



MEJDI TOURS

IsrArts: Experiencing Israel through the Arts May 18 - May 26, 2020

Itinerary

Day 1, Monday, May 18, 2020: Arrival (No Guide, No Bus)

- Arrive into Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion Airport and transfer on your own to the hotel in Jerusalem and check in. Transfer instructions and options will be provided.
- For those who arrive early enough, opt in to a welcome dinner (for an additional cost) at Mona, a fine dining restaurant situated in the Artists House, a dynamic center for exhibitions, displaying unique and varied works of both Israeli and international artists.

Hotel: Bezalel Hotel, Jerusalem¹ (An Atlas Hotel, Israel's premier boutique hotel chain)

Day 2, Tuesday, May 19, 2020: Modern Jerusalem (Guide, Bus)

- After breakfast, gather as a group at the hotel for an orientation with your guide and fellow travelers. If available, a representative of the Ministry of Culture will officially welcome the group and talk about the role that arts and culture have played in the development of a national identity.
- Use the poetry of Yehuda Amichai as a lens for exploring the neighborhood of Yemin Moshe built in the 1890s by Moses Montefiore. When Amichai lived here, Yemin Moshe was on the border between Israeli controlled and Jordanian controlled Jerusalem until the Six Day War in 1967.
- Have free time for lunch in the Machane Yehuda Shuk.
- Spend the afternoon and evening with Michal Vaknin, the Artistic Director of the Mekudeshet Festival, a multi-disciplinary arts festival of originally commissioned works that reclaims Jerusalem's sacredness and re imagines it as a force for expanding common ground, pluralism and creativity. Michal will lead the group on an exploration of Jerusalem's cutting edge artistic scene ending with a site specific performance at the Jerusalem Nature Museum.

Hotel: Bezalel Hotel, Jerusalem² [Breakfast and Dinner included]

Day 3, Wednesday, May 20, 2020: Tel El Ful, Ella Valley, and Jerusalem (Guide, Bus)

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- Spend the morning visiting the East Jerusalem's forgotten palace, Tel El Ful, covered by the very popular Israel Story Podcast episode "King of The Hill" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s1aukdwT11Y>). One of the Israel Story podcasters will guide the group through the location describing the myths, history, Jordanian royals, Arab families, and Israeli generals associated with the site.
- Enjoy lunch at the Vertigo Eco-Arts Village where the group will also participate in a movement workshop and observe a rehearsal or performance. (<http://vertigo.org.il/en/ecological-art-village/>)
- Have an optional dinner (for an additional cost) at ANNA, a restaurant in the spectacular Ticho House, offering a rare combination high-quality Italian cuisine, location in a historic building that belongs to the Israel Museum, and a social program for high risk youth. Anna was established by the Dualis Yozma fund as a social business that trains and employs youth in distress, providing them with an opportunity to acquire a profession and to change the course of their lives. The Ticho House is features the art of Israel's beloved painter, Anna Ticho (1894 -1980) and contemporary art exhibitions.

Hotel: Bezalel Hotel, Jerusalem [Breakfast and Lunch included]

Day 4, Thursday, May 21, 2020: Jerusalem's Old City, Musrara, and Tel Aviv (Guide, Bus)

- Depart for Jerusalem's Old City.
 - Enter through the New Gate and visit the Sandrouni Armenian Ceramics Showroom and meet George Sandrouni (<http://www.sandrouni.com/contactus.html>).
 - See the current exhibit on at Al Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art (<http://www.almamalfoundation.org/>). Al Ma'mal is a center for contemporary art and a catalyst for the realization of art projects in Jerusalem.
 - Meet Wissam Razzouk at Razzouk Ink (<http://www.razzouktattoo.com>), a 700-year-old Christian family owned tattoo parlor. He has centuries of family stories including his involvement in "Healing Ink" which uses tattooing to help Israeli victims of terrorism and war overcome trauma.
 - See the historical photos in Elia photography, a legendary Armenian family owned photography shop that began using photography to document the history of the Old City of Jerusalem in 1924. (<http://www.eliaphoto.com/index.html>)
 - Weave through the shops and alleyways of the Arab *shuk* having lunch on your own along the way.
 - End the tour of the Old City at the Kotel (Western Wall) plaza.
- Exit the Old City and go by bus to the Ma'aleh Film School (www.maale.co.il), screen 2-3 short films produced by their graduates, meet with one of the filmmakers. Ma'aleh's unique, cutting-edge films foster deeper understanding and dialogue between religious and secular Jews. Ma'aleh films primarily deal with the Israeli experience, Jewish identity and Israeli society and culture.
- Have dinner on your own at First Station.
- See a show at the Khan Theatre. The Khan Theatre is the only producing repertoire-theatre in Jerusalem today and is considered to be one of the leading in the country.
- Have an optional discussion about the performance in the hotel lounge at the end of the evening.

Hotel: Bezalel Hotel, Jerusalem³ [Breakfast provided]

Day 5, Friday, May 22, 2020: Tel Aviv (Guide, Bus)

- Check out after breakfast and depart Jerusalem for Tel Aviv.
- Spend the morning on a Behind the Scenes Tour of Tel Aviv led by Drag Queens (<https://visit.org/israel/igy/tel-aviv-city-tour-behind-the-scenes-with-drag-queens>). We will discover the fascinating history of the drag queen, as we visit and support the work of a bustling gay youth center in the heart of an enchanting public garden. The tour revenue helps Israeli Gay Youth counselor training and local events for young men and women struggling to find their identities.
- Have lunch on your own in the Carmel Shuk Market.
- Have time to browse through the Nahalat Binyamin Art Market (<http://www.nachlat-binyamin.com/en-Default.aspx>).
- In the late afternoon on Friday, join a group of beachside drummers at Banana Beach who have gathered every Friday for the last 20+ years to welcome in Shabbat with rhythm, music, and dancing.
- Join Kehilat HaLev for Kabbalat Shabbat and Dinner.

Hotel: Fabric Hotel, Tel Aviv [Breakfast and Dinner provided]

Day 6, Saturday, May 23, 2020: Central Tel Aviv (Guide, Bus)

- After breakfast, delve into Tel Aviv's artistic cultural Zionist history and Bauhaus architectural style along Bialik Street in central Tel Aviv. Bialik Square and its surrounding buildings have been declared a World Cultural Heritage Site by UNESCO and are included in the area of Tel-Aviv designated a "White City" for its unique variant of modern international architecture.
 - Begin at Beit Ha'ir, the city's preserved historic Town Hall, now a historical museum that tells the story of life in Tel Aviv during its 100 years of existence.
 - Have lunch as a group.
 - Then continue to the Bialik House and learn about Hayim Nahman Bialik, Israel's national poet.
 - At the Rubin Museum, see the residence and work of painter Reuven Rubin.
- Have free time for dinner on your own.
- In the evening, see a **dance performance at the Suzanne Dellal Centre or a theatre performance with supertitles** (at one of these theatres: HaBima, Gesher, or Beit Leissen: NOTE: The theatre will be walking distance from the hotel for those who are Shabbat observant).
- Have an optional discussion about the performance in the hotel bar at the end of the evening.

Hotel: Fabric Hotel, Tel Aviv⁴ [Breakfast and Lunch provided]

Day 7, Sunday, May 24, 2020: North Tel Aviv (Guide, Bus)

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- In the morning, visit the Rimons School for Jazz and Contemporary Music to enjoy a showcase of performances by Israel's next generation of music artists. <http://www.rimonschool.co.il/homepage/> (to be arranged by Group Leader, honorarium not included)
- Lunch on own at the Sarona Market
- After lunch, observe a rehearsal of the all-orthodox-female Nehara Dance Group melds movement and religion together (<https://www.neharadance.org/>).
- In the evening, see a **dance performance at the Suzanne Dellal Centre or a theatre performance** with supertitles (at one of these theatres: Gesher, HaBima, Beit Leissen, or Cameri). Deborah will choose the best of the summer season offerings.
- Have an optional discussion about the performance in the hotel bar at the end of the evening.

Hotel: Fabric Hotel, Tel Aviv⁵ [Breakfast provided]

Day 8, Monday, May 25, 2020: Givat Haviva, Umm el-Fahem, and Haifa (Guide, Bus)

- After breakfast head north to Givat Haviva's Collaborative Art Center (<http://www.givathaviva.org/index.php?dir=site&page=gallery&op=category&cs=3093&langpage=eng>). Givat Haviva is an educational and research center that aims to build an inclusive, socially cohesive society in Israel by engaging divided communities in collective action towards the advancement of a sustainable, thriving Israeli democracy based on mutual responsibility, civic equality and a shared vision of the future. Their Collaborative Art Center hosts a gallery, art workshops and a ceramics school. Have lunch there.
- Continue north to the Umm el-Fahem Art Gallery (http://ummelfahemgallery.org/?page_id=25303) located in the Arab-Israeli city of Umm el-Fahem. The Umm el-Fahem Art Gallery was founded in 1996, on the initiative of local residents and artists who wanted to bring quality contemporary art to the city and its population and to exhibit original Arab and Palestinian art.
- Continue to the coastal city of Haifa to learn rhythm and harmony, peacemaking and reconciliation, through a group activity with an interfaith Peace Drums Project between Jewish, Christian, and Muslim youth (<http://leobaekhaifa.org/shared-existence-programs/peace-drums/>).
- Return to Tel Aviv and have dinner on your own.
- OPTIONAL: Have a night off with suggested evening options including a jazz performance at Beit Haamudim (<https://www.facebook.com/BeitHaamudim>).

Hotel: Fabric Hotel, Tel Aviv⁶ [Breakfast and Lunch provided]

Day 9, Tuesday, May 26, 2020: Jaffa (No Guide, No Bus)

- Check out after breakfast and store your luggage.
- Take a walking tour of Jaffa through the lens of music with a member of the multi-ethnic hip-hop group System Ali (<https://www.beitsystemali.com/home-eng>).

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The tour combines the history of the city of Jaffa in its 5,000 years of existence with a discussion of the conflictual issues of the city in recent decades through textual and musical works performed on the site.

- Have lunch on your own.
- Do a workshop and/or see a private performance with the Jaffa Theatre – A Stage for Arab Hebrew Culture.
- Have time on your own for some shopping in the Jaffa Flea Market.
- Have a final group discussion session together along the waterfront.

[Breakfast provided]