Jewish Heritage Roots Tour of
Lithuania and Belarus

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<th>Tour Start Date</th>
<th>June 23, 2015</th>
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<td>Tour End Date</td>
<td>July 2, 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Price Land Only</td>
<td>1,990 Euro</td>
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<td>Price with flights From Tel Aviv</td>
<td>2,675 Euro</td>
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<td>Single Supplement</td>
<td>540 Euro</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tour Guide</td>
<td>Akiva Sella</td>
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<td>History Guide</td>
<td>Dr. Shlomo Tikochinski</td>
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Jews have lived in Lithuania/Belarus for over 700 years - in some areas predating even the arrival of Christianity to this part of the world. Their legacy is rich with both Torah and secular scholarship - most Litvaks could speak at least three languages, two of them being Hebrew and a rich, classic Yiddish. Although the Nazis cut a vast swathe through Jewish life here, there is still much to see and experience in this part of the world, and a new, post-Soviet openness has awakened a huge interest in Jewish history and culture.

Come and meet with members of the Vilnius Yiddish Institute - where Yiddish is being taught as part of the curriculum of the Vilnius University, Lithuania's premier center of higher learning. Travel on to Belarus once a part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, for centuries home to great yeshivas and small shtetls. Vilna, Kovno, Grodno, Minsk, Mir and Slonim - all are basic building blocks of Ashkenazic Jewish heritage.

Scholar in residence and Tour Guide: Dr. Shlomo Tikochinski
Dr. Shlomo Tikochinski of the Open University 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.

**Day 1: Tuesday, June 23 2015: Tel Aviv/Riga**

Arrive Riga airport. Upon arrival tour of Jewish Riga including the Jewish quarter, a memorial for the burnt Great Synagogue of Riga, the Jewish school founded in the XIX by Rav Dr. Max Lilienthal, the Synagogue, the museum “Jews in Latvia”, the Jewish community centre, the sites of Shimon Dubnov in Riga. Visit to Rumbula and Bikierniki Memorials, where Nazis murdered many thousands of Jews from Latvia, Germany and Czechoslovakia. Salaspils - the memorial site of a concentration camp. In the afternoon a tour of the Old Town, including the Castle of Riga, the Dome Cathedral, the Swedish gate and the former Swedish barracks, the Great and Small Guilds, Cat’s house, the “Blackheads” and St. Peter church to view the city from the tower.

**Day 2: Wednesday, June 24, 2015: Riga/Bauska/Panevezys/Kaunas**

Morning Visit the only remaining Synagogue, which today serves as the central meeting place for the Jews of Latvia. Standing since the beginning of the 20th century, the synagogue was most likely spared from burning due to its fortunate location in the Old Town, where fires could be devastating to the surrounding buildings Visit to Rumbula and Bikierniki Memorials, where Nazis murdered many thousands of Jews from Latvia, Germany and Czechoslovakia. Salaspils - the memorial site of a concentration camp. Drive to Bauska (Boisk), the place where Rav Cook comes from. After the visit we will Depart to Panevezys (Ponevezh), see the building of the former world famous Ponevezh Yeshiva, Synagogue, the Jewish ghetto, common grave of the Holocaust victims in the outskirts of the city. Then depart to Kaunas (Kovna), the second large city, an interim capital of pre-war Lithuania. After dinner we will walk along the main street, Laisves aleja, boulevard, with its 2-3 storey buildings, restaurants, shops, as they looked before the war.

**Day 3: Thursday, June 25, 2015: Kaunas/Kedainiai/Kaunas**

See the building of the famous Slobodka Yeshiva founded by Rabbi Nathan Zvi Finkel. The Musar movement and the influence of R’ Israel Salanter on Slobodka Yeshiva. The personality of Rav Itzhak Elchanan Spector. Drive to Kedainiai - small town where the Vilna Gaon lived and worked. Ones was thriving Jewish community, today one can see nice old city with 3 standing Synagogues, market square and one of the oldest wooden churches in Lithuania.
Day 4: Friday, June 26, 2015: Kaunas/Zezmariai/Vilnius
Full day tour of Kaunas, including Slobodka, a Jewish suburb of Kaunas and ghetto during World War II, the Old Jewish cemetery. The Great Action at Demokratu square. The Holocaust museum. The Synagogue and the Children's Memorial in its courtyard. The house where Leah Goldberg, the prominent Israeli poetess, lived. On the way to Vilnius we stop at Zezmariai (Zhezhmer), where a remarkable Jewish community settled before the war with its surviving wooden Synagogue building. After our tour we'll check in to our hotel and prepare for Shabbat.

Day 5: Shabbat, June 27, 2015: Vilnius

After breakfast and Shabbat services we'll take a walking tour to the old Jewish quarter to see the narrow streets and courtyards of the middle-age Ghetto, the Great Vilna Synagogue and the shulhoyf, Vilna Gaon - the great Jewish scholar; Vilna - a centre of the struggle between mitnagdim and Hasidim, the famous Jewish sculptor Mordekhai Antokolsk and the world-renowned Strashun library, that numbered over 6000 volumes at the end of the 19th century.

Day 6: Sunday, June 28, 2015: Vilnius/Paneriai/Trakai/Vilnius
Today we will visit Ponar Memorial, near Vilnius, where the Nazis and their local accomplices murdered in the pits many thousands of the Jews of Lithuania and other countries. A tour of Trakai, the ancient capital and the residence of Grand Dukes of Lithuania, famous for the lakes and sights of the area. The 14th century insular castle with a museum of Lithuanian history. The Karaites and the story of this small ethnic group (confessing Judaism), brought by Vytautas the Great from Crimea as war prisoners about 600 years ago. After the tour we will return to Vilnius and see the present and the past of the Jewish cemeteries, the grave of the Vilna Gaon. The "Cheap Houses" – big dwelling houses built by baron Hirsch for Jewish poor people after the great flood. Building of the world famous printing-house "Widow and Brothers Romm". We end the day at the Hill of Three Crosses to enjoy the fascinating panoramic view of the city.

Day 7: Monday, June 29, 2015: Vilnius/Radin/Grodno
We start the day at Ponar Forest near Vilnius, where more than 100.000 people, mostly Jewish were murdered by the Nazis and visit the Jewish State museum. We return to Vilnius the Jewish cemeteries of Vilna, their past and present; the grave of the Vilna Gaon and of other prominent Jewish figures. In the afternoon we will pass the border to Belarus and drive to Grodno via Radin where Chafetz Chayim founded the Yeshivah of Radin in 1869. One can see the impressive building of the Synagogue. Visit the Jewish cemetery with the mitzvah of Chafetz Chayim and the memorial for the Jews murdered in the WWII. Arrival in Grodno for overnight.
Day 8: Tuesday, June 30, 2015: Grodno/Slonim/Novogrudok/Mir/Minsk

Sightseeing of Grodno, once a residence of Great Duke of Lithuania Vytautas. Here in 1389 he issued a "Permit of Residence" that regarded with favour the arrival of Jews into Lithuania. Walking tour in the old part of Grodno, including the medieval castle, the streets of the Jewish quarter before the war, buildings of the various Jewish public institutions, the Great Synagogue of Grodno, the territory of the Jewish Ghetto and the old Jewish cemetery. Continue to Slonim and see the Slonim Synagogue, which survived the Holocaust and is now being caringly restored and then to Novogrudok – once the centre of the Great Duchy of Lithuania. The ruins of the ancient castle could be seen up to date. Visit to the area of the Jewish ghetto and the places of the mass murder. Visit the Museum of Adam Mitskevich. Drive to Mir. Here a world-renowned yeshiva that numbered about five hundred students from around the world was established in 1815. One can see in the same area the buildings of the yeshiva and of three synagogues. The old Jewish cemetery in Mir. An impressive memorial erected in memory of the Jewish inhabitants murdered during WWII. Visit to the medieval Dukes’ Radziwill castle of Mir built in 1495. Arrive Minsk for overnight.

Day 9: Wednesday, July 1, 2015: Minsk/Volozhyn/Khatyn/Minsk

After breakfast sightseeing of Minsk. “Yama” – a memorial for the Jews perished in Minsk during the Nazi occupation. The obelisk was built on the exact spot where five thousand Jews were slaughtered. Visit Minsk Synagogue. A walk in the small part of the Old Town the only one survived of the pre-war Minsk. The site of the Minsk ghetto. Examples of Jewish architecture, including a building with an ornate wooden door that still has the imprint of a large mezuzah. Continue to Volozhyn and Khatyn to visit the memorial complex and to learn about Belarus’ tragic recent history. Arrive Volozhyn and see the renowned yeshiva established by Rav Hayim Volozhiner, a disciple of the Vilna Gaon in 1803 (it existed until 1942, when the Nazis killed the last sixty-four students). See the Jewish cemetery with the tomb of the great Hayim Volozhiner.

Day 10: Thursday, July 2, 2015: Minsk/Riga/Tel Aviv

This morning we will continue our sightseeing in Minsk than we will depart to Riga for sightseeing and lunch followed by transfer to the airport.

Important to Know:

✦ There may be changes to the order of places visited. We will make every effort to visit every place mentioned in the itinerary.
The tour organizers have no control over airline services such as seating, special meal requests, changes in departure times or delays. These remain the sole responsibility of the airline company.

**Kashrut on Tours**

Kosher food is provided to our travelers on all our tours. 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 who function as our Mashgichim.

Our travelers enjoy gourmet meals prepared by our team including fresh local fish, fruit, and vegetables. This is an integral part of Jewish travel. We make great efforts to assure that our travelers will experience local foods first-hand, while maintaining stringent observance of Kashrut laws on all occasions.

**Rabbi Yisrael Meir Levinger – Head of Kashrut on all SBI Operated Land Tours**

Graduate of Yeshivat Kfar Haroeh and Yeshivat Beer Yakov. He served as Chief Rabbi for 22 years in Basle, Switzerland and for 20 years was on the council of Vaad Hakashrut of Europe. He has authored books on Shechita, and many Kashrut topics and is now working on the Encyclopedia of Kashrut. Rav Levinger is the Company Rav and oversees and is responsible for all our operations and logistical methodology to ensure the highest standards of Kashrut on each tour and each destination worldwide.

Any questions about Kashrut please submit to david@eddiestravel.com and Rav Levinger will respond directly.

**Deposit, Cancellation Fees & Policy:**

A $500 USD Deposit per person must be received at the time of booking in order to confirm your reservation. **Payment in full is due 60 days before departure.** A minimum number of participants are required to operate tour dates. If a minimum number has not been reached prior to tour departure and the tour is cancelled you will receive a FULL refund.

- 90 days before departure bookings are refundable less a $100 administration fee
- 60-90 days prior to departure: $500 + $100 per passenger
- 30-60 days prior to departure: $1,000 + $100 per passenger
- Less than 30 working days prior to departure: 100% of total - no refund
- We strongly recommend purchasing Travel Insurance.
**Flights**

If you are joining us for the Land Tour package only (from outside Israel) you can get an obligation free quote for your flights from us

**Travel Insurance**

Travel insurance encompassing both cancellation and medical insurance is very important and we cannot stress that enough. We strongly recommend that our clients are adequately insured when travelling. It is crucial to purchase the travel insurance within 14 days from the 1st payment that you make for this trip (flights/cruise/tour etc). Your payment is made directly to the insurance company. We highly recommend the 'cancel for any reason' upgrade option. Our preferred policies are Travel Safe (USA & Canadian residents), Travel Select (USA residents) and Global Trip Protection Elite (All other Nationalities). For an obligation free quote and further details email yonah@travelinsuranceisrael.com

**Bookings:** Due to the limited number of spaces on this tour, we urge you to please complete the attached booking form and return it to us by fax as soon as possible.