

Today begins with a walking tour of the Old City of Jerusalem along the Cardo, once the main street of the city. You'll explore the Davidson Center and the Southern Wall Excavations. You will also have the opportunity for an optional tour of the City of David or spend the afternoon relaxing or exploring on your own.

The cities of the Ancient Roman Empire had a special tradition of decorating main roads with spectacular stone columns. These streets were called "Cardo" and Jerusalem, just like any other Roman city, had a Cardo of its own. This ancient street originates at Damascus Gate in the north, running southwards through the Old City, terminating at Zion Gate.

Evidence for the existence of this ancient Cardo were first found on a mosaic map of Jerusalem. The map was discovered on the floor of a Byzantine church located in Midba town in Moav Mountains. This Midba map served as an ancient graphic source to teach the locals about Jerusalem.

The north side of the Cardo, from Damascus Gate to David Street, was built during the Roman period in Jerusalem. The south side, however, was built in the 6th century, during the times of the Byzantine Empire in Jerusalem, and it extends along the western side of the Jewish Quarter. The Cardo consisted of a central open-air passage for animals and carriages, as well as sidewalks for pedestrian use from both sides of the street. A few original stores located on the sidewalks were also found at several sections of the street.

A Byzantine level was discovered by archeologists in the southern side of the Cardo. This level contained beautiful columns which were later restored. Today it is possible to walk along the Cardo just like the ancient Jerusalemites did back in the 6th century. The Crusader's Bazaar, which was built in the 12th century, is now renovated with modern stores selling ancient history.

Davidson Center is home to some of the most intriguing and important archaeological finds from the Second Temple period. Researchers have discovered a wide and impressive street nearby the Western Wall. Apparently, this street used to be the area's main street and was visited frequently by pilgrims, tourists, and sages such as Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai and Rabbi Akiva. You'll walk the street's paving stones and immerse yourself in the story of ancient Jerusalem where thousands of Jews walked 2000 years ago, making their way to Temple Mount. Walking the street, you will also notice huge stones. These stones were knocked from the walls of Temple Mount and have been lying there ever since.

Another impressive discovery is a drainage channel which was found under the street, containing rare finds from the days of the destruction of Jerusalem. This channel used to be the place where ancient warriors escaped to, hoping to find shelter from the Romans. While you're there, explore the Southern Wall where you'll find an ancient staircase leading to Temple Mount. This is how the pilgrim entered the Temple.

The City of David was added as an optional tour as it includes walking through narrow tunnels down very steep inclines, which might not be everyone's cup of tea. During our time in

Jerusalem, we stayed additional days and this was one of our favorites excursions. You'll journey through underground tunnels through which the city was conquered, and residents fled. You'll go down to the hidden spring where kings were coronated, explore the underground mysteries of Hezekiah's Tunnel, where water has flowed since the time of the prophets. One of my most vivid memories is looking at the excavations of David's palace, and visualizing Bathsheba on her rooftop below his balcony.