



A Program of the Museum of Jewish Heritage

Jewish Jewels of the Baltics Lithuania, Latvia & Estonia

August 30 – September 10, 2020



Old Town Vilnius, Lithuania

Program Overview

Lithuanian Jews, also called Litvaks, were among the most influential scholars, energetic businessmen, and skilled professionals in Europe prior to World War II. In Lithuania, Jewish secular and religious institutions flourished. With more than 100 synagogues and some of the leading rabbinical schools of Europe, Vilnius was affectionately known as the Jerusalem of Lithuania. The YIVO Institute—the leading academic institution for the study of Yiddish language and literature—was founded in Vilnius, and the Gaon of Vilna was a world-renowned Talmudist and scholar.

In nearby Latvia and Estonia, Jews also played important roles in the economic and intellectual life of their countries. Their Jewish communities flourished, with customs and culture influenced by German, Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian traditions. Over the years, such luminaries as Isaiah Berlin, Rabbi Kook, Mark Rothko, Louis Kahn, Abba Eban, and Amos Oz have come from Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian families.

Join scholar-in-residence and expert on Lithuanian Jewry Professor Sid Leiman and explore the Jewish heritage and culture of these Baltic Jewish gems. Our trip will begin in the picturesque city of Vilnius and continue through the countryside of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. Among other places, we will visit Trakai, ancient capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania; the charming city of Riga, a World Heritage Site; and Tallinn, an architectural wonder. Throughout the journey, travelers will enjoy good company, magnificent countryside, and Professor Leiman's fascinating lectures, which will provide invaluable context and insights.



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.

Program Details

Program cost: \$6,350 (plus \$54 Museum of Jewish Heritage fee for nonmembers)

- Eleven nights accommodations at deluxe hotels
- Breakfast daily; five lunches and three dinners
- All group transportation via deluxe coach

*Per person, based on double occupancy. single supplement (\$1,245) and gratuities (\$165) 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 March 1, 2020. Balance is due in full by May 1, 2020.

Tentative Daily Itinerary*

Sunday, August 30

Evening: Overview by our scholar, Professor Sid Leiman, followed by orientation and an opportunity to get to know one another; opening dinner at our hotel (included).

Monday, August 31

We will begin this morning with a visit to the old Jewish cemetery (where the Gaon of Vilna is buried) and a walk through the medieval Jewish quarter and ghetto and a visit to the Vilnius synagogue.

Following lunch on our own, we will visit the State Jewish Museum. The hub of the city's tiny Jewish community, this small museum surveys the history of the Jewish community of Vilnius from the 15th through 20th centuries. It displays rare photographs and copies of diaries and handwritten notes relating to the Holocaust.

Evening presentation by Professor Leiman: *The Plight of Jewish Women in Nineteenth-Century Lithuania: Haskalah Versus the Rabbis*.
Dinner on our own.

Tuesday, September 1

Early-morning departure for Keidan (also known as Kedainiai), once an important Jewish shtetl. Here, we will visit the town synagogue and museum, tour Old Town, and have lunch (included). Following lunch in Keidan, we will drive to Kaunas (also known as Kovno) and visit a synagogue that was founded in 1871. Before the Holocaust, this radically designed, neo-Baroque synagogue was one of more than 35 synagogues and Jewish prayer houses in Kaunas. Though few Jews remain in Kaunas, the synagogue houses a stunning Torah ark and encapsulates the rich and famous history of Jewish Kovno. Now a museum, the synagogue contains collections of historical artifacts related to Soviet and Nazi atrocities. Before returning to Vilnius, we will visit the "Ninth Fort" (the ninth in a series of fortifications dating back to Tsarist Russia), today a museum and memorial to victims of fascism.

Evening: Free, dinner on our own.

Wednesday, September 2

Depart our hotel for a day trip to Trakai, ancient capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. En route, we will stop in Paneriai Forest to see a site commemorated by a memorial to the victims of the Holocaust. In this forest, more than 100,000 Jewish victims were murdered, most over a period of a few days.

In Trakai, we will tour historic Trakai Castle and visit the Karaites Ethnographic Museum, situated on a street dotted with picturesque wooden cottages. Many of these cottages were built by the Karaites, an ancient sect and offshoot of Judaism, whose descendants arrived in Trakai from the Crimea in the 14th century. Lunch in Trakai (included).
Evening presentation by Professor Leiman: *The Wisdom of Lithuania's Maskilim and Rabbis*.
Dinner on our own.

Thursday, September 3

Morning: Depart our hotel for the Old Town Gothic Corner and Dawn Gate, followed by a tour of the Tolerance Museum, before returning to our hotel. Afternoon free for exploring Vilnius on our own and/or shopping.

Registration Information

Participation

Limited to 30 participants, 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.

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.

Cancellations

Refunds and Insurance: 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.

Changes

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

Tentative Daily Itinerary, continued

Evening: Special guest lecture by, and discussion with, Dr. Dovid Katz. An American-born, Vilnius-based scholar and cultural historian of Lithuanian Jewry, Dr. Katz is the author of many articles on Yiddish that have been published in encyclopedias (including *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*) and is intimately familiar with the status and situation of today's Jewish community in Vilnius. Dinner on our own.

Friday, September 4

Depart Vilnius for Riga, with a stop at the Baroque Rundale Palace for a private guided tour. One of the most outstanding monuments of Baroque and Rococo architecture in Latvia, the palace was built as a summer residence for Ernst Johann Biron, Duke of Courland and a favorite of the Russian empress Anna Ioannovna. Lunch at Rundale Palace (included). Upon arrival in Riga, check in to the deluxe Grand Palace Hotel, with time to rest and relax.

Evening: Attend services at Peitav Shul (a ten-minute walk from our hotel). The synagogue is an architectural gem and considered a monument of national significance. The only synagogue to be spared during the Nazi occupation, the Peitav Shul is a magnificent edifice, constructed in the manner of Art Nouveau and well worth seeing. Following services, Shabbat dinner (included).

Saturday, September 5

Morning: Free to relax or (optional) attend Shabbat services.

Afternoon: Walking tour of historic Old Riga (designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site), with its many wooden buildings and Art Nouveau architecture. Included is a guided tour of the Art Nouveau Museum.

Evening: Free; dinner on our own.

Sunday, September 6

Our morning will begin with a private guided tour of Riga's Jewish Community Center and Museum. At the museum, we will hear a presentation about Riga's Jewish history by Ilya Lensky, a researcher at the museum. Following lunch on our own in Old Town, we will visit the "Moscow District" and Rumbula Forest, where more than 25,000 Jews were massacred over one weekend. We will end our day at the Žanis Lipke Museum (a modern, interactive museum designed by a prominent local architect that tells the little-known tale of Žanis Lipke and the network of about 25 people who created an "underground railroad" to rescue Jews from the Nazis during the German occupation of Latvia).

Evening: Free; dinner on our own.

Monday, September 7

Depart Riga for Tallinn, capital of Estonia. Along the way, we will view the magnificent countryside with a stop in the seaside town of Pärnu for lunch (included) at Villa Ammende. From Pärnu, we will drive to Tallinn and check in to the Hotel Telegraaf.

Evening: Free; dinner on our own.

Tuesday, September 8

Morning: Private guided tour of the spectacular Kumu Museum, encompassing the building's award-winning architecture and permanent collection of Estonian art. In 2008, the museum received the European Museum of the Year Award, one of the most prestigious in Europe. Lunch at Kumu (included).

Traveling with You...

Scholar in Residence



Sid Leiman, Ph.D. is professor emeritus of Jewish history and literature at Brooklyn College, and he teaches at the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University. He has taught at Harvard, Yale, and Oxford, as well as the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Author of *Rabbinic Responses to Modernity* (2007) and *The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture* (1991), he has contributed entries to *Encyclopaedia Britannica* and *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Dr. Leiman frequently leads Jewish historical tours to Central and Eastern Europe.

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.

Tentative Daily Itinerary, continued

Afternoon: Walking tour of Old Town, including Town Hall Square, Toompea Castle, Dominican Monastery, and Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (magnificent example of a Russian Revival cupola cathedral). Along the way, a guided tour of the Niguliste Museum, with its collection of medieval and early modern ecclesiastical art.

Evening presentation by Professor Leiman: *Lifeboat Ethics: A Jewish Perspective*, followed by a meeting to process the experience of our trip. Dinner on our own.

Wednesday, September 9

Morning: We will visit Tallinn's new Jewish Community Center and the adjoining, architecturally fascinating, synagogue and museum for a guided tour. Lunch on our own; afternoon free for last-minute shopping, or exploring Tallinn.

Evening: Closing, festive, closing dinner at our hotel (included).

Thursday, September 10

Depart for U.S.

**Please note: Daily schedule may be modified subject to weather, unanticipated changes at sites on the itinerary, or group energy.*

Accommodations



The Kempinski Hotel Cathedral Square

The Kempinski Hotel Cathedral Square is a truly distinctive hotel located on Cathedral Square, featuring breathtaking views over the UNESCO-listed Old Town. Major tourist attractions, such as the Presidential Palace and the main shopping street, Gedimino Boulevard (home to many designer boutiques), in addition to galleries, are all within walking distance.



The Grand Palace

The Grand Palace Riga was originally built in 1877 as the Central Bank of Latvia and was converted into a boutique 5-star hotel in 2000. It now offers a setting that encompasses luxury, warmth, and comfort. Voted as Latvia's Leading Hotel, the Grand Palace Hotel is located in the heart of the sightseeing district of Riga Old Town.



Hotel Telegraaf

Hotel Telegraaf is an elegant 19th-century building with a stunning façade perfectly placed in the heart of Tallinn's historical Old Town. Formerly a telephone exchange, it has been masterfully converted to a boutique hotel provide the highest standards of accommodations and cuisine.



Jewish Heritage Travel

A Program of the Museum of Jewish Heritage

How to register

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

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THIS TRIP?

Please check all that apply.

- Museum of Jewish Heritage
- Jewish Heritage Travel
- JewishGen
- Friend or Family
- Social Media
- Advertisement

Registration For:

Trip title/country

Dates of travel

CONTACT INFORMATION

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Email address

Phone number

Cell phone number

PARTICIPANT NAMES:

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

Enclosed is a check made payable to Jewish Heritage Travel 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 nonrefundable deposit for \$1000 per participant by mail or fax (see details at left)