

## **Alphacrucis Israel OT Field Study Itinerary: Nov/Dec 2017 (version 10 — 30 May 17)**

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**Day 1: Fri 01 Dec      Depart Sydney (or other Australian City)**

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Depart Australia on your international economy flight.

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**Day 2: Sat 02 Dec: Arrive Tel Aviv Airport - Gezer Archaeological site. Lunch on the way to the Dead Sea.**

Welcome to the Holy land. On our way to the Dead Sea we will visit Gezer, situated near the International Coastal Highway and guarding the primary route into the Israelite hill country, Gezer was one of the most strategic cities in the Canaanite and Israelite periods. Gezer is a prominent 33-acre site that overlooked the Aijalon Valley and the road leading through it to Jerusalem. The 'tell' was identified as biblical Gezer in 1871. We then make our way to the Dead Sea, also known in the Bible as the "Salt Sea" or the "Sea of the Arabah," this inland body of water is appropriately named because its high mineral content allows nothing to live in its waters. Other post-biblical names for the Dead Sea include the "Sea of Sodom," the "Sea of Lot," the "Sea of Asphalt" and the "Stinking Sea." In the Crusader period, it was sometimes called the "Devil's Sea." All of these names reflect something of the nature of this lake.

*Overnight: Dead Sea – David Hotel*

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**Day 3: Sun 03 Dec: Tel Arad, Tel Beer Sheva, Anzac Cemetery & Museum. Masada.**

Our experience today is through the desert wilderness region. Like many cities in the Holy Land, Arad was repeatedly settled because of its strategic geographical location. Though situated in an area with little rainfall, Arad was inhabited frequently in ancient times because of its position along the routes coming from the east and southeast. Beersheba (also spelled Beer-Sheva) is the largest city in the Negev desert of southern Israel. Often referred to as the "Capital of the Negev". During our time here we will visit the ANZAC memorial and museum where many Australians were based during World Wars I & II. On our way back to the Dead Sea we visit Masada, an ancient fortress in southern Israel's Judean Desert. It's on a massive plateau overlooking the Dead Sea. The fortifications were built around 30 BC. Among the ruins are King Herod's Palace which sprawls over 3 rock terraces, and a Roman-style bathhouse with mosaic floors. The Masada Museum has archaeological exhibits and recreations of historical scenes. Masada was the last stronghold of the Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 AD.

*Overnight: Dead Sea - David Hotel*

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**Day 4: Mon 04 Dec: Qumran, Jericho,**

Today we make our way north along the Dead Sea. Firstly we visit Qumran, a ruin from the days of the Second Temple on the northwest shore of the Dead Sea. It became famous in 1947 when a number of ancient manuscripts were found in nearby caves. These manuscripts are now known as the Dead Sea Scrolls. Next we visit Jericho, the "City of Palms", spread out on the west side of the Jordan River at 825 feet below sea level. The Old Testament site of Tell es-Sultan is in the distance and is the city Joshua destroyed. In Jesus' day a new centre

had been constructed on the wadi banks in the foreground by the Hasmonean rulers and Herod the Great. Our Biblical Tour Guide will then give an Herodian orientation to Holy city of Jerusalem.

***Overnight: Jerusalem – Sephardic House***

**Day 5: Tues 05 Dec: Israel Museum & Shrine of the Book (Great Isaiah Scroll), Bible Land Museum, Yad Vashem (the Holocaust Museum).**

Today we will visit the Israel Museum with a detailed model of Jerusalem from the time of the Second Temple and the Shrine of the Book, which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls. Today's tour includes Yad Vashem the official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust established in 1953, located on the foot of Mt.Hertzel.

***Overnight: Jerusalem – Sephardic House***

**Day 6: Wed 06 Dec: Old Testament Walking tour of Jerusalem: David's Palace compound, Hezekiah's Tunnel, Temple Steps, Western Wall.**

Jerusalem's spiritual importance to Jews and Judaism would be hard to exaggerate. The Bible mentions Jerusalem or Zion more than 800 times. During its long history, Jerusalem has been attacked 52 times, captured and recaptured 44 times, besieged 23 times, and destroyed twice. The oldest part of the city was settled in the 4th millennium BCE, making Jerusalem one of the oldest cities in the world. Today we explore Old Testament Jerusalem, walking through many sites to explain their Biblical significance.

***Overnight: Jerusalem - Sephardic House***

***\*\*Tower of David Light Show \*\* known as the Jerusalem Night Spectacular, stunningly combines the wonders of modern technology, the tumultuous history of Jerusalem and the beauty of the Citadel at the City of David in an unforgettable show intertwining visual and auditory effects. This will be included on one night during your stay in Jerusalem. The show runs for approximately 40 minutes.***

**Day 7: Thur 07 Dec : Old City -Olive Press in the Guardhouse at Damascus Gate, Herochan Mansions in the Jewish Quarter. Hebron (Cave of the Patriarchs/Machpelar) Hebron – Cave of the Patriarchs / Machpelah**

This morning we will visit some other interesting sites in the old city before travelling to Hebron to visit the Machpelah. Genesis 23 records the purchase by Abraham of a plot of ground in Hebron for a burial cave for his wife Sarah. Hebron is located 30kms south of Jerusalem nestled in the Judean Mountains and the oldest Jewish city in the world. The Cave of the Patriarchs, also called the Cave of Machpelah and known by Muslims as the Sanctuary of Abraham or the Ibrahim Mosque, is a series of subterranean chambers located in the heart of the old city of Hebron.

***Overnight: Jerusalem – Sephardic House***

**Day 8: Fri 08 Dec : Beth Shemesh (Sorek Valley) — Elah Valley - Bethlehem & Shepherd's Field. Visit Holy Land Trust.**

This morning we travel to Beth Shemesh, a border city between Judah and Dan. Beth Shemesh was given to the Levites and was the most important Israelite city in the Sorek Valley as it

watched both east-west traffic through the Sorek Valley and north-south traffic along the "Diagonal Route." Recent excavations have shown a thriving city here from the Middle Bronze Age through the Iron II period. Then we look at the Elah Valley, the best view is from the commanding hilltop of Azekah. This strategic city was wisely fortified by Rehoboam, and it was one of the last cities to fall to the Babylonians in the invasion of Judah in 586 BC. The valley below is the location of the battle of David and Goliath. In the afternoon we visit Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus, where we visit Shepherds' Field, walk through Manger Square and visit the remarkable Church of Nativity.

**Overnight:** Jerusalem – Sephardic House

**Day 9: Sat 09 Dec: New Testament Walking tour of Jerusalem**

Today we follow the last week of Jesus life. We start at the Upper Room and walk the footsteps of the passion including the Mount of Olives, Caiaphas' house where Jesus was held in prison and Peter denied Jesus three times, Mt Zion and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

**Overnight:** Jerusalem – Sephardic House

**Day 10: Sun 10 Dec : Samaria — Shiloh, Mt Gerizim, Nebi Samuel. Beit El & Jacob's Rocks near El Bira**

Today we travel north of Jerusalem. Samaria, (Shomron) is the central region of ancient Palestine. Mount Gerizim is one of the two mountains in the immediate vicinity of the West Bank city of Nablus. The holy site of Nebi Samuel is the traditional tomb of prophet Samuel, with remains from the Hasmonean period (2nd C BC) through the Crusaders period (12th C AD).

**Overnight:** Jerusalem – Sephardic House

**Day 11: Mon 11 Dec: Jaffa, Caesarea, Megiddo, Mount Carmel , Cana**

This morning we have a short visit of the city of Jaffa (Joppa) where we will take a short walking tour in picturesque alleys of the old, fortified town. We'll pass by the house of Simon the Tanner and marvel at the views from the hill top. Then we drive up north along the coast to the archaeological ruins of Caesarea, built by Herod the Great in honour of Augustus Caesar and once the Roman capital of the region; visit the excavations of the ancient city, the Roman theatre and aqueduct. Proceed to Muhraka, the site of confrontation between Elijah and the prophets of Baal; enjoy the spectacular view of the Jezreel valley and the lower Galilee. Continue to Megiddo, identified as the site of Armageddon; learn the impressive history of this battlefield as you visit the archaeological excavations including the well-preserved water supply system.

**Overnight:** Galilee – Ginosar Village

**Day 12: Tues 12 Dec Gamla - Hermon Stream Nature Reserve/ Banias (Caesarea Philippi), Hula Valley, Temple of Pan (grotto) and Tel-Dan.**

Today we'll ascend to the Golan Heights to view the panoramic view of the peaks of Mt. Hermon and the rugged plateau of the Golan Heights, and beneath it the green pastoral Hula valley. Caesarea Philippi is situated 35 kms north of the Sea of Galilee and at the base of Mt. Hermon. It is the location of one of the largest springs feeding the Jordan River. Tel

Dan is a nature reserve and the source of the Dan and Jordan rivers. It is an impressive archaeological site with unique remains of the Canaanite and Israelite cities.

***Overnight: Galilee – Ginosar Village***

**Day 13: Wed 13 Dec Bet She'an — Gideons Spring (Well of Hard), Gilboa, Ein Harod — Nein (Ancient Nain near Sulam/Shuem) — Nazareth**

Today we explore the Jordan Valley starting at Beit Shean with its recently excavated amphitheatre. Visit the excavations of this beautiful preserved Roman City which was destroyed in an earthquake.

Situated inside a bowl atop the Nazareth ridge north of the Jezreel valley, Nazareth was a relatively isolated village in the time of Jesus with a population less than two hundred. Today Nazareth is home to more than 60,000 Israeli Arabs, and Upper Nazareth is home to thousands more Jewish residents. Today we will visit to visit the Church of Annunciation built on the site where archaeologists believe the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, Joseph's workshop, Mary's well and the recreated village of Old Nazareth.

***Overnight: Galilee***

**Day 14 & 15: Thur 14 Dec & Fri 15 Dec - walking footsteps of Jesus.**

The Jesus Trail is a hiking path in the Galilee region which connects important sites from the life of Jesus as well as other historical and religious sites. The Jesus Trail is a chance for pilgrims to experience the steps of Jesus in a way that is authentic, adventurous and educational by walking through the beautiful countryside between Nazareth and Capernaum. The distance walked will be around 15km each day through villages such as Cana and Tabgha.

***Overnight: Galilee – Ginosar Village***

**Day 16: Sat 16 Dec Boat trip on Sea of Galilee - Korazim - Kursi (Gadarenes) —baptism in the Jordan.**

Today is our last day in The Galilee. We will take a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee in a recreated boat similar to that used in Jesus time. In the afternoon we will visit Yardenit ("little Jordan") where the water flows from the Sea of Galilee into the Jordan river, eventually flowing into the Dead Sea located more than 100km to the south. This site is believed by some traditions to be the actual site where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3: 13 : "Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John").

***Overnight: Galilee – Ginosar Village***

**Day 17: Sun 17 Dec   Leave The Galilee early this morning to travel to Ben Gurian**

Airport for your return flight home departing early afternoon.

**Day 18: Mon 18 Dec   Arrive Australia**

**Tour Includes:**

- Meeting and assistance on arrival at Ben Gurion Airport by Diesenhaus Unitours representative
- Escorted group transfers on arrival and departure
- Porterage at airport and hotels
- 11 full days sightseeing as per program.
- 2 full days walking tour in Jerusalem
- 2 full days walking in the footsteps of Jesus
- Government licensed English tour guide
- Luxury air-conditioned coach
- Entrance fees as per enclosed itinerary
- 15 nights hotel accommodation at the above-mentioned hotels.
- Meal arrangements: Half Board (including full Israeli buffet breakfast and buffet dinners at hotels daily)
- 15 lunches en route (no lunch on departure day )

**Not Included:**

- Expenses of a personal nature
- Airport taxes
- Border taxes
- Visa fees in needed
- Tips to guide, driver, hotels restaurants staff and porters. We recommend: usd 5 pp/pd for the guide; usd 3 pp/pd for the driver; usd 2pp/pd for the waiters
- Any other item not specified above