

THE NAZARETH CHALLENGE



The Three Seas Challenge Draft Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival Tel Aviv – Sunday 1st

The group will meet in a hotel (TBC) on the shores of the Mediterranean, officially starting the 2020 Nazareth Challenge. The evening will consist of a meal, bike fitting, briefing and the opportunity to explore Tel Aviv and the Old Port of Jaffa.

Arriving in Tel Aviv and joining the group – you have two options

Option One: Plan to arrive at the airport in time to meet our guide at 16:30pm for the transfer to the hotel.

Option Two: Alternatively, if you arrive earlier or later, you can make your own way to the hotel by getting an airport taxi which costs around £15.

Evening Meal and overnight accommodation in Tel Aviv.

Day 2: Tel Aviv to Jerusalem – Monday 2nd

Approx. 70km, cumulative elevation gain of 700 meters.

The day's cycling starts along the northern bank of the Yarkon River in Tel Aviv. On the ride to Jerusalem you'll pass by the Abu Rabah watermill and the beautiful eucalyptus grove that surrounds it. The second part of the ride begins the climb towards the hills of Jerusalem. The route takes you along parts of the Israel Trail, crossing streams, passing under an Ottoman bridge and past a magnificent mausoleum dating back to Roman times before cycling through the hills of the Koah Forest.

Read more about this section of the route [here](#). (Segments 1 and 2 describe the type of scenery you will see, but we will not be following the route exactly).

Evening Meal and overnight accommodation TBC.

Day 3: Tel Aviv to Jerusalem – Tuesday 3rd

Approx. 50km, cumulative elevation gain of 1,000 meters.

A large part of the day is spent cycling along the famous Burma Road and then climbing the hills to Jerusalem. This is the day when you will fully understand why in the Bible Jesus is described as 'going up' to Jerusalem.



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This day of the Three Seas Challenge is cycling through the Jerusalem Hills, ending at the Old City. Read more about this section of the route [here](#). (Segments 3 and 4 covered during this day).

In the evening, you will have an optional guided walk through the Old City and its markets, and we will visit the Western Wall, Golgotha where Jesus was crucified, and the Garden Tomb which many believe to be the site of Jesus' burial and resurrection. Evening meal and accommodation in the Old City.

Day 4: Jerusalem to Jericho – Wednesday 4th

Approx. 50km, cumulative elevation gain of 500 meters.

Compared to the previous day, this day's ride will seem like a piece of cake! Starting in Jerusalem at 754m above sea level, you'll be cycling to the Dead Sea and Jericho, the lowest city on earth at 258m below sea level.

Upon leaving Jerusalem, you'll head south to Bethlehem where you'll visit the Church of the Nativity which many believe to have been the birthplace of Jesus and is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Continuing from Bethlehem, the lunch stop will be at one of the world's greatest ancient monasteries, Mar Saba. Hanging on the edge of a cliff, Mar Saba is an impressive sight. Founded in the 5th Century, Mar Saba is considered the oldest monastery in the Holy Land and the largest in the Judean desert. Unfortunately, there won't be an opportunity for a tour of Mar Saba as their strict rules, based upon 1,500 years of tradition, do not allow women into the monastery (it's also closed on Wednesdays).

The day ends with a ride to the Dead Sea and Jericho. Jericho appears repeatedly in the Bible, perhaps best known for the Battle of Jericho where the city's walls fell after Joshua's army marched around the city. Jericho was also home to Blind Bartimaeus and the tax collector Zacchaeus.

Evening Meal and overnight accommodation in Jericho.



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Day 5: Jericho to Beit She'an – Thursday 5th

Approx. 80km, cumulative elevation gain of 700 meters.

The day is spent cycling northwards through the Jordan Valley with an opportunity to visit the Jordan River where Jesus was baptised.

The lunch stop will be with a Palestinian family, offering insights into local life, customs and traditions.

The day ends at Beit She'an, which is the junction of the Jordan River Valley and the Jezreel Valley. On nearby Mount Gilboa in 1004BC, the army of King Saul was defeated by the Philistines and Saul's three sons were killed.

Evening Meal and overnight accommodation TBC.

Day 6: Beit She'an to Nazareth – Friday 6th

Approx. 50km, cumulative elevation gain of 1,000 meters

The final day of the ride starts by cycling north to Tiberias, taking us to our final sea of the Nazareth Challenge, the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is a place of significance throughout the life and teaching of Jesus. The Sea of Galilee is where Jesus called his first disciples Simon (Peter) and Andrew to follow him, as well as the location for several miracles including the miraculous catch of fish and Jesus walking on water.

From Tiberias we enter the final stretch of the ride. Before completing the route to Nazareth, take in the sights of Mount Tabor which some believe is the Mount of Transfiguration. The ride finished with a spectacular ride through the old city, before arriving at the Nazareth Hospital EMMS in time to meet the Jesus Trail walkers for the finish line celebration.

A tour of the hospital, a celebratory evening meal, and for those still with energy, a time to explore the old city of Nazareth. Overnight accommodation at the Nazareth Trust.

Day 7: Departure – Saturday 7th

After breakfast, a guided tour of the Nazareth Village, before final goodbyes and lunchtime airport transfer. For those wishing to stay longer in Nazareth we can offer travel and sightseeing advice, and extended accommodation in Nazareth.



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Flights:

A wide range of flights are available from many airports. Below are some flights which may be helpful when considering travelling to Israel:

- **London (Luton)** - leaves at 07:15 and arrives in Tel Aviv at 14:15 on Sunday 1st November. The return flight leaves Tel Aviv at 19:35 and arrives in London at 23:05. This flight starts at just £190 (excl. hold luggage).
- **Scotland** – direct flights to Israel aren't available from Edinburgh or Glasgow. There are plenty of options if you are happy with an overnight flight, alternatively consider travelling to London and flying direct from there. The overnight flights tend to arrive early into Tel Aviv, providing the opportunity for extra time to explore Tel Aviv before starting the Nazareth Challenge.

Additional information:

- For an additional cost of £30 per person per night, you can extend your stay at the Nazareth Trust accommodation for those who wish to spend more time enjoying the land of Israel before and/or after the event.
- Your safety is of the utmost importance to the Nazareth Trust. We provide full support along the route, including a support vehicle (where road access allows), spare parts and a guide for the whole trip.
- Areas of the ride enter the West Bank. Only areas that are deemed safe will be entered and alterations to the route will be made where necessary.
- Please be aware that tours and sightseeing opportunities will take place where time permits.
- The ride is set on non-technical off-road routes. You don't need to be an experienced off-road cyclist, but you will need a good level of fitness.

The Nazareth Trust reserves the right to change or even relocate the event or any aspect of its route. This may be as a result of emergencies, severe weather, political unrest or circumstances out with the Nazareth Trust's control.

