



# The Zeitah Excavations

## Travel Tips and What to Pack

A Project Affiliated with the  
American Schools of Oriental Research

### Travel Tips

Volunteer staff will need to **purchase a 5 or 6 inch Marshalltown trowel** to use when excavating at Tel Zayit. Please adhere to the size and brand. You should be able to find one at your local hardware store. **Don't come without it!**

One of the best pieces of advice anyone can give you regarding international travel is to **pack light!** Less is often more, especially when it comes to clothing—remember, you're the one who will have to carry what you bring. One medium to large suitcase should hold everything you'll need. You will be allowed two carry-ons (one at 9" x 15 1/2" x 21 1/2" and one at 6" x 13" x 17", neither to exceed 22 lbs.) and a maximum of two checked bags (one with total height/length/width measurements of 62 inches; the second of 55 inches). Each checked bag weighing over 70 pounds will incur an extra charge (normally a minimum of \$75), which you will be responsible to pay *at the airport*, so don't over pack!

It would be wise to bring a **day-pack as a carry-on**, so that you can keep valuables such as your camera, wallet, passport, etc., with you while traveling, but also so that you will have something small in which to take a change of clothes for overnight weekend trips in Israel.

**Bring any prescription medication in your carry-on, in case your luggage gets lost!**

If your health insurance does not cover you in Israel, you may purchase **travel insurance** at a very reasonable cost (\$45–\$80) for the length of your trip through the excavation's travel agent, **but you must do this at the time you purchase your airline ticket**, so plan ahead.

The easiest way to access cash in Israel is by means of your **ATM card**. Alternately, you may use the cash advance option on your **credit card** (deposit money in your credit card account prior to leaving for Israel to avoid high interest rates and cash advance charges). We strongly encourage you to prepare for **both** possibilities. (FYI: Banks will charge a fee for cashing Traveller's Cheques; wiring money is slow and a hassle; personal checks are not universally accepted; and **the excavation does not cash checks!**).

While the money spent on weekend travel, souvenirs, snacks, etc., varies from person to person, we recommend bringing *at least* \$250 for personal expenses, including snacks at the kibbutz, laundry fees, etc. **Bringing cash in small denominations** will allow you to exchange only as much money as you need to at any given time and thereby take advantage of fluctuating exchange rates. Dollar bills are also handy for tips and emergencies (bring about 20 of them), and using U.S. currency or credit cards at hotels (for weekend travel) will save your paying the Value Added Tax.

**Public transportation by bus in Israel is good and very reasonable.** *Sheruts* (service taxis) sell seats at a fixed price or on an individual basis. These are also inexpensive and run frequently to and from the airport and between major cities. A sherut ride between the airport and Kibbutz Gal'on costs \$40–\$50 (more on *shabbat*) split by the number of people in the sherut. Rental cars are readily available but can be quite expensive.

The water in Israel is generally safe to drink and uncooked fruits and vegetables are safe to eat, but it isn't uncommon for travelers there to come down with a case of the infamous *shilshul* (diarrhea). Bringing along some **Imodium AD** may help you get where you need to go!

Israel runs on 220/240 volt current, so you'll need to bring an **adapter kit** for any small electrical appliances (blow dryer, curling iron, electric shaver, etc.) that don't have a voltage switch. Make sure you get the correct prong shape and configuration for Israeli outlets.

Please **do not bring expensive jewelry**, as the potential for it to become lost or stolen is significant! It's a good idea not to dig wearing rings with gems set in them—leaving them at home is wisest. As a general rule, do not bring valuable items that would need to be insured.

Simply stated, the weather will be hot. Still, you should bring at least one pair of long pants and a lightweight jacket or sweater. **(You'll find cotton and other breathable fabrics most comfortable.)** Long pants and skirts are appropriate when visiting religious sites, and women should bring a large scarf to use as a shoulder or head covering. You may not be admitted without appropriate attire!

**The kibbutz will launder your clothes** for you at a cost of 6 sheqels per kilo (about \$3.00 per pound—\$5.00–\$10.00 per week). You may choose to wash lightweight items in your bathroom sink, in which case you should bring some laundry soap (Woolite or the like).

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Volunteers will need to **bring a towel** (or two) and washcloth. The kibbutz does have a large swimming pool, so one towel for showering and one for swimming could serve you well.

If you have a chance to do some **preliminary reading**, check out some of the most recent issues of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, which includes wonderful photography and articles written for the lay person. The excavation will supply you with a syllabus, including reading and writing assignments, if you are registering for academic credit through Pittsburgh Theological Seminary.

Remember to **leave your contact information with a friend or relative at home**: Kibbutz Gal-'on Guest House and Seminar Centre, Doar Na Sde Gat, Israel (kibbutz office phone: 011-972-7-687-2410; **youth hostel: 011-972-7-687-2548**; fax 011-972-7-687-2677). Inform them that packages (not letters) will be difficult for you to get in Israel—and that you'll have to pay to receive them! Also let them know that **Israel is seven hours ahead** of U.S. eastern daylight time (noon in New York is 7:00pm in Israel).

### What to Pack

If you bring most of the items on the list below (bearing in mind that some are gender-specific), there shouldn't be much you've forgotten! **And don't forget your trowel!**

#### Clothing and Accessories

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Broad-brimmed Hat ( <b>a must!</b> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> Digging sneakers**      | <input type="checkbox"/> Lightweight robe/cover-up            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunglasses ( <b>a must!</b> )        | <input type="checkbox"/> "Dress" shoes           | <input type="checkbox"/> Bathing suit                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digging shirts (1 long-sleeved)      | <input type="checkbox"/> Sandals                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Large scarf                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Dress"* shirts                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Underwear               | <input type="checkbox"/> Belt                                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Digging shorts                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton socks (7 pairs)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Gardening gloves ( <i>optional</i> ) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> "Dress"* shorts                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Light jacket/sweater    | <input type="checkbox"/> Inexpensive jewelry & watch          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Long pants                           | <input type="checkbox"/> One semi-dressy outfit* | <input type="checkbox"/> Money belt/fanny pack                |

\* In other words, to wear when not digging (dress in Israel is generally casual—no jackets or ties needed, men!)

\*\***Volunteers will not be permitted to dig barefoot or wearing sandals.** You should bring shoes that have a flexible, durable sole, with uppers that breathe. Ankle support can also be helpful. Hiking boots are hot and heavy!

#### Toiletries

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sunblock ( <b>a must!</b> )                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Blow dryer                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Decongestant  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand/body lotion                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Curling iron                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Prescription medications  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Towel/washcloth (2)                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Fingernail clippers/scissors | <input type="checkbox"/> Vitamins  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toothbrush  | <input type="checkbox"/> Razors/electric shaver       | <input type="checkbox"/> Band-aids   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Toothpaste  | <input type="checkbox"/> Shaving cream                | <input type="checkbox"/> Body powder   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dental floss  | <input type="checkbox"/> After shave                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Kleenex   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mouthwash   | <input type="checkbox"/> Q-tips                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Ear plugs   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Retainer  | <input type="checkbox"/> Blistex                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Eyeglasses ( <i>recommended over contacts for field work</i> )                        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shampoo   | <input type="checkbox"/> Makeup                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Eyeglass prescription ( <i>in case glasses or contacts need replacing in Israel</i> ) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conditioner   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hairbands/barrettes          | <input type="checkbox"/> Contacts  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soap/body wash                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Woolite                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Contact cleaning items  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic flip-flops ( <i>to wear in the shower</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> Feminine supplies            | <input type="checkbox"/> Safety pins   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anti-perspirant                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Immodium AD                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Sewing kit  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hairbrush/comb                                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Aspirin                      |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hand-held mirror                                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Tums/Alka Seltzer            |  |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Cough drops                  |  |

#### Sundries

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Trowel (a must!)</b>  | <input type="checkbox"/> Pens/pencils               | <input type="checkbox"/> Travel alarm clock   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Camera/film ( <i>film is available but expensive to buy in Israel!</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> Textbooks/Bible            | <input type="checkbox"/> Pocket knife         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Notebook   | <input type="checkbox"/> Pleasure reading materials | <input type="checkbox"/> Address book         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Paper  | <input type="checkbox"/> Day pack                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Stationery/envelopes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Blank book/journal   | <input type="checkbox"/> Adapter kit                | <input type="checkbox"/> Keys                 |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Small flashlight           |   |

#### Documents and Finances

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airline ticket(s)                          | <input type="checkbox"/> Letter of introduction | <input type="checkbox"/> ATM and credit cards     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's license ( <i>for photo I.D.</i> ) | <input type="checkbox"/> Student I.D. card      | <input type="checkbox"/> Cash                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Passport                                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical insurance card | <input type="checkbox"/> International phone card |

**P.S. Don't forget your trowel!**