



MEJDI TOURS



Itinerary

The Holy Land: Stories of the Past, Struggles in the Present, Hopes for the Future

Take a deep, fresh, and unique look at this amazing and holy land, with a multiple-perspective tour of Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Facilitated by two guides, one Israeli and one Palestinian, this tour will allow you to experience ancient holy sites, cosmopolitan cities, scenic landscapes and political realities of this diverse region through the eyes of its residents.

Beginning with the rich cosmopolitan vibrancy and the gritty political realities of Tel Aviv & Jaffa, continuing into the religious histories of Jerusalem, and further into the towns and villages of the West Bank, and ending on the shores of the Mediterranean, this tour offers travelers the opportunity to meet religious leaders, artists, activists, and ordinary citizens and learn about contrasting national narratives, various religious perspectives, and political points of view.

During our visit, we will share in fellowship with local residents, meditate on mountaintop outlooks, and build relationships with local families from the country's diverse Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and other communities. As we move through this holy land, our experiences will compel us to tackle the difficult questions of faithful citizenship in a broken world. Even more, this tour will offer the opportunity to celebrate the hospitality, deep faith, and vibrant cultures of the people of this land.

Daily Itinerary:

Day 1: Monday, March 6, 2023 - Arrival; 1 MEJDI guide

Group lands at Ben Gurion International Airport and transfers to your Jerusalem hotel. Meet your guide at a group **welcome dinner**.

Overnight: Jerusalem [D]

Day 2: Tuesday, March 7 - Historical Context of Jerusalem; 2 MEJDI guides

Begin the morning with an overview of Jerusalem's religious history from the **Mount of Olives**. Then, take a full-day alternative tour of the **Old City** and learn about the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim holy sites with two guides: one Arab and one Jewish. Visit historic religious sites such as **Pater Noster Church** and **Via Dolorosa** (Way of Sorrows). Tour the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher**, the traditional site of Jesus crucifixion and burial and discuss the many conflicts over the site. Visit the **Temple Mount** and meet with a **local imam** for a discussion on Islam and politics in the Old City. End the day with **Rabbi Naamah Kelman** of Hebrew Union College and then meet with the UN Office of Coordination for Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Jerusalem for a briefing on current politics.

**A visit to some archaeological sites will be included, if possible.*

Overnight: Jerusalem [B, D]

Day 3: Wednesday, March 8 - Israeli Perspective, Jerusalem; 1 MEJDI guide

Begin your morning with a visit to **Yad Vashem**, Israel's moving memorial to the Holocaust. Meet with a **Holocaust survivor** for a personal glimpse into one of the darkest moments in history. Have a conversation with an **Israeli soldier at Mt. Hertzl** and take a walking tour of **Ein Kerem** to learn different narratives about Zionism and Israel's 1948 War of Independence. After that, travel to the **Machne Yehuda** market where you can enjoy lunch and free time in the market and then visit **Orthodox neighborhoods**. Afterwards, return to your hotel for a facilitated discussion about the day and for dinner.
Overnight: Jerusalem [B, Morning Snack, D]

Day 4: Thursday, March 9 - Jericho & the Dead Sea; 1 MEJDI guide

Explore Herod's mountain top fortress of **Masada**, with its breathtaking views of the **Judean Desert** and **Dead Sea**. There, discuss the role archaeology plays in the Israeli national narrative. Stop in **Jericho**, tour **Mt. of Temptation** and meet with **Eco Peace** and hear about their joint Arab-Jewish environmental initiatives. Close the day with **dinner in Jericho**.

**If time allows and travelers are interested, the group will make a stop for a dip in the mineral-rich waters of the Dead Sea*

Overnight: Jerusalem [B, D]

Day 5: Friday, March 10 - Shabbat in Jerusalem; 1 MEJDI guide

Take a day for rest and renewal. You might choose to visit the **Israel Museum** (on own), explore the Arab and/or Jewish **marketplaces**, take some time to visit the souvenir shops in the **Old City**, observe the many Muslims and Jews visiting the Old City's holy sites for special Friday prayers, or stroll through the shops and cafes of **Ben Yehuda Street**. In the evening, regather and head out with your Jewish guide to participate in an **evening Service at the Western Wall**. Then, head for a **Shabbat meal** and blessings in Jewish home or homes - Rabbi Joshua Weisman as available. Bid **farewell to your Jewish guide** from here.

Overnight: Jerusalem [B, D]

Day 6: Saturday, March 11 - Palestinian Perspective, Bethlehem; 1 MEJDI guide

Drive to **Bethlehem**, where you will **cross the checkpoint** on foot and take a walk along the **separation barrier** with **Col. Danny Tirza**. Stop at **Rachel's tomb** to hear a briefing on the separation barrier from your guide. Then travel to **Nativity Square**, visit the **Church of the Nativity** and hear from Palestinian Christian and peacemaker **Sami Awad**. Members of the group can choose to spend the night and have **dinner with local families** in Bethlehem or meet back up with your group for dinner at your hotel.

Overnight: Local Families in Bethlehem or Abraham's Herberage, Beit Jala [B, D]

Day 7: Sunday, March 12 - Hebron; 1 MEJDI guide

Start your day with a visit to **Shuhada Street** and see the work being done by **United States Agency for International Development (USAID)** for Palestinian shopkeepers. Next, visit the **Settler Museum** and have a conversation with a **Hebron Settler**. Meet with a representative of **Breaking the Silence**, an organization of former Israeli soldiers who have given testimony to the demands of their service in the Occupied Territories. Meet with a **local Muslim scholar or leader**. From there, visit the **Abraham Mosque and Synagogue**. Have lunch with a representative of **Churches for Middle East Peace** to discuss their work in the Holy Land. Continue to the **Palestinian Center for Conflict Transformation** with founder and director **Zoughby**. Have dinner at The **Tent Restaurant** in Beit Sahour.

Overnight: Abraham's Herberage, Beit Jala [B, L, D]

Day 8: Monday, March 13 - Bethlehem; 1 MEJDI guide

Learn about **Palestinian refugees** during a morning visit to **Aida Refugee Camp** and the **Alrowwad Center**, whose programming focuses on women and youth. Then, travel to **Dar Al-Kalima University** for coffee and a meeting with a member of the school's **Palestinian Christian leadership (Preferably Mitri Raheb per availability)**. For lunch, enjoy a **home-cooked meal and live music by 2-3 Israeli-Palestinian musicians**, hosted at the home of the Abu Sarah family in Bethany. Drive to **Ramallah** and enjoy dinner on your own.

Overnight: Ramallah [B, L]

Day 9: Tuesday, March 14 - Ramallah; 1 MEJDI guide

In Ramallah, meet with a **Palestinian government official**, specifically with Hanan Ashrawi, as available. Make an additional visit with an **NGO civil society leader** (depending on availability): Sahar Francis of Addameer, an institution offering support for Palestinian prisoners and torture victims; Salwa Duaibis of the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counseling to learn about Palestinian prisoners and their families; Sam Bahour, Palestinian-American business man; **Ahmad Shami**, businessman and environmentalist; or Mustafa Barghouti, Palestinian physician, activist, and politician. Between these activities, have a **group lunch in Ramallah**. End the afternoon with a visit to the **Riwaq** to learn about the preservation of Palestinian architecture. Drive to the Galilee and enjoy a **Boat ride on the Sea of Galilee**.

**Optional: Visit a local Hamam to end the tour with a relaxing local experience.*

Overnight: Galilee [B, L, D]

Day 10: Wednesday, March 15 - Galilee and Golan Heights; 1 MEJDI guide

Begin your tour in the picturesque lakeside town of **Tiberias** on the **Sea of Galilee/Lake Kinneret**. Learn about the **Jewish and Christian histories** of the area, and visit the graves of the famous rabbis buried there. Passing by the **Mount of Beatitudes**, continue up into the **Golan Heights**, to learn about the conflicts between Israel and Syria, see some of the minefields and depopulated villages, and have coffee next to the bunkers at Mount Bental, overlooking the **Valley of Tears**. Return to Galilee for the evening.

Overnight: Galilee [B, D]

Day 11: Thursday, March 16 - Jaffa & Tel Aviv; 1 MEJDI guide

Drive to Tel Aviv and visit **Rabin Square** for a discussion of Yitzhak Rabin's assassination, his memory today, and prospects for future peace. Enjoy the rest of the afternoon lounging by the Mediterranean Sea or walking through Tel Aviv's many diverse neighborhoods. Enjoy a **group farewell dinner** at your hotel.

**An optional visit to the Anu Museum will be available per traveler request.*

Overnight: Tel Aviv/Jaffa [B, D]

Day 12: Friday, March 17 - Departure

Check out of your hotel and transfer to Ben Gurion Airport for your flight home.

**D - Dinner included*

B - Breakfast included

L - Lunch included