

ISRAEL / PALESTINE

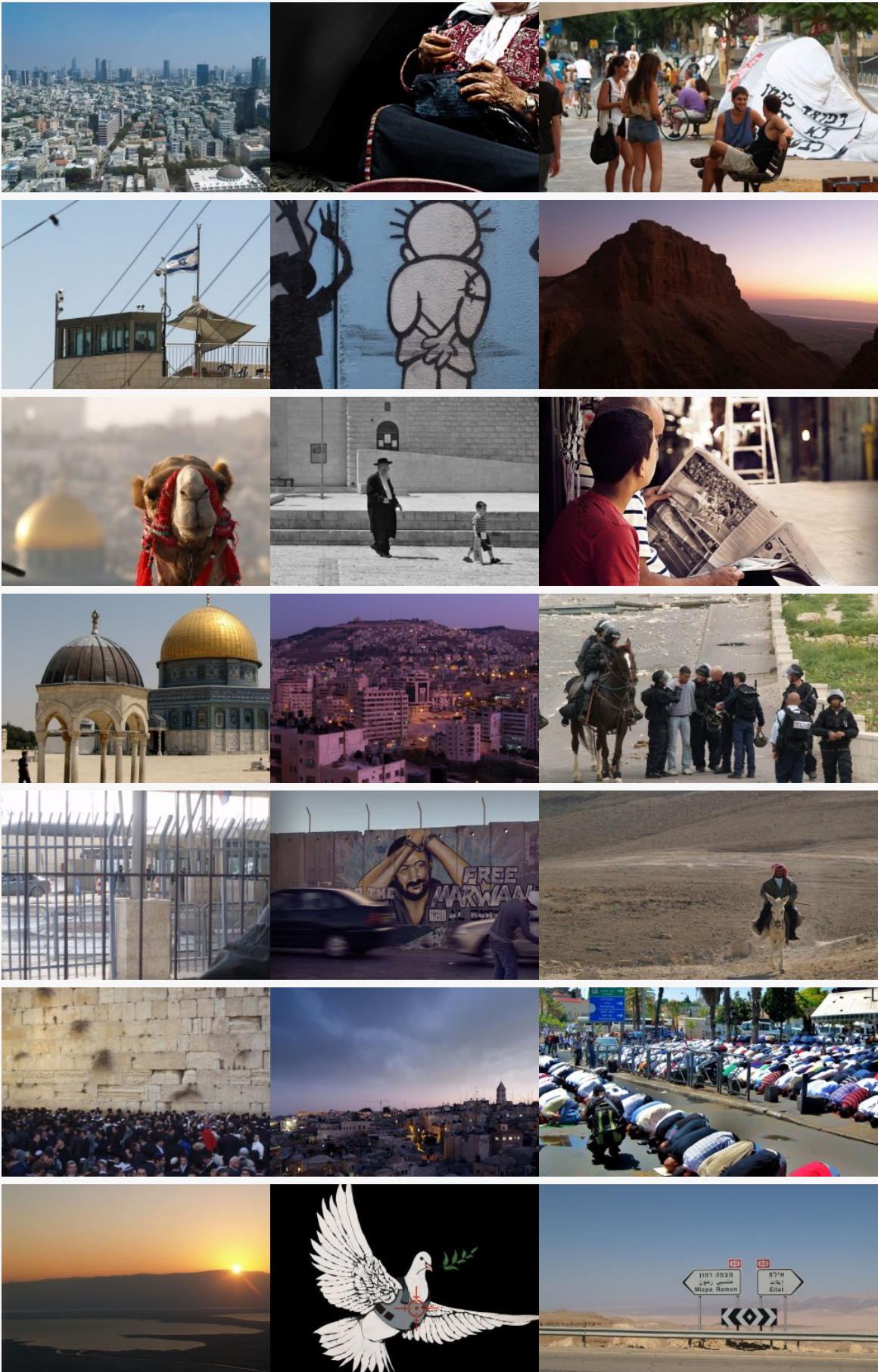
The ongoing political and military fight over land impacts everyday life in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Hebron and demands our special attention. We should also learn about the extremely diverse societies found in Israel and Palestine. A huge variety of people with contrasting and conflicting secular and religious lifestyles—and a correspondingly diverse and active civil society—live on a landmass that is smaller than Belgium.



The economies on opposite sides of the “separation barrier” that winds for 750 kilometers through the land could hardly be more different: The “start-up” nation of Israel boasts high-tech companies that are global leaders but also features extreme economic inequality, while Palestine’s economy languishes under import and export restrictions and is dependent on external funding.

But there is more to Israel and Palestine than these political, social, economic, and religious issues. Its natural treasures include unique flora and fauna in Wadi Qelt, which runs from Jerusalem

to Jericho, well-watered gorges in the Golan Heights to the north, fertile valleys around Bethlehem, and the Ramon Crater in the southern Negev Desert.





Unsere Highlights

Jerusalem

All three Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity and Islam—have sacred sites in the Old City of Jerusalem. Yad Vashem, the world’s largest Holocaust memorial, is located in West Jerusalem. The political future of the city, whose eastern and western sectors display huge socio-economic differences, is a major bone of contention. We will investigate these subjects on political tours, as well as in conversations with contemporary witnesses and discussions with civil-society actors.

Tel Aviv & Jaffa

Tel Aviv represents a modern, secular, liberal contrast to Jerusalem. The Mediterranean beach metropolis with its start-ups, cafés, and clubs also has many East African refugees. We’ll examine the history of Zionist colonization, which inspired the founding of Tel Aviv in 1909 and its master plan of the 1920s. We will also discuss the Zionist narrative of the events of 1948 and the founding of the State of Israel. In the nearby, once-bustling, ancient port city of Jaffa, we will concern ourselves with how Palestinians view 1948 and discuss Jaffa’s significance for Arab nationalism. Finally, we also observe how long-time Palestinian residents are being displaced by gentrification and political decisions.

Hikes

The varied landscapes of Israel and Palestine—the desert canyon of Wadi Qelt, the Golan Heights, the Negev Desert, and the central highlands—beckon us to take long hikes. Along the way, we provide the group with input on the political topography of the region.

Haifa

The northern port city of Haifa is one of Israel’s few “mixed cities” that is inhabited by both Jewish and “Arab-Israeli” residents. We will investigate issues of coexistence in the State of Israel with people who live in this major industrial and university center.

Ramallah

In the West Bank’s booming administrative center, we seek to engage in dialogue about the realities of life for Palestinians under occupation, as well as inner-Palestinian conflicts.

Jericho, Hebron, and Bethlehem

We start by visiting the ancient treasures of these Old Testament cities. We also address ongoing settlement construction, the route of the Wall, and how restrictions on freedom of movement impact the everyday life of Palestinians.

Useful country-specific information

Health & vaccination

No special vaccinations are needed for a stay in Israel or the Palestinian territories. Medical facilities in Israel are excellent, and medical advice is always granted in the Palestinian territories, as well. In order to prevent cases of diarrhea, however, we recommend to avoid drinking tap water.

When it comes to the **Corona virus** (COVID-19), we follow the recommendations made by the [German Federal Foreign Office](#) as well as the local authorities and the German Embassy on site. In case of any change of the health situation, the tour might be subject to according changes we will inform you about as soon as possible.

Language

The official language in Israel is Hebrew, in the Palestinian territories it is Arabic (Syrian-Palestinian Dialect). English is lingua franca and will serve you well while travelling.

Local currency

The official currency in both Israel and the Palestinian territories is the New Israeli Shekel (NIS). It is very easy to exchange money (Euros or US Dollars) anywhere in Israel, or to withdraw cash with a debit or credit card, as the banks have numerous branches. In the Palestinian territories, this withdrawing money is not always just as easy. In the urban centers, however, it will not be a problem. Moreover, you can withdraw cash in Israel and then take it with you. We recommend to take a part of the money in cash, and take a debit or credit card with you as well. Withdrawal fees might vary according to the regulations of your home bank.

Security

The issue of security plays a big role in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

In planning out tours, we follow the recommendations and statements issued by the German Federal Foreign Office. Our route only leads us through areas deemed safe by the Office. While doing so, we keep close contact with the German Embassy and local authorities on the ground. In case of any change of the security situation, the tour route might be subject to according changes.

Over the past years, rarely any suicide attacks have occurred in Israel. If so, they hit busses and public institutions. Alsharq tours primarily use their own coaches for transportation. As a travel group, we do not take part in any larger events or gatherings. It is part of our travel idea to spend several days in the Palestinian territories as well. Here, we also travel with our own coach.

Visa

Visa are provided upon arrival at Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv. It is thus not necessary to apply for a visa at the Israeli Embassy in Germany. Usually, the visa will be issued as a three-months tourist visa at the passport control. To receive a visa upon arrival, you need a passport with a minimum six months validity at the time of travel. The issuing of the visa might happen only after intense questioning from the side of Israeli authorities about the reason for your stay and your destinations inside the country. This is the standard procedure. We recommend to take a list of the tour's destinations and hotels with you and show it to the authorities, if necessary. More information on will be given by the Alsharq team during the preparation meeting and via email.

Visa regulations might change at any time. If so, we will inform you in time before the tour start.

For general information on our tours please click [here](#)

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