



July 2019

Shalom Aglow Israel travelers,

We are so excited for our upcoming trip and to be together in Jerusalem. We have 46 nations and territories that will be represented in our Convocation!

This email contains information to help you get ready for the wonderful experience of being in the land of Israel. You can also find a great deal of information on the Gate 1-Aglow web site related to hotels, climate, currency, clothes to bring, etc. The Convocation and Tour Daily Itinerary is included in this email (at the bottom). You may want to print it and bring it with you so you will know what is planned for each day of the trip. Below is additional information specific to our Aglow trip that will help you plan well for your journey.

HERE ARE SOME IMPORTANT GUIDELINES TO REMEMBER FOR YOUR TRIP:

- **PASSPORT AND VISA IF NEEDED:** You will need your passport to get into Israel. If your passport is due to expire 6 months or less from the September trip you will need to renew your passport beforehand. The United States and some countries do not require Visas to enter Israel but if your nation requires one be sure to travel with your Visa documentation.
- **AIRPORT SECURITY:** Many airports have extra security for flights travelling to Israel. You may have some additional security at your gate before boarding. When arriving in Israel they will ask your purpose for coming and you can respond that you are attending a Conference in Jerusalem and doing a tour (if applicable). When flying out of Israel, they will ask you some questions. They can pull an individual or some from your group for extra security. They will go through your luggage and it can take some time. You can also be selected for extra security when going through security to your gate for your flight home. Only answer exactly what is asked and be respectful to Israel's security process.
- **AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION:** Those who have made airline arrangements through Gate 1 Travel, or who are coming in groups from other nations and have let Roberta Yesowitch know when your group is arriving, will be met at the Ben Gurion Airport and transported on buses to your hotels. There will be someone with a Gate 1 Travel/Aglow sign in the arrivals hall that will direct you to the buses.

If you booked "Land Only" and are arriving independently or you have booked your own hotel, you will need to get your own transportation to your respective hotel. There are taxis, rideshares (like Uber), and buses at the airport.

- **CARRY-ON ITEMS:** Be sure to carry at least one change of clothes and all your necessary medicines in your carry-on bag. Occasionally, your luggage may not arrive in Israel when you do so having a change of clothes can be helpful.
- **CREDIT/DEBIT CARDS:** If you plan to use your credit/debit card in Israel, it is wise to notify the credit card company before you leave home so they will honor purchases made while in Israel. If you plan to access an ATM, give your bank the same information about your plans to travel to Israel. ATMs are not always easy to find. Cash at an ATM will be in Israeli currency only.
- **CONVOCATION OFFERINGS:** We will be taking offerings at the Convocation sessions. We will have credit card forms available. We would prefer credit card or check donations and they will be processed within a couple weeks upon Aglow staff returning to the office.
- **MEALS:** Breakfast and Dinner is provided at your respective hotels if you have booked your hotel through Gate 1 Travel. The Meals are large buffet style and you will have many food options to choose from. Lunches are on your own.
- **ELECTRONIC DEVICES:** Remember to bring chargers and appropriate adapters for your smart phones, cameras, and other devices. (So if you are coming from the United States or from any country that supports 110 volts, you may also need a converter to 220/230 volts. Most modern devices such as mobile phones and laptops have a built-in converter. But if you have a 110 device, you do need an all-in-one converter and adaptor.)

If your devices require batteries, bring extra with you as they are very expensive in Israel.

We suggest turning off your data plan as international roaming fees can get very expensive. Most hotels have internet – some have **Wi-Fi**, some are free, some have daily fees for use. Ask at the reception desk for the Wi-Fi info or the code to log in.

- **WRISTBANDS:** If you registered in a hotel offered by Gate1 your wristband will be in your packet. Blue wristbands are for the main room, and green indicates the overflow room. If you registered in a hotel not offered by Gate1, please come to the Dan Jerusalem Hotel on Sunday evening (September 8th) between 6-9pm or between 7-9am on Monday (September 9th) to pick up your wristband. Please bring your passport as identification.
Note: No name tags will be issued for the Convocation. Your wristband will be needed for entrance into your designated room.

FOR TOUR PARTICIPANTS:

- **VERY IMPORTANT, PLEASE NOTE:** The tour itinerary can be very rigorous and includes extensive walking, climbing stairs, and uneven terrain. It is important to consider these aspects of the tour if you have limitations that would make it difficult to engage in these activities. If you are unable to keep up with the group on your bus, you may be asked to stay behind at the hotel. No one is allowed to sit out a portion of the day's activities in the empty bus.
- **CASH FOR TIPS:** It is important to tip a guide and driver approximately \$10 USD per day when on an international tour. Please bring **\$50 USD or the equivalent of in shekels or euros for tip money for your guides and drivers**. Tips are expected and are not included in the price of the tour. On our Aglow tour, we will collect the money from each traveler on the first day of the trip by passing an envelope and list of names where you will sign that you have put your tip money in. The funds are equally divided between the guides and drivers.

Tips for your hotel room cleaning staff, restaurant servers, and any other services, are included in your trip price. You do not need to tip extra unless you experience an especially helpful staff person.

- **LUNCH CASH:** In addition to tip money, plan to bring enough cash to cover daily lunches. (Many places where we may eat lunch don't take credit cards.) Paying in dollars, euros, or shekels is fine. Plan an average of \$10-\$18 USD per lunch. Some lunches may be more expensive, such as the Saint Peter's fish meal in Tiberius which can be \$20-25. However, most lunches are not that expensive and we try to offer you a variety of choices whenever possible. Soft drinks are always extra and are expensive in Israel.
- **EXCHANGING MONEY:** You may want to exchange a small amount of US dollars or euros for shekels at the airport or the hotel. **However, dollars and euros are readily accepted in many Israeli stores and restaurants.** Your change will be given to you in shekels. We don't recommend buying a large amount of shekels. The US dollar and the euro are roughly equivalent: \$1USD = €1 (euro). Current exchange rate for shekels: \$1 = a little less than 4 shekels.
- **WATER:** Because it is very hot and dry in Israel, dehydration is a VERY REAL concern. Dehydration can cause physical problems so it is very important to stay hydrated. We suggest you bring a supply of \$1 bills or €1 coins to purchase bottled water on the bus. A supply is kept in a cooler at the front of the bus and costs \$1 per bottle. You can also fill an empty water bottle at the hotel each morning if you wish, because the tap water at the hotel is fine to drink. Just remember to drink lots of water, even if you don't feel thirsty!
- **TOURING AS A GROUP:** Each bus will have an Israeli guide and driver as well as an Aglow host/hostess. It is very important to follow their instructions and stay with your group. It can cause the whole tour to fall behind if the guides or leaders must look for someone who is not with the group. Please respect the others in your group by staying together and following instructions.
- **APPROPRIATE ATTIRE:** When touring, plan to wear pants or skirts that come below the knees. Blouses or shirts should keep the shoulders covered because many of the places we visit are considered "religious sites" by both Orthodox, Jewish, and Christian groups. Bare shoulders and knees are considered inappropriate attire.
- **SUN SCREEN AND A HAT** are a must as it can be very warm and dry in many parts of Israel.
- **BRING ONE "WRAP" – A LIGHT SWEATER OR SWEATSHIRT.** The buses are air-conditioned and can get chilly, so having something to wrap around you is helpful.
- **BRING COMFORTABLE WALKING SHOES** – sandals, sneakers...shoes that are not new. There is extensive walking over cobblestones, rough surfaces, up and down steps, and over curbs. Your shoes should be sturdy and comfortable.
- **BRING YOUR SWIMMING SUIT AND WATER SHOES** – for the Jordan River Baptisms. There are swimming pools at several of the hotels. Also, if you wish to be baptized (or rededicated) in the Jordan River, a towel and white baptismal gown is supplied for a small fee of \$10 USD. However, the gown material is **very thin** and **is transparent** when wet. Plan to wear your bathing suit under the gown. There are showers in the changing rooms at the Jordan River.

Shalom and see you soon in Israel!