

Jewish Federation of Greater Kansas City mission to Bulgaria, Romania & Greece

March 2020

Tentative Itinerary



JDC.org

Day 1 Friday, March 13 **Sofia, Bulgaria**

Arrive in Sofia; transfer from airport

Shabbat dinner with Jewish communal leadership

Check in and overnight at Best Western City Plus hotel

Day 2 Saturday, March 14 **Sofia, Bulgaria**

Breakfast at hotel

Shabbat services at Central Sofia Synagogue with Rabbi Yoel Yifrah and Sofia Cohen, Chair of the Bulgaria Religious Council

The Central Sofia Synagogue, which is an enduring symbol of Bulgarian Judaism, dates back to 1909. It was declared a cultural monument in 1955. The famous Judaica library of the Sofia community with its priceless collection of medieval rabbinic responsa was also located in the Synagogue. The synagogue remains active to this day, with weekly services and cultural and community events.

Shabbat lunch at the Beit Ha'am Jewish Community Building

Bet Ha'am focuses on programming for the elderly, including a soup kitchen with daily kosher hot lunches; a Day Center, which offers medical care, rehabilitation services and social activities; a Golden Age Club with lectures, concerts, and Hebrew and Ladino song nights, Jewish choir; and Manos Bendichos ("Blessed Hands"), where women to knit and sew Judaica items together, in the Sephardic tradition.

Walking tour of Sofia with local community member and guide

Havdalah as a group followed by dinner at a TBD restaurant in Sofia

Return to Best Western City Plus hotel

Day 3 Sunday, March 15

Sofia, Bulgaria

Tour Gan Balagan Kindergarten - Meet Preschool Director

The Sofia community inaugurated a new Jewish preschool and kindergarten in the Beit Shalom JCC in 2010 called Gan Balagan. It is the first Jewish preschool to open its doors in the city in more than half a century and has been serving some 65 children, ages two to six and the number grows every year.

Lunch at a TBD restaurant in Sofia

Visit the new Ronald S. Lauder Jewish Day School in Sofia

88 children enrolled in preschool and grades 1-5. 25% are on scholarship. The mission of the school is to provide high-quality education and shape the future members and leaders of the community, who the school hopes will be lifelong learners and active community members. The main values taught to children are Tikkun Olam, Freedom and Respect (toward one another, the environment, etc.). Every month will be devoted to learning a specific value, which will be incorporated into the different classes. The school offers 10 hours a week of Hebrew and Jewish experiential learning, and Shabbat and Jewish holidays are celebrated.

Afternoon bus to Thessaloniki, Greece, sister city of Tel Aviv

Dinner at a TBD restaurant in Thessaloniki; overnight at Excelsior Hotel

Day 4 Monday, March 16

Thessaloniki, Greece

Breakfast / Meet with former 2-term Thessaloniki Mayor Yiannis Boutaris

"For 500 years Jews were a huge part of the fabric and culture of Thessaloniki," he says. Mayor Boutaris pinned a yellow Star of David to his jacket when he was being sworn in for a second term.

Visit Jewish Museum and Monasteriotes Synagogue

Lunch in Thessaloniki

Visit freight train station where Jews were deported to death camps

Transfer to airport for afternoon flight to Bucharest

Day 5 Tuesday, March 17

Bucharest, Romania

Breakfast

JDC briefing and in- depth discussion on Romanian Jewish community



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Depart to Rosen Home

Rosen Home for the Aged- meet the director and visit with clients

Learn more about the projects developed for them, to engage in stimulating activities, such as the theatre club.

Lunch

General touring of Bucharest

Dinner with leaders of the Jewish community

Overnight at Hilton Garden Inn City Center

Day 6 Wednesday, March 18

Bucharest, Romania

Breakfast

Visit the Jewish Kindergarten Gan Eden

Meet the director Dalia Golda and hear her story about, with the help of JDC she turned her dream of opening a Jewish kindergarten into reality.

Visit the Welfare Department and hear of the various programs supporting children in need

Lunch in the Kosher cafeteria

Home visits; Jewish touring of Bucharest

Visit Bucharest JCC, meet staff, tour facility and participate in activities

Find out more about the educational and social programs organized for each age group

Dinner with young leaders and participants of JDC's Pan European programs such as Szarvas, Leatid, and Junction

Early to bed at Hilton Garden Inn

Day 7 Thursday, March 19

Bucharest, Romania

Early departure for Bucharest Airport; 6 a.m. flight to Munich

JDC receives significant funding support from Jewish Federations across North America through cooperation with JFNA. Major funding partners also include: the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, the Maurice and Vivienne Wohl Charitable Foundation, the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation, World Jewish Relief (UK), and tens of thousands of generous individual donors and foundations.



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