



FAQ's and General Program Information

WELCOME

The Center for Holy Lands Studies (*CHLS*) welcomes you on this journey as you encounter your faith where it began. We hope this journey will enhance your understanding of the Bible and provide spiritual renewal as you travel through the lands of the Bible. Contained in this statement is basic information for your program.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the accommodations like?

The hotels or lodgings that you will be staying in are not only comfortable but also provide a relaxing environment after a full day of sightseeing. Breakfast and dinner are included in the overall program price. All rooms are double occupancy unless you paid for the single room option in your registration.

How should I dress?

Casual dress is recommended, such as lightweight pants/shorts and T-shirts (*shoulders must be covered at all times—men and women*). A lightweight hat is a must, preferably one with a brim that covers the neck and ears. During the program, “modesty kits” are sometimes required. A “modesty kit” refers to pieces of clothing (*for both men and women*), which allow participants to make sure that their shoulders and knees are covered. For women: long pants, skirts, or capris and shirts that cover shoulders. For men: long pants and shirts that cover shoulders. “Slip-over” or “wrap-around” clothing is best for such occasions.

Will I need an adapter?

The electric current in Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Greece, and Italy is 220 volts AC, single phase, 50 Hertz. The adapter needed for Israel, Jordan, Turkey, and Greece is Type C. For those groups traveling to Italy, the adapter required is Type L.

You can buy a two or three prong adapter:



How much extra cash will I need?

In addition to regular tourist-type purchases and daily lunch expenses (\$10-20 per day), it is recommended that participants bring cash for incidentals of about \$15-25 per day (*coffee, water, soda, snacks, maps, taxis, tourist guide books, etc.*). US dollars and credit cards are accepted in most situations. During the program, ATM machines exist but are rare. At times they are difficult to locate and are not readily available during the program. It is recommended that participants not depend on ATM machines for their financial needs.

How much water do I need to drink?

The heat in parts of this region is a very real concern. Even during the rainy season (mid-October to mid-April), it can still become hot. Staying hydrated is extremely important. CHLS will always have a sufficient supply of water on the bus; however, it is not always available to you during onsite hiking and touring. Dehydration occurs from excessive loss of water from the body brought on by heat, humidity, a lack of wind, etc. It is critical to stay hydrated before, during, and after the daily tours. A steady intake of fluid is most beneficial; consuming a large amount of fluid in a short period of time does not prevent dehydration and is stressful on the body. Some participants bring powdered electrolyte replenishment mix, such as Gatorade, Powerade, Propel, etc. Also, CHLS recommends that you limit your caffeine intake during the program, which may be wise to begin a week or two before the program.

What does the itinerary include?

The daily schedule is pre-established but remains flexible. When circumstances permit, additional sites will be added to the program schedule. When necessary the daily itinerary will be adjusted to take advantage of changing circumstances. Sites may be visited in an order other than what was previously published. Participants should be prepared for flexibility regarding the daily activities. The most updated itinerary for your trip will be located on the individual program webpage (see thechls.org).

How do I deal with jet lag?

Upon arrival, the initial excitement may cause you to overlook the strain on your body from the long flight and time changes. It is highly recommended that you immediately begin to follow the sleeping patterns of the new time zone. If you arrive during the day, you should do your best to wait until evening before going to bed. If you arrive late at night, you should try your best to rise in the morning with everyone else. Also,

you should make sure to hydrate yourself with water after the long flight. Hydration is an important part of overcoming jet lag more quickly.

Are the meals included?

Breakfast and dinner are included in the program cost (usually buffet-style at the hotel or lodgings). Lunches are not covered; however, options are provided each day based on the program schedule. As previously mentioned under 'Extra Cash,' please be sure to budget \$15-25 per day for lunch.

What are the physical demands of these tours?

CHLS endeavors to maximize your time in the land providing you with a most unique and rewarding journey. At times, the pace is demanding and daily activities often go for a full 8-10 hours. Most CHLS travel locations are not flat, nor are they smooth under foot; therefore, CHLS strongly recommends that you begin preparing for the physical demands of the program long before the departure date. If you are physically prepared, the program will be far more enjoyable, educational, and meaningful.

Is it safe to travel to the lands of the Bible?

CHLS constantly monitors the safety and security issues of the Middle East. CHLS intends for you to enjoy a wonderful time of learning, fellowship, and spiritual development in a safe environment. Rest assured that CHLS will make every effort to ensure your safety. The personnel affiliated with CHLS are trained to assist and instruct you in matters of personal and group safety.

While in the land, CHLS monitors the situation each day and avoids any sites that may not be safe to visit on that particular day. Lodgings are located in safe, gated areas, with security staff. If there is ever a hint of potential danger, CHLS does not travel into those areas. CHLS does not take chances! Almost everyone who returns from their program remarks, "I never once felt unsafe." Like any form of travel, though, there can never be a 100% guarantee of safety. Nevertheless, CHLS has an excellent safety record.

What kind of teaching is provided?

CHLS uses the physical settings of the Bible as a doorway into the biblical world. During your tour or study program, you will discover the geographical, historical, cultural, and spiritual realities that shaped the biblical stories and events. As you explore the Bible in the context of its world and physical setting, you will be amazed at how its message speaks to you more clearly than ever before.

Can I film or record the teaching during my program?

Any lectures, commentary, or lessons given by our staff or other members of the team may be filmed or recorded unless requested otherwise. However, such videos or audio recordings must be for private use only and may not be sold or distributed in any manner. Not only is some information privileged, confidential, and restricted, but lectures and other materials are protected by copyright law.

What does a typical day look like?

Most days begin with breakfast followed by a departure between 7:30 and 8 a.m. The group will travel to the sites by bus, where participants will begin their hikes and visits of the sites. Most days will involve moderate hiking. Lunch usually falls between 12:30 and 2:30 p.m. It is highly recommended that you carry snacks with you. Eating small snacks throughout the day is best for keeping energy stored up in the body. At the end of the day, we will arrive at our hotel or lodgings for dinner and needed sleep.

For this type of program to be successful and to maximize the limited time in the land, participants must all move as a group. A ten-minute delay here and there of one kind or another can actually require the group to eliminate a site planned for visitation. The schedule is full and requires everyone to be punctual at departure times and to follow their leader and/or guide with diligence and closeness. Participants should not wander off.

What is the weather like?

Please use the below website to check the weather forecast prior to your departure.

<http://internationalweather.net/>

Regional conditions for all of our travel locations can vary considerably. It is important that you take this into account when considering how to prepare and pack a variety of layered clothing to adjust to varied weather conditions.

Will I have access to Wi-Fi?

Most hotels and lodgings will have internet access either in the lobby or in the sleeping rooms. Fees may be incurred. Most of the buses that CHLS uses come equipped with Wi-Fi as well.

PROGRAM COST AND FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Program Cost: See thechls.org

Financial Note:

CHLS programs are designed to eliminate the numerous incidental financial responsibilities one often encounters on packaged tours. Tour agencies and their clients often publish a low base price giving the appearance that viewers have discovered a bargain. On such programs, participants are held financially responsible for any number of fees not accounted for in the published program cost. These “hidden” or “unannounced” fees can add up to as much as \$150-300 by the end of your trip.

In an effort to minimize individual responsibilities for undeclared fees, CHLS has calculated these fees and included them into the overall program cost. Except for the daily lunch meal and items related to optional personal choices, the program cost covers all such incidental fees and tips. This way CHLS can provide participants with a realistic cost of the program and eliminate the hassle so often associated with “hidden” fees. For clarification, please review the “Covered” and “Not Covered” features listed below.

Items Covered in the Program Cost:

- a) Roundtrip airfare (*from designated airports; may not be available for some programs*)
- b) All scheduled program activities
- c) Program accommodations
- d) All hotel and program-related tips
- e) All inland transportation
- f) Any local guide as needed
- g) CHLS Guide/Instructor
- h) Two meals a day (*breakfast and dinner*)
- i) Pre-trip packet
- j) Overseas medical and general liability coverage

Not Covered in the Program Cost:

- a) Daily lunches and specialty beverages (*including bottled water, coffee, and other specialty drinks*)
- b) Personal travel insurance – **recommended**

- c) Any incidental personal expenses for snacks, souvenirs, shopping, etc.
- d) Any flights, lodging, transportation, or meals not included in the program schedule and itinerary

Airfare Taxes and Tariffs:

The round-trip airline ticket price was prearranged by CHLS months in advance of the departure date. Often taxes or tariffs associated with the ticket are adjusted by the airlines at the time the airline ticket is issued. In the event an increase of cost is applied by the airline, participants are financially responsible for the increase in airfare. CHLS cannot determine in advance if a tax or tariff is to be applied. If an increase is applied, CHLS will inform participants and request payment.

Single Room Supplement Fee:

CHLS programs are priced based on double-room occupancies. If participants desire a single room, an added fee will be applied. CHLS will make single room requests on the participants' behalf. A single room is not guaranteed by CHLS since it is up to the various hotels to comply with the request. Historically, though, such requests are faithfully honored by the hotels CHLS works with. Visit the specific program page at thechls.org for a single room supplemental rate.

REGISTRATION

Registration:

Program registration is available online at thechls.org or by calling 1-855-700-CHLS (2457).

Deposit Fee and Deadlines:

A non-refundable deposit (*per person*) is required. This fee is applied to the overall program cost. All cancellations forfeit the deposit fee; however, registrants may apply their deposit to another program within twelve months of their initial registration date. After final payment date, all monies are non-refundable.

For the Bible Lands Programs, the \$2,000 deadline is also non-refundable. This amount is not guaranteed to be able to be transferred to another program due to costs already incurred on your behalf.

Disclaimer

The program itinerary is subject to change. In the event of an unforeseen change in the schedule, every effort will be taken to provide participants with the same goals and objectives as outlined in the published itinerary. The published program price is subject to change should circumstances warrant. This would include (*but not be limited to*) changes in airfares, airport taxes, visa fees, airline fuel surcharges, rate changes by agents and their suppliers and changes in international exchange rates.

All CHLS programs are considered unconfirmed (*provisional*) until 25 participants are registered 90 days prior to the scheduled date of departure. In light of the early unconfirmed status of CHLS programs, it is recommended and important that the following two items be considered:

- 1) Individuals and groups should make sure to register ASAP to be counted as part of the required minimum number of participants.
- 2) Participants are also advised not to make any personal travel plans until the program is considered confirmed at 90 days prior to departure.

Should a participant desire to purchase personal airline tickets, make additional hotel arrangements, or purchase any other travel arrangements not under the auspices of CHLS administration (*prior to 90 days of the scheduled departure date*), it is recommended that he/she consult CHLS prior to any such purchases. CHLS cannot be held responsible for any personal flight or land arrangements made by a participant.

Program Correspondence

Please note that the primary correspondence between CHLS and registrants will be conducted by email. If a participant does not have email, or experience email compatibility problems, alternative arrangements can be made via mail, phone, or fax. If there is a group leader overseeing group registration for the study program, he or she may be able to answer some questions directly. However, all other correspondence is to be directed to CHLS. The CHLS website serves as the primary and authoritative source of program information (thechls.org). Participants should review the CHLS website periodically just in case there are revisions or updates to the program, materials, and/or responsibilities (*financial or otherwise*).

Personal Information

CHLS does not share any personal information with program partner associations or vendors unless it is required for the program. CHLS does not sell information to any third party vendors for advertising or marketing.

PASSPORTS AND VISAS

Passports:

All participants must have a passport! Passports must be valid for a full six months after the return date of the program. If a participant's passport expires before this projected date, he/she will need to renew his/her passport. There are no exceptions to this policy.

If participants do not have a U.S. passport, they must notify CHLS since special circumstances may apply to their entry into their program's countries.

If participants have any entry or exit stamps in their passport reflecting previous travels to an Arab or Muslim nation, the participant must notify CHLS.

Participants needing to obtain or renew their passports must take steps immediately to go through the process. This is most important. Dozens of administrative documents are dependent upon participants having their passport information. See the following U.S. State Department website for passport information: http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html.

Seven to ten days after submitting an application for a passport, participants may view the delivery status of their passport at the following U.S. State Department website: http://travel.state.gov/passport/get/status_2567.html.

The U.S. Postal Service also has passport applications to secure a new passport or to renew an old one. Visit <http://www.usps.com/>. Perform a search for "Passport" and follow the links.

Visas:

Each country that CHLS travels to has different visa requirements. For participants with U.S. passports who are traveling to Turkey, a visa must be acquired online prior to the trip's departure. This visa can be acquired at the following link: <https://www.evisa.gov.tr/en/>

All other countries included in CHLS programs do not require entry visas for U.S. passport holders. All participants with a passport from any other country must contact CHLS to obtain information about their visa requirements.

INSURANCES

Overseas medical and general liability insurance is provided for the duration of your trip and is included in the overall cost of your program. Though not required, it is still strongly recommended that you purchase travel insurance above and beyond the coverage provided. If you have any questions regarding the medical and general liability insurance provided, please contact our office at thechls.org.

Optional Travel Insurance:

If you wish to protect your travel investment against an unforeseen cancellation or a needed emergency return flight home, it is recommended that you purchase a travel insurance policy. If you desire to purchase such a policy, you should be aware that **most insurance companies will restrict certain coverage unless you submit for coverage within 14 days of registering for the program.** Consequently, you should not delay in purchasing this insurance.

Insurance Assistance:

If you need to purchase travel insurance, you should refer to the list of providers below. Please note that CHLS is not involved in securing the travel insurance offered by these companies and is not under any contract with the companies listed below. Any questions or concerns related to insurances should be directed to our offices (info@thechls.org).

- Brotherhood Mutual – 1-800-333-3735 ext. 5680 (<http://brotherhoodmutual.com>)
- Access America – 1-866-807-3982 (<http://accessamerica.com>)
- Insure My Trip – 1-800-487-4722 (<http://insuremytrip.com>)
- Travel Guard – 1-800-826-4919 (<http://travelguard.com>)
- Travelex – 1-800-504-7883 (<http://travelex-insurance.com>)
- AAA – 1-800-463-8646 (<http://aaa.com>)

PRE-TRIP PACKET

Experience Israel: Travel Guide with Site Overviews and Reflections

As you travel through the lands of Israel with us, you will survey the Old and New Testament, focusing on their culture, history, geography and spiritual climate. The land, the text, and how it impacts your life today will prove to be a transformational experience for you and your faith. This notebook serves as a reference guide for your entire journey – before, during and after your trip.

Program Journal

We have also provided a special CHLS journal to serve as a helpful medium for recording your thoughts, stories, prayers, and reflections before your trip, during your journey, and after you return. In a digital age, there are so many great ways for you to preserve your experiences, but we definitely recommend this journal as one way of recording the moments surrounding this life-changing trip. This will be a memorable experience that you will look back on for years to come.

Other Materials

Finally, your packet also includes a name badge, hat, luggage tag, and other materials as necessary for your specific program. Whether a luggage tag that makes it a little easier to find your suitcase at the baggage claim, or a journal for recording thoughts and insights gained, we hope the materials in this packet add great value to your trip.

WHAT TO BRING

Medical and First Aid Items:

Medical problems usually revolve around three common illnesses:

- 1) **Dehydration:** Israel has a very high solar intensity and as a result participants will need to drink water more frequently to avoid dehydration.
- 2) **Diarrhea/Constipation:** This is most often caused as a result of the body adapting to new foods and new water. The food and water in Israel is sanitary, safe, and comparable to USA standards. Nevertheless, most participants on the program will undergo mild, moderate or more severe episodes of diarrhea. Participants should be prepared for a 5 – 7 day supply of anti-diarrhea and/or laxative tablets.

Many of the participants on the program will experience one or more of the above conditions. It is unavoidable. It is a fact of international travel that all must face. If participants are prepared in advance and have the proper medical aids, they can manage these discomforts successfully. If participants neglect to prepare for these conditions, this could result in their having to spend a few days at the hotel for medical rest and recovery. Not only would this be uncomfortable; it would also cause participants to miss some valuable sites and instruction while not traveling with the group. Should circumstances warrant, participants will receive professional medical attention to bring them to a speedier recovery.

Also, participants should bring traditional first aid supplies such as band-aids, antibiotics, sun-block, aspirin, and a full supply of prescription medicine. Experience has shown that it is not recommended that participants stop any medication just prior to the program. Rather, participants should wait until the program is concluded before stopping any medication. Participants should treat all of the above symptoms early and immediately. Participants should inform CHLS during the program if they are experiencing any of the above illnesses. CHLS intends for all participants to remain healthy for travel.

Baggage Restrictions:

Baggage size and weight restrictions differ with each airline. Please be sure to check with the airline being used for your program about their specific requirements. We would ask that each participant limit their luggage to one checked bag and one carry-on.

Packing Suggestions:

Customarily, most people tend to over pack for international travel. A good rule of thumb is for participants to pack their bags and then eliminate at least 25-33% of their items. This will reduce the amount of the packed contents and provide needed space for purchases made during their travel. There is limited space available on the bus for luggage. Participants should keep their luggage size and contents to a minimum.

Recommended Clothing List:

There is no single list of clothing articles that can meet the needs of every participant or every trip. However, the list below can offer participants some assistance on what would be appropriate to bring. For a December, January, February, or March program, please adjust this list for warmer clothing:

- Wide-brimmed hat
- Long lightweight pants
- Shorts (*no short-shorts*)
- Light jacket
- Sweater/sweatshirt/fleece
- Comfortable, sturdy boots/shoes
- Water-shoes
- Sandals or comfortable casual shoes
- Swimsuit and towel (***one-piece swimsuit please for cultural sensitivity***)

Recommended Packing List:

- Passport...Passport...Passport
- Facial washcloths as needed (*not typically provided by hotels*)
- Travel clock with alarm
- Durable Sunglasses
- Copies of travel documents and e-tickets
- Medical and traveler insurance papers
- Refillable water bottles
- Bible
- CHLS Program Notebook
- CHLS Journal
- Pens and highlighter
- Small flashlight
- Snacks: granola bars, protein bars, nuts, trail mix, dried fruit, crackers, beef jerky, etc.
- Small and large zip-lock bags for snacks and collectibles
- Cash and credit card (*alert your credit card company about your overseas travel*)
- Camera and smartphone
- Powerade, Gatorade, Propel powder, or something for electrolyte replenishment (*if desired*)
- Imodium A-D, aspirin, ibuprofen
- For women, bring a supply of feminine hygiene products
- Hand sanitizer (*small bottles are recommended*)
- Personal toiletry and medical items
- Sunscreen
- Small plastic bottle of laundry soap in a zip-lock bag to wash clothes in your room (*if desired or necessary*)
- Electrical adapter (*220 voltage, European type*)
- Inflatable pillow for airplane and bus (*if desired*)
- Sleeping aid (*drinking a lot of water on the flights will significantly decrease the symptoms of jet lag*)
- Small first aid kit
- Tissue packs (*potentially 1-2 per day*) as some of the bathrooms do not supply toilet paper

DAY OF TRAVEL

International Flight:

On the day of travel, please arrive at your international departure airport at least 3 hours prior to flight departure in order to check in. The security procedures for international flights can be time consuming as you will be screened and asked a number of questions. Remember this is for your safety. Be patient and straightforward with your answers. If you can respond with a “yes” or “no,” please do so; they are not looking for long answers.

If you have any questions before your trip, or if you miss a connection while traveling to your international destination, contact our office at 417-862-2781, x 3595.

Arrival at Your Destination:

Upon arriving at your international destination, you will be required to go through that country's passport control process. Please be patient. You are almost done with your travel day. Once through passport control, you will proceed to the baggage claim area to retrieve any checked luggage.

Once you have claimed your bags, please look for the group you are traveling with. Either a CHLS representative or a member of our inland team will meet the group in the baggage claim area. If you are flying separately from the group, please make sure CHLS is aware of your schedule and that arrangements have been made to transfer you from the airport to the hotel.

Begin Your Journey:

Now that you have arrived, you will have the chance to check in at your hotel or lodgings, enjoy a satisfying dinner, and rest up for your biblical journey ahead. We pray your experience gives you an unparalleled opportunity to rediscover your faith where it began!

Please contact our office for all other questions.

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