

Sunrise Over Masada, Sunset on a Tel Aviv Beach — An 8-Day Israel Itinerary

Eight days across Israel's two most different faces — the golden stone alleys and holy sites of Jerusalem's Old City, a sunrise hike up Masada above the shrinking Dead Sea, and Tel Aviv's Bauhaus streets and Mediterranean beach clubs, with a day trip north to Nazareth and the Sea of Galilee — with real hotels and 2026 prices for every stop.

DURATION

8 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

March – May & Sept – Nov

mild, dry days (upper 60s–80°F / 20–27°C) in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and bearable desert heat at Masada and the Dead Sea; summer (Jun–Aug) pushes the Dead Sea past 100°F / 38°C, while winter (Dec–Feb) brings Jerusalem's only real chance of rain and occasional chill.

FROM

\$2,150 USD / person

for 2 people, incl. 7 nights' lodging, the Masada & Dead Sea and Galilee day tours, and key admissions

Day 1

Arrival & Old City First Steps

A first afternoon inside Jerusalem's walled Old City, closing at the Western Wall plaza as the stone turns gold at sunset.

Airport Transfer — Ben Gurion Airport (TLV) to Jerusalem

~25 minutes by train to Yitzhak Navon Station, plus a light rail or taxi into the Old City · train ~\$8 USD, taxi ~\$55–70 USD

Israel Railways runs directly from the arrivals hall at Ben Gurion to Jerusalem's Yitzhak Navon Station in about 25 minutes; from there it's a short taxi or light-rail ride to Jaffa Gate. A direct taxi from the airport is simpler with luggage.

Israel Railways · www.rail.co.il/en

Old City Walk — Jaffa Gate to the Cardo

~2 hours, self-guided · free

Enter through Jaffa Gate and follow the narrow stone lanes of the Christian and Jewish Quarters to the Cardo, the excavated main street of Roman and Byzantine Jerusalem, now lined with shops built into the original colonnade.

Western Wall Plaza at Sunset

~1 hour, self-guided · free

Judaism's holiest prayer site draws a quiet, moving crowd as the sky over the Old City turns pink and gold — modest dress is expected, and the plaza is open and free to all visitors around the clock.

Western Wall Heritage Foundation · thekotel.org/en

Overnight — Mamilla Hotel

From \$450–\$650 USD / night, for 2 people

A five-star hotel built into a restored 19th-century arcade just outside Jaffa Gate, with a rooftop restaurant looking straight over the Old City walls.

Mamilla Hotel · www.mamillahotel.com

Day 2

Western Wall Tunnels & the Via Dolorosa

A full day inside the Old City's layered history, from an underground tunnel tour beneath the Western Wall to the traditional route of the Via Dolorosa.

Western Wall Tunnels Tour

~1.5 hours, guided (booked in advance) · ~\$30 USD / person

A guided walk along the full length of the Western Wall's foundation stones, most of it hidden beneath later construction, ending near the Via Dolorosa — tours run in small groups and regularly sell out, so book a slot online before the trip.

Western Wall Heritage Foundation · thekotel.org/en/tours

Via Dolorosa & Church of the Holy Sepulchre

~2 hours, self-guided · church entry free

The traditional route of Jesus's final walk winds through the Muslim Quarter's market stalls to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, shared and disputed for centuries by six Christian denominations under one crowded, incense-filled roof.

Dinner — Machane Yehuda Market

~2 hours · \$20–\$35 USD / person

By evening Jerusalem's covered produce market turns into a strip of bars and small kitchens under strings of lights — a mix of Middle Eastern small plates, wine bars and street food stalls packed shoulder to shoulder.

Overnight — Mamilla Hotel

From \$450–\$650 USD / night, for 2 people

A second night a few minutes' walk from Jaffa Gate.

Mamilla Hotel · www.mamillahotel.com

Day 3

Yad Vashem & Modern Jerusalem

A morning at Israel's Holocaust remembrance center, then an afternoon in the newer city beyond the Old City walls.

Yad Vashem — The World Holocaust Remembrance Center

~3 hours, self-guided · free admission

Israel's central Holocaust memorial and museum, built into a hillside on Mount Herzl, with the Hall of Names, the Children's Memorial, and the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations — admission is free, though it's worth booking a guided tour slot online in high season.

Yad Vashem · www.yadvashem.org

Israel Museum & the Shrine of the Book

~2 hours, self-guided · admission ~\$17 USD

Home to the Dead Sea Scrolls, displayed beneath the museum's distinctive white dome, alongside a scale model of Jerusalem as it stood in the Second Temple period.

The Israel Museum · www.imj.org.il

Dinner — Mahane Yehuda or Downtown Jerusalem

~1.5 hours · \$18–\$32 USD / person

A relaxed last dinner before the desert leg of the trip, with modern Israeli kitchens spread through the streets around Jaffa Road and Ben Yehuda.

Overnight — Mamilla Hotel

From \$450–\$650 USD / night, for 2 people

A third and final night in Jerusalem before an early start for Masada.

Mamilla Hotel · www.mamillahotel.com

Day 4

Masada Sunrise & the Dead Sea

A pre-dawn drive to Masada for a sunrise hike up the desert fortress, then an afternoon floating in the Dead Sea.

Masada Sunrise Hike & Cable Car Down

~5 hours round trip incl. transfer · guided day tour from ~\$110–\$140 USD / person

A guided pre-dawn departure from Jerusalem to hike the Snake Path up Masada in the dark, reaching the cliff-top fortress ruins as the sun rises over the Dead Sea and the mountains of Jordan — the cable car carries hikers back down before the heat sets in.

Bein Harim Tours · www.beinharimtours.com

Floating at the Dead Sea, Ein Bokek

~2 hours, self-guided · beach access often included with hotel or day-tour package

The lowest point on Earth and roughly ten times saltier than the ocean — floating without effort is the main event, along with a coat of mineral-rich mud from the shoreline, widely sold as a natural skin treatment.

Dinner — Hotel Restaurant, Ein Bokek

~1.5 hours · \$25–\$45 USD / person

Most Ein Bokek hotels run large buffet dinners well suited to a day that started before dawn.

Overnight — Nevo by Isrotel Collection

From \$220–\$320 USD / night, for 2 people

A Dead Sea resort hotel on the Ein Bokek shoreline with direct beach access and a mineral-water spa.

Nevo by Isrotel Collection · www.isrotel.com

Day 5

Dead Sea Morning & Transfer to Tel Aviv

A slow final morning by the Dead Sea before the drive west to the coast, ending with a sunset walk through Jaffa's old port.

Dead Sea Spa Morning, Ein Bokek

~2 hours, self-guided · spa treatments from ~\$40 USD

A last unhurried float and a mineral mud treatment before checkout — most Ein Bokek hotels offer spa access to day guests as well as overnight ones.

Transfer — Dead Sea to Tel Aviv

~1.5–2 hours by rental car or private transfer · rental from ~\$45 USD / day, private transfer ~\$140 USD

The drive climbs out of the Dead Sea basin and crosses back toward the coast — a rental car gives the most flexibility, or hotels can arrange a private driver.

Jaffa Old Port at Sunset

~1.5 hours, self-guided · free

One of the world's oldest working ports, its stone alleys, flea market stalls and artist studios overlooking Tel Aviv's skyline just up the coast — the clock tower and the hilltop views from Abrasha Park are the classic sunset stop.

Overnight — Hotel Montefiore

From \$340–\$480 USD / night, for 2 people

A restored 1920s Bauhaus-era building turned boutique hotel on a quiet street between Rothschild Boulevard and the Carmel Market.

Hotel Montefiore · www.hotelmontefiore.co.il

Day 6

Tel Aviv — Markets, Bauhaus & the Beach

A full day in Tel Aviv on foot, from the covered stalls of Carmel Market to the White City's Bauhaus streets and an afternoon on the sand.

Carmel Market (Shuk HaCarmel)

~1.5 hours, self-guided · free to browse

Tel Aviv's largest open-air market, a dense strip of produce stalls, spice shops and quick food counters running from Allenby Street toward Nachalat Binyamin.

Rothschild Boulevard & White City Bauhaus Walk

~1.5 hours, self-guided · free

A tree-lined boulevard through the heart of Tel Aviv's UNESCO-listed "White City," home to the largest concentration of International Style Bauhaus buildings anywhere in the world, built by German-trained architects in the 1930s.

Afternoon at Gordon or Frishman Beach

~3 hours, self-guided · free (beach chair rental ~\$8–\$12 USD)

Tel Aviv's Mediterranean shoreline runs for miles with lifeguarded beaches, matkot paddleball games and beachfront cafés — Gordon and Frishman beaches sit closest to the Montefiore and Rothschild Boulevard area.

Overnight — Hotel Montefiore

From \$340–\$480 USD / night, for 2 people

A second night in the White City.

Hotel Montefiore · www.hotelmontefiore.co.il

Day 7

Nazareth & the Sea of Galilee

A day trip north to Nazareth's old town and the shores of the Sea of Galilee, returning to Tel Aviv by evening.

Day Tour — Tel Aviv to Nazareth & the Sea of Galilee

~10–11 hours round trip, guided coach tour · from ~\$120–\$150 USD / person

A full-day guided tour north to the Galilee region, covering roughly three hours of driving each way with stops built in along the route — the alternative is a rental car for a more flexible but longer self-drive day.

Bein Harim Tours · www.beinharimtours.com

Nazareth Old Town & Basilica of the Annunciation

~2 hours, guided or self-guided · basilica free

Jesus's childhood town, its old market quarter built around the Basilica of the Annunciation, the largest Christian church in the Middle East.

Sea of Galilee — Tiberias & the Shoreline

~2 hours, guided or self-guided · optional boat ride ~\$20–\$25 USD

The freshwater lake at the heart of Galilee, ringed by the hillside town of Tiberias and several sites central to the Christian gospels — most day tours include a short wooden-boat ride out onto the water.

Overnight — Hotel Montefiore

From \$340–\$480 USD / night, for 2 people

Back in Tel Aviv by evening for a last night in the White City.

Hotel Montefiore · www.hotelmontefiore.co.il

Day 8

Neve Tzedek & Departure

A last unhurried morning in Tel Aviv's oldest neighborhood before the transfer back to Ben Gurion Airport.

Neve Tzedek Morning Walk

~1.5 hours, self-guided · free

Tel Aviv's first neighborhood, founded outside Jaffa's walls in 1887, now a pocket of narrow lanes, independent boutiques and café terraces just south of Rothschild Boulevard.

Coffee & Pastry, Neve Tzedek

~45 minutes · \$8–\$15 USD / person

A relaxed last stop before the airport transfer, among the neighborhood's small cafés and bakeries.

Departure — Tel Aviv to Ben Gurion Airport (TLV)

~15–20 minutes by train from central Tel Aviv · train ~\$4–\$6 USD, taxi ~\$25–\$35 USD

Closes the loop on eight days that ran from sunrise on Masada to sunset on a Tel Aviv beach — the train from Tel Aviv HaShalom or Tel Aviv Savidor stations reaches the airport in under 20 minutes.

Israel Railways · www.rail.co.il/en