



MEJDI TOURS

Religions United - Oklahoma City Dual Narrative 8 Days, 7 Nights January 4 - 11, 2017

Take a fresh look at an ancient land, with this groundbreaking multiple perspective tour of Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Facilitated by two guides, one Israeli and one Palestinian, experience the sacred shrines, cosmopolitan cities, and scenic landscapes of this diverse region through the eyes of its residents. Beginning with the religious histories of Jerusalem, continuing into the villages of the West Bank, and ending on the shores of the Mediterranean, this tour offers travelers the opportunity to meet local politicians, artists, journalists and activists, learn about contrasting national narratives, and explore future prospects for justice, security, and peace in the region. With a unique approach that accesses contemporary issues through personal storytelling relationship-building, and facilitated discussions with conflict resolution professionals, the tour features a diverse array of guides and speakers—Israeli and Palestinian, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and Druze, conservative, moderate and progressive. Discover how conflict affects environmental concerns in the Dead Sea Valley, enjoy home-cooked cuisine with local families, and enjoy bustling and colorful bazaars. With time for discussion, reflection, and fun, join us for this unique tour that both explores the complex issues facing Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and celebrates the hospitality and vibrant cultures of her local communities.

Day 1: January 4, 2017 - Arrival [Wednesday]

Arrive at Ben Gurion airport and transfer to Jerusalem for check-in and a welcome dinner with MEJDI Tour Guides.

Hotel: Jerusalem (D)

Day 2: January 5, 2017 - Jerusalem - Three Religions in One Kilometer [Thursday]

Begin the morning with an overview of Jerusalem's religious history from the **Mount of Olives**. Then, take a full day alternative tour of the Old City's Jewish, Christian, and Muslim holy sites with two guides, one Arab and one Jewish. Visit the hotly contested **Temple Mount**, to see the **Dome of the Rock** and **al-Aqsa Mosque**. Meet with a local Muslim scholar for a discussion on Islam and the politics of the site, and then explore the Muslim Quarter. Next, visit the **Western Wall** and Jewish

Quarter, and meet with a rabbi. Finally, tour the Church of the **Holy Sepulcher** to learn about its religious significance and its many sectarian conflicts. This evening meet with representative of IPCRI (**Israel/Palestine Center for Research and Information**). Founded in Jerusalem in 1988, is the only joint Israeli-Palestinian public policy think-tank in the world. It is devoted to developing practical solutions for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Hotel: Jerusalem (B, D)

Day 3: January 6, 2017 - Jerusalem [Friday]

Today, trace the turbulent history of the birth of the state of Israel. At **Yad Vashem**, Israel's moving memorial to the Holocaust, meet with a Holocaust survivor for a personal glimpse into one of history's darkest moments. Then travel to **Ein Kerem**, where Christian tradition says John the Baptist was born. An Israeli and a Palestinian guide will each tell their divergent narrative of the village's role in Israel's 1948 War of Independence. This afternoon visit **Mahane Yehuda market**, shop for delicious treats and watch the hustle and bustle of the market before Shabbat.

Dinner: Shabbat Dinner at the Hotel. Kabbalat Shabbat at Kehilat Kol HaNeshama

Hotel: Jerusalem (B, D)

Day 4: January 7, 2017 - Dead Sea and Masada [Saturday]

This morning take some free time to reflect before heading down to explore Herod's mountaintop fortress of **Masada**, with its breathtaking views of the Judean Desert and Dead Sea. Here, learn how archaeology and nationalism intersect to help create national identity. Following a dip in the mineral-rich waters of the Dead Sea, stop in Jericho to meet with **Friends of the Earth Middle East** and hear about their joint Arab-Jewish environmental initiatives. Close the day with a traditional, home-cooked meal and live music, hosted at the home of a **Palestinian family in Bethany**.

Hotel: Jerusalem (B, D)

Day 5: January 8, 2017 - Samaria (Settlements) and Ramallah [Sunday]

Option for early morning (6am) church service at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Sit with members of the **Yesha Council** (council of Jewish settlements in Judea and Samaria), to hear about their ideology and goals. Meet locals from the settlement and learn about life there. Then, drive to Ramallah to learn about the Palestinian Authority, visit the **Mahmoud Darwish Museum**, and meet with a Palestinian politician and/or NGO. Later, have dinner and special lecture from the peacemaking organization the **Parent's Circle-Families Forum**.

Hotel: Jerusalem (B, D)

Day 6: January 9, 2017 - West Bank - Bethlehem [Monday]

Travel to **Bethlehem** where you will Walk the **Separation Wall** and meet with a government official to learn about the city's shrinking Christian population. Stop by **Manger Square** and, at the **Church of the Nativity**, descend into the cave revered by many as the birthplace of Jesus. Then head to **Shepherd's Field** to savor fresh local cuisine at a Bedouin tent. Continue on to a nearby **Palestinian refugee camp**,

and learn how murals and graffiti have been used to depict the refugees' struggles. Volunteer this afternoon at **Tent of Nations**, building bridges between people and between people and the land.

Hotel: Jerusalem (B, L)

Day 7: January 10, 2017 - Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salaam & Jaffa [Tuesday]

This morning, learn about coexistence with the folks at a unique, intentional community called Neve Shalom/Wahat al Salaam "**Oasis of Peace**". This afternoon meet community members at the **Arab Jewish Community Center in Jaffa** and learn about their efforts to increase cooperation and positive relations between 3,000 Arabs and Jews. Take some time to shop in the artists' colony, and pay a visit **Rabin Square** to discuss Yitzhak Rabin's assassination and his memory today.

Hotel: Tel Aviv (B, D)

Day 8: January 11, 2017 - Haifa [Wednesday]

Spend the morning in Haifa, to learn about Israel's minority communities. Visit the **Bahai Gardens**, and meet representative of the Bahai faith. Have lunch with **a local politician** and get their unique perspective on leading a diverse city and the challenges and triumphs they have experienced. Meet with representatives of **SHATIL** and learn how they are building civil society and actively promoting democracy, tolerance, and social justice. This evening participate in **a facilitated discussion on peace building and faith**. Finally, bid your new friends goodbye at a farewell dinner.

Transfer to Ben Gurion Airport
(B, L, D)