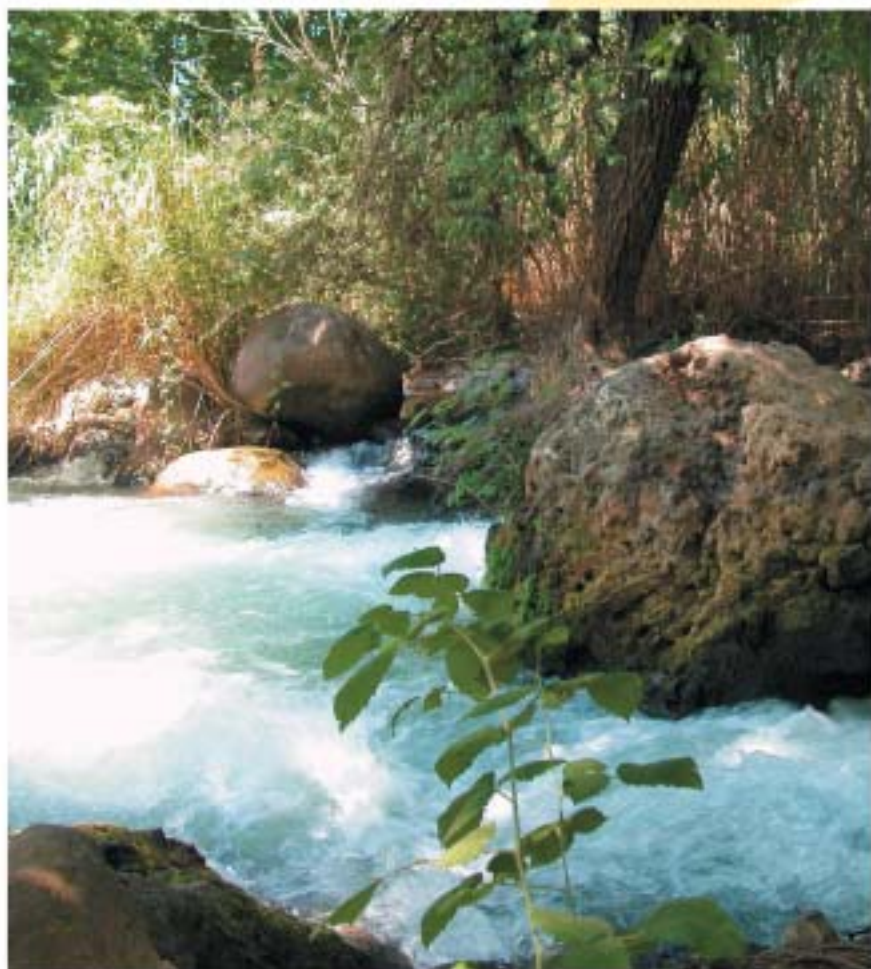


ERETZ GUIDE

TRIG

The Upper Galilee



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The Upper Galilee

ERETZ Magazine's Travel Guide

2005

ZHR Information Center

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Land of Streams • Mountain and Lake



Water rushing through Nahal Hermon.

The Tanor Waterfall, All Year Round

Beside Metulla, the water of Nahal Ayoun hurtles mightily along. Just below Metulla, it forms several waterfalls, the largest and most famous of which is the Tanor Waterfall. In winter, after the rains, the waterfall becomes one of the most exciting nature sites in the Galilee. For decades, its water was always diverted for irrigation in summer and it would dry out. Now water has begun to flow to the waterfall in summer as well - not a major concession because the water flows back to the Hula Valley aquifer, but a tremendous boon to visitors, who can now enjoy this lovely site all year round.

Fifty percent of the water of the Land of Israel originates in a little corner of one tiny northern valley – the Hula Valley. In the northeastern part of the valley rises the Hermon range, which receives abundant precipitation in the form of rain and snow and serves as the main source of the Hula Valley's water. Springs at its foot supply the water of the most famous channel in Israel – the Jordan River.

The plentiful water of the northern Hula Valley had a strong influence on human activity throughout history, as attested by the major archaeological remains that have been discovered in the area: Tel Dan, the remains of the

ancient city of Paneas, Tel Abel Beit Ma'acah, and more.

The water-rich landscape of the northern Hula Valley is unique in Israel. It is the only place in the country where it is still possible all year round to see water rushing through natural channels, luxuriant riverbank vegetation, and impressive waterfalls, and to enjoy it all in the shade of tall trees.

The most famous of the water-filled riverbeds is Nahal Hermon – otherwise known as the Banias River. The river begins in a gushing spring that emerges at the bottom of a steep rock cliff. At this spot, the ancient Greeks created a shrine to the god Pan. The city that was eventually built beside the spring and the groves of the shrine was called Paneas, hence the Arabic name of the site, Banias. And indeed the Banias River, Nahal Hermon, befits the seat of the god known for his love of pleasure, as anyone who walks beside its waters or hikes along the trail leading among the remains of the ancient city toward the Banias Waterfall will discover.

The only riverbed that begins right inside the Hula Valley is Nahal Dan. It starts, like Nahal Hermon, at a gushing spring, which is one of the most copious springs in the Middle East. The Tel Dan Nature Reserve offers a network of trails leading to many lovely nooks. Some of them have acquired their own nicknames: “the Winnie the Pooh tree,” “the Whirlpool,” “the Garden of Eden.” If



you come in the morning or afternoon, you should also pay a visit to the Canaanite and Israelite remains at Tel Dan.

But Nahal Dan does not end in the reserve. From there it splits up into numerous rivulets that flow contentedly through the fields and orchards, through Kibbutz Dafna, Hurshat Tal, and Kibbutz Hagoshrim, until they unite into one stream, which ultimately joins up with its two brothers – Snir and Hermon. At the point where the rivulets become one stream, visitors can choose from many options for riding on the water.

The third of the Jordan streams is Nahal Snir – the Hatzbani River. In its upper segment, from the village of Ghajar to the Maayan Baruch Bridge over the Kiryat Sheмона-Dan Road, it passes through the Nahal Snir (Hatzbani) Nature Reserve – one of the most beautiful riverbed reserves in Israel. The reserve now boasts a new footpath along the channel, sitting corners, and rest rooms. At the Maayan Baruch Bridge and down the riverbed – at the Maayan campsite, Beit Hillel, and Kfar Blum - you'll find inner-tube rides, kayaking, and other attractions.

But that's not all this region has to offer. In recent years, sections of the Hula Lake have been reflooded and a wonderful new lake, known as Lake Agmon, has been created within the valley, along whose winding banks you can hike, fish, and view the thousands of birds that arrive there. Along the eastern periphery of the valley, a large number of springs emerge in the shade of ancient trees. You can take a little hike to these delightful corners, or go on a jeep tour with a local guide who knows every nook and cranny.

And let's not forget the mountains of Upper Galilee, which tower above the Hula Valley and are graced with shady forests, fantastic views, and most of all, the marvelous landscapes of Israel's green north.



Top: The Maayan Baruch Junction bridge over Nahal Snir.
Above: Boating on Nahal Snir.

The Guides of the Galilee

If you're looking for a real experience in the Galilee, go for a day of touring with one of the many Galilee guides - genuine Galilee residents who can lead you to little-known beauty spots, local villages, bountiful orchards, and unique places for a picnic, and are well-versed in all of the myriad details of an area that must be hiked for many years in order to discover all of its treasures. You can, of course, go by foot, by car, by jeep, or on horseback.





Lodgings • A Balcony with a View

The Upper Galilee abounds with places to stay. Hundreds of guest units of all kinds await visitors in villages, moshavim, kibbutzim, and towns, including campsites as well as hundreds of hotel rooms offering top tourist services, such as swimming pools and tennis courts.

Guest Rooms (Zimmerim)

Moshav Margalio

Margalio is surrounded by apple orchards and is situated next to the Crusader fortress of Honin, overlooking the Hula Valley. **Kohav Hatzafon** (04) 694-2872, **Dor el mul Hermon** (04) 694-4640, **Mt. Naftali Vacation** (04) 694-1186, **Margalit Country Inn** (04) 690-2041.

Kiryat Shemona

Pleasant surprises in the capital of the Hula Valley. **Dor Guest Rooms** 052-247-7547, **Galilee Suites** (04) 694-3270.

Beit Hillel

Moshav in the heart of the land of streams, immersed in greenery, with a large number of guest units, including: **Aviv B'Hatzbani** (04) 694-0976, **Gross Country Lodging** (04) 694-9828, **Perl Guest House** (04) 694-2982, **B'bustan Country Lodging** (04) 694-9102, **Gan Yarok** (The Green Garden) (04) 694-0356, **Herman's Orchard Inn** (04) 694-4518, **Rosenfeld's Cabins** (04) 694-4754.

Metulla

Old-time atmosphere. Stone farmhouses, views, and cool air in the middle of summer. **Panorama Zimmer** (04) 694-9379, **Beit Shalom** (04) 694-0767, **Orchan Bagan** (04) 699-7529, **Gil Guest House** (04) 694-0665, **Beit Zamir** (04) 695-0182, **Galila Country Inn** (04) 699-7349, **Estate in Metulla** (04) 694-0791, **Michal Guest House** (04) 694-0322, **Magical View Cabins** (04) 690-4011, **Beit Hadekel** (04) 695-0365, **Turquoise Spa** (04) 695-0839, **Nof Hermon** (04) 694-1662, **Lev Ari Country Guest Rooms** (04)



Top: Beside a Nahal Dan stream at Kibbutz Dafna.
Above: Nofesh Baharim, Ramot Naftali.

Malul Family, Moshav Dishon

Leah Malul of Moshav Dishon operates six cabins of various sizes for couples and families. Breakfast not included. Tel. (04) 694-0708, 050-562-7407



Licensed Tour Guides
Richard Woolf, Rosh Pina
(04) 693-5377

Tirtza Niv
052-247-3188

Hatzbani Nature Tours Plus
054-477-7233

694-9393, **Herut Tamari - Guest House** (04) 694-0552

Yesod Hamaala

Long-established farmers' colony, orchards, and Lake Agmon for a neighbor. **Victoria Guest House** (04) 693-1939.

Ramot Naftali

Looks down on the Hula Valley from the heights of the Naftali Range. **Hava Estate** (04) 694-1762, **Nof Hermon** (04) 694-0655, **Nofesh Baharim** (04) 694-0278, **Aviv Bakerem** (04) 695-0997, **Alon Cabins** (04) 694-2369, **Cabins on the Mountain** (04) 690-2591, **Bein Hazeitim** (04) 694-2726.

Kfar Yuval

Moshav near the Jordan, Baniyas, Hatzbani, and Dan streams.

Rahamim Boarding House (04) 694-3368, **Ben Anat's Cabins** (04) 694-1528, **Jacob's Dream** (04) 694-1287, **Little Switzerland** (04) 694-0533, **Nehemya Guest House** (04) 694-2384, **Nof Hermon – Limor** (04) 694-3380, **Jordan Light Cabins** (04) 695-9317, **Beit Mor** (04) 694-2903, **Yuval in the Village** (04) 690-2092.





Above: The main street of Metulla.

Hagoshrim Hotel

Hagoshrim Hotel is situated in the heart of the "land of streams." The beauty of the place was already known in the Ottoman period - the emir Faour knew what he was doing when he built his winter palace there. Remains of the palace, by the way, blend in well with the modern design of Hasgoshrim Hotel. The hotel offers 180 well-appointed rooms. Each room has air conditioning, TV with a hookup to feature films broadcast by video, minibar, and coffee-making equipment.

It's not only a hotel, it's a little kingdom. You can enjoy numerous activities: outdoor swimming pool, heated pool with jacuzzi, sauna, fitness room, spinning, and squash courts, a selection of massages and other treatments. Also on the grounds are a zoo and summer activities for children. Tel.: (04) 681-6000.

She'ar Yashuv

Moshav between Nahal Hermon, the Banias Waterfall, and Tel Dan. **Hofesh shel Halom** (04) 694-2285, **Tal Hermon Country Inn** (04) 694-2738, **Babustan Cabins** (04) 694-1643, **Drori Guest House** (04) 694-1393, **Orchan 2000** (04) 694-9106, **Nina's Country Inn** (04) 694-0565, **Nuriel Guest House** (04) 694-2367, **Beit Hagefen** (04) 694-2291, **Pausa - Galilee Concept Inn** (04) 690-4434, **Elfassy Estate** (04) 694-4242 **Adri Nina** (04) 694-0565.

Amuka

Moshav situated in a forested area not far from the Ein Zeitim Forest. **Aley Dafna** (04) 682-0482, 052-544-2366.

Had Nes

On the slopes of the Golan near the Sea of Galilee and Jordan Park. **Nir Baramah** (04) 692-1498, 052-870-0485.

Dishon

Moshav next to Nahal Dishon. **Bikta Bahar** (04) 694-0708.

Upper Galilee





Kibbutz Lodgings

In recent years, the kibbutzim of the Upper Galilee have developed a variety of accommodation options, from renovated members' rooms to luxurious units built specially for vacationers. Those staying at a kibbutz can usually enjoy its manicured gardens, large expanses, lawns, swimming pool, and dining room, and many kibbutzim offer other tourist attractions as well.

Kfar Szold Country Lodging: At the foot of the Golan, overlooking the Hula Valley. Guest units (a room and a half and two rooms), wagon rides to the fields. (04) 690-7176. **Nofey Gonen:**

At the foot of the Golan, overlooking the Hula Valley. Kibbutz Gonen has a variety of guest units, including four of a high standard with a jacuzzi. (04) 695-5220. **Mahanayim Country Lodging:**

On the crossroads between the Golan and the Galilee. The kibbutz has well-cared-for apartments and rooms. (04) 693-3221. **Gadot Country Lodging:**

In the Hula Valley, on the banks of the Jordan River at the foot of the Golan Heights. The kibbutz has a variety of rooms for families and couples. (04) 693-9188. **Malkiya Country Lodging:**

In the heights of the Galilee, above the Kadash Valley, with a view of Mt. Hermon and the Golan Heights. In addition to its guest units, the kibbutz has a cafe – Hafuch al Hahar – which serves kosher Galilee breakfasts; there is also a horseback riding school. (04) 694-6882. **Yiron Country Lodging:**

In the heights of the Upper Galilee, with a view of Mt. Hermon and Kibbutz Sasa. The guest units are suitable for couples and families. There is also a nice pond and a unique animal corner. (04) 686-8394. **Nofesh Ba'ananim Sasa:**

Situated at the foot of Mt. Meron. Lovely guest rooms as well as hostel accommodations. The view is spectacular, the air is clear, and the location gives you a good base for nice outings in the Mt. Meron area. (04) 698-8571. **Hulata Country Lodging:**

Next to the Hula Nature Reserve. The guest rooms are comfortable and well equipped. The kibbutz has a complementary medicine center, a shoe store, a swimming pool, and sports facilities; jeep and horseback excursions are also offered. (04) 691-5092. **Farod Country Lodging:**

At the foot of Mt. Mitzpe Hayamim, overlooking the landscapes of Lower Galilee. The guest apartments are air conditioned. (04) 684-9030. **Nofei Habashan** (Kibbutz Lehavot Habashan) – In the Hula Valley, right at the foot of the Golan. Double rooms, family rooms, and hostel accommodations. (04) 695-2315. **Snir Country Lodging** (04) 695-2508. **The Village Inn, Kfar Hanassi** (04) 691-4870. **Misgav Am Country Lodging** (04) 695-3112. **Ganei Dafna** (04) 694-5011.

Hotels

Alaska Inn Hotel, Metulla: This is the famous Sheleg Halevanon



Hotel of Metulla that was built in 1905, but it has changed its name. The old, established hotel knows how to keep in step with the times and it remains young in spirit and inviting. It has 70 spacious rooms equipped with cable TV, video, air conditioning, refrigerator, and jacuzzi. On the hotel grounds there is a swimming pool (in season), dry sauna, pub/club, restaurant, and Internet cafe. We recommend that you go up to the roof whenever you can and look at the view. (04) 699-7111. **Arazim Hotel, Metulla** (04) 699-7144. **Galya Hotel, Metulla:** Hotel with a unique rural atmosphere in a lovely garden. In operation since 1938. The rooms have cable TV, toilet, and shower. (04) 699-7337. **Hagoshrim Hotel** (04) 681-6000. **Pastoral Hotel - Kfar Blum** (04) 683-6611, **Kfar Giladi Hotel** 176 spacious rooms at a high standard, surrounded by large lawns, an ornamental garden, and a natural wood. The rooms are equipped with bathtubs and there is a refrigerator and a coffee corner. Two swimming pools, one heated. Halls with a capacity of 70-180. Tennis court and fitness room. (04) 690-0000. **Vered Hagalil:** Guest farm beside the northern part of the Sea of Galilee, with large garden areas, horseback riding, swimming pool (in season), and a jacuzzi on the balcony. The guest accommodations are divided into the following categories: 3 cabins, 3 rooms, 4 studios, and 9 cottages. Some of the units are wheelchair-accessible. (04) 693-5785.

Guest House

Tel Hai Youth Hostel (04) 694-0043. **Mt. Hermon Field School, Snir** (04) 694-1091.



Top and above: Guest room and pool at She'ar Yashuv

Kfar Yuval

Kfar Yuval, at the edge of the Hula Valley, is perhaps the nicest place we know. Jacob's Dream (04) 690-1287





Nature Reserves and National Parks

Hula Nature Reserve

The Hula Nature Reserve was the first nature reserve designated in Israel. Come and get to know the unique swamp landscapes, the abundance of birds, and the animals endemic to the area and also hear about the struggles of Zionist settlement in the Hula Valley. The reserve has a disabled-accessible trail; the route is easy to walk and suitable for the entire family. **Tel.** (04) 693-7069, (04) 693-4069

Tel Hazor National Park

Tel Hazor is the largest and most important biblical tell in the Land of Israel. A unique tour can be organized for schoolchildren and families; in the course of the tour, they can experience the work of the archaeologist and learn about the difficulties of preserving and restoring remains of the past for future generations. **Tel.** (04) 693-7290

Nahal Ayoun Nature Reserve

Nahal Ayoun descends from Metulla to the Tannur Waterfall and creates three spectacular waterfalls along the way. A hike along it combines landscapes, vegetation, riverbeds, and flowing water. **Tel.** (04) 695-1519

Mt. Meron Nature Reserve

The Mt. Meron Nature Reserve sprawls over an area of 24,000 acres and encompasses unique and rare natural and scenic treasures and remains of buildings and agricultural installations. The reserve offers numerous routes of various degrees of difficulty suitable for a wide range of age groups. To arrange a tour along routes featuring flowers and breathtaking views of the reserve, call the Upper Galilee Guiding Center. **Tel.** (04) 693-4331

Hurshat Tal National Park

Between ancient Mt. Tabor oaks and a stream

of clear water, you can enjoy the pools and water facilities of Hurshat Tal. You can swim in the pool of the springs under the supervision of a lifeguard, have a picnic, and sleep outdoors or in bungalows at the site. For further details: **Tel.** (04) 694-2360

Baram National Park

The ancient synagogue in Baram has remained amazingly well preserved for over 1,600 years. This is a rare opportunity to see a nearly intact building from one of the most important Jewish periods in the Galilee, the mishnaic and talmudic period. Baram National Park is situated next to the Baram Oaks Nature Reserve (a rare natural forest with unusually tall kermes oaks) and other natural and scenic gems. **Tel.** (04) 698-9301

Nahal Amoud Nature Reserve

Come and enjoy the Nahal Amoud Nature Reserve – a magical creation of nature! Water flows in Nahal Amoud all year round and you can find a large selection of hiking routes suitable for any age, degree of difficulty, and season. As you hike, you will see many agricultural installations such as mills, orchards, aqueducts, and more. If you like, you can also stay overnight at the reserve campsite for a fee and by advance arrangement. **Tel.** 057-776-2026

Nahal Snir (Hatzbani) Reserve

Nahal Snir one of the most hiked riverbeds in Israel, and for good reason: it flows with water all year round. In winter, Nahal Snir is the place to see a raging river, and in summer, it offers lush riverbed vegetation, wading pools, and an exciting hike inside its channel. All of these features guarantee the visitor an unforgettable experience no matter what the season. **Tel.** (04) 695-0064

Attractions • Restaurants

Metulla. Beit Ha'ikar (The Farmer's House Museum)

This restored farmhouse, built in 1896, in Metulla's early days, illustrates the settlers' life and the difficulties they encountered in the first years of the colony, which was isolated and distant from any other Jewish settlement. Visits by appointment with the museum's director, Nessia Ilan, **052-417735**.



Ramot Naftali. Barock Dairy

Petting corner, goats' milk products, guided tour, and tastings. **(04) 695-0101**.

Kibbutz Baram. Bar-David Museum of Jewish Art and Judaica.

This three-story museum features a permanent exhibition of Judaica and changing art exhibitions. Other items displayed at the museum include an exact replica of the lintel of the Baram Synagogue. The museum holds (by appointment) tours, lessons, and activities for groups in various languages. **(04) 698-8295**.

Traktoroney Iguana

ATV rides in She'ar Yashuv and various other routes, rides along the riverbeds, night tour, and a marked obstacle course. **050-539-6249**.

Traktoroney Ha'ya'ar

ATV trips in the beautiful landscapes of the Hula Valley, Nahal Dishon, the Galilee, and the Golan, including overnight stays and outdoor meals. **050-743-8313**.

Jeep Tours - Ayelet Hashahar

Jeep tours in the Upper Galilee, the Golan, Mt. Hermon, the Hula Valley, and the Lower Galilee. From one-hour rides to trips of a few days. The jeeps have seven seats and the drivers are local residents. Option of night excursions. **(04) 686-8666**.



Top: The "tractor" of Beit Hillel.

Above: Rope park at Kfar Blum.



Top: The right way to relax in Ramot Naftali.

Above: The hidden canyon beside Yiftah.

Lishansky Restaurant
Metulla. (04) 699-7184.

Baronit Cafe, Gallery, and Dairy Restaurant in Metulla
(04) 694-5909.

Bat Ya'ar Ranch – Forest Activity Center

Country-style restaurant, horse-back riding, jeeps, rope park, bowling in nature, playground, and animal corner. (04) 692-1788.

The Milky Way – The Korlander Farm in Beit Hillel

When Tomi Korlander's parents immigrated to Israel in the early 1950s, they were given one cow as part of the government-granted allotments meant to aid them in their new home. Thus began the family barn, which now houses some 400 cows. About a year ago, the family decided to formalize visits to the barn because more and more people were expressing a desire to see it. The tours take place at milking time

(4 a.m., 11:45 a.m., and 7 p.m.). Visitors are served a chocolate drink made with the "house" milk. You can also try your hand at milking. By appointment. **052-458-5058.**

Maayan (Spring) Campsite

The Maayan Campsite is located at the junction of the road that turns toward Kibbutz Maayan Baruch from the Kiryat Shemona-Banias road. Alongside flows Nahal Snir. A place for picnics and camping out. There are trees, tables, rest rooms and showers. Lighting and a possibility of connecting to lighting, refrigerators, and a cafeteria. **(04) 695-4624.**

Hagoshrim – Maayan Kayaks and Boats

In the Maayan Campsite, Kibbutz Maayan Baruch and Kibbutz Hagoshrim operate kayaking and rafting businesses. There are two routes: the rough route and the family route. The rough route takes you on a challenging 6-kilometer ride in the raging segment of the Snir River. The ride takes about an hour and a half. Children age 10 and up are permitted on this route only in boats. The family route consists of 5 quiet, shady kilometers, suitable for children age 5 and up. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. July, August, and holidays 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Rough route: **(04) 695-4601.**

Family route: **(04) 681-6034/5.**



Kibbutz Hagoshrim: The Valley of the Vanishing River

15-minute route. Begins below the Hagoshrim Hotel. Plenty of water along the way. The entire route is signposted and ends at the entrance to Kibbutz Hagoshrim. (04) 681-6000.

Canada Centre in Metulla

State-of-the-art sports center whose main feature is the largest Olympic ice skating rink of its kind in the Middle East. There is also a heated pool, toddlers' pool, jacuzzi, outdoor pool in summer, basketball court, well-equipped fitness room, bowling alley, and paint-rifle shooting range for adults and children. A restaurant and cafeteria also operate on the site. Open every day of the week from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. 1 Harishonim St. (at the entrance to Metulla). (04) 695-0370.

Lake Agmon

Birdwatching, bicycle trips, rowboats, golf cart excursions, night safaris, and more. (04) 681-7137.

Dining

Dagei Dafna

Fish and meat restaurant located in a trout farm. The fish "jump" into your plate straight from the breeding ponds and diners enjoy not only the freshest food around, but also the pastoral atmosphere amid the Dan streams. (04) 694-5909.

Gosh, Kibbutz Hagoshrim

This restaurant is situated in a pastoral spot, on the edge of Nahal Koren, in a wonderful thicket. It consists of a cabin surrounded by tables and chairs scattered among the trees. Gosh offers trout, sea bream, St. Peter's fish, salmon, and other fish, as well as mushroom soup, onion soup, and cheese made on the kibbutz.

(04) 681-6031.



Beit Jann and Its Environs

Beit Jann is a Druze village situated within the Mt. Meron Nature Reserve. There are several sites of interest in the village, and the villagers are happy to guide visitors to their destination. You can drive on the narrow road that leads a bit south of Beit Jann to Mt. Ha'ari, the site of the Baha a-Din makam, a Druze holy place, and go up to the lookout point on top of the mountain. Another observation point is Mt. Tzafir. To get there, drive to the western entrance of the village, and follow the narrow road beside the el-Jarmak Restaurant. At the northern foot of Mt. Hillel is the spring of Ein Hazaken; you can get there from Beit Jann in a 4x4 vehicle or on foot.

Nahal Snir • The Water Route



Do You Like Trout?

Trouts need water that is cold, flowing, and clean. Therefore they are raised in the upper rivulets of Nahal Dan. At Dagei Dafna you can buy trout that was frozen fresh. You can also dine in the restaurant. (04) 694-1154

Scenic Nooks in Nahal Hermon

Along Nahal Hermon, there are several hidden beauty spots for those who love water landscapes. You can get to them from Moshav She'ar Yashuv. Drive to the southeastern corner of the moshav. From there, a road leads down to Nahal Hermon (small sign). When you come to a little bridge, cross over it and then turn left. Further on, you'll come to two little parking bays with roads leading down to the riverbed.

After many years of debate, it was decided to charge a fee for admission to the Nahal Snir Nature Reserve. Some will dispute this decision, maintaining that it's not right to expect people to pay to enjoy every place where there's a little water. Those who feel that way apparently have not seen the piles of litter in the "natural" sites of Israel. Ardent nature lovers will say that the fence around the reserve disturbs the animals. As usual in Israel, there is no single answer to this question. But one thing is clear: the Nahal Snir reserve is a wonderful place.

Entry to the reserve is from the Baniyas-Kiryat Shemona road (Road No 99). Turn north opposite Kibbutz Hagoshrim (there's a sign), go a bit past the Dag al Hadan restaurant, continue straight and you'll reach the entrance to the reserve.

You can start your hike with a light meal in the shady little picnic site beside the parking lot. Afterward, you can change your clothes in the rest rooms and continue to walk on the wooden path in the direction of the wading pools. The path passes through thick vegetation, between streams, and reaches little wading pools, which also include a little waterfall. The pools are suitable for small children. It's fun, but the main attraction awaits you a bit further on.

The path leads down to the channel of Nahal Snir. Water rushes through the riverbed (entry to the actual channel is dangerous!). You can follow the marking of the Israel Trail, which runs along the eastern bank. On the way, it passes little rivulets and you can also take a shortcut and go back to the left to the parking area. It's a cool and pleasant walk, shaded by the trees.

In the end you reach a bridge over Road 99, beside the Maayan Campsite. This is the end of the route. If you haven't arranged for a car to pick you up, turn left here on a new promenade, which returns to the starting point. The road back takes about 20 minutes and is not shaded. You can, of course, go back the same way you came – along the riverbed. The full hike takes from an hour and a half to three hours, depending on what you do on the way.

Don't forget to bring shoes or sandals for walking in the water, shorts or a bathing suit, a sunhat, and drinking water. Notice the new island that formed this winter in the middle of the riverbed. On the island, which remained from the collapse of the bank in the rainfalls of last winter, grows a large plane tree.



Lake Agmon • Reborn



The Hula reflooding project of the Jewish National Fund, is planned to rehabilitate the Hula lake and swamp. Draining the swamp which was considered to be the zenith of the Zionist enterprise in the valley, turned out to be an action that caused a great deal of damage to the vegetation, rare animals, and the water of the Sea of Galilee. Now the damage is being repaired. JNF has created a new lake (Agmon Hahula – the little lake of the Hula, known in English as Lake Agmon), which is gathering plants and birds that have “rediscovered the Hula” with astonishing swiftness.

To tour the area, start out about 2 kilometers south of the Koah Junction, beside Road No. 90. From that point, turn east on the road leading to the “Hula Project Encampment.” Continue on the road, which leads to Lake Agmon.

At the first junction, turn south (right) and drive along the western canal, which drained the Jordan River. Two kilometers later, you’ll come to a sign pointing left, to “Agmon Hahula.” Drive along the water canal and suddenly the landscape will open up, revealing Lake Agmon in all of its splendor. The road leads around the lake. On the way, you can view the scenery from the observation towers, including the many birds that inhabit the area.

In the northwestern corner of the lake is the main lookout point, with a view of the cranes’ “grazing” areas. Thousands of them spend the winter in this spot.

A small wooden bridge crosses a little channel, which comes from the Jordan River. Beside it are thickets of papyrus. The surrounding expanses of water swarm with birds, and roaming among the papyrus and reeds are nutrias, ducks, jungle cats, and even wild boars (active mainly at night).



Thai Massage in Yesod Hama’ala

At Pinat HaGefen in Yesod Hama’ala there is a guest unit with a jacuzzi and spa that is just right for rest and pampering. You can arrange in advance for a Thai massage, reiki, and health treatments. Yitzhak Ronzberg, (04) 693-7156, 050-750-0814.

Ein Tina

Ein Tina is a wonderful place: lots of water, a little brook, and a waterfall. To get there, drive to Kibbutz Gadot and turn north on Road No. 918. Cross the Jordan River on the “Pkak Bridge.” From the bridge, continue for about 5 kilometers and before the sharp bend in the road, park your vehicle in the parking lot beside the eucalyptus trees, to the right of the road.



To the Baram Oaks Nature Reserve

• A Good Old Fashioned Forest



The Baram Oaks Nature Reserve is one of the best places for a short, easy hike in summer. Not only is it a rare phenomenon - a large natural forest of kermes oaks, which covers some 375 acres - but its impressive trees are impenetrable to the sun's rays, and so the rocks are coated with a lovely layer of green moss that gives the forest an enchanted appearance. When you walk in the forest you'll hear the vigorous chirping of wrens - the smallest birds in Israel - which build their nests of moss.

A short, marked trail offers a hike that takes 1 1/2 - 2 1/2 hours. To reach the starting point, drive on the northern road between Moshav Dovev and Kibbutz Baram (Road No. 899). Turn toward Baram National Park and pass it. At the first junction, turn left and drive about 2 kilometers on the "Baram bypass" road, which descends to the riverbed of Nahal Dishon. Stop beside the Leah and Yitzhak Rabin picnic site, situated

south of the road. You can have a light meal and then set out on your hike.

A dirt road marked in blue leads down through a pine forest to the boundary of the reserve. Here, beside the sign announcing the reserve, the road becomes a trail. The trail enters a little, shaded channel, and you'll have to leap lightly from rock to rock. In winter you can find water in the holes between the rocks.

The channel ends in the large gorge of Nahal Dishon, the riverbed that drains the Mt. Meron mass eastward, toward the Jordan River. Turn right, following the red marking (also the Israel Trail). Walk in Nahal Dishon no more than 200 meters and go right, following the red marking leading out of the channel. About 600 meters further, turn right on the trail marked in black, which will take you back to the parking lot (if you continue straight, you can follow the Israel Trail to the top of Mt. Meron, but that's a route for proficient hikers).

The black trail again passes beneath the lovely canopy of trees of the forest. Soon it becomes a wide dirt road that returns to the "blue" dirt road in which you began the hike.



Bar Am Synagogue

Next to the Baram Oaks Nature Reserve is Baram National Park, which features the remains of an impressive synagogue from the talmudic period. The facade of the synagogue is perhaps the most resplendent facade discovered in Israel to date.



From Keren Naftali to Nebi Yusha • The Big Cliff

This is a route for the whole family, which includes driving in a private car and visiting the beautiful sites of the Ramot Naftali range.

Begin at Keren Naftali, a peak protruding over the Hula Valley. You can get there on a dirt road that turns off eastward from Road No. 886, about half a kilometer south of Moshav Ramot Naftali. The spot is easily recognizable by the antennas there. The road passes along the periphery of a planted forest and reaches large Atlantic pistachio trees that grow among the remains of a Hellenistic temple. We aren't exaggerating when we say that the view from here is one of the most stunning in Israel.

After looking at the view, drive back to the road and then northward. You will pass Moshav Ramot Naftali and a bit north of it you'll find a little sign pointing east (right) to a trail parallel to the road. This is the route of the Israel Trail. You can leave your car by the side of the road and walk northward along the trail, enjoying the lovely view. Several hundred meters later, you'll reach the tomb of a sheikh, Nebi Yusha, which used to be a pilgrimage site.

Return to your car the same way you came and drive north to the Yesha Junction, beside the sheikh's tomb. Before you is the Nebi Yusha police station, which was the subject of a bitter battle during Israel's War of Independence and is now used by the border police. Leave your car in the parking lot and walk to the park behind the police station. After viewing the monument to the fallen in the battle (Israel Trail marking), continue to the observation terrace, which offers a view of the marvelous cliffs of the riverbed of Nahal Kadesh.

Now go back to your car. If it's time for a light picnic lunch, you can have it in the shade of the large Atlantic pistachio tree in the Kadesh Valley. Drive westward from the Yesha Junction for about one kilometer and you'll see the huge tree on the left side of the road, whose shade can accommodate no less than 50 people. Under this tree and under the nearby trees, the Jewish National Fund has created a wonderful picnic site.



Tel Kadesh National Park

Tel Kadesh National Park is a nice site with no admission charge. The parking lot is right at the spot where the border road leaves the northern road, about 3 kilometers west of the Yesha Junction. A well-marked trail leads to the main remains on the tell, which are from the Roman period and include impressive sarcophagi and the facade of a temple to the Roman sun god.

Hidden Canyon

About a kilometer north of Kibbutz Yiftah lies a little hidden canyon, which every child will enjoy hiking. The canyon is just east of the road, and is reached via the blue-marked trail (Road No. 886, between kilometer markers 65 and 66). There is a hidden ravine, navigable with the aid of stakes implanted in the rock. The ivy adds a delightful touch to the route.



Summer on Mt. Hermon • Skiing in Winter, Hiking in Summer



It's no secret that people like to visit Mt. Hermon in winter, have fun in the snow, ride the cable car, and go back home. Those who are in the know go up to

Mt. Hermon in summer. It's much less crowded, and in summer it's a pretty unusual place. Patches of snow remain in the valleys atop the mountain until July, so you can enjoy the whiteness even then. Spring is at its height on Mt. Hermon in May and June, and the flowers are so colorful that the area is reminiscent of the Alps. The cable car brings visitors to a height of almost 2,000 meters above sea level. From that point, the view is marvelous: the Hula Valley, the southern Lebanon mountains, the Naftali Mountains - everything looks beautiful.

Make sure to look at the vegetation, the likes of which you won't encounter in any other place in Israel. An especially interesting shrub is the prostrate cherry (*Cerasus prostrata*). This plant yields quite a tasty fruit, albeit with hardly any flesh. Another nice sight on Mt. Hermon is the shrubs that form thorny cushions. The *Acantholimon ulicininum*, produces a thorny ball half a meter in diameter, which looks so soft and pretty that you want to stroke it. Many plants on Mt. Hermon have a thorny cushion because in winter, the thorny skeleton can store within it buds of plants that will bloom the following spring.

Before leaving, look for the nest of the shore lark or horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). It makes a depression in the earth and surrounds it with a ring of small stones. With the aid of binoculars, you can discover several more birds that can be found only in this area. It's worth the effort.



Hike on Mt. Hermon

The cable car to the top of the Israeli side of Mt. Hermon operates in summer and you can go there and hike without any prior arrangement.

Nebi Hazuri

When you visit Mt. Hermon, have a picnic beside the grave of Sheikh Nebi Hazuri. There is a picnic site in a fenced area in which large oak trees grow, beside the monument to the Egoz fighters.

New Trail

From Nebi Hazuri a short marked trail leads toward Nimrod Castle National Park (not the one that leads down to Nahal Hazuri).



Riding the Range • Trail Fun

From time immemorial, the Upper Galilee has been a land of horsemen. The first Jewish guardsmen in the early days of modern settlement of the land of Israel were always seen on horseback. The cowboys of the Galilee guarded their herds at night from astride their mounts. But a great deal of time went by before horseback riding became an end and pleasure in itself. In the past 20 years, this pastime has become more and more popular in Israel.

There's nothing like the Galilee for a horseback ride. It's nearly the only place in Israel where you can ramble along mountain trails beside flowing water and farmland. The weather is great and the scenery fantastic. The routes are many and varied – you can choose either a ride of 1-3 hours on a prearranged route, a full-day ride, and even several days on a trans-Galilee route.

Previous knowledge is not necessary – at the beginning of the ride, participants receive a thorough explanation on control of the horse, behavior with the horse, and behavior during the ride. The horses used for these rides were chosen because of their easy and quiet nature. Still, it doesn't hurt to remember that these are nevertheless animals – and their behavior is not always predictable (as if human behavior is...).

Each group that sets out on one of these rides consists of no more than 10 people. Accompanying every few riders is a guide who serves both as a riding instructor and a tour guide. Following are several establishments offering horseback riding in the Galilee: **Kibbutz Malkiya** – (04) 694-6882. Riding school, horseback rides, and wagon rides. **Kalil Horse Ranch at Kfar Szold** – (04) 690-7185. Horse-drawn wagon tours of the fields of the Hula Valley. **Vered Hagalil** – (04) 693-5785. Short tours in the area, tours of several hours to the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee, and tours of several days. **Bat Ya'ar Ranch** – (04) 692-1788. Rides in the Biriya Forest. At nearly all of the ranches, rides are limited to children over the age of 12.



Jeep Trips

Every road in the Galilee branches off into an extensive system of dirt roads and other thoroughfares that only SUVs can negotiate. Many companies offer jeep trips in the area, with experienced guides who know the road and the stories behind it. They know where to get good labaneh, where to buy watermelon, and where there's a summer orchard beside a spring. The guides are also equipped with coffee kits and other comforts.

It's another Israel – bouncy, rough, but certainly a Galilee experience not to be missed.