



Blue Dot Travel

Go somewhere different

Israel & Jordan

Departs 14th
November 2018



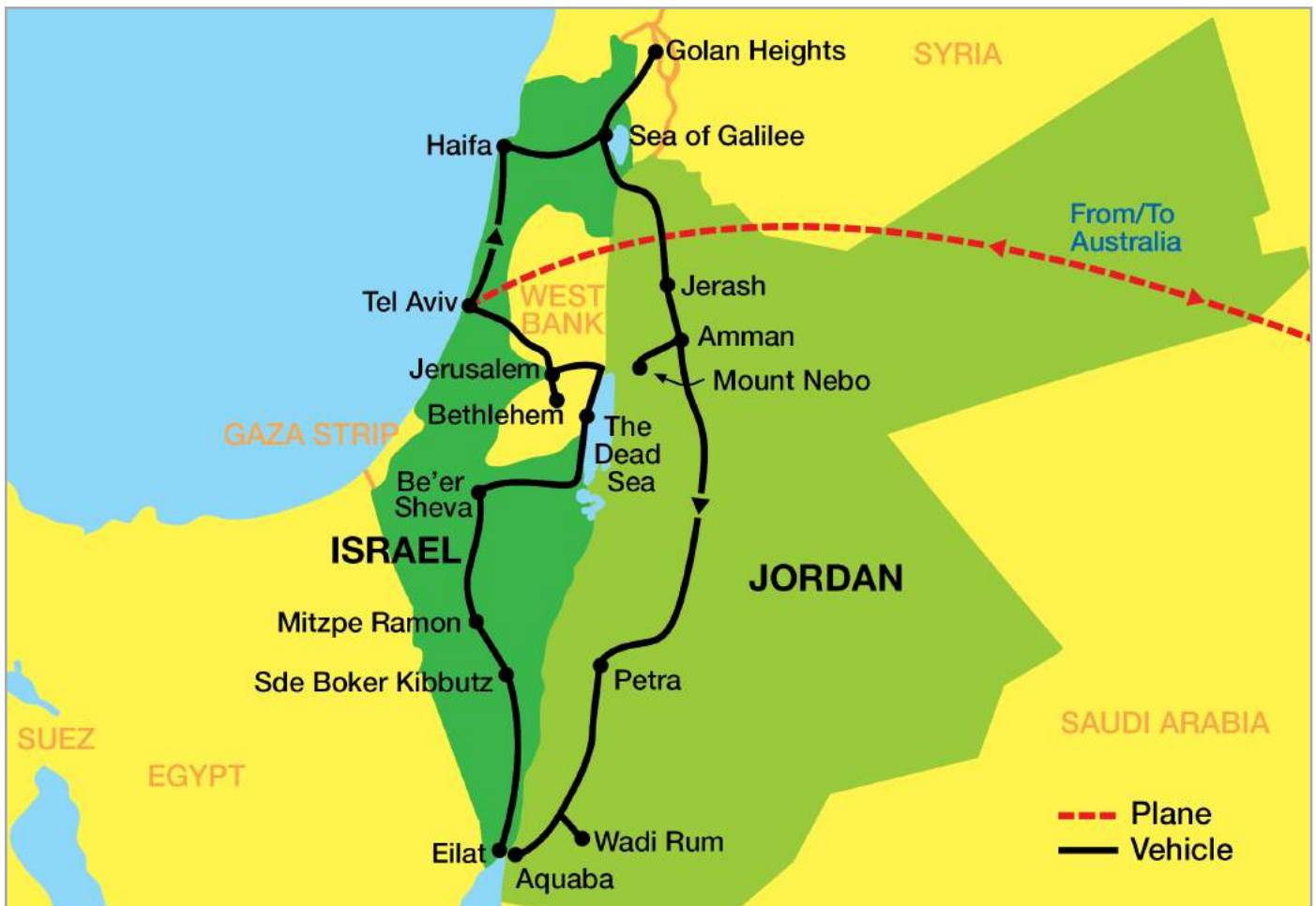


ISRAEL AND JORDAN

Israel - the Jewish State - sits between the Mediterranean Sea and neighbouring Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon. It is a small country with a relatively modest population of just over 7 million. The official language is Hebrew, the origins of which are ancient, however, English is widely spoken. The country was born in 1948 out of post-holocaust WWII. While Israel is only 70 years old, the region's history is many thousands of years old. Archaeologists have identified and dated agricultural communities existing more than 5,000 years ago. Jews have been living here since the period of Abraham around 2,000BC. The capital, Jerusalem, has been a spiritual home for Jews, Christians and Muslims over the centuries. In the early days of Islam, the Prophet Muhammed commanded Muslims to face in the direction of Jerusalem for their daily prayers. Over the centuries, all three religions have battled to hold the spiritually important Holy Land. The problem of finding a fair solution to the conflicting and legitimate claims on the Holy Land continues to confound many interested stakeholders. Around 76% of the population of Israel are Jewish and around 16% Muslim. The Jewish population ranges from the secular to the ultra-orthodox. There are over a million Arab Israelis of varying backgrounds and there are 400,000 Christian Israelis also. With the support of some of the West's major powers, Israel has become a highly successful and wealthy economy and one of the most developed in the region. Most recently, the country has become a world-beating provider of science and technology.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a small, landlocked nation with the exception of a tiny section of The Red Sea. It is mainly desert with around half of the country's population living in the capital, Amman. Most of the population are of Bedouin origin. Arabic is the official language but English is widely spoken. Ancient Semitic settlements – more than 4,000 years old - have been identified by archaeologists around the Jordan River. Since then, all the major powers of the region invaded at some stage and the resulting culture is evidence. Originally siding with its Arab neighbours, Jordan now lives in peace with Israel since signing a treaty in 1994. Wadi Rum and Petra are her two best known attractions but the country offers far more than this.

Come to Israel and Jordan – certainly for the history but also for the ancient and modern architecture, the region's natural beauty, the wonderful cuisine and the region's different cultures.



Day 1 In Transit

Sydney travellers depart on CX110 at 08.40hrs via Hong Kong. Melbourne travellers depart on CX134 departing 08.50 hrs via Hong Kong. Both flights connect to LY076 at 16.30hrs arriving into Tel Aviv at 22.40hrs. Late check-in to your hotel where you'll stay for 4 nights. *Meals in flight.*



Day 2 Tel Aviv

This morning is at leisure to help you recuperate from the long flight. A walk north along the beach and promenade is very interesting as you watch the locals go about their

day. When the group is ready, a bus will transfer you to Old Jaffa for a walking tour of the old city. There's an early dinner planned and the bus will drop you home unless you'd prefer to walk to the hotel which takes about 45 minutes along the beach promenade. (In fact, you can also walk to Old Jaffa if you are up for some exercise – it's a delightful stroll). *D*

Day 3 Tel Aviv

After breakfast, today includes many of the city's sites. We'll drive past the well preserved Bauhaus Buildings on Rothschild Blvd, Rabin Square, Dizengoff Street (the busy

central shopping area) and Neve Zedek (the artist's district), then walk through Carmel Market and visit The Hall of Independence Museum (Haganah Museum Beit Haatzmaut). Visit the German Templars Village known as The Sarna Complex and taste Tel Aviv from one of many kiosk style restaurants in the 'Market Place'. In the evening there'll be a bus transfer to Old Jaffa for dinner at Haj Kahil Restaurant. After dinner, the bus will take us back to the hotel (or if you prefer you can walk). *B/D*

Day 4 Tel Aviv

Today we will visit the Bullet Factory (Ayalon Institute) explaining the pursuit of Independence from Palestine and British Rule to the new Nation of Israel. Explore the new Port of Tel Aviv, choose a quick lunch from the market or walk around the complex and do a little shopping. Drive to the archaeological National Park Bet Guvrin-Maresha (Bell Caves, Crusader Fortress and Roman Amphitheatre) and discover this UNESCO-listed site at your own leisure after a brief orientation. Dinner tonight is at your leisure. The beach promenade in front of the hotel has many local restaurants for you to choose from. Pack ready to move on with your bags in the morning. *B*

Day 5 Tel Aviv

The group will head north to Caesarea's archeological site - a Roman Harbour constructed by Herod in 20BC. See the stunning Roman Amphitheatre and aqueduct, which brought fresh water from the Carmel Mountains. Then visit



the Private Ralli Museum and Art Gallery. On to the Rosh Hanikra Grottos on the border of Lebanon and in the afternoon, walk around the ancient town of Acco (Acre) and its souk (market). You will

have an early dinner at Abu Christo Seafood Restaurant on the sea front. We'll check in to our hotel for one night. *B/D*

Day 6
Tel Aviv — Haifa

Today involves a drive to the summit of Mt Carmel to take in the view of Haifa and its harbour from the top of the Bahai Gardens. Visit the Muhraka Monastery (Stella Maris) built over the caves associated with prophets Elijah and Elisha. Before we leave Haifa we'll have time to visit a popular Arab bakery called 'Gals' and indulge in a coffee and pastry. Then stop in the popular seaside town of Zikhron Yaacov, one of the first modern settlements founded by Romanians and tour the Druze Village where you'll have dinner. Then, drive to Galilee and check in to Ramot Resort hotel for 4 nights. *B/D*

Day 7
Galilee

The group will explore the area surrounding Sea of Galilee today. Tzfat (Safed) is located 1,000m above sea level, with fabulous panoramas of the surrounding area and galleries owned by artists and sculptors. Drive on to Hula Valley and walk around its wonderful bird sanctuary. During the drive view Mt Hermon, the source of the Jordan River which flows into the Dead Sea. On return to the kibbutz, stroll the beautiful gardens and foreshore, then visit the small but amazing Adam Bagalil Museum which houses a boat - amongst other artefacts - dated to 2,000 years ago at the time of Jesus and the revolt against the Romans. Dinner will be at Ramot Resort hotel. *B/D*

Day 8
Galilee

After breakfast, the group will drive along the Jordan Valley Road to Mt Gilboa. You will stop to view the Beit Alfa mosaics and then drive on to the well-preserved Bet She'an archeological site. Today you will also visit the Valley of the Tears where the Israeli/Syrian tank battle took place in the 1973 Yom Kippur war. Arrive back at Ramot Resort hotel. Dinner at a local restaurant. *B/D*

Day 9
Galilee

Today we will visit the birthplaces of Christianity, in the area surrounding The Sea of Galilee. The most significant places are in the Capernaum National Park including the fruit garden of Tabgha, traditionally accepted as the site where Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves of bread and two fish; Mount of Beatitudes where Jesus is believed to have given the Sermon on the Mount; Mount Tabor, believed to be the site of the transfiguration where Jesus took the disciples Peter, James and John to see an apparition of Moses and Elijah; Bethsaida the birthplace of the apostles Peter, Andrew and Philip (mentioned in Christian Scriptures as a place where Jesus performed several

miracles); Yardenit at the Jordan River where Jesus was baptised by John the Baptist (nowadays, pilgrims don white robes and are baptised in the same spot). And a visit to Cana, where Jesus was said to have turned water into wine at the wedding of a poor couple. Dinner at Ramot Resort hotel. *B/D*

Day 10
Jordan

Cross the border into Jordan today. After formalities, visit the Ancient Greco-Roman ruins of Jerash (Gerasa) just outside of Amman, which includes Corinthian columns, the 2nd century Arch of Hadrian and the Temple of Artemis. Time permitting grab the sunset from the top of the city's lookout and then overnight in Amman. Dinner is at Tawaheen El Hawa, traditional Jordanian restaurant. *B/D*



Day 11
Mt Nebo

Visit the incredible Mt Nebo and its mosaics, where the Bible tells us Moses led the Jewish people to the border of the Promised Land, but he himself was not allowed to enter. We will visit the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George in the ancient town of Madaba, where a 6th Century mosaic map of the Holy Land is depicted. Then we drive to the Nabataean site of Little Petra (Siq al-Barid) with 450-metre canyons of buildings carved from sandstone meant to house visiting traders of the Silk Road around the 1st century BC. The magnificently located Marriott Hotel is where we will stay for 2 nights - the view is awe-inspiring! *B/D*

Day 12
Petra

Today involves a fully guided tour of the unbelievable ancient city of Petra. Until its annexation by Rome in 106 A.D., Petra served as a capital for the Nabataeans, a people who controlled caravan trade throughout the region.

The earliest mention of these people is from 312BC, when they apparently withstood an assault by Antigonos, one of Alexander the Great's successors. You will need most of the day to do it justice however those who wish to return earlier can take a short taxi trip back to the hotel. Back to the Marriott for overnight. *B/D*



Day 13
Wadi Rum

After breakfast the group will head south to Wadi Rum National Park with its spectacular desert scenery. You'll overnight in a basic, but comfortable, desert camp after a 4WD trek across the amazing landscape. Note that the 4WD's in Wadi Rum are very basic. *B/D*



Day 14 Jordan back to Israel

After breakfast, we'll drive to Aqaba and then cross the border back into Israel at Eilat. Drive to Mitzpe Ramon (meaning Roman Lookout) and check

into the fabulous Isrotel Beresheet (for two nights). After check-in, you'll take a 4WD through the stunning craters in the Negev Desert. *B/D*

Day 15 Be'er Sheba

Today we will tour Sde Boker Kibbutz, David Ben-Gurion's desert home, the first Prime Minister of Israel from 1948 -1953 and then again from 1955 -1963. On May 14 1948, he delivered Israel's Declaration of Independence from the hall you visited in Tel Aviv. We drive south to Ein Avdat (a World Heritage Site) where many springs empty into deep pools at the southern end of this canyon, fresh water for those on the Spice route during Nabataean times. Then, you will travel to Be'er Sheba where the troops of the 4th Australian Light Horse Brigade are memorialised in a park marking the battle site against the Turks in WWI. Later, return to your hotel for dinner. *B/D*

Day 16 Dead Sea

After breakfast, check out of the hotel and visit the historic site of Masada via the cable car (or a trek if you feel up to it – a solid 30-minute walk uphill). Tour this ancient fortress for insight into the Maccabees and their fight to hold off the Romans from certain death or slavery. Then, drive to Qumran on the north-west coast of the Dead Sea where Bedouin Shepherds found jars in a cave containing 2,000-year-old Torah Scrolls, known now as the Dead Sea Scrolls. There's also an opportunity to swim in the Dead Sea today – make sure you pack a lightweight towel and swimmers. The dead Sea is the lowest point on Earth's surface at 400 metres below sea level. Experience the amazing sensation of floating. Today you'll also visit the biblical oasis of Ein Gedi and Jericho in the Palestinian West Bank. Finally, drive to Jerusalem and check into your hotel - the Dan Panorama for 4 nights. Dinner is at the hotel. *B/D*

Day 17 Jerusalem

Today will be spent entirely on foot in the Old City of Jerusalem. You will pass through the famous Jaffa Gates and visit Christian, Muslim and Jewish sites and all quarters of this historic and vibrant city. A stop at the well-known Abu Shukri Palestinian restaurant for a lunch of falafel and hummus is essential. After lunch, you'll visit the Israel Museum with its miniature model of the old city. Return to your hotel late in the afternoon. In the evening, the group will meet at David's Tower near the Jaffa gates for the Light Spectacular. Dinner tonight is at your leisure. *B*

Day 18 Jerusalem

Today's tour will take in the surrounding area of Jerusalem and include the Chagall Windows, Yad Vashem, the memorial to the Holocaust Victims and, time permitting, Mt Herzl Cemetery where dignitaries such as Golda Meir, Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Perez are buried on a beautiful woodland hill. Next is the Hertzl audiovisual experience (puts Zionism into perspective), then, there's a drive past the Knesset and exclusively religious Jewish area of Mea Shearim. We then visit the Mount of Olives and the Garden of Gethsemene. It's a short walk down the road for dinner at The Olives & Fishes Restaurant. *B/D*



Day 19 Jerusalem

The group will visit the Archeological site of Herodion today, along with its white marble steps. Next is Bethlehem translated from the Hebrew to 'house of bread' and the Church of Nativity and other important sites. We will also tour Ein Karem where John the Baptist was born. Dinner at Ima's near the market for your farewell dinner. Overnight at the Dan Panorama. *B/D*

Day 20 Departure

Today is free time for anything you'd like to see or do in and around Jerusalem (unguided). You'll transfer to the airport for flight home late in the afternoon. Your flight to Hong Kong is LY075 departing 20.50 hrs and arriving in Hong Kong at 1.40pm. *B*

Day 21 In transit

Sydney travellers connect to CX111 departing 7.00pm and arriving Sydney 7.20am 5/12. Melbourne travellers connect to CX135 at 7.05pm arriving Melbourne 7.30am 5/12. *Meals in flight.*

Day 22 Arrive home