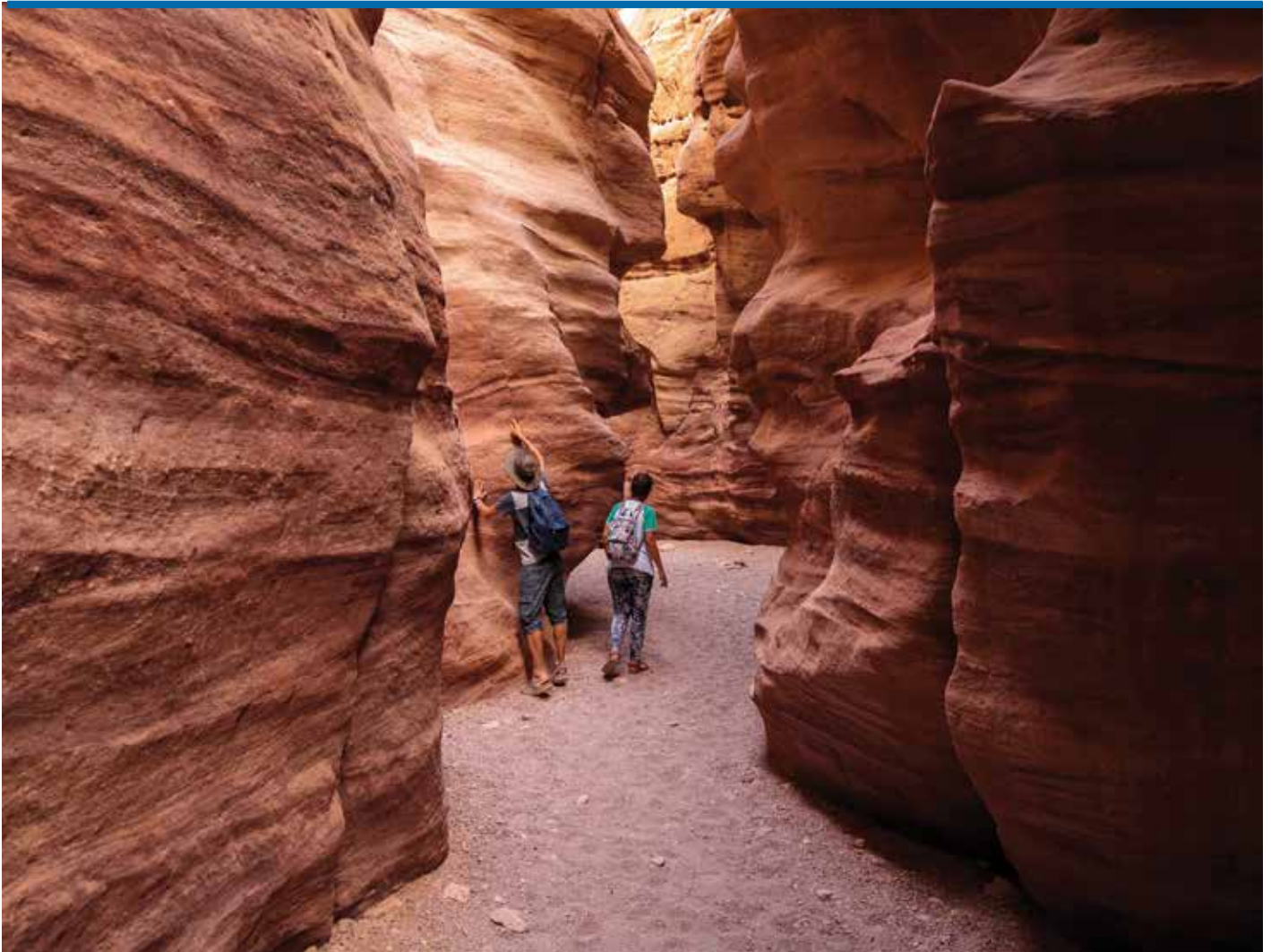


L'Shanah Tova

Tired of empty promises?
Check these New Year's
Resolutions off your list
/ Jennifer Greenberg

As another year washes over as quickly as a summer storm, the time has come to raise a glass to fresh beginnings; gathered round the table we make inaudible promises to a sweet New Year, tongue-tied toasts over ripe Honeycrisps and rich Jerusalem honey. Resolutions made, but never kept. This year is different, though. You are in Israel, and in the spirit of 5779, it is time to repurpose the white pages of that 2018 diary as a travel journal, step outside of your comfort zone and up to your waist in fresh spring water, tackle that aversion to leafy greens. Try something new and adventurous with our list of New Year's Resolutions to conquer while in Israel this September.

I promise to...



Enjoy Life to the Fullest

Life is short. And it only seems to be getting shorter. For the moment, you are in a stimulating country with adventure dangling from every balcony — whether cast in Jerusalem stone or plastered in street artist Dede's signature Band-Aids. The downtime inscribed in the Jewish holidays is the best time to trade in your Netflix subscription for some photo-stream-worthy adventures.

Try something new

DIVE: Snuba in the Red Sea.

The southernmost city in Israel, Eilat, has been blessed with a spectacular coral reef. The northernmost reef in the world and a unique Israeli attraction is the beating heart of the one-mile long nature reserve that stretches across the gulf of Eilat. Diving or snorkeling near the reef, you will see colorful coral gardens home to a variety of multi-hued tropical fish: parrotfish, butterfly fish, giant shellfish, and a wide selection of intriguing species that only come out in the dark. About a ten-minute walk from the Egyptian border, you'll find the southernmost scuba

diving club in Israel, a small venue with plenty of peace and quiet. The club offers an introductory underwater excursion for those who have no previous diving experience.

HIKE: Eilat Mountain Hike

Just minutes from Eilat and offering some of the most stunning views of the south, this hike is the perfect desert escape. Adventuring through rock-formed passages less than two meters wide, yet hundreds of meters high, the Eilat Mountains offer a unique desert experience. Whether hiking or biking, advanced or beginner, an experience awaits every visitor. In great weather conditions, one can see Israel, Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia from the top of mountain, making this experience uniquely Middle Eastern. ▶▶



▶▶▶ **RAPPEL: Jerusalem Rappelling / Snapping**

A unique way to see Jerusalem is by rappelling off the side of the Tayelet or in Hinnom Valley (Gei Ben Hinom), with a view of the Old City. The guide, Yaakov, a rock-climbing champion, is patient and experienced, making him the perfect person to show guests 'the ropes.' If your kids cannot stop climbing walls and trees, why not take them on an adventure they will not soon forget? Suitable for children ages four and up, with younger guests snapping with the guide, this adventure is a must.

HIKE (some more): Ramon Crater
The Ramon Crater ("Makhtesh Ramon") in the Negev is the world's largest erosion crater. Its ancient history dates back 220 million years to when an ocean once filled the massive hole, which measures 500 meters deep, 40 km

long, and anywhere between 2 and 10 km wide. With a network of hikes ranging from easy loops to advanced mountain scales with extreme passageways, this worldwide landmark is the perfect place for thrill seekers to get their adrenaline fix. Be sure to catch the unbeatable sunset at the camel lookout or camp out under the desert stars.

RUN: The Bible Marathon
When it comes to outdoor fitness, Israelis take their exercise quite seriously. Leading a healthy lifestyle is important in the Middle East, and the variety of fresh fruits and vegetables offered in its markets make eating well a cinch. But that's only half the battle. Stay in shape with one of the country's most historic races. The Bible Marathon retraces the footsteps of the man from tribal Benjamin, who ran from the battlefield of what is

now Rosh Ha'ayin to Shiloh, as mentioned in the Book of Samuel. Tackle the marathon madness with verve this September. For information and registration, visit biblemarathon.co.il.

TREK: Israel National Trail
Israel is famous for its hiking trails winding their way over breathtaking heights in the north and lunar-like lows in the south. The routes are a fantastic way to see the country's landscape, and they all link up to form one giant hiking path that traverses the entire country, known as the Israel National Trail. Its northern end is at Dan, near the Lebanese border, and it extends to Eilat at the country's southernmost tip on the Red Sea. The trail is marked with three stripes (white, blue, and orange) and has been named by *National Geographic* as one of the world's best hikes. ▶▶▶



▶▶▶ **TUBE: Dan River**

Located in the Golan Heights at the base of Mount Hermon, the Dan River is a wonderful destination for nature lovers with an abundance of outdoor activities to enjoy. For those in the mood to relax, rent a tube and float along the cool waters. If you have an itch for excitement, kayaking or white water rafting provide a great adrenaline boost. Whichever you choose, a trip down the river makes for a lovely September afternoon. A true highlight of the area is the famous Dag al HaDan restaurant, nestled amidst the trees on the riverbank

...serving the fresh catch of the day and a delectable array of colorful Israeli salads. Nearby, located on the ruins of the biblical city of Dan, the Tel Dan National Park is a remarkable place to experience nature and archaeology all in one place. Visitors are offered a glimpse into ancient life through ruins and artifacts. Additionally, the reserve provides access to dozens of winding streams and hiking trails.

RECOVER: The Dead Sea

This most peculiar body of water is located at the lowest point on the face of the earth (approximately 422 meters below sea level). Its

extremely high salt concentration (33.7%) makes it one of the saltiest seas on the planet, allowing for an indescribable, utterly enjoyable floating experience. The Dead Sea is also chockfull of skin-friendly therapeutic minerals that reputedly combat the effects of aging and skin ailments. Pack your beach bag and head to the popular Kalia Beach, which has changing rooms, showers, lounge chairs, shaded areas, a snack bar, and a lifeguard. Indulge in a free mud bath, and slather yourself with the goeey mineral mud from head to toe for a great photo op.

RINSE & REPEAT



Eat Healthier

You've made a vow to pack away the junk food, to make better decisions at the grocery store, to perhaps try your hand at veganism. While these small goals may feel like feats in the Western World of chain stores, baseball games, and fast food restaurants, clean eating in Israel is all the rage. In fact, besides the odd shawarma or falafel (although vegan) it is harder to be unhealthy in this bountiful country—brimming with fresh fruits, vegetables, and produce.

Produce pileup

More than the land of milk and honey, Israel is the land of persimmon and pomegranate,

coriander and cumin, figs and fresh dates. Whether you are exploring Jerusalem, Nazareth, or Tel Aviv, every Israeli city boasts an impressive market (or 'shuk') where you can buy any—and every—thing imaginable. Bypass the mounds of colorful candy (locally known as 'gummies') tempting any child at heart at the top of the shuk and ping pong between spice stalls, endless rows of fruits and vegetables, and the best hard cheeses and butcher's cuts in town.

Markets will be closed on specific dates during the High Holidays, so make sure to check if they are open before making your shopping list

A Shuk Shopper's Guide to the Galaxy

- ▶ **Be aggressive, B-E aggressive.** Israelis aren't afraid to use force when trying to get their shopping done for the week.
- ▶ **Don't be afraid to bargain.** Market merchants will always try to upsell you, especially if they sense a non-Israeli accent.
- ▶ **Avoid Freaky Fridays at all costs.** If you are blessed with the option, try to steer clear of the shuk on Fridays as the hectic masses squeeze in their pre-Shabbat shopping.
- ▶ **Channel your inner alley cat.** Some of the shuk's golden gems are sprinkled off the beaten path on side streets and alleyways adjacent to the main drag.

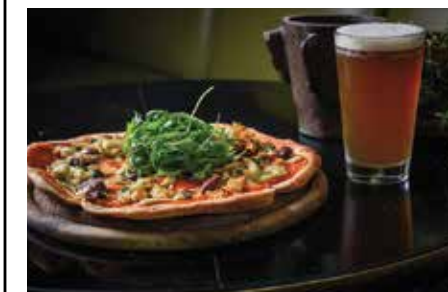


Vegan Variety



It isn't just a nickname, Tel Aviv has earned its title as the "Vegan Capital of the World" and wears its badge with honor. These must-visit meat-free restaurants will please any guest, whether a diehard vegan, a curious customer, or the most skeptical of carnivores:

Meshek Barzilay: Located in the charming Neve Tzedek neighborhood, this organic vegetarian and vegan bistro feels like a secret hideaway. The bright, welcoming restaurant teems with garden-fresh ingredients, each of which celebrates Israel's bounty. Think overflowing salads, homemade cashew cheeses, impressive breakfasts, and a diverse, cultured menu.

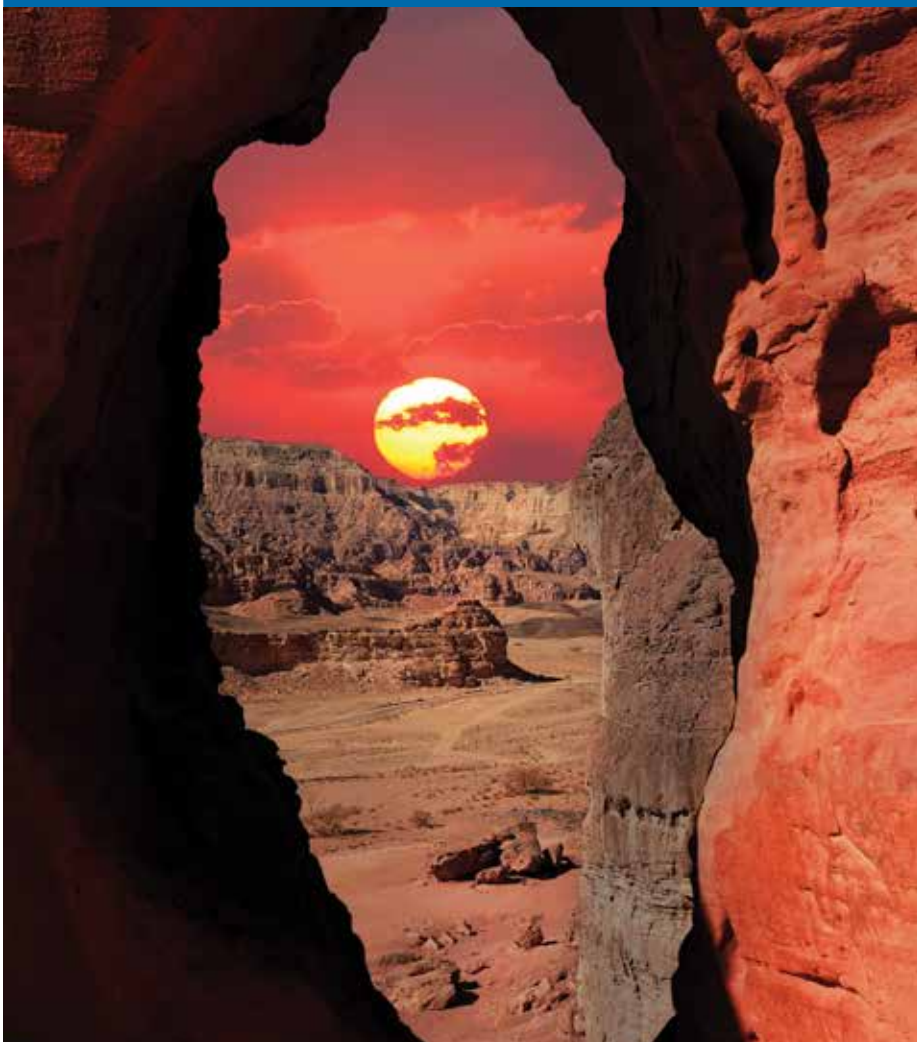


Zakaim: Chef Harel Zakaim is all about exploring everything local at his farm-to-table restaurant, which merges seasonal ingredients with authentic Israeli cuisine. You might even forget that this place is vegan, since the menu is wholly focused on the glory of the ingredients rather than simply finding substitutes for

meat dishes. When you visit, be sure to have a glass of Persian soda, made by Chef Harel's mom herself. **Goodness:** From the owner of vegan favorite HaShwarma HaTivonit comes Goodness, a vegan diner specializing in burgers. Omnivores and vegans alike will drool over the flavorful burgers, crafted to mimic the taste and texture of the real thing with a range of toppings and sauces available. Their vegan versions of crispy shawarma, juicy sloppy Joes, or fish and chips hit home for those missing their junk food fix.



Anastasia: Vegans and non-vegans alike will fall in love with this trendy health-based café. Everything is in superabundance—from the light shining through the windows to the health-savvy staff and extensive menu of vegan, raw, and gluten-free options. Melt over the sweet potato quiche with walnut cheese and spelt or one of their towering salads boasting carefully-selected fresh vegetables and immune-boosting ingredients. **Herzog:** This small restaurant on Ibn Gvirol offers a special dish called Har ('mountain' in Hebrew), which is a huge pile of wholesome deliciousness, with alternating ingredients every day. If you are looking for creative and interesting food to nourish your body, look no further; Herzog is sure to leave even the most famished diners fully satisfied. Who needs meat when there's Herzog?



are complemented by the quiet of the campground, and lack of light pollution. Spend daytime hiking as a family in the desert, and at night, wrap yourself in a warm blanket and lay back beneath a canopy of stars, safe from the chilly desert air. Located just a short drive from Mitzpe Ramon, Be'erot Campground is close to attractions such as camel tours, rappelling, and jeep tours.

Dor Ha'Bonim is the perfect spot to camp out if you have trouble tearing away from the beach at night. No need for artificial ocean sound recordings. One of the few beaches in Israel that allows camping, this scenic spot just south of Haifa will lull you to sleep with its calm, rolling waves. Whether you're bringing a tent or just sleeping on the sand under the stars, it's an ocean-lover's paradise. Perfect for families, groups of friends, or a romantic weekend away with that special someone, take in the majestic views of the sunrise and sunset.

Yotvata Hai-Bar Nature Reserve is just thirty minutes north of Eilat. Drive through beautiful scenery to see endangered biblical animals, which are nurtured at Yotvata Hai-Bar until they are ready to be released into the wild. Here you will find ostriches, Arabian oryx, African wild asses, addaxes (white antelope), and other rare species. Rent a CD tour, which describes the animals that live at the reserve. The tour ends with a visit to the Night Life room and predator center, where leopards, wolves, caracals, and snakes make their homes. The camping area is available by reservation.

Sussita Beach Campground is located across the lake from Tiberias on the Sea of Galilee. A quiet, ►►

Spend More Time with Family

fam·i·ly time
/'fam(ə)lē tīm/

noun

1. Playing bored board games.
2. Wrestling over the remote, failing to find a film, vacating the premises.

Sound familiar? Why not toss these outdated definitions out the car window on your way to one of these perfect camping sites. Whether you want the ocean to lull you to sleep or a freshwater river to jump into in the morning, Israel's camping destinations are as varied as they are gorgeous. There is only so much city life a family can take, after all. And don't forget your bathing suits, decks of cards, and most importantly, marshmallows.

Nature calls

Be'erot Campground is the only accommodation located inside the Ramon Crater, otherwise known as the "Grand Canyon" of Israel. The breathtaking views of the crater



▶▶▶ shaded haven, eucalyptus trees line the campsite, providing plenty of shade and therapeutic qualities. Without numbered camp spots or a need to make reservations, Sussita Beach is the perfect place to go for a last-minute adventure over the holidays. Spend the days lounging in the September sun and getting wet in the Galilee. At night, relax around a fire and enjoy the sounds of nature. Located close to the Ein Gev Harbor, there are plenty of attractions in the area for those craving a bit of excitement. **Gofra Beach** on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee is one of Israel's most popular beach camping sites. Replete with eucalyptus trees, there is plenty of shade for your tents. For those who want a camping experience

with a little more comfort, you can opt for a slightly upgraded area in which you get a fridge, a lighted area that you control, and picnic tables among other amenities. **Yehiam Fortress** is located on the grounds of Kibbutz Yehiam. Twenty minutes east of Nahariya lay the ruins of a fortress from the Crusader period. Camping at Yehiam Fortress allows guests to sleep under the stars and commune with nature, while experiencing a piece of history. The fortress grounds include a mosque, a watchtower, and an assembly hall, restored to tell the story of the battles that once took place here. Yehiam Fortress has a beautiful view of the Galilee, and is located along the Israel National Trail, making it a popular spot among hiking backpackers. ➔

Journal More

You may fill an entire diary merely by documenting all of your new and daring adventures over the course of this trip to Israel. Don't stop there! Continue the healthy behaviors and new adventures and by time you return in 5780, you won't even recognize that restless passenger who picked up the September 5779 issue of *Atmosphere* from the seat pocket and started leafing through its glossy pages.

