

A high priority is placed on post-secondary education. There are seven main universities, with a total of over 60 000 students. The largest are Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan and Tel Aviv University.

In addition to the universities, there are many specialized institutes of higher education. These include Technion — Israel Institute of Technology — in Haifa, which specializes in science, engineering and medicine, and the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, which concentrates on postgraduate scientific research.

Currency

Israel's unit of currency is the new shekel (NIS), made up of 100 agorot. The new shekel, worth 1 000 of the former Israeli shekel, was introduced on January 1, 1986. Banknotes are issued in denominations of 5, 10, 20, 50 and 100 NIS. In March 1990, the exchange rate was 1.69 NIS to one Canadian dollar.

Local Time

Israel time is seven hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time. When it is 9:00 a.m. in Ottawa, it is 4:00 p.m. the same day in Israel.

Business Hours

Saturday, the Sabbath, is the official weekly holiday. There is an increasing trend toward a five-day work week from Sunday to Thursday. Muslims and Christians celebrate their respective holidays.

Government Offices

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday to Thursday

Business Offices

7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Sunday to Thursday

7:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. Some are open Friday.

Department Stores

8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Sunday to Thursday

8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Friday

Banks

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday

8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Monday, Wednesday and Friday