
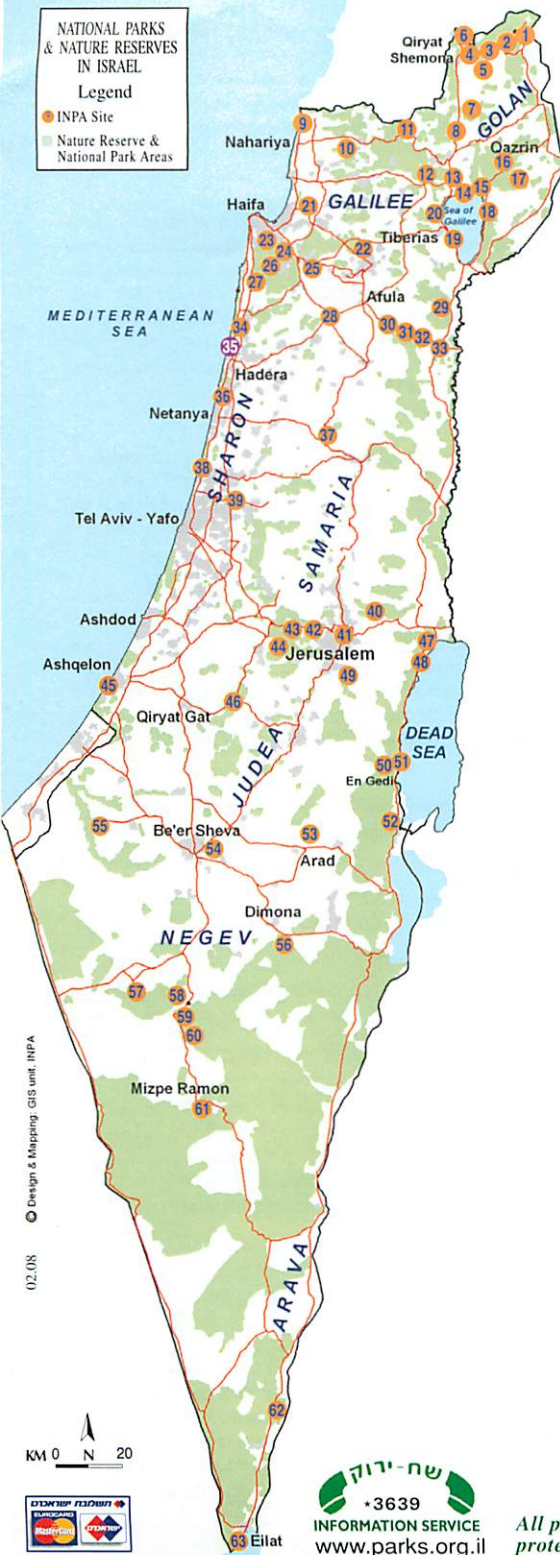


NATIONAL PARKS
& NATURE RESERVES
IN ISRAEL

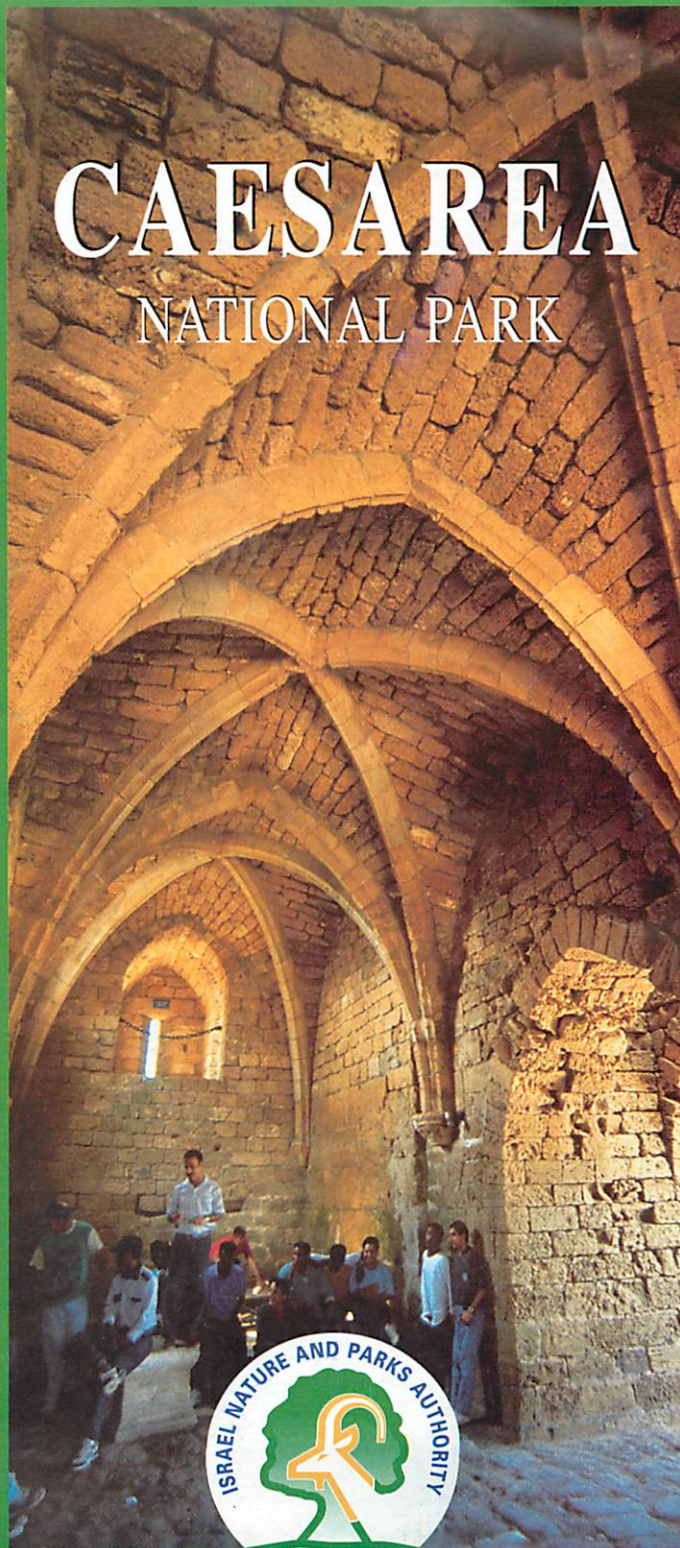
Legend

-  INPA Site
-  Nature Reserve & National Park Areas



1. NIMROD'S FORTRESS N.P.
2. HERMON STREAM N.R. (BANIAS)
3. TEL DAN N.R.
4. SENIR STREAM N.R.
5. HORESHAT TAL N.P.
6. IYYON STREAM N.R.
7. HULA N.R.
8. TEL HAZOR N.P.
9. AKHZIV N.P.
10. YEHI'AM FORTRESS N.P.
11. BARAM N.P.
12. AMUD STREAM N.R.
13. KORAZIM N.P.
14. CAPERNAUM N.P.
15. BETIHA - BET ZAYDA N.R.
16. YEHUDIYA N.R.
17. GAMLA N.R.
18. KURSI N.P.
19. HAMAT TEVERYA N.P.
20. ARBEL N.P.
21. EN AFEQ N.R.
22. ZIPPORI N.P.
23. HAI-BAR CARMEL N.R.
24. MT. CARMEL N.P.
25. BET SHE'ARIM N.P.
26. NAHAL ME'AROT N.R.
27. DOR HABONIM N.R.
28. TEL MEGIDDO N.P. (ARMAGEDDON)
29. KOKHAV HAYARDEN N.P. (BELVOIR)
30. MA'AYAN HAROD N.P.
31. BET ALFA N.P.
32. GAN HASHELOSHA N.P. (SAKHNE)
33. BET SHE'AN N.P.
34. TANINIM STREAM N.R.
35. CAESAREA N.P.
36. ALEXANDER STREAM N.P.
37. SEBASTIA N.P.
38. APOLLONIA N.P.
39. YARQON N.P.
40. EN PERAT N.R.
41. JERUSALEM WALLS N.P.
42. CASTEL N.P.
43. AQUA BELLA N.P. (EN HEMED)
44. SOREQ CAVE N.R. (STALACTITE CAVE)
45. ASHQELON N.P.
46. BET GUVRIN N.P. (MARESHA)
47. OUMRAN N.P.
48. ENOT ZUKIM N.R. (EN FASHKHA)
49. HERODYON N.P.
50. EN GEDI N.R.
51. EN GEDI ANTIQUITIES N.P.
52. MASADA N.P.
53. TEL ARAD N.P.
54. TEL BE'ER SHEVA N.P.
55. ESHKOL N.P. (BESOR)
56. MAMSHIT N.P. (KURNUB)
57. SHIVTA N.P.
58. BEN GURION'S BURIAL PLACE N.P.
59. EN AVEDAT N.P.
60. AVEDAT N.P.
61. RAMON VISITOR CENTRE & BIO RAMON
62. HAI-BAR YOTVATA N.R. (DESERT WILDLIFE)
63. CORAL BEACH N.R.

CAESAREA NATIONAL PARK



טל-יודוק
*3639
INFORMATION SERVICE
www.parks.org.il

All proceeds will be used to
protect nature and heritage

CAESAREA

Welcome to Caesarea National Park!

The park extends from the Roman theatre in the south to the Crusader city in the north. It includes the Byzantine square, the Herodian amphitheatre, promontory palace, bathhouse, a network of streets, and more.

Many archaeological sites within the national park have been prepared for public visits. In addition, parking lots, toilets and restaurants are available. An annotated aerial view of the site presented in this brochure, should assist in making your visit a pleasant one.

The park has three entrances:

- Near the theatre
- South of the Crusader city wall
- Near the eastern gate of the Crusader city

Recommended Tours

Within the park one may choose walking routes varying from one hour to a whole day.

Our suggestions are:

- A. The short route (1-2 hours), which includes the sites numbered 1,3,4,7,8.
- B. A 2-3 hour route, which includes sites 1,2,3,5,7,8,9,11,16.
- C. The comprehensive route (4-6 hours), which includes sites 1-17.



Archaeological Attractions at the Site:

1. The Theatre

This is the most ancient of all theatres found in Israel. Built in Herod's time, it continued to be in use for hundreds of years thereafter. Its location was carefully chosen in accordance with the accepted criteria of the time. It had two *cavea* (seating areas) and could accommodate 4,000 spectators. The orchestra area was decorated with marble-like plaster and renewed several times. Behind the stage stood the lavishly decorated *scaenae frons* - a three storey high wall, built with tall pillars - which served as the stage background. Towards the end of the Byzantine period the theatre was converted into a castle, and was deserted after the Arab conquest.

2. Promontory Palace

Justing into the sea, just west of the theatre, are the excavated remains of an impressive palace with a pool in its western section. The palace dates back to the Roman and Byzantine periods. Archaeologists believe that the pool once served as the city's fish market.

3. Herodian Amphitheatre

A huge U-shaped entertainment structure, complete with an arena and hundreds of seats, was excavated here. Built by Herod, it was probably used for horse racing, sport events and entertainment shows during the Roman period. The amphitheatre, more than 250 m long and 50 m wide, originally had 12 rows of seats, with place for some 10,000 spectators. Two rows of columns were added to its eastern section at a later stage. The structure was referred to as an *amphitheatre* during Herod's time (Antiq. XV:341) and might be the *stadium* mentioned by Josephus Flavius in Jewish War (II:9,3).

4. Network of Streets

A section of the Roman and Byzantine city's grid plan of streets was uncovered at this site. *Insulae* separate the crisscrossing roads.

5. Bathhouse Complex

A luxurious public bathhouse which occupies more than half of the insula, was apparently built here after Herod's amphitheatre ceased to function.

6. Commercial and Administrative Area

Built on the southern section of a Roman-Byzantine insula, the commercial area was erected on vaults which served as warehouses. One of the vaulted chambers was used as a *Mithraeum* (a sanctuary of the god Mithras).

7. Fortified Medieval City

In the 9th century (the Arab period), a fortified city surrounded the harbour. The Arab city walls were later incorporated into the impressive fortifications of Louis IX, which consisted of a high perimeter wall and a 9 m deep dry moat. The wall was 900 m long and 13 m high, and included gates in the north, east and south, and several posterns (secret gateways). A harbour fortress, erected in the south-west, was separated from the city by a trench filled with sea water.

8. The Harbour

A large artificial harbour ('Sebastos') was built here during the time of Herod. It consisted of an outer quay with a 400 m long breakwater, an inner quay, and an anchorage area along which stood columns and mooring stones. The breakwater sank and collapsed during the Roman period, but the harbour was repaired in the time of the Byzantine Emperor Anastasius (491-518 CE). Following the Arab conquest, the harbour fell into disuse and silted up, but was restored again in the 9th century. During the Crusader period a new breakwater was built, with columns taken from the ruins of Byzantine Caesarea. The inner basin, which had been clogged with silt, became a residential quarter. The fishing dock seen here today was built after the creation of the State of Israel.

Geographic Description

Caesarea National Park is situated on the Mediterranean coast in northern Sharon, between the Crocodile and Hadera River mouths. It lies alongside bays and shallow inlets that were formed by wave erosion in the *kurkar* range. These bays were utilized throughout history for the anchorage of sea-going vessels.

Historic Background

During the Persian rule (586-332 BCE), the Phoenicians built a settlement on the shoreline of one of the bays, where the ground water level was high. The village, which was part of Dor county, flourished in the Hellenistic period (332-37 BCE), and is first mentioned in the Zenon papyri (a document from 259 BCE) under the name of Straton's Tower.

In 103 BCE, Dor and Straton's Tower were conquered by Alexander Jannaeus, annexed by the Hasmonean Kingdom, and torn away from it after the Roman conquest. In the year 30 BCE, the village was awarded to Herod, who ruled between the years 37-4 BCE. He built a large port city at the site, and called it Caesarea in honour of his patron Octavian Augustus Caesar. In Josephus' *Jewish War* (1:21,5) it says: "*And he chose on the coast one forsaken town by the name of Straton's Tower... which thanks to its favourable location was suitable for carrying out his ambitious plans. He rebuilt it entirely of white stone and adorned it with a royal palace of unique splendor, displaying... the brilliance of his mind*".

Caesarea was a planned city, with a network of crisscrossing roads, a temple, theatre, amphitheatre, markets and residential quarters. It took 12 years to build, and great festivities were held to mark its completion in 10/9 BCE. The city transformed rapidly into a great commercial centre, and by the year 6 BCE became the headquarters of the Roman government in Palestine.

The high-level aqueduct, which brought water from Shuni springs some 7.5 km northeast of Caesarea, served as a source of water for the prospering city. Its population included Jews and gentiles, but conflicts between them were one of the important causes of the Great Revolt that erupted in 66 BCE. Caesarea served as a base for the Roman legions who dealt with the quelling of the revolt, and it was here that their commanding general Vespasian was declared Caesar. The city received the status of 'colony' and after the fall and destruction of Jerusalem, became the most important city in the country. Being the centre for quelling the Bar Kochva revolt, this is probably where the Jewish leaders headed by Rabbi Akiva were tortured to death.

Pagans, Samaritans, Jews and Christians lived here in the 3rd and 4th centuries CE. Among its famous citizens were Rabbi Abbahu, and the church leaders Auregines and Eusebius.

During the Byzantine period the city flourished, and extended over some 400 acres. Towards the end of the 6th century a perimeter wall was built, making Caesarea the largest fortified city in the country.

Following the Arab conquest in 640 CE, Caesarea lost its political and economic significance. Most of its citizens left the city, and it became a small forsaken village.



Only in the 9th century, with the development of sea-trade and the recovery of the coastal cities, was Caesarea refortified. It was conquered by the Crusaders on May 17th 1101, and ruled by the Knights of Garnier. In 1251, during the crusade of king Louis IX of France, Caesarea was fortified anew with impressive intensity.

In 1265 it was conquered by the Mamelukes led by Baybars, and was destroyed and deserted. Its ruins became a source of lime and building stones for the region. It remained desolate until the late 19th century, when the Ottoman authorities settled Bosnian refugees here. The destroyed Crusader fortress was renovated and became the administrative centre, with new houses built on the ruins.

Kibbutz Sedot Yam was founded in 1940, just south of ancient Caesarea, and in recent years new residential areas were built in the vicinity.

Review of Research Explorations

In 1873, a survey of the Palestine Exploration Fund marked the beginning of the first scientific exploration of the site. They noted the Crusader city, the theatre, hippodrome and aqueducts. Archaeological finds such as columns, pillars, statues and inscriptions were uncovered and removed from the site. Since 1947 only limited digs were carried out, until extensive explorations began in 1959-1964 by an Italian expedition, revealing the theatre, parts of the city's fortifications, and the upper aqueduct; while an Israeli team uncovered parts of the Crusader city, the Jewish quarter and sections of the aqueduct.

Following these excavations, the Crusader city and the theatre became a national park. Since then, many excavations have been carried out in the city and its harbour by teams from the USA and Israel. Since 1992, extensive excavations are being conducted by teams from the Antiquities Authority and Haifa University.

Other Attractions in the Vicinity

- ◆ A beach and a diving club at the southern end of the harbour, as well as a public beach near the high aqueduct.
- ◆ Some of Caesarea's archaeological findings are exhibited in the museum of nearby Kibbutz Sedot Yam.
- ◆ Accommodation available in the vicinity varies from B&B at Kibbutz Sedot Yam to the 5 star Dan-Caesarea Hotel.

Chronological Table

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| The Persian period: 568-332 BCE | The Arab period: 638-1099 CE |
| The Hellenistic period: 332-37 BCE | The Crusader period: 1099-1291 CE |
| The Roman period: 37 BCE - 324 CE | The Mameluke period: 1291-1561 CE |
| The Byzantine period: 324-638 CE | The Ottoman period: 1561-1917 CE |

Safety Precautions and Instructions

- ◆ The national park has precious antiquities. Excavations at the site are still underway. Please do not enter areas not yet opened to the public.
- ◆ It is forbidden to damage, engrave or mutilate the antiquities or to collect souvenirs at the site.
- ◆ For your convenience, parking lots and toilets have been prepared. Please help us keep them clean.

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9. The Temple platform (podium)

In Herod's time an elevated platform was built here to serve as a base for a lavish temple dedicated to Roma and Augustus. An octagonal Byzantine church was later erected at the site, followed by a mosque in the Arab period, and later still by a Crusader cathedral.

10. The Statues Square

This square was part of a Byzantine road (*the cardo*) which was adorned by two statues - one made of marble and one of porphyry - and probably depicted Roman Caesars (some say the porphyry statue was that of Hadrian). The mosaic inscription relates that the square was renovated in the 6th century, during the time of the mayor Flavius Stratigius.

11. The Synagogue

Ruins of a Byzantine synagogue with a mosaic floor and broken fragments of a grille listing the 24 priestly courses, were unearthed at this site. This is thought to have been the Jewish quarter of Caesarea throughout the city's existence.

12. Roman Wall

Ruins of Roman Caesarea's fortifications were excavated in the northwestern limits of the city. They include parts of a wall, a rectangular tower, and a round-towered gate. A paved street with a sewage tunnel beneath it ran through the gate. This part of the wall was probably built on top of the ancient fortifications of Straton's Tower, the village which predated Caesarea.

13. Amphitheatre

The remains of an oval Roman amphitheatre, probably dating to the 2nd century CE, were uncovered here. The amphitheatre was used for gladiatorial and animal combats.

6. Commercial and Administrative Area

7. Fortified Medieval City

8. The Harbour

9. The Temple platform (podium)

10. The Statues Square

11. The Synagogue

12. Roman Wall

13. Amphitheatre

14. Byzantine Wall

15. Hippodrome ("Circus")

16. The High-Level Aqueduct

17. The Low Aqueduct

14. Byzantine Wall

A perimeter wall over 2,600 m long surrounded Byzantine Caesarea. It had several gates and square towers. Its southern gate was discovered on the grounds of Kibbutz Sedot Yam.

15. Hippodrome ("Circus")

Built in the 2nd century CE for chariot racing, this hippodrome was 450 m long and 90 m wide, and could seat some 30,000 spectators. Columns originally set on the wall running along the middle of the race track (*spina*) were unearthed in the arena, as well as a 27 m high porphyry obelisk.

16. The High-Level Aqueduct

Since Caesarea had no rivers or springs, drinking water for the Roman and Byzantine city was brought via a water carrier (*aqueduct*), originating at the Shuni springs. Other water sources such as the upper Crocodile River were added at a later stage. The aqueduct consists of three canals, two of which were added in the course of its use. In low lying areas, sections of the aqueduct were carried on arches (*arcadia*). On its way to the city the aqueduct passed the *kurkar* ridge through a hewn tunnel at today's Jisre a'Zarka village, reaching Caesarea at the height of some 8 m above sea level, with a gradient of 20 cm for each km.

17. The Low Aqueduct

This aqueduct carried water from an artificial reservoir formed by damming the flow of the Crocodile River waters. It is 5 km long and reached Caesarea at a height of 5.5 m above sea level.