

Old City Ramparts Walk

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The Old City of Jerusalem and its walls were put on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1981. On a Rampart Walk you'll get a strong sense of why. The northern walk on the wall takes you past the Christian and Muslim Quarters. A southern walk, which can also leave from the Jaffa Gate, takes you past the Armenian and Jewish Quarters, passes through the Tower of David and ends at the Dung Gate. For security reasons, people are not allowed to walk on the wall near the Dome of the Rock or the Western Wall.

If you're going on a Ramparts Walk, wear comfortable shoes. It's not a real easy walk, because you're climbing up narrow metal staircases. Best to keep an eye on the uneven surfaces you are traversing and stop when you want to take in the views.

To learn more about the walk, visit Ramparts Walk on the Go Jerusalem Web site. After looking at the overview, take a look at the PDFs on the Jerusalem-oldcity.org Web site, where you'll find detailed descriptions of some of the things you will see, and a map showing where on the wall you'll be walking.

The entrance fee is 14 NIS for an adult and 7 NIS for a child.

Old City Alleys & Bazaars

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The Arab souk (market) that sprawls across the Christian and Moslem Quarters in Jerusalem's Old City is a cluttered warren of bizarre juxtapositions, stalls hawking shoddy Middle Eastern tourist chintz next to venerable shops selling the necessities of life to Old City residents, "I Got Stoned in Jerusalem" T-shirts beside traditional kaffiyehs and jalabiyehs, Orientalism rubbing uncomfortably against authenticity.

Don't let that stop you from visiting, though; the souk is a genuine Jerusalem landmark, the mercantile heart of Jerusalem from at least Ottoman times and up to the present. The high arches and ceilings of the souk are a result of the same Ottoman largesse that gave the Old City its current walls, and no matter how many European tourists are being led to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre by way of the gift stalls at any given time, one gets the impression that the rhythms of the souk have remained the same for hundreds of years.

The Time Elevator

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An part of any Jerusalem tour, the Jerusalem Time Elevator carries its passengers on an unforgettable journey through the 3000-odd eventful years of the Holy City's fractious history.

Israeli actor Chaim Topol, best known for his roles as Tevye in the film adaptation of Fiddler on the Roof and the titular lead of the classic Israeli satire Sallah Shabati, stars in the Time Elevator's dramatic half hour multimedia presentation as Shalem, a 3000-year-old guide to Jerusalem history. Amid crashing ceilings, splashing water, seats with six axes of motion and other special effects, Shalem leads the audience through Jerusalem's historic turning points firsthand: sweeping into the city with David's armies, watching Jeremiah confront King Zedekiah, and seeing the First and Second Temples burn. When the Romans take over, when Christianity begins, when the Muslims sweep in from the east and when the State of Israel struggles to gain its independence, the Time Elevator - and you - are there in the midst of the action.

Pool of Bethesda

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The Pool of Bethesda, located in the Old City – just north of the Temple Mount, is one of the few sites in Jerusalem over which there is no debate as to its original location. Visitors will find new understanding of this biblical account as they tour this area. To enter to the pool, Jesus would have walked through the “Sheep’s Gate”, the entrance where the sacrificial lambs were brought to the Temple. He would then have made His way through the five (the biblical number for Grace) walkways to the pool, whose name means, “House of Mercy.” It is just inside the Lion's Gate.

St. Anne’s Church

During the Second Temple period, the Bethesda pool was believed to have supernatural healing powers, especially to cure disabilities and other health-related issues. According to one Christian tradition, the Virgin Mary was born in a cave near this pool, and in that cave, her son Jesus would later perform miracles of faith.

Via Dolorosa

Winding its way through the Old City from Lion's Gate to the venerable Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Christian Quarter is the Via Dolorosa (The Sorrowful Way), a street that traces the last steps of Jesus Christ as he trudged from his conviction at the fortress Antonia to his crucifixion on Golgotha, now purportedly contained within the walls of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

Oscar Schindler’s Grave

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One of the most-visited graves in Jerusalem belongs to Oskar Schindler, the German factory-owner and Nazi Party member credited with saving the lives of 1098 Jews during the Second World War.

His grave in the Catholic cemetery on the southern slope of Mount Zion is visited by Jews, Christians and people of no religious faith. It's the first garden entrance north of "St. Peter in Gallicantu."

Traditional Garden of Gethsemane

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The garden of Gethsemane, near the foot of the Mount of Olives, is named in the New Testament as the place where Jesus went with his disciples to pray the night before he was crucified.

The garden, about 1200 square metres in area, was well known to the disciples as it is close to the natural route from the Temple to the summit of the Mount of Olives and the ridge leading to Bethany. The name in Hebrew means “oil press”. Oil is still pressed from the fruit of eight ancient and gnarled olive trees that give the garden a timeless character.