



Oasis of Peace

American Friends of Neve Shalom/Wahat al-Salam



MEJDI TOURS

Tour: AFNSWAS Israel & Palestine Spring Trip

Dates: Friday, April 28, 2023 - Sunday, May 7, 2023

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival to Village

Friday, April 28

(Group Transfer)

Arrive to Ben Gurion Airport, transfer to [Wahat al Salaam - Neve Shalom Village](#), and check into your accommodations.

Enjoy an interfaith welcome program marking the end of the week, Yom ill Juma, and Shabbat, organized by the Village's Pluralistic Spiritual Center.

Overnight: NSWAS Hotel (D)

Day 2: NSWAS

Saturday, April 29

(Bus)

Begin the day at the Village on a walking tour learning its history, mission and about the activities of the Educational Institutions. Enjoy TBD activities alongside Village residents and a possible trip to a nearby outdoor site for a hike and/or picnic lunch, recapping stories of the WASNS community and surrounding area.

Overnight: NSWAS Hotel (B, L, D)

Day 3: NSWAS

Sunday, April 30

(No guide, no bus)

Visit the Village [Primary School](#), meet students, and explore the [Peace Library and Art Gallery](#). Spend time with Village residents in the evening.

Overnight: NSWAS Hotel (B, L, D)



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Day 4: The Center: Lydd/Lod, Ramle, Jaffa

Monday, May 1

(2 Guides, Bus)

Spend the day exploring the nearby mixed Arab-Jewish cities of Lydd/Lod, Ramle and Jaffa. Walk past remnants of vibrant central markets, the Dahmash Mosque and the St. George's Church (**Lod**), recalling events of 1948 and how their legacy resonates until today. Meet a representative of a local school or community center to discuss the opportunities and limits of shared society in a dense urban environment. Enjoy lunch at the celebrated **Samir's Restaurant** in Ramle, hearing from the owners about what has changed and remained constant in their city over the years. Head to Jaffa in the afternoon for a walk in the port and surrounding neighborhood with representatives of [Sadaka-Reut](#), a bi-national youth movement bridging communities of different backgrounds through joint action. Return to the Village for the evening.

**Possible additions to this day include visits at the [Lod Mosaic Center](#) and/or [Pool of the Arches](#) in Ramla*

Overnight: NSWAS Hotel (B, L, D)

Day 5: Road to the Negev / Naqab

Tuesday, May 2

(2 Guides, Bus)

Head towards the south of the country, passing Beit Shemesh for a brief discussion of the role of religious communities in the national conversation, and stop at **Beit Guvrin - Maresha National Park** for a walk in the "Land of a Thousand Caves." Discuss how both Palestinians and Israelis relate to different epochs of history in the land, and how those histories are represented in the public square. Continue towards Beer Sheva, reaching the campus of "[Hagar](#)": Jewish-Arab Education for Equality for a brief tour, lunch on site, and discussion with school officials. In the afternoon, visit a project of [AJEEC-NISPED](#) in a nearby village to explore issues of access and integration facing Bedouin communities in the region. Return to WASNS for dinner; prepare to depart the following day.

Overnight: NSWAS Hotel (B, L, D)



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Day 6: The North **Wednesday, May 3** **(2 Guides, Bus)**

Depart early in the morning and head north to the art gallery in the Palestinian-Arab Israeli town of [Umm el Fahem](#). Discuss the crucial, but delicate relationships between local artists, community leaders, national agencies and philanthropies, that have powered this unique institution for some 25 years. Continue to Haifa* for a view over the **Bahai'i gardens** and bay, and walk through the neighborhood of **Wadi Nisnas**, taking time to find lunch on your own. Visit [Beit HaGefen](#), the Arab-Jewish Cultural Center, in the afternoon and later meet with a representative of another local organization based in this diverse city (i.e. [Sikkuy](#), [Adalah](#), [Mossawa](#)). Make your way towards Jerusalem in the evening, stopping for dinner along the way before reaching your accommodations.

**Possible additions to this day include a visit at the [Hand in Hand](#) bilingual school*

Overnight: YMCA Three Arches Guest House, Jerusalem (B, D)

Day 7: Welcome to Jerusalem **Thursday, May 4** **(2 guides, Bus)**

Spend the day in the **Jerusalem Old City**, beginning with visits to the Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary complex, sites of rich history, religious and political significance. After approaching the Western Wall, head to the City of David** for a brief visit (*without paid entrance to the park*) and view into the surrounding Silwan neighborhood. Consider the perspectives of the organization managing this site, and those challenging their archaeological conclusions and wide-ranging expansion efforts. Enjoy lunch on your own, then visit the Church of Holy Sepulchre and walk stations along the Via Dolorosa. Spend time in small alleyways of the Muslim Quarter and at the Damascus Gate, discussing recent developments in and around the Old City. In the late afternoon/early evening, explore and find dinner in the city center, before gathering again for an intimate program with the [Jerusalem Youth Chorus](#) (confirmed for this date).

Overnight: YMCA Three Arches Hotel, Jerusalem (B)



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Day 8: Narratives of Leadership & Loss

Friday, May 5

(2 Guides, Bus)

Today's program explores Palestinian and Israeli identity through both prominent and lesser known sites of meaning. Move into the **East Jerusalem** neighborhood of Sheikh Jarrah for a discussion of Palestinian Jerusalemite leadership during the British Mandate. Head to **West Jerusalem** to explore the campus of **Yad Vashem**, Israel's national museum and memorial to the Holocaust, including its main exhibits, Children's Memorial, and Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations. Continue to the gravesite of Yitzhak Rabin on the Mt. Herzl Cemetery, before traveling to Ramallah for lunch and tour of the **Arafat Museum** complex. Return to your accommodations via the contested landscape of northeast Jerusalem, arriving in time to freshen up before Shabbat dinner with a local family(ies).

Overnight: YMCA Three Arches Hotel (B, L, D)

Day 9: Bethlehem, or Judea & the South Hebron Hills

Saturday, May 6

(2 Guides, Bus)

Meet a representative(s) of ["A Land for All"](#) organization at your hotel in the morning, before driving south from Jerusalem into the Bethlehem governorate, or biblical region of Judea in the West Bank. Stop to discuss themes of the graffiti art along the separation/security barrier and take a brief tour of the **Nativity Church**. After lunch on your own in Manger Square, continue into the South Hebron Hills with activists from [Combatants for Peace](#). Visit villages and sites of ongoing joint Israeli-Palestinian efforts in solidarity with vulnerable residents of the region. Return to Bethany/al Azariyeh in the evening for a meeting with representatives of the [Parents Circle - Bereaved Families Forum](#) and dinner with musical accompaniment at the family home of MEJDI Tours founder, Aziz Abu Sarah.

Overnight: YMCA Three Arches Hotel (B, D)

Day 10: Wrap Up & Reflection

Sunday, May 7

(No guide, Transfers to NSWAS & TLV airport)

Return to Wahat al Salaam - Neve Shalom for a day of wrap up and reflection exercises facilitated by the Village's very own [School for Peace](#). Enjoy a closing dinner and transfer to the airport for late night departing flights.

** Post-stay accommodations available upon request at NSWAS Hotel*

Overnight: N/A (B, L, D)