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**Explore Israel with**

**Congregation Beth Ohr**

**Led by Rabbi Joel Mishkin**

**May 3 – 14, 2020**

(Draft: January 6, 2020; Subject to change)

**Sunday, 3 May – *Depart USA***

**Monday, 4 May – *Going up into the Land***

* Morning arrival in **Israel** to be met and assisted by your ITC representative *(today’s program depends on arrival time).*
* Walking tour of the historic **Neve Tzeddek** neighbourhood, once home to Zionist cultural pioneers Eliezer Ben Yehuda, S. Y. Agnon and Rabbi Kook, which 25 years after its founding gave birth to Tel Aviv - *The first Hebrew city in 2,000 years.*
* ***ITC Touch:*** Discover ***City of Sand and Sea***,a mosaic fountain created by artist and writer Nachum Gutman portraying scenes from the history of Jaffa and Tel Aviv.
* Hear about the establishment of Tel Aviv at the **Founders' Monument** then stroll down **Rothschild Boulevard** to view the **Bauhaus** architecture for which central Tel Aviv was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site.
* Visit the new **Israeli Innovation Center** located in the **Tel Aviv Stock Exchange** to learn how Israel became the Start Up Nation.
* Lunch on own
* Tour the ***Israeli Museum*** at the **Yitzhak Rabin Center** for a critical look at Israeli history and society.
* Check-in to the **Carlton Hotel** on **Tel Aviv**'s **Mediterranean Coast**.
* **Welcome Dinner** at Maganda Restaurant in Tel Aviv's old Yemenite Quarter.
* Overnight: Carlton Hotel, Tel Aviv

**Tuesday, 5 May– *Defense and Pioneering in the Western Negev***

* Travel to the western **Negev**.
* Visit **Kibbutz Alumim** to meet with a local *kibbutznik* and hear first-hand about living on the Gaza border, pioneering in the Negev and kibbutz as a community.
* **Briefing on local regional security** from **Rafi Babian**, security coordinator of the Sdot Negev Regional Council and Kibbutz Alumim member.
* Lunch at Kibbutz Alumim
* Discover hi-tech agriculture and innovative crops on the **Salad Trail** on **Moshav Talmei Yosef**.
* Encounter/workshop with local **sculptor Yaron Bob**, who has created works of art out of Kassam rockets that have fallen in the region.
* Travel to the **Negev Highlands.**
* Check-in to the **Ramon Inn** in **Mitzpe Ramon.**
* Dinner at hotel
* Overnight: Ramon Inn, Mitzpe Ramon

**Wednesday, 6 May – *Negev Highlands: Primeval Desert Beauty***

* Learn about the natural history of the region at the multimedia **Makhtesh Ramon Visitors Center** dedicated to fallen Israeli astronaut Ilan Ramon.
* Explore **Makhtesh Ramon** (Ramon Crater) on foot and by **jeep** to discover magnificant desert landscapes and a fascinating window into the earth's past.
* Lunch on own
* ***ITC Touch:*** *Encounter*with a **traditional** **Bedouin community** in the **Negev Highlands** for a "non-touristy" Bedouin tourism experience - Hear about how social changes impacting on their community.
* Dinner at hotel
* Overnight: Ramon Inn, Mitzpe Ramon

**Thursday, 7 May – *Vision and Development in the Negev***

* Walk in the stunning white canyon of **Ein Avdat** in the **Zin Valley***.*
* Tour of **David Ben Gurion's House** on **Kibbutz Sde Boker** to learn about his vision for developing the Negev.
* Travel to the Negev development town of **Yerucham**.
* Lunch with the ***Kitchen Queens of Yerucham*** - *a true gastronomic expereince*.
* Tour of **Yerucham** with a local social activist to hear about its transformation from a downtrodden development town to a dynamic growing community.
* **Study session** on the role of the desert in the Torah at **Bamidbar**, a Yerucham based educational and social action center.
* Travel north to **Jerusalem**.
* Check-in to **Leonardo Plaza Hotel** in **Jerusalem**.
* Dinner on own.
* Overnight: Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

**Friday, 8 May – *The Old City of Jerusalem: An Ancient Jewish Legacy***

* Discover the archaeological story of the **Western Wall** and episodes of Jewish life in Jerusalem 2,000 years ago at **Robinson's Arch** and **the Southern Wall Excavations,** including a recent discovery related to the Chanukah story.
* Unique tour of the **Western Wall Tunnels**, including impressive new discoveries with **Dr. Avi Solomon**, the site's former chief archaeologist (subject to availability).
* Lunch on own
* Explore a Jewish text through an **interactive art workshop** with **Rabbi Matt Berkowitz** at **Kol Haot**.
* Free time to relax and prepare for Shabbat.

**Friday/Shabbat evening options:**

* Join hundreds of other Jews from around the world to ***Greet the Sabbath*** at the **Western Wall**. Option to pray together as a congregation at the **"Masorati Kotel**", where men and women can stand together.
* ***OR***: Attend **Friday night services** at a local Jerusalem synagogue.
* **Festive Shabbat Dinner** at hotel – ***Lone Soldiers invited,*** *subject to availability.*
* Overnight: Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

**Shabbat/Saturday, 9 May – *And on the Seventh Day… in Jerusalem***

* ***Shul Hopping*:** Attend **Shabbat morning services** at a number of different synagogues to experieince Jerusalem's ethnic Jewish mosaic.
* **Traditional Shabbat Lunch** at hotel
* **Shabbat afternoon options:**
* **Late afternoon** walking tour to the historic **Montefiore Windmill** to discover the first neighbourhood built outside the walls of the Old City.
* ***AND/OR***: Walking tour to the First Temple period Jewish burial site at **Ketef Hinnom** – Where archaeologists discovered the oldest biblical text ever found.
* **Havdalah** with Rabbi Mishkin.
* Dinner on own
* **Evening:** Watch the**New sound and light show** at the **Tower of David**.
* Overnight: Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

**Sunday, 10 May – *Nature, Rebels and Refugees in the Judean Desert***

* Tour the ruins of **Qumran**, where the **Dead Sea Scrolls** were discovered and hear about the ascetic Jewish sect that lived there 2,000 years ago.
* Visit the **Qasr El Yahud Baptismal Site** on the banks of the **Jordan River,** where you’llstand 30 feet from Jordan. In Jewish tradition, Qasr El Yahud is associated with where Joshua led the Children of Israel across the Jordan River to enter the Promised Land and where the Prophet Elijah ascended to heaven in a *chariot of fire.*
* Visit the world renown **Chagall Windows** at **Hadassah Hospital**.
* Lunch on own
* Tour of the Archaeology Wing at the **Israel Museum** with an emphasis on Jewish Archaeology, followed by free time to explore additional exhibitions on own.
* Free evening
* Dinner on own
* Overnight: Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

**Monday, 11 May – *Holocaust, Remembrance and Continuity***

* Guided tour of **Yad Vashem Campus focusing on Holocaust art**. This tour will examine both art created to memorialize different aspects of the Holocaust and art produced during the holocaust by its victims, including visits to the **Museum of Holocaust Art**, the **Yad Vashem Synagogue** and viewing sculpture installed at Yad Vashem.
* **Tasting tour** of the bustling **Machane Yehuda Market** to discover Jerusalem's many flavors from East and West.
* Lunch on own, if still hungry
* Guided tour of the new **Hebrew Music Museum** in **downtown Jerusalem**'s **Nachalat Shiva** neighborhood to learn about the history of Jewish music from biblical times and through seven different regions of the Diaspora.
* Free evening
* Dinner on own
* Overnight: Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

**Tuesday, 12 May**

* **Update on Israeli politics** by **Steve Linde**, editor-in-chief of the **Jerusalem Report** and former editor-in-chief of the Jerusalem Post.
* Multimedia tour of the new **Six Day War Heritage Museum** on **Ammunition Hill**, the site of the fiercest and most costly battle of the Six Day War.
* Lunch on own
* **Geopolitical tour of Jerusalem** to examine several key geopolitical issues impacting on the city, including borders, building and settlement (Jewish and Arab) and Israel's security fence.
* Dinner on own
* Overnight: Leonardo Plaza Hotel, Jerusalem

**Wednesday, 13 May** **–** ***Modern Realities and Departure***

* Engage in ***hands on tzedakah*** preparing food packages for distribution to some of Israel's neediest people at **Pantry Packers** in southern Jerusalem.
* Tour of less visited sites in the **Jewish Quarter:**  The **Israelite Tower,** a 2,600 year old "archaeological puzzle" beneath the modern day neighborhood, the **Old Yishuv Court Museum,** **Karaite Museum** and hear about the remarkable new discoveries under the ruins of the **Tiferet Yisrael Synagogue**.
* Lunch on own
* Remainder of afternoon free to explore on own and get in last minute shopping.
* **Late check out**

**Thursday, 14 May** **–** ***Arrive in USA***

* ***Begin planning your next Israel trip with Rabbi Mishkin and ITC Tours!***