



**Sephardic
Balkans**
JEWISH HERITAGE TRIPS



Jewish Heritage Tour of Croatia, Slovenia, and Trieste (Italy)

A JCCNS Travel Experience

September 28—October 10, 2023

**Travel program organized by Sephardic Balkans LLC and Dr. Joseph Benatov
of the University of Pennsylvania**

ITINERARY AT A GLANCE:

Dubrovnik – 2 nights
Split – 3 nights
Zadar – 1 night
Zagreb – 2 nights
Ljubljana – 3 nights

For information and registration, please contact:

Diane Knopf (Group Leader): dmillknopf@gmail.com or 617-694-8587

Sara Ewing (JCCNS Staff): sewing@jccns.com or 857-285-7913

For travel insurance, please contact:

Joseph Benatov at Sephardic Balkans: benatov@gmail.com or 267-970-1817

Itinerary

DAY 1, THURSDAY, SEPT 28: DEPARTURE FROM LOGAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Overnight flight to Dubrovnik (via Munich).

DAY 2, FRIDAY, SEPT 29: DUBROVNIK AIRPORT—DUBROVNIK, CROATIA

Your tour leader and private bus will meet you at the airport and take you to our Dubrovnik hotel. Free time to relax and walk around the beautiful Babin Kuk and Lapad neighborhoods. Festive welcome dinner. **Overnight in Dubrovnik. Hotel More 5*. Dinner**

DAY 3, SATURDAY, SEPT 30: DUBROVNIK AND ENVIRONS

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 and Jewish museum** are particularly enchanting. After Prague, this 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). Buried at Dubrovnik's Jewish cemetery is rabbi Jacob Pardo (grandson of rabbi David Pardo of Sarajevo), who served the communities of Ragusa and Spalato (Split). We'll walk along Dubrovnik's **Stradun** thoroughfare, the town's enchanting alleyways, and the romantic **port**. During your free time you can stroll along the **city walls**, take a short boat ride to nearby **Lokrum** islet, or enjoy the charm of the old town. **Overnight in Dubrovnik. Hotel More 5*. Breakfast and lunch**

DAY 4, SUNDAY, OCT 1: 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. **Overnight in Split. Santa Lucia Heritage Hotel 4*. Breakfast and dinner**

DAY 5, MONDAY, OCT 2: HVAR – CROATIA'S MOST ICONIC ISLAND

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. We will also have a rustic lunch with regional dishes at an organic farm. After some free time in the afternoon, return by catamaran to Split in the early evening. **Overnight in Split. Santa Lucia Heritage Hotel 4*. Breakfast and lunch**

DAY 6, TUESDAY, OCT 3: 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. If you decide to walk uphill to the enchanting **Jewish cemetery**, you will enjoy a panoramic vista of the city and its port. **Overnight in Split. Santa Lucia Heritage Hotel 4*. Breakfast and lunch**

DAY 7, WEDNESDAY, OCT 4: SPLIT—TROGIR—ZADAR

Northwest of Split lies the fascinating historic city of **Trogir**, recognized by UNESCO for its complex of Romanesque, Baroque, Venetian, and Renaissance buildings. Located on an island just off the mainland, you can enjoy the spectacular **Trogir cathedral**, the charming cobblestoned alleys, and the old harbor. Our coastal drive continues through northern Dalmatia. Further along the coast lies Dalmatia's northern hub – **Zadar**. We'll spend one night in this charming seaside town with layers of Illyrian, Roman, Byzantine, and Venetian history. Zadar is also home to two unique sites: a **Sea Organ** emitting natural music generated by the movement of the sea; and the **Sun Salutation** installation which collects sunlight and then produces a hypnotic nighttime light show. **Overnight in Zadar. Bastion Heritage Hotel 4*. Breakfast and dinner**

DAY 8, THURSDAY, OCT 5: 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. **Overnight in Zagreb. Amadria Park Hotel Capital 4*. Breakfast and lunch**

DAY 9, FRIDAY, OCT 6: ZAGREB

The earliest Jewish settlers here date back to the 10th century and include two prominent Jewish emissaries to the king of the Khazars – Mar Saul and Mar Joseph. 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. **Overnight in Zagreb. Amadria Park Hotel Capital 4*. Breakfast and dinner**

DAY 10, SATURDAY, OCT 7: LAKE BLEĐ—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. **Overnight in Ljubljana. Hotel Cubo 4*. Breakfast and lunch**

DAY 11, SUNDAY, OCT 8: POSTOJNA CAVE—TRIESTE (ITALY)—LJUBLJANA

We start the morning with a short bus ride to the miraculous **Postojna Cave**. An intricate karst system of caves, it was formed by the Pivka river and is one of Slovenia's most spectacular natural sites. Postojna is home to the endemic *olm*, a cave-dwelling aquatic salamander. Our drive through Istria will soon take us into neighboring **Italy**, where we'll spend a few hours in 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*. We'll return to Ljubljana in the early evening. **Overnight in Ljubljana. Hotel Cubo 4*. Breakfast and lunch**

DAY 12, MONDAY, OCT 9: 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, stop at the plaque at the intersection of the Jewish Street and the Jewish Path, located at the heart of the medieval Jewish quarter. The city's newest Jewish site is an active synagogue, dedicated just a year ago. The city's festivals, markets, and many languages grant Ljubljana a truly cosmopolitan feel throughout the year. Our tour will end with a delicious farewell dinner. **Overnight in Ljubljana. Hotel Cubo 4*. Breakfast and dinner**

DAY 13, TUESDAY, OCT 10: LJUBLJANA—AIRPORT

Free time and departure. **Breakfast**

PRICING:

JCCNS MEMBERS

\$4,495 (Double occupancy, includes land and air) - add \$760 for single upgrade

NON-MEMBERS

\$4,695 (Double occupancy, includes land and air) - add \$760 for single upgrade

Please contact Diane Knopf at dmillknopf@gmail.com or Sara Ewing at sewing@jccns.com for land only pricing.

Please note: To reserve your spot you must submit a \$500 deposit. You can charge to credit card if you have one on file at the JCCNS, otherwise you must submit a check payable to the JCCNS - attention Sara Ewing.

PRICE INCLUDES:

- Special group air rates on Lufthansa - weight limit for checked luggage is 50 lbs.
- Accommodations at luxury 5* and 4* centrally located hotels
- Ground transportation in full-sized, airconditioned motor coach with bathroom
- Porterage – one piece per person
- Airport transfers
- Two meals per day: daily breakfast and lunch or dinner
- Comprehensive sightseeing entrance fees
- Experienced English-speaking tour director from arrival to departure
- Local guides throughout the trip
- Complimentary bottled water on the bus
- Pre-trip orientation meeting with Dr. Joseph Benatov, who will speak about the region's Jewish history and social gatherings with the group in advance of trip

PRICE DOES NOT INCLUDE:

- Group tips. We will be collecting \$150 per person for tips for your tour leader, local guides, and driver.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

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.

Travel insurance information: Sephardic Balkans LLC will issue your policy through our group account with Travel Guard or Travel Insured International. Please contact Joseph Benatov: benatov@gmail.com or 267-970-1817.

Please note: It is important to have your travel insurance issued within two weeks of your first deposit so that you're covered for pre-existing medical conditions.