

Tipping: Not long ago, apparently, no one tipped in Israel. Now your bill arrives appended with a large handwritten “Service is not included.” Serving staff salaries in Israel are customarily low and the system relies on tips from the customers to even the balance. Note that taxi drivers in Israel do not expect to be tipped; they’re usually content just to overcharge.

Local Cuisine: Felafel is a local dish made of ground chickpeas blended with herbs and spices, shaped into a ball and then deep-fried in oil, covered with tahina (a thin paste made from sesame seeds) and served with an assortment of salads in a pitta bread. The most popular way to eat meat is as shwarma, also known elsewhere as kebab. This is lamb, or sometimes turkey or chicken, sliced from a revolving vertical spit and stuffed, along with salad, into a pitta or rolled in a plate-sized piece of laffa bread. The kosher laws of Judaism ensure that Israel is a dream for vegetarians, with numerous dairy-only restaurants.

Local drink: Although you will see several shelves in supermarkets and grocery shops lined with bottles of wine and spirits, Israelis don’t drink much. For most Jews wine is only drunk on holy days such as Shabbat and during Passover. Spirits are hardly touched at all. The Arab Muslim population also, of course, abstains. However, vines and wines have existed in the Holy Land since 3000 BC, making it one of the world’s oldest wine-producing areas. Arak and brandy are the best-selling Israeli spirits. Ramallah is reputedly the best arak in Israel; normally only available in Jaffa. Vermouth, sherry and port are also produced locally. Also available are some of the Israeli liqueurs, such as Carmei-Zion’s Hallelujah, a sort of Jewish Grand Marnier. Some popular local beers you can try are Neshet, Goldstar, Maccabee and Taybeh.

SHOPPING FACILITIES

Tel Aviv

Nahalat Binyamin St.: Formerly a run-down province of the textile and haberdashery trade, private investment has seen it rejuvenated as a busy pedestrian mall full of fashionable cafés and arty shops. On Tuesday afternoons and Fridays the street is also host to a craft market and filled with buskers, mime artists and dancers.

Carmel Market: Tel Aviv’s loud and crowded market meets Allenby Street at Magen David Circle, from where it runs through the Yemenite Quarter. The main market street is HaCarmel Street, and you need to push your way past the first few feet of clothing and footwear to reach the more aromatic and enticing stalls of fresh fruits and vegetables, hot breads and spices. The best prices are to be had as the market closes, especially about 3 or 4 pm on Friday when everyone wants to sell up before the Shabbat.

Jaffa

Flea Market: To the east of Yefet Street is the flea market, which has a reputation for antiques and interesting oriental bits and pieces. Bargaining is the order of the day, and the stallholders’ traditional sales patter includes the one about making a quick first sale on Sunday morning to bring good luck for the coming week. It’s closed on Saturday.

LOCAL CURRENCY The national currency is the new Israeli Shekel (NIS). The Hebraically correct plural is shekelim but even Israelis when speaking English tend to Anglicise and use ‘shekels’. The ‘old shekel’ was dropped in 1985 as part of a rescue plan to reduce inflation. The new shekel is divided into 100 agorot. There are coins of 10 and 50 agorot and 1 and 5 NIS, and notes of 5, 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 NIS.

OFFICE/TELEPHONE FACILITIES The main post office in Tel Aviv is at 132 Allenby Street, on the corner of Yehuda HaLevi Street. Open Sunday to Thursday from 7 am to 6 pm, and Friday from 7 am to noon, closed Saturday.

Israel has a state-of-the-art, card-operated public telephone system and international calls can be made from any street call box. Telecards are bought from lottery kiosks, news agents or bookshops and come in

denominations of 10 units (12 NIS), 20 units (24 NIS) and 50 units (48 NIS).

To call the U.S. from Tel Aviv, dial 00 International access + 1 (U.S. country code) + area code + local number.

To call Tel Aviv from the United States or Canada, dial 011 International access + 972 (Israel country code) + 03 (Tel Aviv and Jaffa area code) or 02 (Jerusalem and the West Bank area code) + local number.

TOURIST INFORMATION All Tel Aviv taxis charge by the meter, but they are still an expensive way of getting around the city. They operate according to two tariffs: one between 5:30 am and 9 pm and the second at all other times.

TRANSPORTATION Doubling as a multistory shopping center, Tel Aviv’s recently opened central bus station is a mammoth complex where outgoing intercity buses depart from the 6th floor, where there’s also an information point.

USEFUL WORDS AND PHRASES

In Hebrew

Hello/goodbye • sha-LOM

Good morning • BO-ker tov

Good evening • erev tov

Thank you • to-DAH

You’re welcome • al low da-VAAR

Yes • ken No • loh

Where is... • AYE-fo...?

How much is it? • KA-mah zeh ule?

Toilet • she-ru-TEEM

Bank • bank

bus • auto-boos

Do you speak English? • ah-TAH m’dah-BEHR ang-LEET?

In Arabic

Hello • a-halan/mahr-haba

Goodbye • salaam aleicham/ma-ah-salameh

Good morning • sabah-al-kheir

Good evening • masa’al-kheir

Thank you • shoo-khnan

You’re welcome • afwan

Please • min fadlach

Yes • ay-wah

No • la

How much is this? • ah-desh hadah?

Toilet • beyt al-may

Do you speak English? • tech-kee Ingleesi?

This information has been compiled for the convenience of our guests and is intended solely for that purpose. While we work to ensure that the information contained herein is correct, we cannot accept responsibility for any changes that may have taken place since printing.

© RCCL 2009. All rights reserved.



PORT EXPLORER & SHOPPING GUIDE

Ashdod ISRAEL

Tel Aviv

Barely a century old, the modern metropolis of Tel Aviv thumbs its nose at the 3,000 year history of the Holy City with its shackles of tradition and confrontational religions. Forsaking synagogues for stock exchanges and tradition for faddism, the concerns of secular Tel Aviv are finance, business and fun. Tel Aviv is a greatly under rated Mediterranean city. It possesses an absorbing array of distinctive neighborhoods, a result of the diverse backgrounds of its inhabitants. The key to enjoying Tel Aviv is to treat it as a resort; cruise the cafés, hang out at the bars and make good use of the city’s superb beaches. Also make time for a few explorations around town – take a wander in areas like Jaffa and the Yemenite Quarter. Open Sunday, Monday and Wednesday from 10 am to 6 pm, Tuesday and Thursday from 10 am to 10 pm, Friday and Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm

1 Diaspora Museum The museum, also known as Beit Hatefutsoth doesn’t actually display any artifacts from the past. Rather, this is a collection of models, dioramas, films and presentations chronicling the diversity of Jewish life and culture in exile. Open Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 10 am to 5 pm, Wednesday from 10 am to 7 pm, and Friday from 9 am to 2 pm, closed Saturday.

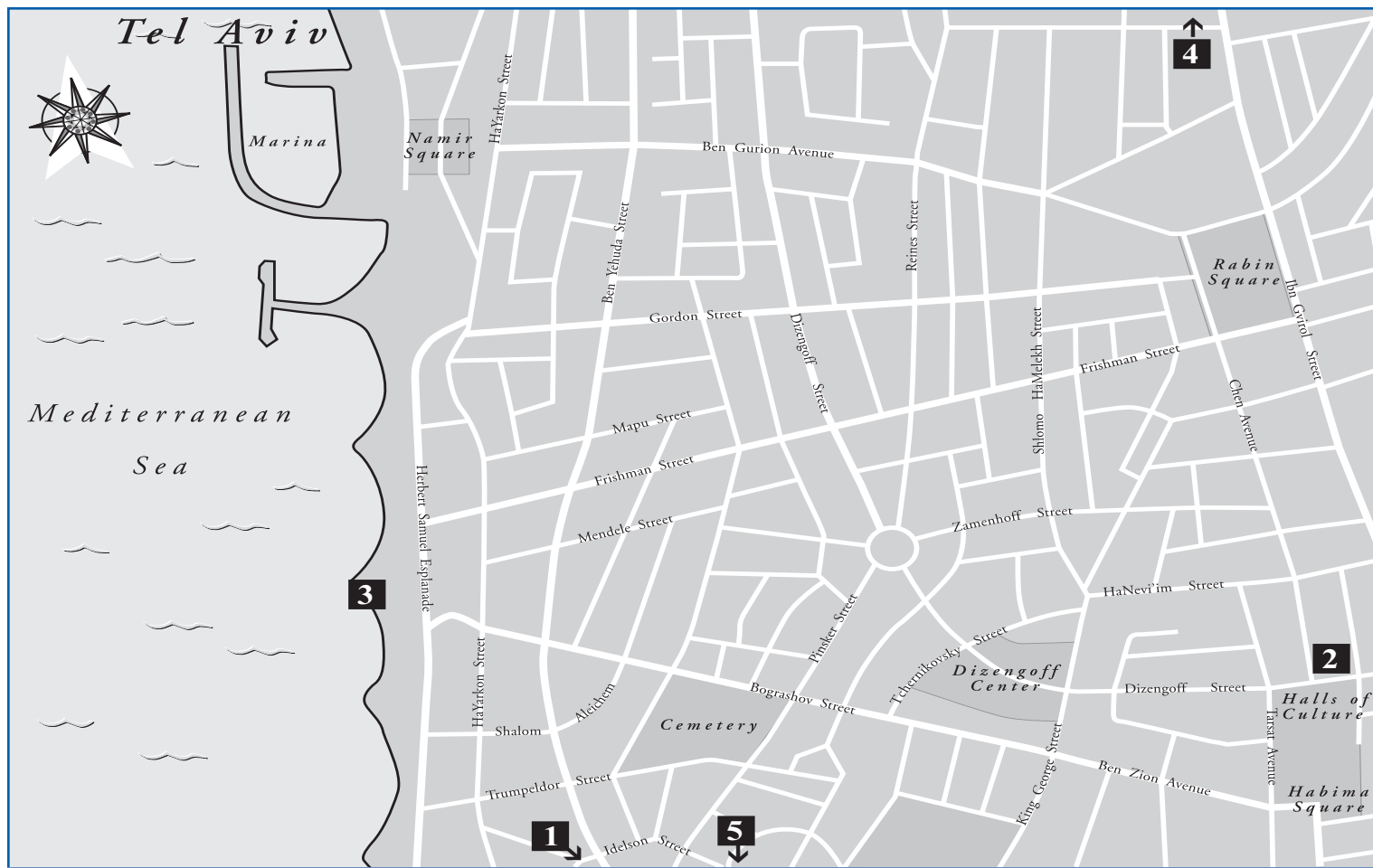
2 Tel Aviv Museum of Art Part of an attractive modern development that includes law courts and the municipal central library, the Tel Aviv Museum of Art, at 27 HaMelekh Shaul Ave, is home to a superb collection, particularly strong on late 19th & early 20th century works.

3 Beaches Possibly the biggest major attraction in Tel Aviv is the lengthy stretch of fine white sand which fringes the alluringly blue Mediterranean Sea. Use caution when swimming as there is a strong undertow in the area. Heed the warning flags posted along the beaches; white means that the area is safe. It is also wise not to take valuables with you when you go to the beach.

continued over



Celebrity **X** Cruises®



PLACES OF INTEREST

4 Land of Israel (Eretz Y'Israel) Museum This actually consists of 11 small museums constructed around an archaeological site, Tel Qasile. The museum complex is made up of, among others, a glass museum, a ceramics museum, a folk-lore pavilion, a reconstruction of a medieval bazaar, a planetarium and a couple of halls housing temporary exhibitions. Open Sunday to Thursday from 9 am to 2 pm (Wednesday until 6 pm) and Saturday from 10 am to 2 pm

5 Shalom Tower One block west of Nahalat Binyamin Street is the imposing bulk of Tel Aviv's major landmark, the Shalom Tower. The lower floors of the tower are a shopping mall while higher up are the offices of the Ministry of the Interior. The 30th floor has an observation deck that is great for views of the city and beyond. Open Sunday to Thursday from 9:30 am to 6 pm, Friday from 9:30 am to 2 pm, closed Saturday.

Jaffa

The legends of Jonah stepping shore from the mouth of the whale and the spectacle of Pegasus circling the harbor on his winged horse Pegasus are both connected to Jaffa, a place that lays claim to the title of world's oldest working harbor. According to the old testament, the port was founded by Japheth, following the flood of his father Noah. The King of the Israelites lost the town in 1468 BC to the Egyptians, whose soldiers made their surprise entry hidden in clay pots. The tides of Islam swept over the port in the 8th century to be repelled briefly during the time of the Crusader conquests. From that time on, Jaffa remained in Muslim hands until the British General Allenby drove out the Turks in 1917. Jews had lived there since at least 1840 and by the end of the century, Jaffa had become a major gateway for boatloads of arriving immigrants. This created conflicts between the Arab community and the Jews for decades and in 1948 the defeat and subsequent flight of the majority of Jaffa's Arab population left the ancient

town in Jewish hands. Since that time, Jaffa has been extensively renovated and developed as an artists' quarter, with attendant galleries, craftshops and cafés.

The Clocktower & Flea Market The Ottoman clocktower, built in 1906 on Yefet Street. To the west of the clocktower is the Mahmudiya Mosque, which was built in 1812.

Museum of Antiquities of Tel Aviv-Jagga At 10 Mifraz Shlomo Street, the museum was originally a Turkish administrative and detention center, the building is now home to a display of local archaeological discoveries.

St. Peter's Monastery This orange-painted Franciscan church was built above a medieval citadel and in later used as a Christian hostelry once visited by Napoleon.

Simon the Tanner's House This is the traditional site of the house where the Apostle Peter stayed after restoring Tabitha to life.

Kedumim Square Old Jaffa's reconstructed center, ringed by restaurants, clubs and galleries.

Artists' Area Along Mazal Dagim Street and the intersecting alleyways named for the signs of the zodiac. Among the galleries at 4 Mazal Dagim is the Ilana Gur Museum with three floors of modern eclectic pop and ethnic art, created by artists from Israel and abroad.

Jerusalem

Jerusalem is the highly disputed capital of Israel and possibly one of the most fascinating and beautiful cities in the world. It is also surely the holiest city of all – so many people have attached so much importance to Jerusalem, for so many different and conflicting reasons, and for so many years. Jerusalem can be divided into three parts: the walled Old City, East Jerusalem, and the

New City. The Old City is the main attraction for everyone: the religious, the historian and the more casual visitor. Within its walls you will find the holiest Jewish site, the Western Wall; the third holiest Muslim site – the Haram ash-Sharif/Temple Mount, from where Mohammed rose to heaven; and the holy Christian sites of the trial of Jesus, His crucifixion, burial and resurrection. East Jerusalem, along with the Old City, was under Jordanian control until 1967. The Old City has Arab markets, and in East Jerusalem you could be in any modern-day Arab town. The New City is cleaner, more modern and less exotic. However, here you will find some of Israel's leading museums, the Knesset building and most of the city's Jewish restaurants, cafés and nightlife.

The Old City A bazaar of living history, the Old City is a densely packed labyrinth of more than 100 streets, 1,000 shops and stalls, and 3,000 years of human experience. As you walk along the Via Delarosa you are treading on the same paving stones that were there at the time of Christ.

Walls & Gates The walls as they exist today are the legacy of Suleyman the Great, who oversaw their construction between 1537 and 1542.

Damascus Gate One of the most impressive structures of Islamic architecture in Jerusalem, Damascus Gate is also the busiest and most photogenic of the Old City gates.

Herod's Gate It was just 328 feet (100m) east of this gate that the Crusaders breached the city walls on July 15, 1099.

St. Stephen's Gate This is the gate that gives access to the mount of Olives and Gethsemane, and from their positions on that biblically famed hillside, Israeli paratroopers fought their way in through this gate on June 7, 1967 to capture the Old City.

Golden Gate The gate was probably sealed by the Muslims in the 7th century to deny access to the Haram ash-Sharif/Temple Mount to non-Muslims. A popular alternative theory is that the Muslims sealed it to prevent the Jewish Messiah from entering the Haram.

Dung Gate Presently the smallest of the city's gates, at one time it was even more diminutive. The Jordanians widened it during their tenure in the city in order to allow cars through.

Zion Gate This gate had to be punched through to give access to the Franciscan monastery left outside the walls by Suleyman's architects. During the 1948 War Israeli soldiers holding Mt. Zion also tried to burst through here in a desperate attempt to relieve the besieged Jewish Quarter. A memorial plaque to the fallen is inset within the gate while the bullet-eaten facade gives some indication of how ferocious the fighting must have been.

Jaffa Gate The actual gate is the small block through which the doglegged pedestrian tunnel passes (the dogleg was to slow down any charging enemy forces) the breach in the wall through which the road now passes was only made in 1898 in order to permit the visiting Kaiser Wilhelm II and his party to ride with full pomp into the city.

New Gate This is the most modern of all the gates, opened in 1887 by Sultan Abdul Hamid to allow direct access from the newly built pilgrim hospices to the holy sites of the Old City's Christian Quarter.

Ramparts Walk One of the best ways to see the Old City and its surroundings is to walk around the top of the walls. The walls are surprisingly high in parts, and the views across the Old City rooftops are a treat. Such a walk will also enable you to make some kind of sense of the layout of the place.

The Citadel (Tower of David) This is one of the country's most impressive restoration projects and a major museum complex.

Museum of the History of Jerusalem The museum and its numerous rooms contain some impressive dioramas and artifacts, holograms and videos employed to tell a version of the city's story.

Haram ash-Sharif/Temple Mount Dominating not just the Old City but in some ways the whole country, this vast esplanade has become a spiritual

keystone to the Jewish and Muslim faiths and something of an obstacle to peace between the two peoples.

Dome of the Rock Enclosing the sacred rock upon which Abraham prepared to sacrifice his son and from which, according to Islamic tradition, the Prophet Mohammed launched himself heavenward to take his place alongside Allah, the Dome was built between 688 and 691.

Western Wall (Wailing Wall) In stark contrast to the gaudy magnificence of the Dome of the Rock, the Western Wall is nothing more than a bare stone wall. However, it still manages to be one of the most captivating places in all of Jerusalem, and indeed Israel. The wall is regarded as the most holy of all Jewish sites. and grew as a place of pilgrimage during the Ottoman period where Jews would come to mourn and lament their ancient loss.

Mt. Zion This compact area contains some of the most important sites in Jerusalem, including the possible site of the biblical Last Supper and a less probable Tomb of David. Also here is the grave of Oskar Schindler, the man with the list.

Bethlehem

Bethlehem was actually well-known long before the arrival of Jesus. Rachel the Matriarch died here and Ruth and Boaz romanced here which, down the line, resulted in David, local shepherd and future king of Israel. Despite being the birthplace of Christ, for almost two centuries after his death, Bethlehem was a center of paganism. It wasn't until May 31, 339 that the town's first church was dedicated by Queen Helena on the site of the present-day Church of the Nativity, built over the accepted birthplace of Jesus.

Church of the Nativity Built like a citadel over the cave where it's believed that Jesus was born, this is one of the world's oldest working churches.

Milk Grotto Chapel Tradition has it that on their way to Egypt the Holy Family took shelter at this Franciscan chapel. While Mary was breast-feeding her baby, so the story goes, some of the milk dripped to the floor, causing the rock out of which the cavern is built to turn chalky white.

Bethlehem Museum On Paul VI Street, just up from Manger Square and on the north side, this small museum has exhibits of traditional Palestinian crafts and costumes. Open Monday to Saturday from 10 am to noon and 2:30 to 5:30 pm, closed Sunday.

King David Cinema & King David's Well On Star Street, about 1/2 mile (.8 km) north of Manger Square, the King David Cinema presents a film, Jesus, which is a virtual word-for-word dramatization of Luke's gospel. The three restored water cisterns in the car park outside the cinema are associated with II Samuel which relates the tale of the thirsty David offering the water to God as a sacrifice.

Rachel's Tomb One of Judaism's most sacred shrines, also revered by Muslims and Christians, this is the tomb of the matriarch Rachel, wife of Jacob and mother of Benjamin.

SHORE EXCURSIONS To make the most of your visit to Ashdod we suggest you take one of our organized Shore Excursions. For information concerning tour content and pricing, consult your Shore Excursion Order Form or contact the Shore Excursion Desk. When going ashore, be advised to take only necessary items and secure any valuables onboard.

LOCAL CUSTOMS Bartering: Bargaining is not always the fun it is made out to be. Mostly limited to Arab markets it can be time-consuming and frustrating. The shopkeeper usually attracts your attention and gives you a price three to 10 times above the realistic going rate. If you are genuinely interested you pull a face and state your offer in a 'take it or leave it' manner. This should be substantially below the amount you are actually willing to pay. Whatever, stick to your guns and do not be bullied or cajoled into paying too much. Turning away from a bargaining session can often cut a price in half.