



TEMPLE BETH EL
OF NORTHERN WESTCHESTER
בית אל

A Jewish Journey to Europe

Poland & Czechia March 30 – April 7, 2025

Optional Berlin Extension April 7 – 10, 2025

Led by Rabbi Jonathan Jaffe

(Itinerary as of June 4 – Subject to Change)

We have much to learn about Jewish survival and resilience from the story of the Jews of Poland, the Czech Lands and Germany. For over 1,000 years, Jewish life and creativity flourished in these areas – which often served as a safe haven for Jews, despite the constant presence of anti-Semitism. We will visit Warsaw, Krakow and Prague (and Berlin) which were once major centers of Jewish life and stand in solemn memory at Auschwitz and Terezin. We will learn about the past with its many challenges and accomplishments and meet members of today's Jewish communities who, against all odds, are taking part in the reawakening of Jewish life Central and Eastern Europe

Sunday March 30

- Midday arrival in Warsaw
- Check -in and relax at our hotel
- Tour and opening dinner in **Warsaw's** beautifully restored **Old Town**

Overnight: Westin Hotel, Warsaw

Monday March 31

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Explore what had been the area of Warsaw Ghetto including UmshlagPlatz, Mila 18, and the Rappaport Memorial.

The 340,000 Jews of Warsaw made up about 1/3 of the city's population in 1939.

- Docent tour at Warsaw's **Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews**. *The museum presents an overview of 1,000 years of Jewish history in Poland. The 3.3 million Jews made up about 10% of the pre-World War II population of Poland.*
- Lunch on your own at the Polin Museum
- At **Warsaw's Genscha Street Cemetery**, consider "The Life that Was". *Dating to 1799, it has over 200,000 graves and tells the story of Warsaw's Jewish Community.*
- Evening and dinner on your own in Warsaw

Overnight: Westin Hotel, Warsaw



Tuesday April 1

- Breakfast at the hotel; pack bus and depart
- Session with the **local Jewish community leader:** *The Jewish Community of Poland Today*
- Stand in solemn memory at the **Lodz Radegast Railway Station Memorial** from where over 140,000 Jews were sent by the Germans to be murdered at Auschwitz and elsewhere
- Packed Lunch en-route
- Continue to **Krakow**; check in at our hotel
- Walking tour and dinner on your own at **Krakow's** beautifully restored **Old Town Square**.

Overnight: Holiday Inn City Center, Krakow

Wednesday April 2

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Explore the **Kazimierz Old Jewish Quarter** of Krakow. Sites include: Ramah Synagogue and Cemetery & Kupah and Temple Synagogues. *Prior to the Shoah, there were about 60,000 Jews in Krakow who made up 25% of the city's population.*
- See the **Schindler Factory Gates** and part of the **Krakow Ghetto** of the Nazi era, including a section of the Ghetto Wall, and Zgody Square from where most of Krakow's Jews were sent to be murdered.



- Lunch on your own
- Guided walking tour at the **Wawel Royal Castle**, once the residence of the **Kings of Poland** and today the symbol of Polish statehood and one of the Poland's premier art museums.
- Program and dinner at the **Krakow JCC**. Learn about the resurgence of Jewish life in Krakow and the challenges facing today's Jewish community.

Overnight: Holiday Inn City Center, Krakow

Thursday April 3

- Breakfast at the hotel; pack bus and depart.
- Head to the **Auschwitz-Birkenau** Polish State Museum & Memorial
- Start at the site of the **Auschwitz I** Concentration Camp. Visit the barracks, museum exhibits and gas chamber.
- Packed Lunch
- Continue to the site of the **Auschwitz II Birkenau Death Camp** where over 1,000,000 Jews were murdered.
- Continue to Ostrava, Czechia for dinner, processing session and overnight at our hotel. *The nearly 10,000 Jews of Ostrava were the third largest Jewish community in Czechoslovakia before the Shoah. Today there is no organized Jewish community there*



Overnight: Mercure Hotel, Ostrava

Friday April 4

- Breakfast at the hotel; pack bus and depart to Prague
- Explore the Punkva Caves and Underground River at the **Moravian Karst Caves Systems**
- Continue to **Krakow**; lunch on own enroute
- Check-in at our hotel
- Join Pragues' **Bejt Simcha Reform Jewish Community** for Kabbalat Shabbat services
- Shabbat dinner

Overnight: Grand Majestic Hotel, Prague

Shabbat April 5

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Visit the **Prague Castle** including **St Vitus Cathedral**. The castle complex is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, founded around 880. *The Prague Castle is considered to be the largest coherent castle complex in the world.*
- Lunch and free time on your own to explore Prague
- Late afternoon walking tour at the **Old Town Square** and the **Charles Bridge**. *The Charles Bridge is lined with 30 statues dating mostly from 1706 – 1714. Of special interest is the crucifixion sculpture with the Hebrew inscription ... קדוש, קדוש, קדוש (Holy, holy, holy...)*
- **Cultural Event – Concert, Opera or Dance**
- Dinner – traditional Czech Cuisine



Overnight: Grand Majestic Hotel, Prague

Sunday April 6

- Breakfast at the hotel
- **From Ghetto to Emancipation:** Explore **Josefov**, the Old Jewish Quarter of Prague including *Europe's oldest synagogue - Alt Neu Shul - seat of the famed 16th century Maharal (Rabbi Judah Lowy) and his Golem.*
- Visit the synagogues, cemetery & Judaica at the **Prague Jewish Museum** and trace the roots of contemporary Jewish identity.
- Lunch on your own
- Stand in solemn memory at **Terezin**, site of the Nazi "showcase" Ghetto to which many of the Jews of Prague were sent before being murdered at Auschwitz and elsewhere.
- Evening: Private Dinner cruise on the Vltava River and trip summary session

Overnight: Grand Majestic Hotel, Prague

Monday April 7

- Breakfast at the hotel. Group bus transfer to Prague Vacalav Havel Airport for flights to USA or continue to Berlin

Optional Add-on to Berlin

Monday April 7

- Breakfast at the hotel – Pack bus and depart hotel to Dresden
- Continue to **Dresden**. *Much of Dresden was destroyed by the massive Allied bombing in 1945. See the magnificent rebuilt **Lutheran Frauenkirche**, & visit the **Royal Palace**.*
- Lunch on your own
- Visit the **Dresden New Synagogue** completed in 2001 and built on the site of a synagogue destroyed in Kristalnacht in 1938. The **Jewish community** of Dresden *dates to the 14th century. 6,000 Jews lived here before WWII with only 50 remaining at the end of the war. Today's community numbers a few hundred, mostly immigrants from the former Soviet Union.*
- Check-in at our hotel in **Berlin**; evening and dinner on your own

Overnight: Hilton Hotel, *Berlin*

Tuesday April 8

- Breakfast at the hotel
- We'll start our exploration of Berlin at the dramatic **Berlin Holocaust Memorial**. *Its central location is an indication of the important role that Holocaust memory plays in contemporary Germany.*
- Walking tour in the area of the **Reichstag** German Parliament, **Pariser Platz** and the **Brandenburg Gate**, *the former city gate completed in 1791, used by the Nazis as a symbol, blocked during the Cold War and restored in 2002 as a focal point of the united city.*
- Near where **Check Point Charlie** used to stand, see the remains of the Cold War era **Berlin Wall**.
- Lunch on your own
- Continue to the **Berlin Jewish Museum** for a guided tour.
- Evening and dinner on your own

Overnight: Hilton Hotel, *Berlin*



Wednesday April 9

- Breakfast at the hotel
- On Rosenstrasse see the site of the Old Synagogue (dedicated in 1714) and the monument remembering the 1943 protests by **non-Jewish women over the arrest of their Jewish husbands**
- Continue to the **Oranienburger Strasse Synagogue**. *Known as the "New Synagogue," when built in 1866, it was partially burnt on Kristallnacht and almost totally destroyed by Allied bombing. It has been partially renovated.*
- Lunch on your own
- Head to suburban **Wannsee** where the secret "Wannsee Conference" was held on January 20, 1942. *The Wannsee Conference brought together senior and mid-level officials of the Nazi regime to coordinate and plan the murder of the Jews in Europe: the "Final Solution to the Jewish Question"*
- Stand in solemn memory at **Track 17** in the **Wilmserford District**, *commemorating the over 50,000 Berlin Jews who were deported from **Grunewald Station**.*
- Dinner with members of the **Berlin Jewish community**

Overnight: Hilton Hotel, *Berlin*

Thursday April 10

- Breakfast at the hotel
- Pack bus and depart to the airport for flights to USA

➤ Listed activities and speakers are subject to confirmation. The trip will be staffed by a Keshet Tour Educator and local tour guides. All underlined meals are included in the package price.



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