

The Tel Burna Archaeological Project

telburna2024participants@gmail.com

<http://telburna.wordpress.com/>



Information and Registration Package for Participants in the Tel Burna Archaeological Project 2024 Season

In the following pages you will find information and registration forms for participating as a volunteer or as a student in the Tel Burna Archaeological Project for the upcoming 2024 season of excavations.

Please send applications to the address below (for additional information, please contact as well):

For online application please go to our website telburna.wordpress.com

For further information, please contact:

Email: telburna2024participants@gmail.com

Or contact

Prof. Itzhaq Shai,

Vice President and Dean of Research and Development, Ariel University

Director, The Tel Burna Archaeological Project

The Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

Ariel University

P.O.B. 3, Ariel 40700

ISRAEL

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The Tel Burna Archaeological Project 2024 Season

The site of Tel Burna is located in the region known as the Shephelah, an area which served as a border between the kingdoms of Judah and Philistia during the Iron Age. A fertile area, ideal for agricultural production, the Shephelah became known as the breadbasket of the south. As to the identity of the site, as has been suggested by several scholars before us, we believe that Tel Burna is the best candidate for the Biblical city of Libnah. The tell's prominence is notable in its flat-topped shape, extensive size, and fortifications which are still visible today, situated alongside the Guvrin river. Our survey finds, conducted in 2009, indicate that the site was an important entity in both the Bronze and the Iron Ages.

Thirteen seasons of fieldwork at the site, in addition to the survey season, have presented us with a coherent picture of the site's settlement history. The fortification system surrounding the tell has created a flat, almost square area of 70 x 70 meters, which constitute the upper tell. Around the periphery of the upper tell, excavations have been carried out in several areas: Areas A1 and B2, exposing the casemate walls along the eastern and western summit (respectively), and Area G to the south where we have begun to reveal the remains of the city's gate and Area G2 just below the gate where we revealed the entry pathway. Area A2 is located in the center of the summit of the tell where a large pillared structure has been revealed. Two more areas, Areas B1 and B3, are located on a lower terrace west of the summit. Excavations in Area C, east of the fortifications, focus on various agricultural installations exposed close to the surface.

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Aerial view showing some of the excavated Areas

The main feature of the Iron Age settlement at the site is the fortification system which surrounds the entire summit. Casemate walls, typical to Iron Age sites in the southern Levant, have been exposed in Areas A1 and B2. The casemate fortifications at Tel Burna were constructed of two parallel walls approximately 2 meters apart, connected to one another by perpendicular walls which form rooms or spaces, known as casemates. Built of large field stones, the outer wall measures 1.5m wide and has been preserved to a height of 3 meters. All in all the entire fortification system would have been approximately 6 meters thick, 280 meters long, and while it stands to a height of about 3 meters, it was certainly much taller in antiquity.

The past few seasons, have unearthed an earlier stratum of occupation on the western side of the summit below the fortifications. These remains date to the 10th century B.C.E. and, as indicated by the dozens of smashed vessels and thick ashy layer, point towards an intense conflagration. An event, which evidently predated, and most likely led to the construction of the tell's impressive fortifications.

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Area B2 Smashed vessels and ashy layer

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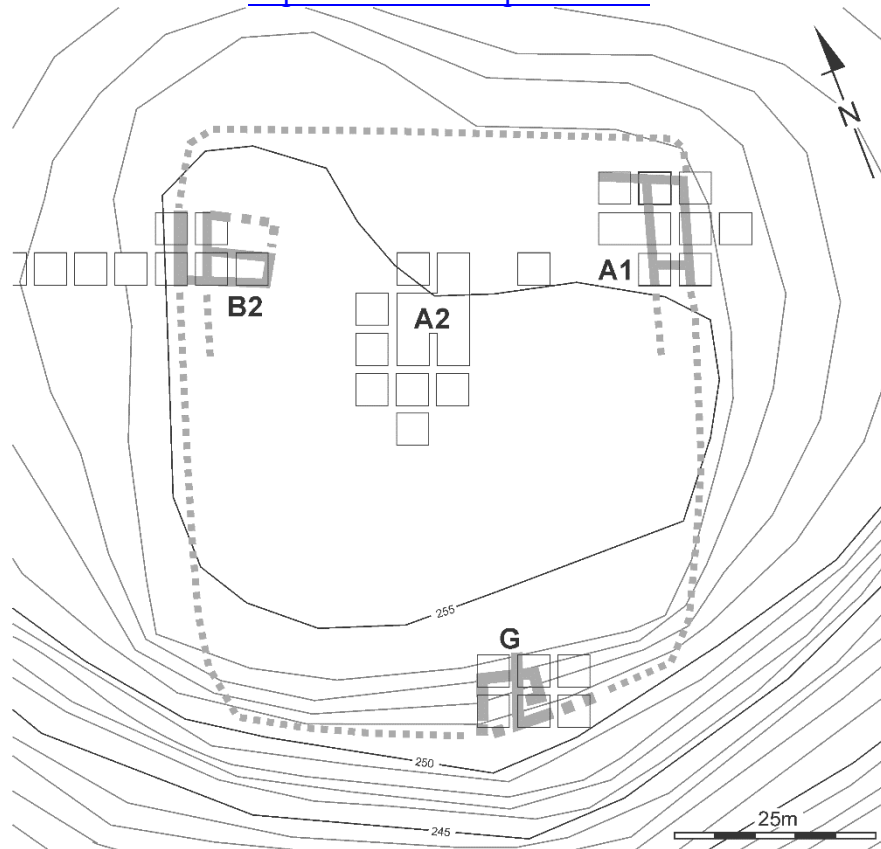


A few of the restored vessels from Area B2

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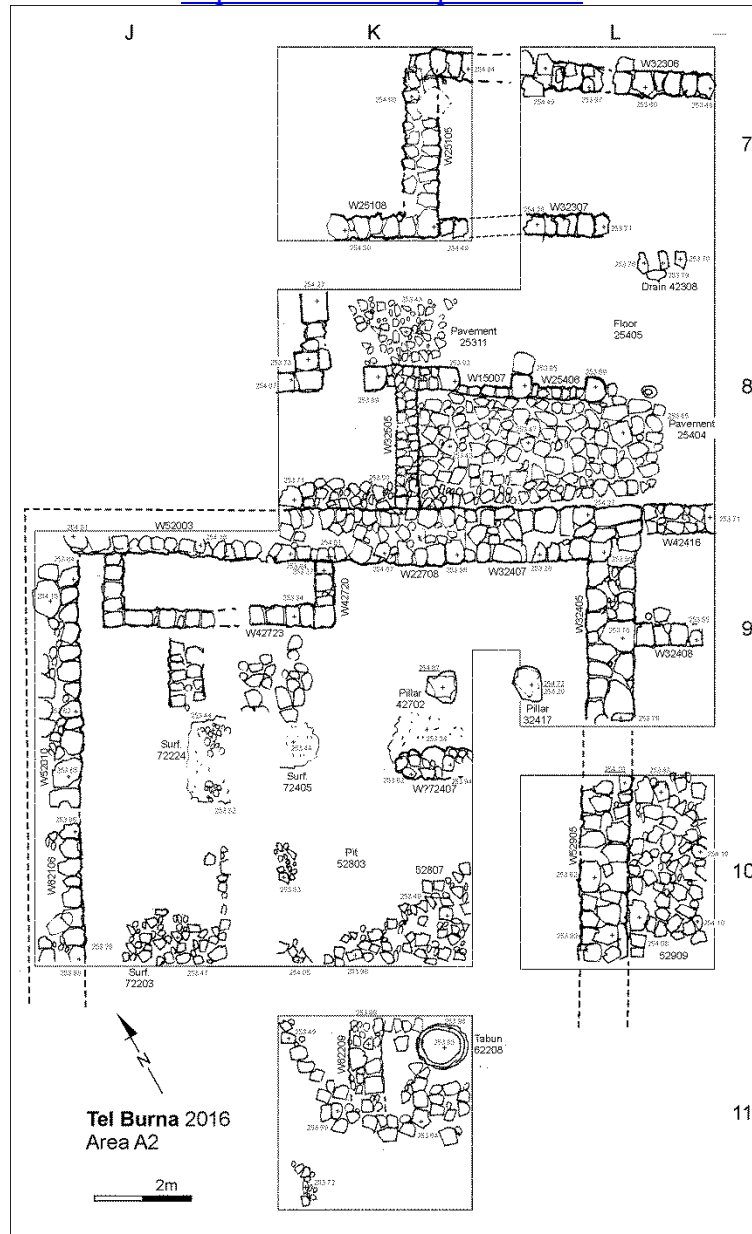
Plan of the fortification remains in Areas A1, B2 and G

Eighth and seventh century B.C.E. remains include not only the fortifications and related surfaces, but also a broad exposure of architectural elements, including the northern part of a large pillared building, the courtyard of which contained both a flagstone pavement as well as a beaten earth floor, located on opposite sides of a partition wall. It seems these two surfaces belonged to a larger earlier structure, which we have only just begun to expose to the south. The ceramic remains found on these floors include wheel burnished pottery, Judean folded-rim bowls and *lmlk*-type jars. Unfortunately, although a *lmlk*-stamped handle has been recovered in the fill above these surfaces, the restored jars are not stamped. This stamp depicts a two-winged emblem, however no letters have survived. Recently, some scholars have suggested dating such stamps to the 7th century B.C.E., which would be compatible with the material remains found along with our *lmlk*-stamp.

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Plan of the Iron Age Structure in Area A2

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LMLK-stamped handle

The 7th century B.C.E. remains uncovered at Tel Burna consist mostly of a series of silos and related architectural elements. Such silos, all lined with stone, cut into earlier remains, are spread across the summit. In one case, the silo reuses an earlier 8th century B.C.E. pavement as its floor, while in another it cuts through the eastern inner fortification wall. Other than 7th century B.C.E. pottery, the silos also yielded a variety of grains which was recovered through the flotation of the sediments. Preliminary archaeobotanical analysis of the remains, conducted by Dr. Simone Riehl of the University of Tübingen, indicates the presence of a number of crop species, with olive, free-threshing wheat and grass pea constituting the main portion of the assemblage. Other frequent taxa were barley, flax, fig, and wild, mostly weedy species. The grain is still under analysis, and we hope that the finds from these installations will further our understanding of the nature and economy of the site in this period.

An additional 7th century B.C.E. structure was discovered in recent years just above the western fortification system. The remains suggest that the fortification was no longer in use during this period, as parts of the structure's white surface were traced to just above the fortification line.

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Plan of 7th century B.C.E. architectural remains in Area B2

Thus far, evidence for Late Bronze Age occupation at Tel Burna has been exposed on the western side of the tell in Areas B1, B3 and D, west of Area B2 and the summit. Architectural remains and Late Bronze Age material culture, specifically around the 13th century B.C.E., were discovered in the shallow fill just below topsoil and above bedrock. Excavations in Area B1 exposed a unique structure associated with cultic activities, which included some unprecedented imported wares. Our work in this area has been completed and published in several articles.

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Storage jars *in situ* in Area B3

Area B3, located directly south of Area B1, was originally opened in 2019 to discover the southern extent of the Late Bronze Age cultic enclosure, as well as explore what lay just beyond that. Starting in that first year, we began to uncover multiple Late Bronze Age building units, obviously separate from the cultic enclosure, with walls that were large and well-constructed, complete vessels *in situ* (including at least seven storage jars from a storage room), and other small finds that gave tantalizing clues as to the function of these buildings. As a result, the goals of our 2023 season centered around exploring these building units further by tracing their layouts and excavating their contents. The 2023 results were just as intriguing as the previous seasons' results and seems to continue to confirm our growing theory that these buildings that we are excavating in Area B3 functioned as a possible governing building that could have been both administrative and residential in nature. The 2023 finds included more rooms, a second storage room/area that contained around 10 complete storage jars *in situ*, an area that was used for copper-working, and fascinating small finds such as a complete plaque figurine and an incised stone object. In the future, we hope to discover the full plan of this major building(s), carefully excavate its contents, identify its nature, determine how it relates to the cultic enclosure that it sits adjacent to, and continue to



Plaque Figurine Area B3

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grow our understanding of Late Bronze Age Burna and the Late Bronze Age in general.

Area C is located about 200 meters east of the tell's summit. In this area we identified installations up to 1 meter in diameter carved into the bedrock. The aim of our work in this area was to study the agricultural installations adjacent to the tell and to identify the periods they were in use. Bedrock was reached between 10 cm to 70 cm below topsoil. Finds included many pottery sherds most of which date to the Late Bronze and Iron Ages. Basalt grinding stones and flint artifacts were also discovered, indicating areas used for preparation of the materials before processing.

The past three seasons of excavations in Area G, on the southeastern edge of the summit, have revealed the remains of a significantly large fortification walls and towers that surround a gate system that seems to have been in use from the 9th to the 7th centuries B.C.E. It seems that there are two gates built on top of one another in two different periods. The earlier gate likely dates to the initial construction of the fortified town and its casemate fortifications, as seen in Areas A1 and B2. Evidence for this earlier gate includes a drainage channel, a gate socket, and burnt mud bricks. This gate was apparently destroyed by fire sometime in the 9th century BCE. The later gate was constructed atop the ruins of the earlier gate – but on a different axis – this late gate seems to have made use of the earlier drainage system and the surrounding massive fortification walls. It is not yet clear if this later gate was destroyed in 701 BCE or if it remained as the entrance to the 7th century BCE town.

Summary and Future Plans

The excavation seasons at Tel Burna, thus far, have revealed Late Bronze and Iron Age II levels, including the fortifications, the gate, a large central structure and a series of silos. Thus providing the first steps in a long-term investigation of the site's history, while particularly addressing its situation along the Judean-Philistine border. This coming year, our excavation goals are the following:

This year our work will focus on the Late Bronze Age occupation, exposed on the western shelf of the tell, where we will open a new area in addition to Areas B1 and B3.

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To enable participation in the excavation, all volunteers will be required to fill in the attached form which must be submitted before the excavation begins (either received in the mail or when the applicant reaches the site). The form relates to health, insurance and required conduct & behavior. Participation in the excavation will not be possible without the completion of this form (sorry, no exceptions!)

I understand that to enable my participation I am required to complete and submit the attached medical, insurance and conduct & behavior form (either by mail or upon arrival to the excavation).

Signature: _____

I wish to volunteer for (check appropriate):

One Week Two weeks Three weeks

Starting date (check appropriate):

June 23 June 30 July 7

Payment:

The price for each week is \$575 (USD), in addition to a \$50 non-refundable application fee. Minimum stay is one week. **Deadline for registration and Payment is May 1, 2024.** Registration will be finalized with the receipt of \$625, \$1200, \$1775 (i.e. registration fee + payment according to planned participation in the project). As of this past summer we are implementing online payments through the ISRAELI INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY and the ISRAEL EXPLORATION SOCIETY. Once you are have filled in the forms and determined the length of your participation you must contact Dr. Debi Cassuto at telburna2024participants@gmail.com for details. (Payments in currencies other than USD or ILS may require a processing fee).

Payment:

Sum _____

Standard lodgings are 4-6 people per room.

Single and Double accommodations are available at a higher cost. If you are interested, please contact us directly for prices and availability.

Signature: _____

Refunds:

In the event of cancellation of participation, the following refund policy will apply:

- 1) Cancellations effective before May 15th, 2024 **will receive full refund** (not including non-refundable \$50 registration fee).
- 2) Cancellations effective after May 15th, 2024, but before June 1, 2024 will receive **refund of 50% of their payment** (not including non-refundable \$50 registration fee).

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3) Cancellations effective after June 1, 2024 **will not be refunded.**

This refund policy is in effect since we order, and pay, for services according to pre-planned numbers of participants. Thus, we must have sufficient prior notice of cancellations so that we are not charged for these services. **All cancellations must be done by email and must receive a written confirmation before they are effective.**

I understand and agree to the refund policy delineated above:

Signature: _____

Note:

Actual participation in the excavation will be approved once the attached Health, Insurance and Conduct & Behavior form is received as well.

Payment includes the following:

Participation in the excavation and related activities; Room and Board from Sunday afternoon until Friday morning; Travel from the base camp to the site and back.

Payment DOES NOT include the following:

Medical and accident insurance; travel to and from Israel; travel to and from airport (or other places of origin) to base camp; travel to and from base camp on weekends; laundry; R&B from Friday afternoon until Sunday morning.

Signature: _____

Requirements:

Volunteers will participate both in excavation (ca. 6AM-1PM) and in post-excavation activities such as pottery washing which will be conducted in the afternoon and evening. Additional information about working and living conditions will be supplied following application acceptance. See as well the attached form below.

Applications should be sent to:

Prof. Itzhaq Shai,

Vice President and Dean of Research and Development, Ariel University

Director, The Tel Burna Archaeological Project

The Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

Ariel University

P.O.B. 3, Ariel 40700

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E-mail: shai.itzick@gmail.com

Visit our website telburna.wordpress.com

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The Tel Burna Archaeological Project

2024 Season

Health, Insurance, and Conduct & Behavior Form

Name: _____
Last First Middle

This form must be comprehensively filled-out by all participants and its receipt is mandatory to enable the volunteer's participation. The filled-out form must be received before commencement of the volunteer's participation in the excavation (either in the mail or at arrival to the site; we strongly recommend the former). In the case of minors (under the age of 18), parents/legal guardians should fill out the form. Please bring a copy of this and other forms when arriving to the site.

Health:

All participants must be of sound mind and body, enabling participation in an exerting physical activity, in (occasionally adverse) outdoor conditions. Participants are required to undergo a medical examination prior to the excavation and present a Medical Doctor's authorization (see below).

Participant's Declaration:

I am of sound mind and body and can participate in the physical demands of the excavation.

Signature of Applicant: _____ **Date:** _____

Doctor's authorization:

I have medically examined the applicant (_____) and believe him/her to be of sound health, enabling participation in the excavation.

Dr. _____ Field of Expertise: _____

Address: _____ Telephone: _____

Doctor's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Doctor's Seal: _____

Insurance:

All participants in the excavation must have health and accident insurance, which are valid in Israel.

Health insurance:

Ins. Company: _____

Accident insurance:

Ins. Company: _____

Policy #: _____ Policy #: _____

Expiration Date: _____ Expiration Date: _____

I have read the above statement and understand that I must have medical and accident insurance that are valid in Israel. I certify that I am so covered while in Israel.

Signature: _____

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The Tel Burna Archaeological Project can refer volunteers to physicians or hospitals in case of accident or illness. However, it must be understood that the costs of medical care and hospitalization will be borne by the volunteer and not by the Tel Burna Archaeological Project, the project directors and staff, and/or affiliated institutions.

I understand my responsibilities regarding health and medical care:

Signature: _____

Conduct & Behavior:

All participants are required to participate, to the best of their abilities, in the various activities that are part of the excavation process. Volunteers are required to follow the directives of the excavation project's staff. Volunteers will not act in any manner that could endanger themselves or other people. Volunteers will not act in a manner that can cause physical injury and/or damage to other people or objects. Volunteers will not behave in a disruptive and/or rowdy manner and will not act in a fashion that is offensive to other participants or the surroundings. Volunteers will not act in a manner contrary to accepted legal norms. Volunteers are expected to behave in a manner that is tolerant to other beliefs, lifestyles and convictions. **Substance abuse of any kind (save for moderate consumption of alcohol) will not be permitted.** The project director reserves the right (at his discretion) to expel from the excavation (and all related activities) volunteers whom will not conform to these requirements.

Participant's Declaration:

I understand the above and will conform to these required modes and rules of conduct & behavior:

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Minors

In the case of minors (under the age of 18), the parent/legal guardian will insure that this form is properly filled-out and that this code of conduct & behavior is fully understood by the volunteer. In the case of misconduct (and subsequent expulsion from the excavation) the parent/legal guardian will be notified by the excavation staff and it will be the parent/legal guardian's responsibility to find alternate plans for the minor.

Parent/Legal Guardian's signature and information (PRINT CLEARLY):

Name: _____ **Relation:** _____

Address: _____

Tel. for contact 24 hours a day: _____

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Additional Tel. for contact: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

The Tel Burna Archaeological Project 2024 Season Undertaking and Release Form

In consideration of being permitted to participate in the Tel Burna Archaeological Project, I agree that I shall so conduct that study in a responsible and professional manner and shall respect and abide by the laws and customs of Israel, the host country.

I have enrolled in appropriate medical and insurance coverage programs.

On my behalf and on behalf of my heirs, executors, personal representatives, contractees and employees, I hereby release and forever discharge Ariel University and the Tel Burna Archaeological Project, their officers and employees from any claim for loss, death, disability, delay, or damage to person, property, or for accident or illness howsoever arising which may be suffered by me or by anyone claiming through me, during the period of, in consequence of, or in any way related to the work and/or study undertaken by me in connection with my participation in this Project.

I have fully informed my Next of Kin regarding all aspects of my proposed volunteering and/or study, including the nature of any possible risks.

Volunteer's Name: _____ **Signature:** _____

Date: _____ **Witness:** _____

I appoint the following person my Designated Next of Kin and authorize Ariel University and the Tel Burna Archaeological Project to contact that person for or with information about me in my absence **(PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY):**

Name: _____

Telephone: (h) _____ ; (w) _____

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Telephone: (m): _____

Email: _____

Address: _____

Name of Designated Next of Kin: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

The Tel Burna Archaeological Project

2024 season

List of Suggested Equipment for Participants

Introduction:

The following should be seen as a list of recommendations for participants in the excavation. This list has been formulated on the basis of a familiarity with the climate, working, and living conditions in Israel and at the site. We believe that adherence to the list will assist in making your stay at the dig as comfortable as possible. Needless to say, this list consists of basic recommendations only – ultimately, you will have to decide what you need and what you do not! Included in the list are various types of equipment and supplies, but not their quantities. Please use your own discretion in deciding what to pack. Take into account that clothes can be washed on site by hand, or for an additional charge, at a local laundry. Please, try not to bring excessive and/or overly expensive personal effects. If you do forget something, most everything is available in Israel, although it may be more expensive and it may not be the brand that you are used to.

Clothing:

Overall, the climate in Israel at this time of year is very hot and dry, especially during the working hours at the site. Nevertheless, during the evening it can be relatively cool. Thus, one should have clothing appropriate for hot weather, although a light sweater or jacket for evening wear will also come in handy. Although many of us like to expose as much of our bodies as possible to the sun in hot weather, the expedition director advises that work in the field be conducted in light-weight, long-sleeved shirts and long pants, and needless to say, with a wide-brimmed hat. In addition, liberal use of sun-screen lotions is highly advised. Although it may seem like a great opportunity to get a tan, prolonged exposure to the sun is not particularly pleasant, nor good for your health!

Suggested List of Clothing and Supplies:

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Clothes:

- Closed work shoes - preferably ankle height
- Wide-brimmed lightweight hat (preferably washable)
- Short sleeved and long sleeved cotton shirts for working
- Cotton shorts
- Cotton pants (slacks)
- Underwear
- Socks
- Sweater/Sweatshirt
- Lightweight jacket
- Pajamas
- Extra shoelaces
- Sandals
- Alarm clock
- Bathing suit – we do not have access to a swimming pool, however volunteers have visited the beaches on their free weekends

Toiletries:

- Toiletries bag
- Soap
- Shampoo
- Sunscreen (ample quantities; high level of protection)
- Toothpaste & toothbrush
- Deodorant
- Athlete's foot powder
- Anti-chafing cream
- Nail clipper
- Anti-bug spray/cream
- Medications if necessary (such as aspirin, antihistamines, etc.)
- Personal supplies (as needed)

General Equipment:

- Canteen/water bottle for personal use
- Work-gloves or gardening gloves
- Trowel (preferably "Marshalltown" brand, size 4/5). The excavation has a limited supply of trowels from previous seasons, but many volunteers prefer to bring their own. Since these are not available in Israel, if you are interested in bringing your own we suggest that you purchase one for your own use to bring to the excavation. These can be purchased on-line at: <https://www.marshalltown.com/cat-1261-trowels>. Other types of trowels such as the "WHS professional archaeology trowel" are also possible from other sites such as <https://pasthorizons.com/collections/trowels-small-tools/products/whs-4-archaeology-trowel-wooden-handle>.
- Duffle-bag/suitcase for gear
- Small bag/knapsack for carrying daily equipment and water bottles

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- Bag for your laundry
- Money belt
- Pocket knife
- Camera
- Knee-pads used for gardening are suggested to protect knees while working, we do a lot of kneeling
- We highly recommend that you bring with you photocopies of: 1) the photo and information page on your passport; 2) credit cards that you will bringing; 3) your airline ticket. If any of the above is lost/stolen during your trip, having photocopies simplifies the process of getting replacements. 2-3 extra passport photos are good to have as well.

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2024 Season

This Year's Excavation and the Security Situation

Due to the “ups and downs” of the security situation in Israel, questions have been asked regarding the safety and security of the participants in the excavation. In fact, throughout the world we are all going through quite troubled times, and being a bit worried is actually a logical (and healthy!) response. This is especially true for those of you that are hearing about the events via the media outside of Israel. Nevertheless, we would like to try and ease your worries a bit.

First of all, as the directors of the team, we put the highest priority on ALL safety issues (not only security-related). The constant, overall safety of all participants is always at the top of our list. Thus, we will never do anything that in any way would put any of the participants in any risk! Second of all, keep in mind that often, the situation as reported in the media seems much worse than it actually is!

Tel Burna itself, and the region around it, is not in, or near, the West Bank, Gaza, and/or the border with Lebanon, where most of the acts of violence have occurred in the past. In addition, there have not been any terrorist activities on, or in the vicinity of the tell. To this can be added that all the activities relating to the excavation (including the excavation itself, field trips, outings, etc.) are conducted under strict supervision (as to where and how we go).

On weekends, as the volunteers make their plans to go sightseeing, we carefully review their itineraries, to ensure that they are not planning to go to any dangerous areas.

Thank G-d, we have never had any security-related problems and we hope and pray that this will continue. If we may add, it should be remembered that the main objective of terrorism is to obstruct us from living our lives in a usual manner. Yes, we must be more aware of security-related issues (and take these matters seriously), but, on the other hand, we will continue with our plans, and yes, we will be out in the field this season!!

Hoping that you will join us this season,

All the best,

The Tel Burna Staff