



ISRAEL FOOD RESCUE: BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL VOLUNTEER MISSION

Volunteer Orientation Guide

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WELCOME TO ISRAEL FOOD RESCUE: BIRTHRIGHT ISRAEL VOLUNTEER MISSION

You are about to embark on a mission to support Israel's agriculture community during a time of extraordinary need. You will help heal and cultivate the land following the destruction wrought by Hamas on October 7, 2023.

This mission is challenging and rewarding. You may participate in any part of Israel's agriculture sector, from planting to pruning, harvesting to packing. You may work with a variety of crops, or you may focus on a single one. We go where we are needed, and we do the work that is demanded by the farmers who request our help. Thank you in advance for maintaining an open mindset and flexibility. This experience is rewarding and memorable!

In this guide we will prepare you for what to expect.

If you have any questions, you can find us on email and WhatsApp.

Thank you for entrusting your Israel volunteer experience to us.

B'Shalom,

Rabbi Randy Brown

CEO & Founder

RabbiRandy@israelfoodrescue.com

+1.202.699.2884

Steven Kravitz

Partner, Finance & Administration

Steven@israelfoodrescue.com

+1.301.351.3376



ABOUT ISRAEL FOOD RESCUE

Israel Food Rescue is a Zionist, nonpolitical, and religiously pluralistic volunteer program that aids needy Israeli farmers and protects Israel's food security.

Israel Food Rescue was founded by Rabbi Randy Brown as a response to the attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. Steven Kravitz and Claudia Kraut were pioneering mission leaders and instrumental in the growth of the program. We conceived this program to make it easy for people who care about Israel to help during this agriculture crisis.

IFR is partnering with Birthright to create this unique opportunity. IFR is the lead educational provider and Israel Experience, who is a contractor for Birthright, will coordinate travel logistics.

The IFR team in Israel consists of Mission Leaders Imbar Slavat, Aaron Shrock, and Shari Rabinowitz. Imbar, will be your day-to-day contact. They will communicate the daily schedule, assist with hotel and meals, accompany you to the farm, and be onsite during the days. They are your first line of support if any issues arise, and, if needed, will escalate to either Randy or Steven.

Every IFR volunteer will be included in several WhatsApp chat groups:

DAILY SCHEDULE: This is outbound only. Your Mission Leader will let you know the specifics of the following day, including meal times, bus times, recommended attire, and weather as well as any changes that may occur.

SOCIAL IFR: This is for photos, tips, planning meetups, etc. This is a purely social channel and should not be used for political posts or long discussions. Every IFR volunteer is invited to stay in this channel, even after your mission ends; it's a lovely community that provides continuity among our alumni. Any inappropriate comments will be deleted and removed from the group, and if this behavior persists you will be removed from the group.



FARMWORK 101

Israel Food Rescue volunteers have picked fruit trees, pruned tomato and cucumber plants, planted fennel, and packed fruits and vegetables. The work depends on the needs of the farmers who've asked us for help. Sometimes volunteers get to work with different crops, and sometimes the need is great and your time is spent on just one crop. Whatever you are called to do, remember you are helping farmers who might otherwise lose their livelihood and you are putting produce on the plates of the Israelis.

Farm labor can require manual dexterity, bending, kneeling, reaching, or carrying produce baskets. Don't worry! Our volunteers have ranged in age from 14 to 83, and we can always adapt the work to your capabilities. There are ways to modify the task to suit any injury or fitness level. Volunteers are encouraged to take breaks and drink water as needed.

This is physical labor! You should be in reasonably good health with full mobility. Please consult your physician before registering if you have any concerns.

People often ask about what to wear and what gear to bring. The most important rule of thumb is to be comfortable, and to wear layers because temperatures can fluctuate. Cotton can become wet with sweat or water and drain your body heat in cold weather or impede evaporation and cooling in warm weather. Wool and synthetic materials in sports gear are great for long days outdoors. Jeans are fine, although hiking pants, work pants, or athletic wear may be more comfortable.

We recommend wearing long-sleeved shirts and pants. It will protect you from the sun, keep you warm in cool weather and prevent any scratches from trees/bushes.

Shoes must be closed-toed. Break in your work shoes or sneakers before you come!

A sun hat and sunglasses are highly recommended.

Remember to bring comfortable, casual clothes for the evening and appropriate clothes for Shabbat. See the packing suggestions page for more information.

Please note that your clothes will get dirty, and may get ruined. Laundromats are available in the vicinity of the hotel.

Please be aware we cannot guarantee there will be bathrooms at the farm site. It is very important to go to the bathroom before we leave in the morning.



CANCELTATION POLICY

FOR INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE REGISTERED FOR MISSIONS AFTER APRIL 1, 2025

1. Please note that if you cancel your mission fewer than 67 days before your arrival, you will forfeit your registration fees.
2. The \$400 single-room supplement will be refunded only with notice given 14 days or more in advance.

INCLUSION AND CIVILITY POLICY

Our volunteers have diverse political beliefs and varying levels of Jewish practice (some of our missions may include those of different religions and/or countries). We strive to be inclusive and respectful of all who join our program. Therefore, in individual and group discussions and in our WhatsApp chats, please do not discuss anything political in nature about any country including Israel nor anything related to religious practice and encouraging others to follow or adopt different beliefs or practices. Additionally, we want everyone to feel safe with their fellow volunteers so no one should be speaking harshly to any other volunteer or staff. We are all here to help the farmers, and everyone should feel comfortable with their fellow volunteers.

If at any time you feel someone has violated this policy, please notify an IFR Mission Leader promptly. IFR reserves the right to remove any volunteer who does not comply with this policy.



SECURITY AND SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

By joining our program, you are agreeing to accept the risk of traveling and working in a potentially dangerous situation. US citizens can register with the US State Department <https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step>. You can then be contacted in case of a family emergency in the US or regarding a crisis in Israel, during your trip.

The following safety recommendations were compiled by discussions with security officials and IDF field officers:

1. Before you travel to Israel, download the app pikud haoref from Israel Home Front Command. This app is available for iPhone and Android. Be sure to activate your GPS / location services, and allow the app access to your location. The app will warn you of any dangerous situations based on your location, so keep your phone with you at all times.
2. Carefully review all the life-saving safety instructions in the app, and remember them.
3. Always be aware of your surroundings. Locate the best place to go to in case of a problem, based on the following:
 - All buildings in Israel built after 1973 have a shelter (mamad in Hebrew). This is the best place to go to if you hear a siren. Most older buildings have a shelter nearby.
 - Try to stay calm when running to a shelter. Many people may be seeking shelter at the same time, and it's easy to get injured during the rush.
 - If there is no shelter in the building or nearby, the next best place is a basement.
 - If there is no basement, the next best place is under the staircase.
 - If you are outdoors, find the lowest point on the ground, such as a ditch. Drop to the ground and cover your head with your hands and arms.
 - If you are in a car or bus, exit and move away from it. Then drop to the ground and cover your head with your hands and arms.
 - You must stay in the shelter, or your position of hiding, for 10 minutes after the siren. If there are multiple sirens, wait 10 minutes after the last siren. This is very important, because even if the Iron Dome defuses the rocket, there may be falling debris.
4. Keep your passport(s) with you at all times, in case you need assistance from your embassy.



TRAVEL TO ISRAEL - 1

Passport	<p>A valid passport is required for travel to Israel.</p> <p>Please make sure your passport expiration date is at least 6 months beyond date of return.</p>
Visa	<p>The rules for travel to Israel have changed. Starting January 1, 2025 all travelers to Israel must have a valid visa or ETA-IL approval before they start their journey. Visitors from countries for which a visa is required for travel to Israel must still obtain a visa as before.</p> <p>For those from the US and Canada, you can get an ETA-IL permit using this link: https://israel-entry.piba.gov.il/. The application process is very simple and the site is in English. Israel Food Rescue volunteers will select the TOURIST category, not the volunteer category. The government of Israel has clearly defined those categories, and Israel Food Rescue falls into the tourism category. Note: Israeli citizens or holders of an Israeli identity number do not need to apply for an ETA-IL.</p>
Before Trip To Dos	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Call your credit card company and let them know that you will be in Israel so they don't think your charges are fraudulent. Make sure you are aware of any foreign transaction fees.• Call your cell phone service and see what they offer for international calls. You can also purchase an Israeli SIM card which will provide an Israeli phone number.• Take a photo of your plane tickets, passport, vaccination certificate, etc. While not a replacement, a copy makes it easier to obtain replacements if necessary.• US citizens: Register your travel for free with the U.S. State Department https://mytravel.state.gov/s/step. This way you can be contacted in case of a family emergency in the US, or regarding a crisis in Israel during your trip.• To avoid problems when passing through customs, keep medicines in their original, labeled containers. Bring copies of your prescriptions and the generic names for the drugs. If a medication is unusual or contains narcotics, carry a letter from your doctor attesting to your need to take the drug. If you have any doubt about the legality of carrying a certain drug into a country, consult the embassy or consulate of that country before you travel.• Bring one or two major credit cards and cash (see the Money section).• Put your name, address and telephone numbers inside and outside of each piece of luggage. Use covered luggage tags to avoid casual observation of your identity or nationality. If possible, lock your luggage.



TRAVEL TO ISRAEL - 2

Immunization and Health	<p>There are no required vaccinations for entry into Israel.</p> <p>Make sure you are up to date on your tetanus shot (every 10 years).</p> <p>The US CDC recommends being up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Routine vaccinations in the US include: Tetanus-Diphtheria-Pertussis (Tdap), Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR), Polio, Varicella (chickenpox), Shingles, Pneumococcal, Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, Meningococcal, and annual Flu vaccine.</p> <p>Information on vaccinations and other health precautions may be obtained from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Phone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) CDC Website: http://www.cdc.gov Traveler's Health Website: https://wwwn.cdc.gov/travel/ Website form to contact CDC: https://wwwn.cdc.gov/ContactUs/Form</p>
Coronavirus	<p>All tourists, regardless of vaccination status, are able to travel to Israel. Testing is not required before or after a flight, and quarantine / isolation is not required. While tests are available in Israel, we suggest you travel with a few.</p>
Customs	<p>You may bring in almost anything you'll need for personal use and convenience. Limited items per adult are: 44 pints cologne or perfume; 2 liters wine; 1 liter liquor; 250 grams cigars or loose tobacco; 250 cigarettes; gifts up to \$200.00 in value. Upon return to the US, you may bring in up to \$400.00 worth of items duty free. Please note: Many Israeli made items are not counted as part of your duty-free allowance as they are exempt from U.S. duty.</p>
Travel Insurance	<p>If you want travel insurance for lost luggage, delay, cancellation, please obtain this on your own.</p>
Electronics	<p>Don't forget batteries, chargers and adapters. The electrical current in Israel is 220 volt AC, single phase, 50 cycles. This is far stronger than the US AC current of 110. A plug adapter will not work unless it is 220 voltage adaptable; most laptop chargers work with both 220 and 110 plugs.</p> <p>Israeli sockets are usually three-pronged, and foreign-made appliances often require adapters for plugs. Travel adapters simply change the shape of your appliance's plug, so pay attention to voltage requirements.</p> <p>Virtually all hotel rooms have 110/220 electric shaver sockets. Our electricity outlets usually conform to European adapters, and hotels and electrical stores can easily supply you with the right adapter if necessary.</p>



TRAVEL IN ISRAEL - 3

Currency	<p>The Israeli Shekel (NIS) is the country's legal tender. The Shekel is divided into 100 agorot. The bills are in denominations of 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 shekels. There are coins of 1,5, and 10 shekels and 5,10, and 50 agorot. You may bring an unlimited amount of foreign currency into Israel, but can only take out up to NIS 1,000.</p> <p>You may wish to exchange some currency at the bank, in order to have cash for incidentals. We recommend that you change only a limited amount at one time, as it will cost you a fee to change back to your home currency. Most places have stopped accepting traveler's checks, but all major credit cards are accepted. There are also many ATM machines throughout Israel. Before traveling, check to see if your bank and credit card companies charge foreign transaction fees.</p> <p>Tourists who have exchanged foreign currency into NIS may exchange their shekels at any bank or at the airport, up to \$500. This will require the original exchange receipt.</p>
Tipping	<p>Tipping in Israel is very similar to tipping in the US. Use your own judgment, based on your personal satisfaction.</p> <p>Here are suggested guidelines for restaurants and hotels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The average restaurant tip is 15%. Tips are not expected at hotels for breakfasts. • Maids: We recommend approximately \$2.00 per person per day. • Taxicabs: Although Israelis do not normally tip taxi drivers, if you are pleased with the service, we recommend tipping 10% of the fare. <p>Tour guides and drivers: It is customary to show your appreciation to the guide and driver of your tour. Ask your Mission Leader for guidance.</p>
Value Added Tax	<p>The VAT (Value Added Tax, similar to sales tax) is currently 17%. All tourists in Israel are exempt from VAT when paying in foreign currency for services provided in Israel. It is advisable to charge all of your extras, including meals, to your room, and when checking out, pay in U.S. dollars or via credit card. Anything that is not charged to your room, even if paid in dollars, will be assessed the VAT.</p> <p>When purchasing items worth over NIS 400 in approved shops, be sure to ask for a completed "VAT Refund Form." This will entitle you to a VAT refund at the airport upon departure, located at the VAT RETURN counter (after security, near the Food Court). The refund will be given in cash after you present your purchase invoices. Please be sure to have with you the articles purchased, as you may be asked to present them. Note that items that include creams and liquids such as Ahava products, which are over the restricted quantity allowed by the airline, may not be allowed in your carry-on.</p>
Hotel	<p>Spirit of Herzl Hotel at 6 Shamai Street in Jerusalem is our home base. It is conveniently located in the heart of Jerusalem, 2 blocks off King George and Jaffa Streets and one block off of Ben Yehuda Street.. +972-26270000</p>



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Phone Apps	<p>Handy apps to have while traveling in Israel:</p> <p>Gett and Yango: If you plan on taking taxis, using an app greatly reduces the risk of overcharging. There is no Uber in Israel, but you can use GETT and Yango.</p> <p>Moovit: Information on public transportation systems</p> <p>Rav Kav: Use this to refill your Rav Kav card (public transportation card)</p> <p>Pikud Haoref: The official App of the Home Front Command provides alerts, guidelines and life-saving information in real time according to your location and areas of interest of your choice.</p> <p>Star Phone: Phone directory app</p>
Public Transportation	<p>Buses, trains, light rail: You can only use the Rav Kav app or Moovit app for public transportation, they do not accept cash.</p> <p>We recommend you download the Moovit app, you can use this app to purchase a bus, train or light rail ticket on your phone. Another option is to buy a Rav Kav card, that you can purchase at the airport and refill using the Rav Kav mobile app.</p> <p>On Saturdays and holidays, you can use a “Sheirut,” or a multi-passenger taxi. This service uses 7-seater minibuses, and operates on the exact routes of public bus lines. You can get on and off the “Sheirut” anywhere along the line, not only at bus stops.</p> <p>Taxis: When using taxis, insist that the driver use the meter. Prices change according to time of day, with evening rates typically higher. You can also use the Gett or Yango apps.</p> <p>Sherut: Only takes cash, make sure to bring 35-50 NIS with you</p>
Photo Etiquette	<p>Israel’s stunning landscapes and picturesque cities and towns make it truly a photographer’s paradise. Please be aware, however, that there are certain religious communities whose members do not want to have their picture taken. These include certain Orthodox Jewish sects and observant Muslims. Your discretion will save embarrassment.</p>



TRAVEL IN ISRAEL - 5

Food and Water	<p>Most Israelis eat a large breakfast, with smaller portions at lunch and dinner. Most restaurants cater to all sizes of appetite.</p> <p>The word kosher means food conforming to Jewish dietary laws. Certain animals and fish are prohibited, and dairy products may not be served together with meat. Most hotels and restaurants have kosher food, though it is easy to find non-kosher restaurants all over Israel.</p> <p>Tap water is safe to drink throughout Israel, and Israel's fresh fruit and vegetables are world-class. Bottled water is available everywhere as well. In hot weather, remember to drink more than you're used to!</p>
Shabbat	<p>In Jerusalem, most theaters and restaurants are closed on Friday nights and Saturdays until nighttime. Non-kosher restaurants remain open every day.</p> <p>In all major cities, most shops are closed, except in non-Jewish neighborhoods. Although some museums and public places stay open, they do not sell tickets on Shabbat; you must buy them in advance.</p> <p>Hotel restaurants and room service operate normally on Shabbat, with menu limitations. If you are driving on Shabbat, please be aware that if your route takes you through certain religious areas, residents may be disturbed to see motor vehicles.</p>
Time	<p>Israeli Standard Time is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, 1 hour ahead of mid-European Time. Israel is 7 hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time and 10 hours ahead of Pacific time.</p>
Internet	<p>Internet Cafes and public WiFi can be found almost everywhere. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv have municipal WiFi throughout the city.</p>
Laundry	<p>Laundromats are available near the hotel.</p>
Bank Hours	<p>Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm and 4:00 to 5:30pm. Monday and Wednesday: 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Fridays and holiday eves: 8:30 to noon.</p>



PACKING SUGGESTIONS

MEDICINES AND TOILETRIES

- Prescription medications should be clearly marked in their original containers

Israel has good pharmacies but here are things that you may want to consider bringing depending:

- A general antibiotic treatment, particularly if you are prone to a recurring infection that requires antibiotics; discuss with your healthcare provider.
- Antacid tablets
- Antidiarrheal tablets
- Cold suppressant
- Throat lozenges
- Dramamine or similar for motion sickness; or motion sickness bracelets
- Cream for itches and rashes
- Paracetamol (acetaminophen) or equivalent ache/headache remedy
- Anti-Inflammatory medication (aspirin, ibuprofen)
- Antihistamine tablets for allergies/allergic reactions
- Antiseptic solution or antibacterial cream/lotion
- Sunburn cream/sunblock
- Lip balm with sunblock
- Band-Aid strips
- Blister prevention strips or cream
- Nail scissors and tweezers. Not in aircraft hand luggage.
- Moleskin for blisters/blister prevention
- Oral rehydration packets such as Electrolade or powder Gatorade
- Inhaler or EpiPen
- Mild laxative
- Covid tests
- Toothbrush/toothpaste/floss
- Deodorant
- Comb/hair brush/small mirror
- Shaving supplies
- Contact lens solution
- Lotion

OTHER ITEMS

- Camera
- Batteries/chargers and adapters
- Sewing kit
- Pocket knife (optional, but sometimes handy)
- Extra pair of glasses and/or contact lenses
- Water bottle/Water bottle holder.
- Sunglasses
- Sun hat
- Woolite or similar for quick, single-item washes in your room
- Plastic bags for dirty clothes and shoes
- Knee pads

