

# Know Before You Go



## Accommodation Information

Western Negev Guest House  
Sea Tower by Isrotel

## Federation Staff

Jim Cohen, Chief Executive Officer  
Shai Avny, Chief Operations Officer  
Kara Rosenwald, Director of Global Experiences & Community Israel Education Strategist  
Ivan Gil, YALA Minneapolis Manager

## Transport from the Airport - Monday, November 3

All participants arriving on Monday, November 3, on El Al Flight #LY 10 will have transportation provided by the Minneapolis Jewish Federation. (All participants arriving other than when stated will be responsible for their own transportation to Rehovot.)

## Transport to the Airport - Flights late Sunday, November 9, or early Monday, November 10

All participants departing Israel on the evening of November 9 and the early morning of November 10 (between 12:00-2:00 AM) will have transportation provided by the Minneapolis Jewish Federation. All participants departing Israel at other times will be responsible for their own transportation to Ben Gurion Airport.

Non-group transport options—responsibility of the participants:

- VIP services can be ordered AERO VIP transport: [www.vipbengurion.com/vip-services-at-bengurion/](http://www.vipbengurion.com/vip-services-at-bengurion/)
- Download App: Gett Taxi (Israel's version of Uber)
- Train from the Airport to the Rehovot stop

## Baggage

Please refer to your airline for luggage restrictions and fees. Please note: soft luggage requires a special Ben Gurion Airport check-in.

## Time Zone

Israel is eight hours ahead of Minneapolis (CST).

## Weather

The average weather in November in Rehovot and Tel Aviv is a high of 74° and a low of 58° Fahrenheit. The weather in Jerusalem is a high of 66° and a low of 54° Fahrenheit.

Please use your favorite weather app to see the weather for our trip dates.

# Know Before You Go



## Electricity

The electrical current in Israel is 220 volts AC. If you are taking electric shavers, hair dryers, irons, or other electric appliances, we advise that you bring a small converter kit for the plugs (available on Amazon or local hardware stores). If you're charging your phone, you may consider a USB adapter.

## Currency/Credit Cards

The official currency of Israel is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS). Credit and debit cards are accepted as well as cash. You can convert currency at the airport, as well as at ATMs across Israel. Check with your bank about foreign transaction fees for credit card charges and ATM withdrawals. You can check the conversion rate from the US Dollar to the Israeli Shekel (NIS) at [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com). The exchange rate fluctuates daily. Most Israeli establishments will take Mastercard, Visa, and American Express, among other credit cards. Please remember to call your credit card companies to authorize purchases while traveling, and check which cards waive foreign transaction fees.

## Packing Valuables and Medication

Valuable and irreplaceable items such as prescription medication, jewelry, and cameras should be packed in your carry-on luggage. Make sure you keep prescription medications in their original packaging. Minneapolis Jewish Federation is not responsible for any lost valuables during the trip.

## Travel Documents

As of January 2025, travelers to Israel must have a valid visa or ETA-IL approval before starting their journey. All participants must complete the new entry application found here <https://israel-entry.piba.gov.il/>.

Know where your passport is and remember to bring it! A valid passport is required to board your flight. Your passport must be valid for an additional six months beyond your return flight date. Leave copies of your passport data page with friends or family at home, so that they can be contacted and help you in case of an emergency. Carry your passport and all original travel documents and IDs with you in your carry-on! (It is a good idea to leave copies of important documents with a family member or friend at home.) Via Sabra must have a copy of all participant's passports in case of an emergency.

## VAT (Value Added Tax)

Israel imposes a value-added tax on purchases of 18% (similar to sales tax in the US). Purchases over a certain amount (approx. \$100) should come with a receipt that non-Israeli citizens can use to apply for a VAT refund at the airport upon departure. This will not apply for meals, food/snacks, or small items you purchase, nor will it always apply when you pay with cash. The VAT refund is usually reserved for larger purchases like art, jewelry, Judaica, and such.

# Know Before You Go



## Cellphones and Wifi

**Given the current situation, all participants must have a data plan to use in Israel.**

Many cafes and restaurants offer complimentary Wi-Fi service. Your cell phone may work in Israel by adding an international plan for the duration of the trip. For example, with an International Plan on AT&T or Verizon, you may send and receive calls as though you were in the U.S. You can also rent a SIM card before you leave, to use with your device. Contact Talk N Save before our departures: [www.talknsave.net/short-trip-plans/](http://www.talknsave.net/short-trip-plans/).

## Communicating with the Group while in Israel

There will be instances while in Israel where Federation staff will need to send messages to the entire group (reminders, itinerary changes, time to meet at the bus, etc.). We will be using WhatsApp for all group communication. It is a free app that you can download and use for free while connected to Wi-Fi or cellular data. Please let a Federation staff member know if you have trouble downloading this app.

## Health/Medicines and Medical Insurance

You do not need any special vaccinations before our trip to Israel. It is an entirely Western country with an advanced level of hygiene, health care, diagnosis, and medicine that is the envy of much of the world and on par with the best of North America and Western Europe. We recommend that you take every precaution to safeguard your health while you are abroad and that you see your physician and discuss your planned travel before departure should you have any medical concerns.

Medications and other medical supplies should be carefully labeled and stored with your carry-on luggage. It is nearly impossible to have a foreign prescription filled while in Israel, as such, please bring extra medication for any unforeseen circumstances. It is suggested that you bring a second pair of prescription eyeglasses/contact lenses. Please contact your medical insurance provider to make sure that your coverage is valid while traveling in Israel.

## Tipping Culture in Israel

It is customary to tip 13-15% in restaurants. Tipping a taxi cab driver is not normally done by locals, but if your ride is exceptional, a tip is always appreciated.

## Suggestions of What to Read & Listen to Prepare for Our Mission

- Sign up for Daniel Gordis emails at [danielgordis.substack.com](http://danielgordis.substack.com)
- Listen to The Daily Briefing from the Times of Israel Podcast
- Listen to Call Me Back hosted by Dan Senor

