

JCC Maccabi Israel: Spectator Information

From July 5-25th, 2023, 1000+ Jewish teen athletes, coaches, and chaperones representing 50+ delegations across North America will come together for a very special JCC Maccabi Games program in **Israel**. This transformative experience will begin with an 8-day Olympics-style JCC Maccabi Games experience in the Haifa area. JCC Maccabi delegations will then hit the road for an action-packed and fun-filled tour across the country including visits to Israel's most culturally, religiously, and historically significant sites and opportunities to continue their JCC Maccabi journey with old and new friends as they explore Israel through the lens of sport. As we celebrate Israel @ 75, the Israel Games present an unmatched opportunity to strengthen teen and community connection to the Jewish people and Israel.

We welcome family members and friends to join us in Israel as visiting spectators and we are pleased to share the following exciting opportunities for families and friends to join in on the Games in Haifa from July 9th-13th and encounter Israel alongside the JCC Maccabi experience.

JCC Maccabi Israel Games - Spectator Experience – July 9-13th, 2023

Join in on the magic of Opening Ceremony and take in all the action of the athletic competition with a JCC Maccabi Israel Spectator Experience pass. When you're not watching the competition, take advantage of day trips in the Haifa area.

- Register [here](#) for a spectator credential that includes access to all athletic events and opening ceremony
- Cost
 - Early bird pricing until 3/15: \$18 for ages 5-12, \$40 for ages 12 and up
 - Standard pricing beginning 3/16: \$36 for ages 5-12, \$60 for ages 12 and up

Optional add-ons:

- Hotel Accommodations - we have secured room blocks for JCC Maccabi spectators in Haifa, and will secure blocks in an additional Haifa hotel as well as a hotel in Netanya (suggested for hockey and baseball spectators) and are available on a first come, first serve bases:
 - [Hotel Reservation Request Form](#) (Additional hotel information will be added soon)
- Day trips / spectator special event options in the Haifa area info will be provided at later date

JCC Maccabi Israel Spectators Trip – July 13-20th, 2023

Once the Games in Haifa are over, JCC Association invites you to join the official JCC Maccabi Games Spectator Trip – a week-long fun-filled and eye-opening journey through Israel. While the teen athletes are beginning their own journey, we are offering you this special opportunity to explore and enjoy the very best of Israel for yourself. Our experience is designed for families and friends of athletes taking part in the JCC Maccabi Games in Israel. The programming begins on Thursday July 13th, after the final sport competition is over. Join us!

Overview:

- July 13 – July 20
- Week-long tour of Israel
- Professional tour guide
- Family friendly trip

For more information including a sample itinerary, pricing and more, visit our trip link [HERE](#).

Spectator Experience Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Can I fly with my teen to Israel?

A: Parents are welcome to book any travel they wish, but we are unable to book them as part of the delegation group booking. The athletes will be arriving in Israel on 6th July, a few days before the Games officially begin and will have programming, practices and a JCC Maccabi Games Shabbat experience before the official Games program begins on 9th July. As spectators will not have access to participants outside of the sport competition sites and opening ceremony, we therefore recommend spectators to arrive on July 8th or 9th (first day of competition/opening ceremony). If you would like help coordinating your own flights, feel free to reach out to our travel partner, Traveland, at 1-800-246-0563 or Maccabi@traveland.net.

Q: When can I see my teen?

A: As registered spectators, parents have access to watch any athletic events (July 9th-13th) as well as attend the Opening Ceremony on the evening of July 9th. All athletes must stay in the JCC Maccabi program system and cannot be taken off site or receive outside visitors other than at the sport competition venues. Athletes will be staying in official Games hotels and may not leave to stay in a different hotel/accommodation with family members.

Q: Are all the sports taking place in Haifa?

A: Most sports will take place in Haifa. Ice hockey (Tnuvot - near Netanya) and baseball (Ra'anana) will be hosted in other locations. If you have an athlete competing in one of those sports, we recommend you stay closer to those facilities.

Q: Where should we stay in Haifa?

A: We have secured a block of spectator hotel rooms at the Dan Carmel Haifa. We will secure additional rooms at another Haifa hotel as well as a hotel in Netanya (recommended for hockey/baseball spectators) that are available on a first come first serve basis.

Q: Is transportation provided by JCC Maccabi to attend athletic events?

A: Spectator passes do not include transportation. We recommend that families rent a car or download the Gett app (similar to Uber).

Q: When will we know when and where my teen is playing?

A: Athletic schedules will come out closer to the start of the Games. Events begin on July 9th, so plan to be in the Haifa area by then to get the full JCC Maccabi experience!

Q: Will there be other programming for spectators other than watching events?

A: Yes, we will be offering some optional day/half-day trips in the Haifa area. More information will be shared with registered spectators as the Games draw closer and sport schedules are clearer.

Q: Can my teen join us for the Israel Spectators trip?

A: No, all athletes must remain a part of the JCC Maccabi program for the full 3 weeks. The Spectator Trip is a separate program for parents and families who wish to enjoy their own parallel travel experience.

Q: Is food included in the Spectator Pass?

A: No. Food is not included but there are many great dining options, both casual and upscale, in the Haifa area.

Spectator Trip Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What are the dates of the trip?

A: The spectator trip begins on Thursday late afternoon July 13 through to July 20. It will begin in Haifa and end in Tel Aviv.

Q: I am coming to watch the JCC Maccabi Games with my extended family, but only myself and one other person are interested in the JCC Spectator Experience trip after the Games – is this ok?

A: Certainly, this trip is an optional extension to the Games.

Q: I am not a member of my JCC, can I still participate in the JCC Spectator trip?

A: We are happy to have you along even if you are not a JCC member!

Q: Can I join for just part of the JCC Spectator trip?

A: No, this is a full week experience, and we hope you will be able to join for the whole week.

Q: Are all meals provided on the JCC Spectator trip?

A: The program includes breakfast at the hotel and one other meal a day – either lunch or dinner. The tour guide will be happy to recommend places to eat for the meal you have on your own. If it's lunch on your own, it is usually in the middle of a full day of sightseeing, so it will generally be a quick stop for a bite!

Q: Are the meals kosher?

A: All meals provided by the program are kosher.

Q: I have some special dietary needs/food allergies, can they be accommodated?

A: Be sure to note any special dietary needs as part of your registration. We will coordinate with our hotel and restaurant meal providers to arrange special accommodation as necessary. We make a good faith effort to accommodate food allergy considerations, however, we cannot make absolute guarantees on behalf of our meal-providing partners.

Q: I will be travelling on my own to watch the Games, is there a way that I can share a room with someone else for the JCC Spectator trip?

A: You can certainly share a room on the trip, however we are unable to make the match! You will need to find out if there is another participant interested in sharing

Q: I hope my child will get to the finals! Will I be able to watch all the games before joining the trip?

A: We hope so too – we will be starting the trip in the late afternoon after the games have concluded.

Q: If I need an extra night's accommodation at the end of the trip, can you assist with this?

A: Yes, we will be happy to be of help in arranging additional nights accommodation.

Q: How Active is the touring?

A: Because we want you to get the most out of your time in Israel, our touring days are full, and there is quite a bit of walking by foot. While none of the walks are strenuous, you will find at the end of the day that you have taken many steps! Be prepared for an average of 3-4 hours of walking a day over all manner of surfaces (cobblestones paths, nature trails, and uneven walkways, etc.). Additionally, the weather in Israel is hot in July, and the sun is more intense than you may be used to at home. When necessary, we will adjust the itinerary for your comfort, and you'll find that most days have opportunities to cool down with swimming or getting wet in general.

NOTE: Travelers who wish to take a break can opt-out as needed after coordinating with the guide. Travelers requiring walking support or with mobility constraints will not be well accommodated on this program.

Q: Who staffs the Spectator Experience Trip?

A: The program is led by an experienced, licensed Israeli guide who is with the group on a 24/7 basis. Your guide will be fluent in English and deeply knowledgeable about the history, culture, environment, and landscapes of Israel. Our guides are charismatic educators with expertise in informal education. Finally, our travel takes place on a spacious, comfortable, air-conditioned bus with a dedicated driver.

Q: What is the age composition of the group?

A: We recommend that this type of trip is suitable for children aged 6 and older. The trip is suitable for families spanning three generations and couples traveling without children are welcome as well! Until registration is complete, we won't know exactly what ages are on the bus!

Q: Is there a minimum number for this trip?

A: Yes, a minimum of 20 participants (adults and children). We encourage you to avoid booking non-refundable flights until we have notified you that the program is fully confirmed. If the minimum group size is not reached, your deposit will be refunded in full.

Q: How is this a Jewish Experience?

A: Israel Family Journey is a pluralistic Jewish travel experience open to all. Group meals are kosher, and there is no bus-based touring on Shabbat. The program is unaffiliated with any specific approach to Judaism. Travelers arrive with varying degrees of Jewish affiliation, and non-Jewish family members and friends are welcomed. Our goal is to provide a complete first-time experience in Israel through the lens of Jewish history and identity.

Q: How all-inclusive is the experience?

A: In short, you're responsible for arranging your own flights to and from Israel, and we take care of most everything else! The program covers two meals a day, all touring, a fantastic staff team, hotel accommodations including luggage portage, and deluxe motorcoach transportation. An airport greeting and roundtrip airport transfers are offered on the arrival day, the day before the arrival day, and on the final evening of the program. Gratuities to the tour guide and driver are also included. You'll be responsible for one meal a day, specialty beverages at group meals and buying souvenirs!

Q: How should I arrange my travel to and from Israel?

A: Basic guidelines for planning your travel to/from Israel are summarized below. More detailed advice is contained in the Pre-Trip Prep Guide. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or for advice on booking flights.

TRAVEL TO ISRAEL

All participants are expected to make their own air travel arrangements to and from Israel (book your flights via a travel agent). The only international airport in Israel is “Ben Gurion” (airport code: TLV), located just 40 kilometers from Jerusalem (approx.25 miles) and 15 kilometers (approx. 9 miles) from Tel Aviv. Non-stop flights are available from several major North American cities, including NYC, DC, Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Newark, Miami, Dallas, and Toronto. Many connecting flight options are available via Europe.

Q: How do I get to the airport at the end of the trip?

A: At the end of the program on July 20, participants will be escorted back to Ben Gurion Airport in time for overnight flights departing between 10:30pm and 1:00am the next day. No hotel is included this evening unless arranged separately.

Participants booked on return flights outside of this window can be accommodated with an airport transfer by special arrangement, and additional fees will apply (note: taxis from Tel Aviv to Ben Gurion Airport are inexpensive, ubiquitous, and reliable).

Those travelers extending their stay in Tel Aviv can be accommodated at our beachfront hotel based on our group rates, which include breakfast and our standard cancellation terms.

Q: Do I need a visa to travel to Israel?

A: Firstly, it is very important to check to make sure that you know where your passport is and that it is not expired or about to expire. Your passport must be valid for at least six months from the date you arrive in Israel. If your passport expires within this period, please start the renewal process today. Airlines will deny you boarding if your passport is not valid according to this policy. If you are traveling to Israel on a USA, Canadian, or European Union member country passport, a visa is not needed to enter Israel. If you are traveling on a passport from another country, you may need a visa to enter Israel. If needed, our office can provide you with a program participation letter.

Q: Are there any COVID restrictions?

A: Currently there is no requirement for entry forms or proof of vaccination to visit Israel. Nor are there masking requirements. However, we are all familiar with how quickly things may change, so please stay up to date in case requirements may change.

Q: Does the trip include travel insurance? Health insurance?

These can be purchased separately by your own insurance agent or through the following links for [travel insurance](#) or local [medical insurance](#) (Available separately).

We strongly advise that you take out travel insurance with the clause “cancel for any reason”