

*“Sir We Wish to See Jesus” (John 12:21)*



ISRAEL TOUR

2023

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

## TICKETS

Most tickets are electronic, so all you will need to check in is your passport and flight number. If your group has paper tickets, your group leader will have them at the airport.

## AIRLINE SEATING

We regret that we are unable to guarantee specific airline seat assignments. Please tell the ticketing agent if you wish to change your assigned seat or if you are not seated with your roommate or family member. Typically, you can go online ahead of time to pick your seat, but this isn't always the case, or a guarantee you will keep your online selection.

## PASSPORT

Make two copies of your passport picture page. Leave one copy with someone at home and keep one with you (packed separate from your passport). If you lose your passport, it is easier to get a new passport when you have a copy. It is extremely important that your passport has not expired. In the past, some travelers have arrived at the airport the day of departure only to find their passport has expired the day of the trip. Please make sure this does not happen to you. Israeli officials will want your passport to be valid up to six months after your return date. For example, if your trip returns April 1st, you will need to make sure that your passport does not expire until after October 1st of that year.

Normal processing for a new or renewed passport is usually three to six weeks. COVID-19 could radically impact processing times. Be proactive and get your passport needs handled today.

## NON-U.S. PASSPORT

Travel with a passport from your country of citizenship must be valid at least six months after your return date.

Travel with a valid Green Card or Visa that allows you to leave and re-enter the United States. Contact the Consulate of each country you will be visiting to get specific travel instructions and visa requirements.

If you are part of an extension to another country, you may be required to have a multiple entry visa into Israel. Please check your itinerary.

Please understand that failure to travel with these documents or have proper Visas may drastically hinder your travel and re-entry into the United States. Responsibility for additional costs are individual responsibilities. If you have any questions, please contact the Consulate of your country of citizenship.

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

## LUGGAGE

Baggage allowance is limited to ONE suitcase, which must not exceed 61 inches (height + width + length) and 50-pounds max. NOTE: The airline will charge extra fees for overweight or oversized luggage.

Your ONE carry-on must not exceed 39 inches (height width + length) and must fit under the seat in front of you. Some airlines have weight restriction for carry-on luggage.

**[CHECK THE WEBSITE OF AIRLINE TO CONFIRM EXACT LUGGAGE RULES]**

Keep in mind that the flight is long and the more leg room you have, the more comfortable you will be.

On the tour bus in Israel, storage space is limited to the space on your lap and the shallow space above your head. We have a FULL bus, so a small backpack is best for daily touring.

ALWAYS pack fewer clothes and bring more money than you think you will need.

It is always a good idea to “*cross-pack*.” If you are traveling as a single, pack a change of clothing in your carry-on just in case your suitcase is temporarily misplaced by the airlines. Husbands and wives should pack some of each other’s clothing in their suitcases for the same reason. Delayed arrival of a suitcase can be inconvenient. These precautions can lessen that effect.

Always keep your written prescriptions (for life dependent medications) packed in a different case from the one used to hold your supply of medication, or on your person.

## HELPFUL LUGGAGE TIPS

- Neatly print your last name on all luggage tags.
- Put a label/tag on your carry-on also. (Extra tags are available at the airport.)
- Put your name & address **INSIDE** your luggage in case your luggage tags are missing.

It really helps to have wheels on your suitcase! You will need to take your suitcase from the luggage carousel, through customs and to the bus.

We will be going to three different hotels and you are responsible for toting your luggage from your room to the bus. On the day of departure, you will take your suitcase from the bus through security to check in –so wheels are a blessing!

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

## CARRY ON

Please remember that your carry-on is always your responsibility to take with you from bus to hotel and hotel to bus. **Please do not leave** your carry-on with your one checked suitcase to be handled by the porters. We would not want to be unfair to them, thus negatively affect our witness. Portage arrangements are the same for any group tour extensions.

## MONEY

The currency in Israel is the shekel (sometimes called the “new shekel”). Check the internet for the most recent exchange rates at [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com).

We suggest that you take enough money to pay for items that are not included such as: Lunches, snacks, beverages, postcards, stamps, room service, laundry, taxi, souvenirs, etc.

The US. Dollar is accepted almost everywhere in Israel. Change is usually given in shekels, so bring smaller bills if you don't want to get a lot of shekels. We suggest \$50.00 in one-dollar bills. This works well when shopping at roadside stands.

We **DO NOT** recommend traveler's checks. Visa and MasterCard are usually accepted for larger purchases and allow you to dispute any incorrect charges.

ATM machines are available in the major cities, but not always easy to find. Remember that an ATM machine dispenses money in Shekels (NOT IN US DOLLARS) and typically charge a fee.

## IMPORTANT

ADVISE YOUR BANK OR CREDIT CARD COMPANY THAT YOU ARE GOING OVERSEAS SO THEY DON'T THINK YOUR CARD HAS BEEN STOLEN AND DENY CHARGES.

## ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

You will need an adapter for all electronics. Israel uses 220 volts instead of 110 and a converter is required to plug into their wall receptacles. (A plug with two round pins instead of two flat prongs like we use). Travel hairdryers, curlers, irons, etc., may have a switch so you can change from 110 or 220 volts. Adaptors can be purchased at luggage stores or on Amazon.

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

## ELECTRONIC “STUFF”

NEVER pack electronic equipment in your checked luggage or leave electronics unattended in your hotel room. Video cameras may be brought into Israel without any problems. Bring extra

batteries for your camera, as well as some replacements or a re-charger with the appropriate adaptor.

A camera with "panorama" capabilities is a real plus. For digital cameras, make sure you bring a large enough storage card or disk to accommodate all the photos you will take. Many people will take upwards of 500 plus pictures.

If you take pictures of Bedouin children or someone's camel or donkey, don't be surprised if they ask for money.

A camera can become a barrier between you and your experience with the Lord, the land, and the people. Don't miss out!

## MEDICATIONS

Be sure to pack enough of your medications to last through the tour. Only life dependent or narcotic prescriptions need to be in the original bottles. Not all prescriptions are interchangeable. Be sure to have your doctor write an Israel-equivalent prescription for life dependent medications.

If you are allergic to any medicines, please keep a list of these with your passport.

In Israel, you may need a prescription for medicines which are sold over the counter in the U.S. Therefore, you should pack some aspirin or ibuprofen, anti-acids, Imodium, and similar items you typically use at home and feel you might need.

If you suffer from car sickness, bring along any medication you use to prevent this on the bus and plane. We found meclizine is less drowsy but consult your doctor.

Never allow prescription medication out of your possession. If the airline requires you to check in your carry-on, take your medication with you.

## VACCINATIONS

**N/A as of (Sept. 2022)** - COVID vaccination requirements for visitors entering Israel is a fluid situation.

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

## GET INTO SHAPE

Start walking... You will have a lot of walking on the tour, and it is wise to build your stamina now. Touring can range between 4 - 6 miles per day.

## CLIMATE RANGES

<u>Jerusalem</u>	<u>Average Temperature</u>	<u>Average Rain Fall</u>
Jan-Mar	45-57F	5"
Apr-Jun	59-76F	1"
Jul-Sep	66-84F	0"
Oct-Dec	54-67F	3"

Israel has a pleasant **spring and autumn**. The weather is similar too Southern California year-round. **Winters** in the north can be cool, with frequent chances of rain or even some snow, with lows in the 40's to mid-70's. **Summers** can be very hot, especially near the Dead Sea... Temps between 70 to above 100 degrees.

Check international weather at [weather.com](http://weather.com) about a week before your departure. Start praying NOW that we have good weather and no rain on our trip.

## HELPFUL HINTS

- Call your credit card company to inform them you are going out of the country, so they don't think your card has been stolen and cancel it.
- Spot remover and sewing kit can be handy.
- Wrinkled clothing: Rather than trying to pack a travel iron, "*Downy Wrinkle Release*" is handy for eliminating wrinkles. Bring some in a small spray bottle.
- Mesh bags: for loose items, toiletries, dirty laundry, etc.
- Mailing tube: for posters and art you may bring back in your suitcase.
- Cough drops and Airborne.
- Zip-lock bags: always useful for your collections of artifacts and rocks.
- Eyeglasses prescription or extra contact lens.
- Consider a smaller travel size Bible.

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

Take the time to journal while there, you will be thankful later. This is an action-packed trip, and it helps to write down important trip experiences for later when you go through your pictures trying to remember all the places you visited.

## PACKING YOUR SUITCASE

- **Do not pack your passport in your suitcase.**
- Pack appropriate clothes that you can mix and match. It is easy to over-pack for this sort of trip. We recommend *"you pack the absolute minimum that you need and then bring half of it."*

**Winter** - Pack a lightweight poncho or travel raincoat, warm gloves, a scarf or cap, and a small umbrella. The weather can range from cool to dry and hot around the Dead Sea and Masada. Bring layers and remove or add them as needed. Rather than packing a bulky or heavy coat, try a simple light-weight raincoat or windbreaker. It takes up little space and worn over a few layers of lighter clothing will keep you warm and dry.

**Summer** - Hat and sunglasses (plus sunscreen) are also highly recommended all year round. Be sure to bring a good pair of walking shoes (tennis shoes or sport sandals work well) that you will not mind getting dirty.

Modest dress is required at some of the locations we visit. In fact, many "holy sites" will not allow you to enter if you are wearing shorts, short skirts, or off-the-shoulder attire. Ladies pack a shawl.

Bring a bathing suit for the baptism in the Jordan River and to float in the Dead Sea (options vary per trip). Additionally, we plan to visit Hezekiah's Tunnel. The shaft typically flows with knee-deep water year-round. You will need a change of pants for the occasion, a small flashlight, and a pair of inexpensive pool shoes. (his is optional and a dry path is available too).

## SUGGESTED PACKING LIST

Travel passport holder for your neck, purse, or around your waist.

### **CARRY ON BAG:**

- Passport, plane tickets, credit card and one other form of photo identification
- Prescription medicines in original containers
- One change of clothes
- Earplugs
- iPhone or something you can listen to music with (optional)
- Camera (optional)

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

- Cash
- Snacks for traveling
- Neck pillow

## **SUITCASE:**

- Casual clothing – pants, capris, t-shirts
- Casual nice clothing for evening dinners
- Bible, notebook, pen highlighter
- Light rain jacket or poncho
- Binoculars
- Ear plugs (for airplane or snoring roommate)
- Small bag pack
- Snack / travel coffee cup
- Moistened towelettes
- Hand sanitizer gel
- Swimsuit, cover up, small towel
- Shawl (women)
- Small flashlight
- Sunglasses / hat
- Chap stick / sunscreen / lotion
- Water shoes for Hezekiah's tunnel & baptism & possible Dead Sea
- Laundry bag

## **AT THE AIRPORT**

**SECURITY CHECK** - You may be pulled aside to answer security questions before you actually-check-in with the airline. Please just answer their questions and do not chat, make jokes, or volunteer information unless you are asked for it.

## **AIRLINE CHECK-IN**

Never discard your ticket until you have checked to see that all flight coupons have been used.

**ELECTRONIC TICKETS** - All you need to check in is your passport and flight number. The ticket agent will print your boarding passes and tag your luggage.

**CHECK-IN** - Make sure the airline properly tags your luggage. The last city code listed on the tag is TLV. Keep your luggage tags in a safe place so you can claim your luggage in Israel, and DIA on the way home.

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

**SEATING** - It is not that we do not want to assign seats. Security and other reasons often dictate when seats are assigned, and which people are assigned to which seats. We will try to ensure that couples and families are seated together. Verify with the ticket agent that you are seated with your spouse or roommate.

## **SECURITY CHECK POINTS**

Have all travel documents and ID readily available at check-in, placed in carry-on or purse, NOT in luggage.

Be prepared to open all luggage for inspection at check-in. All packages, including gifts, may be opened.

Be prepared to submit yourself to a body check by metal detector or by physical means if necessary.

Put pens, keys, cell phones, badges, etc. in your carry-on before the security check to reduce the chance of setting off the alarm.

Put your quart sized plastic baggie with all fluids (under 3-ounce bottles) that you will be carrying on the plane in a tray for inspection.

Please do not say or do anything during security checks, this may cause delay in departure. **NEVER JOKE** about hijacks or bombs. Airline and security personnel take these matters very seriously.

Do not accept anything presented to you unless you have inspected the contents.

**BUDDY SYSTEM** - Use the “buddy system” so if you get delayed someone will know!

## **FREQUENT FLYER INFO**

When you check in at the ticket counter advise them of your frequent flyer account number. If you do not have an account with them, ask for an application and complete it before leaving the ticket counter. **This may be done in advance by contacting the airline’s frequent flyer program personally.**

Keep all your boarding passes and your ticket receipt to verify that the airline has credited your Frequent Flyer Miles. They may ask for proof of travel if your miles have not been credited to your air-miles account. **This cannot be provided after the flight by Mayfair Travel.**

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

**MEDICAL** - Many seasoned travelers are not aware that their health insurance may not cover them outside of the country. If your group has not included travel insurance, you may contact Mayfair Travel for more information.

**CANCELLATION** - If you need to cancel your trip due to an unforeseen emergency or serious illness, most of your trip may be non-refundable, if you are not insured. Cancellation insurance is NOT included in the tour price but is available. Call Mayfair Travel for info.

**\* Once You Arrive in Israel \***

## AIRPORT PROCEDURES IN ISRAEL

After landing, you will enter the terminal and follow the signs to passport control. Here you will present your passport. Stay alert and follow your tour group leaders: Pastor Jeff & Pastor Cody

After exiting passport control a representative from **N.E.T. (Near East Tours)** our tour operator in Israel will be holding a sign that reads “**Westminster Calvary.**” That person will tell you which carousel your suitcase is on and where to gather as a group before being escorted to the tour bus. Stay alert and pay attention to your group leaders.

Should you somehow be separated from the group while inside the airport terminal, or if you cannot locate the Near East Tours representative or your tour leader, exit through customs (with your luggage), go through the doors to exit the terminal. On your right is an exit door that leads to the bus area. If you are lost, please ask an airport employee (wearing a badge) for assistance.

We promise we will not leave without you!!!

## HOTEL SERVICES

Your hotels provide a variety of services. *The tour pays for all taxes and tips, as well as all breakfasts and dinners served in the hotel dining rooms.* If you use any additional hotel services such as room service, laundry service, outside phone calls, or internet usage, you will be billed accordingly and must pay at the front desk when you return your room key. You are also responsible for any additional tips and taxes these services may incur.

Laundry - Each hotel offers a professional laundry service that will clean and press your clothes (prices vary per garment.) Check the pricing with the front desk before you send it out and make sure it will be done before your group changes hotels.

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

Some hotels provide a clothesline that extends across the bathtub for those that want to wash out things in the sink or bathtub, but you will need to provide your own detergent if you do this.

At time of check-in, they will ask for a Visa or Master Card to cover any extra charges that you may incur.

## **ROOMMATE ETIQUETTE**

If you are sharing a room with someone you do not know, there are a few guidelines that will make for an enjoyable trip:

- 1) If you're an early riser and your roommate is not (or vice versa), make sure that you do not disturb them with either noise or light.
- 2) If there is only one key per room, make sure you leave it at the front desk if you are the last to leave the room.

## **TIME DIFFERENCE**

Israel is seven hours ahead of New York, nine hours ahead of Denver, and ten hours ahead of California (except during daylight savings).

## **CALLING HOME**

Contact your cell phone company to learn about international calling plans while in Israel. It's relatively inexpensive when compared to calling from a landline. A call from your room through the hotel switchboard may cost from \$4 to \$10 per minute, even if it is to a toll-free number.

## **MONEY AND SHOPPING**

Jerusalem has a wide variety of souvenirs with some of the best prices. In most places, they take U.S. dollars, so it is not necessary to exchange your money.

If you change dollars into shekels, use only an official moneychanger, or do it at your hotel, or use an ATM. The exchange rate varies between 3 to 4 shekels to the dollar.

The most reliable stores and restaurants display the emblem of the *Israeli Ministry of Tourism*, recommending these establishments for their high quality of merchandise and service. The emblem is a simple icon of two men carrying a large cluster of grapes between them.

If you buy anything described as "antique" be sure to get a certificate of authenticity from the salesclerk or do not buy it.

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

Throughout the trip there will be shopping opportunities and free time.

## VAT TAX

There is a 18% **value added tax**, known as a “VAT”, on all merchandise purchased over \$100 (as of the time of this writing). This tax is refundable upon your departure from Israel at the airport. When you purchase an item, you will be given a special receipt verifying that you paid the VAT tax on that item. As you are preparing to leave Israel, go to the booth in the airport terminal designated for VAT refunds and fill out the paperwork. You **MUST** present your VAT tax receipt and the items for inspection, or there is no refund.

If you make a major purchase, be sure to keep the name of the salesperson and the store name, address, and phone number. Make sure they will stand behind their product. It is best to purchase items that you can have shipped or expensive items with a credit card so that you can dispute the charge if there is a problem.

## FOOD & BEVERAGES

Most people think Israeli food is excellent. We will provide all your breakfasts and dinners. Plan on your lunches ranging from \$10 - \$15 dollars per day, per person. Although when dining out, prices are generally reasonable, and you can spend as little or as much as you want. Try the falafels, shawarma, or hummus with vegetables...YUM!

Some cultural advice about the food: do not order milk or any dairy products with meat or poultry - it is not “kosher” and as a rule will not be served. Other foods that you will not find available are pork products and shellfish.

Israeli tap water is considered safe to drink. Bottled water is available everywhere. Most bus drivers stock water on the bus which you can purchase for about \$1 per bottle.

Coffee and juices are usually included with breakfast and dinner. Soft drinks are NOT included with any meals.

Be sure to drink plenty of water on the plane, on the bus, and during every phase of the tour to avoid dehydration.

## TRAVEL CAUTIONS

Sometimes tourists, in the excitement of being in a foreign country, or as-a-result of “*jet lag*,” temporarily fail to exercise the same caution they use at home. PLEASE BE CAUTIOUS and PAY ATTENTION!

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

## *Things to Remember:*

- Do not bring anything that you cannot afford to lose.
- No smoking on the bus or in your hotel rooms.
- Stay with the group and avoid straying off on your own.
- Since Muslim women are covered from head to foot, Muslim men think that Western women's clothes are "loose and immoral". Please dress modestly at-all-times!
- Do not leave possessions (backpacks, purses, etc.) unattended, as they may be considered by authorities as a potential danger and disposed of.
- Never accept gifts from strangers in or around the airport.
- Avoid the temptation to feed or give money to the local children. One darling child with a handout can quickly become a group too large for your supply.
- Do not follow friendly little children down an alley because their uncle has a shop where you can find a great shipping deal. It may be hard to get out of the store without buying.
- Avoid friendly embraces from strangers. Pickpockets are not limited to the USA.
- In any crowded place, keep your backpacks and hip packs in front of you with your arms folded across them.
- Keep your wallet in your front pants pocket or purse zippered.
- It is wise to place your cash in separate pockets, so it is not so obvious to on-lookers the amount you have.

Please remember we are in a different country and it is good practice to not be a **“Loud American”** while traveling to the different Holy Sites.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

**Keep** your passport on your person at-all-times while traveling. Misplacing or losing your passport can result in serious delays and extra costs for you. At some hotels they require you to leave your passport at the front desk while checked into the hotel. This is normal and safe.

**Keep** a photocopy of the Photo page of your passport in your luggage.

**Never** leave valuables (jewelry, cash, iPhone, laptops, cameras, electronics, etc.) in your hotel room, even if they are locked in your suitcase. It is better to leave significant valuables at home if you don't need them. Keep your journey simple.

All hotels have a safe at the front desk where your important items may be stored when you are away from your room. Some hotels provide a personal safe in your own room. Always check the safe before checking out.

While touring, **always stay with your group**. Be aware of where they are going. Though you may discover something interesting to investigate along the way, it could cause you to lag-behind and become lost.

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

**Tell someone** in the group (preferably your guide or Pastor) if you are staying in the hotel or leaving the tour for any reason.

If you decide to go out **after hours**, always tell someone else in your tour group where you are going and when you intend to return. The streets in Israel are safe, but you should not go off by yourself.

**PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE do not wander from the group.** When the tour guide or bus leader calls to board the bus, respond immediately. It is very hard to hold the bus for those who wander and are not responsive to the requests to board the bus. There are several stops that are time sensitive, and delays may result in the cancellation of our reservations. There is not tolerance in this area of the tour!

## **USEFUL THINGS TO KNOW**

**TAXI SERVICE** - If you decide to take a taxi, make sure you agree in advance with the driver on the fare per person or for all concerned. You will need Shekels for most Taxis.

**RESTROOMS** - In Israel are typically identified as the “WC” and you are expected to pay 1-2 Shekels to the attendant or place a coin in the machine.

**BAPTISM** - A highlight of the trip is to be baptized in Israel. If you do plan to do so we ask that you wear a modest swimsuit and large size tee-shirt to cover yourself. You will have advance notice the day before the baptism to prepare.

## **TIPS FOR THE GUIDES**

We know that you are going to become very fond of your bus driver and tour guide. They are skilled professionals who enjoy working with tourists. Sometimes tour members will take a financial collection on the bus for them to show their appreciation. However, Israel tour companies tip the bus driver and tour guide well. **Therefore, we ask that no one start, or contribute to such a collection.**

## **THE PEOPLE & CUSTOMS**

A good “*Shalom*” goes a long way.

**A firm handshake is obligatory upon meeting and departing.** Never remain seated when shaking a standing person's hand.

When speaking directly to an Israeli, always look them in the eye.

Police wear blue uniforms and usually speak English

# Practical Tips for An Amazing Trip!

Paramilitary police (border police/security forces) wear dark green and a beret of similar color, and usually do not speak English.

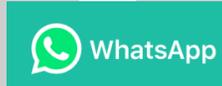
Israeli religiosity ranges from the Ultra-Orthodox to the complete atheist.

Avoid criticizing the country, the people, the food, and the customs. If you have a problem, please talk to your leader or pastor.

## **FINALLY**

Before you leave be sure to connect in three simple steps:

- 1) Pastor Jeff's cell (303) 646-7571
- 2) Stay connected in Israel by downloading the "Whats App"
- 3) Search "Jeff Cramer" in the *What's App* to be added to the group



## **PRAY**

Ask God to enlarge your heart and the hearts of your fellow travelers as you explore the land of promise. Pray for your leaders: Pastors, bus driver, & tour guide that they would be filled with the joy of the Lord and wisdom of the Holy Spirit in navigating this trip of a lifetime.

(Psalm 122:6-7) NLT

*"Pray for peace in Jerusalem. May all who love this City prosper. O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls and prosperity in your palaces."*

*“Sir We Wish to See Jesus” (John 12:21)*

~ ISRAEL TOUR 2023 ~



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