

The Lifetime Experience of Spending Holy Week in the Holy Land

For my Christian friends, I know that Holy Week is both a sacred and exciting time of year. It happens as we emerge from the doldrums of winter and embrace a new season of warm breezes, blossoming trees, and longer days.

As you reflect on the death and resurrection of Jesus, I'll be watching many faithful Christ-followers—some with their whole families in tow—explore the history, the beauty and the aromas of the very soil where Jesus once roamed. Because here in Israel, we love to host Christians looking to unpack their faith in a new and more immersive way. I have numerous friends here who make it their life's mission to provide a rich experience for Christians, and that create gifts which tie their traditions to the Land of Israel.

So why not, a year from now, plan to celebrate this momentous occasion by spending Holy Week in the Holy Land? What better way is there to visualize how it all happened than walking in the footsteps of Jesus in the blessed land of Israel?

Israel encompasses some of the most sacred sites in Christianity. This includes the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, which is believed to be the site of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection. Other significant landmarks include the Garden of Gethsemane, where many believe Jesus prayed before His arrest, and the Via Dolorosa, the route He took to the cross, and the Mount of Olives, where many Christian scholars say Jesus ascended into heaven.

While it's certainly valuable to celebrate Good Friday and Easter in your own local community with people of faith, there's something quite special about experiencing this season

where its history can come to life. Imagine roaming the shores of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus performed many of His most spectacular miracles. You'll even find chefs there who will prepare a meal similar to what Jesus and His followers were eating at that period of time. Being in the Holy Land during Holy Week allows you to connect more deeply with the events of the Easter story and gain a greater appreciation for the culture from which Christianity emerged.

One of the highlights of spending Holy Week in the various regions of Israel is participating in the numerous religious ceremonies and processions that take place during this sacred time. These can include Palm Sunday processions, where worshippers carry palm fronds to commemorate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and the Good Friday procession along the Via Dolorosa, which reenacts Jesus' journey to the cross. Participating in these yearly traditions can be a powerful and emotional experience.

In addition to the historic landmarks and religious ceremonies, there are many other activities to enjoy during Holy Week throughout Israel. You can taste the traditional dishes that combine the foundations of the past with a diverse array of flavors from the present. You'll meet artisans and vendors who trace their heritage here across millennia and can share stories about the Holy Land you won't read about anywhere else.

Beyond the religious and cultural aspects of spending Holy Week in the Holy Land, there's also the opportunity to connect with other Christians from around the world, in addition to your Jewish brothers and sisters with whom you share a tremendous bond as well. People from all over the globe come to the Israel during this time, and being part of this international community can be truly enriching.

 Anyone I know who has spent Holy Week here can attest to it being a life-changing, and faith-affirming experience.

I haven't met a soul who has regretted it yet!

This special place provides an opportunity to deepen your faith, to connect with the history and culture of Christianity, and to be part of a global community of believers. If you're looking for a way to make next Easter unlike any other in your lifetime, consider spending the next Holy Week in the Holy Land. {eoa}

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