

# Our Story – A Journey to Poland & Central Europe

May 22 – June 2, 2019 | An Authentic Israel Experience in Europe

Dear Our Story Travelers,

Dzien dobry! Jo napot kivanok! Dobry den! Hallo! Hello and welcome!

Thank you for choosing to travel with us to Europe on an Authentic Israel experience. We look forward to sharing 12 memorable days together as we travel from Poland to Hungary and on to Slovakia, Austria and Czechia. Together we will explore, learn, bear witness, and share moments of joy – returning home with a new sense of perspective on Europe’s Jewish history and world heritage.

We hope you will find the *Our Story* journey to be packed with varied activities, historical touring and cultural opportunities. Our days are full and on-the-go, with lots of walking (on lots of cobblestones), standing, seeing, imagining and experiencing. This is certainly not a through-the-bus-window style tour! We want you to have the fullest and most authentic experience possible where it happened.

We look forward to welcoming you, and we hope you are looking forward to all that awaits – new discoveries, new food, new friendships, sharing in our Jewish narrative and forming meaningful memories together.

*The Authentic Israel Team*

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## PROGRAM ITINERARY

*The following is an updated itinerary – still subject to reasonable change based on local conditions.*

### **DAY 1 | Wednesday, May 22, 2019 | Orientation to Warsaw**

- Meet at 10:00am in the hotel lobby for group introductions
- Tour of the Jewish Heritage Institute, including the underground archive of the Warsaw Ghetto
- Visit the historic Nozyk Shul and Warsaw’s old Jewish cemetery
- Welcome dinner at a central Warsaw restaurant
- Overnight: InterContinental – Warsaw, Poland


*Meals included: Dinner*

### **DAY 2 | Thursday, May 23, 2019 | Honoring the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising**

- Explore the Museum of the History of Polish Jews

# Our Story – A Journey to Poland & Central Europe

May 22 – June 2, 2019 | An Authentic Israel Experience in Europe

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- Explore the remains of the Warsaw Ghetto and learn about the Jewish community's famous revolt along the Route of heroes and at Rappaport Memorial
  - Depart from Warsaw and travel to Krakow in the afternoon – check-in and free evening
  - Overnight: Golden Tulip Krakow Kazimierz – Krakow, Poland
- Meals included: Breakfast*

## DAY 3 | Friday, May 24, 2019 | Confronting Auschwitz & Birkenau

- Arrive at the grounds of Auschwitz II - Birkenau where the full horror of the extermination of 1.5 million Jews is palpable
  - Continue on to Auschwitz I, the original camp that served as the administrative center for the entire complex. We will tour the watchtowers, fences, cell blocks, wall of death, crematoria as well as the Arbeit Macht Frei Gate
  - Reflections and ceremony at the restored Oświęcim Synagogue near Auschwitz
  - Return to Krakow in the late afternoon
  - Option to celebrate Kabbalat Shabbat with the Jewish community of Krakow
  - Shabbat dinner at the Rimonim Restaurant
  - Overnight: Golden Tulip Krakow Kazimierz – Krakow, Poland
- Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner*

## DAY 4 | Saturday, May 25, 2019 | Shabbat in Krakow

*All touring today is on foot*

- Walking tour of Old Town, Wawel Castle and Kazimierz – the historic center of Jewish Krakow
  - Shabbat lunch at the Krakow JCC, the center of modern Jewish life in Krakow
  - Tour of the Krakow Ghetto and the Oscar Schindler Factory building (from the outside)
  - Free evening and dinner on own
  - Overnight: Golden Tulip Krakow Kazimierz – Krakow, Poland
- Meals included: Breakfast & Lunch*

## DAY 5 | Sunday, May 26, 2019 | From Poland to Hungary

- Check-out of Krakow accommodations and depart for Budapest
- Tour of the Wieliczka Salt Mines, a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- A packed lunch is provided en route
- Arrive to Budapest, stopping for a panoramic intro from the Citadela Hill
- Check-in to accommodations and dinner on own
- Overnight: InterContinental Hotel – Budapest, Hungary

# Our Story – A Journey to Poland & Central Europe

May 22 – June 2, 2019 | An Authentic Israel Experience in Europe



*Meals included: Breakfast & Lunch*

## **DAY 6 | Monday, May 27, 2019 | Exploring Buda and Pest**

- Walk across the Chain Bridge over the Danube River connecting historic Buda and Pest
- Climb up Castle Hill and take in the views from Fisherman's Bastion
- Enter the Jewish Quarter and tour the Dohany Street Synagogue museum, Wallenberg Memorial and Weeping Willow
- View the "Shoes on the Danube Bank" and visit Hősök Tere – "Heroes Square"
- Spend the rest of the afternoon wandering through the Great Market Hall of Budapest
- Evening: Option to visit the thermal Szechenyi Baths on your own
- Overnight: InterContinental Hotel – Budapest, Hungary

*Meals included: Breakfast*

## **DAY 7 | Tuesday, May 28, 2019 | Bratislava, Slovakia**

- Depart Budapest for Bratislava, Slovakia in the morning
- Walking tour of Bratislava- including the Chatam Sofer's grave, the Wall of Memories and other points of Jewish and secular interest
- Cruise up the Danube to Vienna and check-in to our accommodations in the Austrian capital
- Free evening and dinner on own
- Overnight: Renaissance Hotel – Vienna, Austria

*Meals included: Breakfast*

## **DAY 8 | Wednesday, May 29, 2019 | Vienna's World Heritage Sites**

- Walking tour of Vienna – including Judenplatz, the center of Viennese Jewish life, the Monument against War & Fascism, Heroes' Square and the Shoah Monument
- Visit "Stadttempel" – the only synagogue that survived the pogrom on Nov. 10, 1938, St. Stephens Cathedral and the Hofburg Imperial Castle
- Continue on to explore the opulent Schönbrunn Palace – summer home of Habsburg Royalty
- The rest in the afternoon is free to explore on your own
- Evening: Attend the Sounds of Vienna Concert (8:15pm)
- Overnight: Renaissance Hotel – Vienna, Austria

*Meals included: Breakfast*

## **DAY 9 | Thursday, May 30, 2019 | Discovering the Wachau Valley**

- Travel to the Wachau Valley along the Danube

# Our Story – A Journey to Poland & Central Europe

May 22 – June 2, 2019 | An Authentic Israel Experience in Europe



- Explore picturesque Durnstein village with the option to hike up to the ancient castle towering above the town (not for the faint of heart!)
  - Sample local wines at Domaine Wachau
  - Explore the water-filled Seegrotte caves by boat
  - Return to Vienna for evening on your own
  - Overnight: Renaissance Hotel – Vienna, Austria
- Meals included: Breakfast*

## DAY 10 | Friday, May 31, 2019 | Jewels of Josefov in Prague

- Depart Vienna, for Prague in the morning
  - Walking tour of Josefov, Prague's famous Jewish Quarter – including the Altneushul, Spanish Synagogue, the Jewish Museum and Cemetery
  - Option to celebrate Kabbalat Shabbat with the Jewish community of Prague
  - Evening: Group dinner at Chabad's Prague Grill Restaurant
  - Overnight: Hilton Hotel (Pobrezni 1) – Prague, Czech Republic
- Meals included: Breakfast & Dinner*

## DAY 11 | Saturday, June 1, 2019 | Prague's World Heritage Sites

*All touring today is on foot*

- Free morning to enjoy Prague on your own
  - Lunch is included at the hotel
  - Walk across the famous Charles Bridge, tour Old town and explore Prague Castle
  - Ascend to Petrin Hill for a panoramic view of Prague and tour the historic Strahov Monastery
  - Evening – Closing dinner at the Strahov Monastic Brewery and wrap-up discussion
  - Overnight: Hilton Hotel (Pobrezni 1) – Prague, Czech Republic
- Meals included: Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner*

## DAY 12 | Sunday, June 2, 2019 | Farewell


- Final farewells and travel to Prague Airport for morning flights onward

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## WHAT'S INCLUDED

# Our Story – A Journey to Poland & Central Europe

May 22 – June 2, 2019 | An Authentic Israel Experience in Europe



In short, you're responsible for arranging your own flights to and from Europe and any meals not listed as included. We take care of most everything else! The program covers all touring, a fantastic staff team, and deluxe bus transportation (with a bathroom). You'll be responsible for any meals not included, gratuities and your airport transfers (see below).

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## VISA & PASSPORT

Please check to make sure that you know where your passport is and that it is not expired or about to expire. Your passport must be valid for at least three months beyond your planned departure date – and validity of at least six months is recommended. If your passport expires within this period, please start the renewal process today. Many airlines will deny you boarding if your passport is not valid according to this policy. Information about ordering a passport is available at <http://travel.state.gov/passport/>.

If you are traveling to Israel on a USA, Canadian, or European Union member country passport, a visa is not needed to enter the countries we will be visiting. If you are traveling on a passport from another country, you may need a visa, and our office will provide documentation as needed.

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## ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE PROCEDURES

All participants are expected to make their own air travel arrangements to and from Europe, although we will be happy to review your booking before you finalize your tickets. Once your plans are set, send your details to [register@authenticisrael.net](mailto:register@authenticisrael.net) including your arrival and departure times, airlines, and flight numbers.


### Arriving to Warsaw

Travelers are responsible for arriving to our hotel in Warsaw, Poland by 2:00pm on the first day of the program, which means you will want to avoid flights that arrive after 12:00pm. Taxis from Warsaw Chopin Airport to our hotel should cost about \$15 (can be paid by credit card) and Uber rides are also available from the airport. Rooms will be available for guaranteed check-in by 3:00pm, and you will be able to stow your luggage if you arrive earlier. The hotel will have your reservation pre-recorded under your name. You will need to present your passport and credit card for incidentals.

We have scheduled a complimentary pre-tour experience on Wednesday morning with Mi Polin – an artists' collective who embody the renaissance of Jewish life in Poland today. Travelers who wish to participate will meet in the hotel lobby at 10:00am, and please notify us in advance if you plan to do so. The program officially begins with meet-up in the hotel lobby at 2:30pm.

# Our Story – A Journey to Poland & Central Europe

May 22 – June 2, 2019 | An Authentic Israel Experience in Europe



*NOTE: If you would like to arrive in Warsaw the night before the start of the program, contact us about extending your hotel booking based on our group rates.*

## Departing from Prague

On the last day of the program, travelers should book return flights from Václav Havel Airport Prague at their discretion, but please consider that hotel checkout is at 11:00am, and no programming is provided today. We will arrange for a single complimentary bus transfer to the Prague airport in the morning based on when the majority of departure flights are scheduled, but we cannot guarantee return airport transfers to accommodate all travelers. Taxis to the Prague airport from our hotel will cost about \$30 (can be paid by credit card) and Uber rides are also available to the airport.

## What happens if my flight is delayed?

Contact our North American emergency line at 240-668-4559 and email [bonnie@authenticisrael.net](mailto:bonnie@authenticisrael.net) if there is a chance you will be arriving later than expected in Warsaw. If necessary, we will make an alternative meeting plan and/or assist you with filing a trip interruption claim if you purchased travel insurance.

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## STAFF AND TIPPING

The program is led by our guide, Gadi Ben-Dov who will be joined by Ellen Bernhardt who will serve as our group leader. Along the way, Gadi and Ellen will be joined by local guides who will support the tour in each city we visit. Many of the local staff are Jewish and will be able to provide unique insights on contemporary Jewish Europe along the way. A dedicated touring bus and driver(s) will be with us throughout the tour.

The cost of your program does not include gratuities for the local European staff. Because the local staff will be with the group on a rotating basis by country, we highly recommend pre-paying \$125 per traveler in gratuities through our office so that it can be distributed directly on your behalf to our guide, driver, and local staff by country. Contact us if you wish to pre-pay your gratuities.

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## HOTEL CONTACT

The following is the contact information for the hotels:

# Our Story – A Journey to Poland & Central Europe

May 22 – June 2, 2019 | An Authentic Israel Experience in Europe



- **InterContinental Hotel, Warsaw** | Address: Pobřežní 1, 186 00 Praha 8-Rohanský ostrov, Czechia  
Phone: +420 224 841 111
- **Golden Tulip Krakow Kazimierz, Krakow** | Address: Krakowska 28, 31-062, Krakow, Poland |  
Phone: +48-12-424-48-00
- **InterContinental Hotel, Budapest** | Address: Apaczai Csere Janos u. 10, 1051 Budapest Hungary |  
Phone: +36-1-327-6333
- **Renaissance Hotel, Vienna** | Address: Linke Wienzeile, Ullmannstrase 71, 1150 Vienna, Austria |  
Phone: +43-1-891020
- **Hilton Prague** | Address: V Celnici 7, 110 00 Nové Město, Prague, CR | Phone: +420-221-822-100

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## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Insure your investment, and plan ahead for the unexpected with our group-discounted rates through Travel Insured International. The policy includes coverage for medical-related cancellations, travel delays and luggage loss, trip interruption, and medical care. Cancel for any reason coverage is available as an add-on. All benefits are subject to plan exclusions. Refer to the plan documents for a full description of coverage.

The cost of the policy is a function of the total cost of your trip, including airfare booked on your own (our group policy is not age-rated). The policy must be issued before final payment is made for the program, and some benefits are only available within 21 days of registration.

Learn more and order online at [www.grouptravelinsuranceisrael.com](http://www.grouptravelinsuranceisrael.com)

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## PACKING TIPS AND WEATHER

- Though portorage is included at the hotels, we still recommend bringing rolling suitcases for ease of transit.
- Pack your medication, toiletries, and a change of clothes within a carry-on bag in case your checked luggage is delayed in transit.
- Consider bringing a small traveling bag on the bus each day to store extra clothing, personal belongings and a light jacket/sweater for the evenings if we are not returning to the hotel earlier.
- Rain is always a possibility so be sure to bring a comfortable, waterproof jacket and umbrella.



# Our Story – A Journey to Poland & Central Europe

May 22 – June 2, 2019 | An Authentic Israel Experience in Europe



- We will be doing a great deal of walking, so packing comfortable walking shoes (e.g. tennis shoes) is essential.
- If you plan to attend Shabbat services on Friday evening, please bring clothing appropriate for a synagogue. Women should have covered shoulders and a dress or skirt. Men should wear a nice sport shirts and casual pants – but no jeans.
- Laundry services are available in most of the hotels where you will be staying for an extra cost.
- If you plan on visiting the thermal baths in Budapest, be sure to pack a bathing suit, towel and flip-flops.
- In the interest of maximum cautiousness, we recommend not dressing in a way that is recognizably Jewish or American.

*Contact us if you have any more specific packing related questions.*

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## ELECTRICAL CURRENT

If you plan to bring small electrical appliances, Europe uses a 220 volt electrical current and the outlet types are different as well (two 4mm circular prongs). You will need an adapter to plug your items into the wall. In order to avoid "frying" any electrical items, you may also need to bring a voltage converter (note: this is already built into most laptop computers, iPhones, and digital camera battery chargers).

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## FOOD AND WATER

The program costs include a daily buffet style breakfast in the hotels – which is typically comprised of salads, cheeses, and hot breakfast dishes. Some dinners will be kosher as noted and other restaurant/hotel dinners will include vegetarian and non-kosher beef/chicken dishes. Packed lunches as noted will be kosher. All other meals are at your own discretion. Tap water in Europe is perfectly safe to drink. If you prefer bottled water, it is widely available.

Travelers should be sure to note any special dietary needs as part of your registration. We will coordinate with our hotel and restaurant meal providers to arrange special accommodations as necessary. We make a good faith effort to accommodate food allergy considerations, however, we can not make absolute guarantees on behalf of our meal providing partners.



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## MONEY MATTERS

The currencies vary widely according to the countries we visit, and we encourage you to check the updated local exchange rates ahead of the trip at [www.xe.com](http://www.xe.com):

- The local currency in Poland is the Zloty (US\$1 = 3.75 Zloty)  
*We recommend obtaining Zlotys for spending money on arrival at the Warsaw Airport*
- The local currency in the Czech Republic is the Koruna (US\$1 = 22.50 Koruna)
- The local currency in Hungary is the Forint (US\$1 = 275 Forint)
- The local currency in Austria and Slovakia is the Euro (US\$1 = 0.87 Euros)

You can exchange your home currency for local currency prior to departure or by using ATM machines throughout Europe. You can also exchange money during free time when we are traveling in cities, although the rates may not be as advantageous.

If you choose to use your personal ATM card or credit card, consider this advice:

- If your ATM card has a Visa, MasterCard, Star, Cirrus, or Maestro logo imprint, there should not be a problem withdrawing money. Other ATM network cards may work, but we encourage you to check with your local bank if you have any doubts. ATM machines have instructions in several languages including English. The money withdrawn will be in the local currency of the country.
- Major credit cards like VISA and MasterCard are accepted throughout Europe. We advise that you contact your bank to inform them you are traveling abroad and using your cards to make purchases to ensure fraud alerts and security holds are not placed on your accounts.
- Check with your bank for exact fees charged when using ATM and credit cards. Some credit card companies, such as Capital One, do not charge foreign transaction fees.
- Bring your bank's contact information and place it in a separate, secure location in the unlikely event your wallet or purse is lost or stolen.

*NOTE: Public bathrooms in Europe generally are not free, which makes small change in the local currency especially useful when traveling.*