

Getting Ready for Your Israel Trip

Luggage:

- Pack all items in bags you are able to move by yourself at least for short distances. Luggage with strong wheels and shoulder straps is ideal. Although your airline might allow more bags, one piece of luggage is allowed on the tour.
- Carry-on bag (Remember to pack non-liquid medicines and a few essentials in your carry-on bag in case of luggage delays).

Check with the airline regarding exact size/weight/contents regulations for carry-on and checked luggage.

Packing Tips:

- Use gallon and quart plastic zipper bags for packing your items in a way that will be easily identified. For example, put all socks in one, all underwear in one etc. It will make it easier for you to keep your suitcase organized throughout the whole trip.
- It is also a good idea to pack any liquids or gels in zip locks to prevent leakage if broken or crushed.
- All liquids, gels, lotions anything over 3 ounces must be packed in checked luggage. Only liquids that are 3 ounces or smaller are allowed in carry on, and they must fit into a quart size clear zipper bag. This means that only travel size cosmetics can be in the carry-on bag.
- Any medications should remain with you at all times in your carry-on or purse.
- It's also advised to put any charger cords you may need in your carry-on as well as any hair styling tools that you must have.
- Pack at least one days change of clothes in your carry on in case your checked luggage should be lost or delayed.
- Make some copies of your passport and place it in your different bags.
- Make a copy of all credit cards, travel health insurance info, and their phone numbers to call and leave it with a good friend or relative at home in the event they are stolen or lost.

Clothes:

- Shoes:* Take at least two pairs of walking shoes. On a tour, it always feels better to alternate shoes between days. Thick-sole, rubber, supportive shoes are best. You might prefer closed or partially protected toe shoes due to the small stones and dust. You will be walking on slick cobblestone and rocky surfaces. There is no need for fancy shoes. If you want to bring something dressier, flats, wedges or chunky heel shoes are best.
- Touring Clothes:* First of all, dress comfortably. We will be doing a lot of walking and climbing on and off buses. Israel is not a fancy society so emphasize comfort over fashion.

In warmer months (May through September) light cotton clothes are best, but remember to bring a sweatshirt or sweater for air-conditioned buses and flights, and evenings in mountain areas like Jerusalem.

In cooler months (November through March) wear layers and make sure to bring a few pairs of warm pants or tights, warm waterproof jackets. A fleece sweatshirt with a zipper is great for winter in Israel. Boots that are waterproof for touring or Shabbat can be very useful.

Transitional months (April and October) can be both hot and cold so bring a few extra items for different types of weather.

A great website for weather at all times of day in all areas of the country:

www.weather-it-is-israel.com

We will be visiting churches, synagogues and offices that require modest dress. They generally define this as clothes that reach below elbows and knees and no low-cut tops. Some do not allow shorts at all (even if they are long). Jewish holy sites such as the Western Wall require head covering for men.

--Bring enough of the basics for all the days of the trip.

--*Shabbat/Meeting clothes:*

You will need 2-3 outfits for Shabbat and events/meetings.

For men: 2 Khaki style dress pants, and 2 button down shirts.

A jacket and tie are optional.

For women: Modest blouse/skirt or dress. Long skirts and sandals are very fashionable in Israel in warmer months.

Equipment:

--**A touring bag is essential:** Bring a comfortable bag/daypack for touring that can hold a large bottle of water, snacks, sweater, notebook, etc. Some find an insulated water bottle carrier to be helpful in warmer months.

--Purse or small pouch/bag to keep valuables, cellphone, etc. close to you.

--**A hat is essential.** Make sure to bring one or two you will enjoy wearing for all touring.

--sunscreen (year round)

--camera

--batteries (220v battery charger)

Supplies:

--Baby powder can be useful in warmer months

--Hand sanitizer, tissues

--Bathing suit – optional (perhaps an old one for trips that go to the Dead Sea)

--Medications you take regularly (or occasionally) including allergy medications, migraine medication, creams, and other over the counter medications. It's easier to bring medications with you that you might need with you rather than trying to buy them while traveling.

--International travel can weaken the immune system and make you susceptible to viruses. If you have an immune system booster you like to take such as

echinacea/propolis/sambucus or vitamin C/Zinc or something else, bring it along. If you don't usually take something, consult your doctor for a recommendation.

Extras (optional):

- Sunglasses
- Extra pair of prescription glasses/contacts
- Travel alarm clock (can use cellphone instead)
- Hairdryer, iron for 220v or with converter
- Two-prong adapter to needed to match round shape of electrical outlets in Israel (needed even for computer adapter that is suitable for 220). They are sold at travel stores.
- Bible, journal, pen, notebook
- Travel sewing kit
- Laundry bag

Valuables:

- It's not recommended to bring large electronics such as full size laptops, but handhelds are good. Internet access is available (sometimes for small fee) in most of our overnight accommodations.
- It's not recommended to bring too many valuables such as Jewelry.

Cellphones:

Although it's possible to arrange to use your cellphone or Blackberry here in Israel. Often, it is expensive for you and other people in Israel (such as group members or trip leaders) may not be able to call you from their phones. We recommend renting a cellphone in Israel. The cost can be minimal, and it can be very helpful if you momentarily lose sight of the group or have a question during your free time. You can also arrange a plan to be able to make calls outside of Israel. Israel Phones will deliver an Israeli cellphone to your home before you leave for the trip. Check out: www.Israelphones.com or call 718-234-4300.

Travel and Health Insurance

For friendly and professional service contact Yonah Engel regarding a no-obligation price quote.
Email: yonah@travelinsuranceisrael.com
USA phone (402) 404-5205 or (402) 403-1053.
Mention promo code: BOWMAN TOURS

Health and Well-Being

Please inform us of any allergies (food or environmental) or physical/emotional health issues that we should know about to ensure the best possible Israel experience for you and the whole group.

Visas and Passports to Israel

If you are a Canadian or US citizen, you do not need a visa to travel to Israel, but a passport valid for at least six months is required. Also, when entering Israel, you will receive an AL-17 form. Save this form until your departure.

Currency and Exchange Rates

The Israeli currency is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS). Each shekel is divided into 100 Agorot. The banknotes are in denominations of 20, 50, 100 and 200 Shekels. Coins are in denominations of 1, 2, 5, and 10 Shekels, and 5, 10, and 50 Agorot. ATMs are widely available in cities and towns and are easily the best way to access funds conveniently. Traveler's checks are NOT widely accepted in Israel, yet if you feel compelled to bring them, you can exchange the traveler's checks (and cash) commission-free at post offices. Foreign currency may be exchanged at any banks and at many hotels. Most banks' operating hours are: Sunday through Thursday from 08:30am - 12:00pm and from 4:00pm - 6:00pm. You will want to bring enough cash in US dollars or in Shekels for the first few days for lunches, snacks, etc.

Good website for checking the currency exchange rate:

<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

For most of our tours, you will need \$10-\$15 a day for lunch in addition to whatever money for gifts etc. you would like to purchase.

Important: Some credit cards charge higher fees than others for use overseas, ask your company what they charge. Also, let your credit card and bank card carriers know that you will be in Israel. Often, if they see unexpected charges outside your country, they will first assume the card has been stolen and deny the charges.