

ISRAEL: Bethlehem



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Why ISRAEL: Bethlehem?

Hello ☺

Here is the reason why I chose ISRAEL city of Bethlehem. The picture you see on the right is a picture of my dad. My dad was diagnosed with liver failure and he was given a couple of weeks to live. His eyes and skin were becoming yellow and his body was in extreme pain. Even though dad had a little life span he went to Israel with his church called Harvest. During his stay in Israel he was in the city of Bethlehem and his pastor stopped to give a special message. The pastor prayed for my dad's health and he was told "you will be healed of your sickness". After the message my dad suddenly was healed! Today doctors don't know how he is still alive. What a blessing ☺



This is a pic of a happy healthy dad eating pie, I guess that's not so healthy but it has fruit in it!

Did you know?

How Bethlehem got it's name

- Bethlehem is a Hebrew word and it means either "House of Bread" or "House of Meat". The reason why it was named this is because the land of Bethlehem is very fertile.
- Also, the name of the city suggests to strangers that they are welcome here and the food is abundant.
- So much is grown here like fruit, nuts, wheat, and barley. To the people in Bethlehem bread is their life this is their main source of food and they just can't get enough of that stuff, not cheeseburgers or fried chicken, just bread.

Bethlehem is known for:



- The Church of the Nativity. It is one of the oldest church buildings in the world! It is still being used today. It has been used since the present structure built by Emperor Justinian in the early sixth century.



- The Milk Grotto, a shrine demonstration of Catholic spirituality and popular religions from the middle ages. What makes this shrine special is that they believe Mary and Joseph went to this cave and Mary nursed Jesus but a drop of milk fell on the stone and made it white. From popular religion couple who can't have children come to take a piece of the white rock and put it under the mattress hoping to have children.



- This is Bethlehem's favored plant called The Star of Bethlehem plant. It has gotten its name from The Star of Bethlehem that led the wise men to Jesus.

What do you believe?



Bethlehem's beliefs:

- **Palestinian Christianity** : this Christianity is the true backbone of Christian faith. Meaning that they believe that Jesus Christ is the son of God. The only difference is, well, their Palestinian.
- **Muslims**: Are believers or followers in Islam. Meaning that they follow Islam's laws and civilization. And they believe in one God but don't believe that Jesus is God that he was a prophet like Abraham and Moses. And they go by the teachings of Muhammad which to them believe he was the last prophet.

Agriculture

- Even though Bethlehem is now a modern city, most of the city still has the roots of the residents in the land. Where the people have been connected to their land historically for generations.
- The Olive tree is important to the people of Bethlehem. The olive tree does not need a lot of soil or water for its roots. It is a coniferous so its leaves soak up sunlight so it can make a lot of fruit. The olive tree symbolizes Palestinian peoples close connections to the land.
- A lot of people in Bethlehem are farmers and the city dwellers have their own gardens, where they can provide for themselves with fruits and nuts. And they can grow wheat and barley.
- All homes are made out of stone and their industry prospers from the stone houses where one of the traditional businesses is the stone cutting industry where they cut, carve, chisel, and hammer the homes together by stones.
- Another prosperous business is the Mother-of-Pearl and Olive wood Sculpture where mini churches, rosaries, crosses, and jewelry boxes are being made. They also create items like candles and figurines just for the tourists.

Bethlehem's People

- The people in Bethlehem are Palestinians. Some of these people live in their traditional customs and some live differently in their own way. As for example, the traditional dress code for the people are to wear head scarfs to cover your head and they wear a thick rind on the head with the scarf to hold it in place.
- Other Palestinians wear clothing just like we do with t-shirts and pants and they have their head uncovered or wearing baseball caps.
- Today the Bethlehem district has three towns in Bethlehem which are: Beit Sahour, Beit Jala and 70 villages. There are a total of 140,000 Palestnians living in this area and 67% are muslims and 33% are christians.
- The people here are known to be very friendly, of course if you're a visitor looking to buy.
- Their language is Arabic and Hebrew, did you know that you will not find a single curse word in the Hebrew language that is why it is called *Lashone Hakodesh, The Holy Tongue*.

What to do for Fun?

- The Palestinians love music, songs, and dances.
- They have folk dances for joyous events such as festivities, weddings and religious festivals.
- Most of their instruments are wind and rhythm instruments.



About the Land

- Bethlehem is made up of shepherd's fields where there are many and vast wide areas where shepherd's herd their sheep.
- Another main component of land Bethlehem is known for is their Solomon's Pools.
- These pools are important to the areas water supply. There are three pools and they are 100 meters long and 10 meters deep with a capacity of 300,000 cubic meters of water.
- The weather normally in Bethlehem is mild and overcast the temperature there is about 70 degrees.



Government

Today, the Bethlehem Municipal Council has 15 elected members, including the mayor and deputy mayor. The mayor and a majority of the municipal council are to be Christians, while the remainder are open seats, not restricted to any religion.

There are several branches of political parties on the council, including Communist, Islamist, and secular.



Mayor of Bethlehem: Victor Batarseh

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