

ISRAEL: THE HOLY LAND



TRIP OVERVIEW

Biblical sites lie next to ancient synagogues and the sacred Islamic Dome of the Rock in Israel, a country where the most spiritually significant sites of Judaism, Islam and Christianity converge. Take in the most sacred of these areas and structures as you visit the Virgin Mary's home in Nazareth, cross the waters of the Sea of Galilee, ascend the Mount of Beatitudes and travel the path Christ took to his crucifixion on this riveting eight-day tour.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information that you require for a smooth and comfortable trip to Israel. Please take the time to read this dossier to familiarise yourself with all the aspects of our tour. It includes important information such as flight details, visa requirements and travel insurance.

Your included meal guide:

B = Breakfast, L = Lunch, D = Dinner

DAY 1: UK to Tel Aviv

Depart London on your scheduled flight to Tel Aviv, located on Israel's glittering Mediterranean coastline. On arrival, you will be met and transferred to your hotel.

DAY 2: Tel Aviv to Galilee B/D

Embark on a morning tour of Israel's second city Tel Aviv, home to the unique Bauhaus-style buildings of its UNESCO-listed White City and glorious stretches of beach. Reflecting Israel's long and rich past, the city is also dotted with numerous historical sites and a visit to Jaffa, located on the outskirts of the city, allows you to explore this centuries-old city which has been conquered and re-conquered countless times throughout its history. Wander the cobbled alleyways of the area, taking in the historic port which has been in continuous use for over 4,000 years. Travel north to Caesarea to explore the harbour ruins and pillared amphitheatre of this ancient beachfront archaeological site. Next, journey to the UNESCO-listed walled city of Akko (also known as Acre) teeming with fortifications, underground crypts and Ottoman-era structures. Join Marco Polo, the knights of the Secret Order of the Templars and the Crusaders, who have all passed through the walls of this city, as you explore its landmarks before you make your way to your hotel in Galilee.

DAY 3: Galilee B/D

A morning tour of a local kibbutz gives you a chance to witness this unique, communal style of living and learn more about the values of social equality and shared ownership that underpin these communities. Travel onward to the Sea of Galilee, home to some of Christianity and Judaism's most important sites; the area around this lake also offers rolling hills, valleys and quaint, small towns. Enjoy a full day exploring the biblical sites of this region, set against this picturesque backdrop. Sail the Sea of Galilee as you cross these waters by boat to the ruins of the former fishing village of Capernaum, once home to the apostles Simon, Peter, Andrew, James and John. Continue onward to the secluded site of the feeding of the 5,000 before visiting the Mount of the Beatitudes, where Christ gave his Sermon on the Mount. Today, the site is a tranquil garden with a Byzantine church featuring stained glass depictions of the eight beatitudes and sweeping views over the lake and countryside.

DAY 4: Galilee to Jerusalem B/D

After breakfast, depart Galilee for Jerusalem, stopping en route in Nazareth where you can wander the cavernous interior of the Church of Annunciation, believed to be the home of the Virgin Mary. Continue north to the extensive archaeological ruins of Bet Shean, best known as the site where King Saul was killed by the Philistines. Explore the fascinating excavations peppered throughout the area, which include amphitheatres, bathing houses and pagan temples. Continue on

to Jerusalem, passing through the fertile plains of the Jordan Valley, dotted with palm-filled date farms, before checking into your hotel in time for your first dinner in Israel's age-old city.

DAY 5: Jerusalem B/D

Explore Jerusalem's recent and ancient history on today's full-day city tour. The morning starts with a moving visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum where you will gain insight into the grim experiences of the Jewish people during World War 2. The nine galleries of the museum display photographs, films, documents, letters, works of art, and personal items found in the camps and ghettos of Nazi Germany. After this poignant experience, visit the seat of the Israeli government at the Knesset before stopping in at the Israel Museum, home to almost 500,000 objects and artefacts. Witness the aged parchment of the Dead Sea Scrolls, which contain the oldest known biblical manuscripts, and marvel at the amazing reconstruction of Jerusalem as it was before its destruction by the Romans in 66CE. Next, wander the stall-lined alleyways in a spice-scented souk before walking through the sacred hallways of the UNESCO-recognised Church of Nativity in Bethlehem, where it is believed Christ was born.

DAY 6: Jerusalem B/D

Churches, mosques and synagogues lie side by side in Jerusalem, a site of spiritual significance for three of the world's major religions. On today's tour, follow the path Jesus took to his crucifixion as you walk the Via Dolorosa, a winding street that leads to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. A visit to this church gives you access to two of Christianity's holiest sites - the hill of crucifixion and the tomb where Christ was buried and resurrected. Journey through Kidron Valley, along the route of Jesus' flight to the Mount of Olives, as you make your way to the centuries-old religious monuments of Temple Mount, including the gleaming, golden Dome of the Rock - an Islamic shrine and important pilgrimage site. Continue onward and join the pilgrims fervently praying at the Wailing (or Western) Wall before visiting the Antonia Fortress where Jesus was tried for his crimes.

DAY 7: Jerusalem B/D

Enjoy today at leisure, with the chance to explore Jerusalem at your own pace. Those wishing to delve further into the city's history might wish to take in the gnarled olive trees and colourful church of the Garden of Gethsemane or examine 6,000 years of artefacts on exhibit at the Bible Lands Museum. For those wanting a less history-focused experience, a walk down Ben-Yehuda Street gives you access to the city's best shopping and cafés and the chance to enjoy creamy hummus or fragrant falafel in one of its eateries. Alternatively, take an optional excursion (at a fee) to the Dead Sea for the chance to float on its salt-filled waters, then explore the caves at Qumran where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered and visit the imposing natural rock fortress at Masada, the site of the battle between the Jewish people and their Roman occupiers.

DAY 8: Jerusalem to the UK B

After breakfast, depart Jerusalem for Tel Aviv where you'll board your return flight to the UK, or continue on to your chosen extension.

ACCOMMODATION DETAILS & MAP

Accommodation

Your accommodation is selected for convenience, location, comfort or character, and can range from business hotels to boutique hotels. Hotel accommodation is generally rated as local three to four-star standard, but please note there is no international classification system for hotels, and differences in facilities and quality do exist between the UK and Israel. All group tours hotels have private bathroom facilities and air-conditioning, where needed.

Please note some hotels in Israel do not have official star ratings, rest assured that all accommodation used by Mercury Holidays is regularly inspected by our staff and partners to ensure that standards meet your needs.

Please note: final confirmation of your accommodation will be sent in a document, along with your final flight information, approximately 10 days before you travel.

Meals

Breakfast is always western style and served in the hotel each morning. Dinner (when included) will be taken in local restaurants or at the hotel. A variety of restaurants are visited giving you the chance to experience a range of dishes and flavours.

ON YOUR ARRIVAL

On your arrival in Tel Aviv you will be met by a representative from our local agent, **Isram Israel**, holding a sign displaying: "Mercury Holidays". The Mercury Holidays/Isram Israel rep-representative will show you to your transfer vehicle. Your guide will be able to answer any queries. However, if you need to contact Isram Israel during your stay the details are:

Isram Israel (Touring) Ltd

40 Aliyat Hanoar St.
Tel Aviv 67450
Israel
Telephone: 00972 3 6947777
E-mail: info@isram.co.i



WHAT YOU NEED FOR YOUR TOUR

Visas

A visa is not required for entry into Israel as a tourist. On entry, visitors are granted leave to enter for a period of up to 3 months. Visitors entering via Ben Gurion airport are given an entry card instead of an entry stamp in their passport. While this practice is in place at other ports of entry, there have been instances where passports have been stamped for entry purposes. You should keep your entry card with your passport until you leave. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the date of entry into Israel. Visa requirements are subject to change and obtaining a visa is the responsibility of the traveller and not Mercury Holidays. We recommend you check with your destination's tourist board or embassy prior to departure for the most up to date guidelines regarding visas and passport validity.

Insurance

We strongly recommend that you and all members of your party are suitably insured as soon as you book your holiday. It is a condition of booking that you must have suitable travel insurance. It is important that you purchase travel insurance that suitably covers your participation in whatever activities you may undertake at the time that you make your booking. To assist you with this, we have arranged travel insurance in partnership with Holiday Extras. To arrange your travel insurance with Holiday Extras, please call **0800 781 4237** and quote 'WK830' for preferential rates. Please ensure you provide us with the name of your insurer, policy number and their 24 hour emergency contact number as soon as possible. Mercury Holidays will not be liable for any costs incurred by you due to your failure to take out suitable travel insurance from the date of booking.

Health and Vaccinations

It is your responsibility to check any health & vaccination requirements applicable to your booked arrangements. We can only provide general information about this. Health and hygiene facilities and disease risks vary from country to country. You should take health advice about your own needs as early as possible and in sufficient time before your departure. Sources of information include: www.fco.gov.uk, www.travelhealthpro.org.uk, www.hpa.org.uk, your General Practitioner or a specialist clinic.

Physical Accessibility

This tour is accessible to most people with a good level of fitness and normal mobility. It involves climbing of steep stairs and getting on and off coaches. This tour is not suitable for anyone with walking difficulties. All our tours feature a "Tour Pace" to help find the right holiday for you. To travel on any of our tours requires unaided mobility and the ability to stroll around the sights, climb stairs and get on

Emergency contact information

Please find below the emergency contact details for Isram Israel 24-hour mobile phone number:
Telephone: 00972-52-588-8760

and off coaches and boats. Our tour paces are marked with dots out of 3, with the differences being as follows:

- 1 Dot the tour is Easy-Going
- 2 Dots the tour is Intermediate
- 3 Dots the tour is Advanced

Israel: The Holy Land is rated as 2 Dots meaning that the tour pace is Intermediate. A good level of fitness is required as you may be on your feet for approximately four hours in a day, though this will be interspersed with regular breaks and will vary from day to day. You will be walking around the sights, and may be getting on and off coaches, trains and boats and climbing steps which may be irregular. You will stay in variety of hotels throughout the tour. Our guides will always endeavour to provide the highest level of service and assistance; however, they cannot be expected to cater for customers who are unfit to complete the itinerary.

Tour Guides

This is a fully escorted tour, meaning that you will be met on arrival by your national guide who will remain with you for the duration of your trip. You will also be joined by a local guide in each of the cities which you visit, ensuring that you have first-hand knowledge at all times.

Tipping

Tipping is at your discretion; however, we would recommend approximately USD\$10-\$13 per person per day. Any accompanying guides we suggest approx. \$6-\$8 per person per day and for the driver we suggest approx. \$3-\$4 per person per day. All tips will be collected by your guide at the beginning of your tour for your convenience. Tips are accepted in the local currency, however it is asked that if you do not tip in the local currency that you only pay with notes, as coins cannot be exchanged.

Group Size

The minimum number of travellers in your group will be 15, and the maximum will be 35. If in the unlikely event there are less than 15 people booked on your tour date, we will endeavour to reduce any disruption to your holiday and try to operate your tour with lower passenger numbers. If we are not able to operate your departure date, then you may be asked to change to a different date and a full refund will be made available to you should this alternative not be suitable.

Currency Exchange

The currency in Israel is the Israel Shekel. Currencies such as Pound Sterling, US Dollars, Euro and other major currencies can be exchanged in Israel. ATMs

and exchange facilities are available. We advise that you request bank notes in smaller denominations, as it can sometimes be hard to get change from large notes and smaller notes are handy for smaller purchases. We recommend that you exchange your currency before you leave the UK. It is important that you budget carefully and ensure you have the right form of currency before you arrive in the country. Cash machines will also be available throughout the tour in order to withdraw money in your local currency.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, any meals not included in the itinerary as well as drinks and any additional snacks. Approximately £400 per person will be sufficient for the duration of the tour. It is a good idea to try and maintain a supply of small notes and change in the local currency for tipping or small purchases.

WHAT TO PACK

- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Comfortable walking shoes
- Waterproof lightweight jacket
- Sunglasses and hat
- Ruck sack
- Camera and charger
- Loo paper for public WCs
- Binoculars

Credit Card Information

As normal practice you will be asked for your credit card details on check-in at the hotel in order to cover any extras incurred during your stay. If you do not have a credit card you may be asked for a cash deposit. American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are widely accepted in hotels.

Itinerary Changes

The order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions or for operational purposes. Your local guide will inform you of any schedule changes as they are informed of them. Some road construction and/or weather conditions may lengthen the driving times. Our intention is to adhere to the day-to-day itinerary as printed; however, order of events and sightseeing may vary according to local conditions.

- Swimwear
- Anti-bacterial hand sanitiser
- Personal toiletries and first aid kit containing travel pills, rehydration powder, plasters, stomach settlers, antiseptic creams, aspirin etc
- A travel plug adaptor: The voltage in Israel is 220 V. You will need a 2-round pin plug or 2-flat pin plug adapter. Should you plan to use your own hairdryer, travel iron, video camera, battery charger, electric shaver, etc, it is advisable to bring a multi-adaptor

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Your initial flight is to [Ben Gurion International Airport \(Tel Aviv\)](#) with [Virgin Atlantic](#), departing from [London Heathrow Terminal 3](#).

IMPORTANT: Please note that final flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

Baggage Allowance - Virgin Atlantic

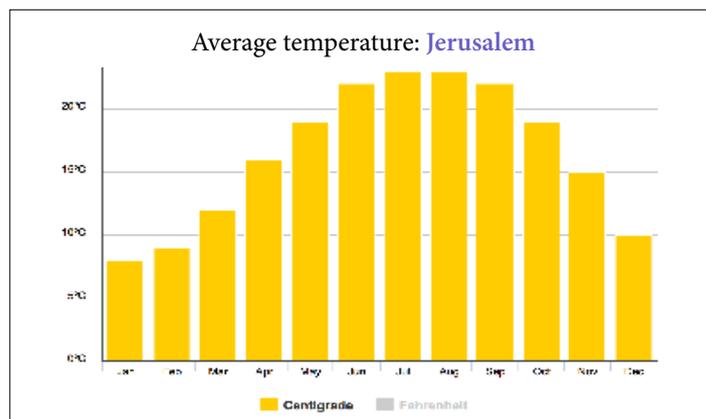
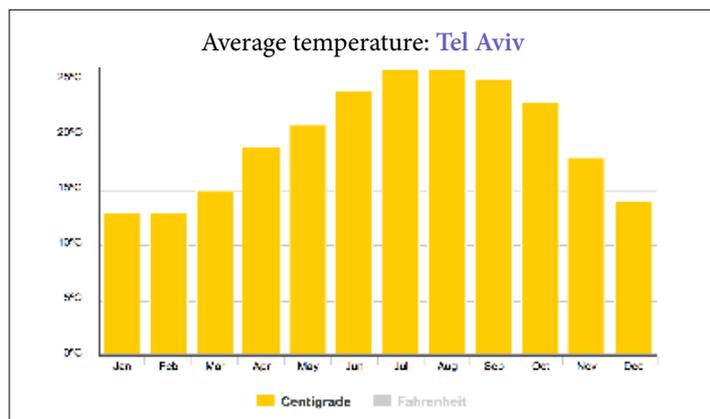
Each passenger is entitled to 23KG of hold luggage plus 1 item of hand luggage not exceeding (Max 10kg - 56cm/36cm/23cm) in size. Weight restrictions will be finalized on E-ticket receipt. Should you wish to take additional luggage you will need to pay extra at check-in. Check-In should be at least 3 hours before departure. Please refer to the airline's website for further details and the most up-to-date information.

Airport Extras

If you wish to arrange airport car parking, lounges or accommodation at preferential rates, we recommend you book this in advance with Holiday Extras on 0871 360 2000, quoting HX313.

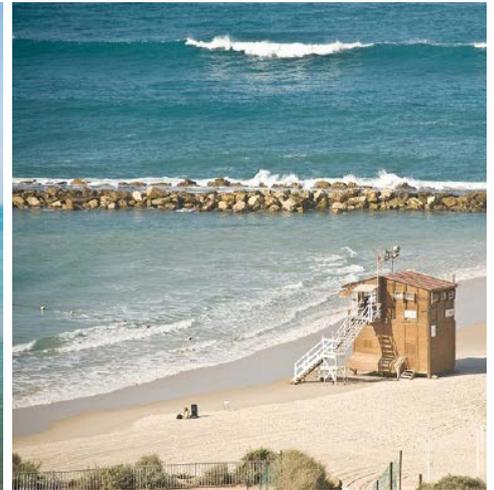
WEATHER AND CLIMATE

Weather can vary quite considerably throughout the year, so please familiarise yourself with the climate charts below.



TEL AVIV CITY STAY EXTENSION

If you have not yet booked this fabulous extension, there is still time to do so. Please contact 0843 224 0723



TRIP OVERVIEW

Stretching along Israel's Mediterranean coastline, Tel Aviv's first-class eateries, pulsing nightlife and seaside neighbourhoods are waiting to be discovered on this 4-night extension. Whether you choose to tour the historic wonders of the city, sunbathe on one of its 16 glorious beaches or sample the city's fantastic shopping and dining options, an extended stay in this lively city is the ideal way to round off your tour.

ITINERARY & DETAILS

This document aims to give you all the information which you will require during your extension to Tel Aviv.

Hotel Information

Tel Aviv (4 nights)

Your stay in Tel Aviv will take place at one of the hotels below:

3★ Hotel Metropolitan Tel-Aviv - Is located just 3 minutes walk from the beach and in the heart of the city centre. Leisure facilities at the Metropolitan include a gym, sauna, and an outdoor swimming pool. The hotel is a 10-minute walk to the shops in the Dizengoff Center. Hacarmel Market, the city's largest open-air market, is also 10 minutes away on foot.

Hotel address: Trumpeldor St 11, Tel Aviv-Yafo, Israel

Contact number: 00972 3 519 2727

Please Note: For departures on 27/05/19, your stay will be at: **3★ Maxim Hotel Tel Aviv**

3★ Maxim Hotel Tel Aviv - The Maxim is located just 2 minutes' walk from the beach and in the heart of the Tel Aviv city centre. The property has a roof top terrace offering panoramic views of the Mediterranean and free Wi-Fi is available throughout.

Hotel address: HaYarkon St 86, Tel Aviv-Yafo, 6343245, Israel

Contact number: 00972 3-517-3721

Any alternative hotels or board basis, plus duration will have been confirmed at booking. Please speak to our reservations department if you are unsure.

Final confirmation of your hotel will be sent in a document approximately 10 days before you travel.

Tour guides

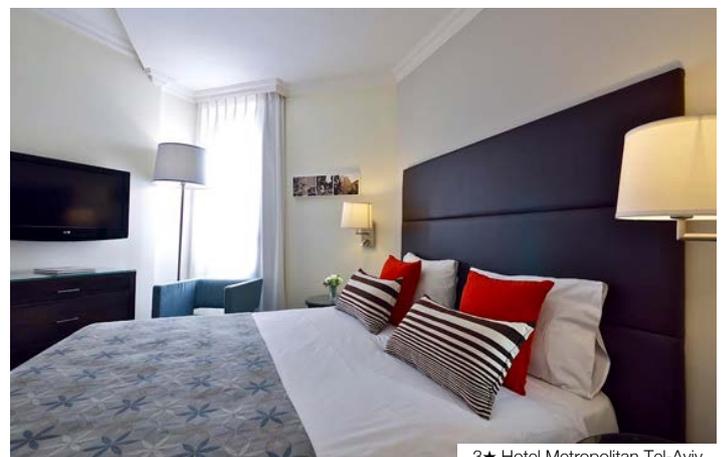
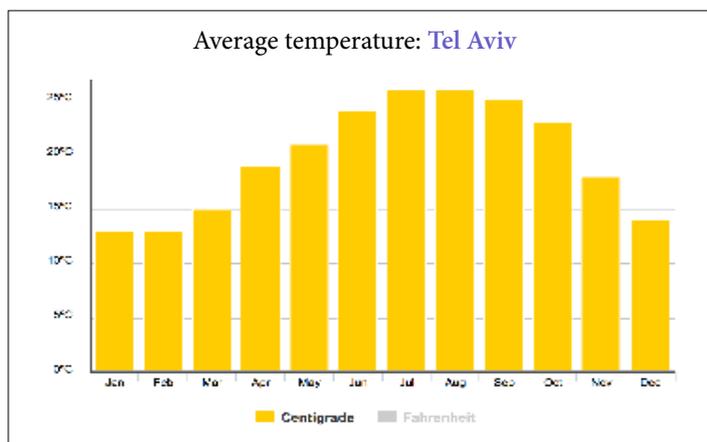
Your stay in Tel Aviv is not escorted by a tour guide. All internal transfers are included.

Personal Expenses

You will need to take money with you to cover any personal purchases such as souvenirs, laundry, and any additional meals, snacks or drinks you may wish to have.

Please note

This extension stay in Tel Aviv will take place at the end of your main tour.



3★ Hotel Metropolitan Tel-Aviv

FLIGHT INFORMATION

Please note: Final hotel and flight details will be confirmed on your e-ticket and final documentation which will be sent to you approximately 10 days before departure.

For any further enquiries or for more information call us on **0843 224 0723**