

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire



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By Michael Hoffman
With Jeanette R. Rosenberg

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JGSGB Education & Mentoring
JGSGB 33 Seymour Place London W1H 5AP

Email <education@jgsqb.org.uk>

Email <mentoring@jgsqb.org.uk>

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Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Introduction to Jewish Genealogical Resources in Turkey

This document has been created to help you to research your family in Turkey on both sides of the Bosphorus and in the former lands of the Ottoman Empire. It is said that the Jews have lived in this area for thousands of years and although very early records are hard to locate, it is still likely that if your family lived in this area, you will be able to locate information that will enable you to trace your ancestral town.

The Jews of central and eastern Turkey are of Kurdish stock, and those of western Turkey are of Ladino origin, descending from ancestors who came from Spain and Portugal, either as a result of the Inquisition, or earlier. These communities stuck together and often named their synagogues and communities after the areas they had originated from. Turks were not required to adopt surnames until 1927, but many Jewish families had adopted last names much earlier than this, and some trace back to Spain. First names tend to follow Sephardi tradition. Some of the oldest communal records are tax records, circumcision records and records relating to engagements and marriages, including dowries.

Can you help?

If you have any additional information for an update to this document, please send it to education@jgs.gb.org.uk

Avotaynu

As well as the information and links in this document, further information can be found in Avotaynu, the Jewish Genealogy journal, which may be consulted in the JGSGB Library. Avotaynu's website notes 22 separate articles about Jewish genealogy in Turkey for the years 1985 – to date. There are also separate chapters on researching in The Ottoman Empire and in Turkey in the Avotaynu Guide to Jewish Genealogy, see www.avotaynu.com/books/guide.htm. Additional articles may also be read online at www.avotaynuonline.com/category/sefardim/turkey.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Genealogy & Family History

Sephardic SIG	www.jewishgen.org/Sephardic
Sephardi Gen	www.sephardicgen.com
Turkey Jewish Genealogy Websites	www.jewishgen.org/Sephardic/turkey_sites.htm
Turkey Middle East Gen Web	www.genealogynation.com/middle-east/turkey.html
Family Search Research Wiki	https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Turkey_Genealogy
FS List of Helpful Websites	https://familysearch.org/learn/wiki/en/Turkey_Helpful_Websites
Istanbul Jewish Genealogy Project	www.dankazez.com/istanbul
Turkish Jewish Genealogy Portal (Geni)	www.geni.com/projects/Turkish-Jewish-Genealogy-Portal/18440
Jews of Turkey in Knowles Collection	http://knowlescollection.blogspot.co.uk/2013/10/the-jews-of-turkey_4.html
Central archives for the history of the Jewish People	http://cahjp.huji.ac.il/content/turkey

Cemeteries

Turkey on JOWBR	www.jewishgen.org/databases/Cemetery/tree/CemList.htm
Turkey on IAJGS Cemetery Project	www.iajgsjewishcemeteryproject.org/turkey/index.html

Jewish Genealogical Society of Washington State has a database of a Sephardi Cemetery with burials of Sephardi Jews originating from Turkey and from Rhodes who immigrated to Seattle from about 1905 onwards. www.jgsws.org/cemeteryproject.php

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Jewish History and Heritage

Jews in Turkey

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jews_in_Turkey

Jewish Virtual History Tour

www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Turkey.html

Jewish Web Index – Turkey

<http://jewishwebindex.com/turkey.htm>

Zulfaris Synagogue & Jewish Museum of Istanbul

www.muze500.com

Foundation for the Advancement of Sephardic Studies & Culture

www.sephardicstudies.org/entrance.html

Centropa

www.centropa.org/search-our-database-jewish-memory

Additional Information can be found by “Googling” Jewish + Istanbul for organised Tours of the Jewish Places of interest in Istanbul, the same applies for Izmir, Bursa etc.

If you have ancestors who lived in the former provinces of the Turkish Ottoman Empire and owned property that was sequestered by the States that came under the influence of the Soviet Union of Russia, it may be possible to trace and claim back ownership by employing somebody locally to research in the old Ottoman records.

Istanbul Birth Marriage & Death Records

Civil birth, marriage, and death records in Istanbul are available in person at "Nufus Mudurlugu" offices. Advance permission is not needed to visit these office. There are 32 nufus offices in Istanbul, one in each of the city's 32 districts: Adalar, Avcilar, Bagcilar, Bahcelievler, Bakirkoy, Bayrampasa, Besiktas, Beykoz, Beyoglu, Buyukcekmece, Catalca, Eminonu, Esenler, Eyup, Fatih, Gaziosmanpasa, Gungoren, Kadikoy, Kagithane, Kartal, Kucukcekmece, Maltepe, Pendik, Sariyer, Sile, Silivri, Tuzla, Umraniye, Uskudar, Zeytinburnu.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Turkish Jewish BMD Records are held by the Office of the Chief Rabbi of Turkey. The Chief Rabbi of Turkey is Rabbi Isak Haleva.

Chief Rabbinate, 23 Yemenici Sokak, Beyoğlu/Tünel, Istanbul

Tel: +90 212 243 5166, or +90 212 293 8794/95, Fax: +90 212 244 1980 E-mail: info@musevicemaati.com

The Chief Rabbinate is located close to Tünel Square in Beyoglu, Istanbul; which you can reach by walking from Taksim Square, along the famous pedestrianised street called Istiklal Street, or by taking the street car, it is also accessible from Galata Bridge, by taking the underground tram from “Tünel” station, for only one stop.

At least 24 hours notice is required before visiting the Chief Rabbinate for security reasons. You will be required to show a form of identification for example a Passport.

The Marriage and Death records only go back to about 1860 and are located in the Chief Rabbinate Offices they have recently been digitised and are now on a computer database. E-mail roots@musevicemaati.com You will be asked for:

1. Details on the person regarding whom you seek information: the person's surname, given name, approximate year of birth, and names of parents or children.
2. An explanation of how you are related to this person.

Please allow one week for a response by email. In the early months of this new information system, requests may be quite numerous and therefore response time might be slightly slower than normal. It should be understood that each individual synagogue kept earlier records and they usually got destroyed when a synagogue accidentally burnt down; the construction of the synagogues was mainly made of wood.

The Rabbinate can also give you a list of all the synagogues in Istanbul and other communities. They also hold information about obtaining Kosher food and organised site seeing of Jewish places of interest. The Chief Rabbinate can provide a list of guides.

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Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Istanbul Synagogues

The Neva Shalom Synagogue, 61 Buyuk Hendek, Galata, is on the right-hand side when you walk towards the Galata Tower.

The Ashkenazi and Italian congregations of Istanbul maintain separate government sanctioned councils. Unlike the Karaite congregation these councils are subordinate to the Central Rabbinical Institutions.

Office of the Ashkenazi congregation: 10 Banker Sokak, Karaköy, Istanbul. Tel: 244 29754

Ashkenazi Synagogue: 37 Yuksek Kildirim Sokak, Karaköy, Istanbul Tel: 244 2975

Office of the Italian congregation: 17/1 Küçük Hendek Sokak, Karaköy, Istanbul. Tel: 244 27784

Italian Synagogue: 27 Şair Ziya Pasa Sokak, Karaköy, Istanbul. Tel: 244 7784

Jewish Hospital of Istanbul

Or-Ahayim Hospital, also known as the Balat Hastenasi 162 Debbek Sokak, Balat, Istanbul Tel: 524 1156/245 7841

The hospital building was erected in 1899, it is located on the old city shore of the Golden Horn in the district of Balat, Balat was predominately a Jewish district in times past, but there is no longer any Jewish people living in this area. The hospital at present serves a largely non-Jewish local population.

Jewish Old Age Home of Istanbul

The Old Age Home, İhtiyarlara Yardım Derneği, Moşav Zekinin, Hasköy, Istanbul. Tel: 253 6084/250 6988

The impressive home is in the neighbourhood of Hasköy in a building formally belonging to the Alliance Israelite Universelle.

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Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Jewish Schools in Istanbul

There is a Jewish Primary School and Jewish High School that used to be located in the area known as Shishane but are now located in the outer suburb known as Ulus.

Jewish Cultural Centres and Clubs in Istanbul

Four active clubs currently serve the needs of the Jewish population of both banks of the city. Şişli-Naşıtaş (the European Side) and Göztepe-Erenköy (the Asian side).

Jewish Club in Sisli, Dostluk Yudu Darneği, Tel: 248 3336

Jewish Club in Göztepe, Kültür Darneği, Tel: 350 4192

Jewish Youth Club, Arkadaşlık Yurdu Derneği-Amikal, Şişli, Tel: 240 6599

Jewish Sports Club Yıldırım, Şişli, Tel: 240 8370

Jewish Museum of Istanbul Contact the museum before visiting for security clearance.

500. Yıl Vakfı Türk Musevileri Müzesi, Perçemli Sokak, Karaköy Medani, Karaköy, Istanbul, Turkey

Tel. 0212 292 6333/34, E-mail info@muze500.com Web site: www.muze500.com

Weekly Newspaper

Şalom whose offices are Şalom Gazetesi, Gözlem Gazetecilik, Kuyulu Bostan Sokak, mola Apt.3/2, Nişantaş, 80200, Istanbul.

Tel:247 3082 / 240 4144 Editor: Mr Silvio Ovadia

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Jewish Cemeteries in Istanbul

Jewish cemeteries are scattered all over the city. The oldest gravestones dating back to the Byzantine period and are located in Eğri Kapi, near the walls of the old city. The newest cemeteries are located in the Ulus district (consecrated in the second half of the 20th Century).

Istanbul's major Jewish cemeteries are located in the following neighbourhoods: Hasköy (including a Karaite plot), Ortaköy, Şişli (Italian), Ulus (Shephardi and Askenazi), Haydarpaşa, Kuzguncuk, Üsküdar (Donme).

Note: To visit any cemetery one should first check with the Chief Rabbinate Offices for information with regard to accessibility as the gates could well be locked for security reasons. For admission to the Italian Congregation cemetery in Sisli. The gates are always locked to prevent any casual visits.

Guide Books to Istanbul

Jewish Sites of Istanbul By Ilan Karmi. ISBN 975-428-035-5 Published by The Isis Press, ISIS Limited Co. Yazmaci Emine Sokak No:4/a Burhaniye – Beylerbeyi TR 34676 Istanbul-Turkey Phone :+90 (216) 321-3851 www.theisispress.org/

Lonely Planet, Guide to Istanbul, ISBN 1-74059-044-9

Eyewitness Travel Guides to Istanbul, Dorling Kindersley ISBN 0-7513-9201-4

Istanbul City Tours: Special Jewish Heritage Tours, are organised by Plan Tours

Cumhuriyet Caddesi, 131/1, Elmadag, Istanbul Tel: 230 2272 www.plantours.com

Istanbul maps site <http://sehirharitasi.ibb.gov.tr/>

Jews of Turkey www.allaboutturkey.com/jews.htm

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Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Jewish Community

Turkish Jewish Community website www.turkyahudileri.com/component/option,com_frontpage/Itemid,1/lang,en

Recent News Stories

An Island Haven for Turkey's Jews <http://forward.com/news/318666/an-island-haven-for-turkeys-jews/>

Turkish Jews staying put but eyeing exit amid president's hostile rhetoric www.jewishaz.com/us_worldnews/world/turkish-jews-staying-put-but-eyeing-exit-amid-president-s/article_9989c6ac-0a28-11e5-81b1-b71fa5aac27d.html

Young Turkish Jews trickling away from shrinking community www.timesofisrael.com/young-turkish-jews-trickling-away-from-shrinking-community/

Bursa

Jewish Community in Bursa www.turkyahudileri.com/content/view/429/222/lang,en

Jewish Heritage of Bursa <http://maviboncuk.blogspot.co.uk/2006/02/jewish-heritage-of-bursa.html>

Jews of Bursa www.turkofamerica.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=530&Itemid=59

Gallipoli This former community, now mainly in Israel

Association for the Jewish Heritage of Gallipoli www.gallipoli.org.il

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Izmir Historical Community

Izmir	www.turkyahudileri.com/content/view/601/219/lang.en/
Bet Hatefutsoth	www.bh.org.il/the-jewish-community-of-izmir/
Izmir Cemeteries	www.jewish-heritage.org.il/moreshet/Uploaded_Files/documents/Izmir%20Cemetery1.pdf
Izmir Jewish Heritage	www.izmirjewishheritage.com
Virtual Izmir Culture and Tourism	www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/vjw/Izmir.html
JewishGen Infofile	http://www.jewishgen.org/Sephardic/izmir_infofile.HTM

Further genealogical information can be obtained from the Revue du Cercle de Généalogie Juive www.genealoj.org

Izmir Modern Jewish Community

Today, most Jews in Izmir live in the upmarket neighborhood of Alsancak, near Mustafa Ender Boulevard, also known as Mustafa Bey. Izmir is Turkey's third largest city with a population of nearly 4 million people, where the Jews number around 1,700. The current religious life of the Izmir community is concentrated mainly around two synagogues: the Bet Israel synagogue and Shaar Hashamaym, a new synagogue located in the modern district of Alsancak that also houses the offices of the local rabbinate and community.

Contact the Izmir Jewish Community Administration Tel: 011-90-232-421-1290 for information about all synagogues and sites, and in advance of any visit plans.

The Jewish Genealogical Society of Great Britain



Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire

Izmir Synagogues

Beth Israel Synagogue Mithat Pasa Cad. No:265 Konak Merkez, Konak, Izmir, Turkey Tel: 232 4251628

Sha'ar Hashamaim Synagogue No. 4 1390 Street, off Mustafa Ender Boulevard

Bikur Holim Synagogue No. 38 Gazi Osmanpasa

Shalom Synagogue No. 38 927 Street

Portugali Synagogue No. 8 926 Street

Algazi Synagogue No. 73 927 Street

Giveret (Senora) Synagogue No. 77 927 Street

Etz Hayyim Synagogue No. 7 937 Street

Hevra Synagogue No. 4 937 Street

Rosh Ha'ar Synagogue No. 67 281 Street

Gur Cesme Cemetery Tomb of Rabbi Hayim Palaggi (1788-1869) Gur Cesme Street

Tire Jewish Community

Jews of Tire

www.jewsoftire.com

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Jewish Genealogy in Turkey & the Ottoman Empire



Interior of the Jewish Museum at Istanbul



Outside Etz Ahayim Synagogue Ortakoy

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