



Sales Guide & Tour Operator's Manual for the Holy Land

2025 edition

Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association (HLITOA)

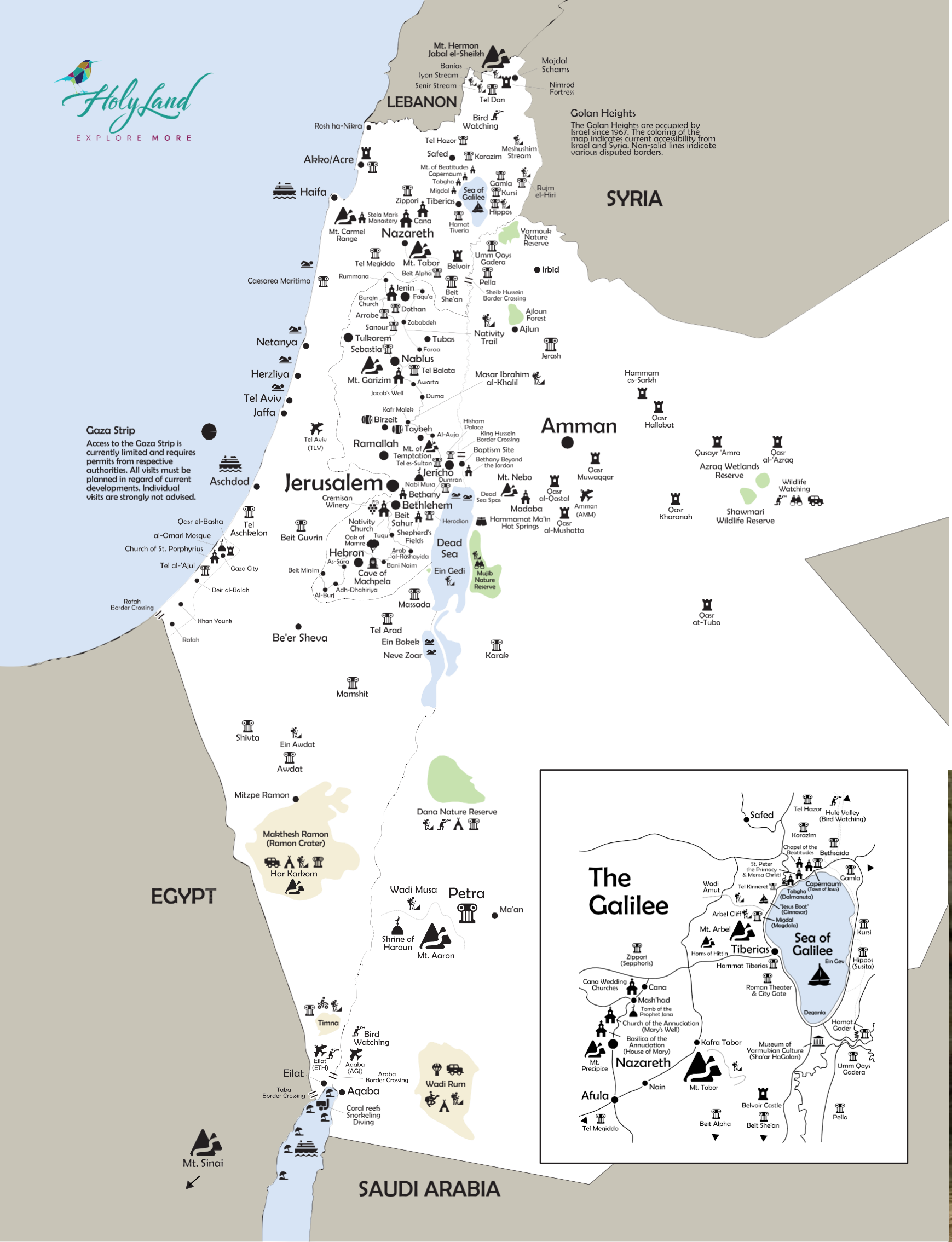


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About HLITOA

The Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association (HLITOA) represents almost 38 Palestinian inbound tour operators serving clients throughout the wider Holy Land in Palestine, Israel, Jordan, and Egypt. Each member is legally registered and able to conduct tours for any client seamlessly throughout the region.

HLITOA's key mission is to support and strengthen Palestinian incoming tour operators, as well as tourism in the Holy Land in general. Its activities include: development and promotion of new touristic offers, initiating and supporting sustainable and fair tourism development, representing Palestinian tour operators at both regional and international levels, supporting international tour operators with updates and practical information, and initiating business contacts between outgoing and incoming agencies.

For more information on HLITOA's activities, visit:

www.hlitoa.com.

About this Sales Guide

The small fertile land bridge connecting Africa, Europe, and Asia lies at the crossroads of civilizations. Through the ages, the region witnessed empires and cultures rise and fall, including: the Canaanites, Phoenicians, Israelites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Arab Caliphates, Crusaders, Ayyubids, Mamluks, and Ottomans.

Today's political borders, dividing the region into Palestine, Israel, and Jordan, are the result of a long, ever evolving history. Yet, each and every era left its unique footprint, if not on the ground, in memories and heritage, creating the unified landscape of remembrance the Holy Land is today.

Navigating through these multiple layers and dimensions can be challenging, whether traveling is your profession or you enjoy private sojourns. HLITOA's Sales Guide & Tour Operator's Manual for the Holy Land was created to support you in your outgoing business to the Holy Land, your product development and itinerary design, and to share with you first-hand knowledge and insights from this unique destination.

1. Destinations. Here you will find a brief, yet comprehensive overview of the regions and destinations the Holy Land offers including all major religious and spiritual sites from Jordan to the Mediterranean. The numbers under each section can lead you directly to an itinerary featuring these places.

2. Itineraries. Here you will find a collection of uniquely designed itinerary suggestions. Some itineraries are covering classical topics from the area of pilgrimage travel, while others are creatively themed suggestions for how to offer the Holy Land off the beaten track.

3. Practical Travel Information. Here you will find solid basic information about arrivals, transportation and getting around in the Holy Land as well as an overview of the wide variety of accommodation and lodging services available.

We hope that our sales guide will be a useful tool in your daily work and a resource of inspiration for how to operate and sell your Holy Land tours even more successfully.





Message from the Director

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Tourism Professionals,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff at the Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association (HLITOA), it is my great pleasure to present you with our updated Sales Guide & Tour Operator's Manual for the Holy Land.

When we first launched this guide in 2018 and 2019, it was the first of its kind—introducing creative itineraries across the wider Holy Land: from the pyramids of Egypt to the deserts of Jordan, from the ancient port city of Akko in Israel to the shrines and sanctuaries along the Masar Ibrahim in Palestine. Each itinerary was carefully crafted to offer new perspectives of the Holy Land, attractive to both first-time visitors and valued returning customers.

Much has changed since then. Our region continues to face immense challenges, and the Palestinian people, particularly in Gaza, endure hardship and uncertainty. Yet, even in these difficult times, we remain steadfast in our mission: to share the richness of our culture, heritage, and hospitality with the world, and to keep alive the belief that tourism can serve as a bridge for peace, understanding, and prosperity.

The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), have in past years ranked Palestine among the fastest-growing destinations, with remarkable rises in international arrivals. This shows us that the Holy Land will always hold a unique and powerful attraction for travelers seeking spiritual depth, cultural diversity, and human connection.

In this spirit, the new edition of our guide combines comprehensive background information on destinations, the latest attractions, extension suggestions, and unique sites east and west of the Jordan Valley. It has been updated to reflect not only the extraordinary heritage of the land but also the resilience and creativity of its people.

With 38 qualified, experienced, and licensed Palestinian tour operators, HLITOA members provide comprehensive coverage of the wider Holy Land. From tailored itineraries and cross-border logistics to full-range travel services for groups and individuals, our members guarantee safe, smooth, and memorable experiences that meet the highest standards of professionalism.

While challenges on the ground remain real, HLITOA looks ahead with determination and hope. We are building for the future—preparing strategies to ensure that, when travelers return in greater numbers, they will find a Palestinian tourism sector ready to welcome them with open arms, sustainable practices, and renewed spirit.

Together with our partners, we and all our members look forward to welcoming you and your guests to the unforgettable experiences that await in the Holy Land—a land of timeless heritage, living culture, and unshakable hope for tomorrow.

Sincerely

Ihab Jabari



Destinations







Jerusalem



The Cradle of World's History

Appears in itineraries: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7

The Old City

In Jerusalem's twisting alleyways, featuring 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 to 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 al-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.

You might also explore Jerusalem from far below and high above: pass through the Western Wall Tunnels and the city's ancient cisterns, today traversing the Muslim Quarter and walk on the very Roman pavement, now few meters below Jerusalem's surface, Jesus may have walked on. Or climb up on the medieval Old City's ramparts, once built by Suleiman the Magnificent to fortify the city, now offering unparalleled views over Jerusalem's maze of streets and alleys.



Jerusalem

In the Vicinity of the Old City

Certainly, a visit to the Holy City would not be complete without extending your travels beyond the Old City walls.

Starting in the east, 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 4th century 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 teachings of Christianity's best-known prayer, the Lord's 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 Tomb of the Minor Prophets, an ancient burial site dating back to the 1st century BCE will catch your attention.

Later on, the underground tunnels from Roman times will take you up to the southern city wall. Continue onwards to Mt. Zion with the

Mount of Olives, Jerusalem



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, 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 in 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. A few meters from the famous, and newly renovated Damascus Gate, descend into Jerusalem's ancient stone quarries at Zedeki-

ah's Cave or pay a visit to the Garden Tomb, a competing tradition for the crucifixion and burial of Jesus.

A walk along the busy Salah ed-Din and Sultan Suleiman Streets will lead you to the Rockefeller Museum, exhibiting artifacts unearthed in the 1920s and 1930s in Mandate Palestine.

After a day full of exploration and discovery, enjoy some signature dishes of Arab-Palestinian cuisine in the restaurants and cafés on East Jerusalemite Zahra or Nablus Street and start planning your next day in the Holy Land.





From the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley



Church of Nativity, Bethlehem



Jericho — The Oldest City in the World

Appears in: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

A ride in 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 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 and orange orchards, the Dead Sea, the Baptismal site and the highlands of Jordan on the horizon.

A visit to Jericho allows you to travel through time. Start your journey with traces of the Neolithic Revolution at Tel es-Sultan, through the biblical era of Joshua's conquest and Jesus' preaching to Zacchaeus, to the magnificent, mosaic-paved Omayyad Palace Qasr Hisham before strolling through Jericho's contemporary center.

In addition to its cultural heritage, Jericho is both a favorite winter resort for its pleasant climate and an ideal spot for small-scale farming of citrus fruits, bananas, and dates.

You are invited to explore this fascinating blend of history, spirituality and nature on foot, by bike, camel-back or horse-drawn carriage. Do not miss a hike in close-by Wadi el-Quelt, the ancient route between Jericho and Jerusalem!

Nablus — Discover Authentic Local Craftsmanship

Appears in: 2, 4, 5, 6, 7

Nestled between the foots 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.

Also known as "Little Damascus", the rich history of Nablus' Old City can be felt in its seven quarters, representing a distinctive example of traditional Palestinian urban architecture and featuring 12 mosques, 2 churches, a Samaritan synagogue as well as a traditional Turkish Hammam, the perfect spot for a wellness time-out.

Explore Nablus' many layers of history at Tel el-Balata, a former hub of an extensive trade network, Jacob's Well, the Samaritan community on Mt. Garizim and in its old city. Nature lovers should head to Wadi Bidan, a picturesque valley rich in mountain springs, for an enchanting hike.



From the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley



Sebastia — A Quiet Getaway into Archeology and Nature

Appears in: 2, 5, 6

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's majestic Hellenistic fortification towers overlook imposing steps leading up to a former Temple of Zeus, and invite visitors to unravel thousands of years of history — among them, the city's past, when it was called Samaria, the tomb of John the Baptist, and the 12th century CE Crusader's church, now a mosque.

Indulge yourself with authentic Palestinian hospitality and lodge comfortably in one of the boutique guesthouses. Enjoy your morning tea on a sun-drenched terrace and let the magnificent views of the surrounding rich olive groves and lush farmlands tempt you to various outdoor activities including hikes and donkey rides.

Sebastia's rich history and ample nature present an archeological and spiritual highlight in Palestine and a perfect off-the-beaten-track destination.

Jenin — The Fruit and Vegetable Basket of the North

Appears in: 2, 5, 6, 7

Located at the foot of the northern Palestinian mountain range, not far from the fertile Jezreel Valley, Jenin is the most northern Palestinian city in the West Bank and famous for its incomparable fresh and tasty fruits and vegetables.

In addition to a visit of Jenin's city center, numerous sites in its vicinity await exploration: Arraba — a tiny village famous for its Ottoman Palaces of the Abd al-Hadi family; Tel Dothan, a so-far barely excavated ancient settlement, where Joseph was supposedly sold to Egypt by his brothers; or Bal'ama tunnel, an ancient water system comparable to Hezekiah's tunnel in Jerusalem.

Yet, by far the most important site in Jenin's vicinity is the picturesque village of Burqin, famous not only for its handmade olive oil soap, but also for hosting one of the oldest churches in the world: the Greek Orthodox St George's Church, biblically known as the Church of the Ten Lepers.

Since Jenin and its vicinity have been fairly untouched by tourism, it is ideal for a thorough experience of an authentic oriental Palestine.

Hebron — A City Steeped in History

Appears in: 3, 5, 6, 7

Palestine's southern urban center transcends 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 the earliest times, Hebron has been steeped in history — a contested space, where religion and faith, culture and heritage are inextricably linked with conflicts and broad diversity of human encounters.

Embark on a guided tour and unravel the roots of Judaism, Christianity and Islam at the mosque and synagogue atop the Cave of Machpela, wander through the old town's market, observe traditional handicrafts in Hebron's leather and glassblowing studios, or indulge yourself with an authentic Hebronite signature dish — camel meat stew!

Offering a diverse blend of history, art, culture and political narratives, Hebron is the ideal place to learn about Palestinian heritage and what life in Palestine is like today.

Bethlehem, Beit Sahour & Beit Jala The Birthplace of Christianity

Appears in: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

Tracing Christianity back to its roots, you will undoubtedly arrive to Bethlehem for a visit of one of the oldest churches in the world: The Nativity Church, a UNESCO World Heritage, commemorated as the birthplace of Christ. Join pilgrims from all over the world and descend to the Nativity Grotto, the Altar of the Innocent Children and the cave St. Jerome lived in for a good portion of his life.

Back above ground continue following the cobbled streets, lined with traditional handicraft stores, offering Bethlehem's signature olive-wood carvings to the Milk Grotto and listen to its legendary story. Continue your walk traversing the Manger Square to the elegant Mosque of Omar and head on to the old market or one of Bethlehem's museums.

Today, Bethlehem is far from the romantic imagination of a small village, some shepherds in the fields, and a manger.

On the contrary, the city hums with activity and invites you to discover local art, watch dancing and theatrical performances, or talk politics. If you are linguistically talented or simply interested, take a course in Aramaic, the language of Jesus!

A few kilometers' distance from Bethlehem, the city of Beit Sahour awaits you for a visit of the Shepherds' Fields and in close-by Beit Jala, St. Nicolas Church remembers the world-wide known saint lodging here for many years.

Beyond this, Bethlehem also makes an ideal base for roundtrips in southern and central Palestine. Within day-trips reach, explore Batir, Hebron, Jericho, or the rocky desert extending to the Dead Sea. In Bethlehem's vicinity, make sure not to miss the enchanting Solomon's Pools, the Hortus Conclusus in Irtas village or the Monastery of Mar Saba, miraculously built in a steep cliff of the Kidron Valley.

Whether you visit as a pilgrim or without religious ambition, Bethlehem and its surroundings are an experiential highlight worth the experience.

Ramallah and al-Bireh Palestine's Vibrant Capital of Culture and Nightlife

Appears in: 6, 7

Set in the middle of rural towns and villages, 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 lined with tiny shops and cafés around al-Manara Square and its iconic four lions, discover the bustling al-Muntazah neighborhood with its trendy bars, and drift through the market with its fruits, vegetables, and freshly made falafel.

Ramallah is at the very heart of Palestine's political and cultural life: it is home to the main governmental buildings, the mausoleum of former Palestinian president Yasser Arafat, and the Mahmoud Darwish Museum, the famous Palestinian poet.

The cities host countless art and folklore events, festivals, and cultural activities like the annual Contemporary Dance Festival.

Known for its mild climate, Ramallah's offer of accommodation, restaurants, cultural activities, and other touristic services are infinite. Being the country's declared cultural hotspot, Ramallah lets every traveler discover a truly colorful Palestine.



Mar Saba Monastery, Bethlehem



From the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley

Taybeh & Birzeit Meet the Local Beer Industry

Appears in: 6, 7

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. Taybeh is home to the only Palestinian brewery producing its beer after the German purity law, While Birzeit hosts the Shepherds Brewery with varying kinds of beer for every taste.

Famous for its own Oktoberfest (Taybeh) and its annual maftoul (couscous) festival (Birzeit), both cities are also rich in history and culture: The Palestinian Museum in Birzeit awaits you with changing exhibitions on culture, society, and contemporary Palestinian art and close-by St. George Church invites for a moment of tranquility, before or after taking a tour to the breweries, each offering tastings of their products.

Situated on a remote, picturesque hillside, Taybeh and Birzeit are a great get-away from bustling Ramallah while allowing for an experience rich in taste and history.

Bethany — The Miracle of Lazarus' Resurrection

Appears in: 1, 7

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.

En route between Jerusalem, Bethlehem or Jericho, a visit to Lazarus' tomb and the Mary & Martha Church will soon be even more worthwhile when a new and significantly longer visitors' path will open in 2018.

Jaffa & Tel Aviv — A Cool Seaside Getaway of Culture, Cuisine and Coastal Fun

Appears in: 3, 6

Set along a 13 km long stretch of serene beaches, Jaffa and Tel Aviv uniquely combine Mediterranean flair with ancient history and modern urban lifestyle.

Indulge yourself in innovative cuisine down at Jaffa's seashore grab a well-shaken cocktail among locals working in one of the hip cafés along the beach, or simply enjoy a relaxed day's walk along the promenade.

Passionate admirers of culture and history will enjoy a stroll through the Bauhaus-style "White City" (UNESCO World Heritage) or traveling back in time in Jaffa's historic seaport, its remnants from Pharaonic times and its biblical spots like the Church of St. Peter.

Be sure, not to miss Jaffa's antiquities and flea market and Tel Aviv's Carmel Market, both full of aromas, scents and tempting shopping opportunities.

Tel Aviv is famous for the Middle East's biggest Pride Week, its especially diverse vegan kitchen, and its exhilarating nightlife from dusk till dawn. More artistically interested visitors will enjoy the various artisan boutiques and the spectacular Museum of Modern Art.



Tel Aviv

The Mediterranean Coastline — A Blend of Archeological Gems and Seaside Wonders

Appears in: 3, 4, 7

Once a main traveling route between the Fertile Crescent and North Africa, the Mediterranean coastline from southern Lebanon to the Sinai Peninsula is as rich in history as in natural variety.

In the very north, nature lovers should not miss the spectacular grottos of Rosh HaNikra with their cavernous tunnels formed by natural erosion, mesmerizing colors and shapes. One of the steepest cable cars in the world, takes you down to the lower base station with a gradient of 60'!

Only a short drive south of Rosh HaNikra, the old city of Akko (Acre), situated on a little semi-peninsula, marvels with its winding cobbled alleys, its skyline of copper-green roofs and numerous minarets and church towers. UNESCO-listed since 2001, Akko's history reaches back to the 3rd millennium BCE! As early as the Bronze Age, Akko's natural seaport made it an important trade city. Further down in history, the Crusaders founded a kingdom here and built a monumental fortress, open for a visit today.

The city's checkered history, including an unsuccessful 61-day-siege by Napoleon, and its picturesque old harbor, make Akko a splendid getaway for admirers of history and nature alike.

Just at the other end of the vast bay, Haifa and its steep Carmel Mountain Range invite you to discover its many architectural and natural wonders. Enthusiastically named the "San Francisco of Israel", you can enjoy far-reaching views from the famous Bahá'í gardens or follow the Bauhaus-style streets of the German Colony all the way to the harbor. Haifa is especially famous for its Jewish-Arab coexistence and a peaceful example of Christians, Muslims, and Jews living and working side by side.

Pilgrims and admirers of magnificent views should also pay a visit to the Stela Maris Monastery, high above Haifa in the Carmel Mountain Range, commemorating prophet Elijah's lodging in this beautiful spot of nature.

Further south, the ancient Roman port city of Caesarea boasts its remarkably preserved remains that have stood thousands of years, dating back to the era of King Herod. Wander through the ruins of the seaside hippodrome, the Roman temples, and the Crusaders' castle or take a dip into the indigo-blue Mediterranean at the ancient aqueduct.

Towards Tel Aviv and Jaffa, the coastal cities of Netanya and Herzliya are prime destinations for sun-seekers and watersport enthusiasts. Whether you are an individual vacationer, traveling with your family, or on a group tour, spending a day or more at the sandy beaches with their Mediterranean turquoise waters is a refreshing experience not to be missed!

South of Jaffa, the modern cities of Ashdod and Ashkelon are worth considering for a brief visit. In Ashdod, the unique Philistine Museum lets you explore the history and impact of the 12th century "sea people" once settling in the area. In Ashkelon history dates back to the 8th millennium BCE, when an ancient seaport was already located here. Tel Ashkelon, the mudbrick city gate with its tunnel-like barrel vault, is the oldest such vault ever found.



Bahá'í Garden, Haifa



From the Mediterranean to the Jordan Valley

The Galilee and the Golan Heights Walking on Biblical Paths in a Varied Landscape

Appears in: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6

A must-see for Christian pilgrims, the biblical landscapes around Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee invite you also for exciting hikes, a relaxed lakeshore getaway and explorations into history dating back to the 3rd millennium BCE.

In Nazareth, Israel's largest Arab city, a modern city center with busy markets joins with its biblical reference as Jesus' childhood home. The Well of Mary, the Basilica of Annunciation, the 12th century "synagogue-church" and close-by Mt. Precipice each commemorate another event in Jesus' early years.

Just a short drive (or longer hike) away, Mt. Tabor with the Church of Transfiguration provides a panoramic view of the Jezreel Valley and Lower Galilee. A few kilometers to the north, several churches remember Jesus' "First Miracle", the Marriage at Cana, while the ancient city of Sepphoris (Zippori) amazes pilgrims and others alike with its stunning mosaics.

From Nazareth, a few days' hike along the "Jesus and Gospel Trail" leads the way to the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus spent most of his public ministry. The lakeshore, 200m below sea level, is lined with New Testament places: Capernaum — the "Town of Jesus", the Mt. of Beatitudes, the Church of Multiplication in Tabgha, Migdal - Mary Magdalene's likely hometown, and close-by ancient cities like Bethsaida and Chorazin.

Away from the sea, in Upper Galilee and the Golan Heights, numerous archaeological sites and nature reserves invite nature lovers and culturally interested travelers alike. Within easy reach by car are ancient Tel Dan, the ancient Decapolis city of Caesarea Philippi at the Banias Stream or the monumental medieval Nimrod Fortress; longer, sometimes strenuous hikes are well rewarded with panoramic views and ancient findings at Gamla, Hippos Susita or the mystic Bronze Age site of Rujm el-Hiri.

If your appetite for sports goes beyond hiking, inquire with your tour operator for some exciting mountain-biking, paragliding from the steep mountain ranges, or river rafting and kayaking.

The historical depth of over five millennia of history, combined with a well-developed touristic infrastructure make the Galilee and Golan an equally intriguing pilgrimage and leisure destination.



Dead Sea



The Dead Sea — The Lowest Place on Earth

Appears in: 1, 3, 4, 6

Almost 430 meters below Sea Level, the Jordan Valley around the Dead Sea is not only famous for its spa facilities and health benefits, but is also rich in historical and natural sites.

At the sea's northern end, close to Jericho, lie the ancient settlement of Qumran and the caves, where the Dead Sea Scrolls — the world's oldest biblical manuscripts — were found. Further south, the lush nature reserve of Ein Gedi awaits you for an easy stroll to the waterfalls or a full-day ambitious mountain hike. Few kilometers onward, the solitary mountain fortress Masada is strategically located on an isolated rock plateau — reachable via the steep snake path or by cable car.

The Dead Sea can easily be reached from Jericho, Bethlehem and Jerusalem or from Amman. A variety of accommodations from guest-houses to luxurious spa hotels are awaiting your visit on either side.

If you are traveling on the Jordanian site, make sure not to miss the unique hot springs of Hammamat Ma'in and the Masada-like, yet barely preserved Mukawer (Machaerus) fortress. Tradition holds, that John the Baptist was imprisoned here once by Herod Antipas.

The Negev — Life in the Desert

Appears in: 4

While covering the majority of Israel's landmass, the Negev hosts less than 10% of the country's population. Stretching from Be'er Sheva all the way down to Eilat, it is the ideal place to experience authentic Bedouin lifestyle, visit archaeological sites or to take part in one of many outdoor activities.

Whether you are an adventure-seeking outdoor enthusiast or an archaeology-driven admirer of history, a trip to the Negev will be a rewarding experience. For example, visit the ancient Nabatean towns Shivta, Mamshit, Haluza, and Avdat along the ancient Incense Route or join an off-road tour into the Makthesh, a globally unique, breathtaking crater-like landscape created by water erosion.

If you are traveling in biblical footsteps, consider a two-day trip 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 proof of extensive religious activity in the area.

All the way to the south, at the border to Egypt and Jordan, the coastal resort-city of Eilat is a year-round getaway on the shores of the Red Sea. Like neighboring Aqaba, Eilat is famous for its diving and snorkeling opportunities in an incredibly colorful and diverse marine life.

Beyond watersports, the Araba (the southern extension of the Jordan Valley) bi-annually receives millions of visitors right from the sky, when migrating birds take a rest not far from Eilat and Aqaba — a world-class bird watching opportunity.





Ad-Deir, Petra



East of the Jordan Valley

Amman — Where Ancient Ruins Stand next to Modern Malls

Appears in: 4

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 for exploring the Jordanian kingdom. 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 entertainments make the city a true cultural hotspot.

Petra, Wadi Rum & Karak — The Ancient Sceneries of Hollywood Movies

Appears in: 4

Petra, the ancient capital of the Arab Nabateans has enthralled travelers ever since their modern discovery in the 19th century. Named one of the "New7Wonders" of the world, Petra's elaborate architecture was carved into the pink-colored cliffs about 2,000 years ago, including numerous tombs, temples, and undoubtedly sacrificial and cultic installations. In 363 CE, an earthquake destroyed large parts of the city and damaged its sophisticated water system; a few centuries later, the city was abandoned and its ruins remained a curiosity to ancient travelers for a long time.

Today, a visit of the Rose City still leaves you curious what its monumental structures like the Lion Triclinium, ad-Deir, or the Snake Monument may have meant for its builders. Petra is a must-stop on any Holy Land trip, no matter if you travel for leisure, are seeking adventures or having spiritual ambitions. If you are an ambitious hiker, you should also not miss the steep ascent to the tomb of prophet Aaron, Mose's older brother, on Jabal Haroun (Mt. Aaron).

About two hours south of Petra, the virtually untouched beauty of the desert of Wadi Rum and its mazes of chiseled canyons are



East of the Jordan Valley



The Oval Forum and Cardo Maximus, Jerash

awaiting your discovery. Whether on foot, camelback or in a 4x4 car, a visit to Wadi Rum will indulge you right into scenes of “Lawrence of Arabia”, “The Martian” or “Rogue One: A Star Wars Story”, all featuring fascinating landscape.

On your way south, you may also consider stopping at one of the best-preserved Crusader castles in the Middle East, the castle of Kerak. 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.

Madaba, Mt. Nebo and Bethany Beyond the Jordan — Holy Sites and Handmade History

Appears in: 4

Only about an hour away from King Hussein Border Crossing or Amman, the tiny city of Madaba marks a perfect starting point to explore the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Rightfully called the “City of Mosaics”, Madaba’s signature artwork is the 6th century mosaic map on the floor of the St. George’s Church depicting the Holy Land as it was known to pilgrims as early as the 4th century! No matter if you are about to complete your journey in Madaba or are just about getting your trip started, you will easily recognize numerous places you will visit or may have already seen.

Just a few minutes to the northwest, biblical Mt. Nebo raises high above the Jordan Valley offering a splendid panorama of the Dead Sea, Jericho and Jerusalem in the distance. The church on its summit dates back to the 4th century and marks the site, from which Moses was granted a last view of the Promised Land before his death.

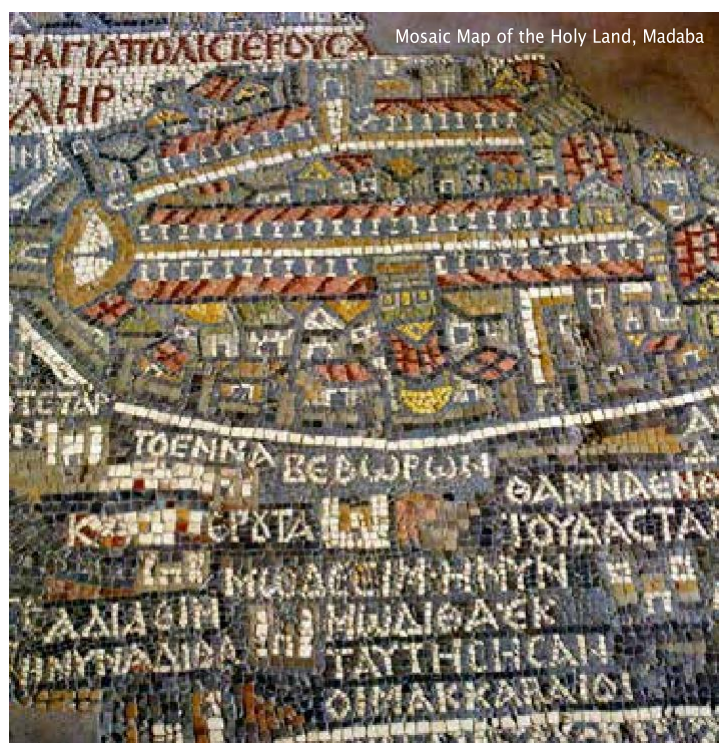
From Nebo’s summit, a steep road takes you down more than 1200m to Bethany Beyond the Jordan, believed to be the place where Jesus was baptized by John. And a few kilometers to the south, Jordan’s Dead Sea spas await you with relaxation and a dip in the salty water, before you may continue to the natural hot-springs of Hammamat Ma’in and Mukawer (Machaerus), the barely preserved 700 meters high hilltop stronghold of Herod the Great and his son Antipas.

Umm Qays, Pella, Ajlun & Jerash — Blends of Nature and Ancient Architecture

In the country’s northwest corner, Jordan features fertile and ever-changing green landscapes laced with the remains of multiple era’s striking architecture.

If you are a pilgrim or simply interested in the country’s biblical sites, visiting Umm Qays in northern Jordan is a must-see. Named Gadara in ancient Greek, the ancient city once was a center of Greek culture in the region located in a commanding position on a ridge. Whether Jesus’ exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac truly happened here, remains unknown, but the view of the Sea of Galilee, the Golan and even Mt. Hermon (Jabal el-Sheikh) is much worth the visit!

Further southwest lies Pella, a gem for any archeology and history lover. Thanks to the surrounding fertile valleys and rich water sources, Pella shows evidence of 8 millennia of settlement from



Mosaic Map of the Holy Land, Madaba



the Neolithic era to medieval Islamic times. Once one of the ten Decapolis cities, Pella today still features a remarkable ensemble of Hellenistic architecture.

Southeast of Pella, Ajloun Forest Reserve is a magnificent nature reserve among lush hills covered by multi-colored wildflowers and forests of pine, pistachio, and carob trees. In its south, you will find the impressive Islamic Ajloun Castle dating back to the 12th century as well as the close-by Tel Mar Elias, often identified with Tishbe, the hometown of Prophet Elijah.

Finally, the impressive Hadrian's Gate in the center of the ancient city of Jerash (Gerasa in ancient Greek) marks today's entrance to a journey through time in one of the world's best-preserved Roman towns. If you have an appetite for ancient architecture, wandering along the colonnaded streets, perfectly designed theatres, vast squares, and lofty temples of Jerash is a must-do.

Aqaba — Word-Class Diving on the Southern Edge of Jordan

Appears in: 3, 4

After spending some days in Petra and Wadi Rum, Aqaba awaits with its indigo-colored waters in front of the red cliffs of the surrounding mountains. The diverse marine life of the Red Sea allures you to spend days snorkeling, scuba-diving, fishing, and sailing, while Aqaba itself invites you to lean back in one of the many beach resorts between Tala Bay and the city center, and to enjoy the holiday atmosphere.

With its international airport and regular direct connections to Amman, destinations in Egypt and Europe, Aqaba is not only a great stop in passing from Jordan to Israel, but can also be your trip's port of entry or final destination.

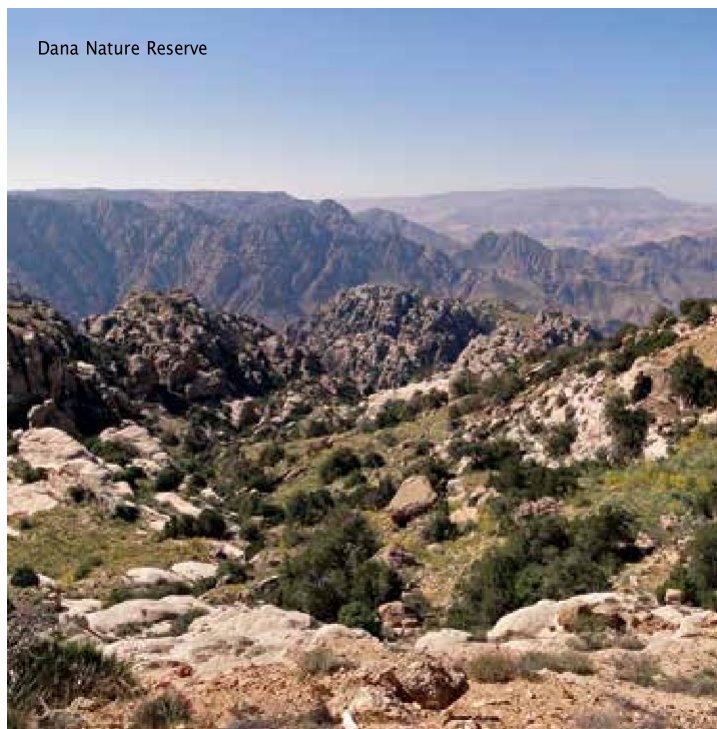
Jordan's Nature Reserves and Desert Castles — A Walk on the Wild Side

Nature Reserves

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

In the northwest, not far from Jerash, Dibe'en Forest Reserve extends over 8.5 square kilometers with pine and oak trees, scattered over the steep hillsides of the Jordan valley. Some of the largest Aleppo Pines grow in Dibe'en, which is one of the last remaining natural pine-oak forest in the Middle East. In addition, the reserve is home to 17 endangered species, including the Persian Squirrel.

The Azraq Wetland Reserve in the country's east is a major stopover for a variety of birds on their annual migration routes. Located in the center of Jordan's eastern desert, it features natural attractions like the vast marshland, several pools, and a large mudflat. A little further south, the Shaumari Wildlife Reserve represents a similar small oasis and was created for endangered animals on 22



square kilometers. Today home to a number of the rarest species in the Middle East, you may see, among other animals, Arabian oryx, Somali ostriches, and gazelles.

The Wadi Mujib Nature Reserve in Jordan's west is rightfully called the "Grand Canyon of Jordan" — starting at more than 900m above sea level in the mountains and descending for more than 1,300m to the shore of the Dead Sea, 400m below sea level. Most likely identical with the River Arnon in the Old Testament, Wadi Mujib invites you for short and longer hikes, introducing you to the incredible biodiversity including numerous migratory birds, but also the striped hyena, the Syrian wolf, or the Nubian ibex.

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. If you are into observation of nature, Dana is your place to be!

Desert Castles

Located in Jordan's east, the Umayyad Desert Castles beautifully portray Islamic life and art along the long-haul desert trading routes in the 7th and 8th century CE. Although their impressive structures suggest the term castle, they actually fulfilled a variety of purposes from outposts to trade centers and caravanse-rais. For some, their exact purpose is still disputed.

A must-see for admirers of Islamic art and architecture, you will not regret a visit even if you are traveling for other purposes. Highly recommended is Qusayr' Amra, about 1 hour east of Amman, for its well-preserved frescoes and mosaics (a UNESCO World Heritage Site). Other impressive sites ones include Qasr al-Azraq, built from black basalt, a former headquarters of Lawrence of Arabia, as well as Qasr al-Hallabat, Qasr at-Tuba, and Qasr al-Kharranah.





Itineraries





Fact Sheet

Kind of tour: Classical pilgrimage through the Holy Land (Israel/Palestine) combining the main pilgrimage sites and places for a faith-based audience.

Main target group: Faith-based pilgrims of all denominations (church visits can be adjusted according to individual affiliation); parishes; religious and pious travelers without church affiliation.

Length of tour: 7 days / 6 nights.

Accommodation: Bethlehem, Jericho, Tiberias/Sea of Galilee, Nazareth, Bethlehem.

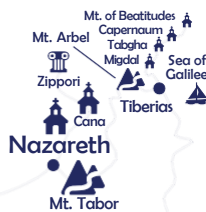
Accommodation level: Church guest houses of different levels (simple/basic to high standard); hotels of all standards; possibility of hostels/dormitories or campsites available e.g. for youth groups.

Best time of travel: Year-round; highly recommended for Christmas, Easter, Pentecost.

Best weather: March to May, September to mid-November.

Recommended group size: Any group size.

Requirements: None; general physical fitness recommended especially if hiking is included.



Biblical Places in this Itinerary

Cana, House of Mary, Magdala, Capernaum, Tabgha, St. Peter's Church, Mt. of Beatitudes, Baptism Site, Shepherds' Fields, the Church of Nativity, Dominus Flevit, Garden of Gethsemane, Pool of Bethesda, Last Supper Room, The Via Dolorosa, Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Resurrection.

1 Welcome to the Holy Land

A classical introduction to the biblical places in Palestine and Israel for first-time visitors or a generally interested faith-based target group with multiple tailoring options.




Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem

Itinerary


Arrival to Tel Aviv Airport or via land border and direct transfer to Nazareth.

1  in Nazareth.

2 In the early morning, optionally attend the daily mass in the Annunciation Grotto in the Catholic Basilica, followed by breakfast and coach excursion to the Cana Wedding Churches, where Jesus performed his first miracle.

Continue to ancient Zippori (Sepphoris), the Roman city Jesus and his father may well have worked in as craftsmen, and admire the breathtaking mosaics. Return to Nazareth and visit the Orthodox Annunciation Church above the Well of Mary and the Catholic Basilica of Annunciation along with a stroll through the oriental market and the Synagogue-Church which likely is the place Jesus went to in his early years.  in Nazareth.


3 Check-out and drive along the foot of Mt. Tabor up to Mt. Arbel for a breathtaking panoramic view of the Sea of Galilee. Enjoy the panorama followed by an approx. 90 minutes hike down the Arbel Cliff (300m high, must be free of vertigo).

Along the Sea of Galilee's north-western shore, follow biblical footsteps: Magdala, hometown of Mary of Magdala; Tabgha, where the miracle of the multiplication of loaves and fishes is commemorated; Capernaum, the "Town of Jesus"; and Mt. of Beatitudes for the Sermon on the Mount. Time and weather permitting, enjoy a dip into the Sea of Galilee before departing to Jericho.  in Jericho.


4 Breakfast in the lowest city on earth, followed by a visit to the Monastery of Temptation half way up the eponymic mountain with the longest cable car below sea level — ancient Jericho, Tel es-Sultan and the whole oasis can be seen from the above.

Pass by the Zacchaeus sycamore fig tree in Jericho, before reaching the Baptism Site for mass, mediation, and entering the water.


Continue to the Dead Sea and pay a visit to ancient Qumran, which may well be connected to John the Baptist before enjoying a dip into the deepest hypersaline lake in the world at 430m below sea level.

Before concluding your day, visit the Mary & Martha Church and the empty tomb of Lazarus in Bethany.  in Jerusalem.

5 Start your day with a panoramic view of the Old City in the city's east from the Mt. of Olives followed by a stroll along its churches: Dominus Flevit Chapel, the Church of Mary Magdelene (only Tuesdays & Thursdays), the Church of Nations in the Garden of Gethsemane and the Tomb of Mary.

In the afternoon, visit one of Christianity's oldest churches, the Church of Nativity in Bethlehem and the Church of St. Catherine. Stroll through Bethlehem's market streets and visit the Milk Grotto and the Shepherds' Fields in Beit Sahur.  in Jerusalem.

6 Another day in Jerusalem's Old City and its four quarters. Start at the Gate of Stephanus (aka Lions Gate) and follow the Stations of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa to the Church of St. Anne and the Pool of Bethesda. Arrive to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and have some time for individual meditation and prayer.

After lunch (optional), enjoy a panoramic view from the central tower of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer before heading through the Armenian Quarter to Mt. Zion, the Room of the Last Supper, the Tomb of David and the Dormition Abbey. Conclude your visit with a walk along the Western Wall and stroll through the Muslim Quarter and its enchanting markets.  in Jerusalem.

7 Check-out and transfer to the airport or land border.

Highlights



Faith-based pilgrimage along important biblical places and the life of Jesus through the Holy Land.



Multiple options for praying, mass celebration and individual or group meditation. Additional mass participation upon request for all religious affiliations.



Perfect introduction to the Holy Land for pilgrims, church groups, biblical study groups, church-based youth groups, pious travel groups and other faith-based travels.



Includes some archaeological highlights of the Holy Land related to the life and teachings of Jesus, such like Zippori (Sepphoris) and Qumran.



Includes short hikes (Mt. Arbel Cliff) and optional additional hikes upon demand (e.g. Wadi el-Quelt in Jericho, Mt. of Temptation).



Swimming opportunity in the Dead Sea and Sea of Galilee (weather permitting).



Boat-ride on the Sea of Galilee included (weather permitting).

Tailor this Tour

Spirituality

This itinerary can be customized to the spiritual and religious background of your customers/clients; e.g. add church visits and mass celebrations along the route matching the church affiliation of your group or include meetings with local parishes or priests.

Life & Miracles of Jesus

Your HLITOA tourism professional can help you reshape the itinerary to include more steps along the life of Jesus and his miracles. You may also want to consider the tours "Traveling in Biblical Footsteps" and "Follow the Lord on Ancient Paths".

Activities along the Itinerary

Depending on your client's preferences, you can add a layer of activities including e.g. hiking, donkey or camel rides, "hantours" and experiences to your tour and get it perfectly tailored to make your offer outstanding from the crowd.



Mt. Tabor: The traditional place of Jesus' transfiguration, with its stunning view and the impressive Roman Catholic Church of the Franciscan Order (Matthew 17:1-9; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36).



Wadi el-Quelt: The steep desert valley connects Jericho and Jerusalem since ancient times and is by many associated with the Valley of the Shadow of Death in Psalm 23, the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), and the dwelling of Elijah (1 Kings 17:3). Add it to your tour for a quiet walk along biblical paths (from 1,5 to 8 hours).



The Church of the Ten Lepers in Burqin: According to Luke 17:11-19, Jesus healed 10 men suffering from leprosy on his way from Nazareth to Jerusalem. The place is today commemorated in the Orthodox church in the picturesque village of Burqin, about 1 hour south of Nazareth. Burqin Church is traditionally credited to be the third oldest church in the world; a pilgrim's must-see!



Jacob's Well in Nablus: A true ecumenical place! Jewish, Samaritan, Christian, and Muslim traditions associate the well, today located in the Greek Orthodox St. Photini Church in Nablus, with the well mentioned in Genesis 33:18-20. The well is again mentioned as the place where Jesus encountered the Samaritan women (Photini in the Orthodox tradition, hence the church's name), cf. John 4:5-15. In the vicinity, ancient Shechem (Tel el-Balata, Acts 7:16) and Mt. Garizim with the Samaritan community can also be visited.



Sea of Galilee: The Sea of Galilee or Lake Kinneret (Numbers 34:11; Joshua 13:27) invites for a longer stay visiting sites like Bethsaida, dwelling place of Philip, Andreas, and Peter (John 1:44) and the site of Jesus' healing of a blind man (Mark 8:22-26); Kursi, the traditional site of the Miracle of the Swine (Mark 5:1-20); and Korazim, one of the cities Jesus cursed (Matthew 11:20-24).



The "Jesus Boat": Learn about the "Jesus Boat" in Nof Ginnosar Kibbutz, an ancient, approx. 2,000 years old fishing boat.



Hiking on Biblical Paths: Indulge your group with longer, spiritual hikes along the Jesus Trail, the Gospel Trail, the Nativity Trail or the Masar Ibrahim (Abraham's Path) and let your clients discover the "Fifth Gospel" — the biblical lands Jesus once sojourned.



Desert experiences: The harsh, deserted lands between Jerusalem and the Jordan River always had a special religious significance. Offer your group long and enchanting hikes in the wilderness of Jericho and Wadi Auja including donkey or camel rides and 4x4 safari tours.



Fact Sheet

Kind of tour: Bible-based pilgrimage combining meaningful places along the life of Jesus with time for meditation, contemplation, scripture study and worship.

Main target group: Spiritual pilgrims, religious and pious travelers seeking to "travel with the bible in their hands" and to (re-) discover the Christian message anew in its original landscape.

Length of tour: 10 days / 9 nights.

Accommodation: Nazareth, Jericho, Jerusalem; optional: Tiberias/Sea of Galilee, Bethlehem.

Accommodation level: Church guest houses of different levels (simple/basic to high standard); hotels of all standards; possibility of hostels/dormitories or campsites available e.g. for youth groups.

Best time of travel: Year-round; recommended especially for Christian holiday seasons (Christmas, Easter, Pentecost).

Best weather: March to May, September to mid-November.

Recommended group size: Tour is recommended for any group size.

Requirements: None; general physical fitness recommended especially if hiking is included.

2 Follow the Lord on Ancient Paths

A spiritual, faith-based, and Jesus-centered pilgrimage following ancient paths based on the life of the Lord as commemorated in the Gospels.



Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem

Itinerary

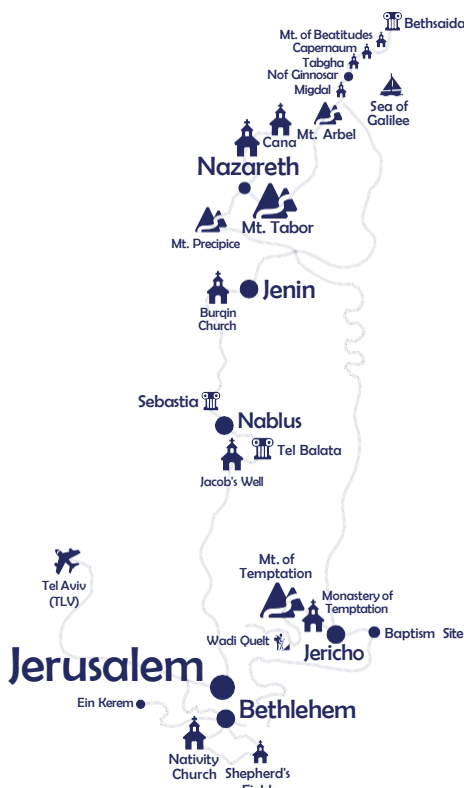
1 Arrival to Tel Aviv Airport or via land border. in Bethlehem.


2 In the morning, visit biblical Ein Kerem for the meeting between Elisabeth and Mary, the first encounter of Jesus and John the Baptist (Luke 1:39-45). Visit the Church of John the Baptist (birthplace of John), and the Church of Visitation, atop the dwelling place of Elizabeth and Zachary. Have some time for individual meditation and to recall Mary's and Zacharias' doxologies (Luke 1:46-56; 67-79).


Continue to Beit Sahur and the Shepherds' Fields, where the angel announced Jesus' birth (Luke 2:8-20). In Bethlehem, recall the story of the birth of Christ (Matthew 2:1-12) located on the Manger Square, the Church of Nativity, and inside the Nativity Grotto. In St. Helena's Church, commemorate the story of Herod's infanticide (Matthew 2:16-18) and the Flight of the Holy Family to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-15; 19-23). in Bethlehem.


3 Depart from Bethlehem to the Baptism Site (Matthew 3) for mass, mediation, and entering the water. From the Jordan River, pass by the Zacchaeus sycamore fig tree in Jericho, followed by a visit to the Monastery at the Mt. of Temptation half way up the eponymic mountain, where Jesus was tempted (Matthew 4:1-11). Continue to Wadi el-Quelt, the steep desert valley connecting Jericho and Jerusalem associated with the Valley of the Shadow of Death in Psalm 23, the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37), and the dwelling of Elijah (1 Kings 17:3). in Jericho.


4 Depart to Nazareth, hometown of Mary, Josef, and Jesus. Visit the Orthodox Church of Annunciation, Mary's Well, the Basilica of Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38), and the Synagogue-Church where Jesus may well have taught (Matthew 13; Mark 6; Luke 4). Pass by Mt. Precipice, where the people of Nazareth rejected Jesus (Luke 4:29-30), before reaching Cana, the place of the First Miracle (John 2:1-12). in Nazareth.




5 Drive up to Mt. Tabor, the traditional site of Jesus' transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-9; Luke 9:28-36) and enjoy a panoramic view of the Lower Galilee. Afterwards, follow biblical footsteps by the Sea of Galilee: Magdala, hometown of Mary of Magdala (Luke 8:2; Mark 16:9), Tabgha, site of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes (Matthew 14:13-21), Capernaum, the "Town of Jesus" (Matthew 12-13; Mark 1:11-28), and the Mt. of Beatitudes (Matthew 5-7).  by the Sea of Galilee.

6 In the morning, drive up to Mt. Arbel for a breathtaking panoramic view of the Sea of Galilee. Enjoy the panorama followed by an approx. 90 min. hike down the Arbel Cliff (300m high, must be free of vertigo) to Nof Ginnosar for a visit of the "Jesus Boat", a 2,000-year-old fishing boat. Afterwards, embark on a quiet sail on the Sea of Galilee and recall Jesus' special relationship with the lake (e.g. Matthew 8:23-27; 13). Pass by Migdal and Tabgha before arriving to Capernaum. Disembark and drive to ancient Bethsaida, hometown of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (John 1:44). Conclude your day with a quiet walk along the Mt. of Beatitudes offering a chance for meditation or worship.  by the Sea of Galilee.

7 In the morning, follow the Nativity Trail to the picturesque Burqin Church commemorating Jesus' Healing of the 10 Lepers (Luke 17:11-19). Continue to Sebastia, ancient Samaria, for a visit of the Tomb of John the Baptist and trace biblical footsteps in Nablus to Jacob's Well (Genesis 33:18-20; John 4).  in Jerusalem.

8 In the morning, enjoy a panoramic view of Jerusalem's Old City from the Mt. of Olives including the Dominus Flevit Chapel (Luke 19:41-44), the Church of Mary Magdalene (only Tuesdays & Thursdays), the Church of Nations in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-55) and the Tomb of Mary. Pass through the Kidron Valley along the St. Peter in Gallicantu Church (Matthew 26:30-35), followed by the Tomb of David and the Room of the Last Supper (Mark 14) on Mt. Zion.  in Jerusalem.

9 Start your second day in Jerusalem at the Stephanus Gate (aka Lions Gate) and follow the Stations of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa to the Church of St. Anne and the Pool of Bethesda. Eventually, arrive to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and spend time for individual meditation and prayer. After lunch, enjoy a panoramic view from the central tower of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Redeemer before heading through the Armenian Quarter to the Western Wall and al-Aqsa Compound (Temple Mount).  in Jerusalem.

10 Check-out and transfer to the airport or land border.

Highlights



Includes all major sites commemorating the life and teachings of Jesus as mentioned in the Gospels.



Includes multiple occasions for praying, mass celebration and individual or group meditation.



Ideal tour for pilgrimage groups on a spiritual journey.



Includes a boat-ride on the Sea of Galilee (weather permitting).

Tailor this Tour



Celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem: Celebrate the birth of Christ in the very place the bible tells us about — Bethlehem — and join thousands of Christians from all over the world for the Midnight Mass and the festive procession from Rachel's Tomb to the Manger Square on December, 24th. Obtain your individually tailored "Christmas in Bethlehem" itinerary from your HLITOA tourism professional and experience the Christmas of a lifetime!



Mount of Temptation Monastery, Jericho

Biblical Places in this Itinerary

John the Baptist Church, Church of Visitation (Ein Kerem); Shepherds' Fields (Beit Sahour), Manger Square, Church of Nativity, St. Helena Church (Bethlehem), Baptism Site (Jordan River), Mt. and Monastery of Temptation (Jericho), Mary's Well, Church and Basilica of the Annunciation, Synagogue-Church, Mt. Precipice (Nazareth), Cana Wedding Churches, Mt. Tabor (Lower Galilee), Magdala, Tabgha, Capernaum, Bethsaida, Mt. of Beatitudes (Sea of Galilee), Church of the 10 Lepers (Burqin), Tomb of John the Baptist (Sebastia), Jacob's Well (Nablus), Dominus Flevit Chapel, Garden of Gethsemane, Church of Nations, Tomb of Mary (Mt. of Olives), St. Peter in Gallicantu, Via Dolorosa and the Stations of the Cross, Church of St. Anne and Pool of Bethesda, Church of the Holy Sepulchre (Jerusalem), Last Supper Room (Mt. Zion).



Fact Sheet

Kind of tour: A tour dedicated to Muslim faith and Islamic heritage in the Holy Land combining well-known pilgrimage sites with lesser known shrines and monuments, and multiple tailoring options.

Main target group: Muslim pilgrims looking for an extension to their Hajj to Mecca or to the maqamat in Jordan; travelers interested in the Islamic heritage of the Holy Land.

Length of tour: 8 days / 7 nights.

Accommodation: Jerusalem, Jericho, Nazareth.

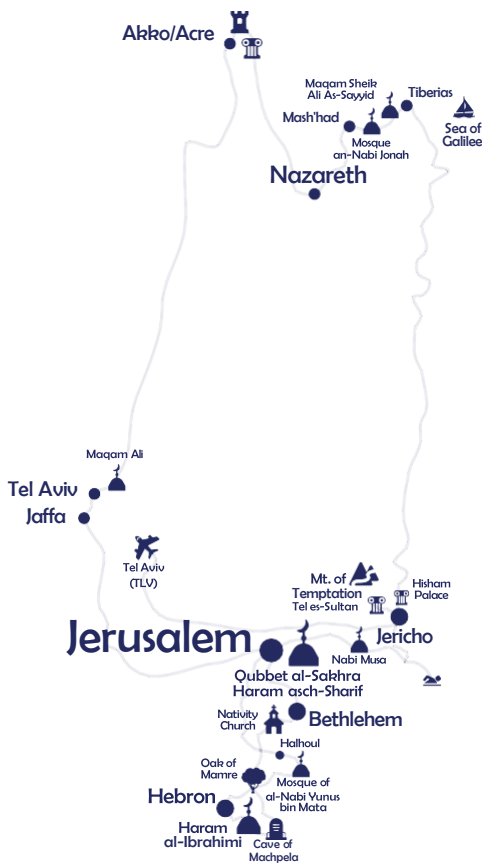
Accommodation level: Hotels of all categories.

Best time of travel: Year-round.

Best weather: Spring and autumn.

Recommended group size: This tour is suitable for any group size.

Requirements: None.



Islamic Sites in this Itinerary

Qasr Hisham, Maqam An-Nabi Moussa, Haram Ash-Sharif, Al-Aqsa Mosque, Mosque of Qubbet al-Sakhra, Tomb of Rabiya Al-Adawiyya, Memorial of Mujir-e-Din Al-Hanbaly, Maqam An-Nabi Samuel, Mosque of An-Nabi Yunus bin Mata, Haram Al-Ibrahimi (Al-Khalil), Al-Jazzar Mosque, Maqam An-Nabi Jonah, Maqam Sheikh Ali As-Sayyid.

3 Islamic Heritage Pilgrimage Tour

Tracing Muslim Faith between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River.

Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem



Itinerary

- 1 Arrival to the airport or via land border and direct transfer to Jericho. 🛏 in Jericho. Accompanied by your local guide, discover the oasis of Jericho, mankind's oldest continuously inhabited city. Visit Qasr Hisham with the famous Tree of Life mosaic, one of the most well-preserved palaces of the Umayyad Era in Palestine, continue to the hilltop of Tel es-Sultan with the ruins of the old city walls.

After lunch, continue to the Dead Sea. Bathe or float in the saline water or treat your skin with the very rich mineral mud. On the way to Jerusalem, stop at Maqam an-Nabi Moussa, the shrine where the tomb of prophet Moses is located, revered by all Muslims. 🛏 in Jerusalem.

- 3 After breakfast, enter the Old City through one of its seven gates and walk through its old and narrow streets. Experience the sounds, colors, and scents of Jerusalem's Muslim Quarter on your way to the Haram al-Sharif and visit al-Aqsa Mosque, the Mosque of Qubbet al-Sakhra (Dome of the Rock), the Tomb of Rabiya al-Adawiyya, and the Islamic schools with their Mamluk style architecture.

On Fridays, join the holy prayer at al-Aqsa and participate in the Khutbah.

In the afternoon, continue through the suq to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and visit the adjacent Mosque of Omar before tracing Jerusalem's history through the city's quarters to Mt. Zion with the Tomb of David — a place holy for Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike. 🕌 in Jerusalem.

4 In the morning, visit the different mosques on the Mt. of Olives and admire the grandness of the city with the Qubbet al-Sakhra at its center. Continue along the marble-memorial of Mujir-e-Din al-Hanbaly, a medieval philosopher, located just above the Tomb of Mary by the Garden of Gethsemane and visit Maqam an-Nabi Samuel which offers a commanding view of Jerusalem and the Mediterranean Sea.

Optional: Hike to visit the Tomb of Salman el-Farsi, who was the barber of the Prophet Mohammed.

Enjoy the afternoon at leisure in the Old City. 🕌 in Jerusalem.

5 In the morning, depart to the village of Halhoul, a fertile region rich in vineyards in southern Palestine and the location of the mosque of an-Nabi Yunus bin Mata, built on top of his grave. Continue to al-Khalil, Hebron, for a visit of its Old Town with the tombs of the prophets Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and their wives in the Haram al-Ibrahimi.

On your way to Bethlehem, stop by the biblical town Ma'mre, where legend says that Abraham pitched his tent and three angels informed him that his wife Sarah would give birth to a son.

In Bethlehem, visit the birthplace of the prophet Issa in the Church of Nativity before returning to Jerusalem. 🕌 in Jerusalem.

6 In the morning, depart to the ancient port city of Jaffa with its picturesque Old City markets high above the Mediterranean Sea. Pass through the city of Tel Aviv and visit maqam Ali, a 13th century Mamluk structure honoring one of Saladin's lieutenants.

Continue along the coastline to the ancient city of Acre and pay a visit to the Turkish Bath, the old Crusader's fortress, and al-Jazzar Mosque. 🕌 in Nazareth.

7 In the morning, stroll through the busy market streets of Nazareth before heading to Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee. On your way, pay a visit to the small city of Mash'had with its shrine dedicated to an-Nabi Jonah and to maqam Sheikh Ali As-Sayyid.

Spend some time by the seashore before heading to Jericho or Jerusalem via the Jordan Valley. 🕌 in Jericho or Jerusalem.

8 Check-out and transfer to the airport, or land border.

Highlights



Includes all major Islamic pilgrimage sites west of the Jordan River.



Includes several less known Muslim sites (e.g. Halhoul, Mash'had)



Join the holy prayer at al-Aqsa and other mosques

Tailor this Tour



Sufi Trails: Explore the hidden heritage of Palestine: In the mountains north of Ramallah, three one-day hiking trails have been designed to offer an unparalleled visit to Sufi shrines and sacred sites in shady oak forests and olive groves. Inquire for your hiking itinerary on the Deir Ghassaneh Trail, the Nabi Ghaith Trail, or the Nabi Anir Trail. Each of them starts/ends at Birzeit and are suitable for any hiker.

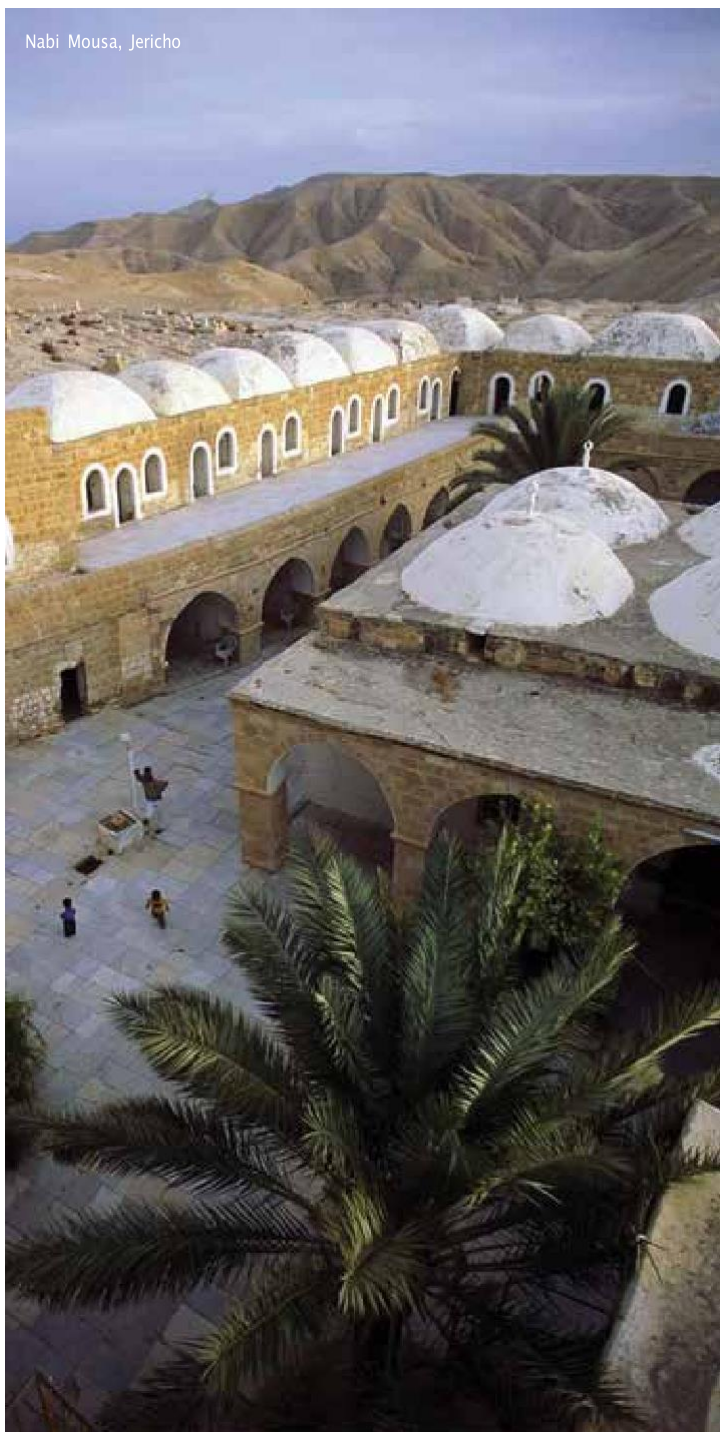


Discover Egypt: Extend your visit to the region and embark on a journey far back into history to Egypt. With daily flights from Amman and regular service from Tel Aviv, the Pyramids, Islamic Cairo, and the white sandy beaches of the Red Sea are only few hours away.



Diving and snorkeling in the Gulf of Aqaba: Especially if you are traveling via Amman, don't miss the chance to spend some days at one of the luxury beach resorts at the Gulf of Aqaba. Go diving, snorkeling or simply relax under the golden sun.

Nabi Mousa, Jericho



Fact Sheet

Kind of tour: A 2-week trail along the mountains of the Holy Land for pilgrims with a love for hiking and nature.

Main target group: Pilgrims and religiously interested travelers with a love for hiking and nature.

Length of tour: 13 days / 12 nights.

Accommodation: Amman, Petra, Aqaba, Har Karkom Campsite, Jericho, Nazareth, Stela Maris Monastery, Jerusalem or Bethlehem.

Accommodation level: Overnight stays in hotels of preferred standard or church guest houses; Har Karkom Campsite.

Best time of travel: Spring, late summer and autumn

Best weather: Mid-March to early May, September to October.

Recommended group size: Tour is recommended especially for smaller groups but can be arranged for any group size.

Requirements: General physical fitness, particularly if the tour is done in summer.

4 Holy Mountains in the Holy Land

The biblical story of salvation is as much a story of faith as it is the story of holy mountains. On this tour, you will sojourn the Holy Land from summit to summit, recalling their stories and traditions.

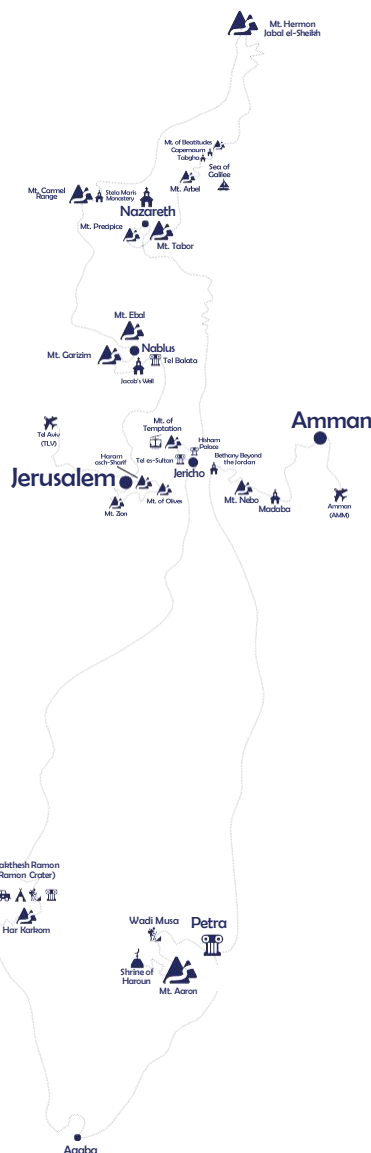


Mount Nebo

Itinerary

- 1** Arrival to Amman Airport. 🏠 in Amman.
In the morning, enjoy a coach city tour through Amman before heading to the Jordan River for a visit of the traditional Baptism Site. Afterwards, pay a visit to Madaba for its 6th century mosaic map of the Holy Land.
- 2** In the afternoon, drive up to Mt. Nebo and recall the biblical account of Moses looking upon the Promised Land shortly before his death (Deuteronomy 34). Continue to Petra via the ancient Kings' Highway. 🏠 in Petra.
- 3** Spend a full guided day in the ancient Nabatean city of Petra and visit its stunning monuments: The Siq, the Treasury, the Winged Lion Temple, and Qasr al-Bint, the High Place and ad-Deir. 🏠 in Petra.
- 4** In the early morning, start your guided hike from the Snake Monument down through Wadi Magtal ad-Dikh: Pass by Aaron's Terrace and arrive to Jabal Haroun (Mt. Aaron, 1450m), one of the holiest sites in Jordan. Enjoy the panoramic view and have some time for meditation at the 14th shrine commemorating the brother of Moses. Descend and continue to Aqaba. 🏠 in Aqaba.
- 5** In the morning, cross the Araba border and drive with 4x4 cars into the southwestern Negev to the foot of Har Karkom (Mountain of Saffron), believed by some scholars to be the biblical Mt. Sinai where Moses received the Tablets of Stone.

Note: The visit is only possible Friday to Saturday. 🏠 in tents at Har Karkom Campsite.



6 At sunrise, follow a path leading up the high plateau and discover some of the numerous relics of ancient times including shrines, altars, stone circles, stone pillars, and over 40,000 rock engravings. Return to the campsite for lunch and continue to Jericho. 🏠 in Jericho.

7 In the morning, visit Tel es-Sultan, ancient Jericho, before riding in the longest cable car below sea level up to the Mt. of Temptation. Visit the same-named monastery and the Omayyad Palace Qasr Hisham. Continue to Nazareth. 🏠 in Nazareth.

8 Enjoy a 4-summit-day: Mt. Precipice south of Nazareth, where tradition holds that angry Jewish worshippers attempted to throw Jesus of a cliff; Mt. Tabor, one traditional site of Jesus' transfiguration, Mt. Arbel, offering a panoramic view of the Sea of Galilee area, and Mt. Beatitudes for Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. Continue to the Golan Heights. 🏠 in the Golan.

9 In the morning, take the chairlift up to the Hermon Mountain Range (Jabal el-Sheikh) in the border region of the Golan Heights. Reaching up to 2,814m in Syria and 2,236m in the area accessible from Israel, the mountain range has held a special religious significance since ancient times, and is believed by some to be the actual Mt. of Transfiguration.

Descend and continue through the Galilee and Jezreel Valley to the Mt. Carmel Mountain Range (Jabal Mar Elyas) to Stela Maris Monastery, located high above Haifa for a visit of the cave dedicated to prophet Elijah and overnight. 🏠 in Stela Maris Monastery.

10 Depart from Stela Maris to Nablus, the ancient city of Shechem at the foot of Mt. Garizim (881m) and Mt. Ebal (951m). Visit the archaeological site on Garizim's summit and meet the local Samaritan community. Inside the city, pay a visit to Jacob's Well, the Tel el-Balata excavations and Nablus Old City before heading to Jerusalem. 🏠 in Jerusalem.

11 Start your day with a panoramic view from the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem's east, followed by a walk along the biblical sites on its western slope. Continue through the Kidron Valley to the excavations of the biblical city of Jerusalem before walking up to Mt. Zion, south-west of the Old City with the Dormition Abbey, the Last Supper Room, and the Tomb of David. 🏠 in Jerusalem.

12 Start your second day in Jerusalem with a guided visit to the Haram al-Sharif (aka the Temple Mount) with the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque. Afterwards, continue along the traditional Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, built upon the traditional Golgotha Rock and the tomb of Jesus. 🏠 in Jerusalem.

13 Check-out and transfer to the airport or land border.

Highlights



Includes all major biblical mountains mentioned in the Old and New Testament.



Includes multiple hiking opportunities of different levels of difficulty and length.



Includes enchanting landscapes in the Jordanian Highlands, southern Negev and Jerusalem Wilderness around Jericho.



The entire itinerary is based on biblical places.

Tailor this Tour



Hammamat Ma'in: On your way from Madaba to Petra, enjoy a dip in the hot mineral springs and waterfalls of Hammamat Ma'in some 260m below sea level. Several underground lava fissures heat the more than 100 springs to up to 63 celcius. Luxury spa accommodation offering a wide variety of professional services including mud wraps, hydro-jet baths and showers are also available.



Jericho: Explore the lowest city on earth and its 10,000 years of history with a guided bike tour through the oasis and discover its enchanting orange orchards, its biblical sites and archaeological highlights. Camel and donkey rides, as well as horse-drawn carriage tours are also available.



Swimming: Not only climb mountains, but also enjoy some unique swimming opportunities: the Dead Sea, the Red Sea, the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean coast.



Night hikes and stargazing: The deserts around Jericho, Petra and Wadi Rum are some of the best places for enchanting night hikes and stargazing in the Holy Land. Follow local Bedouin guides into an amazing landscape and experience the desert life.



Abraham Path near Jericho



Extension to Mt. Sinai: Extend your tour with a few days extension to the southern Sinai Peninsula with its rough mountain ranges, deep valleys and beautiful oases. From Taba or Sharm el-Sheik, drive to St. Catherine Monastery for overnight. Before dawn, start your ascent on Mt. Sinai (2,285m) and watch the sunrise from its summit. Head back to the Red Sea coast for a dip in the water or continue your desert experience with a guided trek on foot or camel.



Fact Sheet

kind of tour: Hiking.

Main target group: Any traveler with a passion for nature, hiking, and an intimate way of traveling and getting into contact with locals.

Length of tour: One-day hikes to about 3 weeks (full 330km).

Accommodation level: Simple accommodation along the Masar including family homestays and guesthouses; hotel accommodation can be arranged.

Best time of travel: March to May and September to Mid-November.

Best weather: March to April, October.

Recommended group size: Individuals, families and groups (recommended up to 25).

Requirements: Physical fitness, hiking experience recommended.

Website: www.masaribrahim.ps.



Highlights



The Masar Ibrahim is all about exploring Palestine on foot. Night or sunrise hikes can be arranged upon demand as well as additional activities, such as biking or rock climbing.



Discovering a country on foot is the best way to get in contact to the local population. Hiking along the Masar offers numerous opportunities to meet with locals and listen to their stories.



On numerous occasions, traditional, often homemade Palestinian food is served along the Masar.

5 The Masar Ibrahim al-Khalil

Discover Palestine's history, culture, and incredibly beautiful landscape

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-day trips or in around 3 weeks over its entire length. Several HLTOA 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.



Segments of the Masar

1 Rummana to Burqin: Grab your hiking boots and start your Palestine adventure in the country's very north. From the village of Rummana (literally "pomegranates") extends one of the most amazingly challenging hikes in Palestine along steep hills, passing through villages dating back to the Canaanite Era, offering panoramic views of the Jezreel Valley and Jenin. The hike ends in the picturesque village of Burqin, hosting one of Christianity's oldest churches commemorating Jesus' healing of the 10 Lepers. **Walking distance/time:** 18km / 5-7h, **difficulty:** demanding.

2 Burqin to Arraba: From Burqin, the Masar continues in south-western direction to the village of Arraba and takes you through agricultural lands. Accompanied by your guide, you will learn about traditional farming techniques and depending on the season, see olive trees in full blossom and beans, tomatoes, and cucumbers growing on the fields. **Walking distance/time:** 15km / 6h, **difficulty:** moderate.

3 Arraba to Sanur: Arraba and Sanur both share an Ottoman history. In the morning, visit the al-Sheikh Abd al-Hady Palaces in Arraba before hiking through the serene countryside, olive groves, and orchards to Sanur with its monumental hillside lookout tower and citadel offering a commanding view. **Walking distance/time:** 9.5km / 2-3h, **difficulty:** easy.

4 Sanur to Sebastiya: Start your morning with a splendid hike up to Mt. Hraish (650m) for a panoramic view of the vicinity before continuing through the mountains and hills between Sanur and Sebastiya. In the afternoon, visit some of the ruins of ancient Samaria, once a capital in the Israelite period and greatly enlarged by Herod the Great. **Walking distance/time:** 15.5km / 4-7h, **difficulty:** challenging.

5 Sebastiya to Nablus: In the morning, visit the center of Sebastiya including the tomb of John the Baptist inside a 12th century Crusaders' church, which was later converted into a mosque. Afterwards, continue your hike to Nablus and have a chance to try the famous Nabulsi Kenafeh dessert as well as traditional handcraft products proudly "made in Nablus". **Walking distance/time:** 10km / 2-3h, **difficulty:** easy.

6 'Awarta to Duma: In the morning, pay a visit to the Samaritan community on Mt. Gerizim next to Nablus or stroll through its old market before starting your hike from the picturesque village of 'Awarta to Duma. 'Awarta once was a center of the Samaritan religion hosting one of their main synagogues, now it is famous for planting olive trees, almonds, corn, lentils and several summer vegetables. **Walking distance/time:** 18.5km / 5-6h, **difficulty:** moderate to demanding.

7 Duma to Kafr Malek: Start in the agricultural village of Duma with its olive groves and wheat fields into the beautiful hills of the Nablus region. After a steep ascent, complete this day's tour in Kafr Malek, a village with many archaeological ruins, historical remains and shrines, partially dating back to the Bronze Age. **Walking distance/time:** 15km / 5h, **difficulty:** moderate to demanding.

8 Ein Samia to Al-'Auja: Today's hike ranks among the most beautiful and interesting hikes in Palestine. Start in Ein Samia, where history can be traced back over 7000 years, putting it in parallel with ancient Tel es-Sultan in Jericho. Eventually, arrive to Al-'Auja, about 12km north of Jericho. **Walking distance/time:** 11km / 4-5h, **difficulty:** demanding.

9 Al-'Auja to Jericho / Aqbat Jaber Camp: Start from Al-'Auja to Aqbat Jaber Camp, a Palestinian refugee camp established in 1948 to accommodate refugees from nearly 300 villages in the north of Haifa. During your hike, you will have multiple chances to meet with locals and hear their stories. In the afternoon, have some time to explore Jericho (Ariha). **Walking distance/time:** 15km / 3-5h, **difficulty:** moderate.

10 Jericho to Sea Level Community: Long and challenging, this hike will prove to be rewarding! Start your day early and hike through Wadi el-Quelt, the isolated, barren and rocky wadi that hosts the Greek Orthodox Monastery of St. George and connects Jerusalem and Jericho. The wadi hike offers unique chances to discover local flora and fauna until you reach the Sea Level Community, learning about the Bedouins, their culture and life style in this area. **Walking distance/time:** 23km / 7-8h, **difficulty:** moderate.

11 Sea Level Community to Khirbet al-Mird: Continue your desert hike from the Sea Level Community to Khirbet al-Mird (aka Hyrcania), once a desert fortress, then hosting a Byzantine monastery with hermit caves, cisterns, canals, and tombs. En route, learn more about the fate of the Bedouins living in the area and their story of becoming Palestinian refugee tribes. **Walking distance/time:** 14km / 5-6h, **difficulty:** moderate.

12 Khirbet al-Mird to Tal al-Qamar: Depart from Hyrcania to Mar Saba Monastery, one of the most ancient and wondrous desert monasteries in the Holy Land. Afterwards, continue along mountains and canyons to Tal al-Qamar Bedouin camp for relaxation and tasting delicious Bedouin food. **Walking distance/time:** 12km / 4-5h, **difficulty:** moderate.

13 Tal al-Qamar to Bethlehem: After a few kilometers of hiking, reach Beit Sahour, famous for the Shepherds' Fields, and eventually arrive to Bethlehem for a visit of its old town and the Church of the Nativity among other significant places. **Walking distance/time:** 12km / 3-4h, **difficulty:** easy.

14 Bethlehem to Tequ': Depart early and hike from Bethlehem to the village of Artas, famously hosting a picturesque monastery called "Hortus Conclusus", the closed paradise. Continue through a fertile valley until reaching Tequ' for a late lunch at the Tequ' Women Center. **Walking distance/time:** 10km / 4-5h, **difficulty:** moderate.

15 Tequ' to 'Arab ar-Rashayida: Head back to the desert through the spectacular Wadi Jihar, a deep limestone canyon that winds down into the desert. In 'Arab ar-Rashayida village you will be hosted in homestays. **Walking distance/time:** 14km / 4-5h, **difficulty:** easy to moderate.

16 'Arab ar-Rashayida to Bani Na'im: In the morning, enjoy a breathtaking view of the Dead Sea and the Jordan Valley from the archaeological site al-'Erishah before hiking along a rocky path to Bani Na'im. **Walking distance/time:** 22km / 5-8h, **difficulty:** moderate.

17 Bani Na'im to Hebron: The village of Bani Na'im has a long history dating back to the Canaanite era. Before reaching Hebron, you will have a chance to visit some of the antiquities and monuments still existing. Eventually arrive to Hebron (Al-Khalil). **Walking distance/time:** 7km / 2h, **difficulty:** easy.

18 Hebron (Al-Khalil) to Dura: The Hebron (Al-Khalil) to Dura day stage begins in front of the Ibrahimi Mosque (Al-Haram al-Ibrahimi), the most important landmark in Hebron, where Ibrahim (Abraham), revered by three religious traditions, was buried alongside his wife, his son, grandson, and their wives. The path leads further through the souqs and alleys of Old City of Hebron. **Walking distance/time:** 12km / 4-5h, **difficulty:** moderate.

19 Dura to As-Sura: In Dura, start your day by visiting Dura Cooperative Association for Agricultural Production. Stamp your Hiker Passport and support the women's cooperative by purchasing some aromatic herbs, sweet raisins, or malban (dried grape juice rollups) — a tasty snack for the way.

After leaving Dura the trail passes through scenic valleys covered with the abundant pine trees. The final part of this section leads up the hill to As-Sura, a small agricultural village in the Hebron Governorate. **Walking distance/time:** 11km / 4-5h, **difficulty:** moderate.

20 As-Sura to Adh-Dhahiriya: After passing through the rural areas surrounding As-Sura, the path to Adh-Dhahiriya leads you through evergreen pine forests. It continues towards Khirbet Rabud, the only major Late Bronze Age archaeological site in the mountains around Hebron. **Walking distance/time:** 13km / 4-5h, **difficulty:** moderate.

21 Adh-Dhahiriya to Beit Mirsim: The final stage of the Masar Ibrahim takes you on an interesting 20-kilometer hike between Adh-Dhahiriya and Beit Mirsim. **Walking distance/time:** 20km / 5-7h, **difficulty:** moderate.



Fact Sheet

Kind of tour: This itinerary challenges the impression that the "Holy Land" is an old-fashioned destination for pious pilgrims praying at holy sites. On the contrary, "fun & faith" can become best friends with this unique combination of classical pilgrims' paths through Israel and Palestine, and a signature collection of activities.

Main target group: Young and young at heart faith-based travelers looking for an active and adventurous visit to the Holy Land and its religious sites.

Length of tour: 13 days / 12 nights.

Accommodation: Bethlehem, Desert Camping, Jericho, Sea of Galilee, Sebastia, Ramallah, Jerusalem.

Accommodation level: Hotels and guest-house of all categories; Bedouin camps with basic standard; optionally: homestays with local families; upon request: campsites.

Best time of travel: March to late May; September to mid-November.

Best weather: March/April, September/October.

Recommended group size: Tour is suitable for any group size; outdoor activities are best experienced in groups between 15 to 25 PAX.

Requirements: Depending on selection of activities.

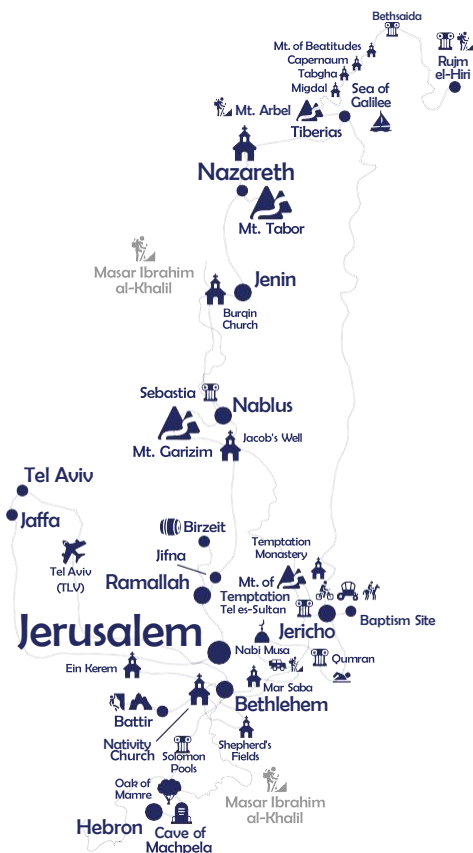
6 Fun & Faith in the Holy Land

An explorers' tour for the young and the young in heart.



Itinerary

- 1** Arrival to Tel Aviv airport or via land border and direct transfer to Bethlehem. in Bethlehem.
- 2** In the morning, visit Ein Kerem, where Mary and Elisabeth once met (Luke 1:39-56), followed by Bethlehem with the Church of Nativity, the Milk Grotto, and the Shepherds' Fields (Luke 2:8-20). In the afternoon, enjoy a guided hike in al-Makrou Valley leading from Beit Jala to Battir (UNESCO World Heritage Site) and spend the night in natural caves with a campfire and a traditional Palestinians farmers' dinner. Optional: Try rope climbing on Battir's certified climbing rocks. in al-Makrou Valley (natural caves, no services).
- 3** After a sunrise-breakfast in the open nature, pass by your hotel to freshen up and continue to southern Palestine. In Hebron, visit the old market and the mosque and synagogue built over the Cave of Machpela (Genesis 23) before continuing to the Oak of Mamre, where Abraham is commemorated for meeting the three heavenly messengers (Genesis 18). Return to Bethlehem for an open-air barbeque and Argileh (hookah) by the ancient Solomon Pools near Bethlehem or enjoy a traditional Hebronite dinner including camel meat stew! in Bethlehem.
- 4** Start out early for a sunrise desert hike from Mar Saba Monastery to the ruins of the Hasmonian Hyrcania fortress, and enjoy a Bedouin-style breakfast in the desert before continuing with 4x4 cars off-road to the Muslim shrine an-Nabi Musa, venerated as the last resting place of Moses. After lunch, optionally visit the ancient Dead Sea settlement of Qumran before enjoying a dip into the hypersaline water. in Jericho.
- 5** In the morning, choose between a bicycle, donkey, or horse-drawn carriage for your exploration of Jericho's oasis, including a visit to ancient Tel es-Sultan (Joshua 6), Elijah's Spring, Zacchaeus sycamore fig tree (Luke 19), and the Monastery of Temptation (Matthew 4). Depending on the season, pick some fresh oranges from Jericho's orchards and squeeze some fresh, healthy and tasty juice before continuing to the Baptism Site at the Jordan River. In the late afternoon, arrive to the Sea of Galilee. by the Sea of Galilee.



6 In the morning, drive up to Mt. Arbel, offering a panoramic view of the Sea of Galilee area, and hike down its 300m steep cliff to Magdala, the likely hometown of Mary of Magdala (Luke 8:2).

Afterwards, trace biblical footsteps along the Sea of Galilee: Tabgha for the miracle of the Multiplication of Loaves and Fishes (Matthew 14:13-21); Capernaum (Matthew 12-13) and the Mt. of Beatitudes (Matthew 5-7). Enjoy a sail on the Sea of Galilee, followed by a dip into the water (weather permitting).

In the evening, embark on one of the party boats sailing the biblical lake at night or enjoy a cold drink at Tiberias' lakeshore. 🏊 by the Sea of Galilee.

7 Start your day with an approx. 5-hour roundtrip hike to rarely visited ancient, megalithic, monument, Rujm el-Hiri, made up of more than 42,000 basalt rocks arranged in concentric circles.

Return from the Golan Heights to the Sea of Galilee for a visit of the ancient village of Bethsaida, hometown of Philip, Andrew, and Peter (John 1:44) or continue to Nazareth for a visit of its churches. 🏊 by the Sea of Galilee.

8 In the morning, follow the Nativity Trail to the picturesque Burqin Church commemorating Jesus' Healing of the 10 Lepers (Luke 17:11-19) and continue to Sebastia, ancient Samaria, for a visit of the Tomb of John the Baptist and trace biblical footsteps in Nablus: e.g. Jacob's Well (Genesis 33:18-20; John 4).

Today's traveling can be done by bus or partly as a hike along the long-distance hiking trail Masar Ibrahim. In the evening, arrive to Ramallah. 🏊 in Ramallah.

9 Take a guided walk through Palestine's bustling de facto capital and visit the Mukata'a, headquarters of the Palestinian National Authority with the Mausoleum of Arafat.

Continue to the nearby Palestinian village Jifna where tradition holds that the Holy Family rested near an oak tree on their way from Jerusalem back to Nazareth, and enjoy a traditional Palestinian chicken dish for lunch.

In the afternoon, visit the Birzeit brewery and taste one of the few Palestinian-brewed beers before returning to Ramallah for an evening in one of its bars and clubs. 🏊 in Ramallah.

Highlights

	Includes all key Christian pilgrimage sites in the Holy Land.		4x4 off-road tour in the desert.
	Multiple occasions for swimming.		Opportunity for donkey or camel riding.
	Rock-climbing opportunity in el-Makrou Valley.		Unique visit to Early Bronze Age (3000-2700 BCE) megalithic site Rujm el-Hiri.
	Multiple hiking opportunities.		Bike tour in Jericho.
	Unique underground tour of Jerusalem		



10 In the morning, depart from Ramallah to Jerusalem for an unusual underground tour of the Holy City. Visit the excavations of biblical Jerusalem and walk through the water-filled Hezekiah Tunnel to the Pool of Siloam before entering the Old City through the Roman canal system under the Valley of Tyropoeon and resurface at the Western Wall Plaza. Visit the Western Wall and re-enter Jerusalem's underground at the controversial Western Wall Tunnels traversing the Muslim Quarter.

Resurface once again at the beginning of the Via Dolorosa to follow some of the Stations of the Cross and visit the large cistern system under the old Roman pavement (aka Lithostrotos or Gabbatha) near the Ecce Homo Arch (John 19:13-14). Descend again to the subterranean "Prison of Christ" before heading along the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

After visiting the church with its underground chapels and 1st century tombs, enjoy the rest of the day at leisure in the busy Old City market streets. 🏊 in Jerusalem.

11 In the morning, enjoy a panoramic view of the Old City from the Mt. of Olives. Continue down-hill on foot and visit the Dominus Flevit Chapel (Luke 19:41-44), the Church of Mary Magdalene (only Tuesdays & Thursdays), the Church of Nations in the Garden of Gethsemane (Matthew 26:36-55) and the Tomb of Mary. Pass through the Kidron Valley along the St. Peter in Gallicantu Church (Matthew 26:30-35), followed by the Tomb of David and the Room of the Last Supper (Mark 14) on Mt. Zion. 🏊 in Jerusalem.

12 Depart from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv/Jaffa and spend a day at leisure on the Mediterranean coast. Go swimming or explore the city. 🏊 in Tel Aviv.

13 Check-out and transfer to the airport or land border.



Fact Sheet

Kind of tour: Culinary tour.

Main target group: Food lovers and all travelers ready to indulge themselves into a world full of flavors, spices, and tastes of the Palestinian-Arabic cuisine.

Length of tour: 8 days / 7 nights.

Accommodation: Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jericho.

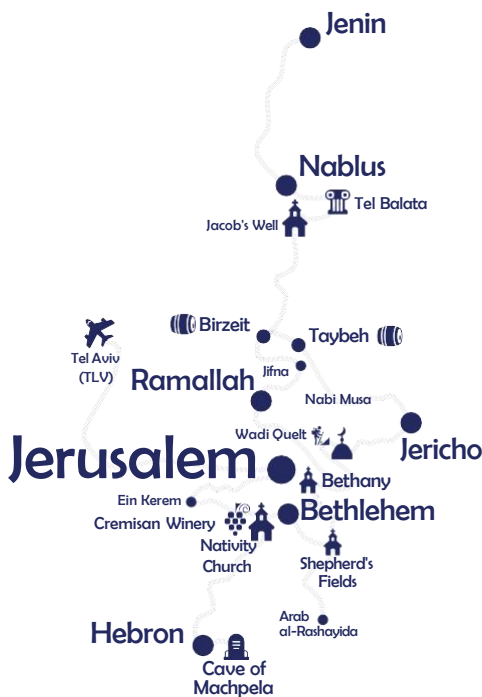
Accommodation level: Hotels and guest-houses of all categories; homestays with local families, Bedouin camp.

Best time of travel: Year round, especially July to October when many fruits are harvested.

Best weather: Spring and Autumn.

Recommended group size: Tour is suitable for any group size; for best experience, groups up to 20 PAX are recommended.

Requirements: None, except a desire for tasty food.



7 A Taste of Palestine

A tour entirely focused on the culinary heritage of Palestine highlighting Arabic signature dishes and beverages through tastings, visits, encounters with local farmers and cooking classes.



Itinerary

- 1 Arrival to Tel Aviv Airport or via land border and direct transfer to Jerusalem. in Jerusalem.
- 2 Start your day with an authentic hearty Jerusalemite breakfast of hummus, ful, falafel, salads, and mint tea at the 1900s family run Abu Shukri restaurant in the Old City. Afterwards, follow your guide to Jerusalem's different bazaars and indulge yourself in all of the scents they offer, whether it be the spice bazaars or the fresh made brews of Arabic coffee. Continue for lunch to Bint al-Balad, a women's cooperative preparing local dishes to visitors before continuing your tour along Jerusalem's historic and religious monuments. in Jerusalem.
- 3 Explore the vicinity of Jerusalem on a guided tour: the Mt. of Olives with its biblical landmarks, Ein Kerem, known to be the hometown of John the Baptist (lunch), and eventually Bethlehem, birthplace of Christ with its enchanting churches and busy market streets. For dinner, head to a famous BBQ restaurant, where lamb meat is traditionally cut using a large curved knife and be introduced to the famous mezze, a collection of Arabic salads and appetizers. in Bethlehem.
- 4 In the early morning, optionally attend the daily mass in the Church of Nativity. After breakfast, visit the Shepherds' Fields in Beit Sahour before heading to the Cremisan Monastery and Winery for a wine tasting as well as an overview about the history, culture, and difficulties of the clergy and the local Christian neighborhoods. After a simple but truly Palestinian falafel sandwich for lunch, pass by the Solomon Pools, from which water was drawn in ancient times to Jerusalem, before arriving to Hebron. Visit the Old City and get a taste of daily life. For dinner, enjoy a truly Hebronite dinner, including — upon prior arrangement — camel meat. in Bethlehem.

5 Depart from Bethlehem through Wadi Nar to Bethany and visit the Tomb of Lazarus and the Church dedicated to Mary & Martha. Continue to the Palestinian city of Jifna for a locally family-prepared lunch. In the afternoon, taste Palestinian-brewed beer in either Taybeh or Birzeit, before exploring the bustling city of Ramallah and enjoying its famous Rukab ice-cream made with Arabic gum. For dinner, head to one of Ramallah's famous bars, often featuring live music. 🍷 in Ramallah.

6 Depart to Jenin for a visit to a traditional organic farm working to restore and preserve traditional methods of farming. For lunch, you are invited to participate in preparing a traditional meal at Beit al-Karma Women Cooperative in Nablus, followed by a guided tasting tour through the Old City. On your way to Jericho, treat yourself with a traditional Palestinian-style dessert prepared with special semolina dough and goat cheese and drizzled with rosemary flavored syrup. 🍷 in Jericho.

7 In the morning, explore the oasis of Jericho with its enchanting orange and dates fields by bike or horse-drawn carriage, followed by a homemade, organic lunch in the city. In the afternoon, pass by the Islamic shrine Nabi Musa, resting place of Moses by Muslim tradition and enjoy a panoramic view down to Wadi el-Quelt and St. George Monastery. With sunset, arrive to a traditional Bedouin camp in the Jerusalem Wilderness for a concluding dinner from the earthen zarb oven. 🍷 in the desert.

8 Check-out and transfer to airport or land border.



Highlights



Includes signature dishes and beverages of the Palestinian-Arabic cuisine.



Includes multiple encounters and meetings on Palestine's culinary heritage with locals.



Includes cooking classes.



Includes a wine-tasting of locally grown Palestinian wine.



Includes beer-tasting of Palestinian brewed beers.

Famous Local Dishes

The following dishes are signature foods of Arabic-Palestinian cuisine and best enjoyed in renowned restaurants or shared with local families.

Musakhan: Chicken cooked on top of round taboun bread, garnished with onions, pine nuts and sumac (a lemony tasting reddish spice)

Maqlubeh: Literally "upside down": meat cooked in the bottom of a large cooking pot with fried eggplant or cauliflower and seasonings. The pot is then turned over at once bringing the meat and vegetables on top - hence the name.



Qioreh: A classic from the city of Hebron, with chicken or lamb sealed in a pot with rice, butter and seasoning and cooked slowly in a bread oven.

Fokhara: Chicken or lamb and vegetables cooked in a sealed earthenware pot.

Mansaf: A Bedouin dish of lamb cooked in a tangy sauce of yoghurt, served with rice.

Mulukhiyya and Bamia: A green leaf which turns glutinous when cooked, and okra. Both vegetables are commonly turned into soups or stews, with or without meat

Street Food

Falafel: These fried rounds of crushed chickpeas, flavored with herbs and spices, are found throughout Palestine. There are slight regional variations — Ramallah falafel tend to be longish ovals, whereas elsewhere they're usually round or slightly flattened. In Hebron, they often come served with fried potato and/or rounds of fried eggplant, instead of the more usual salads and hummus. However, they're served, they're cheap, filling, tasty and a godsend for vegetarians.

Kebab: There are many variations on the theme of meat on a stick. The stereotypical "shish" or pieces of meat, marinated and grilled, is more commonly found in sit-down restaurants. Street kebabs are more often "seek" kebab — minced meat mixed with herbs and molded around a skewer, served in pita with salads and sauce.

Shwarma: Don't be fooled by any resemblance to the veal doner kebabs of post-pub Britain; shwarma is more like some good Greek gyros. Usually served in pita bread, the tastier version is offered in shrak, the foot-wide, wafer-thin stretchy bread cooked over a metal griddle, known as saj. Shwarma made with shrak can easily challenge origami with its intricate, neat folds.

Mu'ajanat: Usually sold at bakeries, Mu'ajanat are pastries baked in a wood oven, usually filled with: Za'atar (local thyme), white or yellow cheese or cooked minced meat.







Practical Travel Information



Arrival, Transportation & Getting around in the Holy Land

Arrival to the Holy Land

Located at the crossroads of three continents – Europe, Asia, and Africa – the Holy Land is within easy reach from literally anywhere in the world by air, sea or land border.

The Holy Land may well be one of the oldest established travel destinations in the world. As early as the 4th century CE, the first pilgrims – Queen Helena, Egeria or the Pilgrim of Bordeaux – voyaged to what later became Palestine, Israel, and Jordan, tracing biblical footsteps. The Christian pilgrimage was born!

Ever since, the lands on both banks of the Jordan River intrigued pilgrims and believers, joined by explorers and admirers of ancient cultures alike to embark on a journey to the holy sites and natural wonders of the small land bridge connecting Asia and Africa.

Welcoming millions of travelers annually, the tourism infrastructure in Palestine, Israel, and Jordan is perfectly capable of serving any kind of customer and can blend in with any kind of travel, from classical pilgrimages to culinary heritage tours to action-seeking nature adventures.

In this section, you will find a brief, non-exhaustive overview on the travel services available. For more information and any special requests, do not hesitate to contact your HLTOA tourism professional.



Arrival by air: Thanks to its main international airports in Tel Aviv and Amman, Israel and Jordan are well connected to world-wide air travel. From both airports, numerous regular and charter airlines offer daily connections to major hubs across the globe including Europe, Asia, Africa, North America, and the Middle East. International charter flights are also available to/from Eilat and Aqaba airport. In combination with a land border crossing, travelers can also arrive via Sharm el-Sheik or Taba airport in Egypt.



Arrival by sea: Through the seaports and cruise terminals Ashdod and Ashkelon in the Mediterranean and Aqaba and Eilat in the Red Sea respectively, the Holy Land is a regular stop in many cruise itineraries. For customers arriving with private cruising or motor yachts, marinas are available along the Mediterranean as well as in the Gulf of Aqaba.



Arrival by land: Arriving to the Holy Land is also possible via land border from Egypt via Taba Border Crossing, while Israel and Jordan are well connected via the Araba and Sheikh Hussein Border Crossings in the south and north of the countries. The King Hussein Border Crossing directly connects Amman with Jericho.

The Holy Land is a comparably small region with short distances between major cities and sites, which makes getting around fast and convenient. Any point is within reach of a day's trip, even across international borders. Whatever your clients' itinerary may be, your HLITOA tourism professional will happily suggest the best combination of comfortable and efficient means of transportation.

Cooperating with a Palestinian incoming professional also comes with the benefit that no change of buses, drivers, or guides is required when traveling between Israel and Palestine. In addition, your HLITOA tourism professional will take care of group visa arrangements and a smooth cross-border operation for traveling between Egypt, Israel, and Jordan.

Transportation

For usual transportation needs, the following means are available:



Large tour bus: For groups with up to 55 passengers, large tour buses are the most common means of transportation. Buses with an extended capacity of up to 60 passengers are also available, but are not able to reach all places due to their length. Most buses are equipped with Wi-Fi, USB-charging stations, and a refrigerator. Luxury buses are also available.



Mini and medium tour buses: For groups up to 16, 20, or 30 people, mini and medium-sized buses are available including luxury buses with extra-wide seats, a personalized mini-bar, a coffee machine and more. Wi-Fi, USB-charging stations, and a refrigerator are basic amenities in most mini and medium tour buses.



Vans: For FITs and small groups up to 7 people, regular and luxury vans are available for day trips and longer journeys.



Luxury chauffeur service: For VIP services and luxury tours, chauffeur service is available for transfers or special trips.



Public transportation: For FITs and days at leisure, a close-meshed network of public transportation with regular bus service and taxi services is a reliable means of transportation for urban and interurban travel. Taxis and regular mini busses can be flagged in the street or booked via phone or mobile application. Individual airport transfers can also be arranged through local operators in advance.



Rental cars: Rental cars are available from all airports and major cities. For better rates and more comprehensive insurance packages, pre-ordering is advised. Please note: only a few rental car companies allow traveling in Israel and Palestine. Your HLITOA tourism professional can provide you with advice and arrange rentals for your clients.



Off-road tours: For a short getaway into the Jerusalem Wilderness around Jericho and Bethlehem or a multiple-day trip to Har Karkom Plateau or deep into the desert of Wadi Rum, off-road tours can be arranged for your clients. Kind of cars vary from classical Landrover Defenders to luxury Jeeps.



For special occasions and unique experiences, you may also include one or more of the following:

Getting Around in the Holy Land



Quad tours: For adventurous tours in the desert, quad tours can be organized through your HLITOA tourism professional.



Bicycle tours: More and more famous over the last years, regular and off-road bicycle tours can be arranged for your clients including equipment rental and service cars for luggage and refreshment transportation on longer tours.



Camel rides: Once a very common means of transportation, camel rides from few minutes to multiple-days trips can be arranged through your HLITOA tourism professional, e.g. in Wadi Rum, around Jericho, or in the southern Sinai.



Donkey rides: Treat your clients with a special experience and offer them a means of transportation once reserved for kings and high officials: a donkey ride! Available in Sebastia and Jericho.



Horse-drawn carriage rides: A truly unique experience is a guided tour of the Jericho oasis from aboard a traditional horse-drawn carriage.



Hot-air balloons: Hot-air balloon rides are available on a regular basis in Wadi Rum and are especially recommended for a sunrise flight.



Helicopter tours: In some areas, helicopter sightseeing can be arranged for your clients. Inquire on options at your HLITOA tourism professional.



Cable cars: Offer your clients great panoramic views from aboard the cables cars at Manara Cliff, Jericho's Mt. of Temptation, Rosh Ha-Nikra caves, Haifa cable car to Mt. Carmel, or the Masada plateau.



Sailing boat rides: For meditation after visiting the holy sites or just for leisure, sailing boat rides can be arranged on the Sea of Galilee.



Semi-submarine rides: Take your clients right into the fascinating coral reefs world of the Gulf Aqaba aboard a semi-submarine ride from Aqaba or Eilat.



Water sports: In Eilat and Aqaba, multiple motorized water sports can be arranged for your clients including water scooters and banana boat rides.



River rafting and Canoeing: Opportunities for river rafting and canoeing are available in the northern streams like the Jordan River.

There is a wide variety of accommodation and lodging offers in the Holy Land meeting the demands of any kind of client or tour. Your HLITOA tourism professional will be happy to suggest the perfect match for your clients and your targeted budget.

Accommodation and Lodging in the Holy Land



Hotels: In the touristic hubs you will find a large variety of hotels of different standards from budget to luxury accommodation, meeting any demand.



Boutique Guesthouses: In many places, e.g. in Bethlehem or Sebastia, boutique guesthouses, usually located in beautifully restored old houses, are an interesting alternative to deluxe hotels, especially for smaller groups.



SPA Hotels: Along the Mediterranean, the Dead Sea, and at the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba, numerous luxury SPA hotels offer world-classes services for leisure travelers.



Church Guesthouses: Pilgrims and faith-based travelers will appreciate the basic accommodation church guesthouses offer along the main pilgrimage routes from the Sea of Galilee through Nazareth to Bethlehem and Jerusalem.



Hostels: For budget travelers and youth groups, hostels offering simple and basic accommodation including dormitories, are a good alternative to hotels or church guesthouses.



Bedouin Camps: Along the long-distance hiking trail Masar Ibrahim and in the desert vicinity of Bethlehem, Bedouin camps provide simple, yet exceptional accommodation in tents or even under the starry sky. An overnight with the Bedouins usually includes a folkloric show with music and authentic Bedouin-style food.



Caving: For nature lovers, spending a night out in a natural cave in the hillsides around Bethlehem is definitely a special experience. Food and drinks will be supplied through your local operator.



Homestays: For travelers seeking encounters with the local populations, homestays provided by families are a perfect opportunity for an inexpensive overnight stay, complete with home-made food and a lot of talking and discussion. Homestays are available primarily in the north of Palestine.

Traveling with Special Needs

For travelers with special needs, please inquire at your HLITOA tourism professional about suitable transportation, accommodation, and tailor-made, needs-based itineraries.





Palestine Sunbird



Explore more

Publishing Information

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It is recommended that travelers consult the travel advisories issued by their respective Ministry of Foreign Affairs. You may also ask your HLITOA tourism professional for updates on the current travel security situation.

The Holy Land

A touristic map
for pilgrims & visitors

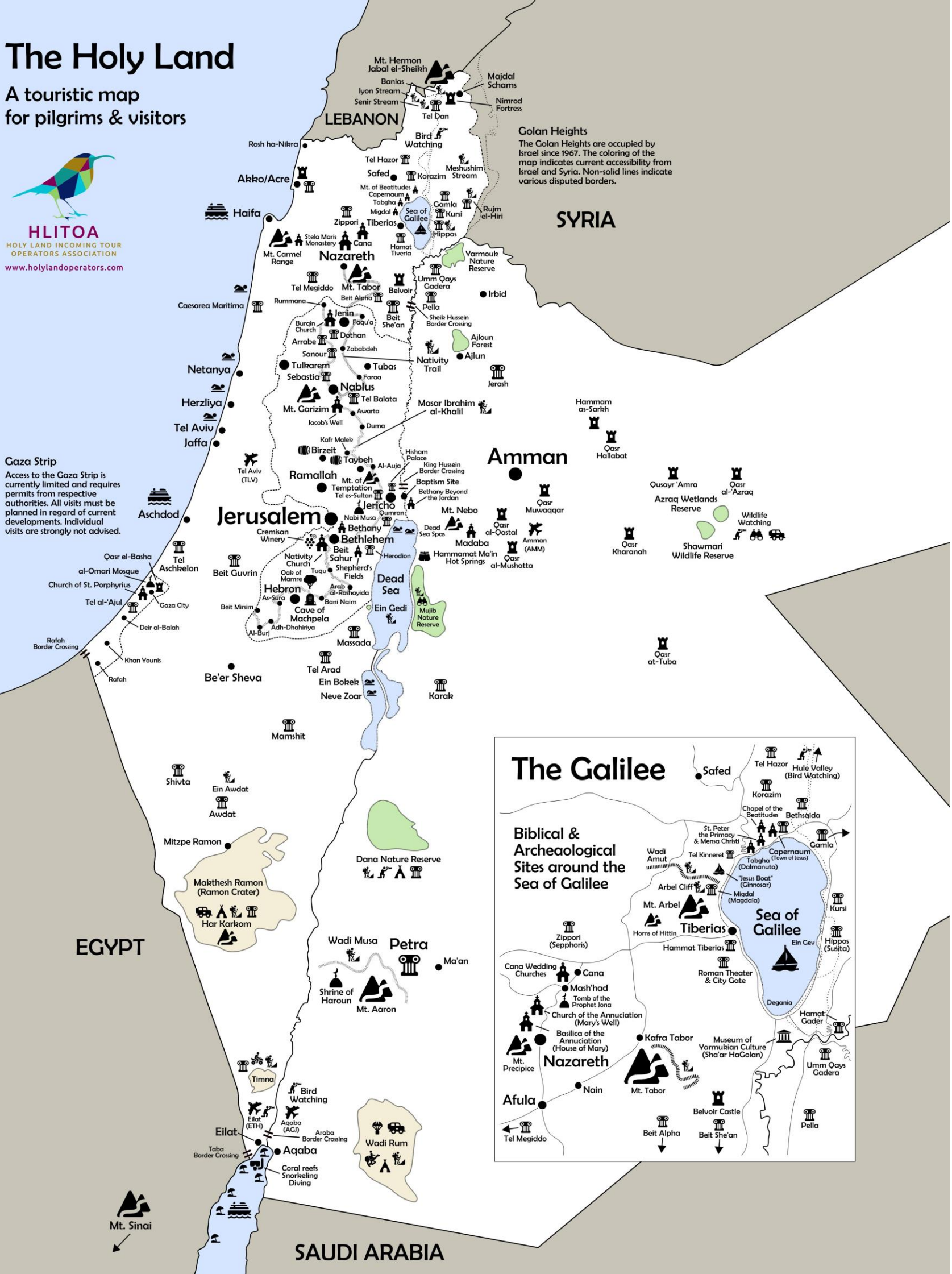


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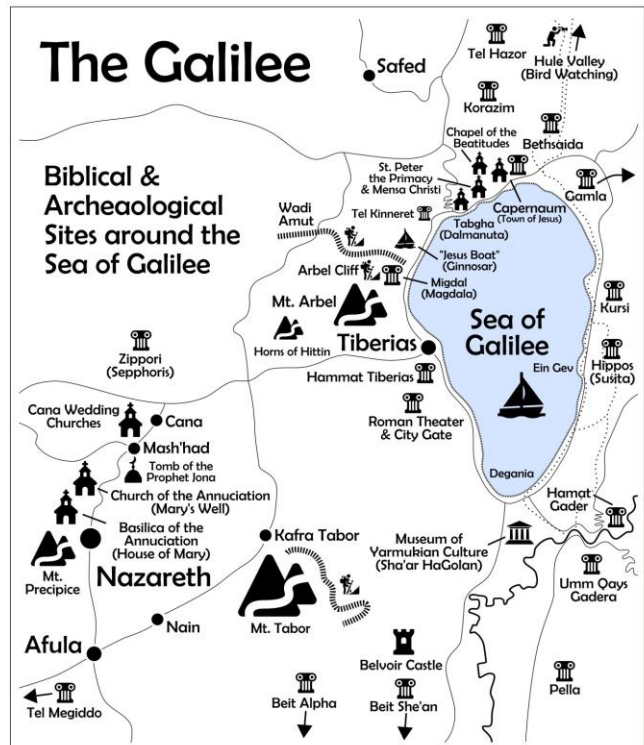
Gaza Strip

Access to the Gaza Strip is currently limited and requires permits from respective authorities. All visits must be planned in regard of current developments. Individual visits are strongly not advised.



The Galilee

Biblical &
Archeological
Sites around the
Sea of Galilee





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