



# ISRAEL MATTERS!

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## Tel Aviv: Top Travel Destination

### House Republicans Call for Embassy Move to Jerusalem Ahead of Deadline

A House subcommittee recently held a hearing featuring four speakers in support of moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, and a fifth who expressed skepticism and urged caution.

The hearing – scheduled and run by Republican lawmakers that have long called for the embassy relocation – comes shortly before a December deadline for President Donald Trump to decide whether to order the move or else delay it another six months.

A 1995 law requires that the president move the embassy to Jerusalem unless he deems it detrimental to US national security interests. Trump has said he is delaying the move as he explores a potential peace process between Israelis and Palestinians but insists the move is a matter of “when not if.”

One speaker who testified before the panel was Dore Gold, a former top aide to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the President of the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, who highlighted Israel’s protection of holy sites to Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike. He said that support for the move in Israel is at an “all-time high.”

Gold warned that “radical Islamic groups” were increasingly threatening religious sites that Israel has successfully protected for decades. “There’s an impression that the Israeli government doesn’t actually want this,” he added. “It’s important for them to hear Israelis take a strong stand on this.”

[JPost.com ]

*By: Maya Danielle Nissim, Teacher, Travel Blogger, and Internationally Published Writer*



Out of the 30+ countries I have visited and innumerable cities I have wandered through, Tel Aviv is by far my favorite and a destination I enjoy visiting time and time again. However, before a recent trip I was surprised to hear from friends and colleagues that many people don’t know how truly remarkable this city actually is.

The meaning behind the words Tel Aviv is ‘hill of spring’, which is part of what makes this sunny city such a desirable place to visit. All year round and during most hours of the day, the city is blossoming and full of life. In Tel Aviv, you constantly feel the energy buzzing all around you.

I wish I could share the aromas from delicious falafel corner shops, the energy I felt while listening to Israeli music as I walked through the markets, and the passion for life I saw in the eyes of the incredible people I met. After spending time exploring Tel Aviv, I felt that this magnificent, vibrant city should not be kept secret any longer. Tel Aviv should be recognized as a top travel destination and must make its way to the top of your bucket list!

Here are three reasons why you should visit this non-stop city, Tel Aviv:

1. The best foods are in Tel Aviv.

Whether I went to a tiny hole-in-the-wall falafel shop or a sit-down Italian dinner, the flavors in the dishes were unlike any I have ever tasted before. There are a variety of cuisines available, abundant restaurants with recipes designed to perfection and made with Israeli flare. There are also numerous choices for vegetarians and vegans to choose from.

My favorite quick eats falafel shop is HaKosem, a highly recommended street food restaurant known for their mouthwatering falafel, shawarma, and sabich (fried eggplant) stuffed pitas. If you are looking

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for a casual dining experience with friends and family, a famous restaurant and local hotspot is Port Said. It is an Israeli tapas restaurant with an excellent ambiance and also a great place to have a drink. Another favorite restaurant of mine is Amore Mio. It is a traditional Italian restaurant made with fresh Israeli vegetables and heavenly cheeses.

2. The night is young all night long.

Walking around the central city streets, Bograshov, King George, Sheinken, Dizenhoff, and Rothschild, you will see lively cafes and bars at almost any time of the day. Tel Aviv is known for its energetic nightlife. My favorite bar of all time is called, Tepale. It is a tiny, local bar that serves a famous middle-eastern drink, arak. I highly recommend you start or end your night here! You may be welcomed with complimentary arak shots if you sit at the bar.

3. You can explore Tel Aviv easily by foot.

My favorite part of visiting Tel Aviv is wandering around its unique streets by foot. There are some areas that look more run-down than European cities, but the stone pathways and colorful street art tell a story of how the heart of the city has become hip and artistic.

Jaffa, Neve Tzedek, and Nachalat Binyamin Street are excellent areas to explore, take photos, and get a taste of the different cultures in Israel. In Jaffa and Neve Tzedek you can go back in time on a historic tour, or make your way to Tel Aviv's beautiful coastline to see some of the best views of the city. On Nachalat Binyamin Street, you can visit the famous art market on Tuesdays and Fridays. Most of the jewelry and pieces of artwork are made by hand.

Finally, it is important to add, that as a woman I felt safer walking around Tel Aviv at anytime of the day and night than I have in any other city. It was a surprise to me and made me realize how important it is to spread awareness of this magical city.

I hope this has convinced you to consider Tel Aviv when planning your next trip! When arriving in the city, take a moment to breathe in the fresh air from the sea, appreciate the beauty behind the tired houses, welcome the active city life noises from this middle-eastern paradise that never sleeps, and enjoy exploring the special streets. I can assure you that once you visit, it will leave you feeling full of life! [huffingtonpost.co.uk]

## Why Israel has the World's Highest Percentage of Teenage EMTs

When the dispatcher alerted them about a two-week-old baby who'd stopped breathing, 16-year-old Ori Cohen and his Magen David Adom crewmates were nearby with their ambulance. Working quickly under the guidance of the crew's senior emergency medical technician, Cohen

and his fellow volunteers restored the infant's breathing and whisked her off to the hospital. The doctors said she'd be fine. Cohen is one of 11,000 Israeli teenagers working voluntary shifts on MDA ambulances throughout Israel – making up a remarkable 60 percent of the volunteer staff.

"We have the biggest youth corps by percentage in the world, as far as I know," says Eli Yaffe, MDA deputy director for general training and culture. He adds that in some other countries, youth volunteers are only allowed to do tasks such as patient transport rather than responding to emergencies as youth volunteers do in Israel. The 50-year-old national emergency response network started a formal youth program in 1993 for 15 to 18-year-olds as an option for fulfilling the Education Ministry's mandatory 60 hours of volunteering for high-school students.

While the majority of emergency calls don't involve trauma, youth volunteers are trained to handle serious scenarios. Those who have volunteered for at least a year are eligible to take on more responsibility such as supervising younger volunteers. About 35 percent of youth volunteers also continue to volunteer after serving in the Israel Defense Forces.

During the summer of 2017, approximately 700 MDA youth volunteers chose to take a course for dealing with mass-casualty disasters. About 230 youth volunteers took a first-aid trainers' course so they can teach peers.

Not only Israeli youth are clamoring to volunteer with MDA. Over the past 25 years, 6,500 teens have come to Israel for six weeks of training and volunteering with MDA squads across the country. "We run 10 courses a year, working with Jewish youth movements in 20 countries," says Uriel Goldberg, coordinator of MDA's Yochai Porat Overseas Program. "Quite a few make aliyah, as I did after the program," says Goldberg. The courses are also offered to foreign teens in Israel on gap-year programs and to 18- to 29-year-olds who come independently. In 2016, there were a total of 427 MDA youth volunteers from around the world. [israel21c.org]

### Help Wanted!

Your editor has been the Chair of the TBS Israel Affairs Committee for about a decade. During that time Israel has seen significant changes to its national identity, including those in security, technology, and the sociology of the country.

Few things last forever and the time is right for a change in the committee's leadership.

If you are passionate about Israel and are willing to take the initiative to continue to bring to the TBS membership an increased awareness of events in, or affecting Israel, then this is the challenge for you. If this sounds like you, please let Rabbi Scolnic know of your interest.