



## **8-Day, 7-Night Macedonian Jewish Heritage Tour** **With an Optional Northern Greece Jewish History Tour Extension** **With Macedonian Jewish Community Experts Sarah Aroeste and Josh Bloom**

**July 26 - August 2, 2022**

### **Itinerary:**

#### **Day 1, Tuesday, July 26, 2022: Arrival**

- Arrive into Skopje. Meet and greet and transfer to the hotel.
- Welcome orientation.
- Group welcome dinner at Dukat with invited Macedonian guests.

*Accommodation: Marriott, Skopje (Dinner included)*

#### **Day 2, Wednesday, July 27, 2022: Skopje History**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Spend the morning wandering through Čaršija, Skopje's Ottoman Old Town. See the Mustafa Pasha's Mosque, the Cifte Amam former Turkish bathhouse, the large Bit Pazar market for vegetable and other goods, and the 14th century Sveti Spas Church which has magnificently carved 19th century iconostasis shines.
- Have lunch at Pivnica An, a traditional Macedonian restaurant in an old Ottoman inn.
- Explore the Museum of Macedonian Struggle, and learn about the trials and tribulations of the people of Macedonia as they fought for the unification and creation of an independent Macedonian state.
- Then cross the Stone Bridge over the Vadar River to Pela Square. This area was the center of a recent architectural transformation of the capital, completed with several national monuments.
- Stroll down Macedonia Street to see a memorial to Mother Teresa who was born in Skopje in 1910. Visit Mother Theresa Memorial Museum.
- End the day by meeting, Ambassador Byrnes, of the U.S. Embassy in Skopje.

*Accommodation: Marriott, Skopje (Breakfast and Lunch included)*

#### **Day 3, Thursday, July 28, 2022: Jewish Skopje**

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Visit the Monopol Tobacco (today Imperial Tobacco) factory that served as a transit camp in the deportation of the Jews of Bulgarian occupied-Macedonia during World War II, on their way to Treblinka extermination camp. Approximately 7,000 Jews were held there.
- Explore Skopje's new multi-million dollar Holocaust Memorial Center with the Center's CEO Goran Sadikarijo. The museum highlights Jewish life in Macedonia before World War II and the fate of the 98% of the country's Jewish community who were killed in the Holocaust.
- Learn about an inter-religious Holocaust education project, founded by an ethnic Albanian.



# MEJDI TOURS

- Visit the Jewish Community Center, meet members of the community, and enjoy a cooking workshop at the Jewish Community Center and create local Macedonian fare.
- In the evening, be VIP guests of renowned Ladino singer/songwriter, Sarah Aroeste, for a spectacular concert in Skopje.

*Accommodation: Marriott, Skopje (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)*

## **Day 4, Friday, July 29, 2022: Ancient Macedonia (Stobi and Heraclea Lystestis) and Shabbat in Monastir/Bitola**

- Check out of the hotel after breakfast.
- Head southeast to the ancient city of Stobi. Once the biggest Roman city in the Balkans, the archaeological site contains traces from the Paeonians, Hellenic, Roman, and early Christian periods. The remains of two synagogues, built one above the other, was found at this site with the top one dating back to 3rd -4th century CE and the older synagogue dating back to the 2nd century CE.
- Continue to the Stobi Winery for a tour with an expert wine guide. Enjoy lunch and a wine tasting.
- Continue on to Bitola, known as Monastir during Ottoman rule.
- Visit Heraclea Lyncestis, the best-preserved city from the Ancient Macedonian Empire, renowned for its elaborate mosaics, ancient theater and Roman baths. Heraclea was founded by Philip II of Macedon in the 4th century BCE and was a strategically important town during the Hellenistic period.
- Have a Shabbat dinner in Monastir/Bitola with Macedonian friends of the Jewish community.

*Accommodation: Hotel Tref, Bitola (Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner included)*

## **Day 5, Saturday, July 30, 2022: Walking Tour of Jewish Monastir/Bitola (Shabbat Observant Friendly: No bus)**

- Take a walking tour of the Jewish history of Monastir/Bitola tour with Zoran Gjorgiev, including the Jewish homes of relatives of some of our travelers (including the home of Sarah Aroeste's family), HaShomer Hatzair Building, Talmud Torah Building, column of the destroyed synagogue, buildings with Jewish signs still on them.
- Visit the Monument of the Deported Jews and the Estrea Ovadija Mara Monument at the Dr. Haim Abravanel Health Center.
- Have a group lunch.
- In the afternoon, have the option to visit the NI Institute and Museum Bitola, see its photo gallery with a collection of images titled "Jewish Ethnic Identity Bitola." In the archaeological wing, find an exhibit from one of Bitola's synagogues, including parts of a Torah scroll dating to the 15th century as well as other religious articles. The museum also exhibits a partial list of the city's deported Jews, and photographs of partisans, including Jewish partisan leaders Estreja Ovadija and Josef Mordo Nachmijas.
- Have dinner on your own along the Sirok Sokak pedestrian thoroughfare.

*Accommodation: Hotel Tref, Bitola (Breakfast and Lunch included)*



## **Day 6, Sunday, July 31, 2022: Monastir/Bitola**

- Visit Bitola's Jewish Cemetery to learn more about the Jewish history of Monastir/Bitola, the communal ancestors buried there, and efforts to revitalize the site for its historic significance.
- Visit Bitola's city archives.
- Have free time for lunch on your own in downtown Bitola.
- Enjoy a free afternoon time to wander the city center or spend additional time doing genealogy research with Zoran. For those who are interested, you can join the guide for a visit to Pelister National Park.
- Have a group dinner.

*Accommodation: Hotel Tref, Bitola (Breakfast and Dinner included)*

## **Day 7, Monday, August 1, 2022: Ohrid**

- Check out of the hotel after breakfast and enjoy a scenic shoreline drive to the Sveti Naum Macedonian Orthodox Monastery along the waters of Lake Ohrid. See iconostasis from the 18<sup>th</sup> century and frescoes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Stroll through beautiful gardens with free roaming peacocks.
- Have lunch at Ostrovo Restaurant at the Sveti Naum complex. Take a boat ride alongside of the restaurant.
- In the afternoon, have time to relax on the Sveti Naum's beach.
- On the way to Ohrid, stop to visit the Bay of Bones Museum on Water in the village Peshtani, at the southeast coast of Lake Ohrid. Travel back in time in a reconstructed historical settlement, from Slavic to Roman times, all the way to Prehistory, at the end of Bronze Age and the beginning of Iron Age.
- Continue on to the town of Ohrid. Along the way, your guide will share the Jewish history of Ohrid that dates back to 1382.
- Check into the hotel and have time to begin exploring the city and have dinner on your own.

*Accommodation: Holiday City Palace, Ohrid (Breakfast and Lunch included)*

## **Day 8, Tuesday, August 2, 2022: Ohrid**

- Ohrid is known as the City of 365 Churches (one for each day of the year!). Spend the day visiting churches such as Saint Jovan Kaneo, Saint Sophia, Church of Our Lady Perivlepta, and Sveti Kliment Ohridski, as well as Tsar Samuel's Fortress, the Roman Amphitheater, the Robevci House Museum, National Workshop For Handmade Paper, and the Icons Gallery.
- Have lunch at Kaneo.
- End the day with a boat cruise on the lake.
- Have a final farewell group dinner.
- Group transfer available to Skopje airport for overnight flights out of Skopje. Anyone who is interested in extending their stay in Ohrid, can.

*(Breakfast and Lunch included)*