

The Church of The Holy Sepulchre

Nestled in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem is arguably the holiest site in Christianity, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. This iconic place of pilgrimage is believed to encompass the sites of Jesus Christ's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection. Since its construction, the Holy Sepulchre Church has gone through periods of destruction and reconstruction that have created a complex tapestry encompassing layers of history and culture that can still be seen today. During the period of Roman rule in the 2nd century, when Jerusalem was known as Aelia Capitolina, the site where the church now stands was a temple dedicated to the goddess Venus. In the 4th century, during a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, Saint Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, is said to have discovered the remains of the cross on which Jesus was crucified, referred to as the "True Cross" on the site. It was then that Constantine ordered the temple destroyed and the Holy Sepulchre Church was first built and its reverence in the Christian tradition began. Throughout history it has gone through periods of destruction, including during the Persian conquest in 614CE, the earthquake of 746CE, and in 1004CE by the Fatimid caliph al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, but it has always subsequently been rebuilt. It was during restoration by the Crusaders in the mid-12th century that the Church was given the form that it retains today. Since that time, frequent restoration and renovation have maintained the church. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is home to more than thirty chapels and altars, including those marking the last four Stations of the Cross along the Via Dolorosa. The entrance to the church is through a courtyard, known as the parvis, which is surrounded by other structures housing monasteries and chapels of many different Christian denominations. On the south side of the parvis are the large wooden doors that lead into the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Since at least the 12th century, but possibly as far back as the 7th century, the keys to these doors were entrusted to descendants of the Muslim Nuseibeh family who continue to be responsible for opening and closing the church. Just inside the entrance a stairway on the right leads up to the site of the crucifixion, known as Calvary of Golgotha. Straight in front of the entrance is the Stone of the Anointing which marks the spot that Jesus's body was prepared for burial. Continuing further into the church to the left, visitors will enter into the Byzantine-style domed rotunda with the Aedicule standing at its center. This beautifully adorned shrine encloses the tomb of Jesus and stands as an honored marker of the burial and resurrection. Other places of interest within the church include the Catholicon, or main area of worship, featuring "stunning Byzantine architecture and magnificent religious artwork. The Chapel of the Finding of the Cross is another highlight, commemorating the discovery of the True Cross by Saint Helena. Uniquely, the administration of the Holy Sepulchre Church is shared between different Christian denominations. The primary denominations with a presence in the church are the Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Armenian Apostolic Churches. Additionally, the Coptic Orthodox, Ethiopian Orthodox, and Syriac Orthodox Churches also have smaller representations. The complex arrangement, known as the "Status Quo," which dates back to the 18th century and was made permanent in 1852, dictates the rights and responsibilities of each denomination in managing and maintaining the church. Under this agreement, areas and objects within the church are designated for specific denominations, ensuring a delicate balance and preventing conflicts over control. The most famous symbol of this agreement is the 'unmovable ladder,' which has sat on a ledge above the entrance to the church since the 18th century. Despite occasional disputes, the denominations have cooperatively upheld this arrangement, allowing them to worship and share in the spiritual significance of the Holy Sepulchre. For those seeking an understanding of Christianity in Jerusalem and how it fits into the larger fabric of Jerusalemite history and culture, there is no better place to visit than the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The church is open daily, although there may be closures dependent on the prayer services of the many different denominations. Whether for religious, historical, or cultural reasons, a visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is truly unforgettable."

Unique Selling Proposition

Tomb of Jusus Christ

Site Religion & Type

- [Christian Site](#)
- [Church](#)
- [Station of the Cross](#)
- [Tomb](#)

Target Group

Denomination with high relevance

Benedictine
Brothers
, Catholic -
Armenian
, Catholic - Greek
, Catholic - Roman , Coptic
, Mennonite , Mormon
, Orthodox -
Armenian
, Orthodox - Assyrian
, Orthodox - Ethiopian
, Orthodox - Greek
, Orthodox - Russian
, Protestant - Anglican

- [Free Independent Travelers \(FITs\)](#)
- [Families](#)
- [Foreign Families](#)
- [Local Families](#)
- [general interest](#)
- [Organized Groups](#)
- [Christian Groups](#)
- [Muslim Groups](#)
- [Secular Groups](#)
- [Leisure](#)
- [Fact Finding](#)
- [Other Secular Groups](#)
- [Youth and Students](#)

, Protestant - Baptist
, Protestant - Methodist
, Protestant - Pentecost
, Protestant -Lutheran
, Salesian
Brothers , Zion sisters

Telephone

[0097226284202](tel:0097226284202)

Address

Saint Helena Road
Jerusalem
PS-JEM
Palestinian Territories

31.778023,35.22978
[View in Google Maps](#)

Best time of day to visit

No difference

Best Time of Year to Visit

Year round

Estimated time of visit

1-2 hours

Weather Consideration

bad weather days
, Suitable for rainy

Dress Code

dresses Shoulders should be covered
, Modest Clothes
, Shorts not allowed for adults Females required to wear below the knee skirts
, Trousers Allowed For Female Visitors

Entry Limitation

Dress code required

Summer Times

Sunday: 5:00-21:00
October to March
Monday: 5:00-21:00
October to March
Tuesday: 5:00-21:00
October to March
Wednesday: 5:00-21:00
October to March
Thursday: 5:00-21:00
October to March
Friday: 5:00-21:00
October to March
Saturday: 5:00-21:00
October to March

Winter Times

Sunday: 4:00-19:00
Monday: 4:00-19:00
Tuesday: 4:00-19:00
Wednesday: 4:00-19:00
Thursday: 4:00-19:00
Friday: 4:00-19:00
Saturday: 4:00-19:00

Booking On Site

No

Booking Online

No

Booking via Phone

No

Advance booking required

No

Free For

Free (locals only) , Free for everyone

Bathrooms

Free

Handicap bathroom

No

Parking

No parking available

Stairs

No

Wheelchair Friendly

No

Stroller Friendly

No