



AMERICAN CONFERENCE *of* CANTORS
Sacred music. Spiritual leadership. Jewish life.

The Music and People of

POLAND & PRAGUE TOUR

Featuring uplifting music and spiritual inspiration by members of
American Conference of Cantors

October 14 - 25, 2023

Join the soaring voices of the **American Conference of Cantors** on a unique journey, as together we sing, pray and explore our way through Europe! Ours will be a mission of music and healing, featuring gala concerts, outstanding scholarship, connections with local communities and unforgettable touring geared toward Cantors and congregants alike. Join us as we discover the inspiring people, hidden history and musical heritage of Poland and Prague!



Face to face encounters with Europe's nascent
Jewish communities

Ayelet *Tours, Ltd.*

THE MEMORIES LASTS FOR EVER

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Overview

Join the American Conference of Cantors on a unique journey, as together we sing, pray and explore our way through Europe! Ours will be a mission of music and healing, featuring concerts, scholarship connections with local communities and unforgettable touring. Join us as we discover the inspiring people, hidden history and musical heritage of Poland and Prague together!



Children at the Krakow JCC Frejda Preschool

Face to Face Experience:

- **Jewish Revival in Prague:** Meet with members of Ec Chajim, Bejt Praha or Bejt Simcha, two of Prague's Progressive Jewish communities, and take inspiration from their dedication to revitalizing Judaism in the city.
- **Shabbat of Celebration:** Join the local Jewish community and guests worldwide for a celebratory Shabbat dinner.
- **Riding for Life:** Take part in the Ride for the Living, biking the 55-mile journey from Auschwitz to Krakow. (optional)
- **Progressive Judaism in Warsaw:** Meet with Beit Polska and Ec Chajim and discover the heart of Jewish revival in Warsaw.
- **Discussing the Past, Describing the Future:** Meet non-Jewish Polish youth in the Forum for Dialogue and learn how they work to preserve their town's Jewish past and build a better future.

Musical Experiences:

- Sing a Joyful Song: Enjoy the harmonious melodies of Clil (pronounced Tslil), the Warsaw and Lodz Jewish community choir! Sing along and learn new melodies as Poland's youth bring Judaism to life.
- A Fitting Celebration: Enjoy a festive dinner and farewell concert by the ACC, including greetings from the Israeli Ambassador and remarks from local Jewish community leaders.



Artistic Experiences:

- Via the Mezuzah: Join Mi Polin, the hip artist collab, for a pre-War tour of Jewish history in the Praga District.
- Tasting Kazimeirz: Delight in the Kazimeirz culinary scene on a tasting tour, enjoying delicacies such as perogie, zapikanka and other treats.

Jewish History:

- A Light in Dark Times: Witness the moving stories of heroism and martyrdom along the Warsaw Ghetto Memorial Route.
- Standing as a Witness, Vowing "Never Again": Visit the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp for a difficult and emotional tour through the ultimate witness to Nazi barbarity and horror.

- Synagogues and Cemeteries: Discover the rich history of the former Jewish quarter of Kazimierz, including its famous synagogues and cemetery.
- History Preserved: Stroll through the Josefov, Prague's former Jewish Quarter, and visit its famous synagogues and cemeteries, preserved by the Nazis as a museum to our destroyed culture.

Jewish History:

- Salt of the Earth: Travel deep underground to the UNESCO Heritage Wieliczka Salt Mines for a tour of Europe's oldest working salt mine, filled with artifacts and sculpture.
- History Over a Pilsner: Discover Plzen and its Moorish Great Synagogue, the second-largest in all of Europe. Meet with locals, pay respects at the memorial to Jewish life lost and visit the city's famous Pilsner Brewery.

Itinerary



Day 1: Saturday, October 14, 2023: DEPARTURE

- We depart from the USA on our overnight flights to Prague.

Day 2: Saturday, October 15, 2023: DEPARTURE

- Arrivals throughout the day in **Prague**, the Czech capital known as "the City of One Thousand Spires", filled with Baroque churches, promenades, parks and ancient city walls. Transfers will be provided for all arrivals on this day from the airport and central train station (transfer times TBD based on flight list).
- We enjoy a city tour, encompassing visits to the **Hradcany Castle**, the **Charles Bridge**, the famous **Astronomical Clock**, and **St. Vitus' Cathedral**. (Tours will depart at 10:00 a.m., 12:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. to accommodate different arrival times).
- * **ACC OPENING PROGRAM:** We join with the voices of the ACC and the local Jewish community for our opening ceremony and concert sing-along.
- We delight in a **welcome dinner and reception**, catching up with old friends and making new acquaintances.

Overnight in Prague

Day 3: Monday, October 16, 2023: JUDAISM IN PRAGUE

- Breakfast at our hotels.
- We tour of the former **Jewish Quarter** known as the **Josefov**, with its **Old Town Hall, Spanish Synagogue, Alt-Neu Synagogue, Pinkas Synagogue, Maisel Synagogue**, the **Jewish cemetery**, and the **State Jewish Museum**, all standing witness as testament to the Jewish life the Nazis all but extinguished from the area.
- **OR...RETURNEE TRACK:** Visit **Bejt Hagibor**, the building that housed the Nazi headquarters during World War II, today meaningfully transformed into a Jewish seniors' home and kindergarten.
- Lunch on own.
- * **FACE TO FACE:** We meet with members of Prague's three Progressive Synagogues, **Etz Chaim, Bejt Simcha, and Bejt Praha**, community members of the **JCC** and **Rabbi David Maxa**, the first Czech-born rabbi to return to Prague and founder of Congregation Etz Chaim. We take inspiration from their dedication and hard work to revitalize Judaism in this great city.
- **CULTURAL OPTION:** Attend a classical music concert at one of Prague's majestic concert halls (details & cost TBD).

Overnight in Prague

Day 4: Tuesday, October 17, 2023: TEREZIN AND BEYOND

- Breakfast at our hotels.
- Today, we travel to **Terezin**, the former "model" Nazi concentration camp. We visit the **prison fortress**, the **hidden synagogue** and the **museum** filled with the artwork of former prisoners. We stop at the **memorial monument**, pass through the town itself, and hear stories and see photos of some of the rabbis imprisoned here. Among those rabbis are **Rabbi Leo Baeck** and **Rabbi Regina Jonas**, the first woman ordained a rabbi.
- A **boxed lunch** is included today.
- **OR...RETURNEES TRACK:** Take a day-trip to **Plzen** and visit the **Great Synagogue**, the second largest synagogue in Europe. Built in the Moorish style, it stands as a testament to the once-great Jewish community in Plzen. We take part in a special program with the local community and visit the **River Rock Memorial**, created by a local school, that placed one rock for each Jew from Plzen. We end our day at the world-famous **Pilsner Brewery** before returning to Prague.
- Back in Prague, we enjoy some leisure time and dinner on own.

Overnight in Prague



Day 5: Wednesday, October 18, 2023: PRAGUE TO KRAKOW

- Breakfast and check out of our hotels.
- We board our buses to **Krakow**. Along the way, we enjoy the beautiful Bohemian and Moravian landscape and discuss the stories of these lands.
- Upon arrival in Krakow, we check into our hotel and have time to refresh.
- Dinner on own this evening.

Overnight in Krakow

Day 6: Thursday, October 19, 2023: JEWISH PRESENCE IN KRAKOW

- Breakfast at our hotels.
- We take part in a **Jewish heritage tour of Kazimierz**, the old Jewish district, where we see the **Old Synagogue**, a massive fortress-like building erected in the 15th to 16th centuries, the **Tempel Synagogue** and the **Ramuh Synagogue**. We continue to **Apteka pod Orlem**, the **Under the Eagle Pharmacy Museum** inside the Jewish Ghetto and hear the story of **Tadeusz Pankiewicz**, recognized as a Righteous Among the Nations. We also pass by **Oskar Schindler's Factory** and the memorial at the former site of the **Plaszow Concentration Camp**.
- Lunch on own.
- * **FACE TO FACE**: This evening, we hear the inspiring story of the rebirth of Jewish life in Krakow and the creation of the **Krakow JCC** as part of our discussion with **Executive Director Jonathan Ornstein**. We will also discuss the amazing work of the organization during the war in Ukraine.
- **CULTURAL OPTIONAL**: We enjoy a delicious **culinary tour of the Kazimeirz Jewish Quarter**, enjoying local delicacies such as perogie, zapikanka and other treats (separate cost).

Overnight in Krakow

Day 7: Friday, October 20, 2023: AUSCHWITZ-BIRKENAU

- Breakfast at our hotels.
- We travel to **Auschwitz-Birkenau**, the infamous Nazi concentration camp, using personal stories and texts as a guide. We begin our visit with a **memorial service**, followed by a visit to the **museum**. We participate in a guided walk through **Birkenau** with time for personal reflection, then join as a group at the end of the train tracks for a powerful memorial prayer.



- A **boxed lunch** is included today.
- We return to Krakow.

* **ACC PROGRAM:** As the sun begins to set, we join together for **candle lighting** and **Kabbalat Shabbat services** with the local community, featuring the voices of the ACC.

* **FACE TO FACE /KRAKOW JEWISH CULTURE:** Later this evening, we enjoy an energetic and joyful **Shabbat dinner** together with the local

Jewish community, including Holocaust survivors, members of the local Hillel and Ukrainian refugees.

Overnight in Krakow

Day 8: Saturday, October 21, 2023: SHABBAT SHALOM!

* **ACC PROGRAM:** **Shabbat morning services** will be led by members of the ACC.

• **PROGRAMMING OPTIONS:**

o **Optional morning tour:** We travel outside the city center to explore the fun and fascinating UNESCO World Heritage Wieliczka Salt Mines, dating back 700 years. It is one of the largest and oldest working salt mines in Europe and is on the UNESCO list of the 12 most priceless monuments in the world (separate cost).

o **Optional free time** for exploring Krakow on own, enjoy the amazing market square for a little souvenir shopping.

• This afternoon, we enjoy a tour of **Wawel Castle**, **St. Mary's Church** and the **Renaissance Cloth Hall**, then continue down the **Royal Way** to the **Krakow Market Square**, the second largest square in the world, in Krakow's ancient city center.

* **ACC PROGRAM:** This evening, we join for **Havdallah and a concert**, celebrating the rebuilding of the Krakow Jewish community with music originating from Poland and Central Europe.

Overnight in Krakow

Day 9: Sunday, October 22, 2023: KRAKOW TO WARSAW

- Breakfast and check out of our hotels.
- This morning, we drive to **Kielce and Platny 17**.

* **FACE TO FACE:** We meet with **Bogdan Bialek**, the man who restored the local community in memory of the tragic events during the pogrom, and who was involved in the implementation of a number of initiatives aimed at combating anti-Semitism and xenophobia at Platny 17. Here, we assist by helping at the local refugee center opened on the same site of the pogrom.

- We enjoy **lunch** in Kielce before continuing to **Warsaw**.
- Upon arrival, we check into our hotels in Warsaw and enjoy the evening at leisure.
- **CULTURAL OPTIONAL:** We enjoy a staple of Warsaw culture with a live classical Chopin concert (separate cost).

Overnight in Warsaw

Day 10: Monday, October 23, 2023: JUDAISM IN WARSAW

- Breakfast at our hotels.
- We spend today engrossed in history through a **Jewish heritage tour of Warsaw**. Stops include:
 - The beautiful **Nozyk Synagogue**, the only surviving prewar synagogue in Warsaw
 - The **Memorial Route of Jewish Martyrdom and Struggle**
 - The **Umschlagplatz Monument** where Jews were assembled for deportation during the Holocaust
 - The horrific **Stawski Street buildings** where the SS was headquartered
 - The **Jewish Resistance Bunker at Mila 18** where the resistance fighters made their final stand
 - The few remaining fragments of the **Warsaw Ghetto wall**
 - The **Okopowa Street Jewish cemetery**, one of the largest in the world
- **OR... RETURNEE TRACK:** Join the artist collaboration **Mi Polin** for a moving tour through **Warsaw's Praga District** to discover the traces of pre-war Jewish history by following the outlines of mezuzahs that once adorned the doorways throughout the neighborhood.
- We take a **docent-led tour** of the astounding **Museum of the History of Polish Jews (POLIN)**. The museum sits on the former site of the Warsaw Ghetto and features a multi-media narrative exhibition about the vibrant Jewish community that flourished in Poland for a thousand years.
- * **ACC PROGRAM:** We host a **memorial service** at the dramatic **Monument to the Ghetto Heroes**, built by the Warsaw-born Jewish sculptor **Nathan Rappaport**.
- Free evening to enjoy the Warsaw culinary scene (recommendations provided by our team or the host hotels for any free night).

Overnight in Warsaw

Day 11: Tuesday, October 24, 2023: WARSAW

- Breakfast at our hotels.
- This morning, we drive through the **Warsaw Zoo**, where we visit the **Zookeeper's House** owned by the couple that saved many Jews during the Holocaust, now memorialized in the movie **"The Zookeeper's Wife"**.

* **FACE TO FACE:** Participate in a special program with the Forum for Dialogue, a group working to strengthen connections between Jews and non-Jews in Poland. Led by local non-Jewish youth, we tour a nearby village to learn about its Jewish history and how its residents are working to preserve the past and forge a new direction for the future.

• We discover Warsaw's **Old Town** on a walking tour through the cobblestone alleys. Along the way, we see the medieval buildings reconstructed after World War II, explore the **Old Town Market Square** and view the **Presidential Palace**.

* **ACC CLOSING PROGRAM:** Offering a window into the revitalization of Jewish life in Poland, we join for our **closing ceremony and concert sing-along** with the voices of the ACC, the local Jewish community and the JCC's choir.

Overnight in Warsaw

Day 12: Wednesday, October 25, 2023: DEPARTURE

- Breakfast and check out of our hotels.
- We transfer to the airport for our flight home, landing later today. Transfers will be provided for all departures on this day to the airport (transfer times TBD based on flight list).

The Memories Last Forever!

Itinerary subject to change



About



AMERICAN CONFERENCE of CANTORS
Sacred music. Spiritual leadership. Jewish life.

ABOUT THE AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF CANTORS (ACC):

The ACC, through its support for and cultivation of excellence among cantors, strengthens Reform Jewish life in North America. ACC cantors are equipped to be attentive to the joys and challenges that members within a congregation face over the course of their lives, using both their unique calling to music and prayer and their shared responsibilities for offering spiritual leadership to congregations. ACC members also can help lead their congregations and by extension, the Reform Jewish movement in North America, to a bright future.

The ACC maintains rigorous standards for ordination/certification, offers deep support for the professional needs of cantors, advocates with passion for the evolving role of the cantorial vocation and cultivates ever-increasing professional excellence among its members.

ABOUT THE JCC KRAKOW:

The Jewish Community Centre of Krakow was opened in April 2008 by HRH The Prince of Wales and now serves as the focal point for the resurgence of Jewish life in Krakow, which has dramatically increased since Poland's transition to a democracy in 1989. JCC Krakow works to change both the world's perception of Poland and Poland's perception of Jews. The JCC provides social, educational and community-oriented services to the Jewish community of Krakow, offers programming open to the entire Krakow community to foster Polish-Jewish relations and acts as a visitor center for hundreds of thousands of tourists, many of them Jewish, who pass through Krakow.



ABOUT THE JCC WARSAW:

Jewish Community Center JCC Warszawa is a people-oriented initiative serving as an environment for Jews, people of Jewish descent and their non-Jewish spouses and friends, fostering exploration of Jewish and universal values leading to building their personal Jewish narratives. The JCC offers a safe space for everyone to become and feel a part of the Jewish community in the atmosphere of openness, pluralism and mutual respect. It encourages people to experience and produce modern Jewish culture and provides experiential Jewish education at the highest level.

“The history of mankind is the instant between two strides taken by a traveler.”

– Franz Kafka, renown Czech Jewish author –

