

# Israel



**Full name:** State of Israel

**Government:** parliamentary democracy

**Location:** Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Lebanon

**Seat of government:** Jerusalem, though most foreign embassies are in Tel Aviv

**Area:** 22,072 sq km (8,522 sq miles), including Jerusalem and Golan; slightly smaller than New Jersey

**Climate:** temperate; hot and dry in southern and eastern desert areas

**Terrain:** Negev desert in the south; low coastal plain; central mountains; Jordan Rift Valley

**Natural Hazards:** sandstorms may occur during spring and summer; droughts; periodic earthquakes

**Population:** 6.9 million (UN, 2006)

**Ethnicity:** Jewish 76.4% (of which Israel-born 67.1%, Europe/America-born 22.6%, Africa-born 5.9%, Asia-born 4.2%), non-Jewish 23.6% (mostly Arab)

**Major Language:** Hebrew, Arabic

**Religion:** Jewish 76.4%, Muslim 16%, Arab Christians 1.7%, other Christian 0.4%, Druze 1.6%, unspecified 3.9%

**Life expectancy:** 78 years (men), 82 years (women) (UN)

**Currency:** 1 new Israeli shekel (NIS) = 100 new agorot