



JERUSALEM: WHERE OLD MEETS NEW

A beautiful, ancient city with a vibrant, contemporary heart. From buzzing markets and thriving nightlife to religious wonders and breath-taking architecture, **Emma Johnson** reveals why it's the ideal place to spend a long weekend

A city undergoing an immense cultural rejuvenation, Jerusalem combines the essence of the colourful Mediterranean lifestyle, with a profound sense of both history and modernity. While its ancient origins remain a central focus of the city's attraction, this doesn't mean that contemporary life, in all its rich diversity, hasn't arrived here in style.

Inspirational and innovative, Jerusalem is now a thriving modern city, offering vibrant neighbourhoods where food, shopping, market life and nightlife run side-by-side with centuries-old traditions, making it a dynamic destination for the most savvy of travellers. Visitors can also now take advantage of the Jerusalem City Pass (itraveljerusalem.com/jlm-city-pass) – an inexpensive way to navigate the city, which is only £30 for seven days.

Vibrant Life

Food lovers, for instance, will find Jerusalem to be one of the most thrilling places to eat and shop. As the melting pot of east-meets-west, its food scene reflects the many cultures and communities who call the city home, and its eclectic cuisine encompasses traditional Middle Eastern, North African and South American as well as exotic Asian flavours, and continental European cuisine. In November,



as part of the Open Restaurants season to celebrate Jerusalem's dynamic and pioneering food movement, the city's restaurants open their doors to offer a wonderful behind-the-scenes experience for epicures, which includes tastes of the Jerusalem table and a celebration of local produce and the city's storied culinary heritage.

Whenever you visit, Mahane Yehuda Market is the place to start your gastronomic adventure. Bursting with street food and fresh produce, its vibrant, pulsing atmosphere is a focal point of Jerusalem life. Next to the market, eat delicious modern Israeli flavours at Machneyuda, and don't miss Pepito's, serving Latin American street food.

Also embracing Jerusalem's cultural juxtaposition perfectly is The First Station – a food and entertainment complex built on the foundations of the city's old train station. Beautifully restored, it is home to two of the city's great restaurants, Adom (Mediterranean cuisine) and Station 9 (Asian fusion) as well as bars, cafés, galleries and shops.

Nights Out

One of the most popular nightlife spots is Justice, which regularly hosts some of Israel's most sought-after DJs. Also check out Jerusalem's Port, a fabulous venue with live music, art, food and drink; the Gatsby cocktail lounge, with a vintage 1920s speakeasy design; the Capricorn Karaoke Bar; and Ora Bora, set within a magical garden. All bring their own brand of magic to the Jerusalem nightlife scene.

Culturally, the city is also rich with art, design and theatre. The Opera Festival, Design Week, International Film Festival and Mekudeshet – the Jerusalem Season of Culture, all run across the year. A programme of cultural shows, including concerts at Yellow Submarine – Jerusalem's premier concert venue – and *Hallelujah* – an evening show in the ruins of the ancient City of David – bring a modern city in touch with its cultural and historical heart in a creative and thought-provoking way.

Historical Marvels

With a long and fascinating history, Jerusalem's role in many cultures and religions has resulted in incredible architecture and fascinating stories, which give both a profound sense of the past, but also a contemporary understanding of our world today.

A short walk from the Old City walls are Via Dolorosa (The Way of the Cross), Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Tower of David citadel, The Wailing Wall and Haram Al-Sharif (Temple Mount). The most significant tourist site in Israel, Temple Mount is also one of the most significant holy marvels of the world.

Some of Israel's most important museums are also here, including the staggering Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, whose vast triangular concrete prism cuts through the landscape guiding visitors through its many remembrance halls and exhibits. In addition, the Israel Museum, the Bloomfield Science Museum Jerusalem and the Museum of Islamic Art offer a wide-ranging understanding of a culture now embracing the city's contemporary place in the world.

With all this, Jerusalem is a uniquely modern metropolis, blending its ancient and spiritual lure with a vibrant outlook and a culturally rich landscape of food, art, nightlife and architecture.

BA flies to Tel Aviv from London Heathrow. itraveljerusalem.com