



## **Restaurants with a Mediterranean feel and fresh local flavors**

### **Tel Aviv**

**Mizlala**, 57 Nahalat Binyamin St. Tel Aviv, Tel: 03-566-5505

At celebrity chef Meir Adoni's bistro, he serves dishes like Palestinian tartar, chopped rump steak, crude tehina, pine nuts, yogurt, broad beans and cumin and goose shin confit, full-grain wheat "cholent" in date honey, alongside more traditional fare, such as Yemenite kubaneh or challah with ikra dip (a Romanian version of taramasalata, fish roe dip).

**Toto**, 4 Berkowitz St. Tel Aviv, Tel: 03-693-5151

Meals with a strong Italian influence, but many touches of Middle Eastern cuisines, all interpreted by chef Yaron Shalev. Try fabulous dishes like Turkish ravioli with sour cream, water cress, za'atar (hyssop) and hot pepper. Or Greek pizza with sardines, roasted eggplant, feta and egg.

**Shila**, 182 Ben Yehuda St. Tel Aviv, Tel: 03-522-1224

A Spanish style bar and restaurant that serves fun tapas as well as larger plates. Chef Yaron Cohen comes up with dishes like kingfish and eggplant, which is an excellent example of the Israeli fusion and the use of local ingredients. Other dishes like citrus-scented tiger shrimp with fava beans, sweet peas, chili and sheep's milk labane and seared tuna salad in a miso marinade, with carrots, cucumbers, celery and hijiki seaweed show both Arab and Asian influence.

**Mel & Michelle**, 155 Ben Yehuda St. Tel Aviv, Tel: 03-529-3232

An Italian trattoria situated very much in the Middle East. Chefs Yogev Yehros and Nir Wayman's now famed baby calamari are served over tabbouleh, with a tehina sauce. Not quite a classic Italian dish, but so local and delicious.

**Raphael**, 87 Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv (King David Tower), Tel: 03-522-6464

For more than 10 years this restaurant has been one of the best in the country. Celebrity chef Raffi Cohen's kitchen is strongly influenced by the Moroccan cuisine that was introduced to him by his grandmother. Try the Moroccan cigars, filled with veal offal and served with tehina, or the lamb shoulder couscous with whole chickpeas, market vegetables and spices from the Maghreb.

**Chadar Ochel (The Dining Hall)**, 23 Shaul Hamelech Blvd, Tel Aviv Tel: 057-944-3036

Named after the kibbutz's dining hall, chef Omer Miller plays with Israeli classics in dishes like the Dining Hall vegetable salad, grissini and hardboiled egg. These are all the ingredients

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**Address:** P.O. Box 71, Rehovot 76100, Israel

**Tel:** 1.323.283.8702 \* **International:** +972.50.7713.823 \* **Fax:** +972.8.9452.645

**Email:** [trips@JesusWalkedHereTours.com](mailto:trips@JesusWalkedHereTours.com) \* **Website:** [www.JesusWalkedHereTours.com](http://www.JesusWalkedHereTours.com)



that make the classic Israeli dinner, especially that which is traditionally served on a kibbutz. The chef serves Israeli staples such as cheese burekas and veal kibbeh near calamari in tomato cream and tehina.

**Monka** *15 Yehuda HaYamit Street, Jaffa. Tel: 03-682-0707*

**Bulgarian food at this veteran restaurant.** Try leek patties - From the Balkan cuisine, these fried patties can be either vegetarian or can include ground beef. They are available at Bulgarian restaurant, where you should also try the kebabs, and if you dare, try the shkembe, a tripe soup.

## Jerusalem

**Machneyuda**, *10 Beit Yaakov St.. Tel: 02-533-3442*

A chef restaurant situated one minute away from Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market. The fun atmosphere of the market shows in every aspect of the place, from the language of the menu to the singing kitchen staff. The closeness to the market is also apparent in every dish: fish tartar in yogurt and dates, black risotto with cauliflower, artichokes, squid and parmesan, basbousa cake with tehina ice cream and fruit.

## Galilee

**Aluma**, *On the Kfar Vradim-Tarshiha road. Tel: 04-957-4477*

Chef Ali Sawitat says Aluma specializes in "Galilee cuisine with some touches of French cuisine"; the chef is Dari Ben Nevat. The meat is aged at the restaurant, where they also serve calamari with labaneh, and okra with seafood. The restaurant, which has a capacity of around 50, changes its menu every three months.

**Al Tanur**, *at Raina junction, near Nazareth in the Galilee. Tel: 04-601-4948*

Located behind a gas station. Don't let looks deceive you: Al Tanur's unassuming location and simple set up are a front for outstanding Arab foods. Popular dishes at Al Tanur are shoulder of lamb served on a platter for four, leg of lamb, stuffed ribs and a portion of stuffed neck for two.

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## Ethnic Foods in Israel and Where to Eat Them

**Mafrum** - A delicious creation from the Libyan cuisine. A mixture of ground beef spiced with cinnamon is sandwiched between two thin slices of potato. The sandwich is dipped in egg and flour and fried, then cooked with other chopped vegetables in tomato sauce and served over couscous. Try this and more stews, including the famous shakshuka, at Bechor & Shoshi, but go early for lunch because they run out of mafrum early.

### Where to eat this delicacy:

- Bechor & Shoshi, 14 Yad Harutzim St., Tel Aviv 03-687.2895
- Doctor Shakshuka, 3 Beir Eshel St., Jaffa.

**Hamusta kibbeh soup** - From the Kurdish cuisine, which is a cousin of the Iraqi one. Both cuisines offer a number of different soups, all with kibbeh, which are bulgar and farina patties stuffed with meat. The soups include the hamusta, a sour broth made with Swiss chard and zucchini, or a red soup with tomatoes and beets. You are likely to start your meal with a table filled with small salads, hummus and fresh pita bread, so remember to save some room for the heavy soup as well.

Jerusalem has a large Kurdish community and Morduch, just outside Machne Yehuda market is an excellent place to try this cuisine.

### Where to eat this delicacy:

- Morduch, 70 Agripas Street, Jerusalem. 02.624.5169

**Yemenite bone soup** - OK, not exactly what you wish for in a hot day in Israel, but sitting in an air conditioned room, sweating over a bowl of marrow bones cooked in the Yemenite spice mixture called Hawaij (turmeric, cumin, cardamom etc.) is an experience not to be missed. You will finish the last drops of the soup using the Yemenite bread, lachuch, which is similar to the Ethiopian injera.

### Where to find this delicacy:

- Rina and Zecharia, 22 Hakovshim St., Yemenite Quarter, near Carmel Market, Tel Aviv. Tel: 03-517.7612

Try **Jachnoon** too, an overnight cooked rolled pastry served with a hardboiled egg and spicy sauce. It is available in many of the homemade food markets around the country and in some restaurants

### Where to find this delicacy:

- Jachnoon Bar, 2 locations
  - 30 HaEgoz St., Machne Yehuda Market, Jerusalem. Tel: 02-624-2771

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- 28 Hillel St., Center of Jerusalem

**Khoresh e qorme sabzi** - a Persian stew of meat, beans and herbs, which is simply full of flavor. Another Persian dish to try is the Gondi soup. The gondi are chickpea flour and chicken dumplings.

**Where to find this delicacy:**

- Salimi, 80 Nachalat Benyamin Street, Tel Aviv. Tel: 03-518-8377

**Watercress salad** - is one example of the Arab cuisine, and will be served to your table together with herb tabuleh, eggplant in tahini and eggplant in yogurt, cauliflower in tahini, fattush, fresh za'atar salad, wild mustard salad, and at least ten other fresh herb and vegetables dishes. That's how any meal in an Arab restaurant will begin. Together with smooth hummus, labaneh and tahini dips, pickles and fresh pita bread there's really no need to order a main course. And for about \$10 per person it's one of the most reasonable and fabulous options there are.

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