

Today you will once again visit the Cardo, as you make your way to some very memorable sites in the Old City. You'll explore ancient Jerusalem at the Southern Steps (called Teaching Steps) and experience the Western Wall. In [Deuteronomy 16:16](#) God said "Three times a year all your men must appear before the Lord your God at the place he will choose: at the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the Festival of Weeks and the Festival of Tabernacles." Jesus Himself walked these stairs many times and it may be where He told His parables to the crowds, challenged the Pharisees, and taught His followers. These steps led to the Hulda gates which was the primary entrance to the Temple Mount in the time of Christ. Neil Armstrong visited the Southern Steps and said, 'I am more excited stepping on these stones than I was stepping on the moon.' He then knelt down and kissed the slab of stone where Jesus stood and where the Church was born.

The Western Wall, Wailing Wall, or Kotel, known in Islam as the Buraq Wall, is an ancient limestone wall in the Old City of Jerusalem. It is a relatively small segment of a far longer ancient retaining wall and is considered the most religious site in the world for Jewish people. Thousands of people journey to the wall every year to visit and recite prayers, either spoken or written down and placed in the cracks in the wall. The wall is divided into two sections, one area for males and the other for females. Women and men should be dressed modestly in the Western Wall Plaza as it officially serves as a synagogue and to pray at the wall, women should have their legs and shoulders covered; men should cover their head. (You will receive a full list of recommended clothing later).

The Western Wall is made of 45 courses of stone of which 28 are above ground and 17 rows are still underground under the Western Wall Plaza. The top half of the Western Wall's stone courses that rise up above the Prayer Plaza are from Muslim restoration. The others are mostly original stones from the Second Temple period. The entire height of the section of the Western Wall seen at the Plaza is estimated to be 32 meters from the bedrock to its highest point.

You'll visit the Pool of Bethesda where Jesus performed the Sabbath miracle ([John 5:1-31](#)). Excavated in the late 19th century, it has taken more than 100 years for archaeologists to accurately identify and interpret this site. In the Gospel of John, the Bethesda Pool is described as having five porticoes - a puzzling feature suggesting an unusual five-sided pool, which most scholars dismissed as an unhistorical literary creation. Yet, when the site was excavated, it revealed a rectangular pool with two basins separated by a wall - thus a five sided pool - and each side had a portico.

Get your singing voice warmed up as you next will visit the Church of St. Anne and sign a hymn, experiencing its rich acoustics, one of the attributes for which it is known. Located on the Via Dolorosa near the Lions' Gate and the Church of the Flagellation and Condemnation, and inside the Muslim Quarter, the Church of St. Anne is the best-preserved Crusader church in Jerusalem. It marks the traditional site of the home of Jesus' maternal grandparents, Anne and Joachim, and the birthplace of the Virgin Mary.

You will visit Herod's Antonia Fortress, where it is traditionally thought to be where Jesus appeared before Pontius Pilate and tried for blasphemy. The Antonia Fortress was a citadel first built by the Hasmoneans, and later refurbished, renamed by Herod the Great in 37-35 BC for Herod's patron Mark Antony and serves as the starting point of the Via Dolorosa, which you will walk and follow in Christ's steps toward his crucifixion. Your day will end at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre where you can take time to reflect on Christ's sacrificial love. Considered the holiest place in Christendom, this large complex of houses includes many important sites of Jesus' life and was built by Emperor Constantine in 330 A.D. at the behest of his mother, the Empress Helena. It has been destroyed and rebuilt several times during its long history. Most importantly, inside is the hill of

Golgotha, the site of Jesus' crucifixion, as well as the Tomb of Jesus, where he was buried and from which he rose.