



Migrating birds



Aqueduct



Majr ibn Amr

# 1 Jenin



Jenin is the most northern Palestinian town in the West Bank. Its vicinity is part of the fertile Jesreel Valley (*Majr ibn Amr* in Arabic) and known as the fruit and bread basket of Palestine. In addition to trips into the countryside, this typical Arabic region of Palestine offers archaeological discoveries and cultural encounters.

## Sights

- 1 The **fruit and vegetable market** in the city center, the old market *as-Sebat*, the ancient aqueduct and the water system of **Bal'ama**.
- 2 The excavations of **Tel Dothan**, where according to tradition, Joseph was sold to Egypt by his brothers.

## Activities

- 3 Meeting with **al-Jalame Women Cooperative**, whose members are autonomously planting fruits and vegetables and offer typical Palestinian dishes.
- 4 Hiking in **Um at-Tut Nature Reserve** and **bird-watching** in *Majr ibn Amr*, where two times a year tens of thousands of migrating birds rest.



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Iconostasis



Icon



Cave of the 10 lepers

## 2 Burqin



The small village of Burqin is located in the very north of Palestine. According to the tradition, Jesus – on his way from Nazareth to Jerusalem – passed by a cave, in which 10 men, suffering from leprosy, were locked. The men begged Jesus for help and were cured (cf. Luke 11:17-19). Today, this miracle is commemorated in the Church of Burqin, which should be a part of any pilgrimage to the Holy Land.

### Sights

- 1 **Greek-Orthodox Church of the Ten Lepers**, founded by Queen Helena in the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE – one of the oldest churches in the world.
- 2 The center of the village with historic buildings from the Ottoman period and the restored **palace of the Jarrar-family** (*al-Khoukha*), today a visitor center.
- 3 Traditional **factories** where local oil olive is made into soap.

### Activities

- 4 **Overnight** with local families (homestays) and hikes through the lavish fields around Burqin or along the long-distance hiking trail **Masar Ibrahim al-Khalil** (the *Abraham's Path*).



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Tomb of John the Baptist



Ceramic art



Archaeological site

## 3 Sebastia



Once a regional capital in the Late Iron Age, Sebastia is a hidden gem, peacefully sitting on the scenic slopes of the Nablus Hills. Sebastia is worth a visit – for pilgrims and nature lovers alike.

### Sights

- 1 The ruins of the **Roman acropolis** with its majestic Hellenistic fortification towers, the former **Temple of Zeus** and the Iron Age ruins of the **palace of Omri**.
- 2 The 12<sup>th</sup> century Crusader's church, now a mosque, which is said to host the **tomb of John the Baptist** – one of Palestine's less well-known pilgrimage sites.
- 3 Al-Massoudieh, a former station of the **Hejaz railway**, which once connected Damascus with Acre by the Mediterranean and Medina.

### Activities

- 4 An overnight stay in one of the **beautifully restored boutique-guesthouses** surrounded by olive orchards and scenic hills.
- 5 Guided **hikes** or **donkey rides** through the lavish green landscape and visiting the **ceramic laboratory** in the small neighboring village of Nisf Jubeil.



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Tel el-Balata



Market in Nablus



Photini Church

## 4 Nablus



Nestled between the slopes of Mt. Ebal and Mt. Garizim on an ancient trade route, Palestine's second largest city is famous for its sweets, traditional olive oil products and its busy markets.

### Sights

- 1 The excavations of the ancient city of Sichem at **Tel el-Balata** (cf. Acts 7:16) – already in ancient times an important trading center.
- 2 **Jacob's Well** (cf. Genesis 33:18-20) inside the Greek-Orthodox Photini Church where Jesus met the Samaritan woman (cf. John 4:5-15).
- 3 **Mt. Garizim** with the Samaritan community and the archaeological excavations.

### Activities

- 4 A walk through the seven quarters of the Old City, e.g. to the beautifully restored caravansary **Kahn al-Wakala**.
- 5 Visiting the traditional **olive oil soap factory** in the middle of the Old City or **Turkish Bath**, the Hamam.



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St. George Church

## 5 Taybeh & Birzeit



Meet the Palestinian brewers! If you are after a glass of cold amber proudly brewed in Palestine, Taybeh and Birzeit, just a few kilometers from Ramallah, are your places to go.

### Activities

- 1 **Beer-tasting in Taybeh**, where the same-named brewery is the only one in Palestine brewing according to German purity law.
- 2 A tour of the **Shepherds Brewery**, which is specialized in a selection of different tastes appealing to any mood.

### Special Occasions

- 3 The only **Oktoberfest in the Middle East**, celebrated annually at the Taybeh Brewery and the annual **Maftoul** (couscous) **festival in Birzeit** – as a matter of fact, accompanied by a chilled beer.

### Sights

- 4 The **Palestinian Museum in Birzeit** with changing exhibitions on contemporary Palestinian Art.
- 5 A **walk through Taybeh** with its olive orchards and the medieval St. George Church.



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## 6 Ramallah



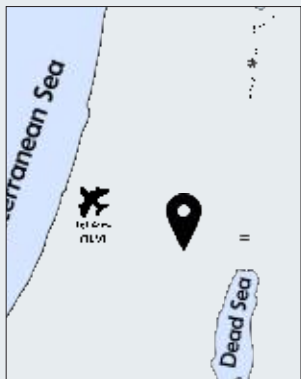
Just 15km north of Jerusalem, Ramallah and its twin city al-Bireh are a vital hotspot teeming with a thriving art scene and bustling nightlife. Stroll along streets vitalized by tiny shops and cafés around al-Manara Square and discover the bustling al-Muntazah neighborhood with its trendy bars and drift through the market with its fruits, vegetables and freshly made falafel.

### Sights

- 1 The **Mahmoud Darwish Museum**, dedicated to the famous Palestinian poet.
- 2 A visit to the **seat of government** and the mausoleum of former Palestinian president Yasser Arafat.
- 3 Excavations of **biblical Bethel** (cf. Genesis 28) close to the Palestinian village Bittin.

### Activities

- 4 A stroll through the city center and **enjoying Palestine's bustling nightlife**.
- 5 A hike along the **Sufi Trails** north of Ramallah or in the nature reserves of **Ein Qinya** and **Ein Samia**.
- 6 A **political tour** along the Israeli Separation Wall to **Qalandia checkpoint** and the Qalandia refugee camp, which was founded in 1949.



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Tree of Life Mosaic in Qasr Hisham



Oranges



Wadi el-Quelt

## 7 Jericho



A ride with the longest cable car below sea-level takes you up to the Mt. of Temptation in minutes. From here, where Jesus is said to have been tempted by the devil for 40 days and nights, the lowest city on earth lies to your feet! Enjoy the stunning panorama of the spring-water-fed oasis with its dates, citron and orange orchards.

### Sights

- 1 **Tel es-Sultan**, the ancient part of Jericho and the magnificent, mosaic-paved **Omayyad Palace Qasr Hisham**.
- 2 The traditional **baptism site of Jesus** at the Jordan river, the Monastery of Temptation on the same-named mountain, and the ancient sugar mills.

### Activities

- 3 Exploring the oasis by **bike**, on foot, from a **horse-drawn carriage** or on **donkey-back**.
- 4 A walk through the orchards, where you can **pick your own oranges and lemons** (especially in winter) and squeeze them into a tasty-healthy juice.
- 5 Hiking through **Wadi el-Quelt** or a daytrip to nearby **al-Auja** and the eco-center.



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Mar Saba Monastery



Nabi Musa



Camel "Schuschu" in Nabi Musa

8

## Desert



One of Palestine's most amazing landscapes extends between Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jericho. Along a distance of just 25km, the landscape descends from the Jerusalem Hills over more than 1200m meters in altitude down to the shore of the Dead Sea and changes from green slopes to a barren rocky desert.

### Sights

- 1 The **desert monasteries of Mar Saba**, not far from Bethlehem and of **St. George** in Wadi el-Quelt, near Jericho.
- 2 The **Islamic shrine an-Nabi Musa**, according to a local tradition the final burial place of Moses.
- 3 The ruins of the Herodian **Hyrcania fortress**, half way between Mar Saba and Nabi Musa.

### Activities

- 4 Hiking through **Wadi el-Quelt**, the ancient path between Jericho and Jerusalem (cf. Psalm 23).
- 5 **Hike, camel ride** or **offroad drive** from Mar Saba to Hyrcania and onwards to Nabi Musa.
- 6 Desert camping and typical Palestinian dishes at **Bedouin camps** and enjoying sunset and sunrise in the desert.



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Tomb of Lazarus

## 9 Bethany



On the eastern slope of the Mt. of Olives, lies the Palestinian city of Bethany (*al-Eizariya* in Arabic). Two key events in Jesus' life are commemorated in this small town: The revivification of Lazarus, the brother of Mary and Martha and the anointing of Jesus by Mary.

### Sights

- 1 The **empty tomb of Lazarus** (cf. John 11:1-46), after the Nativity Church the most frequently visited pilgrimage site in the West Bank. But still it remains a hidden gem in pilgrims' itineraries to the Holy Land. A steep stairway, cut into the rock, leads down to the empty burial chamber.
- 2 The **Mary & Martha Church**, commemorating the anointing of Jesus in Bethany (cf. Matthew 26:6-13), just few meters from the tomb.

### Arrival & Visit

- 3 A visit to Bethany can be done as a **stopover** on any journey between Jerusalem, Bethlehem or Jericho, ideally in the early morning or late afternoon.



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Hot springs of Hammamat Ma'in



Rock hyrax in Ein Gedi



The Dead Sea

# 10 Dead Sea



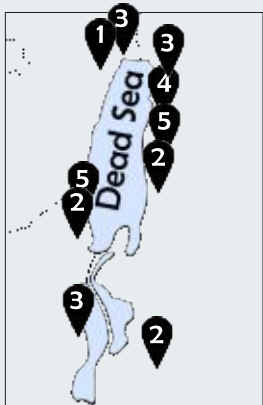
At an altitude of 400m below sea level, the Dead Sea is the world's most deep hyper-saline lake and without doubt one of the most fascinating places in the Holy Land, inviting for a relaxing dip into the mineral-rich water. In addition, numerous excavations and impressive landscapes along its shore await exploration.

## Sights

- 1 The excavations of the ancient **Qumran society** (West Bank) and the Qumran caves where the **Dead Sea Scrolls** were found.
- 2 The ancient, now ruined fortresses of **Masada** (Israel), **Machaerus** (aka "Mukawir") and **Kerak** (Jordan).

## Activities

- 3 **Swimming and relaxation** in the lowest salt lake on earth in Kaliya, Neve Zoar, Ein Bokek or the Jordanian Dead Sea Spas.
- 4 Relaxation in the hot springs of **Hammamat Ma'in** (Jordan) high above the Dead Sea.
- 5 Hiking in the National Parks of **Ein Gedi** (Israel) or **Wadi Mujib** (Jordan) with challenging trails, canyoning or wild-life watching.



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Chapel on the Shepherds Fields



Herodion



Painting inside the chapel

## 11 Shepherds Fields

In a few kilometers' distance from Bethlehem, the Shepherds Fields in Beit Sahur invite for a spiritual visit to the ancient grottos. According to the tradition, the shepherds were herding their sheep here when the angel announced the birth of Christ (cf. Luke 2:8-20).

### Sights

- 1 The **Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox Shepherds Fields** with their grottos and chapels.
- 2 **Mary's Well**, the place where according to a local tradition the Holy Family rested on their miraculous way to Egypt.
- 3 The **Herodion**, once an impressive fortress of king Herod the Great and his likely burial place.

### Activities

- 4 Hiking along the long-distance trail **Masar Ibrahim**, for example from Beit Sahur to Arab al-Ras-hayida for a **panoramic view of the Dead Sea** or to the caves of Tuqu.
- 5 Enjoying an authentic **Palestinian dish** accompanied by a folkloric show or **celebrating Christmas** on the Shepherds Fields.



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Nativity Grotto

## 12 Bethlehem



Tracing Christianity back to its roots, you will undoubtedly arrive to Bethlehem at the majestic entrance to one of the oldest churches in the world: The Nativity Church, a UNESCO World Heritage, commemorated as the birthplace of Christ. But Bethlehem has much more to offer.

### Sights

- 1 The **Church of the Nativity** with the **Nativity Grotto**, the altar of the Innocent Children and the **Grotto of Hieronymus** at Manger Square.
- 2 The **Milk Grotto**, where Jesus and his parents are said to have rested before escaping to Egypt.
- 3 The **Old City** with its traditional **olive wood carvers** and numerous museums like the Icon Museum, the Bethlehem Museum or the Nativity Scenes Museum.
- 4 The museum for **Palestinian folklore** in Murad Castle, the ancient **Solomon Pools** or the Hortus Conclusus Monastery.

### Activities

- 5 A **walk through the Old City** and a visit to one of the many dance and theater performances.
- 6 Learning **Arabic or even Aramaic**, the language Jesus spoke and celebrating Christmas in Bethlehem.



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Mosque of Abraham



Old City of Hebron

## 13 Hebron



Palestine's southern urban center traces its history back to the times of the early patriarchs. According to the biblical tradition, Abraham once bought the Cave of Machpela which is venerated as the last resting place of himself, his wife Sarah and his offspring generations. Since earliest times, Hebron is steeped in history – a contested space, where religion and faith, culture and heritage are inextricably linked with conflicts and a broad diversity of human encounters.

### Sights

- 1 Mosque and synagogue atop of the **Cave of Machpela** and Hebron's Old City, a Palestinian UNESCO World Heritage Site, with its beautiful Mamluk style architecture.
- 2 The **"Oak of Mamre"** at the Russian-Orthodox Monastery of the Trinity, commemorating Abraham's encounter with the three angels (cf. Genesis 18).

### Activities

- 3 A stroll through the vivid **New City** of Hebron with its traditional glass blowing factories.
- 4 Don't miss: a typical Hebronite culinary specialty: **slow-cooked camel stew**.



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## 14 Masar Ibrahim

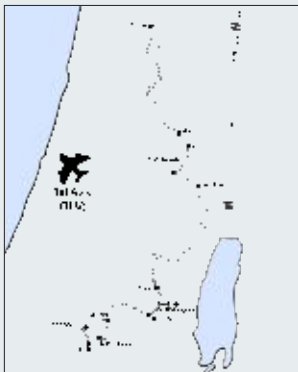


Discover Palestine's history, culture and incredible beautiful landscape along the 330km long hiking trail Masar Ibrahim al-Khalil.

The Masar Ibrahim al-Khalil (Abraham Path) is a **long-distance hiking trail** that runs through the West Bank from the Mediterranean **olive groves** of the highlands of the north to the **silence of the deserts** in the south; from the area west of Jenin to the area south of the Sanctuary of Abraham (known in Arabic as *al-Haram al-Ibrahimi*) in the city of Hebron.

National Geographic Traveler chose the Abraham Path as its #1 walking trail in 2014. The **330km long Masar** ("path") can be hiked in parts reaching from day-tours to multiple days-trips or in around 3 weeks over its entire length.

Several tourism professionals offer assistance and **full-service organization** along the whole trail including local guiding, in-depth city guiding, arrangement of homestays with local families and logistical support including luggage transportation.



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Tel Arad



Tel Sheva

## 15 Negev (1)



The Negev, the barren and wide-open desert landscape east of the Jordan Valley, extends from the Mediterranean coast via Beersheba all the way down to Eilat at the Gulf of Aqaba and invites for numerous ancient discoveries.

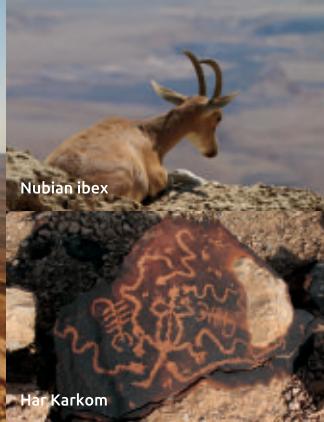
### Sights

- 1 Tel Arad**, an ancient settlement dating back to the Bronze Age (around 4000 BCE). From the 10<sup>th</sup> to the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE it was part of a **major trade network** between the Arabian Peninsula and the Mediterranean.
- 2 Tel Sheva**, not far from the modern city of Beersheba, is mentioned a couple times in the Bible (cf. Judges 20:1; 1 Samuel 3:20) and was one of the **dwelling places of Abraham** in southern Canaan (Genesis 22:19; 21:32). A unique find of the excavations was a horned altar and the sophisticated underground cistern system.
- 3** As early as 5000 BCE, Egyptian mineworkers quarried for copper in the rocks of **Wadi Tima**. The drifts are the **oldest mines for metal in the world** and located in an amazing landscape with fascinating rock formations. Some of the deep tunnels hewn into the rock are open for visitors along with other archaeological finds such like an **Egyptian temple**.





Maktesh Ramon



Nubian ibex

Har Karkom

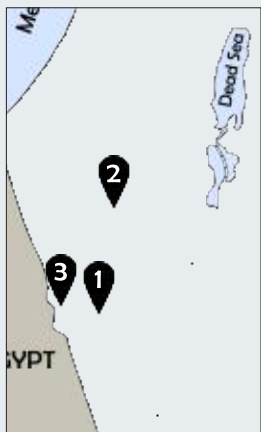
## 16 Negev (2)



The Negev, the desert landscape between the Mediterranean and the southern Jordan Valley does not only invite for archaeological discoveries, but also for exciting outdoor activities on foot, bike or with jeeps.

### Activities

- 1 Jeep safari or hiking inside the **Maktesh Ramon**, a crater-like, world-wide unique landscape shaped by erosion over millions of years. In this fascinating landscape, you may also spend a night out in a tent, **discover the wildlife** during a night-hike or take the challenge of a tour in the crater on mountain bikes.
- 2 Hiking in **Ein Awdat National Park** includes not only a scenic hike along the small river, but also a challenging ascend to the cliff's top via iron stairs. Ein Awdat is also a great place for **animal-watching** including free-living vultures and Nubian ibexes.
- 3 A two-day trip with camping to the rock plateau of **Har Karkom**. The harsh rocks landscape has been proposed to be the very Sinai Mountain, Moses once received the Tablets of Stone from. More than **40.000 rock engravings** are at least good proof of extensive religious or spiritual activity in the area.



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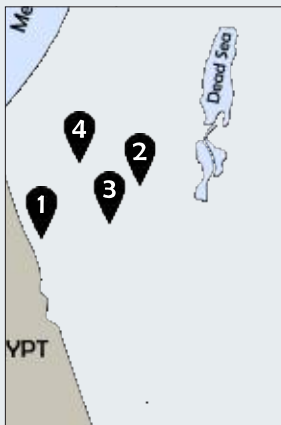
## 17 Nabateans (1)



One of the highlights of any trip into the Negev is without question a visit to the ancient Nabatean cities of Shivta, Mamshit, Avdat, and Haluza located along the ancient Incense Route (UNESCO World Heritage Site).

### Sights

- 1 **Shivta** is located about 40km southwest of Beersheba and was most likely part of the Nabatean trade network. For certain, Shivta was a **major stopover** in the Byzantine era **for pilgrims** traveling from St. Catherine Monastery at Mt. Sinai to Jerusalem. Its most astonishing finds are the three churches and wine presses.
- 2 **Mamshit** was an important trading post along the **Incense Route between Petra and Gaza** and is the best preserved Nabatean city west of the Jordan Valley – definitely a must-see.
- 3 **Avdat** was once the second most important Nabatean city after Petra in Jordan. **Nabateans, Romans and Byzantines** dwelled here on a high plateau offering a commanding view.
- 4 **Haluza** was also a trading post along the route between Petra and Gaza and was at times **an urban center** of the region.



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## 18 Nabateans (2)



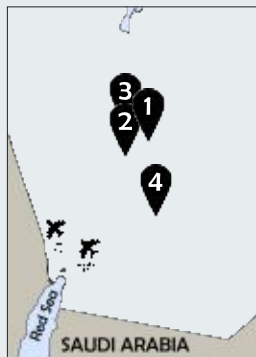
Petra, the ancient capital of the Nabateans has enthralled travelers ever since its modern discovery in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The city's elaborate architecture was carved into the pink-colored cliffs about 2000 years ago and rightfully ranks among the most important sights in the world. About two hours to the south-east, the virtually untouched beauty of the desert of Wadi Rum and its mazes of chiseled canyons are also awaiting discovery.

### Sights

- 1 **Petra**, the ancient capital of the Nabateans and their most important trade center along the **Incense Route**, together with its famous edifices like ed-Deir (the "Monastery"), Qasr el-Bint, the Lion Triclinium or the Treasury.
- 2 The **shrine of Aaron** on the same-named mountain, Jordan's most holy Islamic place.

### Activities

- 3 **Hiking** in and around Petra, e.g. up on Mt. Aaron or to the "Monastery" (ed-Deir).
- 4 An excursion in a **4x4 car**, **hiking** or a **camel ride** into the fascinating landscape of Wadi Rum or an overnight stay in one of the Eco-Lodges, camping under the stars or a **hot-air balloon ride** at sunrise.





Red Sea

## 19 Red Sea



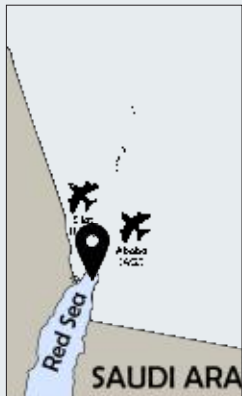
All the way to the south, in the tri-border region of Israel, Jordan and Egypt, the coastal resort-cities of Taba (Egypt), Eilat (Israel), Aqaba and Tala Bay (Jordan) are a year-round getaway at the shores of the Red Sea, famous for its diving and snorkeling opportunities in an incredibly colorful and diverse marine life.

### Activities


- 1 Relaxation at the **miles and miles of white sandy beaches** between Taba and Aqaba – a **perfect winter destination!**
- 2 **Diving or snorkeling** in the unique underwater world with its coral reefs and colorful fishes in Eilat, Aqaba or Tala Bay.
- 3 A variety of **water sports** (e.g. banana boat rides or parasailing), swimming with dolphins or visiting the aquarium.
- 4 A **trip to the desert** with quads, 4x4 cars or on camel backs, e.g. to Wadi Timna or for bird watching in the desert.

### Accessibility

- 5 There are regular direct connections to the international airports of **Eilat** (Israel) and **Aqaba** (Jordan) to/from Europe as well as direct connections to Tel Aviv and Amman. There is a **border crossing** between Aqaba and Eilat as well as between Eilat and Taba.



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Eilat



Agamon



Gamla

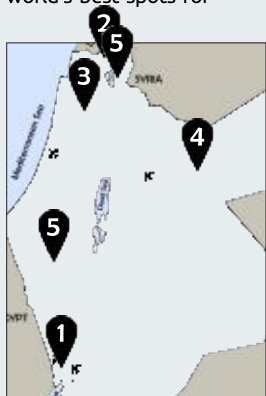
## 20 Bird Watching



Two times per year, the Jordan Valley and Azraq and Shawmari Nature Reserves become a resting place, when more than 500 million of migrating birds take a break in the region on their way to or from their winter refuges. Thanks to its geographic location, the small land bridge between the Mediterranean and the Arabian Desert make the Holy Land to one of the world's best spots for bird watching.

### Some Ideal Spots for Bird Watching

- 1 In the very south of the Jordan Valley, **at the northern end of the Gulf of Aqaba**, the extensive plains provide ideal conditions for migrating birds to take a break and thereby become a perfect spot for bird watchers.
- 2 North of the Sea of Galilee, bird watching tours are offered in **Hule National Park** and **Agamon bird park**.
- 3 In **northern Palestine**, the southern plains of the Jesreel Valley (*Marj ibn Amir*) are an ideal spot for bird watching.
- 4 In Jordan, **Azraq and Shawmari nature reserves** offer bird watching opportunities in a scenic desert landscape.
- 5 Wild birds, among them the Egyptian vulture and European griffons, are endemic e.g. in **Ein Awdat** (Negev) or in **Gamla National Park**, east of the Sea of Galilee.



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## 21 Amman

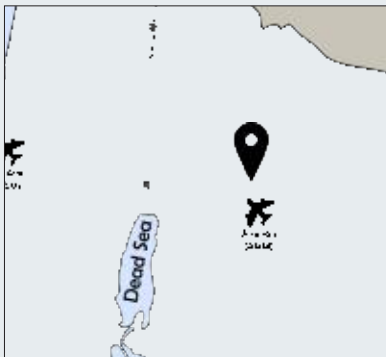


Ideally located in the hills between the vast desert and the fertile Jordan Valley, Jordan's capital is a **multi-cultural city of contrasts**.

One step will lead you to modern shopping malls, while another takes you to traditional souqs (markets) and ancient ruins, like the majestic **Amman Citadel** featuring Roman, Byzantine and early Islamic remains together with a stunning view of the city.

With no destination more than a 4-hour-drive away, Amman serves as an ideal base and **starting point to explore** the Jordanian kingdom – also on one's own, e.g. with a rental car.

In addition, **great museums** like the Folklore Museum or the **National Gallery of Fine Arts** combined with Amman's lively nightlife of theatrical and traditional Arabic entertainment make the city a true cultural hotspot.



Nubian ibex



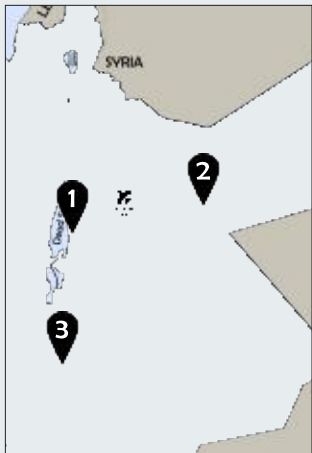
## 22 Nature in Jordan



Whether you are a passionate nature lover or simply traveling for leisure, visiting at least one of Jordan's nature reserves should be on your list!

### Selected Nature Reserves

- 1 The **Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve** in Jordan's west is rightfully called the "Grand Canyon of Jordan" – starting at more than 900 m above sea level in the mountains and descending for more than 1300 m to the shore of the Dead Sea. With a bit of luck, you'll see the striped hyena, the Syrian wolf or the Nubian ibex.
- 2 Located in the center of Jordan's eastern desert, **Azraq Nature Reserve** features natural attractions like a vast marshland, several pools and a large mudflat. A little further to the south, the **Shawmari Wildlife Reserve** represents a similar small oasis and was created for endangered animals on 22 square kilometers of land.
- 3 In south-central Jordan, **Dana Biosphere Reserve** is the largest reserve of the country, home to some 700 plant species, more than 200 species of birds and almost 40 species of mammals.



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Mukawer (Machaerus)

## 23 Castles in Jordan



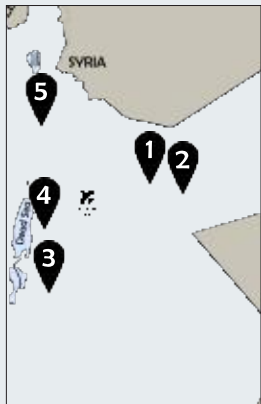
Located in Jordan's east, the Umayyad Desert Castles beautifully portray Islamic life and art along the long-haul desert trading routes in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century CE. Other, no less impressive castles can be found along the Jordan Rift Valley and in Jordan's north.

### Desert Castles

- 1 **Qusay' Amra**, about 1 hour east of Amman, for its well-preserved frescoes and mosaics.
- 2 **Qasr al-Azraq**, built from black basalt, a former headquarters of Lawrence of Arabia.

### Other Castles

- 3 On the way to Petra, **Kerak** is one of the best-preserved castles in the Middle East. Built in the 1140s and captured by Saladin's army in 1189 CE, the massive structure sits 900 meters above sea level in a commanding position offering a splendid view.
- 4 **Mukawer** (Machaerus), the barely preserved 700 meters high hilltop stronghold of Herod Antipas and the likely place of the beheading of John the Baptist.
- 5 The 12<sup>th</sup> century CE castle of **Qala'at ar-Rabad** in Jordan's north, majestically located on a steep cliff.





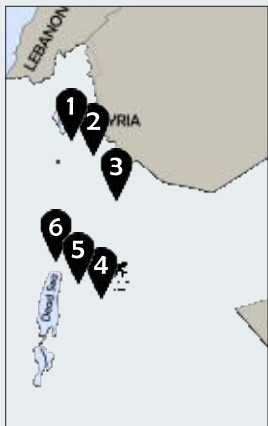
Mosaic Map of Madaba

## 24 Pilgrimage in Jordan 🏴

Not only between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean, but also east of the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea pilgrims can find a number of biblical places and places of pilgrimage.

### Places of Pilgrimage in Jordan

- 1 In antiquity, the city of **Umm Qais** ("Gadara" in ancient Greek) was a major center of Greek culture and is associated with Jesus' exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac (cf. Luke 8:30).
- 2 **Tel Mar Elias**, often identified with Tishbe, the hometown of Prophet Elijah.
- 3 **Jerash** ("Gerasa" in ancient Greek) in one of the world's best-preserved Roman towns.
- 4 The **St. George's Church in Madaba** is known for its mosaic pavement, depicting the Holy Land as it was known to pilgrims as early as the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE.
- 5 Just few minutes to the northwest of Madaba, biblical **Mt. Nebo** raises high above the Jordan Valley offering a splendid panorama of the Dead Sea, Jericho and Jerusalem in the distance.
- 6 The **baptism site** "Bethany Beyond the Jordan", believed to be the place where Jesus was baptized by John.



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Tel Aviv



Jaffa



St. Peters Church

## 25 Mediterranean (1)

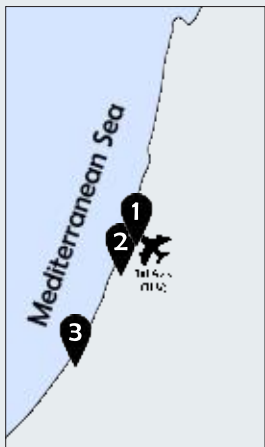
Between Tel Aviv and Ashkelon travelers will not only find around 50km of coastline with white sandy beaches, but also numerous sights inviting for a visit.

### Sights

- 1 **Tel Aviv** with its white beaches, variety of water sports, bars and nightlife, modern shopping centers and cultural highlights like the **"White City"** with its Bauhaus architecture, the Museum of Modern Art or the Opera.
- 2 The **Old Town of Jaffa** with the church dedicated to St. Peter, the excavations from Pharaonic times and the antiquities and flea market.
- 3 The world-wide unique **Museum of Philistine Culture** in Ashdod and the excavations of **Tel Ashkelon** with its mudbrick city gate and tunnel-like barrel vault, one of the oldest such vaults ever found.

### Activities

- 1 **Swimming, relaxation** at the beaches, **water sports** and nightlife, culture and a very rich and diverse cuisine, not only, but especially for **vegetarian and vegan dishes**.
- 1 For years, Tel Aviv is known as one of **the world's top LGBT travel destinations**.



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Haifa and the Bahai Gardens



Caesarea Maritima



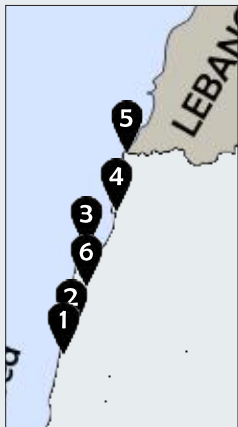
Port of Akko

## 26 **Mediterranen (2)**

North of Tel Aviv, a spectacular scenery alternates with charming cities and sights, while the coast cities of Herzliya and Netanya are especially famous for their white sandy beaches.

### Sights & Nature

- 1 The excavations of **Caesarea Maritima**, with its remarkably preserved remains including the ruins of the seaside hippodrome, the Roman temples, and the Crusaders' castle.
- 2 The **ancient aqueduct** which once channeled freshwater from the Carmel Mountain Range to Caesarea Maritima.
- 3 The coastal city of **Haifa** with the former German Colony (today an artists' quarter), the Bahai Gardens and the **Stella Maris Monastery** high above the city.
- 4 The **Old City of Akko** (Acre), since 2001 a UNESCO World Heritage Site, with its monumental Crusaders' fortress, the Templar Tunnels and the picturesque port.
- 5 The grottos of **Rosh HaNikra** with their cavernous tunnels formed by natural erosion, mesmerizing colors and shapes and one of the steepest cable cars in the world.
- 6 The ancient caves of **Naha Me'arot** and **Wadi el-Mughara**, where excavations unearthed traces of human settlement from as early as 500.000 years ago.



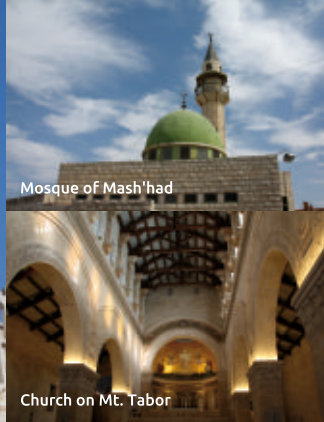
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Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth



Mosque of Mash'had

Church on Mt. Tabor

## 27 Nazareth



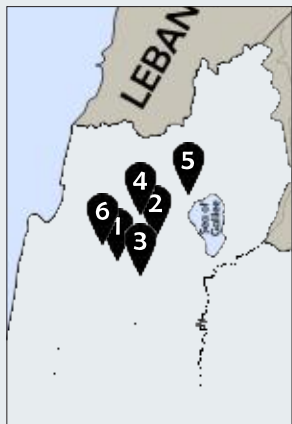
In Nazareth, Israel's largest Arab city, a modern city center with busy markets joins with its biblical reference as Jesus' childhood home. A number of interesting biblical and religious places can also be found in the vicinity.

### Religious Places

- 1 Inside Nazareth: The **Well of Mary**, the **Catholic Basilica of Annunciation**, the 12<sup>th</sup> century "synagogue-church" and the **Greek-Orthodox Church of the Annunciation**.
- 2 The several "**Wedding Churches**", commemorating Jesus' "First Miracle", the Marriage at Cana.
- 3 Mt. Tabor with the **Church of Transfiguration**, commemorating the miracle of Jesus' transfiguration.
- 4 **Mas'had**, a small village, where according to Islamic tradition, the tomb of prophet Jona is located.

### Activities

- 5 **Hiking** along the "Gospel" or "Jesus Trail", which both span from Nazareth to the Sea of Galilee in a few daily stages.
- 6 A visit to the "**Nazareth Village**", where the village life of Nazareth in Jesus' times becomes alive.



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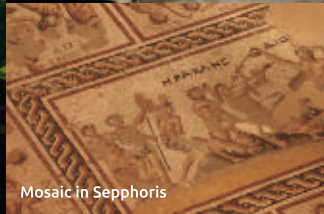




Jesreel Valley



Tel Megiddo



Mosaic in Sepphoris

## 28 Jesreel Valley



The Jesreel Valley (*Marj ibn Amr* in Arabic) extends from the Carmel Mountains in the west down to the Jordan Valley in the east and is one of the most fertile, but also historically important regions in northern Israel and Palestine. Due to its central location, the valley has been a strategic and contested place throughout history (cf. Judges 5:19).

### Sights

- 1 The ancient burial city of **Beit She'arim** with its more than twenty underground tombs from the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century CE.
- 2 The excavations of **Tel Hazor**, one of the most important cities in Canaan around 1800 BCE.
- 3 **Tel Megiddo**, one of the most important archaeological sites of the biblical era. From "Har Megiddo", the Mountain of Megiddo, the bible derives "Armageddon", the place of the eschatological battle between Good and Evil (cf. Revelation 16:16).
- 4 The excavations of the ancient city of **Sepphoris** (Zippori), with its perfectly preserved mosaic floors from Greek-Roman times.



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Nimrod Castle

## 29 Golan Heights

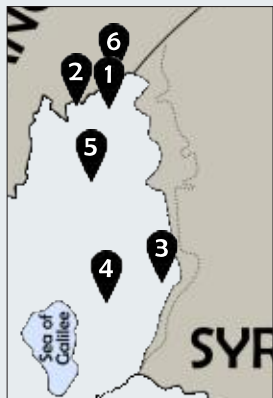
Geographically, the Golan Heights extend from the Sea of Galilee to Damascus. Since 1967 a major part of the Golan Heights is occupied by Israel and annexed since 1981. Several nature reserves and archaeological excavations invite nature lovers and cultural travelers alike for a visit.

### Sights

- 1 Nimrod**, a fortress from the 13<sup>th</sup> century CE. The impressive structure was built by Salah ed-Din's nephew al-Aziz Uthman as a stronghold against the crusaders.
- 2 Tel Dan** with its excavations of the biblical city (cf. Judges 18:11-13) and the oldest mud-brick gate in the world.
- 3 Rujm el-Hiri**, "stone-circle of the wild cat", a mystical Bronze Age cultic site made of some 42.000 basalt stones.
- 4 The ruins of Gamla**, until 87 CE an important Jewish town in the Golan.

### Activities

- 5 Hiking** along the **Banias River**, the Snir River or to the **Meshushim Pools** with their hexagonal, up to 5 meters high basalt columns.
- 6 Hiking and skiing** on Israel's highest mountain – **Mt. Hermon** (*Jabal el-Sheik* in Arabic).



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Sunset over Tiberias and Mt. Arbel

## 30 Tiberias



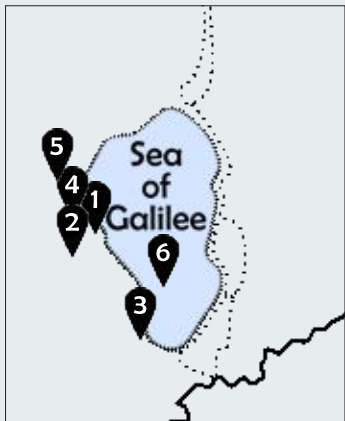
Tiberias was founded in 17 CE by Herod Antipas and is today the largest city in the Jordan Valley. In the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE, Tiberias was one of the most important religious centers of Judaism.

### Sights

- 1 **Hamat Tiberias**, an ancient bathhouse, fed by water from hot, sulfuric springs with some very well-preserved mosaics on display.
- 2 The **ruins of the Roman amphitheater** which once seated around 7000 people.
- 3 The modern **baptism site Yardenit**, some few kilometers south of Tiberias at the Jordan River.
- 4 The **tomb of Maimonides**, an important scholar of the Middle Ages and one of the most important Jewish scholars of all times.

### Activities

- 5 Hiking on **Mt. Arbel** for a panoramic view of the Sea of Galilee and a steep descent via the 300m high cliff.
- 6 Boat ride on the **Sea of Galilee** or swimming in the water.



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North-western shore of the Sea of Galilee, seen from Mt. Arbel

## 31 Sea of Galilee (1)



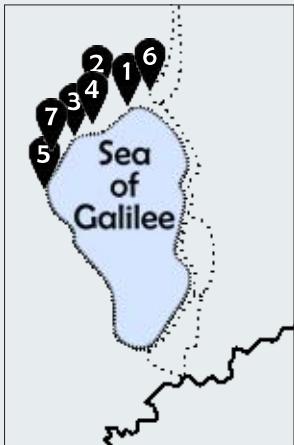
Some of the most important biblical places of pilgrimage are located along the north-western shore of the Sea of Galilee between Tiberias and Bethsaida.

### Biblical Places

- 1 The excavations of **Capernaum**, the ancient city in which Jesus dwelled and taught for several years and where the "House of Peter" is located.
- 2 The **Mountain of Beatitudes** with the same-named chapel high above the sea shore.
- 3 **Tabgha**, the traditional place of the miracle of the Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes.
- 4 **St. Peter's Primacy**, where Jesus is said to have bestowed leadership of the church upon Peter.
- 5 The excavations of the ancient city of **Migdal**, the likely home-town of Mary of Magdala.
- 6 The excavations of **Bethsaida**, a village from which some of Jesus' disciples are said to have originated and of **Chorazim**, one of the cities Jesus cursed.

### Sights

- 7 The "**Jesus-Boat**", an approx. 2000 years old fisher boat which was found in the Sea of Galilee.



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Kursi



Hippos Susita



Yarmuk Museum

## 32 See of Galilee (2)



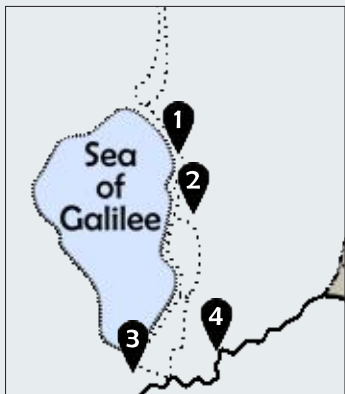
The eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee is called “country of the Gerasenes” in the New Testament (cf. Luke 8:26-39). Here, according to the bible, Jesus healed the man with demons (Matthew 8:23-34). Since Israel occupied the Golan Heights in 1967, the eastern shore is accessible from Israel.

### Sights

- 1 The ancient village of **Kursi**, which is often identified with Jesus’ exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac. In the 5<sup>th</sup> century CE, a Byzantine monastery was established for pilgrims.
- 2 The ruins of the ancient Greek-Roman city of **Hippos Susita** (meaning “horse”), approx. 350m above the sea.
- 3 The unique **Museum of Yarmukian Culture**, dedicated to the same-named people living at the Yarmuk River some 8000 years ago.

### Activities

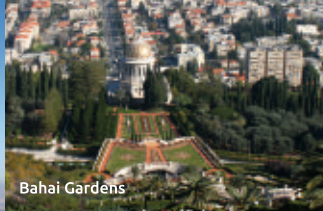
- 4 The hot **thermal springs of Hamat Gader**, which were used by the Romans as early as 2000 years ago and until today invite for a relaxing bath or massage.







View from Mt. Carmel



Bahai Gardens



Stella Maris Church

## 33 Mt. Carmel



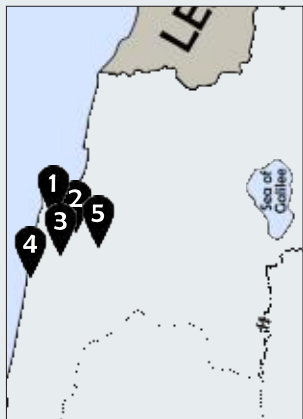
The small mountain range extends from Haifa for more than 25km in south-eastern direction to the Galilee and the Jesreel Valley. This scenic region gains an elevation of almost 550m and invites especially for charming hikes.

### Sights

- 1 **Haifa** and the **Bahai Gardens** along with the two **Druze villages** Daliyat al-Karmel and Isfiya, both offering a glimpse into the Druze religion and culture.
- 2 The two monasteries **Stella Maris and Muhraqa**, both associated with the life of the prophet Elijah (cf. the so-called "Judgment of God on Mt. Carmel", 1Kings 18:1-40).
- 3 Caves with pre-historic traces of human settlement in **Nachal Me'arot Nature Reserve**.

### Activities

- 4 Hiking and camping in **Mt. Carmel National Park** or in **Taninim Nature Reserve**, the origin of the ancient aqueduct of Caesarea Maritima.
- 5 Wildlife observation in **Hai-Bar Karmel Nature Reserve**, e.g. white-tailed eagles, griffon vultures of the endangered Persian fallow deer.



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Beit Sche'an

## 34 Gilboa Mountains

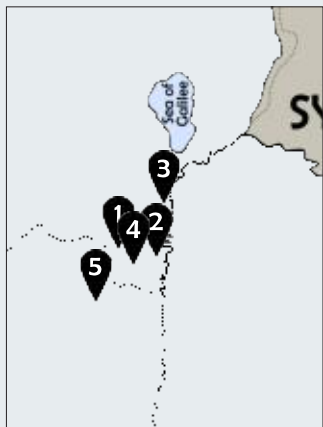
The mountains of Gilboa stretch for about 20km in the east of the Jesreel Valley along the border of the West Bank. The region is not only rich in archaeological gems, but also a great place for hiking and nature observation.

### Sights

- 1 The ancient synagogue of **Beit Alpha** dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup> century CE with its unique and well-preserved mosaic floors.
- 2 The excavations of the ancient **Decapolis town of Beit She'an** (aka Skythopolis) where once up to 40.000 inhabitants dwelled.
- 3 The impressive ruins of the medieval **Belvoir Castle** (literally "nice view") dating back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE. Some 550m above the Jordan Valley, the castles is one of the most beautiful of all crusaders' fortresses in the Holy Land.

### Activities

- 4 Swimming in the 28° warm **thermal springs** of Gan ha-Schloscha/Sachne National Park.
- 5 A walk in the Palestinian Nature Reserve **Umm at-Tut** near Jenin.



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al-Aqsa and the Jewish Quarter



Stone of Anointing



Old City of Jerusalem

## 35 Jerusalem (1)

In Jerusalem's twisting alleyways, seamed by more than 200 shrines, synagogues, sanctuaries and world-renowned monuments, you are literally breathing history.

Jerusalem invites you with its **infinite mélange of history, culture, language and foreign influences** – a unique spot of sensory and spiritual experiences. Its wonders go far beyond religion, offering infinite possibilities for an unforgettable time and creating long-lasting travel memories.

Walk through the four **Old City quarters** – Muslim, Christian, Jewish, and Armenian – for an exceptional tour d'horizon from culinary delights like Palestinian goat-cheese Knafeh to freshly baked Jewish challah bread and from the scents of incense burned in churches to the spicy aromas of the market streets. Jerusalem touches upon all senses.

Discover the **Church of the Holy Sepulcher** – commemorating the place of Christ's crucifixion, burial and resurrection – the **Haram ash-Sharif** with the al-Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock – Islam's third holiest site – or the **Western Wall**, part of the massive substructure of the Temple Mount, built by Herod the Great – Judaism's most venerated prayer site.



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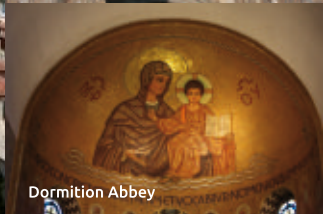
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View of East Jerusalem



Lions Gate



Dormition Abbey

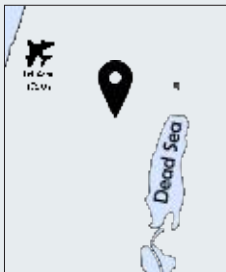
## 36 Jerusalem (2)

South-east of the Old City, you may admire the **archaeological findings** of Jerusalem from biblical times and ascend to the **St. Peter in Gallicantu Church** and continue to **Mt. Zion** with the **Last Supper Room**, the Tomb of David and the **Dormition Abbey**, the location where Mary is said to have lived after Jesus' death.

West of Mt. Zion, you may cross the Jerusalem-Hebron Road and traverse into West Jerusalem, where a visit of the **First Station** and the **German Colony**, the Dutch Colony with its artist quarters and a stroll along modern Jaffa Street are highly recommended. If you have an interest for archaeology, history or art, do not miss the **Israel Museum**, the Bible Lands Museum, and the Holocaust Memorial **Yad Vashem**.

Continue your exploration in **East Jerusalem**, just north of the Old City. Few meters from the famous, and newly renovated **Damascus Gate**, descend into Jerusalem ancient stone quarries or pay a visit to the Garden Tomb.

A walk along the busy **Salah ed-Din** and **Sultan Suleiman Street** will lead you to the Rockefeller Museum and to East Jerusalem's many cafés, restaurants, and shops.



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Mt. of Olives



Church of Nations



Garden Gethsemane

## 37 Mt. of Olives



East of Jerusalem, the **Mt. of Olives** with its religious monuments and panoramic views awaits you: In Jesus' times a vast **olive tree orchard**, the mountain slope is today home to a mainly Arab community and visited by an endless stream of pilgrims tracing biblical events:

The **Chapel of Ascension**, originally a church, today an Islamic shrine, goes back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century CE and hosts a stone, believed to be the one, from which Jesus ascended to heaven.

A few meters downhill, the **Pater Noster Church** remembers Jesus' first teaching of Christianity's best-known prayer, while the **Dominus Flevit Church** and the **Church of Nations in the Garden of Gethsemane** are remembering to Jesus' last days in Jerusalem.

But even, if you are not on a spiritual pilgrimage, you should not miss the **magnificent panorama of the Old City** of Jerusalem from the observation point and maybe the **"Tombs of the Minor Prophets"**, an ancient burial site dating back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century BCE, will catch your attention.



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