

TRIP PREP SUGGESTIONS

As soon as you can...

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A PASSPORT THAT DOES NOT EXPIRE UNTIL A MINIMUM OF SIX MONTHS AFTER YOUR LAST DAY IN ISRAEL. Allow six to eight weeks for passport processing; expedited service is available.

PURCHASE TRAVEL INSURANCE. You can be out a substantial amount of money if you forego purchasing travel insurance and find that you must cancel - even a couple of months prior to your departure date. We recommend that you seriously consider purchasing a good travel insurance within 10-14 days of your initial trip deposit. Typically, this will allow you to include a Pre-Existing Medical Condition Exclusion Waiver in your coverage. [CLICK HERE](#) for a quote from a highly reputable and competitively-priced travel insurance company.

BEGIN PREPARING SPIRITUALLY THROUGH PRAYER AND BIBLE READING.

START LEARNING ABOUT ISRAEL: Read a good Israel travel guide and track your itinerary on the map, read recommended books watch recommended DVDs, etc. [CLICK HERE](#) for recommended travel guide.

At least two months prior to departure...

START YOUR PACKING LIST.

BUILD STAMINA – START WALKING DAILY: Tours involve quite a bit of walking, and you don't want to be the straggler keeping your group behind schedule. Walk at a good clip at home, climb stairs, and if you can – try walking on uneven ground (which you will find at many sites in Israel).

START DRINKING PLENTY OF WATER: If you don't already, now is the time to start drinking water in abundance; hydrate yourself before the trip even begins. The total solar radiation in Israel is among the highest in the world, making it essential to stay hydrated. When you arrive in Israel, you will need to continue this increased water intake, drinking small amounts of water throughout the day. Try to carry a water bottle around with you. Even though Israel's tap water is high quality and safe, it does have a high mineral content. You may prefer to buy bottled water – which is available on tour buses for just one dollar; it generally is chilled. Bring a few dollar bills with you daily. If you have difficulty drinking plain water, try a powdered drink mix or Mio.

ARRANGE TRANSPORTATION TO AND FROM YOUR AIRPORT OF ORIGIN: What your most stress-free and cost-effective option? If your group is taking a bus, that simplifies your decision! Other options include: 1) arrange for a family member or friend to take you to the airport for your departure and pick you up when you return, 2) drive your car with or without others, and pay for long-term parking either at the airport or at a facility close to the airport that will shuttle you to the airport. You can find some good deals at cheapairportparking.org. Keep in mind that popular Park and Rides fill up quickly, so if this is your choice – reserve a space early. *Research online for prices and reviews*, 3) rent a one-way rental car, or 4) take a shuttle or taxi.

At least one month prior to departure...

BREAK IN YOUR PRIMARY WALKING SHOES: Walk at home in your new shoes; you don't want blisters!

PURCHASE ALL NECESSARY SUPPLIES FOR YOUR TRIP.

MAKE CERTAIN YOU HAVE STRONG AND DURABLE LUGGAGE: Lightweight luggage is helpful to accommodate the weight of everything you will probably want to pack. Sturdy luggage is also essential; it will be tossed around on flights, pulled through airports, thrown under the tour bus multiple times, and regularly repacked - experiencing substantial wear and tear! Your luggage should securely and easily open and close and it should have wheels that are in good working order; nothing is as frustrating as a suitcase that keeps falling over! Also, make your luggage easily identifiable. This can be accomplished several ways: having a suitcase that is not black (another color or print), tying a brightly colored ribbon or scarf to your suitcase handle, attaching a bright luggage tag, tying a luggage strap around your luggage, adding a bright handle grip, using a strip of *washi* tape (tape with colorful designs), or even painting a design on your suitcase. These suggestions will facilitate smooth sailing at the airport, and throughout the trip.

MAKE SURE YOUR CLOTHES AND BACKPACK OR PURSE ARE COMFORTABLE: They need to be comfortable to walk in, to stoop down, to hike uphill, etc. This is the time to figure out how you will carry everything with comfort.

START A FOLDER WITH IMPORTANT PAPERS: Include your itinerary, flight schedule, important contacts, travel insurance documents, health information including medications, copy of passport and driver's license, a place or pouch for receipts, etc.

EVALUATE YOUR PHONE OPTIONS (See "TRAVEL ESSENTIALS). If using a SIM card, make sure your smartphone is unlocked and order one to arrive in time. Various companies offer these products. [For dependable SIM card service and wholesale pricing, click here for ISRAEL CONNECT.](#)

LET YOUR BANK AND CREDIT CARD PROVIDERS KNOW THE DATES YOU WILL BE IN ISRAEL. WRITE DOWN YOUR 4-DIGIT CODE FOR THE DEBIT OR CREDIT CARD YOU WILL BE USING.

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One – two weeks prior to departure...

BEGIN THE PACKING PROCESS: Try to be fully packed a couple of days early so you're not totally stressed out the day before departure.

ENSURE YOUR PASSPORT IS IN A SAFE PLACE.

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE A WORKING, FULLY-CHARGED CAMERA WITH AMPLE MEMORY, ALONG WITH A CHARGER AND EXTRA BATTERIES IF REQUIRED. (Not necessary if you are using your smartphone for photography).

CONTACT YOUR AIRLINE OR TRAVEL AGENT ABOUT ANY SPECIAL DIETARY (OR OTHER) FLIGHT NEEDS.

The night before departure...

PRINT OUT YOUR BOARDING PASS UP TO 24 HOURS PRIOR TO DEPARTURE.

CAFFEINE TO STAY AWAKE? You may want to have something with caffeine to enable you to stay up all night before your next-day departure. This will likely help you to sleep better on the plane and be more acclimated to Israel time when you arrive. Read “BEAT JET LAG.”

DRESS FOR THE LONG FLIGHT: Wear your most comfortable clothes and socks; you’ll be sleeping in them! Also, bring your heaviest jacket and shoes to reduce check-in luggage weight. And, you will appreciate a watch.

PREPARE YOUR AIRPORT DOCUMENTS: Passport holders are convenient to hold your boarding pass, passport, and driver’s license. Holders that hang around your neck are really handy!

PACK YOUR CARRY-ON ITEMS EFFICIENTLY:

Carry-On Baggage

Suggestions for a stress-free flight – customize as needed.

- Keep your passport, plane ticket, debit/credit cards/cash; driver’s license, SIM card, etc. close to you in a money belt or secure zippered compartment.
- Wear your watch.
- Good travel pillow - essential for getting good sleep on the plane
- You may want to bring a comfy throw blanket from home for extra warmth to help sleep
- Earplugs and eye mask
- Sleep aids (most people need them)
- Decongestants (if needed)
- Other medication as needed
- Chewing gum to pop plugged ears
- Snacks
- Small, empty plastic bottle to fill with water before boarding your flight
- Israel travel guide
- Map of Israel
- Books/materials you’d like to read on the plane
- Pens, highlighters, paper
- Business cards
- Glasses and cleaner for your glasses
- Hand sanitizer or sanitary wipes
- Kleenex
- Toothbrush and toothpaste, breath mints
- Small makeup case and brush and/or comb for women

These items can remain in the over-head compartment of the plane:

- Car/house keys
- High-value items: cameras, jewelry, electronics, etc.
- Supplements and medications
- Spare glasses if needed
- Pajamas and one change of clothes (just in case your bag is “lost in transit”)
- Toiletry case
- Notebook or folder with important papers