Israel, 16 days, October 20 – November 4 2020
ISRAEL

Journey deeper, beyond the Holy Land, for a look into the early history of this region on this memorable tour of Israel. The three major monotheistic religions – Christianity, Islam and Judaism – have significant ties to this part of the world and enduring examples of their presence await discovery. From palace complexes and ancient fortifications, to man-made catacombs and Roman ports – we delve deeply into the rich history woven into the fabric of this country. Over the millennia, Israel has felt the tread of conquerors and settlers: Canaanites, Israelites, Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Ottomans, and even Imperial Britons, all of whom have left their signature. Join us and discover the incredible archaeology of Jerusalem, uncover the tragedy of Masada, and visit Jericho, one of the oldest cities in the world.

Dates and prices
16 days
Oct 20 - Nov 04 | $8,200 $8,500 SAVE $300
(exc. international airfare from the US)
Single Supp: $2,250  Deposit: $1,250

Price includes
• Expert Scholar & Tour Manager
• Accommodation
• A/C coach
• Entries & tips
• Meals as per the itinerary
• Four lectures from our expert scholar
• $1,000 donation to the Oriental Institute

Tour highlights
• Explore an abundance of iconic ancient sites on this fascinating trip with one of the leading experts in prehistoric archaeology of the region
• Visit Jericho, one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world; excavated by the Oriental Institute
• Spend time in the heart of Jerusalem, where a wealth of history awaits from the Biblical Mount of Olives to Hezekiah’s Tunnel
• Learn more about the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran and view them at the Israel Museum
• Discover the UNESCO-listed fortress of Masada, one of the greatest archaeological sites in Israel

Added Bonus
If you book a place on this tour, it will include a $1,000 donation to the Oriental Institute. This donation will grant you a Breasted Society membership – their upper level package, which offers museum access along with special events strictly for members.

Ruins of Masada Fortress and the Dead Sea

Expert Scholar: Dr Yorke Rowan
Research Associate Professor at the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Yorke is a specialist in the Archaeology of the Southern Levant. He is trained as an anthropological archaeologist, with a PhD from the University of Texas at Austin. As Director of the Galilee Prehistory Project, he explores the Chalcolithic Period; and as Co-Director of the Eastern Badia Archaeological Project he is working on recording and excavating sites in the Black Desert of Jordan. His previous works cover the archaeology of religion and ritual as well as the Chalcolithic period. Dr Rowan is currently preparing a monograph on his work on the first phase of the Galilee Prehistory Project.
Day 1 | Arrive in Jerusalem
Today we arrive in the city of Jerusalem. After reaching our hotel, we enjoy a lecture by our tour leader, Yerke Rowan with a group dinner to follow. Dinner included.

Day 2 | Jerusalem
Our tour begins on the Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus, both of which boast spectacular views over Jerusalem. From here, we take a walk down to the Kidron Valley to view some of the finest standing monuments of the Second Temple period. Lastly, we visit the Herodian Quarter, the residence of the upper-class Jerusalemites, and the Cardo – the main thoroughfare of the Upper City.
Breakfast & lunch included.

Day 3 | Jerusalem
Today, we begin to explore the Old City’s historical layers at the City of David. On an alternative tour we explore the cultural wealth of the site and discover the role of archaeology in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in the life fabric of the village. We see how archaeological layers - from Jerusalem’s earliest existence and to this day – have come to light, and how they constitute a key focal point of political friction in East Jerusalem.
Breakfast & lunch included.

Day 4 | Jerusalem
A fascinating morning awaits as we devote a number of hours to an in-depth visit to the Israel Museum. Here, we can encounter the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are the oldest Biblical manuscripts known to man and were discovered in caves on the west bank of the River Jordan in the late 1940s. After, there is free time to explore the old city independently and, later, we visit the Western Wall at sunset.
Breakfast & dinner included.

Day 5 | Jerusalem
Today begins with a tour and lecture at the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research, the oldest American research center for ancient Near Eastern studies in the Middle East. Later, we visit the Rockefeller Museum of Archaeology, which houses finds from ancient Near Eastern studies in the Middle East. Later, we visit the Rockefeller Museum of Archaeology, which houses finds from ancient Near Eastern studies in the Middle East. Later, we visit the Rockefeller Museum of Archaeology, which houses finds from ancient Near Eastern studies in the Middle East.
Breakfast & dinner included.

Day 6 | Jerusalem
We drive to Jericho this morning and pay a visit to the Herodian Winter Palace complex. Here, we find evidence of luxury on a grand scale, with traces of swimming pools, bathhouses, orchards, and gardens as well as three palace buildings of increasing magnificence. We continue by cable car to the Monastery of the Mount of Temptation. Later, we visit the New Jerusalem of the valley, where the OI excavated, directed by Don Whitcomb. This is an important Islamic archaeological site and one of the most sophisticated Umayyad palaces in the region, with some elaborate mosaics and stucco carvings on display. It is here, in the bathhouse, that we can see the famous “Tree of Life” mosaic.
Breakfast & lunch included.

Day 7 | Jerusalem - Sodom
Traveling south from Jerusalem, we stop at Lachish, which was conquered by the Assyrians in 701 CE. The capture of Lachish was the subject of a magnificent series of wall reliefs for the palace at Nineveh, now housed in the British Museum. From here, we continue on to Tel Be’er Sheva, believed to be the Biblical town of Beersheba. Later, we can experience weightlessness in the Dead Sea.
All meals included.

Day 8 | Sodom
Today, we visit the UNESCO-listed fortress of Masada. Built by Herod as a sanctuary on the isolated cliffs of the Judean Desert, it was later occupied by the Zealots and others fleeing the Roman. After a full morning at this extensive site, we visit to the Qumran, which is believed to have been an Essene settlement whose library housed the legendary Dead Sea Scrolls.
All meals included.

Day 9 | Sodom - Tiberias
Our tour continues at the Roman ruins in Bet She’an, where excavations have revealed evidence of its role as an Egyptian provincial capital as early as the 14th to 12th centuries CE. The city flourished under the Pax Romana and continues to thrive as a result of its location as a junction between the Jews and Jordan valleys. We travel into the Jordan Valley, a fertile land “flowing with milk and honey” (Deuteronomy 31:20), and tour its excavations. A drive through the hills brings us to the site of Sepphoris, home to a mosaic locally known as the “Mona Lisa” of the area.
All meals included.

Day 10 | Tiberias
Today we visit the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Akko (Acre), a truly historical walled port city with continuous settlement from Phoenician times. During our time here in the Old City, we see evidence of Ottoman and Crusader occupation, and we also visit both the impressive Mosque of Al-Jazzar and Knights Hall. The history of the latter goes back to the Hellenistic Period, although the ruins that remain are mostly from that of the Crusader. Later, we will make our way to the UNESCO-listed Carmel Caves, which were first excavated in the 1920s. Artifacts that have been uncovered here include human burial remains, animal bones, and flint tools, and they tell stories about the evolution of early man in the area. We will also visit a winery, where we will learn about the wine-making process in Israel as well as the popularity of the final product itself.
All meals included.

Day 11 | Tiberias - Galilee
Our first stop this morning is Capernaum and Tabgha, where the multiplication of the loaves and fishes is said to have taken place. We continue around the Sea of Galilee to the Golan Archaeological Museum. Collections housed within this museum cover all historical periods. Here, we can pore over artifacts from Byzantine Christian settlements as well as finds discovered on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. From here, we continue to Tel Hazor and explore the site. Its surviving ramparts are considered to be among the best examples of their type in the region. Early work by Israeli archaeologist and military leader, Yigael Yadin, revealed 21 different strata of settlements going back to the Early Bronze Age. Famous as one of King Solomon’s military centers, it was finally destroyed by the Assyrians.
All meals included.

Day 12 | Galilee
This morning we make our way to Tel Dan, the most northerly Israelite city that was known in antiquity as Laish until it was captured by the tribe of Dan. Next, during our visit to Golan Heights, we will see Banias, an ancient site that developed around a spring once linked to the Greek god, Pan. Here, we also see the Crusader fortress of Qal’at Namrud (Nimrod Fortress). Located on a cliff above the Banias, it was built to help guard the road from Damascus to Tyre and Tiberias during the Crusader period.
All meals included.

Day 13 | Galilee - Haifa
Returning to Galilee, our first visit is to the Solomonic city of Megiddo, where we explore the remains of the ancient city. Next, we visit the remains of the ancient necropolis of Beit She’arim. This UNESCO-listed site is hewed into the limestone slopes of hills bordering the Vale of Jeor’eel – a series of man-made catabombs developed during the 2nd century CE. Later, we travel to Haifa.
All meals included.

Day 14 | Haifa - Tel Aviv
We begin our day at the Reuben and Edith Hecht Museum at Haifa University. This museum exhibits material from the “Land of Israel,” and includes an outstanding collection of Phoenician material.
Breakfast included.

Day 15 | Tel Aviv
This morning we explore the UNESCO-listed White City area of Tel Aviv, which houses the world’s largest collection of Bauhaus-style buildings. It got its name because the majority of the buildings here, which were constructed by German immigrants in the 1920s and 30s, are white in color. Our afternoon will be spent at leisure.
Breakfast & dinner included.

Day 16 | Depart Tel Aviv
This morning we depart for home or for our onward travels.
Breakfast included.

Activity Level
We stay in a selection of hotels, hand-picked by our experts, ensuring they are the best available:

- 6 nights in Jerusalem: 4* – David Intercontinental
- 1 night at the Dead Sea: 5* – Dan Carmel Hotels Haifa
- 2 nights in Tel Aviv: 5* – David Intercontinental
- 3 nights in Tiberius: 4* – Gai Beach
- 1 night at a hotel: 5* – King Solomon Hotel
- 1 night at a hotel: 5* – Kfar Blum Kibbutz

Tour Information
+1 (844) 368-7682 | www.archaeological-tours.com/isr