

Between Rome and Jerusalem- An Inspiration Tour of Ancient and Contemporary Italy and its Jewish History
November 7 –18, 2026

Prepared for Hebrew College by Keshet Educational Journeys

With Rabbi Dr. Leonard Gordon and Professor Jeffrey Woolf

10 Jun 26

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

Saturday Night, November 7 **Departure**

- Recommended Flight: Swiss Flight 53 departing Boston at 9:50pm.

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 in Zurich at 11:10am.
- Transfer to Swiss Flight 1662 departing at 1:05pm. Arrival in Venice at 2:10pm.
- Meet your Keshet staff at the airport.
- Transfer to Venice and tour by **gondolas**, including the **Rialto Bridge** and the **Bridge of Sighs**
- Visit **San Marco Square**
- Transfer to hotel for check-in and time to freshen up.
- Welcome dinner at Gam Gam Kosher restaurant in the heart of the Ghetto. Opening Framing with Prof. Woolf.



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



Monday, November 9 **The Venetian Islands**

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.

- Breakfast at hotel
- Tour of the **Ghetto Nuovo** (the New Ghetto) and **Ghetto Vecchio** (Old Ghetto), the **Jewish Museum** and the **Levantine and Sephardi synagogues**.
- Transfer by boat to Murano. Visit one of **Murano's glass factories**.
- Lunch break (on own)
- 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 *Storia del ghetto di Venezia* (The Venice Ghetto) (*Pending confirmation*).
- Dinner at Ba'Ghetto Ristorante.
Overnight: NH Venezia Santa Lucia Hotel , Venice (or equivalent)

Tuesday, November 10

Ferrera

- Breakfast at hotel, check-out and depart.
 - 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**.
 - Lunch break (on own)
 - Continue across the Apennine Mountains to **Florence**, the birthplace of the Renaissance and the Medici Dynasty, which was home to Leonardo Da Vinci, Michelangelo and Botticelli as well as a thriving Jewish community.
 - Afternoon arrival in Florence and outlook of the city from the **Piazzale Michelangelo**. *On site learning with Rabbi Gordon: Pico della Mirandola: Renaissance Humanist and Christian Kabbalist*
 - Check-in at hotel.
 - Dinner and evening at leisure.
- Overnight: Grand Hotel Cavour, Florence (or equivalent)**



Wednesday, November 11

Tuscany: To Florence

- Breakfast at hotel.
- Walking tour of central Florence, including the **Piazza Duomo, Batistero, Piazza Della Signoria, Ponte Vecchio and the San Lorenzo Market**
- Continue to the **Galleria d'ell Accademia** to view its masterpieces, including the stunning David statue and the four statues of the Slaves.
- Lunch break (on own)
- Visit the **Great Synagogue**.
- Highlights Gallery tour of the **Uffizi Galleries**, one of the great art museums of the world.
- 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 (or equivalent)

Thursday, November 12

Tuscany: Pisa & Siena

- Breakfast at hotel, check-out and depart.
- Travel to **Pisa** to explore the famous **Leaning Tower** (the bell tower of the Cathedral), the Cathedral and its Baptistry
- Continue to **Siena**, Tuscany's loveliest medieval city.
- Visit the central piazza, **Il Campo**, famous for its Palio horse race run around the piazza
- Lunch break (on own)
- Explore the **Duomo**, including the Cathedral roof.
- Visit a Chianti winery for a wine tasting and aperitivo (Italian light dinner with focaccia, Italian cheeses, olive and more).
- Check-in at hotel.

Overnight: Siena TBA

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.

- Breakfast at hotel, check-out and depart.
- 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
- Lunch break (on own)
- Transfer to Rome
- Late afternoon – free time and Shabbat preparations.
- Candle lighting: 4:25 PM
- Kabbalat Shabbat with the local Jewish community at the Great Synagogue.
- Shabbat Dinner at BaGhetto Kosher Restaurant

Overnight: Kolbe Hotel, Rome (or equivalent)



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.

- Breakfast at the hotel.
- Late morning study session with Rabbi Gordon: “Traitors or Heroes: Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai, Josephus and Jewish responses to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70CE”
- Shabbat Lunch TBD.
- Walking tour of the main squares of the city center including **Piazza di Spagna, the Trevi Fountain, Pantheon, and Piazza Navona**
- Group Havdala at 5:34 PM followed by lecture with Prof. Woolf: “How Judah Maccabee founded Italian Jewry”.
- Evening: At leisure or optional cultural program TBA.

Overnight: Kolbe Hotel, Rome (or equivalent)

Sunday, November 15

Castelli Romani

- Breakfast at the hotel
- This morning we will tour the **Colosseum**. Built by Emperor 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 Medieval Synagogue and Jewish Hospital.
- Lunch break (on own) and free time.
- Visit the **Catacombs of Vigna Randanini**, the oldest Jewish burial site in Europe.
- Lecture with Prof. Woolf.
- Dinner and evening at leisure.



Overnight: Kolbe Hotel, Rome (or equivalent)

Monday, November 16

Pompeii

- Breakfast at hotel.
- Today we set off on a true archeological adventure, departing Rome on the super-fast (1 hr 20 min) train to Naples, then continuing by private bus to **Pompeii** located at the foot of Mt. Vesuvius.
- We will explore the elegant and incredibly well-preserved **villas** displaying vibrant **frescoes, mosaics, 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. Visit the “Doctor’s House”.
- Lunch break (on own)
- Return to Naples to take the train back to Rome.

- Dinner and evening at leisure.
Overnight: Kolbe Hotel, Rome (or equivalent)

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.



- Breakfast at the hotel.
- 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 Basilica**.
- Lunch break (on own)
- Walking tour to the **Forum** and view the **Arch of Titus** with its image of the Roman soldiers carrying the Menorah from the ransacked Temple of Jerusalem.
- Concluding program-“Am Yisrael Chai” at the **Arch of Titus**.
- Final dinner at BaGhetto Restaurant

Overnight: Kolbe Hotel, Rome (or equivalent)

Wednesday, November 18

Rome and Jerusalem

- Breakfast at hotel
- Transfer to Rome’s Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport.
- [Lufthansa Flight 1867](#) departing FCO at 12:20pm. Arrival in Munich at 1:55pm.
- [Transfer to Lufthansa Flight 424](#) departing at 4:05pm. Arrival in Boston at 6:35pm. (Recommend Flight)
- Listed activities and speakers and hotels are subject to confirmation.
- All breakfasts plus underlined meals are included in the package price.
- 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

Activity Level-Please note that we will be spending most days exploring on our feet, often through medieval alleyways and cobble stone streets. Stairs are often unavoidable.

Note for single travelers: This program offers a warm and welcoming atmosphere for those travelling with friends or on their own. The atmosphere you'll find is of learning and experiencing in the company of a small group of individual friends. There is a good chance that you will not be the only person without a travel partner. You may wish to have your own room, in which case the single supplement is noted on the pricing. However, if you prefer to save this fee we'll try to match you up with another solo traveler. Just let us know that you'd like a roommate when registering.



המכללה העברית
**HEBREW
COLLEGE**

ITALY TOUR
November 8 – 18, 2026



Day 1 Departure
Boston

Days 2-3 Venice
Rialto Bridge & Jewish Ghetto

Days 4-5 Florence & Tuscany
Duomo, Pisa & Siena

Day 6 "Little Jerusalem" and Shabbat in Rome

Day 7-9 Rome and Pompeii

France
Adriatic Sea

- ➔ 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