

Israel

Capital: Jerusalem

Population: 7,000,000

Largest cities: Tel Aviv, Haifa

The state of Israel was created in 1948 as a homeland for Jews from all over the world. The country was previously called Palestine. Much of the Palestinian Arab population was forced to leave Israel, fleeing into Jordan and Lebanon. This has created conflict between Israel, the Palestinians and neighbouring Arab states.

Landscape

- fertile valleys, e.g. Jordan river
- dry deserts, e.g. Negev
- mountains, e.g. Golan Heights

Agriculture

- *kibbutzim* = large communal farms where many families live and work together, usage of computerized irrigation to water the land has made large areas of barren desert fertile
- *wheat, potatoes, cotton, sugar beet*
- *vegetables and citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, grapefruits)*
- *cattle, goats, sheep, poultry and camels*

Industry

- *diamond cutting* = 25% of Israel's export earnings, rough diamonds are imported, then cut and polish for the use in jewellery
- *salt* production
- *copper and iron ore*
- *textile + clothing industry*
- *armament* production
- *handicrafts* (jewellery)

Jerusalem

= holy place for Jews, Muslims and Christians

- Jewish Western Wall = the only remaining part of Herod's Temple
- Temple Mount from where the Muslim prophet Mohammed rose up to heaven
- Church of the Holy Sepulchre = the traditional site of Christ's burial and resurrection

Israeli army

Because of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and repeated wars with the neighbouring countries, the army plays important part in Israeli life. From the age of 18, Israeli men and women must serve in the army for number of years. Women receive the same training as men but do not take part in direct combat.

Prime ministers to remember: Simon Peres, Jicchak Rabin, Benjamin Netanjahu, Ehud Barack, Ariel Sharon