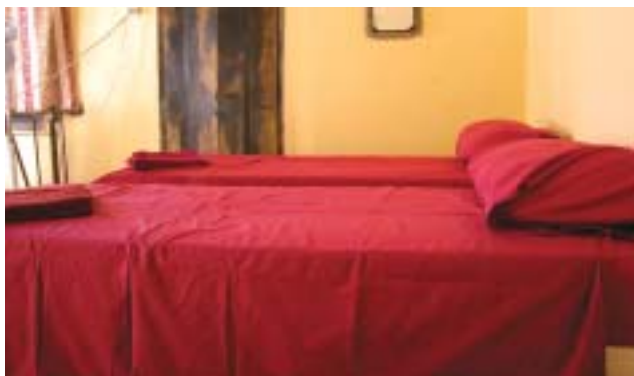


WHAT'S UP

The Fauzi Azar Inn



Hikers can now rest their weary feet in one of the historic mansions of Nazareth.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, the European powers invested heavily in establishing a presence in the Land of Israel. Local Christian Arab families took advantage of the situation to forge ties with representatives of these powers. Many families amassed a great fortune due to these connections and one of the most striking reminders of this wealth is the mansions that were built in those days in the large cities.

Nazareth

Old Nazareth features a number of impressive mansions from that time, but for various reasons, these mansions were neglected for many years. Some of their inhabitants lost their holdings, others sought more modern houses outside the crowded center, and some houses were abandoned due to battles over inheritances. Some houses were rented out. The Old City of Nazareth deteriorated and the mansions remained as monuments to the good old days.

Recently, the old center of Nazareth has been given new attention – definitely an important step in the rehabilitation of this architectural and cultural legacy, but not enough. Renewing the houses requires a large amount of money.

Maoz Inon

About a year ago, an energetic young man by the name of Maoz Inon hiked the entire Israel Trail together with his girlfriend (have patience – you'll soon see the connection). They then hiked in the Sierra Nevada for 40 days, and spent five months traveling in South America. Inon subsequently took a course in New Zealand in guest house management.

"We came to the conclusion," says Inon, "that the Israel Trail is no less beautiful than the other places. However, in order to hike the trail more easily, hikers should be provided with comfortable overnight accommodations on the way."

"I looked for an attractive place next to the Israel Trail," he continues. "In the end, I decided that Nazareth met these requirements. The town

is located in the heart of the Galilee and has a lot to offer. There are important sites and the tourists are treated wonderfully. If I were a tourist, I would be happy to spend a week in the town and use it as a base for hikes."

The House

Inon looked for a place in which he could fulfill his



dream and establish an inn for hikers. With the help of the Tourism Association and the local branch of the MATI Business Development Center, Inon hooked up with the owners of the Fauzi Azar mansion, right at the edge of Nazareth's open-air market, and began to set up his guest house there.

The building is indeed a delight. You enter via an open courtyard, decorated with stone arches. A staircase leads to the second floor. At the entrance, visitors are greeted with a spacious living room, and a window with three large arches, supported by marble columns, which looks out on ancient Nazareth, the Church of the Annunciation, the White Mosque, and the Jezreel Valley.

The Inn

So far, seven guest rooms have been prepared in the Fauzi Azar Inn. The rooms are "flexible," that is, they are suitable for couples, families, and groups (up to 40 people can be accommodated in the inn). Three of the rooms have private showers and toilets. When the renovation is completed, there will be 10 rooms. The accommodations are suitable for excursionists, visitors to Nazareth who want a quiet place to stay, and those who are hiking the Israel Trail.

Those who want a jacuzzi should not look here. There simply isn't one. There's no TV in the rooms or even in the central hall. On the other hand, sometimes you can hear the church bells ringing and the muezzin calling the Muslim faithful to prayer. You can make yourself a cup of tea or coffee any time you please.

Inon also can arrange for guests to enjoy a typical Nazareth meal in a private home (NIS 75 per person) and a guided tour of the city.

Useful Information

How to Get There: There are two parking lots about two minutes' walk from the inn. Just call the inn from there and someone will come and show you the way.

Prices: NIS 50 per bed in a dorm room, NIS 300 per room with shower and toilet.

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Ya'acov Shkolnik