

PASSPORT TO ISRAEL

TEL AVIV

Tel Aviv was founded in 1909 by 66 Jewish families next to the ancient port city of Jaffa (also called Joppa in the Bible). The name “Tel Aviv” comes from a book called Old New Land, written by Theodor Herzl, the man who dreamed of creating a Jewish homeland in Israel. These early pioneers worked hard to turn the dry land of Eretz Israel (the Land of Israel) into what is now a modern, high-tech city known as the technological powerhouse of the Middle East.

While Jerusalem is Israel’s religious heart, Tel Aviv is its center for business, creativity, and culture. The city is full of life; it has art museums, theaters, music concerts, and parks.

Tel Aviv sits right on the beautiful Mediterranean Sea, where people love to swim, surf, and play beach volleyball. Along the coast, you’ll see bike paths, cafés, and locals enjoying the sunshine. It’s also an amazing city for food lovers! Visitors can eat at fancy restaurants or explore outdoor markets called shuks, where they can find fresh fruits, colorful spices, and local treats.

A typical day for a young person in Tel Aviv might start with a fruit smoothie from the shuk before catching a bus to school. After class, they might meet up with friends at the beach to play Matkot, one of Israel’s favorite games. Matkot is like beach tennis—two players use wooden paddles to hit a small rubber ball back and forth as fast as they can. It’s fun, active, and a perfect reflection of Tel Aviv’s lively spirit!

MATKOT (ISRAELI PADDLE GAME)

FOR THE TEACHER

Description:

Matkot is a favorite game of beachgoers in Tel Aviv. Students will work with a teammate or by themselves to keep the ball going back and forth (or up and down!) as long as possible without it touching the ground.

If playing individually, use a paddle or your hands to keep the ball or balloon in the air as long as possible.



WATCH THIS VIDEO
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT ISRAEL'S
SECOND-LARGEST CITY!

Resources Needed (Outdoor/Gym Matkot):

- Two paddles per pair
- One rubber ball, soft foam ball, or balloon per pair
- Gym floor space or taped-off ‘courts’ (optional)

Resources Needed (Classroom Matkot):

- One soft foam ball or balloon per pair
- Two paddles per pair

Instructions:

The club leader may choose between playing Matkot outdoors or a modified indoor version. The goal of the game is to keep the ball going back and forth as long as possible without letting it hit the ground!

FOR THE STUDENT

How to Play (Outdoor/Gym Matkot):

- Pair up with a partner. Stand about 6–10 feet apart to start.
- **Serve the ball:**
 - One player gently tosses and hits the ball toward their partner to start the rally.
- **Rally back and forth:**
 - Players take turns hitting the ball back and forth, trying to keep it in the air as long as possible.
 - The goal is cooperation, not competition — you’re both trying to keep the rally going!
 - You can count how many successful hits you get in a row.
- **If the ball drops:**
 - Just pick it up and start again! Try to beat your last rally score.

How to Play (Classroom Matkot):

- Find a partner. Choose to stand or sit 5–8 feet apart.
- One player will gently serve the ball or balloon to their partner.
- Keep it going back and forth, counting how many times you can pass it between you.
- If the ball or balloon falls, start again and try to beat your last score!

