

Here are what Sabeel considers the most essential items to bring:

1. **Bible**
2. **Passport**, plus a copy or two of the photo page, packed separately from the passport itself.
3. **Medications:** Any necessary prescription medications, glasses, or other medical necessities.
4. **Clothing:** To be on the safe side, wear conservative clothing, even though people in the cities are very stylish here. Your attire should adhere to the following:
 - A. A combination of clothes for warm and cold weather. The temperature is not stable during this season in the Holy Land. Be sure to have a rain jacket.
 - B. Trousers or dresses, skirts, leggings, etc. to the ankles.
 - C. No low necklines or bare midriffs.
 - D. Women should carry a **scarf** at all times, to be worn over the head at holy sites or in case it is needed to cover shoulders and neckline.

It is best to wear clothing to the ankles everyday, since different locations that we will visit demand different dress codes and we want to ensure that everyone is dressed appropriately so that all can attend.

5. **Footwear:** sturdy, closed, comfortable walking shoes and sandals.
6. **Hygiene products:** (such as lotion, face wash, baby wipes, anti-bacterial products, feminine hygiene) **Note, these are available here, but if you have special brands or allergies bring what you are used to. Remember that imported items are much more expensive since they know tourists purchase them.
7. **Travel towel**
8. **Sunglasses, sunscreen, Hat** etc. for protection from strong, bright sunlight.
9. A small **backpack** or **shoulder bag** suitable for day trips (large enough to hold water bottle, passport, snacks, camera, toothbrush, etc. and small enough for easy carrying)
10. An empty **flash drive** (To share photos with everyone before we depart, I would suggest 8 GB or larger) .
11. It will be helpful if you're able to bring a few small **packaged snacks** (e.g. granola bars, trail mix, etc.) for yourself

A modest amount of **cash** for personal items, such as souvenirs, drinks, or impromptu stops for ice cream or snacks (preferable to travelers' checks).

Estimate the total amount of snacks, sodas, juices, ice cream to be ~\$100 for the trip. (Not including souvenirs)

And now, here are a few further items that are optional but may be useful to you, depending on your own needs & preferences:

E. A small travel **clock/alarm**, a **headlamp**, or **small flashlight**

F. **Camera & extra batteries**

G. **Notebook** for journaling or taking notes

H. **Hand held device** (ipad, smart Mobile) for internet access

I. **Umbrella**, as there is a possibility of rain in March

Jesus Christ Liberator Then And Now 2017

Practical Information about Palestine and Israel

The combined land of Israel and Palestine makes up a population of about 11,246,827 people. Israel proper has a population of 7,465,50, including 1,513, 200 Israeli Arabs.

The West Bank has a population of 2,350,583 and the Gaza Strip has about 1.5 million. There are also around 673, 200 illegal Israeli settlers living all over the West Bank.

Israel/Palestine is bordered by four countries: to the southwest is Egypt, to the east, Jordan, and to the northeast Syria (The Golan Heights, occupied by Israel in 1967, was originally part of Syria). Directly to the north is Lebanon, and to the west is the Mediterranean Sea. A very small plot of land, the combine area of Israel and Palestine takes up only 27,642 square kilometers (slightly larger than Massachusetts or Sicily).

Both Israelis and Palestinians claim Jerusalem as their capital. Tel Aviv is the largest city in Israel proper and also the location of the major international airport.

Languages: The official languages of Israel and Palestine are Hebrew and Arabic, but most of the population in both areas speak some English as well.

Religions: This is a country thought to be holy by a whole host of religious groups. The largest religions are Judaism and Sunni Islam, but there are representatives from every form of Christianity, with the largest Christian populations belonging to one of the Orthodox churches, as well as sizable populations of Druze and Samaritan communities.

Weather: The weather in Israel/Palestine is dry and temperate for most of the year. The rainy season begins in October and continues through the winter until about May, when it becomes hot and dry. The mountains in the north can get very cold and it sometimes snows, but for the most part the country remains at a temperate climate. Average temperatures in the summer range from 25-35 degrees Celsius (77 -95 Fahrenheit), and in the winter from 9-14 degrees Celsius (48 – 60 Fahrenheit).

Time Zone: Jerusalem is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time. In the summer it is three hours ahead.

Safety: For the most part, Israel and Palestine are very safe places. Given the political situation, there are certainly periodic outbursts of violence, but they are rarely dangerous for visitors. It is important that visitors respect the culture and customs of the places they visit, and try to be conscious of the impact their actions have on others. Provocative clothing is discouraged in most of the country but especially at religious sites of any kind.

Internet Access: Internet is widely available in a variety of forms. There are wireless internet connections available all over Israel and Palestine, and for those without laptops/hand held devices there are internet cafes with cheap rates scattered throughout all major cities. All the hotels where we will stay have free wifi available.

Telephones: Calling outside the country requires a country code specific to the place you are trying to reach. Calling to Israel from another country requires the country code 972 and probably a code to

get out of your native country, and calling to the West Bank or Gaza requires the country code 970. There are pay phones widely available in Israel and Palestine and it is also possible to buy local cell phones with phone cards for those staying for a longer period. Please write Sabeel if you would like to rent a local mobile and number. The cost is \$ 60 US for the trip.

Electricity: For the most part, foreigners will need to buy adapters to use cell phones or computer chargers. The voltage here is 220+ and adapters/converters are available for purchase here for around three dollars.

Currency and Money: The national currency is the shekel. The exchange rate to the dollar is 3.8/1. Money may be exchanged all over Israel and Palestine via money changers and ATM machines, but the best rate will be found at the airport, so it is good to take out money when you first arrive. Not all money changers give the same exchange rate, so it is wise to consult with Sabeel staff about money exchange when you arrive to Bethlehem if you have not already gotten funds from the airport ATM.

NOTE: It is also important to check with your local bank before leaving for Israel to make sure they give you permission to withdraw cash from Israeli/Palestinian ATMs. In the past, foreign visitors have had their credit/debit cards taken by the ATM because their bank assumed the card had been stolen and brought to the country illegally.

Arriving and Departing: If you are flying directly to Ben Gurion airport, you will most likely be issued a three month tourist visa. For many countries (**USA, Canada and European Union countries**), it is possible to get a visa upon arrival in Israel, but for some it is necessary to obtain an entry visa beforehand, so be sure to check the website for the Ministry of the Interior for that information. See here:

<http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ConsularServices/Documents/VisaRequirements-Tourists.pdf>

If you arrive early and want transportation to Jerusalem!

Transportation from and to the airport is readily available; leaving the airport going to Jerusalem one can take a shared taxi/ Neshar bus for around sixty-five shekels. As you walk out of Terminal 3 at Ben-Gurion airport you will find 12 seated Neshar vans (white and yellow). Please find photo below:

An individual taxi is about 80 USD.

Sabeel will contact you with a private email regarding the preferred way to get to the Bethlehem hotel.



Tips for the trip!!

We're so glad you've registered, and we want to help make your experience as safe and fun as possible. Here are just a few things to keep in mind when you arrive to the country:

- Don't drink the tap water. Bottled water is a better choice.
- Drink at least two liters of water every day!
- Avoid buying food from random street vendors. It may look or smell yummy, but there are no regulations on its preparation. Better to be safe than sorry!
- Because we are soon to be a global little community here in the Bethlehem Hotel with many different cultures and understandings of privacy, we ask that you respect each other's personal space by refraining from visiting any hotel room but your own. Please feel free to utilize hotel common spaces (like the lobby) to hang out with friends.
- If you have any questions, please feel free to connect with the staff.
- Please don't flush paper in the toilet
- Please lock your hotel room at the hotel with the keys every night before you sleep and whenever you leave the room.

We will remind you of the following points when you arrive!

