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## Dear Reader,

Israel beckons. For more than 60 years, Israel has been one of the most sought after travel destinations, with more than 3 million visitors coming to our shores in 2008, an all-time record.

Israel is, of course, the Promised Land and the Holy Land. For centuries, Jews, Christians and Muslims have made a journey to Israel an act of faith, a journey that was often complex and enormously challenging. In the 21st century, we remain the goal of the religious traveler – but the challenges are, of course, no more daunting than a vacation to Europe or here in America.

But Israel is also an ultra-modern country, a place that is utterly westernized, a place where a vacation can be the perfect combination of history, culture, faith and relaxation. It is a destination perfect for families, a land with a tourism infrastructure that is second to none, with hotels ranging from super-luxury to hip and boutique to B&B's. It is a land where Americans are welcomed with open arms, a land where virtually everyone speaks English. And it is a land that is totally accessible, with as many as 10 nonstop flights a day from the United States.

This booklet is designed to help you bring your clients to Israel. It contains a vast amount of information – but if there is more you need to know, please contact the Israel Government Tourist Office nearest you.

Send your clients to Israel. They'll never be the same.

Sincerely,

Arie Sommer

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The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem



## getting there

Israel is a crossroads, but the fusion of influences, religions, cultures, life-styles and attractions go way beyond common notions about the country.

### Religious Crossroads

Stand in the shadow of the **Western Wall**, the holiest site in Judaism, in **Jerusalem's Old City** and gaze up at the **Temple Mount** as men and women, separately, mourn the loss of the First and Second Temples or approach the stone edifice to slip a prayer, scrawled on a piece of paper, into one of its cracks.

The Temple Mount, which is the historic site of the two temples, is known to Muslims as the **Noble Sanctuary**, and that makes the location revered in Islam, too. The plateau houses the **Dome of the Rock** and **al-Aqsa Mosque**, the third-holiest site in Islam, from which Muhammad rode a winged horse to heaven.

A few minutes away by foot are the **Stations of the Cross**, or **Via Dolorosa**, a sanctified passageway for Christians recalling the scenes of Jesus' final sufferings.

Meanwhile, in the northern coastal city of **Haifa**, another faith counts Israel as hallowed ground. In this port town on the slopes of **Mt. Carmel**, the Baha'i community has constructed the **Baha'i World Center**, which features a shrine and network of gardens so lush that any golf-course architect would be envious.

Thus, Israel is a religious crossroads.

### Geographic Crossroads

A geographic crossroads which felt cultural crosswinds from traders, armies and empires, Israel lies in Southwest Asia, and is perched between the hearts of Europe, Africa and Asia. The tiny country – about the size of New Jersey – is sandwiched between the **Mediterranean Sea** and the deserts of Syria and Arabia. Direct neighbors include Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt and, of course, the Palestinian territories on the West Bank and in the Gaza Strip.

In this unique location, Israel offers virtually every kind of natural wonder. **Mt. Hermon**, north of the **Golan Heights**, is Israel's highest peak. In the winter, travelers delight in its skiing, snowboarding and sledding.

The caves of **Rosh Hanikra**, accessible by descending cable cars yards from the touchpoint of the Israel-Lebanon border, offer a wondrous medley of sound and color.

And, tourists can choose between beautiful beaches along the Mediterranean, a swim in **Eilat** on the **Red Sea**, a ferry ride across the freshwater **Sea of Galilee**, or a float on their backs, buoyed by the salty healing powers of the **Dead Sea**, which is the lowest point on Earth.

This lowest point on Earth, however, can be a high point, too, as Masada, the mountainous and ill-fated site of a rebellion by Jewish zealots against the Romans, looms over the Dead Sea on the periphery of the **Judean Desert**.

### Cultural Crossroads: Classic Meets Chic

But, Israel is not just history, religion and culture, or archeological digs and museums.

Israel is **Leonardo DiCaprio**, **Demi Moore**, **Ashton Kutcher**, **Madonna**, **Richard Gere** and **Brad Pitt**, among numerous other celebs, making the scene in the Holy Land and being seen, too.

Israel is trendy restaurants, clubs, cafes and art galleries in **Tel Aviv's Jaffa section**, **Port Area** and **Florentin neighborhood**.

Israel also is the off-duty female soldier, marching in her own personal style along **Dizengoff Street** in Tel Aviv, decked out in the latest fashions of Israeli or European designers.

### Before You Go, Know This About Safety

If you haven't booked clients to Israel before and you are hesitant because of safety concerns, know this: Most people who have traveled to Israel can attest – just ask them – that the scary headlines that may have graced the pages of newspapers at home seem like a distant unreality when they visited Israel.

Some 3 million tourists visited Israel in 2008, and each one returned home safely.

Israelis and tourists alike will tell you that while terrorism can happen anywhere, stories about safety issues in Israel are overblown and that Israelis and their guests go about their lives and travels feeling very safe within the country.

Your clients won't feel any security concerns when they are sipping Turkish coffee in a **kibbutz hadar ochel** (community dining room) or frolicking with native **Sabras** and immigrants who made **Aliyah** (ascended to make Israel their home) as they "live life," as the Israelis call it, on Tel Aviv's beaches.

And, lastly, your clients can feel confidence in knowing that Israel's intelligence services are world-renowned, and ensuring the health of the country's tourism industry and a hospitable welcome to the country's traveler-guests are high priorities.

### Getting There: Flights

**El Al**, **Continental**, **Delta** and **US Airways** operate more than more than 10 daily nonstop flights to Tel Aviv (TLV) from the U.S., including from New York (JFK), Newark (EWR), Los Angeles (LAX), Atlanta (ATL) and Philadelphia (PHL). And these carriers, plus Air Canada, have a vast array of connecting flights to get travelers to these origin cities. Around the world, more than 70 airlines offer flights to Israel.

### Getting There: Cruises

Several cruise lines offer sailings from Europe with port calls in **Haifa** and **Ashdod**. For example, the **RCL Vision of the Seas** offers 12-night **Holy Land Cruises** from Venice, this fall, including port calls in Haifa and Ashdod. And, the **Celebrity Equinox** features 13-night **Holy Land Cruises** from Civitavecchia, also embarking in the fall season, on Sept. 9, Sept. 22, Oct. 5 and Oct. 18, 2010, with stops in Haifa and Ashdod.

## getting around

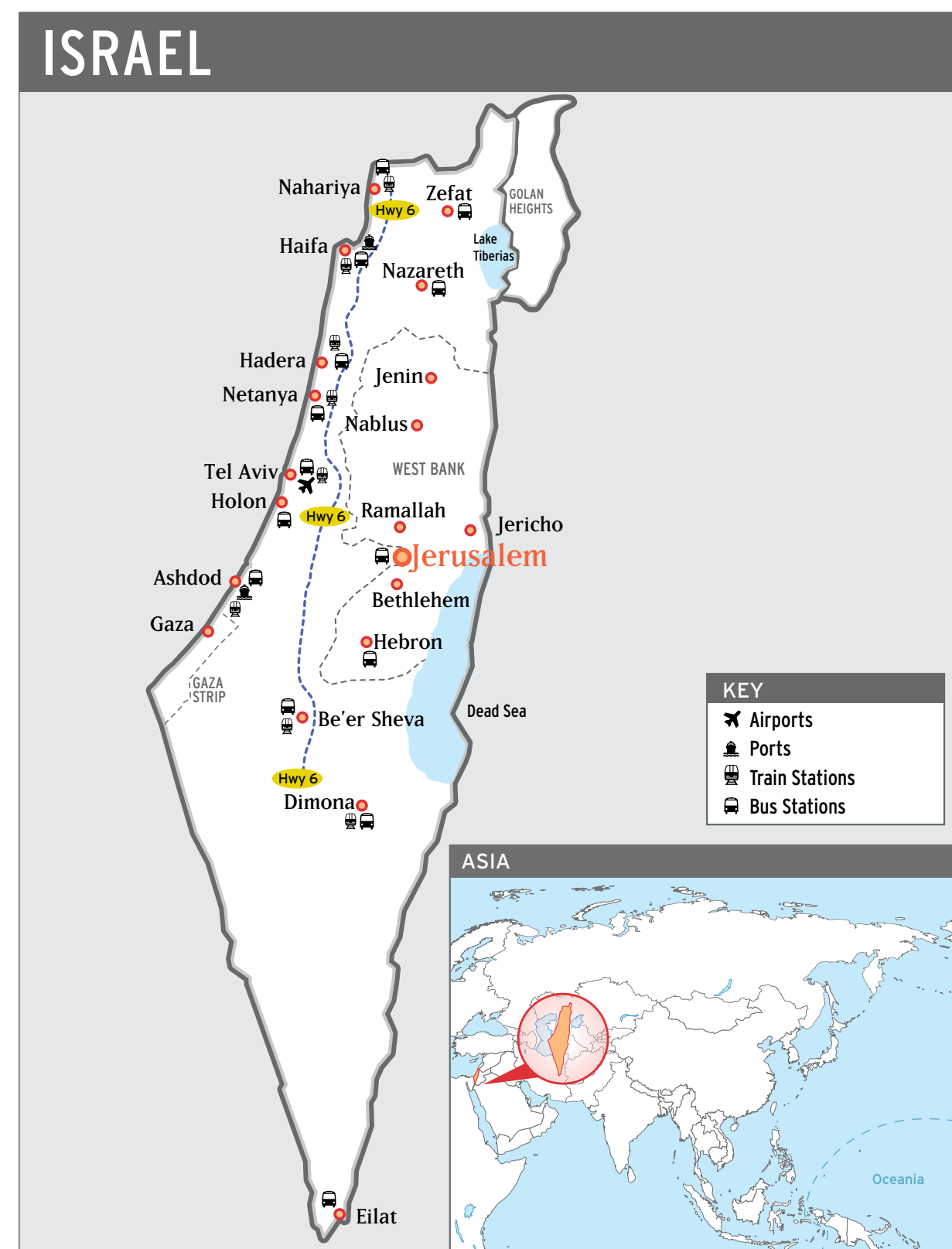
**AIRPORTS:** **Ben Gurion International Airport (TLV)**, located near **Lod**, which is southeast of Tel Aviv and about 30 minutes away by car (when the traffic is light), is Israel's main international airport. The airport is also just 40 minutes away from Jerusalem by car. Considered among the safest airports in the world, Ben Gurion is a thoroughly modern facility with a wide array of services, shops and restaurants. Don't forget to tell your clients to arrive at the airport 3 hours early before departure from Israel. Transportation options to and from the airport include public Egged buses, rail services, rental cars, taxis, limousines and other private car services. For more information about the airport and transportation alternatives, visit [www.iaa.gov.il](http://www.iaa.gov.il) and click on "English" in the top left corner.

**HIGHWAYS:** Israel has a vibrant network of highways, with **Highway 6**, a roughly 186-mile-long, north-south electronic-toll road, among the newest. Highway 6 connects **Nahariya** in the north to **Be'er Sheva** in the south. The highway is a convenient way to bypass the more heavily traveled Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

**DRIVING:** Travelers from the U.S. and Canada can lawfully drive in Israel with their U.S., Canada or international driver's licenses. Signage on the roadways point to the country's diversity as most are written in Hebrew, English and Arabic.

**RAILWAYS:** Ben Gurion Airport has a train station on Level S, the lowest level, and the station, open from 3 a.m. until midnight, is accessible from the airport's Greeters Hall. There are connections to Tel Aviv, Haifa, Acre and Nahariya. Israel's rail service is nationalized and the **Rakevet** (train) network runs primarily along the country's Mediterranean coast, but also dips down into the Negev. For tourists and Israelis alike, the trains make a great alternative to roadway congestion and sitting next to a window offers great views of the disparate vistas passing by. Reserved seats, which are not required, can be purchased up to seven days in advance inside the train stations from cashiers or at automated ticket kiosks. For more information, visit [www.rail.co.il/EN](http://www.rail.co.il/EN).

**BUSES:** **Egged**, the major public bus company in Israel, operates most of the routes between cities and within major towns, with the exception of the Tel Aviv area and its surroundings, where the **Dan** bus company is the premier provider. Fares are reasonable and tickets can be purchased from the driver or within the bus stations. Travel agents should forewarn their clients that buses don't operate on **Shabbat**, from sundown Friday night until sundown Saturday night in parts of the country, so travelers should make other transportation arrangements, such as taking a sherut, a private taxi where multiple travelers share the fare. Buses indeed operate on Shabbat in Haifa and in some neighborhoods in Jerusalem. For more information about Egged bus routes, visit [www.egged.co.il/Eng](http://www.egged.co.il/Eng).



## money matters

### CURRENCY

Israel's currency is the New Israel shekel (NIS), usually only called shekel (or shekelim in the plural form). The shekel is divided into 100 agorot. Exchange rates can fluctuate, but the shekel has fallen in tandem with the U.S. dollar, which is a pleasant surprise for U.S. visitors hit by high prices in Europe.

Currency-exchange centers are located in major cities. The centers charge no commission but offer a slightly lower exchange rate than those provided at the banks, which may charge up to 4% commission. On the whole, exchanging money at one of these bureaus is generally more efficient and quicker than standing in line at a bank.

Credit cards are accepted at the majority of Israeli shops and restaurants, although finding establishments willing to take payment against American Express or Diners Club cards might be a challenge. Cash payments in NIS are always accepted, but payments in foreign currencies are not. Traveler's checks are only accepted at shops that deal primarily with tourists. Visa cards are widely accepted at ATMs, but withdrawals with a MasterCard can only be conducted at ATMs of Bank HaPolim.

### TAXES

Israelis pay a 15.5% value-added tax (VAT) on all goods, and prices quoted always include this tax. Tourists are exempt from paying the VAT for accommodations, organized tours, car rentals and flights within Israel, but only when payments are made in foreign currency or with a credit card from a foreign bank. In addition, tourists who purchase goods exceeding US\$100 at shops posting a "Tax Refund/Tax-Free Shopping" sign are entitled to a VAT refund at their port of departure. Exceptions to this rule include tobacco products, electrical appliances and photographic equipment. Tourists should make sure to ask for a special invoice when they make purchases at these shops in order to present it at the VAT refund office.

### TIPPING

Tip 10%-15% in restaurants. In upscale hotels and restaurants, a 15% service charge may be included in the bill. Tipping taxi drivers is not expected but gladly accepted when offered. On the other hand, tour guides and their bus drivers usually expect tips. Hotel staff is appreciative when tips are left.

In the shuk, Old City, Jerusalem



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# wholesalers and tour operators

A variety of wholesalers in the U.S. and land-tour operators in Israel offer a plethora of religious, cultural and secular tours of Israel.

**YA'LLA TOURS USA:** Ya'lla Tours USA has been offering escorted tours to Israel since 1993. The tours include 5-day Galilee Stopover, 8-day Israel Highlights, 14-day Glory of Israel, 9-day Journey of Faith, 19-day Dan to Beersheva, 5-day Jerusalem Stopover, 7-day Israel Bibleland, 8-day Israel Heritage, 14-day Ultimate Israel, and 9-day Magnificent Israel tours. For example, the Magnificent Israel tour starts at \$4,175 per person, double, for departures Jan. 4 to Feb. 28, 2010. Ya'lla offers a co-op program for travel agents when they promote certain Ya'lla tours.

**ISRAMWORLD:** Founded in 1967, New York City-based Isramworld offers almost every manner of tour to Israel, ranging from the **Ultimate Family Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tour to Israel**, a 15-day escorted program, to the 11-day **Elite Israel by Private Car** and **Elite Jordan and Eilat**, a 6-day excursion. The 2010 lineup is being finalized, and some modifications and additions were in the works. The tours depart five days a week, generally last seven to 15 days, and many of the tours are customizable. There are nine hotel plans, with all the properties being 5-star or 5-star deluxe.

To get a taste of the unforgettable memories in the making, consider the itinerary for what promises to be a highlight in the Bar/Bat Mitzvah Tour, namely **Monday: Masada/Tiberias Bar & Bat Mitzvah Day!** Isramworld describes it:

"Cable car to the top of the heroic heights of Masada, the last stronghold of the Zealots in their struggle against the Romans. Join together in Masada's ancient synagogue for a compelling Bar/Bat Mitzvah ceremony. Tour the excavations before descending this legendary mountain. Continue to the verdant **Galilee**; stop en route at **Beit Alfato** visit one of the oldest synagogues ever excavated. Then to **Kibbutz Kineret**, the first kibbutz in Israel, and burial place of many of the founding fathers of the modern state. Continue to **Tiberias** for dinner and overnight."

Isramworld generally offers preferred travel agents who are consortia members 15% commission, and up to 18% for certain dates. Standard commission for other travel agents is 10%. In 2009, agents could receive up to 25% commission on bookings for their own, personal trips.

For brochures and other information about Isramworld, visit [www.isram.com](http://www.isram.com). To book tours, call 800-223-7460 ext. 9700.

**COLLETTE VACATIONS:** Tracing its roots to bus tours of Florida in 1918, **Collette Vacations**, headquartered in Pawtucket, R.I., offers a 10-day itinerary, **Israel: A Journey to the Holy Land**. Tour highlights include: **Tel Aviv, Jaffa, Caesarea, Tiberias, Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Jericho, Dead Sea, Masada,**

**Qumran, Jerusalem, Wailing Wall, Bethlehem, Church of the Nativity, Mount of Olives and Mt. Zion.** Sample rates range from \$1,599 for a Feb. 23, 2010, departure to \$1,849 for a departure on April 27, 2011.

Among the tour highlights is the opportunity to explore the place where the **Dead Sea Scrolls** were discovered, the caves of **Qumran**, and then view the scrolls themselves in Jerusalem's **Israel Museum**. Another signature moment undoubtedly will be a tour of and dinner at a **kibbutz**, a form of a collective, rural community where many of Israel's pioneers found their passion and strength.

For Israel departures from May 2010 and later, travel agents booking all-inclusive Collette tours will secure for their clients free, round-trip sedan service, including gratuities, from home to the airport.

Travel agents earn Collette commission on door-to-door, pre-sold options, and on land and contract air when purchased with a tour. The Israel tour comes with **guaranteed departure dates** (i.e. they can't be cancelled if passenger numbers are insufficient), and the Collette No Worries Cancellation Waiver guarantees clients a cash refund even if they cancel the day prior to departure. For information about the tour, visit [www.collettevacations.com/travel-agent.cfm](http://www.collettevacations.com/travel-agent.cfm).



View from Mount of Olives



The Western Wall, Jerusalem

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**PERILLO TOURS:** Established in 1945, Woodcliff Lake, N.J.-based **Perillo Tours** offers in 2009 a 10-day **Israel and the Holyland Tour**, at \$2,249 per person, double land. The tours, with Monday departures and Wednesday returns, run through Dec. 7.

Perillo President Steve Perillo says the same tour, targeting a secular clientele, will continue in 2010, although an optional **Cairo** extension will be added. Perillo also will offer EL AL in 2010.

The fully escorted tour, which includes breakfasts and dinners, takes in **Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jericho, Cana, Tiberias, Capernaum, Nazareth, Galilee** and the **Sea of Galilee, Haifa** and **Caesarea**.

For travel agents participating in the **Perillo Perks** program, Israel bookings qualify for prizes and override commission. The tour is not bookable in the GDSs. For more information, visit [www.perillotours.com/israel](http://www.perillotours.com/israel) or call 800-431-1515.

**MORE TOUR INFORMATION:** There is a vast array of other North American and Israeli companies that offer packaged tours or land tours in Israel. The Israel Incoming Tour Operators Association lists members contact information in Israel at [www.israeltravel.co.il](http://www.israeltravel.co.il). And Tour Guides provides a search engine to pair travelers with some of Israel's more than 1,300 certified tour guides at [www.tour-guides.co.il](http://www.tour-guides.co.il).



## cities and must-see places

From Safed, Akko, Tiberias and Nazareth in the north to Tel Aviv and Jerusalem in the central portion of the country, and Eilat along the Red Sea in the south, it would be impossible in a guide this size to detail all of the must-see venues in Israel.

That's why if your clients are first-time visitors to the historic and culture-packed destination, an organized tour might make sense. And, it takes time and many repeat visits to do justice to exploring Israel.

However, following are a few highlights of cities and other must-see places.

### JERUSALEM

Jerusalem has it all – history, religion, culture and entertainment – all wrapped up into a golden/purplish-at-dusk blend of old and new. The song, *Yerushalayim shel Zahav (Jerusalem of Gold)*, with the chorus, "Jerusalem of gold and of bronze and of light, Behold I am a violin for all your songs," hints at the magic that your clients will unearth in this wondrous, picturesque city.

The **Old City** is bounded by 16th-century ramparts and historic gates, and takes in must-see venues such as the **Western Wall, Church of the Holy Sepulcher** and the **Dome of the Rock**.



Outside the walls of the Old City, and with the Judean desert as a backdrop, tourists will be interested in visiting the **Mount of Olives**, with its historic Christian sites and churches, and its status as one of Jesus' favorite spots for preaching to the faithful. **The Jewish Cemetery**, according to a biblical passage, will be the site where the Messiah arrives and the Resurrection begins.

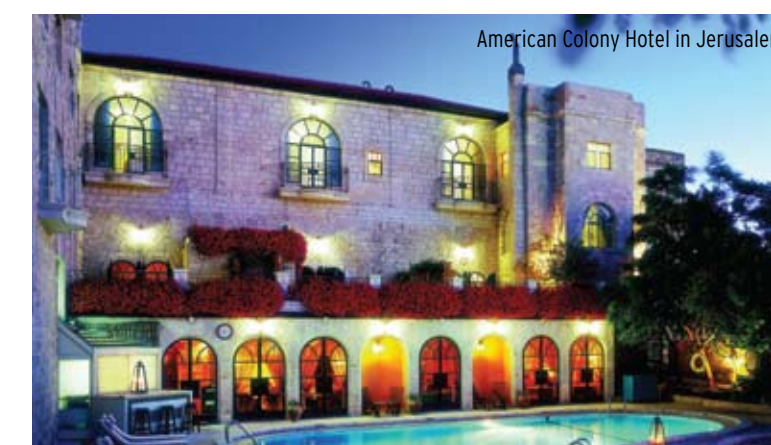
Also in the newer section of Jerusalem, among numerous museums and attractions, the **Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum** stands out as an essential stop, as it provides a guide to the struggles and near-obliteration of European Jewry.

**JERUSALEM HOTELS:** The **Dan Hotel Chain** has three hotels in the city, including the 237-room **King David Jerusalem Hotel**, a landmark property that overlooks the Old City and is part of **The Leading Hotels of the World**. **The Dan Panorama Jerusalem** and the **Dan Boutique Jerusalem** also are options. **The Inbal Jerusalem Hotel**, with a view of the Old City and Liberty Bell Park, provides an easy stroll to many historic and religious sites. The award-winning **American Colony Hotel**, affiliated with **The Leading Small Hotels of the**

### Inbal Jerusalem Hotel

The Inbal Jerusalem Hotel is the perfect location for any vacation. Come experience the holiday atmosphere for the Succot festival from \$250 per person (double room). Winter rates starting from \$150 per person (double room). The Inbal Hotel has just opened the finest health club in the city. For more details and bookings, go to [www.inbalhotel.com](http://www.inbalhotel.com).

**World**, is a boutique hotel with Arabian arches and is located within a 10-minute walk of the Damascus Gate. The **David Citadel-Jerusalem Hotel**, a luxury 384-room property, faces the David Citadel and Tower. **The Mamilla Hotel Jerusalem** has a contemporary motif and is located next to new shopping and entertainment venues on Alrov Mamilla Avenue. **The Crowne Plaza Hotel Jerusalem** is located at **Givat Ram**, near the **Hebrew University campus** and within walking distance of the **Knesset (Israel's Parliament)**.



The nearby **Western Wall Tunnels**, replete with a model depicting the life of the young Jesus, animated films and blocks of pavement constructed during the Herodian era, winds under the Muslim quarter.

The historically **Jewish, Armenian, Muslim** and **Christian Quarters** are scattered throughout the Old City and each neighborhood offers its unique history and culture.

And in **Via Dolorosa**, tourists can trace the path of Jesus' last steps from the First Station, the Antonia Fortress, where Jesus was said to have been brought to Pontius Pilate, to the Ninth Station or crucifixion site.

agent offer

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●●●●● HAIFA

The wonders of **Haifa** extend from the port, which serves as a gateway for commerce and cruise ships, to the heights of **Mount Carmel**, with the **Baha'i World Center**, and its sculpted garden and shrine, serving as a bookmark for the city. The **Haifa Funicular**, which shuttles visitors from **Bat Galim promenade** to the upper reaches of Mount Carmel, all the while offering a lookout onto the blue Mediterranean and shipping lanes below, is an alluring attraction for adventurous souls.



Baha'i World Center

●●●●● ACRE

A 20-minute drive north from Haifa along the Mediterranean coast is **Acre** (Akko in Hebrew), a must-see city because of its history and bustle. A World Heritage Site, this coastal city was a prize taken by the Crusaders and the Ottomans, and even Napoleon Bonaparte unsuccessfully tried to breach its walls after laying siege to the city. Unlike Napoleon, tourists can experience Acre's history and get inside the **Old City's** walls. **Hummus Said** in the Old City is a great place to experience Acre's culture and charms. Plan to arrive at the restaurant before noon because it sometimes closes in the early afternoon when the hummus runs out.

**ACRE HOTELS:** **Akkotel Hotel**, a former boys' school under British rule, actually is part of the Old City's walls. **Palm Beach Hotel**, at the southern tip of the city, has a private beach.



Acre

●●●●● TIBERIAS

**Tiberias**, a city in the **Lower Galilee** on the eastern shore of the **Sea of Galilee** can serve as a base to explore the Sea of Galilee and the **Golan Heights** on the lake's opposite shore. Tiberias, with its spas, family recreation and amazing panoply of history, will elevate any trip. From Israel's lowest city at about 655 feet below sea level, travelers can gaze across the Sea of Galilee to the opposite shore, where the Golan Heights reaches to an elevation of more than 3,900 feet.

**TIBERIAS HOTELS:** **Holiday Inn Tiberias**, some five minutes from downtown, is part of an area that encompasses the **Tiberias Hot Springs Spa**, the **Hamat Tiberias National Park** and a beach ideal for swimming and sailing. The **Sheraton Tiberias**, situated near the **Promenade**, features balconies with views of the Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights.



Holiday Inn Tiberias

agent offer

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Holiday Inn Haifa Hotel

**HAIFA HOTELS:** The **Holiday Inn Haifa Hotel** is located near the Baha'i gardens and is perched on Mount Carmel with spectacular views of **Haifa Bay**. **Dan Hotels** has three properties in Israel's third-largest city: the **Dan Carmel**, the **Dan Panorama Haifa** and the **Dan Gardens Haifa** (31 rooms).

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Dan Panorama, Haifa 📍 Dan Panorama, Jerusalem 📍 Dan Panorama, Eilat  
Dan Boutique, Jerusalem 📍 Dan Gardens, Ashkelon 📍 Dan Gardens, Haifa

●●●●● **DEAD SEA**

About an hour or so southeast of Jerusalem, the **Dead Sea**, with its salty and mineral riches, is said to be just the tonic for aches, pains and spiritual unease. **Hamei Ein Gedi**, on the western shore of the Dead Sea, offers thermo-mineral as well as freshwater pools, a mud bath and, of course, a treatment facility. And, nearby **Masada** is a must-see for Jewish, Christian and secular-oriented tourists – well, for everyone. Masada is a World Heritage Site. And, the historic plateau, with its desert backdrop and perch over the Dead Sea, indeed is a sight to behold. Masada was a refuge for Jewish zealots, who revolted against the Romans some four decades after the death of Jesus. Rather than become slaves, history has it that the rebels committed suicide. At a later juncture, Masada became a refuge for Christian Monks.

**DEAD SEA HOTELS:** The **Daniel Hotel Dead Sea**, part of the **Tamarets Hotels Group**, is located in **Ein Bokek** at the lowest portion of the Dead Sea. With 302 rooms and 12 luxury suites, the hotel is a convenient base for excursions to Masada, **Qumran** and Ein Gedi. **The Royal Hotel Dead Sea** features a Dead Sea pool, which is heated in winter, and is one of the largest properties in the area. And the **Novotel Thalassa Dead Sea** houses a large spa, with all the accoutrements, including a solarium.



●●●●● **WINERIES**

Israel makes some great wines which are consumed within its borders and exported all over the world. Sampling their flavors by visiting vineyards, located in the **Galilee, Samaria, Samson, Judean Hills** and the **Negev** regions, is a fruitful pastime for wine lovers. The Wine and Food Academy, based in London, says Israel nourishes about 12 large, commercial wineries and more than 150 boutique wine enterprises. The largest, according to the Academy, are 1) **Carmel Winery**, 2) **Barkan Wine Cellars**, 3) **Golan Heights Winery**, 4) **Efrat Winery**, 5) **Binyamina Wine Cellars**, 6) **Tishbi Estate**, 7) **Galil Mountain**, 8) **Dalton Winery**, and 9) **Recanati Winery**. **Isramworld's Elite Travel Collection** conducts private tours that include winery excursions and wine tasting.



●●●●● **food & wine itinerary**

**DAY 1**

Begin your tour of Israel's gastronomic highlights in Jerusalem, with the flavor of history: Visit the Jewish Quarter, then descend to the Western Wall.

Wander the Old City markets, steeping yourself in its sights, sounds and aromas, and try your hand at hunting and bargaining for treasures. Later walk through Mahane Yehuda, the produce market of the capital where there's a number of good restaurants in the old stone buildings. Finish the day with optional evening tours that explore the development of Jerusalem from the 19th century on.

Dinner at one of the many fine restaurants in Jerusalem. Overnight in Jerusalem.

**DAY 2**

Leaving Jerusalem, take Highway 1 through the Judean Mountains. A scenic detour through the Eshtaol Forest near Beit Shemesh will showcase the region of Samson's exploits and includes Tel Zor'a, where Samson's traditional tomb is located. Then it's off to sample wines from the Clos de Gat winery, located at the foothills of the Judean Mountains.

Continue to Tel Aviv. In the heart of the city, you'll enjoy the colors and aromas of the Carmel Market, Tel Aviv's open-air fresh produce market. Tel Aviv boasts restaurants for every palate, preference and pocket. Some of the best fish restaurants in the city are located in the Tel Aviv Port. Overnight in Tel Aviv.

**DAY 3**

Start the day with a visit to the pioneering town of Zikhron Ya'akov – an area abundant in vineyards and wine.

Continue through the forested Carmel National Park to a Druze village on Mount Carmel, Isfiya or Daliat El Carmel, where you can enjoy a slice of Druze life and culture and a taste of traditional Druze home hospitality.

Continue north to Acre. Explore the Knights Halls, the Al-Jazaar Mosque, the bathhouse with its multimedia display, and the new ethnic museum, built right into the rooms of the old wall. Spend the night at a bed and breakfast in the Galilee Mountains or in the Tiberias area near the Sea of Galilee.

**DAY 4**

Drive along the western shore of the Sea of Galilee to Rosh Pina. Enjoy a meal at in one of the many fine country-style eateries that dot this picturesque community. A special treat is the chocolate factory in the restored part of Rosh Pina, located in the 19th-century 1-room schoolhouse.

Return to central Israel, stopping in the late afternoon at Caesarea, Herod's magnificent port city. Enjoy a tour, a beautiful Mediterranean sunset, and a meal at one of the restaurants or cafes in the restored area within the 11th-century walled city.



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# modern israel

Israel is not just Roman ruins, biblical parchments and glorious vistas. It also is discotheques, trendy restaurants and cafes, hot fashions and celebrities getting in on the action.

## ●●●●● TEL AVIV

In early September, for instance, **Madonna** closed out her \$408 million *Sticky & Sweet* tour, with a series of concerts in **Tel Aviv's Hayarkon Park**.

Actor **Brad Pitt** and director **Quentin Tarantino** were slated to make cameos in Israel in September, with arrivals timed to coincide with the Israel premiere of their film, *Inglourious Basterds*, a depiction of Holocaust-era Jewish soldiers who plotted mayhem against the Nazi enemy. And, numerous other celebrities supply the gossip columnists with plenty of fodder as they sample the city's restaurants and other hot nightspots.



Tel Aviv

beach, and **Mul-Yam** (meaning Across the Sea), an upscale seafood restaurant owned by self-styled gastronomic cognoscente Shalom Maharovsky.

**Gan HaHashmal** (Electric Park), the site of an old power plant, is considered one of the coolest neighborhoods in Tel Aviv with its trendy boutiques and indie-fashion designers. It is located near Balfour and Yedua Halevy streets.

The **Florentin Quarter**, too, a sort of Israeli version of New York City's SoHo, with art galleries, cafes, shopping and plenty of nightlife should be on your clients' itineraries if they want to catch up with some Israeli chic.

**TEL AVIV HOTELS:** The **Dan Tel Aviv** and **Dan Panorama** are **Dan Hotels'** contributions to Tel Aviv hospitality luxury. The **Hilton Tel Aviv**, with 14 meetings rooms and its location a minute or so from the beach is another option, although renovations are slated from November 2009 to March 2010. **InterContinental's David Tel Aviv** hotel provides the dual experiences of a beachfront promenade, which is just a brief saunter from the central business district. With 314 rooms and suites, the **Sheraton Tel Aviv Hotel and Towers** also combines a beachfront venue with proximity to the city's business, shopping and entertainment areas.

## ●●●●● EILAT

At the southernmost tip of Israel on the **Red Sea**, where the coral appears to be bursting with Technicolor to the nth degree, **Eilat** is the resort town of choice where Israelis and legions of tourists from Europe and elsewhere choose to take their fun-and-sun vacations. The **Bay** area in Eilat is a locus of attention, featuring some of the most idyllic beaches and diving perches in the world. And, there is no shortage of spots for travelers seeking some nightlife in Eilat. The myriad hotels in the city offer piano bars and clubs, and the pubs and restaurants around town offer entertainment ranging from the loud to the serene. Take your pick.

**EILAT HOTELS:** The **Dan Eilat** and the **Dan Panorama Eilat**, with 374 rooms and 277 rooms, respectively, provide different angles on all the fun. The former is located on the Red Sea beachfront and the latter overlooks the **Lagoon**, a few minutes from **North Beach**. The **Hilton Eilat Queen of Sheba Hotel**, centrally located, touts its seafloor pool, Red Sea views, spa and an adjoining shopping mall. And **Holiday Inn's Crowne Plaza Eilat Hotel**, located on the **Promenade**, seems to be a very kid-friendly establishment as its **Freckles Club**, equipped with movies, games and arts and crafts, promises not to place a blemish on any vacation.



At the Underwater Observatory Marine Park in Eilat

agent offer

### Daniel Herzliya Hotel

The Daniel Herzliya Hotel has launched new Executive Suites on the shore at Herzliya Pituach. Guests will enjoy reserved parking, breakfast at Shizen restaurant, free entry to Shizen Spa & Business Lounge, complimentary 30-minute spa treatment, free Wi-Fi, 15% off spa treatments and VIP amenities. To book call 09-9520828 or email [res@tamareshotels.co.il](mailto:res@tamareshotels.co.il).

One of the most sought-after places to see and be seen in Tel Aviv these days is the **Port area** (Namal, in Hebrew), where factories and warehouses have given way to restaurants, cafes and clubs in what has become a trendy stomping ground. **Shalvata Restaurant** in the Tel Aviv port is a magnet for "attractive Tel Aviv yuppies and celebs," according to the *Jerusalem Post*. And, two other hot eateries in the port area are **Boya**, a restaurant and bar on the



Tel Aviv

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And **Holiday Inn's Crowne Plaza Tel Aviv Hotel** is positioned on the seashore promenade, close to the city center and just 11 miles or so from Ben Gurion Airport. The **Crowne Plaza Tel Aviv City Center** is on Menahem Begin Road, near the landmark **Azriela Towers**. The city also boasts numerous boutique properties, including the **Leonardo Boutique Hotel Tel Aviv**, the **Cinema Hotel** and **Hotel Montefiore**.



Dan Tel Aviv



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# the pope

**Pope Benedict XVI** made an historic visit to Israel on May 11-15, 2009, as part of a broader trip to the Middle East.



The Pope, who grew up in Germany and joined the Hitler Youth as a teenager, spoke out against anti-Semitism, and during a visit to the **Yad Vashem Memorial** in Jerusalem on May 11, he honored those millions of souls who perished in the Holocaust.

"This passage from the Book of the prophet Isaiah furnishes the two simple words which solemnly express the profound significance of this revered place: *yad* - "memorial"; *shem* - "name," the Pontiff said.

"I have come to stand in silence before this monument, erected to honor the memory of the millions of Jews killed in the horrific tragedy of the *Shoah*. They lost their lives, but they will never lose their names: These are indelibly etched in the hearts of their loved ones, their surviving fellow prisoners, and all those determined never to allow such an atrocity to disgrace mankind again. Most of all, their names are forever fixed in the memory of Almighty God."

Pope Benedict XVI continued:

"One can rob a neighbor of possessions, opportunity or freedom. One can weave an insidious web of lies to convince others that certain groups are undeserving of respect. Yet, try as one might, one can never take away the *name* of a fellow human being."



As officials of the Jewish state and Holocaust survivors looked on, the Pontiff added:

"Sacred Scripture teaches us the importance of names in conferring upon someone a unique mission or a special gift. God called Abram 'Abraham' because he was to become the 'father of many nations' (Gen 17:5). Jacob was called 'Israel' because he had 'contended with God and man and prevailed' (Gen 32:29). The names enshrined in this hallowed monument will forever hold a sacred place among the countless descendants of Abraham. Like his, their faith was tested. Like Jacob, they were immersed in the struggle to discern the designs of the Almighty. May the names of these victims never perish! May their suffering never be denied, belittled or forgotten! And may all people of goodwill remain vigilant in rooting out from the heart of man anything that could lead to tragedies such as this!"

During his 5-day journey to Israel, the Pope visited sites in **Jerusalem, Nazareth and Bethlehem.**

In addition to visiting Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, among the Pope's many highlights in Israel, he prayed at the **Western Wall** and the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher** in Jerusalem; paid a courtesy visit to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem on the **Temple Mount**; conducted a public mass on **Precipice Mountain in Nazareth**; participated in a welcoming ceremony in the square in front of the **Presidential Palace in Bethlehem**; and also visited a Palestinian refugee camp, **Al Aida**, in Bethlehem.

Pointing to the unique role Israel plays for various religious denominations around the world, the Pope, speaking at a farewell ceremony at Ben Gurion Airport on May 15, said: "Thank you for your warm welcome in Israel, a land which is holy to millions. I appreciate the opportunity to come here."

Israel was very honored to welcome the Pope. To mark the historic event, Israel issued a commemorative stamp collection, "Israel Welcomes Pope Benedict XVI."

The stamp collection depicts the various holy sites that the Pope frequented during his 5-day visit to the Israel.

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# safety

If you haven't booked much Israel before, or if your clients have long wanted to make that journey to the **Holy Land** but haven't gotten around to it, just talk to more experienced Israel specialists or veteran travelers to the country and they all will tell you the same thing: Israel is safe, and those unpleasant headlines seem light-years away when you're in Israel touring the country and enjoying its wonders.

The bottom line is that Israel is an extremely safe country to visit and to tour, which is why **Israel's Ministry of Tourism** has no hesitation to promote the country enthusiastically. In addition to Israel's own EL AL, Continental, Delta, US Airways and some 70 other foreign carriers offer service to Tel Aviv – none of whom would dream of risking the safety of their passengers, crews or aircraft if the country were dangerous. In 2008, 3 million tourists came to Israel, an all-time record, and all 3 million went home again safe and sound.

Most of the security procedures enforced throughout the world after 9/11 were perfected in Israel, and travelers flying to and from **Israel** feel massively reassured by the measures they encounter.

The streets and highways of Israel are **safe 24/7** and no tourist would think twice about strolling the streets of **Tel Aviv** or **Jerusalem** at 3 in the morning. A fine illustration of the comfort level of safety in Israel is that Israelis send even small children alone to school on foot or bus – an unimaginable phenomenon in most of the United States.

To visit **Bethlehem** and **Jericho**, the two main tourist areas in the parts of the West Bank that are controlled by the Palestinian Authority, no prior clearance or authorization is required.



Jerusalem: Children in the Old City's Jewish Quarter



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## the etiquette of greetings

"Shalom" (pronounced *shah-LOME*) is a common greeting upon introduction. If you're a man greeting another man, you should shake hands and maintain direct eye contact. With an Arab Israeli, a slight bow is also appropriate. Always use the right hand for introductory handshakes. If you're greeting someone of the opposite sex, wait to see if your Israeli counterpart offers his or her hand. Arab and Orthodox Jewish men often won't introduce their wives if they're present. If your acquaintance ignores his spouse in your presence, you should do the

same. Some Orthodox Jewish men will not accept a business card directly from a woman; in such cases, she should place it on a table where he can reach it. When exchanging business cards, take time to carefully read the card of your acquaintance, and treat it with respect. During a meeting, leave the card on the table in front of you. Most Israeli businesspeople speak English. Use professional or standard English titles (Mr., Ms.) along with the person's last name until instructed otherwise.



Sunrise in Tel Aviv

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Studio Schneider

# phil papa: papa's travel store



Phil Papa, the co-owner of Papa's Travel Store in Secaucus, N.J., hadn't completed any Israel bookings for his largely leisure-client base in a few years, and all of a sudden, he has two groups journeying to the Holy Land within a couple of months.

Papa, a Vietnam veteran, ex-teacher and now 30-year agency co-owner with his brother Guido Papa, credits the spurt to an Israel Ministry of Tourism TV ad campaign.

"It's superb," Papa said. "A nice video of Israel. Well done. Keep it peaceful there for now and that should spark some more interest in Israel."

"My clients had a feeling that it's safe enough," Papa added. "Things seem to be quieter and they feel safe about it."

Papa just sent a family of six on a 2-week Isram FIT to Israel, Turkey and Egypt. The group spent four or five days in Israel.

"It was quite extensive and they took in several areas, including the Dead Sea and Jerusalem, where they stayed," said Papa, who has never been to Israel himself, but counts it as "one of the places I do plan on making it to at some time in my life."

The secular-oriented group that he booked, including a local doctor and his family, who are not Jewish, were interested in "historical, archeological stuff," Papa said.

"I always find the media exaggerate things," Papa said. "They are looking for something and they blow things out of proportion."

He added:

"People see this and they panic and they don't go. So, you go over there and you don't put yourself in harm's way. Don't leave your brain at home when you go on vacation."

It's been tough times lately in the travel agency business, and Papa is glad to see these Israel bookings walking through his doors.

"It's good to see the bookings come almost back to back, for August and October," Papa said. "It's something nice, and unusual, because I didn't get two Israel bookings all last year."

It also hinges on clients having confidence and getting the word out that Israel is a safe destination.

"If clients feel comfortable to go, they'll go," Papa said.

And, he's optimistic that the two bookings through Isramworld and Perillo, respectively, are a good omen for Israel travel.

Said Papa:

"Right now, I think it is a pretty good time to go. Are clients going to start swimming through the doors? I hope so."

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Papa, working with Isramworld, fully customized the trip, including hiring a private van with an Isram tour guide on the ground in Israel leading the daily excursions.

And, Papa also will be sending an area couple to Israel in October on Continental from Newark, after booking them on the Perillo Tours Israel and the Holyland Tour.

Actually, the couple, also non-Jewish and interested in a secular trip, initially booked their tour for March 2008, but cancelled even though the situation in Israel at the time had calmed.

"They were leaving in March 2008 and were panicking," Papa recalled. "They weren't taking any chances. I told them wait a while longer and let's see how it pans out. They were comfortable with that."  
"It's calmer now," Papa said. "Maybe those videos had some effect on the clients prompting them to go. Everyone has a desire to go somewhere. These two people right now, they've always had a desire to go to the region. They are getting older and figured let's go now while we can make it."

For all of his clients, Papa religiously checks the U.S. State Department website to see if there are new travel warnings, and he has a philosophy about travel and safety.

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