

Adventures Around Every Corner: ISRAEL

On the Mediterranean Sea in the Middle East, the Holy Land offers unbelievable adventures around every old street corner, river and fortress.

By Miriam Porter

Weightlessly floating in one of the saltiest bodies of water in the world without a life vest, I'm at the lowest point on earth. I don't dare open my mouth for fear of salty water splashing in, so instead I just keep smiling, which is easy to do in Israel, a land I had previously only read about in books. The Dead Sea float is just the start of many adventures to come in Israel. From exploring tunnels to climbing a World Heritage site or boating along the Jordan river, this country offers adventures around every old street corner, river and fortress.



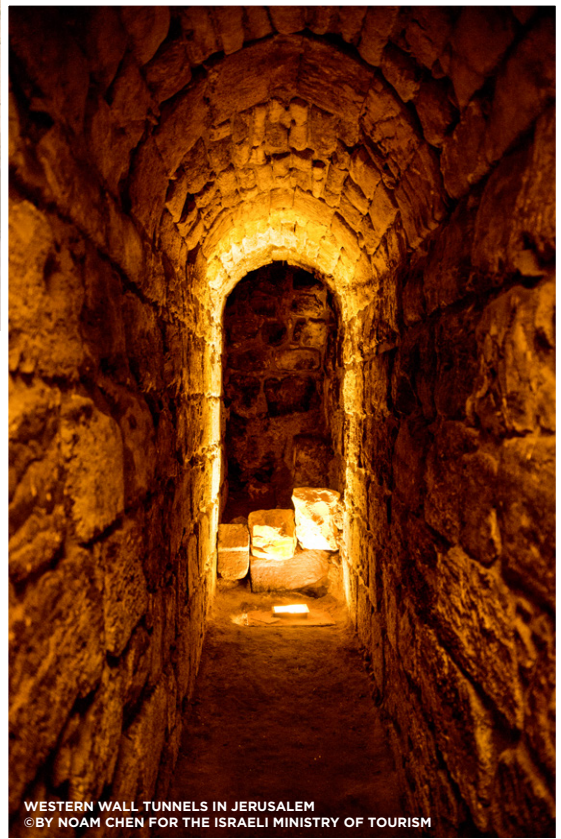
PLACING A PRAYER NOTE INTO THE CRACKS OF THE WALL



WESTERN WALL IN JERUSALEM

EXPLORE WESTERN WALL TUNNELS

Visiting Jerusalem's Western Wall in person took my breath away. Having studied the history of the Jewish people, it is moving to stand on the land where it all began in the Old City. The city has four quarters – Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Armenian. The Western Wall (The *Kotel* in Hebrew) is the western support wall of the ancient Jewish Temple and the most religious site in the world for Jewish people. I had prepared a special prayer note to slip into the cracks among the millions of others. Located next to the Wall are underground tunnels running under the Old City. You can see parts of the wall hidden from view – touch ancient stones holding stories of struggle and triumph while learning the history of this archaeological site.



WESTERN WALL TUNNELS IN JERUSALEM ©BY NOAM CHEN FOR THE ISRAELI MINISTRY OF TOURISM

CLIMB MASADA

Wear comfortable shoes to explore the second most visited location in Israel, after Jerusalem. Masada, a UNESCO World Heritage site located in the Judean Desert, is an ancient fortification and a strong symbol of the deep-rooted kingdom of Israel. Dating back to King Herod, this fortress was built as a secure palace for him to retire, Roman style. It eventually became a refuge of the last survivors of the Jewish uprising as they refused to be slaves and heroically chose death. For over 13 centuries, Masada has remained untouched and the archaeological sites are strictly protected. There are options to climb independently or with a guide – this is the only way to see Masada glowing at sunrise. At 8 a.m., cable cars can whisk you up in three minutes for breathtaking views of the Moab Mountains and Dead Sea.



MASADA ©ITAMAR GRINBERG FOR THE ISRAELI MINISTRY OF TOURISM