



Jewish
Heritage
Travel

A Program of the Museum of Jewish Heritage



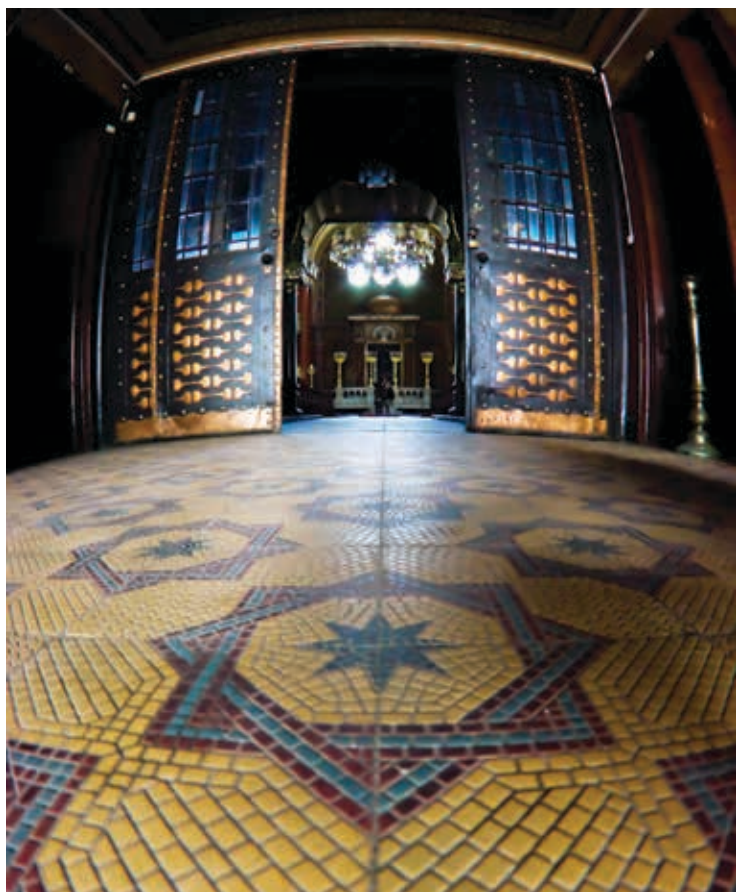
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We are dedicated to making your experience rich in content and superior in comfort.

This unique travel program combines the expertise and resources of two organizations that cherish the traditions, achievements, and faith of Jewish communities – past and present – around the world. Jewish Heritage Travel and the Museum of Jewish Heritage are delighted to have the opportunity to share this rich, varied, and poignant history and culture with you on these select trips. We look forward to traveling with you.

From Sofia to Salonika: Jewish Gems of the Balkans

May 3–14, 2017



Synagogue interior, Sofia

Program Overview

Jews have lived in the Balkans since Roman times, with the largest numbers being primarily Sephardic Jews who arrived following the expulsion from Spain in 1492. Over the next 500 years, Sephardic culture—songs, cuisine, Ladino (Judaeo-Spanish language), customs, and folklore—defined the Jewish communities of Greece, Bulgaria, and Macedonia.

Bulgaria and northern Greece’s Jewish histories are an important part of this Sephardic cultural context. In Sofia, we will meet with leading members of the Jewish community, visit its magnificent synagogue, enjoy daylong outings to Plovdiv and the Rila Monastery, and tour other sites of interest, including Bulgaria’s National Historical Museum and Alexander Nevsky Cathedral.

En route to Thessaloniki (Salonika), dubbed “Jerusalem of the Balkans,” we will visit Skopje, capital of Macedonia, and see its newly built Holocaust Memorial Center and the Beit Yaakov synagogue and Jewish community center. We will have ample time to stroll through the Oriental cobblestone streets of its old bazaar.

In Thessaloniki, where Ladino once served as the city’s lingua franca, we will be hosted by the Jewish community; visit the city’s two synagogues as well as the important Jewish Museum of Thessaloniki; learn about the tragic fate of Salonika’s Jews during the Holocaust; and see other important sites, including the Hagia Sofia Church and tomb of Philip II, father of Alexander the Great.

We will be joined by accompanying scholar Joseph Benatov, whose research has focused on the history of Jewish life in Bulgaria, Macedonia, and Salonika, as we enjoy deluxe accommodations throughout our trip and enjoy hearing local music.

Tentative Daily Itinerary*

Wednesday, May 3 | Sofia

Check into the 5-star Sense Hotel Sofia, known for its sophisticated design and elegant, modern atmosphere. Rest and relax from our journey.

Evening: Overview by our accompanying scholar, Joseph Benatov, followed by orientation and an opportunity to get to know one another. Welcoming dinner at our hotel (included).

Thursday, May 4 | Sofia

Walking tour of Sofia that will include, among other sites, the Old Town, Independence Square, Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, the mosque, and covered market. Break for lunch on our own before visiting the Sofia synagogue. One of the architectural monuments of Sofia, the synagogue boasts a richly decorated interior, featuring columns of Carrara marble and multicolored Venetian mosaics, as well as decorative wood carving—and the largest chandelier in the Balkans, which is rumored to be made from gold from ancient Palestine.

Evening: Presentation by Professor Joseph Benatov, “A History of Jewish Life in Bulgaria,” before dinner on our own.

Friday, May 5 | Sofia—Rila Monastery

Visit the Boyana Church, a medieval Bulgarian Orthodox church situated on the outskirts of Sofia. The east wing of the two-story church was originally constructed in the late tenth or early eleventh century. In 1979, the building was added to the UNESCO World Heritage list. Break for lunch (included) before arriving at Rila Monastery, Bulgaria’s largest and most renowned monastery, which emerges abruptly out of a forested valley in the Rila Mountains. The monastery complex, one of the foremost masterpieces of Bulgarian National Revival architecture, was declared a national historical monument in 1976 and became a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1983.

Return to Sofia in time for a festive Shabbat dinner (included), followed by a special performance of local music.



Panorama of Skopje, Macedonia



Roman Amphitheater, Plovdiv



Sofia Synagogue



Old Plovdiv Cityscape

Saturday, May 6 | Sofia

Morning: Free to relax, or attend services at the Sofia synagogue, which is a short walk from our hotel

Afternoon: At leisure, or visit one of the nearby museums.

Evening: Presentation by Joseph Benatov, “How the Bulgarian Jews Survived the Holocaust.”

Sunday, May 7 | Sofia—Plovdiv

Plovdiv, with many parks and gardens, museums, and archaeological monuments, will be the European Cultural Capital in 2019. Its Old Town, with houses from the National Revival period (eighteenth–nineteenth century), is an imposing open-air museum situated on the three hills of the ancient Trimontium. Plovdiv boasts Thracian, Roman, Byzantine, and Bulgarian antiquities, the most impressive being the Roman amphitheater—the best-preserved in the Balkans, it is still used for performances. We will break for lunch (included) before visiting the Museum Trakart, with an excellent exhibition of floor mosaics from a residential building from the fourth century ce and glassworks dating from fifth century bce up to the fourth century ce. We will also visit the synagogue and the Jewish monument commemorating the rescue of the local Jewish community.

Monday, May 8 | Sofia—Skopje

Depart for Skopje. En route, stop in Kyustendil and visit the Dimitar Peshev museum, dedicated to the life of locally born Dimitar Peshev, Deputy Speaker of the Bulgarian National Assembly during World War II. In 1943, he publicly stood up against the planned deportations of the Bulgarian Jews. Just a few weeks before his death, Peshev was awarded the title “Righteous Among the Nations” by Yad Vashem. En route, break for lunch (included).

Arrive late afternoon, Skopje, Macedonia, check in to the new 5-star Skopje Marriott hotel. Rest and relax before dinner at our hotel (included).

Tuesday, May 9 | Skopje

We will visit the Jewish community of Skopje and the Beit Yaakov Synagogue. The synagogue was opened on the top floor of the Jewish community center in Skopje in 2000. The sanctuary is a simple room, decorated with modern stained-glass windows illustrating Jewish symbols. Following this visit,



Panagia Chalkeon Church Thessaloniki.

a walking tour of Skopje's old market and the Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia. The Memorial Center is located in the so-called Jewish Quarter of Skopje, which was the center of Jewish life in this city until the deportation of the Jews. The Holocaust Memorial Center for the Jews of Macedonia was officially opened in 2011, exactly 68 years after the German forces deported the Macedonian Jews to the Treblinka extermination camp.

Afternoon: Free to explore Skopje on our own and visit sites and museums of interest.

Evening: Presentation by Joseph Benatov, "Sephardi Vignettes from the Balkans," before dinner on our own.

Wednesday, May 10 | Skopje—Thessaloniki

Depart for Thessaloniki. En route, we will stop at Vergina for lunch (included) and a private guided tour of the tomb of Philip II of Macedonia (a UNESCO World Heritage site) and new museum. Our guide will be Eugenia Koukoura, a lecturer and historian of ancient Greek history. We will then visit the Veria before arriving in Thessaloniki. The Jewish community of Veria, which received Saint Paul at its synagogue, dates from antiquity. It was a Romaniot community, which grew further after the fifteenth century, with the arrival of the Sephardic Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. The almost completely preserved Jewish quarter, called Barbouta, dates from the early and mid-nineteenth century. It is of a defensive and introverted typology, where the houses are built around an open courtyard, with access only through two gates that used to be locked at night.

Check into the 5-star Daios Luxury Living hotel. Rest and relax before dinner (included).

Thursday, May 11 | Thessaloniki

Today will begin with a walking tour of Thessaloniki, including the synagogue, Old Market, Allatini Bank building, Jewish Museum, and new Jewish memorial that commemorates the Jewish population that never returned from Auschwitz-Birkenau. Our Jewish guide will be Hella Kounio-Matalon, who will share her family's story of Nazi-occupied times in Thessaloniki.

Evening: Presentation by a local Jewish scholar.



Thessaloniki, Greece

Friday, May 12 | Thessaloniki

Our guide, Hella, will take us to the old train station, where the deportations to Auschwitz took place, past historic villas once home to the Jewish elite of Thessaloniki, Yeni Cami (new mosque) built for converted Jews, the old city walls with a panoramic view of the harbor, and a new monument on the university campus where the Jewish cemetery was once located. We will have lunch along the way (included).

Evening: Shabbat dinner (included) with members of the Jewish community. Evening: Presentation by a local Jewish scholar.

Saturday, May 13 | Thessaloniki

Morning: Free, or (optional) attend services at synagogue.

Afternoon: (optional) private guided tour of the Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum with Eugenia Koukoura, followed by a walking tour, including the White Tower. Once used as a fort enhancing the harbor's defenses, a garrison, and a prison, it is an informative museum today, dedicated to the city's history and the multicultural spirit of Thessaloniki.

Evening: Closing meeting and dinner (included).

Sunday, May 14 | Thessaloniki

Depart on flights for home.

**Please Note: Daily schedule may be modified subject to weather or unanticipated changes.*



White Tower, Thessaloniki, Greece

Traveling with You...

Scholar in Residence



Joseph Benatov holds a Ph.D. in comparative literature from the University of Pennsylvania where he teaches Hebrew at all levels. He is originally from Bulgaria and a member of Sofia's Jewish commu-

nity. Dr. Benatov is the English translator of the contemporary Bulgarian novel *Zift*. He has also translated Israeli poetry, prose, and drama. His translations of plays by Hanoch Levin, Martin McDonagh, and Ethan Coen were all staged to wide acclaim in Bulgaria. Dr. Benatov has over 10 years of experience leading travelers across Bulgaria, including UNESCO representatives, 92nd Street Y visitors, JDC board members, and Anti-Defamation League officials. Dr. Benatov lectures regularly on the history of Jewish life in Bulgaria and has published on the fate of Bulgaria's Jews during the Holocaust. His article on the topic appears in the anthology *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (University of Nebraska Press).



New Holocaust Memorial, Thessaloniki

Accommodations



Sense Hotel, Sofia

Sofia's first upscale design hotel, balancing luxury and superb design with world class service. Proud member of Design Hotels, Sense Hotel Sofia is an architectural piece of art that stands out from the crowd. Nestled in the heart of Bulgaria's capital, Sense Hotel Sofia has a matchless location on Sofia's main boulevard Tsar Osvoboditel, a street that is home to some of Bulgaria's most important buildings, including the country's National Assembly.



Marriott Hotel, Skopje

The brand new 5-star Skopje Marriott hotel is located in the heart of the city on Macedonia Square and boasts incredible views to the Vardar River and 500-year old Stone Bridge. The hotel's spa features a state-of-the-art gym, treatment rooms, swimming pool, Jacuzzi and 4 types of saunas.



Daios Luxury Living Hotel, Thessaloniki

Located on Thessaloniki's seafont, the urban chic Daios Luxury Living includes a Mediterranean bar/restaurant and stylish rooms, both with splendid panoramas over Thermaikos Gulf and the White Tower. In a privileged location, Daios Luxury Living is just few steps away from the city's landmark, the White Tower, and Aristotelous Square. A variety of restaurants, museums, cultural centers, bookstores and smaller shops can be found within walking distance.



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Program Details

Program Cost: \$6,650 (plus \$54 Museum of Jewish Heritage fee for nonmembers)

Includes:

- Eleven nights' accommodations at deluxe hotels*
- Full breakfast daily; five lunches; six dinners
- All group transportation via deluxe air-conditioned coach
- Entrance fees to all museums and sites on itinerary

**Per person, double occupancy; single supplement (\$965) and gratuities (\$160) additional.*

To reserve your place, please complete the registration form and submit with a nonrefundable deposit of \$1,000 per person (payable to the Jewish Heritage Travel Program). A second nonrefundable deposit of \$1,000 per person is due on December 3, 2016. Balance is due in full by January 3, 2017

Disclaimer of Responsibility By registering for this program, participant specifically waives any and all claims of action against the Museum of Jewish Heritage, and the Jewish Heritage Travel office and their respective staffs for damages, loss, injury, accident or death incurred by any person in connection with this tour. The Museum of Jewish Heritage, and the Jewish Heritage Travel office and their respective staffs assume no responsibility or liability in connection with the service of any train, vessel, carriage, aircraft or other conveyance which may be used wholly or in part in the performance of their duty to the passengers. Neither will the Museum of Jewish Heritage, and the Jewish Heritage Travel office or their staffs be responsible for any injury, death, loss, accident, delay or irregularity through neglect or default of any company or person engaged in carrying out the purposes for which tickets, vouchers, or coupons are issued. No responsibility is accepted for losses or expenses due to sickness, weather, strikes, wars and other causes. In the event it becomes necessary or advisable for any reason whatsoever to alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty. All rights reserved to require any participant to withdraw from the tour at his/her own expense when such an action is determined by the tour staff to be in the best interest of the participant's health and safety, and that of the group in general.

Registration Information

How to register

Online jhtravel.org

Mail Fill out this registration form and mail with your check or credit card information to:

Jewish Heritage Travel Program
27 North Chestnut Street
New Paltz, NY 12561

Fax Fill out this registration form and mail with your check or credit card information and fax to:

845.256.0196

Telephone Call our office

845.256.0197

Monday-Friday, 10am-5pm

Participation The program will entail considerable walking, including uneven terrain. Participants need to be in active, good health, able to keep up with the group, ready to travel and experience group and cultural differences with grace. If you have any questions, or need help with your travel plans, please call the Jewish Heritage Travel Office at 845.256.0197. Participation is limited. Register early.

Insurance Participants are urged to purchase travel insurance for losses necessitated by having to cancel participation due to health issues. For your convenience, insurance forms will be sent upon registration, or consult your own insurance agent. Please contact The Jewish Heritage Travel office at 845.256.0197 for more information.

Changes All rights are reserved by the Program Directors to make faculty substitutions and/or to modify the itinerary (including hotels) as needed.

Cancellations All cancellations must be received by The Jewish Heritage Travel Program in writing. Cancellations received up to 120 days prior to departure: full refund less non-refundable deposits, per person; 119-90 days prior to departure: 50% refund per person after non-refundable deposits. No refunds after this date.



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Registration Form:

Trip title/country

Dates of travel

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name

Address

City State Zip

Email address

Phone number Cell phone number

PARTICIPANT NAMES: Museum Member

 Yes No

 Yes No

ACCOMMODATIONS

I would like a single room (for single room supplement please see trip details) I'll share a room with:

Please share any special information we should know to enhance your experience.

FLIGHT ARRANGEMENTS

- I will make my own flight arrangements .
 I need assistance and will call (845-256-0197).

DEPOSIT

Make your deposit by check or credit card.

- Enclosed is a check made payable to Jewish Heritage Travel Program

in the amount of: \$_____.

- Please charge \$_____ to my:

- Master Card Visa American Express

card holder's name

card number exp. date: mo/yr validation code

Signature

Please send your non-refundable deposit for \$1000 per participant by mail or fax.

MAIL
Jewish Heritage Travel Program
27 North Chestnut Street
New Paltz, NY 12561

FAX
845.256.0196

TELEPHONE
845.256.0197
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