

Frequently Asked Questions and the Correct Answers about USY Summer Programs

1) What are the programs, their dates, prices, and eligible grades?

PROGRAM	2012 DATES*	2012 Prices**	GRADE AS OF 9/11
USY on Wheels, East	June 26 - July 24	\$4955	8
USY on Wheels, Classic	June 25 - August 9	\$6990	9-11
USY on Wheels, Mission: Mitzvah	June 25 - August 2	\$6495	9-11
USY on Wheels, Pacific Northwest	July 2 - July 24	\$4695	9-11
Israel Adventure	June 26 - July 25	\$5995	10-12
Israel Pilgrimage/Poland Seminar	First Departure: June 18 - July 23 Second Departure: June 27 - August 1	\$7895	10-12
Eastern Europe/Israel Pilgrimage	June 26 - August 6	\$8710	10-12
Israel Adventure PLUS	June 27 - July 31	\$6750	10-12
Italy/Israel Pilgrimage	June 26 - July 31	\$8445	10-12
L'Takayn Olam	June 26 - July 25	\$5985	10-12

* Dates subject to change

** Prices subject to change

If parents have individual questions about what their child's trip will cost, they can contact the New York office for that information.

2) What is the cancellation policy?

A \$750 deposit is required, with the balance to be paid on or before April 1. Should an application be withdrawn for any reason, a \$150 processing fee will be withheld provided such written cancellation is received by March 1, and then the following cancellation fee schedule applies:

March 1-31: \$750

April 1 - May 3: \$950

May 4 - May 26: \$1,200

May 27 - June 9: \$2000

June 10 - Departure: Full cost of Program

Please note: Additional cancellation fees may apply for all programs. You will be notified of such fees in advance. USY does not provide trip cancellation or interruption insurance. Please contact your local insurance company or contact the USY office for recommended options.

3) What is included in the price?

The price of your trip includes sleeping arrangements, 3 meals a day, transportation around the country, and admission fees for all activities done as part of the program.

4) Is my flight to the location where the program starts included in the price of the program?

Wheels

All domestic flights to the starting point of the trip are not included in the price of the program. If the USYer is from Far West, New Frontier, Pinwheel, EMTZA, or SWUSY they are eligible for a \$500 discount to help offset travel, with the exception of Pacific Northwest. For Pacific Northwest, the flights to and from Alaska are included in the price of the program.

Pilgrimage

All international flights are included in the price of the program, but domestic flights to the New York/New Jersey area are not. International flights can be extended, but parents must speak to the USY International office before January 30. Also, additional fees may apply in these situations.

5) How much spending money does a USYer need?

We suggest that each person bring approximately \$500 or about \$100 a week. This figure, of course, will vary depending on the quantity of gifts that the USYer will want to buy for family and friends.

6) Are there scholarships available?

The Central Office of the Department of Youth Activities gives out scholarships in cases of extreme hardship for which we have limited funds. For various ways to raise money go to www.usy.org/escape/scholarship/waystosave/. For further information, consult your Rabbi or Regional USY Director. If you would like to apply for a scholarship, please do so as early as possible.

Along with scholarships, International USY can help you set up a payment plan. This plan will assist in paying for a certain program over a period of time. If you are interested in setting up a payment plan, please be in touch as soon as possible with Aviva Tilles, Director of USY Summer Programs, at tilles@uscj.org or at (212) 533-7800, ext. 1116.

7) How many USYers are placed in each group?

Each group has approximately 15-45 USYers, depending on the size of the group. USY tries to create cohesive and balanced groups.

8) What is the staff/kid ratio?

Each group includes one staff member for every 8-9 participants. There is also at least one staff member that is First Aid/CPR certified.

9) Can I visit relatives or have my relatives visit while on a USY program?

Participants will be allowed to visit with their relatives if written parental permission has been received by the International USY Office and a mutually convenient time can be arranged with the help of the group leader. USYers cannot be taken away from the group overnight, only for day visits and meals.

10) What are the Religious Policies?

- **Shabbat** on USY Summer Programs is truly a memorable experience. To appreciate the uniqueness of *Shabbat*, one must experience the family feeling that each group gets from the joy of being together. In order to create the most effective *Shabbat* atmosphere, therefore, as a group we refrain from traveling, writing, handling of money, listening to iPods or musical instruments, and using telephones.
- **Kashrut** (the Jewish dietary laws) is observed at all times by USY Summer Program participants. This applies, of course, to all regular meals as well as to snacks. We wait three hours between eating meat and eating dairy foods. In addition, *Kashrut* is also to be followed when you are away from the group or on free time.
- **Tefillah/Prayer**
 - USY Summer Programs provide the opportunity for you to learn about and experience prayer in the most unique places around the United States and Israel. Imagine the beauty of a sunrise Shacharit service at Masada or the Grand Canyon, Mincha service at the Kotel or in the outdoors of Yellowstone, Havdalah on the Pacific Ocean, or a Kabbalat Shabbat service overlooking the old city of Jerusalem. The religious aspects of a USY Summer Program aim at creating an understanding and appreciation of Tefillah.
 - All participants on USY Summer Programs engage in daily prayer, two to three times a day. On Shabbat, we have additional services starting Friday evening with a lively Kabbalat Shabbat and concluding on Saturday evening with a meaningful Havdalah.
 - For many, this will be the first opportunity to pray on a regular basis and it may seem strange, particularly if one is unfamiliar with the structure of the service and the individual prayers themselves. You, your group, and your staff will come together to create a support group and the proper atmosphere in which we can feel comfortable while we pray.
 - Every Meal begins with HaMotzi and ends with Birkat Hamazon (Grace after Meals).
 - Males **must** bring *kippah*, *tallit* and *t'fillin* with them, they are required to wear all three items at weekday morning services, kippah and tallit at Shabbat morning services and a kippah at all other appropriate times (including all meals and study sessions). Females who want to wear *tallit* and *t'fillin* are encouraged to do so.

11) What are the Behavior Policies?

- Immediate dismissal, including being put on the next available flight at the parent's expense.
 - The use of and/or possession of illegal drugs or narcotics is absolutely forbidden. This includes taking prescription drugs that were not prescribed specifically for your use.
 - The use or purchase of alcoholic beverages is absolutely forbidden. Furthermore, in order to assure an appropriate environment for program participants, unsupervised entry into pubs, bars, discos, and similar venues is strictly forbidden.
 - Shoplifting and stealing are absolutely forbidden.
 - Purchasing or possessing knives is absolutely forbidden.

- Leaving the groups without permission MAY result in being sent home.
- Anti-group or destructive behavior, violating curfew, vandalism, and mistreatment of others are typical actions that will force us to re-evaluate your participation on Wheels and may lead to eventual dismissal from the group, without liability on the part of USY.
- USY upholds the highest standards of moral and sexual behavior within the frame work of Judaism. This includes the fact that males and females are not permitted in each other's rooms. Any USYer violating these standards is subject to dismissal and to being sent home at the parents' expense. Judgment in such situations will be made by the program leader in consultation with the Central Staff of International USY.
- Smoking is not permitted at any time on the program. Possession and use of cigarettes, hookas, and water pipes are prohibited at all times.
- Ear and body piercing is strictly prohibited at all times on USY Summer Programs, including during leisure time and during visitation periods. Even with parental permission this is prohibited, as we cannot assume responsibility for sanitary conditions of the piercing facilities and implements. If a USYer violates this rule, he or she must remove the ring at his or her own expense. Body piercing will be considered a serious behavioral offense and may result in a USYer being sent home. Tattoos are strictly prohibited at all times on USY Summer Programs. In addition, hair dying is prohibited at all times on USY Summer Programs.

12) What happens if my child gets sick or hurt on the road?

Wheels

- Each group has a staff member that is certified in First Aid/CPR. In addition, each participant must have their own medical insurance. This plan must cover doctor's consultations, medication, and hospitalization.
- The Wheels program will utilize local doctors and hospital emergency rooms to treat Wheelniks that need medical care. We will carry a full First Aid kit and over-the-counter medicine with us, but when a Wheelnik is sick we will seek professional care. If your child is taken to the doctor, for any reason, you will be called. We will attempt to call you before your child is seen by a doctor, but please realize that this is not always possible. However, at no time, unless in a dire emergency, will there be any major treatment without your prior knowledge and approval.

Pilgrimage

- Each group is provided with a chovesh (medic) who will attend to the health of the group. In addition, each participant is enrolled in a special medical plan. This plan covers doctor's consultations, medication, and hospitalization. It does **not**, nor does Israel Pilgrimage, cover dental care, optometry care, psychiatric consultations, or treatment related to pre-existing conditions (mental or physical). Our medical insurance begins when you reach your first destination and ends when you board the plane for North America or depart from the group at Ben Gurion Airport.

Both

- If a USYer is too sick to leave the hotel for the day's activities, a staff member will stay back at the hotel with the USYer and catch up with the group when the USYer is feeling better. If a USYer is sick, but well enough to go with the group, there are extra seats so the Wheelnik can have their own area.
- If you wear glasses, or contact lenses, please bring an extra pair **plus** a written copy of your prescription with you and give it to your group leader before departure.
- Medications: All prescription medications must be clearly indicated on the medical form, or in writing if prescribed after submission.
- Wheelniks may not hold their own prescription medication (with the exception of one epi-pen and emergency inhaler). A staff member will be responsible for holding medications for the Wheelniks to take as prescribed.

13) What is the Cell Phone Policy?

Cell phones are not to be on or used during group activities, including: tefillot, during daytime or evening programs, throughout Shabbat, or at any other time when the group is functioning as a unit. If someone is found to be in violation of these rules the cell phone may be confiscated by the group leader.

International USY is NOT RESPONSIBLE if the cell phone is lost or damaged during the summer.

14) Can you accommodate special food needs?

Vegetarians and others with special diets and allergies will be accommodated; however **we must be notified of your specific needs prior to the summer.**

15) What do we eat?

Wheels

Breakfast and dinner are usually served at the hotel where we are staying and usually the group makes their own lunch in the morning to be eaten around lunch time. The food is wholesome and nutritious. Breakfast includes cereal, yogurt, fruit, and various other items that can be requested. Each morning the kids will be responsible for making their own sandwiches for lunch which will consist of tuna, peanut butter and jelly, cheese, cream cheese, butter, on either bread or bagel. They will be given various fruits and vegetable to pack with their lunch. Dinner consists of various different meals such as lasagna, baked ziti, Mexican burrito bar, deli, meatballs, chicken, with various side dishes.

Pilgrimage

Breakfast and dinner are usually served at our base and usually the group brings along box lunches for their day of touring, but from time to time, we will eat in restaurants on the road. The food is wholesome and nutritious. Being in Israel will give you the opportunity to try out new foods you may never have eaten, such as falafel, humus, and other Middle Eastern specialties. You may even find a new twist to the foods to which you're accustomed.

16) Where do we stay?

Wheels

There are a couple of different arrangements that USY on Wheels uses. Wheels buses usually stay at hotels such as Hilton, Holiday Inn, Hyatt, Sheraton, and Marriott. We have worked with these hotels for many summers and have a positive working relationship with them.

The Wheels buses also take part in home hospitality, which is one of the unique aspects of USY on Wheels that makes our trip so special. Each Wheels bus will have the opportunity to spend several nights with families from our Conservative congregations across the country. These families open their homes to the Wheelniks for the duration of their stay.

Pilgrimage

Our groups stay at a variety of facilities during the course of the summer, including hotels and youth hostels that are carefully chosen by USY Israel Pilgrimage to provide the best possible location and living conditions. They are built to house three to six participants in a room.

While in Jerusalem, most groups stay at the beautiful Fuchsberg Center for Conservative Judaism. Our campus is fully equipped with dining halls, multi-purpose rooms, and plenty of outdoor space for programs and hanging out.

17) Where do you go?

On each programs page on the website please find a link to the general itineraries for each of our four unique Wheels programs and specific itineraries for our six life changing Israel programs. Each group will follow its own itinerary, which will be shared with the participants and parents towards the end of May.