

Hebrew College

Between Rome and Jerusalem- An Inspiration Tour of Ancient and Contemporary Italy and its Jewish History

November 8 –18, 2026

Prepared for Hebrew College by Keshet: The Center for Educational Tourism in Israel

With Rabbi Dr. Leonard Gordon and Professor Jeffrey Woolf

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"The Creator made Italy from designs by Michaelangelo." - Mark Twain

Saturday Night, November 7 **Departure**

- Departure from Boston to Venice via Zurich on United at 9:50 PM.

Sunday, November 8 **Welcome to Venice**

We begin our experience in Italy with a tour which will take us to the canals, bridges, gondolas, courtyards, historical and architectural landmarks of this beautiful city. Alongside the astounding city of Marco Polo, explore the history of a Jewish community which has its earliest roots in the 16th Century. Our tour combines the best of what Venice has to offer, both general and Jewish.

- Arrival at Venice Marco Polo Airport
- Transfer to Venice and tour by **gondolas**, including the **Rialto Bridge** and the **Bridge of Sighs**
- Visit **San Marco Square**
- Tour of the **Ghetto Novo** (the New Ghetto) and **Ghetto Vecchio** (Old Ghetto), the **Jewish Museum** and the **Levantine and Sepharadi synagogues**.
- Transfer to hotel
- Welcome dinner at Gam Gam Kosher restaurant in the heart of the Ghetto.



Overnight: NH Venezia Santa Lucia Hotel , Venice (or equivalent)

Monday, November 9 **The Merchant of Venice**

Venice is situated on 118 different islands separated by canals. Today we'll visit the 8 islands that make up Murano, a center for glassmaking since the 13th Century and Burano, known for its lacework and its brightly colored houses. We will also meet with an author and leader of the Venice Jewish community, Riccardo Calimani. (Pending availability)



- Transfer by boat to **Murano**. Visit one of Murano's glass factories
- Continue to the colorful island of **Burano** for a tour and an opportunity to visit its acclaimed lace workshops and colorful houses.
- Return to Venice to meet **Riccardo Calimani**, leader of the Jewish community of Venice, historian of Italian Jewry and author of *The Venice Ghetto* (Pending confirmation).

- Dinner: Ba'Ghetto Ristorante.

Overnight: NH Venezia Santa Lucia Hotel , Venice (or equivalent)

Tuesday, November 10 *The Venetian Islands*

- Depart Venice and travel to Ferrara, which provided refuge for many refugees from the Spanish Inquisition and became a major Jewish center. In Ferrara we will visit the site of the medieval ghetto and the Sephardi synagogue, as well as the **Museum of Italian Judaism and the Holocaust**.
- Continue across the Alpenine Mountains to Florence, the birthplace of the Renaissance and the Medici Dynasty, which was home to Leonardo De Vinci, Michaelangelo and Boticelli as well as a thriving Jewish community.

- Afternoon arrival in Florence and of the city from the **Piazalle Michelangelo**

Overnight: Grand Hotel Cavour, Florence



Wednesday, November 11 *To Florence*

- Walking tour of central Florence, including the **Piazza Duomo, Batisterium, Piazza Della Signora, Ponte Vecchio** and the **San Lorenzo Market**
- Continue to the **Galleria Accademia** to view its masterpieces, including the stunning *David* statue and the four statues of **the Slaves**
- Visit **the Great Synagogue**.
- Gallery tour of the Uffizi Galleries, one of the great art museums of the world.
- Evening: Dinner at "Ba'ghetto" and evening **with Rabbi Joseph Levi, Chief Rabbi of Florence and Shulamit Furstenberg-Levi**, scholar of Medieval and Modern Italy for an appraisal of contemporary Italian anti-Semitism, the standing of Israel and the future of the Italian Jewish community.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Cavour, Florence

Thursday, November 12 *Tuscany*



- Depart Florence for **Pisa** to explore the famous **Leaning Tower** (the bell tower of the Cathedral), the Cathedral and its **Baptistry**
- Continue for **Siena**, Tuscany's loveliest medieval city.
- Visit the central piazza, **Il Campo**, famous for its **Palio** horse race run around the piazza
 - Explore the **Duomo**, including the Cathedral roof.
- **Visit a Chianti winery for a wine tasting and aperitivo**

aperitivo (Italian light dinner with focaccia, Italian cheeses, olives...).

Overnight: Siena TBD

Friday, November 13

(Little) Jerusalem in Italy and Kabbalat Shabbat in Rome

Rich in history, encompassing the ancient, modern, urban, artistic and bucolic, Tuscany represents a journey of leisure, pleasure, and above all, discovery – thus ItalyGuides describes this magical area. Travelers familiar with Israel and Italy compare the Galilee's beauty with that of Tuscany.



- Travel to **Pitigliano**, *La Piccola Gerusalemme* (Little Jerusalem). This mountaintop town was the center of Jewish life in Tuscany for a thousand years. Tour its **synagogue, mikveh, matza bakery** and take in its stupendous views
- Transfer to **Rome**
- Late afternoon – free time and Shabbat preparations. Candle lighting: 4:25 PM
- Kabbalat Shabbat with the local Jewish community
- Shabbat Dinner with members of the community.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome

Shabbat, November 14

Shabbat in Rome

Capital of the modern state of Italy, seat of the Vatican and capital of the ancient Roman empire, this city is a feast to the eyes and spirit. The well-preserved remains of the one of the ancient capitals

of Western Civilization and modern monuments thrill the visitor. Our walking tour today allows us to get a taste of the city which we will explore for the next three days.

Shabbat will be a time to relax (a bit), to explore on your own and to get to know the Jewish community of Rome, with services in the Great Synagogue and walking tours to additional sites in this enchanting city.

- Join the morning services at the **Great Synagogue**
- Shabbat Lunch TBD.
- Walking tour of the main squares of the city center including **Piazza Espania, the Trevi Fountain, Phanteon** and **Piazza Navona**
- **Walking tour to the Forum and view the Arch of Titus** with its image of the ransacking and burning the Temple in Jerusalem and leading Jewish captives off into exile.
- **Discussion: Rome and Jerusalem and havdala 5:34 PM**
- Evening free or cultural program.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome



Sunday, November 15

Castelli Romani

Today we will tour the **Colosseum**. Built by **Emporer Vespasian**, conqueror of Jerusalem and the Roman commander credited with burning the ancient Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. Vespasian built this large structure – the largest of its size in the world – from proceeds from the sacking of the treasury of the Temple. **Visit the Arch of Titus and the Catacombs of Vigna Randanini, the oldest Jewish burial site in Europe.**



*South of Rome is a region of **green hills** and **volcanic lakes** known as **Castelli Romani**. Since the early days of Rome this area has been a green refuge from city life. Today modern Romans come here on hot summer weekends. We will visit this area and some of its most outstanding ancient and Medieval sites.*

- **Visit the picturesque village of Nemi, a Medieval town on the shores of Lake Nemi.**
- View **Lake Albano** in the mouth of an extinct volcano.
- Visit the town of **Tivoli** and tour the magnificent **Villa D'Esti**, whose magnificent Renaissance buildings, gardens and fountains are a UNESCO world heritage site.
- Return to Rome for free evening.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome

Monday, November 16

Pompeii

The elegant and incredibly well-preserved villas of Pompeii display vibrant frescoes, mosaic, and courtyards which attest to the opulence of everyday life in Ancient Rome. Only nine years after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem, Pompeii was itself engulfed by a volcanic eruption that froze it for eternity, together with traces of a Jewish diasporic community which was deeply interwoven with Roman society.

- Today we set off on a true archeological adventure, departing Rome on the super-fast (1 hr 20 min) train to Naples, then continuing to Pompeii and Mt.Vesuvius, returning by train to Rome.
- **Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome**

Tuesday, November 17

Christian and Ancient Rome

Ancient Rome was and is the seat of the Vatican whose Popes saw themselves as the “New Israel”. Today we will explore some of its sites and the institutions that played a major role in shaping our Jewish and western world history.



- Visit **Vatican City** including the **Vatican Museums** with the famous ceiling of the **Sistine Chapel**, **Vatican Square** and **Saint Peter’s Cathedral**.
- Visit the **Statue of Moses** by *Michelangelo* in **San Pietro in Vincoli Cathedral**
- Concluding program at the **Arch of Titus**.
- Final dinner at Ba Ghetto.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Palatino or Mediteraneo (or similar), Rome

Wednesday, November 18

Rome and Jerusalem

- Transfer to Rome’s Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport for ITA’s 10:15 AM direct flight to Boston.

This itinerary is proprietary to Keshet and is intended for the promotion of and to inform those considering joining this Keshet trip. It is not to be transmitted to any other party without prior authorization from Keshet.



HEBREW COLLEGE ITALY TOUR

November 8 – November 18, 2026

in partnership with

Keshet
Educational Tourism



Boston

Day 1 Departure

Days 2-3 Venice

Rialto Bridge
& Jewish Ghetto

Days 4-5 Florence & Tuscany

Duomo, Pisa & Siena

France

Adriatic Sea

**Day 6 "Little Jerusalem"
and Shabbat in Rome**

**Day 7-9 Rome
and Pompeii**

➤ **Day 1 Departure**

➤ **Days 2-3 Venice**
Jewish Ghetto & Islands

➤ **Days 4-5 Florence & Tuscany**
Renaissance & Countryside

➤ **Day 6 "Little Jerusalem" Pitigliano
and Shabbat in Rome**

➤ **Days 7-9 Rome and Pompeii**

➤ **Day 10 Return**