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2017 Maccabiah Games

Trip to Israel

July 2–12, 2017

ITINERARY



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Program developed and operated
by the JCC Association Israel Center



2017 MACCABIAH GAMES TRIP TO ISRAEL

July 2–12, 2017

Join us for an amazing opportunity to journey to Israel during one of the most colorful Jewish events in the world—the Maccabiah Games. We will have the chance to get to know Israel's greatest sights as well as attend some of the competitions taking place in a variety of fields.

Whether spending time in Tel Aviv, Israel's first Hebrew city, exploring the capital of Jerusalem, or discovering the terrain of the Galilee and Golan, being in Israel at this very special time adds a whole other dimension of enjoyment as Jewish athletes around the world gather here in a vibrant demonstration of Jewish peoplehood.

TRIP CHAIR: Dan Bernstein, President/CEO Merage Jewish Community Center.

PLEASE NOTE:

*This program officially begins on Sunday, July 2 at 12 noon and ends at 3 p.m. on Wednesday, July 12. Please make sure to arrange flights accordingly. We are able to help with any hotel extensions and transfers (at own expense).

Some meals or items indicated in the program are at the participant's expense. The program is subject to change.

ITINERARY

DAY 1 – Welcome to Israel

Sunday, July 2, 2017

After meeting up in Tel Aviv, we will officially kick off our trip in the port city of Jaffa, which has served as entryway to Israel since time immemorial.

AFTERNOON

12:00 P.M.

Meet up at the Royal Beach Hotel, Tel Aviv

Official opening of program at the Old City overlook in Jaffa; within view of the Mediterranean Sea and the modern city of Tel Aviv, we will make a celebratory Shehechyanu (blessing of gratitude) to kick off our journey

Opening lunch and orientation with JCC Association staff and tour educator

Depart for Caesarea National Park for a guided tour of this ancient maritime city built by King Herod 2,000 years ago. It boasts the best of Greco-Roman culture

5:00 P.M.

Continue drive up north

EVENING

7:00 P.M.

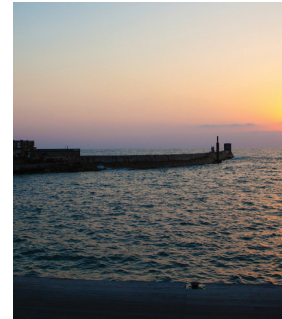
Arrive at Kibbutz Kfar Blum in the Upper Galilee and check into the Pastoral Hotel

8:15 P.M.

Depart for festive dinner at “Dag Al HaDan” restaurant overlooking the Snir River, one of the Jordan River tributaries

OVERNIGHT –

Pastoral Hotel, Kfar Blum



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DAY 2 – Northern Adventures

Monday, July 3, 2017

Today provides an opportunity to get to know Israel's most Northern terrain—its landscape, and the people who live there, along with getting some insights into the themes of water and security.

MORNING

9:00 A.M.

Depart hotel and take an off-the-beaten track jeep ride up the Golan Heights; stop en route at observation point into Hula Valley to understand the geographic sprawl of the region and the strategic importance of the territory

Visit the extinct volcano of Mount Bental, a former IDF outpost overlooking Syria, and hear the dramatic stories of both the Yom Kippur war in the region, along with an overview of the current situation in Syria

AFTERNOON

1:00 P.M.

Lunch on own

Wine tasting at one of the Golan's boutique wineries and learn how the

ancient art of wine making has become one of Israel's most internationally successful industries

3:00 P.M.

TRACK 1: Return to the hotel to relax and enjoy the spa

TRACK 2: Enjoy an easy hike in the Banyias stream or Tel Dan National Park

EVENING

7:00 P.M.

One of the following programs TBD:

BBQ dinner

-or-

Dinner and evening walk through the alleyways of the Old City of Tsfat with musical program

OVERNIGHT –

Pastoral Hotel, Kfar Blum



© Itamar Grimberg, Israeli Ministry of Tourism

DAY 3 – The Mosaic of the Galilee

Tuesday, July 4, 2017

We head today to Jerusalem, but not before spending a bit more time in the Galilee and experiencing it both by foot and through our appetite!

MORNING

8:30 A.M.

Check out and depart hotel for either:

TRACK 1: Kayaking on the Jordan River

TRACK 2: Bike riding/walking the loop path of the Hula Nature reserve, a unique watering spot for over 500 million birds migrating along the Syrian-African rift yearly

11:30 A.M.

Galileat - Both tracks meet up to drive to a Druze village in the Galilee to take part in a short cooking workshop at a resident's home for an opportunity to cook, eat, and get to know a little about the Druze culture

AFTERNOON

2:30 P.M.

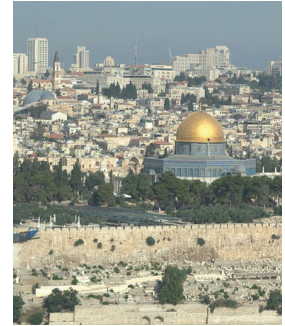
Drive to Jerusalem

EVENING

5:00 P.M.

Arrive in Jerusalem and have short "Shehechyanu" ceremony upon arrival
Check in to the Herbert Samuel Hotel/Orient Hotel and enjoy free evening and dinner on own

OVERNIGHT – Orient Hotel, Jerusalem



DAY 4 – Jerusalem of Gold

Wednesday, July 5, 2017

A day to enjoy the ancient stories of Jerusalem as well as its developing hi-tech scene.

MORNING

9:00 A.M.

"Jerusalem as the Center of Major Religions": Depart for tour of the Old City of Jerusalem and visit landmarks of the Jewish and Christian Quarters, including the Western Wall, and Western Wall tunnels

AFTERNOON

1:00 P.M.

Group lunch at local Jerusalem restaurant in Mamilla open-air pedestrian mall

3:00 P.M.

"Israel in the 21st Century": Understanding the High Tech Revolution in Israel"—Depart for visit to Mobile

Eye to meet with project staff. Mobile Eye is a tech company focused on technology that reduces the risks of traffic accidents, with the potential to revolutionize the driving experience by enabling autonomous driving

5:00 P.M.

Return to hotel

EVENING

Enjoy free evening and dinner on own

8:00 P.M.

Tower of David sound and light show (optional and with advance sign up)

OVERNIGHT – Orient Hotel, Jerusalem



DAY 5 – Collective Memory and Community

Thursday, July 6, 2017

We begin our day exploring collective memory and identity through a visit to Yad Vashem, Israel's holocaust memorial. Afterwards, we explore the many facets of Jerusalem, before celebrating tonight with the opening of the Maccabiah Games!

MORNING

9:00 A.M.

“Understanding the Significance of the Holocaust in Israeli Society”: Discussion with educator, Rachel Korazim (at hotel)

10:15 A.M.

Depart for visit to Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, including the Avenue of the Righteous of the Nations and a visit to the children's memorial

AFTERNOON

1:15 P.M.

Lunch at one of Jerusalem's restaurants in the colorful Machane Yehuda market, followed by time to stroll, shop and take in the sights and sounds of one of Jerusalem's greatest landmarks

4:30 P.M.

Return to hotel to rest before opening ceremony

EVENING

Dinner on own

20th Maccabiah Games opening ceremony at the Teddy Stadium in Jerusalem

OVERNIGHT – Orient Hotel, Jerusalem



© Itamar Grimberg

DAY 6 – Highlights of Jerusalem

Friday, July 7, 2017

Before entering Shabbat, we take the time to both enjoy the culture and social projects of Jerusalem.

MORNING

9:30 A.M.

“Trying to Make Sense of the Headline News in Israel”: Meet with journalist for an update of current events

Depart hotel for either:

TRACK 1: The Arts: depart for the Israel Museum for a guided visit to the Shrine of the Book and selected exhibits in the Israeli art wing and the Jack, Joseph & Morton Mandel Wing for Jewish Art and Life

TRACK 2: Geopolitics: depart for a guided drive to selected points in Jerusalem to gain a greater understanding of the relationship between Jews and Muslims in West and East Jerusalem and see the separation fence/security barrier up close

AFTERNOON

1:00 P.M.

Lunch on own at any number of Jerusalem spots: Ben Yehuda Street, First Station, a renovated train station, now a culinary and cultural complex, or the Mamilla Mall

Maccabiah Games, ice hockey competition at the Jerusalem Arena (optional)

Rest and relax while preparing for Shabbat

EVENING

7:00 P.M.

Candle lighting in hotel lobby followed by Kabbalat Shabbat at Western Wall

8:30 P.M.

One of the following programs TBD:

Group Shabbat dinner at hotel joined by lone soldiers serving in the IDF (Israel Defense Forces) and hear their stories about what motivated them to leave home to serve in Israel's military
-or-

Friday night dinner at EATWITH – an Israeli startup that allows Israelis to host people in their homes for meals, combining their love of cooking with their love of hosting

OVERNIGHT – Orient Hotel, Jerusalem



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DAY 7 – Shabbat Shalom

Saturday, July 8, 2017

Experience the beauty of Shabbat as a different dimension of Jewish time – the weekly separation from daily life and an opportunity to explore its meaning for different people in Israel and abroad – and a chance to relax, see friends.

MORNING

Free time to join Shabbat services in one of Jerusalem’s many synagogues, or to enjoy Jerusalem’s parks, or just relax, meet up with friends and family

AFTERNOON

1:00 P.M.

Lunch on own (lunch can be provided at hotel with advance sign up at own expense)

4:00 P.M.

“The Jewish Calendar: 17th of Tammuz”:
A closer look into literature discussing some of the lesser known dates in the calendar and their significance in modern day society

5:30 P.M.

Optional guided walk through the Jerusalem neighborhood of Yemin Moshe, or the Old City

8:00 P.M.

Group Havdallah at hotel

EVENING

Group dinner followed by an Israeli cultural event

OVERNIGHT – Orient Hotel, Jerusalem



Day 8 – Landscapes and Legends

Sunday, July 9, 2017

Today, we descend to the Judean Desert, as we learn of the legendary story of the Masada fortress and the role it has played in modern Israel. The colorful landscape of the Dead Sea will be the backdrop of our day as we encounter the desert at its best.

MORNING

7:30 A.M.

Depart hotel for Masada

9:00 A.M.

Take the cable car to the fortress of Masada, visit the extensive excavations of Herod’s palace and last Zealot stronghold 2,000 years ago

AFTERNOON

12:00 P.M.

Lunch on own at Masada restaurant in visitor’s center

1:30 P.M.

Rest, relax, and rejuvenate in the Dead Sea—the lowest place on earth at one of

the beaches. Here you can enjoy local, natural minerals—basking in mud, and floating in the water

- Beach offers mud, sulfur pools
- Special treatments (massages etc.) at participant’s expense

4:30 P.M.

Depart for “Desert Spectacular”—enjoy and early dinner in the beautiful desert setting

EVENING

8:30 P.M.

Return to Jerusalem

OVERNIGHT – Orient Hotel, Jerusalem



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DAY 9 – Discovering the Lowlands

Monday, July 10, 2017

As we depart from Jerusalem and make our way to Tel Aviv, we explore some of the treasures of Israel's lowlands (historical or cutting-edge).

MORNING

9:00 A.M.

Check out of hotel and depart for one of the following TBD:

An active archaeological dig at Beit Guvrin National Park—and help unearth this city, built over 2,000 years old

-or-

Visit the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel's leading research institution, and learn of Israel's many innovations in a variety of fields that include medicine, biotechnology and agriculture

AFTERNOON

1:00 P.M.

Lunch (location depending on choice of morning program)

3:30 P.M.

Arrive in Tel Aviv and participate in a guided walk through Neve Tzedek, one of the oldest neighborhoods in the modern city of Tel Aviv and hear the stories of the city founders, and their vision for the cultural capital of the state of Israel

Check into Royal Beach Hotel Tel Aviv

5:00 P.M.

TRACK 1: Free afternoon to enjoy Tel Aviv's beaches or the hotel pool and spa and a free evening

TRACK 2: Maccabiah swimming and rugby competition at Wingate Institute (optional - at additional cost)

EVENING

Dinner on own in Tel Aviv

OVERNIGHT – Royal Beach, Tel Aviv



Day 10 – The First Hebrew City

Tuesday, July 11, 2017 / 17th of Tammuz

Our journey in Tel Aviv continues as we hear more about the story of its founding along with other interesting contemporary chapters.

MORNING

Optional early morning bike ride (at own expense) or power walk along the promenade

Breakfast

10:30 A.M.

One of the following programs TBD:

Depart for guided tour of Independence Hall, where the state of Israel was proclaimed in 1948 and a look at the guiding principles of its founders

-or-

Depart for the Palmach Museum, which tells the story of this fighting unit during the 1948 War of Independence

12:30 P.M.

Stop at Rabin Square to share memories of November 1995 when Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated and the effect his murder had on Israeli society

AFTERNOON

1:30 P.M.

Lunch on own along Nachalat Binyamin pedestrian artisan's market, or at the Carmel fruit and vegetable market

3:00 P.M.

Depart for social action project with Leket Israel, a national food bank, at their packaging center in Rana'ana

5:00 P.M.

TRACK 1: Enjoy at round of golf at Israel's prestigious golf club in Caesarea (TBD based on availability of course) at additional cost

TRACK 2: Option to attend Maccabiah swimming and rugby competition at Wingate Institute and the Israel Sports Hall of Fame at Wingate

EVENING

Dinner on own

OVERNIGHT – Royal Beach, Tel Aviv



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DAY 11 – Journey's End

Wednesday, July 12, 2017

A day devoted to the many different flavors of Tel Aviv before we end our journey.

MORNING

9:00 A.M.

Take part in a short sports activity in Tel Aviv facilitated by Etgarim, a non-profit organization that helps disabled children and adults participate in sports

11:30 A.M.

One of the following activities TBD:

“Reading the Writing on the Wall”:

Enjoy a graffiti tour to understand better the messages of the street art scene of Tel Aviv

-or-

“Tikun Olam: Beyond Israel's Borders”:

Depart for meeting with staff and volunteers from IsraAID, a non-profit, non-governmental organization committed to providing lifesaving disaster relief and long-term support all over the world to learn about their work, their humanitarian aid and advocacy (at their offices in Tel Aviv University at Beit Hatfutsot)

-or-

Depart for a guided visit to Israel's Olympic Experience museum

AFTERNOON

1:00 P.M.

Festive final lunch and wrap up discussion

3:00 P.M.

Free time

4:00 P.M.

Late check out, followed by departure for airport or vacation extension



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is the cost of the trip?

A: If you are sharing a room the cost is \$4,170 per person (based on a minimum of 15 participants). If there are two of you traveling together and sharing a room, the total cost is \$8,340 plus airfare.

Q: I will be traveling alone and want my own room. Is this possible and what is the extra charge?

A: Yes, we do offer single rooms and you are able to specify that on the registration form. The additional cost is \$1,310. The total land cost will be \$5,489.

Q: What are the flight arrangements for the group?

A: You are responsible for your own travel to and from Israel. We are happy to help make arrangements for ground transportation to and from the airport (at own cost).

You can use a local travel agent, online booking or Amsalem Tours in Israel.

To verify booking through **Amsalem Tours** please contact:

Judit Zur

1307 South Mary Avenue, Suite 203
Sunnyvale CA 94087
Direct Phone: (408) 503-6214
Toll Free Phone: (877) 228 8731, ext. 4321
Fax: (408) 774-9790
Email: judit@abt-us.com

PLEASE NOTE: Program officially begins on Monday, July 3, 2017 at 10 a.m., with a pick up at Ben Gurion airport, followed by another pick up at 11:30 a.m. from the Royal Beach hotel. The program ends at 3 p.m. on July 12.

Q: What about travel insurance?

A: We highly recommend travel insurance in case you need to cancel for unexpected reasons. This will also cover your airfare costs in the event this trip is canceled due to insufficient registration.

Q: If there are fewer than 15 participants will the trip commence?

A: JCC Association will make a decision by March 1, 2017 if registration is not sufficient. If not, you will be fully refunded for your land costs.

Q: Who is our tour educator for this trip?



A: **Moki Schwartz.**

Moki Schwartz is a professional tour guide and tour educator, licensed in 2008 by the Israel Ministry of Tourism and Haifa University. Moki lives in Jerusalem with his wife Rahel and two young sons—Aharon and Michael .

Born and bred in Israel to North American parents who immigrated to Israel in the late 1960s, Moki holds a joint bachelor's degree in archaeology and Jewish history, and a master's degree in comparative religion from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

At the moment, besides guiding, Moki is working on his dissertation which explored intertwined historical narratives between Jews and Christians in late antiquity.

As a tour guide, Moki regularly works with a variety of North Americans, including young adults and adults. He guides private groups, families and individuals as well. Moki specializes in educational tourism, private tours, small groups and family-oriented tours, historical-cultural tours and hiking.

Moki is a nature lover, through-and-through, who has hiked, traveled and explored the “width and length” of the country.

In addition, Moki is a dedicated long-distance runner and biker who competes regularly in many races in Israel.

Q: My passport expires on July 4th—right in the middle of the trip. Does this matter?

A: Yes. Your passport must be valid for at least 6 months from the arrival date in Israel.

Q: How do I get last minute information before traveling?

A: You will be sent a participant pamphlet with general information about Israel, including packing, currency, electrical appliance use, etc. In the weeks leading up to the trip you will receive emails with information on when and where to meet on July 2.

[Click here to download the participant pamphlet or go to jcca.org/BoardingPassInfo.](http://jcca.org/BoardingPassInfo)

Q: Can I rent a cell phone or data package to use in Israel?

A: Cell phones can be rented from our recommended vendor “**Talknsave**”. The phone can be delivered to specific addresses in the U.S., the airport in Israel upon arrival, or the hotel in Tel Aviv. You can also rent data packages. For more information please refer to talknsave.net/jcc.

Q: Are all meals provided?

A: The program includes breakfast at the hotel and one extra meal (either lunch or dinner) each day. You are free to choose where and what to eat for those meals. The tour educator will be happy to advise you and point you in the right direction.

Q: Do I need to bring extra money?

A: Yes. You will need spending money to buy gifts, for the extra meal or for your free time. Gratuities for the tour guide and driver are not included. Generally speaking, we recommend between \$3-\$5 per person per day for the driver and \$5-\$8 per person per day for the tour educator.

Q: Are there extra fees for Israeli citizens?

A: Yes. Members of the group who are Israeli, regardless of where they reside, are by law required to pay an additional 17% VAT at hotels (non-Israelis are exempt from paying the value-added tax) and therefore they may be charged VAT by the hotel reception. We will need a photocopy of your passport to share with the hotel as well as the slip of paper you receive at passport control when entering the country.

Q: Will I have time to see family or friends?

A: Yes, there are times in the program when you are free to meet up with family or friends or just hang out with the people on the trip.

Q: If I want to arrive earlier, or stay beyond the dates of the program, is this possible?

A: If you want to extend your trip, we can help you book extra nights at the hotels and extend your health insurance coverage.

Q: Is it possible to arrange a trip to Petra, Jordan before or after the trip?

A: A trip to Petra before or after the trip can easily be arranged through one of the following suggested companies.

DESERT ECO TOURS: desertecotours.com

YOUR WAY: yourway.co.il

NUFAR TOURS: nufartours.co.il

Q: I've never travelled to Israel and am a bit nervous about the security situation. Do you have plans in place?

A: JCC Association has your safety as top priority. Despite what you read in the news, Israel is a fun and bustling place. It's safe to walk around at night, kids travel on buses on their own from an early age and the cities are generally a lot safer than many cities in North America. Having said that, should there be any change in the security situation during your visit we will share the information with you and take all the necessary precautions (eg: advising against visiting certain areas, changing the program if necessary, etc.).

Q: What kind of hotels are we staying in? Is there air conditioning and Wi-Fi?

A: The hotels are equivalent to five-star deluxe hotels (Israel does not yet have a star grading system for all hotels so this is an approximation) and all have air conditioning and Wi-Fi available. Please check the hotels for yourself by looking at the hotel websites: (NOTE: Hotels may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances. We will ensure a replacement hotel of similar quality.)

PASTORAL HOTEL: pastoral-hotel.com

ROYAL BEACH TEL AVIV: isrotel.com/royal-beach-tel-aviv

ORIENT HOTEL: isrotel.com/orient

Q: Is medical insurance provided in the cost of the program?

A: A basic medical insurance package is provided as part of the program cost for those up to age 60. The following rates will be charged for those over 60 years old:

60-65 years: \$3.50 extra per person per day

66-70 years: \$4.45 extra per person per day

71-80 years: \$7 extra per person per day

Q: I've been to Israel many times? What will make this trip special?

A: You will be coming to Israel at a very special time—the 20th Maccabiah Games! You will have the opportunity to be a part of this unique occasion and to attend opening ceremony. If you are a sports fan, you can also opt to watch some of the competition. In addition you will be with a great group of JCC people and will be cared for by the JCC Israel Center staff and tour educator. So along with some more traditional experiences, we hope you will enjoy a novel way of experiencing Israel.

Q: I've never been to Israel. Is this the right trip for me?

A: You will have an opportunity to see and experience traditional attractions, as well as more unusual ones, like participating in the opening of the 20th Maccabiah Games. JCC Association prides itself on preparing cutting edge programs and opportunities to learn about Israel from Israelis and that explore the challenges and successes of the country.



Stephen P. Seiden, Chair

Alan Mann, Interim President

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Contact Sara Sless at ssless@jcca.org for more information.

TO REGISTER VISIT:
cvent.com/d/4vqkrw
Registration opens Sept 30, 2016