FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Holy Land

37 questions · November 3, 2026

1. What makes a Holy Land journey a pilgrimage rather than an ordinary tour?

A pilgrimage is travel undertaken with a spiritual purpose. In addition to visiting historic places, pilgrims make time for prayer, worship, reflection, and fellowship so that the journey can deepen their relationship with God.

Approaching the itinerary with openness, patience, and respect helps turn each site into an opportunity for spiritual growth rather than simply another sightseeing stop.

2. How should I prepare spiritually before a Holy Land pilgrimage?

Many pilgrims prepare by praying regularly, reading the Gospel passages connected with the places on the itinerary, and reflecting on the intentions they wish to carry with them. Some also receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation or speak with a priest or spiritual director before departure.

A simple journal can be helpful for recording prayers, insights, and meaningful moments during the journey.

3. Will Mass or other prayer services be part of the pilgrimage?

Catholic pilgrimage itineraries commonly include Mass, prayer, Scripture reflection, or devotional time when scheduling and local permissions allow. Exact times and locations may change because sacred sites manage their own calendars and access.

Follow the final itinerary and the instructions of the pilgrimage leader for each day’s liturgical schedule.

4. Do I need a passport or visa for a Holy Land pilgrimage?

Every traveler needs a valid passport, and visa or travel-authorization requirements depend on nationality, routing, and the countries included in the itinerary. Entry rules can change, so do not rely only on past travel experience.

Review the official country information on the U.S. Department of State travel site and any instructions provided by Holy Land Tours and Travel before departure.

5. How long should my passport remain valid after the pilgrimage?

Passport-validity rules vary by destination and may also depend on transit countries. Many travelers are advised to have several months of validity beyond their planned return date and enough blank pages for entry and exit stamps.

Confirm the exact requirement for every country on your itinerary before making final travel arrangements.

6. Should I carry copies of my passport and travel documents?

Yes. Keep a paper copy of the passport identification page, insurance information, itinerary, and emergency contacts separate from the originals. A secure digital copy can also be useful if documents are lost or stolen.

Do not post passport images publicly or store them in an unsecured shared folder.

7. How should I check current safety conditions before departure?

Security conditions can change quickly, so travelers should review current government advisories shortly before departure and remain attentive to updates from the tour operator. Avoid relying on blanket statements that any destination is always safe.

U.S. travelers can consult the official travel advisories and should follow all instructions from local authorities, guides, and Holy Land Tours and Travel.

8. Can the itinerary change because of security, weather, or site closures?

Yes. Border procedures, security conditions, religious observances, weather, traffic, and local site decisions can require changes to the order or availability of visits.

The tour team may substitute, reschedule, or omit a stop when necessary to protect the group and keep the pilgrimage operating responsibly.

9. What health preparations should I make before traveling?

Schedule a medical or travel-health consultation well before departure, especially if you have ongoing conditions or take prescription medicines. Make sure routine vaccinations are current and ask whether any destination-specific precautions apply to your itinerary.

For official guidance, review the CDC Travelers' Health destination pages.

10. How should I pack prescription medicines?

Bring enough medicine for the entire trip, plus a reasonable reserve for delays. Keep medicines in their original labeled containers in your carry-on bag, together with a copy of the prescription or a physician’s letter when appropriate.

Some medicines that are common at home may be restricted elsewhere, so confirm destination rules before traveling with controlled or specialized medication.

11. Is travel insurance recommended for a Holy Land pilgrimage?

Comprehensive travel insurance is strongly recommended because international trips can be affected by illness, cancellation, delay, baggage problems, or an unexpected need for medical care. Coverage and exclusions vary considerably between policies.

Review cancellation, interruption, medical, evacuation, and pre-existing-condition provisions carefully before purchasing.

12. What physical activity should I expect on the pilgrimage?

Holy Land itineraries often involve extended walking, standing, stairs, hills, uneven stone surfaces, and getting on and off a motor coach several times a day. Sacred and historic sites may have limited seating or accessibility.

Begin a moderate walking routine before departure and discuss any health limitations with your medical professional and the agency before booking.

13. Can a traveler with limited mobility join a group pilgrimage?

Participation depends on the specific itinerary and the traveler’s ability to move safely through sites that may not meet U.S. accessibility standards. A traveler who needs regular physical assistance may need to bring a capable companion at personal expense.

Contact Holy Land Tours and Travel before registering so the agency can explain the demands of the itinerary and whether a private or modified arrangement may be more appropriate.

14. Are Holy Land pilgrimages suitable for older adults?

Many older adults participate successfully, but age alone does not determine suitability. The more important factors are stamina, balance, mobility, heat tolerance, and the ability to keep pace with a group schedule.

Review the itinerary honestly, prepare physically, and consult your doctor if you have concerns about walking, long flights, or chronic medical conditions.

15. What clothing is appropriate for churches and sacred sites?

Modest clothing is the safest choice. Shoulders and knees should generally be covered, and travelers should avoid clothing with offensive language or imagery.

A lightweight scarf or shawl can be useful for entering religious sites, while comfortable layers make it easier to adjust to changing temperatures.

16. What shoes should I bring?

Bring supportive walking shoes with good traction that have already been broken in. Uneven pavement, stone steps, slopes, and long periods of standing can make fashion shoes or new footwear uncomfortable.

A second comfortable pair is useful in case the first becomes wet or causes irritation.

17. What weather should I prepare for in the Holy Land?

Conditions vary by season, elevation, and location. Coastal areas, inland cities, desert regions, and higher locations can feel very different on the same itinerary, with warm days and noticeably cooler mornings or evenings.

Check the forecast shortly before departure and pack breathable layers, sun protection, and a light rain layer when appropriate.

18. How can I stay comfortable in hot or dry conditions?

Drink water regularly, use sunscreen, wear a hat, and choose lightweight clothing that protects the skin. Do not wait until you feel very thirsty before drinking.

Tell the guide promptly if you feel dizzy, unusually weak, confused, or unwell so the group can respond appropriately.

19. What kind of food is usually served during the pilgrimage?

Group meals commonly include Middle Eastern and Mediterranean dishes such as salads, bread, rice, vegetables, hummus, grilled meats, fish, and fruit. Hotels may also offer familiar international choices.

Menus vary by property and destination, so travelers should expect regional flavors and a structured group-meal schedule.

20. Can dietary restrictions or food allergies be accommodated?

Many hotels and restaurants can assist with common dietary needs when they receive advance notice, but not every kitchen can guarantee an allergen-free environment. Provide clear written information to the agency before departure and remind the guide when necessary.

Travelers with severe allergies should carry prescribed emergency medication and a translated allergy card.

21. Is tap water safe to drink throughout the itinerary?

Water quality and traveler tolerance can vary by location. Follow the guidance of the tour leader and hotel, and use sealed bottled water whenever local advice recommends it.

Stay hydrated and check that the bottle seal is intact before drinking.

22. What currency and payment methods should I use?

Local currencies vary across Israel, the Palestinian territories, and Jordan. Credit cards are accepted in many hotels, restaurants, and established shops, while cash remains useful for small purchases, donations, and markets.

Carry more than one payment method, keep small amounts of cash available, and ask your bank about foreign transaction and ATM fees before departure.

23. Should I notify my bank and card companies before traveling?

It is wise to review your bank’s international-use settings before departure. Some institutions no longer require a formal travel notice, but you should still confirm that your cards will work abroad and that your contact information is current.

Keep the issuer’s international support number separate from the card in case it is lost or blocked.

24. How should I protect money and valuables?

Carry only what you need for the day and keep your passport, cards, and extra cash in a secure place. Avoid putting a wallet in a back pocket or leaving valuables unattended on a coach, in a restaurant, or in an unlocked hotel room.

Use the hotel safe when appropriate and remain alert in crowded markets, transportation areas, and major tourist sites.

25. Are tips included, or should I budget for gratuities?

Tipping arrangements depend on the specific tour and may be collected in advance or handled according to instructions from the pilgrimage leader. Do not assume that an amount published for an older trip still applies.

Review the current itinerary, invoice, or pre-departure materials for the applicable gratuity policy.

26. What electrical voltage and plug adapters will I need?

Electrical voltage and outlet types can differ from those used in North America and may vary across the countries on the itinerary. Most modern phone and laptop chargers accept a broad voltage range, but the label on each device should be checked.

Bring a reliable universal plug adapter, and use a voltage converter only when the appliance specifically requires one.

27. Will I have Wi-Fi and mobile phone service?

Hotels commonly provide Wi-Fi, but speed and reliability can vary, especially during busy periods or outside major cities. Mobile coverage is generally available in populated areas but may be inconsistent in remote locations or while crossing borders.

Ask your carrier about roaming, or consider an approved international plan, SIM, or eSIM that matches the countries on the itinerary.

28. How can I avoid unexpected international phone charges?

Review your carrier's roaming terms before departure and understand how calls, texts, voicemail, background data, and hotspot use are billed. Disable data roaming unless it is included in your plan.

When practical, use trusted Wi-Fi and internet-based calling or messaging, but keep your phone secured with a passcode.

29. What can I pack in my carry-on bag?

Carry-on restrictions are set by aviation-security authorities and airlines. Medicines, travel documents, essential electronics, and one change of clothing are useful to keep with you, while liquids and prohibited items must comply with current screening rules.

Check the TSA What Can I Bring page and your airline's baggage policy before packing.

30. How much luggage should I bring?

Pack as lightly as practical because travelers may need to move luggage through airports, hotels, border points, and coach loading areas. Airline size, weight, and fee rules vary and can change.

Follow the baggage allowance shown in your final travel documents and confirm it directly with the operating airline before departure.

31. What happens if my checked bag is delayed?

Report the missing bag to the airline before leaving the baggage-claim area and keep the claim receipt. Place medicines, documents, essential toiletries, and a change of clothing in your carry-on so you can manage the first day without your checked bag.

Notify the tour leader promptly and keep receipts for necessary purchases in case your airline or insurer requests them.

32. What languages will I hear, and will English be enough?

Arabic, Hebrew, and English are commonly encountered, and other languages may also be heard at international pilgrimage sites. Guides and tourism professionals often communicate in English, but fluency varies by person and location.

Learning a few respectful greetings and expressions in the local language is appreciated and can enrich personal interactions.

33. What cultural and religious etiquette should I follow?

Speak quietly in places of worship, follow posted photography rules, avoid interrupting prayer, and respect separate areas or lines where they exist. Do not touch religious objects, clergy, or worshippers without permission.

Your guide may give additional instructions based on the customs of a church, mosque, synagogue, monastery, or local community.

34. May I take photographs at every sacred site?

No. Photography, flash, video, tripods, and mobile-phone use may be restricted during worship or inside certain sacred areas. Rules can also change during special services or crowded periods.

Look for posted signs and follow the instructions of the guide and site staff before taking pictures.

35. What should I expect at border crossings during a multi-country itinerary?

Border crossings may involve passport inspection, security questions, baggage checks, walking between processing areas, and waiting that cannot be predicted precisely. Requirements differ according to nationality and route.

Keep your passport and required documents accessible, answer officials clearly, and remain with the group unless instructed otherwise.

36. How can I manage jet lag and the time difference?

Time differences vary with your home location and seasonal clock changes. Begin adjusting sleep gradually before departure, stay hydrated during the flight, and seek daylight after arrival when practical.

Use the local time shown on your phone or hotel clock rather than relying on a fixed hour difference published months earlier.

37. What should I bring for prayer and personal reflection?

Useful items may include a small Bible, rosary, prayer book, journal, and a list of intentions from family or parish members. Keep the collection light enough to carry comfortably throughout the day.

Some pilgrims also bring small religious items for blessing, subject to the schedule and rules of the sites visited.