PREPARING FOR YOUR

**HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE TOUR**

**MARCH 1 -10, 2021**

**“KNOW BEFORE YOU GO”**

**TRAVEL INSURANCE**

We are able to send insurance quotes from Travel Guard – IF REQUESTED -- as soon as applications are received. Immediate purchase is required for those who need coverage for a “pre-existing” condition or have interest in a ‘Cancel For Any Reason’ clause. Many prefer to wait until the time of final payment. Please just let us know what you prefer. Once the quote is sent, should you decide to purchase, it will be directly through Travel Guard (not from our agency) – and you may safely pay by credit card.

Please feel free to contact us if this information below does not address your concerns.
 **Travel insurance is highly recommended**. It’s essential that each individual protect their travel investment for the unexpected. Something like an unforeseen family emergency could necessitate a last minute cancellation, and a flight delay could cause you to miss a connection, forcing you to pay additional fees in order to catch up with the group. Lost, stolen or misplaced luggage can be both costly and stressful as you scramble to replace necessities while participating in a fast-paced itinerary.

 We generally recommend Travel Guard with cancellation coverage equal to the full cost of the tour. It is also good to have coverage in the event of a missed, delayed or cancelled flight.   Aside from that, you should check with your health insurance provider to determine if health coverage is warranted, as many providers do not cover overseas care (such as Medicare, for example).

**OUR REFUND POLICY**

PLEASE NOTE: **Travel insurance is highly recommended**.

**Gifts From Above** will issue a full refund of all deposits within a 30 day period of application. Due to supplier regulations, a $350 administrative fee will be deducted from all refunds requested after 30 days.

Upon receipt of second installment, we will purchase group airline seats. Airline seats are nonrefundable/ nontransferable and are not exchangeable. **Once group airline ticketing is completed, cancellations will not receive a refund of the deposit or second installment of total tour cost.**

**60 days prior to departure only a 25% refund of the third and final payment will apply.**

**Cancellations made between 59 and 40 days prior to travel will receive only a 10% refund of the third and final payment.**

**Cancellations made 39 days or less before travel date are ineligible for any refunds.**

– ANY REQUESTS FOR CANCELLATIONS MUST BE MADE **IN WRITING** TO GIFTS FROM ABOVE. THE POST MARK//DATE ON THE ENVELOPE (OR YOUR E-MAIL) WILL SERVE AS DATE OF OFFICIAL NOTICE OF INTENT TO CANCEL.

**Please mail all cancellation requests to: ROBERTA KLEIN**

**GIFTS FROM ABOVE**

3130 MEMORIAL HWY, SUITE 102

DALLAS, PA 18612

E-MAIL : ARK2@EPIX.NET

**BAGGAGE**

 Each person in our group is limited to one checked suitcase (maximum 50 lbs.) and one small carry-on due to limited baggage area on buses. For some airlines and taxi/coach transfers, extra luggage may be subject to an extra charge due on the spot.

You are responsible for complying with the airline regulations concerning their baggage allowances and with the airline restrictions on the size, weight and contents of your check-in and carry-on bags. Check with the carrier for luggage guidelines. Neither Gifts From Above or our tour supplier is responsible for loss or damage of luggage or personal belongings. A protection plan is strongly recommended to cover loss or damage of your luggage.

At the time of booking we will update all travelers on baggage regulations. Typically, the following regulations apply: **LUGGAGE ALLOWANCE**-

--- 1 CHECKED BAG ---  (GENERALLY the max weight 45 – 50 LBS)

    --- 2 CARRY-ON  (usually one rolling bag , max size: 9" by 15.5" by 21.5" with

    A maximum weight of 22 LBS) and one personal item (we suggest a tote or backpack)

**FLIGHTS, TRANSFERS, AND AIRLINE SEAT ASSIGNMENTS**

**FLIGHTS FROM ORD to ISRAEL ON UNITED.**

FLIGHT TIMES/DURATION ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN GREEN

1 UA 140K 01MAR M ORDTLV SS9   645P  145P  02MAR T /DCUA /E 11 HOUR

 2 UA  85K 10MAR W TLVEWR\*SS9  1125A  435P /DCUA /E 12 HOUR

 3 UA1672K 10MAR W EWRORD\*SS9   625P  812P /DCUA /E 2 HOUR 47 MIN

**FOR THOSE WHO ELECTED TO USE MOTORCOACH TRANSFERS FOR CHICAGO AIRPORT**

**MEETING PLACE**: HIGHLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH

 1005 N 28th AVE

 WAUSAU

[please note: church parking lot may be used for drop off and pick up only – cars may not be left]

**GATHERING TIME AT CHURCH: MARCH 1 – 9:45 AM**

**DEPARTURE TIME: 10:15 AM**

OUR FLIGHTS WILL INCLUDE MEAL SERVICE [BUT I ALWAYS RECOMMEND EVERYONE PACK SOME SNACKS.]

EACH PERSON WILL BE ALLOWED **ONE FREE** CHECKED BAG [weight allowance: up to 50 pounds] and one carry-on [weight limit: 15 pounds; this can be a small suitcase, tote or backpack PLUS one personal item such as purse].

Please note: airport check-in WILL be required.

We negotiate special rates with major carriers and air arrangements are subject to certain restrictions on change/or cancellation, eligibility and seat assignments. Group seating policy is different for each airline. Gifts From Above are not in control of seat assignments. Seats are subject to airline discretion and change without notice. We do everything possible to confirm seats whenever available. Some airlines and/or fare types do not allow for pre-seating and require this be done at airport check-in only. Even when seats are originally pre-assigned, they are not guaranteed and can be modified by the airline due to the equipment changes. Bulkhead and exit row seats cannot be requested and pre-assign ahead of time. Bulkhead seats are given to the passengers traveling with infants and for those with disability. Exit row seats are held for assignment at airport check in only, as passengers wishing to sit in these seats must be physically capable of carrying out the associated responsibilities. The airline agent must see a passenger’s physical condition before assigning them an exit row seat. On most routes, these seats can be purchased for a fee on arrival at the airport.

MOST GROUP FLIGHTS REQUIRE CHECK-IN AT THE AIRPORT. SEAT REQUESTS WILL BE PROVIDED TO THE AIRLINES IN ADVANCE OF TRAVEL – BUT MAY NOT BE ASSIGNED UNTIL CHECK-IN. SHOULD A SPECIAL AIRLINE SEAT BE REQUIRED, WE WILL GIVE AN OPTION TO PURCHASE AN UPGRADE AT THE TIME OUR AIRLINE CARRIER IS SELECTED.

Gifts From Above are not responsible for flights that are occasionally overbooked, delayed or cancelled by the airlines. All fares and schedules are subject to change without notice.

**AIRPORT ARRIVAL** We recommend you arrive to the airport for your check-in at least 3 hours prior to your international flight departure time; and 2 hours prior for your domestic flights.

**TIME ZONE DIFFERENCE**  During our travel time (in March) there will be a 9 hour time difference between Chicago and Israel (for example: when it is noon in Chicago -- it is 9 PM in Jerusalem). If calling home, you will want to wait until after dinner – should you call home in the morning, you will be waking your loved ones from a sound sleep.

The time difference between New York and Israel will be 8 hours. (when it’s noon in NYC -- it is 8 PM in Jerusalem).

**OUR HOTELS IN ISRAEL**

**Regarding Internet access at the hotels**:

1. At Ramat Rachel – Use in the lobby is free, in the rooms the cost is approx. $10 per day. There are also a few computers in the lobby, they belong to a private company and the cost is approx. $6 for 20 min.).

2.  Nof Ginosar – Free in the lobby; there are a few computers in the hotels, the price is the same.

**ABOUT OUR HOTELS** – YOU CAN VISIT THEM ONLINE AT:

[www.ginosar.co.il](http://www.ginosar.co.il) Hotel Ginosar is a beautiful and secure kibbutz hotel on the Sea of Galilee. We will be staying there the first 4 nights.

[www.ramatrachel.co.il](http://www.ramatrachel.co.il) Also a kibbutz hotel. Located in a safe neighborhood, the Ramat Rachel boasts a breathtaking view of Bethlehem and an indoor sports center complex with an Olympic-sized swimming pool. We will be staying there 4 nights.

Middle Eastern hotels don’t stock washcloths in bathrooms. If you cannot do without them, you should pack some for your use. **Both of our hotels equip all rooms with hairdryers**.

**Laundry services** are available (at a cost) at both hotels. (Another option is to hand wash items and hang them over the tub to dry)

**Both hotels feature large buffet breakfasts and dinners in exceptionally lovely dining rooms. All meals served in the hotels are kosher.**

**VOLTAGE IN ISRAEL** – Our hotels will have 230 Voltage with 50 Hertz – what this means to tourists from the USA, is, if you intend to take any electrical devices, you will need both converters (or transformers for laptops, MP3 players and camcorders) as well as 2 round pin adaptors.

**PASSPORT ESSENTIALS**

For travel outside the United States, U.S. citizens must have valid passports, with an expiration date of at least six months after the scheduled return date. If possible, you should renew your passport approximately 9 months before it expires. Travelers are responsible for ensuring that they have the proper travel documents and MUST CHECK with the respective consulate(s) or visa agency to determine whether any visas are required. Any information provided pertains to US citizens only. Non-US citizens should check with the respective consulate of the country(s) to be visited for current entry requirements.

A valid Government-issued photo ID is required for all domestic flights within USA.

Regulations may also require you to have at least 2 blank pages when entering a country.

Airlines will not allow you to board, if these requirements are not met. If boarding is denied, you will be in full penalty for cost of the tour.

**NAMES MUST MATCH PASSPORT!** The name given on your APPLICATION must match the name on your passport, and in-turn, the name on your air ticket. Any variation between the spelling of your name on your air-ticket and passport will require re-ticketing, often at the cost of a completely new ticket. The airline will deny boarding if your airline ticket does not match your passport. **(And this is the reason Gifts From Above requires a photocopy of the photo page of your passport.)**

**VISA INFORMATION**

**American tourists do not require visas for travel to Israel.**

**ISRAEL’S WEATHER IN MARCH**

**Temperature -- Israel enjoys the typical Mediterranean Climate which is essentially composed of two seasons: wet and dry. March comes at the end of the wet/rainy season and usually** the weather significantly improves. This is a great time of the year to visit, as the damp and chilly days of winter are long gone, but it never becomes uncomfortably hot. **Temperatures generally r**ange between 50 degrees at night and 72 degrees during the day. While afternoons are often warm and sunny, temperatures can drop rapidly in the evenings so you should expect cooler weather towards the end of the day. Our day at the Dead Sea will be considerably warmer and almost certainly sunny and dry. Shorts and t-shirts will be appropriate that day.

**Rain --** During this time of the year, the Mediterranean receives its fair share of rainfall, with an average of 2 – 3 inches spread across a 10-day period. Pack an umbrella and some waterproof clothing to protect you if caught in a sudden downpour while sightseeing. **Average Sunshine Hours --** The arrival of spring means longer days, and we may expect an average of 10 hours of sunshine per day during this time of year.

**PACKING SUGGESTIONS**

**IMPORTANT** – make at least three photocopies of the picture/photo page of your passport. Keep them in different places in your carry-on luggage and, better still, give a copy to a traveling companion. Leave one in the hands of someone at home. This will facilitate replacement if your passport is lost or stolen.

\*\*\* **NEVER PACK YOUR PASSPORT IN THE LUGGAGE YOU WILL BE CHECKING** – INSTEAD --- CARRY IT ON YOU AT ALL TIMES (& consider wearing a money belt or carrier under your clothes).

\*\*\* **NEVER PACK MEDICATIONS IN THE LUGGAGE YOU WILL BE CHECKING** and when estimating your needs, **bring enough medication for four extra days.**

**\*\*\* DON’T LET BLISTERS RUIN YOUR EXPERIENCE – Pack only comfortable**, **well-broken in, walking shoes** – we will be walking up and down hills and steps. If you wear sandals, those with a closed toe and some support are your best bet for wandering around archaeological sites.

**REGARDING LIQUID ALLOWANCES AND AIRLINE REGULATIONS FOR CARRY-ON LUGGAGE:**

**All carry-on liquids must be 3.4 ounces or less** and must fit in a one quart, clear, plastic, zip-top plastic bag. Only one bag of liquids is allowed per person and must be presented at the time your carry-on luggage is screened.

**HOW TO MAKE AN OVERNIGHT FLIGHT MORE COMFORTABLE**

\*You are allowed 2 carry-on items, we suggest you take both. Ideally, you’ll want one “squishable” piece that fits under the seat in front of you – an **expandable, zippered, canvas tote** works well – you may want to consider packing the following in that bag: a **cervical pillow** (many stores sell inflatable models), **ear plugs, sleep eye-mask, socks/and or rubber soled slippers** (feet swell at high altitudes and restroom floors can get messy on overnight flights – stocking slippers are not the best choice). **Wear loose, comfortable clothing** (such as a jogging suit with an elastic waistband). You may want to consider wearing removable panti-liners in your underwear. Don’t forget a **sweater or jacket** (the temperature on overnight flights tends to be cool).

\***Chamomile tea bags** – have with dinner – it’ll help relax & lure you to sleep and/or a sleep aid containing **melatonin.**

\*Pack a small bag with travel sizes of **toothbrush and toothpaste, fresh wipes, tissues, and a change of socks**.

**\* Include all medications, cash and valuables in the bag you have under the seat in front of you – keep it with you at all times.**

**\* If you wear glasses, consider bringing a hard covered case to store them in while you sleep. A case with a hook that can fasten to your tote is handy as it will prevent loss of your glasses.**

**STORE YOUR ROLLING CARRY-ON IN THE OVERHEAD BIN–**

 **\*\*\***In that piece**, pack at least three complete changes of clothing** (this can be a lifesaver in the case of lost luggage).

**DON’T FORGET TO PACK –**

**Sunglasses and a pair of back-up glasses if you wear prescription lenses.**

**Sun-screen lotion**

**Packaged or travel-size stain remover**

**A rain jacket and an umbrella**

A **travel size Bible, a journal, notebook, and a supply of pens.**

Bring plenty of film for your camera, **estimate your needs -- then double them**. Film is available in the tourist areas – but can be very expensive. **Extra batteries and a back-up microchip** are also recommended.

Bring **packages of tissues** and keep them on you at all times, (often restroom facilities lack toilet

paper.)

**Our dress code while touring is strictly informal** –During the day, comfortable clothing which can be layered is best. The buses will be cool and air-conditioned but outdoor temperatures will vary greatly. A jacket/hoodie is recommended.

Khaki or dark- colored slacks and light-colored, light-weight, short sleeve, collared shirts are good

choices. (Consider topping sleeveless shirts with sleeved (or ¾ length) light-weight shirt as protection from the sun.)

\*\***Many religious sites do not allow shorts or sleeveless shirts**. A jacket or scarf to cover bare shoulders is necessary. Capri-length slacks (cargo pants) or pants that zipper to shorts - especially with pockets that close -- are a good compromise for shorts.

**Choose your in-flight canvas bag carefully** – look for something that can be used on the bus each day. Items can be safely left on the bus while we are touring and could include things like a jacket, umbrella, camera, snacks, Bible, notebook, water bottles, etc., etc.

**BUDGETING ESSENTIALS**

**Our tour is pretty much “all-inclusive” with a few exceptions. Our hotels offer (included) full buffet breakfast every morning (coffee and tea are included with breakfast) as well as a full buffet dinner. Lunch each day will be on your own; locations to eat will be at the discretion of our guide. We recommend that you allow $15-20 per person, per day for lunch.**

**REGARDING TIP MONEY** –

Your tour cost includes all tips for hotels, restaurant in the hotel, guide and drivers. There are only a few exceptions. The Garden Tomb is a Ministry which charges no admission fees; they rely on love offerings – we suggest $5-6 per person. They leave a basket out for your offerings. Also, at the end of the tour, our guide and driver will expect a love offering [that is standard with all Holy Land tours]. We will pass an envelope around the bus – tips will be entirely at your discretion.

**REGARDING CURRENCY**

**Israeli** uses the Israeli Shekel but the American Dollar is welcomed everywhere.

**EXCHANGE RATES** - You will almost always get the best rates when buying foreign currency with either a credit or a debit card. The rates of exchange will be between two and seven percent better than using cash or traveler's cheques (which are rarely used by anyone now).

**REGARDING CREDIT CARD USE** - before you leave the States, call your credit card provider to find out if there are charges and/or conversion fees for credit card use in Israel **AND** inform your provider of the dates you will be away and the countries to be visited.

**.**

**CELL PHONE USE** – Mostly likely, your provider won’t offer service in Israel without prior arrangements and fees. To avoid roaming charges you should keep your phone in airplane mode while overseas. You may, however, want to bring it for calls when you return to the USA.

\*\*\*And – just a reminder --- many of us rely on our cell phones for the time. So, you should **take a watch or other time piece if you won’t be using your cell phone.**

**INTERNET** We anticipate that our hotels in Israel will offer complimentary Internet access in the lobbies.

**VOLTAGE IN ITRAEL** – The hotels have 230 Voltage with 50 Hertz – Wall **outlets** typically accommodate **plugs** with two or three round pins (the latter grounded, the former not) -- what this means to tourists from the USA, is, if you intend to take any electrical devices, you will need **both converters** (or transformers for laptops, MP3 players and camcorders) as well as **adaptors.**

**PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER –– our tour IS NOT a fashion show!!**

 Considering extra baggage charges and lost luggage problems, packing is becoming a science. We encourage everyone to travel light (even though your luggage will be handled for you at the hotels, you’ll still have to lug it around the airports).

We suggest taking **only** one rolling carry-on and a fabric bag which can be stuffed under the seat in front of you. Nothing to check -- nothing that can be lost!

**Suggested clothing - Total slacks** - 4 pair – a mix of light to mid-weight slacks, jean or capris/cargo.

**Total shoes** -  two pair - (comfortable athletic shoes/sneakers for walking & closed-toed sandals)

**4 or 5  shirts with rollup sleeves,** light weight, light colored, breathable, collared, cotton/poly to protect from sun (choose those you can mix and match with **5 or 6 sleeveless cotton shirts**.)

Bring a rain jacket and umbrella.

Be prepared to dress in layers – evenings are expected to be in the high 50s and low 60s at night.

Try on all clothes before you leave home to make sure they are comfortable and will be worn. Don't pack items randomly and then decide, over there, whether or not you want to wear them.

If an item can't be worn with more than one outfit - leave it home.

Any seasoned traveler will tell you to take all your oldest socks and undies -- wear and toss!

We suggest lightweight PJs and bathrobe (I pick mine up at a Thrift store for $1.00 each and toss before I go home.)

Pack only travel-sized bottles of shampoo, even hairspray – then toss them before you come home.

All the tossing makes room for the books and souvenirs you will be buying.

\*\*\* Savvy travelers know it’s not wise to wear valuable/irreplaceable jewelry.

**LAST BUT NOT LEAST**

**UPON ARRIVAL INTO TEL AVIV** on March 2, 2021 - **after clearing PASSPORT CONTROL** please assemble with our group at **BAGGAGE CLAIM**.

**DO NOT PROCEED FROM BAGGAGE CLAIM UNTIL YOUR TOUR LEADERS AND TRAVEL AGENT HAVE ARRIVED**. (We will be at the back of the group, making sure everyone has successfully been allowed to enter the country and will meet the group as soon as this is accomplished. While you are waiting, it is acceptable to use the restrooms, but, please, let someone know where you are going – and do not leave your luggage unattended.)