



StandWithUs

Israel represents resilience, empowerment, and hope. It is a nation of indigenous people who overcame 1,900 years of racism, oppression, and violence to achieve freedom and self-determination in their ancestral home.

Despite the many challenges they continue to face, Israelis find countless ways to make the world a better place.



Diversity

Israel is one of the world's most diverse nations. Most of its Jewish communities lived across the Middle East, Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Americas before returning to their indigenous homeland. Many non-Jewish minority groups—Arab and non-Arab Christians and Muslims, Bedouins, Druze, Circassians, Baha'i, and others—also call Israel home.



Innovation

Israel is a world leader in technological research and development. With their entrepreneurial spirit, Israelis have turned their tiny country from a relative backwater to one of the most technologically advanced on the planet. Many of the technologies you use every day, like your phone and computer, include key components produced by scientists in Israel. Israel's innovations are also helping to solve major global challenges like hunger, disease, water scarcity, and environmental degradation.



Environment

Israel's small size, arid climate, and lack of natural resources have helped turn it into a leader in environmental sustainability. From reforestation and alternative energy to water conservation and combating desertification, Israelis are making discoveries that are leading to a more sustainable world.



Human Rights

Israel is the only country in the Middle East where all citizens are equal under the law, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. All Israelis can take part in free and fair elections, are free to speak their minds, and have the right to a just and open trial. They can also challenge government policies directly in the highest courts and work with Israel's thriving NGO sector to address social problems.



Making the World a Better Place

Israel goes above and beyond to make the world a better place. Israelis were among the first responders to the Haiti earthquake in 2010 and Typhoon Haiyan in the Philippines in 2013. They have given aid to Syrian refugees on their northern border and in Greece, where many fled to from the civil war. Israel has also given asylum to refugees from Darfur, Vietnam, and Kosovo and shared life-saving medical and agricultural technologies with communities all over the world.



Jewish Diversity

Reestablished as the national homeland of the Jewish people, Israel's population includes Jews of many ethnic and religious identities.

- Seventy-nine percent of Israelis are Jewish. They come from widely diverse ethnic, racial, and cultural backgrounds and from all branches of Judaism.
- About 78 percent of the Jewish population describe themselves as secular or traditional. Twenty-two percent are religious or ultra-Orthodox Jews.
- Israel is home to 135,000 Jews of Ethiopian descent.
- The majority of Israel's Jews returned to their ancestral homeland from across the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. Most of these immigrants came from Arab countries.
- After a struggle for the right to emigrate, over 1 million Jews from the former Soviet Union moved to Israel in the 1990s.

Arab Citizens of Israel

Israel's Arab citizens are the largest minority group in the country and are active in all facets of Israeli life.

- Arabs have won as many as 17 of the 120 Knesset (Israel's parliament) seats in a single election.
- Israeli Arab Ali Yahya was appointed ambassador in 1999. Israeli Bedouin Ismail Khaldi was appointed consul general in 2006.
- In 2013 an Arab woman, Mais Ali Saleh, graduated as valedictorian from Israel's top medical school.
- The Arab Christian community leads Israel in academic achievement, outperforming Jews, Muslims, and all other religious groups.
- In 2011 Israeli Arab Supreme Court Justice Salim Joubran convicted former Israeli President Moshe Katsav of misconduct. In 2015 Joubran administered Israel's national elections as head of the Elections Committee.
- While Israel's Arab minority still faces significant challenges, there are many people in the government and thriving NGO sector who dedicate their lives to making Israeli society more just and equitable for all citizens.





Ethnic Diversity

As a refuge from discrimination, Israel strives for equality and harmony among its diverse populations.

- People from over 70 countries have made Israel their home since its founding in 1948.
- Fourteen percent of Israelis are Arab Muslims, and 7 percent are Christians, Druze, and Bedouin.
- Israel is home to a community of 4,000 Circassians, a non-Arab, predominantly Sunni Muslim people who were forced from their own homeland in the 19th century.
- About 250,000 Bedouin, an Arab nomadic people, reside in Israel. With the educational opportunities offered in Israel, illiteracy rates among the Bedouin have fallen a remarkable 70 percent within a generation.

Cultural Diversity

A vibrant music and art scene reflects Israel's diverse culture.

- From the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra (founded in 1936 by professional musicians escaping the rise of fascism in Europe) and the Mizrahi music created by Jews from the Arab world to popular modern artists like Idan Raichel, A-Wa, and Netta Barzilai, music has been a uniting factor for Israelis of every background.
- Israel's first art school, the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Jerusalem, was founded in 1906. Today, Israel has more museums per capita than any other country in the world.
- Israel has ten film schools and seven international film festivals. Millions of people every year enjoy Israeli-made films and films starring Israeli actors. From 2007 through 2012, four Israeli films were nominated for Academy Awards.





Civil and Political Rights

Israel is a dynamic, modern democratic nation in which citizens of all political beliefs are represented.

- Israel's Knesset is composed of 10 separate political parties from all sides of the political spectrum.
- With dozens of newspapers in many languages, Israel has a free and open press, which facilitates constant debate about politics and other societal issues.
- The Supreme Court of Israel is an independent and equal branch of government where all government decisions can be challenged.
- Israel's prime minister, the head of government, is usually selected from the party that wins the largest number of parliament seats. Israel's president, the head of state, is selected by the Knesset to perform a largely ceremonial role.

Advancement of Women

Since the founding of Israel in 1948, women have played a vital role in governing, developing, and protecting the nation.

- In 1969 Golda Meir became Israel's first female prime minister, the third elected female leader of any country.
- Israeli women are leaders in all branches of government, as evidenced by Israel's 2008 foreign minister, Tzipi Livni; Speaker of the Knesset Dalia Itzik; and High Court judge Dorit Beinisch.
- One-third of Israel's armed personnel are women, compared to 14 percent in the U.S.
- In Israel there is universal paid maternity leave, and women have access to safe, legal abortions. Israeli law requires at least one woman to be on each public company's board of directors.

Pnina Tamano-Shata, Israel's first female Ethiopian-born MK



Golda Meir, former Israeli PM





LGBTQ Rights

Israel's LGBTQ community has been able to fight for its rights and win.

- LGBTQ Israelis have achieved many victories. Israel prohibited workplace discrimination in 1992, allowed openly LGBTQ soldiers to serve in 1993, granted same-sex couples spousal benefits in 1994 and adoption rights in 2005, and started recognizing same-sex marriages performed abroad in 2006.
- In 2012 the IDF welcomed its first openly trans person. In 2018 Sharon Afek became Israel's first openly gay major general.
- Israel's first drag queen, Dana International, won the Eurovision song competition in 1998. In 2016 Talleen Abu Hanna, an Israeli Arab woman, won Ms. Trans Israel.
- LGBTQ organizations are active throughout Israel, continuing to advocate for LGBTQ rights. As a result of their work, 61 percent of Israelis support same-sex marriage.

Religious Freedom

Israel is home to many religious minorities and guarantees their right to practice their faiths and administer their internal affairs.

- There are almost 2 million non-Jews in Israel—making up about 20 percent of Israel’s population.
- Israel officially recognizes 15 distinct religious groups. Each religious community can set its own rules about marriage, divorce, and wills.
- Christians in Israel increased in number from 34,000 in 1948 to roughly 160,000 today. Israel is the only Middle Eastern country where the Christian population has grown in the last half century.
- The Israeli city of Haifa is home to the Baha’i world headquarters. The Baha’i Faith is an independent religion that arose in Persia in the mid-19th century.





Reforestation

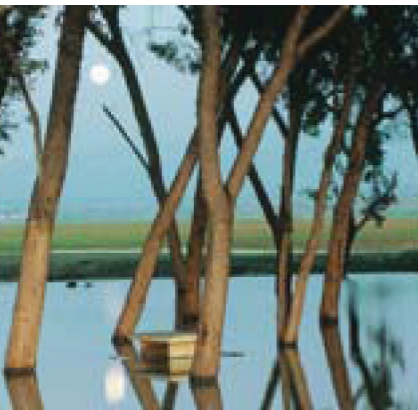
Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, once declared, "I do not know if there is a more fruitful enterprise whose results are so useful as the planting of trees." Israel is a global leader in reforestation and nature preservation.

- In 1948 forests covered 2 percent of Israel's territory. Today, trees cover 8.5 percent.
- The Jewish National Fund (JNF) has planted more than 240 million trees in Israel, including 12,500 acres of forest every year.
- Israel has over 150 nature reserves and 65 national parks.
- Tu B'Shevat, the "New Year of the Trees," is a popular Israeli holiday. Children and adults celebrate by planting trees throughout the country.

Combating Desertification

Israel has made deserts bloom at home and abroad — an extraordinary accomplishment in the face of water shortages, desertification, and drought.

- Israeli scientists study ways to grow drought-tolerant crops in sand and increase access to food for countless people around the world.
- The Negev Desert is home to the Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research. Students from around the world study Israeli methods of preserving drylands.
- In 2007 Israel and Nigeria initiated a \$17 billion joint project to reverse desertification and create 2 million agricultural jobs.
- In 2012 Israel hosted its fourth annual International Conference on Drylands, Deserts, and Desertification. The conference was co-sponsored by the UN.





Alternative Energy

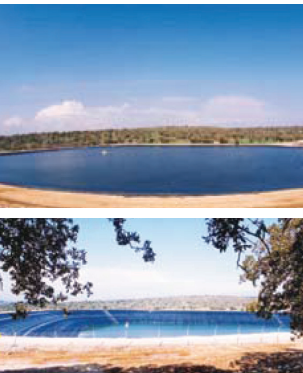
Israel is a world leader in the development of alternative energy sources.

- Israel has been a pioneer in solar energy use. Israeli company Energiya is building the first utility level solar field in southeastern Georgia.
- Israeli startup Phinergy has invented a battery that can power vehicles using only air and water.
- Using bacteria that “eat” petroleum, Israeli company BioPetroClean helps clean up oil spills on land and sea.
- In 2016 Israel joined the Paris Climate Agreement to dramatically reduce climate emissions. Israel’s efforts include building the tallest solar energy tower in the world.

Water Conservation

Recognizing its severe lack of water resources early on, Israel has become the “Silicon Valley” of water conservation technology.

- Israel treats 92 percent of its wastewater and reuses 75 percent in agriculture, the highest rate in the world.
- Tel Aviv-based company Netafim pioneered the use of drip irrigation in agriculture. Drip irrigation helps conserve water, improves crop yields, and helps protect the environment.
- Through the use of innovative irrigation techniques, Israeli farms have increased water efficiency from 64 percent to 90 percent.
- Israel is helping people in California and elsewhere to overcome drought and make water consumption more sustainable.
- In 2015 Israel and Jordan signed an agreement to share water and help replenish the Dead Sea.





Commitment to Innovation

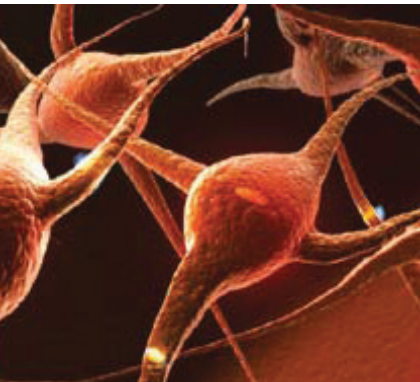
Innovation is part of Israel's culture. Israeli startup guru Yossi Vardi explains, "This is a startup country, socially and culturally. It is in our heritage, our ethos.... The country is constantly renewing itself."

- Israel has more startups per capita than any other country.
- Israel has the second-highest number of total startups in the world after the U.S.
- Microsoft, Google, Apple, Facebook, IBM, and many others have opened research facilities in Israel to benefit from its innovation capabilities.
- Israelis have the third-highest number of university degrees per capita worldwide.
- Israel ranks fourth in the world in scientific papers published per capita.

Biotechnology

Israel produces some of the most advanced biotechnology research in the world.

- Israeli scientists created a DNA nanocomputer that detects cancer and releases drugs to treat it.
- On a per capita basis, Israel has the largest number of biotechnology startups worldwide.
- Israeli firm BrainStorm Cell Therapeutics developed a novel stem cell therapy to help Parkinson's patients restore their motor functions.
- Israeli scientists developed an AIDS treatment.
- Actor and paralysis research advocate Christopher Reeve called Israel "the world center" for paralysis studies.





Medical

Israeli innovations are saving lives and helping to overcome some of the most difficult challenges to global health.

- The Israeli-developed Babysense breathing monitor has helped protect over 600,000 infants from sudden infant death syndrome.
- Israel developed the PillCam, a disposable miniature video camera that patients can swallow. Doctors in more than 60 countries use it to visualize the small intestine. The PillCam has helped over 122,000 patients worldwide.
- Two out of the three top drugs to treat multiple sclerosis were developed in Israel. Another Israeli drug is used by about 70 percent of multiple sclerosis patients worldwide.
- Israel's emergency bandage has saved the lives of countless soldiers and civilians, including U.S. Congresswoman Gabby Giffords.

Computing & Communications

Often called “the second Silicon Valley,” Israel provides research and development for some of the largest high-tech companies and is a world leader in communication technology.

- Intel’s Centrino chip, which powers WiFi networks, was developed at Intel Israel.
- Most of the Windows operating system was developed by Microsoft Israel.
- The Israeli company Comverse invented voicemail.
- Instant messaging technology was developed by four young Israelis in Tel Aviv.
- Israeli company Waze developed community-driven navigation software utilizing information sent by users to provide real-time traffic updates and more.





Agricultural Assistance

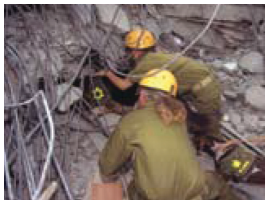
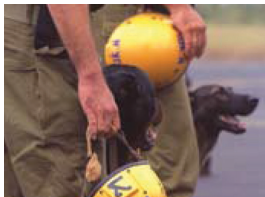
After overcoming water scarcity and food insecurity, Israelis now help people around the world with sustainable agriculture.

- Israel's Volcani Center for agricultural research has partnered with 32 countries, providing superior cattle bloodlines to improve milk output and assisting the dairy industries of developing countries.
- Israeli scientists developed corn that is resistant to parasites in sub-Saharan Africa, helping people there increase their food production.
- From Poland to Turkmenistan, farmers work alongside Israeli irrigation specialists from the company Netafim to improve crop yields while helping to preserve the environment.
- Israel offers agricultural training to farmers from Gaza, the West Bank, and Egypt.

Emergency Assistance

With over 70 years of expertise in emergency response, Israel is always among the first on the scene at international disaster sites.

- Israel Defense Forces rescue teams have responded to earthquakes in all corners of the globe, including: Mexico (1985); Armenia (1988); Turkey (1999); El Salvador, India, and Peru (2001); Indonesia (2006); Haiti (2010); Japan (2011); and Nepal (2015).
- Israel has treated thousands of Syrians wounded in their civil war and assisted countless refugees, despite Syria's ongoing hostilities against Israel.
- Israel sent humanitarian and medical aid to the Philippines when it was devastated by Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 and to Puerto Rico in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria in 2017.



Refugee Resettlement

Israel has always served as a refuge for people in need.

- Israel rescued 40,000 Jews from Yemen during Operation Magic Carpet in 1949, completing 380 airlift rescues. In total, Israel gave refuge to nearly 600,000 Jews who were expelled from Arab states.
- In 1977 Israel rescued 400 Vietnamese boat people fleeing oppression and granted them asylum. They are now proud citizens of Israel.
- Israel rescued 8,000 Ethiopian Jews during Operation Moses in 1984 and 14,000 during Operation Solomon in 1991. Israel also absorbed many more who escaped on their own. Today, there are roughly 135,000 Ethiopian Jews living in Israel.
- In 1993 Israel was one of a handful of nations to accept Bosnian Muslim refugees fleeing war-torn Yugoslavia.
- Between 2002 and 2007, Israel gave refuge to Liberian and Sudanese refugees fleeing from their war-torn countries.





Sharing Medical Discoveries

Technologies and medical programs developed in Israel are saving and improving lives around the world.

- In 18 years the Israeli organization Save A Child's Heart has treated over 2,800 children suffering from congenital and rheumatic heart disease in 30 countries where quality medical care is unavailable.
- A natural bacterium discovered in Israel helps control mosquitoes and black flies, preventing river blindness and malaria in 11 African nations and reducing infection along China's Yangtze River by 90 percent.
- Israeli ophthalmologists travel to countries throughout the developing world to treat preventable blindness and ocular disease, using high-tech treatments that are otherwise unavailable.

StandWithUs

Supporting Israel Around The World



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310.836.6140

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