

Join Alan, Debbie, Karen, Lauren and Danielle Schaeffer as they share with us about the country of Israel.



A NEWSLETTER FOR AND BY MAGS YOUTH

Israel and the Negev Desert

By Karen Schaeffer

The country of Israel rich in history for anyone interested in archaeology, geology or paleontology. The archaeology of Jerusalem, Caesarea, and Masada tell the story of Israel from many centuries ago. The Dead Sea, the Arch cave, and stalactite caves in the area give us a look at the geological history of Israel. The paleontology finds of the Negev give us a glimpse at the kind of trees and plants that grew in that area hundreds of thousands of years ago.

Jerusalem is the capital of Israel. It is a walled city built on the remains of the old city. There are still some parts of the old city left. One of the ruins is the palace and the Temple Mound, the place where the Jewish Temple stood. On the grounds of the Temple mound stands the Dome of the Rock. This is where Muslims believe that it is where Muhammad ascended to heaven on his Night Journey.

Caesarea is the city of Herod, the ancient king of Israel. This port city has withstood earthquakes and other natural disasters. It is a very important city because it has lasted many thousands of years and it has still stands.

Masada was a safe place for the Jews to hide during the time of the Roman Empire. Looking down from Masada, Roman camps can be seen. This is where the Romans waited for the Jews to leave Masada. Masada is in the middle of the Negev desert. In Masada, there were cisterns filled with water. Jars with food were also found when it was excavated. There was a palace area, storage rooms filled with wheat, and potchards with names inscribed on them. It was decided that these names were in the drawing for the person who was going to kill all of the Jews on Masada. The Jews decided that it was better if they died than to be slaves to the Roman. The potchards are on display today.

The Dead Sea is a salty sea, too salty for animals to live in. It is so salty that people can float on the surface. The Dead Sea contains many other minerals as well. One cup of water from the Dead Sea could cause a human to die. At the bottom of the sea there are salt crystals. These crystals, made from salt that had built up, can be found in the shape of a ball with pointy crystals sticking out or it can be found in the shape of stalagmites, like you would find at the top of a cave. Either way, they form and make a layer of pointy crystals. Deeper in the Dead Sea there is mud that is good for the skin. In many lotions the minerals found in this mud can make it helpful to dry skin.

The Arch Cave is in the far north of Israel. Long ago this cave collapsed, leaving a strip that looks like an arch. It is a beautiful landmark that many tourists go to see each year.

There are stalactite caves in many places of the world, but in Israel it is different. Huge stalagmites and stalactites are everywhere. The cave I saw is a large, live cave. Live caves still form stalactites and stalagmites. These stalactites and stalactites drip water to continue forming.

The place where fossilized tree roots lie is also in the Negev. It is where a volcano erupted leaving a crater, colored sand, and these fossilized roots.

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