

Join Ayelet's Traveling University
for an unforgettable journey to

ITALY

Led by Prof. Stephen Berk
July 1-13, 2023

(As of 9/22/22)

For over two thousand years, Jewish communities have existed in Italy. Our ancestors settled here during the pre-Christian Roman era and through periods of prosperity and times of persecution, have held a continuous presence until today. We'll explore these roots and routes – historic, religious, culinary, artistic and beyond. Prof. Stephen Berk will illuminate it all with fascinating presentations throughout!



Day 1: Saturday, July 1, 2023: DEPARTURE FOR ITALY

- We depart on our overnight flight to Rome, Italy to begin our adventure!
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Day 2: Sunday, July 2, 2023: ARRIVE IN ROME

- Upon arrival in **Rome**, we meet our guide and begin our tour of this Eternal City – a city of images, vivid and unforgettable. A city of silhouettes, bell towers, cupolas, the peal of bells, motor scooters, gelato and cappuccino!
- We begin with a walking tour of Rome, including the **Trevi Fountain, Spanish Steps** and the **Pantheon**.
- Later this afternoon, we check into our hotel and have a chance to refresh before an **introductory program with Professor Stephen Berk**, followed by our **welcome dinner** this evening.

Overnight in Rome

Day 3: Monday, July 3, 2023: JEWISH ROME

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **Morning lecture by Prof. Stephen Berk.**
- We begin the day with a tour of the **Jewish Ghetto** in the **Trastevere** section on the banks of the Tiber River with a local historian. This was the site of Jewish concentration at the hands of Pope Paul IV. The medieval streets wind their way towards the **Deportation Square** from where Jews were sent off during the Holocaust.
- Next, we visit the **Museo Ebraico di Roma, the Jewish Museum of Rome**. Built in 1904, it is one of the oldest Jewish museums in Europe. Most impressive is the collection of Torah covers made with fabric dating back to between the 16th and 18th centuries.
- We continue our day with a visit to the **Great Synagogue**. It is considered one of the most impressive in Europe and was completed in 1882.
- We visit a wine bar for a **wine tasting and small snack**.
- The remainder of the afternoon and evening are at leisure to explore and enjoy dinner on own.



Overnight in Rome



Day 4: Tuesday, July 4, 2023: A TASTE OF ITALY + ANCIENT ROME

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we visit Rome's **Central Market** filled with artisanal foods of every variety. We enjoy a **chef-led cooking class** and prepare **lunch** our purchases.
- Next, we enjoy a tour of the **Vatican museums**, including one of the largest art collections in the world, spanning from Roman, Etruscan and Egyptian antiquities to contemporary art.
- Later this afternoon, we see the work of Raphael and Michelangelo and admire the **Sistine Chapel's** magnificent frescoes.
- We continue to **St. Peter's Square**, where some of the most important Papal ceremonies take place.
- Evening at leisure and dinner on own.



Overnight in Rome

Day 5: Wednesday, July 5, 2023: JEWISH ROME PART II

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **Morning lecture by Prof. Stephen Berk.**
- Today, we tour the **Jewish catacombs**, believed to date back to the period between the second and third centuries, with inscriptions in Hebrew, Greek and Latin that tell the story of the families that were buried there.
- This afternoon, we continue our adventure with a visit to the **Colosseum**, the **Roman Forum** and other monuments left as a sign of Rome's great historic past, including the **Arch of Titus**. This is a monument to a past less deserving of praise and a symbol of Jewish historic lows. Located in the archaeological heart of the city of Rome, the Flavian Amphitheatre, or more commonly, the Colosseum, stands for monumentality and receives a large number of visitors daily, attracted by the enchantment of its history and its complex architecture.
- This evening, we enjoy a visit with leaders from **Progressive Beth Hillel Roma Congregation (WUPJ)**. We will learn about the Italian Jewish experience, both in the past and present.
- We enjoy **dinner** together at a restaurant nearby.

Overnight in Rome



Day 6: Thursday, July 6, 2023: PITIGLIANO & SIENA

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we travel to **Pitigliano**. **Prof. Berk** will lead a discussion with us on the bus along the way.
- Upon arrival, we will be given a guided tour of the “**Forno dell Asime**”, the **Jewish bakery**, the **Jewish ghetto and cemetery** and the breathtakingly beautiful **synagogue** that sits at the bottom of a flight of stairs.
- At the **Valle Orientina**, we visit the “**Bath of the Jews**”, formerly a mikvah dating back to 1800, now in use as part of their spa facilities.
- Our next stop is the quaint city of **Siena**, where dazzling displays of pastry and coffee, chocolates and local wines tug at the taste buds. In Siena, we will find local pottery and unusual artisans as we experience the flavor of everyday life in this charming city.
- We check into our hotel, followed by **dinner** together tonight.

Overnight in Siena

Day 7: Friday, July 7, 2023: TO FLORENCE

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- This morning, we depart Siena and drive to **Florence**, one of the most beautiful cities in the world with its overflow of palaces, churches and museums filled with masterful paintings and sculptures. **Morning lecture by Prof. Stephen Berk** along the way.
- Upon arrival, we enjoy a **tour of Florence** with a close look at the Jewish world that was once centered here. The stories that emanate from the late 14th century ghetto to the Moorish style architecture of the synagogue built in 1882 will be enhanced with a visit to the **Museo Ebraica** (Jewish Museum).
- We continue to the **Accademia of Fine Arts** to view the **Statue of David** and other great works by Michelangelo.
- Time permitting, we’ll stop for a moment of reflection at **Track 16**, where Jews were deported to concentration and labor camps.
- Later this afternoon, we head to our hotel for check in with time to relax and refresh.
- This evening, we enjoy **Shabbat services** at **Shir Hadash Firenze/Florence**, followed by a festive **Shabbat dinner** at our hotel with members of the congregation.



Overnight in Florence



Day 8: Saturday, July 8, 2023: FINE ARTS IN FLORENCE

- Shabbat Shalom! Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we walk to the nearby **Uffizi Gallery**, one of the most visited museums all over the world. It houses some of the most important works of the Renaissance, including those by Leonardo da Vinci, Giotto and Michelangelo.
- This afternoon, we walk to **Il Duomo**. Begun in the late 1200's and consecrated 140 years later, this pink, green and white marble Duomo (cathedral) symbolized Florence's wealth and prestige. Nowhere in the world can one see such architectural magnificence in a church as in the Duomo in Florence. While here, we view the Baptistery's renowned "Gates of Paradise" by Ghiberti.
- We continue to **Piazza Santa Croce**, one of the most famous piazzas in Florence. The piazza houses the **Basilica Santa Croce**, where the famous Renaissance movers and shakers such as Michelangelo, Galileo, Machiavelli and modern Italian inventors such as Guglielmo Marconi and Enrico Fermi lie buried.
- Dinner on own this evening. Santa Croce is considered as the heart of nightlife filled with restaurants, bars and pubs.

Overnight in Florence

Day 9: Sunday, July 9, 2023: FERRARA'S NEW MUSEUM, VENICE – A CITY OF CANALS

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- **Morning lecture by Prof. Stephen Berk.**
- We travel by bus to **Ferrara**, where we visit the new **Museum of Italian Judaism and the Shoah**, exploring 2,000 years of Jewish history (see [NYTimes article](#)), including an introduction by the museum director, **Simonetta Della Seta**.
- We continue our drive to **Venice**, a city of 150 canals, 400 bridges, gondolas, the Piazza San Marco and breathtaking beauty.
- Upon arrival, we visit the Roman Catholic **St. Mark's Basilica**, which holds the relics of Saint Mark the Evangelist, the patron saint of the city located in the former political and religious center of **Saint Mark's Square**.
- Next, we enjoy a "**secret itineraries**" **tour of Doge's Palace**. We skip the long line and head straight inside to explore the palace's opulent public chambers adorned with masterpieces of Renaissance art. While here, we learn how the powerful doges ruled the Venetian Republic with an iron fist and gain rare entry into shadowy quarters of the **Piombi attic prison**, where Casanova was once locked up. We complete our visit with a walk across the famous **Bridge of Sighs** and wander the dark dungeons of the **New Prison** network.
- We check into our hotel before setting out again for dinner on own.



Overnight in Venice



Day 10: Monday, July 10, 2023: BURANO & MURANO

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **Morning lecture by Prof. Stephen Berk.**
- Today, we visit the colorful **Island of Burano**, noted for its lace work and brightly painted houses.
- Next, we visit the **Island of Murano** and tour one of the many glass-making businesses on the island.
- This afternoon, we return to **St. Mark's Square** and experience a **gondola ride**.
- Evening at leisure to explore and have dinner on own.



Overnight in Venice

Day 11: Tuesday, July 11, 2023: TRIESTE

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- This morning, we depart on our tour of the seaport of **Trieste** lying between the Adriatic Sea and Slovenia. Our visit begins in **Borgo Teresiano**, a district of Trieste built in the mid-18th century to assist in its development. We also see the **river** and **Piazza Unità d'Italia**, the main square in Trieste.
- Next, we stop on the hill of **San Giusto** to visit the **castle** and take in the panoramic views of the area.
- We continue to the **Roman Theater** for an explanation on urban, architectural, historical and everyday life particulars.
- **Optional** visit to the **Risiera di San Sabba**, once a compound that functioned as a Nazi concentration camp during WWII.
- Free time for lunch on own.
- This afternoon, we proceed with a **Jewish heritage tour**, including visits to the **Galleria Tergesteo**, **Piazza della Borsa**, the **Jewish ghetto**, **Saba's house**, **Via del Monte**, the **statue of Saba**, the **canal**, **Via San Lazzaro**, **Via Imbriani**, **Café San Marco**, the **synagogue** and more!
- Time permitting, we will visit the **Jewish museum** or the **Morpurgo museum**.
- We return to Venice for an evening at leisure and dinner on own.

Overnight in Venice



Day 12: Wednesday, July 12, 2023: JEWISH VENICE

- Breakfast at our hotel.
- **Morning lecture by Prof. Stephen Berk.**
- We begin our day with a visit to **Campo Del Ghetto**, where Jews were forced to live by the Venetian government from the mid-1500s to 1797 when Napoleon Bonaparte forced the Venetian Republic to dissolve itself and end the ghetto separation from the rest of the city. While here, we also see the **three synagogues (Spanish, Canton and Italian)** as well as the **Jewish Museum**.
- Enjoy the afternoon at leisure to explore this beautiful city and time for last-minute shopping.
- Tonight, we come together to enjoy a **farewell dinner**, reflecting on the wonderful time we've had on our journey through Italy.

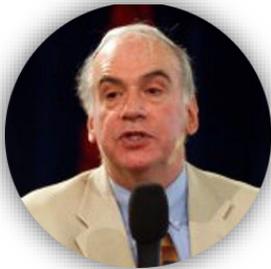
Overnight in Venice

Day 13: Thursday, July 13, 2023: DEPARTURE

- Breakfast and check out of our hotel.
- We transfer to the airport for our return flight (likely via Rome), landing later today.

The Memories Last Forever!!

**Itinerary subject to change*



ABOUT PROF. STEPHEN BERK:

Prof. Stephen M. Berk is a Professor of History at Union College in Schenectady, New York, 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, Italy, Cuba, the Caribbean, Eastern Europe and Israel. It is a privilege to have him with us!

