

PLACES ON THE MAP OF ISRAEL

מקומות על מפת ארץ ישראל

BEER SHEVA

The city of Be'er Sheva is considered the capital of the Negev desert (). This city is the most highly identified with the Patriarchs (Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, since it was their place of residence.

The very hot and dry city is located in southern Israel and is Israel's 7th largest city. It is considered one of Israel's largest growing cities.

According to the Bible, Abraham dug wells at Beersheba and the city was the place where they formed alliances Abimelech, King of the Philistines. The origin of the name Beersheba is explained by the wells dug in each place where an alliance was formed (in Hebrew, be'er well; sheva, oath or seven). To symbolize his ownership of the well, he planted a tamarisk tree there and that became Be'er Sheva's emblem.

Until the days of King David and King Solomon, Be'er Sheva was the most southern point of the country. "From Dan to Beer Sheva" () was the customary designation for the entire area of the Land of Israel.

Today, Be'er Sheva is home to Soroka – the Negev hospital, Ben Gurion – The Negev University, the municipal museum, a pumping station of the Eilat – Haifa pipe line and home to large industries and markets. Another attraction in the city is the Bedouin Market, a market open for one day each week (Thursday) where the Bedouin tribe (Arab tribe residing outside of Be'er Sheva) sell their crafts and merchandize.



EILAT

Eilat is the most southern city in Israel. The city is a popular tourist centre, where people escape to the hot climate, hiking opportunities and the Red Sea with its famous corals, water sports and hotels.

The city was created in the 1950's because there was a need to establish Israeli presence in the area (a point between Jordan and Egypt), and because of the need for a port to ship to Africa and Asia via the Red Sea.

Eilat borders the Egyptian city of Taba and Jordanian city of Aqaba. It is surrounded by the magnificent red mountains to the north and is considered the hottest city (climate) in Israel. The low humidity and desert climate of the southern Negev has temperatures rise above 40 degrees Celsius in the summer.

It is unclear where the city's name comes from. Although Eilat is mentioned in the bible in the book of Exodus, some think the name comes from the word Ayil which means "ram". These animals were there in the time of Abraham. The Israelites passed by the city, King David established his southern defense line there, his son Solomon developed the area for the import and export that took place there and other kinds passed by there.

The city fell into the hands of the Syrian king, changed names and its importance declines. During the Ottoman Turks it was a small police station and nothing else. In 1949, Israel occupied Eilat in an army operation which was the last move of the War of Independence. Since then, the city has gradually grown into the major tourist attraction it is today.



JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, the capital city of the state of Israel, is located in the Judean Mountains, between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea. Jerusalem is one of the oldest cities in the world and is a holy city to Jews, Christians and Muslims.

All branches of the Israeli government are located in Jerusalem, including the **Knesset** (Israel's parliament), the residences of Israel's Prime Minister and President, the Supreme Court.

Jerusalem is home to the Hebrew University and to the Israel Museum, This biblical city is mentioned in the bible numerous times as King David established it as its capital and King Solomon built the first temple in Jerusalem.

Since the biblical times, the city has been under different rulers and governments. When the city's population grew in the 1800's, new neighbourhoods began to form outside of the city wall. This became known as the new city (as opposed to the old city within the walls).

As Israel declared its independence in 1948, during the War of Independence, Jerusalem became divided, and the old city – within the walls – ended up in the Jordanian's hands. Jordan was in control of the holy sites and denied Jewish access to them. Even though Jerusalem was declared the official capital of the new state of Israel, an important (maybe most important) section of the city was not under Israeli rule.

During the Six Day War, in 1967, Israel regained control of the old city and access to the holy sites was restored.

Jerusalem is Israel's largest, most populated and most religiously diversified city. Its old city is divided into 4 quarters: Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Armenian. Tourists from all over the world and all religions come to visit the city and experience its unique atmosphere and ancient roots.



THE WESTERN WALL – HAKOTEL

When the Romans destroyed the Second Temple in 70 C.E., only one wall (the western wall) from the outer wall that surrounded the Temple Mount court yard remained standing. That wall is the most sacred and holy place in Jewish life. Today, it is located in the Old City of Jerusalem at the foot of the western side of the area known as the Temple Mount.

Jews from all over the world head to the Western Wall to pray and experience the only remnant of what was the most sacred building in Jewish history.

The Kotel (as it is called in Hebrew) was under Muslim rule for more than 1000 year, during which the Arabs used it as a garbage dump to humiliate the Jews. For 19 years, between 1948-1967, it was under Jordanian rule and Jews were not allowed to visit the wall. The moment it was re-captured was an emotional moment in Jewish history as Jews were allowed, to once again visit and pray at this sacred location.

There is a custom to insert written prayers (notes) into the Kotel's cracks and stones. Large crowds arrive at the Kotel on Friday evenings, Jewish holidays and fast days.

Today, the Kotel is a national symbol and many ceremonies and Jewish events take place there.



TEL AVIV

Tel Aviv is the second most populated city in Israel, after Jerusalem. It is located on the Mediterranean coast, in central west Israel. Tel Aviv is affectionately referred to as the city that never sleeps () because of its popularity, its lively night life and its dynamic atmosphere.

Tel Aviv was built as an extension to the old port city of Jaffa. When Jaffa became very populated during the 1800's Aliyot, Jews began settling outside of Jaffa, finding new homes in the sand dunes in that area. In 1906, with more and more settlers arriving, the "Ahuzat Bayit" society was formed, seeking to form a new city outside of Jaffa that will co-exist with its Arab neighbors. Meir Dizengoff, who later became Tel Aviv's first mayor was a member in this society.

On 11 April 1909, 66 Jewish families gathered for a land lottery which is the official establishment of Tel Aviv. On 21 May 1910, the name Tel Aviv was adopted originating from Hertzels famous book "Old New Land". The other name that was considered was "Herzliya" which later was given to the first Hebrew school founded in 1906 in Tel Aviv. Tel Aviv was planned as an independent Hebrew city with wide streets and boulevards, running water at each house and street lights. New neighbourhoods were added as Tel Aviv expanded and grew. It was in Tel Aviv, on May 14th 1948, that David Ben Gurion declared the independence of the State of Israel.

Today Tel Aviv is the financial and cultural capital of Israel. It attracts 2.5 million international visitors annually and is the fifth most visited city in the middle east.



TIBERIAS

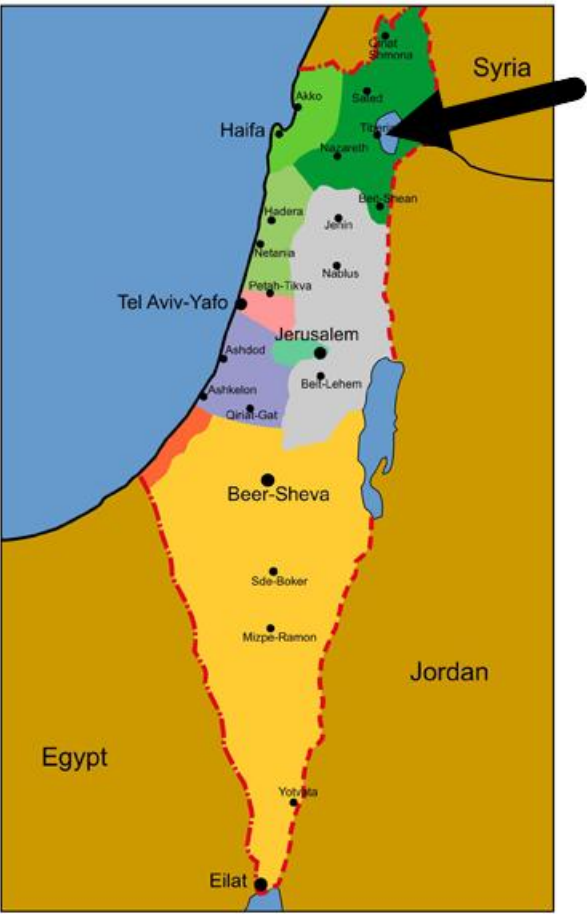
Tiberias is a city on the western shore of the Kinneret. The city is considered to be one of Judaism's four holy cities, established in 20 CE and named after the Roman emperor Tiberius.

The city of Tiberias is known for its hot springs which are considered to be helpful with skin problems and other health problems.

The Jewish population of the 20th century refused to settle in Tiberias because of a presence of a cemetery that existed there which was considered a source of ritual uncleanness (especially for Kohanim).

In 145 CE, Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai cleansed the city of its ritual impurity, allowing leaders to settle there and, leading to even the Sanhedrin to move there during the time of the revolt against the Roman Empire. It is believed that the Mishnah and the Jerusalem Talmud were written in Tiberias. It became a site for Jewish learning and scholars settlement.

The city underwent many different changes and was under many different rulers over the centuries. Since 1948, Tiberias became almost entirely Jewish. It attracts tourists because of the ancient Tiberias cemetery and the small port on the shore of the Kinneret attracting fishermen and visitors.



KINNERET

The Kinneret, also known as the Sea of Galilee is the largest fresh water lake in Israel, the lowest fresh water lake on Earth and the second lowest lake overall. The Jordan River is its main source of water as its water flows into it. It is also fed by rainfall and springs on the northern side.

The Kinneret is located in Northern Israel between the Golan Heights and the Galilee region. The sea is only 13 miles by 7 miles, but is one of the most well known bodies of water in the world.

The name appears in the Bible in the books of Numbers and Joshua. Some believe that it originates from the word "Kinnor" () which means violin as the lake has a shape of a violin to it.

In 1950, 2 years after the birth of the independent state of Israel, the country put together a plan to link the Kinneret with the rest of the country by a National Water Carrier in order to supply the water to the entire country. The carrier's construction was completed in 1964 and it supplies the entire country with fresh water as the Kinneret is the only source of the country's drinking water.

The size of the lake and dry conditions are always putting the lake at risk and under heavy monitoring by the Israeli government.

The Kinneret is a tourist attraction and a popular holiday destination.



THE DEAD SEA

The Dead Sea is located in the eastern border of Israel and is the border with Jordan. The Dead Sea is considered the lowest point on earth (427 meters or 1300 feet below sea level) and the saltiest body of water on earth. It is 10 times saltier than the ocean and thus, cannot have animals live in it. That is why it is called the “Dead Sea” in English.

The Dead Sea attracts visitors and tourists from all over the world because of the salt minerals that are considered to be very healthy and helpful to many skin conditions. The different spas, resorts, cosmetics and hotels are a serious source of revenue to the state of Israel.

The density of the salt and the high concentration of chemicals makes swimming impossible and makes floating possible, a common sight at the sea.



The climate of the Dead Sea is dry air and high temperatures. The Dead Sea is actually shrinking, which is a cause for much concern.

