

**Site 1A: Introduction to Jewish Life in Leopoldstadt**  
Leopoldstadt, 1020

The history of Jews in Austria is one of repeated **exile** (der Vertreibene) and return. In 1624, after years and years of being forbidden from living in Vienna, Emperor Ferdinand III decided that Jewish people could return to Vienna but would only be allowed to live in one area outside of central Vienna. That area was called “Unterer Werd” and later became the district of Leopoldstadt. In 1783, Joseph II’s “Toleranzpatent” eased a lot of the restrictions that kept Jews from holding certain jobs or owning homes in areas outside of Leopoldstadt. As a result, life in Vienna became much more open and pleasant for Jewish people, and many more Jewish immigrants began moving to Vienna.

Leopoldstadt remained the cultural center of Jewish life, and was nicknamed “Mazzeinsel” after the traditional Jewish matzo bread. Jews made up 40% of the people living in the 2<sup>nd</sup> district, and about 29% of the city’s Jewish population lived there. A lot of Jewish businesses were located in Leopoldstadt, as well as many of the city’s synagogues and temples. Tens of thousands of Galician Jewish refugees from Eastern Europe made their home there, and brought many of their traditions (such as Yiddish literature) with them.

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### Site 1B: Leopoldstäter Tempel/Leopoldstadt Temple Tempelgasse 5, 1020 Wien



As Jewish people gained more rights and citizenship in the 19th century, the Jewish population of Vienna increased sharply, making the construction of a second large Synagogue necessary (the first being the Stadttempel in the 1<sup>st</sup> district). The Leopoldstadt Temple was designed by Viennese architect Ludwig von Förster and opened its doors on May 18, 1858. In comparison to the Stadttempel in the first district, which had to be concealed behind a regular house façade, this building could stand free and visible to the public, a first for Viennese synagogues. It became known as the Great Synagogue of Vienna, and many of the community's large events were held here.

During the Novemberpogrom in November 1938 the building was destroyed; only parts of the wings survived.

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JEWISH COMMUNITIES OF LEOPOLDSTADT AND ALSERGRUND****Site 2: Theater Nestroyhof- Hamakom**  
Nestroyplatz 1, 1020 Wien

Foto by © Pia Hagenbach

The Nestroyhof was built in 1898 (designed by Oskar Marmorek, a friend of Theodor Herzl) and quickly developed into a center of Jewish culture and the Yiddish Theater movement. As the Nestroyhof gained importance after 1927, it became the home of the “Jewish Theater” company, and famous groups of actors and artists from all over the world came to perform. It was a cultural center for the Yiddish Theater movement. All that stopped in 1938, when the Gestapo shut it down. The building itself was “aryanized” (taken from its Jewish owners) and went through several changes of ownership and purpose after the war. Until 1997 it was the home of a supermarket. In 2009 it was once again made a theater, the Theater Nestroyhof-Hamakom.

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### **Site 3: Türkischer Tempel/Turkish Temple** Zirkusgasse 22, 1020 Wien

Under terms of the peace settlement with the Ottoman Empire in 1718, a Turkish mission was established in Vienna which also included dozens of Sephardic Jews (a subculture of Jews that originate in Spain, Portugal, North Africa and the Middle East). In 1736, this group was allowed to form their own independent synagogue, which remained illegal for native Austrian Jews for more than another century. This synagogue, which officially opened in 1887, was built by Hugo von Wiedenfeld and modeled on the Alhambra in Spain. The synagogue flew both Austrian and Turkish flags and would celebrate the birthday of the Ottoman sultan and the Austrian emperor every year. This temple was also destroyed during the Novemberpogrom of 1938.

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### Site 4: Sammellager/Assembly Camp 2a Kleine Sperlgasse, 1020 Wien



Foto © Hannah Lietz

This building used to be a Vorschule (primary school), and later the Nazis used the classrooms as an assembly camp for people waiting to be deported to ghettos or concentration camps in Eastern Europe. Conditions in the assembly camp were incredibly crowded, dirty and cold, and sometimes people froze in winter. Approximately 45,000 people spent their last days in Vienna in this building, and many were sent directly from here to the gas chambers of a concentration camp.

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### **Site 6: Talmud-Thora-Schule – Altes Jüdisches Museum/ Talmud- Thora-School – Old Jewish Museum Malzgasse 16, 1020**



The Talmud-Torah school organization, founded in 1814, administered here a school starting in 1850. It was closed during the war, but opened up again in 1946, moved back into the old building in 1956, and became an officially recognized school again in 1978.

The oldest Jewish Museum in the world was also housed in this building. Immediately after the Anschluss in 1938, the museum was closed by the Nazis. A part of its collection was destroyed, and the rest stolen. In 1939 whatever was left was turned over to the Naturhistorisches Museum (Natural History Museum) for a Nazi exhibit on “The Physical and Spiritual Appearance of the Jews” (Das körperliche und seelische Erscheinungsbild der Juden).

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### Site 7: Foerstergasse 7, 1020 Wien



On April 12th, 1945, just a few hours before liberation, nine Jews, male and female, ages 21 to 82, who had been hiding in the cellar of the house Foerstergasse 7 were taken from their hiding place by an SS commando quartered in this same street and executed in a nearby bomb crater. The first commemorative plaque was installed in 1954, the present one in 1960.

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### Site 8A: Introduction to Jewish Life in Alsergrund Alsergrund, 1090 Wien

While Leopoldstadt known as the “Jewish district, Jews lived in almost all of the other districts of Vienna as well. After Leopoldstadt, Alsergrund had the highest percentage of Jewish residents. While Leopoldstadt remained a community with a high percentage of immigrants, Alsergrund became a home for middle-class and professional Jews, and a high percentage of Jewish doctors, lawyers, and businessmen made their homes there. Alsergrund was also a place where some went specifically to move away from the immigrant and traditional background of Leopoldstadt and **assimilate** (sich anpassen) further into non-Jewish Austrian society and culture.



**Site 8B: Gedenksymbol: Schlüssel gegen das Vergessen/  
Memorial: Keys against Forgetting**  
Servitengasse, 1090 Wien



Foto © Hannah Lietz

A local citizen's research project showed that over half of the people living on Servitengasse before 1938 had been Jewish. The community then developed a focused memorial project that remembers the people who used to live on this street and honors them through research, memorials and education programs. The project resulted in several memorials and plaques, including the "Schlüssel gegen das Vergessen" (Keys against Forgetting), which was opened in 2008. The memorial contains 462 keys, each one attached to the name of a former Servitengasse resident.

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### Site 9: Heim für Mischehepaare/Home for Mixed Marriages Seegasse 16, 1090 Wien



So-called “mixed marriages” are a specific group of victims of the Nazis that rarely became focus of much research. The couples consisted of one who was Jewish within the meaning of the 1935 Nuremberg racial laws, but not the other. Many “mixed marriages” were at first considered “privileged” in the beginning and saved the Jewish partner from deportation and from some of the humiliation and rules that affected other Jewish people.

According to the historian Kurt Schubert, in October 1942 there were still 8,200 Jews in Vienna, 4,000 of whom were partners in mixed marriages. In the summer of 1943 a home for couples in mixed marriages was established in the Seegasse #16. However by December 1943 the home was evacuated and most of the former residents were murdered.

**Site 10: Friedhof Seegasse/Cemetery Seegasse**  
Seegasse 9-11, 1090 Wien

Foto © Hannah Lietz

The cemetery in the Seegasse is the oldest Jewish cemetery still existing in Vienna. The oldest gravestone dates to 1540. Up to 1941 the cemetery contained over one thousand valuable Renaissance and Baroque gravestones. During the Nazi occupation, the old gravestones were hidden in several different places and buried to protect them from being destroyed. The Jews who hid them were all later murdered and the knowledge of the hidden gravestones was lost. An accidental and unexpected discovery in the “Zentralfriedhof” cemetery of about 300 of the hidden gravestones brought people’s attention back attention back to the cemetery. In 2013 additional gravestones were discovered.