

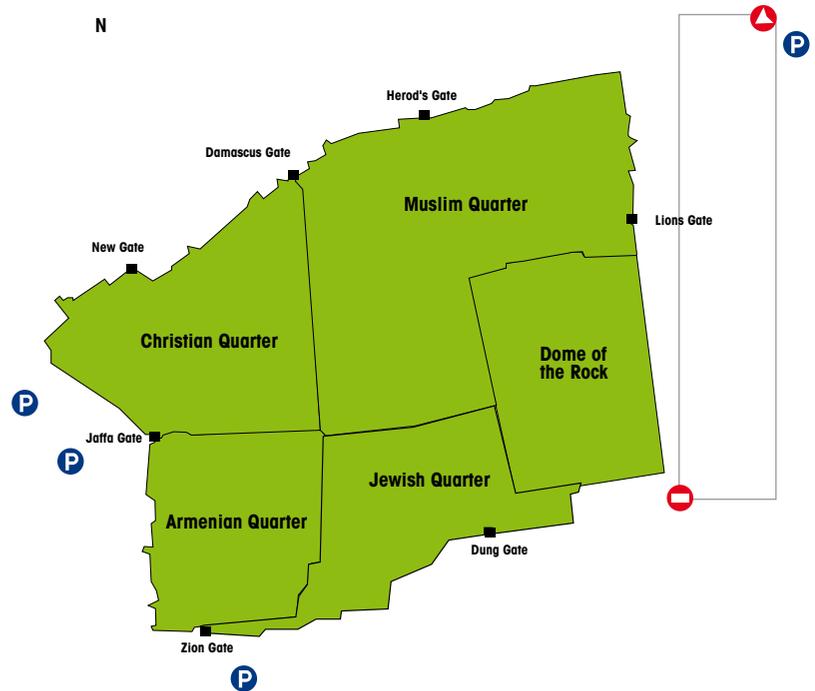
THE VALLEY OF THE KING FROM EMEK TZURIM TO NAHAL KIDRON



JERUSALEM
THE OLD CITY
העיר העתיקה
البلدة القديمة

The Old City Walking Tours
A GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT TOURIST

	Starting point: Emek Tzurim National Park/Jaffa Gate
	Ending point: Kidron Valley tombs and the City of David
	Tour length: 3-4 hours
	Parking: The Beit Orot Compound parking lot (free parking). The route is not circular and we recommend that you use two cars, one parked at either end of the route, or public transportation. Bus lines 4, 19, 26, 28, 30 – to Hebrew University on Mt. Scopus, or bus line 48 – to the Beit Orot parking lot. From the end point: From the area of the Western Wall take any bus line heading to downtown Jerusalem.
	Public transportation:
	Notice: Entrance to holy sites requires modest dress



Prime Minister's Office



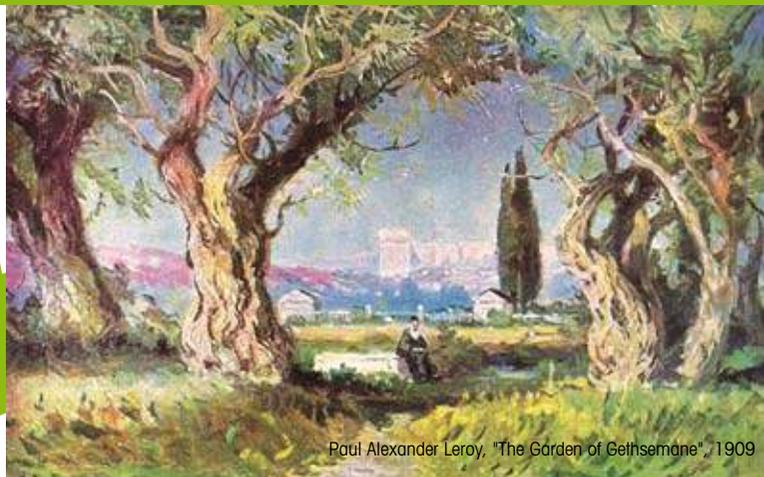
The Jerusalem
Municipality



הרשות לפיתוח ירושלים
THE JERUSALEM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

The Mt. of Olives is a place of ancient landscapes, historic narratives and breathtaking views of the city of Jerusalem and the desert that lies to the east. Jewish, Muslim and Christian traditions link the Mt. of Olives with the Messianic period and in the wake of these, the slopes of the Mt. of Olives became an ancient burial place where stories of the dead are linked with visions and the complexities of contemporary Jerusalem.

This tour crosses a path that descends to the Emek Tzurim National Park located on the slopes of Mt. Scopus as you approach Nahal Kidron (the Kidron Valley). On the way the route passes between sacred sites, archaeological remains and various observations points that look out onto the city of Jerusalem.



Paul Alexander Leroy, "The Garden of Gethsemane", 1909

Emek Tzurim National Park

Between the Mt. of Olives, Mt. Scopus and the Kidron Valley lies the Emek Tzurim National Park. In an area where every corner and path is steeped with historical significance and tradition, it is the many stones that gave this valley its name. Covering 170 dunams (0.17 sq.km. or 42 acres) of open space with olive trees and Mediterranean vegetation the valley, which was declared a national park in 2000, preserves the Mediterranean flora surrounding the walls of the Old City and offers breathtaking views of Jerusalem.

1

We walk along the paths that descend the slope of the valley until we are standing opposite the greenhouse building that belongs to the Temple Mount Sifting Project.



Treasures of the past in piles of dirt – Temple Mount Sifting Project

In 1999 the Muslim Waqf began renovation work in the ancient open spaces known as Solomon's Stables on the Temple Mount. The work, which was carried out without any supervision or archaeological study, raised fears that vitally important historical information would be lost forever. The building contractors who worked on the Temple Mount dumped the earth and rubble they removed from the site at different trash dumping sites around the city, including the Kidron Valley. In 2004 it was decided to carry out extraordinary rescue excavations: Usually archaeology follows stratigraphy – examining findings and dating them according to the strata of earth in which they were found. But in this case the stratigraphy was meaningless because the earth was removed from its surrounding context and the different layers of earth had been mixed together. Nevertheless, it was decided to sift through the earth that had been dumped and to examine its contents in an

- 🕒 Sunday - Friday
winter:
8:00 - 16:00
summer:
9:00 - 17:00
- 📞 For reservations
call: *6033
- 🎫 Entrance fee



Photo:
Jean Marie Hosatte



Photo:
Jean Marie Hosatte

Photo: Avishag Elbaz



Photo: Zeev Radovan



Photo: Zeev Radovan

effort to at least try and gather, for the first time, information regarding the finds from the Temple Mount, a site which – due to its sacred and sensitive nature – was never excavated.

Hundreds of trucks brought the earth to a site allocated for this purpose in the Emek Tzurim National Park, and the site is now a center of research combined with training and educational activity, which is carried out with the help of volunteers who do the sifting work as part of their visit to the site, and funded by the Elad Foundation.

Tens of thousands of objects have been discovered thus far, including ancient coins, tools and arrowheads dating from the First Temple Period, Second Temple Period and the Crusader Period to the First World War – evidence of the many wars that Jerusalem has seen. Among the major finds was a bulla (a seal impression), which bore an inscription written in ancient Hebrew script, "For Gedalyahu son of Immer" – a member of a family of priests from the period of the Return to Zion who is mentioned in the book of Jeremiah.

From the Temple Mount rubble site the path continues southward until it reaches a parking lot. We cross the length of the parking lot and reach the A-Tur road. We turn to the right and proceed for about 100 meters along the road. After the bus stop we cross the street and continue along a dirt path along the channel of the Kidron Valley. On the eastern side we can make out ancient burial caves, and to the south we can see the gilded domes of the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Mary Magdalene. At the edge of the orchard we leave the path heading to the left, and climb eastward on a path that crosses between terraces located above the orchard. Above us is the stone wall that belongs to the Orson Hyde Park. We keep to the path at the foot of the wall and continue to the end. A steep but short ascent will bring us to the entrance of Orson Hyde Park.

3

The secret of the disappearing garden – Orson Hyde Memorial Park

We go back out the gate of the Memorial Park and exit to a paved path that will lead us to the road that descends from the Mt. of Olives to Gethsemane (Al-Mansuria Road). We walk along the edge of the road for about 100 meters, taking extreme care while walking. We reach an intersection, and immediately past the intersection, on the left (south) side of the road is the Church of All Nations in Gethsemane.

Orson Hyde, in whose memory the park is named, was a prominent leader in the Mormon Church who visited the Holy Land in the late 19th century. In the early 1980s the Mormons wanted to build a campus in Jerusalem. Teddy Kollek, mayor of Jerusalem at the time, was willing to allocate them a plot of land on the western slopes of Mt. Scopus, but suspicion surrounding the Mormon mission raised much opposition in Israel which quickly reached the Knesset halls. In the wake of this controversy the Mormons pledged that local students, neither Jews nor Muslims, would not be permitted to study at the Jerusalem branch of the university, only students who came from abroad. The Mormon University also raised donations for the opening of the park in Emek Tzurim, at the foot of their new campus.

The Orson Hyde Memorial Park covers an area of eight dunams (around two acres) and contains lovely spots with natural woodlands and spectacular views of the Kidron Valley and the Old City.



Grief in Gethsemane – the Church of All Nations

4

At the end of the Passover meal that came to be known as “the Last Supper,” Jesus went with his disciples to Gethsemane, an olive orchard located at the edge of the Kidron Valley. While the disciples were asleep Jesus prayed alone to God, pouring out his sorrow and beseeching God to take from him the cup of agony and suffering for the sins of mankind. The next day Jesus was betrayed to the Romans by Judas Iscariot, then tried and crucified.

Tradition identified Gethsemane at this site during the Byzantine and Crusader periods, and in the early 20th century the magnificent church we see before us was built by the renowned Italian architect Antonio Barluzzi. The name of the church, the Church of All Nations, symbolizes the cooperation among many Christian nations in erecting this impressive edifice.

The church is also known as the Basilica of the Agony and the Church of Gethsemane. The basilica was built around the stone of agony upon which Jesus said his sorrowful and hasty prayer to God. All the details of the building, its decorations and furnishings are aimed at recreating that atmosphere of terrible sorrow that shrouded Jesus during the late hours of the night and to describe for visitors the events that preceded Jesus’s arrest and conviction.

-  Sun.-Sat.
- winter:
8:00-12:00,
14:00-17:00
- summer:
until 18:00
-  Entrance is free
-  02-6283264





The windows are covered with dark glass, giving an intended dimmed-lighting effect to the interior that evokes a mood of depression analogous to Christ's agony; the ceiling is painted a deep blue to simulate a star-studded night sky; while mosaics depict the events that took place according to Christian tradition at this very site. Entrance into the church is through a bronze door decorated with the Tree of Life springing from a cross, symbolizing the device of torture and death that became a miracle of victory in Christian belief. The new church includes reproductions of ancient mosaics that were found at the site. Olive trees that are hundreds of years old grow in the Garden of Gethsemane adjacent to the church, and from the garden we can get a good view towards the Kidron Valley and the Temple Mount.

Upon leaving the church it is recommend that you walk away some distance and get a good look at the stunning façade. The mosaic on the pediment over the entrance shows a kneeling figure of Jesus, dressed in red to symbolize his suffering;

above him an angel holds a table with the Greek letters "alpha" and "omega," the first and the last, an appellation of Jesus in the Book of Revelation. To the left of Jesus are the figures of the disciples and to the right are the people weeping over his fate.

From the Kidron Valley to the Kingdom of Heaven – Church of the Tomb of the Virgin

The New Testament does not reveal what happened to Mary, the mother of Jesus, but several traditions describe her death. As with all saints, Mary fell into an eternal sleep and she rose to heaven, where she was gathered up in the arms of her son. Traditions identifying the site of this event are divided: Once tradition identifies the site as Ephesus in Turkey, while another tradition places the site on Mt. Zion, where the German-Catholic Dormition Abbey commemorates this event. According to this tradition Mary was brought for burial in the Kidron Valley and she rose to heaven from the Mt. of Olives. Alongside Mary's tomb tradition also identifies here the tomb of her husband, Joseph the Carpenter. A church was erected at the site as early as the Byzantine Period, but the church we will be visiting was built

We turn right on the main road and descend towards the Church of the Tomb of the Virgin.

5

Sun.-Sat.
winter:
8:00-12:00,
14:00-17:00
summer:
until 18:00

Entrance is free.



G. Bauerneind, "Mount of Olives", 1902



in the 12th century, during the reign of Melisende the Crusader Queen of Jerusalem, whose tomb is also found in the church.

Surrounding the tomb are altars belonging to the Eastern Orthodox churches: Armenian, Greek-Orthodox, Syrian and Coptic, as well as a more modest Catholic structure. The reason for this lies in the fact that Catholic tradition actually supports the identification of Mary's tomb at the Ephesus site. The church is lit by hanging oil lanterns above which are "church eggs" – decorated ceramic spheres that keep the oil safe from the mice who dare to climb down the iron chains to the receptacles holding the oil.

From the Tomb of the Virgin Mary we return to the junction with Derech Yericho (Jericho Way). We cross the road and continue to the left (south) along Derech Yericho on the western side of the road. Across the Kidron Valley we can see the sealed up "Gate of Mercy" or Golden Gate in the walls of the Old City, and beneath it is a Muslim cemetery. Right below us at the edge of the Kidron Valley is a Christian cemetery. To the east of the road we can easily make out the façade of the Church of All Nations, with the Russian Orthodox Church of St. Mary Magdalene and its golden onion domes above that. After walking a short distance along Derech Yericho we reach the Mt. of Olives Information Center.

www.mountofolives.co.il

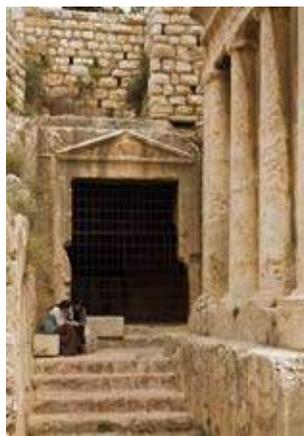
- 📍 Mount of Olives Information Center
- 🕒 Sun.-Thurs. 9.00-17.00
- ☎️ 02-6275050

The Center was established and is run by the City of David site and serves as a center of activities and services to those visiting the area. The Center has a database of deceased persons who are buried in the cemetery on the Mt. of Olives, and you may obtain information about sites located on the Mt. of Olives and about the cemetery. You may also purchase maps, books and information here.

From Derech Yericho a paved stepped path, Derech Shiloach (Silwan Way), branches off and descends into the channel of the Kidron Valley – the Valley of Yehoshaphat, and passes the lower boundary of the ancient Jewish cemetery on the Mt. of Olives.



▲ Photos courtesy of: US National Library of Congress



"From the Valley of Yehoshaphat leads the Way to Heaven" – Burial monuments in the Kidron Valley

6

This description by a 12th-century traveler is based on traditions from the three monotheistic religions that describe, each one in its own way, that in this valley God will make his final judgment in the End of Days. Even as early as the Second Temple Period this narrow channel between the Mt. of Olives and the Temple Mount was a crowded and sought-after burial site.

The enormous burial monuments and the long-forgotten identities of those buried here have inspired traditions and legends that have become part of Jerusalem's history.



The rebellious son – "Yad Avshalom" – Absalom's Pillar

7

For many years Jerusalem fathers would teach their rebellious sons a lesson by bringing them to the Kidron Valley. Here they would throw stones at the monument to remind their sons of



Photos courtesy of:
US National Library of
Congress ▶

the punishment meted out to a rebellious a son – stoning. This ancient educational method originates with the legend that connects this burial site to Absalom, the beloved son of King David, who rebelled against his father and who was killed while escaping from David when his hair became entangled in the thick branches of a tree. In the 1920s, when archaeologists came to investigate the site, they were forced to first remove a huge pile of stones over three meters high.

Jewish tradition links the monument to the monument built by Absalom, as noted in the verse from the book of Samuel II (18:18): “Now Absalom in his lifetime had taken and built for himself the pillar, which is in the king's valley...” However, in reality, this tomb has been dated by archaeologists to the 1st century CE, about a thousand years after Absalom.

And from the lesson we learned about rebellious sons, we should take another look at Absalom's Pillar and have a short lesson in Hebrew

language. The Hebrew word “yad” also means a statue or memorial (in addition to its other meaning, “hand”). Above or alongside the tomb was a statue, in this case a carved roof, known as a nefesh (“soul”) – a Jewish funerary monument similar to the Greek stele and meant for the soul of the departed.



Priests from the family of Hezir – The Tomb of Bnei Hezir

A three-line Hebrew inscription located above the entrance to this burial cave indicates that buried here are priests from the family of Hezir: “This is the tomb and the nefesh (funerary monument) of Eliezer, Hania, Yoezer, Yehuda, Shimon, Yohanan sons of Yosef son of Oved Yosef and Elazar sons of Hania, priests of the Hezir family.” Thus the inscription indicates that this site was a family burial cave for a several generations of well-known priests from the Hezir family. The Bible mentions a family of priests by the name of Hezir (Chronicles I, 24:15). This is the name of one of Jerusalem's wealthy families which was part of the 24 families who undertook the shifts of priestly duties at the Temple (the priests of the Hezir family had the 17th watch). During the Second Temple Period the father is mentioned as one of the leaders who signed Nehemiah's covenant (Nehemiah, 10:21), although we have no way of knowing whether there is any connection between this Biblical



Photo: Max Richardson

family and the Second Temple Period family since here, as with Absalom's Pillar, the tomb and the inscription are dated several hundred years later than the Biblical citation.

Although the inscription indicates the "nefesh," the funerary monument, it would appear that this was destroyed over the years. The tomb has been dated to the Hasmonean Period and was entirely carved into the bedrock. In the front are two pillars with Doric capitals, above which is a decorated cornice.

Christian tradition identifies the tomb as that of St. James, the younger brother of Jesus, who

was thrown from the walls of the Temple Mount into the Kidron Valley because of his devotion to Christianity.

The prophet's revenge – Tomb of Zechariah

Zechariah son of Yehoyada the priest waged a fierce battle against idol worship in the Holy Temple and severely reprimanded the Jewish people. The people were angry with him, and as such they stoned him to death in the Temple courtyard. A



▲
Photos courtesy of:
US National Library of
Congress

tradition dating from the Middle Ages links this tomb to the prophet Zechariah and the Jewish sages, who were shocked by the cruel murder of this man of God in the Holy Temple, told that the moment of revenge would be swift in coming: When the Babylonian army laid siege to Jerusalem and conquered the city, Nebuzaradan, the cruel captain of Nebuchadnezzar's guard, went to the Temple courtyard and stared at Zechariah's blood, which didn't stop bubbling. Nebuzaradan asked in wonder about the blood and why it wouldn't stop bubbling. The people responded, "There

was a prophet among us who used to reprove us for our irreligion, and we rose up against him and killed him, and for many years his blood has not rested. He said to them, 'I will appease him.' He brought the great Sanhedrin and the small Sanhedrin and killed them over him, but the blood did not cease. He then slaughtered young men and women, but the blood did not cease. He brought schoolchildren and slaughtered them over it, but the blood did not cease. So he said, 'Zechariah, Zechariah. I have slain the best of them; do you want me to destroy them all?' When he said this to him, it stopped." (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Gittin, 57b).

The monument is carved into a single stone in the bedrock (monolith) and is dated to the end of the Second Temple Period during the 1st century CE. The monument has several elements with an Egyptian influence, such as the pyramid-shaped roof, as well as Greek influences, as seen from the Greek style of the pillar capitals.

Above us are the slopes of the Mt. of Olives with its hundreds of graves. Further details about the Mt. of Olives cemetery are available in the booklet of the tour entitled "Mt. of Olives."

10

Siloam Pool

A dirt path continues and descends towards the neighborhood of Silwan, the Village of Shiloah, an Arab neighborhood built on the steep sides of the hills about the Kidron Valley. We can return to the paved path and follow it up to the southeastern corner of the Old City walls, to the City of David or to the Western Wall through the Dung Gate.

Those continuing along the channel of the Kidron Valley will reach a broad plaza on the right-hand side, the plaza around the Gihon Spring. You can see the opening to the Siloam Tunnel and those wishing to enter can go up to the entrance plaza from the City of David site.

-  Siloam Pool –
City of David
National Park
-  *6033
-  Sun.-Thurs.
winter:
9:00-17:00
summer:
9:00-19:00
Fri., holiday eves:
9:00-13:00
-  Entrance fee

From this point you can continue along the promenade leaving the splendid Siloam Pool plaza that was recently uncovered, and to the stepped path that leads towards the Western Wall.



REST ROOMS

Beit Orot parking lot,
Near the visitor center on the Mt. of Olives.

Writing: Nirit Shalev-Khalifa

Photo: Baruch Gian

Photos courtesy of: City of David – Ancient Jerusalem Archive

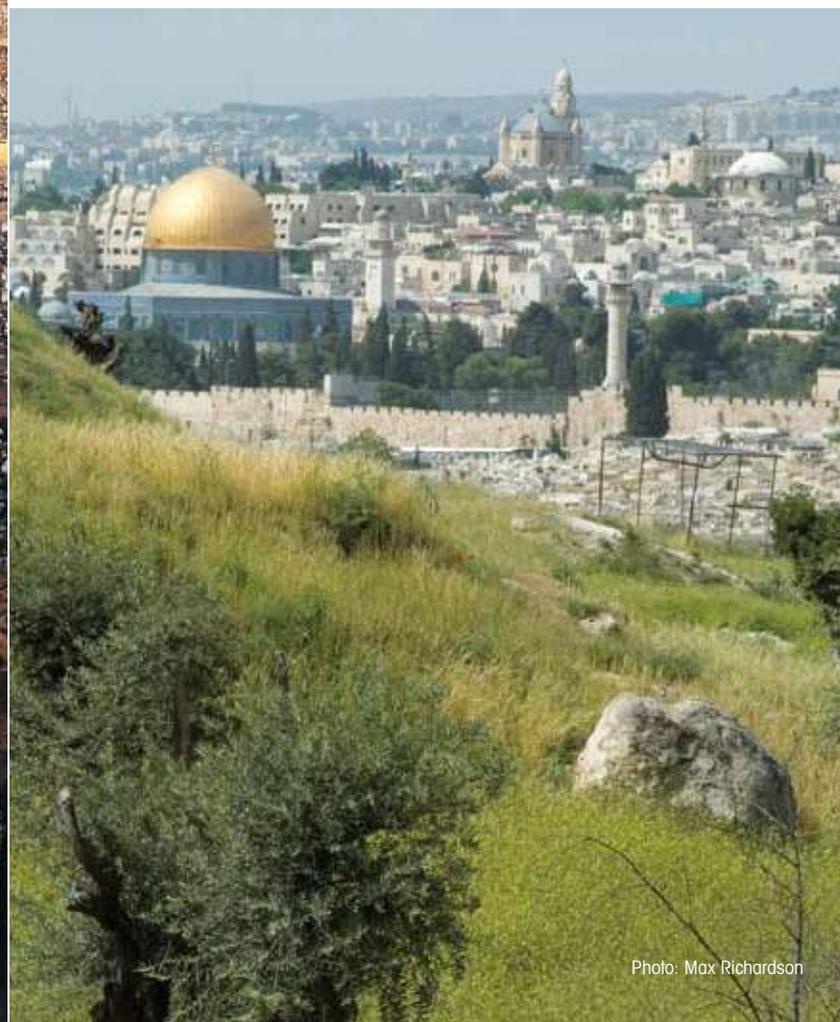
US National Library of Congress

Historical photos courtesy of Yoel Amir collection

Maps: Tour-Man.com, designed by Luda Goykhman

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Project management: Iky Bar-Yosef, Tourism consultation & managing



LEGEND:

- 1 EMEK TZURIM NATIONAL PARK
- 2 TEMPLE MOUNT SIFTING PROJECT
- 3 ORSON HYDE MEMORIAL PARK
- 4 THE CHURCH OF ALL NATIONS
- 5 CHURCH OF THE TOMB OF THE VIRGIN
- 6 BURIAL MONUMENTS IN THE KIDRON VALLEY
- 7 "YAD AVSHALOM" – ABSALOM'S PILLAR
- 8 THE TOMB OF BNEI HEZIR
- 9 TOMB OF ZECHARIAH
- 10 SILOAM POOL

-  STARTING POINT
-  ENDING POINT
-  INFORMATION CENTER
-  PARKING
-  REST ROOMS
-  BUS STATION
-  FOOTPATH
-  OLD CITY WALL
-  LOOKOUT POINT

