

POLITICALTOURS

Travel beyond the headlines

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Israel & Palestine

Dates:

October 2021, Sunday 3rd to Monday 11th *8 nights*

2017 marked the 50th anniversary of the Six Day War and Israel's capture of East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Despite the lapse in time talk of a peace-settlement with the Palestinians seems as remote as ever.

Our tour looks at views from both sides with extensive visits throughout the West Bank and Israel: from right wing settlers to Palestinian militant groups and the mainstream political parties. We examine the remaining obstacles to a two-state solution including the issues of borders and land, Israeli settlements in the West Bank, the status of Jerusalem, Israeli concerns over security and the right of Palestinian refugees to return.

The tour is led by **Gershon Baskin**, one of Israel's best known commentators on the peace-process. The founder of a joint Israeli Palestinian think tank, Gershon also helped to negotiate the release of the Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit from captivity in Gaza.

Like all our tours we meet with leading political figures and analysts, as well as ordinary people. We try to get under the skin of one of the most complex and diverse areas in the world.

Price: £4830.00

Single Supplement: £500.00

Most meals and all accommodation are included in the price. Flights are not included and need to be arranged with your own travel agent.

Like all our tours the itinerary is focused on current affairs. Events on the ground may change and the final schedule may be adjusted accordingly.

Itinerary

Day One: *East Jerusalem*

Welcome dinner. Local and international analysts give an overview of the Israeli and Palestinian positions today. We look at the main issues, the main players, discuss how we got to where we are, and consider the possibility of future negotiations. *Overnight Jerusalem*

Day Two: *Jerusalem*

Meetings with diplomats and journalists for their take on the peace process. We visit the Old City, visiting all three major holy sites: the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Haram al-Sharif and the Western Wall. The Temple Mount, Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque have become the focal point of political tensions. *Overnight Jerusalem*

Day Three: *Introduction to Palestine*

We head into the West Bank for an introduction to Palestine and Palestinian politics. Crossing the Israeli-controlled checkpoint at Qalandiya, we enter Ramallah the centre of Palestinian governmental administration. We look at the structure of the Palestinian Authority since the Oslo Accords. After lunch, a local guide takes us on a tour of the wall and explains its impact on Ramallah. *Overnight Ramallah*

Day Four: *The northern West Bank*

We drive north to Nablus, a flashpoint between Palestinian fighters and the Israeli army. Visit to Balata, the largest refugee camp in the West Bank, where we discuss issues of internal displacement and the role of the UN. The right of return is one of the major stumbling blocks in the peace process. Home-cooked lunch in the Old City with an inspirational women's group who are using local food and age old recipes to bring people together and uplift the community. *Overnight Ramallah*

Day Five: *The southern West Bank*

From Ramallah to Bethlehem is around 20km as the crow flies. But Jerusalem, and multiple Israeli checkpoints stand in the way. Brief visit to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. The afternoon is devoted to first-hand exploration of Hebron, a city holy to Judaism and Islam that was divided by the Oslo

Accords, where 250,000 Palestinians are separated by walls, barbed wire and the Israeli army from around 700 Jewish settlers, who occupy part of the city's old quarter. *Overnight Bethlehem*

Day Six: *The Desert & the Settlements*

The desert mountain of Masada is a focus for Zionist identity, where the story of Jewish courage and resistance to Roman rule is told to each generation. Israel's settlements in the West Bank will be key to any final resolution of conflict: we visit the Gush Etzion, a cluster of settlements south of Jerusalem. *Overnight Bethlehem*

Day Seven: *Narazeth – Zichron Yaakov*

This morning we drive north to the largest Arab city inside Israel. Nazareth has both a long history and a densely complex modern existence, shared between Muslim and Christian Palestinians within the city centre and Jewish Israelis in the separate town of Upper Nazareth nearby. Tensions between the two communities have surfaced amid competing needs. After Nazareth we head to Zichron Yaakov, one of the earliest 20th century Jewish settlements in Palestine. Here we will be hosted in people's homes, an opportunity to see how mainstream Israelis view the current state of politics and the peace-process. After tea we proceed down the Mediterranean coast to Israel's bustling commercial capital Tel Aviv. *Overnight Tel Aviv*

Day Eight: *Tel Aviv*

Tel Aviv is home to some of Israel's most important political think tanks, academics and human rights groups. We use this final day to both review the tour and examine the range of political forces within Israel. Is there any hope of renewed commitment to the peace-process? Farewell dinner. *Overnight Tel Aviv*

Day Nine: *Tel Aviv*

Breakfast and departures for airport