



Church of the Resurrection with Shoresh Study Tours **ISRAEL: THE LIFE AND WORLD OF JESUS**

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Touring Practicalities

A Guide for All Participants

Hopefully this rather extensive list will help answer some questions about all the little details involved with touring in Israel. Of course, it is impossible to plan for everything, but a little pre-planning never hurts! *This document was created by Shoresh Study Tours, and now adapted to Church of the Resurrection.

FLIGHTS

Connecting flights to meet the group:

If traveling alone to meet the group for your international flight, you should also be at your first airport very early, preferably three hours ahead of time. Three hours gives you some margin to change your flights in case your original flight is delayed or canceled. This happens frequently. If there is any problem, make it immediately known that you have to get to an international flight to be part of a group. (Please do so graciously. Our experience is that airline personnel respond much better to calm and kind than to anxious and angry.) Please let your agent and tour leaders know if you have a problem.

Another reason we recommend three hours is that it is not unusual to have unexpected traffic delays and other problems on the way to the airport. It is much better to be very early, and then to relax and read than to not have enough time. The reality is that if you miss your connecting flight, you will likely miss your flight to Israel. It is somewhat hard (though not impossible) to catch up to the group if you do not arrive in Israel with the group (or before, if you have made your own flight arrangements.)

Please note: If you have trip insurance, be sure to understand the policy as applies to missing your international flight because you did not leave enough time to connect or are delayed beyond your control; especially as it applies to two separate air tickets as opposed to just one. Don't hesitate to contact your insurance provider with questions or for an explanation.

BAGGAGE:

If you must check a bag, **make sure that your carry-on has enough of everything** you need to get you through a few days, including medicines, eyeglasses, cell phone charger and other hard to replace items.

- Most airlines only allow 2 checked bags at 50 lbs each and one carry on. Check with your specific airline for variations. **However, because of limited space on buses (and depending on group size), it is best if members only bring one bag each.**
- If your group will be traveling on a minibus (ask your Tour Host), please bring only one medium sized suitcase and a small carry on bag due to space limitations.

The “3-1-1” Rule:

Currently the airlines are using a 3-1-1- rule for carry-ons = 3.4 ounce (100ml) bottle or less (by volume); 1 quart-sized, clear, plastic, zip-top bag; 1 bag per passenger placed in screening bin. One-quart bag per person limits the total liquid volume each traveler can bring. Please check with your airline for up-to-date baggage allowances and restrictions.

PASSPORT:

Bring your passport and a photocopy of its main pages (**leaving a photocopy behind with friends or family, and a copy to admin@resbalt.org**). Keep the photocopy in a separate place or give to a fellow passenger to carry. You should store your passport and any other valuables that you do not need on your person for the day in the hotel lobby safe (or room safe, if provided). However, you will always need some form of picture id on your person. ***You may also want to have a scanned copy online, in an email to yourself or in something like Dropbox or iCloud.***

PACKING:

Somehow it seems that no matter how tightly and lightly you pack, as soon as you reach your room, suitcases seem to explode, taking over precious space! (Roommates are not too forgiving about this...)

It is ideal to pack in just one carry-on bag and one personal bag (purse or small bag, briefcase or computer case). If you can do so, then unexpected flight changes will not cause you to worry about where your checked luggage went or how you will find it and luggage will be more easily moved around through the tour. Check with your airline about size requirements for carryon bags, though. Many international airlines have much smaller requirements than US carriers.

It is helpful to purchase packets of Woolite or the equivalent (Bed, Bath and Beyond has them). We strongly recommend using packing folders, etc. to compress clothing. Packing folders are available at some local camping (Black Creek) or travel outfitters or online: www.eaglecreek.com (see Packing Solutions.)

Clothes can easily be hand-washed at night and laundering services are available (see below).

A few guidelines to remember as you pack:

Layers—The weather in Israel can fluctuate from site to site. You may be swimming at the Dead Sea and bundling up against a cold wind at Mt Hermon. Nights in Tiberias can be stifling and nights in Jerusalem can be brisk. Therefore, bring clothes that you can easily layer. You can check Jerusalem weather (usually a bit colder than the rest of Israel) at:

<http://www.02ws.com/station.php?lang=0>.

- **WINTER: December – February** please bring one or two warm sweaters and a coat, as well as an umbrella and a hat as the weather can be windy and rainy.
- **TRANSITIONAL SEASONS: October – November / March – April** please include a mid-weight jacket or warm sweater, as well as an umbrella or rain jacket for sudden short rain showers.
- **SUMMER: May – September** please bring a hat or visor and sunscreen. You will still want a light jacket for evenings in Jerusalem.

Multi-use—Bringing clothes that can double (or triple) purpose is a great way to save space and make your life simpler. (If your tour includes the Dead Sea, you'll also want a bathing suit and some sandals.)

Durable and Simple—Since you will be walking lots and getting in and out of buses often, it is best to have:

- Shoes that are comfortable and durable for walking on rough ground. (If your tour includes Hezekiah's Tunnel, bring durable sport sandals with ankle straps or shoes that can get wet for walking through the water.)
- Clothes that are loose, comfortable, and will not get in your way. (If your tour includes Hezekiah's Tunnel, bring short pants, or long pants that can get wet for walking through the water.)

Casual—Israel is an informal country and it is especially normal for tourists to dress in “touring” wear, i.e. comfort. Shoresh tours are also quite rigorous so you will need clothes you are comfortable walking all day in, with many stairs and even some climbing at times.

PERSONAL ITEMS:

- **It is best to bring those personal items you just can't live without from home. Israel is a modern country, but things that are easily accessible at home, may not be available here at all!!**
- You'll want to bring travel sizes of toiletries
- You may want to bring a face cloth, as many hotels do not provide these
- Do bring insect repellent, as there can be mosquitoes by the Sea of Galilee and some other places.
- Something light and comfortable to wear at night
- Also, make sure to bring a Bible, journal, and camera!

- (If your tour includes Hezekiah's Tunnel, please bring a compact flashlight w/batteries.)

APPROPRIATE DRESS:

- Jeans or trousers are fine for men or women at all times.
- Women, if wearing skirts or shorts, they must be at knee-length or below, except for perhaps one beach outfit. Men also should not wear shorts unless they are knee length or below. More conservative dress is required at some sites (see below).
- Head covers are not required at any of the sites; however, bare shoulders can be an issue. Most women find it easiest to bring a light scarf, even a sheer scarf, to wrap around their shoulders at required locations.
- All national park sites are secular and have no dress requirements.
- At synagogues, churches, and other "holy sites" skirts and pants (including for men) must go below the knee and shoulders must be covered.
- The Old City does not have a "dress code". However, it is best if women dress with relative modesty (as defined above), due to cultural differences and not wanting to draw attention.

LAUNDRY SERVICE:

- Nearly all hotels have laundry services. However, this is only useful if you will be staying at a particular hotel for longer than 2 days. Usually this involves putting dirty laundry in a bag provided by the hotel and giving that to housekeeping, who may then outsource for the service.
- Services in Jerusalem are limited at best, but as most groups stay for a longer period in Jerusalem it is often the most logical place to do laundry. There is a small laundering service available in the Christian Quarter of the Old City that provides delivery and same-day service.
- You may want to purchase packets of Woolite or the equivalent for hand-washing.

SHORESH PROVIDES:

On the first day of your tour you will receive:

- Shoresh baseball cap
- Light drawstring bag
- Reader with informational and amusing articles
- Touring map of Israel w/detailed maps of Jerusalem

PHYSICAL DEMANDS & EXERCISE

Groups consistently underestimate the physical demands of a Shoresh Tour. While not literally hiking every day, Israel is a hilly country and even a day tour in the Old City involves many stairs and lots of climbing.

It is not an exaggeration to say that on some days, our tour groups are walking about 4 miles a day, though this is not continuous – there are rests throughout the day. If you are not accustomed to that much walking, please don't wait till your arrival in Israel to start. Give yourself at least a month's preparation of regular walking, building up to 4 miles (with rests) in one day.

- The sites with the most walking are Caesarea, Masada, Meggido, Dan, and Jerusalem. There are sometimes optional hikes in Ein Gedi and maybe a few other sites, but people can choose to stay either on the bus or at the site's snack shop until the group returns.
- In Jerusalem it is sometimes possible to take individual taxis at your own cost to different sites to meet up with the group if you cannot join them walking.
- For those wanting additional physical exercise, the guide and/or hotel receptionist can recommend good places to walk and/or run in the mornings before breakfast and in the evenings. Your accommodation will generally not have a fitness center, although some might have swimming pools (these are usually not "lap" pools).

***If you have any physical conditions that make sitting or walking difficult, please notify your tour leader as soon as possible.**

****If you have any medical conditions that can flare up and/or require medication(s), please inform your tour leader as soon as possible.**

A TYPICAL DAY:

We want you to have accurate expectations of what a Shoresh Study Tour is actually like on a day-to-day basis. First of all, you will be on a study tour, which means that you will be hearing lots of in-depth teaching at various sites. While there will be some time for reflection and contemplation, your tour will be focused mainly on study.

Typically, the day begins with breakfast at about 07:30. (Some group leaders may elect to have a morning time of prayer before breakfast.) The group will then depart the hotel at about 08:30. From here you will either board your bus/coach, or if the day is in Jerusalem, begin walking.

The morning will be occupied with visiting various sites. If it's a day of travelling by coach, at each site you will get off the bus, have an opportunity to use the restroom, and then walk around the site, standing or sitting at various spots while the guide teaches and explains things. Then you get back on the coach and continue to the next site. Some days in Jerusalem, the pattern is similar, but you will walk between the different sites.

After lunch at a local restaurant or café, you will continue the same pattern of travelling between sites and then touring them and hearing teaching. You will return to your hotel (or arrive at a new hotel) in time for dinner. There may or may not be a speaker or meeting scheduled in the evening.

Most tours have at least one half day or more free for rest, reflection, relaxation and shopping. In general, most tours have at least half of the evenings free. Check your itinerary to see how much free time is allotted for your particular tour.

We want you to understand that while Shoresh tours are not “run-where-Jesus-walked” experiences like some budget pilgrimage programs, but our tours are full and intensive. Occasionally a tour leader will request an itinerary with more time set aside for reflection, prayer, etc., but on the majority of our tours you will be on the go most of the time.

ADJUSTING:

To have a really good trip, it helps to adjust your expectations to the reality of what you will encounter on your tour of Israel. Israel is a modern, developed country, but it is probably different from your home country in some significant ways. All of our Shoresh staff will do our best to help you enjoy this fascinating young nation in the ancient Land of Promise.

Culture:

- Israelis are in general a warm and friendly people who may have a brusque exterior. Native-born Israelis are nicknamed “Sabras”, after a local cactus that is sharp and thorny on the outside but soft and sweet on the inside.
- In Israel people tend to talk louder and be comfortable standing closer to each other than in many western countries.
- You will find that people often don’t queue or stand in line, but rather push ahead. Don’t be surprised if you find yourself doing the same.

Time Changes:

- The time change from the eastern US to Israel is 7 hours and from the UK is 2 hours.
- Here are a few hints to help you acclimate as you jump time zones:
- Drink lots of water
- Eat small food portions, especially while flying
- No caffeine while traveling or immediately before
- Go light on alcohol
- Some travelers find Melatonin, a naturally occurring hormone, widely available where vitamins are sold, to be very helpful in preventing jetlag.
- Finally, upon arrival try to assimilate as much as possible to the local time—go to bed when locals go to bed, wake up when locals wake up. This may mean pushing hard through the first day, but it is well worth it. Your guide will probably take tiredness into account and allow time for short rests along the way.

TOUR EXPECTATIONS:

Tour Leadership:

- Your Shoresh guide will take care of all logistical details and teaching during the day.
- Your Tour Leader(s) will provide pastoral care and spiritual input for the group and individuals, organize any meetings before breakfast or in the evening, and provide assistance with the group's personal needs.
- Shoresh Office Staff will be available in Jerusalem and look forward to meeting you!

Tour Bus:

We have worked with the same bus company for over 18 years. You will be traveling on a comfortable, modern, air conditioned coach with an expert driver.

Tour Guide:

- Our guides are all committed Messianic/Christian believers. They have completed the rigorous two-year Israeli tour guide course, and are licensed by the Israeli government.
- In addition, we have specially trained them to teach Shoresh's Jewish roots perspective.

Schedule:

- Leaving early each morning—most guides like to leave shortly after breakfast. This is for your benefit, so that you may fully experience as much as possible during your short stay in Israel.
- Punctuality—the group can only move as fast as the slowest person. Please make an effort to be on time (or early!) for all engagements. This small consideration will go along way to foster better group unity and preserve the guide's valuable energy!

Bathrooms:

About 95% of the sites in Israel have bathrooms available. If not, the guide will alert the group before going to that site, so people can plan accordingly. Bathrooms vary in their cleanliness. It is always best to have some tissue on hand in case it is not available.

Accommodations:

- Most Shoresh groups stay in 3/3+ star hotels and also guest houses. Accommodation is ordinarily clean, decent, and basic.
- You will find lots of cultural atmosphere in these places but there are usually not appliances like mini-bars, hair dryers, etc. in each room.
- You may want to bring a face cloth, as many hotels do not provide these.

Food:

- Israeli food is a delicious version of Middle Eastern cuisine, with some modern additions.
- Breakfasts at hotels are served buffet style, and will usually include: salads, hard boiled eggs, cheeses, yoghurt, bread, fruit, dry cereals, fruit drinks and tea and coffee (no meat).
- Lunches will usually be sandwiches with a variety of fillings, such as "shwarma" (grilled meat or turkey) or "falafel" (fried garbanzo bean patties), often with hummus (garbanzo bean paste) and salads. Tea, coffee, juices, and other drinks are available. (See below for prices)
- Dinners at hotels are served buffet style, and will usually include: bread, rice, potatoes, and/ or pasta, perhaps soup, and one or more fish, meat or chicken dishes, salad, and dessert.

- You will probably not be able to get to natural food stores easily while on tour, so it is best to bring any special foods you need with you.
- If you have any food allergies or special dietary requirements, please notify your tour host as soon as possible.

Water:

- You will be happier and healthier if you drink lots and lots of water on your tour. You probably will need to drink at least twice the amount of water you are used to drinking at home. For much of the year, Israel is hot and dry, but even in the cooler months it's easy to get dehydrated, which can significantly reduce your health and comfort.
- The tap water is safe to drink everywhere in Israel.
- Bottled water is available everywhere.
- Your bus driver will keep a stock of cold bottled water for sale on the bus.

ELECTRONICS, INTERNET, & PHONE

Cameras: Bring extra batteries and accessories from home as it will be difficult to find them here and you may not have time to take from the rest of the tour to do so.

Electricity:

- Electric power is **around** 230V, 50Hz AC.
- The sockets accommodate standard European plugs (round, with two or three pins).
- If you are bringing electrical appliances please bring your own electrical adapter plug.

Computers/Cell Phones:

- The power supply for your computer (PC or Mac) and your cell phone should work fine – you just need an adapter to fit your plug into an Israeli plug.
- **Check the small print on your power supply to make sure it can handle 220-240 volts.** If your power supply cannot handle 220v, purchase a voltage converter designed for electronics, not just one for appliances such as hairdryers. Some converters can handle both.
- **Hairdryers:** If you are bringing one, we recommend that you purchase a dual voltage hairdryer that can handle 220 volts without needing an additional voltage converter (Brookstone and other travel stores and websites have such hairdryers.) ***Set it to 220 volts before you leave. If you use it the first time in Israel but have left it on 110 volts, it will burnout. This has happened before.*** Most voltage converters do not handle hairdryers well and can burnout. You will still need an adapter plug.

Internet:

- If you bring a laptop computer, most hotels also offer wireless Internet access, but may include a charge. The connection may only be available in a lobby or central area, and not in individual rooms.
- Wireless Internet access is available at Christ Church Guesthouse. Ask at reception for a passcode to access the Internet.
- There are various Internet cafes in Jerusalem. Some hotels will also have computers.

Phone Calls, Texting:

We encourage people to consider the trip a retreat and plan on being relatively out of touch. If you feel you need to rent a phone in Israel, contact the Shoresh Israel office for more details.

Mobile phones from home:

- UK mobile phones usually work well in Israel.
- For Americans: only GSM type phones (most but not all AT&T and T-Mobile models and a few others- check your model with your company) work in Israel.
- To use your cell phone in Israel, check with your cell phone provider in your home country. Carriers usually need to be informed before you leave in order to use the phone internationally. There is no cost to add that service, but phone rates are very high (at least \$2.49 a minute currently). Discount plans are available from some carriers at additional cost.

Texting:

- The time difference makes regular communication back home somewhat difficult, and therefore texting is often more convenient. You can leave a text while people at home are asleep and vice versa.
- Texting is also much less expensive (usually \$.35-\$.50 a text message).
- Check with your cell phone provider in your home country to verify text charges.

Calling cards:

- **DO NOT** use calling cards from your home country – many hotels will not honor them and you will end up being charged for the call.
- You can purchase international calling cards from convenience stores around the country. These enable you to call internationally at very low rates per minute (cheaper the more units of time you buy). Please check with your hotel before using these to make sure that the only charge will be to call the local Israeli access number.

In case of emergency:

Your leaders may or may not have cell phones, however your guide and driver both will and in an emergency will be able to make contact.

MONEY MATTERS:

Money:

The current exchange rate (**as of 1/4/17**) is:

1 USD = 3.85 NIS (New Israeli Shekels)

You can also find the current rate online or on the business page of the Jerusalem Post, copies of which are available in the Christ Church dining area and at most other hotels. Just subtract .02 from the listed rate to get the actual on-the-street or bank machine exchange rate.

- You can often order foreign currency from your home bank. It's good to do this **at least two weeks in advance** of the trip so there is enough time for it to ship to your local bank
- The easiest way to deal with money is to bring a minimum of \$30 cash per person per day, (more if you plan to do much shopping), and keep it in the hotel or bus safe. The guide will show you where to change money.
- **Lunches generally run between 65-110 NIS per person per day.**
- ATMs are available and you can usually withdraw up to 1,000 NIS per transaction – if your card is honored in Israel. Most US cards work here. Please check with your bank before your trip to ensure that your card is recognized throughout Israel. Ask your guide about where to withdraw money.
- Whichever option you choose, it is good to bring and keep about \$100 cash on hand.
- **DO NOT bring traveler's checks. Many places won't accept them anymore and the rate of exchange much worse than you will get from a money changer or from an ATM.**

Shopping:

- Almost every site has a place to shop. However, Shoresh tours are not all-stop shopping trips. The guides plan several times and locations specifically for shopping. It is too time-consuming to shop at each stop; thus, this will be highly discouraged.
- As a general rule, haggling is *only* acceptable in Jerusalem's Old City markets.
- Haggling is *expected* in Jerusalem's Old City markets and you should generally start with a price at least half of what is initially offered.
- **DO NOT** pay with your credit card in Jerusalem's Old City markets. Pay cash only.

VERY IMPORTANT

Credit Card for Medical Emergencies:

Your travel insurance will usually only reimburse you for medical costs after the fact, not pay for them up front. You need to bring a current valid major credit card to use to check in to a hospital in the event of medical emergency.

Meeting God:

Shoresh is at heart a discipleship ministry. Our prayer is that everyone will encounter the Lord Yeshua (Jesus) in a real and meaningful way during their tour.

In the words of one veteran Shoresh tour leader:

“There is one constant on every trip and for every pilgrim: God will meet you somewhere, somehow, in a powerful way. You can plan on it. What you can’t plan on is where or when it will happen. That’s up to Him. The important thing is to be open and available—and unashamed. If you sense that God is trying to move in your life, and tears or fears start to come, resist the temptation to resist, and simply trust that He is in control...”

Spiritual Preparation:

- o Read the scriptures:
- o Reading through the four gospels again would be an excellent idea. If you only have time for one, begin with Luke.
- o For those with time, read the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) will provide excellent background and really enhance your understanding of the New Testament.
- o Find a good Bible atlas and begin to familiarize yourself with important areas and their physical relationship to one another as you read the Bible. *Regions on the Run* from Biblical Backgrounds is a great one. (You can order one at www.bibback.com/purchase)
- o Start praying for your tour group now. Here are some suggestions:
- o That the Holy Spirit would disciple each person in the group.
- o That anyone who does not yet know the Lord Jesus would come to know Him.
- o For God to bless everyone’s packing and preparations – not to forget anything but not to bring anything unnecessary either.
- o The group would bond easily and travel together well.
- o For grace and wisdom for the guide and tour leader(s) as they work together each day to provide the best possible experience for the group.
- o That God would expose where we believe lies, uproot them, and plant His truth in our hearts.
- o For God to open the ears of everyone’s hearts to hear what He is speaking to them, through His word and His Spirit, and to give them grace to obey.

As you continue to prepare for your journey to Israel, please contact your tour leader(s) with any questions. Happy packing!

In Messiah,

The Shoresh Staff