

Some Frequently Asked Questions...

Health, Fitness and Medical

Q. The information provided says that a reasonable level of fitness is required. What does that mean?

A. Some of the bigger days, we will walk 6-10km. However, you also need to be aware that we spend a lot of time on our feet, even if it is just standing at a site looking and listening. This year we have built 3 optional rest afternoons into the tour.

Q. Are there places where there are lots of stairs?

A. There are elevators in all hotels. Masada is accessible by cable car. There are a few stairs at many places. One big climb at Petra is optional. Hezekiah's tunnel has stairs. Megiddo has stairs (Down only)

Q. What if I have a medical condition which may need to be monitored during my trip?

A. If you have a medical condition we request that you notify us of this before you travel. If you need to take medication, we would also ask that you provide an action plan from your doctor advising what to do in case of an emergency. It would be wise to have a letter from your GP listing the medications that you will be carrying as not all countries have the same pharmaceutical leniency as Australia. ie. If you are carrying medication that includes codeine this could be problematic in some countries

Q. What will be the COVID requirements?

A. That is a hard question to answer this far out as requirements constantly change. Currently, there are no requirements to test. You may wish to consider masks on the plane and bus. You must have COVID cover in your travel insurance. (Olive Tree travel use Covermore insurance . See Covermore Insurance. PDS pages 42-44)
As with all trips of this nature we will be encouraging everyone to be careful with hygiene.

Food and Dietary Issues

Q. Lunches are not included in the cost. What does that mean about how they will be catered? Will we all be taken to one establishment, or will it be fend for yourself?

A. On most days, the guide will take the group to a suggested restaurant/café and usually negotiate a simple meal deal (often a simple sandwich or pitta bread, with a filling like Falafel, and salad/chips and drink). This assists us to stay on schedule instead of trying to round people up from 10 different places. We will try to keep lunches to US\$15 however, some days they may be US\$20. As there is a lot of food laid on at breakfast and dinner, some people skip lunch.

Q. What about dietary requirements?

A. There will always be options for people with dietary requirements such as vegetarian and gluten free at breakfast and dinner as they are buffets. However, sometimes lunches can be difficult. Anyone with more severe requirements for the lunches may need to bring their own snacks from home (or sneak a bit extra from breakfast at the hotel!).

Q. Do we need to allow money for water and toilets?

A. Most toilets will be free. However, a bit of loose change is recommended for some of the toilets (such as those in service stations in remote locations). We suggest you buy all water and don't drink from taps. I will be trying to negotiate for the bus driver to keep the bus stocked with refrigerated bottled water that people can buy for US\$1 each! I will give more advice on how to do water the cheapest ways once we get to Israel.

Itinerary and Accommodation

Q. The costs are based on twin share. Are doubles available for the same cost?

A. Yes. Same cost whether it's a room with 2 x twin beds or a double/queen for a married couple! It's only the single room occupancy that attracts the supplement

Q. Will there be time for self-exploration at some sites?

A. It varies from site to site. At many places, after the guide's commentary and explanation, people will have time to wander through a site themselves and be told where and when to meet either back at the bus or at a designated spot.

Q. Do we have WIFI?

A. The Israeli bus had fairly good WIFI last time. The hotels offer more than they deliver. It tends to drop out a lot.

Q. What will the weather be like?

A. It will be winter. Day time temperatures are around 10-15 degrees. I usually start the day with a jumper or jacket which you can take off as the day progresses (and leave in the bus). By 4pm you will need your jacket/jumper back on.

If you google weather in Israel in December, that will be helpful. You could google each location. E.g. Jerusalem up in the hills is colder than Caesarea Maritima by the sea. Petra was freezing at night, but hot in the day.

Q. Are there opportunities to wash clothes?

A. It is suggested you pack light as we will be based in two of the hotels for 5 nights each, which gives you the opportunity to do some washing in your room. This can dry overnight or while we are out that day. There is a laundry opposite the Tiberias hotel in Galilee (or at least there was last time).

Q. Do we need swimmers?

A. Bring your swimmers as one of the hotels has a heated indoor swimming pool (steam coming off the water). Plus, we might get a chance to swim in the dead sea (it is freezing).

Q. Do we need to dress more modestly in the Palestinian sites?

A. In Israel, dress standards are like Australia (in winter). In the Palestinian sites it is wise to be more respectful in regards to clothing. Keep in mind it will be winter so most people will be fully covered anyway. You will know in advance if you need to dress modestly on a particular day.

Visas and Currency

Q. Do we need visas?

A. For Aussie/NZ/UK passport holders, they get a free of charge visa on arrival into Israel. We take care of and organise a special group Visa for Jordan and Greece. No one will need to worry about getting visas done themselves before departure unless they are arriving separate to the group.

Q. What currency will we be dealing in?

A. You will be dealing in US\$ for spending money in Israel and Jordan.
Euros in Greece.

However, be aware it costs every time you use the card. Last time it cost me US\$6 every time I swiped a card. (So I take a fair bit of cash and just do a few larger cash withdrawals over there if I run out.) Previous tour members have been able to draw US dollars from ATM's in Israel. Likewise Greek ATMs dispense Euros.

Preparing for the Trip

Q. Is there pre-reading I can do?

A. Yes, this is advised to maximize your experience. We will soon be adding suggested reading to the website. One list will provide bible readings that go with the sites we visit. Another list will be the required reading for the QTC students, but this can be very beneficial for those attending the tour as a member of the public. (Also, a previous tour member has also shared his helpful pre-tour research from last time, which you may find interesting).