

Holy Land

Accessibility & Wheelchair Access Questions



Of the many things that go into planning a pilgrimage, physical demands are just as important. Beyond the distance and locations, we understand that a pilgrim with mobility limitations must consider the accessibility of their pilgrimage. Whether you are accompanying a friend/family member, or researching for options based on your own needs, we are happy to make as many provisions for you as possible, so please read the information below in order to help us - help you!

The layout of the Roads, Shrines, and Churches on your pilgrimage

Israel and Jordan are based on a myriad of old buildings, cobblestone roads, and split-levels/uneven surfaces everywhere. Due to the structure of the old buildings, access to some establishments may not be convenient for wheelchair use, will require the use of stairs, or the facilities for the disabled in general may be limited. Many streets are narrow, and due to strict traffic regulations, they are "Pedestrian Only" and the buses are not permitted.

We encourage all pilgrims to be able to walk 3 - 4 miles per day, comfortably. Walking each day is not done all at once, as it is broken up throughout the day with Mass, and time on the bus driving from one site to another. However, you will need to walk to/from the Churches/Sites/Museums, as well as the walking that you will do while touring the sites from within.



Steps to Grotto: Church of the Nativity



Steps to Calvary, Church of the Holy Sepulchre



Old City, Jerusalem

Physicality (how committed to the wheelchair/walker the pilgrim is)



Walker

If you have a walker or are not able to walk long distances at one time etc, rest assured that you will still be able to join our pilgrimages, just let us know at the time of registration so we can make note. Masses and visits to Museums are confirmed for set times, with some sites closing during the day for cleaning, so a pace must be kept. However, that pace is easily kept by most, and still allows time to prayer and reflection. Also, while it is noted that you can expect 2 - 3 miles of walking per day, that is not at one time! It is broken up by being on the bus, Mass, breaks, etc.

Scooters

We would not recommend bringing them on the pilgrimage. There is a set limit of space and weight available underneath the bus for each pilgrims checked bag, and nowhere on the bus to fit them. You would also incur additional costs from the Airlines in order to ship it to/from your destination, along with charging the Scooter etc. If you have additional questions, please feel free to contact our office anytime.



Partial Use of Wheelchair

Should you need a wheelchair only sometimes, or just in case you feel tired, we can arrange for a wheelchair to be placed on the bus, and available to you should you need it. Just advise us of which options (below) will make your pilgrimage easier.

**We advise that someone travel with the client to help throughout the day, as well as in the evenings at the Hotel.*

Full Use Wheelchair

Should a wheelchair be necessary at all times, we can arrange a Private Bus with a lift, that will make it easier for you to go on and off. Please be advised, these busses must be rented, and require an additional expense to the pilgrim, which are often quite costly.

Special Request Options

Private Cab Ride to Sites

Your guide will let you know about the layout of the walk for each day, such as Hills or areas that are not "Barrier Free". If you choose, we can arrange for a car to pick you up, and drop you off as close as possible to sites (at the clients expense.)

Hotels

In the Hotels, we can arrange for you to stay in Handicap Accessible rooms where available. In the event they are not available, we will inquire for rooms on the Main Floor, or, near an elevator. (or on a Main Floor / Near an elevator.)

Flights

We can make requests for Handicap seating, or, we can request for Bulk Head seating. We can also arrange for Wheelchair Assistance from the moment you arrive at the Airport, to your Terminal, or all the way to your seat.

**Note: while we will do everything we can to ensure your request for specific seating*



Sites

When it comes to the layout and structure of these Holy sites (Monasteries, Churches, and Basilicas), some of them are not "barrier free". For that reason, we will advise you of the sites where there are no elevators,



These options all depend on the physicality of the pilgrim, or how committed to the wheelchair the pilgrim is. Should the wheelchair be necessary at all times, it would require a special bus with a lift to carry you on and off - those busses must be rented, and require an additional expense to the pilgrim, which are often quite costly. When going to Qumran and the Dead Sea, they are split between dirt and tar road, they also include uneven and long steep hills. For that reason, Private transfers to the sites (with that bus) may be necessary for the duration of your trip and are at the clients expense.

In the event that a client requires more assistance, or rely on the use of a wheelchair

We suggest searching for a Tour Company whose pilgrimages are designed solely around the needs of the pilgrims. They are more equipped to help, and special provisions are made throughout. As a Group Pilgrimage - those arrangements are more affordable when split amongst all those attending, rather than the sole individual. This will also supply for a more comfortable pilgrimage.

*Aliyah Tours is **NOT** affiliated with such Tour Companies – but they are easily “searchable” through Search Engines.