

# Amiel

Make it Memorable

## Jewish Heritage Tour in Italy: From Rome to Milan



# Lazio – Tuscany – Liguria – Piedmont – Lombardia

## Day 1: Arrival in Rome

## Day 2: Colosseum, Roman Forum, Arch of Titus

Starting a tour of Jewish heritage in Rome at the Roman Forum offers a chronological entry point into the story of Jewish life in the Eternal City. From this site of forced dispersion and trauma, we will trace the Jewish people's journey into Rome—some as captives and others as free citizens—marking the beginning of a community that would establish itself in the heart of the empire.

**\*\*Colosseum\*\*:** Rome's iconic monument, the Colosseum, hosted gladiatorial games, beast hunts, and executions to impress the public and showcase imperial power.

**\*\*Roman Forum\*\*:** A tour takes you back to ancient Rome's heart—the political, religious, and social core for over a thousand years.

**\*\*Arch of Titus\*\*:** A 1st-century triumphal arch honoring the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 70 CE. It depicts Roman soldiers carrying the Temple Menorah and sacred vessels from the destroyed Second Temple—a symbol of Jewish exile and loss.



## Day 2 Continued:

### The Jewish Ghetto, Portico of Octavia

The symbolic entrance to the Jewish Ghetto; remnants of a Roman temple repurposed in the Middle Ages.

- Great Synagogue of Rome (Tempio Maggiore)
- Including a visit to the Jewish Museum of Rome (Museo Ebraico di Roma)

Located in the Synagogue complex, it offers insights into 2,200 years of continuous Jewish presence.

### There are different visiting options, such as:

- Private meeting or Q&A with the Chief Rabbi of Rome (subject to availability)
- Meetings with other community leaders, educators, or Holocaust survivors
- Brief religious lecture or Torah discussion (optional, in English, Italian, or Hebrew)
- Kiddush or kosher light refreshments (can be arranged for groups)

## Overnight Rome



## Day 3: Campo de' Fiori, Trastevere, Vatican Museums & Sistine Chapel, St. Peter's Basilica

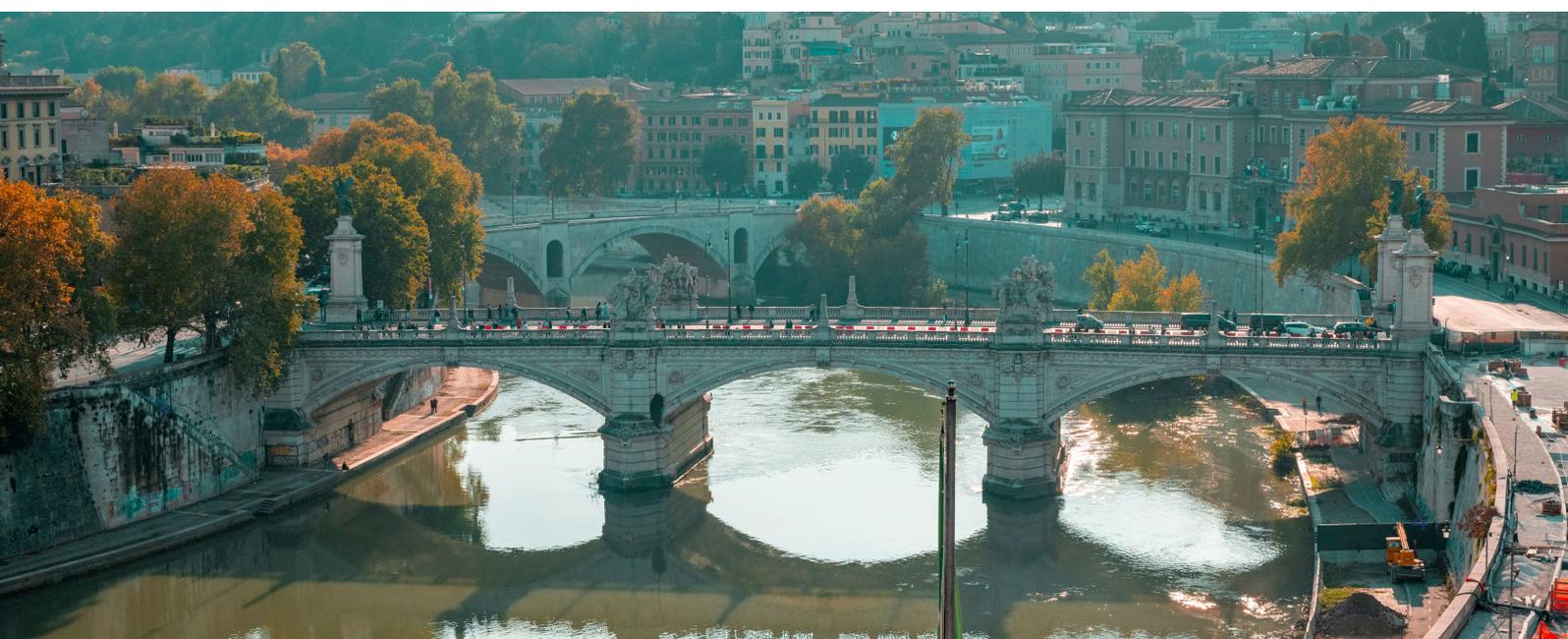
### A Journey through Conflict, Coexistence, and Culture

**Campo de' Fiori** is now a vibrant market square, but its history is marked by public executions and religious persecution.

- Ponte Cestio to Isola Tiberina - Historically linked to Jewish-Roman relations.
- Trastevere – Medieval Jewish Roots
- Church of Santa Maria in Trastevere - Medieval mosaics with scenes from the Hebrew Bible.

**The Vatican** - From Judaism to Christianity: The Birth of a New Religion in Rome

- **The Vatican Museums** showcase a premier collection of art and spirituality, from ancient Rome to Renaissance masterpieces, many of which are rooted in shared Jewish and Christian traditions.



## Day 3 Continued:

- The highlight is the **Sistine Chapel**, where Michelangelo's frescoes depict scenes from Genesis, including the Creation of Adam, and the powerful Last Judgment.
- The visit continues to **St. Peter's Basilica**, the heart of the Catholic world, home to Michelangelo's Pietà, Bernini's baldachin, and an iconic dome overlooking Rome.

These sites reveal not only the grandeur of Christian art and faith, but also centuries of dialogue—sometimes tension, sometimes inspiration—between Jewish roots and Christian expression.

## Overnight in Rome

### Day 4: Catacombs, WWII Memorials

- **Catacombs of Vigna Randanini (Jewish Catacombs)**

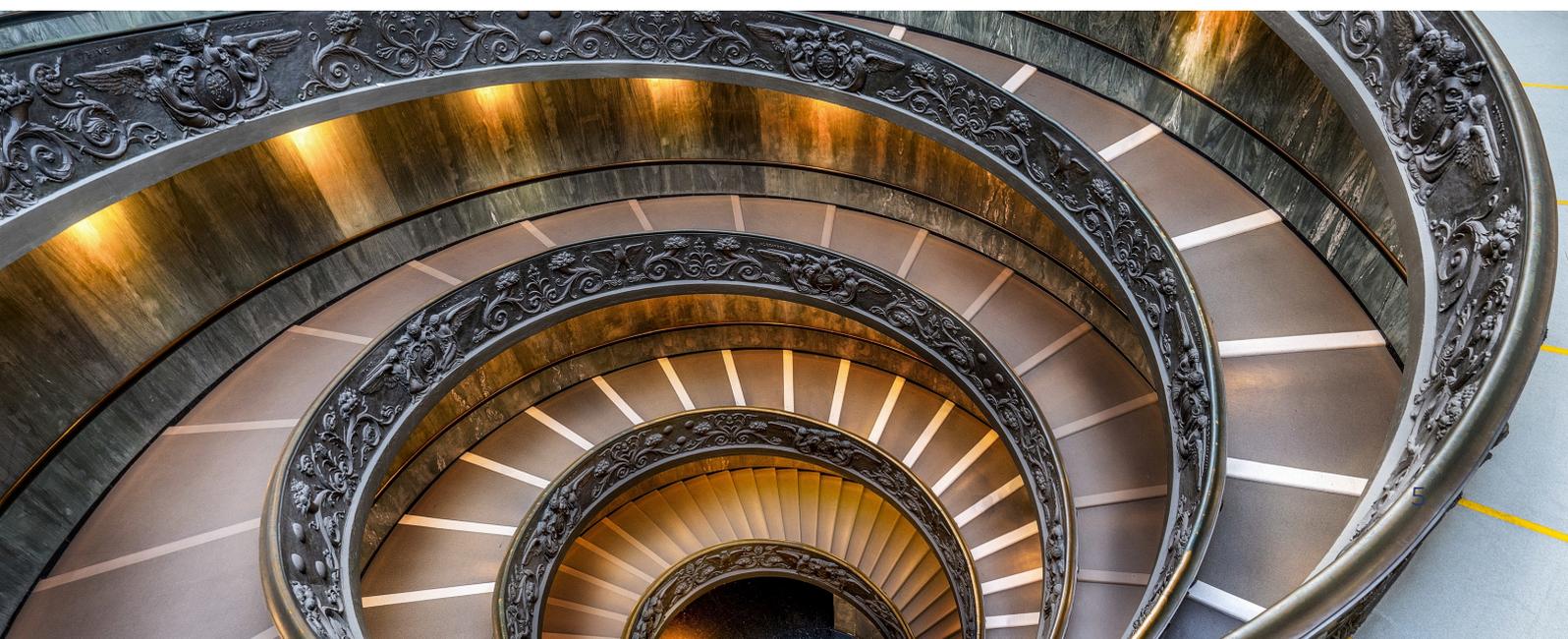
One of the few Jewish burial sites from the 2nd to 4th century CE.

#### Options:

Visit the Museum of the Liberation of Rome to learn about Jewish deportations and WWII resistance.

Explore other Roman sites, such as the Pantheon and Piazza Navona.

## Overnight Rome



## Day 5 - Tuscany

**Leaving Rome and driving North to Tuscany, stopping in Pitigliano, Siena, Livorno** (Possible to add another stop in one of the Chianti towns along the way and visit a winery)

### **Pitigliano – Little Jerusalem**

Perched on a volcanic tufa cliff in southern Tuscany, Pitigliano is a hilltown offering stunning scenery and a glimpse into centuries of Jewish life in rural Italy. Nicknamed "La Piccola Gerusalemme" (Little Jerusalem), it reflects the town's once-flourishing Jewish community and its close ties with local Christians.

**Historic Jewish Quarter** - The former Jewish ghetto in the old town features stone archways, hidden courtyards, and narrow passages that reflect a once-thriving Jewish life.

**Synagogue of Pitigliano** - Originally built in 1598 and restored in the 1990s, this modest synagogue holds significant historical value. Inside, you can see the original Torah ark niche, women's gallery, and a small exhibit on Jewish life in Pitigliano.

**Ritual Spaces Below** - Beneath the synagogue lies an underground complex that testifies to daily religious life:

### **Drive to Siena**



## **Day 5 Continued:**

Jews lived in Siena as early as the 14th century. Though subject to periodic restrictions and ghettoization (especially under the Medici and Papal influence), the community produced prominent rabbis, scholars, and merchants. The synagogue stands as one of the few surviving active synagogues in Tuscany today.

### **Siena Synagogue**

Tucked off Piazza del Campo, the Synagogue symbolizes a resilient Jewish community. Built in 1786 in the ghetto, its plain exterior shows restrictions then—but inside, an elegant neoclassical interior with marble, stucco, and gold details is revealed.

While exploring Siena's Jewish heritage, we will pass by:

- **Piazza del Campo -**
- **Palazzo Pubblico & Torre del Mangia**
- **Siena Cathedral (Duomo di Siena)**

**Drive to Livorna**

**Overnight: Livorna**



## Day 6: Livorno, Pisa, Florence

Livorno's Jewish history stands out among Italian cities. Thanks to the Livornina Laws by the Medici in the late 1500s, Livorno offered Jews (and minorities) religious freedom, tax breaks, and trade privileges. This made Livorno a Sephardic hub, where Jews escaping persecution from Spain, Portugal, North Africa, and the Ottoman Empire found refuge and opportunity.

- The Synagogue of Livorno (Tempio Maggiore)
- Benamozegh Library
- Memorial to the Deportees

### Drive to Pisa

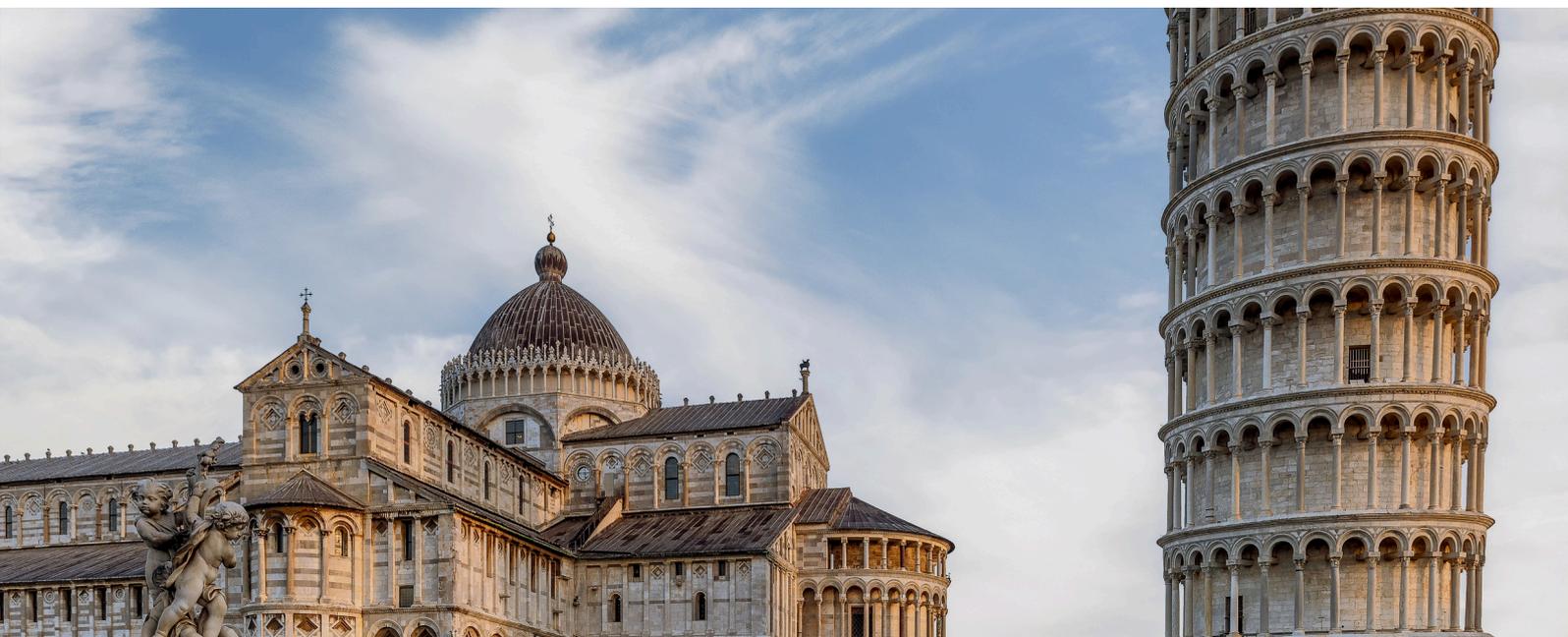
#### Begin the tour at Pisa's world-famous complex:

- Leaning Tower of Pisa (Torre Pendente)
- Cathedral (Duomo di Pisa)
- Baptistery and Camposanto (Sacred Field)

Jewish life in Pisa dates to at least the 12th century, with growth during the Medici period due to Pisa's commercial importance and openness.

- The Jewish Quarter is centered on Via Palestro, Via del Tempio, and Via San Martino.
- Synagogue of Pisa (Sinagoga di Pisa)

### Drive to Florence



## Day 7: Florence

The Jewish presence in Florence dates to the 13th century and grew under the Medici in the 15th and 16th centuries. In 1571, Cosimo I de' Medici created a ghetto, where Jews were confined but still engaged in printing and scholarship, especially in the 17th century. After Italy's unification, the ghetto was dismantled, and the community integrated into Florentine society while preserving its history and culture.

- Great Synagogue of Florence (Tempio Maggiore)
- Jewish Museum of Florence
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### **Piazza del Duomo & the Heart of Florence**

Walk through the city center, stopping at Florence's most iconic landmarks:

- Piazza del Duomo
- Florence Cathedral (Santa Maria del Fiore) with its magnificent Brunelleschi Dome
- Giotto's Bell Tower
- Baptistery of San Giovanni,
- Piazza della Signoria
- Stroll to Ponte Vecchio, the oldest bridge in Florence, once home to butchers, now lined with jewelers.

### **Overnight Florence**



## Day 8 - Florence Uffizi Gallery

One of the world's greatest art museums, featuring masterpieces by Botticelli, Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, and Caravaggio. Look for Old Testament themes in paintings (e.g., Judith, Esther, David, Moses)—a bridge between Jewish heritage and Renaissance Christian art.

Basilica di Santa Croce

- Burial site of Michelangelo, Galileo, and Machiavelli, with frescoes by Giotto and monuments celebrating Italian genius. Jewish connection: The nearby Scuole Ebraiche were once active; also a reminder of Florence's open intellectual climate.
- Walk along the Arno River
- **Optional:** other museums in Florence, such as: Galleria dell'Accademia, Museo Nazionale del Bargello and more.
- Visit Mercato Centrale or take a cooking class.

## Overnight Florence



## Day 9 – Liguria

### Drive from Florence to Genoa, stopping in Lucca (still in Tuscany)

**Lucca**, a charming Tuscan town known for its intact Renaissance walls, medieval towers, Romanesque churches, and elegant piazzas.

- Porta San Pietro (City Gate)
- Piazza San Michele & Church of San Michele in Foro
- Torre Guinigi
- Piazza dell'Anfiteatro

### Drive to Liguria, stopping in La Spezia

**La Spezia** is centered on its Jewish heritage and its pivotal role in post-WWII Aliyah Bet (illegal immigration to Israel). While La Spezia is not known for medieval Jewish sites, it is crucial in the modern story of the Jewish people — particularly in the aftermath of the Holocaust.

Molo Italia hosts the monument to "La Spezia – Porta di Sion," in the historic port overlooking the Gulf of Poets. In 1946, it was a secret departure point for Holocaust survivors heading to Eretz Israel on Mossad LeAliyah Bet ships, cementing La Spezia's identity as "The Port of Zion."

**Walk Through the Historic Center – Piazza Garibaldi to Piazza Beverini**  
**Drive to Genoa**  
**Overnight: Genoa**



## Day 10 - GENOA - Drive to Piedmont

### **Piazza De Ferrari** – The Civic Heart

The grand Piazza De Ferrari, the city's main square, surrounded by 19th-century elegance and public buildings, including:

- Palazzo Ducale – former seat of the Doges, now an exhibition space
- Teatro Carlo Felice – Genoa's historic opera house.

### Walk Along **Via Garibaldi** – The “Strada Nuova” of Palaces

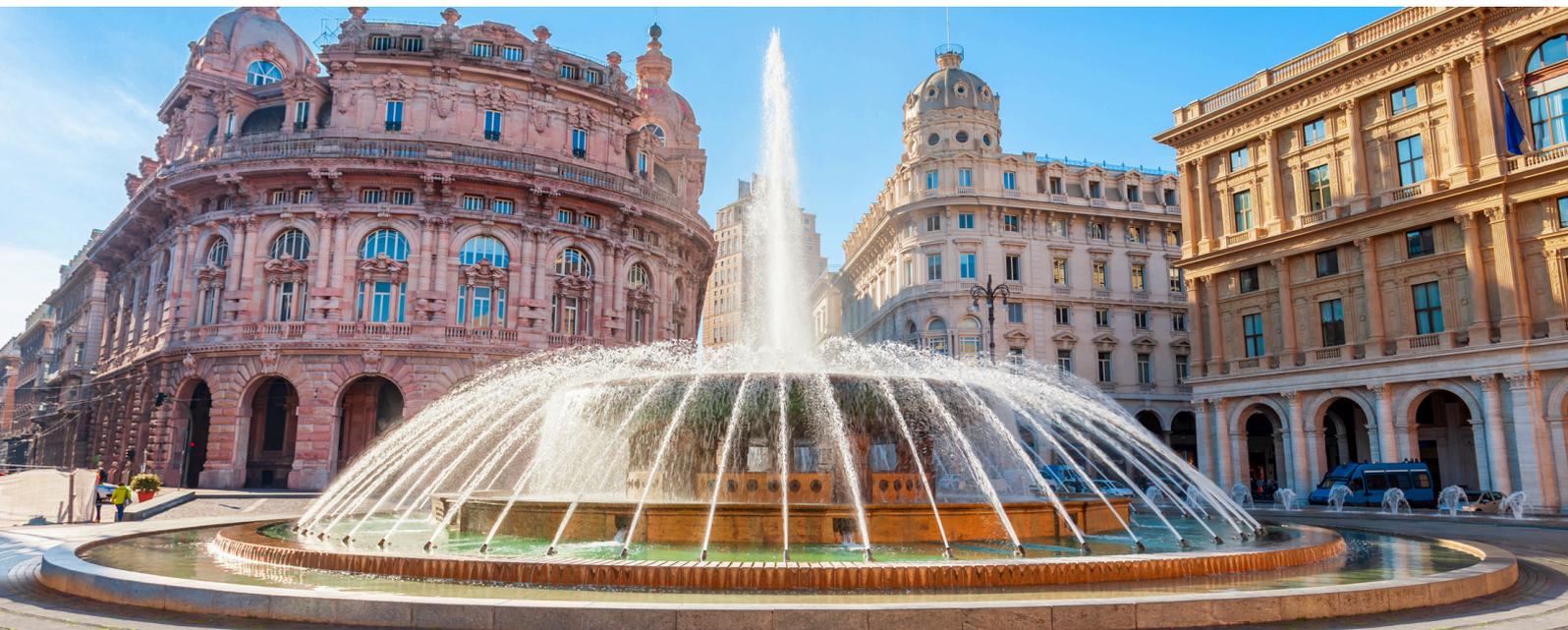
- Palazzo Rosso, Palazzo Bianco
- Palazzo Tursi

### Stroll Through the **Caruggi** – Genoa's Medieval Alleys

- Cathedral of San Lorenzo – Black-and-white striped Romanesque-Gothic church.
- Porto Antico – The Revitalized Old Port

### **Jewish Heritage Note:**

Genoa's small but historical Jewish presence, particularly in the port's post-WWII story. Genoa was an important departure point for ships carrying Holocaust survivors to Israel in the 1940s, alongside La Spezia.



## Drive to Turin, Piedmont, stopping in Cuneo

**Cuneo** played a vital role during World War II, particularly in the Italian Resistance and in protecting Jews as a key escape route over the Alps. Although not a major battlefield city, its geography and spirit of resistance made it essential for Jews in hiding and seeking refuge.

**Cuneo Synagogue** (requires advance access via the Jewish Community of Turin).

**Shoah Memorial** commemorating deportations from the area.

## Drive to Turin

### Overnight: Turin

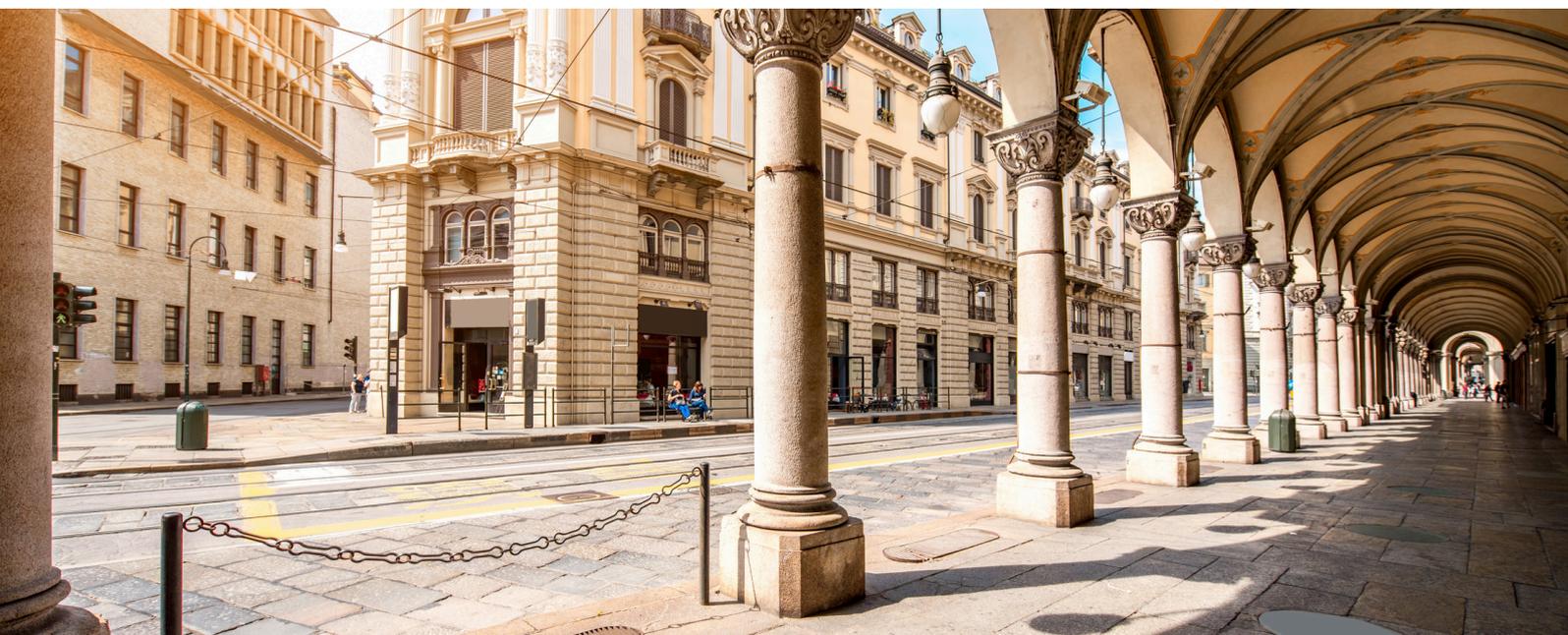
## Day 11 - Turin

Turin, the elegant capital of Piedmont, plays an important role in the history of Italian Jewry. While not as old as the Jewish communities in Rome or southern Italy, Turin's Jewish presence has been integral to the city's evolution from a royal capital to a modern European center.

## Piazza Carlo Alberto & Via Maria Vittoria

**Former Jewish ghetto streets** (established in 1679, abolished in 1848).

- See typical ghetto-era buildings (taller than average with interior courtyards and small balconies).
- Note the discreet locations of original synagogues, prayer rooms, and kosher butcher shops.



## Day 11 Continued

### Synagogue of Turin & Jewish Museum

Originally designed by Alessandro Antonelli as a monumental temple, delays and damage led to the construction of a smaller synagogue in 1884, now part of a modern community complex.

- **The active synagogue** (orthodox, Italian rite)
- **Museo Ebraico di Torino:** highlights Jewish life in Piedmont, emancipation, religious objects, and the Shoah.
- **Shoah Memorial** in the square honors the Jews deported from Turin.

### Walking Tour in Turin

#### Porta Nuova Station (Stazione Centrale) WWII Deportations and Memory

- Platform 17 (binario) at Porta Nuova station – wartime deportation site.
- Piazza San Carlo is a Baroque square with the churches of San Carlo Borromeo and Santa Cristina, and home to elegant cafés and bookshops.
- Piazza Castello & Palazzo Reale (Royal Palace)
- Palazzo Madama
- Real Chiesa di San Lorenzo

### Overnight Turin



## Day 12

### Casale Monferrato

Casale Monferrato, has a rich Jewish history and heritage, despite its current small Jewish population. The town was once home to a thriving Jewish community, with a synagogue that is now a national monument and a museum complex that preserves Jewish art and history.

### Baroque Synagogue (1595)

- Museum & ceremonial silver collection
- Jewish quarter still visible in town plan

### Vercelli

Vercelli's Jewish community dates back to the 15th century and flourished especially after emancipation in 1848, when Jews became active in the city's civic and cultural life.

- Synagogue (1878)

### Back in Turin

### Mole Antonelliana & National Cinema Museum

Originally conceived by Antonelli (1863) as Turin's synagogue, the project became too ambitious and costly. The building was repurposed as a monument to national unity and now houses the Museo Nazionale del Cinema.

- Symbol of the city and the tallest brick building in Europe.
- The elevator to the top offers panoramic views of Turin.
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### Overnight Turin



## Day 13 - Turin

The last day can be dedicated to additional visits in the Turin area and its surroundings, such as the Venaria Palace or the viewpoint from the Basilica of Superga, which are not necessarily related to Jewish heritage.

It is also possible to travel to Milan, add a city tour, and continue to Malpensa Airport from there. It's worth noting that Turin also has its own airport.



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