

Israel

Continent: Asia

Languages Spoken: Hebrew, Arabic

Population: 9,730,000

Currency: Israeli New Shekel (ILS)

Area: 22,145

Main Landmarks:

- {'name': 'Western Wall', 'writeup': 'An ancient limestone wall in Jerusalem, sacred in Judaism as the last remnant of the Second Temple.'}
- {'name': 'Dead Sea', 'writeup': 'A salt lake bordered by Jordan to the east and Israel to the west, known for its extreme salinity and mineral-rich waters.'}
- {'name': 'Masada', 'writeup': 'An ancient fortress on a plateau overlooking the Dead Sea, symbolizing Jewish heroism.'}
- {'name': "Bahá'í Gardens", 'writeup': "Terraced gardens in Haifa, a UNESCO World Heritage site and a holy place for the Bahá'í faith."}
- {'name': 'Yad Vashem', 'writeup': "Israel's official memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, located in Jerusalem."}

Head of State / Government:

Isaac Herzog (President)

Main Cultural Events:

- {'name': "Yom Ha'atzmaut", 'writeup': "Israel's Independence Day, celebrating the establishment of the state in 1948 with nationwide festivities."}
- {'name': 'Jerusalem Film Festival', 'writeup': 'An annual event showcasing Israeli and international films, promoting cultural exchange.'}
- {'name': 'Purim', 'writeup': 'A Jewish holiday marked by costumes, feasting, and public celebrations commemorating the story of Esther.'}
- {'name': 'Tel Aviv Pride', 'writeup': 'One of the largest LGBTQ+ pride events in the Middle East, promoting diversity and inclusion.'}
- {'name': 'Sukkot', 'writeup': "A week-long Jewish festival celebrating the harvest and commemorating the Israelites' desert wanderings."}

Food & Cuisine:

Israeli cuisine is a diverse blend of Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and Jewish culinary traditions, featuring dishes like falafel, hummus, shakshuka, and fresh salads, often emphasizing fresh vegetables, olive oil, and spices.

Brief History:

Modern Israel was established in 1948 as a homeland for the Jewish people following centuries of diaspora and the Holocaust. The region has a long history dating back to ancient times, significant for Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Since its founding, Israel has experienced multiple conflicts and peace efforts with neighboring countries and Palestinian populations.

Important People:

- David Ben-Gurion - Primary national founder and first Prime Minister
- Golda Meir - Fourth Prime Minister and one of the first female heads of government
- Theodor Herzl - Founder of modern political Zionism
- Chaim Weizmann - First President and Zionist leader
- Yitzhak Rabin - Prime Minister and Nobel Peace Prize laureate

Current Conflicts:

Ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict involving disputes over land, sovereignty, and security, including tensions in Gaza, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem.

Youtube Links:

- Israel Travel Guide - Top Things to Do and See
- History of Israel Explained
- Israeli Culture and Traditions
- Understanding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict
- Israeli Food Tour - Must Try Dishes