

Tel Aviv

تل ابيب

תל אביב



Jerusalem may only be 80km up the road, but culturally, socially and psychologically it may as well be a million miles away. While Jerusalemites flock to the holy sites, Tel Avivans hit the clubs. Kippas are swapped for sun visors, gefilte fish for sushi and quarried stone for poured concrete. If it's 3000 years of history you're after, head for the hills, but if you're dead set on partying by the Med shores, pack your volleyball and bathing suit and visit the city by the sea.

After a few days in Tel Aviv (or TA as it's affectionately known by expats) you may start to wonder if there is such thing as a weekend. The city seems to be on permanent holiday and at any time of day or night you can saunter down a main street and find crowded cafés, joggers, beach bums and dog walkers. Business is casual and no-one owns a suit.

The city combines its liberal, laissez faire attitude with low-level development and interconnected neighbourhoods. A short walk leads you from the glamorous beachside hotels to the exotic Yemenite Quarter to fashionable Rothschild Blvd.

While you could spend weeks sightseeing in Jerusalem, the main attractions of Tel Aviv can be done in a couple of days. The real reason to visit might be to escape the tourist hordes and enjoy a city that boasts fantastic cuisine, a heaving nightlife and pleasant tree-lined streets that spill into the Mediterranean Sea. Tel Avivans will tell you it's the greatest city on earth, so spend a few days and find out why.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Diving into the warm Mediterranean or digging your toes into the sand at one of the city **beaches** (p164)
- Dressing up and getting down – Tel Aviv is home to some of the hottest **nightclubs** (p177) in the Middle East
- Visiting the **Diaspora Museum** (p158) – a fine introduction to Jewish history and the Diaspora
- Delighting in the magical sea views of **Jaffa** (p182), an ancient Arab port with a lively junk market and cheap eats
- Slipping on a pair of super-sized sunglasses and shopping till you drop on ultra-trendy **Sheinken St** (p157)



■ TELEPHONE CODE: 03

■ POPULATION: 1,160,000

HISTORY
Out of Jaffa

While the history of Jerusalem is a grand biblical epic, the making of Tel Aviv is a modern short story centred on drive and ambition coupled with town planning blunders.

Tel Aviv was begun by small groups of Jews who wished to migrate from the

cramped and unsanitary confines of long-established, predominantly Arab Jaffa. Initially they settled in two small communities, Neve Tzedek (1886) and Neve Shalom (1890), among the dunes on the sandy coastal plain just north of the Arab town. Before long they were joined by another 60 families who were led by Meir Dizengoff, an

ambitious figure who had plans to create a major Jewish town.

Taking as a model the English garden city, several town planners were invited to submit schemes for the new town. The plan adopted was that of Professor Boris Schatz, founder of the Bezalel Art School in Jerusalem. It centred on what is now Herzl St and the new town was given the name Tel Aviv (Hill of Spring), from a reference in Ezekiel 3:15.

Eccentric Town Planning

Progress on the new town was briefly halted when the Turks broke up the settlement and expelled the Jews from the area, but with the British victory in WWI, development was permitted to continue. Arab riots in Jaffa in 1921 sent many Jews fleeing for Tel Aviv, swelling the numbers from a founding 550 people in 65 homes to an outsized 40,000 inhabitants.

The town grew quickly to accommodate the newcomers, but the development was on occasion a little eccentric. Allenby St, for instance, planned as the new main thoroughfare, was meant to run north-south parallel to the seafront but it was diverted in order to reach a coffeehouse on the beach. The Neve Shanan district in the south was planned in the shape of the seven-branched menorah merely because of the associated Jewish symbolism. And

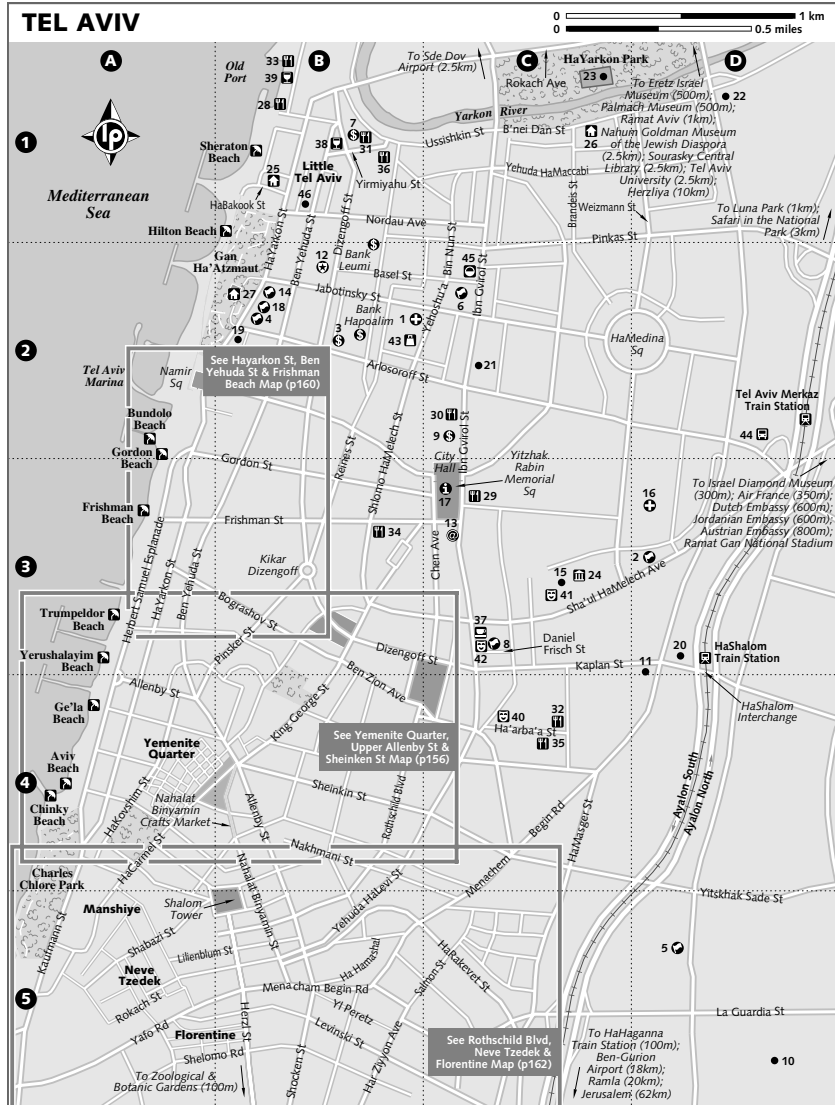
the immigrants kept coming. The 1930s saw waves of arrivals from overseas, many fleeing the threat of Nazi Germany.

When war did break out in 1939, Tel Aviv played host to about two million Allied troops. It also became a centre of the Zionist resistance against Britain's anti-immigration policies. In 1948, as the British pulled out, Jewish forces attacked Jaffa and after bloody fighting most of the Arab population fled, leaving the old town in Israeli hands.

All this was a far cry from the English garden city envisaged just 40 years earlier.

Bouncing Back

Tel Aviv's growth in the 1960s and '70s sent it crashing into other cities, turning neighbours such as Ramat Gan and Holon into virtual suburbs of the greater municipality. Early restrictions on the height of buildings had to be amended when authorities realised the only place to go was up. Skyscraper development began in earnest in the 1980s, and with it came a hi-tech boom. Development in this area did not go unrecognised and *Newsweek* recently called Tel Aviv one of the world's top 10 tech cities. Investment, however, was hampered in the 1990s by a wave of suicide bomb attacks that targeted buses, cafés and nightclubs. The second intifada



INFORMATION	Azrieli Observatory(see 20)	Tapeo.....	35 C4
Assuta Hospital.....	1 B2	Bowling Tel Aviv.....	21 C2
Australian Embassy.....	2 D3	Centre of Arts (Mishkan Ha'Omanuyut).....(see 41)	
Bank Leumi.....	3 B2	Helena Rubenstein Pavilion of Contemporary Art.....(see 24)	
British Embassy.....	4 B2	Mini Golf.....	22 D1
Canadian Embassy.....	5 D5	Olympus Climbing Wall.....(see 23)	
Egyptian Embassy.....	6 C2	Skate Park.....(see 23)	
Exchange Bureau.....	7 B1	Sportek.....	23 C1
German Embassy.....	8 C3	Tel Aviv Museum of Art.....	24 C3
Hapoalim Bank.....	9 C2	ENTERTAINMENT	
Irish Embassy.....(see 8)		Cinematheque.....	40 C4
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Swiss Embassy.....	14 B2	SHOPPING	
Tel Aviv Central Library.....	15 C3	Couple Of.....	43 B2
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TEL AVIV

TEL AVIV

(2001–05) left Tel Aviv virtually devoid of foreign visitors. But investment still flows, sometimes in a big way: in 2006 Donald Trump announced the construction of a new 70-storey building in Ramat Gan. Despite its vibrancy and upward movements, Tel Aviv is at heart a low-key city, much of its centre still dominated by unobtrusive Bauhaus architecture. In 2003 Unesco recognised this and bequeathed the 'White City' with world heritage status.

ORIENTATION

Tel Aviv is a large conglomeration of connecting suburbs sprawling across a coastal plain. Most of your time will be spent in the city's well-defined central district, which occupies about 6km of seafront estate and is focused on four main streets running north–south, more or less parallel to the beach line. Closest to the sand is hotel-lined Herbert Samuel Esplanade, while a block inland is the central backpacker accommodation area, Ben Yehuda St. Further back is the trendy shopping zone, Dizengoff, and then more or less marking the easternmost limit of central Tel Aviv is Ibn Gvirol St. These all run virtually the entire length of the central city area, from the northern tip bordered by the Yarkon River, down as far as Allenby St and the Yemenite Quarter, the original 1930s centre of town.

Allenby St, almost a continuation of Ben Yehuda St, is a fifth major street, which runs south from the city centre towards the central bus station.

Maps

The English-language *Tel Aviv-Jaffa Tourist map* is an excellent resource and available from the Tourist Information Centre (p154). Most hotels also have the free *Tourist Map of Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv's Modern Movement – Site Plan* (30NIS) indicates where to find the various styles of Bauhaus and eclectic architecture across the city, plus descriptions of the buildings. It is available at the Bauhaus Centre (see p159).

INFORMATION

BOOKSHOPS

The following shops all offer English-language titles.

Halper's (Map p162; ☎ 629 9710; 87 Allenby St) Used English-language books.

Lametayel (Map p156; ☎ 616 3411; www.lametayel.com; Dizengoff Shopping Centre) Specialist shop for travel books and maps. It carries a full range of Lonely Planet guidebooks and promotes loitering – there is a comfy sitting room with beanbags and cushions, and also a useful board posting messages to others looking for travel partners.

Nun Bet Books (Map p156; ☎ 620 4818; 13 Idelson St) Used books and artwork.

Steimatzky (Map p162; ☎ 522 1513; 103 Allenby St) Chain bookstore; other locations include the central bus station, Dizengoff Centre, the Opera Tower Centre and 109 Dizengoff St.

EMERGENCY

Ambulance (☎ 101)

Fire (☎ 102)

Police (☎ 100)

TEL AVIV IN...

Two Days

Kick off day one with a self-guided bike tour to familiarise yourself with the city. Take along the *Tel Aviv – The White City* map, which describes the different architectural styles of the city. Lunch on fashionable Sheinken St before exploring the **Carmel Market** (p155) and the **Yemenite Quarter** (p155). The best days to visit this part of town are Tuesday or Friday, as nearby Nahalat Binyimin St comes alive with a crafts fair. In the afternoon, head down to Jaffa for a poke around the **flea market** (p184). Wrap up your day with dinner and dancing at the Old Port.

Reserve the morning to see the **Diaspora Museum** (p158) at Tel Aviv University. Later, head down to Rothschild Blvd to visit **Independence Hall** (p161) and the redesigned **Haganah Museum** (p161). Hit the beach in the afternoon and take a stroll around arty **Neve Tzedek** (p161). If you've made prior arrangements, catch some evening drama at the **New Cameri Theatre** (p178). If that's not your style, a pub crawl around posh Rothschild Blvd and Lilienblum St would be a fine way to cap your Tel Aviv tour.

Tourist Police (Map p156; ☎ 516 5382; cnr Herbert Samuel Esplanade & Geula St)

For tourists the best police station to use is the tourist police. Another handy station is at 221 Dizengoff St (☎ 545 4210). The police station at 14 HaRakavet St (☎ 564 4458) has a lost and found service.

INTERNET ACCESS

Inter Fun (Map p156; 20 Allenby St; per hr 13NIS; ☎ 24hr)

Log-In (Map p160; 21 Ben Yehuda St; per hr 15NIS; ☎ 24hr)

Private Link (Map p160; 78 Ben Yehuda St; per hr 13NIS; ☎ 24hr)

Surf-Drink-Play (Map p156; per hr 10NIS; ☎ 24hr)

Three locations, including 77 King George St, 112 Dizengoff St and 65 Ibn Gvirol St.

INTERNET RESOURCES

www.tel-aviv.gov.il/english Official website for the municipality.

www.tel-aviv-insider.com Excellent tips on activities, dining and nightlife.

LAUNDRY

Nameless self-serve **laundrettes** (washing machine 12NIS, dryer 5NIS; ☎ 24hr) are widespread. A few of these include 26 Allenby (near Mugarby Guesthouse), 9 Mendele St (just off Ben Yehuda), Kikar Dizengoff (by the Center Hotel) and 81 Ben Yehuda St. The bar at Momo's Hostel (see p168) also has self-service laundry, affording you the chance to start your pub crawl in sparkling attire.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Left-luggage facilities are available at Ben-Gurion airport for a pricey US\$4 per day.

WI-FI ACCESS

Wireless hotspots are fairly easy to come by in Tel Aviv. Most hotels also offer wireless access, although this is sometimes a pay service. Several streets and public places are wi-fi equipped, including Rothschild Blvd, Sheinken St, Masarik Sq, Ibn Gvirol St and the Old Port restaurant strip. Wi-fi equipped cafés are also plentiful (sometimes advertised with a 'wi-fi' sticker on the window). The best of the bunch are Coffee Bean (p172), Tozeret Haaretz (Map p172), Café Bialik (Map p171), Chocolate Bar (Map p174) and Luche (Map p172).

Most guesthouses and hotels in Tel Aviv have a left-luggage room, charging between 2NIS and 10NIS per day. Many other places that you might expect to have left luggage (such as the central bus station) don't offer this service for security reasons.

LIBRARIES

Salon Mazal (Map p156; ☎ 629 7734; 3 Almonit Alley; ☎ 1-11pm Sun-Thu, 11am-3pm Fri) Small collection includes books on anarchism, gay and lesbian issues, the environment, feminism and globalisation.

Sourasky Central Library (☎ 640 8745; Tel Aviv University; ☎ 9am-7.45pm Sun-Thu, to 12.15pm Fri) Reasonable collection of books in English and a comfortable sitting atmosphere. Wireless internet.

Tel Aviv Central Library (Map p150; ☎ 691 0141; 27 Sha'ul HaMelech Ave; ☎ 10am-7pm Sun-Thu, 9am-noon Fri) Disappointingly small collection.

MEDIA

Time Out Tel Aviv, produced bi-monthly, is a great resource for what's on in the city. It's available at the Tel Aviv Tourist Information Centre and some upscale hotels. The *Jerusalem Post* and the English edition of *Ha'aretz* can be purchased at newsstands and in bookstores.

MEDICAL SERVICES

Tel Aviv has top-quality medical services and hotels can contact a doctor or hospital in case of emergency. Pharmacies are widespread and stock medications from Israel and Europe. Try Superpharm, which has locations at 62 Sheinken St and 131 Dizengoff St. The Dizengoff Centre has several optometrists.

Assuta Hospital (Map p150; ☎ 520 1515; 62 Jabotinsky St) This hospital specialises in surgeries. It also does x-rays and blood tests and has a dental clinic.

Dr Ayaldan (Map p156; ☎ 525 4186; Dizengoff Shopping Centre; ☎ 4-8pm Mon, 3-7pm Tue & Thu, 10am-2pm Fri) Provides a range of dental services, including cleanings for 220NIS.

Physicians for Human Rights (Map p162; ☎ 687 3718/3027; fax 687 3029; 52 Golomb St; ☎ 5-7pm Sun, Tue & Wed) Provides low-price medical assistance (30NIS for the first visit, 10NIS for follow-up visits) for visitors who aren't covered by health insurance in Israel. Basic treatment and examinations only (ie no surgeries or x-rays).

Tel Aviv Medical Center (Ichilov) Hospital (Map p150; ☎ 697 4444 general information, 691 4000; www.tasmc.org.il; 6 Weizmann St) All-in-one hospital with a 24-hour emergency room. It also has a travellers' clinic

BEN YEHUDA & THE REVIVAL OF HEBREW

One of the great achievements of the modern Israeli state was the resurrection of Biblical Hebrew, which had not been used as a common language for a couple of thousand years. After the Jews spread into the Diaspora centuries ago, they adapted to local cultures and picked up the local lingo wherever they settled. Hebrew was preserved in holy texts and in synagogues worldwide but out on the street it was about as useful as Latin is in Rome today.

This started to change when the first Zionists began returning to Palestine in the 19th century. Among them was Eliezer Ben Yehuda, a Lithuanian Jew born on 7 January 1858. Like most children of his age he was introduced to Biblical Hebrew through a thoroughly religious upbringing and came to Palestine in 1881 imbued with the idea of making the previously biblical language a secular tool that would enable Jews from all over the Diaspora to communicate in one unified tongue.

The Hebrew language had been well preserved in the religious texts but on the street Ben Yehuda found himself at a loss when trying to describe things like trains and incandescent light bulbs. He began the task of updating the language while simultaneously spreading it among his peers. His firstborn son was the first all-Hebrew-speaking child in modern history.

His persistence and proselytising paid off and today there are around around seven million Hebrew speakers worldwide. The number of speakers grew tremendously with the influx of Russian Jews to Israel. Globalisation has also had an effect on the language and many new words dealing with computers have had to be made up or borrowed. A classic case of word adoption is the @ symbol, which Israelis call 'strudel' because it looks like the pastry. Officially the Academy of the Hebrew language is charged with creating new words; it has officially coined more than 100,000 of them.

A lot of slang also comes from Arabic. If you hear somebody saying 'Saibaba' they are not whispering the name of the famed Indian saint, they are just saying 'cool, OK,' Arabic-style. You may even hear some Arabic-English hybrid phrases, such as on departure a friend may say: 'Yallah, bye.'

where you can get immunisations (ask for Malram clinic) and an on-site dental clinic.

MONEY

The best currency exchange deals are at the private bureaux that don't charge commission, and there are plenty of them. Addresses for exchange bureaux include 101 Dizengoff St, 114 Dizengoff St, 308 Dizengoff St, 92 Allenby St and 97 HaYarkon St. There are also exchange desks at the foot of the Opera Tower escalator and the top floor of the Dizengoff Centre. These offices are generally open for business Sunday to Thursday from 9am to 9pm and Friday from 9am to 2pm.

Oddly enough, the best place to change a travellers cheque is at a post office, which will do it with no commission. ATMs are available at major banks Leumi, Mizrahi and Hapoalim, one of which can be found on just about any city block and in any shopping mall. Note that the American Express office in Tel Aviv will not change travellers cheques; this is done in Jerusalem.

For more information on changing money, see p395.

POST

Main post office (Map p162; ☎ 564 3650; cnr Mikve Yisra'el & Levontin; ☒ 7am-6pm Sun-Thu, to noon Fri) This is the place to pick up poste restante or use Western Union (☎ 564 3654). Branch offices are included on our maps of Tel Aviv.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist Information Centre City Hall (Map p156; ☎ 521 8214; 69 Ibn Gvirol St, Lobby); Downtown (Map p150; ☎ 516 6188; 46 Herbert Samuel Esplanade). **Tourist Information Office** (Map p160; ☎ 520 7600; www.visitisrael.gov.il; 7 Mendele St; ☒ 8am-4.30 Sun-Thu) This national tourist office can provide info on regions of Israel beyond Tel Aviv.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

American Express (Map p160; ☎ 526 8888; fax 777 8801; nitsam@amex-travel.co.il; Beit El Al Bldg, cnr Ben Yehuda & Shalom Aleichem Sts) Can book flights, but does not handle travellers cheques (this is done in Jerusalem).

ISSTA (Map p160; ☎ 521 0555; www.issta.co.il; 109 Ben Yehuda St) Student travel agency that can sometimes come up with very well-priced airline tickets. It's on the corner with Ben-Gurion. Another branch is in the Dizengoff Shopping Centre.

UNIVERSITIES

Tel Aviv University (☎ 640 8111; www.tau.ac.il; Ramat Aviv 69978) Israel's biggest university is located on a leafy campus a couple of kilometres north of the Yarkon River. Worthy of a wander if you've come up here to see the on-site Diaspora University (see p158).

DANGERS & ANNOYANCES

Tel Aviv is a remarkably safe city and it's perfectly OK to wander around after dark in the central areas. The area around the old bus station is a bit dodgy; it's a haunt for prostitutes, drug dealers and pickpockets, so try to avoid it after dark. For other tips on protecting your personal safety see p387.

SIGHTS

Tel Aviv's main sights are spread all over the city but most are easily connected by bus and certainly by taxi. Locals tend to mass around the shopping area of Kikar Magen David, from where you can easily walk to Sheinken St, the Carmel Market, the Yemenite Quarter and pedestrianised Nahalat Binyamin St.

Further south, in the shadow of the Shalom Tower, you have the more fashionable and upscale Lilienblum St, Rothschild Blvd and Neve Tzedek, the location of the Suzanne Dellal Centre. There are a few places of historical interest in this area, including Independence Hall.

Northern Tel Aviv (north of the Yarkon River and Rokach Ave) has the Diaspora Museum, the Eretz Israel Museum and the Palmach Museum.

There isn't much reason to venture east of Ibn Gvirol St, except to visit the observation deck of the Azrieli Centre or the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. With several places of interest, Jaffa is a destination all its own.

Yemenite Quarter, Upper Allenby St & Sheinken St

What Kikar Magen David lacks in aesthetics, it attempts to make up for in personality. The beating heart of Tel Aviv, with its street performers and throngs of strutting locals, is called Magen David because the six streets that intersect here are representa-

tive of the Israeli six-pointed Star of David (*magen* means 'star of').

From this key axis you plunge into the Carmel Market, shop in the trendy boutiques of Sheinken St, buy crafts on the pedestrianised Nahalat Binyamin St or sniff the aromatic spices of the Yemenite Quarter. Historical Bialik St has a couple of interesting museums and if you are heading up King George St, don't miss Almonit (Anonymous) Alley.

YEMENITE QUARTER

Tel Aviv may be the city that never sleeps, but the **Yemenite Quarter** is one parcel of land smack in the centre that seems to have slumbered though the better part of the 20th century. An exotic oasis of narrow lanes, crumbling houses and smoky kitchens, the neighbourhood is just a couple of blocks away from the hustle and bustle of Allenby St. Its low rent has also attracted a bastion of bohemians and students looking for affordable peace in the city centre.

Recent years have seen redevelopment and the biggest success story has been that of **Nahalat Binyamin St**. Formerly a run-down province of the textile and haberdashery trade, private investment has seen it rejuvenated as a busy pedestrianised precinct full of fashionable cafés and arty shops. Divert your eyes upwards, too, where there are the vestiges of some very elegant architecture. Take note in particular of No 16 (Rosenberg House), No 8 (Degel House) and No 13 (Levy House), with its beautiful tiled panels depicting caravans of camels.

CARMEL MARKET

Passionate free-marketeers pedal everything from fresh-cut flowers to piles of cumin in this frenetic narrow **marketplace** (Map p156), squeezed between the old Yemenite Quarter and Nahalat Binyamin St. This bubbling cauldron of commerce starts at Kikar Magen David, where hippies strum guitars for shekels. You need to push your way past the first few metres of clothing (SpongeBob SquarePants boxer shorts and knock-off Nikes) to reach the more aromatic and enticing stalls of fruits and vegetables, hot breads and spices. When in form, the stallholders have an amusing sales patter, singing songs to promote their goods and often joining in with one another.

1 INFORMATION

- Dr. Ayıldan (see 42)
- Exchange Bureau (see 42)
- Exchange Bureau (see 42)
- Inter Fun (see 42)
- ISSTA (see 42)
- Laundrette (see 42)
- Nun Bet Books (see 42)
- Salon Mazal (see 42)
- South African Embassy (see 42)
- Stematzky (see 42)
- Superpharm (see 42)
- Surf-Drink-Play (see 42)
- Tourist Information Centre (see 42)
- Tourist Police (see 42)

2 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Bialik House (see 42)
- Carmel Market (see 42)
- Herbyod (see 42)
- Isacnia Rubenstein Pavilion (see 42)
- Jacobson Institute (see 42)
- Menor Auditorium (see 42)
- Pura (see 42)
- Reuven Rubín House (see 42)
- Spa Mud Hayam (see 42)
- Surf Point (see 42)
- Swimming pool (see 42)

3 SLEEPING

- Galileo (see 42)
- Golden Beach (see 42)
- Hayakon 48 Hostel (see 42)
- Hotel De La Mer (see 42)
- Hotel Eilat (see 42)
- Hotel Ness-Ziona (see 42)
- Hotel Sea Net (see 42)
- Mercury B&P (see 42)
- Miami Hotel (see 42)
- Mugraby Hotel (see 42)
- Sun City Hotel (see 42)

4 EATING

- Bialik Café (see 42)
- Café Barco (see 42)

5 SHOPPING

- Bezael Market (see 42)
- Dizengoff Centre (see 42)
- Enki by VV (see 42)
- HaMachteret (see 42)
- Krembo Records (see 42)
- MDK (see 42)
- Naama Bezael (see 42)
- Opera Tower Shopping Centre (see 42)
- Photo Film (see 42)

6 TRANSPORT

- Austrian Airlines (see 42)

7 DRINKING

- Costa Nostra (see 42)
- Minzar (see 42)

8 ENTERTAINMENT

- Dizengoff Cinema (see 42)
- Habitat Theatre (see 42)

9 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Herbert Samuel Esplanade (see 42)
- Yerushalayim Beach (see 42)
- Goch's Beach (see 42)
- Aviv Beach (see 42)
- Chinky Beach (see 42)
- Charles Park (see 42)

10 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Yemenite Quarter (see 42)

11 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Nahalat Binjamin Market (see 42)

12 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Allenby St (see 42)

13 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Sheinken St (see 42)

14 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Allenby St (see 42)

15 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Allenby St (see 42)

16 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Allenby St (see 42)

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48 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Allenby St (see 42)

49 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Allenby St (see 42)

50 SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- Allenby St (see 42)

Each of the narrow sidestreets specialises in produce ranging from poultry or fish to dried fruit and nuts or spices sold from sacks. The best prices are to be had as the market closes, especially around 3pm or 4pm Friday, when everyone wants to sell up before the Shabbat.

BIALIK ST

A short street lined with attractive buildings, Bialik is a repository of Tel Avivian history. Look out for the **Reuven Rubín House** (Map p156; ☎ 525 5961; www.rubinmuseum.org.il; 14 Bialik St; ☒ 10am-3pm Mon, Wed-Thu, 10am-8pm Tue, 11am-2pm Sat), the former residence of the artist of the same name. On display is a selection of his work and part of the artist's private collection of photographs and furnishings.

A few doors along is **Bialik House** (Map p156; ☎ 525 4530; 22 Bialik St; admission free; ☒ 9am-5pm Sun-Thu, 10am-2pm Sat), former home of Chaim Nachman Bialik, Israel's national poet. It contains memorabilia connected with his life and work, but it was closed for renovations when we checked.

SHEINKEN ST

Feeling beautiful? Join others who think they are too on Sheinken St, Tel Aviv's answer to Melrose Ave. Up and down this street you'll find boutique shops selling everything from designer sunglasses to the latest line of imported Brazilian bikinis. The main people-watching point is Nafha St, a block in from Kikar Magen David, where you can dine alfresco in a sidewalk café.

KING GEORGE ST

A parade of bargain shops and hole-in-the-wall restaurants marks King George St, a key artery connecting Rabin Sq, the Dizengoff Centre and Kikar Magen David.

Jabotinsky Institute

The **Jabotinsky Institute** (Map p156; ☎ 528 7320; 38 King George St; admission free; ☒ 8am-4pm Sun-Thu) is an historical research organisation with a museum on the 1st floor presenting the history and activities of the national resistance movement, founded and led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky. Several departments show his political, literary and journalistic activities, and also document the creation of the Jewish Legion in WWI (a paramilitary force

set up to aid illegal immigration during the time of the British Mandate).

Almonit (Anonymous) Alley

It's easy to miss this tiny sidestreet while walking up King George St. But as a decidedly non-trendy, alternative hangout, the people that do come here appreciate its obscurity. The alley was originally named after Getzel Shapira, an American Jew who financed civic projects in Tel Aviv in the 1920s. Later, Mayor Dizengoff, irritated that anyone with money could have a street named after themselves, ordered the street names changed and a clerk gave the alley a name that essentially means 'John Doe'.

Almonit sports a café, a secondhand bookshop, a vintage clothing store and a hairdresser fond of outrageous wall art (which is changed every couple of months). The most interesting establishment is **Salon Mazal** (Map p156; ☎ 629 7734; 3 Almonit Alley; ☒ 1-11pm Sun-Thu, 11am-3pm Fri), a combination bookshop, library and café described by one of the volunteers as 'a centre for spreading alternative knowledge'. The café strictly adheres to a vegan menu and changes according to whoever is on duty (and all profits go towards animal rights groups). Pop in at least for some free-trade coffee served with soy milk. Lectures are occasionally held here and they have plenty of brochures and information on local events of interest to activists.

Ramat Aviv & Tel Aviv University

The wealthy suburb of Ramat Aviv is home to the nation's elite (a sort of Park Ave and Beverly Hills rolled into one) as well as **Tel Aviv University**, the nation's future elite. The university campus features some striking modern architecture and its departments cover the widest spectrum of all the country's universities. However, for the visitor, there are a couple of good museums here, one of which, the Diaspora Museum, should not be missed.

A less obvious attraction is **HaYarkon Park**, a green wooded expanse beside the river that offers some respite from the traffic and noise. The river is a little dirty and the surroundings are marred by some prominent electricity pylons, but it doesn't stop students from the nearby campus flocking down here to take advantage of the row boats for hire. On weekends locals come to

the park to enjoy a variety of sports; there is a climbing wall, a skate park, basketball courts and football fields.

DIASPORA MUSEUM

The **Nahum Goldman Museum of the Jewish Diaspora** (☎ 646 2020; www.bh.org.il; Beit Hatefutsoth, 2 Klausner St, Matiyahu Gate, Ramat Aviv; adult/student 34/24NIS; ☎ 10am-4pm Sun-Tue, to 6pm Wed) doesn't actually display any artefacts from the past. Rather, this is a good collection of models, dioramas, films and presentations chronicling the diversity of Jewish life and culture in exile. The main role of the museum, Beth Hatefutsoth in Hebrew, is to relate the unique story of the continuity of the Jewish people through exhibition, education and cultural endeavours. Special attractions in the museum include the Feher Jewish Music Centre, the Douglas E Goldman Jewish Genealogy Centre (where visitors can register their family tree to be preserved for future generations) and a Visual Documentation Centre, which is the largest photo-documentation centre of Jewish life in the world. The beautifully constructed and innovative methods of telling this experience are completely absorbing, and this place can take the best part of a day to get around.

While you are here, it's also worth strolling around the **grounds** of Tel Aviv University. There is a small student centre and café where you can grab snacks, sandwiches and drinks.

To get there take bus No 25 from HaMelech George St, or Reines St near the corner of Frishman St, or take No 27 from the central bus station. Get off at the university, either Matatia Gate No 2 or Frenkel Gate No 7.

ERETZ ISRAEL MUSEUM

The **Eretz Israel Museum** (Land of Israel Museum; ☎ 641 5244; 2 Chaim Levanon St; http://eretzmuseum.org.il; adult/student 35/27NIS; ☎ 9am-3pm Sun-Tue & Thu, 9am-5pm Wed, 10am-2pm Sun) actually consists of 11 linked, small museums built around an archaeological site, Tel Qasile. The museum complex is made up of, among other things, a planetarium, a glass museum, a folklore pavilion, a reconstruction of a medieval bazaar, a ceramics museum and a couple of halls with temporary exhibitions. Perhaps the best section is the multimedia presentation of Baron Rothschild, the financier who

paid for many public works projects in Tel Aviv in the late 19th century. Although not all of it is exactly enthralling, it's very well done and can easily occupy a few hours of your time. To get there take bus No 24, 27 or 86.

PALMACH MUSEUM

Dedicated to the guerrilla fighters who took on the British army in the late 1940s, the **Palmach Museum** (☎ 643 6393; www.palmach.org.il; 10 Haim Levanon St; adult/student 25/15NIS; ☎ 8.30am-3pm Sun-Thu, to 12.30pm Fri) is a high-performance exhibit that works to both entertain and inform. Presented in a multimedia format, this museum leads visitors through several chambers that collectively describe the rise of the Palmach, their training and triumphs. It's located about 200m past the Eretz Israel Museum.

HaYarkon St, Ben Yehuda St & Frishman Beach

Tel Aviv's major beachfront property is a mixed bag of upmarket hotels, seedy boulevards and crumbling office blocks. The big draw is (obviously) the beach, a golden stretch of sand teeming with Tel Avivians out for daily rituals of beach tennis and sunbathing. Most of the city's large chain hotels are lined up along the Herbert Samuel Esplanade, a sort of Miami Beach of the Middle East. While the coastal views are spectacular, Ben Yehuda St, two blocks inland is down-market boulevard of broken dreams. Once a popular shopping street, business has moved elsewhere, with the exception of airline offices, banks and a few other essentials.

Around Ben-Gurion Ave, the scene becomes a little more sedate. Once considered a singles neighbourhood, it's now a popular address for families, a trend that becomes even more evident the further north you head. The bike lane running the length of Ben-Gurion Ave carries cyclists from Rabin Sq to the sea at Namir Sq, a run-down slab of concrete that sports a couple of cafés and a new nightclub.

The historical highlight of Ben-Gurion Ave is the home that once belonged to Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion. Now the respectable **Ben-Gurion Museum** (Map p160; ☎ 522 1010; 17 Ben-Gurion Ave; admission free; ☎ 8am-5pm Sun & Mon, to 3pm Tue-Thu, to 1pm Sat), the site was maintained more or

less as it was left at the time of David Ben-Gurion's death, the small rooms are simply furnished and contain part of the revered politician's library of some 20,000 books, as well as his correspondence with various world leaders.

If you are heading north of the main beach, have a look at **181 HaYarkon St**, an apartment block with an oddly designed façade that resembles a vertical rock garden. Make sure to look at both sides of the building.

Dizengoff St, Ibn Gvirol St & Habima Sq

Away from the tourists along the coast, central Tel Aviv becomes a grid-like procession of chic shopping streets, palm-fringed plazas and baby stroller-filled parks. Dizengoff St, an important north-south traffic artery, is a high street of bridal shops, bookstores and coffee shops peopled by local entrepreneurs pecking away at laptops. Things quiet down a little as you head east, the major landmark being the vast Rabin Sq, a key arena for political rallies and concerts. South of here is Habima Sq, home to the Habima Theatre.

KIKAR DIZENGOFF

The geographic heart of the city, **Kikar Dizengoff** is regularly populated by a motley mix of mohawked punks, hippies, ice cream-licking tots and energetic centigenarians. The square, named after the city's first mayor (1910-37), is located on a raised platform over the street, a block north of the Dizengoff Centre shopping mall.

The **Fire and Water Fountain** in the centre of the square makes for a somewhat appropriate symbol of the city. Spinning crazily,

spurting water at random moments and occasionally launching flames into the air, its outlandish behaviour continues naughtily into the night, almost unnoticed by city residents infected by similarly unpredictable manner. The fountain was designed by Ya'acov Agam, a leading Israeli artist known for his (obvious) predilection towards rainbow colour schemes.

HELENA RUBENSTEIN PAVILION

Named for the woman behind the cosmetics empire, the **Helena Rubenstein Pavilion of Contemporary Art** (Map p156; ☎ 528 7196; www.tamuseum.com; 6 Tarsat Blvd; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon, Wed & Sat, to 10pm Tue & Thu, to 2pm Fri) is part of the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (see below) and is used for temporary exhibits by guest artists, both Israeli and foreign. Admission is sometimes free depending on the exhibit, but a Tel Aviv Museum of Art ticket is valid for here, too. Call ahead before going, as the place is closed when exhibits are in transition.

The Pavilion is part of the large Heychal Ha'Tarbut (Halls of Culture) complex, which includes the Mann Auditorium (Map p156) and Habima Theatre.

TEL AVIV MUSEUM OF ART

Part of an attractive, modern development that includes law courts and the municipal central library, the **Tel Aviv Museum of Art** (Map p150; ☎ 607 7020; www.tamuseum.com; 27 Sha'ul HaMelech Ave; adult/student 40/32NIS; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon, Wed & Sat, to 8pm Tue & Thu, to 2pm Fri) is home to a superb permanent collection of Impressionist and post-Impressionist works, as well as some fine 20th-century avant-garde. Works by

BAUHAUS ARCHITECTURE

Bauhaus style offers simplicity and egalitarianism, designed by architects who carried socialist ideals with them from Europe to Israel. One result of their collective beliefs is the flat roof, intended to be a communal area for all the residents of each building. Of the 4000 Bauhaus-style buildings in the city, just 360 have been renovated, the rest crumbling in the salty, humid sea air, which is not kind to the plaster used for the building façades. Despite its Unesco status, there are no public funds for the restoration of buildings – anything restored was completed by the building's owner.

A handy book if you are interested in Bauhaus architecture is *Bauhaus – Tel Aviv* (2003) by Nahoum Cohen, with a brief description of Bauhaus style and lots of pictures of buildings in Tel Aviv. Some of the best examples of Bauhaus architecture are 34 Frug St, 56 Levanda St (which looks like a ship) and the Cinema Hotel on Kikar Dizengoff.

Bauhaus fans will want to stop by the **Bauhaus Centre** (Map p160; ☎ 522 0249; www.bauhaus-center.com; 99 Dizengoff St), which is loaded with souvenirs and artwork. The centre runs Bauhaus city tours at 10am Friday and costs 50NIS.

Picasso, Matisse, Gauguin, Degas and Pollock feature prominently and there are some works by Jewish post-Impressionists Chagall and Soutine. The jewel of the collection has to be van Gogh's *The Shepherdess* (1889).

The museum often screens films and holds special exhibitions – check the *Jerusalem Post* on Friday or ask at the tourist information

office for the Tel Aviv-Jaffa tourist booklet, which usually lists current exhibitions. Hold on to your ticket, which includes entrance to the Helena Rubenstein Pavilion.

To get to the museum take bus No 9, 18, 28 or 70 from HaMelech George St, Dizengoff St or Rothschild Blvd. Or it's not far to walk from Kikar Dizengoff.

The impressive building with the fountain in front, just west of the museum, is the Centre of Arts (Mishkan Ha'Omanuyut), home to the Israeli Opera company.

Rothschild Blvd, Neve Tzedek & Florentine

Shine those cuff links and chamois your shoes; this southern fringe of the city centre is Tel Aviv's poshest area, loaded with exquisite restaurants. Its also the most historic area of the city, where the first buildings were laid down 100 years ago and the elite members of society erected their mansions.

ROTHSCHILD BLVD

This pleasant, leafy boulevard was named after the Jewish family of financiers. At one time Rothschild Blvd was *the* address to have. It's no longer so exalted but former glories are invoked at **Independence Hall** (Map p162; ☎ 517 3942; 16 Rothschild Blvd; adult/child 17/14NIS; 9am-2pm Sun-Thu), where on 14 May 1948, Ben-Gurion declared the establishment of the State of Israel. Previous to that the building had been the home of Meir Dizengoff, one of the founders of Tel Aviv. Entry includes a short introductory film and a tour of the room where the Declaration of Independence was signed.

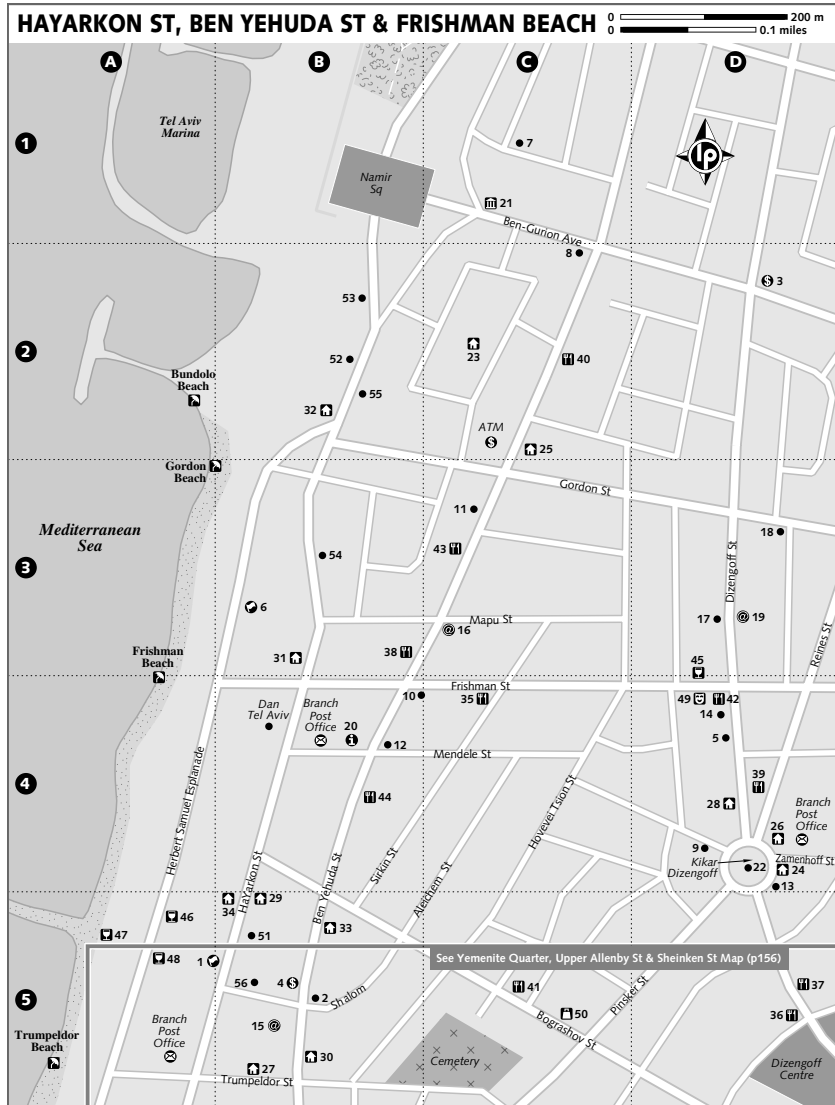
West of the junction with Allenby St, the **Haganah Museum** (Map p162; ☎ 560 8624; 23

Rothschild Blvd; ☎ 9am-4pm Sun-Thu) chronicles the formation and activities of the Haganah, the military organisation that was the forerunner of today's Israel Defence Forces (IDF). It has been recently renovated in a multimedia format where you follow 'Itsik' (a fictional character) as he escapes from a European ghetto to Israel, where he becomes a young war hero.

Near the bottom of Rothschild Blvd at 9 Ahad Ha'am St sits the imposing bulk of the **Shalom Tower**, the city's first skyscraper. It was built on the site of the city's first building, Gymnasia Herzlia (1909). Today there is a shopping arcade inside, plus an **observation deck** (Map p162; ☎ 517 7304; 9 Ahad Ha'am St; admission 10NIS; ☎ 10am-6.30pm Sun-Thu, 10am-2pm Fri, 11am-1pm Sat) with great views of the city and beyond.

NEVE TZEDEK

Stepping out of downtown Tel Aviv and into the Neve Tzedek neighbourhood, the decibel level immediately drops a few notches. The tranquil pace of life is greatly owed to the narrow, winding streets, avoided by cars, motor scooters and the like. This was Tel Aviv's first Jewish neighbourhood, founded in 1887, and was pleasantly renovated to accommodate the nouveaux riches. The quarter is well worth a casual wander; besides the sights listed below check out **2 Lilienblum St**, home of the first cinema in Israel.



INFORMATION	Fire & Water Fountain.....	22 D4	DRINKING ☎	Bukowski.....	45 D3
American Embassy.....	1 A5	SLEEPING ☎	Buzz Stop.....	46 A5	
American Express.....	2 B5	Ami Hotel.....	La Mer.....	47 A5	
ATM.....	3 D2	Center Hotel.....	Mike's Place.....	48 A5	
Bank Leumi.....	4 B5	Gordon Inn Guest House.....			
Bauhaus Centre.....	5 D4	Hotel Cinema.....			
Exchange Bureau.....	(see 5)	Hotel Metropolitan.....			
Exchange Bureau.....	(see 19)	Kikar Dizengoff Apartments.....			
French Embassy.....	6 B3	Lusky Suites Hotel.....			
Gordon Ulpan.....	7 C1	Momo's Hostel.....			
ISSTA.....	8 C2	Prima Tel Aviv Astor.....			
Kabbalah Centre.....	9 D4	Renaissance.....			
Kibbutz Program Centre.....	10 B4	Sky Hostel.....			
Launderette.....	11 C3	Yamit.....			
Launderette.....	12 B4				
Launderette.....	13 D4				
Le-an Ticket Agency.....	14 D4				
Log-In.....	15 B5	EATING ☎	American Airlines.....	(see 4)	
Momo's Bar.....	(see 30)	Abu Shukri.....	Arkia.....	51 B5	
Private Link.....	16 C3	Bagels & Coffee.....	Avis.....	52 B2	
Steimatzky.....	17 D3	Buddha Burger.....	Cathay Pacific.....	(see 4)	
Superpharm.....	18 D3	Human Nature.....	El Al.....	(see 2)	
Surf-Drink-Play.....	19 D3	Karish.....	El Dan.....	53 B2	
Tourist Information Office.....	20 B4	Lechem Erez.....	Eurocar.....	54 B3	
		Luche.....	Hertz.....	55 B2	
		Sabihe.....	Israir.....	56 B5	
		Supersol Supermarket.....	Qantas.....	(see 4)	
		Taste of Life.....	Royal Jordanian Airlines.....	(see 56)	
			South Africa Airways.....	(see 56)	

TEL AVIV

TEL AVIV

INFORMATION

- 1 D1 Agudah.....
- 2 C2 CLAF.....
- 3 C1 Halper's.....
- 4 D2 Kav Toved.....
- 5 D1 Kibbutz Hotels Reservations.....
- 6 D2 Main Post Office.....
- 7 F3 Physicians for Human Rights.....
- 8 E1 Police Station.....
- 9 E1 SPNI Tel Aviv.....
- 10 D1 Stenackery.....

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

- 11 B2 Etzel Museum.....
- 12 A2 Hagannah Museum.....
- 13 C1 Hassan Beq Mosque.....
- 14 A1 Home of Shimon Rokach.....
- 15 B2 Independence Hall.....
- 16 C1 Nahum Gutman Museum.....
- 17 B2 Planet Spa..... (see 20)
- 18 C1 Shalom Tower.....
- 19 F2 Stuccilli Centre.....
- 20 B2 Suzanne Dellal Centre.....
- 21 C1 Sun Aviv.....

EATING

- 22 D3 Blumilch.....
- 23 C1 Blend.....
- 24 B2 Breakfast Club.....
- 25 D1 Golden Bar.....
- 26 D1 Jewish Princess.....
- 27 A2 Lanski.....
- 28 D1 Lemmy's.....
- 29 C2 Mish Mish.....
- 30 C1 Nanuchka.....
- 31 A2 Shesek.....
- 32 C1 Shoshana Johnson.....

DRINKING

- 33 D1 Carme Dirm.....
- 34 C1 Dome.....
- 35 C2 Evila.....
- 36 C1 Fusion.....
- 37 D1 HaOman Tel Aviv.....
- 38 C1 Minerva.....
- 39 C3 Vox.....

ENTERTAINMENT

- 44 C1 Carme Dirm.....
- 45 F2 Dome.....
- 46 D1 Evila.....
- 47 F2 Fusion.....
- 48 B3 HaOman Tel Aviv.....
- 49 C1 Minerva.....
- 50 F2 Vox.....

TRANSPORT

- 51 E4 Central Bus Station.....
- 52 B1 Continental Airlines.....

The district is also home to the **Suzanne Dellal Centre** (see p178), a former school and cultural centre, which now serves as a venue for festivals, exhibits and cultural events, as well as a relaxing place to look at murals and spend a sunny afternoon.

The former **home of Shimon Rokach** (Map p162; ☎ 516 8042; www.rokach-house.co.il; 36 Rokach St; admission 10NIS; ☞ 10am-4pm Sun-Thu, to 2pm Fri & Sat) with its gilded copper dome, contains tributes to the man who envisioned the construction of Tel Aviv. Dating from 1887, the house now contains exhibits and videos that chronicle the early days of the city. On the same street is the **Nahum Gutman Museum** (Map p162; ☎ 516 1970; www.gutmanmuseum.co.il; 21 Rokach St; adult/student 20/10NIS; ☞ 10am-4pm Sun, Mon, Wed & Thu, to 7pm Tue, to 2pm Fri, to 5pm Sat), which displays 200 lively and fanciful works by the 20th-century Israeli artist. This address also housed the editorial board of the HaPoel HaTzair political movement's newspaper from 1907 to 1914.

MANSHIYE

Located at the southern, seafront end of Carmel Market, Manshiye was at one time an Arab district but it was largely destroyed during the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and its inhabitants fled. The sole evidence of the neighbourhood's Arab heritage is the Hassan Beq Mosque.

The 1948 Arab-Israeli War is recorded in the **Etzel Museum** (Map p162; ☎ 517 2044; Kaufmann St; adult/child 10/5NIS; ☞ 8.30am-4pm Sun-Thu), an attractive smoked-glass structure built within the remains of an old Arab house close to sea. The museum presents a mainly photographic history of the Jewish victory against the Arabs in Jaffa in April 1948.

Old Port, Little Tel Aviv & Basel St

Originally opened in 1936 to give newly established Tel Aviv sea-trafficking independence from Jaffa, the port fairly soon went into decline with the construction of a better, deeper harbour at Ashdod. In the early 2000s the municipality went in and overhauled the area, creating a wide boardwalk and transforming the derelict warehouses into commercial space. It's now the most fashionable piece of real estate in the city, with a 1km-long strip of restaurants, bars and nightclubs. It's at its busiest after dark and on weekends when hordes of young clubbers descend on the strip of discotheques.

The first streets inland from the port make up Little Tel Aviv, a knot of crisscrossing lanes that converge most significantly at Yirmiyahu and Dizengoff Sts. Cafés and restaurants crowd the junction, but the main reason to pass by is for a taste of the hummus at the well-known Hummus Ashkara (see p175). On Shabbat and Jewish festivals, especially Purim, this junction of streets is closed to traffic and used as extra seating for the local cafés. Nearby Basel St, a family-orientated neighbourhood, is another area for coffee shops and restaurants.

HaKira & Ramat Gan

The further east you head in Tel Aviv, the more businesslike the city becomes. Ibn Gvirol St basically demarcates the eastern border of downtown, and beyond it you are heading into a world of wide boulevards, glassy skyscrapers and industrial plants.

AZRIELI OBSERVATORY

Israel's version of the Empire State Building (but without the four-hour line for the elevator) involves a trip up to the 49th floor of the Azrieli round tower to the **Azrieli Observatory** (Map p150; ☎ 608 1179; 132 Menechem Begin Rd; adult/student 22/17NIS; ☞ 10am-8pm Tue-Thu, to 6pm Fri, to 8pm Sat). Admission includes use of an audio guide (in English or Hebrew) that describes the various buildings and landmarks around the city – you'll get a better grasp of it all during daylight hours. There is also a **film** (adult/student 22/17NIS) covering the history of the city using 3D animation. Its target audience (four year olds) may appreciate the talking, time-travelling camel and flying robot companion, but we recommend you save your money for lunch.

You'd be wise to call ahead to check that the observation deck is open – it's frequently closed for private functions. The Azrieli complex includes a three-level shopping mall containing, among other things, a food court and a movie theatre. To reach the towers, take bus No 11, 78 or 608.

RAMAT GAN

Although it's a distinct city, Ramat Gan (Map p182) is now considered part of Tel Aviv, and is a fast-growing centre for business and commerce. Ramat Gan has not gone unnoticed by foreign investors. Even hard-to-please Donald Trump was impressed and

in 2006 committed to building a 70-storey building here.

The cornerstone of Ramat Gan is the Israel Diamond Centre, the vast diamond-trading house that has made Israel the number-one exporter of diamonds. Sadly, the Diamond Centre is closed to the general public, but you can still get an up-close look at a woman's best friend at the **Israel Diamond Museum** (Macabbi Bldg Passage, 1 Jabotinsky Rd, Ramat Gan; admission 10NIS; ☎ 10am-4pm Sun-Thu, to 5pm Tue), which shows off the process of extraction, polishing and the trade of diamonds.

ACTIVITIES

Tel Avivans are an active lot and are usually found rollerblading towards the nearest park, biking to the beach or heading off to the gym, sports bag tucked under arm.

Beaches

When the weather is warm Tel Avivans flock to the city beaches en masse. Here you'll find bronzed bods soaking up the Mediterranean rays, kite surfing and knocking back and forth little rubber balls in friendly matches of *matkot* (Israeli beach tennis).

The beaches are safe and clean, with changing rooms and freshwater showers scattered along its length. Swimmers, however, must heed lifeguard warnings when conditions become rough; a black flag means that swimming is forbidden; red means that swimming is dangerous and you certainly shouldn't swim by yourself; white means that the area is safe.

Like any beach anywhere, you also need to keep an eye on your belongings – when swimming, just ask the person on the next blanket if they can look after your gear. You'd be wise to simply leave valuables in your hotel.

The main beaches are jam-packed most days, especially on Shabbat. You'll have a little more breathing room in the early morning or around sunset. At night, beer drinkers and dancers are attracted to the main seaside bars and patios. This is a great time for a quiet stroll down by the water's edge.

Generally, the most crowded beaches are in the centre of the city – **Ge'la Beach**, **Yerushalayim Beach** and **Trumpeldor Beach**. These tend to attract the teenage tearaways and are probably the least pleasant. A five-minute walk north to **Frishman** or **Gordon** beaches are

more relaxed. Further north, the **Hilton** and **Sheraton** beaches have better facilities and attract tourists from the nearby hotels.

The crowds thin out the further south and north you go. If you want more privacy there's a religious beach north of the Hilton up towards the old port. On Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday only women are permitted to use the area and it is a good place for any woman, Jewish or not, to enjoy a swim or to sunbathe without the constant attention of an amorous Israeli male. Mixed couples can escape to the beach just north of Old Jaffa or the city of **Bat Yam**, which has a beautiful stretch of white sandy beach. Bat Yam is a 20-minute bus ride from the centre of Tel Aviv; take bus No 10 or 46.

Aviv Beach is a designated area for surfers, kayakers, windsurfers and kiteboarders (casual swimming is not allowed here). You can rent equipment at the beach from **Surf Point** (Map p156; ☎ 517 0099; www.surf-point.co.il; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm) for a pricey 100NIS per hour (or 788NIS for 10 hours). They also have kiteboarding lessons, but only if you own your own equipment: for 4000NIS you can buy equipment and eight hours of lessons.

The Sportek

Joggers, footballers and frisbee throwers should head for the long strip of grassy parkland along the Yarkon River, otherwise known as the **Sportek** (Map p150). It's most crowded in the afternoons and weekends.

The Sportek also features the **Olympus Climbing Wall** (Map p150; ☎ 699 0910; www.kir.co.il; 42 Rokach Ave; admission & harness 50NIS, shoe rental 12NIS; ☎ 5-10pm Sun-Thu, 2-8pm Fri, 11am-9pm Sat), which offers rock-climbing lessons. Avoid overcrowded Saturdays, when schoolchildren take over the place.

Near the climbing wall is a **skate park** (Map p150; ☎ 050 574 2717; per day 28NIS; ☎ 4-8pm Sun-Thu, 11am-8pm Fri & Sat), basketball courts and trampolines. Ultimate Frisbee matches are held here at 4.45pm every Friday and at 4.30pm Saturday. North of the Sportek, across Namir Rd, the young and the young at heart will enjoy **Mini Golf** (Map p150; ☎ 699 0229; www.minigolf.co.il; per round 26NIS; ☎ 4-8pm Sun-Thu, 10am-8pm Fri & Sat).

To reach the Sportek from Dizengoff St, take any bus headed for Ramat Aviv. Without traffic, a taxi will cost around 25NIS.

Spas & Fitness Centres

You no longer need to travel all the way to the Dead Sea for a good spa treatment. You can soak yourself and rejuvenate right here in Tel Aviv. The most central treatment centre is **Spa Mul HaYam** (Map p156; ☎ 516 2818; spa@myspa.co.il; 46 Herbert Samuel Esplanade); here you can get treatments with sea water, meditation workshops, milk- and mud-baths, and various forms of massage. They also do workshops for feng shui and massage.

Another beautiful spot is **Planet Spa** (Map p162; ☎ 510 9876; www.planetspa.co.il; 30 Shlush St; 1½hr treatment 375NIS; ☎ 11am-10pm Sun-Thu, 10am-5pm Fri, noon-6pm Sat) where you can choose from several types of treatment, followed by lovely little accompaniments like wine and chocolate. It faces the courtyard of the Suzanne Dellal Centre.

Tel Avivans are very health-conscious and this fact is reflected in the number of fitness centres scattered about town. Most of these have a 24-hour entry pass (around 50NIS) or a one-week admission (100NIS). Call ahead to see what they offer. Gyms in the Dizengoff Centre include **Everybody** (Map p156; ☎ 529 16666; ☎ 24hr Sun-Thu, 9am-7pm Fri) and **Pure** (Map p156; ☎ 527 2782; www.pure.co.il; ☎ 6am-1am Sun-Thu, 6am-8pm Fri, 8am-10pm Sat).

The Mediterranean Sea works fine as a bathing pool, but if you prefer to do laps there is a beautiful **swimming pool** (Map p156; ☎ 620 4116; admission 60NIS; ☎ 24hr) on the 4th floor of the Dizengoff Centre (east block).

Other Activities

There are plenty of other activities to keep you busy in Tel Aviv. Budding yachtsmen may want to contact **Danit Tours** (☎ 052 340 0128; www.danit.co.il), which runs sailing and motorboat trips from the Tel Aviv Port. For a group of up to 13 people it charges 1500NIS for two hours at sea. Smaller groups can sail for 800NIS.

If bowling takes the edge off, head for **Bowling Tel Aviv** (Map p150; ☎ 523 1222; 124 Ibn Gvirol St; per game 28NIS; ☎ 10am-2am). There are also billiard tables here but you'll find a more mature crowd at **Stuccilli** (Map p162; ☎ 537 7766; 11 Yad Harutzim St; per hr 54NIS; ☎ 24hr), a gigantic pool hall decked out with 19 tables, velvet couches and candles.

If you want to get to know Tel Aviv like a local, and enjoy **rollerblading**, find a pair of skates and go to the Habima Theatre

at 10pm Tuesday. From here around 150 rollerbladers and skaters set off on a three-hour skate around the city. This is highly recommended. The organisers have a website: <http://rollers-israel.net>.

WALKING TOUR

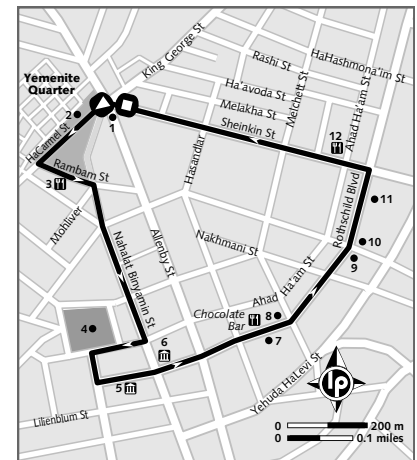
Tel Aviv's major construction boom occurred in the 1930s, resulting in numerous Bauhaus-style buildings. This walk takes you past various Bauhaus examples, plus a few other sites of historic interest. There are plenty of cafés and juice stands along the way to provide sustenance.

Kikar Magen David (1), where six streets converge near the **Carmel Market (2)** (p155), is a key axis point and a good place to start a walking tour of the city. Plunge into the market to experience the early-morning movements as traders sell freshly baked bread and vegetables to restaurateurs. Take your second left onto Rambam St (note the incongruous 'we sell fresh pork' sign in the corner of the market). Rambam has several eclectic-style buildings, notably the **Carmella restaurant (3)** at No 12.

At Nahalat Binyamin St turn right (if it's a Tuesday or a Friday you'll be in the midst

WALK FACTS

Start & Finish Kikar Magen David
Distance 2km
Duration At least two hours



of a bustling crafts fair), and walk south past the many stores specialising in fabrics. Two blocks down, turn right onto Ahad Ha'am St and after one block you'll be at the foot of the imposing **Shalom Tower** (4; p161), Tel Aviv's first skyscraper. Turn left on Herzl and another left on Rothschild Blvd, noting **Independence Hall** (5; p161; No 16) and the **Haganah Museum** (6; p161; No 23). A couple of blocks up, recharge your batteries at the Chocolate Bar (p174).

Rothschild Blvd is one of Tel Aviv's most beautiful boulevards, the former stomping ground of the city's founders who built the prototype Bauhaus and eclectic-style buildings. Opposite the Chocolate Bar at No 46 is **Sotheby's** (7), an elegant building of mixed styles painted canary yellow. A bit further on, **No 49** (8) is another mixed-style building with a gray façade hidden by palm trees. Further down, have a look at **No 84** (9), the first building in the city to be constructed over a columned ground floor. **No 82** (10), opposite, leans towards an Art Deco formula, while **No 96** (11) has received recent renovations.

Reaching Sheinken St, turn left and walk one block to **Café Tamar** (12; p171) where you can snack on a half-bagel and cheese, the same dish served for five decades to Tel Avivans. Continuing down Sheinken St, passing fashionable boutiques, you'll eventually come back to Kikar Magen David. From here you can easily continue your explorations of the Yemenite Quarter, Bialik St or King George St.

COURSES

Language

Gordon Ulpan (Map p160; ☎ 522 3095; hadas.goren@012.net.il; 7 LaSalle St) The most popular ulpan (Hebrew-language school) in Tel Aviv charges around 670NIS per month, plus a 70NIS registration fee.

Maale Ulpan (Map p150; ☎ 687 9822; 78 HaTikva Rd) In the south of Tel Aviv. A five-month course costs 1800NIS.

Tel Aviv University Ulpan (☎ 640 8947) Intensive, academic-level ulpan. Seven-week course US\$1000.

Kabbalah

Kabbalah Centre (Map p160; ☎ 526 6800; www.kabbalah.com; 14 Ben Ami St) The Kabbalah centre has courses (in Hebrew) on Jewish mysticism (1100NIS for 10 lessons). If you don't speak Hebrew, they have recorded classes in English. Occasionally the centre has English-language lectures, so call and ask

what's on. If you only have a passing interest, visit their excellent bookshop.

TEL AVIV FOR CHILDREN

The **beach** (p164) is the most obvious place to take the kids, provided you've lathered them with sun block. A trip to the top of the **Azrieli Observatory** (p163) is another popular diversion, and they will probably enjoy the short 3D movie that tells a brief history of the city. **HaYarkon Park** (p157), with its climbing wall, motor and row boats, trampolines, skate park, basketball courts and miniature golf course, could easily occupy a half-day (or longer if you pack a lunch).

There's a small amusement park with roller coasters and rides at **Luna Park** (☎ 642 7080; www.lunapark.co.il; admission 85NIS) in northern Tel Aviv. Opening hours change by the month, so call ahead. From Ibn Gvirol St, take bus No 47 or 48. Another excursion is to **Safari in the National Park** (☎ 631 3531; admission 48NIS; ☎ 9am-4pm Sat-Thu, to 1pm Fri), a self-drive park where you can see lions, tigers and other wildlife roaming in a 'natural habitat'.

TOURS

The municipality runs three tours in the city and it's worth joining at least one of them while you are in town. All three tours are free of charge and there is no need to make an advance booking. If you do have questions, contact the Tourist Information Centre (see p154).

The most interesting tour visits various buildings in Tel Aviv to study Bauhaus architecture. It runs at 11am Saturday (except Yom Kippur) and the meeting point is at 46 Rothschild Blvd (at the corner of Shadal St).

A second tour walks around Old Jaffa, its archaeological sites and the flea market. It meets at 9.30am Wednesday (except Yom Kippur) at Jaffa's clock tower.

The third tour studies the art and architecture of Tel Aviv University. It meets at 11am Monday (except holidays) at Dyonon bookstore at the University campus entrance.

There is another free city tour to Old Jaffa, the Habima Theatre, the Mann Auditorium, the Israeli Opera House, the Tel Aviv Museum and the Diamond Museum. The catch is that it's run by a private diamond dealer, so when the tour is over you're also brought to the diamond showroom for a 'look-see'. Tours leave at 9.30am and 1.30pm Sunday to

GAY & LESBIAN TEL AVIV

Tel Aviv has the Middle East's most vibrant gay community, and even plays host to an annual Gay Pride Parade. The best place to start for information is the **Association of Gay Men, Lesbians, Bisexuals & Transgenders** (Agudah; Map p162; ☎ 620 5591; www.glb.org.il; 28 Nachmani St) where you can pick up information or grab a copy (in Hebrew) of the *Pink Times*. You should also contact the **Gay Hotline** (☎ 03-516 7234; ☎ 7.30pm-10.30pm Sun, Tue & Thu). Another option is the lesbian organisation **CLAF** (Map p162; ☎ 03 516 5606; www.gay.org.il/claf; 22 Lilienblum St; ☎ 11am-4pm Mon & Wed). If you are looking for a gay-friendly hotel, try quaint Galileo (p168).

Most of the nightlife is focused on Sheinken and Nahalat Binyamin Sts, where you'll find plenty of rainbow flags, but the best gay night out in town is surely Tuesday at the Move (p177) in the Old Port. On Friday, try Vox (p177), located in Yad Harutzim. Once a month the gay party moves from the Vox to the Dome (p177) next door. **Plug & Play** (☎ 527 5631; admission 30-60NIS), a suggestively named gay party, is held Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Call for the location.

Evita (Map p162; ☎ 566 9559; 31 Yavne St; ☎ noon-late) This is a preppy café that mutates into a saucy gay lounge-bar by night. There's plenty of pelvic-shaking and free-flowing alcohol. It's located in a quiet alley a half-block south of Rothschild Blvd.

Carpé Diem (Map p162; ☎ 560 2006; 17 Montefiore St; ☎ 8pm-late) A relaxed atmosphere pervades this place, helped by the back lounge deck, which has floor seating on cushions. Occasional professional strip performances: Monday for men and Tuesday for women.

Minerva (Map p162; ☎ 560 3801; 98 Allenby St; ☎ 10pm-late) This dedicated lesbian bar was supposedly renovated, though it's still quite the seedy dive, which may appeal to some. DJ dance parties are held every Thursday.

Beachgoers might want to visit Hilton Beach, Tel Aviv's unofficial gay beach. At 7pm every Saturday, gay parties are held at Cheech Beach (between Sheraton and Hilton beaches).

Thursday and at 9am Friday. Call ahead for a pick-up from your hotel (☎ 575 7979).

SLEEPING

Virtually all of Tel Aviv's hostels and hotels are on or around Ben Yehuda and HaYarkon Sts, all just minutes from the beaches, popular eating and shopping places and night-spots. The flip side is that a lot of these places, especially in the lower price bracket, tend to be quite noisy, especially if you are in a room facing the street. If you prefer a little more peace and quiet, consider staying in the more sedate Dizengoff St area or in Jaffa.

Two buses leaving from the central bus station will get you to the general hostel-hotel area: bus No 4 goes along Allenby St and Ben Yehuda St, and bus No 5 along Dizengoff St. From Arlosoroff bus station, take bus No 10.

Yemenite Quarter, Upper Allenby St & Sheinken St

BUDGET

Miami Hotel (Map p156; ☎ 510 3868; 8 Allenby St; r 150-250NIS; ☎) Dimly lit, somewhat depressing place in varying shades of purple. Basic rooms do not have TV and more pricey

ones have TV and air-con. The main reason to stay here is the great sea views.

Mugraby Hostel (Map p156; ☎ 510 2443; www.mugraby-hostel.com; 30 Allenby St; dm 47NIS, s with/without shower 190/170NIS, d with/without shower 220/190NIS; ☎) Shabby like Sky and Momo's, Mugraby is a friendly guesthouse smack in the middle of things at the top of Allenby St, a couple of blocks from the beach. It's just a bit more welcoming, and has free wi-fi. All double rooms have air-con and TV, and prices include breakfast.

Our pick! HaYarkon 48 Hostel (Map p156; ☎ 516 8989; www.hayarkon48.com; 48 HaYarkon St; dm with/without air-con 74/56NIS, r with/without bathroom 275/205NIS; ☎) The HaYarkon 48 is one of the best hostels in the country. Located in a converted school and just two blocks from the beach, it has excellent facilities including a clean communal kitchen, reliable showers and a free breakfast. The common room has a pool table and a TV, and is an excellent place to meet other travellers. If you get a private room, ask for one with a balcony. Dorms are colourfully decorated and pleasant, although not all have air-con. Booking through their website could net you a small discount on double rooms. Best of all is the

friendly management, which goes out of its way to advise on travel in the country and is attentive. Internet costs 15NIS per hour.

MIDRANGE

Galileo (Map p156; ☎ 516 0050; www.sun-aviv.co.il; 8 Hillel Ha'zaken St; s/d 240/260NIS; 🏠) Enter the narrow lobby and be greeted with personal service in this small, boutique-style hotel. Each of the 12 rooms come with a baby-blue colour scheme, walls decorated with European art, plus a few goodies awaiting your arrival, including a fruit basket, a Jacuzzi tub or a bottle of champagne upon request. There is also a nice rooftop lounge with an outdoor shower to cool off. The hotel also has an appealing location, tucked off Allenby St on the edge of the exotic Yemenite Quarter. Price includes breakfast.

Sun City Hotel (Map p156; ☎ 517 7913; www.sun-city.co.il; 41 Yona Hanavi St; s/d 210/270NIS; 🏠) This well-managed micro-hotel is new and not time tested, but those who have stayed here give high marks for personal service and design. Rooms are a touch small but the location is great and prices come with breakfast.

Golden Beach Hotel (Map p156; ☎ 516 2727; www.goldenbeach.co.il; 56 Herbert Samuel Esplanade; d US\$100; 🏠) This three-star hotel was recently renovated and offers pleasant rooms overlooking the beach. Prices include breakfast.

HaYarkon St, Ben Yehuda St, & Frishman Beach

BUDGET

Hotel Eilat (Map p156; ☎ 510 2453; 58 HaYarkon St; www.hotel-eilat.co.il; r 180NIS; 🏠) Has a few clean rooms and friendly staff. Rooms are small and a bit shabby, but you could make a home here for a few nights without much difficulty.

Momo's Hostel (Map p160; ☎ 528 7471; www.momos-hostel.com; 28 Ben Yehuda St; dm 58NIS, s 100NIS, d with/without bathroom 200/130NIS; 🏠) This colourful, character-filled place has an attached bar-café and a central location. Rooms are a little scruffy and crowded but reasonably clean. Rates include a light breakfast and use of the kitchen. Men and women, and travellers and long-term workers, have separate dorms. This place tends to attract quite a crowd of transient backpackers in search of work and has a party vibe (thanks to the bar downstairs). In summer you can sleep on the roof for 40NIS.

Sky Hostel (Map p160; ☎ 620 0044; skyhostel@walla.com; 34 Ben Yehuda St; dm 50NIS, s with/without bathroom 160/100NIS, d 200/130NIS; 🏠) One block north of Momo's, Sky is somewhat more bland than its neighbour, but is less crowded and offers more privacy. It is also a bit cheaper. Better double rooms come with shower and TV.

Hotel Ness-Ziona (Map p156; ☎ 510 6084; zeevs@isdnet.net.il; 10 Ness Ziona; s/d/tr US\$65/75/85) Located on a quiet street in the centre, Hotel Ness-Ziona is a somewhat barren place, but friendly, clean and safe. Private rooms come with fans, high ceilings and anti-quoted furniture. While it's not the most appealing place in town, it's popular with foreign travellers looking for a low-priced hotel without the crowded backpacker vibe of others in this category.

MIDRANGE

Gordon Inn Guest House (Map p160; ☎ 523 8239; www.sleepinrael.com; 17 Gordon St; s/d/tr, with bathroom US\$57/71/85, s/d/tr, without bathroom US\$46/59/72; 🏠) Many travellers enjoy the warmth and communal feeling of this hybrid hostel-hotel, a well-kept downtown option. Unique in this category, it combines the tastefully decorated air-con rooms expected from a midrange hotel with the hospitality and personal service one expects from a backpackers. All rates include breakfast and there's a bar downstairs. Take bus No 4 from the central bus station.

Ami Hotel (Map p160; ☎ 524 9141; www.inisrael.com/ami; 152 HaYarkon St; s/d/ste US\$60/75/95; 🏠) This friendly, rambling option near the cluster of luxury hotels has 61 rooms, some with sea views, others with balconies. All rooms come with TV, phone and air-con, although the décor isn't much to write home about. Rates include a full Israeli breakfast. If you don't mind the slightly out-of-the-way location, this place represents good value.

Hotel Sea Net (Map p156; ☎ 517 1655; www.seanethotel.co.il; 6 Ness Ziona St; s/d/tr US\$84/99/134; 🏠) This pleasant, modern place with 70 rooms sits on a quiet street two blocks from the beach. Rooms are a bit small but newly renovated, with interactive TV. For US\$10 more you can get a larger corner room with a desk. Price includes an Israeli breakfast.

Lusky Suites Hotel (Map p160; ☎ 516 3030; www.luskysuites-hotel.co.il; 84 HaYarkon St; s US\$90-100, d US\$100-120, ste US\$160-180; 🏠) A smart lobby leads up to well-appointed rooms, with TV and two desks. Windows are large and let in lots

of light, and pricier rooms have balconies. Some rooms are en suite with kitchenette. The 'penthouse' could even squeeze into the top-end category. It's popular with European travellers, with whom you can mingle during the free Israeli breakfast.

Hotel Metropolitan (Map p160; ☎ 519 2727; www.hotelmetropolitan.co.il; 11-15 Trumpeldor St; s/d US\$105/124; 🏠) Geared towards the business traveller, this functional, centrally located place has 228 rooms and 23 suites, many catching sea views. Rooms include a small desk, cable TV and wi-fi internet. Other facilities include a fitness centre, sauna, bar, restaurant, a newly built outdoor pool and a sundeck. Prices include breakfast. Suites cost about 50% more than the standard rooms.

Hotel De La Mer (Map p156; ☎ 510 0011; www.delamer.co.il; 2 Ness Ziona St, cnr HaYarkon; s/d US\$90/110; 🏠) Offering lots of personal service and attention, this boutique hotel is a great choice in this area. Spa treatment is available, plus there's room service and free wi-fi. Rooms are spacious and sparkling, with new furniture and tasteful colour schemes; some have with balconies and sea views. The price includes breakfast, which is taken on an outdoor patio. All rooms are non-smoking – a rare treat in Israel.

TOP END

Prima Tel Aviv Astor (Map p160; ☎ 520 6666; www.prima.co.il; 105 HaYarkon St; s/d US\$120/150; 🏠) If you need something functional and close to the beach, this no-fuss kosher hotel has reasonable rooms with sea views. Breakfast is included in the price and there's free internet in the plush little lobby. It's on the corner with Frishman St.

Yamit (Map p160; ☎ 519 7111; www.yamitparkplaza.com; 79 HaYarkon St; r US\$140; 🏠) It doesn't look like much from the outside, but this a good value hotel with 182 modern rooms, many with sea views. Best of all, it's connected to a huge gym and sauna next door, which you can use free of charge.

Renaissance (Map p160; ☎ 521 5555; www.renaissancehotels.com; 121 HaYarkon St; d US\$145-165; 🏠) Set amid other high-rise luxury hotels, this one diversifies itself by having a slightly better location over a sandy beach. All of its 342 rooms have a balcony, and there is an indoor pool and health club.

Mercure B&P (Map p156; ☎ 628 8888; www.mercure.com; 14 Ben Yehuda St; s/d US\$160/180; 🏠)

A nice addition to somewhat seedy Ben Yehuda St, this place has 103 plush rooms with large windows, safe and a flat panel TV that doubles as a computer monitor. There is a small gym, modern lobby and a bar. Prices include breakfast and free wi-fi internet.

Tel Aviv Hilton (Map p150; ☎ 520 2222; hiltonisrael sales.telaviv@hilton.com; Gan HaAtzma'ut or Independence Park; d US\$310-355; 🏠) A five-star deluxe hotel with all the trimmings, the Hilton welcomes visitors with a spacious modern lobby and elegant rooms. At the top of its class, it offers four restaurants, a large gym, sauna and sunny pool deck overlooking the sea.

Dizengoff St, Ibn Gvirol St & Habima Sq Kikar Dizengoff Apartments (KDA; Map p160; ☎ 524 1151; www.hotel-apt.com; 89 Dizengoff St; s US\$75-90, d US\$85-140, tr US\$105-140; 🏠) Centrally located, well equipped and very secure, KDA are ideal for both long- and short-term stays and can't be beaten for price and quality. Rooms come equipped with kitchenettes that include microwave, fridge, sink and utensils. Other niceties include cable TV, phone, safe, wireless internet and great showers. There's 24-hour security and accommodating staff. It's on the north side of Kikar Dizengoff, close to many shops and restaurants.

Center Hotel (Map p160; ☎ 629 6181; www.atlas-hotels.co.il; 1 Zamenhoff St; s/d/tr US\$116/136/196; 🏠) Built in the Bauhaus style, the recently renovated Center Hotel retains a boutique feel despite its chain affiliations, thanks to the small number of rooms and distinctive décor – hardwood floors, bright-white paintwork and colourful murals in the bedrooms. Wi-fi is free, as is the buffet breakfast served across the walkway at the Hotel Cinema. This is a nice address if you prefer a quiet hotel away from the tourist gangway that is HaYarkon.

Cinema Hotel (Map p160; ☎ 520 7100; www.atlas-hotels.co.il; 2 Zamenhoff St; s/d/tr US\$116/136/200; 🏠) Housed in a former movie theatre, Hotel Cinema has tastefully transformed into a Bauhaus hotel, blending seamlessly into the Kikar Dizengoff, which it overlooks. Not forgetting its roots, the hotel is decorated with old theatre components – projectors, stage lights and archaic wiring. It's under the same management as the Center Hotel opposite, but the 82 rooms here are slightly larger and there are added touches like a

sauna, fitness centre, reading room and a beautiful rooftop patio.

Rothschild Blvd, Neve Tzedek & Florentine

Sun Aviv Hotel (Map p162; ☎ 517 4847; www.sun-aviv.co.il; 9a Montefiore St; s/d 210/270NIS; 🚗 🚶) A designer hotel in the shadow of the Shalom Tower, Sun Aviv is well placed for the nightclubs and bars on Rothschild Blvd and the shopping mania around Kikar Magen David. There are just four rooms, but each is individually styled with colourful wallpaper, artworks and simple furnishings. Prices include breakfast.

Old Port, Little Tel Aviv & Basel St

HI Tel Aviv Youth Hostel (Map p150; ☎ 544 1748; tel aviv@yha.org.il; 36 B'nei Dan St; dm/s/d US\$21/40/53; 🚗 🚶) Used mainly by Israelis, this is the only government youth hostel in Tel Aviv. It's spacious and comfortable but unlike other hostels does not have any cooking facilities. Breakfast is included. To get there take bus No 5, 24 or 25 from the central bus station, get off at Yehuda HaMaccabi St, then walk two blocks north.

Alexander (Map p150; ☎ 545 2222; www.alexander.co.il; 3 HaBakook St; d US\$125-145; 🚗 🚶) Good for families, the rooms at the Alexander offer lots of space, two rooms and a kitchenette. They also have a gym, sauna and business centre, but it's a bit away from the centre.

EATING

Once a great gathering of fly-blown hummus joints and felafel stands, Tel Aviv has spent the past decade growing up, adopting more sophisticated fare from Europe and elsewhere in the Middle East to become one of the region's better food cities. Tel Avivans take great pride in their restaurant scene, avidly flocking to the newest hot spots, many of which will certainly spring up during the lifetime of this book; you'll need to keep an ear to the ground for the newest places.

Despite the sheer number of fab restaurants, ethnic variety is somewhat limited. Apart from a few designer sushi bars, there are only a handful of places that do authentic Asian food. Good Latin American or African fare is also thin on the ground.

Expect European prices: lunch at a café will cost 40NIS to 50NIS (US\$9 to US\$11) while dinner at an upscale restaurant will

cost 70NIS to 100NIS. This makes eating on the cheap somewhat challenging; if you are on a budget you'll be limited to the ubiquitous shwarma, hummus and felafel stands where you can grab a plate of food and a drink for 18NIS to 30NIS.

Neighbourhood grocery stores can be found on just about every block of the city. There is a supermarket in the basement of the Dizengoff Centre, and a Supersol supermarket at 79 Ben Yehuda St (between Gordon and Mapu). Fresh fruits and vegetables are cheaply bought at the Carmel Market.

Yemenite Quarter, Upper Allenby St & Sheinken St

In this diverse area you can sample traditional fare in the Yemenite Quarter, such as meat soups and kebabs, or try designer dishes in the mod restaurants of Sheinken St. Upper Allenby St has a clutch of good cafés, amid fast-food joints and shwarma stands.

RESTAURANTS

Maganda (Map p156; 26 Rabbi Meir St; meals 30-40NISNIS; 🚗 noon-midnight Sun-Thu, 8am-noon Sat; 🚶) One of the oldest restaurants in the Yemenite Quarter, this Oriental kosher food restaurant specialises in an array of kebabs and salads. It has recently been renovated and now has lots of space for big groups.

Shimon (Map p156; cnr Kappa & Manla Sts; soup 12-25NIS; 🚗 9.30am-4.30pm Sun-Thu) With its marinated meats and mix of spices, Shimon makes some of the best soups in the neighbourhood. Popular with literary types and artists, who descend on the place during the lunch hour.

Orna and Ella (Map p156; ☎ 620 4753; 33 Sheinken St; meals 45-70NIS; 🚗 10am-midnight Sun-Fri, 11am-midnight Sat) Set inside a beautifully renovated Bauhaus apartment, with stark white design and no musical distractions, this 15-year-old institution serves homy gourmet cuisine to locals and celebrities alike (Natalie Portman was recently spotted here). It uses the freshest ingredients brought straight from the market and everything is made from scratch. The menu changes weekly, but you can count on the seared salmon, smoked duck and great sweet potato pancakes. Don't miss the excellent pastries!

CAFÉS

Sonia Gatzel Shapira (Map p156; ☎ 526 1234; 1 Almonit Alley; meals 25-35NIS; 🚗 9am-late Mon-Thu, 8am-6pm Fri,

11am-late Sat; 🚶) You'll find a crowd of regulars here sipping coffee, reading and chatting with the two brothers who own the place, Aviran and Snir. The indoor section, decked out in vintage furniture, grooves to a soundtrack of R&B, jazz or rock. Even better is the sunny patio out back. It has a mainly vegetarian menu, featuring pastas and sandwiches. Try the Moroccan bread with olive oil.

Café Noah (Map p156; ☎ 629 3799; 93 Ahad Ha'Am St; light meals 20-35NIS; 🚗 7.30am-midnight Sun-Thu, 8am-6pm Fri) Popular with writers, poets, pundits and other folk desperately attempting to avoid a nine-to-five job, Noah has well-worn wood floors, a small library and dozens of dusty old *National Geographic* mags. The menu offers salads, sandwiches and all-day breakfast. For a healthy treat try to the quinoa salad, prepared with a type of grain indigenous to South America. There's live jazz at 8.30pm each Sunday. Free wi-fi internet access.

Café Tamar (Map p156; ☎ 685 2376; 57 Sheinken St; snacks 20-25NIS; 🚗 7am-8pm Sun-Fri) This place was opened when the British Mandate was still in effect and the atmosphere hasn't changed much since those heady days. Owner Sarah Stern (who has been in charge since 1955) can still be found at the café, gabbing with her customers about her days spent serving in the British army. Her speciality, half a bagel with cheese, a hard-boiled egg and salad (24NIS) has been the cornerstone dish for half a century. The crowd is a mix of old-timers and neighbourhood intellectual types. Visit on Friday to watch some serious chess matches.

Café Bialik (Map p156; ☎ 620 0832; 2 Bialik St; dishes 35-65NIS; 🚗 8am-3am Sun-Fri, 9am-3am Sat) Another unique café, this one is larger than most, with high ceilings and diner-style seating. The food ranges from excellent to amazing, and if you aren't too hungry they offer the same dishes in tapas-sized portions (for half the price). Try the salmon and teriyaki tapas or the entrecôte (beef) skewers. They have free wi-fi access, live music most nights and a 'happy hour' from 4pm to 10pm that sees discounted drinks.

QUICK EATS

Felafel Yosef (Bezalel Market; 🚗 8am-8pm Sun-Thu, to 4pm Fri) One of the best and most interesting felafel joints in the city. Here you are given a pita and allowed to add as much felafel and condiments as you please, all for 12NIS.

SELF-CATERING

In the City (Map p156; 1 Ben Yehuda St; 🚗 7am-midnight) A gourmet supermarket with locally produced cheeses, vegetables and imported meats.

HaYarkon St, Ben Yehuda St, & Frishman Beach

Because of its proximity to the rash of beach hotels and hostels, this part of town is home to quite a few touristy restaurants, although there are a few gem-like local places among them, including the following. Ben Yehuda St is the place to trawl for hummus and shwarma joints, while the beachside boulevard, Herbert Samuel Esplanade, hosts a few all-night eateries.

RESTAURANTS

Human Nature (Map p160; ☎ 529 0262; 69 Ben Yehuda St; dishes 30-45NIS; 🚗 8am-11.30pm Sun-Thu, 8am-6pm Fri, 7am-11.30pm) A likable 'organic café', Human Nature specialises in health food using 100% organic ingredients. Wash down your teriyaki tofu with a pure fruit juice or try their excellent Bulgarian goat-cheese pizza, but save room for the organic sorbet ice-cream dessert.

Manta Ray (Map p162; ☎ 517 4773; Kaufmann St; dishes 80-100NIS; 🚗 9am-midnight) Spectacularly set on the beach, Manta Ray combines a five-star seafood menu, attentive service and Mediterranean views. Pick a few dishes off the mezze platter (we liked the goat cheese and the eggplant) and then enjoy a main course of roasted scallops, sea bass fillet, grilled shrimp or a juicy steak. It's also a great place for breakfast.

CAFÉS & QUICK EATS

Taste of Life (Map p160; ☎ 620 3151; 60 Ben Yehuda St; dishes 30-45NIS; 🚗 9am-9pm Sun-Thu, to 2pm Fri; 🚶) This place, run by immigrants from the USA, does vegan cuisine that includes tasty veggie shwarma, steamed vegetables, vegetarian hot dogs, tamali, tofu-lafel, barbecue twist burgers, yogurts and shakes.

Abu Shukri (Map p160; ☎ 523 3113; 22 Frishman St; 🚗 10am-8pm; 🚶) A branch of the famed Abu Shukri in Abu Ghosh, this place serves up bowls of fresh hummus and beans for 17NIS (egg is an extra 3NIS). Unlike most fast-food joints, this one has a pleasant indoor setting with air-con. They also do great homemade lemonade.

Luche (Map p160; ☎ 525 5999; 33 Bograshov St; meals 35-45NIS; ☎ 8am-1am) Fresh and fun, Luche is a breath of fresh air on Bograshov St. Here you can try all kinds of healthy meals in a bright, homy atmosphere, complete with couches and shelves stacked with books. Come in the morning for an Iraqi breakfast involving an omelette, salad, eggplant and tahini.

Lechem Erez (Map p160; ☎ 529 1793; 120 Ben Yehuda St; snacks 12-25NIS; ☎ 8am-midnight) Tel Aviv's original gourmet bakery is still going strong, despite a plethora of new competition. Enjoy some freshly baked bread, rosemary foccaccia, muffins, cheese, dips and jams served on the open-air patio.

SELF-CATERING

Supersol supermarket (Map p160; 79 Ben Yehuda St; ☎ 7am-midnight Sun-Thu, 7am-4pm Fri, 8.30pm-midnight Sat) Large chain supermarket with reasonable prices.

Dizengoff St, Ibn Gvirol St & Habima Sq

Several good cafés and restaurants are located in the eastern part of the city. Most places are low-key coffee shops that serve sandwiches and big salads, plus dozens of refreshing juice stands that squeeze fresh juice and make yogurt with fresh fruit.

RESTAURANTS

Tapéo (Map p150; ☎ 624 0484; 16 Ha'arba'a St; tapas 15-40NIS; ☎ 7pm-late) Once you've settled in and polished off a couple of tapas snacks you can almost imagine that you've been transported to Barcelona. And like a Spanish restaurant you can find huge crowds mingling and drinking jugs of Sangria till well after midnight. The menu is laden with delicious treats, including sliced scallops, jumbo shrimp wrapped in noodles, stuffed empanadas and grilled eggplant. It's located among other upscale restaurants, around the corner from the Cinematheque.

Brasserie M&R (Map p150; ☎ 696 7111; 70 Ibn Gvirol St; dishes 50-100NIS; ☎ noon-5am) Up there with the most popular Tel Aviv restaurants, this French restaurant is busy all the time – stop by around 3am on a Tuesday and wonder at the crowds. The big leather couches, mirrors, brass fittings and brusque service will make Parisians feel at home, while the oysters, steaks and paté will please even the most sophisticated palates. It's quietly known as a meeting place for local celebri-

ties, but still maintains a neighbourhood atmosphere.

Messa (Map p150; ☎ 685 6859; 19 Ha'arba'a St; dishes 80-160NIS; ☎ noon-1am) More than a restaurant with impeccable *haute cuisine*, Messa has a magical quality that raises the restaurant experience to a new level. The centrepiece of the white-on-white dining hall is an elongated table, where strangers are placed together to mix and mingle over their seafood casseroles, zucchini flowers and crème brûlée. Around the edge are small alcoves where others disappear into enormous black cushions so soft they nearly induce sleep. The servers appear frequently to announce options for the next course, and everything is made from scratch by chef Aviv Moshe, who blends his Kurdish heritage with French and Mediterranean cooking. Following your meal, spare time for a drink in the stunning jet-black bar, where the oversized lamp shades appear suspended in the void of darkness. Dress is casual but Messa remains one of the most exclusive restaurants in the city – a popular dinner spot for celebrities, the prime minister and VIPs visiting from abroad.

CAFÉS

Coffee Bean (Map p150; ☎ 529 8669; 73 Ibn Gvirol St; sandwiches 16-20NIS, coffee 12-20NIS; ☎ 7.45am-12.30am Sun-Thu, 7.45am-3.30am Fri, 8.45am-1am Sat) This coffee-shop chain offers a relaxed, smoke-free, air-con sitting area. Laptop users will enjoy the big tables and free wi-fi. There are outlets on the first floor of the Dizengoff Centre and at 30 Ibn Gvirol St.

Shine (Map p150; ☎ 527 6186; 38 Shlomo HaMelech St; ☎ 8.30am-12.30am Sun-Thu, 8.30am-5.30pm Fri, 10.15am-12.30am Sat; ☎) This neighbourhood café, occupying a lovely spot under the trees, has a minimalist interior of white walls and silver trim, although most people prefer the outdoor patio. It attracts a young, smart set who mingle over brunch, drinking cappuccinos with soy milk (10NIS) or champagne cocktails. The menu is mainly light salads and sandwiches. Vegetarians will enjoy the curry tofu.

Tozeret Haaretz (Map p156; ☎ 522 0802; 12 Masarik Ave; ☎ 7am-midnight Sun-Fri, 9.30am-midnight Sat) Overlooking beautiful Masarik park, this timeless bohemian café serves up some of the best cakes and sweets in the city, as well as some good-value snacks and meals. Try the excellent shakshuka (18NIS to 39NIS). Make

sure you go to the right place; it's tucked behind another café called Masarik 12.

Café Bacio (Map p156; ☎ 528 9753; 85 King George St; snacks 10-25NIS; ☎ 8am-midnight Sun-Fri, 4pm-midnight Sat) There is a very likable mood here, especially in the evening, when the attached lounge-room fills up with artists, musicians and plain old regulars. It's very sociable, a little bit like a bar without the alcohol. Instead the main menu items are desserts – ice cream, brownies, cakes and coffee.

QUICK EATS

Sabihe (Map p160; 42 Frishman St; per sabihe 12NIS; ☎ 9am-11.30pm Sun-Thu, 9am-3pm Fri, 8-11.30pm Sat) A variation on the felafel, the *sabihe* includes a crushed hardboiled egg, sauces and condiments in a pita. The long lines waiting for one of these is an indication of its popularity.

Bagels & Coffee (Map p160; ☎ 620 3162; 69 Dizengoff St; bagel with toppings 18NIS; ☎ 9am-2am) US-style bagels served up with your choice of cream cheese or veggie toppings.

Karish (Map p160; 98 Dizengoff St; wrap 18NIS; ☎ 11am-2am) Step up to the bar and order hot-off-the-grill chicken or steak wrap, stuffed with diced tomatoes, peppers, guacamole and garlic sauce. Delish.

Buddha Burger (Map p160; ☎ 077-787 8792; 75 Dizengoff St; snacks 16-20NIS; ☎ noon-10pm Sun-Thu, 11am-late afternoon Fri, after sunset-11pm Sat; ☎) A vegan bar and takeaway place whose specialities include burgers (NIS16), frankfurters, sandwiches made with smoked tofu, fruit shakes made with soy milk (13NIS to 18NIS) and quiches based on milkless cheese.

Rothschild Blvd, Neve Tzedek & Florentine

This neighbourhood has a high concentration of upscale restaurants. It covers the area between Rothschild Blvd and Florentine, as well as Nahalat Binyamin St.

RESTAURANTS

Kyoto Salsa (Map p162; ☎ 566 1234; 31 Montefiore St; dishes 50-100NIS; ☎ noon-midnight; ☎) Black lacquer furniture and sharp lighting make a stunning stage for this Japanese and Latin fusion restaurant. The excellent menu ranges from Latin-spiced seafood casserole to a Japanese business set lunch for 59NIS. Or for something light, order up some sushi, washed down with a margarita.

Betty Ford (Map p162; ☎ 510 0650; 48 Nahalat Binyamin St; ☎ noon-late) This retro funk bar-restaurant has a wonderful kitchen serving up delicious burgers topped with *maibucha* (cooked red peppers and tomatoes). Other great menu items include meat kebabs and grilled crab. The bathroom downstairs is an experience in itself with an (almost) unisex bathroom.

24 Rupees (Map p162; ☎ 681 8066; 14-16 Shoken St; ☎ noon-midnight Sun-Thu, 7pm-midnight Sat) Down a windswept street in southern Tel Aviv, amid motorcycle shops and warehouses, sits this extremely popular rooftop Indian restaurant. The setting is reminiscent of a Sinai tiki-camp, complete with floor mattresses, colourful carpets and low tables, but the food is definitely Indian. You have your choice of three types of vegetarian thali (24NIS) and homemade drinks – try the mango lassi (24NIS). There is a very mellow, secret-society vibe here and the owners Uri and Neta are dedicated to preparing food with the freshest ingredients, all making it worth the long trek. A word of advice: the door downstairs is hard to spot and looks locked – don't worry, it's not.

Moses (Map p162; ☎ 566 4949; 35 Rothschild Blvd; ☎ noon-4am) This popular burger place stays busy well after midnight, especially on weekends. You can eat outside on the deck overlooking beautiful Rothschild Blvd or sit in the air-con interior. Moses serves some of the best hamburgers (45NIS) in Tel Aviv: a plump, 200g mixture of seasoned lamb and beef served with tangy sauces and toppings, or you can choose from a selection of appetisers and sandwiches. After midnight the price of a burger and fries drops to 29NIS.

Yakimono (Map p162; ☎ 516 8666; 19 Rothschild Blvd; sushi 45-65NIS; ☎ noon-midnight) This Japanese place has a hard-edged minimalist design with shades of grey and sharp lighting. There is no dress code per se, but it was one of the few places we found where the clientele tends to dress up rather than down. The sushi is excellent, but if you prefer a hot meal they do grilled teriyaki steaks and chicken – Sting apparently loved the place on his visit in 2006.

Suzana (Map p162; ☎ 517 7580; 9 Shabazi St; meals 45-65NIS; ☎ 10am-midnight) If you've just come out of a performance at the Suzanne Delal Centre, and want to enjoy another Neve Tzedek favourite, head across the street to this elegant outdoor dining establishment. Here you'll get a fusion of European and

Mediterranean dishes, including stuffed vegetables and Cornish hen. Enjoy your meal on the open deck in the shade of an enormous ficus tree. If you are here in the evening, take in views of lovely Neve Tzedek while enjoying a drink on the rooftop lounge.

Bugsy (Map p162; ☎ 681 3138; 26 Florentine St; meals 60NIS; ☎ 9am-late Sun-Fri, 11am-late Sat) Named after the well-known Jewish gangster Benjamin 'Bugsy' Siegel, this dimly lit bistro has intimate seating and a menu featuring everything from marinated burgers to parmesan latkes. In the evening it turns into a lounge bar, complete with a DJ spinning records from a little alcove above the bar.

QUICK EATS

Patat (Map p162; 38 Nahalat Binyamin St; fries 12NIS; ☎ 4pm-5am) When your pub crawl has come to an absolute standstill, muster up a little more energy to reach this hole-in-the-wall joint on Nahalat Binyamin St. They only serve French fries, with a variety of dips.

Chocolate Bar (Map p162; ☎ 560 4570; 45 Rothschild Blvd; ☎ 8am-1am) Specialising in chocolate bars, chocolate drinks and even chocolate pizza, this place has the potential to overdose your sweet tooth. All the chocolate and ice cream

is homemade. Besides the obvious attraction of so much chocolate, this is also a very comfortable place to sit and watch stately Rothschild Blvd go about its business.

Olive (Map p162; ☎ 510 6680; cnr Lilienblum & Herzl Sts; sandwiches 20-25NIS; ☎ 24hr) Feeding hungry party-goers 24/7 with freshly grilled sandwiches and snacks. With jazz music and diner-style seating, it makes for a perfect late-night break between clubs.

Old Port, Little Tel Aviv & Basel St

Home to some outstanding restaurants, the Tel Aviv Old Port is a must for a one-off dining experience. The entire area, a wasteland of abandoned warehouses a decade ago, has been renovated into a vibrant precinct of cafés, bars and restaurants.

RESTAURANTS

Agadir Hotel (Map p150; ☎ 544 4045; Old Port; burgers 30-40NIS; ☎ noon-6am) About 500m north of Benny the Fisherman is another fashionable restaurant with fine food offerings, mostly steaks and burgers piled high with a dozen different toppings (options include goat's cheese, Portobello mushrooms, guacamole and smoked goose breast, among others).

Done up like a Moroccan hotel lobby from the 1920s, there is another, more casual branch, located at 2 Nahalat Binyamin St.

Tierra Health Bar (Map p150; ☎ 604 7222; 54 Yermiyahu St; dishes 35-90NIS; ☎ 10am-midnight; ♿) Tierra Health Bar does a wide range of organic treats; we recommend the chicken breast with millet or the red tuna and mushrooms – both excellent! But even better than the food is the massage you can get from your server (seven minutes, 20NIS) – the staff members at Tierra are all certified massage therapists. To complete your healthy lunch date, grab a seat at the oxygen bar for 10 minutes of 100% pure O₂.

Benny the Fisherman (Map p150; ☎ 544 0764; Old Port; dishes 70-90NIS; ☎ noon-midnight) Sit on the deck and enjoy the sun setting over the harbour at this picturesque seafood restaurant. It's part of the newly renovated Old Port area, and while it's still relatively new on the scene, it has won a popular following for the grilled fish, shrimp and calamari. Portions are large and the service is excellent.

CAFÉS & QUICK EATS

Hummus Ashkara (Map p150; 45 Yermiyahu St; meals 18NIS) This is where locals go when they're after excellent hummus and *fuul* (fava bean paste). Further credibility was earned when a national newspaper recently voted its hummus the best in Israel. The sign is in Hebrew only, so look out for the Coca-Cola sign and the tables on the street.

HaKira & Ramat Gan

RESTAURANTS

2C (Map p150; ☎ 608 1990; Azrieli Towers, 49th fl; meals 150-180NIS; ☎ noon-midnight Sun-Thu, 8.30pm-1am Sat) Views of Tel Aviv don't get much better than the ones from restaurant, located on the top floor of the round Azrieli Tower. The kosher menu offers meat dishes such as fillets and chops with fresh veggies.

DRINKING

Tel Aviv has bars and pubs scattered all over the city; the highest concentrations are around upper Allenby St, Lilienblum St, the Florentine area, Nahalat Binyamin St, the Old Port and Yad Harutzim. Travelers' bars are on Ben Yehuda St and Herbert Samuel Esplanade. Most are open seven days a week and charge between 15NIS and 20NIS for a beer.

Yemenite Quarter, Upper Allenby St & Sheinken St

Minzar (Map p156; ☎ 517 3015; 60 Allenby St; ☎ 24hr) Set back from the main street, this is a bohemian-style coffeehouse that actually specialises in beer. Happy hour extends from 5pm to 10pm.

Cosa Nostra (Map p156; ☎ 517 5242; 10 Nahalat Binyamin St; ☎ 8pm-5am) Tucked into a shack, this funky little bar attracts musicians and bohemians after a cold beer and old-school rock and rap. When was the last time you grooved to a line-up of Run DMC and the Bee Gees?

HaYarkon St, Ben Yehuda St, & Frishman Beach

Mike's Place (Map p160; ☎ 052 267 0753; 86 Herbert Samuel Esplanade; ☎ 4pm-late) On the beach, this is the place to go for live music. Blues and rock bands play nightly from 10.30pm. There's also a sizable menu of grill-style meals, cocktails and, especially, beer. Happy hour lasts from 4pm to 9pm, and all day on Saturday.

Buzz Stop (Map p160; ☎ 510 0869; 86 Herbert Samuel Esplanade; ☎ 24hr; ♿) If the music gets too loud at Mike's Place you can crawl next door to the Buzz Stop. The food ain't great, but there is a wide selection of beer, a busy atmosphere and free internet for customers.

La Mer (Map p160; ☎ 523 7822; Herbert Samuel Esplanade; ☎ 24hr Jun-Sep) This summertime beach bar is a 24-hour party hub. Come in the evening when you can dig your feet in the sand, sip cocktails and watch the moonlight play off the sea. It's opposite Mike's Place.

Dizengoff St, Ibn Gvirol St & Habima Sq

Bukowski (Map p160; ☎ 523 2323; 39 Frishman St; ☎ 10pm-late) Completely enclosed with sound-proof walls and without a sign on the outside, you could walk past this place a dozen times and never know that there is a rockin' party behind the closed door. Smoky and dimly lit, this local bar is a dress-down place with a vociferous following and a long list of drinks. Predominantly '80s music.

Rothschild Blvd, Neve Tzedek & Florentine

Ourpick Blaumilech (Map p162; ☎ 560 8852; 32 Rothschild Blvd; ☎ 7pm-late) Overlooking gorgeous Rothschild Blvd and busy Allenby St, Blaumilech is perfectly placed to draw in big crowds to its cosy confines. Comfy

CITY CLOSED, GONE SWIMMING

Jerusalem and Tel Aviv celebrate Shabbat in very different ways. While the Holy City dresses up, prays by the Western Wall and dines communally, Tel Avivans kick their shoes off, eat out and crawl between the pubs.

The great weekly parade begins around 2pm on Nahalat Binyamin St. The pedestrian walkway is invariably packed with artists' stalls and musicians, the cafés are full and there is usually dancing. Walk also through neighbouring Carmel Market to witness the scenes as the traders slash prices and even give away bags of fruit and vegetables.

Another great happening is the Friday afternoon/evening party on Chinky Beach (aka Drum Beach) near the Dohaniarium. Locals play music and dance on the sand. There's no charge for turning up, and you can buy food and drinks. Show up around an hour before sunset.

On Saturday, if the weather is fine, the beaches are packed solid. A salsa dancing party is held at Bundulo Beach (behind the Renaissance Hotel) between 4pm and 8pm. HaYarkon Park is also busy with joggers, bikers and footballers. Tel Avivans also visit Jaffa, where the eating and entertainment places are open and busy.

While all the city buses grind to a halt, a sherut (service taxi) service runs the No 4 route up and down Ben Yehuda St and Allenby St. Mercedes sheruts operate to Jerusalem and Haifa from HaHashmal St, east of the southern end of Allenby St. The other operational public transport is the United Services bus No 90, running from the Dan Panorama Hotel along Allenby, Ben Yehuda, Bograshov, Dizengoff, Reines and Arlosoroff Sts to Herzlia up the coast.

While many restaurants and shwarma stands will be closed, a walk of one or two blocks in any direction will lead you to an open fast-food place or supermarket. All the travellers' bars by the beach continue serving uninterrupted. Laundrettes are also open, a good thing if you need clean clothes for a big night out when the Shabbat ends.

sofas line the interior of this low-lit lounge-bar and in between them people attempt to dance to the rock, pop and hip-hop dished out by the nightly DJ. It can be a wild scene with so many people trying to dance, drink and mingle in such a tight space. The clientele is an unpretentious 20s and 30s crowd and you shouldn't expect anyone to turn up before 11pm. If the interior is overcrowded you could always hang out on the front deck, a great spot to catch a breather before diving back into the fray.

Golden Bar (Map p162; ☎ 516 9194; 9 Rothschild Blvd; ☎ 6pm-late) DJs play a strong mix of rock, blues and rap for patrons on the street-side patio or the small indoor dance floor. There is also a decent choice of pub grub scrawled onto a blackboard, including chicken wings, burgers and fries.

Breakfast Club (Map p162; ☎ 560 8852; 6 Rothschild Blvd; ☎ 1am-late) Plastered with photos of the famous and infamous (Kim Il Sun, Stalin, the Ayatollah and Salvador Dali), and showing bizarre movies on its TVs (*Blade Runner*, *The Wall*), this place makes for a unique downtown dance experience. It's known as a late-night destination, so don't bother turning up until 2am or 3am.

Shoshana Johnson (Map p162; ☎ 506 7443; 97 Allenby St; ☎ 6pm-late) A curious find in downtown Tel Aviv. Where most places are all sleek chrome and neon lights, this belongs in the Latin Quarter of some other continent. The ambiance is relaxed but it's undoubtedly a singles bar, popular with a 30ish crowd. There is no sign in English, so look for the 'Libros en Español' sign. And the name? Shoshana Johnson was an American POW captured in Iraq – although we're not sure what that has to do with a bar on Allenby St.

Lanski (Map p162; ☎ 517 0043; 1st fl, Shalom Tower, 6 Montefiore St; ☎ 9pm-late Sat-Thu, 10pm-late Fri) Built in the shape of an 'H' for maximum eye-contact opportunities, this bar makes claim to be the biggest in the Middle East, an assertion we won't try to dispute. Sunday is bartenders' night, when Tel Aviv's barmen come in to swap war stories.

Shesek (Map p162; ☎ 516 9520; 17b Lilienblum; ☎ 9pm-late) Something of a black sheep on this street of progressive bars, Shesek is a rough-around-the-edges scenester bar and bohemian haunt well known for pumping out a variety of music (mash-ups and punk to

trance and avant-garde hip-hop) and quality beer (including Taybeh, a microbrew manufactured in Ramallah). It's the kind of place where you can have a civilised conversation with the DJ and make a few requests.

Blend (Map p162; ☎ 510 0985; 20 Ahad Ha'am St; ☎ 9pm-late) Set in the courtyard of a historic house, this is one of the most attractive bars in the city. This open area gives a unique feel, as if you're at a cocktail party at the home of some fabulously wealthy Tel Avivian.

Mish Mish (Map p162; ☎ 516 8178; 17a Lilienblum St; ☎ 8pm-late) Looking back to an earlier age of cocktails and jazz music, Mish Mish attracts a slightly older crowd of Lilienblum faithful. It's right next door to the more youthful Shesek.

Nanuchka (Map p162; ☎ 516 2254; 28 Lilienblum St; ☎ 10pm-late) This Georgian place is set inside an old home, and this fact comes through in the rambling nature of the place – there are several interconnected rooms, one for dining, one for drinking and others for floor lounging. It serves partially as a restaurant but most people simply try to wedge their way to the bar, where a convivial atmosphere makes it easy to meet others.

Jewish Princess (Map p162; ☎ 050 0260; 67 Yehuda Halevi St; ☎ 9.30pm-late) A healthy mix of gay, straight and bisexual yuppies pervades this creatively designed bar, fitted with leather couches and red lighting that pokes through dangling lamps. There is a hidden lounge out the back, tapas is available and the management is friendly.

Lenny's (Map p162; ☎ 518 4589; 7 Vital St; ☎ 8am-1am Sun-Fri, 10am-late Sat) Young and hip, Lenny's is a great little neighbourhood bar in Florentine. There are a few other bars on this street that you can crawl to in a matter of seconds.

Old Port, Little Tel Aviv & Basel St

M.A.S.H. (Map p150; ☎ 605 1007; 275 Dizengoff St; ☎ 5pm-4am) This long-time travellers' haunt has billiard tables, cheap beer and a friendly vibe. It's a good place to watch sports or just drink till you fall down (the name is short for More Alcohol Served Here).

Rivendell (Map p150; ☎ 602 3129; Old Port; beer 20NIS; ☎ 9pm-late) One of several über-chic lounge-bars in the Old Port. If the name sounds familiar, Rivendell was an Elven outpost in the *Lord of the Rings*. No elves here, just A-listers enjoying the seafront

location and pricy drinks. Wednesday is an '80s dance party.

ENTERTAINMENT Nightclubs

Tel Aviv has the best nightlife in Israel but you need to be prepared for some late nights. Doors usually don't open until midnight and the party really doesn't get going until around 2am.

There are two main areas for the big clubs. One is located at the Old Port, a newly renovated area of bars, clubs and restaurants frequented by tourists, yuppies and off-duty soldiers; the second is an industrial area called Yad Harutzim, popular with hard-core clubbers who can handle the party and the 6am after-party.

You can reach the Old Port on foot or by bus from the centre while Yad Harutzim, southwest of the centre, is best reached by cab (20NIS from the centre). Cover charges for dedicated discotheques range from 50NIS to 100NIS. Bars, some of which double as dance clubs, are free. There's rarely a dress code, but most people put on their clubbing best.

At the time of writing, a new, large dance club was being built at Namir Sq. For a full listing of bars and clubs, pick up a copy of

Time Out Tel Aviv, available at kiosks and hotels.

Move (Map p150; ☎ 602 0426; Old Port; admission 60NIS; ☎ 11pm-late Mon-Sat) If you only have the time for one club in Tel Aviv, make it this place. Bursting at the seams with young Israelis, the quandary of how so many people fit into such a small space is a sight to behold. Tuesday is gay night.

TLV Club (Map p150; ☎ 544 4194; Old Port; admission 50-100NIS; ☎ midnight-late Mon, Fri & Sat) This large discotheque often features Israeli rock and pop stars – call to find out what's on. Admission prices vary, depending on who's performing.

Dome (Map p162; ☎ 687 0591; 3 HaTsira St; admission 60-100NIS; ☎ 1am-late) One of the biggest dance clubs, but if you need to slip away from the crowds, just go out back to a beach-style chill-out space. Student parties are held on Fridays.

Vox (Map p162; ☎ 687 0591; 2 Yagia Kapaim St; admission 40-70NIS; ☎ 1am-late) Around the corner from Dome, Vox is a bit smaller and sexier than its neighbour. There are several levels, a voyeur terrace and a hidden couch area for make-out sessions. Gay parties are held on Friday.

HaOman Tel Aviv (Map p162; ☎ 681 3636; 88 Arbanael St; admission 100NIS; ☎ 1am-late) Sister club

PUB CRAWLING IN TEL AVIV

A proper pub and nightclub tour of Tel Aviv requires a bit of money and lots of endurance.

Around sunset, kick off your evening with a drink at one of the beach bars, such as Le Mer (p175) at Frishman Beach or Sakaya (p185) in Jaffa. Other seaside options that open early are Mike's Place (p175) and Buzz Stop (p175), both popular travellers' haunts, but if you have a taste for some local flavour, head to the café-bars around Kikar Magen David, such as Minzar (p175), or try Betty Ford (p173) on Nahalat Binyamin St.

Most dedicated bars won't open until 10pm. Around this time head down to Lilienblum St for an hour or two of pub crawling, stopping in at Nanuchka (opposite) and Shesek (opposite). Around midnight, check out the action at one of the Rothschild Blvd bars such as Blaumilech (p175), Golden Bar (opposite) and nearby Shoshana Johnson (opposite) or the Jewish Princess (opposite).

Clubs start shakin' between 2am and 3am and at this point a cab could come in handy. Try a club at the Old Port, the best of which are TLV Club (above) or Move (above). If you've got the energy, the best after-parties happen in the wee hours at Yad Harutzim clubs such as Vox (above) or Dome (above).

If you're looking for something a bit more laid-back, try the bars on Florentine St. The famed club HaOman Tel Aviv (above) is not too far away if you're up for some late-night dancing.

Consider this as a loose guide only. The best bars and clubs come and go and you'll need to check local listings or ask bartenders for info on parties and special events. The monthly magazine *Time Out Tel Aviv* is a good place to start.

Wherever you end up, you can enjoy the dawn right back where you started, as most beachside bars such as La Mer will be waiting with open arms.

to the one in Jerusalem, this is one of the biggest, brashiest clubs in the city. It hosts international DJs and has plenty of swank, including an on-site sushi bar, a sunken dance floor and five bars. Come dressed to impress or the high and mighty bouncers will never let you inside.

Cinemas

In summer, free films are sometimes screened on the beach near Allenby St.

Cinematheque (Map p150; ☎ 606 0800; 1 Ha'arba'a St; admission 35NIS) This is the flagship in a chain of Israeli cinemas that feature classic, retro, foreign, avant-garde, new wave and off-beat films. It often hosts film festivals. Alternatively, choose a film from the video library and pay 20NIS for a private screening.

For Hollywood films, try **Dizengoff Cinema** (Map p156; ☎ 620 0485; Ground fl, Dizengoff Centre), the **Hod Theatre** (Map p160; ☎ 522 8090; 101 Dizengoff St) or **Rav-Chen Movie Theatre** (Map p160; ☎ 528 2288; Kikar Dizengoff).

Theatre & Dance

New Cameri Theatre (Map p150; ☎ 606 0960; www.cameri.co.il; Golda Meir Centre, 19 Sha'ul HaMelech Ave) Hosts theatre performances in Hebrew, with simultaneous English translation on Thursdays only. The theatre is in the Israeli Opera House (☎ 692 7777).

Habima Theatre (Map p156; ☎ 629 5555; Tarsat Blvd, Habima Sq) Home of Israel's national thea-

tre company, Habima stages performances on Thursday, with simultaneous English-language translation.

Zoa Theatre (Map p150; 1 Daniel Frisch St) A small theatre with nightly performances in Hebrew. The **Yiddish theatre** (www.yiddishpiel.co.il) occasionally stages performances here. Tickets from 160NIS.

Suzanne Dellal Centre (Map p162; ☎ 510 5656; www.suzannedellal.org.il; 5 Yechieli St) Stages a variety of performing arts including dance, music and ballet.

Beit Lessin (Map p160; ☎ 725 5300; 101 Dizengoff St) Has at least one theatrical performance per week.

Tzavta (Map p150; ☎ 695 0156; 30 Ibn Gvirol St) This club-theatre has pop and folk Israeli music, as well as Hebrew-language comedy and improv theatre on Fridays.

Live Music

Classical music concerts are sometimes held at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art (see p159) and the Israeli Opera House.

You can hear live rock and blues music at Mike's Place (p175) at 10pm nightly. Rock bands also play at **Fusion** (Map p162; ☎ 791 0303; cnr HaMasger & Yad Harutzim Sts). For jazz, check out Café Noah (p171) at 8.30pm on Sunday, or the **Coffee House** (☎ 528 0565; 88 Dizengoff St) from 4pm to 7pm on Fridays.

European and American rock, pop and rap stars make frequent appearances in and

around Tel Aviv. Check *Time Out Tel Aviv* to see who is coming to town.

Sport

Tel Avivans are passionate about their football team, the Maccabi Tel Aviv. Big matches are played October to June at **Ramat Gan National Stadium** (229 Aba Hillel Silver Rd, Ramat Gan), reached from downtown bus No 20, 42 or 67. Tickets can be bought at the stadium on game day for 40NIS to 120NIS or in advance from **Le-an ticket agency** (Map p160; ☎ 524 7373; 101 Dizengoff St).

SHOPPING

Tel Aviv has plenty of shopping areas, ranging from streetside flea markets and antique shops all the way up to designer boutiques and shopping malls.

Camping Gear

There are a few outdoor stores around town, many of them selling travel guidebooks, maps and all manner of camping supplies. One of the most well known, Lametayel (see p152) is a combination bookshop and camping store. Another good option is **Maslul** (Map p160; ☎ 620 3508; 47 Bograshov St).

Crafts & Souvenirs

A crafts fair is held on Nahalat Binyamin St every Tuesday and Friday. Even if you're not in the mood to spend money, this is a great place to walk around and soak up Tel Aviv's exuberant atmosphere. You'll find paintings, ceramics, jewellery and glasswork. Interspersed among the craft sellers you'll spot buskers, mime artists and dancers.

If antiques are your thing, check out the junk market held every Tuesday and Friday at Kikar Dizengoff. Among the detritus you'll find old coins, stamps and other antiques.

The best Judaica is available in Jerusalem, but if you are bargain hunting you'll find shops along Ben Yehuda St, some of them opposite the Sky Hostel. These shops also sell postcards, souvenirs and the like.

Clothing

HaMachteret (Map p156; ☎ 620 2413; 17 Almonit Alley) By refashioning old garments and designing new items (with vintage fabric), designer Assaf Pelleg has carved out a niche market for himself. The spacious showroom of HaMachteret (which means Underground)

is a pleasure to browse, thanks to the colourful walls and comfy lounge. Both men and women are catered for and you can accessorise with handmade wallets and jewellery.

Couple Of (Map p156; ☎ 520 1490; 207 Dizengoff St) Handmade sandals for both men and women come in a variety of designs and mediums at this Dizengoff St shoe boutique. The fashions are created by a husband-and-wife team, Elon and Sheli Satat-Kombor, who favour shoes that lend equal priority to comfort and design. Prices range between 500NIS and 1500NIS.

Naama Bezalet (Map p156; ☎ 629 3938; 40 Sheinken St) Parting with Tel Aviv traditional fashions (short skirts and tank tops), designs here span the fashion legacies of the 20th century. Everything from vintage-style lingerie to 1950s Euro holiday designs and 1960s polka dots are on display.

Enki By VV (Map p156; ☎ 527 4335; 38 Mohaliver St) Specialising in handmade casual women's clothing, this studio-shop, operated by VV Ben-Ezra, has a good selection of colourful summer and winter outfits. This is but one of several fashion studios on Mohaliver St, an excellent place to browse the latest designs and meet the people who create them.

Music

There are plenty of music stores around town, including a Tower Records in the Opera Tower Shopping Centre, as well as CD sellers in the Carmel Market. For a good selection of Israeli rock, plus tickets for upcoming concerts, try **Krembo Records** (Map p156; ☎ 525 9507; www.kremboshop.com; 18 Sheinken St).

Photography

Photo Film (Map p156; ☎ 517 0968; 84 Allenby St) Good selection of new and used photo equipment, plus photo processing.

MDK (Map p156; ☎ 510 7711; 36 Allenby St) This shop sells photographic equipment.

Shopping Centres & Markets

Israel's first mall, the **Dizengoff Centre** (Map p156; ☎ 621 2400, ext 2; cnr Dizengoff & King George Sts; ☎ 9am-midnight Sun-Thu, 9am-4pm Fri, 8pm-midnight Sat) is a bustling centre of commerce filled with cafés, fast-food joints and retail shops. It also has two cinemas, a supermarket, a couple of fitness centres and an indoor pool. An Israeli food fair is held noon to 8pm Thursday and 10.30am to 4pm Friday.

PSY-TRANCE PARTYING

Israeli trance music, adapted from music brought home during the '80s and '90s from post-army trips (of both kinds) around Goa, has in recent years developed into a strong local scene. Its parties, known as Psy-trance, are often overnight or two-day affairs frequently held on an isolated patch of beach or forest clearing, rather than inside the confines of a Tel Aviv club.

Entry to parties tends to be free or donation-based; there's a liberating lack of bouncers and attitude, and, unlike many other forms of electronic music, the focus is firmly on peace, love and harmony. Psychedelic artwork, light shows and lasers, projected images of ecstatic Hindu gods and a combined crowd of blissed-out hippies and revellers dressed as fairies make these parties an experience a visitor won't quickly forget.

Israel's first trance artists included DJ Miko and Astral Projection; nowadays, Infected Mushroom, Skazi and Astrix are key players on the party scene, though new talent regularly hits the DJ booths. To find out where and when to go, look for fliers in Tel Aviv record shops and Sheinken St clothes stores; Krembo Records (see opposite) was one of the pioneers on the scene and is the very best place to enquire. Also worth delving into are www.isratrance.com and www.trance.co.il (for which you'll need to register), both giving info on upcoming parties. You'll usually have to call to find out the exact locations, which are often closely guarded secrets until just hours before the sun sets and the party starts.

Thanks to Daniel Owen for his assistance with this boxed text. Amelia Thomas

The **Opera Tower Shopping Centre** (Map p156; ☎ 510 796; 1 Allenby St; ☎ 10am-10pm), located at the top of Allenby St and Herbert Samuel Esplanade, also contains shops and a cinema. It is a modern, fashionable place with a convenient location near the hotels and the beach.

The first three floors of the **Azrieli Centre** (Map p150; ☎ 608 1179; www.azrieli-center.co.il in Hebrew; 132 Menahem Begin Rd; ☎ 10am-10pm Sun-Thu, 10am-4pm Fri, 8pm-midnight Sat) are also taken up by a shopping mall and cinema. There is a mixed bag of upmarket shops and chain retail outlets, plus a better than average food court.

If you prefer heavily laden carts and lots of shouting to the gloss and glamour of the malls, check out Tel Aviv's convivial Carmel Market (see p155), where you can pick up spices, food, T-shirts and various odds and ends. For clothing and swimwear, you'll get the best deals at the nearby Bezalel Market (Map p156), located just off King George St.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Air

Most travellers fly in and out of Ben-Gurion Airport, usually on **El Al** (Map p160; ☎ 971 6111; www.elal.co.il; 32 Ben Yehuda St), but **Arkia** (Map p160; ☎ 699 2222; telaviv@arkia.co.il; 74 HaYarkon St) also has daily flights to Eilat (370NIS) and Haifa (442NIS, daily except Saturday) from Sde Dov airport, north of the Yarkon River. The other domestic airline is **Israir** (Map p160; ☎ 795 5777; www.israir.co.il; 23 Ben Yehuda St).

For more information on baggage and ticketing see p400.

Airline offices in Tel Aviv:

Air Canada (Map p150; ☎ 607 2111; www.aircanada.com; Azrieli Centre, 132 Menahem Begin Rd)

Air France (☎ 755 5005; www.airfrance.com; 7 Jabotinsky St, Ramat Gan)

Alitalia (☎ 971 1047; www.alitalia.it; Ben-Gurion airport)

American Airlines (Map p160; ☎ 795 2133; www.aa.com; 29 Ben Yehuda St)

Austrian Airlines (Map p160; ☎ 511 5110; www.aa.com; 1 Ben Yehuda St)

British Airways (Map p150; ☎ 606 1555; www.britishairways.com; Azrieli Centre, 132 Menahem Begin Rd)

Cathay Pacific (Map p160; ☎ 795 2133; www.cathaypacific.com; 29 Ben Yehuda St)

Continental Airlines (Map p150; ☎ 511 6700; www.continental.com; 25 Ha'mered St)

KLM (☎ 971 1138; www.klm.com; Ben-Gurion airport)

Lufthansa (☎ 513 5355; www.lufthansa.com; e-ticket only, counter at Ben-Gurion airport)

Qantas (Map p160; ☎ 795 2133; www.qantas.com; 29 Ben Yehuda St)

Royal Jordanian Airlines (Map p160; ☎ 516 556; www.rj.com; 5 Shalom Aleichem St)

South African Airways (Map p160; ☎ 510 2828; www.flysa.com; 23 Ben Yehuda St)

United (☎ 513 5600; www.united.com; e-ticket only, Lufthansa counter, at Ben-Gurion airport)

Bus

From Tel Aviv's enormous **central bus station** (Map p150; ☎ 694 8888) outgoing intercity buses depart from the 6th floor, where there's also an efficient information desk. Suburban and city buses use the poorly signposted stalls on the 4th floor. There are some Dan departures from the 1st floor also. Tickets can usually be bought from the driver as well as from the ticket booths. Note that during Shabbat you'll have to resort to sheruts (service taxis).

Buses leave for Jerusalem (No 405, 17.70NIS, one hour, every 15 minutes); for Haifa (No 910, 23NIS, 1½ hours, every 20 minutes); Tiberias (Nos 830, 835 and 841, 42NIS, 2½ hours) once or twice hourly from 6am to 9pm; Eilat (65NIS, five hours), more or less hourly from 6.30am to 5pm (an overnight service departs at 12.30am); and Be'er Sheva (13.70NIS, 1½ hours, two or three hourly).

Tel Aviv's second bus station, the **Arlosoroff terminal** (Map p150; ☎ 695 8614; cnr Arlosoroff & AP Derakhim Sts; 4-9pm Sun-Thu, 11am-3pm Fri 6-11pm Sat), adjoins the central train station north-east of the centre. To get there, take bus No 61, which travels along Allenby St, King George St, Dizengoff St and Arlosoroff St.

For information on buses to Egypt, see p403.

Car

Most of the car-rental agencies are on Ha-Yarkon St, near the Sheraton Moriah Hotel. Parking can be a nightmare in downtown Tel Aviv. Parking at the red-and-white curb is illegal and you'll be towed if you do. Lots and garages charge around 45NIS per 24 hours of parking.

Avis Ben-Gurion Airport (☎ 971 2315); Tel Aviv (Map p160; ☎ 527 2314; 113 HaYarkon St)

Budget Ben-Gurion Airport (☎ 971 1504); Tel Aviv (Map p160; ☎ 524 5233; 99 HaYarkon St, in Dan Tel Aviv)

Eldan Ben-Gurion Airport (☎ 977 3400); Tel Aviv (Map p160; ☎ 527 1166; 114 HaYarkon St)

Europcar (Map p160; ☎ 524 8484; 126 HaYarkon St)

Hertz Ben-Gurion Airport (☎ 977 2444); Tel Aviv (Map p160; ☎ 522 3332; 144 HaYarkon St)

Sherut (Service Taxi)

The sheruts (service or shared taxis) outside the central bus station run to Jerusalem (20NIS) and Haifa (25NIS). On Saturday, they leave from HaHamashal St just east of Allenby St and charge about 20% more than the weekday fare. See p409 for more information.

Train

Tel Aviv has three train stations: the main station, **Tel Aviv Merkaz** (Map p150; ☎ 577 4000/5770; www.israrail.org.il/english), is located at the end of Arlosoroff St; the smaller **HaShalom train station** is convenient for the Azrieli Centre; while further south, HaHaganna is a five-minute walk from the central bus station.

From Tel Aviv Merkaz, you can travel to Haifa (24.50NIS, one hour) via Netanya (12.50NIS, 25 minutes), more or less hourly from 6am to 8pm Sunday to Friday, and on to Akko (34NIS, 1½ hours) and Nahariya (38NIS, 1¾ hours). Heading south, you can travel down the coast to Ashkelon (22.50NIS, one hour) and as far as Be'er Sheva (25.50NIS, 1¼ hours), both departing once or twice hourly. To reach Tel Aviv Merkaz from the centre, take bus No 61 or 62 north from Dizengoff St to the Arlosoroff bus terminal, which is a two-minute walk from the station.

GETTING AROUND

Tel Aviv plans to build a subway but at the rate the project is progressing most locals admit that they would just as soon expect to see the Messiah. Until then, a combination of bus, taxi and bike will have to suffice.

To/From the Airport

The most straightforward method of getting from Ben-Gurion airport into Tel Aviv is by train – the station entrance is outside the international terminal, to the left. At least two trains run per hour to Tel Aviv Merkaz station (12NIS, from 3.30am to 11pm daily). A bus used to travel from the airport to the city centre, but at the time of writing services had been suspended. However, bus No 475 (11.70NIS) still travels between the airport and the central bus station, departing from the station and from the airport

(outside the departure area) every 20 minutes to 30 minutes. Otherwise, a taxi will cost around 90NIS.

Bicycle

Tel Aviv is flat and traffic is relatively light so it's easy to get around by bike. A few streets even have dedicated bike paths, such as Rothschild Blvd, Ben-Gurion Ave and Ben-Zion Ave. For rentals, try **O-Fun** (Map p150; ☎ 544 2292; 197 Ben Yehuda St), which rents bikes for 30NIS per day. Alternatively, Maslul (see p179) has a bike that it lets out for day use (free).

Bus

Tel Aviv city buses are operated by **Dan** (☎ 639 4444; www.dan.co.il) and follow an efficient network of routes, running from 5.30am to midnight except Shabbat. The single fare is 5.20NIS, but for 12NIS you can buy a red pass (*hofshi yomi*), which allows one day of unlimited bus travel around Tel Aviv and its suburbs; it is valid from 9am until the end of the day.

Currently, these are the major Tel Aviv bus routes:

Bus No 10 Central train station via Arlosoroff St, Ben Yehuda St, Allenby St, Herbert Samuel Esplanade, Jaffa Rd and on to Bat Yam.

Bus No 18 Central train station along Petah Tikva Rd and Sha'ul HaMelech Ave to Ibn Gvirol St, then Frishman St, Dizengoff St, Pinsker St, Trumpeldor St and Ben Yehuda St, Allenby St, Yerushalayim Ave and on to Bat Yam.

Bus No 25 Tel Aviv University via the Diaspora Museum, then HaMaccabi St, Ibn Gvirol St, Arlosoroff St, then Shlomo HaMelech St, HaMelech George St, Allenby St and Carmel Market.

Bus No 4 Central bus station via Allenby St, Ben Yehuda St and Dizengoff St to the Reading terminal, north of the Yarkon River.

Bus No 46 Central bus station via Jaffa Rd to Jaffa.

Bus No 5 Central bus station, along Allenby St, up Rothschild Blvd, along Dizengoff St, Nordau Ave, Ibn Gvirol St, Pinkas St, Weizmann St and HaMaccabi St and then back. Useful for the HI hostel, the Egyptian embassy, Habima Sq and Kikar Dizengoff.

Bus No 61 Along King George St, Dizengoff St, Arlosoroff St and Jabotinsky St to Ramat Gan in east Tel Aviv.

Sherut No 4 Same route as bus No 4 for the same price. Its advantage is that it's more comfortable, taking only as many passengers as there are seats, and it's quicker – once it's full it only stops to let people off. It also operates on Shabbat (when the price doubles), between the northern end of Ben Yehuda St to the inter-urban sheruts at the bottom of Allenby St.

Taxi

All Tel Aviv taxis charge by the meter. Plan on 20NIS to 25NIS for trips anywhere within the central city (if you have a group of four people it becomes more cost-effective than the bus). They operate according to two tariffs: the lower tariff between 5.30am and 9pm and the 25% higher night tariff between 9pm and 5am.

AROUND TEL AVIV

The greater Tel Aviv area, known as the Gush Dan region, is a web of nondescript suburbs slowly consuming the farmland developed by the early Zionists. Rishon LeZion, the fourth-largest city in Israel and once a separate entity, is now virtually connected to the Tel Aviv metro area. The highlight of the region is the long stretches of golden beaches between Tel Aviv and Netanya, but you won't be alone; Israelis flock to the coast, especially on weekends.

Historic Jaffa, with its 4000-year-old harbour, is another pleasant break from the

hustle and bustle of Tel Aviv. Here you'll find great restaurants and the expertly preserved Old Jaffa, with its winding lanes and art galleries.

The mixed Arab-Jewish town of Ramla, which has a bustling market on Wednesdays, has not yet been tainted by the tourist brush. It contains a number of places of historical interest and is easily reached by train. Rehovot is home to the Weizmann Institute of Science, one of the world's premiere science academies; you can combine a visit to the institute with a tour of the Carmel winery in Rishon LeZion.

Among the destinations listed in this section, Jaffa is the only one within walking distance from Tel Aviv; the rest are easy day trips and can be visited by local bus or train from Tel Aviv.

JAFFA

יפא יבא

☎ 03 / pop 46,500

With its sea views, wind chimes, outdoor cafés, galleries and laid-back atmosphere, Old Jaffa is something of a mini-holiday getaway for Tel Avivans. But it wasn't always so. For around 4000 years, while Tel Aviv was nothing more than sand dunes, it was Jaffa that stood as one of the great ports of the Mediterranean Sea. Jaffa's small harbour doesn't get much seafaring traffic these days, but the predominately Arab town does haul in its share of tourists, especially Israelis coming here for a weekend brunch. It's a great little town for strolling and you can stop in at neighbourhood restaurants for a *masbacha* (chickpeas in warm hummus-tahini sauce) or join a crowd of locals as they casually puff away on their nargileh (water pipe).

History

Founded, according to the Old Testament, by Japheth, in the wake of the famed flood that shot his father Noah to fame, Jaffa came to prominence as a port during the time of Solomon. The King of the Israelites lost the town in 1468 BC to the Egyptians, whose soldiers made their surprise entry hidden in clay pots.

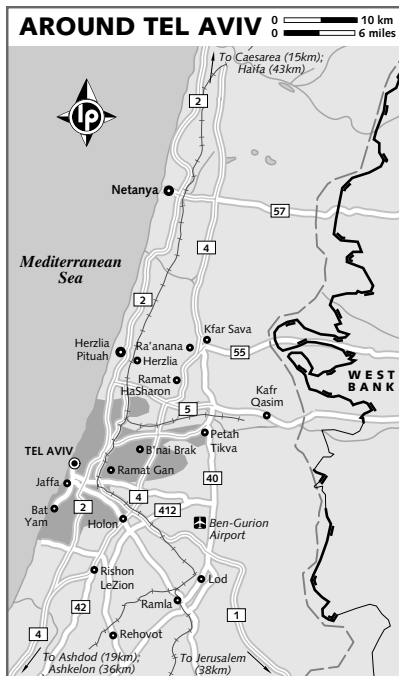
The tides of Islam swept over the port in the 8th century, to be repelled briefly during the time of the Crusader conquests. From that time on, Jaffa remained in Muslim hands until the British General Allenby

drove out the Turks in 1917. Jews had lived here since at least 1840 and by the end of the century, Jaffa had become a major gateway for boatloads of arriving immigrants. There were tensions between the new arrivals and the existing Arab community and, in 1921, these boiled over into full-blown anti-Jewish riots. The riots were to recur every few years until the decisive fighting of 1948, which saw the defeat and subsequent flight of the majority of Jaffa's Arab population, leaving the ancient town in Jewish hands.

Since that time, Jaffa has been extensively renovated and developed as that perennial Israeli favourite – an artists' quarter, with attendant galleries, craftshops and cafés.

Orientation

Jaffa is divided into two parts. Old Jaffa, which is of the most interest to travellers, is located on the knoll overlooking the sea, west of Yefet St. East of Yefet St down Olei Zion St is New Jaffa and the open-air flea market.



Sights

OLD JAFFA

While the downtown area of Jaffa was largely constructed during the Ottoman period, the oldest remains of the city, dating back thousands of years, are in the coastal enclave of **Old Jaffa**. It's worth visiting twice, once in the daytime to see the visitors centre and appreciate the view back towards Tel Aviv and once in the evening to savour the fine restaurants and seaside ambience.

As you enter from Roslan St, walk past the boarded-up Antiquities Museum of Tel Aviv-Jaffa (which may reopen pending an increase of visitors), to a grassy knoll called **HaPisgah Gardens**. Here you'll find a small **amphitheatre** with a panorama of the Tel Aviv seafront as its backdrop. Excavations nearby have uncovered Egyptian, Israelite, Greek and Roman remains. The bizarre white neo-Mayan sculpture on one of the hills purportedly depicts the fall of Jericho, Isaac's sacrifice and Jacob's dream.

From the gardens, cross the **Wishing Bridge**, making sure to touch your zodiac sign on the rail, look towards the sea and make a wish.

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The bridge connects the gardens to **Kikar Kedumim** (Kedumim Sq), the reconstructed centre of Old Jaffa, ringed by restaurants, clubs and galleries but dominated by the bulk of **St Peter's Monastery** (☎ 8-11.45am & 3-5pm Oct-Feb, 8-11.45am & 3-6pm Mar-Sep). This cream-painted Franciscan church was built above a medieval citadel and in its later guise as a Christian hostelry it was visited by Napoleon.

In a chamber underneath the square is the well-designed **visitors centre** (student/adult 6/8NIS; ☎ 10am-6pm), where you can view partially excavated remains from the Hellenistic and Roman era and watch a 15-minute film on Jaffa. You can also pick up an informative free map down here.

Descending the steps beside the monastery will lead you to a tightly squeezed lane, at the southern end of which is **Simon the Tanner's House**. This is the traditional site of the house where the Apostle Peter stayed after restoring Tabitha to life (Acts 9:32).

In the courtyard you can see a well, believed to have been used in Peter's day, and a stone coffin from the same period. When Muslims built a mosque on the site in 1730, they used the coffin as an ablutions font.

The main **artists' area** is stepped Mazal Dagim St and its branching stone alleyways named for the signs of the zodiac. The most interesting gallery is the **Ilana Goor Museum** (☎ 683 7676; www.ilanagoor.com; 4 Mazal Dagim St; adult/child/student/senior 24/14/20/20NIS; ☎ 10am-4pm Sat-Thu, to 6pm Fri), home of the first Jewish khan and built in the 18th century. It served as a hostel for Jewish pilgrims arriving at the Jaffa port on their way to Jerusalem. Today it is the private home of artist Ilana Goor, who has turned her home into a tasteful display, with three floors of modern eclectic pop and ethnic art, created by artists from Israel and abroad.

THE PORT & ANDROMEDA'S ROCK

One of the oldest known harbours in the world, the port of Jaffa (then known as Joppa) was mentioned by Hiram, King of Tyre, in conversation with Solomon (II Chronicles 2:16) and referred to in Jonah 1:3. For centuries this was where pilgrims to the Holy Land first arrived en route to Jerusalem and it was Palestine's main port.

Beyond the sea wall are a cluster of blackened rocks, the largest of which is named

after Andromeda who, according to Greek mythology, was chained here as a sacrificial victim but was snatched from the jaws of the great sea monster by Perseus on his winged horse. The municipality has plans to erect a statue of Andromeda on top of the rock.

CLOCK TOWER & FLEA MARKET

For many visitors, Jaffa's main attraction is not the thousands of years of history but the simple joy of browsing through what seems to be a thousand years of junk. East of Yefet St, the streets of Jaffa are taken over by a city wide **flea market**, which has a decent reputation for antiques and interesting oriental bits and pieces. It's a great place to pick up an old pair of boots, a rusty xylophone or, as one marketeer tried selling us, a 6ft-tall grinning plastic monkey wearing a top hat and trench coat. The market could require several visits if you're a serious shopper, as new items appear regularly. Bargaining is the order of the day, and the stallholders' traditional sales patter includes the one about making a quick first sale early on Sunday morning to bring good luck for the coming week. It's closed on Saturday.

As you are heading in or out of town, take a moment to contemplate the Ottoman **clock tower**, built in 1906, on Yefet St. To the southwest of the clock tower is Mahmudiya Mosque (1812), which was built using columns filched from Caesarea and Ashkelon; it's closed to non-Muslims.

Tours

Every Wednesday (except Yom Kippur) a free guided **Old Jaffa walking tour** is led by the Association for Tourism, Tel Aviv-Jaffa. Meet by the clock tower at 9am; the tour ends at about noon.

You can also do a two-hour, **audio-guided walking tour** (depending on numbers 25-45NIS). Pick up the audio player at Jaffa's visitor centre.

Also worthwhile is a **boat tour** (☎ 682 9070; admission 20NIS), running every 30 minutes from 11am to 7pm Saturday.

Festivals & Events

Every Thursday, Jaffa hosts a small street fair in the flea market after 8pm. In July and August, Jaffa also hosts the Jaffa Nights concerts in HaPisgah Gardens (in Old Jaffa) after 9pm.

Sleeping

Old Jaffa Hostel (☎ 682 2370; www.inisrael.com/oldjaffahostel; 8 Olei Zion St; dm 45NIS, s 150-230NIS, d 170-260NIS; ☎) In a beautiful old Turkish home, decorated with sepia family photographs, the Jaffa is both friendly and atmospheric. The large bar and common room, as well as the airy dorms and comfortable private rooms, are decorated with historic Arabic furniture and objets d'art. London's *Independent* newspaper recently included this place in a list of top 50 guesthouses worldwide (it was ranked No 15). Enter from Ami'ad St.

Beit Immanuel (☎ 682 1459; www.beitimmanuel.org; 8 Auerbach St; dm 1/2/3 nights US\$20/18/16, s/d/tr US\$45/62/75; ☎) Built in 1884 by Baron Ustinov, Peter Ustinov's father, this was originally the Park Hotel, in which guise it entertained guests such as Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany. Nicely renovated, and with a garden, it now comprises a pilgrims' hostel, study facilities and a worship centre for a Hebrew-speaking congregation. Prices include breakfast. It's just outside Jaffa, south of Jaffa Rd. To get there take bus No 44 or 46 from the central bus station and get off at the Nechustan Lift factory (look for the sign) – Auerbach St can be located by the rocket-like spire of Immanuel Church. The hostel is a 10-minute walk to either Jaffa or Neve Tzedek.

Eating

For Israelis, Jaffa's main culinary attraction is fish, and both Mifraz Shlomo St and the port area boast numerous outdoor restaurants.

Said Abu Elafia & Sons (☎ 681 2340; 7 Yefet St; ☎ 24hr) This is a bakery that has become a legend in Israel. It was Jaffa's first bakery, established in 1880, and four generations down the line the Abu Elafia family is busier than ever. The main attraction is a uniquely Arab pizza-like concoction that involves cracking a couple of eggs on a pitta, stirring in tomato, cheese and olives, and baking it in the oven. Other items include 24 varieties of bread, such as pitta coated in sesame seeds or spices; ask for a *za'atar* or a *sambusa* (a sort of samosa).

Dr Shakshuka (☎ 682 2842; 3 Beit Eshal St; meals 35-50NIS; ☎ 8am-midnight Sun-Fri) This is a culinary highlight in the area. The setting is an old Ottoman-era building decorated

with hanging lamps, dried chilli peppers and abandoned guitars, but the real highlight is the food. Along with its eponymous *shakshuka* (a skillet concoction featuring egg, capsicum, tomato sauce and spices), the Gabso family whips up a range of Libyan and other North African delights. For an enormous business lunch you'll pay 64NIS, and a massive 'complete couscous' spread with couscous, bread, salads, lamb and a stuffed potato will set you back just 44NIS. Don't miss it!

Puaa (☎ 682 3821; 3 Rabbi Yohanan St; mains from 45NIS; ☎ 10am-12.30am) Part retro-style café and part flea market, this place specialises in lunchtime soups and salads, but dabbles in fish and chicken dishes. The beverage selection includes an excellent lassi yogurt drink with cardamom. In the unlikely event that you have a room that needs furnishing, you could also take home the plates, tables, chairs, silverware and wall hangings – everything is for sale. Note that it stays open all night on Shabbat.

Bernhardt Show (☎ 681 3898; 10 Kikar Kedumim; mains from 75NIS; ☎ noon-11pm) This is an upmarket seafood blast, serving calamari, sea trout, mullet, mussels and other *fruits de mer* (including lobster from 220NIS). Those on a tight budget can stick to the starters and salads, which average 35NIS to 40NIS.

Fisherman's Restaurant (☎ 682 4115; Jaffa Port; mains from 60-80NIS; ☎ noon-midnight) As the name suggests, this is another place for seafood. They serve up a fantastic shrimp in garlic butter (85NIS) and a choice of good salads (20NIS to 30NIS). Aside from the tasty menu items, the main reason to eat at the port is to enjoy the harbour atmosphere and cool sea breeze.

Around the flea market you'll find plenty of hole-in-the-wall *tamiya* and *felafel* stands; try the popular **Itzik Bar** (☎ 518 4882; 5 Olei Zion; ☎ 7am-4pm), which serves up two eggs, chips, salad and hummus for 20NIS.

Drinking

Sakaya (☎ 681 8177; 8 Nakhum Goldman St; ☎ 7pm-late) If you prefer to drink your alcohol under the moonlight, try this open-air bar on the southern beach promenade. They play a fun mix of music and occasionally have live shows. Call ahead to make sure it's not booked out for a private party.

Entertainment

Arab-Jewish Theatre (☎ 681 5554; www.arab-hebrew-theatre.org.il; 10 Mifratz Shlomo St) Hebrew- and Arabic-language plays that openly discuss pressing differences between Arabs and Jews.

Mayumana (☎ 681 1787; www.mayumana.co.il; 15 Lioius Pasteur St) The Israeli version of 'Stomp' is a hugely popular show so if you want tickets you'll need to book well in advance.

Gesher Theatre (☎ 681 3131; www.gesher-theatre.co.il; 7-9 Yerushalayim Ave) Contemporary Russian theatre largely comprising new immigrants; it's a favourite venue of world-famous Russian clown, Slava.

Getting There & Away

From the centre of Tel Aviv, it's a pleasant 2.5km seafront stroll to Old Jaffa. Alternatively, take bus No 46 from the central bus station, bus No 10 from Ben Yehuda St (or the train station), bus No 26 from Ibn Gvirol St, bus No 18 from Dizengoff St or bus No 18 or 25 from Allenby St, and get off at the clock tower. To return to the centre, take bus No 10 from Yerushalayim Ave.

NETANYA נתניה נתניה
☎ 09 / pop 167,000

Anyone with a sudden urge to fly off to the French Riviera could save money by popping up to Netanya for a few hours. This sun-and-sand resort town offers 11km of the finest free beaches in Israel, populated largely by French-Jewish immigrants. The lively pedestrianised main street is lined with shops, cafés, patisseries and a handful of excellent restaurants.

Information

Solan Telecom (☎ 862 2131; 8 Kikar Ha'Atzma'ut; ☎ 9am-10pm Sun-Thur, to 2pm Fri) Internet café and international telephone service.

Tourist office (☎ 882 7286; fax 884 1348; Ha'Atzmaut Sq; ☎ 8.30am-4pm Sun-Thur, 9am-noon Fri) Housed in a kiosk at the southwest corner of Ha'Atzmaut Sq.

Activities

Israelis come from all over to enjoy Netanya's **beaches**, which are crowded on weekends with swimmers, sunbathers and volleyball players. There are lifeguards on duty, plus changing rooms, showers, lounge chairs and umbrellas. HaRishonim Promenade, the cliff above the beach, is

great for strolling and sea views. From here you can even take an **elevator** down to the beach. The cliffs also make for good paragliding; contact **Dvir** (☎ 899 0277, 050 833 3103). Horseriding is available at the **Ranch** (☎ 866 3525; per hr 100NIS), on the northern edge of Netanya. They offer daytime and moonlight rides on the beach. If you are in town on Shabbat you'll spot **folk dancing** around Ha'atzmaut Sq.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotel Orit (☎ 861 6818; www.israelsvan.com/orit; 21 Chen St; s/d, with breakfast US\$40/56) Budget travellers could try this friendly and comfortable hotel, set inside a large, rambling home.

King Solomon (☎ 861 1397; www.inisrael.com/king-solomon; 18 Hamapilim St; s/d, with breakfast US\$85/100; ☎ ☎) Midrange travellers are in for a treat at this beautifully renovated hotel. An eye-catching red lobby leads to stark white rooms with new carpets and balconies offering sea views. All rooms come with flat-panel TV and fridge and there is access to a Jacuzzi, gym, sauna and outdoor pool.

Stamfer (☎ 884 4714; 6 Stamfer St; dishes 35-50NIS; ☎ 8am-3am) Veering away from Netanya's usual batch of family restaurants, Stamfer attracts a singles crowd in search of light meals and a lively atmosphere. The food runs from fruit shakes and salads to pastas and stir-frys, served indoors or on the large patio. In the evening it turns into a bar.

Getting There & Away

Buses run roughly every 15 minutes to and from Tel Aviv (14.80NIS, 30 minutes), and every half-hour to and from Haifa (20NIS, one hour) and Jerusalem (32NIS, 1¼ hours). To reach Caesarea, Megiddo, Nazareth or Tiberias, change buses in Hadera.

CARMEL WINERY

Located in the sleepy town of Rishon LeZion (First to Zion), the **Carmel Winery** (☎ 03-948 8802; www.carmelwines.co.il; adult/child 15/12NIS) makes for a pleasant half-day trip from Tel Aviv. Built in 1897, it is the oldest in Israel and produces some of the country's finest wines. From 1929, the winery was also used by the Haganah as weapons depot and training grounds during its fight with the British. Visitors are treated to a multimedia presentation on the vinification process and

a sampling of the wines – tours are held at 9am, 11am, 1pm and 3pm Sunday to Thursday, but advance bookings are required.

After seeing the winery, head across **Village Park**, passing the large **water tower** (built in 1898) and turn right on the pedestrianised Rothschild St. Continue to the end of the street, where facing you is the Great Synagogue, built in 1885 and registered as a warehouse because the Turkish authorities wouldn't allow the Jews to build a place of worship – step inside, it's open during the day.

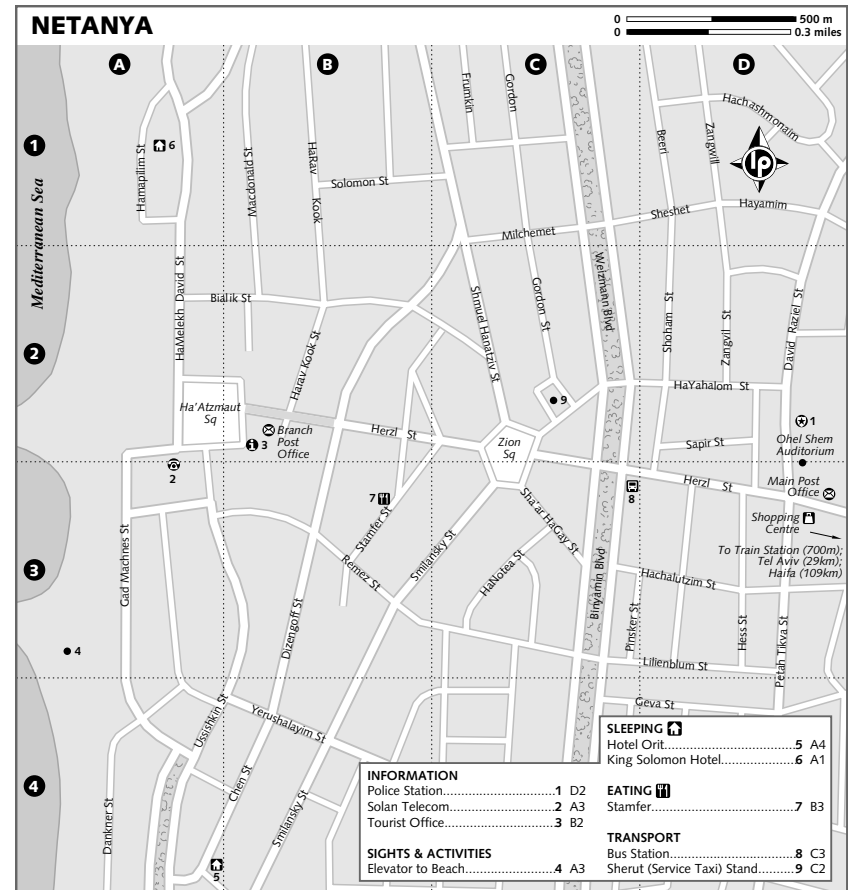
Across the street from the synagogue the quaint **History Museum** (☎ 03-959 8862 1621; 2 Ahad Ha'am St; admission 8NIS; ☎ 9am-2pm Sun-Thur, to 1pm Fri), housed in a collection of period

buildings that lend insight into the pioneer spirit that drove the early Zionist settlers and the obstacles they faced. Your ticket is also good for a sound and light show at the nearby Village Well.

Getting There & Away

Sheruts (7NIS) depart frequently from the east side of the central bus station. Or take bus No 200 or 201 from there. Trains (7NIS) from any of the three Tel Aviv stations also come to Rishon, departing every 20 minutes.

Many visitors follow a visit to the winery with a visit to the Weizmann Institute in nearby Rehovot – a 10-minute ride from the bus station at Rishon LeZion.



REHOVOT

רחובות רחובות

☎ 08 / pop 88,000

Ask any Israeli what they know about Rehovot and they will probably mention the Weizmann Institute of Science, Israel's premier research centre for applied sciences. The city itself is a relatively new creation, having been founded in 1890 by a group of ambitious Zionists from Poland. Rehovot, located 60km from Tel Aviv, is unspectacular, but the institute is easily reached by train and makes for a fine half-day trip.

Weizmann Institute of Science

The world-renowned **Weizmann Institute of Science** (☎ 934 4500; www.weizmann.ac.il; ☹ 9am-4pm) was named after the first president of Israel, Chaim Weizmann, who was a leading research chemist, and statesman. During WWI, Weizmann's scientific researches proved valuable to the Allied war effort and the goodwill generated may have been a factor in squeezing the Balfour Declaration out of the British in 1917. The institute in its present form was established in 1934, on moshav (cooperative settlement) land, to provide facilities for research and study in the sciences. Students and staff continue the work today, conducting research into fields as wide-ranging as disease, agriculture, the environment and computer technology.

As you enter the institute campus, on your right is the Wix library building that houses the **visitors centre and multimedia presentation** (adult/child 15/10NIS). Campus attractions include the Solar Tower Observation point, the History Pavilion, the Physics Pavilion and the Ziskin Building (where you can see a 'super computer' built in 1964). A highlight is the **Clore Garden of Science** (☎ 934 4401; www.weizmann.ac.il/garden; adult/child 30/20NIS; ☹ 10am-5pm Mon-Thu, Fri 10am-2pm), an outdoor science museum where you can see how waves are made, spin on a gyroscope and play with numerous other toys that demonstrate the laws of physics.

Also on the institute's grounds next to the tombs of Dr Chaim Weizmann and his wife Vera is the **Weizmann House** (admission 15NIS). Designed by the renowned German architect Eric Mendelsohn, a refugee from Nazism, the house was built in 1937 in the international style. There is a museum inside, displaying his personal collection of

photos, books and memorabilia, notably his passport (the first in Israel). Parked outside is the Lincoln limousine presented to Weizmann by Henry Ford Jr, one of only two ever made (the other was given to US President Truman).

Getting There & Away

The best way to Rehovot is by train (12.50NIS, 30 minutes) from any of the Tel Aviv stations. From the train station it's a five-minute walk to the Institute. You can also catch a sherut (14NIS), departing frequently from the central bus station, or an Egged bus (No 201 or 301, 13.50NIS, 40 minutes, every 10 minutes).

RAMLA

רמלה רמלה

☎ 03 / pop 63,500

With its bustling market, underground pools and crumbling Islamic architecture, Ramla makes for an interesting half-day trip from Tel Aviv. It's not quite as old as nearby Jaffa – history here stretches back 'only' 1300 years – but the town is noteworthy as the only one in Israel founded and originally developed by Arabs.

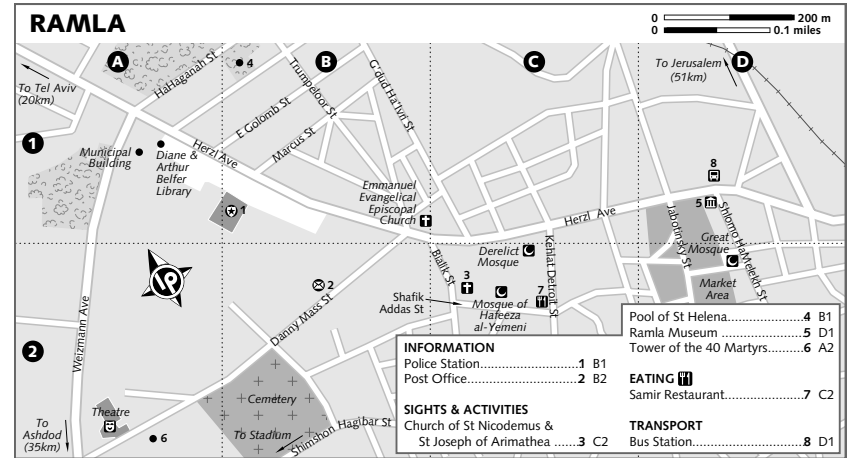
Founded in AD 716 by the Umayyid caliph Suleiman, Ramla ('spot of sand')

AYALON CAVE

It's a rare event when Ramla makes headlines, but in 2006 the world's scientific community became momentarily captivated by the announcement that eight previously unknown animal species were found in a hidden cave near the city. The 'Ayalon Cave' was found when men digging a rock quarry noticed a fissure in the ground; upon inspection they found a 2.5km subterranean chamber – the second longest in Israel.

Despite being sealed off from the outside world for millions of years, small critters and their offspring managed to survive in the darkness. All are related to, but different from, animals already known to scientists. One, for example, looks like a scorpion but is blind and whitish in colour. Among the invertebrates, there are four crustaceans and four terrestrial species.

While scientific studies continue, the cave, which contains an underground lake, remains closed to the public.



was a stopover on the road from Egypt to Damascus. Prior to the arrival of the Crusaders in the 11th century, Ramla was Palestine's capital and it maintained its importance in the Middle Ages as the first stop for the Jerusalem-bound pilgrims who came ashore at Jaffa. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War the majority of the Arab population was forced to flee, and they were replaced by Jewish immigrants from various countries.

Although just 20km southeast of Tel Aviv, Ramla is surprisingly untouristed, but its handful of Islamic and Christian monuments and friendly mixed population of Arabs and Jews make it worth a visit, especially for the Wednesday market.

Sights

The **Ramla Museum** (☎ 929 2650; cnr Herzl Ave & Shlomo HaMelech St; www.museum-ramla.org.il; admission 6NIS; ☹ 9am-4pm Sun-Thu, to 1pm Fri) Aside from providing a basic overview of town's history, it also acts as Ramla's de facto tourist information centre. For 12NIS you can buy a joint ticket for the museum, the Tower of the 40 Martyrs and the Pool of St Helena. It stands in front of Ramla's sprawling market and Great Mosque. The market is busiest on Wednesdays.

The **Church of St Nicodemus & St Joseph of Arimathea** (admission free; ☹ 9am-noon Mon-Fri) was constructed in the 16th century on what Christians allege to be the site of biblical Arimathea, the hometown of Joseph, who is

believed to have arranged the burial of Jesus with Nicodemus (John 19:38-39). Owned by the Franciscans, the church's claim to fame is that Napoleon stayed in the adjacent monastery during his unsuccessful campaign against the Turks. The church itself has a distinctive square bell tower and a painting above the altar that is attributed to Titian (*The Deposition from the Cross*). The entrance to the church is off Bialik St, through the first gate on your left. Ring the bell and one of the monks living here will let you in. If the outer gate is also locked you'll need to poke around for a key-keeper.

The impressive, somewhat neglected **Tower of 40 Martyrs** (admission 5NIS; ☹ 8am-2.30pm Sun-Fri, 7.30am-3.30pm Sat) is a 14th-century minaret built as an addition to the 8th-century White Mosque (Jamaa al-Abiad), of which only traces remain. The tower is named after 40 martyrs allegedly buried nearby. The inscription above the door to the tower, dating from 1318, indicates renovations at the site made by Sultan Muhammad Al-Nasir. An attendant should be on hand to let you inside the tower (views are best in the early morning).

Set in pleasant gardens off HaHaganah St, the **Pool of St Helena** (admission 8NIS; ☹ 8am-2.30pm Sun-Thu, to 2pm Fri, to 4pm Fri) is an 8th-century reservoir that was reputedly built for Haroun ar-Rashid of *The Thousand and One Nights* fame, although the name it goes by refers to the mother of the Roman emperor Constantine. (In Arabic it's called the

Pool of Al-Anazia and in Hebrew it's called Breichat Hakeshatot, The Pool of Arches.) An attendant on hand will unlock the entrance when visitors arrive.

Eating

Samir Restaurant (7 Shafik Adas St; dishes 25-35NIS; ☎ 8am-8pm) Stepping out of dusty Shafik Adas St, the clock turns back several centuries in historic Samir, an ancient Arab home given a beautiful restorative touch. There is no English menu, but the friendly

owner will tick off the various meat kebabs and salads on offer.

Getting There & Away

There are trains to Ramla (10NIS, 20 minutes) from Tel Aviv departing every 20 minutes through the day. Buses to Tel Aviv (10NIS, 40 minutes) run every 20 minutes, with slightly less-frequent services to Jerusalem (18NIS, 75 minutes). While buses to Tel Aviv depart until around 10pm, the last Jerusalem bus is at 8pm.