

CHAPTER FOUR

Groups & Programming

Group Assignments

Each group (“Bus”) consists of approximately 40 campers from throughout North America. Because of the richness of the activities and the sharing of a multitude of special experiences, life-long friendships are often formed. Each participant has the opportunity to request people with whom s/he would like to be placed, and we guarantee that s/he will be with at least one of them. If you have specific issues to discuss, please contact Dan Katz directly.

Itineraries

Tremendous thought is put into the planning of every minute of Mach Hach BaAretz. The program is designed to be inspirational, educational and fun. Time is spent in each region of the country so that campers can gain an appreciation for the historical and modern significance of each area. A group generally sleeps in the same place for 2-5 nights and then moves on. If you suspect that your child will have difficulty organizing his/her belongings for all the packing and unpacking involved, please discuss strategies that will help him/her. Feel free to contact us for guidance. A written itinerary (calendar style), specific to your bus, will be sent to you before the summer. It will be as exact as possible, but please understand that last minute changes in program sometimes occur.

Lodging

Throughout the course of the program, each group sleeps in approximately ten different hotels, guest houses and dormitories throughout the country. All are clean, comfortable and air-conditioned. Bathrooms are connected to the rooms. Generally there are 3-5 campers in a room. Towels and linens are supplied (we recommend that you bring 2 towels for use at water activities outside the hotel). Sleeping bags with freshly laundered liners will be provided during Yam L’Yam and Wilderness. There is no need to bring your own.

Inter-Bus Programming

There are several times over the course of the program when all the groups will be together. These are opportunities to spend time with old and new friends from other buses, and to experience the strength and spirit of the group as a whole. Those events are: arrival night ceremonies at the Kotel, Shabbat Mach Hach, Tisha B’Av closing and The Amazing Race. In addition, all Adventure Week programs combine campers from all buses. Lastly, individual buses will meet up for inter-bus basketball games.



Adventure Week Options

- *Chessed* – Each day will have a different focus which will allow us to learn about a unique population in need and to volunteer with them (Physical disabilities, special needs...).
- *Army* - Participants will learn navigation skills and shooting positions and will go to battle on the paintball field. They will wear army uniforms and experience life as Israeli soldiers.
- *Yam Le'Yam* - Hike the width of Israel, from the Kineret to the Mediterranean. Help prepare meals over an open fire, star gaze and sleep outdoors surrounded by the lushness of the North.
- *Wilderness* - Spend four days in the stunning and stark Negev desert. Hike and learn survival skills by day and sleep peacefully under the star-filled sky at night.
- *Culturefest* - Engage with all the culture that modern Israel has to offer. Enjoy its foods, music, art and film. See Israel through a different lens.

Hikes

Hiking is a major component of Mach Hach BaAretz. We believe that it is critical to learn about and experience Israel with our bodies as well as with our minds. Hiking will take place in deserts, mountains and water. Please be aware that it is geared toward normal, healthy teenagers but will be physically strenuous at times. We do not have facilities for people who are unable to hike on a consistent basis, so please be sure that you are physically and emotionally prepared for such a program. That said, if you are not an experienced hiker do not worry. Your madrichim and friends will be there to give you loads of encouragement and support.

Daily Routine

No part of the daily program is optional. All campers are expected to be at each activity, on time, unless they have special permission from a staff member. This includes tfilah 3 times a day, meals, shiurim and all other activities. There will be a nightly curfew so that every camper will get adequate sleep in order to be sufficiently rested to meet the physical demands of the program.

Free Weekend

The Free Weekend this year will be from Friday morning, July 26th until Sunday morning, July 28th. Specific details and a form requesting host contact information is available in your online account. Hosts can pick-up and drop-off their guests at specific times at locations in Jerusalem, Latrun, Ramat Gan and Raanana. Campers may travel to/from their hosts by taxi only if we have written permission from the parents. We recommend that campers not travel by public bus or train unless they are accompanied by their host or have spent significant time in Israel and are very familiar with the public transportation system. We highly recommend that all campers go to a family or adult friend. Spending the weekend in a dormitory or hotel without proper adult supervision is NOT recommended. If you do not have friends or family in Israel, we will arrange for your child to spend the weekend with a Bnei Akiva family. As transportation is not provided, campers going to a Bnei Akiva family will be put in a licensed taxi at their own expense. Luggage will be stored for participants during the weekend, they only need to take an overnight bag. Everyone will be taken to a supermarket before the Free Weekend to buy a small gift for their hosts, or you can order a gift basket to be delivered to their home. Please note that **all rules of conduct that apply to campers during the program apply during the Free Weekend as well.**

