



Shalhevet



תנועת בני עקיבא העולמית
WORLD BNEI AKIVA



HACHSHARA
תשע"ב
2011-12

Welcome to the world of Hachshara!

Bnei Akiva inspires and empowers Jewish youth with a deep commitment to the Jewish people, the Land of Israel and the Torah. Its members strive to live lives of Torah va'Avodah, combining Torah learning and observance with active contribution to the Jewish people and society.

For 80 years, our Hachshara programmes have played a part in shaping and training the future leaders of Bnei Akiva and Jewish communities around the world.

Your gap year is when you can devote specific time to Jewish learning, and Hachshara is designed to help you make the most of that time. And you'll find that being on Hachshara is a learning experience itself – you'll find out more about Israel, pick up Ivrit and grow as a person.

Our team

Bnei Akiva has a highly qualified administrative and educational staff in Israel, looking after the programmes and participants on a daily basis.

- Qualified resident leaders (madrichim) – among them, Israelis on their second year of National Service – accompany our groups, guiding and advising them throughout their year in Israel.
- The programme co-ordinator (rakaz) plans the seminars and Shabbatot, and is responsible for the logistical and educational implementation of the programme. He visits the group regularly and maintains close contact with the madrichim.
- Our groups are also cared for by educational mentors, a young family (mishpacha melava) who look after the welfare needs of those on Hachshara. As experienced graduates of Bnei Akiva, they help to guide our participants individually so that they gain the most out of their year.



Shalhevet

Shalhevet is an uplifting, inspiring and empowering year in Israel with Bnei Akiva.

You'll learn new skills, hone old ones, develop your Jewish identity and adapt to new environments – all while enjoying the group experience.

Shalhevet is all about learning and giving. It's a year for yourself, but also a chance to contribute to society around you.



Marva Army Experience

Marva is ideal for those who want to become familiar with Israel by experiencing the physical and emotional challenges of the country, its challenges and its people. Through hiking the land, living in field conditions, navigating deserts and hillsides and participating in seminars and lectures, you'll learn about the issues of the country.

The programme is based in the Southern Negev, but you'll spend time in various other parts of the country, including Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the Galilee. The two-month experience is conducted in easy Hebrew, and as participants come from all over the world, that becomes the common language of communication, allowing for significant improvement of Hebrew skills.

Marva is a physically demanding programme, and participants are expected to be in good physical condition and highly motivated. You will be required to have a personal interview prior to acceptance.

Marva may ask for a financial deposit, in exchange for the uniforms and equipment, which will be returned at the end of the programme.

Magen David Adom

Magen David Adom provides effective emergency first-aid treatment. You'll be part of this mission and gain valuable hands-on experience giving basic medical treatment while experiencing "real life" in Israel.

After completing a required training course, you'll volunteer alongside Israelis on ambulances at various MDA stations across the country. After successful completion of the course you will be a certified "First Responder", recognised through MDA Israel. Hachshara will be assigned stations based on the needs of MDA. Depending on the amount of volunteers, the group may be split into various stations. Participants must be in good physical and mental health, and basic conversational Hebrew is required.

The work that you will do saves lives and has a lasting effect on Israeli society. It is highly rewarding and is ideal for people who enjoy working with, and helping others.

IMPORTANT: Before coming on Hachshara, participants wishing to volunteer for MDA should have had Hepatitis B vaccinations, and must bring the accompanying documentation.



Development Town Volunteering

By volunteering in a development town, you'll combine Bnei Akiva's principles of Torah and Avodah. You'll live and volunteer in a neighbourhood in one of Israel's socio-economically deprived areas where there is a real need for volunteers.

Living in apartments, and shopping, cleaning and cooking by yourselves, you will learn to be independent and gain important skills that you will use later in life.

Volunteer placements – which take place in the mornings and afternoons – may include teaching English in local community centres, helping in soup kitchens, working with the elderly, and sports. Your time in the development town will be supplemented with a learning programme, an Ulpan (Hebrew language classes) and evening activities.

Through your experience, you will gain appreciation for the challenges facing the people of Israel today.

Kibbutz

From the early days of the State, kibbutzim had a sense of duty, serving as a pillar of strength for Zionism. The members lived under extreme conditions, while tilling the soil, draining the swamplands, and building a settlement. Today, Hachshara participants are viewed as valuable contributors to the kibbutz movement.

Working with kibbutz members, you may share duties in the field, gardens, factories, kitchen, dining hall or childcare facilities. You'll be offered placements according to the work requirements of the kibbutz, and you'll live together in kibbutz housing, eating meals in the communal dining room.

The group will also become involved in kibbutz social and communal activities such as Shabbat and holiday celebrations. You'll be "adopted" by an Israeli kibbutz family, enabling you to have a closer view of what kibbutz life means for the children and adults who reside there permanently.



Machon LeManhigut

World Bnei Akiva believes in the importance of developing Jewish leadership around the world, which is why we have our own centre of leadership – the Machon LeManhigut (Leadership Institute).

The Machon is committed to training, inspiring and enriching the Jewish leaders of tomorrow. Providing a broad range of stimulating classes, combined with exciting seminar days exploring Israeli society, you'll be nurtured into making life-defining decisions.

The Machon will develop your understanding of key areas relating to Jewish life and the State of Israel.

The two-month Machon period is an intense and interactive seminar looking at Jewish identity and leadership.





Jewish Studies

Education is at the heart of Bnei Akiva, and there will be learning programmes throughout the year. However, there is also a set period of time dedicated specifically to Jewish learning in a Yeshiva or Midrasha environment.

These learning institutions will teach a religious Zionist and modern orthodox educational philosophy while studying all aspects of Torah.

We place importance on interaction with communities in Israel, and you will learn about critical and relevant issues of faith in modern times.

You'll be guided throughout, and different levels will be catered for. To be a participant on Hachshara, you don't need prior knowledge in Jewish studies – you just need commitment to learn and to grow.

We will equip you with Torah learning skills that will stay with you for life, and you'll soon feel at home in a Beit Midrash.



Questions and answers

Why Hachshara?

Hachshara is the Bnei Akiva programme! It sounds obvious, but you rely on Bnei Akiva to support and help you whilst in Israel and you can trust us to create a programme tailored to people from a Bnei Akiva background. Lehava is a fulfilling, challenging and exciting programme, placing a different emphasis on individual components within the year. Hachshara is geared towards what you, individually, want from your year in Israel and allows you the security and enjoyment of being part of a group sharing the same experiences.

Which programme should I go on?

It can be confusing deciding how to spend a gap year. You should weigh up what you're hoping to get out of your year and decide which programme best suits your aims. If you wish to discuss your options with us, or ask any questions, we're always happy to help. If there's anything you'd like to ask the current Hachshara, we'll be happy to put you in touch with them.

Will I see my friends on other programmes?

Yes! There are times when the different Hachshara groups are together, even though your real group relationship will be with those on your own programme. You'll also have ample free time and free Shabbatot to make your own plans and arrange visits to those on other programmes.

What will the learning be like?

You've almost certainly never learnt in the way you will on Hachshara, but don't worry. First of all, most people will be in the same boat. Everybody has their own level – it's about finding your own level and being happy. There is so much to learn and so little time. As long as you are motivated and do as much as you can, you will be able to look back at your year with pride and with the knowledge that you realised your potential. It's not only the amount of time spent learning but what you learn in that time that is important.



General information



Security

The safety of the participants on Bnei Akiva programmes is our primary concern. We follow the security advice of the Security Department of the Jewish Agency, and run our activities in areas of Israel with their approval. Participants wishing to leave the bases on which the programme operates must notify the staff and receive permission. In the event of a change in the security situation, we will inform our participants by text message. Occasionally, as a precaution, we will ask the groups to "stay home", rather than go out, even during free time.



Medical care and insurance

Medical services and insurance for illness and injury while in Israel on Hachshara are provided by our recommended medical insurance company. Treatment related to pre-existing conditions is not included in the coverage. Doctors affiliated with the plan are located throughout Israel and participants can easily arrange to see one, no matter where they are based at the time. Participants are advised to take out "personal effects insurance" and we'll be happy to send you the details from our recommended insurers.



Visa extension

When participants arrive in Israel they will be issued with a three-month tourist visa. World Bnei Akiva will make the arrangements to extend this visa into a year-long visa. This visa allows the participants to volunteer in Israel and to stay in the country legally for up to a year; it does not affect their status as citizens of their home country or their rights if they were to make Aliyah at a later date. Any cost for extending the visa must be paid for by the participant. Two passport photos will also be required. If participants leave the country during the programme and then return, it is likely that their visa will be cancelled and it will then be their responsibility to apply again for a new extension visa.



Special diets and allergies

If you require a special diet or have a severe allergy that may necessitate extra attention, please state this in a letter to the programme co-ordinator. Bnei Akiva will make every effort to cater for your needs, although this may not always be possible. You must check with the Finance Manager if you will need to add a payment to cover the cost of these dietary needs.



Bedding and towels

Bedding, sheets and pillows are provided for some parts of the year, but each participant should bring a set with too. A sleeping bag and towels are necessary.



Laundry

Laundry for certain parts of the year will be provided free of charge, for example Development Town and Kibbutz. During other periods, laundry will be organised, but the participants will have to pay, at a cost of around 25-40 shekels for a large load.



Pocket money

On Hachshara all necessary expenses are covered: food, accommodation and transport. However it is necessary for participants to come with a certain budget in order to cover other expenditure: personal entertainment, travel to and from free weekends, all holiday (chofesh) periods of the programme, workbooks, hebrew study books and Jewish books that they may need for their studies. It is the participant's decision how much money they bring. We recommend that around 150 – 200 shekels a week is ample for a participant on our programmes.



Mobile phones

We advise that you participate in our recommended mobile phone provider, which has a competitive plan enabling you to call your friends on Hachshara for free. The plan also lets our staff reach all of our students immediately and simultaneously in all circumstances. Please see the up-to-date information sheet and order form that will be distributed around two months prior to the start of Hachshara.



Damage deposit

A damage deposit of USD \$100 (or equivalent in any currency) in cash must be handed in at the start of the year, which will be returned if no damage has been caused.



Application details

Application process

Apply online at www.hachshara.org. This website will also have the latest information about our programmes. Once you have begun the application process, you can sign in as many times as you like to continue the application. A medical form, which has been signed and stamped by a doctor, must accompany the application.

Cost

The cost of Hachshara covers tuition, seminars, tiyulim, accommodation, special Shabbatot, group transportation, staff and medical insurance. Bnei Akiva UK will ask for an additional administration charge which covers flights and pre-Hachshara seminars. Not covered are the costs of optical care and treatment of prior dental problems, medical care relating to pre-existing conditions, hepatitis vaccination (required by MDA volunteers) and laundry for certain parts of the year. In addition, you may be required to purchase your own books and learning materials for the study periods.

Cancellation fees are in place for cancellations made prior to the start of, as well as during the programme. No refunds will be given for participants who are expelled from Hachshara for any reason.

Interview

After we receive your application, you'll be invited for an interview. Your interview allows us to get to know you a bit better and assess your suitability for Hachshara. It will also give you time to ask us any specific questions you may have about Hachshara.

Bursaries

Hachshara is a Masa-recognised programme. Masa is a joint project of the Government of Israel and the Jewish Agency for Israel, which has a Scholarship Fund that will give assistance based on financial need. Please read the information carefully and apply at www.masaisrael.org.

University applications

The value of gap year activities is widely documented and most universities will allow you to apply for deferred entry. It is a good idea to include details of your proposed gap year in your personal statement to support your application.



All information in this booklet is subject to change.



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הסוכנות היהודית לארץ ישראל
Jewish Agency for Israel

כל מקום שאני הולך אני הולך לארץ ישראל
Everywhere I go I am on the way to Eretz Yisrael