

PROGRAM ITINERARY

DAY 1

FIRST STEPS IN ISRAEL

Fri. Dec 25, 2026

- Arrive at Ben-Gurion International Airport, where we'll be greeted by our J² Expert Educator who will accompany us throughout the journey, offering insight, context, and inspiration.
- Group transfer to your Tel Aviv hotel and check in, with time to refresh and prepare for Shabbat.
- Gather together for Kabbalat Shabbat and festive dinner at the hotel, marking the beginning of your shared experience in Israel with joy, song, and community.

 Overnight: Tel Aviv, Israel  Meals: Dinner

DAY 2

TEL AVIV: RESILIENCE AND NEW BEGINNINGS

Sat. Dec 26, 2026

- Begin the day at the Ayalon Institute near Rehovot, where a hidden underground ammunition factory supplied the pre-State Jewish underground - an unforgettable story of ingenuity and bravery.
- Stop at the Jaffa lookout for a sweeping introduction to Tel Aviv and its unique role in Israel's history and culture.
- Walk along the Independence Trail, tracing Tel Aviv's development from sand dunes in 1909 to the declaration of Israel's independence in 1948.

- Explore the colorful neighborhood of Florentin, where bold street art and murals reflect the pulse of Israeli society and its ongoing conversation about identity and resilience.
- Conclude Shabbat with a community Havdalah ceremony, followed by a free evening to enjoy Tel Aviv's beaches, restaurants, and nightlife at your own pace.

 Overnight: Tel Aviv, Israel  Meals: Breakfast

DAY 3

CROSSROADS OF CIVILIZATION

Sun. Dec 27, 2026

- Check out of the hotel and head north along Israel's Mediterranean coast.
- Explore Caesarea, the great Roman-era port city built by King Herod, and stroll by the impressive aqueduct stretching along the pristine shoreline.
- Step into the Crusader-era city of Akko, where medieval knights, Ottoman rulers, and diverse communities left their mark on this UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Continue to Rosh Hanikra, descending in the world's steepest cable car to the striking white cliffs and grottoes along Israel's northern border.
- Drive inland to the Upper Galilee and check into the hotel.
- Dinner together at the hotel.

 Overnight: Upper Galilee, Israel  Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 4

SPIRIT AND SECURITY IN THE NORTH

Mon. Dec 28, 2026

- Enter the mystical city of Tsfat, center of Kabbalah and Jewish spirituality, and explore its medieval synagogues, cobblestone alleys, and thriving artist galleries.
- Take a nature walk through the lush Tel Dan Reserve, home to crystal-clear springs and the ruins of an ancient biblical city.
- Travel up to Mount Bental on the Golan Heights, where we'll gaze into Syria and gain first-hand insight into Israel's complex security and geopolitical challenges.
- Special dinner at the Galilee Culinary Institute by JNF. Savor a gourmet, farm-to-table experience that celebrates Israeli innovation, sustainability, and the rich agricultural traditions of the Galilee—featuring locally sourced ingredients and inventive dishes inspired by the region's vibrant flavors.

 Overnight: Upper Galilee, Israel  Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 5

FLOATING THROUGH HISTORY

Tue. Dec 29, 2026

- Check out of the hotel and set sail on the Sea of Galilee, where ancient stories of Jewish life come alive on the water.
- Explore Daliyat el-Carmel, a Druze Village. Stroll through this picturesque Mount Carmel community known for its vibrant market, colorful crafts, and warm Druze hospitality. Gain insight into the unique Druze faith and way of life, and enjoy free time for lunch on your own at one of the local restaurants offering authentic Druze cuisine.

- Arrive in Jerusalem and stop at Mount Scopus for a traditional Shehehiyanu blessing, giving thanks for reaching this moment together in the holy city.
- Check in to your Jerusalem hotel.

 Overnight: Jerusalem, Israel  Meals: Breakfast

DAY 6

THE MANY LAYERS OF JERUSALEM

Wed. Dec 30, 2026

- Explore the Jerusalem Archaeological Park, including the Davidson Center and Robinson's Arch, where stones whisper stories of the ancient Temple.
- Approach the Kotel (Western Wall), Judaism's holiest accessible site, and experience its powerful spiritual and historical resonance.
- Walk through Hurva Square, the lively heart of today's Jewish Quarter.
- Climb to the rooftops of the Old City for sweeping views of the diverse communities that make Jerusalem a mosaic of traditions.
- Visit the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Step inside one of Christianity's holiest sites, revered as the place of Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Explore its ancient chapels, sacred shrines, and the powerful atmosphere that has drawn pilgrims from around the world for nearly two millennia.

 Overnight: Jerusalem, Israel  Meals: Breakfast

DAY 7

MEMORY AND RENEWAL

Thu. Dec 31, 2026

- Visit Yad Vashem, the national memorial to the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust, an essential emotional and educational experience. Your tour will include:
 - The Avenue of the Righteous, where trees symbolic of the renewal of life have been planted along with plaques honoring brave non-Jews who saved Jews during the Shoah.
 - The Historical Museum, a state-of-the-art interactive display reflecting decades of research and educational expertise. The story of the Holocaust, with an emphasis on individual victims, is told through survivor testimonies, original artifacts, and personal possessions saved from the ghettos and camps.
 - The Children's Memorial, commemorating the 1.5 million children lost during the Holocaust.
 - Memorial service where we will pay tribute to those who were lost.
- Experience the vibrancy of modern Jerusalem with a stroll through Mahane Yehuda Market, filled with flavors, aromas, and energy.
- Mount Herzl is Israel's central military cemetery and hosts the graves of the leaders of the nation. Over the last two years, the recently fallen have joined this sacred place. Visit Mount Herzl and contend with the human price paid by Israeli families and the country in the Israel-Hamas War.
- Volunteer at Pantry Packers, preparing food parcels for families in need - an act of giving back during your journey.
- Enjoy a free evening to explore Jerusalem on your own, whether in the bustling Ben Yehuda Pedestrian Mall or the café-lined German Colony.

🌙 Overnight: Jerusalem, Israel 🍽️ Meals: Breakfast

DAY 8

MASADA AND THE DEAD SEA

Fri. Jan 1, 2027

- Ascend Masada via the Snake Path or cable car, and explore the dramatic story of Jewish resistance that has become a symbol of survival and courage.
- Descend to the Dead Sea and enjoy the unique sensation of floating in its buoyant, mineral-rich waters.
- Return to Jerusalem to prepare for Shabbat.
- Kabbalat Shabbat at Kehilat Shir Chadash. Welcome Shabbat with uplifting services at this dynamic Reform congregation, affiliated with the Israel Movement for Progressive Judaism. Share in joyful prayer, music, and community spirit - followed by a warm communal Shabbat dinner. This congregation holds special meaning, as it is where Rabbi Zive once served as an intern rabbi.

🌙 Overnight: Jerusalem, Israel 🍽️ Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

DAY 9

SHABBAT IN JERUSALEM

Sat. Jan 2, 2027

- Spend a free Shabbat in Jerusalem with optional visits including:
 - A self-guided walk along the Old City Ramparts (voucher provided).
 - The Tower of David Museum, chronicling Jerusalem's history.

- The Israel Museum, home to world-class art and the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- The Biblical Zoo, a family favorite with animals in natural habitats.
- Gather as a community for a moving Havdalah ceremony marking the end of Shabbat.
- Late check-out.
- Celebrate our final evening with a private festive farewell dinner, filled with memories and gratitude.
- Group transfer to Ben-Gurion International Airport for your return flight.

 Overnight: Flight  Meals: Breakfast, Dinner