



# The Dead Sea

البحر الميت

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## Includes ➔

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## Best Places to Stay

- ➔ Shkedi's Camplodge (p302)
- ➔ Ein Gedi Kibbutz Hotel (p291)
- ➔ Hod HaMidbar (p299)

## Best Family Hikes

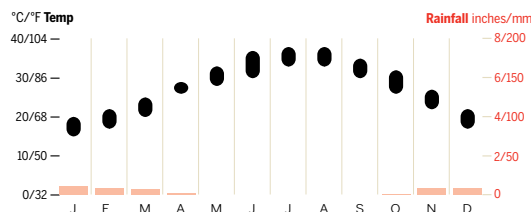
- ➔ Wadi David (p289)
- ➔ Wadi Arugot (p290)
- ➔ Wadi Bokek (p298)

## Why Go?

The lowest place on the face of earth, the Dead Sea (428m below sea level) brings together breathtaking natural beauty, compelling ancient history and modern mineral spas that soothe and pamper every fibre of your body. The jagged bluffs of the Judean Desert, cleft by dry canyons that turn into raging tan torrents after a cloudburst, rise from the cobalt-blue waters of the Dead Sea, heavy with salt and oily with minerals. In oases such as Ein Gedi, year-round springs nourish vegetation so lush it's often been compared to the Garden of Eden. Atop the bluffs lies the arid moonscape of the Judean Desert; down below, human beings have been at work for millennia, building Masada and Qumran (where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found) in ancient times and, more recently turning their hands to creating hiking trails, bike paths, kibbutzim, luxury hotels and even a world-famous botanic garden.

## When to Go

### Ein Gedi



**Nov–Apr** Warm and sunny. Judean Desert cloudbursts cause flash floods in wadis.

**Jul–mid-Sep** Oppressively hot. Record temperature: 49.2°C. Begin hikes at dawn.

**Passover & Sukkot** Completely booked with domestic tourists.

# Dead Sea Highlights

- 1 Floating in the briny, soothing waters of the Dead Sea at sandy **Ein Bokek Beach** (p298).
- 2 Ascending Masada's **Snake Path** (p297) before dawn and watch the sunrise from the top.
- 3 Taking a refreshing dip in the waterfall-fed plunge pools of **Ein Gedi Nature Reserve** (p288).
- 4 Soaking in a hot sulphur pool and glop on black mud at **Mineral Beach** (p293).
- 5 Imagining life among the defenders of Roman-besieged Masada at the evocative **Masada Museum** (p296).
- 6 Cycling one of the wide wadis around **Neot HaKikar** (p301).
- 7 Descending **Wadi Daraja** (p293) with the help of ropes and the breast stroke.
- 8 Shooting the breeze around the campfire at **Shkedi's Campdodge** (p302) in Neot HaKikar.
- 9 Pampering yourself at one of the hotel day spas at **Ein Bokek** (p298).

