

The Harvard College Israel Trek

The inaugural Harvard College Israel Trek (Spring Break, March 14th-23rd) will bring 30-40 Harvard undergraduate students to Israel, in hopes of facilitating a nuanced first encounter with the country, its history, narratives, culture, politics and people.

Organizers:

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Goals

Diverse content: Students will learn about Israeli history, culture, and politics. The topics explored will include the hi-tech industry, the emerging cultural landscape, the relationship between religion and state, the peace process and Israel's geopolitical position in the region.

Peer-led personalized experience: The Trek will be led by a dynamic team of Israeli undergraduates for their peers at the college. The Trek will draw on the narratives of its participants and leaders, placing a special emphasis on fostering meaningful personal interactions. This component will add a unique and personal dimension to this particular Israel experience.

Engage the broader community: One of the Trek's primary goals is to engage a broader audience than merely the students participating in the trip. To this end, a media team will accompany the group throughout the trip. All video recorded content, clips, live streams as well as participants' blog posts, status updates and tweets, will be featured daily on a website designated specifically for this purpose. In this way, anyone, anywhere in the world will be able to virtually share the Trek experience.

Rigorous preparation: In the weeks leading up to the Trek participants will be encouraged to attend a series of introductory meetings in which they will be given the opportunity to meet one another and learn about the region from some of Harvard's leading faculty members. These meetings will supplement the Trek's robust educational curriculum, allowing participants to cultivate a richer and better-informed understanding of Israel.

Participants

Recruiting efforts will target diverse student leaders from across campus. Selection will be based on a written application process and, in certain cases, a follow-up interview. Preference will be given to students in their junior and senior years of college who are not eligible for Birthright.

Tentative Agenda

Students will meet with Israeli politicians, journalists and analysts, engage with leading cultural and high-tech figures, and learn from Israeli and Palestinian peace activists and negotiators about the conflict. Tentative speakers include: Benjamin Netanyahu, Shimon Peres, Naftali Bennet, Tzipi Livni, Salaam Fayad, Zehava Gal-On, Ari Shavit, David Horowitz, Ruth Gavison, David Grossman, Anat Hoffman, Ohad Naharin, Aviad Kissos, Bashar Masri, Yossi Abromovitz.

Fundraising Goal: \$147,000

Tentative Budget		
Expense	Costs Per Participant	General Costs
Travel (flights)	\$1,300	
Accommodation	\$700	
Food	\$500	
Transport, guide and entrance fees	\$1,000	
Participation fee	(\$300)	
Total costs per participant	\$3,200 * 40 participants	\$128,000
Speaker honorarium		\$5,000
Website		\$3,000
Media team		\$4,000
Pre-Trek events		\$2,000
Just in case fund		\$5,000
Total		\$147,000