



JCC Association
Center for Israel Engagement

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PASS >>**



ISRAEL THROUGH THE CULINARY LENS

ITINERARY

MARCH 8–18, 2027



**Jewish Community Center
of Greater Baltimore**

Israel Through the Culinary Lens

- Tour Leader:** Sara Shalva
- Tour Co-chairs:** Jenn Kaplan and Shelley Hendler
- Tour Educator:** Dari Arbel

Shalom!

Welcome to this special journey with your friends from the JCC of Greater Baltimore. Together, we will discover Israel through the lens of the culinary arts—cooking, eating, and learning how the culinary arts can be a window into understanding Israeli society. Our journey in Israel will also recognize the changes in the country since the tragedy of October 7 and the ensuing war. Most importantly, we will get to know each other and return home with new friends and colleagues.

Please note:

Some meals or items indicated in the program are at participants' expense. The program is subject to change.

DAY 1: MONDAY, MARCH 8, 2027

Welcome to Israel

After safely landing at Ben Gurion International Airport in Tel Aviv, we will meet up and begin our journey together.

MORNING

If you arrive in the morning, we will begin our journey with a visit to Neot Kedumim, the world's only biblical nature reserve.

Meet up at Ben Gurion International Airport with the tour educator and JCC Association staff members.

Depart for Neot Kedumim, Israel's biblical nature reserve, where we will begin with a snack and the *Shehecheyanu* (blessing of gratitude) for our safe arrival in Israel.

Bibles in hand, we will briefly walk the land to get our footing in Israel. We also will have an opportunity to plant a tree, which can be dedicated in honor or in memory of a loved one.

Travel to Tel Aviv, check into the hotel, and have time to freshen up.

AFTERNOON

If you arrive in the afternoon, the group will be met at the airport by the tour educator and JCC Association staff members.

Check into the hotel and, time permitting, freshen up.

EVENING

7:30 P.M.

Opening dinner and introduction to the trip and to each other

"What Is the Israel I Am Coming Into?" with tour educator

OVERNIGHT

Prima City Hotel, Tel Aviv (or similar)

DAY 2: TUESDAY, MARCH 9, 2027

Beginning Our Journey Into Modern Israel and the Culinary Mosaic of the People of Israel

Today we will begin our journey with a look at how Tel Aviv has evolved as a modern Hebrew city, how we define Israeli cuisine, and how it has evolved over the 79-year history of the State of Israel.

MORNING

- 9 A.M.** “Creating the Cultural Zionist: The Vision for Tel Aviv”
On this guided walk, we’ll discuss the notion of Jewish leadership and peoplehood through the story of the building of Tel Aviv, beginning with a walk from the Old City of Jaffa through the city’s earliest neighborhoods of Neve Tzedek. What were the leaders’ challenges in founding Tel Aviv? What are the challenges of today’s leaders?
- 11:30 A.M.** Visit to [Asif](#), Israel’s culinary institute, to learn about the work they do to preserve and promote the food cultures of Israel
- 1 P.M.** Lunch at Balinjera Ethiopian Restaurant and a meeting with owner and chef Fanta Prada or her niece, social activist Ashagar Araro
- Free time to enjoy the Nachalat Binyamin arts and crafts market

AFTERNOON

- 3:30 P.M.** “Graffiti on the Walls”
A guided walk through the Kiryat Hamalacha neighborhood of South Tel Aviv to explore how the graffiti tells the story of Israel’s current social and economic status
- 5:30 p.m.** “It’s Five o’clock Somewhere”
Visit to the [Milk and Honey Distillery](#) for a cocktail workshop that will include a chance to see how whisky is made, tastings of some of the distillery’s products, and instruction from a mixologist about how to mix and shake cocktails and mocktails

EVENING

- Dinner on your own and a free evening
- Optional: Dinner (at an additional cost) at [BlackOut Restaurant](#) for a dining in the dark experience, followed by a free evening
- Advance booking is required.

OVERNIGHT

- Prima City Hotel, Tel Aviv (or similar)

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 10, 2027

Culinary Mosaic of the Jewish People

Today we will take a first look at the mosaic and diversity of Israel.

MORNING

Depart for a visit to the newly renovated [ANU-Museum of the Jewish People](#) (previously known as the Museum of the Diaspora), including a guided tour of [Foodish, the culinary wing of ANU](#), that tells the story of Jewish food traditions from around the world.

Depart for the Lewinsky Market in south Tel Aviv or the Carmel Market for a food-tasting tour that will have us enjoying the fresh produce and spices and exploring the ethnic diversity of foods sold in the market.

AFTERNOON

“What’s in a Supermarket?”

A visit to a local supermarket to explore what’s on the shelves and discover how the store is similar or different from stores at home

4 P.M.

“A Window Into Moroccan Culture”

We’ll participate in a Moroccan food demo and workshop with chef [Nofar Zohar](#), including an early dinner to enjoy the fruits of our labor (kosher but without a kashrut license)

-or-

Moroccan cooking workshop at [Bishulim: The Culinary Institute of Israel](#) (with a kashrut license)

EVENING

Free evening

OVERNIGHT

Prima City Hotel, Tel Aviv (or similar)

DAY 4: THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2027

Remembering October 7 and the Strength of Community

Today we will travel south to visit the site of the Nova Music Festival massacre. We will hear how the affected communities coped with the invasion of the terrorists, how they are rebuilding, and explore the role of food in the healing process. We will spend time in Ashkelon, Baltimore's partnership community, and meet with friends, both old and new.

MORNING

8:15 A.M. Depart for the south, with a stop en route at the monument to the *tatzpitaniot* (IDF surveillance soldiers for an overview of the region

Visit the Tekuma car graveyard to hear stories of some of those whose cars were torched by Hamas terrorists as the cars' owners fled from the Nova Music Festival and other sites of terror

Continue south to the site of the Nova Music Festival, which has become a memorial to the more than 360 people who were murdered, taken hostage, or survived and have since taken their own lives

Depart for Ashkelon, where we will eat lunch

AFTERNOON

We will spend the afternoon and evening in Ashkelon, learning about the special connection and relationship between it and Baltimore. Details of the program will be determined together with colleagues in Ashkelon.

EVENING

Late evening return to Tel Aviv

OVERNIGHT

Prima City Hotel, Tel Aviv (or similar)

DAY 5: FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2027

Preparing for Shabbat

MORNING

Check out of the hotel

Depart for Abu Ghosh to visit the cottage industry's [Al Yasmin Halva and Tahini shop](#) to explore how tahini and halva are made and enjoy some tastings

Visit one of Israel's boutique wineries in the Jerusalem hills for a tasting and to learn how the ancient art of wine making has become a modern industry that holds a respected place in the international marketplace

-or-

Visit [Hamatsesa](#), a new and sustainable enterprise, to learn how cider and fruit juices are made from rejected fruit

Depart for Jerusalem

Lunch on your own in the Machane Yehuda Market

AFTERNOON

3 P.M. Check into the hotel

5 P.M. Kabbalat Shabbat at a local synagogue (optional); candle lighting

EVENING

Shabbat dinner at the hotel

OVERNIGHT Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem (or similar)

DAY 6: SATURDAY, MARCH 13, 2027

Shabbat Shekalim

(the first of four special Shabbatot that precede Passover)

Torah reading: *Pekudei* (Exodus 38:21–40:38)

Today will be a more leisurely day to enjoy Jerusalem and the spirit of Shabbat, relax, and/or meet up with friends and family,

MORNING

Participants will choose from several concurrent activity tracks:

Track 1: Leisurely morning to enjoy the hotel, meet family and friends, or visit the Israel Museum or other sites

Track 2: Shabbat services at a local Jerusalem synagogue

Track 3: (begins at 10 a.m.): Depart for a guided walking tour to some of the main sites in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City

AFTERNOON

2 P.M. Shabbat lunch at the hotel

Optional walk in the vicinity of Yemin Moshe, the first neighborhood to be built outside the walls of the Old City

4:30 P.M. “Current Events in Israel: What the Weekend Papers Are Talking About”
Discussion with an Israeli journalist

6 P.M. Meet up for discussion and Havdalah

EVENING

Dinner on your own and free evening

OVERNIGHT Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem (or similar)

DAY 7: SUNDAY, MARCH 14, 2027

Modern Day Israel: Challenges and Achievements in Food Security

Food is central for survival and for the soul. Today we will look at food insecurity, attempts to curb hunger for some Jerusalem residents, and explore one of the staples of the Mediterranean diet.

MORNING

- 7:30 A.M.** Depart for Mezilat Mazon, the [Jerusalem Food Rescuers](#) at the Givat Shaul Wholesale Market
This non-profit organization aims to create a more just and sustainable urban food system with less waste, diverting surplus produce that would otherwise be wasted to support communities that don't have equitable access to food. Following a short tour of the market, there will be an opportunity to volunteer and participate in a food workshop.
- 11 A.M.** Depart for Machane Yehuda fruit and vegetable market, for a food tasting tour to discover the diversity of foods and cultures in the market

AFTERNOON

- 3 P.M.** Visit the Shalom Hartman Institute or Pardes for a study session ("Poetry After October 7" with educator and Hartman fellow Rachel Korazim is a possibility.)
-or-
Depart for the newly opened [National Library of Israel](#) for a tour of its art, architecture, and special treasures.

EVENING

- Depart for the Judean hills for dinner and world music at [HaCanaanite restaurant](#) in Kfar Adumim
-or-
Dinner at [Jacko's Street](#) or [Harvey's Smokehouse](#) in Jerusalem

- OVERNIGHT** Prima Kings Hotel, Jerusalem (or similar)

DAY 8: MONDAY, MARCH 15, 2027

Rebuilding Lives and Community

Today we will travel north, continuing our culinary theme through volunteering and participating in culinary workshop

MORNING

Depart for the north

Volunteer to sort and pack rescued fruit and vegetables at [Leket's Logistics Center](#) in Gan Haim (central Israel) for distribution to its nonprofit partners. Leket is the national food bank and one of the leading food rescue organizations in Israel.

-or-

Volunteer in the fields picking fruit or vegetables through Leket.

Lunch at [Hanan ha-Gaban](#) (Haban the Cheesemaker)
Dairy at Moshav Herut

AFTERNOON

Visit the Tishbi Vinery for wine tasting and to meet Oshra Tishbi who has developed a range of fine foods

5 P.M.

Travel to Daliyat HaCarmel and through [Galileat](#), participate in a (kosher) Druze food workshop to understand the culture and food of this important community

EVENING

Check into the hotel

OVERNIGHT [Ayala Hotel](#), Ayelet HaShachar

DAY 9: TUESDAY, MARCH 16, 2027

Growth and Resilience on the Northern Borders

Following the events of October 7, many of the communities on the northern border were evacuated, and during the war in 2025, many were badly damaged. Today, we will meet with some of those who are looking to rebuild and strengthen the communities of the north.

MORNING

(If staying at a kibbutz guest house, we will begin the day with a walk around the kibbutz.)

Travel to Kiryat Shmona

Easy hike in Tel Dan or Banyas or the cherry orchards in bloom on Kibbutz Margalot to enjoy the spring blooms

Meet with participants on the Shnat Sherut 50 Plus program. Supported by the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC), this is a volunteer program in which retired Israelis spend a year in development towns, lending their experience and expertise in education, psychology, social work, business, and other disciplines.

Lunch on own

AFTERNOON

Visit the [Margalit Food Startup City](#) to get a sense of the food industry of the future, including challenges and successes

-or-

Visit the newly opened [JNF Galilee Culinary Institute](#) to learn about the vision to strengthen the communities of the north through the culinary arts

EVENING

Dinner at hotel

OVERNIGHT

[Ayala Hotel](#), Ayelet HaShachar

DAY 10: WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2027

Coming Full Circle

Today we will end our time in Israel, and reflect on the various experiences we have shared.

MORNING

Optional early morning walk or yoga

10 A.M.

Check out of the hotel

Depart for Café Marag at Kfar Vradim, a social and occupational rehabilitation center for people with disabilities and a cultural and communal center for local residents and tourists

-or-

Depart for Kishor Winery, located on Kibbutz Kishorit, a home for adults with special needs. In this community, the members are active contributors to the important work of the winery, which is an integral part of the community.

AFTERNOON

Hafreshat challah | Separating challah is a ceremonial removal and burning of a small piece of challah dough as a symbolic offering before baking. Harkening back to Temple times, the ceremony has become synonymous with a time for reflection, prayer, and gratitude, offering a special way to bring our journey to an end.

EVENING

Final dinner

Depart for the airport for return flights



JCC Association
of North America

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