

Ayelet TOURS

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!

Ayelet Tour's Traveling University
Jewish Heritage Tour of

EASTERN EUROPE

with Professor Stephen Berk
June 15-28, 2024



Jewish Heritage Tour of Eastern Europe

Prague * Warsaw * Krakow * Budapest
with Professor Stephen Berk
June 15-28, 2024



DAY 1 SATURDAY, JUNE 15, 2024 OUR JOURNEY BEGINS

- We depart the United States on our overnight flights to **Prague**.
(Contact Ayelet Tours for assistance booking flights.)

DAY 2 SUNDAY, JUNE 16, 2024 WELCOME TO PRAGUE!

- Welcome to **Prague**, the Czech capital, also known as "the City of One Thousand Spires," with its Baroque churches, promenades, parks and ancient city walls.
- Transfer on own to our hotel to check in and freshen up (private transfers available at additional cost).
- This afternoon, we visit the 1,000-year-old **Hradčany Castle**.
- Tonight, we enjoy an **orientation lecture** and **welcome dinner** with Professor Stephen Berk.

Overnight in Prague

DAY 3 MONDAY, JUNE 17, 2024 JEWISH PRAGUE

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we enjoy a **lecture by Professor Berk**, followed by a **meeting with Rabbi David Maxa**, the first Czech-born rabbi to return to Prague. Rabbi Maxa is the founder of **Ec Chajim**, Prague's progressive Jewish community who dedicate their time to revitalizing Judaism in this great city.
- We depart the hotel and set out for a visit to the **State Jewish Museum**, established in 1906. This is one of the oldest existing Jewish museums in Europe.
- Next, we set out on a tour of **Jewish interest sites** in the Old City to view the **Josefov**, Prague's Jewish town with its **Old Town Hall**, the **Alt-Neu Synagogue**, the **Pinkas Synagogue**, the **Maisel Synagogue**, the **Spanish Synagogue** and the **Jewish cemetery**.
- We cross the **Charles Bridge** for a tour of **Golden Prague** and to view the **Astronomical Clock** and **St. Vitus' Cathedral**.
- After time to relax and freshen up, we enjoy the evening at leisure and dinner on own.

Overnight in Prague



DAY 4

TUESDAY, JUNE 18, 2024
TEREZIN

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we travel to **Terezin**, the former "model" Nazi concentration camp. We visit the **prison fortress** and the **Jewish cemetery**, the **hidden synagogue** and the **museum** filled with the artwork of former prisoners, where **Professor Berk lectures**.
- We stop by the **memorial monument** and pass through the town itself. We'll also hear stories and see photos of some of the great rabbis imprisoned here, including **Leo Baeck** and **Regina Jonas**, the first woman ordained a rabbi.
- A **boxed lunch** will be included along the way.
- We return to Prague for personal reflection, followed by an evening at leisure and dinner on own.

Overnight in Prague

DAY 5

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 2024
PRAGUE TO WARSAW

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we transfer to the airport for our short **flight to Warsaw**.
- Upon landing, we head to **POLIN Museum (The New Museum of the History of Polish Jews)** for a guided tour. The Hebrew word Polin means either Poland or "rest here" in English and is related to a legend of the arrival of the first Jews in Poland. The museum sits on the former site of the Warsaw Ghetto and features multi-media narrative exhibitions about the vibrant Jewish community that has flourished in Poland for a thousand years.
- After lunch on own, we drive through the **Warsaw Zoo**, where we visit the **Zookeeper's House** owned by the couple that saved many Jews during the Holocaust, now memorialized in the movie *"The Zookeeper's Wife."*
- We continue to our hotel to check in and freshen up.
- This evening, we enjoy an elegant **Chopin concert** in an unforgettable setting, followed by dinner on own.

Overnight in Warsaw

DAY 6

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2024
WONDERFUL WARSAW

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day with a **lecture** by Professor Berk and hear from **representatives of Beit Polska** and the **Director of the JCC Warsaw**.
- Today, we enjoy a **city tour** of Warsaw, including **Chopin's Monument**, the **Royal Castle**, the **Jewish Historical Society** and walk to **Old Town Market Square** and **Lazienki Park**.

- This afternoon, we participate in a **Jewish heritage sightseeing tour** encompassing **Nozyk Synagogue** (the only surviving synagogue in Warsaw, founded in 1900), the **Warsaw Ghetto**, the **Jewish Resistance Bunker at Mila 18**, the **Stawski Street buildings** (where the SS had their headquarters) and the **Gesia Cemetery** (established in 1806, containing the graves of about 250,000 people and known as the largest cemetery in Poland).
- This evening, set out to explore and enjoy dinner on own.

Overnight in Warsaw

DAY 7

FRIDAY, JUNE 21, 2024
TO KRAKOW

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we depart Warsaw and board the **train to Krakow**.
- Upon arrival, we enjoy a **Jewish heritage tour** that includes the Old Jewish District of **Kazimierz**, where we see the **Old Synagogue** (a massive fortress-like building erected in the 15th and 16th centuries), the **"Temple"** and the **Ramuh Synagogue**.
- After time for lunch on own, we drive by the site of the **Plaszow Concentration Camp**, then continue past **Schindler's Factory** to the **Little Museum at the Drugstore** in the former Krakow Ghetto.
- We continue to our hotel to check in and relax.
- As the sun begins to set, we join members of the inspiring **Krakow JCC**, including its Executive Director, **Jonathan Ornstein**, for **Shabbat services** and **dinner**. The Krakow JCC is a vibrant and growing community, serving Jews from pre-school through the elderly and hosting the annual Ride for the Living from Auschwitz to Krakow.

Overnight in Krakow

DAY 8

SATURDAY, JUNE 22, 2024
SHABBAT SHALOM!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we invite you to join us for **optional Shabbat services**.
- The afternoon is at leisure to explore this beautiful city at your own pace.
- Enjoy dinner on own at one of the delicious local restaurants tonight.

Overnight in Krakow





DAY 9 SUNDAY, JUNE 23, 2024 AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day with a **lecture** by Professor Berk.
- Later this morning, we travel to **Auschwitz-Birkenau**, the infamous Nazi concentration camps where many Jews and others perished in WWII. Here, we see the museum and pay tribute to the victims. **Boxed lunches** are included today.
- We return to Krakow and have the remainder of the afternoon to reflect.
- We enjoy **dinner** together this evening at a local restaurant.

Overnight in Krakow

DAY 10 MONDAY, JUNE 24, 2024 HIGHLIGHTS OF KRAKOW

- Breakfast at our hotel and **lecture** by Professor Berk.
- This morning, we enjoy a city tour, including stops at **Wawel Castle**, **St. Mary's Church**, the **Renaissance Cloth Hall** and other ancient landmarks.
- Later, we visit the **Wieliczka Salt Mines**, which are over 700 years old and one of the largest and oldest working salt mines in Europe. The site is on the UNESCO list of the 12 most priceless monuments in the world. An elevator will descend to the first level of the mine, where we will be able to see the 180-foot chapel made from salt rock and lit with salt-crystal chandeliers. There are many other chambers carved out of a huge block of salt, underground museums and even underground tennis and volleyball courts.
- We return to Krakow for an evening at leisure to explore and enjoy dinner on own.

Overnight in Krakow

DAY 11 TUESDAY, JUNE 25, 2024 KRAKOW TO BUDAPEST

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we depart Krakow and drive to **Budapest**, the capital of Hungary. Situated on the opposite banks of the **Danube River**, the former cities of Buda and Pest are linked by a series of graceful bridges. **Professor Berk lectures** on the bus.
- Upon arrival, we check into our hotel and have a chance to freshen up.
- This evening, explore the city and enjoy dinner on own.

Overnight in Budapest

DAY 12 WEDNESDAY, JUNE 26, 2024 BEAUTIFUL BUDAPEST

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, **Professor Berk lectures** as we enjoy a panoramic bus tour of Budapest, including **Parliament**, the **Castle Hill area**, **Fishermen's Bastion**, **Hero's Square** and **Gellert Hill**.
- Next, we view the **Raoul Wallenberg memorial statue** and hear the story of his heroic acts to save thousands of Jews in the Holocaust, followed by a visit to **Dohany Synagogue**, the Moorish masterpiece of architecture and the largest synagogue in Europe. Within its gates are the **Jewish Cemetery and Museum** and the **Holocaust Tree of Life memorial**.
- We continue to the **Shoes on the Danube River memorial** commemorating the vicious reign of the Nazi-allied Arrow Cross. We also view the **suitcase memorial**, the Jewish community's answer to the new and controversial memorial installed by the Hungarian government many believe seeks to absolve the state from their involvement in WWII.
- We complete our tour at the beautifully restored **Rumbach Street Synagogue**, soon to be the site of a new interfaith museum focusing on battling racism and Anti-semitism. We have a conversation with the museum leadership while here.
- After time to freshen up at our hotel, head out and enjoy dinner on own at a local restaurant this evening. Those interested may wish to explore Budapest's famous "**ruin pubs**", built in the inner courtyards of the former Jewish quarter, now featuring hip artsy and funky bars to be discovered.

Overnight in Budapest



DAY 13 THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2024 JEWISH BUDAPEST

- Breakfast at our hotel, followed by a **lecture** from Professor Berk.
- We board our bus to tour more of the city's highlights, including the **Royal Palace** and **Coronation Church**.
- Next, we visit the local **Moishe House**, a place where young adults in their 20's come together to create a vibrant Jewish community. We meet some of the residents and learn about the programs they host for their peers.
- The remainder of the afternoon is at leisure. Options include:
 - Discover all that the **Great Market Hall** has to offer, from colorful produce to beautiful flowers and fantastic meals to fresh fish, plus great people watching and photo opportunities
 - Visit the **Gellert Hill Spa** to soak in the thermal baths
 - Explore the city on own
- We return to our hotel to relax and refresh.
- This evening, we come together one final time for a festive **farewell dinner** with **members of the JCC Budapest**.

Overnight in Budapest

DAY 14 FRIDAY, JUNE 28, 2024 FAREWELL

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to the airport for our flights back to the United States, landing later today.

Dr. Stephen M. Berk is a Professor of History at Union College in Schenectady, New York. He is the Chair of the Department of History, Director of the Program in Comparative Communist Studies and Faculty Advisor to the Jewish Student Organization. He is author of *Year of Crisis, Year of Hope: Russian Jewry and the Pogroms of 1881-1882* (Greenwood Press, 1985). At the present time Professor Berk is writing a book entitled, *Our People Are Your People: American Jewry and the Struggle for Civil Rights 1854-1965*. The book provides an interesting discussion of an extremely important chapter in the history of the civil rights movement and attempts to dispel the myths and misunderstandings that surround the Black-Jewish relationship. Professor Berk is also the author of many articles on Russian History, Russian Jewish History, anti-Semitism and American Policy in the Middle East. Professor Berk is frequently consulted by newspaper reporters and by television and radio stations including the BBC. He has lectured in numerous universities in countless cities and towns in the United States and Israel and is a primary speaker for the UJA, Israel Bonds and B'nai B'rith. Professor Berk is considered an absolutely superb lecturer and teacher. Touring with him has been compared to attending a "traveling university...his lectures are outstanding." He is always informative, interesting and entertaining. He has lectured as scholar-in-residence for us on many trips to Russia, Spain, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe, Cuba and Israel. It is a privilege to have him with us!



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**itinerary subject to change*