



Northern Exposure

Touring the Western Galilee offers an abundance of leisure options, among them nature tours and birdwatching, adrenaline-rising Ranger and jeep tours, fascinating workshops, and, of course, fine food and excellent wines. It's Galilee time / Yulia Prilik-Niv

The Western Galilee is a gorgeous region attracting scores of tourists, particularly in the spring and summer. Close proximity to the sea, streams, natural surroundings, and access to its creative locals, point towards abundant attractions combining into a purely fun quality experience. Here are a few suggestions for an enjoyable Galilee weekend – for all ages.

What to do?

Meshek Hefer

Tour in Rangers and Tomcars
Eyal Hefer is a genuine pioneer, one of the first residents of Abirim village, where he and his dedicated team, including his wife, Edna, and workers who are also friends, run a pampering campsite in the forest, with huts, a horse farm for riding and therapeutic treatments, and riding off-track vehicles. At Hefer's you can experience the area and whip up some dust in a challenging Tomcar or Ranger tour, followed by rest and true connection with nature. (meshekhefer.com)

Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk

Settlement and Pioneering
If you're curious to learn about early settlements, pioneering, and Zionism, Kibbutz Kfar Masaryk near Akko is ideal. The kibbutz, which still maintains most 'kibbutz origins' traditions, offers a taste of the cooperative life in experiential tours, nature and birdwatching, its agricultural fields, and the visitors' center, housing a small museum of nostalgia, *halutz* (pioneer)-style garments, and more. Officially called the Halutziada, the event takes place on the last Shabbat of every month and on holidays, at 10 am. (kefarmasaryktur.co.il). ▶▶▶



Hacienda Hotel

Where to sleep?

Together with the region's tremendous selection of "zimmer" holiday cottages and kibbutz accommodations, the Hacienda Hotel, a member of the C-Hotels chain, stands out as a special spot. The expansive site is dipped in green, looks down on the view from above. Even when the place is filled with guests, there's plenty of quiet, air, and space to enjoy. A host of attractions are available at Hacienda, from the pool and spa to a children's club, mini golf, and sports facilities. The new rooms near the pool are designed for families. [c-hotels.co.il]

Bustan HaGalil Creative time

There are no shortage of creative workshops in the Western Galilee, which overflows with artists and artisans. At least one person in almost every village works in tourism, arts and crafts, or art tourism. Looking for activities suitable for the entire family? Head to the studio of Hasi Naveh in Bustan HaGalil. Hasi gives a range of creative workshops, all based on the textiles which she weaves with great charm. Workshops in quilting are offered, but the small kids may find making flower prints on fabric the most interesting. (westgalil.org.il)



Rimoney HaGalil Jeep and Sailing

The Western Galilee has the answer for the most serious action addicts. Rimoney HaGalil operates jeep tours to Monfort Castle, to natural springs, and to other cool corners you couldn't reach on your own, and, they also offer high energy sailing on Tornado boats, departing from the Akko port. (rimoney-hagalil.com). There are also regular boats departing from the Akko port, with slow sailing of 10 minutes for those who've already filled their action quota.

Nurit Poran Going to the market

If you're fascinated by markets, a tour of the shuk in Akko or Tarshish >>>



with Nurit Poran is an amazing experience. Along the way you'll visit a spice merchant, enjoy some irresistible falafel, fresh Galilean hummus, and other cooked dishes, a fishmonger will fillet ceviche for you on the spot, a home cook will overload the table with her creations, and all the while you can absorb extensive knowledge from Nurit, who's been living and breathing the markets for years. (nuritporan.co.il)

Kishor Winery
Wine that warms the heart
Although the Western Galilee doesn't

have the reputation of being a major wine region, it certainly is one by virtue of its exceptional terroir; it just hasn't acquired the appropriate branding (yet!). One of the area's most interesting wineries is Kishor, an estate winery. It has a very interesting story based on its location in Kfar Kishurit and the surrounding vineyards. Some of the workers are village residents with special needs. The winery, which has one of the most attractive visitors centers in all of Israel, recently received an upgrade, with new labels bearing illustrations of regional archaeology sites, and more. Brunch is served on the spot, which is also a venue for special events and the like. (kishor-winery.co.il) >>>



Worth knowing

For those preferring organized activities, it's worth noting that twice a year the Western Galilee Now NGO stages regional tourism festivals with tours, meals, workshops, markets, and activities, making it one of the best ways to sample the unique region. Those arriving at other times of the year may always build their own tour itinerary and route with the (free of charge) assistance of the JNF's visitor information center in Akko, located in an ancient building at the entrance to the old Turkish bazaar, whose sole purpose is promoting area tourism. There's also a stunning exhibition, called *Neduniya*, at the center. (www.westgalil.org.il)



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See the Sights



Elmarsa Photo: Afik Gabai

Where to eat?

When in the Galilee, do as the local Galileans. In other words, take a pass on international delicacies that are available in all kinds of places, and skip between culinary strongholds to concentrate on what the Galilee land offers. A few suggestions:

Bistro Aluma in Tarshiha: A European-Galilean bistro putting the region's best on the plate, supported by precise preparation techniques. Enjoy the fresh fish, seafood, and meats. (alumabistro.co.il).

Mina Restaurant: In Akko's most beautiful

area, and one of the prettiest in all of Israel, Mina was founded to pair Europe and Israel by way of the plate. In the afternoon hours, a series of mezze dishes, fish, seafood, and other delicacies fill the tables (facebook.com/MinaRestAcre).

Elmarsa Restaurant at Akko Port: Right near the colorful fun market. Packed to overflowing on Shabbat afternoons, with a great view of the port, there is a constant flow of deliciously-made delicacies here, all of them authentic, and offering perfect Galilee flavor (elmarsa.co.il).