

How to See the Holy Land in 10 Days

Obviously, use this however you want. This is just a suggested itinerary, but it hits all the highlights. You can switch days around to work best for your needs.

If you have ten days, spend three of them in Petra. If you only have a week, skip the Petra portion and just do the Holy Land.

MS = Must See (you should REALLY hit this site)

IS = Interesting Spot (this is a good one, but not a must see)

UTY = Up To You (I consider this site skip-able, but you might find it interesting)

**Check and double check all opening times to make sure you don't get to something as it closes! Many of the churches close at different times in the middle of the day, or on certain days of the week.

Day 1:

Mount of Olives, Silwan (avoid doing this list of things on a Sunday)

- Take a cab to the top of the Mount of Olives.
- **IS** -- Visit the Church of the Ascension, where Christ supposedly ascended to Heaven after admonishing his disciples to spread the Word.
- **UTY** -- Pater Noster convent, where the Lord's Prayer is written on the walls in dozens of languages.
- **UTY** -- the village of Bethany (Azariya) is on the east side of the Mount of Olives. You can walk down the road to the church built on the site where Christ mounted a donkey on Palm Sunday. Walk down the Mount, starting from the Seven Arches Hotel, hitting whatever churches you feel like
- **UTY** -- Dominus Flevit, built to commemorate Christ's crying over Jerusalem
- **UTY** -- Santa Maria Magdalena, Russian Orthodox Church for Mary Magdalene (pretty, but not historical)
- **MS** -- Church of All Nations (Basilica of the Agony), built over the rock where Christ suffered the Atonement
- **IS** -- Grotto of Gethsemane, where the disciples waited while Christ prayed, and where Judas betrayed Christ.
- **UTY** -- Mary's Tomb, supposedly where Mary, Mother of Christ, is buried. Walk up the hill northward, to the Old City's Lions Gate (St. Stephen's Gate) and enter the Old City.
- You are now on the Via Dolorosa. Follow the Via, stopping at whatever churches you want.
- **IS** -- St Anne's Church (where Mary the Mother of Christ was born) and the Pools of Bethesda, where Christ healed a lame man.
- **MS/IS** -- 14 stations of the cross, which any guidebook will describe to you. They end at the Holy Sepulcher, the traditional site of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ.
- **UTY** -- wander out through the Christian Quarter, stopping at the touristy shops. Visit Shaaban's shop, on the corner of Christian Quarter Road and Greek Orthodox Patriarchate Road, and tell him you're a friend of Kyler's. You'll get good deals on all his stuff.

Day 2:

Jewish Quarter and Silwan (this is a good list of things to do on a Friday, but you must finish them all early, before Shabbat starts)

- Start at Jaffa Gate.
- **IS** -- The Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem. Wander through the Armenian Quarter, stop to see St. James Church.

- (UTY) if you're interested. Look for St. Mark's Church (IS), where some say the Last Supper took place. Look for nice Armenian pottery places. At Sandrouni's shop, near St James Church, tell George you are with the American Consulate for a good deal.
- Leave the Old City through Zion Gate and visit Mount Zion. Make sure to hit the Cenacle (MS), where Christ probably instituted the Last Supper.
- David's Tomb (IS) is directly downstairs from the Cenacle.
- The Dormition Abbey (IS) is another possible site for Mary's final resting place.
- A little further down the hill is St Peter in Gallicantu (IS), where Peter denied Christ three times, and the Christian cemetery where Oscar Schindler is buried (UTY).
- Go back in through Zion Gate. Wander through the Jewish Quarter, past the Cardo (ancient Roman road full of modern shops, IS) and visit the Temple Institute, where a group of religious Jews is preparing all the tools needed to operate the Jewish temple (when and if it gets rebuilt, UTY). End up down at the Western Wall (MS). Don't spend too long!
- Leave through Dung Gate and head down the hill in to Silwan. Visit the City of David archeological park (MS) for a couple of hours. Paying for a guide will make the entire thing more worthwhile. Wear clothes and shoes that can get wet, as the tour ends in the narrow tunnel with water up to your calves.
- If it's Friday, go back to the Western Wall to watch the Jews ring in the Sabbath.
- OR wander down into the Kidron Valley and check out the ancient tombs there.

Day 3:

Muslim Quarter and Bethlehem

- (MS) Be at Dung Gate by 8:00 a.m. and take the Mughrabi Gate Ascent up onto Mount Moriah. Visit al-Haram al-Sharif, viewing the Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock. Leave the Haram via any of the northern gates and wander through the Muslim Quarter streets and shops to Damascus Gate.
- Stop to sight see as you go.
- (MS) Outside Damascus Gate, walk north on Nablus Street, following signs for the Garden Tomb. Visit the Garden, and make sure to take one of the guided tours.
- (MS) Go back toward Damascus gate, but take a left on the main street and walk two minutes to the bus station. Ask anyone there which bus goes to the Church of the Nativity, and catch that bus. YOU WILL NEED YOUR PASSPORT TO GET BACK. The bus drops you off close to the Church of the Nativity. ASK THE DRIVER WHERE TO CATCH THE BUS BACK SO THAT YOU DON'T GET LOST.
- Visit the Church, the Grotto, and St. Catherine's Church next door and its grottos.
- (IS) Ask around for the Milk Grotto, where a drop of Mary's breast milk supposedly turned the walls of the cave white.
- (IS) The Shepherds Field Church in Beit Sahour (near Bethlehem) will require a cab ride, but might be worth it. Catch the bus back to Damascus Gate.

Day 4:

West Jerusalem

- (MS) Dress VERY MODESTLY and wander through Mea Shearim to view the Ultraorthodox neighborhood. BE AWARE that these people do not like tourists. DRESS ULTRA CONSERVATIVELY and TAKE NO PHOTOGRAPHS!
- (IS) Wander into the Ben Yehuda area, a pedestrian shopping area with restaurants, etc. (UTY) There are a number of interesting sites in this area. You can hit the Ethiopian Church, the Russian Compound and Church, Safra Square (City Hall), the old Italian Hospital. A guidebook or walking tour book will describe them.
- (IS) Head North-West to Mahane Yehuda Market. This is an open-air market with lots of fresh foods and spices. Walk the streets, and grab lunch before heading to your next stop.

- (IS) Catch a cab to the Israel Museum and Knesset. The Israel Museum is currently under renovation, but they still charge full price to see a third of the Museum. You can view the Dead Sea scrolls and see a model of Jerusalem at the time of Christ. The Israeli legislature, the Knesset (UTY), is across the street, and the Supreme Court and Foreign Ministry are nearby. You can visit the Knesset without a reservation.
- Catch another cab to Mount Herzl (UTY) and Yad vaShem, the Holocaust Museum (IS, some say a MS). Mount Herzl is Israel's version of Arlington Cemetery, and Yad vaShem is Israel's Holocaust Museum.
- (IS) Finish the day off with dinner at nearby Ein Karem. You can visit two churches related to the life of John the Baptist – one where he was born (IS), and one where John leapt in Elizabeth's womb when Mary approached (IS). They'll be closed in the evening, so if you want to go inside, time your visit right.

Day 5:

Dead Sea, Masada – NOTE: The Dead Sea/Masada region is MUCH warmer than Jerusalem.

- Leave early enough to take route 1 to route 90 south. (IS) Stop at Qumran, at the northern end of the Dead Sea, and visit the site where the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered.
- (MS) Drive further south to Masada. Take the cable car up Masada and view Herod's plateau fortress, where a group of rebels defied a Roman siege for years. There are some pretty impressive cisterns at the other end of the hilltop.
- (MS) Stop at one of the Dead Sea beaches to get in the water. Unlike anything you've ever done! Ein Gedi beach is cheap and has very few accommodations. Mineral Beach costs about \$10 per person, but has showers, changing rooms, a hot tub (with Dead Sea water), massages available, & mud pots to cover yourself with black mud and take a photo. Either way, you're going to want shoes in the water. HOT and rocky beaches (especially in the summer time).
- Drive home and clean off in the shower, then catch dinner in an East Jerusalem Arab restaurant.

Day 6:

Galilee

- Leave Jeru in the morning and take route 1 and 90 north to Galilee. Note the Jordan River as you pass it -- and note that it is bone dry in most places. The water is used up for irrigation.
- Take the road on the east side of the Sea of Galilee and drive up to the northern end. Visit the following:
 - (MS) Capernaum, where Christ taught.
 - (MS) St Peter's Primacy, where Christ appeared to Peter after the resurrection and ate fish.
 - (MS) Loaves and Fishes Church, where Christ multiplied the loaves and fishes (closed on Sun-- check before you go)
 - (MS) Mount of Beatitudes, where Christ taught the Sermon on the Mount.
- (IS) Take the road to Mount Tabor to see one of two possible sites where Peter, James and John observed the Transfiguration of Christ
- Backtrack a little and take the road to Nazareth. Visit the Basilica of the Annunciation (MS!) where Mary lived when Gabriel informed her she was to carry God's son; (IS) St. Joseph's Church, on the same grounds, where Joseph lived at the same time; and (IS) the Ancient Synagogue (in the Old City area near the previous two sites), where Christ might have attended worship services as a child.
- (IS) If you have time drive to the top of Mt. Tabor and visit the Church of Transfiguration.
- (IS) Drive back to Jerusalem via Route 6 (take a good road map) and note as you drive through the Jezreel Valley that you are in the area of Tel Meggido, or in Hebrew Har Meggida, also known as Armageddon.

**An alternate option for this day is to drive up to the Sea of Galilee the night before and stay at En Gev (a holiday resort that sits on the edge of the Sea of Galilee. There is a beautiful sandy beach at En Gev where you can swim, even at night! This will give you some extra time in Galilee to visit Tel Meggido, and get back to Jerusalem at a reasonable hour.

Day 7:

The Coast (or Catch Up Day)

- With your own car and a long day, you can hit Jaffa (IS -- the Old City is cool) and Tel Aviv (UTY) before driving north to Caesarea Maritime (IS) to swim, then to Haifa to view the Baha'i gardens (MS). There's tons to see and do through here, but it's hard to get it all in one day. If you have extra days, stay overnight in Haifa and visit Akko, Tel Meggido, and other areas before going back to Jerusalem. Or, use this day to hit all the stuff you missed in Jerusalem and do your souvenir shopping.
- I recommend you take your dip plated car to Jordan for the easiest travel. Otherwise, you're going to have to take a bus down through Eilat and Aqaba or some such hassle.

Day 8:

Drive to Jordan

- Visit Mount Nebo (IS) and Madaba (IS) on your way to Petra. Overnight in Wadi Musa (Movenpick Hotel is the best!).

Day 9:

Spend all day in the Petra park, hiking and sightseeing.

Day 10:

Drive back to Jerusalem, stopping at the Baptismal Site of Christ before crossing the Allenby Bridge.