

## TRAVEL INFORMATION ON ISRAEL & JORDAN

To help prepare for your tour, we offer the following information. We hope that you will review it carefully.

### Time zone:

Israel & Jordan are Two hours ahead of GMT (Greenwich Mean Time) during winter, and three hours ahead during summer, from May 1<sup>st</sup> till October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### Climate:

Israel's summer period (from April to October) is long, warm, and virtually without rain. During these months, some of the most pleasant holiday areas are along the sea.

Additionally, the hill towns of Jerusalem and Upper Galilee offer weather that is somewhat cooler and drier.

The winter season (from late November to March) is characterized by cool temperatures and long periods of sunshine interspersed with short periods of rain. During these months, Tiberias (on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee), the western shore of the Dead Sea, and Eilat (on the Gulf of Aqaba) have generally warm and sunny weather.

Jerusalem is situated at 700m altitude. The winters are cold and rainy with snowfalls once or twice a year. By contrast summers are dry and warm, with low humidity and temperatures averaging around 29 °C or 80 °F, making for pleasant bright days. During autumn and spring a hot desert winds 50 C°. Evenings may be cool even in the summer; a jacket or jumper is handy.

Local average daytime temperatures range as follows for the year (°C):

City		Jan.	Feb.	March	April	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
Jerusalem	C	6-11	7-14	8-16	12-21	15-25	17-27	19-29	19-29	18-28	16-26	12-19	8-14
	F	43-53	44-57	47-61	53-69	60-77	63-81	66-84	66-86	65-82	60-78	54-67	47-56
Tel Aviv	C	9-18	9-19	10-20	12-22	17-25	19-28	21-30	22-30	20-31	15-28	12-25	9-19
	F	49-65	48-66	51-69	54-72	63-77	67-83	70-86	72-86	69-89	59-83	54-76	47-66
Haifa	C	8-17	9-18	2-21	13-26	15-25	18-28	20-30	21-30	20-30	16-27	13-23	9-18
	F	49-63	47-64	47-70	55-78	58-76	64-82	68-86	70-86	68-85	60-8	56-74	48-65
Tiberias	C	9-18	9-20	11-22	13-27	17-32	20-35	23-37	24-37	22-35	19-32	15-26	11-20
	F	48-65	49-67	51-72	56-80	62-89	68-95	73-98	75-99	71-95	65-89	59-78	53-68
Eilat	C	10-21	11-23	13-26	17-31	21-35	24-37	25-40	26-40	24-36	20-33	16-28	11-23
	F	49-70	51-73	56-79	63-87	69-95	75-99	77-103	79-104	75-98	69-92	61-83	51-74
Dead Sea	C	11-20	13-22	16-25	20-29	24-34	27-37	28-39	29-38	27-36	24-32	18-27	13-21
	F	53-68	56-72	61-78	68-85	75-93	80-99	83-102	83-101	81-96	75-90	65-80	56-71

Jordan has a hot, dry climate characterized by long, hot, dry summers and short, cool winters. The climate is influenced by Jordan's location between the subtropical aridity of the Arabian desert areas and the subtropical humidity of the eastern Mediterranean area. January is the coldest month, with temperatures from 5°C to 10°C, and August is the hottest month at 20°C to 35°C. Daily temperatures can be very hot, especially in the summer; on some days it can be 40°C or more, especially when the Shirocco, a hot, dry southerly wind blows. These winds can sometimes be very strong and can cause Sandstorms.

### **CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES**

Conservative clothing is a good idea out of respect to the culture, particularly if you want to visit any religious sites. Women should have clothing that covers their shoulders and reaches their ankles. Men should wear trousers and cover their shoulders.

In the summer, clothing of lightweight fabric (such as cotton) is most appropriate, including slacks and open-neck shirts for men and daytime dresses, slacks, and blouses for women. Ladies may want to include a “smartly casual” dress for special occasions. Few men wear jackets and ties in the summer, except for business and other more formal occasions. It is suggested that you also pack a sweater or lightweight jacket for cooler evenings.

In the winter, you will need warmer clothing, including an overcoat, sweater, raincoat, and hat. Men will want to include a jacket and tie; and ladies will want to include a more formal, smartly casual” dress.

You will also want to pack sunglasses, a lightweight (fold-up) sun hat with brim, and sun block. A swimsuit and beachwear will be appropriate for coastal areas.

A pair of comfortable, soft-soled walking shoes are suggested for touring (even in the summer months when sandals and open shoes are acceptable.)

If you wear prescription glasses or contact lenses, we recommend that you bring an extra pair of glasses (as well as a copy of the prescription).

You should carry along an adequate supply of any prescribed medications you may require while traveling. Prescription medicines should always be carried in your hand luggage (not in checked baggage) in their original, labeled containers only.

## **LAUNDRY**

Laundry service is usually available at larger hotels in Israel. However, remember to check the hotel's individual laundry return policy and pricing schedule before choosing to have laundry done at a hotel.

It is also suggested that you request laundry service only when you have a sufficient length of stay remaining to ensure that your laundry is to you before depart.

## **CURRENCY**

In Jerusalem the unit of currency is New Israeli Shekel (NIS), which is divided into 100 AGOROT. Notes are issued in denominations of 20, 50, 100 and 200 NIS. Coins are issued in denominations of 1 AGORA, 5, 10, and 50 AGOROT, 1, 2, 5 and 10 NIS. Exchange rates are regulated and are the same at all banks.

For updated rate of exchange please check the below website  
<http://www.xe.com/ucc/>

We suggest that you exchange money only at authorized facilities (such as banks, hotel desks and authorized money changers at the center of towns). Generally, you should limit the amount of money you convert into local currencies and exchange only what you think you will spend before leaving any foreign country. Be aware that only paper currency will normally be accepted for exchange.

Travelers' checks and major credit cards are widely accepted.

The currency in Jordan is the Jordanian Dinar (JD) - known as the jay-dee, which is made up of 1000 fils. You will sometimes hear piastre or girsh, which are both 10 fils (10 qirsh equals 100 fils). Often when a price is quoted the unit will be omitted, so if you're told that something is 25, it's a matter of working out whether it's 25 fils, 25 piastre or 25 dinars!

Coins are 10, 25, 50, 100, 250 and 500 fils. Notes come in denominations of JD1, 5, 10, 20 and 50. Try to change larger notes as often as possible at larger restaurants and when paying your hotel bill. Changing money is very easy in Jordan, and most major currencies are accepted in cash and travellers cheques. US dollars are the most accepted, followed by UK pounds and euros.

It is possible to survive in Jordan almost entirely on cash advances, and ATMs abound in all but the smaller towns. Visa is the most widely accepted card for cash advances and using ATMs, followed by MasterCard. Other cards, such as Cirrus and Plus, are also accepted by many ATMs (eg Jordan National Bank and HSBC).

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## **Photography**

: We recommend that you bring all the photographic equipment you will need from home, including additional camera batteries. It is also suggested that you check the working order of your camera and have your equipment insured before you depart.

When photographing people, always ask permission first. The only exception to this is when you are photographing a public scene with a lot of people in it, aiming at no one in particular. Always be considerate of anyone's desire not to be photographed. There are some places where photography is prohibited, and these areas are usually clearly marked.

Do not take photographs of military installations or airports. If you are uncertain about whether or not photography is permitted, ask. Taking photographs when permission is not granted is inconsiderate at best and may result in the confiscation of your camera.

## **ELECTRICITY**

In Israel AND Jordan, electricity runs 220/240 volts. If you do bring electrical appliances, take along international converter kit complete with a set of adapter plugs. These are available from better electrical and hardware stores in your country.

## **FOOD AND DRINK**

In the Holy Land you may enjoy international as well as Arabic and Israeli Food. The "Israeli cuisine" is really a blending of many cultural flavors and varieties, predominantly those of the Middle East and Mediterranean. Also, the Palestinian Cuisine provides you with the real traditional Arabic and Middle Eastern cuisine.

"Kosher" refers to food that is eaten and prepared according to Jewish dietary law. Pork, which is prohibited under both Jewish and Muslim law, is generally not available in Israel. Shellfish, which is prohibited under Jewish law, is permitted under Muslim law and is generally available.

There is a wide variety of Jordanian food to sample whilst visiting, from Mansaf (lamb and rice) to Mezze (mix of salads).

Market stalls in Israel and Jordan are full of fresh produce that literally arrives within hours of having been picked. A wide variety of foods and vegetables at reasonable prices can be found at the local markets and supermarkets. Although fruits and vegetables are considered safe to eat, remember to wash all produce bought in open-air markets before eating.

Although some of the locals drink the tap water, it is generally recommended to drink bottled water. It is all right to shower and brush your teeth using tap water.

## **GRATUITIES**

Many Travelers view tipping as a difficult subject, though this need not be the case.

The first thing to remember is that tipping is not compulsory, nor are there any fixed amounts. The bottom line in determining whether and how much to tip is to ask yourself how much the individual did to make your travels more enjoyable. It is with this in mind that we offer the following information.

Gratuities for guides and drivers are not included in the price of your tour so we offer the following tipping guidelines.

Recommended tipping schedule for small groups or Individual Travelers:

### **In Israel:**

Guide: \$25-\$35 per person per day

Driver: \$20-\$25 per person per day

### **In Jordan:**

Guide: \$15-\$25 per person per day.

Driver: \$10-\$20 per person per day.

It is acceptable to tip in either US currency or the countries' currency, and it is customary to present gratuities in envelopes.

Tips are usually awarded on the last day spent with the staff member.

Members of small parties may wish to increase their individual contributions slightly.

These tipping guidelines are suggestions only and decisions involving tipping rest entirely with you.

## **VALUABLES, SAFETY, AND TRAVEL INSURANCE**

Exercise the same safety precautions throughout your travels as you would at home.

Be especially careful with your passport; and memorize its number, date of issue, and place of issue. It is also a great idea to carry a photocopy of the informational pages of your passport (the pages containing your photograph and passport details, as well as any amendment pages and visas) and to leave

a copy at home. Follow the security measures included with your travelers' checks, and also leave an additional record of their numbers at home.

Please do not pack valuable items (such as your camera) in checked baggage.

We recommend that all travelers purchase adequate trip cancellation/interruption, medical, and baggage insurance and that they carry the details of their coverage with on tour.

## **COMMUNICATION**

To assist you in the event you must be reached while traveling, a complete listing of hotel contact information will be provided with your final tour materials. Please be advised that some hotels impose a surcharge that can more than double the cost of international calls. Be sure to check the hotel policy before placing an international call from a hotel.

## **LANGUAGE**

Hebrew and Arabic are both official languages in Israel. Arabic is the official language of the Palestinian Authority. English is common and widely spoken.

Arabic is the official language of Jordan, but in most tourist places people understand and speak some English.

## **TRAVEL CONDITIONS**

As stated in the section on CLOTHING AND ACCESSORIES, Israel is a very informal country in both dress code and attitude. Travelers may notice, for examples, that guides, hotel staff, and drivers are more casually dressed and assume a more familiar posture with visitors than tourism personnel encountered in other Middle Eastern countries. We are sure, however, that you will find yourself well served during your stay in Israel, for the Israeli and the Palestinian people are friendly and eager to share unique lifestyle with visitors from overseas.

Also keep in mind that, because of the many religious holidays that are celebrated and the periodic congestion at some sites in Israel, itinerary alterations may be made during your tour. We ask for your understanding should schedule adjustments be necessary.

## **SMOKING**

We ask that you refrain from smoking while in sightseeing vehicles and at any group meals during your tour.

**TAXIS AND SHERUT:** All city taxis have meters. By law, meters must be used. Between cities, taxi prices are fixed. Shared (Sherut in Hebrew) taxis or vans are available between major cities and along certain urban routes, and prices per passenger are fixed.

For taxis, tipping is not customary in Israel; but a small tip is greatly appreciated. Generally, tipping is also required in restaurant when a service charge is included in the bill; but at first-class establishments, it is customary to tip at least 10% of the net bill in addition to the included service charge.