



WORLD BNEI AKIVA
SHNAT HACHSHARA - ISRAEL YEAR PROGRAMS

MTA | LIMMUD





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Welcome to World Bnei Akiva

BNEI AKIVA is a Jewish religious Zionist youth movement, the largest Zionist youth movement in the world. We inspire and empower young Jews all over the world with a sense of commitment to the Jewish people, the Land of Israel and the Torah, placing an emphasis on the value of Aliyah to the State of Israel.

WORLD BNEI AKIVA, a non-profit organization with headquarters in Jerusalem, works with Jewish communities in the Diaspora, assisting and strengthening the local Bnei Akiva snifim (branches), as well as the wider Jewish community. We are active in 23 countries, 43 cities, with over 100 snifim and represented by over 100 shlichim (emissaries). Among our many endeavors is a range of year programs known as HACHSHARA, meaning "preparation", which is one of the largest and most popular Gap Year programs in Israel.

FOR MORE THAN 80 YEARS, Hachshara has played a part in shaping and training the future leaders of Bnei Akiva and Jewish communities in Israel and around the world. It is a vital component of your Jewish journey, when you can devote time to learning Jewish texts, develop independently and explore your identity.

Discover Israel · Develop your Jewish Identity · Have the time of your life!



Who? What? When?

MTA is a Yeshiva/Midrasha based Israel year program geared for participants from Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand and runs between January and December.



AT A GLANCE

FEB	Opening Seminar
MAR	Yeshiva/Midrasha
APR	Shvil Yisrael
	Pesach Break
	Holocaust to Redemption Seminar
MAY	
JUN	Yeshiva/Midrasha
JUL	Shoah Seminar Journey to Poland
AUG	Kibbutz/ Volunteering
SEP	Yeshiva/Midrasha
	Hadracha Seminar
OCT	Succot Break
	Notern Tiyul
NOV	Yeshiva/Midrasha
DEC	Closing Seminar

MTA

Midreshet Torah Va'Avodah

MTA offers a year of intense study in top learning institutions all while remaining in the Bnei Akiva framework. With over 30 years of experience, MTA has produced generations of leadership for Bnei Akiva, and is the perfect way to build one's future in Torah learning and Israel.

MTA (Midreshet Torah Va'Avodah) is an Israel year programme geared for participants from Australia, South Africa, and New Zealand.

We are proud to have partnered with four incredible institutions for

the MTA programme: Midreshet AMIT, Midreshet Harova, Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi and Yeshivat Har Etzion. You will spend an entire year with them, immersing yourself in the Beit Midrash and soaking up *Torat Eretz Yisrael*.

Outside of yeshiva and midrasha,

you will travel the length and the breadth of Israel on seminars, Shabbatonim and tiyulim as well as experience kibbutz and go on a life-changing trip to Poland. From learning about Israeli society to volunteering where Israel needs you most, MTA brings Torah study

and a passion for Israel into one holistic programme. Your year with MTA also places focus on leadership, and through volunteering, touring and learning from first-class educators, you'll gain the skills and knowledge to make a real difference in your

own community. You'll be more independent than you've ever been in your life, yet you can relax knowing that your needs are being looked after.

*Exact calendar is subject to change

MACHON MAAYAN

Machon Maayan is a transformative, life-changing seminary journey which combines inspirational, serious Torah learning, diverse and personalized chesed/internship opportunities, and thought-provoking, experiential weekly seminars and tiyulim that seamlessly move the classroom into the Land of Israel. Over the years, Machon Maayan has developed the reputation of being an incredibly warm home where each student is showered with personal attention by a very caring and passionate staff. The multi-facility Givat Washington college campus - which includes an Olympic-size swimming pool, a gymnasium, basketball and tennis courts, a fitness center, an art school, a music school and more - is the perfect address for motivated young women

who wish to grow personally, spiritually and religiously.
<https://machonmaayan.org>



YESHIVAT ERETZ HATZVI

Yeshivat Eretz Hatzvi is situated in the Katamon neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and places emphasis on teaching the skills to enable students to become independent in their studies. Featuring prominently in the schedule are Gemara, Tanach, Halacha and Machshava classes. While the curriculum

is devoted to *Limmudei Kodesh*, the Yeshiva is sensitive to issues that students face during their growth process in Israel, and that they will encounter in their subsequent university years.
www.yehatzvi.org



MIDRESHET HAROVA

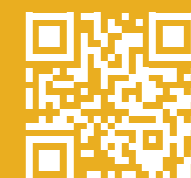
Midreshet Harova is located in the heart of the Jewish Quarter of Jerusalem's Old City, and is one of Israel's leading seminaries. The Midrasha offers an ideal setting for students to achieve spiritual and intellectual growth in a religious Zionist framework. The open intellectual environment, combined with the wide variety of teachers, is particularly

attractive to the creative student interested in exploring a range of ideas and approaches.
www.harova.org



YESHIVAT HAR ETZION

Yeshivat Har Etzion is the largest of the Hesder Yeshivot, where Israeli students combine their army service with yeshiva study in a five-year programme. The intense study of Gemara is the central focus of learning, while other areas of study, including Tanach, Machshevet Yisrael and Halacha, are integral parts of the programme as well. The overall goal of the yeshiva is to foster within each student a love of Hashem and a lifelong commitment to Talmud Torah, Am Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael.
www.haretzion.org



Program Components

Leadership Seminars

Bnei Akiva believes in the importance of developing Jewish leadership around the world. Our Hachshara seminars aim to help you to return to your communities ready to take active leadership roles as madrichim in Bnei Akiva, as activists in the Jewish student world and as leaders within the Jewish community. You'll be introduced to leaders of the past, be inspired by leaders of today, and gain practical skills to help you be the leaders of the future.



Tiyulim

As well as various trips you'll take with your Yeshiva or Midrasha, you'll get to see the length and breadth of Israel with World Bnei Akiva: Hachshara. We'll show you some of the most beautiful views in the country, and while you're stretching your legs, you'll also expand your educational horizons, learning about the land of our forefathers. Later in the year, our Eilat Tiyul will give you the opportunity to enjoy water sports, hike the land, and see how Ben Gurion's dream of making the desert bloom is coming true.



Zionism and Israeli Society

Our Shabbatot and seminars will give you an in-depth journey into Israeli society where you will explore the challenges that exist in Israel. You'll meet people from all shades of the spectrum of those who make up the population. Politicians, the media, the army and other connected organisations will present their take on life in Israel.



Summer Volunteering

Some of the MTA participants will have the opportunity to run educational programmes and activities for underprivileged children and immigrants in the summer.



Sar-el Army Experience

Sar-el provides people from abroad with an opportunity to volunteer on an IDF base doing routine but important tasks. (Sar-el may not be available to the entire group.)



Seder Night

The group Seder is a highlight of the year! You'll never forget Seder Night on World Bnei Akiva: Hachshara. Whilst you might feel a little homesick at the thought of being away from home for Yom Tov, you'll soon feel differently once it comes to the unique experience itself! You'll share stories, customs and songs from around the world.





Group Shabbatot

A few times during the year, MTA will reunite to spend Shabbat together. We choose the venues carefully so that you'll enjoy Shabbat against a backdrop of some of Israel's most beautiful settings. You'll sing, share Divrei Torah, and enjoy meals together – all while seeing much more of Israel.



MTA SHABBATOT

Shabbat Irgun

Shabbat Irgun in Israel is the culmination of a month of celebrations, which includes a special ceremony at which the newest shevet name is revealed. Shabbat Ha'irgun is the highlight of the year for members of Bnei Akiva in Israel – and you'll be joining one of the local branches of BA to share in the celebrations, and getting to know your Israeli counterparts.

Shabbat Hachshara

MTA will join together with the rest of World Bnei Akiva's many Hachshara programmes from all over the world to enjoy Shabbat with an international flavor. There will be

around 200 people from every continent, and while you might not all speak the same language, you'll all have one thing in common – you are all part of Bnei Akiva.

Yeshiva and Midrasha Shabbatot

Shabbat at your Yeshiva or Midrasha is an integral part of your year experience, and will strengthen your bond with your rabbis and the other students. From time to time, your Yeshiva/Midrasha will have a Shabbat away, and you'll be inspired by your teachers as well as by the location.

Shoah Seminar

Before and after the MTA Journey to Poland, you will explore different issues related to the Shoah, including the relationship with the foundation of Israel, how survivors were treated in Israel, the partisan forces, the role of the Zionist youth movements during the time of the Shoah, and more. You will hear survivor testimonies and visit some of Israel's main Holocaust museums, including Yad Vashem. This seminar frames the experiences you will receive on our Journey to Poland.

Journey to Poland

MTA participants have the special opportunity to visit Poland as part of their year with World Bnei Akiva: Hachshara. Starting and ending in Israel, the trip focuses on the experiences of Polish Jewry throughout its history. You'll explore the immense and beautiful Jewry of pre-war Poland, dating back 800 years, and you'll examine the years of the Holocaust by visiting Jewish ghettos, death and labour camps, and other significant sites. The trip is prepared meticulously by our educational team so that the experience is a meaningful one.





Who? What? When?

Limmud is an experiential based Israel year program aimed at participants from Australia, South Africa and New Zealand. It runs from January to December.

AT A GLANCE

FEB	Opening Seminar
MAR	Kibbutz Northern Tiyul
APR	Zionism, Pre-Pesach & National Holiday Seminars
MAY	
JUN	Mechina Shvil Yisrael Europe & Poland Journey
JUL	
AUG	Magen David Adom Volunteering
SEP	Yeshiva\ Midrasha Chagim
OCT	Hadracha Seminar Southern Tiyul
NOV	
DEC	Machon-Leadership institute and Closing Seminar

*Exact calendar is subject to change

LIMMUD

Operating in a religious Zionist, co-ed environment, Jewish high school graduates from Australia, South Africa and New Zealand join together for a transformative year in Israel. Guided by a strong team of dedicated staff, participants experience an incredible process of learning, self-empowerment, and growth, preparing them for university and their professional lives well into the future.

Limmud is an uplifting, inspiring and empowering gap year program in Israel with World Bnei Akiva. You'll learn new skills, enhance existing ones, develop your Jewish identity and adapt to new environments - all while enjoying the group experience.

On Limmud you'll spend significant time at Yeshiva or Midrasha, as well as the legendary Bnei Akiva experience of Israel, including

Kibbutz, Shabbatons, seminars, interactions with Israelis, community volunteering, Marva (IDF experience)/ MDA (ambulance experience) and more!

During the Mechina period you'll also experience orienteering, camping, physical training combined with learning about Zionism, Hasbara, Leadership, all infused within the Bnei Akiva Ideology. Limmud will encourage you to grow

Jewishly. You will come back with a clearer understanding of what it means to be Jewish for you, and the skills, drive and passion to develop your own Jewish identity.

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

✓ JEWISH ENRICHMENT

Learning a religious Zionist and Modern Orthodox educational philosophy, you will also learn about critical and relevant issues of faith in modern times. More on page 16.

✓ LEADERSHIP COURSE

The leadership course period is an intense and interactive seminar looking at Zionism, Israeli society, Jewish dilemmas and leadership. More on page 16.

✓ MECHINA OLAMIT

Based in Kibbutz Migdal Oz in Gush Etzion, Limmud has the unique opportunity of experiencing an authentic Israeli Mechina. It's a challenging 2.5 month period of the programme, which builds character and personal growth through educational, experiential, and physical activities. More on page 14.

Mechina Olamit

The Mechina serves as the ideological Beit Midrash of World Bnei Akiva. Through its learning programme, participants deepen their understanding of our movement's ideology, learn how to be leaders and gain practical hadracha skills.

The "Mechina" formula is a real Israeli success story. Each year tens of thousands of young Israelis join Mechinot around the country to prepare for the challenges of transitioning from school into the IDF. Many of them go on to leadership roles both within and after the army. Our Mechina Olamit programme applies this same successful formula for Limmud as they transition to university, community leadership roles, and their professional lives in the future.

Limmud participants go through an incredible process of learning, self-empowerment, and leadership training. You will gain life experience in an unforgettable setting with the guidance

of a team of dedicated leaders of the highest quality. The programme includes experiential Torah learning, deepening knowledge of Jewish peoplehood and Israel Diaspora connections,

community involvement, leadership, hasbara, hiking and discovering Israel, fitness training and more...



Community Volunteering

Volunteering is an inseparable component of the Bnei Akiva ideology. Throughout the year you will volunteer in different places in Israel and different organizations, such as "One Family", "Tachlit", "Leket Israel" etc.

During the Mechina period, the group will have an opportunity to decide on one long-term volunteering project. The project will reflect where the group feels Israel needs them the most. This will empower all the members of the group, teach them responsibility, and force them to think and internalize what are the different challenges Israeli society has, and where can they as young idealistic adults make a real difference.



Shvil Yisrael - the Israel National Trail

You'll have the special opportunity of taking part in a country-wide hike, delving into the grand scale of Biblical landscapes.

Together with participants on other World Bnei Akiva programs from the USA, Europe and South America, you'll see Israel like never before, and will stretch your mind as well as your legs. The hikes are long, and challenging, covering some of Israel's most remote and breathtaking scenery. At night, the groups camp out in the wilderness, singing and bonding by the campfire, and getting some well-earned rest.

Shvil Yisrael is a highlight of the year on Limmud!

Grow & Develop as a person

Jewish Enrichment

Education is at the heart of Bnei Akiva, and there are learning sessions throughout the year on all World Bnei Akiva Hachsharot programmes. However, there is also a set period of time dedicated specifically to Jewish learning on Limmud.

Our learning institutions teach a religious Zionist and Modern Orthodox educational philosophy, and you will also learn about critical and relevant issues of faith in modern times.

You'll be guided throughout, and different levels are catered for. don't need prior knowledge in Jewish studies – just an open mind, and 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.



Leadership Course

World Bnei Akiva believes in the importance of developing Jewish leadership and activism around the world, which is why over and above the Mechina we have Leadership training courses within all our programmes.

The leadership courses are a variety of intense and interactive seminars studying Zionism, Israeli society, Jewish dilemma's and leadership. The courses are geared towards

training, inspiring and enriching the Jewish leaders of tomorrow.

Providing a broad range of stimulating sessions, combined with exciting seminar days exploring Israeli society, you'll be nurtured through making life-defining decisions. The courses will develop your understanding of key areas relating to modern activism, Jewish life and the State of Israel.



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, World Bnei Akiva's Hachshara participants are viewed as valuable contributors to the kibbutz movement.

Working with kibbutz members, you'll share duties in the field, gardens, factories, kitchen, animals, 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. Lunch is together in the communal dining room, and dinners and breakfasts are prepared by the participants - encouraging responsibility and independence. You'll greatly improve your Hebrew through such interactions and with Ulpan classes.

The group will also become involved in kibbutz social and communal activities such as Shabbat and holiday celebrations, enabling you to have a closer view of what kibbutz life means for the children and adults who reside there permanently.



Realize skills

Option 1: 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 and its people. Through hiking the land, living in field conditions, navigating deserts and participating in seminars and lectures, you'll learn about the issues of the country through the lens of the IDF.

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.

you never knew you had

Option 2: Magen David Adom

Magen David Adom (MDA) provides effective emergency first-aid treatment for people in need, and saves lives. You'll be part of this incredibly unique and meaningful mission and gain valuable hands-on experience giving basic medical treatment, while experiencing "real life" in Israel.

After completing an intense training course, you'll volunteer alongside Israelis on ambulances at various MDA stations across the country. You'll be a certified

"First Responder", recognized throughout MDA Israel. Limmud will be assigned a station based on the needs of MDA. Depending on the number 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 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 World Bnei Akiva Hachshara, participants wishing to volunteer for MDA must have had Hepatitis B, MMR, and COVID-19 vaccinations, and must bring the accompanying documentation. In addition, we recommend starting to learn Hebrew before Hachshara starts. The number of MDA participants may be limited depending on the need for volunteers.

**Placements in certain fields may not be available.*



Journey to Poland

Limmud participants have the special opportunity to embark on a Journey to Europe and Poland.

The Europe & Poland Journey focuses on the rich and beautiful Jewish heritage of pre-war Europe, dating back 800 years. You will also examine the harrowing years of the Holocaust by visiting Jewish ghettos, and death and labor camps, and other significant sites. The trip is meticulously prepared by our educational team to ensure a meaningful and impactful experience.

While in Israel, you will prepare for your journey to Poland, and upon your return, you will engage in processing and reflecting on the many concepts and issues covered during the trip.





Frequently Asked Questions

✓ Why Hachshara?

You rely on World 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. 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.

✓ Will I see my friends on other programmes?

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

✓ Do I need a special visa to stay in Israel for the year?

When you arrive in Israel you'll be issued with a three-month entry visa at border control at Ben Gurion airport. We will help you make the arrangements to extend this visa into a year-long visa. This visa does not affect your status as citizens of your home country or your future Aliyah rights. If you or your parents have Israeli citizenship, please contact the Israeli Consulate as soon as possible and complete any necessary steps before arrival in Israel.

✓ What security measures are taken?

We understand that applicants and their families may have concerns about participant safety over the course of the program, and about the dynamic security situation in Israel. Your safety & security is our number one priority. As an approved MASA program, all World Bnei Akiva Israel programs follow the safety and security guidelines outlined by MASA for all their programs, and we follow the security advice of the relevant security agencies in Israel, and run our activities with their approval.

✓ Are arrangements made for 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 attached to your medical form. Although it may not always be possible, we will make every effort to cater for your needs.

Health and well-being

World Bnei Akiva take our participants' physical & emotional wellbeing very seriously. Noting the rise in emotional challenges amongst youth, we have commissioned the services and support of "Keshev"- a professional organization in the mental health and wellness field. Keshev provides us with a wide variety of services including group sessions and one-on-one meetings with participants on topics of mental health such as anxiety, depression, sexuality, eating disorders and more. They provide emergency on-call support to staff, and designated on site hours for any participant who needs extra support mentally or emotionally. Through their team, our participants and staff are offered guidance and support needed, to help them to have an emotionally healthy and safe year.

Have no fear! These questions and answers are only a selection of the most commonly asked, we encourage you to reach out and ask us anything at all. We understand that preparing for your year in Israel and away from home, although exciting, can also be quite overwhelming. Rest assured that World Bnei Akiva is here to answer all your questions, assist with your needs, and help prepare you for the most amazing year of your life!

✓ Is medical care and insurance provided?

Medical services and insurance for illness and injury while in Israel on Hachshara is included in the cost of the programme. Doctors affiliated with the plan are located throughout Israel and you can easily arrange to see one, no matter where you are based at the time. Not covered by the medical insurance are costs related to optical care and treatment of prior dental problems, medical care relating to pre-existing conditions. The full insurance policy details and its exclusions can be viewed on our website. You are also advised to take out 'personal effects insurance' to cover your valuable belongings.

✓ Who manages Hachshara?

We have highly qualified and experienced administrative and educational Programme Directors in Israel who manage each programme, it's coordinator, madrichim and participants. Qualified resident leaders (madrichim) accompany you, guiding and advising you throughout your year in Israel. The programme co-ordinator (rakaz) is responsible for the logistical and educational implementation of the programme. They will visit you regularly and will maintain close contact with the madrichim, your local Bnei Akiva, and your parents.

✓ Is Hachshara useful for my university studies?

The value of gap year programmes such as World Bnei Akiva Hachshara, that encourage personal development, is widely acknowledged and most universities will allow you to apply for deferred entry. It is a good idea to include details of your Hachshara programme in your personal statement to support your application.

✓ Is laundry arranged?

Laundry for certain parts of the year will be provided free of charge, for example on Kibbutz. During other periods, laundry will be organised, at a cost of around 25-40 shekels for a large load.

✓ What do I need to bring with me?

A few weeks before the start of your Hachshara programme, we'll send you a packing list, containing all the essentials for an amazing year in Israel!

You should bring both a sleeping bag and beddings. Although beddings will be provided for some parts of the year, there will be occasions when you'll need it. There are companies that hire out sets to gap year participants, to save you from schlepping it to Israel in your luggage.



APPLY NOW

How to do it



1. Apply online at worldbneiakiva.org/application | Once you have begun the application process, you can sign back in as many times as you like to continue the application.

2. Register with MASA at www.masaisrael.org | Masa is a project of the Israeli government that offers Hachshara participants an automatic grant, with further needs based funding available.

How much does Hachshara cost?

The cost of Hachshara for 2025 is 105,000 NIS. The cost will cover tuition, seminars, tiyulim, accommodation, special Shabbatot, group transportation, staff and medical insurance.

Not covered by the medical insurance are costs related to optical care and treatment of prior dental problems, medical care relating to pre-existing conditions, hepatitis and MMR vaccinations (required by MDA volunteers). The full Maccabi insurance policy details and it's exclusions can be viewed here. In addition, you may want laundry done at certain parts of the year (eg. Marva/Mad periods), and you may be required to purchase your own books and learning materials for the study periods.

How will I know if I have been accepted?

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 the programme. It will also give you the opportunity to ask any specific questions you may have.

Shortly after the interview, you'll be informed of your acceptance. Your place will be confirmed only after the payment plan has been agreed.



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World Bnei Akiva Hachshara



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