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

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

TEL AVIV-JAFFA (YAFO) ...... 105
Herzliya... 144
Netanya... 145
Ramlia... 146

THE DEAD SEA P285

AKKO P175

OLD PORT BOARDWALK, TEL AVIV P115
## Contents

### LOWER GALILEE & SEA OF GALILEE . . . 183
- Nazareth .................. 184
- Kafr Kana .................. 194
- Tzipori .................... 195
- Mt Tabor ................... 196
- Kfar Tavor .................. 196
- Kfar Kisch .................... 197
- Kfar Kama .................... 197
- Jezreel & Beit Sh’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
- 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

### 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

### 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

### 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
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.
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 Bahá’í Gardens, visit Mt Carmel and the Druze village of Dalijat 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.
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 southwestward 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.

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, falafel and the local fast-food favourite, sabich.
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)
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.

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.