



Israel



Alberta Relations

PROFILE

Capital: Canada believes that the final status of the city needs to be negotiated between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Population: 8.9 million (2019)

Language: Hebrew (official), Arabic, English

Government: Unicameral Knesset or Parliament (120 seat, members elected by proportional representation to serve four-year terms).

Head of State: President Reuven Rivlin

Head of Government: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Currency: C\$1 = 2.7906 New Shekel (2018 Average)

GDP: \$632.64 trillion (2018)

GDP growth rate: 3.28 per cent (2018)

Inflation: 0.82 per cent (2018)

Unemployment: 3.98 per cent (2018)

Key Economic Sectors: high-technology products (including aviation, communications, computer-aided design and manufactures, medical electronics, fiber optics), wood and paper products, potash and phosphates, food, beverages, and tobacco, caustic soda, cement, construction, metals products, chemical products, plastics, diamond cutting, textiles and footwear footwear.

Source: Global Affairs Canada

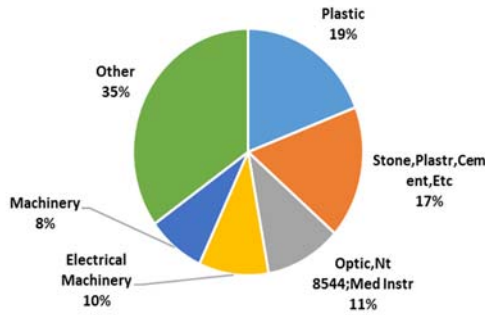
OVERVIEW

- Canada recognized the State of Israel upon its founding in 1948, and the two countries established formal diplomatic relations on May 11, 1949. 2019 marks the 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Canada and Israel.
- The Canadian Jewish community, currently around 350,000, acts as an important bridge between Canada and Israel.

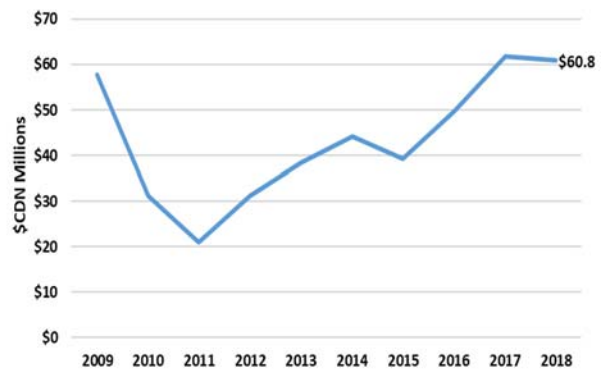
TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- Israel is in the unique position of having free trade agreements with the United States, the European Union and Canada.
- Canada-Israel Free Trade Agreement (CIFTA) has been in force since January 1997, eliminating all tariffs on industrial products, and on some agricultural and seafood products.
- On May 27, 2019, Honourable Jim Carr, Minister of International Trade Diversification, welcomed royal assent of Bill C-85: An Act to amend the CIFTA Implementation Act and to make related amendments to other Acts.
- The modernized CIFTA will reduce tariffs, ease border restrictions on goods, increase transparency around regulations, reduce red tape, and help small and medium-sized enterprises generate more business in both countries.
- Although kosher certification is not a legal requirement to export to the Israeli market, supermarkets and hotels will not purchase non-kosher products.
- In 1994, Canada and Israel created the Canada-Israel Industrial Research and Development Foundation to promote collaborative R&D between firms in both countries. This program was renewed in 2006.

Alberta's Merchandise Exports to Israel 2014 to 2018
(Total Average \$51.2 Million)



Alberta Exports to Israel (2009-2018)



- As a pioneer in Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Israel is one of the biggest military drone exporters in the world with commercial drones being a natural extension of growth.
- Alberta's exports to Israel averaged \$51.2 million from 2014 to 2018, consisting mostly of salt, sulfur, earth, stone, optical medical instruments, plastic, and electrical machinery.
- Alberta's imports from Israel averaged \$17.3 million from 2014 to 2018, consisting mostly of stone, plaster, cement, plastic, electrical machinery, and machinery.

ENERGY

- Israel is strategically located for regional energy transit to the Middle East, Europe and Asia. It shares pipeline access with several Middle Eastern countries, including both Jordan and Egypt. The reliability of pipeline operation, however, is questionable in the region due to the political instability in the area and previous attacks on several different lines.
- As of January 2014, the Oil & Gas Journal estimated Israel's proved reserves of oil at 11.5 million barrels and its proven reserves of natural gas at 10.1 trillion cubic feet (tcf). While neither figure places Israel in the top 40 globally, these totals are significantly higher than they were a few years ago.
- In January 2009, 9 tcf of natural gas was discovered in the Tamar fields (located offshore, near Haifa). Commercial production began in March 2013.
- The most recent offshore discovery occurred at the Tamar Southwest exploration well. Located eight miles southwest of the Tamar Field, the Tamar Southwest field may contain more than 500 billion cubic feet of natural gas.
- The most significant find in offshore Israel is the Leviathan field, located approximately 80 miles off the coast and situated in water that is more than 5,000 feet deep. Assessments of the Leviathan field indicate that there could be as much as 19 Tcf of recoverable natural gas in place. The field is scheduled to come online towards the end of 2019.
- The discoveries of the Tamar and Leviathan fields (among others) will allow the country to become a significant exporter of natural gas in the next decade. There are competing proposals to develop pipelines and LNG infrastructure to support natural gas exports, but deliberations about how Israel will get its natural gas to market are ongoing.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

Advanced Research & Technology:

- Israel is widely recognized as a leading source of knowledge and innovation in advanced research and technology. The percentage of Israelis engaged in scientific and technological inquiry, and the amount spent on research and development relative to its gross domestic product is one of the highest in the world. Israel ranks tenth among the most innovative countries in the Bloomberg Innovation Index and has among the highest number of start-ups per capita.

Nanotechnology:

- Israel's academic, business and government leaders recognize nanotechnology as a key platform for ensuring Israel's continued R&D excellence. The country has established six nanotechnology centers at its research institutes. The focus areas of these centres mirror the capabilities of Israel's nanotechnology companies: Nanomaterials; Nanobiotech; Nanoelectronics; and Nanowater.

Aerospace & Defence:

- Israel has had nearly 40 commercial drone start-ups in the past three years. Alberta has an application rich environment and hosts Canada's first permanent restricted airspace to conduct beyond line of site operation and cluster of organizations involved in various aspects of the industry. As a result, the commercial unmanned aviation industry is poised for growth.
- There remains much to discover with the application of this technology to a wide scope of industries and further development of hardware, software, and operational products is required and could be explore through partnerships.

EDUCATION

- Between 2014 and 2018, 139 citizens of Israel had international study permits come into effect for Alberta.
- Advanced Education provides funding to Alberta post-secondary institutions through the Campus Alberta Grant for International Learning which allows institutions to develop short-term study abroad programs in other countries including Israel.
- During 2015-16, there were 36 students from Israel registered in degree, diploma and certificate programs in Alberta.

- In 2013-14, MacEwan University employed a PhD student from Hebrew University to work on a research project, funded by MacEwan's Research Services Office.
- MacEwan University staff member Kenneth Ristau was a Fellow of the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Israel in 2012/2013 and participated in archaeological excavations at Ramat Rachel in the summer of 2009, and at Tel Dor in the summers of 2006 and 2007.
- In March 2016, University of Alberta's Vice-President (Research) and various members of the Faculties of Science and Engineering took part in the Weizmann-Alberta Nanoscience Meeting at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel.
- The University of Calgary (UCalgary) has exchange agreements with Hebrew University of Jerusalem and the University of Haifa.
- The Israel Studies Program in the Faculty of Arts makes UCalgary an important centre of this emerging multidisciplinary analysis of Israeli history, politics, society, and culture.
- UCalgary has an innovative interdisciplinary M.A. program in Israel Studies that explores critical issues in contemporary Israeli history and politics, and provides insight into the issues that Israel will face in the future.
- The Hotchkiss Brain Institute has extensive research links and hosted the Israel-Alberta Neuroscience Symposium in 2015.
- UCalgary School of Public Policy and the Haskayne MBA students participate each spring in a graduate Group Study Program 'field school' in Israel.
- In 2005, Alberta's Ministry of Infrastructure and Transportation signed a water conservation and irrigation research agreement with the Jewish National Fund of Canada.
- University of Lethbridge has offered its students the opportunity to train at the Tel Beth Shemesh Archaeological Field School in Israel since 1989. Participants have uncovered significant archaeological finds such as a seal discovered at Beth Shemesh, along with other finds on the floor of an excavated house dated by archaeologists to the 12th century BCE.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

- Alberta's total agriculture and food exports to Israel in 2016 reached \$8 million.
- Israel has traditionally been a large purchaser of Alberta wheat (\$5 million in 2014); however, in 2016 wheat dropped off, and exports were dominated by pet food (\$4 million) and canola seed (\$3 million).
- Total agriculture imports to Alberta from Israel in 2016 were \$1.2 million, dominated by guavas and mangoes (combined \$0.4 million) and greenhouse peppers (\$0.3 million).
- Israel imports 70 per cent of its food products, and the Israeli private consumption is growing at 5 per cent per year.
- While Alberta's best opportunities will be grains and pulses, other items of interest include: organic, healthy or natural products, and salty and sweet snacks, sauces, and spreads.

IMMIGRATION AND COMMUNITY

- The Jewish community in Alberta numbers approximately 15,000, mostly in Edmonton and Calgary. Of the many Jewish cultural and charitable organizations and activities in Alberta, the Jewish Federation, Hadassah and the Jewish National Fund have been the most prominent.
- Since 1979, Calgary-based Kahanoff Foundation has provided close to \$50 million to charitable programs in Israel in the areas of health, education, culture, social services, philanthropy and community development, and research.
- Between 2014 and 2018, 682 citizens of Israel became Permanent Residents of Canada, with Alberta as their intended destination. Approximately 69 per cent were economic immigrants, including applicants, spouses, and dependents.
- Between 2014 and 2018, 405 citizens of Israel had Temporary Foreign Worker Program LMIA work permits comes into effect for Alberta.

RECENT VISITS

- June 2019: Ambassador Barkan visited Alberta and met with the Premier.
- March 2017: Consul General from Toronto, Ms. Galit Baram, had her official visit in Edmonton.
- August 2014: His Excellency Rafael Barak visited Edmonton and met with Premier, Speaker, Lieutenant Governor, Deputy Ministers of Agriculture and Transportation, Assistant Deputy Minister Policy, Environment and Sustainable Resource Development, and Leader of the Official Opposition.
- October 2012: Dr. Uzi Landau, Israeli Minister of Energy and Water Resources, visited and met with Premier.

DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATION

- Israel's Ambassador to Canada is His Excellency Nimrod Barkan. He took up his posting in December 2016.
- Canada's Ambassador to Israel is Deborah Lyons. A Representative Office of Canada to the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah manages issues related to Gaza and West Bank.
- Ms. Galit Baram is Israel's Consul General in Toronto with jurisdiction over Alberta, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Northwest Territories, Yukon, and Nunavut. She took up her posting in August 2016.