TOUR CODE

IS1

ADVENTURESABROAD

ISRAEL

'Exploring the Holy Land'

10 days

Updated 06/01/2013

Day 1 ***Arrive in Tel Aviv***

Today we arrive in Tel Aviv and transfer to our hotel.

Stretched along the beautiful beach strip of the Mediterranean, Tel Aviv is Israel's largest city and main commercial center. It is a busy metropolis that inspires visitors with a unique energetic atmosphere. Tel Aviv presents a lively combination of entertainment venues, shopping malls, exotic markets, and golden beaches. It is also the country's greatest cultural center, home of a variety of museums, galleries, theatres and concert halls.

Overnight in Tel Aviv. Meal plan: Dinner, if required.

Day 2 ***Tel Aviv & Jaffa***

Today we have a tour of vibrant Tel Aviv, a modern city with a unique mix of European and Middle Eastern influences. We see the Independence Hall and the colourful Carmel Market before visiting the Museum of the Diaspora, a multi-media depiction of the history of the Jewish people.

This afternoon we will visit the Old Port City of Jaffa (Yaffo), an ancient and beautiful city located in the south of Tel-Aviv. Jaffa claims over 4,000 years of history and is the place where the prophet Jonas was swallowed by the whale, and the Rock of Andromeda can be seen jutting from the water. The Turks, Napoleon and the British also established their rule of the region through control of this city. We have a walking tour of the old city of Jaffa, a major attraction with winding alleys full of cafes, restaurants and art galleries. You will have free time for independent exploration. Jaffa is a mixed city with Jews, Christians and Muslims living together in harmony.

Return to Tel Aviv.

Overnight in Tel Aviv. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 3 ***Tel Aviv - Caesarea - Akko - Haifa***

Travelling north along the scenic Mediterranean coast road, we will cross Netanya and visit the impressive ruins of Caesarea, once Roman capital of the Holy Land. Caesarea, whose construction began in 22 BC was dedicated by Herod to his patron Augustus Caesar. When it was completed 12 years later, only Jerusalem outshone it in its grandeur. The Roman theatre here once seated 3,600 people. By the main gate to the theatre is proof that Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea during the time of Jesus, actually lived in this area. At various times in its history, this beautiful coastal town has been a Roman Capital, a port and a major conquest for the Crusaders.

We continue through this historic and dramatic landscape to Haifa via Megiddo, named in the Book of Revelations as the place of Armageddon, the place where the forces of good and evil will meet in the final battle for mankind. Of particular interest are the outlines of 5,000 year old early Bronze Age temples.

After visiting Acre (Akko), with its underground Crusader city and the crypt of St John, we arrive at the beautiful city of Haifa.

Overnight in Haifa. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 4 *Haifa - Nazareth - Tiberias*

We begin our day with a visit to the summit of Mount Carmel with its breathtakingly panoramic view of the town, the bay, and a considerable part of western Galilee. Later we will tour the Persian Gardens and the Bahai Shrine.

We travel onwards to Nazareth where we visit the largest Basilica in the Middle East -- the Church of Annunciation. According to one of the ancient traditions, it was here that the archangel Gabriel foretold the coming of Jesus to the Virgin Mary. The interior of the present church has a most beautiful design, incorporating fragments of much older buildings.

We continue to Tiberias on the shore of the Sea of Galilee (Yam Kinerett).

Overnight in Tiberias. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 5 *Tiberias - Capernaum - Tabgha - Tiberias*

At the northern tip of the Sea of Galilee we visit Capernaum, one of the most important Jewish and Christian sites of the Roman and Byzantine period and home of some of the Disciples. Jesus is believed to have moved here from Nazareth because it was the home of his first converts, Peter and Andrew.

Continuing, we arrive at Tabgha where Jesus performed the miracle of the loaves and fishes. We visit the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes. The mosaic floor is incredible, featuring ancient Egyptian motifs.

We then board our boat for a delightful cruise across the emerald Sea of Galilee to ancient Tiberias, a relaxed seaside resort located in the cradle of Christianity. We have an opportunity to visit Kibutz Ein Gev.

Overnight in Tiberias. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 6 *Tiberias - the Dead Sea*

Today we journey through the Jordan Valley to the Dead Sea stopping at Beit Shean and Beit Alpha on the way. Once we check in at the hotel (after 2 pm), you can use the hotel spa and beach where you will have the chance to bathe in the mineral-enriched mud or have a float on the Dead Sea.

Overnight at the Dead Sea. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 7 *Dead Sea - Masada - Wadi David - Jerusalem*

This morning we travel south to visit Masada.

This great flat-topped mountain and natural fortress was once held by a small band of Jewish zealots for three years

despite the force of Roman armies. On this site 1,000 people committed mass suicide rather than be enslaved. Flavirus Josephus said, "Who decided a long time ago, brave soldiers that we are, not to be slaves of the Romans or of any person other than God; for he alone is the true and just master of men."

From Masada we travel northward to the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve. After a short walk we reach Wadi David (David's Spring), a waterfall hidden in an oasis of luxuriant green vegetation that hangs clustered in a canyon wall.

We continue our journey toward Jerusalem. On the northwest shore of the Dead Sea we encounter the settlement of Qumran. In 1947 it was here that two shepherd boys made one of the most significant discovery in religious history, the Dead Sea Scrolls (written texts of the Old Testament) hidden in the caves. The people who wrote them are believed to have been the Essenes who lived here until AD 68.

Later in the day we arrive in Jerusalem, the City of David.

Overnight in Jerusalem. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 8 *Jerusalem - Bethlehem* - Jerusalem*

Today we will see the Old City from the vantage point of the Mount of Olives.

We enter the old city and visit the Christian sites. Following the last steps of Christ along Via Dolorosa, we approach Calvary and the most sacred site in Christendom, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Most Christians venerate this site as the location of the death, burial and resurrection of Christ.

We stop at Mount Zion to see St Peter in Galicantu and the Upper room.

From Jerusalem we continue to Bethlehem.* We visit the Church of the Nativity, the birthplace of Jesus. Built like a citadel over the cave where it is believed Jesus was born, the original 4th century church commissioned by Constantine was altered in AD 530 by Emperor Justinian. It was later captured by the Crusaders and then came under the jurisdiction of Saladin and then the Mamluks.

*NOTE: Due to security concerns / procedures that change frequently, Bethlehem exists in our programme on a provisional and tentative basis only. In the event that a visit to the West Bank is not appropriate by departure time, we may remain in Jerusalem and expand our sightseeing there with a visit to the Israel Museum to see the Dead Sea scrolls and a model of the second temple.

Overnight in Jerusalem. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 9 *Jerusalem: City Tour*

Old and new merge seamlessly in Jerusalem. You may hear the Muslim call to prayer competing with the clanging of bells from Christian churches and the prayers of Jews praying before the Western Wall. Everywhere you turn you'll see reminders of the three religions -- Islam, Judaism and Christianity -- that have shaped this part of the world.

We have a morning visit to the Temple Mount, one of the glories of Islamic Jerusalem, where you will view the Dome of the Rock. We then enter through the Jewish Quarter to witness the Herodian Mansions, a lavish palace in antiquity and built formerly of white marble, followed by a visit to the most important site in Judaism, the Western Wall.

Our tour also takes us by way of the Knesset, Israel's parliament, to the President's House and the Yad Vashem

Memorial and Museum to the Holocaust.

Overnight in Jerusalem. Meal plan: Breakfast and dinner.

Day 10 *Departure*

Our tour ends in Jerusalem this morning.

Land & Air customers will be transferred to Ben Gurion International (the airport serving Tel Aviv and Jerusalem - TLV). We can arrange airport departure transfers for Land Only passengers for an extra cost (payable locally).

BON VOYAGE!! Meal plan: Breakfast.