



Summer fun at the Sea of Galilee



TALY'S TRAVEL
• BY TALY SHARON

The Sea of Galilee is one of the top destinations in Israel. During the summer, this lake attracts young people and families who come to enjoy the beaches and water activities. Here are a few of its attractions.

Nof Ginossar Hotel

Nof Ginossar has been a popular vacation resort in Israel for many years, since Kibbutz Ginossar established it. This hotel is the first kibbutz hotel in Israel, built in 1964. With a private beach, swimming pool, dining services and 650 dunams of groomed lawns and flora alongside the Tsalmon Creek, it is a vacation paradise. Add to this the proximity to Tiberias and many of the attractions around the Sea of Galilee – and you have the perfect holiday destination.

We came to Ginossar with two teens. We spent two nights there and quickly formed a fun routine – breakfast, water attraction, lunch, museum, swimming pool, dinner and card games. This was a superb family retreat; our teens, who are often difficult to entertain, enjoyed it and did not complain even once – a major success!

Nof Ginossar has two areas: a hotel and village. The hotel is closer to the lobby, is well furnished, and suits couples and small families. The village is a separate area, across the parking lot, and serves mostly families looking for simpler country lodging, yet enjoying all the services of the hotel. All the rooms of the hotel were refurbished and are of high standard, with quality facilities and flat-screen TVs. The newest rooms are the Delux rooms, suitable for a couple+1 with some connecting rooms – very fancy.

We got a Grand Delux room. These rooms are spacious and have a small balcony, comfortable renewed bathroom, bathrobes in the closet for in-room use, and terry bath towels. The room had a small safe and coffee and tea-making facilities.

Settled, we went down to the pool. The pool is open throughout the summer and is partially shaded. It is adjacent to the beach and surrounded with eucalyptus and banana trees.

We ate breakfast and dinner at the hotel's dining room. The food was good and very diverse, served in buffet style. Breakfast featured eggs and pastries, cheeses and vegetables, and local dishes such as shakshouka. For dinner, there were many salads, and always a variety of fish, chicken and beef. There was also children-friendly food and an interactive stand with hamburgers.

In the evenings, after dinner, there were singers at the bar, where light dairy meals and varied beverages were served. The lobby also features a large souvenir shop that reminded me of a museum shop – many nice articles and Judaica items.

The hotel also offers activities for families and children, such as a yellow bus tour of the kibbutz, boat rides and children's



AQUA KEF (above) is an inflatable water park on the Sea of Galilee. Below, the Nof Ginossar Hotel is one-stop vacation spot. (Taly Sharon)

entertainment programs. There is a playground and table games such as table tennis, and basketball and tennis courts; and a new gym will be opened any day.

Besides being a nice place to stay at, Ginossar provides all the services and amenities needed to make a vacation successful!

Prices vary, starting from NIS 600 for a double room off season, including breakfast.

Nof Ginossar Hotel

Website: www.ginossar.co.il
Phone: 972-4-6700-300

Yigal Alon and Jesus' Boat Museum

Just off Nof Ginossar's parking lot is the Yigal Alon Museum. When the water of the Sea of Galilee withdrew because of the drought of 1986, something caught the eyes of two fishermen from Ginossar: the remains of an ancient boat submerged in the mud. The boat, dating back to the days of Jesus, was excavated in a complex operation and preserved. Rotem Yaakov, from the boat's excavation team, tells us that this was a community operation that took 12 days in which all the kibbutz members, including children, helped dig the boat out from the mud with their bare hands, pulling it out of the water while making sure it did not collapse due to the weakness of the old timber.

While there is no evidence that this was a boat that Jesus sailed in, this is the type of boat used for fishing and transportation two millennia ago. It is about eight meters long and is made of 12 different types of timber, with the original timber being the Lebanon cedar, a very expensive type of wood.



The boat museum documents the excavation and restoration, and presents additional archeological remains found in it, including original metal screws.

The Yigal Alon museum, in which the boat museum is housed, is a museum for the memory of IDF commander and politician Yigal Alon, a member of Kibbutz Ginossar. Very small, it is visited mostly by groups of students as well as a meeting place for Jews and Palestinians. It is best to visit there with a guide, but if you come for a self-guided tour, I think the second floor is the most exciting, with a temporary exhibition of the Israeli radio "Kol Israel" and an exhibition of the artwork created together in Jewish and Palestinian meetings. If you are already in the building, don't miss the panoramic view of the area from the upper-level balcony. There is also a large souvenir shop, an air-conditioned

cafeteria and clean toilets. Boat rides on the Sea of Galilee take off from nearby docks, so the place may be very busy at times.

Yigal Alon Center and the ancient boat, Ginossar

Hours: Saturday to Thursday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Website: bet-alon.co.il
Phone: +972-4-672-7700

Admission: NIS 20 (including the museum and the boat).

Aqua Kef (Aqua Fun)

Perhaps the newest, and for sure the hottest attraction today in the Sea of Galilee, is Aqua Kef, an inflatable floating water park. If you like activities and find Wipeout exciting, then this is the playground for you: obstacles, trampolines, jumping platforms, climbing areas, flips, slides and swings – all made to be conquered. It will take you on a

fun adventure.

The water park is divided into four areas: The Family Park (ages 6 and up), The Extreme Park, The Kids' Park (easy obstacles, ages 3-6), and The Olympic Park (for groups – volleyball, basketball, water polo, etc.).

Visitors enter the park in sessions. Each session is 45 minutes and it takes two sessions to explore all the areas. But note that it is an effort, so unless you are very fit, I suggest starting with one session, and at least getting some rest before the next one.

Website: www.aquakef.com

Phone: 1-700-555-079

Price: NIS 35 to 95

Hours: Sunday to Friday 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. (extended hours on some the days and separate bathing for the religious community afterwards – contact Aqua Kef for info).

Children up to the age of 10 need in-water (paying) adult supervision. Life vests mandatory for everyone, and there is a lifeguard on duty.

Gai Beach Water Park

One of the well-established water attractions in Tiberias is Gai Beach Water Park. With seven types of water slides, a wave pool and a 750-square meter kiddies' world, it is the ultimate place for families. The affiliated beach nearby offers water sports. Well-organized showers on premises.

Gai Beach Water Park

Address: 1 Eliezer Kaplan Blvd, Tiberias

Open: 7 days a week during the summer 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Price: NIS 70 to 99

Phone: +972-4-670-0713

Nahala Bateva ("Estate in Nature") Druse Experience

The Galilee is one of the authentic locations to experience some Druse culture and cuisine. Nahala Bateva is a restaurant and campsite featuring Druse hospitality with ethnic food such as *Makloubeh* (upside-down chicken, vegetable, and rice dish), *Mensaf* (lamb stew on rice), stuffed vine leaves, local salads and other dishes.

Seating is outdoors, under the trees where the children can roam around and enjoy a playground and animal corner. We met Kassem and Farha, the owners. Kassem served in the Israeli army and when he retired, he built this farm with his own hands, until he fell ill and is now in a wheelchair. The farm was deserted for a few years, and he reopened it a few years ago. Farha, his wife, is in charge of the cooking here; everything she makes is fresh and tasty. Don't expect fast food here, just come to enjoy the fresh air and breeze. You are highly likely to meet Kassem and Farha in person and find them to be good interlocutors.

Nahala Bateva is open all week all day; prices are 45-90 for main courses.

Facebook: www.facebook.com/kassem.ib
Address: Tsalmon

Phone: Kassem +972-50-309-5250

The writer was a guest of Ginossar, Aqua Kef and Nahala Bateva with the assistance of Emeq Hayarden Regional Council.

Of Air Koryo and Turkish Airlines, despots and dictators



THE TRAVEL ADVISOR
• By MARK FELDMAN

Let's imagine you're planning an exotic vacation. Let's assume you want an island vacation spot where you can relax in splendor and catch up on your summer reading.

You've gallivanted through Greece, shimmied in the Seychelles, hung loose in Hawaii, knocked around on Koh Samui, took time off on Tahiti. Your island destination this time is situated in Oceania, the largest island in Micronesia. Bonus for those shopaholics – it's an unincorporated United States territory with plenty of Costco stores. We're talking about Guam.

It's no wonder Guam receives more than a million visitors a year. White sandy beaches, clear turquoise waters, and a gentle ocean breeze welcome visitors from Korea, Japan, Russian, China and the US. Yet with the entire spectrum of first-world amenities Guam offers, it's surprising mellow.

That is until their Homeland Security Department issued new guidelines for both residents and tourists. The fact sheet included such tips as: "Do not look at the flash or fireball – it can blind you" and "Take cover behind anything that offer protection" if outside at the time of a radioactive blast. Government officials stated it would take 14 minutes for a deadly weapon to reach the island but of course those at the site of a nuclear impact would be killed instantly and all structures would disintegrate from the power of the blast and intense fire. That's what is called a major buzz kill.

This originates in the wake of North Korea's threat to launch a missile attack against Guam. The cherubic dictator of North Korea, Kim Jong-un, who consolidated power by executing his Uncle and assassinating his brother, is hell-bent on putting his stamp on the world. While a total failure in economy reforms, his success in developing nuclear weapons can no longer be ignored and his threats on Guam have led to a war of words with US President Donald Trump.

While Kim Jong-un wants to unleash a nuclear holocaust on Guam, another strong man, Turkish President Recep Erdogan, who salivates to could control his opposition like the North Korean leader, has urged Muslims across the world to "visit" and "protect" Jerusalem, slamming what he said was an "unacceptable" infringement on Palestinians' rights to a holy site. One despot wants to destroy tourism while another one appears to be encouraging it.

It's an axiom of the travel industry that politics and tourism make strange bedfellows. Let's be clear – you

have to be a lunatic to travel to North Korea. The fact that 5,000 Westerners – with almost 800 Americans – visit North Korea every year shows that lunacy, while not rampant, does exist. In fact it took the death of an American citizen, who died after suffering from a mysterious brain injury while in detention in North Korea for the US State Department to ban Americans from traveling to the country. The crime committed by the young American who succumbed to his brain injuries: he was accused of stealing a propaganda poster from a hotel.

AIR KORYO is the national airline of North Korea, headquartered in Pyongyang. Its fleet of 18 planes consists primarily of Soviet-made planes such as the Tupolev Tu-204. Air Koryo has offices in only a few countries, primarily China, Russia & Thailand. Its sole office in Europe is situated in Berlin.

Turkish Airlines is the national airline of Turkey, headquartered on the grounds of Ataturk Airport in Istanbul. Turkish Airlines flies to 119 countries, more than any other airline. Its fleet of 339 aircraft, not surprisingly, has no Russian-made planes. It is a member of the Star Alliance, which is a loose consortium of 28 airlines purportedly working in tandem. Each airline maintains its own individual style and cultural identity, bringing the richness of diversity and multiculturalism to the alliance. At the same time each airline shares a common dedication to the highest standards of safety and customer service.

Air Koryo is not a member of any of the airline alliances and has the dubious honor of having received some of the worst reviews of any operating airline.

Skytrax is a United Kingdom-based consultancy company that runs an airline review site. Skytrax conducts research for commercial airlines, as well as taking surveys from international travelers to rate airports, airlines, cabin staff and several other elements of air travel. Their methodology is transparent, with the upshot that their World Airline Awards are held in high esteem for clarity of process and independence, with no outside sponsorship or external influence. Qatar Airways has been named the 2017 World's Best Airline with Singapore Airlines coming in as the bridesmaid.

The top 12 airlines of 2017 are as follows:

1. Qatar Airways
2. Singapore Airlines
3. ANA All Nippon Airways
4. Emirates
5. Cathay Pacific
6. EVA Air
7. Lufthansa
8. Etihad Airways
9. Hainan Airlines

10. Garuda Indonesia
11. Thai Airways
12. Turkish Airlines

Israel's main airport, Ben-Gurion, welcomes a quarter of this list to its runways: Cathay Pacific, Lufthansa, Hainan Airlines and Turkish Airlines. Sadly, the world's air travelers after ranking 100 Top Airlines have not found a place for El Al or any other Israeli airline.

Air Koryo does appear on a Skytrax list; in fact it holds the number one spot for the World's Worst Airline. It's the only airline with a paltry one-star rating. To be equitable, reviewers comment on a clean aircraft with polite cabin attendants. In-flight entertainment consisted of North Korean military-type music. Food is usually a cold burger with a choice of water, coffee, tea or a soft drink.

I'VE WRITTEN in the past about the ethical dilemma of flying Turkish Airlines, with a tin-pot wanna-be despot spouting antisemitic remarks too often, couched as anti-Israel assertions, but when Turkish Airlines invited me on a flight to Luxembourg, my curiosity overrode my ethics. It was my first time on what's been considered for many years the Best Airline in Europe along with a visit to one of the largest and busiest airports in the world. This, coupled with my insatiable desire to see one of the best lounges in the world, had me acquiescing for a 24-hour sojourn.

My flight plan was simple: Tel Aviv- Istanbul- Luxembourg, and 12 hours later the reverse. The flights themselves were quintessentially perfect. The planes, both Boeing and Airbus equipment were clean and spacious. The crew was both courteous and competent. Once airborne, our flight attendants offered a hot towel service to all passengers. Newspapers and magazines were also made available and even on the short flight from Tel Aviv to Istanbul a complete meal was served. Turkish Airlines economy service comes with a nice over-sized pillow.

Arrival in Istanbul was security conscious and as I was transferring flights, there was no passport control for me to enter, simply a body scan and X-ray of my carry-on luggage. It was a good 10-minute walk from security to the end of the airport where my own Turkish Delight was waiting.

Turkish Airlines lounge at Ataturk Airport in Istanbul is simply an amazing adventure. Eligible for all business class clients as well as any Star Alliance Gold member, the Turkish carrier has the biggest flight network of any airline in the world and therefore Istanbul is a big hub for transit passengers who appreciate a good lounge. When it comes to food the lounge offers a lot, Turkish specialties, a Chinese kitchen, Western

food and also a fruit bar, all spread over two floors. You won't starve, that is for sure. Also the quality of the food is super fresh – it's not even a buffet, it's like a real chef is constantly preparing.

Wondering what else you can do at the lounge? Here is a nice list of how to pass your time:

- Enjoy a real cinema with a fancy popcorn machine.
- Play some pool.
- Try a few new books at the library.
- Play Golf (Yes a real Golf Simulator!)
- Take a shower or two.
- Play the latest Play Station games such as FIFA or Formula 1.
- Experience a Carrera racetrack, those with a remote control.
- Play in a kids' corner, with heaps of toys!

The lounge also provides lockers to put away your bag. You have a few nice couches to nap on while following news channels from around the globe or live sport events. Of course I don't need to mention that fast Internet and a business center are also available.

On my flight to Luxembourg, the same detail of quality service was repeated. The dining part was what stood out most for me. I'm always in awe these days – with airlines cutting out food options or charging a king's ransom for a soggy sandwich – when an airline makes an effort to offer a full-service meal. Be it kosher or vegan, everyone was able to enjoy a quite edible repast. Upon my return to Istanbul Airport, I again was able to while away the layover in their airport lounge before boarding an Airbus A-330-300. This next-generation aircraft features both flat-bed business seats as well as 219 economy-class seats. Never have I stretched out so luxuriously, and I fell asleep the moment we reached cruising altitude.

IN LATE October, as El Al introduces her 787 Dreamliner on flights to Newark, Delta will be switching from its 747 to this beauty. With United Airlines flying a 777, the transatlantic competition on nonstop flights will become a whole new ball game. Don't count out the European airlines as they fight hard to keep their market share, but when flying to JFK or Newark, the Big Three will easily dominate the skies.

I can make one more promise: One airline you won't be seeing at any US airport in the short or long term is Air Koryo. Or, as they say in whispers throughout North Korea: even a monkey sometimes falls from the tree.

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