



WOMEN'S MISSION TO ISRAEL

A Quick Guide to Israel

ISRAEL FAST FACTS

FULL NAME:

Israel / State of Israel

CAPITAL CITY:

Jerusalem

COUNTRY SIZE (TOTAL AREA):

22,0722 sq km

POPULATION:

10.1 million (2025 estimate)

TIME ZONE:

UTC +3 (Israel Daylight Time)

**Starting October 26, UTC +2 (Israel Standard Time)*

HEAD OF GOVERNMENT/
PRIME MINISTER:

Benjamin Netanyahu

HEAD OF STATE/PRESIDENT:

Isaac Herzog

GOVERNMENT:

Parliamentary Republic

OFFICIAL LANGUAGES:

Hebrew

MONETARY UNIT:

New Israeli Shekel (NIS/ILS)

VOLTAGE:

230 V / 50Hz.



LANGUAGE(S)

Hebrew is the official language of Israel, though English and Arabic are widely spoken throughout the country. Other common languages heard in Israel include Russian, Polish, French, Hungarian, and Yiddish.

CURRENCY

The official currency of Israel is the New Israel Shekel (₪).

Banknotes are issued in denominations of 20, 50, 100, and 200, and coins available in 1, 2, 5, and 10 shekels, as well as 10 and 50 agorot (like cents).

If looking to withdraw money from an ATM, confirm with your banking institution ahead of time what the rates are, and if they have any recommendations for suggested or partner banks to withdraw from.



PAYMENT METHODS

While international credit cards—specifically Visa and MasterCard—are accepted at nearly all hotels, restaurants, and shops, it is recommended that you carry cash (in the local currency) with you, especially if you are looking to shop in markets.

If planning to predominantly use a credit card while in Israel, please note that many banking institutions will charge an additional transaction fee. It is always best to notify your bank before travelling, as well as to check with them regarding additional charges and fees.

WEATHER

While Israel is known for warm weather and sunshine, it still maintains a four-season cycle, albeit one with long summers and a short spring. Summers in Israel can last from May until October, though it is typically at its hottest and most humid in July and August. While Israel typically doesn't see more than 40-50 days of rain over the course of the year, it is typically concentrated over the winter months, particularly January and February.

January to March typically sees temperatures in the mid-teens (Celsius), with April and May averaging 20-23 degrees Celsius. In June temperatures move into the mid-20s, with July and August hovering around 30 degrees. September and October average temperatures in the mid-20s, with November and December gradually dipping to the high teens.

Though a small country, in the south of Israel, temperatures typically go up a few degrees, especially near the Dead Sea, where summer days can rise above 40 degrees Celsius.

VISA & PASSPORT INFO

The need for a travel visa depends on nationality—for Canadians, no travel visa is required. The maximum duration of any tourist trip is 90 days. The Government of Canada advises that you ensure your passport is valid for at least 6 months beyond your travel dates.

VOLTAGE

Israel uses 230 voltage at a standard frequency of 50Hz, which will require bringing a travel adaptor with you. Ideally you should bring a Type H adaptor, with a three-pin plug (different to the UK plug), though a Type C or E/F adaptor (a two-pin plug, which is used in continental Europe) will still work. Depending on your adaptor, a transformer may be required as well, specifically if you are bringing electric shavers, hair irons, or small electrical appliances that are not dual voltage.

HEALTHCARE & MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

In the case of a medical emergency, dial '101'.

While travel to Israel poses no serious health risks, travel and medical insurance is required.

STANDARD BUSINESS HOURS

Israel's standard work week runs from Sunday to Thursday, with Friday and Saturday as the weekend. Most businesses and offices close early on Friday in preparation for Shabbat. Public transportation will also stop running early on Fridays, usually around noon, and resumes again on Sundays.

Shops are typically open Sunday-Thursday, from 9:00/10:00 AM to 8:00 PM (depending on the type of store), with early closures on Fridays. Many malls reopen Saturday evenings after Shabbat, while a few select malls and stores in more secular neighbourhoods may open on Saturday but with shorter hours. A variety of restaurants, cafés, and chain coffee shops—if not kosher—will remain open on Saturday.



CULTURAL NORMS & BEST PRACTICES TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

TAXIS & TRANSPORTATION

- If taking a taxi in Israel, ask for the meter to be turned on (say “*moneh b’vakasha*”, which means “meter please”). Cab drivers may try and negotiate prices upfront but often it is better to go with a metered price.
- Taxis are often pricier overnight, during shabbat, and over Jewish holidays.
- Uber is not available in Israel. If looking for a taxi or ride-sharing app, use Gett.

TIPPING & TAXES

- Tipping is standard practice in Israel, similar to North America. Plan to tip waitstaff, cab drivers, and service providers 15%.
- Taxes are already built into the price in Israel, similar to how it is in Europe.
- While most places accept credit cards, it’s always best to carry local currency with you for markets, small cafes, street food, and tipping.

DRESS CODE

- When visiting most religious sites, women are expected to dress modestly covering their shoulders and thighs. Men are expected to cover their shoulders, and may be expected to use a head covering, such as a kippah or a hat.
- In orthodox neighbourhoods, women are expected to dress conservatively, covering their shoulders, arms (past the elbow), and legs (past the knees). It is also suggested that women wear a longer skirt (rather than trousers), and dress in muted neutral colours. Men are expected to cover their shoulders and wear a head covering.

SHOPPING

- Similar to shopping in Europe, when you purchase goods over a certain value in Israel, you can claim a VAT refund at the airport and get your taxes back. However, this option is only available at stores that are registered with the Ministry of Tourism and/or stores that participate in the VAT-refund plan.



DINING

- The drinking age in Israel is 18, with alcohol widely available throughout the country. However, in Muslim-dominated areas, alcohol may be less accessible.
- While not all restaurants in Israel are kosher, most restaurants in West Jerusalem are.
- Kosher restaurants will be closed on Shabbat throughout Israel, with exceptions at hotels and in some city centres.
- If planning on dining at a hotel restaurant on Shabbat, it is strongly recommended to call ahead and make a reservation. In some cases, it is required.
- It is recommended to make reservations for dinner beforehand, regardless of the night of the week.
- Kosher restaurants are more expensive than non-kosher restaurants in Israel

OTHER

- As a tourist visiting Israel, it is important that you keep the blue slip you receive at the airport. When you land, your passport will not be stamped. Instead, you'll be handed a blue slip that is proof of you entering the country.
- As a helpful precaution, it is recommend to pack extra medication along with proof of prescriptions, in case travel home is unexpectedly delayed.





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