

HotspOTs Israel

A Travel Guide with a Difference

HIP, HOT,
AND TRENDY

Joanne Nihom / Esther Voet



Welcome to HotspOTs Israel

When thinking of Israel, most people have a political or biblical image. Let us enlighten you: that image is not complete. World-famous trend watcher Lidewij Edelkoort has exhibited in the Design Museum Holon. DJ Armin van Buuren performs regularly at parties in the Negev Desert. Israeli women have definitively substituted their standard garb of T-shirt, denim shorts, and sandals that they wore until the 1980s, for high heels and designer sunglasses. Designers are opening shop after shop for a true shop-till-you-drop experience. Award-winning restaurants keep popping up as well as boutique hotels, there are reputable galleries all over the country, and the beach bars along the sunny coasts do not fall short of the hottest European ones! There are eco-friendly villages with a focus on reflection, peace, and quiet, and numerous organic, vegetarian restaurants; the country is among the top 5 most vegetarian-friendly countries.

Israel buzzes!

And that is the Israel we want to show you. Because we think that it is only with this Israel that your image of the country can be complete.

Israel has become an ultimate holiday destination, where you can still ski until April on Mt. Hermon, float in the Dead Sea or get treatments throughout the year, or swim in the azure blue water of the Red Sea, spangled with corals and tropical fish.

You can hike in a constantly changing landscape, and all this without having to drive hundreds of kilometers.

The hills of northern Galilee are covered with forests and woodland, the Jezreel Valley offers stunning views, and then there is the Negev Desert which will enchant you. In addition, there are, if you feel inclined, ancient archaeological sites and unique geological phenomena. But everywhere you go, you will find original places to stay or unexpected eateries for a fantastic meal. That is the Israel we have tried to capture in this book.

Dive into Tel Aviv's nightlife, see the Bauhaus architecture in the daytime, or take a wine tour in the Golan Heights. Soar in a hot air balloon over the desert, or miss a couple of hours of sleep to gaze at the magical star-studded skies.

With this travel guide you will meet the Israel of the 21st century. Prepare to be surprised!

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10. Culinary Melting Pot

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Located in the Nahalat Binyamin pedestrian mall is Chef Meir Adoni's restaurant, Catit. Adoni is renowned for his exquisite cuisine in which he combines traditional and modern techniques: the Israeli culinary melting pot at its best. For truly intimate celebrations, they offer two private dining rooms. And there's also room for up to fourteen guests, which is ideal for a family dinner or meeting, and then there's the garden as well.

Catit, 57 Nahalat Binyamin, Tel Aviv
Tel: 03-5107001, www.catit.co.il



24. Past, Present, Future

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This museum, also known as the Museum of the Diaspora or the Museum of the Jewish People, is more than just a museum. It is an institution where four thousand years of Jewish history are presented, but which also focuses on the future. Everything revolves around Jewish identity, and answers the question of what that identity looks like. Besides the permanent exhibition there are ongoing temporary exhibits. It provides a beautiful insight into Jewish life outside Israel.

Beit Hatfutsot, Tel Aviv University Campus,
Klausner Street, Ramat Aviv,
Tel: 03-7457808, www.bh.org.il



47. Ceramics and Vintage

For the ceramics enthusiast, Irit Goldberg's ceramics gallery in Jaffa comes highly recommended. Aside from her own art pieces, she also sells vintage items from around the world!



52. Recycled Fashion

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Naomi Maaravi's father taught her to never throw anything away. He always told her: "Everything is unique, has a personality, a soul, and carries with it something: warmth, sadness, love, or attention". He would turn something old into something new. For instance, an old milk bottle became a lamp. Naomi followed her father's path, but applies it to clothing. Using old fabrics and secondhand clothes, she creates something new and unique: hip and trendy fashion.



66. Come and Sea... (us)

This special shop is all about passion for the sea. Owners Tami and Ronit 'Yam' (Sea) as they are known, breathe, design, create, and sell fashion, jewelry, and home styling items – all with a touch of the 'sea'.



© Dmitry Pistrov

76. A Night on the Town

The number one way to get to know Tel Aviv's nightlife is on a TLV Night Tour. Spread throughout the entire city with countless bars, pubs, and nightclubs featuring performances by nationally and internationally renowned DJs, you just need to know where to find them. Ido Weil of TLV Nights leads journalists, tourists, and even Israelis around the city's nightlife.



38. Holy Horses

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When you visit Jerusalem it's usually about the city, the culture, the religion... What about going horseback riding on the outskirts of Jerusalem and seeing the city from a different angle? Enjoy the hills, the green... the secrets... The Harei Yehuda Riding Stable is located in pastoral Tzur Hadassah, about 15 minutes by car from Jerusalem's Gilo neighborhood, or from Beit Shemesh. The stables are situated at the edge of the Sansan Nature Reserve and close to dozens of attractive hiking and riding trails, including the Soreq stalactite caves, Begin Park, Nahal Katlav, Ein Kobi, and Ein Matta. The stable comprises a riding school and club, and dog kennels. It is built on a steep slope on three levels, which perfectly preserve the area's pastoral views.

The Harei Yehuda Riding Stable
Tel: 02-5791355, www.hyr.co.il



31. Paradise

A place to enjoy luxury with a personal touch against a breathtaking background of the evergreen hills of the Western Galilee while smelling and seeing the Mediterranean Sea.



67. A Meal on the Water

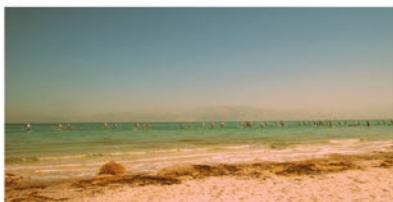
Where the Hatzbani and Dan rivers meet is Dag Al Hadan, a unique place in nature where there's more to do than just eat a delicious meal (there's always fresh fish from the Dan). Why not have a go at rafting on the Hatzbani before lunch.



I. Dream Away in a Cave

In the Judean Mountains, between Hazan and Beit Guvrin, you can spend the night in a deluxe cave with a private garden, planted with herbs and spices, overlooking the vineyards. The Columbarium Caves are naturally cool in summer and warm in winter. There is natural light, purified water, and all waste is recycled. Moshav Shekef is situated between Moshav Amatzia and Guvrin National Park, in an area also known as The Land of a Thousand Caves.

Columbarium, Moshav Shekef, Lakhish
(about an hour's drive southeast from Tel Aviv),
Tel: 050-6456455, www.columbarium.co.il



4. Whatsup

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Need some cooling down during your summer holiday? The instructors at Supaway Surf Club, owned by Amit Inbar, Olympic windsurfing medalist, will take you on a breathtaking journey on a stand-up paddleboard (SUP). Enjoy the turquoise waters, corals, rocks, and flying fish, the stunning sandy beaches and red rock cliffs.

Stand-up paddleboarding is an invigorating and rewarding water sport, suitable for all ages and fitness levels.



5. Soreq Cave

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On the way from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, in the beautiful Judean Mountains, lies Beit Shemesh. If you decide not to drive, try taking the train from Jerusalem. The route takes you along the ancient Roman road, which in the spring has a rippling brook flowing through the valley. Phenomenal! Once in Beit Shemesh, follow the signposts to Avshalom Nature Reserve, which is about eight kilometers outside the city. There is an amazing cave in this reserve, the Soreq Cave (also called Avshalom Cave). It was discovered accidentally in 1968 during excavation work that exposed a cave with beautiful stalactites and stalagmites, some of which are at least 300,000 years old. Because the cave was completely sealed from the outside world, no human or animal had ever seen it until 1968, and it is still virtually untouched. The extraordinary stalactites twist and turn, as if defying gravity.

Soreq Cave, 78 Yirmiyahu Street, Jerusalem

Tel: 02-5006261, www.showcaves.com/english/il/showcaves/Sorek.html

