



Tel Aviv תל אביב תל אייב

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Best Places to Eat

- » Ali Caravan (p150)
- » Raphael (p133)
- » Adora (p133)
- » Benedict (p136)
- » Goocha (p133)

Best Places to Stay

- » Center Hotel (p129)
- » Beit Immanuel (p150)
- » Hotel Montefiore (p130)
- » Old Jaffa Hostel (p150)
- » Art Plus Hotel (p128)

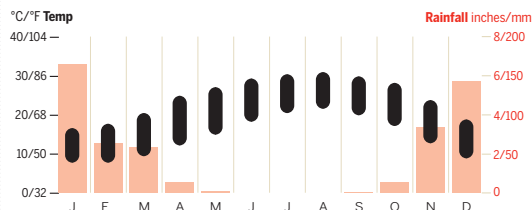
Why Go?

While the State of Israel hits the headlines, the state of Tel Aviv sits back with a cappuccino. Lovingly nicknamed the Bubble, Tel Aviv (TLV) is a city of outdoor cafes, leafy boulevards and long sandy beaches. A favourite with Europeans looking for some year-round sun, Tel Aviv is fast becoming a bubble of boutiques, bistros and brasseries. All over the city old Bauhaus buildings are getting a well-needed facelift and skyscrapers aspire to build a kind of Manhattan in the Middle East. Yet the real Tel Aviv is found in humble hummus joints, wine bars hidden down alleyways, fresh-fruit-shake stalls, quiet memorial gardens and chaotic marketplaces.

With its plethora of pick-up bars, nightclubs and all-night parties, Tel Aviv has been labelled 'Sin City'. But appearances can be deceptive. The diversity of its people, music, museums, art galleries and graffiti all testify that Tel Aviv has soul.

When to Go

Tel Aviv



Mar–May Tel Aviv blooms in spring-time with bright bougainvillea flowers.

Jun–mid-Sep Party at the Gay Pride Parade (June) and cool down at the beach or pool.

Dec–early Mar Cold with sporadic rain; the city is still blessed with winter sun.

Lie of the Land

Tel Aviv is very easy to get around, as its bustling central area focuses on five parallel north-south streets that follow 6km of seafront. Nearest the sand is Herbert Samuel Esplanade, while the hotel-lined HaYarkon St lies a block inland. East of HaYarkon St is Ben Yehuda St, home to backpackers and souvenir shops, and the fourth parallel street is the trendy Dizengoff St, which marks the geographic centre of the city. Further east again, Ibn Gabirol St forms the eastern boundary of the city centre. The Neve Tzedek and Florentine districts mark the southernmost reaches of the city centre before Jaffa, while Park HaYarkon and the Old Port (Nahal) mark the northernmost.

BICYCLE BOOM

Being a compact city, there is no better way to see Tel Aviv-Jaffa than on two wheels. The Big Orange (Tel Aviv's answer to the Big Apple) now has over 100km of dedicated bike paths running along many of the major thoroughfares. There's a bunch in Park HaYarkon, and one follows the coastline from a bit north of Sde Dov airport south, via Jaffa, to the suburb of Bat Yam. A free map of the bike-path network can be picked up at tourist information offices. For more information see p145.

In 2011, the municipality introduced **Tel-O-Fun** (☎6070; www.tel-o-fun.co.il), a citywide bike-rental scheme similar to Paris' Vélib'. You pick up and drop off the green bicycles in over 75 docking stations; the first half hour of use is free. Subscriptions cost 14NIS (daily) and 60NIS (weekly); pay with your credit card at any Tel-O-Fun station.

Tel Aviv's Best Beaches

» Hilton Beach (p126) is the city's unofficial gay beach and is popular with dog owners. Although crowded on weekends, during the week it is calmer and can be a great spot for sunset swimming or surfing.

» Gordon Beach (p126) in the centre is close to most of the major seafront hotels and has beach volleyball courts, a small outdoor gym and plenty of butch bronze bodies playing serious games of *matkot* (beach tennis).

» Alma Beach (p126), nearer Jaffa, is where the cool kids from Florentine come to chill, smoke a nargileh pipe and drink a beer.

THE NAME GAME

Tel Aviv streets are generally named after people and this eclectic mix includes names from Britain (Allenby), Eastern Europe (Jabotinsky) and Moorish Spain (Ibn Gabirol).

Fast Facts

- » Area: 51.4 sq km
- » Synagogues: 544
- » Bauhaus buildings: over 4000
- » Age of Jaffa: over 4000

Boutique Beer

- » The Dancing Camel (p139) brews its own pale ales and stouts.
- » Norma Jeane (p139) offers a range of international beers on tap.
- » Porter & Sons (p139) sells boutique European and Israeli beers.

Resources

- » Tourism office: www.visit-tlv.com
- » Municipality: www.tel-aviv.gov.il/english
- » Tel Aviv guide: www.telavivguide.net
- » Tel Aviv city: www.telavivcity.com