



WORLD BNEI AKIVA
SHNAT HACHSHARA - ISRAEL YEAR PROGRAMS

KIVUN



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Welcome to World Bnei Akiva

BNEIAKIVA is a Jewish religious Zionist youth movement, the biggest 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?

Kivun is a program where you will experience living independently in Israel, encounter Israeli society first-hand, and engage with Judaism like never before.

AT A GLANCE

KIVUN

The Kivun program is a life-changing, integrated gap-year experience with World Bnei Akiva. Learn about yourself, Modern Orthodox Judaism and Religious Zionism through relevant and meaningful Torah study – focused on preparing you for real-life experiences. Experience an all-encompassing, authentic taste of Israel through volunteering and actively contributing to Israeli society. Gain career development and experience the work market in Israel through professional internships. Expand your horizons and grow through diverse and memorable experiences. Make friendships with Jewish youth from around the world that will last a lifetime. Enhance and develop your skills, and become empowered to fill advanced leadership roles in Bnei Akiva and beyond.

Your first year after school is your first real opportunity to shape your future life direction and choose the values you wish to live by.

That's why we've designed the Kivun program, to help you explore your Judaism and Zionism in a positive

and non-judgmental environment, and to help you forge your own personal direction.

Kivun will facilitate your personal and religious growth through diverse and challenging experiences, giving an authentic encounter with Israel.

It will deepen your understanding of Judaism through relevant and contemporary learning from ancient texts to modern, cutting-edge issues.

Bnei Akiva believes that our learning and personal growth must be

matched by a commitment to action - or in other words, Torah Va'Avodah. On Kivun you will become active contributors to Israeli society, making a tangible difference to people and communities.

And Kivun doesn't end there: our vision is for graduates of Kivun to make a lifelong commitment to giving back to others, through being involved in Bnei Akiva, the wider community and Israel.



SEP	
OCT	Kibbutz
NOV	
DEC	Internships
JAN	
FEB	MDA / Marva
MAR	Community Volunteering
APR	Learning & Leadership
MAY	
JUN	Closing Seminar
JUL	

Exact Kivun calendar is subject to change



YOUR HOME

Bnei Akiva - a global community

Kivun has been uniquely created to meet your needs as young Jews. Most of the program is with likeminded youth from North America, England, mainland Europe and beyond. Additionally, significant parts of the year have been designed to cross paths with other World Bnei Akiva Hachshara programs from around the world. This means you will have the opportunity to learn, hike and celebrate chagim with other young Jews from over 15 different countries; from Australia to Italy and from Uruguay to South Africa. The coming together of future Jewish leaders from so many different countries and backgrounds will enrich your year and give you friends from around the world.

Leadership-focused learning

Education is at the heart of Bnei Akiva, and there are set periods of time dedicated specifically to Jewish learning, when you will become equipped with the skills and motivation to become future Jewish leaders. Kivun aims to give you a broad knowledge base whilst focusing on relevant and engaging topics, and we're not afraid to ask difficult questions about faith, religion and identity.

Our teachers are highly qualified male and female religious Zionist and Modern Orthodox educators, and our classes are interactive, discussion-based and taught both in the Beit Midrash and on location in sites of importance throughout

the country. Another feature of Kivun is that our learning isn't in a vacuum - rather it's integrated within a framework of real-life experiences, living independently in Jerusalem.

Through celebrating shabbatot and chagim as part of a community, you will feel the pulse of life in modern-day Israel and make connections that will last beyond your year. You'll be guided throughout, and different levels are catered for. To be a participant on a World Bnei Akiva Hachshara program you don't need prior knowledge in Jewish studies – you just need the commitment to learn and to grow.



EXPERIENCE YOUR 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 settlements. Today, World Bnei Akiva 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 "hosted" 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.

Community Volunteering

You'll volunteer in a neighborhood in one of Israel's socio-economically deprived areas where there is a real need for volunteers. This will bring you to experience a part of Israel that you would not necessarily encounter elsewhere. Volunteer placements may include teaching English in local community centers, helping in soup kitchens, working with the elderly, and sports. Your time will be supplemented with a learning program and evening activities. Through your experience, you will gain appreciation for the challenges facing the people of Israel today.



UNLEASH YOUR POTENTIAL

Jewish Enrichment

In addition to the ongoing learning curriculum and learning seminars, there is great value for a participant on a Bnei Akiva gap-year to have the opportunity to strengthen learning skills, familiarity with Torah texts and immersion in a fulltime Torah-learning environment. Therefore we offer an option for an intensive Jewish Enrichment learning track. The group will be guided by outstanding educators and have a timetable catered specifically for them. They will have the opportunity to delve into topics ranging from Talmud and Tanach, Halacha and Machshava, Jewish History and more all part of the unique structure of Kivun. Please note: There is a required minimum of participants to run this track.

Marva

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.

The program is based in the Southern Negev, but you'll spend your 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.

Important: Marva is a physically demanding program, and participants are expected to be in a 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 program.

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 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. Kivun 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 and MMR 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.





FORGE

YOUR DIRECTION

INTERNSHIPS

We believe that your year in Israel should give you the tools to shape your future life direction in a truly holistic way. That's why we are offering professional internships, personalized based on your needs and interests. We aim to find a placement suited to you, connected to your fields of interest*.

Building connections with people and experiencing life in the Israeli workplace will give you an authentic and diverse appreciation of what it means to live and work in Israel.

*Placements in certain fields may not be available.



DISCOVERING ISRAEL

Israel has a dynamic, multi-layered society, where each person and family has a story to tell.

On Kivun you'll travel the length and breadth of Israel on seminars to uncover about how the Zionist dream unfolded into reality, the

diversity and complexity of Israeli society, how the Holocaust affects Israeli identity and how the Land of Israel has been brought to life in modern times.

Kivun is committed to training, inspiring and enriching the Jewish leaders and activists of tomorrow.

Our seminars give you the opportunity to meet the movers and shakers of Israeli society, whether in politics or religion, charity or hi-tech, and from this learn what it takes to make a difference to the society around us.



IN THEIR WORDS

"Kivun is like no other experience. Nowhere else will you be fully immersed into Israeli culture and society, and provided with the best tools and opportunities to grow. It gave me a strong sense of identity, opportunities I couldn't imagine, enriching speakers, an inspiring global community, and friends for life. It's an experience of the best Israel has to offer, and will last you a lifetime."

– Sara Cowen, UK



"Kivun gives me the opportunity to be fully me. It provides the experiences to allow me to stand on my own feet – in relation to Israel, Judaism, personal independence and life skills. It provides an environment that is educational and nurturing, while I do a lot of fun stuff and get to know a lot of new people from around the world."

– Jalta Muller, Holland



Kivun was a life-changing year and loved every moment of it! It was amazing to meet so many people from all around the world and experience Israel like never before. I experienced unparalleled personal-growth, and learned so much about Israel, Judaism and my self. Kivun was the greatest year of my life and I'm so happy I chose this program!

–Elinor Fligman, Sweden

"Our son, Sam, had a terrific time on Kivun. He learnt so much about Israel and its diverse population, as well as increasing his Jewish knowledge whilst at the same time having a lot of fun. Most of all, we witnessed tremendous personal growth during the nine months he lived in Israel. He learned to live independently within the framework of a structured program. Kivun provided Sam with the tools and motivation to become an engaged leader within the Jewish community. Kivun most definitely exceeded our expectations and we would not hesitate to recommend it to anyone looking for a fulfilling gap year experience."

– Sidney & Lorraine Myers, UK

"Kivun is like an extended family. It allows you to grow at your own pace whilst challenging you and allowing you to grow in your independence and spiritual beliefs. The program is structurally diverse so that throughout the entire year you have thoroughly learned about the diversity of Israeli culture – from the strenuous life on a kibbutz, what giving your life for the army really means, and how giving without expecting anything in return exceeds all expectations. Kivun is not just a year in Israel, but it's a year when you can say you've learned to walk the life of an Israeli, and to make a tangible difference to Israeli society."

– Shira Rabinowitz, USA



Frequently Asked Questions

About Kivun

✓ Why Hachshara?

You rely on World Bnei Akiva to support and help you whilst in Israel and you can trust us to create a program tailored to people from your 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 programs?

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

✓ What security measures are taken?

Your safety is our primary concern. Like all gap year programs, we follow the security advice of the relevant security agencies in Israel, and run our activities with their approval. In the event of a change in the security situation, we will inform you. Occasionally, as a precaution, we will ask you not to go out, even during free time.

✓ Will Hachshara be useful for my university application?

The value of gap year programs such as World Bnei Akiva's Hachshara programs is widely acknowledged 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. Additionally, courses provided on Kivun may count for credits at certain colleges and universities.

✓ Are arrangements made for special dietary requirements?

If you require a special diet or have a severe allergy that may necessitate extra attention, please state this in your medical form on your application. Although it may not always be possible, we will make every effort to cater for your needs.

✓ 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 program. 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. Treatment related to pre-existing conditions is not included in the coverage. You are advised to take out 'personal effects insurance' to cover your valuable belongings.

✓ Do I need to arrange a visa for a year in Israel?

Yes, you must arrange your student visa prior to arrival in Israel. To do this you need to contact your local Israel mission to apply for a MASA A/2 Visa for your year in Israel. If you or your parents have Israeli citizenship, then the visa requirements are different. This must be discussed with your Israeli mission, who will advise you what steps are necessary to complete before arrival in Israel. Please note that visa requirements are set by the Israeli Government and are subject to change.





FAQ Continued...

Who is this program for?

The Kivun program is for people who are highly motivated to get the most out of a Bnei Akiva gap year in Israel. Participants will benefit from learning Torah and experiencing Israel in an unparalleled manner. If you want to have a gap year experience where you gain the skills to become tomorrow's Jewish leader today, then Kivun is for you!

How do group Shabbatot work?

Kivun will roughly follow an alternating "in"- "out" schedule, and will be adapted depending on the specific time of year. The group Shabbatot will be both at home, or visiting another community in Israel. Staff members will ensure participants have somewhere to go on free Shabbatot.

Will there be vacation?

Kivun is a nine-month program and every day is important! In order to maximize participants' time in Israel, there will only be vacation during Sukkot & Pesach – after the Seder.

Is laundry arranged?

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

Should I bring bedding or a sleeping bag?

You should bring both. We provide a pillow and blanket, but you will need to have bedding. There are companies that hire out sets to gap year participants, to save you from schlepping it to Israel in your luggage.

What else should I bring?

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



APPLY NOW – HOW TO DO IT

1. Apply online at www.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. Carefully read the Application Guidelines on the website before starting the application. This includes, among other requirements, completing the medical form which needs to be signed and stamped by a doctor, and uploaded to the application website.

3. 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.

Tuition

Tuition covers all costs during programming, including seminars, tiyulim, accommodation & food during programming, program related travel expenses, staff, medical insurance, visas.

The tuition fee does not cover costs for optical care, treatment of prior dental problems, medical care relating to pre-existing conditions, hepatitis and MMR vaccinations or additional check-ups (that may be required by MARVA/ MDA volunteers), laundry for certain parts of the year, and food during free Shabbaton/ chofesh times. In addition, you may be required to purchase your own books and learning materials for the study periods.

Please contact us for more details.

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

Shortly after the interview, you'll be informed if you have been accepted. Your place will be confirmed only after a payment plan has been agreed.

Scan to apply online:



CONTACT DETAILS & SCHOLARSHIPS

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SCHOLARSHIPS

We believe that no-one should miss out on a Bnei Akiva educational experience due to financial reasons. Please inquire about what scholarships could be available.

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