



**Sephardic
Balkans**
JEWISH HERITAGE TRIPS



Jewish Balkans With Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

**Travel program organized by Sephardic Balkans LLC &
Dr. Joseph Benatov of the University of Pennsylvania
in consultation with Rabbi Elyse Goldstein**

**Main Tour: Jewish Bosnia & Croatia, 12—21 October 2026
Extension: Jewish Slovenia & Trieste, Italy, 21-25 October 2026**

MAIN TOUR ITINERARY AT A GLANCE:

**Sarajevo – 2 nights
Dubrovnik – 2 nights
Split – 3 nights
Zagreb – 2 nights**

EXTENSION AT A GLANCE:

**Ljubljana – 2 nights
Trieste – 2 nights**

All accommodation in excellent 4* and 5* hotels.

Delicious food & wine throughout the tour!

Main Tour Detailed Itinerary

DAY 1, MONDAY, OCT 12: SARAJEVO, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Arrival in the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Check into our centrally located hotel. Depending on your arrival time, get an initial feel of Sarajevo's vibrant, friendly atmosphere. We will all meet for a brief orientation session and then go out for our welcome **dinner (included)**. **Overnight in Sarajevo. Hotel President 4***.

DAY 2, TUESDAY, OCT 13: JEWISH SARAJEVO

The beginning of Sephardi presence in the city dates back to 1565, most Jews arriving via Salonica. Over the next decade they established their *cortijo* or *mahalla judia* (Jewish quarter) and built a synagogue, Il Kal Vjezu (the **Old Synagogue**). This fascinating pre-modern architectural masterpiece today serves as an active temple and also houses Sarajevo's splendid **Jewish Museum**. We will also visit the ornate **Ashkenazi Synagogue** (1902), which serves as the main *shul* of the Jewish community; the **Grand Sephardi Synagogue** (Kal Grande); the **Old Sephardic cemetery**, established in 1630 and used by the Serbian military as a strategic firing position during the civil war; and the **National Museum**, home of the *Sarajevo Haggadah*. Not to be missed are also the vibrant Oriental **Old Bazaar**, the Gazi Hursev-beg Mosque (1531), the **Latin Bridge** (Archduke Franz Ferdinand was assassinated nearby), and the array of lovely Austro-Hungarian buildings along the main promenade. *Free time for lunch and dinner on your own – we'll make suggestions*. **Overnight in Sarajevo. Hotel President 4***.

DAY 3, WEDNESDAY, OCT 14: MOSTAR—STOLAC—DUBROVNIK, CROATIA

As we leave Sarajevo, our scenic drive takes us through mountainous canyons and pristine ravines. We'll pass through Jablanica, a region famous for its spit-roasted lamb. Mostar was home to a sizable Jewish community, and the former synagogue today serves as the city's puppet theater. Located on both sides of the turquoise Neretva river, the East and West parts of the historic **Old Town** are connected by Mostar's most celebrated (and photographed) structure – the **Old Bridge** (*Stari Most*). Originally built in the 16th century, the bridge was destroyed in 1993 during the civil war and was impeccably rebuilt ten years later. We continue to **Stolac** to the grave of Moshe Danon, the noted 19th-century Grand Rabbi of Sarajevo. Bosnia's Jewish community has renewed the pre-WWII tradition of a yearly pilgrimage to the site. Nearby lies the **Radimlja** medieval necropolis, whose ornate tombstones (or *Stećci*) are a unique regional phenomenon. We bid farewell to Bosnia and cross into gorgeous **Croatia**, arriving in **Dubrovnik** – the nation's crowning coastal gem. *Free time for lunch and dinner on your own – we'll make suggestions*. **Overnight in Dubrovnik. Hotel More 5***.

DAY 4, THURSDAY, OCT 15: DUBROVNIK

Until the Napoleonic conquest of 1808, for over four centuries **Dubrovnik** was coterminous with the autonomous maritime Republic of **Ragusa**, reaching its commercial zenith during the 15th and 16th centuries. Sephardi Jews settled here – and across Dalmatia – in large numbers after the Expulsion. They mostly traded in silk, leather, spices, wool, and textiles.

In 1556, Dubrovnik also welcomed a significant number of Jews expelled from Ancona by Pope Paul IV. Dubrovnik's 1532 **synagogue** is particularly enchanting. After Prague, it is the second-oldest active synagogue in Europe. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the most prominent Jewish family was that of the illustrious rabbi Aaron ben David ha-Koen (from Florence). We'll walk along Dubrovnik's **Stradun** thoroughfare, the town's enchanting **alleyways**, and the romantic **port**. During your free time in the afternoon and evening, you can walk along the city walls, take a short boat ride to nearby Lokrum islet, or enjoy the charm of the old town. Group **lunch** in the Old Town (**included**). *Free time for dinner on your own.* **Overnight in Dubrovnik. Hotel More 5*.**

DAY 5, FRIDAY, OCT 16: THE ADRIATIC COAST—SPLIT

Our drive today takes us on the famed Jadranska seaside road, along Dalmatia's breathtaking southern **Adriatic coast**. We'll pass by medieval **Ston**, whose defense walls are sometimes likened to the Great Wall of China. The scenic region we'll be traversing is home to sunny vineyards, Franciscan monasteries, craggy cliffs, and oyster farms. From the northern coast of the picturesque Pelješac peninsula, we will cross the famed newly built Pelješac Bridge (thus avoiding the Neum border crossing with Bosnia & Herzegovina). Our final destination today is **Split**, Dalmatia's undisputed hub. After we check into our hotel, you will have some free time in the afternoon to start exploring what bustling Split has to offer. The Ivan Meštrović Gallery, for example, is dedicated to the work of Croatia's internationally renowned sculptor. In the evening we'll attend Kabbalat Shabbat services at the Split Synagogue. *Free time for lunch on your own.* Group **dinner (included)**. **Overnight in Split. Santa Lucia Heritage Hotel 4*.**

DAY 6, SATURDAY, OCT 17: SPLIT ON FOOT

Romaniote Jews lived in nearby Salona (no connection to Salonica) in the 3rd century. In the middle of the 7th century they moved to the court of Diocletian, soon to become the town of Split. During the Middle Ages the Jewish merchants of Split and Ragusa (Dubrovnik) served as trade brokers between Dalmatia, Italy, and regions along the Danube. In the 16th century there were two distinct Sephardi communities in Split: the Eastern/Levantine from Ottoman lands and the Western – or Ponentine – Sephardim from Italy. One of the most prominent Ashkenazi families were the Morpurgos of Maribor. The historic Morpurgo bookstore still stands in the heart of the old town (though currently closed). Our walking tour includes **Diocletian's Palace**, where menorah engravings are clearly visible on the walls; the spectacular **synagogue** dating back to the early 1500s; and the historic Jewish neighborhood, converted into a ghetto from the mid-1700s until Napoleon's arrival in 1806. We will also stop by the fish market, walk up to the enchanting **Jewish cemetery**, and enjoy a panoramic vista of the city and its port. Group **lunch (included)**. Free time in the afternoon and evening, *dinner on your own.* **Overnight in Split. Santa Lucia Heritage Hotel 4*.**

DAY 7, SUNDAY, OCT 18: HVAR – CROATIA'S MOST ICONIC ISLAND

We start the morning with an exciting catamaran boat ride to the idyllic **Island of Hvar**. In the 4th century BC, the Greeks founded here the Pharos colony. One of the most beautiful islands in Croatia, and by some accounts in the world, it is one of Europe's famed **lavender capitals**. Take in the breathtaking views of the Adriatic from one of the island's fortified peaks. We'll enjoy the island's natural beauty and walk through the preserved historic **Hvar**

Town and Stari Grad. Hvar is also noted for its local olive oils and specialty wines made from indigenous grape varietals, so be prepared for a memorable wine-tasting and olive-oil-sampling experience (**included**), plus a rustic **lunch (included)** with regional dishes at an organic farm. After some free time in the afternoon, return by catamaran to Split in the early evening. *Dinner on your own.* **Overnight in Split. Santa Lucia Heritage Hotel 4*.**

DAY 8, MONDAY, OCT 19: SPLIT—PLITVICE LAKES—ZAGREB

Our drive this morning takes us through central Croatia, or Croatia proper, where you can take in the natural beauty of the country's inland geography, dotted by mountain chains and castles perched on hilltops. The Plitvice Lakes are the most spectacular natural formation in the region – and arguably in the entire country. The natural park is one of Europe's top UNESCO World Heritage sites. Plitvice comprises sixteen turquoise, crystal-clear lakes, a series of stunning waterfalls, dense forests, and a system of wooden bridges and boardwalks. From Plitvice we continue on to Zagreb, Croatia's capital city and largest metropolitan center. Group **lunch (included)**. *Dinner on your own.* **Overnight in Zagreb. Amadria Park Hotel Capital 4*.**

DAY 9, TUESDAY, OCT 20: ZAGREB

The earliest Jewish settlers here date back to the 10th century and include two prominent Jewish emissaries, Mar Saul and Mar Joseph, to the king of the Khazars. In the late medieval period, Jews arrived from lands as disparate as Albania, Malta, France, Hungary, and Moravia. From the mid 18th century, the Jewish community was comprised of settlers from Hungary, Moravia, Bohemia. Today Zagreb is home to the country's largest Jewish community, whose 1867 synagogue was demolished by the Ustashe in 1941. You are likely to fall in love with the city's unique vibe, a particular blend of Central European and Mediterranean charm. Our walking tour of the city includes the iconic **Jelačića Square, the Dolac marketplace, the historic 19th century Tkalčićeva street, the arrestingly baroque Upper Town, and much more.** *Lunch on your own.* **Enjoy a festive farewell dinner (included).** **Overnight in Zagreb. Amadria Park Hotel Capital 4*.**

DAY 10, WEDNESDAY, OCT 21: ZAGREB AIRPORT

Free time and departure – or continue on the post-trip extension to Slovenia and Trieste.

LAND PRICE:

3,890 EUR per person in double room

Single supplement: 985 EUR

Price will be converted to USD or CAD at the time of each payment.

Spaces are limited. Registration is first come, first served. **Book early to avoid disappointment!**

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

1000 EUR per person to reserve a spot

Remaining tour balance is due on 30 March, 2026

PAYMENT METHOD:

Check, Zelle, or bank transfer

Credit card payments available with a 3.5% fee

CANCELLATION POLICY:

First deposit is refundable until 1 February 2026

Remaining payments are subject to the following cancellation terms:

Three months prior to departure – full refund; 45 days prior to departure – refund 50% of paid amount. Less than 45 days – no refund. We recommend travel insurance.

PRICE INCLUDES:

Accommodation in luxury 4* & 5* hotels.

Zoom orientation session.

Pre-trip Zoom learning session with Rabbi Goldstein and Professor Benatov.

Transportation in modern, air-conditioned, full-size bus with washroom on board.

Licensed English-language tour leader with specialized knowledge on the Jewish history of the region.

Certified local guides with specialized knowledge on the Jewish history of their hometowns.

Round-trip speedboat tickets for the day-trip to the island of Hvar.

Hotel portage.

Entrance fees.

Daily breakfast.

Three dinners and four lunches. All dinners include 1-2 glasses of local wine.

A wine tasting and olive oil sampling.

Arrival airport transfers.

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

International airfare.

Departure airport transfer.

Tips.

NOTES:

Upon registration, you will receive a travel insurance quote through our Travel Insured International or Travel Guard group account. It's important that we issue your policy within 14 days of your initial payment so that you are covered for pre-existing medical conditions.

We will collect 140 EUR per person for tips for your tour leader, local guides, driver, and waiters. You will pay for group tips together with your second deposit.

A Florida-based ticketing agent is available to provide assistance booking flights.

If you decide to arrive early, we will book your room at our hotel.

For registration or additional details, contact Joseph Benatov at: benatov@gmail.com or 267.970.1817

Extension

Jewish Slovenia & Trieste, Italy With Rabbi Elyse Goldstein

21-25 October 2026

Detailed Itinerary

DAY 1, WEDNESDAY, OCT 21: LAKE BLEED—LJUBLJANA (SLOVENIA)

As we depart Zagreb, we'll soon leave Croatia and enter into neighboring Slovenia. Our morning drive will take us to **Lake Bled** and **Bled Castle**, Slovenia's pristine and most romantic spot. In the middle of the lake stands a charming island topped with a Baroque church. The medieval castle, placid waters, and the steep Julian Alps contribute to Bled's harmony. The region is also renowned for its *cremeschnitte*, a calorie-rich cream delicacy. We will end the day in **Ljubljana**, Slovenia's lovely capital city. Group **lunch (included)**. *Dinner on your own. Overnight in Ljubljana. Grand Hotel Union 4**.

DAY 2, THURSDAY, OCT 22: LJUBLJANA

Ljubljana is one of the most captivating cities in Europe. The quaint city center, overlooked by an **old castle**, with the **Ljubljanica river** slowly flowing through it, offers its visitors an abundance of architectural and cultural monuments and a uniquely laid-back atmosphere. Walk through the historic Jewish neighborhood and stop at the plaque at the intersection of the Jewish Street and the Jewish Path, located at the heart of the medieval Jewish quarter. Visit the iconic Dragon's Bridge, the Central Market, and the Cathedral of St. Nicholas. The city's festivals, fairs, and many languages grant Ljubljana a truly cosmopolitan feel throughout the year. Free time in the afternoon to continue enjoying the city. *Free time for lunch and dinner on your own. Overnight in Ljubljana. Grand Hotel Union 4**.

DAY 3, FRIDAY, OCT 23: LJUBLJANA—TRIESTE, ITALY

Our morning drive through Istria will take us into neighboring Italy, where we'll explore beautiful Trieste. In the 15th century, one of the town's prominent Jews was the influential banker Isacco da Trieste. Notable 18th-century Jewish families included the Parente, Morpurgo, Luzzatto, and Levi. The town came to be known as *Gateway to Zion* due to its central role in the post-WWI emigration to Palestine. Trieste's rich Jewish heritage is tangible in the town's imposing Israelite Temple, one of Europe's largest synagogues. James Joyce and his wife Nora arrived to Trieste in 1905 from nearby Pula, and ten years later Joyce started working on *Ulysses*. Kabbalat Shabbat services at the Trieste synagogue. *Lunch on your own. Group dinner (included). Overnight in Trieste. Hotel Duchi Vis à Vis 4**

DAY 4, SATURDAY, OCT 24: TRIESTE

Enjoy more of Trieste's impressive sites, including Piazza Unità d'Italia, the Canale Grande, the Roman Theater, and the iconic Caffè San Marco. Outside of the city, visit to the mid-19th century Miramare Castle, built for Archduke Ferdinand Maximilian and his wife Charlotte of Belgium. Free time in the afternoon to explore more of Trieste. *Lunch on your own.* Farewell dinner (included). Overnight in Trieste. Hotel Duchi Vis à Vis 4*

DAY 5, SUNDAY, OCT 25: TRIESTE AIRPORT

Free time and departure.

LAND PRICE:

1,630 EUR per person in double room

Single supplement: 560 EUR

Price will be converted to USD or CAD at the time of each payment.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

400 EUR per person to reserve a spot

Remaining tour balance is due on 30 March, 2026

PAYMENT METHOD:

Check, Zelle, or bank transfer

Credit card payments available with a 3.5% fee

CANCELLATION POLICY:

First deposit is refundable until 1 February 2026

Remaining payments are subject to the following cancellation terms:

Three months prior to departure – full refund; 45 days prior to departure – refund 50% of paid amount. Less than 45 days – no refund. We recommend travel insurance.

PRICE INCLUDES:

Accommodation in luxury 4* hotels.

Zoom orientation session.

Pre-trip Zoom learning session with Rabbi Goldstein and Professor Benatov.

Transportation in modern, air-conditioned, full-size bus with washroom on board.

Licensed English-language tour leader with specialized knowledge on the Jewish history of the region.

Certified local guides with specialized knowledge on the Jewish history of their hometowns.

Hotel portage.

Entrance fees.

Daily breakfast.

Two dinners and one lunch. All dinners include 1-2 glasses of local wine.

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

International airfare.

Departure airport transfer.

Tips.

NOTES:

We will collect 40 EUR per person for tips for your tour leader, local guides, driver, and waiters. You will pay for group tips together with your second deposit.

For registration or additional details, contact Joseph Benatov at: benatov@gmail.com or 267.970.1817