



The ancient city of Jerusalem has been the most beloved, hated and fought-over city since the dawn of history. If it is possible to describe it without taking a biased political stand, it is worth visiting by people of all faiths, historians, tourists and seniors looking for their roots.

Of course, there are many more interesting and historic sites to see other than just a list of five. However, just as an introduction for those planning to visit, here are our vote for the top five:

1. Dome of the Rock is the most familiar sight of any skyline photo you see of Jerusalem. Built over the rock of ancient Mt. Moriah in the 7th Century A.D., it's a Muslim shrine marking the Prophet Mohammad's life-on-earth-ending journey to the Seven Heavens.
2. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher has been fought over, destroyed, damaged and reconstructed many times since it was first built around 1000 A.D. Many of its shrines within the complex are considered holy sites where Jesus walked and preached.
3. The Western Wall is one of the most familiar sites in Jerusalem to those of the Jewish faith, both residents and visitors. The old kotel (wall) is covered with niches where worshippers put pieces of paper containing prayers and notes. It is also called the Wailing Wall, because for centuries Jewish worshippers have come to cry out their troubles and sorrows. The area is usually attended daily by very orthodox Jews dressed all in black. Be aware that they are easily offended by gaudily-dressed tourists and their clicking cameras.
4. The street market called Mahane Yehuda or the Jaffa shuk may be worth a visit by tourists who want a bit of relief from trekking through ancient religious areas. At the intersection of Agrippas street and Jaffa Road, the market offers souvenirs, holy objects (mostly fake), clothing, vegetables, fruit, spices, snacks and much more. Prices are a bit high, but as in all Middle East markets, always negotiable.
5. The Jerusalem Botanical Gardens are near the Givat Ram campus of Hebrew University and the Israel Museum. Of course, if there's time, all are worth a visit. The gardens cover a large area, and feature displays of growing plants and flowers from all over the world. There's a natural stream and forest of trees and plants that date back to Biblical days.