

ISRAEL-JORDAN HIKING STUDY TRIP

PREPARATION AND PACKING

Wyn Laidig
Revised March 2019

PHYSICAL PREPARATION

Your trip experience will be greatly enhanced if you are in good physical condition. There is so much teaching to absorb – if you are struggling physically to keep up, your mind simply won't be able to process all the new information you will be exposed to. You can't start too early in preparing your body for this trip. Get your hiking boots NOW and begin exercising NOW

- Do aggressive walking/hiking & stair climbing **in your hiking boots**
- Cardio training VERY important - train for strenuous climbing by stair-stepping, doing lunges, build your leg muscles, lungs and heart
- You should be comfortable doing a 10-mile fast walk / hike in the heat of the day
- Wearing your hiking boots and carrying a backpack with 3 quarts of water, you should be able to walk on a treadmill at ~3 mph with maximum incline for 30 min without needing a rest.

SUITCASE

Smaller is better. Do not bring more than one check-in bag weighting up to 44 lbs, MAX. There will not be room on the buses in Israel for more than one checked bag per person. Also, the smaller and lighter the bag, the better. You will need to carry all your stuff by yourself frequently.

You can also take a small carry-on, like your backpack, on the plane. What I prefer to do is take a lightweight duffel bag as my carry on, and put my backpack inside the duffel when I travel on the plane. Then, once I am in Israel and Jordan, I can use that duffel bag for my dirty cloths. And at the end of the trip I can even check both my suitcase and my duffel as checked bags if I want.

HIKING BOOTS

I can't emphasize enough the importance of investing in good shoes for this trip. It is important that you have strong **hard-sole** hiking shoes with **high-ankle support**. We will be hiking over lots of sharp rocks and on uneven terrain. You should be able to stand on sharp pointy things and not feel them poking up on the bottom of your feet. If you feel sharp objects poking up, your soles are too soft. Expect to pay \$150 - \$300 for good shoes. You don't want sore feet or a twisted ankle. It has happened... and then people end up having to go home early. Not good! You will probably have to order shoes online unless you have an REI close by. Local places normally don't have the right stock. I usually order several pair at a time only keep the best one. Don't be afraid to return them all if none fit well. If your shoes rub on your toes or bones, get something else! Good shoes should feel good on your feet! Stick with a good name brand, for example Asolo, Garmont, Vasque, Lowa, Merrill, Keen, Salomon or Zamberlan. And make sure you end up with a **high-top, hard-sole "hiking boot"**.

For men, my favorite is the Asolo TPS 520 GV which also comes in a wide. I also really like the Asolo TPS Equalon GV as well as the Garmont Pordoi Nubuck GTX:

<https://www.asolo.com/en/products/backpacking/triple-power-structure/tps-520-gv-evo-chestnut.html>

<https://www.asolo.com/en/products/backpacking/triple-power-structure/tps-equalon-gv-evo-dark-brown-cendre.html>

<http://www.garmont.com/en/products/hiking/pordoi-nubuck-gtx>

For women, I highly recommend the Asolo Onyx GV, as well as the women's Asolo TPS 520 GV EVO and Asolo TPS Equalon GV: Also the Garmont Pordoi Nubuck GTX for women:

<https://www.asolo.com/en/products/hiking/a-fast/onyx-gv-woman-cendre-flame.html>

<https://www.asolo.com/en/products/backpacking/triple-power-structure/tps-520-gv-evo-woman-chestnut.html>

<https://www.asolo.com/en/products/backpacking/triple-power-structure/tps-equalon-gv-evo-woman-grey-blue-peacock.html>

<http://www.garmont.com/en/products/hiking/pordoi-nubuck-gtx-wms>

WATER SHOES / SANDALS

For water shoes, a good pair of Teva's or even an old pair of running shoes will be fine. My all time favorite in terms of a comfortable sandal that can be worn hiking through water is the Ecco Yucatan, available for either men or women:

http://us.shop.ecco.com/outdoor-men-sandals/ecco-mens-yucatan-sandal-069564.html?dwvar_069564_color=56401#cgid=men-sandals

http://us.shop.ecco.com/women-sport-sandals/ecco-womens-yucatan-sandal-069563.html?dwvar_069563_color=57807#cgid=women-sandals

HIKING SOCKS

I like a fairly thick cushioned sock that will add to the comfort of hiking in my boots. Smartwool socks work well and dry out quickly. My favorite hiking socks are the full cushion hiking socks by Darn Tough:

<http://darntough.com/men/mens-hike-trek/boot-sock-full-cushion>

<http://darntough.com/women/womens-hike-trek/boot-sock-full-cushion>

BLISTER PREVENTION

I highly recommend everyone bring with them some of Dr. Scholl's Molefoam and Moleskin. Every trip I end up passing this out like candy because it is so useful for blister prevention and care. The Molefoam is thicker than the moleskin. It is good to have both on hand depending on how much protection you need. I would use the moleskin before the blisters occur, and once you have signs of a blister then use the thicker molefoam. It has adhesive on the back, but you should also buy some good cloth medical tape to tape it on as well, since they tend to come off especially when on the heel.

<https://www.drscholls.com/productsandbrands/moleskinpluspadding/>

<https://www.drscholls.com/productsandbrands/molefoampadding/#>

MODEST CLOTHES

For both men and women, no sleeveless shirts or tank tops should be worn at any time other than swimming. In addition, some places we will visit have strict modesty requirements. For that reason, at these specific locations we must dress especially "modestly". That means:

For men: You must have 1 pair of long pants for admission to some of the locations we will visit. I prefer the light weight hiking pants that have zippers just above the knees so the pant legs can be zipped either on or off depending on the need.

For women: You will need at least 1 long skirt (well below the knees) OR 1 pair of modest long pants (not stretchy yoga tights). Like for the men, this could be the light weight hiking pants that have zippers just above the knees.

Also, women need to avoid cloths that would be "see-through" when wet.

OTHER CLOTHING:

- Several pair of hiking shorts (that's what you'll wear every day)
- One pair of "extra-modest" cloths – see above
- Plenty of lightweight T-shirts – the non-cotton quick-drying sports shirts are best
No sleeveless shirts or tank tops. Also, women need to avoid cloths that would be "see through" when wet.
- Bathing suit or clothes to swim in (you'll want to swim in the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee)
- Hat – mandatory – wide brim to keep off as much sun as possible
(I know it messes up the hair, but it helps prevent sun-stroke)
- Lightweight jacket (just in case it gets cool at night)
- Sunglasses – I think having a pair with a neck cord is nice
- Headband, sweat-band or cotton scarf (optional)
- One nicer set of clothes for Sabbath meals. Other meals are normally eaten in hiking clothes

OTHER SUPPLIES:

- Hydration backpack (this will be sent this to you)
- Bible (a paperback fine-print ESV will be sent to you)
- Flashlight with strong light and extra batteries (each person needs their own flashlight)
- Odor-eater foot powder (to keep your shoes from smelling up the bus)
- Small container of laundry soap (there will be one place where you can do laundry, if there is time)
- Ziploc bags for snacks, collectibles and for disposing of personal items
(In backpacking terms, "pack it in, pack it out")
- Black sharpie marker for labeling "rocks of remembrance" you collect
- For women: panty liners and personal hygiene products (you won't have time to buy supplies on the trip)

- Tissue packs or backpacker's toilet paper rolls (you may end using these often!)
- Snacks: granola bars, trail mix, beef jerky, pay-days, crackers, any treats that won't melt (Lunch is sometimes not eaten until about 1 or 2 PM.)
- Electrolyte gel or powder, powdered Gatorade, or sports drink mixes to add to your water
- Antibiotic ointment, band-aids, tape, moleskin and molefoam for blister care
- Ibuprofen, Allieve, or Tylenol for pain and sore muscles
- Melatonin, Tylenol PM, or Ambien (prescription sleeping pill) to help regulate sleep
- Motion sickness pills if needed for bus rides
- Tums or Pepto Bismal for upset stomach
- Imodium for diarrhea
(Nothing worse than uncontrollable diarrhea on the trail)
- Pack all meds in original container(s) so they don't look like illegal drugs.
- Electrical adapter (they use 220 volts, with 2 round prongs)
- Highlighters/ pens (a pen w/ grip may be helpful - sweating makes it hard to hold)
- Camera with plenty of memory and extra batteries (or charger that works on 220V)
- Sunscreen (waterproof, high blockage)
- Small but loud travel alarm clock (sometimes the hotel wake-up calls don't happen as requested)
- Disposable wipes or hand-wash gel to clean hands before eating
- Credit card and/or cash for any purchases. (Do not bring travelers checks!)
- Photocopies of your passport for your suitcase, carry-on, and day-pack

PASSPORT

- You'll need a current passport (no immunizations are required, and no visas needed for US citizens)
- **MAKE SURE** your passport is **valid for at least 6 months beyond the end date of the trip!!**
(If not, they won't let you on the plane!)

TIPS FOR THE TRIP:

- Read your Bible and pray **DAILY** in preparation for this trip!
- Ask 4 people to pray for you every day while you're on the trip.
- Contact your credit card company to inform them you are traveling overseas (so they won't put a hold on your card the first time you use it!)
- Contact the Post Office to hold your mail while you're gone
- Wear your hiking boots every day all day for several weeks at a time, prior to the trip
- Drink a *lot* of water on warm days!
- Apply #50 sun screen frequently
- To hand wash clothes, wring out excess water in a towel then hang in room to dry
- Organize clothes and pack backpack each evening before bedtime
- Keep toilet paper or tissues in your pocket for emergency pit stops
- Don't plan on getting email or voice messages.
(Most hotels will have internet access you can pay for, but you may not have time to use it.)
- Leave the gadgets at home (let's try it without the Iphone, Ipad, Ipod, computer, GPS, etc.)