Carpathian Mountains Jewish heritage Tour

at the award winning Thermal Star Resort Hotel

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<td><strong>Tour Start Date</strong></td>
<td>Aug 19, 2015</td>
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<td><strong>Tour End Date</strong></td>
<td>Aug 26, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Price Incl Flights from TLV</strong></td>
<td>$2,190</td>
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<td><strong>Price Land Only</strong></td>
<td>$1,950</td>
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<td><strong>Single Supplement</strong></td>
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Join us for an exciting Jewish authentic experience at an attractive price!

This year marking the 70th anniversary of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany, we have chosen to visit the Jewish cradle of Central Europe, with preserved Jewish towns with many traces and memories of Jewish communities that once existed and the grand dynastic names of towns like Zhitomir, Berdichev, Nadvorna, Kaliv, Sanz, Viznitz, Satmar Munkach. This is the place where the holy Bal Shem Tov walked and left his mark on the creation of the Hassidic Movement.

**Scholar in Residence: Rabbi Dr. Benny Lau**

known by his congregants and students as "Rav Benny," Rabbi Dr. Benjamin (Benny) Lau heads IDI's Judaism in Action project, and is the rabbi of the modern Orthodox Ramban Synagogue in southern Jerusalem. A charismatic leader, social entrepreneur, and media figure, he speaks out clearly on current issues, focusing on the humanistic values of Judaism and insisting that tradition face the challenges of contemporary society. Rabbi Dr. Lau's education includes studies at Yeshivat Har Etzion, a BA in Talmud from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and an MA and PhD in Talmud from Bar-Ilan University. His doctoral dissertation analyzes the halakhic theories of R. Ovadia Yosef. He opted for full military service in the Israel Defense Forces' Golani Brigade. After his yeshiva and academic studies, he moved from Jerusalem to Israel's southern periphery, where he served in the rabbinate for a decade as Rabbi of Kibbutz Saad and Talmud instructor at Yeshivat Hakibbutz Hadati, the movement's yeshiva at Kibbutz Ein Tzurim.
Rabbi Lau has been the rabbi of the Ramban Synagogue, one of Jerusalem's most active congregations, since the year 2000. Under his leadership, the synagogue was transformed into a hub of religious, cultural, and benevolent activity that serves the entire neighborhood. A noted author, he has published scores of books and research articles on the Jewish heritage. His prolific writings focus on Jewish philosophy, issues of Halakhah and society, and the connection between Biblical, Mishnaic, and Talmudic sources and contemporary social and political realities.

**History Guide: Dr Shlomo Tikochinski** of the The Van Leer Jerusalem Institute is the academic director of the research groups The Jewish Musar Movement: Theory, Practice, and Contemporary Contexts; The Lithuanian Yeshiva and Its Connection to the Public Space in Israel; and Discourse between Worlds. The VLJI is a leading intellectual center for the interdisciplinary study and discussion of issues related to philosophy, society, culture, and education is an expert in the history of Eastern Europe, Hasidism, Mitnagdim and everything in between. Dr. Tikochinski will enrich our touring experience with invaluable insights into the Hasidic leaders, Zionist leaders, writers and artists who were active in the Carpathian region and the Ukraine in general. We will hear Hasidic tales selected from the spiritual treasures and ways of life of the Ukrainian Hasidim and of Hungarian Jewry, accompanied by singing and accordion in Hebrew and Yiddish. Dr. Tikochinski guides group tours to Eastern Europe as well as leading heritage tours to this region arranged by the American Joint Distribution Committee.

**Thermal Star Resort Hotel 5***
Ranked among the most beautiful spa hotels in Transcarpathian region Thermal Star Resort Hotel is a unique resort located in the picturesque valley of Carpathian Mountains, on the lakeside. Everything has been done here for the guests’ comfort and health improvement: a high standard of accommodation, spa treatment, exquisite cuisine and wide range of additional services.

This Carpathian Thermal Star health resort offers treatments with its own curative high-silicon complex thermal water. Thermal Star owns two thermal mineral-water wells whose high silicon content contributes to the normalization of metabolic processes in the body, improves the condition of bones, cartilage tissue, skin, and reduces the risk of atherosclerosis. The resort includes two outdoor swimming pools, sports' facilities, and a playground for children. The resort includes spa rooms fitted with modern equipment, a diagnostic laboratory, its own mineral water, saunas and steam baths.


The entire hotel, which is for our use during Pesach, is spread out over an area of 40 acres and is situated on the shores of a lake in the scenic Carpathians. The hotel is owned by a well-known Jewish philanthropist born in Munkács and who is a major philanthropist to Israel, and also donates to the rehabilitation and commemoration of the Jewish community living in this area.
Location

The Carpathian Mountains forms an arc of roughly 1,500 km stretching across Romania, Hungary, Ukraine and Slovakia, making them the second-longest mountain range in Europe where the highest peaks exceed 2,500m. The hotel itself is 600 meters above sea level.

Most of the region was once part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, known as Transylvania. Residents view themselves as belonging to "Carpatia", the name of the mountain region, and do not show any interest in who controls the area. The political divisions made after World War II do not interest them.

Jewish Heritage

In the past Jews lived in almost every village, town or city in the area and in some areas they constituted 30-50% of the population. During our tour we will visit remote villages Jewish cemeteries and the graves of Hassidic Rabbis. We will visit the Munkács Hebrew Gymnasium, synagogues, and Jewish institutions and communities. Most of the esteemed Hassidic sects, such as Nadvorna, Kalibo, Sanz, Viznitz, Satmar Munkács, etc. were from this area.

Daily Itinerary:

Day 1: Wednesday, August 19:
Evening flight to Lvov. Upon arrival transfer to hotel in The Carpathian Mountains.

Day 2: Thursday, August 20: Chust
This morning we will visit some small towns and will hear interesting Jewish stories about towns such as Chust, Vinogradov (Sevlyush), Bushtino. During the tour we will visit the synagogues, the cemeteries and hear the stories of prominent rebbes of both past and present Jewish communities.
Day 3: Friday, August 21:

Excursions to Uzhgorod & Munkác

A tour of the center of the Transcarpathian region with a history that dates back thousands of years. We will walk across the old pedestrian bridge and into the Korzo's main street with its many architectural sights. Next we will visit the great pseudo-Moorish style synagogue and hear the story of Rabbi Falberman's synagogue, followed by a visit to the Jewish cemetery where we will see the Ohel of Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried, the author of Kizur Shulchan Aruh after our visit we will continue to Munkác. The Jewish community of Munkác consisted of Galician and Hungarian Hassidic Jewry, Orthodox Jews, and Zionists. Materially impoverished, yet wealthy in ideological debates, the Jews of interwar Munkác constituted almost half of the town's population.

The Munkác Jewish community was famous for its Hassidic activity as well as its innovations in Zionism and modern Jewish education. The Chief Rabbi of Munkác, Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira (who led the community from 1913 until his death in 1937), was the most outspoken voice of religious anti-Zionism, and during our tour we will learn about his struggles. We will also visit the Hebrew Gymnasium, synagogues, Jewish institutions and communities. We will return to our hotel and prepare ourselves for Shabbat.

Day 4: Shabbat, August 22:
After Shabbat services and lunch we'll take a walking tour.

Day 5: Sunday, August 23:
A day in the Carpathians. We will spend the day in the heart of the Carpathian mountains where we'll enjoy the beauty of this picturesque area. During the day we will see the Shypot waterfall, one of the most beautiful waterfalls in the Carpathians. We will then take the cable car to the top of the Gymba mountain (1491m) and where we will partake of the mineral water from natural springs.

Next we will visit Kolochava, a picturesque village in the Carpathians surrounded by mountains. We will visit the Old Village Museum, which is the first village museum of folk architecture and life in the Transcarpathian region and recreates the atmosphere of the cultural and public life of Verchovyna. We will see recreated homesteads, a blacksmith's forge, a schoolhouse, a synagogue, etc.

Day 6: Monday, August 24:
Kosice & Prešov

Today we will visit Kosice, a city situated in the center of Europe, close to many European borders, and with all the elegance of a modern European city. A place where history, modern art, sport and night life all converge, creating an unforgettable atmosphere. During our tour we will visit the state theatre, historical buildings, the remains of the city's defense walls from medieval times, some of the little streets, and of course, the synagogues.
After the tour we will continue to Prešov, which is a yet undiscovered gem among the royal Slovak towns. We will visit the Jewish synagogue, houses on Hlavná street which have elements of the rare eastern-Slovakian renaissance, the Klobusicky palace, the Rakoczi palace, the town hall, the Bosak Bank, the Evanjelic College, Caraffa´s prison, the town’s fortresses, the Neptune fountain and the Red Army Monument built in 1945.

**Day 7: Tuesday, August 25:**

**Bardejov – Lviv**

This morning we will visit the UNESCO Slovak town Bardejov. The town of Bardejov in the Eastern part of Slovakia was rightly awarded the European award, gold medal of ICOMOS Foundation of UNESCO in 1986 and it was inscribed into the List of the World Cultural Heritage of the same organization in 2000. Bardejov is spoken of as the “most Gothic town in Slovakia”. The principal area of its historical core is the rectangular Radnicne square skirted by rows of antique burgher houses with typical gable facades. Our tour will include a visit the small Jewish quarter and the fine 18th-century synagogue. We end the day in Lviv.

**Day 8: Wednesday, August 26:**

**Lviv – Tel Aviv**

During the tour we will visit the old Jewish quarter in Lviv which embraces the old part of the city center and includes excursion in Staroyevreys'ka and Brativ Rohatyntsiv streets and we will see the ruins of Gold Rose synagogue. The tour also includes a retrospective journey into the history of the Jewish by visiting Svozody Ave and Rynok square.

After the tour we will make our way to the airport for our return trip home. This will have been an unforgettable experience, seeing a beautiful and fascinating part of the world and perhaps would have aroused an appetite for seeing even more of this part of the world.
VIP cottage Upgrade for the Package

- Superior room $220 per person
- Junior suite $260 per person
- Suite $320 per person
- Apartment (2 bedrooms, 4 beds) $245 per person

Kashrut on Tours

The entire hotel will be kosher for Passover under the close supervision of Asher Z. Ehrenfeld, Chief Rabbi of Debrecen. The rabbi also comes from this area and has extensive knowledge of local history and the Hassidic communities. We work with the local Rabbinate to provide Hashgacha for all local ingredients and fresh meat and poultry. In some cases, we fly in kosher food from Israel and other sources, depending on the destination of the tour. We do not guarantee Pat Israel and Chalav Israel for all destinations. In many destinations we have our own crockery and cutlery. Where we don't, we provide disposables at the meals. When we cook in Hotel kitchens, we ensure proper Kashering and we use our own kitchenware on kashered and covered surfaces. All this is done under the strict supervision of our trained staff/guides that function as our Mashgichim. Our travelers enjoy satisfying meals prepared by our team including fresh local fish, fruit, and vegetables. This is an integral part of Jewish travel.

Package Includes:

- International Flights from Tel Aviv
- Accommodation at the Thermal Star Resort Hotel
- Sightseeing and entrance fees as per the itinerary
- Comfortable air conditioned touring coach
- Daily full board meals on each day
- Kosher sandwiches for lunch when on full day tours
- Experienced English-speaking guide

Package Excludes:

- Travel & Health Insurance
- Personal expenses

PAYMENT TERMS:

- Deposit of $1,000 per room is required upon booking confirmation
- 50% payment is due by December 30, 2014
- Balance is due by February 15, 2015
- Staff Tips of 60₪ per room per night payable on Invoice
- Visa and MasterCard add 2% merchant fee
- American Express add 3% merchant fee