

ISRAEL TRAVEL PLANNING & PREPARATION

TRAVEL PLANNING

Site Guides – Old City of Jerusalem

An Israel experience can be the seminal moment in Jewish identity formation for any Jewish family or individual. While each individual trip is different, almost every one includes visits or stops at: The Old City of Jerusalem, the Dead Sea, Massada, Yad Vashem (Israel's Holocaust Memorial and Museum), and the lesser visited but equally important Independence Hall in Tel Aviv.

This guide will provide travelers with some background readings of primary source texts for each place to be completed before departure, questions for family or traveler thought and discussion, links to multimedia about each location, and suggestions for other nearby sites to consider including in your planning.

Any family or group of families planning a trip to Israel should engage all family members in the process of planning the trip to provide a richer experience for all participants. This can include everything from itinerary planning, to deciding what types of foods to eat, what to pack, and types of artifacts/souvenirs to look for. While these guides provide a basic overview for these five individual sites, for a more in-depth pre trip educational enrichment experience, we suggest CIE's Pre-Trip Resource and Activity Guide: **To Israel and Back: A Journey to Our Future For Families and Groups Traveling to Israel**, which will provide more insight for groups to use in learning about Israel's development as a modern nation.

Old City of Jerusalem

Jerusalem's Old City is a wonderful mix of both ancient and modern history, an illustration of the religious connection to the land for Judaism as well as Islam and Christianity, and a center point for the Arab-Israeli peace process. Visitors should plan to spend a minimum of one day in the Old City and may decide to devote even more time to this unique neighborhood.

Educational Themes when visiting the Old City

- Ancient Israel
- Religion in Israel
- 1947 UN Partition Plan
- The Six Day War
- Jerusalem as a capital city

Source readings on Ancient Jerusalem



Model of the Second temple circa 66 CE at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem

“GEMARA. Our Rabbis taught, He who has not witnessed the rejoicing at the place of the Water-Drawing has never seen rejoicing in his life. **He who has not seen Jerusalem in her splendor, has never seen a desirable city in his life. He who has not seen the Temple in its full construction has never seen a glorious building in his life.** Which Temple? — Abaye, or it might be said, R. Hisda, replied, The reference is to the building of Herod. Of what did he build it? — Rabbah replied, Of yellow and white marble. Some there are who say, With yellow, blue and white marble. The building rose in tiers in order to provide a hold for the plaster. He intended at first to overlay it with gold, but the Rabbis told him, Leave it alone for it is more beautiful as it is, since it has the appearance of the waves of the sea.”

—**Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 51b**

“Ten measures of beauty descended to the world: nine were taken by Jerusalem and one by the rest of the world.”

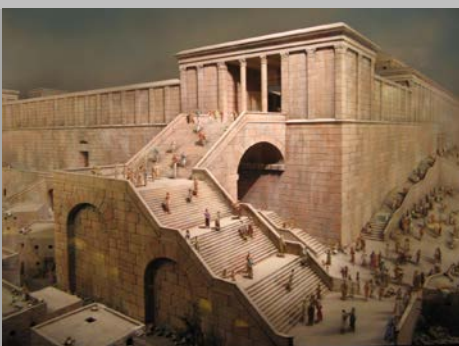
—**Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 49b**



Clower Leaf Illustration showing Jerusalem as the center of the world, 1581

“If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither, let my tongue stick to my palate if I cease to think of you, if I do not keep Jerusalem in memory even at my happiest hour.”

–Psalms 137:5-6



Reconstruction model of Ancient Jerusalem

“May the Lord our God have mercy on God’s people Israel, God’s city Jerusalem, Zion the abode of God’s glory, the royal house of David, God’s anointed one, and the great and holy Temple that bears God’s name.

–**First sentences of the third Blessing of the Birkat Hamazon (Blessing After Meals)**

“Return in mercy, to thy city Jerusalem and dwell in it, as you have promised; rebuild it soon, in our days as an everlasting structure, and speedily establish in it the throne of David. Blessed are you, O Lord, Builder of Jerusalem”

-**Fourteenth Blessing of the Amidah**



Marble Bust of Hadrian

“At Jerusalem, Hadrian founded a city in place of the one which had been razed to the ground, naming it Aelia Capitolina, and on the site of the temple of the [Jewish] god, he raised a new temple to Jupiter. This brought on a war of no slight importance nor of brief duration, for the Jews deemed it intolerable that foreign races should be settled in their city and foreign religious rites planted there. So long, indeed, as Hadrian was close by in Egypt and again in Syria, they remained quiet, save in so far as they purposely made of poor quality such weapons as they were called upon to furnish, in order that the Romans might reject them and they themselves might thus have the use of them. But when Hadrian went farther away, they openly revolted.”

- **Cassius Dio, Roman History, Circa 200-222 CE**



Painting, *The Siege and Destruction of Jerusalem*, David Roberts, 1850

“O Hashem, our God, console the mourners of Zion and the mourners of Jerusalem, and the city that is mournful, ruined, scorned, and desolate: mournful without her children, ruined without her abodes, scorned without her glory, and desolate without inhabitant. She sits with covered head like a barren woman who never gave birth. Legions have devoured her, and idolaters have conquered her; they have cast Your people Israel to the sword and wantonly murdered the devout servants of the Supreme One. Therefore Zion weeps bitterly and Jerusalem raises her voice. My heart, my heart – (it aches) for their slain! My innards, my innards – (they ache) for their slain! For You Hashem, with fire You consumed her and with fire You shall rebuild her, as it is said: ‘I will be for her, the words of Hashem, a wall of fire around and I will be glorious in her midst.’ Blessed are you Hashem, Who consoles Zion and rebuilds Jerusalem.”

-Nachaim prayer, which is added to the Amidah on Tisha B’Av (the fast day that commemorates the destruction of the Temple)

Source Readings on the Status of Jerusalem, 1947-1967



1947 UN Partition Plan for Palestine

“Chapter I: Holy Places, Religious Buildings and Sites

1. Existing rights in respect of Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall not be denied or impaired.
2. In so far as Holy Places are concerned, the liberty of access, visit, and transit shall be guaranteed, in conformity with existing rights, to all residents and citizens of the other State and of the City of Jerusalem, as well as aliens, without distinction as to nationality, subject to requirements of national security, public order and decorum.

Similarly, freedom of worship shall be guaranteed in conformity with existing rights, subject to the maintenance of public order and decorum.

3. Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall be preserved. No act shall be permitted which may in any way impair their sacred character. If at any time it appears to the Government that any particular Holy Place, religious, building or site is in need of urgent repair, the Government may call upon the community or communities concerned to carry out such repair. The Government may carry it out itself at the expense of the community or community concerned if no action is taken within a reasonable time.

4. No taxation shall be levied in respect of any Holy Place, religious building or site which was exempt from taxation on the date of the creation of the State.

No change in the incidence of such taxation shall be made which would either discriminate between the owners or occupiers of Holy Places, religious buildings or sites, or would place such owners or occupiers in a position less favourable in relation to the general incidence of taxation than existed at the time of the adoption of the Assembly's recommendations.

5. The Governor of the City of Jerusalem shall have the right to determine whether the provisions of the Constitution of the State in relation to Holy Places, religious buildings and sites within the borders of the State and the religious rights appertaining thereto, are being properly applied and respected, and to make decisions on the basis of existing rights in cases of disputes which may arise between the different religious communities or the rights of a religious community with respect to such places, buildings and sites. He shall receive full co-operation and such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the

exercise of his functions in the State.”

–UN Resolution 181, 11/29/1947

[For the full resolution, which calls for the partition Palestine into 2 states, one Jewish, one Arab with Jerusalem as an international free city click here.](#)



Map showing Jordanian Annexation of West Bank, including sections of Jerusalem, 1950

“In the expression of the people's faith in the efforts spent by His Majesty, Abdullah, toward attainment of natural aspirations, and basing itself on the right of self-determination and on the existing *de facto* position between Jordan and Palestine and their national, natural and geographic unity and their common interests and living space, Parliament, which represents both sides of the Jordan, resolves this day and declares:

First, its support for complete unity between the two sides of the Jordan and their union into one State, which is the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, at whose head reigns King Abdullah Ibn al Husain, on a basis of constitutional representative government and equality of the rights and duties of all citizens...”

–Jordanian Annexation of West Bank, Resolution Adopted by the Jordanian House of Deputies, 4/24/1950

Source: Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The Hurva Synagogue in May 1948

“The Jewish Quarter was destroyed. No building remained unharmed, all were severely damaged. The return of the Jews to this place will be impossible.”

“I saw this defeat as the greatest blow to befall the Jews, especially from the morale aspect, as they were distanced from the Western Wall and the Jewish Quarter for the first time in fifteen generations”.

– Abdullah El-Tal, Commander, the Arab Legion, Jerusalem, 1948

Source: *The Company for the Reconstruction and Development of the Old City*, <http://www.jewish-quarter.org.il/taarucha.asp?page=2>

“There was terror in the old city and a frantic rush to grab prized possessions as women, children and the aged were herded across the lines. Then with all the pomp of earlier conquerors, King Abdullah made his triumphal tour. By the time the cheering of the Arabs died down, the UN had finally contrived a four-week truce – but it rested uneasily on a land seething with bitterness.”

–Life Magazine, June 28, 1948



Flag of the United Nations

“The General Assembly,

Having regard to its resolutions 181(II) of 29 November 1947 and 194(III) of 11 December 1948,

Having studied the reports of the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine set up under the latter resolution,

I. *Decides* in relation to Jerusalem,

Believing that the principles underlying its previous resolutions concerning this matter, and in particular its resolution of 29 November 1947, represent a just and equitable settlement of the question,

1. To restate, therefore, its intention that Jerusalem should be placed under a permanent international regime, which should envisage appropriate guarantees for the protection of the Holy Places, both within and outside Jerusalem, and to confirm specifically the following provisions of General Assembly resolution 181(III):

(1) The City of Jerusalem shall be established as a *corpus separatum* under a special international regime and shall be administered by the United Nations;

(2) The Trusteeship Council shall be designated to discharge the responsibilities of the Administering Authority... and

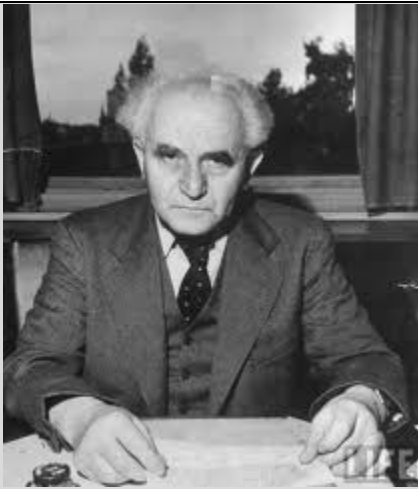
(3) The City of Jerusalem shall include the present municipality of Jerusalem plus the surrounding villages and towns, the most eastern of which shall be Abu Dis; the most southern Bethlehem; the most western, Ein Karim (including also the built-up area of Motsa); and the most northern, Shu'fat, as indicated on the attached sketchmap (annex B).

2. To request for this purpose that the Trusteeship Council at its next session, whether special or regular, complete the preparation of the Statute of Jerusalem (T/118/Rev. 2), omitting the now inapplicable provisions, such as articles 32 and 39, and, without prejudice to the fundamental principles of the international regime for Jerusalem set forth in General Assembly resolution 181(II) introducing therein amendments in the direction of its greater democratization, approve the Statute, and proceed immediately with its implementation. The Trusteeship Council shall not allow any actions taken by any interested Government or Governments to divert it from adopting and implementing the Statute of Jerusalem;

II. *Calls upon* the States concerned to make formal undertakings, at an early date and in the light of their obligations as Members of the United Nations, that they will approach these matters with good will, and be guided by the terms of the present resolutions.”

-UN General Assembly Resolution 303, 12/9/49

The Resolution was adopted by 38 votes in favor, 14 against, 7 abstentions



Prime Minister David Ben Gurion

As soon as the fighting stopped, we began transferring Government offices to Jerusalem and creating the conditions the capital needed - effective communications, economic and technical arrangements. We are continuing with the transfer of the Government to Jerusalem and hope to complete it as soon as possible.

When the First Knesset convened in Jerusalem on 14 February 1949 the necessary arrangements to enable it to function normally in the capital did not yet exist, and we had to hold the Knesset sittings temporarily in Tel Aviv. Now that the necessary arrangements have nearly been completed in Jerusalem there is no longer any reason to prevent the Knesset from returning to Jerusalem. We propose that you take a decision to this effect.

In all these arrangements there is, of course, nothing that alters in the slightest degree any of the existing rights in the Holy Places, which the Government of Israel will respect in full, or our consent to effective supervision of these Holy Places by the United Nations, as our delegation to the General Assembly declared."

-Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, December 13, 1949

Source: *The Knesset*, <http://www.knesset.gov.il/docs/eng/benqurion-jer.htm>

Source Readings on Israeli Reaction to the Recapture of the Western Wall and the Old City of Jerusalem during the Six Day War in June 1967

Taken from CAMERA - <http://www.sixdaywar.org/content/ReunificationJerusalem.asp>



Motta Gur

"For some two thousand years the Temple Mount was forbidden to the Jews. Until you came — you, the paratroopers — and returned it to the bosom of the nation. The Western Wall, for which every heart beats, is ours once again. Many Jews have taken their lives into their hands throughout our long history, in order to reach Jerusalem and live here. Endless words of longing have expressed the deep yearning for Jerusalem that beats within the Jewish heart. You have been given the great privilege of completing the circle, of returning to the nation its capital and its holy center...Jerusalem is yours forever."

–Commander Mordechai "Motta" Gur to his brigade upon their recapture of Jerusalem's Old City and holy sites



Moshe Dayan and Uzi Narkis in the Old City 1967

"This morning, the Israel Defense Forces liberated Jerusalem. We have united Jerusalem, the divided capital of Israel. We have returned to the holiest of our Holy Places, never to part from it again.

To our Arab neighbors we extend, also at this hour - and with added emphasis at this hour - our hand in peace. And to our Christian and Muslim fellow citizens, we solemnly promise full religious freedom and rights. We did not come to Jerusalem for the sake of other peoples' Holy Places, and not to interfere with the adherents of other faiths, but in order to safeguard its entirety, and to live there together with others, in unity."

–Defense Minister Moshe Dayan



Uzi Narkis, Moshe Dayan and Yitzhak Rabin enter through the Lion's Gate into the Old City 1967

"I felt truly shaken and stood there murmuring a prayer for peace. Motta Gur's paratroopers were struggling to reach the Wall and touch it. We stood among a tangle of rugged, battle-weary men who were unable to believe their eyes or restrain their emotions. Their eyes were moist with tears, their speech incoherent. The overwhelming desire was to cling to the Wall, to hold on to that great moment as long as possible."

–Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin

"The Wall was before us. I trembled. There it was as I had known it—immense, mighty, in all its splendor...overcome, I bowed my head in silence."

–General Uzi Narkiss, Head of Central Command during the Six Day War



Prime Minister Levi Eshkol

"Honorable Chief Rabbis, Honorable Community Leaders:

I have taken the liberty to call you to this meeting in order to enable you to share with me the news of the events taking place these last few days in Jerusalem, the Holy and Eternal City.

On the Monday of this week, after the Egyptian aggression against Israel began, I announced in a radio broadcast that Israel would take no military action against any State that did not attack it. Despite this statement, the Government of Jordan - under Egyptian command - declared war upon the State of Israel and its forces and embarked upon hostile action by land and in the air. Our forces were compelled to take the necessary military steps in order to put an end to this aggression and to protect human lives. By its actions, the Government of Jordan, with the agreement of Egypt and following upon pressure from Cairo, violated international law, the United Nations Charter, and the neighborly relations between our two countries.

In its aggression Jordan made no distinction between civilians and soldiers.

Crime was piled upon crime by Jordan when it carried war into Jerusalem, thus desecrating the eternal peace of this city, which has always been a source of hallowed inspiration to mankind. As a result of Jordanian aggression, dozens of people were killed and many hundreds were wounded. Blood was shed in the streets of Jerusalem and hundreds, perhaps thousands, of dwellings were hit. There was shelling specifically directed at hospitals, synagogues, Yeshivoth, the President's residence, the Hebrew University, the Israel Museum and Government buildings. Likewise a large number of schools in the city were hit. The shelling continued uninterruptedly from Monday until today, Wednesday. Out of consideration for the sanctity of the city, and in accordance with our policy of avoiding casualties among the civilian population, we have abstained from any answering action inside the city, despite the casualties incurred by our soldiers and citizens.

The criminal actions of Jordan's Government shall stand before the court of international opinion and before the judgment of history.

Peace has now returned with our forces in control of all the city and its environs. You may rest assured that no harm whatsoever shall come to the places sacred to all religions. I have requested the Minister of Religious Affairs to get in touch with the religious leaders in the Old City in order to ensure regular contact between them and our forces, so as to make certain that the former may continue their spiritual activities unhindered.

Following upon my request, the Minister of Religious Affairs has issued the following instructions:

- a) arrangements in connection with the Western Wall shall be determined by the Chief Rabbis of Israel;
- b) arrangements in connection with the Moslem Holy Places shall be made by a council of Moslem clerics;
- c) arrangements connected with the Christian Holy Places shall be made by a council of Christian clergy.

With the aid of the Rock and Salvation of Israel, from Jerusalem, a symbol of peace for countless generations, from this Holy City now returned to its peace, I would like to have you join me in this call for peace among all the people of this area and of the whole world.”

-Prime Minister Levi Eshkol's Address to Jerusalem's Spiritual Leaders



“I am speaking to you from the plaza of the Western Wall, the remnant of our Holy Temple. ‘Comfort my people, comfort them, says the Lord your God.’ This is the day we have hoped for, let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation. The vision of all generations is being realized before our eyes: The city of God, the site of the Temple, the Temple Mount and the Western Wall, the symbol of the nation’s redemption, have been redeemed today by you, heroes of the Israel Defense Forces. By doing so you have fulfilled the oath of generations, ‘If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its cunning.’ Indeed, we have not forgotten you, Jerusalem, our holy city, our glory. In the name of the entire Jewish people in Israel and the Diaspora, I hereby recite with supreme joy, Blessed art Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us in life, who has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this day. This year in Jerusalem – rebuilt! “

–General Shlomo Goren, Chaplain of the Israeli Defense Forces, at the Western Wall

Shlomo Goren, Chief Rabbi of the IDF, blowing the Shofar at the Wall

Questions for Discussion:

- Why is Jerusalem so important to the Jewish people and to Israel?
- What role has religion played in Jerusalem’s history and development? Has it changed during modern history?
- What has been the view taken in regards to Jerusalem’s Holy Places by different ruling parties throughout time?
- What do you think Jerusalem looks like? Sounds like? Smells Like?
- Why has the Kotel (Western Wall) become such an important symbol for Jews and Israelis?
- How has Jerusalem changed over time?

Family/Group Activity:

Imagine it is the year 70 and the Jews have just been exiled from Israel by the Romans after the destruction of the Temple. Until now the Temple in Jerusalem was the center of Jewish life and the land of Israel was the center of the Jewish people. All of Jewish life revolved around this physical, political, and religious connection. Now the Temple has been destroyed and the people have been removed from the land.

Your family/group is charged with needing to come up with strategies to keep the Jewish people together in light of this monumental change. What should the Jewish people do now that the Temple has been destroyed and they have been taken from their land? How or why are you going to keep Jews connected to each other and to Jerusalem and the land of Israel?

As a group, develop three strategies for keeping the Jewish people together and connected to Jerusalem and the land of Israel.

Links to Multimedia Resources

- [Video and Audio showing the Breakthrough To Jerusalem during the Six Day War](#)
- [An Interactive Tour of the Old City model at the Israel Museum](#)
- [Jerusalem of Light, a 1911 film of Jerusalem from the Spielberg Film Archive of Hebrew University](#)
- The song [Yerushalayim Shel Zahav \(Jerusalem of Gold\)](#) was written by Naomi Shemer in May of 1967 with a last verse added after the 6 Day War in June. [The lyrics can be found here](#) and there is a good [webpage devoted to the song here](#).
- After the Six-Day War, Meir Ariel, a songwriter and soldier who served in the Paratroopers Brigade and was one of the soldiers who recaptured Jerusalem during the Six-Day War wrote a protest parody of Yerushalayim Shel Zahav called [Yerushalayim Shel Barzel \(Jerusalem of Iron\)](#). As an activity with teens or adults, compare the [lyrics of Ariel's song](#) with those of Shemer's. **What different images do they present of Jerusalem?**
- The Israel Museum has an image search engine that includes a number [of images related to Jerusalem archaeology](#).

Additional Resources:

- For Younger Children, we recommend the book [Snow in Jerusalem](#), by Deborah da Costa – combine with a look at the Central Zionist Archive's images and documents of actual snow in Jerusalem [which can be found here](#).
- Yehuda Amichai, one of Israel's most well-known poets, and the Poet Laureate of Jerusalem wrote many poems about the city. We recommend the collection [Poems of Jerusalem and Love Poems](#).