



MEJDI TOURS

St. Francis Xavier University - Study Tour Led by Dr. Jamie Levin

Itinerary

Day 1: Sunday, April 23, 2023 - Arrival [Airport transfer, no guides]

Arrive to Tel Aviv on a group flight [or on own within certain time parameters] and transfer to your hotel in Tel Aviv. Meet a MEJDI representative upon arrival for brief introductions before heading out by foot for a welcome dinner nearby.

Hotel: Prima Hotel 75, Tel Aviv [D]

Day 2: Monday, April 24 - From Jaffa to Lod: The Ancient & Unknown [Bus, Guide]

Begin the day with a drive into the very center of the country for a walk to the top of **Tel Gezer**, a monument to ancient civilizations with a stunning panoramic view across territories stretching from the coastline towards the Jerusalem hills. Consider parts of this land's story that extend back far beyond the modern conflict, antiquity and even biblical times, setting the stage for a conversation that leads to today. Head on towards the town of **Ramla**, once a capitol of Islamic rule in the region for lunch at **Samir's famous restaurant** in a centuries' old stone home. Meet the owner, an Arab Christian, whose family is deeply rooted in the city. Continue to the adjacent "mixed" Jewish-Arab city of **Lod/al-Lydd** for a walk through an Old City laid waste in 1948 and scantily rebuilt with economy housing blocs throughout the decades since. Far from the tourist circuit but tucked just behind Israel's international airport, Lod's unique diversity and socio-economic dynamics make it a microcosm of the country as a whole. Have a conversation with a **local civil society leader** before returning to Tel Aviv, alighting at the port of Jaffa. This is where your tour concludes for the day, with a view over the Mediterranean and reflection on the potential and limits of shared society. Israeli memorial day begins this evening, and you may consider observing one of the ceremonies taking place elsewhere in the city.

Hotel: Prima Hotel 75, Tel Aviv [B, L, D]

Day 3: Tuesday, April 25 - The White City, Tel Aviv
[Guide only, walking tour; use public transit]

Travel by foot to the historic **Ahuzat Bayit** neighborhood, the original suburb modeled on Herzl's vision in *Alteneuland* that grew into the modern city of Tel Aviv. Walk under the fig and Poinciana trees of **Rothschild Boulevard** to learn of the city's history and observe some of Tel Aviv's Bauhaus style buildings. Stop outside the former house of **Eliyahu Golomb**, one of the founders of the **Haganah organization**, the pre-State Jewish military force that later evolved into the Israel Defense Force (Israeli army). Visit the newly reopened **Independence Hall** (due to reopen in 2023 date TBD; if closed, see exhibit in Shalom Mayer Tower) to hear the voices of Israel's founders and to consider the implications of their proud declaration. Grab lunch on your own at the **Carmel Market**, noticing a thriving cafe culture, surrounding high rises and creative galleries. In juxtaposition, ride the bus together to South Tel Aviv for a walk through neighborhoods surrounding the maligned "New" Central Bus Station. Meet a **representative of the local migrant worker and/or asylum seeker communities** living in this area for perspective on their backgrounds, culture, and obstacles to full inclusion within Israeli society. Head back to your hotel for a free evening.

** consider adding a meeting with a Canadian diplomat on evening of Day 2 or Day 3 (fee, if any, not included in pricing)*

Hotel: Prima Hotel 75, Tel Aviv [B]

Day 4: Wednesday, April 26 - The Galilee
[Guide, Bus]

Check out of your hotel and head north, stopping first in Um El-fahm, a large Muslim town within the predominantly Arab "Triangle" region, for a tour of its acclaimed **art gallery** and conversation with management on the intersection of religion, culture, and politics in Arab-Palestinian society in Israel. Continue deeper into the Galilee for a visit to **Kibbutz Hanaton**, a "newer" community founded in the 1980's by members of the "Conservative" or "Masorti" movement. Meet a village educator for a discussion on how the Kibbutz model has evolved, on religious pluralism (or lack thereof) in Israel and on co-existence in this region of the country. Continue east from here*, driving across the Golan Heights and arriving to **Mt. Bental** for a look into Syria and discussion on the complex reality along Israel's northern borders. Arrive to your hotel along the Sea of Galilee for dinner and a relaxing evening.

**consider adding a short nature walk at the [Meshusim Reserve](#) (~1 hr)*

Hotel: Ein Gev Holiday Resort (Sea of Galilee) [B, L, D]

**Day 5: Thursday, April 27 - Fortresses Then & Now: Masada & The E-1 Region
[Guide, Bus]**

Depart early for a scenic drive along Route 90 looking across Israel's/the West Bank's eastern border into Jordan. Stop at **Al Auja eco-village** just outside of Jericho for a briefing on their environmental preservation work in areas around a shrinking Dead Sea. Continue to **Masada National Park** and ride the cable car to Herod's vacation home, turned refuge for Jewish rebels following the Roman siege on Jerusalem nearly 2,000 years ago. Explore the extensive excavations and consider the complicated place of this site in Israeli national memory. After lunch at the foot of the mountain, make your way back North and stop for a chance to dip in and lounge at a private **Dead Sea** beach. Continue towards Jerusalem for a late afternoon introduction to areas on the eastern outskirts of the city, a disputed area called **E-1** built up by Israel over decades to fortify Israel's claim to a "unified" city. Move on to a viewpoint on the **Mt. of Olives**, taking in your first glimpse of the golden Dome of the Rock and facing west as the sun wanes behind the "New City." Arrive to the hotel for a brief introduction to your surroundings, before enjoying an evening on your own.

Hotel: YMCA Three Arches Guest House, Jerusalem [B, L]

**Day 6: Friday, April 28 - United/Divided: Welcome to Jerusalem
[Two guides, walking tour and public transit]**

Spend the day within MEJDI's "Dual Narrative" framework presented by two guides - one Jewish Israeli, one Palestinian. Walk through the Old City's Jaffa Gate, passing the Tower of David and Armenian Quarter before heading through the Jewish Quarter to the **Western Wall**. Step through the "Dung Gate" and visit the **City of David**, a national park built within a largely under-resourced Palestinian neighborhood, managed by an ideological organization committed to expanding Jewish presence in East Jerusalem. Continue back through the Old City to the **Church of Holy Sepulchre**, noticing the flow of traffic emerging from Al Aqsa/The Temple Mount after Muslim prayer services. Pass through the Damascus Gate into downtown East Jerusalem for a visit to a renowned **Palestinian bookshop** and lunch at a local eatery. Later in the afternoon, take the light rail to the **Mahane Yehuda market** on the opposite side of the city to feel the pre-Shabbat buzz before heading back to your hotel. Gather again for Shabbat home hospitality nearby.

Hotel: YMCA Three Arches Guest House, Jerusalem [B, L, D]

**Day 7: Saturday, April 29 - De Facto Capital: Ramallah & Surroundings
[Guide, Bus]**

Begin the day just West of Jerusalem with a walk in the village of **Lifta**, destroyed in 1948. Consider this landmark within the larger context of the Palestinian national experience, before continuing to Ramallah, the *de facto* capital of the Palestinian Authority. Visit the **Arafat Museum** for a discussion on national leadership and walk through the Old Town for lunch on your own before continuing to **Rawabi**, the first planned Palestinian city. Meet a young entrepreneur for a conversation on obstacles to and prospects for growth within the Palestinian economy. Conclude the day with a tour at **Taybeh**, a Palestinian brewery opened in a moment of optimism following the signing of the Oslo Accords in the 1990's. Hear from their manager about their efforts to bring Palestinian beer around the world. Continue back to Jerusalem for an evening on your own.

Hotel: YMCA Three Arches Guest House, Jerusalem [B]

Day 8: Sunday, April 30 - The West Bank/Judea in Focus [Two guides, Bus]

Begin the day with a “Dual Narrative” visit to the **Temple Mount/Noble Sanctuary**, where you could not enter on Friday. Walk the grounds and consider the importance of this site in both Israeli and Palestinian national perspectives. Continue towards Bethlehem for a visit to **Rachel's Tomb** and walk along the separation/security barrier that surrounds it. Enjoy lunch at a favorite local hangout overlooking the picturesque Makhrou Valley, then head into Bethlehem for a visit to the **Aida Refugee Camp**, Banksy's **Walled Off Museum**, and downtown Manger Square, site of the **Church of Nativity**. Make a short drive to a nearby **Jewish town/settlement** for a walking tour and conversation with a community leader on their way of life and what inspires residents to make their homes in this part of the country. Return to Jerusalem for a free evening.

Hotel: YMCA Three Arches Guest House, Jerusalem [B, L]

Day 9: Monday, May 1 - Where From/Where To: Israeli Memory & Leadership [Guide, bus]

After breakfast, head to **Yad Vashem**, a leading global institution for Holocaust education. Hear recorded testimony of a survivor and pass through the main exhibits with a curated audio guide. Open a conversation with you guide on the place of these events in Israeli consciousness as you continue by foot onto **Mt. Herzl**, Israel's national cemetery and resting place of Zionist leaders from Herzl to Rabin and more. After lunch on your own nearby, head to the **Knesset**, Israel's parliament, for a tour and meeting with a government representative to discuss foreign policy developments such as the Abraham Accords and Israel's local agenda vis-a-vis the Palestinians. Enjoy some free time in the late afternoon before a concluding dinner

with two representatives of a bi-national Israeli-Palestinian organization (i.e. IPCRI or other) working to build a more peaceful future.

Hotel: YMCA Three Arches Guest House, Jerusalem [B, D]

**Group may consider departing on a late night return flight on Day 9 to avoid the additional overnight.*

**Day 10: Tuesday, May 2 - Departure
[Transfer only]**

Check out of your hotel in the morning and transfer to the airport for your departing flight.

Hotel: N/A [B]