



Israel & the Palestinian Territories



THIS EDITION WRITTEN AND RESEARCHED BY

Daniel Robinson,

Orlando Crowcroft, Virginia Maxwell, Jenny Walker

PLAN YOUR TRIP

Welcome to Israel & the
Palestinian Territories... 4

Israel & the Palestinian
Territories Map... 6

Israel & the Palestinian
Territories' Top 20... 8

Need to Know... 18

If You Like... 20

Month by Month... 22

Itineraries... 26

Crossing Borders... 30

Travel with Children... 34

Regions at a Glance... 36

ON THE ROAD

JERUSALEM 40

Abu Ghosh... 103

Soreq Cave... 103

Caves of Maresha &
Beit-Guvrin... 103

Latrun... 104

**TEL AVIV-
JAFFA (YAFO) 105**

Herzliya... 144

Netanya... 145

Ramla... 146

**HAIFA & THE
NORTH COAST 148**

Haifa... 149

Daliyat al-Karmel... 166

Carmelite Monastery
of St Elijah... 167

Atlit... 167

Ein Hod & Ayn Hawd... 167

Zichron Ya'acov... 169

Mey Kedem... 170

Jisr az-Zarka... 170

Caesarea... 171

Akko (Acre)... 175

Nahariya... 181



THE DEAD SEA P285



AKKO P175



OLD PORT BOARDWALK,
TEL AVIV P115

Contents

UNDERSTAND

LOWER GALILEE & SEA OF GALILEE... 183

Nazareth 184

Kafr Kana 194

Tzippori 195

Mt Tabor 196

Kfar Tavor 196

Kfar Kisch 197

Kfar Kama 197

Jezreel & Beit She'an Valleys 198

Beit She'an 198

Belvoir 199

Beit Alpha Synagogue... 199

Gangaroo Animal Park... 200

Ein Harod 200

Tiberias 201

Sea of Galilee 208

North of Tiberias 208

South of Tiberias 217

Eastern Shore 218

Hamat Gader 219

UPPER GALILEE & GOLAN 220

The Upper Galilee 221

Tsfat (Safed) 221

Mt Meron Area 231

Rosh Pina 234

Hula Valley 236

Kiryat Shmona &

Tel Hai 237

Metula 237

East of Kiryat Shmona... 238

The Golan Heights 240

Katzrin 240

South of Katzrin 242

North of Katzrin 244

Northern Golan 246

WEST BANK 249

Bethlehem 253

Ramallah & Al-Bireh 262

Jericho & Around 266

Hebron 272

Nablus 274

Jenin 277

THE GAZA STRIP .. 279

Gaza City 283

Khan Younis 284

Rafah 284

THE DEAD SEA 285

Ein Gedi 288

Masada 296

Ein Bokek 298

Sodom 300

Neot HaKikar 301

THE NEGEV 303

Arad 305

Be'er Sheva 305

Sde Boker 309

Mitzpe Ramon 312

The Arava 317

Eilat 320

PETRA 330

The Ancient City 332

Wadi Musa 336

Siq al-Barid

(Little Petra) 342

Israel & the Palestinian Territories Today 344

History 346

People of Israel & the Palestinian Territories 362

Hummus & Olives: Regional Food 368

Daily Life 373

Government & Politics 377

Religion 382

Arts 386

Environment 392

SURVIVAL GUIDE

Safe Travel 398

Directory A–Z 401

Transport 412

Health 418

Language 421

Index 429

Map Legend 439

SPECIAL FEATURES

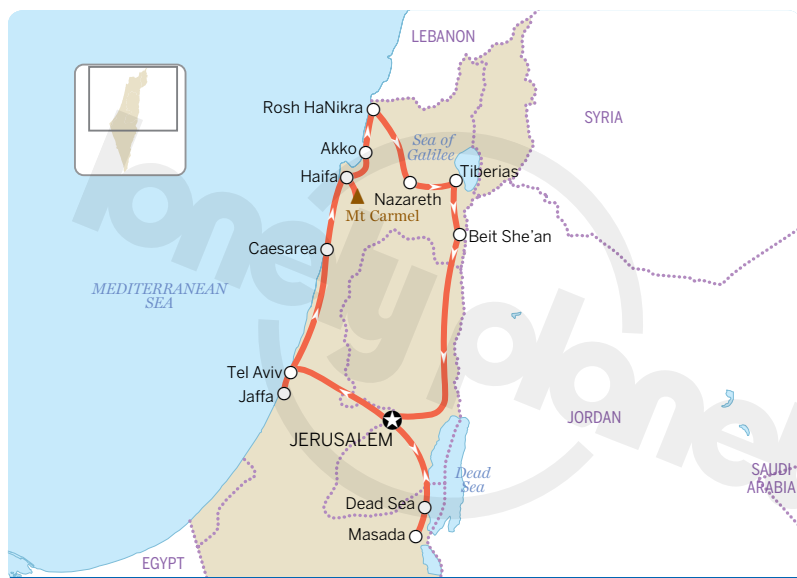
Al Haram ash-Sharif/ Temple Mount 3D illustration 50

Jerusalem Image Gallery 82

Religious Sites 210

Petra Walking Tour 3D illustration 340

Itineraries



2
WEEKS

Best of Israel

Spend your first four days in and around **Jerusalem**, including a couple of days wandering the alleys of the Old City, exploring the Western Wall and the adjacent Temple Mount/Al-Haram ash-Sharif, and following the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Break out your swimsuit and hiking shoes for a full-day excursion down to the **Dead Sea** and up the storied stronghold of **Masada**. Then head to the Mediterranean coast for three days around **Tel Aviv**, dividing your time between strolling, cycling, lounging on the beach, fine dining and watching the world go by. Next, head up the coast for a peek at Roman-era **Caesarea** before pushing on to **Haifa**. Check out the views from atop **Mt Carmel** and the Baha'i Gardens before a day trip to the walled city of **Akko (Acre)** and the grottoes of **Rosh HaNikra**. After a day in **Nazareth**, concluded with a tongue-tingling 'fusion' dinner, head to **Tiberias** for a day exploring the storied shores of the Sea of Galilee. On the drive back to Jerusalem, stop at the Roman ruins in **Beit She'an**.



4

WEEKS

Israeli Odyssey

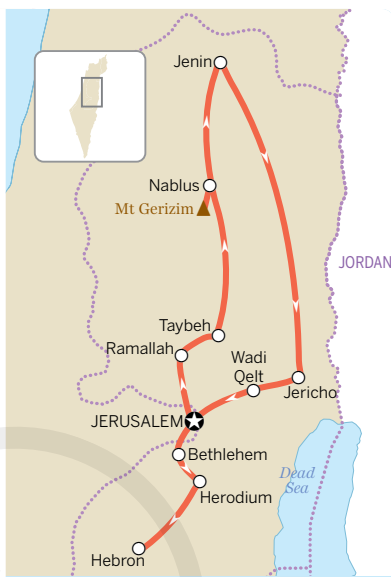
After four or five days in and around **Jerusalem**, including a couple of days exploring the Old City and a half-day visit to the Israel Museum, take a trip down to the wondrous caves at **Beit Guvrin**, stopping at a winery on the way. Next, stir it up in **Tel Aviv** for a few days, strolling along the beachfront promenade to historic **Jaffa**, biking along the Yarkon River and working on your Mediterranean tan. On your way north to **Haifa**, stop at the Roman ruins of **Caesarea** and the quaint old town of **Zichron Ya'acov**, famed for its vintage winery. After touring Haifa's sublime Baha'i Gardens, visit **Mt Carmel** and the Druze village of **Daliyat al-Karmel**. The next day, continue north to **Akko (Acre)**, with its enchanting mixture of Crusader ruins and Ottoman relics. Then go as far north as politics permit, to the subterranean grottoes of **Rosh HaNikra**, before heading inland for a couple of days in **Nazareth**, exploring Christian sites and dining on traditional Arab delicacies and East-West fusion dishes. Based in **Tiberias** for a couple of days, relax around the Sea of Galilee, combining ancient synagogues and Christian sites with quiet beaches and, perhaps, white-water rafting on the Jordan River. Loop east to the Golan Heights, visiting the hilltop ruins of **Gamla**, the Golan Archaeological Museum in **Katzrin** and towering **Nimrod Fortress**. Circle west via the lush vegetation of **Banias Nature Reserve** to the wetlands of the Hula Valley, beloved by migrating birds; the quaint, cobbled streets of **Rosh Pina**; and **Tsfat (Safed)**, suffused with the spirituality of the Kabbalah (Jewish mysticism). Finally, head south through the Jordan Valley, strolling the colonnaded Roman thoroughfares of **Beit She'an** and visiting the Palestinian city of **Jericho**, whose ruins go back to the very beginning of civilisation. After a starlit night on the shores of the **Dead Sea**, rise early to catch the sunrise from high atop **Masada**. Continue south into the Negev Desert for a day or two around **Mitzpe Ramon**, including a hike into **Makhtesh Ramon**. Next stop, for a spot of sea, sun and snorkelling, is **Eilat**. Finally, cross into Jordan to visit the awe-inspiring 'red city' of **Petra**.



10
DAYS

Culinary Trail

Start in **Jerusalem**, where contenders for the 'best hummus' title can be found in the Old City, and the foodie scene around the Mahane Yehuda produce market is worth exploring. For the country's best gooey-hot, cheesy-sweet *kunafeh* pastry, head north to the West Bank city of **Nablus** and then sample extra-virgin olive oil in **Jenin**. Make a beeline for **Nazareth**, where the buzzword is fusion, the culinary inspiration both Levantine and European. Continue your culinary pilgrimage on the shores of the **Sea of Galilee** with a lunch of St Peter's fish, and then head to the **Golan Heights** for perfectly aged steak – paired, of course, with Golan-grown red wines. Looping west, stop in **Jish** for Galilee-style Arab cuisine, or drop by the all-vegetarian settlement of **Amirim** for meat-free treats. Finally, head to the Mediterranean coast, sampling seafood and hummus in **Akko (Acre)**, creative Arab cuisine in **Haifa**, and modern Israeli cuisine in **Tel Aviv**, where glamorous restaurants run by celebrity chefs vie for attention with traditional eateries serving hummus, felafel and the local fast-food favourite, sabich.



1
WEEK

Welcome to the West Bank

From the Arab bus station in **East Jerusalem**, hop on a bus to **Ramallah**, where you can drop in on the Muqata'a, last resting place of Yasser Arafat. Spend the afternoon sipping coffee, scooping hummus and clacking backgammon tiles, then get ready for a night on the town. The next day, drop by the only brewery in the Palestinian Territories, **Taybeh**, returning to Ramallah to catch a concert or theatre performance at one of the city's many arts venues. Next, head north – through olive orchards and terraced hills – to **Nablus** for a day of shopping in the enchanting market, scrubbing up at an ancient hammam and visiting the Samaritans atop **Mt Gerizim**. Then travel north to the Christian sites near **Jenin** and that city's renowned Freedom Theatre before looping east and south to **Jericho** for some extraordinary hiking in **Wadi Qelt**. Then slip south-westward to beautiful **Bethlehem**, with its winding lanes and ancient churches. Finally, stop off at Roman-era **Herodium** before heading down to the West Bank's troubled gem: the extraordinary city of **Hebron**, profoundly sacred to both Jews and Muslims.



Above: St Peter's fish,
served grilled, at the
Sea of Galilee

Right: Street vendor
selling *nammoora*
(squares of sweet
semolina cake topped
with nuts)



BRIAN CRUICKSHANK / GETTY IMAGES ©



OUR STORY

A beat-up old car, a few dollars in the pocket and a sense of adventure. In 1972 that's all Tony and Maureen Wheeler needed for the trip of a lifetime – across Europe and Asia overland to Australia. It took several months, and at the end – broke but inspired – they sat at their kitchen table writing and stapling together their first travel guide, *Across Asia on the Cheap*. Within a week they'd sold 1500 copies. Lonely Planet was born.

Today, Lonely Planet has offices in Franklin, London, Melbourne, Oakland, Beijing and Delhi, with more than 600 staff and writers. We share Tony's belief that 'a great guidebook should do three things: inform, educate and amuse'.

OUR WRITERS



Daniel Robinson

Coordinating Author; Haifa & the North Coast, Lower Galilee & Sea of Galilee, Upper Galilee & Golan, The Dead Sea Brought up near San Francisco and Chicago, Daniel spent part of his childhood in Jerusalem, a bit of his youth at Kibbutz Lotan and many years in Tel Aviv, where he worked on a PhD in late Ottoman history, covered suicide bombings for the Associated Press, and helped lead the local Critical Mass campaign for bike paths. A Lonely Planet author since 1989,

he holds a BA in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton and an MA in Jewish History from Tel Aviv University. His favourite activities in Israel include cycling Tel Aviv's historic avenues, hiking the wadis of Ein Gedi, and birdwatching in the Hula and Arava Valleys.

Read more about Daniel at https://auth.lonelyplanet.com/profiles/daniel_robinson



Orlando Crowcroft

West Bank, The Gaza Strip Orlando Crowcroft has spent the bulk of his career so far reporting from the Middle East, including Egypt, the Gulf and the Kurdish region of Iraq. His first trip to the West Bank was to attend a football tournament in 2012, when a surprise Palestinian win in Hebron against Tunisia triggered a pitch invasion – and a love affair with the West Bank. In 2014 he was based in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem as a stringer for the Guardian and the National, covering

Israel, the West Bank and Gaza during the summer war between Hamas and Israel.



Virginia Maxwell

Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, The Negev Although based in Australia, Virginia spends much of her year researching guidebooks in the Mediterranean region. The author of guidebooks to Italy, Spain, Turkey, Morocco, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iran and the United Arab Emirates, she knows Mediterranean Europe and the Middle East well and adores both regions for their culture, history, architecture, art and food. This is her first time covering Israel & the Palestinian Territories for Lonely

Planet. Virginia also wrote the Safe Travel section.



Jenny Walker

Petra Jenny Walker has written widely on the Middle East in many Lonely Planet publications and is a member of the British Guild of Travel Writers. She has a long academic engagement in the region (dissertation on Doughty and Lawrence, MPhil thesis from Oxford University on the perception of the Arabic Orient and current PhD studies at NTU) and is currently Associate Dean at Caledonian University College of Engineering in Oman. She has travelled in 110 countries

from Panama to Mongolia.

Published by Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd

ABN 36 005 607 983

8th edition – October 2015

ISBN 978 1 76034 276 0

© Lonely Planet 2015 Photographs © as indicated 2015

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in China

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be copied, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, except brief extracts for the purpose of review, and no part of this publication may be sold or hired, without the written permission of the publisher. Lonely Planet and the Lonely Planet logo are trademarks of Lonely Planet and are registered in the US Patent and Trademark Office and in other countries. Lonely Planet does not allow its name or logo to be appropriated by commercial establishments, such as retailers, restaurants or hotels. Please let us know of any misuses: lonelyplanet.com/ip.

Although the authors and Lonely Planet have taken all reasonable care in preparing this book, we make no warranty about the accuracy or completeness of its content and, to the maximum extent permitted, disclaim all liability arising from its use.

© Lonely Planet Publications Pty Ltd. To make it easier for you to use, access to this chapter is not digitally restricted. In return, we think it's fair to ask you to use it for personal, non-commercial purposes only. In other words, please don't upload this chapter to a peer-to-peer site, mass email it to everyone you know, or resell it. See the terms and conditions on our site for a longer way of saying the above - 'Do the right thing with our content.'