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Your
relocation
guide to
Israel



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Memb No: A091



TELEPHONE:	Country code (972) + Area code
STANDARD TIME:	GMT +2 hours
WEIGHTS & MEASURES:	Metric
ELECTRICITY:	220v
INOCULATIONS/VACCINATIONS:	Check polio, diphtheria and tetanus are up to date. Recommended Hepatitis A, Typhoid
PUBLIC HOLIDAYS:	Mar 4, Apr 3-9, Apr 10, 24, May 17, Jun 2, Sept 24-25, Oct 2, 6-13, 14, Dec 14-16 (These dates will vary from year to year)
OFFICE HOURS:	08.00-17.00 Sunday – Thursday
BANK HOURS:	08.30-12.30 Sunday – Thursday 16.00-18.00 Sunday, Tuesday, Thursday 08.30-12.00 Friday
EMERGENCY TELEPHONE NUMBERS:	101 – Ambulance 100 – Police 102 – Fire
BRITISH EMBASSY:	192 Hayarkon Street Tel: Aviv 63405 Israel Tel: (03) 725 1222 Fax: (03) 527 8574
TOURIST & TRAVEL INFORMATION:	Tourist Information Office 24 King George Street Jerusalem 94262 Israel Tel: 026 754 811 Fax: 026 233 407
ISRAELI EMBASSY IN LONDON:	2 Palace Green London W8 4QB Tel: 0207 957 9500 Fax: 0207 957 9555

Customs

To the best of our knowledge, the following documentation is required to import household goods and personal effects into Israel. However, it is advisable to check with the authorities that documentation is in order, prior to despatch.

Customs regulations for Personal Effects / Household Goods:

Immigrants

Documents required:

- Original passport of consignee and spouse
- English packing list, without values
- Letter authorising destination agent to clear shipment
- Inventory (in Hebrew) showing values of all items, giving make, serial number and appliance manufacturer's name, whether old or new, and sizes for all fabric items (provided by Destination Agent)
- Invoices for newly purchased items (less than 12 months old)
- Rental contract or other proof of residence in Israel for one year minimum
- New immigrant booklet "Teudat Oleh" of consignee and spouse
- Power of Attorney authorising destination agent to clear shipment and signed at the destination agent's office
- Declaration for customs (provided by D/A) showing values of all items, giving make, serial number and appliance manufacturer's name, whether old or new (to be prepared and signed at the D/A's office)

New Immigrants are entitled to a tax free importation of household goods and personal effects. In order to utilise this privilege, consignee must have a new immigrant booklet (Teudat Oleh).

Duty free entry for all personal and household goods.

Electrical appliances – only one of each permitted plus two computers and two televisions per family.

Carpets for new immigrant:

Permitted duty free entry :

25% size of flat

75% if wall to wall carpeting

Communication equipment, sporting equipment, and outdoor furniture are subject to duties – partial or full, depends on the item.

- Consignee can immigrate from country A and import from country B
- Date of arrival is the date of 1st entry into Israel as marked in the Teudat Oleh booklet issued upon arrival in the country

- Number of duty free shipments limited to three within three years of arrival
- Lease contract for flat must be a minimum of one year and if furnished, should specify which items are supplied with the flat, as customs will not allow identical items to be brought in duty free
- Shipment of a car and professional tools will not be calculated within the framework of three shipments allowed
- Expiration of rights, goods must arrive at port of entry no later than three years from the date of arrival
- No items brought for other people are allowed

Israeli Citizens who lived abroad less than 2 years

Documents required:

- Clear copy of picture page of Israeli Passport
- English packing list, without values (From O/A)
- Power of Attorney authorising destination agent to clear shipment (Provided by D/A)
- Declaration for customs (provided by D/A) showing values of all items, giving make, serial number and appliance manufacturer's name, whether old or new (to be prepared and signed at the D/A's office)
- Optional: EUR-1 or Certificate of Origin for newly purchased items

If consignee did a formal export when they left Israel (e.g. via a certified International Mover or Freight Forwarder) and the Original Export Documents are found in the company's archives then all that is on the export list that matches the import list can be imported tax free.

Consignee must obtain the papers with the Original customs stamp, not a copy.

Israelis who lived abroad more than 2 years

- English packing list, without values on it
- Clear copy of picture page of consignee and spouse's passport
- Clear copy of "returning Israeli" stamp page of consignee and spouse's passport
- Proof of Residence in Israel
- Invoices for newly purchased items (less than 12 months old)
- Power of Attorney authorising destination agent to clear shipment (Provided by D/A)
- Declaration for customs (provided by D/A) showing values of all items, giving make, serial number and appliance manufacturer's name, whether old or new (to be prepared and signed at the D/A's office)

If consignee is an Israeli citizen who lived abroad between two and six years and sum of visits each year did not exceed 120 days, then they may be eligible for Returning Citizens status.

Consignee must visit the customs house governing their place of residence and bring along their Israeli passport, their spouse's passport and a proof of residence (Rental contract, ownership contract, city tax bill etc).

Once Israeli Customs stamped the passport with 'Returning Israeli' stamp, consignee may import personal effects and household effects tax free. Including one of each household appliances plus two computers and two televisions per family.

Some items may not be exempted at all, including Alcohol, food, Communication equipment (phones, fax machines etc.).

Expiration of rights: goods must arrive at port of entry not later than nine months from the date of arrival.

Religious individual (A-3 status) (Minister, Priest, Theological Student)

Same procedure as persons entering under B-1 status including:

- Status (A-3) stamped in passport by Customs authorities
- Letter from place of service
- Bank guarantee or deposit

A-3 visa needs to pay a deposit or a bank guarantee, which will be released or paid back once they leave Israel and sends the HHGs back.

Tourists (B-2)

No duty free rights. All goods imported are subject to Customs duty.

Foreign workers (B-1 Visa)

- English Packing List, without values
- Original Passport, already stamped with B-1 Visa
- Israeli Customs Forms & Power of Attorney (filled in Israel)
- Letter from employer, confirming that client will be working for him in Israel

Documents Required for Clearance from consignee's EMPLOYER in Israel:

- ORIGINAL Bank Guarantee documents, signed by the issuing bank

Unlike most countries in the world, where Work Permit/Visa entitles consignee to import their personal effects tax-free, in Israel the procedure is different.

Consignee's employer will have to raise a bank guarantee in the amount of duties levied by Israeli Customs, in order to clear the shipment without paying taxes. This guarantee will have to be renewed every year and can be revoked only when the goods are exported out of Israel.

Note: The guarantee covers Israeli Customs duties and taxes only, and does not cover other port related charges

like NVOCC handling charges, cargo terminal charges and wharfage fee.

Diplomats removals

- English Packing List, without values
- Clear copy of passport
- Clear copy of diplomat's ID card
- Original tax exemption papers (Form 380)
- Letter of Authorisation from governing diplomatic body to D/A

Diplomats are entitled to a tax-free importation of personal effects, once a tax exemption franchise is obtained by the body (e.g embassy, consulate or organisation) in which the diplomat is physically serves.

The diplomatic body must apply for a diplomatic ID card for consignee at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jerusalem. Once obtained, the tax exemption is applied for at the Customs House, by presenting the bill of lading, packing list and customs forms. Once the customs broker (e.g. Destination Agent) receives the ORIGINAL tax exemption papers, the shipment can be cleared tax free.

Note: The exemption covers Israeli Customs duties and taxes only, and does not cover other port related charges like NVOCC handling charges, cargo terminal charges and wharfage fee.

There are no restrictions on importing alcohol for diplomats and as all of them are released with tax exemption, there not duties either. We recommend not to import more than 30-40 bottles to avoid more complicated customs clearance that require a permit from the wine department in the Israeli Standard Institute. We recommend to consult with your local destination agent (D/A) prior to shipping.

Inheritances

Document required:

- Inheritance papers issued by Israeli Court

No special privileges.

Tools for professional purposes

Document required:

- Valued packing list

Importer must prove they are essential to his profession.

Liquors and Cigarettes

Subject to payment of full duties and taxes.

There are no restrictions on importing alcohol for diplomats and as all of them are released with tax exemption, there not duties either. We recommend not to import more than 30-40 bottles to avoid more complicated customs clearance that require a permit from the wine department in the Israeli Standard Institute. We recommend to consult with your local destination agent (D/A) prior to shipping.

Motorcars, other motor vehicles, caravans and trailers

Documents required:

Vehicle importing is potentially complicated and should be coordinated with DA before shipping to confirm if possible to import as there are age and other restrictions.

- Document proving registration in importer's name
- Insurance document
- Purchase invoice
- Valid driver's license
- Proof of payment

New immigrants – will pay taxes of ~ 77% of value of car plus shipping.

For new immigrants- car must arrive at POE within 3 years from consignee's date of arrival.

Only one car can be imported

All cars should comply with the Israeli Institute of standards.

Shipper should check with Destination Agent by faxing registration details of car.

Firearms, ammunitions, explosives, dangerous chemicals, drugs

All the above are prohibited.

Firearms have to have special authorisation applied for to Ministry of Interior prior to shipping.

Pets

Document required:

- Certificate for all normal inoculations including rabies

Plants and Vegetable products

- Special import license required

Other Information

How to consign the Bill of Lading / Airway Bill.

Consignee: Shippers name (as shown on passport) Israeli ID number (9 digits) for Israeli citizens or Foreign Passport number (for foreigners).

Shippers address in Israel.

Shippers phone number in Israel.

Food

We strongly recommend that shippers be advised not to ship any commercially prepared and purchased food product with your unaccompanied personal goods.

This includes: wines, spirits, beer, cider, spices, herbs, canned packed or wrapped foods, pet food, pastas, rice, food supplements, vitamins, fruit juices, carbonated / non carbonated drinks, milk, perishable foods, dry foods and any other item intended for human or animal consumption.

If the shipper insists on shipping food items, the specified information below must be gathered and provided for each food item imported. If the information is not provided, the food items may face refusal of entry, requiring segregation / manipulation of the shipment under customs supervision at a bonded facility, at substantial additional cost. Costs could be in the thousands of dollars and cannot be anticipated. These costs will be the responsibility of the client.

- Product brand name
- Product classification
- Country of production
- Country of packaging
- Type of product (canned, bottled, packaged)
- Quantity

Ask for **Atlantic form QF565** for completing.

General information on the State of Israel

Background

Following World War II, Britain withdrew from its mandate of Palestine, and the UN proposed partitioning the area into Arab and Jewish states, an arrangement rejected by the Arabs. Nonetheless, an Israeli state was declared in 1948, and Israel subsequently defeated the Arab armies in a series of wars that did not end deep tensions between the two sides. (The territories Israel has occupied since the 1967 war are not included in the Israel country profile, unless otherwise noted.) On 25 April 1982, Israel withdrew from the Sinai Peninsula pursuant to the 1979 Israel-Egypt Peace Treaty. In keeping with the framework established at the Madrid Conference in October 1991, Israel conducted bilateral negotiations with Palestinian representatives and Syria to achieve a permanent settlement with each. Israel and Palestinian officials on 13 September 1993 signed a Declaration of Principles (also known as the "Oslo Accords"), enshrining the idea of a two-state solution to their conflict and guiding an interim period of Palestinian self-rule. The parties achieved six additional significant interim agreements between 1994 and 1999 aimed at creating the conditions for a two-state solution, but most were never fully realized. Outstanding territorial and other disputes with Jordan were resolved in the 26 October 1994 Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty.

Progress toward a final status agreement with the Palestinians was undermined by Israeli-Palestinian violence between 2001 and February 2005. Israel in 2005 unilaterally disengaged from the Gaza Strip, evacuating settlers and its military while retaining control over most points of entry into the Gaza Strip.

The election of HAMAS to head the Palestinian Legislative Council in 2006 temporarily froze relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA). Israel engaged in a 34-day conflict with Hizballah in Lebanon from July-August

2006 and a 23-day conflict with HAMAS in the Gaza Strip from December 2008-January 2009. In November 2012, Israel engaged in a seven-day conflict with HAMAS in the Gaza Strip. Direct talks with the Palestinians most recently launched in July 2013 but were suspended in April 2014. The talks represented the fourth concerted effort to resolve final status issues between the sides since they were first discussed at Camp David in 2000. Three months later HAMAS and other militant groups launched rockets into Israel, which led to a 51-day conflict between Israel and militants in Gaza.

Geography

Israel lies on the Mediterranean coast of Southwest Asia. Beyond the coastal Plain of Sharon are the hills and valleys of Samaria with the Galilee highlands to the North. In the east is the rift valley, which extends from Lake Tiberias to the Gulf of Aqaba and contains the Jordan river and Dead Sea. In the south is the Negev, a triangular semi-desert plateau. Agriculture production was boosted by the inclusion of the West Bank in 1967 exporting fruit and vegetables. Other exports are machinery and transport equipment diamonds and clothing. Tourism and foreign aid are important to the economy.

Sites in the West Bank, 42 in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, 25 in the Gaza Strip, and 29 in East Jerusalem (February 2002 est); Sea of Galilee is an important freshwater source.

Environmental Issues

Limited arable land and natural fresh water resources pose serious constraints; desertification, air pollution from industrial and vehicle emissions. Groundwater pollution from industrial and domestic waste, chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Climate

Much of Israel has warm summers and mild wet winters. Southern Israel is hot and dry. Sandstorms may occur during the Spring and Summer other natural hazards are droughts and periodic earthquakes.

Population

The population is estimated to be 6,352,000, it includes about 187,000 Israeli settlers in the West Bank, about 20,000 in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights, and fewer than 177,000 in East Jerusalem.

Transnational Issues

West Bank and Gaza Strip are Israeli-occupied with current status subject to the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement – permanent status to be determined through further negotiation; Israel continues construction of a “seam line” separation barrier along parts of the Green Line and within the West Bank; Israel withdrew its settlers and military from the Gaza Strip and from four settlements in the West Bank in August 2005; Golan Heights is Israeli-occupied (Lebanon claims the Shab’s Farms area of Golan Heights); since 1948 about 350 peacekeepers from the UN Truce Supervision

Organisation (UNTSO) headquartered in Jerusalem monitor ceasefires, supervise armistice agreements, prevent isolated incidents from escalating, and assist other UN personnel in the region.

Currency

The new Israeli shekel (ILS), note is NIS is the currency abbreviation, ILS is the International Organization for Standardisation (ISO) code for the NIS.

Coins: 5, 10 and 50 agurot, 5 & 10 shequel.

Notes: 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 shequel.

The major international credit cards are accepted by leading hotels, travel agents, airline office etc, but shops may seek to charge a higher price.

Economy

Israel has a technologically advanced free market economy. Cut diamonds, high-technology equipment, and pharmaceuticals are among its leading exports. Its major imports include crude oil, grains, raw materials, and military equipment. Israel usually posts sizable trade deficits, which are covered by tourism and other service exports, as well as significant foreign investment inflows.

Between 2004 and 2013, growth averaged nearly 5% per year, led by exports. The global financial crisis of 2008-09 spurred a brief recession in Israel, but the country entered the crisis with solid fundamentals, following years of prudent fiscal policy and a resilient banking sector. Israel’s economy also weathered the 2011 Arab Spring because strong trade ties outside the Middle East have insulated the economy from spillover effects.

Slowing domestic and international demand and decreased investment resulting from Israel’s uncertain security situation reduced GDP growth to an average of roughly 2.6% per year during 2014-15. Natural gas fields discovered off Israel’s coast since 2009 have brightened Israel’s energy security outlook. The Tamar and Leviathan fields were some of the world’s largest offshore natural gas finds in the last decade. Political and regulatory issues have delayed the development of the massive Leviathan field, but production from Tamar provided a 0.8% boost to Israel’s GDP in 2013 and a 0.3% boost in 2014. One of the most carbon intense OECD countries, Israel generates about 57% of its power from coal and only 2.6% from renewable sources.

Income inequality and high housing and commodity prices continue to be a concern for many Israelis. Israel’s income inequality and poverty rates are among the highest of OECD countries, and there is a broad perception among the public that a small number of “tycoons” have a cartel-like grip over the major parts of the economy. Government officials have called for reforms to boost the housing supply and to increase competition in the banking sector to address these public grievances. Despite calls for reforms, the restricted housing supply continues to impact the well-being of younger Israelis

seeking to purchase homes. Tariffs and non-tariff barriers, coupled with guaranteed prices and customs tariffs for farmers have kept food prices high through 2015.

In the long term, Israel faces structural issues, including low labor participation rates for its fastest growing social segments – the ultraorthodox and Arab-Israeli communities. Also, Israel's progressive, globally competitive, knowledge-based technology sector employs only about 8% of the workforce, with the rest mostly employed in manufacturing and services – sectors which face downward wage pressures from global competition. Expenditures on educational institutions remain low compared to most other OECD countries with similar GDP per capita.

Security

We advise against all travel to the Gaza Strip because of the security situation. Since 26 June 2006, the Israel Defence Forces have carried out military operations in Gaza. Despite the ceasefire between Palestinian militant groups and Israel effect from 26 November 2006, there continues to be frequent clashes between armed Palestinian groups and attacks on individuals.

We also advise against all travel to the Gaza strip because of the threat of kidnap.

We advise against all travel within 2km south of Israel's border with Lebanon because of on-going military operations along the border. You should follow all securityrelated instructions given by the Israeli register with the British Embassy in Tel Aviv, and that you remain vigilant at all times.

We advise against all but essential travel to the West Bank. We continue to believe that terrorist groups maintain the intent and capability to kidnap foreigners including British nationals particularly in Nablus and the northern West Bank. We strongly advise you to maintain a high level of vigilance when travelling anywhere in East or West Jerusalem, and to follow local advice.

A high threat from terrorism and military activity in Israel and in the Occupied Territories remains.

We strongly recommend that you obtain comprehensive travel and medical insurance before travelling to Israel or to the Occupied Territories. Many policies do not cover you if your claim is the result of terrorism. You should check any exclusions, and that your policy covers you for the activities you want to undertake.

Registration Strongly Advised

British nationals in Israel and the Occupied Territories are strongly advised to register with and to follow local advice issued by the British Embassy Tel Aviv, or the British Consulate-General in Jerusalem.

Crime

- Most visits to Israel are crime-free
- You should keep your personal belongings in a safe place
- The theft of passports, credit cards and valuables from public beaches is commonplace
- If travelling on your own and not in a group, be particularly careful to keep wallets, money and valuables out of sight
- Crime is generally not a problem in the Occupied Territories, but you should take sensible precautions to protect yourself and your belongings

Road Safety

Driving in Israel is erratic and there are frequent accidents. Radar speed traps operate on roads within Israel and fines for speeding are high. It is not safe to hitchhike in Israel. If you are travelling to the desert, go with others, take a supply of water and a mobile phone and let someone know your itinerary and expected time of return.

Local Laws and Customs

You should ensure that you comply with customs regulations. If you arrive with valuable personal items (computers, camcorders etc), you may be required to pay a deposit that is refundable on or after departure. Tax may be levied on items sent to visitors already in Israel.

You should carry identification at all times because foreigners are required to show some form of identity if requested by the local authorities. When travelling within Israel it is permissible to carry photocopies of the date and entry stamp pages of passports to avoid losing the original. Passports may be required when crossing between Israel and the Occupied Territories and when entering Jerusalem. Passports and immigration slips must be produced when crossing into or out of the Gaza Strip.

You are advised to take heed of any official advice given about movement into and within the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

The penalties for smuggling and trafficking in illegal drugs are severe. Those caught in possession can expect a prison sentence and deportation.

Israel is a country in which a number of religions and cultures mix. People feel strongly about their beliefs and customs. You should be aware of this at all times.

For example, it is not wise to go into Jewish ultra-orthodox areas of Jerusalem on Shabbat (Saturday). Also, you should dress modestly in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

You should be sensitive about taking pictures of people in Muslim and Orthodox Jewish areas and you should take care not to take photographs of military or police personnel or installations.

Education

All Israelis, from pre-schoolers to senior citizens, benefit from a wide variety of educational programs. School attendance is mandatory from age 5-16 and free to age 18. Almost all three-four year olds attend some kind of preschool program, though they are neither compulsory nor free. Schools running an English curriculum are listed in the Directory of the European Council of International Schools, which is available from ECIS Inc, 21B Lavant Street, Petersfield, Hants, GU32 3EL. Tel: 01730 268 244.

Language

The official languages of Israel are Hebrew and Arabic. English is widely spoken throughout the business sector. Road signs are displayed in all three languages.

Religion

Religious affiliation and practice is a matter of personal choice with religious freedom guaranteed by the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel. At present the country's population is comprised of 81.1% Jews, 14.2% Moslems, 3.0% Christians (mostly Arabs) and 1.7% Druze and others. Within this pluralistic framework, the various communities maintain their own religious, educational, cultural and charitable institutions. The courts of each religious community have full jurisdiction in matters of the personal status of its members. Each of the country's many holy sites is administered by its own religious authority.

Health

Health standards compare favorably with those of most developed countries. Life expectancy and the country doctor patient ratio are among the highest in the world, whilst infant mortality rate is among the lowest. Training for medical professions is offered at four medical schools, two schools of dentistry, one of pharmacology and some 20 nursing schools, four of which grant academic degrees.

Health services are offered at some 225 general and specialised hospitals (with some 32,000 beds), as well as through a network of outpatient clinics, mother-and-child health care centres, convalescent homes, rehabilitation institutions and school health programs, which include dental care. Medical facilities and services are provided by the Ministry of Health, the large municipalities, private and non-profit institutions and health insurance funds.

Emergency care is available through Magen David Adom (Red Shield of David), which corresponds to the Red Cross, or the Red Crescent, in other countries. It provides a public ambulance service, mobile intensive care units and emergency treatment at first-aid stations all over the country, and maintains a network of blood banks.

Healthcare in Israel is not free and any form of medical treatment can be expensive. We strongly recommend that comprehensive travel and medical insurance is obtained before travelling. Hospitals will insist on payment and may take legal action to delay departure until bills are met.

Travellers' Tips

Travelling to Israel and the Palestinian Territories. If so, be prepared. Make sure you have insurance, that you know how money can be transferred to you in an emergency, that you have checked the Department of Health Advice for Travellers and that you know what the Consular Section can and cannot do for you.

Although every care is taken to ensure that all information in the Relocation Guide is accurate and up to date we cannot accept liability for any inaccuracy.