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# Safety and Security on Taglit-Birthright Israel trips



#1

## Safety First



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- The safety of participants is our top priority.
- A safety and security orientation is held for every group upon arrival in Israel.
- Trip Organizers brief participants regularly concerning the security arrangements and guidelines for the day.
- All Trip Organizers are experienced tour operators or providers and have undergone rigorous accreditation in order to run trips.
- Highly trained tour guides and staff, fluent in local languages and familiar with the entire country, travel with the groups at all times.







# Security Umbrella



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- **Taglit-Birthright Israel** constantly reviews and implements the most stringent security measures throughout your trip to ensure a comprehensive safety umbrella.
- No effort or expense is saved or spared for the safety and security of our participants.
- Trips may be postponed if we cannot ensure the safety of participants and an enjoyable trip.





# Security Policy

- The government of Israel is devoted to the safety and security of visitors and citizens alike.
- As a program in which the Israeli government is a partner, **Taglit-Birthright Israel** is in constant contact with Israeli security/public safety authorities.
- **Taglit-Birthright Israel** utilizes the same security system and procedures used for Israeli school and student groups.





## Alumni Speak Out

- "Several safety precautions were taken, including having two armed guards stay with our group throughout the ten day trip. However, I believe that it was the Israeli people who made me feel so safe. Adults went to work, and children went to school; life went on as always. The Israelis didn't live in fear, so why should I?"

- *Jeff Maurer*







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## Where will you go?

- Much of the program takes place in rural areas, away from borders.
- Many popular tourist sites are in the desert, by the sea or in the mountains.
- Although Israel is about the size of New Jersey, groups criss-cross the country throughout the trip.
- Israeli tour guides and peer participants who join each group will ensure that you see the very best Israel has to offer.





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## Where will you not go?

- The program does not travel to the West Bank, Gaza or East Jerusalem, other than the Jewish Quarter of the Old City.
- Groups do not visit any area or drive on roads deemed unsafe by Israeli authorities.
- Itineraries will be changed as security situations warrant.
- Participants do not leave the groups to travel, explore or visit with Israelis on their own during the ten-day trip.
- Changes are possible when permitted by the security authorities





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## Situation Monitoring Room

- **Taglit-Birthright Israel** travel programs are approved daily with the "Situation Monitoring Room" administered by the Israel Ministry of Education, and coordinated with the I.D.F., Israel Police and other security authorities.
- The Situation Monitoring Room operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.
- The Situation Monitoring Room issues guidelines as to where it is safe to travel and the best routes to use.
- The Situation Monitoring Room initiates contact at least twice daily with each and every **Taglit-Birthright Israel** group.
- A group's itinerary will be changed immediately if necessary (weather or security related).
- In the event of a health or security emergency, the Situation Monitoring Room arranges for immediate services to reach the persons involved.







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## Maximum Safety Measures

- A Global Positioning System (GPS) is carried by each group so authorities are aware of each group's location at all times.
- The GPS has a “distress button” that immediately signals the Situation Monitoring Room and opens a direct line of communication between them.





# Alumni Speak Out



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- "I was sure that we would be safe wherever we went due to the many safety checks undertaken prior to our visit to any particular area."

- *Micah Karg*







# Staying Connected



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- When trips are running, **Taglit-Birthright Israel** operates a 24-hour hotline, as does each Trip Organizer.
- Each Trip Organizer provides participants and their families with additional contact information.
- Groups travel with cellular phones and can be reached 24-hours a day (cell phone service is widely available all over the country).





## Getting Around



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- A private bus and driver remain with the group for the entire trip.
- Drivers are highly trained and never leave the buses unattended or unlocked.
- Buses must meet high standards of age, power, comfort and size to accommodate the group size.
- Public transportation is not allowed at any time.
- Groups also get to hike, rappel, walk or otherwise get off their buses to see all the sites!





## Medical Staff



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- At least one highly trained and well-equipped medic is assigned to every group for the duration of the entire trip.
- They are able to assist participants with the everyday incidents that may happen during active travel as well as in the case of an accident.
- Israel is host to first-class medical facilities and nearly the highest per capita of doctors in the world!





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## Armed Escorts

- At least one highly trained, armed escort will accompany each group throughout the entire trip.
- Armed escorts have completed IDF military service and many are the same age of participants.
- They speak the language of the group participants and usually end up being an integral social member of each group.
- The number of armed escorts increases in accord with circumstances and subsequent instructions from the Situation Monitoring Room.







## Alumni Speak Out



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- "I never once felt threatened. Israel is not what they feed you on CNN and the other networks. It is very safe and people live very normal lives as we do in the U.S."

- *Shaun Ertischek,  
SUNY Binghamton*





# Staying Together



- Participants in each group remain together at all times, and follow a set schedule of activities that combine both meaningful activity...and fun!
- Private travel away from the group is prohibited during the trip but participants may make arrangements to extend their stay past the ten-day trip (airline fees may apply and arrangements are the sole responsibility of the participant).





## Where Will You Stay?



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- Groups sleep at kibbutz guesthouses, small and medium sized hotels and may even spend a night under the stars at a Bedouin desert camp.
- All lodging must meet high standards of comfort, amenities and capacity to accommodate each group (generally 3 or 4 stars).







## Alumni Speak Out



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- "The strange thing I found about Israel is that even though I had never been there before, and I live thousands of miles away, I felt like I belonged there. Despite the violence that Israel has faced for decades, I felt a strange sense of security that I don't even feel in the small and quiet city which I live in."

- *Jared Tabs*

