

## Cheadle Masjid al-Aqsa Trip Sept 2023

Cheadle Masjid is pleased to announce its next al-Aqsa trip led by our very own Imam Abid Khan and arranged by Royal Travel, departing on Thursday 7 September and returning on Monday 11 September 2023.

Al-Aqsa is referred to by several names including Al-Maqdis (house of purity), Al Quds (Purest Place), and indeed Masjid Al-Aqsa has and always will be dear to the hearts of Muslims. It was the Qibla for Muslims before Allah (SWT) commanded to take the Kaaba as our Qibla.

During the "Night Journey" known as Al-Israa al-Mi'raj our Prophet Muhammad ﷺ was first transported to Masjid Al Aqsa from Makkah where he led a jamat of all the prophets (AS).

Abu Dharr said, "I asked the Prophet ﷺ 'Which masjid was the first on the earth?' He (ﷺ) said, 'The Sacred Masjid (Mecca).' I said, 'Then which one?' He said, 'The Furthest Masjid (al-Aqsa).' I asked, 'How much time was between them?' He said, 'Forty years. Wherever you are when the time for prayer comes, pray, it will be a masjid for you.'" (Bukhari)

The trip will include Friday prayers in al-Aqsa, a detailed walking tour of al-Aqsa including The Dome of the Rock (Qubbat Al-Sakhrah), its history and importance, and a walking tour of the old city of Jerusalem (including for example the Church of the Holy Sepulchre) with detailed explanations of the significance, benefits, and doubts in relation to those sites in the context of all three Abrahamic religions.

Please do note however that the trip will be focussed on the al-Aqsa compound, praying in Qibli masjid, spending as much time as possible in that blessed land where there is not one inch but a nabi or angel has been in that very same place.

There will be a ziyarah programme visiting:

- Jabal Al-Zaytoon (the Mount of Olives)
- Hebron - Masjid Khalil
- Halul - Maqam of Yunus AS
- Jericho - Maqaam of Musa AS
- Church of the Holy Sepulchre
- Birthplace of Maryam AS
- Residence of Imam Al Gazali
- The kanaqah of Salah Uddin Ayoubi RH
- The Buraaq Wall - Where the Prophet (ﷺ) tied Buraaq during the Night Journey
- Masjid Umar Bin Al-Khattab (RA) – the place where Umar (RA) performed Salaah after the conquest of Jerusalem

To enable the best experience, we will stay at the National Hotel, which is a 15 minute walk to the al-Aqsa compound. However please be aware that hotels in and around the old city of Jerusalem are not at the international standard you may expect.

### Travel Requirements

You must hold a British or EU passport which is valid for at least 6 months from the date of return.

You must have a valid health insurance policy with coverage for the treatment of COVID-19. Further requirements may be issued at short notice and will need to be complied with.

## Flights and Arrival

As this is a *land only* package, you will need to arrange your own flights. We recommend booking the following flight only after your place has been confirmed:

- EasyJet flight EZY2261 leaving Manchester at 12:50 on Thursday 7 September 2023
- EasyJet flight EZY2262 leaving Tel Aviv at 21:30 on Monday 11 September 2023 (arriving at Manchester at 01:05 on Tuesday 12 September 2023)

Please note that any hold baggage will need to be added to your booking.

It is recommended that all travellers fly into Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv so that we may assist you following your exit from the airport. If you arrive earlier or leave later than the dates/times of the above flights means you will have to pay the costs of transport too/from the airport and for any extra nights at the hotel.

You should prepare for a significant delay in Ben Gurion airport as Israeli immigration can take a number of hours. The Royal Travel and CMA support team will assist you in this process but please note:

- You may be required to await security checks including interviews before a decision is made permitting your entry into Israel, this can take three or more hours following arrival.
- You may be refused entry and required to return to the UK.

Being granted entry is not in the control of CMA or Royal Travel and therefore if entry is refused, the cost of the package cannot be refunded.

## Health / Fitness

Both the al-Aqsa compound and the old city have numerous steps and gradients and our trip will involve a lot of time walking. The floor surfaces are not paved and consist of stone blocks. The hotel is a 15 minute walk each way for able adults.

This does not make the trip prohibitive for younger children or our elder brothers and sisters, but they will definitely feel the strain. For this reason we would suggest that this trip is not for those who have difficulty walking. Al-Aqsa is different from Makkah and Madinah for example where wheelchairs are plentiful and the routes in and out of the Al Aqsa compound are not suitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs.

In September the weather is likely to be warm (25-28C) and sunny, but can be a little cool at fajr time.

## Costs

The cost of food and general shopping is expensive in Jerusalem. However, you will be supporting the local Palestinian economy. Palestinians face many hardships and restrictions and therefore money spent amongst the Palestinians is of benefit to our brothers and sisters enabling them to support their families.