

THINGS TO DO IN JERUSALEM

You'll Never Be Bored

The following ideas are the best of many options you will find listed in Guidebooks like Fodor's, The Rough Guide, or the Lonely Planet Guidebook. Some of these are in Murphy-O'Connor's archaeological guidebook *The Holy Land*. He lists 23 items with two stars (his highest ranking; we will be seeing 16 or 17 of those in our itinerary). And most of these are things I've enjoyed doing.

1. Walk the Ramparts, on the walls of the Old City. Open at 9:00 a.m. and accessible from Jaffa Gate, Damascus Gate, and the Citadel. See Murphy-O'Connor, pp. 12-13, for times and instructions. Best to begin at the Jaffa gate and walk around to the Damascus Gate.

2. You can return to any of the places we visit on our walking tours. We will not have time to see everything, so you may want to return and have a second look.

3. The Citadel Museum (at Jaffa Gate). See Murphy-O'Connor, pp. 23ff. The museum is good. A sound and light show at 9 or 9:30. The Citadel is one of Murphy-O'Connor's two star attractions that is not on our itinerary. For light show evenings check M-O p. 24 (10:10 p.m. on Saturday may be the best option).

4. Wander the streets of the Old City visiting every one of its four quarters in turn. Along the way, pay attention to the Mamluk architecture etc. identified in Murphy-O'Connor, pp. 38-48.

5. Armenian Cathedral of St. James. Open only during services, 6-7 a.m. and 3-3:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, 6:00-9:30 a.m. Murphy-O'Connor, pp. 68-72.

6. Climb the tower of the Church of the Redeemer. Murphy-O'Connor, pp. 50 for map, and p. 64.

7. Several options for lunch:

a. Eat the best hummus in Jerusalem at Abu Shukri (at 5th Station of the Cross, corner of Via Dolorosa and El Wad St.). Enjoy the excellent fresh falafel balls, labaneh, baba ghanoush, tahini, and fresh vegetable salad.

b. Have an feast called a mezza (an assortment of salads and dips with pita bread). Options: Pascha's; Philadelphia (expensive); Azzahra (moderate); the Notre Dame (buffet), etc.

c. Very good felafel at Samir Said's The Friendly Felafel, 11 Christian Quarter Road, just near Shabaan's shop (see below)

8. Walk Hezekiah's Tunnel from the Gihon Spring to the Pool of Siloam. We will likely be able to do this as an option on our "City of David."

9. The Rockefeller Museum in East Jerusalem. Murphy-O'Connor, p. 163.

10. Ein Kerem, where John the Baptist was born. Murphy-O'Connor, pp. 169-71.

11. Take a round trip on Egged bus #99. The route takes in most areas of the city, with running commentary. Buses depart on the hour (10-2 and 4) from Mamilla St (Rehov HaEmek) near the Jaffa Gate. Ask first if the tour is in English. Reservations 224 Jaffa Road, or Egged Tours, 44a Jaffa Road, or the tourist information office at the Jaffa Gate.

12. Explore underneath the Damascus Gate. Murphy-O'Connor, pp. 15-16.

13. Wander the streets of East Jerusalem. After sitting on the steps at the Damascus gate watching people for a while, walk up Salah Al-Din Street.

14. Shopping:

a. Visit my friend Yasser Barakat's shop in the Mauristan (immediately south of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre). His is one of the best antique shops (carpets, Palestinian embroidery, large decorative plates, art prints by David Roberts). Be careful, Yasser doesn't bargain. But if you mention my name, and/or if you hesitate and affirm quietly that it's beyond your budget, he may bring the price down slightly saying it's his best price.

b. Ali Baba Souvenir Shop. Shabaan Amer is a very fine fellow. He is the brother of Majdi, whom we will meet in Bethlehem. His prices will be fair, especially if you mention my name.

c. Try bargaining for an item of jewelry in the Old City shops.

d. Armenian pottery. Don't buy the generic blue and white. Go to Jerusalem Pottery, 15 Via Dolorosa (green door); Hagop Antreassian (in Armenian Quarter near Zion Gate); Armenian pottery near St. James Armenian church; or Balian ceramics at 14 Nablus Road (outside the old city). Hagop is unique, but more expensive.

15. Old Synagogues in the Jewish Quarter in HaKehuna Street (built in the 17th century).

16. Walk the streets of West Jerusalem after sunset on the

sabbath: Zion Square, Ben Yehuda Street, King George Street, Yoel Salomon. Go for ice cream on Ben Yehuda Street after sunset on Saturday.

17. Walk through Mea She'arim district, home of the ultra-orthodox community. Dress very modestly. Long skirts for women. No photography. A market at the end of Bukharim Street is like something out of Fiddler on the Roof.

18. The Chagall Windows of the Hadassah Medical Centre in West Jerusalem are spectacular. This center is not far from Ein Kerem (see #9 above). Entrance fee 10 NIS. Hours 8:00-13:15 and 14:00-15:30. Combine this with a visit to nearby Ein Kerem, where John the Baptist was born. Murphy-O'Connor, pp. 169-71.

19. Go back to the Israel Museum.

20. Sit in a cafe in the Old City or in East Jerusalem and drink Turkish/Arabic coffee. Or in West Jerusalem, outdoor cafes abound around Ben Yehuda Street and on Yoel Salomon.

21. Expensive gift shops on Yoel Salomon and Ben Yehuda Street are fun to look at.

22. Buy some exotic spices at "Holy Land Spices," at 58 David Street in the Old City. Or as you wander through the Old City, buy some Turkish delight or fresh dates.

23. Try some Arabic Sweets at one of the many sweet shops in the Old City.

24. Help me add to this list with your new ideas.

Here's a sample itinerary for your free day. Or, this is what I would enjoy if I could get up early enough.

- Begin by attending worship (for a little while) at the Armenian Cathedral of St. James.
- Find a place to sit and drink Arabic Coffee until 9:00.
- Then walk the ramparts from Jaffa Gate to Damascus Gate.
- Wander the streets of the Old City until about 11:00, visiting some of the shops mentioned above.
- Then go to Abu Shukri for lunch, arriving around 11:30.
- More wandering around the Old City in the afternoon, or make your way back to the Citadel at Jaffa Gate.
- Then you have the afternoon free to do what you like from the list above.
- Return at least once to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.
- Be back for supper or book off and have supper somewhere else.