

# WHY ISRAEL?

*"Jerusalem of gold, and of bronze, and of light  
Behold I am a violin for all your songs".*

*Naomi Shemer*





# 10 REASONS TO VISIT ISRAEL

## History

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With a cultural past that stretches back to even before biblical times, Israel has a rich array of ancient sites that are easy to explore. One of the most famous is Masada, the mountainous stronghold at the edge of the Judean desert where Jews tried to fend off the ancient Romans. There are stunning Roman ruins in Caesarea (some of which can be even be seen on an underwater tour), Crusader ramparts in Akko, the ancient Western Wall in Jerusalem, St. Mary's Well in Nazareth and so much more – and new archeological discoveries are being made all the time.



## Religion

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As cornerstone to the three major monotheistic religions, Jerusalem is home to major sites of religious significance and pilgrimage, including the Temple Mount, Western Wall, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa Mosque. The Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial is an essential stop. Safed is the cradle of Jewish mysticism, and you can retrace Christ's footsteps along the shores of the Sea of Galilee.



## Science & Technology

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With eight Nobel laureates in the sciences and known as the Start-Up Nation because it has the largest number of high-tech startups after the US, science and technology is one of the country's most developed sectors. Israel boasts the highest number of scientists, technicians, and engineers per capita in the world, and the amount it spends on R&D per capita is also the highest in the world.



## Desert

Israel's Negev is a visual sight to behold, its stark desert relief home to an infinite variety of beautiful views. And eco-tourism and desert adventure touring options abound, from hiking and biking along desert trails to all-terrain jeep trips, camel rides along the ancient frankincense route, rock climbing and rappelling. There is also a great range of modern guest cabins and inns, as well as unique spas, to unwind in after a day of desert exploration.



## Cuisine

It's not called the Land of Milk and Honey for nothing! Thanks to its Mediterranean climate and agricultural ingenuity, Israel grows an amazing array of organic produce that finds its way into fresh market cuisine that you'll find served throughout the country. Because it is a crossroads country, there are infinite varieties of food and restaurants, from Jewish Yemenite to Druze, Palestinian to Turkish to trendy New Israeli restaurants that take reservations weeks in advance.



## Beaches

Life's a beach in Israel! This small country is blessed by three seas; the Med (iterranean), the Dead and the Red. With over 100km of sandy Mediterranean coastline, the urban beaches of Tel Aviv with their surfing enthusiasts and compulsive paddleball players contrast hugely with mineral spa beaches of the Dead Sea and the divers haven among the coral reefs of Eilat.





## Cosmopolitan Tel Aviv and Its Nightlife

Tel Aviv, the antidote to many preconceptions about the country, with miles of sandy shores, Israel's second city is youthful and laid-back, with a casual dress code, liberal attitude and thriving nightlife. Declared the party capital of the Middle East, Tel Aviv teems with an attractive and young international population, nightlife that rivals Manhattan, a brilliant and burgeoning fashion scene, relaxed vibe and a great variety of outstanding restaurants. The ancient city of Jaffa provides an atmospheric counterpoint to Tel Aviv's soaring towers and famous curved white Bauhaus buildings, a legacy of the 1930s, recognized by UNESCO as World Cultural Heritage site.



## The People

The most prominent characteristic of Israel's the population is its massive diversity. Among its 8.27 million inhabitants you will find Jews, Muslims, Bedouin, Druze and Christians, as well as small ethnic religious groups such as the Circassians and the Samaritans. Be they Sephardic and Ashkenazi, religious or secular, local or immigrant they share one attribute, the desire to talk to strangers.

## The Weather

Its Mediterranean climate makes Israel ideal for all-season travel. If summers can be hot, with temperatures reaching 90 degrees in places (and even hotter in desert locales like the Dead Sea), October is an ideal time to visit. While much of Europe and the U.S. are shivering, most of Israel basks in sunny temperatures that hover around 70-80°F (21-27°C) or warmer in the Red Sea resort of Eilat.



## Nature

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Away from the coast, the country's diversity truly astounds: in the south, there's the vast crater-strewn emptiness of the Negev Desert, while to the east, the Dead Sea beckons with the saltiest body of water on earth and, at 1,388 feet below sea level, the lowest elevation on the surface of the planet. In the north the Galilee region surprises with its green hills and valleys. Between October and December, tens of thousands of migrating birds gather here on their way to warmer countries and provide a spectacle not to be missed.

