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## A view to the history of Polish Jews and Jewish presence in contemporary Poland, including Prague extension Guaranteed departure and land program September 7 - 16, 2012

### **Day 1 Friday Sep 7, 2012**

#### **Warsaw (Shabbat Dinner)**

Arrival in Warsaw. Orientation walk through the Old Town and drive for shabbat dinner.

Evening meeting at the **Beit Warszawa** - Jewish Cultural Association co-founded in 1999 by Severyn Ashkenazy, his son Adrian and five Polish and expatriate American Jews who wished to practice Judaism in a more liberal way than that offered by the only other Jewish spiritual center in Warsaw – the Orthodox Synagogue. Beit Warszawa takes into account that a vast majority of Jews living in Poland is only starting to discover their roots. Consequently, the association's main goal is to familiarize them with the Jewish religion, history and tradition.

Dinner to be served at the Beit Warsaw place. Enjoy also meeting with the representatives of the Jewish community of Warsaw.

### **Day 2 Saturday Sep 8, 2012**

#### **Warsaw (Breakfast & Dinner)**

While in Warsaw you cannot omit to visit the places that are the witnesses of the Jewish presence and their difficult history during the World War II. Meet with your professional local guide who will take you through the not so far away history. See such Jewish sites, as:

> **Nozyk Synagogue** - devastated during the occupation and renovated after the war, serves all believers to this very day;

> **Warsaw Ghetto area** – including the site of the bunker on Mila Street, the place where the chief staff of the Jewish Combat Organization committed suicide, the monumental memorial of the Heroes of the Warsaw Ghetto located on the square which was once the site of one of the main bunkers of the Jewish Combat Organization and the Umschlagplatz.

Dinner at “Pod Samsonem” local restaurant beautifully located in the Old Town, having the charm of the Jewish oldstyle house. You will be welcomed in traditional Polish way – with bread and salt – as the symbol of Polish hospitality. Your welcome dinner will also be an introduction to delights of typical Polish & Jewish style cuisine. Short recital of Yiddish songs performed by the actors of the State Yiddish Theater in Warsaw.



### **Day 3 Sunday Sep 9, 2012**

#### **Warsaw > Lodz (Breakfast & Lunch)**

In the morning see the **Okopowa Jewish Cemetery** – the largest one in Warsaw founded at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Many beautiful, richly ornamented, gravestones display lions, deer, plant life, and trees. Several eminent politicians are buried at this cemetery. This cemetery also has a section with graves of Jewish officers and enlisted men who lost their lives in the defense of Warsaw in 1939;

**> Meeting with the Mr. PrzemyslawIsroelSzpilman, Director of the Okopowa Jewish Cemetery, who will tell about its history.**

Departure for Lodz - a city where three traditions crossed: Polish, Jewish and German. Accommodation at Andel's hotel which is a jewel of architectural design. Housed behind the historic red-brick façade of a former textile mill. The building complex stands out for its impressive historic details, which create a striking yet interesting contrast to the modern architecture of the hotel. The hotel is situated on the grounds of Manufaktura, one of the largest shopping, culture and entertainment centres in Poland. The first step will be put in the magnificent interiors of **Poznanski Palace** – that belonged to the Poznanski family, who were among the wealthiest Jewish clans in the city. The industrial empire of Poznanski was a self-sufficient district which included the owner's residence, factory, workers housing complex, church and a hospital. Now, housing the Historical Museum of Lodz is proud of its splendid dining room, special exhibitions devoted the ArturRubinstein and Jerry Kosinski. Dinner to be served at the Anatewka restaurant that is designed in the epoch of the city's history with the Polish- Jewish compilation of traditions and cultures.



### **Day 4 Monday Sep 10, 2012**

#### **Lodz > Krakow (Breakfast & Lunch)**

In the morning see the **Jewish Cemetery** – the largest one in Europe. About 160 000 people are buried there. Today the Cemetery has an area of 39,6 hectare. In more than 100 years of the history of the Cemetery many meritorious for our city and its history people like known rabbis, fabricants, physicians, politicians, social activists etc were buried at this Cemetery. Their tombstones often show high class of stone and metal craftworks.

Lunch at a local restaurant and departure for Krakow.

Upon arrival afternoon tour of the Old Town with the Main Market Square with magnificent houses and palaces. In the middle of the square is the Cloth Hall built before 1349, but altered in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Inside are many shopping stalls and on the first floor is the National Museum which has a collection of Polish sculptures and paintings from the 18<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Also in the square is the magnificent extensive Gothic Church of Our Lady with the famous wooden altar created by Wit Stwosz.

### **Day 5 Tuesday Sep 11, 2012**

#### **Krakow (Breakfast & Dinner)**

Guided tour of Krakow, the first European city included in the UNESCO list of the most precious places of the world. Krakow is the city of humanism, whose sites capture the essence of Polish history and where the world's greatestsculptor of the Gothic, VeitStoss lived and worked for nearly 20 years. Our tour will take us to the Wawel RoyalCastle with priceless Flemish tapestries that present the Renaissance north-European art at its height and to theWawel Cathedral, where Poland's kings were once crowned.

Continue to **Kazimierz district** - that part of Krakow which was till the WW II inhabited by the Jews, and could serve as a model of Jewish life in the Diaspora.

Drive into the labyrinth of streets and alleyways - where else in the Diaspora where streets named after figures from the Old Testament - Jacob, Isaac, Joseph. Visit the famous **Remuh Synagogue**, named after the great Cracovian rabbi and scholar Moses Isserles, and the museum of the Jewish life in Cracow at the **Old Synagogue**.

Short break for tea & cake at the **Cheder Cafe** - the only place in Kazimierz with the genuine Israeli style coffee on the menu. Brewed and served in brass fijas with cardamom, cinnamon and other oriental spices will get you close to atmosphere of the Ashkenazi and Sephardi culture. Cheder Café's specialities are also different types of tea - served in Moroccan and Israeli style, with fresh mint leaves and brown sugar.

See a documentary movie about the history of Kazimierz district.



Visit the newly opened museum located in the former **Oscar Schindler's Factory**.

The main exhibition "Krakow Under Nazi Occupation, 1939-1945" shows the dramatic choice that people made. Keyphases of the period come in for special attention, including notorious *Sonderaktion* of November 1939 (during which 183 people were arrested, most of the university professors), as well as the creation and liquidation of the Jewish Ghetto. "Krakow Under Nazi Occupation: 1939-1945" showcase life during the war for Poles and Jews, concentrating at least some of its narrative on the disruption of Polish-Jewish relations against the backdrop of Nazi brutality. The atmosphere of the era is evoked by recreations of typical Cracovian interiors and street scenes. At the same time it presents the history of Krakow Jews and the tragedy of Jewish community being a part of the tragedy of the rest of the population.

Dinner to be served at a Jewish restaurant with klezmer music concert.



**Day 6 Wednesday Sep 12, 2012**

**Krakow (Breakfast & Lunch)**

Morning drive to Oswiecim. At first we want to show you Oswiecim, the town, with its history and the way it became the witness of human tragedy, and the most important how the town wants to keep the memory and live a new life at the same side. Visit the **Chewra Lomdej Misznajot Synagogue** and exhibition „A new life” tour of Oswiecim (Oszpicin) with introduction to the history of the city before the WW II and the present days of the town. Afterwards – a short presentation how Jews and Poles lived together in Oswiecim and formed the life of their city „Our old neighbours”.

Drive to **Auschwitz – Birkenau** considered as the biggest Nazi's concentration camp, Auschwitz-Birkenau was established on 14th June 1940 and liberated in January 1945. About 1.5 million people of 28 nationalities lost their lives here, mostly Jews. Prisoners were unloaded onto the specially designed ramps, poisoned with Zyklon B exhaust fumes and burned in piles or crematories. Fellow prisoners were forced to service the gas chambers and assist the cremation of the bodies and their robbing.

During the camp evacuation in January 1945 thousand of inmates died in so-called death march. When the camp was liberated there were about 7 000 prisoners, all in terrible conditions.

Late afternoon visit to **Galicia Museum** – meeting with the Director and short presentation of the museum.

The Galicia Jewish Museum exists to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust and to celebrate the Jewish culture of Polish Galicia, presenting Jewish history from a new perspective. Located in the heart of Kazimierz, Krakow's Jewish quarter. One of Poland's most visited Jewish museums and cultural centers.

**Meeting with the Righteous among the Nations.**

### **Day 7 Thursday Sep13, 2012**

#### **Krakow > Wroclaw (Breakfast & Lunch)**

Departure for Wroclaw, once described as "the holy blossom of Europe, a beautiful gem among cities" has always been a bone of contention, changing hands many times throughout its long history. A city situated in the middle of the Silesian Lowland, where the Odra River branches out to form 12 islands, Wroclaw is the mixture of many different religions and cultures.

Afternoon walk through the heart of Wroclaw, the Market Square with the beautiful buildings and the Town Hall, that is recognised as gem of Gothic-Renaissance urban architecture. See the magnificent Aula Leopoldinum, one of the most magnificent chambers of the Wroclaw University. Rich Baroque decors from the 1st half of the 18th century make Aula Leopoldinum one of the most spectacular Baroque interiors in Poland. Wroclaw's Jewish community is one of the oldest in today's Poland, dating back to the 12th century when the city was an important trade centre along the Amber Road.

Though consistently confronted with persecution – perhaps most famously during the Inquisition of the 15th century when John of Capistrano inspired the public torture and burning of 55 Jews on Plac Solny – Jews have steadily played a role in the development of the city. See the **White Stork Synagogue, Old and New Jewish Cemeteries.**

**Evening meeting with the representatives of Jewish community in Wroclaw and dinner.**



### **Day 8 Friday Sep 14, 2012**

#### **Wroclaw > Prague (Breakfast & Dinner)**

Departure for Prague.

Upon arrival afternoon tour of **the Jewish Quarter**, or the Prague Jewish Ghetto as it was later to become known, also endured a lot of structural changes, the latest of which was a vast redevelopment of the area between 1893-1913. Its present appearance dates mainly from this period, although most of the significant buildings from previous eras were saved, a living testimony to the history of Prague Jews, spanning many centuries.

See the buildings that form the best preserved complex of Jewish historical monuments in the whole of Europe. Six synagogues remain, including the Old-New Synagogue and the Spanish Synagogue, plus the Jewish Town Hall and the **Old Jewish Cemetery**, which is the most remarkable of its kind in Europe. **The Old-New Synagogue** - is the oldest preserved synagogue in Central Europe, built in early gothic style in the late 13th century and is richly adorned by intricate stonework. All interior furnishings are originals. The Old-New Synagogue is today the main house of prayer of Prague's Jewish community. See also the newest, biggest, and arguably most spectacular of Prague's synagogues, **the Jubilee Synagogue** is so called because it was decided upon on the 50th anniversary of the accession of Franz Joseph I.

Dinner to be served on the boat with the beautiful panorama of the city.



**Day 9 Saturday Sep 15, 2012**

**Prague >Terezin> Prague (Breakfast & Dinner)**

Morning half day tour to **Terezin**, a former "model" concentration camp. Visit Jewish Cemetery, Memorial Monument and small fortress with remains of equipment of the concentration camp.

Afternoon at your disposal in Prague.

Farwell dinner with special folk entertainment to be arranged at one of the Prague restauratns.

**Day 10 Sunday Sep 16, 2012**

**Prague (Breakfast)**

Departure transfer.

End of services.