

*A World of Sophisticated Journeys and Retreats*

160 Oakland Street

Suite A

Rochester

NY

14620

info@luxworldtravel.com

## Women in the Old and New Testament Itineraries

Year Round: 2011

Can be customized to include spa, beaches, food and wine, hiking, adventure and more.

10-Day and 4-Day itineraries available



### 7- Day Base Itinerary

#### OVERVIEW

The traveler to Israel walks through history, and this interfaith tour embraces every bit of it while honoring the amazing women interlaced within multicultural history. Huldah the prophetess come to life as does Mary Magdalene and Rachel. Enjoy Massada Museum , a UNESCO World Heritage Site, vineyards, spas, and more with this itinerary for women to walk through Biblical history in style and awe. Ideal for faith groups or girlfriend getaways with 4 or more travelers.

This trip will be customized to include private car transfers to and from the airport, private English-Speaking guides, walking you through ancient paths of multi-culture and religious heritage. Enjoy regional cuisine, spas, hikes through nature preserves, along with private touring of Israel's most amazing treasures.

## **Day 1 – Jerusalem: City of prophetesses, heroines and queens**

**Overview of Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives** – this spiritually significant mountain is also the place for a bird’s-eye view of the mountains and valleys surrounding the city and the way it grew through the ages.

**Huldah's Tomb** –Huldah the prophetess (2 Kings 22:14; 2 Chron. 34:22) has been commemorated here since the Middle Ages. The lady buried here is sacred by other names to other faiths: to Christians, she is St. Pelagia, a fifth-century singer from Antioch who abandoned her former life to devote herself to God. To Muslims, she is Lady Raba’ah, a ninth-century religious luminary.

**Eleona (Pater Noster)** – one of the first churches to be founded on the Mount of Olives in 326 CE by Queen Helene, the mother of King Constantine who was the first Christian emperor. Queen Helene also identified Calvary and the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem; in this and other ways she left an indelible mark on Christian history.

**Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene** – this beautiful 19th century church in its tranquil garden setting (open on Tuesday mornings) is the burial site of Princess Alice of Battenberg, Queen Elizabeth’s mother-in-law. Princess Alice, who married into the Greek royal family, was honored as a Righteous Gentile by Yad Vashem in 1994 for hiding a Jewish family when the Nazis took over Athens.

**The Tombs of the Kings** – an old Jerusalem tradition has it that this magnificent tomb was the burial place of the kings of Judah. But it is actually that of a queen – Helene of Adiabene –who converted to Judaism and came with her family from Mesopotamia to Jerusalem, where she was highly praised for her gifts to the poor and to the Temple.

**The Western Wall** – a last remnant of the Second Temple, and as such, the holiest place in the Jewish world and a scene of fervent prayer and Bar Mitzvah celebrations (Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays).

**The Southern Wall Archaeological Park** – a “still-life” of the original Herodian street, revealing Roman destruction Robinson’s Arch, and where a highlight is Hulda’s Gates, named after the prophetess, and by tradition a teacher, who both censured and comforted at the end of the First Temple period.

**The Davidson Visitor Center** – housed in an eighth-century CE palace, where beautiful displays and a virtual-reconstruction, high-definition interactive model bring Jerusalem’s history alive.

**The Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem** – in this unique collection of items reflecting Egyptians, the Hittites, the Philistines, the Assyrians and others who left their mark on the region are many displays relating to women, including jewelry, figurines, a bust of “Sarah the Matriarch,” a model of Esther’s palace in Shushan, a Byzantine woman’s decorated sarcophagus and more.

## **Day 2 – Jerusalem: Highlights of the Old City**

**The Jewish Quarter** – including the Cardo, Jerusalem’s ancient main street; the First Temple-era Hezekiah’s Wall; and the Burnt House, destroyed when the Romans conquered Jerusalem in 70 CE, where a moving audiovisual presentation highlights questions of class, the place of women, and the tragic end of one ancient Jerusalem family.

**The Syriac Orthodox Church of St. Mark** – over the traditional house of Mark (Acts 12:13-16), where visitors can consider the part played by the servant girl Rhoda in the story of Peter’s return to the community and other “lowly” female figures in Scripture.

**The Church of the Holy Sepulchre** – the most sacred ground in the Christian world, this ancient church stands over the Tomb of Jesus and the last of the Stations of the Cross.

**The Dormition Abbey** – marking the site of the Assumption of Mary, with an unusual representation of Mary surrounded by a mosaic of Old Testament women.

**Rachel’s Tomb** – Rachel was another biblical mother-to-be on the road to Bethlehem. After she died giving birth to Benjamin, Jacob built her a monument here (Gen. 35:20). To this day, women come to Rachel’s tomb to pray for fertility and safe childbirth.

**Kibbutz Ramat Rachel (“Rachel’s Height”)** – the remains of a First Temple royal citadel unusually accented with artwork by sculptor Ran Morin. From here, an overview of the Judean Desert, Bethlehem, and the Mountains of Moab recalls that Ruth the Moabite changed history by braving the unknown to come to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law Naomi.

**The Church of Mary’s Seat** – some years ago during road work here the remains came to light of the Katisma (“seat”), a church previously known only from pilgrims’ literature, where tradition says the heavily pregnant Mary rested on her way to Bethlehem. It is hoped the remains, including magnificent mosaics, will someday be restored. Meanwhile, the stone seat and the form of the octagonal church around it are still visible.

## **Day 3 – Jerusalem and northern environs: The women behind the men**

**The City of David** – the most ancient part of Jerusalem, with Warren’s Shaft, the “water fortress” at Gihon (1 Kings 1:38-40), the Pool of Siloam and more. While overlooking the present-day homes on the hillside, consider the story of David and Bathsheba and the role she played in Solomon’s life.

**Tel Shiloh** – the location of the Tent of Meeting (Josh. 18:1), where Hannah came to pray for a son (1 Sam. 1:12-18), has been pinpointed on this archaeological mound; an interesting visitor center and film rounds out the experience.

**The Israel Museum** – the Ethnography Wing reveals ways that customs involving women and families in traditional cultures can reflect those of the Bible; the Shrine of the Book, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered; the 1:50 Model of Second Temple Jerusalem.

## **Day 4 – The Almog Tabernacle, Massada, Ein Gedi and the Dead Sea: Sacred servants and heroic tales**

**Massada National Park** – Herod’s magnificent fortress, with its palaces, bathhouses and ramparts was also the last stand of the Jews against the Romans in the Great Revolt in 73 CE. The historian Josephus notes that two women and five children survived, and visitors wonder who they were and what might have been their fate. The new **Massada Museum** reflects daily life, highlighting among its exhibits women at their many daily tasks. The combination of Massada’s dramatic story with its fabulous architecture and finds has won it recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Ein Gedi National Park** – a walk through the oasis, where “vineyards” once grew, a metaphor in the love poetry of the Song of Songs 1:14. The remains of Ein Gedi’s antiquities frame the story of Babatha, a woman of the town who fled the Romans to a cave where archaeologists found documents telling her life story.

End the day with a dip in the Dead Sea and spa treatments.

## **Day 5 – The Negev: Meeting the Matriarchs**

Be'er-Sheba – the city that Abraham founded (Gen. 21:31) when he moved here with Sarah, and where the conflict between Sarah and Hagar reached its climax (Gen. 21:9-14). The landmark well outside the gate is a backdrop for the many stories about women’s encounters at the well, including Rebecca (Gen. 24:13-26) Rachel (Gen. 29:9-12), the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-29), and others.

Be'er Sheba’s ancient urban planning, water systems and other finds, along with its biblical significance, have made it a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

**Bedouin women’s craft center in Rahat** - learn how crafts going back to Bible days can improve the lives of contemporary women who are descendents of a culture going back to the days of the Patriarchs and the Matriarchs.

**David and Paula Ben-Gurion’s home at Sde Boker** – the modest home of Israel’s first prime minister and his feisty and devoted American-born wife, Paula. Visit the nearby tomb of the couple, overlooking the magnificent Zin Canyon. The view of the Desert of Zin, in the southwestern portion of which, at Kadesh, Miriam died (Numbers 20:1), is also opportunity to consider Miriam as a leader alongside Moses and Aaron (Micah 6:4).

Walk through the Avdat Canyon to the Avdat Spring.

## **Day 6 – From the Mediterranean to the Sea of Galilee: Women in their public and private lives**

**Caesarea** – the showcase Roman port built by Herod the Great, figuring centrally in both Jewish and Christian history. In addition to touring the theater, amphitheater, Crusader walls and other highlights Caesarea, as the home of the four daughters of Philip (Acts 21:8-9), is an excellent place to explore the role of women in public life in the early church. Visit the Hannah Senesch Museum at adjacent Sdot Yam to hear the moving story of a modern-day heroine.

**Mount Tabor** – to this mountain, the “high mount” of Transfiguration (Mark 9: 2-9), the judge Deborah called Barak to fight the Canaanites (Judges 4:4-16). With the ancient ruins and beautiful views as inspiration, find out who Deborah really was.

**Sepphoris** – traditional birthplace of Mary, Sepphoris was built by Herod Antipas. Joanna, the wife of Cuza, Herod’s steward (Luke 8:3), who might have lived here, was among Jesus’ early supporters. Visit the restored theater, the “Mona Lisa of Galilee” mosaic, the Nile House and the Cardo. Another highlight is the sixth-century synagogue that tells a story of redemption and reveals an unusual representation of Sarah.

**Nazareth** – most of the monuments in Nazareth, the town where Jesus grew up, are devoted to Mary, this is where the Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38) took place. Highlights include the Church of St. Gabriel, built over the spring where Mary no doubt drew water for her family, and the magnificent Basilica of the Annunciation. At the reconstructed Nazareth Village, learn about the daily life of women in Jesus’ day and take part in a weaving workshop.

**Cana** – the scene of Jesus’ first miracle, the changing of water into wine at a wedding (John 2:1-11), in which Mary’s played a role with great theological implications.

### **Day 7 – Around the Sea of Galilee: Spirits of protection and the pioneering spirit**

**Tiberias** – this ancient city on the lake is the location of the tomb another Rachel, who loved and supported her husband, the great Rabbi Akiva, through thick and thin. Among the city’s Roman ruins, a first-century Herodian palace has been discovered, including a room with a marble floor where visitors can imagine Salome, the daughter of Herodias, dancing for the head of John the Baptist (Matt. 14:3-11).

**The tomb of Rachel the poetess** – the passionate verses of Israel’s pioneering poet laureate are some of the best-loved in modern Hebrew literature. Reading them in this tranquil lakeside setting provides fertile ground for exploring women’s experiences as pioneers in this land in the early 20th century and elsewhere.

**A boat ride on the Sea of Galilee** – emulating the experience of Jesus and the disciples, and recalling the story of “Miriam’s Well”: Miriam died in Kadesh, but immediately thereafter, according to legend, a miraculous spring appeared that nourished the Children of Israel everywhere in their hour of need and eventually found its way to the Sea of Galilee.

**The Mount of Beatitudes** – an overview of the Sea of Galilee from the place where Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount.

**Capernaum** – scene of many miracles and teachings, and known as Jesus’ “own town” (Matt. 9:1), including the house of St. Peter – (Mark 1:29) and the Ancient Synagogue – built over the site where Jesus preached. Healings of women figure centrally in Jesus’ Galilee ministry, and the Capernaum synagogue is an excellent place to delve into these stories.

**The Tabha Benedictine Monastery Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes** – the site of the feeding of the 5,000 (Matt. 14:13-21).

**Job's Spring** – a warm spring surrounded by an old stone tower, where local women came seeking healing in days gone by. According to tradition, Job's wife, who had sold her long hair to support the family when they became destitute, was reunited with her husband here.

Bethsaida – the home of Peter, Andrew and Philip (John 1:44; 12:21), Bethsaida is now undergoing excavation, revealing homes and a street from the Roman period, and remains of the biblical city of Geshur, including a huge gateway and a palace. David himself may have come to the throne room discovered here to ask Talmai King of Geshur for the hand of his daughter, Maacah (2 Sam. 3:3).

**Mount Arbel National Park** – with an ancient story of its own and a magnificent view of the entire region, particularly old and new Magdala, the hometown of Mary Magdalene, at its foot. Delve more deeply into the story of this “proclaimer.”

## Vacation Package Quote

This Cultural Journey package includes:

- 7 Nights Deluxe Double Accommodations
- Daily Breakfast
- 1 Spa Included Treatment per guest
- All activities and fees mentioned in itinerary
- All Ground Transfers
- Hotel Taxes

**Double Rate with Inclusions from:**

**\$1795 pp**

To book this vacation or to discuss options or add-ons, please contact Melinda Johnston at: [mj@luxworldtravel.com](mailto:mj@luxworldtravel.com), or by calling, **1.866.269.2659**.



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LUX WORLD TRAVEL (866) 269-2659 USA, + 1 (585) 672-5587 USA Office, + 1 (585) 298-9701 USA FAX

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