

Jewish Federations Western Connecticut Community Mission to Israel

October 16 – 24, 2023

Itinerary is subject to change

Day 1: Monday, October 16, 2023

Bruchim HaBa'im - Welcome to Israel!

- Arrival at Ben Gurion International Airport. Meet and greet.
- Proceed to Tel Aviv-Jaffa known as Israel capital for culture, commerce, and startups.
- Opening dinner at a restaurant **Malka Restaurant** by international Chef Eyal Shani

Overnight: Carlton Hotel, Tel Aviv

Day 2: Tuesday, October 17, 2023

The First Hebrew City: Past, Present, Future

- Breakfast at your hotel
- Walk through **Neve Tzedek**, the first Jewish neighborhood to be built outside the old city of the ancient port of Jaffa. Today it is a cultural mecca, with small boutiques and galleries, and the Suzanne Dellal Dance and Theater Center.
- Visit **Florentin Neighborhood** and learn about the city's vibrant **street art and graffiti scene** as you hear compelling stories behind the artwork from a local guide.
- Enjoy **street food lunch** like locals – Falafel in a pita, Hummus with tehini, Sabich and Burekas, all are very much Israeli.
- Visit at The **Shimon Peres Center for Peace and Innovation**: walk through the center and discover the story of the innovation nation. Meet virtually some of the leading Israeli entrepreneurs and companies representing all fields of Israeli innovation - automotive tech, agrotech, medical devices, cybersecurity, and more. Then take off to the future and learn about where Israeli innovation could lead to next.
- **Evening and dinner at leisure** to explore the Israeli version of The City that Never Sleeps.

Overnight: Carlton Hotel, Tel Aviv

Day 3: Wednesday, October 18, 2023

To Build and To Be Built

- Breakfast at your hotel
- Visit **ANU - Museum** of the Jewish People at the Tel Aviv University campus. ANU, formerly known as the Museum of the Jewish Diaspora (Beit Hatfutsot), is dedicated to celebrating and exploring the experiences, accomplishments, and spirit of the Jewish people from biblical times to the present. "ANU" — Hebrew for "we" — embraces inclusion and diversity.
- Proceed north to **Zichron Yaacov**. One man and his grand dream; Learn and experience firsthand how Baron Edmond de Rothschild turned his vision, values, and passion into reality. The **Ramat Hanadiv** gardens were inspired by the Baron's legacy and achievements.
- Lunch on route
- Arrive to **Afula-Gilboa SNEC Partnership** **Geather region** for partnership site visit/s including guided tour visit of **Ein Harod Museum**
- **Shevet Achim V'achayot**: Enjoy dinner with partnership families and volunteers.

Overnight: Ein Harod Kibbutz Lodging

Day 4: Thursday, October 19, 2023

Galilee, Golan, Community, and Culture

- Breakfast at your hotel
- Visit **Tsfat** or Safed, which has been known since the 16th century as a major center of Kabbalah - Jewish mysticism. Safed's mystical aura adds to its special status as one of Israel's four holy cities, along with Jerusalem, Tiberias, and Hebron. The old synagogues, narrow alleyways, and artists' studios add to the hilltop city's unmistakable charm.
- Proceed to **Metula**, Israel most northern town. Overlook the border with Lebanon and visit the newly constructed **Memorial Monument for the Southern Lebanon Army (SLA)**.
- Boxed lunch / Picnic lunch in the area
- Ascend **Golan Heights by jeep** to gain a better understanding of the strategic importance of the region.
- Visit and wine tasting **Odem Mountain Winery**, celebrating 20-year of wine producing. Edith and Michael Alfasi had a common dream of family winemaking in Golan Heights. Along with their love for wine, Edith and Michael's passion for winemaking led them to create a boutique winery that produces unique, creative, high-quality, and most importantly delicious wines.
- Participate in **Galilean cooking workshop and dinner** at the home of **Druze family** as we discuss the Druze community, their mysterious religion, and their unique culture.

Overnight: Ein Harod Kibbutz Lodging

Day 5: Friday, October 20, 2023

From Valleys to Mountains

- Breakfast at your hotel
- **Buzz Experience!** At Kibbutz Sde Eliyahu we will take a glimpse into organic agriculture. Visit **Bio-Bee**, the first biological pest control facility in Israel, and a world leader in its field. See live samples of beneficial insects and bumblebees, which are used for pollination.
- Continue to the ancient city of **Beit Shean**, Israel's largest archaeological park, to explore the remains of what was once a Hellenistic (and later a Byzantine) city. Stroll through the ancient streets and see shrines and an amphitheater.
- Drive to Jerusalem along Jordan Rift Valley
- Recite **Shehecheyanu**, the traditional blessing recited upon arrival to Jerusalem, atop Mount Scopus overlooking the Old City of Jerusalem.
- Enjoy a festive **Shabbat dinner** at the hotel with **lone soldiers** from around the world.

Overnight: David Citadel Hotel, Jerusalem

Day 6: Saturday, October 21, 2023

... and God blessed the seventh day ...

- Breakfast at your hotel
- Opportunity to attend Tefilot, Shabbat services, at one of the many synagogues in Jerusalem of your choice.
- **Optional: Shabbat walking tours exploring Jerusalem:**
 - **If Walls Could Speak:** Visit Yemin Moshe and Machne Israel and hear the stories of the brave men and women that started a revolution by settling in the first houses located outside the Old City Walls.
 - **The Railroad (Mesilla) Park:** Walk along the route of the Ottoman Railway, a lively urban park that connects different neighborhoods of Jerusalem.
- **Optional:** Spend the **day in the Dead Sea** region, the lowest spot on land on earth.
- Tour **Masada**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site; tour the ancient fortress that occupies a breathtaking, strategic location high on a flat plateau above the Dead Sea and gain insight into the symbolic importance of determination and heroism which continues to this day. Walk down via the famous snake path. Enjoy **floating on the Dead Sea**, experience its therapeutic benefits and use the SPA facilities at one of the hotels in the area, followed by **buffet lunch** on-site.
- Evening and dinner at leisure
- **Optional:** Enjoy the spectacular **Sound and Light Show** at the **Tower of David** fortress. The walls of the Citadel serve as a stage for a nighttime show which is a celebration of sight and sound. The story of Jerusalem unfolds through giant breathtaking, virtual reality images.

Overnight: David Citadel Hotel, Jerusalem

Day 7: Sunday, October 22, 2023

Old & New

- Breakfast at your hotel
- *Where it all begun:* Tour the **City of David**. King David captured a Jebusite citadel in order to build his capital. The city was well fortified with its own water source; it had never belonged to any of the Israelite tribes and was, therefore, unlikely to provoke jealousy among them. Today we will go back in time and tour City of David at the archaeological excavations of David's Jerusalem.
- Tour the **Jewish Quarter** with it uncovered the Roman Cardo -the marketplace from the Roman era and The **Western Wall**, where the stones of the Second Temple are exposed. Visit different sites of the **Christian and Muslims Quarters** including the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and the famous Arab Bassar to see Middle Eastern life with its rich colors, flavors, and smell, including **on route lunch**
- Visit to **JDC Channoch** program providing young ultra-Orthodox men, 16-23 years old with the necessary foundation of skills and training within the culturally accepted yeshiva framework to enable them to effectively enter the workforce and earn sustainable incomes.
- Visit **Hamifal** - "The Factory" - a community of artists that turned an abandoned 19th-century building in the heart of Jerusalem into a shared platform for art and culture. Tour Hamifal learn on the history of the building, once the home of Sarafin Lorenzo, and hear firsthand from **artists** on the arts and crafts created on site.
- Dinner at **Eucalyptus Restaurant** owned and led by **Chef Moshe Basson**, situated in the Artists Quarter, by the walls of the Old City, serves a modern interpretation of biblical cuisine with spices, local and wild herbs that were once part of the traditional cuisine.

Overnight: David Citadel Hotel, Jerusalem

Day 8: Monday, October 23, 2023

Biblical Times in the 21st Century

- Breakfast at your hotel
- **Neot Kedumim**, a restored nature reserve, participate in a unique outdoors **leadership activity** where you will lead a flock of sheep and goats, just like Moses and King David, and put their own leadership skills to the test. Later, following the biblical atmosphere we will fulfill the command of **planting tree in Eretz Yisrael** to plant our roots in Holy Land.
- Lunch at **Derech Hagefen** - an off-the-beaten-track restaurant in a scenic, leafy environment outside Jerusalem.
- **Yvel**, founded in Jerusalem in 1986 by **Orna and Isaac Levy** and continuing a family tradition of more than one hundred years in the creation of exquisite high-end jewelry designs featuring pearls and gold in various colors. Special tour at **Megamedia**, Yvel one-of-a-kind initiative which enables new immigrants from Ethiopia a once in a lifetime opportunity to acquire the art of jewelry making, diamond setting and jewelry design, including **Buna coffee ceremony**
- Evening and dinner at one of Jerusalem's many restaurants

Overnight: David Citadel Hotel, Jerusalem

Day 9: Tuesday, October 24, 2023
Remember Yesterday, Dream of Tomorrow

- Breakfast at your hotel
- Tour **Yad Vashem**, Israel's National Memorial, that serves as a profoundly Jewish memorial to the *Shoah*, The Holocaust. The museum will feature survivors' testimonies, personal belongings of victims, and state-of-the-art displays that preserve the stories of the six million victims. Designed by the world-renowned architect Moshe Sadie, its dramatic structure cuts through the mountain like a spike and highlights powerful exhibits like the **Valley of Communities** and the **Children Memorial**.
- **Mount Herzl** (in Hebrew: Har Herzl) is the burial place of Israel's founding fathers, the country's leaders, and the site of Jerusalem's military cemetery. Pay tribute to those whose vision helped build Israel and those who gave their lives to protect the nascent nation.
- Venture through the **Machne Yehuda** open-air market for a **tasting tour** and explore the flavors, smells, and personalities that make this unique market one of Jerusalem's jewels.
- Get a close-up look at Israeli house of parliament, the **Knesset**, including a meeting with a **Member of Knesset**.
- Free afternoon for rest, relaxation, and last-minute shopping.
- **Farewell dinner** at the home of Rabbi Josh Weisberg and family. "**Rabbi Josh**" is a Talmud scholar, documentary filmmaker, tour guide and the specialty chef at Jerusalem's iconic *Tmol Shilshom* restaurant.
- Transfer to Ben Gurion airport for departure flight or extend your stay in Jerusalem.