# FAQs

## ISRAEL TOUR 2027

## Who runs 'Israel Tour'?

Israel Tours have been run successfully for decades through a partnership of UJIA Israel Experience, the Youth Movements/Organisations, and Tour Providers in Israel (the Organisers). When you sign up, you do so through the Youth Movement/Organisation of your choice, but the success of Tour relies on each of the Organisers playing their part.

**UJIA Israel Experience** (a department of The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) 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 Movements/Organisations and Tour Providers in Israel to help ensure Israel Tours run smoothly and to high standards.

**The Youth Movement/Organisation** will be responsible for the educational content, delivery and ethos of the programme, and all communication with you. They are Bnei Akiva UK, BBYO, CTeen, Ezra Youth, FZY, Habonim-Dror UK, JLGB, LJY-Netzer, Noam Masorti Youth, RSY-Netzer, Sinai Youth, and Tribe.

**The Tour Provider in Israel** is responsible for all 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 UJIA Israel Experience Important Information Booklet, including the UJIA Israel Experience Terms and Conditions. If there is a conflict or inconsistency between the information in these FAQs and the UJIA Israel Experience Important Information Booklet, the terms of the UJIA Israel Experience Important Information Booklet prevail.

## Which Youth Movement/Organisation should I choose?

Each Youth Movement/Organisation offers something different and provides a unique experience, building a programme around their specific ideologies, religious outlook and educational curriculum. Please visit https://ujia.org/israel-tour/ where you can click through to all the different Youth Movements/Organisations. You can also contact the

Youth Movements/Organisations directly to find out more information about the requirements and expectations of each programme, and whether it suits your child.

## How and when do I apply?

Applications for this summer are scheduled to open in November, and links to apply online will be available via the youth movement websites which can be found here: https://ujia.org/israel-tour/.

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 29th 2027 (all dates are subject to change. On occasion, late applicants can be accommodated. Please contact your movement directly if the deadline has passed to check availability.)

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

Yes, there are a number of avenues for support including **bursaries, loans, subsidies, and scholarships.**

Both the Youth Movement you apply to 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.

You can also get in touch with your Youth Movement/Organisation to learn more about subsidies via our partnership with Mosaic United, and scholarships that are available.

Additional information about these will be available online closer to the application launch date, and full details will be signposted when you complete your application forms.

## What insurance cover is there for the programme?

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

your behalf by your Youth Movement 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 your movement 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 if 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 (£75). During the initial application form you will be asked if you are interested in a Flight Deviation. This can include changing your 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 Tour look and feel like?

Visiting Israel at this time has taken on a special significance and our experiences over the past 3 years 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 our support, and there will of course be a strong emphasis on volunteering and social action projects within the itinerary. The Youth Movements running Israel Tour excel at managing the balance between creating an educational experience that is both meaningful and enjoyable. There will of course be opportunities to experience culture, water sports, beaches, coral reefs, deserts, mountains and more. We will only go to areas approved by Cheder Matzav (Israel's 'Situation Room' for trips/tours) 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. Have a conversation with your Youth Movement for more details about what they are planning, and their ideological and educational outlook for Tour.

## What is the cancellation policy?

A full cancellation policy will be available via your Youth Movement/Organisation, as well as in the Terms & Conditions you receive when you apply.

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 29th January 2027, 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.

Please note, you can only apply to one youth movement's Israel Tour per applicant. If you apply for multiple movements for the same applicant your full deposit will be non-refundable after 48 hours.

## If the UK Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) guidance advises against all but essential travel to Israel – does this mean we can't go?

Several times since the October 7th attacks the FCDO has advised against all, and all but essential travel, to large parts of Israel. However at the time of launching Tour there are no restrictions on the vast majority of travel in Israel. Israel Tour can take place even if the FCDO advice changes. That is because over the past three years we have risk assessed Israel Tour, 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 able to put in place, even during times of war and uncertainty.

The FCDO publishes guidance on how to interpret its travel advice here: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/about-foreign-commonwealth-development-office-travel-advice: 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 2024, 2025 and 2026.

We understand that each individual Youth Movement and 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?

Since 2023 we made significant steps to ensure additional security is in place, and an increased level of provision to care for the participants on Israel Tour is available. 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. For the last three years:

i. All Israel Tour groups had an armed security guard at all times.
ii. All Israel Tour groups had a 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 had knowledge of the location of shelters at each place of accommodation.
iv. All Tour Providers had an emergency protocol in place for locating all participants immediately in the event of an emergency situation.
v. There was 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 often also through your Youth Movement.

vi. Additional training was given to UK Madrichim on safety & security best practice.

vii. When participants were given free time, it was always within specific geographical boundaries. Participants are split into sub-groups of no less than three Participants and will have to report to their Israel Tour Madrichim/ot (Leaders) at regular intervals.

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

Israel Tours under UJIA Israel Experience have been run for decades through periods of conflict and unrest, including running safely in the summers since October 7th. 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 the last three summers, in 2014, during the Intifada, and on other occasions of unrest.

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. All UJIA Israel Experience Tours are 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 ELAL 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 Youth Movements, the UJIA Israel Experience network supporting those 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 ELAL, The Jewish Agency, and Tour Providers on the ground. 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, Cheder Matzav, or Israeli Government advise us against coming to Israel or curtailing Tour, this would be cause for cancellation. Likewise, should ELAL not be able to fly and travel becomes 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.

We are proud that the Israel Tour project has not been cancelled in the last three years, despite significant last-minute challenges and escalations. Whilst individual Youth Movements/Organisations may make their own decision on cancellation timelines, the overall viability of Israel Tour can be confirmed at very short notice. When signing up for Israel Tour you should understand that even if there appears to be uncertainty, Israel Tours will still go ahead if it is safe to do so on the ground.

## 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 as possible to you, with an adjustment made for how much of the programme had already elapsed, and any additional costs incurred in repatriating participants.

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UJIA Israel Experience works closely with a wide network of Youth Movements and organisations in the UK, tour providers in Israel, and Israeli security services. This has enabled us to run Israel Tours safely for decades through conflict and unrest, and has ensured that these formative educational experiences will continue to be a rite of passage for countless young people in the British Jewish community.

It is clear that continuing to arrange and support trips to Israel is more important than it has ever been. We continue to have an educational responsibility towards our youth to provide them with meaningful educational Israel experiences, but this summer's Israel programming will also bring a vital and much needed boost to local communities who are deeply appreciative of diaspora Jewry's solidarity at this time.