



DINOSAUR GOES TO ISRAEL

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Dino boards a plane and travels to Israel, where he munches on falafel, tucks a message high up on the Western Wall, and invites a friendly camel to go snorkeling in the southern resort of Eilat.

JEWISH CONCEPTS

Dino may be a dinosaur, but he's doing lots of the same things that people do in Israel every day. He munches on falafel, tucks a message high up in the Western Wall, and invites a friendly camel to go snorkeling in the southern resort town of Eilat. From the moment God instructed the Biblical ancestor Abraham to leave the place of his birth and "go to a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1), Israel became a destination for Jewish travelers (usually human). And today it's more interesting than ever! Where else in the world can one see avant-garde apartments built atop the ruins of King Herod's pools? Israel also boasts a variety of climates and terrains — from the snowy peaks of Mount Hermon in the north to Eilat's coral reefs in the south. Israel is a unique combination of ancient history and contemporary living, and it holds a special place in the hearts of the Jewish people.

When Dino places his message in the Western Wall, he's taking part in a long tradition. This wall was once part of the Second Temple's courtyard, built by King Herod around 19 BCE. People from all over the world visit the Western Wall (in Hebrew, the *Kotel*) to share their prayers with God by inserting written notes into the cracks of this ancient structure. The Western Wall in Jerusalem is one of the holiest places in Israel. No wonder Dino wanted to visit it!

USING THIS BOOK AT HOME

Like many Jews around the globe, the family in this book has relatives in Israel. Israeli citizens hail from all over the world and have family and friends in every country (humans, not dinosaurs!). How many degrees of separation do you have with an Israeli family? It may not be practical to board a plane to visit, but your family can connect with Israelis in other ways. A nearby synagogue or Jewish community center may be able to pair your child with an Israeli child for a pen-pal (or email) relationship. Your child may discover some surprising similarities or differences about the way your family and the Israeli family celebrate holidays or spend family time.

One of the things Dino enjoys is eating a falafel sandwich at a local stand. No falafel stand in your neighborhood? Don't let that stop you from enjoying a tasty Israeli treat. Try making falafel at home — from scratch or from a boxed mix. Stuff the falafel into a pita with roasted eggplant, tomatoes, or any vegetables you like. Tahini, a sesame sauce, is the traditional topping, but you can try any topping you like! Add some hummus on the side and have an Israel-inspired meal at home.