



Israel - Culture Smart!: The Essential Guide to Customs & Culture

Marian Lebor, Jeffrey Geri

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A world leader in hi-tech, Israel has been dubbed “the start-up nation”—a description that could equally well apply to its remarkable birth as a haven for Jewish immigrants and refugees. Having started with few natural resources just over sixty years ago, it is now a thriving democracy and a regional superpower. This dynamic, diverse, and paradoxical country is steeped in history and biblical associations, yet most Israelis are modern, secular, and energetically materialistic. The hostility of its neighbors has helped to forge Israeli identity and has been a spur to growth and innovation.

This success has had a price. Since 1948 every generation of Israelis has been touched by war. For this reason, perhaps, Israelis tend to live intensely. They have a huge passion for life, are great strivers after excellence, are always open to new ideas, and are risk-takers. The tensions within Israeli society of tradition and modernity, ethnic diversity, religious and secular worldviews, and civic and martial values are the ingredients of a unique human experiment. Israel is a cauldron of creativity and contradictions.

This revised edition of *Culture Smart! Israel* describes increasing polarization. The gap between rich and poor is widening, and an unprecedented social protest movement—the so-called “cottage cheese revolution”—has taken the establishment by surprise. Elections have removed the ultra-Orthodox parties from power but produced a coalition divided over the questions of peace and settlements. Demographic growth is greatest in the Orthodox Jewish and Israeli Arab communities. Attitudes and behavior are being challenged and reassessed across the land.

For the visitor, all this is a source of fascination. *Culture Smart! Israel* will help you to discover the human reality beyond the clichés of the tourist brochures. Israelis are generous and outgoing hosts. By deepening your understanding of them, you will be able to make genuine friends and valued business partners.

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