

## Jewish Roots in Belarus

12 days – 11 nights

Minsk, Stolbtsy, Nesvizh, Mir, Navahrudak, Baranovitch, Pinsk, Slonim, Brest, Grodno, Radun  
Heritage, History, Culture, Discovery

**This program may be operated for individual or for groups  
This is a suggested itinerary – Please call us to customize**

*Jewish roots run deep in Belarus, which borders both Poland and Lithuania. Over 600 years ago, Judaism became one of the area's traditional religions (eventually, there were 50 synagogues in Minsk alone). Today, few Jewish visitors think of visiting this area. We hope this tour will change the minds of a few of them.*

### Day 1: Minsk

After your arrival at Minsk airport you'll be met by our representative and transferred to your chosen hotel. Rest of the day at leisure. Dinner at the hotel. [D]

### Day 2: Minsk

Discovery of the Belarusian capital with accent on the Jewish past in Minsk. First, we head to the Jewish Community Center with the possibility of meeting representatives of the Jewish community. Then we continue to the old Jewish quarter, dating from the 19th century, and visit the main city synagogue and the Jewish cemetery. A panoramic tour including an excursion to the Museum of Belarusian Jewish History and Culture established in 2002 before visiting "The Pit" memorial complex dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust, where 5,000 ghetto Jews were shot. Depart for the village of Maly Trostenets, the former concentration camp, located about 6 miles south-east of Minsk, to visit of the memorial at the main site of the massacres where more than 200,000 people, mainly of Jewish origin, were exterminated between 1942 and 1944. Return to Minsk for dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/D]

### Day 3: Minsk (Khatyn)

Today we drive some 13 miles northeast of Minsk to the Mound of Glory that celebrates Russian soldiers who fought in the war. It was inaugurated in 1969 on the 25th anniversary of the liberation of Belarus. Another 25 miles to Khatyn we visit the memorial dedicated to the Belarusian wars. Learn about the history of the war of the Soviet Union and World War II on this private tour. First, visit the Stalin Line Museum, named after the line of defense built on the western border of the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Explore the different sections and replicas of bunkers and military equipment before finishing at the Khatyn Memorial, which commemorates the victims of war. Return to Minsk. Afternoon free to discover on your own. Dinner at the hotel. [B/D]

### Day 4: Minsk, Nesvizh, Mir, Navahrudak, Baranovichi

This morning we head to Nesvizh and visit the palace, considered the country's most beautiful palace by the people of Belarus. Its richly diverse architecture and attractive gardens make it one of the most popular tourist attractions in the country. After tour the remains of the Jewish ghetto. The Jewish population of Nesvizh grew rapidly through the 19th century. Nesvizh was known as a center for Jewish learning, and had many other important Jewish institutions. Among the well-known rabbis who officiated in the community at various times were Isaac Elhanan Spektor and Samuel Avigdor "ToNesvizh Synagoguesfa'ah." The last rabbi (1941) was Yitzhak Isaac Rabinovitch. The community had a yeshiva, a Hebrew school and kindergarten, and a Yiddish school. Then, we continue to Mir, a village founded sometime prior to 1345. It is home to a late medieval castle, which made the town the target of many attacks over the centuries. The town belonged to the Illinič family first and then to the Radziwiłł family. After a visit of the Radziwiłł Castle we visit the Jewish quarter including a synagogue and a yeshiva, a library, the old cemetery dating from 1731, the memorial to the city's 1,500 murdered Jews, the tomb of the last serving rabbi at the place of execution of more than 700 Jews. After lunch, drive to Navahrudak, where the Novogrudok ghetto existed in 1943. Visit to the Jewish Museum of

Heroism and the memorial where 3 mass killings of Jews took place. Finally, continue to Baranovichii, where the Jewish colony settled at the end of the 19th century. Visit of the territory of the former Jewish ghetto, the historical museum and the "Gay" memorial complex. Reach the town in time for dinner. Overnight in Baranovichii. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 5: Baranovichii (Pinsk)**

Today, drive to Pinsk in the southern part of Belarus. Pinsk once had a large Jewish population (according to a Czarist Russian census, 74%). Nearby is the birthplace of Chaim Weitzmann, first president of Israel, who studied in the local gymnasium (Golda Meir spent two years of her youth here as well). While most of its Jewish population was murdered by the Nazis, Pinsk has experienced a spirited revival, and is a current center of Jewish education in Belarus. It now boasts a boy's and a girl's boarding school (recognized as state orphanages), community outreach programs, a Chesed (charity) Fund, yeshiva, summer and winter camps, Holocaust memorial programs, Graduate Programs, and even a Wedding Fund (which supports traditional simchas). Learn about these activities and enjoy Lunch with members of the proud Pinsk community. In the afternoon, return to Baranovichii. Remainder of the day is at leisure. Dinner in town. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 6: Baranovitch, Slonim, Brest**

We start the day in Slonim visiting the baroque-style synagogue (1642). After, visit of the old Jewish cemetery (restored and the memorial built in memory of the 8,000 Jews of the Slonim ghetto killed by the Nazis in the years 1941-1942. Lunch in Slonim and departure to Brest. On arrival, discover Brest on foot with visits to the commemorative plaque of Manachem Begin, the prime minister of Israel between 1977 and 1983 and the one in memory of the Jewish ghetto of Brest. The Brest Jewish History Museum, the Belarus Cinema, the Old Synagogue and the Old Jewish Hospital Building. A pleasant walk on rue Gogol, a veritable open-air museum, rue Sovietskaia and the monument to the millennium of Brest. Saint-Siméon Orthodox Cathedral (1861-1864) and the Church of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross (1856) inscribed on the list of the country's historical-cultural heritage. Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 7: Brest, Grodno**

Spend a leisurely morning in Brest to visit the fortress, one of the most important war monuments of the Second World War. After lunch a 3-hour drive to Grodno. Installation at the hotel, dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 8: Grodno**

In the morning focus on the historical Jewish heritage of Grodno with a walking city tour in the Jewish historic center: Jewish quarter's old houses and shops that belonged to Jews, a Yeshivah and others, the neo-Russian style choral synagogue built at the end of the 19th century and the Museum of the History of the Jews of Grodno. End the morning tour at the territory of the Grodno ghetto with its tombstone in memory of the Jews killed by the Nazis and their collaborators. Lunch and, in the afternoon, guided tours of the museum of the history of religion, former museum of atheism, the old castle built in the 14th-15th centuries by Prince Vytautas the Great, and the new castle in rococo style built in the 18th century. Then, head to the Church of the Holy Cross and the Bernardins monastery in Gothic, Renaissance and Baroque styles. Finally, tour the Church of Saint Francis-Xavier and its Jesuit monasteries, a masterpiece of Belarusian Baroque, Dinner and overnight at the hotel. [B/L/D]

#### **Day 9: Grodno, Radun (Jewish Yeshivas), Volozhin, Minsk**

A 90-minute drive to Radun, nicknamed "the Mecca of Torah", the city that was once a major Jewish center in the Russian Empire. Visit of the Yeshiva of Radun founded in 1869 by Rabbi Israel Meir Kagan, known under the name of Hafetz Haïm, and a former Jewish cemetery from the 15th century. On our way back to Minsk, we stop in Volozhin, known for its Yeshiva, built in 1803 which existed until 1939. Visit to the Museum of History, the building of Yeshiva of Volozhin, called "the Mother of the Yeshivas" and the memorial of the Volozhin ghetto. Lunch en route on the last step to Minsk. Installation at the hotel and free time before dinner. [B/L/D]

**Day 10: Minsk, Stolbtsy, Vitebsk,**

Today we drive to Stolbtsy, or Stowbtsy, in the footsteps of the old Jewish ghettos to visit the memorial to the 3,000 Jews murdered in the city in 1941-1942, during the Second World War by the German army in the context of the Shoah. Visit of the old Jewish cemetery (1795), the synagogue (1886). Lunch and, in the afternoon, meet with Jewish families of the city. Continue to Vitebsk for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D]

**Day 1: Vitebsk, Minsk**

After breakfast meeting in the Vitebsk Jewish Community. Then, visit the Marc Chagall's house-museum and art-center, the Jewish Cultural Center, the branch of the International Scientific-Educational Center "The Holocaust", places of mass extermination of Jews during the war 1941-1945. The Jewish community in Vitebsk has been formed in the beginning of the XVI century. In 1630 the building of the synagogue was constructed and the Jewish burial place was opened. From the end of the XVIII century the city becomes one of the centers of a habad study in the Hasidism. in the XIX century - the center of the orthodox Judaism. In Vitebsk was born Menahim Mendel - the founder of the hasidism, Rivka Guber – the public figure, Beskin and Maze – the military leaders of Israel. Return to Minsk for dinner and overnight. [B/L/D].

**Day 12, Minsk, USA**

Enjoy breakfast at the hotel. At the appointed time you be met and transferred to the airport to board your flight back home. [B]

[B] = Breakfast | [D] = Dinner | [B/D] = Breakfast and Dinner | [B/L/D] = Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner

**Your Tour includes:**

- Round-trip airfare USA-Minsk
- Arrival and departure transfers
- 11 nights' accommodation:
  - Minsk - 5 nights
  - Baranovichi – 2 nights
  - Brest – 1 nights
  - Grodno – 2 nights
  - Vitebsk – 1 night
- Meals (Jewish or Kosher):
  - Breakfast daily
  - 7 lunches
  - Dinner daily
- Sightseeing of Minsk
- Excursion to Mound of Glory & Khatyn
- Tour Jewish Nesvizh
- Visit Nesvizh Palace
- Radzwill Castle in Mir
- Visit Novogrudok ghetto
- Historical "Gay" memorial in Baranovichi
- Visit Jewish Pinsk
- Tour Slonin Ghetto
- Tour of Jewish Brest
- Grodno fortress

- Grodno Jewish Quarter
- Yeshivas of Radun & Volozyn
- Excursion to Jewish Stolbtsy
- Meet the Jewish Community in Vitebsk
- Private transportation for transfers & tours
- Visits as indicated in the tour
- English speaking guide
- All local taxes

**Tour does not include:**

- Any taxes and surcharges relating to airfares
- Travel insurance
- Wi-Fi at hotels
- All alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks
- Other meals not mentioned in the itinerary
- Extras and gratuities
- Early check-in, late check-out (Most hotels begin check-in around 2:00pm).
- Expenses of personal nature
- Portorage at airport and hotels
- Optional tours and activities
- Any service not specifically listed under "include"

**Recommended hotels for your Tour:**

| City               | Hotel Name              | Tripadvisor |
|--------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| <b>First Class</b> |                         |             |
| Minsk              | President Hotel Minsk   | 4.5         |
| Baranovichi        | Mariinskiy Hotel        | 4.5         |
| Brest              | Hampton by Hilton Brest | 4.5         |
| Grodno             | Kronon Park Hotel       | 5           |
| Vitebsk            | Luchesa Hotel           | 4           |

Hotels will be confirmed at time of booking

**Tour Prices:**

**From: \$2,229 including airfare**

Add-ons available from all US gateways.

Prices are per person and may change without notice

These programs can be customized for individuals and for groups

Changes to this program may be requested by phone (1855-55-TOURS) or using the web FIT Quote Request

- Airfare

We also be glad to add the necessary airfare from your gateway so you take advantage of our special discounted leisure fares

- Program

You may add or remove;

- Trip days
- Cities and sites
- Meals

- Other options

- The program was designed with private services, however, we may substitute shared sightseeing where available
- If you prefer deluxe services we may operate this program including private driver, private guide and concierge service.

- Quotation

Once we have designed the program the way you want we'll give you a quote within 2 business days.

**Tour Code:** BY03MSQ21VT

**Options:**

- Lunches and dinners can be arranged for individuals, families and groups at top restaurants or any restaurant requested by you.
- We can revise the itinerary to spend more time and provide more depth in those areas that you are interested on.
- Any other changes to the itinerary will be accommodated depending on the facilities available in the area.

**Group Quotations**

- If you wish to use these programs for your group or as the basis for a customized journey please either call us (1-855-55-TOURS or use the web Group Quote Request.
- In either case our specialists will work with to refine all the details and they will get you a quote with 2 business days. Quotes may be obtained for the air and land portions of just for the lad

journey.

- Booking both air and land with us will represent savings for you because of our buying power and longtime relationship with the airlines.
- We will also may have the choice between regular fares and special leisure fares not available to the public.