

Alphacrucis Israel OT Field Study Itinerary: December 2019

Depart Sydney 01 December at 15:45 – Arrive Hong Kong 21:55
Depart Hong Kong 02 December 01:10 – Arrive Tel Aviv 06:55am

Day 1: Monday 2 December

Arrive Tel Aviv – Neot Kedumim Biblical Reserve – Jaffa – Simon the Tanners House – Hanging Orange Tree – Gezer Archaeological site.

Morning visit to Neot Kedumim Biblical Reserve, the world's only biblical nature reserve hidden in the quiet foothills of Judea, between Tel Aviv & Jerusalem.

Lunch at Joppa followed by a walking tour of the ancient seaport of Jaffa. Jaffa which is located on the Mediterranean Sea just south of Tel Aviv, is where the apostle Peter received a crucial vision that changed his mind about accepting gentiles into the early Christian Church. Jaffa offers no original sites to visit, but a disused private residence (formerly a mosque) behind Jaffa's lighthouse is believed to stand on the site of Simon the tanner's house. Continue your walking tour to the hanging orange tree created by artist Ron Morin. According to Morin, his work of art represents the juxtaposition of man and nature. Symbolically, however, it also represents for some as Israel's rebirth as a nation and triumph over sand and wasted lands, having since the late 1800s turned the ancient derelict lands into a forward-thinking, agricultural society.

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.

Overnight: *Dead Sea – David Hotel*

Day 2: Tuesday 3 December

Tel Arad – Tel Beer Sheva – ANZAC Cemetery & Museum

Our experience today is through the desert wilderness region. Like many cities in the Holy Land, Tel Arad was repeatedly settled because of its strategic geographical location. It is now one of Israel's most important archaeological sites. A fortified Canaanite city and fortresses from the time of the kings of Judah have been unearthed at the site. The remains of a unique Judean temple and an extraordinary water plant from the times of the Judean kings were discovered in the fortresses.

We continue our journey to Tel Beer Sheva, an archeological site which is believed to be the remains of the biblical town of Beersheba, often referred to as the Capital of Negev.

During our time here we will visit Anzac Cemetery & Museum, The ANZAC Memorial Center in Be'er Sheva was built in cooperation with the governments of Australia and Israel. The Center is located near the cemetery for combatants of the First World War in Be'er Sheva. The ANZAC Memorial Center is a unique place in Israel that tells the story of the soldiers of the ANZAC.

Overnight: *Dead Sea – David Hotel*

Day 3: Wednesday 4 December

Masada – Ein Gedi

We will continue to Masada; Masada is an ancient fortress in southern Israel's Judean Desert. It's on a massive plateau overlooking the Dead Sea. A cable car and a long, winding path climb up to the fortifications, built around 30 B.C. 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.

Afternoon walking tour of **Ein Gedi**, Ein Gedi is one of Israel's premier hiking spots, featuring spectacular beauty, varied landscapes, and botanical gardens.

Overnight: *Dead Sea - David Hotel*

Day 4: Thursday 5 December

Qumran – Jericho – Mount of Temptation - Jordan Baptismal site Qasr El Yahud

Today we make our way north along the Dead Sea. 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 several 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 Mount of Temptation is about 5km north-west of the west Bank city of Jericho. Access to the summit is by a 30-minute trek up a steep path – passing through cliffhanging monastery on the way – or by a 5-minute cable car ride from Tel Jericho.

Overnight: *Jerusalem – Sephardic House*

Day 5: Friday 6 December

Bethlehem – Hebron – Free afternoon

This morning we travel to Bethlehem, birthplace of Jesus, where we visit Shepherds' Field, walk through Manger Square and visit remarkable Church of Nativity and Holy Land Trust.

We will then continue to Hebron (**subject to security situation on the day**) and visit the Cave of 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 Patriarchs, also called the Cave of Machpelah and known by the 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.

****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.*

Overnight: *Jerusalem – Sephardic House*

Day 6: Saturday 7 December

Free day

Overnight: *Jerusalem – Sephardic House*

Day 7 Sunday 8 December

Old Testament Walking tour of Jerusalem: (The Cardo) - David's Palace compound - Hezekiah's Tunnel - Temple Steps - Western Wall - Western Wall Tunnels

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

Day 8: Monday 9 December

The Shephalah (Sorek Valley) - Elah Valley - Tel Azekah - Tel Maresha (Micah) - Bet Guvrin

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 and 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 586BC. The valley below is the location of the battle of David and Goliath

Overnight: Jerusalem – Sephardic House

Day 9: Tuesday 10 December

Israel Museum – Biblelands Museum – Yad Vashem

This morning we will visit Israel Museum with a detailed model of Jerusalem from the time of the Second Temple. Continue our tour to the Shrine of the Book (Great Isaiah Scroll) which houses the Dead Sea Scrolls. Today's tour includes Yad Vashem, the official memorial to the Jewish victims of the Holocaust. It was established in 1953 and located on the foot of Mt. Hertzl.

Israel Museum is open until 9pm for those who wish to return for an evening visit.

Overnight: Jerusalem – Sephardic House

Day 10: Wednesday 11 December

New Testament Walking tour of Jerusalem - Gethsemane Mount of Olives - St Anne's, Caiaphas' house - Mt Zion - Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

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

Overnight: Jerusalem – Sephardic House

Day 11: Thursday 12 December

Caesarea – Megiddo - Mount Carmel - Muhraka - Jezreel Valley

Depart Jerusalem and head north 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 excavation of the 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 the battlefield as you visit the archaeological excavations including the well-preserved water supply system.

Overnight: Sea of Galilee - Ginossar Village

Day 12: Friday 13 December

Beit She'an – Gideons Spring – Gilboa – Ein Harod – Nein – Nazareth – Mary's Well

Today we explore the Jordan Valley starting at Beit She'an with its recently excavated amphitheatre. Visit the excavations of this beautifully preserved Roman City which was destroyed by 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 the Church of Annunciation which was built on the site where archaeologists believe the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary, Josephs workshop, Marys well and the recreated village of Old Nazareth.

Overnight: Sea of Galilee - Ginossar Village

Day 13: Saturday 14 December

Gamla - Mt Bental - Hermon Stream (Banias) Nature Reserve - Hula Valley - Tel-Dan

Today we will visit as many National Parks in the Golan Heights region as time and weather permits. In the southern part of the Golan Heights, in a hidden place, you can find the ruins of the ancient Jewish city of Gamla. The Gamla Nature reserve is a wonderful combination of nature, landscape and historical remains. Caesarea Philippi is in Hermon Stream National Park otherwise known as Banias. Here you will also find the Temple of Pan. Tel Dan National Park is both a nature reserve and a magnificent ancient city. It is the source of the Dan and Jordan rivers and an impressive archeological site with unique remains of the Canaanite and Israelite cities.

Overnight: Sea of Galilee – Ginossar Village

Day 14: Sunday 15 December

One day walking tour with Avi Farjoun. Walking in the footsteps of Jesus from Mt Beatitudes to Tabgha and Mt Arbel.

Overnight: Sea of Galilee – Ginossar Village

Day 15: Monday 16 December

Boat trip on Sea of Galilee - Korazim - Kursi (Gadarenes) - Cana -Yardenit.

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 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"

Kafr Kanna is an Arab town, in Galilee, part of the Northern District of Israel. It is associated with the New Testament village of Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine.

Overnight: Sea of Galilee – Ginossar Village

Day 16: Tuesday 17 December

The Galilee early this morning to travel to Ben Gurion Airport for your return flight home departing early afternoon.

Depart Tel Aviv 17 December at 14:30 – Arrive Hong Kong 06:15 - 18 December
Depart Hong Kong 18 December 08:40 – Arrive Sydney 20:50