

A Journey Through the North of Israel¹

Last summer, my husband and I set out on an unforgettable trip through the North of Israel. In just a few days, we were able to weave together the threads of history, spirituality, nature, and culture that make this region so unique.

August 20 — Tiberias and Haifa

Our trip began in **Tiberias**, where we checked into our hotel and immediately felt the sense of being surrounded by centuries of Jewish life. Tiberias is one of Judaism's four holy cities, and its landscape is dotted with the graves of great sages and tzaddikim. Standing among these sacred sites, we felt a deep connection to the voices of our past.

Later that day, we drove north to **Haifa**. The road itself was a joy, unfolding into views of the Galilee. Haifa, perched on the slopes of Mount Carmel and looking out over the sea, greeted us with its vibrant energy — a mix of modern port city and spiritual crossroads.

August 21 — Safed and Akko

The next morning, we headed to **Safed (Tzfat)**, the mystical city of Kabbalah. Wandering through the **Ari HaKodesh Synagogue** and the artist colony, we encountered a blend of the sacred and the creative. A stop at a diamond factory reminded us that Safed is also a place of livelihood and craftsmanship, not only mysticism.

From there, we continued to **Mount Meron**, visiting the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai, the great sage of the Zohar. It was a deeply spiritual stop, a mountain carrying both serenity and holiness.

By the afternoon, we arrived in **Akko (Acre)**, a city layered with history. Walking through the Old City felt like stepping through time — Phoenician, Roman, Crusader, Ottoman. Highlights included the bustling Old City Market, the mysterious **Templars' Tunnel**, and the Turkish Hammam Museum. We admired the grand **Khan al-Umdan** and ended our tour at the **Bahá'í House**, a site sacred to another faith, reminding us of Akko's enduring role as a crossroads of peoples and religions.

August 22 — Rosh Hanikra and Banias

Our third day took us further north to the **Rosh Hanikra grottoes**. The turquoise waters crashing into chalk-white cliffs created a natural wonder of rare beauty. From there, we continued to the lush **Banias Nature Reserve** in the Golan, home to ancient ruins and Israel's most famous waterfall. Walking along the trails, hearing the roar of the Banias Waterfall, and enjoying a picnic in the green woodlands made this day feel like a true embrace of nature.

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August 23 — The Golan Heights and Beyond

On our final day, we visited the **Golan Heights Winery** in Katzrin. Learning about the process of wine-making, from vineyards to barrels, connected us to Israel's ancient agricultural traditions. The tasting experience was memorable — Avrum and I shared smiles as we compared notes on the flavors, while children nearby enjoyed grape juice and pretzels.

From Katzrin, we had the option to explore deeper into the Golan: archaeological sites, adventurous hikes, and serene pools surrounded by forests. On the way back south, we also considered a stop at **Caesarea Philippi**, another reminder of the deep historical roots spread across this land.

Closing Reflection

This journey was more than a summer getaway. It was a pilgrimage through history, faith, and landscape. From the mystical heights of Safed to the roaring waters of Banias, from the Templars' tunnels of Akko to the vineyards of the Golan, each stop was a thread in the tapestry of our people's story. Traveling with my husband by my side made it even more special — together we carried not only our suitcases, but also a shared memory of discovery, laughter, and connection to the land of Israel.

