

Suqs and Bazaars

The Trail's Nature and Stations



This trail focuses on traditional and contemporary economic and commercial life in the Old City of Jerusalem. It is an enjoyable trail, but requires perseverance and tolerance, given that most Suqs are narrow alleys that are crowded with peddler stands and frequented by many small carts. It is difficult to plan this walk for large groups or children, as they may scatter if the call for shopping takes over their better judgment. Despite these precautions, Suqs exhibit daily social activity, portraying memories, historical flavors, oriental variety, and an uniqueness rarely found in other places. One cannot but mention Jerusalem's famous sesame bread (Ka'ak bsumsum), Zalatimo's sweet pastry (Mutabbaq), Ja'far's cheese pastry (Knafeh), al-'Amad's dense sweet confection, halva (Halaweh), Abu Shukri's hummus, coffee and tea in Suq al-Qattanin, lounging in al-Dabbagha and Aftimos Suq, and the spices of Suq al-Attarin. It is recommended to start the trail at the northern end of Suq Khan

al-Zait and conclude it at Suq al-Qattanin near al-Aqsa Mosque. In other words, this trail is concentrated in the heart and center of the Old City. The trail requires 3 - 4 hours, depending on the pace of sightseers.

Trail's stations:

1. Suq Khan al-Zait
2. Suq Aftimos and Al-Dabbagha
3. The Three Suqs' Roofs
4. Suqs of Lahhamin (Butchers), Attarin (Spice traders) and Khawajat
5. Suq Al-Qattanin

1. Suq Khan al-Zait

Suq Khan al-Zait is a long one, with shops along both sides, and is paved with stone tiles typical of Jerusalem. The first part of this Suq, extending from its northern beginning to just before its intersection with the Christian Quarter Road and 'Aqabat al-Mufti, is uncovered, while the other parts of this Suq are covered by a stone roof, protecting shoppers from natural elements. Shops along Suq Khan al-Zait offer a large and rich variety of modern consumer goods which cater for the needs of tourists and residents alike, including popular restaurants, confectionery and nut shops,

2. Suq Aftimos

Suq Aftimos is one of the most recent Suqs of the Old City of Jerusalem. It was named after the Greek Archimandrite Aftimos, who built it at the beginning of the twentieth century, completing it in 1902. The Suq is located west of the German Church of St. Savior and southeast of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher.

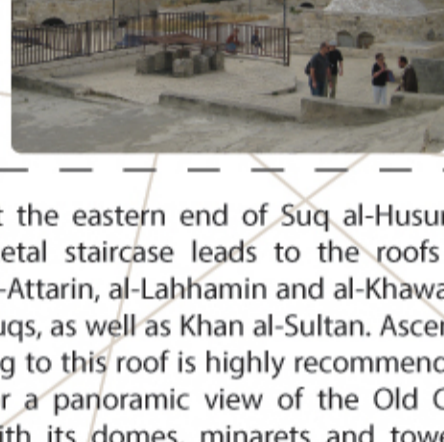
The souk area bustling with life and architectural variety, including a Russian church, a German church, Umar Ibn al-Khattab Mosque minaret, oriental shops, and groups of locals, expatriates and tourists from around the world.



falafel stands, butcheries, vegetable stands and souvenirs. The Suq, however, has lost its traditional specialization of soap manufacturing and olive pressing, given the need to adapt to modern times.



3. Roofs of the three suqs of al-Attarin, al-Lahhamin, and al-Khawajat



At the eastern end of Suq al-Husur, a metal staircase leads to the roofs of al-Attarin, al-Lahhamin and al-Khawajat Suqs, as well as Khan al-Sultan. Ascending to this roof is highly recommended for a panoramic view of the Old City with its domes, minarets and towers, Mount of Olives, the Jerusalem wilderness horizon, the Dome of the Rock to the east, the domes of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and other sites like the Citadel to the west.

In addition the Suqs are narrow and difficult to navigate, the roof offers a quieter and wider place for guidance and viewing. The roof can also serve as a place for rest, reading, meditation, and having a light snack. Care must be taken for sun protection in the summer, and to avoid slipping while moving around or using the metal staircase.

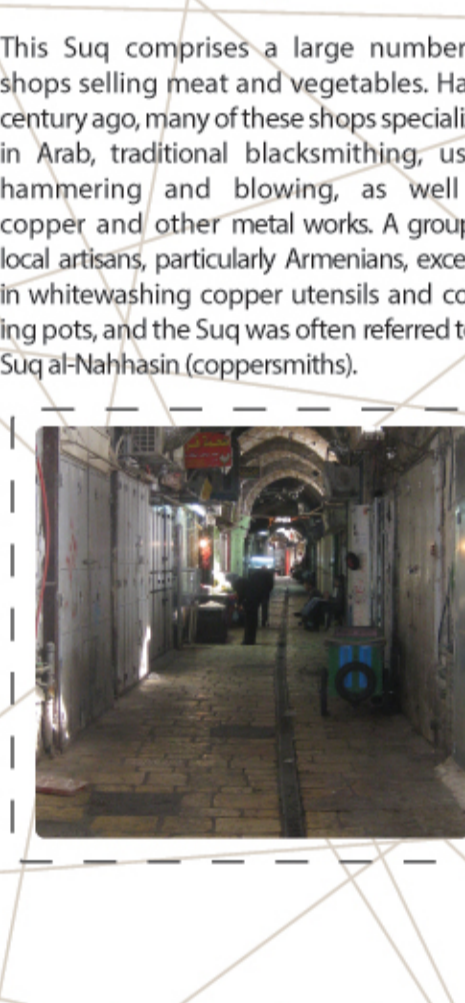
4. The three suqs (al-Attarin, al-Lahhamin, al-Khawajat)

Suq al-Attarin

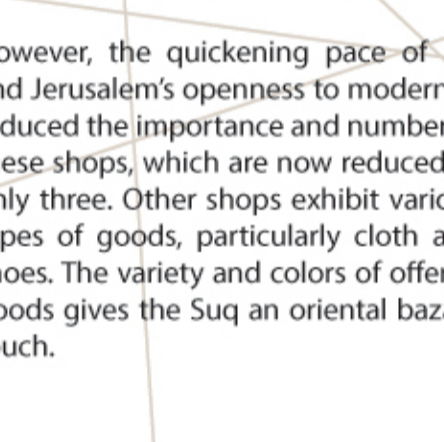
Suq al-Attarin is the middle one among the three Suqs and is also the middle of the cardo street, extending from the end of Suq Khan al-Zait until the beginning of I-Bashura, or the beginning of Harat al-Sharaf (the Jewish neighbourhood). Until recently, this Suq specialized in Arabian and Oriental spices, from which it took its name.

Suq al-Lahhamin (Butchers' market)

This Suq comprises a large number of shops selling meat and vegetables. Half a century ago, many of these shops specialized in Arab, traditional blacksmithing, using hammering and blowing, as well as copper and other metal works. A group of local artisans, particularly Armenians, excelled in whitewashing copper utensils and cooking pots, and the Suq was often referred to as Suq al-Nahhasin (coppersmiths).



However, the quickening pace of life and Jerusalem's openness to modernity reduced the importance and number of these shops, which are now reduced to only three. Other shops exhibit various types of goods, particularly cloth and shoes. The variety and colors of offered goods gives the Suq an oriental bazaar touch.



Suq al-Khawajat (Well-Off market)

The eastern section of the Suq is known as Suq al-Khawajat, referring to traders of cloth and textiles. At present, only the southern part of the Suq is open, as the northern part requires renovation after large parts of it caved in following the 1927 earthquake.



5. Suq al-Qattanin (Cotton Market)

Suq Al-Qattanin is considered one of the most complete and beautiful Suqs in Palestine. It is among the most famous Suqs in Jerusalem. It is adjacent to al-Aqsa Mosque and leads to it from the western side. In fact, it represents a vital connecting point between al-Aqsa Mosque and al-Wad Street.

Suq al-Qattanin contains a Khan (caravanserai) and two baths, and extends 95 meters from east to west. It is flanked, north and south, by two lines of shops, with thirty shops in each on the first level. The second level contains 60 private areas for visitors and travelers to stay.

Other suqs

There are a number of streets and alleys in the Old City which served as bustling Suqs, and continue to do so. Among them is Bab Hutta, the Christian Quarter Street, Bab al-Silsilah Street, extending from al-Aqsa Mosque in the east to Jaffa Gate in the west, as well as other Suqs mentioned in references. Among the main Suqs adjacent to the Old City in the north are Suq al-Musrarah. Today, Sultan Suleiman Street and Sultan Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi (Saladin) Street are among the main streets of Jerusalem, bustling with commercial activity around the Old City.

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