

## July 2017 - The Month of Summer Festivals

*Courtesy of VisitPalestine.ps*

During the month of July many cultural and musical activities take place in Palestine; in fact, at this time of the year it is likely that a cultural event is present on any day of a given week. Numerous annual festivals can be enjoyed in July as well, offering unique experiences to locals and visitors alike.



### Jerusalem Festival – Yabous Centre, Jerusalem (Al-Quds)

Since its launching in 1996, the Jerusalem Festival has taken place every year with the aim of strengthening Palestinian identity and supporting the cultural life of Jerusalem (Al-Quds). Cultural expression fosters resilience and helps to maintain hopes and aspirations for a better future – which carries special significance in the Palestinian context.

Presenting various arts activities

that include music, theater, cinema, and poetry, the festival tells the story of a people that yearns to gain its independence.

This progressive national event has traditionally involved great numbers of performers and operates under the principle of cooperation with community organizations – thus it has served as precedence for local productions that aim to develop local artistic capacities.

In its 22nd edition this year, the Jerusalem Festival continues to provide opportunities for cultural enjoyment in Jerusalem. Events will take place between July 17 and 26; the detailed program can be found on the website of Yabous Centre: [www.yabous.org](http://www.yabous.org).

### Palestine International Festival for Dance and Music – Popular Art Centre, Ramallah

While the Jerusalem Festival focuses on supporting local artists, Palestine International Festival for Music and Dance (PIF) is likely the most international festival held in Palestine. This creative project aims to connect the Palestinian people with the international cultural world and thereby contributes towards the international cultural exchange that, on daily basis, is inaccessible for many Palestinians.

The PIF was founded in 1993 and traditionally has invited troupes and individuals known for their acclaimed and distinguished artistic achievement. As the festival tends to attract large numbers of attendees who come from various villages and cities in the West Bank and also from within the Green Line, it furthermore strengthens interactions and ties between Palestinians from different regions. From the 2000 until 2005, the Popular Art Centre was not able to organize the Festival due to the strenuous political and economic situation. When it reopened in 2005, the festival expanded, moving beyond Ramallah and into villages and refugee camps throughout the West Bank. The long history and wide scope of the event make it a “must go” for seasoned and new visitors to Palestine.

The eighteenth annual Palestine International Festival for Dance and Music will take place July 12 - 18. More information can be found on the website of the Popular Art Centre: [www.popularartcentre.org](http://www.popularartcentre.org).



### Birzeit Heritage Week – Rozana Association, Birzeit

Every summer, the charming streets of Birzeit's usually tranquil old core revive during Birzeit Heritage Week, a week-long festival full of activities and exhibits that showcase the rich cultural mosaic of Palestine. The organizers invite visitors to immerse themselves in the excitement of today's local creative arts and crafts, the humor

of performing comedians, the rich bounty of local agricultural products, the sounds of traditional Palestinian music, the beauty of its *dabke* (traditional dance) performances, and the laughter of happy children.

It has been eight years since the first Birzeit Heritage Week took place, and each time anew, Rozana Association surprises audiences with a rich and diverse week-long program of activities. In 2017, the festival presents cinema, street performances, theater performances for adults and for children, art exhibitions, dancing, and various genres of music.

Habitually, the festival begins with an opening ceremony featuring the performance of a traditional Palestinian wedding. During the show, visitors are able to observe millennia-old wedding rituals that culminate in a classic *dabke* dance, expressing the joys of new beginnings as symbolized by a wedding.

This year the festival will take place July 12 - 16; more information can be found on Rozana Association's website: [www.rozana.ps](http://www.rozana.ps).

*To learn more about various events in Palestine, visit our website at [www.visitpalestine.ps](http://www.visitpalestine.ps), or contact the Visit Palestine Information Center in Bethlehem via [info@visitpalestine.ps](mailto:info@visitpalestine.ps) or (02) 277-1992.*

