

Ayelet's Traveling University Jewish Heritage Tour to UKRAINE

Led by Professor Natan Meir

June 2020

(As of 7/22/19)



Led by the engaging and enlightening Prof. Natan Meir, we'll uncover the stories of Ukraine. We will stroll through former Jewish neighborhoods, marvel at stunning synagogues, and wander centuries-old shtetls as we bring the past to life through historical documents, poetry, and photographs. Prof. Meir's presentations and touring commentary help create an immersive educational experience that won't soon be forgotten.

PAST PARTICIPANT COMMENTS:

"Professor Meir was just outstanding. His grasp of Jewish history from the Pale Settlement to each of the countries we visited was exceptional. He provided comprehensive and unique perspectives of the evolution of the Jewish culture as it evolved over the centuries. My wife and I came away knowing so much more than we did when we started". - Bill Morales

"Professor Natan Meir was wonderful. We would love to travel with him again. Thanks for arranging this trip, it was inspiring and educational". -Sandy Glatter

Day 1: Tuesday, June 23, 2020: DEPARTURE

- We depart the United States on our overnight flight to Odessa, Ukraine.

Day 2: Wednesday, June 24, 2020: WELCOME TO ODESSA!

- We arrive in **Odessa**, known as "the pearl of the Black Sea." The city was part of the Pale of Settlement and it welcomed Jews from all parts of the Russian Empire. On the eve of World War I, a third of the city's population was Jewish.
- We check into our hotel and refresh before our **welcome dinner** together this evening, with ice-breaker introductions and a tour overview with Professor Meir.

Overnight in Odessa



Day 3: Thursday, June 25, 2020: EXPLORING ODESSA

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **Lecture and discussion with Professor Meir.**
- This morning, we tour **Jewish Odessa**, including the **Odessa Museum of Jewish Heritage**, historic **synagogues** and the **Holocaust memorial**.
- This afternoon, we set out on a panoramic tour of Odessa. Along the way, we see the **Potemkin Steps**, famous from Sergei Eisenstein's movie "The Battleship Potemkin," **National Academic Theater of Opera and Ballet**, **Vorontsov Palace** and the architecture and historical monuments of **Deribasovskaya Street**.
- We return to our hotel.
- Evening at leisure and dinner on own.

Overnight in Odessa

Day 4: Friday, June 26, 2020: DISCOVERING KIEV

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we transfer to the airport for our flight to **Kiev**.
- Upon arrival, we are met by our local Ayelet Tours representative. A very important Russian religious and historical center in the past, Kiev was excluded from the Pale of Settlement and officially Jews had no right to settle here. Nevertheless, the city became a significant Jewish metropolis, home to fabulously wealthy sugar barons and industrialists in addition to writers such as Sholem Aleichem.
- We set out on a panoramic overview of the city, passing by **Independence Square (site of the 2014 Maidan Revolution)**, the **Golden Gate**, and the 11th-century Orthodox **St. Sophia's Cathedral**.
- Next, we stop to visit the **Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine** to view the collection of Judaica, one of the richest in Eastern Europe.
- As the sun sets, we join together to welcome **Shabbat** with the local Progressive congregation, followed by **Shabbat dinner** with members of the community.

Overnight in Kiev

Day 5: Saturday, June 27, 2020: SHABBAT SHALOM!

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- We begin our day with a **lecture and discussion with Professor Meir**.
- **Optional:** This morning, enjoy a walking tour of central Kiev.
- This afternoon, we tour the **Pechersk Lavra**, the holiest Eastern Orthodox monastery in this part of Europe, a complex made up of famous ancient churches and a network of catacombs.
- Spend the evening exploring the city and enjoying dinner on own.

Overnight in Kiev



Day 6: Sunday, June 28, 2020: JEWISH KIEV

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Morning **lecture and discussion with Professor Meir**.
- Today, we set out on a tour of Jewish Kiev. We begin with a walking tour of **Podol**, the port district and historically the center of Jewish life in Kiev, including a stop at the **Great Choral Synagogue (AKA the Rozenberg Synagogue)** for a tour of the Neo-Moorish building by a congregational leader.
- We stop for a short memorial service at **Babi Yar**, the infamous site where a series of devastating massacres were carried out during WWII.
- This afternoon, we visit the **Sholem Aleichem Museum**, the museum of the great Jewish writer and one of the founders of literature in Yiddish, including children's stories. At the age of 15, inspired by Robinson Crusoe, he wrote his own Jewish version of the novel and decided to become a writer, taking the pseudonym Sholem Aleichem, a traditional Jewish greeting meaning "peace unto you."
- We continue to the **Brodsky Synagogue**, the second largest synagogue in Kiev, followed by a visit to the new **HaOlam Jewish Community Center** for a tour.

Overnight in Kiev

Day 7: Monday, June 29, 2020: KIEV TO LVIV

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we depart Kiev and travel to **Lviv**. Professor Meir lectures on the bus. Along the way, we stop in **Zhitomyr**, **Brody** and **Busk**, shtetls that were formerly important Jewish communities.
- We arrive in **Lviv** this afternoon, one of the most important centers of Ukrainian cultural, economic and political life, noted for its beautiful and diverse architecture.
- We check into our hotel and refresh before setting out for an evening at leisure and dinner on own.



Overnight in Lviv

Day 8: Tuesday, June 30, 2020: DISCOVERING LVIV

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- Morning **lecture and discussion with Professor Meir**.
- This morning, we enjoy a walking tour of the medieval town center and the former **Jewish quarter** at the corner of Ruska and Federovska Streets, where the gates to the neighborhood once stood and were locked from within for the residents' safety. We see a typical Jewish home, the ruins of the burned down **Golden Rose Synagogue**, once the center of Jewish spiritual and social life, and the former public school for Jewish women, later a Jewish cultural and educational society. We continue our stroll and see the remnants of the **Great City Synagogue** and a mikvah.
- This afternoon, we take a panoramic bus tour of the city. Along the way, we stop to see **Rynok Square**, **St. George's Cathedral**, the **Lviv High Castle** atop Castle Hill and the **Pototski**



Palace.

- We complete our day at the **Holocaust memorial**, commemorating the suffering of the Jews who once called Lviv home.
- Spend the evening reflecting and reminiscing on our tour as we enjoy a **farewell dinner** together.

Overnight in Lviv

Day 9: Wednesday, July 1, 2020: DEPARTURE

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

The Memories Last Forever!!

**Itinerary subject to change*

