FIRST STEPS IN ISRAEL

JEWISH AGENCY FOR ISRAEL

Every one of us, together.
DEAR OLEH,

On behalf of The Jewish Agency for Israel, we would like to wish you a big Mazal Tov on your decision to make Aliyah and start your new life in Israel.

Since the founding of the State, The Jewish Agency for Israel has helped over three million people from all over the world to make Aliyah.

We are delighted to assist you with planning your Aliyah and will be happy to remain your point of contact for advice throughout your integration process in Israel.

The Jewish Agency’s Global Service Center will be happy to answer any Israel-related question before or after your Aliyah:

Within Israel: 1800-228-055 | gci-en@jafi.org
United States and Canada: 1-866-835-04304

The Jewish Agency for Israel would like to wish you and your family success in your upcoming Aliyah. We look forward to assisting you in this exciting new chapter of your life.

Best regards,

The Aliyah, Absorption and Special Operations Unit
The Jewish Agency for Israel
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WHO CAN USE THIS GUIDE?

This guide is intended for the first-time Oleh, Ezrach Oleh or Katin Chozer. If you do not know which category you fall into, consult your Aliyah office or the Global Service Center at 1-866-835-0430.

Note for the New Oleh:
If you have previously held an Israeli ID number for any reason—as an A1 Temporary Resident visa holder, as a permanent resident, a Machal volunteer, or you are (or were) an Israeli citizen—or if you are married to a person who has previously held any Aliyah status, please consult with your Aliyah office for clarification.

Note for the Ezrach Oleh and Katin Chozer:
If you have given up your Israeli citizenship, were issued an Israeli ID card in the past, or if you are married to a person who has previously held Aliyah status of any kind, please consult with your Aliyah office for clarification.

Additional Notes:
• All information in this brochure is accurate as of May 2018. Costs and other details are subject to change.
• Israel’s Ministry of Aliyah and Integration is formally called the Misrad ha’Aliyah v’ha’Klitah in Hebrew. Colloquially, it is known simply as the Misrad Haklitah. In this booklet we refer to it variously as the Misrad Haklitah and the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration.
• For simplicity, in this booklet we refer to individual immigrants as “Oleh.” In each case the term is meant to apply equally to men and women.

Disclaimer:
Information in this guide is for general information purposes only, and does not constitute legal, professional, commercial or other advice. Not all of the listed information may be applicable to your specific status.

You should always seek independent legal, professional, commercial or other advice before acting or relying on any of this information. In addition, while The Jewish Agency for Israel has made every effort to make sure the information in this guide is up to date, The Jewish Agency for Israel does not guarantee the accuracy of such information.
PREPARING FOR YOUR ALIYAH FLIGHT

• Make sure to check your flight ticket for baggage allowance as it may vary from one region to another. For more information please consult your Nefesh B’Nefesh case manager.

• For Olim: make sure to bring the passport that contains your Aliyah visa.

• Pack into your hand luggage the originals of all documents you presented to your Aliyah office.

• Pack into your hand luggage the arrival form you received from your Nefesh B’Nefesh case manager.

• Research and decide on your desired Kupat Cholim (health insurance/health service provider):
  
  Clalit: clalit-global.co.il/en

  Leumit: leumit.co.il/eng/home

  Maccabi: maccabi4u.co.il/1781-he/Maccabi.aspx

  Meuchedet: http://lang.meuhedet.co.il
AT BEN GURION AIRPORT

After you disembark from your flight, start following the signs in the direction of arrivals/baggage claim. Along the way you will walk down a long corridor. At the end of that corridor, just before passport control, you should be met by a representative of the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration.

In the event that you are not met: you will notice, immediately before the entrance to the passport control hall, a phone mounted on the wall on the left-hand side. Pick the phone up to be connected directly to the airport office of the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration.

Do not enter the passport control hall alone. Await a member of staff to accompany you through passport control. Once you are met, enter the passport control hall and present your Aliyah visa or Israeli passport.

WELCOME TO ISRAEL AND MAZAL TOV!

You will then be accompanied to the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration offices. If you are arriving on a group or charter flight, you will be accompanied by a Nefesh B’Nefesh representative. Please note the processing time there may vary according to the number of Olim arriving at the same time.
AT THE AIRPORT OFFICE OF THE MINISTRY OF ALIYAH AND INTEGRATION

This section is divided by statuses. Please read the relevant information according to your status.

FIRST TIME OLEH

This information applies to new Olim who do not have an Israeli ID number or previous A1 visa, nor a spouse who previously held any Aliyah status. If your spouse had any Aliyah status in the past, you will receive only the Israeli ID.

You will receive:

- **Teudat Oleh** (Immigration Card) – one per family. Inside will be contact information for your local branch of the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration.

- **Teudat Zehut** (ID Card) – one per family member aged 16 and older. In some cases, you will be referred to your local branch of the Ministry of the Interior.

  **Note about the Teudat Zehut:** Due to the law requiring a biometric ID (see appendix), you will receive only a temporary ID card, valid for three months. You are required to schedule a meeting at the Ministry of the Interior to apply for a biometric ID card.

- Once you have an ID number you will also receive:
  - First installment of your *Sal Klitah*, in cash.
  - Confirmation of registration with the *Kupat Cholim* (health fund) of your choice.
  - A SIM card for your cell phone, with 200 free call minutes.
  - A form to be signed by your bank when you open a bank account.

EZRACH OLEH

The following information does not apply if you previously renounced your Israeli citizenship or your spouse has previously held any Aliyah status.
You will receive:

- **Teudat Zaka’ut** – one per family. Inside will be contact information for your local branch of the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration.
- First installment of your Sal Klitah, in cash.
- A SIM card for your cell phone, with 200 free call minutes.
- A form to be signed by your bank when you open a bank account.

Since you already hold an Israeli ID number you cannot receive your Israeli ID at the airport. You will be required to turn to your local branch of the Ministry of the Interior to apply for an Israeli ID card (see further instructions in the section on “First Steps in Israel”).

**KATIN CHOZER/ OLEH WHO HELD AN A1 VISA IN THE PAST**

At the Ministry’s airport office you will be registered for your free taxi ride to your first destination. Due to the fact that you already have an ID number, the airport office is unable to process your other paperwork. Detailed instructions are listed in the “First Steps in Israel” section.

**HEADING FOR HOME**

Once you have completed the registration process you will be accompanied to pick up your bags.

At customs you are required to declare individual items valued at USD$200 or more, or cash valued at more than 50,000NIS. Please note that you can carry up to 1,250,000NIS in cash on your Aliyah flight.

You will be guided to your taxi, which will take you for free to your first destination.
FIRST STEPS IN ISRAEL

Before visiting a government office, check that you have the correct address and opening hours for the specific service you require – they are subject to change.

Check that you have all the documents that you may need. Preparing copies of everything is usually a good idea.

Tip: if your Hebrew is limited, bringing a Hebrew-speaking friend can smooth the way.

MISRAD HAPNIM (MINISTRY OF INTERIOR)

This section applies only if you did not receive your Te’udat Zehut (ID Card) at the airport – that is, if you are a Katin Chozer, Ezrach Oleh, or Oleh who has previously held an A1 visa.

In this case, you will need to apply for an Israeli ID card at the local branch of the Ministry of the Interior. Each family member aged at least 16 will need to apply in person at the local branch of the Interior Ministry for a Biometric ID card.

You are required to schedule a meeting. The meeting is scheduled via phone at *3450 or through the following link: goo.gl/wo3RWG

Please make sure to take with you two passport-sized photos, and the original copies of the documents you presented to the Aliyah office:

• Rabbi’s letter, birth certificate, marriage certificate, death certificates etc.
• Printed forms you received at the airport.

At the Ministry of Interior you may request a temporary ID card which will be issued on the spot but will be valid for only three months. Getting the temporary ID first will allow you to open a bank account right away instead of waiting at least ten days, the time it takes to issue a Biometric ID card.
APPLYING FOR A BIOMETRIC ID

Whether you received a temporary ID card at the airport or at the Ministry of the Interior, you will be required to apply for a biometric ID within no more than 90 days. It is vital to keep track of the time as holding an expired ID may prevent your access to certain services.

To set up a meeting please register at goo.gl/wo3RWG or dial *3450.

SERVICES FROM THE MINISTRY OF ALIYAH AND INTEGRATION

This section applies only if you were not registered for these benefits at the airport – that is, if you are a Katin Chozer, Oleh who has previously held an A1 visa, or an Oleh whose spouse held any Aliyah status in the past.

Arrange an appointment at your local Ministry of Aliyah and Integration branch over the phone at 03-973-3333 or via the following link: https://goo.gl/EWaQ25

MEDICAL INSURANCE

You may be entitled to up to one year of exemption from the fees to Bituach Leumi for health insurance as long you are not working and have no income from abroad.

- Health insurance services in Israel are provided by the Kupat Cholim (health fund) which may charge a separate fee depending on the level of coverage.
- If you are receiving any type of income from abroad, this benefit might not apply to you.

Most new Olim are registered for a Kupat Cholim (Health Fund) at the airport. If you were not registered for a Kupat Cholim at the airport – that is, if you are a Katin Chozer, Oleh who has previously held an A1 visa, or an Oleh whose spouse held any Aliyah status in the past – we advise you to take private insurance until your registration with a Kupat Cholim is completed. Then proceed with the following steps in the registration process:
1. Take the forms you received at the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration to the Postal Bank (at large postal offices).

2. Pay the registration fee (approximately 15 NIS per person) and sign up for the health fund of your choice.

3. Pick up your membership card at the Health Fund offices.

**BITUACH LEUMI**

*Bituach Leumi* is the National Insurance Institution of Israel. This institution provides health insurance coverage, various pensions, unemployment and disability insurance to people who are regarded as residents of Israel. The health services are provided by the *Kupot Cholim* (health funds) but other assistance is dependent on special conditions that are approved directly by Bituach Leumi.

For a list of benefits please dial *6050* or go to [https://goo.gl/Ttydcu](https://goo.gl/Ttydcu)

Please note: in certain cases you may not have immediate access to the services until your residency status is verified by Bituach Leumi. If you previously held an A1 visa, or if you are returning to Israel for a second time after making Aliyah in the past, or if you are a returning resident, please contact Bituach Leumi to verify your status at *6050* or go to [https://goo.gl/KVsnvw](https://goo.gl/KVsnvw)

**REGISTERING FOR HEBREW ULPAN**

To register for an ulpan you must get a voucher from Misrad Haklitah. Arrange an appointment at your local branch over the phone at 03-973-3333 or via the following link: [https://goo.gl/EWaQ25](https://goo.gl/EWaQ25)

The following link contains a list of ulpanim around Israel including contact information: [https://goo.gl/auMe1A](https://goo.gl/auMe1A). Your ulpan voucher will cover 500 hours of intensive Hebrew study with any of the ulpanim on this list. (Note that there are also some private ulpanim in Israel, for which you would pay out of pocket.)
OPENING A BANK ACCOUNT

Open a shekel-based account at the bank of your choice. Make sure to have a valid ID. You should also bring with you the bank forms you received from the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration – you need to have those signed by the bank. You will have to deposit some minimal sum to activate the bank account.

If you previously held a tourist account, update your bank as to your status.

- Tip: Ask what benefits you can receive as an Oleh.
- Tip: Ask about the processes for internet banking and for obtaining cheque books, ATM cards and credit cards.

BACK TO THE MINISTRY OF ALIYAH AND INTEGRATION

Once you have set up your bank account and had the bank sign the form you received at the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, you will need to drop off the form at Misrad Haklitahh. This will enable monthly deposits of the Sal Klitah to your bank account.

BIOMETRIC PASSPORT

For 90 days following your Aliyah, you may leave Israel using your foreign passport.

After 90 days, you will need a biometric Israeli passport to leave the country. If you wish to get the passport earlier, you will need to waive your right to opt out of Israeli citizenship at the Ministry of Interior.

Your first passport will be valid for five years. Service fees may vary according to the time of year. For more information please go to https://goo.gl/GekaWb

For your second passport, the Interior Ministry will check whether you lived in Israel for at least 2/3 of the time. If you have, then you will be able to apply for a 10-year passport. If not, another five-year passport will be issued.
OPENING A FILE WITH CUSTOMS

You will need a customs file if you are planning on receiving a shipment (for example of furniture or household goods), purchasing Israeli manufactured goods with a discount or using Oleh rights to buy a car.

Fax or hand-deliver your Teudat Zakaut/ Teudat Oleh and passport to the customs authority offices:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>CUSTOMS HOUSE</th>
<th>PHONE NUMBER</th>
<th>EMAIL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rishon Le-Zion</td>
<td>General number: 03-9421666</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Rechely@customs.mof.gov.il">Rechely@customs.mof.gov.il</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Personal import &amp; diplomats:</td>
<td>Personal import: <a href="mailto:yishi@customs.mof.gov.il">yishi@customs.mof.gov.il</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>03-9421705/3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haifa</td>
<td>04-8354811</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashdod</td>
<td>08-8510610</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerusalem</td>
<td>02-6545555 02-6545602 02-6545610</td>
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Website: http://taxes.gov.il/customs

(Choose English option from upper left corner.)
GETTING YOUR ISRAELI DRIVER’S LICENSE

Starting August 13, 2017 the Ministry of Transportation has launched a reform making it easier to convert a foreign driver’s license to an Israeli one if your license was issued at least five years before your Aliyah date. The reform applies to any Oleh, resident or person on a working visa who has a valid driver’s license from a foreign country:

• Type A—Motorcycle
• Type B—Car
• Type T—Tractor

In this case, to get your Israeli license, turn to your local Ministry of Transportation office with the following documents:

• Foreign license
• Green form (Tofes Yarok) and photos. For a full list of locations where you can pick up the form and have your photo taken, please visit: gov.il/he/Departments/General/photo_driving_license_stations
• Teudat Oleh and Teudat Zehut

If your license has not been valid for five years, you will be required to take a driving test. In this case:

• Get the green form (Tofes Yarok) and have your photo taken. For a full list of locations where you can do this, please visit: gov.il/he/Departments/General/photo_driving_license_stations
• Arrange an eye test and medical exam. You will receive forms attesting to your physical ability to drive.
• Take the completed forms and photos to the licensing authority office with your:
  • Teudat Zehut
  • Teudat Oleh
  • Passport with Aliyah visa
  • Foreign driver’s license
  • Photocopies of all the above
• Arrange lessons and a test with a recommended instructor.
AR NONA (MUNICIPAL TAX)

*Please note that the Arnona benefit does not apply to a Katin Chozer.*

Olim and Ezrachim Olim are entitled to a reduction of up to 90% (depending on location) from their Arnona Municipal Tax on 100 sq.m. (1,076 sq. feet) of their home, for 12 of their first 24 months in Israel.

Take the following to your local municipality:
- Teudat Zehut: original + copy
- Teudat Zakaut/Teudat Oleh: original + copy
- House contract: original + copy
- Arnona bill: original
- In the event that you previously resided in a different location: confirmation that the reduction has not been received – original

**DEGREE RECOGNITION**

If you intend to work in the public sector, or if you ever need to collect unemployment benefits, you will need to have your academic degrees “recognized.” To do this, go to the Ministry of Education to submit the following (the original version and a copy of each):
- Teudat Zehut
- Teudat Zakaut/Teudat Oleh
- Diploma
- Official transcript/s
- If you completed high school after 2000, then your high school diploma

For more information please go to: [www.education.gov.il](http://www.education.gov.il)

**ASSISTANCE FROM YOUR MUNICIPALITY**

Many municipalities have an English-speaking project manager who may help Olim with various matters, including (but not limited to) helping find schools for your children. Please consult your Aliyah advisor at Misrad Haklitah for their contact information.
**Aliyah Benefits**

- **Free one way flight and additional baggage**
- **Free transportation from the airport**
- **Sal Klitah (financial assistance)** • 6 monthly payments from time of arrival
- **Free health insurance** • For up to 1 year for non-working Olim
- **Aliyah programs for young Olim** • Initial 5 months in Israel
- **Free ulpan** • Available for a 5-10 month period within 10 years of Aliyah date
- **Arnona discount** • For a 12 month period within the first 2 years following Aliyah
- **Rental Assistance** • 4 years of assistance beginning in the 8th month following Aliyah
- **Customs benefits, including import of shipment, purchase of locally made goods in Israel and import or local purchase of a car** • For 3 years following date of Aliyah
- **University studies** • Begin studies within 3 years following date of Aliyah (age and other restrictions apply)
- **Income Tax benefits** • For 3 1/2 years following date of Aliyah
- **Property Purchase Tax** • One-off reduction within 7 years following Aliyah
- **Mortgage Assistance** • Once-off assistance during the 15 years following Aliyah
Free one way flight and additional baggage
Free transportation from the airport
Sal Klitah (financial assistance)
• 6 monthly payments from time of arrival
Free health insurance
• For up to 1 year for non-working Olim
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• For 3 1/2 years following date of Aliyah
Property Purchase Tax
• One-off reduction within 7 years following Aliyah
Mortgage Assistance
• Once-off assistance during the 15 years following Aliyah
USEFUL CONTACT INFORMATION

Information leaflet about mandatory biometric documentation:
https://goo.gl/EbR4oz

- Ministry of the Interior: www.moin.gov.il | *3450
- Ministry of Aliyah and Integration: www.moia.gov.il | 03-9733333
- Bituach Leumi: www.btl.gov.il | *6050
- Customs / Income Tax: https://goo.gl/Qb3nyA
- Driver’s License: www.mot.gov.il | *5678
- Army: https://www.mitgaisim.idf.il/english/

GLOSSARY

| ALIYAH     | Immigration to Israel |
| ARNONA     | Municipal tax. Amounts are based on the location and size of your residence. |
| BITUACH LE’UMI | National Insurance Institute (responsible for welfare payments, pensions, child benefits, unemployment, etc.) |
| EZRACH OLEH | Basic meaning: an Israeli citizen born abroad. Plural: Ezrachim Olim. Note: immigration categories can be complex; consult your Aliyah office to confirm your status. |
| KATIN CHOZER | Basic meaning: returning minor. Plural: Katinim Chozrim. Note: immigration categories can be complex; consult your Aliyah office to confirm your status. |
| KUPAT CHOLIM | Health insurance fund + health services provider. Plural: Kupot Cholim. |
| MISRAD HAKLITAH | Ministry of Aliyah and Integration (responsible for Integration services for new immigrants) |
| MISRAD HAPNIM | Ministry of the Interior (responsible for issuing Teudat Zehut, passports, address changes, etc.) |
| SAL KLITAH | Financial assistance paid in the six months following Aliyah |
| TFIILAT HA’OLEH | Immigrant’s Prayer |
| TE’UDAT OLEH | Booklet in which your received immigration benefits are recorded |
| TE’UDAT ZAKA’UT | A certificate attesting to one’s eligibility for assistance from Misrad Haklitaah |
| TE’UDAT ZEHUT | Identity Card |
| TOFES YAROK | Literally “Green Form” – given to you when you have your photo taken for the Israeli driver’s license. |
| ULPAN      | Program of Hebrew classes |
TFILAT HAOLEH—IMMIGRANT’S PRAYER

I thank thee, my G-d, G-d of my fathers that you have planted me among the dwellers of the Land of Israel, and not among the dwellers of the countries of the earth. That you have strengthened me with the power and courage to walk in the paths of Abraham our forefather “unto the country I shall show thee.”

That you have opened my ears to hear the great shofar calling us to wake up from our diaspora to the gathering and the return to your holy quarters, in happiness and in joy, of free will and not from misery, anguish, loss or desertion.

That I am among the privileged who are blessed daily by this land’s captivating air, its breathtaking landscapes, its sweet and fruitful crops enlightening Torah and amongst the children who have returned to its borders.

For the privilege to live and act alongside with You, the Almighty, and with the rest of your children congregating from all four corners of the earth, to take part in the mission of repairing the world in your Holy name.

My heart is overflowed and my eyes shed a tear that my children will dream in the Hebrew language, will walk the hills and the valleys of this land as in their own home, and will take part in defending their homeland in courage and humbleness.

I promise You, my Lord, who chose his people with love, to see your country and your children in kindness, to accept the hardships as challenges, the barriers as incentives, the differences as blessings and the questions as the answers.

I will never forget from where I had come and from there I will bring with me all that is spiritual, the attributes, the smells and the music, and by doing so will add another magnificent and unique note to the dazzling masterpiece that is weaved around us.

I will place a special prayer for my family, friends and community members that the goodness which I had found here shall be bestowed upon them as well, so they can put their steps towards their homeland as well, despite all the struggles and hardships.

Were my mouth filled with song as the sea, and my tongue with ringing praise as its roaring waves, my lips full of adoration as the wide heaven and my eyes sparkling like the sun or the moon, were my hands spread out as the eagles in the sky, and my feet as swift as the deer, I should still be unable to thank you enough, Hashem.