Dear Israel Adventure Traveler,

Are you ready for the trip of a lifetime? I hope so, because we will be leaving for Israel soon! Allow me to answer some frequently asked questions:

1. **Money**--It is best to go to your bank to get some local currency prior to leaving. The current exchange rate (as of April 7, 2023) for Israel shekels to dollars is 1 ILS = 0.28 USD and 1 USD = 3.6 ILS. Keep in mind that the exchange rate that you receive at the airport will be less favorable. There are ATM machines in Israel that you can use with debit cards. Most cards do not charge transaction fees for ATMs in Israel; however, it is best to check. You also can use credit cards for most purchases over $10. Foreign vendors will accept U.S. currency, but they will try to give you less for your money (think that you will lose ten cents on the dollar). The same is true with traveler’s checks. However, if the convenience of having a debit or credit card is worth the fees (if they have them), then, of course, you do not have to worry about losing your money. Finally, call your credit or debit card company, and let them know you will be in Israel. If you do not call, then your card may be shut down as a fraud alert action. Bring a second credit card, if possible. Even when I call, the credit card companies shut down the card some of the time until I call from Israel, reiterating my previous call.
2. **Money belts**--I find it best to have a money belt or something that hides both your passport and money when in foreign lands. While it is unlikely that you will have anything stolen, taking precautions is the best way to deal with the possibility of theft.
3. **Passports**--Please make a copy of your passport and bring both your passport and the copy with you. Place it somewhere other than where you keep your passport in case you lose the passport.
4. **How much money should I bring?** The answer is very individual. Try to figure out how many gifts you want to buy and add $125 (just in case). Try to figure out how many sodas or coffees you will want to buy. (Sodas are expensive in Israel, running about $4 a pop--excuse the pun.) While you will have a lot to eat (we will have a lot of buffet breakfasts and dinners), you may want a midday candy bar. Lunch is not included on the trip. Lunch will run around $12-15 per day on average.
5. **Water**--Bring a water bottle that you can reuse. We recommend drinking 4 bottles of water per day in a more arid land. You will need to have water with you every day. Fill up before we leave the hotel to cut down on buying the water. On the bus, water costs $1 per bottle. Thus, you will save about $4 a day on water if you bring a bottle.
6. **Hat**--Bring a hat that will cover as much as possible for the days in the desert. Also, bring suntan lotion (1 bottle for every 2 people).
7. **Packing**--I would suggest packing a change of clothes in your carry-on bag and some deodorant. I do this as standard practice just in case. Remember, to use the travel-sized containers (3.4 ounces or less) for any liquids in your carry-on luggage.
8. **Traveling to Israel & Meals**– it will take your group at least an hour to get through customs and get their luggage. The bus will leave when all of the groups coming into Tel Aviv for our tour have arrived. Breakfast and/or dinner will be served on the plane depending on your departure time. Most flights will serve both. Prior to getting on the plane, on layovers and in the airport, your food expenditures will be up to you. Once on the bus, The Israel Adventure will provide your breakfasts and dinners. We do not cover breakfast on your day of arrival, since all airlines offer some form of breakfast on the flight. If you have food allergies, please inform Dr. Davis once you are in Israel (so he can keep that information on him).
9. **Sleeping on the plane**--It is important that you sleep on the plane. The plus to the way we are doing the trip is there is no lost time. The minus is that if you do not sleep on the plane, you will not be awake for some pretty special sites. This trip is designed for maximum efficiency of our daytime hours. You will want to be rested as much as possible. It is also important that on the first couple of days that you resist the urge to sleep during the day and convert to the schedule of Israel. I cannot emphasize enough how much you will want to be fully awake while we are there. Let’s take full advantage of our time there!
10. **Phone**–Check with your carrier in advance to understand or update your international calling plan. With the prevalence of international calling plans and free wifi options, the Israel Adventure does not offer a calling service. You may also send messages on Marco Polo and other apps on your cell phone. You may also access the internet each night in your hotel room. Most buses also have wifi.
11. **Travel Insurance**–Since we have no control over flight changes, war, terrorism, and disease outbreaks (think COVID), you may wish to get travel insurance. Travel insurance will cover an emergency flight home, if needed, as well as trip interruptions for various reasons. Generally, airlines only give refunds and allow a change in travel plans in cases of death within the immediate family or a note from your doctor saying that travel is against medical advice. Any flight changes will have to be worked out with the airline. The Israel Adventure does not refund any monies for trip interruption of various kinds.
12. **Loss of days due to flight delays or cancellations-** If your trip is interrupted or delayed by the airlines, the Israel Adventure cannot reimburse you for loss of days or loss of trip due to situations out of their control. Loss of time in Israel, due to airline delays or cancellations will have to be worked out with the airline or with your travel insurance. This is another good reason to have trip cancellation or interruption insurance.