

Israel's Energy bonanzas

- **Israel has discovered and is developing major volumes of gas to make them a serious gas exporter by 2019. Also, Israel has discovered major deposits of Shale oil which have yet to be developed.**

For many years there was a great mystery as to why there seemed to be oil and gas all over the Middle East but none onshore or offshore within Israel's territorial waters. In the last 15 years things have changed because gas has been found offshore of Israel and Gaza and Shale oil within Israel itself.

History and background

Oil exploration began with the establishment of the State of Israel and continued through the '50s and '60s with some false dawns. After the Six Day War Israel captured Egypt's Abud Rudeis oil fields in the Sinai Peninsula and this produced about 50% of Israel's oil needs until 1975 when Israel returned the oil fields to Egypt. Following this a number of companies were formed to continue to look for oil and gas, but the finds were not sufficiently large to produce oil and gas commercially.

In the last few years however, working in cooperation with overseas companies, Israeli firms have made major commercial discoveries of Gas in its Mediterranean waters which are now being developed. In addition, major oil shale discoveries [maybe as much up to 100 billion barrels] have been made within Israel, which rank amongst the largest in the world. However, the extraction of shale oil from the rock can cause adverse effects to the environment, and the viability of this process is still being assessed in Israel.

Outline of the discoveries to date and the associated oil and gas production

The main discoveries have been gas offshore the coast of Israel, as shown on the map below.



Though a group of fields off the coast of Tel Aviv have been producing some oil for several years, the much larger Tamer field started producing gas in April 2013. The gas from this field will provide the majority of Israel's needs over the next 15 to 20 years. The first phase of the even larger Leviathan gas field is being developed with the aim of being in production in 2017/2018. Once the Leviathan gas field production starts it will turn Israel into a major gas exporter in the region. The level of exports has been set by the government at 40% of the total annual gas production with the view of protecting Israel's resources.

Other blocks, yet to be explored, are also believed to have potential gas deposits. There is confidence that there is some oil beneath the gas in the Leviathan basin, but this has yet to be explored. In any event, by switching to gas, Israel's carbon footprint will reduce dramatically.

(Click [here](#) to watch a four minute video showing the development of the Tamer field which began production in March 2013.)

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