

THE SEA OF GALILEE

THE LOCATION

The Sea of Galilee, the lowest freshwater lake on Earth at 686 feet below sea level, is located in the northern region of Israel. Surrounded by the Galilean hills and the Golan Heights, it is fed by several rivers and streams, including the Jordan River. It is a popular tourist destination known for its natural beauty, rich history, and cultural and religious significance.

BIBLICAL SIGNIFICANCE

The Sea of Galilee is referred to as the Sea of Chinnereth in some Old Testament verses, such as Joshua 12:3 and Numbers 34:11, where it is mentioned as one of the bodies of water that marked the borders of the land conquered by Joshua and the Israelites, and as one of the borders of the land promised to the Israelites. The name "Chinnereth" comes from an ancient Canaanite word for a harp or lyre, which was associated with the shape of the lake. The lake's name was later translated into Greek and Latin.

The Hebrew word "galil," from which the modern name for the sea derives, appears 24 times in the Old Testament, referring to the region of Galilee.

In the New Testament, the Sea of Galilee is associated with important events in the life of Jesus, such as the calling of the first disciples, calming the storm, and feeding the 5,000..

AMAZING THINGS TO SEE

The Sea of Galilee, also called Lake Kinneret or Lake Tiberias, is approximately 13 miles long, 8.1 miles wide at its widest point, and has a total shoreline of around 33 miles. It is 686 feet below sea level and has an average depth of about 82 feet, with the deepest part located near the center at around 141 feet. The lake is known for its sudden and intense storms caused by the region's unique geography and weather patterns. These storms can bring heavy rain, strong winds, and high waves, making navigation difficult and resulting in fatalities.

MATTERS OF HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE

During the First Jewish Revolt (66-73 CE), a sea battle occurred on the Sea of Galilee. Roman general Vespasian sent ships to attack Jewish rebels who had taken control of Tiberias. In the ensuing naval battle, the Jewish rebels used various tactics, but the Roman fleet won, captured Tiberias, and suppressed the rebellion. This battle played a significant role in shaping the course of the conflict in the Galilee region.

MODERN SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SEA

While very little of the water is used for drinking water, the Sea of Galilee is an important source of water for irrigation in the surrounding region. The lake's freshwater is used to irrigate agricultural lands in the Galilee region, which includes crops such as olives, dates, citrus fruits, and grapes for wine production. The water is typically pumped from the lake and distributed through a network of canals, pipes, and reservoirs to farmers in the area.

SITES AROUND THE SEA

MIGDAL:

- Migdal is an ancient town located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.



- The town is believed to date back to the Bronze Age and has played an important role in the region's history and culture.
- The site of ancient Migdal is home to the Migdal Synagogue, which is one of the oldest synagogues in the world.
- The Migdal Synagogue features intricate mosaics and inscriptions in Hebrew and Aramaic, and provides insight into the history of Jewish worship in the Galilee region during the Second Temple period.
- The discovery of the Migdal Synagogue has made the site an important cultural and historical landmark for visitors.

GINOSAR:

- Ginosar is a kibbutz located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- The kibbutz is home to the Yigal Alon Museum, which contains a number of historic boats and exhibits related to the Sea of Galilee's fishing industry.
- One of the most famous exhibits at the museum is the "Jesus Boat," a 2,000-year-old fishing boat that was discovered in the Sea of Galilee in the 1980s.
- Ginosar is also home to a botanical garden and a beach area that are popular with tourists and locals alike.

MOUNT OF BEATITUDES:

- The Mount of Beatitudes is a hill located on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- The site is traditionally believed to be the location where Jesus delivered his famous Sermon on the Mount.
- The Mount of Beatitudes is home to a Franciscan church and monastery, which were built in the early 20th century.
- The site is an important pilgrimage destination for Christians from around the world, who come to pray and reflect on Jesus' teachings.

EIN GEV:

- Ein Gev is a kibbutz located on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee.
- The kibbutz is known for its fish restaurant, which serves local fish species such as tilapia and St. Peter's fish.
- Ein Gev also offers boat tours of the Sea of Galilee, providing visitors with a unique perspective on the lake's natural beauty and historic sites.
- The kibbutz is also home to a small museum dedicated to the history of the Galilee region.

SUSITA:

- Susita (also known as Hippos) is an ancient city located on a hill overlooking the Sea of Galilee.
- The city was founded in the Hellenistic period and was later occupied by the Romans and Byzantines.
- Susita features numerous archaeological sites and historic landmarks, including a Roman theater, a temple, and a large bathhouse complex.
- The site offers stunning views of the Sea of Galilee and the surrounding countryside, and is a popular destination for hikers and history buffs.