

20 Iyar 5785
18 May 2025

Severe heatwave - 17 May 2025

On 17 May 2025 a severe heatwave prevailed across the country. Although brief in duration, the episode featured temperatures exceeding 40 °C in most regions apart from the mountains. It was the most intense May heat event in the past five years, and several northern stations registered their highest May values in decades.

Temperature and weather conditions during the event

Along the coastal plain 40–42 °C were recorded; the Judean Lowlands and northern Negev observed 41–43 °C; the northern valleys and the Jordan Valley attained 42–44 °C; and the southern Arava experienced the peak readings of 43–45 °C. Around the Dead Sea and the northern Arava it was slightly less hot, with 39–41 °C, while similar figures were logged in the southern Golan. The Judean and Samaritan Highlands measured 37–39 °C, the Upper Galilee registered 35–37 °C, and the northern Golan noted 33–35 °C. The lowest values, 30–32 °C, were confined to a narrow coastal strip, moderated by the onset of a sea breeze from the morning hours. The very high temperatures were accompanied by pronounced aridity, and wildfires ignited in several locations, most notably near Ramat HaShofet. In that area gusts exceeded 50 km/h, although the event was generally not characterised by strong winds.

Exceptional aspects of the event

At several northern stations the readings obtained during this heatwave represent the highest May temperatures in many years—at Mount Tabor since 2001, at Afula–Nir Ha-Emek since 1999, at Elon since 1941, and at Newe Ya'ar* a May record was broken, surpassing data maintained since 1949. Elsewhere in the country it should be noted that a short-lived May heat surge with such extreme values last occurred in May 2019 and previously in 2016 and 2015, **before that, comparable events were rarer, roughly once every five to ten years.

* It should be emphasised that ventilation at the Newe Ya'ar station has progressively deteriorated over the years because of encroaching vegetation and assorted structures, a situation liable to yield higher temperature readings than those obtained in the more open surroundings when winds are weak.

** Exceptionally high values were likewise registered in May 2020, though they occurred within the framework of a prolonged subsidence-driven heatwave.

Maximum* temperatures (°C) on 17 May 2025

Station	Maximum* temperatures (°C) 17.05.2025
Haifa (Technion)	40.2
En Carmel	40.7
En HaHoresh	41.1
Tel Aviv Coast	32.2
Bet Dagan	41.5
Hafetz Haim	42.3
Qevuzat Yavne	40.1
Netiv Ha-Lamed-He	43.5
Negba	41.2
Besor	42.5
Dorot	42.4
Zefat Har Kenaan	35.8
Elon	41.6
Tavor	42.9
Merom Golan Picman	35.4
Avne Eitan	38.9
Jerusalem	38.1
Beit Jamal	41.3
Newe Ya'ar	43.5
Afula Nir HaEmek	43.3
Kefar Blum	41.5
Zemah	40.3
Beer Sheva	42.9
Sede Boqer	40.1
Sede Eliyyahu	44.3
Gilgal	44.3
Sedom	38.6
Hazeva	41.2
Paran	40.8
Yotvata	43.2
Eilat	45.5