

# Israel Travel Tips

## Visa and Passports

Travel outside of the United States requires a passport valid for at least the next six months. No visas are required for entrance to Israel.

## Health Concerns When Traveling

To be sure you're travel worthy; speak to your doctor before your departure. We strongly suggest purchasing appropriate trip insurance covering medical, baggage and trip cancellation as needed. Below are two choices.

- [www.travelguard.com](http://www.travelguard.com) 1-800-826-4919
- [www.sevencorners.com](http://www.sevencorners.com) 1-800-335-0611
- You do not need shots or vaccinations to visit Israel. However, should you need any medications, be sure to carry it with you. Also take some of the following items along for any emergencies; diarrhea medicine (liquid or tablets), allergies medications, and any other personal hygiene products you may require.

## Baggage

Transatlantic flights allow one (1) checked piece of luggage per person and one (1) carry-on bag. Please check your carrier's regulations as to the weight and size of the bags.

## Airport Security Leaving the U.S.

Security checks are routinely carried out for your protection and safety. Expect to be asked about the contents of your luggage – whether you packed your bags yourself and were they in a supervised place before reaching the airport. Do not take any mail, packages or unknown items from anyone before or after arriving at the airport.

## What to Pack

### Year-round in Israel

- Sunglasses and a hat. You'll find the sunlight is stronger than what you're accustomed to, even in the winter. A hat is also useful sun protection, year-round.
- Comfortable walking shoes, sneakers and sandals.
- Swimwear is appropriate year-round, whether it's to splash in the hotels indoor pool or hit a beach on a warm, winter day in the southern part of the country.
- Sunscreen and insect repellent are useful items as well.
- Water bottle – it's a dry country and you should be drinking regularly.
- The dress in Israel is casual. Most people wear jeans, slacks and capri pants on the trip. No spaghetti strap blouses for women. Pack water shoes for the Dead Sea and water baptism at the Jordan River.
- Even the congregation services are very casual.
- Carry a "modesty kit" for visiting holy sites or traveling in Arab or conservative Jewish areas, for instance, when visiting the Western Wall, it is mandatory for a female to wear a scarf in order to gain access. A modesty kit for women should include slacks or a wrap-around skirt (below the knee), a blouse that covers the shoulders, a hat or a scarf for the head. A kit for men should include long pants and a shirt that covers the shoulders. Carry these items on the bus and your guide should let you know when to wear it.

- TIP: Unfortunately, luggage occasionally gets lost or misplaced. Pack a carry-on bag that includes some necessities for a few days -- a change of clothes, all medications, spare contact lenses or glasses, all forms of money and any important documents. Bring a Hebrew/English dictionary – it's great to have along although most Israelis can speak a smattering of English.

### **Electronic Appliances in Israel**

Electric current in Israel is 220-volt A.C., single phase, 50 cycle which requires special adapter plugs with round prongs. If you intend to take appliances (hair dryer, electric razor, iron, hot water coils for tea) that are suitable for both 110 and 220 volts, make sure to carry a set of adapter plugs. If your appliance is for 110-volt only, you will also need a converter. Never plug your 110-volt appliance into a 220-volt outlet without a converter; it will work at twice its speed for a few seconds - and never work again!

### **Israel's Border Procedures - Passport Control**

Upon arrival to Israel, visitors need to present their passports and entry forms; forms will be given on board your flight.

### **Israel Customs upon Arrival**

A dual-channel customs clearance system operates at all Israeli airports and at the Rafah Terminal -- Israel's southern border crossing. Visitors without any Goods to Declare may pass through the Green Channel upon exiting the Arrivals Hall. Passengers bringing in new commercial products, even if exempt from duty, must declare them and use the Red Channel.

- For further information please contact The Department of Customs: [www.mof.gov.il](http://www.mof.gov.il).

### **Arrival and Hotel Transfers**

When on an Holy Land Voyager Israel Tour, our representative will meet you immediately after passport control upon your arrival in Israel. Our representative will lead the group to the bus where your guide and driver will be waiting for you. For travelers arriving in Israel on their own, arrange for a private transfer (please contact our office for more information), or, take a local taxi or shared 'sherut' to your destination.

### **Transportation**

Hoy Land Voyager uses modern air-conditioned motor coaches. Smoking is never permitted while on board the motorcoach.

### **Credit Card Users**

Inform your credit card offices that you will be out of the country from 3/9 – 3/19 and may be using your credit card in Israel, and/or during travel (including airport stops). Unusual activity is a sign of a breach of security. If the credit card company is not aware of your plans, in order to protect you, they may suspend your card automatically.

### **Israel Currency and Bank Information**

The currency in Israel is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS). Each shekel is divided into 100 'agurot' (singular 'agura'). NIS bills are in denominations of 200, 100, 50 and 20 shekels. Coins are in denominations of 1, 2, 5 and 10 shekels, and 50 and 10 agurot. One may bring an unlimited amount of local and foreign currency into Israel in cash, travelers' checks, letters of credit and State of Israel Bonds. Foreign currency may be exchanged at any bank and at many hotels.

- Bank operating hours (generally): Sunday through Thursday from 8:30 am -- 12:30 pm and from 4:00 pm – 6:00 pm.

- TIP: The most convenient way to obtain currency is through Bank ATM machines which may be found all over Israel. Enter your 4-digit numeric pin number and receive shekels debited in U.S. dollars to your account. The exchange rates are fine at the local banks.
- Most stores take US currency (The one dollar bills can be used to purchase items such as bottled water and soft drinks.) You can exchange dollar bills into local currency at airports, hotels, and banks. Whenever you exchange dollars, keep the receipt given to you. You will then be able to convert any remaining currency back into dollars when you leave the country. Most stores love U.S. dollars, but you can sometimes get better bargains if you pay in the local currency.
- Carry and guard your passport, pocketbook, purse, and other valuables very carefully. Keep your valuables in the safe at the hotel. Never leave them in your hotel room or luggage. Purchases can be made with major credit cards, however, do not take unnecessary credit cards.

### **Sightseeing**

Tour schedules are planned many months ahead, but occasionally there are changes made to your scheduled sightseeing and/or advertised visits. Your tour director or local guide will notify you of all changes.

### **Newspapers in Israel**

Local, international newspapers and periodicals are readily available in a number of languages. For English, look for The Jerusalem Post or Haaretz English Edition, which comes bundled with the International Herald Tribune.

### **Time difference in Israel**

Israeli Standard Time is seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time, U.S.A.

### **Emergency Assistance**

Police: Dial 100 | [www.police.gov.il](http://www.police.gov.il)

Ambulance: Dial 101 | [www.101.up.co.il](http://www.101.up.co.il)

Fire Brigade: Dial 102

### **Telephone usage and important phone numbers:**

- Dialing Israel from the U.S.: Dial 011-972 and then the number in Israel (omitting the initial zero of the area code). For example: 011-972-2-111-1111.
- Dialing the U.S. from Israel: AT&T, Sprint and Verizon all have toll-free access numbers in Israel. Ask your hotel operator how to dial directly from your room. If dialing from a public phone, check the instructions on your calling card (which will tell you to dial either: 012, 013 or 014 for overseas) and then continue with a 1 for the United States, followed by the area code and phone number.
- Calling cards. Public phones in Israel operate with calling cards, which are available at your hotel, local post office and newsstands throughout the country.
- Internet access in Israel: Some hotels have pay-for access in their rooms, or have service available in the lobby or hotel business center. Many hotels now have free WiFi as well. You can also access the Internet by stopping in for a cup of coffee at Aroma or other local cafes – enjoy your espresso along with free WiFi service for customers.

### Postal Service

Stamps, envelopes, picture postcards and greeting cards may be easily purchased at your hotels and local post office. The post office sells phone calling cards and can help with money transfers as well. Please note that post offices are closed on Shabbat and major holidays.

### Departing Israel via Ben Gurion International Airport

Airline Check-In: Passengers must check in at Ben Gurion International Airport at least three hours prior to departure time.

### Airport Security

Security checks are carried out routinely for your protection and safety. Expect to be asked about the contents of your luggage – was it packed by you and in a supervised place before reaching the airport. Do not take any mail, packages or unknown items from anyone either before or after arriving at the airport.

### Don't Forget

- Please make certain that you have a valid passport.
- Please do not forget your passport and flight tickets.
- We **HIGHLY** recommend that you keep a **photocopy of your passport** in your purse or wallet.
- Please pack medications in your carry-on bag and not checked luggage.
- Never leave your passport, valuables or money in your hotel room, unless placed in the safe.
- **Water Bottle** - You will carry your water daily. You can fill it at the hotel and save money or purchase water from your bus driver or grocery store.
- **Please** plan on drinking a lot of liquid (water) on the plane. The flight is long so you will want to maintain hydration.

### Misc

- Please **bring money** for lunches, bottled water, laundry, telephone calling cards, souvenirs and all other personal expenses.
- Please bring a generous supply of **\$1 bills** to use for street children vendors.
- Don't forget to pack your **cameras**.
- For those being water baptized in the Jordan River, please pack a **swimsuit**. Baptismal robes will also be available to go over the swimsuit.
- Bring your Bibles, journals and other reading materials for the tour and airplane flights.
- A money belt that fits under your clothing is recommended.
- Bring a day bag to carry personal items and water bottle on the tour bus.