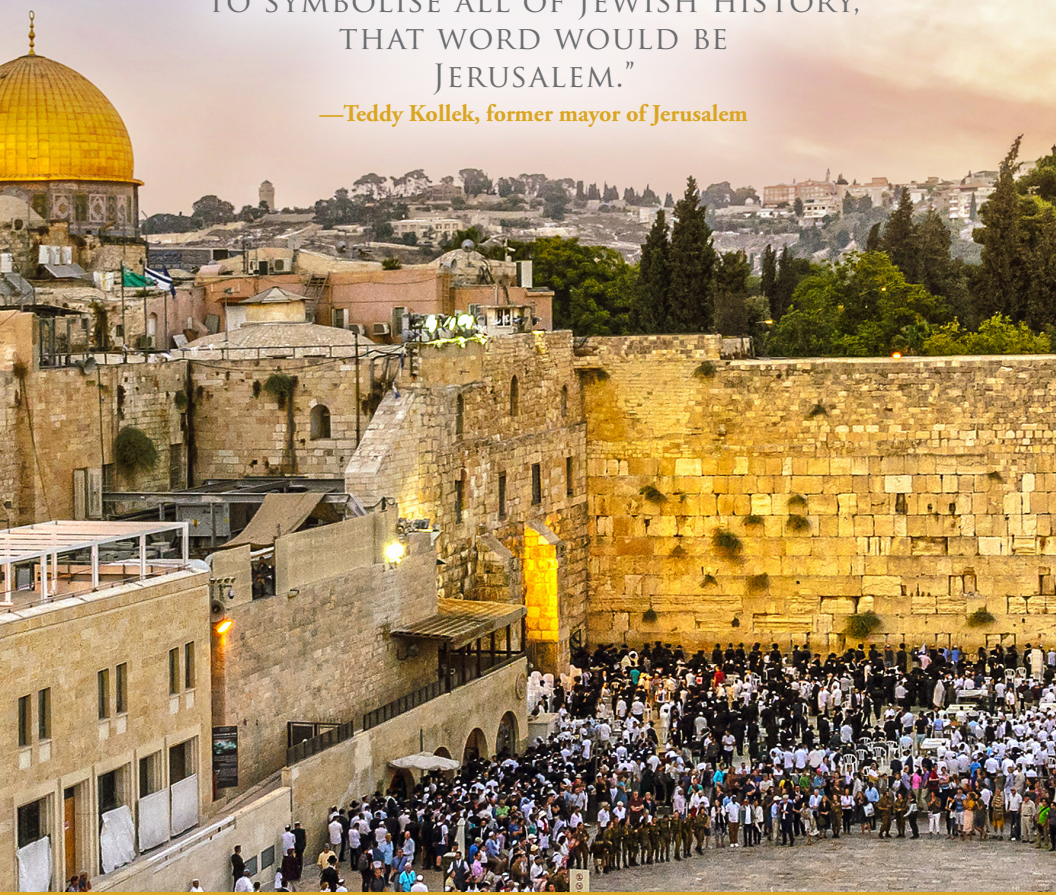


JERUSALEM

10 ESSENTIAL FACTS

“IF YOU WANT ONE SIMPLE WORD
TO SYMBOLISE ALL OF JEWISH HISTORY,
THAT WORD WOULD BE
JERUSALEM.”

—Teddy Kollek, former mayor of Jerusalem



Produced by

StandWithUs
UNITED KINGDOM

JERUSALEM

10 ESSENTIAL FACTS

1 Jerusalem is the capital of the modern State of Israel. The land of Israel, including Jerusalem, is the ancestral home of the Jewish people. Jews have lived there for over 3,000 years, since King David made the city his capital in the 10th century BCE. For centuries Jerusalem was the capital city of Jewish kingdoms, the location of Judaism's holiest sites, and the historical focus of Jewish political life. The histories of Jews and Jerusalem are impossible to separate from each other.

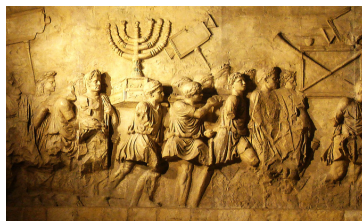


Royal seal impression of King Hezekiah, a direct descendant of King David, dates back to the seventh century BCE.

Special thanks to the City of David Foundation for the use of this photo.

2 In the first and second centuries, the Roman Empire conquered Jerusalem, destroyed the Second Jewish Temple (completed in 516 BCE and expanded in 10 BCE), and prohibited Jews from even visiting their holiest city. While some Jews remained in their land, most scattered across Europe and the Middle East. For 1,900 years they lived as an oppressed minority, suffering expulsions, massacres, and ultimately genocide.

3 Jerusalem is so central to Jewish culture that memory of its destruction by imperial Rome (depicted on Rome's *Arch of Titus*) and the hope to return are included in many Jewish customs and holidays. This includes breaking a wine glass at weddings while reciting, in Hebrew, "If I forget you, Oh Jerusalem, may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth" and the Jewish holiday Tisha B'Av – a fast day dedicated to mourning Jerusalem's destruction. Millions of Jews pray at the Western Wall (aka "Wailing Wall" or Kotel), the last remaining section of the Jewish Temple. "Jerusalem" appears in the Hebrew Scriptures (aka Old Testament) over 660 times.



Detail from the Arch of Titus built in 81CE depicting Roman soldiers' removal of the Jewish menorah.

4 Jerusalem is also of great importance in Christianity and Islam, containing holy sites held in deep reverence by billions of people around the world. For Christians these include the Church of the Holy Sepulcher (built in the 4th century), the Garden Tomb, and the Garden of Gethsemane. For Muslims this includes the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound (built in the 7th century, also known as Al-Haram al-Sharif), the third holiest site in Islam after the mosques of al-Haram in Mecca and al-Nabawi in Medina. The Al Aqsa Mosque Compound is also located on the Temple Mount, which is the holiest site in Judaism.

5

Over the centuries, Jerusalem has been ruled by various invading empires and almost none of them claimed the city as their capital. Aside from a brief period of Crusader rule, the Arab and Muslim empires that governed Jerusalem, made their capitals in cities like Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and Constantinople. Jerusalem became a capital again in 1920, when the League of Nations established the British Mandate for Palestine. The British were made responsible for restoring the territory as a national home for the Jewish people while safeguarding the rights of all other communities living there.

6

After Jewish leaders accepted and Arab leaders rejected the United Nation's 1947 proposal to divide the British Mandate, Arab troops laid siege to Jerusalem and nearly starved 100,000 Jews to death. In 1948 the Arab Legion of Jordan, commanded by British officers, attacked Jerusalem's Jewish neighbourhoods and captured the Old City. The Jordanians evicted all Jews from the areas they conquered and illegally occupied the eastern sector of Jerusalem until 1967. Together with local Arab forces, they destroyed and looted nearly 60 Jewish synagogues, turning many into animal stalls and latrines. The 2,500-year-old Jewish cemetery on the Mt. of Olives was vandalised, with thousands of tombstones shattered and used for building materials. Jerusalem was a city divided by mine fields and barbed wire, and for the first time in over a thousand years, Jews were barred from living near and praying at their holiest sites.



The historic Hurva Synagogue, destroyed by the Jordanian army in 1948 and restored in 2010.

7

During the Jordanian occupation, Christians, unlike Jews, were given access to their holy sites in Jerusalem and Bethlehem but with limits on the number of pilgrims allowed in during Christmas and Easter. Christian charities and religious institutions were prohibited from buying real estate. Christian schools were subject to strict controls, including being required to teach the Qu'ran to all the students.

8

During the 1967 Six-Day War, following unprovoked attacks by Jordan against Israel, Israel's army liberated Jerusalem's Old City from Jordan, and found the Jewish Quarter completely neglected and virtually destroyed. Since 1967, under Israeli control, members of all faiths have enjoyed religious freedom and access to their holy sites in Jerusalem. Access is restricted only when there are security threats that put people of all faiths in danger. Unfortunately, tensions have increased in recent years, leading to repeated clashes between Israeli police and extremist rioters affiliated with Palestinian terrorist groups like Hamas. Nevertheless, there are over 50 churches and 33 mosques operating freely in Jerusalem today.



Modern Jerusalem

Old City of Jerusalem, where today followers of all religions have free access to their holy sites.

9

Jews became the largest religious group in Jerusalem in the early 1800s and have been a majority of the population since 1864. Before 1948 substantial Jewish communities lived in both eastern and western Jerusalem. In 1967 the Jewish population was 197,000, and the Palestinian Arab population was 68,000. As of 2021, the population is about 600,000 Jews and 350,000 Palestinians.

10

Jerusalem is Israel's largest city at nearly 50 square miles. It has become a major cultural centre with over 70 institutions teaching arts and sciences, some 60 museums, over 30 annual festivals, an annual marathon, 26 wineries, and over 1,500 public parks and gardens. All of these have been visited by as many as 4.5 million tourists per year.



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