

# Jewish heritage travel essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

## Dissertation

### Chapter One - Introduction

### Chapter Two - What is Judaic heritage travel?

### Chapter Three - Travel composing in Eastern Europe

### Chapter Four - Eastern Europe's response to Judaic heritage travel

### Chapter Five - Decision

Travel has been an of import portion of Judaic life since ancient times. Hebrews would do pilgrim's journeys to the Temple in Ancient Jerusalem ; following the devastation of the Second Temple, sing Jerusalem or populating out 1s last twenty-four hours there remained an of import aspiration of pious Jews and in the Diaspora other locales such as the Gravess of Hasidic rebeyim or of the zaddikim among Maroc Hebrews have been finishes of devotional travel before Eastern Europe has been accessible. [ 1 ] In modern times, travel remains an of import portion of Judaic life. In peculiar, since the autumn of communism and the entree to the former Eastern axis states that has been available since the early 1990s, Eastern Europe has become a popular finish. With a long history of Jewish community, its links to the Holocaust and the effects of communism on society to detect, Eastern Europe has rapidly become a premier location for Judaic heritage travel. This thesis examines Judaic heritage travel in Eastern Europe, why people undertake trips based on Judaic heritage and the travel composing genres that accompanies this type of travel.

Chapter two efforts to specify what Judaic heritage travel really is and the different signifiers that it takes. At its most basic degree, heritage travel may be set abouting basic walking Tours around the old Judaic quarters of Eastern European metropoliss such as Prague or Budapest. There are besides signifiers of heritage travel that delve much deeper than this nevertheless - some Judaic travelers are on journeys to detect about their ascendants or their roots, others on journeys to detect more about the Holocaust, whilst for some the autumn of communism and the freedom to go in the part is every bit of import as the Judaic heritage facet of travel. The construct of ' virtual Jewishness is besides examined in this chapter. The phrase, coined by Ruth Ellen Gruber, is a term used to depict the involvement in merely the tourer locales and word picture of old Judaic communities in the like of Poland and the Czech Republic, as opposed to an existent involvement in or apprehension of Judaic life in these states today. Judaic heritage travel will frequently be undertaken by gentiles that identify with Judaic civilization - Gruber examines this in her survey of practical Jewishness.

Chapter three examines the genre of Jewish travel composing in the context of Eastern Europe. There is now a broad scope of literature on the topic with a assortment of positions. Whilst Gruber is acknowledged as one of the world's governments on countries of Judaic involvement in Eastern Europe, a figure of other authors have produced books detailing their ain personal experiences going across Eastern Europe since the autumn of communism. A figure of these books delve a good trade deeper into Judaic heritage than merely naming sites of involvement and depicting temples and graveyards.

Writers such as Anna Reid, Anne Applebaum and Eva Hoffman have undertaken serious analyses of Judaic life in Eastern Europe and their own journeys in composing these books are an illustration of seeking signifier of heritage travel. The personal histories written since the early 1990s tend to concentrate on the oppressive governments under communism and how all facets of life, non merely Judaic life, were affected. This chapter besides looks at some of the personal travelogues posted on the Internet - the positions of the amateur can sometimes be every bit telling as those of the professional travel author. Again, many of these histories detail journeys in which non-European Hebrews are going across the continent in a hunt for their own roots.

Chapter four looks at how Eastern Europe itself has addressed the comparative detonation of Judaic heritage travel to the part. Are the people of Eastern Europe simply interested in the tourist dollar or are they spreading out the scope of Judaic civilization available due to a real concern for the hereafter of Judaic civilization in Europe? Is there a common bond between the people of Eastern Europe, oppressed for so long under communism and those of the Judaic religion who throughout the ages have frequently been seen as an laden race? This chapter looks at some of the Judaic cultural attractive forces that have sprung up in Eastern Europe since the autumn of communism and efforts to measure the motivations for them.

Chapter Five provides a decision to the thesis.

Chapter Two - What is Judaic Heritage Travel?

Judaic heritage travel to Eastern Europe can be undertaken at a figure of different degrees. The most basic signifier of this travel is that which takes a traveler to a new and interesting portion of the universe that has an component of Judaic history and civilization that can be included in the trip. It is a signifier of travel that can be undertaken by both Jews and gentiles. Judaic heritage travel is progressively popular - as Gruber provinces: " Jewish subject touristry, meanwhile, has become a well-established niche in the huge tourer market, promoted on the private degree, and besides strongly backed by the province, metropolis or regional authorities." [ 2 ] There is nil per se incorrect with this type of travel but, as we shall analyze, it can take to a more commercialized, even tacky presentation of Judaic life and one that brings small existent benefit to the Judaic communities around which is based. For many travelers, an apprehension of the holocaust is an of import portion of travel to Eastern Europe - both Jews devising pilgrim's journeies to holocaust sites and European gentiles seeking to do sense of events merely over half a century ago. The are legion sites of involvement across Eastern Europe, from the ghettos in the big metropoliss and the topographic points of mass exile, to the concentration cantonments and the gas chambers themselves. It is of import to understand that Judaic heritage travel is non entirely experienced by Jews ; it can besides be driven by the rational, religious, societal and political docket of European gentiles who are detecting their ain yesteryear and that of their ascendants. [ 3 ]

There is besides a more rational type of Judaic heritage travel as encouraged by the likes of travel author Ruth Ellen Gruber that looks at non merely promoting the more commercialized type of Jewish themed touristry but "

literally, at setting temples, Judaic graveyards, old ghettos and former Judaic quarters, long ignored or buried back on the map - at 'filling in the blanks' and therefore reintegrating Judaic history and memory into modern-day mind-sets." [ 4 ] There is surely a danger that heritage tourism can cut down the little Judaic communities of Eastern Europe to little more than a side-show as local tour operators and concerns rake in the net incomes from portraiture of Judaic life in the yesteryear. It is of import, as Gruber argues, that the involvement in Judaic civilization is used besides to take a breath back life into ailing Judaic communities.

Finally, there is a more personalised type of heritage travel, frequently taken entirely or in little groups to the less popular parts of Eastern Europe by travelers doing journeys to see where their ascendants came from and to rediscover, or so discover, their Judaic roots. The journeys taken by authors such as Applebaum, Reid and Hoffman, covered in chapter three are illustrations of this.

One thing that is certain is that there is a demand and a turning market to fulfill the demand for Judaic heritage travel. As Gave Levenson, travel author for the New York Judaic Week wrote every bit early as 1990 " Berlin walls autumn, Fe drapes rise and all of a sudden the huge sweeps of Eastern Europe are unfastened to see for increasing Numbers of travelers eager to research its wealths and/or to look into their ain specific roots in the country. Tour operators are developing programmes to fulfill a repressed hungriness for general information, and others are making paths whose really specialness makes them exciting and newsworthy" [ 5 ]

Over the past decennary and a half, Europe has seen a monolithic growing in involvement in Jewishness as a whole, whereby anything to make with Judaism, Jews, Judaic civilization, the Holocaust and Israel has progressively been recognised as portion of national history and civilization and embraced by mainstream civilization. As a consequence of this, Judaic civilization, or what non-Jews believe to be Judaic civilization has become a seeable and popular cultural attractive force in states where Jews themselves are so little in Numberss as to be unseeable. Judaic heritage travel is closely associated with this often-false portraiture of Judaic civilization.

Heritage travel itself has been the focal point of academic survey in recent old ages and some of the definitions given can be utile in measuring why do people set about Judaic heritage travel. A recent definition by Poria et Al looked at the motives of the tourers and stated: " heritage touristry is a phenomenon based on tourist' motives and perceptual experiences instead than on specific site attributes...heritage touristry is a subgroup of touristry, in which the chief motive for sing a site is based on the place's heritage features harmonizing to the tourists' perceptual experience of their ain heritage." [ 6 ]

Another attack, possibly more applicable to the Judaic heritage touristry in Eastern Europe is that heritage touristry is a type of touristry that allows chance to expose the yesteryear in the present. Sigala and Leslie besides attempt to specify what is that people really get out of heritage travel. Whilst heritage tourers may pass clip, money and other resources on a trip to heritage sites, there is seldom a touchable return on their investing. What they do have is an experience that provides chiefly psychological benefits.

<https://assignbuster.com/jewish-heritage-travel-essay/>

[ 7 ] From the point of view of the tourer locale hosting the visitants, a positive experience is besides an of import factor: “ happy and satisfied clients are more likely to return, and more likely to state positive things about the service they have experienced.” [ 8 ]

A speedy glimpse on the Internet reveals the turning handiness of Judaic heritage Tourss, providing for different types of travelers. [www.koshertravels.com](http://www.koshertravels.com) advertises kosher culinary art and personal service on guided Tourss of Eastern Europe, [www.TotallyJewishTravel.com](http://www.TotallyJewishTravel.com) offers a broad scope of trips to sites of Judaic heritage more general web sites such as [www.europeforvisitors.com](http://www.europeforvisitors.com) offers information on Kosher eating houses, Judaic communities and cultural information of involvement to Judaic visitants to Eastern Europe.

The national tourer offices in Eastern European states have besides begun to publicize specialized Judaic heritage Tourss in their advertizements and on web sites. For illustration [www.staypoland.com](http://www.staypoland.com) offers a 10 twenty-four hours heritage circuit of the state offering a broad Texas Ranger of escorted trips to heritage sites including: a circuit of the historic ghetto country ; visits to the Korczak Orphanage, the Janusz Korczak Memorial, the Noszyk Synagogue and the commemoration to the Heroes of the Ghetto ; a visit to the Umschlagplatz, site of the exile of the Jewish Community to Treblinka ; a twenty-four hours trip to Lodz including visits to the Lodz ghetto and the largest Judaic graveyard in Europe ; a visit to Auschwitz-Birkenau ; a visit to Schindler’s mill ; repasts in Judaic eating houses with Klezmer music and ; trips to Lublin, place of the Judaic Parliament from the 16<sup>Thursday</sup> century and the Majdanek Concentration Camp. Many of the trips organised by circuit <https://assignbuster.com/jewish-heritage-travel-essay/>



companies will be similar - criterion sights to see will include old Judaic quarters in the metropoliss, graveyards and temples and constantly a trip to one of Easter Europe's former concentration cantonments. They are aimed at the comparatively inexperient traveler, instead than the more adventuresome visitants, determined to acquire off the beaten path to detect their ain roots,

Similarly, tourer web sites for Prague advertise walking Tourss around the city's Judaic Quarter, saying " this deeply traveling narrative embraces the traditions, imposts and fables of the Judaic people in Prague from the poorness of the pogrom refugees to their glittering successes." [ 9 ] The walking circuit advertised here, serves as a typical illustration of the usual type of heritage circuit, covering:

- Development of the Judaic ghetto, its temples, Old Cemetery and Town Hall
- Judaic communities in Prague from the earliest records in 965
- The altering position of Jews over clip
- The renovation of the ghetto 100 old ages ago
- The destiny of Jews over the centuries and the calamity of the Holocaust
- Leftovers of a community - Prague's Jewish community today [ 10 ]

One of the most revealing lines here is ' remnants of the Judaic community' , practically an admittance that the Judaic Quarter in Prague is now more of a museum and focal point for heritage tourers than location of a booming Jewish community.

One of the issues that has arisen from the growing in popularity of Judaic heritage travel is how true a contemplation the primary tourer countries give of Jewish life and whether or not they are good to the Judaic communities in Eastern Europe. There is surely some falsity in the manner some facets of Judaic life are presented. Whilst Judaic life had thrived in the great metropoliss of Eastern Europe a little over 60 old ages ago, today Numberss of Hebrews are much smaller and many of the Old Judaic quarters host klezmer festivals, Yiddish linguistic communication categories and Judaic walking Tourss without any existent engagement from the local Judaic communities. As Gruber writes, the consequences can sometimes be tacky: “ kiosks, stores and markets overflow with new Judaic kitsch ; souvenir Jerseies and post cards athletics imagination runing from candle holders and gravestones to imitations of Franz Kafka. There are painted wooden carvings of hook nosed, bearded Jews for sale In Poland and Golem figurines and side locked Judaic marionettes for sale in Prague. In Krakow, a Ukrainian set at one 'Jewish-style' cafe dresses up in Hasidic garb and dramas Yiddish melodies for frequenters sipping poulet soup and kosher vodka, while local travel bureaus takes visitants on ' Schindlers List' and other Judaic tours”

[ 11 ]

Gruber's statement is that with the standard heritage travel, designed to steer inexperient travelers comfortably through the established countries of Judaic heritage there is small being done towards the existent reinvention of Jewish community. Much of the activity in footings of Judaic civilization is carried out without the Jews themselves. This scenario is non needfully due to any peculiar opposition by the lasting Judaic communities in Eastern

Europe, but instead due to the fact that there is a new signifier of Judaic civilization that does not necessitate Hebrews for its existent realization. A walk-to circuit through the old Judaic One-fourth of Prague for illustration does not necessitate to be conducted by Jews. Gruber quotes Judaic bookman Amos Luzzatto on this subject: “ We are constructing museums where there is no longer Judaic life. It seems as if we are witnessing two phenomena that are parallel but go in opposite ways: the figure of museums is turning ; the communities disappear” [ 12 ]

Gruber’s description for the developments in the Judaic Centres of Eastern Europe is, as encapsulated in the rubric of her book, practical Jewishness. She draws a differentiation between the tourist locales and the associated involvement in Judaic civilization in the likes of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic and existent Jewish life in these states. There are of course positives and negatives to the effects of heritage travel and the practical Jewishness that it can bring forth. A positive consequence is that fact that there is an evident desire for Eastern Europe to at least effort to compensate some of the wrongs done towards its Jewish community under fascism and communism. The fact that there is an involvement in Judaic civilization should besides be taken as a positive development. The stereotyping and commercialization of Judaic civilization may be unwelcome but the drift behind practical Jewishness would look to hold the right purposes at least.

Judaic heritage travel of course is not merely for Jews – many gentiles besides take portion in Tours of and visits to Judaic heritage sites. Gruber suggests that in these instances Jewish heritage travel is being driven by the rational, societal and political docket of European gentiles who are trying to detect

both their ain yesteryear and that of their ascendants. [ 13 ] Non- Jews besides play a major function in the publicity of Judaic heritage. In Eastern Europe, gentile will have on Star of David's, assume Judaic sounding names, attend temple, eat kosher nutrient and direct their kids to Jewish schools in efforts to set up a Judaic manner of individuality. It is writes Gruber, a procedure " that in bend encompasses a ' virtual Jewishness' , a ' virtual Judaic world' populated by ' virtual Jews' who perform - or as Bodemann put it, enact - Judaic civilization from an foreigner position, alongside of frequently in the absence of local Jewish populations." [ 14 ]

The Holocaust is a major portion of Judaic heritage travel and the sites of the ghettos in Eastern European metropoliss along with the concentration cantonments across Germany and Poland are at the bosom of heritage trips by Jews detecting their roots and besides gentiles who seek an apprehension of what has happened in old coevalss. It is evidently hard to pull off touristry to such topographic points with sensitiveness - the museums based at the concentration cantonments to day of the month look to be accomplishing this, but these topographic points remain one country that much ne'er succumb to the commercialization that has crept into other countries of Judaic heritage travel. The thought of human-centered battle and the sense that the Judaic religion somehow represents the oppressed besides ties into Judaic heritage travel. Janusz Makuch, a immature Polish, non-Jewish rational that founded Krakow's one-year festival of Judaic Culture explains this when relation of his find of the intervention of the Jews in his state: " It was like a find of Atlantis that people lived here and created their ain original civilization and had such a deep influence on Polish culture" [ 15 ] Makuch

goes onto explicate that he felt is his responsibility to try to raise the Judaic civilization as a court to the three million Polish Jews killed in the Holocaust and besides every bit testimony to the thousand twelvemonth history of the Jews in Poland. [ 16 ]

Today's heritage travel to Holocaust sites and commemorations represents a alteration in the type of recollection of the Holocaust. As subsisters become older and fewer, in the same manner that we see war veterans become fewer each twelvemonth - there are less and less existent remembrance of events and a demand for new types of representation for future coevals. The museums and commemorations found in heritage sites appear to be the best manner of gaining this. Again nevertheless, some heritage travel can befog the world of what has gone earlier - Schindler's List Tourss in Krakow for illustration take tourer to sites where the events depicted really took topographic point and besides to the topographic points where the film was filmed. It is as Gruber describes " a mixture of celluloid and world, in which each is given equal weight." [ 17 ] This is a upsetting tendency - that tourer are as interested in seeing the sites of shooting instead than the scene of existent and awful events suggests that the hereafter may keep about a dumbing down of the Holocaust into a Hollywood event.

Judaic heritage travel is now steadfastly established in Eastern Europe, for better or worse. There is a danger that it can travel down the route of minimizing Judaic civilization in the most popular locales - the accent though, must be with the bing Judaic communities to go involved in heritage touristry and assist determine how their community and manner of life is portrayed.

As in any genre, the manner and quality of travel composing about Eastern Europe and Jewish heritage is peculiar and varied. Writing on the topic varies from standard format travel ushers that guide manqué travelers would utilize to voyage them around peculiar sites of involvement to more individualized histories of peculiar journeys made to follow the author's roots or to analyze peculiar historical issues - the Holocaust and the effects of Communism on Eastern European Jews are most platitude.

Ruth Ellen Gruber is one of the more fecund authors on the topic, adding elaborate ushers on sites of Judaic involvement to her other work on practical Jewishness and the ground behind heritage travel. Much of Gruber's travel composing focal points on promoting travelers to travel somewhat off the beaten track when looking for sites of Judaic involvement. An article on the Czech Republic for illustration focuses less on Prague but instead on the little town of Boskovice, place to one of the most extended old Judaic ghetto countries in Eastern Europe. Gruber looks non merely at the history of Judaic countries during the war and under communism but besides how they have fared since the political alterations in the early 1990s. She appears every bit concerned as concerned about the hereafter of Judaic communities in Eastern Europe as with the yesteryear. She writes of Boskovice: " Back in 1990, the edifices in the Judaic Quarter were crumbling and abandoned, the 17<sup>Thursday</sup> century temple was little more than an empty shell...what a difference a decennary and a half makes...the Judaic one-fourth excessively has undergone extended gentrification. Many of the small crooked houses have been renovated and painted soothing batch and ocher, and some of them have even been converted into dress shops, upmarket coffeehouse

( such as the Makkabi and the Herman Ungar Tea Room ) and even a fast nutrient felafel restaurant.” [ 18 ] Gruber besides advises her readers of other Czech towns with a Judaic heritage - Trebic, with its two historic temples, Velke Mezerici with its two former temples and a little Jewish museum, Polna with a well-preserved Judaic one-fourth and Loumnic with an 18<sup>Thursday</sup> century temple that has been converted to a gallery and a civilization Centre and a beautiful Judaic graveyard.

Gruber excels from other authors about Judaic heritage travel in that she provides an in deepness background to the Judaic history in all of the towns that she writes about. For Polna for illustration, she tells the narrative of the Hilsner matter, a celebrated episode in Czech and Judaic history. Leopold Hilsner, a local cobbler was arrested for the slaying of a local adult female. He was accused of perpetrating the frost with the complicity of the local Judaic population in order to run out the girl’s blood and utilize it to do Passover matzah. The matter drew a moving ridge of anti-semitic force at the clip, but Hilsner was finally amnestied old ages subsequently in a instance that had reverberations of the Dreyfus matter in France. [ 19 ] It is this attending to detail that marks out Gruber’s travel composing - she deals with the topic in far more item than the standard travel usher and her books would be the most utile beginning of information for anybody going to countries of Judaic heritage outside the large metropoliss in Eastern Europe.

Gruber, irrespective of her positions on practical Jewishness remains convinced that Judaic heritage sites do hold an intrinsic historic, artistic and architectural value but remains concerned that in the most popular sites at least, a subject park manner future awaits. As she describes: “ By 1998, the <https://assignbuster.com/jewish-heritage-travel-essay/>

old Judaic one-fourth of Trebic, where no Jews live, boasted Jacob's Snack Bar, the Synagogue Guest House, the Judaic Grocery and Rachel's Wine Cellar." [ 20 ] It is a valid point.

There are other authors who tend not to brood on the commercialization of all things Jewish and gently direct people around the chief cultural Centres, whether the civilization portrayed is echt or non. Yale Strom's *A Wandering Feast: A Journey Through the Judaic Culture of Eastern Europe* takes a more simplistic position on travel and Judaic civilization in Eastern Europe. His history portrays a happy universe of vivacious Judaic communities, klezmer music narrations and traditional Judaic nutrient. It is possibly the vision that those setting together heritage Tourss would wish to portray, yet Strom does not truly delve under the surface of the sometimes unreal Judaic civilization that he encounters. His book is mostly a travelogue for the traveler on a guided circuit to follow - there is small in footings of self-discovery or existent apprehension of the history of the Jews in Eastern Europe included.

Other histories of travel in Eastern Europe have been more individualized and reflected travel outside the popular finish of Prague, Krakow and Budapest. Anne Applebaum's *Between East and West, Across the Borderland's of Europe* is an history of her travels through Poland, Lithuania and Belarus shortly after the autumn of the Berlin Wall in the hope of following her ain Eastern European roots. Applebaum's grandparents had lived in the Polish town of Krobrin, which prior to 1939 had seen Hebrews make up half of its 11, 00 dwellers, many having edifice and running stores. [ 21 ]



Applebaum efforts to unknot the complex alterations of authorization in the part that have both stirred up cultural tensenesss whilst go forthing others unsure as to their true nationality. She writes in her debut that “ a traveler can run into a adult male born in Poland, brought up in the Soviet Union, who now lives in Belarus - and he has ne'er left his village.” [ 22 ] This is the kind of travel composing that will appeal to the more adventuresome traveler - for the manager party traveler around Prague and Krakow, there is small demand for this type of information.

Unlike the heritage traveler hot spots to the West, the history of the holocaust is harder to follow this far east. There was small demand for the Germans to conceal the deceases of Jews or to export them off to extinction cantonments. Applebaum writes about the scene of a slaughter of Hebrews by Germans and Lithuanians in the town of Radun in 1942. There is no Judaic commemoration in the town. A memorial to the dead provinces merely “ here lie buried 1, 137 peaceable Soviet citizens, changeable in 1942 by fascists” Applebaum's inquiries to a subsister as to why the memorial doesn't say why the dead were Judaic receives the simple answer “ they were peaceable Soviet citizens. That was what they were.” [ 23 ]

Applebaum besides examines another recurrent subject in Judaic heritage travel - the subjugation of people in Eastern Europe under Communist regulation. She visits Minsk, a little town in Belarus before the War with an active Judaic population. After the war, the Judaic population had all but been destroyed and Applebaum describes the city's speedy transmutation into a big, soulless Soviet industrial metropolis. Interestingly, even in Minsk, Applebaum finds some grounds of the popularization of Jewishness amongst

<https://assignbuster.com/jewish-heritage-travel-essay/>

gentiles that is so prevailing in the more tourist-friendly countries of Eastern Europe. Applebaum meets a gentile who loves the thought of traditional Jews ; he speaks Yiddish and Hebrew and even Teaches it to the staying Jews in the part that are fixing to travel to Israel. Applebaum writes: “ what Vitaly loved were the Jews of the yesteryear: the Jews with caps and coils around their ears, the Jews in long black coats, the Judaic adult females in wigs, the Judaic kids who studied Talmud and Torah by candle flame, the Jews whose civilization one time dominated Minsk.” [ 24 ] There is small to see in Minsk in footings of heritage - her usher can indicate out the sites on now non-existent houses or overgrown burial topographic points - the overall feeling is of a metropolis in which Judaic civilization was efficaciously destroyed by the Nazis and given small chance to reinvent itself under communist function. In some ways, the same could be argued of the Judaic cultural hot musca volitanss such as Prague and Krakow - the difference being that, post-communism, these metropoliss have made active efforts to market their Judaic yesteryear as a tourer cultural attractive force. Applebaum concludes her visit to Minsk with a cheerless sum-up of the recent yesteryear on Minsk, authorship of the Judaic population that “ when they had been alive, Minsk had been a different sort of metropolis, a better metropolis, a metropolis of supplication and survey, non a metropolis of mills and smog.” [ 25 ]

Applebaum finds small in Krobrin, the place of her grandparents. The old temple is now a obsolete brewery and in footings of detecting her roots, there is small for Applebaum to pull upon. Possibly this explains some of the success of the Eastern European locales that offer an obvious Judaic heritage - there is more to offer the visitant and more to fulfill the desire that people

have to detect the Judaic lineage. Sadly, in many parts of Eastern Europe, there is small if anything in footings of heritage or an on-going Judaic civilization. for people to detect in the birth topographic points of their ascendants. Arriving at the little town or small town where their ascendants one time lived may be every bit much as a roots happening journey can offer. Of class, for some, this may do. Applebaum however finds some positives in her authorship. In the debut to her book she writes that she made the journey to look for grounds that differences and assortment of civilizations and faiths can outlive war, communism and Russification, “ testimony in fact that people can last any effort to uproot them.” [ 26 ] She does happen some grounds of this. Some little Judaic communities still exist in countries where Judaic civilization had all but been wiped out, whilst in other parts, Judaic civilization lives on more strongly - possibly sometimes the practical Jewishness that Gruber defines, but a Judaic civilization however. Applebaum’s composing focal points less on the physical sights of Eastern Europe but instead on the people who have lived under Communist regulation and how they have adjusted to their newfound freedom. It is besides represents an history of non-European Jews trying to happen their roots in the new Eastern Europe - for anybody be aftering an independent journey it provides an first-class usher as to the type of experiences one can anticipate.

Matthew Reisz has besides written travel stuff about Jews in Eastern Europe, concentrating on the facets of subjugation and endurance that are so cardinal to the history. His debut to *Europe’s Jewish Living quarters* , whilst accepting that the great Judaic Centres of the universe today are Israel and

the United States, emphasises the importance of Europe in Jewish history “ It was on European dirt that the majority of universe Jewry lived until the Holocaust, on European dirt that Maimonides wrote his *Guide for the Perplexed*, on European dirt that Zionism was forged, on European dirt that the great Judaic minds and creative persons of Paris, Vienna and the Weimar Republic mostly created the modern docket in music, natural philosophies, depth psychology and many of the arts...” [ 27 ] This is an of import point - for those interested in Judaic civilization, Europe is massively of import even outside of roots and lineage. Many heritage travelers may non hold household that have lived in Eastern Europe but are drawn to the part anyhow merely by its rich Judaic heritage.

Like many other Judaic authors on Eastern Europe, Reisz does so from a personal position. His grandparents were transported to decease cantonments from Terezin, as were several other relations and he acknowledges that in composing the book “ I had far deeper motivations ; although my female parent is non Judaic, the book was produced partially as a hunt for my ain roots, in understanding and jubilation and with a far more than professional interest.” [ 28 ] Reisz besides avoids what are seen as what he footings the “ heartlands of the Holocaust” [ 29 ] , partially because there are a figure of books already written on these countries but partially because he understands that there is small in the manner of existent Judaic life in these countries - the old Judaic quarters or the concentration cantonment locations are at that place for the heritage travelers and cater for a different type of traveler - Reisz wants to concentrate on a combination of Judaic history and life as it is today. He clarifies this markedly, composing

“ I have tried to avoid topographic points where there is small to state except: here there was one time rich and critical Judaic life - and now there is nothing.” [ 30 ]

Reisz writes admiringly of Prague’s Jewish Quarter, wondering at the fact that its has survived at all after Nazi business and the indifference and sometimes ill will of the Communist government. He besides addresses the issue of the hardly functioning Judaic population in Prague today. Whilst admitting that there are two working temples in the metropolis, Reisz points out that exterior of the tourer season there are non ever plenty Jews for signifier a *minyan* [ 31 ] He besides remarks on the population of Czech Jews, authorship: “ Like other Czechs, they have ever had a repute for lukewarm spiritual committednesss ; the awful losings of the War old ages, ageing folds and the troubles of obtaining an instruction in Judaism have all had their impact ; yet it is cheering that the Jubilee is still a functioning synagogue.” [ 32 ]

Much of Reisz’s description of Prague focal points on its yesteryear. Indeed he compose “ the yesteryear is a changeless presence in Prague” [ 33 ] and his descriptions of Prague’s old edifices and narrow lanes give the prospective traveler a good indicant of what to anticipate.

As is to be expected nevertheless from any Judaic author composing about Eastern Europe, some of Reisz’s most effectual prose comes when he deals with the Holocaust. It is an issue at the bosom of practically all composing on this portion of the universe and intelligibly so. Reisz describes Prague’s Memorial Hall that now houses the Jewish Museum and the most effecting of

the Holocaust images. He describes scenes of mundane life in the ghetto and the barracks: “ hangings, cramped bunk beds, tightly shut Gates, soldiers crowding crowds of bantam kids off while others look down from a window above. Almost more moving are the utterly normal images of woods, butterflies, corsages, Christmas trees, princesses and firebrakes, all painted by kids destined for exile to the East.” [ 34 ]

Reisz besides writes about Terezin, little town near to Prague that is tainted by the Holocaust to a greater extent than Prague itself. Whilst Prague remains a beautiful and civilized tourist locale over and above of its Jewish yesteryear, the same can not be said for Terezin. Reisz describes it as “ a strange and stark site of wartime Judaic agony and a peculiarly blazing illustration of a replacement regime’s effort to falsify the past” [ 35 ] Terezin consists chiefly of a ghastly tourist attractive force known as the Little Fortress and the barracks, established in the 1870s as a defense mechanism against Prussia. Its most celebrated inmate was Gavrilo Princip, the bravo who sparked off World War I when he shot Franz Ferdinand. The fortress was re-opened and used by the Nazis in 1940 to keep politicians, officers of the former Czech ground forces, relations of those who had fled abroad, captured British pilots and some echt felons. As in all the concentration camps the words *Arbeit macht Frei* ( Work will do you free ) appears above the entryway.

For Reisz nevertheless, merely every bit upsetting as the grounds of the Nazi yesteryear in Terezin is the grounds that the Communist government used the site as a method of propaganda instead than a memorial to those that were imprisoned or died at that place. Until the autumn of communism

visitants were shown what Reisz describes as an “ unpalatably one-sided” [ 36 ] movie about Terezin, emphasizing the glorious Russian function in its release and the bright Communist hereafter. Reisz’s work appears to strike precisely the right balance in footings of Judaic heritage – de gives graphic descriptions of some of the old Judaic quarters and noteworthy edifice, yet expands on this with an probe into the past and how Eastern Europe today is reflecting its Judaic heritage.

Eva Hoffman’s book ‘ Exit into History’ describes her journey through the new Eastern Europe as she tries to analyze what the societal and political alterations will intend for the people populating at that place. Hoffman’s book is less a narration on Judaic heritage travel than an analysis of post-communist Eastern Europe, yet she still discovers Jews with intriguing narratives to state.

Again, Hoffman can set aside political and historical issues to present first-class descriptive prose. Her description of Prague serves as a reminder that whatever the Judaic history may be in Eastern Europe, it is still merely a beautiful portion of the universe to see for any traveler: “ Nothing I know about this other metropolis of seven hills has prepared me for its extravagancy and copiousness and eternal ocular surprises, as if, someplace beneath its land, there were a invariably refilling reservoir, or a geyser, from which beauty springs. The oculus can non travel without meeting a arresting piece of statuery, or painted ornament, or flowery architectural inside informations, or a Cubist brush of chimneys.” [ 37 ] It is easy to overlook when reflecting on travel composing on Eastern Europe that, for all of its history, many of the towns and metropoliss provide architectural sights that

<https://assignbuster.com/jewish-heritage-travel-essay/>

are worth the visit entirely. The simple aesthetics of travel to fantastic metropoliss should non be forgotten.

Like several others, Hoffman journeyed around Eastern Europe in the early 1990s, abruptly after the prostration of the Iron Curtain. Much of her composing investigates how it was for people both Judaic and non-Jewish to populate under the Communist governments. She argues that history in this portion of the universe is somehow thicker, more pressure and oppressive than in Western Europe. The live of ordinary people have been affected to a much greater extent by political relations than of those in the West. Hoffman notes that, much as under Nazi business, under communism people at one point or another have been forced to do some sort of ethical pick or determination: “ to decide, at one clip or another, whether he or she was for or against...whether to inform on a neighbor, subscribe a unsafe request, base by mutely during an anti-semitic run, or hazard imprisonment by protest.” [ 38 ] Certainly, within Judaic heritage travel there is an component of reflecting non merely on the Holocaust but besides on the subjugation of people across Eastern Europe for half a century. For many travelers the two may be combined - Judaic travelers seeking out their ain roots may good unite their ain heritage with looking for a greater consciousness of political history in Europe. For gentiles who see themselves as opposed to subjugation in whatever signifier, the chance to research both the location of the Holocaust and the political subjugation under communism is an attractive force of travel to the part.

Anna Reid's *Borderland - A Journey Through the History of the Ukraine*, farther east to analyze Judaic history and finds, as in other countries of  
<https://assignbuster.com/jewish-heritage-travel-essay/>



Eastern Europe, hardly being Judaic communities. There is small in the book to urge the Ukraine to as a finish for Judaic heritage travel. Making up less than 1 per cent of the population 1989, [ 39 ] the Ukraine's' Jewish population is bit by bit being assimilated into the Ukrainian population, attending at temple is hapless and many of the staying Hebrews are being aftering to travel to Israel. This is non to state that the Ukraine is an anti-semitic state - as Reid writes " There are few Jew-baiters left in Ukraine because there are few Jews." [ 40 ] Reid's work is far removed from the standard tourer ushers to Eastern Europe - it is the narrative of a personal journey that finally finds comparatively small in footings of Judaic heritage, yet is interesting however.

Heritage journeys can be made by people as Jews, Eastern Europeans, or both. One's ain background will hold dictated a personal set of fortunes and an single lineage. The lifting of the Iron Curtain has given people an chance to do heritage journeys to research their yesteryear. For people populating in Eastern Europe both before and after the Communist governments, the support of those from elsewhere may give hope that repression will non return in the hereafter.

Haim Shapiro's series of articles in the Judaic Post newspaper give a well-balanced position of Poland both past and present. He is on a roots trip to detect the topographic points that his household have come from in Poland and Belarus. Before turning to the Judaic yesteryear in the state he provides the reader, Judaic or non-Jewish, of what is it like to merely see the state as a tourer:

“ The state is easy to see. Public conveyance is convenient and inexpensive. There are plentifulness of java stores and Internet coffeehouse. It has all the convenience of Western Europe at Eastern European monetary values. Along with that, the landscapes and towns are beautiful” [ 41 ] Shapiro is cognizant nevertheless of Poland’s repute as an anti-semitic state and remarks: at one point “ it is at times like this that we have come to Poland to bask ourselves. For many Israelis, Poland is merely a state of decess cantonments and Jew-baiters. I am cognizant of the calamity, as when I see the pictures of the murdered creative persons, and I am cognizant of Polish antisemitism, although everyplace we have gone here, our response has been warm and welcoming” [ 42 ] Shapiro makes an of import point about Judaic heritage travel here - wherever Jews travel to in Eastern Europe in hunt of heritage they will be faced with grounds of decess and agony of their ascendants or at least past coevals of their ain people. To be merely basking a vacation at the same clip must sometimes look slightly self-contradictory and is a ground that can divide Judaic heritage travel in Eastern Europe from other types of cultural and heritage travel in other states.

Shapiro besides writes about another of import issue - the consequence of Judaic heritage travelers on the lives of Jews still populating in these countries. He describes an awkward assemblage of Israelis childs at a Warsaw temple and quotes a local occupant saying that Israeli groups can upset the spiritual services: “ when the Israelis come it’s a circus. The remainder of the twelvemonth it’s a normal synagogue.” [ 43 ] Shapiro’s’ decision nevertheless is positive, and one that should be taken on board by any Judaic heritage travelers sing Poland or Eastern Europe. He quotes a

funeral manager stating him to give the message to non-European Hebrews that they should come to Poland to observe their heritage, non handle the state as a cemetery. He says: " Tell them, they should come to Poland, but they should make so to observe a thousand old ages of Judaic life here, and non merely calamity and destruction." [ 44 ]

Wide ranges of travel ushers now make specific mention to Eastern Europe's Jewish heritage every bit do travel companies in the selling stuff. The following paragraph from the [www. cheapflights. com](http://www.cheapflights.com) web site about travel to Poland serves as a typical illustration:

" It was the state most devastated by World War II in Eastern Europe, losing about a one-fourth of its population and about its full Jewish community. The wake of the War greatly affected the character of the state. Former Judaic graveyards in the metropoliss and the blunt concentration cantonments where the Nazis carried out their extinction remain as the most rousing reminders of the nation's calamities. Cities destroyed by the war had to be rebuilt from abrasion and many meticulously restored edifices and historic old towns are testimony to the pride and finding of a strong and lasting nation." [ 45 ]

Individual travelogues posted on the Internet by heritage travelers can besides do interesting reading and give a position on the motives for the mean traveler as opposed to the professional travel author. The gap paragraph of Gerald Sanders travelogue, *Our Judaic Roots Tour*, gives a good indicant as to the conflicting point of views that non-European Jews can hold approximately going to the part:

“ On August 6, 1990 we began what turned out to be the most absorbing experience of our lives. My late married woman, Joan, and I journeyed to happen our roots in Poland as members of an organized group. Joan had anticipated the trip with unchecked enthusiasm since the thought of going to Poland foremost occurred to her about five old ages earlier. I was more than a small doubting and had all the preconceived impressions that most of the American Jewish community holds referring Poland...’Why travel at that place? It’s merely a cemetery of our ancestors’ ‘ you are non traveling to happen anything of genealogical value, the Germans destroyed it all’ ‘ the poles were the worst of the world’s anti-Semites’ , ‘ the adjustments and nutrient will be unacceptable’ ” [ 46 ]

Drum sanders trip goes onto to be a enormously successful trip of self-discovery, doing good usage of Polish archives to follow household history, sing sites of Judaic involvement throughout the metropolis and basking all right kosher nutrient throughout the trip. There are minutes on the trip where Sanders expresses his choler at what he sees: “ No trip to Poland is complete without a trip to Maidenak and Auschwitz. The horror that our people experienced in those topographic points can ne’er be to the full described or understood. The following clip one hears a German stating that ‘ we didn’t know’ , don’t believe him. Maidenak entirely had 7, 000 German guards at any given clip, and they had households who knew what they were making! ’ [ 47 ] The overall subject of Sander’s trip though is one of acquisition. He states that for serious genealogists, a visit to Poland is compulsory for those with Polish roots. He besides learns a small about the Jewish community in Warsaw today which at least moves off from the ‘

virtual Jewish' Tours criticised by Gruber. Sanders writes in his history " the figure of Jews in Krakow in 1990 was about 300. They were largely aged and, for the most part, really hapless. Our group bought gifts for them, which we distributed at the Remuh Synagogue." [ 48 ] It is cheering to hear that at least one independent traveler has made the attempt to interact with the existent Jewish community in Eastern Europe - ideally this would be a much more common happening on heritage trips.

Travel composing about heritage travel to Eastern Europe is an spreading genre. As with any tourist location, the manner and criterion of the authorship will change. The chief hope should be that authors see the differentiation between the tourist traps and existent Judaic civilization. The publicity of echt Judaic life in Eastern Europe should ever be encouraged.

#### Chapter Four - Eastern Europe's response to Judaic Heritage Travel

For Eastern Europe, Jewish heritage travel has been foremost and foremost another twine to the bow of the tourist industry that is so of import to metropoliss such as Prague and Krakow as they have moved out of the Communist epoch. Judaic heritage can guarantee a healthy inflow of money into Eastern Europe and locals have been speedy to do the most of this. Again whether the positive response to Judaic travelers and other Westerners with an involvement in Judaic civilization is good to the long-run growing of Judaic communities in Eastern Europe remains to be seen. At present, much of the economic benefit seems to be heading towards the gentiles in Eastern Europe who are successfully marketing its Judaic heritage.

There are a figure of illustrations of the positive publicity of Judaic civilization in Eastern Europe. In Berlin in 1992, an exhibition of Judaic civilization described as the world's largest and most expensive of all time was held at Martin Gropius Bau museum. The event, *Judische Lebenswelten ( Patterns of Jewish Life )* cost the metropolis over \$ 6 million and saw over 350, 000 people attend Judaic public presentations, concerts, movies and readings.

[ 49 ] In Poland, the metropolis of Krakow, with a population of 200 Hebrews in 1993, [ 50 ] opened its Centre for Judaic Culture, operated and staffed by gentiles. In the three old ages from its opening the Centre has been prolific in the figure and graduated table of events that it has produced. Krakow would look to function as a perfect illustration of Gruber's ' virtual Jewishness' theory - it is a metropolis with a rich Judaic heritage, that sells its Judaic civilization as one of its chief tourer attractive forces, yet is really home to a bantam figure of Jews, few of whom play any portion in the heritage industry that has grown in the metropolis. Across Poland as a whole in fact, over 500 ' serious titles' on Judaic history, literature and civilization were published in 1995-96 [ 51 ] , demoing a rapacious appetency fro information on Judaic civilization in the state.

Undoubtedly. Eastern Europeans have embraced the more commercial side of Judaic heritage travel wholeheartedly. Gruber, once more slightly critically, refers to the fact that new Judaic bookshops in Vienna, Berlin and Krakow pull a big patronage [ 52 ] , and goes on to depict the chief attractive forces that Eastern Europeans are opening up for visitants - Judaic quarters and tourist attractive forces with ' Jewish manner restaurants' and Judaic sounding names, marks in Hebrew or Hebrew manner letters and nutrient,

including porc named after rabbis of Old Testament prophets. [ 53 ] Clearly Gruber has a valid point here. It may be acceptable for non-Jews to be involved in the Judaic heritage industry and to gain even from the commercialization of Judaic civilization but the deficiency of regard shown for cardinal dogmas of the Judaic religion, the naming of inexpensive dishes in tacky eating houses after of import spiritual figures is a measure excessively far. Commercialization at this degree will merely farther banish the little Judaic communities staying in Eastern European metropoliss. There is already grounds that there is a division between the heritage travel industry and the echt Judaic communities. Crass insensitivities to the Judaic religion will merely worsen this division.

The popularity of Judaic civilization has manifested itself in a figure of more scholarly pretenses every bit good. Numerous conferences are now held across Eastern Europe each twelvemonth on all facets of Judaic civilization, history and tradition and similar Numberss of academic survey programmes, classs and talk series have besides been established. [ 54 ]

Hebrews that have lived in Eastern Europe both before and in the immediate wake have openly expressed reserves about the invasion from heritage travelers. There is grounds that members of the Jewish community can sometimes be made to experience like some type of museum exhibit, peculiarly Hassidic Jews, whose manner of frock confirms with the stereotyped Jew marketed as marionettes or figures in souvenir stores and on market stables. Eli Valley, a immature American Jew who lived in Prague at around the clip of the Velvet revolution remarks: " In the five summers since communisms prostration, Prague's Jewish one-fourth has become a

<https://assignbuster.com/jewish-heritage-travel-essay/>

regular Jurassic Park of Judaism, a Williamsburg for the scruples of Europe... . on the street you can buy a Judaic doll, complete with black robe and elephantine olfactory organ for \$ 50. In the eyes of the tourers, Prague is a circus of the dead. On the infrequent occasions that a Hasidic household visits the country, visitants abandon the dead spiritual objects and take out their cameras" [ 55 ]

Heritage and cultural tourism of class is not limited to Eastern Europe and there are illustrations from elsewhere in the universe that states such as Poland and the Czech Republic can learn from in developing their heritage travel industries. One of the most encouraging facts for the Eastern European states is that heritage travelers can be a profitable type of visitor. Research based chiefly in America or on Americans going to Europe suggests that cultural tourists are older, better educated and more affluent than the general public as a whole.. Furthermore, cultural tourists are travelers who tend to remain longer at a destination, spend more while there and participate in more activities than other tourists. [ 56 ] This in itself would appear to be good news for the Eastern European tourist Centres but there is besides research that suggests that the heritage travel market will go on to grow. Aging baby boomers, who are the biggest individual growing market in tourism today, are besides seen as the largest possible market for heritage tourist attractive forces. As people age, they take a greater involvement in their cultural roots, in history and in understanding the past. [ 57 ] This would surely look to be the instance with heritage travel to Eastern Europe. The complex history of Europe's Jews would look to add to the attractive force of heritage travel,



over and above the general involvement in heritage travel that already exists across the universe.

The rapid economic, societal and political alterations that have taken topographic point in Eastern Europe in the post-communist epoch have besides been a factor in the growing of Judaic heritage travel to the part. As Gruber writes: “ with the concluding autumn of communism, the denudation of Judaic history and heritage became a counterpoint to the burial of the Communist yesteryear. The toppling of memorials to Marx and Lenin, the renaming of streets, and the transmutation of communist edifices for other utilizations were besides seen as Acts of the Apostless that re-consecrated a desecrated landscape” [ 58 ] Evidence of this can be seen across Eastern Europe - historic edifices, both Judaic and non-Jewish have been cleaned up and restored over the past decennary and, recognizing the power of the tourer dollar, strategies to entice concern and investing have been put in topographic point to promote heritage travelers. Another noticeable tendency has been for streets and squares with names from the Communist epoch to be renamed to reflect the Judaic historical recovery.

Eastern Europe has developed a varied market of attractive forces to pull heritage travelers. Potential tourers will include Judaic roots searchers, pilgrims to Holocaust sites and Hasidic graves, local schoolchildren and foreign survey groups, mainstream and Judaic heritage bundle Tourss, insouciant perceivers and even local occupants looking for nostalgia or accounts in relation to events in the yesteryear. Obviously what may work for some marks may non work or even offend others. Michael Reisz, composing in The Independent, refers to an Israeli satirical study about a <https://assignbuster.com/jewish-heritage-travel-essay/>

travel agent offering bundles like “ a hebdomad in Poland which features seven concentration cantonments in thee yearss – no, there’s no free twenty-four hours for shopping” [ 59 ] It is of import for those involved in heritage travel in Eastern Europe to gain that such touristry can easy go morbid or exploitative and discourage Hebrews from run intoing Czechs, Germans or Poles. This is where the fact the few Hebrews are involved in heritage touristry can go a job – if Judaic travelers arrive in these states to be shown around concentration cantonments by a series of non-Jewish ushers, it can merely add to any old prepossession that Poland, for illustration is merely a Judaic Cemetery and all Poles are Jew-baiters.

Large Numberss of locally produced ushers to Eastern Europe’s Jewish heritage were produced in the old ages following the autumn of communism. Jiri Fiedler produced a guidebook in 1991, Jaroslav Klenovsky was bring forthing images and post cards of Morovian temples in 1991 and in Poland more than a twelve or more ushers to Jewish sites had been produced by the early 1990s. [ 60 ] Indeed in Poland, German journalist Katherina Osche was prompted to compose: “ Considering the figure of publications, exhibits, and the big focal point on Judaic subjects in the media, one could acquire the feeling that the state had a few hundred thousand Jews and a blossoming German Judaic culture.” [ 61 ] Mainstream ushers besides began to include Judaic heritage information both in print and on the Internet. The undermentioned transition from the Time Out Guide to Prague serves as an illustration:

“ The streets north-west of the Old Town Square are queerly vacant of occupants. This is Prague’s Josefov vicinity, one time the city’s pullulating

Judaic ghetto...begun in the 13<sup>Thursday</sup> century, this was the religious bosom of Prague's Jewish community for some 700 years...The stinking Old Judaic Cemetery was created in the 15<sup>Thursday</sup> century and was used until 1787... . On the far side of the graveyard is Pinkas Synagogue where the inside walls are covered with the names of the 80, 000 Holocaust victims from Bohemia and Moravia. The temple besides has a heartbreaking show of drawings by kids made in the Terezin concentration camp." [ 62 ] Local regional and provinces tourist offices in Poland and the Czech Republic have besides begun to bring forth booklets, maps and booklets on Judaic heritage.

The general reaction to Judaic heritage travel in Eastern Europe has surely been positive. This has doubtless partially stemmed from the fiscal wages that Judaic heritage travel can convey in some countries, but general tendency towards involvement in Judaic civilization would propose an overall positive attitude towards Judaism.

#### Chapter Five - Decision

Judaic heritage travel to Eastern Europe is now a steadfastly established sector within the tourer market and likewise, a genre of travel composing to attach to such travel has besides developed. The journeys are made for a figure of ground - roots discovery chiefly, but besides a contemplation of a turning involvement in Judaic civilization amongst gentiles and a simple involvement in the political alterations that have affected the part in recent decennaries. The Holocaust every bit good remains a focal point for travel to the part and the authorship that follows.

One of the chief issues around such travel is its impact on Judaic communities across Eastern Europe. Gruber points out that every bit good as the embracing of all things Jewish by gentiles in Eastern Europe, there has besides been an internal Judaic rediscovery of roots and heritage every bit good. As she states: “ Indeed, the embracing of Judaic civilization by mainstream society has gone side by side ( and at times manus in manus ) with attempts by Jews themselves to retrieve or redefine personal Judaic individualities and to resuscitate or enrich Judaic communities, Judaic life and internal Judaic civilization in Various countries” . [ 63 ] Quite justly, there is a turning sense of urgency among Eastern Europe’s Jews that for all the benefits that Judaic heritage travel might convey, if they