MAKHTESH RAMON
Tour and Hikes

SAMPLE

Makhtesh Ramon
Road Trip

Israel By Foot
Hiking the Holy Land

www.hike-israel.com

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**Important note:** Take into account that some of the roads are Dirt Roads! All of them are Ok also for a regular passenger car.

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**Acknowledgments**

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WHAT IS A MAKHTESH?

- **Crater** – A **roughly circular depression in the ground** usually caused by volcanic activity, impact or explosion.
- **Makhtesh** – A **crater-like** formation created by **erosion**
- The word **“makhtesh”** is the Hebrew word for a **Mortar and Pestle**. The geological landform was given this name because of its similarity to a grinding bowl.

There are only seven such craters in the world, all of them located in the Land of Israel (5) and the Sinai desert (2). Of the five located in Israel, two are tiny ones near the top of Mount Arif. That leaves us with the three main Makhteshim (craters):

- **Makhtesh Ramon**: It is the largest makhtesh in the world. Over 40 km long, 10 km wide, and about 400 m deep. It is also the most famous, and by far the most visited since the main road #40 from Beer Sheva to Eilat is crossing it.
- **Makhtesh Hatira** (also called the **“Big” Makhtesh**) is the 2nd in size. 14 km long, 6 km wide, and about 400 m deep. It is much less popular than it’s “bigger brother”, but not less beautiful.
- **Makhtesh Hazera** (also called the **“Small” Makhtesh**) is the 3rd in size. 7 km long, 5 km wide and over 500 m deep. Because of its small size, it easier to understand the Makhtesh phenomena as you can see almost its complete outline in one view.
LOTS CISTERNS

Ancient cisterns from king Solomon’s period

Starting point: On road #171 near the junction with a Blue marked dirt road. (GPS: 30.503353, 34.609570)

Road #171 crosses the highest area of the Negev Desert. A relatively flat area at an altitude of 800-1000 meters. Because of the altitude, the area is relatively colder and gets more precipitation compared to other areas in the desert. Therefore it is richer in flora and fauna. It even gets occasional snowfall during some of the winters.
• Drive North on the Blue marked dirt road for about 1 Km unit reaching a parking area and a campground.
• From here, there is a 4 Km circular Red marked trail that passes near several of the 17 cisterns.
• We recommend to walk right (West) on the Red marked trail for about 1 Km and retrace your steps. In this short section, you will pass by five cisterns.

The Lots cisterns, are a series of 17 man-made water-holes, dug during King Solomon’s period (10th century BCE). Today, 3000 years later, they still get filled with water each winter.