

ASHKELON EXCAVATION PRACTICAL INFORMATION 2008

ACCOMMODATIONS: The Ashkelon Expedition members will be housed in the Dan Gardens Hotel, a comfortable, full service hotel near the beach. It has a swimming pool, weight room, room service, and sauna. Most people on the Hotel staff speak English, although this should not be assumed (This situation is the same for the rest of the country).

Rooms will be shared by three to four persons. Common space and storage for personal belongings within each room are limited and must be shared. A spirit of flexibility and cooperation is essential when living at close quarters for a sustained period of time. You should bring a credit card so that the Hotel can make an imprint. Your card will not be charged unless there are additional personal expenses, such as room service, phone charges, or damage to hotel property. Each person is responsible for their own additional expenses.

On occasion, members of the excavation are visited by friends or relatives who are traveling in Israel. If they desire to remain overnight at the hotel or will be at meals, this must be arranged IN ADVANCE with the excavation administration and will be at the excavation member's own expense. Private arrangements whereby an additional person stays in a room are unacceptable.

CLOTHING: Although the climate of Ashkelon is moderated by sea breezes, it does get very hot in the summer. If possible, we will provide a sun shade in the field; however, the shade is frequently not large enough to cover the entire field throughout the day. As the sun moves across the sky, the shaded area of the field changes. Clothing made of lightweight cotton and cotton blends is ideal. While excavating, most people choose to wear shorts and T-shirts, but you may want to wear long sleeved garments until you become acclimated to the sun. A change from work clothes is appropriate before gathering in the hotel's spaces, in particular, the dining room. You must bring a lightweight hat with a broad brim that shades your head, face and neck and it should be worn whenever you are in the sun. Baseball caps are discouraged since they do not provide coverage for your ears and neck.. Sunglasses and sunscreen are a necessity. Persons with sensitive skin should be extremely attentive to this caution.

Good footwear is also important. It should be lightweight, sturdy and offer some ankle support. Ankle-high work shoes or desert boots are excellent. Ankle-length boots with canvas sides (fabric which breathes) and thick rubber soles, sometimes styled "commando boots," are quite popular. Tennis shoes are also acceptable. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL YOU BE PERMITTED IN A SQUARE WEARING SANDALS OR BAREFOOTED.** You must have adequate foot protection. This advice also applies to traveling.

For free time, casual attire is standard. Ashkelon can be chilly in the evening and a sweatshirt or windbreaker is useful. Most "dress up" occasions demand only clean pants or skirt and shirt. Ties and jackets are unnecessary.

When visiting religious sites in Israel modest dress is expected. In some cases you will not be allowed in the sites if improperly dressed. Women should wear skirts or long pants and should have their shoulders and upper arms covered. Men should wear long pants.

In brief, you really do not need a tremendous number of things: a change of dig clothes, one or two casual outfits, one nice outfit, a swimsuit, a hat and change of footwear. Virtually every first-time traveler and many who have been abroad before pack too much. Your belongings should take up not more than 20% of a moderate-sized closet and one small dresser drawer. One full-size suitcase should have room to spare. One well-tested guidebook suggests that after you have set out all the things you will be taking, reduce the overall amount by a minimum of one third. Another advises that the careful traveler can really fit everything needed into a carry-on size bag.

COST OF LIVING: In many ways it is comparable to New York or Boston. While inexpensive public transport and

overnight accommodation at hostels help to cut costs, Israel should not be viewed as the summer traveler's bargain bonanza. Travel and other extra free time expenditures should be planned accordingly. Your room is guaranteed at the Dan Gardens Hotel throughout the season, so you should not require additional housing. There are several nearby shops, restaurants, and a general store (where you can purchase snacks and drinks.). The hotel also possesses a full bar and room service. As you are no doubt aware, there are potential dangers involved in taking public transportation and frequenting public locations such as markets, restaurants, and shopping malls. The Expedition recommends that you exercise caution when planning your free-time activities.

ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES: Israeli current is 220/240 V. If you bring electrical appliances you will need an adaptor. Adaptors are available in most hardware stores and are fairly reasonably priced. Some newer appliances, however, do have dual voltage settings and will work on either U.S. or Israeli current. Check the information on your new appliances.

COMPUTER AND E-MAIL ACCESS: Many participants choose to bring a personal laptop. Wireless internet service is available through the hotel at a fee. You may wish to consider purchasing your own wireless card and service plan as the hotel's prices are considered high. The Excavation does not supply access to the internet and will not cover the cost of service in the hotel.

FOOD: Except for second breakfast which is served in the field, meals are served in the hotel dining room. The food will be typical Israeli cuisine. Servings are plentiful and vegetarian and fruit plates are usually available upon request. As is the case in any extended institutional living situation, menu repetition over a seven-week period is a fact of life and meals may get monotonous. However, a number of restaurants including seafood, Chinese food and pizza are located within walking distance.

Snacks and cold drinks are available in the hotel at additional (expensive) charge. Most Expedition members rapidly discover the location of nearby grocery stores to round out their supply of cookies, corn flakes, nuts, etc.

LETTER OF IDENTIFICATION: Before departure you will receive a letter identifying you as a member of the Excavation Staff. It will facilitate your check-in at the airport. Frequently when security officials ask why you are traveling to the designated country, they ask if you have any identification papers to confirm your statement. You should keep the letter with you until you return home.

LINENS AND LAUNDRY: Sheets, blankets, towels, pillows and pillowcases will be provided and cleaned by the hotel at no charge. It would be a good idea, however, to bring a medium-sized towel and washcloth in case you travel on your own. Don't forget a beach towel. Bedding may not be removed from the hotel.

Each member of the excavation is responsible for personal laundry. Usually this is done by hand in one's room. Small travel clotheslines and clothespins are convenient for this purpose. The climate is such that laundry dries rapidly. It might be helpful to bring a small amount of detergent as a starter but such items are readily available in Ashkelon. Alternatively, you may opt to take your clothes to a Laundromat. Since the charge is based upon the weight of your clothes, you may want to combine your clothes with someone from the Expedition and split costs.

MAIL: All mail should be sent to:

**Ashkelon Excavations
52 Eshkolei Paz
Afridar, Ashkelon, ISRAEL**

MEDICAL ADVICE: Each member of the Staff must have current medical insurance coverage which is valid for Israel. All costs involving visits to physicians and hospital care are borne by the individual. You should bring all prescription drugs that you anticipate will be necessary. The pharmacies in Israel are well-stocked and you may purchase any over-the-counter medications you might need. Since store hours are inconvenient, we suggest that you consider bringing cough and cold medicine. Diarrhea medicine is strongly recommended. It

can take a few days for your digestive system to adjust to the local food and water. Ashkelon has a clinic and hospital in the event of a medical emergency. The two most common ailments in the course of a season are cough and diarrhea. Veterans of the region's maladies often carry night and day cough medicine which includes an expectorant and for stomach problems, immodium.

Contact lenses usually do not cause any special problems, although it is not advisable to wear them in the field since it is very dusty. Care is relatively simple since we are housed in a hotel. Contact lens wearers should bring a pair of glasses for backup. Bring a copy of your prescription in case of loss or breakage of contacts or glasses.

Because of the climate, diet in the Middle East usually includes foods high in natural salts (e.g., olives, goat cheese, etc.) and you are encouraged to salt your meals. If you have special restrictions on salt intake, please check with your physician. We also recommend that you bring a container of powdered Gatorade (or equivalent) to help maintain your electrolyte balance. Some of these preparations are salt-free. You should plan to bring a water bottle to the field and drink frequently to help keep yourself hydrated.

MONEY: ATMs are the easiest way to obtain cash from home, although they are not as omnipresent as in the USA. You should check with your own bank about additional transaction fees for your card. Travelers checks are still accepted in most places. They usually don't bring quite the same advantage as American dollars in bargaining, but they have the obvious advantage of guarantee against loss or theft. Many places accept Visa or MasterCard. Wiring money to an Israeli bank has proven to be most **in**convenient and time consuming. You needn't worry about having Israeli shekels the minute you get into the country. If it is absolutely necessary, you can change money or access an ATM machine at the airport, but in most cases you can function quite well with dollars until arrival in Ashkelon. Since the exchange rate fluctuates it is best to exchange only enough for minimal needs at one time. Carrying about \$20 in U.S. singles helps both with tips and other emergencies. Small denomination bills (20s) also allow for conversion of no more than you need in a particular instance.

Some merchants and hotel owners will accept personal checks, but this is not absolutely guaranteed. Inquire first. Obviously the youth hostels and smaller shops refuse. Remember, if you are traveling on weekends and pay your hotel bill in U.S. currency or a U.S. credit card, the hotel will not charge the Value Added Tax, thus reducing your cost.

PERSONAL FINANCES: AS A MATTER OF POLICY, THE EXCAVATION DOES NOT CASH PERSONAL CHECKS OR MAKE LOANS TO PARTICIPANTS. Each participant in the excavation is responsible for personal finances. While choice and rate of personal financial expenditures varies individually, each participant should anticipate this reality and plan accordingly.

TELEPHONE: The easiest way to contact friends and family is by using a personal cell phone. Please check with your provider before you leave to make sure you have international service in Israel. We request that you restrict cell phone use to personal time and do not accept calls while in the field (except in case of emergency).

The Dan Gardens Hotel phone number is accessible to Expedition members. For direct dialing from the U.S: 011 – 972 – 8 - 677-1777. Connection is made more quickly if the caller can give the hotel desk attendant your room number. PLEASE LEAVE THIS NUMBER WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS WHO MAY WANT TO CALL YOU WHILE YOU ARE IN ASHKELON. DURING THE EXCAVATION, PEOPLE CALLING THE OFFICE AT HARVARD WILL GET A TAPED MESSAGE ONLY. For regular contact with home, the least frustrating method of contact is for you to set a time when you will call home. You may also use a local pay phone with an international phone card.

CAMERAS AND FILM: While Kodak and Fuji film are available in Israel, it is very expensive. We strongly recommend that you bring your film with you. Digital cameras are obviously convenient, but don't forget to bring replacement batteries or a battery charger.

TIME: Israel is seven hours ahead of Eastern Daylight Time. For example, noon in New York is 7 p.m. in Ashkelon.

TROWEL: While the Excavation is well equipped with "the tools of the trade," i.e., picks, shovels, brushes and wheelbarrows, you should purchase and bring a trowel. These can be obtained in any good hardware or building supply store. Please make sure that the trowel is a mason's trowel (with a pie-slice type blade) and **NOT** a gardening trowel (a curved shovel-like blade). When you make this purchase you will be confronted by a diversity which can be bewildering. While the choice is very much a question of personal preference--you'll be using this sometimes for several hours at a time--a few suggestions may be of help. First, the brand of choice is Marshalltown, due to better construction. Second, size varies greatly. The very large ones are not recommended - the blade of the trowel should be about 5 inches or less. Try a few, such as the Marshalltown 45-6, and others in that range. The numbers appear on the face of the Marshalltown trowel blade. As noted, the choice is yours.

WEEKENDS: Whereas many excavations do not provide weekend residence, at Ashkelon you have room and board seven days a week. Our workweek will be Sunday through Friday. Saturday is a free day.

Public transportation in Israel is not recommended given the current state of security in Israel. In addition, please remember that buses do not run on Saturdays in observance of Shabbat. *Sheruts* (or service taxis) are large Mercedes cabs that sell seats at a fixed price or on an individual basis. They are inexpensive and frequently run between major cities such as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, Beersheva and Ashkelon. The most efficient method of transportation from the airport to Jerusalem is by *sherut*. Rental cars are readily available, but very expensive (roughly comparable to U.S. prices).

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OVERVIEW:

Sunday through Friday

First Breakfast: 4:40 AM (in hotel)

Excavation on site: 5:30 am - 1 PM

(5 and 5:15 AM transportation to site, 9 AM Second Breakfast, 11:30 AM Fruit Break, 1 PM return)

Lunch: 1:45 PM at the hotel dining room

Following lunch, there is approximately an hour of free time

The afternoon and evening schedules change frequently, but often include artifact and data processing, along with lectures. Your responsibilities will be arranged after you arrive.

Saturday

Free time