Beginning in 1967 a tunnel was excavated along the entire length of the Western Wall of the Temple Mount, passing beneath the buildings of the Muslim Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. The initiative for this excavation was taken by the Israel Ministry of Religious Affairs, which sought to become familiar with the Western Wall and the reasons for it having become a focus for Jewish prayer.

Remains of several periods of construction have been found in the tunnel. At the northern end a massive pre-Herodian water channel was discovered. The monumental Herodian period construction characterized by huge ashlars was found the entire length of the tunnel. It became clear that Herod did not complete the construction project at the northern end of the Western Wall. One of the four western gates of the Temple Mount, known today as Warren’s Gate after its discoverer, is now visible to visitors. It is of great significance as, according to historical sources, its proximity to the Holy of Holies of the Temple made this a place of Jewish prayer in the medieval period. As this area became inaccessible following the construction of Mamluk buildings here in the 14th–15th centuries, the portion of the Western Wall at today’s Prayer Plaza replaced it.

The 70 CE destruction wrought by the Romans to the walls of the Temple Mount enclosure is evident in the Tunnel and includes a pile of collapsed building stones. Following their foundation of the pagan city of Aelia Capitolina, the Romans constructed a large bathhouse in the area of the southern part of the Tunnel. There is also evidence of Jerusalem’s subsequent history: Byzantine period dwellings; a bridge connecting the Upper City with the Temple Mount in the Early Islamic period that replicates a similar Second Temple period bridge whose remains were also found in the Tunnel; remains of a Crusader period church. This was followed by Mamluk period urbanization covering the area abutting the Temple Mount’s western wall with public buildings, blocking most of it from sight until an earthquake in 1546 exposed the small portion that would become a Jewish place of prayer.

The discoveries at the Western Wall Tunnel enrich our knowledge of Jerusalem’s history. This book describes the rich finds uncovered through decades of research.

Contents
Discover Western Wall Tunnel in East Jerusalem, Israel: Descend 2,030 years into the past in an ancient tunnel built to support Jerusalem's most famous wall. An archway in the Western Wall Tunnel. israeltourism/CC BY-SA 2.0. A narrow passageway in the Western Wall Tunnel. israeltourism/CC BY-SA 2.0. The Struthion Pool, one of the cisterns found inside the Western Wall Tunnel. Berthold Werner/Public Domain. The Struthion Pool. Susanna Feldman/CC BY-SA 4.0. A street built under King Herod's regime. israeltourism/CC BY-SA 2.0. Women praying near Warren's Gate, the closest place in the tunnels to the Holy of Holies. David Shankbone/CC BY-SA 3.0. Been Here? The Western Wall, or â€œWailing Wallâ€, is the most religious site in the world for the Jewish people, located in the Old City of Jerusalem.Â Web: Click Here. Tourist Israel Itinerary Suggestion: Pair an afternoon tour of the Western Wall Tunnels with the morning Half Day Jerusalem Old City Tour. Want more ideas about what to see in that area? Check out these other highlights of the Jewish Quarter. "Jerusalem is like an Atlantis that sank into the sea everything there is submerged and sunken This is not the heavenly Jerusalem but the one down below, way down below. And from the sea floor they dredge up ruined walls and fragments of faiths, like rust-covered vessels from sunken prophecy ships. That's not rust, it's blood that has never dried" (Yehuda Amichai, 1998).Â When the drainage tunnel excavators reached the Western Wall, they turned right â€“ southward, and dug a tunnel 10 meters long, to the corner of the Western Wall, locally called the Kotel. There, in a place still closed to the public, we saw the cornerstone of the bottommost foundation of the Kotel. We took pictures of each other next to it and exited via spiral stairs, emerging in Davidson Park.