THE CHASSIDIC ROUTE

The Chassidic Route is a tourist route following the traces of Jewish communities through southeastern Poland, and soon also western Ukraine. Twenty-three communities in which priceless reminders of a centuries-old Jewish presence have survived have already joined the project. These are: Baligród, Biłgoraj, Chełm, Cieszyn, Dębica, Dynów, Jarosław, Kraśnik, Lesko, Leżajsk (Lizhensk), Lublin, Łańcut, Łęczna, Przemyśl, Radomyśl Wielki, Ropczyce, Rymanów, Sanok, Tarnobrzeg, Ustrzyki Dolne, Wielkie Oczy, Włodawa and Zamość.

The Chassidic Route runs through many picturesque areas, like the Roztocze Hills or the Bieszczady Mountains, and joins localities where one can find imposing synagogues and Jewish cemeteries with gravestones dating back to the 18th, 17th or even the 16th century. Many of them are still visited by Chassidim from all over the world.

Within the framework of the Route, the Foundation supports local authorities and non-governmental organizations in protecting and promoting their townships’ multicultural heritage. Our aim is also to stimulate the development of dedicated tourism based on Jewish heritage through the establishment of permanent inter-sector partnerships.

The Chassidic Route gives many places in Poland the opportunity to appear on the map of tourist attractions. Apart from well-known Zamość, included on the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites, there are many places along the Route that are often omitted by tourists unaware of their significance.

*We invite you to take a trip along the Chassidic Route!*
WHY THE “CHASSIDIC ROUTE”?

For many centuries Poland was home to several generations of Jews as well as the scene of an unprecedented development of Jewish culture, religious thought and writing. It was here that Chassidism, one of the most important currents ever to come into being within Judaism emerged in the 18th century. Chassidism gained particularly many supporters in eastern Poland, including territories through which the Chassidic Route runs today.

It is traditionally believed that the creator of Chassidism (in Hebrew, chassid means “pious”) was Israel Ben Eliezer of Medzhybizh in Podolia (today, a region of the Ukraine), known as the Baal Shem Tov. Chassidim believed that religion could not be limited to the strict observance of the commandments of Judaism, and that obeying them in too literal a manner could even distance man from God. They therefore strongly emphasized the emotional experience of faith.

Chassidim concentrated around tzadikim (in Hebrew, tzadik means “the righteous one”), charismatic spiritual leaders, each of whom preached a distinct way of approaching God: specific ways of studying religious texts and celebrating rituals. Some tzadikim became famous for their theories, for example that prayers would be heard by God only if shouted or accompanied by dancing. In the 19th century the post of tzadik became hereditary, which led to the creation of whole dynasties, taking their names from the towns where tzadikim courts took root.

On yartzeit, or the anniversary of a tzadik’s death, Chassidim gather round the tzadik’s grave, believing that on this day the rabbi’s soul visits his place of rest. They pray and leave kvitlech – pieces of paper bearing their requests – on the tzadik’s tomb. This tradition is still alive and Chassidim from all over the world still regularly visit the graves of tzadikim in Dynów, Leżajsk, Ropczyce or Rymanów.

However, not all the places along the Chassidic Route were centers of the Chassidic movement. Tzadik “courts” existed in Cieszanów, Dębica, Dynów, Lesko, Leżajsk, Lublin, Łańcut, Przemyśl, Ropczyce, Rymanów and Tarnobrzeg (or, more precisely, in nearby Dzików). The most important center of Chassidism in Poland was Leżajsk, where the famous tzadik Elimelech was active. Other places along the Route were home to smaller groups of Chassidim, affiliated with tzadikim from other towns and villages. This, however, does not reduce the appeal of the Jewish heritage sites located there.
Jarosław
- two synagogues built in the 19th c.
- 3 Ordynacka St. and 12 Opolska St.
- building of the Yad Charuzim Society
- 1 Tarnowskiego Sq.
- cemetery founded at the beginning of the 18th c.; Kruhel Pełkinski St.

Leżajsk (Lizhensk)
- cemetery founded in the 18th c.; resting place of Tzadik Elimelech of Leżajsk/Lizhensk (1717–1787), pilgrimage destination for Chassidim from all over the world
- Górna St.

Łańcut
- Baroque synagogue built in the 18th c.
- 16 Jana III Sobieskiego Sq.
- cemetery founded in the 17th c.; resting place of Tzadik Naftali Tzvi Horowitz of Ropczyce (1760–1827) and Eleazar Shapiro of Łańcut (d. 1865), the founder of the Dynów tzadik dynasty
- Stanisława Moniuszki St.

Dynów
- cemetery founded at the end of the 18th c.; resting place of Tzadik Tzvi Elimelech Shapiro of Dynów (1785–1841)
- Józefa Piłsudskiego St.

Przemyśl
- the so-called “new synagogue” erected at the beginning of the 20th c.
- 5 Linii Brzeskiej Sq.
- the so-called “new cemetery” founded at the beginning of the 19th c.; the largest Jewish cemetery in Podkarpackie province
- Juliusza Słowackiego St.

Ustrzyki Dolne
- cemetery on Mount Gromadzyń, founded in the 18th c.

Baligród
- cemetery founded at the beginning of the 18th c.
- Jana Duplaka St.

Lesko
- synagogue built in the 17th c.
- 16 Berka Joselewicza St.
- cemetery founded in the 16th c.; one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Europe
- Juliusza Słowackiego St.

Sanok
- the synagogue of the Yad Charuzim Society built in the 19th c.
- 5 Franciszkanska St.
- the Sadogóra synagogue erected in the interwar period
- 10 Rynek St.
- the so-called “new cemetery” founded in the 19th c.
- Kiczury St.
1. **Radomyśl Wielki**
   - Cemetery founded in the 19th c.
   - Kąty St.
   - The so-called “Teflówka”; former house of Rabbi Chaim Englam

2. **Ropczyce**
   - Synagogue founded in the 18th c.
   - Monte Cassino St.

3. **Dębica**
   - Synagogue built at the end of the 18th c.
   - 3 Krakowska St.
   - Cemetery founded at the turn of the 18th c.
   - Cmentarna St.

4. **Kraśnik**
   - Synagogue complex consisting of two synagogues built in the 17th and 19th c.
   - 6 and 6a Bóżnicza St.
   - The so-called “new cemetery” founded ca. 1850
   - Szewska St.

5. **Łęczna**
   - Great Synagogue, built in 1648
   - 19 Bóżnicza St.
   - The Small Synagogue, built at the beginning of the 19th c.
   - 21 Bóżnicza St.

6. **Łęczna**
   - Cemetery founded in the second half of the 18th c.
   - Wolczynski St.

7. **Włodawa**
   - Baroque synagogue complex erected in the second half of the 18th c.
   - 7 Czerwonego Krzyża St.
   - Cemetery founded in the 15th c.; one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Europe
   - Kolejowa St.

8. **Chełm**
   - The so-called “new synagogue” built at the beginning of the 20th c.
   - 8 Kopernika St.
   - Cemetery founded in 15th c.; one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Europe
   - Kolejowa St.

9. **Rymanów**
   - Baroque synagogue built in the 17th c.
   - Restored since 2005
   - Corner of Rynek and Ignacego Bieleckiego St.
   - Cemetery founded in the 16th c.; resting place of Tzadik Menachem Mendel of Rymanów (1745–1815)
   - Józefowo–Stawiskiego St.

10. **Kraśnik**
    - Synagogue complex consisting of two synagogues built in the 17th and 19th c.
    - 6 and 6a Bóżnicza St.
    - The so-called “new cemetery” founded ca. 1850
    - Szewska St.

11. **Łęczna**
    - The Great Synagogue, built in 1648
    - 19 Bóżnicza St.
    - The Small Synagogue, built at the beginning of the 19th c.
    - 21 Bóżnicza St.

12. **Ropczyce**
    - Synagogue founded in the 18th c.
    - Monte Cassino St.

13. **Dębica**
    - Synagogue built at the end of the 18th c.
    - 3 Krakowska St.
    - Cemetery founded at the turn of the 18th c.
    - Cmentarna St.

14. **Radomyśl Wielki**
    - Cemetery founded in the 19th c.
    - Kąty St.
    - The so-called “Teflówka”; former house of Rabbi Chaim Englam
    - 2 Tadeusza Kościuszki St.

15. **Tarnobrzeg**
    - Cemetery founded at the beginning of the 20th c.; resting place of Tzadik Eliezer Horowitz of Dzików (d. 1860)
    - Mani Dąbrowskiej St.

16. **Chełm**
    - The so-called “new synagogue” built at the beginning of the 20th c.
    - 8 Kopernika St.
    - Cemetery founded in the 15th c.; one of the oldest surviving Jewish cemeteries in Europe
    - Kolejowa St.