



MACCABIAH 2025 TRAVEL PACKAGES FAQ

Before reading any further, please keep in mind that this information pertains to families and supporters who want to visit Israel to watch their athletes compete at the July 2025 Maccabiah. The athletes, coaches, managers, medical team, and other volunteers already have accommodations, programming, etc. that will be taken care of by Maccabi USA. Please note, however, that Masters athletes do have more flexibility and they can join one of these travel packages if desired.

We encourage everyone to [sign up for our Travel Package Interest List](#) to receive ongoing updates.

What are the benefits of joining a Maccabi USA travel package?

The Maccabiah is a logistically complex event with competitions taking place all across Israel. We have been running Maccabiah travel packages for many years to help our families have unforgettable experiences in Israel while also reducing trip planning stress.

We will provide you with: Hotel, high-level group activities, transportation to competitions, fun and meaningful Israel/Jewish experiences, and connection to other Maccabi USA families.

Are these trips built for Israel first-timers, veterans, or somewhere in between?

All the travel packages are designed for everyone, whether you've never been to Israel or you've been there many times. We incorporate a variety of activities into the experience focusing on high-level access options that wouldn't otherwise be available to most Israel travelers (e.g. dinner with the Israeli president, helicopter rides across Israel, etc.).

Again, because of the logistics of the Maccabiah, we also help with transportation, which many families find helpful.

Can I bring my family/friends on the travel package, no matter what age?

Yes! The travel packages are designed to be family friendly and will have different activity options to help cater to a variety of age groups. October 7th-related activities, Yad Vashem, and other mature places and topics will be covered in these itineraries, but there are always alternatives for kids that will occur simultaneously. In some cases, you can even leave your children with youth counselors if you want to go on these activities while they enjoy themselves in a separate space.

Can Maccabi USA delegation members (i.e. athletes, coaches, managers, doctors, etc.) join the Travel Packages?

No, with the exception of Masters athletes. The delegation has its own itinerary, activities, schedule, etc., and these Travel Packages are intended for everyone else who wants to come and watch the action, including family, friends, and supporters of Maccabi USA or Israel.

Masters athletes can choose to opt out of their delegation lodgings and make their own accommodation arrangements, including through one of these travel packages. However, please keep in mind that Masters athletes often have busy practice/competition schedules, so they may miss activities, and there is no reimbursement for that.

Can my U16, U18, or Open Maccabiah athlete(s) opt into a travel package?

No. Your U16/U18/Open athlete(s) will be staying with our USA delegation throughout the Maccabiah and cannot come on this with you. We have an entire program and system in place for the athletes so they will be taken care of every step of the way.

Can I spend time with my U16, U18, or Open Maccabiah athlete(s) in Israel?

In addition to watching them play and seeing them after competitions, you have the option to be with your U16/U18/Open athletes from:

- Friday evening, July 11 - Saturday evening, July 12 (during the Travel Packages)
- Friday evening, July 18 - Saturday evening, July 19 (Travel Packages already over)

Maccabi USA prioritizes the athlete experience and thus we encourage them to spend as much time as possible with their teammates and new friends. We will also have delegation activities for the athletes throughout Shabbat, which they can choose to participate in.

If you have U16 or U18 athlete(s) that you want to take out on July 11/12 or July 18/19, you must follow a specific 'check-out' procedure so we know where they are at all times. Open athletes who are over 18 years old also have procedures they need to follow, and you will get more information about that as we get closer to the Games.

Can I pay on an a la carte basis to join specific activities from the daily Travel Package activities, or just pay for Travel Package transportation? Alternatively, if I register for a Travel Package, will I get credits or refunds for any events/activities I cannot attend?

Unfortunately, no. Each package is only sold as a full bundle, as it is too complicated logistically and financially to be able to offer items a la carte. Likewise, there is no reimbursement for any activities missed during your time in Israel.

What if I can only make it to Israel for a portion of the dates for the Travel Package I would like to join?

If, for example, you want to go on the Silver Supporters Package (July 7-14), but you can only be in Israel from July 9-14, then Gil Travel will give you a prorated price. Please reach out to Ariel at ariell@giltravel.com to get more specific information.

Is airfare included in the travel packages?

No, but if you would like our travel partners, Gil Travel, to book your flights, please reach out to: air-dept@giltravel.com.

If you book your own flight, we recommend El Al at this time as the most reliable airline to Israel.

Is there a deadline to register for the Travel Packages or to book airfare?

We have not set any deadlines for Travel Package registration, but we encourage you to sign up as space can get limited. Especially given the recent ceasefire in Israel, we expect a general summer tourism rush, so we recommend booking as soon as possible.

Likewise, with flights, we recommend booking as soon as possible, as increased demand to get to Israel will increase those prices.

When does travel package registration open?

Travel package registration will open by Friday, January 24, and we will send out an email with the link and further information.

Do the travel packages include Opening Ceremony tickets?

Yes, all 3 packages include an Opening Ceremony ticket and transportation to/from the Opening Ceremony.

Can I attend the Opening Ceremony in Israel even if I don't join one of the travel packages?

Yes, but every spectator (including children) will need to purchase a ticket to be allowed into the stadium. Opening Ceremony tickets will become available for purchase as we get closer to the Maccabiah (pricing and date to be determined by Maccabi World Union). We will facilitate the Opening Ceremony ticket sale and provide more information to families as soon as we get it.

FYI that Opening Ceremony transportation can be very difficult without organized transportation because of security and the blocking of streets/added traffic. Getting public transportation, especially after the ceremony ends, may also be difficult.

Can I watch Maccabiah competitions in Israel without opting into a Maccabi USA travel package?

Yes. The Organizers have never required credentials at previous Maccabiah Games in Israel, and as of now, that is still the case. Should they change their policy and require a credential to get into Maccabiah venues, you will be notified and also able to purchase credentials to watch competitions without opting into a travel package.

What are the major dates to be aware of for the Maccabiah as I plan my own/my family's Maccabiah experience?

- July 8-21: The Maccabiah (multi-sport) competition goes from July 8-21. Only a few sports will begin Tuesday, July 8, which is why the Travel Package itineraries indicate that competitions start on Wednesday, July 9, though please note it is possible you could have an athlete who will play that day.
- July 10: Opening Ceremony (Teddy Stadium in Jerusalem)
- July 20: Last day of competitions if teams make it that far
- July 21: Closing Ceremony (only open to the delegation and is closed to the public, parents, family, etc.)
- July 22-23: Maccabi USA delegations depart Israel back to the United States

Note that U16/U18/Open Athletes, but not Masters Athletes, will all be in Israel *no later than July 1* to engage in our educational Israel Connect program, as well as to participate in training camp.

When will we get the athlete competition schedule to help plan our trip?

General Schedule: By the spring, we will likely be sent the general schedule from Maccabiah Organizers. The general schedule indicates the dates that specific competitions take place. For example—and this is hypothetical—the general schedule might tell us that the U18 Boys basketball competition will run from July 9-20, but it won't tell us which of those days or at what times the U18 Boys basketball team will actually play.

Specific Schedule: The specific schedule will actually list game dates, times, and opponents, but please do **NOT** expect to receive it until just a few weeks before the Maccabiah starts, and remember that the schedule is always subject to change even after publication.

As soon as we receive these schedules from the Games Organizers, we will send them on to you.

What are the Travel Package dates and where in Israel will we travel?

- Gold Mission
 - July 4-7: Tel Aviv

- July 7-11: Jerusalem
 - July 11-14: Whichever city your athlete is competing in (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem or Haifa)
- Silver Supporter's Package
 - July 7-11: Jerusalem
 - July 11-14: Whichever city your athlete is competing in (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem or Haifa)
- Bronze Friends and Family Package:
 - July 7-11: Jerusalem
 - July 11-14: Whichever city your athlete is competing in (Tel Aviv, Jerusalem or Haifa)

Both the Gold and Silver will also have the opportunity to travel to the Dead Sea & Masada, kibbutzim in the south that were impacted on October 7, and elsewhere.

Will security be provided?

Yes, security will be provided for all travel package activities and buses, with the exception of transportation going to/from competition venues (Maccabi World Union will secure all venues).

As an FYI, the USA delegation (athletes, coaches, trainers, etc.) will have their own security as well.

If I don't sign up for one of the Travel Packages, are there any opportunities to gather with other Maccabi USA families?

Anyone is welcome to go to Israel on their own for the Maccabiah and we hope you will do so even if you don't join us. You will be able to attend all competitions (there has been no cost for that in the past) and can also buy Opening Ceremony tickets unless/until they sell out. We don't have any information at the moment about when those tickets will become available or how much they will cost, but we will share that as soon as we know more.

Outside of the Opening Ceremony, there are no other communal gatherings planned, which is why we recommend joining the Mission if possible.

How strenuous will this trip be?

Depends on the activities—you can always opt out of them and also, we frequently have multiple options during the day depending on the itinerary.

Do the Travel Packages include transportation to and from all the competitions?

Yes for Gold and Silver, but no for Bronze.

If our athlete competes July 9-12 we miss most tour activities--can we cancel after finding out athletic schedule?

Unfortunately, no, and it is likely you won't know your schedule until a few weeks prior to the Maccabiah (and even then, things can and do frequently change). We will provide you with the transportation you need to get to and from the competition, but we cannot guarantee that you wouldn't miss Mission events, as that does happen.

If someone is arriving in Israel earlier or later, can the trip/fee be adjusted?

Maybe

If you want to extend your stay how does that work? Is there a schedule of the games ahead of time?

Gil Travel can handle extensions (both before and/or after the Mission). The competition schedule will not come out until a few weeks before the Maccabiah starts.

Pricing

See slides

Safety and security

See slides

Where to stay /tours/ Transportation to events from July 15-22

If you would like to help planning your travel (i.e. hotels, logistics, activities, etc.) and/or continuing to get transportation to competitions, Gil Travel can accommodate you. Otherwise, you would be on your own to get from place to place, though after a week on the Mission you should feel comfortable with your surroundings and with the competitions locations. Public transit is also an option, such as Gett.

The trip shows only one week, while the event runs for two weeks. Why is that?

Most people cannot stay the full two weeks, which is why we don't offer that package. We do a mix of activities before the competition starts and while it goes on so that there are days you don't have to be concerned about missing Mission activities to go to games.

Travel packages w/o flights or only one way flights available?

Travel packages do not include flights, though Gil Travel can get them for you.

Want to better understand the logistics for day to day for our 16 year old daughter traveling by herself

This is not a question we're addressing for the Mission—please contact your coaches for more information. Just note that we take care of them every step of the way from the plane ride to Israel through the plane ride back. There will be a combination of practicing, Israel/Jewish education and touring activities, games, social events, etc.

What if we need to leave Israel before the package end date? Do all events occur during the package dates?

All travel package activities occur between July 4-14 for Gold and July 7-14 for Silver and Bronze. There aren't other activities made available by Maccabi USA for supporters outside of those dates, though there is plenty of competition to watch and you will likely meet other families and become friendly with them throughout.

Will athletes and supporters be together or be able to be together at the B'nai mitzvah USA delegation?

That is unlikely. We will probably have 1,000 athletes at the B'nai Mitzvah and they will all be together with their teams. Only the Gold Mission will be attending and will stay together as a group as well. Possibly you will see or be near them and of course you can go up and talk/hang out with them, though we recommend you give them space to be with/make new friends.

How often will we be able to see our athlete? It is my family's first trip to Israel, and we would like to experience some of it together.

Shabbat and after their games are the only times you will be able to see your athletes. After games, you should be able to see them on the field, court, etc. for a few minutes. On Shabbat, starting Friday night, July 11, through Saturday night, July 12, you can check out your U16/U18 athletes, though you MUST follow the procedure for that (more info available on that at a later date). Open athletes who are 18 and older don't need to be 'checked out', though they need to keep their coaches apprised of what they're doing.

The organization's philosophy is that the athletes should spend as much time with each other as possible, though we understand you want to see them too, which is why we allow this on Shabbat.

Note that you and your athletes might plan time to meet up, but they may change their mind as they get closer to their teammates, and additionally, we do have programming for them on Shabbat.
