



## **Israel May 2023**

Travel Dates: June 6, 2023 - June 20, 2023

### **Tuesday, June 6**

- Arrive in Tel Aviv.

### **Wednesday, June 7**

- We will explore one of the oldest ports in the world, Jaffa port, where it's believed the Biblical story of Jonah and the whale occurred. Afterwards, we will visit a desalination plant where Israel is solving their water shortage by taking salt water from the Mediterranean and filtering it to become fresh, drinking water. Then we will have a short visit to the Sorek caves to experience one of the most beautiful sites in Israel and see the massive formations of stalactites and stalagmites. We will travel into the Negev desert for scorpion exploration at night.

### **Thursday, June 8**

- While in the Negev desert, we will meet up with a hydrologist that has been studying ancient farming techniques using floodwater discharge and help create a terrace as was once used in ancient times. Then we will travel to Eilat/Red Sea and visit Yotvata Hai-Bar Preserve. This preserve breeds and manages "extinct in the wild" animals and other desert endangered animals.

### **Friday, June 9**

- This day students have the opportunity to experience Diving/snorkeling the Red Sea to explore some of the most unique coral reef ecosystems in the world. The Red Sea has the most endemic species compared to anywhere else in the world. We will perform water testing to compare salinities from the different bodies of water that we visit.

## **Saturday, June 10**

- We will stop in Ein Gedi and visit the Nature Preserve and Masada. The preserve contains beautiful waterfalls, springs in the middle of the desert, and amazing wildlife such as ibexes and badgers. It is also the site where David may have written some of the Psalms and hid from King David. Masada is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. It is a fortress created by King Herod and was the site for one of the final events in the First Jewish-Roman War.

## **Sunday, June 11**

- Today will be an amazing experience as we visit the dead sea: the lowest point on earth with one of the highest salinities for bodies of water. We will perform water testing here and float in the sea. Feel free to do a mud bath! Afterwards, a visit to the multiple prize-winning botanical gardens in Ein Gedi (at a kibbutz) to see more than 900 different species of plants from around the world. This will be the final evening of scorpion exploration.

## **Monday, June 12**

- Next, we will be traveling northbound to Tiberias (Sea of Galilee). On the way, we will visit the historical baptismal site of Jesus on the Jordan River and perform water testing (Qaser El Yahud). There we will take a tour of a kibbutz that is fully sustainable. There we will experience using bees as a natural pesticide (Bio bee tour), swim spring-fed pools in a lush beautiful, landscaped oasis (Gan Hashlosa), and finish the day with a boat tour on the Sea of Galilee where many Judeo-Christian events occurred.

## **Tuesday, June 13**

- We will visit Magdala: an ancient city on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where a first century synagogue and city were recently discovered. A short visit to the Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus delivered the famous Sermon on the Mount, followed by kayaking the Jordan river. We will finish the day visiting Caesarea of Philippi: a Greek-Roman city dedicated to the Greek god Pan where a natural spring and grotto exist.

## **Wednesday, June 14**

- This day we will be guided hike through Tel Dan Nature Reserve: which contains the largest karstic spring in the Middle East and is the southernmost location of the Near Eastern Salamander (critically endangered). The water splits and joins with another stream to create the Jordan River. Following Tel Dan, we will meet with a botanist to learn why Israel is a biodiversity hotspot. The day will be finished at the Golan Heights Winery to learn about the sustainable fermentation process of Israeli grapes.

## **Thursday, June 15**

- Today we will hike through the wetlands of the Hula Valley and learn about one of the most successful restoration projects in the world as well as viewing many flora and fauna. We will visit a sustainable goat farm and garden that creates the most delicious cheeses, fruits and breads!
  - Traveling westbound to the Mediterranean a stop at Rosh HaNikra grottoes and Mediterranean.
  - Afternoon snorkel in the Mediterranean
  - Visit to the archeological museum

## **Friday, June 16**

- On the way to Jerusalem, we will have the option to dive/snorkel Caesarea National Park which contains King Herod's ancient port that sank.
- Visit Israel's Sea Turtle Rescue Center where they rehabilitate and reintroduce sea turtles back to the Eastern Mediterranean.
- Visit Neot Kedumim: a Biblical Landscape Reserve that is internationally recognized as a model for ecological restoration.

## **Saturday, June 17**

- Today will be spent exploring religious/cultural sites that also have biological context of how people in ancient times utilized resources around them will be viewed today by visiting Mt Olives, Garden of Gethsemane, Pools of Bethesda, and the Garden tomb.

## **Sunday, June 18**

- Exploration of more religious/cultural sites in the Old City of Jerusalem and learning about the history of the area and major religious/cultural sites such as Christ church and the Western Wall tunnels.

## **Monday, June 19**

- Our last day of the trip will be spent visiting the City of David.
- Walking through knee high water in Hezekiah's tunnels
- Visit to the world-renowned Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum.
- Visiting Machane Yehuda market: an open air market filled with local fruits, vegetables, spices, baked goods, restaurants, etc. Overnight Post Hostel in Jerusalem.

## **Tuesday, June 20**

- Return to US