

Monday, May 25th

Masada

Written by Alyssa Miller & Daniel Saltzberg

We woke up in the Bedouin tent at about 6am, where we had a wonderful breakfast and then headed off to Masada. When we arrived at Masada, we began the trek up the Roman ramp. Upon reaching the top, we went to the *beit kenesset* and *davened shacharit*. Following services, we learned about the story of Masada by touring the ruins and discussing the decision that the heads of the family had to make. After our discussion, we began our descent down the snake path, which took about 40 minutes. Once we got to the bottom, we had a little time to shop for Dead Sea products and souvenirs.

We then went to the Ein Gedi Spa at the Dead Sea. There, we had the opportunity to float in the Dead Sea and experience the sting of the salt on our scrapes and scratches from earlier hikes. We then covered ourselves in mud, and then enjoyed a nice lunch. We had to take a tram to get to the Dead Sea because over the last 25 years, the Sea has receded roughly 2 km.

We left the sea and went to hike Nachal David in Ein Gedi. We hiked up the short waterfall and enjoyed swimming in the fresh water pool and waterfall. We continued hiking to the top of the waterfall and we saw where David had hidden in the caves in ancient times, which is why this waterfall is named for him.

We are currently making our way to Jerusalem, where the plan is to check in to the hostel, and then go over to Ben Yehuda St. where we'll have some free time for dinner and some shopping.