# **En Gedi**

**Nature Reserve** 

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**Flora** 

of rare flora in the oasis.

## **Nearby Sites:**



www.parks.org.il I \*3639 I En Gedi National Park, Tel: 08-6584285

The En Gedi Nature reserve is located on the eastern edge of the Judean Desert, on the shore of the Dead Sea, the lowest place on earth (approximately 400 m below sea level). The reserve contains vast differences in elevation over relatively short distances and as a result, one of its distinguishing features is its sheer cliffs. The reserve covers an area of 14,350 dunams (1,435 hectares) and it was designated a protected nature reserve in 1971.

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Two valleys run through the reserve: Wadi David in the north and Wadi Arugot in the south. Four sweetwater springs flow in the reserve: David's Spring, flowing into Wadi David; Arugot Spring, flowing into Wadi Arugot; Shulamit and En Gedi Springs – flowing down the slopes between the two wadis. Altogether, the springs generate approximately 3 million cubic meters of water a year. They are fed by rain that falls in the Judean Mountains and seeps into the underground water table, flowing underground towards the east and finally welling up in the reserve. A significant amount of the reserve's spring water is "trapped" and used by Kibbutz En Gedi and its surroundings. During winters with heavy rainfall, powerful floods run through the reserve. Wadi David collects water from an area covering approximately 18 km and only flows after rain has fallen over En Gedi itself, while Wadi Arugot, which is approximately 40 km long, collects water from an area covering approximately 200 km from the Hebron Mountains to the Dead Sea and flows when strong rain has fallen in that region.

The combination of the reserve's geographic location, topographic composition, warm temperatures and lack of cold days, coupled with the abundance and quality fauna, representing different geographic regions, to survive here.

The En Gedi oasis is host to the densest concentration of tropical

plants growing in Israel, some of which are exceedingly rare. In

some cases, this is the northernmost point at which they can

be found. The botanist Michael Zohary wrote that in the 1920s,

En Gedi sustained dense groves of trees and bushes, with a

predominance of jujube (Ziziphus), acacia, maerua, and cordia.

The oasis's flora has been greatly diminished since surroun-

ding settlements began to use part of the reserve's water

for agriculture. Today, the Israel Nature and Parks Authority

is investing great efforts in order to restore the populations

Below are some of the **tropical plants** prominent in the reserve:

The Christ-thorn jujube (Ziziphus spina-christi) produces a juicy

fruit that resembles a small apple. The Arabic name for Wadi

David is Wadi el-sideir, named after this plant. According

**The Jericho balsam** (Balanites aegyptiaca) is recognized by

its thorns and fruit that resembles dates. None of

the Jericho balsam trees that existed in the reserve

during the 1940s exist today. The Jericho balsam trees

found today in En Gedi grew from seeds collected -

from the balsam groves near Ma'oz Chaim in the

northern Jordan Valley and planted in the reserve in

1962. According to Muslim tradition, the balsam tree is a

product of the underworld - it

that it contains and its bitter fruit is the

punishment meted out to criminals in

En Gedi contains the largest concentration

fruit is small, luscious, orange-colored and

sticky, and it is a favorite food of Tristram's

grackle (Onychognathus tristramii), bulbuls

Pychnonotus xanthopygos) and fruit-

eating bats (Pterpopdidae).

f **Cordia sinensis** in Israel. The cordia's

survives because of the flames Jericho balsam

Two species of acacias grow

in the reserve, conspicuous

by their feathered leaves:

Accacia raddiana, which

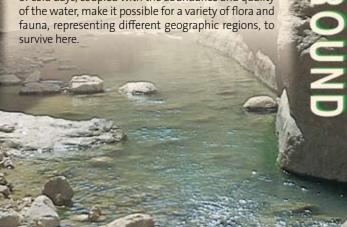
has a single trunk and

round branches, and Acacia

tortilis. which has multiple

umbrella shape.

trunks and a characteristic



the reserve. Cyprus cane (Arundo donax), common cane (Phragmites australis), tall sugar cane (Saccharum ravennal), **common reed** (*Typha domingensis*), and *Pluchea dioscoridis* are just a few examples. Tamari paaestina,

Salix acmophylla and Populus euphratica also grow in Wadi Arugot.



drip from the rocks.





### Mammals



Moringa peregrina is a rare tree that grows sporadically along the Dead Sea rift valley. It looks like a large broom bush (Retame raetam) and has beautiful pinkish-white flowers that bloom in the spring and last until the end of the summer. Its fruit are long pods that remain hanging on the tree long after the seeds have been scattered. The **Salvadora persica** forms crowded clusters of vegetation. It is part tree and part evergreen bush. Its leaves are large and fleshy and provide nourishment for ibexes and hyrax.

The Sodom apple or Dead Sea apple (Calotropis procera), whose trunk and branches are covered with thick, cracked bark, is very common in En Gedi. This plant is distinguished by its large leaves and hollow fruit that resembles apples. The Sodom apple tree is mentioned in the Mishnah and the Talmud. The long fibers attached to

the seeds may once have served as wicks Referring to Sabbath lights, the Mishnah says: "It may not be lighted with cedar-bast, nor with uncombed flax, nor with floss-silk, nor with willow-fiber, nor with nettle fiber" (Shabbat 2,1). When the trees' branches or leaves are cut, they exude a toxic white liquid which serves to protect the plant from animals.

There are only about 10 specimens of *Maerua crassifolia* –a very rare tree –

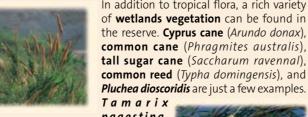
left in Israel. Five of these are in the En Gedi reserve. This tree also grows in

oases in Jordan, on the eastern shores of the Dead Sea.

The *Grevia villosa* is a very rare bush that was brought to En Gedi from Kibbutz Mitzpeh Shalem (north of En Gedi) when it was established. Many of these plants have now been planted in the reserve.

Oxystelma alpini is a very rare vine that is in danger of becoming extinct. During the 1990s, only one specimen of this plant existed in the reserve, in Wadi Arugot. Today, great efforts are being made to restore its population.

Epipactis veratrifolia is an orchid that was discovered in the Aneva Spring in the Judean Desert in 1944 by Tuvya Kushnir, a naturalist (one of the 35 men who died in a battle in the Hebron Mountains). The discovery created quite a sensation in the botanical world. The plant is very rare and it grows in the cracks between the rocks in Wadi David and Wadi Arugot. In addition to tropical flora, a rich variety



**Desert flora** that have adapted to heat and are able to withstand a lack of moisture grow on the dry banks, a short distance from the water, the most prominent among

these being **Zygophyllun** dumonum and Gymnocarpus decander.

Mediterranean flora such as maritime squill (Urginea maritima), onosma orientalis and others also grow in En Gedi. In addition to the above, seasonal plants, such as different species of **storksbill** (*Erodium*), Rumex cyprius and erucaria rostrata appear during the rainy season, forming carpets of colorful blooms. Lichens and ferns such as maidenhair fern Adiantum capillus) decorate the dozens of trickles of water that





Prominent among the larger animals in En Gedi are the Nubian ibex (wild goat) and the rock hyrax (coney), both of which are mentioned

### "The high hills are a refuge for the wild goats and the rocks for the conies" (Psalms 104:18).

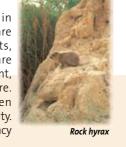
**Ibex** (Capra ibex nubiana)

These animals live in herds and are famed for their ability to climb steep hills that provide them with refuge from predators. The male, larger than the female, is bearded and bears horns that angle back. These horns continue to grow throughout the ibex's life and reach tremendous size in adult males. During the rutting season (September-November), males can be observed carrying out the courting ritual, trailing after the females with awkward dancing steps while extending their heads, their lips curled back and their tongues hanging out. Calving occurs in the spring, between March and April. For many years, Judean Desert ibex were hunted and their population dwindled, until they were on the brink of extinction. One of the most impressive achievements of the nature protection movement in Israel was the rescue of the ibex

population in Israel, with the enacting of the Wild Animal Protection Birds Law in 1955. As a symbol of recognition for these efforts, the bust of the ibex has become an integral part of the emblem of the Israel Nature and

**Rock Hyrax** (*Procavia capensis*)

Rock hyrax, or conies, live in rock crannies or in thickets. They live in groups and like the ibex, are remarkable climbers. The hyrax feed on plants, some of which are poisonous. Although they are mammals, their body temperature is not constant, changing according to the ambient temperature. Therefore, on cold mornings, they can be seen sunbathing on top of rocks before resuming activity. The females give birth in the spring, after a pregnancy of seven and a half months.



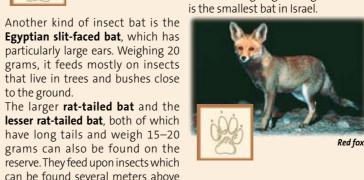
### Nocturnal mammals

Most of the desert mammals, such as the leopard, a rarely seen predator of the cat family that is fast becoming extinct, are nocturnal. The leopard s a solitary animal and although glimpses of it are rare, signs of ts presence - such as footprints, diggings and feces – can sometimes be seen in the reserve Other predators, such as the **striped** 

hyena, the wolf and two types of

foxes: the red fox (Vulpes vulpes) and the Afghan fox (Vulpes cana) are also part of the reserve. In addition, the reserve contains rodents such as the Cairo spiny mouse, the golden spiny mouse (which is diurnal) and the **porcupine**. The Dead Sea region contains a vast array of bats – small nocturnal flying mammals. There are 15 species of

bats in En Gedi. From among the insect bats present in En Gedi, we will mention the Bodenheimer's **pipistrelle** – a species endemic to the region of the Red Sea that makes up part of the Syrian-African Rift Valley, whose northernmost border reaches Wolf En Gedi. Weighing 2.5–3 grams, this is the smallest bat in Israel Another kind of insect bat is the



can be found several meters above ground. In addition, the reserve also contains **Egyptian fruit bats** that feed upon the fruits of various trees such as the Christ-thorn jujube and the

females to mate. The *Polyrhacis simplex* stands out among the **insects** that

inhabit the reserve. It is social insect that originated in India and Burma.

species of aphids and cicadas, tended by the ants. In order to protect the

aphids and cicadas from the sun, the ants secrete threads and weave

Several species of black and yellow xylocopa (tree bees) are common

in the reserve. The bees drill tunnels in tree trunks,in which the

Colotis fausta and Colotis

**phisadia** are tropical butterflies

The reserve is home to many

different species of dragonflies

- insects that thrive in a humid

environment: it is easy to recognize adult dragonflies by

their colors and large wings. The female lays her eggs in

The river crab (Potamon potamios) and the river snail

melanopsis) inhabit the sweet water pools and rivers.

the water, where the larvae hatches and predates.

This ant is particularly prevalent in Wadi Arugot,

where it constructs its characteristic nests, mainly

under rocks. The adult ant bears the larva, which

secretes a silk thread from a special gland, and

walls of the nest. The ants also feed on "honey

dew," a sweet liquid secreted by many different

coverings around the branches on which they lie.

females lay their eggs.

that live in the reserve.

uses it to weave a web that covers the opening

to the ground.



En Gedi also supports a wide range of reptiles. We shall mention only two species of poisonous snakes: the black viper/basilic (Tractaspic

engaddinsis) (the En Gedi viper) and the adder (Echis coloratus), and one non-poisonous species: **the** *Coluber rhodorhachis*. In addition, several species of lizards can be found in the reserve, such as the Desert and Sinaia gama. **Amphibians** are also represented in the reserve: during the winter months, particularly in the evenings, the loud croaking of the male **river frogs** (Rama ridibunda) can be heard on the banks of the streams, inviting the

Agriculture in En Gedi En Gedi has always been famous for its dates – "I rose like the date palm in En Gedi" (Eccliasticus 24:4) but it is particularly noted for the cultivation of aromatic plants and medicinal herbs. The henna

Jericho and En Gedi became especially famous for a plant called in Hebrew Sanhedrin 109a describes robbers in Sodom who could sniff out balsam in the homes of the wealthy, and came at night to steal it.

The fragrance was obtained from the plant by collecting the resin that flowed from the plant, after its stem had been cut. The following verse attests to the plant's scent: "...who would bring the crop of a chicken and fill it with afarsimon, and then put it in her shoe, under the heel, and when she would see a group of boys, she would press the *afarsimon* and its fragrance would

When Marc Anthony wanted to bestow a generous gift on his lover, Cleopatra, he confiscated the balsam groves in Jericho and En Gedi in her name, whereupon Herod hastened to lease them from her. Balsam was so significant that Titus and Vespasian exhibited the plant during their





**The Arabian babblers** (*Turdoides squamiceps*) – a species of social songbird, spend a large part of their time on the ground and are distinguished by their

blackstart (Cercomela melanura) a small gray bird





The white-crowned wheatear (Oenanthe leucopyga) stands out due to its contrasting black and white feathers and its habit of sitting on top of rocks, thereby marking out its territory.

is a very common ground bird, often seen running around on the banks of the river looking for food.

Gedi reserve are important nesting **falcon** (Falco pelegrinoides).

Some of these migrating birds, such as the white and the red-breasted wagtails, abide in the reserve and spend the winter there.

and animals, and for many generations the region was the water and the hot climate provided En Gedi with obvious advantages for cultivating unique plants and reaping good harvests. Traces of ancient irrigation systems can be found throughout the reserve, as well as once-cultivated terraces. There are 15 cisterns/reservoirs (the smallest of which is 80 m<sup>3</sup> and the largest, approximately 1,500 m<sup>3</sup> – the total area of reservoirs and cisterns comes to approximately 6,000 m³). Aqueducts can also be seen that were either hewn out of the rock or man-made. These impressive remnants testify to an intensive ancient



total area cultivated in the past came to approximately 1,100 dunams (110 hectares) while today, Kibbutz En Gedi cultivates only 500 dunams (50 т

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once again and its inhabitants fled. A new Jewish settlement was established in En Gedi as early as the 3rd century CE. A synagogue was erected in the middle of the village and with the passage of years, it was modified, enlarged and renovated. During the



 $last\ period\ of\ its\ existence, it\ was\ a\ large\ and\ magnificent\ edifice\ that\ represented$ the economic prosperity of the inhabitants. In 1965, while a field was being  $plowed, remnants of the {\it synagogue's mosaic floor were discovered}. Archeological$ excavations carried out since then have uncovered a number of Hebrew and A ramaic inscriptions in the mosaic floor, one of which contains the genealogy fromAdam to Japheth, another consists of a list of the months and the signs of the zodiac. Also uncovered were inscriptions dedicated to donors who contributed to the erection of the synagogue. A very interesting inscription contains threats and curses anyone who would be the cause of controversy, libel or reveal "the secrets of the city" to strangers. The secret might have been the cultivation and and processing of balsam - the source of the region's wealth. Around the middle of the 6th century CE, the Jewish settlement of En Gedi was destroyed by fire and abandoned. During the 4th century, the Arugot Fort was built on the slopes of the mountain above Tel Goren. This might have served as a guard tower for the balsam

During the Mamluk period (13th-14th centuries CE) a small village existed in En Gedi and it contained a flour mill that was constructed next to the En Gedi spring. In time, this colony was also abandoned. From that time, until the Israeli War of Independence (1948), no permanent settlement existed in



until the War of Independence, Bedouins from the Rashida tribe resided there in the winters and mostly cultivated vegetables in the oasis.

Alexandroni Division and commanded by Shmariya Gutman, a member of Kibbutz Na'an (and a part-time archeologist) sailed on the Dead Sea from Sodom, intending to settle En Gedi in an attempt to include it this location within the borders of the State of Israel. In 1953, a Nachal company (an army brigade consisting of soldier-farmers) settled on the land. Three years later the settlement turned into a kibbutz. The members of the kibbutz proceeded to erect a youth hostel adjacent to the kibbutz and in 1959, the Nature Protection Authority 20th century established its first field school here.

Many species of birds live in the En Gedi reserve permanently. The most noticeable among them is Tristram's grackle (Onychognathus tristramii) – a black bird with orange-tipped wings and a loud singing voice that rings throughout the reserve.

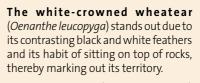


The fan-tailed raven (Corvus rhipidurus) hovers over the reserve's peaks as it sounds its characteristic

loud cries.

whose singular characteristic is its spreading black tail.





The sand partridge (Ammoperdrixheyi)

One of the nocturnal birds of prey occasionally observed in the reserve is Hume's tawny owl (Stryx butleri), which feeds mostly upon small rodents and insects.

The Syrian-African Rift Valley serves as an important migration route for many species of songbirds, water birds and birds of prey.





plant (lausonia), which produces the yellowish-red aromatic dye used to color hair, nails and teeth, was cultivated on the irrigated

### "a cluster of henna in the vineyards of En Gedi" (Song of Songs 1:14)

afarsimon, possibly balsam, the biblical "perfume." The Talmudic tractate

stir them like poison..." (Eicha Raba, Ch. 4, 18)

victory march in Rome after having put down the Great Revolt.

uproot the balsam groves during the fighting in En Gedi so that they would not fall into the hands of the Romans, but the latter were careful to protect them and fought for every plant.

long tail and light brown coloring.





The cliffs of the Judean Desert and En sites for a variety of birds of prey, such as the Griffon vultures (Gyps fulvus), the Egyptian vulture (Nephron percnopeterus), Bonelli's eagle (Hieraaetus fasciatus), and Barbary

Over 200 different species of birds can be observed in the En Gedi oasis during the migration periods that take place in the fall and in the spring.

The water sources of En Gedi have always attracted both people

site of flourishing agricultural settlements. The profusion of

cultivation culture, using every available piece of land. The



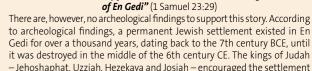


terraces located between the springs:

According to the Roman historian Pliny the Elder, the Jews endeavored to







above the En Gedi spring, on the crest of a cliff, overlooking the Dead

Sea and the Moabite Mountains. There is evidence thata water-linked

ceremony was held in the temple. Four hundred and twenty-nine

copper and ivory ceremonial vessels that had apparently been used in

this temple were found in the Treasure Cave that is in Wadi Mishmar

(south of En Gedi). These vessels are now on exhibit in the Israel Museum

David reached En Gedi (1000 BCE) and hid there during his wanderings in

"And David went up from thence, and dwelt in the stronghold

– Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Hezekaya and Josiah – encouraged the settlement "And he built towers in the wilderness, and hewed out many cisterns, for he had much cattle" (2 Chronicles, 26:10) Remnants of this settlement can be found on the Tel Goren. During that

was already famous for its dates. Industrial remains such as remnants of casks and ovens found in the courtyards of houses on Tel Goren indicate that they had apparently been used for the preparation of perfume from balsam. Josiah, King of Judah, stored anointing oil and from that time on, kings were anointed with persimmon oil. The En Gedi of the period of the Kings of Judah was destroyed at the end of the 6th century

established in the En Gedi oasis flourished and grew through the intensive development of irrigated agriculture on the mountain slopes. Signs of preparations of the land – terraces, cisterns that were built and plastered as well as aqueducts – can still be seen today throughout the oasis. The Hasmonean king John Hyrcanus who founded the dynasty, Alexander Jannaeus and those that came after them – developed En Gedi extensively and turned it into a main city and an estate for the royal house. Remnants of a citadel tower, built to protect the estate and ensure its safety, have been found on top of Tel Goren.

### above the oasis.

David & Saul The destruction of the Second Temple was a period of great suffering for the inhabitants of En Gedi. According to Josephus Flavius, zealots, inhabitants of Masada, invaded En Gedi during Passover in 68 CE in order to acquire agricultural supplies and they slaughtered 700 women and children, pillaging homes and stealing all of the crops before returning to Masada. After the revolt, ownership of the settlement in En Gedi was transferred to the Roman emperor and the settlement seemed to take on new life. From documents unearthed in Wadi Hever, we learned about the wealth and possessions of the Jews living in the area. A unit of 100 soldiers (known as a centuria) was stationed in En Gedi, entrusted with the task of ensuring peace in the region. A Roman bathhouse was apparently built for use by this army unit and remnants of the bathhouse were discovered

in the date groves located northwest of the ancient En Gedi settlement. During the period of the Bar Kokhba Revolt (130–135 CE), the region of the Dead Sea was an important center that supplied salt and agricultural products to the rebels. Letters found in Wadi Hever indicate that Bar Kokhba claimed that the people of En

Gedi did not provide enough help for his warriors, evidenced by the fact that supplies did not always arrive. The Romans put down the rebellion by force, En Gedi was destroyed



groves or the facilities used to manufacture perfume.



the region. However, from the 19th century



period in history, spring water was used for the first time to irrigate cultivated fields, presumably to grow dates. The words: "'Hazazon-tamar'—the name is En Gedi" (2 Chonicles 20:2) could be an indication that En Gedi

the desert after fleeing from King Saul.

The earliest vestiges

unearthed in En Gedi date

back to the Chalcolithic

era (approximately 5,000

years ago). It is during that

period that copper began

being used in the Land of

Israel. At that time, a central temple was erected in En

Gedi and pilgrims traveled

from afar to worship there.

The temple was erected

BCE by the Babylonians (the destruction of the First Temple). The colony was reestablished in the Persian era (5th century BCE), abandoned and once again reestablished during the Hellenistic period (2nd century BCE).

The development of Jewish settlement in En Gedi and its growth began in the Hasmonean period (152–37 BCE) and continued for 700 years, until the decline of the Byzantine Empire (550 CE). During that period, the settlement

Members of the Essene sect may have settled above En Gedi as early as the the 1st century CE. This sect is mentioned in the writings of the Roman historian, Pliny the Elder. According to Pliny, the Essenes lived the life of ascetic monks above En Gedi. A pool and the remains of cells that served as the living quarters of the Essenes, or possibly as temporary dwellings for people from En Gedi, were discovered on the site on the elevation

### Welcome to the En Gedi Nature Reserve

The Israel Nature and Park Authority hopes that you will enjoy your visit to the reserve.

The goal of the reserve is to ensure the perpetuation of the landscape, springs and waterfalls, flora, fauna and remnants of the past.

Remember: the animals, plants, water, rocks and traces of the past are an inseparable part of the reserve while we the visitors are only guests for a short time.

By following the instructions listed below, you will guarantee that the reserve remains unspoiled, ensure your own safety and be able to enjoy your stay.

### **Rules of Behavior While Visiting** the En Gedi Nature Reserve

- It is absolutely forbidden to damage or harm flora, fauna or inanimate objects!
- Please do not feed the animals. All their food is found in the reserve and any other nourishment might be unhealthy for them!
- Do not bring food into the reserve. Eating is only permitted in the designated areas in the parking lots.
- Do not bring in pets.
- Do not bring musical instruments or radios into the reserve. Enjoy the quiet sounds of Nature and do not make unnecessary noise.
- It is absolutely forbidden to smoke or light fires on the reserve grounds!
- Do not climb walls of ancient structures and do not enter buildings that are marked
- It is absolutely forbidden to remain in the reserve after dark! For your convenience there is an overnight parking and camping area on the En Gedi public beach.
- Keep the reserve clean and take your garbage away with you.
- It is forbidden to climb rocks and/or rappel from them.
- Keep to marked paths. Wandering from marked paths could endanger your own safety as well as that of other visitors and could cause damage to the reserve.
- Make sure you have an updated topographical map (1:50,000) of the trails.
- Carry at least 5 liters of water per person per day. Do not depend on natural water sources for drinking water.
- Make sure you wear a hat and comfortable walking shoes.
- There is a danger of floods during the winter, spring and fall. Do not walk in or cross streambeds during those seasons.
- Some of the areas of the reserve are marked "closed to visitors" for reasons of safety and to protect the natural environment – please observe these instructions.

The En Gedi oasis contains sources of water and food that are vital to the wildlife's existence. The limited number of hours that the reserve is open makes it possible for the animals to reach these resources safely and quietly.

The reserve is open from 08:00 to 16:00 in the winter and from 08:00 to 17:00 in the summer (depending upon standard and daylight saving time).

Below is a list of trails in the reserve, arranged for your convenience according to degree of difficulty and the amount of time they take.

We will be happy to assist you in planning your visit to the reserve and to answer any questions you may have.

Our telephone numbers are: 08-6584285; 08-6584517; fax: 08-6520228.

Text: Avi David, Translation: Miriam Feinberg Vamosh **Map:** Shalom Kveller; **Photographs:** INPA Archives Production: Adi Greenbaum © The Israel Nature and Parks Authority

### Trails

**The ancient synagogue** – the focus of Jewish settlement in ancient En Gedi in the 3rd–6th centuries CE. The synagogue's floor – a mosaic – is decorated with animals and inscriptions. A visit to the synagogue can be combined with the beginning or end of any walk through the

**Lower Wadi David** – the trail passes by waterfalls and pools containing lush streambank vegetation and culminates at David's Waterfall. Concentrations of trees characteristic of the reserve can be seen at the beginning of the walk: acacias, jujubes, thorn trees, cordia, etc.

**Upper Wadi David** – David's Waterfall, Shulamit's Spring, the Dodim Cave, the En Gedi Spring – a scenic trail from which one can see the desert oasis of En Gedi and overlook the Dead Sea. One can discover the natural flora of the reserve and reach its water source. Dodim's Cave is located above David's Waterfall. It is a karstic cave. The trail passes close to archeological sites: the Chalcolite temple, the flour mill, ancient water reservoirs and terraces for irrigated cultivation.

**Wadi Arugot** – a walk along the route of one of the largest streams in the Judean desert. The trail passes through wild vistas with an abundance of water the whole year around. (The table below describes the short and long trails).

**Lookout trail, the Dry Canyon, the En Gedi Spring, Lower Wadi David** – a scenic trial along the "seam line" between the desert portion of the reserve and the oasis. It is possible to follow the northern bank of Wadi David, go down to its canyon-like, dry section until the Dry Waterfall, and then return by following the southern bank of the stream. From the Dry Waterfall one has a beautiful view of the descent of Wadi David, the Dead Sea and the Moabite Mountains in the east.

The three trails described below ascend to the top of the desert, overlooking the magnificent view of the Judean Desert to the west and towards the Dead Sea and the Moabite Mountains to the east. The ancient paths are the En Gedi (Flower Hill) and the Essenes Ascents. The trails are:

- Walk through the field school crossing to **Mount Yishai**, walk on the desert plain until reaching the En Gedi Lookout; descend via the En Gedi (Hatsits) Ascent and along Lower Wadi David, exiting through the Wadi David ticket office.
- Climb from Tel Goren up the En Gedi (Hatsits) Ascent to the En Gedi Lookout; descend through the **Bnei Hamoshavim Ascent** to **Wadi Arugot**, exiting through the Wadi Arugot
- Climb up the **Zeruiah Ascent** from Kibbutz En Gedi to the desert plain, descending via the **Essenes Ascent** to **Wadi Arugot**, exiting through the Wadi Arugot ticket office.

\*1 – easy; 2 – relatively easy; 3 – difficult; 4 – very difficult

# Desert Plateu Window fall ault Escarpme LEGEND: 90 Foot path .... Marked path Walk this way. Dry / flowing waterfall Antiquities Lookout 1116 A Restrooms Parking lot Souvenirs **₹** Picnic tables Jerusalem & Bet She'an Information & Cashier Drinking water Cafeteria The Dead Sea No entry to hikers Map not to scale

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Recommended Trails for Walking in the En Gedi Nature Reserve						
Trail	Degree of difficulty*	Length of time (in hours)	Starting point	Conclusion	Starting time – no later than:**	Comments
The ancient synagogue	1	1/2	The synagogue	The synagogue	15:30	Guided tours and special activities are available, to be coordinated in advance
The lower section of Wadi David: David's Waterfall	1	1	The Wadi David ticket office	The Wadi David ticket office	15:00	You must leave David's Waterfall by 15:3
The upper section of Wadi David: David's Waterfall, Shulamit's Spring, Dodim's Cave, En Gedi Spring	2	3–4	David's Waterfall	The Wadi David ticket office or the Tel Goren	13:30	You must leave Dodim Cave by 14:30; you must leave En Gedi Spring by 15:00

**time indicated is according to standard time; during daylight	saving time, add one hour

Trail	Degree of difficulty*	<b>Length of time</b> (in hours)	Starting point	Conclusion	Starting time – no later than:**	Comments
Wadi Arugot (short walk): The Hidden Waterfall	2	2–3	The Wadi Arugot ticket office	The Wadi Arugot	14:00	You must leave the Hidden Waterfall by 15:00
Wadi Arugot (long walk): The Hidden Waterfall, The Upper Pools	3	4–5	The Wadi Arugot ticket office	The Wadi Arugot ticket office	12:00	You must leave the Upper Pools by 15:00; You may begin the trail from the Hidden Waterfall to the Upper Pools no later than 13:00
Tsaffit Trail, The Dry Canyon, En Gedi Spring; Lower Wadi David	3	4–6	The Field School	The Wadi David ticket office	12:00	Dangerous during floods!

\*1 – easy; 2 – relatively easy; 3 – difficult; 4 – very difficult

Trail	Degree of difficulty*	Length of time (in hours)	Starting point	Conclusion	Starting time – no later than:**	Comments
Mount Yishai, En Gedi Lookout, En Gedi (Hatsits) Ascent, Lower Wadi David	4	7–9	Field School	Wadi David	8:00	Physically challenging long trail, must inform
Tel Goren, En Gedi spring, Spring, En Gedi (Hatsits) Ascent, En Gedi Lookout, B'nei Hamoshavim Ascent Wadi Arugot	4	6–8	Tel Goren	Wadi Arugot	8:00-9:00	Physically challenging long trail, must inform
Zeruiah Ascent, desert plain, Essenes Ascent, Wadi Arugot	4	7–9	Kibbutz En Gedi	Wadi Arugot ticket office	8:00	Physically challenging long trail, must inform reserve staff of planned route