

GOING DEEPER

ACTS Israel Tour 2018



PHOTOGRAPHY IN ISRAEL

I am sure there will be many of you on the tour far more adept with a camera than I am, but here are a few things I've learned after a number of trips to Israel. Perhaps something here will help you.

Some Basics

Make sure your camera has batteries or the batteries are charged. It's terribly frustrating to arrive at a great spot for taking pictures only to discover that you can't take any or only a few.

If you have a DSLR check that your exposure settings are correct at the start of the day. You can lose good opportunities if you've adjusted them the night before and then start the day with all your pictures under- or over-exposed.

Get a Shoulder Sling

Most DSLR's come with a neck strap. My experience is that this can become heavy as we walk about during the day. I bought a Carry Speed shoulder sling and found it greatly improved my day. The weight of the camera no longer drags on your neck and it hangs comfortably by your side.

Just an ad photo. Not me. I wish I had that flat stomach!

Wide Angle Lens and Circular Polarizer

If you are using an DSLR, a circular polarizing filter can be very helpful for capturing blue skies and removing reflections from foliage and similar features.

A wide angle lens can also help. The picture below was taken with a circular polarizer and a 10mm lens.

The Walls of Jerusalem from the Kidron Valley

Look for Details Not Just Big Scenes

For many years as I travelled I'd happily snap away at large scenes and move on. Of course, you want to capture the larger context. Here's a photo of the large brass menorah across from Israel's Knesset, it's equivalent to our Parliament.

The menorah outside the Knesset

If you look closely at the menorah, however, you find it's a rich treasure house of amazing smaller details. The detail below shows Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones which is near the middle of the central branch of the menorah.

These nails below were used in construction of the ancient Galilee boat at Ginosar.

Ancient nails used for boat building

So keep your eyes open for the little things. Push in close and you'll be glad you did.

Catch the Reactions of Others on the Tour

There's plenty of photographic action to be found if you keep an eye out for others reacting to what we see. At the menorah I found it almost more interesting to watch how others were responding to it.

Snap Your Meals

Some of you may already have a habit of taking a picture of your meal. If not, give it a try. Here's a snap of a plate with a St. Peter's Fish, a species of fish unique to the Sea of Galilee.

Saint Peter's Fish from the Sea of Galilee. Good!

Keep an Eye Out for the Wildlife

In some of the places we visit, the animals may be the main photographic subject.

Wild Ibex at Masada

Camels are common in some areas. The hobbles on their forelegs show that these are domesticated animals, part of someone's herd

Camels in the desert south of the Dead Sea

Plants and Flowers

We will be in Israel in the spring. You'll find flowers in bloom.

There are some plants you're not likely to see in Canada like this giant Aloe.

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Look Down. There's Interesting Stuff at Your Feet

Some interesting things will be right at your feet. Here is a circular socket that could be used for a rotating door post. Next to it is a square retaining socket where heavy beams could be slipped into place to bar a door.

Circular door socket and square post socket

On the beach at Tabgha, there were these two stones. I don't know if they had a purpose, were a message, or just an accident of nature.

Heart-shaped stones on the beach at Tabgha

Machinery

At some sites you'll see ancient machinery. Here's a stone olive mill found at Capernaum, used for crushing olives prior to pressing them for oil.

A stone live crusher

Signage

It can be helpful to snap a photo of an explanatory sign. Snap a close up of the sign and then a larger photo with the sign in context. Later you'll be able to link them together.

Here is the audience hall at Caesarea where the Apostle Paul may have made his defense before Agrippa and his appeal to Caesar.

I didn't hold steady enough when I snapped the sign but its readable and that's enough.

[View Larger](#)

Here's a sign on the Via Dolorosa in Hebrew, Arabic, and English.

Sign on the Via Dolorosa

Stained Glass Windows

Some of the churches we will visit have amazing stained glass windows. With an SLR use a high aperture and center-weighted metering. A tripod helps but if the window is bright you can do it hand held. Use a high ISO. The bright colours will overcome the noise factor.

Stained glass window at Mensa Christi

Not Everything Is About History. Have Some Fun

This "dragon" was perched along the path as we walked to the top of Mount Bental.

Metal dragon sculpture on Mount Bental

Go Close

Step close or zoom in to capture details. I was fascinated by the gnarled growth layers of this ancient olive tree in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Make Sure You Are in the Picture

Don't forget to put yourself in the picture. Ask others to do it for you. Here's a fun photo I took for young friends at Caesarea.

Friends at Caesarea