

Discover Jewish Heritage of Portugal 2023



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DAY 1, Tuesday Jun 06: USA / Porto

Depart your home city to Newark (New Jersey) to board the overnight flight to Porto, Portugal.

DAY 2, Wednesday Jun 07: Arrive Porto

Welcome to Porto (Oporto in Portuguese), a coastal city in northwest Portugal known for its stately bridges and port wine production. In the medieval Ribeira (riverside) district, narrow cobbled streets wind past merchants' houses and cafes. Porto is also Portugal's second city, home to one of the oldest Jewish communities in the country that was spared by the earthquake of 1755 that destroyed much of Lisbon but left Porto intact, including the streets of the former Jewish quarter, narrow streets, and balconied houses, with street names such as "Rua Monte Judeus," "Escadinhas do Monte dos Judeus," and "Pátio das Escadinhas do Monte dos Judeus." The main synagogue stood on the Escadas da Vitória, a place still locally called "Escadas da Esnoga," meaning "stairway to the synagogue." There is a plaque that marks this site.



Porto had a vibrant Jewish community before the establishment of the Portuguese kingdom in 1143. Many Jewish merchants had their offices along the Porto riverfront. One of its three Jewish neighborhoods was called Monte dos Judeus (Jews' Hill). A synagogue was located on the Rua da Sinagoga (Synagogue Street), which is now Rua de Sant'Ana (Saint Ana Street). To live in the town, Jews needed the permission of the Bishop of Porto.

The contribution of Portuguese Jews to world history is enormous and its history is



inseparable from the Jewish presence in Portugal between the 5th and the 15th centuries. In the northern region of the country are villages, cities, and small towns where important Jewish communities once thrived. It would be hard to trace back the arrival of the first Jews in Porto as it is to trace back the foundation of the city. Although Porto tolerated its Jewish community and even tried to protect it for many years, the expulsion of the Jews from the country following the infamous Inquisition completely destroyed its Jewish Heritage.

Board our bus and transfer to the city where we begin our city tour of Porto. We will visit the first Jewish neighborhood of the city, the lost medieval synagogue in Porto and all the forgotten places where the Jewish influence left its mark in town. Our guide will share with the history of the Jewish Heritage in Porto for you.

Return to the Crown Plaza Porto Hotel for dinner and welcome remarks by our academic leader Dr. Rabbi Peter Tarlow.

Overnight Crown Plaza Porto Hotel. (D)



Day 3, Thursday Jun 08: Full Day Excursion to Douro Valley

One of Portugal's most endearing regions is the Douro River Valley, the winding, terraced region that produces the country's beloved port wine. The Douro is one of the major rivers of the Iberian Peninsula, flowing from its source near Duruelo de la Sierra in Soria Province across northern-central Spain and Portugal to its outlet at Porto. The Douro Wine Region is the oldest demarcated wine region in the world, dating from the 18th century. The amazing landscape of the vineyards in the slopes is unique and the reason why the landscape is considered to be UNESCO world heritage.

The estates which produce the grapes to make Port wine are known, as elsewhere in Portugal, as quintas. Our tour begins with a visit to a Port wine producer. There



will be a personalized guided tour of the vineyards where the process of making the Port wine will be explained. The wine tasting will be accompanied by a careful selection of Portuguese cheeses.

Next, we board a short scenic cruise of beauty and serenity enjoying the beauty of the hills and grape vines around you. we stop for lunch at typical Portuguese restaurant and will be given the choice of meat, fish, or vegetarian (lunch is on your own).

Afternoon return to Porto and our hotel for overnight and dinner.

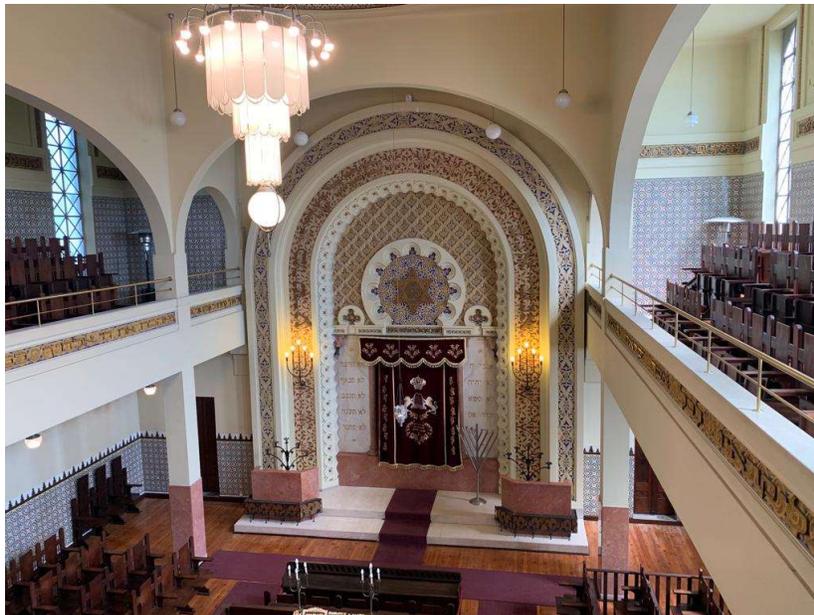
Overnight Crown Plaza Porto Hotel. (B,D)



Day 4, Friday Jun 09: Porto and Mekor Haim Synagogue & Museum

This morning we visit the Kadoorie - Mekor Haim (Source of Life) Synagogue is the largest synagogue on the Iberian Peninsula and one of the largest in Europe. Built with donations from Jews from all over the world, it was significantly inaugurated in 1938, a time when in Nazi Germany synagogues were being burned down and the Estado Novo was being implemented in Portugal.

This architectural monument is one of the most extraordinary houses of Jewish worship in the world and is also the headquarters of the Comunidade Israelita do Porto (Israeli Community of Porto). The community was founded in 1923 by Captain Artur



Barros Basto (1887-1961), known for trying to rescue the descendants of Jews forced to convert to Christianity in the 15th century, who kept in secret the practice of precepts of the Jewish religion.

This Synagogue is a singular architectural monument, and one of the most extraordinary places of Jewish worship in the world. It is also the headquarters and "heart" of the Jewish

Community of Oporto, which was founded in 1923 by Captain Barros Basto, who became known in the Jewish world for trying to rescue the descendants of the Jews who were forced to convert in the 15th century and who continued to practice, in secret, certain precepts of the Jewish religion.

We continue our visit across the street at the Holocaust Museum of Oporto. Created in 2021 by the Jewish Community of Oporto in partnership with B'nai B'rith International and Holocaust museums in Moscow, Hong Kong, the United States and Europe.

We stop for lunch (on our own) before returning to the hotel. Evening Shabbat Services (for those that wish to participate), followed by a Shabbat Dinner at the hotel.

Overnight Crowne Plaza Porto Hotel. (B,D)



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Day 5, Saturday Jun 10: Porto Shabbat

Today is free to relax and take in the Shabbat in Porto with the Jewish community. The synagogue is beautiful and was renovated recently by the community. There are typically a variety of people from all over the world at the Shabbat services organized by the Jewish Community.

Overnight Crown Plaza Porto Hotel. (B,D)

Day 6, Sunday Jun 11: Coimbra, Trancoso, Belmonte, Covilhã

This morning we make our way to Coimbra. Situated along the banks of the river Mondego, Coimbra is famous for its university, the oldest in Portugal and one of the oldest in Europe. Coimbra is a city steeped in history. It was Portugal's medieval capital for more than a century. Its historic center dates to Moorish times and offers a unique atmosphere with its dark cobbled lanes and monumental cathedrals. On summer

evenings, the city's old stone walls reverberate with the haunting metallic notes of the guitarra (Portuguese guitar) and the full, deep voices of fado singers. Time permitting, we will visit the university's famous "Biblioteca Joanina" library, dating back to the 18th century, it was designated as one of the most beautiful libraries in the world.



We continue our drive to

Trancoso, a well-preserved sample of a Portuguese walled town whose narrow streets and stone houses preserve the medieval atmosphere. Trancoso was once the home to a large flourishing Jewish community. This ended with the arrival of the Inquisition. Indeed, throughout the Middle Ages, the community of this city in northern Portugal has experienced an economic and social expansion unique in Europe. Trancoso, thanks



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to its important fair, was a city of passage and exchange. In the fifteenth century, the Jewish population rose to more than 500 people, which forced the community to settle outside the boundaries of the judaria. Even today, there are many traces of this past. As you walk through the city, you will find Hebrew inscriptions, stars of David, and other symbols on the door jambs. In 2012 it honored its Jewish heritage with the establishment of the 'Isaac Cardoso Center for Jewish Interpretation' and a new synagogue called Beit Mayim Hayim – 'The House of Living Waters.

We continue to Belmonte situated in the remote and beautiful region of Portugal is rich in the history and traditions. The town is noted for its Marranos often referred to as "Belmonte Jews", or "Crypto-Jews". They are the Jewish community in Belmonte that have survived in secrecy for hundreds of years. The community was forced under King



Manuel I to convert to Catholicism in 1490. Otherwise, they would face exile. They had maintained their Jewish identity for over four hundred years by marrying mainly among themselves

and adhering to the belief in a single personal Deity who would redeem his people at the end of days. They practiced some Jewish observances, the Sabbath, and some holidays. They often lit candles on Friday night where they could not be seen from outside and observed Passover and Yom Kippur a day or two before or after the Jewish calendar date to confuse the Inquisition. They were discovered in 1917 by Samuel Schwartz, a Galician mining engineer who shared with them that there are many living Jews all over the world.

Continue to Covilhã for dinner and overnight at the Hotel.

Overnight Purala Wool Valley Hotel & Spa. (B,D)



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Day 7, Monday Jun 12: Covilhã, Castelo de Vide, Tomar, Lisbon

This morning we tour Covilhã with its steep narrow streets and spectacular views, Covilhã is one of the most charming places in central Portugal. The narrow, winding streets follow the slope of the hill, blending into the terrain and the city walls.

Archaeological data shows that the Synagogue, the center of knowledge in Jewish communities, was in the Rua das Flores. The Jewish community of Covilhã lasted from the 12th century until the beginning of the 20th century, the largest and most important in the Serra da Estrela Region and one of the strongest in Portugal.

The community of this region was mainly dedicated to trade and crafts, but also to agricultural activities, having been mainly the drivers of the wool industry. At the end of the 15th century, there were at least two Hebrew nuclei. One (the oldest) intramural located next to Portas do Sol; the second, on the outside, adjoining them close to the village gates surrounding the area that encompasses Rua do Ginásio and Rua das Flores. A stop at the synagogue and a discussion with a local Jewish leader.



Next, we head to Castelo de Vide is a picturesque village in the district of Portalegre, with an ancient and perennial past, with origins at the top of an elevation of Serra de São Mamede. Castelo de Vide is marked by the Restoration war, according to the walls and ramparts surrounding it; many military personnel from other countries settled here throughout the first decade of the 19th century. The oldest built heritage in the village is essentially of Moorish and Christian origin. The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are represented by several examples of civil and religious architecture. Easter festivities are the most characteristic events, by mixing it with Jewish rites. The gardens, huge, cultivated acres, town corners, house style, manors, fountains, and the marks of



the past are the traits that characterize Castelo de Vide. Meander along narrow sidewalks which go from "Porta da Vila", in the Castle, to "Fonte da Vila", in everything equal from those who form the remaining medieval nucleus. The urban area for the Jewry from Castelo de Vide grew, fundamentally, from the streets "Fonte", "Mercado", "Arçário", "Mestre Jorge", "Judaria", "Ruinha da Judaria", the current "Rua dos Serralheiros" and "Rua Nova". The extent of this space can be understood due to the proximity to the Castilian border.

The Jews who lived within the walls of the little hilltop town of Castelo de Vide were engaged in the traditional activities of commerce, crafts, and sometimes medicine. The Spain edict from 1492, promulgated by the Catholic Kings, Fernando and Isabel, caused



a massive displacement of Jewish families seeking to escape Spain and many if not most crossed in Portugal along the border in this region. The Jewish population grew after 1492 with the arrival of Jews from Spain. The former Judaria is fairly easy to identify around the market square (Praço de Comércio). Between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries the characteristic little streets led to the small synagogue.

Nest we visit Tomar, an historic city boasting great charm for its artistic and cultural wealth, whose greatest expression is in the Convent of Christ, one of the chief works of the Portuguese Renaissance. The former seat of the Order of the Knights Templar. The remains of their fortress and a monastery are still intact and open as a museum. Buried away in one of the narrow

streets of the old Jewish quarter rests the oldest existing synagogue in Portugal dating back to 1438. After the forced conversions that followed in 1496; the synagogue was used as a prison, a church, a hayloft and finally a warehouse. In 1921 the building was declared a national monument and in 1939 the owner, Samuel Schwartz donated it to the state for use as a museum. A mikveh was discovered next door during excavations of the outbuilding in 1985. A prosperous Jewish community developed here back in the 14th and 15th centuries in what is called "the lower town", or town below. We will visit the Abraham Zacuto Museum (Abraham Zacuto was a famous Spanish astronomer, astrologer, mathematician, rabbi, and historian who served as Royal Astronomer in the 15th century to King John II of Portugal). The Museum displays numerous ancient



tablets, gravestones, texts, and artifacts showing all aspects of Jewish life in ancient Portugal.

Continue to Lisbon for dinner and overnight.

Overnight and dinner at the Dom Pedro Palace Hotel. (B,D)

Day 8, Tuesday Jun 13: Lisbon City Tour

Welcome to Lisbon, Portugal's Capital City. Seven cinematic hillsides overlooking the Rio Tejo cradle Lisbon's postcard-perfect panorama of cobbled alleyways, ancient ruins and white-domed cathedrals, a captivating scene crafted over centuries. Lisbon's history revolves around its strategic geographical position at the mouth of the Tagus, the longest river in the Iberian Peninsula. Its spacious and sheltered natural harbor made the city historically an important seaport for trade between the Mediterranean Sea and northern Europe, serving as a strategic meeting-place for different peoples. Important Jewish communities settled in this region and contributed to the flourishing of its trade and culture.

We begin our e a walking tour of the Jewish quarters. Jewish heritage in Lisbon can be traced beginning with the Alfama quarter, a large community that included the Judiaria Grande and included the Rua da Judiaria. These narrow streets still evoke the spirit of the generations of Portuguese Jews who lived and flourished there. As the community grew, more Jewish refugees came to Lisbon, and a new Judiaria Pequena was formed in the 13th century near what is today known as the central Praça do Comércio. This entire area was totally destroyed by the 1755



earthquake. The nearby Rossio square, before the earthquake, was the site of the court of the Inquisition. It was there where Jews and other accused heretics were burned at the stake. There is also the National Museum of Ancient Art, where you will find a primitive Portuguese masterpiece, including Jews wearing Stars of David on their clothing and a rabbi opening the Talmud, as well as other paintings with Jewish themes.

Continue our tour to Praça do Rossio, the city's liveliest area, where many locals and tourists meet up. The square and its surrounding streets are packed with some of the



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city's most famous restaurants, bars, and shops; it's also the site of the Jewish Lisbon Memorial. This memorial to the victims of the 1506 Jewish Massacre was erected on April 19, 2006 — the 500th anniversary is also known as the “Lisbon Massacre,” “Lisbon Pogrom,” or “The 1506 Easter Slaughter” and located at the historic square Largo de



Sao Domingos, located by the Church Igreja de Sao Domingos. Explaining this Jewish massacre begins with the inception of the Spanish Inquisition in 1492 when 93,000 Sephardic Jews fled Spain and took refuge in Lisbon. In the early 1500s, drought and plague swept through Portugal. Jews preparing Passover feasts (using unleavened bread and bitter herbs) were thought to have caused the plague/drought, with Easter and Passover in close proximity in 1506. It is estimated

that between 2,000 to 4,000 Jews who were forced to convert were killed.

Afternoon some free time for shopping and return to the hotel for dinner and overnight.

Overnight and dinner at the Dom Pedro Palace Hotel. (B,D)

DAY 9, Wednesday Jun 14: Lisbon, Sintra, Cascais

This morning we visit Lisbon's main synagogue called Shaare Tikva, or Gates of Hope. It was built in the early 20th century as Jews, some but not all of the Portuguese descent, returned to Portugal from Gibraltar and North Africa. The main facade of the synagogue faces an inner courtyard since Portuguese law at the time forbade non-Catholic religious institutions from facing the street. Inaugurated in 1904, the Lisbon Synagogue was the first synagogue to be built in Portugal since the late 15th century and was designed by one of the country's best-known architects, Miguel Ventura Terra. The synagogue served as the center of Jewish life in Lisbon and was a sanctuary for the thousands of Jewish refugees who passed through Portugal during World War II. The marble Torah ark is inscribed with the Ten Commandments and encrusted with a gold



leaf. It is also the home of a collection of documents dating from the 17th through the 20th centuries.

Next we head towards Lisbon's environs. First stop medieval Sintra, a resort town in the foothills of Portugal's Sintra Mountains, boasting a forested terrain and studded with pastel-colored villas and palaces and former summer resort of Portugal's monarchy. Here we visit the Moorish- and Manueline-style Sintra National Palace distinguished by dramatic twin chimneys and elaborate timework. The hilltop 19th-century Pena National Palace is known for its design and views. Following lunch, we stop at Cabo da Roca. It is a wild and rugged headland marking mainland Europe's most westerly point. The windswept cliffs of Cabo de Roca were believed to be the edge of the world up until the late 14th century and the desolate scenery adds to the allure of the location.

Our tour continues as we make our way to Cascais, Lisbon's coastline and popular holiday destination. Historically, Cascais was a fishing village, until King Luís I (1838 -

1889) chose it as his royal summer retreat. Trailing the Portuguese nobility were the high society of Portugal, who in turn constructed lavish villas, ornate mansions and exquisite gardens. Today, Cascais is an elegant fusion of



decorative 19th-century architecture, and during the summer it is a bustling resort, with a buzzing holiday atmosphere. The Jewish Community first appeared and became organized in Cascais when Pedro I declared the town independent in 1364. Many residents were accused of Judaism, heresy, and apostasy throughout the years. Cascais played host to important Jewish personalities not only within the backdrop of Inquisition or of groups of Sephardim Jews who had settled in Portugal, but more particularly during the 1930s and 1940s. Time permitting we stop at the Chabad House, home to a magnificent book collection, with several original prints dating back to medieval times.



This afternoon we are back in Lisbon. Time permitting, we will visit the Tower of Belem. Dating back to the 16th century, it was built in Manueline style, featuring imposing stonework and detailed carvings, depicting numerous significant figures. Nowadays the fortified white tower is a symbol of Portugal and an inseparable part of the landscape



in Lisbon. As a matter of fact, it was even classified as UNESCO Cultural Heritage of Humanity!

Nest we drive to the Monument to the Discoveries. Commemorating the Age of Discoveries, it was built to honor the 500th anniversary of the death of Prince Henry the Navigator, one of the greatest Portuguese discoverers. The 52 meter-tall (170 ft) monument depicts numerous explorers onboard a caravel, led by Prince Henry the Navigator.

Return to the hotel for a farewell dinner and a final talk by Dr. Rabbi Peter Tarlow

Overnight and dinner at the Dom Pedro Palace Hotel. (B,D)

DAY 10, Thursday Jun 15: Departure

Transfer to the airport for the flight home. (B)

