

BIBLICAL SITES

For Christian Visitors



ISRAEL – A Life-Changing Experience

Israel ... Land of the Bible ... Land of Faith ... the Holy Land, revered throughout recorded history as the cradle of monotheistic religion. For a person of faith whose beliefs are rooted in the Bible, there is no place on earth like the Holy Land. In this narrow strip of land lies the source of religious belief of much of mankind. Here, amongst the barren hills and fertile plains, man's spirit learned to soar, and from here a new message went out to all the world: **"... and many peoples shall come, and say, 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; that He may teach us His ways and that we may walk in His paths'. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem"** (Isaiah 2:3-4). Records of the Holy Land go back over 5,000 years, bearing witness to the fact that this was never a quiet, peaceful region. Situated as it is, straddling the divide between Africa and Asia, the area has almost always been a battleground. Wave after wave of conquerors poured into it, anxious to control the strategic trade routes linking the centers of the ancient world. With almost predictable regularity, control swung from one victorious power to the next.

During the time of Roman rule in the Middle East, about 2,000 years ago, an event took place that was to shape human history forever. This momentous event was the birth of Jesus. Born into the home of the carpenter Joseph and his wife Mary, Jesus entered this world quietly. The New Testament Gospels teach us that Mary gave birth to Jesus in Bethlehem, wrapped him in cloth and "laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7).

Jesus grew to manhood in Nazareth, lived and moved among the people of Galilee and Jerusalem. He gained recognition as a teacher, prophet, and performer of miracles. Jesus was crucified, buried and resurrected – giving birth to Christianity. His life and teachings have affected millions of people around the world, changing the course of history. Nowhere else on earth do the events of Jesus' life come alive as here, in Israel, the Holy Land.

For nearly 2,000 years, Christian visitors from all over the world have come to the Holy Land, the land of their spiritual heritage. With Bible in hand, they have walked in the places Jesus walked, and prayed in the places He preached and prayed. For Christians, Israel is a place like no other. It provides them a one-of-a-kind opportunity to experience the land of the Bible, to deepen their faith, and to be spiritually transformed for a lifetime.

This handbook will guide you through the biblical references that connect the Old and New Testaments with the actual cities and landscapes where Judaism and Christianity were born. For centuries, Christian travelers to Israel have been spiritually transformed as they visit the land where the events of the Bible took place. Indeed, Christians return home with a deeper, richer and more committed faith. Once you visit Israel, you will never be the same! Welcome to Israel!

Please Note: In the wake of the peace process, some of the sites mentioned in this booklet have been transferred, or are in the process of being transferred, to the Palestinian Authority's responsibility.



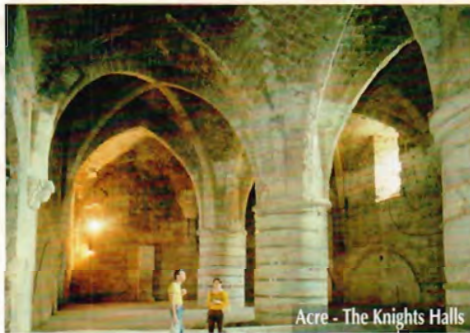
North

Galilee, Upper Galilee, Mount Carmel

Achziv – An important Phoenician port, a fortified city located along the Acre-Antiochus highway. Served as a fortress during the Crusader era. **Today** – Achziv National Park is noted as one of northern Israel's most popular beaches, located 5 km. north of Nahariyya.

Acre (Akko) – As recorded in the New Testament, the apostle Paul visited this city (Acts 21:7). Conquered by the Crusaders in 1104, it was an important and fortified port city during the Crusader era. Following the fall of Jerusalem, it served as the last capital in the Holy Land. In 1291, the city fell to the Mameluke sultan Malek El-Ashraf, who destroyed what he could and buried what remained. Later, Napoleon Bonaparte's march on the east was stopped by the Turks at Acre in 1799.

Today – Acre (Akko) is a town devoted to small industry, commerce, and tourism. It is noted for its seafood restaurants and tours of its ancient ramparts, subterranean Crusader city, and its caravanserais (inns).



Acre - The Knights Halls

Ancient 2,000-Year-Old Boat – This boat sailed the Sea of Galilee during a period of special historical significance. At that time, the shores of the Sea of Galilee were teeming with Jewish settlements. This ancient boat is probably an example of the boats mentioned by the historian Josephus Flavius, who described the marine battle in the town of Migdal that took place during the Great Rebellion of the Jews against the Romans. During that period, the shores of the Sea of Galilee also provided the setting for the deeds of Jesus and his disciples, as recounted in the New Testament (Matthew 7:23-27, Matthew 14:22-25, Luke 5:1-7). The ancient boat is one of several exhibits at the Yigal Alon Museum.

Armageddon – Known in Hebrew as **Megiddo**, a giant fortress and city was built here by King Solomon (1 Kings 9:15). In the New Testament book of Revelation, it is referred to as the site of the "final battle".

Today – You can visit the excavations of Solomon's stables and fortress, as well as an excavation of 26 civilizations superimposed upon one another.

Armageddon (Megiddo)



Belvoir – Known today as Kochav Ha Yarden (Star of the Jordan), this Crusader castle was set on a high mountain south of the Sea of Galilee with a magical view of the Galilee, hence its name, meaning "beautiful view".

Today – As one of Israel's national parks, the ruins of Belvoir are easily accessible by car.

Belvoir



Sea of Galilee



Bethsaida (“The House of the Fisherman”) – The place where Jesus was active as a preacher and healer. This is the location of the homes of Jesus’ followers Peter, Philip, and Andrew, as well as the location where Jesus healed the blind man (Matthew 11:21, Luke 10:13, John 1).

Today – You can see excavations of the city Jesus often visited and knew well.



Bet She'an – the Roman Theater

Bet She'an – An ancient city with a glorious past. King Saul and his sons, who lost the battle against the Philistines at nearby Mount Gilboa, were hung from Bet She'an's city walls (1 Samuel 31). During the Greco-Roman period, the city was known as Scythopolis. Its zenith was achieved during the Roman period, when it was one of ten major cities (the Decapolis) in the Levant. During the Byzantine period, Bet She'an served as the capital of Palestina Secunda. During the eighth century AD, the city was destroyed by a powerful earthquake.

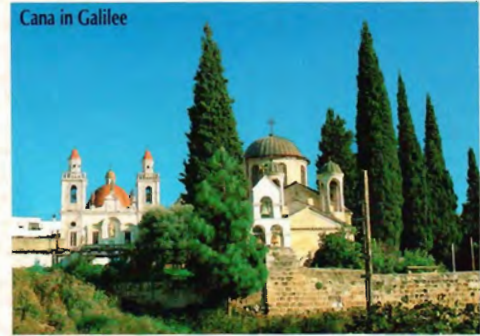
Today – Bet She'an is one of Israel's most prominent archeological sites, with a major Roman theater, the Roman-Byzantine Cardo (main street), giant columns, shops, mosaics, and a yet-to-be-excavated tel (excavation mound). There are also remains of a Byzantine church with an impressive mosaic floor.

Caesarea Philippi (Banias) – Named for the Greek god Pan, Pnias (or Banias in Arabic) was built as Caesarea Philippi by Philip, son of Herod, at one of the sources of the Jordan River. Jesus visited this site together with the disciples (Matthew 16:13-23, Mark 8:27).

Today – Banias is part of a national park full of loudly running tributaries and pistachio trees. See the remains of the Greek shrine to Pan, and swim near one of Israel's most beautiful waterfalls.

Cana in Galilee – This was the site of Jesus' first miracle – the transformation of water into wine at the Wedding Feast – and a later miracle of healing (John 2:1-11, 4:46-54).

Today – See the Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches, as well as the cupola dedicated to the messenger, Bartholomew [Nathaniel] (John 21:2).



Chorazin – An important Jewish town from the time of the Second Temple located north of Capernaum. Chorazin was rebuked by Jesus for its lack of faith (Matthew 11:2, Luke 10:13).

Today – Chorazin is the home of one of Galilee's most intact ancient synagogues.



Capernaum – Located on the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum was the center of Jesus' Galilee ministry. Jesus lived here for a substantial period, healing the sick, preaching in the synagogue, and performing miracles (Matthew 4:13, 9:1).



Capernaum

Today – Capernaum is the location of Israel’s best preserved third/fourth-century marble synagogue. The new, stressed-concrete Roman Catholic Church of St. Peter is spread-eagled atop the excavations of the town Jesus once lived in. It contrasts with the dark volcanic stones of the Franciscan Monastery and the white walls and red domes of the Greek Orthodox Church.

Carmel (Mount) – Mount Carmel is associated with the prophets Elijah and Elisha (1 and 2 Kings). A Christian holy site based on the story of the prophet Elijah and the miracles he performed atop the mountain, it is thought to be the original site of Catholicism’s Carmelite Sect.

Today – The city of Haifa sweeps up the slopes of Mount Carmel. It is home to museums and multiple cultural and educational institutions. Haifa is Israel’s third-largest city and most important port. No visit to Haifa is complete without touring the restored Templar Colony, Elijah’s Cave, the Stella Maris Church and Monastery (referred to as “Schola Prophetarum”), the Muhraka (Carmelite monastery at the site of the struggle between the priests of Ba’al and the prophet Elijah [1 Kings 18:14-17]), the Technion (Israel’s equivalent of M.I.T.), and the Museum of “Illegal” Immigration.

Dobrath – Known today as Daburiya, this was a town of Zebulun (Joshua 19:12) and the place where Jesus cured the epileptic boy (Luke 9:37-43).



Mount Tabor - Daburiya

Domus Galilae – Adjacent to the Christian holy places situated near the Sea of Galilee, above the Mount of Beatitudes, is a learning center that was built for seminary students, priests, and Christian believers in general, for studying and deepening their ties with Jewish tradition as the source of Christianity. The site is built on three levels: The highest is a convention center housing a unique library, an abbey, and assembly halls for fulfilling the center’s educational goals. The next two levels are designed to provide living accommodations for both students and visiting pilgrims.

En-Dor – Near Mount Tabor, home of the medium (witch) of En-Dor (1 Samuel 28:7-25).

Today – The modern Kibbutz Ein Dor has a fascinating archeological museum of Roman artifacts discovered in the region, and a memorial to the members of the kibbutz killed in war.



Arbel Cliff & Sea of Galilee

Galilee (Sea of) – Also known as the **Lake of Gennesaret, Lake Tiberias, and Lake Kinneret**. The Sea of Galilee is a comparatively small lake fed by the Jordan River and situated 220 meters or 655 feet below sea level. Violent storms rush down from surrounding mountains causing rough water on the sea. Here Jesus rebuked the winds and the sea (Matthew 8:26), taught from Peter’s boat (Mark 3:7-9), performed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes (Luke 5:1-11), calmed the storm (Matthew 8:23-27), and walked on water (Matthew 14:22-23, Mark 6:45). The lake’s northern shore – stretching from Mount Arbel to Hyppos – is known as the Evangelic Arch (Matthew 4:15).

Today – The Sea of Galilee is one of Israel’s four seas and, in addition to being a repository of dozens of Christian holy sites, is a vacation paradise for Israelis and tourists. The largest city on the lake is Tiberias, one of the four holy cities of Judaism, and the beaches and villages surrounding the lake are a haven for tourists. In addition to visiting the seaside shrines, Christian visitors can also enjoy sailing in fishing boats across the waters.



Sea of Galilee

Gilboa (Mount) – Battle of Saul (1 Samuel 28:4). Canticle of David on Saul and Jonathan (2 Samuel 1:17-24).

Today – The base of Mount Gilboa is one of Israel's most tranquil spots – Gan HaShlosHa-Sachne – whose gardens and pools were voted by *TIME* magazine as one of the 20 most beautiful spots on earth.

Ginossar – Nof Ginossar is a kibbutz on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. Not mentioned in the Bible, Ginossar is home of the Yigal Alon Museum that houses a 2,000-year-old fishing boat discovered in the Galilee mud during the drought of 1986 and removed from the water for restoration. It is certainly an authentic Sea of Galilee fishing boat from the time of Jesus.



Hazor – Joshua captured and burned this city (Joshua 11:10-14). Hazor also played a part in the lives of Deborah and Barak (Judges 4:2), and was rebuilt by Solomon in the tenth century BC (1 Kings 9:15).

Today – The multilayered tel (excavation mound) of Hazor is a fascinating site, allowing visitors to look at more than five millennia of layers of civilization.

Horns of Hittin – This valley separated by two sharp hills was the site of battles between the Crusaders and Saladin in 1187. The Crusaders' defeat in this battle brought about the collapse and destruction of the first Crusader kingdom.

Hypos – Known today as **Susita**, Hypos, like Bet She'an, was one of ten Greco-Roman cities known as the Decapolis. Located atop the Golan Heights with a panorama of the Sea of Galilee, this area is mentioned in the miracle of the swine (Matthew 5:14). This area may have been one of the world's first Christian metropolitan communities.

Jezreel Valley – A fertile valley noted repeatedly in the Old Testament (Joshua, Judges, and 1 Samuel) and later referred to as the Valley of Armageddon in the New Testament (Revelation 16:16).

Today – This is one of Israel's loveliest regions. The Jezreel Valley is lush with farms, villages, pastures, and meadows, and is known as "Israel's breadbasket."



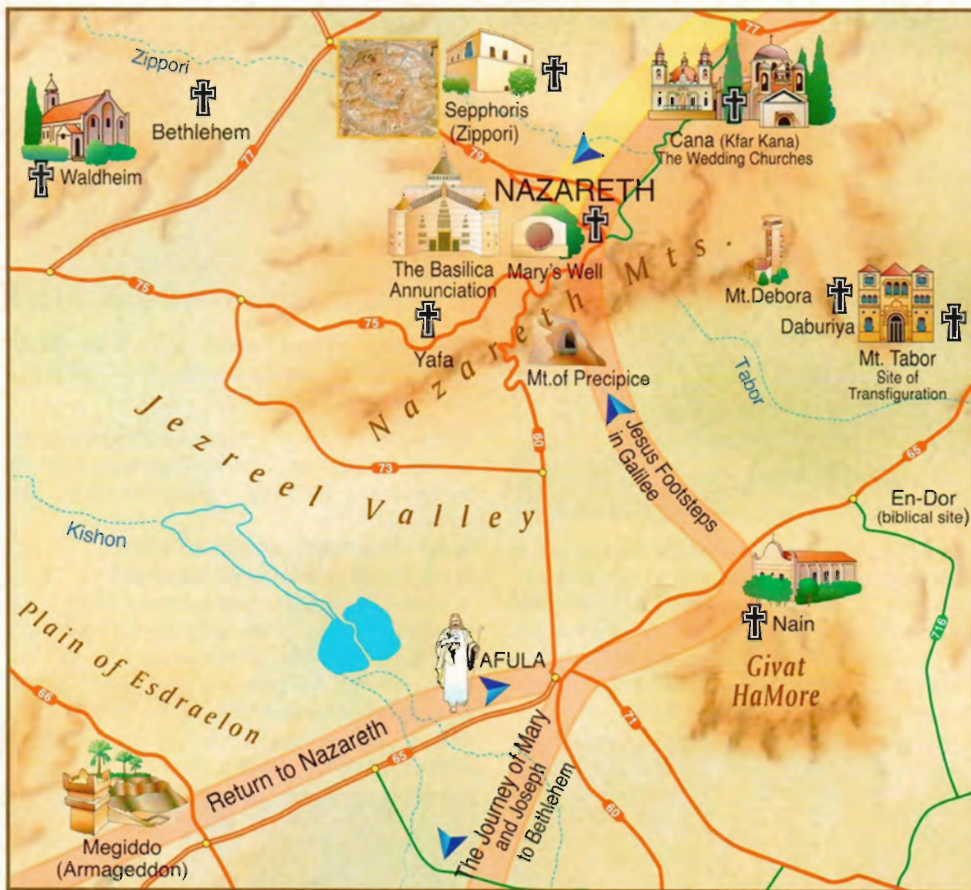
Jordan River – Israel's most important river, the Jordan River joins the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Jesus was baptized in the river by John the Baptist near Jericho (Mark 1:9-11).

Today – Many Christian visitors to Israel are baptized in the Jordan River at Kibbutz Kinneret (Yardenit), where the Jordan flows south out of the Sea of Galilee. In upper Galilee, the Jordan River is ideal for whitewater rafting (spring) and kayaking (summer and fall). The original baptismal site Kasr Al-Yahud near Jericho is accessible to visitors, reservation in advance.



Kaalat Nimrod – This Crusader castle on the Golan slopes was conquered by the Mamelukes.

Today – One of Israel's national parks, Kaalat Nimrod (Nimrod's Castle) is one of Israel's most impressive and accessible Crusader remains.



Nazareth - General view



Kishon River – This river at the foot of Mount Carmel is mentioned in the Song of Deborah (Judges 5:21) and also in the verse “Elijah led them to the river Kishon” (1Kings 18:40).



Kursi – Identified as the site of the miracle of the swine (Matthew 8:28-34, Mark 5:1, Luke 8:26-33). Nearby is Tel Hadar, where Jesus fed the 4,000 (Matthew 15:29-34). During the Byzantine era, this site was known as Dodecathronon (Twelve Seats). **Today** – Kursi is a national park including a chapel and monastery from the sixth century.



Magdala – Known today as Migdal, this was the birthplace and home of Mary Magdalene (Luke 8:1-2), the woman who was healed by Jesus and became one of his followers. She was a witness to the resurrection (John 20:1).

The Mount of Beatitudes – This hill at the northwestern point of the Sea of Galilee is where Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-8). With its view toward Capernaum and Tabgha, the hill is shaped with a hollow that serves as a natural amphitheater, amplifying the speaker’s voice. **Today** – The flower-filled gardens of the Mount of Beatitudes are a treat for visitors. The Italian government funded the construction of the black-domed Church of the Beatitudes in 1937.



Nain (near Mount Tabor) – This is the village where Jesus brought back to life “the dead son of the widow” (Luke 8:11-18).

Nazareth – The city of Nazareth is located in the heart of an undulating valley, where Jesus spent his boyhood and lived with Joseph and Mary (Luke 1:26-38).

Today – Visitors typically concentrate on the Basilica of the Annunciation – consecrated by Pope Paul VI in 1964 – recalling the announcement of the Angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary of the approaching virgin birth (Luke 1:26-38); as well as the Church of St. Gabriel; Mary’s Well; the Synagogue Church, where Jesus preached commentaries on the Book of Isaiah (Luke 4:16-30); and the site where a crowd attempted to throw Jesus over a cliff (Luke 4:29).



Sepphoris – Known in Hebrew as Zippori, Sepphoris was a major second/third-century city that was also home of Joachim and Anna, and the birthplace of Mary. Located here is the Franciscan Church of St. Anna, dedicated to the mother of the Virgin Mary (Luke 13:32).

Today – The excavations at Zippori National Park have uncovered a large city, in the midst of which archeologists have found some of the most magnificent mosaics ever discovered in Israel, including one known as “The Mona Lisa of Israel.”



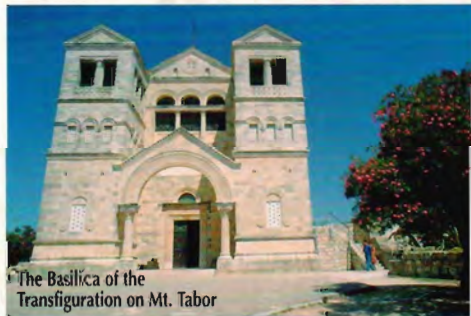
Sephoris



Tabgha – This site is the traditional location of the miracle of the loaves and the fishes, and the post-resurrection appearance of Jesus

(Matthew 14:14-21, Matthew 16:18-19, Mark 6:34-44, John 21:15-19). An early Byzantine church was discovered in 1932 and rebuilt in 1982 as the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes. Mosaics were also discovered, including a view of marshes and water birds, and a basket with loaves of bread and two fishes.

Today – Located at the foot of the Mount of Beatitudes, visitors to Tabgha can see the Church of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes, the Church of St. Peter's Primacy, and the Octagon Pool.



The Basilica of the Transfiguration on Mt. Tabor

Tabor (Mount) – This is a prominent hill southwest of the Sea of Galilee, with very few foothills. It was at the foot of Mount Tabor that Deborah and Barak defeated the forces of Sisera. Mount Tabor is believed to possibly be “the high mountain” Jesus ascended and before the eyes of Peter, James, and John underwent the Transfiguration. Afterward, he was seen conversing with Moses and the prophet Elijah (Matthew 17:6-13, Mark 9:2-8, Luke 9:28-36).

Today – A snaking road leads through pine forests to the summit of the mountain and the Roman Catholic Church of the Transfiguration and adjacent monastery. The views from the summit, north to Nazareth and east to the Sea of Galilee, are astonishing.

Tel Hadar (on the Sea of Galilee) – Near Tabgha, on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus fed 5,000 people (Matthew 14). Later, on the eastern shore, on a hill called “Dodecathronon” (today known as Tel Hadar), Jesus performed the second miracle of feeding the multitudes. This time he fed 4,000 (Matthew 15). Tel Hadar is situated a few kilometers south of Bethsaida, home of several of Jesus’ disciples, and a little north of Kursi, where Jesus performed the miracle of the swine.

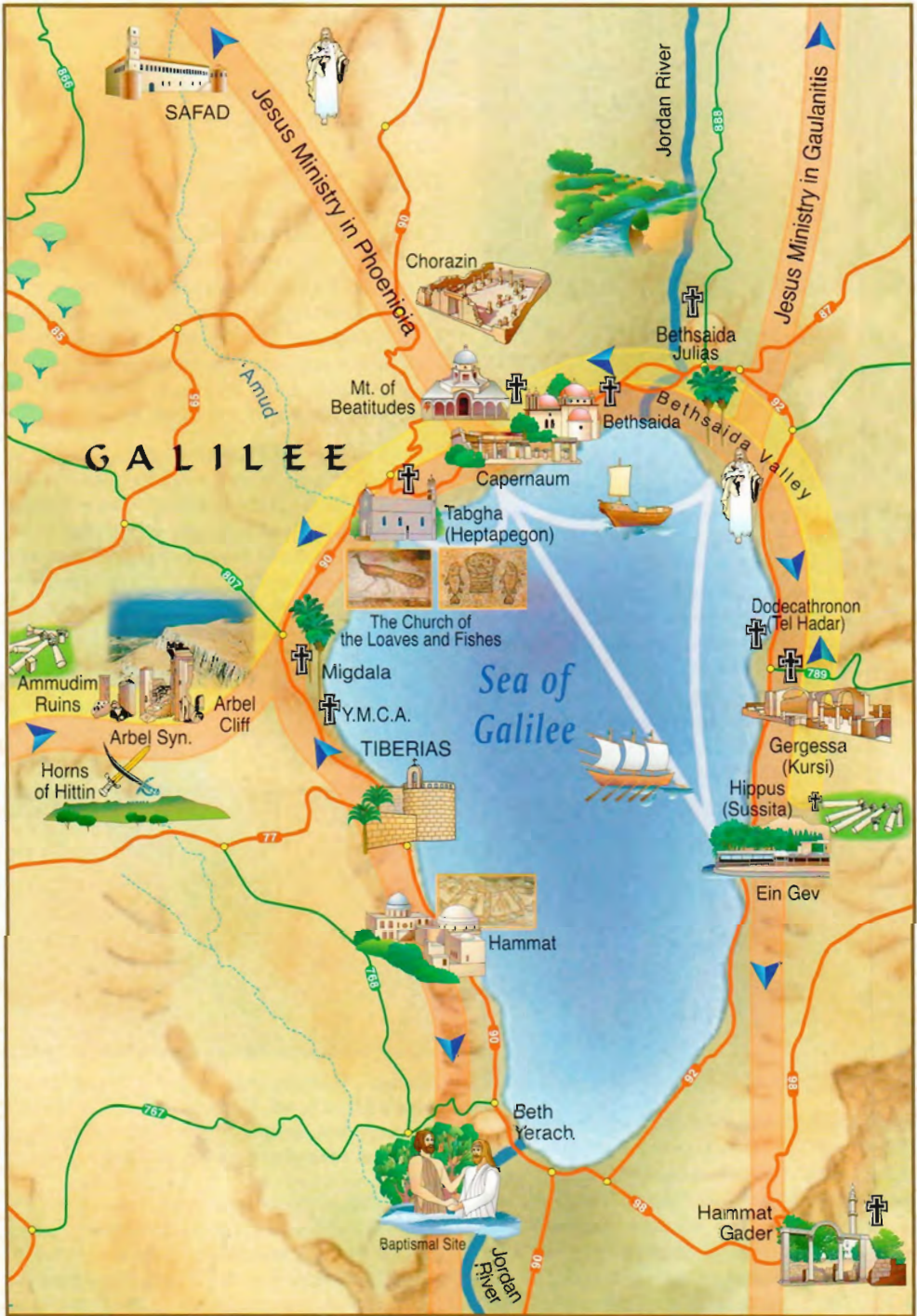
The Mount of the Precipice – Mount Kedumim is known in Christian tradition as the Mount of the Precipice (Jabel Kafza in Arabic). The mountain stands out in the landscape, with its southern slope forming a vertical cliff above the Kesulot Valley and the Jezreel Valley. Following Christ’s sermon at the synagogue in which he interpreted the laws of the book of Isaiah, he was removed from the city with the intention of casting him off a high rock (Luke 4:16-30). The Mount of the Precipice is believed to be the place from which Jesus escaped the persecutors who desired to cast him from the high place and kill him.



Tiberias Wall

Tiberias – This spa town was built by Herod Antipas (John 6:23) to honor Tiberius Caesar. After the fall of Jerusalem, it became a center of Jewish learning and is considered one of the four Holy Cities of Judaism.

Today – This is the most important town on the Sea of Galilee, from which boats sail to Capernaum and Ein Gev on the eastern shore. Tiberias is visited by most Christian visitors to Galilee. Many visit the Tiberias hot springs and the first-century mosaics at Hammat Tiberias.





Central The Mediterranean, Plain of Sharon, Judea & Samaria

Abu Ghosh – Here in ancient Kiriath Yearim, the Ark of the Covenant rested for 20 years before being brought by King David to Jerusalem, 15 miles to the east. The Benedictine Monastery of the Ark recalls the site. The Church of Notre Dame, built in 1142, is one of the most beautiful Crusader structures in Israel.

Today – Abu Ghosh is a prosperous Arab town and a popular excursion for residents of Jerusalem who are attracted to its Middle Eastern restaurants. Choral and classical concerts are given regularly in the village churches.

Ancient Yearim



Aphek (Antipatris) – This city is known today as **Afek**. The Philistines captured the Ark of the Covenant at Aphek (1 Sam 4:1-11). Paul was brought to Antipatris on his way to Caesarea for trial (Acts 23:31). The city was built by Herod in honor of his father Antipatris.

Anathoth – The birthplace of Jeremiah the prophet (Jeremiah 1:1), this city is known today as Anata.

Ashdod – This is one of the five Philistine cities. Philip the Evangelist baptized an Ethiopian near here (Acts 8:26-40).

Today – Ashdod is Israel's second-largest port. Many cruise ships stop here for day tours to Jerusalem.

Ashkelon – This is one of the five Philistine cities. King Herod decorated the city with fountains and

National Park - Ashkelon



bath houses. During the Arabic period, the development of the city continued. The city was destroyed to its foundations by the Mamelukes in 1270.

Today – The modern Mediterranean resort town of Ashkelon is known for its parks and archeological treasures.

Atlit – This is the Crusader port of Chateau de Pellerin (1217-1291).

Today – The beaches of Atlit are superb. A fascinating place to visit is the British internment camp created after World War II to detain Jewish refugees from the Holocaust seeking entry to Palestine.

Bethel – Meaning "House of God," this is where Jacob dreamed of the ladder reaching into heaven (Genesis 28:19). The Ark of the Covenant remained at Bethel at various times (Genesis 31:13, Judges 21:19, 1 Kings 13:11, 2 Kings 2:2). Today, Bethel is a community of 3,500 people, twenty miles north of Jerusalem.

Bet Sahur* – This village between Jerusalem and Bethlehem is the traditional site of the Shepherds' Fields of the Nativity story (Luke 2:8-21).



The Silver Star



Bethlehem

Bethlehem* – Translated as "House of Bread" (Hebrew) or "House of Meat" (Arabic), Bethlehem was where Jacob's beloved wife, Rachel, died giving birth to Benjamin (Genesis 35:18-19, 48:7). It is the birthplace of King David and site of his anointing by Samuel (1 Samuel 16:1). It is also the birthplace of Jesus of Nazareth (Matthew 2:1, Luke 2:4). Just

* Site under Palestinian Authority's responsibility.

south of Bethlehem are the Pools of Solomon, which have provided water for Jerusalem for three millennia (Song of Songs 4:12).

Today – A visit to Bethlehem should include the Basilica of the Nativity, the Church of the Nativity, the Chapel of the Milk Grotto, the Shepherds' Fields (in nearby Bet Sahur), and Rachel's Tomb.

Ekron – The Ark of the Covenant was placed on a cart and driven to Bet Shemesh (1 Samuel 6:16).

Gerizim (Mount) and Ebal (Mount) – Israel assembled on Gerizim and Ebal (Joshua 8:33). They pronounced the blessing of God on Mount Gerizim and the curse of God on Mount Ebal (Deuteronomy 11:29-30).

Gezer – This city was destroyed by Pharaoh and given as a wedding gift to his daughter, Solomon's wife. Solomon rebuilt Gezer (1 Kings 9:16-17).

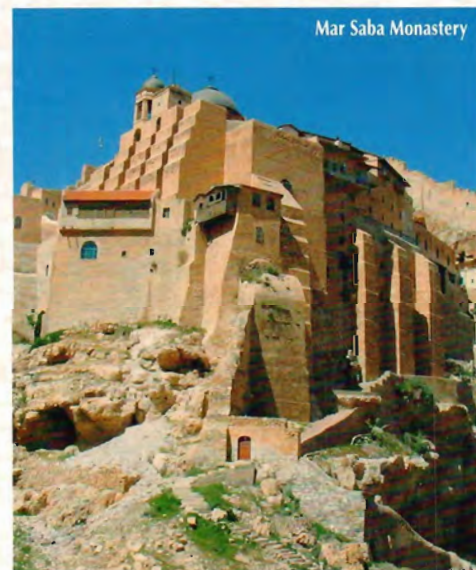


Jaffa (Joppa) – Traditionally believed to have been founded by Japheth, son of Noah, Jaffa is one of the oldest towns in Israel. Cedars of Lebanon sent by King Hiram of Tyre and destined for Solomon's Temple were unloaded at Jaffa (2 Chronicles 2:15), and Jonah embarked for Tarshish from Jaffa (Jonah 1:3-17). Peter was there, in the home of Simon the Tanner, where he prophesied the vision of the pure and impure animals (Acts 10:5), and where he brought Tabitha back from the dead (Acts 9:36-42).

Today – Jaffa is part of the metropolis of Tel Aviv-Jaffa, center of Israel's largest metropolitan area that is home to some three million Israelis. In Jaffa, visit St. Peter's Church, the House of Simon the Tanner, and the archeological discoveries in Kedumim Square.



Jericho* – This city vies with Damascus as "the oldest city on earth." It was the first town conquered by the returning children of Israel under Joshua (Joshua 4:5-6). It was also important to prophets Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:18-22). Near Jericho, the Monastery of St. John (Kasr El-Yahud) recalls the site where Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist. **Today** – Visit the monasteries surrounding Jericho, Elisha's Church, and the archeological tel of ancient Jericho.



Judean Desert – During the Byzantine period, the concept of penitence in monasteries became very popular, resulting in the construction of several monasteries that operate to this day.

* Site under Palestinian Authority's responsibility.

The monasteries of **St. Theodosius**, **Mar Saba**, **St. George's** in **Wadi Kelt**, and the **Qarantal** in the area of Jericho, can all be seen, and the "modern" Inn of the Good Samaritan between Jericho and Jerusalem (Luke 10:30-37) can be visited.

John the Baptist's Cave – This cave from the Byzantine era situated near kibbutz Zova was named for the wall engravings identified with John the Baptist and his symbols.

The cave served as an underground reservoir used for baptism and other ritual ceremonies conducted by John the Baptist and his followers at the beginning of the first century.

Ramleh – Ramleh's Catholic Church is dedicated to Joseph of Aramathea and Nicodemus, who arranged for the burial of Jesus following the crucifixion (John 19:38-39).

Today – See the Hospice of Nicodemus, the fourteenth century Tower of Ramleh, the White Mosque, and the Pool of St. Helena.

Samaria (Sebastiye) – Founded as capital of Israel by King Omri in 876 BC (1 Kings 16:23-25), Samaria was taken by the Assyrians (2 Kings 17:5-6). The prophet Micah foretold Samaria's impending destruction (Micah 1:6); Philip preached in the city (Acts 8:5); and Peter and John came to the city (Acts 8:14). Samaria may have been the site of John the Baptist's execution and Salome's dance (other possibilities include Herodion in Judea, and Macchaeus in modern-day Jordan).

Today – The remains of the giant, second-century city of Sebastiyeh include the Roman Forum, theater, acropolis, and Temple of Augustus. The Byzantine Church of John the Baptist and nearby Mosque of Nabi Yaha (Tomb of John the Baptist) both support the theory that Samaria was the place of John the Baptist's murder.

Sharon (Plain & Valley of) – This is the fertile valley and pastureland often referenced in the Bible (1 Chronicles 5:16; 27:29; Isaiah: 33:9; 35:2; 65:10).

Today – The drive from Tel Aviv and Ben Gurion International Airport to Jerusalem passes through the Plain of Sharon and the Valley of Ayalon, where Joshua bade the sun stand still (Joshua 10:12-13).

Shechem* – Present-day Nablus, this was originally Roman Neapolis or Naples, and the site of the Tomb of Joseph. Abraham passed through Shechem coming from Ur (Genesis 12:6); Jacob bought a "parcel of land" at Jacob's Well (Genesis 33:19); Joshua renewed the covenant with God (Joshua 24); The Samaritans originated here (2 Kings 17:24-41); and Jesus talked with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's Well (John 4:7-11).

Today – See the Canaanite city walls, El BIRTH Temple (where Joshua renewed the covenant), Jacob's Well, the Crusader Church, and the Tomb of Joseph.

Yavne (libneh) – This was a trading post on the Roman road called the Via Maris. It became a center of Jewish learning after the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD.



Shiloh – An ancient city on Mt. Samaria between Ramallah and Nablus, north of Jerusalem. A religious center, sacred to the Tribes of Israel and the Tent of Meeting after the conquest of the land. (Joshua 18:1).

The dwelling place of Eli the Priest, in the time of the Judges; a center of ritual and spiritual leadership and a place of assembly for religious ceremonies. "If the daughters of Shiloh come out to dance, catch you every man his wife from the dancers and go to the land of Benjamin" (Judges 21:19-23).

* Site under Palestinian Authority's responsibility.

Jerusalem



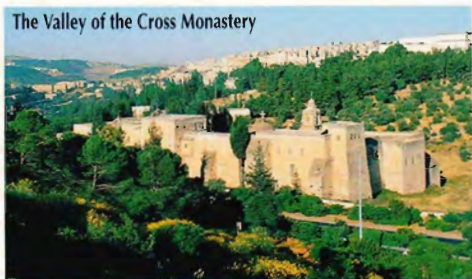
General View



Focal Point of Judaism and Christianity, also considered holy by Islam.

- Proclaimed capital of Israel by David 996 BC.
- Site of the First Temple, built by Solomon and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC, then rebuilt by Nehemiah in 445 BC.
- About 40 years before the birth of Jesus, Herod expanded and beautified the Second Temple.
- Jesus' ministry in Jerusalem was marked by: miracles at Bethesda and Bethany; clashes with the Pharisees; a triumphal entry to the city during what became known as Palm Sunday; conducted the "Last Supper" (Passover Seder) on Moun Zion; spent the night in the Garden of Gethsemane; the arrest, trial, condemnation; and the Way of the Cross (Via Dolorosa) to Calvary or Golgotha.
- The Temple was destroyed by the Romans in the year 70 AD. The only remnant of the Temple after the Roman destruction was the western retaining wall of the Temple's supporting platform. In subsequent centuries, this wall became the focus of Jewish pilgrimage and mourning. Today, considered Judaism's holiest shrine, it is known simply as "The Western Wall."
- In 135 AD, after the Bar Kochba revolt, the Romans razed what remained of Jerusalem and renamed the city Aelia Capitolina.
- After the Roman Empire adopted Christianity in the fourth century, Queen Helena, mother of Byzantine Emperor Constantine, visited Jerusalem; identified sites associated with Jesus' life; and ordered the building of churches such as the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.
- Jerusalem was conquered in 632 by Moslems who built the Dome of the Rock over the site of the Temple.
- Jerusalem was stormed by Crusaders in 1099, reclaimed by Saladin in 1187 and fell under Mameluke, then Ottoman Turkish rule.
- The present Old City walls were built by Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in the 16th century.
- Jerusalem was occupied by Britain in 1917.
- The State of Israel was declared in 1948, and Jerusalem was declared the capital in 1949.
- For 19 years, Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan, with Jews and Israelis of all faiths prohibited from visiting their holy places.
- Jerusalem was reunified in 1967 and rededicated as the eternal capital of the Jewish people, with freedom of worship and tourism for all religions.

The Valley of the Cross Monastery



Jerusalem – Biblical References

- ★ On the northern border of the tribe of Judah (Jebusites) (Joshua 15:8).
- ★ Melchizedek, King of Salem (Genesis 14:18).
- ★ Conquest by David (2 Samuel 5:1-12).
- ★ Religious and political capital of the Kingdom of Israel (1 Kings 3:1, 7:1-12, 12:41-43; 2 Samuel 6:1-23).
- ★ Jerusalem Psalms: 26, 41, 42, 48, 75, 84, 87, 95, 125, 127, 133, 134, 137, 146, 147, 150.
- ★ Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar in 587 BC (2 Kings 25).
- ★ Rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah (Nehemiah 3).
- ★ Jesus foretold destruction of Jerusalem (Luke 21:20).
- ★ Jerusalem represented the Chosen People (Ezekiel 23, Isaiah 62).
- ★ The Holy City (Nehemiah 11:1).
- ★ Meeting place of the nations (Isaiah 2:1-5, 60).
- ★ Vision of the New Jerusalem (Isaiah 54:11-17, 62).
- ★ The Holy City, the New Jerusalem at the end of time (Revelation 21:2).



The Cardo

Jerusalem – The Holy City for Christians

The New Testament tells of Jesus' frequent visits to Jerusalem, including the final week commencing with the triumphal entry on what is now Palm Sunday, and the crucifixion and resurrection at what is now Easter or Resurrection Sunday.

It was here in Jerusalem that Jesus and the disciples celebrated the Passover Seder meal atop Mount Zion (the Last Supper). Here in Gethsemane, at the base of the Mount of Olives, Jesus spent the night before his arrest by the Romans. Jesus was tried in Jerusalem by Pontius Pilate and condemned to die on the cross, the standard form of Roman execution. Here, Jesus was crucified and hurriedly buried before the onset of the Sabbath. When the family of Jesus returned to the tomb after the Sabbath, they discovered it empty ... and it was 40 days later, from atop Jerusalem's Mount of Olives, that Jesus is believed to have risen to heaven. In addition to locations related to the life of Jesus, holy sites in Jerusalem are connected with the lives of Mary and the disciples. It was in Jerusalem that the world's first Christian community was established.



Gethsemane

Jerusalem: The Mount of Olives

- David left Jerusalem trying to flee from Absalom (2 Samuel 15:30-32).
- Solomon built a palace on the hill near Jerusalem (1 Kings 11:7-8).
- The Glory of the Lord stood upon the mountain that is on the east side of the City (Ezekiel 11:23).
- Jesus entered Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-16).
- The agony of Jesus in Gethsemane (Matthew 26:30-56).
- The ascension of Jesus (Luke 24:50, Acts 1:4-12).
- Jesus prophesied the destruction of the Temple (Mark 13:3).
- "Jesus went to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed ..." (Luke 22:39).
- The appearance of Jesus and the fulfillment of the prophecies (Ezekiel 11:23, Zechariah 14:4).
- The peak of the Mount of Olives from which Jesus rose to heaven (Luke 24:50-51).
- The place of Ascension Church (Luke 21:37).
- Pater Noster Church (Eleona).

Today – See the Panorama of Jerusalem from the summit: the Church of All Nations (Basilica of Agony), the Garden of Gethsemane, the Church of Mary Magdalene, the Tomb of the Virgin Mary, the Church of Dominus Flevit (Our Lord Weeping), and the world's holiest Jewish Cemetery.

Jerusalem: Bethphage



- ★ Palm procession during the triumphal entry of Jesus to Jerusalem (Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:29-40, John 12:12-16).
- ★ At the edge of the Mount of Olives (John 11:1-45).
- ★ Bethany (Mark 11:1-8) was the site of the miracle of restoring life to Lazarus, brother of Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42).
- ★ Features the cave where Lazarus is buried and the Bethphage Church.

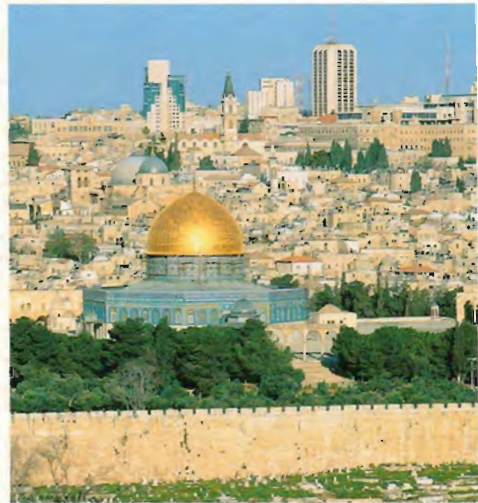
Today – See the Temple Mount, the Western Wall, the Hulda Steps, the Dome of the Rock, and the Western Wall Tunnels.

Jerusalem: Mount Zion



- ★ King David's Tomb.
- ★ The Last Supper (Matthew 26:26-35; Luke 2: 11-47, 22:7-38).
- ★ Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).
- ★ Denial of Peter (Mark 14:72, John 18:15-27).

Today – See King David's tomb, Cenacle (the Room of the Last Supper), the Crypt of the Dormition Church (the church is built on the site where Mary, mother of Jesus, is believed to have fallen into eternal sleep), and Lutheran Cemetery (including grave of Oscar Schindler).



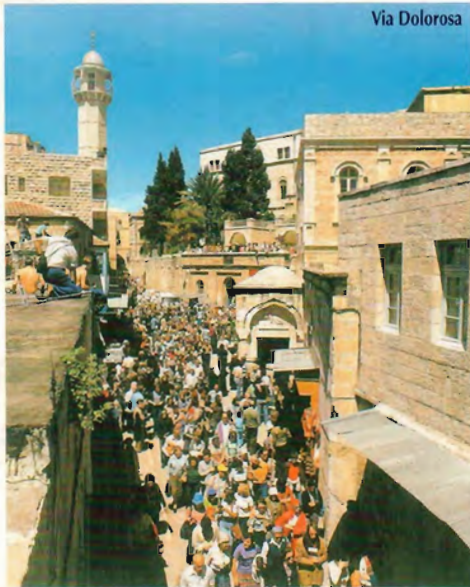
Jerusalem: Mount Moriah (The Temple Mount)

- ★ Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac (Genesis 22:2).
- ★ David desired to build a house for God (2 Samuel 7:1-17).
- ★ Construction of the Temple of Solomon (1 Kings 5, 6).
- ★ Dedication of the Temple (1 Kings 8).
- ★ Vision of the prophet Isaiah in the Temple (Isaiah 6:108).
- ★ "This is the Temple of the Eternal" (Jeremiah 7:1-15).
- ★ The book of the Law found in the Temple (2 Kings 22).
- ★ Destruction of the Temple by Nebuchadnezzar (2 Kings 25).
- ★ Vision of the future Temple (Ezekiel 40, 44).
- ★ Reconstruction and dedication of the Temple (Ezra 4, 6).
- ★ The birth and annunciation of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25).
- ★ Presentation of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2:22-38).
- ★ Jesus astonishing the rabbis in the Temple (Luke 2: 40-47).
- ★ Pinnacle of the temple – temptation of Jesus (Luke 4:9-13).
- ★ Expulsion of the moneychangers from the Temple (Matt 21:12-17).
- ★ Jesus teaches (John 7:14-53).

Today – Jewish Cemetery, the churches and convents on Mount of Olives, and Rehavam Observation Point.

Jerusalem: The Via Dolorosa (Way of the Cross)

This is the mile-long route through the Old City of Jerusalem, leading from the Antonia Fortress, where Jesus was condemned by Pontius Pilate, to Golgotha (Calvary), the place of the crucifixion. The Via Dolorosa (Way of the Cross) is marked by 14 Stations. At each Station there is a chapel or marker depicting an incident in Jesus' final mortal journey. The traditional site of Golgotha-Calvary is the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Some Christian denominations consider the Garden Tomb, outside the current Old City walls, to be the true site of Golgotha-Calvary (Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19).



1st Station

Antonia Fortress: Pilate condemns Jesus.

2nd Station

The Chapel of the Condemnation (Lithostratos): Jesus takes up the cross.

3rd Station

Jesus falls under the cross for the first time.

4th Station

Jesus meets his mother.

5th Station

Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus carry the cross.

6th Station

A Jerusalem woman wipes Jesus' face, and the cloth takes up the image of Jesus' face. Vera Nika in Greek means "true image," thus the woman becomes known as "Veronica."

7th Station

Jesus falls for the second time.

8th Station

Jesus consoles the women of Jerusalem.

9th Station

Jesus falls for the third time.

10th Station*

Jesus is stripped of His garments.

11th Station*

Jesus is nailed to the cross.

12th Station*

Jesus expires on the cross.

13th Station*

Jesus' body is taken from the cross and washed (the Stone of Unction).

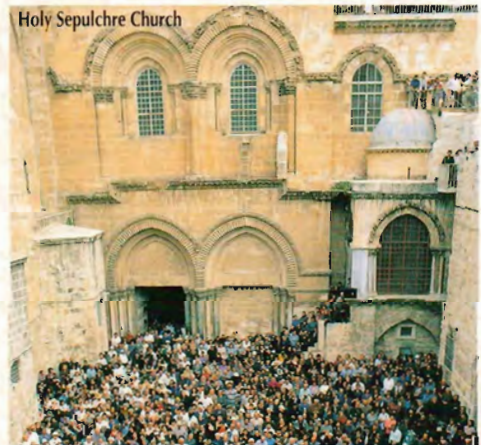
14th Station*

Jesus' body is laid in the Tomb of Joseph of Aramathea.

* The last five stations are within the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

Today –

- Sisters of Zion Convent (The Antonia Fortress)
- Lithostratos
- The Stations of the Cross
- The Church of the Holy Sepulcher
- The Garden Tomb
- The bazaars and markets of Jerusalem's Old City



Jerusalem: Additional Sites of Interest by Neighborhood.

Today –

The Old City

Old City Christian Quarter:

- Latin Patriarchate
- Patriarchate St. Savior Church
- St. John the Baptist Church
- Church of the Redeemer

Old City Muslim Quarter:

- Lions (St. Stephen's) Gate
- St. Anne's Church, St. Anne's Monastery, Bethesda



Old City Armenian Quarter:

- St. James Cathedral
- Armenian Orthodox Monastery
- Christ Church
- Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem

Old City Jewish Quarter:

- The Herodian Mansions
- First Temple Model
- The Hulda Steps
- The Southern Wall
- HaOphel Archeological Garden
- Davidson Center

Just Outside the Old City Walls

- The Garden Tomb
- The Church of St. Peter in Gallicantu
- The City of David
- Pool of Siloam (Silman)
- End of Hezekiah's tunnel (Isaiah 8:6)
- Location of the healing of the man born blind (John 9)

New City

The Valley of the Cross

- Monastery of the Cross (built on the site regarded as the place from which the tree was cut for the cross of Jesus)

Russian Compound

- Cathedral of the Holy Trinity

St. Simeon's Monastery

- Church built on the traditional site of the house of Simeon (Luke 11:30)

The Israel Museum – Shrine Of The Book (home of the Dead Sea Scrolls)

The Biblical Archeology Museum

Yad Vashem (Israel's National Monument, Memorial, and Museum of the Holocaust)

The Holyland Model (Giant scale model of Jerusalem at the time of Jesus) - The Israel Museum

Mar Elias Monastery

- The site of Elijah's flight from Jezebel

Kathisma

- Newly discovered remains of a giant fourth-century church that recalls the spot where Mary rested en route to Bethlehem

Russian Compound



Ein Karem

- Traditional birthplace of John the Baptist, son of Zacharias and Elizabeth, first cousin of Jesus
- St. John's Church, including the cave that is believed to have been the home of Zacharias and Elizabeth (Luke 1:5)
- Russian Visitation Church (Luke 1:39-56)
- Church and Convent of the Sisters of Zion Monastery of John the Baptist, constructed close to the cave where he lived a life of solitude and penitence (Luke 1:80)





South

The Dead Sea, Negev Desert, the Red Sea

Arad – This is the site of an ancient tel in the northern Negev. It includes remains from the early Canaanite period (Numbers 21:1, Joshua 12:14).

Today – See the archeological tel and visit the city of 50,000 that is known for its dry air and curative atmosphere.

Beersheba – This is a southern border city from the biblical period of settlement in Israel, called Be'er Sheva (seven wells) in memory of the seven wells dug by the servants of Isaac (Genesis 26:33).



Abraham's Well

Today – Beersheba is home to a quarter million Israelis and is considered the capital of the Negev. Visit Ben Gurion University of the Negev and the Thursday Bedouin Market. To the south, Kibbutz Sede Boqer is the home and grave of David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister.



Tel Beersheba

The Dead Sea (Salt Sea) – This is the lowest place on Earth located at 416 meters or 1,365 feet below sea level. It is also the saltiest body of water on Earth with over eight times more salt than the ocean.

Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 13:10-13, 14, 18, 19) are believed to have been situated nearby.

Today – Visitors enjoy floating on the Dead Sea, as well as enjoying one of the many spas.



Dead Sea

Ein Gedi – David hid here when pursued by Saul (1 Samuel 24). Ein Gedi is also the location of a beautiful oasis (Song of Solomon 1:14).

Ezion Geber – The children of Israel camped at Ezion-Geber (Numbers 33, 36).

Today – Ezion Geber is part of the Red Sea resort port of Eilat, visited by thousands of tourists and Israelis annually. Just to the north is Timna Valley Park, the site of King Solomon's Pillars, and the mines that reveal the green Eilat stone related to Malachite.



Masada

Masada – Herod’s magnificent mountaintop palace and fortress, it was the site of the last Jewish stand against the Romans in 73 AD and mass suicide of its 960 defenders. Declared as a world heritage site. **Today** – No visit to Israel is complete without visiting **Masada**, accessible by foot or cable car.

Negev Desert – Part of the desert described in the wanderings of the Children of Israel, including the Wilderness of Zin and the Ramon Crater (Exodus 3:1-15, 19:1, 20, 21-22, Deuteronomy 6:1-13).



Nahal Hever – Scrolls found here are dated from 88-135 AD and describe the Jewish rebellion against the Romans, led by Bar Kochba.

Qumran – This is the area where the Essenes wrote the Dead Sea Scrolls, which were discovered in a cave here in 1947 after 2,000 years.

Today – Travelers enjoy exploring the excavations of Qumran. Also consider visiting **Kibbutz Almog**, with its Museum of the Scrolls.



Touring with a Bible in Hand

Israel Journey Tour - 7 Days

DAY 1

Arrive at the beautiful Ben Gurion Airport outside of Tel Aviv. Visit the nearby Neot Kedumim Biblical Landscape Reserve for a biblical meal and a tour of the site. Or perhaps, visit Mini Israel for a tour of miniatures of Israel's holy sites (either activity may also serve as a finale to the tour). Travel by bus to your hotel in Tel Aviv or Netanya, located on the Mediterranean Sea.

DAY 2

Your journey begins at Jaffa (biblical Joppa), the ancient seaport from which the Prophet Jonah fled from God (Jonah 1:17) and the city where Peter stayed with Simon the Tanner and restored Tabitha to life (Acts 9:36-43). Then you will drive north along the Mediterranean coast to Caesarea, the great Roman port city and one of the largest archeological digs in Israel. This is where the Roman centurion Cornelius was baptized by Peter and became the first gentile convert to Christianity (Acts 10) and where Paul was tried by Festus (Acts 25:6-12). Continue to Mukhraka on Mount Carmel, where Elijah battled the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:25), then to Megiddo (1 Kings 9:15), where you will find a fascinating tel (hill) comprising 26 ancient civilizations superimposed on one another, overlooking the Valley of Jezreel also known as the Valley of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16). Next, drive across the valley to Nazareth, the boyhood home of Jesus. Visit the Basilica of the Annunciation and Mary's Well. Then, travel on to Cana where Jesus performed His first miracle, turning water into wine (John 2:1-11). Couples wanting to renew their marriage vows can do so at the chapel. Finally, drive on to Tiberias. Overnight in Tiberias.

DAY 3

This day begins by visiting the biblical sites around the Sea of Galilee: the Mount of Beatitudes, where Jesus gave the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1-12); Capernaum, the town where Jesus lived during

His Galilee ministry (Matthew 4:13, Mark 3:1); Tabgha, where Jesus multiplied the loaves and fishes (Luke 9:10-17); and the chapel that commemorates where Jesus instructed Peter to "feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). Stop at Nof Ginnosar to see the 2,000-year-old "Jesus Boat" unearthed from the Sea of Galilee. Then, enjoy a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee and a traditional St. Peter's fish lunch. After lunch, view the "Galilee Experience" audiovisual presentation. Then, as time permits, visit the Upper Galilee and the Golan Heights where you can see ancient cities of Caesarea Philippi and Hazor before returning to your hotel in Tiberias or stop by at Yardenit for a baptism service in the Jordan River. Overnight in Tiberias.



DAY 4

Today you travel down the Jordan River Valley from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. Your first stop will be the Crusader fortress of Belvoir overlooking the Jordan River Valley. Then, drive on to Beit She'an (Judges 7:4-8, 1 Samuel 31:10), the largest and most spectacular excavation in all of Israel. It was here that the bodies of King Saul and his sons were put on public display by the Philistines (also known as Scythopolis during Jesus' time). Next, you travel south via the Jordan Valley to Jericho, the world's oldest city conquered by Joshua (Joshua 6:20). Then, continue to the Dead Sea, travel through the wilderness of Judah to your hotel at Ein Bokek, near the Dead Sea. Overnight in Ein Bokek.

DAY 5

Begin your journey today with a visit to Masada, where you will ascend the mountain by cable car to view Herod's desert fortress. Continue to the beautiful oasis of En Gedi where David hid from King Saul (1 Samuel 24). Stop for a short float on



the Dead Sea. Then, drive to Qumran, the home of the first century sect known as the Essenes, the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Returning to Jericho, take the cable car from Jericho to Qarantal (the Mount of Temptation, Matthew 4:1-11) and the monastery. Finally, travel from Jericho up to Jerusalem an ascent of 4,000 feet in 13 miles, stopping at the Inn of the Good Samaritan along the way (Luke 10:24-26). Stop at the top of Mount Scopus for your first view of the "Golden City" as the sun sets over Jerusalem. Overnight in Jerusalem.

DAY 6

Today you will begin to explore Jerusalem. Begin with a drive around the old city walls and note each of the city gates. They each contain a wealth of history and significance. Travel by bus to the top of the Mount of Olives and view the entire city of Jerusalem. Then, walk down the Palm Sunday Road to the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:30), stopping at Dominus Flavit, where Jesus stopped and wept over Jerusalem (Luke 19:41). See the ancient olive trees in the Garden of Gethsemane and visit the beautiful Church of All Nations. Next, the bus will ascend Mount Zion where you will visit the Tomb of David and the Upper Room (Mark 14:12-26; Acts 1:13). Enter the Old City through the Zion Gate, make your way to the Jewish Quarter and visit the Cardo and Hezekiah's Wall, and have

your first glimpse of the Western Wall. Then, leaving the Old City for the day, a short drive takes you to the Israel Museum and the Shrine of the Book, where the Dead Sea Scrolls are kept, then on to the Knesset to view the beautiful Menorah. Continue to Yad Vashem, the site of the Holocaust memorial. Finally, stop by the Model of Jerusalem from the time of the second temple, before returning to your hotel for the evening. Overnight in Jerusalem.



DAY 7

Begin the day by visiting Bethlehem, the Church of the Nativity, and Manger Square (Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-7), as well as Shepherds' Field at nearby Beit Sahour, where the "Good News" was first heard. Then, return to the Old City through the Dung Gate where you can then explore the Southern Temple Excavations and the Western Wall. Visit the Rabbinic Tunnel, which takes you underground to the base of the Temple Mount, and the actual streets that Jesus and His disciples walked upon. Ascend the Temple Mount and visit the Dome of the Rock. Continue with a walking tour of the Old City that includes the Via Dolorosa, Pools of Bethesda (John 5:1-24), St. Anne's Chapel, Lithostrotos, Ecco Homo Arch, Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and the Oriental Market. Then, exit the Old City through the Damascus Gate and take a short walk outside, where you will find the site of the Garden Tomb and Gordon's Calvary. There you can enjoy a memorable communion service to conclude your journey. Evening departure or overnight in Jerusalem.

Israel Practical Data

More information, including links to the various websites, can be found on the Ministry of Tourism website (www.goisrael.com). Additional assistance can be obtained at the Israel Government Tourist Offices abroad and in the information offices in Israel, whose addresses appear on the website.

Hotels

Israel has hundreds of hotels offering a wide choice of accommodations to suit all tastes, purposes and budgets, ranging from small, simple facilities to five-star luxury establishments with prices varying according to grade and season. Hotel rates are quoted in U.S. dollars.

Most of Israel's major hotels have conference rooms and halls suitable for small to medium sized gatherings, plus audiovisual equipment; translation, technical, and fax services; high-speed Internet; e-mail and mobile communications; as well as large facilities for exhibitions. Due to the importance of the convention industry to Israel, most new hotel properties are built with convention and conference facilities.

Information and reservations for many resorts, spas, hotels, boutique hotels, kibbutzim, and hotel chains can now be accessed online in Hebrew, English, and often other languages as well.

Kibbutz Hotels

The kibbutz (collective settlement) is an Israeli social experience. Most of the 280 kibbutzim throughout Israel are essentially agricultural settlements, but many have moved to a more industry-oriented economy. Several kibbutzim, mostly in northern and central Israel, have established hotels on their premises, providing visitors with a close view of this world-renowned lifestyle. They offer guests a relaxed, informal vacation in delightful rural surroundings. Some present special evening programs about the kibbutz experience.

Holiday Villages

Excellent accommodations are available at Israel's holiday resort villages. They offer a wide variety of water sports, including swimming, water skiing, diving, and sailing, as well as horseback riding, tennis, a full touring program, and evening entertainment. Predominantly geared for younger travelers, and with an emphasis on outdoor activities and informality, most villages are open only during the summer months.

Youth Hostels

The Israel Youth Hostels Association (IYHA), which is affiliated with the International Youth Hostels Association, operates some 25 youth hostels throughout the country for guests of all ages. All offer dormitory accommodation, and most provide meals and self-service kitchen facilities. Some hostels also provide family accommodations for parents accompanied by at least one child. Individual reservations should be booked directly at specific hostels, and group reservations should be booked with the IYHA.

The IYHA also arranges individual 14-day, 21-day, or 28-day package tours, called "Israel on the Youth Hostel Trail." These include nights in any of the 25 hostels with breakfast and dinner, unlimited bus travel, a half-day guided tour, free admission to national parks, a map, and other informative material.

Field Schools

The Society for the Preservation of Nature in Israel (SPNI) operates a network of more than 25 field schools throughout Israel, each specializing in the natural history and ecology of its environment. Most also have overnight accommodations for visitors, including a dining room and other services. The field schools, generally located far from densely populated regions, also offer a wide variety of unconventional, challenging, and scenic desert and mountain tours.

Bed & Breakfasts

Bed & Breakfasts are one of Israel's fastest growing tourist accommodations sectors, catering to both the domestic and international markets. Many B&Bs are on kibbutzim and moshavim throughout the country, and some can now be found in Arab villages as well. B&Bs cater to all styles, tastes, and levels. Some have specialized motifs, such as horses, sports, or national styles. Many B&Bs can be accessed online.

Rooms for Rent

An increasing number of Israel's rural settlements (kibbutzim and moshavim) are supplementing their incomes by offering rooms for rent at reasonable prices.

Health Resorts

A unique combination of therapeutic factors – the mineral-rich Dead Sea, therapeutic mud, thermal sulfur mineral springs, and a mild, sunny, and extremely dry climate – have made certain areas of Israel excellent year-round health resorts, internationally renowned since ancient times.

Most of Israel's health resorts are centered in two areas: the Sea of Galilee (220 meters or 655 ft. below sea level) and the Dead Sea (416 meters or 1,365 ft. below sea level). Offering a wide range of accommodations and equipped with modern facilities, they provide a choice of treatments for a variety of ailments and conditions.

Christian Hospices

Various Christian denominations offer accommodations in the vicinity of their religious sites. They are often a good value in the low-to-moderate price range. You do not need to be a Christian to stay in most of these hospices, but you must be prepared to abide by the rules. For information, call the Jerusalem Tourist information office, tel. 02-6271422. Additional information on hospices and church services may be obtained from the Christian Information Center.

Organized Tours

Numerous organized tours, mostly in air-conditioned buses or minibuses, are conducted by licensed tour operators. Itineraries and prices are determined in accordance with Ministry of Tourism guidelines to ensure a full sightseeing program in maximum comfort. Half-day, full-day, and longer tours are available, some combining air with road travel. Tours depart regularly from major cities and from popular resort areas during peak seasons. All organized tours are accompanied by experienced, licensed multilingual guides identified by an official emblem bearing the words "Licensed Tour Guide." Smaller groups may hire a licensed driver-guide and a special limousine or minibus, identified by the red Ministry of Tourism emblem. Full details, itineraries, prices, and schedules are available at travel agencies and tour companies. Major public institutions and organizations, such as WIZO, Hadassah, the universities, and the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) offer guided tours of their facilities. Walking tours of the larger cities are arranged by the municipalities. Further information is available at any major hotel.

The Israeli Week

The Israeli workweek is Sunday through Thursday, and the weekend is Friday and Saturday. Most businesses that are open on Friday close early in the afternoon before the onset of the Jewish Sabbath, which begins at sundown on Friday and lasts until shortly after sundown on Saturday. Muslims and Christians observe their own Sabbaths, on Friday and Sunday, respectively.

Languages

Hebrew and Arabic are Israel's two official languages, but it's rare to find an Israeli who isn't bilingual (at least). The country is a melting pot with citizens from nearly every single country on the face of the earth – many of whom speak the language of their parents. Almost all road signs, shops, restaurant menus, guides, and other materials are also in English.

Money and Customs Matters

The Israeli currency is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS). It comes in 20, 50, 100, and 200 shekel notes. One shekel is divided into 100 agorot, and coins come in 5, 10, and 50 agorot denominations, as well as one-shekel, five-shekel and ten-shekel coins.

Money can be exchanged in just about any bank in Israel. All are open mornings, Sunday-Friday, from 8:15 or 8:30 am. Afternoon hours vary. All are closed on Friday afternoon, Saturday, and most Jewish holidays. Money can also be changed at registered storefront money changers located in all major towns and cities. Please note, however, that money changers do not accept traveler's checks. Foreign currency transactions conducted on Sunday are based on the previous Friday's exchange rates.

Both citizens and visitors bringing electrical appliances into Israel, valued at more than \$200, must go through the red channel at customs.

Adult visitors to Israel may import, duty free, 250 cigarettes or 250 grams of tobacco products, two liters of wine and

a liter of spirits, plus 250 milligrams of perfume. Please note that animals, plants, firearms, fresh meat, and raw materials may not be brought into Israel unless a permit has been obtained in advance.

Climate and Clothing

When packing for a trip to Israel, be sure to take the country's climate into consideration. Although most of the year is hot and sunny, winter can be cold, especially in the mountains and at night. Winter is also the rainy season, so make sure to bring rain gear. Some other practical clothing tips: bring a head covering and sunglasses for touring under the sun. Comfortable shoes are also a good idea. You will also need modest clothing and often a head covering for visiting the holy places since shorts and sleeveless dresses are not permitted when entering those sites.

For men, unless you're coming on business, it's doubtful you'll ever need to wear a jacket and tie.

Driving in Israel

All drivers from abroad are required to have a valid driver's license (international or from home). Driving in Israel is on the right, and signs are in Hebrew and in English in most places, as well as in Arabic in some areas. Road signs use the international standard.

Speed limits on Israeli roads are 90-110 km per hour on interurban highways, 80 km per hour on other interurban roads, and 50 km per hour in built-up areas. Seat belts are mandatory at all times for both driver and passengers, front and back. Children under the age of 14 are forbidden to ride in the front seat.

Israel Railways operates regular rail service between Israel's main cities. For routes, schedules and fares see www.israil.org.il.

To and From the Airport

Most travelers to Israel will arrive at Ben Gurion Airport, just off the highway connecting Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. For those who are not being met and who do not want to take a taxi, there is regular bus service and direct or connecting trains between Ben Gurion Airport and the rest of Israel. There is also a shuttle bus service between the airport with the hotel districts in both Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

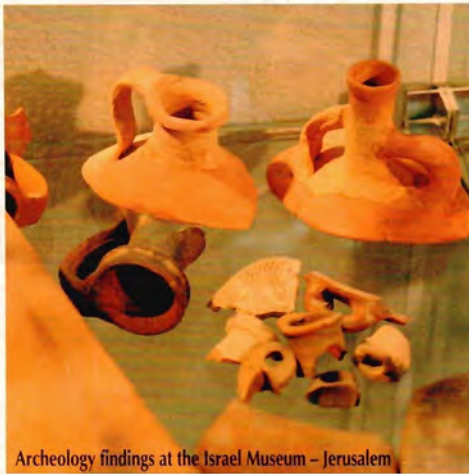
For trips to the airport, a number of taxi companies provide door-to-door service 24 hours a day, either on a taxi basis or as a shared ride (from Jerusalem or Tel Aviv).

Shops

In Israel's major cities, shops are usually open from 9:00 am until 7:00 pm, Sunday through Thursday. Some, especially small neighborhood shops, still close for an afternoon siesta from 1:00 pm (or 2:00 pm) until 4 pm. A large number of modern shopping malls have sprung up throughout the country in recent years, with business hours that are even more flexible. Nevertheless, on Fridays, shops usually close for the day between 2:00-3:30 pm, and most places of business in Jewish areas do not open on Saturdays.

Museums

Hours vary from museum to museum. Some are open on Saturdays.



Archeology findings at the Israel Museum – Jerusalem

Post Office

Most post offices open at 8:30 a.m. Sunday through Friday, and remain open until 12:30 or 1:30 in the afternoon, depending on the day. Afternoon hours vary; some branches are open from 3:30-6:00 pm. You can also exchange foreign currency at many post offices, and receive money transfers quickly from abroad.

Credit Cards

Most shops, restaurants, and hotels accept credit cards. The most common are Visa, EuroCard/MasterCard, Diners Club, and American Express.

Value Added Tax (VAT)

The Value Added Tax in Israel is 15.5%. Unless otherwise stated, the amount listed on all bills includes VAT (although non-Israelis paying in foreign currency are exempt from VAT payments at hotels, on flights, organized tours and car rentals, with or without chauffeur).

Tourists who use foreign currency when purchasing more than \$50 worth of goods at Israeli shops listed by the Ministry of Tourism are usually entitled to a 5% discount at the shop and a VAT refund at Ben Gurion Airport upon departure. In order to obtain the refund, the (unused) goods that were purchased must be placed, along with the receipt, in a sealed transparent bag and presented to the bank official in the airport departures hall. He or she will break the seal, verify the contents, and refund the VAT in U.S. dollars to the nearest dollar (less the bank commission). At other points of departure, Israeli customs officials will handle the matter and the refund will be mailed to the tourist's home address.

Time Differences

Israel is two hours ahead of GMT and seven hours ahead of Eastern Time, although during the period of daylight savings time, there may be some variations.

Taxis

By law, all taxis in Israel must be equipped with a meter that must be operated for all local rides. Legal taxis are white, with a "taxi" sign on the roof and license number on the sides. Passengers are entitled to a printed meter receipt. The meter can be operated according to three distinct fare rates, the regular fare plus a surcharge for ordering a taxi immediately by telephone, the regular fare, and a surcharge imposed for Saturdays, holidays, and at night (between 9:00 pm and 5:30 am). There is a surcharge for luggage as well. Intercity fares are determined by an official price list that the driver must show upon request. In Israel, it is not customary to tip taxi drivers.

Tipping

Tipping is fairly standard in Israel, though the current norm of 10% as the accepted rate is still fairly low. A service charge may or may not be listed on your restaurant bill. When it is not included, a tip is expected, and at better quality establishments, 12-15% is now considered more appropriate.

Religious Customs

Except for East Jerusalem, Haifa, and Nazareth, public transportation does not operate on the Jewish Sabbath – from sundown on Friday until Saturday night. The same is true on Jewish holidays – from sundown to sundown. However, taxis and (in some urban areas) shared taxis ("sherut" service) are available. The exception to this is Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement, on which no motorized vehicles of any kind move in the streets, except for emergency vehicles, such as ambulances.

Just about every major hotel in Israel operates under rabbinical supervision, which means that only kosher food prepared according to Jewish dietary laws is available. Outside the hotels, there are many fine restaurants that serve kosher food and others that serve non-kosher food. In the large cities, there are also restaurants that remain open on Saturday, but these are not kosher.

In Arab population centers, the shops, restaurants, and cafes remain open on Saturdays and nearly all Jewish holidays. When visiting Christian, Muslim, Druze, or Baha'i areas and sites, make sure to conform to local religious customs, holidays, and celebrations.


Electric Current

In Israel, the electricity is 220 volts, 50 cycles; though in major hotel rooms there is usually a built-in 110-volt electric razor transformer. Most sockets in Israel are three-pronged, but different from those used in Europe or the U.K., and tourists bringing electrical appliances to Israel would be well advised to bring an adapter from home.

Η ΑΓΙΑ ΠΟΛΙΣ ΤΕΡΟΥΣΑΛΗΜ



For more information, including Israel Government
Tourist offices abroad, please contact:

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NEGEV DESERT

PHILISTINES
Samson's Country

IDUMEA

JUDEA

MOABITES

P E R E A



Valley of Salt

Jebel Usdum (Salt)

Dead Sea

Jordan

Arnon

Zerqa

DIBON (Mesa Stone)

AROER

Macherus

KERAVOT

Zerqa

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Sodom and Gomorrah

Zoar

Kir-Harosheth Kir-Moab (Kerak)

Kir-Moab

Aroer

Dibon

Macherus

Keravot

Zerqa

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Valley of Salt

Jebel Usdum (Salt)

Dead Sea

Jordan

Arnon

Zerqa

DIBON (Mesa Stone)

AROER

Macherus

KERAVOT

Zerqa

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Sodom and Gomorrah

Zoar

Kir-Harosheth Kir-Moab (Kerak)

Kir-Moab

Aroer

Dibon

Macherus

Keravot

Zerqa

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth

Beth