



MEJDI TOURS

Congregation B'nai Yisrael Post-B'nai Mitzvah Trip to Israel with Rabbi Josh Strom and Brad Zicholtz March 22-30, 2024

Itinerary:

Day 1, Friday, March 22, 2024: Arrival-Tel Aviv

- Arrive into **Ben Gurion Airport**, ideally on El Al flight 28 from Newark departing at 1:30 pm on Thursday, March 21, 2024 and arriving at 6:55 am.
- Meet your driver and guide and transfer to Tel Aviv.
- [Time permitting,] Begin your tour with an opening gathering outside of the Etzel House. The **Etzel House** is dedicated to the pre-state Zionist paramilitary organization, the Irgun. With seaside views of both Jaffa and Tel Aviv, learn the Arab and Jewish histories of these adjoining cities including an explanation of the birth of Tel Aviv and the Zionist movement and the struggles of life in Arab Jaffa and beyond. Briefly see the exhibit inside the Etzel House which tell the Israeli perspective on the 41 Irgun fighters who died in the battle for Jaffa in 1948. The building is one of the very few remaining structures from the Arab neighborhood of Manishiya that was in part destroyed during the 1948 battles.
- [Time permitting] Continue on foot to the **Carmel Market Shuk** for lunch on your own. Shop for Purim costumes!
- Stroll up **Bialik Street** to learn about the history of cultural Zionism. Bialik Street is home to **Rubin Museum**, the former residence of painter Reuven Rubin and **Bialik House**, the former residence of Israel's national poet Chaim Nachman Bialik. Beit Ha'ir, Tel Aviv's former town hall is at the top of the street.
- Transfer to your hostel and check in.
- Attend **Shabbat services** with a Reform congregation in Tel Aviv.
- Have a **Shabbat dinner**.

Hostel: Selina, Tel Aviv Port [Dinner included]

Day 2, Saturday, March 23, 2024: Tel Aviv and Jaffa

- Travel to the **ANU Museum: The Museum of the Jewish People** (formerly known as the Diaspora Museum). The museum presents and displays the unique and ongoing 4,000

year-old story of the Jewish people – past, present and future with a heavy emphasis on culture and religious diversity.

- Have lunch in the **Jaffa** shuk on your own followed by a tour of the historic port city that highlights how it has become an incubator for coexistence and shared society.
- Gather on the beach to end Shabbat with **Havdallah**.
- Join in a **Purim party** on the streets of Tel Aviv!

Hostel: Selina, Tel Aviv Port [Breakfast & Dinner included]

Day 3, Sunday, March 24, 2024: Purim in Holon (tentative)

- Check out in the morning, and head to the Tel Aviv suburb of Holon. There, attend the Adloyada, **the largest annual Purim parade** in the country. Thousands of marchers participate in the parade, which has a different theme every year. The marchers include Holon's schoolchildren, students in various classes at the city's community centers and sports and cultural centers; groups of gymnasts, acrobats and jugglers; dance troupes and musical ensembles; street theater groups, and, of course, the enormous colorful floats, which are the most exciting and impressive part of the event.
<https://www.holon.muni.il/English/CultureAndLeisure/Festivals/pages/purimparade.asp>
[X](#)
- Have a group lunch.
- Head north to the ancient port city of **Caesarea**. Tour the ancient Herodian port city of Caesarea, whose extensive sandstone ruins overlook the peaceful blue waters of the Mediterranean. There, see the theater, hippodrome, and learn about the area's Crusader history and the old Bosnian Muslim community that lived there.
- Arrive at your kibbutz accommodations and have a group dinner.

Hostel: Zohar Badeshe, Kibbutz Dalya [Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included]

Day 4, Monday, March 25, 2024: Culinary Galilee

- Begin the day with a **tour of the kibbutz** and learn about the Kibbutz movement.
- Visit **Sindyanna of the Galilee** in Kanna, a female-led non-profit that actively promotes the concepts of "business for peace" and Fair Trade in Israel. They sell Arab producers' olive oil and other premium products in the international marketplace according to Fair Trade principles, and then channeling all of the profits back into Arab women education. **Taste fair trade olives and olive oil and then learn to make a zatar spice blend** before enjoying lunch.
- Travel to the picturesque town of **Tzfat** (Safed) in Upper Galilee. A center of Kabbalah and one of Judaism's Four Holy Cities. Enjoy walking the village's narrow stone lanes and art galleries, and visit its synagogues. **Sample cheese** at a 200 year old cheese shop.
- Return to the Kibbutz for dinner.

Hostel: Zohar Badeshe, Kibbutz Dalya [Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included]

Day 5, Tuesday, March 26, 2024: Haifa

- Start the day with a visit to the famous **Baha'i Gardens** to learn about the Baha'i faith.
- Then your guide will take you through the city's **Wadi Nisnas district** – a Christian-Arab neighborhood famous for its art route. Stop into **Beit HaGefen Arab and Jewish Contemporary Art Gallery**.
- Visit Haifa's **Yad-b'Yad Bilingual Hebrew-Arabic School** and meet their multiethnic students.
- End the day with a program with Ethiopian Israelis at **Leo Baeck Education Center** to hear their community's history, current social issues, and involvement with this hub for Reform Judaism in Haifa.
- Return to the Kibbutz for dinner.

Hostel: Zohar Badeshe, Kibbutz Dalya [Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included]

Day 6, Wednesday, March 27, 2024: Modern Jerusalem

- Check out after breakfast and ascend to Jerusalem.
- Pay a sobering visit to **Yad Vashem**, the Israeli Holocaust Museum. Have lunch at the museum.
- In the afternoon, get a guided orientation to the **Machne Yehuda Shuk** with your guide.
- In the evening, go to **Ben Yehuda Street's** pedestrian shopping district. Have free time to shop and eat on your own.

Hostel: Beit Ben Yehuda, Jerusalem [Breakfast & Lunch included]

Day 7, Thursday, March 28, 2024: Old City of Jerusalem

- Enter the **Old City** through the Dung Gate to begin an exploration of the three major religious traditions and their stories about what makes this place holy to these faith traditions.
- Ascend the **Temple Mount / Noble Sanctuary** for a close view of the iconic **Dome of the Rock** and **al Aqsa Mosque**.
- Visit the **Kotel (Western Wall)** plaza and have time for personal reflection or prayer.
- After a group lunch at Abu Shukri, learn about the **Christian "Stations of the Cross" along the Via Dolorosa** and the incense-filled halls of the **Holy Sepulchre Church**, the place identified as both the site of the crucifixion and the tomb of Jesus.
- Weave through the shops and alleyways of the **Arab shuk** (market) in the Old City, where you can have some free time to practice your haggling skills.
- Visit **Razzouk Ink**, a 700-year-old Christian family owned tattoo parlor in the Christian Quarter that originally catered to Christian pilgrims to Jerusalem. Meet the current owner Wissam Razzouk; he has centuries of family stories to tell including his own

involvement in “Healing Ink,” which uses tattooing to help Israeli victims of terrorism and war overcome trauma.

Hostel: Beit Ben Yehuda, Jerusalem [Breakfast & Lunch included]

Day 8, Friday, March 29, 2024: Archaeological Dig, Neve Shalom-Wahat al-Salam, Heller High, and Shabbat at Kibbutz Gezer

- Head south to **Beit Guvrin** to participate in a hands-on archaeological experience that combines excavating, sifting, pottery examination, and exploration of an extensive archaeological cave system.
- In the late afternoon, visit the Reform American high school students spending a semester in Israel with **Heller High** based at Kibbutz Tzuba.
- Then be welcome to **Kibbutz Gezer**, one of Israel’s Reform kibbutzim, by the Kibbutz’s rabbi. Join the community for **services followed by a festive Shabbat dinner**.

Hostel: Beit Ben Yehuda, Jerusalem [Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included]

Day 9, Saturday, March 30, 2024: Masada

- Travel south to the mountaintop fortress of **Masada**.
- Upon reaching Masada, **hike the Snake Path up**, take in breathtaking views of the Judean Desert, explore the archaeological park, and learn the dramatic story of Masada’s role in the Great Revolt.
- Enjoy time at a **local hotel spa** - Take a **dip in the mineral-rich waters of the Dead Sea**. Have the opportunity to shower off before reboarding the bus to return to Jerusalem.
- Stop for a pit stop along the way where you can have your picture taken atop a camel.
- Have a Havdalah together and a farewell dinner before transferring to the airport for the trip back home.

[Breakfast, Lunch, & Dinner included]