



# Traveling to Israel With Food Allergies

Food allergies don't have to stop you from traveling. Whether traveling for business or pleasure, careful preparation and communication will help make your trip safe and enjoyable. This guide provides some helpful tips for traveling to Israel, plus information on understanding food labels and dining out at restaurants.

## Medication

Bring a kit with all your medications, including extra epinephrine auto-injectors. It is also recommended that you carry an Emergency Care Plan that outlines recommended treatment in case of an allergic reaction, is signed by a physician and includes emergency contact information. You can download a Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan in Hebrew at [allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/emergency-care-plan.pdf](http://allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/emergency-care-plan.pdf). (FARE's action plan can be downloaded at [foodallergy.org/faap](http://foodallergy.org/faap)). Be sure to bring extra copies with you, and keep your plan in a place where others can find it. It is important that you and your travel companions understand what to do in case of an emergency.

Ask your doctor to write prescriptions that you can carry with you. The adrenaline (epinephrine) auto-injector is not sold over-the-counter, but any doctor can prescribe you an adrenaline (epinephrine) auto-injector if needed. The only brand of adrenaline (epinephrine) auto-injector available in Israel is EpiPen®. The most common antihistamine available in Israel is Fenistil drops, which have a similar effect to Benadryl, but other forms are also available. All medications require physician prescriptions.

Understand policies for carrying medication on board the aircraft. You are allowed to keep your epinephrine with you in the aircraft cabin. However, you may need to show the printed label that identifies the medication and user. It is recommended that you also show the prescription label from the pharmacy. Carry with you a Travel Plan completed by your doctor that confirms your food allergy and travel requirements. A Hebrew/English Travel Plan can be downloaded at [allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/travel-plan.pdf](http://allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/travel-plan.pdf).

## Emergencies

### ADMINISTER EPINEPHRINE AND DIAL 1-0-1

Always keep your epinephrine with you and easily accessible. Let your travel companions know about your allergies so they know what to do in case of an emergency and where your auto-injectors are located.

In the event of an emergency, administer epinephrine immediately. It is critical not to delay administering epinephrine. Next, contact emergency services by calling 1-0-1 to request ambulance transport to a hospital emergency department. All ambulances are equipped with adrenaline (epinephrine) and staffed to administer it in Israel. Be sure to inform the dispatcher that someone is experiencing an allergic reaction so that you will be provided with a special ICU (Intensive care unit) ambulance when transported to the hospital. It is important to remain at the hospital for at least four hours of observation because symptoms may return.

Familiarize yourself with the local emergency services phone number and dialing procedures. For example, some hotels may have specific procedures for dialing 1-0-1 from your room. Be aware of your location so that you can give the dispatcher specific information. Also, familiarize yourself with the location of the nearest emergency department. You may want to purchase travel insurance prior to arrival in Israel. Emergency care can be expensive without insurance.

## Understanding Food Labels

Reading food labels and ingredients on packaged food is an important part of managing food allergies and avoiding your allergen. Currently, labeling regulation in Israel is in process, and there are no regulations that require labeling of food allergens at present. Today, only the largest food manufacturers (Osem / Nestle, Tnuva, Strauss, Elit, Telma / Unilever) are adding allergy information to their product labels. It is advised that those managing food allergies read all ingredients and labels available on all packages carefully, every time. In most cases, the labeling is available only in Hebrew and Arabic. You can use the Google Translate app ([translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com)) to take a picture of the Hebrew label and translate it. The following table lists the main common allergens labeled in Israel and their pronunciation in Hebrew:

ALLERGEN NAME	PRONUNCIATION IN HEBREW	WRITTEN IN HEBREW
Milk	Halav	חלב
Peanuts	Botnim	בוטנים
Nuts	Egozim	אגוזים
Fish	Dagim	דגים
Sesame	Sumsum (T'hina, halva)	שומשום, טחינה, חלבה
Shellfish, Seafood	Tsdafot, Perot Yam	צדפות, פירות ים
Wheat	Hita	חיטה
Eggs	Beitzim	ביצים
Soy	Soya	סויה



## Snacks and Meals

It is recommended that you travel with non-perishable food that is safe for you to eat, in case you are unable to find allergen-free food while traveling. Good options include uncooked pasta and snack bars that are free of your allergen. If you plan to stay in a hotel, consider staying in one that has a small kitchen or a refrigerator and microwave to store and prepare safe meals and snacks. Thoroughly clean all utensils, equipment and surfaces before first use. You may be able to purchase some of the same products in the Israel as you can back home, but remember that the same product manufactured in different countries can contain different ingredients. Most of the 4- and 5-star hotels will accommodate you if you inform them that you or your child has food allergies. Generally, they will have you speak personally with the dining room manager, who will assist in providing available options that are safe for you.

## Dining Out at Restaurants

When you are dining out with food allergies, planning ahead is important. There are no particular restaurants or restaurant chains that are known to be safe for individuals with food allergies. Whether a restaurant will accommodate your food allergies depends solely on the goodwill of the owner and manager, as there is no official policy in the matter. Most restaurants will state that they can't take responsibility, though a growing number of restaurants are becoming allergy-aware.

Before you go to the restaurant, there are some steps you can take to see if a particular restaurant is a good choice for you. Many restaurants have websites and post their menus online for you to review ahead of time. You can also call the restaurant and ask to speak to the chef or manager about your food allergies, menu items and meal preparation. We recommend calling during off-peak hours. The best way to evaluate is by speaking directly to the staff and seeing how they treat your requests. You may bring your own food into most restaurants if it is for personal use only.

Communication between restaurants and customers with food allergies is essential to a safe dining experience. The restaurant manager and wait staff should know about your food allergy. Remind a manager or the head waiter about your allergies before you are seated.

In addition to asking questions about the ingredients and preparation methods, carry a "chef card" that outlines the foods you must avoid. Hebrew/English chef cards are available at [allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/chef-card-template-il.pdf](http://allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/chef-card-template-il.pdf). Present the card to the chef or manager for review.

When selecting your meal, keep it simple. If you have to ask complicated questions about the items on a menu, simple food made with basic ingredients may be the safest. Be sure to ask what is in your dish and how it is prepared. It is important that the restaurant staff understand what you are allergic to and take steps to avoid cross-contact. You may want to speak to the manager and the chef, just to be sure.

Remember, never be embarrassed if you feel you are not communicating effectively. If you think a member of the wait staff does not understand your situation, always trust your instincts and seek out another staff member or manager. Sometimes, the safest choice is to avoid eating and find a safe meal somewhere else.

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Kosher restaurants that serve meat are exceptional for those with dairy allergy. As a general rule, a kosher meat-serving restaurant is not allowed to have any dairy products at all. Nevertheless, some ingredients may be considered non-dairy (PARVE), but still have traces of milk. Kosher laws cannot be trusted for milk allergy. Please be aware and check for allergy information even if the restaurant is Kosher.

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## Resources

Food Allergy & Anaphylaxis Emergency Care Plan: [allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/emergency-care-plan.pdf](http://allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/emergency-care-plan.pdf)

Reading Food Labels: [foodallergy.org/foodlabels](http://foodallergy.org/foodlabels)

Google Translate: [translate.google.com](http://translate.google.com)

Chef Cards: [allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/chef-card-template-il.pdf](http://allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/chef-card-template-il.pdf)

International Travel Plan: [allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/travel-plan.pdf](http://allergyisrael.org.il/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/travel-plan.pdf)