

# Prague's Maisels synagogue reopens with new exhibit

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*Maisels synagogue Photo: © Jewish Museum in Prague*

The historic Maisels synagogue in Prague, a key part of the Jewish Museum in Prague, reopens July 1 with a revamped permanent exhibition on Jewish history called [Jews in the Bohemian Lands 10th-18th century](#). The building had been closed to the public since April 2014 during the refurbishment.

The exhibition is based on the previous, thematically similar, exhibition there, the museum says, but it “draws on the latest research findings and makes the topic more attractive as a result of its new arrangement, its selection of exhibits and, above all, the inclusion of audio-visual and interactive elements.”

These include a virtual tour, fruit of a collaboration by the Jewish Museum, the City of Prague Museum and the Czech Technical University in Prague, called “Flight Over the Prague Jewish Town” that will be projected onto a large screen in the main nave of the synagogue.

*The exhibition also has touch screens that feature a rich variety of pictorial materials, which will enable visitors to search the museum’s database for information about prominent Jewish*

*communities and personages. Visitors will also be able to “browse” a selection of rare Hebrew manuscripts and printed books, as well as historical maps of Jewish settlements. There will also be an opportunity to have a detailed look at the Prague Jewish procession of 1741 (24th of April), which was held in celebration of the birth of Emperor Joseph II.*

Curated by Dr. Iveta Cermanová, and Dr. Alexandr Putfk, with architectural design by Hynek Fetterle, the exhibit deals with the following main themes:

- the status of Jews in medieval and early modern society, the Jewish community, and traditional Jewish scholarship in the Bohemian lands.
- the “golden age” of Prague Jewry in the Renaissance period, with special attention given to the benefactor and synagogue builder Mordecai Maisel and to the Golem legend.
- the livelihood and social life of Jews, including discrimination, anti-Jewish riots and spiritual oppression.
- how the Jewish enlightenment and growing contacts between Jews and Christians in Prague prefigured a transformation in the life of the Jews of Bohemia and Moravia from the end of the 18th century onwards.



*Interior of Maisels synagogue showing part of new exhibit. Photo: © Jewish Museum in Prague*

*The exhibition seeks to convey, in a clear and easy-to-understand yet engaging way, the inner life of Jewish communities in the Bohemian lands and to show the diversity of their relationship with the wider society. It is divided into eight thematic units along the perimeter of the synagogue, which are to be viewed from right to left as in the direction of Hebrew script. The introductory section is located near the entrance below the gallery and deals with the topic of Jewish settlement in the Bohemian lands.*

The synagogue was originally built in the Renaissance style in 1590–1592. It burned down in the 17th and 18th centuries and was rebuilt several times — its current neo-gothic form dates from the turn of the 19th-20th centuries.

The synagogue long displayed the museum's collection of silver, and then housed a historic exhibit.

<http://www.jewish-heritage-europe.eu/2015/06/29/pragues-maisels-synagogue-reopens-with-new-exhibit/%E2%80%9D>