



# Ashdod

Travelers  
guide



Ashdod. אשדוד : —

# Legend



## Events and Sites



Worthwhile



Possible



Pass

## Transportation



Bus



Parking

## Information



Opening Hours



Website



Paid admission



Disabled Access



Free admission



Tourist Information



Address



Tip



Telephone



Tip for the kids



# Ashdod

Chief Editor

**Michael Shichor**

Shichor Publishing Ltd.

# **Shichor Travel Guide**

## **ASHDOD**

© Shichor Publishing ltd. All rights reserved.  
P.O.Box 21083, Zipcode 6121002, Tel Aviv  
Website: [www.shichor.co.il](http://www.shichor.co.il); Email: [guides@shichor.co.il](mailto:guides@shichor.co.il)

First Edition - 2018

No part of this book may be reproduced in any way or by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, and storing in computer memory), and no commercial use may be made of any part of it without prior written permission from the publisher.

The Publisher makes every effort to ensure the reliability of the information contained in this guide, and that it is up-to-date, but cannot accept any responsibility for errors and/or changes found. The photos in this book are for illustration purposes only. The publisher is not liable for advertisement content.

ISBN: 978-965-7326-66-4

**Lead editor:** Mirit Friedman

**Editing and proofreading:** Daniel Shichor

**Cover and Grid Design:** Baruch Nae'

**Graphics:** Artic Studio

**Photographs:** Details at the end of the book

**Maps:** Shai Hayoun Studio



# Content



## From the Editor

.....	7
-------	---

## How to use this guide

.....	9
-------	---

## Good to know

Ashdod is.....	14
Opening Data.....	15
Geographic, Topographical and Architectural structure.....	16
A little history.....	26
Culture and Art.....	38

## Getting Ready

When to arrive.....	44
Holidays and Events.....	44
Seasons and Weather.....	49
Ashdod in the Rain.....	50

## To Use

Arriving in the City.....	52
Transportation within the City.....	54
Tourist Information.....	58
Important telephone numbers.....	59

## Must see

Ashdod-Yam Fort.....	62
Givat Yonah.....	63
Monart Arts Centre.....	63
Sand Dune Park and The Great Dune.....	64
Ad Halom Bridge.....	65
Lachish Park Ashdod.....	66
The Blue Marina.....	66
The Kirya Quarter and City Park.....	67
The Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture.....	68
Ashdod Beaches.....	68

**Ashdod  
with  
children**

Hai-Lachish Promenade .....	70
Etgarim Park.....	71
Dolphin and Sea Center .....	72
Ashdod - Yam Park.....	73
Ashdod Port Visitors' Center .....	74
Payis Kids' Park (Pirate Park).....	75
The Green Submarine.....	75
Ralex Car Museum .....	76

**Traveling**

The structure of the sightseeing trip in Ashdod .....	78
Along the seashore: Nostalgia and the aroma of spices among the town's first houses .....	79
Heart of the city: Between cultural assets and urban nature .....	94
Following the sun: From the ancient fort to the southern coast.....	109
Brought us thus far: from the heroes of 1948, through the primeval landscapes to a unique shopping experience .....	120
Sea, nature and extreme: A route for families with children.....	139
Tour of "Slichot": Ashdod's unique synagogues.....	149

**Around  
Ashdod**

Beit HaEdut (Testimonial House) .....	170
Tel Ashdod.....	170
Roberts Pool.....	172
Nitzanim Sands Reserve.....	172
Hill 69.....	174
Adi Watch Factory.....	174
Kad Bnei Darom Visitors Center.....	175
Agronen - Self-Picking, Gedera .....	176
Hamei Yoav Hot Springs .....	176

**Culinary  
Arts and  
entertainment**

Culinary Arts.....	178
Entertainment .....	208

**Ticking it off**

.....	211
-------	-----

**List of  
photographs**

.....	212
-------	-----

# From the Editor



Dear visitors,



For thousands of years, this thriving port city existed on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea. It served as a strategic point on the ancient sea route - the main road that passed through Israel and connected the empires of the region.

Ashdod, one of the most ancient cities in the country, has served throughout the various periods in local history as a lively trade and cultural center. During the Philistine period, it was also the most important of the five cities of the kingdom.

Alongside the impressive archaeological remains that testify to its rich past, the modern metropolis, which began as a small immigrant town, now offers visitors a wide range of attractions and sites in the city and its surrounding area. After setting records and making impressive achievements in almost every possible field - health, culture, sports, education, transportation, environment and more - Ashdod started to realize its amazing potential in the field of tourism, with impressive projects of international standard that reflect the unique natural resources the city enjoys.

Thanks to the meticulous planning that preceded the establishment of Ashdod, the port and the large industrial areas are completely separated from the residential areas and tourist sites, so that even though the city plays an important role as one of the largest economic gateways to the State of Israel, it still allows visitors to enjoy the peaceful and pastoral feeling of a coastal city.

Add to this the long coast lined with golden sand, the only sand dune of its kind in Israel, the nature reserves with rare animals and

plants, the important heritage sites, the fascinating museums, the green parks, the hundreds of art sculptures set in every corner of the city, shopping centers and colorful markets, a variety of recreation options for the entire family, a host of multicultural events and culinary options of European standard - and you get the perfect mix for the perfect vacation.

This guide is based on years of getting to know the city of Ashdod, together with its nature, rhythm and preferences of its visitors. A large team of professionals had worked for a long time on developing and editing the guide in a harmonious and modular way, to suit each and every one.

I am convinced that the guide will help you during your visit to the beautiful city of Ashdod and will make your visit a wonderful and unforgettable experience.

We hope you find the book helpful and have an enjoyable trip,



**Michael Shichor**

## How to use this guide

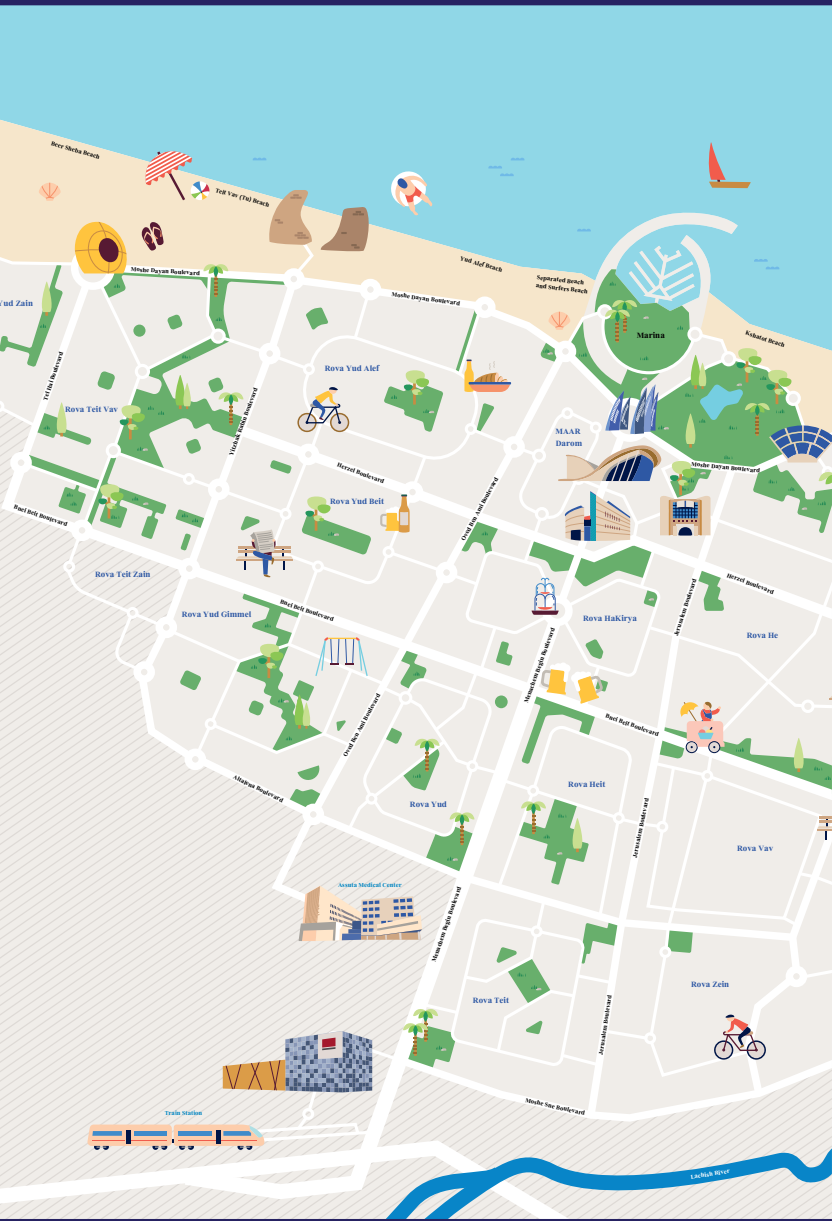


As a complex and unique city, Ashdod offers a wide variety of fascinating attractions and points of interest, so a single short visit is surely not enough to enjoy all the city has to offer. This guide is aimed at presenting you with the essence of the Ashdod experience, and in it you will find suggested tour routes that include the most interesting and prominent sites in the city and its surroundings. The routes are planned so that most travelers will not have to visit all the sites along the way, but will have the opportunity to select the sites that most interest them, based on their personal taste and the recommendations presented here.

The guide opens with general information that briefly reviews the history and geography of Ashdod. The following sections offer useful and important information that will help you get around the various sites. Following that are lists of the prominent sites and recommended routes, divided according to their geographic location, and a brief introduction to the different areas of the city. Reviewing these chapters before embarking on your tour, will not only help you get to know the site better, but it can make your stay more efficient and help you save precious time, effort and money.



Have a safe journey  
and a wonderful time





**אשדוד**  
Ashdod. אשדוד

The Mediterranean Sea







# Good to know

Ashdod is

Opening Data

Geographic,  
Topographical and  
Architectural structure

A little history

Culture and Art





## Ashdod is



- The fifth largest city in Israel, and one of the oldest in the region
- A multicultural mix: The only place in the world where there are immigrants from 99 different countries
- The main port of entry for goods from abroad and the second largest port city in the country
- The home of "The Great Dune"- almost the last remnant from the sands of the coastal plain
- Israel's leader in environmental education and a national model in the field of green transportation
- One of the most planned cities in Israel, in which there is total segregation between residential and industrial areas
- A rising star in the culinary arena, offering a rich and varied repertoire of restaurants and coffee shops
- A surprising and renewing metropolis that has undergone accelerated development in recent years
- A paradise for sea lovers, offering pristine, spectacularly beautiful beaches and a variety of marine activities
- A national and international chess superpower, with impressive achievements in both adult and youth categories

## Opening Data

<b>Origin of the name</b>	The city is named after the ancient Philistine city "Ashdod" (which was also known as "Ashdod-Yam" a name given to it by the Assyrians) and is mentioned many times in the Bible. There are several interpretations of the name "Ashdod", the most common of which are "Stronghold," "Fort," and "Outpost". There were several versions of the name over the years - including "Euclid" by the Greeks, and "Isdud" by the Arabs who lived in a nearby village up until the establishment of the State of Israel - but it still maintained its original characteristics.
<b>Terrain</b>	50.9 square kilometers (of which 1.8 square kilometers are sea shore areas).
<b>Number of residents</b>	About 250 Thousand.
<b>Economy</b>	The commercial and manufacturing industries in the city are highly developed, and rely, among other things, on the city's main economic anchor - the Port of Ashdod, which is also Israel's largest maritime commercial gateway. About 20 percent of the city's residents are employed in manufacturing, and a similar percentage are employed in commerce.
<b>Souvenirs</b>	A work of art from the beautiful gift shop in The Arie Klang House, beach toys for children at the Ashdod-Yam Market, which operates in the Lido Beach Plaza every Wednesday, and an array of souvenirs and representative items in the Information Center located at the entrance to City Hall.
<b>The pride of the city</b>	A unique sand dune, the largest in Israel; the only museum in the world dedicated to the Philistine history; the restored Lachish Stream; the ancient Ashdod-Yam Fort; the broad beachfront that is the cleanest and most beautiful in Israel; a versatile and impressive cuisine; and the diversified population which are considered the biggest immigrant absorbers in the country.
<b>Character</b>	Modern and traditional, religious and secular, peaceful and adventurous. Ashdod is a unique melting pot - a mosaic of people and cultures.
<b>Beauty</b>	Pristine beaches, wide and well tended boulevards, fascinating historical sites, green parks.
<b>Language</b>	Although Hebrew is the official language in the State of Israel, each city has words and expressions understandable only to its residents. Ashdod is no different, and has developed a language of its own which includes expressions such as "Ya Chasra" ("What a shame", which is said in a nostalgic context), "Noder" ("I swear to you"), "Rabina" ("Depression", mainly at the beginning of a work week) and "Picho" (A local nickname for a child that does not know to stand his ground).

## Geographic, Topographical and Architectural structure



Ashdod is located on the Mediterranean coast, in the southern part of the coastal plain, in an area that is also known as the **Philistine coast**. The city borders Ashkelon in the south, Yavne in the north, and Gan Yavne in the east, and the **Lachish stream** flows through it

The source of the stream, which flows from south to north along the eastern boundary of the Ashdod Sands, is on the western slope of Mount Hebron, and it empties into the Mediterranean Sea in the northern part of the city, between **Givat Yonah** (Jonah's Hill) and **The Port of Ashdod**. The western part of the stream forms the jurisdictional boundary of the city, and its northern part stretches the boundary between the residential part of the city, its industrial area and the Port.

Thanks to its strategic location on the ancient **sea route**, Ashdod served for many periods in history as a major port city. The limited archaeological digs conducted in the area over the years revealed the remains of the port city which served Ashdod, the most important of the Philistine cities. Today, **Ashdod-Yam (Tel-Ashdod)** is one of the most prominent mounds on the Philistine coast. About five kilometers north to the site, on the city's shoreline, is a magnificent archaeological site with the remnants of a coastal fort, one of the most beautiful built in ancient Israel - **The Ashdod-Yam Fort**.



## Geographic, Topographical and Architectural structure

The remains visible today on the site date back to the early Arab period in the land of Israel. The remains of the harbor built in the Philistine period (Tel Mor) were discovered on the banks of the Lachish stream. **The port of Ashdod** was built on the northern bank of the stream, which is unique by the fact it was not dug in the bay itself, but was built for about a kilometer into the sea, using breakwaters for a combined length of about three kilometers.<sup>1</sup>

The city of **Ashdod** was built on sand dunes and sandstone ridges, the type of terrain typical of the coastal plain. Until the 1940s the coastal plain was covered with shifting sands, preserved partly thanks to the Arab villages (the largest of which was the village of **Isdud**, next to Tel Ashdod), whose inhabitants herded sheep and cattle in the area thereby preventing vegetation from taking root in the sands. At the beginning of the twentieth century, during the British Mandate, trees were planted on top of the hills parallel to the beach, in order to stop the sands from shifting. To the south of the Ad Halom junction one can see, for example, **the grove**, planted by the British with the aim of preventing the sands from shifting to the nearby railway track.

The accelerated development of the city and its constant expansion over the years significantly reduced the sand areas in the region, and today the Ashdod **Sands park** is essentially the last remnant of the Ashdod sands in particular and the impressive sand dunes of the coastal plain in general. There are unique types of plants in the park, including the **White Acacia tree** - a remnant of the vegetation that once covered the area - and the park serves as a home to a variety of animal species.

And still, the existing sand areas constitute one of the reasons the number of the open areas in the city is the highest among the big cities.

The wind regime in the area led to the fact that Ashdod's sandy beaches are flat and broad, more than any other city on the coastal plain. The wind's direction was even taken into account when the city was built, in order to reduce the air pollution from the industrial plants as much as possible.

**Good to know**

A•B•C

**Idi**

Fish

Since its establishment in 1995, the legendary fish restaurant owned by Idi Israelovitz has become a pilgrimage destination for diners from all over the country. Since the establishment of the flagship restaurant in the north of the city, two more restaurants joined it - one located in the marina and the other on the beach.

**Ben-**Ami,  
Oved

One of the founders of Ashdod, was also among the founders of Netanya and Even Yehuda, and even served as mayor of Netanya for many years. Ben-Ami was also the one who financed the establishment of the daily newspaper "Ma'ariv". His brother, Moshe, was the grandfather of businessmen Nochi and Danny Dankner.

**Givat**Yonah  
(Jonah's Hill)

The highest point in the city. From here you can view the Port of Ashdod and the Lachish stream. According to one of the traditions, this is where Jonah the prophet was buried after he was cast out of the mouth of a large fish.

This is also the reason why Ashdod, which is one of the few planned cities in the country, was initially built with the industrial areas (light and heavy) and the Port completely separated from the residential neighborhoods, and located at the northern entrance to the city.

Ashdod is divided into 17 residential districts, which are referred to by Hebrew numbers, while two additional districts - **The Kirya** (the main business center) and **The Marina** - serve both for residential and for business and commerce purposes. An additional district, the "**Special Quarter**", was established in 2017 south of District 'Tet' and east to District 'Yod', and includes the **Ashdod Assuta Hospital**, inaugurated this year, and an academic campus with several colleges.

Each of the city's districts was planned to function as an independent unit that includes a commercial center, community center, educational institutions, public parks, health services and more. Unlike other cities, Ashdod's districts were not divided internally into neighborhoods.

Their borders are wide roads, planned as a grid, while the city center is located at the junction of the main transportation lines.

### Ashdod by numbers

1·2·3

Public gardens consist of about **1/5** of the open areas in the city • There is **12.3** SqM of nurtured green spaces per resident in the city • In 2015, **350,000** seasonal flowers were planted in the city • In 2015, **150** trees were handled to reduce the nuisance caused by falling Ficus fruit • There are over **300** playgrounds in the city • **280** statues are placed around the city, and an average of **8** more are added each year • The Ashdod Yam Park covers an area of **200** acres • It has an open theatre for big shows, which can hold **6,400** viewers, and a playground with accessible facilities for all kinds of disabilities

Ashdod's master plan from 1959, sought to create a spacious city, giving its residents quality of life and, despite its growth, maintaining its pastoral and pleasant character as a coastal city. In addition, in order to prevent religious, economic or ethnic polarization, in each district there are different types of apartments and public institutions which cater for everyone.

Indeed, since its establishment the city absorbed Jews from all over the Jewish Diaspora and established its tolerant and open minded character, as it continues to maintain a harmonious relationship between the communities living within it.

For many years the city had the highest population growth rate in the country. In the decade between 1994-2004 Ashdod grew by about 70 percent, thanks to the large waves of immigration from the former Soviet Union. In the years 2001-2009 the population growth rate declined, but in 2013 it began to increase moderately and the rate of natural growth rate in Ashdod stabilized around the national average (about six percent).

The districts were established more or less in a chronological order, as the city developed from the north southward. The newer districts are therefore located in the south of the city. The only district missing from the division of Ashdod

is **Quarter Yod Dalet (14)**, since its very establishment was disputed over the fact that the Great Dune, one of the few sand reserves in the country, is in its territory.



The first district, Quarter Alef, which is located in the northwest part of the city, was initially built as a housing project by the "Solel Boneh" company for the benefit of the Electric Company employees who established the first two power stations in town, in the late 1950s and early 1960s. The quarter contains a large public garden called "Gan Elisheva", named after the wife of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, who contributed a great deal to the development of Ashdod in its early years. The monument to the fallen of the Israeli Navy is located in the garden, and annual memorial ceremonies are held there.

The construction of Quarter Bet (2) began at the same time as the construction of the first Quarter in the city, and ended in the late 1960s. It is characterized by low standing buildings. Most of the streets in the quarter were named after important individuals in Jewish history, or after birds and animals. The first Magistrate's Court in the city was built in this district in 1963, and the first two high schools in Ashdod were established here. The "Star Center" commercial area, considered one the largest in the country, is also located here as well. Ben-Gurion Park is located in the eastern part of the Quarter, and earned



the name "Police Park" due to its proximity to the city's old police station. The 1948 monument in memory of IDF soldiers who fell in the battles of Ashdod is also located in this park.

On February 14th 1968 Ashdod received the status of a city. In that same month the bridge over the Lachish steam connecting the Port area to the city was inaugurated. At the time, it was considered the longest bridge in Israel. That same year the "Ort Yami (Maritime) Ashdod" school was established, which today also houses the "Sea and Dolphin Center" of the "Mahmali" Foundation.

### Ashdod by numbers

1·2·3

There are immigrants from **99** countries around the world living in Ashdod • In the decade between 1994-2004 the population in Ashdod increased by **72** percent following the absorption of immigrants from the former Soviet Union • **80** percent of the city's immigrants are from the former Soviet Union • **40,000** immigrants from the Jewish-Georgian community reside in Ashdod - the largest Georgian-emigrant community in the world • Ashdod is also home to the largest Karaite Jewish community in the country - **30,000** people • The population of immigrants from Ethiopia living in Ashdod is the **4th** largest in the country after Netanya, Rishon LeZion and Be'er Sheva.

Over the years the city had expanded to the south and to the east. During the 1960s ultra-Orthodox immigrants from the United States and Europe settled in Quarter Gimel (**3**), and were joined in the early 1970s by immigrants from Georgia. About half of the streets in the Quarter were named after well-known rabbis, and half carry names relating to the War of Independence. Quarter Vav (**6**), in the east of the city, was also built swiftly in those years, to absorb the large waves of immigration. The streets in the Quarter were named after important people from Jewish history, leaders of Jewish communities, and those who fought for the establishment of the state.

During the 1970s, construction of Quarters **Dalet (4)**, **Hei (5)**, **Het (8)** and **Yod Alef (11)** began. In 1974 the freeway to Tel

Aviv was inaugurated, which reduced travelling time to the center of the country significantly, and made the city even more attractive.

Until the southern quarters of the city were built, **Quarter Dalet (4)** was considered the most prestigious section in the city, and even included public institutions and the central bus station. They were relocated to the Kirya Quarter in the early 2000s. The streets in this Quarter were named partly after members of the Knesset and partly after maritime concepts. In **Quarter Het (8)**, which today borders the Kirya Quarter, the streets are named after flowers. The streets of **Quarter Yod Alef (11)**, which was built in the middle of the 1970's, were named after the country's streams and mountains.

The first museum in the city - **The Corine Mammame Museum of Philistine Culture** - was opened in 1990. After receiving recognition from the Ministry of Sport and Culture in 2014, it became the only museum, in Israel and abroad, dedicated to the Philistine culture.

**Quarter Hei (5)** in the center of the city was built parallel to **Quarter Dalet (4)**, but its construction was completed during the 1990s, when the "**Lev Ashdod**" Mall - the largest mall in the city - was built in the Quarter. The streets



in this Quarter were named after Hebrew authors, poets and Hebrew creations.

During those years **Quarter Zayin (7)** was also built in the eastern part of the city, to house the ultra-Orthodox population. Therefore, its streets received the names of Tannaim and Amorite leaders. Many religious institutions operate in this Quarter, and some of the streets are closed to traffic on Saturdays and Jewish holidays.

## Geographic, Topographical and Architectural structure

Beginning in the 1990's, the waves of immigration changed Ashdod's status from a development town to an industrial city with rapidly growing population. **Quarter Tet Vav (15)**, the largest of the city's districts, was built in stages, the last of which included the construction of several high-rise buildings among other things. It was completed in the beginning of the 2000s.



Following the large waves of immigration during those years, an additional master plan was prepared for the city, which included the construction of residential quarters **Yod Gimel (13)**, **Yod Dalet (14)**, and **Tet Zayin (16)** in the Sands Park and the Great Dune. In 2017 a new master plan was made, with the intent of significantly expanding the city, at the edges of the Great Dune among other places.

**Quarters Yod (10)** and **Yod Gimel (13)** were built at the same time in the beginning of the 1990's, housing mainly immigrants from the former Soviet Union. The streets in **Quarter Yod (10)** bear names associated with the Prophets of Israel, whereas in **Quarter Yod Gimel (13)** the streets are named after the kings who ruled the kingdoms of Judea and Israel.

**Quarter Tet Zayin (16)**, built during the first decade of the twenty first century on a relatively small area (following the new master plan), mostly contains residential towers. Streets in this district are named after fruit. **Quarter Yod Zain (17)**, construction of which began towards the end of that decade, consists mainly of private homes, and its streets are named after types of gemstones.

The most populated quarter in Ashdod is **The Kirya Quarter**, also known as "The City Quarter". Construction in the quarter started in the late 1990's. The quarter is divided into three parts: The Kirya business center north, The Kirya business center south, and The Kirya residential. Together with Quarters Alef (1), Bet (2) and Dalet (4) this Quarter created the city's center.



The quarter incorporates most of the public, cultural and trade institutions in the city, including government ministries, **City Hall**, **The Municipal Sports Arena**, **The Central Bus Station**, the **Yad Lebanim Center**, the Cultural Center including **The Monart Center for the Arts**, and the largest **Open Theatre** in Israel, as well as **City Mall** and **C-Mall shopping center**.

During that period large industrial and commercial areas developed in the city and the number of residents surpassed one hundred thousand. Ashdod's large industrial areas cover 17 percent of the city's area and include the light industry area - **Kiryat Halutzim**, the heavy industry area - **Kiryat Eitanim** and the Northern industrial area - the **Kiryat Ognim Park**. The "Ad-Halom" industrial zone lies southeast to the city. Many mistakenly think it is part of Ashdod, but in fact it is a part of the Be'er Tuvia Regional Council.

## Geographic, Topographical and Architectural structure

In 2001, following the September 11th attacks in the United States, and the wave of anti-Semitism which engulfed Europe, the Jews of France began flocking to the city, which built large wealthy neighborhoods for them along the shoreline, in a style reminiscent of the French Riviera.

As of the second decade of the 21st century the various districts of the city are in a constant process of urban renewal.

The decline in available land reserves in the city, together with the increase in the rate of population growth, led to the fact that most of the construction in Ashdod is high-rise construction. In 2015 The "**K**" Towers in the Kirya Quarter, which rise to a height of 150 meters, entered the list of the two hundred tallest high-rise buildings in Israel outside of Gush Dan (the Tel Aviv metropolitan area).

However, real estate is not the only area in which the city aims high. Over the years Ashdod has consistently and continuously won a fair amount of prizes, awards and praises for its conduct in many areas. In 2010 alone the city won the **Kirya Yaffa fellowship** prize from the Council for a Beautiful Israel, thanks to 15 consecutive years of winning the title of the most beautiful city in Israel, as well as the **Realizing Israel** prize in the field of environmental and urban development (thereby becoming the first city in Israel to win this award). In 2012 it won the **Flag of Beauty** from the Council for a Beautiful Israel, sponsored by The Ministry of Interior. In the same year it won a Ministry of Transportation competition and was chosen to lead the green transportation revolution in Israel. A year later, in 2013, Ashdod became the first city to receive the **National Volunteer Award**, given by the Nation Council for Volunteerism in the Prime Minister's Office. The same year it won the title of **Greenest City in Israel** in the **Cleantech Competition** for the Greenest Municipalities in Israel. In 2014 the city won the **AKIM Inclusion Award** as well as awards for education, and it continues to serve as a national role model for excellence in a wide variety of fields.

## A little history



Modern Ashdod began as a small immigrant settlement, which was founded in 1956, and over the years became the fifth largest city in the country. However, archaeological discoveries in the area testify to the fact that the location was



settled as early as the ancient stone age, and it is in fact one of the oldest settlements in Israel. Ancient Ashdod was built as a fortified Canaanite city at the end of the 17th century BC at **Tel**

**Ashdod**, located southeast to today's Ashdod, and about four kilometers from the coastline. The archaeological site, which rises to a height of ten meters above sea level and stretches over 380 dunams (15.2 acres), is considered one of the largest in Israel.

With the city's conquest by the **Philistines** during the 12th century BC, Ashdod, which at the time was a part of the tribal area of Judah, joined the list of the five most important cities in the Philistine Kingdom, along with Ashkelon, Ekron, Gat and Gaza.

At the time the city had an extensive and thriving trade activity, and according to archaeological evidence, Ashdod served as a important trade center with countries abroad, thanks to its port (today's **Tel Mor**, located on the northern bank of the Lachish stream, near the ancient sea route), which was probably built by the Philistines.

During the first half of the tenth century BC Ashdod was one of the largest cities in Israel. However, in 960 BC the city was destroyed. According to researchers, it was either **Pharaoh Siamun**, the sixth Egyptian king of the 21st dynasty,



who destroyed it, or **King David**, during one of his battles against the Philistines. The port of Tel Mor was also destroyed together with the city.

With the renewal of the Philistine settlement in the city in the eighth century BC, Ashdod was restored and became the glorious capital of the **land of the Philistia** (the name of the land of Philistines, which stretched between Gaza and Jaffa). However, this time the Philistine rule was short-lived. In the middle of the eighth century BC the city was completely destroyed by **Uzziah King of Judea** as part of his quest to conquer Philistia ("He went to war against the Philistines, and broke down the walls of Gat, Yavneh and Ashdod. He then rebuilt towns at Ashdod and elsewhere among the Philistines...", II Chronicles, 26:6-8).

## Good to know

A•B•C

**Dune**

The last remnant of the shifting sands of the coastal plain lies at the southeastern end of the city of Ashdod, in the Sands Park. The great dune rises to the height of 35 meters and is over 250 meters long.

**The**

Center for the  
Performing  
Arts

Ashdod's official cultural center has become one of the city's icons. The structure, located in the city's cultural center, was designed by architect Haim Dotan in 1999 but was only inaugurated 13 years later due to construction delays and financial difficulties. The hall, which is now considered one of the most beautiful and unique buildings in the country, hosts the best artists from Israel and abroad, as well as many cultural events.

**Wadi**

Sukrir

The historical name of the Lachish stream, in the section that flows in the region of Ashdod. The name originates in the Arab village of Arab El Sukrir that was located next to it. In the city's early days, the stream was diverted south in order to enable the construction of the Port of Ashdod.

Towards the end of that century, in 712 BC, **Sargon The Second**, king of Assyria, began his conquests of the region. He fortified the Philistine cities, including Ashdod, and by the end of the eighth century BC he had conquered vast areas in the land of Israel one after the other. It is interesting to note, that the only reference in the Bible to Sargon is in fact in the context of the city Ashdod: "In the year that Tartan came into Ashdod, when Sargon the king of Assyria sent him, and he fought against Ashdod and captured it" (Isaiah 20:1). When the Assyrians conquered the city the fortifications in Tel Mor were destroyed and the hill was abandoned. Settlement was not renewed until the Hellenistic period.



## Ashdod by numbers

Ashdod's jurisdiction covers an area of **50.9** square kilometers, similar to that of Tel Aviv • The urban built-up area is **15** square kilometers • The percentage of open spaces in Ashdod is the highest among the large cities: **60** percent • Population density relative to area is similar to the residential density in Haifa, which is about **4,700** people per square kilometer • The residential density relative to the built-up area, on the other hand, is about **33,000** people per square kilometer, • **twice** as much as other large cities in Israel • **19** percent of all the buildings in the city are **8** stories or taller - more than any other large city in Israel • Outside of the Dan metropolitan area, Ashdod boasts the tallest skyscrapers in the country - towers of **40** and **44** stories • **83** percent of Ashdod's residents are generally satisfied with their residential areas, a similar percentage to the national average.

At the end of the seventh century BC Ashdod came to under the rule of **Josiah King of Judea**, who took advantage of the decline in power of the Assyrian Kingdom, and from that moment on the Philistine region was the subject of a constant struggle between Egypt and Babylon. The end of Josiah's reign came with the conquest of **Psamitik The First**, king of Egypt, who ruled the region until its conquest by **Nebuchadnezzar**, king of the Babylonian Empire. According to evidence, Nebuchadnezzar captured the ruler of Ashdod in **604 BC**.

In **332 BC**, with the fall of the land of Israel into the hands of **Alexander the Great**, the City of Ashdod was conquered as well. The Philistine name of the city was changed to the Greek name "**Azotus**" and a port city was added to it: "**Azotus Paralus**" (Ashdod-Yam, which means: "Ashdod by the sea"), about five kilometers northwest of it. Until the Hasmonean rebellion (in the years **160-167 BC**) Azotus Paralus thrived, and even appears in the ancient Madaba Map (from the sixth century BC), in a diagram that includes a pier, a platform and many public buildings. Relics from that period, including church remains, were found about two kilometers from the site, but were never excavated.

In the beginning of the Roman period **Azotos Mesogaios** (Ashdod on Land) was conquered by **Pompeius**, who cut it off from the Hasmonean kingdom, banished its Jewish residents, and rebuilt it. The city was given as a gift to **Herod** by **Augustus Caesar** in 32 BC, and the latter gave the city to his sister **Shlomit**. Azotos Mesogaios retained its importance until the fourth century BC, when the port city expanded and the significance of the land city diminished. In fact, nothing is known about the city from that period up until the establishment of the Ottoman Empire.

With the Arab conquest of the land of Israel, in the seventh century, the village of **Isdud** was built on the ruins of the Philistine city, in Tel Ashdod. At the same time the Citadel, now known as "**The Ashdod-Yam Fort**", was built on the seashore, and was intended to assist in the protection of the southern coastal plain from the invasion of Byzantine ships. In the tenth century, during the **Fatimid Dynasty**, the fort was expanded and fortified, and was called "**Qal'at al-Mina**" (Fortress of the Port).



In the year 1033 a severe earthquake destroyed large parts of Jerusalem, Ramla and Tiberias and damaged the fortress as well, among other things.

In 1099, with the end of the first crusade, the fortress was resettled, this time by the **Crusaders**, who fortified it and called it "**Castle Brewer**" (after the Crusader Knight Nicolas

de Brewer). In 1260 the fortress was abandoned for the last time, and today one can view its remains located on the southern beach bordering **Quarter Tet Vav (15)** in the city, as well as by the remnants of its signaling tower, the guard post, located in the Quarter square.



Towards the end of the 19th century **Jisr Asdud** (the "Ad-Halom" bridge of today, located about a kilometer north of the Ad Halom junction), and the Arab village of **Arab El-Sukrir** (where the Electric Company station is currently located), were established in the area of Ashdod, and were used for the transportation of goods. Later on, under British rule, they became important strategic locations on "**The Sea Route**" leading to Egypt. The British even built a train station in that location, serving the Lod-Gaza-Egypt line.



On the 15th of May 1948, with the termination of the British Mandate and the declaration of the establishment of the State of Israel, the second and decisive stage of the War of Independence began. The Arab armies invaded the country and in a short time established a line on the Isdud (Ashdod)-Hebron axis threatening Tel Aviv, and intending to link up with the Jordanians in Latrun in order to cut off Jerusalem.

Three days earlier, on the 12th of May, the soldiers of the Givati Brigade made sure to blow up Jisr Isdud (see more on The Ad Halom bridge) as part of "**Operation Barak**", intended

to establish Jewish control of the areas meant to become the territory of the State of Israel upon its establishment.

On the 29th of May the Egyptian forces began moving quickly to the north, heading for Isdud, while attacking various settlements in the Negev area. Upon arriving at Isdud, they were stopped near Jisr Isdud and attacked by the Israeli forces, including aircraft of the 101st Squadron flying their first ever sortie.

During the intense fighting the settlement of Isdud, which at the time numbered about 5,000 people, was destroyed and abandoned, and it remained abandoned until the 1950's. Today its remains can be seen about three kilometers southeast of modern Ashdod.

### More about: Ad-Halom Bridge



The bridge was built by the Turks in the late 19th century over the Wadi Sukrir (Lachish stream) ravine, on the foundation of the original Roman bridge. The bridge, about 35 kilometers from Tel Aviv, was the northernmost point in the country reached by the Egyptian Army forces during War of Independence.

Two days before the declaration of independence, the Givati Brigade blew up the bridge as part of "Operation Barak". About two weeks later, when the Egyptian forces began moving north toward Isdud, the Givati brigade soldiers were ordered to embark on "Operation Philistia" with the aid of the Negev Brigade, with the aim of stopping the Egyptian forces from advancing toward the center of the country. In the meantime, the Egyptians were attacked from the air by four Messerschmitt aircraft. On the night between May 30th and 31st, 1948 two Givati companies raided the Egyptian force at the bridge area, and two days later the operation began, in which the soldiers were to surprise the Egyptians in three sectors - north (in the bridge area), central (in the vicinity of the Isdud train station) and southern (in the town of Isdud). However, the activity was postponed after receiving disinformation regarding the Security Council's ceasefire decision, and the element of surprise was lost. On the night between the

2nd and 3rd of June, when the Israeli forces arrived at the area, the Egyptians opened fire on them causing many casualties. After fierce fighting the Israelis managed to stop the Egyptians.

At the end of the war, the bridge, which up until then was named after the town of Isdud, was reconstructed and was given the symbolic name "Ad Halom Bridge" (Thus Far Bridge). To the west of the bridge today is The Ad Halom Park, which contains a memorial site to commemorate the fallen. During the course of the park's development works, which took place in 2010, the bridge was renovated and its historical appearance was restored. In addition, the Ad Halom interchange (which replaced the "Ashdod South Junction") was inaugurated.

In 1948, during the period of Israel's provisional government, the formulation of a plan for the dispersal of the population throughout the country was started, as part of which the planning department, headed by architect **Arieh Sharon**, proposed to establish a city in the south of the country with a deep water port.

On the eve of Operation Kadesh, in 1956, the idea of establishing the city started to take shape, when the then-prime minister, **David Ben-Gurion**, sent a letter to **Oved Ben-Ami**, who was the mayor of Netanya at the time, in which he wrote: "Do for the south as you did for the north".

Indeed, a short while after the end of the operation, Ben-Ami and **Philip Klutznik** (President of the B'nai Brith organization in the United States) established the "Ashdod Company Ltd.", a subsidiary of "Bonei Arim Company Ltd.", and the required authorization from the government to execute the plan was obtained.

In 1955, a group of surveyors and planners was sent to the area of Sukrir in order to choose a place to build a new power station to serve the southern part of the country. The **Ashdod Alef (A) power station** became operational in 1958 (later called "Eshkol Alef" [1]).

On the 25th of November 1956, 22 immigrants from Morocco arrived at the desolate area, and settled in a transit camp (sheds

and tents) that was erected on the bare sand, without planning, access roads or proper water supply. At the beginning of 1957, they were joined by families from Egypt and Romania, and the settlement, then called "**Ashdod-Yam**", numbered 370 families.

In the summer of that year The Ashdod Company received the concession to build the city, which included construction on 40 thousand dunams. Two years later the city celebrated its establishment, and the first local council, headed by **Dov Gur**, was appointed in October 1959. A month later the plans to construct the **Port of Ashdod** were completed.

In 1961 the name of the settlement was shortened to "**Ashdod**" (see "More on: From Ashdod-Yam to Ashdod"), and it had about 5,000 residents.

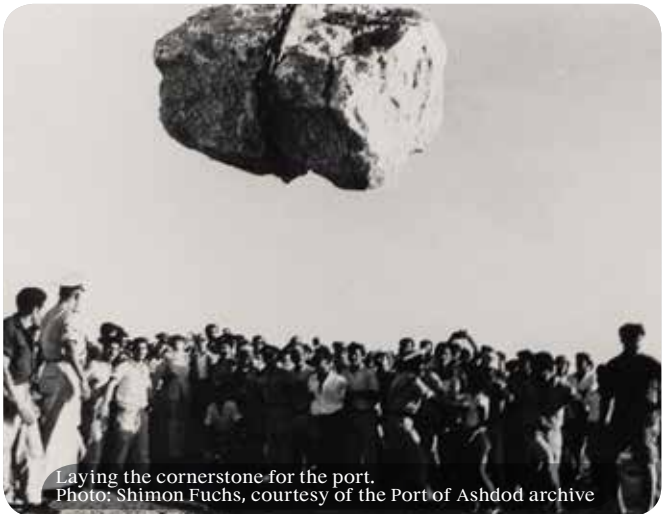


### More about: From Ashdod-Yam to Ashdod

Ashdod's first elected Mayor, Robert Haim, had the city's name changed shortly after he came into office. In an interview conducted with him by students of a school in the south, he said: "One day, in 1961, I was invited to the Hasharon Hotel in Herzeliya. The well-known Edmond de Rothschild was expected to arrive, and I, who at the time was looking for funding to establish the municipal library, jumped at the opportunity hoping to find the right time during the meeting when he would agree to donate the funds required. When we arrived there, I was introduced to him as the mayor of Ashdod-Yam. At the right moment I approached him, and he said 'Ah, you are from Kibbutz Sdot Yam, right?'. I was most upset he thought I was from Kibbutz Sdot Yam. All of that night I tossed and turned in bed and early in the morning, I headed to the office of the then Minister of Interior Mr. Haim Shapira... 'I request that the name of Ashdod-Yam be changed to Ashdod immediately'. 'Well', he said, 'no problem'. 'Convene the city council, discuss the matter, vote, sign, and submit a request and I will approve it'. I did not want to wait. I went outside, wrote the request on a piece of paper, signed, went back into the office and announced, 'Please confirm the city's new name!'. And indeed, following this chain of events, the Minister of Interior approved my request".

During that year construction commenced on the port of Ashdod, and the railway tracks leading to the town were laid. Two years later, many industrial plants were established, among which were refineries, and the '**Eshkol Bet (B)**' power station was inaugurated.

The Ashdod port became operational in 1965, as one of the only ports in the world at the time built in the open sea. From that moment onward the city began its accelerated development as it became a major port city in Israel, as well as Israel's main maritime-commercial gateway.



On February 14th 1968, Ashdod officially became a city, and the city's territory increased with the transfer of the remainder of the land allocated in the concession - 6,000 dunams - from the Hevel Yavne regional council . In October of that year, the first municipal elections were held, and **Avner Garin** was elected Mayor, serving in office until the election of **Zvi Zilker**, in 1969.

During the 1970's the city continued to expand and the waves of immigration rapidly made it into a fast-developing industrial city that was attractive for the younger population,

thanks to the attractive housing possibilities. Adding to that was the inauguration of the highway to Tel Aviv in May of 1974, which significantly shortened travel time, and the inauguration of two additional power stations - **Eshkol Gimel (3)** and **Eshkol Dalet (4)** - which placed Ashdod fourth in Israel in terms of electricity supply.

In the municipal elections held in 1983, **Arieh Azoulay** was elected Mayor of Ashdod. During his tenure (until 1989) Ashdod expanded to the south, towards the Nitzanim dunes, and **Quarter Tet Vav (15)** was built.

On March 7th, 1984 an explosion shook Ashdod. It was the first terrorist attack in the city's history. A fragmentation grenade planted in a shopping basket blew up on an "Egged" No. 9 bus en route from the local market located on the shore to the city's neighborhoods. The Abu Nidal terrorist organization claimed responsibility for the attack, which took the lives of three city residents and was etched as a traumatic event in the city's collective memory.

In March 1989 Zvi Zilker began his second term as Mayor of Ashdod, and remained in office until 2008.

Since the 1990s there has been an accelerated growth in the city's population, with the arrival of many immigrants from the former Soviet Union. Ashdod began expanding to the south



and east, and three residential Quarters were built in the **Sands Park** and in the north of the **Great Dune**.

With the increasing need to make the city accessible to the center of the country in general and Tel Aviv in particular, the Israel Railways Tel Aviv-Ashdod line was inaugurated in June



1992. (Up until then, the railway serviced the port only).

In the early 2000's the wave of terror that hit Israel, did not leave Ashdod untouched. On the 14th of March 2004 the city experienced another deadly terrorist attack. This time it was a double suicide bombing at the Port of Ashdod, resulting in the death of ten city residents, including eight port employees. The Hamas and Fatah organizations took responsibility on the attack.

In 2004, Ashdod, which suffered from smog generated by the activity of the power stations since its establishment, switched to **natural gas**, which reduced the city's air pollution significantly.

In July 2005, the "**Jubilee Port**" named for the late **Rafael Eitan** was dedicated, doubling the operating capacity of the Ashdod Port.

In the municipal elections held in November 2008, **Dr. Yehiel Lasri** was elected mayor of Ashdod. About a month later, the **Ad Halom interchange** on Route 4 was inaugurated, opening another quick entrance into the city.

Following the incessant rocket fire from the Gaza strip toward settlements in the Western Negev, operation "**Cast Lead**" started on 27th of December 2008. With the attacks on the Gaza Strip, terrorist attacks expanded to the settlements in the south and for the first time Ashdod was hit by Grad rockets. One of those rockets even caused the death of a female resident of the city.

In March 2012, as rocket fire on the city resumed, Ashdod received reinforcement in the form of an "**Iron Dome**" battery that was placed close to the city, and managed to intercept most of the rockets. In November of that same year, the IDF resumed its activities in the Gaza strip, this time as part of operation "**Pillar of Defense**", during which over 190 rockets were fired at the city.

In the municipal elections held in October 2013, Dr. Lasri was elected to serve another term as the mayor of Ashdod.

On July 8th, 2014, following an increase of the firing from

the Gaza Strip at settlements in the south of the country, operation "**Steadfast Rock**" began. During the 50 days of fighting, 236 rockets were fired at Ashdod. 15 of the rockets fired fell inside built-up areas in the city causing panic. In this operation as well, the "Iron Dome" battery proved itself and managed to intercept most of the rockets.

In 2015, as a result of the decision by prime minister Ariel Sharon in 2001, Ashdod joined the prestigious list of localities in Israel where a **seawater desalination facility** operates. The facility, which was built in the northern industrial zone, provides about 15 percent of Israel's the domestic water supply.

On June 4th 2017, for the first time since 1980, a new public hospital was opened in the country. A tedious public struggle led to the establishment of the **Ashdod Assuta Hospital**, a modern hospital which provides advanced medical services to residents from the city and the surrounding area.

Today, Ashdod is one of the largest and most populous cities in Israel, as well as one of the three important commercial port cities. Accelerated development and construction processes, establishing large factories with national significance, promoting the principals of sustainability and environmental development, absorbing new immigrants and developing social infrastructure, and more, made Ashdod into a dynamic city that manages to maintain its pastoral character as a coastal city while serving as a role model and example of an advanced city with a bright future.

## Culture and Art



For thousands of years the southern port city served as the beating heart of the region, constituting a central axis for culture and commerce, as shown by the variety of archaeological findings discovered in it throughout the years.

The modern city, with foundations based on its glorious historical past, is today the largest receiver of immigrants in Israel and a fascinating meeting place between cultures, traditions and communities from all around the world.

Ashdod takes pride in its diversified, unique and rich cultural and social fabric, as well as in meticulous urban planning that emphasizes the proper distribution of cultural institutions in all of the city's quarters. This is in addition to cultivating the cultural center in the **Kiryat Quarter** ("The City"), which houses all of the main cultural institutions, including **The Monart Center for the Arts**, where The "**Academa**" municipal conservatory, the Ballet School, and the Dance Center operate, and where the local representative bands and municipal orchestras perform. In addition, the impressive **Ashdod Art Museum**, which has received national and international acclaim, is situated in the Center.

Every year, at the end of Independence Day, an award ceremony is held at the Monart Art Center awarding the Mayor's "**Golden Brush Prize**", for the promotion of art in the community. The award is given to local artists in the categories of art education, contribution to the community, valuable artistic achievements, and a lifetime achievement award.



The Cultural Center also houses the **Yad Lebanim House**, and the "**Pais**" Ashdod Performing Arts Center, which the

residents refer to as "**Heichal Hatarbut**". This is one of the largest, and without a doubt among the most impressive, buildings of its kind in the country, and serves as the city's main performance hall. The nearby **Ashdod-Yam Park**, the city's flag project, includes, among other things, the largest **open theatre** in the country, with over **6,000** seats. Northeast of the Park is the one of a kind "**Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture**", which presents the city's fascinating Biblical past.

The spirit of creativity has been quite intense in the city quite over the past few years, even outside the cultural institutions. In the city's squares, streets, gardens and parks, on the boardwalk and next to public institutions there are about **300 statues and monuments** made by artists, and dozens of cultural events are held throughout the entire year.

Among the famous sculptures and symbols of the city: **The monumental Eye of the Sun sculpture**, created by the artist Moti Mizrahi, located at the southernmost point of the city, in the second largest square in Israel - **Kikar Hayovel** (Jubilee Square); The prominent **Sail Statue** by Israeli artist Israel Hadani, located in the Marina Square in memory of the Jews of Thessaloniki; and a **silver obelisk** (nicknamed "**The Needle**") created by the sculptor Yoram Miler and situated in the center of Ilan Ramon Square.

### Ashdod by numbers

1 • 2 • 3

In Ashdod there are **2** public museums: The Ashdod Art Museum and the Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture • Every year about **50,000** people visit the museums • There are **2** orchestras, the Andalusian Orchestra and the Ashdod Symphony Orchestra • The Andalusian Orchestra plays longer compositions (of **30** minutes and more) than any other Israeli orchestra • There are **20,000** registered readers at the city's libraries • In 2015 the municipal library conducted **6** meetings with authors in Russian • The "Academa" municipal conservatory has been active for over- **50** years • The Panov Ballet Theatre has been active in the city since 1993, and performs in front of over- **30,000** people annually.

**The Arie Klang artists home**, inaugurated in 2016 at the foot of Givat Yonah (Jonah's Hill), serves as a home for the city's artists and creators as well as a visitors center on the history of Ashdod. Among the esteemed members of the Ashdod Artists Association is sculptor Baruch Wind, one of Ashdod's oldest and prominent artists. There are 13 pieces of his work displayed across the city, among them are the **Struma and Mefkure monument**. Wind served as chairman of the association for about 20 years, and initiated a long line of artistic events, including international symposiums for sculpting and an outdoor show with local and international artists.



Ashdod holds extensive cultural activities throughout the year. The city's **Ashdod Symphony Orchestra and Andalusian Orchestra** perform in Israel and around the world, and include successful music, folklore and dance events, among them the "Window to the Mediterranean" Festival for Israeli contemporary music, the "Super Jazz Ashdod" International Jazz Festival hosting musicians and jazz singers from Israel and abroad, and the World Ballroom and Latino-American Dance Championships, with participant delegations from over 200 different countries. In addition "**The Dorato**" Circus

operates in town, the first to ever be accepted into the European Circus Union (ECA).

The recreational and leisure culture in Ashdod is rich and diverse, and provides a fascinating peek into the mix of cultures and traditions that exist side by side in the city.

# Getting Ready

## When to arrive

- Holidays and Events
- Seasons and Weather
- Ashdod in the Rain



# When to arrive

## Holidays and Events



### Icon Index



Worthwhile



Possible



Pass

The exact date of some of the events changes from one year to another. Current information regarding dates of events and festivals can be found on the [www.ashdod.muni.il](http://www.ashdod.muni.il) website and at the Ashdod municipal call center 106 (for those calling from out of town: 08-8545495)

### "Riding The Wave" Festival



**Date:** Beginning of September. **About:** A festival of music, art and folklore, held with the cooperation of the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption, celebrating the city's immigration efforts with a wide variety of cultural events. The festival takes place in the city's cultural center, where various cultural and art institutions are located. **State of the city:** Color and culture in the heart of the city.

### Sukkot (Holiday)



**Date:** Intermediate days of Sukkot, during October. **About:** During the holiday thousands of visitors flood the city's tourist sites, and enjoy a wide variety of festive events, festivals and shows, which are open to the public. The holiday events include, among other things, the Annual Wine Festival, which hosts boutique wineries, tasting booths and musical ensembles along the Lachish Park, The Musical Ushpizin (guests) Festival, Jews of Georgia Day, which depicts Georgian culture in song and dance, The International Festival for Circus Arts and more. **State of the City:** Happy and celebrating.



### The "Ashdod Poetry"



**Date:** Six days at the end of November. **About:** A festival of authentic and varied Hebrew poetry, which presents a range of Israeli creators from various creative fields. It is an unusual opportunity to become familiar with works from the periphery that did not necessarily manage to get to the front of the stage. The festival includes master classes, poetry performances and readings, unique musical ensembles, a variety of workshops and more. **State of the city:** Poetic and inspirational.

### Ashdod Super Jazz



**Date:** Two days in November-December. **About:** The International Jazz Festival, held annually at the Center for Performing Arts in the Kirya Quarter, attracts the best jazz artists from Israel and abroad. **State of the city:** Musical.



### "The Golden Age" Festival



**Date:** Five days during the Passover holiday. **About:** The festival, which is held with the participation of over one hundred artists and creators, as well as many musical ensembles including the Ashdod Andalusian Orchestra and the Ashdod Symphony Orchestra, bridges between east and west and reveals one of the most glamorous periods in Jewish history. During the festival a variety of cultural and musical performances are held in cultural institutions throughout the city. **State of the city:** Open and multicultural.



*In cultural institutions throughout the city (The Ashdod Art Museum, The Green Submarine, The Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture and more) special events are held during the Passover holidays. It is recommended to check for updates before arrival.*

### Mimouna in the park



**Date:** The end of the seventh day of Passover, April.

**About:** The traditional Mimouna celebration in Ashdod is held at the city's Ben-Gurion Park, and includes a Mediterranean musical event with the participation of the best artists. **State of the city:** Cheery and multicultural.

### Ashdod Night Race



**Date:** Towards the end of April. **About:** In 2017 the city hosted the first municipal night race, a beach race which included two parts - popular and competitive - attended by runners from all over the country. **State of the city:** Sportive and Happy.

### "Peoples and Tastes" Festival



**Date:** May-June. **About:** A food festival which faithfully represents the diversity of nations and ethnic groups that make up the city of Ashdod. The colorful festival, which takes place along the banks of the Lachish stream, offers tastings from a variety of dishes from around the world in about forty different food stands. Alongside the food, the visitors also enjoy live performances by dance companies and musicians who play music from various countries around the world. **State of the city:** International and festive on the banks of the stream.

### Window to the Mediterranean Festival



**Date:** During the month of August. **About:** A festival comprised of two evenings of first-rate shows that take place on the natural sand dune facing the sea, between Oranim Beach and Hakshatot (Arches) Beach. **State of the city:** Happy and cheerful.

### Victory Day March



**Date:** 9th of May. **About:** A march commemorating the anniversary of the Allied Forces triumph over Nazi Germany. Veterans of World War II take part in the event, which takes place in the city's Rogozin pedestrian mall in the presence of the Mayor, city councilors, members of the Knesset, Holocaust survivors, member of public organizations, school children and many of the city residents. Memorial services at the monuments for war heroes take place all around Ashdod. **State of the city:** Dignified and respectful.

### Mediterrana Festival



**Date:** Several days May-June. **About:** International festival of art, cinema, music and flavors of the Mediterranean Basin. The festival hosts artists from Israel and abroad in four cultural centers in the city - The Ashdod Open Theatre, The Performing Arts Center, Yad Lebanim House, and the city square. The coffee shops and restaurants throughout the city join in the festivities. Starting in 2017 the Festival incorporates "Mediterranean" sporting events such as "Pétanque". **State of the city:** Fascinating and exiting cultural mosaic.

### World Championships in Ballroom and Latin American dancing



**Date:** beginning of June. **About:** The prestigious international competition is held at the Center for Performing Arts in the Kirya Quarter, with the participation of delegations and judges from 200 different countries. Ashdod has already won the competition before and continues to demonstrate impressive performances every year. **State of the city:** International and joyful.

### Made In Israel Festival



**Date:** A week during July. **About:** A week of performances saluting Israel expressed in a variety of shows held in the city's cultural centers. **State of the city:** Nostalgic.

### White Night Events



**Date:** End of July- beginning of August. **About:** A wide variety of free events that take place during one night in several locations throughout the city- Movie screenings, performances of all kinds, parties, street shows and juggling. **State of the city:** Alert and energetic.

### Sounds of the Sea Festival



**Date:** During August. **About:** Along Gandhi Beach (Hakshatot Beach) in the city, a number of shows and musical performances take place on several stages. **State of the city:** Alert and energetic.

### Beer Festival



**Date:** Two days during August. **About:** The festival, which draws thousands of visitors each year, is held in the as part of The Israeli Summer events in Ashdod, and includes lots of good beer and fine Israeli music. The best artists perform in a central location in the city (details are posted close to the festival dates), and the audience can enjoy the shows while sitting in the open air. **State of the city:** Summery and carefree.



## When to arrive

### Seasons and Weather



Ashdod enjoys pleasant weather all year round. The last and only time it snowed in the city (then Isdud) was in February 1950, so there is no need to be equipped with snow gear, and even in the rainy winter season (November-March) you can enjoy an average temperature in the city of 18 degrees Celsius. During the summer months, the average temperature is around 30 degrees Celsius, mainly thanks to the breeze coming from the sea, and the advanced planning of the city, which took wind directions into account.

In general, the best time to visit the city is during September-October and April-May, when the weather is especially pleasant for hiking. However, during all seasons you can find an abundance of attractions in Ashdod for any type of visitor (see the chapter on "To Travel"), and in the months of June-August it is especially recommended to visit the beautiful beaches.



*Towards the end of summer and beginning of fall (August-September) you can enjoy the spectacular bloom of the beach Lilies at the Ashdod-Yam Fort.*



## Ashdod in the Rain

Ashdod is beautiful and inviting even when it's raining. For those who wish to remain dry, here are a few suggestions for entertainment in the rainy city:

- Take advantage of a rainy day and visit one of the impressive museums in the city- The Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture, The Ashdod Museum of Art, and the Ralex Car Museum.
- Enter one of the city's mythological coffee shops, such as Cafe Tzameret, and sip a hot chocolate or an Americano coffee (with milk, the way they like it in Ashdod).
- Enjoy live and intimate performances of the best artists at the Arie Klang House.
- Demonstrate your skills in wave surfing (for professionals only) at Gil Beach, designated for surfers.
- Enjoy a day of indulging shopping at one of the large shopping centers in town.
- Take in a matinee at the Globus Max Cinema in the C-Mall, and enjoy a good meal in one of the fine restaurants in the vicinity.
- Visit one of the many synagogues in the city during prayer time, and take in the special characteristics of each and every one.
- Tour the covered part of the market in Quarter Bet (2), the oldest in town, and enjoy the impressive photo exhibit while you shop.

# To use

Transportation  
within the city

Visitors information

Important telephone  
numbers

PORT OF

F ASHDOD

## Arriving in the city



With the upgrading of the transportation infrastructure in the city, and beyond, travel times between Ashdod and major cities in central and southern Israel have been shortened significantly over the years. The city, which is located west of Route 4, has two quick entry ways: the northern entrance - at the Ashdod interchange, and a southern entrance - at the Ad Halom interchange.

As part of the port reform from 2005 and the State's investment in the construction of the Hadarom Port north of the Port of Ashdod, it was decided to upgrade the highway infrastructure in the entire area: widening Route 7, eliminating Route 41, and constructing the Ashdod North interchange on Route 4 toward Yavne - which connects the industrial area and the Port of Ashdod directly with Route 4 - significantly easing traffic congestion at the northern entrance to the city.

### Good to know

A•B•C

#### Zichron

Avraham

The synagogue that was built by the community of Georgian Jews is one of a variety of about 300 synagogues in Ashdod. Its windows are a work of art representing the creation of the world.

#### Hakshatot

Beach (Arches Beach)

- Or as it is officially called, "Gandhi Beach" (named after the late Rechavam Ze'evi) - is one of the most popular beaches in Ashdod. The beach, which lies north of the Blue Marina, is named for its impressive arches structure, which houses restaurants and coffee shops, and is a tourist attraction on its own.

#### Tet

vav (15)

The largest of the city's quarters was built in stages, starting in the 1990s and ending in the beginning of the first decade of the 21st century. This quarter contains the "Pillbox", the ancient signaling tower that helped protect the area from seaborne invasion.



**By train:** The Moshe Bar Kochva "Ashdod Ad Halom" train station was constructed in 1992 near the Ad Halom Bridge (hence its name), on the historical railway line that led to Egypt. Since the construction of the railway station in Ashkelon in 2005, the Ad Halom station serves as an intermediate stop on the Israel Railways Lod-Ashkelon line.

The train ride to Ashdod is comfortable and relatively fast (average travelling time from Tel Aviv is about fifty minutes). The trains run at a frequency of once an hour (during rush hours they are more frequent).

The main entrance to the station is from the west, but it can also be accessed from the east via a pedestrian overpass. The station has two platforms, connected both by the bridge and by an underground passage. The station is large and air conditioned, it includes a cafeteria, beverage vending machines, a library, and of course cashiers and ticket machines. There is a free parking lot adjacent to the station as well as a taxi station. The **Big Fashion** shopping center is located within 5 minutes' walk.

The Afikim Bus Company operates several bus lines between the train station and the city (21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 66, 85) as well as from the station to surrounding settlements (Gan Yavne, Bnei Aish, Kiryat Malachi, Ashkelon and more).



*Although the station and the train itself are accessible to people with disabilities, maintenance work may sometimes affect the station's accessibility. It is recommended to contact customer service (\*5770) in order to make sure your travel route is fully accessible.*

**By bus:** In 1996 the new central bus station, which serves the urban and intercity bus lines of the "Afikim" Company in Ashdod-Yavne-Rehovot-Tel Aviv cluster, as well as regional lines connecting those major cities and the settlements around them, was inaugurated. Also operating from the bus station are bus lines of "Egged" (a line to Jerusalem and a seasonal line to Eilat), "Metropolin" (lines to Be'er, Kiryat Gat, Sderot and Netivot), "Connex" (lines to Tel Aviv, Bar-Ilan

University, Tel Hashomer, Rishon LeZion, Rehovot, Yavne, Ashkelon, Kiryat Malachi, Gedera and Gan Yavne), and "Eged Ta'avura" (internal lines). In addition to these bus lines, there are also two intercity lines that are operated by service taxis: a Tel Aviv-Ashkelon route, which goes through Ashdod, and a Tel Aviv-Ashdod route. These routes also operate on Saturdays (For further information: Tel 1-900-724-141 Extension 383).



*For more information about "Afikim" bus routes, rates, accessibility and more, check the [www.afikim-t.co.il](http://www.afikim-t.co.il) web site.*

**By car:** Travelling by car to Ashdod is relatively simple and quick. The city is only 34 kilometers away from Tel Aviv, and 50-60 kilometers from Jerusalem and Be'er Sheva. Drivers can connect with Route 6 (Trans-Israel Highway) via Highway 7, which begins at the Ashdod interchange and intersects with Route 4.

**By boat:** There is a passenger terminal at the Port of Ashdod, which serves the flow of passenger traffic arriving by sea, which is constantly increasing especially in view of the increased popularity of Mediterranean vacation cruises. The Blue Marina is another marine gateway. It is the third largest marina in the country, servicing yachts from Israel and abroad.



*For inquiries and more information regarding the Blue Marina's services, please call 08-855-7246 (main office)*

## Transportation within the city



In 2012 Ashdod was selected by the Ministry of Transportation to lead the green transportation revolution in Israel, to serve as a national model city and a breeding ground for research and development of the field. Ashdod's unique transportation project was designed to upgrade the municipal infrastructures, improve accessibility and mobility in the city

with various means of transportation, reduce air pollution and traffic accidents, ease the city's traffic congestion and encourage the residents to make use of public transportation. The project (called "REWAY"), that its implementation began in November 2016, includes among other things the establishment of new innovative bus stops that have electronic information boards, ticketing stands, a Rav-Kav loading station and a free Wi-Fi network, upgrading the roads and sidewalks around the city, adding new transportation lines, shortening travel times, issuing bus tickets that can be used for transferring from one bus to another, establishing a new bus terminal, paving a network of bicycle paths linking the different parts of the city, electric bicycle rental, and more.

As part of the project the residents of the city are able to choose between travelling on a few express bus lines inside the quarters, or taking the non-express lines, which take a slower winding route, but where there is no need to change buses.

The transportation revolution in the city is expected to secure Ashdod's place as national pioneer in the adaptation of an advanced technology for the prevention of traffic accidents.



*The implementation of the different stages of the project may cause traffic congestion in the city and temporary changes in public transportation from time to time. It is advised to check with the Municipal Service Center (106) and to make use of navigation applications before arriving in the city.*

**Buses:** As part of the implementation of the REWAY project, the urban bus lines in Ashdod, and most of the intercity lines, are operated by the "Afikim" bus company. Some of the intercity bus lines are operated by "Egged" and "Metropolin". The old buses are being replaced by modern and environmentally friendly buses, which travel on fast exclusive traffic routes. Bus tickets can be purchased directly from the driver, or purchase a magnetic "Rav-Kav", which enables the loading of several trips.



**TIP**

The Rav-Kav is a reloadable electronic card that replaced the previous paper tickets and significantly reduces travelling costs. It can be loaded with all the existing subscription types ("Daily Pass", "Monthly Pass", punch cards and more). A travel ticket is valid for 75 minutes, so during that time it is possible to transfer between different means of transportation with no extra cost. The ticket can be purchased at the Central Bus Terminal (Sunday-Thursday 07:00-19:00, Friday 07:00-13:00), at the Top Center Mall (6 HaAmoraim Street, Rova Zain [Quarter G]) or on the website [www.ravkavonline.co.il](http://www.ravkavonline.co.il)

The central bus terminal is located in the City Quarter, and is divided so that the urban bus stops are located in the eastern part of the building and the intercity stops are located in the western part. The terminal services "Afikim", "Egged" and "Metropolin" bus lines.

**Service taxis:** The service taxi system in the city is operated by "Moniot Ha'ir". Most of the service lines overlap with the urban bus lines, and are even coordinated with the train schedule.

**TIP**

Those who wish to spend an evening in Tel Aviv can make use of the No. 333 night bus line, which operates from midnight till four in the morning, travelling to entertainment centers and back. Updated information can be obtained on the [www.kav-layla.co.il](http://www.kav-layla.co.il) web site, or at the "Kol-Kav" call center at \*8787

## Transportation within the city

**Taxis:** The Ashdod taxi system is very efficient, and includes 11 regulated stations that operate, mostly, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The taxi drivers in Ashdod are courteous and welcoming, and the taxi cabs are for the most part new.



*Please note that the majority of the taxi stations operate around the clock, but there are stations that are closed on Saturdays.*

**Car:** The convenient access routes to Ashdod and its relative proximity to major cities in the center and south of the country, as well as the broad main roads and large supply of parking (mostly free of charge) around the city, make travelling by private car easy.



**Bicycle:** Ashdod offers a developed infrastructure of trails designed for cyclists, and riding in the city, which is relatively flat and has long straight roads, is very convenient. You can also rent a bicycle at several agencies in the city that also offer guided tours for the whole family, such as "Mike Bike" (1 El Hayam Alley, Mey-Ami Beach, Tel 08-917-7661) and "Or & Shir Roll with Love" (At the exit from the promenade: Tel 054-485-1589).



## Ashdod by numbers

1·2·3

**17** cities in Israel participated in the Ministry of Transportation's competition to determine the model city for Sustainable Transportation • Ashdod won **1st** place in the competition and an impressive grant of NIS **230** million • The transportation reform includes, among other things, the addition of **19.7** kilometers of public transport routes and the paving of **21.5** kilometers of bicycle routes • **30** city employees participate in the municipal "Ride to Work" program and come to work on their bicycles • The largest parking lot in Israel was built next to the Port, and is designed for **450** trucks • There are **29** gas stations in Ashdod, operated by **9** companies • In comparison, in Tel Aviv there are **46** gas stations operated by **5** companies.

## Tourist Information



As part of the tourism revolution the city is undergoing, a first-of-its-kind tourist bureau is planned. Until its establishment, tourists can use the services of "Ashdod Tourism Ltd." (3 Yair Stern Street, Givat Yonah; Tel 08-854-5815, 08-854-5210), as well as the virtual offices of the Ministry of Tourism, which offers information through three digital channels: E-Mail, Facebook and the WhatsApp messaging application (for further information: Tel 050-900-0400, <https://virtual.goisrael.com>).

TIP

*During the weekends, "Ashdod Tourism Ltd." conducts guided tours around the city, free of charge. The experiential tours are suitable for the entire family and lead visitors to the city's main sites, as well as to fascinating hidden corners known only to its residents. For more details and registration: go to the "Visit Ashdod" Facebook page or call 08-854-5815, 08-854-5210*

# Important telephone numbers



## Emergency services

Police: 100	(08-6387295)
Fire Department:	102 (08-9116655- Regional station)
Magen David Adom (Medical Emergency Services):	101 (08-8551333)
Home Front Command:	08-9207341 or 104 from any phone
Assuta Hospital Ashdod:	03-7644444, *6474
Natal- Help line for victims of anxiety:	1-800-363-363
Eran- Emotional First Aid:	1201 (Hot line 24/7)

## Transportation services

National Info. Center - Ministry of Transportation:	*8787
Afikim:	*6686
Egged:	08-6260555, *3133
Metropolin:	*5900
City Taxi Ashdod:	08-8669966
Israel Railways:	*5770 or 03-611700

## Miscellaneous

Ashdod Tourism Ltd.:	08-8545815 or 08-8545210
Municipal Hotline:	106 (08-8545495).

Also provides tourist information about city sites, tours, exhibits, events, and more





# Must See



- The Ashdod-Yam Fort
- Givat Yonah (Jonah's Hill)
- The Monart Art Center
- Sand Park and the Great Dune
- Ad-Halom Bridge
- Lachish Park Ashdod (LPA)
- The Blue Marina
- The Kirya Quarter and City Park
- The Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture
- Ashdod Beaches

# Running



## The Ashdod-Yam Fort



Parking on asphalt road leading to the fort



"Afikim" bus lines 2, 2A, and 22

## The Ashdod-Yam Fort

The impressive archaeological site, located on the southern coastline of Ashdod, presents the relics of the most beautiful coastal fortress built in the country in the early Arab period. This fort, like others of its kind built along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, was built with the purpose of defending the region against the invasion of Byzantine ships. Today you can enjoy a fascinating tour of the site and view a magnificent sunset all year round (see the route "Follow the Sun: From the Ancient Fort to the Southern Beach").



*An especially romantic way to experience the city is by renting Tandem Bikes for couples. The "Light&Song Rolling with Love" company offers three routes: along the Lachish stream and along the coastline, from Mei-Ami beach to Lido beach or from Mei-Ami beach to the Leonardo Hotel. Would you like to enrich the experience? You can also order a picnic basket (1 El Hayam Alley; Sun-Saturday 10:00-20:00; Tel: 054-485-1589)*



**Givat Yonah (Jonah's Hill)**



Free parking at the boardwalk parking lot or across from the Ilanot School



"Afikim" bus lines 2, 2A, 3, 11, and 13

### Givat Yonah (Jonah's Hill)

The highest site in the city is one of its most prominent symbols. According to various traditions of the three major religions, the site is the burial place of Jonah the Prophet. The hill, located in the northwestern part of the city, served as a strategic observation point throughout different periods in history, and the Ashdod port's lighthouse was also built on that spot. Visitors to the hill enjoy a beautiful panoramic view of the city and its surroundings (see the route "Along the Sea: Nostalgia and the Aroma of Spices Among the City's First Houses").



*At the foot of Givat Yonah facing the sea, you will find the Arie Klang House, Ashdod's impressive Artists House, which serves as a stage for local artists through its art gallery, among other things. Here you can also receive information about tourist sites and various events happening in the city, and purchase souvenirs at the store operating on site (Tel: 08-922-1883)*



**The Monart Art Center**



Yad Lebanim and Monart Parking Lot



"Afikim" bus lines 13, 18, 33A, and 66

### The Monart Art Center

The multidisciplinary cultural center, which operates in the heart of the lively city and overlooks the Ashdod sea shore, houses the Ashdod Museum of Art, the Center for the Performing Arts, the Chamber Orchestra, the Opera, theater and dance groups, and the "Academa" Municipal Conservatory. In addition it has a dedicated wing for experiential environmental activities, and a variety of cultural events.

The Center's modern structure bears a slight resemblance to the Louvre Museum in Paris,

thanks to its pyramid roof, which is made of glass. The structure of the Performing Arts Center, which is adjacent to the Monart Center, is also considered to be quite prominent in the Israeli architectural landscape. The ensemble of culture and art in the area attracts many visitors from around the country (see the "Heart of the City: Between Cultural Assets and Urban Nature" route).



### **Sand Park and the Great Dune**



Hashikmim  
Parking Lot



"Afikim" bus lines  
3, 5, 9, 12, 22, 34,  
and 321

### **Sand Park and the Great Dune**

This wild area, which stretches between Ashdod and Nitzanim, is the last remnant of the sand dunes that once covered the southern coastal plain, and the only place in the country where there is a geographical continuum between migratory sand dunes and the beach. The

Great Dune, which borders Quarter Yud Dalet (14) of the city and is located in the northeastern part of the spectacular nature reserve, rises to the impressive height of about 35 meters. This nature reserve serves as a home to a wide variety of wild animals, including deers, jackals, foxes, rabbits and various reptiles (see the "Only Sand and Abroad: Between the Primeval Landscapes and A Unique Shopping Experience" route).

## Good to know

**Yad  
Lebanim**

The Municipal Cultural Center, established in 1990, in the city's cultural campus, is used for many shows and events in the city. At the entrance to the building, there is a memorial site for the city's fallen IDF soldiers, who lost their lives in Israel's military campaigns.

**Round-  
abouts**

It was not in vain that the city earned the name "The city of a thousand squares". Those visiting will notice a substantial amount of impressive city squares, with names that are not any less impressive and creative given to them by its residents (see "The Blue People Square", "The Shpitz Square", "The Spaceship" and more).

**Lachish  
Stream**

One of Israel's southernmost coastal streams. Lachish Stream (named after the ancient city) flows 72 km from the Hevron Hills region into the city of Ashdod. With the exception of the part of the stream that flows through the city, the stream is a seasonal stream flowing only in the winter.

**Ad-Halom Bridge**

Dirt parking lot at the site



To Ad-Halom Station



"Afikim" and "Dan BaDarom" bus lines 17, 26, 27, 140, 141, 142, 150, 151, 152, 465 and all the lines arriving at the nearby "Egged" bus terminal

**Ad-Halom Bridge**

The bridge, which was built by the Turks in the late 19th century on top of the foundations of the original Roman bridge, is the northernmost spot in the country reached by the Egyptian military forces during the War of Independence. Hence the name "Ad-Halom" ('Thus Far'), which is also the name of the highway interchange located south of the bridge. At the end of the war the historic bridge was reconstructed and the Ad Halom park was built next to it, which contains a memorial site to the fallen soldiers of the Givati Brigade and a monument to commemorate the fallen soldiers of the Egyptian Army. The park borders the beautiful Lachish stream nature reserve (See the route "Ad Halom: From Touring the Authentic Market to the Decisive Battle in the 1948 war").



**Lachish Park Ashdod (LPA)**

The Lachish Park parking lot



"Afikim" bus lines 2, 2A, and 3

**Lachish Park Ashdod (LPA)**

The spectacular park, constructed in 1996 on the southern bank of the restored Lachish stream, covers an area of about 650 dunams (162.5 acres), part of which was left wild and completely natural.

The cultivated part of the park includes shaded seating areas, green lawns, a bird watching area, and a promenade named "Chai Lachish" next to which there is a miniature safari that contains Ibexes, Zebras, Oryx, Fallow-deers and Deers, among other animals. Within the park, in the eastern part of the promenade, there is an "Extreme Park", which offers a variety of extreme activities for the entire family (See the route "Sea, Nature and Extreme: A Route for Families with Children").



*The SEGS company offers fun guided Segway tours along the Lachish stream and Ashdod's beautiful beachfront. Tours last for one-two hours (depending on tour type) and are suitable for participants aged 16 and up. For details and reservations: Tel 03-955-0405*

**The Blue Marina**

When constructed in-1994, Israel's third largest marina was considered to be one of the most impressive real estate projects in the country. At the location where sailors from all over the world docked for thousands of years, there is now a modern yacht anchorage, which offers 550 spacious docking berths, and is part of a unique tourism and leisure complex. Unlike other marinas in the country, in the Blue Marina compound one can roam freely (See the route "Heart of the City: Between Cultural Assets and Urban Nature").

**The Blue Marina**

The Marina parking lot



"Afikim" bus lines 5, 14, 66





#### The Kirya Quarter & City Park



Recommended:  
Yad Lebanim and  
Monart Parking Lot.



To the Kirya Garden  
- the "Afikim" No.  
4 bus line; To the  
Monart Center-  
"Afikim" bus lines  
13, 18, 33A, and 66

#### The Kirya Quarter and City Park

Ashdod's beating heart brings together most of the city's public, cultural and commercial institutions. The Kirya Quarter (known as the "City Quarter") is the most populated quarter in the city, and together with Quarter Aleph (1), Quarter Bet (2) and Quarter Dalet (4), it creates the city's vibrant center. Here you can find one of the great green lungs of the city, City Park, where there are lawns, seating areas, and many amusement rides for children, including the Kirya Garden (See the route "Heart of the City: Between Cultural Assets and Urban Nature").





**The Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture**



The Maccabi Health Care Center parking lot / Hashayatim



The "Afikim" No. 4 bus line

### The Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture

The only museum in the world dedicated to the history of the Philistines is situated in Quarter Dalet (4), and offers a fascinating journey into Philistine-era of Ashdod. In the museum there is a permanent interactive exhibit called "The World of the Philistines", which tells the story of the region from biblical times till nowadays through interesting archaeological items and experiential displays, next to interchanging art exhibits by various artists (See the route "Heart of the City": Between Cultural Assets and Urban Nature")

### Ashdod Beaches



There are many parking lots along the beaches where parking is free of charge.

### Ashdod Beaches

The broadest and most beautiful shoreline in Israel, the golden beaches that are rated the cleanest beaches in the county year after year, the high level of services and abundance of beach facilities, handicapped accessibility, and the events and activities offered, all made

this coastal city especially attractive to tourists from both Israel and from abroad. Along about six kilometers of an especially wide beach (about 400 meters) there are seven regulated beaches, among them Gandhi Beach - the famous Hakshatot Beach (Arches) - and a separate beach for religious people (see the routes "Along the Sea: Nostalgia and the Aroma of Spices Among the City's First Houses" and "Follow the Sun: From the Ancient Fort to the Southern Beach").



*Storage lockers are available for bathers to store their belongings at Ashdod's declared beaches. There is a nominal one-time fee for the service.*



# Ashdod with children



The Hai-Lachish  
Promenade (LPA)

Etgarim Park

The Dolphin and Sea  
Center

Ashdod-Yam Park

The Port of Ashdod  
Visitor Center

The Children 'Pais' Park  
(The Pirate Park)


The Green Submarine


The Ralex Car Museum


# Ashdod with children





## The Hai-Lachish Promenade


 Park Lachish Parking Lot (On Laskov Road)

 The "Afikim" No. 2 bus line


 Open 24/7 throughout the year

 Free of charge

 Herzl Boulevard

 08-854-5481

 Handicapped Accessible

 The route is accessible to baby strollers



## The Hai-Lachish Promenade (LPA)

The beautiful promenade, located on the southern bank of the Lachish stream, and begins near the Etgarim Park in the Lachish Park area, is a kind of a small scale safari. Along the promenade, which is open to the public, there are fenced enclosures with several kinds of animals - antelopes, zebras, fallow deer, ostriches, rams, ibex, sheep, deer, and more. Some of the animals were brought here in 2005, after the evacuation of Gush Katif. Next to each compound there is a sign explaining about the animals occupying it, as well as shaded seating areas. In addition, the walkway is paved with beautiful statues and green lawns alongside it. On the other side of the stream, trains that carry containers to and from the Ashdod Port, pass through from time to time - an attraction all by itself for the little ones in the group.



### Etgarim Park



The Park parking lot (free of charge)



"Afikim" bus lines 10, 11, 12, 20, 26 to HaBanim Street, and from it walking north for about ten minutes



July-August: Sunday-Thursday, Saturday 10:00-17:00, Friday 09:00-15:00; September-October, April-June: Open for groups by appointment on Saturdays only



Admission charged; discount to local residents (upon presentation of ID)



Herzl Boulevard, Northern entrance (follow the signs)



053-486-7782, 053-750-6599



ashdod.muni.il



In principle the park is not accessible, but some of its facilities may be suitable for people with disabilities. It is recommended to check before arrival



Those with long hair must use a sea cap; infants should wear a swimming diaper

Suitable for the whole family

● Suitable    ● Possible    ● Unsuitable



### Etgarim Park

The experiential park, located on the northern edge of the Lachish stream, offers a variety of challenging attractions for the whole family - from a special compound for toddlers and children (ages 1-5), through impressive facilities for children aged six and up, to the extreme tower which is the tallest in the country (35 meters), for children aged 12 and up, and includes three rappelling stations, a rope rack, a double climbing ladder and a climbing pipe, which is climbed upon using pegs.

The park also has a state of the art skate-park, a trampoline compound, a Bedouin hospitality tent and a huge children's pool, 50 centimeters deep. All the facilities in the park are included in the admission ticket. In the summer months there are various performances here. It is recommended to check in before arrival.



**The Dolphin and Sea Center**



The parking lot of the Lachish Stream Park and from it about a 300 meters walk along the stream in the direction of the sea up to the sign



"Afikim" bus lines 2, 2A, and 3



Sunday-Thursday  
09:00-16:00; Friday  
09:00-14:00



Admission charged from age 2; discount for local residents



In the Ort Ashdod Naval Officers school compound



Tel 054-996-0171



dolphincenter@immrac.org



Partial accessibility (not including handicapped rest rooms)



For groups of 15-25 participants and with pre-arrangement only

Suitable for the whole family

16-18 11-15 6-10 2-5

● Suitable ● Possible ● Unsuitable

**The Dolphin and Sea Center**

Not many are aware of this, but in front of Ashdod's beautiful beaches there are many different types of dolphins living in the waters. This is one of the reasons the "Machmali" foundation (The Marine Mammal Research, Information and Aid Center), which is concerned with the preservation of marine mammals and their environment, decided to establish the foundation's education center specifically in Ashdod. At the unique center, which was established in 2016 at the Ort Naval Officers School on the southern banks of the Lachish stream, visitors are exposed to the wondrous world of these marine mammals living along the coast of Israel. The guided tour, which leads the children on a marine journey through the eyes of the dolphin, includes the screening of fascinating videos and a visit to the nearby ecological park, among other things. The tour lasts about an hour.



*Next to the Dolphin and Sea center, on the banks of the Lachish stream, lies the "Ashdod Paintball" complex, which offers an enjoyable extreme experience for the whole family (from age 9 and up). You must come in closed shoes. For details and reservations: Tel 054-990-0990*

**Ashdod-Yam Park**



Ashdod-Yam Park  
Parking Lot



"Afikim" bus lines  
4, 14, 66



All Week 06:00-23:00;  
The Fountain - In  
summer: Sunday-  
Thursday 20:30,  
21:30, 22:15, Saturday  
21:00, 22:00, In the  
winter: Sunday-  
Thursday 18:30,  
20:30, Saturday  
20:30, 21:30



Free of charge



Moshe Dayan  
Boulevard



Tel: 08-856-2926



[www.ashdod.muni.il](http://www.ashdod.muni.il)



All areas of the  
park are fully  
accessible.

Suitable for the whole family

● Suitable    ● Possible  
● Unsuitable

**Ashdod-Yam Park**

The beautiful park, which stretches over an area of about 200 dunams (50 acres) between the heart of the city, the Blue Marina and Gandhi Beach, opened in 2012 and offers a variety of entertainment options for the entire family.

Throughout the park there are lawns, walking paths, bicycle routes, unique gardens including a statue garden and a rock garden, shaded playgrounds for all ages and sports arenas including a skate-park which is the first of its kind in Israel, a restaurant, the largest open theatre in Israel and a panoramic bird observation point that provides an impressive view of Ashdod's seafont. In the middle of the park there is a grand artificial lake, which offers boat rides and has a colorful fountain in its center, inspired by the fountain in Barcelona, which features a show combining light, music and water.





### The Port of Ashdod Visitor Center



Sunday-Thursday  
08:00-16:30, Friday  
(once a month) 08:30-  
13:00



Free of charge



Port of Ashdod



08-851-7564



www.ashdodport.  
co.il



Full accessibility  
for all types of  
disabilities



The visit is guided  
and must be  
reserved in advance,  
for groups of 20-50  
visitors; during the  
holiday of Sukkot  
the center is open  
for individual and  
family visits subject  
to registration and  
pre-arrangement.



Suitable for the  
whole family

16-18 11-15 6-10 2-5

● Suitable ● Possible  
● Unsuitable

Photography: Barak Ben Itzhak

### The Port of Ashdod Visitor Center

One of the most advanced and largest visitor centers in the country, tells children the story of the Port, the largest of its kind in Israel, and showcases the daily activities that take place in it, in an experiential and enjoyable manner for the whole family. It is a wonderful opportunity for the children to experience the Port, which is an exceptionally important economic gateway for Israel, up close.

The visit, which takes place in organized groups only (except for the intermediate days of the Sukkot Holiday), combines an experiential tour of the visitor center itself, and a driving tour around the Port. The center contains interactive displays, in which a crane is assembled from 5,000 Lego blocks, and moves using a sensor, four screens that broadcast from the Port grounds in real time, a simulator that simulates routing a ship to the harbor and connecting it to the platform, and more. In addition, historical movies are screened at the center and there are rare pictures of the harbor's way of life from its establishment in the beginning of the 1960s. The visit lasts about an hour and a half.



### How pleasant it will be at the Visitor Center

**To befriend:** Yoske and Giuseppe from the cool animation movie and learn more about the many products we receive from countries overseas

**Careful:** Don't sprain your neck from staring at the impressive tall cranes

**Don't let your parents persuade you to walk away** from participating in the challenging cargo trivia game

**End with:** Fooling around in front of the screen at the entrance to the center, that dresses you up as a variety of colorful characters

### Pirate Park



The Mei-Ami Parking Lot (Free of charge)



"Afikim" bus route 11 to the promenade/ Max Nordau



All week, 24 hours a day



Free of charge

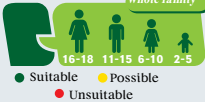


Mei-Ami Beach



The park is handicapped accessible, but the equipment is not accessible.

Suitable for the whole family



### The Children 'Pais' Park (The Pirate Park)

The innovative amusement park is located on the city's northern shoreline- the Mei Ami Beach - and includes dozens of exciting rides for kids, including the highlight located in the center of the park - a model of a pirate ship. The colorful 1,400 square meter park is part of the northern promenade, and has a huge pyramid of climbing ropes, 35-meter-long slides and a variety of playground facilities suitable and accessible even for children with disabilities.



*At the end of your time in the park, it is recommended that you continue your trip southward along the beautiful beach promenade that stretches between Mei-Ami beach and Lido beach.*

### The Green Submarine



Yad Lebanim and Monart Parking Lot



"Afikim" bus lines 13, 18, 33A, 66



Monday, Wednesday 16:00-19:00. Entry is on the hour.



Admission Charged



8 Derech Eretz Street



08-854-5180

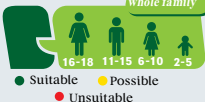


www.ashdodartmuseum.org.il



Handicapped Accessible

Suitable for the whole family



### The Green Submarine

The "Green Submarine" visitor center within the Ashdod Museum of Art is an interactive activity space suitable for the whole family, and offers artistic activities alongside important and interesting information about environmental quality and ecology.





## The Ralex Car Museum



Parking on the premises



Afikim, Egged and Metropolin bus lines 33, 34, 43, 212, 213, 220, 221, 280, 284, 292, 312-315, 317, 319-321, 323, 330, 333, 348, 350, 351, 438, 448, 467



Monday-Thursday  
08:00-16:00, Friday  
08:00-13:00



Free of charge



1 Ha'avoda Street



08-852-2470



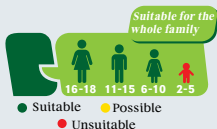
ralex-cars.com



Handicapped Accessible



Visit by appointment only



## The Ralex Car Museum

For years, Rafi Hershkowitz, a mechanical engineer by trade, reconstructed and renovated antique vehicles, and even ran a workshop for restoring different types of race cars. Many cars that he restored throughout the years won the "Most beautiful car in Israel" award as well many international awards. After about twenty years of activity, he decided in 1997 to establish in Ashdod the first of its kind automobile museum on the grounds of the Ralex-Toyota auto shop he managed.

The museum has a unique display of vintage cars (50 years old and up), a car restoration workshop, and a coffee shop. A pre-arranged guided tour is possible.





# Traveling

Along the sea shore

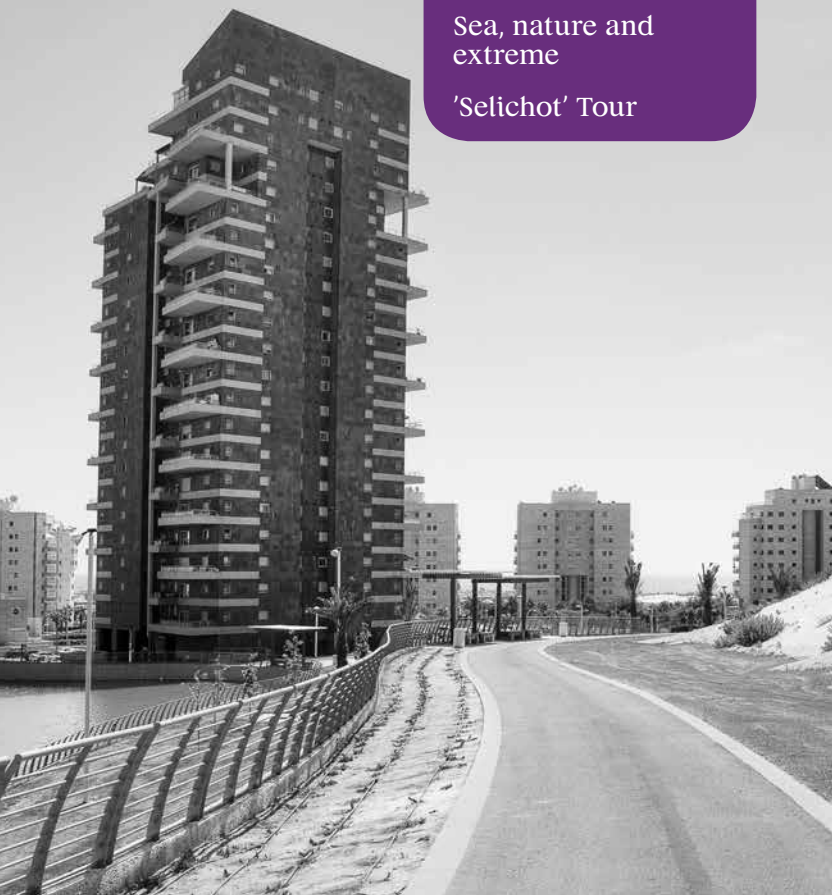
Heart of the city

Following the sun

What brought us here

Sea, nature and  
extreme

'Selichot' Tour



## The structure of the sightseeing trip in Ashdod



Ashdod has an abundant variety of sites, and it will be difficult to visit them all in one visit. You can enjoy hikes in the city, but due to the dispersal of tourist sites in many locations, it may be necessary to use your private car or the efficient public transit. Here are six hiking trails in the various areas of Ashdod, which include its most interesting sites. The six trails are presented as tracks which last from a few hours to a whole day, and are arranged in a logical order



in terms of geographical proximity to one another and in accordance with the recommended visiting hours. You may of course combine the tours according to personal preferences, taste and your heart's desire, taking into


account weather restrictions and fatigue.

The tours are arranged so that for the most part, they end close to the starting point of the previous tour. This allows for a long continuous tour, according to the time you have left. The tours are suitable for all and do not require much physical effort. It is recommended to follow the routes from beginning to end, so as to ensure a true and thorough acquaintance with the city.

As a rule, for those staying in the city for less than three days, it is recommended to first visit the must see sites mentioned in the "Must See" chapter.

**TIP**

*Please note that on holidays and various other dates opening times of the various sites may change. It is advised to check the site's call center or website prior to arrival.*



**Along the seashore:**  
Nostalgia and the aroma  
of prices among the town's  
first houses



Duration of  
the tour:  
4-5 Hours

## Ashdod | Sightseeing

The route in front of you passes mainly through Quarter Aleph (1), where it all began and from which modern Ashdod grew out of the white sands. It begins with a spectacular view of the city, continues with a tour among some of its prominent icons with a nostalgic gaze at the homes of the first settlers, and ends with a visit to the colorful market and one of the famous golden beaches with which Ashdod is blessed.



*Before you set off, please note that the Ashdod-Yam market operates on Wednesdays only, which means that in order to enjoy it, you have to begin this tour on that day of the week.*



The first stop on the tour will be hard to miss. **Givat Yonah** (Jonah's Hill) is the highest point in Ashdod, and relatively easy to spot thanks to the **red & white** lighthouse located at its peak. Apart from its beautiful 57-meter-high panoramic view, it is also a holy site of the three major religions.

The origin of the hill's name is embedded in local tradition, according to which it is the burial site of the prophet Jonah son of Amitai. Another tradition holds that it is here that Jonah the prophet



La Mamounia 4



The Ashdod-Yam Market 5



The Struma and Mafkura Monument 6



Gandhi Beach 7



### Givat Yonah (Jonah's Hill)



Free parking at the foot of the hill (Follow the signs to "Arie Klang House")



"Afikim" bus company routes 2, 2A, 3, 11, or 13



Open 24/7 all year round



Free of charge



Yair



Full access to the observation deck, no access to the gravesite

was spewed from the whale's mouth after he was swallowed by it when he evaded his mission to the city of Nineveh. On the Madaba map, one of the world's oldest maps, which was uncovered in a mosaic in a church in Jordan, the hill is marked as a domed structure with a Greek inscription next to it reading "Saint Jonah". The domed structure stood here until 1959 and then, for reasons unknown to this day, was completely destroyed. Findings unearthed during the Antiques Authority's excavations confirm the existence of life in that location during the time of Jonah the prophet - the First Temple period. Investigators raised two theories regarding the identity of the inhabitants of the fort, the remains of which were found on the hill. According

to one, it was the Assyrians who ruled in the area during the Iron Age. But according to the second theory, it was Josiah the king of Judea, who conquered Ashdod from the Assyrians and ruled it during the seventh century BCE. Either way, it was without a doubt a strategic point that dominated the two large settlements in the area at that time- Tel Ashdod and Tel Mor. During the British Mandate this spot was used by the British as an observation post for tracking illegal immigrant ships.



### More about: Quarter Aleph (1)

The first quarter was built during the city's early years in the northwestern part of the city, and its construction ended during the 1970s. Up until the 1980s it was Ashdod's main quarter. As the business, entertainment and cultural center of the city, it drew in residents from all around the city. Along its main streets - Rogozin and Shavei Zion - there were dozens of shops, restaurants and coffee shops, and it was here that the city's first movie theatre (the "Dagon Theatre"), the first central bus station, and the official Ashdod soccer stadium were built. With the establishment of the Kirya Quarter ("The City"), during the 1990s, Rova Aleph lost some of its importance.

However, over the years it managed to renew itself and restore its former glory. Today, the Quarter features one of the largest markets in the coastal plain, the first 5-star hotel in the city (Hotel West), the new Artists Home, and a variety of attractions for the whole family - on the oldest beaches in the city: Mei Ami beach and Lido beach.

The hill, which is called "A-Nabi Unes" (**The prophet Jonah**) in **Arabic** also contains the remains of a Muslim sheikh's tomb from the late eighth or early ninth century. Over the years the name of the hill was changed to "**Givat Yaffa**" (**Yaffa's Hill**), after the late wife of Oved Ben-Ami, one of the city's founders. However, the name never took hold.

At the entrance you will notice a large observation deck to your left, and to your right, at the foot of the hill, a monument to the late Yaffa Ben-Ami. Continue on the path as it curves to the right, and climb up the stairs to the right, which lead to the high observation point (53 meters above sea level). At its top there is a structure with a round canopy, reminiscent of the ancient dome which stood here previously.

## Good to know

A•B•C

### Revivo Compound

The name of the "Star Center", one of the largest commercial centers in Israel, which is located in Quarter Bet (2) and contains about a hundred stores, restaurants and coffee shops. The compound received its name following an investment by the soccer player Haim Revivo in the construction of the compound.

### Ashdod Port

Israel's leading economic gateway, it is the largest sea port in the country in terms of the volume of cargo that passes through it. Since its establishment it has been the main entry for goods into Israel.

### The city's symbol

The new symbol, redesigned by Shmuel Yehuda Oish for Ashdod's 60th anniversary, presents the modern city that grew out of the sands. The symbol contains a lion's head (which represents the tribe of Judah to which the region belonged, among other things), and Kikar Hamifrasim (the Sails Square) painted blue (sea), green (sustainability), orange (energetic) and brown (the city residents).

The large water towers next to the stairs were erected on the hill in the beginning of the 1960s, together with the Port of Ashdod



## Ashdod | Sightseeing

lighthouse and the harbor itself. The gleaming beacon of light sent from the lighthouse onto the open sea, signaling to the ships the direction to the harbor, was one of the city's most prominent hallmarks. Over the years the use of the lighthouse ceased, and with the expansion of construction in the city it is no longer as prominent as before.

Upon entering the covered building you will be able to notice in front of you, on the ground, a gravestone placed here in 2002 by the people of "Atra Kadisha", an ultra-orthodox organization dealing with the protection of graves, upon which is engraved "Tomb of Jonah son of Amitai the prophet".

From the beautiful observation point you can view the northwestern part of the Ashdod harbor, and even see the impressive coastal strip and the Lachish stream estuary. The ORT Naval Officers School is **located on the southern bank of the stream**. Within the compound you will notice an interesting round structure resembling a ship. This

is "**The Dolphin and Sea Center**", where you will arrive on the "Sea, Nature and Extreme route - a tour for families with children". To the east the edges of the northern industrial area and the great water tower are visible, and to the south you can see the homes of **Quarter Aleph (1)**, and the two impressive KK Towers visible on the skyline. These are Israel's tallest skyscrapers, outside of the Tel Aviv metropolitan area. At the foot of the hill lies **Gan Elisheva (Elisheva**

**Garden)**, which you will reach later on the tour.

### Arie Klang House



Sunday- Thursday  
08:00-16:30



2 Yair Street



Free of charge



08-922-1883



Fully accessible





From this observation point it is especially easy to discern the nature of the pre-planning of the city, which is considered as one of the most well-planned cities in Israel, and which made a clear division between residential areas, light industry zones and heavy industry areas.

After a relaxing view of the beautiful scenery, you can return to the circular path surrounding the hill, roam a little around the garden, dine at "Kira" restaurant located to the right of the exit, or return straight to the parking lot and continue to the next location. No, there is no need to get into the car. The next location is **the Arie Klang House** to your right.

Ashdod's new artists house, named after Arie Klang, was inaugurated in January 2016 and became the first public building in the city to be built with green technology. The impressive building, which covers an area of 1,962 square meters and is divided into three floors, also houses (on the top floor) the offices of "The Hevel Yavne Municipal Union for Environmental Quality" and the offices of "Ashdod Tourism Ltd".

The Arie Klang house is a unique home for the artists of Ashdod, providing them with a stage for their creativity and working in collaboration with the Artists of Ashdod Union. The house combines three major fields: art, culture and community. It has an art gallery that displays rotating exhibits of Ashdod artists and a "Made in Ashdod" shop (at the entrance, on the left) which sells works of art, books and many products relating to the city or that were produced by the city's residents. It is also possible to obtain information about the city's various tourists sites and events.

### More about: Arie Klang

A Holocaust survivor who immigrated to Israel in 1945, he arrived in Ashdod after he was discharged from the IDF. For many years he held a number of public key positions- on both local and national levels, and was one of the city's founders. Klang was an outstanding industrialist, and even received the prestigious Excellent Industrialist Award from the Israeli President. He served as the deputy mayor of Ashdod for three terms. Among other things he was in charge of constructing the first building in the city that had an elevator and the establishment of the adjacent "Mei-Ami" hotel, and he was involved in the construction of the Kirya Quarter ("The City"). In 2016, the new Artists house bearing his name was inaugurated at the foot of Givat Yonah (Jonah's Hill).

Now you can choose whether to continue to the next part of the tour on foot or by car. All together there is about twenty minutes of intermittent. If it is an especially hot day - it is recommended that you use your car from here until the end of the route. In the event you chose to ride, it is advised that you park your car in the Gan Elisheva parking lot (free of charge), and from there continue on foot to "the Californias" and then backtrack, or to give up this part of the route entirely and to continue straight to the monument for fallen Navy soldiers.

If you chose the walking option, please follow these instructions: Backtrack on Yair street, turn left on Jabotinsky street and then immediately right to Yair street, which further on changes its name to Moshe Marzuk and Shmuel Azar. Cross the cultivated garden down the street and at the intersection with HaVradim street, you can notice a few of Ashdod's first settlers homes to your left - the **famous California structures**, which earned the nickname "The Californias".

### More about: The Californias



In the early years of the establishment of the city of Ashdod, 22 families from Morocco, Egypt and Romania resided in the northern part of Quarter Aleph (1), in temporary housing. The elongated California buildings replaced the initial transit camp shacks and were considered by the first settlers as a real upgrade, since unlike the shacks in the transit camp - the Californias were wired for electricity. The California buildings also housed Ashdod's first medical clinic, the first bank (Bank Hapoalim), an Egged bus stop and more, and Aleph (A) Center and the local council building with the water tower on top were built across from them.

Should you wish to take a closer look at the Californias, continue a little on HaVradim street, and after that backtrack straight on the street, which later on changes its name to Shavei Zion. A little before the intersection of Shavei Zion & Rogozin, in the commercial center to the right, Ashdod's first movie theatre- Dagon Theater **-was located.**

From the time the movie theatre was established in 1961 by the late Yitzhak Maimon, it attracted all of the region's residents, who came to watch films (black & white) as well as shows, performances and cultural events that took place there. The best artists of the time performed here - from Yaffa Yarkoni to Zvika Pik. This movie

theatre was also the place where Ashdod was declared a city, on February 14th, 1968. 15 years later the place burned down, and unfortunately, nothing remained of it.



## The Equator

	Rova Aleph (Quarter A)	Rova Daled (Quarter D)
<b>Year of Birth</b>	1957	The 1970s
<b>Character</b>	Old buildings and green parks	Single family homes next to high-density construction
<b>Attractions</b>	The first villa neighborhood, the Northern Beach Promenade, West Hotel, the vibrant Rogozin Street, the quarter is bounded by three beaches: Lido, Oranim and Mei-Ami	The Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture, three major parks: The Twin Park, Bordeaux Park and Re'im Park
<b>Population</b>	Senior citizens, among them the city's first settlers and new immigrants, mainly from	Mostly young. About a third of which are new immigrants

At the intersection of Rogozin, Shavei Zion and Nordau streets, on a large rock, stands a monument to the city's residents who have fallen in Israel's wars. The statue, made from black metal and looking like a candle burning down, was built by Matilda Halperin, a bereaved mother.

On the other side of the road stands **Canada House**, which serves as an absorption center for new immigrants. It is the first absorption center built in Ashdod. The interesting rectangular building was designed in the 1960s by architect Moshe Lofenfeld, who designed many other buildings in the country, including the "Beit Ariela" municipal library in Tel Aviv, the national sports stadium in Hadar Yosef, Tel Aviv, and the famous pyramid house in Be'er Sheva.

Now continue straight on Max Nordau street, towards the beach, until you see **Gan Elisheva** on your left, named after the late wife of Israel's third prime minister, Levi Eshkol. Prime Minister Eshkol contributed a great deal to the development of the city during its first years.



*Gan Elisheva has many green spaces and charming nooks. You can have a short picnic in it before you continue your tour, or at the end of your visit to the market.*

Inside the beautiful garden is **the monument for Israel's fallen Navy soldiers**. After you enter (from the parking lot), continue straight for a little and you will be able to see it down the hill, to



your right. The monument was erected in 1972 as a memorial for the 47 fallen soldiers of the destroyer "Eilat", which sank due to a missile strike off the Sinai coast in October 1967. A year after it was erected, it was decided that it will serve as the main monument in memory of Israel's fallen Navy soldiers. Every year, the state ceremony in memory of the Navy soldiers who fell in Israel's wars is held here.

Architect Carmeli Feldman, a Navy reserve soldier, designed the monument, which is made of exposed concrete combined with iron, marble and granolite flooring, and is reminiscent of a ship's deck, command bridge and mast. On the black marble plank in front of you, the names of all of Israel's fallen Navy soldiers are engraved, and above them a verse from the book of Psalms: "Your way led through the sea, your path through the mighty waters, though your footsteps were not known". In the center of the structure the words from Aviv Gefen's song were written: "When we are sad we go to the sea, that is why the sea is salty".

There is an audio explanation at the entrance to the monument site, on the right . Click on your preferred language (Hebrew / English) and you will be able to hear a comprehensive explanation about the monument.

If you climb the monument stairs to the observation deck on the second floor, you will notice that the symbols of all of the Navy vessels that were sunk during Israel's campaigns are engraved on the concrete banister of the balcony . From here you can observe the beach promenade and the blue sea as well as the next location on your tour: **La Mamounia**.

### La Mamounia



Parking available (Free of charge)



The Promenade



08-8536060

Now return to your car, and at the exit from the parking lot turn left onto Max Nordau street, and then left again on Hatayelet street. On your right stands an interesting pinkish building, which looks like it was taken from the Arabian Nights stories.



The "La Mamounia" building, which is impressive both inside and out, was built on Lido beach, as an exact replica of one of the palaces of the King of Morocco, using building materials very similar to the original ones used. Today it serves as a commercial and shopping

center, and also contains a banquet hall and restaurant.

Continue in your car southward along Hatayelet street. On the right you can see the "Waterfall" sculpture, created by the Moroccan-born artist Yael Artzi in 1998. This is just one of about 300 statues placed around the city.

Further along, on Lido beach to your right, you will see **the beautiful sun dial tower**, which shows the exact time though a shadow which is cast by the pole standing in its center. In the beach's large parking area, south of the tower, the **Ashdod-Yam open market takes place every Wednesday** (also known by its popular name "**The Wednesday Market**"), attracting thousands of visitors every week from all over the country. Apart from the fruit and vegetables, which arrive directly from the farmers, the old urban market offers a wide variety of products sold in over

## Ashdod | Sightseeing

400 different stalls - from house ware and toys to clothing, shoes and car accessories. The market, which is a microcosm of the multicultural society in Ashdod, is open from sunrise to sunset, and provides an interesting peek into community life.

### Ashdod-Yam Market



Lido Beach parking lot



Wednesdays (on holidays/ festivals the market takes place on Mondays) from early morning till sunset



The Promenade



08-8536060



Handicapped accessibility - Fully accessible



After absorbing the flavors and aroma of the colorful market, it is time to continue with a short drive along the coast, be impressed by the promenade and the rare beauty of the sea, and feel like you're overseas. When you arrive **at the Hakshatot Square**, where Rogozin and Moshe Dayan streets meet, you will see on your right **the Struma and Mafkura** monument, which commemorates the 1,072 illegal immigrants from the two ships that sank in the sea. In order to get to it, turn right (following the signs to Gandhi beach) and park your car in one of the nearest parking lots. Now, take a short walk back to the monument. On your way to it, you will see another monument, made of steel: It is called "**Shadow and Light**" and serves as a commemorative enterprise for the illegal immigrants from Morocco and the fallen from the ship "Egoz" who perished in 1961 on their way to the Israeli shore. This impressive monument, which was erected in early 2016, is the creation of the architect and artist Ari Moris Hayun. It consists of three parts assembled side by side and embedded deep into the ground, and one central part. When you approach the monument, you will discover that the parts do not touch each other. According to the artist, the three parts represent three North African countries: Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria, whereas the fourth part represents the State of Israel.



*Across the road from the monument, you will be able to see the largest open theatre in the country, which is located within the Ashdod-Yam park and which hosts many shows and events throughout the entire year. For more information and ticket bookings visit the [www.ashdod.muni.il](http://www.ashdod.muni.il) website.*

Continue on the path towards the Struma and Mafkura monument created by the sculptor Baruch Wind in 1991. To the left of the monument stands an iron model of the ship "Mafkura", which is placed on waves made out of concrete and painted white. On the right, embedded into the ground are pieces of the ship's wreckage and torn sails on which the death route of the ship is etched, together with commemorative details and words of remembrance: "An eternal memorial for the martyrs of the illegal immigrant ships who found their death in the depths of the Black Sea when they fled the horrors of the Nazi regime in Romania, and on the way to the Land of Israel were martyred by malicious murderers".



## More about: The illegal immigration enterprise to the Land of Israel

Between 1934 and 1948 over 100,000 illegal immigrants came to the shores of Israel. Many of them were European Jews fleeing the terror of the Nazi regime, who were forced to immigrate to Israel illegally, due to the restrictive immigration quota set by the British during the mandate. However, some of the ships did not make it to the shores of Israel, among other things due to their shattered state and the large number of immigrants, and they sank (or were sunk) during their voyage. This was the fate of the "Struma" and "Mafkura" ships. "Struma" sailed from Romania at the end of 1941 with about 760 illegal immigrants on board. However, on its way to Israel the ship's engines failed and it was towed to Istanbul, Turkey. Two months later, after the British refused to allow the ship to dock in Israel, the Turks decided to send it back to sea. On the 24th of February 1942 the ship was hit by a missile from a Russian submarine and sank. In 1944 the illegal immigrant ship "Mafkura" also sank with all its passengers.

### Gandhi Beach



Gandhi Beach parking lot



End of April to mid-October, all week 07:00-17:00 (In season, July-August, activities usually last until 19:00).



Moshe Dayan Blvd., corner of Mafkura



08-8652867



The beach is accessible up to 15 meters from the water line.

From here you can continue to one of the most popular beaches in Ashdod and the surrounding area - **Gandhi Beach**, which is mainly known by its former name "**Hakshatot Beach**", and conclude your tour with bathing in the pleasant waters or sitting in comfort at one of the coffee shops or restaurants located at the entrance to the beach.

The regulated beach, located west of Rova Daled (Quarter D), is 150 meters long. It got its name from the arch shaped structure at its entrance, which houses many coffee shops and restaurants. In 2002 it was decided to name the beach

**TIP**

*On the municipal application "Ashdodit", which can be downloaded from either Google Playstore or Apple's Appstore, you can get real-time updates on the city's beaches: Find out which flag is raised on the lifeguard's hut, receive information about maritime conditions - rough or calm, and know whether the beach is especially crowded.*





after the late Minister of Tourism, Rechavam Ze'evi, who was murdered in October of the previous year.

The beach, which is considered the main and largest beach in the city, provides many services to visitors, and apart from the businesses in the building itself (open all week) you will also find fields for ball games, a chair rental service, tanning beds and parasols, bathrooms and showers, two outdoor showers (one is for surfers), sport facilities, a covered playground for children, first aid services and more.

On Saturdays you can enjoy dancing that takes place in the Hakshatot plaza (in winter - starting at 11:00 in the morning; in summer - starting at 18:00 in the evening), and an artists market operating in the morning.

### They said about her



"It wasn't always easy, but everything was done out of deep persuasion, faith and hope for the future of the place. Many are the people who are worthy of praise for their work towards the solidification of a dynamic society in Ashdod, which such a special and important city deserves."

**(The late Shaul Ben Simchon, one of the city of Ashdod's founders)**



# Heart of the city: Between cultural assets and urban nature



Duration of  
the tour:  
4-5 Hours





The route in the heart of the bustling city crosses its municipal and cultural center, passes by a few of its prominent symbols, continues to the museum that is considered one of a kind in the world and the city's flagship project, which offers a variety of attractions for all types of visitor, and ends at the Marina, which is one of the largest and most beautiful in Israel.



The Monart Art Center 3



The Thessaloniki Jewish Community Square 4



The Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture 5



Park Ashdod Yam 6



The Blue Marina 7

### TIP

*En route to the first stop of the tour, it is recommended to pass through Benei Brith Boulevard. On the western part of the avenue, between Yehuda Halevi street and Jerusalem Avenue, there are 14 beautiful statues standing on the grass, the work of various artists, some of whom are residents of the city.*

The first stop on the tour, **Ilan Ramon Square**, is located on Menachem Begin Boulevard - the city's main transportation artery, which stretches from Ad Halom intersection in the east, the southern entrance to Ashdod, to the Blue Marina in the west. The city's residents mostly identify the square by its former name: "**City Square**", or by its nickname "The Kirya Square", "Needle Square" or "Point Square", and not by its official name, given to it in 2010 to commemorate the Israeli astronaut who died in the Columbia space shuttle disaster in 2003.

### Ilan Ramon Square



The Zimmer Center parking lot on Haklita Street, or on adjacent streets



"Afikim" bus company routes 4, 8, 23, 28, 74, 76, 325, or 333



The Square does not have handicapped access.

The square, which was designed by architect Yoram Miller and is located on the only mini-tunnel in the city, is one of the most expensive projects built in Ashdod in the 1990s. On your way to the square, you will be able

to see a silver cone, which resembles an obelisk, standing prominently at its center.



For many years a long laser beam came out of the top of the cone, which could be seen from afar, and slightly resembled the laser beam coming out of the top of Hassan the Second Mosque in Casablanca, Morocco. However, over the years the laser beam was stopped following complaints that it interfered with the navigation of vessels in the city's maritime area.

There are stairs leading to the cone, but it is advisable not to cross the busy road to the square, since there is no designated pedestrian crossing at the location.



*Ashdod is a fascinating melting pot of cultures and traditions. Before you set off, it is recommended to sit in one of the coffee shops surrounding the square, just to do some people watching. In most cases you will hear conversations conducted in a wide range of languages - from French and Russian to Georgian, Indian and Moroccan.*

From here you can continue on foot until the end of the tour, but take into account that it is not a circular route, which means that at the finishing point you have to board a bus in order to return to the square, or walk up the street for a considerable amount of time. The following directions are for enthusiastic walkers, but it is definitely possible to go from one site to another using your car. There is also another intermediate possibility: Travel by car to the Kirya parking lot, which is in the center of the route, and from there proceed on foot to all the locations.

From the square, continue west on Menachem Begin Boulevard, which has a wide variety of shops, restaurants and coffee shops. Upon reaching Herzl Boulevard, where you can see **the City Mall** in front of you, you will see a large park to your right. This is **the Northern City Park**, which has lawns, seating areas and playground facilities for children. To your left is **the Southern City Park**, which is also known as "**The Kirya Garden**". This is one of about 300 playground complexes scattered throughout the city of Ashdod.

Continue on foot along Menachem Begin Boulevard. A little after the big City Mall (and within the complex) you will find the city's **Central Bus** station. Bus lines from all over the country stop here. Immediately after the station, on the right, is **the City Garden**, in which you will find many businesses, restaurants and coffee shops. Continue and cross HaGdud Ha'ivry Street. In front of you lies **the city's cultural** district.

### More about: The Kirya Quarter ("The City")

The Quarter, which started to be built in the west of the city during the late 1990s, quickly became the main quarter in the city and one of the most populated. Unlike the norm in many cities, it was built as the city center after the city was already quite a few years old, so that the government and cultural institutions were built in it gradually, until they created a modern center with an innovative design. Most of the businesses and offices are clustered in the western part of the quarter, in the Cultural Quarter, where the City Hall and main cultural institutions are also located. The city's residents call the quarter "The Tel Aviv of Ashdod", due to its varied population which brings together a rich cultural mosaic.

This part of the Kirya Quarter (also known as "The City Quarter") is the throbbing heart of the city, and contains most of the public, cultural and commercial institutions. On your right stands the impressive **Ashdod** Municipality building. At the entrance to the building stands the stone statue of "The Twelve Tribes" by the artist Edward Dolkart, which was created according to the biblical description of the 12 precious stones of the high priest's breastplate. This is just one of about 300 statues scattered around the city.

To the Left of the city hall you will see the glass pyramid of **the Monart Art Center**, the multidisciplinary cultural center which houses the **"Akada" municipal conservatory**, the ballet

#### The Monart Art Center



Yad Lebanim and  
Monart Parking Lot



"Afikim" bus  
company routes  
13, 18, 33A, or 66



## Ashdod | Sightseeing

school and dance center, the opera, local bands and municipal orchestras, and **the esteemed** nationally and internationally acclaimed Ashdod Museum of Art.

The center's structure, with its glass roof, which was built in the 1990s, was designed by architect Moshe Lofenfeld, who designed many well-known buildings in the county, and even in Ashdod itself (see "Canada House" in "Along the seashore: Nostalgia, History and the Aroma of Spices").

Before the museum in the center was inaugurated, it underwent a series of structural changes under the direction of architects Rafi Segal, Eyal Weisman and Manuel Hertz.

### The Ashdod Museum of Art



Sunday, Tuesday-  
Thursday 09:00-16:00;  
Monday 09:00-20:00;  
Friday and Saturday  
10:30-13:30



Admission charged



8 Derech Eretz Street



08-8545181



www.  
ashdodartmuseum.org.il



The museum is fully  
accessible.

The exhibition spaces were inspired by the rectangular structures of harbor containers, and became the hallmark of the innovative museum, which was opened to visitors in 2003.

The entrance to the museum is through a pedestrian bridge opposite the City Garden. From the bridge you can observe the Square named for the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, which you will come to later on, and the Blue Marina, where the tour today ends.

The Ashdod Museum of Art, one of the leading museums in Israel, has been in



operation for the past 15 years, and has rotating exhibits of Israeli art. The museum constantly examines issues pertaining to local identity, which are tested against the unique character of the



city of Ashdod - an Israeli city that is multicultural and has many identities. This came together through several exhibitions presented in the museum in the past few years, which sought to expose and examine the sensitive nerve centers of contemporary Israeli culture. In the exhibitions, works of art by contemporary artists are presented alongside those of veteran artists, Israeli next to international in diverse artistic mediums.

Next to the museum on its west is the **Yad Lebanim House**, which

### Yad Lebanim House



Ticket office is open  
Sundays- Thursdays  
from 09:00-13:00 and  
17:00-20:00



Performances are for  
payment.



3 Habanim Street



08-8545833/4



Accessible

hosts many cultural events - from plays to standup performances, through Hebrew song nights and entertainment shows, to municipal events and formal ceremonies. In the upper hall of the building there are rotating exhibitions of local artists from the city and the surrounding area.

From the Yad Lebanim House you can go down to the plaza of the **Pais Ashdod Performing Arts Center**, which was inaugurated in 2012 and quickly became one of the city's icons due to its unique design and interesting shape, reminiscent of a large wave or whale rising from the sea.

### The Performing Arts Center



Sunday- Thursday  
09:00-21:00; Friday and  
holiday eves 09:00-13:00;  
Saturday- about an  
hour after Shabbat  
ends



Performances are for  
payment.



1 Derech Eretz Street  
08-9568111



[www.mishkan-ashdod.co.il](http://www.mishkan-ashdod.co.il)



Fully accessible; The  
hard of hearing can  
receive headphones at  
the entrance to the hall;  
seats for handicapped  
people must be  
arranged during ticket  
reservation.



Ashdod's official cultural center was designed by architect Haim Dotan in 1999, but its construction was delayed for 13 years, among other things due to budgetary difficulties. Today the building is considered one of the most beautiful and unique buildings in the country, and it hosts the best artists

from Israel and abroad. The high-quality hall contains more than 900 seats, about 300 of which are in the gallery. Despite its size, it offers quite an intimate viewing and listening experience.

## Ashdod | Sightseeing

When you leave the Cultural Quarter continue west on Menachem Begin Boulevard. In front of you is the **Square named for the Jewish community of Thessaloniki**, better known by its informal name "**The Square of Sails**". The square, which commemorates Ashdod as a seaside city, is one of its most prominent icons. The statue, the impressive work of artist Israel Hadani, reaches a height of 15 meters and is made of welded and painted steel that resembles sailboats sailing on the water.



### TIP

*It is worth going back during sunset to view the sails statue. That is when the sun reflects on the cold metal giving it a spectacular look.*

Turn right at the roundabout, to Moshe Dayan Boulevard, and continue northward on foot. On your right you can once again be impressed by the modern structure of the Performing Arts Center. Later on, at the intersection with Habanim street, to your right, you will notice an impressive bronze statue. This is **the statue of "Samson The Hero"** the work of the artist Baruch Wind, dedicated to the memory of the heroes of the Holocaust and of Israel's wars. Continue straight on Moshe Dayan Boulevard, and on your left you can already see the complex of one of the largest projects constructed in the city, which you will reach later on your tour: The Ashdod-Yam Park.

## Good to know

**Fellow of the beautiful sustainable city**

One of the Council for A Beautiful Israel's most prominent competitions. The esteemed award was given to Ashdod in 2010 to mark 15 consecutive years of winning five stars for beauty. That same year, the city also won the Fulfilling Israel award and the award for individuals and institutions that were outstanding in planning and actively establishing different environmental projects. This made Ashdod the only city in Israel to win this award. Over the years, Ashdod continues to consistently keep its high status in the ranking of the most beautiful cities in Israel.

**Ashdod-Yam Park**

The city's largest urban park was built in 2013 next to the Blue Marina, with an investment of NIS 80 million. The park has a variety of sport and fitness facilities, playground facilities for children, and attractions for the whole family. At its center there is a huge artificial lake which was inspired by the fountain in Barcelona, next to which is the largest open theatre in Israel, which hosts big shows and events, as well as one of the largest skate-parks in the country.

After about two hundred meters you will arrive at **The Twin Towers Park**, to your right, and to the memorial dedicated to those murdered during the terrorist attack in the United States on September 11th, 2001, including four Israelis: The late Alona Avraham (resident of the city), Shai Levinhar from Neve Monoson, Danny Levine from Jerusalem and Chagai Shefi from Tel Aviv.

To the left of the monument stands the **Tehilat Zion Synagogue**, which was built by David Ben Menachem, the mythological Mohel of Ashdod.



Now cross the park in the heart of the pastoral neighborhood of Quarter Dalet (4), with a children's playground on your right, and continue to its end. Climb the stairs to your right and you will come to Hashayatim street. Continue straight, and after about fifty meters, turn right on the path leading to the

**Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture.**

### The Corinne Mamane Museum for Philistine Culture



Sunday, Tuesday-  
Thursday 09:00-16:00;  
Monday 09:00-20:00;  
Friday and Saturday  
10:30-13:30; Closed  
on holiday eves and  
holidays



With payment;  
Discount for local  
residents, children  
(5-18), soldiers and  
senior citizens



16 Hashayatim Street



08-6224799



[www.phcm.co.il](http://www.phcm.co.il)



Accessible

Befitting the city, which was the most important of the Philistine cities, today Ashdod houses the only museum in the world dedicated to the history of the Philistines. In the museum there are three exhibition spaces: An interactive permanent exhibit called "The World of the Philistines - The Beginning and End of the Philistine Culture", which presents the story of the Philistines from a human perspective and introduces the visitors to another, less familiar, aspect of the Philistine people. The exhibition consists of about 140 fascinating archaeological exhibits and experiential technological presentations. "The Philistine Feast" is a hospitality space for groups, which allows them to become acquainted with biblical cuisine. The banquet

design is inspired by the palace of Knesos in Crete, the origin of the Philistines according to the Bible. The gallery for rotating exhibitions presents rotating exhibitions (once a year) in the fields of cultures and ethnography, and enables a glimpse into various traditions and customs in Israel.

The museum first opened in 1990, and in the summer of 2013 it was reopened after being closed for a year to upgrade the exhibition spaces. The museum was officially recognized by the Ministry of Culture and Sport, and today draws many local visitors as well as tourists. There is a small gift shop on the premises, as well as a variety of activities for children.

### Ashdod-Yam Park



All week  
06:00-23:00



Free of charge



1 Mafkura Street



08-856-2926



[www.ashdod.muni.il](http://www.ashdod.muni.il)



All areas of the park  
are fully accessible.

When you leave the museum turn right, and right again, and follow the signs to the Dalet (D) community center. The peaceful alley connects at the end with Hatzolelim street. Cross the street and continue straight to Jerusalem boulevard. Turn right and in front of you - at the end of the road - you will be able to see the stairs leading to the next stop on your tour: **the Ashdod-Yam park**, which covers an area of about 200 dunams (50 acres) between the heart of the city and the Blue Marina.

The spectacular park, which was opened to the public in 2012, was built on a limestone hill which is about 50 meters high. This hill was commonly known as "Missile Hill", since for a number of years it served as a firing position for the air force's anti-aircraft missiles. When planning the park, it was decided to leave a natural sand dune



in the southeastern part of the park, recalling the sands upon which the city of Ashdod was built.

There are those who define the park as "a little piece of heaven", and indeed - the Ashdod-Yam park has an abundance of large lawns and attractions for any type of visitor - all kinds of sport fields, a handicapped accessible

garden, children's playgrounds (with climbing walls, trampolines, slides and a musical garden that has musical tiles, among other things), a peripheral boardwalk for pedestrians, bicycle paths, a skate-park complex which has already hosted international competitions, a beautifully landscaped rock garden with rocks that are characteristic of various parts of the country, a statue garden, a spectacular selection of observation points, a cafeteria-coffee shop, a mini-golf area, the largest amphitheatre in the country, and the highlight - a large artificial lake (which you will reach if you now continue straight on the path) with a musical fountain in the middle inspired by the magical fountain in Montjuic, Barcelona. On the lake you can rent designed paddle-boats



*Don't miss the chance to view the fountain's audiovisual show. Activity times: Daylight saving time - Sunday-Thursday 20:30, 21:30, 22:15, Saturday 21:00, 22:00; Winter time - Sunday-Thursday 18:30, 20:30, Saturday 20:30, 21:30*

## Ashdod | Sightseeing

(activity times: Sunday-Thursday from 12:00-21:30) and sometimes there are even water-ball games held there. Surrounding the lake are beautiful statues, which are an attraction in their own right.



The park can easily keep you busy for an entire day. Depending on the time at your disposal and the energy you have left, you can decide whether to end the tour here or continue to **the Blue Marina**.



To get to the Marina, cross the park and exit gate No. 6 toward the sea and the marine sports center, to the left of which is the third largest marina in Israel. The modern yacht harbor offers 550 berths and is part of a unique tourist and leisure complex, which includes restaurants and coffee shops among other things. Unlike other marinas in the country, you can roam freely in the area of the Blue Marina.

### The Blue Marina



24 Hours a day



Union (Ashdod Marina)



08-8677663



www.ashdod-yam.co.il



Partial accessibility

Immediately south of the marina is Gil Beach, named after the late surfer Gil Shneur. The beach is not for bathing but for surfers only. North of the marina stretches the popular Gandhi Beach (Hakshatot Beach). Whether you chose a cruise or to relax on the beach, you will find that there is no better way to end the day than at the beautiful blue sea of the southern coastal city.



*From the marina you can depart, for example, on a romantic sunset cruise, fishing cruises in fully equipped boats, or a variety of maritime activities, with the "Gali Gal" sailing club ([www.galigal.net](http://www.galigal.net)) or with "Keshet on the Sea" ([www.keshetsailing.co.il](http://www.keshetsailing.co.il)). It is advisable to book in advance.*

### They said about her



"The city as the measure of the man"

**(Amos Oz in his book "Here and There in the Land of Israel", published by Am Oved. 1983)**





**Following the sun:  
From the ancient fort  
to the southern coast**



Duration of  
the tour:  
**4-5 Hours**



## Ashdod | Sightseeing

The tour along the southern part of the Ashdod coast, which leads to the remains of the most impressive citadel built in Israel during the early Arabic period, passes through some of the most famous roundabouts in the city and ends at one of the most beautiful beaches on the coastal plain.

On your way to the first stop on the tour, you will drive on Moshe Dayan Boulevard, along the city's beautiful coastline, in an area which was used for thousands of years as a trading post and a central port city. On your right is **the sports and leisure promenade** which stretches from **the Ashdod-Yam market** (see the route "Along



the Seashore: Nostalgia and the Aroma of Spices Among the Town's First Houses") on Lido beach along all of Quarter Yod-Alef (11), which includes, apart from a walking trail, seating areas, picnic tables, and sports and fitness facilities, and some of it is even paved with an impressive artistic mosaic.

On your drive south, pay attention to the beautiful villas on your left. Up until the establishment of the Kirya Quarter, Quarter Yod-Bet (12) and Quarter Tet-Vav (15), Quarter Yod-Alef (11) was considered the most prestigious quarter in Ashdod. Today this area is still among the most sought after and expensive areas in the city.



## Ashdod by numbers

1·2·3

**6** Israeli chess masters play at the Ashdod Chess Club • Of the **10** top-ranked chess players in Israel, **2** play as part of the Ashdod club • There are **20** Pétanque courts in the city. The game originated in France and its objective is to accurately throw metal balls • About **40,000** residents engage in some form of organized sports • Ashdod is a city of ballroom dancing: the Tsisaphers school for ballroom dancing has produced **70** percent of the Israeli dance champions • Today about **150** new students register each year • **15** international dance competitions have taken place in the city, including the world ballroom dancing championship.

The Gil Keko **Marchers Square** is located at the intersection of Moshe Dayan Boulevard and Nachal Hayarkon Street. People from the Electric Company's Eshkol Power Station initiated the design of the square and the figures that appear to be marching in it, in memory of their friend, the late Gil Keko, who died in a car accident during his military service. The artist Aharon Shani created the statues from metal, in a manner that mimics everyday actions, such as walking, running, and strolling. Each of the sculptures was given a unique look.

Continue south on Moshe Dayan Boulevard and turn right at **Kikar Hashalom (Peace Square)**, named after Yael Asraf, following the signs to the fort. The sculpture "The Fragile Peace" in the square is the creation of the artist David Soussana from 2002. The sculpture, made of stone and gold-colored metal, represents the fragility of peace in the region, and the hope for a brighter future.

**The Ashdod-Yam Fort**

On the southern end of the parking lot adjacent to the Fort



"Afikim" bus company routes 2, 2A, and 22

Just a few meters after the turn you will be able to notice the impressive remains of **the Ashdod-Yam fortress on your left**, located a few meters from the water line, on a beach that was fittingly named "Fortress Beach" by the residents. .



*Please note: Fortress Beach is not regulated. There are no rescue or first aid services, and despite the fact that it is crowded with bathers most of the year, it is defined as a beach where bathing is prohibited.*

The archaeological site, one of the most important in the area, shows remains, the earliest of which are dated back to the iron age,



some 3,000 years ago, when Ashdod was one of the five Philistine cities, and even the most important one.

The Ashdod-Yam fortress was built by Sargon the second, king of Assyria, in order to prevent invasion of the city. At that time, Ashdod-Yam was a flourishing commercial city, with luxurious buildings, a large platform, a wide pier and many churches, among other things.

Toward the end of the seventh century, the ancient citadel was rebuilt by the Umayyads, the first dynasty to rule the Muslim Empire. Following the Arab conquest, the Mediterranean basin, which until then was entirely controlled by the Byzantine Empire, was filled with fortified port cities in order to prevent a renewed occupation of the region. The Ashdod-Yam fortress, which was part of a system of strongholds built along the Israeli shores during the ancient Islamic period in an attempt to aid in protection against raids by Byzantine ships, is a perfect example of such fortification. Along the coastal plain, several similar fortifications were discovered, but the Ashdod-Yam fortress is the only one which is well preserved.

The fortress was surrounded by a wall made from chiseled limestone blocks and a deep moat that encircled it on three sides. It was originally about seven meters high and about two meters wide. In the tenth century, during the time of the Fatimid dynasty, the citadel was expanded and fortified, and was named "Qal'ath Al-Mina" (Fortress of the Port). Six towers were erected, in the western corners of the fortress and on both sides of its gates (the western

and the eastern), which were used for guarding and protection. The western towers were round, while the towers in the eastern corners were square. At the eastern entrance to the fort (from land) there was probably a drawbridge, which allowed for passage over the moat. Researchers estimate that the narrow western gate, which was completely destroyed by sea waves, was also equipped with a drawbridge, which served as an entry and exit to and from the dock.

The approximately 2,700 square-meter rectangular fortress was damaged by a severe earthquake that struck the country in 1033, but in 1099, at the end of the First Crusade, it was re-inhabited and reinforced, this time by the Crusaders, who called it "Castle Brewer" (named after the Crusader knight Nicholas de Brewer). In 1290, with the banishment of the Crusaders from the country, the fortress was abandoned, and today you can see its impressive remains, as well as the remains of its signal tower, which are a short drive away and to which you shall arrive at later on.

### More about: Archaeological findings in the fortress



During archaeological excavations that took place at the fortress site over the years, many rooms were restored, some of which included cooking and baking ovens, and a courtyard was revealed, that probably housed a stable in its southern part for the horses of the cavalry stationed there. In the eastern part of the yard stood six storerooms for grain and various goods, of which only three remained intact. Two wells and the remains of a bath house and of a mosque were also revealed in the courtyard. Ancient coins, glass and metal vessels and a variety of pot shards from the Byzantine, Ancient Islamic and Crusader periods were also discovered in the excavations that took place there.

Researchers believe that there are still many additional findings buried under the sand, waiting to be unearthed.

The impressive site is now considered one of the most romantic locations in Ashdod. From here you can view spectacular sunsets all year round, and at the end of the summer you can also enjoy the beautiful bloom of the Primrose and White Beach Lily.

From here, continue to one of the remnants of the impressive signaling system that led from the Ashdod-Yam fort to **Ramla - the Citadel**.

Return to Moshe Dayan Boulevard and turn right. In front of you, you can see from afar the big sun-eye statue in the center of Kikar

Hayovel, which you will come to later. Turn left on Mota Gur street and after a few meters turn right onto Beethoven street and then right onto Van Gogh street. Continue along the road as it curves to the left and turns into Chasidei Umot Ha'olam street, and further on, you will see the small mound in the center of the Square, with the remains of the Citadel on it, in front of you.

The ancient signaling tower, built parallel to the Ashdod-Yam citadel during the ancient Islamic period, lies in the middle of the pastoral modern neighborhood in Quarter Tet-Vav (15). On the west side of the square there are stairs leading to the top of the hill (on the southern side there is another entrance suitable for strollers). Climb up and reach the remains of the Citadel, which served as a link between Ashdod and the Arab government that was located in the county seat in Ramla.

The square fortification is built from limestone laced with broken potsherds, and at its center there is a round structure made of rough unchiseled stones. Now look to the north, to the sea, and imagine the tower guards who used to look out onto the great blue sea trying to locate Byzantine war ships and prevent raids on the



coastal settlements. When the guards identified an enemy ship, the immediately lit a big bonfire, and used the smoke to create a signal to the towers of the nearby cities. And so, within a short while, the news of imminent threat made its way to Ramla, from where armed warriors set out to defeat the invaders.

After enjoying the beautiful landscape from the top of the hill, continue south on Hasidei Umot Ha'olam street toward the next stop on your tour, about a two-minute walk. Cross Montefiore Boulevard, and in front of you, on the left, you will notice the beautiful **She'ar Yashuv Synagogue**.

While you walk over to the synagogue you will notice that it is not surrounded by a fence or a wall, and in fact stands as a public structure inside an urban garden. This makes a clear statement that the place is intended to serve as a spiritual center for all and to serve the entire community and not only the regular worshippers. And indeed, the prayer version in the synagogue is Sephardic-

Moroccan, but the synagogue serves a mixed community - from Moroccans and French to Georgians and native Israelis.

### The She'ar Yashuv Synagogue



Sunday-Thursday  
08:00-16:00'  
Friday 08:00-13:00



Free of charge



4 Montefiore Street



To arrange a visit:  
David Zohar- Tel:  
057-7627671; David  
Avraham- Tel:  
050-8676636



Not accessible to the  
handicapped



Visit by appointment  
only

Notice the Eastern elements in the synagogue's design. Architect Haim Saban, a resident of the city, combined arches, curves and additional Eastern elements in the building, such as domes above the entrance lobby and at the back of the building. Around the entrance lobby there are marble covered columns. The prayer hall itself is devoid of columns, its walls are not parallel and are built at an angle to enable a line of sight with the cantor from anywhere in the hall. The windows are double glazed with an internal stained-glass window, and on the colorful semi-transparent divider of the women's section there are verses

of praise for women from the Book of Proverbs. In the circular corridor behind the hall, a sink was installed for the Kohanim to wash their hands for the blessing. The idea was taken from the synagogue in Livorno, Italy, and shortens the waiting period for the Kohanim until they return from the hand washing ceremony.



*Every Simchat Torah, there are Hakafot Shniyot held in the courtyard opposite the synagogue in a festive atmosphere enjoyed by everyone - not only the religious.*

### More about: Commemorating Combat Soldiers

In 1997, right after the helicopter disaster, Rabbi Moshe Lahiani, the Chabad Rabbi from Marseilles, France, arrived in Israel. The Rabbi, who was deeply shocked by the disaster, contacted the association of synagogue, which was then in the planning stages, and suggested naming the synagogue "She'ar Yashuv" after the settlement in which one of the helicopters crashed. At the ground-breaking ceremony that was held that year, the commander of the helicopter fleet was present, and the community members joined in the efforts to commemorate the fallen. In the entry hall of the synagogue, which was inaugurated in 2002, there is a memorial section with a prominent and touching wall painting depicting black figures of combat soldiers. Next to it are plates with the names of the 73 soldiers who perished in the disaster.



From the staircase of the synagogue there is a view of Ashdod's beautiful beach. Return now to Montefiore Boulevard and turn left **toward Kikar HaYovel**. The big statue in the heart of the square has become one of the city's hallmarks. **The Eye of the Sun** statue, which rises to a height of 18 meters, was created by the artist Moti Mizrahi, and is considered by many to be a monumental and unusual work of art.

The eastern side of the giant lens, which is reminiscent of an eye, is yellow and represents the sun, whereas its western side is silver-gray and represents the moon. In the center there is a smaller, semi-transparent glass lens, which allows for the sun and the moon to be seemingly trapped or swallowed into this meshed eye. The statue is embedded on its side into a gray stone dome thirty meters in diameter, and is surrounded by a large oval square.



The project of the statue's place in the square was designed by the architect Danny Horowitz, who integrated modern lighting technology designed by lighting designer Nissan Gelbard.



*It is recommended to return to the square at night time when the statue is illuminated by changing colors*

After viewing the statue, you can continue on foot towards the beach, which is only about 300 meters' walk away, or return to your car and drive to it. **Be'er Sheva Beach**, the southernmost regulated beach in Ashdod and one of the most beautiful beaches on the coastal plain, was inaugurated in 2010 and has since received countless names and nicknames, including Tet-Vav (Quarter O) beach, Riviera Beach, the Southern Beach, Circles Beach and the New Beach. Its current name was given to it in 2014, after Be'er Sheva Mayor Ruvik Danilovich asked Ashdod Mayor Dr. Yechiel Lasri to name the beach after the capital of the Negev, as a tribute to the southern city.

## Ashdod | Sightseeing

On your way to the attractive beach, north of the square at the entrance to the beach, and southwest of the remains of the Ashdod-Yam fort, there is another archaeological site, where fascinating findings from various eras, from the late bronze period to the Mamluk period were unearthed. The horseshoe-shaped complex is surrounded by a thick wall, and the foundations of different buildings and pools were found around it. Researchers estimate that the fortification was constructed by a local ruler who rebelled against the Assyrian regime during the reign of Sargon II. It is possible that due to the excavations taking place in the area, access to the site will not be allowed.



### More about: Impressive mausoleums

On the way back from the beach you can pass through another archaeological site, located in the sports and leisure promenade, between the Kikar HaYovel and Mota Gur street. During the development works that took place there, two impressive mausoleums were discovered from the Roman and Byzantine periods. The structure of the tombs, which served members of the upper class, is unique to the southern coastal plain. The two mausoleums are a part of the great cemetery of "Ashdod-Yam", as described in the ancient Madaba map.

On the beach itself, which meets the international "Blue Flag" standards every year attesting to cleanliness, safety and the high level of services it provides, you will find a special access road for the handicapped and a shade cover adapted to the handicapped population, playground facilities, sports and fitness facilities, and even a beach library (the first in town) from which you can borrow whatever books and magazines you wish. An especially relaxed and enjoyable way to end the tour.

### They said about her



"And (Uzziah) went out to wage war against the Philistines, and he tore down the walls of Gath, and the walls of Yavneh, and the walls of Ashdod. Then he built cities near Ashdod and among the Philistines."

**(Chronicles II, chapter 26, verse 6)**



**Brought us thus far:**  
From the heroes of 1948,  
through the primeval  
landscapes to a unique  
shopping experience

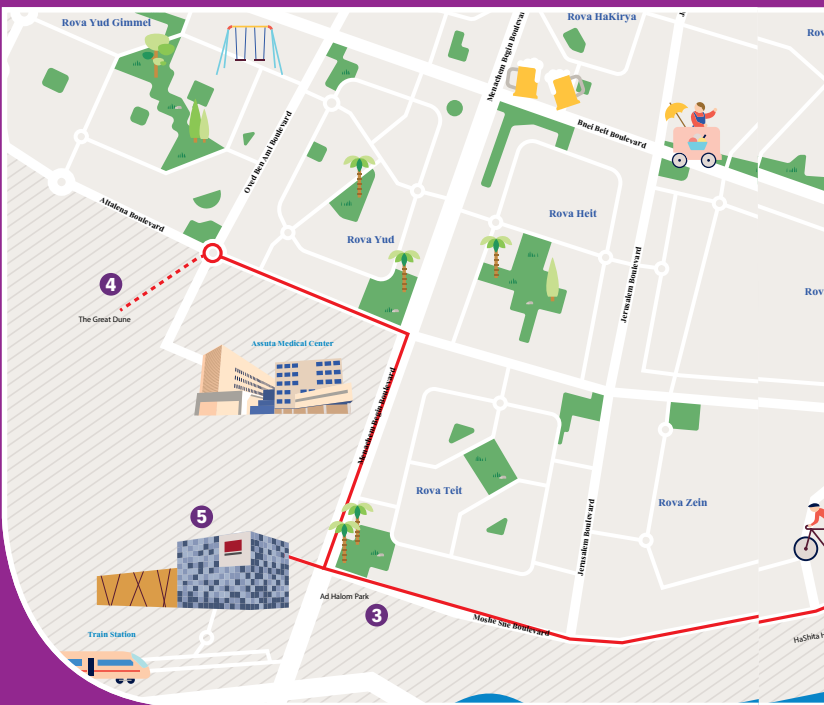


Duration of  
the tour:  
**4-5 Hours**



## Ashdod | Sightseeing

The route in front of you, which begins with a culinary tour of the mythological market in Quarter Bet (2), passes through the historical park where the Egyptian forces were stopped in the War of Independence, combines a visit to the heritage and battle legacy sites, memorials and impressive parks, and provides a taste of authentic Ashdod as well as of modern Ashdod.



## What brought us here



If you are visiting during the summer, it is recommended to leave early in the morning, and even to begin at the Great Dune, when it is more pleasant outside and not too hot for roaming around the Sands Park. In any event it is advised to take sufficient drinking water, a hat, and sunscreen.



Sand Park and the Great Dune 4



Big Fashion complex 5



## Center Bet (B) Market



B Market parking lot (free of charge).  
Using Waze: "City Market Quarter Bet-Ashdod" or "The Bet Market parking lot"



"Afikim" bus company routes 3, 4, 7, 8, or 24



Sunday-Thursday  
06:00-19:00;



Friday 06:00-16:00



Free of charge



Yoseftal



Not particularly handicapped friendly

Start your day at the city market, the oldest one in town, **Center Bet Market**, which is located in commercial center in the heart of Quarter Bet (2), of the city's first quarters.

Before you enter the market itself, you can cross the parking lot to its northern side, where Gan Halohamim (**Combat Soldier Garden**) is located. The park was restored and upgraded in 2014, and includes a well-invested children's playground, fitness facilities, ping-pong tables and many seating areas, among other things. The Municipal Library is also located within the park.

In the stalls of the oldest market in town you can find fresh fruit and vegetables of all kinds all year round, all sorts of quality meats, freshly baked goods, and sweets of all kinds. A wide variety of colors, tastes and aromas will surround you. The market's versatility is also reflected in the variety of languages you can hear: Hebrew,



## The Equator

	Wednesday Market	Center Bet (B) Market
<b>Location</b>	The Lido Beach parking lot, Rova Aleph (Quarter A)	Yoseftal Street, Rova Bet (Quarter B)
<b>Open</b>	Wednesdays, except during holidays or festivals- then the market operates on Monday	All week, except Saturday
<b>When</b>	From the early morning hours till sunset	Sunday-Thursday 06:00-19:00, Friday 06:00-16:00
<b>Character</b>	Versatile like the city's population. Here you will find fruit and vegetables straight from the farmers, along with trinkets of all kinds	Whatever you can think of, you'll find it there
<b>Bargains</b>	Fishermen's equipment, car and mobile accessories, and especially cheap name-brand clothing	High quality spices, fresh fruit and vegetables
<b>Prices</b>	Depending on your bargaining abilities	There is also extra cheap



Russian, French, Arabic and Moroccan. Like in any market, here too it is recommended to haggle over the price before making a purchase. The calm and peaceful atmosphere, the variety of shops around and the unique photo exhibition "Curators in Market Bet", create a colorful, interesting and inspiring shopping experience.



*It is recommended to take advantage of the visit to the market and to purchase food and beverages for the picnic you can have later on in the tour, at the well-maintained Ben-Gurion Park, or at the Acacia Albida Park.*



### More about: The "Curators in Market Bet" Exhibition



The fascinating photo exhibition, displayed at the old market since December 2016 and refreshed every year, documents the market through the eyes of 15 local resident photographers, in dozens of spectacular photographs. The stall owners take part in the exhibition themselves, by turning into a kind of "curators" and choosing the photograph that will be presented in their store/shop.

Now, that your basket is full of goodies, you can continue to the next stop on the tour. Drive south on Yoseftal street and turn left on Rambam street. At the T-junction at the end of the street, you will see Ben-Gurion **park** in front of you, one of the largest and most luxurious parks in Ashdod. In the park, which earned the nickname "The Police Park" due to the police station located in it, there are spacious lawns, many seating areas, a barbecue compound, playground facilities and more, as well as the Magistrate's Court and the Municipal Stadium.



*Every year Ashdod's traditional Mimouna celebration is held in the area adjacent to the police station. It is recommended to come and enjoy an authentic celebration full of flavors, colors and aromas.*

Turn left at the junction, to Hanasi Weissman Boulevard, and left again at Itzhak Hanansi Boulevard, and to your left you will see **the monument for those who fell in the battle for Ashdod's liberation during the War of Independence** (the 1948 Monument), which commemorates the 11 casualties of the battle of Sukhrir and the 54 casualties of Battalion 54 of the Givati Brigade who fought in the

containment battles that took place in the sands of Ashdod during the War of Independence.



### More about: The monument for the fallen of the War of Independence

The monument, which was originally built at the request of the parents of the fallen in the Battle of Sukhrir (all from Rishon LeZion), was expanded in 1966 and today includes a memorial for the fallen from the Givati Brigade as well, who lost their lives during the containment battles in the region. At the center of the monument there is a stone wall, the left part of which is rectangular and smooth while the right part is shaped like a trapezoid, cut diagonally and downwards. On the left part there is a marble slab on which the names of the fallen are engraved and the sentence: "Their memory shall be forever". On the right part, along the diagonal, there is a long slab of rock bearing the names of the Rishon Le Zion residents who lost their lives here and the words: "You who pass here Remember! We opened the gate to victory, it is upon our dead bodies that the route to the Ashdod harbor was paved".

Continue straight on Itzhak Hanasi Boulevard and turn right at Kikar Elta Square, into Rabbi Shimon Ben Shetach street. **Elta** (The initials of "Aircraft Industry Electronics") which is located nearby, is a subsidiary of Israeli Aerospace Industries, and is considered one of the world's leading companies in military electronic systems. The company, with its five large plants, was transferred here in 1969

as part of the policy of the government headed by Levi Eshkol to spread out the industries and support development towns.

From Rabbi Shimon Ben Shetach street turn left on Moshe Sneh Boulevard and right into **the Acacia Albida Park (Elta Park)**. The large and tangled grove is the

#### The Acacia Albida Park



Park parking lot (free of charge)



"Afikim" bus company routes 13, 26, or 450 to the adjacent cemetery, and from there a five minute walk to the south.



24 hours a day, all year round



Free of charge



The Acacia Albida Park



Not accessible for handicapped in wheelchairs



home of many Acacia Albida trees and old sycamore trees, some of which are remnants of the tree boulevard that was planted here in olden times along the ancient coastal road ("Via Maris"), between Jaffa and Gaza (See the chapter on "Geographical, topographical and architectural structure").

The Acacia Albida tree is native to Africa, where it grows mainly in the continent's eastern savannahs. Its name comes from the white color of its tree trunk. Israel is in fact, the northern distribution boundary of this tree, which appears in Israel's list of protected plants.

Some of the Acacia Albida's most important concentrations in Israel are located throughout Ashdod. If you are lucky, you will be able to spot a variety of reptiles, birds, butterflies and even kinds of mammals such as foxes and jackals among the tangled trees. At the end of winter you can see blossoms of the Anemones, the Sharon Tulip, the Purple Iris and more, while in August-November the Acacia Albida blossoms. Like the Acacia Albida, the Sycamore Ficus also came to us from Africa. Since in Africa this tree reproduces through the pollen distributed by wasps, the Sycamores found in Israel are only those planted by man or brought here thousands of years ago.

On exiting the park, turn right on Moshe Sneh Boulevard, make a U-turn at the first available opportunity, and continue south on

Moshe Sneh Boulevard. On the right, about 300 meters after the turn, is the impressive and unusual building of **the Orot Haim U'Moshe** synagogue, which is considered one of the most magnificent synagogues in the country (see the route "Slichot Tour: Ashdod's Special Synagogues").

Continue on the road and turn left at the first turn, to the narrow path leading

### The Ad Halom Park



Dirt parking lot at the site



To the Ad Halom station



"Afikim" and "Dan BaDarom" bus companies routes  
17, 26, 27, 140, 141, 142, 150, 151, 152, and 465, and all the lines that arrive at the nearby Egged bus terminal.



24 hours a day, all year round



Free of charge



The Ad Halom Park



Partially accessible



## Ashdod | Sightseeing

to **Ad Halom** park, which commemorates the soldiers fallen here during the War of Independence while stopping the Egyptian forces from advancing northward to the center of the country. This is the northernmost location reached by the Egyptian army during the battle, thus the name: "Ad Halom" (thus far).

### TIP

*You can tour the park on foot, bicycle or car (in part of the park). Cyclists can continue west from here to Hakshatot Beach, north along the Lachish stream to Lachish park, or south toward Tel Ashdod and old Nitzanim (for the more experienced).*

At the entrance to the park turn left and park your car next to the tall monument, which resembles the Egyptian obelisk. **The monument for the fallen soldiers of the Egyptian army**, which was erected in 1989 as part of the Camp David peace treaty with Egypt is dedicated to the memory of the Egyptian soldiers who fell in the Ashdod region during the battles of the War of Independence (an additional obelisk was erected opposite the Yoav Citadel). On the monument, made from red granite stone, there are engraved inscriptions in Arabic, English, Hebrew and Hieroglyphics.

To the north of the obelisk, among the thick vegetation, hides the remains of an Egyptian Vickers machine gun post embedded into the ground. The concrete post was cast by the Egyptian army after the Ad Halom bridge was blown up by the Givati brigade soldiers, during the War of Independence. There is no entry to it. Between the obelisk and the post you will be able to notice a few thick sycamore trees.



Now continue (it is recommended by foot, but you can also continue with your car) about 500 meters northeast, toward the monument for the Givati soldiers and the Ad Halom bridge. The dirt trail curves to the right along the southern bank of the stream, and next to it there are quotes by those who participated in the battles. From this point you can only continue on foot.

Further down the path you will reach a large plaza, which provides a beautiful view **of the Lachish stream**. A wind rose is **painted on the floor of the plaza, which illustrates** the distances (that are relatively short) to the most important sites during the War of Independence, such as to Tel Aviv, Cairo and the village of Isdud. Next to it stands **the Pillbox**, the guard post of the British police, which was built in 1936 for the purpose of protecting the bridge and the railway track from Arab attacks. The post's nickname, Pillbox, derives from its cylindrical shape, which resembles the shape of a pill box.

Opposite the Pillbox is **the memorial monument to the Givati combat soldiers**. The names of the 54 soldiers who fell in the War of Independence battles are engraved on the memorial wall, next to the inscription "To the warriors who cried up to here, fell and did not win". On the wall there is also a relief map of the Operation Philistia, the great battle that took place here on June 3rd, 1948.

### More about: The containment battle on the bridge



Hours after the declaration of independence, on the eve of May 15, 1948, Arab armies, including the Egyptian army, invaded the country. The invasion began with an assault on two fronts: one towards the Be'er Sheva-Hebron-Jerusalem area, and the other towards Tel Aviv. The combat soldiers of Company B, Battalion 54 of the Givati Brigade, who were in charge of the sector, prepared in advance for the Egyptian invasion and several days earlier, on May 12, blew up the bridge over the Lachish stream as part of Operation "Barak", with the aim of blocking the Egyptian advance into the center of the country.

Blowing up the bridge turned out to be quite a difficult task, after the two mules that carried the explosives shook off the charges and disappeared into the dark. The soldiers had to carry the explosives themselves. A failed attempt to attack the Egyptians in the vicinity of the bridge during Operation

Philistia on the night June 2-3 cost the lives of 54 men, all from the same Givati Battalion.

While the Egyptian forces, which included an infantry brigade reinforced by armored vehicles and cannons under the command of Brigadier (Colonel) Mahmud Najib, began building a Bailey Bridge in an attempt to overcome the obstacle of the stream, the Air force's first four Messerschmitt airplanes, purchased in Czechoslovakia, assembled on the Israeli base at Tel Nof. The first squadron of the Israeli air force left immediately, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Mudi Alon, with one of the four planes piloted by Ezer Weizman, who later became the Commander of the Air Force and, later on, the President of Israel. The attack led to the halting of the Egyptian column toward Tel Aviv, but the squadron suffered its first loss. In October 1948, following Operation "Yoav", the Egyptians retreated to the south.

Now carefully go down the stairs to the left of the monument, towards the stream bed, and pass under the **new railway** bridge. A short walk will lead you to a beautiful observation point that overlooks **the renovated historical Ad Halom** bridge as well as the bed of the Lachish stream.



*During floods you can see the mighty flow of the stream from here.*

The Ottoman Bridge, which was built at the end of the 19th century over the steam bed of Wadi Sukrir (the Lachish Stream) and crossed the route from Yavne to "El-Majdal" (Ashkelon), was built on the foundations of a bridge from the Roman period, and for decades served as the central axis on the Ashdod-Ashkelon route. At the beginning of the 1980s, traffic was diverted to a new route in the east, and the Ad Halom bridge was left standing between the Railway bridge and the new road. The original bridge, blown up by the Givati forces during Operation "Barak", was restored after the War of Independence and rebuilt in the mid-2000s as part of the development work on Ad Halom Park.



If you go up to the bridge itself, you will notice **a monument to your left in memory of Public Works Authority workers who died in the wars and acts of terrorism launched against.**

### The Avner Garin Garden



Shopping Center parking lot opposite the park (free of charge)



"Afikim" bus company routes 3, 9, 15, 22, 34, or 321 to the Yod Gimel (13) shopping center



All week, 24 hours a day



Free of charge



King David



The park is handicapped accessible

From here, go back to your car. If there are at least three hours left until sunset, on your way to the next stop on the route, you can still make it through the **Avner Garin Garden**, in Rova Yod-Gimel (Quarter M), named after the first mayor of Ashdod.

The park, which is filled with lawns, shaded corners, sports and amusement facilities and seating areas, is dotted with impressive statues, mostly located around the skating rink that is in the center of the garden. Among the most prominent statues is the statue "**Dialogue**" by the artist Buki Schwartz, which was placed behind the plaza in

1997 and represents alienation and lack of listening to one another; and the "**King's Chair**" statue, which was placed in the park that same year, created by the artist Israel Rabinowitz. In the statue, which is located to the right of the entrance to the park, there are 12 cypresses made of iron which are presented like bayonets embedded in the rock. The statue, which integrates an ancient well, seems to symbolize the conflict between two nations settled on the same land.



From here you can return to the Quarter's commercial center, and stock up on food and beverages for your visit to the next stop on your tour: The Sand Park and the Great Dune. Drive north on David Hamelech street and at **May 1945 Square** (or as it is also called: **HaNitzachon [victory] Square**) turn right onto Oved Ben-

Ami Boulevard. Notice the **victory monument** in the heart of the square, which is dedicated to the memory of World War II veterans, and marks the day of victory over Nazi Germany.

It is advised to park your car on the side of the road slightly before the square at the end of Oved Ben-Ami Boulevard, and continue to it on foot. The large square in front of you is Altalena Square, named after the ship Altalena, the sinking of which, shortly after the establishment of the state, was etched as one of the most dramatic (and perhaps even traumatic) events in the history of Israel.

Beyond the square you can see the beautiful desert scenery dotted with high dunes. This is the southeastern boundary of the city, and the beginning of the Sand Park, which without a doubt is one of the most impressive nature sites in the southern region. Although it is not a trip to the Sahara Desert, climbing the dunes at sunset can provide quite a successful preparation for such a trip.



*Please note: Even if it seems as if your vehicle may be able to manage driving in the sands, it is advisable not to push your luck and be tempted by the tire tracks left there by field vehicles.*

### More about: The Altalena Affair



The ship "Altalena" (Jabotinsky's literary name), set out from France at the beginning of June 1948, with about 940 immigrants and many weapons and medical supplies on board, which the Etzel Organization was bringing into Israel to aid during the war. However, since a short while earlier an agreement was signed with the organization's commander, Menachem Begin, for Etzel to disarm and delivering its weapons to the Israeli Defense Forces, the interim Israeli government ordered that all of the weapons be delivered into its possession. After the organization members tried to unload the weapons from the ship anyway, they were given an ultimatum to send the ship back to sea. On June 21st, the ship arrived at the Kfar Vitkin beach, but the Etzel command rejected the ultimatum. Following an exchange of fire that began shortly after that, the ship continued sailing south, to the Tel Aviv shore, where it ran aground. With a renewed exchange of fire,



the ship was hit by a shell fired by IDF forces. The Etzel members later claimed that sending them back to sea was designed to harm them. The Hagana members, on the other hand, claimed that the Etzel members were planning a revolt. 16 Etzel members and three IDF soldiers were killed in the crossfire. The decision of the Etzel leaders not to return fire toward the shooters probably prevented a civil war.

Within a few minutes' walk, or better yet - climb, southeast of the square, is the **Great Dune**. The unique impressive dune, which can be seen from afar, is the largest dune in Israel. You can reach it from here, but since there are no signs or direction, it is recommended to be patient and wait until you arrive at the next location in the tour.

### Sand Park and the Great Dune



The Shikmim parking lot (free of charge)



To Ad-Halom Station



"Afikim" bus company routes 17, 27, 38, 85, 85A, 140, 141, 142, or 152



All week, 24 hours a day



Free of charge



Hashikmim Parking Lot



Not accessible

While it takes significantly longer (about two hours) to get from it to the dune, the route itself is marked, and provides more attractions.

Return to your car, continue northward on Altalena Boulevard, and turn right at Menachem Begin street. On your right you will see the Ashdod **Assuta Hospital**, the opening of which on June 4th, 2017, at the end of a long public struggle, was no less than an historical event. The modern hospital was the first public hospital opened in the country since 1980. The hospital now provides advanced medical services to residents of the city and the surrounding areas.

With the Big Fashion complex, which you will come to at the end of your route, and the southern exit from the city in front of you, turn right on Moshe Sneh Boulevard. Drive slowly, since a few meters after the turn you need to turn right, toward **Sycamore Park**, which lies at the northeastern edge of **the Sand Park**.

After a few hundred meters the road curves to the left. Continue until you notice **the Shikmim** parking lot - the northern entrance to the large Sand Park. In the parking lot there is a group of huge sycamore trees, a number of picnic tables and a playground.



## More about: The Sand Park

The large wild sand area, which is probably also the last of its kind in Israel, lies between Ashdod and Nitzanim over an area of about 3213 dunam. This is the largest expanse of sand still left on the coastal plain. Among other things, this area contains the tallest migratory sand dune in the country, which became one of the symbols of the city and perhaps even of the entire region. In addition, one can see unique habitats, ancient orchards, a boulevard of old sycamore trees, and desert and other animals, some of which endemic (unique to the region). Among other things, you may encounter jackals, deers, gerbils, foxes, porcupines, and a variety of reptiles, birds and insects.

Shikmim (Sycamore) Park is a relic of the boulevard of sycamores that was planted along the ancient coastal road (Via Maris) - a prominent element of the scenery along the southern coastal plain. For thousands of years the historical coastal road served as the shortest route north. The sycamore trees were planted along it in order to relieve the armies, nomads and merchants passing along it, and to provide them with essential shade during their long journey.



### TIP

*If you arrived there in a vehicle that is not an SUV (4X4), make sure to keep along the limestone road leading to the location, in order to avoid sinking into the sand.*

Some of the country's most impressive and oldest sycamore trees are still growing in the parking lot. In fact, all of the sycamore trees in Israel were planted by man, since the wasp (African) that pollinates these trees is not indigenous to our region.

Good to know

A•B•C

**The  
French**

Immigrants to Israel, from the second largest Jewish community in the world, mostly choose the city of Ashdod as their new place of residence. Apart from the wave of anti-Semitism that is has been washing over Europe in the last decade, many of the immigrants list Zionism as the true motive for their decision to immigrate to Israel. Some say that Ashdod closely resembles the south of France and the sunny Riviera region.

**Immigrant  
Absorption**

As a city that is considered the largest absorber of immigrants in Israel, since its establishment, Ashdod has offered a fascinating cultural encounter. Immigrants from 99 different countries reside in the city, and most of them were absorbed between 1990 and 2006.

Several hiking trails branch off from the dirt parking lot. The trails were marked by the Jewish National Fund (JNF), and appear in the marked roads map of the area. From here you can leave on a circular route (marked in green) of about two hours, from which you will see spectacular, almost vanishing vistas of our country. Please note, almost the entire route is exposed to sun, and therefore you must be equipped with drinking water, a hat and sunscreen.

The first stop on the tour is located south of the parking lot. After a few minutes walk you will arrive at **the orchard**, a remnant of the Mawasi agriculture that was there. In this sand depression, grape vines, pomegranate trees, fig trees, strawberries, and other fruit trees grow wild. After the trees were planted they were watered for only one year. Since then they survive thanks to rain water and the high level of ground water. At the edge of the orchard you will be able to notice large Acacia Albina trees, under which you can rest.



Cross the orchard and climb the sands, on the path, toward the west. The route goes up and down in between the sand hills which are covered by typical Mediterranean vegetation. Now you will come to the highlight of the park: **The Great Dune**. Climb carefully from its southern side to the top.

The Great Dune, among the only remnants left of the migratory sands of the coastal plain, is Israel's largest sand dune and the most unique in the Middle East. It is about 250 meters long, with a steep slope of about 35 meters. The dune, which moves at a rate of about a meter per year, is crescent-shaped due to the southwesterly wind that blows here most of the year.

From the top of the dune you can enjoy the sight of vast golden spaces and the southern neighborhoods of the city. This is the time to take off your shoes, return to your childhood for a moment and roll down the hill with enjoyment.

After resting a little from your playfulness, dust off your clothes from the sand and return to the parking lot. You can end the tour with a unique shopping experience that can mostly be found only abroad.

Turn right onto Moshe Sneh Boulevard, and turn left at the roundabout. On your left is the entrance to the parking lot **of the** huge Big Fashion complex.

This unique complex is, in fact, an open shopping center, one of the only ones in the country, offering an international shopping and entertainment experience. Among the spacious and well-designed avenues of the complex you will find over 130 of the leading brands from Israel and abroad in the best leading fashion

### Big Fashion complex



Shopping center parking lot



To Ad-Halom Station



Sunday-Thursday

09:30-21:30; Friday

09:00-14:30;

Saturday 10:00-23:00

(Stores that do not open on Saturdays:

Half an hour after

the end of Shabbat

until 23:00)



1 HaRakevet Road



073-2600483



bigcenters.co.il



The compound

is handicapped

accessible



chains, including H&M, Forever21, Swarovski, Urbanica, Mac, and a wide variety of coffee shops and restaurants, as well as an abundance of activity areas for family entertainment.

Ecological decorative ponds are scattered around the complex, giving the visitors a sense of calm and serenity.

In April 2016 this shopping center, which contains 26 thousand square meters of commercial space, won an honorable mention in a competition held by the International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) Europe, which comprises of about 1,500 malls and shopping centers in Europe. Now you can choose whether to go on a shopping spree, or rest from the day at one of the many restaurants in the place.

### They said about her



"We are all tired. The Egyptians are currently in Ashdod, but tomorrow they may move to Tel Aviv if we don't stop them. Despite our fatigue, and for the sake of our families, we will go out tonight too."

**(Arie Kotzer, a company commander in the Givati Brigade, during a briefing before leaving for Operation Philistia)**



# Sea, nature and extreme: A route for families with children



Duration of  
the tour:  
4-5 Hours









Ashdod is considered one of the cities in the country with a particularly high percentage of young people. More than half its residents are aged 34 or younger. It is no wonder then, that the city offers a fair amount of attractions and points of interest for the young people in the group.

The tour before you is dedicated for families visiting Ashdod with children, who are interested in a route that includes as wide a variety of attractions as possible, and is not too long and exhausting for the little ones. The route was planned such, that at different stops along the route you are able to choose whether to keep on walking, or go to the next stop by car.



*Even the trip to Ashdod itself can become a wonderful attraction for the children, if you come by train. In this case, make sure to leave for the city at least an hour earlier and take into account that for small children (up to the age of seven) this option is less suitable, since it requires an additional walk of about ten minutes from the bus station to the first stop on the tour.*

Please note that the visit at the Sea and Dolphin Center requires pre-booking at least a day in advance, and sometimes is conditional on a minimum number of participants. Before you head out make sure you take a bathing suit, comfortable walking shoes and plenty of water with you.



*On hot summer days it is recommended to start the tour in the early morning hours (08:00-09:00) or alternatively- in the afternoon (14:00-15:00)*

## Ashdod | Sightseeing

The tour begins at **the Pirate Park** at Mei-Ami beach, the northernmost of the city's beaches. When you arrive from the parking lot, you will not be able to miss the main attractions of the park - a large pirate ship installation that can keep the children occupied for a long time. In the complex there is a wide variety of playground facilities for kids, including swings, 35-meter-long slides, and a huge pyramid made of climbing ropes.



### Pirate Park



The Mei-Ami Beach parking lot (free of charge)



"Afikim" bus company route 11 to the promenade / Max Nordau

All Week, 24 hours a day



Free of charge



Mei-Ami Beach



The park is handicapped accessible, however the facilities themselves are not.



**TIP**

*North of the Pirate Park, a short walk away, is the Lachish stream estuary. It is worthwhile to pop over and see the waterfowl that visit there most days of the year.*

Try to take your children away from the playground facilities and return to the parking lot. Now you can continue by car to the next stop on your tour: **Lachish Park Ashdod (LP"A)**. The magnificent park, built in 1996 on the southern bank of the Lachish stream, as part of the rehabilitation work on the stream, covers an area of about 160 acres.

During its construction an emphasis was placed on maintaining the ecological balance, so that a large part of the park's natural vegetation remained intact while other sections were cultivated, with added shaded seating areas, green lawns, a bird-watching area, a beautiful promenade, and large stone statues.



## More about: The restoration of the Lachish

Until the 1960s the waters of the Lachish stream were clear and clean, and used for recreation, fishing and agricultural purposes. However, with the development of the city and the construction of industrial plants along the route of the stream, different kinds of sewage were pumped into it. In 1992, following a wide-spread flooding of the stream, work to rehabilitate it began. The flow of sewage to the channel of the stream was stopped, and Lachish Park Ashdod, a promenade, and boat anchorage were built alongside the stream. At the same time, the Ad Halom Park was established and the development of the Sand Park to the south began.

### Lachish Park Ashdod



The Lachish Park parking lot (on Laskov Way)- gravel parking lot



"Afikim" bus route number 2



Open 24/7 throughout the year



Free of charge



Herzl Boulevard



08-8545481 (The Tourism Company);  
053-7106129



The paved walkway is suitable for strollers and movement disabled

You will find restrooms at the entry to the park, on your right. It is advisable to take advantage of the facilities before the tour starts. As you walk down the path towards the stream, you will notice a pyramid shaped concrete statue to your right. The statue, created by the artist Ruth Katz and placed in the park in 1997, is only one of about 300 statues scattered around the city and its sites. In the section of the park where the tour passes today, there are about ten large stone statues, placed here after a sculpturing symposium that took place in Ashdod. Some of them are an attraction on their own for the children.

Since 2009 there has been a sharp decline in damage to the Lachish stream, and following testing by the Ministry of Environmental Protection in 2015, it was

included among the three cleanest streams in Israel.

At the end of the descent the path forks (A T-junction). A right turn leads to the "Hai-Lachish" promenade, which you will come to later on your tour, while a left turn, towards the sea, will lead you to your next stop on the route: **The Dolphin and Sea Center**- the first of its kind in the Mediterranean basin.

The center was built in 2016 in the vicinity of the Ort Ashdod Naval Officers school, by the volunteers of the Marine Mammal Research,

### The Sea and Dolphin Center



Sunday-Thursday

09:00-16:00;

Friday 09:00-14:00



With payment from age two; Discount for local residents



054-9960171



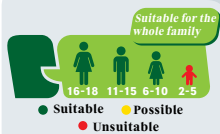
dolphincenter@immrac.org



Partial accessibility (not including handicapped toilets)



For groups of 15-25 participants and by prior arrangement only



Information and Assistance Center, in order to serve as the organization's educational body and to expose visitors to the wondrous world of marine mammals living along the coast of Israel. Ashdod was not picked as the center's location at random. Researchers from the organization and Haifa University have been following the dolphins in Israel for decades, and the results of the observations show that there are many dolphins especially off the Ashdod coast, and in particular a permanent and impressive presence of the common dolphin, which is an endangered species.

The exhibitions in the center show the Mediterranean Sea and its inhabitants from the perspective of the dolphin, and include, apart from fascinating pictures and clips, also a wealth of findings from the organization's intense research over the years, including most impressive

skeletons and skulls of whales and dolphins. A special corner in the center is dedicated to getting acquainted with the unique song of the whales and their sonar-based navigation and communication systems, while another corner is dedicated to the seals in Israel, which the foundation has also been following for years.

On the second floor of the center, there is a research station for the study of super predators (sharks, stingrays, dolphins, tunas and more) in the Mediterranean sea. It is not possible to enter, but from here you can observe Givat Yona' (Jonah's Hill) to the south and the Lachish stream to the north. The guided tour in this location takes about an hour, and includes a visit to the fenced compound of **the nearby** ecological park, among other things.

### Ashdod by numbers

1-2-3

The residents of Ashdod produce on average **1.5** kilograms of household waste a day • The residents of Tel Aviv produce **twice** as much waste • Close to **70** percent of the city's residents take part in the Ministry of Environmental Protection's waste separation and recycling project • Food waste constitutes **50** percent of the residents' household waste • Waste separation reduces the volume of landfill

waste by **20** percent • **14** percent of Ashdod's residents recycle electronic waste, compared with less than **10** percent in other major cities in Israel • Between 2007 and 2014 the Ministry of Environmental Protection provided a total of NIS **86** million in support of recycling activities in Ashdod.

The establishment of the ecological park included biological purification of the stream waters by planting special vegetation, as well as the construction of petting zoos and a bird watching site. The place where the stream estuary and the Mediterranean sea meet is extraordinarily important ecologically. The many waterfowl that pass through here during the migration season draw many birdwatchers to the park. The more observant ones

### Etgirim Park



Park parking lot (free of charge)



July-August: Sunday-Thursday, Saturday 10:00-17:00, Friday 09:00-15:00; September-October, April-June: Open for groups by prior appointment - on Saturdays only



Admission charged; Discount for local residents (with ID card)



053-4867782,  
053-7506599



ashdod.muni.il



Not fully accessible. Some of the facilities may be suitable for people with disabilities. It is recommended to check before arrival



Those with long hair must wear a swimming cap; Toddlers are required to wear a bathing diaper

Suitable for the whole family



● Suitable ● Possible ● Unsuitable

may be able to notice colonies of several types of egrets and herons among the branches of the eucalyptus trees along the stream. In the stream itself there are swamp turtles, frogs, toads and tree frogs (listed as an endangered species) among other things.

At the end of the visit, backtrack and return to the parking lot. A short drive in your car will bring you **to the extreme park** and the eastern part of the promenade, with the wildlife living in it.

Upon exiting the parking lot, turn left, and at the roundabout take the second exit - to Ben-Gurion street. Turn left on Herzl Boulevard and, after about 800 meters, turn left onto a limestone road, following the signs to the park and the nearby horse ranch, a distance of about 100 meters from the road.

The experiential park includes a variety of challenging attractions for the entire family - toddlers aged one to five can enjoy the shaded "Etgartaf" (child challenge) arena, which includes a selection of playground facilities for young children, Gymboree, climbing wall (for ages four and up), inflatables, a motorcycle course (from age two), omega and more; ages three to eight can get lost in a giant three-tier maze; ages six and

## Ashdod | Sightseeing

up can experience the long omega; ages 12 and up will be excited by the tallest extreme tower in the country (35 meters), which has three rappelling stations, a rope facility, a double climbing ladder, and a climbing pipe you can climb using pegs.

In the park area there is also a trampoline complex, an innovative skate park, paint-ball, a large zoo that includes a petting station, a Bedouin hospitality tent and many shaded spots that are inviting for a picnic. The park's huge children's swimming pool, covering about a quarter of an acre and 50 centimeters deep, is open during the summer. Next to it there is a water slide intended for those aged six and up. All of the facilities in the park are included in the entry ticket.



*During the summer months, the Etgarim Park hosts performances by many artists. It is recommended to check for updates before arrival avoid sinking into the sand.*

From the Etgarim park you can take a tour of the **Hai-Lachish promenade**, along less than a kilometer, and observe the variety of animals transferred here from Gush Katif after the evacuation of the settlements there in 2005.

Exit on foot from the Etgarim Park parking lot and turn left at the dirt road. Those who wish to see the natural and uncultured part of the Lachish park can walk about 400 meters up the stream (right at the dirt road), towards the tall bridge of Herzl Boulevard that crosses its channel.



If you turned left, continue straight and further down on your left next to the promenade, you will notice a row of wide cages that creates a type of miniature safari, in which there are ibexes, deers, zebras, ostriches, rams, fallow deers, antelopes and more.



*Please do not feed the animals, an action that might endanger them.*

While you are walking along the paved path, note the rich vegetation on the banks of the stream, and beyond it the passing trains that carry containers to and from the Port of Ashdod. The little ones would be happy to count the containers with you.



*During the months of May-June, you can enjoy the fruit of the strawberry trees growing along the stream.*

At the end of the row of cages you will see a split in the path, where you turned left at the beginning of the route. This is the time to backtrack to your car, and continue north to the next and final stop on your tour: the Ralex Car Museum.

### The Ralex Car Museum



Parking on the premises



Sunday-Thursday  
08:00-16:00, Friday  
08:00-13:00



Free of charge



1 Benei Brith  
Boulevard



08-852-2470



ralex-cars.com



Handicapped  
Accessible



Visit by prior  
appointment only



Turn into Herzl Boulevard and after about 150 meters make a U-turn and continue north until the right turn onto Nir Galim Road. Turn right onto Benei Brith Boulevard and after about 120 meters turn right and right again until you see in front of you the Ralex-Toyota garage on your left, in which this interesting museum is located.



## Ashdod | Sightseeing

The country's first-of-its-kind car museum was established in 1997 by Rafi Hershkowitz, a mechanical engineer by trade, who worked in reconstructing and renovating antique cars, among other things. The museum area contains a unique display of vintage cars (aged fifty years and more), including cars that Hershkowitz built himself. You can tour the facility with a guide, by prior appointment.

From here you can decide whether to continue to one of the sites that appear in the other routes (like Givat Yonah (Jonah's Hill) or Hakshatot Beach, which are on the "and the aroma of spices among the town's first houses" tour) and conclude the day with it, or to return home - tired but satisfied.

### They said about her



"The Ashdod harbor is the flagship of the Israeli economy."

**(Transport Minister Avigdor Liberman during his visit to the Ashdod Harbor, August 2003)**



# Tour of "Slichot": Ashdod's Special Synagogues

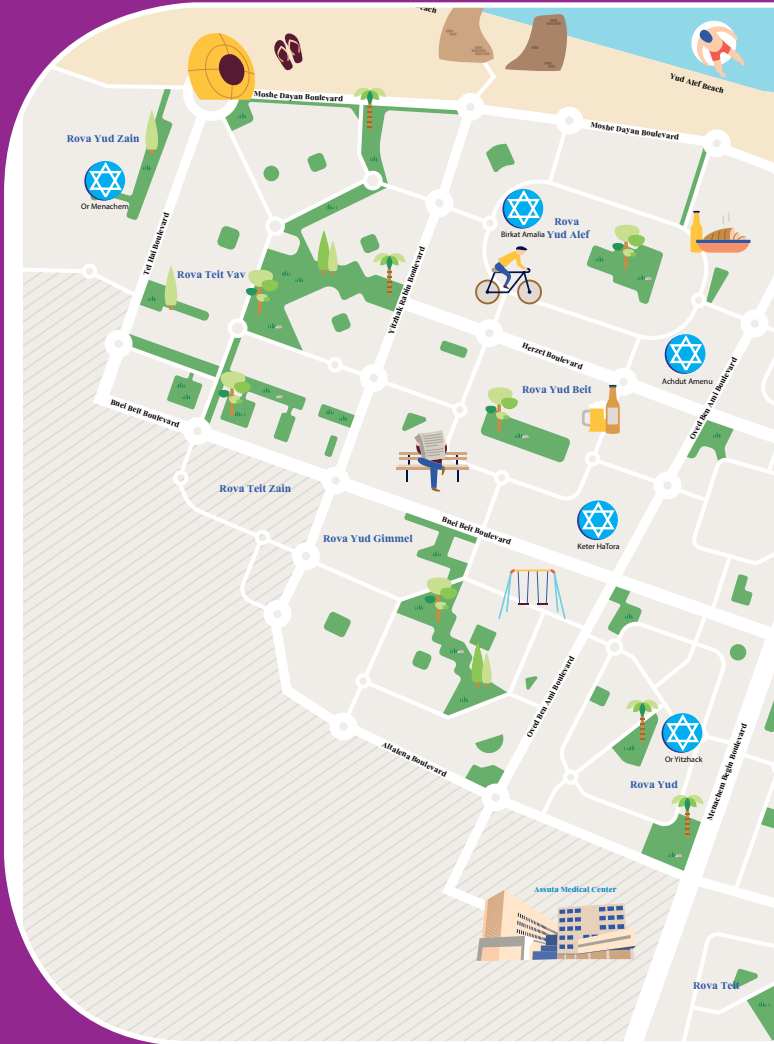


Duration of  
the tour:  
4-5 Hours



## Ashdod | Sightseeing

Ashdod contains the largest immigrant communities from Georgia and Romania, as well as one of the largest communities of immigrants from France and Ethiopia. Add to it the many immigrants from the former Soviet Union, South American countries, Iran, India, South Africa and more, and you get a fascinating mosaic of cultures and one of the most varied selections of synagogues in the world.



## 'Selichot' Tour

The city's residents know how to live in peace among many types of immigrants, and are a perfect example of ethnic tolerance. The next tour is especially suitable towards the time of Slichot, but not only then. This is a special tour of the unique synagogues the city of Ashdod has to offer, and you will find that the enriching visit opens a window into the various Israeli ethnic groups, their cultures and their traditions.





*To those visiting the synagogues: Please dress modestly and keep your heads covered - women and men.*

Please note that a visit to most of the synagogues must be coordinated in advance. Of course there are many more synagogues in the city, but these are without a doubt the most special.

Start your tour at the impressive **Orot Haim U'Moshe** Moroccan synagogue.

#### The Orot Haim U'Moshe Synagogue



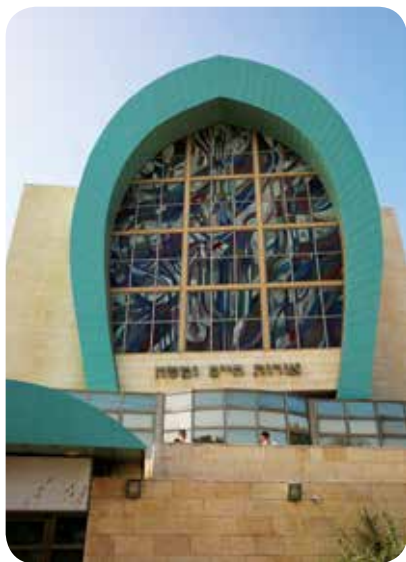
Parking available  
(Free of charge)



43 Ha'admor MiBelz Street

To arrange a visit:  
Eliyahu Pinto, Tel:  
053-773-1351

Those who drive on Moshe Sneh boulevard can't help but notice the unusual building, which stands in its splendor against the backdrop of the ultra-orthodox Be'er Moshe neighborhood in Quarter Gimel (3) in town. The huge stained glass windows in the front of the synagogue are placed in a kind of green metal arch, and overlook the grave of Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto, which is located at the entrance to Ashdod's cemetery.



Until about 12 years ago, the synagogue was located in a small trailer established by Rabbi David Hananya Pinto in memory of his father, Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto. The trailer, which was built on a private (consecrated) plot, was gradually expanded and today looks a little out of place as one of the most magnificent synagogues in the country. However Rabbi David Hananya Pinto saw its location as a natural choice, since he wanted to give the best to a

public that wasn't necessarily among the more influential in the country, and to establish a community of Sephardi Torah scholars.

The synagogue in its current form was designed by architect Yehuda Zahavi, and was inaugurated in 2005. The five-story building, also contains a large Kollel, yeshiva (Talmudic college), and Mikveh (ritual bath).

The synagogue's prayer hall is of middle eastern style, with arches, a marble floor, and stained-glass windows designed by a stained glass artist in modern and abstract motifs. The handrail in the women's section is integrated with delicate metal designs, and some say that the Rabbi's wife was involved in choosing the window colors and the chandelier design. The carpets here are red, the ceiling is acoustic, and thanks to the special lighting, the prayer hall is brightly lit at night. The prayer style is Moroccan and includes religious songs and liturgical poems preserved by the Moroccan Jews, in which holy singing was considered the apex of the spiritual world and the fulfillment of man.

### More about: Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto

Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto was born in Mogador, Morocco. His family's roots go all the way back to Rabbi Haim Vital, who was considered the student and successor of Rabbi Isaac Luria (the "Ari") from Tzfat. It is told that Rabbi Moshe Aharon lived a life of celibacy and asceticism, and did not leave his house for forty years. When he immigrated to Israel after the Six Day War, his home in Quarter Bet (4) in Ashdod became a pilgrimage site and a center for religious renewal. His son, Rabbi David Hananya, resides in France and comes to Ashdod every so often. For his flock it is a day of celebration.

Now continue to the synagogue of the Jewish community of

#### The Shomer Yisrael Synagogue



Parking available  
(Free of charge)



26 Shlomo Ben Yosef  
Street



To arrange a visit:  
Benny Elias, Tel:  
052-8392744

Cochin in Israel, **the Shomer Yisrael synagogue**, which is hidden next to an old and lively shopping center where the smells of the market are mixed with the aroma of spices.

From Hativat Golani street turn right onto Uziyahu street, and continue on it for about one-and-a-half kilometers, until turning right onto Shlomo Ben Yosef street, where the synagogue is located.

It is said the first Jews who settled in southeast India (today the



Kerala region) came to the area by ship at the time of King Solomon. According to one version, they were merchants sent by Solomon with the purpose of bringing ivory and parrots for the first temple. According to another version, they were Jews who arrived during the Babylonian exile. Either way, the first synagogue in the Kerala region was built in 1568. In the 18th century, there were already eight synagogues and the Jews of the region earned the name the Jews of Cochin, after one of the main cities of the region.

Many of the Cochin Jews immigrated to Israel during the 1950s and 1960s. Some of them were absorbed in different community settlements in the country, and a few hundred of them arrived in Ashdod and settled mainly in Quarter Vav (6). In 1967 the community's first synagogue was built. The new synagogue, inaugurated in 1995, bears the name of the greatest scholar of the community, Rabbi Nechemia Ben Avraham, also known as Nechemia Motta (Nechemia the elder), who some say came Cochin from Aden in Yemen.

The building was designed by architect Joseph Cohen. It is modest, it creates an intimate atmosphere, and its outer visage slightly resembles the beautiful synagogue that stands to this day in the village of Chennamangalam, where some of the community members lived (by the way most of the remaining synagogues in Cochin are now used as museums). But, while the original synagogue was mostly made of bronze-plated wood, the one in Ashdod was built with stone, and because of the Mediterranean climate conditions and the fear of termites - the ark here is made

out of stone as well. Six high curved windows are fixed in the prayer hall, and it is illuminated by three luxurious chandeliers.

Some of the prayer books at the synagogue are "Zechor Avraham" prayerbooks, which come from the Livorno community in Italy. The prayer version is mostly according to the Jews of Cochin, and each holiday and Shabbat have their own tunes. Unique customs were preserved in the community such as building a 'Manara' (a canopy or Chupa) to carry the holy books during Simchat Torah, the sanctification of the bride by the groom and not by the Rabbi, and in the past, worshippers used to wear colorful clothes- green on Sukkot, crimson on Shavuot, blue for Simchat Torah, and white for the Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. When there is a Shabbat Hatan (the Shabbat before a man gets married) or a Bar Mitzvah here, it is customary to serve traditional foods such as Chapati and pastries stuffed with meat.

The community now numbers about sixty families in the city. If in the early years the community members earned a living from manual labor, since in Cochin they worked mainly in agriculture, today it is an educated community most of whose members are professionals and live in various quarters in the city.

From here continue **to the Or Yitzhak Synagogue**, of the Georgian Jewish community, the exterior of which the Great Synagogue in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia.

Turn right (south) from Shlomo Ben Yosef street, which later curves

**The Or Yitzhak Synagogue**



Parking available  
(Free of charge)



10 Hatzionut Street



To arrange a visit:  
Rabbi Gershon  
Butrashvili,  
Tel: 054-555-3155

to the right and turns into Dov Gur street. Continue straight at the roundabout and turn left at Benei Brith Boulevard, then turn right on Menachem Begin Road. At the big roundabout named after Ilan Ramon take the fifth exit, to Hatzionut Street, and after about 50 meters you will reach the synagogue, which has huge glass windows adorning its front.

The architectural style of the synagogue combines the classic with the modern - from the Greek style columns with gold crowning to the huge windows. Under the top molding in the front there are three Stars of David, and in the garden surrounding the building, wooden benches were placed for the benefit of worshippers and visitors.

It is one of the newest and most magnificent synagogues of the community in Israel. It was established by the four sons of the city's resident Yitzhak Nenikashvili in memory of their father,

and was inaugurated in September 2009 in the City Quarter, where Ashdod's cultural institutions are located next to many municipal and government institutions.

At the center of the synagogue there is a marble floor, with a carpet on top of it that surrounds the stage and looks as if it is woven out of artistic tiles. A luxurious chandelier hangs from the ceiling. The thin colorful scarves that adorn the magnificent Torah Scroll in the prayer hall were donated by the women of the community as a tribute to the glorification of the holy book, and they give the ceremony a personal and emotional tone. "The Georgian community members love to combine spirituality and tradition with the beautiful and aesthetic," says the community's Rabbi in the city, Rabbi Gershon Butrashvili.

### More about: The immigration from Georgia

In the early 1970s, after much conflict with the Soviet Union's communist government, large waves of immigration started to arrive in Israel from Georgia, the first Jews who broke the barrier of the iron curtain. Many of the Georgian immigrants came to Ashdod and settled in Quarter Dalet (4) of the city, where the first community synagogue was also built. They worked in different trades, mainly in commerce and small entrepreneurship, and in the fabric of Ashdod communities they were characterized as people who helped others, and perceived as those who "know how to get along". Over the years they moved into various quarters in the city, but many still maintain the characteristic traditions, culture and customs of the community. This is especially true in Ashdod, where 40 thousand of the community members live, and which is considered the capital of Georgian Jewish community in Israel and in the world.

The prayer version at the synagogue is Jerusalem-Sephardic, but the music is Georgian. The heartfelt form of hospitality and the joy of the Georgian Jews are apparent in the synagogue as well, and on holidays and at festive events they set tables in the hall or in the garden filled with food and good wine as proper, and celebrate to the sounds of famous ethnic dance groups, musicians and singers from the community.

On Shabbat Shira, when the part about the "Song of the Sea" is read from Parshat Beshalach, the worshipers stand on their feet and read it in a unique form of song. On that Saturday they also eat korkuti - a special wheat dish that is cooked to commemorate



the manna eaten by our forefathers in the desert, which is also mentioned in the weekly reading of Beshalach.

From the Or Yitzhak synagogue, continue south on Hatzionut street, turn left on Hatikva and right at the Onot roundabout, onto

**The Shalom Shabazi  
Achdut Amenu synagogue**



Parking lot: Parking available (free of charge)



5 Nachal Snir Street



To arrange a visit:  
Yoel Shosef, Tel:  
054-784-5680

Tamuz street. At the next roundabout continue straight, and turn left on Kineret street and left again at the roundabout-to Nachal Snir street. Here stands **the Achdut Amenu synagogue named after Shalom Shabazi**, the revered Rabbi of the Jews of Yemen and greatest of its poets.

The synagogue, which was designed by architect Yair Zadok and built in 2000, is located in a beautiful garden. On the outside it is painted beige and terracotta. It does not stand out and isn't fancy, and if not for the Menorah on its roof, one might think it was a villa in Tuscany.

In 1984, singer Ofra Chaza released her album Yemenite Songs, which contained liturgical poems of the 17th century Rabbi and poet, Shalom Shabazi. His centuries-old poems (such as "Im Nin'alu") became some of the singer's greatest hits. Neighborhoods and streets were named after him, and naturally synagogues as well. The holy Aron (in the prayer hall) was set in the corner, in the exact direction of Jerusalem, thereby creating a form of an arrow. On the wooden plank above the prayer hall there are engravings of the seven species, the 12 tribes, the stone tablets and the burning bush, and the windows are decorated by soft orange-colored curtains.



The seats in the prayer hall create a kind of circle around the bima (platform), which is surrounded by artistic glass featuring paintings of the walls of Jerusalem. In the traditional "cheder" (religious pre-school and primary school) in Yemen the students sat in the shape of an open square around one Torah scroll, while here the seating is modern and fits the 21st century, but something of the Yemenite Jewish tradition is still felt.

The first Torah scroll used for prayer in the synagogue was donated by the Rabbinate and was actually Ashkenazi. In time, the letters faded and the scroll was about to be invalidated. The owner of the scroll, who was one of the founders of the synagogue, could not accept this decree. Many inquiries were sent to well-known rabbis from Yemen, and as a result the book was fixed by a Yemenite scroll writer. It is used for prayer to this day.

The prayer version in the synagogue is mixed, comprised of Baladi (an ancient version used over 1,800 years ago by the Jews of Yemen) and Shami (a version brought to Yemen about 350 years ago, probably by merchants from Spain). Although the prayers are led by a cantor, the congregation actually sings most of the prayers together with him. Most of the Yemenite immigrants living in Ashdod came to the city from the nearby Shetulim cooperative settlement and from Gedera. Most of them were born in Israel, and learned the Yemenite language when the parents spoke Yemenite between them when they didn't want the children to understand.

In order to preserve the poetry and tradition, they read the Torah in Yemenite, and one of the children receiving lessons from a Mori (as the teacher in the traditional Yementie Cheder is called), translates to Hebrew verse by verse. Rabbi Shalom Shabazi's songs are sung with a trill, a Yemenite step and joy during festive events. Purim and Simchat Torah are a true celebrations, in which tables are set, tablecloths are placed, and there is plentiful eating with whiskey, vodka and Yemenite Arak liquor.

From the Yemenite Jews synagogue, continue on to the **Keter HaTorah** synagogue of the Karaite community, which is about a four-minute drive.

### The Keter Torah Synagogue



Parking available  
(Free of charge)



9 Tishrei Street



To arrange a visit:  
Yossi Yefet, Tel:  
054-561-9144

Return in the direction from whence you came, and turn left at the second roundabout, onto Herzl Boulevard. At the next turn, turn right onto Oven Ben-Ami Boulevard, right again at the roundabout onto Kochav Hatzafon street, and then right onto Tishrei street.

This is the location of the new Karaite synagogue, which was inaugurated in the city in 2010, and designed by architect Seri Ben-Ami. Thanks to its location, at the corner of Bnai Brith Boulevard and Ben-Ami Boulevard, its whiteness stands out. Above the entrance there is a seven-branched Menorah, long windows are set in its white walls, through which a pleasant light filters in, and the surrounding garden is beautiful and well-kept.

Back in the tenth century CE, Rabbi Aharon Ben-Asher, the man the synagogue is named after, was active in Tiberias. Ben-Asher, who was related to Anan Ben-David the founder of the Karaite stream, is the one who developed the method of vowelizing the Bible that is considered the most accurate and qualified. According to this method, which is accepted by both Karaite and rabbinic traditions, Ben-Asher proofed and vowelized the Aleppo Codex, the famous bible manuscript of which an original copy is currently housed at the Israel Museum.

Anan Ben-David himself lived and worked in the eighth century CE, and some researchers claim that close to forty percent of the Jewish nation were Karaite during the following two hundred years.

### More About: The Karaite Community



The Karaite community are called that because they believe in the bible as written. The prayer is conducted in a kind of dialogue between the cantor and the congregation, and is mostly based on the Book of Psalms and ancient liturgical poems and music. Most of the members of the community immigrated to Israel from Egypt and the end of the 1950s. Many of them settled in Ashdod, which has the largest concentration of Karaites in Israel today, over two thousand families. The old synagogue in Quarter Alef (1) in the city served the community for many years until the new synagogue was built.

The members of the community are careful to preserve their unique tradition, and in the synagogue there is even a choir of young members of the community, who renew forgotten songs. At the entrance to the prayer hall, you must take off your shoes according to the verse ...“Take off your sandals, for the place where you are standing is holy ground...” (Exodus 3:5). For reasons of purity, entry to the prayer hall is forbidden for menstruating women, and entry is forbidden for both genders after visiting the cemetery.

In general entry is allowed only after showering. With the exception of those who are unable, prayer is conducted standing up, kneeling and bowing down.

The prayer hall at the synagogue is built as a large inner space and is carpeted. Unlike other communities, the Karaite pray only twice a day, in the morning and in the evening. The prayers serve

as a substitute for the sacrifice custom that was customary in the temple. In contrast with the Mezuzahs of the main streams in Judaism, the parchment of the Karaite Mezuzah contains the Ten Commandments, and not the paragraphs of "Shma Israel" and "Vehaya Im Shamo'a" from the Bible.



The community members view the synagogue as a mini-temple, a unique and central place where man unites with his Maker. According to the Karaite approach, women are equal to men and they

are not forbidden to pray and sing in the synagogue, but because of modesty they do not come up to the Torah and the men and women are separated.

From the Kraite synagogue, continue now to the Ashkenazi synagogue, **The Birkat Amalia** synagogue. Return to the roundabout and turn right, onto Tamuz street. At the next roundabout, take the third exit onto Herzl Boulevard, and at the roundabout turn right onto Har Shomron street. Turning right at Kineret street will lead you to Nachal Yarmukh street, where you should turn right. At the end of the street you will be able to see the plain front of the synagogue.

If not for the Menorah standing on the roof of the entrance and the name of the synagogue that is affixed at the front, one would think it is one of the villas of Quarter Yod Alef (11) where the

The Birkat Amalia Synagogue



Parking available  
(Free of charge)



5 Nachal Yarmuch  
Street



To arrange a visit:  
Avraham Moshe,  
Tel: 050-944-0901  
08-867-6839

synagogue is located. Inside as well, it is characterized by clean contours and a restrained humble decor. The only splash of color comes from the colorful stained glass designs that are naive in style and almost remind us of a child's painting.

The synagogue, which was built in the 1980s, is named after the mother of Arie Klang, who was a contractor and entrepreneur and one of the city's oldest

residents (see information about Arie Klang in the route "Along the seashore: Nostalgia and the aroma of spices among the town's first houses").

It is one of the only Ashkenazi synagogues in Ashdod, if not the only one. In a city where the majority of worshipers who attend synagogue are Sephardi, it is a sort of nature reserve where the people praying there are mainly Ashkenazi, from Romania and Hungary, from Italy, the United States, Uruguay and France, and a few from Georgia and North Africa.

Another fact worth mentioning is the prayer style. The prayers here are read in Hebrew in the Ahid format, which is the IDF version. The worshipers are mostly made up of those with knitted



Yarmulkes, and most are professionals from the Religious Zionist stream. Although most of the worshipers are Ashkenazi, people from other communities also come for the Bible studies that take

place here, and many conduct Bar Mitzvahs, circumcisions, and even weddings here. On welcoming the Sabbath they sing songs by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach, "the Singing Rabbi" whom everyone remembers from the 1960s and 1970s.

The festivities that take place in the synagogue are a great opportunity to sample true Ashkenazi catering and to fondly remember the tastes of yesteryear - from Kugel and Gefilte Fish to Cholent, Herring and P'tcha (organized groups who visit the synagogue can pre-order catering). The regular worshippers pay membership dues and are registered in an independent organization of about 100 members.

The tour will now lead you to one of the largest synagogues in the city. Return to Kineret street, turn left on Har Tavor street and right at Alliance Square, to Moshe Dayan Boulevard. At the forth roundabout turn right onto Rogozin street, and again right- onto Haim Moshe Shapira street. Continue straight, turn right at Balfour street, and right at the roundabout onto Moshe Even Ezra street. Turning right will lead you to Moshe Tchernichovsky street.

The arched windows of the **Yismach Moshe** synagogue, together with its exterior stone walls, give the building a Jerusalemite look. The words "Torah, Service and Acts of Lovingkindness" that are fixed on the metal crown in the front, are taken from the

### The Yismach Moshe Synagogue



Parking available  
(Free of charge)



28 Brener Street



To arrange a visit:  
Rabbi Yaakov Biton,  
Tel: 052-662-1500

phrase attributed to Rabbi Shimon the Righteous, "On three things the world stands, on Torah, Service and Loving kindness". The Torah symbolizes the spiritual side, service - the physical side and lovingkindness - the link between the two.

The synagogue is named after the Rabbi Moshe Aharon Pinto. His son, Rabbi Haim Pinto, is the Chief Rabbi of Ashdod, and also serves as the Chief Rabbi of Kiryat Malachi. The prayer style here is Moroccan, and so are the songs, music and liturgical poems sung at the synagogue, which also has a strong connection with the Israel Andalusian Orchestra. Ashdod is perhaps the city with the most diverse number of communities in the country, and although the style of prayer in the synagogue is pure Moroccan, other communities pray here as well, those with knitted Yarmulkes and the secular who come to the synagogue during the holidays.

## Good to know

**Sesame Street** The place where the Ashdod custom of welcoming the Sabbath was born is in Quarter Bet (2), at the intersection of Borochov and Rabbi Maimon streets, and it constitutes a reminder of old Ashdod. The city elders used to sit in the coffee shops on the street and discuss current events while their wives were busy cooking and cleaning for the Sabbath. The bustle on the street reminded the residents of the people of the "Sesame Street Show", and the name took root.

**The Ashdod-Yam Market** Ashdod city market, or as it is commonly known "The Wednesday Market", draws many visitors to it from Ashdod as well as other places. The market, which takes place in the Lido Beach parking lot, offers fruit, vegetables and other food items, and flea-market style items as well.

**Tel Mor** The old port city of Ashdod is today an ancient archaeological site located on the northern bank of the Lachish stream, near the ancient coastal road. Excavations conducted in the area uncovered 12 archaeological layers - from the end of the late bronze era up to the Hellenistic period. Among other things discovered at the site, a device was unearthed that was used to produce the color purple from snails.

One of the things that make the synagogue unique is the complete abstention from speaking during prayer, and strictly keeping the rule that at the synagogue people are ordered to pray and not engage in mundane matters. Another special thing is that on the walls there are no paintings or pictures, only verses and texts that express law, justice, humility, and love of mankind and the Torah - all things that are food for the soul and spirit. Drawings of white peace doves on a blue background on the ceiling give the place a sense of airiness.

The synagogue, which was design by architect Lior Malka, is of the largest in the city, with more than 500 seats in the main hall

and about 150 more in the women's section. The renewed hall was designed by architect Zahava Binyamin and the worshipers took part in the funding. The main element in the hall is a relief made from gold-plated iron and copper, a master artist's depiction of the Temple with three crowns - Torah, Priesthood and Kingship - the stone tablets, Jerusalem, and the Jewish nation standing at Mount Sinai. Underground, at the spot of the cantor's lectern, holy stones brought from the synagogue of the Pinto family of Rabbis in the coastal city of Essaouira, Morocco, were placed.

Inside the prayer hall there are about thirty Torah scrolls. One of the scrolls is about 250 years old, and it came from either Syria or Morocco. It is considered to have special attributes and therefore it is never opened or read. The scroll passes from home to home and even among hospitals, and brings salvation, or so it is believed. Rabbi Pinto's permanent seat is actually in the far corner of the hall, as one of the people. This is so that the worshipers will not pay attention to him - but to worshipping the Creator.

From here, continue to the special synagogue of the Ethiopian community, **the Goel Yisrael synagogue**. Backtrack and turn left

### The Goel Yisrael Synagogue



Parking available  
(Free of charge)



8 Mavo Hasharvitan  
Street

To arrange a visit:  
Rabbi Michael  
Maharat,  
Tel: 054-800-1037

on Moshe Even Ezra street, then left again onto Yehuda Halevi street. On Bnai Brith Boulevard turn right, while on your left is the city's beautiful statue garden. Turn left on Jerusalem Boulevard, and then right onto HaPrachim Boulevard. At the roundabout turn left, onto HaRotem street, and immediately right into Mevo Hasharvitan street.





The Goel Yisrael synagogue is nothing like the synagogues of the Ethiopian immigrants in their country of origin. It is built from straight walls of white stone, and the only design element present is at the front of the building where there are three narrow windows which are pointy on top. The interior of the synagogue is simple and plain, and the women's section is decorated with stained glass reminiscent of old drawings from the Holy Land.

In the corner of the hall there are two touching photos: One is of the late Rebbetzin Yelganish Zipora pleading among a large audience of women in white, and the second is of the community elders before they immigrated to Israel.

"The choice of architectural style is not by chance," says the Rabbi of the Ethiopian community in Ashdod, Rabbi Michael Maharat, after whose mother, Rebbetzin Yelganish, the synagogue is named. "I see myself as an Israeli in every respect, and it was important to me that the building fit in with the general modern style. Our intention is to integrate ourselves in the country, and therefore I am not in favor of maintaining customs that were rooted in the past among the Ethiopian Jews, such as sacrificing a lamb or a goat for Passover, when a son is born, forty days after childbirth, or on other occasions. Much to my joy, these customs are fading from the world".

However, Rabbi Maharat ascribes much importance to keeping the Israeli traditions, and he conducts weddings, Bar Mitzvahs, Shabbat Hatan and of course makes sure to celebrate the holidays according to Jewish law. He immigrated to Israel with his family when he was about 13 years old, the son of a family of Kessim. His father, who was a Kes, ordained his brother, who is today a Kes in the city.

### More about: The Ethiopian Jews in Ashdod

In Ashdod there are about 1,500 families of Ethiopian decent. Although many of the young people have distanced themselves from tradition, they still come to the synagogue on the holidays. Those who "steal the show" are the adults, who come dressed in their best traditional attire. Women and men alike wear wide white scarves, woven from white cotton and decorated with colorful threads called Netala. The white decorated dresses of the women are called Habeshah Kemis, and on their heads they wear Shash scarves.

The prayer style is comprised from the Ghez language (an ancient Semitic language spoken by various ethnic groups in Ethiopia that is also known as Classical Ethiopian) alongside the familiar Jerusalem Sephardi style. The prayers are accompanied with songs in Sephardi style, traditional songs and the pleasant song of the Kes that are members of the community.

### The Or Menachem Synagogue



Parking available  
(Free of charge)



1 Avnei HaChoshen  
Street



To arrange a visit:  
Rabbanit Chana  
Amar, Tel-  
050-681-0174

Now continue **to the Or Menachem synagogue**, named after the Lubavitcher Rabbi. From HaRotem street turn right and immediately left, onto Jerusalem Boulevard. Further on turn left, back onto Bnai Brith Boulevard, and continue straight, passing three of the city's Quarters, until you arrive at the southernmost point in Ashdod. After an about ten minute drive turn right onto

Tel Hai street, then left on Sapir street and continue straight at the roundabout with the road, which changes its name to Avnei Choshen.

The elegant exterior of the Chabad compound where the Or Menachem synagogue is located is restrained, but there is no doubt that this is some kind of palace. The huge complex, with a white stone facade and grey-blue windows, was designed by architect Gil Minster, and the interior decoration was entrusted to Keinan Architects. Although it only opened in 2017, Rabbi Menachem Amar and his wife, Rebbetzin Chana already envision an all-round Jewish center that will operate in Ashdod and beyond.

It is possible to see by the great deal of attention given to every detail, be it big or small - from the velvet curtain in the designed hall to the mosaic decorating the wall at the luxurious hand washing corner. The stylish mosaic depicts the Holy Temple with a Kohen standing next to it washing his hands. "So, anyone washing their hands in front of the mosaic understands they are a link in a chain," explains Rabbi Amar. The benches at the synagogue are made from brown mahogany wood, the chandelier is bright, and the whole place shows prestige and innovation. There are new white Yarmulkes placed on the benches for anyone who wants to come inside and pray.



## More about: Rabbi Amar

Rabbi Amar was born and educated in Paris, and spent several years an emissary of the Rebbe mission in Sydney, Australia. In 2004 he arrived in Ashdod to establish a spiritual center to increase Jewish identity in the spirit of Chabad and the ideology of Hassidut. And so, aside from the synagogue, various activities take place there, including Torah lessons and workshops, lectures, women's nights, and professional counselling and guidance for young couples - all in an attempt to create a young community that will identify with the place.

When you walk in the compound traditional tunes and soul music emanate from the speakers in the ceiling. "The modern architecture was designed to inspire the young generation and connect it to tradition and Jewish identity with innovative means that will speak to its heart," says the Rabbi, who not only talks but also does, with the help of multimedia - screens that come up and down, state of the art projectors, and even a hall that resembles an "escape room" - an interactive experience of being acquainted with Judaism and the tradition of Chabad.

The synagogue and the offices at the location are open at all times, and whoever wants to enter the compound is welcome to come in, have a glass of water and even make themselves coffee. The lobby is adorned with a commemorative wall to glorify the burial place of the Ba'al Hatnaya, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of the Chabad Hassidic movement. The Judaica shop in the complex complements the holistic experience. Getting back to the basics, the prayer style is Sephardi combined with the music of joy and elation, and whoever wishes is welcome to raise a glass or two of Vodka.



## They said about her

"From Ekron to the sea all the cities near Ashdod, along with their villages. Ashdod, its towns and its villages"

**(Book of Joshua, Chapter 15, Verse 46-47)**



# Around Ashdod

Beit Ha'Edut  
(Testimonial House)

Tel Ashdod

Roberts Pool

Nitzanim Sands  
Reserve

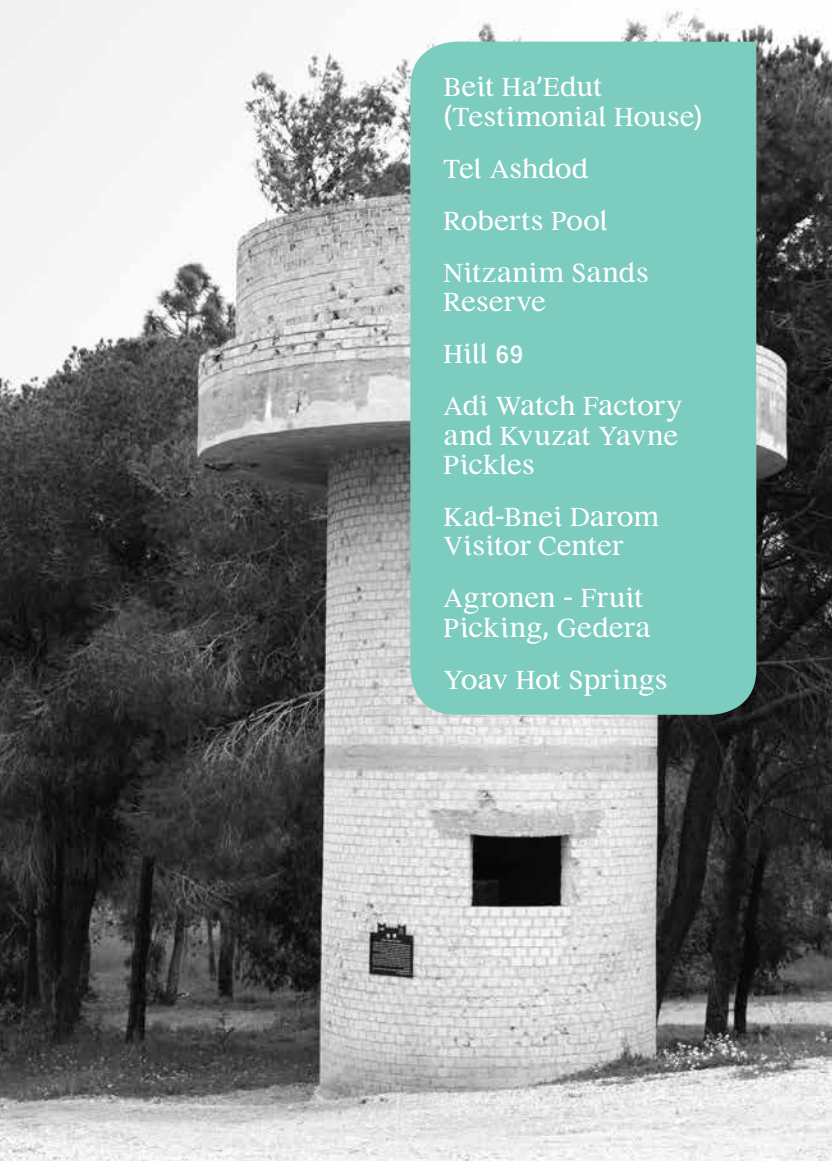
Hill 69

Adi Watch Factory  
and Kvuzat Yavne  
Pickles

Kad-Bnei Darom  
Visitor Center

Agronen - Fruit  
Picking, Gedera

Yoav Hot Springs



**Beit Ha'Edut**

Sunday-Thursday  
08:30-16:00



With payment;  
discount for students,  
senior citizens and  
groups.



Nir Galim cooperative  
settlement (at the  
northern entrance to  
Ashdod)



08-856-8476 Ext 2



[www.beit-haedut.org.il](http://www.beit-haedut.org.il)



Entry by prior  
arrangement only.

**Beit Ha'Edut (Testimonial House)**

The religious Zionist heritage and Holocaust memorial Testimonial House is located in the heart of the Nir Galim cooperative settlement, northeast of the city of Ashdod, near Route 41. The small intimate museum was established at the beginning of the 1990s by the members of the Bnei Akiva organization, with the aim of documenting, researching, and bequeathing to future generations the memory of the Holocaust and the heritage of religious Zionism. Among other things exhibited are the works of artists who survived the Holocaust, and a variety of

authentic displays from the Holocaust period. In 2012, the "Glass House" exhibit was inaugurated at the museum, displaying in a fascinating experiential manner the story of the rescue of many of the Jews from Budapest at the end of the war. There are also a library, archives, and a conference hall in the complex.

**Tel Ashdod**

Southeast of today's Ashdod, about five kilometers from the shore and south of the Ad Halom industrial area, is one of the largest agricultural sites in Israel. The archaeological excavations conducted at the site for about a decade uncovered many findings attesting to the long-standing settlement in the area and the tremendous importance of the region over about two thousand years. The findings also included many remains of one of the five philistine towers, which stretched over an area of hundreds

**Tel Ashdod**



24 hours a day, throughout the year



Free of charge



South to the Ad Halom industrial zone



Not accessible to the handicapped



It is advised not to come with a private car that is not a 4x4. Park your car across from the Emunim interchange on Route 4, or in the center (About 400 meters from the Tel).

of dunams, and served as an important center during the Philistine era, as well as 23 historical strata - the earliest of which dates to the middle Bronze age and the latest to the late Byzantine period.

About two hundred meters north of the archaeological site, a huge complex was unearthed, which experts say was used as the Assyrian governor's palace. Numerous items of alabaster, clay and metal were exposed in the palace's compound, as well as an icon of a sitting Egyptian goddess dated to the 12th century BC, which earned the nickname "Ashdoda". Some of the many items discovered in the excavations conducted here are now displayed at the Museum of Philistine

**Culture in the city.**

The archaeological site, which dominated the ancient sea route (Via Maris), rises to a height of about ten meters above sea level. Among other things, it includes the remains of the Arab village of Isdud and the remains of the entrance to the Philistine city, through which the Holy Ark was brought in. Some of the village buildings still show signs of bullet holes from the fierce battles that took place here during the War of Independence. At the top of the site stand the remains of the mosque that was located in the middle of the village, and was named after Salman Al Farsi, who was, according to legend, the personal barber of the Prophet Muhammad. To the west of the mosque there is a khan that was built during the Ottoman period and used as a resting place for pilgrims passing through. Next to the



Khan stands one of the only structures that was left mostly intact—the tomb of Sheikh Abu Al-Kabel.

At the end of the visit you can continue to the great winter pond - Roberts Pond (it is recommended to visit during the winter, or alternatively in the spring when you can enjoy the beautiful blossoms in the area).

#### Roberts Pool

-  24 hours a day, throughout the year
-  Free of charge
-  West to Beit Ezra
-  Not accessible to the handicapped
-  It is recommended to come during the winter or the beginning of the spring. The area is meant for off-road vehicles and hikers only.

#### Roberts Pool

The Great Winter Pond, which covers an area of about 190 dunams (47.5 acres) southwest of Tel Ashdod, between the Ashdod Sands Park and Route 4, is named after Scottish artist David Roberts, who, during his visit to Israel in 1839, painted the landscapes of Israel, among which were the Pond and the adjacent Tel Ashdod. Its Arabic name is "Birket El-Khan", after the Khan which was located at the foot of the nearby Tel (archaeological site).

The rainwater collected here every winter draw many kinds of waterfowl and a wide variety of amphibians. There are Eucalyptus trees and many Sycamore trees on the banks of the pond, as well as diverse water vegetation. The pond, which generally remains full of water until the spring arrives, is an excellent location for a picnic in nature (careful: Do not bathe in its waters).

Roberts Pond is also a station on the hiking trail (black markings), which begins at the Shikmim Field School (on Nitzanim Beach) and ends at Tel Ashdod.



*Be careful not to confuse it with the sewerage reservoir north of the pond. In some of the maps it is wrongly marked as Roberts Pond.*

#### Nitzanim Sands Reserve

The giant sand park, which covers an area of about 20 thousand dunam (5000 acres) between Ashdod and Ashkelon, is a reminder of the sands that once covered the coastal plain, and is without a doubt one of the most impressive and magical nature sites in the south. Once you have conquered the top of the famous great sand dune at the northern end of the park, within the city of Ashdod (see the "Running" chapter), you can continue to explore the park.



**Nitzanim Sands Reserve**

The Shikmim Field School Parking Lot



From sunrise until nightfall



Free of charge



The Nitzanim Reserve



[www.parks.org.il](http://www.parks.org.il)



Partially accessible



There are no restrooms or water in the reserve, so it is best to take advantage of the field school for that purpose.



The beautiful reserve is divided into two by the Evtach stream (a dry river bed that opens into the sea at Nitzanim Beach). The area south of the stream is a training ground for the IDF basic training base located in the reserve, and entry is prohibited. The area north of the stream,

about 8,000 dunams (2000 acres) of land, is open to the public. The spectacular Nitzanim Beach (an official beach) and the ground water pools within it are not included in the reserve area.

The two large sandstone quarries, which were in operation for about three decades until the late twentieth century, created a very interesting topography in the area. Since the mining works took place at the top of the sandstone ridge on the reserve, the point that should have been the highest in the area became the lowest. Over the years quarrying at the site stopped, and the quarries, which were dug to a depth of over twenty meters, became ground water reservoirs.

The region, which was the scene of difficult battles during the War of Independence, is now a pastoral reserve, with a wide and unique variety of plants and animals, including the Israeli deer, common fox, mongoose, and land turtles. Among other things, it also houses a small community settlement called "Nitzan".

Visiting the reserve, which is managed in cooperation between the Jewish National Fund and The Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel, is especially recommended in the fall season, but it is possible to tour the site all year round. (In the summer it is advised to start the visit early in the morning.) You can choose between several hiking routes, which are marked in black, green and blue. At the entrance to the reserve, there are signs explaining about the site, and next to them a parking lot and picnic tables shaded by eucalyptus trees.



*Do not pass on visiting the impressive structure of the field school. The building, which earned the nickname "The Palace", used to be the home of the Mukhtar of the Arab village located there. Next to it is the Monument of the Female Combat Soldier.*

## Hill 69

The hill, which was given its name because of its height (69 meters above sea level - the highest spot in the area), is located about five kilometers southeast of the entrance to the Nitzanim Sands Reserve.

### Hill 69



Dirt parking lot on site



24 hours a day, throughout the entire year



Free of charge



Hill 69



Partially accessible



Due to its height, the British built three water towers on it during the mandate period, which supplied water to the military camps in the area (hence its other nickname "Three Towers Hill").








Later on, the hill became a first rate strategic point after the fall of Nitzanim to the Egyptian army during the War of Independence. After a number of failed attempts by the Egyptian army to conquer the hill from a Givati unit, it was taken on June 10, 1948 after a bloody battle that claimed the lives of 20 combat soldiers. Other combat soldiers were wounded or taken captive. A few months later the Israel Defense Forces managed to retake control of the hill. Today a monument stands on the site in memory of the fallen. The historic towers were restored and a Jewish National Fund parking lot was built next to them.

## Adi Watch Factory and Kvuzat Yavne Pickles



The watch factory store, which is considered the largest of its kind in the country, is located on the side of Route 41, between the Benei Darom intersection and the Gedera intersection. You can find all of the

**Adi Watch Factory and Kvuzat Yavne Pickles**

-  On-site parking  
Sunday-Thursday
-  08:00-17:45;  
Friday 08:00-12:45
-  With payment from  
age three
-  08-854-8601/633
-  Kvuzat Yavne  
Fully accessible  
(including  
wheelchairs)
-  www.  
adiwatches.co.il
-  Visits to the site  
are for groups  
only, and by prior  
arrangement.

leading brands under one roof - from the house brand (Adi) to veteran international brands such as Swiss Military, Timex and Rhythm.

The experience of a visit to the location combines not only the opportunity to purchase every type of watch (from wrist watches - for women, men and children, through alarm clocks and wall clocks), but also to enjoy a screening of a short film (at no cost) that describes the watch assembly process at the factory; a guided tour of the only watch production floor in the country; a visit to the "Kvuzat Yavne" pickle factory, which was established about sixty years ago and became the leading brand in the country; and a tour of the Kvuzat Yavne Solar Farm, where you can learn up close the method of producing electricity using the sun's rays.

**Kad-Benei Darom**

-  On-site parking  
Sunday-Thursday
-  10:00-16:00; Friday  
and holiday eves  
09:00-12:00; Closed  
on Saturdays and  
holidays
-  With payment (price  
varies according to  
group type)
-  08-851-5548 or  
050-861-6666
-  Bnei Darom  
Cooperative  
Settlement
-  Accessible
-  www.kad.co.il
-  Visits to the site are  
for groups only, and  
by prior arrangement;  
Demonstration of  
the oil production  
process - during  
the olive harvest  
(October/January)

**Kad-Benei Darom Visitor Center**

The unique olive press is located at the old Benei Darom cooperative settlement, and has been operational for over forty years. Quality olive oil, pickled vegetables of all kinds, and a variety of spreads are manufactured at the location. At the olive press visitor center, you can enjoy a demonstration of the olive oil production process (both old and new methods), a screening of a film that describes the production process in the factory, a visit to the First Residents' House and learning the story of the settlement's



establishment, tastings of factory products, and more. All the products can be purchased at the factory store.

**Agronen - Fruit Picking**

On-site parking

Friday 09:00-15:00;  
Saturday from 09:00  
until the last of the  
fruitWith payment from  
age three

053-937-4258



Agronen, Gedera

Fully accessible  
(including  
wheelchairs)

www.agronen.co.il

**Agronen - Fruit Picking, Gedera**

About a quarter of an hour drive from Ashdod, the beautiful fields of Agronen offer an exotic fruit picking experience for the whole family. In the field (16 dunams (4 acres)) you will find a large variety of tree strawberries (black, white and Pakistani), nine different varieties of raspberries, and different types of Brazilian Pitanga cherries. In addition you can enjoy picking loquats and strawberries, and you can purchase empty baskets if needed (to manage carrying it all home).



Most of the crops are in greenhouses, so it is possible to visit in almost every kind of weather (except in particularly stormy weather). The entrance area is also covered to protect from the rain.

**Yoav Hot Springs**

A visiting to this area isn't complete without a pleasant relaxation experience to rejuvenate you before you return to your daily routine. The Yoav Hot Springs complex has 11 thermo-mineral pools, which are drawn from the depths of the earth and flow in their natural composition at a temperature of 37-39 degrees (Celsius) straight into the pools. The mineral- and sulfur-enriched waters have unique healing properties, to help rejuvenate body and soul.

Next to the pools there are a wet sauna, a dry sauna and a steam Jacuzzi, and you can get a pampering health massage. There is a kosher restaurant, as well as a rest and hospitality area, on the banks of the lake.

**Yoav Hot Springs**

On-site parking

Sunday 09:00-17:00;  
Monday, Wednesday  
08:30-16:30; Tuesday  
08:30-22:00; Thursday  
08:30-23:00; Friday  
08:00-15:30; Saturday  
07:30-17:00With payment  
(Treatment packages  
can be purchased);  
Discount for children  
(ages 5-12) and for  
senior citizens

08-670-5600



Yoav Hot Springs



Accessible

www.hamei-yoav.  
co.ilEntering the water -  
from age three and up.  
Please bring a bathing  
suit, flip flops, towel  
and bathrobe (the last  
two can be rented at  
the place)

# Culinary arts and entertainment



## Culinary arts



In the beginning there were the sea, the harbor and fish. Two or three Ashdod food institutions that opened and succeeded in the beginning were sea, harbor and fish. Two or three Ashdod food institutions that opened and succeeded, and were the culinary face of Ashdod. After that came the immigration from Russia. And from Ukraine. And from Moldova. And from Georgia. After that, and in between the immigrants from Ethiopia, and from the rest of the world's communities had arrived.

Later on there was a revival of Moroccan, Yemenite and Tunisian food; Turkish and Persian dishes again aroused curiosity; and there was growing interest in Chinese, Thai and Indian cuisines. These were followed in the Israeli coastal cities by many French immigrants and a few Dutch and Spanish speakers here and there, all of whom had long loved Italian pasta, Mexican nachos and Hungarian blintzes. Then, with all the waves of immigration, Ashdod became a melting pot of cultures.

In between, many good hard-working people had many childhood dreams, and a new generation of restless young people matured, and again that sea, with the beaches and the waves and especially the fresh fish, that inspired and sparked creativity. And so, with a little urban encouragement, the momentum of construction and development, and a lot of entrepreneurial energy, those dreams slowly materialized and expanded the local catering repertoire, becoming an attractive scene that provides a perfect local response to the residents' pallet, and a Mecca for the crowd of diners and people looking for entertainment from all over the country (and from other countries too), until it was impossible not to admire the gastronomical treasure that rose here in Ashdod, and to call it an exclusive culinary scene. The Ashdod culinary scene, does not shame the big sisters in Israel and abroad.

A culinary scene means an active food scene and culinary arts field. A culinary scene means a place that becomes a location of interest for good food lovers and for professionals in the field of food, cooking and catering. A culinary scene is a topical gastronomic event that testifies to a bustling city life. Being a basic existential need, food attests to life. Therefore, food that develops into an event - food in the city - testifies to the movement of its cultural, social and economic wheels.

The Ashdod culinary scene reflects multiculturalism. It is a mosaic of flavors from all around the world; it is a gastronomic melting pot, in which the chefs of the world came together to build and be built in the city. It is a winning mix of a variety of flavors, aromas, colors and languages all

living together as one on a fertile land by the sea. The Ashdod culinary scene features a Georgian Khachapuri with a Yemenite Falafel, and Pad-Thai together with a Mexican Polenta, side by side. The Ashdod culinary scene is the dream of an Ethiopian girl who cooked for her family since she lost her mother - a dream that became a reality years later when she opened a restaurant in town that features her mother's cooking made in her memory. The Ashdod culinary scene is the dream conceived by four young friends when they shared a room in a Mexican surfing town - a dream which came true when they opened their joint restaurant. The Ashdod culinary scene is the special friendship woven between a Chinese family and an Israeli family, which brought on the establishment of a Chinese restaurant in town. It is the unique love story between a Thai woman and an Israeli man, which is expressed with Thai dishes the couple offer in the restaurant of their dreams. It is the dream of the boy who ate only the food at the boarding school in Brazil, and when he immigrated to Israel he decided that from now on he will be his own master and cook his own food for himself and his loved ones.

All these dreams, and many more, woven at different ends of the earth, came true here, in little Ashdod in little Israel, thanks to a blessed initiative, perseverance, investment, diligence, faith, and a lot of love. The love of food, the love of cooking, the love of culture, the love of food culture. And the love of people, who receive with pleasure everything the dreamers know so well how to give. The fulfillment of all those dreams is the fruit of labor of these entrepreneurs, cooks, bakers, chefs, pastry chefs, winemakers, fishermen, food magicians, delicacy-makers and taste artists who reside in the city, who did not give up on making what was once considered imaginary come true - those who radiate their love of food onto their customers' - their diners' - love of food. All of these are the ingredients of the Ashdod culinary scene - the human components that come together, shaken and well-stirred, spiced just right (with adjustments according to taste), and cooked on high heat with lots of warmth, passion and love, until golden. As a golden product, these are the things that make Ashdod what it is on a daily basis, a multicultural city that is growing and vibrant, eating and drinking, cooking and catering, entertaining and hosting; an attractive coastal city of piping hot flavors and the aromas of roasting, an Israeli city that brings immigrant communities together, with an impressive variety of restaurants and chefs, diners, bars, bakeries and pastry shops, pubs and falafel stands, ice cream parlors and kiosks, French fry shops and delicatessens, catering companies, cooks and bakers galore, earning it the nickname "Culinary City". And how.



*For more details on restaurants in Ashdod, see our book "Ashdod: A City of Flavors", our website [www.shichor.co.il](http://www.shichor.co.il) or contact the Ashdod Tourism Bureau by e-mail: [visitashdod2@ashdod.muni.il](mailto:visitashdod2@ashdod.muni.il)*



## Idi Dagim (Fish)



There isn't one person who is asked to name a restaurant in Ashdod who will not immediately reply: Idi. Idi is the most famous of all the restaurants in the city. It has been Ashdod's culinary face for years. It is a mythological institution. People make pilgrimage to it from every location and site in Israel, and its name has traveled far and wide even outside of Israel.

It seems it has always been here, the mother of all Ashdod restaurants. But it wasn't so 30 years ago, when Idi Israelowitz was still a dreamer and had not yet fulfilled his dream. He had a wonderful job as a diver with the Eilat-Ashkelon Pipeline Company, when he decided in the early 1980s that he was impatient to fulfill his destiny and become independent in the food industry. Even at the price of jeopardizing his successful employment.



At first he took a year sabbatical from the company, and tried his luck by opening a small pub. After a year he returned to the pipeline company in order to secure his family's income, but the culinary bug did not let go. He decided to leave his secure position and start an independent career. Even his manager at the company looked at him as if he was crazy when he announced he was leaving, but Idi could no longer ignore the true burning desire he had inside. And so he opened a small place again. And then another six or seven locations. Some had better results, some less so. On the way, in between, he still had doubts and dilemmas, and even the question of whether the original, mythological and famous Idi Fish would have even existed had he not left his job at the pipeline.

But his dilemma wasn't relevant. He went with love, his connection to the sea, and the belief that there has to be a place in Ashdod like the one he had fantasized about. And that a place like that would also be successful. He sought to specialize in the field he loved and knew, fish and seafood. So he travelled from time to time to restaurants in France, learned how they operate, did research and studied at the Cordon Bleu - one of the most respected culinary institutions in France. His acquaintance with the owner of Mul Yam, the Michelin Star Tel Aviv restaurant, who had been a fish importer before he became a restaurant owner, also helped him a great deal with opening his own restaurant.



In 1995, at the end of his wanderings, he came to the place in Ashdod where he decided to build the restaurant he had imagined. And so, after many hours of studying, touring, loving the sea and its produce, development and hard work, and lots of spunk, perfectionism and faith, a designed location, fresh catch of the sea, a superb menu and excellent service - the good reviews were not far behind.



6 Habosem street



073-7569513



Sunday- Saturday, 12:00-23:00

## Pescado



Friends Yechiel Zino and Eran Jano, residents of Ashdod, came home from the big trip they had immediately after they were discharged from the army, and realized that something was missing. A kosher fish restaurant. Eran's family has a fish shop ("Jano Brothers Fish"), and Yechiel possesses innate management abilities, even if he had no active management experience, as well as natural and supernatural abilities as a chef even though he never had his own TV show. It was clear to them that the restaurant business is very demanding, but that did not deter them from their dream of a real, lively fish restaurant. And kosher, of course. They started small, spending many hours at Eran's family fish shop, learning the trade, reviewing the market, and deriving inspiration. At first they imagined a small restaurant serving fresh kosher food, a humble menu based on goods from the "Jano Brothers Fish" shop. But their business had other plans. And so did their satisfied customers.

Thanks to diligence and investment, not submitting to the traditional molds of grilled fish or fried fish, turning to original dishes and a wide variety of fresh fish from the catch of the day, seasoning with their small secret of success - homemade salt instead of sea salt, understanding food and design, a beautiful and



pleasant location, and mainly thanks to a great love and the will to give - Pescado grew and became a much more significant restaurant than what they had dreamed or imagined it would be. It became an institution, a leader, rather than an assembly line for dishes. Today the two owner friends can be proud of the fact that their restaurant, whose name means "Fish" in Spanish, is valued even beyond the city limits of Ashdod; a place visited regularly by local and national politicians and celebrities;

and a place that gets great reviews and flattering ratings from the leading chefs in the country.



1/12 Martin Buber



08-8523063



Sunday-Thursday, 12:00-24:00,  
Saturday - one hour after the  
Sabbath ends until midnight

## Café Lyon



A few Paris enthusiasts from Tel Aviv came one day to one of the three Café Lyon branches in Ashdod. They thought that in terms of Brasserie, Boulangerie and Patisserie, no one could surprise them anymore. That they had already seen it all. They were told that despite the fact they saw it all - they should visit Ashdod anyway. So they travelled to Ashdod. And entered. And for a long while did not utter a word but only looked at each other, the large refrigerated displays with wooden panels, and their sweet hypnotic contents.

They really did think they had seen it all, but after a moment of silence and shock they regained composure and admitted: It is doubtful that such a sweet work of art could be found even in Tel Aviv. A moment later they found themselves having a close relationship with a white chocolate mousse combined with espresso Crème brulee' and chocolate toffee, puffs filled with muslin cream, strawberry pie and a crispy Belgian waffle with a scoop of ice cream on the side. Is it surprising that in two minutes they canceled their tickets to Paris?

Café Lyon is a French coffee shop chain that has four branches, three in Ashdod and the fourth in Yavne. The chain owners, Shimshon Itach and Yaniv Tal, entrepreneurs from Ashdod, established it as a continuation of the young and dynamic path of its mythological sister, the La Lyons restaurant they established in 1996. Even then, over two decades ago, Itach



and Tal wanted to move people French style. At Lyon, the coffee shop franchise named after the city of Lyon, which is considered the French culinary capital, they expanded, enlarged, renovated, and revived. They recruited the pastry chef Vered Oranim, a former food technologist at Elite, as the conductor of the fabulous desert section.

The Lyon chain manufactures its own cakes and pastries, which are handmade with embedded European frills. However, the menu is carefully adapted to the Israeli pallet. Apart from the indulgent deserts, French country cuisine is served - sandwiches, salads, pasta, soups, pancakes, pizza, quiches, fish and specialty drinks. There was a time Itach and Tal marketed their products to pastry shops around the country, but at a certain point they decided to concentrate in Ashdod and to build their coffee shop empire into a shrine for joie de vivre in commercial centers in their home town. And let the whole country chase them all the way to Ashdod.



1 Hagdud Ha'ivri street, Gan Ha'ir Complex; 47 Jabotinsky street, Star Center Complex, 1 Ariel Sharon street, Big Fashion Complex



Sunday- Thursday 08:00 until midnight; Friday 08:00-15:00; Saturday- One hour after the Sabbath ends until midnight





## Endive



One night all of the West Boutique Hotel in Ashdod rose to their feet. Everyone was waiting for a young couple who was invited to spend their first night as husband and wife after solidifying their love in the faith of Moses and Israel, at the hotel. The crew waited for them in anticipation, recruited for the purpose of making the bride and groom's time pleasant, briefed to the last possible detail. The exclusive hotel suite, which was reserved by their parents as a wedding gift, was well prepared. The nice breeze coming from the sea caressing Lido Beach was restless. And only the young couple was late to arrive. When the elegant limousine finally stopped at the entrance to the Boutique Hotel and its doors opened, a small insignificant phrase came out of two sweaty and happy mouths: "Sorry we are late, but will Endive's famous brunch be waiting for us tomorrow morning?" The famous indulging brunch of the Endive Restaurant was waiting for them, and how. And they knew why they were asking about it, and what exactly they were waiting for. It included - and still includes - for young couples and those not so young - an open buffet with a view of the sea with a variety of salads, boutique cheeses, freshly squeezed juices, a selection of pickled and warm fish, various omeletes, quiches, tapas and quality coffee.

But brunch isn't where the indulgence ends. In the evenings, guests at the restaurants receive gourmet meals created by chef Anatoli Shafir, orchestrating Endive's Mediterranean cuisine with European touches, and young people, and the not so young who visit here on Fridays greet the Sabbath to the sounds of a typical Greek Bouzouki in a free and liberated atmosphere.



West Boutique  
Hotel, 21 Hatayelet  
street



073-2866806



Sunday-Thursday 12:00 until  
midnight; Friday, and Saturday  
evening for private events



## Calma





The process of reducing Lido beach, the main stretch of beach in the city, into a site bustling with people only in the hot summer days, kept Aviv Matzliach, a resident of Ashdod in his forties, awake at night. He decided to restore its former glory, and bring back winter business and business back to winter. Quite a few places of entertainment opened at Lido Beach and closed shortly thereafter. One of the reasons was that they appealed almost exclusively to the rising sun and the tan-seeking crowds in the July-August heat. The winter months left the area empty and desolate. But Aviv Matzliach loves the winter too, the cuddling together over a steaming cup of tea in a warm restaurant when a view of the rough seas through the window.

Even back when he established Calma at Lido Beach ten years ago, he had no intention of being one of the seasonal businesses that struggle through the colder part of the year. He positioned Calma as one of the most stable and popular restaurants in the region, and with every day that passes it gains more of a reputation and satisfied customers. People come to it from all over the country and during every day of the week, but here too there is nothing like Fridays. While Friday morning brings young families to Calma to enjoy a relaxed breakfast by the sea, the night belongs to the twenty-something crowd- who greet the Sabbath with a pint of beer at sunset. As night falls, dinner is served, after which the place becomes a thriving entertainment site which lasts until the wee hours of the night. Smoldering Friday- In the summer, and in winter.



Lido Beach, Hatayelet street



08-8667241

All week,  
08:00-01:00



## The Tunisian Sandwich



In the midst of an important work meeting on the matter of absorption in Ashdod, just after the '77 electoral revolution, the new absorption minister David Levi became very hungry. There was no choice. The meeting was stopped. One does not mess with hunger, surely not with the hunger of a minister, and definitely not with the hunger of Absorption Minister Levi. After he was told of the seductive culinary choices in the developing city, the minister surprised everyone by asking to be driven to Rova Alef (Quarter A).



His devoted advisors were still trying to mumble something about a better alternative, but a determined Levi ignored their doubts. It seemed he knew why.

At the door of the modest Tunisian Sandwich Kingdom located in the commercial center next to the market, a colorful happy character greeted him with a warm hug. He was well-known in town. Morris Sitbon. Two years later Levi was promoted and became the Minister of Housing and Construction. Ashdod's growth in general and the strengthening increase of construction in particular, brought him to the city many times. On each visit, the minister's tight schedule had a half an hour reserved for Morris's fresh fried fricassee, with the huge gap in the center which gives it the look of a smiley face. Levi soon became a part of the family. The joint photograph with Morris and the sandwich soon followed. It was hung in a place of honor, visible to any regular or casual guest who wishes to feel the hominess, happiness and tastiness with a bun where the whole is more than the sum of its parts, and even the overwhelming generosity of its presentation.



1 Rogozin street, inside the commercial center (shop 23)



08-8567161



Sunday-Thursday  
10:00-20:00;  
Friday 10:00-13:00

## Petra



Even when he was 16, while wearing a pair of yellow plastic gloves during his dish-washing shift at a steakhouse in Ashkelon, Simo Ben-Chovel was waiting for the moment when his last plate would be polished and he would be able to go to the other side of the kitchen, the chef's side. That is how he learned the secrets of the culinary arts. And so, between scrubbing and polishing, he dreamed of his own restaurant that would one day be able to provide for his parents and the rest of his family as well, and that would have those special dishes he would invent himself. His culinary education moved up a notch when he took a cooking course in the IDF and, parallel to his military service, he also learned at the Tadmor School. When he was a soldier he even participated in a national chefs competition and won third prize. So, not surprisingly, the creative culinary dream the dish-washing boy had came to be and Ben-Chovel became the conductor of the concert of his life - Petra restaurant, which he established at Hakshatot Beach in the city. His musical instruments were the Georgian-European delicacies, in which he weaves his unique sound - his creative fingerprint, a personal touch, a one-time arrangement of the foods, his own Khachpuri tune. He fills the flaky Georgian dough shaped like a boat not only with Georgian cheeses and a poached egg, but also with seafood and a smear of butter, and he bakes it in a stone oven. This creative symphony is complimented by the pleasant atmosphere, the addictive breeze and the spectacular view from the beautiful restaurant, which recently celebrated the ninth anniversary of its establishment.



Hakshatot Beach,  
1 Mafkura street



053-9441986



All week, 09:00  
until midnight



## Vino del Mar



Ran Baranes was in the events bar service business, while Avi Aharoni had a liquor store. Avi's store sold to Ran's bar, and the two worked with each other on an almost daily basis. They clicked. When it became apparent that they wanted to establish something of their own, they thought how to take it one step further and incorporate the world of cocktails Ran likes so much with the wine world in which Avi specialized. They decided to open a place in Ashdod that was different than the locations the city had so far known, and after much further thought they decided to open a quality restaurant with good drinking, and the icing on the cake would be live shows, especially Spanish-style music.



The two found a location on the seafront, and slowly began building it from the ground up, with their bare hands, almost without seeking the help of professionals. As people who came to the restaurant business with prior knowledge, they knew exactly how they wanted their restaurant to look and operate. And so they created their dream restaurant. They designed it with the atmosphere of yesteryear, with bottles hanging over the bar and many candles to light the darkness, and in a Spanish style, with tiles and flooring in Catalan decor. To complete the ambiance, they recruited young local employees, as well as professional barmen, and dressed them in bow ties. By the time the two friends consolidated the character of the restaurant, it had already begun taking on a life of its own, selling unique quality wines and cocktails, while the food took a back seat.

Over time, the refreshing restaurant located on the northern beach grew and developed. Chef Elad Rubin was recruited to prepare weekly specials, and the food was no longer the snack next to the drinks. It was given the honorable place it deserved. Today, VINO del Mar, is defined as a Mediterranean chef restaurant and wine bar, but the two partners do not suffice with definitions of any kind.



1 Martin Buber



08-6713588



Sunday-Thursday, 11:00-02:00,  
Saturday - one hour after the  
Sabbath ends until 02:00

## Ronjan



Avi Avital rubbed his eyes and almost pinched himself to make sure he was not hallucinating. His eyes were accustomed to the herd of elephants that crossed rocky road winding in front of him, and were they accustomed to the amazing view of Isan, the small village in the northeastern part of Thailand. But this time, as he was chewing the delicious Pad-Thai he ordered for next to nothing, he also saw her on the road. Ronjan slowly crossed the road. Their eyes met. Love was ignited - instantly and mutually.



With no hotel in the village, Avi offered to pay Ronjan for staying at her home. She agreed, and he stayed. After two months of living together (with her grandmother and sisters), the two lovebirds married in a traditional Buddhist wedding. And then they came to Israel. Ronjan worked in flower arranging, but did not neglect for one moment her dream of opening a business selling fish and seafood to people from her homeland who were working in the country. Together with Avi, making the dream come true seemed possible.

That is how a Thai restaurant called "Ronjan" was born on the coast of Ashdod. The beginning wasn't easy. Many of Ashdod's residents, old and new, raised an eyebrow. It did not discourage Ronjan and Avi. Gradually news of the quality of the tiny restaurant spread. The single table was joined by more tables, and the great demand led to the move to Mei Ami Beach.



24 Max Nordau street,  
opposite Mei-Ami Beach



054-8111585



Sunday- Thursday 12:00-  
22:00; Friday 11:00-17:00



## Addis Alem



When she was eight, Efrat (Espa) Zana's world was shattered. Her mother, Addis, a dominant wonder woman, a role model for all the women of the small village of Attia in the Gondar region of Ethiopia who copied her recipes and admired her cooking, passed away at a young age, leaving behind a husband, two daughters and four sons shocked and in pain, and an entire village orphaned and grieving. Efrat's only sister was at the Sudanese border in a failed attempt to immigrate to Israel together with her husband. Since in Ethiopia men were forbidden to engage in household chores in general, and cooking and cleaning in particular, the family's burden fell on the fragile shoulders of the eight-year-old girl.

She matured overnight, and without gas and electricity, but with a little help from her siblings and neighbors, she began cooking for her family. The legacy of her mother Addis was her guiding light, and her voice and instructions echoed in her ears all the time. A-year-and-a-half later, the family was informed of Operation Solomon, and together with her father and brother Efrat immigrated to Israel at the age of nine-and-a-half. However, while other immigrants her age got acclimated at boarding schools and educational institutions, Efrat stayed at home to take care of the needs of her father and brothers, until finally, in order to alleviate her plight and the lack of childhood experience, her father sent her to the religious boarding school in Kfar Batya.

When her father passed away the family was once again in pieces. Just before his passing he asked her to go to school and learn, and she decided to fulfill his will. While providing for herself and her siblings, she graduated with a degree in Electronic Engineering. She got married in 2005, and after living with her husband in Australia for five years as emissaries for Keren Hayesod, and now a mother of four children, she still had one more dream to fulfill.

She opened the Addis Alem Ethiopian restaurant in Ashdod. The Amharic name means "a new world", and it commemorates the name of her unforgettable mother. Efrat became the chef in the restaurant she owned, and together with the delicious Ethiopian dishes from her mother's home, heartwarming service and a smile, she receives loving compliments and a great deal of demand from all over the country and abroad, as well as the fulfillment of the dream to continue on her mother's path.



5 Habanaim St.



053-2736551



Sunday-Thursday 11:00 until  
midnight; after Sabbath by  
advanced booking

### Aramis

What	A meat restaurant with an ideal view of the Mediterranean sea
Why	If the combination of good meat, cold beer and the beach brings a smile to your face, Aramis is the place for you
How much	Medium- Expensive
Signature dish	Beef Wellington
When	Sunday - Thursday 12:00 until midnight; Friday - Saturday 09:00 until midnight
Where	1 Lido Beach



### Falafel Tzan'ani

What	Quality falafel with the taste of old
Why	It's hard to argue with three decades of experience
How much	Cheap
Signature dish	Falafel!
When	Sunday - Thursday 08:00-21:00
Where	16 Yehuda Halevi street



### Two Gays Grill

What	A meat restaurant with a wide selection of possibilities
Why	For a quick fine meal alongside all the regular clientele
How much	Cheap
Signature dish	Meat balls in a baguette
When	Sunday- Thursday 11:30 till midnight; Saturday- an hour after the end of the Sabbath until midnight
Where	1 Rogozin street



### Castle

What	A romantic restaurant which magnetizes to it couples from all over the country
Why	A diversified menu which includes a selection of meat dishes and sea food
How much	Medium
Signature dish	Shrimps with smoked duck breast
When	Sunday- Thursday 17:00-01:00; Friday- Saturday 13:00-02:00
Where	85 Ha'atzmaut street



## Espania

What	A fish and sea food restaurant with a Spanish Aroma
Why	For authentic Spanish food made of fresh Mediterranean raw materials
How much	Expensive
Signature dish	Paella
When	All week from 12:00 till midnight
Where	11 Abba Hillel street



## Porto

What	A Mediterranean restaurant with a rich pizza menu
Why	For the special serving dishes, the result of Adi Nissany's work
How much	Medium
Signature dish	Fettuccine Artichoke
When	Sunday- Wednesday 12:00 till midnight; Thursday 12:00 till the last customer; Friday 11:00 until an hour before the Sabbath; Saturday- an hour after the end of the Sabbath until the last customer
Where	2 El Hayam Lane





## Kira

What	On the tallest hill in the city there is a great restaurant with a view second to none
Why	For the food, for the sunsets, for the breeze
How much	Medium-Expensive
Signature dish	Trio- A combination of rib-eye steak, fillet and veal chops
When	Sunday- Friday 09:00 till midnight; Saturday 10:30 till midnight
Where	4 Yair street, Givat Yona (Jonah Hill)



## Chon Lee

What	An authentic delicious Chinese-Taiwanese restaurant which represents the Israeli- Asian collaboration
Why	Because good Chinese restaurants are scarce in our region
How much	Cheap
Signature dish	Chicken with vegetables
When	Sunday- Thursday 12:30-23:00; Friday 12:00-16:00; Saturday from half an hour after the end of Sabbath until midnight
Where	6 Haorgim street



## Mama Rachel

What	A cooked food restaurant rich in flavors
Why	To taste the creations of Mama Rachel, who cooks there for over a quarter of a century
How much	Cheap
Signature dish	Moroccan fish
When	Sunday- Friday 11:30-14:00 or until all the food is gone
Where	15 Kibbutz Galuyot street



### Weissman

What	The first glatt kosher restaurant in town
Why	For meat dishes in Moroccan orientation
How much	Medium- Expensive
Signature dish	A saddle of lamb stew
When	Sunday- Thursday 12:00 till midnight; Weekends with reservation only
Where	9 Habanaim street



### Shachaf

What	A fine Georgian restaurant that serves traditional dishes
Why	In order to taste Tbilisi in Ashdod
How much	Cheap
Signature dish	Khachapuri
When	Sunday- Thursday 08:30-20:30; Friday 07:00-14:30
Where	53 Tel Chai street





### Pizza Bella

What	An Italian Pizza parlor with a French aroma
Why	Because the raw materials are imported straight from Italy
How much	Cheap
Signature dish	La Krol Pizza
When	Sunday-Thursday 10:00-23:00; Saturday from half an hour after the end of Sabbath till 23:00
Where	5/22 Haim Moshe Shapira street



### Holland Chips

What	A Dutch chips diner with a variety of sauces
Why	To try chips in peanut butter sauce
How much	Cheap
Signature dish	Fish & Chips
When	Sunday-Thursday 11:00-22:00; Friday 11:00-15:00
Where	74 Rogozin street



### Puzzle Café

What	A delicious and fresh restaurant-café
Why	To enjoy a cup of coffee in the background of the sea
How much	Medium- Expensive
Signature dish	Sirloin Carpaccio
When	All week 09:00-01:00
Where	1 Mafkura street, at the end of Arches Beach



### Julia

What	A chic place which suits every mood
Why	For the ambiance
How much	Medium
Signature dish	Arancini
When	Sunday- Thursday 08:00-01:00; Friday 08:00-15:00; Saturday from the end of Sabbath till midnight
Where	5 Hatayelet street



### Tiramisu

What	An Italian- dairy restaurant in the lobby of Hotel Leonardo
Why	To enjoy a good meal and contribute to the welfare organization of Niv the owner
How much	Expensive
Signature dish	Fish Shawarma
When	Sunday- Thursday 08:00 till midnight; Friday 08:00-16:00, Saturday from half an hour after the Sabbath ends till midnight
Where	1 Hayam Hatichon Boulevard, Leonardo Hotel



### Aladdin on the boulevard

What	A fairytale sea fish restaurant
Why	For the special fresh fish that the owner Eli Alkoby caught
How much	Medium
Signature dish	Salmon in coconut cream
When	Sunday- Thursday 11:00 until the last customer; Saturday from the end of the Sabbath until the last customer
Where	1/3 Martin Buber street



## Namaste

What	Unforgettable north Indian
Why	To dine in the background of authentic drawings from Mumbai
How much	Cheap
Signature dish	The green chutney that accompanies every meal
When	Sunday- Thursday 12:00-16:00, 18:30 till midnight; Friday 12:00-16:00; Saturday from half an hour after the Sabbath ends until midnight
Where	20 Hatayelet street, La Mamounia Building



## Sunset Boulevard

What	An American diner straight out of a movie
Why	For the impressive alcohol collection and the superb meat dishes
How much	Medium
Signature dish	Tomahawk Hamburger
When	Sunday- Thursday 18:00 until the last customer; Friday-Saturday 12:00 until the last customer
Where	1 Martin Buber street



## Entertainment



The nightlife scene in Ashdod is being swept by a wave of overwhelming development in the past few years, and it offers a variety of possibilities for local residents and visitors who desire a night out.



### The opening five / night life



#### It

What	A social pub for the benefit of the community, which hosts quality performances with the participation of a diversified audience. In addition to the shows the pub also hosts discussions and lectures on social matters, promotes initiatives for the needy, and supports the LGBT community in the city.
Atmosphere	Revolutionary wind
When	Tue.-Sat. 09:00 until the last customer, Sun.-Mon. closed.
Where	12 Hakshatot Beach

## Entertainment

### Favela

What	A Mexican restaurant with a drink menu that is an attraction all by itself.
Atmosphere	Young and lively.
When	Sunday-Thursday 18:00-02:00; Friday 10:00-02:00; Saturday 12:00-02:00
Where	1 Martin Buber street



### Napopo

What	The neighborhood pub is welcoming to anyone who happens to come by.
Atmosphere	Homely with no commitment. On certain evenings the party goes on until the wee hours of the night.
When	Wednesday-Sunday 21:30 until the last customer
Where	15 Hatikshoret street



## Shlomper

What	One of the most vibrant bars in the city, packed with a young and carefree audience
Atmosphere	Between relaxation and a real party
When	Saturday-Thursday, 21:30-03:00
Where	5 Habanaim street

## Drink Point

What	The Ashdod branch of the well-known bar franchise combines quality alcohol with excellent service and affordable prices.
Atmosphere	On the weekend the atmosphere heats up
When	Monday, Wednesday-Saturday, 22:30-03:00
Where	2 Habanaim street



# Ticking it off



	Checked Dated ✓	Notes
Viewing the city's scenery and beaches from the top of the historic Givat Yonah (Jonah's Hill)		
Going on a romantic sunset cruise and ending with a meal at the Blue Marina		
Learning about the city's glorious past at the Corinne Mamane Museum of Philistine Culture		
Strolling along the Lachish Stream and enjoying the various attractions along the way		
Being in awe of the many heritage sites at the spot where the Egyptians were stopped during the War of Independence		
Wandering around the colorful markets and getting a taste of the Ashdodian melting pot at its best		
Shopping like you do abroad in one of the luxurious malls and shopping centers		
Riding a bicycle along the track surrounding Ashdod		
Walking through the pages of history at the impressive Ashdod-Yam Fort		
Enjoying the innovative exhibits at the Ashdod Museum of Art		
Booking tickets to one of the grand shows at the Center for the Performing Arts		
Taking a photo against the background of one of the statues scattered around the city		
Climbing to the top of the Great Dune at the famous Sand Park		
Getting on all the rides at the Ashdod-Yam Park and being excited like children		
Lounging on one of the spectacular beaches and searching the horizon for ships making their way to the harbor		

# List of photographs

D- Daniel Shichor | M- Mirit Friedman | S- Shutterstock.com

Page 3 :M ; Page 9 :S elbuD ; Page 13 :S-Oleksan Dr 1 Lysenko ; Page 4 : Gaul Porat ; Page 16 : Gaul Porat ; Page 19 :M ; Page 21 :M ; Page 21 :D M ; 22 : ; Page 24 : W wikipeDia\_ori ; Page 25 : W Yaakov2 ; Page 27 : W YigalD11 ; Page 27 :M ; 28M : ; Page 31 : Shimon Fux courtesy of The Port of Ashdod Archives ; Page 32 :M ; Page 35 :S-Michael Egenburg ; Page 36 : M ; Page 37 : S- Michael Steinv121272 ; Page 39 :S- Africa StuDio ; Page 42 :S- Donstov Evgeny ; Page 43 : ChaMeleonsEye S- ; Page 47 : S-RoMan Yanushevsky ; Page 48 :S-Kichigin ; Page 49 :blueDog stuDio S- ; Page 51 : S-Michael Stein 121272 ; page 52 :S- Michael Stein 121272 ; Pages 53-55 :S- Liz Glasco ; 56 :M ; Page 56 :S- Goncharovaia ; Page 57 : Gaul Porat ; Page 57 :M ; Page 58 : Yigal Slavin ; Page 58 :S-Chairoij ; Page 59 :S- Michael Stein 121272 ; Page 60 :D ; Page 61 :S - greenlanD ; Page 62 :S - DoMinic Laniewicz ; Page 63 :S - Michael Stein 121272 ; Page 64 :M ; Page 65 :M ; Page 65 :Public Relations Ashdod Museum ; Page 66 :S - Saklakova ; Page 67 :S - Rostislav Glinsky ; Page 68 :S - Michael Egenburg ; Page 69 :S - CliMaxAP ; Page 70 :M ; Page 70 :D ; Page 70 :M ; Page 71 :M ; Page 71 :Gaul Porat ; Page 71 :D ; Page 71-72 :M ; Page 74 :D ; Page 77 :M ; Page 78 :D ; Page 79 :M :80 :M ; Page 82 :Gaul Porat ; Page 83 :S - Michael Egenburg ; Page 84 :S - Michael Egenburg ; Page 84 :D ; Page 85 :Igal Slavin ; Page 85 :S - Michael Egenburg ; Page 85 :M ; Page 85 :S - Michael Stein 121272 ; Page 85 :M ; Page 86 :D ; Page 87 :M ; Page 88 : Public Relations Ashdod Museum: Ilan Asiag ; Page 89-90 :S - Michael Egenburg ; Page 91 :Igal Slavin ; Page 92 :M ; Page 93 :S - oneinchpunch ; Page 93 :M ; Page 94 :S - Michael Stein 121272 ; Page 95 :M ; Page 96 :S - Digital Photo ; Page 96 :S - RoMan Yanushevsky ; Page 97 :S - ChaMeleonsEye ; Page 97 :S - PerspectivesFootage ; Page 97 :S - RoMan Yanushevsky ; Page 99 :S - RoMan Yanushevsky ; Page 101 :S - krugloff ; Page 103 :S - PerspectivesFootage ; Page 104 :S - ChaMeleonsEye ; Page 105 :M ; Page 106 :S - Ewais ; Page 106 :D ; Page 107 :S - ChaMeleonsEye ; Page 107 :S - Michael Egenburg ; Page 110-112 :D ; Page 114-115 :M ; Page 117 :S - ChaMeleonsEye ; Page 119 :S - Parthbhatt ; Page 120 :S - Michael Egenburg ; Page 121 :S - MIKHAIL BANIFATOV ; Page 123 :S - BoDiaPhoto ; Page 123 :D ; Page 123 :S - DoMinic Laniewicz ; Page 123 :S - iceD skinny Mocha ; Page 123-124 :M ; Page 128 :D ; Page 128 :S - David TaDevosian ; Page 129 :S - BoDiaPhoto ; Page 131 :S - eFesenko ; Page 134-145 :D ; Page 155-149 :D ; Page 156 :S - Sprut2005 ; Page 178-157 :Jenny Schweber ; Page 181 :Jenny Schweber ; Page 181 :S - ADaM RaDosavljevic ; Page 182 :S - RaMon Grosso







# Ashdod



The **Ashdod Shichor Guide** blends the historical story of the harbor city with the modern tourist experience which it offers today, and shines a new light on a cultural pearl on the Mediterranean coast.

The **new generation of Shichor guides** was especially adapted to the Israeli tourist and his preferences, and views the tour as a whole based on an exact blend of fascinating sites, effective time management and of course- comfort, enjoyment and satisfaction.

Each of the **daily tours** and clusters of sites we prepared for you, constitute an entire information array: maps, spectacular photographs, tips and fascinating information.

The Shichor recommendations at the end of the guide include references carefully chosen for restaurants and entertainment, to always keep you in the loop.

**The Shichor Guide- Was prepared by Israelis for tourist in general and Israelis in particular!**

## In the guide:

- Daily tour routes
- Special tips for a perfect trip
- Events and sites rating according to level of importance and interest
- **"The opening five"**- Five of the city's hottest food, drink and entertainment spots
- Heritage sites and Jewish sites
- Recommended sites

[www.shichor.co.il](http://www.shichor.co.il)

The Shichor website: For planning your trip and receiving current updates, recommended restaurants, shopping, sales, entertainment, events, exhibitions, hotels and more, for you use in real time- before or during your trip



Recommended price: 99ISL