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אתרי עתיקות בקיסרי - 89810					



**Sunny side up** Israel's beaches usually come prepared with chairs and sun umbrellas

# Life's a beach

Yes, it's hot. And sticky. But 150 kilometers of Mediterranean coastline have got you covered. From secluded hideaways to the trendiest beach in the country, *Time Out Israel's* writers help you find the perfect spot to spread out your towel

So this is how things are looking: it's the hottest month of the hottest season in one of the hottest regions in the world, and you are beyond worrying about any unsightly back sweat. Frankly, it is entirely possible that you are genuinely concerned about melting. Welcome to August in Israel. But, and there is a but, as this Middle Eastern country boasts 150 kilometers of immaculate Mediterranean coastline, one beautiful and substantial-sized freshwater lake and a legendary saltwater sea, the key to a perfect summer is choosing your perfect stretch of sand. From the urban beaches in Tel Aviv to the rural sands of the north, find the body of water that works for you, and wash those summer woes away.

## THE MEDITERRANEAN



### CAESAREA

**Where** Located midway between Tel Aviv and Haifa, posh Caesarea is dotted with many a vacation home owned by the rich and famous. Some of Israel's best-kept beaches are nestled between the ruins of Caesarea's famous archaeological sites, which date back to King Herod's ancient kingdom.

**The beach** While the beaches in Caesarea are some of the most well kept in the country, Caesarea's most breathtaking beach houses a

Roman aqueduct which marks its inland edge, hence the name – **Aqueduct Beach**. Usually on the weekend tourist-bus track, it is best to check it out on a weekday. A lifeguard is on hand but there's no cafe, so once you are done lazing in this beautiful place, you can head to nearby **Harbor Beach**, also a popular spot. While an entry fee to the beach is required, it includes toilets/changing rooms, a lawn area with beach loungers, umbrellas, lifeguards and the **Beach Bar (04-6363989)** – a seaside café-bar. Unfortunately, the beach is currently closed for swimming due to construction work, but the surrounding ruins and great cafe make it worth the short trip from Aqueduct Beach.

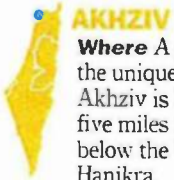
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### When you get tired of lazing in the sun...

**Dive!** The fact that one can scuba dive in the water among the ruins epitomizes Caesarea's triple threat: historical significance, archaeological magnitude and waterside location. The **Caesarea Dive Club** (04-6265898, *book in advance*) guides both amateur and experienced divers through the underwater ruins, revealing insights into Herod's building techniques. The less adventurous can make do with snorkeling and explore marine life closer to the surface.

**Bonus** Enjoy fine dining at Caesarea's popular bistro, **Helena** (04-6101018), which serves delicious fare and boasts a wall of windows that sit at the edge of the water, creating a magnificent ambience.

**In a nutshell: Posh, sophisticated and historic**



### AKHZIV

**Where** A protected national park, the unique and beautiful beach at Akhziv is located in Israel's tippy top, five miles north of Nahariya, and just below the Lebanese border at Rosh Hanikra.

**The beach** Akhziv is a national park for a reason. Hiding among its many pools and lagoons are all sorts of wonderful wildlife including starfish, tiny octopi and, during the summer months, sea turtles that come to lay their eggs. With a shallow lagoon for children to splash in and a deeper one for adults to swim in, Akhziv is something of a water wonderland. To boot, in addition to lifeguards and bathroom facilities, there are manicured lawns for picnicking, playground equipment, a snack bar and a restaurant.

### When you get tired of lazing in the sun...

Ride the world's steepest cable car! Located at nearby **Rosh Hanikra**, the cable car will deliver you to spectacular white grottoes perched high above the churning blue of the sea. Formed by the crash of waves on soft chalk rock, Rosh Hanikra's famous grottoes are quite magnificent. In the summer, you can follow the promenade from Akhziv to the entrance of Rosh Hanikra.

**Bonus** Not ready to leave? Make a night of it and book a charming wooden tzimmer (cabin) at the **Akhziv Holiday Village** (04-9826030). Great for couples or families, facilities include an on-site spa, swimming pool, tennis courts and a playground.

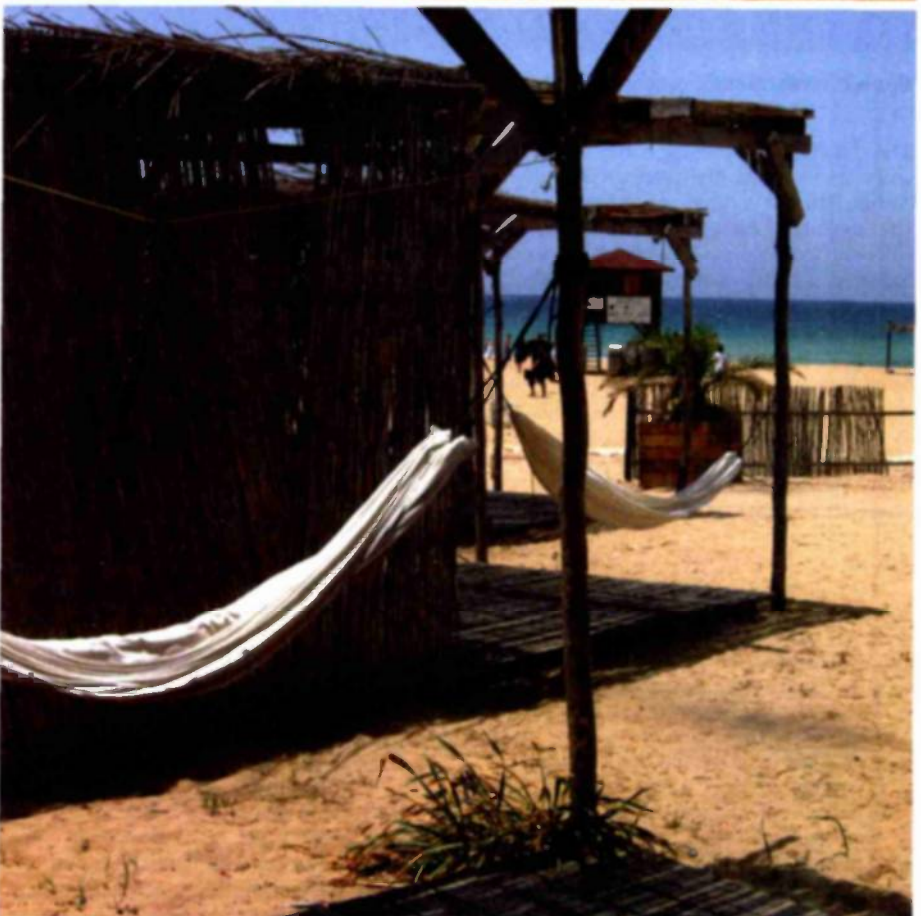
**In a nutshell: A nature lover's dream**



### HERZLIYA

**Where** Situated just north of Tel Aviv, Herzliya is among Israel's most upscale cities, favored by ambassadors and foreign diplomats. It's no wonder, then, that the **Herzliya Marina** (*herzliya-marina.co.il*) is home to luxurious yachts, speed boats and cruise ships.

**The beach** Relax on the shores of **Herzliya Beach**, which hugs the marina. While communal toilets are available, there are no beach chairs for public use, so bring your own.



**Rest and relaxation** Hilton beach in Tel Aviv (top), Akhziv (bottom)

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**Scenic sunbathing** Aqueduct Beach in Caesarea

Those in the mood to escape the crowds will want to try the more serene beach at **Sidna Ali**, just south of the archaeological site Apollonia. Lined by towering rocky cliffs and framed by a 13th-century mosque, Sidna Ali feels miles away from the rest of commercial Herzliya.

**When you get tired of lazing in the sun...** Shop and dine! The Herzliya Marina lies adjacent to the **Arena Shopping Mall**, which, in the spirit of its location, features guards dressed as sailors and is home to a variety of restaurants and **cafes** overlooking the water. Try the kosher **Bistro 56** (09-9565181), which serves a large variety of gourmet meat.

**Bonus** Learn to sail or rent a sailboat at **Derech HaYam** (09-9578811). The company also organizes sailing trips complete with photographers, catering and an array of alcoholic and soft beverages.

**In a nutshell: Trendy fun in the sun**

### NETANYA

**Where** Further north along the Mediterranean coast beyond Herzliya, you'll find the city of Netanya – a residential spot, which is especially favored by French expats.

**The beach** Clean and almost virginal, the picturesque Netanya Beach has

bars, restaurants and water-sports clubs. There are also public toilets and chairs for rent. Known for having an exceptionally sprawling beach, there is a spot for everyone.

**When you get tired of lazing in the sun...** Take a horseback ride! The staff at **HaVatzelet HaSharon Ranch** (09-8663525), located on the beach, leads tours on the scenic trails around the beach.

**Bonus** The beach's claim to fame is its elevator down to the ocean, which swiftly transports you from the city's cliffside promenade down to the beach. **Claustrophobes** – though not **agoraphobes** – can also access the beach by taking the stairs down the steep descent.

**In a nutshell: Family-friendly relaxation with an old-school European twist**

### TEL AVIV

**Where** Tel Aviv, the cultural center of the country, boasts a 14-kilometer stretch of sand along its coast, which houses 12 beaches. The city's westernmost avenue, **Herbert Samuel**, flanks a promenade that spans the city's shoreline and is home to **cafés**, restaurants and plenty of tourists.

**The beach** For a day of chilled-out fun, put on your trendiest bikini and head over to **Hilton Beach**, a favorite among the

## Golden rules

**BESIDES THE MANDATORY SUNTAN LOTION AND WATER ON HAND, THERE ARE A FEW MORE THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE HITTING THE BEACH**

**DO** pay attention to – and learn to love – the lifeguard ("matzil hayam"): While their macho affectation and nonstop, incomprehensible booming broadcasts from their imposing wooden towers may disturb your snooze on the beach, they are cultural icons (with a distinct, no-holds-barred brand of Israeli humor) and your best chance of help in case of drowning.

**DON'T** be afraid of taking up new sports. The long stretches of beach are the perfect place to excel at **matkot** (paddle-ball), or take up "shesh besh" (**backgammon**). You can also embrace additional national beach sports such as watermelon and feta eating, or people watching.

**DO** get to know your neighbors. Get used to it: Since the "sardine effect" is in full force in the summer, you will not be alone either on the sands or in the water. Sure, your neighbors will spread out exponentially, play freestyle **matkot** in your personal space, and let their dog rebuild your sandcastle, but they are also ready to watch your belongings when you go into the water (taking turns is the common rule), lend a willing ear to whatever ails you, and give you free advice on the where, how and who of anything you want to know about Israel.

**DON'T** play with the jellyfish ("medusot"). These annual, transparent visitors to Tel Aviv's shores can burn so stay away from them.

**DO** choose your beach timing carefully. Early mornings – 06:30-09:00 – will bring out the veterans for doses of daily calisthenics, beach walking and running routines and long distance swimming. The heedless sun worshipping officially runs from 09:00-16:00, but unless the lobster look is your thing, use sunscreen. If you're out at these unbearable hours, make sure to sit under a parasol and hydrate regularly. The late afternoon – 16:00-19:00 – brings out the families and after-work cuties, who have transformed the art of chilling out into a science.

**DO** bring some spare cash. Many beaches charge for chair use (NIS 10-15), and you will want a few spare shekels to buy water, soft drinks and the classic ice lollies known as "artic" that are sold by ubiquitous vendors at all points along the shore.

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city's young and hip sun-worshippers. Tel Aviv's unofficial gay beach, accessed by a service road from Metzizim Beach (or a short walk downhill from the Hilton Hotel), offers the conveniences of bathrooms, volleyball nets and beach chairs for rent. Whether you're looking for water sports or just want to loaf around, there's something for everyone on the Tel Aviv coastline – even the Orthodox community: **Religious beach**, (which strangely enough neighbors the gay beach) is the only “religious” beach in the area, offering separate bathing hours for men and women. Enclosed by a fence and open to women on Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, and to men on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, there is no dress code, but the clientele generally prefers to cover up more than the common beachgoer. On Saturdays, while the religious community observes Sabbath, the beach is open to both men and women, but somehow still manages to retain the quiet.

**When you get tired of lazing in the sun...** Surf! Hilton Beach is considered to be one of the best spots for surfing on Israel's coastline, owing to its offshore reef that creates a swell. Check out **Topsea Surf Club** for equipment rental and classes (03-6503000). **Bonus** Get hit by a blazing shot of paddle ball. “Matkot” is the unofficial national summer sport in Israel, with beach patrons

avidly (and tediously) batting away with their paddles.

**In a nutshell: A little something for everyone**



### PALMACHIM

**Where** Just outside of Rishon Letzion, halfway between Tel Aviv and Ashdod, is one of Israel's “wildest” beaches and best kept secrets. Summer in Israel means crowded beaches, but at Palmachim you have a real chance of escaping the masses and spending some quality, private time with the sea in all its glory.

**The beach** Services are minimum (just lifeguards and bathrooms), but perhaps such simplicity is just what the doctor ordered. There are excellent views of Tel Aviv to the north and beautiful cliffs to the south, and within walking distance is Yavneh Yam, an important archaeological site dating back to at least the second millennium BCE, said to have once been the seat of the Sanhedrin (supreme court of ancient Israel).

**When you get tired of lazing in the sun...** Check out the **archaeological museum** (03-9538281, call in advance) at the nearby Kibbutz Palmachim. The museum displays important finds from the immediate surroundings, including ancient anchors, coins, and a mosaic floor from Byzantine times.

**Bonus** Kids (and some adults) will be psyched to learn that the beach is next to the Palmachim air base, Israel's primary spaceport. While a spacecraft launch is unlikely, helicopters and other aircraft sightings are very probable.

**In a nutshell: The same gorgeous sea and coast, without all the fuss**

## THE DEAD SEA



### MINERAL BEACH

**Where** A dip in the Dead Sea provides one of the most unique swimming experiences in the world. This most peculiar body of water is located at the lowest point on the face of the earth (approximately 422 meters below sea level). Just remember to never put your head under the water, and remove any silver jewelry as the salt will corrode it. And unless you are a true believer in tough love, beware of submerging any cuts or wounds into the salty water – it'll burn like the sun (although it will, indeed, heal faster).

**The beach** Head to the popular **Mineral Beach**, whose fee includes changing rooms, showers, lounge chairs, a snack bar, umbrellas and a lifeguard as well as the added bonus



Pristine surroundings Palmachim

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**Take to the lake** Kinneret's Tsemach beach

of a hot mineral pool great for soaking tired muscles. Massages are also available for an extra fee.

**When you get tired of lazing in the sun...** Laze at the spa! The Sea of Spa (08-6594813, ext. 2) offers an array of treatments using mineral-rich mud and water from the Dead Sea. Changing rooms, showers and a restaurant are also available at the spa, making it an ideal place to spend the day.

**Bonus** If you don't know how to swim, don't fret: The exceptionally high salinity of the water in the Dead Sea causes everything and everyone that enters the water to float.

**In a nutshell: A feast of salt and minerals**

## THE SEA OF GALILEE

### TSEMACH BEACH

**Where** Israel's largest freshwater lake, the Sea of Galilee (also known as Lake Kinneret), is situated smack center in the north of the country – dividing the Golan Heights region from the Galilee. The Sea of Galilee is quite sizeable – about 53 kilometers in circumference, 21 kilometers long and 13 kilometers wide, and is a popular vacation

spot for Israeli families looking to get away for a few days.

**The beach** Tsemach Beach is a popular destination located on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee, near the Yarden Valley. For a small price, this family-friendly beach provides more than a few amenities, including chairs, umbrellas, toilets and a café. Tsemach Beach is also the site of many summer festivals and performances, and adrenaline junkies will be pleased to hear that it's loaded with opportunities for various water sports including kayaking, water skiing and tubing.

**When you get tired of lazing in the sun...** Ride a bike! One of the best ways to appreciate the lake and its surroundings is to rent a bike and ride around its circumference. You can pick up a bike at the **Aviv Hotel** in the center of the seaside city of Tiberias (66 HaGahil St, 04-6712272. NIS 60 per day).

The friendly and helpful folks at the hotel will also provide you with a map of the area complete with highlights around the lake. Other bicycle rentals in Tiberias: **Panorama Hotel** (04-6720963), **Maman Hostel** (04-6792986).

**Bonus** Dine at Kibbutz Ginosa's eatery, **Ktseh HaNahal**, which serves delectable, authentic Lebanese cuisine (*at the entrance to Kibbutz Ginosa*, 04-6717776).

**In a nutshell: Freshen up in freshwater**

## Secret spots

**GET THE SKINNY ON WHERE TO BUST OUT THAT NEW BIKINI. TIME OUT SPILLS THE BEANS ON ISRAEL'S MOST CONFIDENTIAL INTELLIGENCE: TOP SECRET BEACHES.**

**KUSHI BEACH** (or, in the long form, Hof HaSheket Shel Kushi) is located about halfway between Hadera and Netanya, one kilometer north of Mikmoret. Named for the lone restaurant on it, Kushi Beach is framed by sand dunes and jagged cliffs, and has a windswept feel to its "shanti" (Hindi word for peace, commonly used in Israel to translate roughly to "hippie") vibe. Pack in a guitar and a sheesha (hookah), and you'll be ready to go.

**HOF DOR TANTURA** is just twenty minutes south of Haifa off of Road 4. While entrance does cost a few shekels, you'll soon be rewarded with a scene right out of a painting – an expansive Mediterranean coastline with colorful fishing boats serenely bobbing on the blue waters. Wade out to the nearby island for a beach adventure bonus.