

# VISIT EIN GEDI: THE SPRING OF THE GOATS



Israel's Ein Gedi, or 'the Spring of the Goats' is a unique water haven in the Judean Desert, close to the Dead Sea. Not only does this oasis feature a variety of rare fauna and flora, its importance is directly linked to the book of books - the Bible.

Ein Gedi is a beautiful oasis located on the shores of the Dead Sea in Israel. It remains a natural source of fresh water and for thousands of years has been crucial for all living creatures of the area. Its historical relevance is impossible to doubt. According to archeological finds and historical research, **Ein Gedi used to function as a royal estate of the Kings of Judea for cultivating dates**. The Bible mentions its name on several occasions, including one in the Song of Songs. Apparently, David fled to Ein Gedi and the nearby caves when he had to escape from King Saul.

In 1956 a kibbutz was founded near the oasis which is a very appealing place for tourists. Thanks to a permanent settlement in the area, it is much easier to explore the oasis, discover the famous caves, admire the renowned springs of fresh water and observe the precious wildlife of Ein Gedi.

**To protect the natural riches, a National Park was founded in Ein Gedi in 1972.** It features two precious spring-fed streams - Nachal David (stream David) and Nachal Arugot (stream Arugot). There are many rare species of animals attracted by the abundance of fresh water, including the ibex and the hyrax. There are many species of resident birds in the reserve as well. The diverse vegetation, such as Sodom apple, acacia, jujube and poplar are also to be found here.

Another great attraction is the Botanical Garden located in the Ein Gedi kibbutz. Here, visitors may admire the impressive 900 species of plants from all over the globe. Ein Gedi is one of the hidden jewels of Israel and is definitely worth a visit for anyone planning to come to the Dead Sea.

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