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Unearthing Israel: Important Archeological Sites You Should Visit

Sandy Bornstein

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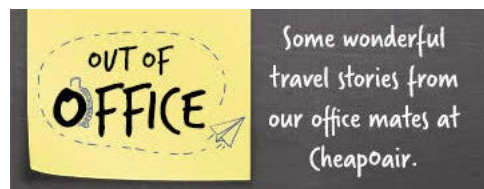
History

Israeli archeological sites are ubiquitous and reveal thousands of years of history. With so many diverse places, it's impossible to see everything. Whether you have just a few days or an extended stay, we've compiled a list to get you started.

Jerusalem



Image via Sandra Bornstein



Most people either begin or end their trip in Jerusalem. While touring the Old City, it's advisable to dress modestly. Head to the [Western Wall Plaza](#), to view the remaining courtyard wall that surrounded the Second Temple built during the time of King Herod.

To understand what lies beneath the surface, reserve a tour, at least a couple of months in advance, at the [Western Wall Tunnel](#). If time allows, visit the nearby [Davidson Archaeological Garden](#) and The Herodian Quarter: The Wohl Museum of Archeology.

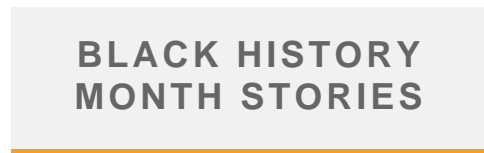
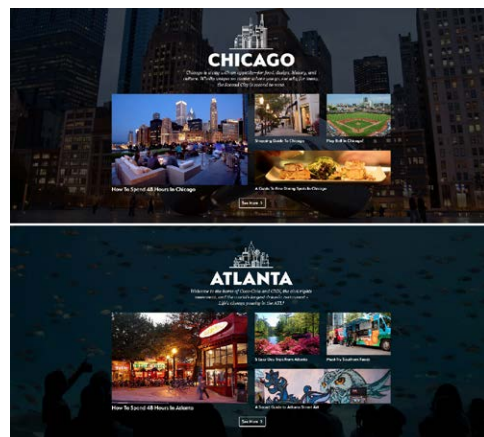
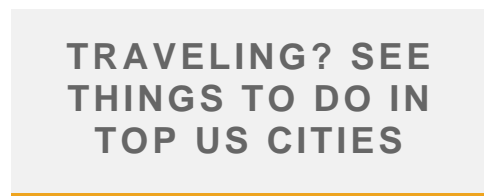
Dead Sea (Southeast of Jerusalem)



Image via Sandra Bornstein

It's possible to take a day trip from Jerusalem to the remote Dead Sea area. However, some prefer spending additional time relaxing at a nearby spa or continuing their journey from this location. The Dead Sea's main attraction is [Masada](#), a surviving hilltop fortress from the time of King Herod. It was

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captured by the Romans in the 1st century C.E. and marked the destruction of the Kingdom of Judea at the end of the Second Temple period.

While most people associate [Qumran National Park](#) as the place where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found, visitors to this park will be able to view the remains of the Essene community (aqueducts, cisterns, reservoirs, and assorted structures), the people who lived there until the 1st century C.E.

At the [Ein Gedi Antiquities National Park](#), remnants from the Second Temple period through the Byzantine Period can be seen. Most notable is an ancient synagogue with a mosaic floor.

North of Jerusalem



Image via Sandra Bornstein

If you're looking for one of Israel's largest archaeological sites, go to [Bet She'an National Park](#) in the Galilee. Excavations have revealed communities going back approximately 6,000 years. The park displays remain from the different eras. The main draw is the Roman ruins — theater, bathhouse, temple, colonnaded streets, and mosaics — from the 1st to the 2nd century C.E.

A 12th century Crusader fortress overlooking the Jordan Valley, known as [Belvoir Crusader Fortress](#), is located at Kochav Hayarden. The outer fortress includes a moat, inner and outer gates, towers, cistern and bathhouse, and a covered inner courtyard. The inner fortress has towers at each of the four corners and a fascinating secret staircase that leads to the moat.

[Zippori National Park](#) in the Lower Galilee is well known for its colorful and well-crafted mosaics found in the Dionysus House. Many stay several hours longer to explore the Roman streets, the public buildings from the 1st to 4th centuries C.E., a Crusader fortress, burial caves, and an ancient water reservoir.

Northern Coast of the Mediterranean Sea

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The Templars built a [Hospitaller Fortress](#) in the southwest part of Acre (Akko). This Crusader structure, north of Haifa, has 28-foot thick walls and an arched tunnel that connects the main building to the east port. Today, you can walk near the walls that go around parts of the Old City and visit sections of the old fortress, including the Knight's Hall of the Hospitaller Fortress and the Templars' Tunnels, and shop in local stores.

[Caesarea National Park](#) sits on a prime seashore real estate between Tel Aviv and Haifa. The park is spread out so keep in mind that there are two entrances. This historic site is also the host for musical concerts. For a one-of-a-kind experience, visit the Underwater Museum. It's the only place in the world where amateur and professional divers can take a guided underwater tour through an ancient city's ruins.

TIP: The Israel Nature and Parks Authority oversees the major attractions. For money saving, multi-site ticket options visit their [website](#).

Why not unearth a great holiday in Israel? Visit with one of our cheap flights!