



## Tel Aviv on holiday list

**C**oncorde Travel has added Tel Aviv to their holiday offerings for a limited time. A five-hour flight from Ireland, it is a hidden hotspot that offers a temperate climate, excellent beaches, archaeological and historical sites, and unique geography to increase its appeal.

Nine night packages on a charter programme are from €854 per person. This includes flights, transfers, taxes and accommodation in a three-star hotel.

Flights take off from Belfast on September 6, Cork on September 15 and a series from Dublin between September 24 and October 21.

www.concordetravel.com or phone (01) 775 9300.

■ **DUBLIN'S** Westbury Hotel is offering special packages with exclusive discounts from a range of shops in the immediate vicinity of its city centre base, just off Grafton Street.

The package — available until December 31 — starts at €359 per room per night and includes bed and breakfast and dinner accommodation for two people, foot massage in the hotel room by NU Essence beauty therapist and a complimentary glass of champagne or cocktail at The Marble Bar.

Details by phoning 01-6791122 or visit www.doylecollection.com

■ Irish Ferries is promoting a break to Britain's top theme park, Alton Towers Resort, for a family of two adults and two children (11 and under) at a starting price of €509 until September 3 with mid-week live dance shows featuring popular children's television characters.

The offer includes two nights hotel accommodation with breakfast, one day's entry into the park and return cruise ferry travel by car from Dublin-Holyhead or Rosslare-Pembroke.

Call 0818 300 400, or visit www.irishferries.com/altontowers.

■ **JOHN GALLIGAN** Travel are now selling places on two luxury autumn transatlantic cruises operating out of Waterford and Dublin.

The company offers cruises operated by Silversea from Waterford on September 4 (from £2,835) and Dublin on September 7 (from £2,871). A third sunshine cruise in Tangiers from Dublin on the Ocean Countess is selling from €1,099 per person sharing.

John Galligan Travel (01) 207 6555 or www.jgt.ie.

■ **SUNDAYS** in Belfast during August are getting a whole lot busier with cultural events, family entertainment, special tours, markets and extended openings on many of the city's attractions.

To help people make the most of their Sundays, a new 'Belfast ... A Summer of Sundays' Guide has been published to provide all the information and ideas needed to plan the perfect day in the city.

Go to www.gotobelfast.com.

Forget the typical tourist traps and head instead for the East End to soak up the best — and cheapest — of what London has to offer, says **Sean Sheehan**



**CROSSING THE DIVIDE:** Pedestrians cross the Millennium Bridge over the River Thames in London; opposite, Trafalgar Square in Central London. Pictures: Toby Melville

**B**EEN THERE, done that? You may think so, but London constantly reinvents itself and, whether on a first or 21st visit, there are plenty of surprises. Forget the tourist traps — Madame Tussauds, the London Eye, Tower of London — and for less money enjoy more by staying, eating and drinking where fun-loving but not super-rich Londoners live and hang out. The place to go for a hip urban fix is East and North London and its working-class, semi-gentrified neighbourhoods.

Around Hoxton, Shoreditch and Brick Lane you will see the Twitter types tweeting their friends but short walks bring you to non-glitzy streets full of history and culture and dotted with bargain places to eat and drink. The best deal for the pricey West End is free tickets for children aged 5-16, available now until August 27 at West End theatres when parents purchase seats for themselves (kidsweek.co.uk).

The East End, synonymous for so long with poverty and deprivation, is where the Irish came in the 1840s after the Famine; Jews, fleeing pogroms in Europe,

sought refuge here in the closing decades of the 19th century; Pakistanis and Bangladeshis arrived in the 1950s and, in the last ten years, young professionals moved in for the cheaper rents and the thrill of a rough ambience. Brick Lane, now boho London at its self-conscious best, is the place to head for.

For a grand stroll through central London make your way to the Millennium Bridge outside the Tate Modern. If you're packing children, follow the Thames to Westminster Bridge to Namco Station (namcoexperience.com/countdown) where the bumper cars are only €2.30 and bowling at €3 a game. If the sun is out, take them to Battersea Park (batterseapark.org) where the fountains, the largest in any of London's parks,

provide cool fun when they gush forth at least once every hour. And if you are in the park, look for Barbara's Hepworth's Single Form sculpture (1961), a smaller version of her monumental piece that graces the United Nations in New York, and the tranquil Peace Pagoda.

The Tate Modern, like most of London's museums and art galleries, has free admission (tate.org.uk) and as well as the art there's a fabulously iconic view of the Thames looking straight across to St Paul's Cathedral from its 5th floor café. While you are here enjoy a saunter along the Southbank (southbanklondon.com) and check out what's on at the National Theatre. Be at the box office when it opens at 9.30am to get front-row tickets for that evening's performances at less than €11.

# London calling



What if you want your culture and alcohol at the same time? The place to go is Dr Sketchy's Anti-Art School — check out drsketchylondon.co.uk and you'll see what it's all about. For exquisite cocktails in a refined setting, drop into the Lobby Bar at One Aldwych (see Accommodation).

For a great pint of real ale, seek out the Jerusalem Tavern in Britton St, tucked away behind Farringdon station (stpeters-brewery.co.uk), or the more easily found Lamb in Lamb's Conduit St in Holborn (tel: 020 7405 0713)

Your money almost gone — what else is free? Recitals of sublime music at St Paul's

in Covent Garden (actorschurch.org) and St Giles-in-the-Fields Church (stgilesonline.org), and organ recitals at Westminster Abbey (westminster-abbey.org) every Sunday from 5.45-6.15pm.

Borough Market (boroughmarket.org.uk) is a great place to wander on a Friday or Saturday and the Courtauld Gallery is free on Mondays from 10am to 4pm (www.courtauld.ac.uk).

Worth the journey just to see Cranach's Adam and Eve, Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergère, Gauguin's Nevermore and Van Gogh's Self-Portrait with Bandaged Ear.

## Go to the top-of-the-class with Mahon Point this summer!

(ADVERTISEMENT)



Leather school shoes from a selection at Next Mahon Point

worth of prizes to be won, from new trainers for everyone to musical equipment. There is even a "Build a School Garden" kit! Other prizes include school tours to wonderful places like Thomond Park and Fota Wildlife Centre. "We took advice from teachers and from the kids themselves on what they would like to win, explains Shanti McNulty, Marketing Manager, "and we were very fortunate in securing sponsorship of many of the prizes from shops in Mahon Point and elsewhere in Cork, as well as local attractions."

### Find The Bus Stop!

Entry is open to primary school children, but anyone can enter to nominate a primary class to win, so teachers, family and relatives can play too! Entering couldn't be simpler. Just pick up a form at the Customer Service desk in Mahon Point, and then follow the bus stops around the centre to collect the answers. Post your entry into the life-sized school bus entry box in the middle

of the centre. Be sure to persuade all your classmates to enter too. The closing date has been specially extended to September 5, so that children on their first week back can get in on it too.

### Free Family Safety Events!

Alongside the competition, Mahon Point Shopping Centre will also be hosting a Number of FREE Family Safety Events during the month of August with family care goody bags from Sam McCauleys.

19th August, 2pm  
Shopping Safely with Kids

20th August, 2pm  
Home and Car Safety with Mothercare

26th August, 10am-2pm  
Mothercare Check it Fits for Kids Car Seats

28th August, 3pm  
First Aid for Parents - An introduction

Centre Manager, Justin Young, explains the thinking behind the whole event. "Our parent-friendly services and shops, attract a large number of families, so we have selected educational prizes that the kids will enjoy, while at the same time offering some useful safety sessions for Mums and Dads. It's another way to reward their loyalty to Mahon Point."

## gettingthere

■ Aer Lingus flies to Heathrow from Dublin, Cork or Belfast (aerlingus.com) and bmi flies to Heathrow from Dublin (www.flybmi.com).

■ Getting around: An Oyster card takes the hassle out of queuing for transport tickets and having the right change and individual fares cost less with one. Cards can be purchased at Heathrow tube station or online (tfl.gov.uk).

■ Accommodation: The booking facility at visitlondon.com provides a range of places to stay. The best of the centrally-located no-frills hotels is The Ibis (ibishotel.com) in East Aldgate, close to trendy Brick Lane, with doubles for around €110. Holiday Inn Express hotels (hiexpress.co.uk), with similar rates are better value for families because buffet breakfast is included.

For frills, and reasonable rates if you are lucky or flexible with dates, is design-conscious The Hoxton (hoxtonhotels.com) in Great Eastern St. Its luxe-industrial style suits the neighbourhood, beds are comfortable and your room's mini-bar is empty but fillable with bar-priced drinks purchased in the lobby.

The average rate for a standard room at the Hoxton is around €110. For frills and thrills in the heart of London, it has to be the One Aldwych (onealdwych.co.uk) where glamour meets gravitas and not an inch of chintz to be seen on the premises. Situated on a triangular site where Aldwych meets The Strand, this lovely hotel is laced with classicism and avoids completely the international deluxe style that

reduces so many quality hotels to assembly-line status. A double room will cost at least €265.

■ The Great Eastern Dining Room (rick-restaurants.com) on Great Eastern St has an early bird three-course pan-Asian meal for €18 (6-7pm, Mon-Fri). Brick Lane is bursting with curry houses (Aladdin at No 132 is very well known), 24-hour bagel bakeries and green meals inside a double-decker London bus (www.root-master.co.uk). If you do feel the need to slum it in the West End then find Hummus Bros at 88 Wardour St (hbros.co.uk) for flavour-rich houmous with a choice of toppings for between €5 and €10. Try Korean cuisine at Assa (53 St Giles High St, tel: 020 7240 8256) for a bibimbap set lunch for around €5.

■ Socialising for live music and DJs in Shoreditch's Curtain St, Bar Music Hall (barmusicall.com) is a well-established venue; for something new in the same street hit The Hoxton Pony (thehoxtonpony.com) for seasonal, organic cocktails in teacups (bourbon with rhubarb, cinnamon sticks and vanilla pods) and music that swings from ska and soul to old movie tracks. Comedy Café (comedycafe.co.uk) is around the corner in Rivington St and The Bricklayer's Arms in Charlotte St does passably well at imitating a proper East End boozier. Also in the vicinity, Hot Breath Karaoke (myspace.com/hotbreathkaraoke) at The Legion, 348 Old Street (tel 020 7729 4411) jumps into life on Tuesday nights; €9.40 admission.

■ More info at www.visitlondon.com



John Rocha Boys Anorak from Debenhams Mahon Point



Back to school clothes from a range at Tesco Mahon Point



Child Safe wrist bands available free at Mahon Point Shopping Centre