



מרכז מדבר וים המלח
Dead Sea & Arava
Science Center

בחסות אוניברסיטת בן גוריון בנגב
Under the auspices of Ben Gurion University of the Negev



הקרן הלאומית למדע
المؤسسة الإسرائيلية للعلوم
Israel Science Foundation

Silicon in the Critical Zone: Soil, Cells, Plants and the Planet
Arad, Israel – 19-22 September 2022

Practical information

Getting there and getting around

You will most likely need to take a train from the airport to Tel-Aviv (unless you arrive during the early morning).

By bus from Tel-Aviv

There are four direct buses per day travelling from Tel-Aviv to Arad: Line 421 at 9:00 and 12:00, and Line 389 at 18:00 and 20:00. These buses depart from platform A10 at the bus terminal adjacent to the *Tel-Aviv Center (Savidor)* Train Station. The bus takes 1.5-2 hours to get to Arad, depending on traffic. Line 421 has a 10-minute break about mid-way.

By train from Tel-Aviv

Option 1: Take a train from Tel-Aviv to *Lehavim-Rahat* Train Station and from there Line 400 to Arad. The bus leaves the train station ca. 15 min. after the train arrives. It departs from a small terminal that is to your right when exiting the station. The train ride takes about an hour, plus 30 minute on the bus.

Option 2: Take a train from Tel-Aviv to *Be'er-Sheva Center* Train Station. Make sure you take a direct or semi-direct train, and not a train that does a 1-hr detour (the latter usually leaves Tel-Aviv 10 minutes after the direct and semi-direct trains). When arriving at Be'er-Sheva, go to the central bus station, located to the left when exiting the train station. From Be'er-Sheva, take Lines 386, 387 or 388 to Arad (departing from platforms 17-18). Line 387 is the fastest, whereas 388 is the least favorable (many stops along the way and usually more crowded, but most frequent).

Early morning arrivals

If you arrive at the airport in the early morning (midnight until 5:00), you can take Line 469 from the airport to Be'er-Sheva and proceed as in option 2 above. However, take note that the first bus to Arad departs from Be'er-Sheva at 6:00.

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Upon your arrival

The bus will take you to the city's central bus station (last stop for most lines, excluding 400 and 421). When leaving the bus, turn right and walk 200 m, Inbar Hotel will be to your right across the street.

If you arrive at night, most buses do a "tour de-Arad". In which case, leave the bus at the first stop and turn right. The hotel is at the next junction.

After the workshop concludes

We planned the schedule so that you can get in time to the 17:00 bus to Tel-Aviv (Line 421, arrives from the Dead Sea so it might be a little late), the 17:10 bus to the train station (Line 400, also arrives from the Dead Sea). Buses to Be'er-Sheva depart every 20 minutes on average.

Additional public transport tips

On weekdays (Sunday to Thursday), most main train and bus lines start operating between 5:00 and 6:00 and the last departure is between 21:00 and 22:00. The last bus from Be'er-Sheva to Arad is at 23:50. On Fridays, public transport ceases operation in the afternoon (last departures are usually around 15:00). On Saturdays, there is limited service only after sunset. *This applies to all services, including trains and buses to/from the airport.*

Bus drivers in Israel no longer handle money (cash or credit). Please prepare in advance. The most convenient way to travel in Israel using public transport is buying a Rav-Kav Card (a smart card equivalent to London's Oyster and Sydney's Opal). You can purchase it at a stand in the airport's reception hall or with the cashier at any train station and central bus station for only 5.00 NIS. Using automated machines, you can upload cash (stored value) or purchase daily or weekly passes. Make sure the pass you purchase is for the correct day/week and covers your entire planned journey(s) for that day/week.

***Note: the pricing system is expected to change by August 2022, but not all details of the reform have been finalized yet. We will update the file accordingly.*

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A quick guide to Arad

The packed program might not leave too much time for sightseeing, but if jetlag makes you wake up or go to sleep at awkward hours, here are some tips and recommendations.

This town is not very big (30,000 inhabitants), and the hotel is at the corner of the town's commercial center. This can be a nice opportunity to absorb the population mosaic of Arad and its vicinity. A rough estimation is you can hear ten different languages within a single day.

You may also want to try a local Falafel (deep-fried chickpea balls, served in a pita bread with a variety of salads) – Israel's official street food. Most vendors are located just near the hotel, across the street from the bus station.

Three recommended walking trails (see map)

The promenade: Most of this trail follows the town's main road, but the observation point at its eastern edge is worth it. If visibility is good, you will see the vast desert, the Dead Sea and the Moab Mountains in Jordan. There is also a scenic trail running parallel to the main road.

The squills trail: This is a short walk in a dry ravine between two neighborhoods. The main attraction in late September are the squills (*Urginea maritima*), a geophyte that grows a 1-m tall stem with many small white flowers. It grows in very dense patches in this region. Do not touch its leaves, which contain painful calcium oxalate raphides! You can take the trail to the new Renanim neighborhood, where you can see the house of a local metal artist (with a dragon and a giraffe in the front garden) and some nice views of the desert and Dead Sea.

The waterholes trail: This is a slightly longer and more challenging trail north of town, covering two dry ravines. The western one has four waterholes along it, carved into the rock and marked by large stones. You can also notice the shallow stone channels on the slopes, which divert runoff to the waterholes. The eastern ravine offers a more dramatic relief, and in its southern end, you can find an old water retention pool. The climb from the eastern ravine back to town may be a bit challenging if you are not in great shape. The installations date back to 1500 years ago, but were in use until recently (as the concrete near some of them testifies).

We recommend not going too far away or during dark hours.

Wildlife

Walking the trails near town, you are likely to encounter hyraxes, small rodent-like mammals that are phylogenetically related to elephants. They are shy, and will run away once they notice you. You can also encounter jackals and foxes along the trails (they sometimes get into town in search for food, mostly during the night). They never attack people, but that does not mean you should try to pat them. Herds of goats and sheep or small packs of camels also graze around town.

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There is a herd of wild gazelles living just north of town. They very rarely reach within sight, but when they do, they make a great sight.

Architecture and cityscape

Arad is Israel's first planned city, and was a blank canvas for some experimental architecture. The neighborhoods around the town's center were planned to accommodate walking. The main pedestrian trail crossing each neighborhood is the "heart" of the neighborhood, with amenities built along it. The buildings themselves are an assortment of various public housing designs from the 1970 and 1980s.

Some interesting buildings:

- 1) The town's central square and the old theatre/cinema – a proud representation of functional socialist architecture.
- 2) City hall is located on the hill above the central bus station. These used to be the first houses and hotel back in the 1960s. A newly built medical center opposite the stadium carries a familiar name.
- 3) The "patio", located along the eastern part of Hen Street, is an experiment in desert-adapted housing. These buildings were built around inner courtyards with open-air corridors. Over the years, they became the not-so-attractive part of town (but still very safe to walk).
- 4) The pyramid synagogue: Not an old building, and not really a pyramid, but a unique design for a Jewish synagogue.

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