

FACTS ABOUT  
ISRAEL

An aerial photograph of a vast agricultural landscape in Israel. The foreground shows a golden-brown field with a circular green patch. The middle ground is filled with various green and brown fields, some with rows of trees. The background features rolling hills under a clear blue sky. The image is framed by a large orange triangle on the left and a yellow triangle at the bottom right.

**THE  
LAND**

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# FACTS ABOUT ISRAEL

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# ISRAEL IN PERSPECTIVE

Regional map



# Topography of Israel

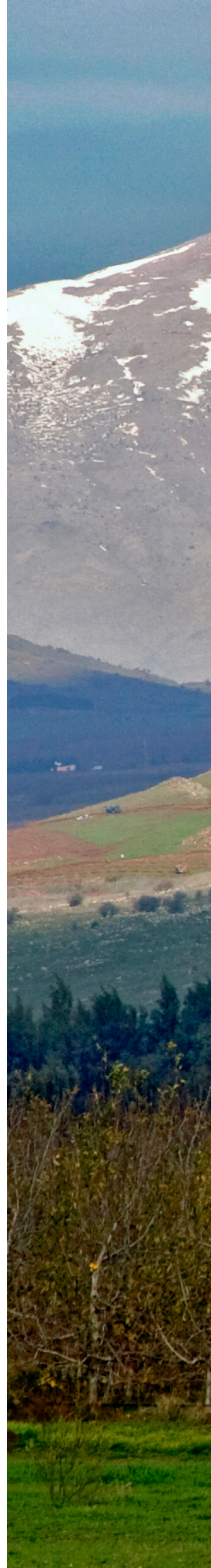


# WHERE CONTINENTS MEET

Israel is located at the junction of three continents - Europe, Asia and Africa,

and is one of only two countries bordered by both the Mediterranean Sea and the Indian Ocean (via the Red Sea).

Though Israel's total area is a mere 22,072 square kilometers (8,522 square miles), it features a large variety of geographical regions. In the north, bordering Lebanon, lies the Galilee, with its hilly, green and fertile Mediterranean landscape. To its east, bordering Syria and Jordan and overlooking the Sea of Galilee, are the volcanic rock plateaus of the Golan Heights. The arid hills of Judea and Samaria run through the center of the country, with the Jordan River flowing to the east of them along the Jordanian border, from the Sea of Galilee in the north to the Dead Sea in the center. It is the only main river in Israel that flows north to south, with all the others flowing east to west, emptying into the Mediterranean Sea. In the west, the lush Mediterranean coastal plain boasts green fields as well as golden sandy beaches. To the south, bordering Egypt and Jordan, lies the rocky Negev desert, reaching Israel's most southern point in the Gulf of Eilat on the Red Sea.



### Ski and Sea

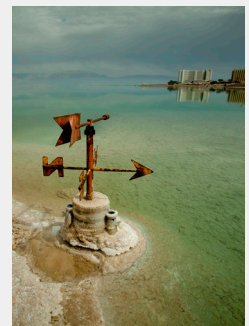
In Israel's far north, the Mediterranean climate gives way to chilly Mount Hermon, rising 2,814 meters (9,232 ft.) above sea level and home to the country's only ski resort. You can play in the snow in the morning and then drive just a few hours south for a dip in the warm Dead Sea.

## Driving across Israel

At its widest point, the country is a mere 135 km (85 miles) across, a driving distance of only 90 minutes. The length of the country, from its northern-most town of Metulla to the Red Sea port city of Eilat in the far south, is 470 km (290 miles) – about a six-hour journey.

### Did You Know?

The lowest point on earth is the Dead Sea, at 429 meters (1,407 ft.) below sea level. Its famous mineral-rich water and accompanying medicinal mud create a natural health spa which draws visitors from around the world.



# CLIMATE & WATER

The country's climate is formally characterized as ranging from subtropical to temperate. In practice, that means skiing in the north while going to the beach in the south

The northern and coastal regions experience hot summer months with sunshine every day, and cool, rainy winters (November to March). The southern and eastern regions are characterized by an arid climate and semi-desert conditions. Average annual precipitation in Israel is 435 mm (17 inches).

The presence of different climates in a small geographic area is significant: the range enables a rich and diverse agriculture as well as dramatic variety in the local flora and fauna. Israel is host to approximately 2,380 different types of plant life, including about 160 varieties found exclusively in Israel.

## Every drop counts

Given a long summer season with virtually no rain, water is scarce in the region. True to Israeli style, innovation was born of necessity, and Israeli researchers and engineers pioneered ground-breaking water technologies, such as drip irrigation, water recycling and desalination, positioning Israel as a global leader in the field. Today, more than 80 percent of Israeli household waste water is recycled for agricultural use.

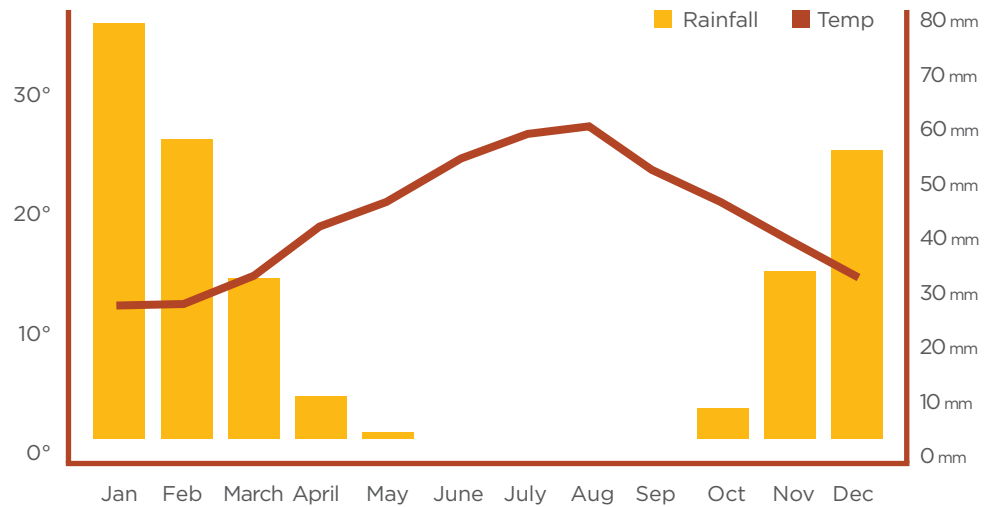




### Did You Know?

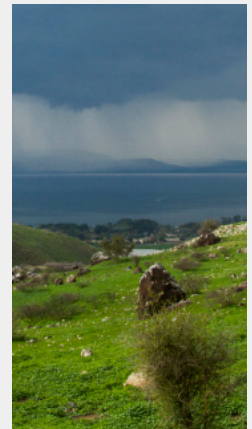
Rich and beautiful, 1,200 meters of coral reef run beneath the sparkling waters of the Red Sea, just off the coast of Eilat. One of the northernmost reefs in the world, it has been declared a nature reserve by Israel.

### Average monthly Temperature and Rainfall



### The evergreen Galilee

Home to forests, streams, and endemic plant species, the Galilee region is famous for its nature reserves and bird sanctuaries. Its hilly and evergreen landscape, reminiscent of Tuscany and Provence, offers year-round outdoor recreational activities.



# JERUSALEM – THE CAPITAL OF ISRAEL

## A green city

Green public spaces cover 27% of Jerusalem's area (32 out of 120 square kms or 12.4 out of 46.3 square miles)



The city of Jerusalem is holy to people of faith the world over, and has been the historical, spiritual, and national center of the Jewish people since King David's time, 3000 years ago. During Israel's War of Independence (1948), Jerusalem was divided, and the eastern section was occupied by Jordan until reunification of the city in 1967. Located in the Judean Hills, Jerusalem has an altitude of 754 meters (2,474 ft.). The city is the largest in Israel, both in terms of area (120 square kilometers/46.3 square miles) and population (830,000).

The capital of modern Israel, Jerusalem is much more than the seat of government. Its vibrant mix of cultures and traditions is reflected in the diversity of the city's neighborhoods, each with its unique ambiance and beautiful architecture.

Residents and visitors can enjoy numerous green parks, a wealth of cultural offerings, both classical and contemporary, and a trendy night-life scene

Dozens of museums cater to every age and taste; the most visited are the Israel Museum, featuring fine art, archeology and Jewish art, and the Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center (each welcoming more than 800,000 visitors a year). Jerusalem is also known for its quality educational opportunities and leading industrial and technological clusters.



The Knesset - Israel's parliament

#### Did You Know?

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem consistently ranks among the top 100 universities in the world, particularly in mathematics, computer science, and business administration. Founded in 1918, it was the second modern institution of higher education in the country, following Jerusalem's Betzalel Academy of Fine Arts (founded in 1906).

#### Jerusalem's Population - Then and Now

1844



- **3,390**  
Christians
- **5,000**  
Muslims
- **7,120**  
Jews

As reported by the Prussian Consul in Jerusalem

2013



- **12,000**  
Christians
- **295,000**  
Muslims
- **522,000**  
Jews

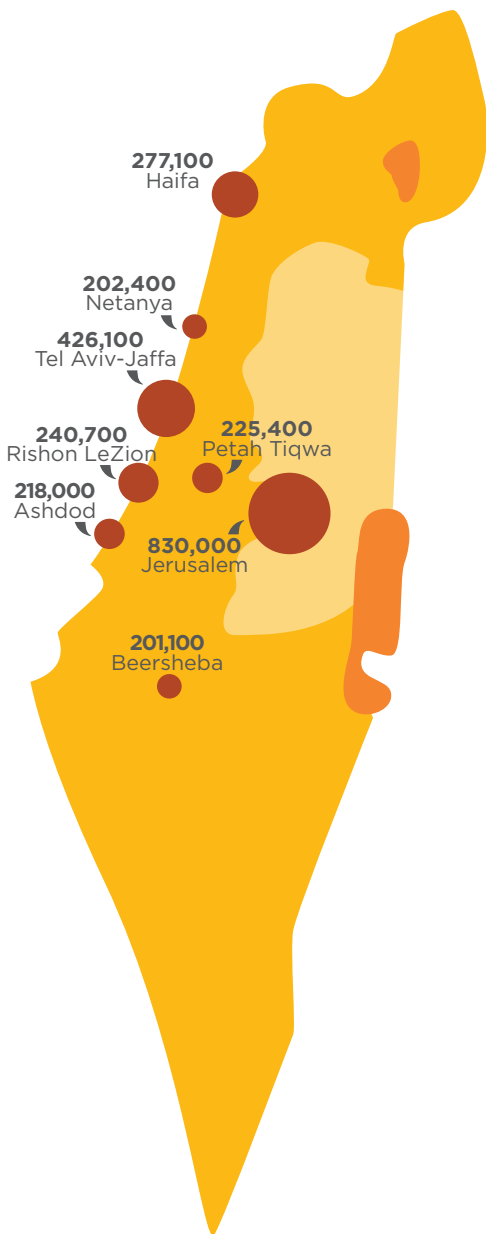
Central Bureau of Statistics

## The Holy City

The picturesque cobblestone alleyways of the Old City of Jerusalem are reputed to host more holy sites than any other place on earth, with a myriad of synagogues, churches and mosques. Jerusalem is Judaism's holiest city, as the seat of the first and second Temples during biblical times and as the Jewish people's millennia-old spiritual center. Christians trace the footsteps of Jesus in Jerusalem, including the Last Supper, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Islam counts the city as its third holiest site, deriving from the Prophet Muhammad's nocturnal journey there. The quarters of the Old City (Jewish, Muslim, Christian, and Armenian) reflect this importance.

# CITY PULSE

Main Israeli cities by population density



## Israel's unique flair can be attributed in part to the ever-present mix of ancient and modern

Historic Beersheba and Jerusalem, whose origins date back to biblical towns, are juxtaposed with modern cities like Karmiel, Modi'in and Tel Aviv; the latter celebrated its hundredth birthday in 2009.

While Jerusalem was ancient Israel's capital, several other cities gained significance throughout the country's long history. Under the Roman and later Byzantine empires, the port town of Caesarea became the region's administrative center (25 B.C.E-640 C.E). For the Crusaders, the port of Acre was a vital stronghold (1104-1291 C.E.).

Architecturally too, centuries of history stand side by side in Israel's cities. From the sweeping arches traditional to the region to the stark lines of modern Bauhaus, Israeli buildings showcase a diverse range of architectural styles.

### Did You Know?

Israel is home to resort towns ranging from the popular Red Sea getaway of Eilat, through historic Tiberias on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, to Safed, an artistic and spiritual mountain resort destination. The Mediterranean coast boasts numerous beach resort towns like Nahariya, Netanya and Ashkelon, which attract local and international tourists alike.





Flash 90

## The city that never sleeps

The White City on the Mediterranean, Tel Aviv is home to over 400,000 residents, joined daily by businesspersons, tourists, and party-goers. The city is Israel's economic powerhouse, the seat of the stock exchange and the heart of the hi-tech sector. Architecturally, Tel Aviv's Bauhaus collection is possibly the finest in the world, recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The cultural scene offers high-class events including art festivals, opera and ballet, as well as rich night life and entertainment options. All these and more position Tel Aviv as the country's bustling center.

### From the Bible to Cyber-tech

Beersheba can reminisce about its lengthy history, beginning with the biblical patriarch Abraham, who founded it and made his home there. Today, the city is the capital of the Negev and has become a hub for world-leading companies specializing in cyber protection and vital infrastructure security technologies.

# COMMUNICATIONS & TRANSPORTATION

From highway development and railways to WiFi “smart cities,” green bike lanes, and apps that determine one’s best options for public transportation, Israel stands at the cutting edge of technology-based transportation and communication infrastructures.

Smart cities, including Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, go far beyond free WiFi in their innovative possibilities.

Tel Aviv offers apps that direct drivers to available parking spots, identify trash requiring collection, monitor street light functionality, and alert residents to water leaks and air pollution pockets. The Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure is invaluable for modern living, and Israel makes the most of it, as befits the “Start-up Nation.”

## Looking for adventure?

Cycling blogger “Freewheelin’ Jon” was the first to bike the 982 kilometers (610 miles) from the snows of Mount Hermon in the north to the tropical waters of the Gulf of Eilat on the Red Sea. He made the trek in sixteen days in 2009, riding the route of the national Israel Bike Trail that runs through the country “end to end,” top to bottom. His blog sums up the journey: “Overall Enjoyment Factor: 982 k’s”



### Did You Know?

Traffic signs are posted in three languages: Hebrew and Arabic (Israel’s two official languages) and English, making navigation simple for visitors.



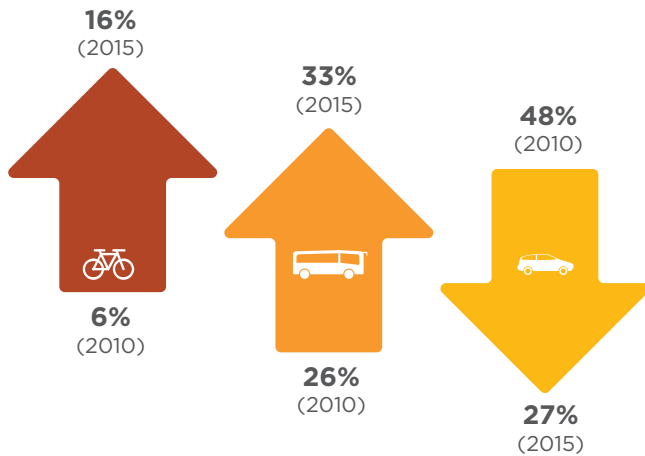
Jerusalem's light railway passing the Old City walls

## The world's first WiFi city

In 2004, Jerusalem launched the world's first city-wide, free WiFi network. Tel Aviv soon followed, and throughout both cities, residents and visitors enjoy surfing the Internet for business and leisure in green parks, on promenades, and anywhere else they may wish.

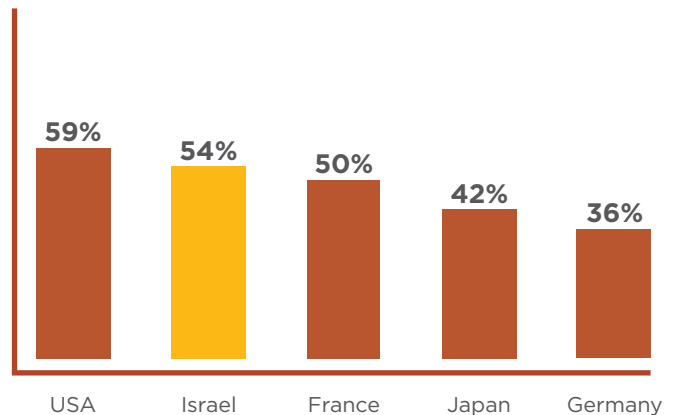
### A Greener Commute

#### Getting to work in Tel Aviv



### A Digital Society

#### Active social media users\*



The majority of Israelis are active on the digital social media

\*2015; Relative to population

# ARCHEOLOGY COMES ALIVE



Roman Ruins in Beit She'an National Park

Significant archeological discoveries are an exciting part of life in Israel, a land where civilizations have left their mark, literally, at over 30,000 impressive sites throughout the country

Israel not only contains the world's highest density of archeological sites (more than one site per square kilometer/mile), but also some of the world's oldest, with prehistoric findings dating back 1.4 million years.

One of the most famous sites is the fortress of Masada, a hill by the Dead Sea where a group of Jewish rebels made their final stand against the Roman army in 73-74 C.E.

Archeology is integral to both city and rural life. Findings provide physical evidence of the region's history and cultural heritage; and the visible remains of previous inhabitants, uncovered from the soil, link past, present and future.

#### Did You Know?

The Jerusalem Archeological Park and its accompanying open-air museum present 5,000 years of history before visitors' very eyes. The park extends from the environs of the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives, including the Kidron and Hinnom Valleys, and brings to life the city as it was during the ancient Jewish kingdom of Judea.



## Outstanding Archeological Discoveries



[1]

Hand axe made by Homo erectus, 1.4 million years ago. Ubeidiya, Jordan valley.



[2]

Impression of the royal seal of the Judean King Hezekiah, 8th century BCE. Jerusalem.



[3]

Lion-shaped vase, Hellenistic period, 2nd century BCE. Maresha, Judean plains.



[4]

The Dead Sea Scroll fragments, the oldest surviving manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible, Judean kingdom period, 3rd century BCE-1st century CE. Judean desert.



[5]

Christian inscription and mosaic, late Roman period, 3rd century CE. Megiddo.



[6]

Jewish medallion, Byzantine period, circa 6th century CE. Jerusalem.



[7]

Bronze oil lamp with Christian symbols, Byzantine period, circa 6th century CE. Bet She'an.



[8]

Coins and jewelry from the Arab Fatimid Caliphate period, 11th century CE. Tiberias.



[9]

Hospitaller compound, Crusader period, 12th-13th centuries CE. Acre.



[10]

Glazed Faience bowl, Mamluk period, 13th century CE. Bet She'an.

## The Dead Sea Scrolls

In 1947, a young shepherd discovered ancient scrolls in a hidden cave in the rocky slopes above the Dead Sea. An international treasure, his find included texts from nearly all of the books of the Jewish Bible, predating all other known manuscripts of the same texts by approximately 1,000 years. The scrolls, dated from the third century B.C.E. to the first century C.E., are prized as a world cultural heritage, and many are on display at the Shrine of the Book at Jerusalem's Israel Museum. The ancient scrolls are also accessible online, following an ambitious digitization project with specially-developed advanced imaging technology. Take a peek: [www.deadseascrolls.org.il](http://www.deadseascrolls.org.il).

## Dig for a Day

The popularity of the "Dig for a Day" program attests to the excitement of, and commitment to, archeology in Israel. Locals and tourists take the role of archeologists, engaging in the same processes that the professionals do (excavating, sifting and examining). Many important ancient artifacts have been discovered through this unique and rewarding experience.



Israel Antiquities Authority

**Archaeology photo credits (page 16)**

1. Yael Yolvitch, Israel Antiquities Authority
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3. Clara Amit, Israel Antiquities Authority
4. Shai Halevi, courtesy of the Leon Levy Dead Sea Scrolls Digital Library, Israel Antiquities Authority
5. Niki Davidov, Israel Antiquities Authority
6. Ouria Tadmor
7. Unknown, courtesy Israel Antiquities Authority
8. Mariana Salzberger, Israel Antiquities Authority
9. Raanan Kislef, Israel Antiquities Authority
10. Clara Amit, Israel Antiquities Authority

FACTS ABOUT  
**ISRAEL**

The People

**The Land**

History

The Quest for Peace

Democracy

Education

Economy

Innovation

Caring for the Environment

Israel in the International Community

Sharing for a Better World

Israel and the Jewish World

Culture

Lifestyle

Visiting Israel