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Gay Tel Aviv: A Gay Travel Guide to the
Middle East Oasis

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Overview

It's a place where cultures collide: Jews, Arabs, Christians, atheists, artists, scientists, locals, foreigners, young, old, gay and straight – they all share this rather secular city in such a religious country. But somehow this diversity and tolerance of one another has created an ambiance in Tel Aviv rarely found in other cities throughout the world. Tel Aviv has recently landed itself on the map as one of the top destinations for LGBT travelers. But more than just weather, Tel Aviv is vibrant, hip and artistic. It's a city that doesn't sleep and even in the heart of a highly religious country, it's a place where you can find a huge gay population with a sense of openness and a thriving nightlife scene.

For Europeans, Tel Aviv is possible to visit on a long weekend city break since flights from most parts of the continent are under four hours. Visitors coming from North America or other parts of the world will probably visit Tel Aviv as part of a longer trip to Israel or another nearby destination.



Transportation & Airport Transfer

Making your way around Tel Aviv isn't too difficult but you won't find a city metro or rail system like you might in Jerusalem or other European cities. Tel Aviv does have a developed public transport network but it's geared more towards locals rather than for tourists. Buses are abundant but mostly all in Hebrew so navigation isn't always simple. Besides the regional train that goes to the airport and other cities within Israel, your best bet is to take a taxi or go by bike.

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Like many big cities around the world, Tel Aviv has recently implemented a [bike sharing program](#) where you can rent bikes all across the city at various different stations. Take the bike one way from one station and return it to another for simple commuting while also taking the opportunity to burn off all that hummus and falafel you've probably been eating. If you're staying in a central neighborhood, then you shouldn't have to travel too far or exert too much effort as Tel Aviv is compact, flat and easy to get around. The easiest way from the airport to the city is to take the train from Terminal 3 to the city. The ride takes about 20 minutes and costs about 3€. The train doesn't operate during Shabbat (Friday afternoon until Saturday evening) or Jewish holidays so you'll need to catch the bus or take a taxi. A taxi should run you about 30€.

Gay Hotels and Gay Friendly Accommodation in Tel Aviv

Tel Aviv is relatively small and compact so it's best to stay in a neighborhood central to most of the places of interest. Neighborhoods like Florentine or Neve Tzedek are some of the best places to stay. Tel Aviv doesn't specifically have a gay neighborhood but you can find lots of gays hanging around these areas drinking at cafes, riding bikes and walking dogs during the day and hitting up the bars and clubs by night. Just about any property is gay-friendly in Tel Aviv, but there are a few favorites that are well known for gay travelers.

Luxury

[Brown TLV Urban Hotel](#) – Iconic gay favorite hotel in town. Great option if you have the budget. At a minimum, you should at least visit their outdoor bar and rooftop terrace to hang with a fashionable crowd while sipping top-notch cocktails. *Address: Kalisher 25, Tel Aviv, 65165*

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Photo via Brown Hotel

[Hilton Hotel Tel Aviv](#) – probably one of the most popular gay hotels in town. After all, the gay beach where the hotel sits has been dubbed Hilton Beach and it's where all the homo's flock to take in the sun. Address: Independence Park, Tel Aviv, 63405

Mid-Range

[Melody Hotel](#) – just across from the Hilton and minutes walking to the gay beach. We stayed several nights at both the Royal Beach and Melody and both were nice properties. Address: 220 Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv, 63504

[Royal Beach Hotel](#) – relatively new hotel that caters towards LGBT travelers located on the beach. Address: Hayarkon 19, Tel Aviv, 68011

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Photo via Royal Beach Hotel

[Alexander Hotel](#) – a stylish and gay-friendly hotel and also a member of the IGLTA.

Budget

[Pink House TLV](#) – caters just to LGBT travelers and offers budget accommodations.

Address: 17 Raban Gamliel, Tel Aviv, 63426

Apartments

There are many sites for apartment rentals in Tel Aviv, with [AirBnB](#) probably being one of the most popular. Prices are generally comparable to budget hotels, especially if you're willing to get a room in a shared apartment.

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There are even a few LGBT-oriented booking sites like [misterbnb](#) with listings from gay hosts for gay guests where you can either rent a whole apartment or a private room in a shared apartment. Understanding Tel Aviv's gay scene is much more easily done with the help of a local and apartment sharing is one of the best ways to meet someone living in the city who knows how things work, where and when are the best nights to go out, and what places to eat at and which to avoid.

Special offers: [sign up with AirBnB using this link](#) or [misterbnb using this link](#) you will receive a free \$25 credit to use on your first booking!



Photo Credit: misterbnb

Sightseeing & Activities in Tel Aviv

Jaffa Old Town – Most sites and attractions here are modern but head just ten minutes south to the old town of Jaffa and you can explore the oldest Israeli port city that dates back to more than 5,000 years. This area maintains its historic appeal and has been reclaimed with countless restaurants, hip bars and more art galleries than you can count.

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Jaffa Old Town

Jaffa Flee Market – head up to the Jaffa flea market to enjoy the sights, smells and sounds of a bustling street marketplace. Browse the offerings and enjoy a freshly made falafel or sabich for lunch and later buy yourself a cool and freshly squeezed orange or pomegranate juice from one of the many street vendors.

Rothschild Boulevard – When you've had enough sun for the day head up to Rothschild Boulevard to relax at a cafe. As day turns to night, you'll see why Tel Aviv is world famous for its nightlife scene, especially in this and the surrounding neighborhoods.

Carmel Market – arts, crafts, vegetables, local fruits and spices are found at this efficiently located gathering of vendors and artists. Of all Tel Aviv's shuks, this is the most famous, most centrally located, and the largest.

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Old Train Station – If you're feeling like a snack or a full meal combined with shopping and frivolity, take a stroll through the historically designed stores, fashion boutiques, restaurants, galleries and art exhibits. Do take the extra time to pause just long enough to take in a performance by the street circus.

Gay Tours in Tel Aviv

[TLV Nights PubCrawl](#) – though the website doesn't say they provide gay tours, one of their guides is gay and knows the Tel Aviv gay scene very well.

[OUTstanding Travel](#) – during summer they offer [gay bus trips](#) every weekend to the Dead Sea, Jerusalem and several other destinations. They also offer customized travel services and packages if you're looking for a full-service tour operator. During Tel Aviv pride, they run the bus tours on a daily basis.

Special Offer! You can save up to \$50 or more on tours with OUTstanding Travel! [Click here](#) for your exclusive discount.

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Photo via OUTstanding Travel

Restaurants & Cafes in Tel Aviv

[Tony Vespa](#) – An abundance of oh so happy and gay souls sitting and sipping outside... and non-kosher pizza sold by weight (not by the slice) inside. And they're open late!

[CafeLix](#) – Located at 15 Sgula Street, this first of its kind cafe helped to propel the market on slow-roast coffee.

[Levinsky 41](#) – Stop in to watch former chef Benny Soda whip up his signature sparkling waters combined with organic fruit syrups (using apricots, almond, roses, strawberries and peaches) resulting in a refreshing, subtly sweet beverage.

[Alla Rampa](#) – Seated in Tel Aviv's industrial strip, this local musicians' hangout features cocktails at its new open-air tapas bar and some innovative options for vegetarians.

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[Abraj Restaurant](#) – Enjoy the sea breeze and authentic, fresh market bistro dishes made from the daily catch by port fisherman in Jaffa Jaffa. Relish in this establishment's cosmopolitan atmosphere.



Photo via OUTstanding Travel

Tel Aviv Gay Bars & Lounges

Tel Aviv is full of cafes, bars and clubs that cater to the local Israeli gay residents and LGBT travelers with many of the popular gay venues actually places with mixed crowds.

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[Brown Hotel Bar](#) – The Brown is a boutique hotel in Tel Aviv and is a gay favorite place to stay near Rothschild Boulevard. But more than that, it's a meeting place for visitors and locals who come to enjoy the patio-style bar, the rooftop terrace, fashionable crowd...and amazing cocktails. I'm an advocate of quality and attention to detail when it comes to making drinks and the Brown does it perfectly. The aroma of freshly fired rosemary piercing out the top of my fruity yet sour cocktail was more than enough to impress me and reason to go back for seconds.



Photo via Brown Hotel

[Lima Lima](#) – Shake your booty, or other significant asset, all night long, then relax in the waterfall courtyard. Super cool place with surprisingly personable service.

[Kuli Alma](#) – a new and trendy underground bar with outdoor lounging, indoor dancing and even a changing art gallery. Our top pick!

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[Shpagat](#) – a stadium-like tiered bar located on Nahalat Binyamin Street where you can enjoy a drink with friends and people watch from many of the different levels as nighttime crowds cruise up and down the street.

Tel Aviv Gay Clubs & Parties

Tel Aviv doesn't really have permanent gay clubs but instead they have over-the-top gay parties that change venues. These parties bring an attractive and energetic crowd of mostly men – with both locals and foreign visitors. Popular parties in town include the [FFF Party](#) and [Forever Tel Aviv](#) just to name a few. The locations change but they are often held at Ha-oman, Tel Aviv's mega club located south of Florentine neighborhood, a 15-minute drive from City Center.

Gay Hangouts in Tel Aviv (Beaches)

Though Tel Aviv is gay-friendly all around, the beach just in front of the Hilton Hotel is considered the official Tel Aviv gay beach and is appropriately named Hilton Beach.



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Photo via OUTstanding Travel

Mezizim Beach – a cooler atmosphere than the next 2 beaches, probably due to its further north (and resulting longer trek) location. Still, well worth the walk.

Hilton Beach – looking for some tanned and steamy muscles? This is “The Gay Beach”, conveniently located near the Tel Aviv Hilton Hotel. The close-by Frishman Beach is a hangout for the younger crowd.

Gordon Beach – is where all the beautiful people gather to have some fun in the sun. Definitely a 20-something crowd.



Photo via OUTstanding Travel

Popular Gay Events in Tel Aviv

The locals of Tel Aviv have even embraced the annual Tel Aviv Gay Pride festival held in June each year. It's one of the largest events in Tel Aviv and one that the entire city has grown to accept and appreciate. Tel Aviv is without a doubt the gay capital of Israel. Though Israel is a religious country at heart, Tel Aviv has a mix of foreigners and locals with a strange secular and liberal vibe. Naturally, the gay pride festival in Tel Aviv is one of the top events to attend and it's become famous in recent years. Now with more than 180,000 attendees, the gay pride has become an important part of Tel Aviv's annual events reaching beyond just the LGBT community.

Day Trips from Tel Aviv

[Jerusalem](#) – One of the best things about Israel from a travel perspective is the small size of the country and its diversity of offerings for a tourist. In less than a few hours, you could make a quick visit to Jerusalem and be back in Tel Aviv for dinner. While you could easily spend 2 days in Jerusalem, it's still possible to see the highlights in a small amount of time. There is no other city like Jerusalem in the world. It's a holy site for three major world religions, full of history, culture and conflict. While Tel Aviv is urban, hip and never sleeps – Jerusalem is tranquil, historic and religious and couldn't be more different. Visiting the sites that date back thousands of years is a fascinating way to learn about the history and culture, both past and present.

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Photo via OUTstanding Travel

[Caesera](#) – take a tour of the ancient Roman city of Caesera, just under an hour away and north of the city.

[Dead Sea](#) – floating in the Dead Sea was unlike anything. With a salt concentration of 34%, your body floats completely in the water without effort. It's actually difficult to swim and the sensation you get being in the Dead Sea is so strange and unexplainable. It's like floating in... (what? can you try to describe it?) You really have to be there yourself to fully understand.

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Floating in the Dead Sea

[Haifa](#) – you can head north to Haifa to visit the Baha'i Temple Gardens with 19 stunning terraces built alongside Mount Carmel.

[OUTstanding Travel](#) even offers gay bus trips every weekend to all these destinations and if you're visiting during Tel Aviv pride, they run the tours on a daily basis. [Click for more info plus exclusive discounts.](#)