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Preparing for the Trip

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- Helpful Websites
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 - To Prepare for Egypt and Jordan
 - To Prepare for Greece and Turkey
- A Four-Week Bible Series to Prepare a Group Spiritually for a Trip to Israel

TRAVEL SAFETY FACTS

1. Airport security for all flights to the Middle East is very thorough.
2. Terrorist incidents in those Middle East countries visited by tourists, though well publicized in the media, are extremely rare.
3. There is more danger of death or injury driving from one's home to the airport than of being attacked by terrorists while on tour.
4. The governments of Israel, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, and Turkey take the safety of tourists very seriously and have implemented extraordinary measures to increase security.
5. Several steps can be taken to minimize even further one's chances of being involved in terrorist incidents.
 - Keep a low profile. Try not to be conspicuous in your dress, speech, or behavior.
 - Avoid wearing articles of clothing that advertise your nationality or that actively identify you with one side or the other in the current Middle East conflict.
 - Avoid crowds, protest groups, or other potentially volatile situations that could present safety or security risks.
 - Stay with your group and avoid wandering off alone (similar to the advice you would give someone coming to visit any major city in the United States).
 - Dress and act in a manner that shows proper respect for the social and cultural values of the region. Avoid falling into the "Ugly American" stereotype.
 - Remain aware of your circumstances and surroundings. Don't become so absorbed by the grandeur of the sites that you fail to keep track of what is happening around you. If you sense anything out of the ordinary, don't hesitate to express your concerns to the tour guide or tour leader.

6. Tour buses are in constant contact with their headquarters and with other guides and drivers. The tour operators monitor any potential trouble spots; and if they feel there might be a problem, they will contact the guide and driver and reroute the group to avoid the area.

TIPS FOR TRAVELERS

Clothing

Most tours to the Middle East are very informal. (No real dress-up occasions, even for Sunday.) Plan to wear comfortable clothes while touring. Most tours encourage participants to wear jeans or slacks on the trip. Take one jacket or heavy sweater, even during the summer months. Remember when packing: Less is better. Comfortable shoes with nonskid soles are necessary. (You will be doing a great deal of walking, often over uneven terrain and smooth stones.) Wash-and-wear items are very helpful, and shorts are acceptable. However, those who wear shorts should also carry a “modesty kit” for visiting holy sites or traveling in more conservative areas so that knees and shoulders are covered. A modesty kit for women should include slacks or a wraparound skirt (below the knee) and a blouse that covers the shoulders. A modesty kit for men should include long pants and a shirt that covers the shoulders.

Currency

Depending on what is covered in your tour, extra expenses may include incidental food items (beverages, snacks, lunch, etc.). You will also want to bring money to purchase souvenirs. Of that amount, you should carry at least \$25 in \$1 bills, which can be used to purchase bottled water, soft drinks, postcards, etc. Should you need to do so, you can exchange dollars into the local currency at airports, hotels, and banks. Traveler’s checks offer security against having your money lost or stolen, but they can be more difficult to cash and not all restaurants or stores will accept them.

If you exchange dollars into local currency at the airport, bank, or hotel, keep the receipt given to you. You will then be able to convert

any remaining currency back into dollars when you leave the country. Most stores love U.S. dollars, but you can sometimes get better bargains if you pay in the local currency.

The basic unit of money in each country is as follows:

- Israel uses the New Israeli Shekel (NIS), which is divided into 100 agorot.
- Egypt uses the Egyptian Pound (£E), which is divided into 100 piastres.
- Greece uses the Euro (€), which is divided into 100 cents.
- Jordan uses the Jordanian Dinar (JD), which is divided into 100 piastres.
- Turkey uses the New Turkish Lira (TRY), which is divided into 100 kuruş.

Just before leaving on your trip, check the Foreign Currency Exchange section in your local newspaper to determine the current exchange rate, or check the rate online at <http://www.oanda.com/converter>.

You should consider the use of a money belt or pouch. Clever pickpockets are waiting for you. Carry and guard your passport, pocketbook, purse, and other valuables very carefully. Keep your money and passport on your person or in your hotel safe-deposit box. Never pack them in your suitcase or leave them in your hotel room. Larger purchases can be made using a major credit card, though some cards are not as widely accepted as Visa and MasterCard. Contact your credit card company before you leave to let them know the countries you will be visiting. Also, go through your wallet or purse to remove all unnecessary credit cards (in case your wallet were to be lost or stolen).

Electric Appliances

The electric current in Europe and the Middle East is 220-volt AC, single phase, 50 cycles, which requires special adapter plugs that can vary by country. If you intend to take appliances (hair dryer, electric razor, iron) that are suitable for both 110 and 220

volts, make sure to carry a set of adapter plugs. If your appliance is for 110 volts only, you will also need a converter. Never plug a 110-volt appliance into a 220-volt outlet without a converter; it will work at twice its speed for a few seconds—and never work again!

Health

No shots or vaccinations are required to visit most tourist destinations in Israel, Egypt, Greece, Jordan, or Turkey. However, you might want to visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website for up-to-date information on issues specific to each country and on how best to protect yourself while there (<http://www.cdc.gov/travel>). Should you need any medications during the trip, be sure to carry them with you. Also, take some of the following items along for any emergencies: Pepto Bismol tablets, Imodium, sleeping pills (to help overcome jet lag the first few nights), Dramamine (if you are subject to motion sickness), cold or allergy tablets (if you are subject to allergy attacks), and any other personal hygiene products you may require.

Insurance

International travel is usually trouble-free, but it is still wise for travelers to consider purchasing travel insurance to cover medical expenses, trip cancellation/interruption, lost or damaged luggage, and travel delays. Such insurance can usually be purchased at the time a tour is booked. Check with the tour operator, ask your own insurance agent, or look online for travel insurance options.

Luggage

International airlines normally limit coach passengers to one suitcase and one carry-on bag (excluding purse or camera bag). In addition to satisfying airline regulations, this limitation also makes it much easier for individuals to keep track of their luggage when it is being loaded and unloaded from the buses and when it is portered at hotels. Be sure your suitcase closes and fastens securely (use an extra strap if necessary). Mark your suitcase and carry-on bag clearly so you will be able to distinguish it. Women should consider using

only their initials rather than their first name. Do not pack cameras, expensive jewelry, or other valuables in your suitcase.

Current airline security regulations require that checked baggage be unlocked. However, you can use locks that are Transportation Security Administration (TSA) approved. These locks can be opened by the TSA and then relocked. Consider buying a TSA-approved lock if you wish to lock your luggage.

Be sure to have anything you will need while flying in your carry-on bag. Also keep your essential toiletries and a one-day change of clothes with you in your carry-on luggage (just in case your baggage would get “lost in transit”). Don't overpack. Leave some room for items you may purchase and bring back. Remember that on the way over you will be wearing the same clothes for two days—walking, riding, and sleeping in airplanes. Dress for comfort!

Meals

Hotels usually serve nutritious breakfasts, so don't skip breakfast! Lunches may or may not be included in your tour. (Check your travel brochure.) Dinner will be ample. Some foods will be new to you. Any foods served at the hotels will usually be safe to eat. Exercise care in eating unpeeled fruit and fresh vegetables purchased in open-air markets unless you peel and/or wash them first. Consider bringing along some snack foods to eat on the bus when you are traveling.

While the tap water in most hotels is usually safe, if you have any doubts, consider purchasing and drinking bottled water. Coffee, tea, and soft drinks are also safe to drink. Depending on the specific country and locale, you might need to exercise care about using ice. Plan to pay for any extra drinks you order for meals. (These are not usually included in the price of a tour.)

Other Items to Pack

Consider bringing a pack of moist towelettes for warm touring days, and a washcloth—if needed—since some hotels do not supply them. Don't forget your sunglasses, and remember that a hat is an absolute necessity. (One with a broad brim is a wise

choice.) You can request a wake-up call from most hotels, but you may also want to carry your own alarm clock. Boxed snacks (e.g., dried fruit) can help keep one's energy up between meals. Any liquids you take should be in tight (preferably plastic) bottles. Only fill them three-fourths full to allow for expansion. Put each bottle in a small ziplock plastic bag for further protection.

Passport Information

Make sure your passport is up-to-date (and isn't scheduled to expire until at least six months after the trip). Visas are required prior to departure for some countries in the Middle East. (Individuals with U.S. passports do not need to obtain a visa prior to their trip to Israel; a tourist visa will be issued to them at passport control on arrival.) Travel agencies will usually take care of obtaining required visas for individuals. Check with them if you have any questions. Keep your passport with you in a safe place at all times. Also, keep a photocopy of your passport in a separate location, possibly inside your suitcase. Remember, do not pack your passport inside your suitcase!

If you plan to obtain a passport for the first time, instructions for applying for your passport are found on pages 30–32. The key tip for first-time applicants is to apply early!

Photography

Before leaving on the trip, make sure your digital camera is working, your battery is fully charged, and your memory card has sufficient space. It's also wise to take an extra battery and memory card. If your camera uses rechargeable batteries, make sure to pack the charger and cable.

If your camera allows you to choose different quality settings for your pictures, select the highest resolution possible. While lowering picture quality allows you to store more pictures on a memory card, you might be disappointed with the results later. It's better to invest in an extra memory card before you depart than to return with pictures that are less than satisfying.

Use discretion in what you photograph—especially military personnel, secure areas (like airports and military bases), Muslim

women with covered faces, or Orthodox Jewish men and women. If you are in doubt, ask first!

Physical Exercise

You will be doing a great deal of walking on your trip. It is strongly recommended that you do some walking now—in the shoes you're taking on the tour—to condition yourself. If you're buying new shoes for the trip, plan to wear them weeks before departure so they are “broken in” and you are comfortable walking in them.

Shopping

The English language is spoken sufficiently everywhere, so no language problem need arise. Part of the fun of shopping is the Middle Eastern culture of “bargaining” for an item. When bargaining with merchants, don't appear too anxious to purchase an item, and never accept the first price as the actual price. In many cases the item can be purchased for less than half the “asking price.” The truth of Proverbs 20:14 will come alive in the markets of the Middle East. “‘Bad, bad,’ says the buyer, but when he goes his way, then he boasts” (NASB).

Keep a written record of all your purchases, as this will make filling out your customs report easier when you return home. Be careful about exposing much money at any one time when you are shopping.

Telephone

Calls to the United States can be placed through the switchboard at all hotels. However, most hotels add a hefty service charge for this service that can often double the cost of the call. A prepaid calling card (available at many discount stores in the U.S.) can be a more cost-effective option. But with the increase in cellphones worldwide it's becoming more difficult to find a pay phone in many countries. A third option is to rent a cellphone with prepaid minutes while traveling overseas. (In many cases incoming calls to these phones are free.) Check with your tour operator to see if this is a possibility.

If you don't plan on making very many calls, another option is to

take your cellphone with you overseas. But before doing so, check with your carrier to verify its coverage map and roaming charges. If your phone allows you to access email or the Internet, consider turning off those features while overseas, except for those times when you can connect via Wi-Fi. If you are not careful, you can incur a massive phone bill by accessing email and the Internet while using international data roaming.

Traveling as Part of a Group

Sometimes photographers will take pictures of you or your group. You are not obligated to buy any of these photos. Expect some inconveniences such as schedule changes. Things do not always run as smoothly as they do in the United States. Have a good Christian attitude about it all.

Be careful about sharing your faith. This is an especially sensitive situation in the Middle East. Let your life and conduct count. Consider the believers there whose situation you might make more difficult by arousing anger or by giving a poor testimony. Pray for the tour. Live with others as Christians should; plan to cooperate and stay on schedule with the group. The guide and tour host are concerned for the welfare of the entire group, and they count on your cooperation to make it an enjoyable experience for all.

Weather

The climate of Israel, Greece, Jordan, and the southern part of Turkey is often described as Mediterranean. This type of climate is known for its hot, dry summers and cold, rainy winters. Other parts of Turkey have a climate that is more akin to Europe. Egypt is a desert climate with very little rainfall.

Israel

Winter weather in Israel is very changeable, and November through March is the rainy season. While you should have many beautiful days, expect to see some rain, especially in the hill country. The average temperature can vary greatly depending on where you are in Israel. Expect cool days and cold nights in Jerusalem.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Israel in the winter.

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Jerusalem	67/54	56/47	53/43	57/44	61/47
Tel Aviv	76/54	66/47	65/49	66/48	69/51
Sea of Galilee	78/59	68/53	65/48	67/49	72/51
Dead Sea	83/61	74/51	70/49	73/51	79/56

Spring and summer weather is stable and pleasant. April and May can still bring occasional rain, but little or no rain will fall from June through October. The average summer temperature can still vary greatly. Expect warm days and cool nights in Jerusalem.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Israel in the summer.

	April	May	June	July	August
Jerusalem	69/53	77/60	81/63	84/66	86/66
Tel Aviv	72/54	77/63	83/67	86/70	86/72
Sea of Galilee	80/56	89/62	95/68	98/73	99/75
Dead Sea	87/63	95/69	99/75	103/77	104/79

Egypt

Winter weather in Egypt is mild and predictable, with warm days and cool nights. While October through March is the rainy season, Egypt is very dry except for along the Mediterranean coast. Cairo's annual average rainfall is about 2 inches, and that total decreases to .04 inches in Aswan. It is not unusual for some parts of Egypt to report no rainfall in a year.

Early spring weather in Egypt is generally comfortable. However, this is the time of year when there can be large fluctuations in temperature, particularly when the *khamsin* wind prevails. The *khamsin* is a very hot, dry wind that blows from the south and south-east, raising the temperature by up to twenty degrees in a matter of hours. These rapid rises in temperature don't last long, but they are often followed by dust/sand storms accompanying a cold front.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Egypt throughout the winter and early spring.

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Aswan	86/58	79/50	75/46	79/49	86/54
Cairo	75/54	69/51	66/47	69/48	75/52
Luxor	78/59	68/53	74/42	78/44	84/51
Red Sea	83/61	74/51	75/64	77/64	79/68

Late spring and summer weather in Egypt is stable and hot. April can still see warm days and cool nights, but by May the days are becoming extremely hot. The temperature is made more bearable by very low levels of humidity, but this raises the concern of rapid dehydration. Proper hydration is essential in the summer months; drink plenty of water.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Egypt in the late spring and summer.

	April	May	June	July	August
Aswan	97/63	101/71	108/76	108/76	108/84
Cairo	83/56	90/63	95/68	96/71	95/71
Luxor	95/60	103/69	107/72	108/76	107/76
Red Sea	88/77	95/79	99/82	107/82	108/84

Greece

Winter weather in Greece is very changeable, and November through March is the rainy season. While you should have some beautiful days, expect to see periods of rain. The average temperature can vary greatly depending on where you are in Greece.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Greece throughout the winter and early spring.

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Athens	64/53	58/47	55/44	55/44	60/47
Iráklion, Crete	66/56	61/51	58/48	58/48	61/50
Thessaloníki	58/44	51/37	48/34	51/36	57/41

Spring and summer weather is stable and pleasant. April and May can still see occasional rain, but little or no rain will fall from June through October. The average summer temperature can still vary greatly. Expect warm days and pleasant nights.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Greece in the late spring and summer.

	April	May	June	July	August
Athens	66/52	74/60	83/67	88/72	88/72
Iráklion, Crete	67/54	73/59	80/66	83/72	82/71
Thessaloníki	65/46	75/54	84/62	88/66	87/65

Jordan

Winter weather in Jordan is very changeable, and November through March is the rainy season. While you should have some beautiful days, expect to see rain, especially in the hills near Amman. The average temperature can vary greatly depending on where you are in the country. Expect cool days and cold nights in the higher elevations.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Jordan throughout the winter and early spring.

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Amman	70/50	59/43	54/39	55/39	61/43
Aqaba	75/54	69/51	68/50	71/53	78/58
Petra	78/61	68/53	65/50	69/54	75/59

Spring and summer weather is stable and pleasant. April and May can still see occasional rain, but little or no rain will fall from June through October. The average summer temperature can still vary greatly. Expect warm days and cool nights in Amman.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Jordan in the late spring and summer.

	April	May	June	July	August
Amman	73/48	82/57	88/61	90/64	91/66
Aqaba	87/65	94/72	100/77	102/80	102/80
Petra	85/67	92/73	97/78	99/81	98/81

Turkey

Winter weather in Turkey is cool and wet. While several hours of sunshine can be expected each day, less than half the days in each month can be expected to be rain free. Cool days and cold nights are common in the higher elevations.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Turkey throughout the winter and early spring.

	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	March
Istanbul	57/47	50/42	46/37	47/37	51/40
Kusadasi (Ephesus)	64/48	59/42	55/39	57/41	60/42
Denizli (Laodicea/Colossae)	62/42	51/37	50/33	51/35	59/39

Spring and summer weather is very stable and pleasant, although it can rain even during the summer. Expect warm days with abundant sunshine.

Following are the average high/low temperatures for various places in Turkey in the late spring and summer.

	April	May	June	July	August
Istanbul	60/47	69/54	78/62	82/66	82/67
Kusadasi (Ephesus)	66/48	75/53	82/60	86/64	86/64
Denizli (Laodicea/Colossae)	68/46	77/53	86/60	91/66	91/64

PACKING LIST

The following list is intended to help you pack more efficiently. If you have any special needs, be sure to add those items to your list. Items with an asterisk (*) are optional.

Clothing

- blouses, shirts, socks, underwear (take a limited supply—use wash-and-wear)

- shorts, slacks, jeans, skirts (take a limited supply)
- personal modesty kit (for entering “holy places” and conservative communities)
- heavy sweater or jacket
- swimsuit
- walking shoes (plenty of walking! Good shoes are very important!)
- flip-flops or old sneakers (for the beach)
- sunglasses
- hat

Toiletries/Medications

NOTE: The TSA requires all carry-on liquids to be in 3.4 ounce (100 ml) or less (by volume) bottles and to be placed in a single quart-sized, clear plastic, ziplock bag. Any other liquids need to be in your checked luggage. There are exceptions for medications and baby formula, but these items need to be declared for inspection at the security checkpoint.

- shampoo
- hand sanitizer (small bottle)
- toothbrush and toothpaste, dental floss
- deodorant
- comb and hairbrush
- nail clippers, file
- shaving equipment
- eyedrops or contact lens solutions and cleaners*
- other personal hygiene products
- athlete's foot treatment, Band-Aids
- diarrhea medicine (just in case!)
- cold remedy or decongestant tablets
- sleeping pills

- motion sickness pills
- aspirin or other nonprescription medications
- prescription medications (pack several days' supply in your carry-on luggage in case your suitcase is delayed)
- sunscreen/lotion, sunburn medication/ointment
- package of towelettes*
- earplugs

Miscellaneous

- travel alarm
- plastic bags (for wet washcloth, laundry, etc.)
- pen, notebook, and small Bible (Old and New Testament)
- small sewing kit
- adapter or converter for all electrical appliances
- tiny flashlight
- handkerchiefs or tissues
- laundry detergent (small supply)*
- washcloth*
- camera, charger, extra batteries, extra memory cards
- extra pair of eyeglasses (or prescription)
- electrical appliances (hair dryer, razor, curling iron)*
- digital recorder*
- small umbrella or rain hat (November–April)
- boxed snacks (individually packed, travel size)*

Items to Pack in Hand Luggage

- airline ticket (or copy of e-ticket)
- passport
- one-day change of clothes

- essential toiletries (remember TSA 3-1-1 rule regarding small sizes)
- neck pillow and sleeping mask (for sleeping on airplane)
- good book(s) (to read on the flight over and back)

REQUIREMENTS FOR OBTAINING A U.S. PASSPORT

If you have never traveled abroad, it is wise to apply for a passport as early as possible. Several documents (including a certified birth certificate) must be submitted along with the application, and it can take up to six weeks to process a passport request. The government can expedite a passport application, but they charge a significant premium for that service. Travelers who plan ahead can avoid the stress—and additional charge—of a last-minute application. Consider applying for your passport at least three months prior to your scheduled date of departure.

If you currently have a valid passport that is scheduled to expire within six months after your trip, you must also renew your passport before you go. Countries will not admit travelers whose passports will expire within six months of entry. Renewing your passport now will help avoid potential complications while on the trip. (See point 3 below for how to renew a passport.)

1. Obtain a passport application from your district or county clerk's office (usually at the county courthouse), the post office, or your tour operator. The form can also be downloaded from the U.S. Department of State website, www.travel.state.gov/passport. The website includes a very helpful "Frequently Asked Questions" section with current information on fees and policies. It is wise to visit this site before applying for a passport.

2. Fill out the application and take it back to the nearest Passport Acceptance Facility. Call the facility first to arrange an appointment time to appear with your application. The location and phone number for the nearest facility can be found at the Department of State website listed above. You will need to bring the following items.

- a. A certified birth certificate with state, city, or county seal as well as the name of the birth parent(s). Hospital birth certificates or “notification of birth” certificates are not acceptable. You must present a certified birth certificate.
- b. A recent 2 x 2 inch photo with image size between 1 and 1 3/8 inches from bottom of chin to top of hair with plain white background. Photos must be clear, front view, full face, taken in normal street attire (no hats or dark glasses). Passport photos can be obtained at most camera shops and photography studios—and at many office supply stores and copy centers—with no wait and at a reasonable price.
- c. A valid driver’s license, military ID, or state-issued picture ID. (Also, bring along a photocopy of both the front and back of the license or ID.)
- d. A check or money order for the cost of the passport payable to “U.S. Department of State.” Not all sites will accept cash, so call the office you’ll be going to for their specific payment options.
- e. Your Social Security number.
- f. All applicants must appear in person at the passport facility. (This includes applications for minors.) Minors under the age of sixteen must also have both parents (or legal guardians) appear in person with the child and provide evidence of their relationship to the applicant.
- g. Certified proof of name change (required only if your name is different than that appearing on your birth certificate), such as a marriage license.

3. The above information applies to all new passport applications. If you are renewing your passport, you only need to obtain an application for passport renewal from the nearest Passport Acceptance

Facility or from the Department of State website listed earlier. You can mail the application (along with your old or expired passport) directly to the passport office listed on the form.

4. Please keep your receipt until your passport and submitted documents have been returned to you.

5. If you already have a valid passport but have changed your name, you must get your passport changed. See the Department of State website for specific details on how to change or correct your passport.

HOW TO OVERCOME JET LAG

Rapid travel through multiple time zones can take its toll on the traveler's physical and mental well-being. "Jet lag" is the phrase used to describe the condition when an individual's internal body clock is out of sync with the actual time in the region to which he or she has traveled. The clock on the wall says that it is the middle of the night, but the traveler's body awakens and refuses to go back to sleep. Jet lag can result in lethargy, sleeplessness, constipation or diarrhea, and illness. At the very least it can make a person feel "out of sorts" for the first two or three days of the trip.

Several simple techniques have been developed to help an individual overcome the symptoms of jet lag and adjust his or her internal body clock to the new time zone as rapidly as possible. One option is to use sleeping aids the first few nights at the new destination to help force yourself to sleep through the night. Another technique is one used by government employees who travel around the world and who must operate at peak efficiency the minute they arrive. The principles behind this technique are explained fully in the book *The Cure for Jet Lag* (Back2Press Books), by Lynne Waller Scanlon and Charles F. Ehret. The following information is loosely adapted from the book and applied specifically to flights to the Middle East. If you follow these principles, you will find that your body will adjust very rapidly to the change in time zones.

The time difference between the eastern United States and the Middle East is seven hours. That is, when it is noon in New York City, it is 7:00 p.m. in Amman, Istanbul, and Jerusalem. Similarly,

when you bed down at 10:00 p.m. in Athens or Cairo, it's only three in the afternoon back home in New York City. The following instructions will help you overcome jet lag while touring the Middle East. It is sometimes difficult to follow these principles exactly, but the more you are able to follow them, the easier you will find it to adjust your internal body clock.

The Day of the Flight

- Get out of bed earlier than usual.
- Eat a high-protein breakfast and lunch, and try to eat a high-carbohydrate supper during the flight.
- Drink a lot of water or decaffeinated beverages to compensate for the dehydration that is common on long flights.
- Shortly after the evening meal on your transatlantic flight, set your wristwatch ahead to your destination time.
- Since it is now early morning destination time, try to rest or sleep as soon as possible. Pull down your window shade, put on a sleeping mask, or take a sleeping aid—but go to sleep!

Breakfast, Destination Time

- Do not oversleep. Walk around to activate your body and brain.
- Drink one to two cups of black coffee, strong tea, or caffeinated soft drinks between 6:00 and 8:00 a.m. destination time or when breakfast is served on the airplane.
- Keep active. Do not nap! Go to bed by 10:00 p.m. destination time. Even though you feel tired, consider taking a sleeping aid to make sure you sleep through the night.
- If you wake up in the middle of the night, try to go back to sleep.

The First Touring Day

Your body should be almost adjusted to the change in time zones. Eat well, keep active, don't allow yourself to nap, and enjoy your time on tour. Take a sleeping aid for the last time that night.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE MOBILITY IMPAIRED

How accessible are the lands of the Bible for those who are mobility impaired?

Good News

Many of the countries in the Middle East have invested a great deal of time and money into making sites more accessible to the mobility impaired. They have added walkways, pathways, ramps, and other mobility-friendly opportunities to provide increased access, not just for the mobility impaired, but for everyone. In addition, there are now tours designed specifically for the mobility impaired.

Bad News

Not all sites are accessible to the mobility impaired. Whether it's the waterfall at En Gedi, the high place at Petra, or the Areopagus in Athens, the pathway can be steep, the steps uneven, and the ground rugged and rocky. Other sites might only provide partial accessibility depending on the level of impairment.

Recommendations

Here are some specific recommendations to help the mobility impaired have an enjoyable and profitable trip.

1. Begin your trip with a realistic appraisal of your capabilities and limitations. Everyone has to evaluate what he or she can accomplish.
2. Plan ahead! As noted earlier, there are tours specifically designed for the mobility impaired. Check online to see if such a tour might best match your physical needs. If you are considering a tour not designed for the mobility impaired, check with the tour operator to determine the accessibility of sites and type of accommodations provided. Select the tour and tour operator that can best accommodate your particular needs.

3. Communicate with the tour leaders before the tour begins. Make sure you understand how the daily schedule matches your specific capabilities and challenges, and see if there are ways the tour can be adapted to your specific needs. For example, if you cannot tour for longer than half a day, will there be a way for you to leave the group and return to the hotel? Are there sites you might need to “sit out” or view from the bus?

4. Travel with someone who will assume responsibility for your needs. While many participants on a tour have a servant’s heart, do not impose on them or limit their opportunity to accomplish their intended goals for the trip. You may not be able to get to all the sites others are getting to, but don’t limit their opportunity to see those sites.

5. Realize that many sites are accessible, so don’t get discouraged if you can’t get to every single one. Having an overview of some sites will still give you just as much personal impact as being able to see every single detail. You do not have to hike to the bottom of the Grand Canyon to appreciate its beauty!

6. While you may not be able to visit all the sites you hope to see, neither will the others on the tour! No tour gets to every possible site! There is always more to see than there is time to see it. Enjoy what you are able to see and do. Remember, contentedness is a key characteristic for a successful tour.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

The Internet is an excellent source of information to help someone prepare for a trip to the Middle East. Unfortunately, many websites do not remain accessible for a long period of time. The following links were chosen because of their helpfulness and because of their long-term stability.

General Sites to Assist in Travel to the Middle East

- Currency Converter (www.oanda.com/converter)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (www.cdc.gov/travel)

- Passport Information (www.travel.state.gov/passport)
- Photographs of Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, and Greece (www.bibleplaces.com)
- U.S. State Department Travel Warnings and Consular Information Sheets (www.travel.state.gov/travel)

Israel

- *Haaretz* newspaper (www.haaretz.com)
- Israel Ministry of Tourism (www.goisrael.com)
- Israel Museum (www.english.imjnet.org.il)
- *Jerusalem Post* newspaper (www.jpost.com)
- Jewish Virtual Library (www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org)
- *The Times of Israel* newspaper (www.timesofisrael.com)

Egypt

- *Abram Online* newspaper (www.english.ahram.org.eg)
- *Egypt Independent* newspaper (www.egyptindependent.com)
- Egyptian Museum (www.gem.gov.eg)
- Egyptian Tourist Authority (www.egypt.travel)
- Virtual Egyptian Museum (www.virtual-egyptian-museum.org)

Greece

- Athens Survival Guide (www.athensguide.com)
- Greece Tourism Organization (www.visitgreece.gr)
- Tourism in Greece (www.greek-tourism.com)

Jordan

- Jordan Tourism Board (www.visitjordan.com)
- *Jordan Times* newspaper (www.jordantimes.com)

Turkey

- Turkey Ministry of Culture and Tourism
(www.goturkey.com)
- *Hürriyet Daily News* newspaper
(www.hurriyetdailynews.com)