

Chef Michael Rantissi Israel Culinary Trip

March 2024



8 Nights

MARCH 16, 2024 - MARCH 24, 2024

Over 9 days, Michael will showcase the history, ingredients and cooking techniques of the region. He'll introduce guests to the person he credits for his love of cooking – his mum – and share the skills he learnt on his journey from apprentice to one of the most innovative and successful business operators in Sydney. Along the way you'll meet other chefs and food artisans who will show you the best of the region. You'll eat, drink, watch and learn and return home happy and full and armed with the know-how to try making it all yourself. Come experience this unforgettable trip for yourself!

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Our team

ABOUT US

We're a team of Israel-obsessed locals ready to take you on the trip of a lifetime around our exciting country. We aim to "unfold Israel" by immersing you in the experience of Israel. Hike a hidden trail, tour a historic site you've never heard of, taste unfamiliar flavors, meet someone who was born here and someone who immigrated – take it all in.

Become acquainted with contemporary Israel, its history, heritage, cuisine and culture.

And of course with the Via Sabra touch - the extra special care we devote to making every tour the best adventure of your life, at no extra charge, you'll find yourself transformed!

I invite you to join the Via Sabra community, discover Israel for yourself– and discover yourself!

Avihai Tsabari

Avihai Tsabari

CEO and founder of Via Sabra



In a nutshell

Chef Michael Rantissi Culinary Trip- March 2024

MARCH 16, 2024 - MARCH 24, 2024

Day 1

Sat, 16 Mar 2024

- Welcome to Israel!
- Transfer to Tel Aviv
- Check in to your hotel

Day 2

Sun, 17 Mar 2024

- 'What is Israeli Cuisine?' with Gil Hovav
- Market to Market - the Evolution of Tel Aviv's Markets
- Levinsky Market
- Carmel Market
- A Different Lens- Looking at Culture Through Fashion at Maskit
- Time to refresh before dinner
- Dinner at HaBasta

Day 3

Mon, 18 Mar 2024

- Untold Jaffa Through Michael's Eyes
- Visit Michael's family home and meet his mother
- OPTIONAL: Ilana Goor Museum
- Time to relax before dinner
- Chef's Demonstration and Dinner at The Private Room at George and John Restaurant with Chef Tomer Tal

In a nutshell

Chef Michael Rantissi Culinary Trip- March 2024

MARCH 16, 2024 - MARCH 24, 2024

Day 4

Tue, 19 Mar 2024

- Begin the day at Asif: Culinary Institute of Israel
- Depart Tel Aviv and drive north
- Prepare lunch and dine with Michael
- Drive to Akko and start with a short historical tour
- Dinner at Uri Buri
- Drive to your hotel and check in

Day 5

Wed, 20 Mar 2024

- Meet the People Behind Israeli Innovation and Creativity
- Visit Karat Caviar Farm
- Tasting tour at Ghajar
- Tour the Christian sites around the Sea of Galilee
- Time to rest and enjoy the hotel's facilities
- Dinner at the hotel's Wood Grill Restaurant

Day 6

Thu, 21 Mar 2024

- Drive to Mattat to meet Chef Erez Komarovsky
- Continue to Nazareth
- El Babour Spice Shop
- Welcome to Jerusalem!
- Dinner on your own

Day 7

Fri, 22 Mar 2024

- Tour Jerusalem's Old City
- Old City Tasting Tour
- Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own
- Experience a festive Shabbat meal

In a nutshell

Chef Michael Rantissi Culinary Trip- March 2024

MARCH 16, 2024 - MARCH 24, 2024

Day 8

Sat, 23 Mar 2024

- Wine tasting at Clos de Gat Winery
- Visit Beit Jamal Monastery
- Wine tasting at Sphera Winery
- Late lunch at Majda Restaurant
- You've never had halva or tehina like this!
- Return to the hotel
- Dinner on your own

Day 9

Sun, 24 Mar 2024

- Mining Jerusalem Bakeries
- Street Food Mania in Machane Yehuda Market
- Deconstructing Sabich
- Free time
- Final dinner at Rama's Kitchen
- Transfer to the airport or return to the hotel



Shalom!

DAY 1 SATURDAY, 16 MARCH 2024

- **Welcome to Israel!** Upon arrival at Ben Gurion Airport, your VIP agent will be waiting to greet you at the sleeve of the plane. After assisting with arrival procedures and collecting your baggage, you will be taken to meet your driver.
- **Transfer to Tel Aviv**
- **Check in to your hotel** Relax and freshen up for dinner on your own.

Overnight: The Jaffa Hotel Tel Aviv



From Market to Market

DAY 2 SUNDAY, 17 MARCH 2024

- **Breakfast at the hotel**
- **'What is Israeli Cuisine?' with Gil Hovav** Gil Hovav is one of Israel's leading culinary journalist and a popular TV personality. He has played a major role in the remaking of Israeli cuisine and the transformation of Israel from a country of basic traditional foods into a "gourmet nation". Gil has produced some of Israel's most popular TV cooking shows and written a number of bestselling cookbooks and novels.
- **Market to Market - the Evolution of Tel Aviv's Markets** The markets of Tel Aviv are some of Michael's favorite places to explore. Before visiting some of these famed markets together with Gil Hovav, learn about the immigrant influences on the foods you will find here. See why the produce, spices, and many other culinary delights remain today the inspiration for Michael's dishes.
- **Levinsky Market** The Levinsky Market, founded in the 1920's, specializes in spices and Mediterranean delicacies. It is, in many ways, the best market in Tel Aviv, known for its variety, freshness, and special atmosphere. Whether you are looking for a rare Indian spice or some good quality saffron - this is the place. Shops offer a cornucopia of excellent cheeses, smoked fish, wines, and other delicacies. Tour the market and have "tastings" throughout.
- **Carmel Market** Continue to Carmel Market (Shuk HaCarmel), the largest market in Tel Aviv. Touring the market reveals the taste of the ages of Tel Aviv in the youthful atmosphere of the city's central market. This established market that was founded over 90 years ago, can now reveal its secrets, stories, and legends to you.
- **A Different Lens- Looking at Culture Through Fashion at Maskit** Conceived in 1954 by Ruth Dayan, Maskit was created as a fashion art house, focusing on the design and production of contemporary luxury clothing utilizing traditional embroidery techniques from Hungarian, Yemenite, Bulgarian, Bedouin, Palestinian, Druze, Lebanese and Jewish artisans. The resulting works of art created more than jobs for immigrants; and a brand was born.
- **Time to refresh before dinner**
- **Dinner at HaBasta** HaBasta is one of Michael's favorite Tel Aviv eateries located right off the market. Almost all of its produce is sourced from the market. An extensive daily changing menu is scribbled on a piece of paper on the wall. The dishes, while simple, are satisfyingly complex in execution. The international wine list is equally exceptional. You will be greeted by Maoz Alonim, chef and owner.

Overnight: The Jaffa Hotel Tel Aviv



Jaffa - A Tale of Two Cities

DAY 3 MONDAY, 18 MARCH 2024

- **Breakfast at the hotel**
- **Untold Jaffa Through Michael's Eyes** Tour the Ajami neighborhood of Jaffa, a predominantly Arab neighborhood, where you'll hear a challenging narrative about the city and its history. Continue your tour through Jaffa, enjoying the beauty of the winding streets and the beautiful port with its biblical reference. During the tour, visit stores that Michael and his family have been shopping at for decades and pick up things for the meal later.
- **Visit Michael's family home and meet his mother** Have an intimate discussion with Michael and his mother about the things that influence their cooking. This riveting discuss will be followed by a cooking workshop and shared meal in the courtyard of the house.
- **OPTIONAL: Ilana Goor Museum** The Ilana Goor Museum sits on a hill in Old Jaffa and is a beautiful setting for the work of artist Ilana Goor and her magnificent collection.
- **Time to relax before dinner**
- **Chef's Demonstration and Dinner at The Private Room at George and John Restaurant with Chef Tomer Tal** George & John offers a contemporary menu, corresponding with locality and seasonality, serving refined and creative dishes within a unique atmosphere. The Private Room by George & John is situated in a historic location, previously used as the wine and beverage storage of the original Jerusalem hotel where Mark Twain would visit and write his memoirs during his visit to Palestine. George & John, led by Head Chef Tomer Tal, was voted the Best Restaurant in Israel, and in the top 6 best restaurant in the Middle East & North Africa's 50 best restaurants 2023 awards.

Overnight: The Jaffa Hotel Tel Aviv



Creativity and Culture

DAY 4 TUESDAY, 19 MARCH 2024

- **Breakfast at the hotel and check out**
- **Begin the day at Asif: Culinary Institute of Israel** Asif is a non-profit culinary center that aims to cultivate and nurture Israel's diverse food culture. Tour the library where there are books, selected by culinary experts, (you might even find one of Michael's) that represent Israeli, Arab, and Jewish cuisine from all over the world; visit the exhibition space that explores relationships between food, history, agriculture, and more; and, finally, visit the rooftop urban garden which grows rare varieties of herbs, including over 250 types of ezov (hyssop), the main ingredient in the za'atar spice blend, and one of Michael's favorites, which he incorporates into many of his recipes.
- **Depart Tel Aviv and drive north**
- **Prepare lunch and dine with Michael** Roll up your sleeves and enter the kitchen to cook alongside Michael as he demonstrates to you some of the foundations for preparing Middle Eastern and Mediterranean dishes. Come together with Michael to see how the food, which is at the heart of the Middle Eastern Feast, you have prepared creates a conversation between friends.
- **Drive to Akko and start with a short historical tour** Akko is one of Michael's favorite places in Israel for fresh seafood and one of the best locations in Israel to taste traditional Arabic cuisine. The ancient city of Akko, situated on the Mediterranean coast, is one of the oldest ports in the world, and a city shared by Jews and Muslims. Walk narrow streets past towering ramparts, deep moats, green domes, venerable synagogues, slender Muslim minarets, and secret passageways.
- **Meet Uri Buri for a drink on the rooftop of the Efendi Hotel**
- **Dinner at Uri Buri** For the past 40 years, the popular Uri Buri restaurant has offered a variety of delicately prepared fresh fish and seafood dishes, and boasts a wine list with over 100 different kinds of fine Israeli wines.
- **Drive to your hotel and check in**

Overnight: Mitzpe Hayamim Hotel



Face to Face Encounters

DAY 5 WEDNESDAY, 20 MARCH 2024

- **Breakfast at the hotel**
- **Meet the People Behind Israeli Innovation and Creativity** Michael believes that one of the secrets behind the beauty of Israeli cuisine that has influenced his work is the fusion between innovation, tradition, and people. Today we will explore how and where creativity meets tradition in Israel as we visit innovative businesses, private homes, and unique villages to discover more about the history and Israel's diverse ethnic communities.
- **Visit Karat Caviar Farm** This Galilee-based innovative aquaculture startup was launched in 1992, when a dedicated team of entrepreneurs and aquaculture professionals imported genuine Osetra sturgeon fingerlings directly from the Caspian Sea to a farm located in the north of Israel. The Osetra is one of the rarest species of sturgeon and the source of the world's highest quality caviar. The cold, pure Galilee water offers ideal conditions for the sturgeons that closely match their natural habitat.
- **Tasting tour at Ghajar** Meet chef Ali Katib for a tasting tour in the only Alawite town in Israel, which was originally a Syrian village. Entry used to be restricted to residents or those with special permits only, but that recently changed when Israel lifted all limits on movement. Hear about the town's complex, yet interesting story, have lunch at the home of Ali's mother, and taste the special Alawite cuisine.
- **Tour the Christian sites around the Sea of Galilee** Visit Capernaum, The Church of the Multiplication, and the Primacy Church of St. Peters.
- **Time to rest and enjoy the hotel's facilities**
- **Dinner at the hotel's Wood Grill Restaurant**

Overnight: Mitzpe Hayamim Hotel



Local Ingredients, Local History

DAY 6 THURSDAY, 21 MARCH 2024

- **Breakfast at the hotel and check out**
- **Drive to Mattat to meet Chef Erez Komarovsky** Chef and baker Erez Komarovsky is considered the godfather of Israeli baking and one of Israel's most prominent culinary figures. Komarovsky is one part of the "Erez and Hanan" high-end catering company, head of the 'Galilean Cooking School' in Matat, founder of the legendary "Lehem Erez", and the author of many cookbooks, baking and more. Walk among the Middle Eastern vegetable patch, as Michael points out bounty that he brings back to his eateries. You'll pick fresh produce which you will transform during a cooking workshop into lunch which you will enjoy after.
- **Continue to Nazareth** Israel's biggest Arab city, Nazareth is a fascinating place, set in the Lower Galilee. It combines traditional, simple Arabic charm, Christian history, and grand old Arabic architecture. Nazareth is home to many important early Christian sites, including the Basilica of the Annunciation, Mary's Well, and the Synagogue Church, as well as an authentic, living Arab souk (market).
- **El Babour Spice Shop** Stop at El Babour Spice Store in the heart of the holy city of Nazareth. The 120-year-old, family-run mill is renowned for its range of exceptional homemade spices. Pick up the essentials that Michael uses in his authentic traditional kitchen and hear his stories behind his favorite spices.
- **Welcome to Jerusalem!** We'll meet at the hotel for a cocktail to toast our arrival in Jerusalem, and this next phase of our journey. After checking in to the hotel and freshening up, wander through Jerusalem's iconic stone-lined streets, explore the Judaica shops, and people-watch in one of the world's oldest cities. Michael has picked out some restaurant recommendations for dinner, or you can explore Jerusalem yourself and find a spot that speaks to you (and your appetite).
- **Dinner on your own**

Overnight: Orient Hotel Jerusalem



Jerusalem - Holy to All

DAY 7 FRIDAY, 22 MARCH 2024

- **Breakfast at the hotel**
- **Tour Jerusalem's Old City** Tour Jerusalem's Old City and meet the people and places that make this place so unique. In the Jewish Quarter, uncover the layers of Jewish history from the time of the First Temple until the present day. In the Christian Quarter, visit the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and, if conditions permit, visit the one of the holiest sites to both Islam and Judaism, the Temple Mount. Throughout the tour explore the complexity of a city that is holy to the three major religions - Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- **Old City Tasting Tour** Walk through the Muslim and Christian Quarters of the Old City seeing the historical and religious sites. See some off-the-beaten track sites in the winding alleyways and enjoy some Jerusalem delicacies. We will have a "taste of history" that interweaves stories and anecdotes, historical information, and, of course, combines the senses of smell, taste, and sound.
- **Enjoy some time to explore the city on your own** Witness the sense of calm that begins to fall over the city as the Sabbath begins.
- **Experience a festive Shabbat meal**

Overnight: Orient Hotel Jerusalem



The Hills are Alive

DAY 8 SATURDAY, 23 MARCH 2024

- **Breakfast at the hotel**
- **Wine tasting at Clos de Gat Winery** Clos de Gat Winery is situated at the foothills of the Judean Mountains, bordering Israel's biblical Ayalon Valley, where Joshua defeated the Five Kings. An ancient "Gat" (Hebrew for wine press), pre-dating the Roman period by a thousand years, is located by the house set in the heart of the vineyards.
- **Visit Beit Jamal Monastery** Beit Jamal is a Catholic monastery run by Salesian order. The monastery is active today and hosts concerts, sells pottery made by the nuns, and runs a winery. The Christian tradition identifies the site with the Roman- and Byzantine-era Jewish village of Caphargamalam, the original name of the village. Another spelling and etymology for the name is therefore Beit Gemal or Beit Gamal - the House of Rabban Gamaliel the Elder.
- **Wine tasting at Sphera Winery** Sphera Winery is a boutique winery featuring only white wines from the Judean Hills of Israel. Carefully balancing nature, innovative technology and a delicate, artistic touch, by focusing on only white wines, Sphera can zoom in on the fine details and discern the slightest of subtleties. Doron and Sivan, the winery's owners, believe in a clear and minimalistic approach that brings out the fruits' true essence, while ensuring wines that are layered with rich and complex flavours. And, of course, the views aren't too bad either.
- **Late lunch at Majda Restaurant** Majda, a restaurant in the Jerusalem Hills village of Ein Rafa, is famous for its innovative fusion cuisine, beautiful property, views from its rooftop, and for an appearance on Anthony Bourdain: Parts Unknown. The menu is full of creative local dishes all prepared by Yakub and Michal, the Arab-Jewish couple who own Majda.
- **You've never had halva or tehina like this!** On the way back, stop at an iconic tehina factory in Abu Ghosh. Tehina is an essential ingredient when eating falafel and hummus, reminiscent of food at his mom's house on a Sunday morning and inspiration for his first book "falafel for breakfast" understand now why people are flocking to to eat the food of his childhood.
- **Return to the hotel**
- **Dinner on your own**

Overnight: Orient Hotel Jerusalem



Melting Pot or Tossed Salad?

DAY 9 SUNDAY, 24 MARCH 2024

- **Breakfast at the hotel**
- **Mining Jerusalem Bakeries** Make your way through the labyrinth of Jerusalem's bakeries, and sample the mounds of mouth-watering pastries.
- **Street Food Mania in Machane Yehuda Market** In the heart of Jerusalem sits this bustling, multi-ethnic market bursting with life, art, and flavor. A tasting tour through Machane Yehuda Market is an adventure for your taste buds! Enjoy the hustle and bustle with all the rich fragrances, colors, and sounds this iconic Jerusalem market offers.
- **Deconstructing Sabich** While in the Machane Yehuda Market, you'll buy all of the ingredients to make Sabich, then join together in a kitchen to put it all together with Michael!
- **Free time**
- **Final dinner at Rama's Kitchen** "Rama's Kitchen" was founded by Rama Ben Zvi 28 years ago, and was one of the restaurants that brought the appreciation of local cuisine and the connection from garden to plate to Israel. This unique restaurant in the Jerusalem hills has become a thriving culinary landmark and is consistently ranked as one of Israel's leading restaurants. The magnificent surroundings enhance a total and uniquely special culinary experience. The menu constitutes a confluence of contemporary western cooking techniques and traditional Arab and Mediterranean cuisine.
- **Transfer to the airport or return to the hotel** (Hotel and transportation are not included.)



Unfolding Israel
VIA SABRA

Via Sabra gave us an Israel experience like no other. The bookings, the guides, where we went, everything was a joy, the perfect combination of touring, learning and fun.

Stephen K



Not only was the experience reflective of top-notch quality and superb attention to detail, you were treated like family.

Elizabeth



It was the most interesting, delicious, fun trip that we have ever had to Israel and quite frankly, anyplace! Our tour guide brought everything alive for us and filled our days with so many adventures. Cannot recommend this enough.

Ariel P

