

2nd
honeymoon : israel™
It's about the journey

After hearing my son and daughter-in-law rave about their trip on Honeymoon Israel, my husband and I signed up for our own 2nd Honeymoon Israel trip. Viewing first-hand the accomplishments and vitality of the Jewish people in Israel was a life-changing experience. The trip was extremely well organized and followed a program very similar to what my kids experienced. (Although, I was glad we took the tram to Masada, not walked to the top like they did!) Our guide, Jeremy Aron, was a scholar and the essence of an educator because he asked questions after presenting different viewpoints, which allowed us to reach our own conclusions. From Tel Aviv to Jerusalem we explored many facets of Israeli life. Participating in an archaeological dig, hearing viewpoints from a modern Orthodox woman and a Palestinian about a two-state solution, we feasted on these opinions unknown to most Americans. Many of the couples on our trip had children who experienced Honeymoon Israel and were interfaith marriages. The concept of opening one's arms and hearts to embrace and welcome all people into the Jewish community is at the very base of Honeymoon Israel's philosophy. During our trip, when I saw my gentile husband participate fully in all activities (including an Israeli dance) I felt he finally understood our need to tell the same story every Passover. Since I have spent most of my life running away from being Jewish, I feel well prepared to really appreciate how lucky I am to be part of such a remarkable history. Honeymoon and 2nd Honeymoon Israel trips have such significance to our culture because the educational experiences demonstrate to participants the strength of the Jewish people and welcome all who want to be part of obtaining this knowledge. This is the beginning of a movement in Jewish culture. It is an educational experience that changes lives and perceptions of the Jewish people. I encourage your federation to contribute generously to Honeymoon Israel enabling young couples to witness the transformation that results from this trip. With so many interfaith marriages, the opportunity to go on Honeymoon Israel, is truly a once in a lifetime adventure to help our children and their spouses have a better understanding of who we are, where we come from, and where we are going.

- Linda Livingston

2nd Honeymoon Israel is so much more than a sightseeing tour of Israel. In fact, our visit many years ago there was just a primer for a much richer and deeper experience with HMI. Through a combination of incredible lectures on almost every facet of Israeli daily life, HMI weaves together a complete picture of what it means to be an Israeli and a Jew living in Israel today. Rather than just hearing about the country on TV, our group really got a glimpse of all sides of the challenges, joys and opportunities that every person, Jew and non-Jew living in the Holy Land faces today. The programming that Mike and his team have assembled could never be replicated by a couple trying to put together their own individual visit/vacation. Sharing a Shabbat dinner after lighting the candles at a spot overlooking the old city, having the equivalent of a group cook-off contest at a Kibbutz in the Golan Heights, eating lunch in the home of a Druze family and learning about their culture and religion, and attending a lecture by a political scientist attempting to explain the complexity of Israeli politics, are just a few of the most unique and wonderful moments of our trip. And coming home to discuss and share the same experience our daughter and son-in-law had was equally transformative. We were all so thankful to HMI, first and second, for giving us these incredible memories and experiences, and drawing us closer to our own family, our faith, and the land and people of Israel.

- David Kagel