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## GEEO ITINERARY

X-Israel and Palestine 6/25/2023

### **Day 1: Tel Aviv Arrive at any time.**

Today is an arrival day and, as travelers are arriving from all corners of the world, there are no planned activities. You are free to arrive at any time in Tel Aviv. In the early evening, you will meet your tour leader and fellow group members for an important group meeting. Check the hotel notice board (or ask reception) for the exact time and location of this meeting. Afterward, there will be the option to head out for a meal together in nearby in a local restaurant. If you arrive late, your group leader will leave you a message at the front desk.

### **Day 2: Tel Aviv/Haifa (B, L) This morning explore vibrant Tel Aviv. Enjoy an orientation walk in historic Jaffa before driving up the coast to a Druze community for a local lunch. After, continue to Haifa, beautifully set on the slopes of Mount Carmel facing the Mediterranean Sea.**

Enjoy a quick driving tour of Tel Aviv before continuing to historic Jaffa, where we take a walking tour to visit the Old Markets, Simon's House, and the ancient port of the city of Jaffa, out of which modern-day Tel Aviv has grown. The port is thought to be one of the oldest ports in the world and, myth has it, was the point from which Jonah set off in the Biblical story of Jonah and the Whale. We then drive north to visit a Druze town and enjoy a lunch of local specialties. The Druze community in Israel is recognized as a separate religious entity with its own courts and spiritual leadership. Their culture and language is Arabic. After, continue to Haifa, beautifully set on the slopes of Mount Carmel facing the Mediterranean Sea. Approximate travel time: 1.5 hrs by private vehicle with stops along the way

### **Day 3:Haifa/Nazareth/Galilee (B) Visit Akko and explore its colorful markets and old city. After, travel to Nazareth where we visit the Basilica of the Annunciation, one of the largest churches in the Middle East. Continue to the Sea of Galilee for the evening.**

This morning we drive north to the city of Akko. Traced back to Pharaoh Thutmose III, Akko is thought to be one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. While wandering the labyrinthine alleys, explore the traces of the Crusader, Muslim, and Ottoman conquerors. Visit the Old Markets, Aljazar Mosque, and the unique underground Crusader castle. Afterwards, drive to Nazareth, a city of religious importance and spirituality. Delve into its rich historic and biblical significance, but also admire its modern culture and Middle Eastern charm. Visit the Basilica of the Annunciation, one of the largest churches in the Middle East. We will then continue to our hotel near the Sea of Galilee for the evening. Approximate travel time: 2 hrs total by private vehicle with stops along the way

### **Day 4: Galilee/Jericho (B) Tour the Sea of Galilee area, including the Church of Transfiguration and the ruins of Capernaum. Also, visit a local kibbutz to learn about this interesting communal lifestyle. Continue to Jericho for the night.**

This morning we'll tour the Sea of Galilee, including sites such as the Church of Transfiguration and Capernaum. Capernaum is home to one of the earliest churches in the world, as well as a monumental ancient synagogue. We also visit Tabgha, with its ancient mosaic of the Loaves and Fishes dating back to the original Byzantine church. We'll also visit a Kibbutz Community and learn about this interesting communal way of life.

We will then drive to Jericho for the night.

Approximate travel time: 2 hrs total by private vehicle with stops along the way

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**Day 5: Masada/Dead Sea/Jerusalem (B) Visit the fortress of Masada, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. After, relax at the Dead Sea with time to swim before continuing to Jerusalem for the night.**

This morning we drive to Masada, a UNESCO World Heritage site and stunning rock fortress that was the last stronghold of the Jewish people during their rebellion against the Romans. The story of the site reveals the courage of the defenders of Masada and their battle against the conquering Romans. Opt to hike (or ride) to the top and learn more about this ancient place. Visit Herod's palace, the mikveh, storerooms, watchtowers, and the synagogue. Continue on to the fascinating Dead Sea for what will surely be the low point of this trip—only in the sense that the surface and shores are 1,412 feet below sea level, Earth's lowest elevation on land. The Dead Sea is actually a lake, without any form of life whatsoever in its waters, hence its name. The water is so dense (five to ten times as salty as regular seawater) that it is practically impossible to sink. While swimming, cover yourself with the sea's mud, which is reputed to have special healing powers, and don't forget to take a photo of yourself reading a book while floating! You will notice that the salt penetrates any cuts on your body and has an unusual smell, but there are showers to wash off under after swimming. Afterward, we will drive to Jerusalem where we will spend the next three nights. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by private vehicle

**Day 6: Jerusalem (B) Take a guided walk through the Old City including the Dome of the Rock, Al Aqsa mosque courtyard, the Stations of the Cross, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the Western Wall. This afternoon is free to explore on your own.**

This morning you will take a guided walk through the Old City, starting at the Dome of the Rock and Al Aqsa mosque courtyard. After, walk along the Stations of the Cross to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Explore the winding alleyways and quarters and continue on to the Western Wall. This afternoon is free to explore on your own. You will have the option to pre-book an afternoon tour (\$140 USD) in which you can visit the famed Israel Museum and view the Dead Sea Scrolls, housed in the Shrine of the Book. The tour continues on to the Mahane Yehuda Market, often referred to as "The Shuk," a vibrant local market full of the sights, sounds, and flavors of the Middle East. A popular spot for locals and visitors, as Jerusalem's largest market, it features fruits, vegetables, specialty food stalls, and numerous spots for food and drink. Wander through the maze of vendors and sample some local treats. Afterwards, stop in at a local establishment for a tasting of craft beers.

**Day 7: Jerusalem (B) Visit Bethlehem, the Church of the Nativity, and the Duhaishe Camp for Palestinian refugees. Return to Jerusalem and visit the Domari Society of Gypsies for lunch. Then, opt to visit museums or explore on your own.**

This morning we take a day trip to ancient Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus and King David, and visit the Nativity Church. The city is an important site to all three major religions of Israel: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. Then we will visit the Duhaishe Camp for Palestinian refugees. What started as a camp has become a thriving town. We will learn more about what life is like for Palestinians in the area. We then return to Jerusalem and stop for lunch at the Domari Society of Gypsies to enjoy Domari hospitality as we learn about the unique culture, spices, and handicrafts. This lunch program is creating jobs and training opportunities for women. With lower literacy and employment rates in the community, the Domari Society focuses on tutoring children and providing job skills training for women. The afternoon is free to explore on your own. Approximate travel time: 1 hr by private vehicle

**Day 8: Jerusalem (B) Depart Jerusalem at any time.**

You are free to depart at any time today. Please note that check-out time from the hotel is normally mid-morning, but luggage storage facilities are available. Want more adventure? Book two or more GEE0 trips in the same year and receive a discount! GEE0 will give you 10% off of the lesser value program(s) (up to 3 programs). If you don't see a program that interests you that pairs with this trip but still would

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like to extend your time abroad, let us know. We will work with you to find a non-teacher trip from our tour operator's much larger catalog. Even better, if you are an educator we can still offer you a discounted price on the trip you choose!