



CUT-OUT-AND-GO GUIDE | NON-STOP TEL AVIV



instant escapes

Non-stop Tel Aviv

Buzzy bars, busy bazaars, sizzling beaches — it's all go in this zippy city

Hedonism's a 24-hour affair in Israel's party city (from dawn food markets to late-night rooftop drinking dens). But modern architecture and dance, world-class museums, and an intoxicating melting-pot of people all testify that the Manhattan of the Middle East has serious substance, too. **By Karen Glaser**



SEE & DO

● Get up at dawn (or don't go to bed!), and swim at one of Tel Aviv's eight main beaches as the sun casts its pink haze over the water. Many have loyal crowds — gay, family, bohemian... Opt for sleepy Jerusalem Beach (1) on map to **bask in the warmth and watch matkot, Israel's bat-and-ball beach game** and unofficial national sport.

● Get under the skin of the Big Orange (as residents call this Middle Eastern NYC), with a free city tour accompanied by a Tel Aviv Greeter (telavivgreeter.com). These English-speaking **locals will walk you around their favourite neighbourhoods** — perhaps the Yemenite Quarter with its teeny kosher cafes, or Gordon Street, where dozens of avant-garde, commercial galleries have set up shop. Don't tip at the end of the tour — guides aren't allowed to accept your shekels.

● With its leafy lanes, posh shops and pastel-hued houses, arty Neve Tzedek is great for a wander. It's also the city's oldest official district, first settled in 1887, and home to some of the world's most exciting dance. Israel shuns **fusty, traditional ballet in favour of exhilarating contemporary moves**, best seen in the beautiful, courtyarded Suzanne Dellal Centre (00 972 3 510 5656, www.suzannedellal.org.il; tickets from £12; 2).

● Sharpen your elbows for the frantic Carmel Market (Sun-Thu; 3), where

THE REAL MCCOY

There is only one rule in this market: all the artefacts and jewellery on sale must be handmade in Israel

you can buy **everything from spices (don't leave without some tangy za'atar) to knock-off designer sunglasses**. Many of the stallholders are Sephardi (Jews who settled here from Arab lands, Spain and Portugal), which makes it feel exotic, even for Israel. Continue your spending spree next door at the lively arts-and-crafts market that snakes along Nahalat Binyamin Street (Tue and Fri only; 4).

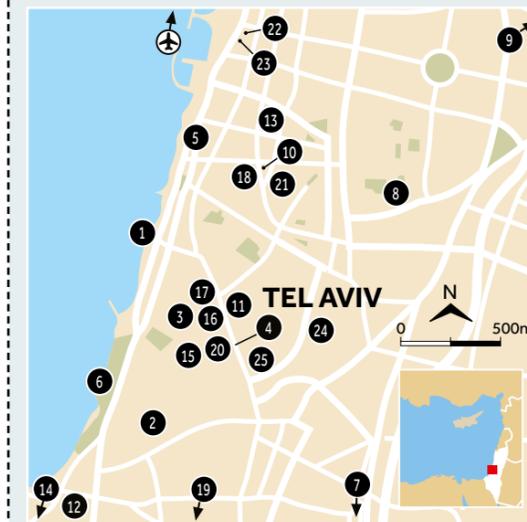
● It's two-wheels-good, four-wheels-bad in this health-conscious, pancake-flat city. There are 70km of cycle paths and a citywide bike-hire scheme (like London's), with the beachside route between the Sheraton 5 and Charles Clore Garden 6 delivering **postcard-perfect views of skyscraper-backed sand**. Pick up your chariot from one of 150-odd stations around the city, and pedal from £2.80 (tel-o-fun.co.il). You can pay with your credit card.

● Fêted designer Ron Arad (a Tel Aviv boy) came up with the swirling, red ribbon-like structure of the Design Museum Holon in greater Tel Aviv (dmh.org.il; £6; 7). See **eye-popping exhibitions on everything from Issey Miyake to the history of bicycles**. Then there's the iceberg-esque Tel Aviv Museum of Art (tamuseum.org.il; £8; 8), also worth a look for works by Miró, Picasso, Chagall and Cézanne.

● Time for a break from sand and sightseeing. HaYarkon Park 9 is the city's green lung and one of the world's most impressive urban spaces. You could easily **lose a day moseying through its gargantuan tropical gardens**, cactus-strewn trails, and stream-side paths. Kids in tow? Leave time for a trip to the on-site waterpark and petting zoo.

● Tel Aviv's creamy, curvy Bauhaus buildings have earned it World Heritage status. Designed by refugee German-Jewish architects, their pioneering **curved corners and long balconies lend the place a refreshingly clean, modern look** that sets it apart from most of the Middle East's more antique-looking cities. It's all best viewed on one of the Friday morning walking tours from the Bauhaus Center (bauhaus-center.com; £10; 10). >

Light waves: left, Jerusalem Beach at twilight; below left, striking a pose in Neve Tzedek district; the curvaceous structure of the Design Museum Holon



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EAT

● **The humble falafel joint**

NO NAME (Sandwiches about £2)
Because: Tel Avivim travel across the city to scoff falafel, the country's national snack, at this hole-in-the-wall joint. Yes, it's that good. **Travel's tip:** When stuffing your pitta with salads and *tachina* (tahini), don't confuse the garlicky tomato sauce with the adjacent *skhug* of the same colour — the latter, a Yemen sauce, is eye-wateringly hot. 64 Allenby St; @

● **The slap-up brekkie**

DR SHAKSHUKA (Dishes about £6)
Because: *Shakshuka*, the North African dish of eggs poached in a sauce of tomatoes, onions, peppers and chilli, is the ultimate Tel Aviv fry-up, and this is the best place in town to sample it. **Travel's tip:** For the best atmosphere, get a table under the awning of this Ottoman-era building — not inside the dark and cramped main restaurant. 3 Beit Eshal St; shakshuka.rest.co.il; @

● **The blast from the past**

KETON (Mains about £9)
Because: You can make like the Jewish refugees who gathered here in the mid-'40s, scoffing *kreplach* (stuffed dumplings), *gefilte* (minced fish) and other East European culinary staples. **Travel's tip:** Ask for the window seat, where celebrated Israeli poet Alexander Penn used to eat. 145 Dizengoff St; 00 972 3 523 3679; @

● **The seaside sensation**

KALIMERA (Mains about £12)
Because: It's obligatory to dine in the beautiful ancient port of Jaffa, part of the city since 1950. **Travel's tip:** Don't overdo it on the finger-licking starter flatbreads, as the main courses are mammoth. *Jaffa Port* (Nemal Yafo); 00 972 3 682 3232, kalimera.co; @

● **Euro-posh nosh**

KIMMEL (Mains about £17)
Because: After all that falafel and *shakshuka*, sometimes it's nice to have a change. This is the place to savour European classics, such as French onion soup and *osso bucco* stew. **Travel's tip:** Order a bottle of home-produced Cabernet Sauvignon with your meal — Israeli wine has come a long way in recent years. 6 Hashachar St; 00 972 3 510 5204 @

NOT IN THE GUIDEBOOK

Take ethical tourism one step further and eat nearby at Mamot (7 Hashomer St), where all the food is cooked by single mothers, providing them with extra income

IT'S NOT KOSHER

Even though Keton is as traditional as Tel Aviv restaurants come, it's still not kosher. That's the same with nine out of ten restaurants in liberal Tel Aviv

DRINK & SHOP

● **The pub with a heart**

THE PRINCE
Because: You can party without a guilty conscience at this rooftop bar, which hosts art exhibitions to fund local social-action projects. **Travel's tip:** Go for Israeli beers (Goldstar, Maccabee) — they're a third cheaper than imported ones. 18 Binyamin Nahalat St; ze-ze.org; @

● **The fresh-fruit-shake stall**

HAMITIZIM SHEL HAAHOLA
Because: Juice and smoothie stands are ubiquitous in Tel Aviv but, at 73 years old, this one has been serving thirsty pedestrians longer than most. **Travel's tip:** Try the kiosk's signature drink of date, banana and pecan nuts. 2 Binyamin Nahalat St; @

● **The Bauhaus souvenir stop-off**

BAUHAUS CENTER
Because: If you love the Bauhaus aesthetic, here's the place to pick up a quirky retro Golda Meir fridge magnet or funky table mat. **Travel's tip:** The jewellery is stunning, but prices are halved at the Nahalat Binyamin Street arts-and-crafts market (see 4). 99 Dizengoff St; bauhaus-center.com; @



ASK THE LOCAL

Writer and Hebrew teacher Nava Bloch has lived in Tel Aviv all her life

“It's easy to walk to most places in Tel Aviv, but if you want to use the bus, buy a Rav Kav, a rechargeable card (80p): one ticket costs £1, and you can use it as often as you like within 90 minutes (remember, buses don't run on the Jewish Sabbath, from sundown on Friday to sundown on Saturday). The city's top chefs go to two tiny hole-in-the-wall joints at the junction of Dizengoff and Frishman Streets @ for falafel and *sabich* (a classic Israeli fried aubergine sandwich). Tel Aviv is peppered with small public gardens you can't see from the road — my favourite is the memorial garden Magen Avraham @, near my home in Old Jaffa.



STAY

● **The chic city sleep**

BROWN TLV (Doubles from £112, B&B)
Because: Minutes from gallery-lined Neve Tzedek quarter, and decorated with '70s-inspired furniture, this hotel is all chic urbanity. **Travel's tip:** Chow like a local — room rates include breakfast at any one of five nearby cafes. 25 Kalisher St; 00 972 3 717 0200, browntlv.com; @

● **The old movie house**

HOTEL CINEMA (Doubles from £124, B&B)
Because: This is your chance to sleep in a Bauhaus former cinema, complete with vintage lighting, projectors and other silver-screen paraphernalia. **Travel's tip:** Make the most of the wine-and-snacks reception (5pm-7.30pm), free to guests from Sunday to Friday. 2 Zamenhoff St; 00 972 3 520 7100, atlas.co.il; @

● **The extraordinary view**

MELODY HOTEL (Doubles from £140, B&B)
Because: The only way is up in Tel Aviv — limited ground space means the

city is expanding vertically. See it all from the eighth-floor roof terrace of this design-conscious hotel. **Travel's tip:** Breakfast is officially served between 6.30am and 10am, but they don't mind if you linger over the delicious Israeli salads and cottage cheese for half an hour longer. 220 HaYarkon St; 00 972 3 5215300, atlas.co.il; @

● **The glam beach hut**

SHALOM HOTEL & RELAX (Doubles from £165, B&B)
Because: This New England-style beach-house hotel, with its decked roof terrace, is just a five-minute walk from the Med, so is the place to stay if you've come to Tel Aviv to get a tan. **Travel's tip:** Ask about complimentary bicycle hire — a breezy ride along the seaside esplanade beckons. 216 HaYarkon St; 00 972 3 762 5400, atlas.co.il; @

● **The city icon**

THE ROTHSCHILD HOTEL (Doubles from £184, B&B)
Because: The Rothschild Hotel is one of the most photographed buildings



LOCAL SECRET

Newly single? It's not official, but just behind Rothschild Boulevard is Otto (48 Ahad Ha'am St), the bar where Tel Aviv's divorcees go to quaff and mingle

Tel-ling tales: clockwise from top left, chatting by the waterfront in Old Jaffa; the national snack, falafel; the rooftop terrace at Melody Hotel; Bauhaus Hotel Cinema; juice stall at the Carmel outdoor market

in Tel Aviv, on one of the city's most iconic boulevards. And, in keeping with the philanthropic endeavours of Baron Edmond de Rothschild (after whom both the hotel and street are named), it's packed to the rafters with specially commissioned art works. **Travel's tip:** Rooms at the front have balconies, but cost £50 more than those at the back. They're worth it for the view. 96 Rothschild Blvd; 00 972 3 957 8888, rothschild-hotel.co.il; @

● **The sophisticated retreat**

THE ALMA HOTEL (Doubles from £250, B&B)
Because: This '20s former apartment block on the corner of Rothschild Boulevard melds cutting-edge contemporary design with one-off antiques. The results are stunning. **Travel's tip:** Don't complain about the (delicious) food. According to his staff, Alma's celebrity chef Yonatan Roshfeld is the Israeli equivalent of Gordon Ramsay: talented and, er, outspoken in equal measure. 23 Yavne St; 00 972 3 630 8777, almahotel.co.il; @

GET ME THERE GO INDEPENDENT

EasyJet (easyjet.com) flies from Luton, Manchester and Gatwick, from £76 one way. **EI AI** (elal.co.il) has returns from Luton from £329, and from Heathrow from £359. **BA** (ba.com) has Heathrow returns from £324.

GO PACKAGED

West End Travel (020 7644 1500, www.westendtravel.co.uk) has three nights at the Hotel Cinema from £529pp, B&B, with Luton flights. **Expert Travel** (020 8922 1234) has five nights' B&B at Shalom Hotel & Relax from £749pp, with Luton flights. **Israel Holiday Designers** (020 3384 0028, israelholidaydesigners.com) has three nights' B&B at Melody Hotel from £449pp, with Gatwick flights.

GET AROUND

From the airport, take the shuttle train to the city centre (rail.co.il; £2.65; 20 mins).

FURTHER INFORMATION

See thinkisrael.com