

## Tel Aviv Now

Beachside buzz, hip hotels and gastronomic wonders – all the typical Mediterranean attractions in one of the least-expected places.

by Anthony Grant



**TLV IS A JOLT OF** non-stop energy – and as much a state of mind as a city. Fourteen kilometres of beaches soften the urban edge, while bold new hotels and an exuberant culinary scene make it the Middle East's new must. Here's how to experience the best of it.

### STAY

The most hotly anticipated hotel opening in Tel Aviv, **The Jaffa, a Luxury Collection Hotel** ([thejaffahotel.com](http://thejaffahotel.com)) debuted in July within the sumptuously refurbished premises of the 19th-century French Hospital. Set in

vibrant Jaffa, the property includes a new building, outdoor pool and Italian restaurant. Where Jaffa meets south Tel Aviv in the revitalised American-German Colony district, **The Drisco** ([thedrisco.com](http://thedrisco.com)) is a haven of contemporary elegance in a restored 1866 building,

while at the start of bustling Nahalat Binyamin Street, classic Bauhaus design gets a fresh and bright makeover from designer Karim Rashid at **The Poli House Tel Aviv** ([brownhotels.com](http://brownhotels.com)), and farther down the street by the Carmel Market the new **Fabric Hotel** ([atlas.co.il](http://atlas.co.il)) exudes a hip vibe in a former fabric factory. For an eyeful of Tel Aviv's famous waterfront promenade, **The Carlton** ([carlton.co.il](http://carlton.co.il)) is a perennial favourite, and breakfast at its Carlton

on the Beach is a Tel Aviv institution.

### EAT

Tel Aviv's raucous restaurant scene is powered by its denizens' adventurous appetites and the triumph of New Israeli cooking: inventive, market-based and a hybrid of Middle Eastern flavours. Make sure to check out chef Yossi Shitrit's aromatic recipes like Moroccan grouper cakes with Swiss chard, chickpeas and pickled lemon at chic **Mashya** ([mashya.co.il](http://mashya.co.il)). The city's movers and shakers swear allegiance to **Shila** ([en.shila-rest.co.il](http://en.shila-rest.co.il)), where chef Sharon Cohen's eminently shareable seafood and other dishes are served a la plancha. Young chef Raz Rahav rules the roost at buzzy **OCD** ([ocdtlv.com](http://ocdtlv.com)) where diners seated near the open kitchen eagerly tuck into whatever the seasonal tasting menu turns up. At cosy **Dalida** ([dalidatlv.co.il](http://dalidatlv.co.il)), meanwhile, located in the Levinsky spice market area, chef Dan Zuretz oversees a market-fresh medley (think Arab cabbage and potato in champagne with seared calamari, bacon and champagne foam). In the northern stretches of



Chef Raz Rahav in the kitchen of his restaurant, OCD



From left: The Poli House's panoramic rooftop pool; a garden-view from at The Jaffa; assorted Greek small plates at Greco restaurant

## Tel Aviv's raucous restaurant scene is powered by its denizens' adventurous appetites and the triumph of New Israeli cooking

Tel Aviv and near the beach, airy **Greco** ([greco.co.il](http://greco.co.il)) is like a trip to Mykonos, and at the Tel Aviv Museum of Art daring design and attentive Israeli twists on French and Mediterranean staples tempt at **Pastel Brasserie & Bar** ([pastel-tlv.com](http://pastel-tlv.com)).

### SEE

The city's free **Independence Trail**, beginning at the busy intersection of Rothschild Boulevard and Herzl Street, is a new pathway of gold-coloured bricks joining ten heritage sites linked to Israel's independence. If the signature curvilinear style of many buildings on and around Rothschild Boulevard – heart

of the "White City" – intrigues, consider joining a walking tour offered by the **Bauhaus Center** ([bauhaus-center.com](http://bauhaus-center.com)) to learn more. The façade of the striking Herta and Paul Amir Building at the **Tel Aviv Museum of Art** ([tamuseum.org](http://tamuseum.org)) is made up of 465 interlocking precast concrete panels; inside there's a 26.5m atrium and impressive collection of Israeli art.

### SHOP

If there's one word that could define Tel Aviv style, it's irreverent, with fashion designers preferring to make their own rules. Browse the snappy, colourful looks of the menswear of **David**



The eclectic offerings at the Elemento concept boutique

**Sassoon** ([david-sassoon.com](http://david-sassoon.com)), favoured by local TV star Lior Raz. Young new Israeli designers hold sway at **Razili** ([razili.co.il](http://razili.co.il)), while home furnishings get a magical Mediterranean treatment at **Elemento** ([elemento-design.com](http://elemento-design.com)); founded by designer Yossy Goldberg, the store's irresistible mix of furniture, accessories and art is housed in a rambling, ancient building in Old Jaffa. **Namal Tel Aviv** is Hebrew for Tel Aviv Port,

14,000 square metres of seaside shops and restaurants in the city's "old north". **Hatachana** ([hatachana.co.il](http://hatachana.co.il)), once terminus station for the old Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, is now the entrance to an outdoor mall with designer boutiques and upmarket eateries. It's located between the beach and the start of slender Shabazi Street, the principal commercial thoroughfare of the trendy Neve Tzedek neighbourhood.