

JERUSALEM: FAMILY-FRIENDLY ACTIVITIES

Ideas for spontaneous outings, free days and last-minute adventures

Suzanne Lieberman
ISRAEL TOURISM CONSULTANT

+(972)-54-239-2574
SUZANNE@SUZANNELIEBERMAN.COM

Discover Jerusalem at Your Own Pace

For many years, I have been helping visitors to Israel make the most of their time here, creating experiences that reflect their individual interests, needs and pace.

Visitors come in all shapes and sizes – from families with young children and energetic teenagers to solo travelers, multigenerational families and retirees returning to Israel for the first time since the 1970s. No two visitors are alike, and no two trips should be either.

As valuable as guided tours are, experiencing Jerusalem is also about the freedom to explore at your own pace. Whether you have a free day, wake up to unexpected rain, have children who need to let off steam, or simply feel like doing something different, it's about finding what feels right for you and your family.

That's where this guide comes in.

It is by no means an exhaustive list of everything Jerusalem has to offer. Rather, it is a collection of ideas and inspiration for those unplanned moments: activities that generally don't require advance reservations, together with a selection of experiences that may be available at relatively short notice.

Sometimes, the most memorable moments of a vacation are the ones you never planned!

Enjoy discovering Jerusalem, your way.

Suzanne

A note before you set out:

This booklet is intended as a general informational guide only. Readers are responsible for making their own inquiries directly with the relevant establishments before visiting. Information is subject to change, and no responsibility is accepted for inaccuracies or changes to availability.

Museums and indoor attractions

Israel Museum: Explore the Second Temple model of Jerusalem, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the sculpture garden and the children's Youth Wing. General Museum visits are a flexible option. **https://www.imj.org.il/en**

Bible Lands Museum: Discover the ancient civilizations of the biblical world through fascinating archaeological displays. Regular guided tours are also included in admission, subject to availability, without advance registration. **https://www.blmj.org/en/visit/**

Tower of David Museum: The renovated museum brings Jerusalem's history to life through interactive technology, multimedia exhibits and archaeological discoveries. Climb to the panoramic lookout for wonderful views of the city . **https://www.tod.org.il/en/**

National Library of Israel: An impressive architectural experience in its own right. Visitors can explore the public areas, admire the enormous reading halls and enjoy the gardens free of charge. The interactive exhibitions require separately booked tickets.
https://www.nli.org.il/en/visit

Bloomfield Science Museum: A hands-on interactive museum where children and adults can experiment with light, movement, electricity, perception and scientific phenomena. Rather than simply looking at exhibits, visitors are encouraged to touch, experiment and discover how things work. **https://www.mada.org.il/**

The Burnt House (Beit HaSaruf): Inside the Jewish Quarter of the Old City, discover the remains of a Jewish priestly family's home destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. An engaging audiovisual presentation brings the dramatic final days of the Second Temple period to life, making the archaeological discoveries particularly meaningful.
https://travelrova.co.il/language/en/the-burnt-house/

Temple Institute: Discover the fascinating world of the Beit HaMikdash through reconstructed sacred vessels, priestly garments, detailed models and paintings depicting life in the Temple. https://templeinstitute.org/holy-temple-museum/

Old Yishuv Court Museum (Chatzer HaYishuv HaYashan): Step inside a 500-year-old courtyard house in the Jewish Quarter and discover how Jewish families lived in Jerusalem before 1948. Authentic furnishings, household objects, traditional clothing and reconstructed rooms provide a fascinating glimpse into everyday life in Jerusalem of generations past. https://www.oyc.co.il/



Animals, nature and outdoor activities

Jerusalem Biblical Zoo: Always a family favorite, with animals from around the world, spacious grounds, lakes, a children's zoo and the impressive Noah's Ark visitor center. Allow at least three hours. Tickets can be purchased at the entrance. **https://www.jerusalemzoo.org.il/en**

Gazelle Valley (Emek HaTzvaim): A wonderful urban nature reserve where gazelles roam freely. Explore walking trails, ponds, birdwatching stations and a tortoise shelter. Bring binoculars and see how many gazelles the children can spot. Free admission. **https://www.gazelle-valley.com/eng/**

Sacher Park (Gan Sacher): A fantastic modern playground with climbing equipment, slides, swings, sports facilities and enormous lawns. Perfect for children who need to burn off some energy between sightseeing activities. Free.

The First Station (HaTachana): Jerusalem's historic railway station has been transformed into a lively entertainment complex with restaurants, children's activities and market stalls. Free entrance, with charges for individual activities. Includes Train Track Park (Park HaMesila) – Follow the tracks of Jerusalem's original railway through the German Colony, Baka and beyond. A lovely family outing on foot, with scooters or bicycles which can be rented on site, stopping for refreshments along the way. **https://www.firststation.co.il/en/**

Sataf: Just outside Jerusalem, explore ancient agricultural terraces, natural springs and beautiful walking trails overlooking the Jerusalem Hills. Bring a flashlight for exploring the spring tunnels where accessible and wear shoes suitable for uneven terrain. Free. Best in dry weather.

Ramparts Walk: See Jerusalem from an entirely different perspective as you walk along the historic walls of the Old City, enjoying magnificent views of its rooftops, courtyards and surrounding neighborhoods. There are two alternative routes, northern and southern, starting in the Jaffa Gate area. **https://www.funinjerusalem.com/ramparts-walk/**

Jerusalem Botanical Gardens: Explore beautiful gardens featuring thousands of plant species from around the world, winding paths, a picturesque lake and a tropical conservatory. A lovely family outing.
https://www.botanic.co.il/

Wohl Rose Garden (Gan HaVradim): Located opposite the Knesset, this beautifully landscaped public park features hundreds of varieties of roses, spacious lawns, winding paths, a picturesque pond and a waterfall. Although the roses are at their best in spring, the gardens are a lovely spot for a family stroll or picnic throughout the year. Free admission, no advance booking required.
https://jerusalemfoundation.org/old-project/wohl-rose-park-of-jerusalem/

Jerusalem Bird Observatory: A hidden gem in the heart of Jerusalem, adjacent to the Knesset and Wohl Rose Garden. Observe local and migratory birds from specially designed observation shelters overlooking a small pond. Children can learn about bird migration, conservation and urban wildlife. Bring binoculars if you have them! Early morning is the best time to visit. Free admission, no advance booking required for independent visits.
https://www.birds.org.il/en/birding-center/The-Nili-and-David-Jerusalem-Birds-Observatory



Exploring Jerusalem independently

Nachlaot: Explore the picturesque courtyards and narrow alleyways of this historic neighborhood. Combine with a visit to Machane Yehuda shuk.

Yemin Moshe and Mishkenot Sha'ananim: Wander through the charming stone lanes, visit the Montefiore Windmill and enjoy beautiful views of the Old City. A wonderful spot for family photographs.

Ein Kerem: Explore this picturesque village-like neighborhood with its winding streets, artist galleries, historic buildings and beautiful hillside scenery. A lovely destination for a leisurely afternoon.

Haas Promenade (Tayelet): Some of the most spectacular panoramic views of Jerusalem, with plenty of space for children to run around. Bring a picnic and enjoy the scenery on a sunny winter's day.

Mamilla Avenue: Enjoy the outdoor pedestrian mall, sculptures, shops, cafés and festive atmosphere. Easily combined with a visit to the Old City.



Fun, games and rainy-day activities

Bowling Jerusalem, Talpiot: Take a break from sightseeing with some family-friendly competition at this large indoor bowling complex. With 18 bowling lanes, children's bumpers, arcade games and additional entertainment, it's a great option for families with children of different ages. Lev Talpiot Mall, 17 HaUman Street. https://www.arbelbowling.co.il/snypym/%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%9D

Gravity Park: An indoor adventure park featuring trampolines, climbing activities, slides, ninja-style obstacle courses and arcade games. An excellent opportunity for energetic children to let off steam, particularly on a rainy winter's day. https://www.gravitypark.co.il/branches-new/jerusalem-branch/jerusalem-attractions

Allé Climbing Center: An indoor climbing and bouldering center offering a range of climbing challenges for different skill levels. A fun physical activity for adventurous children, teenagers and adults, including beginners. https://www.dreamwallclimbing.com/new-projects/alle-climbing-center-jerusalem-israel

Pealton: An indoor soft-play center with climbing equipment, slides and play areas designed for toddlers and younger children. Ideal for families with little ones who need a break from historical sightseeing. https://play.pealton.co.il/playgrounds/playgroundsjerusalem/?ContentID=55714

Reservations Recommended – Check for Last-Minute Availability

Yad Vashem: Israel's national Holocaust remembrance center offers a moving and educational experience through personal stories, historical artifacts, photographs and testimonies. In addition to the Holocaust History Museum, visitors can explore the Children's Memorial, the Avenue of the Righteous Among the Nations and the extensive outdoor grounds. Children under 10 are not permitted in the Holocaust History Museum. https://www.yadvashem.org

A Look into the Past – Virtual Reality at the Kotel: Step back 2,000 years and experience the magnificence of the Second Temple through immersive, 360-degree virtual reality technology. Using special headsets and rotating seats, visitors can explore the reconstructed Temple as it appeared in its glory days. A fascinating experience for children and adults alike, easily combined with a visit to the Western Wall. https://thekotel.org/en/tours/A-LOOK-INTO-THE-PAST/

JClay Studio Jerusalem – Pottery Painting: Choose from a wide selection of ceramics, including mugs, serving dishes and Judaica, and decorate your own personalized masterpiece. A relaxing, creative activity suitable for all ages. Allow approximately two hours. Check same-day availability and arrange collection of your finished piece before leaving Israel. https://jclaystudio.com

Kad V'Chomer Ceramic Painting: A popular and relatively inexpensive pottery painting studio in the German Colony, suitable for ages three and above. Choose your ceramic piece and decorate it using your own designs and colors. No reservations required; seating is on a first-come, first-served basis. Allow time for firing and collection. https://www.funinjerusalem.com/kad-vchomer/

Kiyor Studio for Ceramics and the Arts: Create your own ceramic artwork from clay or choose from a selection of handmade pottery pieces to decorate. Conveniently located opposite Mahane Yehuda Market. Walk-ins are welcome, although calling ahead is recommended. **https://www.kiyorstudio.com**

Hadara Ceramics Studio: Enjoy a hands-on pottery workshop in the German Colony, creating and decorating your own ceramic piece from scratch rather than simply painting a ready-made item. Suitable for children and adults. Call to check last-minute availability at +972 50-673-6643.

Jerusalem Pottery Hagop Karakashian: Armenian Ceramic Painting – Discover Jerusalem's distinctive Armenian ceramic tradition and try your hand at decorating a ceramic piece using colorful traditional designs. Located in the Christian Quarter, making it an easy addition to an Old City visit. Call +972-2-626-1587 to check workshop availability.

Time Elevator Jerusalem: Conveniently located in Mamilla mall. A multisensory cinematic experience combining moving seats, panoramic screens and special effects to take visitors on a journey through Jerusalem's history. **https://www.time-elevator.co.il/en/**

Cocoa Forest: Chocolate Workshops: Located in Talpiot, this hands-on chocolate workshop offers children and adults the opportunity to create and decorate their own delicious chocolate treats. A fun and creative experience for the whole family, particularly on a rainy day. **https://yaaracacao.co.il/he/pralines-workshop/**

The Workshop Jerusalem: Formerly located in Gush Etzion, this unique woodworking studio in Talpiot offers families the opportunity to create beautiful, handcrafted pieces of Judaica using professional tools under expert guidance. Choose an individual project or work together to create a meaningful family keepsake. Suitable for ages 6 and above. Allow approximately three hours. **https://theworkshop.co.il/**

Exploring Jerusalem is wonderful. I hope you find this information useful.

Knowing how to put all the pieces together to create a memorable family vacation is another matter entirely.

If you're planning a trip to Israel and would like personalized assistance with your itinerary, accommodations, private guides and experiences, I'd love to help.

More than your trip - it’s your story.

Suzanne

https://www.suzannelieberman.com/