



MEJDI TOURS

Exploring Israel: Past, Present, and Future with Rabbi Neil Blumofe
June 5-19, 2017

Day 1, Monday, June 5, 2017: Arrival

- Meet up at the hotel in Tel Aviv.

Hotel: Prima City, Tel Aviv

Day 2, Tuesday, June 6, 2017: The History of Tel Aviv Walking Tour

- Meet your two guides, one Israeli and one Palestinian, and begin with a walking tour of the historic Ahuzat Bayit neighborhood, modeled on Herzl's vision in *Alteneuland* that grew into the modern city of Tel Aviv.
- See the Bauhaus style houses of the "White City." On the grand Rothschild Boulevard, stop to visit Independence Hall, the site of the signing of Israel's Declaration of Independence.
- Have some time to shop in the Nahalat Binyamin Arts and Crafts Fair and eat your way through the Carmel Shuk Market.
- Stop by Meir Park to learn about some lesser known people and events that helped shape Tel Aviv.
- End the tour in Trumpeldor Cemetery where many of the city's founders, early residents, and cultural and historical figures are buried.

Hotel: Prima City, Tel Aviv [B]

Day 3, Wednesday, June 7, 2017: Jaffa

- Spend the day touring Jaffa, covering the Old City, the Flea Market, vintage galleries, and modern coexistence in the city.
- Along the way, meet inspiring people committed to peace and coexistence.
- Have dinner in the dark at the Nalaga'at Center for the deaf and blind.

Hotel: Prima City, Tel Aviv [B, D]

Day 4, Thursday, June 8, 2017: South Tel Aviv

- Take a behind-the-scenes tour of the Tel Aviv Bus Station, checking out modern art exhibits, a Filipino church, a Yiddish library, endangered bats, theatre companies, a

nuclear fallout shelter, and a medical clinic that serves the African refugee community.

- Stroll through the Levinsky Shuk Market for lunch.
- Visit a Shalom Hartman Institute funded day care center for African refugee children in Israel.
- Meet Israeli and Palestinian representatives of the peacemaking organization the Parents Circle-Families Forum. Members of this organization have all lost family members to war, terrorism, or violence.

Hotel: Prima City, Tel Aviv [B]

Day 5, Friday, June 9, 2017: Tel Aviv Pride, Foodie Spots, and Shabbat

- Start the day off by touring the Friday organic market at the Tel Aviv Port.
- Join over 10,000 people at Tel Aviv's annual Gay Pride celebration.
- Have the option of staying at the Pride celebration or continuing to Sarona, a former Templar complex, and its new culinary market.
- Bring in Shabbat with Beit Tefilah Israeli, an inclusive egalitarian community. Be welcomed to the minyan by one of its founding members before services.
- Enjoy Shabbat dinner together at the hotel.

Hotel: Prima City, Tel Aviv [B, D]

Day 6, Saturday, June 10, 2017: Free Day in Tel Aviv

- Have the day free to spend as you like: sleep in, have a leisurely breakfast, attend Shabbat services, relax on the beach, explore various neighborhoods, meet up with friends or family, join a walking, biking, or Segway tour, or check out a museum.
- Lunch provided at the hotel.

Hotel: Prima City, Tel Aviv [B, L]

Day 7, Sunday, June 11, 2017: Caesarea, Jisr az-Zarqa, and Haifa

- Visit the ancient Roman and Crusader era port of Caesarea.
- Have lunch on your own in the port.
- In the afternoon, experience the authentic atmosphere and culture of the Israeli Arab fishermen's village of Jisr az-Zarqa.
- Upon arriving in Haifa, check into the hotel and have dinner together.

Hotel: Colony Hotel, Haifa [B, D]

Day 8, Monday, June 12, 2017: Diversity of Haifa

- Start with a visit the Baha'i Gardens to learn about the Baha'i faith.
- On your way to and from lunch, stroll through the city's Wadi Nisnas district – a Christian-Arab neighborhood and explore its “Museum Without Walls” art route. End the tour at a Jewish-Arab Culture Center and their art gallery dedicated to multiculturalism and dialogue. There, meet a representative of this central hub for Haifa's different national, ethnic, and religious groups.

- Then visit Isha L'Isha—Haifa Feminist Center, the oldest grassroots feminist organization in Israel and a leading voice for women's rights.

Hotel: Colony Hotel, Haifa [B, L]

Day 9, Tuesday, June 13, 2017: Rosh Hanikra and Akko

- Drive to the northernmost border of Israel to enjoy the sea grottos and white cliffs of Rosh Hanikra.
- Then head south to the ancient port city of Akko. Have lunch on your own in the colorful shuk. Tour Akko's city walls, museums, Fishermen's Port, marina, citadel, underground tunnels, and religious sites.

Hotel: Colony Hotel, Haifa [B]

Day 10, Wednesday, June 14, 2017: Gilboa and Jericho Areas

- See intricate mosaics at a 5th century synagogue in Beit Alfa.
- Cross into the West Bank and head to Old Jericho.
- Hike or take the cable car up to the top of the Mount of Temptation to see the impressive Greek Orthodox Monastery there.
- Visit the Baptism site at Qasr al Yahud on the banks of the Jordan River. Christian tradition associates Qasr al Yahud with the site of Jesus' baptism by Matthew. In Jewish tradition, this is considered the location where Joshua led the Israelites into the Land of Israel.
- See evidence of the shrinking Dead Sea and learn about the environmental impact.
- Have dinner together at the hotel in the Palestinian Christian town of Taybeh.

Hotel: Taybeh Golden Hotel [B, L, D]

Day 11, Thursday, June 15, 2017: Rawabi, Ramallah, and Taybeh

- Begin the day in Rawabi to see the first planned Palestinian city. Meet a representative of the company that is building Rawabi.
- Meet a Palestinian Authority official in Ramallah.
- Meet a Palestinian business leader committed to peace.
- End the day with a pre-dinner tour of the Taybeh Brewery and Taybeh Winery.

Hotel: Taybeh Golden Hotel [B, L, D]

Day 12, Friday, June 16, 2017: Hebron and Gush Etzion Region

- Travel to Hebron's Old Town. Meet local Palestinian residents, Israeli settlers, and IDF soldiers. Visit the Cave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs.
- Visit a West Bank Jewish settlement.

- Ascend to Jerusalem. Upon arrival, recite the traditional “shehechyanu” blessing from a breathtaking vantage point.
- Organize egalitarian Shabbat services in the Old City.
- Be hosted for Shabbat dinner by the Sephardic Education Center.

Hotel: Montefiore, Jerusalem [B, L, D]

Day 13, Saturday, June 17, 2017: Jerusalem

- Have the day free to spend as you like: Sleep in, have a leisurely breakfast, attend Shabbat services, explore various neighborhoods, meet up with friends or family, go on a day trip to Masada, or check out a museum.
- Lunch provided at the hotel.
- Take part in an afternoon walking tour of the Old City. Visit the Kotel, Christian “Stations of the Cross” along the Via Dolorosa, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Arab Shuk market, and more.
- Come back together for Havdallah overlooking the Old City.

Hotel: Montefiore, Jerusalem [B, L]

Day 14, Sunday, June 18, 2017: Jerusalem

- Track 1:
 - Pay a sobering visit to Yad Vashem, the Israeli Holocaust Museum.
 - Visit to the graves of some of Israel’s most famous historical figures, including Theodore Herzl, Ze’ev Jabotinsky, Golda Meir, and Yitzhak Rabin at Mount Herzl.
- Track 2:
 - Spend the morning at the Mount of Olives visiting the Jewish cemetery and Christian holy sites.
 - Have lunch on your own at the Wine and Cheese Restaurant on the roof of the Notre Dame Center. There, meet with a Catholic priest involved in interfaith work.
 - Meet a representative the Jerusalem Intercultural Center who will take the group to visit the site associated with both King David’s Tomb and the Jesus Last Supper.
- Everyone: Return to the hotel for dinner and a farewell comedy show with comedian Benji Lovitt.

Hotel: Montefiore, Jerusalem [B, D]

Day 15, Monday, June 19, 2017: Jerusalem

- Visit the former home of Shai Agnon, winner of the Noble Prize for Literature.
- Take a walking tour through Armon Hanatziv Promenade and the neighborhoods of Abu Tor, Mishkenot Sha’ananim, and Yemin Moshe that *traces the tracks of the delicate and intricate poetry of the world reknowned Yehuda Amichai.*

- End the tour with a final inspirational speaker from the Shalom Hartman Institute.
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