

DRAFT ITINERARY TO BE CONFIRMED WHEN WE HAVE AIRLINE TIMES

Day 1 – Feb 25 – Leave early afternoon via International Airport for Israel (People will leave from different capitals around Australia and meet up along the route)

Day 2 – Feb 26 - Arrival - On arrival visit Neot Kedumim, a nature park with plants trees and artefacts referenced by the Bible. This would depend on time of flight arrival as most will be tired after the long flight. If arrive early, maybe could go to hotel for a nap and then after lunch do the Neot Kedumim or just a lull day by the beach, sleep, walk in town etc

Day 3 – Feb 27 - Visit the pre-48 secret underground ammunition factory – the Ayalon Institute – in Rehovot followed by an orientation drive around Tel Aviv; visit Jaffa and walk around the Neve Tzedek neighbourhood and perhaps the Carmel market.
Overnight: Tel Aviv

Day 4 – Feb 28

Depart Tel Aviv for Caesarea Maritima, where Paul was imprisoned for 2 years and Peter converted 3000. Visit the Carmelite Monastery at the Muhraqa, where Elijah smote the false prophets – Drive through the Druze villages of Dalya and Usfiya. / Descend on the eastern side of Mt. Carmel and, time permitting, visit Bet Shearim, the necropolis of the Rabbis in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. End the day with a view of the Bahai Gardens and the northern coastline of Israel. Overnight Haifa.

Day 5 – Mar 1 - Drive to Akko (Acre), see the prison where the British hanged members of the underground; visit the Knights of St. John Castle, walk through the shuk to the harbor and the medieval Genoese marketplace. Continue to Rosh HaNikra to walk through Israel's "blue grotto". Drive across the mountainous north to Safed, home to an artist colony and one-time center of Kabbalah. Overnight Kibbutz Ginosar on the Sea of Galilee. Rosh HaNikra

Day 6 – Mar 2 - See the remains of a boat from the time of Jesus. Experience an early morning sail across the Sea of Galilee. Visit the Mt. of Beatitudes. Tabgha, Capernaum, Fish lunch before or after depending on time. Continue around the lake, stopping at Kursi and the Yardenit Baptismal Site, before returning to Ginosar. Optional evening visit (after dinner, at participants' expense) to Tiberias hot springs

Day 7 – Mar 3 - Visit Biblical Dan and Caesarea-Phillippi. Drive up the Golan stopping at Tel Fahr which fell to the Golani Brigade's Barak Battalion in the Six Day War. At Kibbutz El Rom see a short movie about the 1973 tank battle on the Golan and visit the battle site at Mt Odem (will be cold and windy here) – Return to Ginosar.

Day 8 – Mar 4 - Drive via Cana to Zippori (Sepphoris) to see the capital of the Galilee before Tiberias was founded and the hub around which villages such as Nazareth revolved. Continue to Nazareth Village where you can relive the Nazareth from the time of Jesus. Time permitting, visit Church of the Annunciation. At the foot of Mt. Gilboa visit the 6th century synagogue of Bet Alfa. Stop for a welcome to Jerusalem on Mt. Scopus before settling in. Overnight: Jerusalem

Day 9 – Mar 5 - Start with a spectacular view of Jerusalem from the Mt. of Olives - Walk down the Palm Sunday Road, visit the Chapel of Dominus Flevit and the Church of all Nations at the Garden of Gethsemane – Afternoon visit to Bethlehem commencing with Lunch there –Visit the Holy Sites including the Shepherds Field, Shepherds Church, Church of the Nativity with Birth cave.

Day 10 – Mar 6 - Free to enjoy Jerusalem (Old and New City)

Day 11 – Mar 7 - Early morning visit (leave hotel at 7:15 - this to avoid a very long wait in line) to the Temple Mount; exit at the northern end and then visit the Pools of Bethesda, the Sisters of Zion crypt and walk the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Walk through the shuk to Damascus Gate and Solomon's Quarries (also known as Zedekiah's cave) before ending at Garden Tomb about 3pm.

Day 12– Mar 8 - Begin with a visit to David's City - see the movie of Jerusalem from its inception (some 4,000 years back) until the time of Solomon. Walk underground down the hill to the Gihon Spring; continue via the now-dry Canaanite water channel to (those who wish can walk - in water up to their knees or higher - through the 550m. long tunnel built by Hezekiah, joining the wimps at) the Pool of Siloam. From here we return via Herod's drainage channel below his street, 700 meters to emerge under Robinson's Arch onto the street from the time of the Temple. There we will visit the Davidson Center, the steps that led to the Temple, followed by a visit to the Western Wall. On Mt Zion visit the Last Supper Room and the prison of Christ at St. Peter et Gallicantu – enter the Jewish Quarter and walk the Cardo. Visit the Burnt House.

DAY 13 – Mar 9 -Today we view the model of Second Temple period Jerusalem; the Dead Sea scrolls (perhaps see also the short film on Man as the Temple and a little of the Israel Museum - about 2 1/2 hours) Continue past the Israel Knesset [if it's a Sunday or Thursday we could visit the Knesset but it too takes time – if we do this should begin here at the first English speaker's visit and then go to the Museum] and the Supreme Court to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. Visit En Karem and the birthplace of John the Baptist. Finish our visit to Jerusalem with a walk down Ben Yehuda St. and town center or the outdoor market at Mahaneh Yehudah. Overnight: Jerusalem

Day 14: – Mar 10 - Drive down to Emmaus where the resurrected Jesus appeared to Leontidas and Cleopas. Continue to the Latrun Tank Memorial and mini-Israel. Continue via Bet Shemesh (where the ark of the Covenant returned and the Ela Valley (where David slew Goliath) to Bet Guvrin (the Biblical Maresha conquered by Joshua) where we explore the myriad bell-shaped caves and the wonderfully preserved Roman Amphitheatre. Return to Jerusalem

Day 15 – Mar 11 - Depart Jerusalem via the Inn of the Good Samaritan to visit the caves of Qumran, En Gedi and Masada which we ascend by cable car but descend on foot via the Roman ramp where the bus meets us; drive to Kfar HaNokdim, where you ride camels for ½ hour in the desert before returning to settle in your Bedouin tent (the whole group in one large tent – while your guide seeks out his private cabin) and enjoy a Bedouin hafla for dinner (perhaps followed by Bedouin music)

Day 16 – Mar 12 - Explore Tel Arad; visit a local Arab falah (peasant) village. Continue to Tel Sheva; Make our way to our Dead Sea hotel to get to the hotel early to enjoy the salty waters of the Dead Sea and any other delights the hotel may offer. Overnight: Dead Sea

Day 17 – Mar 13 - Part Free Day at the Dead Sea. At 12:00 noon we head down the Arava Valley for Timna (lunch on the way) to see the rock formations and ancient mines and Temples. Visit a re-creation of the Tabernacle in the Sinai desert and overnight Eilat

Day 18 – Mar 14 - Eilat: visit Giora's Eilat Stone factory, continue with an orientation drive around Eilat, and visit the underwater observatory.

Day 19 – Mar 15 - Free to enjoy the sea (early visit to the bird-watching centre, scuba or snorkel at the coral beach and/or the dolphin reef, parasail, ride in a glass-bottomed boat,

or just lie in the sun on the northern beach) and /or the desert – arrange a camel ride up Wadi Shlomo, take a jeep ride - fly to Ben Gurion airport to catch your plane home.

Day 21 – March 17th - (We lose a day with the date line) and arrive back in Australia around lunch time.