



**JCC Association**  
Center for Israel Engagement

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**JCC of North Shore and Shirat Hayam Congregation**

# **Israel Journey**

**May 11-22, 2025**



Tour Educator:  
Group Leaders:

Marty Schneer  
Rabbi Michael Ragozin

## Shalom!

Welcome to this special journey to Israel at a pivotal time in the history of the country.

You are about to embark on a journey to Israel. Whether you are a first-time traveler or have experienced Israel many times, the trip will provide an insider's look at Israel—its history, development, issues of geopolitics and current events. There will be opportunities to discuss the idea of community, diversity and shared society – all this in the light of the traumatic events of October 7. Our conversations will enable us to reflect how it all relates to the world of our own JCC or congregation. We hope this journey will be a transformative experience!

**Please note:** Some meals and other items in the program are at participants' expense. The program is subject to change.

### DAY 1: SUNDAY, MAY 11, 2025

#### Travel to Israel

Depart for Israel

### DAY 2: MONDAY, MAY 12, 2025

#### Arrive in Israel

#### AFTERNOON

Participants should plan on being in Israel by 5 pm on Monday. Check in will be available at the Tel Aviv hotel from 3 pm

5 p.m. Group to meet up at Ben Gurion Airport (or meeting point in Jaffa) , where your tour educator, and Sara Sless, assistant director of JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement, will greet the group.

Depart for Jaffa for Shehechyanu (blessing of gratitude on arriving in Israel) from the Old City of Jaffa overlooking the coastline of Tel Aviv *while the coastline and setting maybe familiar our we stepping into a country still reeling from the Swords of Iron war? Is our relationship to Israel different*

Check into Hotel, Tel Aviv

#### EVENING

Dinner and orientation to the program. "What is the Israel we are Walking Into? In What Manner is it Different from the Israel pre-Oct 7?" (with tour educator)

Overnight Dan Panorama Hotel, Tel Aviv hotel (or similar)

### DAY 3: TUESDAY, MAY 13, 2025

#### Tel Aviv: First Hebrew City

Today we will begin our time in Israel by setting the scene exploring Tel Aviv as the first Hebrew City and the vision of the leaders and to what extent their vision has been realized in today's cultural center and economic hub, we will continue with a look at the work of exceptional people and organizations who have made a great contribution to society especially since October 7

#### MORNING

9 a.m. "Creating the Cultural Zionist: The Vision for Tel Aviv"  
Depart for a guided walk and discussion about the notion of Jewish leadership and peoplehood through the story of the building of Tel Aviv, through the city's earliest neighborhoods of Neve Tzedek. *What were the challenges of the leaders in founding Tel Aviv? What are the challenges of the leaders today?*

12 pm Lunch on own and some free time in the Carmel market and Nachalat Binyamin arts and crafts fair

#### AFTERNOON

2:30 p.m. Depart for Shamir Medical Center (Assaf Harofeh) to meet with Professor Shai Efrati founder and director and senior physician, Dr. Keren Doenyas-Barak of the PTSD unit at the Sagol Center for Hyperbaric Medicine and Research, which is at the forefront of research and treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). We will hear about the groundbreaking work being done in the realm of trauma and specifically those who survived the Nova music festival and Swords of Iron.

5:30 p.m. Visit to Hostage Square in Tel Aviv  
  
(We remain hopeful that all the hostages will have been released by this time, and if so, we will meet with representatives of the released hostages (to hear their stories and of the struggle of the [Bring Them Home Forum](#)) and the role of civic leadership at a time of crisis

#### EVENING

7:30 p.m. Dinner (Tel Aviv restaurant) we will be joined by a representative of Brothers and Sisters in Arms who pivoted on October 7 from their cause fighting judicial reform to provide emergency services to those hard hit by the war in Gaza and beyond (Eran's Angels or Brothers and Sisters in Arms) *How did they operate? Who was their leadership? What was their strength?*

Overnight Dan Panorama Hotel, Tel Aviv (or similar)

## **DAY 4: WEDNESDAY, MAY 14, 2025**

### **October 7: Devastation, Heroism and Resilience**

Today we will travel south to get a sense of the magnitude of destruction on October 7 and the resilience of those that lived through those days and thereafter

#### **MORNING**

8 a.m. "The Geographical Map of the Middle East and the Current threats from the north and the south," an overview with journalist (at hotel)

9:30 a.m. Depart for the south  
Visit the car graveyard at Moshav Tekuma to view the remains of the burnt and damaged vehicles recovered from along Highway 232 on October 7

Continue to the site of the Nova music festival where over 360 people were killed in and around the area and 44 were kidnapped into Gaza. We will mourn together the terrible loss of life and the horrors of that day

1 p.m. Lunch in Sderot, a city of resilient residents, coming to life and growing out of the devastation

#### **AFTERNOON**

2:30 p.m. Depart for visit to Sha'ar HaNegev Matnas (Community Center) to meet with director Adi Rom and hear about the role of the matnas in creating and strengthening community

5:30 p.m. Reflection and debriefing

Depart for Tel Aviv

#### **EVENING**

Dinner on own and free evening

Overnight Dan Panorama Hotel, Tel Aviv (or similar)

## DAY 5: THURSDAY, MAY 15, 2025

### Shared Society

We will look at the notion of shared society – from within the Jewish community and shared society for Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel

The group leaders will decide upon the relevant option closer to the date of the program

#### MORNING

9 a.m.

#### **Option 1 if security situation allows**

Understanding the geo politics of the north – borders, Lebanon Syria (including a visit to Kibbutz Hanaton Educational Center and meeting with students on one of the mechina pre army programs -*what is the vision of these young people for the State? What leadership roles do they aspire to?*)

#### **Option 2:**

Depart for the city of Lod

Meet with senior professionals at Abraham Initiatives, an NGO working to fulfill the promise of full and equal citizenship and complete equality of social and political rights for Israel's Jewish and Arab citizens, through change of public policy.

Walk and observe the different communities in this mixed city and learn about the work of the Abraham Initiatives in working to strengthen the socio-economic base of the city and creating safer cities

Lunch on own

#### AFTERNOON

Meet with young people from North America and Israel a pre army mechina leadership program to hear from them about their understanding of a shared society, the challenges facing the Israel that they meet in adulthood

#### EVENING

(for both option 1 and option 2 )

Taste of Israel

Depart for Mevashlim Havaya, where we'll participate in a cooking workshop-to create Middle Eastern dishes and then enjoy the fruits of our labor for dinner

#### Overnight

Dan Panorama Hotel, Tel Aviv (or similar)

**DAY 6: FRIDAY, MAY 16, 2025 (Lag B'Omer)**

**MODERN DAY ISRAEL**

A look at contemporary Israel and change of tempo as we together with the city prepares for Shabbat

**MORNING**

9:30 a.m. Check out of hotel

10 a.m. Depart for a guided visit to recently renovated ANU museum, the Museum of the Jewish People (formally known as the Museum of the Diaspora)

Depart for Jerusalem

**AFTERNOON**

Overview of old and new Jerusalem from the Hass Promenade

Check into hotel

**EVENING**

6:15 p.m. Depart by bus for Kabbalat Shabbat  
Track 1: at the *Kotel* (Western Wall) with Marty Schneer  
Track 2: Kehilat Zion synagogue with Rabbi Ragozin

Shabbat dinner at the hotel in main dining room

Overnight Dan Panorama Hotel, Jerusalem (or similar)

**DAY 7: SATURDAY, MAY 17, 2025 (Emor torah portion)**

**Shabbat in Jerusalem: Shabbat to Relax**

Today will be a day of leisure to enjoy Jerusalem and the spirit of Shabbat, relax, meet up with friends and family, visit the Israel Museum or the parks

**MORNING**

Free morning to visit a local synagogue, have a leisurely breakfast, relax, and reenergize, or meet with family and friends, or visit on own the Israel museum

Lunch at hotel (advance sign up required)

**AFTERNOON**

3 p.m. Depart for a guided visit to the recently renovated Tower of David Museum  
-or-  
Guided walk-through Yemin Moshe with the poetry of Yehuda Amichai

7:30 p.m. Tie in conversation and *Havdalah* (at hotel)

**EVENING**

Dinner on own and free evening in Jerusalem

Overnight Dan Panorama Hotel, Jerusalem (or similar)

## **DAY 8: SUNDAY MAY 18, 2025**

### **Centrality of Jerusalem**

Today, we will explore the very earliest layers of the city and the diversity of the communities in Jerusalem

#### **MORNING**

8:30 a.m.

“The Centrality of Jerusalem for Jews, Christians, and Muslims,”

Depart for a guided visit to select areas of Jerusalem’s Old City, including the Jerusalem of the Second Temple period, the Cardo (ancient Roman street), the Kotel (Western Wall) and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in the Christian Quarter.

A visit to the Kotel Tunnels

Lunch on your own in the Old City and some free time to shop or wander

#### **AFTERNOON**

3 p.m.

A visit to the Menachem Begin Heritage Center and participate in a hands-on experience to understand the complexity of the coalition government at the Knesset (Israel’s parliament), during this simulation program we will understand the different positions and institutions in the Knesset as well as the methods and hurdles encountered in the legislative process and the overall importance of the Knesset as the foundation of the State of Israel’s vibrant democracy

#### **EVENING**

6 p.m.

Dinner at Jerusalem restaurant

Overnight

Dan Panorama Hotel, Jerusalem (or similar)



## DAY 9: MONDAY MAY 19, 2025

Today will offer an opportunity to explore the concept of collective memory and the evolving place of the Holocaust in Israeli society.

### MORNING

8:15 a.m.      Advanced sign up for tracks required (Track 2 is especially relevant to those who have visited Israel and Yad Vashem previously)

Track 1: Depart for a tour of Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center. We also will visit the Children's Memorial.

Track 2: Depart for a guided tour of the new [National Library of Israel](#)

12:30 p.m.      Tracks to meet up for lunch in Beit Hakerem on your own

### AFTERNOON

2:30 p.m.      Visit to Mount Herzl military cemetery and the recently opened hall of names

3:30 p.m.      Time to return to the hotel for a short shopping or relaxation break

### EVENING

6 p.m.          Depart the Judean desert, participate in world music experience, followed by dinner at Canaanite restaurant

Overnight      Dan Panorama Hotel, Jerusalem (or similar)

**DAY10: TUESDAY MAY 20, 2025**

**The Complexity and Politics of Modern Day Jerusalem**

Today we will look at the complexity of modern day Jerusalem from both the perspective of security and from the perspective of the cultural and social nature of the city with a growing haredi (ultra-orthodox) population

**MORNING**

9 a.m. Depart for a guided drive through certain neighborhoods of Jerusalem to understand the complexity of modern day Jerusalem, including a view from Gilo of the separation fence or security barrier, a look at the US embassy and understand why it was a controversial decision

11:30 a.m. Free time to wander around Machane Yehuda food and vegetable market, a mosaic of peoples, flavors and cultures. Meet up for lunch at Azura or Steakiat Hatzot restaurant

**AFTERNOON**

2 p.m. A Window into Hareidi Society

Depart for the ArtShelter Gallery to meet with director and curator Dr. Noa Lea Cohn, the first community gallery dedicated to the ultra-Orthodox. *What inspired them to establish the gallery? What is unique about a Hareidi art gallery? How does the gallery interface with the wider community?*

4 p.m. Depart for the Maaleh film school- through the media of film we will view and discuss the short documentaries or movies prepared by graduating students of the film school. The films will focus on security and diverse society.

**EVENING**

6 p.m. Dinner on own and free time

Overnight Dan Panorama Hotel, Jerusalem (or similar)

**DAY10: WEDNESDAY MAY 21, 2025**

**Full Circle**

**MORNING**

Check out of hotel

9 a.m. Israel and the Diaspora – a discussion about the evolving relationship and in what ways the events of the last 18 months have brought the communities together or apart with Leah Garber Senior Vice President and Director General JCC Association Center for Israel Engagement (at hotel)

10:30 a.m. Depart for guided visit to selected exhibitions at the Israel Museum including the Israeli Art wing and the Mandel Wing of Jewish Life  
-or-  
Depart for Neot Kedumim, Israel’s biblical nature reserve, where we will briefly walk the land, Bible in hand, to get our footing in Israel. We also will have an opportunity to plant a tree, which can be dedicated in honor or in memory of a loved one.

**AFTERNOON**

Lunch on own and free time for last minute shopping

5 p.m. Meet up at hotel for final wrap up discussion

Final festive dinner and depart for airport for midnight flights