
WELCOME TO PALESTINE

THE HOLYLAND

AHLAN WA SAHLAN



Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
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A Guide to Palestine

Ahlan Wa Sahlan

Welcome to Palestine

With a history that envelops more than one million years, Palestine has played an important role in human civilisation. The crucible of prehistoric cultures, it is where settled society, the alphabet, religion, and literature developed, and would become a meeting place for diverse cultures and ideas that shaped the world we know today. Its rich and diverse past, abundant cultural heritage, and the archaeological and religious sites of the three monotheistic faiths including the birthplace of Jesus Christ, make Palestine a unique centre of world history.

For Palestinians, this cultural diversity is viewed as a source of wealth, and each part of the million years of settled life plays an integral part in wider human heritage of those that call this land home. This past makes up a large part of the contemporary Palestinian philosophy of sustainable development, which seeks to keep active the cultural identity of the Palestinian people.

Visitors to Palestine will encounter on their journey myriad religious, historical, and archaeological sites. Beyond the historical, Palestine offers walks and hikes in its extensive valleys, along coasts, as well as desert hills, towns, and ancient marketplaces at the hearts of cities and villages nestled in the heart of breath-taking landscapes. They will enjoy Palestine's sumptuous cuisine and, most important, feel the warmth and hospitality of the Palestinian people, Christians and Muslims alike, who will share with them the hopes and aspirations of a nation that is in the process of rebuilding. With its million years of human history, and a welcoming people offering rich hospitality, visitors are left with the warm feeling of being at home.



Chronology of Palestine

Archaeological Period	Period
Lower Paleolithic	1 million – 120.000 BC
Middle Paleolithic	120.000 – 45.000 BC
Upper Paleolithic	45.000 – 18.000 BC
Epi- Paleolithic	18.000 – 8.000 BC
Neolithic	8.000 – 4.500 BC
Chalcolithic	4.500 – 3.300 BC
Early Bronze Age	3.300 – 2.200 BC
Middle Bronze Age	2.200 -1.550 BC
Late Bronze Age	1.500 - 1.200 BC
Iron Age	1.200 – 586 BC
Persian Period	586 - 332 BC
Hellenistic Period	332 – 63 BC
Roman Period	63 BC – 324 AD
Byzantine Period	324- 638 AD
Umayyad Period	638 - 750 AD
Abbasid Period	750 – 969 AD
Fatimid Period	969 – 1099 AD
Crusader Period	1099 – 1187 AD
Ayyubid Period	1187 - 1260 AD
Mamluk Period	1260 – 1516 AD
Ottoman Period	1516 – 1917 AD



Artist Adnan Al Zubaïdi- Bethlehem- « Kays Al Zarara»

A Stroll through Palestine

Visitors to Palestine seeking a unique and unforgettable journey can dive into the history of the earliest human settlement in Jericho and Wadi Khareitoun. They can trace the advent of urban society, the footsteps of prophets, or the path of Jesus Christ from birth to resurrection. Simply travelling from one city to the next offers an eclectic mix of heritage. In Bethlehem, travellers can visit the Grotto of Nativity where Jesus Christ was born, then travel southeast to the village of Beit Sahour where they can see the Shepherd's fields. Then, on southward along Hebron Road travellers will find the remains of an ancient water system; Solomon's pools and their extensive water canals. Further down the road is Hebron city, a vibrant economic centre, it is also home to the burial place of six of monotheism's patriarchs, and the fourth sacred city of Islam.

East is the Jordan River, where John baptized Jesus Christ. The sycamore tree that Zacchaeus climbed so he could see Christ on his walk to Jerusalem sits just in the new city of Jericho, and west of the city are the high cliffs known as the Mount of Temptation, home for centuries to a Greek Orthodox monastery. Beyond the biblical, the Jordan Valley plays host to several important and attractive sites including the Dead Sea, where the Dead Sea scrolls were found at Qumran, the oldest city on earth Tell al-Sultan, the sugar mills, and the nearby Hisham's Palace; sites dating from the Prehistoric Periods through to the Bronze, and Iron Ages, up to the Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Crusader, Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman times. With bicycle rentals in the town center and a cable car to the mount, hundreds of thousands of years of human history can be taken in during an afternoon.

Then turning north, is the city of Jenin; one of the oldest places of habitation on the ancient plain of Marj Ibn Amer. At the south-eastern edge of the plain, a few kilometres west of the city stands the fourth century Church of Burqin, erected to mark the spot where Jesus healed the lepers. The city would have been one of those in the path of Mary and Joseph as they travelled on their way to Bethlehem from Nazareth. Along this path, olive trees –more common in the central and northern districts—gradually give way to vineyards, which are dominant in the south, especially on the Hebron and Bethlehem hills. Stone terraces enclose the trees and vines, and watchtowers are distinctive features of the rolling hills. Fieldstones used to terrace the hills make use of the mountain terrain, and additionally retain moisture and prevent soil from eroding. Watchtowers were themselves important for seasonal agricultural, used to guard the fields and crops, and are living testimonies of the relationship between the Palestinian farmer and his land.

South of Jenin is Nablus, nestled between two round mountains along the floor of the valley between, homes over the years have crept up the hills offering spectacular views of the city core. In its center, visitors can walk through the historic market and dense old city, with its fabric shops, mosques, and churches. With a working olive oil soap factory, and home of Palestine's favourite desert, Nablus is the capital of the north. Nearby are sister cities Tulkarem and Qalqilia, found on the fringe of Palestine's central mountainous ridge south of Marj Ibn Amer, and represent the central zone of Palestine. The area played an important role in the past as a crossroad between the sea and the northern region, and today is the site of hundreds of archaeological features (Tell Taannek, Tell Jenin, Khirbit Bal'ama, Tell Dothan, Khirbet As-Samra, and Wadi Qana), which provide information about the region's cultural history. This area is known as the breadbasket of the area, with farmers growing wheat, olives, almonds, figs, and citrus.

Traveling southwest towards Palestine's coast is Gaza. Its old city market is a top attraction, as are archaeological sites like Tell Al-Ajjul, Tell As-Sakan, Tell Al-Blakhyia, and Umm Amer, as well as the newly excavated Byzantine churches dating back to the fourth and fifth centuries AD, only recently unearthed and renovated.

The heart of Palestinian culture is, of course, Jerusalem. The city where Jesus Christ walked and spread his message of peace and love, where he spent his last days with loyal disciples, and where he was crucified, buried, and resurrected. It is also in Jerusalem where visitors can visit the magnificent Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque, two of Islam's holiest and the most beautiful shrines that make the skyline of Jerusalem so unique and iconic.



Artist David Roberts

JERUSALEM (AL-QUDS)

The Holy City

Jerusalem, as a holy city for Islam, Christianity, and Judaism, is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Archaeological excavations show the history of the city began over 5,000 years ago. Among its 220 historic monuments are the Al-Aqsa mosque and the Dome of the Rock, built in the seventh century, which stand as magnificent pieces of architecture. It is also home to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which houses Christ's tomb.

The city has been known by different names through its history: Urusalim, Jebus, Aelia Capitolina, the City, Beit Al-Maqdis, and Al-Quds. Jerusalem's sites and long history present an exceptional testimony to vanished civilizations: the Bronze Age, Iron Age, and the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Crusader, Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Ayyubid, Mameluk, Ottoman periods.

The old city of Jerusalem and its walls is one of the best-preserved medieval Islamic cities in the world. It is divided into four main quarters: the Muslim Quarter, the Christian Quarter, the Armenian Quarter and the Jewish Quarter. The old city has been home to many diverse cultures, which are reflected in the architecture and planning of the city and its sacred buildings, streets, markets, and residential quarters. Today, Jerusalem's living traditions continue, making the city the heart of human history.

In 1982, Jerusalem was inscribed on the list of the cities of World Heritage in Danger by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Al-Aqsa Mosque (Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa)

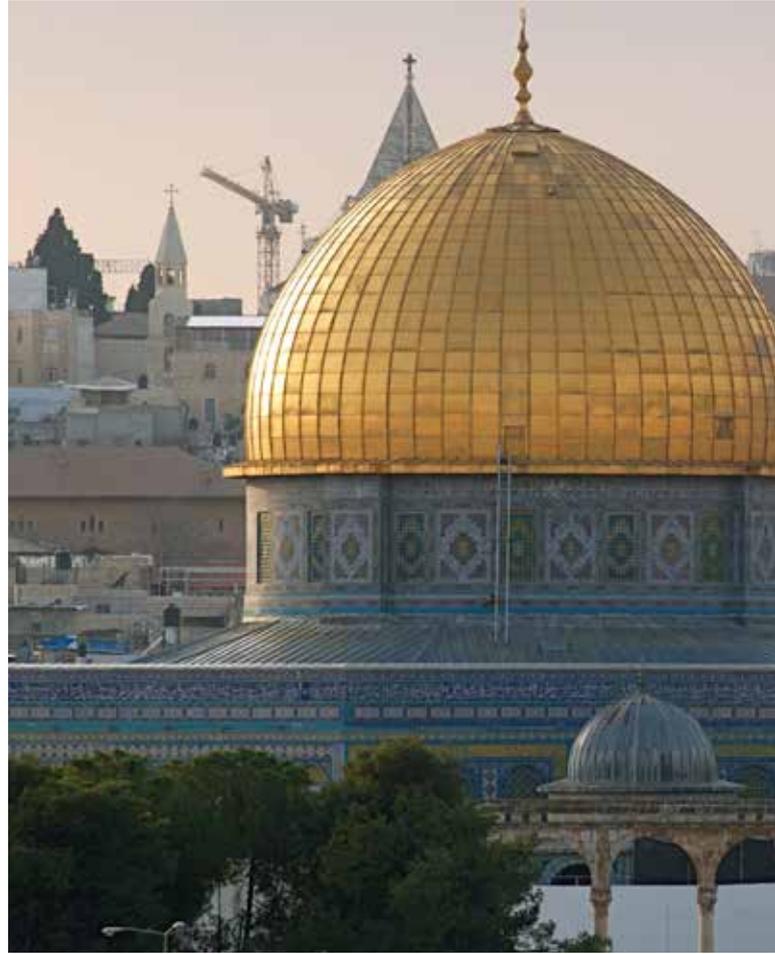
Also known as the al-Haram ash-Sharif (the noble sanctuary), the grand mosque includes in its compound the Dome of the Rock. This mosque is the third holiest shrine for Muslims, after the Kaaba in Mecca and the Prophet's Mosque in Medina, Saudi Arabia. With rows of colonnades and gardens, the compound stretches over one-fifth of the Old City, occupying a vast area of 140,900 square meters. The mosque itself is silver-domed, and was built as a place of worship next to the Dome of the Rock. Originally built between 709-715 AD by Caliph Walid Ben Abdul Malik, al-Aqsa was reconstructed at least six times and very little of the original mosque remains in the present structure.

The Dome of the Rock (Qubbat As-Sakhra)

Situated in the Old City's Muslim Quarter, it marks the spot where the Prophet Mohammed ascended into heaven following the miraculous journey of one night from Mecca to Jerusalem, known as the Israa and Miraj. It is also the oldest and most exquisite Muslim shrine in the world. Built at the end of the seventh century by the Umayyad Caliph Abdul Malik Ben Marwan, the mosque has a rectangular octagon exterior and a specular gold-covered dome.

Church of the Holy Sepulchre

Preserving the most holy sites of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, this church is the holiest of shrines for the world's Christians. Situated in the Old City's Christian Quarter, the church was first built in the fourth century by Constantine's



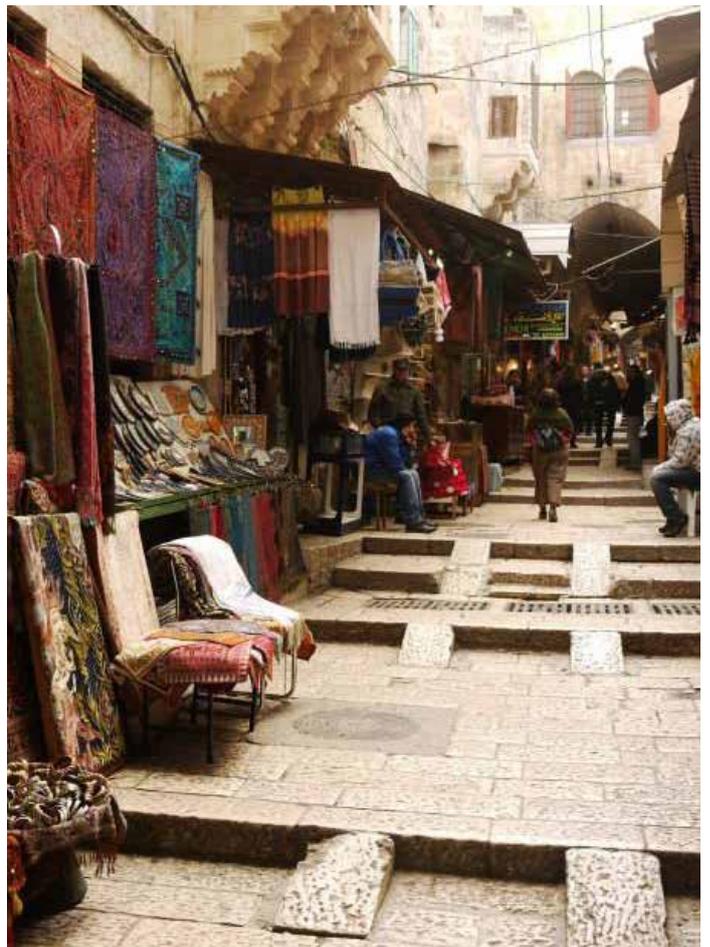
Mother Helena, over the site of a pagan temple built during the Roman period. Also re-built over successive generations, the present structure was built by the Crusaders in the twelfth century, and contains the last five Stations of the Cross. It also contains the Chapel of Golgotha where Jesus was crucified, the Sepulchre itself where Jesus was buried, and the Chapel of Mary Magdalene where the risen Christ first revealed himself.

The Garden Tomb

Located outside Jerusalem's city walls and close to the Damascus Gate, the simplicity, beauty, and peaceful atmosphere of the Garden Tomb makes it a favourite spot for prayer and meditation. Some Christians find worshipping near the rock-hewn tomb helpful as they seek to relive the crucifixion and resurrection experience, since it gives a clear picture of what the place of crucifixion and burial must have looked like at the time of Jesus.

Via Dolorosa (The Way of the Cross)

The traditional route that Jesus followed as he carried the cross from the Antonia fortress where he was condemned to death, to the Calvary, where he was crucified. The walk is commemorated in fourteen stations: two are located at Antonia, seven in the streets of Jerusalem, and the last five inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.



The Old City



The Garden Tomb



Church of the Holy Sepulchre



Mount of Olives

The Mount of Olives is located east of Jerusalem, across the Kidron Valley. From its heights a magnificent view of the Old City and a striking panorama as far as the Dead Sea and the mountains of Moab in the East can be seen.

Beyond its striking sunsets, the Mount of Olives is associated with some of the most important events in Jesus' life. It was here that the man Christians believe to be the Son of God ascended to Heaven (the location of which is marked by the Chapel of Ascension), where he foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, taught his disciples the Lord's Prayer (Pater Noster), and wept over Jerusalem on his way to the Holy City on Palm Sunday (Church of Dominus Fleuit). Perhaps the most striking feature of the mount today is the Russian Orthodox Church of Saint Mary Magdalene, with its striking onion-shaped spires.



Church of Saint Mary Magdalene

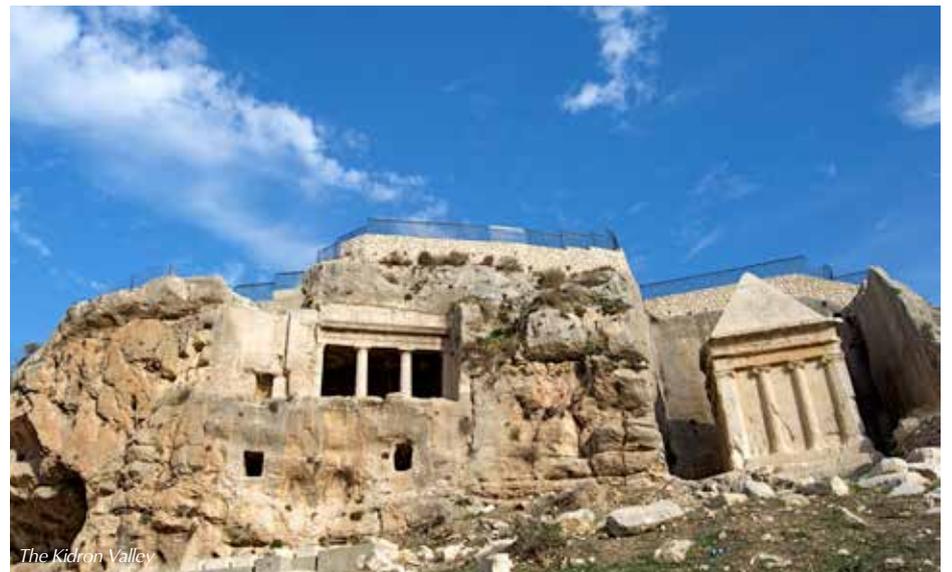
Garden of Gethsemane (Church of all Nations)

Located at the foot of the Mount of Olives, the Church of All Nations was originally built by the Byzantines in 379 AD over the place made holy by Jesus' prayer and agony. The present church is considered one of the most beautiful in Jerusalem, and was built between 1919-1924. It is called the Church of all Nations, because sixteen nations contributed to its construction.

Today, the Garden of Gethsemane appears as it did more than 2,000 years ago, and within it are some of the world's oldest olive trees. The garden was a spot favoured by Jesus, and one that served as a site for retreat and prayer, most notably where he spent his last night.

The Kidron Valley

The Kidron Valley separates the Mount of Olives from the City of Jerusalem. Jesus crossed the valley many times, including on the evening of Holy Thursday when he went with his disciples to Gethsemane. The ancient tombs of Absalom, Jehoshaphat, and Saint Zacharias are located along the Kidron Valley. Tombs of Christians, Muslims, Jews line the valley, as it is closely associated with the Day of Judgement.



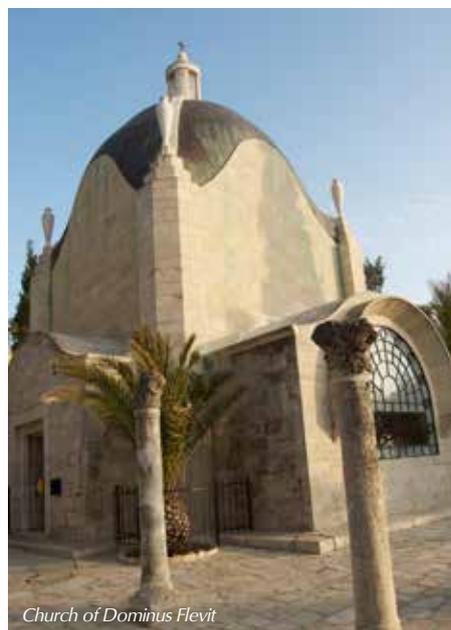
The Kidron Valley

The Tomb of the Virgin Mary

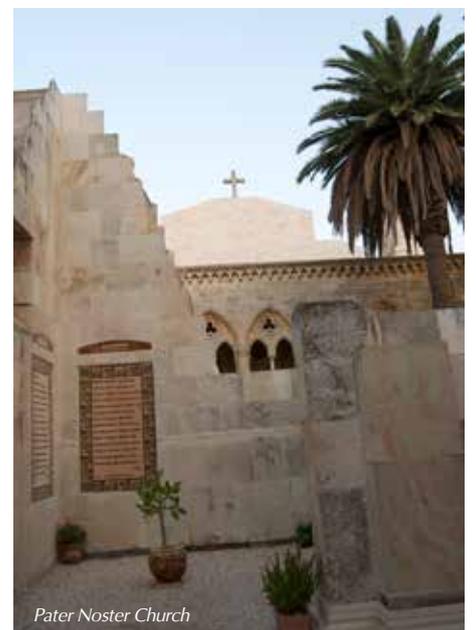
According to tradition, the Virgin Mary, who died in Jerusalem, was buried in the Kidron Valley. The Crusaders built the present church over the ruins of a Byzantine basilica to mark the place of the Virgin Mary's tomb and her assumption.



The Tomb of the Virgin Mary



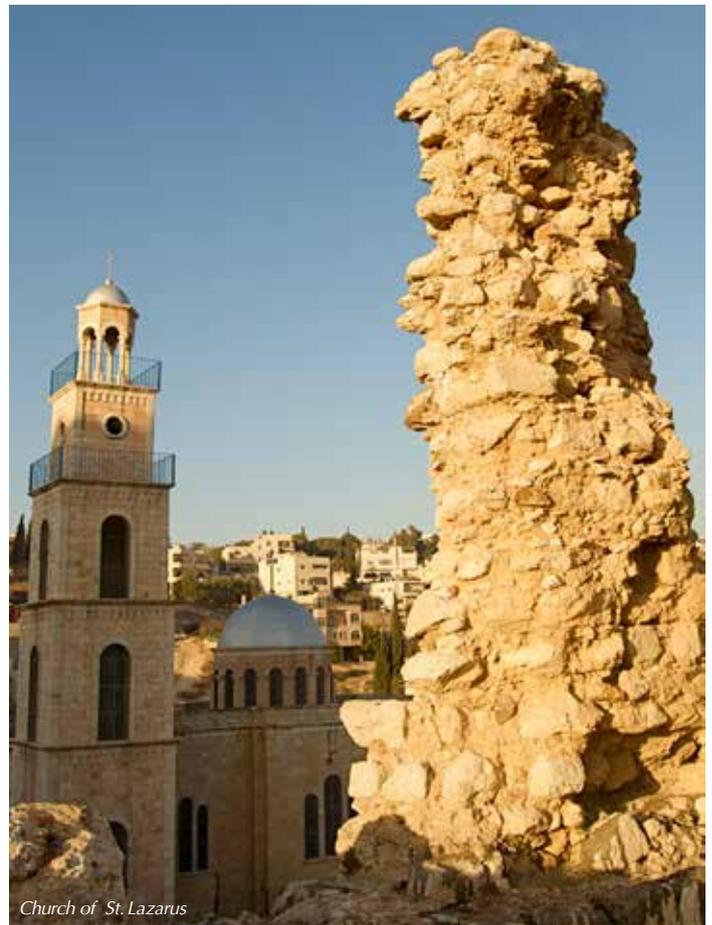
Church of Dominus Fleuit



Pater Noster Church

Al-Azarieh (Bethany)

Located two miles east of Jerusalem on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, Bethany was the home of Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, whom Jesus loved. The village has been known by the Arabic name of Lazarus since the fourth century, and it is where Jesus performed the great miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead.



Church of St. Lazarus



Church of Gethsemane

BETHLEHEM

Follow the Star



The city of Bethlehem is holy to both Christians and Muslims. It is acknowledged as the birthplace of Jesus Christ or, in Arabic, Issa, who is known as the Son of God in Christian belief and a divinely inspired prophet to Muslims. The Church of the Nativity, a Byzantine basilica, was built by Helena (the mother of the Emperor Constantine), to commemorate Jesus' birth. It is built on top of a cave where, according to a tradition first documented in the second century AD, Jesus was born. It was first dedicated in 339 AD.

The city itself has a long pre-Roman history documented first in the fourteenth century BC in the Amarna letters. Archaeological evidence from the Chalcolithic period, Bronze, and Iron Ages show that the earliest human presence was on the eastern slope of the city's central hill, and in the middle of the fields of Beit Sahour. It was probably here that the Iron Age city lay, but by the tenth to eighth centuries BC, the town was located on the high ridge of today's Bethlehem in the area of gardens around and east of today's Nativity Church. At this early period the caves beneath the church were still in use. By 700 BC, the town had

lost some of its significance but became an important centre once more during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, when the construction of the Jerusalem aqueduct meant part of its water was diverted to the city.

Jesus' birth in Bethlehem at the end of Herod's reign determined the destiny of the town. Under Constantine, the first Christian emperor, the Church of the Nativity was built as one of three imperial churches in Palestine. At the end of the fourth century AD, Saint Jerome settled in Bethlehem and built two monasteries with the help of St. Paula. The Church was destroyed in 529 AD and was rebuilt on a much grander scale under Justinian, and this structure remains essentially the church that stands today. The city was depicted on the Madaba mosaic map in the 6th century AD.

The Church is the central feature of Bethlehem, and is surrounded by other important sites related to Christ's birth. Among these is the Milk Grotto, an irregular cave hewn in the soft limestone, located southeast of the basilica, where according to Christian traditions, Mother Mary nursed baby Jesus while hiding there from Herod's soldiers. The shepherds' fields, where the angel of the Lord is believed to have appeared before the shepherds bringing them the good tidings of the birth of Jesus, are roughly 2 km east of Bethlehem. There are two competing sites: one belonging to the Roman Catholics, and the other to the Greek Orthodox Church.

Bethlehem's old town is the place where a wide range of religious and traditional activities take place. The Patriarch Route, which runs along Star Street, is the route of a religious parade, which passes through each year during Christmas celebrations. The Nativity Square hosts a grand celebration each year, marking the anniversary of the birth of Christ.





Nativity Church



Saint Theodosius Monastery



Grotto of the Nativity

The Church of the Nativity

The oldest church in the Holy Land that is still in use, the original was constructed under the patronage of Constantine's mother, Helena, who came on a pilgrimage to Palestine in 325 AD to investigate the sites associated with the life of Jesus Christ, revered since the early days of Christianity.

Helena chose the Grotto of the Nativity, the traditional birthplace of Jesus, as the site for the huge basilica, which was completed in 339 AD. Inside the Church, two sets of stairs on either side of the main altar lead down into the grotto, the site where Jesus was born. A silver star embedded in white marble and bearing the Latin inscription 'Here of the Virgin Mary Christ was born' marks the site. In 2010 a Palestinian presidential committee was established to restore the roof of the church, in bad need of repairs. In 2012, the Nativity Church and the Pilgrimage Route were inscribed on the World Heritage List.

Milk Grotto

According to tradition, the Milk Grotto is where Mother Mary nursed baby Jesus while hiding from Herod's soldiers before going to Egypt. Located southeast of the Basilica, it is an irregular Grotto hewn out of soft white rock. It is believed that some drops of Mary's milk fell onto the rock, turning it white. Revered by Christians and Muslims, the milk-white rock is known for its healing powers and reputed ability to make nursing easier for women.

Saint Theodosius' Monastery

Built by Theodosius in 500 AD, the monastery is located west of the historic village of Ubediyeh, 12 km east of Bethlehem. A white-walled cave marks the burial site of Saint Theodosius, and tradition has it that the wise men rested here after God warned them in a dream that they should not return to Herod.



Milk Grotto



Mar Saba Monastery

Built into the rock overlooking the Kidron Valley, 15 km east of Bethlehem, this magnificent monastery is a spectacular sight when it first comes into view. It preserves a way of life unchanged since the time of Constantine, and maintains a tradition of not allowing women to enter. The great monastic leader Saint Saba (439-532) AD, the monastery's namesake, founded the site in the Byzantine period.

Masjid Bilal (Rachel's Tomb)

This small building marks the traditional Tomb of Rachel, Jacob's wife. It is considered holy to Christians, Muslims, and Jews. The present sanctuary and mosque were built during the Ottoman period and are situated on the Jerusalem-Hebron Road near Bethlehem's northern entrance.

Artas

A small village located in a fertile valley, 3km south of Bethlehem. The name Artas is derived from the Latin word *hortus* meaning Paradise. It was likely named for its lush plants and rich soil. The village is also home to many ruins, including a Crusader convent, the foundations of a Crusader church, a castle as well as several Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and Crusader sites. Artas has a breath-taking view of the spectacular Convent of Hortus Conclusus (closed garden) and the surrounding hills with their terraced green fields.

Solomon's Pools

Hidden among pine trees in a small valley 4km south of Bethlehem, Solomon's Pools consist of three huge rectangular reservoirs of stone and masonry that can hold 160,000 cubic meters of water. Although tradition attributes these to King Solomon, the pools almost certainly date from the time of Herod, and may have been conceived by Pontius Pilate. In the past, the reservoirs collected spring and rainwater and pumped it to Bethlehem and Jerusalem. They continued to function until the time of the British Mandate.

Qalat Al-Burak, an Ottoman fortress dating back to the seventeenth century is located near the pools, built to protect their water sources.

Herodion (Jabal Al-Furdais)

Built in a circular shape on top of a hill 6km southeast of Bethlehem, this fortress



includes the remains of a huge palace built by King Herod for his wife in 37 BC. The palace contained a luxurious, round-walled building, fortified chambers, baths, and terraced gardens. Herodion fort hill dominates the landscape of the area, and offers an impressive view of the Dead Sea from its peak.

King David's Wells (Biyar Daoud)

Located north of Bethlehem, David's Wells mark the site where David's men broke through a Philistine garrison to bring him water.

Beit Jala

This quaint town 2km west of Bethlehem is an old Canaanite city whose name in Aramaic means, 'grass carpet.' Today it is the home of a theological seminary and several old churches and convents, of which the Church of Saint Nicholas, with its square tower and golden dome, is the most famous. The Salesian Monastery of Cremisan, housing a school and a library, is at the edge of the town, and is reputed for its excellent wine. Beyond the Cremisan winery, Beit Jala is known for its first-rate olive oil. Located up a steep hill, the town is cooler in the summers than either Bethlehem or Jerusalem, and coupled with its attractive scenery, made it a popular summer resort.

St. George's Church— Al-Khader

It was built in 1600 AD and rebuilt in 1912. The pilgrimage is in honour of Saint George (in Arabic al-Khader), the soldier monk who slew the dragon; he is venerated for being able to ward off the evil eye. Islamic tradition has it that he left his native Lydda, where he was born, and settled here in this village which bears his name. Muslims and Christians come together annually on St George's feast days

(5 May-6 May), to celebrate their common protector, to whom many different blessings are attributed. Saint George is also the patron saint of farmers, travellers and the mentally sick. According to a popular belief, lunatics were chained to a ring in the walls of the courtyard here in order for them to be delivered from their insanity due to the intervention of Saint George.



Beit Sahour

This historic town, whose name means "Place of the Night Watch", in reference to the Shepherds who keep watch over their flock by night, lies 1km east of Bethlehem. In the past, the Canaanites inhabited its numerous caves, and today it is the home of many churches and convents. Churches now mark the sites of Shepherds Field, the Field of Ruth and the Well of the Lady.

Shepherds' Fields

Located in the town of Beit Sahour 2 km east of Bethlehem, this is the site where the angel of the Lord is said to have appeared before shepherds bringing them good tidings of the birth of Jesus. Joined with a multitude of heavenly hosts, the angel sang 'Glory to God in the Highest and on Earth, Peace among men.'



Al-Baryiah: The wilderness of the mountain desert, caves and monasteries.

The Al-Baryiah area is a semi-arid zone, with a mountainous desert habitat. Essentially a treeless, thin-soiled, arid and dramatically eroding limestone plateau, it is dissected by a valley (*a wadi*) draining towards the Dead Sea. It lies in the rain-shadow of the central highlands, and is classified as a hot area that receives very low annual rainfall (recently between 400 mm to 150 mm from west to east).

Its unique geological formation, bio-geographic location, and an abundance of water from flash floods and permanent springs, a natural diversity exists within this desert habitat that is rare, if not unique. Birdlife International calls the area one of the most important bird areas in the region, and one of the major migration routes for many bird species worldwide.

El-Baryiah is also rich in cultural heritage. Archaeological investigations have shown continuous occupation in different parts of it, extending from the Lower Palaeolithic period to modern times. Evidence of habitation in early prehistoric times (100,000- 10,000 BC) is particularly well-attested along the north side of Wadi Khareitun where three caves –Iraq Al-Ahmar, Umm Qala, and Umm Qatafa— once provided homes in a wooded landscape overlooking a river. Umm Qatafa, across the *wadi* opposite the Old Laura Monastery, is the site where the earliest evidence of domestic use of fire in Palestine was identified.

Throughout its history Al-Baryiah has been a place to take refuge, as Jesus himself experienced during his '40 days and 40 nights.' After the growth of Christianity, hermits began to inhabit caves in the area, and built a series of monasteries which subsequently formed a monastic centre. During the Islamic period, a series of shrines (*maqams*) were established in the area, including Khan al-Ahmar and Maqam an-Nabi Musa. These sites are important places on the Muslim pilgrimage route to Mecca.

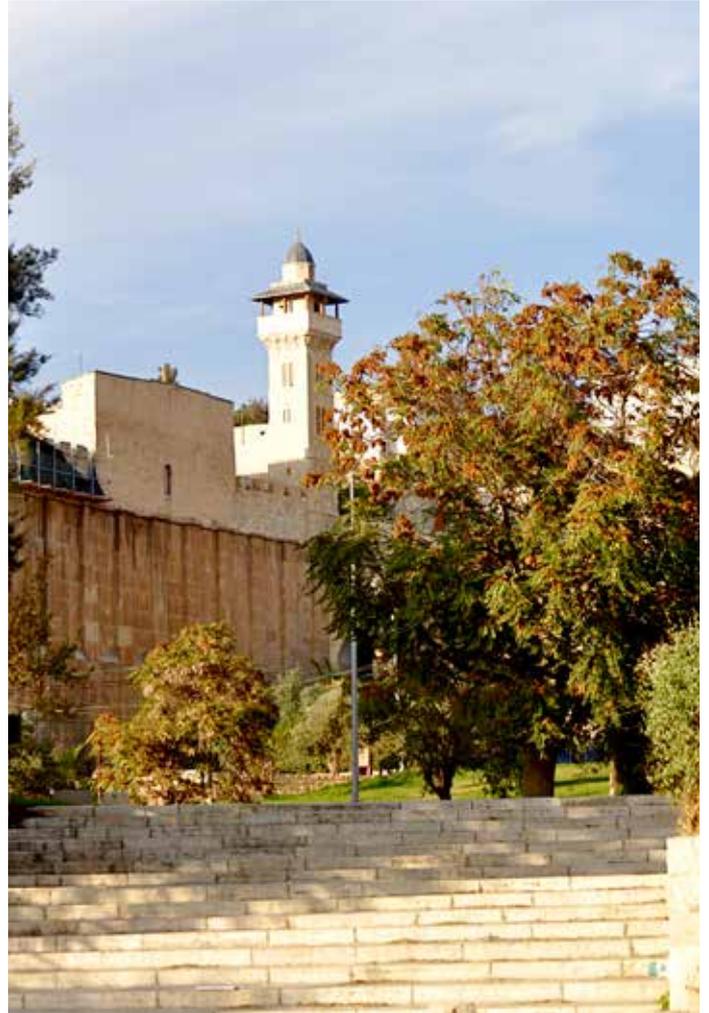
HEBRON

Khalil Ar - Rahman

Hebron is one of the oldest continuously inhabited towns in the world, its Arabic name, Khalil al-Rahman, means 'The Friend of God.' Ancient Hebron was situated on Jebel Ar-Rumeideh (the Rumeideh hill), located southwest of the current historic town. Archaeological investigations show several layers of habitation, dating from the Chalcolithic period (circa 4500-3200 BC) down to the Umayyad period (661-750 AD). The city has always been known as the burial place of the prophets Abraham/Ibrahim, Isaac, Jacob and their wives. During the Roman period, Herod the Great (73-4 BC) built a massive wall to enclose the cave of the prophets' tombs. After the conquest of Hebron by the Crusaders (1099), this enclosure was turned into a church, and subsequently, after Saladin's retaking of the city in 1187, into a mosque. Inside it, a walnut-wood carved minbur (pulpit) stands near the prayer niche. It was brought by Saladin from Egypt and is believed to be among the oldest wooden Islamic pulpits.

With the Arab-Muslim conquest, Hebron became the fourth sacred city of Islam after Mecca, Medina and Jerusalem, and was visited by Muslim pilgrims from all over the world. The town and the mosque were honoured and sanctified by the rulers of successive Muslim states, the Islamic leaders, and by the public. During Mamluk rule (1250-1516 AD), Hebron flourished and became a famous Sufi centre. Hundreds of Islamic religious and historical monuments were built close to the enclosed tombs. During Ottoman rule (1517- 1918 AD) the town witnessed a period of expansion, giving the old city its present-day shape and boundaries.

Still dominated by Mamluk-style architecture, Hebron is one of the few Islamic cities that has preserved its authentic set up, visible in its urban fabric and prestigious architecture, corroborated by its particular craftsmanship (the famous pottery and glassware of Mamluk origin) and its traditional life.





The Ibrahimi Mosque

The Old Town of Hebron

One of the oldest towns in Palestine, its market, (souq) has striking arched roofs and a maze of alleys that are definitely worth exploring. The shops and stalls sell everything from pottery, olivewood, blown glass, to a wide array of aromatic spices and dried fruits.

Al-Haram Al-Ibrahimi (The Ibrahimi Mosque)

Known locally as Al-Haram (the sanctuary), the mosque and its surroundings house the tombs of the monotheistic patriarchs and their wives, Abraham, Isaac, Ishmael, Sarah, Ruth and Rebecca.

Oak of Ibrahim

An oak tree 2km west of Hebron marks the legendary site where Abraham (Ibrahim) pitched his tent. Excavations in 1926-28 revealed a Herodian enclosure with a well in its south-western corner. Until recently, pilgrims would peel pieces of the trunk for good luck. Now, however, the Russian Orthodox Church that owns the site and the nearby monastery has wrapped the trunk with steel braces for protection.

Haram Al-Rama (Mamre)

It lies halfway between Halhoul and Hebron. The site was discovered during archaeological excavations in 1920s and 1980s. According to religious traditions the site might be the place where Abraham received the three Angels who informed him that his barren wife Sarah would give birth to his son Isaac. Christian traditions also identify this place as a resting place of Joseph and Mary on their way to Egypt. In the Roman period, Herod the Great built an impressive enclosure complex (49X65m) with statues to Edomite deities. After the first century AD, the site became one of the main market fairs in Palestine. In the fourth century AD, a church was built inside the enclosure, which is depicted on the Madaba Map, the site was reused during the medieval period. The site was rehabilitated by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as an archaeological park.

Halhoul

A beautiful and fertile village, Halhoul lies 5km north of Hebron. Abundant vineyards dot the area, producing Hebron's renowned grapes. The Mosque of Nabi Yunis lies just outside the town. According to Muslim tradition, the mosque was built over the grave of the Prophet Jonah.



JERICOHO

Located 36 km east of Jerusalem, Jericho is on the road to Amman and at the junction of the highway to the Galilee. In Jericho is Tel As-Sultan, the ancient city of Jericho, which is the lowest (258 m below sea level) and the oldest town on earth, dating back more than 10,000 years. It grew up around a perennial spring, Ain As-Sultan, in an area of fertile alluvial soil which attracted hunter-gatherer groups to settle and start the process of plant and animal domestication. Ain As-Sultan is biblically known as Elisha's spring, where the prophet Elisha cleansed the water of Jericho.

Jericho's moderate climate makes it a favourite winter resort, as it is always a number of degrees warmer than other parts of Palestine owing to its low elevation and the height of the surrounding mountains. It is an important agricultural area, producing fresh fruits, and vegetables year round. Jericho dates, bananas and citrus fruits are especially famous.

Tell As-Sultan (ancient Jericho), the Oldest City in the World

The site of Tell As-Sultan is located in the lower plain of the Jordan valley, approximately 10 km north of the Dead Sea. At a depth of 250 m below sea level, and with a history dating back to the Neolithic period, it is the lowest and the oldest town on the earth. The mound where the ruins of the town were found covers an area of about one acre.

The city of ancient Jericho was mentioned in historical sources, a recent find has the name appear on a scarab from the second millennia BC.

Successive excavations at the site uncovered its cultural history stretching 10 thousand years. The earliest remains belong to the Natufian culture (10th-8th millennia BC), and consist of flint tools, which attests to the presence of a hunting Natufian camp near the spring. The remains of the early Neolithic settlement are represented by a small settlement, with round houses built of mud brick and surrounded by a wall and a round tower, representing the earliest preserved piece of a fortification system.

Jericho played a major role in the early stages of Christianity. In the late Roman and Byzantine periods, the town was reduced to the area of modern Jericho. It was mentioned in several classical sources, including the sixth-century Madaba Mosaic map, where it was marked by the symbol of a church and a palm tree, along

with the inscription, "Of St. Elisha."

Archaeological excavations in the last century have revealed archaeological remains from various sites in the historic core of modern Jericho which shed light on the history of Jericho during the Byzantine period. A considerable number of churches from the Byzantine period have been found in the vicinity of Jericho, including Tell Al-Hassan, the Coptic Church, the Greek Orthodox Church of Abuna Anthimos, and Khirbat En-Nitla. Byzantine remains, including a colourful mosaic floor, were uncovered in 1962. In 2010, during construction work of the Russian museum in Jericho, a salvage excavation was carried out in the area by a Palestinian-Russian expedition, under the direction of Dr. H. Taha and Dr. L.A. Beliaev. The expedition uncovered more architectural remains, including a mosaic floor, which was found during bulldozing work, and a series of buildings dating to early Roman, Byzantine Umayyad, Medieval, and Ottoman periods.

A series of rehabilitation work was carried out in the site by the Palestinian Department of Antiquities during the last decade, within the framework of cooperation with the University of Rome La Sapienza and UNESCO. The site continues to reveal information of some of the earliest civilizations on earth, as well as details about their ways of life and habitation.

Monastery of Temptation (Deir Quruntel)

The summit of the Mount of Temptation rises sharply 350 m above sea level, commanding a magnificent view of the Jordan



Valley. The 30 to 40 caves on the eastern slopes of the mountain have been inhabited by monks and hermits since the early days of Christianity. It is the site where Jesus spent forty days and nights fasting and meditating during the temptation of Satan. A monastery was built in the sixth century over the cave where Christ stayed. The path leading to the monastery is very steep and difficult to climb, but is well worth the walk. Alternatively, a cable car scales the heights of the cliff, providing a spectacular view of the surrounding valley.

Hisham's Palace

Hisham's Palace is located on the northern bank of Wadi Nueima, 2 km north of Jericho in the Jordan Valley. It was identified as the ruins of Kh. Al-Mafjer. The site was built by Caliph Hisham bin Abed el-Malik who reigned between 724 to 743 AD. The site was used as a winter resort. The spectacular palace was destroyed in a severe earthquake in 749 AD.

The excavation was carried out by the Palestinian Department of Antiquities, between 1935 and 1946 under the direction of D. Baramki and R. Hamilton. The excavation uncovered a significant part of the palace complex. In 2006 excavation was carried out in the bath area, under the direction of H. Taha and between 2010 and 2013 a joint Palestinian-American expedition uncovered the north gate of the palace and remains of the Abbasid occupation in the northern part of the palace

The site is composed of a palace, a thermal bath complex, a mosque, and a monumental fountain within a perimeter wall that was never completed. The three first principal buildings were arranged along the west side of a common forecourt, with a pool covered with a pavilion in its center.

The palace was two stories with towers at the corners. The entrance to the palace was through a vaulted passage, lined with benches on both sides. It was planned around a central courtyard that was enclosed by four arcaded galleries. On the southern side a small mosque was found. In the western gallery of the central courtyard a stairway led to an antechamber paved with mosaics, which lead to an underground vaulted room, or *sirdab*, with

benches and a mosaic floor. The common mosque is attached to the northern wall of the palace.

The large bath is located in the northern part of the palace. It consisted of a domed porch on the east, a great reception hall, a series of small bathing rooms and a latrine. The reception hall was paved with 38 colorful mosaics. In the southern part of the bath, a large swimming pool was found.

At the northwest corner of the reception hall is the *diwan*, a small guest room, with benches along the walls. The floor of the *diwan* was paved with fine mosaics, depicting the scene of the tree of life. The palace was supplied with water through an open channel from the Ein Deuk and Ein Nueima springs at the foot of Mount Quruntul.

Following the transfer of authority to the Palestinian side in Jericho, a large restoration and rehabilitation program was carried out by the Palestinian Department of Antiquities at the site, in cooperation with UNESCO, the Italian Cooperation, ANERA and USAID. The archeological park now includes a modern interpretation centre, a mosaic laboratory, and a site museum, as well as a new bridge and access roads.

The Sycamore Tree and Russian Museum

The sycamore tree that Zacchaeus climbed so as to see Christ on his walk to Jerusalem has been housed since 2010 on the grounds of the Russian museum in Jericho. A salvage excavation was carried out on the lands of the building in June-September 2010 by a Palestinian-Russian expedition, the fruits of which are on display in the museum itself.

Just north of the Russian compound, remains of a mosaic floor appeared during bulldozing work. Excavation teams revealed a series of buildings, and mosaic pavements dating to the early Roman, Byzantine Umayyad, Medieval and Ottoman periods.

These, and ruins of Byzantine churches in the area are a testament to the major role Jericho played in the early stages of Christianity.



Ain Ad-Deuk Synagogue

The site of the Ain Ad-Deuk synagogue is located on the northern Bank of Wadi Nueima, northwest of Jericho. The site was exposed in 1918 by a shell fired by the Turks at the British in the area. Excavations in 1919 revealed a mosaic floor decorated with menorahs and Aramaic inscription.

The synagogue consists of a main hall, a narthex, and an adjoining courtyard surrounded by a wall. The entrance of the courtyard was to the north. The hall had a basilical plan and was divided by two rows of six columns into a nave and two aisles. The entire hall was paved with mosaics, while the narthex was paved with a white mosaic laid in black frame.

A series of conservation activities were carried out at the Synagogue by the Palestinian Authority Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage in 2002 and 2004 aiming to maintain the mosaic pavements.

Shahwan House Mosaic

In 1936 a synagogue was discovered north of Tell As-Sultan in what is today the house basement of the Shahwan family. The remains revealed a building with a rectangular plan, divided into a nave and two aisles by two rows of square pillars. The pavement of the building is of mosaic with stylized geometric and floral design. In 2008 a series of restorations were carried out, including the restoration of the mosaic pavement.

Tawaheen As-Sukkar (The Sugar Mills)

Located in the lower foothills of the Jordan Valley, the original function of the once industrial zone is preserved in the name of the site, 'the sugar mills.' The mills give visitors an opportunity to take a look at an industrial installation for manufacturing sugar that was part of the economic activity in the Jordan Valley during the medieval period.

The Jordan Valley's sugar cane cultivation and mills were mentioned in several early medieval sources, which described Jericho in 1225 AD as a city famous for sugar cane and dates. Three different components of the manufacturing process can be seen in the ruins of a water aqueduct, a courtyard, press, mill house, refinery, furnace, kitchen and a storage house. These represent three parts of the process: a water system, refinery, and the agricultural land. Sugar cane was planted and harvested on the land, then shredded, crushed, and pressed. It was later boiled, and the resulting crystallized sugar was removed from the containers. The mill was

powered by water brought by aqueducts from the springs of *Ain Nueima* and *Ain Deyuk* at the north-eastern foot of Mount of Temptation.

Qumran

Located 15km south of Jericho on the western shore of the Dead Sea, this is the site where the famous Dead Sea Scrolls were found. A Palestinian shepherd looking for a stray goat made the discovery of the scrolls in 1947.

The scrolls consist of copies of biblical and apocryphal literature, the writings of the sect, including the Commentaries, the Rule of the Community, the Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness, and the Damascus Document. The dates of these scrolls range from the second century BC to 68 AD, but mostly dated from the first century BC. The study of the scrolls developed into an academic discipline known as Qumranic studies. It provides us with valuable information about the history of Judaism and the early phase of Christianity.

Following the find, several excavations were carried out in the site and the surrounding caves. The excavated site revealed a large complex of buildings, including communal facilities, a sophisticated water system, a library, and a large cemetery.

Wadi Qelt and the Monastery of Saint George

Wadi Qelt is a natural rift with high, sheer rock walls extending 45 km through the hills between Jerusalem and Jericho. Hermits have inhabited the *wadi* since the third century. Today, it is a wonderful place for hiking, especially in the winter. The Monastery of Saint George, Deir Al-Qelt, is an impressive structure carved out of the rock of the cliff walls. Built in the fifth or sixth century, the monastery was destroyed during the Persian invasion of Palestine. Most of the present monastery dates back to a 1901 restoration done by the Greek Orthodox Church.

The Good Samaritan Inn

Located 10 km east of Jerusalem on the main road to Jericho, the Good Samaritan Inn (Al-Khan Al-Ahmar, literally 'The Red Inn') is a sixteenth-century structure that once served as a rest stop for travellers. Today, the inn is occupied by a souvenir shop and a Bedouin tent serving refreshments to tourists. On the other side of the road are the remains of Saint Euthymius Church, which was built in the fifth century to commemorate the biblical story of the Good Samaritan.



Qumran



Wadi Qelt and the Monastery of Saint George

Maqam An-Nabi Musa

Nabi Musa is the Arabic name for the Prophet Moses, who is recognised as one of the most important prophets in Islam, as well as Christianity and Judaism. Maqam An-Nabi Musa has been the site of an annual pilgrimage since the time of Salah Ad-Din. Set in an awe-inspiring landscape 20 km east of Jerusalem, the shrine is a splendid example of medieval Islamic architecture. The shrine, mosque, minaret, and some of the rooms at the site were built in 1269, and successive additions were added in 1475.

The Jordan River

The Jordan River flows from Mount Hermon in Syria, about 3,000 feet above sea level, to the Dead Sea, which is 1,300 feet below sea level. The winding Jordan River, with an average width of 100 feet, covers a distance of only 65 miles as the crow flies. However, if it were stretched out, the riverbed would cover 160 miles end-to-end. Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan River, and ever since, the river has been a holy site for Christians, with many pilgrims visiting the river every year to be baptised.

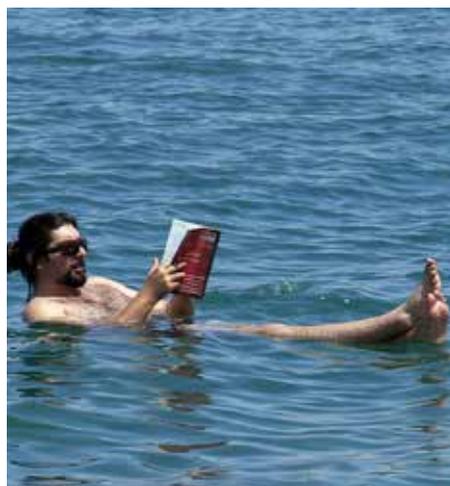
The Dead Sea

The Dead Sea, also known as the Salt Sea and the Sea of Lot, is a unique body of water in the Jordan Rift Valley. The Dead Sea is 85 km long and 17 km wide and covers an area of about 677 square km. It lies about 417 m below sea level, making the Dead Sea the lowest point on Earth. In addition, the Dead Sea is the world's saltiest large water body, with a salt concentration ten times higher than the Mediterranean. The earliest traces of nearby human habitation date back to the Chalcolithic period (approximately 4500 to 2500 BC). It was mentioned in the Bible and described by many Greek, Roman and Arab writers.

The entire basin is a spectacular landscape characterised by the abundance of a variety of ecosystems, including semitropical marshland, mudflats, wetlands, semi-desert, and arid desert. The diverse ecosystems surrounding the Dead Sea make this area an important site for biodiversity. It is home to some rare and threatened flora and fauna, such as the Lesser Kestrel. The Dead Sea basin is considered one of the main global bird migration routes, as well as an important bird habitat in the Middle East. Along with its ecological importance, the Dead Sea is rich minerals, attracting millions of visitors who wish to take advantage of the therapeutic qualities of its waters.



The Jordan River



RAMALLAH

The Bride Of Palestine



Located 16 km north of Jerusalem, at an elevation of 900 m above sea level at the crest of the Hills. It is known as the “Bride of Palestine” for its general geographical beauty. Ramallah has a pleasant, cool climate and has long been a popular Summer resort. During the twelfth century, French Crusaders built a stronghold in Ramallah, and the remains of a Crusader tower, known as At-Tira, can still be seen in the old part of town.

Modern Ramallah has a lively town centre, museums, art galleries, theatres, parks, booming restaurant scene, and bustling nightlife, Ramallah is a fast-growing cosmopolitan town. It is also much serviced for visitor, with comfortable places to stay, some Palestine’s best restaurants, good transport and other tourism – related services, and hospitable, friendly people

Al-Bireh

Ramallah’s twin city, Al-Bireh, is located on the central ridge running through the mountain of central Palestine, and is 900m above sea level, its location served as a cross-border trade between the north and south, along the caravan route between Jerusalem and Nablus. The name of Al -Bireh is derived from the Canaanite name Beeroth means “Water Well”. In Roman period named Berta means castle, during Crusader period a settlement

was established on al Bireh, and was first known as Mahumeria then its name was changed to Magna Mahumeria means the worshipping. The Crusaders built a tower, administrative building (Curia) which was used as a Crusader headquarter, in addition to a church which was located at the center of the city.

According to Christian tradition, Joseph and Mary rested in Al-Bireh on their way from Jerusalem to Nazareth when they discovered that Jesus was missing. A Crusader church, known as the Church of the Holy Family, marks the spot where they stopped. The church of al-Bira is recorded in September 1128, when it and the other villages appurtenances were confirmed to Holy Sepulcher by Pope Honorius II. Around 1172 the Pilgrim Theodric recorded that the Church dedicated to St. Mary which belonged to the Templars, might have been converted in to a mosque in the Ayyubid period .By 1514 the vaulting had collapsed ,most walls were still recognized until the First World War. The church plan is a three –aisled basilica of four bays, measuring overall about 22 by 34/37 m .Its east end terminated in to three semi –circular apses, the central one being preceded by a barrel-vault .210m deep. The walls were about 2.70m thick, on the inside they were faced throughout with smoothly dressed ashlar, and on the outside with rougher blocks. The main door was probably in the center of the west.

Beitin

Beitin is located approximately 14 km north of Jerusalem and 5 kilometres east of Ramallah. It is identified as ancient Beth El (House of God). The town of Beitin was mentioned in the classical sources as a city fortified by Bacchides, military commander of Ptolemy Soter of Egypt, and destroyed by Vespasian during the uprising against the Romans.

The site of Tell Beitin was excavated between 1934 and 1960 by W. F. Albright and J. L. Kelso on behalf of the American School of Oriental Research. The earliest remains date to the Bronze Age, around 2100 BC. The town was settled throughout the Iron Age and the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Mamluke, and late-Ottoman periods.

New archaeological surveys and excavations were carried out at Beitin by a joint Palestinian-Japanese expedition between 2011 and 2013, from the Palestinian Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and Keio University, Japan, in cooperation with the local community of Beitin, under the direction of H. Taha and D. Sugimoto.

The expedition team conducted a general survey of the Beitin area, mapping out the main archaeological features, including the *tell*, the *burj*, the water system, and the cultural landscape. Burj Beitin is believed to be the site of a Byzantine monastery built of ashlar stones, and which is composed of an impressive triple gate, rooms paved with beautiful coloured mosaics, a two-story tower with a door, a central courtyard, and a cistern within a perimeter wall. The preserved parts of the mosaic floors are decorated with geometric and floral patterns, including bunches of grapes. The excavation in the western area next to the tower uncovered the western door of the tower and courtyards paved with flagstones from the first phase of its construction. The construction techniques

and the materials showed that the tower was constructed during the Byzantine period (fourth century AD), and was renovated several times before the beginning of the Mamluk Period. The other important result of this excavation was the identification of the Mamluk town of Beitin. The village of Beitin is a living museum, with its rich archaeological and cultural resources. It has great potential for being developed as an important tourist attraction in Palestine.

Taybeh

The picturesque town of Taybeh is located 12km northeast of Ramallah, from its elevated spot it overlooks the desert wilderness, the Jordan Valley, Jericho, and the Dead Sea. Taybeh is also rich in history and culture. Ruins of a Byzantine church known as "Al Khader" (Saint George) are situated east of town. Still standing are two chapels, an entrance portico and stairway, parts of a mosaic floor, and its well-preserved baptistry. The church was rebuilt by the Crusaders during the 12th century. In 2010 the Department of Antiquities discovered a tomb dating back to Byzantine to early Islamic period. Restoration work was carried out in downtown of Taybeh, an annual October fest is held in the town.

Abud

The village of Abud is located 30km northwest of Jerusalem, lying on the principal Roman road via Gophna (Jifna) to Antipatris (Ras el-Ain). Archaeological surveys have revealed a long history of occupation, stretching from the Roman period to the present. Evidence of Roman, Byzantine, Crusader, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman occupation was attested in several sites of the village, such as the coloured rock-cut tombs in el- Maqati', 2 km west. The site was identified with Casale Santa Maria of the Crusader period. Abud was mentioned in the Frankish sources (12th century) as the village of St. Mary sold by Baldwin of Mirabel to the Hospital in 1167. From 1176 the income from the village was devoted to the provisions of white bread for the sick in the Hospital in Jerusalem. In this period three Syriac monks from Abud are mentioned in the colophons of liturgical manuscripts. The first is Elias, who constructed the monastery of Deir el-Kaukab, between Abud and Deir Abu Mashal (Belfort), sometime after 1030; In the Late Medieval (14 century) Yaqut Al-Hamawi described Abud as a small village near Jerusalem. The village of Abud was mentioned in the Ottoman dafters in the late 16th century as part of the Ramla Nahiya. Later Abud was part of the Banei Zeid region.

A number of ruined churches dating to the Byzantine and early Medieval period were identified in and around the village of Abud, including Mar Abadiya church, St. Anastasia's Church, St. Barbara's church, St. Theodore's church and St. Mary church.

The church of St. Mary al-'Abudiyah

church is located in the centre of the old village. The church was



Yasser Arafat's Tomb

dedicated to St. Mary, presumably during the Crusader period, when the village was renamed as Casale Santa Maria. An Aramaic inscription found on the vault of the south aisle indicates that it had been rebuilt during the Fatimid period, in “the 450th year of the Bedouins”, which would bring us to the year 1058. The inscription mentions also the founder of the church. According to the popular religious tradition, Jesus Christ passed through this road to Nazareth avoiding the road via Samaria, because of the eminent hostility between Jews and Samaritans. The church is known for its miracles, and therefore occupies a distinguished position among the churches of Abud. It is visited by Christians of Palestine and Jordan, especially on the annual feast of the Virgin Mary, on August 28, for the blessings and making vows.

Nabi Samwil (Prophet Samuel)

Is situated on top of a mountain, 890m above sea level and 4 km north of Jerusalem. The village is traditionally held to contain the tomb of the prophet Samwil from which the village receives its name. It was built around a mosque with a minaret that offers an extensive view of the hills of Jerusalem. Its mosque acts as a prominent landmark. The site consists of a large turreted mosque and a cellar, which holds the cloth-covered tomb of Samuel. In Byzantine period a monastery was built at Nabi Samwil, serving as a hostel for Christian pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem. It was restored and enlarged during the reign of Justinian I in the mid-6th-century AD.

Al-Jib (Gibeon)

Is located at an altitude of 739m above sea level, a few kilometres north of Nabi Samwil, the picturesque village of Al-Jib is the site of the ancient Canaanite city of “Gibeon”, meaning a hilltop, and it was

mentioned by the Romans and Franks as Gabaon. Archaeological excavations confirmed this identification with the discovery of 56 jar handles inscribed with the Semitic trilateral gb'n. In the seventh century, Gibeon was a prosperous wine-producing city. Excavations in the area have uncovered sixty-three wine cellars, each capable of storing forty-two large barrels of wine. Other interesting finds include a well-preserved ancient water system. The ancient tell is a rocky hill situated in the midst of a beautiful, intensely cultivated plain, the site included an impressive ancient water system (twelfth- to eleventh-century BC) water pool and a cistern which have a spiral staircase of 79 steps cut in solid rock, giving access to a spring outside the walls. This system denied water to attackers while making it available to inhabitants under siege.

Tell Al-Nasbah

Located at the southern entrance of Al-Bireh, 14 kilometers northwest of Jerusalem, the site lies adjacent to ancient road way connecting Jerusalem to Nablus. Tell en-Nasbah was occupied in the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze I periods, when it was a relatively small village. After this time the site was virtually abandoned until the beginning of the Iron Age. During 9-8th centuries the site was reused as a walled settlement with massive gate. Archaeological excavations uncovered pottery, coins and other small finds which indicate that some settlement at the site into the Hellenistic Roman period was probably an agricultural estate, occupied by a watch tower, kilns, a few buildings and fields. The tell does not seem to have been occupied in later times, though Byzantine tombs were found in the extra-mural cemeteries and the floor of a

Byzantine church near the west cemetery was uncovered

Birzeit

The town of Birzeit is located in the hills around 10 km north of Ramallah. It is identified as ancient Berzetho from the Greek-Roman period. It was first occupied in the Bronze Age as attested by the site Tell Ar-Ras, which is north of the town. It was continuously inhabited during the Iron Age and the Greek-Roman period, as indicated by archaeological evidence at a site known as Khirbet Birzeit. The buildings in the center of town were built during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. Today, Birzeit is home to Birzeit University, the oldest university in Palestine, which was founded in 1924.

Jifna

Located near Birzeit, Jifna is a small, scenic village that was once an important Roman-Byzantine city. Previously known as Gophna of Josephus, Jifna was the regional capital during the first century AD. Today, Jifna is a popular summer resort, offering a variety of outdoor restaurants, bars, and coffee shops.

Ein Kenya Nature Reserve

A beautiful nature reserve 7 km northwest of Ramallah, Ein Kenya is named after its natural springs. A variety of wild plants, birds, and animals make Ein Kenya a great place for picnics and hiking.



Birzeit University



St. George's Church-Taybeh



Jīna



En Kenya

NABLUS

Neapolis, the new city, was founded in 72 AD by the Flavian Emperors, as part of the Roman dynasty. Built on the northern slope of Mount Gerizim, around 2 km west of Tell Balata, the Roman city was marked on the Madaba map as early as the sixth century AD. Over the years, the original Greek name, Neapolis, was Arabised into the city's modern name, Nablus. It was printed on the first city coins issued during the reign of Domitian and Marcus Aurelius. The city developed into a major centre in the second century AD. Major building projects were launched, including the hippodrome, the theatre, and other public buildings. A Roman temple dedicated to Zeus was erected on Mount Gerizim during the reign of Antonius Pius. During the reign of Philip the Arab, the city of Neapolis was raised to the status of a Roman colony: Colonia Flavia Iulia Sergia Neapolis.

The city of Neapolis flourished during the Byzantine period and became the seat of a bishop. In 484 AD, during the reign of Emperor Zeno, a large octagonal church was built on the summit of Mount Gerizim, dedicated to Mary Theotokos. In the sixth century, Justinian (530 AD) fortified the church by building an enclosure encircled by towers.

While depicted on the Madaba map, the representation of the city was badly damaged, though some details are still visible, including parts of the city wall and its towers. A colonnaded street runs east to west, and seems to be crossed by a shorter street running from north to south. The large church in the southeast of the depiction might be the cathedral of Neapolis.

In the first half of the seventh century, the city was conquered by the Arabs of the Umayyad Dynasty. From the tenth century it was known as little Damascus, as the growing city found itself in the province of Damascus when that city was made the seat of Umayyad power between 661 and 750. Since then the old city has been extensively damaged by a series of earthquakes, which destroyed some of the architectural sites.

The seven quarters of the old city represent a distinctive example of traditional urban architecture in Palestine. The city centre features a bustling market, or souq, with impressive mosques, Turkish baths, and traditional soap factories. At the end of the eighteenth century, the city began to expand outside its original walls.

Today, Nablus is considered the major commercial, industrial and agricultural centre in the northern region of Palestine. It is known for its olive oil soap, talented goldsmiths, and traditional sweets. Nablus is considered to be the best place in Palestine to eat *knafeh*, a beloved Palestinian dessert made from cheese and semolina flour, and dripping with sweet rose water syrup.

Tell Balata (Balata Hill)

Tell Balata is identified as the Canaanite town of Shechem, which was mentioned in several ancient sources dating from the first and second centuries BC. The site is located near Nablus, and it lies between the famous hills of Gerizim and Ebal where the main north-south and east-west routes of Palestine crossed. It is said to have been the hub of an extensive early road network.

Tell Balata rises some 20 m above the 500 m contour passing through the village of Balata at the lowest point of the valley. It has been called 'the uncrowned queen of Palestine' because it is endowed with many water sources in addition to good winter rainfall, thus providing agricultural security.

Excavations have revealed much about the history of the site, particularly that it was an urban centre during the second urbanisation period in Palestine in 2000 BC. Of the most impressive surviving ruins is a fortress temple, which is thought to have been used for public worship. Other visible ruins include two monumental gates, massive city walls, a governor's palace with a small private temple, guardrooms, an assembly, living quarters, and a kitchen. Between 2010 and 2012, the site was rehabilitated as an archaeological park in a joint project between the Palestinian Department of Antiquities, the University of Leiden, and UNESCO.



Tell Balata



Mount Gerizim

Mount Gerizim, or Jebel At-Tor, is the sacred mountain of the Samaritans and has been so for thousands of years. It consists of three peaks: the main summit, a wide flat western hill, and Tell Ar-Ras to the north. It has been traditionally identified as the sacred mountain upon which a blessing was delivered by divine decree, a claim which, in Samaritan belief, overrides that of the rival Temple of Jerusalem. On the summit is a rock that the Samaritans believe was the place where Abraham was about to sacrifice his son Isaac. The Samaritans, now a small Palestinian community of only a few hundred people, believe the temple on the mountaintop was the first temple built by Yosha' Bin Noun in the Holy Land. Archaeologically, the temple discovered on the summit existed before the second century BC. It was apparently built nearby a considerable settlement area on the mountaintop, which archaeological excavations have shown was occupied, not necessarily continuously, during the Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic periods. The archaeological remains on the main summit consist of a large acropolis with paved *temenos* and massive fortifications with casemate walls and chamber gates, surrounded by a residential quarter. The ruins probably represent the Samaritan town during the Hellenistic period, destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 128 BC. In the early Roman period, the main summit seems to have been deserted, though a temple to Zeus was built in the second century just to the north on Tell Ar-Ras overlooking Nablus.

In 484 AD, during the reign of Emperor Zeno, a large octagonal church was built on the main summit, dedicated to Mary Theotokos. The church was turned into a fortress, and later strengthened by Justinian. The Samaritans were insulted by the presence of a church on their sacred mountain, and this affront contributed to their revolt in 529 AD. The church was abandoned in the eighth century, and the fortress was dismantled in the ninth. In the sixteenth century, a shrine to the Muslim saint Sheikh Ghanim was built on the east corner of the ruined church.

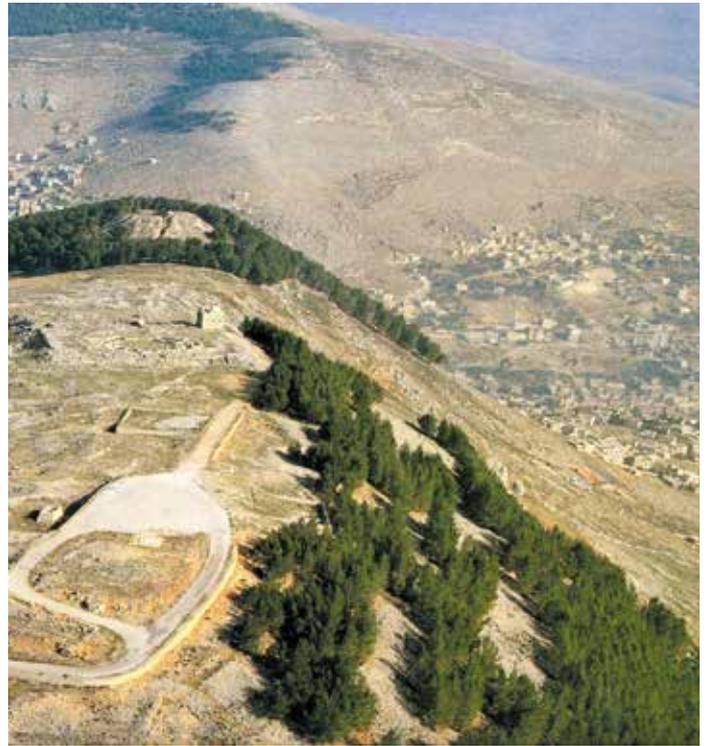
Mount Gerizim continues to be the religious centre of the Samaritans. Their village is below the summit and now includes a museum. Every year, many visitors come to see the Samaritans' ceremonial procession to and around the mountain summit, a contemporary version of a tradition that they believe to be thousands of years old.

Bir Al-Hamam (The Pigeon Well)

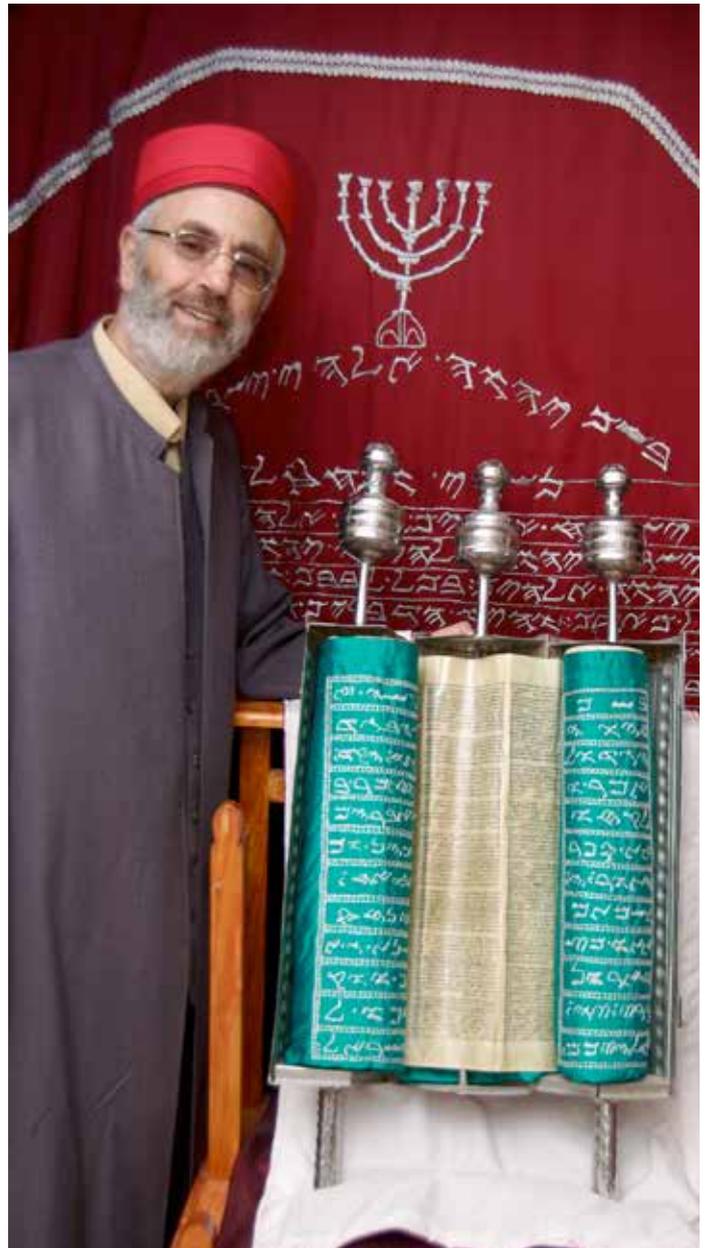
Bir Al-Hamam is on the northwestern upper slope of Mount Gerizim, around one km west of Tell Ar-Ras on the northern edge of the mountain, overlooking the western part of the city of Nablus. Bir Al-Hamam rises 750 m above sea level and offers an impressive view of the valley below.

The site features a small monastery complex with a gate, stable, courtyard, cistern, prayer room, and meeting room. The whole area was enclosed by a large stone wall. There was also a cistern, which was apparently fed by water from the roof surface of the church complex.

The area was first inhabited in the late fifth century and early sixth century when the monastery was built. It was occupied again during the Ayyubid period, evidenced by three inscriptions that were found at the site. The preserved part of the inscription reads as follows: 'for the salvation of the *armigeri* (the soldiers).' The second inscription reads, 'O Lord Jesus Christ) give rest to lovers of Christ.' The third inscription reads, 'By vow and for the salvation of Esuchios and Megalos and Prokopias the lovers of Christ.' The names mentioned in the inscription were three brothers who were benefactors of the church.



Mount Gerizim



Sebastia

Sebastia (Sabastyia) is located around 10 km northwest of Nablus at the junction of two main historical routes, the northern Nablus-Jenin route and the western route from the Jordan valley to the Mediterranean coast. The site offers a magnificent view of the surrounding farmland.

Sebastia was a regional capital during the second Iron Age and a major urban centre during the Hellenistic-Roman period. It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in Palestine and remains known by its ancient name, indicating a strong element of cultural continuity. Christian and Islamic traditions place the tomb of John the Baptist there.

A series of excavations were carried out at the site, the first conducted between 1908 and 1910 by Harvard University. The most recent was carried out by the Palestinian Department of Antiquities in 1994, and uncovered part of an Iron Age city including a royal palace complex and a central courtyard. One of the major discoveries was an ivory collection from the eighth and ninth centuries BC.

Sebastia flourished during the Iron Age II as a regional capital. It was captured by the Assyrians in 722 BC during the reign of Sargon II and became the centre of the Assyrian province in Palestine. Later, under Persian rule, the city remained a provincial capital for central Palestine. In 332 BC, the city was captured by Alexander the Great. Massive fortifications around the acropolis were added, including a circular tower. The city was destroyed by John Hyrcanus in 107 BC. Then, in 63 BC, the city became part of the province of Syria. Emperor Augustus later gave it to Herod, who renamed it Sebaste (in Greek Sebastos is Augustus) in honour of the emperor. Severus gave it the name Colonia in 299 AD. A large building programme was carried out during the Roman period, including the city wall, a gate, a colonnaded street with 600 columns, the basilica, the forum, a theatre, a temple for Augustus, a stadium, an aqueduct, and cemeteries.

During the Byzantine period, Sabastyia was a seat of the bishop. A church dedicated to Saint John was built on the southern slope of the acropolis. A Byzantine church and a Crusader church, both dedicated to Saint John, were built in the centre of the old village. A mosque was also built in honour of Saint John (Nabi Yahya).





The present town of Sabastya, including the archaeological remains, the historical town, and the cultural landscape, is a major tourist attraction in Palestine. A series of restoration activities was carried out in the historic core, including renovating the mosque, the shrine of Nabi Yahya, the Cathedral of John the Baptist, the Roman mausoleum, the olive press, Kayed palace, and the traditional buildings, along with a walking trail.

Jacob's Well

Situated at a slight distance from Balata village, near the eastern base of Mount Gerizim, Jacob's Well is a pilgrimage destination that commemorates the encounter of Christ with the Samaritan woman. A church was built over the well, then destroyed, and then restored by the Crusaders. Today Jacob's Well stands within the walled complex of the Greek Orthodox Monastery.

Joseph's Tomb

A little to the north of Jacob's Well is the traditional site of Joseph's tomb. An Ottoman building with a white dome marks the site.

JENIN

Located about 43km north of Nablus, on the ancient trade road from Nablus through wadi Bal'ama and across the plain of Marj Ibn Amer and Lajjun to Haifa, and an altitude about (100-250) above the sea level . The name was derived from Ein Ganim meaning the spring of Ganim and referring to the region's plentiful spring. Jenin Knows as Gina in the Amarna letters in the fourteenth century B.C, and Gina in the Roman period in Crusader period the city named Grand Grin.

Today, Jenin is a picturesque town built on the slopes of a hill and surrounded with gardens of carob, fig, and palm trees. It is distinguished by its agriculture, producing an abundance of fruits and vegetables.

Burqin: The Church of the Ten Lepers

The village of Burqin lies about 5 km west of Jenin at the northern end of the Arraba plain. The village is mentioned in several historical sources. In the sixteenth century it was described as a small village. Archaeological surveys in Burqin have revealed evidence of remains from the early Bronze Age, middle Bronze Age, late Bronze Age, Iron Age, and the Roman, Byzantine, Ummayyad, Ayyubid, Mamluk, and early Ottoman periods.



The Church of the Ten Lepers - Burqin



Jacob's Well

Saint George's Church is located on the northern slope of the historic centre of the village, overlooking Wadi Burqin and belongs to the Greek Orthodox community. The church was dedicated to Saint George (Al-Khader), a popular saint for both Christians and Muslims.

The first systematic survey of the church was carried out by the Palestinian Department of Antiquities in 1997. According to the survey, four main architectural phases in the history of the church may be discerned. The first church was in a cave, which was originally a Roman cistern. The cave and the church were identified as remains of the Byzantine period. In the second phase, a church was built in front of the cave, between the sixth and the ninth centuries. It was described in documents from the Crusader and Ottoman periods. The present church consists of the cave, the main hall, and the nave. It was rebuilt during the eighteenth century AD.

The Church of Saint George in Burqin is linked with the tradition of the ten lepers mentioned in the New Testament. According to Christian tradition (Luke 17:11–19), Christ entered the village on his way to Galilee and miraculously healed ten lepers who asked for his help. Therefore, the church is known locally as the Church of the Ten Lepers.

Tell Taannek

Tell Taannek is a pear-shaped mound approximately 14 acres in size. The site is located at the northern end of the Nablus ridge and at the southern edge of Marj Ibn Amer, 8 km south of Tell Al-Mutesellim (Megiddo). The site occupies a strategic location on the border between the mountainous area and the plains on the main route between Jenin and Haifa. It is west of the historical pass, Wadi Hasan, and east of Al-Yamoun.

The modern Palestinian village Taannek, located on the southeastern slope of the Tell still bears the ancient name Taannach. The name was mentioned around 1350 BC in the Amarna letters. Taannek was mentioned as a captured city during the Thutmose III's military campaign in Asia in 1468 BC. The city was captured again by Shishak I in 918 BC during his campaign in Palestine. The site was mentioned several times in the Bible as a Canaanite town undefeated by Joshua. Later Taannek was mentioned as a large village in the fourth century AD by Eusebius and in the Crusader records from the Middle Ages.

Zababdeh

Located 6 km south of Burqin, Zababdeh is built over the site of a Byzantine village. A beautiful mosaic of a sixth century church can be found at the convent of the Rosary Sisters, as well as a Roman building, known as Boubariya.

Khirbet Bal'ama and the Water Tunnel

Khirbet Bal'ama is located at the southern entrance of Jenin, approximately 2 km south of the main centre of the city. The site was a fortified Canaanite city that occupied a strategic position along the historical route of Wadi Bal'ama that linked the Arraba Plain with Marj Ibn Amer. The site is identified with ancient Ibleam, which was mentioned in the Egyptian Royal Archive in the fifteenth century BC. During the classical period it was known as Belmont, and in the medieval period as Castellum Beleismum.

Excavations at Khirbet Bal'ama led to the recovery of the ancient water system, the means by which the inhabitants of ancient Belameh accessed the Bir As-Sinjil Spring at the base of the mound. It was designed to be used primarily in times of war and siege.

The tunnel consists of three parts: the archway at the lowest entrance, the rock-cut tunnel going upwards to the west, and the unfinished upper passage. The excavation uncovered evidence from the Bronze Age, the Iron Age, and the Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Umayyad, Crusader/Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods. In 1999, a series of restorations was carried out on the site. In 2005 the tunnel was rehabilitated as an archaeological park and is now open to visitors.



Tell Dothan

Tell Dothan is located on the eastern side of the fertile Arraba plain, approximately 8 km north of Jenin and 1 km east of the Nablus-Jenin road. It is bordered by fertile plains and a spring at the southern foot of the hill.

The earliest remains at the site date back to the Chalcolithic Period. In the early Bronze Age around 3000 BC, the city was a major fortified urban centre. Dothan was again inhabited in the late Bronze Age and Iron Age I. A spectacular discovery at the site is a tomb dug into the western slope of the hill, which contains more than 1,000 complete pieces of pottery and around 100 skeletons. The domestic quarter, consisting of a street, houses, storerooms, ovens, and household objects dating from the Iron Age II were also uncovered. From the ninth to the seventh centuries BC, the town was destroyed and rebuilt several times. The last destruction, at the end of the eighth century BC was attributed to the Assyrians. The city later became a flourishing centre under Assyrian Rule.

Scant evidence of Hellenistic and Roman occupation was found at the site, and the last occupation dates back to the Mamluk period. Popular tradition links the story of Joseph and his brothers to a cistern there, known as Joseph's pit.

The Forest of Umm Al-Rihan

Umm Al-Rihan Forest consists of a series of densely forested areas estimated to be around 15,000 acres in total. The area of Umm Al-Rihan is overseen by the Palestinian Authority, and has been proposed as a site for a nature reserve.

The forest lies within the semi-coastal region and has an environmental system that resembles a Mediterranean Sea forest. Its most important characteristic is that it serves as a migration route for birds travelling from the coast. Many of the birds that pass through the area are species that are threatened or declining throughout all or large parts of their range in the Middle East, such as the Lesser Kestrel, Honey Buzzard, and Egyptian Vulture. In addition, there are other species living in the habitat that are known to be endangered, such as wolves and red foxes. The woodland area also boasts plant diversity and is home to the original wild species of barley and wheat, in addition to many wild species of fruit.

Tulkarem

The prosperous town of Tulkarem is located 12 km from the Mediterranean Sea, and about 15 kilometres west of Nablus. Its location between the coastal plain and mountain of the central Palestine has made it an important stop along both trade and conquest over the course history. Originally inhabited by the Canaanites, its ancient name was Tur Karm, meaning the Mountain of Vineyards, because of its fertile land.

During the Ayyubid , and later the Mamluk period (1260-1516), the majority of Tulkarm's lands were made part of a waqf ("religious trust") to support the "Al-Madrasa al-Farisiyya" in Jerusalem, The mainstay of the Tulkarem 's economy was agriculture ,and fertile land produced grain ,citruses as well as fruits and olives.



Tulkarem Museum

Qalqilya

Situated 12 km from the Mediterranean coast, Qalqilya was once a Canaanite city. Its name was derived from a Roman castle known as Qala'alia. This small town has the only zoo in Palestine, which was established in 1986.

Wadi Qana

Wadi Qana is a nature reserve with a network of caves. Excavations of one of these caves in 1980 found remains from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, and the Early Bronze Age. The cave system is spread over five levels with an entrance on the uppermost level. The cave was once used as a burial place, and pottery, flint, stone, ivory, and bone objects have been found there. Neolithic remains were found in the cave, including pottery vessels from the Yarmukian culture. The bulk of the objects date to the Chalcolithic period and consist of pottery, basalt, metal, bone, ivory jewellery, and human skeletal remains. The most distinctive find from the caves is a collection of copper, electrum, and gold objects. Some were made of almost pure gold and others of electrum with a 70:30 ratio of gold to silver. The gold and electrum of Wadi Qana represent the earliest production of this precious metal in Palestine to date.

GAZA CITY



Located on the Mediterranean seashore, 32 km north of the Egyptian border, Gaza City is considered one of the most ancient towns in the world. Strategically placed on the Mediterranean coastal route, ancient Gaza was a prosperous trade centre and a stop on the caravan route between Egypt and Syria.

Gaza was a major Philistine city in the early Iron Age, and the site of the Canaanite God of fertility, Dagon. Gaza City is mentioned a number of times in the Bible, especially as the place, where according to tradition, Samson brought down the Philistine temple. In 734 BC the Assyrian king Tiglath-Pileser III captured Gaza and the city remained under Assyrian control until the middle of the seventh century BC. In the sixth century Gaza became an important royal fortress under the Babylonians. The city of Gaza flourished during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. It was mentioned by the ancient Greek writer Herodotus as Kadytis. In 332 BC, the city was captured by Alexander the Great after a long siege. During the Roman Period, Gaza became a major urban

centre, with temples dedicated to Zeus, Aphrodite, Apollo and the major local deity Marnas. The city was expanded beyond the ancient settlement and the ancient port of Maiumas was established. During the Byzantine Period, the name of the city was changed to Constantia and a large church was built on the site of the temple of Marnas in the fifth century AD. The city was depicted on the Madab mosaic map from the sixth century as a large city with colonnaded streets and a large basilica in the centre. It was shown also on the mosaic floor of the church of St. Stephen at Umm Er-Rasas, from the eighth century. In 636, Gaza came under Islamic rule. It became famous as the burial place of Hashim, the grandfather of prophet Mohammed and as the birthplace of Al-Shafia. The church of John the Baptist was built on the site of the Eudoxiana. In 1187 the city was captured by Saladin and became part of the Ayyubid state. Gaza was a regional capital during the Mamluk period. In 1516 the city of Gaza fell to the Ottoman Empire and became the capital of the province of Palestine. It flourished during this period as a main trade centre and a station on the main trade route between Egypt, Palestine, and Arabia. Gaza was under British rule from 1918 to 1948, and to the Egyptian rule between 1948 and 1967, when it fell under Israeli occupation in 1967. Following the transfer of authority to the Palestinians in 1995, Gaza was again under the control of its people. Today, Gaza City is the economic centre for a region where citrus fruits and other crops are grown. The city is famous for its hand-woven carpets, wicker furniture, and pottery. Famous also for its fresh seafood, Gaza has numerous restaurants along the beach as well as public parks where visitors can enjoy the pleasant Mediterranean breeze.

The Great Mosque

Located in downtown Gaza at the end of Omar Mukhtar Street, the Great Mosque or Al-Umari Mosque features a beautiful minaret. It was originally a Norman church built by the Crusaders in the twelfth century. It is said to occupy the site of the first ancient temple of Marnas.

Napoleon's Fort

Located on Al-Wahda Street in downtown Gaza, this imposing stone building dates back to the Mamluk period. It is known as Qasr Al-Basha (The Pasha's Palace) because Napoleon (referred to as the 'Pasha') spent a few nights here on his way through the town in 1799.

Saint Porphyry Church

This fourth century church is where Saint Porphyry died and was buried in 420 AD. It is located in the Gaza's Old City and is still used by the Greek Orthodox Community.

Al-Zaytun Quarter

Gaza's oldest quarter, Al-Zaytun contains many beautiful old homes with impressive carved wooden doorways. A Catholic and a Protestant Church are also located in this quarter.

Al-Daraj Quarter

This quarter in the Old City that features the Abdulhamid Public Fountain. This fountain was built in the sixteenth century and renovated by the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid in 1893.

Sayyed Hashem Mosque

Located in the Al-Daraj Quarter, the mosque is one of the biggest and most beautiful in Gaza. The tomb of the Prophet Muhammad's grandfather Hashem Bin Abdulmanaf, who died in Gaza during a trading voyage, is believed to be under the dome of the mosque.

Anthedon Port

Anthedon is the first known seaport of Gaza mentioned in Islamic literature along with Tida. The city was inhabited from 800 BC to 1100 AD, and witnessed a series of different cultures: Neo-Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, and early Islamic (Umayyad, Abbasid, Tulunid, and Fatimid).

One km south of the seaport of Anthedon is the ancient harbour of Maiumas, which was once identified as the harbour of Gaza. It has been continuously populated and during the Roman period became a flourishing, well-developed coastal town. Maiumas, which is mentioned only in late classical sources, dates back to an earlier period when Gaza's trade with Greece began. Maiumas

comes from an Egyptian word meaning 'maritime place.'

The archaeological site of ancient Anthedon has not been precisely identified. There are several heaps of ruins in various neighbourhoods of Gaza City, which have been considered to be the old harbour. However, the site of Anthedon is probably a hill located to the north of Gaza known to the locals as Tida. In the Middle Ages, Anthedon was known as Tida or Taida.

The present site consists of the ruins of a Roman temple and a section of a wall, as well as Roman artisan quarters and a series of villas. Mosaic floors, warehouses, and fortified structures were also found in the area. The site's archaeological remains date from the late Iron Age, as well as from the Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. The excavated site is about five acres. It consists of a well-preserved 65-metre mud brick wall, which once surrounded the old commercial city centre. The massive walls stretch 30 metres eastwards at the extraordinary height of 8 m and thickness of 6 m.



Tell Um Amer

The first settlement on this site, Tell Umm Amer, was established during the Roman era in Wadi Gaza close to the seashore. It appears on the Madaba map under the name Tabatha and was inhabited from the Byzantine to the early Islamic period (400 to 670 AD). Tell Umm Amer was the birthplace of Saint Hilarion, who had received an excellent education in Alexandria, and had gone to Antonius in the desert for further instruction. He founded a monastery in the third century, and is considered as the founder of monastic life in Palestine. The monastery was destroyed in 614 AD. The site contains the ruins of the monastery of Saint Hilarion, (born in 291 AD). It consists of two churches, a burial site, a baptism hall, a public cemetery, an audience hall, and several dining rooms. The monastery had many facilities, including water cisterns, clay ovens and drainage channels. Its floors were made of limestone, marble tiles, and coloured mosaics depicting plant and animal scenes. The floors also include a Greek inscription decorated with circular motifs. In addition, the monastery was equipped with large baths that could adequately serve the pilgrims and merchants travelling from Egypt to the Fertile Crescent through Via Maris.

Khan Yunis

Located 25 km south of Gaza City, Khan Yunis is a market town for the agricultural produce from local villages. It features a fortress built in the thirteenth century as a garrison for soldiers guarding pilgrims on their journey from Jerusalem to Mecca. The weekly market in the town centre is a fascinating picture of traditional life.

Rafah

Located on the southern tip of Gaza, Rafah is a beach town with sand dunes and date palms. This Canaanite town was called Rafia by the Greeks and the Romans, and some ancient mosques and archaeological sites, as well as a mosaic floor have been found there.

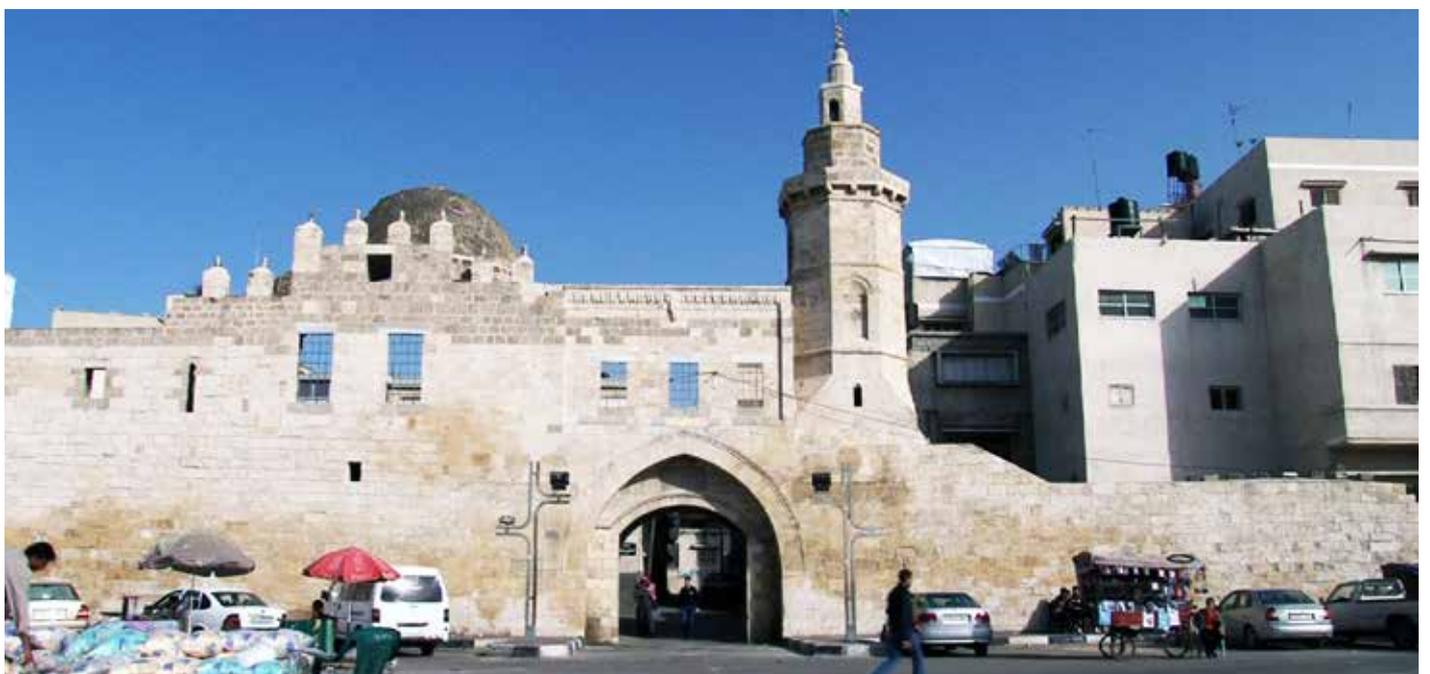
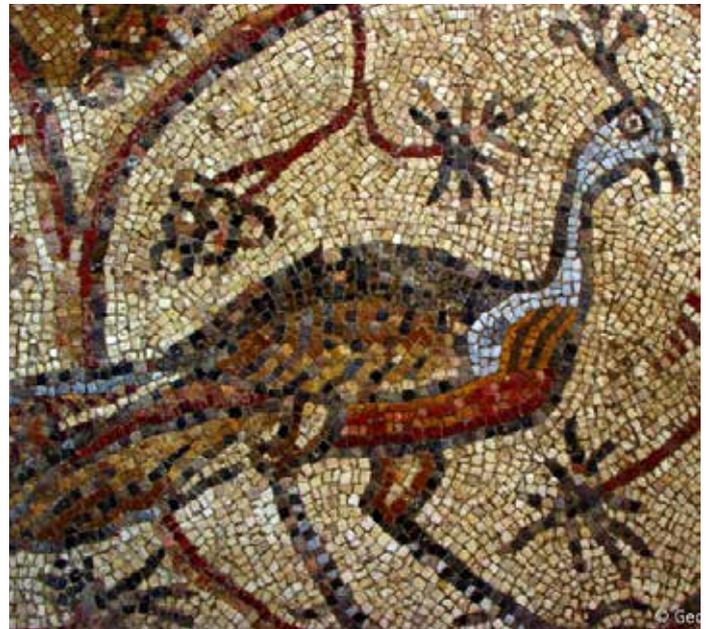
Deir Al-Balah

Well known for its beaches and palm trees, recent excavations of this southern Gaza town uncovered a cemetery dating back to the late Bronze Age, along with pottery, tombs, bronze pots, and a mosaic floor. Deir Al-Balah is also home to a monastery that was built by Saint Hilarion, (born in 291 AD).

Wadi Gaza

This *wadi* is distinct for its twists and turns. It has eight major curves in its path across the Gaza Strip. Its width varies, with its widest point near its mouth where it reaches about 100 m. Six smaller rivers feed into the main valley, the most important of which are Wadi Abu Qatroun to the north and Wadi Ghalbeh to the south. The location of the Gaza Strip at the corner of the land bridge connecting the continents of Africa and Eurasia, makes it a bottleneck for migratory birds. Thousands of ducks, herons, storks, cranes, flamingos, waders, raptors, quails, passerines, and other birds have been reported to pass through Wadi Gaza. The most common endemic bird is the Palestinian sunbird (*Nectarinia osea*), which is found throughout the year at the Gaza Strip. Studies show that there is an urgent need to protect the Wadi Gaza as a wildlife habitat. The threats to the area are quite severe. Wadi Gaza faces many environmental problems. One of the most pressing problems is that it is used to collect sewage from refugee camps and as a solid waste dumping site.

Holidays & Feasts



Christmas in Bethlehem

The Church of the Nativity belongs to three Christian denominations and Christmas is celebrated on three separate dates each year: 25 December (Latin), 7 January (Greek Orthodox), and 19 January (Armenian Orthodox). A Christmas parade on 24 December marks the start of Christmas celebrations in Bethlehem each year. The procession of the Latin Patriarch arrives from Jerusalem, making its way to the Church of Nativity through the ancient roads of Bethlehem. Later that evening, a midnight Christmas mass highlights the celebrations of Christ's birth.



Easter in Jerusalem

During the holy week of Easter, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre becomes a focus for Christian pilgrimage. The Easter festival formally begins with Palm Sunday, when pilgrims carry palm branches and walk from the Church of Bethphage up to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. It ends on Sunday, the resurrection day. The calendar of events during the holy week offers a variety of commemoration ceremonies. For example, on Holy Thursday, the day of the washing of feet, the Greek Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem performs the ceremony in an open area outside the Church.

Ramadan

Ramadan, the ninth month of the Muslim lunar calendar, marks the day when the holy Quran was revealed to Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel. Ramadan is a special month of fasting. Every day before Sunrise to Sundown, Muslims abstain from food and drink. At sundown, families gather to break the fast with a meal called Iftar. Afterwards, it is customary for Muslims to visit relatives, neighbours, and friends. Daylight signals the resumption of the fast.

Laylat Al-Qadr (The Night of Decree)

The evening of the twenty-seventh day of Ramadan marks the most special day of the year for Muslims when Laylat-al-Qadr is observed. Muslims believe that on this night, Prophet Muhammad first received the revelation of the Holy Quran.



Ramadan

Eid Al-Fitr (Fest of the Breaking of the Fast)

The first day of the month following Ramadan, known as the month of Shawwal, marks the beginning of a three-day holiday called Eid Al-Fitr. Muslims celebrate with a feast, gifts, and visits to family and friends.

Eid Al-Adha (Feast of Sacrifice)

According to Muslim tradition, God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son Ishmael on this night. Seconds before the sacrifice, God intervened and Abraham sacrificed a ram instead. Muslims believe that it is from Ishmael that the Arabs descend, and they commemorate this occasion at the end of the annual pilgrim to Mecca during a feast known as Al-Adha. The five-day feast is celebrated throughout the Muslim World and on the first day, Muslims sacrifice a sheep, giving some of the meat to the poor.



Qatayef

General Information

Visiting Holy Places

At all times, please remember that most of the holy sites of Palestine are still functioning places of worship, and that many are cared for by varying monastic orders who have taken vows of chastity and personal poverty. It is not always possible to visit or take photos of all the places of a church or monastery, or to request a meeting or visit with the priest, abbot, monks or sisters. During the Christmas season, normal visiting hours may vary outside the posted dates and times due to the availability of their caretakers. Please be respectful of the practices and traditions of each faith by dressing modestly and wearing inoffensive clothing. We ask that visitors remember that the Christmas season is a busy, often hectic time for members of all various religious communities and orders, and that a decline for a visit or entrance to a specific location for whatever reason is not a personal insult aimed at you, your gender, or your religious persuasion.

Accommodation

All major Palestinian cities and towns offer a variety of conveniently located places to stay. Located in Christian convents, hospices offer the same facilities and prices as hotels. Bed-and-breakfasts are inexpensive and offer visitors a unique opportunity to become acquainted with Palestinian family life.

Local Cuisine

Palestinian cuisine is very popular among visitors. Diners are offered an appetising assortment of hors-d'oeuvres, known as meze. Humus and baba ghanouj, widely known in Europe and the United States are made to perfection in Palestine. Main courses include a savoury collection of meat, poultry, seafood, and vegetable dishes. Palestine is also renowned for its sweet pastries.

Handicrafts

Cross-stitch embroidery is a traditional art form in Palestine. Using natural homemade materials, women intricately embroider dresses, jackets, vests, cushions, tablecloths, and much more. Jerusalem pottery is another art in Palestine. It includes ceramics decorated with geometric patterns and colourful glassware. Religious ornaments, handmade made from olive wood and mother-of-pearl with painstaking attention to detail, are also popular. Palestine's world-renowned olive wood carvings are made from local olive trees. Olive trees in Palestine are not only found in abundance but some date back to the time of Jesus. Exquisite olive wood statues, boxes, crosses, and other items can be found at the numerous souvenir shops in Bethlehem and Jerusalem.



Ma'amoul



Barazeq



Musakhan

Climate

There are four seasons in Palestine. Winter is mildly cold and rainy, while summer is usually hot and dry. Autumn is pleasant and spring is beautiful, with a wide array of wild flowers and blooming trees. Average temperatures in Palestine range from 9 to 18 degrees Celsius in winter and 26 to 30 degrees Celsius in summer. Regardless of the season, visitors are advised to wear modest dress, especially when visiting holy sites.

Communications

International calls can be made from domestic telephones, including public pay phones. Fax and E-mail services are available.

Currency

In the absence of a Palestinian monetary unit, the New Israeli Shekel remains in use. All major credit cards and travellers cheques are accepted. Foreign currencies can easily be exchanged at any bank or money exchange shop.

Economy

Palestine has a developing economy in tourism and agriculture and this generates the country's main economic income. With seven agro-climatic zones with at least twenty different soils, nearly sixty agricultural crops are grown in Palestine. Industry and trade are still small-scale, largely due to Israeli restrictions.

Language

Arabic is the official language in Palestine. English is widely spoken, while Italian, French and German are spoken to a lesser extent.

Local Time

Palestinian time is GMT + 2 hours in winter and GMT + 3 hours in summer.

Shopping

Shopping in Palestine is a unique experience, with customers and merchants often good-naturedly haggling over prices. The country's main streets and markets are filled with shops selling local and imported items. Especially appealing to tourists are the numerous shops selling handmade items, aromatic Middle Eastern spices, jewellery, tasty oriental sweets, and much more.

Working Hours

Government offices open from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm. Banks open from 8:00 am to 12:30 pm, with some banks reopening from 3:00 to 5:00 pm. Most shops open from around 8:00 am until around 7:00 pm. Muslim shops close on Friday, while Christian shops close on Sunday. The official weekend is Friday and Saturday.

Transportation

Car rental companies in major Palestinian cities offer reasonable prices. Taxis are both comfortable and widely available. However, since taxis don't operate on meters, it is best to agree on the price before setting off. Economically priced shared taxis are also widely used.

TABLE OF DISTANCES

J: Jerusalem; **B:** Bethlehem; **H:** Hebron; **JO:** Jericho; **R:** Ramallah; **N:** Nablus; **G:** Gaza.

Distances in kilometers

	J	B	H	JO	N	R	G
J	0	7	31	38	59	16	98
B	7	0	28	45	66	23	105
H	31	28	0	67	90	47	81
JO	38	45	67	0	62	45	136
N	59	66	90	62	0	45	137
R	16	23	47	45	45	0	114
G	98	105	81	136	137	114	0

MUSEUMS

Bethlehem Museums

Al-Bad Museum for Olive Oil Production: Tel: (02) -2741583
Opening hours: 8:00-14:30-Monday through Saturday.

Baituna al Talhami Museum (Folklore Museum) Arab Women's Union
Telefax: (02) – 2742589 / Opening hours: daily from 8:00-13:00/14:00 – 17:00 except for Sundays and Thursdays afternoon.

The Nativity Cribs Museum inside the Peace Center Building – Manger Square :
Tel: (02) – 2766677 / Fax : (02)-2764670, www.peacenter.org
Opening hours: daily from 10:00-18:00 except Sundays from 10:00-16:00.

Palestinian Heritage Center: Telefax: (02) -2742642 / Tel: (02)-2742381 / www.phc.ps

International Nativity Museum:
Tel: (02) – 2742421/ (02) – 2747161
Salesian Convent / Opening hours: daily upon request/ a previous appointment is recommended.
www.salesianbethlehem.com / The Salesian convent includes as well an art center.

Al – Kahf Gallery/Museum
Dar Annadwa Addawliyya / The International Center of Bethlehem
Paul VI St. –Bethlehem -Tel: (02)- 2770047/ Fax: (02)-2770048 / www.annadwa.org

Museums in Ramallah & Al-Bireh

Museum of Palestinian Popular Heritage –In`ash el Usra Society, Al Bireh:
Tel: (02)-240 2876/ (02)-2401123 / Fax: (02) - 240 1544. Opening hours: daily from 8:00-15:00 except Fridays.

Mahmoud Darwish Foundation & Museum: Building Towers, The National Street - «Jerusalem Nablus» - Ramallah - Telefax: 00972-02-2408587/ Tel: +972-02-2952808
E-mail: info@darwishfoundation.org / www.darwishfoundation.org.



Ramallah Museum: Al-Harajeh St. Across from Arab Bank, Old Town in Ramallah: Telefax: (02) - 295 9561 open daily from 8:00-15:00 except Friday and Saturday.

The Birzeit University Ethnographic & Art Museum: Tel: (02)-298 2976/ Fax: (02)-2982059 vtamari@birzeit.edu, Opening hours: daily from 10:00-15:00 except for Fridays and Sundays.

Tulkarm Museums: Tulkarm Museum: Telefax: (09)-2672356 Opening hours: daily from 8:00-15:00 except Friday & Saturday.

East Jerusalem Museums

Armenian Museum, Old City: Tel: (02) – 628 2331, Fax: (02) – 6264861, Opening hours: Mon-Sat, from 9:00-16:30.

Islamic Museum (The Islamic Waqf Association), Old City, (02)-628 3313, Fax: (02)- 628 5561, opening hours for tourists: daily from 7:30-13:30.

Wujoud Museum: Tel: (02)- 626 0916/ Fax: (02)-6272625 / www.wujoud.org .

Jericho Museums:

The Russian Museum & Park Complex: Tel (02) – 231-3001, 054-522-1532, Fax: (02) –231-3000 Opening hours: Mon-Sat, from 9:00am -17:00 pm.

Hisham's Palace Museum : Tel (02) – 2322522. Opening hours: daily from 8:00am-18:00pm in summer /8:00am – 17:00pm in winter.

Hebron Museums:

Doura Museum: Municipality Park/Garden (behind the Cultural Center): Tel: (02) – 2287677, Opening hours: Mon-Thu, from 8:00am-3:00pm.

Mamre Archeological Site (Bir Haram AR-Ramah)), (02)-2228248, opening hours for tourists: daily from 8:00am -3:00pm.

Gaza Museum:

Al- Mathaf: Tel: (08)- 285 8444 /Fax: (08)- 2858440/Jawwal: 0597418080/ www.almathaf.ps.



Arts & Cultural Centers

East Jerusalem

Al-Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art
 Ashtar Theater
 Palestinian Heritage Museum (Dar At-Tifl)
 British Council
 Center for Jerusalem Studies /Al Quds University
 Community Action Centre (CAC)
 Educational Bookshop
 El-Hakawati Theatre company
 Faisal Hussein Foundation
 French Cultural Center
 Issaf Nashashibi Center for Culture & Literature
 Jerusalem Centre for Arabic Music
 Palestinian Art Court – Al Hoash
 Palestinian National Theatre
 Sabreen Association for Artistic Development
 Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology
 Sanabel Culture & Arts Theatre
 The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music
 Theatre day Productions
 East Jerusalem YMCA
 Yabous Productions
 Magnificat Institute – School of Music

Musalaha
 Tantur Ecumenical Institute for Advanced Theological Studies

www.almamalfoundation.org
www.ashtar-theatre.org
www.palestinemuseum.ps
www.britishcouncil.org/ps
www.jerusalem-studies.alquds.edu
www.cac.alquds.edu
www.educationalbookshop.com
www.el-hakawati.org
www.fhf-pal.org
ccfjeru@consulfrance-jerusalem.org
isaaf@alqudsnet.com
mkurd@yahoo.com
www.alhoashgallery.org
info@pnt-pal.org
www.sabreen.org
www.faith@sabeel.org
sanabeltheatre@yahoo.com
www.birzeit.edu/music
www.theatreday.org
www.ej-ymca.org
www.yabous.org
www.magnificat.org.il
www.custodia.org/magnifica
www.musalaha.org
www.come.to/tantur

Bethlehem

Al-Harah Theatre
 Alliance Française de Bethléem
 Anat Palestinian Folk & Craft Center
 Arab Educational Institute (AEI)-Open Windows
 Artas Folklore Center
 Bethlehem Peace Center
 Catholic Action Cultural Center
 Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation
 Holy Land Trust
 Inad Centre for Theatre & Arts
 Dar Ad Naddwa Institute: Christmas Lutheran Church, Bethlehem
 ITIP Center «Italian Tourist Information Point» & Angelo Frammartino Media Center
 Palestinian Heritage Center
 Tent of Nations
 The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music
 Turathuna – Centre for Palestinian Heritage
 Palestine Center for Rapprochement Between Peoples
 Salesian Artistic Centre
 Al-Liqa'-Center for Religious & Heritage Studies in the Holy Land
 The Russian Center of Science & Culture

www.alharah.org
www.af-bethleem.org
marie_musslam@yahoo.com
www.aeicenter.org
artasfc@yahoo.com
www.peacenter.org /info@peacenter.org
info@ca-b.org
www.bethlehem2000.org/cchp
www.holylandtrust.org
www.inadtheater.net
www.diyar.ps
www.ipcp-pal.org
www.phc.ps
www.tentofnations.org
www.birzeit.edu/music
www.bethlehem.edu/library/turathuna/about
www.pcr.ps
www.salesianbethlehem.com
www.al-liqa-center.org.ps
 Website : <http://pse.rs.gov.ru/>

Hebron

Association d'Echanges Culturels
 Hebron-France (AECHF)
 British Council-Palestine Polytechnic
 University
 Children Happiness Center
 Yes Theatre
 The International Palestinian
 Youth League (IPYL)

www.hebron-france.org
www.britishcouncil.org/ps
children_hc@yahoo.com
www.yestheatre.org
www.ipyl.org

Jericho

Jericho Culture & Art Center, Telefax: (02)-232 1047

Jenin

Hakoura Center

The Freedom Theatre / Jenin Refugee Camp

www.hakoura-jenin.ps

www.thefreedomtheatre.org

Nablus

British Council – Al-Najah University

Cultural Centre for Child Development

Cultural Heritage Enrichment Center

French Cultural Centre

Nablus The Culture

www.britishcouncil.org/ps

cultural_98@yahoo.com

arafatn24@yahoo.com

ccfnaplouse@consulfrance-jerusalem.org

www.nablusculture.ps

Ramallah & Al-Bireh

A.M.Qattan Foundation

Al-Kamandjati Association

Al Kasaba Theatre and Cinematheque

Al-Mada Music Therapy Center

Amideast

The International Academy of Art Palestine

Ashtar for Theatre Production

BirZeit Ethnographic and Art Museum

British Council

El-Funoun Dance Troupe

Franco-German Cultural Centre Ramallah

Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center

Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE)

Popular Art Center

Ramallah Cultural Palace

RIWAQ: Centre for Architectural Conservation

Shashat

The Edward Said National Conservatory Of Music

The Palestinian Circus School

First Ramallah Group, Sareyyet Ramallah

Greek Cultural Center-»Macedonia«

www.qalandiyainternational.org

www.alkamandjati.com

www.alkasaba.org

www.al-mada.ps

www.amideast.org

www.artacademy.ps

www.ashtar-theatre.org

www.virtualgallery.birzeit.edu

www.britishcouncil.org/ps

www.el-funoun.org

www.ccf-goethe-ramallah.org

Facebook/ admin@sakakini.org

www.pace.ps

www.popularartcentre.org

info@ramallahculturalpalace.org

www.rivwaq.org

www.shashat.org

www.birzeit.edu/music

www.palcircus.ps

www.sirreyeh.org

makdonia@palnet.com

GAZA

Al-Qattan Centre for the Child

Arts & Crafts Village

Ashtar for Culture & Arts

Culture & Light Center

French Cultural Center

Global Production and Distribution

Theatre Day Productions

Windows from Gaza for Contemporary Art

www.qattanfoundation.org/qcc

www.gazavillage.org

atlas9@palnet.com

ifarah@palnet.com

ccfgaza@consulfrance-jerusalem.org

art.global@yahoo.com

tdpgaza@palnet.com/ www.theatreday.org

www.artwfg.ps

Tourism

Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities

The Palestinian Society of Tourist & Travel Agents

Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association

Arab Hotel Association

Your Guide To Palestine

This Week In Palestine

Siraj Centre

www.travelpalestine.ps

www.pstta.org.ps

www.holylandoperators.com

www.palestinehotels.com

www.visitholyland.ps

www.thisweekinpalestine.com

www.sirajcenter.org

www.walkpalestine.com

www.bikepalestine.com

www.jerusalemwilderness.com

Tourist Information Centers

The Tourist Information Offices of the Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities located in Bethlehem, Ramallah, Jericho, and Hebron, provide tourists with the needed essential information & with a collection of the Ministry tourist promotional publications.

Bethlehem Tourist Info. Center: located inside the Peace Center Building at the Manger Square. Tel: (02)- 2766677. Opened daily from 8:00am-3:00pm except for Fridays/Sundays and Holidays.

Ramallah Tourist Info. Center: located at Issa Ziyada Street opposite to Ramallah Municipality. Tel: (02)- 2945555/extension (5). Opening hours: daily from 8:00am-18:00pm in winter / from 9:00am-19:00pm in summer except for Fridays and Holidays.

Jericho Tourist Info. Center: located at Jericho Main Square (Duwwar Ariha)/ Tel: (02)-2312607. Opening hours: daily from 8:00am-4:00pm in winter - 5:00pm in summer except for Fridays/Saturdays and Holidays.

Hebron Tourist Info. Center: located near the old municipality square-Qantarat Ash-Shalody/ Tel: (02)-2224890/ Opening hours: daily from 8:00am-3:00pm except for Fridays/Saturdays and Holidays.

There are also other tourist information centers found in various parts such as:

The Visitor Information Center –Manger Square
Christian Information Center -Jerusalem

www.vicbethlehem.wordpress.com
www.cicts.org

Universities /Colleges

Birzeit University
An-Najjah University
Al-Quds University
Al-Azhar Univeristy (Gaza)
Arab American University
Bethlehem University
Bethlehem Bible College
Hebron University
The Islamic University (Gaza):

www.birzeit.edu
www.najah.edu
www.alquds.edu
www.alazhar-gaza.edu
www.aaau.edu
www.bethlehem.edu
www.bethlehembiblecollege.edu
www.hebron.edu
www.iugaza.edu

Religious Missions & Entities

John Paul II Foundation
Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land

www.jpil.ps/en
www.custodia.org

Parishes & Church offices in Palestine:

Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land. Phone: 02-626-6800.
Latin Patriarchate of the Holy Land. Phone: 02-628-2323.
Anglican Cathedral of Saint George (Jerusalem). Phone: 02-627-1670.
Greek Catholic Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Phone: 02-628-2023.
Greek Orthodox Jerusalem Patriarchate. Phone: 02-627-8356.
Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem. Phone: 02-626-4853.

www.elcjh.org.
www.lpj.org.
www.j-diocese.org.
www.mliles.com.
www.jerusalem-patriarchate.org.
www.armenian-patriarchate.org.

Research & News

Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem
Palestine Mapping Centre
JMCC
PASSIA
Palestine News Network
MIFTAH
AMIN
Al Quds
Al Ayyam
Wafa
Maan News
Al-Hayyat Al-Jadedah

www.arij.org
www.palmap.org
www.jmcc.org
www.passia.org
www.pnn.ps
www.miftah.org
www.amin.org
www.alquds.com
www.al-ayyam.com
www.wafa.pna.net
www.maannews.net
www.alhayat-j.com

Palestine Wildlife Society
 Ramattan Studios
 Ramallah on Line

www.wildlife-pa.org
www.ramattan.com
www.ramallahonline.com

OCHA-The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs www.ochaopt.org

Web Portals

Masader, The Palestinian NGO Portal
 Hadara
 Al-Quds Network

www.masader.ps
www.hadara.ps
www.alqudsnet.com

Emergency

	Ambulance	Police	Tourism & Antiquities Police
Jerusalem	101	100	
Bethlehem	02-2744222/101	02-2744936	02-2770750/1
Gaza	08-2863633/101	08-2863400	08-2829017
Hebron	101	100	02-2227796
Jericho	02-2321170/101	02-2322521	02-2313760
Nablus	09-2380399/101	09-2383029	09-2385244
Ramallah	02-2400666/101	02-2421230 02-2420263	02-2969930

Essential common Arabic phrases:

Welcome	Ahlan-wa-Sahlan
Please	Min Fadlak
Thank You	Shukran
Yes	Na'am
No	La'a
How are you?	Kief Halak?
I am fine	Ana bekheir
Everything is OK	Kulshay tamaam
Good morning	Sabah El-Khair
Good evening	Masa' El-Khair
Please take me to	Lawsamaht khodnee Ela..
It is near...	Kareeb...
I don't understand	Ana mush fahim...
Could you help me?	Momken tsaadny?
Will you wait for me?	Momken tentazerny?
Take me to my hotel	Bede aroh Laloteal
I need a doctor	Bedi doctor
How much is that?	Ad-eesh hada?
It's too expensive	Hada Ktir Ghaly
My name is...	Esmy..
I am from...	Ana min...
I am tired	Ana ta'ban.
Let's go	Yalla



Accommodations

Bethlehem

Alexander Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2770780/1
www.alexanderhotel.ps
ahotel@p-ol.com

Al-Salam Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2764083
samhotel@p-ol.com

Angel Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2766884
info@angelhotel.ps
www.angelhotel.ps

Bethlehem Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2770702-2745373/4
info@bethlehemhotel.com

Bethlehem Inn Hotel,
Bethlehem, 02-2742424
info@bethinn.com
www.star-inn-hotels.com

Bethlehem Star Hotel,
Bethlehem
02-2743249
htstar@palnet.com

Doom Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2777565

Everest Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2742604
makkrum@yahoo.com
everest@yahoo.com

Golden Park Hotel & Resort,
Bethlehem, 02-2774881
goldenparkresort@hotmail.com
www.goldenparkresort.com

Grand Bethlehem Hotel,
Bethlehem, 02-2741440
bandaks@p-ol.com

Holy Family Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2748650
holyfamilyhotel@hotmail.com

Holy Land Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2778962/3
www.holylandhotel.net

Lafontana Gallery Hotel
Bethlehem, 02-2774325
www.lafontanagroup.com
faud.j@lafontanagroup.com

House of Peace, Bethlehem
02-2764739
nbt4god@gmail.com

Jacer Palace Intercontinental
Bethlehem
02 2766770
jacer@inter.conti.com
www.interconti.com

Murad Hotel & Toursit Resort
Bethlehem
02-2759880
murad_shaker@yahoo.com

Nativity Bells Hotel, Bethlehem
02 2748880
www.nativitybellshotel.com
nativitybelshotel@palnet.com

Nativity Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2744083
reservation@nativityhotel.com
www.nativityhotel.com

Olive Tree Hotel&Resort Village
Bethlehem
02-2750090
diretreeresort@live.com

Paradise Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2744542/3769
paradise@p-ol.com

Saharah Hotel
Bethlehem
02-2772306
sales@saharabethlehem.com
www.saharabethlehem.com

Santa Maria Hotel
Bethlehem
02-2767377
smaria@p-ol.com
www.santamariahhotel.com

Shepherd Plaza Hotel
Bethlehem
02-2740656/7
shepherdhotelbethlehem@
gmail.com

Shepherd House Hotel
Bethlehem
02-2773707
info@shepherds-house.com
reservation@
shepherds-house.com

Shepherd Hotel , Bethlehem
02-2740656/7/6
info@shepherdhotel.ws
www.shepherdhotel.ws

St.Antonio Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2777010

St. Gabriel Hotel , Bethlehem
02-2759990, www.st-gabrielhotel.com

St.Nicolas Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2743040-1-2
info@nicolashotel.com
www.nicolashotel.com

St.Michael Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2769921

St.Vincent Guest House, Bethlehem
02-2760968/9
svincent@p-ol.com
www.saintvincentguesthouse.net

Mount David Hotel, Bethlehem
02-2766511
info@mountdavidhotel.com

Franciscan Casa Nova , Bethlehem
02 2743981
fphbeth@palnet.com

Orient Palace Hotel, Bethlehem
02 274 2798
info@casanovapalace.com
www.casanovapalace.com

Mary's House, The Brigettine Sisters Hostel
Bethlehem
02 2750360
brigida@p-ol.com

Hebron

Hebron Hotel, Hebron
02 2254239
hebron_hotel@hotmail.com

Al Haremein Suites Hotel, Hebron
02 2224080
al.h.s.hotel@hotmail.com

Jenin

Agricultural Development Association
Hostel, Jenin
04-2510462
north-branch@pal-arc.org

North Gate Hotel ,Jenin
04-2504264
info@northgate-hotel.com

Haddad Hotel &Resort Village, Jenin
04-2414010
haddadbooking@ymail.com
www.haddadtoursimvilage.com

Nablus

Al Qaser Hotel, Nablus
09-2341444-9
alqaser@alqaserhotel.com
www.alqaserhotel.com

Crystal Motel, Nablus
09-2333281
cristal_motel@windowslive.com

Pension Ramsees, Nablus
09-2376913

Youth Nabulsi Hostel, Nabuls
09-2386642
wajdiyaeesh@gmail.com

Al_yasmeen Hotel, Nablus
09-2333555
www.alyasmeen.com
yasmeen@palnet.com

Nablus Society for Development &
Community, Nablus
09-2333375
sdc_nablus@yahoo.com

Jericho

Intercontinental Hotel, Jericho
02-2311200
jrcha.reservation@ichotelgroups.com

Jericho Hotel&Resort Village, Jericho
02-2322189/7
www.jerichoresorts.com
reservation@jerichoresorts.com

Jerusalem Resort Hotel, Jericho
02-2322444

City Moon Hotel, Jericho
02-2326844
yusraswaity@yahoo.com

Roman Pilgrims Hostel, Jericho
02-2320920

WEDO Hostel, Jericho
02 2310424
fadi25@foeme.org
www.jvec.ps/wedo@p-ol.com

Jifna

Reef House Pansion, Jifna
02-2810881
reefpension@gmail.com
www.reefhousepension.ps

Khourya Family GuestHouse, Jifna
02 2811485
rkhouriya@yahoo.com

Ramallah

Al Addin Hotel, Ramallah
02-2407687
alaaddenhotel@gmail.com

Al-Bireh Tourist Hotel, Ramallah
02-2420803
albireh-hotel@yahoo.com
Al Hambra Palace Hotel Suites , Ramallah
02 2956226
ramallah_rsr@yahoo.com

Al-Jabi Hotel & Palace Restaurant,
Ramallah
02-2391107

Al Zahra Towers Hotel, Ramallah
02 2423019
alzhaa_tour@yahoo.com

Al-Ain Hotel, Ramallah, 02-2405925
alain_hotel@yahoo.com

Alwehdeh Hotel, Ramallah, 02 2980412
info@alwehdehhotel.ws, www.
alwehdehhotel.ws

Ankars suites, Ramallah, 02-2952603
info@ankarassuiteshotel.ps

Best Eastern Hotel, Ramallah, 02-2958450
besteastern@jorl.com, info@
besteasternhotel.com

Beauty Inn, Ramallah, 02 2966477/8
beauty.inn@hotmail.com / www.beautyinn.
ps

House of The Palestinian Red Crescent
Society, Ramallah
02-2978524

Sweet Caesar Hotel, Ramallah, 02
2900335
jnimer@daysinn.ps



Crown Suites Hotel, Ramallah, 02-2974002
info@crownsuiteshotel.ps
City Inn Hotel, Ramallah, 02-2428081
cityinnhotel@live.com

City Inn Palace, Ramallah, 02-2408080
www.cityinnpalace.com

Gemzo Suites, Ramallah, 02-2409729
www.gemzosuites.net/gemzo@palnet.com

Grand Park Hotel, Ramallah, 02-2986194/2959315
info@grandpark.com / www.grandpark.com

Merry Land Hotel, Ramallah, 599413181

Movenpick Hotel, Ramallah, 02 2985888
www.moevenpick-ramallah.com

Retno Hotel, Ramallah, 02-2950022/3
retnohotel@retnohotel.com / www.retnohotel.com

Rets Hotel, Ramallah, 02-2987433
retsrooms@hotmail.com

Rocky Hotel, Ramallah, 02-2964470
rocky_hotel@hotmail.com / www.rockyhotel.com

Royal Court Suites, Ramallah, 02-99992112
info@rcshotel.com

Palestine Trade Tower Hotel, Ramallah, 02-22973574
info@palestinetradetower.com

Jerusalem

Ambassador Hotel, Tel: 02-5412222
www.jerusalemambassador.com

American Colony Hotel , Tel: 02-6279777
www.americancolony.com

Azzahra Hotel , Tel: 02-6282447, www.azzahrahotel.com

Capitol Hotel, Tel: 02-6282561/2

East New Imperial , Tel: 02-6272000

Gloria Hotel, Tel: 02-6282431, gloriahl@netvision.net.il

Golden Walls Hotel, Tel: 02-6272416, www.goldenwalls.com

Holy Land Hotel , Tel: 02-6272888, www.holylandhotel.com

Jerusalem Hotel, Tel: 02-6283282, www.jrshotel.com

Jerusalem Panorama Hotel, Tel: 02-6284887
www.jerusalempanoramahotel.com

Legacy Hotel, Tel: 02-6270800
www.jerusalemlegacy.com

Mount of Olives Hotel, Tel:02-6284877,
www.mtolives.com

Mount Scopus Hotel, Tel: 02-5828891
mtscopus@netvision.net.il

National Hotel , Tel: 02-6278880
www.nationalhotel-jerusalem.com

New Metropole Hotel, Tel: 02-6283846

Ritz Hotel, Tel: 02-6269900, www.jerusalemritz.com

Rivoli Hotel, Tel: 02-6284871

St. George Landmark Hotel, Tel: 02-6277232
www.stgeorgehoteljerusalem.com

Seven Arches Hotel, Tel: 02-6267777,
svnarch@trendline.co.il

Victoria Hotel, Tel: 02-6274466 ,
www4victoria-hotel.com

Austrian Hospice, Tel: 02-6265800
www.austrianhospice.com

Notre Dame Guesthouse, Tel: 02-6279111
www.notredamecenter.org

St. Andrew's Scottish Guesthouse , Tel:02-6732401
www.scotsguesthouse.com

Knights Palace Guesthouse, Tel: 02-6282537
www.knightspalace.com

Travel Agencies

Beit Sahour

Anastasias Tours, Beit Sahour, 02-2744674
anwar@anastasiastours.com

Bethlehem 2000 Tours & Travel ,Beit Sahour
02-2772815, sales@bt2000.ps

Four Seasons For Travel, Beit Sahour
02-2774401, fseasons@p-ol.com/www.pilgrimsforpeace.org

East Wind Tours & Travel ,Beit Sahour,
02-2773316
haya@eastwindtours.com

Gloria Tours &Travel, Beit Sahour
02-2748811, gloria@p-ol.com

Angels Tours &Travel, Beit Sahour
02-2775813, angels@p-ol.com/www.angels-tours.com

Sunbird Travel@tours, Beit Sahour, 02-2779779,
Violet Qumsieh@live.com / info@sunbird-tours.com

Grace Tours, Beit Sahour, 02-2757363
elias@grace-tours.com

Siraj Center, Beit Sahour, 02-2748590
info@sirajcenter.org / www.sirajcenter.org

Alternative Tourism Group ATG, Beit Sahour, 02-2772151
info@atg.ps / www.atg.ps

Bethlehem

Abeer Tours & Travel Co., Bethlehem, 02-2760274
abeertours@live.com

BethlehemStar Travel Agency, Bethlehem,
02-2770441
tonyhosh2008@hotmail.com

Crown Tours&Travel, Bethlehem, 02-2740911
sales@crowntours.com / www.crowntours.com

Hala Tours & Tourism, Bethlehem, 02-2755320
operation@hla-tours.net

Golden Gate Tours&Travel, Bethlehem,
02-2766044
www.goldengate.tours.ps

Laila Tours &Travel, Bethlehem, 02-2777997
www.lailatours.com / laila@lailatours.com

Lama Tours International, Bethlehem, 02-2743717
www.lamatours.com /
info@lamatours.com

ICI Tours & Travel Co., Bethlehem, 02-2741872
tourism@aca.ps

Mosallam Intrnacional Tours, Bethlehem,
02-2770054
mitourism@gmail.com

Nativity Tours & Travel Co., Bethlehem,
02-2761124
info@thenativitytours.com

Pilgrims:Angels Tours & Travel Co.,
Bethlehem, 02-2764436
angelspilgrims@yahoo.com

Sansour Tours & Travel Agency, Bethlehem,
02-2744459
rg_sansur3@hotmail.com

Hebron

AL Salam Travel.Co, Hebron, 02-2233747
abd-055@hotmail.com

Alkiram Tours & Travel, Hebron, 02-2256501
alkiramtourism@yahoo.com / info@alkiram.ps

Ar- Raed Travel Agency, Hebron, 02-2293030
raedbader@msn.com

AL Afaq Tours & Travel, Hebron, 02-2211332
alafaq.travel@gmail.com

Beauty Lines Tours & Travel, Hebron, 02-2211111
beautylines-pal@hotmail.com

Butterfly Tours & Tourism, Hebron, 02-2216088
butterfly.co@hotmail.com

Blue Star for Tourism, Hebron, 02-2216270
majdi@ghaithgroup.ps

Green Line Tours, Hebron, 02-2226763
green_line_travel@hotmail.com

Al Arrab Tours & Travel, Hebron, 02-2211917
Rami-Tour@hotmail.com

AL-Buhaira Travel @Tourism, Hebron, 02-2252098
al-buhira@hotmail.com

Iben Er-Rif Tours & Tourism, Hebron, 02-2218011
elreef_ebn@hotmail.com

Sabeen Tours & Travel, Hebron, 02-2294775
sabeenco@yahoo.com

Ramallah

Abu Al-Halaweh Co. For Tourism,
Ramallah, 02-2963390
halawehtourism@yahoo.com

Al-ÁsÁs For Tourism & Travel, Ramallah,
02-2956250
issistravel@hotmail.com

Arsima Co. For Tourism & Travel, Ramallah,
02-2975571
fadi@arseema.ps

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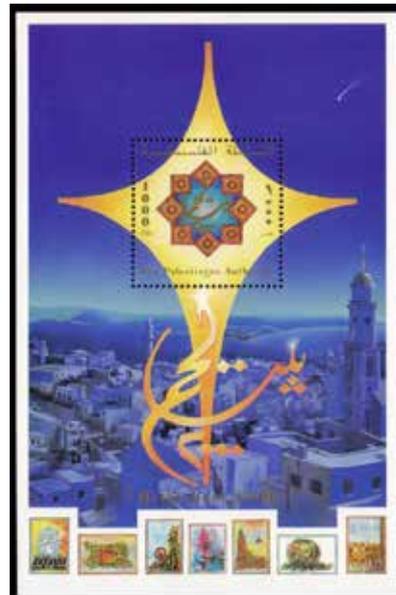
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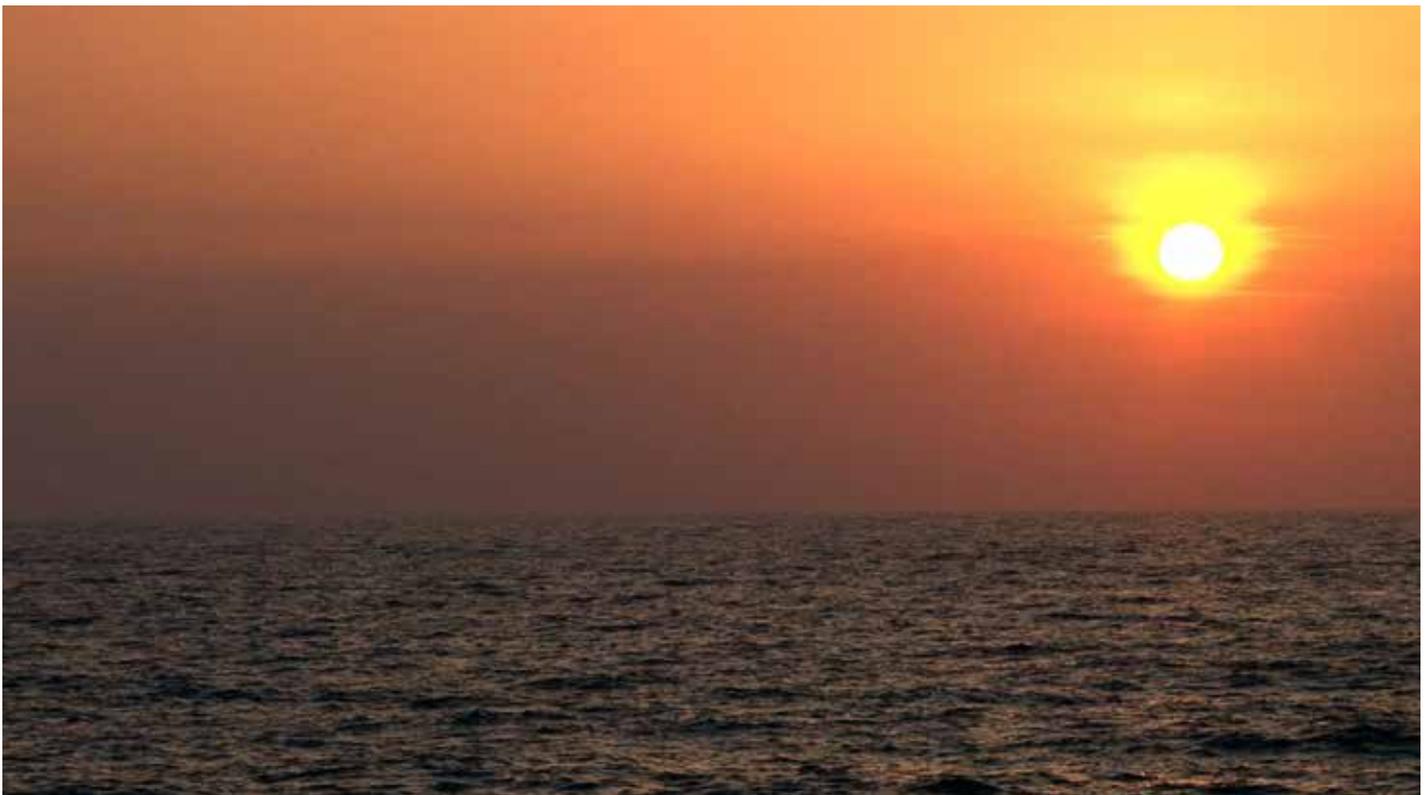




NATURE OF PALESTINE







On This Earth

We have on this earth what makes life worth living:
April's hesitations, the aroma of bread at dawn
a woman's point of view about men
the works of Aeschylus, the beginning of love
grass growing on a stone, mothers living on a flute's sigh
and the invader's fear of memories

We have on this earth what makes life worth living:
The final days of September
A woman leaving forty in full blossom
The hour of sunlight in prison
A cloud reflecting a swarm of creatures
The peoples' applause for those who face death with a smile
And,
The tyrants' fear of songs.

We have on this earth what makes life worth living:
On this earth, the lady of earth,
Mother of all beginnings
Mother of all ends.
She was called... Palestine.
Her name later became... Palestine.
My Lady, because you are my Lady, I deserve life.

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Mahmoud Darwish

A Palestinian Poet & Writer
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