

# Israel (Arab Communities)



## COUNTRY FACTS:

**Capital:** Jerusalem

**Population:** 7,353,985

**Area, sq. mi.:** 8,522

**Real GDP per capita:** 28,600

**Adult literacy rate:** 99% (male); 96% (female)

**Ethnic make-up:** Jewish 76.4% (of which Israel-born 67.1%, Europe/America-born 22.6%, Africa-born 5.9%, Asia-born 4.2%), non-Jewish 23.6%

**Religion:** Jewish 75.5%, Muslim 16.8%, Christian 2.1%, Druze 1.7%, other 3.9%

## School Classes

Arabi-Israeli students are evaluated on a variety of tasks: daily homework, class participation, periodic written (very rarely oral) exams. To maintain a good grade, students must turn in daily homework, participate in class regularly and perform well on exams. Students study with the same students in all lessons and they do not change classrooms. Boys and girls study in the same classrooms and are not seated apart in class.

## School Relationships

Students are generally formal with their teachers, addressing them by title such as "Teacher."

## Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities can be found through private or public clubs or community centers and there are a limited number of schools that provide such activities. Parents are supportive of these activities and some get actively involved.

## School Rules

Most schools in do not allow cell phone usage at all, some schools only forbid cell phones in class, but it is ok to use it outside of the classroom.

## Return

Arab-Israeli students spend July and August upon their return studying to catch up with the material they missed during their stay in the U.S. and many of them get tutoring to apply for matriculations into grade 11 and 12.

## Family Life

In Arab-Israeli families, most households consist of parents, or a parent, and their children. Rarely do grandparents, aunts, uncles or cousins live in the same house, even if they live in the same town. In some areas, uncles and cousins might live in the same building or apartment complex, but not the same house. Arab-Israeli families may eat meals all together as a family, or separately depending on family members' schedules. It is considered respectful to allow family members to have regular, individual time by themselves to pursue their own activities, socialize with friends or to simply relax.

It is common for both parents in Arab-Israeli families to be professionals and for both to be financially responsible for the family. In some homes, though, only the father works and supports the family while the mother is a homemaker. In many cases the father is the authority figure. While it is important to always be respectful, many Arab-Israeli teenagers interact informally with their family members.

## Responsibilities

Students are largely expected to be responsible for their assigned chores, studies, and sometimes taking care of younger siblings. Parents will give an allowance or some teenagers work and they use the money for either savings or buying personal items.

It is uncommon for Arab-Israeli families to have hired household help. Household members, including children, are often given specific chores, which can include cleaning their bedroom and bathroom, doing their own laundry and generally contributing to the upkeep of the house. Mothers are the ones that typically cook and teens are likely to be very unpracticed in the kitchen.

## Parental Involvement

Arab-Israeli parents monitor what their children do online. Parents usually inform their children when particular items can be shared as common family property. Other than that a child's personal property is usually not shared. Many Arab-Israeli parents are in direct contact with their children's school and are kept aware of their academic progress. Teens do not experience a high amount of independence in Arab-Israel and are mostly dependent on their parents.

## Pets

Some Arab-Israeli families have pets, others don't. It is uncommon to have dogs in the house.

## ***Personal Interactions***

### ***Mixed Gender Socializing***

It is perfectly acceptable for Arab-Israeli teens to have friends of the opposite sex and to socialize with them individually.

### ***Friendships***

Arab-Israeli teens make friends through school and the community. Teenagers can have many friends, but typically have one or two close friends with whom they spend most of their time. It is uncommon for Arab-Israeli teenagers to share money with each other.

## ***Communication Styles***

### ***Eye contact***

Eye contact is important in Arab culture in Israel as a sign of respect for those with whom you speak. Teenagers are expected to make eye contact with adults.

## ***Personal Hygiene***

Arab-Israeli teenagers generally take a quick shower once a day, and sometimes twice if they are involved in physical activities. Teenagers are expected to keep their bathrooms clean and dry after using them (towels are hung up, and hygiene products are put away). Most teenagers have one towel in their bathroom to use to dry their body and maybe a separate towel to dry their hair or face. It is generally thought to be unclean to wear the same clothes two days in a row or to wear them twice without washing them.

## ***Religion***

Attending religious services for Muslims is an individual activity and for Christians it is more of a family event. Muslims fast during Ramadan, and mothers will prepare large meals for the breaking of the fast, Iftar, at sunset that includes salads, soup, and a main dish. Sometimes families are invited to homes of other families for the Iftar. Eid al-Fitr is a time of family gatherings, big meals, visits with relatives, and the purchase of new clothes for the holiday.

### ***Holidays***

Muslim Holidays are: Ramadan, Eid al-Fitr, Eid al-Adha; Christian Holidays include Christmas and Easter.