

Welcome to Ashkelon



English Speakers of Ashkelon

ESOA972@GMAIL.COM

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We reserve the right to edit all material received and accepted for publication.

English Speakers of Ashkelon

ESOA endeavors to assist in the integration of all English speaking immigrants into Israeli society while at the same time providing a multitude of social, cultural and civic activities. We believe in giving back to our community and thus all profits from our functions are donated to local charities.

Message from ESOA Board

Ashkelon is a casual beach community with over 141,000 residents as of 2018 and growing continuously. The city is served by the Israel Rail System and 3 bus companies with the Dan South as the primary intercity carrier. Ashkelon is an easy commute to Tel Aviv, Be'er Sheva or Jerusalem via public transportation. We created this booklet to assist potential and new olim to Ashkelon. We hope you will find it useful and helpful. We will be updating it on an on-going basis.



We have all been new olim and have learned that when it comes to dealing with a situation there is rarely a single best answer. ESOA is, however, committed to helping potential and new residents and we invite you to consult us at any time!

Contacting ESOA

Email: ESOA972@GMAIL.COM

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/ESOAshkelon>

ESOA Board of Directors

Board	Name	Email
Co-Chairperson	Lorna Szeffler	lszeffler@gmail.com
Co-Chairperson	Raphi Bloch	raphibloch@gmail.com
Membership	Rona Roth	Esoa.rona@gmail.com

Membership is free for your first year after making aliyah, and thereafter is ₪100 for families and ₪75 for singles. A two-year membership is available at a discounted rate, ₪180 for families and ₪130 for singles. Some local businesses and all ESOA events are discounted for members with your card.

Telephone Numbers

Police Department	100
Police Station – HaNasi 80	08-677-1444
Ambulance (Magen David Odom)	101
Fire Department	102
Electric Company Hotline 24/7	103
Municipality Hotline	106
Municipality Hotline	08-679-2306
IDF Home Front Command	1207
Barzilai Hospital	08-674-5700
Life Guard – Delilah Beach	08-673-6929
Life Guard – Bar Kochba Beach	08-673-0479
Home Front Command	1207
Post office	*2237
Water Department	106
Arnona Property Tax	08-679-2306



Information when making Aliyah to Ashkelon

Banking

Ashkelon has all of the major bank chains in Israel including Discount, Hapoalim, Mizrahi, Yahav, Leumi, Union Bank and others. Israeli credit cards are a hybrid of a debit and credit card. You will need to deposit the same amount as your credit limit as a guarantee. Some banks will open an account for you with zero funds, so your Sal Klita payment can be automatically deposited as required.

Misrad Ha'klita (The Ministry of Absorption) – Telephone: 1-599-500-914

It is important to make an appointment in advance to sign up for your absorption basket and ulpan.

Misrad Ha'Pnim (Ministry of the Interior) – Telephone: 08-674-2555 or *3450

The Ministry of the Interior creates and maintains your Teudat Zehut (ID Card) and Israeli Passport. You can now request both documents in the Bio Metric versions. You MUST visit the Misrad Ha'Pnim each time you change your address! You may apply for an Israeli passport after being in the country one (1) year. You might want to apply for a Teudat Ma'avar (temporary travel document) in case you have to travel in an emergency.



Absorption and Interior Ministries

Visit Misrad Ha'Klita (Absorption office) & Misrad Ha'Pnim

Both ministries are located at 9 Berl Katsenelson Street, which is off of Ben Gurion Blvd at the end of the Migdal and also the area is bordered by the Hutsot Kanyon (Mall). This area is serviced by a number of bus routes.

The hours of operation for all offices housed in the building are (January 2015):

Ministry of Aliyah & Immigrant Absorption (Misrad Ha'Klita)

5th Floor

Sun, Mon, Wed, Thurs 8:30-13:30

Wed 15:00-18:30

The Ministry of the Interior (Misrad Ha'Pnim)

3rd Floor – Tel: *3450

Population and Immigration Bureau

Sun-Mon-Tues-Thurs 08:00-12:00

Mon 14:30-17:00 Wed 13:30-17:00

Visa Services by Appointment Only

Employer and Foreign Worker Services

Sun-Mon-Tues-Thurs 08:00-12:00

Bureau of Collections Enforcement

Sunday -Thursday 08:30-13:30

Holiday Hours Sun-Thurs 09:00-12:00

Israeli Employment Services

Sun, Thurs 08:30-13:00

Youth Hours Mon, Wed starting at 13:00

Telephone (08-675-0241)



City of Ashkelon Senior ID Card

For an Ashkelon Senior Card go to the Pensioner's Department located at the end of the City Hall Building on 7 HaGvura Street in a small alleyway, the door is on the right.

Israeli Senior Citizen Card

Those reaching the official retirement age (62 for women and 67 for men) will receive their cards automatically. New immigrants should follow the directions at: http://vatikim.gov.il/teuda/Pages/teudat_ezrach_vatik.aspx (Hebrew - translator needed)

Health Care

Joining a Kuppah (Medical Insurance Plan)

Ashkelon has all of the major health funds: Maccabi, Clalit, Leumit and Meuchedet. All have sizable primary clinics and branches in and around Ashkelon. The standard “basket” of basic benefits is mandated by the government, you can also obtain supplemental coverage for a fee.

Major Medical Providers in Ashkelon

Maccabbi – <http://maccabi4u.co.il/14-he/Maccabi.aspx>

Clalit – <http://www.clalit-global.co.il/en/>

Meuchedet – <http://lang.meuhedet.co.il/>

Leumit – <http://www.leumit.co.il/eng>

Additional Health Care Information

Our local hospital, Barzilai Medical Center – Rechov Ha’histadrut – Telephone, 08-674-5700, is not associated with any of the medical insurance companies but takes all insurance. <http://www.barzilaimc.org.il/eng/>

Medications

Medical providers usually have their own pharmacies, but you can also have your prescriptions filled at retail outlet pharmacies.

Urgent Care

There is an urgent care facility, for all individuals.

Terem

3 HaPalmach Street in the Migdal section of the city near the corner of Herzl St.

1599-520-520

Sunday-Thursday 16:00-24:00

Friday 12:00-24:00

Shabbat and holidays 9:00-24:00

www.terem.com

Bituach Leumi - (National Insurance Institute of Israel)

Bituach (Bituah) Leumi is similar to national pension and health insurance, Americans can liken this to the Social Security Administration’s Social Security Benefits (both retirement and disability) and Medicare. New immigrants have their national insurance paid for 1 year, thereafter they have to make arrangements to pay the approximately NIS 105 monthly fee. This does not take the place of your Kuppah. <http://www.btl.gov.il>

The Ashkelon branch is located on the ground floor at 97 HaNasi (across from The Cultural Center on Ben Gurion. 08-674-3750/3

Communications

Land Line Services

Ashkelon is serviced by Bezeq, Hot, and many cell phone companies offer land lines.

Cell Phone Services

Ashkelon is serviced by most cell phone providers.

Internet Services

There are now several Internet service providers. Ask around for recommendations and check out their packages.

TV Service

Cable TV services are provided by Hot. Satellite TV services are provided by Yes. Most Cell phone companies also have Television services available.

Housing

Short Term Housing

There are a number of “vacation” short term rental apartments located in and around the Marina. There are a number of good vacation rental companies online but the largest is <http://www.airbnb.com>. During the summer these tend to be expensive and sparse. During the winter months you can make monthly arrangements at reduced rates. Local real estate agents may also help you find short term housing.



Long Term Housing

Whether you are a buyer or a renter, besides utilities, you will be expected to pay Arnona (municipal property tax). You also pay the VAAD fee (Building Management fee, for apartment blocks) which covers building and grounds maintenance, common utilities, cleaning services, and repairs etc.

Renting

Real Estate Agents charge up to one (1) month commission. You can check such web sites as, <http://www.yad2.co.il>, which is a Hebrew web site, to gauge prices based on your needs.

It is a common practice, if renting through a realtor, to give them 12 post-dated checks in advance, which will be deposited in the landlord's account at the proper time. These checks should be given to the landlord's representative and a receipt given back to you. In addition, it is customary to supply partially filled out checks for utilities, in case you fail to make the proper payments. As part of the rental process, you will be asked for a blank check to cover damages and/or a promissory note for a specified amount.

Alternate methods of payments can be negotiated, do not hesitate to ask, if you would prefer to make other arrangements.

Purchasing

It is advisable to familiarize yourself with how purchasing works in Israel, the following are a few links to get you started:

<http://www.buypropertyinIsrael.com/article/the-request-for-real-estate-brokerage-services>

<http://www.buypropertyinIsrael.com/article/the-basics-of-buying-property-in-Israel>

<http://www.buypropertyinIsrael.com/article/types-of-land-in-Israel>

<http://www.nbn.org.il/aliyahpedia/community-housing/buying-renting-home/glossary-of-israeli-real-estate-terms/>

It is always advisable to use a lawyer to review and recommend changes to lease or purchase contracts. This is almost a requirement in Israel.

Real Estate Agents are paid their commission directly from the buyer and/or seller directly through a written agreement or invoice. No agent should receive any other monies other than their own commission; all monies should go through the respective lawyers and receipts received.

Utilities and Municipal Taxes

Notes:

- 1) It is customary for a renter to pay Arnona (municipal property tax), VAAD (building fee), and utilities in addition to the base rent.
- 2) For the utilities listed below (unless stated differently), you and the Landlord/Seller or their legal representative (with legal Power of Attorney) must accompany you to change any of the following into your name. The representative must have the Landlord/Seller's Teudat Zeuhut or a copy of such.
- 3) You will be asked for the current meter reading and the reading the day you took possession. They may require that the previous tenant/owner validate the readings, so make sure to have his or her current contact information, such as cell phone and new address.
- 4) Bring a Hebrew copy of your purchase or rental agreement. Some attorneys will translate the agreement to your native language for your own records, for a fee.
- 5) If you have a cell phone or digital camera it is wise to take a picture of all meters as proof.

Arnona (Ashkelon City Municipal Tax) – 1 HaGvura St., 4th floor.

Telephone – 08-679-2306— www.ashkelon.muni.il

You will need to make an appointment. The building is located on HaGvura Street in the Maccabi building on the fourth floor above the Maccabi Pharmacy entrance. It is a short walk from the Central Bus Terminal. You can arrange for your olim or senior discounts at the same time. You can only use one of the discounts at a time.

To obtain the 25% Ashkelon City discount for seniors you must bring a statement from Betuach Luemi or from your home country's retirement program. For U.S. citizens that is your yearly 1099 and your new benefits statement each January.

A note on Arnona. At the beginning of each year the city sends out an annual bill, and a bi-monthly bill, which follows your normal payment method. If you pay annually there is a fairly substantial discount. Do NOT pay both.

Water (Ashkelon City Service) – 21 Eli Cohen (7th Floor)

Telephone – 1-800-800-277 www.mei-a.co.il

The building is located at the bottom of Ort Street and Eli Cohen Blvd. in the Blue Glass Office building. It is a short walk from the Central Bus Terminal. Make sure to bring a Hebrew copy of your buyer or rental contract. No appointment is needed.

Electricity – 23 HaOrgim Street, Ashdod – Telephone 103 (24/7 for all calls)

www.iec.co.il

The electric company consolidated its offices in 2019 and closed the Ashkelon office. You will have to go to the Ashdod office. No appointment is needed.

Gas.

If you opt not to have any gas in your unit you still may have to pay a minimum fee of around 20 shekels per month. There are three (3) gas companies located at:

Amizragaz – Tsahal Street – 08-675-0673

Pazgaz – 31 Herzl Street (Migdal area) – 08-675-0648

Supergaz – Ha'Avoda Street (off of David Ramez Blvd) – 08-675-0646

General Notes on Housing

Arnona (municipal property tax), water, and electricity can be set up for automatic payments either from a credit card or directly from a checking account. Check with the agency if there are additional restrictions and discounts for using automated payments.

Always take pictures of any defects or damages on the day you move into a property – if possible turn on the date and time feature on your camera or cell phone.

Neighborhood Information

Local maps are available with all neighborhood areas marked as well as points of interest in the city. You will find Anglos living in all areas of Ashkelon. Many, but not all areas, are included in the following list.

Barnea is one of the newest areas, with construction still taking place. It is an area preferred by young families as there are many neighborhood parks where children can play. There is range of housing available, from older apartment blocks to multi-million-shekel homes near the sea.



Afridar was one of the first neighborhoods settled and has both newer and older apartments, cottages, and villas at many price-points. It starts about 400 meters from the sea and spreads up the hill to Afridar Center and to the north and south. Many bus lines cross the area, so it is easy to get to medical clinics, bus terminals, library, hospital and shopping.



Afridar Center and the surrounding areas are populated by many cottages (2 homes attached) and single homes at the top “of the hill”. The houses range from original condition to newly enlarged and renovated.

Hofim is the Marina area which has construction with older apartments tending to be small “vacation” units and newer high rise buildings with larger apartments. The area borders both Afridar and Barnea neighborhoods.

Neve Hadarim and **Neve Dkalim** is a neighborhood of buildings that range from individual homes to older 4 story units to newer 6 to 10 story units with a mix of owners and renters.

Neve Ilan and **Ne’ot Ashkelon** are home to a large number of buildings between 10 and 15 or so years old. There are religious schools in the neighborhood. A park runs from Eli Cohen through the center of Neve Ilan. Although close to Eli Cohen, the inner neighborhood is very quiet.

Both the **Ha’City** and **Eshkole Paz** neighborhoods start near the Cultural Center. Ha’City is mainly two rows of 3 to 20 story apartment buildings bordered by Ben Gurion Blvd on one side and Beit El on the other. Eshkole Paz is an oasis of meandering cobblestone streets of single family homes (villas) and duplex buildings (cottages), which is bordered by Beit El and HaPardes.

Neve Yam in the south near the national park is mostly single-family homes.

Hanasi Herzog and **Ramat Kramim** both newer areas in the north with large single-family homes.



South of Ben Gurion Blvd are several old and new areas. The neighborhoods include: **Shimshon, Giv’at Tsiyyon, Jabotinsky, Shikmim, Neve Allonim, Giv’at Haprahim, Golda, Ben Gurion** and the newest park/lake community called **Ha’Agamim** which is still under construction and includes high rise, mid-rise and villas.

Education

Ulpan

Ashkelon provides a number of locations in which to take Hebrew lessons. Classes are given during the day and in the evening for those who work. The adult Ulpan includes 5 months of full immersion classes 5 times per week, Sunday through Thursday. The Pensioners or Senior Ulpan class is given for 10 months with classes three days per week. As a new Oleh/Olah, you are provided with a voucher for one of these classes.

To sign up for Ulpan, go to the Ulpan office at Beit Canada at 209 Bar Kochba Blvd. For more information on ulpan and your rights, speak with your Misrad HaKlita advisor and check-out the Misrad Haklita ulpan site at https://www.gov.il/en/Departments/General/ulpan_main.

Continuing Education

Ashkelon Academic College, with nearly 6,000 students, is located at the corner of Eli Cohen Blvd. and Yitshak Ben Zvi. More information can be found at their Hebrew web site <http://www.ash-college.ac.il/>. Part of the site can be accessed in English.

General Education

Ashkelon has 32 elementary schools and 15 junior and senior high schools with an additional 150 kindergartens and more are being constructed as the population grows. The city has religious and non-religious schools.



Registering Your Children

Registration of children in school, kindergarten or day-care is generally carried out at the Office of the Department of Education (Machleket Chinuch) of the local authority – 08-6792339, www.ashkelon.muni.il/edu. For special needs education contact the Office of the Department of Education.

The documents needed for registration include:

- ✓ Te'udat Oleh with your current address
- ✓ Rental or purchase contract and a photo copy
- ✓ Te'udat Zehut of both parents
- ✓ Birth certificate for each child
- ✓ Transcripts or certificates from previous schools

Contact the Machleket Chinuch by dialing 106 to confirm requirements as they may change.

Getting Around

Trains and Buses

Bus transportation is available throughout the city. There are a number of smartphone apps available for download such as MOOVIT and HERE. These apps are real time, if you need to look at the schedule for a different day, time or location you will need to use the web.

The cost of a one segment ticket is ₪5.90 (₪3.80 for seniors). It is about ₪25 for the bus to Jerusalem and ₪22 (₪11 for seniors) for the train to Tel Aviv as examples of longer distance fares. Internal city rates vary from city to city. Ashkelon's bus fees are currently lower than Be'er Sheva or Tel Aviv.

You can purchase multiple ride or monthly packets on personalized or anonymous RAV KAV cards. Personalized cards are insured against loss and have the ability to include student, the disabled, and senior profiles for discounts.

The sherut is a native Israeli invention with mini vans or cars providing inner city services along the bus lines with similar ticket costs – this is a shared ride system. There are also sherutim (plural) that go city to city. Taxis cruise the city and you may find them honking at you while waiting for the bus or even while you are walking. Make sure to negotiate the rate prior to getting into the cab.

Owning a car and obtaining a driver's license

If you wish to have a car in Israel you must have a valid Israeli driver's license. If you are purchasing a new car, you should review the new immigrant discount rules.

Driver's License

You may drive on your valid current foreign license for one (1) year upon arrival. You will need to convert your license within three (3) years of your arrival as a new immigrant. Please see below for links to the most current procedures. See below for helpful websites.

Misrad Harishui (Department of Motor Vehicles) is located in the same building as the Ministries of the Interior and Absorption, 9 Katsenelson, 5th floor. Their hours are Wednesday 08:00 – 12:00 and Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 8:00 to 13:15

Please see the following links for information:

General information and Descriptions of License Classes: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Driving_licence_in_Israel

Step by Step instructions: <https://www.nbn.org.il/aliyahpedia/government-services/drivers-license-cars/converting-foreign-drivers-license/>.

Israel Government Portal English - Driving in Israel: - <http://gov.il/FirstGov/TopNavEng/EngSituations/ESDrivingLicenseRenewal/ESDDrivinginIsrael/>

Parking

Ashkelon has adopted the country wide system of painted curbs to tell you where you can or cannot park, as follows:

- ✓ Red and White Curbs – No Parking
- ✓ Blue and White Curbs – Paid Parking where noted
- ✓ Red and Yellow Curbs – Bus Stop No Parking
- ✓ Black and White Curbs – No formal parking policy

What Does the Curb Say?



Marks the side of the road.
It is not an official parking area,
however local behavior will
dictate whether it's acceptable
to park there or not.



No parking - at all



Parking is permitted.
You may have to pay for parking -
check for a sign to see if you need
to pay.



Bus stop - no parking

Aliyah Tip #14

Photo courtesy of AliyahLift Shipping

The blue and white parking areas in Ashkelon require a ticket or an app such as Pango if noted. There are parking ticket dispensing machines in any area that have the blue and white painted areas. There are still many open dirt lots in and around the city where you can find parking: near the Ministry of the Interior, the central bus station, and the train station.

Many newly constructed buildings have owner assigned parking underground or at street level. If you intend to have a car, this might be a consideration when renting or buying property. Private residences may or may not have parking within the boundaries of the lot, check if there is convenient street parking if renting or buying a house.

Recreation and Leisure

Leisure

It goes without saying that Ashkelon's 12 kilometers of beaches are a main source of leisure activities, with a promenade (טיילת pronounced "tayelet" in Hebrew), with outdoor exercise areas, which is home to many special events during the year. A beach warning: There can be strong undertows so only swim when and where a lifesaver is present and there is a white flag. Ashkelon uses a flag system to indicate swimming status: White – Swimming allowed, Black – No Swimming, Purple – Jellyfish sighted.

There are 4 swimming beaches with life guards:

Bar Kokba Beach is located north of the Marina.

Delilah Beach, located south of the Marina, has a number of cafes and restaurants, pool and snooker parlor, along with 2 sand volleyball courts and outdoor exercise equipment.

The Religious Beach (separate bathing) is located between Delilah Beach and the National Park. Swimming for men on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; Women on Sunday, Tuesday, and Thursday.

HaPark Beach located at the National Park combines a beach area with other facilities.



The National Park is located at the southern tip of the beach area and includes an impressive array of ancient artifacts from the Bronze Age through the Byzantine era. There are facilities for camping, multiple picnic areas and Bar-B-Qs. For more information on hours and reservations see:

http://old.parks.org.il/BuildaGate5/general2/data_card.php?Cat=~20~879864773~Card12~&ru=&SiteName=parks&Clf=&Bur=325944566

The Marina has a number of eateries as well as kayak, surfing and sailing lessons, and row boats available for hire.

Municipal Facilities

The City of Ashkelon has a pool with hydrotherapy facilities, tennis center with 17 courts and soccer stadium. There is an outdoor sports stadium and an enclosed sports arena. Ashkelon is home to professional Soccer, Basketball and Lacrosse teams.

Marjorie Sherman Israel Tennis Center

Address	Ofer Blvd., Shimshon Gimel, P.O. Box 409 Ashkelon 78191
Phone	972-8-672-5364
Email	ashkelon@tennis.org.il
Operating hours	Sunday - Thursday 8.00 to 22.00 Friday 8.00 to 19.00 Saturday 8.00 to 12.00

The Municipal Library is located to the west of the Central Bus Station on Ben Gurion Boulevard. To obtain a library card you will need to leave a check to offset any damage or lost books. Some English books may be obtained at the community centers in Barnea and Shimshon (Woldenberg).

The Cultural Hall, with seating for 850, is located at the corner of Ben Gurion Blvd. and HaNasi Street. The hall hosts many plays, concerts and other performances. Telephone - 08-6718334. Performance information maybe found at <http://www.ashkelonline.co.il/> (in Hebrew).

Ashkelon Academic College is home to many cultural, educational and business events along with Ashkelon's Film Festival which takes place in October. For more information call 08-678-9246. Their website is in Hebrew at <http://www.ash-college.ac.il/>. A sneak peak of the facility can be found on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bvn-pOAfxkE>. Information can be found at <http://www.convention.org.il/> (Hebrew only).

Private Facilities

There are two private country clubs:

Country Club Ashkelon, 59 HaTayyasim, 08-6710787

Barnea Country Club, 10 Rothschild St., 08-6744552

Community Centers

(see Cultural, Artistic & Sports CTR on the Ashkelon tourist map)

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE
HAVATZELET	Hatanaim Street, just off Eliezer Milron (Shikmim)	08-684-5740
NEVE DKALIM	13 Yahadut Sfarad (Neve Dekalim)	08-939-8804
TIQVATENU	21 Rehov Gidon, (Giv'at Tsiyyon)	08-672-7310
BORTON	32 Rav Maimon St. (Shimshon)	08-672-4272
BEIT VOSK	1 Halilah (Afridar)	08-673-8170
BARNEA	20 Har Kna'an (Barnea)	08-673-1941
KATSENELSON	6 Rav Yosef Karo St (Ramat Eshkol)	08-675-1224
SHAPIRA	13 Aleph, Shapira St (Neve Allonim)	08-676-1894
WOLDENBERG	15 Groper St (Ben Gurion)	08-673-9195
NEVE ILAN	7 Arye St (Neve Ilan)	08-675-5914

Shopping and Dining

There are several shopping areas within Ashkelon, each with its own distinct flavor.

The newest is the **Globus Center** at the southern exit of town.

The **Marina Mall** is along the promenade with shops, restaurants, and a movie theatre.

The indoor **Hutsot Mall** (Kanyon Hutzot) is located on the corner of Ben Gurion Blvd. and Katsenelson Street. A small mall with chain stores, bowling alley, and cinema.

The indoor **Giron Mall** (Kanyon Giron) is located adjacent to the Central Bus Station between Ben Gurion Blvd. and HaGvura Street. A mid-size mall with many chain stores.

The **Silver Power Center** is an outdoor shopping area located adjacent to the Ashkelon Train Station off of Route 4. There is a large supermarket, along with appliance stores, hardware, health-food, sports stores, furniture and clothing shops.

Along **Eli Cohen** Street are many small individually owned shops, along with a few chain stores.

The **Outdoor Municipal Market** (“shuk” in Hebrew; 134 on the map) is behind the Remez Bus Depot on David Remez Street. On Thursdays, besides fruit and vegetable booths, you will find clothing and household goods.

The **Municipal Market** (129 on the map) is a small area of stores between the Remez Bus Depot (on David Remez) and HaAvoda Street. There is an area for green grocers, butchers and fishmongers, along with stores selling household goods.

The **Midgal** area, with Herzl Street at its core, runs from Katsenelson to Eli Cohen with many small alleyways and streets. The pedestrian mall (**Midrachov**) and surrounding streets are home to a great variety of shops including hardware/plumbing stores, banks and the main Post Office. Several business offices are located on the upper floors of many buildings. There are a number of small cafes where you can sit and enjoy our fine weather and people watch or take a break from shopping.

Afridar Center is an area with many cafes, stores, a supermarket, both Bank Leumi and Bank Hapoalim and a drug store/pharmacy. The area also has 2 gas stations.

North Industrial Area has several large supermarkets, other large stores, and garages.

Dining and Catering

Like most cities, cafes and restaurants come and go, so please first check regarding Kashrut status and availability. For more places to dine out try this web site: <http://>

www.tripadvisor.com/Restaurants-g297739-Ashkelon_Southern_District.html. You can also check out the website <http://www.2eat.co.il>. This site has menus of some establishments translated into English.

There are a number of catering companies in Ashkelon open on Friday mornings for purchasing prepared foods for Shabbat. Here are a few of the largest with locations.

- Agamim – Afridar – Hatayyasim and Moshe Dorot
- Ha'Baron – North Industrial Center
- Rafaeli – Shimshon – 2nd floor of Kanyon Lev on Hahistaddrut
- Ganne Shimsone Hotel – Afridar on Sonnebend off of lower Drom Afrika
- Tami Hasaf - Afridar - Shlomo Cohen Street 1 in the small outdoor mall off Yrushalyim Blvd.

Social Services & Volunteering

Private and Semi-Public Organizations

Whether you require a service or would like to volunteer, the following is a partial list of organizations that service the Ashkelon area:

The **Yael Volunteer Service** (Supporting the Sick)

Yael is a national organization of volunteers operating in public hospitals throughout Israel. To volunteer at Barzilai Medical Center call 08-674-5301.

The **Shira Pransky Project** – Part of AACI (Americans and Canadians in Israel)

The Shira Pransky Project (<http://shirapranskyproject.org/>) aids English speakers to navigate through the Israeli health care environment with a very comprehensive web site. They also have a Facebook Page where they keep people updated on new services and information, (<https://www.facebook.com/ShiraPranskyProject>). To volunteer email <mailto:volunteers@shirapranskyproject.org>.

Yad Sarah – 6 Rechov Ariel – 08-671-1532

Yad Sarah provides a spectrum of free or nominal cost services, including loan of medical equipment. Operating Hours – Sunday – Thursday 9:00 – Noon, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday 17:00 to 19:00 and Friday 9:30 – Noon.

City of Ashkelon Social Services

<http://www.ashkelon.muni.il/mahlakot/Pages/default.aspx>

Helpful Links

Immigration and Olim Services

Nefesh B’Nefesh – <http://www.nbn.org.il>

Nefesh B’Nefesh aids those who would like to make Aliyah from North America and the United Kingdom with helpful articles, on-line application with step by step instructions and lists of required documents, along with helpful community and city guides.

American and Canadians in Israel (AACI) – <http://www.aaci.org.il/>

AACI is an organization that provides many social as well as informative seminars for those from the U.S.A. and Canada.

Jewish Agency for Israel - <http://www.jewishagency.org/>

The Jewish Agency provides Aliyah services including the required interview as part of the application process. The Agency oversees absorption centers and many programs for those wanting to make Aliyah.

All Rights - http://www.kolzhut.org.il/en/Main_Page

Kolzhut Organization, author of the website [All Rights](http://www.kolzhut.org.il/en/Main_Page), is a non-profit, collaborative project built and maintained by a large group of Israeli experts building an encyclopedia of information about rights and entitlements in Israel.

Medical Services

The **Shira Pransky Project** from AACI - <http://shirapranskyproject.org/>

This informative website helps you navigate through the medical services provided in Israel. The following page provides links to the major medical service companies along with a link to the Ministry of Health’s Medication Database. [http://](http://shirapranskyproject.org/medication-look-up/)

shirapranskyproject.org/medication-look-up/

Government Links

Ministry of Finance (Misrad Ha’Otsar)

This office provides information concerning regulations and procedures, including what you can bring with you when making aliyah. They also include all tax regulations

including who, how, and what needs to be reported, <http://ozar.mof.gov.il/ita2013/eng/mainpage.htm>. You may also want to look at <http://www.dutycalculator.com/country-guides/Import-duty-taxes-when-importing-into-Israel/>.

Ministry of Health Misrad HaBri'ut) - English - <http://www.health.gov.il/English/Pages/HomePage.aspx>

National Insurance Institute of Israel (Bituach Leumi) – English - <http://www.btl.gov.il/English%20Homepage/Pages/default.aspx>. This website explains many programs including pensions and medical benefits in Israel.

Ministry of Transportation (Misrad HaTachbura) – English - <http://en.mot.gov.il/>
This website includes such items as buying a car in Israel.

Israel Post Office (Doar Yisrael) – English <http://www.israelpost.co.il/hpcontent.nsf/EntryHomePage?ReadForm&L=EN>. Israel Postal Authority provides basic banking services; You can pay utility bills, switch medical providers, and purchase pre-paid credit cards for travel to European Union countries and the United States. They also offer Western Union money transfer services.

Ministry of Agriculture

If you are bringing an animal on Aliyah you will need to notify the Ministry within 48 hours of arrival – Dr. Uri Ziv – UriZiv@MOAG.GOV.IL

Transportation Web sites

Rail System (IsraRail) – English - <http://www.rail.co.il/EN/Pages/Homepage.aspx>
Train schedules, ticket prices etc.

Egged Bus Company – English - <http://www.egged.co.il/HomePage.aspx>
Bus Schedules, ticket prices etc. (Until 2016 Ashkelon's bus company)

Dan Bus Company – English - <http://www.dan.co.il/english/default.asp>
Bus Schedules, ticket prices etc.

Private website combining bus company offerings with an English option – <http://www.bus.co.il>

Calendar of Events

On-Going Activities

ESOA Art Chug – Every Sunday morning

ESOA Craft Chug – Every 2nd Monday of the month

Women's Bible Study – every other Wednesday

Monthly Events

ESOA Coffee and Conversation – locations and dates vary

ESOA Lectures and Trips – watch for email announcements and on Facebook

Yearly Events

- Spring – Ashkelon City Purim Parade
- Spring – Ashkelon City Mimouna Celebration
- Spring – Ashkelon City Independence Day Festivals at the city hall square and near the beach
- Summer – Annual music festival on the promenade and surrounding area, including many children's activities
- October – International Jewish Film Festival
- Winter – Ashkelon Kosher Wine Festival

For updates on events watch the ESOA Facebook page or ask to be added to the ESOA e-mail list.



English Speakers of Ashkelon

ESOA972@GMAIL.COM

Photography courtesy of Stevie Sacks