

THE VIA DOLOROSA

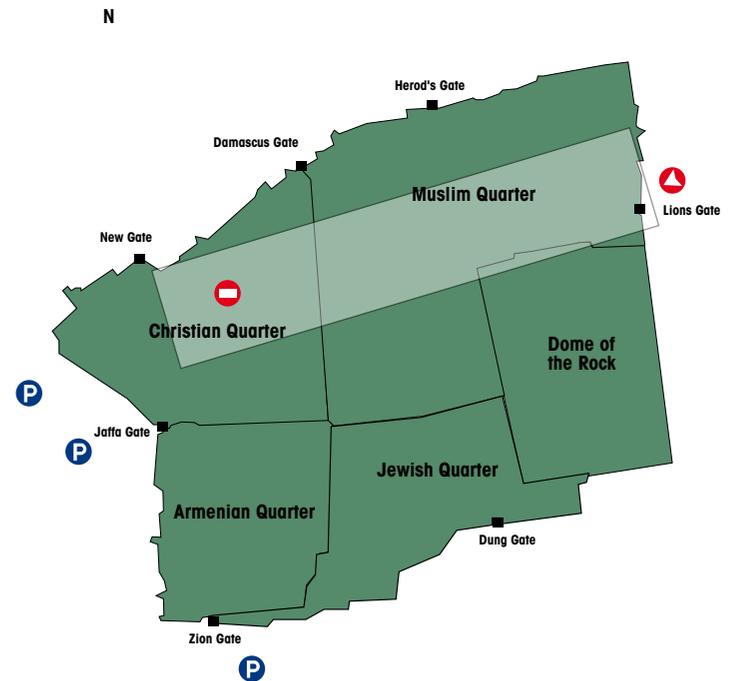
THE WAY OF THE CROSS



JERUSALEM
THE OLD CITY
העיר העתיקה
البلدة القديمة

The Old City Walking Tours
A GUIDE FOR THE INDEPENDENT TOURIST

	Starting point:	The Lions Gate
	Ending point:	The Church of the Holy Sepulcher
	Tour length:	3-4 hours
	Parking:	We recommend parking in the lots near the Jaffa Gate – the Carta and Alrov parking lots (Yitzhak Kariv Street) and from there take public transportation or a taxi to the starting point of the tour.
	Public transportation:	Buses 1, 2, 3, Bus 99
	Information:	Jaffa gate Information Center: 02-6271422 Christian Information Center: 02-6272692
	Visiting hours at the Churches:	08:00-12:00, 14:00-17:00 (in Summer until 18:00) The churches are closed on Sundays and Christian holidays
	Notice:	Entrance to holy sites requires modest dress



Prime Minister's Office



The Jerusalem Municipality



הרשות לפיתוח ירושלים
THE JERUSALEM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Jesus came to Jerusalem on the eve of Passover, accompanied by his disciples. The events that took place during the week following his arrival in the city until his crucifixion and resurrection have become the foundations of the Christian faith.

After eating with his disciples (“the Last Supper”) Jesus went to Gethsemane. It is here that he was caught, handed over to the Romans and sentenced to die on the cross. The path Jesus walked from the place of his judgment to the site of his crucifixion is sacred in Christianity and is known as the “Via Dolorosa” – the Way of Suffering. Fourteen stations along this path signify events that are mentioned in the New Testament and later Christian tradition, and various Christian sects emphasize certain traditions and stations over others.

The current route of the Via Dolorosa was set down during the Middle Ages, and it originates with events from the 1st century CE, but their significance for believers crosses the boundaries of time and space.



Lions at the gates to the city – the Lions Gate

The gate gets its name from the pairs of stone “lions” seen on either side of the gate’s façade. Legend has it that Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent, who built the walls around the Old City in the 16th century, dreamed about lions who were about to devour him because he had not seen to the defense of the city of Jerusalem. Upon awakening he ordered that the walls be built and that lions be placed at the city’s gate. There are those who believe that they are actually panthers, the crest of the Mameluke sultan Baybars, and it would seem that they were originally part of an older building. In Arabic the gate is known as Bab Sitt Maryam, named for the Virgin Mary, mother of Jesus, who is buried at the foot of the Kidron Valley. In Christian tradition the gate is called St. Stephen’s Gate for St. Stephen, the first Christian martyr, who was stoned to death. During Easter Week, Palm Sunday processions pass through the gate on their way from the Mount of Olives to the Old City, following the tradition of Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem. During the Six Day War, IDF paratroopers breached this gate in order to reach the Old City.

At the top of the gate is a small turret. In Arabic this is known as a meshikuli, from the English “machicolation,” a small parapet or turret through which it is possible to observe those entering the city and if necessary – to pour boiling oil or tar on your enemies.

We enter through the gate (the entrance to the Temple Mount is on our left), and continue along Lion’s Gate Road (Derekh Sha’ar Ha-Arayot) until we reach a large opening on the right.

Healing and mercy – St. Anne's Church and the Pool of Bethesda

Christian tradition identifies St. Anne's Church as the home of Anne (Hannah) and Joachim, the parents of Mary, mother of Jesus, and this is the origin of its name. It was built in the 12th century and it is one of the most beautiful Crusader churches in Israel. In 1192, after the fall of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem, Saladin turned the church into the Salahiyye theological school for the study of the Qur'an, which is commemorated in an inscription above the entrance to the church. In the 19th century the compound was given to the French Order of the White Fathers.

Behind the church are the remains of ancient pools, a Roman temple and churches. The pools have been identified with the Pool of Bethesda mentioned in the New Testament, where Jesus



healed a crippled man by speaking to him. During the Roman Period this site was the location of a temple to Asclepius, the Roman god of healing. A church was built over the ruins of the temple and the pool in the 5th century, and today we can see the great arches that supported the floors. Edited to here

We proceed along the street until we reach a stairway on the left.

The first Station of the Cross: The condemnation of Jesus

This is where the Antonia Fortress stood, which housed the Roman guard. This is why the site is connected to Jesus' trial by the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate. During the Ottoman Period the fortress housed a barracks, prison and government seat, and tribunals were held here. For the Christian faithful there is some support for the historical connection and the belief that Jesus was tried here. The steps Jesus used to descend from the location of his trial to the street were sent to Rome during the 4th century to the Scala Sancta Church – the Church of the Holy Steps.

Today this is the site of the Al-Omariya School for Boys. Friday afternoons a Franciscan procession leaves from here, which continues down the length of the Via Dolorosa.



The second Station of the Cross: Jesus is given his cross

Before us are two churches – the Chapel of the Flagellation to the right (east) and the Chapel of the Taking Up of the Cross, to the left. The Chapel of the Flagellation marks the affliction of Jesus after his trial, and the entrance to the church is adorned with a relief similar to the crown of thorns the mocking Roman soldiers placed upon

We enter the courtyard of the Franciscan compound on the opposite (northern) side of the street.

the head of Jesus. There are also stained glass windows, one of which depicts Pilate washing his hands – a gesture symbolic of his being innocent of responsibility for the crucifixion, because after Pilate offered to release a prisoner from jail in honor of the Passover holiday, the people preferred that he free the prisoner named Barabbas, rather than freeing Jesus.

The Chapel of the Taking Up of the Cross was built on the ruins of a Byzantine church. Its floor contains street paving stones from the 2nd century CE, with grooves intended to keep horses and carriages from slipping on the smooth stone. This is the flooring known as the Lithostrotos. On the decorations we can see Pilate (who is washing his hands) sending Jesus for crucifixion and the placing of the cross on Jesus' shoulders. In the courtyard are wooden crosses, and contemporary pilgrims carry these on their backs during processions along the Via Dolorosa. The compound, which also houses a Franciscan academy and institute, was built in the 20th century. The institute includes a library and a museum.



Photo: Sarit Pery

We continue until we reach the Stairs of the Nuns (to the right).

5

Behold the man! The Ecce Homo Arch

Above the street is the Ecce Homo Arch ("Behold the man" in Latin). According to the New Testament, these were the words uttered by the Roman procurator when he presented Jesus to the people before being sentenced.

The arch was built in the 2nd century CE during the time of Emperor Hadrian, as the entrance gate leading into the Roman Forum (the public square). On either side were two smaller arches: The northernmost small arch was integrated into the Ecce Homo Basilica. Also located nearby is the Convent of the Sisters of Zion, where ancient ruins were found beneath its foundations. There is an archaeological site here with diagrams and



finds from the excavations (entrance is from the Street of the Nuns; there is an entrance fee). Farther along the street and to the right we can go up and view the side arch. Also on the street is the Greek Orthodox Praetorium (the Prison of Christ).

The Third Station of the Cross: Jesus falls for the first time

To our right is a Polish Catholic church which was actually purchased by Armenian Catholics based in Poland. The relief at the entrance depicts Jesus falling for the first time under the weight of the cross as he walked along the Via Dolorosa. The church compound stretches along the street until the Fourth Station of the Cross. The present chapel was built in 1947 through donations made

We turn left on to Rechov Hagay. On the left is the entrance to the Third and Fourth Stations of the Cross. We enter through the iron fence, to an opening with a sign above it that reads III STATIO.)

6



Photo: Sarit Pery

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The Fourth Station of the Cross: Jesus meets his mother

According to tradition, the Virgin Mary stood here and observed the sufferings of her son as he carried the cross on his way to his death. We are at the ancient street level underneath the Armenian Catholic Church of our Lady of the Spasm, built in 1881. Archaeological remains from former Byzantine buildings were found on the site, including a mosaic floor from the 5th century CE. The mosaic depicts a pair of sandals, reminiscent of the sandals mentioned in a later tradition and symbolizing the place where Mary stood weeping for her son and his fate. This is the source of the name of the church ("spasm" here referring to an emotional state resulting from extreme sorrow or grief). We ascend the stairs into the Armenian Catholic church, where wall paintings depict the events of the Third and Fourth Stations of the Cross.

Photo: Sarit Pery

We exit the church and turn left to Rechov Hagay, then right onto the Via Dolorosa. On the left is the Fifth Station of the Cross.

8

The Fifth Station of the Cross: Simon of Cyrene

"As they led him away they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus" (Luke, 23). At this site the Roman soldiers forced passersby to offer assistance to those who had been sentenced, as they began the final ascent towards the crucifixion hill. This is the Chapel of Simon of Cyrene. To the

Photo: Sarit Pery

right of the lintel, near the corner of the wall at shoulder height, is a smooth stone with a hollow. According to Christian tradition this hollow was an imprint made when Jesus stumbled and rested his hand upon the wall to keep his balance, and the touch of centuries of pilgrims has smoothed out the stone and made the depression deeper. The chapel belongs to the Franciscans, as indicated by the symbol on the building's façade: The "Jerusalem cross" consisting of one large cross with four smaller crosses in either corner, the cross that was adopted by the Franciscan order; and the symbol of the Franciscans depicting the crossed arms of Jesus and St. Francis of Assisi underneath a dove that symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

The Sixth Station of the Cross: Veronica's house

When the suffering Jesus walked up the hill, a woman exited her house and wiped the sweat from his face. The woman is known as Veronica, perhaps a combination of the words vera ("true" in Latin) and icon ("image" in Greek), derived from a tradition that the cloth used to wipe his face bore the image of Christ and came to be known as the Veil of Veronica. The original cloth made its way to Rom and was used to heal the Emperor Tiberius, and remained there. To the right is the entrance to the compound of the Little Sisters of Jesus, where they make and sell icons (religious images).

Photo: Sarit Pery

We continue walking up the street until we reach a wooden door on the left, above which is a stone arch with the inscription "VI", to the right of which is a pillar sunk into the wall.

9



Photo: Sarit Pery

We ascend the street to Rechov Beit Habad (Street of the Olive press) and go into the entrance before us, with the inscription "VII".

9

The Seventh Station of the Cross: The Gate of Judgment, Jesus falls for the second time

This is the gate through which Jesus left the city of Jerusalem for his crucifixion outside the city, and here his guilt was proclaimed: He was declared as the "King of the Jews," a proclamation that meant rebellion against the Roman empire. According to a later tradition Jesus fell a second time, on the threshold of the gate (the Russians identify this gate as being in a nearby compound owned by them). At the entrance we see the base of a Roman column that stood on the ancient thoroughfare, the *Cardo Maximus*, whose path and commercial nature are preserved to this very day.

We exit to the right and go up al-Khanqah Road, until we reach a round stone and an inscription on the wall to the left.

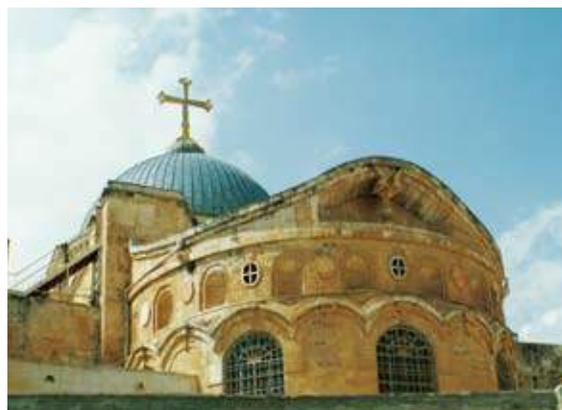


The Eighth Station of the Cross: The daughters of Jerusalem

The Greek inscription we seen the stone means "Jesus Christ Conquers" (the letters at the bottom, NI and KA make up the Greek word "nika" which means "to conquer" and the letters IC and XC are the first and last letters from the Greek words for Jesus Christ, IHCOYC XPICTOC). This site is associated with Jesus' warning to the daughters of Jerusalem, who followed him and lamented him: "...Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children..." (Luke, 23). The wall belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church of St. Charambalos. The building blocks our path towards the crucifixion site, and therefore we must go around.

The Ninth Station of the Cross: Jesus falls for the third time

The pillar marks the place where Jesus fell for the third time. This is the last Station of the Cross before the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, the climax of the *Via Dolorosa*. Nearby is the Coptic compound. Beneath are chambers and an ancient water cistern named for St. Helena, mother of the Emperor Constantine, who came to Jerusalem in the 4th century and identified all of the Christian holy sites.



We go back down towards Rechov Beit Habad (Street of the Olive press) and turn right. Farther along the street we turn right and go up the stairs to an alleyway that turns right and then left. After the arch is a pillar with the inscription "IX".

We enter through the doorway to the left and come out in a courtyard at the center of which is a round building.

A rooftop Ethiopian village – Deir as-Sultan

We are standing on the roof of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in a compound known as Deir as-Sultan, which is occupied by Ethiopian monks. According to their tradition the Ark of the Covenant was taken from the Holy Temple in Jerusalem to Aksum, Ethiopia, by the son of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, who was born in the wake of her visit to Jerusalem. The Ark is believed to be kept in Ethiopia to this very day. Ethiopian Christian tradition follows many customs that are said to date back to early Judaism.

We go through the low opening opposite us and descend two flights of stairs and exit into the outer courtyard of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.



The Church of the Holy Sepulcher

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, in front of which we are now standing, was built in its present form during the Crusader Period. When it was originally constructed in the 4th century CE it was larger and was known as the Church of the Resurrection, actually referring to Jesus' resurrection from the grave. In the



13th century the keys to the church were handed over to a Muslim family, and they are still responsible for opening the doors at sunrise and locking them at sunset. Most of the compound is run by the Greek-Orthodox, the Catholic and the Armenian sects, with smaller chapels have been set aside for the Coptic Orthodox and the Syrian Orthodox. In the 19th century a "status quo" was signed, an agreement that defines the ownership of the different sects and arrangements for worship and other ceremonies at the church; this agreement is still in effect today. To our left is a bell tower that was built during the Crusader Period.

The Tenth Station of the Cross – Jesus is stripped of his garments

Beneath the silver dome to the right is the chapel that commemorates where Jesus was stripped of his garments, which were distributed among those who placed him on the cross. This was the place from which pilgrims would climb up to Calvary (the Latin name for the site of the crucifixion) during the time of the Crusaders.

-  The Church of the Holy Sepulcher
-  Summer 05:00-20:00
- Winter 05:00-19:00

We enter through the gate and ascend the stairs to the right.

The Eleventh Station of the Cross – Jesus is nailed to the cross

Here Jesus was nailed to the cross, as depicted in the mosaic we see across from us. A crusader mosaic in the ceiling describes Jesus as the ruler of the world, and on the wall is an image of the Binding of Isaac which, according to ancient tradition, actually took place at Calvary – hinting at the crucifixion of Jesus and his resurrection. This section of the compound belongs to the Catholic Church and is therefore known as the Latin Calvary; the area on the left (the Twelfth Station of the Cross) belongs to the Greek Orthodox Church and is called the Greek Orthodox Calvary.

The Twelfth Station of the Cross: Jesus dies on the cross

In the New Testament the place where Jesus was crucified is called Golgotha (from the Aramaic word for “skull”). Tradition says that Adam was buried underneath the Rock of Golgotha and that Jesus’ blood dripped onto Adam’s skull, symbolizing atonement for Adam’s Original Sin (in the Garden of Eden). Part of the rock is visible in the Chapel of Adam, beneath us, especially the red veins in the stone which are thought to be the blood of Christ. In the background we see Jesus on the cross and above him is his indictment “This is Jesus the King of the Jews.” Below the altar is a round niche in which the cross stood. A long line of people waits to visit this site, and the faithful prostrate themselves in holy awe.

The Thirteenth Station of the Cross: Jesus is taken down from the cross

Between the previous Stations of the Cross is a statue of the Virgin Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, and above this is an arch that says “Stabat Mater” (“the mother





stood"). In Catholic tradition this is where Mary stood and observed her son on the cross; other traditions place this spot at the entrance to the church.

This is the Stone of Unction, where the body of Jesus was laid out and anointed with oil and spices in preparation for burial. Pilgrims who visit here kiss the stone and bring cloths that have been soaked in oil. The mosaic on the wall depicts the removal of Jesus from the cross, his anointing and his burial in the cave.



The Fourteenth Station of the Cross: Jesus is laid in the tomb and is resurrected

Jesus was removed from the cross as the Sabbath was approaching, and there was no time to find him a proper burial site. A man by the name of Joseph of Aramathea offered his family's burial cave that was located nearby, and thus the location of the most holy site in Christianity was decided. When Mary, Jesus' mother returned to the tomb on Sunday with Mary Magdalene in order to arrange for a more permanent tomb they did not find his body, and an angel told them of his miraculous resurrection.



The Tomb of Jesus is located in the center of a round hall, inside a rectangular structure known as the Edicule. Leading to it is the Chapel of the Angel, which contains a piece of the stone that was rolled in front of Jesus' tomb and opened at the time of the resurrection; in an interior room is the Holy Sepulcher, the Tomb of Jesus. Every year on Holy Saturday (the day before Easter) the Holy Fire ceremony is celebrated as the Greek Orthodox Patriarch enters the Tomb and

We descend to the entrance level and proceed to a flat stone with lamps hanging above it.

We pass by the Stone of Unction and enter a round, pillared hall.



REST ROOMS

Lions Gate
Winter: Sun.-Sat. 7:00-17:00
Summer: Sun.-Sat. 8:00-18:00

The corner of Hagai Street and Via Dolorosa
Winter: Sun.-Sat. 7:00-17:00
Summer: Sun.-Sat. 8:00-18:00

Muristan – Aftimos Market
Winter: Sun.-Sat. 7:00-17:00
Summer: Sun.-Sat. 8:00-18:00

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Photo: Michael Halpern
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prays. The Holy Fire, symbolizing the Resurrection of Jesus, descends from Heaven, lights the candle in the hand of the Patriarch and the flame is passed along to the believers standing around him. Behind the tomb is a Coptic chapel and opposite the entrance to the chapel is a Roman burial cave, evidence of the fact that this was once a burial site.

Across from the entrance to the cave is the Greek Orthodox Catholicon that contains a round vase containing a large ball. This is known as the omphalos and signifies what is thought to be the center of the world. From the center of the Catholicon it is possible to descend into the Armenian Chapel of St. Helena, and to the cave that houses the Chapel of the finding of the True Cross, where Helena discovered "the True Cross" of Jesus, which was later lost during the fall of the Crusaders, and sacred pieces of which are scattered in churches around the world.

Our tour ends here. Those who are interested may wander around the markets and bazaars located near the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (see the tour "Markets in the Old City") and exit the Old City either through the Jaffa Gate or the New Gate.





MUSLIM QUARTER

CHRISTIAN QUARTER

THE TEMPLE MOUNT



- LEGEND:**
- 1 THE LIONS GATE
 - 2 ST. ANNE'S CHURCH & THE POOL OF BETHSADA
 - 3 THE FIRST STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 4 THE SECOND STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 5 THE ECCE HOMO ARCH
 - 6 THE THIRD STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 7 THE FOURTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 8 THE FIFTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 9 THE SIXTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 10 THE SEVENTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 11 THE EIGHTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 12 THE NINTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 13 DEIR AS-SULTAN
 - 14 THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHER
 - 15 THE TENTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 16 THE ELEVENTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 17 THE TWELFTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 18 THE THIRTEENTH STATION OF THE CROSS
 - 19 THE FOURTEENTH STATION OF THE CROSS

- STARTING POINT
- ENDING POINT
- REST ROOMS
- OLD CITY WALL

JERUSALEM ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK - DAVIDSON CENTER