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5 PLACES

## Five Places to Go in Jerusalem

Jerusalem's city center has transformed into a vibrant scene, with youthful, often tattooed habitués offering a curious juxtaposition to the religious pilgrims roaming the Holy City.



Machneyuda is a restaurant in Jerusalem's city center that embodies the boisterous spirit and flavors of contemporary Jerusalem. *Tzachi Ostrovsky for The New York Times*

By Amy Tara Koch  
Nov. 7, 2018



In the city center, just a 15-minute walk from the cobblestone alleys of the Old City of Jerusalem, trendy restaurants and boutiques — even coffee bars that double as late-night performance venues — have blossomed. Their youthful, often tattooed clientele offer a curious juxtaposition to the religious pilgrims roaming the Holy City. A growing tech scene — there are upward of 500 start ups in the city — has fueled the metamorphosis. So have art schools, with about 2,500 students combined; many of those students are remaining thanks to city and nonprofit spaces supporting arts-minded entrepreneurs. The city's creative energy is on full display at [Machane Yehuda Market](#), also in the city center. In recent years, the 19th-century, open-air market for spices, meat, flowers and produce has had a second shift at sundown when it transforms into a lively night life scene with frequent D.J.-hosted events. In this sprawling labyrinth, artisan beer halls, tapas and falafel stands, and upscale restaurants open their graffiti-adorned garage-style doors to welcome the city's multi-culti cool kids.

### Machneyuda

For a meal that is as much a party as a dining experience, this nine-year-old restaurant inside the Machane Yehuda Market, run by the acclaimed chefs Assaf Granit, Yossi Elad and Uri Navon, embodies the boisterous spirit and flavors of contemporary Jerusalem. As dishes arrive — fattoush salad with Bryndza cheese, mini open-faced corned beef sandwiches topped with chipotle aioli, and “Shikshukit,” ground lamb with tahini and lemon — Arabic funk blares. Impromptu dancing erupts when the staff gives a signal by banging on kitchen pots.

Beit Yaakov Street 10, [machneyuda.co.il/homepage](http://machneyuda.co.il/homepage)



The dining area of Villa Brown Jerusalem, a 24-room boutique hotel. *Tzachi Ostrovsky for The New York Times*

### Villa Brown Jerusalem

In a city of big box hotels, this Ottoman-era villa turned 24-room boutique hotel opened in 2017 and is manna to travelers drawn to intimate, tastefully designed lodging. A rooftop terrace, a bougainvillea-draped garden and a cozy subterranean wine cave fashioned from an ancient cistern add to the charm of this stylish property.

Ha-Nevi'im Street 54, [brownhotels.com/villa](http://brownhotels.com/villa)

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Gatsby is a 1920s-inspired cocktail bar in Jerusalem's city center. *Tzachi Ostrovsky for The New York Times*

### Gatsby

In true speakeasy fashion, this 1920s-inspired cocktail bar is as stylish as it is hard-to-find, behind an unmarked door in a nondescript strip of shops. Theatrical takes on classics — like the Gatsby Sazerac, which involves a fiery torching of a vintage coupe glass — are the boite's calling card.

Hillel Street, 18, [facebook.com/GatsbyJerusalem](http://facebook.com/GatsbyJerusalem)

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Sofia is a boutique with sleek, made-in-Israel apparel. *Tzachi Ostrovsky for The New York Times*

### Sofia

Eight years ago, when Miri Ashur Zuta opened this gem box of a shop, a trendy fashion boutique in conservative Jerusalem seemed like an oxymoron. Yet this boutique has thrived, with its sleek, made-in-Israel apparel a beacon for locals and visitors on the hunt for different street style.

2 Bezalet Street, [facebook.com/SofiaDesignersGallery/](http://facebook.com/SofiaDesignersGallery/)



The cafeteria inside Hamiffal at Lorenzo House Cultural Center. Hamiffal is an art collective and creative platform. *Tzachi Ostrovsky for The New York Times*

### Hamiffal at Lorenzo House Cultural Center

With ever-changing installations in the elevator, within toilet stalls, dangling from rafters and woven throughout the rosemary-scented garden, a crumbling 19th-century mansion has been recast (through funding by the [Jerusalem Foundation](#)) as Hamiffal, or, “the factory.” At this art collective and creative platform, visitors can view and purchase work by local artists, partake in events that range from concerts (classical and electro-romantic to Hasidic rap) and film screenings to secondhand fashion pop-up shops. Or, they can simply hang out under the fantastically frescoed ceilings with a snack from the on-site cafe.

Ha-Ma'aravim Street 3, <http://hamiffal.com/english/>

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