



State of Israel
Ministry of Science,
Culture & Sport

FURAD
Forum of University
Research Authority Directors



Guide for the Visiting Researcher in Israel



Israeli Researcher's Mobility Portal:

<http://eracareers.most.gov.il>

Guide for the Visiting Researcher in Israel

Contents:

Introduction	Page 3
Background - The State of Israel	
Research Opportunities in Israel	Page 4
Israeli Universities:	
Bar-Ilan University	Page 5
Ben-Gurion University of the Negev	Page 6
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem	Page 7
Technion - Israel Institute of Technology	Page 8
Tel-Aviv University	Page 9
University of Haifa	Page 10
Weizmann Institute of Science	Page 11
Practical Information:	
Visa and Entry	Page 12
Work Permit	Page 13
Social Security	Page 14
Health Insurance	Page 15
Medical Care	Page 15
Health Tips	Page 16
Housing	Page 16
Childcare and Education	Page 16
Taxation	Page 17
Banking and Finances	Page 17
Driving in Israel	Page 18
Public Transport in Israel	Page 18
Learning Hebrew	Page 19
Weather and Clothing	Page 20
Phone and Internet	Page 20
Jewish Calendar	Page 21
Travel in Israel	Page 21

Introduction

The Guide for the Visiting Researcher in Israel was prepared in favor of foreign researchers who are studying and working in Israel, as well as in favor of researchers who are planning to pursue their research career in one of Israel's research institutions.

This guide compiles relevant information for foreign researchers and their families – information on Israel, Israel's universities, and information on practical issues, such as visa and work permit, social security, taxation, etc.

The guide was prepared by the Israel Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport, in collaboration with FURAD (Forum of University Research Authority Directors), as participants in the ERA-MORE project, funded by the EU under the 6th Framework Program.

For further information on the ERA-MORE project and on research opportunities in Israel, please visit the Israeli Researcher's Mobility Portal: <http://eracareers.most.gov.il>.

The State of Israel

Background:

Israel is situated in the Middle East, along the eastern coastline of the Mediterranean Sea, and forms part of a land bridge linking three continents: Asia, Africa and Europe.

The total area of the State of Israel is 22,145 sq. km. (8,630 sq. miles) - 290 miles (470 km) in length and about 85 miles (135 km.) across at the widest point. The country is bordered by Lebanon to the north, Syria to the northeast, Jordan to the east, Egypt to the southwest and the Mediterranean Sea to the west.

Although small in size, Israel encompasses the varied topographical features and climates of a continent, ranging from forested highlands and fertile green valleys to mountainous deserts, and from the coastal plain to the semitropical Jordan Valley and the Dead Sea, the lowest point on earth. Israel's temperate climate is characterized by much sunshine, with a rainy season from November to April.

Israel declared its independence on May 14th, 1948. Since its inception, Israel's population has grown five-fold. Its 7 million inhabitants comprise a mosaic of people with varied ethnic backgrounds, lifestyles, religions, cultures and traditions. Of its 7 million people, 76.2 percent are Jews, 19.5 percent are Arabs (mostly Muslim) and the remaining 4.3 percent comprise Druze, Circassians and others.

Israel's official languages are Hebrew and Arabic, but walking through the country's streets many other languages can be heard.

Israel's unit of currency is the Shekel (divided into 100 agorot) and is valued at 0.18127 Euro in March 2007.

Research Opportunities in Israel for Post-Doctoral and Post-Graduate Researchers

Science and Technology in Israel:

The percentage of Israelis engaged in scientific and technological research and the amount spent on research and development (R&D) in relation to its GDP, are among the highest in the world.

Israel's large reservoir of qualified personnel is primarily responsible for its scientific and technological attainments, with over 80 percent of all publishable research conducted within Israel's universities. The large number of patents taken out by the universities is indicative of their relationship with industry, and the establishment of science-based industrial parks adjacent to university campuses has met with great commercial success. Universities have also set up 'spin-off' industrial firms for the commercialization of specific products based on their research, often in partnership with local and foreign concerns.

At the Crossroads of Science and Excellence

The scientific achievements of Israel's eight institutions of higher education and research have been a driving force for the nation's innovation and technology.

Israeli advances in medicine, agriculture, the environment, are internationally acclaimed.

Inquisitive scientists and researchers will discover a multi-lingual, multi-cultural academic environment with many colleagues from around the world. Researchers will find a welcoming atmosphere where English is the pre-eminent language and where the universities provide assistance in organizing accommodations.

A Magnet for Innovative Scientists

Israel has a long tradition of hosting members of the international community. Every year hundreds of foreign students and visiting scientists conduct research in Israel's institutions of higher education.

With its well-established networks and contacts between Israeli and US researchers, and as a participating member in the Framework Programs of the European Union, Israel sees itself as a scientific research co-operation bridge between Europe and the USA.

Israel invites you to share in our international scientific endeavor.

Build your future career, credentials and contacts by spending one or two years with us.

Israeli Universities:



Bar-Ilan University Ramat Gan

Bar-Ilan University is dedicated to advancing first-rate academic scholarship and research excellence, adhering to principles of tolerance and democracy. The campus is located in Ramat-Gan, a major city within the metropolitan Tel Aviv area.

Bar-Ilan numbers more than 31,000 undergraduate and graduate students attending its main campus and five nationwide institutions. There are 38 academic departments in the Faculties of Exact Sciences, Life Sciences, Social Science, Humanities, Jewish Studies and Law. Each year more than fifty Post-Doctoral fellows, coming primarily from the United States, Europe and the Far East, study at the university.

Among the broad spectrum of disciplines in which Bar-Ilan specializes are: physics, medicinal chemistry, mathematics, probability, brain & neurobiology, cancer, fertility, computer sciences, information technology, lasers, nano-technology, materials, economics, strategic studies, developmental psychology, music, archaeology, Jewish law and philosophy, and translation studies.

Bar-Ilan maintains cooperation agreements with more than 50 international academic and research institutions, including facilities throughout Europe, the U.S., the former Soviet Union, and in Asia . Bar-Ilan researchers collaborate with scientists worldwide in projects funded by the EU's programs, and many prestigious European and international funding agencies.

Bar-Ilan's goal is to synthesize academic and research excellence with a solid appreciation of Jewish heritage.

For further information, please contact:

Dr. Israel Peer, Director, Research Authority
Tel: 972-3-5318404. Fax: 972-3-6353277
E-mail: isser@mail.biu.ac.il

Mobility Portal: <http://research.biu.ac.il/>



**Ben-Gurion University of the Negev
Beer-Sheva**

Inspired by the vision of Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben-Gurion, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev was founded in 1969 to act as a driving force in Israel's efforts to develop a modern society in the Negev desert.

Today, Ben-Gurion University is a major center for teaching and research, with more than 17,500 students enrolled in four faculties: Engineering Sciences, Health Sciences, Natural Sciences, and Humanities and Social Sciences; in the School of Management; and in the Kreitman School of Advanced Graduate Studies. Among the University's highly regarded research institutes are those for Applied Research; Applied Biosciences; Desert Research, and the Ben-Gurion Research Center and Archives .

Ben-Gurion University has over 1400 researchers, including over 800 tenured faculty members and close to 300 senior scientists who have immigrated from the former Soviet Union and over 300 medical clinicians from the Soroka University Medical Center.

Ben-Gurion University is a world leader in arid zone research, offering its expertise to many developing countries. Through growing ties with the Arab world, BGU is striving to lay the foundations for scientific and academic cooperation throughout the Middle East.

In 1998, the Blaustein Institute for Desert Research in Sede Boker was recognized as a European Large Scale Facility for Desert Studies .

For further information, please contact :

Mr. Moshe Amir
Adviser to the Vice-President & Dean for R&D
Research and Development Authority
Tel: 972-8-647 7679 ; Fax: 972-8-647 7745
e-mail: tivoli@bgumail.bgu.ac.il

Mobility Portal: <http://profiler.bgu.ac.il/resco/era-careers/index.htm>



The Hebrew University of Jerusalem Jerusalem

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem enjoys an international reputation for its innovative, creative research.

Opportunities for post-doctoral studies in the unique setting of Jerusalem are available throughout the University's seven Faculties, twelve Schools and over seventy research centers. Hundreds of scientists and post-doctoral fellows from all over the world come every year to collaborate with the University's researchers.

The 1,200 faculty members teach 24,000 students, including 7,600 studying for an M.Sc or M.A. degree, and 2,600 working on doctorates.

At the Faculties and Schools of Science, Medicine, Dental Medicine, Agriculture, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine and Nutrition research is conducted in all the traditional disciplines, as well as in many interdisciplinary fields such as biotechnology, neural computation, applied structural biology, marine biogeochemistry, computer science, environmental science, science teaching and other areas.

The Hebrew University is also well known for its research in humanities, social sciences, law, archaeology, Jewish studies, education, psychology, human rights and European studies.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Shoshana Glatzer
The Authority for Research and Development
Tel: 972-2-6586633 Fax: 972-2-6520421
e-mail: moph@vms.huji.ac.il

Mobility Portal: <http://sites.huji.ac.il/rmp/>



Technion-Israel Institute of Technology Haifa

One of the world's most prestigious technological universities, the Technion has been an integral part of engineering and science in Israel since it opened more than 70 years ago.

The Technion's 80,000 graduates have brought Israeli industry to the forefront of high technology. The majority of Israel's scientists and engineers have received their training at the Technion, the country's oldest university .

18 faculties and departments cover all major fields of engineering (civil, aerospace, agriculture, biomedical, chemical, electrical, food and biotechnology, materials, mechanical, industrial and management); science (chemistry, physics, mathematics, computer, education in technology and science, biology); architecture and medicine. The Technion is one of the few technical universities in the world incorporating a medical school.

Technion City occupies 300 wooded acres overlooking Haifa Bay with a modern campus comprising some 100 buildings. Average enrollment is about 9,000 undergraduates and about 3,000 graduate students. The academic staff numbers about 700. Every year the Technion brings to the Israeli economy 1,700 engineering and science graduates, and awards about 375 M.Sc., 125 D.Sc. and 80 M.D. degrees.

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Orit Razon
Liaison Office
Technion R&D Foundation Ltd
Tel: 972-4-829-4854 Fax: 972-4-8232958
e-mail: razono@tx.technion.ac.il

Mobility Portal: <http://www.technion.ac.il/~liaison/MC/MobilityPortalTechnion.htm>



Tel Aviv University
Tel Aviv

Located in Israel's cultural, financial and industrial heartland, Tel Aviv University comprises nine faculties, 106 departments and over 75 research institutes.

With a campus in residential Ramat Aviv, Tel Aviv University has 27,000 students, and offers an extensive range of study programs in its faculties of Engineering, Exact Sciences, Medicine, Life Sciences, Humanities, Law, Social Sciences, Arts and Management. Multidisciplinary programs are highly encouraged .

Among the University's 2,000 faculty members are internationally renowned scientists in fields as diverse as particle physics, cell biology, biotechnology, genetics and fiber optics, as well as in the humanities, social sciences and law.

The University promotes a multidisciplinary approach to research through 14 institutes, including three super-centers for: brain studies, ecological and environmental studies and for cardiac research and medical engineering.

The University enjoys extensive research contacts with leading academic and scientific institutions abroad, including 100 cooperation agreements with universities in North and South America, Europe and the Far East, as well as student exchange agreements with numerous U.S. universities .

For further information, please contact:

Prof. Yoram Oron
Director, Inter-Academic Affairs
Tel: 972-3-6406133. Fax: 972-3-6409697
e-mail: acadaff@tauex.tau.ac.il

Mobility Portal: <http://www.tau.ac.il/visitors/>



University of Haifa Haifa

Some 16,500 students are studying toward a degree (B.A., M.A., or Ph.D.) in the University of Haifa, Perched on top of Mt. Carmel. Haifa is also Israel's largest port on the Mediterranean. The University offers six Faculties: Humanities, Social Sciences, Sciences and Science Education, Law, Social Welfare and Health Studies, and Education. And five Schools: Business Administration, Social Work, History, Public Health, and Political Sciences.

The region's established industries are spearheaded by Haifa's innovative science-based industry parks that make the city the country's hi-tech capital. IBM put up its largest research center outside the United States on the University campus.

These features are reflected in the range of subjects and areas covered by the University's 32 research institutes and laboratories: evolution, archaeology, education, natural resources and environment, law, shipping and transport, psychology, welfare and health, Holocaust studies, Jewish-Arab relations, multiculturalism, tourism, security, and many others.

The University plays a vital role in and for the wider community. The North of Israel, where the majority of Israel's Arab citizens live, and where, in the early 1990s, many of the immigrants from the former Soviet Union preferred to settle, combines fertile valleys and mountainous areas, urban centers and traditional villages, kibbutzim and development towns.

The University welcomes post-doctoral students particularly in the fields of evolution, psychology, mathematics and geography .

For further information, please contact:

Ms. Shoshi Zalka
Research Authority
Tel: 972-4-8240622. Fax: 972-4-8342101
e-mail: zalka@research.haifa.ac.il

Mobility Portal: <http://ra.haifa.ac.il/mportal/>



Weizmann Institute of Science Rehovot

The prestigious Weizmann Institute of Science, a center of scientific research and graduate study, is located on a 1.2 square kilometer campus of lawns and sub-tropical gardens in the town of Rehovot on Israel's coastal plain, 22 kilometers south of Tel Aviv and 56 kilometers west of Jerusalem.

The Weizmann Institute's staff of 2,500 is comprised of scientists, scientific and technical support staff, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students and administrative personnel. Each year, the Institute plays host to hundreds of visiting scientists from around 40 countries and hosts numerous international scientific conferences and symposia.

The Institute is organized into five faculties, 18 departments and numerous interdisciplinary science centers. Current fields of research and study include: Life Sciences (Biological Chemistry, Biological Regulation, Immunology, Molecular Cell Biology, Molecular Genetics, Neurobiology, Plant Sciences, and Structural Biology); Chemistry (Organic, Physical, Theoretical, and Material Sciences); Physics (Complex Systems, Condensed Matter, and Particle Physics); Mathematics (Applied and Computer Science and Theoretical Mathematics) and Science Teaching. Interdisciplinary programs include Brain Research, Environmental Sciences and Energy Research and Archeological Sciences.

For further information, please contact:

Dr. Boaz Avron

Academic Secretary & Head, Directorate for Research and Academic Affairs

Tel: +972-8-9343843

Fax: +972-8-9344114

e-mail: boaz.avron@weizmann.ac.il

Mobility Portal: <http://www.weizmann.ac.il/acadaff/RMP/>

Practical Information for the Visiting Researcher in Israel:

Visa and Entry

Please Note:

- Your passport must be valid for 3 or 6 months (depending on nationality) beyond the date of the requested visa.
- Your visa must be extended on time. A fine is levied by law for every month's delay (for each passport holder, including children).

Visa Categories:

B-2 (Tourist Visa)

Issued (before arrival or upon arrival at the airport, depending on nationality) to visiting scientists and to accompanying persons. Granted to participants in short-term programs such as conferences, *Ulpan* (Hebrew school), academic meetings, etc.

This visa can be extended at any of the Ministry of Interior branches in Israel for up to a maximum of 24 consecutive months.

A-2 (Student or Post-Doctoral Student)

Issued to students and postdoctoral fellows (includes multiple entries).

Valid for one academic year, and can be extended for the period of a student's studies up to one additional academic year. Granted at the request of the host institution.

Note: A-2 visa holders cannot obtain any B visa while in the country.

A-4 (Accompanying family members)

Issued to accompanying persons of A-2 and B1 visa holders (includes multiple entries).

Given only to children, husband or wife of trainees, guests and visitors to a research institution.

For details about specific visa requirements in each university, please visit the university's mobility portal.

B-1 (Temporary work permit)

Granted to persons possessing a signed contract with an Israeli employer.

Valid up to 54 months. The decision to grant a temporary permit rests with the Ministry of Interior.

Note:

- B-1 visa holders must have the required re-entry visa if they intend to leave Israel and return.
- A valid medical insurance certificate is required for the duration of the period of the requested extension of the visa.
- It takes a few months for B1 visa to be authorized by official authorities.
Some universities assist you in changing a B-2 tourist visa to a B-1 working permit, while other universities advise their visiting researchers to arrange the visa prior to their coming to Israel.
- A person accompanying a visiting scientist (i.e. a holder of a B-2 visa) can be granted a working permit (B-1 visa) only if he or she received a job proposal before entering the country.

For any inquiries regarding visas, please contact us in advance:

Varda Sagi

The Ministry of Science, Culture & Sport (Bridgehead Organization)

Tel: +972-2-5411171 Fax: +972-2-5815595

e-mail: varda@most.gov.il

Or contact the relevant university's Mobility Center (Mobility Centers contact details pages 5-11).

Work Permit

A temporary work permit is granted to persons possessing a signed contract with an Israeli employer. The work permit is issued in a specific visa – B1 – by the Ministry of Interior. (Further details are found above on this page).

Social Security

The Israeli National Insurance Institute has signed international social security conventions, in order to ensure the protection of social security rights of a person who moves from one country to another, and to avoid dual insurance payments. Visitors from these countries may be eligible for benefits, or may continue to accrue rights, during their stay in Israel under the terms of these agreements. However, each case is considered on its own merits and dependent on the relevant agreement provisions.

A researcher from a country with a bilateral convention with Israel, should pay social security fees either in his home country or in Israel, according to the specifications of the respective convention. By presenting a certificate from his country's social security institute, proving that he is insured there, the researcher will be exempt from payment of social security fees in Israel.

Payment of Social Security fees in Israel depends on the status of the researcher:

- Researchers who receive a scholarship are in a status of a student; therefore, they are not employees of the university and do not receive a salary from the university. Since receiving a salary is a parameter for social security rights, they are not entitled for social security rights as employees.
These researchers should pay their Social Security fees independently in Israel (unless they come from a convention country and choose to continue paying their Social Security fees in their home country).
- Researchers who receive a salary or a stipend for living expenses in the framework of professional training (post-doctoral students) are considered as employees of the university, therefore **they are entitled for social security rights as employees**. The university deducts the social security fee from their salary (unless they come from a convention country and choose to continue paying their Social Security fees in their home country).
- Senior researchers, sent by an overseas university, continue receiving their salary from the university and are considered as "positioned workers" by the National Insurance Institute, therefore **they are exempt from payment**.

Specific Insurance:

Work injury

According to Israel's National Security law and according to a multilateral social security convention which Israel, among other countries, signed, any worker, whether from a convention country or not, is insured against work injury.

Maternity Insurance

Who is entitled for Hospitalization Grant, Maternity Grant and Birth Allowance?

Employee or self-employed woman working in Israel or the wife of an employee or self-employed person, working in Israel for at least 6 months immediately preceding the birth, even if not residents of Israel, provided she gave birth in Israel.

For inquiries and forms, please contact the Israeli National Insurance Institute:

Tel: +972-2-6709665 Fax: +972-2-6512683 e-mail: liaison@nioi.gov.il

Health Insurance

Visiting researchers must arrange an overseas full health insurance, that will cover emergency services and hospitalization, prior to their arrival in Israel (in their country of origin), or join a local insurance plan, upon arrival. It is possible to purchase such insurance from any of the recognized National Health Funds (called *Kupat Holim* in Hebrew).

It is strongly advised to purchase a supplementary insurance that includes:

- Dental insurance
- Accident and Disability Insurance
- Maternity Costs (Pregnancy and delivery-related care and hospitalization)

Please check for specific health insurance arrangements in each university Mobility Center (Mobility Centers contact details pages 5-11).

Medical Care

Israel has a high standard of health services, top-quality medical technology and research, modern hospital facilities and an impressive ratio of physicians to population.

Each of Israel's universities is located near a major Hospital.

A First Aid (*Magen David Adom*) round-the-clock service as well as emergency rooms in major hospitals are on duty 24 hours a day.

For a complete list of all hospitals and medical centers in Israel, please check <http://www.doctor.co.il/hospitalslink.htm>

Emergency Services:

First Aid (*Magen David Adom*) Tel: 101

Round-the-clock emergency services, seven days a week, throughout the country. Call 101 in an emergency.

Duty Hospitals (*Hadar Miyun*)

Emergency rooms in major hospitals are on duty 24 hours a day. A fee is normally charged for emergency room services, unless *Magen David Adom* refers the patient there or when the case is so urgent that there is no possibility of prior consultation.

Duty Pharmacies

The daily press publishes the address and telephone numbers of pharmacies which remain open in rotation, on *Sabbath*, holidays and at night. Listings of the duty pharmacies are posted on every pharmacy door.

Health Tips

Sunburn and Heat Stroke:

The sun is very strong in Israel, so protect your skin with clothing or sun screen, and wear a head cover outdoors, as well as sunglasses. Be careful and avoid extended exposure to the sun, especially at the beach or swimming pool. In warm weather, drink regularly whether you feel thirsty or not, and if you have children, ensure that they do the same. Symptoms of dehydration include headache, nausea, failure to urinate and fainting. Be aware and drink a lot!

Housing

Housing facilities vary between the various universities.

Please check for specific housing arrangements in each university Mobility Center (Mobility Centers contact details pages 5-11).

Childcare and Education

Israel has a well-developed pre-school educational system, including day-care centers, as well as private caretakers, for infants and toddlers, nursery school and pre-kindergarten and kindergarten (private or partly private).

Compulsory free education begins at age 5. Although primary and secondary education is generally free, most schools require a nominal annual payment to cover incidental expenses.

School Year Calendar:

Elementary schools - September 1st - June 30th

Secondary schools (usually from grade 7) - September 1st - June 20th

Many day-care centers continue through early August, and most are closed during the last two weeks of August. Summer camps or summer sessions are almost always private, and require payment.

If you have school-aged children, it is advisable to consult the university's Mobility Portal, as early registration may be necessary.

Taxation

Israel has signed bilateral agreements with some European countries, permitting income tax exemptions.

Visiting researchers from these countries are exempt from income tax in Israel for a period of up to 2 years, the payment is made in their respective countries usually at the end of their visit.

Please consult your local authorities before departure for Israel.

Value Added Tax (VAT, in Hebrew - *ma'am*)

A Value-added tax of 17% is charged on purchases and transactions, except for tourists' hotel bills and car rentals paid for in foreign currency. Keep the receipts and ask for a cash refund at the Airport.

Customs

Visitors should acquaint themselves with the latest customs regulations applicable regarding personal or household belongings (especially cars).

Please note that items such as video cameras, personal computers (PCs) and other electronic equipment are not exempt from Israeli customs duties. Such items must be declared to Customs upon arrival in Israel, and must be taken out with you when you leave. Certain visa categories may entitle you to exemptions or reductions in customs on imported items.

For all information on tax, customs & VAT, please check the Israel Tax Authority Guide of the Department of Customs and VAT at the Ministry of Finance:

<http://www.mof.gov.il/customs/eng/guidef.htm>

Banking and Finances

Foreign visitors are entitled to open a foreigner's bank account in shekels, and/or any other currencies.

List of banks with branches in all cities:

- Bank Hapoalim <http://www.bankhapoalim.com>
- Bank Leumi <http://english.leumi.co.il>
- Israel Discount Bank <http://www.discount-bank.co.il>
- Mizrahi Bank <https://www.mizrahi-tefahot.co.il>
- Mercantile Discount Bank <http://www.mercantile.co.il/Mercantile/English>

Driving in Israel

Driving in Israel requires a valid driver's license and a compulsory insurance.

- Your regular driver's license, or international driver's license, must be replaced by an Israeli license one year after your first date of entry into the country.
For all information on driver's and vehicle licenses in Israel (including converting a foreign driver's license), please check the Driver's Booklet of the License Bureau at:
http://www.mot.gov.il/wps/pdf/HE_MOT/Hoveret_rishui_EN.pdf
- Driving without a valid driver's license invalidates both compulsory and comprehensive insurance. Check with your insurance company if your home car insurance conforms to Israeli standards.
- Seat belts must be worn at all times by both front and back seats passengers.
- Headlights must be turned on in daylight when driving on intercity roads between November 1 - April 1.
- Children under 12 years old are not allowed in the front seat (unless they are infants in a safety seat).

Helpful Tips:

- Driving in Israel is on the right side of the road.
- Distances and speed limits are marked in kilometers.
- Speed limit:
 - 50 Km/h (31 Miles) in urban areas
 - 90 Km/h (56 Miles) on inter-city roads, unless otherwise stated
- Road signs are normally featured in Hebrew, English and Arabic.
- When renting a car, drivers must be over 21 years old, and hold a valid drivers license. (For most nationalities there is no need for an International Drivers License).
- Crossing the border to Sinai or Jordan in a rented car is not allowed.
- Before renting a car, check if your credit card company covers insurance, as some rental companies' rates include insurance.

Public Transport in Israel:

Israel's main international airport - Ben-Gurion International Airport - is located approximately halfway between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Flights arrival information by phone: (03)972-3344

Note: Security measures above and beyond what you might encounter in most countries are taken for flights both to and from Israel. These measures are undertaken for your and other passengers' safety and security. Arriving at the terminal at least three hours before your flight is well advised, as Israeli security procedures can be time-consuming.

Getting around Israel:

By Bus

Buses are the most common form of public transportation in Israel. The extensive national bus system is run by a public corporation called *Egged* (tel 03-694-8888, <http://www.egged.co.il/Eng/>). Additionally, a bus company called *Dan*, operates solely in the Tel Aviv metropolitan area.

By *Sherut* (Shared Taxi Service)

Faster than the bus companies are the minivans, known as *monit sherut* or "service taxi", that follow the bus routes but can be hailed from anywhere. *Sherut* fares usually cost the same or slightly less than the bus, but during *Sabbath*, when normal buses do not operate, *sherut* fares will increase.

By Train

The train currently runs along Israel's Mediterranean coast, being particularly useful for connections between Haifa, Tel Aviv and the airport.

Central Phone Number: 03-577-4000 or <http://www.israrail.org.il/english/>.

By taxi

Taxis are very common in Israel. It is advised to ask the driver to use the meter.

Note: In getting around Israel, pay attention primarily to the *Sabbath*: from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown, there is effectively no public transportation available in Israel (there are though taxis and a limited *Sherut* services).

Learning Hebrew

Ulpan Programs

The "*Ulpan*" is a course dedicated to teaching the Hebrew language.

Target population: Students of all ages and backgrounds, Individuals and families.

Ulpan programs run from 3 weeks up to 20 weeks.

You may find good *Ulpan* Programs in:

- Most of the universities
- *Kibbutz*
- Other private and public *Ulpan* Programs

For the contact details of all *Ulpan* programs, please visit our mobility portal at:

<http://eracareers.most.gov.il/hebrew>

Weather and Clothing

Israel's climate ranges from temperate to tropical, with plenty of sunshine. Two distinct seasons predominate: a rainy winter period from November to April, and a dry summer season from May to October. Rainfall is relatively heavy in the north and center of the country, with much less in the northern Negev and almost negligible amounts in the southern areas. Regional conditions vary considerably, with humid summers and mild winters on the coastline, dry summers and moderately cold winters in the hill regions (Jerusalem), hot dry summers and pleasant winters in the Jordan Valley, and year-round semi-desert conditions in the Negev. Weather extremes range from occasional winter snowfall at higher elevations to periodic oppressively hot dry winds which send temperatures soaring, particularly in spring and autumn.

Dress is generally informal in Israel.

In summer, easy-care cottons and other lightweight fabrics are recommended.

Protect yourself against the sun - a hat and sunglasses, sunblock and a water bottle are essential.

Winter gets much colder, warm wear is required, especially in the evenings.

It often rains, and a raincoat and umbrella are required.

Phone and Internet

The international access code for Israel is +972.

The outgoing code is 00 (not from public phones) followed by the relevant country code (e.g. 0044 for the United Kingdom).

Public phones are card operated and are available at the post office and local kiosks.

The local mobile phone operators use GSM networks and have roaming agreements with most international operators, otherwise mobile phones can easily be rented.

Area Codes:

Drop the leading 0 (zero) when calling from abroad:

- Jerusalem area 02
- Tel Aviv-Yafo 03
- North 04
- South 08
- Sharon 09

Cellular carriers

cellcom (052)

Pelephone Communication (050)

Orange - Partner GSM (054)

Mirs - Motorola Communications (057)

Internet home & office connections are made by several communication companies.

Internet cafes are available in the main towns and tourist areas all over Israel.

Jewish holiday calendar

The Jewish calendar, which is the official calendar of Israel, determines the dates of the Jewish holidays and is used for religious purposes by Jews all over the world. The "modern" form is a rule-based lunisolar calendar, measuring months defined in lunar cycles as well as years measured in solar cycles, and distinct from the almost entirely solar Gregorian calendar. Because of the different measuring of the Jewish calendar and the Gregorian calendar, the Gregorian dates of the Jewish holidays vary from year to year.

On a more practical level, you should take into account the fact that during Jewish holidays, like during the Sabbath, there is effectively no public transportation available in Israel (there are though taxis and a limited *Sherut* services).

Jewish Holidays:

Rosh Hashanah — The Jewish New Year (September)
Yom Kippur — Day of Atonement (September-October)
Sukkot — Festival of Booths (October)
Shemini Atzeret and *Simchat Torah* (October)
Hanukkah — Festival of Lights (December)
Tu Bishvat - New year of the trees (February)
Purim — Festival of Lots (March)
Pesach — Passover (April)
Lag Ba'omer (May)
Shavuot — Pentecost (May-June)

New Israeli/Jewish national holidays (May-June):

Yom HaShoah — Holocaust Remembrance day
Yom Hazikaron — Memorial Day
Yom Ha'atzma'ut — Israel Independence Day
Yom Yerushalayim — Jerusalem Day

Travel in Israel

Israel is a beautiful country with diversified landscape and interesting people and places. We wish you a most fruitful and enjoyable stay in Israel.

For information about traveling in Israel, please check the Ministry of Tourism website:

http://www.tourism.gov.il/Tourism_Eng
<http://www.infotour.co.il/>

Information compiled and edited by:

Varda Sagi
Information Officer
ERA-MORE
Israel Bridgehead Organization
Ministry of Science, Culture & Sport
P.O.B 49100 Jerusalem 91490 Israel

For further inquiries and information, please do not hesitate to contact us:

Tel: +972-2-5411171 / 183
Fax: +972-2-5815595
e-mail: varda@most.gov.il
<http://eracareers.most.gov.il>

Credit for information and excerpts in this guide:

- The Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Israel Ministry of Interior
- The Israel Ministry of Finance
- The Israel Ministry of Transportation
- The Israel Ministry of Tourism
- The Israeli National Insurance Institute
- FURAD – Forum of University Research Authority Directors
- Israeli University websites and Mobility Portals:
(Bar-Ilan University, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev,
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Technion - Israel Institute of Technology,
Tel-Aviv University, University of Haifa, Weizmann Institute of Science).

Disclaimer:

Every attempt was made to ensure the reliability and accuracy of the information, provided "as is" in this guide with no guarantee or ground for rights or claims of any kind.