Holy Land Trip – Frequently Asked Questions

Travel & Entry Requirements

- **Do I need a passport?**
  *Yes. U.S. citizens must have a valid U.S. passport to travel to Israel. Your passport must be valid for **at least six months beyond your date of entry into Israel**. If your passport expires sooner than that, you should renew it before travel.*

- **Will I need a UK Travel Authorization (ETA) if transiting through the UK?**
  If your flight routes through the UK (even for a layover) an UK ETA is required. You can use the link on our website to obtain this- it is a quick and easy process that is around $15 per person.
  (Note the EU will begin this soon as well. It keeps getting pushed back but is scheduled to begin in the fall/winter of 2026)

- **What airport should I fly into?**
  Ben Gurion Airport (TLV), located near Tel Aviv.

- **Should I purchase travel insurance?**
  Travel insurance is strongly recommended. Coverage should include:
  - *Trip cancellation/interruption*
  - *Medical coverage abroad*
  - *Emergency evacuation*
  - *Lost baggage protection*

Flights & Transportation

Are flights included in the trip cost?
No. You will need to purchase your own flight to and from Israel. This allows you the flexibility of traveling at your own pace and comfort as well as giving opportunities to cash in traveler's miles you may have accrued with the airline of your choice!

Can I extend my stay before or after the tour?
Yes. If you plan to extend your stay, you are responsible for your own lodging and transportation outside official tour dates.

When should I book my flight to arrive in Israel?
*Book your flights into Ben Gurion Airport in Tel Aviv. Our tour begins with a meeting and welcome dinner at the hotel on **Feb. 10** so you should plan to **arrive by 4 pm** if possible. **This will mean your outbound flight from the USA to Israel will have to depart on Feb 9** to arrive on time.*

Our pilgrimage officially begins with our Welcome Dinner at 6:00 PM on February 10. Any flight arriving on **February 10** will work, as we'll arrange your airport transfer to the hotel. However, **the ideal arrival time is between approximately 9:00 AM and 3:00 PM** (with around noon being particularly comfortable). This allows plenty of time for immigration, baggage claim, and your transfer to the hotel. While official hotel check-in is generally 3:00 PM, rooms are often ready a little bit earlier, allowing many participants to settle in, freshen up, and relax before our 6:00 PM Welcome Dinner.

If you'd like to arrive one or two days earlier to recover from jet lag or enjoy additional time in Israel before the tour begins, we'll be happy to help arrange extra hotel nights and airport transfers.

When should I book my flight to depart Israel?

*Please book your return flight departing from **Tel Aviv** (TLV) on **18 Feb 2027 after 10pm**, **or shortly after midnight** with the date changing into 19 Feb 2027.*

For your return flight, our final touring day takes us from the Sea of Galilee south through Israel to the Tel Aviv area. To enjoy the complete final day with the group, we recommend booking a flight departing Ben Gurion Airport (TLV) on February 18 between approximately 10:00 PM and 11:59 PM, or during the early hours of February 19 (12:00 AM–2:00 AM). These departures allow you to experience the full pilgrimage without requiring an additional hotel overnight.

If you prefer an earlier daytime departure on February 18, you would simply need to leave the group before the tour concludes, and we'll be happy to assist with those arrangements (private transfer from Sea of Galilee to Tel Aviv TLV airport is approx 280 USD) .

Alternatively, if you'd prefer a morning or daytime flight on February 19, we'll be glad to help arrange an additional overnight stay near Ben Gurion Airport, together with any transfers you may need.

Cost & Payments

What exactly is included in the trip price?

- *Hotels*
- *Daily breakfast and dinner and select lunches.*
- *Ground transportation in Israel*
- *Full time, all-day professional Israeli tour guide and travel host*
- *Entrance fees to scheduled sites*
- *Airport arrival transfers*

What is not included?

- *Airfare*
- *Travel insurance*
- *Personal purchases*
- *Some lunches*
- *Passport fees*
- *Tips for services*

What is the $250 per person tip fee?

Rather than asking travelers to tip at each stop, this fee is collected upfront for convenience and fairness. The tip fee covers gratuities for the full trip and is distributed to:

- *Tour guides*
- *Bus driver*
- *Hotel staff*
- *Restaurant staff*
- *Luggage handling teams*

Why is the tip fee charged per person instead of per couple?
Gratuities are calculated based on the number of travelers being served, not the number of rooms. Each traveler receives full services throughout the trip (meals, guiding, transportation, luggage handling), so the gratuity is assessed per person.

What is the cancellation policy?
Per Holyland Bible Tours:
• Deposit fully refundable until **January 10, 2027**

Should the situation in Israel become not fit for our group travel, we would not leave the group exposed, but would shift to the Footsteps of Paul Program for the same dates in Europe instead of in Israel.

Safety & Security

Is it safe to travel to Israel?
Israel hosts millions of international visitors annually, including many Christian pilgrimage groups. Tourism areas and holy sites are heavily secured and are not near the border. Most of our touring takes place in the old city of Jerusalem and in the national park regions of Galilee. Our tour provider Ezer will also monitor conditions closely and adjust the itinerary if necessary to ensure group safety.

What areas will we visit?

Jerusalem	*Way of the Cross*	*Masada*
Bethlehem	*Sea of Galilee*	*En Gedi*
Gethsemane	*Capernaum*	*Qumran*
Mount of Olives	*Mount Beatitudes*	*Judean Wilderness*
Calvary	*Nazareth*	*Caesarea*
The Empty Tomb	*Jordan River*	*Armageddon*
Temple Mount	*Dead Sea*	*…and more*

What language is spoken at these regions?
While the majority of people will speak Hebrew or Arabic, due to the wide amount of tourism, English is widely understood!

What clothing requirements are there?
Most of the areas we visit are in larger modern communities so pants, shorts, workout clothes are acceptable. There are a few "holy" sites that will require shoulders and knees be covered. Men wear shirts with sleeves (no tank tops) and pants and women wear the same or dresses or skirts to the knees. This can be remedied by carrying a scarf or jacket. When visiting the Dome of the Rock, women will need a jacket or top that covers all the way to their wrist and pants that go to their ankles.

Health & Physical Requirements

How much walking is involved?
Expect moderate daily walking, often on:

- *Uneven stone surfaces*
- *Hills*
- *Stairs*
- *Archaeological sites*

Comfortable walking shoes are essential.

Is the trip suitable for seniors?
Many seniors participate successfully. However, travelers should be in good general health and able to walk moderate distances daily.

Is the trip open for families with children?
Yes! We are excited to open this tour to families. There is something very special about a family wanting to teach their children in the footsteps of our Savior. With this in mind, the standard deposit will need to be paid for each individual regardless of age. But for children under the age of 12 at the time of the tour, the following discounts will be applied to the amount of their tour cost.

- One child: **$160** discount
- Two children: **$200 per child**
- Three or more children: **$250 per child**

Can dietary needs be accommodated?
Most hotels and restaurants can accommodate common dietary needs (vegetarian, gluten-free, etc.)

Practical Matters

What should I pack?

- *Comfortable walking shoes*
- *Modest clothing for holy sites (covered shoulders and knees)*
- *Lightweight layers*

- *Hat and sunscreen*
- *Electrical adapter (Israel uses Type C and Type H plugs, 230V)*
- *Journal*
- *Bible*

What currency is used?
Israel uses the Israeli New Shekel (ILS). Credit cards are widely accepted. It's helpful to carry some small local currency for minor purchases. You can order foreign currency from your bank a few weeks before to get the best exchange rate.

Will my cell phone work in Israel?
Most U.S. carriers offer international plans. Check with your provider before departure. Wi-Fi is widely available at hotels.

Our group will be using a free message app called What's App. A couple of group chats will be set up by Heather Teis a week before the tour. This can be used for extra announcements, questions, and picture sharing! This also is a great option for you to send lengthy videos to friends and family back home at no charge and that can be watched at their convenience!

Group & Participation

Is this trip open to people outside of Southern Hills Church?
Absolutely! Travel is more fun with friends! We are excited for friends from all over the country to join us and you on this journey! So whether you are a friend outside of Southern Hills Church or you are wanting to invite your friends and family along—the more the merrier!