



"The Grand Dame" of Women's Adventure Travel Since 1982

2014 ~ Celebrating 32 Years!

DATES

September 8 - 21, 2014

COST

\$5,995 from Tel Aviv, Israel (\$800 deposit)

RATING

Moderate

ACTIVITIES

Archeology, Architecture, Birding, Cultural Exploration, National Parks, Natural History, Photography, Sightseeing, Snorkeling, Swimming, Walking, Wildlife Viewing, Cultural Performances

MAIN ATTRACTIONS

- Discover daily, with in-depth experiences, how ancient history, culture and nature are so intertwined in Israel.
- Visit with Israeli artists, biologists, archeologists, and historians to learn first-hand about Israel's rich spiritual wealth, natural history, and cultural diversity.
- Stay in superior hotels/accommodations throughout the trip.
- Be treated to the local food and unique way of life on a Kibbutz.
- Participate on an archeological dig with local archeologists.
- Explore the cities of Jerusalem, Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Caesaria.
- Relax and swim in the Red Sea at Eilat.

AdventureWomen is the oldest adventure travel company for active women over 30.

THE NATURE OF ISRAEL: A Cultural and Wildlife Adventure

This adventure is like no other you will ever find to Israel! Long famous for its spiritual wealth and cultural diversity, Israel has always been a stand-out destination, rich with history and natural wonder.

The cultural, ecological, and historical interactions AdventureWomen travelers encounter on this unique trip in Israel are boundless. Almost daily, we'll have in-depth experiences that illustrate how ancient history, culture and nature are so intertwined in Israel. Crossing through biblical landscapes, we delve a little deeper throughout our trip and discover the often overlooked natural beauty and wildlife surrounding us every step of the way.

Visiting the biblical landscape reserve of Neot Kdumim, we'll explore an exceptional endeavor to re-create the physical setting of the Bible in all its depth and detail. Here are plants from biblical times with names such as the "Forest of Milk and Honey" and "Isaiah's Vineyard." We'll see how Neot Kdumim embodies the panorama and power of the landscapes that helped shape the values of the Bible and provides a rich vocabulary for expressing them.

In Jaffa, one of the world's oldest cities, AdventureWomen guests are honored to call on acclaimed artist Ilana Goor in her private home. Outside Tel Aviv, we'll visit the Latrun Bird Watching Center, a model for restoration ecology in Israel, and meet Dr. Yosef Leshem, founder of the bird center and the driving force behind many of Israel's birding centers.

Another highlight of our trip is Kibbutz Nachshon, a strategic region that has played a central role in the history of modern Israel, with roots back to the Biblical period. Viticulture and winemaking have been a part of life in the valley for at least 3,000 years, and the ancient stone wine vats in the hills and fields bear witness to this. In Tel Maresha, we'll work with local archeologists on a dig of an ancient subterranean complex that housed burial grounds, storerooms and hideouts.

Jerusalem's Biblical Zoo is a world leader in protecting endangered species, and we'll meet with Dr. Sigalit Dvir, deputy director of the Zoo, for a special "behind the scenes" tour. We learn about the endangered species this zoo protects, such as the Persian fallow deer and the sand cat, both nearly extinct but being rehabilitated at the zoo.

We travel to the White City of Tel Aviv, to Caesarea for Roman and Byzantine ruins, and to Haifa, Israel's most ethnically diverse city. Our journey takes us along the Jordan Valley to the magical city of Jerusalem, sacred to the three great monotheistic religions of the world – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

From Hai Bar Park, known as "Little Switzerland"; Tel Dan Nature Reserve, blending archaeological findings in a lush backdrop teeming with

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INCLUDED IN THE PRICE OF YOUR NATURE OF ISRAEL TOUR

- 13 days/12 nights, fully guided land and hotel arrangements in Israel.
- Internal flight between Eilat and Tel Aviv.
- All meals as specified in the itinerary.
- Complimentary bottled water throughout.
- All *transfers from hotels to airports (*included in cost if part of group air arrangements), services and taxes, and all ground transportation in air conditioned coach throughout the trip.
- Gratuities for baggage handling.
- Superior hotel accommodations throughout in twin-bedded double occupancy rooms with private facilities.
- Services of a highly-trained, English-speaking, specialist guide (Amir Orly) throughout the tour.
- All entry fees to visited monument, parks, and places of worship.
- All meals as listed in the itinerary.
- One AdventureWomen escort.

NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR ISRAEL ADVENTURE VACATION

- Roundtrip international airfare from New York to Tel Aviv, Israel, including fuel surcharges and airline taxes.
 - Cost of Passport.
 - Currently, no visa is required for U.S. citizens to enter Israel. Israel may issue visas upon entry into the country. This is free of charge.
 - Excess baggage charges levied by airlines.
 - Meals and beverages, other than specified, plus items of a personal nature (laundry).
 - Personal, trip cancellation, and baggage insurance.
 - Tips and gratuities to your main guide, driver, local guide(s)
- Suggested amounts are, on average:
- \$10 per person, per day to your main guide;
 - \$5 per person, per day to any local guide(s);
 - \$5 per person, per day for driver(s).

animals; stunning Bahai Gardens; a nature trek at Ein Gedi; and to floating on the Dead Sea, we end our fascinating trip in Israel at Eilat on the shores of the Red Sea for birding, swimming, sailing and relaxing.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT TRAVELING TO ISRAEL

Round-trip airfare from New York to Tel Aviv, Israel is NOT included in the cost of the trip package.

Flights to Tel Aviv: Estimated Airfare Price Per Person (Economy

Class): \$1,800 per person, international airfare from New York to Tel Aviv, Israel on Delta Airlines. All departure taxes and fuel surcharges are included in this price (Subject to change).

When you register for this trip, an AIRLINE RESERVATION FORM is enclosed in your registration packet. You need to complete the form and send/fax/email it to our outfitter and air agent, Lori Charles, who will be booking your round trip air from New York to Tel Aviv, and any additional air from your hometown to New York.

Air Schedules and More

Choosing the best possible air arrangements is always a challenge. Our outfitter and air agent works with many airlines that offer the best level of service, routings and value for many of our AdventureWomen programs. Due to our arrival and departure times into Tel Aviv, it is easiest to fly as a group, be picked up on arrival as a group at the same time, and be taken to the airport at the same time at trip's end.

Roundtrip economy-class jet transportation will be provided from New York to Tel Aviv via Delta Airlines.

September 8, 2014 Delta Airlines DL268K:

Departing New York (JFK) at 11:50 p.m.

Arriving Tel Aviv at 5:20 p.m. on September 9

September 21, 2014 Delta Airlines DL269U:

Departing Tel Aviv at 12:40 a.m. (check in late night on September 20th

Arriving New York at 5:30 a.m. on the same day, September 21

****Please note** that all flight numbers and current air schedules are subject to change with no advance notice!

HOW TO REGISTER FOR THE NATURE OF ISRAEL TOUR

First, call (800-804-8686) or email (trips@adventurewomen.com) the AdventureWomen office to determine space availability. As a courtesy, we will hold your space for 5 days while you are completing the registration process, and making personal and travel arrangements.

Next, complete and sign the Trip Registration and International OR Domestic Passenger Information forms on our Web site by clicking "Sign Up for this Trip" on the trip page. We can also fax or email them to you. Include, with your forms, the required deposit that can be made by credit card (Visa, MasterCard, or Discover), personal check, money order, or cashier's check. You can also give us your credit card number over the phone. Once we receive your **deposit and both forms**, we will mail you a trip confirmation/information packet verifying your registration.

LIABILITY FORM AND FINAL PAYMENT

Part of what AdventureWomen, Inc. hopes to foster is the taking of more self-responsibility for our own lives, health, and safety. Please read the Liability Form carefully, sign it, and return it with the remainder of your balance due by:

JUNE 10, 2014.

CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS

Notification of cancellations must be received in writing. Full payment is due 90 days prior to departure date, and 50% of the registration deposit is non-refundable.

For cancellations received 60-89 days prior to the trip departure date: 50% of the total trip cost is non-refundable. For cancellations received 1-59 days prior to the trip departure date: 100% of the total trip cost is non-refundable.

You are highly encouraged to purchase trip cancellation insurance to cover emergency situations and trip cancellation. Information is sent to you in your registration packet.

SWITCHING TRIPS

Before your final balance due date, you may change your deposit to another trip within the same calendar year by paying a \$75 fee to switch. You may not switch your deposit to a trip in another calendar year.

NO SMOKING POLICY

Beginning in 1995, our trips became smoke free. Please note that there will be no smoking by any participants on Adventure-Women vacations.

Then, to make your airline reservations, call our travel consultant **Lori Charles at Classic Escapes, 1-800-627-1244 or 1-718-280-5021** to make your airline reservations.

PHYSICAL CONDITION REQUIRED

This trip is rated as **MODERATE**. This means that you must be in very good physical condition. Trips of this designation offer moderate physical challenges. We define "Moderate" as being able to hike/walk from 5-8 miles, in rolling terrain.

PASSPORTS, TRAVEL DOCUMENTS AND HEALTH REQUIREMENTS

Citizens of the United States must possess a valid passport, which must be valid 3 months beyond your intended stay. No visas are required for U.S. Citizens for travel to Israel. Citizens of other countries should check with the Israeli Embassy in their home country.

If you do not have a passport, GET IT SOON! When you get your passport, you should also get two extra photographs to take with you. You should always possess extra photos when traveling to use in case of an emergency.

No special vaccinations are required for travel to Israel. However, please consult your personal physician, local health department, travel clinic, or immunization center about any vaccinations you may need to update, or others that may be personally recommended for you based on your age, health, and past vaccination history. Hepatitis A and B are present everywhere in the world, so you should talk to your doctor about this.

You MUST have your own health insurance and not have any physical problems or conditions that would be adversely affected by the activities on this trip or the rigors of international travel.

ABOUT OUR ISRAELI SPECIALIST-GUIDE

With more than 30 years experience, a Master's Degree in Biblical Studies, and deep insight into his homeland's complex past, **Amir Orly** is the ideal guide to show us Israel's many treasures. He serves as a guide for dignitaries, media, and heads of state, and has developed and taught academic programs on religion and regional conflict for several American universities. Amir will enrich each stop along our journey with historical background and meaning.

OUR EXCITING ITINERARY FOR THE NATURE OF ISRAEL ADVENTURE

Days 1 - 2, Monday - Tuesday, September 8 - 9, 2014: New York/Tel Aviv

Tonight we board our overnight flight to Israel.

Arriving the next day, we are greeted by our guide and transferred to our hotel. En route to the hotel, we visit the biblical landscape reserve of Neot Kdumim, a unique endeavor to re-create the physical setting of the Bible in all its depth and detail. There are plants here from biblical times with the following names: the *Forest of Milk and Honey*, the *Dale of the Song of Songs*, *Isaiah's Vineyard*, and the *Fields of the Seven Varieties*. Far more than a "garden" that displays various biblical plants, Neot Kdumim embodies the panorama and power of the landscapes that helped shape the values of the Bible and provides a rich vocabulary for expressing them.

Tonight's Welcome Dinner is followed with an evening discussion by an Israeli nature preservation expert.

(Meals Aloft and Welcome Dinner)

Overnight at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Tel Aviv

**ABOUT ADVENTURE
TRAVEL TOURS**
Please Read Carefully!

At AdventureWomen, we would like to ensure that all participants understand that our excursions are adventure travel vacations, and not "tours." We define "adventure travel" as travel in which one actively participates, as opposed to a "tour," in which one is more or less a passive observer. AdventureWomen designs and organizes vacations all over the world for women who want to experience an active, out of the ordinary vacation, and meet new friends. Most of all, we want our trips to be fun!

In this spirit, the successful adventure traveler should be a good-natured realist and have a sense of humor! Adventure vacations, by nature, require that participants be self-sufficient, flexible, and able to accept situations as they exist, and not just as they would have preferred or expected them to exist. The constraints of scheduled group traveling also necessitate that each of us be understanding of and sensitive to others. Being on time is important, and contributes to the congeniality, success and well being of both individuals and the group!

Thank you for choosing to travel with AdventureWomen! If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call, write or email us.

Renowned for its excellent personalized service, the Crowne Plaza Hotel is modern, elegant and ideally located on Tel-Aviv's seafront promenade. It is within easy access from Tel-Aviv's fun and entertainment centers, shopping, business and nightlife districts. The hotel features 246 rooms and suites all equipped with modern amenities, and it is our home for the next three nights.

Day 3, Wednesday, September 10: Tel Aviv/Old Jaffa/White City Of Tel Aviv City Tour

Today we begin with a visit to Jaffa, which adjoins Tel Aviv with a harbor that has been in use since the Bronze Age. The city's history is connected to a series of successive conquests that rocked Israel throughout the millennia. Today Jaffa is a city with a diverse population of Jews, Muslims and Christians. Currently undergoing a wave of gentrification, Jaffa is a socio-economic mix of young artists, new wealth and older, less affluent inhabitants. Culturally, Jaffa has become a place where creative people live, work and set up shop, making its streets a maze of discovery – with galleries, theaters, restaurants, a flea market and an antique district.

We are honored today to visit a unique museum and art gallery located in the private home of acclaimed artist Ilana Goor. Well-known for her unusual designs of tableware and furniture, she has renovated a beautiful old building in the Artists Quarter.

We continue to the recently renovated old Othman train station and stroll through Neve Zedek, the first neighborhood in Tel Aviv. For years, the neighborhood prospered as Tel Aviv itself, the first modern city, grew up around it. Years of neglect and disrepair followed, but today, Neve Zedek has become one of Tel Aviv's latest fashionable and expensive districts.

We break for lunch in the Old Port of Tel Aviv, one of the liveliest entertainment centers, with dozens of restaurants, high end shops and markets.

Tel Aviv was founded in 1909 by a small group of Jewish families who moved from the overcrowded and hostile Arab town of Jaffa. Just one hundred years later, it is Israel's 2nd largest and most vibrant city. Its sheer vigor and determination makes Tel Aviv seem vastly bigger than it really is. In fact, the city is smaller in area than Haifa or Jerusalem, but almost one-half of Israel's population lives in the greater Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

Driving through the White City of Tel Aviv, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, we see a collection of over 4,000 Bauhaus or International-style buildings. These were built in the 1930s by German Jewish architects who immigrated here after the rise of the Nazis. We stop to visit the "White Square" environmental monument by well-known Israeli sculptor Danni Karavan.

This evening we enjoy a special outing that includes dinner and a theater performance at Na Laga'at Center. Originally opened in 2007, Na Laga'at (which translates to "please touch") was founded by the Na Laga'at non-profit organization, which in turn was founded on the idea that every human being has the right to contribute to the society in which he or she lives. The Center is the first of its kind in the world and its main aim is to promote interaction between deaf-blind, deaf, and blind individuals with people able to hear and see, regardless of cultural or social distinctions.

(Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

Overnight at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Tel Aviv

Day 4, Thursday, September 11: *Latrun Bird Watching Center/Kibbutz Nachshon/Tel Maresha*

A special morning today, we spend time in the country-side at Latrun Bird Watching Center, a model for restoration ecology. Meet with Dr. Yosef Leshem (duties permitting) or someone from his team, founder of the bird center and the driving force behind many of the birding centers in Israel, and hear about the UN supported program: "Birds Have No Borders." Tel Aviv University and SPNI (Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel) have been allocated an area of 8 acres on the western side of the site in order to establish the International Center for the Study of Bird Migration. The complex includes an inter-university research institute, a field study center, a hostel, and a large auditorium that combines a museum and a radar system to display to the public the phenomenon of stork and other bird migration.

On our way to the historic Ayalon Valley in the center of Israel, we'll visit Kibbutz Nachshon. This strategic region has played a central role in the history of modern Israel and its roots go back to the Biblical period. Viticulture and winemaking have been a part of life in the Valley for at least 3,000 years, and the ancient stone wine vats in the hills and fields bear witness to this. We learn about this unique way of life, visit their dairy farm and winery, and taste the kibbutz's homemade produce of cheeses and wines. A delicious lunch is served at the Kibbutz.

Next stop: Tel Maresha, part of the expanse of the National Park of Beit Guvrin that covers approximately 1,250 acres. For thousands of years, people quarried the high quality limestone from these hills, which created huge hollow complexes beneath the ground. The complexes were used for dwellings, burial caves, storerooms, cisterns, industrial facilities, hideouts and dovecotes (a structure to house doves or pigeons).

Walking through this underground labyrinth, we glance into how people lived and worked in ancient times. And, time permitting, we'll participate in an archeological dig, a rare opportunity to touch a piece of history!

(Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

Overnight at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Tel Aviv

Day 5, Friday, September 12: *Tel Aviv/Caesarea/ Haifa*

Our journey continues north to Caesarea on the Mediterranean Sea, an ancient city and now an archaeological park. Constructed by Herod the Great between 22 and 10 BC and named for Caesar Augustus, Caesarea was one of the most splendid cities in Palestine and

was the capital of the province for almost 600 years. Here there are ruins from the Roman, Byzantine and Crusader eras, with a virtual model of Ancient Caesarea and the enormous artificial port that even today would be considered an important feat of engineering. Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael is located between the southern Carmel Mountain and the Mediterranean Sea in the foothills of the town Zichron Ya'akov. Established in 1949, the Kibbutz is a wildlife sanctuary especially developed to protect the habitat both for native and migratory and wading birds such as the Great Black Headed Gull, Terns and Glossy Ibis. For thousands of years, migrating birds would stop at this swampland in order to build up strength prior to making the long trek over the Sahara Desert. Today, the fish ponds created by Kibbutz Ma'agan Michael mimic these swamps, and serve as a place for migrating birds to meet, rest, and feed. Throughout the year, hundreds of species of birds are seen at the ponds of Ma'agan Michael, and SPNI has decided to open a bird observatory here.

Next, we drive to the foot of Mount Carmel to see the Stella Maris Carmelite Monastery. In the 12th century, during the Crusader occupation of the region, groups of religious hermits began to inhabit the caves in this area in imitation of Elijah the Prophet. Within a century, these monastic hermits were organized into the Carmelite order which spread throughout Europe. While the Carmelite orders flourished in Europe throughout the Middle Ages, its founders on Mount Carmel were exiled at the time of the Mamluk conquest in 1291 and did not return until the 18th century. Construction of the present monastery and basilica began in 1836. Today, Mount Carmel is a center of the Israeli wine industry, and lunch today is in the Tishbi Winery, the first private commercial winery on Mount Carmel!

We end our very busy day with a last stop before Haifa, at the picturesque Ein Hod Artist's Village, situated on a hillside among olive groves, with a stunning view of the Mediterranean Sea and a 12th c. Crusader fortress. Many Israeli painters, sculptors and musicians live here, and maintain studios and galleries that are open to the public.

Located on the northern peak of Mount Carmel, Haifa overlooks a bay on the Mediterranean Sea. Compared by some to the similarly-situated cities of Memphis or Naples, Israel's third largest city is a major industrial center and has a population of almost 300,000. According to a popular Israeli saying, "*Tel Aviv plays while Jerusalem prays. But Haifa works!*"

Like most of Israel, Haifa has been populated since ancient times. Elijah is the city's most famous early inhabitant: here he meditated in a cave before defeating the priests of Baal. In April 22, 1948, the Arabs of Haifa surrendered to Israeli forces and the town remains under Israeli rule today. Most of Haifa's Arab inhabitants left, but the town still retains a cosmopolitan mixture of Muslim Arabs, Christian Arabs, and Baha'is.

(Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

Overnight at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Haifa

Our hotel tonight is located on the green hills of the Carmel Mountain, with a breathtaking view of the Haifa Bay. The hotel is just a few minutes' walk from the popular Louis Promenade and Carmel Center with its many cafés, shops and entertainment venues. From the hotel you can easily walk to the breathtaking Bahai Temple and Gardens. Tastefully and elegantly designed in modern style, all the guestrooms and suites offer marvelous views.

Day 6, Saturday, September 13: Haifa/Bahai Gardens/Hai Bar National Park

After breakfast we visit the immaculate Bahai Gardens, with their stone peacocks and delicately manicured cypress trees. A restful, aesthetic memorial to the founders of the Baha'i Faith, pilgrims come to Haifa from all parts of the world to pay homage to the first leaders of their religion, which emphasizes unity across cultures and religions. They believe that messengers of God, like Moses, Jesus and Mohammed, have been sent at different times in history with doctrines varying to fit changing social needs, but bringing substantially the same message.

We'll then discover the National Park of Hai Bar, which is located on Mount Carmel. Covering some 1,500 acres in the heart of Mount Carmel, known as "Little Switzerland," this park carries on a special mission to restore Israel's wildlife. The nature reserve protects the wild animals mentioned in the Bible and other endangered desert species.

Driving to the World Heritage Site of Acco, we view an exceptional historic walled port-city which has had continuous settlement from the Phoenician period. Acco became the capital of the Crusaders after they lost Jerusalem. Walking through the restored underground Crusader City, we can see that the present city is characteristic of a fortified walled town dating from the 18-19th centuries, with well-preserved components such as a citadel, mosques, khans, and baths.

Continuing to Rosh Hanikra, we take short cable car

ride that descends down to the British railway tunnels and bridge. A tunnel allows visitors to reach the sea caves (grottoes) and watch the interaction of sea waves and the white rock. It is one of the most spectacular sites of nature beauty in Israel. The cliff and the seashore are a natural reserve of unique fauna and flora. On the slopes of the cliff, the scented white seashore Lilies, Narcissus and Squill bloom in autumn and wintertime. Inside the grottoes, groups of bats spend their day resting on the ceiling while swallows and rock pigeons nest in the protective darkness of the caves. Flights of seagulls wing their way to their nesting island a mile to the west. There one can observe most of the local and European seashore and sea birds. The rocky depths of the sea offers a friendly environment to all kinds of Mediterranean fish and other marine animals.

The most attractive guest on this shore is the logger-head turtle, a huge maritime reptile that has chosen these rocky shores as a mating area. In the rough sand shores the female digs bottle-shaped pits and lays her eggs in early summer. A few weeks later hundreds of tiny turtles dig their way out of the pits and hurry to the sea, guided by the beam of the full moon.

(Breakfast and Dinner)

Overnight at Kibbutz Hagoshirim

Our next two nights are at HaGoshirim Kibbutz and Resort Hotel, located in the heart of the Galilee forest among natural springs and between the tributaries of the Jordan River. It is built on the site of Emir Fa'ur's ruined winter palace, where he controlled the northern Hula Valley in the days of the Ottoman Empire. The hotel lies in the center of the valley, facing the Golan Heights and the snows of Mount Hermon. Its unique combination of ancient and modern architecture blends together in pleasant harmony.

Day 7, Sunday, September 14: Tel Dan Nature Reserve/Beit Osishkin/Hula Nature Reserve & Agamon

Today's drive takes us to Tel Dan Nature Reserve, a wonderfully unique combination of nature and culture. With rare archeological findings of city life dating back to the Neolithic or Stone Age, and lush river greenery along the river, Tel Dan is a feast for the mind and senses. This principal tributary of the Jordan River is Israel's biggest source of fresh water. Here you will become aware of the conflict between nature preservation and other uses of fresh water in a long water shortage period.

We visit Beit Osishkin, a museum and education center for nature and culture of the region, and have an opportunity to learn about the alpine peaks of Mount Hermon

and the ecological impact of the drainage of the Hula Lake in the 1950s. Following lunch, the drive takes us north to the Hula Nature Reserve and the Agamon, for a half day of bird watching in the north of Israel. The Hula Valley is an important resting and "refueling" place for migrating birds on their annual trip from Europe to Africa and back. The lake and the swamps are home to tens of thousands of aquatic birds, along with many species of rare plants and fish, creating a wondrous world of flora and fauna.

(Breakfast and Dinner)

Overnight at Kibbutz Hagoshirim

Day 8, Monday, September 15: Mount Meron/Tsfat (Safed)/Jerusalem

This morning we drive along the Rift Valley cliffs, overlooking the Hula Valley to Mount Meron, then we take a hike around the comfortable "Summit Trail" and enjoy amazing views over the entire north of Israel.

We'll visit the ancient Galilean city of Safed, the highest city in Israel, which commands breathtaking views of the Galilee with its green mountains and the white snow-capped peak of Mount Hermon. One of the four holy cities of Israel (Jerusalem, Tiberias, and Hebron are the other three), it has been a spiritual Kabbalah center since the 1600s. The Kabbalist mystics lived, studied, taught, and wrote in the city, and many of their graves are today objects of worship. We wander through the alleyways past charming stone houses with their artist studios, workshops and synagogues, some active for as many as 500 years.

Lunch today is enjoyed at Muscat, Chef Haim Tibi's gourmet's restaurant at Mizpe Hayamim Resort.

Driving along the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem we stop, if time permits, to visit the National Park of Beit She'an, which houses some of Israel's most spectacular archaeological finds. Located on the banks of the Harod stream, this city was first established in the 5th century BC. It served as the military and administrative center of the Egyptian New Kingdom and is another of the many sites that were destroyed in 732 BC by Tiglath Pileser III, King of Assyria. It was on the walls of Beit Shean that the Philistines hanged the bodies of King Saul and his sons after the crushing defeat on Mt. Gilboa.

Late this evening we arrive at the magical city of Jerusalem and check into our hotel, where we stay for the next two nights.

(Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

Overnight at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Jerusalem

The Crowne Plaza Jerusalem is a luxurious, spacious and modern hotel situated on Givat Ram. Its 400 rooms offer breathtaking panoramic views of the Old City, the Knesset, the Supreme Court and the Israel Museum. Every floor in the Jerusalem Crowne Plaza Hotel has a different theme, each of which pertains to a different neighborhood in the city.

Day 9, Tuesday, September 16: Jerusalem: Mount Of Olives/Old City Of Jerusalem/Israel Museum / Jerusalem's Zoo

We spend today exploring Jerusalem, a mountainous city with a 5,000-year history, sacred to the three great monotheistic religions of the world – Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It is a major site of pilgrimage for all three religions, as well as non-religious travelers, thanks to its unmatched historical and spiritual importance, its network of museums and concerts, and the archeological treasures that are continually discovered here. It is also a dynamic modern city shared by Jews, Christians and Arabs.

We'll visit the Mount of Olives, with its stunning views of Jerusalem. According to Jewish tradition, the Messiah will appear here and bring the dead back to life. As a result, the hillside became the holiest cemetery, and is covered by thousands of graves, some remaining olive trees, and churches that mark the various acts in the life of Jesus.

The streets of the Old city of Jerusalem is the perfect venue for a walking tour, which includes amazing and exotic middle-eastern bazaars and markets. Stroll through Armenian, Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Quarters, and visit historical, archeological, and holy sites.

Before visiting the Israeli Supreme Court for a tour of this striking compound, we have an authentic falafel lunch.

The architects for the Supreme Court building leaned heavily on the Bible and the precepts of Jewish thought in their design. Notice at the entrance foyer that there is a narrow staircase leading into the sky. Jerusalem stone walls on one side, and a bare flat wall on the other, symbolize the aspiration from the land (laws) toward the heavens (justice.) This same theme is repeated in the visual leitmotif of straight lines ("Your laws are straight," Psalms 119:113) and circles ("He leads me in the circles of Justice," Psalms 23:3.) The courtrooms are simple and elegant: the judges and lawyers sit along two tables that form a circle. And the building is conveniently situated between the Knesset (Israel's parliament) and the site of the future Prime Minister's office and

residence, thus the judicial branch serves as mediator between the executive and legislative branches. Our next stop is the Israel Museum. The most popular part of the museum is the Shrine of the Book, with its distinctive onion-shaped top. The roof was designed to resemble the jar covers in which the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947. Inside, a long, subtly lit passageway, designed to evoke the environment in which the scrolls were found, has a permanent exhibition on life in Qumran when the scrolls were written. The main attraction of the Shrine of the Book is, of course, the Dead Sea Scrolls themselves. Directly beneath the dome is an imposing showcase containing a replica of the Great Isaiah Scroll (written c. 100 BC), comprised of 66 chapters on a 23 ft long, sewn-together piece of parchment. This find was extremely important, as it is 1,000 years older than the oldest biblical manuscript that was ever available. Another important exhibit here is the scale model of Jerusalem at the time of the Second Temple.

We end our day in Jerusalem's Biblical Zoo, a world leader in protecting endangered species. Meet Dr. Sigalit Dvir, deputy director of the Zoo for a special "behind the scenes" tour. The Jerusalem Zoo is also a Middle Eastern leader in a different, broader type of population control: saving endangered species from extinction and eventually reintroducing the animals back to nature. The Persian Fallow Deer was thought to be extinct in the early part of the 20th century, but was found again in Iran about 50 years ago. Israel has been breeding the animals since the 1970s, at the Hai Bar Animal Reserve on the Carmel, and at the Jerusalem Zoo. Another animal being saved by the zoo is the Sand Cat, a small, nocturnal feline desert dweller native to the Arava. Nearly extinct due to agriculture, the cats are being raised in an off-exhibit area by the zoo, in conjunction with the Israel Zoological Association and the National Parks Authority, with the express goal of reintroducing them back to nature.

(Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

Overnight at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Jerusalem

Day 10, Wednesday, September 17: Dead Sea/Einot Tzukim Nature Reserve/Ein Gedi Nature National Park/Masada/Mitzpe Ramon

This morning we leave Jerusalem and travel to the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth and the saltiest body of water on earth. No living creature can live in this water, but its minerals are good for our skin and muscles.

We visit the Einot Tzukim Nature Reserve. The green oasis stands in contrast between the desolate slopes of the des-

ert and the blue Dead Sea. Walking through the reserve we meet animals and plants around the springs of fresh water.

Another reserve we visit is the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve, a lush oasis set between the harsh Judean Desert and the barren Dead Sea. Taking a short hike to the beautiful waterfalls, we enjoy the wonderful flora and fauna en route.

Lunch today is on the shores of the Dead Sea, allowing us time to float in this sinkless and mineral-laden water.

After lunch we climb the ancient serpent path, or take a cable car to the ruins of Massada, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Built by King Herod, the site would later be the scene of the Zealots last stand against the Roman Legion. Determined not to become slaves to the Romans, they did the unthinkable, which was mass suicide. Some 960 souls chose death over surrender on that fateful day. Explore the ancient excavation of Herod's Palaces, the bathhouse, storerooms, the ramp, and one of the oldest synagogues in the world.

In the Negev Desert of southern Israel is the largest natural crater in the world, Mitzpe Ramon, a place of unparalleled serenity and breathtaking views. The crater's walls are made from layers of different-color rock beds containing fossils of shells, plants, and trees.

(Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

Overnight at the Isrotel Inn Hotel in Mitzpe Ramon

Our hotel tonight, the Isrotel Ramon Inn Hotel, is situated on a cliff overlooking the Ramon Crater. You can enjoy a wet and dry sauna, a heated and covered swimming pool that is open all year round, and a variety of body treatments. "The Ramon-Inn Restaurant" serves an abundance of Middle Eastern style cuisine with a North African touch.

Day 11, Thursday, September 18: Machtesh Ramon/Yotvata Hai Bar/Eilat

Today's drive brings us to makhtesh Ramon, a large erosion cirque, created 220 million years ago when oceans covered the area (the word crater is therefore a misleading translation of Hebrew to English). The Ramon Crater measures 24 miles in length and between 1.2 and 6 miles in width and is shaped like a long heart, forming Israel's largest national park, the Ramon Nature Reserve. There are very few craters like this in the world, and three of them are located in the Israeli Negev Desert.

Continuing by bus we travel to the Arava Planes subtropical desert, with its unique fauna and flora. Here we visit Yotvata Hai Bar, a safari-like reserve with animals that at

one time were natives to this country and later became extinct. The Hai Bar Reserve (Hebrew for wildlife) works at trying to reintroduce these animals back to nature. Our destination for tonight is Eilat, Israel's southern-most city on the shores of the Red Sea. Eilat's location made it strategically significant during the many historical periods in which it served as a port, beginning in the days of King Solomon. The modern city of Eilat was established in 1950. In the early 1950s, a quay was built in the new city, and subsequently a port, which became the basis for the new city's economy. Eilat has a rare combination of tropical sea with some of the most beautiful coral reefs, a huge number of migrating birds, and a very unique geology.

(Breakfast and Dinner)

Overnight at the Crowne Plaza Hotel Eilat

The Crowne Plaza Hotel Eilat is ideally located on Eilat's North Beach. The hotel has 266 spacious rooms, a large swimming pool surrounded by lawns, poolside snack bar, luxurious health club and spa including reflex-massage, dry and wet saunas, chiropractic and mud treatments, Jacuzzi outdoor pool and cosmetic treatments. We stay here for the next two nights.

Day 12, Friday, September 19: *Eilat's Bird Sanctuary/Underwater Observatory*

To visit the Eilat Bird Sanctuary means an early start to our day. Connecting between three continents – Africa, Asia and Europe – Eilat is the principle migration route for millions of birds. In the spring, more than 30 species (about a million birds of prey) take advantage of rising warm air above the Eilat Mountains. For many, Eilat is a refueling stop on their hazardous journey. During the migration season, between 500 million to a billion birds are estimated to cross Eilat's skies. The Eilat Bird Sanctuary and Ringing Station are located on the site to the north of the Saltpans and close to the Jordanian border crossing. The saltpans, pools, trees and bushes here host migrant birds such as shrikes, flycatchers and warblers. The Little Green Bee-eater is also common here.

We return to the hotel for breakfast and then continue with our visit to the underwater Observatory to view the full spectrum of sea life that lives in Eilat's famous and magnificent coral reefs. The bay is one of the major attractions of the Red Sea, with its beautiful beaches, water sports, and one of the best diving spots in the world. South of the city is the Coral Reserve, with splendid tropical fish on the reef, and the Underwater Observatory, which displays a marine museum with collections of fascinating sea animals.

At lunchtime we board a private yacht to enjoy a relaxing sailing experience along with a delicious BBQ lunch.

Tonight we are treated to a special Farewell Dinner in a local restaurant, and we celebrate our time together and this unique trip we have just completed in Israel.

(Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner)

Overnight at the Crowne Plaza Eilat

Day 13, Saturday, September 20: *Eilat~Day At Leisure/Tel Aviv*

Today is at leisure to explore Eilat on our own. Most of Eilat's sunny Red Sea shores will remind you of a tropical Caribbean hideaway. The water is very clear and calm and swimming is lovely. There are plenty of bars/restaurants on the beach, so lunch will be a hard decision!

Late afternoon we'll be transferred to the airport for our short flight to Tel Aviv, where we connect with flights home, departing shortly after midnight.

(Breakfast)

Day 14, Sunday, September 21: *Tel Aviv/New York*

This morning we land in New York and transfer to flights to your hometown cities, with all the special memories of our Nature of Israel adventure.

(Meals Aloft)

ISRAEL'S CLIMATE AND WEATHER IN SEPTEMBER

The seasons in Israel are different from those in the United States and western Europe. Basically there are two seasons: from late October through mid-March is considered winter, which is cool to cold, and often rainy; and summer, from April through October, which is warm to hot and virtually rain-free.

Some will argue that weather-wise, the best time to visit Israel is in the spring (April and May) or autumn (September and October) when temperatures are milder in most areas. In September, the temperatures in Tel Aviv are usually between 61 to 75 Degrees Fahrenheit. Jerusalem and the Golan Heights are approx. 5 degrees F. colder, and Eilat is usually 5 degrees F. warmer.

We think that September is a splendid time to visit Israel!

MONEY AND CURRENCY IN ISRAEL

The unit of currency in Israel is the Israeli Shekel. As of September 14, 2013, 1 U.S. dollar = 3.542 Shekels.

Do bring a few hundred U.S. Dollars to use while traveling to and from Israel, or to exchange when you get to the airport on arrival in Tel Aviv. You should budget that

your tips be in Shekels.

Dollars are easily exchanged in Israel. You can do that at the airport on arrival or Shekels can be withdrawn from an ATM, which are widely available and is the best way to get Shekels in Israel. Do **not** buy Shekels before you arrive, as you will get a *terrible* exchange rate. Most major credit cards are widely accepted in Israel, even for small purchases, with the exception of Discover Cards, which are rarely accepted.

ELECTRICITY IN ISRAEL

The electricity in Israel is rated at 220V (220V - 240V) 50Hz. Israel uses what is called an "H" type plug. This plug, which is unique to Israel, has two flat prongs that form a V-shape and a flat vertical grounding prong at the bottom. They are rated at 16A. Type H outlets (sockets) are so shaped as to accommodate type C plugs as well.



Type H plug and Outlet

WHAT TO PACK FOR YOUR ISRAEL VACATION

LUGGAGE, CLOTHING, AND TRAVEL ACCESSORIES:

Three words of packing advice for your Israel vacation with AdventureWomen: **LIGHT, LIGHT, LIGHT!** It is best to condense your luggage into **one manageable suitcase with wheels** and one daypack or backpack (carry-on size). Also, a spare, very light duffle bag or day pack rolled or folded into your wheeled suitcase is useful to have to transport souvenir items home.

CARRY ON BAG FROM THE U.S.:

We suggest that you use your daypack as your carry-on bag during all flights. In it you should include all valuables and essentials: medications, passports and all important documents, cameras and film, a day's change of clothing, lightweight sleepwear, and toiletries.

Put luggage ID tags on the outside AND inside of your baggage. If your bag is lost and the outside ID tag and baggage stickers are dislodged, the airlines may open the bag to search for an ID inside your bag. (AdventureWomen sends you 3 tags for the outside of your bags.)

PRE-DEPARTURE TASKS FOR YOUR ISRAEL ADVENTURE VACATION

- Obtain or renew passport.
- Evaluate and obtain trip cancellation, baggage, and

medical insurance.

- Consult with physician for physical examination, immunization, malaria suppressant, and prescription medicine recommendations.

TRAVEL CLOTHING

- Clothing should be lightweight, quick drying, and made of breathable fabrics. Pay special attention to sun protection needs. Long sleeves and wide brim hats are highly recommended.
- Underwear. Synthetics are easier to wash and dry.
- Sleepwear.
- Shirts: Long-sleeve, synthetic or cotton shirts because they are featherweight, durable, wrinkle-resistant, and dry quickly. Those with multiple, closed (velcro or zipper) pockets are excellent.
- Short-sleeve synthetic or cotton T-Shirts. Those with multiple, closed (velcro or zipper) pockets are excellent.
- Sweater/Jacket: Medium-weight sweater, or jacket made of synthetic fabric.
- Vest: A lightweight, multi-pocket, photo journalist-type vest is excellent for day use (use it to store camera equipment, binoculars, etc.).
- Pants: Full-length pants, preferably of quick-drying synthetic fabric with many zippered pockets. Pants with zip-off legs save room and are very convenient for use during a long day.
- Knee-length hiking shorts, preferably of a synthetic fabric.
- Bathing suit.
- Sun hat with a wide brim, preferably with a chin strap to keep it from blowing off.
- Waterproof rain jacket and/or sturdy poncho to protect day pack and camera gear from rain. (This can be your jacket, as listed above, as long as it is waterproof).
- Athletic socks (synthetic for easy washing and drying) that are suitable for your lightweight hiking boots or walking shoes.
- Sturdy, properly fitting footwear can make your trip much more comfortable and enjoyable. Good ankle support and good traction are critical. We recommend lightweight hiking boots OR comfortable, lightweight walking shoes.
- Sandals for more "light" walking days, or evenings out. (Teva-type sandals or similar, with support: Merrill's, Keens, etc. or any thing that can get wet and dry fast, especially when you are on the Red Sea and in Eilat).
- 3-4 cotton bandanas. (For uses too numerous to mention!)

- 1 set of nice, casual city clothes that are dressier for evening restaurants or social activities.

PERSONAL ITEMS

- Passport.
- 2 spare passport photos to bring on the trip (in case of lost passport).
- Battery operated travel alarm clock.
- Extra batteries for cameras, alarm clock, etc.
- Small flashlight with extra batteries and bulb.
- Sunglasses (90% - 100% ultraviolet and some infrared protection) and case.
- Contact lenses, cleaner, saline solution, extra eyeglasses with safety band.
- Money belt.
- U.S. Cash and credit cards.
- Address book, writing paper, or journal, pen/pencil.
- Daypack (can also serve as an airline carry-on bag).
- Water bottle. We recommend the 24 oz. Nalgene Everyday OTG Tritan Bottle. Made of Eastman Tritan™ copolyester, the bottle is completely BPA-free. Tritan™ copolyester provides excellent impact resistance and is suitable for both warm and cold beverages.
- Locks for your suitcase/duffel bag (when left in rooms).
- A variety of sizes of Ziploc-type bags for packing liquids, or wet, dirty clothing.
- 1-2 heavyweight plastic garbage bags (for wet clothes).
- Washcloth (not supplied in most hotels).
- Personal toiletries in small leak-proof bottles.
- Biodegradable bar soap (can double as laundry soap).
- Tampons or sanitary napkin supply (not always widely available).
- Thread, needles, safety pins for minor repairs.
- Insect repellent.
- Wash & Dries (or other antiseptic wipes) for hand washing and emergency toilet paper.
- Earplugs. We recommend Mack's Pillow Soft White Moldable Silicone Snore Proof Earplugs, which you can buy at most drugstores, or www.earplugstore.com. Good to 22 Decibels!
- Small, lightweight binoculars for viewing animals, birds, scenery and long distance views. Nikon or Minolta make fine, lightweight viewing binoculars. Try a general game viewing 7 X 28, or 8 X 20 binocular.

PERSONAL FIRST AID KIT (bring in small amounts and in small containers)

- Foot powder for moisture absorption; cloth, not plas-

tic Band-aids; about 10 individually wrapped alcohol pads; and a small tube of Neosporin or other antibiotic cream.

- Aspirin/ibuprofen, etc.
- Cold-symptom relief tablets, antihistamine, cough drops.
- Adequate quantity of sweat-resistant sun screen with at least an SPF 15 rating or higher, and lip balm with sunscreen.
- Tweezers.
- Ace bandage.
- An prescription antibiotic.
- Prescription medicines in their original bottles.
- Acidophilus enzyme (available in capsules in health-food stores). This often helps your digestive system get in shape for "new" flora.
- Imodium, Lomotil, or similar anti-diarrhea medicine.
- Pepto-Bismol tablets and/or liquid (in leak-proof bottle).

CAMERA EQUIPMENT

For many women, photography will be a VERY LARGE part of this trip. The opportunities are endless, and the scenery spectacular! We suggest that you bring many more memory cards and batteries than you think you could ever use!

OPTIONAL

- Pictures of your house, pets, and family (local people love to see this!).
- Reading material.
- Extra, lightweight duffle bag (empty, and packed inside your suitcase).

LAST MINUTE REMINDERS

- Make photocopies of your airline tickets and the first two pages of your passport, plus any visas - not required of U.S. Citizens - (if they are stamped inside your passport) and put them in different locations (suitcase, carry-on bag, etc.).
- Bring your 2 additional passport size photos to use in emergencies.
- Your valuables should be insured for the duration of the trip, but better yet, leave them at home (don't wear expensive gold and diamond jewelry).
- Remove extra credit cards, driver's license, and personal items from wallet or purse.
- Make sure passport and plane tickets are valid and in the correct name.
- Check with airline to reconfirm reservations and departure time (most airlines want to hear directly from the client for confirmations).
- Please leave all valuable jewelry at home!!!**

SOME EXTRA ITEMS TO ADD TO YOUR “WHAT TO BRING” LIST

With more than 30 years of experience flying around the world, we think these items help make your long airline flights much more comfortable:

- ☐ Neck pillow - Inflatable neck pillow for blissful support and deep sleep. For packing, it folds into itself. Self-sealing valve means nothing to close. Soft microfleece cover removes for washing.
Eagle Creek Large Inflatable Travel Neck Pillow at TravelSmith.
 - ☐ Sleep mask /Comfort eye shade - Ultra lightweight and comfortable, the Comfort Eye Shade screens out light and distractions for a cozier flight. Ultra-soft micro fleece for comfort. Adjustable elastic strap for a perfect fit. Made of Molded Polyester Micro Fleece.
Eagle Creek® Comfort Eye Shade at TravelSmith.
 - ☐ Travel compression socks - Reduce ankle and leg swelling and reduce the risk of deep vein thrombosis. These doctor-designed socks stimulate circulation through gradual compression that stops swelling and guards against (DVT). Made of coolmax®-lycra®-nylon. The TravelSox® cushion Walk Socks have extra-padded soles and are made of moisture wicking SoftPrim®.
TravelSox® Cushion Walk Sock™ at TravelSmith.
 - ☐ Noise canceling headphones - Block out unwanted sounds of children crying and airplane engine drone, and/or enjoy great audio sound. Reduce distortion and increase perceived loudness so you can enjoy sound at a lower volume. Get the around the ear design, which is very comfortable.
 - ☐ Bose Quiet Comfort 2 - List Price: \$199.99. Oval shaped around-the-ear design, an iPod fits nicely in the center of the case between the headphones. You can get the next generation of Bose Quiet Comfort 3, but the cost is \$349.00.
 - ☐ Audio Technica ATH-ANC7- List Price: \$219.95 Excellent sound quality and above average noise cancellation. Comfortable leather cushioning around the ear and can be worn for long periods of time with nodiscomfort. Excellent headphones with a reasonable price tag.

*Thank you for choosing to travel with
AdventureWomen!*

If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to call, write, or email us.

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