

## Israel Tour 2025 - FAQs

### Who runs FZY Israel Tour?

FZY Israel Tour has been run successfully for decades through a partnership of UJIA Israel Experience, The Federation of Zionist Youth UK (FZY), and Tlalim Educational Tours (collectively known as 'the Organisers'). When you sign up, you do so through FZY, but the success of Israel Tour relies on each of the Organisers playing their part.

**FZY** will be responsible for the educational content, delivery and ethos of the programme, and all communication with you.

**UJIA Israel Experience** (organised by The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and supported by UJIA) takes on a number of administrative roles including helping manage the application process, coordinating flights, and being responsible for crisis management. UJIA Israel Experience provides support to Youth FZY and its tour provider in Israel (Tlalim) to help ensure Israel Tours run smoothly and to high standards.

**Tlalim** is responsible for all the day-to-day arrangements on the ground, for example food, transportation and accommodation.

**UJIA** provides financial assistance on a means tested basis to participants to ensure Israel Tour remains accessible for all. UJIA supports the project through its support for JAFI and UJIA Israel Experience, but it is not one of the Organisers.

More information about this and all of the topics covered in these FAQs are set out in the [Important Information Booklet](#), including the [Terms and Conditions](#). If there is a conflict or inconsistency between the information in these FAQs and the [Important Information Booklet](#), the terms of the Important Information Booklet prevail.

### How and when do I apply?

Applications for this summer will open on December 9th 2024, and the link to apply online will be available via the FZY website which can be found here: [Israel Tour | FZY](#)

The application process involves an Initial Application (Form I) where basic information is taken and you pay a deposit. Your application will then be processed and you'll be sent the Full Application Form (Form II). This includes detailed medical questions, contact details and more. You will have 4 weeks to complete this form.

The deadline for applications is January 31st 2025. (All dates are subject to change. On occasion, late applicants can be accommodated. Please contact FZY directly if the deadline has passed to check availability.)

### Is financial assistance available to assist with the cost of Israel Tour?

Yes, both FZY and UJIA have a bursary fund which has supported thousands of young people who cannot afford the full cost of Israel Tour.

Click [Here](#) for an overview of the application process. Additional information about this will be available through FZY when you complete your application forms.

### Is financial assistance available to assist with the cost of Israel Tour?

Travel and medical insurance policies are included in the cost of Israel Tour. These policies will be made available to you by FZY. Medical Insurance is taken out on your behalf by Tlalim in Israel. Travel Insurance is

taken out on your behalf by FZY in the UK. Please make sure to spend some time reading these policies to know exactly what is and what isn't covered.

There may be some pre-existing medical conditions that are not covered in the general policy, and additional cover may need to be provided. Please speak to FZY about arranging this cover with the providers in Israel. Medical costs in the event of 'hostile action' are covered by the Israeli State, and include a number of additional benefits, including, transportation costs for families, mental health support, and ongoing grants and support where required.

The travel insurance policy covers you for cancellation, curtailment and disruption in a number of scenarios, as well as covering lost, delayed or damaged luggage. Despite this cover, we encourage all participants not to bring expensive or valuable items with them on Israel Tour to avoid unnecessary upset. The policy does cover you during times of war and even though current FCDO guidance is against travel to Israel. It **does not** cover claims brought about as a direct result of war (as mentioned, many medical costs in the event of 'hostile action' are covered by the Israeli State).

### [Can an Israel Tour participant fly to / home from Israel independently of their Israel Tour group?](#)

Flight deviations are offered as part of the application process to accommodate extending your stay in Israel, with a small flight change administrative charge. During the initial application form you will be asked if you are interested in a Flight Deviation. This can include changing your outbound/inbound journey to another ELAL flight, or cancelling the inbound flight. If you click yes, you will be sent further details nearer the time. Please note – all deviations must remain London-Tel Aviv flights. If you wish to fly to an alternative location, you can choose to cancel your flight.

### [What will Israel Tour look like? Will it be fun?](#)

Yes!

Visiting Israel at this time has taken on a special significance and our experiences over the past year show these trips are more important than ever. As such, this summer there will be ample opportunities to engage with a country that is in need of a collective hug, and there will of course be a strong emphasis on volunteering and social action projects with the programmes. However, it is still Israel Tour. FZY excel at managing the balance between creating an educational experience that is both meaningful and enjoyable. There will still be opportunities to experience water sports, beaches, coral reefs, culture, deserts, mountains and more. Remember, we will only go to areas approved by *Cheder Matzav* on the day and itineraries may change even at the last minute, but Israel Tours will continue to strengthen the Jewish identity of our youth and deepen their connection to Israel. In summer 2024 almost all participants agreed that safety measures in place allowed them to enjoy their Israel Tour. Have a chat to FZY's Israel Tour coordinator [jake@fzy.org.uk](mailto:jake@fzy.org.uk) for more details about what we are planning, and our ideological and educational outlook for Tour.

### [What is the cancellation policy?](#)

A full cancellation policy is available [here](#), as well as in the [Terms & Conditions](#).

On application you will be required to pay a deposit to secure your place on the programme. Should you choose to cancel your place within 48 hours of submitting your application, you will be entitled to a full refund. After 48 hours, but prior to the application deadline on 31st January 2025, you will be entitled to a full refund minus an administration fee (£150). From the application deadline until 60 days prior to travel you will be entitled to a full refund, minus your deposit and admin fee, after which there is a sliding scale as departure nears.

## UK Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) guidance is currently against all but essential travel to Israel – doesn't this mean we can't go?

At the time of launching Israel Tour and since the October 7th attacks, the FCDO advises against all but essential travel to large parts of Israel. We hope this changes before Israel Tour departs this summer but there is no guarantee that that will happen. Israel Tour will take place even if the FCDO advice doesn't change. That is because we have risk assessed Israel Tour this year, taken advice, put in place additional risk mitigations and concluded that it can be run successfully, safely and securely with the mitigations and arrangements we are putting in place.

The FCDO publishes guidance on how to interpret its travel advice [here](#). As they state "FCDO travel advice aims to inform British nationals so they can make decisions about travelling abroad... no foreign travel can be guaranteed as safe. You must take personal responsibility for your own travel. Any decision to travel to, stay in, or leave a country, or to undertake any type of activity in that country, is for you to take on the basis of the best available information from our travel advice and other sources. The government cannot make these decisions for you".

In FCDO's definition of essential travel they state "Whether travel is essential or not is your own decision. You may have urgent family or business commitments which you need to attend to. Only you can make an informed decision based on your own individual circumstances and the risks".

In other words, it's for parents to consider the advice to help make an informed decision. As part of this, we hope you will consider the arrangements we've put in place and the extra measures we're putting in place this year (see below).

We have considered the FCDO's advice and factored it into our risk analysis, alongside the other sources of professional guidance and advice available to us. We have also put in place extensive measures to ensure the success of Israel Tour. In assessing the professional guidance received from our Israeli partners, and undergoing an extensive risk analysis, we are ready to launch and then deliver Israel Tour. We are proud that Israel Tours were able to run safely and successfully in summer 2024.

We understand that each individual parent will need to analyse their own understanding of the risks and make their own choice regarding travel to Israel and we recognise that parents will want to consider the FCDO guidance as part of their decision-making.

### What extra security measures will be in place?

For summer 2024 we made significant steps to ensure additional security was in place, and increased provision to care for the participants on Israel Tour. At the time of writing, it is difficult to predict what may or may not be required this summer, and all plans are of course subject to change depending on the advice received from Israeli security organisations we work with. We anticipate:

- i. All Israel Tour groups this year will have an armed security guard at all times.
- ii. All Israel Tour groups will have an Israeli Madrich/a trained and responsible for managing emergency/siren situations. It is their responsibility when arriving at any location to know where safe areas/shelters are, and ensure participants get to those places in an emergency.
- iii. All Israel Tour Groups will have knowledge of the location of shelters at each accommodation, and on scheduled routes the buses take. This will be given in advance of arrival. Please note, travel itineraries can change for a variety of reasons.
- iv. All Tour Providers will have an emergency protocol in place for locating all participants immediately in the event of an emergency situation.
- v. There will be increased provision of mental health support on call, should a group or individual be affected by a siren or serious incident. There is provision for this through the Tour Providers, Medical Insurance, UJIA Israel Experience support infrastructure, and also through FZY.
- vi. Additional training will be given to UK Madrichim on safety & security best practice.

- vii. Participants' free time will be restricted to those areas approved by the office of the *Cheder Matsav/Moked Teva*, and there may be no possibility of free time. Participants should be aware that the decision to allow free time is made on a day-to-day basis. If Participants are given free time, it will always be within specific groups of no less than three Participants and will have to report to their Israel Tour Madrichim/ot (Leaders) at regular intervals. Participants will have an emergency card that will include all relevant and emergency phone numbers. Travel to and from any potential free time activities will only be on the group bus.

### What happens if a new war starts, or there's an escalation, whilst the groups are in Israel? Will you bring groups home?

FZY Israel Tours under UJIA Israel Experience have been run for decades through periods of conflict and unrest, including running safely in summer 2024. There are a number of local, national, and global, government and non-governmental support systems we are able to call upon in an emergency situation. There is a detailed crisis management protocol that can be enacted at a moment's notice.

In the event that certain areas of the country become unsafe, itineraries and accommodation can be changed immediately, and participants moved to a safe location. This has happened in the past, and we work with partners experienced in this field. Tours ran successfully with geographic restrictions last summer, in 2014, during the Intifada, and on other occasions.

In the very unlikely event that circumstances require a curtailment of the programme and participants to return to the UK, our core partnerships would come into play. FZY Israel Tour is under the auspices of the Jewish Agency for Israel with direct access to Israel Government officials in emergency situations. There is also a long-standing and very close partnership with EL AL backing up Israel Tours that ensures all participants would have a flight home in an emergency. In addition to this, our community infrastructures include close working relationships with both the Israel Embassy in the UK, and the British Embassy in Israel. Whilst participants on Israel Tour enjoy a unique and formative experience with their young leaders and FZY, the UJIA Israel Experience network supporting these groups is vast and provides an extensive level of support in crisis situations.

### In what circumstances would you cancel Tour?

We are constantly assessing advice from *Pikud HaOref* (Home Front Command), *Cheder Matzav* (Israeli Government situation room), and speaking with partners at EL AL, The Jewish Agency, and Tour Providers on the ground. FZY and UJIA Israel Experience does not make its own assessment of the security situation - we rely on our working relationships with close partners and institutions who have vast expertise in this area. Should the Home Front Command, *Moked Teva*, or Israeli Government advise us against coming to Israel or curtailing Tour, this would be cause for cancellation. Likewise, should EL AL not be able to fly and travel therefore became impossible, this would be a cause for cancellation. We keep the situation under constant review and cancellation is always a last resort.

Before this step is taken there are many other options available which we can utilize to ensure safe passage and experience in Israel. These may include itinerary changes, geographical restrictions, additional security measures, or the possibility of a truncated shortened programme. More information about this is contained in [Terms and Conditions](#).

### If I sign up, and Tour is cancelled, will I get my money back?

If Israel Tour has to be cancelled before departure because we have to cancel it, it is likely that almost all of the money you have paid will be able to be returned to you. There may be some incidental costs that cannot be recovered - for example insurance costs, GP certificate costs, some unrecoverable land costs - but the Organisers will endeavour to protect funds and then recover as much as possible for you.

Should Israel Tour have to be curtailed during the programme, the Organisers would endeavour to return as much possible to you, with an adjustment made for how much of the programme had already elapsed, and any additional costs incurred in repatriating participants.

### [If Israel Tour ends up getting cancelled, will you look to run a different programme somewhere else?](#)

FZY is launching Israel Tour because as things currently stand, we are confident we can run a safe, meaningful and fun programme in Israel as per the advice we are receiving from our security partners in Israel. Should the situation change before Israel Tour commences as per the guidance we receive from our security partners [as outlined above](#), then FZY would most certainly look to run a different option this summer. Whether this could happen would depend on how soon before Israel Tour was due to commence that we had to cancel the programme. Although FZY have explored alternative programming outside of Israel, we will not be offering any such programme unless Israel Tour has to be cancelled.

### [Why are you not running an alternative programme to Israel Tour this summer?](#)

FZY is proudly a Zionist youth movement with Israel at the core of everything we do. For decades FZY have been running Israel Tour in the summer after GCSEs and it has become a rite of passage for the community. Whilst the security organisations and partners we work with in Israel and the UK are confident that we can operate a safe, meaningful and fun programme in Israel, and whilst our internal risk assessments concur with their conclusion, FZY believe we have a duty both to Israel and the British Jewish community to continue running the Israel Tour programme. For FZY to ensure it can dedicate its resources fully towards Israel Tour and the participants that are participating on this programme, we will not be providing an alternative option for our 16-year-olds. As noted in a [question above](#), in the event that FZY cancels Israel Tour then we would look to pivot and run alternative programming somewhere else.

In the same way that FZY has analysed the risks and determined its path forward with regards to travel to Israel currently, we recognise that each family needs to do that same and reach a conclusion that they feel comfortable with.

### [What is FZY?](#)

The Federation of Zionist Youth UK (FZY) is a Jewish Zionist Youth Movement, strengthening Jewish and Zionist identity whilst creating a strong and vibrant Jewish community for tomorrow. At FZY we strive to challenge, stimulate, educate and excite British Jewish youth through an array of programming. FZY works within a pluralist framework and therefore welcomes and respects members from different Jewish and political backgrounds, whilst providing a space to explore your own Jewish identity and that of others. [Check out FZY's website](#) for more information about FZY's ideology and programmes.

### [What is UJIA Israel Experience?](#)

UJIA Israel Experience is organised by the Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) and supported by the United Jewish Israel Appeal (UJIA) and facilitates Israel Tour as a service to FZY and other Youth Movement/Organisations, Synagogues, Student Organisations and other communal organisations incorporating an experience of Israel into educational activities. UJIA Israel Experience processes application data on behalf of FZY. All applicants are eligible to apply to the UJIA Bursary Scheme for financial assistance to cover the costs of the programme.

### [What is Israel Tour?](#)

Israel Tour is a rite of passage which thousands of young British Jews have gone through over the last several decades. Israel Tour is a 3 week educationally driven Programme with an emphasis on "experience" and Jewish journey. The programmes for the different tour groups are varied and may include, as examples, guided visits to Israel's many beautiful and meaningful sites, seminars, hikes, volunteering, swimming, water sports, abseiling or climbing. For further information, explore the [FZY Israel Tour website](#).

### What are the dates of Israel Tour?

FZY expects to take several Israel Tour groups, therefore they do not all leave and return on the same day. We expect the Israel Tour groups to depart on 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> July and to return on 29<sup>th</sup>-31<sup>st</sup> July. All dates are subject to change.

### What age participants is Israel Tour for?

Israel Tour is for people graduating from Year 11 (S4 in Scotland). For information about other programming FZY will be facilitating for other age groups, see the [FZY website](#).

### What type of accommodation with the participants be staying in?

FZY groups stay in lots of different types of overnight accommodation, including Kibbutzim, youth villages, and campsites. You can expect that the vast majority of nights will be spent in youth hostels; these are basic but clean and often quite lovely. Rooms typically sleep around four participants, normally with en-suite bathrooms and showers.

### What will the participants do on Israel Tour?

The core programme (subject to change) for each of our buses includes all the following: Jerusalem, the Kotel, Old City, Yad Vashem & Mt. Herzl; Tel Aviv; Touring the north and south; Bedouin hospitality; Desert & water hikes; Maccabiah Games; Masada at sunrise; Dead Sea; Camel rides; Volunteering; Kayaking; Snorkelling the Red Sea; and Druze hospitality. More details can be found on the [FZY Israel Tour website](#).

### How many participants will there be on an Israel Tour group?

This will partially depend on how many people apply. We are expecting to create buses that have 40 participants, although this could be slightly more or less depending on various factors.

### Will the participants be with their friends?

FZY's plan is to place participants with their friends whilst at the same time ensuring they get to be with some new people. As part of the application process you will be asked to highlight some people you would like to be in a tour group with. FZY will then attempt to split the tour groups as best as we can based on friendship requests and ensuring groups that are balanced. There will be at least one occasion that every Israel Tour group will meet up with every other, and many more times when groups will see and/or stay with each other as they travel across Israel.

### Can I join Israel Tour for a selection of days or a shorter time?

The basic answer to this question is no. However, if you have a personal situation that you believe may be 'exceptional' then please be in contact with the FZY Office who can determine whether there is anything that can be done about your specific case.

### Who are your staff?

Each Israel Tour bus is expected to have four madrichim (leaders) who will accompany the group throughout. Traditionally, this has been two British madrichim who are students in university, and two Israeli madrichim who have completed their IDF service, one of which will be a tour guide and another who will be a first aider. FZY, along with its partners from UJIA Israel Experience and Tlalim provide extensive, up-to-date and programme-specific training to all madrichim (British and Israeli) in safeguarding, child protection, discipline, welfare, education, etc. No madrich/a is allowed to begin their role without this training. We bring in external expertise to advise on and in some cases deliver certain training to ensure it is of the highest standard. Additionally, depending on the advice of the Israeli security organisations we work with, a security guard may accompany all groups.

### Will the participants need spending money?

There will be times participants may want to buy snacks, ice cream, memorabilia, etc. whilst in Israel. We recommend participants bring with them a small amount of spending money to purchase these things if they want.

### What food will be provided?

Breakfast and dinner are often served buffet-style in hostels. Because participants spend each day out and about, lunch varies between sandwiches, packed lunches, and hot lunch deliveries (like school meals!). All the food we provide is certified Kosher and the programme caters for a wide range of allergies and dietary requirements. Depending on the security situation in the summer, if groups are spending a lunchtime in a marketplace or an evening in a shopping mall, participants receive the cash-equivalent of a meal so that they can choose their own food.

### Can FZY cater for special dietary requirements?

In most cases, FZY can cater for special dietary requirements if we are made aware of these in advance. In Israel, food allergies are far less common than in the UK; especially with regards to nut, sesame and chickpea allergies. Consequently, we are unable to provide food suppliers, restaurants or accommodation sites in Israel that can guarantee that food has been made in a nut free environment or guarantee that specific foods have not been present in the preparation of a dish. Additionally, many snacks (including chocolate and crisps) contain nuts, sesame and/or chickpeas which means their presence are likely to be found throughout Israel, including in kitchens.

### How does Shabbat look on FZY Israel Tour?

Shabbat is often one of the best days on Israel Tour as we create a real '*Shabbatmosphere*' that encapsulates the whole group. FZY is a pluralist youth movement, and as such do not dictate or educate how participants should / shouldn't observe Shabbat. We will provide three different services / options for participants to engage in on Friday night and Shabbat morning and all the activities that we offer operate within the laws of Shabbat. In public places we ask that the participants do not break Shabbat, but in their rooms and private spaces they are able to as they wish.

### Can participants use their phones?

During programmed time and at other times stated by the madrichim (leaders) we have a phone-free environment to encourage the participants to socialise with one another and build lasting friendships. At limited and specified times during the programme, participants can use their phones.

### What is the procedure if a participant is unwell?

There will be a first aider on the group staff of Israel Tour. If a participant is feeling unwell or requires extra support, the first aider alongside the other group leaders will be available to assist. There are group *rakazim* (coordinators) and other staff based in Israel to support this process.

### What happens with medication during Israel Tour?

The medication will be held and dispensed by the British Israel Tour madrichim (leaders) for the entirety of Israel Tour. It is the responsibility of the participant to remind and request the madrichim to administer their prescribed medication in the correct dosage and at the designated time. The only exceptions relate to EpiPens, Insulin and Inhalers. All participants requiring an EpiPen, Insulin or an Inhaler must ensure they bring two doses with them on Israel Tour. The participant must carry at least one of these on them at all times with at least one additional dose available should it be required. Full details of these procedures can be seen in the [Important Information Booklet](#).

### How do I sign up?

To sign up you need to complete a short online application form. This must be accompanied with a deposit which can also be paid online via the application form. A more thorough application and medical form will be sent later in the process.

### How and when do I pay?

A deposit is required upon initial application and there is a section in the initial online application that can process payment of this. The deadline for the payment of the deposit is Friday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. The full balance of the Programme is due and must be paid no later than Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2025. Payment using credit / debit card through FZY's online payment system is preferable, although other payment methods are accepted. Contact Eliana ([eliana@fzy.org.uk](mailto:eliana@fzy.org.uk)) at the FZY office to explore additional payment methods.

### What if I can't afford the full cost of Israel Tour?

FZY is an inclusive youth movement and we understand, especially during the challenging financial times brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic downturn, that not everyone can pay the full price for Israel Tour. Therefore, there is financial assistance available for families that are unable to pay the full price of the programme from FZY and the UJIA. As part of the initial online application form there is an opportunity to request financial assistance. If you require further information and/or your circumstances have changed and you did not request financial assistance on the initial application form, please contact Claire ([claire@fzy.org.uk](mailto:claire@fzy.org.uk)) at the FZY office in confidence. She will be able to explain the financial assistance process further and answer any questions you may have.

### What are the key dates I should be aware of when applying for Israel Tour?

Applications for Israel Tour open on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> December 2024. FZY has limited spaces available so complete your forms early to avoid disappointment. If you are not offered a place, you may be put onto a waiting list or our partners at UJIA Israel Experience may be able to support you to get a place with a different Youth Movement/Organisation.

### Are there limited spaces on Israel Tour?

Yes. FZY have a certain number of flights to Israel that have been reserved. Additionally, to ensure a high standard of programming, there are a limited number of madrichim (leaders) who can facilitate the groups. FZY envisions being able to take several hundred participants on Israel Tour, but should applications be very high, there will be a limit on the number of applications we can accept.

### Will my child have priority if they have been on an FZY programme in the last 12 months?

Yes. Those participants that have been enrolled on an FZY programme these past two years will receive priority if they apply to Israel Tour before 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024. After this deadline passes, FZY can no longer provide priority to anyone. Even within the time allocated for priority placement, FZY will still operate on a first-come first-serve basis and there may be other factors, i.e., ensuring balanced Israel Tour groups with regards to gender, etc. or governmental regulations relating to a viral pandemic that may impact the acceptance process.

### Will there be an information evening?

Absolutely, FZY will be having two information evenings tailored towards parents this year. The first is open to anyone who is interested in sending their child(ren) on FZY Israel Tour this summer. The information evening will begin at 7.30pm on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2024 and it will provide an overview of the FZY Israel Tour programme with a focus on security, insurance and cancellation policies. A recording of this information evening will be available on [FZY's YouTube channel](#) shortly after its conclusion for those who may have missed it or would like to refresh themselves with some of the information. We will be setting a date for a second information evening closer to the time for those parents who have registered their child(ren). We will share this date and other information about the meeting with parents/guardians in due course.