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Tourism

Guests and overnight stays

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Jerusalem compared to select Israeli cities

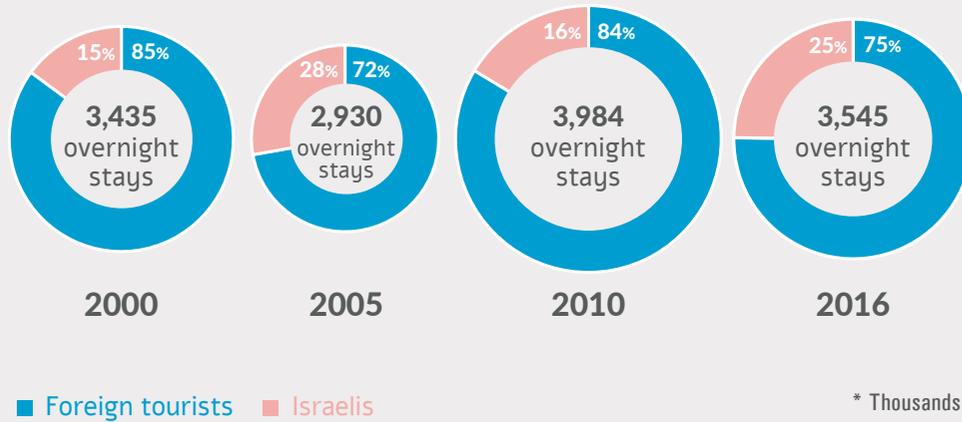
Profile of the tourists

Revenues



Tourism

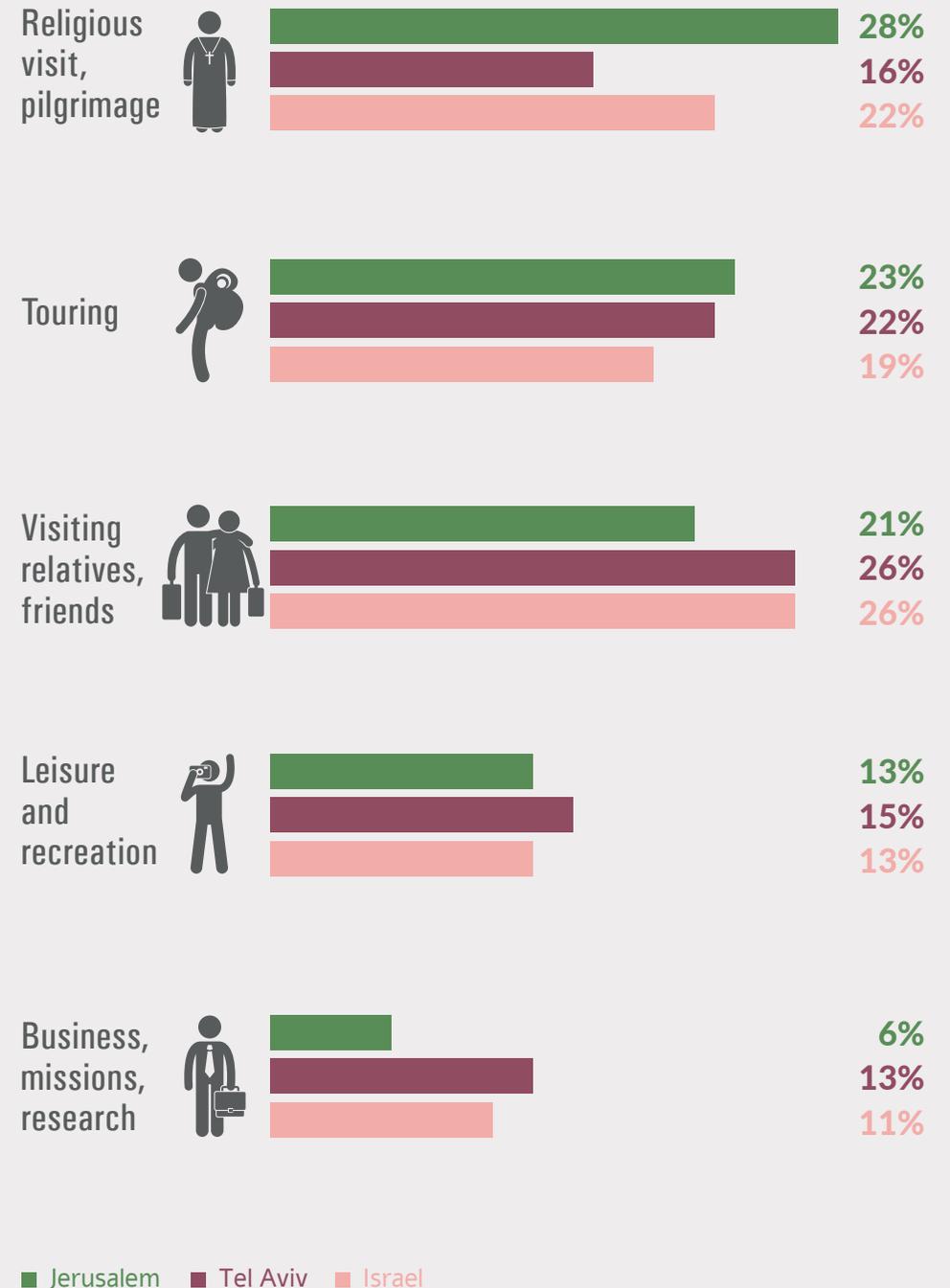
Overnight Stays of Foreign Tourists and Israelis in Hotels in Jerusalem, 2016



Overnight Stays of Foreign Tourists and Israelis in Hotels in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Eilat, 2016



Purposes of Foreign Tourist Visits to Israel, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv, 2015



Guests and overnight stays

Jerusalem attracts visitors from across the country and the around world because of its unique cultural and religious heritage, its status as Israel's capital city, its centrality for the Jewish people as well as its sanctity for the three monotheistic religions, and the historical and archeological sites and cultural centers it has to offer. The number of rooms in Jerusalem's tourist hotels is the largest among Israel's cities, with the exception of Eilat. In 2016 the number of rooms in Jerusalem hotels totaled 10,300. The number of guests in Jerusalem hotels was 1,322,700 and the number of overnight stays reached 3,545,900.

At the close of 2016 Jerusalem had 77 tourist hotels³³ with a total of 10,300 rooms, constituting 20% of all rooms in Israel's tourist hotels. By comparison, Eilat had 11,000 rooms (21%), Tel Aviv had 7,900 rooms (15%), and the Dead Sea area had 4,100 rooms (8%).

In 2016 the number of guests in Jerusalem hotels totaled 1,322,700, of whom 60% were foreign tourists and 40% were Israelis. Among foreign tourists, 47% came from the Americas (mainly from North and Central America), and 29% from Europe.

The number of guests in Jerusalem hotels in 2016 – 1,322,700 – was higher than the figure for 2015 – 1,243,600 – and slightly lower than the figure for 2014, at 1,333,300. Foreign tourists totaled 790,500, higher than the figure for 2015 – 744,600 – but lower than the figure for 2014, at 878,500. Israeli guests

totaled 532,200, which was higher than the figure for 2015 – 499,000 – as well as 2014, at 454,900.

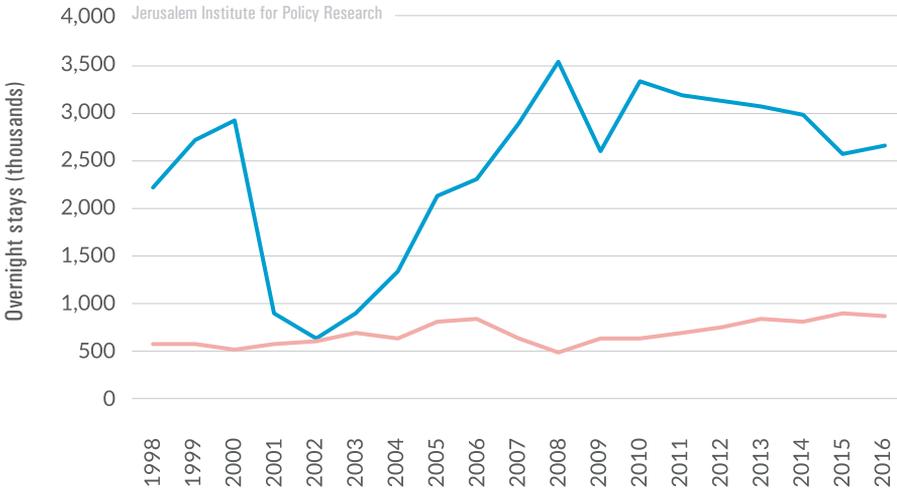
The number of overnight stays in Jerusalem hotels in 2016 reached 3,545,900, which was higher than the figure for 2015 – 3,474,100 – but lower than the figure for 2014, at 3,797,200. Seventy-five percent of the overnight stays during 2016 were by foreign tourists, and 25% by Israelis.

The number of overnight stays by foreign tourists in 2016 totaled 2,665,600, which was higher than the figure for 2015 – 2,568,300 – but lower than the figure for 2014, at 2,982,000. The number of overnight stays by Israelis in 2016 totaled 880,300, which was lower than the figure for 2015 – 905,800 – but higher than the figure for 2014, at 815,200.

³³ Include hotels and guesthouses registered with the Ministry of Tourism. All mentions of hotels in this chapter refer to tourist hotels.

Overnight Stays in Tourist Hotels in Jerusalem, 1998–2016

■ Foreign tourists ■ Israelis



In 2016 the average number of overnight stays per guest (for foreign tourists as well as Israelis) in Jerusalem’s hotels totaled 2.7. For foreign tourists the average was 3.4, twice the average among Israeli guests (1.7). The average number of overnight stays in Jerusalem by foreign tourists (3.4) was higher than the average for the Dead Sea area (2.7) and Tel Aviv (3.1) but lower than the average for Eilat (4.3). The average number of overnight stays in Jerusalem by Israelis (1.7) was identical to the average for Tel Aviv but lower than the figures for the Dead Sea area (2.4) and Eilat (2.8).

In 2016 the highest numbers of overnight stays by foreign tourists in Jerusalem were recorded during the months of November (312,800), May (278,200), and October (249,100). The highest numbers of overnight stays by Israelis were recorded in August (136,200), December (88,400), and October (87,900).

In 2016 the room occupancy in Jerusalem’s hotels was 53% (compared with 54% in 2015 and 60% in 2014). The occupancy rates were comparable across hotels of different ranks: the highest-ranked hotels (levels I and II) recorded an occupancy rate of 52%, while intermediate and lower-ranked hotels had a 55% occupancy rate.

West Jerusalem – East Jerusalem

The number of hotel rooms in West Jerusalem, as well as the number of guests and number of overnight stays, was significantly higher than in East Jerusalem. East Jerusalem had a distinctly higher proportion of foreign tourists than West Jerusalem.

In 2016 West Jerusalem hotels recorded a total of 8,200 rooms (80%) while East Jerusalem recorded 2,100 rooms (20%). During the course of the year, 1,161,700 guests stayed in West Jerusalem hotels (88%) and 161,000 guests stayed in East Jerusalem hotels (12%). The number of overnight stays reached 3,040,300 in West Jerusalem (86%) and 505,600 in East Jerusalem (14%).

In 2016 hotels in **West Jerusalem** hosted 1,161,700 guests, which was higher than the figures for 2015 – 1,093,700 – and 2014, at 1,149,700. During these years, 55%–62% of the hotel guests were foreign tourists. The number of overnight stays in West Jerusalem hotels totaled 3,040,300, which was higher than the total for 2015 – 3,009,900 – but lower than that of 2014, at 3,262,200. Of all overnight stays, 71%–76% were by foreign tourists.

In 2016 tourist hotels in **East Jerusalem** hosted 161,000 guests, which was higher than the figure for 2015 – 149,900 – but lower than the total in 2014, at 183,700. During these years, 91%–92% of the

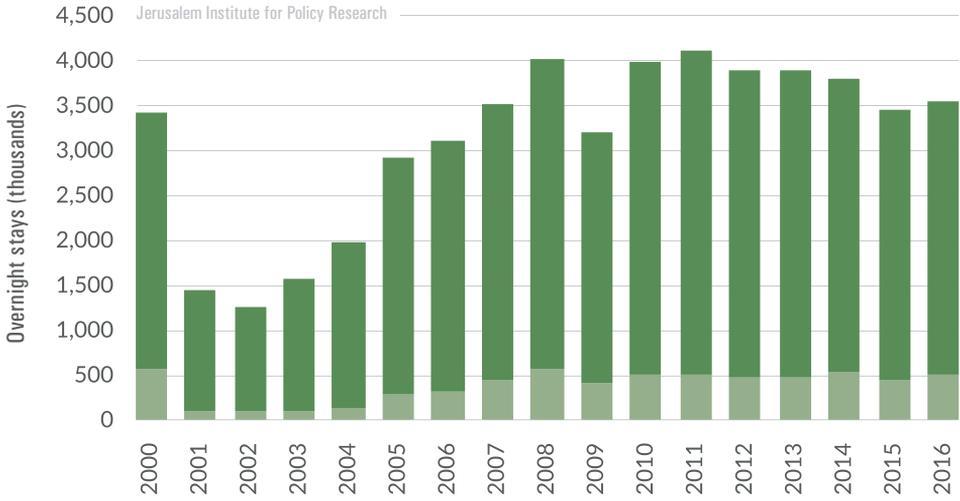
hotel guests were foreign tourists. The number of overnight stays totaled 505,600, which was higher than the figure for 2015 – 464,200 – but lower than the total in 2014, which reached 535,000. During each of these years, foreign tourists accounted for 95% of all overnight stays.

In 2016 the average duration of overnight stays by guests in West Jerusalem tourist hotels was 2.6 nights, lower than the average for East Jerusalem, at 3.1. The average duration of overnight stays by foreign tourists in West Jerusalem was 3.4 nights, comparable to the average for East Jerusalem, at 3.2 nights. The average duration of overnight stays by Israeli guests of West Jerusalem hotels was 1.6 nights, lower than the average recorded in East Jerusalem, at 2.0.

The room occupancy rate for West Jerusalem hotels was 54%, which was slightly higher than the rate recorded in East Jerusalem, at 48%.

Overnight Stays in West and East Jerusalem, 2000 – 2016

■ West Jerusalem ■ East Jerusalem



Jerusalem compared to select Israeli cities

Jerusalem has a strong power of attraction for foreign tourists, who totaled 790,500 in 2016 (28% of all foreign tourists in Israel). The number of overnight stays by foreign tourists in Jerusalem reached 2,665,600 (31% of all overnight stays by foreign tourists in Israel), compared with 26% in Tel Aviv, 8% in Eilat, and 5% at the Dead Sea area.

In 2016 Jerusalem hotels hosted 1,322,700 guests (15% of all the guests across Israel's hotels), compared with 1,223,300 guests in Tel Aviv (14%), 2,368,800 in Eilat (26%), and 870,800 at the Dead Sea area (10%).

Jerusalem has a strong power of attraction for foreign tourists. The number of foreign guests at Jerusalem hotels was 790,500 (28% of all foreign hotel guests in Israel), compared with 730,000 in Tel Aviv (26%), 159,600 at the Dead Sea area (6%), and 153,300 in Eilat (5%). The number of Israeli guests at Jerusalem hotels totaled 532,200 (9% of all Israeli hotel guests across Israel), compared with 493,300 in Tel Aviv (8%), 711,200 at the Dead Sea area (12%), and 2,215,400 in Eilat (36%). Thus, Israelis evidently prefer Eilat and the Dead Sea area as destinations, whereas foreign tourists prefer Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

In 2016 the number of overnight stays at Jerusalem's tourist hotels totaled 3,545,900 (16% of the total for Israel), compared with 2,102,200 at the Dead Sea area (10%), 3,066,000 in Tel Aviv (14%), and 6,864,500 in Eilat (31%). The number of overnight stays by foreign tourists in Jerusalem totaled 2,665,600 (31% of all overnight stays in Israel by foreign

tourists). At the Dead Sea area the total was 431,000 (5%), in Eilat it reached 657,800 (8%), and Tel Aviv had a total of 2,248,700 (26%).

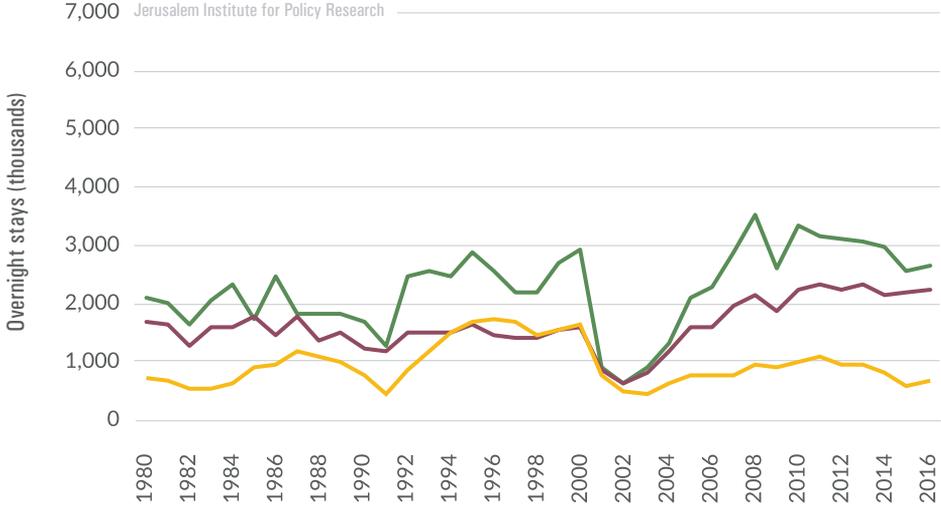
The number of overnight stays by Israelis in Jerusalem was 880,300 (6% of all overnight stays by Israelis in Israel), compared with 817,300 in Tel Aviv (6%) and 6,206,800 in Eilat (46%). Two other destinations preferred by Israelis were the Dead Sea area, with 1,671,200 overnight stays (12%) and Tiberius, with 950,900 (7%).

Foreign tourists accounted for a very high proportion of overnight stays in Jerusalem, at 75%, comparable to the figure for Tel Aviv (73%) but higher than the figures for Israel (39%), the Dead Sea area (20%), and Eilat, where foreign tourists accounted for only 10% of overnight stays.

The room occupancy rate in Jerusalem was lower than that of other leading tourist destinations. In 2016 Jerusalem had a room occupancy rate of 53%, which was lower than the rates for Eilat (72%), the Dead Sea area (70%), and Tel Aviv (70%).

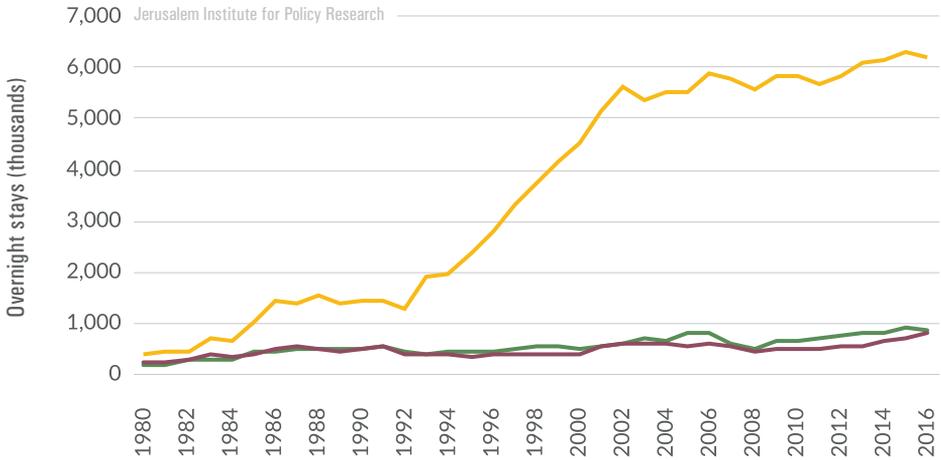
Overnight Stays by Foreign Tourists at Tourist Hotels in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Eilat, 1980 – 2016

■ Jerusalem ■ Tel Aviv ■ Eilat



Overnight Stays by Israelis at Tourist Hotels in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Eilat, 1980 – 2016

■ Eilat ■ Jerusalem ■ Tel Aviv



In recent years tourist accommodation practices across the world have been changing, and Israel is no exception. For the past decade, a growing number of tourists have chosen not to stay at hotels and opted instead for personal homes or short-term rentals, among other alternatives. Overnight stays by tourists at personal homes became possible thanks to internet-based information-sharing and advertising platforms, foremost among which is the Airbnb website.

As of July 2017, a total of 2,800 short-term rentals³⁴ were on offer in Jerusalem, 77% of which were apartments and 22% of which were rooms within apartments. The main neighborhoods in which rentals were advertised were the City Center, Nahlaot, Rehavya, and Talbiya. Tel Aviv,³⁵ by comparison, had 8,000 properties for rent, 81% of which were apartments. The numbers of rentals in Haifa³⁶ and Eilat³⁷ were significantly lower, at 700 and 800, respectively.

The Ministry of Tourism conducts an annual survey on incoming tourism, with the aim of exploring the scope of tourism to Israel and characteristics of the tourists. The survey's findings reveal that the number of overnight stays by foreign tourists at short-term rental properties in Israel totaled 1.78 million in 2012, and nearly doubled itself within three years, reaching 3.38 million overnight stays in 2015. Of these overnight stays in 2012, 39% were in Jerusalem, compared with 25% in Tel Aviv, 7% in Haifa, and 2% in Eilat. In 2015 the proportion of overnight stays in Jerusalem dropped to 21%, while the percentage for Tel Aviv rose significantly, reaching 43% of all overnight stays in Israel. In Haifa and Eilat these stays accounted for 11% and 3%, respectively.

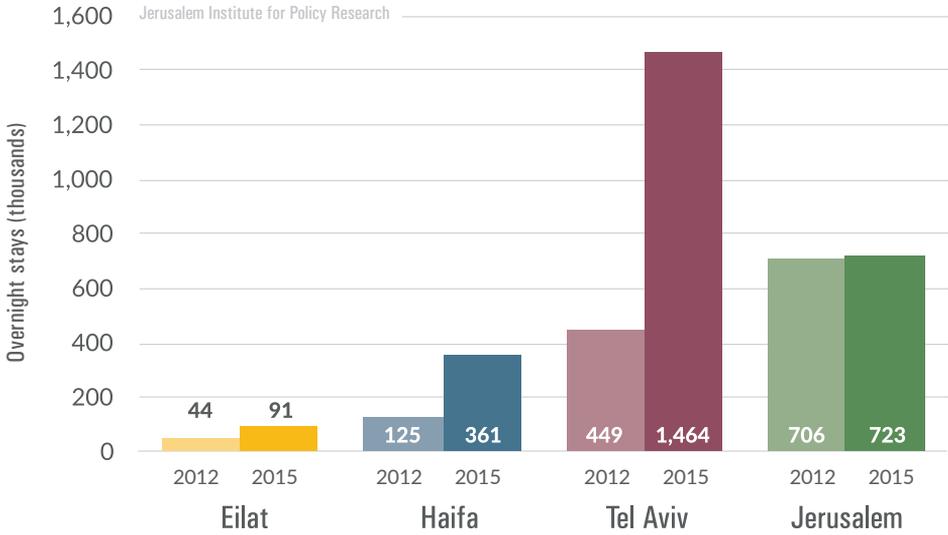
34 <https://www.airdna.co/city/il/jerusalem>

35 <https://www.airdna.co/city/il/tel-aviv>

36 <https://www.airdna.co/city/il/haifa>

37 <https://www.airdna.co/city/il/eilat>

Overnight Stays by Foreign Tourists in Short-Term Apartment Rentals in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa, and Eilat, 2012, 2015



In 2012, overnight stays at short-term rental properties accounted for 6% of all overnight stays across Israel. In Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Haifa, 7%–8% of overnight stays were at such properties. In 2015 the proportion of overnight stays at short-term rentals in Israel rose to 11%. Jerusalem’s proportion

remained comparable, at 9%, whereas in Tel Aviv and Haifa the proportion of such overnight stays rose significantly, reaching about one-fifth (20%) of the total.

Profile of the tourists

In 2015 a total of 2,173,200 tourists visited Jerusalem, constituting 78% of all tourists to Israel. Fifty-nine percent of the tourists who visited Jerusalem did so independently. The main reasons for visiting the city were religious worship or pilgrimage, touring, and visiting relatives and friends.

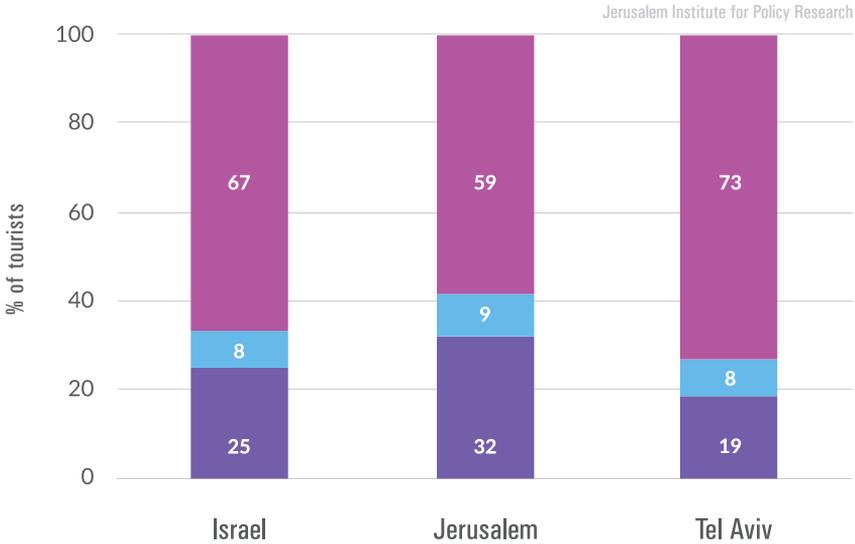
The Ministry of Tourism's survey on incoming tourism also looked at the characteristics of foreign tourists visiting Israel. The survey found that in 2015 a total of 2,173,210 foreign tourists visited Jerusalem, constituting 78% of all tourists to Israel that year. Of the tourists who visited Jerusalem, 59% were Christian and 25% were Jewish. In Tel Aviv 48% of the tourists were Christian and 30% were Jewish. The proportion of Muslim tourists was small, at 3% in Jerusalem and Israel, and only 1% in Tel Aviv.

The main purposes cited for visiting Israel by tourists to Jerusalem were as follows: religious worship or pilgrimage (28%), touring (23%), visiting relatives and friends (21%), and leisure and recreation (13%). For Tel Aviv the main purposes cited were visiting relatives and friends (26%), touring (22%), religious worship or pilgrimage (16%), leisure and recreation (15%), and business and research (13%).

Among the tourists who visited Jerusalem, 59% were traveling independently (rather than with an organized tour or package tour). Among tourists to Tel Aviv, 73% were traveling independently.

Foreign Tourists to Israel, Jerusalem, and Tel Aviv by Nature of Visit, 2015

■ Traveling independently ■ Package tour ■ Organized tour



Revenues

In 2016 the revenues from hotels in Jerusalem reached NIS 1.70 billion, which amounted to 17% of all revenues from hotels in Israel. The highest revenues were recorded from hotels in Eilat, at

NIS 2.41 billion (24%). Revenues from Tel Aviv hotels reached NIS 2.04 billion (20%) and the total from the Dead Sea area was NIS 1.08 billion (11%).

Revenues from Tourist Hotels in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, the Dead Sea Area, and Eilat, 2016

