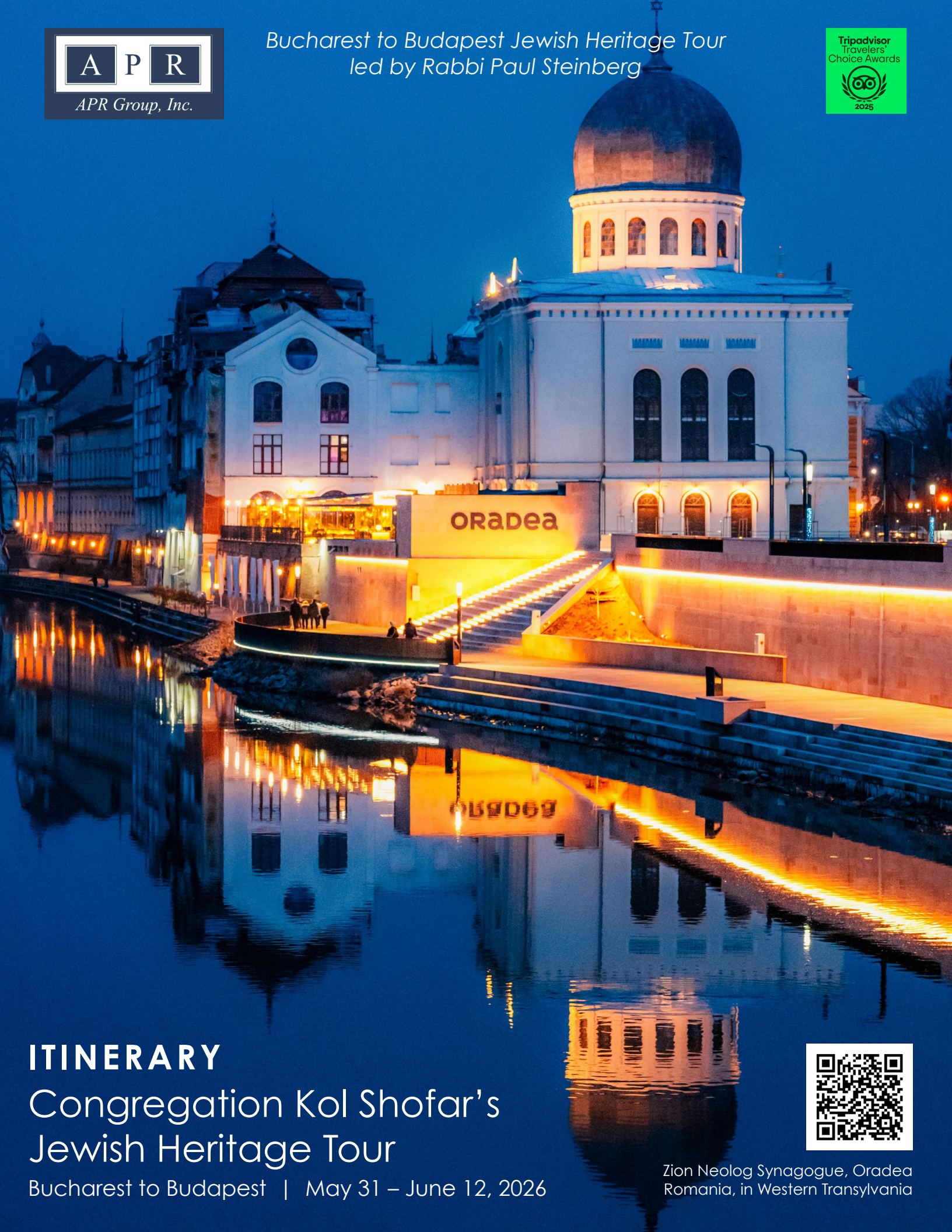




APR Group, Inc.

Bucharest to Budapest Jewish Heritage Tour
led by Rabbi Paul Steinberg

Tripadvisor
Travelers' Choice Awards



ORADEA

ITINERARY

Congregation Kol Shofar's Jewish Heritage Tour

Bucharest to Budapest | May 31 – June 12, 2026



Zion Neolog Synagogue, Oradea
Romania, in Western Transylvania



Brasov cityscape in Romania

Introduction: Kol Shofar’s Inaugural Jewish Heritage Tour

Romania is quickly emerging as one of Europe’s most exciting travel destinations. You are among the “early birds” to experience its beauty—rolling landscapes, the majestic Carpathian Mountains, authentic folklore, rich culinary traditions, world-class wines, and a wealth of both Jewish and secular historical sites.

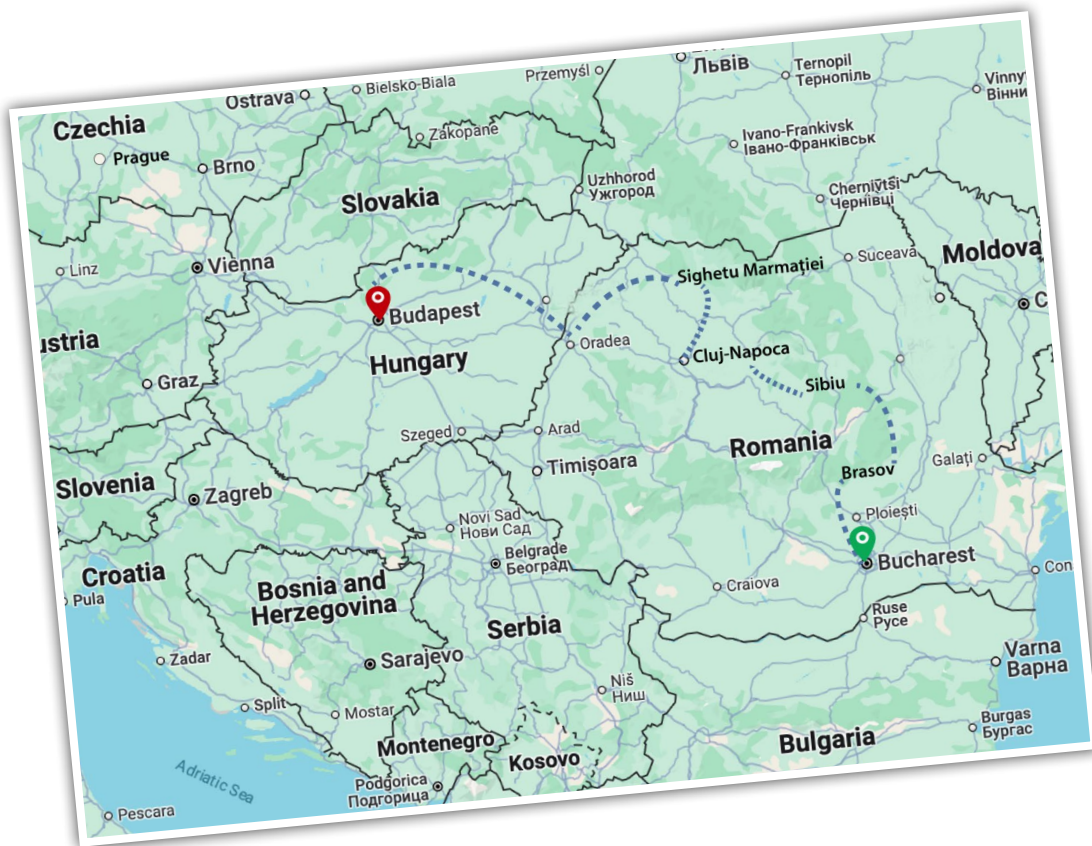
Romania for centuries was divided among powerful dynasties: the Ottoman Empire in the south and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in the north, especially in Transylvania. Their lasting influence can still be felt today in Romanian architecture, cuisine, language, and folklore. Modern Romania came into being in December 1918 at the close of World War I.

Our journey will highlight the northern Transylvanian region, once home to a vibrant Ashkenazi Jewish population before World War II, as well as the capital city of Bucharest, affectionately known as the “Paris of the East.”

Budapest is the captivating capital of Hungary where Jews live in safety and relative comfort. The city offers a unique blend of historic architecture, famous thermal baths, lively culture, and delicious food. The Dohany Street Synagogue is Europe’s largest and houses a vital Holocaust Memorial, a Jewish Museum and features a pipe organ (a nod to Hungary’s unique Neolog “brand” of Judaism), and a cemetery within its grounds. The city’s “duality” connects the ancient, hilly side of Buda with the bustling, grand boulevards of Pest, creating a complex destination we’re eager to explore.

This promises to be a journey filled with history, discovery, and memories. Bring your camera or phone; you’ll want to capture every outstanding moment.

Bon Voyage—A Journey to Remember



Cities on this Journey

Bucharest

Bucharest is the capital and largest city of Romania. The metropolis stands on the River Dâmbovița in south-eastern Romania. Its population is officially estimated at 1.76 million residents within a greater metropolitan area of 2.3 million residents, which makes Bucharest the 8th most-populous city in the European Union. Bucharest is a major cultural, political and economic hub, the country's seat of government, and the capital of the Muntenia region.

Brasov

Brașov is a city in the Transylvania region of Romania, ringed by the Carpathian Mountains. It's known for its medieval Saxon walls and bastions, the towering Gothic-style Black Church and lively cafes. Piața Sfatului (Council Square) in the cobbled old town is surrounded by colorful baroque buildings and is home to the Casa Sfatului, a former town hall turned local history museum.

Sibiu

Sibiu is a city in central Romania, situated in the historical region of Transylvania. Located some 275 km (171 mi) north-west of Bucharest, the city straddles the Cibin River, a tributary of the Olt River. Now the seat of Sibiu County, between 1692 and 1791 and 1849–65 Sibiu was the capital of the Principality of Transylvania. Until 1876, the Hecht house in Sibiu served as the seat of the Transylvanian Saxon University. Nicknamed "The Town with Eyes" for the eyebrow dormers on many old buildings, the town is a popular tourist destination. It is known for its culture, history, cuisine, and architecture.

Cluj-Napoca

Cluj-Napoca, a city in northwestern Romania, is the unofficial capital of the Transylvania region. It's home to universities, vibrant nightlife and landmarks dating to Saxon and Hungarian rule. Surrounding its central square, Piața Unirii, is the Gothic-style St. Michael's Church and the dramatic



The Brasov Synagogue in Romania

Matthias Corvinus Statue of the 15th-century king. The baroque-era Bánffy Palace is now a museum showcasing Romanian art.

Sighetu Marmăției

Sighetu Marmăției, until 1960 known only as Sighet, is a city in Maramureș County near the Iza River, in northwestern Romania. The municipality's name derives from a Hungarian term which means "island in Máramaros". It is well known as the birthplace of Elie Wiesel (1928-2016) noted Holocaust survivor and author of *Night*.

Oradea

Oradea is a city in the Crișana region of Romania. It serves as the administrative centre of Bihor County and is regarded as an economic, social, and cultural hub in northwestern Romania. The city is situated on both banks of the Crișul Repede River, which stretches to both sides of the Crișana plain,

between the hills. The city features notable Art Nouveau architecture and is a member of both the Réseau Art Nouveau Network and the Art Nouveau European Route.

Budapest

Budapest, Hungary's capital, is bisected by the River Danube. Its 19th-century Chain Bridge connects the hilly Buda district with flat Pest. A funicular runs up Castle Hill to Buda's Old Town, where the Budapest History Museum traces city life from Roman times onward. Trinity Square is home to 13th-century Matthias Church and the turrets of the Fishermen's Bastion, which offer sweeping views.



Museum of Jewish History in city of Bucharest, Romania

Daily Itinerary

DAY 0: SUNDAY, MAY 31, 2026 – FLY SFO TO BUCHAREST (FLIGHT OPTIONS T/B/A)

DAY 1: MONDAY, JUNE 1 – ARRIVAL IN BUCHAREST: ROMANIA'S CAPITAL MEALS: D

Meet your guide upon arrival and transfer to your hotel for check-in and rest.

Welcome Dinner and comprehensive trip overview for all group travelers, Q & A.

Overnight: Marmorosch Bucharest Autograph Collection

DAY 2: TUESDAY, JUNE 2 – BUCHAREST: JEWISH HERITAGE MEALS: B L D

Today, we will explore the capital Bucharest, well known as the “Paris of the East”. We will walk through the former Jewish quarter followed by general highlights of Romanian history.

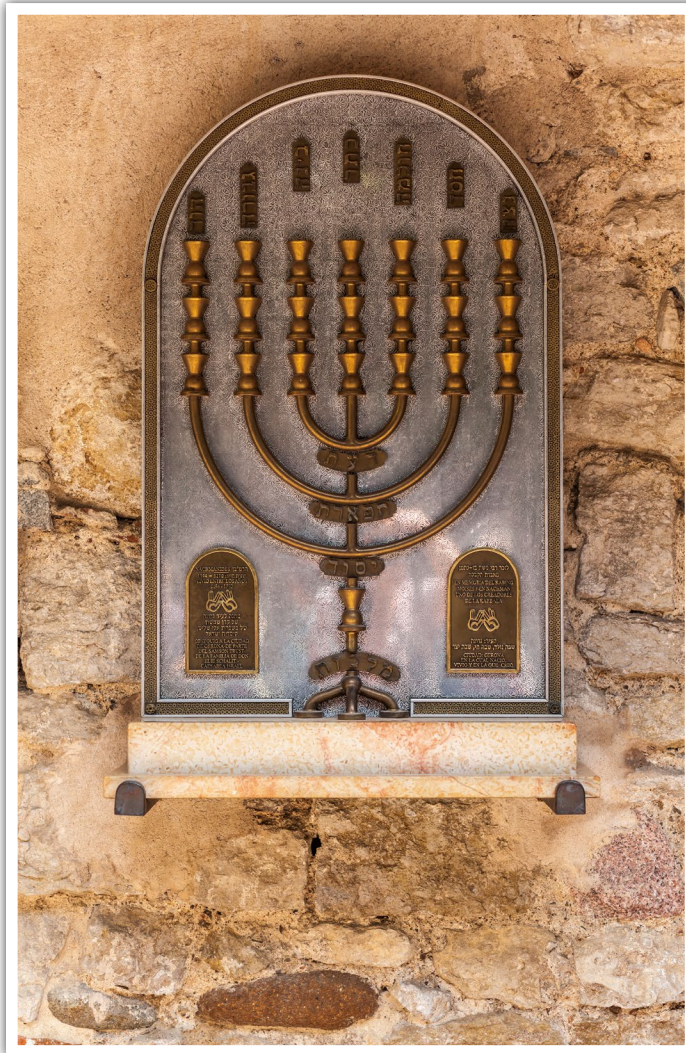
Bucharest Jewish Sites to visit:

- The Choral Temple/ Synagogue
- The Jewish Museum Bucharest
- The State Jewish Theater
- Sephardic Cemetery
- Jewish & National Holocaust Monument
- Walking through the Old Town

Enjoy a presentation on Jewish life in Romania led by members of Bucharest's Jewish community; Group lunch, Q&A session.

Additional attractions and sites in Bucharest (time permitting)

- **Arch of Triumph, Romanian Atheneum**, and the colossal **Parliament Palace**.
- Walk through **Palace Square** and **University Square**, significant to Romanian civic life.
- **The National Museum**
- **Cismigiu Gardens**
- **Little Paris Museum; Museum of Communism; Stavropoleos Monastery**
- **Café Capsa** on Bucharest's most famous and oldest street: Calei Victoriei



Overnight: Marmorosch Bucharest Autograph Collection

DAY 3: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3 – BUCHAREST TO BRASOV: THE CAPITAL TO THE MOUNTAINS & TRANSYLVANIA
MEALS: B D

We begin our journey travelling north through the **Carpathians** with a stop in **Sinaia** (1:50 drive time) to visit **Peles Castle**, commissioned by King Carol I in 1873 and completed in 1883, Peles castle served as the summer residence of Romania's royal family, until 1947.

Next, we will visit the legendary **Bran Castle**, (1:00 drive time) linked with the legend of Dracula.

Continue across scenic landscapes to **Brasov**, (:30 drive time drive time) a Saxon-influenced city in Transylvania. Brasov's Jewish Community today has about 75 families, a Kosher Kitchen and Kosher store.

Arrive at Brasov and stroll through its **medieval Old Town**, including a visit to the **Black Church**.

Overnight: Kronwell Hotel, Brasov

DAY 4: THURSDAY, JUNE 4 – BRASOV TO SIBIU
MEALS: B D

Before departing **Brasov** we will visit **Beth Israel Synagogue**, formerly a Neolog congregation which is now an Orthodox congregation. Transfer to Sibiu (2:10 drive time).

Founded in the 12th century by German settlers known as the Transylvanian Saxons, Sibiu features a distinctly Germanic character. The wealthy settlers built strong fortifications to protect the town, sections of which are seen today. Because Jews were not permitted to live within the city's fortified walls, the synagogue was constructed outside the original city limits.

As we explore Sibiu, we'll stroll along narrow cobblestone streets lined with charming houses and overflowing flower boxes, reflecting its medieval and Saxon heritage. Highlights include the Brukenthal Museum, the oldest museum in Romania, (1817) and many additional reminders of the city's cultural

vitality. Sibiu was named the **European Union Cultural Capital in 2007**.

Our Jewish cultural visit to **Sibiu** will focus on the **Great Synagogue**, rededicated in recent years and which today hosts numerous cultural events connected with the Jewish holidays. We'll have the opportunity to meet and talk with the Synagogue's president.

Overnight: Continental Forum Hotel, Sibiu

DAY 5: FRIDAY, JUNE 5 – SIBIU TO CLUJ-NAPOCA **MEALS: B D**

After breakfast we will transfer to **Cluj-Napoca**, (1:50 drive time).

Cluj-Napoca is the unofficial capital of the Transylvania region; it was ruled by the Austrian Hungarian Empire until 1918. During the months of September to May Cluj-Napoca triples to nearly 1 million inhabitants from a surge of students, including hundreds of Israelis attending its University, and especially the school's internationally renowned Medical School. The Jewish Community, though small, caters to legions of Jewish Students during the academic year together with the local CHABAD.

Some of the highlights of today's city tour:

- **Central Square**
- **Piața Unirii**
- **Memorial to the December 1989 Revolution**
- Gothic-style **St. Michael's Church**
- The dramatic **Matthias Corvinus Statue** of the 15th-century king.
- **Banffy Palace**, now an esteemed art museum.
- **MUZEON** (Museum) and its innovative storytelling exhibit of Jewish history
- **Holocaust Memorial** and **Tranzit House** (a former Jewish Synagogue- currently being refurbished) on the shores of the **Somes River**.

This evening, we will gather to welcome Shabbat at **Temple of the Deportees**, the recently refurbished **Neologa Synagogue**. We'll celebrate Kabbalat Shabbat with the Cluj-Napoca Jewish community, and partake of a festive dinner together with community members.

Overnight: Marriott Courtyard, Cluj-Napoca

DAY 6: SATURDAY, JUNE 6 – CLUJ-NAPOCA: SHABBAT REFLECTIONS **MEALS: B**

Enjoy a relaxed Shabbat morning, with an option to attend Shabbat Services at **Temple of the Deportees**

Afternoon options include cultural walks, quiet time in nearby nature, and/or a visit to **The Botanical Garden** (tickets are available to purchase before Shabbat).

Gather for **Shabbat Reflections** led by Rabbi Steinberg.

Dinner on your own

Overnight: Marriott Courtyard, Cluj-Napoca



Holocaust Memorial by artist Peter Hans Jacobi.

DAY 7: SUNDAY, JUNE 7 – CLUJ-NAPOCA TO SIGHET MARMATIEI

MEALS: B D

After breakfast we will travel to Sighetu Marmatiei (3:15 drive time), birthplace of **Nobel Laureate Elie Wiesel**.

Today's city tour will include visits to:

- Elie Wiesel's childhood home, now a memorial museum for the **Maramures County Jews**.
- **Holocaust Monument**
- **Wijnitzer Klaus Synagogue**, and the **Old Jewish Cemetery**. At the cemetery visit two special "OHALIM," tombstones of the **Great Sate Mare (Teitelbaum) Dynasty**
- **Sighet Train Station** where 12, 500 Jews were deported from Sighet

Before dinner, walk the shores of the **Iza River** where every Thursday Jewish Community members traditionally would wash their clothes in preparation for Shabbat.

Overnight: Hotel Gradina Morii, Sighet Marmatiei

DAY 8: MONDAY, JUNE 8 – SIGHET MARMATIEI - ORADEA MEALS: B D

Today we will continue our tour of our Romanian guide Peninah Zilberman's hometown with planned visits to the following sites:

- **Bersana** – a women's monastery on a 1400m (4600') hill offering gorgeous views
- **Sepenta** – The "Happy Cemetery"
- **Kahana Court**
- The area where **PALINCA** is manufactured– the highly-regarded, very strong double- or triple-distilled fruit brandy made mostly from plums.
- Wood carvers and women carpet weaver artists
- Local Market

Transfer to **Oradea** (3:35 drive time)

Overnight: Double Tree by Hilton, Oradea

DAY 9: TUESDAY, JUNE 9 – ORADEA MEALS: B L

Oradea, a beautiful city on the banks of the **Crișul Repede River**, is home to three restored and operating synagogues. The community is often referred to as **"The City of the Romanian Anne Frank"** in honor of **Eva Heyman**, whose diary recounts her experiences during the Holocaust. We will pay tribute to her at the memorial site dedicated to her memory.

Today we will share a special Kosher lunch with members of the local Jewish community and hear their personal stories of resilience and renewal.

After lunch we will visit the **Jewish Museum** established in 2018 and the **Zion Synagogue** which also serves today as a vibrant venue for concerts and exhibitions throughout the year. We will also see the **Great Synagogue** and walk along the former **"Jewish Street,"** once the heart of the community. Beyond its Jewish heritage, Oradea is celebrated for its remarkable **Art Nouveau** architecture. We admire landmarks such as the city's National Theatre and its elegant walking promenade lined with former Jewish residences.



Romania, Bucharest, Choral Temple.

The highlight of the day is planned to be our visit to the **Darvas–La Roche House**, where the family's granddaughter will join us to share her family's Jewish history and personal reflections.

Dinner on your own.

Overnight: Double Tree by Hilton, Oradea

DAY 10: WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10 – ORADEA TO BUDAPEST: ACROSS BORDERS MEALS: B D

This morning, we will transfer to **Budapest** (3:20 drive time) one of Europe's most architecturally magnificent and historically rich European capital cities. Budapest's grand **Dohany Street Synagogue** is Europe's largest. Our lodging will be the lovely **Continental Hotel** in the Jewish Quarter where we can walk everywhere.

Our expert Budapest Guide is **Mr. Karesz Vador** with 20+ years of experience as a Jewish genealogist, lecturer and renown Jewish Heritage Guide of Hungary, predominantly Budapest.

The experiences during our 1 ½ days in Budapest, starting with today's half-day walking through the Jewish Quarter from our hotel, will include these among many others:

Intro to Hungarian and Budapest Jewish history & Jewish Quarter Walking Tour:

The Ghetto Memorial; Dohany Street Synagogue complex (the Shul, Heroes' Temple, Raoul Wallenberg Park with the Tree of Life, etc.) - Carl Lutz memorial – and Rumbach synagogue. (Note: time-permitting today or tomorrow, we'll visit or view **Theodore Herzl's** birthplace; the **Weeping Willow Memorial** and more).

Overnight: Continental Hotel, Budapest



DAY 11: THURSDAY, JUNE 11 BUDAPEST: GRANDEUR AND REMEMBRANCE

MEALS: B D

Morning Program: Walking Tour

The Medieval Jewish history of Buda: Visit to the **Medieval Synagogue**, its Beit Ha Midrash and the site of the former Great Synagogue; a short walk to the nearby Fisherman's Bastion (great lookout/photo option). We view the former villa of one of the most important Hungarian Jewish tycoons. Karesz will recount the history of the family and its connections to Hungarian art, literature and more.

Afternoon Program: Bus Tour with stops:

Liberty Square; The Living Memorial (including the "Counter-Memorial" to Shoa victims); The highlights of Liberty Square relating to Jewish history); passing the Liberation Memorial and US Embassy

The Glass House: Zionist resistance and the most prominent of righteous Gentiles, Carl Lutz

The Danube Bank: The Shoes Memorial

Exploring the scenic Buda side boasting of **panoramic views over the Danube.**

1 Hour Scenic Boat Ride on the Danube

Dinner and farewell celebration at restaurant

Overnight: Continental Hotel, Budapest

DAY 12: FRIDAY, JUNE 12 – BUDAPEST – SFO (DEPARTURE)

MEALS: B

After breakfast, bid farewell to Karesz and our wonderful Romanian tour guide Peninah!

Airport transfer for Flight **Budapest – SFO** (ETA SFO mid-late afternoon same day 6/12/26)

Inclusions, Exclusions are listed in the Informational Brochure.

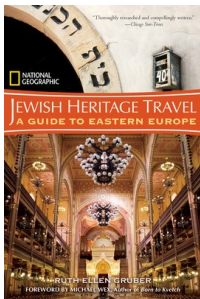
Our Tour Guide



Kol Shofar's tour of Romania is guided by Ms. Peninah Zilberman, founder and CEO of Romania's Tarbut Foundation ([https:// www.ftsighet.com](https://www.ftsighet.com)). Tarbut is headquartered in her parents' home town of Sighet-Marmatiei ("Sighet") in Transylvania in the north of Romania. Sighet is the birthplace of Nobel Prize Laureate Elie Wiesel, whose book **Night** recounts Elie's childhood in Sighet and his memories during the Holocaust. **Night** was on the New York Times best seller list for 80 weeks. Peninah's parents are Holocaust survivors who met on a refugee boat sailing from Marseilles to Israel in 1948. Peninah was born in Israel and eventually moved to Toronto, Canada where she raised her family. She served the Toronto Jewish Community for decades as a Jewish educator for the Conservative movement, and as Director of the Toronto Holocaust Museum while working as an educator for Adath Israel, Toronto's largest Hebrew congregation of over 1400 families. Peninah returned to her roots in Sighet and founded Tarbut there in 2014.

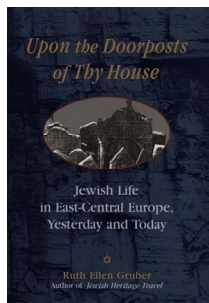
Peninah has dedicated her current career to "never again." She is committed to spreading Holocaust awareness by teaching Romanian and European Jewish history to help prevent a future Holocaust. She implements programs for teachers each year to educate thousands of high school students across Romania in Jewish studies and Holocaust history. Peninah is a citizen of the world. Each year she travels to visit Jewish heritage sites across Europe and North America to augment her effectiveness as a teacher and Foundation leader. We are so grateful Peninah is available to help guide and educate congregants during our Tour alongside our own Rabbi Paul.

Recommended Reading



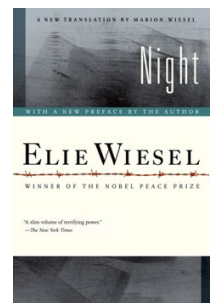
Jewish Heritage Travel: A Guide to East-Central Europe

Gruber, Ellen: (1994) Wiley Books (pps. 143-223 Hungary & Romania)



Upon the Doorposts of Thy House: Jewish Life in East-Central Europe, Yesterday and Today

Gruber, Ellen: John Wiley & Sons, 1994



Night Wiesel, Elie. Bantam Books, 1960

Tour organizer APR GROUP, INC. offers private customized pre- and post-trip visits to Prague, Vienna and elsewhere in Europe. For more information, contact APR at (415) 686-9672 or email moroccotravelgroup@gmail.com

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Bran Castle, the famous Dracula's castle in Transylvania, Romania at sunset