

## ISRAEL TRAVEL TIPS AND GENERAL INFORMATION

### PASSPORT

Check that your passport is not expired or about to expire. Your passport must be valid for at least six months following the date you arrive in Israel. Information about ordering a passport is found at [http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport\\_1738.html](http://travel.state.gov/passport/passport_1738.html). Make a copy of your passport photo/signature page which includes your passport number and keep it in your suitcase.

### PACKING

Be sure to check with both your domestic and international airline carrier about baggage rules and fees. It is recommended that you bring at least one change of clothes, toiletries, prescription medications and valuables in your carry-on bag in the unlikely event that your checked luggage gets delayed. You may also want to bring some snacks with you for your flight. It can be difficult and expensive to get over-the-counter medication. Consider bringing a small quantity of items such as Tylenol, Imodium and motion sickness medication.

### CURRENCY

The local currency is the New Israeli Shekel. Each shekel is worth about 25 cents. Shekel coins come in units of 1 (~25 cents), 2 (~50 cents), 5 (~\$1.25), and 10 (~\$2.50) as well as much smaller coin denominations called agorot. Shekel bills come in units of 20 (~\$5), 50 (~\$12.50), 100 (~\$25) and 200 (~\$50) denominations. One important thing to keep in mind is that coins in Israel have much higher values than what we are used to in North America, so watch your coins carefully. Go to [www.coinmill.com/ILS\\_USD.html](http://www.coinmill.com/ILS_USD.html) for the current exchange rate.

### EXCHANGING MONEY, DEBIT & CREDIT CARDS

The most convenient place to exchange cash is at the airport. There are two exchange booths near the luggage carousels. If your ATM/Debit card has a Visa, MasterCard, Star, Cirrus, or Maestro logo imprint, there should not be a problem withdrawing money. PLUS cards will not work in Israel. Major credit cards like VISA and MasterCard are accepted throughout Israel. Most banks and credit card companies charge a foreign transaction fee. Be sure to check with your bank/credit card company about what their fee is and also let them know you will be traveling abroad prior to your departure. Some credit card companies, such as Capital One, do not charge foreign transaction fees.

### ELECTRICAL CURRENT

The electrical current in Israel is 220 volts, which is twice the voltage used in North America. The electrical plugs are also different, with two rounded prongs. You will need a voltage converter if you are bringing electronic or electrical items (unless they have a built-in one) as well as an adapter for plugging in your items. Adapters can be purchased at an electronics store, travel store or in the travel section of a discount store (i.e. Target & Walmart).

## MEDICATION AND CONTACT LENSES

If you are taking prescription medication, bring enough for the duration of your trip. Take all medication on the plane with you in your carry-on luggage. Do NOT pack any medication with your checked luggage. The same is true for contact lenses.

## WATER

The water in Israel is properly treated and is perfectly safe to drink. Bottled water is widely available and inexpensive or you can bring a water bottle and fill it as needed. If you plan on hiking in Israel, especially in the summer, consider a Camelback or other device to carry larger quantities of water.

## CABS

If you use a cab anywhere in Israel, insist they turn the meter on - moneh b'vakasha (meter please). Cab drivers will try to negotiate a price in advance and not use the meter so they do not need to report the income. Unless you know how much the ride will cost, you are almost always better off paying the meter price. If the driver refuses to put the meter on, simply get out of the car and wait for another cab.

## INTERNET ACCESS

In many areas of Israel, in particular Jerusalem, you can find free internet access. Many hotels still charge for a wi-fi connection. It may be beneficial to purchase a wi-fi modem through your phone company to have internet access at all times. There are also companies in Israel that rent modems for your computer. The rental fee is normally less than what hotels charge and you would have internet access at all times.

## WEATHER

Israel enjoys warm, dry summers (April-October) and generally mild winters (November-March) with somewhat drier, cooler weather in hilly regions, such as Jerusalem and Safed. January is the wettest month and June, July & August are the driest months with no precipitation. Average temperatures are listed below.

	Jerusalem	Tel Aviv	Yokneam	Tiberias	Eilat
January	43-53	49-65	46-63	48-65	49-70
February	44-57	48-66	47-64	49-67	51-73
March	44-61	51-69	47-70	51-72	56-79
April	53-69	54-72	55-78	56-80	63-87
May	60-77	63-77	58-76	62-89	69-95
June	63-81	67-83	64-82	68-95	75-99
July	66-84	70-86	68-86	73-89	77-103
August	66-86	72-86	70-86	75-99	79-104
September	65-82	69-89	68-85	71-95	75-98
October	60-78	59-83	60-81	65-89	69-92
November	54-67	54-76	56-74	59-78	61-83
December	47-56	47-66	48-65	53-68	51-74

## POPULAR ISRAELI FOODS

While there is a tremendous variety of cuisines and food eaten in Israel, certain dishes are considered typical Israeli food. These traditional foods of Israel can be found throughout the country: in restaurants and cafés, food stands, and of course, in many Israeli homes.

### ISRAELI BREAKFAST FOODS:

Borekas	pastries filled with cheese, potatoes, or vegetables
Israeli salad	typically chopped tomatoes, cucumbers, onions & parsley in lemon juice
Jachnun	a filling dish made from dough and cooked overnight
Labane	a tangy yogurt spread to be enjoyed at any meal
Shakshooka	poached eggs in a spiced tomato sauce

### ISRAELI LUNCH/DINNER FOODS:

Baba Ganoush	a tangy eggplant spread
Falafel	deep fried chickpea balls, often served in pita bread
Hummus	a mashed chickpea spread
Malawach	this flaky round pastry can be enjoyed with sweet or savory toppings
Shnitzel	chicken/turkey cutlets breaded and fried
Shwarma	grilled lamb or other meat that is then sliced or “shaved” very thin and often enjoyed in pita or laffa bread
Tahini	a delicious spread made from ground sesame seeds

### ISRAELI DRINKS:

Café Afuch	an “upside-down” cappuccino
Iced Coffee	a coffee slushi
Lemonana	mint lemonade, sometimes served frozen and blended
Nana Tea	mint tea

## COMMONLY USED HEBREW WORDS & EXPRESSIONS

Excuse me	S’licha
Good evening	Erev Tov
Good morning	Boker Tov
Good night	Lyla tov
Hello, goodbye, peace	Shalom
How much? How many?	Ka’mah?
No	Lo
Please, you’re welcome	B’va-ka-sha
Thank you	Toda Raba
Where are the bathrooms?	Eh-foh ha’sherutim?
Wonderful	Yofi

For additional questions about your Israel trip,  
contact: Karen Rader, [KRader@JFedSTL.org](mailto:KRader@JFedSTL.org) or 314-442-3756  
Jewish Federation of St. Louis • 12 Millstone Campus Drive • [www.jfedstl.org](http://www.jfedstl.org)

