

"In these brilliant personal recollections, Ruth Gruber proves to her many readers that journalism, too, can be at the service of memory." —Elie Wiesel

Completely
Updated
& Revised

JEWISH HERITAGE TRAVEL

*A Guide to
East-Central Europe*



RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

JEWISH HERITAGE TRAVEL

A GUIDE TO EAST-CENTRAL EUROPE

Updated and Revised Edition

Ruth Ellen Gruber



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RESERVE
(SLAVIC)

To the memory of Flora, Joe, Becky, and Frank

PREFACE

Before World War II, nearly five million Jews lived in Poland, Czechoslovakia (today, the Czech Republic and Slovakia), Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, and Yugoslavia (today Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Yugoslavia). Most of them perished in the Nazi Holocaust, and most of those who survived the Holocaust emigrated, mainly to Israel and the United States, leaving fewer than 150,000 Jews in these countries today.

Despite World War II and despite more than four decades of communist rule, much still stands to bear witness to the rich Jewish culture that once flourished in the region. This book is a guide to these many remaining traces of Jewish culture and civilization. It is designed both as a practical guide for travelers to the various countries and as a sourcebook for armchair travelers interested in learning about a vital part of European and Jewish history—past and present.

The book is divided into chapters, one chapter for each country-area. Each chapter includes a brief historical survey of Jewish life in the country-area, plus addresses of the main Jewish communities and Jewish facilities, such as kosher restaurants. Where possible, I have listed locally available English-language guidebooks and other publications, which can provide more detailed information on Jewish heritage. **Boldfaced** terms are defined in the glossary at the back of the book. Asterisks (*) mark some of the sites I found personally most interesting, a selection that is purely subjective.

Readers desiring further information on specific sites may want to contact the United States Commission for America's Heritage Abroad in Washington, D.C., a body set up by Congress in 1985, or The Jewish Heritage Council of the World Monuments Fund, 174 East 80th Street, New York, NY 10021. Both organizations are involved in the ongoing process of documenting and preserving Jewish monuments, and in 1993 they completed a full-scale survey of Jewish sites in Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. This information has been loaded into a computer database.

The world is changing more rapidly than the changes can be recorded. Each visit to the countries discussed brings more information. I invite you to share in the thrill of these discoveries—and I thank those of you who have written to me to inform me of what you have discovered.

RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

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