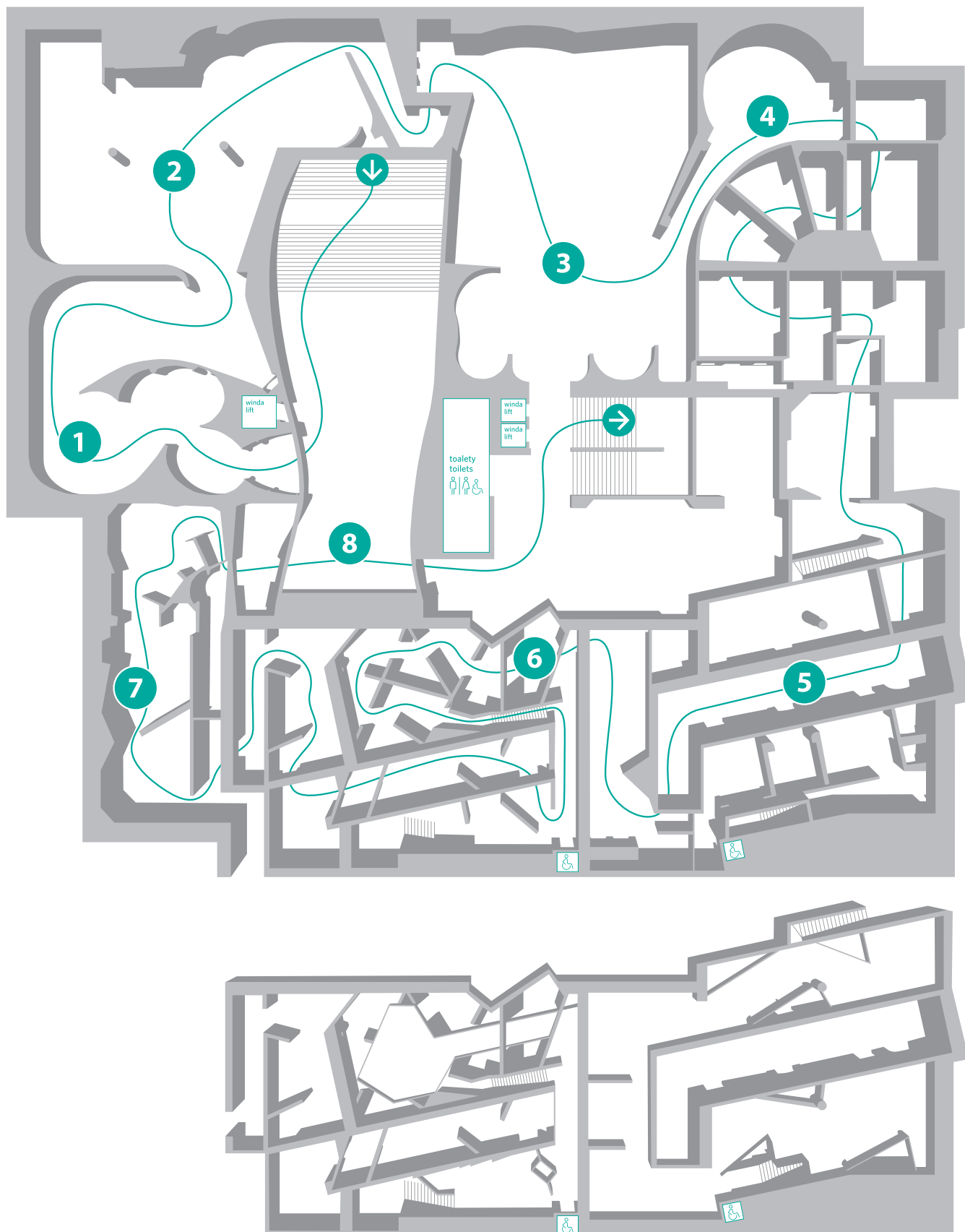


## THEMATIC TOUR:

# One Hour, Eight Highlights



## 1. Bracteate

**Gallery 2:**  
First Encounters, 965-1500



This coin, which dates from the early 13th century, is the oldest object in POLIN Museum's collection. Its **Hebrew** inscription is an indication that Jews were involved in minting coins and in developing medieval Poland's monetary economy. Explore these early coins and even design one of your own at the stronghold. Known as bracteates, these coins were usually one-sided.

Walk to the wooden stronghold and round bracteate table, with a showcase for the original coin and two round interactive screens.

**CHECK MAP:**  
from START to highlight 1

## 2. Kraków and Kazimierz model

**Gallery 3:**  
Paradisus Iudaeorum, 1565-1648



The story of the most influential Jewish community in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569-1772) is presented in a panoramic film and dramatic scale model of Kraków and nearby Kazimierz. King Jan Olbracht had moved Jews from Kraków to Kazimierz in 1495 - the Jewish neighborhood is highlighted on the upper right of the model. However, some Jews continued to do business in Kraków, and several even served at the royal court as physicians and bankers. Become a walker in the city at touchscreens along the model, where you can tour the Jewish community and its institutions, visit six **synagogues**, all of which still exist, meet **Rabbi** Moses Isserles and other luminaries, and explore Christian-Jewish relations.

The model is in the very center of the gallery.

**CHECK MAP:**  
from highlight 1 to highlight 2

### 3. Gwoździec synagogue

#### Gallery 4: The Jewish Town, 1648-1772



The **synagogue** is at the center of Jewish communal life. The original Gwoździec wooden synagogue was built around 1650. Its interior, which was covered with hand-painted prayer texts, zodiac signs, animals, and flowers, was renovated in 1729. The central **bimah**, the platform from which the public reading of the **Torah** scroll takes place is typical of Polish synagogues. This synagogue was destroyed around 1914, but in 2011 and 2012, a team of 300 volunteers and experts, led by Handshouse Studio, reconstructed the roof and magnificent painted ceiling using traditional materials and tools. There were once more than 150 wooden synagogues in the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. None of them have survived.

On entering the gallery, turn right and walk straight through the Marketplace to the synagogue.

**CHECK MAP:**  
from highlight 2 to highlight 3

### 4. Partitions

#### Gallery 5: Encounters with Modernity, 1772-1914



The rulers of Prussia, Austria and Russia look down from their massive portraits on the empty throne of the last Polish king. Between 1772 and 1795, they partitioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which disappeared from the map, and inherited the Jews living there. Jews are now individual subjects of absolutist monarchs. Sit at a throne and explore the laws that now regulate many details of their everyday life, while surrounded by maps illustrating a geopolitical reality that will last until the First World War.

Exit from the **synagogue**, turn left, and follow the corridor to the three large portraits.

**CHECK MAP:**  
from highlight 3 to highlight 4



## 5. On the Jewish street

### Gallery 6: On the Jewish Street, 1918-1939



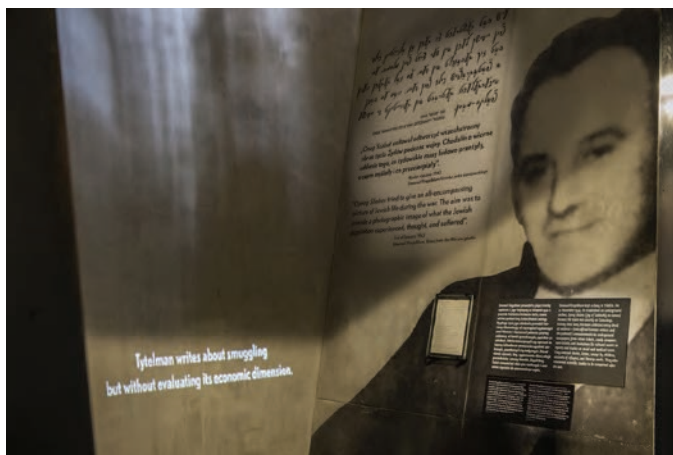
Enter a multimedia street. This lively environment is inspired by the bustling city life of the Second Polish Republic – most Polish Jews lived in cities and towns – and the expression “*af der yidisher gas*” (on the Jewish street), which is a metaphor for the Jewish world. Despite economic hardship and antisemitism, this was a period of great political energy and cultural creativity in **Yiddish**, **Hebrew**, and Polish. Entrances on each side of the street lead to thematic areas devoted to politics and culture.

Go left from the film about the First World War and then right to an archway leading to the Street.

**CHECK MAP:**  
from highlight 4 to highlight 5

## 6. Warsaw Ghetto

### Gallery 7: Holocaust, 1939-1944



The Warsaw ghetto was the largest of the more than 600 ghettos in occupied Poland not only in size but also in population, with 450,000 Jews trapped there over the course of its existence from October 1940 until May 1943. Adam Czeraniak and Emanuel Ringelblum, whose diaries are quoted on the walls, are your guides. Czerniaków was the chairman of the Judenrat, the Jewish Council, which the Germans created to run the ghetto and carry out its orders. Ringelblum, a historian, created a secret archive, *Oyneg Shabes*, to document every aspect of the struggle to survive in the Warsaw ghetto. Those documents, which were created on the spot and in the moment are the basis for presenting the Warsaw ghetto.

Pass through the first three sections of the Holocaust gallery – outbreak of war, occupation, and separation and isolation of Jews – to the entrance to the Warsaw ghetto area, which is defined by its sloping grey walls.

**CHECK MAP:**  
from highlight 5 to highlight 6

## 7. Monument to the Ghetto Heroes

**Gallery 8:**  
Postwar Years, 1944 to the present



Nathan Rapoport's Monument to the Ghetto Heroes was unveiled on the rubble of the destroyed ghetto in 1948 on the fifth anniversary of the Warsaw ghetto uprising. The creation of this monument is shown through documents, photographs and original objects from POLIN Museum's collection. A 1948 newsreel film captures the unveiling of the monument before thousands of witnesses and dignitaries in Poland and from abroad. Memorializing the tragedy, restoring dignity, and seeking justice were of utmost importance to survivors of the Holocaust. POLIN Museum faces the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes.

On your left, as you enter the gallery, is a wall of "registration forms." Straight ahead and to your right are a large photomural, posters, projected newsreel, and showcases related to the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes.

**CHECK MAP:**  
from highlight 6 to highlight 7

## 8. Renewal of Jewish life

**Gallery 8:**  
Postwar Years, 1944 to the present



Since the fall of communism in 1989, there has been a renewal of Jewish life on a small scale and great interest among the Polish public in Jewish history and culture. In video interviews, Jews living in Poland today answer six questions: Is there antisemitism in Poland? What does Israel mean to you? Who creates Jewish culture and for whom? Is there a future for Jews in Poland? Did you always know you were Jewish? What does it mean to be a Jew in Poland?

Last section of the exhibition.

**CHECK MAP:**  
from highlight 7 to highlight 8



# Glossary

**Aron ha-kodesh** (Holy Ark) – cabinet in which → **Torah** scrolls, the most sacred object in Judaism, are kept. The ark is located at the eastern wall of the → **synagogue**, the direction of Jerusalem and prayer.

**Ashkenazim** – descendants of Jews who, from the Middle Ages, resided initially in German lands, and later also in the whole of Central and Eastern Europe. Today they also live in Israel and in many other countries. Some still speak → **Yiddish**. They have their own customs, which differ somewhat from those of → **Sephardim**.

**Bet midrash** (Yiddish: *besmedresh*, study house) – a public place, supported by the → **kehillah**, Jewish community, where men gather to study → **Torah** and also for prayer.

**Bimah** – raised platform from which the public reading from the → **Torah** scroll takes place. The bimah in Polish → **synagogues** is traditionally located at the center of the main prayer hall and faces the eastern wall.

**Cantor** (Hebrew: *hazan*, Yiddish: *khazn*) – a professional prayer leader with musical ability who conducts the synagogue service. A → **rabbi** or layperson may also conduct the service.

**Diaspora** – the collective of Jews living outside the Land of Israel.

**Galitsianer** – Jew from Galicia, a province of the Austrian Empire created from the partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late 18th century. According to the stereotype, Galitsianers were the opposite of → **Litvaks**.

**Heder** (Yiddish: *kheyder*, lit.: room) – traditional school where young boys learn to read Hebrew and study the → **Torah**. Their teacher is called a melamed.

**Halakhah** – Jewish religious law, which governs all aspects of Jewish life, is based on the commandments (*mitzvot*) in the → **Torah**.

**Hasidism** – a movement of spiritual renewal that began in the 18th century in Podolia. Israel ben Eliezer, known as Ba'al Shem Tov (Besht), is considered the founder. The movement is organized around charismatic leaders → **tsadikim** and is based on a religious ethos rooted in mystical experience, with an emphasis on ecstatic worship, song, and dance.

**Haskalah** – Jewish Enlightenment, a movement that emerged at the end of the 18th century. Its proponents, maskilim, promoted the renewal of Jewish life by reforming it and adopting a modern sensibility. They encouraged the teaching of modern Hebrew as well as foreign languages and other secular subjects.

**Hebrew** – both the Jewish sacred language of prayer and study (Yiddish: *loshn-koydesh*) and modern Hebrew (Hebrew: *ivrit*), which developed in the 19th century and became the official language of the State of Israel.

**Kabbalah** – the Jewish mystical tradition, both philosophical and practical. Kabbalah is believed to hold the secrets to the universe and to contact with God. *Sefer ha-Zohar* (Book of Radiance), a medieval collection of mystical commentaries on the → **Torah**, is the key text of kabbalah.

**Kahal** – Jewish executive council responsible for governing a kehillah, the organized Jewish community in a particular location. The kahal recorded its decisions in a pinkas, a communal record book.

**Karaite** – Adhering only to the → **Torah** itself, Karaites reject the rabbinic interpretations of its laws, in contrast with Rabbinite Jews. Originating in medieval Babylonia, Karaites eventually settled in Crimea, Lithuania, and other parts of Eastern Europe.

**Kashrut** – laws of ritual purity relating to food, which prohibit eating certain animals and the mixing of milk and meat, and that prescribe how meat is to be slaughtered and prepared. These laws are based on the biblical book of Leviticus. Food that is fit to eat, according to these laws, is kosher.

**Klezmer** – a musician who traditionally performed at weddings and on other occasions, traditionally in a band that included a violinist, bassist, cymbalist, and drummer, and later also a clarinetist and trumpeter.

**Litvak** – a Jew from the northeastern part of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. This region (Yiddish: *Lite*, Hebrew: *Lita*) includes Lithuania and parts of Belarus, Latvia, and nearby areas. According to a stereotype that arose in the 19th century, Litvaks are the opposite of → **Galitsianers**.

**Mahzor** – festival prayer book, in contrast with the siddur, a daily and → **Shabbat** prayer book.

**Matzevah** – Jewish tombstone. In the historic territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Jewish tombstones were often elaborately carved and might be painted in bright colors.

**Mikveh** – pool for ritual immersion.

**Minhag** – Jewish custom, which often has the force of binding religious law → **Halakhah**.

**Minyan** – prayer quorum. Traditionally, a minimum of ten Jewish men (at least 13 years old) is required for public worship in the synagogue, for the → **Torah** reading, and at weddings, funerals, and other religious ceremonies.

**Rabbi** – religious leader of a Jewish congregation who is qualified to resolve issues on the basis of → **Halakhah**. A rabbi heads the Jewish court (Hebrew: *bet din*, Yiddish: *bezdin*), teaches → **Torah**, performs marriages, and certifies that foods conform to the requirements of → **kashrut**.

**Sephardim** – descendants of Jews who lived on the Iberian Peninsula. Following expulsion from Spain and Portugal during the 15th century, Sephardim settled in Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire, including the Balkans and North Africa. Some still speak Ladino and many observe their own customs, which contrast with some of those of → **Ashkenazim**.

**Shabbat** (Yiddish: *shabes*) – day of rest, from sunset Friday until shortly after sunset Saturday, during which work is prohibited.

**Shtetl** (lit: town) – The Yiddish word shtetl, when used in English, refers to towns in Eastern Europe where Jews formed a large percentage of the population and developed a distinctive way of life.

**Shtibl** – a room or small building where → **Hasidic** men, followers of a particular → **tsadik**, gather to pray, study, and socialize.

**Synagogue** (Yiddish: *shul*) – house of prayer. Traditionally, men and women sit in separate sections.

**Talmud** – compilation of Jewish legal literature. The Talmud consists of the Mishna, a legal code that specifies how the commandments of the → **Torah** should be carried out, and the Gemara, rabbinical interpretations of the Mishna. The material in the Talmud was created between the 3rd and 5th century CE in Palestine and Babylonia. The Babylonian Talmud is more comprehensive and became more popular than the one created in Palestine, which is known as the Jerusalem Talmud.

**Torah** – In the narrow sense, Torah refers to the first five books of the Bible. In the broad sense, Torah refers to all Jewish sacred teachings stemming in one way or another from the written Torah. The handwritten Torah scroll is the most sacred object in Judaism.

**Tsadik** (Yiddish: *rebe*) – literally “righteous person,” refers to a charismatic leader associated with → **Hasidism**. *Tsadikim* are considered by their followers to be intermediaries between God and His people.

**Yeshiva** – religious academy where young Jewish men study the → **Talmud** and other religious texts.

**Yiddish** – the historic Jewish vernacular of → **Ashkenazi** Jews, a fusion of German dialects, Hebrew and Aramaic, and Judeo-Romance and Slavic languages. The beginnings of Yiddish are in the Rhineland in the Middle Ages. About 13 million people spoke Yiddish before the Second World War.