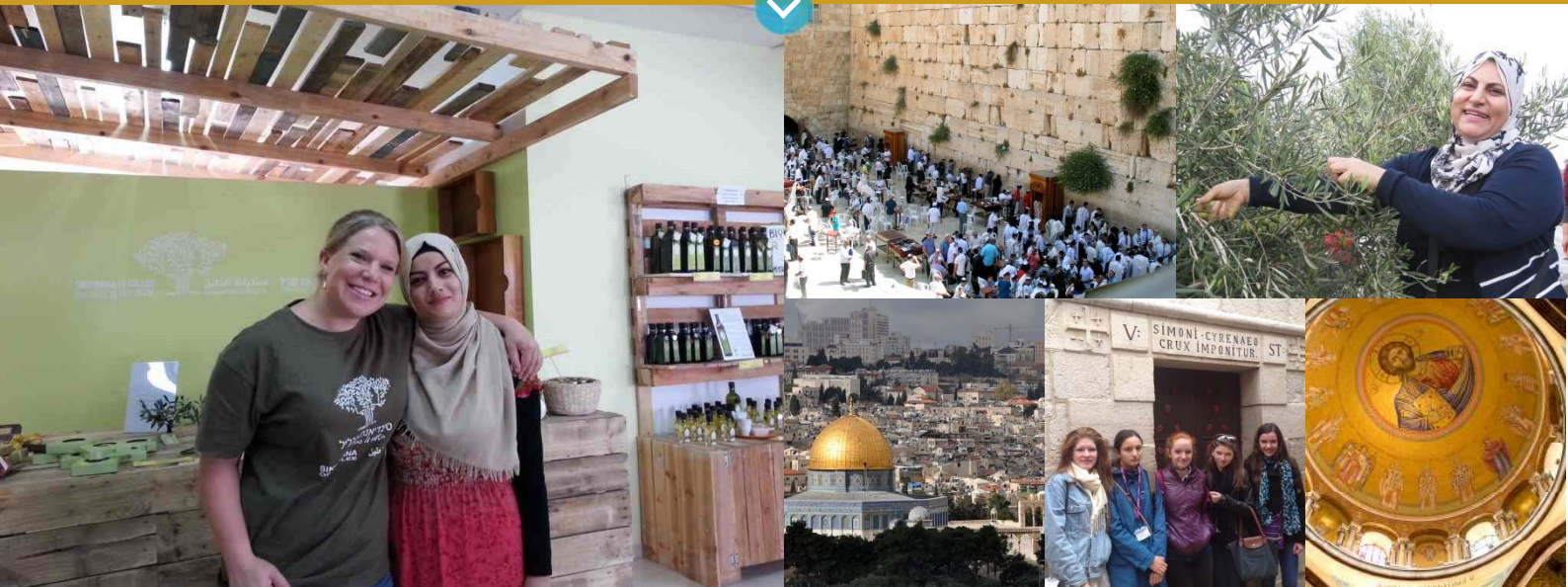


Israel & Palestine

Hummus and Humanity



Discover the wonders and issues of the Holy Land, with an emphasis on women's issues. With visits to the main sites of religious importance as well as talks and activities which will challenge your pre-conceptions of the region, this itinerary gives the chance to learn about some tough issues. We believe there is no other destination that comes close to the educational potential of the Holy Land – whether you're looking at the religious significance of Jerusalem to Judaism, Islam and Christianity, the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the stunning geographical landscapes in this small corner of the middle east. As a meeting place of cultures, empires and religions since the very dawn of history, the Holy Land delivers an intense educational experience. We love it. And we know you won't be disappointed.



Recommended Itinerary:

Culture shock rating: 

Day 1: Fly from London to Tel Aviv: Salaam Aleikum and Shalom! Welcome to Israel and Palestine! You will be met at the airport and transferred to your hotel where your guide will give you a trip briefing before taking you out for your first taste of authentic Israeli cuisine at the famous 'Dr. Shakshuka' restaurant.

Physical rating: 

Day 2: Visit Jaffa, Caesarea, Akko. Overnight Nazareth : This morning we have a walking tour of ancient Jaffa before heading north to the amazing Roman ruins of Caesarea and then finally Akko to visit the crusader castles and underground tunnels. Later we head to Nazareth for the night.

Day 3: Nazareth – Cana – Sindyanna Women's NGO - Tiberias: We visit the Basilica of the Annunciation and the Greek Orthodox Church. These churches mark two different sites heralded as the place where the Angel Gabriel informed the Virgin Mary that she was pregnant with Jesus. We then go to Cana of Galilee to visit the Wedding Church and also visit Sindyanna of Galilee (www.sindyanna.com) a not-for-profit female-led fairtrade "business for peace". This NGO sells Arab producers' olive oil, honey, almonds and soaps in the international market place and channels all profits back into education for Arab women, bridging cultural divides, encouraging sustainable agriculture and supporting organic farming. The organisation is run by both Arab and Israeli women who share a vision of peaceful co-existence. In the afternoon we drive to Tiberias visit Capernaum, Mount of Beatitudes and Tabgha – the Church of the Multiplication of the Fish, and take a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee.

Day 4: Mt Tabor, Jericho, Dead Sea, Mountain Camp.: We journey south to the Dead Sea, stopping at Mount Tabor first, then on to Jericho. We visit the Baptismal site on the way, before having a swim in the warm waters of the Dead Sea. At 400 metres below sea level it is one of the world's most saline bodies of water. Late afternoon, we head to the dramatic escarpment overlooking the Dead Sea and our night time camp high in the mountains. We can enjoy a camp fire and songs at this basic, yet spectacular, mountain retreat. The dawn from here is equally spectacular.

Day 5: Massada, Qumran, Jerusalem, Conflict resolution talk. This morning we visit Masada - an ancient palace and fort set on a 400m high desert plateau overlooking the Dead Sea. From the top it's possible to see the remains of the siege wall and eleven war camps built by the Romans when the castle was under siege during the Jewish revolt.

Next, we head to the site of Qumran by the Dead Sea, the location where a local Bedouin discovered the first Dead Sea Scrolls in 1947. Driving to Jerusalem, we stop at the Mount of Olives - providing a panoramic view over the city and Temple Mount, home of the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa Mosque. This evening, we have a speaker come to our hotel to give a talk about conflict resolution and the work being done in the region with regard to this.

Day 6 – Jerusalem Old City, Yad Vashem: We start the day with a visit to Gethsemane and then a short drive takes us to the old city where we begin a walking tour of the Old City starting from St. Stephen’s Gate. The first stop will be the Church of St. Anne along the Way of the Cross (The Via Dolorosa) ending at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The narrow streets of old Jerusalem are alive with locals and the history of this incredible city seems to ooze from every building. This afternoon, we visit the Holocaust Museum – Yad Vashem – a poignant reminder of humanity’s darkest moments. Depending on what day you are in Jerusalem, we may be able to add in a Synagogue visit and Sabbath meal.

Day 7: Western Wall, Dome of the Rock, Bethlehem, Refugee Camp visit: This morning, we leave early to try and avoid the queues and visit the Western Wall, the courtyard of the Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque. The holiest site for Jews and the third most important site for Muslims lie just a stone’s throw away from each other. Our guide will tell you the history and religious significance of each site and the current issues that both ‘sides’ feel. Later, we drive to Sabeel, the Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center to learn about their work regarding justice, peace and reconciliation. See: www.sabeel.org for more information. In the afternoon, we drive to Bethlehem where we visit the Church of the Nativity and the Shepherds’ Field in Beit Sahour. Whilst in Bethlehem, we can visit a refugee camp. The refugee camps around Bethlehem don’t, in any way, shape or form, relate to how you envisage a refugee camp to be. Instead, they are more reminiscent of an inner city neighbourhood or ghettos in a large eastern US city. A local guide will accompany us on this organised activity as we witness how everyday life goes on despite the run-down nature of the area. Butchers, vegetable stalls, dry goods shops, internet cafés all thrive in a bustling community.

Day 8: Nablus, Cooking School, Samaritans, fly UK: This morning we drive out of Jerusalem to the West Bank and have a visit to the city of Nablus. Here we enjoy a cooking class and culinary tour in the Kasbah of Nablus – the Old City. The cooking class and the tour will be given by women in Bait Al-Karama - <http://baitalkarama.org>, and is a chance to try your hand at creating some of the delicious dishes we've been sampling in recent days. The centre aspires to combine a culinary social enterprise with activities of art and culture. It’s run entirely by women. After lunch, drive up to Mount Jerazim to meet with the Samaritans and learn about their culture. The Samaritans are a Jewish minority – the population of which is around 800 people only. Late afternoon, we drive to Tel Aviv and check in at the airport in time for your evening flight back to the UK.

Important Information:

It is important to realise that the itinerary needs to be flexible. While every effort will be made to follow the above schedule, in the event of political problems, airline schedule changes, we will do our best to make your trip as enjoyable and hassle-free as possible, but it is important to EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED and be prepared to accept some slight changes. Relax and have faith in your guides.



DAYS FOR GIRLS This trip can include a session working alongside Days for Girls, a grass roots organisation aimed at giving every woman and girl access to proper feminine hygiene products and health advice. For more information look on our website: www.thestc.co.uk/travel/days-for-girls



The School
Travel Consultancy

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