

## 15-DAY CUSTOMIZED TOUR OF ISRAEL

- DAY 1 A travel day. We will fly on Delta leaving Denver at noon. We change planes in JFK for our connecting Delta flight to Tel Aviv. It is a long flight and multiple meals will be served in flight. Try to sleep.
- DAY 2 We arrive in Tel Aviv early in the afternoon. We lose 10 hours in flight. We will be met at the airport and transferred to our kibbutz which is located on the northern shore of the Sea of Galilee for a relaxing meal and overnight. They have a lovely beach and it will be a good place to relax after our long flight.
- DAY 3 After a large Israeli breakfast our introduction to the land of Jesus begins with a visit to the Mount of the Beatitudes. Here we will read portions of the Sermon on the Mount as we begin to explore the deeper meanings of the life of the Messiah. (Matthew 5-7) We will then visit Caesarea Philippi where Peter gave his great confession of faith in the shadow of a heathen worship center. (Matthew 16:13). We also have the opportunity to visit Banyas Falls. A visit to Dan, a trip through the Golan Heights and to the ruins of Chorazin (Luke 10:13) will fill the rest of our first day. We return to our hotel for dinner and overnight.
- DAY 4 After our full breakfast, this morning we start out with a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee and remember all the activities of Jesus ministry which took place here. Among the stops scheduled for the day are visits to Capernaum, Tabgha where Jesus fed the 5000 (Matthew 14:15), the country of the Gadaranes on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (Mark 5) and the Church of Peters Primacy (John 21). We also will visit the Ancient Boat Museum. A two thousand year old boat rescued from the mud of the Sea of Galilee is on display. We end the day at the Jordan River where we have the opportunity to remember our own baptisms. This evening after dinner we will drive into Tiberius to visit the town along the shore of the Sea of Galilee. There is an excellent establishment run by some Messianic Jewish people which show a multi-media presentation called the Galilee Experience. This is an optional event, but I have seen it several times and recommend it. Overnight at the kibbutz.
- DAY 5 After breakfast today we head north east. A trip to the Nazareth Village will bring to life a farm and Galilean village of 2000 years ago. We will also visit the churches in Nazareth itself. Our next stop will be Sepphoris, the "big city" of Jesus' youth. Then we take the highway all the way to the Mediterranean Sea where we visit Mount Carmel and remember all the Elijah stories followed by our trip to the ruins of Caesarea. Caesarea is an active archeological dig site and every time I go they have uncovered more of the past. Back to Tiberius for our last overnight there.
- DAY 6 This morning we say goodbye to the Galilee. Our first visit will give us a chance to see all of the Jezereel Valley as we visit the tel of Megiddo. Twenty layers of cities are evident at this site revealing evidence of a fortified Canaanite city from approximately 3000 BC in addition to the walls built by Solomon around 975 BC. The good king Josiah met his death here in 609 BC at the hands of the Egyptians. Traditionally this will also be the site of the final battle of Armageddon or Ah Megiddo. Our next visit will be to the fabulous ruins of Beth Shean. Here you can see the ruins of the large Greco-Roman city and also climb the tel to see the ruins of the old Canaanite city where the body of Saul was hung on the walls. 1 Samuel 21:10. Heading south we will visit the excavations of the ancient city of Jericho where the Israelite army captured the town under Joshua. After this we visit Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947. Many people believe the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls was the greatest historical discovery of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Late in the afternoon we will reach our hotel beside the Dead Sea.
- DAY 7 After our last few busy days today we get to sleep in and maybe take another morning swim in the Dead Sea. Our only sightseeing today will be a trip to the fortress of Masada built by Herod the Great (the baby killer). This is the location made famous by the final resistance of the 960 Zealots against the Romans in 73 AD that resulted in the defenders committing suicide rather than be captured by the Romans. Today Israeli soldiers take their oath of office on Masada saying "Masada will not fall again." We then head out for the drive to the resort town of Eilat on the northern tip of the Gulf of Aqaba which is part of the Red Sea. We will have time to check out the local night life after we check into our hotel.
- DAY 8 Today we cross the border into Jordan. After clearing customs we will drive for approximately 2 hours to reach the World Heritage Site that has been declared one of the new 7 wonders of the world. Petra, which means "cleft in the rock", was largely built by the Nabateans around 100 BC as a center for the caravan trade. To the south is Jabal Harun or Aaron's Mountain. Local tradition says this is the site of the burial of the brother of Moses before the Israelites entered Canaan. Petra was a popular burial ground with tombs of the Nabateans dating back to at least 400 BC and much evidence of later Greek and Roman tombs. After 200 AD the city became mainly a religious center and you will find evidence of the gods and goddesses worshiped there. There was a Christian presence there starting around 450 AD and that lasted until the Muslim military conquest around 630 AD. According to Arab tradition Petra is the place where Moses struck the rock to provide water for the Israelites when they were wandering in the desert. At the end of the day we return to our hotel in Eilat for overnight.

- DAY 9 Today we drive from Eilat to Jerusalem. One of our stops will be at the Ramon crater. This site in the Ramon Nature Reserve is a crater approximately 24 miles long, up to 6 miles wide in some areas and about 150 feet deep. It is surrounded by the Negev Mountains and is an area of Israel most foreign tourists never see. We will also visit the Valley of Elah where David killed Goliath. Good spot to replenish your stone supply. We also visit the Bet Guvrin Caves and the ancient town of Beersheba. The name of this town means "well of the oath." Check out Genesis 21:31. This is the area inhabited by Abraham and Isaac. Late in the afternoon we check into the Ramat Rachel which will be our home for the rest of our stay in Israel.
- DAY 10 After a huge Israeli breakfast this morning we drive up to the Mount of Olives with the magnificent view of the city. The church of Pater Noster (Latin for "our father," the opening to the Lord's Prayer) may be the location of the Ascension of Jesus. From the Mount of Olives we will walk down the Palm Sunday Road to the Garden of Gethsemane and the Church of All Nations then continue to Mount Zion and visit King David's Tomb and the Upper Room. In the afternoon we will visit the Church of the Nativity and the Shepherd's Field in Bethlehem including a stop at an olive wood factory. We return to the kibbutz for dinner and overnight.
- DAY 11 We start with a walking tour of the Old City. We will visit the Western Wall, continue up to the Temple Mount to the Dome of the Rock. We also will visit the pools of Bethesda and then walk along the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. There are multiple stops, many having to do with the Easter story. Take a notebook, otherwise you will not be able to remember them all. We will have some free time for shopping at the bazaars of the Old City. Dinner and overnight at the kibbutz.
- DAY 12 Today will be both fun and somber. Be sure to take your walking shoes and your water shoes. We will visit the ancient city of David—that area of Jerusalem that was inhabited by David around 1000 BC. We will see the Gihon Spring, the Stepped Stone Structure and the ruins of a four-room Israelite house. Then it is off to walk in water up to our knees single file thru Hezekiah's Tunnel. (Read Hezekiah's story in 2 Kings 18 thru 21 and 2 Chronicles 29 through 32). We will visit the church of St. Peter in Gallicantu (gallicantu means cock crow) where Jesus spent the night before his crucifixion. The haunting Holocaust Museum will be our last stop of the day. You will never forget this, especially the children's section.
- DAY 13 This morning after breakfast we will have some free time and then late in the morning our bus will pick us up for our visit to Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha and the tomb where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. From there we will go to the Israeli Museum. This is the location of the Shrine of the Book where the Dead Sea Scrolls are displayed and also the model city built to scale of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus. We will then have the opportunity to attend a Shabbat service with Jewish believers in Jesus at Christ Church just inside the Joppa gate. They have earphones for translation into English. Back to the kibbutz for dinner and overnight.
- DAY 14 This morning is Sunday. After our own services you will have a free day in Jerusalem. Sunday is a working day in Israel so you can choose between shopping, visiting the Wohl Archeological Museum with its burnt house from the 70 AD Roman destruction of the city, a visit to the Tower of David Museum that tells the history of the city or the Bible Lands Museum that traces the travels of people in the land. The Ramat Rachel has a very large pool and is also the site of an active archeological dig that they believe may have uncovered the ruins of Hezekiah's palace. Perhaps you would like to join volunteers working at an archeological site on Mt. Scopus for a couple of hours.
- DAY 15 Our last morning in Israel you might want to sleep in. Time to get the packing done. The bus will pick us and our luggage up around noon and we will go for lunch and then to the Garden Tomb where we will have a communion service. The balance of the day will be spent exploring Jaffa (the ancient Joppa) and Tel Aviv. After Dinner on Doron in Tel Aviv we will be transported to the airport to check in for our flight home. Our flight leaves at 11:30 PM for Atlanta, but check in can take several hours.
- DAY 16 Arrive home. Your Bible reading will never be the same again!