**Arava Institute FAQs**

**What is the Arava Institute? What makes it special?**

The Arava Institute for Environmental Studies is an environmental education and research program in the Middle East, preparing students from Israel, Palestine, Jordan, and North America to cooperatively solve the region's environmental challenges. Affiliated with Ben-Gurion University, the Arava Institute houses academic programs, research, and international cooperation initiatives on a range of environmental concerns and challenges.

The study body at the Arava Institute is comprised of Jordanians, Palestinians, Israelis, and students from around the world. By living and learning in this uniquely diverse environment, students build global networks with like-minded peers and professors, while developing communication and leadership skills needed for cross-cultural cooperation.

**What will I study at the Institute?**

You can expect the following:

* An interdisciplinary program comprised of rigorous courses in diverse environmental fields, including environmental sciences; environmental ethics; policy and economics; renewable energy; ecology; and sustainability.
* A peace-building and environmental leadership seminar
* An optional independent research project of your choice as well as hands-on and field study components.

**How long is the program?**

4 months. Students can attend from October – January, or from February – June.

**Will my credits from studying at the Arava Institute transfer to my current school?**

Yes. Students receive transcripts from Ben Gurion University. Many North American Universities recognize credits from Ben Gurion. However, before applying, we encourage you to talk with your study abroad office to make sure that your credits will be accepted.

**Can I apply for financial aid?**

While there is not financial aid available from the Arava Institute, there are numerous scholarships you can apply for. Please visit our website to learn more about these opportunities.

**What is it like to live on a kibbutz?**

Located on Kibbutz Ketura, the Arava Institute offers students a rare opportunity to participate in one of Israel’s traditional models of collective living. Students eat three meals a day with kibbutz members, students, staff, and volunteers in the kibbutz dining room. Students have access to the kibbutz facilities including sports facilities (swimming pool, soccer field, tennis courts, and basketball court), the general library, and communal laundry. Students are welcome to participate in kibbutz cultural activities and celebrate holidays, and to attend Shabbat services. Students also have the option to be "adopted" by a kibbutz family.

**Is it safe?**

Yes, it is a safe area. Kibbutz Ketura is a small, peaceful community in the desert with a population of about 400. It is located four hours from Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, and three hours from Beer Sheva and the S’derot area.

**What will I do in my free time?**

Students participate in a variety of extracurricular activities including desert hiking, camping, yoga, gardening, music and horse back riding. Each semester, students produce a "yearbook," called Yalla, to capture memories and promote future contact. The kibbutz pub is a favorite hang-out place; here, students can mingle with kibbutz members and volunteers.

Additionally, the Arava Institute places students within reach of bustling cities and the most magnificent wonders of the world.

**What are Arava alumni doing today?**

Many of the 800 alumni of the Arava Institute now work in key positions that utilize their professional skills in environmental, ecological and societal improvement and growth. Our alumni are working for the EPA, leading programs at the Arava Institute, continuing their studies, working in environmental education and management in nonprofit environmental organizations, creating startup business in the environmental field, and much more.