Volunteers for Israel (VFI) Announces Exciting New Programs for 2019

WORK HARD AND PLAY HARD
Volunteer on an army base, work in an archeological dig, travel off the beaten path. Take a meaningful journey.

THE NEW VFI PLUS PROGRAMS

Over the years, thousands of volunteers have helped the IDF maintain combat readiness through their work on army bases in Israel. Hundreds have returned year after year, bringing friends, family, and community members. From our returning volunteers, we hear that more people would volunteer to help in Israel if only someone would take care of the logistics for them, if only they had the chance to tour Israel as well, if only there were an additional, unique experience that might entice those on the fence.

In response, VFI has recently developed 4 additional All-Inclusive programs, the VFI PLUS programs for your consideration.

The VFI PLUS Programs take care of everything. ALL arrangements for your volunteer assignment, housing, transportation, airport transfers, private tours, lectures, specialty guides, admission fees, food (except touring lunches), and tips are included. You are responsible only for your round-trip air travel to Tel Aviv. It could not be simpler: just pack your bags and show up.

These programs are already getting rave reviews.

INTRODUCING

VFI PLUS
Designed for first-timers who have not experienced the must-see wonders of Israel, this 17-day program includes 9 days of volunteering on an IDF base plus 8 days of custom touring with a professional Israeli guide in an air-conditioned bus. You will have the satisfaction of contributing to the security of Israel and the joy of experiencing the highlights of the ancient and modern state.

VFI PLUS ADVANCED
For the Israel veteran. You’ve climbed Masada, floated in the Dead Sea, stuck your note in the Western Wall, walked the Tel Aviv beach eating your falafel, shopped the Ha Carmel shuk and even seen the Dead Sea Scrolls. How to top that?

As in VFI PLUS, this 17-day program includes 9 days of volunteering on an IDF base plus 8 days of private, custom touring with a professional Israeli guide in an air-conditioned bus. This deluxe itinerary features unusual and authentic under-the-radar experiences.

VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY
Awaken your inner Indiana Jones. Get your hands dirty on an active archaeological site guided by professionals from the Israel Antiquities Authority. This 14-day, all-inclusive program is for both first-timers and repeat volunteers. It combines 5 days of volunteer work on an IDF base, 5 days of work at a professional IAA dig site, and 4 days of custom touring in an air-conditioned bus.

VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY-2
This archaeology-only program is for the person who was captivated by Herman Wouk’s The Source years ago and cannot wait to dig in. The work on this 7- or 14-day program is exclusively on an active IAA archaeological site, guided by professionals. This program also features custom touring to off-the-beaten-path locations.

Whether volunteering on an IDF base or on a dig – all housing, most meals, an IDF work uniform, job assignments and evening programs are all provided.

All touring is a wonderful mix of historic and educational site visits and high-quality lectures delivered by expert Israeli guides. A rich assortment of subjects range from antiquity to the present. Accommodations while touring are mostly 4-star hotels.
RESOURCES FOR YOU TO USE

For general information on the VFI PLUS Program, visit
http://www.vfi-usa.org/program-options/vfi-plus

Detailed itineraries, costs, schedules and trip registration,
visit GIL Travel at For VFI PLUS, visit
tinyurl.com/vfiplus2
For VFI PLUS ADVANCED, visit
tinyurl.com/vfiplus3
For VFI PLUS ARCHAELOGY, visit
tinyurl.com/vfiplus8
For VFI PLUS ARCHAELOGY-2, visit
tinyurl.com/vfiplus7

View the brief VFI PLUS introduction video at www.tinyurl.com/vfiplus

The enrollment process is straightforward; here are some facts.

• All volunteers apply through VFI channels for application and acceptance, and pay the VFI non-refundable $125 application fee. See www.vfi-usa.org. Identify your regional VFI representative by calling (866) 514-1948 or email info@vfi-usa.org or visit www.vfi-usa.org and select the Contact tab, then your region on the map. Tap the APPLY NOW button on the Home page to download and print your VFI Application.

Contact your VFI representative who will review your application process which includes forms, medical release, references, personal interview, etc.

• Non-U.S. English-speaking citizens apply through their home country. See www.Sar-El.org

• Then reserve your place on your chosen program by contacting GIL Travel at 800.223.3855 and ask for Ilana at ext. 369 or email ilanab@giltravel.com.

• Volunteers must fill out GIL Travel forms and remit a $500 deposit which is fully refundable should they not be accepted by VFI for any reason. If the VFI PLUS program does not go, for any reason, they get back 100% of their monies paid to GIL Travel. GIL Travel also offers support for air travel and additional accommodations beyond the scope of these programs.

• A minimum of 10 participants is required for each program by a cutoff date. Should the minimum not be met, GIL will inform participants of available options.

• Work assignments on the IDF base are in direct support of the needs of the IDF base commander. Job duties are varied, frequently have to do with logistics, and all training is provided, as well as an IDF work uniform, lodging, all kosher food, and your job assignment.

• Work assignments on the archaeological sites are in direct support of the needs of the IAA site project manager and all tools and instruction are provided.

• Feel free to contact Steve Plotkin, VFI PLUS Program Manager, anytime at 610.358.5366, or steveplotkin@erols.com

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS FOR VFI PLUS
Jaffa, Jerusalem, Beit She’an, Safed, Golan Heights, Gamla, Kibbutz Gesher, Kibbutz Degania, City of David, Jerusalem Jewish Quarter, Western Wall Tunnels, Via Dolorosa, Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Garden of Gethsemane, Machane Yehuda, Qumran, Dead Sea, Masada, Yad Vashem, Mount Herzl, Israel Museum

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS FOR VFI PLUS ADVANCED
Haifa, Bahai Gardens, Akko, Templar Tunnels, Mane Katz Museum, Rosh HaNikra, Jerusalem, Knesset Tour, Davidson Center, Herodion Mansion, Burnt House, Machane Yehuda Market, Gush Etzion Museum, Yemin Moshe, Negev Desert, Sde Boker, Mizpe Ramon &Crater, Desert Song Farm, Revivim, Avdat, Stargazing, Tel Arad, Weizmann Institute

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS FOR VFI PLUS ARCHAELOGY PROGRAMS
Haifa, Bahai Gardens, Akko, Templar Tunnels, Mane Katz Museum, Rosh HaNikra, Jerusalem, Knesset Tour, Davidson Center, more...
PROGRAM SCHEDULE AND COST FOR 2019

SCHEDULE:

March 29–April 14 ........................................ 17 days VFI PLUS ADVANCED program
May 12–May 25 ............................................. 14 days VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY program
Sept. 8–Sept. 21 ........................................... 14 days VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY program
Oct. 25–Nov. 10 ........................................... 17 days VFI PLUS program
Nov. 17–Nov. 23 ...... 7 days option VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY-2 program
Nov. 17–Nov. 30 ........................................ 14 days VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY-2 program
Dec. 6–Dec. 22 ........................................... 17 days VFI PLUS ADVANCED program

COST:

VFI PLUS ADVANCED PROGRAM
March 29 -April 14 ....................................... $2,880 (Single Supplement $725)

VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM
May 12-May 25 ........................................... $2,900 (Single Supplement $1,020)

VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY PROGRAM
September 8-September 21 ...................... $2,595 (Single Supplement $668)

VFI PLUS PROGRAM
October 25–November 10 ............................ $2,695 (Single Supplement $780)

VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY-2 PROGRAM- 7-DAY OPTION
November 17-November 23 ......................... $1,970 (Single Supplement $438)

VFI PLUS ARCHAEOLOGY-2 PROGRAM- 14-DAY OPTION
November 17-November 30 ......................... $2,995 (Single Supplement $984)

VFI PLUS ADVANCED PROGRAM
December 6- December 22 ......................... $2,695 (Single Supplement $665)

Above single person, land-only rates are based on double-occupancy. A Single Supplement is available. Your VFI $125 application fee, and your roundtrip airfare to Tel Aviv are additional.

All VFI PLUS programs are open to English-speakers worldwide. Most programs run concurrent with scheduled Sar-El volunteer programs.

What is Not Included:

Your airfare to Tel Aviv
GIL Travel can assist you with air & hotel arrangements

Travel Insurance – recommended, and available from GIL Travel at additional cost

Lunches while on the road during touring days

Your personal expenses and gift purchases

Other travel options and extensions

EVERYTHING else is included—You Merely Have to Show Up

TESTIMONIALS

Here is what recent VFI PLUS participants said:

“Best experience ever. Rewarding, nourishing, rich, vibrant and brought my heritage to life. Formed lasting friendships with Israeli’s and VFI team.”
–SHOSHANA 2018

“The VFI PLUS program was a real Plus in my life! While I am not Jewish it taught me about the need for Israel, the importance of the work that we did while on base, showed me the important sites in Israel and brought a better understanding of why Israel is an important partner for us in the U.S.”
–ANNETTE 2018

“I really didn’t know what to expect. I enjoyed doing the exhausting physical work of digging, carefully removing dirt around stones, moving debris with the wheelbarrow, sifting, and washing pottery shards, small animal bones, and flint stones. Learning about the site history from our archeology madricha was valuable. It was mindboggling to find objects from 5 to 7 thousand years ago. To sum it all up, it was a great adventure: team work, patience, exposure to different cultures, learning and discovery.”
–NAOMI 2018

“This Volunteers for Israel PLUS was one of the most rewarding experiences of my lifetime. I had the opportunity to work as a volunteer on a military base to help support the IDF soldiers and to have a fabulous tour with other volunteers in the land of Israel was a time to cherish.”
–DALE F. 2017

“The VFI Plus experience is a magnificent experience for all people who desire to travel to the Holy Land. As an observant Jew I was fully accommodated by the people who organized the VFI Plus program.”
–MICHAEL M. ESQ 2017

“Overall the VFI program was wonderful and represented one of the greatest travel experiences we have ever had. An opportunity to interact with the “real Israel” through wonderful young people.”
–TERRY & BOB 2017
VFI PLUS PROGRAM – EXAMPLE ITINERARY:

Day 1 – Friday – Travel day — Arrive in Tel Aviv — transfer to hotel, welcoming Shabbat supper

Day 2 – Saturday — Tel Aviv – All-day group touring, walking tour option for observant.

Day 3 – Sunday – Transfer to IDF Base – Transfer to airport IDF meeting point, bus transport to IDF base, get IDF uniform, begin orientation and work assignments

Day 4,5,6 – Monday thru Wednesday – Volunteer on IDF base, work assignments, evening activities

Day 7 – Thursday – Volunteer on IDF base, at noon begin weekend touring in private bus, Beit She’an, Overnight: Tiberias

Day 8 – Friday – All-Day touring, Safed, Golan Heights, Jeep Tour. Shabbat supper. Overnight: Tiberias

Day 9 – Saturday – All-Day touring, Gamla Synagogue, Kibbutz Gesher, Kibbutz Degania, Walking tour option for observant. Overnight: Tiberias

VFI PLUS ADVANCED PROGRAM – EXAMPLE ITINERARY:

Visit https://tinyurl.com/vfiplus9

Day 10 – Sunday – Return to IDF Base – afternoon work assignments

Day 11,12,13 – Monday thru Wednesday – Volunteering and residing on IDF base, work assignments, evening activities


Day 15 – Friday – All-Day touring in Jerusalem, Jewish Quarter, Shabbat group supper. Western Wall Tunnels, Cardo, Christian Quarter, Via Dolorosa leading to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Garden of Gethsemane, Machane Yehuda. Overnight: Jerusalem

Day 16 – Saturday – All-Day touring, Qumran, Masada, Dead Sea, Mea Shearim and the Old City. Overnight: Jerusalem. Walking tour option for observant.

Day 17 – Sunday – Touring and Departure, Yad Vashem, Mount Herzl, Israel Museum, Farewell supper in Jaffa, transfer to Ben Gurion Airport in evening, fly home.

FOR ADDITIONAL DETAILS:
Visit https://tinyurl.com/vfiplus8

VFI PLUS ARCHAELOGY PROGRAM – EXAMPLE ITINERARY:

Day 1 - Sunday – Travel day – 9:00 a.m. arrival at Tel Aviv airport Arrivals Area – bus transport to IDF base, get IDF uniform, begin orientation and work assignments

Days 2,3,4 – Monday thru Wednesday – Volunteering and residing on IDF base, work assignments, evening activities

Day 5 – Thursday – Volunteer on IDF base, at noon begin weekend touring in private bus, overnight hotel

Day 6 – Friday – All-Day touring. Shabbat supper. Overnight: hotel

Day 7 – Saturday – All-Day touring, Walking tour option for observant. Overnight hotel

Days 8,9,10,11 – Sunday to Wednesday – 6:00 a.m. bus transport to archaeology dig site, volunteer work until 2:30 p.m., transport to hotel

Day 12 – Thursday – 6:00 a.m. bus transport to archaeology dig site, volunteer work until 2:30 p.m., volunteering ends, weekend touring begins. Jerusalem – Tower of David, Hezekiah Tunnels. Overnight: Jerusalem

Day 13 – Friday – All-Day touring in Jerusalem, Jewish Quarter, Shabbat group supper. Western Wall Tunnels, Cardo, Christian Quarter, Via Dolorosa leading to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Garden of Gethsemane, Machane Yehuda. Overnight: Jerusalem

Day 14 – Saturday – All-Day touring, Walking tour option for observant, farewell dinner in Jaffa, transfer to Ben Gurion Airport in evening, fly home.