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Tel Aviv: Thou Shalt Have Fun

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Port Tel Aviv, a hybrid of hospitality a short walk from the Mediterranean Sea, will embrace a stylish boutique hotel and posh private residences with dazzling penthouses. PHOTO CREDIT: Port Tel Aviv.

By Rochelle Lash

Tel Aviv, the social and culinary capital of Israel, is on the cusp of a boom in hybrid hotel-condos, and that's a good thing. The city is so appealing that after your first visit, you'll want to buy in and stay forever.

The divine Jaffa Hotel, an urban resort that is part of the Luxury Collection of Marriott, is a leader in the trend, and now the buzz is about the next generation of hybrids which will be open for business well after the current Israeli travel restrictions are lifted.

The glamorous David Kempinski Tel Aviv is expected in 2021 with a pivotal location at the heart of Tel Aviv's thrilling promenade along the shore of the Mediterranean Sea. The stylish Port Tel Aviv is slated for 2022 and already has held luminous launch parties in New York and Los Angeles. And Mandarin Oriental will bring its Asian-inspired elegance and legendary service to Tel Aviv in 2023.

Save your shekels. This is upscale living, at its best.

Travel has surged to vacation homes, resorts and country lodging that people can call their own – their “permanent getaway.” Wha’ zat? At its simplest, it means that travelers who love Tel Aviv’s fabulous food, epic nightlife, gorgeous weather and safe surroundings can check into a stunning hotel overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

Thinking long-term and ideal for larger bubbles traveling together, a “permanent getaway” means buying a ravishing condo in the same complex so you can visit often, stay as long as you like and soak up the luxe life with resort-style features.



Travel writer Rochelle Iash conquers the waves in the 4,000-year-old Jaffa Port, Tel Aviv, Israel. PHOTO CREDIT: Mati Tihov, Tel Aviv

I visited Tel Aviv in 2019 for the first time since my student days and it was as though Moses delivered an 11th Commandment that said: “Thou Shalt Have Fun.”

Tel Aviv is a pacesetter metropolis of marvelous cuisine, sizzling nightlife, progressive technology, precious culture, and beach bliss, stoked by more than 300 days of sunshine a year. This city manages to be laid-back and intense at the same time.

I was so enthralled that I immediately re-booked for 2020 to reprise my experiences: a luscious Mediterranean dinner at HaSalon (Bon Jovi was at the next table); shakshuka, the sumptuous, traditional Israeli breakfast dish of baked eggs in spicy tomato sauce; paddle-boarding in the 4,000-year-old Jaffa Port; and historic cultural immersion at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

But it's people who make or break a destination and shalom is only the beginning. Israelis are so willing to share the love – or at least a glass of Galilee wine and a taste of Mediterranean octopus. True, in the post-COVID era, the camaraderie of sampling other people's food right off their plates might not be on the table, but Israel still is the friendliest country I have ever visited.

You're family, right off the bat.



Port Tel Aviv, scheduled to open in 2022, will be a next-generation hotel-condo complex designed for “permanent vacations.”
PHOTO CREDIT: Port Tel Aviv

HYBRID HOTELS

Port Tel Aviv, expected to open in the posh Old North neighborhood in Q4 2022, will encompass a five-star hotel with 44 rooms and suites on the first two floors of a crystalline 10-story tower overlooking the Mediterranean Sea.

The hotel will be topped by 40 lavish private apartments with one to four bedrooms, as well as luxurious penthouses featuring wraparound decks with private pools.

Port Tel Aviv is the creation of Ilan Pivko, an Israeli starchitect, who fashioned the Cubist-inspired structure, enclosed in glass with retractable windows opening to sun terraces and vacation essentials.

Port Tel Aviv will be “amenity-rich,” said Lee Ziv, vice-president of sales and marketing. “We’ll have all the bells and whistles of a dream vacation spot.

“And it will be strong on outdoor space — people are yearning for fresh air and the restorative Mediterranean Sea breezes.”

The beach is a few minutes’ stroll and the buzzy waterfront is home to an outdoor food market, art galleries, and cafés. The bells and whistles at Port Tel Aviv will include the expected perks of a top hotel, and more: a dazzling restaurant, two cocktail bars, a cinema, conference spaces, 24-hour room service, a roof-top pool, baggage unpacking, concierges, exhibits of contemporary art, as well as optional services such as private chefs, personalized security, VIP airport transportation and excursions on private yachts and helicopters. Or you can simply chill out “at home.”

The David Kempinski Tel Aviv, expected to open in 2021, will be a luxurious hotel on Tel Aviv’s Mediterranean shore, adjacent to a condo complex. PHOTO CREDIT: The David Kempinski Tel Aviv

The David Kempinski Tel Aviv will be a striking addition at the heart of Hayarkon Street, Tel Aviv’s vibrant beach promenade. A condo tower is being built adjacent and will share some amenities, although it won’t operate under the Kempinski brand.

The 32-story hotel will feature 250 rooms and suites, including the best-in-show David Suite, a three-story stunner with two bedrooms, a living room, and a private pool and fitness room. The David Kempinski will be loaded with a five-star lifestyle: a cigar and whisky bar, a rooftop bar, two outdoor swimming pools, a gym, a spa, and Joppa, for fine Mediterranean cuisine.

The grand Mandarin Oriental, Tel Aviv will be a beachfront hybrid of about 220 hotel rooms and suites, plus 230 luxurious residences. A huge resort, it will embrace several restaurants and bars, poolside dining, a ballroom, a waterfront sports club, and the signature Spa at Mandarin Oriental. Mandarin Oriental, Tel Aviv: mandarinoriental.com.

Information: Tel Aviv Tourism: visit tel-aviv.gov.il; Port Tel Aviv, port-tlv.co.il; The David Kempinski: kempinski.com/en/tel-aviv; Mandarin Oriental Tel Aviv: mandarinoriental.com.

Rochelle Lash is a career news editor and lifestyle columnist. She writes a weekly travel-hotel column for the Montreal Gazette and Postmedia affiliates in Canada, and also has written business, food, fashion and travel for The New York Times, Canada's National Post and The Globe and Mail, Robb Report, the International Herald Tribune, Skiing Magazine and Town & Country Magazine. In 2019, Rochelle was inducted into the Laurentian Ski Museum in Quebec, the seat of North American skiing, for her extensive ski tourism writing. And her new favorite urban destination is Tel Aviv.