

Jewish National Fund

ISRAEL @ 65 Independence Day Mission

April 11 – 18, 2013

Dr. Robert Benedon, Mission Chair

Michael Feinman, Greater NY Zone Director • Lynn Norton-Robins, Regional Director of NJ

Thursday April 11 • Arrival / Jerusalem



Jerusalem

Welcome to Israel! Upon your afternoon arrival into Ben Gurion Airport, continue through passport control and Customs before proceeding to Baggage Claim to collect your luggage. Meet the driver and transfer to the Inbal Hotel in Jerusalem, ranked #4 by Conde Nast Travelers Readers Choice Awards for Best Middle Eastern Hotels.

This evening we will enjoy a **welcome dinner** at the hotel. Joining us for dinner will be a **JNF representative**, who will provide us with an introduction to the mission and overview of current JNF activities and work in Israel. Following dinner, we will hear from special guest speaker, **Daniel Gordis**, Senior Vice President of the Shalem Center and regular columnist for the *Jerusalem Post* and frequent contributor to the *New York Times*. He will discuss current events shaping Israel at this time (*pending confirmation*).



Inbal Hotel

Overnight, Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem

Itinerary Subject to Change

Friday April 12 • Jerusalem



Yad Vashem



Mahane Yehuda Market



Kabbalat Shabbat at the Kotel

Following a delicious Israeli breakfast at the hotel, we will begin today at **Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum & Memorial**. A sprawling complex of tree-studded walkways leading to museums, exhibits, archives, monuments, and memorials, Yad Vashem tells the story of the Holocaust from a uniquely Jewish perspective, emphasizing the experiences of victims through original artifacts, survivor testimonies & personal possessions. Following a solemn tour, we will attend a memorial ceremony at the Valley of Lost Communities in honor of those who perished in the Holocaust.

After this emotional visit, we'll head to the colorful **Mahane Yehuda Market** for lunch on our own. We'll become immersed in the bustling energy of Jerusalem's shuk as we join local Jerusalemites in their weekly tradition of shopping for Shabbat in the market.

Later this afternoon, we'll return to the hotel to prepare for Shabbat. Early this evening, there will be an optional visit to the Kotel for Kabbalat Shabbat. Also known as the Western Wall, the Kotel is the last remaining retaining wall that enclosed the Temple Mount in the Second Temple Period. Afterward, we will return to the hotel for a candle lighting followed by **Shabbat dinner**.

Overnight, Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem

Saturday April 13 • Shabbat in Jerusalem



Masada



Dead Sea



Old City of Jerusalem



Mamilla Avenue

Today will be at leisure in honor of Shabbat. Optional Shabbat services will be offered. Spend the day relaxing at the hotel, exploring Jerusalem on your own or consider one of the following **optional tours**:

Optional Tour 1: Masada and Dead Sea Full-day Tour*

After a morning departure from the hotel, drive via the Judean Hills along the shores of the Dead Sea, the lowest place on Earth. Continue to Masada, the mountain fortress built by King Herod, where the Zealots made their last stand against the Romans. Hear the story of the Jewish fighters before a cable car ride (or a hike) to the top of the Herodian Palace Complex. Tour the remains of the walls, palaces, synagogues, water cisterns, mosaic floors and Roman baths.

Descend the mountain to the depths of Dead Sea. Take a swim in the buoyant waters of the Dead Sea or simply relax at the beach. Return to Jerusalem early this evening. Along the way, view the Qumran caves, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. (**Additional cost - not included in mission price.*)

Optional Tour 2: Old City Walking Tour

Echoes of history meet the voices of the present day in this living testament to the Jewish presence in Jerusalem. The tour will enter the ancient city through the Jaffa Gate and head directly to the **Western Wall**, the last remaining wall that enclosed the Temple Mount in the Second Temple Period. Take a few minutes for prayer and contemplation before proceeding to the **Southern Wall Excavations** to see the original steps that lead to the Temple Mount. Afterward, take a stroll down the **Cardo**, the main street in Jerusalem 2000 years ago.

This evening will be at leisure, allowing us to explore Jerusalem and experience the city's nightlife at our own pace. Consider a walk along **Mamilla Ave.**, designed by world-renowned Israeli architect Moshe Safdie, who retained the unique character of ancient Jerusalem while offering one of the top shopping experiences in the city. Acting as a bridge between modern and ancient, the avenue is lined with 19th century buildings, street performers, restaurants and many designer boutiques, and is often referred to the Fifth Avenue or Champs-Elysees of Jerusalem.

Overnight, Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem

Sunday April 14 • Negev



Be'er Sheva River Park

Following breakfast, we will make our way south to **Be'er Sheva**, the capital of the Negev. We will visit the **Be'er Sheva River Park**, a massive water, environment and economic development project that serves as the centerpiece of JNF's efforts to revitalize the entire city of Be'er Sheva. **Itai Freeman**, Director of the Be'er Sheva River Project, will provide an update on the project and discuss the progress of the amphitheater, Lake Park and the newly unveiled Pipes Bridge.



Pipes Bridge in Be'er Sheva

We will proceed to **Givot Bar**, a new Negev community located near Be'er Sheva. In partnership with the OR Movement, JNF has helped create a desirable community that offers a quality of life not available in Israel's crowded center. A representative from the **OR Movement** will lead us on a tour of the community and introduce us to several residents, who will share their experiences forging new lives in the Negev and discuss what life is like as a true modern-day pioneer.



Home in Givot Bar

Afterward, we will continue to **Sderot**, and visit the **JNF Indoor Recreation Center**, the largest indoor playground in Israel. This fortified facility provides Sderot's youth with a safe, secure place to have fun and simply be children. During **lunch**, we will meet several **Sderot residents** to understand how the indoor playground has enriched their lives.

Pending confirmation, a **Mayor David Buskila** will brief us on the current social, political and economic climate in the city and provide us with a brief overview of the city's history.



Sderot Indoor Recreation Center

We will then proceed to the nearby **Ramat Rachel Kibbutz**. Early this evening, we'll observe a moment of silence and then hear the sounds of sirens ringing throughout the country to mark the start of **Yom Hazikaron**, Israel's Memorial Day. We'll then enjoy **dinner** at the kibbutz followed by the kibbutz's special program with lone soldiers that to commemorate Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism.

Overnight, Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem

Monday April 15 • Yom Hazikaron in Jerusalem



Ammunition Hill

Today is **Yom Hazikaron, Israel's Memorial Day**. We'll begin the day with a visit to **Ammunition Hill**, site of the famous Six-Day War battle. A representative will lead us through the battleground and bunkers on a tour that follows the footsteps of the soldiers who fought here. We will see the new "Seam-Line" multimedia show about the Six-Day War and reunification of Jerusalem. The tour will conclude at JNF's **Wall of Honor**, honoring Jewish veterans from around the world.



Observing the two minutes of silence

En route to our next activity, we will stop in our tracks and leave the bus to join the public in remembering Israel's fallen soldiers and victims of terror. These **two minutes of silence** will be an eerie contrast to the usual hustle and bustle of the city. We'll then hear the sounds of sirens marking the opening of official memorial ceremonies and remembrance gatherings.

Pending confirmation, we'll proceed to **Har Herzl** to attend Jerusalem's military ceremony honoring Israel's fallen soldiers.

Afterward, we'll have **lunch** at a local restaurant and the remainder of the afternoon at leisure.



Ceremony at Mt. Herzl

Pending confirmation, this evening we will go to **Mt. Herzl** to attend the famous outdoor **National Israel Independence Day Opening Ceremony**, a magnificent event that marks the end of Memorial Day and the start of Israel's Independence Day celebrations**. We'll join Israelis in the joyous festivities and become immersed in the sounds and celebration of the night.

Overnight, Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem

***Please note: There are a very limited number of tickets available to the public for the ceremony at Mt. Herzl. We are doing our absolute best to secure them for everyone on the mission but we will not have a final answer on our request for tickets until shortly before the ceremony. We appreciate your understanding.*



At an IDF Base



The on-board ship exhibit at Atlit Illegal Immigration Camp



Independence Hall



Ben Yehuda Street



Putting out the fire

Itinerary Subject to Change

Tuesday April 16 • Yom Ha'atzmaut in Tel Aviv

Today is **Israel's Independence Day, Yom Ha'atzmaut!** We'll make the transition into the celebratory spirit of this holiday with a visit to a local **IDF Base** for a tour with soldiers. Following the tour, we'll have the unique opportunity to chat with the soldiers to learn about daily life in the IDF.

Afterward, we will visit the **Ayalon Institute**, a secret bullet factory established by the Haganah in 1945. As the largest bullet factory during that time, it produced 2.25 million bullets from 1946 - 1948, completely in secret.

We'll continue to **Independence Hall**, to see where David Ben-Gurion announced the Independence of the State of Israel.

We'll then return to Jerusalem for an evening at leisure, providing us with an opportunity to enjoy Jerusalem's nightlife at our own pace. Alternatively, consider a stroll down **Ben Yehuda Street**, Jerusalem's open-air pedestrian mall filled with cafes, stalls with funky jewelry and the sounds of musicians playing their instruments on the street.

Overnight, Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem

Wednesday April 17 • Northern Region

Following a delicious Israeli breakfast, we will drive north along the scenic coastal route. We will stop at the **Atlit Illegal Immigration Camp**, which JNF helped restore in partnership with the Society for the Preservation of Israel's Heritage Sites (SPIHS). Converted into a detention camp by the British Mandate, Atlit imprisoned thousands of Jewish immigrants upon arriving into Israel.

After the tour, we'll continue north to the Carmel Region. We'll stop at the **Carmel Forest** to witness, first-hand, the destruction from the recent forest fires. During a tour, a **KKL representative** will discuss the efforts to repair the vast ecological damage, rehabilitate the forests and prevent the spread of future fires. We will meet with an **Israeli Fire Fighter**, who will share his personal experiences fighting the deadliest forest fire in Israel's history.



Planting a Tree

We'll then enjoy a lovely **picnic lunch** before heading back toward Jerusalem. Along the way, we'll stop at **Neot Kedumim**, an eco-tourism site and "living museum" that recreates the physical setting of the Bible in all its depth and detail. Following a tour, we'll continue to the **Harvey Hertz - JNF Ceremonial Tree Planting Center**, which serves as JNF's primary planting center in Israel. Here, we will each have the opportunity to **plant a tree** and contribute to JNF's ongoing afforestation efforts in Israel.



9/11 Living Memorial

We will arrive in Jerusalem in time to attend a very special **KKL-JNF Mega Event**, in honor of Yom Ha'atzmaut. We'll join Jewish communities from around the world as well as dignitaries, leaders and Heads of State for a festive celebration to show solidarity and unity.

Overnight, Inbal Hotel, Jerusalem

Thursday April 18 • Jerusalem



Burma Road

This morning we will begin at the **9/11 Living Memorial**, built in memory of the victims of the September 11 terrorist attacks. Designed by award winning Israeli artist Eliezer Weishoff, the memorial depicts the World Trade Center and Pentagon through sculpture and landscape architecture. This unique memorial is the only place outside of New York that recognizes the names of the people who were killed on 9/11 as well as their countries of origin.

Afterward, we'll take a drive along the **Burma Road**, Israel's first by-pass road built in 1948. Along the road, we will see the oversized silhouette figures that have been placed to recall the fortitude of the Haganah, who worked tirelessly to construct the road.



Tank at Latrun

Following a **picnic lunch**, we'll visit **Latrun**, a memorial site for fallen soldiers with an open-air museum featuring more than 200 tanks and vehicles dating back to WWI. Several **IDF soldiers** will lead us on a tour and explain Latrun's role as a major battle ground during the War of Independence and then liberated from Jordanian rule during the Six Day War in 1967.

This evening, we'll enjoy a **farewell dinner** at the hotel before we transfer to the airport for our return flights to the USA.

Overnight, En Route