

PORTUGAL & SPAIN

FOLLOWING THE PATH OF THE CONVERSOS

Tour will feature
in-person
interviews by
Moment's Nadine Epstein
with local authors, politicians,
journalists and more.
These will be interwoven into
the itinerary as the tour
approaches



Led by Editor in Chief, Nadine Epstein
May 2024
*with optional post-tour to
Palma de Mallorca & Barcelona*

Jewish history in Portugal and Spain is filled with contradictions. There is tragedy here, but there are also traces of former glories during the 1,000 years before the inquisition – these were large scale Jewish communities that prospered for long periods. We will delve into the past, as well as reach out to the nascent Jewish communities of today to hear their struggles and their successes.

moment

Moment Magazine Presents: **PORTUGAL & SPAIN**

Following the Path of the Conversos *May 6-17, 2024*

DAY 1

MONDAY, MAY 6, 2024
DEPARTURE

- We depart the United States on our overnight flight to Lisbon, Portugal!

DAY 2

TUESDAY, MAY 7, 2024
BEM VINDO A LISBON!

- We arrive in **Lisbon** and are met by an Ayelet Tours representative. (All arrivals on this day will be transferred to the beginning of the tour).
- **Bem vindo a Portugal - welcome to Portugal!** We arrive in Lisbon mid-day, meet our guide and begin our journey.
- Our tour begins at Lisbon's major synagogue, **Shaare Tikva**, which celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2002. We learn about the history of Jewish settlement in this city that is believed to have begun not long before Lisbon fell to the Moors in the 8th century.
- We continue to the waterfront area of **Belem**, where we visit the **Monastery of Geronimo**, the largest cloister in this part of the world.
- Next, we see the **monument to Vasco da Gamma**; it was from here that he set sail to discover the New World.
- We check into our hotel and have time to relax and refresh.
- This evening, we join together for a **Kosher welcome dinner** at a local restaurant.

Overnight in Lisbon (D)



DAY 3

WEDNESDAY, MAY 8, 2024
JEWISH LISBON

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Today, we enjoy a **walking tour with a focus on Jewish history**. We start in the **Alfama**, Lisbon's oldest quarter, crowned by the 12th century **Castelo (castle) Sao Jorge** (outside visit).
- We continue to the West hills of the historic center in **Bairro Alto**, where one of Lisbon's most important Jewish quarters stood. This enclave was once home to some of the greatest Iberian Jewish sages, including **The Abarbanel** and **Joseph Karo**.
- Next, we visit the **Chiado quarter** and find **the most important Judaic artifacts of Portugal**, preserved in the ruins of a roofless church, which is now deconsecrated and used as an archaeological museum. We learn about Portugal's clandestine involvement with the Nazis and how "Portugal's Oskar Schindler" led the single largest rescue mission of WWII. Before leaving Chiado we visit the **site of the 1974 Carnation Revolution**, which brought an end to Europe's longest running Fascist dictatorship.
- Along the way, we take in the **Elevador de Santa Justa**, designed at the workshop of Eiffel (of tower fame).
- We proceed to **Rossio Square**, where the **National Theatre** stands upon the site of the **Palace of Estaos**. It was here, during the Inquisition, that many Jews were tortured and killed as infidels. The adjacent **Square of Sao Domingo** is the site of the Massacre of 1506, during which more than 500 New Christians (Jews who were forced to convert) were tortured and killed.
- Along the way, we also see the **memorial monument** erected not long ago by Lisbon's Jewish community and the monument nearby erected by the church.
- We note the architecture of the **Rossio train station**, then walk by the **famous Ginja stand** where locals purchase small glasses of cherry liqueur, first brewed in an ancient monastery.
- From a viewpoint in **Baixa**, we discuss how life once was in the **Judaria Grande**, bustling with activity from successful merchants positioned near the harbor. Despite devastation, which came in the forced conversion of 1497 and the natural disasters of 1755, this area still contains clues to its Jewish past, and we will discover Jewish customs still present in the community and architecture.
- We finish with a walk along **Praca Comercio** and the waterfront to enjoy the beauty of this charming city and to see the riverside where Jewish refugees during WWII would have departed en masse for New York and South America.
- Tonight, enjoy dinner on your own at a local restaurant and free time to shop, sip a delicious cocktail and maybe even hear some live music.

Overnight in Lisbon (B)



DAY 4

THURSDAY, MAY 9, 2024
SINTRA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We drive about a half hour outside Lisbon to the UNESCO World Heritage site of **Sintra**. Here, we walk through the **Jewish quarter** where Jews lived before the forced conversions of 1497.
- We continue with a visit to the breathtaking **Pena Palace**, a notable example of Portuguese architecture in the Romantic period. The palace is surrounded by a forest featuring over 500 different tree species gathered from the four corners of the Earth.
- We complete our day with a stop in **Cabo da Roca (Cape Roca)**, the westernmost point of continental Europe, and overlook the beautiful sea.
- We return to Lisbon for free time to shop and dinner on our own.

Overnight in Lisbon (B)



DAY 5

FRIDAY, MAY 10, 2024
TOMAR

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we head north to **Tomar**, one of Portugal's historical jewels and the last Templar town to be commissioned for construction.
- Upon arrival, we see the **Convento De Cristo**, a former Roman Catholic convent built in the Portuguese Manueline architectural style that once served as the headquarters of the Order. Also part of the compound is the **Tomar Castle**.
- Enjoy time to explore the **convent's gardens and forested parks**, including the **National Forest of Seven Hills**, which nature lovers in the group will especially enjoy.
- After time for lunch on our own, we tour the **Abraao Zacuto Museum**, which served as a synagogue in the 15th century and today is a significant reminder of one of the greatest Sephardic Jewish communities.
- We continue to **Porto**, located on Portugal's west coast and known for its stately bridges and port wine production. Here, we will discover the Old-World charm and see **signature blue tiles** adorning many of the buildings. Portugal was a neutral country during WWII, so many fortresses are still fully intact, and some have even been repurposed into wine and port cellars.
- We check into our hotel and relax.
- This evening, we welcome **Shabbat** at **The Kadoorie - Mekor Haim (Source of Life) Synagogue**, then return to our hotel for a festive **Shabbat dinner**.

Overnight in Porto (B, D)



DAY 6

SATURDAY, MAY 11, 2024
SHABBAT IN PORTO

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We enjoy a morning at leisure or attend a local synagogue for **Shabbat morning worship**.
- After **Shabbat lunch** at our hotel, enjoy one of these options:
 - **Option 1 - Guided Porto Bike Tour:** A 3-hour easy and engaging guided tour along the beaches, parks, waterfront and historical landmarks of Porto. It is a safe and comfortable ride for anyone who is at ease riding a bike (separate fee applies).
 - **Option 2 - Seaside Walk:** Choose to take it easy and meander on a seaside stroll along the Atlantic Ocean with a café stop in Alfurada.
- Dinner tonight is on our own. The amazing food mall located in our hotel complex is highly recommended (many vegetarian and dairy options are available) or enjoy dinner in the town center (transportation to and from the hotel is on own).

Overnight in Porto (B)



DAY 7

SUNDAY, MAY 12, 2024
BELMONTE

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we visit **Viano do Castelo**, known for some of the most beautiful architecture in the area, and see the **Santuário de Santa Luzia church**.
- Next, we stop at **Taylor Fladgate Cellars** for a taste of the city's main attraction, port wine! An expert will teach us about **port production** while we savor the flavors of this beautiful town.
- Our journey continues to the historical town of **Belmonte**, birthplace of Pedro Albares Cabral, the navigator who discovered what is now Brazil, and home to the largest Jewish community in the country.
- We visit the **Sinagoga de Belmonte**, opened in 1996, more than 20 years after the revival of Judaism in the area. We also take a short tour of the **Jewish Museum** to learn about the history of the Jewish people in Portugal and their integration into Portuguese society, specifically in the fields of art, literature, commerce and culture.
- Next, we stop at **Belmonte Castle**, built in the 13th century with an open-air amphitheater, later transformed into a fortified manor house in the 15th century for the Cabral family.
- We proceed to **Pousada de Belmonte**, the former convent of Nossa Senhora da Esperanca (Our Lady of Hope), now the beautiful and luxurious **Hotel Convento de Belmonte**, situated on the slopes of the Serra da Esperanca. We take in the views of the plains and the peaks of the Serra de Esrela mountain range from the property.
- We will mark the start of **Yom Hazikaron** (Israel's Memorial Day) with members of the local community.
- Later, we check into our hotel, then meet up to enjoy **dinner** together.

Overnight in Belmonte (B, D)

DAY 8

MONDAY, MAY 13, 2024
PORTUGAL TO SPAIN

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We begin our day in **Penamacor** to meet the director of the newly opened **Casa da Memória da Medicina Sephardita Ribeiro Sanches**, located in the heart of the village. This is a project that aims to perpetuate the memory of Portuguese Jews who practiced medicine throughout the medieval and modern periods, with emphasis on those who, upon leaving Portugal, almost always for ethno-religious reasons, achieved fame abroad. Among these, there is a very particular emphasis on the figure of **António Nunes Ribeiro Sanches**, born in Penamacor, also giving us a better understanding of his position within the group of Portuguese people, eminent doctors, who brought so much brilliance to medicine within and outside borders.
- We then **cross over from Portugal to Spain**, a journey that many Conversos would have done centuries ago. We will stop for **lunch** in the city of **Cáceres** and get to explore this city that is part of the **Jewish Quarters Network of Spain**. More than five centuries later, it is still possible to feel the presence of that Sephardic Cáceres, and we will have the opportunity to visit not one but **two of its old Jewish Quarters**.
- We continue south to Spain's **Andalucian region**. Upon arrival in **Seville**, we check into our hotel, then enjoy time for dinner on our own.

Overnight in Seville (B, L)

DAY 9

TUESDAY, MAY 14, 2024
JEWISH SEVILLE

- Breakfast at our hotel. (Note today is Israel's Independence Day – we'll mark the occasion!)
- This morning, we enjoy a **Jewish heritage tour** of Seville. Inside the **former Jewish quarter**, we try to understand how our ancestors lived in this city until the edict of expulsion was issued by King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in 1492.
- We continue to the **Barrio de Santa Cruz**, once a thriving Jewish community, with its winding narrow streets and small plaza.
- After lunch on our own, we delight in a city tour of Seville. We begin in the iconic and beautiful **Plaza de España**, a 50,000 square meter spectacle of light and majesty designed for the 1929 Ibero-American Expo. We also visit the **burial site of Christopher Columbus**, then take in the view at the largest cathedral in Spain, with its **Giralda Tower**, as well as the Moorish **Alcazar Palace**.
- This evening we join together for **dinner** at a local restaurant.
- **Optional:** Enjoy a traditional **Flamenco performance** (additional cost).

Overnight in Seville (B, D)



DAY 10

WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2024
EXPLORING CORDOBA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- Today, we drive to **Cordoba**, home of the great Rambam, Moses Maimonides. Here, we meet with Progressive community **Rabbi Haim Casas** to discuss Conversos, Jews who converted to Catholicism. Rabbi Casas will act as our guide throughout the city.
- We see the **synagogue** with its **bronze statue of Maimonides** and the **cathedral**, once a mosque.
- Once the home of the Jewish community, Cordoba's medieval quarter is called "**La Judería**" (**The Jewry**), a labyrinth of winding, narrow streets, shady flower-filled courtyards and picturesque squares such as **La Plaza del Potro**. Here, we visit the **Casa De Sefarad** for a special program about the Ladino language and Sephardic culture and music.
- Next, we visit the famous "**La Mezquita**," the mosque-cathedral known as one of the most accomplished monuments of Moorish architecture.
- Time permitting, we have a chance to explore the shops of **Calle Judios**.
- Later, we travel to **Granada**, check into our hotel, then enjoy a free evening to explore the lively town center.

Overnight in Granada (B)

DAY 11

THURSDAY, MAY 16, 2024
GRANADA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We enjoy a tour of the highlights of Granada today, including the **Alhambra Palace**. This was the palace where, in 1492, Ferdinand and Isabella signed the decree expelling the Jews from Spain.
- We also see the famed **Generalife Gardens** and the **Old Jewish Quarter**.
- This evening, we join together for a festive **farewell dinner** and reminisce about all that we have experienced together on this journey.

Overnight in Granada (B, D)



DAY 12

FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2024
ADIOS ESPANA!

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to **Granada Airport** for our flight back to the United States, landing later today.



JOIN OUR
POST-TOUR TO
**PALMA DE
MALLORCA &
BARCELONA**



Our time in Mallorca will be enhanced by guide **Dani Rotstein** (who will also accompany the full tour). A content producer, entrepreneur, and storyteller, New Jersey native Dani Rotstein spent years traveling the world. When he moved to the Spanish island of Majorca in 2014 to produce TV commercials, he didn't expect there to be much Jewish life there. His surprising discoveries led to his work on the documentary film *Xueta Island: A Hidden History*, for which he is not only a director, but also a subject. He became involved with the local Jewish community, founding *Limud Mallorca* as well as *Jewish Majorca*, a company that offers educational tours of Jewish heritage sites around the island.

**POST
DAY 1**

FRIDAY, MAY 17, 2024
PALMA DE MALLORCA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to the airport for our **flight to Palma de Mallorca**.
- Upon landing, we enjoy a panoramic tour of Mallorca, a modern city with an ancient past; Palma's rich history is ours to explore. Architecture admirers marvel at the **Cathedral of Santa Maria of Palma**, an iconic Gothic Roman Catholic cathedral that has stood for nearly 800 years.

- We also will visit the famous **Castillo Bellver** built in the 14th century for King James II of Majorca, one of the few circular castles in Europe and offering commanding views of the bay.
- Later, we check into our hotel, then join together for **dinner** and an incredible **musical program**.

Overnight in Mallorca (B, D)



POST DAY 2

SATURDAY, MAY 18, 2024
SHABBAT IN MALLORCA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- With **lunch** included along the way today, our local Jewish guide leads us on a walking tour through the **Jewish quarter** of Palma, including a visit to the small **Jewish History Museum** and the sites of the **old main synagogue** and possible **secret synagogue**. We also visit the local **Orthodox Sephardic synagogue**, which is still in use today. We will learn about and pay homage to the **Chuetas**, a group of “Converso Mallorquins” who are direct descendants of the Medieval Jews of the island who had been discriminated against for centuries. In the last decade, some have recently converted back to Judaism.
- In the afternoon, we will take a drive through the famous **Serra de Tramuntana** to visit the mountain villages of **Valldemossa**, **Deia** and **Soller**. We can visit the **house of the famous writer Robert Graves** before heading back for our final evening in Mallorca to enjoy dinner on our own.

Overnight in Mallorca (B, L)



POST DAY 3

SUNDAY, MAY 19, 2024
BEAUTIFUL BARCELONA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We depart on our short **flight to Barcelona**.
- Upon arrival, we see the **harbor area** and the **Columbus Statue** and stroll down “**La Rambla**,” a popular downtown boulevard.
- We continue to the awe inspiring **La Sagrada Familia Church** designed by Gaudi and still in a perpetual state of construction. We also see Gaudi’s **Park Güell**, one of many partnership projects between the artist Gaudi and entrepreneur Eusebi Güell.
- We check into our hotel, then join together for **dinner**.

Overnight in Barcelona (B, D)



POST DAY 4

MONDAY, MAY 20, 2024
JEWISH BARCELONA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we enjoy a private **Jewish heritage tour of the Calle**, the Jewish quarter of Barcelona. Our time will include a private tour of **Casa Adret**, the oldest building in the Jewish quarter, formerly owned by medieval Jews and now functioning as the headquarter for Mozaika, a Jewish cultural center.
- We continue with a fascinating private tour of and access to the **archives of the Barcelona Cathedral**, focusing on those holdings related to the Jewish community.
- We see the remains of **Major Synagogue** that reopened in 2002 as a small museum.
- Next, we visit the **ancient cemetery** from the middle-ages. While no visible markers remain today, we will hear the history of the site and the efforts of Dominique Tomasov Blinder, an architect member of the local Jewish community, to get it designated a landmark site. From this point we can look over the Mediterranean and on to the city of Barcelona.
- Our next stop is at **Monjuich (Jews' Hill)** with a magnificent view of the city. This hill is Barcelona's central park today.
- This evening is at leisure with dinner on our own, perhaps in the city center for a taste of "tapas," the Spanish hors d'oeuvres buffet.

Overnight in Barcelona (B)

POST DAY 5

TUESDAY, MAY 21, 2024
GIRONA & BESALU

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we travel to **Girona**, one of the most important Jewish historical sites in Spain. While here, we visit the **Jewish Quarter**, which dates back to the 12th century, and discuss Girona's place in Jewish history.
- Next, we tour **medieval Girona**, famous for its Kabbalists. It was also the home of the great sage Nachmanides, who defended the Jewish faith in the 13th-century Disputation of Barcelona. We also stop by the **Jewish Museum**.
- Lunch on own, en route.
- We continue to **Besalu**, a picturesque medieval town that features one of the best preserved **mikvaot** (ritual bath) in all of Europe.
- Later, we return to Barcelona, where our adventure comes to an end with a festive **farewell dinner** at a local restaurant, recalling all that we have discovered and experienced together.

Overnight in Barcelona (B, D)

POST DAY 6

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2024
FAREWELL

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we transfer to the airport for our flight back to the United States, landing later today.

THE MEMORIES LAST FOREVER!!

**itinerary subject to change*

