



Broad Israel and Petra Tour Notes **February 13 – March 1, 2017**

Headlines:

- Amazing and touching history. Who can get their mind around 2,000 and 3,500 years?
- Israelis are friendly - in most cases. Two out of three of our hotels were very helpful, kind, and courteous.
- Israelis are honest – in most cases. In the kibbutz, coats forgotten in the dining room were there in the morning. In the Holocaust Museum, my coat did not stay where I left it. In Eilat, the coat of one of our group was still there an hour later.
- Safety. I too feel quite safe.
- Gone too many days. Our rule has been 2 weeks which I'm marginally breaking. Hair, nails, weight training, amount of product that fits in a zip bag, all are stressed but not so much as missing Tom.

Annoyances (obviously small):

- No washcloths. Like in Europe, what do they use? I bring my own bar soap but found it supplied here.
- Paper products are so recycled as to be near worthless though they are better than the old French pink toilet paper.
- Haughty attitudes mixed with very sweet helpful people meaning you never know what's coming your way.
- Lack of telephone and slow internet. Yet there was often internet provided by the town and/or parks.
- Jet Lag – after coming from Hawaii a few days earlier, it added up to 12 hours difference.



I like my picture running out of a Petra burial cave. It tells a lot too – five extra pounds.

I like this story and it tells a lot: In 1982, Sen. Joe Biden confronted Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin threatening to cut off aid to Israel. Begin forcefully responded “Don’t threaten us with cutting off your aid. It will not work. I am not a Jew with trembling knees. I am a proud Jew with 3,700 years of civilized history. Nobody came to our aid when we were dying in the gas chambers and ovens. Nobody came to

our aid when we were striving to create our country. We paid for it. We fought for it. We died for it. We will stand by our principles. We will defend them. And, when necessary, we will die for them again, with or without your aid.” Amen.

I like my own stories from 4 years ago: (1) I was searching for a grocery store, asked directions from a young fellow on the street. He didn't know. A few blocks later, he runs up to me to say he found one and would take me there. (2) Waiting for a tour bus, a lady asked if I needed anything. After a bit of conversation she handed me her card and said to call if I needed 'anything.' A tour, help, advice, a ride, anything.

Daily notes home:

Day 1 - to Israel

In March 2013 I had one of my more exciting and interesting trips; it was to Israel which was in connection with the Jerusalem marathon. Now I am on a return trip which I always had intended.

Attached is a PDF of those trip notes as much because I am unlikely to write anything better this time. Much of my trip will be a repeat. I'm starting out with these notes because some of you have wished for a similar trip, some have been and maybe you didn't spend as much time as you wished, some considered coming along on this trip, and some of you are super penpals who seem to enjoy armchair traveling.

Israel is noted for their security efforts but also for their efficiency. My second security clearance given by the Israelis proved the case of the efficiencies. A lineup of about 10 people put their suitcases on a long table and then stood to the side. One swipe of every suitcase then proved no explosives so we were cleared. Then the next 10 lined up.

I was only home a week between the Maui hike and this trip. Five hours west and now seven hours east in time zones and we will see how the body does. Coincidentally it was 10 1/2 hours to Honolulu and now it is 10 1/2 hours to Tel Aviv. All of which caused me to hedge my bet and book a lie-flat seat. (It's a good thing I booked it because there do not appear to be any upgrades and only three seats remain).

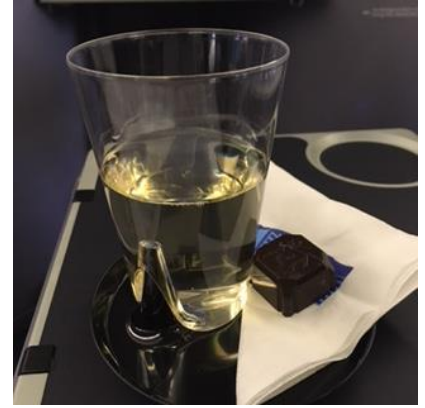
See the smart little glasses tray mounted to keep from spilling? It is a new invention of United's Polaris service. We were on an inaugural Polaris flight to Paris where they even had a little fuzzy teddy bear giveaway. I gave away and I'm now pleased to see that they are offered on eBay at \$250 each. Double pillows and double blankets from Saks Fifth Avenue along with warm slippers are now part of Polaris.

Days 2 and 3 - into and in Tel Aviv

I didn't get into the hotel until early afternoon in part due to a late arrival aircraft, my not following directions about where to meet my driver, and even then I was so brain-dead that I lost much of the day.

Rain and more rain. It was raining on arrival and it kept raining most of the day until a nice opening in the evening. The blasts of thunder gave me pause for a moment. Quickly I was remembering that I choose the poor weather in off-season versus hordes of tourists. January and February are the wettest months of the year in Israel. The rain is predicted to remain for at least a few days. We are in the 50s but Petra could be in the 80s.

Accommodations. I am plenty happy with my hotel. The Don panorama is a chain and Don is a family name. They seem to own this four star chain and also five star hotels such as Jerusalem's King David Hotel. I luckily got a room on the 11th floor with a balcony and a perfect view of the water and looking to old town Jaffa and also out the other side into town and the high rise buildings. The room is small but well-appointed with a generous amount of mirrors and lighting, a sitting area plus a desk. It is from the Bauhaus architecture era and has some curved walls. By the number buses it is accommodating tour companies. By the number of Asians, probably Chinese, in the breakfast room they are accommodating those big money people. The breakfast buffet could fill up a block and has a Chinese section, a Japanese section, pizzas, all kinds of seafood, that's to bulls, a huge array of cheeses with some new to even me, and their fruit offerings including the famous dates that would almost feel your hand. Lots of things in between and I tried to sample many of them. But for my usual oatmeal I was only able to find their "porridge".



I am pleased to be here for five nights. From the web:

<http://www.danhotels.com/TelAvivHotels/DanPanoramaTelAvivHotel/> - The Dan Panorama Hotel offers easy access to everywhere you want to be. Across the street is the Mediterranean Sea and within minutes you find yourself on an inviting sandy beach with warm and clear waters. For a truly Mediterranean experience, explore the Carmel market - one of the largest open markets in Israel that has a wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables as well as meats, fish and baked goods. Also nearby is the Neve Tzedek neighborhood which was the first Jewish neighborhood built outside of the walls of Jaffa. Neve Tzedek has a village feel to it, filled with small alleyways and boutique stores to peruse. A leisurely stroll along the waterfront promenade to the north will lead you to the Tel-Aviv Port. The Port is the city's newest entrainment hub and has outstanding restaurants, shops and nightclubs. The promenade to the south will take you to Jaffa which is famous for its association with the biblical stories of Jonah, Solomon, and Saint Peter as well as the mythological story of Andromeda and Perseus. Its ancient port has been in use since the Bronze Age and you can still watch the fishermen going out to sea.

In 2013 I stayed at the Renaissance farther north and on the seaside whereas this hotel is across the street from the sea. Yet I hear the surf. The renaissance hotel gave me closer access to a more modern town whereas this hotel is closer to Old Jaffa, the famous Carmel market, and the old Tel Aviv town. The area looks it.

Me?

-It is pleasant to feel like I saw the major sites in 2013.

-no pressure to hurry.

-walking from the hotel to Old Jaffa in 2013 seemed much shorter than from my hotel now, yet my 2013 hotel was farther north. Damn. I walked and walked.

Jetlagged. I'm not allowed to think of anything but the current time and not allow for jet lag. NOT. It was hard to stay upright by mid-afternoon and the 4 o'clock syndrome was alive-and-well during the night. Being farther easterly it started at 2:30 AM until about 5 AM.

Oops. There was a toddler screaming bloody murder in the restaurant at dinner. The family eventually left and as they were leaving wait-staff had run after them to get them to sign for their bill. The unfortunate coincidence? The same family with the continual screamer is directly across from my room. I have twice asked them to close their room door.

Miles of walking. Maybe I missed walking in Carmel Market last time but I got an eyeful finally. Also Neve Tzedek and their market, the city's oldest quarter (other than Jaffa). It looks it. Then onto all of Rothschild Boulevard, once an elegant address but now a bit old yet noted by its central promenade lined with trees, benches and kiosks. One end was ultra-shabby and the other end culminated in a large park and Mann Auditorium.

My legs held up to continue through the auditoriums, parks and into Rabin Square where they were setting up a Sunday expo and run. (Do I miss the runs? Maybe). I'd not been down Gvirol Road and the warren of covered arcades full of locals and foodstuffs hit my fancy so much I eventually stopped in one. (If Parisian are soft and reserved, Israelis are the opposite). This road took me as far north as I've been on foot - to the port and their tiny river.

Internet. It's readily available all over town and free. Safe? I try to not use. It is offered by the city, in all parks and many public areas.

Pictures include my room, the two views from my balcony, view from high on the hill in old Jaffa towards my hotel (Jaffa is full of wild cats), and the Israeli version of salad nicoise.

A busy market, Mann Auditorium, and Yitzhak Rabin square.

And another good night picture from my balcony. Seasides give the most delightful sunrise and sunset skies.

I start my formal tour tomorrow at 8 AM.



My first room at a Dan Panorama in Tel Aviv with the balcony giving a view towards Old Jaffa plus out the back towards the Old Town of Tel Aviv.



Sunset over Old Jaffa from my balcony; a view with the requisite cat from up on top of the Old Jaffa Hill; followed by Salad Nicoise served with a generous amount of tuna slices; the old market near to the hotel.



Some of the museum quarter; Rabin Square; guess who loves the ever changing sunsets and sunrises.

Day 4 - The first day of the actual tour

Jet lag continues with a vengeance. Again it was 2:30 AM and I didn't return to sleep so I gave up and got up at 5 AM.

The weather is OK when I remember that I chose off-season but it is very gray and wet again today. There was no sunrise because the sun seemed to be nonexistent.

Breakfast continued to seem rather foreign despite the great number of offerings. I'm usually adventuresome but one whole section was filled full of bowls of little squirmy looking things that I couldn't identify. I didn't go hungry, I found some little puffballs, those huge dates the size of a hand, porridge, boiled eggs, and many familiar and also different cheeses.

The vegetable pizzas are my favorite and are slapped together sandwich-style for a later snack. There is no bacon or sausage or any kind of usual breakfast meat. No, not even spam like we saw everywhere in Maui.

Today's Tour - Dorone was the guide and whose name means "a gift." He had been a paratrooper type, advanced degree in history and archeology, and had worked his dissertation and did diggings on a site we visited today. All that probably makes him sound better than he was. I had trouble hearing him; he will be my guide for two days then again towards the end. As suspected, my tour company is a consolidator and in fact two others on our tour were with other consolidators so it appears to be the name of the game in Israel.

From the tour company – what we were scheduled to do: The day begins with a guided visit at the Independence Hall in Tel Aviv, located on the picturesque Rothschild Boulevard. It is the site where Israel's declaration of independence took place. Next, drive to Latrun, on the way to Jerusalem; visit Yad-Lashirion known as the Armored Corps Memorial Site and Museum. The memorial, set in a Mandate era fortress; it is one of the most diverse tank museums in the world and was the initiative of the Israeli Armored Forces Veterans. Proceed, by a very short ride, to tour the Mini Israel Park, exhibiting miniature models of the most important sites and buildings in the country.

Travel back west to Rehovot and visit the Ayalon Institute, once a top secret underground bullets factory for the Hagana, one of the Jewish underground movements that fought for an independent Israel. Hear the amazing story of a dedicated group of young men & women indicating the resourcefulness in the creation of the State of Israel.

Where we went – it didn't always match the purchased itinerary: Independence Hall and Museum which was the First building ever in Tel Aviv. It was also where Ben Gurion announced to the world the new state of Israel. The building is on the famous Rothschild Boulevard where I walked yesterday. It is rather nondescript from the outside and among those of the Bauhaus architecture. After a film, then a lecture, we felt more in tune with the 1948 situation.

Next up was the **Ayalon Institute** aka the Bullet kibbutz was quite a ways out of town. Highly secret yet in earshot of the then controlling Brits, who mandated death if guns found, we toured and heard the most amazing story about a simple kibbutz compound having built 25' underground a bullet factory right under the nose of the British, a group of heroes produced over 5 million bullets. This was done after World War II. It saved the day for the war of independence.

Kibbutzim Hill - <http://eng.shimur.org/Ayalon-institute/>

Bet Guvrin National Park with bell caves. Apparently it was a BC homogenic community. When the Adomites (sp? - help!) had to leave or convert to Judaism, they left but not until the total ruination of their houses. Their huge warren of basements remain and are now the caves. I didn't get all the information because I was working very hard to stay dry and out of the mud. I was not successful. I think it was the Birthplace of Herald the great. We walked many levels down uneven slippery muddy stairways into huge open areas. No banisters. Only little ballet shoes since I thought we were going to museums all day. The two other gals decided not to go any further. That might be what I should have done too but in the end I did stay upright - Though very muddy and shivering cold. The shoes will never be the same.

https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beit_Guvrin_National_Park

The armored tank museum. This was a lot more interesting than I had expected. It was quite a distance out of town and I was chilled to the bone by then but I'm glad I didn't miss any of it. One tank had been sliced in two so we could see and understand who does what inside. Our Israeli guide was quite pleased to show us the newer and fourth rendition of an Israeli-made tank. No one would sell them tanks so they developed their own and he claims it far out does anything the Americans make. He made a good case.

There is a wall of soldiers who died in action in the same vein of our Vietnam War memorial.

Tank museum - https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yad_La-Shiryon

Forced landing into Tel Aviv

<http://www.timesofisrael.com/tel-aviv-bound-flight-diverted-to-london-over-disruptive-passenger/>

One couple on our tour was on this plane. They said the little gal terror in question couldn't have been more than 5 feet and 90 pounds. Yet a series of great big policeman in battle gear came in and escorted her out with a bag over her head.

Lunch. I gave up my breakfast sandwich for a big fat Falafel. So much for worrying about my extra 5-pounds. It did have a load of vegetables and was stupendously messy. Does that mean all the little calories dripped out?

Dog dead tired. I am so tired. I might not even need alcohol to sleep. But I'll try to add a few pictures here and send this off for those of you with an interest. Because tomorrow early starts another trip. (I take back the alcohol cut back: the babies across the hall are both screaming in tandem.)

PS I'm sorry for the silly misspellings yesterday. Siri tried too hard to help me. I do enough misspellings on my own.



Representative of the workers who slaved underground making ammunition yet near to the enemy; onto the Bell Caves Park which was worth the mud and rain we endured. Huge caves.



After the Bell Caves, the Tank Museum seemed a good break from the incessant rain.



Israel honors their war dead and not only with a wall. They also brag about their inventions outdoing the Americans as represented on an "America Don't Worry – Israel is Behind You" t-shirt.

Day 5 - Tel Aviv city

Weather. No rain in today's prediction which fortunately turned out to be correct. We saw the first sunshine since I've been here and while I thought I didn't care if it rained or shined in fact I was pleasantly pleased to see the sun. As well as warmed by it.

Tourist day. From the tour company: In & around Tel Aviv. Visit the Diaspora Museum & drive by the main streets of Tel Aviv, the business and entertainment center of Israel. Stop at Rabin's Square, place of assassination of Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin. Continue to Old Jaffa, an 8000 year old port city. Tour the ancient ruins and walk along the restored artist's quarter. Walk the streets of Neve Tzedek, the first neighborhood of Tel Aviv, built in 1909. Proceed to Nahalat Benyamin, the pedestrian street with its musicians, handmade jewelry and artifacts. Next, stop at Sheinkin, the lively and colorful street especially known for its unique shops, café life and youthful ambiance.

What we really did. After a little bit of drive-through Tel Aviv we parked and had a walking tour of the old port Jaffa which is one of oldest known in the world. I had walked there often and had a tour around on my own but never a walking tour inside. It is a little bit Disneyland yet it contains some noteworthy historical sites: St. Peter's monastery is there which is the only group left from marmalouk control. Those who remember the Bible stories will recognize the House of Tabatha and it is here. As well as house of Simon the tanner from the Bible.

Those who like real estate prices will be interested to know that a house might sell for \$20 million in old Java. We met a man sitting up on his balcony and we asked him if he owned or rented his apartment and he declared that no, he owned the entire house. I'll add a picture.

Across the road and between the port and my Hotel sits the First train in Middle East that goes from Tel Aviv - Jaffa to Jerusalem. It is apparently not efficient as people prefer other modes of transport.

A walking tour of the first community before Tel Aviv was even dreamed of was the focus of our next walking tour. It was full of unique stories, low houses, all red roofs, and now many converted to shopping, eateries, and artist's locations.

We drove a distance out of town to the university complex which houses a huge Tel Aviv museum about Israelis and their history, Known as the diaspora museum. Their history is so long and extensive that my attention span ran out and took me to the café for an enjoyable lunch. The section with miniature copies of synagogues around the world kept my attention because I had been to so many of them. Called Beit Hatfutsot, **Diaspora museum**
https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beit_Hatfutsot

Our next stop was Rabin Square with more of a description about the murder of Rabin. From the University to Rabin Square was the long road I walked my first full day. I was surprised and impressed with myself. Smile.

Our last stop was the Carmel market. It is near to my hotel and you might remember that I walked through it already but on this, a Friday afternoon, it is full of performers and artists.

We were back early to the hotel and I admit to deciding that I needed some dead time. After a worrisome confrontation with the family of the noisy kids across the hall, I not only decided that the locals were not in the least shy, but I subsequently decided I needed to lock my door for the rest of the evening for more reasons than being tired.

Saturday is Shabbat so no tours and a chance for me to get caught up with sleep. And my neighbors to calm down.

About some of the photos.

The first two photos are daytime views taken from Jaffa.

Beverly collects pictures of manhole covers which I've learned to appreciate. I found one that was labeled Old Port Jaffa. Tom likes cats and there were plenty to choose from in Jaffa. He also likes roosters and this is the year of the rooster and they were featured at one of the market booths.

The big house with the multiple balconies is owned by the man we met. He houses his children and their families in this house. \$20 million times four?

The Tel Aviv marathon begins on the 24th. The year I was here for the Jerusalem marathon, the Tel Aviv marathon had to be reduced to a half marathon, start early at 5 AM, and even with that they still had a death and many hospitalizations from the over 100° heat.

The huge iron sculpture with miniature lights inside was in the diaspora museum and has important significance. From everywhere in the museum it seemed center stage. All the layers of Ironworks denote that nothing can keep the beams of light from coming through. Nice.





Day 6 is Shabbat

The parks are full, the streets are near empty of cars but full of pedestrians. How special. It's Shabbat. (My confusion is that the parking lots appear to be pretty full.)

What is Shabbat? (I find a few different spellings.) The **Sabbath** is commanded by God. Every week religious Jews observe the **Sabbath**, the Jewish holy day, and keep its laws and customs. The **Sabbath** begins at nightfall on Friday and lasts until nightfall on Saturday. ... Jews often call the day **Shabbat**, which is **Hebrew** for **Sabbath**, and which comes from the **Hebrew** word for rest.

Late morning lie in. It was nice to wake from natural causes and have a late breakfast and then just do whatever hit my fancy at the moment. I retraced my steps from the two walking tours yesterday. One was up the hill, up and around more and more steps to old Jaffa.

More walking. It was only 6 1/2 miles according to my iPhone pedometer but that has always under reported and also doesn't account for all the hills and the many steps up and down. I spent most of the afternoon on my feet.

Restaurants. I had meant to have a real meal at the far end of the port where many fishing boats and factories have been converted to Restaurants. It was not to be because I don't wait in line for food. In fact I have come to enjoy restaurants less and less. I eat plenty in part because of a big breakfast and zip bags and because I frequent grocery stores too. Restaurants are too pricey, too noisy, waste a lot of time, and even if I had a friend here to share a meal I don't hear well. I am delighted that this tour did not include dinners. So I continued my walk and had a sandwich Seaside but I did miss this sit down for a glass of wine.

Old town. My walk through Neve Trez Revealed plenty of restaurants and shops open but nearly half closed. When I passed a restaurant that had been recommended and where I'd intended to eat, I wasn't hungry. When I went back two hours later it was full with a line forming.

Weather was about 60 with plenty of sun and blue skies. It will sound fussy but I wish it would stay whereas I understand it's going up to the 80s.

Kibbutz coming up. I pack out and leave early tomorrow morning and end up at a kibbutz where I remain for two nights. I will have a new tour guide for the following seven days before he turns me over to prior tour guide. When the seven days and my Jerusalem tour is completed, my first guide takes over going onto Eilat and Petra and finally back to Tel Aviv.

Pictures include a house full of dolls, in the windows, at the door, to include those on the balcony in old town
A very famous pastry shop with a good background story. It seems a wealthy woman lost her fortune and had to dismiss her employees. She gave a small going away stipend to one who turned around and opened a pastry shop; he is now quite wealthy with a chain of shops. I wonder if he helped her out.
The fishing port with a fisherman and two cats waiting patiently nearby.
There were a lot of street performers. There was also an open door to a mosque with enough people going in that I joined them. Yes I felt a little sacrilegious especially taking these pictures. See the room especially for women?
Two cartoons. One I thought was amusing and the other only because who would expect to see Las Vegas type flyers on an Israeli street on Shabbat.



Day 7 - off to Galilee

With a full day and so little time I need to send my notes in even looser form than prior - or not send at all.

I am not a fan of early mornings. Far too early I meet my new tour guide who will take me up north and then to Jerusalem and after seven days turn me back to my original Tour Guide.

Jackie or Jacko or Yaki started with a history lesson and pointing out the many Tel Aviv embassies. Wonder why the US would move to Jerusalem? All other embassies are in Tel Aviv.

Sales pitch. Tourism only represents 1 percent of Israel. Tel Aviv one if best 5 towns for restaurants and 10th most expensive city in world. Many major high tech centers which is their top income producer. During recent recession, Israel didn't suffer. Their treasury secretary said to be great and now second (deputy) to Janet Yeltsin. 2nd largest in start-up companies. Famous for high tech companies and considered a super power after US. All very impressive.

What the tour company says about Day 7 plans: Traveling north along the Mediterranean Coast. Travel from Tel Aviv north, via the coastal highway, to tour Caesarea National Park. Walk the archaeological park for an in-depth guided tour of some of the best preserved Roman and Crusader ruins, including the vast Roman hippodrome, the renovated amphitheater and more. Proceed along the coast to Haifa and enjoy a panoramic view of Haifa Bay atop Mount Carmel. Visit "Af Al Pi Chen", the Naval Museum of the illegal immigration to Israel at the British mandate time. Drive to Acre to walk along the Old Harbor and local Arab Bazaar. Travel to Israel's northernmost point at Rosh Hanikra. Descend by cable car to tour the limestone sea grottoes. End at Hotel Kibbutz Lavi Hotel (Hodf) in Galilee. (Siri argued that Galilee should be Galileo.)

What we really did - and learned. Drive through the Valley of Sharrah. Rose of the Valley. Or Rose of Sharrah. Depending on the Bible translation. Darned if I remember the stories from the Bible as it is. Fortunately they either come back to me your sound quite familiar.

Translation problems. When they decided to go full-time all out for Hebrew, there were a lot of words that hurt created and needed to be. As in many language translations there are some amusing problems that we learned throughout the day: Kia car in Hebrew means vomit. Like the horns on Michelangelo.

Biggest diamond industry in the world. \$22 billion a year in diamonds and also in high tech.

Swamp lands bought from Palestinians and others and turned into habitable land. Eucalyptuses dried it out as well as canals. I seem to remember there is some problem with the eucalyptus either taking over or using up too much water but fortunately they have learned a lot of uses for the wood, the leaves, the oil, etc.

Did you know that Oil has been found? Huge and large reserves. Good for them. Don't they deserve it? By the way, could somebody please explain to me why the Jews have been so persecuted?

Cesareria. The first main stop was Cesareria built by Herod the Great known as most prolific builder of all time. A huge city with land created out in the ocean that can still be seen from the air or by air and amphitheatres and stadiums galore. We heard a bit of opera performed in their renovated stadium where it is said that any artist of importance has performed. Like the Rome Colosseum it could be flooded with water. The old city of about 3800 years ago is so huge that we were driven to the aqueduct system of about 20 miles that supplied it.

Neighborhoods. A bit different was a few drives through Residential areas such as in a golf resort, we saw Weitzmsn's ex residence and even Benjamin Netanyahu's home. Plus an Archeology private museum of rich and surprisingly colorful design.

Baha'i Shrine and faith complex up on hill of Haifa is worth a report. Worth another visit. When I visited in 2014 I had meant to study this religion a little bit more. They believe that no religion has a monopoly on truth and they want to reconcile the teachings of all holy men. It is either on or on the way to Mt Carmel. Cost \$250 million to build their gardens and burial spot of the founder. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shrine_of_the_B%C3%A1b

Haifa is 3rd largest city and also built on a port. Pure Mediterranean. Multi ethnic full integration is working here. Can see Acre, Galilee, Jordan from the hill. Drove the Panorama road.

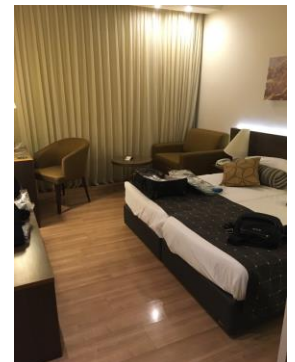
Lunch. New info: We drove into two **Druze villages**. A 10th century religion, against extreme Islam, believes in only one God, Similarities to Arabic language. They serve Israel and are good law-abiding citizens. Their mode of dress is rather unique. I'll need to look this up for more info. A huge Druze meal followed - One of those with so many little bowls of appetizers that you are total full before the main course comes out. It was skewers of barbecue meats. If there was a desert none of us wanted it.

Through green hills and valleys with cows and horses we drove over curvy roads. Ugh. We learned more about how it used to be forest until it was all chopped down prior to the arrival of the Israelis, and now there is serious Reforestation effort undertaken.

Megiddo. I didn't know about Megiddo the Hill until our guide reminded us that it was the Tel used as the basis of Michener's book called "the source". It is now a UNESCO site, and contains some 22 layers of civilization. We had a tour down into the famous water system that was featured in the book and took us maybe 250 steps to get down. Big funny: there were a number of huge buses and on at least three of them I saw signed "Israel experience with Governor Mike Huckabee".

Unplanned: **Nazareth** as much because it's Sunday with no traffic or parking shortage saving an hour. Via Mt tabor to visit the church of annunciation where Mary was born. That church / basilica is absolutely over-the-top. It looks like there was a competition among countries to produce these huge mosaics or tile work pictures of Mary and Jesus. The one by the US is all gold. One by Japan has all of the kimono with 5000 pearls.

On our way back through the little narrow streets we stopped at one of the kiosk for fresh squeezed pomegranate juice that I shared with an African Gray parrot - until he bit my plastic cup. At least he didn't bite my lip (like my Big Bird Pandora did.)



Hotel. We didn't get to the new hotel, a kibbutz noted for being a 4-star, (I don't think so) until about 6 PM. This is one of the few dinners that is included. Plus there are evening programs.

What is a kibbutz? A kibbutz is a collective community in Israel that was traditionally based on agriculture. The first kibbutz, established in 1909, was Degania. On my 2013 trip we learned they have been wildly successful in many ways. Wikipedia info seems to bear that out. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kibbutz>

The tour company? So far I am very happy with the tour company. I had guessed they were consolidator but they do it well and many other companies are doing it in the same method here. One could make a much less expensive trip to Israel but it would take a lot of research and considerably more time to see it all the same way. I will be fortunate if I feel the same about the tour company at the end. I suspect that my daily itineraries will not match up but so far that is fine.

Security. It is non-intrusive and it feels generally nonexistent. Yet everywhere there are people looking at you as you enter a festival, as you enter any buildings, but apparently it is racial profiling because I have never been asked to remove my coat or open my backpack.

No Uzis. Also surprisingly as compared to my trip in 2013, I have only seen one soldier with a gun. I was advised (by my last soldier guide) they are not Uzis but they are big and look like automatics. Maybe it's simply nice being a tourist and not in the know but I feel plenty safe. I don't jump at a blast nor at a siren.

For the record: Prima City 6 Hotel is used as a lesser hotel by tour company.

Pictures: A local ritzy neighborhood and home of some dignitaries. The fenced one had been a number of houses, now one. Caesarea went on and on, seaside, once a large town. The Baha'i Shrine in Haifa, a Druze meal, one of many roadside tombs (see the rolling stone that would cover it?), the Church of Mary, and the next door Catholic church full of elegant expensive art from most countries. That marble floor is flat – not steps as it appears.





Day 8 - from the kibbutz in Galilee

Boca Tov - Good Morning. We are supposed to learn a new word or phrase every day. This may be all I do.

Breakfast, like last night dinner, was a buffet of healthy foods. However there was very little familiar food but that doesn't stop me.

What the tour company says we are doing today: Tour in the Galilee & Golan Heights. Drive to Safed, Known in Hebrew as Tzefat - one the four Jewish Holy Cities & a world known Kabbalah Center. Visit the Ari Hakadosh Synagogue, where the "Shulchan Aruch" was compiled by Joseph Karo, stroll through the local Artists' Quarter and tour the Visitors Center. Proceed with a fun & exciting Jeep tour to the foot of the Golan Heights. Ascend the Golan, by car, and stop at an observation point over the Syrian city of Kuneitra. On for a short walk at Tel Facher, a former Syrian army camp. Proceed for another short walk at the Banias Springs. Visit Tel Hai and see the "Roaring Lion" monument telling the heroic battle story of Josef Trumpeldor and his comrades in 1920. Meet with a Kibbutz member and learn about their unique lifestyle.

What we really did and learned: Jackie or Yaki the Guide has 48 years guiding. He is my age, served in the military, (who doesn't), continues to volunteer as a policeman, has three daughters and five grandsons. He says he was not a good student but he has information like a professor who is lecturing but he can spiel it without notes but with passion. He is full time filling us full of info. He is more like a 50 or 60-year-old - not in his 70s.

Military facilities are all over but maybe even more in Golan Heights as security needs are great. There are many minicamps, and memorials at a number of locations. The military has set up fake small Arab villages for training.

This is such a small country - about the size of New Jersey. First sights of Jordan and Syrian border as we came off a hill and saw the Sea of Galilee which is really a lake. Water was coming from the lake at an alarming rate but has been partly controlled by desalination, water reuse and many reservoirs. 86 percent of their wastewater is recycled vs 1 percent in US. As you look at all the settlements, high-rises, it is hard to imagine how they can ever keep up with water needs.

March is the best month for wild flowers. They have 6 months of no rain. Zero. Yet there are mango orchards, almond trees in bloom, avocado groves. Bananas. Mostly olive trees. Date palms. Apples and cherries. Remember that drip irrigation was developed by the Israelis.

Drove through Magdar village, home of Mary of Magdalene, saw place of Sermon on the Mount and also the Location where Jesus supplied wine and bread. Though it is been a very long time since I read the Bible I couldn't help but wonder if Israel would seem so special to someone who had not studied the Bible.

Desert and more desert but in areas surprisingly green. After crossing the very tiny Jordan River, which used to be crossing into Syria prior to 1967 war, we were near to one of lowest places on earth with only the Dead Sea being lower. It was along this road, perched on a series of large rocks we saw a kind of badger called something like cliff mocks.

Settlements. Do we agree or not? There are so many Golan Heights settlements; people are thinking Trump is friendly to Israel which gives high hopes that they can not only keep the settlements but add more. They aren't the only people with hope from Trump.

A winery tour. Katzin is a town constructed from scratch, with industrial complex and Golan Heights winery for history, tour, modern bottling facility, oak room, and then tastings. Lots of small vineyards work as a cooperative following consultants from U of Calif at Davis. Within view of snow covered Mount Hermon. They produce 6 million bottles a year with 35 varieties. Kosher. Over 50 types of wine are offered. We only got to taste four. I was ready to stay awhile.

Shabbat year? Each 7 years they stop production of a percentage of fields. Did I get that right? Hard to imagine.

Fully and amazingly mechanized. All aspects. Oak barrel room smell was my favorite. So Cheers! La heim. (Sp?) Our young and seemingly knowledgeable guide revealed the winery having received many awards and high 90s ratings. 14.5 percent alcohol is high for averages. We had a white, a thick dark Cabernet and a sweet Moscato.

Golan Magic experience was a little bit cheesy but it was helpful to understand the topography of the Golan Heights and then the war and its related problems. There was 180° screen and it began with aerial views of the Golan Heights but much of it was like a sales pitch. Then we went to another section that had a huge model of the Golan Heights with an overlay audio visual performance with special-effects explaining the geology, settlements, history and their battles. I'm sure we all left it with more understanding why the retention and the settlement of the Golan Heights is so important to the future of Israel. They almost lost it in the 1973 war.

Olive oil production tour. They claim to have the best and I wouldn't be surprised but I do believe their claim that they are using 100% of the olive. We not only had olive oil tasting but we had a review of the various products they are making for cosmetics, soap, food stuff, from what used to be thrown away and an environmental problem for the water aquifers. They sold quite a bit of product, particularly the cosmetics, to our group. Those of us with hand carry luggage were not able to purchase even if we wanted to.

Lunch: a Druzian pita like a huge thick crepe was filled with a yogurt/cheese, olive oil, and a mixture of green herbs said to been a favorite in Jesus times. Served with a hot sauce, olives and more olive oil mixture.

Right. Left. Center. They were said to have mostly left and center newspapers. So - Israel Today Newspaper was started by Adelson (of Las Vegas and Macau fame) a strong Bibi supporter. Adelson decided Israel needed an alt right paper and it is now everywhere - and free. Where does the Bibi recent scandal come in?

So much. War. Bunkers (under trees which is a story). Mine fields. Trenches. What am I doing here? At the Syrian border, high up on a hill, we heard booming: The launch, a couple seconds delay, and then the hit. Some of our guest seemed fascinated. I had a body full of goosebumps. Icky.

Arrogance after the 1967 war win was said to have been somewhat disastrous. They were so totally unprepared for surprise attack on Yom Kippur. It didn't go well, they were found to be quite unready, without supplies, but it could have been worse. Because it was an Empty roads time with people at home or in synagogue, this was a bit of luck. Otherwise could have been a bigger catastrophe. Who helped other than the US? Germany! Germany!

Volcanic area. Remember that the snow-covered mountain has to do with a volcano and there are various volcanic tubes Drove down into an old crater where we saw Syrian ammunition storage facilities. We could see Lebanon in the background with snow covered Mount Hebron overlooking.

Safed. I have heard about this town as being a special artist colony but this was my first visit. Earthquake totally destroyed it late 1800s then did serious damage in 1927. Another earthquake is expected and probably within the next couple years as it has a history of every 90 years. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Safed>

Some of the studios in old town were well done with famous artists having either donated all of their artwork, at their death, to include a large collection of Marc Chagall, or some world-class sculptures showing their work. The allegedly famous long alley of shops had a lot of junk intermixed with the unique.

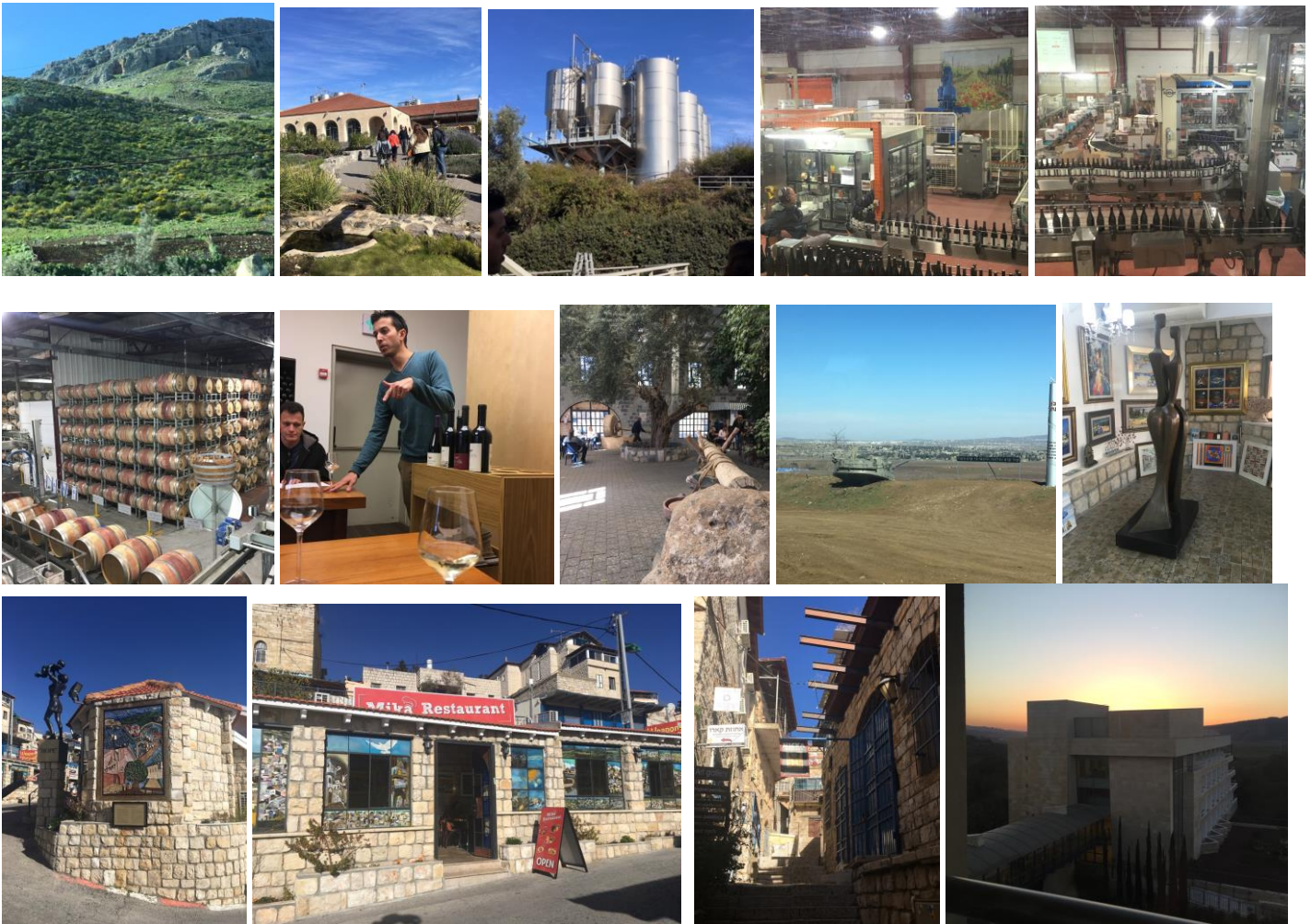
We went into a synagogue for lessons in history and types of Jews. Kabbala started here and now I realize that the type of Kabbalah practiced by the Madonna's and Beyoncé's of the world is not at all what the original Kabbalah consists of. But having said that, I am prone to think that believing in and practicing anything could be better than nothing.

What is Kabbalah? Syncretic traditions of Christian Kabbalah and Hermetic Qabalah developed independently of **Jewish** Kabbalah, reading the **Jewish** texts as universal ancient wisdom. Both adapted the **Jewish concepts** freely from their Judaic understanding, to merge with other theologies, religious traditions and magical associations. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kabbalah>

The highways and Roadways so good to be envious. I don't think they have any potholes but they have to be good, efficient and complete for military needs.

End. This is my last night in the Kibbutz and we move onto Jerusalem tomorrow. Will I stay awake long enough for the lecture about the kibbutz late this evening?

Pictures include: Golan Heights is surprisingly hilly and green. The winery with lots of automation, the olive oil facility, a tank lookout over Syria, the artist community at Safed, and one of the kibbutz buildings at sunset.



Day 9 - on way to Jerusalem

Yofi Tofi is our phrase for the day. Very Beautiful. Yes - Everything Is. Our guide Jackie, also called Yaki, is always UP.

Yesterday. Standing at the Syrian border and looking out at the UN complexes and hearing at the shelling, then driving along the rows of bunkers, was a sobering moment and one that will surely stay with me. It is hard enough to imagine living the life of caution in Israel, let alone living under continue shelling in Syria. Again, I don't understand why all the hate. A friend claims it goes all the way back to the two sons of Abraham going two different directions.

Hospital- our guide was rather indignant, (as he probably should be), that Syria bombs Israel and yet Syria just sent 2500 people for free Israeli hospitalization.

On that subject I learned that their medical care is not hugely different than ours. They pay into a social security type fund based on their income. Some might only pay about \$120 a month for care, then a small amount at each medical visit yet if you want a specialist and not wait for sometimes months, you should purchase private insurance coverage in addition. An average income is about \$2500 a month and if under \$1000 a month the government supplements.

The UN. Could it be true that half of the UN resolutions are condemning Israel? Why? There is a lot more to this than meets the eye apparently. I came here to learn but I continue to be mystified why there is so much hatred toward the Jewish people and Israel. Later: check out Nikki Haley speech at the UN. Wow. Of course it was headlined here. <http://www.israellycool.com/2017/02/20/watch-nikki-haley-rips-un-security-council-for-anti-israel-bias/>

Breakfast: really very foreign and I made a cereal by finding creamy semolina and a number of seeds on the salad buffet. There were vegetable pies, lots of sweets, Lasagna, and even a spaghetti mixture. The big pan of what looked like custard turned out to be more like cheesecake. A few mini empanada-like things without much filling.

Weather. Finally some warmth and only a light jacket needed. Our price was fog. There must be lots more sun at times based on all the orchards and greenery.

What the tour company says I will be doing today: From the Galilee to Jerusalem. Short ride to Tiberius, an ancient & very present Israeli city located on the western shores of the Sea of Galilee. Visit Rambam's Tomb; Proceed to Beit Shean, also known as "scythopolis", the biggest archeological park in Israel with beautiful Roman and Byzantine era excavations. Proceed to Beit Alpha to explore the magnificent mosaic floor of a synagogue dating to the Byzantine era. On to Gan Hashlosha, (the Sachne) located at the foot of the Gilboa Mountains, with an opportunity to enjoy its fresh & cool water springs. Late afternoon, travel via the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem. Atop Mount Scopus, stop for a blessing as you enter the city.

What we really did today:

It always feels like an early start. This was pack-out day. Fortunately I will have five days in the next hotel which I always find to be a benny.

Kibbutz Tour. Yes I went to last night's lecture and it was probably worth the lack of sleep. The old guy had the typical speech that was too fast and like he had a mouthful of marbles but I worked hard to understand. I understood more this morning when Jackie gave us a driving tour. Kibbutz is the purest form of communism. Everybody is equal in communism but some more equal. In kibbutz everybody is really equal.

Used to be 270 kibbutz in Israel but only 1/3 still pure. Many went private. This one has Kabbalah leaders. He talked about how they were given land grants plus loans, help from the state there was literally nothing. He joked about how the women used to do all kinds of work including working in the field but slowly they got pushed into things like childcare. And now there is more equality.

All rooms by law must be practically a bomb shelter. They are called Secured rooms and also square footage is mandated. There have been 8000 - 12,000 rocket attacks in recent years. 4,000 in last war 10-12 years ago. The secured rooms are meant to keep the inhabitants safe by being made a very heavy concrete like a bomb shelter. Israel has developed way to intercept rockets/missiles called Iron Dome to intercept those bombs falling into populated areas and have intercepted 90 plus percent. Because of the high cost of the interceptors at about \$50,000 each, they are not used when they fall in an open vs populated area. 800 people at this religious kibbutz. Saw their bomb shelters, cattle and horse farms, furniture factory, agriculture but the hotel is a big money maker.

Totally self-sufficient. Yet the Population of those living in all kibbutz has fallen from 4 percent to 1 1/2 percent. I couldn't help but wonder about the growth having started in the mid-40s and now there are a lot of old people to be taken care of. Our speaker looked very old but it turns out he was only in his 60s and he had a huge unhealthy belly. The Israelis have bred their cattle to be some of the best in the world. One cow can produce 390,000 gallons of milk per year. Said to be one of best in world.

Child care. In the early days children lived in a day care center and only visited their parents for about an hour during the lunch break. Then it was decided that families were important but the problem is where to put the children in the little teeny apartments inhabited by the adults. This new family arrangement caused a need for enlarged homes which is just being completed now. While all houses are basically the same, residents are given flexibility to design the inside.

Tiberius. Huge! Below sea level. Established by the Romans. Then Byzantine. Marmalouks. Turks. In 1948 took from Arabs. Tourism main industry. Even a kosher McDonald's. Remnants of old town wall has buildings into and over it. Population about 40,000. Maimonides memorial and tomb here.

Mount of Beatitudes. Pope and 100,000 students visited in 2000. High on a hill overlooking the Sea is the church where Christ gave his Sermon on the Mount which famously began with his blessings or beatitudes. Lovely and extensive gardens and by the amount of tour buses, the thousands continue to arrive.

Capernaum is on the northern side of the Sea and a focal point of Christ's teachings. Surviving houses from that period.

Kursai is in still more Bible stories. Where the herd of swine went down the bluff and drowned in the lake. By the end of the day we had pretty much drove around the Sea of Galilee. And again traversed still another Ex border crossing with Syria and saw still another kibbutz on the border. The Jordan border was all along our side for miles. Part of Jordan Valley is quite fertile with food stuff and also fish ponds. No wonder the migrating birds are staying. We saw one series of fish ponds that was a virtual buffet for birds.

Beit Alfa Antiquities National Park. Found on a Kibbutz in 1928 in near perfect condition was a 6th century Mosaic floor in the ancient synagogue, now shown by a biblical story film.

A rest for the eyes? We had a stop in an Australian nature preserve with a spring fed lake complete with those little fish that like to nibble on your feet. Remember when pedicure shops tried them? Zoo with kangaroo to feed which we saw but we missed the koala bears. Place is called Gangaroo Park.

Lunch: A local sharma shop. I'd call it a gyro from Greece. There were add-ons like an Israeli or Arabic Subway. Plus choice of two salads. The guide teased me for my pricey Stella Artois but the whole bill was 37 shekels or maybe \$10.

Beit Shean. The best preserved Roman-Byzantine town in Israel. We saw a small portion and their arena as well as their tel. I'd meant to see more like my intended itinerary offered.

West Bank. Lebanon old border (pre 1967) was crossed. West Bank border patrol with wall in sight. Wall or fence? 95 percent is a fence. Israeli can go in but Palestinians can't come in easily. Racial profiling so we went straight through. Area newly full of vineyards, date palms, etc., all taught to the Arabs by Israelis in last few years in order to create peace. Give a means of income and violence subsidies. Also sheep herders, turkey farms, even camel. Oasis is now 50x bigger since the Israelis consulted and set the Arabs in business. New homes vs shacks. Same growth happened with Jericho after Israel helped set up businesses.

Miscellaneous tidbits:

Archeological control. Can deal but not dig. Makes sense as it keeps artifacts in country.

Gas station uses chip. No cards. No fuss or muss, no paper, no people and fully computerized. \$7 a gallon approximately. It looks like our EZ pass system.

Newspapers. Man in all red. Hawking free right wing newspapers. Odd is red normally left wing color.

Animals' roadside must be a Cliff Fox or a Badger. They are like rabbits in their numbers, and in size, sitting roadside on the rocks. Related to elephants! That's not a typo.

Date syrup is like a honey and likely the Bible's "milk and honey". Many date palm orchards and Israel is largest exporter. They have more than one variety but also the huge one favored by the Arabs.

Bird flyway. Cormorant. Stork. Pelicans. Many migrating birds quit just passing over but now stay over in Israel. It looks like they reluctantly or unintentionally feed them.

Train transport seems very limited but there is a new one from a Haifa port to near to Jordanian border. Might be needed and used by military.

Plastic recycling. Israel is first in world. Much of the recycling is totally volunteer. There are huge room-size cages all around town for plastics, cardboard and aluminum. Small water bottles have a \$.30 deposit so that is incentive to recycle.

Read. "Mere Christianity" by C.S. Lewis basic book and easy read.

Pictures follow but captions will have to wait. And now good night.





Day 10 - in Jerusalem.

The word(s) of the day - Can or Ken means yes. Toda - thank you.

It was a long cold day but good. So far two major items on my wish list isn't going to happen: Beit Shean and the Jerusalem Tunnels. The tour company sold me an itinerary that is incorrect. Is this a sign to have me return?

What the tour company says we will do today: Day 8 of Tour - Jerusalem the Old City. Day begins with a tour of Mount Zion & a visit to King David Tomb. Walk into the Old City, along the Cardo, an ancient Roman Market Road. Proceed into the Jewish Quarter & visit the four Sephardic Synagogues restored after 1967 war. Special feature of the day: Guided tour of the Kotel Tunnels. Proceed to tour the Davidson Center and walk to the local Arab Bazaar. At Jaffa gate visit the David Tower Museum and explore Jerusalem's ancient remains beginning with the first temple period.

What we really did:

To Bethlehem. We continually crossed ex borders or current borders. So many new roads, tunnels and a ring road showing the amazing ability to build and need for good roads. Went into West Bank again. Back and forth with no border crossing problem.

Major drop in Christian population of Bethlehem since annexation. From 80 percent down to 30 percent per one source, then the Palestinian Christian guide told us that they were down to 60 families and only 10% of the population.

We were turned over to a Palestinian guide at the border. Israelis are not allowed in. Four years ago we walked across the border with a crossing guide and then met by a Palestinian. This time we drove the back streets which felt something like I'd expect hijacking might start.

As soon as we crossed the border the guide and the driver said, "OK Seat belts off." They don't like seatbelts but they sure do need them.

My observation from before and this trip (which I realize is pretty limited) It is dirty, it isn't cared for, and they complain about the economy and the need for peace. When I ask others why the Palestinians can't pick themselves up a little bit better I'm reminded of the extreme political corruption. For instance, when Arafat died he was found to have nearly \$1 billion hidden away; though some of it was recovered, his younger wife and daughter now live in Paris on a budget of \$100,000 a month.

First stop. Church of Nativity which is the oldest church in the world where there are always hordes of people pushing to get down into the cave so they can kiss the spot where Jesus was born. Then they push their way over to the other cave where the manger was said to be. That manger is now in a church in Rome. Our guy took us around pasty line and we went straight in. I missed the town's 3000 year old olive tree. Bethlehem is high on a hill at 900 meters above sea level.

Samaritans still exist in Bethlehem area but very few. They are grandfathered and can have both Palestinian and Israeli passports. Only limited numbers of these peoples remain in the world. I did a quick look up and only found their revolts. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Samaritan_revolts

We saw Mosaics in the floor that are 1700 years old. They were so finally detailed to look like tapestry. Next-door was a Catholic Church and then finally to the required Johnny's tourist souvenir shop. We were reminded it was Christian run and we should support it. It was the same one I went to four years ago. I supported it when I found some ok Jerusalem cross earrings. I skipped the \$270 pair. Smile. Despite wondering if the Palestinians help them self, we all left reasonably generous tips.

We saw the Tomb of Rachael area at the wall on the way back to Jerusalem.

We learned about the need for education and what boycotting can really mean. Soda Stream Company boycott example. They moved after some actress started a boycott and huge numbers of Palestinians lost their livelihood. Boycott Israel Products? Then 1 1/2 Palestinians don't have bread.

Old Town Jerusalem. Then we went to what we probably all came for and that is "old town" Jerusalem. I have had three trips prior into old town with the two of them being with a Tour Guide and one afternoon on my own. Plus one partial running through with the Jerusalem marathon. We entered by Jaffa gate where a new and modern shopping mall exist. Fortunately it's in fairly well and is near to the ancient Cado.

King David's tomb or maybe it is David's tomb as there is conflict as to the true location. It is in a Turkish hotel with a Muslim mosque of 3000 years ago. It was amusing to enter through a synagogue (men to see one side and women in another) then into a mosque.

Into a crusaders church called Church of the Dormition where it is believed the place of the Last Supper. Proved that Leonardo da Vinci Last Supper painting was totally wrong in all its depiction. Laughed that Leonardo obviously never participated in a Jewish dinner.

German Kaiser built church was nearby as was a couple of other German built churches.

We walked the Armenian quarter, the Jewish quarter and square where you see a synagogue, a mosque, and a church all of which could be put into one camera frame then continued on to what most tourists head for: Wailing or Western Wall. There remains a barrier between male and female. I learned that all those little prayer notes stuck between the wall cracks are eventually gathered up and placed at a burial site.

Then to the Stations of the Cross where I managed to see all of them in my touring four years ago but this time maybe saw half. Eventually into the more colorful Arab quarter.

Church of the Holy Sepulcher with the last two Stations of the Cross was the usual crowded mess. I guess that for the over 1000 years the church exists, pilgrims stood in line, and I wonder how many fell down the very narrow, uneven and steep marble stairways. There were no banisters. The lines were long and it was thought it would take two hours in line in order to see the tomb of Jesus.

Last stop before the restaurant was the old Cado or early shopping mall. In places the excavation revealed three layers down and it is certain to have gone back 3000 years.

The Armenian restaurant gave us a zillion little bowls of salads which should have been enough for dinner but that was strictly the appetizer. Then along came a middle course and finally the meat course. I found an Armenian red wine and instead of dessert their Armagnac.

Called the **Night Spectacular**, a sound and light show happens at the Citadel at Zaffa Gate. I wouldn't have thought of going as it sounds rather like Disney, and in addition it was so very cold, but it lived up to its name. Fortunately there were Blankets for sale and we all laughed that they could have charged us much more but they were only about \$10 and a nice souvenir.

It was late getting to the hotel and if I didn't, somewhere I need to tell the story about how it was after 8 PM and I was fearful I didn't even have a hotel room. It took quite a while to sort it out and get me in a new room.

Setting the alarm for 5:30 AM was going to be painful.

Pictures: I'm going to try to put captions with the pictures once again. I stopped when they shuffled but maybe new software has it remedied.

At a border crossing with the scenes of a wall.

One of the most ancient streets in Bethlehem.

Down into the cave where Jesus was said to have been born.

At the side of the manger.

Pilgrims coming up from the cave.

Part of the nearby Catholic Church and their cloister

The souvenir shop with olive wood carvings.

In Old Jerusalem.

Female soldiers.

The synagogue in the Jewish quarter in sight of a mosque and a church.

The Western Wall which is just a very tiny portion of what it was when King Herod built it.

Women and men are still segregated.

Part of a market in the Arab quarter.

People bring items to the stone of Unction. This is where the anointing and shroud wrapping of Jesus body was said to take place.

Part of a large mural in the Cado.

The Armenian restaurants know how to give you variety.

In the citadel for the night spectacular sound and light show.

Miscellaneous:

Liberty Bell replica in a local park near to my hotel. Thanks to Carolyn: I researched it for you!

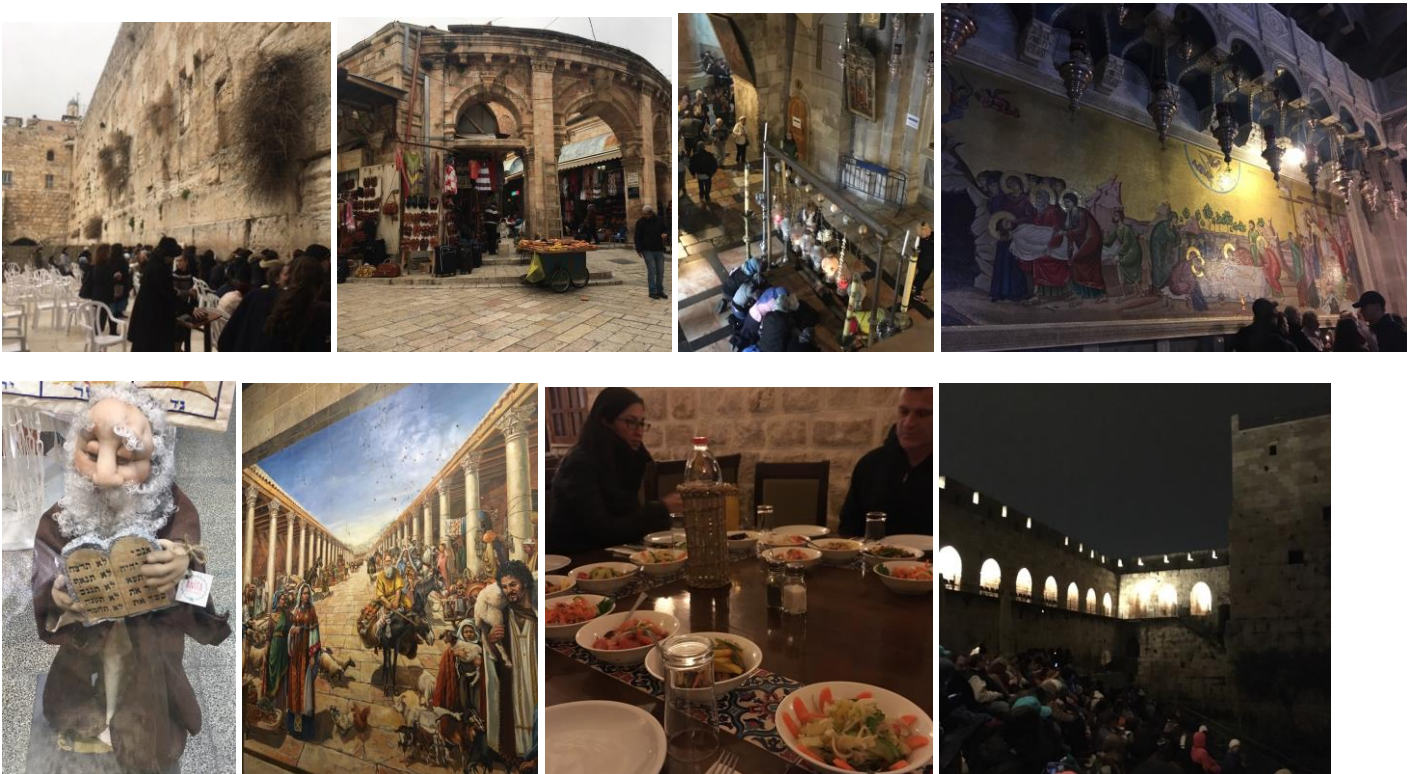
Gan HaPa'amon is named for the miniature liberty bell at the entrance to the park. The bell, a miniature of Philadelphia's liberty bell, was added to the park in honor of the United States centennial celebrations in 1976. The bell was a gift from the city of Philadelphia.

Tough Cookies. Girl border guards do profiling at all bus centers. Buses are bullet proof.

Joke. Do you know why Israelis don't make love on the street? Because a bunch will come along and offer advice.

Birth Right. I need to remember to talk about birthright trips once again.





Day 11 - more of Jerusalem.

Yaki forgot our word of the day. Or evidence would suggest that I am the one that forgot the word of the day.

Tired. It may have been me because I slept through my alarm and did other stupid things all morning. By afternoon I did even more stupid things of which I can't even admit.

Overload? I have often times thought that 10 days is enough for any trip and then I get grumpy. I better get over it because I have quite a few days left. Fortunately Shabbat is coming up which means a lie-in for ME.

What the tour company says I'll be doing today: Day 9 of Tour - Jerusalem the New City. Start the day with a visit at the Kotel complex to see & enjoy the Bar-Mitzvah ceremonies as they take place every Monday & Thursday. Continue to Mea Shearim and learn about the unique lifestyle of the ultra-orthodox Jewish communities. Drive to Mount Hertzal, the Israeli Military Cemetery and visit Yad Vashem, Holocaust Memorial. Proceed to tour Ammunition Hill, a former Jordanian army stronghold, conquered by the Israeli army in the Six Day War, and converted into a national memorial site and museum. Drive by the Knesset, Israel's Parliament and see the Menorah with its Biblical emblems. Visit the Israel Museum, the Shrine of the Book, where the Dead Sea scrolls are housed, and tour the new Holyland Model – a miniature second temple replica of Jerusalem.

What we really did:

An early start was tough for one who hadn't gotten unpacked until after 8:30 PM. The Hotel and the room fiasco seemed bigger because I was tired.

Appointment at government i.e. The Knesset for a tour. On the way we traveled Via Rahavian, the best section of Jerusalem. Another lovely stone windmill and there are two in Jerusalem.

Knesset means Parliament. I am thinking that it must be helpful that the Israelis had other governments to copy from and learn from. I trust and hope they did. Guided tours are only given on Sunday and Thursday and by appointment. Here are most all government agencies including the Supreme Court, various monuments, and even a lovely rose garden that I walk through four years ago.

Stopped by a huge menorah set in gardens; it is carved with historical stories which Yaki described in detail, plus gave us goosebumps when he listed bad happenings that all came on one date including 9-11 when construed on their calendar. Then that we dial 9-11 for emergencies.

Security. Our first security going through the government gates was amusing in that the armed guard looked at us carefully and then asked if we were carrying weapons and when it was negative he shoed us in. The second security

was much more complete and probably more than we usually go through for TSA. Later in the tour when a backpack was abandoned and I pointed it out to the guide he notified a security person and quickly there were a number of them surrounding it.

Tour was by a young very articulate nicely dressed in a suit fellow. Three branches of government to separate powers. Transparency - even pics allowed. 120 members of parliament governing over 8 1/2 million people. Board of members and nicely lots of women (33) and plenty of non-Jewish. Board shows who is in attendance and info is public through the internet. Lack of attendance brings cuts in salary. Elections each 4 years though it's been 2 years lately. Voting is by party. Bibi for instance requires 61 votes of parliament consisting of many parties. Committee room: there are 12 different committees and rooms. In one we saw a film of the dream of democracy. No one is born to Parliament we are reminded. Expansive modern Jerusalem stone and marble building.

Marc Chagall has created walls of tapestries and 12 floor mosaics telling the story of the Jewish people. The tapestries took 4 years to weave.

Then we were off to **The Israel museum** for a tour of the Miniature Jerusalem done on a 1:50 scale. I was there before but having a guide was better. We got stories such as the King David and Bayshiva naughty story.

Dead Sea Scrolls. On the same grounds is the purpose built building to house the Dead Sea scrolls. How they were found, originals, artifacts, etc. but also how they were found by a young goat herder and how they figured out the importance, is quite the story. Only in a place with no moisture could they have survived. No pictures allowed.

Architecture is to represent the jars that held the scrolls. Water spraying on the dome building shows the ritual bath. Cylinders at the entry represent the scrolls.

Big point. After 2000 years, found 99.9 percent of translation remains correct. Also, Old Hebrew of 2000 years ago is very similar and mostly can be read by today's standards. This is not however the more difficult "ancient Hebrew".

I'm reminded that while I like having a guide, these tours only give a short time. I call it a flyover which is sad for this big important complex. I'd spent much of a day here four years ago.

We drove next to the **Santiago Calatrava String Bridge.** I'd forgotten how spectacular it is. New train coming from Tel Aviv is planned at the same area as the bridge and the train will be a record 270 feet below surface.

Mere Shearim (sp?) neighborhood was next on our list to learn about the Ultra-Orthodox. Apparently there are quite a few "tribes" with some extreme and militant. They go back to 16th century with more and more created. Our guy didn't talk about the problem of the heavy population increasing steadily. He did talk about the differences of Clothing, hair, beards, hat, all showing their tribe or sect. Girls can show hair but not married women. A wig is okay but now no Farrah Fawcett fancy styles. And no Indian made wigs. The altar Orthodox consist of 20 percent of Israel population. Growing.

Next up was **Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus.** I missed the camels that I saw before. I was amazed to see the Wall of names of those who donated over \$1 million. Wow!

We got there Via Hebrew university and Via Ammunition hill where we parked and learned some about the British Cemetery from WWII. And inscription: "So far away from home, but so close" Reminding Israel is home to ALL Jews.

Lunch at museum. Real food of fish, pasta and vegetables and best of all, wine. Maybe wine is why I screwed up later....

Yad Vasham - Holocaust Museum or Memorial - No pictures allowed inside. This was my third trip and I read and saw some more info. It is not only for sadness, though there is plenty of that, but to remember others too. This was not the only Holocaust in the world. <http://www.yadvashem.org/> Lost were 1 1/2 million children who will never have children and their children won't have children.... Gone are 6 million people.

The Candle of God is the sole of man. It was a time when Europe was in darkness. The world turned their back. The Vatican as an organization didn't take a stand. A reminder to take a stand. Like the Swiss who financed Hitler, they too have guilt. The first part of the history was particularly frightening when you realize the lack of freedom happening to some in our own society now.

There are now rows and pathways of planted trees to the honor the righteous. Not just Oscar Schlinder but a Muslim mother, a Nazi officer who risked his life to help Jews, and more, in fact 12,000 trees planted in their individual honor. I wonder if we as Americans are going to have the guts to stand up for what is right. To protect others.

Then our last stop of the day was the Military cemetery. It had already been a heavy day and I think I could've done without this. There was the story of those lost in a submarine accident and a whole memorial in the shape of a ship to those lost. There was the story of the Lone Soldier: three outsiders came to Israel to fight in Gaza war. Only one was left without a return family request. 40,000 strangers showed up for his funeral.

Me? A few tears but not because I **lost my rain coat**. I know where but it wasn't there when I returned. I was miffed about having to check my purse/backpack and in that confusion of repacking into pockets, I left the coat behind. I'll hope whoever took it needs and enjoys it. A plus is now I have extra room in my suitcase

Hotel. I moved in yesterday but it was unacceptable and they promised me an upgrade room that didn't smell bad. When I came in last night it was as though the conversation never existed. The hotel description reads well and I'll do OK and after about an hour they did come through with a little bit better room and with a view better than the rooftop of the parking lot.

From their website: The Dan Panorama Hotel Jerusalem with its dignified architecture and honey-colored Jerusalem stone exterior resonates with the spirit of this legendary city. One of Jerusalem's favorite hotels, the Dan Panorama Hotel, boasts an exceptional location that enables you to explore Jerusalem's multifaceted attractions simply by stepping outside. Across the road from the Dan Panorama Hotel Jerusalem is the splendid Bloomfield Garden that is one of the largest parks in Jerusalem and from which you overlook the city. At the end of the park is the famous Yemin Moshe neighborhood. The neighborhood was established in 1891 by Moses Montefiore and was the first Jewish district build outside the walls of Jerusalem. Towering high above the red roofed houses is the Montefiore Windmill which provided cheap flour to the residents and today is a museum that showcases Montefiore's vision.

Around the corner is the fabled King David Hotel, a destination in itself with magnificent public areas where politicians and headline-makers mingle. A scenic stroll along historic landmarks takes you down to the endlessly fascinating Old City that invites you to explore a medley of cultures, famous holy sites of the three monotheistic faiths and the more earthly attractions of vibrant multicolored open markets. The Old City is divided into four quarters- the Armenian, Christian, Jewish and Muslim. Since the history of Jerusalem is over 3000 years old, in the different quarters you will find captivating architectural remnants of past conquerors such as the Crusaders, Romans and Ottomans. In the Jewish Quarter, you can visit the Western Wall, considered one of the holiest places in the Jewish religion. The Muslim Quarter houses the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock that are sacred to the Muslim faith. In the Christian and Armenian Quarters are important landmarks and churches such as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher that are holy to Christians of all denominations.

Miscellaneous tidbits:

Kosher cost problem. This is a little gossipy sounding but the Jewish people on my trip and the guide confirms that the cost of granting kosher status varies by area and is considerable.

Volunteer's numbers over 20 percent of Israelis. Monetary contributions are considerable. Common for Jews to help one another and specifically if not more so in Israel.

Mormon center is located in Jerusalem and they have agreed to not proselytize. It is a research and study center only. Nice.

Muslim area has 330,000 people who are offered Jerusalem (not Israeli) citizenship. 44 percent of Israel terrorism came from that area.

Underground north/south **highway tunnel** being extended.

Unemployment percentage is one of the lowest in the world. 4.5 percent.

No Old Folks homes. They are called Parents Homes.

Pictures:

View from my hotel window.

Guard at government complex.

Our guide Yaki.

Inside their parliament.

Way inside parliament.

Chagall mural on tapestry.

A close up section.

Scale model from Second Temple time.

The purpose built building for the Dead Sea Scrolls intended to represent the top of the container. That's water spraying over the top and a lineup of Chinese tourists.

A couple pieces of art from there sculpture garden.

I believe this one is done by the same artist that created the "bean" in Chicago.

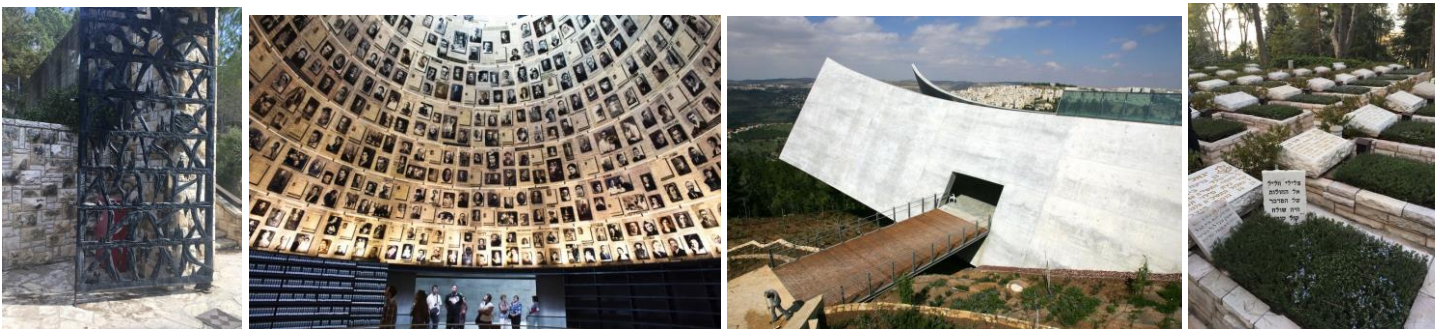
Santiago Calatrava artwork in the form of a pedestrian bridge.

Just one of the many sects in the ultra-orthodox section.

A zillion names of people who donated \$1 million or more to the university. So impressive.

The gate to the Holocaust Museum intended to represent barbed wire.

A small section of the military cemetery. In Israel they go all out to honor their heroes.



Day 12 - to Masada and Dead Sea

Guide's Introduction to the day: Today will be the lowest point of our life: the Dead Sea is the lowest place on earth.

Last day on this tour for most with only Dan and Laura, Chinese from San Francisco, going onto Eilat and Petra with me and my first guide, Darone. It is also our last day with Yaki. It has been excellent but I'm looking forward to my own Shabbat for a rest.

What the tour company promised: Day 10 of Tour - Qumran, Masada & Dead Sea. Drive via Edomim Road into the Judean Desert. Stop to visit Qumran, the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Continue to Masada, Tour the new

visitors' center and ascend Masada by cable car for a tour of the archaeological site known as the fortress of King Herod and last stronghold of the Zealots. Descend by cable car & travel for the last part of the day for some fun & relaxation at one of the Dead Sea Hotels for lunch and Spa facilities.

What we did:

Started with a drive through central city, passing a synagogue with largest collection of known menorahs, the prestigious Russian quarter, and a Chapel built by Antonio Belucchi same as chapel of Beatitudes.

Our drive out of town followed the old wall border and into what was Jordan territory pre 1967. We would be going down 4000 feet where it would be hugely warmer by maybe 10 degrees centigrade. It is also dry like hard to imagine: Sometimes zero inches of rain, but averaging 1.8 inches. We crossed four check points but each was a non-event for us because, as we were reminded, they are trained in racial profiling. Well I like racial profiling, I am not immune to realizing that it is not nice for some people.

Reforestation and even planting in the dessert seems near impossible. Scientist thought it was impossible but it's happening. Where trees were said to need a lot of rain, they have huge Groves with only 4 inches of average rainfall.

Since 1900, almost 250,000,000 trees have been planted in all regions of Israel from the Golan and Galilee in the north to the Negev in the south. <https://aabgu.org/israels-remarkable-reforestation/>

Bedouin encampments were seen often along the edge of the highway along with their herds of sheep and goats. Important to remember that this is their choice. I thought that in Bethlehem too: who am I to judge their cleanliness. Bedouin are said to be both rich and poor. Some are known for extortion and crime. Some serve the public.

Weather. Hazy. But could see Jericho off the roadway and then we could almost see the other side of the Dead Sea.

Qumran caves was our first stop and it was the site near where the Dead Sea Scrolls found in 1952. We walked what seemed like a spa or ritual baths that were from 150 BC to AD 68. Archaeological Dig shows us a life of 2000 years ago that had been inhabited by a group who largely disappeared and were not thought of again until the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the area around 1947. We saw a film to help understand but mostly enjoyed that we were within view of the Sea.

The village seemed impossible for all the efforts they had to make to collect and store the waters. Ritual baths requiring virgin or living waters and large cisterns, sometimes waterfall, aqueduct, kilns and ovens, pottery workshop and storage, with rooftops made of palm branches to keep the water clean. This Wikipedia web link has a few pictures and better description: https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qumran_Caves

Dead Sea. Called Salt Lake by the locals and it borders all of Israel, the West Bank and Jordan. It's more than 400m below sea level, the lowest point on dry land. It's famously hypersaline water makes floating easy, and its mineral-rich black mud is used for therapeutic and cosmetic treatments at area resorts. The surrounding desert offers many oases and historic sites. Surface elevation: -430 m; Area: 605 km²; Length: 50 km. It is losing depth fast and not by Israel but by neighbors. Has dried out in its history and I could even see huge amounts of land that was not exposed four years ago.

A Strange fungus has been discovered despite no other life exists in this lake. It has 10x more minerals than any other known body of water. Water is thick and heavy. It is a big business mining of minerals. Biggest (near) potassium producer in world. Salts even sold in New Jersey for snow melt. It is been used for and in Cosmetics back to Cleopatra time and the salt is known to have been a partial means of wealth of king Herold.

AHAVA was the first cosmetic firm created by a kibbutz and it plus others now are big income producer for Israel. We had a tour and it was my second time there. The factory and showroom was again absolutely "infested" with Asians who just couldn't spend fast enough. Crazy. They are fortunate to have Asians and not Diana's as customers because I am prone to use things like bar soap and limited product. I say Crazy as Asians spend and take home cases of product. One group of buses spent \$75,000 in a half hour. Our group tried. I think some of the husbands might've had tears. Me? I still use bar soap so I only bought a couple of small gifts. (After yesterday's loss of my coat, I have room in my suitcase.)

Sinkholes are sadly numerous. Some spas are now deserted and orchards and roads abandoned due to sinking. We saw a major cave-in of the highway and used a diversion.

Wildlife. Birds. Foxes. Leopards. Lizards of 40 inches. Snakes including poisonous ones. Scorpions. We would later have a drive-through a wildlife national park with the joke being it was our Safari. Despite the difficult and loose-looking rock and the poisonous snakes, I saw hikers in the rock scree.

Drove through Anghetti. King David was once here plus a kibbutz. Big archaeological digs are going on here.

Masada. It was King Herod who had this town built high up on a rock cliff presumably for his safety. However it is doubtful that he ever actually lived here. He was so paranoid that he was even known to have killed his wife and sons he loved for fear they'd take over. He died in year 4BC. So Masada was built for no purpose and the King never came. But others did. It consists of 55 acres, 17 storerooms with food all left to be discovered and in amazing condition due to the extreme dryness. These storerooms would take on significance at a later date.

In the Year 70 Romans took over and the Jews of Jerusalem ran away to the safe hilltop of Masada but the Romans couldn't let them get by with it. The Romans took 9 months to build a ramp for their battering ram and take over. Yet the Jews knew what the final answer would be for them and instead of slavery, or rape, etc., they chose to die a free people. Yet they couldn't commit the sin of suicide. This was in the year 73 AD and there were 800 of them. They met and decided that the men would kill their own women and children and then there would be seven men left who would draw lots in a Lottery for killing each other. The last one standing took the guilt of all the others. Heavy stuff. History knows the story because one woman and her children were left. We don't know but can guess what happened to that one woman.

We took the cable car up after seeing a film. Four years ago I also took the cable car and each time I looked down with envy at the trail. It is about 1000 feet of elevation gain on a reasonably smooth surface and many stairs.

We finished our tour the palaces, the extensive water cistern project, a number of churches, a pigeon home, and what might be the oldest synagogue in the world. There were a number of archaeological digs going on and one gal we talked to was from my area of New Jersey. Another was very excited to have dug down in a cistern far enough to reach a white mosaic floor that was the same as the nearby church.

Lunch again was real food found in their cafeteria. Meat, rice, vegetables, salad and fruit. I really like to have a big breakfast, some snacks, a big healthy late lunch, and then limited dinner.

Ein Gedi Nature preserve drive through - More badgers and a small quick little deer. I finally figured out that the cliff foxes aren't. They are called rock hyraxes. Yet we saw even more of the little antelope looking deer on the edge of the highway. It turns out they are ibexes. Interesting how they live in groups and take turns in their roles. The males protect and the females watch the children - they all take turns.

Neve Midbar Beach on the Dead Sea: My travel companions all went in the water and got sandy and salty and dirty and I sat at the bar and had a glass of wine. Four years ago I was at a Spa that now is a giant sink hole.

Miscellaneous tidbits:

Golda Meier known as the only one in government with balls.

First in so many things. First in diamonds which purchased by Arabic world. First in dates. First in high tech?

The Ultra-Orthodox wear these Fur hats on Shabbat. We saw them on our drive back into Jerusalem. Why fur hats in the summer? Forever ago they were thought to be "Sly as a fox". Our guide tells us that these hats can be very expensive. Saw them on Hasidic Jews walking along the roadway on way back into Jerusalem.

Family day. No Mother's Day. No Father's Day. The world has changed. Now it is family day.

ICC. Israel Corvette Club was at Masada with 26 Corvettes all lined up in the parking lot.

Books. Do you know those books called "then and now"? Or "history and present"? They show the current archaeological site then have a film overlay showing how it used to look. In Rome for instance it is hard to have enough imagination to get anything out of it without such a book. In Budapest the old Roman ruins have a device that look like a telescope but as you look through it and move it around you see a depiction of how it was believed to be when built. Well I bought one of those books on Israel after seeing them over and over again at the same very stupid high price (about \$50) and I finally gave in. That was only way to get it and now I think it was worth it.

Shoes. I have now trashed two pair of shoes walking through mud caves and old ruins. Hiker shoes would've made more sense.

Pictures:

Panorama of town where a spa once existed and near to the caves of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Big canyons and evidence of high waterfalls existed.

I asked and found that the Swiss had built the cable car. This was a surprise because it seems like the Israelis know how to do everything.

This guy had climb the top of the building in Masada and stayed there a while with his selfie stick. Just proving that not only girls are selfie twits.

And unusual bird that had a little sound like children singing.

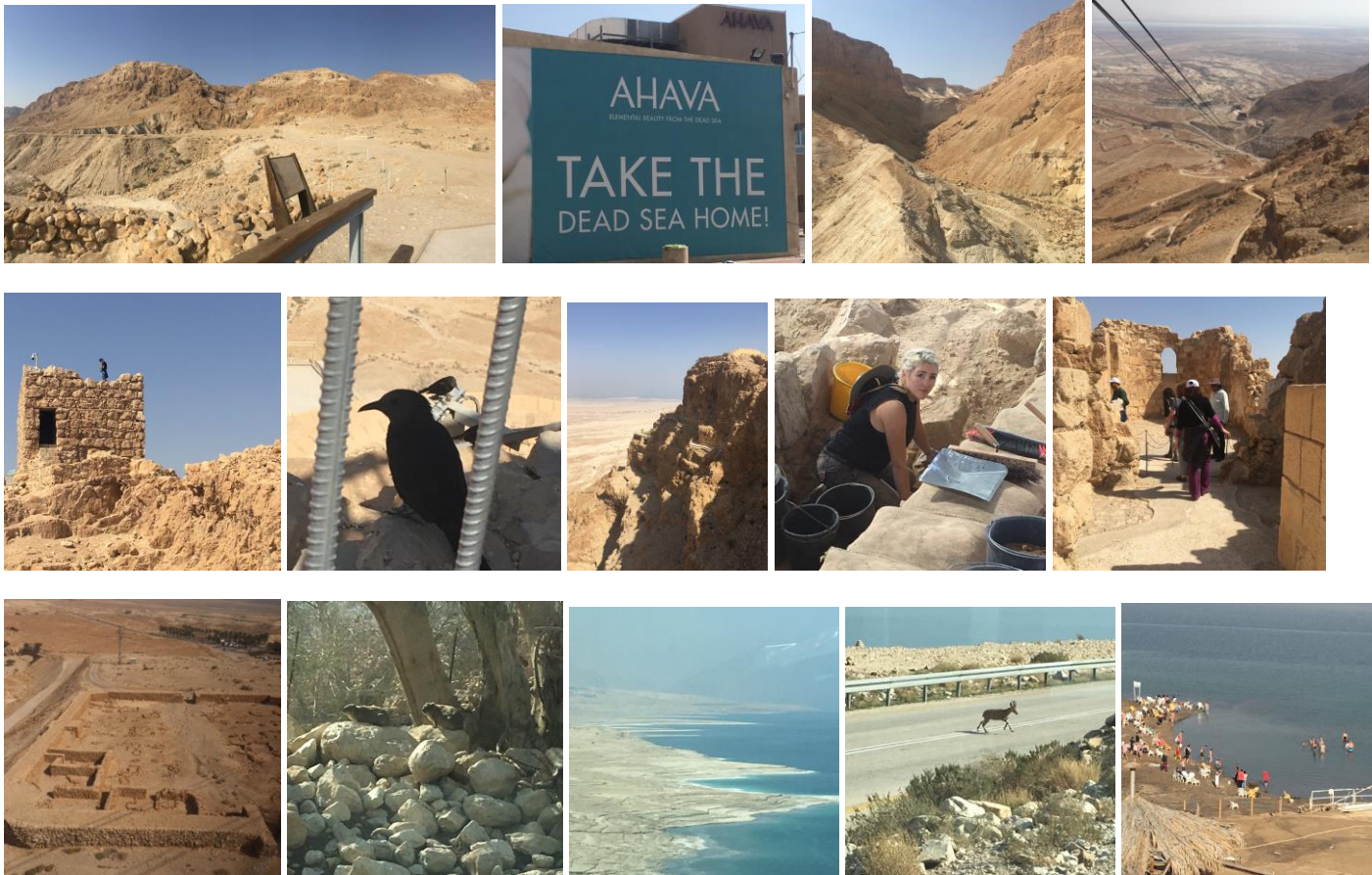
Looking back at the three levels of palaces. There were trails used by donkeys that would bring the water up to the giant cisterns.

The New Jersey gal working on an archaeological dig and quite excited to have found some pottery shards.

A church with some lovely mosaic floors not to mention quite a view.

One of five Roman encampments from when the Romans tried to take over the Jewish families. The Romans eventually succeeded but found everyone dead.

End. Well not exactly THE END because there's a lot of things I want to research but better that I go out and walk the town and research when I get home.



Day 13 - What to do on Shabbat? REST!

I slept until I woke from natural causes and then had a late and slow breakfast. Then I headed out anticipating spending much of the day on my feet.

The Rampart walk started at Jaffa Gate. This is something I meant to do last time and it is a good overview of all of Jerusalem - old and new.

I circled the city from the outside walls and also from the ramparts above. I can't even imagine how many steps as it went up and down. Up-and-down. It was possible to peek in places I hadn't seen but also an overview of the areas outside the walls. The walls were built by Suleiman the Magnificent (remember Istanbul) in the 16th century, when he restored the ancient walls, and they have served as military fortifications ever since.

From 1948 to 1967 Jordanian snipers used the ramparts to shoot at Israelis living outside the walls and there are still multiple bullet holes on many buildings. I tip toed and hung onto all the rails all I could, from Jaffa Gate through Zion Gate and got off at Dung Gate for still another view of the wailing or western wall. (I thought I had a weak knee but it was the other one that caused me concern maybe from so much up-and-down.) I had views of Old City rooftops, Sultan's Pool, Yemin Moshe, Mt. Zion and the Mount of olives. I might've stayed at the Western Wall a bit longer but sirens erupted and I thought it best to remove myself. I walked along the city of David and back behind the Western Wall where there

appeared to be a whole archaeological dig site of another town. The walk requires a lot of stair climbing and descending. Once on it you can't get off for a couple of gate's length.

Garden of Gethsemane. I was on a mission to go up to the Mount of Olives to see the church of all nations in the Garden of Gethsemane. More than once I drove by their Grove of 2000 year old olive trees and wanted to stand among them. <https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gethsemane> It is most famous as the place where Jesus prayed and his disciples slept the night before the crucifixion. (I was happy that the place had a public pay toilet because I had been walking for nearly 3 hours.)

Church of all nations. Little did I know I would feel so good about being in the magical, clean yet elegant church. It didn't hurt that I was comfortable again. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_All_Nations. Across the street was the **Tomb of Mary** and caves. Shortly thereafter near the Armenian quarter of old town I would go to the **Birthplace of Mary**.

The Arab quarter being mostly Muslim of course is open on Shabbat. I eventually got to the very busy section of Arab quarter in old town and exited via the Damascus gate but not before lots of mixed emotions about the Arabs. Again, who am I to say that they should clean up their garbage or keep their area a little nicer, but it sure is different from the other quarters. Also I have discomfort with the continual solicitation if not pushing to sell services or goods.

Via Dolorosa Route is the main drag with the Stations of the Cross. I would guess that this was my fifth time walking its full length. Two guided tours before, one walk then on my own, one guided tour this trip, and now again on my own. I think that's enough but it is quite amazing to be on a street that is so old, so full of history, and brings such a number of pilgrims. Four years ago I saw pilgrims carrying/dragging a huge cross.

Parks. There must be huge numbers of beautiful newly built parks in the city with many of them named after the benefactors. The Jewish people certainly are generous. All along the Jaffa gate was a multi block water, marble and Greenery park.

King David Jerusalem Hotel. I had looked in the first evening but had vowed to return to this very famous place. It is known as "one of the world's legendary hotels, is a major landmark in a unique city. Blending the past and the refinement of the ancient world, the King David Hotel is unquestionably the most famous of all of Jerusalem's hotels. Superbly located on an elevated site, the King David Jerusalem Hotel offers incomparable views of the walls, the minarets and the domes of the Old City."

From Wikipedia, it is "a member of [The Leading Hotels of the World](#) and continues to accommodate foreign heads of state and diplomats visiting Israel. Amongst the hotel's more famous guests are [King George V](#); Jordan's [King Hussein](#); U.S. Presidents [Richard Nixon](#), [Gerald Ford](#), [Jimmy Carter](#), [Bill Clinton](#), [George W. Bush](#), and [Barack Obama](#); British Prime Ministers [Winston Churchill](#), [Harold Wilson](#), [Margaret Thatcher](#), [John Major](#), and [Tony Blair](#); the [Prince of Wales](#); [Elizabeth Taylor](#); [Richard Dreyfus](#); [Richard Gere](#); [Madonna](#); and [Hillary Clinton](#)." More at: <http://www.jerusalem-insiders-guide.com/king-david-hotel-jerusalem.html> and https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/King_David_Hotel

It's owned by The Dan hotels which is the same chain where I stay. But the King David had Internet that worked. Unfortunately I was there during sleeping hours at home; I have been frustrated with slow Internet and thus slow FaceTime with Tom.

Inside was lovely as well as historical. Along the very long hallway are many signatures of dignitaries engraved in the floor. It was fascinating to walk along looking down at your feet and reading all the signatures. And no one looks twice at a tourist reading the names because they all had surely done it too.

YMCA. Who would have thought? This is used as a hotel and called Three Arches and one of the more interesting buildings in the city having been designed by the same as the Empire State Building. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem_International_YMCA

Liberty Bell Park. This lovely oasis is full of playgrounds and benches and picnic areas as well as a rather large amphitheater. It also contains a replica of the Liberty Bell as found in Philadelphia. It even has the same damaged crack. Why? I should research.

Mamilla Shops. I don't really know what they are called but they are at the Bush Square across from Independence Park on the corner of King David and Mamilla and it's built like a replica of the old Cado. It's a long semi covered archway with artwork/statuary all along the edges. No shops were open but I enjoyed taking pictures of the art.

Other tourists: it was amusing how often I ran into other tourists that I met on this trip. We aren't even at the same hotel nor on all the same day trips.

There is plenty to do on Shabbat:

-The Israel museum -Rothschild museum of archeology -Arab museum that Includes watches Collection -Plenty of guided tours.

Pictures:

The YMCA hotel.

Outside the Western Wall on my way up to Mount of Olives.

Mount of Olives.

The church of all nations.

Olive trees that are said to be 2000 years old.

The church of all nations.

Detailed mosaic flooring throughout.

Mary's tomb and the site of the grottoes.

Mary's birthplace.

In the church of Bethesda along the Via Dolorosa and one of the Stations of the Cross.

Check it out. That wheel on the back is a simple breaking mechanism. Just step on it.

The Damascus gate. Where I removed myself from the hordes.

This is my kitty cat picture of the day.

Salad Nicoise, some wonderful bread and a glass of white wine at the famous King David Hotel. Sitting Gardenside.

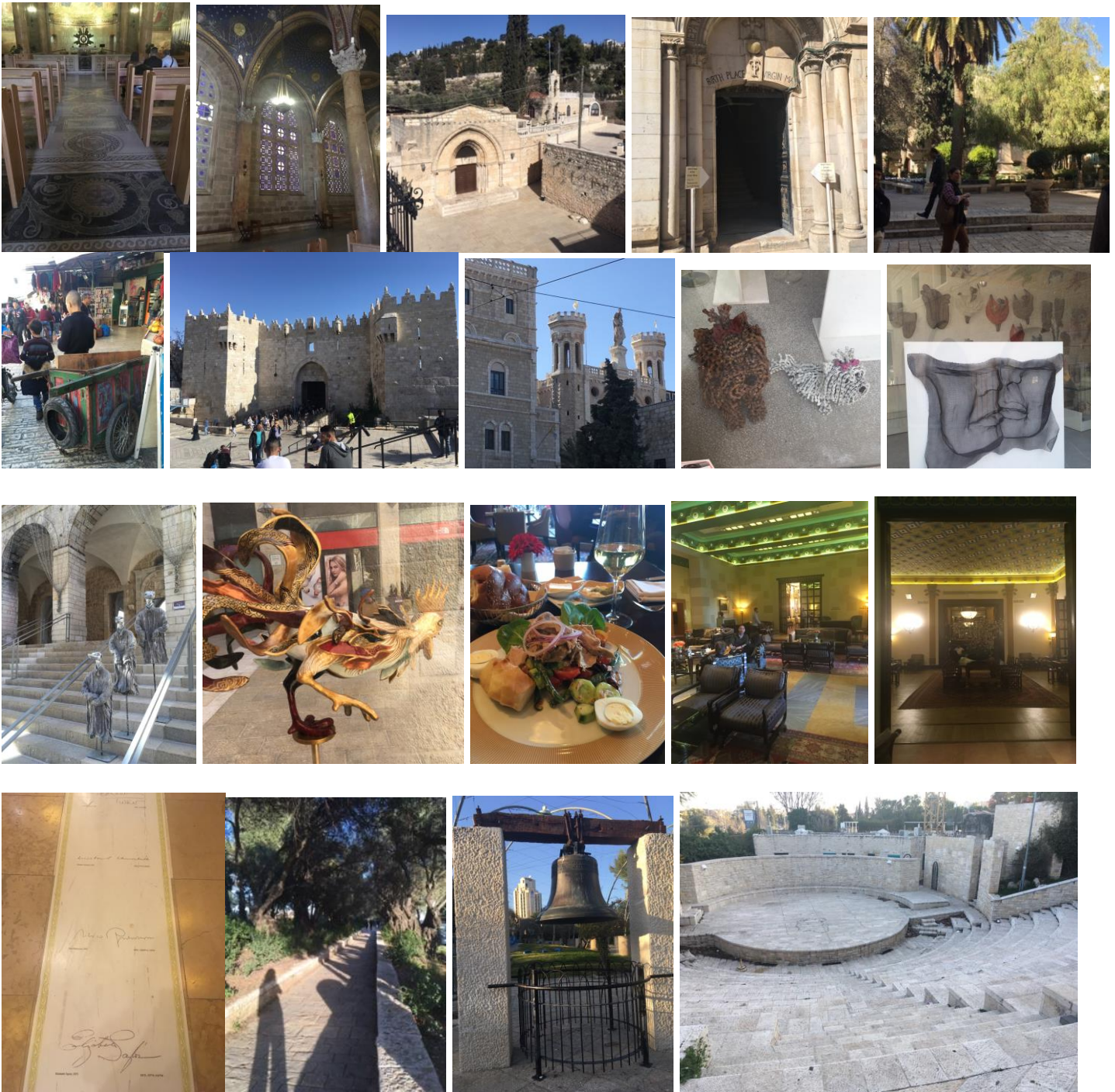
Inside the King David Hotel.

Only a small piece of all the signatures of famous visitors. The first one is Elizabeth Taylor.

Well, other people take selfie's so here is mine.

The end. But only for today as tomorrow is early and I am heading toward the south of Israel. I think those notes are going to be humorous because we are doing things like going to an underwater research center, a camel ride, and a visit to a Bedouin tribe for lunch.





Day 14 - on the way to Eilat

To Eilat we go! We had guide Darone again. That's good. Unfortunately it was with 17 guests and in a big bus. I just hope he doesn't carry a big flag like for the Japanese tourists.

It took a full hour and ten minutes to cross Jerusalem and pick up at other hotels. Sunday is like our Monday as a back to work day.

What the tour company said we'd do today:

Day 12 of Tour - Traveling to Eilat by the Red Sea. Travel south via the Negev Desert. Explore Timna Park, visit the ancient copper mines, King Solomon Pillars and marvel at the massive multi-colored rock formations. Continue to Eilat, the southernmost Israeli city located on the shores of the Red Sea. In Eilat visit the Marine Park one of the largest Sea Aquariums in the world and its underwater observatory set in a coral reef. (It turned out to be the most accurate of all days).

What we did:

Desert started just barely out of Jerusalem as we came across the checkpoint. The mountains are the border for the desert. It was what we saw yesterday but other info/facts offered. The hillside rows that look like terraces are goat paths. We could see Jericho clearer.

Sink holes are far too many and I wonder if all the wells/pumps/irrigation don't have as much to do with the sinkholes as much as the lowering of the Dead Sea.

Lot's wife who turned into a pillar of salt is allegedly at **Mt Sodom**. Apparently the mountain is primarily rock salt. There's a hiking path among the salts and maybe some of them look like Lot's wife. I missed it because the nice bus felt like a rock 'n rolling boat. I could not even look.

Ugly areas. Salt and mineral collection/industry took away from the resort look. It's a big business.

Big cliffs. Resorts of high rises. Lots of water side factories. Still more date palms. More south we went the more the terrain looked moonscape. 70 percent of Israel is desert. Then suddenly huge mountain cliffs across in Jordan fronted by date palms. The cliffs of Jordan would be in our view for miles.

Wildlife reserve could be seen from the road and was a 15 mi.² place founded so they could re-introduce some of the creatures that were named in the Bible and supposedly lived in this Negev valley. I was trying to keep my belly calm so I didn't look but people claim to have seen animals and the place is full of Somali donkeys, ostriches, antelope, etc. I looked it up and found one weird Bible species called a caracal being raised there. We did see ibex on the roads again.

Lunch stop was a strip mall of food stands like sharma/gyro, a local 7-11, and a McDonald's. I had a gyro with lots of salads which I appreciate having little or no mayo. I'm not losing any weight on this trip.

Military. There were many soldiers at lunch with hands on their machine guns. Could see military outposts along the way said to be Jordanian. It's an area so far without walls.

Following highway 90 the main route north and south. Lots of big buses. I was thinking how there must be a better way to get there. I don't ride well.

Trucks carrying cars were common. They were going back-and-forth from the south port at Eilat to an upper Israeli port to be reloaded on ships again for shipment to Europe. Trucking from end to end of Israel saves shippers money, Israel gains, Egypt Suez Canal loses. We saw huge fields of parked white cars. Parked waiting to be transported and white because they were plastic coated.

Countries bordering Israel: I hadn't really thought of it but you have Lebanon at the top, Syria to the east followed by Jordan still on the east, you can see Saudi Arabia at the bottom and over to the west is Egypt. Then the long long stretch of the Mediterranean Sea to the east. The bottom port at Eilat is actually the Gulf of Aqaba. In the 1947 agreement, Israel was given this a little piece of water frontage

Timna Park is the largest park in Israel. Where Egyptians once lived and now has hiking trails for travelers to see what they call King Salomon's Pillars and the Miners Temple and surely more. It was hot and very dusty. Same shoes ... they have now been trashed. I wore them in the bill caves through rain and mud, I wore them through all the ruins and over rocks, and now I wore them in the scree of volcanic rock.

Copper mining surrounded by huge limestone and granite mountain cliffs. Volcanic action created these pushed up rocks.

Volcanic Crater. It is huge. This 1/2 of a crater is twinned with another half crater found 120 km away in Jordan.

Smelting camp from 3500 years ago for mining copper which required 900 degrees of heat. Noted for the mushroom formations.

Underwater Observatory. It's called coral world and it's said to have 500 species of fish and corals, some seen in the underwater observatory that is 20 feet underwater. It's not my kind of thing so I didn't stay very long but I did climb the big lighthouse type steps up to the top where they say on a clear Day you can see four countries.

The Hotel: Dan Panorama Hotel in Eilat for 2 nights.

<http://www.danhotels.com/EilatHotels/DanPanoramaEilatHotel/index.htm> From their website: The Hotel has been created with our guests in mind. Ideal for a vacation that blends sun and fun with Eilat's spectacular natural attractions, the Hotel

is splendidly located overlooking a tranquil marina where sailboats anchor. A short stroll takes you to Eilat's famous North Beach where you can perfect your tan, swim in the clear cool Red Sea, scuba dive, sail or indulge in any other water sport that takes your fancy. Another feature of the Hotel is its proximity to many of Eilat's varied tourist activities that tempt you to be as active or as idle as you like. In addition to superb cuisine, other attractions include an inviting outdoor swimming pool, service to satisfy your every whim, and the ongoing fun of a talented entertainment team.

The Jerusalem hotel: I was glad to be leaving as a lot of things didn't go well. Even after the room got settled which was a two day series of errors, the poor management continued. Internet was a problem, the elevators didn't always work, snooty front desk, and the maid stitched my wash cloths. (Israel, like in Europe, somehow managed to only have big bath towels and big hand towels.).

Miscellaneous tidbits:

Antiques. We had a guest who invested in one of those Arab shops that do pushy bargaining of his piles of dusty stuff. Things like a king Solomon cup for \$500. A Roman glass jar. Cynical me, I would expect, due to the large amount of similar offerings, that they were made in Korea.

Water on bus for 5 shekels or \$1 US. Interesting that exchange rate is 3.6 shekels per \$1 US.

Spa guest on Dead Sea died last year. They don't know but maybe she drank some of the water; it doesn't take much of that concentrated salt to cause serious trouble.

EI AI Air this morning was overbooked and allegedly offered free RT ticket return and free hotel to change flights.

Tourists. One creep on the bus that Tom would have put in his place immediately. Monopolized the conversations, loud, too much money, he liked his own potty jokes, had a shaved head and exposed butt crack. The Ugly American.

Eilat Airport is in the middle of Eilat so they've started building one far outside the city. It means that my hotel balcony can be pretty noisy. **Eilat is a tourist shopping** Mecca because Israel gave it tax-free status which means a minimum of 17% savings. I didn't care about the savings when I found a pair of replacement shoes.

Date palm propagation -- I want to research. Interesting sight.

What did we do on Shabbat? Surprisingly many of us did the same thing. Either old town and/or shopping.

Pictures:

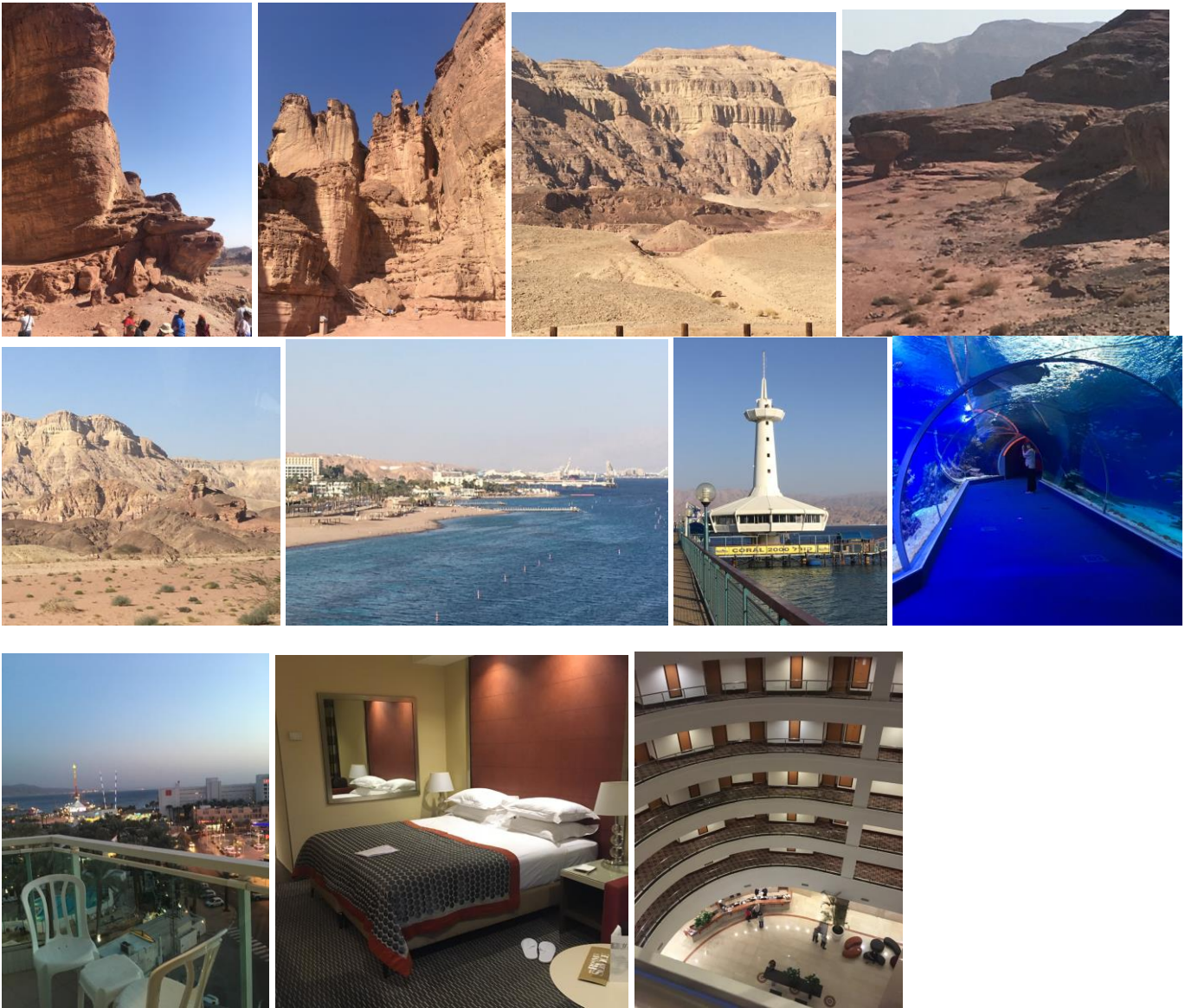
Another view of the Santiago Calatrava pedestrian bridge
King and Solomon's towers.

There is a mushroom formation out there. It shows the different type of rock with the bottom being the soft stuff. This was also the site of the 3500 year old village.

Eilat

Off my balcony and I don't know if we are looking at Jordan or Egypt across the water.





THE END for today. Tomorrow is a very long day to Petra.

Day 15 - Petra!

It was such an early start and a very long day. Was it worth it? That is a big question. There are so many places in the world to see, did I really need to see Petra? I have admitted to the time and below you'll see that I also admit to the inconvenience and also the price. But it is after all one of the "wonders of the world" and, as Tom would say, it's only money.

Breakfast picnic was offered since the hotel breakfast doesn't open as early as we left. A cheese sandwich, Pasta salad, two small muffins with jams, a container of Olives, a pack of tuna, some mortzerella balls, yogurt but no spoon, an orange and an apple. A bottle of water which I would prefer to have been coffee in the morning and scotch in the evening.

The drive. It was barely a stone's throw to the Jordanian border. The Guide who picked us up from the hotel was also the person who collected our \$125 visa fee and border tax. Then for passport control to get an Israeli exit visa. We are clearly told to put away our exit visa or the Jordanians will lose it. And to hold onto our passports because it will be looked at a number of times. No kidding! What an understatement.

Border crossing. We go through at least three different passport checks with a no man's land in between. After crossing the Jordanian border we must wait for our Jordanian guide, a no show for about 10 minutes. He went through passport checks with us and then passed us onto another passport check person where we got two stamps in our passport. Those Arabic words are pretty. We would repeat the numerous steps when we return to Israel. To include security checks as we left - yes, left - Jordan and again as we entered Israel.

From the Israel side to the Jordanian side is like black-and-white. However it is not as dismal looking as going into Bethlehem. The Jordanians are a pretty people with their dark hair, dark eyes, creamy dark skin, and very friendly. We immediately see big-big man in Arab garb standing in passport line and with his harem of girls.

Wait and more wait. I was up at 5:30 AM and at 8:15 AM we are still standing and waiting. The shops are friendly but seemingly third world. The kitty cats are cute and in abundance. The shop offers us free bottled water. Finally we go through two more passport checks until we find our bus. This could be a Monty Python episode. But almost made up for the harassment when I got a front row seat in the bus. I would really need it.

Guides. Sabah Ahir said with your mouthful of marbles means good morning in Arabic. Alham is a greeting. Eshmail is the driver. I can't get a guess to the guides name but later told Ali would do. He had a sweet but disarming way of inserting our names into his commentary. Odd and disconcerting. On the way back to Israel he picked up a friend or a hitchhiker who got out in the dark before we got to the border.

Our first destination. Aqaba is their border city in view of Eilat. King Hussein and Y. Rabin opened this border in 1994. Jordanian side SAD compared to Israel, but not as spooky as Bethlehem.

The town seem to be in full renovation and there were villas, along the beach, in town. Very small coastline. 150,000 population and also tax free like Eilat. Lots of construction going on. Lots of clean up needed. From Aqaba one can see 4 countries sharing the Gulf that goes into the Red Sea. (The red sea is not red but rather was the Reed Sea but in the translation they dropped and letter E). There is Ferry service to Egypt and it's used often by the Egyptians for the cities tax free zone just like Eilat. Amman their capital is ONLY 350 km straight head!

Quickly we climbed into high granite and sand golden - reddish mountains. Wadi means dry Valley riverbed. Our bus, along with the oil tankers and trucks, reverted to a lower gear to get up the hills. Going 3000 meters high. (I question that and maybe it was 3000 feet). My ears, my lunch containers and water bottles all showed the effects of elevation. I had a headache much of the day but that may have been for lack of caffeine.

Jordan does not have any oil but they buy from Saudi Arabia. All the tankers on the road certainly bore this out. Export is phosphate and minerals of the Dead Sea.

Weather. Over the mountain one can oftentimes see snow! When it's still warm in Aqaba. We had plenty of patches of snow roadside.

Goat herders were in abundance; all in black head to toe and some with donkeys alongside. Camels to the side and even in center median. Goats on the highway. I mean ON! Hitchhikers. Broken cars. If condition of highways were the military need, Israel wins by far. But who are we to comment with all America's potholes.

Ottomans built route ways. The country or area was once called Trans Jordan and British owned. They didn't have all these check points? It turns out some of the checkpoints had to do with declaring your purchases. Some cities might be tax-free yet it is not unlimited.

Jordan is 6 1/2 million population. More than 3/4 of their land is desert. Most of the population is in the north where the capital of Amman has 1/3 of the population. They are 95 percent Muslim. All learn and use English. Dinar is currency and 1 dinar is \$1.50 with always same exchange rate. Negotiate prices everywhere and be clear if it's Dinar or Dollars. I can't help but think there is a lot of trickery going on. Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Israel borders. More?

We were driving through Wadi Ram. Moon Valley. Used in movies as a moonscape. Wadi means Valley and they sure have a lot of them with these tall peaks of mountains.

Snow! At the requisite tourist shop, we had quite a view and a strong wind that was really cold. There were bits of snow piles at 1550 meters. I was afraid we were not going to be allowed to leave until we bought a sufficient amount of merchandise. I thought the shopkeepers were creepy and both they and the shop smelled.

Mount Aaron, named after Moses brother, highest mountain with a shrine on top was in good view. On Kings Highway connected the three kingdoms. Wow, Mountains that would give competition to any of our parks. Expansive when we were on hilltops, you could see for miles of continuous high peaked mountains

Wonders of the World - either first or second after the Great Wall. UNESCO. Kings Tomb at Petra rated with the Pyramids. **It better be worth it.** It was such a long drive all I could think was "this better be worth it."

Cost. This is tacky but it is part of the story. It was \$269 for the tour then \$125 Jordanian visa and border tax so yes, \$394 is horrible overpriced but only way known to do day trip. There were a number of us on the tour booked through different tour companies and we had all been consolidated into Echo tours and had paid same price. There might be a loophole however in that supposedly there's no visa or border tax if you stay overnight. (Marriott and crown plaza nearby.) I would guess that Petra is well worth more than a day trip. In fact a day trip is pretty tiring. We didn't get a lunch until 3:30 PM and it was a buffet of Jordanian food. <http://science.nationalgeographic.com/science/archaeology/lost-city-petra/> We didn't get back until around 8 PM.

Pictures:

This is tough because I took so many pictures and it was dramatically unique and beautiful. So I will give you a link if you want to see more.

The requisite cat at the Jordanian border.

Some offerings at the first required Jordanian tourist shop. They advertised medicine herbs.

A big seller were headscarves. Plenty of tourist walked out with Yasser Arafat red and white checkered tablecloth looking headgear.

A representative hilltop city.

In the town bordering Petra.

For \$40 US you could ride the carriage one way. Or a horse ride came with your entry ticket. Or there were donkeys.

This portion of this city were tombs. Remember this is over 2000 years ago.

The instrument was historical. The music was haunting. I recorded some of it.

The first glance of the treasury. It was an "oh wow" moment. It's called the treasury but it is really a tomb and only a few meters deep.

The way the camels folded up and their hinge of two knees on the back was a surprise to me.

Vendors were selling artsy bottles of Petra sand.

Too young local boys followed by mama who is on a cell phone.

I wonder if the gal in red had to pay double for this ride. I felt sorry for the donkey.

These are the royal tombs that are said to rival the Egyptian pyramids. It took a lot of steps to get up to them and maybe only three or four of us did it.

The stone ceiling was multicolored Rock and well worth

The stones just go on and on. If we had more time, with a two hour hike one can get to the village. What we were seeing were the caves and tombs for burial.

Facts about Petra

"PETRA IN NEW SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD" - Petra means "rock" in Greek, and this city lies in a small desert valley completely surrounded by towering sandstone cliffs.

The spectacular archaeological ruins in the Middle East, Petra (Jordan) represents an ancient Arab culture and architecture that flourished more than 2,000 years ago (around 6th century BC). The city has managed to 'wow' the world with its elaborate stone-cut architecture as well as water conduit system.

1. The city is called 'Rose city' for the rose-red colored sandstone hills. The red-tinged mountains surrounding Petra on its three sides make it look like a fortress.
2. Petra for almost five centuries was hidden to the outside world, until its rediscovery by a Swiss explorer named 'Johann Ludwig Burckhardt' in 1812. It is therefore called the 'Lost City'.
3. Among the Petra's amazing architecture, The Treasury is the most popular. It is estimated to be over 2,000 years old. In reality, the Treasury is nothing more than a facade with a relatively small hall once used as a royal tomb.
4. Petra-influenced Movies: If you are an Indiana Jones fan, you may feel that you are enacting a scene out of the film Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade while entering through the Siq and peeking through the Al Khazneh. Other movies featuring scenes influenced by the breathtaking sites in Petra include Transformers: Revenge of the Fallen, Arabian Nights, and Mortal Kombat Annihilation.
5. Petra is more popular for its 800 individual monuments that includes buildings, tombs, baths, funerary halls, temples, arched gateways, and colonnaded streets, that were mostly carved from the kaleidoscopic sandstone.
6. Among the most popular monuments in Petra is the 2,100-pound sandstone bust of Dushara, Petra's primary male deity.
7. Petra shelters around 800 carved tombs.
8. The city was first established in 312 BC; making it one of the oldest metropolises in the world.
9. The only access to Petra is through a 300 meter high canyon. Something like this
10. The Bedouin of the Arabian Desert have destroyed some of the most priceless carvings on the Treasury's walls. They used the carvings as target during their shooting practice.
11. Salt blown in from the Dead Sea is crystallizing the pores of the sandstone and slowly weakening the beautiful structures.

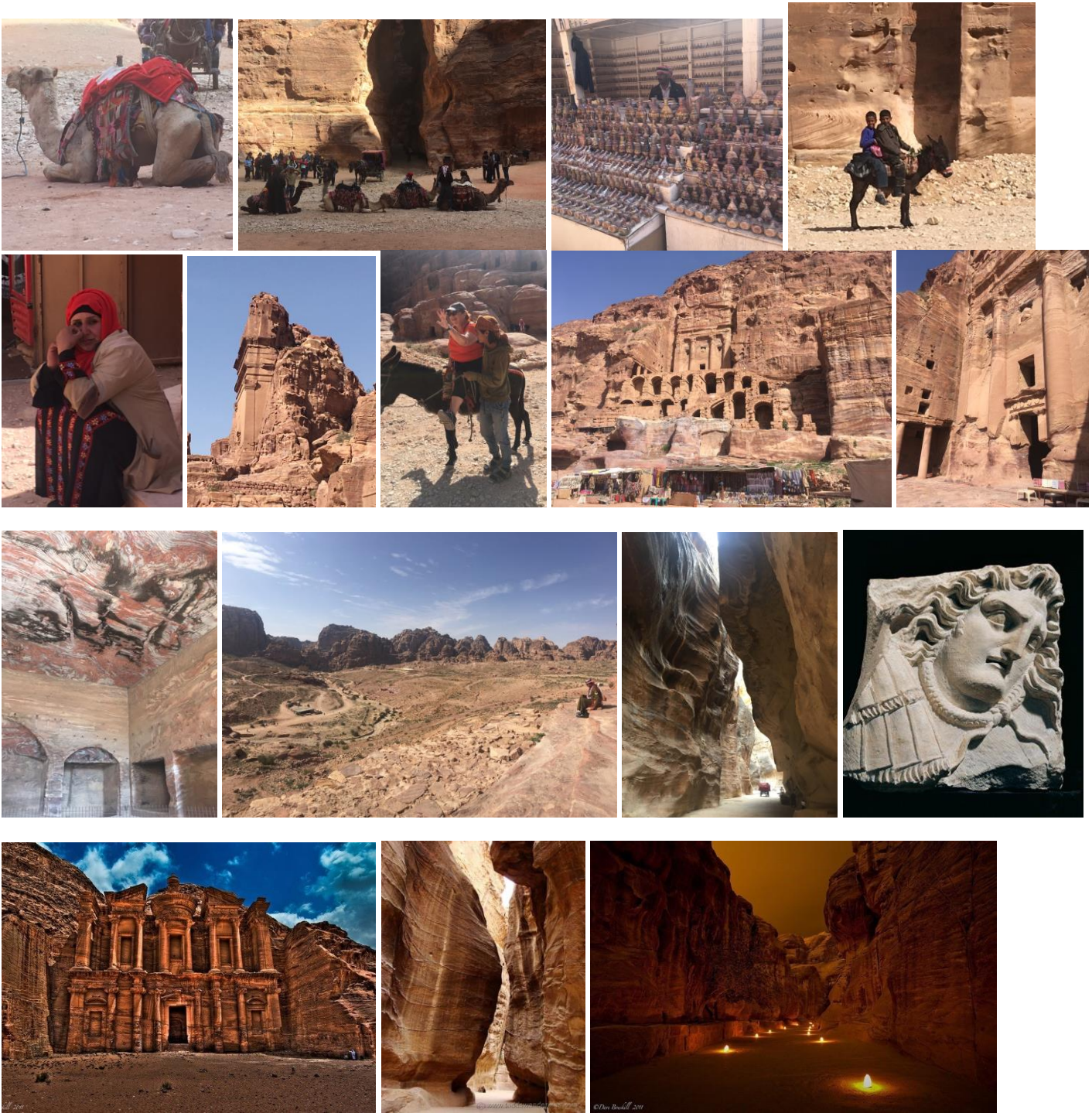
12. Petra is thought to have been built during the Byzantine Era of the 5th and 6th AD when Petra became an important Christian center.

13. Petra is one of the evidence to Mankind that Middle East was after all the most influential region of the world in the Middle Ages.

"Petra is a hidden gem that will take you through the history of Middle East like no other place. It easily rivals Jerusalem as a caretaker city of the Middle East World."

National Geographic: <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/travel/world-heritage/petra-jordan/>





Day 16 - last tour day on way to Tel Aviv

Didn't start perfectly: After picking up at three hotels someone remembered they left their coat behind. Then the fourth hotel had the road closed for paving necessitating a circuitous route and long walk to get their luggage. I suspect it cost about 45 minutes delay but we were less grumpy because the bus has Wi-Fi. And our guide told more stories.

Breakfast is good but is odd. In Eilat there is rich offerings of all kinds of vegetables and stuffed pastries full of spinach or vegetables, eggs, or potato-based Filo dough, lots of olives and pickles, hummus, goat cheeses, but nary a bit of cereal or fruit. I didn't go hungry but I sure paced the buffet line hunting for something familiar.

Off we go. Hussian is our driver. His wife Sarah who is a kindergarten teacher came along and our guide suggested she'd be helpful to keep us in line. We have Darone back as our guide.

What the tour company says we are doing today: Day 14 of Tour - Negev Desert. Travel from Eilat via Mitzpe Ramon. Atop the crater's northern rim enjoy a splendid view of Makhtesh Ramon, a unique geological formation found only in

Israel. Proceed to Kibbutz Sde Boker to see Ben Gurion grave overlooking the vast Zin Valley. On for a short camel ride and a visit an authentic Bedouin tent to enjoy local hospitality and a light lunch. Continue to Kibbutz Hatzetim and visit Israel's Air Force Museum to view planes & equipment and to hear the story of this world known & brave fighting force. Drive back to Tel-Aviv.

What we really did:

Eilat. More historical stories while driving around including not only Eilat liberation story but also how Eilat was nothing but one little adobe house when they took over late 1940s. Two Israeli battalions were in competition to take over (they refer to it as a liberation) Eilat. The first one in failed to bring a flag so they made one out of a bedsheet and ink and hoisted it on top of this one lone small adobe house on the seaside. Now Eilat is a large town, with many modern buildings, a new airport being built, and a tax-free shopping zone. The speed of the Israelis plus the beauty and perfection, is amazing. Meanwhile their neighboring countries are left in the dust. And dark.

Game preserve. Remember the biblical animal farm? I still didn't see any of the unique animals. But others did.

Gelato at the COW-stop is a famous gelato roadside stop and amusement park. There were a full-size replica some cows all over for people to take their pictures. Ugh. The gelato is only sold here. It was our second time here (called a pressure-relief stop) and the first time there were rows of buses and this time it was vacant. No one had coffee; we were warned there were no toilets or even bushes for the next two hours. Someone reminded us: Coffee in; Coffee out. Just the thought of having no stops made my tummy rumble.

Mountains in the Negev desert are over 4,000 feet above sea level and though very desert looking, they are majestic. Where the Israelis have settlements, their famous drip irrigation system has created green oasis. (The kibbutz that invented drip irrigation has become quite wealthy since they were wise enough to patent it.)

Green vs barren lands: The Bedouin tribes were taught to work the land but they couldn't be convinced to settle down. That's one reason Israeli lands were greened but in Jordan is not; our lookout mountain made it clear who settled where.

Phallic Tower? We went by a Kibbutz known for where all were early vegans. And known for their creative air condition method. There is a huge sculpture or tower that is humorously called a phallic symbol. It has some air conditioning purpose that I was finally able to research. Siri was confused when I asked for the Kibbutz with the phallic tower. No Siri, it is not a caboose either. <http://greenbuildingelements.com/2013/11/25/coolest-passive-cooling-tower-youll-ever-see/>

There was a large Army tank training base. It look like a small town. Water in the desert is obviously a problem and more so here because water is a mile deep. It is pumped but comes up hot, so we saw fountains where it's sprayed to cool it. This is all in one of the largest knows Wadi. Flash floods have 100x more power here.

Roads and highways. If we had these roads in the middle of the desert with four thousand feet of elevation, we would call it a marvel. A near impossible feat. The Israelis call it a military necessity.

Makhtesh Ramon - means crater. Israel's most dramatic natural phenomenon, this crater is 25 x 5 miles wide with the depth of the 1600 feet. It was a natural occurring Valley versus a volcanic action crater. It would be the third crater I saw. Up on top it was a dramatic overview. We were born about selfies: Someone died recently taking a selfie from our lookout. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Makhtesh_Ramon

Our overview showed a luxury hotel named Genesis. Fancy, pricey and with infinity pools. From the web: The hotel is located amid a breathtakingly beautiful primeval landscape, near the ancient Spice Route, on the edge of the towering cliffs that slope down into the Ramon Crater – an extraordinary natural phenomenon unparalleled in the world. The hotel's unique location (800m above sea level) guarantees cool, comfortable weather all year round – guests are urged to bring warm clothing, even during the summer.

Ben Gurion memorial and grave with a University campus for environmental studies. It was a lush oasis created out of empty desert. A short bus ride away was the Kibbutz where Gurion lived much of his life. He refused living in luxury but was finally convinced to take a slightly larger Kibbutz Dwelling since he entertained world leaders. It was smaller than cracker box size even after the enlargement. It would seem that Ben Gurion was the founder of Israel like George Washington is for the US. It was the second time we saw a film about him, the earlier one being in Tel Aviv at Independence Hall. He was not much more than 5 feet tall but a powerhouse. When he died his directions were to have no gun-salute or memorial. He didn't need one: His memory lives on.

Military youth camp is within the complex and we learned that the Birth Right trios get time with the military experience. Its purpose is to give kids an idea what it will be like in the military.

Full-moon moonlight hikes take place in this desert surrounding. Apparently the whitish rocks and desert sand glow and no flashlights are needed.

Bedouin Tent Camp for lunch and camel ride. Noted that it is touristy and not authentic; there's running water and electricity so it can't be real Bedouin living. It's so touristy they have overnight facilities. I cringe at what those might be.

60 percent of Bedouin live in houses. None travel tent to tent camp anymore. We learned how tents were open only to the east for sunrise and how visitors had to always Approach from the west, make a little grunting noise to announce their presence, so all the women would be moved over to a private area of the tent before the visitors were allowed in. The Hospitality was a complex ritual; coffee service sounds like a performance. It also gives messages. If you are given a full cup of coffee it suggests that you partake and leave. If you are given just a small cup, it means you are welcome to stay a few days. If you stay more than a few days you are expected to assist with the work. The Bedouin Code is unbreakable. An insult is forever and serious revenges are dealt.

Camel ride was part of the itinerary. They only put us on female camels since they are easy to control. Smile.

I was questioned - Did I ride the camels. In Petra, a horse ride was part of the itinerary but I wanted to walk. I did my walk in less time than the horses took. It is not only that I like to walk and see things on my own time, but I was recognizing that just one fall and my life could change dramatically. For the camel ride we were told that anyone with back issues should not attempt the ride. We were also told how to lean back as the camel rose so that we wouldn't fall off. All of which reminded me to stay off.

Lunch in the Bedouin camp was OK but nothing to write home about. Like the Armenian bunches of little bowls, it was Yogurts, goat cheese, humus, lots of fresh vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumber, red peppers, plus green olives, all to be eaten in these thin flat breads that were like a giant grilled crêpe. All of us looked at the filthy looking mats on the floor and decided to take the table and chairs. The Turkish coffee is well worth testing; it is thick and the cardamom makes it unique.

Turkish coffee - In hotels we are given an American type instant coffee or also a larger package of a Turkish instant coffee. Mix it, let it settle, and you have about an inch of sludge in the bottom that won't even pour out. Obviously sugar must be added at first before the settling.

Passed new city being built that will be a military training complex and bring families. Just another amazing city cropping up in the desert.

Only in this part of the world. Sign on side of road: BEWARE OF CAMELS NEAR THE ROAD.

Beersheba - 7th largest city and capital of Negev Desert. A perfect location as a main intersection and with easy access to well water. Now 300,000 population from few hundred in early 1900s. It is famous for having Abraham's Well from The Bible. An olive tree from that period exists, with some supporting help, just outside the well. I'm always so impressed with their honoring and treasuring trees. Trees cannot be cut down. Even date palm trees when they get too tall for picking, they are replanted in gardens.

Air Force Museum. Guided by one of the many sexy young Air force gals who wore the tightest white khakis I can remember. And most of them had a huge head of gorgeous hair halfway down their back. The lineup of men wanting their pictures taken with these gals was sweet. A tour, stories of amazing Israeli Air Force feats, and a Film shown in the 707 that was used to rescue hijacking victims.

Since all of the aircraft were from at least 20 years ago, it was a tour down memory lane for me too. There were aircraft that I grew up with such as the little piper cub. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Israeli_Air_Force_Museum

To the hotel for one last night. On to "home" in Tel Aviv and the hotel where I started. "Home" didn't look promising at first because their computers and Internet were down but it all turned out fine. I got a good rest and will be ready for the long flight home.

Miscellaneous tidbits:

Via an Iron Dome site which was noted to have been created with American money. ISIS has been along their border and only two weeks ago they'd launched a missile that was intercepted. Recently a missile mistakenly hit the Jordan town of Aqaba where we visited yesterday and killed a few civilians.

Co-ed military is almost complete; looking to have "all women" tank patrols. Women are already in combat and submarines.

Date palm - more info on these amazing desert growers and heavy producers. Can you imagine that there could be up to four pickings a year and the tree could produce 300 pounds of dates? https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Date_palm
Sometimes we see these little bags at the base of the trunk that are growing miniature trees. That is the propagation method and I saw three per trunk.

Stockings like knee highs or panty hose seem non-existent. I remember once in Italy hunting for socks and finally finding that there are specialty stores for socks. I never could find one in Eilat.

Trees are honored. Highway course was changed - yes, actually moved - so as to save a tree.

Why is Hebrew writing from the right to left? Think of how a right-hand man would chisel into stone and they would have to go toward the left. Hebrew is an ancient language. It also looks like design artwork.

Pictures:

A few of the breakfast items as examples.

The luxury hotel overlooking the crater and a panorama picture of what they might view from their private infinity pools.

At Ben Gurion gravesite and a picture of him at his desk.

You've got to feel sorry for the camels. And look at their spindly little legs.

Not one of us wanted to sit on these floor cushions. But the cat did as he posed in the ready waiting to jump up on the table to finish our lunch.

Females in the Air Force. And they all looked like models.

A familiar piper cub like from my father's little airport when I was a kid.

The air conditioning tower that is a big joke as described above.

Now this really is THE END. I'm going home Wednesday evening. And yes, even those of us who travel as our "business" get tired of traveling.





Reply comments re Petra:

Holy cow (and camels) Diana! This is certainly one of your most Fantastic Journeys! Yes, from MY armchair travel perspective, it was worth it for YOU to go. What an amazing trip and report. A few descriptive adjectives that come to mind - harrowing, impressive, frightening, funny, exhausting, sad, and awe-inspiring. YOU are our own personal INDIANA JONES. Thank you from the folks back home.

Diana - these are some of your best photos yet. The rock formations are formidable and beautiful. The colors are spectacular. I too was fascinated by the way the camels sit down. Their back end hind legs look almost like a human! Did you get to ride one? Honestly, even though it was an expensive tour and there were some inconveniences, I'm sure it was worth it. I loved the photos!

BIG TIME THE END.

Or is it? Left undone:

Graffiti tour – said to be really fun and interesting; friends used Tai for a guide but Zim is good too. <http://grafitiyul.co.il/?lang=en>. I'd expected to have free days but later realized that my free days were Shabbat when much did NOT happen.

10 fabulous food tours in Israel - We did a fun food tasting tour of the Levinsky market. There are many others though including one at the Saron market which I hear is really good. I heard about a great shopping and cooking thing in either Tel Aviv or Jerusalem but I'd have to get the info on it. It's expensive.

<http://www.israel21c.org/10-fabulous-food-tours-in-israel/>

Promised by the tour agency but not done:

- Naval Museum of the Illegal Immigration during British mandate time.
- Acre Old Harbor and local Arab Bazaar. Northern Rosh Hanikra. (All of which I did, but expected to do again.)
- Jeep tour to foot of the Golan Heights.
- Tel Facher walk, a former Syrian Army camp, and walk to Banias Springs.
- Roaring Lion Monument at Tel Hai.
- Beit Shean had been tops on my list but we only got the amphitheater.
- Gan Hashlosha at foot of the Gilboa Mountains and its water springs.
- Kattel Tunnels guided tour. Also tops on my list.
- King David Tower Museum.
- A Bar-Mitzvah ceremony at the Kottel complex.
- Israel Museum (I did years ago, but the tour had promised more time there. We saw the 1:50 replica of Jerusalem and the Dead Sea Scrolls only.)

Itinerary

Time difference: 7 hours later

Mon Feb 13 – Day 1

4:05pm Depart Newark EWR via UA#84

Tue Feb 14 – Day 2

9:25am Arrive Tel Aviv TLV Ben Gurion Airport

Pick up by tour company confirmed. BGN Airport representative will meet you at the arrival hall (as per your landing details) & will lead you to the car for transfer to Tel Aviv.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel - Tel Aviv – 5 nights with 1st on own (booked by tour company)
Charles Clore Park, Tel Aviv 68012 Tel Reservations: +972-3-7408966
Hotel Tel: +972-3-5190190 Email: panoramatelaviv@danhotels.com
www.DanHotels.com

Day on own – open

Wed Feb 15 – Day 3 and Day 1 of tour

Scheduled arrival for WWW.TOURPLANISRAEL.COM - Broad Israel & Petra Tour
15 Days | 14 Nights | 10 + 1 Guided Touring Days

Rest of group: Wednesday Arrival Pick up from Ben Gurion Airport. BGN Airport representative will meet you at the arrival hall (as per your landing details) & will lead you to the car for transfer to Tel Aviv.

Day on own – open

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel - Tel Aviv – 5 nights total - 1st of 4 nights with tour

<http://www.danhotels.com/TelAvivHotels/DanPanoramaTelAvivHotel/> - *The Dan Panorama Hotel offers easy access to everywhere you want to be. Across the street is the Mediterranean sea and within minutes you find yourself on an inviting sandy beach with warm and clear waters. For a truly Mediterranean experience, explore the Carmel market - one of the largest open markets in Israel that has a wide variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables as well as meats, fish and baked goods. Also nearby is the Neve Tzedek neighborhood which was the first Jewish neighborhood built outside of the walls of Jaffa. Neve Tzedek has a village feel to it, filled with small alleyways and boutique stores to peruse. A leisurely stroll along the waterfront promenade to the north will lead you to the Tel-Aviv Port. The Port is the city's newest entrainment hub and has outstanding restaurants, shops and nightclubs. The promenade to the south will take you to Jaffa which is famous for its association with the biblical stories of Jonah, Solomon, and Saint Peter as well as the mythological story of Andromeda and Perseus. Its ancient port has been in use since the Bronze Age and you can still watch the fishermen going out to sea.*

Thu Feb 16 – Day 4 and Day 2 of tour - Modern Israel Heritage day

8:00am Pick up at hotel

The day begins with a guided visit at the Independence Hall in Tel Aviv, located on the picturesque Rothschild Boulevard. It is the site where Israel's declaration of independence took place. Next, drive to Latrun, on the way to Jerusalem; visit Yad-Lashirion known as the Armored Corps Memorial Site and Museum. The memorial, set in a Mandate era fortress; it is one of the most diverse tank museums in the world and was the initiative of the Israeli Armored Forces Veterans. Proceed, by a very short ride, to tour the Mini Israel Park, exhibiting miniature models of the most important sites and buildings in the country.

Travel back west to Rehovot and visit the Ayalon Institute, once a top secret underground bullets factory for the Hagana, one of the Jewish underground movements that fought for an independent Israel. Hear the amazing story of a dedicated group of young men & women indicating the resourcefulness in the creation of the State of Israel.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel - Tel-Aviv – 2nd of 4 nights with tour

Fri Feb 17 – Day 5 and Day 3 of tour - In & around Tel Aviv

Visit the Diaspora Museum & drive by the main streets of Tel Aviv, the business and entertainment center of Israel. Stop at Rabin's Square, place of assassination of Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin.

Continue to Old Jaffa, an 8000 year old port city. Tour the ancient ruins and walk along the restored artist's quarter. Walk the streets of Neve Tzedek, the first neighborhood of Tel Aviv, built in 1909. Proceed to Nahalat Benyamin, the pedestrian street with its musicians, handmade jewelry and artifacts. Next, stop at Sheinkin, the lively and colorful street especially known for its unique shops, café life and youthful ambiance.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel in Tel-Aviv – 3rd of 4 nights with tour

Sat Feb 18 – Day 6 and Day 4 of tour - At leisure

Day at leisure in Tel Aviv – no transport available on Saturdays.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel Tel-Aviv – 4th of 4 nights with tour

Sun Feb 19 – Day 7 and Day 5 of tour - Traveling north along the Mediterranean Coast

Travel from Tel Aviv north, via the coastal highway, to tour Caesarea National Park. Walk the archaeological park for an in-depth guided tour of some of the best preserved Roman and Crusader ruins, including the vast Roman hippodrome, the renovated amphitheater and more.

Proceed along the coast to Haifa and enjoy a panoramic view of Haifa Bay atop Mount Carmel. Visit “Af Al Pi Chen”, the Naval Museum of the illegal immigration to Israel at the British mandate time. Drive to Acre to walk along the Old Harbor and local Arab Bazaar. Travel to Israel's northernmost point at Rosh Hanikra. Descend by cable car to tour the limestone sea grottoes.

Hotel Kibbutz Lavi Hotel (Hodf) in Galilee - Kibbutz Hotel – 1st of 2 nights
D.N. Lower Galilee, 1526700 Tele: 073-7598821,

<http://hotel.lavi.co.il/?lang=en> - *When you want a vacation with no worries or compromises regarding kashruth... If you belong to the religious or the traditional community, at some time you've probably run into a problem concerning kashruth or Sabbath observance when planning a vacation. The concerns most likely related to such matters as the level of kashruth and the location – not close enough to a synagogue. At times, a vacation tailored to the religious community in a hotel with satisfactory kashruth, and with no need to compromise regarding Shabbat observance, may have led you to compromise in other areas, such as the standard of the accommodations. The Kibbutz Lavi Hotel was established in order to offer you a fulfilling experience with no compromises. The hotel is located in Kibbutz Lavi, an area of lush vegetation surrounded by green fields. In Lavi guests and visitors can enjoy the magnificent views of the region of the Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights. At our hotel hospitality is our stock-in-trade, and we give special attention to the needs of the religious community. In every aspect of the Hotel and its facilities – including the lobby, the kitchen, the restaurant, the pool – a high level of kashruth and religious observance is strictly maintained.*

Mon Feb 20 – Day 8 and Day 6 of Tour - In the Galilee & Golan Heights

Drive to Safed, Known in Hebrew as Tzefat - one the four Jewish Holy Cities & a world know Kabbalah Center. Visit the Ari Hakadosh Synagogue, where the "Shulchan Aruch" was compiled by Joseph Karo, stroll through the local Artists' Quarter and tour the Visitors Center.

Proceed with a fun & exciting Jeep tour to the foot of the Golan Heights. Ascend the Golan, by car, and stop at an observation point over the Syrian city of Kuneitra. On for a short walk at Tel Facher, a former Syrian army camp. Proceed for another short walk at the Banias Springs. Visit Tel Hai and see the "Roaring Lion" monument telling the heroic battle story of Josef Trumpeldor and his comrades in 1920.

Meet with a Kibbutz member and learn about their unique lifestyle.

Hotel Kibbutz Lavi (Hod) Hotel in the Galilee - Kibbutz Hotel – 2nd of 2 nights

Tue Feb 21 – Day 9 and Day 7 of Tour - From the Galilee to Jerusalem

Short ride to Tiberias, an ancient & very present Israeli city located on the western shores of the Sea of Galilee. Visit Rambam's Tomb; Proceed to Beit Shean, also known as "scythopolis", the biggest archeological park in Israel with beautiful Roman and Byzantine era excavations.

Proceed to Beit Alpha to explore the magnificent mosaic floor of a synagogue dating to the Byzantine era. On to Gan Hashlosa, (the Sachne) located at the foot of the Gilboa Mountains, with an opportunity to enjoy its fresh & cool water springs.

Late afternoon, travel via the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem. Atop Mount Scopus, stop for a blessing as you enter the city.

Hotel Dan Panorama Jerusalem
39 Keren Hayesod St', Jerusalem 94188 Reservations Tel: +972-3-7408966
Hotel Tel: +972-2-569-5695 Email: panoramajlm@danhotels.com

The Dan Panorama Hotel Jerusalem with its dignified architecture and honey-colored Jerusalem stone exterior resonates with the spirit of this legendary city. One of Jerusalem's favorite hotels, the Dan Panorama Hotel, boasts an exceptional location that enables you to explore Jerusalem's multifaceted attractions simply by stepping outside. Across the road from the Dan Panorama Hotel Jerusalem is the splendid Bloomfield Garden that is one of the largest parks in Jerusalem and from which you overlook the city. At the end of the park is the famous Yemin Moshe neighborhood. The neighborhood was established in 1891 by Moses Montefiore and was the first Jewish district build outside the walls of Jerusalem. Towering high above the red roofed houses is the Montefiore Windmill which provided cheap flour to the residents and today is a museum that showcases Montefiore's vision.

Around the corner is the fabled King David Hotel, a destination in itself with magnificent public areas where politicians and headline-makers mingle. A scenic stroll along historic landmarks takes you down to the endlessly fascinating Old City that invites you to explore a medley of cultures, famous holy sites of the three monotheistic faiths and the more earthly attractions of vibrant multicolored open markets. The Old City is divided into four quarters- the Armenian, Christian, Jewish and Muslim. Since the history of Jerusalem is over 3000 years old, in the different quarters you will find captivating architectural remnants of past conquerors such as the Crusaders, Romans and Ottomans. In the Jewish Quarter, you can visit the Western Wall, considered one of the holiest places in the Jewish religion. The Muslim Quarter houses the Al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock that are sacred to the Muslim faith. In the Christian and Armenian Quarters are important landmarks and churches such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre that are holy to Christians of all denominations.

Wed Feb 22 – Day 10 and Day 8 of Tour - Jerusalem the Old City

Day begins with a tour of Mount Zion & a visit to King David Tomb. Walk into the Old City, along the Cardo, an ancient Roman Market Road. Proceed into the Jewish Quarter & visit the four Sephardic Synagogues restored after 1967 war.

Special feature of the day: Guided tour of the Kottel Tunnels.

Proceed to tour the Davidson Center and walk to the local Arab Bazaar. At Jaffa gate visit the David Tower Museum and explore Jerusalem's ancient remains beginning with the first temple period.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel in Jerusalem – 2nd of 5 nights

Thu Feb 23 – Day 11 and Day 9 of Tour - Jerusalem the New City

Start the day with a visit at the Kottel complex to see & enjoy the Bar-Mitzvah ceremonies as they take place every Monday & Thursday.

Continue to Mea Shearim and learn about the unique lifestyle of the ultra-orthodox Jewish communities.

Drive to Mount Hertzal, the Israeli Military Cemetery and visit Yad Vashem, Holocaust Memorial.

Proceed to tour Ammunition Hill, a former Jordanian army stronghold, conquered by the Israeli army in the Six Day War, and converted into a national memorial site and museum. Drive by the Knesset, Israel's Parliament and see the Menorah with its Biblical emblems.

Visit the Israel Museum, the Shrine of the Book, where the Dead Sea scrolls are housed, and tour the new Holyland Model – a miniature second temple replica of Jerusalem.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel in Jerusalem – 3rd of 5 nights

Fri Feb 24 – Day 12 and Day 10 of Tour - Qumran, Massada & Dead Sea

Drive via Edomim Road into the Judean Desert. Stop to visit Qumran, the site where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Continue to Massada, Tour the new visitors' center and ascend Massada by cable car for a tour of the archaeological site known as the fortress of King Herod and last stronghold of the Zealots. Descend by cable car & travel for the last part of the day for some fun & relaxation at one of the Dead Sea Hotels for lunch and Spa facilities.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel in Jerusalem – 4th of 5 nights

Sat Feb 25 – Day 13 and Day 11 of Tour - At leisure

Day at leisure in Jerusalem – no transportation available on Saturdays.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel in Jerusalem – 5th of 5 nights

Sun Feb 26 – Day 14 and Day 12 of Tour - Traveling to Eilat by the Red Sea

Travel south via the Negev Desert. Explore Timna Park, visit the ancient copper mines, King Solomon Pillars and marvel at the massive multi-colored rock formations.

Continue to Eilat, the southernmost Israeli city located on the shores of the Red Sea. In Eilat visit the Marine Park one of the largest Sea Aquariums in the world and its underwater observatory set in a coral reef.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel in Eilat – 1st of 2 nights

North Beach, Eilat Reservations Tel: +972-3-740-8966
Hotel Tel: +972-8-638-9999 Email: panoramaeilat@danhotels.com

<http://www.danhotels.com/EilatHotels/DanPanoramaEilatHotel/index.htm> - *The Dan Panorama Hotel Eilat has been created with our guests in mind. . Ideal for a vacation that blends sun and fun with Eilat's spectacular natural attractions, the Dan Panorama Eilat Hotel is splendidly located overlooking a tranquil marina where sailboats anchor. A short stroll takes you to Eilat's famous North Beach where you can perfect your tan, swim in the clear cool Red Sea, scuba dive, sail or indulge in any other water sport that takes your fancy. Another feature of the Dan Panorama Eilat Hotel is its proximity to many of Eilat's varied tourist activities that tempt you to be as active or as idle as you like. In addition to superb cuisine, other Dan Panorama Eilat attractions include an inviting outdoor swimming pool, service to satisfy your every whim, and the ongoing fun of a talented entertainment team.*

Mon Feb 27 – Day 15 and Day 13 of Tour – Booked the Optional Petra Tour
Stay at leisure in Eilat by the Red Sea, or join a day trip to Petra (Jordan)

6:45am Pick up from Eilat Hotel – verify time
Ask hotel for a breakfast box pre trip.

Transfer to Yitzhak Rabin Crossing (Arava Border). Assisted border crossing (our representative will be there as you go through passport control). Walk across to Jordan, meet with your Jordanian guide, passport control & travel to Petra (about 2 hours) via Aqaba.

In Petra tour begins at the gate of the Archaeological Park, walk the famous Al-Siq, a narrow gorge with a winding trail. (Optional short horseback ride, from the gate till the opening of the gorge). At the end of canyon, reveals itself the legendary Treasury Monument. Enter the stone carved monument then walk along the dry riverbed & explore sites found along its path: the Amphitheatre, Kings' Tombs, Roman Market Road & more. Hear the story of the Nabateans, who have established Petra as their capital on the "Spice Route".

Lunch break - lunch is served, buffet style, in one of Petra's hotels.

Afternoon, travel back to the border & time permitting, short tour of Aqaba. Border crossing & transfer back to Eilat, with an estimated return in Eilat ~18:30 pm.

Bring: Passport, cash of \$60 for Jordan visa fee and \$65 border taxes = \$125, comfortable walking shoes, hat, sun-screen lotion (Nov. to Mar. warm clothes) and plenty of patience for border crossing

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel in Eilat – 2nd of 2 nights

Tue Feb 28 – Day 16 and Day 14 of Tour - Negev Desert

Travel from Eilat via Mitzpe Ramon. Atop the crater's northern rim enjoy a splendid view of Makhtesh Ramon, a unique geological formation found only in Israel.

Proceed to Kibbutz Sde Boker to see Ben Gurion grave overlooking the vast Zin Valley. On for a short camel ride and a visit an authentic Bedouin tent to enjoy local hospitality and a light lunch.

Continue to Kibbutz Hatzerim and visit Israel's Air Force Museum to view planes & equipment and to hear the story of this world known & brave fighting force.

Drive back to Tel-Aviv.

Hotel Dan Panorama Hotel in Tel Aviv – 1 night only
Address and phone above

Wed Mar 1 – Day 17 and Day 15 of tour - Departure

11:00am Hotel check out and store luggage – day at leisure

7:40pm Transfer from hotel to airport included.

11:10pm Depart Tel Aviv TLV via UA#91

Thu Mar 2 – Day 18

4:35am Arrive Newark EWR

Contact of Tour Plan Israel Toll Free USA 1-800-490-5251 Tel + 972 8 631 6860 Mobile + 972 50 532 8070 E-mail info@tourplanisrael.com Tzukim St. 257/4 P.O.Box 14298 Eilat 88100 ISRAEL

Included in tour: Transfers, 14 nights (plus one night on own) in 4-star hotels, breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners at Kibbutz Lavi Hotel, 10 guided touring days, entry fees.

Per Debbie: Great fish is Yaffo. Sheinkin shop. Tel Aviv museum has shows. Opera House is world class. Safed known for the artists.

Check Rick Steves 56 minute talk on The Holy Land: Israelis

In 1982, Sen. Joe Biden confronted Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin threatening to cut off aid to Israel... Begin forcefully responded..... "Don't threaten us with cutting off your aid. It will not work. I am not a Jew with trembling knees. I am a proud Jew with 3,700 years of civilized history. Nobody came to our aid when we were dying in the gas chambers and ovens. Nobody came to our aid when we were striving to create our country. We paid for it. We fought for it. We died for it. We will stand by our principles. We will defend them. And, when necessary, we will die for them again, with or without your aid."

Walls of Shame: West Bank Separation Wall - Al Jazeera English

http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/general/2007/11/200852518465249175.html?utm_source=Al+Jazeera+English+Newsletter+%7C+Weekly&utm_campaign=e7ea6af4e3-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_03_05&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e427298a68-e7ea6af4e3-219913389

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http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2017/02/jim-crow-alive-israel-170226083918015.html?utm_source=Al+Jazeera+English+Newsletter+%7C+Weekly&utm_campaign=e7ea6af4e3-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2017_03_05&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_e427298a68-e7ea6af4e3-219913389