

Biblical and Modern Israel

Day 1: Flight to Israel.

Fly from London. Upon arrival meet our representative and assistance at Ben Gurion airport and transfer to your hotel.

Dinner and overnight: Kibbutz Guesthouse

Day 2: Jezreel Valley – Megiddo/Armageddon - Nazareth Church of the Annunciation – Nazareth Village – Tiberias

This morning we drive north along the coastal plain, passing by Mount Carmel where the prophet Elijah defeated the prophets of Ba'al, and through the biblical Jezreel Valley. One of the most fertile areas in the country, you will see modern agricultural communities, kibbutzim (plural of "kibbutz"), scattered throughout the valley, growing much of Israel's domestic and export produce, just as in ancient times. Then on to explore the site of **Megiddo/Armageddon** and discover why this tel (archaeological mound), which holds 5,000 years of accumulated cities, is viewed as the place for the "cataclysm of the end of days." See the stables and gateway built by King Solomon, and walk through the underground water tunnel built to protect the city from the Assyrian invaders 2,800 years ago. Continue to the modern city of **Nazareth**, vastly larger than the ancient hamlet where Jesus spent his childhood, where we visit the **Church of Annunciation** and also Mary's Well. Then we have **lunch at Nazareth Village**, a unique reconstruction of what first century Nazareth looked like on an actual ancient agricultural site. See real herders with animals, and craftspeople working the land, weaving cloth, processing wheat and cooking as it was done in the time of Jesus. Lunch is literally "home-made" with the same recipes, from the same ingredients and grown on the same land as in antiquity. Enjoy a true biblical meal. Drive through the village of Cana, where the first miracle of turning water into wine at the wedding feast took place. Finally, arrive at the lovely Sea of Galilee, Israel's only fresh water lake and main source of water. Discuss the issues of sharing water among the countries of the region. Drive through **Tiberias**, another city which combines the old and the new, with its modern shops and cafes along its lake promenade.

Dinner and overnight: Kibbutz Guesthouse

Day 3: Sea of Galilee Boat Ride - Capernaum - Golan Heights & Kfar Haruv – Mt. Beatitudes

Breakfast in the hotel. Start the day with a **Boat Ride on the Sea of Galilee** followed by a visit to **Capernaum**, hometown of St Peter and the center of Jesus' Ministry in the Galilee. See the remains of the first century town and the synagogue where Jesus taught, and have an opportunity to consider and discuss the meaning of these teachings. Drive up to the **Golan Heights** (biblical Bashan) and visit **Kfar Haruv**, a modern Jewish community on the Golan, where you will have lunch together with the Kibbutz members in their communal dining room and a magnificent view of the entire Sea of Galilee. This will be followed by a **discussion with a Kibbutz member living on the Golan Heights** of their past experiences, and the current strategic issues facing Israel in this region. This will also be a good orientation on the location of the various holy sites around the lake. See the **Mount of Beatitudes**, where the Sermon on the Mount was delivered, and enjoy the view from here as well. Return to Tiberias.

Dinner and overnight: Kibbutz Guesthouse

Day 4: Beit Shean - Jordan Valley - Qumran - Dead Sea - Camel Ranch and Bedouin Experience

We make an early drive into the beautiful fertile Jordan River Valley to tour **Beit Shean**, from whose walls the Philistines hung the heads of King Saul and his sons, and later the magnificent capital of the Roman Decapolis, destroyed by earthquake in antiquity. Then drive south through the center of the country to the **Dead Sea**, on the border with the Kingdom of Jordan. Learn about the interesting and hopeful relations between the two countries. Along the way pass the modern city of **Jericho** and the **Mount of Temptation**, which you can see from the road. We will tour **Qumran**, the site where the "Dead Sea" scrolls was found. Stop for a "swim" in the salty, mineral rich waters of the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth, located some 400 metres below sea level, and then continue to the **Negev Desert** to Nokdim **Camel Ranch** for a desert experience with camel rides, a Beduin "hafla" (festive) dinner and overnight in large Bedouin tents.

Dinner and overnight Nokdim Camel Ranch.

Day 5: Masada - Jerusalem - Haas Promenade – Southern Wall Excavations - Western Wall - Via Dolorosa - Holy Sepulchre - Map program

After a very early breakfast, we ascend the ramp to **Masada** and walk through palaces built by Herod the Great and site of the last stand of the Jews against the Romans 2,000 years ago. Learn about the meaning of these events for the modern State of Israel, we descend the Plato a cable car or by foot on the "snake" path. We then drive through the Judean desert to Jerusalem and we start our tour of the holy city at the **Haas Promenade** for a spectacular view of the Old City of Jerusalem, and see how it is enveloped by the beautiful modern city. Tour the **Southern Wall Excavations** of the Temple Mount, walking on the stairs where Jesus taught, and seeing the remains of the markets, roads and residences from the time of Jesus. Stop at the **Western (“Wailing”) Wall**, a remnant of the foundation of the Temple built by Herod in the first century BC, the holiest site of Judaism. See the modern rebuilt Jewish Quarter, excavated since 1967, and built directly over the ancient homes of the Jews who served in the Temple 2,000 years ago. Walk along the **Via Dolorosa**, the way Jesus walked on the way to the Crucifixion, culminating in the **Church of the Holy Sepulchre**, traditional site of Jesus’ Crucifixion and Burial.

Evening activity: The Changing Images of the Middle East – Interactive Map Program, on the Changing Map of the Middle East, focusing on the political and demographical issues of yesterday and today. This program is interactive and all participants participate actively.

Dinner and overnight: Ma'ale Hachamisha Jerusalem

Day 6: Old City - Mount Zion - Mount of Olives - Gethsemane -Bethlehem – Church of the Nativity - Garden Tomb - Summation

After breakfast we tour the **Old City** passing the Jewish Quarter and the Roman **Cardo** to the **Mount Zion** to visit the Tomb of King David and the **Room of the Last Supper**. We will ascend the **Mount of Olives** for a wonderful panoramic view of the Old City of Jerusalem with the Temple Mount. Walk through the **Garden of Gethsemane** where Jesus hid from the Roman soldiers, see the ancient olive trees, and visit the Church of All Nations. In the afternoon, visit **Bethlehem**, just south of Jerusalem, and the **Church of the Nativity** with the Birth Grotto. Along the way, see the Shepherds' Fields. To end this amazing day, visit the **Garden Tomb**, a peaceful and beautiful place for meditation and spiritual contemplation. Traditionally, from here Jesus ascended to Heaven. In the evening departure transfer to Ben Gurion Airport and your flight home.

Please note: some outbound flights are overnight flights and the itinerary will be adjusted to include accommodation on Day 6 instead of Day 1 and early morning flight home on Day 7.