

By  
Awadallah  
Al Yamani\*



## THINGS TO DO IN JERICHO

**L**ocated at the lowest elevation on Earth, Jericho will delight you with its unique climate and special atmosphere. There are many things to do for all kinds of tastes. Enough to keep you busy and entertained during numerous visits.

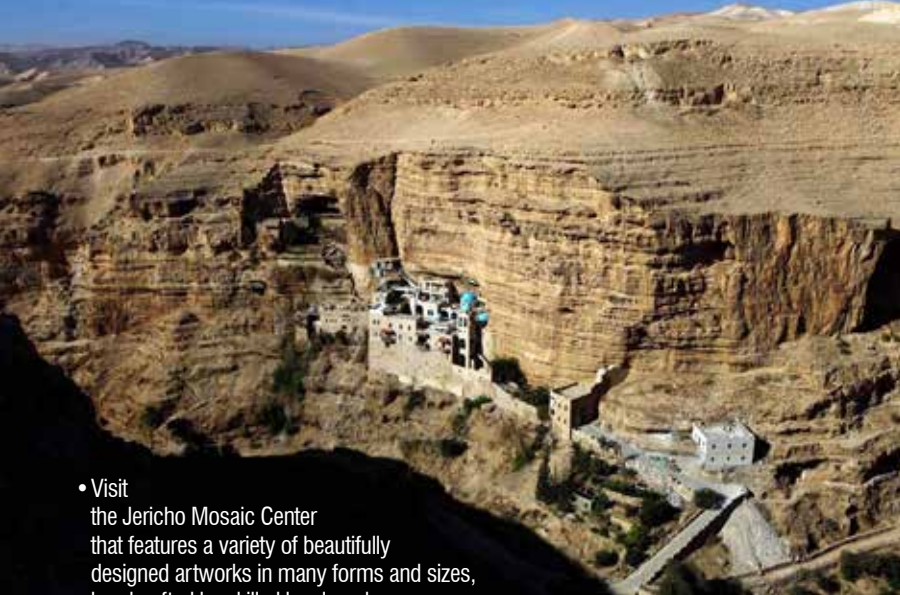
- Bring your family to enjoy the warm weather in winter and the late nights out in summer as Jericho boasts a warm and welcoming family atmosphere and shines as Palestine's winter resort.
- Eat Abu Ayesh's special round sesame bread (known as *ka'ek* in Arabic) with *duqqa* (dried thyme mixed with sesame, salt, and spices). Abu Ayesh's bakery is considered one of the oldest and most famous in Jericho.
- Buy all kinds of fresh fruits and vegetables from Jericho's central market, known as the *hisbeh*, evidence of Jericho's reputation as the Palestinian fruit and vegetable basket. Try the famous *Abu Namleh* bananas that are typical Jericho fare, unusual because of their small size and black-dotted peel. Remember to get some of Jericho's delicious leafy greens – *molokhiyya* and



*khubbaizeh* – and *hwerneh* (a seasonal herb that is eaten with yogurt and olive oil), which are very popular throughout the country.

- Rent a bike and enjoy a ride through the city's flat streets, neighborhoods, and alleys. You will discover Jericho's vibrant natural beauty, the lifestyle of its residents, and its interesting and renowned touristic sites.
- Walk through the city center and visit the Russian Museum with its vast garden, the Sycamore tree that was made famous by Zacchaeus, and the nearby farmers' market, also called Al-Gemmayze Street Market, which offers a range of local products and handcrafted items.
- Enjoy a coffee as you smoke a *shisha* (hookah) of your favorite flavor at one of Jericho's open-air cafés in the city center. Alayyan, Al-Usta, and Abu Kuhle are among the city's oldest, most famous cafés.
- Bring your friends and visit the horse-riding clubs to enjoy horse racing, show jumping, and horse beauty competition events.
- Let off some steam with an entertaining experience at the Paintball Club.
- Enjoy a pleasant evening at Spanish Park, a large recreational space that offers entertainment for the whole family, including a large variety of activities, games, and serene, relaxing areas.
  - Explore Jericho's beautiful museums, the most famous of which are the Hisham Palace Museum,\*\* the Yasser Arafat Museum, located at the governorate headquarters, and the Russian Museum in the city center.

Don't miss the ten most important tourist sites in Jericho: the Sycamore tree, the Russian Museum, Tell as-Sultan Ancient Jericho, Mount of Temptation, Ein as-Sultan water spring, Hisham's Palace,\*\* Jesus' baptism site on the Jordan River, Nabi Mousa Shrine, Wadi Qelt, and the Dead Sea.



- Visit the Jericho Mosaic Center that features a variety of beautifully designed artworks in many forms and sizes, handcrafted by skilled local workers.
- Try some local food at one of the city's restaurants that offer a large selection of both Oriental and Western dishes as well as sweets, fresh juices, and more.
- Enjoy the breathtaking scenes at sunset from several locations in the city, most prominently from the slopes of the Mount of Temptation and other elevated areas in the surroundings where one can view the city's lush beauty, the Dead Sea, parts of the Jordan Valley, and the hills of Amman, Jordan.
- Visit the springs in and around Jericho, the most important of which are Al-Auja, Ein as-Sultan, and Ein al-Dyouk. These water resources feed large areas of the city and are located near Tell as-Sultan, the area with the oldest known human settlement in history.
- Enjoy time with family and friends throughout the summer or on weekends at Jericho resorts and swimming pools. The city is known for its pools and outdoor and indoor water parks.
- Get a taste of the local sweets such as *knafeh* (fine noodle-like pastry on a layer of cheese, soaked in syrup), dates-and-banana ice cream (a traditional Jericho specialty), or refreshing natural juices.
- Make a stop at Jericho's municipality facilities, such as the Jericho Municipal Theatre Hall, the Jericho International Stadium, the Municipal Library, the Children's Center, the Cultural Center, and other facilities that host diverse cultural, social, and sports events.
- Visit the Jericho Tourist Information Center in the city's central public plaza for a free city map, brochures, and more information.
- Enjoy the truly unique experience of a ride in the Jericho cable car, with the excitement and enjoyment of ascending the Mount of Temptation, and visit the monastery at the top.
- Enjoy hiking on the trails in Wadi Qelt and experience the magical desert flora and fauna in the area between Jerusalem and Jericho. Hike lovers will appreciate the unique setting. You will pass through St. George's Monastery that is built into the stone facade.
- Eat local dishes such as *musakhan* (roasted chicken with onions on thin bread baked in a *taboun* oven), *zarb* (the Bedouin way of cooking meats and vegetables over coals in an underground oven), and *mansaf* (a traditional dish of lamb meat served



over rice with a special thick yogurt sauce), and experience the Bedouin lifestyle in the Bedouin Tent that combines tradition, authenticity, and the aesthetics of a unique way of life.

- Visit one of the palm factories in the city and learn about the different stages of the palm harvest, from picking the palms to filling the boxes, sorting, and packaging. Enjoy an experience that is both fun and useful. Jericho has the highest date-production rates in the country.
- Nature lovers, especially bird watchers, will enjoy the fact that Jericho is a

subtropical oasis. Its climate and location in the long corridor known as the Jordan Rift Valley create a paradisaical nature reserve for flocks of migrating birds.

- Visit the only Palestinian salt-mining factory on the shores of the Dead Sea.\*\*\*
- At the end of your visit to the city of Jericho, you can take a picture near the "We Love Jericho" logo at the roundabout near the courthouse. Share the picture with friends on your social media platforms.



*Awadallah Al Yamani has been engaged in the tourism sector for the past eight years and is currently working for the Jericho Tourist Information Center.*

\* This article has been translated from Arabic by Areej Daiba.

\*\* Some sights are currently undergoing renovation. Please call the Jericho Tourist Information Center for opening hours of special sites and museums at 02 231 2607, daily between 8:00 and 17:00.

\*\*\* For more information, please consult "Where to Go" in *This Week in Palestine's* February 2020 issue. For guidance, contact Hussam Hallak by phone at 052 454 0564 or 02 994 8964 or on Facebook @West.Bank.Salt.