

## TRAVEL TIPS AND WHAT TO BRING

### ARRIVALS AND DEPARTURES

Departing for International air travel passengers are to check-in at International Airports at least four hours prior to departure time.

### AIRPORT SECURITY

Security checks are carried out routinely for your protection and safety. Expect to be asked about the contents of your luggage – was it packed by you and in a supervised place before reaching the airport. Do not take any mail, packages or unknown items from anyone either before or after arriving at the airport.

### DUTY FREE ITEMS

A returning U.S. resident is allowed \$800 in purchases duty free. Gifts may be mailed to the U.S. duty free, but are limited to \$100 per person, per day.

### VALUE ADDED TAX (VAT) REFUND

Tourists Tax Refund. According to the **Value Added Tax (VAT)** Law, a foreign tourist can benefit from a zero rate of VAT on various services obtained and purchases made during a stay in Israel. Israel's value added tax stands at **17 percent**, but if you're a tourist, don't sweat it — when you return to the airport for your departing flight, you can get the **tax refunded** on many big-ticket purchases by following several simple steps. A VAT refund form can be filled out, if your purchase is over \$100. Only purchases of more than \$100, made at participating stores, are eligible. Before plunking down your cash, look for the "**tax refund for tourists**" sticker on the store's front door. *A standard receipt is not enough to ensure your refund.* so even if the store's employee tells you otherwise, *insist they write you out a special tax-refund invoice*, also known as a **Change Place tax refund form**. The form must be **pre-printed with the store's name**. If an employee tries to make an excuse as to why they can't provide you with the special form, you can use it as an opportunity to bargain for a lower price or take it as a sign that you should shop elsewhere.

### HOW TO RECEIVE YOUR VALUE ADDED TAX MONEY REFUND

1. Upon departure at airport, Visit the Tax Refund booth at the Ben-Gurion Airport departure hall in Terminal 3.
2. Present the tax receipts along with receipt for the item your purchased
3. Make sure to **pack your new purchases in your carry-on baggage**, so you'll have it on hand when you arrive for departure at the airport or Tax Refund booth
4. Show your **tourist visa** to claim your refund. If you prefer not to have your passport stamped when entering Israel, make sure you hang on to the piece of paper stamped by the border agent instead.

5. Be aware that your refund is subject to a service commission, and it can fluctuate depending on the current exchange rate of your home currency and whether or not the money is returned to a credit card. Check with the teller to see how you can incur the lowest possible charge.

### **UPON ENTERING THE U.S.**

If you purchased any type of fruit, meats, etc., you must report this on your documents. In order to bring in dates, figs or fruit, they must be vacuumed sealed. Fresh fruits can and will be confiscated at DFW International Airport. If you do not report food items, you can be subject to a very large fine.

### **CREDIT CARDS**

All major credit cards are accepted – American Express, Visa, Diner’s Club, Eurocard and VISA. Inform your credit card offices that you will be out of the country and the dates you will travel to Israel, Switzerland and France. Let them know you may be using your credit card in (including airport stops) in other countries. If the credit card company is not aware of your plans, in order to protect you, they may suspend your card automatically.

### **ISRAEL CURRENCY AND BANK INFORMATION**

The currency in Israel is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS.) One may bring an unlimited amount of local and foreign currency into Israel in cash. You will need your passport for exchange.

- Bank operating hours (generally): Sunday through Thursday from 8:30 AM – 12:30 PM and from 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
- **ATM** – The most convenient way to obtain currency is through Bank ATM machines, which may be found all over Israel. Credit cards are accepted so enter your 4 digit numeric pin number and receive shekels debited in U.S. dollars to your account. The exchange rates are fine at the local banks.
- Most stores take U.S. currency ( \$1 and \$5 dollar bills can be used to purchase items such as bottled water and soft drinks.) You can exchange dollar bills into local currency at airports, hotel, and banks. Whenever you exchange dollars, keep the receipt given to you. You will then be able to convert any remaining currency back into dollars when you leave the country. Most stores love U.S. dollars, but you can sometimes get better bargains if you pay in the local currency.
- Carry and guard your passport, pocketbook, purse, and other valuables very carefully. Keep your valuables in the safe at the hotel. Never leave them in your hotel room or luggage unless they are in the secured hotel safe in your room.

### **SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE CURRENCY**

The national currency of France is the Euro. The currency symbol of the euro is € and EUR is the 3 letter code. ATM machines are common in most places or just use your credit card. Swiss currency is the Swiss Franc. Many shops in Switzerland will accept euros.

## **ELECTRONIC APPLIANCES IN ISRAEL**

Israel operates on a 230 V and 50Hz.

- Plug type C is the plug which has (2- round pins)
- Plug type H has three pins in a triangular shape
- Plug type M has three round pins.

If you intend to take appliances (hair dryer, electric razor, iron, hot water coils for tea) that are suitable for both 110 and 220 volts, make sure to carry a set of adapter plugs. If your appliance is for 110-volt only, you will also need a converter. Never plug your 110-volt appliance into a 220-volt outlet without a converter; it will work at twice its speed for a few seconds – and never work again!

## **ELECTRONIC APPLICANCES IN SWITZERLAND**

Switzerland operates on a 230V and 50 Hz.

- Plug type C is a plug which has (2- pins) plugs
- Plug type J is a plug which has (3-pins) plugs.
- Plug type C (2-pins) plugs also fit J sockets. Most sockets are designed for three pin plugs.

## **SIGHTSEEING**

Tour schedules are planned many months ahead, but occasionally there are changes made to your scheduled sightseeing and/or advertised visits. Your Israel tour guide or CFN Switzerland and France host will notify you of all changes in all countries.

## **TIME DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DALLAS AND ISRAEL**

Israeli Standard Time is 8 hours ahead of Central Time.

## **TIME DIFFERNECE BETWEEN DALLAS AND SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE**

Germany and Austria are 7 hours ahead of Central Time in the U.S.A.

## **ISRAELI EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE**

Police: Dial 100 or [www.police.gov.il](http://www.police.gov.il)

Ambulance: Dial 101 or [www.101.up.co.il](http://www.101.up.co.il)

Fire Brigade: Dial 102

## **SWITZERLAND AND FRANCE EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE NUMBERS**

Police: 117

Fire and ambulance: 112

You can dial free of charge from any public call box. Please note that you can't call 112 with a phone without a SIM card. Through the 112 number, you can call for an ambulance.

## **TELEPHONE USAGE AND IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS**

\*Call your mobile phone carrier for special rates while in Israel

Calling from USA to Israel, just follow these simple dialing directions:

1. USA exit code: dial 011
2. Country code: Next dial 972
3. Area code: 1 digit
4. The phone number: (7 digits). (See sample call below)
  - Jerusalem city code: 011 +972 + 2 + 7-digit phone number
  - Tiberius city code: 011 + 972 + 4 + 7-digit phone number

Calling from Israel to USA

1. Israel exit code: 001
2. Country code: 1 digit
3. Area code: 3 digit
4. 7-digit phone number

Calling from Switzerland from USA

1. Frist Dial 011
2. Next dial country code 41
3. Then dial area code
4. Finally, dial phone number

## **POSTAL SERVICES**

Stamps, envelopes, picture postcards and greeting cards may be easily purchased at your hotels and local post office. The post office sells phone calling cards and can help with money transfers as well.

## **WEATHER IN ISRAEL**

The weather will vary from the Dead Sea, where temperatures will reach 99 to 100 degrees to Jerusalem, where the temperature during the day can be 75-90 degrees. At night, it can be very cool and even cold. You will want to bring a jacket and layer your clothes accordingly.

## **WEATHER IN SWITZERLAND AND SOUTHERN FRANCE**

The weather will vary from 70 to 80 degrees. In contrast, high-altitude Zermatt, in the Alps has an average June temperature of just 45 degrees. At night, it may be cool so you will want to bring a comfortable jacket.

## **WHAT TO PACK**

- Leave your valuable jewelry at home
- Bring AC adapters and Convert Box
- All essential prescription medications in their original bottles. Also bring a copy of the generic names for each and pack in carry-on luggage
- Items to help your rest/sleep on transatlantic flight (e.g. eye mask, neck pillow, ear plugs, extra socks)
- Sunglasses and a hat. You'll find the sunlight is stronger than what you're accustomed to, even in the winter. A hat is also useful for protection from the sun.

- Two (2) pairs of comfortable walking shoes, sneakers and sandals.
- Swimwear is appropriate year-round, whether it's to splash in the hotels' indoor pools or hit a beach on a warm, winter day in the southern part of the country.
- Pack water shoes for the beach and baptism at the Jordan River
- Sunscreen and insect repellent are useful items as well.
- Water bottle – it's a dry country and you should be drinking regularly.
- Layer, layer, layer (you can shed clothing and leave it on our protected motorcoach)
- The dress is casual. Most people wear jeans, slacks and Capri pants on the trip. No spaghetti strap blouses for women.
- Even the congregation services are very casual.
- Small umbrella and light weight rain coat for (England)
- Hand sanitizer, small package of Kleenex
- Carry a “modesty kit” for visiting holy sites or traveling in Arab or conservative Jewish areas. For instance, when visiting the Western Wall, it is mandatory for a female to wear a scarf in order to gain access. A modesty kit for women should include slacks or a wrap-around skirt (below the knee), a blouse that covers the shoulders, a hat or scarf for the head. A kit for men should include long pants and a shirt that covers the shoulders. Carry these items on the bus, and your guide should let you know when to wear it.
- TIP: Unfortunately, luggage occasionally gets lost or misplaced. Pack a carry-on bag (55” X 40” X 23) cm that includes some necessities for a few days – a change of clothes, all medications, spare contact lenses or glasses, all forms of money and any important documents. Bring a Hebrew/English dictionary – it's great to have along, although most Israelis can speak a smattering of English. Your carry – luggage or bag must not weight over 18 lbs.

### **KEEP UP WITH YOUR BELONGINGS**

Leave valuables, including items of sentimental value at home! Always double check your belongings before you leave the planes, hotels and buses. Always check your safe at the hotel to assure it is empty. Make sure you have your passport, money, phone, charger and electrical adapter/converter box and camera before leaving your hotel room. Neither CFNI nor does Sar-El Tours assume responsibility for lost items or luggage.

### **DON'T FORGET**

- Please make certain that you have a valid passport, not a card passport.
- If you are not a U.S. citizen, check to see if you need a visa, if so, make certain it is valid and you do not wait until the last minute to file for visa. (It takes time)
- Please do not forget your passport and flight tickets.
- We HIGHLY recommend that you keep a photocopy of your passport in your purse or wallet.
- Please pack medications in your carry-on bag and not checked luggage.

- Never leave your passport, valuables or money in your hotel room, unless placed in the safe. Each day, you will carry your water bottle with you. To save money, fill your bottle up at the hotel or purchase water from our bus driver or grocery store.
- **Please** plan on drinking a lot of liquid (water) on the plane. The flight is long so you will want to maintain hydration.

#### **MISC**

- Please bring money for lunches, bottled water, laundry, telephone calling cards, souvenirs and all other personal expenses.
- Please bring a generous supply of \$1 bills for street vendors.
- Don't forget to pack your cameras, chargers, and cables
- For those being water baptized in the Jordan River, please pack a swimsuit. Baptismal robes will also be available to go over the swimsuit.
- Bring your Bibles, journals and other reading materials for the tour and airplane flights.
- A money belt that fits under your clothing is recommended.
- Bring a day bag to carry personal items and water bottles on the tour bus.