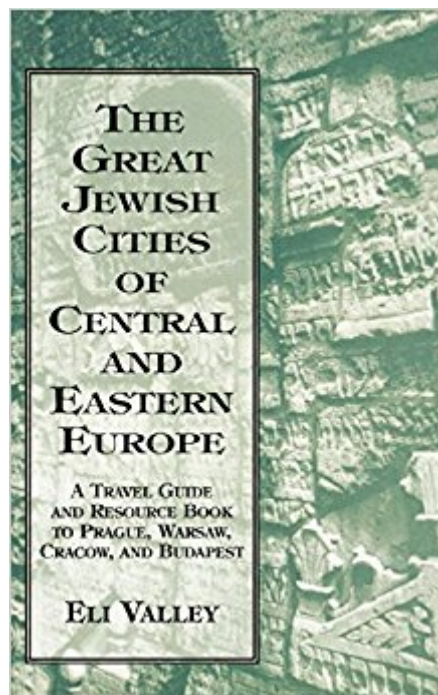




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# Great Jewish Cities Of Central And Eastern Europe: A Travel Guide & Resource Book To Prague, Warsaw, Crakow & Budapest



## Synopsis

The Great Jewish Cities of Central and Eastern Europe: A Travel Guide and Resource Book to Prague, Warsaw, Cracow, and Budapest is the most comprehensive guidebook covering all aspects of Jewish history and contemporary life in Prague, Warsaw, Cracow, and Budapest. This remarkable book includes detailed histories of the Jews in these cities, walking tours of Jewish districts past and present, intensive descriptions of Jewish sites, fascinating accounts of local Jewish legend and lore, and practical information for Jewish travelers to the region. The Great Jewish Cities of Central and Eastern Europe is much more than a tour guide. It is a rich storybook filled with illuminating gleanings from all aspects of Jewish culture in the region: inspiring legends from the streets of Jewish Cracow; a secret glimpse at the former facade of a Prague synagogue; strolls atop a buried Medieval synagogue in Budapest; a virtual reality tour of Warsaw's former Jewish quarter. The author combines experience in several disciplines to elucidate all aspects of Jewish history in these cities, from architectural history to religious symbolism. The entire history of Jewish life, including local traditions and contemporary anecdotes is covered. In addition, The Great Jewish Cities of Central and Eastern Europe is also a practical sourcebook essential for the Jewish traveler, containing information ranging from kosher restaurants to the prayer times and service descriptions of active synagogues in the region. Whether it's an ancient legend or a description of a kosher restaurant, Eli Valley describes the topic in a style that is both enthusiastic and easy to read. The author's years of experience in the region give him an insight into the local Jewish communities rarely seen by the outside world. In spite of the renewed accessibility of Jewish sites, local tour guides are not well-versed in the history of Jewish compatriots, and guide books include only sparse, misleading information about the Jewish sites. The unfortu

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## Customer Reviews

Valley, an experienced tour guide, takes readers through the sites, history, and cultures of cities important to European Jewish history. Close to 100 pages for each locale, in-depth itineraries focus on history and present-day culture, adding some lodging and dining recommendations. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

"This beautiful and melancholy book is more than a guide to great Jewish cities: it is a book of tales." -- Elie Wiesel, author and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

This book covers information for all four cities we will be visiting on our Road Scholar trip. Author seems very knowledgeable.

This book is a gem! I pick it up and settle down in my chair and am transported in time and place to Eastern Europe. I was in Prague before I read the book (it had not been published yet) and now when I read the Prague sections everything comes to life. Mr. Valley has a way with words. He supplies the reader with his dense knowledge of his subject in an easy to read, matter of fact style. I would recommend this book to anyone whether or not they are planning to travel to the cities described. I am eagerly awaiting his next book.

This book is tremendous in size and tremendous in style of writing, history, background and cultural enlightenment. Mr. Valley is a historian, a story-teller, a tour guide, and linguist extraordinaire. This book is a fountain of information on all things pertaining to the Jews of Central and Eastern Europe. While I am not Jewish, I found a lot of the history and legends fascinating. I even learned many new Hebrew words and expressions. I particularly found the history of each synagogue interesting. Mr. Valley really shows off his knowledge in this respect, as the back of the book reveals he is the son of a rabbi. I especially liked the parts regarding the Old and New cemeteries of Krakow. Suffice it to say, One can be easily absorbed in just one of the cities covered in this book (there are four: Prague, Warsaw, Cracow, Budapest) for many hours. In fact, although I have never been to Poland, my husband has been three times, I know more about the city of Krakow than he does! I happen to be referring to the Hardcover edition of this book and it is a very heavy, long, and detailed book ( I

might add that the print size on the page is quite small and I needed my reading glasses to see it comfortably). Plus, I am not sure, given all the new carry on regulations on planes, that it would be practical to lug it around on a trip. But, perhaps if it were a kindle book? I thoroughly enjoyed this book. I used it as a resource for a project I am working on. For someone like myself, who has very little knowledge of the Jewish culture in Krakow or Warsaw, but who wants to know more, this book was indispensable.

When I purchased this book for a recent visit to Prague and Cracow, I thought it would simply point me to the places of Jewish interest. To my delight, the book did so much more. It's filled with stories, anecdotes, and insider information that made our trip a personally uplifting experience. I had no idea there was so much to still see in these cities. My only complaint is that the book is so big - over 500 pages - that it can become a burden for light travelers. But it's a must-read for any visitor who wishes to see and to learn about how the Jews lived in Europe throughout the centuries. We returned from Europe last week, and I'm still re-reading the book for the memories.

I picked this book up from a friend's bookshelf intending to flip through the pages. I ended up taking it home with me and reading it from cover to cover. It's well written and filled with a great deal of fascinating history. Not having ever been to the cities mentioned in the book, I can't comment on the accuracy of the tourist information. But this book would be of interest to anyone who has a curiosity about the history of Jewish life in eastern Europe. If it's ever reprinted, photographs would make it even better.

Having known Eli many years ago at University, I couldn't wait to read this book to re-establish spiritual contact. What I wasn't prepared for was the depth and passion that Eli had written on the subject. This is a masterpiece that once you have picked up you will not put down until you have seen the cities and experienced the tours first hand. My only regret is that the vast majority of those reading this book may never actually visit Prague.

I was lucky to find this book in the library and used it extensively while in Warsaw, Cracow and Prague. The detail is incredible, the writing style excellent with a hint of humor. This book -made- my trip so I'm buying my own copy. If you take this book to Europe with you don't bother hiring a guide or taking a tour. It has more than any individual could offer.

For anyone interested in the Jewish history of Eastern Europe, this book is compulsory. It also presents conceptual and detailed history of over a thousand years and up-to-date descriptions of what the traveller will find now. Don't leave it behind despite its heft.

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