



Birthright Israel Frequently asked Questions-Winter 2024/25
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Table of Contents (click on any of our FAQ to be taken to the answer):

[When is the Hillel of San Diego trip?](#)

[I see we're departing from LAX but I live here in San Diego. How do I get to LAX?](#)

[I had to make a \\$360 deposit in my application. Will I be refunded?](#)

[What is the deposit for?](#)

[What does the gift of Birthright Israel cover?](#)

[How is Birthright Israel funded?](#)

[Am I eligible?](#)

[Can I fly to Israel on my own and then meet my group there?](#)

[Can I extend my flight and stay in Israel after my trip is over?](#)

[There is an active war going on in Israel. . . right? How can you ensure my safety?](#)

[Who will I travel with?](#)

[Does Birthright Israel make accommodations for individuals with medical, developmental, and physical disabilities?](#)

[Will this be a "religious" trip?](#)

[What sort of physical activity can I expect?](#)

[What if I get ill or need medical assistance while on a Birthright Israel trip?](#)

[What if I'm unable to go at the last minute?](#)

[Catch all help form \(for participants/students and staff\)](#)

When is the Hillel of San Diego trip?

Our trip leaves from LAX on December 25, 2024 and will return to LAX on January 5, 2024. Applications are currently open and will close on October 3 (tentative close date).

I see we're departing from LAX but I live here in San Diego. How do I get to LAX?

You're responsible for finding and paying for any domestic travel, but not for international travel. Don't book any domestic travel until you receive a confirmation email from us that you have a seat on our trip.

I had to make a \$360 deposit in my application. Will I be refunded?

Yes, the \$360 deposit is fully refundable. There is an additional \$25 processing fee that isn't refundable. Shortly after your Birthright Israel trip, you'll receive an email with instructions on how to request a refund for your deposit.

You'll also receive a refund if you're waitlisted or you withdraw prior to the refund deadline for accepted participants.

What is the deposit for?

Due to the limited number of spots on each trip, we need to ensure that all chosen participants will show up. When an applicant pays the \$360 USD deposit, this lets us know that you're serious about traveling with Birthright Israel and covers any fees that we might incur in the event of a late cancellation.

What does the gift of Birthright Israel cover?

What's included:

- Round trip airfare (from designated cities)
- Accommodations 3 and 4-star hotels
- Group transportation in Israel
- At least two meals per day
- All organized activities and touring

What's not included:

- Most lunch meals
- Personal purchases (like souvenirs)
- Travel/health insurance
- Cell phone plan or e-sim card
- \$360 USD deposit which you can kindly donate or request a refund after your trip

How is Birthright Israel funded?

Birthright Israel programs are funded by nearly 40,000 donors annually, including tens of thousands alumni, their families, and individual donors from around the world who believe in our mission. The program is also funded by the people of Israel through the government of Israel, The Jewish Agency for Israel, and Jewish communities and Federations.

Am I eligible?

Birthright Israel trips are open to all Jewish young adults, **ages 18 to 26 years** old who have not participated on an educational trip to Israel since they turned 18 and/or lived in Israel past the age of 12.

How you choose to define your Jewishness is up to you. This trip is a chance to discover Israel and explore your Jewish identity, whether it be cultural or spiritual. We welcome participants from diverse backgrounds so you'll fit right in.

Can I fly to Israel on my own and then meet my group there?

The Birthright Israel trip begins when you meet your group at the airport prior to your departure.

If you are offered a spot on a trip, and wish to request an exception to meet the group in Israel, you must contact your Trip Organizer as soon as possible and wait to receive confirmation that your request has been approved. **If the exception is approved, you are responsible for arranging your flight to and from Israel, at your own expense.** Your flight must arrive in Israel no later than the start of your trip and may not depart before your trip ends. Your Trip Organizer will ask for your flight details to verify this information.

Can I extend my flight and stay in Israel after my trip is over?

Birthright Israel participants may extend their stay by either extending their ticket for up to 90 days or by canceling their return ticket. If you will not be using your return ticket, you must inform your Trip Organizer as early as possible, prior to your group departure.

There is an active war going on in Israel. . . right? How can you ensure my safety?

The safety and well-being of our Birthright Israel participants is our primary operating principle and our foremost concern. We will not hesitate to further adjust our approach, as necessary.

Birthright Israel trips operate under strict safety and security standards set in accordance with the IDF's Homefront Command guidelines. These guidelines include geographical travel boundaries, limiting groups from traveling within a 20-40km range of the Lebanese border and the Gaza envelope, exact protocols of how to operate during the sound of a siren, personal safety guidelines and more. Birthright Israel's operations department and field teams are in constant contact with trip staff and oversee the group's operations and safety.

Who will I travel with?

You'll be exploring Israel with up to 40 other Jewish participants. Of course, your trip wouldn't be complete without the two staff members (called madrichim) who fly with the group, one Israeli tour educator, an Israeli security guard (who is also a first aid responder), and the bus driver, who will help you make the most of your experience. You'll also have the opportunity to meet Israeli locals who will join you for a portion of the trip.

Does Birthright Israel make accommodations for individuals with medical, developmental, and physical disabilities?

Birthright Israel believes that every eligible young adult should be able to travel to Israel to experience their Birthright. Guided by our Jewish values, we aim to be inclusive of all individuals with disabilities, special requirements, limitations or challenges.

We offer opportunities to include young adults with special requirements on our classic trips accompanied by an aide or shadow if needed. Additionally, we offer accessible programs for those who prefer to travel with others from their community.

Will this be a "religious" trip?

Not if you don't want it to be. Our Trip Organizers represent a variety of religious movements and Zionist ideologies. While all Birthright Israel programs provide opportunities for participants to celebrate Jewish life together—the 'how' will vary by Trip Organizer. **Using Hillel as a Trip Organizer, we do our best to represent different traditions and practices. If there is something important to you (a Shabbat practice, a daily prayer, etc.), make sure you tell your trip staff!**

What sort of physical activity can I expect?

Pack your hiking boots and swimsuit. Our trip itineraries are jam-packed with exciting, physically-demanding activities, including walking long distances, climbing, hiking, and swimming. The average day includes about 15 hours of activities, which means early wake-ups and late nights.

What if I get ill or need medical assistance while on a Birthright Israel trip?

Your health is our top priority. A fully-trained first-aid responder will be with your group throughout the length of your trip. An on-call doctor and local hospitals are also always available. In extreme situations, participants will be transferred to another city for specialized medical treatment when necessary and, where indicated, will later be returned to the country of origin for further treatment.

You're responsible for having personal medical insurance coverage. It must be valid in Israel throughout the period covered by the trip. (If you don't have medical insurance and are purchasing travel/medical insurance for the sole purpose of this trip, you might want to consider supplementary coverage for continuation of treatment/care in your home country if required when you return home).

What if I'm unable to go at the last minute?

If you cancel your trip within *65 days of your confirmed flight departure you'll forfeit the security deposit. **For our trip leaving December 25, 2024 and returning January 5, 2025, the 65 day deadline is OCTOBER 21, 2024. To get your refund, you must cancel before that day.**

Catch all help form (for participants/students and staff)

[Help Request \(tfaforms.net\)](#)

This link is a catch all help form for Hillel International Birthright Israel trips. Any support a student or staff needs can be submitted through this help form. Be as detailed as possible in your requests.