



Shalom fellow traveler,

With all your reservations now finalized, and your trip coming up soon, this newsletter is full of some practical tips, advice and answers to some of the frequently asked questions for the upcoming trip. Some of these tips I gave you in Tour Information Newsletter #2, but it never hurts to be reminded!

### ***Do I need a Visa for Israel?***

The only requirement for entry to Israel is a valid passport which must be valid for 6 months beyond the day of arrival in Israel.

Once you arrive in Israel, keep your passport with you at all times as you are required by Israeli law to carry ID. Make sure you bring your passport with you each day whilst on tour.

Keep a photocopy of your passport main page with your travel documents.



### ***Is the food safe in Israel?***

The food in Israel is praised for being safe for consumption, however it is advisable for travelers to stick to tour guides recommended restaurants that are known for preparing quality food. Avoid street food or water that isn't from the bottle.

All of the restaurants and eating places that we will visit on the tour are kosher and safe. Most major places boast safe and drinkable tap water.

Some dishes, such as hummus and falafel may be common to the western palate.

Others such as Shakshuka (a popular breakfast dish) or Kanafeh (a heated pastry with goat cheese) offer new experiences.



## ***What Clothing do I need to pack for Israel?***

As you begin packing, consider what will go in your personal item and what will go in your luggage. Always keep medications and tech gear in your carry-on luggage. If you use a lightweight backpack or shoulder bag as your carry-on luggage, it will also come in handy to carry your sightseeing essentials.

It is difficult to pack light for Israel considering the fluctuation in weather from city to city. Here are a few items that should definitely make it into the suitcase:

- Casual and comfy clothes are the norm. There is no need to pack any formal clothing.
- Suitable clothing for the weather during your tour dates.
- Extra socks and underwear
- Bring a few extra pairs of underwear and socks than you were originally going to pack. The hotels only have a laundry service which you pay for. You can do some rinsing in your own room but you won't have access to a dryer. So, if you wait to do laundry until you are down to one pair of underwear, you are going to have to wait about two days for your clothes to dry.
- Comfortable walking shoes with grip - the stone paved streets can get slippery.
- Aqua shoes or flip flops for going into the Dead Sea and tunnels with water should you choose to go through them.
- A lightweight raincoat or jacket, if there is possibility of rain during your tour dates.

### ***Modest clothing for religious sites***

With some religious sites you will be required to wear modest clothing in order to enter the site. Be sure to pack items that can keep shoulders, head and knees covered. Do your best to be a conscious traveler and ditch items with slogans of any political or belligerent nature.

**For Women** - Something to cover your head and shoulders as well as skirts, dresses, or pants that go below the knees are a must. Scarf, wrap or sarong is helpful to cover up.

**For Men** - You are in need of pants or shorts that cover knees and shirts that cover the shoulders - tank tops are not allowed in many places.

### ***Toiletries***

Bring your favorite toothpaste because you probably won't be able to find the exact same flavor in Israel.

If you don't want to use the hotel shampoo and conditioner then pack your favorite shampoo brand. Brands like Pantene are more expensive in Israel, as are popular face washes.

If you wear contacts, bring enough contact solution to last you for your stay. Apparently, the contact solution in Israel uses different ingredients than name brands in the USA, so if you have sensitive eyes, this could affect you.

## Rain gear for tours between October through to April

Bring a sturdy travel umbrella and a rain jacket or even some disposable ponchos you can carry in your travel backpack. Contrary to what many people think, much of the land of Israel is very blessed by rain. The rain, however, falls in an interesting pattern. Every year, the rains start in late October and then continues until April. This phenomenon is what the Biblical writers are referring to when they mention the early rains (October) and the latter rains (April). The Old Testament prophet Joel said, *"Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the LORD your God: for he hath given you the **former rain** moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the **former rain**, and the **latter rain** in the first month."* (Joel 2:23) In the New Testament, James writes about the rain seasons in reference to patience and timing. He says *"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the **early and latter rain.**"* (James 5:7)

Just as He did centuries ago, God is still ensuring that the land is properly watered. Unlike surrounding countries who could count on huge rivers like the Nile and Euphrates to provide a source of water, Israel had to look up to heaven and relate to God for the blessing of rain. Moses reminded the children of Israel, *"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul, That I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thine oil. And I will send grass in thy fields for thy cattle, that thou mayest eat and be full."* (Deuteronomy 11:13-15)

We will be touring Israel in January which will be in the middle of the 6-month rainy season. We may have nice clear sunny winter days and we might also have some showers along the way. So, be prepared and bring a good travel umbrella and a rain jacket just in case!



Snow in Jerusalem in February

## ***What Health and Safety items should I pack?***

This list is general and may not include all the items you need. If you are a traveler with specific health needs talk to your doctor about which items are most important for you.

- Your regular prescription medicines. Bring enough of your prescription medicine to last the entire stay and also bring a copy of all prescriptions.
- Personal medical and or health essentials.
- Sunscreen - Sunscreen is expensive in Israel. Pack some with you before you come so you can explore the country without getting sunburnt. (SPF 15 or greater) with UVA and UVB protection.
- Sunglasses and hat - wear for additional sun protection. A wide brim hat is preferred.
- Hand sanitizer
- Antiseptic wipes
- Small packet of Tissues
- Band-Aids
- Lip balm
- Mints to aid digestion and upset stomach, plus helps your breath!
- Cold medicine, cough drops, and ibuprofen are all essentials.
- Imodium medication for traveler's diarrhea.

Israel has top rated doctors, pharmacies, and hospitals should you need to take advantage of those services while you're on tour.

## ***Do I Need Vaccines for Israel?***

You should be up to date on routine vaccinations while traveling to any destination. Visit your doctor at least a month before your trip to get vaccines or medicines you may need.

Some vaccines are recommended or required for Israel. The main ones are Hepatitis A and Typhoid.

The World Health Organization recommend the following vaccinations for Israel: hepatitis A, hepatitis B, typhoid, rabies, anthrax, meningitis, polio, measles, mumps and rubella (MMR), Tdap (tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis), chickenpox, shingles, pneumonia and influenza.

It is always best to consult with your doctor.

### ***Covid-19 Vaccination***

All tourists (regardless of whether vaccinated or not), from all countries are able to travel to Israel. Tourists flying to Israel no longer require any testing before or after their flight. Currently tourists are permitted to travel to Israel from all countries. There are no countries on the Red List. Tourists do not need to isolate upon entering Israel.



## What money do I need for Israel?

As you plan for your trip remember that the official currency is the Israeli Shekel but carrying a few US Dollars is a good idea, as some stores and traders will accept US dollars. Also, be sure to notify your bank to let them know you'll be travelling overseas.



## What are some Tech Tips for Israel?

Most people travel with devices large and small, cords of all kinds, and external batteries as a backup for necessary gadgets. Pack all of your chargers and cables in a separate packing cube. It's a good idea to carry your tech gadgets with you in your carry-on luggage. Depending how much you are into technology, here are some things you may need are:

- Power Adapters and Converters - The adapter is Type C or H. For USA travelers - If you have things such as blow dryers, hair straighteners, electric buzzers, etc. a power converter will be necessary in order to use these items. The electrical current in Israel differs from America, you will want a converter that will change the electric current from 110 volts to 220 volts.
- Ear pods or Headphones
- Phone bungee cord - Look after your mobile phone with a phone bungee - it protects against loss, theft and damage.
- Camera and memory cards, cables, chargers.
- Portable charger/battery pack.
- Laptop computer or tablet and chargers.
- Back up external hard drive or portable flash drive
- Extra Charging cord for your phone
- Storage device for photos
- SIM card tool if you plan on changing sims.
- Selfie stick to get those shots above the crowd.
- Flashlight
- Pen - This is the best tech gadget!



## ***How safe is Israel?***

Israel is known for its security measures and takes extra precaution towards visitors both flying in and at its borders. From the time you get off the plane in Tel Aviv to the time you board to head home, you'll see how committed Israel remains to safety. Security on flights bound to and from Israel is far stricter than any flights in the USA.

At the airport, professionals trained to spot any danger ask each passenger a number of questions. They take this very seriously. Officials run background checks on every visitor who is planning on entering country. Something to note is that profiling is common upon entering Israel, so individuals of Arab or Muslim descent, or if one appears to be suspicious in any way, may have to endure longer screenings.

All the places we will be travelling to, such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Tel Aviv are regarded as safe. Tour Companies have your safety as their primary goal. (Yes, even above making a profit.) Why? First, because it's right. But also, because if you get harmed on their watch, their good reputation will never recover. They have as their top priority your comfort and safety throughout your journey. Believe me, it is in the best interest of the travel company that you are safe!

All tours require a licensed Israeli guide. This ensures your safety because the guide does this for a living every day. The guide knows the land, its political issues, and can recognize any potential danger.

Just ask anyone you know who has travelled there whether or not it's safe. You can rest at ease. All the details of travel have been arranged so that you can focus on why you're there - to connect the Bible and its lands to your life.



*God Bless, Kurt (Tour Host)*