



Jewish itineraries

Discovering a charming face of Trieste.



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On a discovery tour of Jewish Trieste

In the heart of the city

The ghetto

The itinerary in the “Jewish” heart of Trieste can start nowhere else but in the ghetto, which stretches behind the main square called *piazza Unità d'Italia*, one of the most suggestive and largest “balconies” overlooking the sea, in the world.



In the adjacent **piazza della Borsa (Stock Exchange Square)**, historically the economic fulcrum of the city, you will access, through **via Poetizza**, an intricate maze of narrow streets full of antiquity shops and second-hand book stores. On imagining these streets populated by Jewish merchants, with their ware randomly laid out, in a swarming of colours and voices, you will no longer find the expression “*ghettoing*” strange, an expression that *Triestini*, that is the inhabitants of Trieste, use to mean “making noise, confusion”. So, no negative connotation: here, the word ghetto, does not recall concepts of separation and margination.

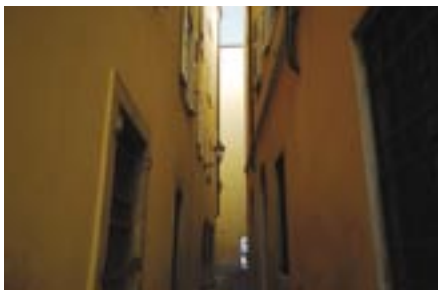
The old ghetto and the Riborgo ghetto

It was almost a historical compromise, between the Town Authority and the Austrian Imperial delegate - who shared the power of authority in Trieste - to bow to a minority of patricians who did not tolerate the economic evolution of the Jews, imposing the institution, in 1695, of a ghetto.

But in the Trauner ghetto, now called **the old ghetto**, the 11 Jewish families - about seventy people - just did not want to stay: too narrow and damp. They objected with protests asking for respite. Consequently an alternative solution was found: the **Riborgo ghetto**, where you are now, the commercial centre of the town where the Jews of German origin, the Ashkenazi, had originally settled two centuries earlier.

There is only one small part of this area left, as it was demolished in the Thirties during the slum-clearance works.

In the ghetto there were three synagogues,



called *scole*, which represented the heart of religious life.

Already in 1785, Emperor Joseph II, following the indications of his tolerant predecessor Maria Teresa, officially abolished the ghetto, after having also cancelled any markings (like the yellow O that the Jews had to wear on their clothing): the experience and the enterprising spirit of the Jewish community were fundamental for the mercantilist policy followed by the Hapsburg Empire, where Trieste took on a fundamental role upon being elected as **free port** in 1719.



As you turn into **via del Teatro Romano**, you will understand the **demolishing works carried out in the Thirties**, in order to build the Fasces House (the current Police headquarters) and to enlarge the Roman Theatre, overlooking the road.



Mansions Hirschel de Minerbi and Treves

Going up **corso Italia**, at number 9 the neoclassic **palazzo Hirschel de Minerbi** stands out, bearing the name of the rich Jewish trader who had it built in 1833. On the other side of the street, on the corner with **via Dante**, there is a completely different building: the eclectic **mansion** which was once the property of the **Treves** family, whose descendants founded the publishing house, bearing the same name, in Milan in 1861.

Via del Monte

Enter into **via del Monte**, which climbs up towards San Giusto hill: breathe the particular atmosphere of this very important place in the life of the Jewish community, celebrated also by the writings of **Umberto Saba**, an important Italian writer and poet of Jewish origin.

At the top of the street, the **ancient cemetery** arose in 1446, which was used for 400 years.

The Scola Vivante, the Israelite temple following the Spanish rite, was located at street numbers 3 and 5 where at present the Primary school of the Community is located.

The museum “Carlo and Vera Wagner”

Still in **via del Monte**, at number 5/7, there is the **“Carlo and Vera Wagner” museum of the Jewish Community** where you can obtain



more information on the history and the social life of the Jews in Trieste. The building was used as a hospital and in the Thirties as the head office of the Jewish Agency which dealt with the European Jews coming to Trieste to board the ships bound to Israel or the United States. In the different rooms inside the current museum, a small Ashkenazi-Polish synagogue was built, which is still in use.

Times: Sundays from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm and from 5.00 pm to 8.00 pm; Tuesdays from 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm; Wednesdays from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm and from 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm; Thursdays from 10.00 am to 1.00 pm and from 4.00 pm to 7.00 pm

Closed on Saturdays and on Jewish holidays
Tel. +39 040 633819 (also for guided visits)
museumcarloeverawagner@triestebraica.it

The curiosity

Cosmopolitan Trieste, even in the Jews rites

The first Jews who arrived in Trieste, between the 14th and 15th centuries, were of **German origin**: the so-called Ashkenazi. Then the Sephardi Jews arrived from Spain following their expulsion in 1492, then in 18th century those who were attracted by the freedom that the free port reached Trieste and, in 19th century, those who escaped from the *pogrom* on the Greek island of Corfu. All these different origins found expression in **distinct rites**: before the current synagogue was built, in 1912, there were four, smaller ones, two following the German cult and two the Spanish cult.

The Vivante mansion

Now go down towards **piazza Benco**: at number 4 you will notice a large 18th century building. It is Casa Vivante that the Jewish Community used as a school until 1851. Trieste is different from other cities also in its early emancipation from strict rules for children's education: it was Joseph II, in 1781, who allowed the Jews to attend all public schools.

The Morpurgo museum

Going up corso Italia once again, you will cross via Imbriani: at number 5 you will find the Morpurgo Civic Museum. It is located inside a neo-Renaissance building and bears the same name as the family of rich bankers it belonged to and which was then donated to the Town authority. On the second floor there is a suggestive example of a late 19th century bourgeois house, in a magnificent alternation of styles and chromatics.



Times: from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm only on Sundays and Tuesdays.

1st and 3rd November from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm

Closed: 1st January, 25th April, 1st May, 15th August, 25th December and Easter

Tel. +39 040 636969 (to book guided visits)
tel. +39 040 6754480 on Mondays from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm and on Wednesdays from 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm, excluding holidays;
servizioidattico@comune.trieste.it,
fax +39 040 6754727)

Caffè San Marco

Reach piazza San Giovanni and then turn



into **via Battisti**: at number 18 there is the **historical** Caffè San Marco, with its interiors in Viennese style. Founded in 1914, it has always had Jewish clients. It was a meeting place for **famous intellectuals** as it still is nowadays; one of the habitués is the writer Claudio Magris.

The synagogue

In **via San Francesco**, at number 19, you will see the current synagogue: it was opened in 1912, and it is the point of reference for the Jewish community. The interior is bright, rich



in gold-coloured mosaics and friezes, which together with the starred cupola, highlight the Ark of the Covenant. It is reputedly known as **one of the most interesting temples of the age of emancipation** and it was built to unite the ancient synagogues into one single building.

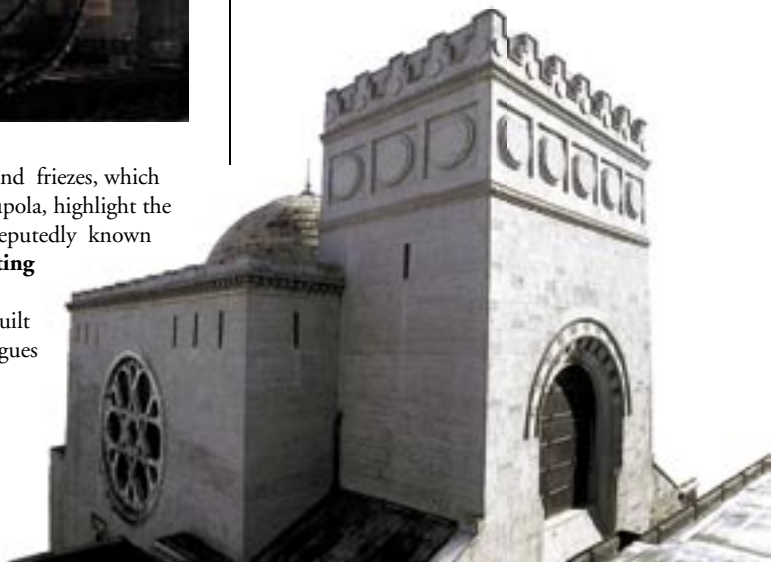


Open to the public for guided visits (payable) every Sunday morning from 10.00 - 11.00 - 12.00 and every Thursday afternoon at 3.30 - 4.30 - 5.30.

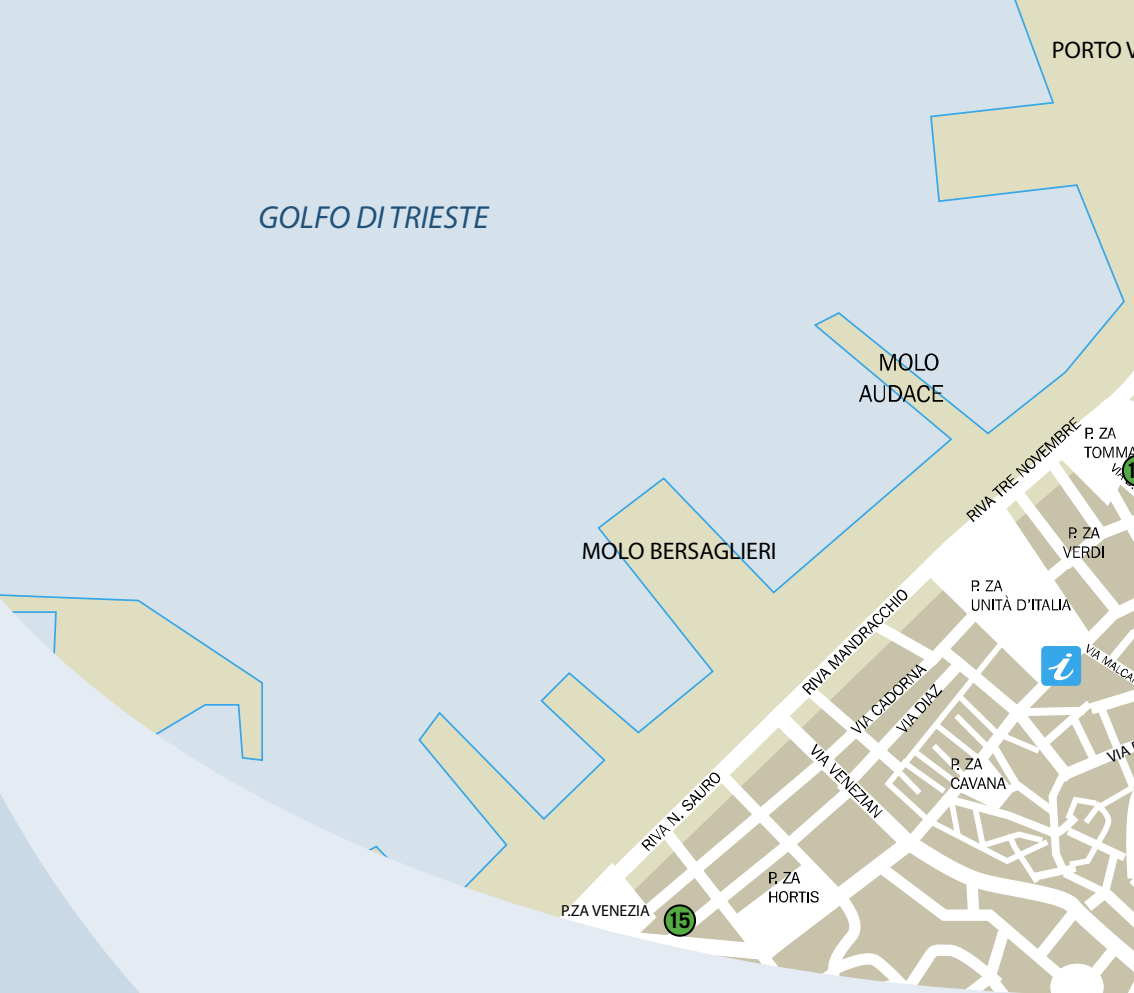
Booking is required for groups:

call +39 040 6726736

visitesinagoga@triestebraica.it



GOLFO DI TRIESTE



INFO POINT TURISMO FVG

Piazza Unità d'Italia 4/b

1

GHETTO

2

MANSION HIERSCHEL DE MINERBI

Corso Italia 9

3

MANSION TREVES

Corso Italia angolo Via Dante

4

VIA DEL MONTE

5

CARLO AND VERA WAGNER MUSEUM

Via del Monte 5/7

6

MANSION VIVANTE

Piazza Benco 4

7

MORPURGO MUSEUM

Via Imbriani 5

8

CAFFÈ SAN MARCO

Via Battisti 18

9

THE SYNAGOGUE

Via San Francesco 19



La Bomboniera pastry-shop

Reach via Carducci once again, turn into via di Torrebianca and then into via **xxx Ottobre**. At number 3, you will find yourself back in the mid-19th century: it was at that time that the Eppinger family decided to open a pastry shop for the making of *kosher cakes*, that means made according to the ritual rules and thus allowed.



It was nothing new for this Jewish family, who had already opened other confectionery shops, amongst which the pastry shop located at the entrance to the ghetto, almost half a century earlier. But we wonder if the Eppingers had imagined that La Bomboniera would become a real and proper confectionery temple and one of the oldest pastry shops in Italy. Nowadays we appreciate the historical furnishings and the delicious excellence of their products. Among these the *montino*, a Jewish cake to be tasted in February and March, for the *Purim* feast.



The Hirschel mansion

On entering in piazza Sant'Antonio, go towards the sea along **via Rossini**, which overlooks the Grand Canal: at number 14/16 you will see an imposing neo-Classical building standing out. It was built in 1825 by the Hirschel Jewish merchant family and it is the result of architect Butazzoni's talent.

The Carciotti mansion

On the sea front, on shore **III Novembre** 13, there is the **first and most original example of neoclassical style in Trieste**, a sort of forerunner of the future style of the town. Designed by the



architect Matteo Pertsch (pupil of the greatest maestro of the Italian Neoclassicism, Giuseppe Piermarini), it was the first head office of the insurance company **Assicurazioni Generali**, founded by the entrepreneur of Jewish origins, Giuseppe Lazzaro Morpurgo in 1831 together with a group of entrepreneurs from Trieste and Veneto and which is currently one of the highest ranking insurance companies in Europe and in the world.

Caffè Tommaseo



From shore III novembre, going back towards piazza Unità, you will come into piazza Tommaseo. At number 4 there is the Caffè Tommaseo, a historical café embellished by large mirrors and furnishings in Mittel-European style, built in 1824 by two rich tradesmen from Mantova, the brothers Felice and Vitale Vivante. Opened in 1830, it is the oldest café in Trieste, where you can still hear the echoes of historical and literary memories.



La Risiera di San Sabba (The San Sabba Rice Mill)

It has been given this name because it is located inside an old building used for rice hulling: the San Sabba Risiera is **the only extermination camp on Italian territory**. Here the Nazis interned the Jews, to then take them to the extermination camps in

Eastern Europe.

A cremation furnace had been built in this area, which the Germans destroyed before the end of the war. The site

was also used for the elimination of hostages, partisans, political prisoners and Jews. In 1965 the Risiera became a **national monument**.



Address: via Giovanni Palatucci, n. 5

Times: from 9.00 am to 7.00 pm

Closed: 1st January, 25th December

Tel. +39 040 826202 (to book guided visits:

tel. +39 040 6754480 on Mondays from 9.00 am to 1.00 pm and on Wednesdays from 1.00 pm to 5.00 pm, except holidays; fax +39 040 6754727)

servizioidattico@comune.trieste.it,



The Jewish cemetery

As you enter the cemetery, built in 1843 after the closing of the old cemetery in via del Monte, on your left you will see **the tombs of the most important Jewish families**. Like those of the Morpurgo, Morpurgo de Nilma and de Parente families, the latter being one of the oldest in Trieste, given that they had already been granted imperial privileges in the first half of the 17th century. Walking on, you will see, on your right, a funeral monument commemorating **the members of the Jewish community deported to the concentration camps**, during the Second World War. Walking among these ancient tombs surrounded by lush vegetation, is a unique experience.



Address: Via Della Pace n. 4

Times: Mondays and Thursdays from 8.00 am to 1.00 pm and from 3.00 pm to 6.00 pm

Fridays from 8.00 am to 12.30 pm

On Sundays from 8.00 am to 1.00 pm

Closed on Saturdays and on Jewish holidays

For guided visits tel. +39 040 6726736

Great Jewish artists and intellectuals

Artist and intellectuals of Jewish origin, who left indelible signs in the contemporary Italian panorama and not only, lived in Trieste.

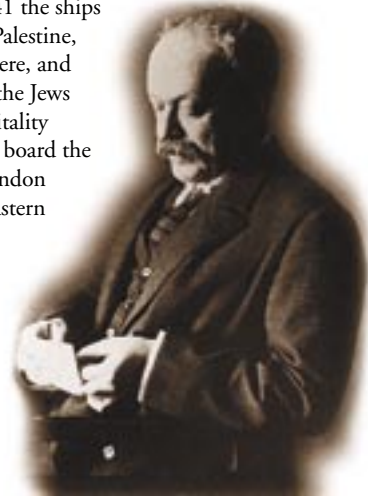
Enter the **Libreria antiquaria Umberto Saba** (via San Nicolò, 30; open during usual working times): the famous writer purchased



it after the First World War. The book-shop published, in 1921, the first edition of the *Canzoniere*, his masterpiece.

Admire the unmistakable style of this place: it was the framework of the poet's encounters with clients and intellectuals, occasions where preview readings of pages of his new creations were held. Saba also loved discussing about psychoanalysis and he was, in actual fact one of the first people in Italy to experiment it, thanks to **Edoardo Weiss**. This doctor from Trieste and of Jewish origins, was the first to bring, as his pupil, Freud's theories to Italy. Psychoanalysis constitutes the trait d'union also with the Jewish painter **Arturo Nathan**: in the Revoltella museum, an interesting modern art gallery, you may observe greatly suggestive self-portraits, which bear witness to the artist's inner evolution. In the museum you will also discover the portraits of other Jewish artists—like **Isidoro Grünhut** - who, from late 19th century to early 20th century, gave rise to what was defined as the “civilization of portraits”. One whole museum has been dedicated to the great writer **Italo Svevo**, also coming from a Jewish family, where you will discover, amongst other things, his letters and the original editions of his books.

Giorgio Voghera, poet of the vital Jewish community before the war, was instead obliged to seek refuge in Palestine, because of the racial laws. After the foundation of Israel, in fact, Trieste and its Community won the title of **Sion's Gate**: from the Twenties to 1941 the ships sailing towards Palestine, departed from here, and it was here that the Jews were given hospitality while waiting to board the ships and to abandon central and Eastern Europe.





Museo Revoltella

Via Diaz n. 27

Times: Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays,

Saturdays from 9.00 am to 6.00 pm

On Sundays from 10.00 am to 6.00 pm

Closed on Tuesdays

Tel. +39 040 675 4350 / 4158

Fax +39 040 675 4137

revoltella@comune.trieste.it

Museo sveviano (The Svevo Museum)

For information: tel. +39 040 6758182

Did you know?

Kosher bread, oil, wine, cheese and ice cream. Kosher because allowed, as they were prepared according to specific rituals. The Jewish Community in Trieste still has a range of references and stores where to buy these products, like the Saturday plaited bread (*challot*). You can also find cd's with traditional music of the town, and you can also visit, together with the rabbi, the Community Library as well as go to the La Lanterna, a seaside swimming location of ancient traditions which follows the needs of the most orthodox: here men and women are separated by a wall that is three metres high.

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Opening times and other information regarding the resources mentioned herein may be subjected to variation and all responsibilities, deriving thereby, are declined.

PHOTO:

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