

## FAQ about Israeli Bedouin

### Where do Bedouins live?

110,000 live in the Negev, 10,000 live in the central area of Israel, and 50,000 live in the north of Israel.

Bedouins live in tents or in stone houses. It depends if they are leading a nomadic way of life or if they have settled down in a town of some sort.

### Are they nomads?

Fewer and fewer Bedouins in Israel have a nomadic lifestyle. Israel is trying to settle the Bedouins in towns due to the increasing scarcity of land. Israel needs to limit the land used for grazing and roaming. It is all a matter of the land resources of the country where the Bedouins live.

### What kind of education do the children get?

In Israel, the Bedouins are offered free education up to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and after that are free to pursue higher education. Both girls and boys attend school.

### Do they travel by camel?

In Israel Bedouins do not travel that much anymore by camel. Camels are used for long journeys in the desert. Bedouins living in desert countries such as Egypt or Jordan would travel by camel if they did not have an automobile. Many Bedouin families in Israel today own cars and travel long distances in them.

### If they are in the desert where do they get water?

Bedouins who live in the desert know of waterholes and oases. This information is passed down from generation to generation. The Bedouins live around the water sources and all of their travel and dwellings will depend on this. They plan and map out their travel according to water resources on the way.

### What kind of jobs do they have?

Bedouins used to mainly have jobs as shepherds. Today in Israel, they have many other jobs. Some of them have military careers in the Israeli army such as scouts, because of their keen sense of orientation in nature. Others work in factories, the building trade or teach in schools. Many operate heavy equipment in land development. The more educated they become, the more diverse their job range. Bedouins of the Negev also deal in tourism.

### Do they grow their own food?

Bedouins will grow some of their food if they stay long enough in one place. They will plant fruit trees and vegetables and will always have livestock. They use the milk of the sheep, goats and camels, and sometimes they even have cows. Like many indigenous people they utilize all their resources fully and

completely, not wasting anything. So if they slaughter a lamb, they will use all of its parts, including the skin.

### How do they stand the climate?

Bedouins know how to dress in order to insulate their bodies from extreme temperatures, be it hot or cold. In the desert, during the day it is very hot, but at nights it can get quite cold. During the day they wear long cotton clothing covering themselves from head to toe. This actually protects their body from intense heat and they do not dehydrate. At night they will sleep in tents made of out animal skins, which also naturally insulate against extreme temperatures.

### Do they have electricity?

If Bedouins settle down in Israel in community towns they receive electricity from the state. Otherwise they buy their own private generators and produce their own electricity.

### What products do they make?

They make everything they need in their lives; cheese, bread, rugs, tents, saddle bags, coffee grinders, musical instruments, clothing, embroidery, jewelry and more.

### What kinds of food do they eat?

They eat pita bread, labaneh (a kind of yoghurt/cheese from goat milk), vegetables, fruit and lamb on special occasions such as weddings. They drink sweet tea and coffee.