

This is an updated itinerary.

Please read carefully. The videos are meant to supplement the text and they will make your trip more meaningful and enjoyable. If the URL does not automatically come up, simply place it in your browser.

Bruchim Ha'Baim!

Welcome!

¡Bienvenidos!

To Israel:

**The Start-Up nation and
Land of Legends & Miracles!**



The Center for Latino – Jewish Relations

El Centro de Relaciones Latinas – Judías

**The CLJR is a proud member of the Jewish Heritage
Alliance!**

**Departure date: December 4 Houston to Newark and then to
Tel Aviv**

Day 1, Wednesday Dec 04: Arrive Tel Aviv

Welcome to Israel... you are now in the land of the Bible and the eternal homeland of the Jewish Nation. The re-birth of Israel is an unprecedented phenomenon in human history. We will live the miracle of a people expelled from their land some 2,000 years ago. After two millennia of exile, the Jewish people has fulfilled the Biblical prophecy of return, speaking the same language as their ancestors and having recovered their national dignity. This, historic event is not merely unique to historians, but it is a demonstration of the Hope that is both the watchword and national anthem (HaTivah) of the Jewish people.

Hear children sing the national anthem: Ha'Tikvah (The Hope)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YpRmJZ8aSZ0>

Arrival –Shalom Aleychem

Meet and greet upon arrival at Ben Gurion Airport with VIP-assist after deplaning. Complete immigration formalities and commence to exit the airport. There will be a person holding a sign to gather our group as we deplane.

Young Jewish Americans being met at the airport by Israeli youth

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mZ_nbinWkvE

Before exiting the building we stop for a brief “Shehechyanu” blessing giving thanks to God for enabling us to experience a new or special occasion. We will partake in a piece of Challah (sweet bread), dipped in salt and say the following blessing in Hebrew and English:

Blessed Are You Lord our G-d, Ruler of the Universe who has given us life, sustained us, and allowed us to reach this day

We then make our way towards the ancient port of Yaffo for an orientation tour of Israel's Biblical port. Yafo (sometimes spelled Jaffa in English) is famous for its association with the biblical stories of Jonah, Solomon and Saint Peter as well as the mythological story of Andromeda and Perseus, and later for its oranges.

[See Yafo Video](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgF0zMUY2g>

Modern renovated Yafo boasts cobblestone paths and winding alleys twist through the massive stone fortifications that surround the city. Yafo is now an artist's quarters complete with galleries, cafes, and shops. We can follow the walls that snake around the bottom of the city for a look at how this ancient area is alive with some of the area's best restaurants and nightclubs, art galleries and high-quality folk craft shops sell fabrics, ceramics, metal works, jewelry and clothes.

Lunch is at Dr. Shakshuka. Situated to the side of the flea market, where we will sample the restaurant's signature dish: Shakshuka, a Middle Eastern classic

[Video for Shakshukah](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ifWWRZSWS18>

After lunch we check in at our hotel: Royal Beach Hotel. The hotel's beach front location allows its guests easy proximity to

some of Tel Aviv's most popular sites: Carmel market - one of the largest open markets in Israel, Neve Tzedek neighborhood, Tel-Aviv Port and more. It is also close to nightlife and entertainment: restaurants, museums, art galleries, shopping malls and theaters.

See video about Neve Tzedek (meaning an Oasis of Righteousness)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S3AZc4lnZ0k>

Our post check-in program includes a panoramic tour of historic Tel Aviv, visiting the Tel Aviv area known as the "White City. This part of Tel Aviv derives the name *White City* from the fact that most buildings in the area are white! Tel Aviv is the world capital of Bauhaus-style buildings. German-Jewish architects, fleeing German anti-Semitism, constructed these buildings between 1920 and 1940,

We visit Rothschild Boulevard, one of the city's most important and iconic streets. Located in the heart of the White City of Tel Aviv, Rothschild Boulevard is a commercial, cultural center, and culinary center. It is also famous for its fantastic coffee "kiosks" or shops.

We will have arrived in Israel during the eight-day Jewish celebration known as Hanukkah (Chanukah). This beautiful Jewish holiday commemorates the victory of Jewish freedom fighters, known as the Maccabees, against the Greek speaking Assyrians. The Maccabean revolution is the world's first war fought for religious liberty and inspired other revolutionaries such as the American and French revolutions. Some of the main

traditions of this holiday include candle lighting each night of the week and eating fried foods, including Sufganiyot (jelly filled donuts). At sundown (early evening) we celebrate the holiday by lighting a candle each evening and singing popular Chanukah songs.

Maoz Tzur: (Rock of ages) and sufganiyot donuts
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=il01XqYnrDo>

We have our first dinner in Israel at **Aria**: Recently opened, the restaurant menu is created by Chef Guy Gamzu, offering a wide variety of dishes with carefully selected ingredients and raw materials.

Overnight at the Royal Beach Hotel.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CoezcfQcwiA>

Day 2, Thursday Dec 06: Tel Aviv – Yerushalayim (Jerusalem)

Please note that we use the actual Hebrew names for places throughout this text rather than a foreign word.

Our first stop is *Beit Hatfutsot*: (The Museum of the Jewish People). This museum serves as an introduction to Israel and conveys the multi-millennia narrative of the Jewish people and its Diaspora. The museum provides a taste of Jewish culture, faith, and accomplishments, showing some of the many contributions of the Jewish people to humanity.

See the museum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvMba6Vh8PM>

We then visit Taglit, a Center for Israeli Innovation. Israel is more than merely the land of the Bible and the home of Western religions; it is also the world's *Startup Nation*. In just 70 years this old-new nation ranks as the eighth most powerful and innovative country in the world, rivaling the United States and Europe in such areas as: agriculture, medicine and computer science.

Video on Taglit center:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdieXEJOjAQ>

Through the center's lens, we will learn about Israel as an international leader in technology, engineering, philanthropic and groundbreaking inventions for agriculture, medicine, transportation, security, and outer space.

We break for **lunch at Claro**. This recent culinary addition to Tel Aviv's food scene is situated inside a 150-year-old space preserving the historic character of the building. The original vault of the National Printing Office is located in "LeMata" as well as distillery rooms and a tunnel connecting the building to the adjacent winery.

The City of Rehovot

We resume our drive with a stop at the Ayalon Institute. Prior to and during the War of Independence the Ayalon Institute was a top-secret operation that from 1945 to 1948 produced over 2.25 million bullets in a clandestine underground factory, built not far from the British occupation authorities.

Our next stop is the *Weizmann Institute of Science*, one of the world's top-ranking academic centers. Named after the first president of Israel, the Weizmann Institute of Science is a public

research university in Rehovot, Israel, established in 1934. It is one of the world's foremost academic institutions.

The Weizmann: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ye3v7xBxE4I>

From the city of Rehovot we travel to Yerushalayim, the holy city of Jerusalem. There is a legend that says that G-d gave 10 measures of beauty to the world: 9 to Yerushalayim and one to the rest of the world. The city is known as *Yerushalim shel Zahav*, (Jerusalem the Golden). Holy to three of the world's great religions, Yerushalayim is both modern and ancient; a vibrant modern national capital and a place of spirituality. We can debate how many measures of beauty G-d gave the city but everyone agrees that Yerushalayim is like no other city on earth.

Hear the song that best describes Israel's capital city:

Yerushalayim shel Zahav (Jerusalem of Gold)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JH8gtdDA5x0>

In Yerushalayim our hotel is the **Orient Hotel**, situated in the heart of a neighborhood called today, the German Colony. Our hotel is walking distance from many cultural, tourist, and historic attractions. The hotel includes two renovated Templar residences at the entrance, part of its efforts to blend into the 19th-century architecture of this historic neighborhood.

This first evening we sample Yerushalayim cuisine at the **Eucalyptus Restaurant**. The Eucalyptus is located on a set of steps in the old city, surrounded by artists workshops, pots filled with herbs and flowers, and a view of the city's ancient walls. Chef

and owner, Moshe Basson greets his guests with traditional Middle Eastern hospitality. Chief Basson is famous for being a part of the slow food movement. His menus include centuries-old Middle Eastern recipes.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gXjLN_IHCWI

Day 3, Friday Dec 07: Yerushalayim

Following breakfast we begin this touring day with a stop at the **Israel Museum**, Israel's largest cultural institution, ranked among the world's leading art and archaeology museums. Founded in 1965, the Museum houses encyclopedic collections, including works dating from prehistory to the present day, in its Archaeology, Fine Arts, and Jewish Art and Life Wings, and features the most extensive holdings of biblical and Holy Land archaeology in the world.

During our short visit, we shall tour the Model of Yerushalayim in the Second Temple Period. Professor Avi-Yonah created the model, measuring some 1,000 square meters. Avi-Yona's based his reconstruction on descriptions from Jewish sources, particularly the Mishnah, and the writings of the contemporary historian Flavius Josephus. He also relied on archaeological finds from Yerushalayim and from other Roman cities.

We then go from ancient Israel to the darkest periods of twentieth century Jewish history, the Holocaust. We visit **Yad Va'Shem**, Israel's largest Holocaust memorial set on the slopes of the Mount of Remembrance on the edge of Jerusalem. Yad Vashem is Israel's official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust – a very humbling experience, but a definite must do for those who want to gain a deeper insight into the Israel and Jewish psyche.

Yad Va'Shem

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vx-HQVjNYWw>

Yad Va'Shem means “a hand and a name” in Hebrew (referring to the millions who were not given the dignity of a Jewish burial with a specified burial plot). The museum complex also recognizes and honors a number of non-Jews that helped save Jews during modern Jewish history’s darkest period. These heroes are referred to as “The Righteous among the Nations (Gareit-Tzedek)”. It’s a place that remembers the past and safeguards memory for future generations. The museum’s goal is to teach what occurred, the reasons that it happened, and stands as a warning for future generations.

We continue our day with a visit to Jerusalem’s bustling open-air Machaneh Yehuda market. The market offers a dizzying assault on the senses. Vendors exemplify typical Middle Eastern “haggling” over their products’ prices with the smell of spices and fresh fish wafts through the air. From vegetable stalls, bakeries and boutique wine and cheese bars to fish and chip or falafel stands and sit-down restaurants of every style and price range, the now gentrified market’s dozens of eateries present the widest assortment of culinary options in the city.

See video of Machaneh Yehudah:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VwImax7Ylgs>

Here we feast in traditional Middle Eastern food at the famous **Azura Restaurant**, a family-run institution famous for its inspired delicacies. Spread across an entire cobblestone courtyard, the eatery offers a taste of old Yerushalayim with an array of soups, salads and specialty dishes. Azura’s food is rich in a cultural history that reflects the various ethnic backgrounds of the Jewish

Middle East that make up modern Jerusalem, including Iraqi, Turkish and Tunisian influences

Time permitting, and at the group's option, we also can choose to visit picturesque **Mishkenot Sha'ananim**, a part of the first neighborhood constructed outside the Old City walls. Built along the pastoral top of a mountain overlooking the Old City walls in 1860, the historical area is popular among artists with venues for art and culture in the spirit of dialogue, cooperation and pluralism.

[Kabbalat Shabbat; Welcoming 'Queen' Sabbath](#)

By 4:00 pm, with the sun beginning to set, we feel Shabbat (the Sabbath) arriving. As the city turns a golden color the Sabbath Queen makes her weekly arrival across the land. Jerusalem's streets turn quiet and prayers mix with the smells of Sabbath meals begin to ascend toward Heaven. We hear requests to G-d to grant a Sabbath of Peace (Shabbat Shalom) to us, to Yerushalayim and to all Israel

Getting ready for Sabbath's arrival

Being here it feels as if even the city's towers bow down to Queen Sabbath. Listen to one of the many songs of the Sabbath's arrival with these three songs

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G5UFZ0ekFP4&start_radio=1&list=RDG5UFZ0ekFP4

Shalom Aleichem:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ux5TH9TPSMU&list=PLDC24DBB0AB1F6DFB>

Welcoming the Sabbath at the Train Station
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T2sFgxvrxdl>

This evening a special treat... **Shabbat of a Lifetime** offers a unique event for visitors of all backgrounds to experience an authentic Shabbat (Jewish Sabbath) at the home of a host family in the heart of Jerusalem, complete with explanation of the special relationship between Shabbat and the Jewish Nation.

Day 4, Saturday Dec 08: Yerushalayim

This morning we head towards **Qasr al Yahud** (The Jews' Castle or Palace), a site located on the banks of the Jordan River not far from Jericho. Christian tradition associates Qasr al Yahud with the site of Jesus' baptism by Matthew (Matthew 3) and it has been revered as such from at least the fourth century. There are many monasteries and churches in the area testifying to the long religious tradition at Qasr al Yahud. In Jewish tradition the crossing of the Jordan by the Children of Israel under Joshua (Joshua 3) must also have taken place in this general area. It is also associated with the site where Elijah handed over the prophecy to Elisha and rose to heaven on a fiery chariot (2 Kings 11)

We continue to Israel's equivalent of the Alamo: *Masada*. On the way we shall pass **Qumran**, the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in eleven caves near the site. Historians have called The Dead Sea Scrolls the greatest manuscript find of all time. Discovered between 1947 and 1956, the Dead Sea Scrolls comprise some 800 documents but in many tens of thousands of fragments. The Scrolls date from around 250 B.C.E. to 68 C.E. They contain Biblical and apocryphal works, prayers and legal texts and sectarian documents. This priceless collection of

ancient manuscripts is invaluable to our understanding of the history of Judaism, the development of the Hebrew Bible, and perhaps some of the beginnings of Christianity.

We arrive at **Masada** (Hebrew for fortress) a place that has become one of the Jewish people's greatest symbols as the last Jewish stronghold against the Roman invasion. More than two thousand years have passed since the fall of Masada yet the regional climate and its remoteness have helped to preserve the remains of its extraordinary story.

Video of Masada:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_t38sBuQ7pQ

The Masada complex, built by Herod the Great, King of Judaea, (37 BCE to 4 CE) and particularly the "hanging" palace with its three terraces, is an outstanding example of opulent architectural design, elaborately engineered and constructed in extreme conditions. The water system was particularly sophisticated, collecting run-off water from a single day's rain to sustain life for a thousand people over a period of two to three years.

Bring a bathing suit, hat and sunglasses. Bring good walking shoes!

For lunch we depart Masada heading to the **Dead Sea** and Ein Bokek, the main beach of the Dead Sea hotel area. We lunch at Herods Dead Sea Hotel, a luxurious, elegant 5-star hotel located right on the shores of the Dead Sea at the Hamme Zohar area.

The lowest place on earth, the Dead Sea (431 meters below sea level) brings together breathtaking natural beauty, compelling ancient history and modern mineral spas that soothe and pamper

every fiber of your body. The jagged bluffs of the Judean Desert, cleft by dry canyons that turn into raging tan-colored torrents after a cloudburst, rise from the cobalt blue waters of the Dead Sea, heavy with salt and oily with minerals.

We head back to Yerushalayim and the hotel in time for to say good-bye for another week to Queen Sabbath with the “Havdalah” Service. Havdalah marks the symbolic end of Shabbat (the Sabbath) and ushers in the new week. The ritual involves lighting a special Havdalah candle (with several wicks), blessing a cup of wine and smelling sweet spices. Shabbat ends on Saturday night after the appearance of the first three stars in the sky.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXFvSeD6Qrg>

Dinner is with Jews who have returned home from Latin American and European Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries. These are members of an organization or Latin Jews called: *Olim*. It is an organization dedicated to helping returnees from Latin speaking countries to integrate into Israeli society. Olim also works with “Lone Soldiers” from Latin Countries.

Dinner will be at a restaurant called Touro: a Mediterranean restaurant located in the heart of the picturesque Mishkanot Sha’ananim neighborhood and boasting a breathtaking view of the Walls of Jerusalem and the Tower of David. The restaurant is named after Yehuda Touro (1775-1854), an American Jewish philanthropist, and it is thanks to his generous donation and that of Moses Montefiore that the neighborhood was established.

Day 5, Sunday Dec 09: Yerushalayim

Early morning (6am) optional Mass

For those who desire it: There is a mass at Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Mass presided by the Latins in the Edicule of the Holy Sepulcher begins at 4.30 each morning and is repeated each half hour until 7.45

After breakfast, we begin the day at Yvel Design Center, one of Israel's most prestigious jewelry providers whose jewelry sold in some of the world's best-known stores. There we learn about the founder's childhood experience making Aliyah from Argentina (returning to the land of his forefathers), rendering him sensitive to the challenges of Jews retuning home.

One such success story is Daniel Sahalo, a proud Israeli, a Hebrew University graduate, a captain in the IDF reserves, a husband and a father of two little boys. What's special about Daniel is that he was born in a small farming village in Gaina (Ghana Africa). Daniel will share with us his incredible journey of life-threatening dangers and survival, including food shortage, in order to make his way back to Israel. Approximately 90% of Yvels 100 plus employees are new arrivals from around the world.

We then visit *United Hatzalah*, the largest independent, non-profit, nationally recognized and fully-volunteer emergency medical services (EMS) organization in Israel. *United Hatzalah's* cadre of 5,000 medics, paramedics, and doctors creates a web of emergency first responders, each connected to a proprietary GPS-based dispatch system which, together with its motorcycle ambulances ("ambucycles"), provides lifesaving aid faster than any other EMS organization in the world. This service is free of charge, 24/7. In Israel last year, United Hatzalah's highly qualified volunteers treated over 295,000 people per year and are one of

the reasons that Israel is among the world's top medical countries.

See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKVIjafnBU8>

(NOTE: This segment of the day is blocked to feature a visit to an IDF base. We also are trying to arrange a meeting with "Lone Soldiers" (a lone soldier is defined as a serviceman or woman without immediate family in Israel). Most are young volunteers from abroad that feel the sense of belonging and duty to the Nation of Israel). We will provide detailed description upon confirmation. Exact program is still to be determined)

We return to Jerusalem for dinner in Naurah restaurant located in Abu Gosh, the ultimate experience for anybody looking for tasty Middle Eastern Food. The town of Abu Gosh, just outside Jerusalem in the Jerusalem Hills, considered the unrivaled hummus capital of Israel, and some would say, the world. An Arab-Israeli village, Abu Gosh is famed across Israel for its amazing hummus restaurants, with Israelis traveling from far and wide.

Day 6, Monday Dec 10: Yerushalayim

First stop this morning is the **Supreme Court**, the highest court in Israel. It has ultimate appellate jurisdiction over all other courts, and in some cases original jurisdiction. The Supreme Court consists of 15 Justices, who are appointed by the President of Israel, upon nomination by the Judicial Selection Committee.

Next we visit the **Western Wall**, the most religious site in the world for the Jewish people. Called in Hebrew the Kotel

ha'Maarivi" this was the western support wall of the Temple Mount. Thousands of people journey to the wall every year to visit and recite prayers. These prayers are either spoken or written down and placed in the cracks of the wall. King Harod built the Temple (Beit Ha'Mikdash), and the Romans destroyed it in 70 CE. What remains is the Kotel or the support wall. Today we can see where the Israelis have dug below the ground of the wall, exposing two more levels of the wall. They also cleared the area around the wall to create the Western Wall Plaza that visitors see today.

America's Ambassador at the Western Wall for Chanukah
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b0h6hf7h9EE>

We continue our tour with visit to Sephardic Synagogues. The "Sephardic synagogues" is the name of a compound that includes 4 synagogues belonging to the Spaniard sector in the ancient city in Yerushalayim. The synagogues are located in the corner of the Jewish quarter. Building the Sephardic synagogues was the initiative of Sefarad Jewry (Spain and Portugal) that returned to Yerushalayim in the early 16th century, after they were forced out of Spain in 1492.

Originally each synagogue was separately built including a separate entrance to each synagogue. The first synagogue to rise was the Rabbi Yohanan Ben-Zakai synagogue. In adjacent to the synagogue is a Talmud center for children built in the name of the Prophet Elijah (Eliyahu Hanavi).

In 1764 the community joined a massive group of Jews returning to Israel from Istanbul in Turkey, together they established, in adjacent to their rising compound, the Istanbul synagogue.

For lunch today we visit a typical a Israeli fast food stand featuring Israel's most famous fast food: the falafel at: *Falafel Ofer*

Following lunch we visit **Friends of Zion Museum**. The Museum brings to life stories of non-Jewish love and heroism to the world. Visitors enter a whole new world, where they meet the biblical figures, academics, businessmen, and military officials who, through their faith, have forged an everlasting bond between the Jewish and its non-Jewish friends.

Friends of Zion Museum:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=944eHkbNGAk>

We return to the hotel for an afternoon Discussion / Presentation. With a noted person who will speak to the group with Q&A session.

Toward evening we return to the Kotel (Western Wall) for a Chanukah lighting experience to participate and also to remember that here is the location that is closest to where the Chanukah miracle of the oil flask occurred. Being at ground center for Western religions also reminds us that we too live in a time of miracles, we only need to be wise enough to know them.

Farewell Dinner and closing remarks at a private dinner

A time to remember:

Al Col Eleh- For all these things:

A video from this year's *National Sing-along*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oxzR9Z-kG6Q>

Day 7, Tuesday Dec 11: Departure

Following breakfast at the hotel we transfer to Ben Gurion Airport.

“Shalom Chaverim/ Farewell friends”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4KWKZ-uU2d4>



This JHG Tour is designed and operated by Discovery Tours Group and its Israel Affiliates