

Last update - 02:03 14/12/2007

Record number of students to take part in Birthright Israel this year

By [Irit Rosenblum](#)

The first 300 of the this winter's 17,000 Birthright participants will land in Israel next week in the latest chance for Jews 18 to 26 years old to visit Israel on an educational trip.

In the current program, they will be coming from 20 countries from all over the globe, with the first group arriving from Australia and Uzbekistan.

The huge number of participants, a new record for Birthright (taglit in Hebrew), will bring the Israeli tourism industry about NIS 130 million over the four winter months.

Six airlines will be carrying the participants: El Al, Israir, Arkia, Continental, Delta and Turkish Airlines.

Birthright participants spend 10 days in Israel touring historical and national heritage sites in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Galilee, the Golan Heights and the South, including Masada and the Dead Sea.

About 3,400 Israeli soldiers join the students.

During the eight years of Birthright, over 150,000 participants from 52 countries have visited Israel. On the business side, this has generated tourism revenues of NIS 1.2 billion for services such as hotels, food, security, guides, entrance fees, buses and flights.

Birthright is a joint initiative of the Israeli government and a number of Jewish philanthropists and communities around the world. The founders were Charles Bronfman, Michael Steinhardt and Lynn Schusterman. Sheldon and Miriam Adelson have pledged \$60 million to the program, which has allowed thousands of students who were on the waiting list to come to Israel on Birthright this year.

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