



## Budapest's Jewish District

Gravestones provide evidence that there were Jews among the population of the Roman province of Pannonia in the 2nd and 3rd centuries. The high water mark of Hungarian Judaism came during the reign of King Matthias in the middle ages, when the popular head of state introduced the Jewish prefecture. In the 18th century, the Jews were ordered by Joseph II to take on German surnames instead of their traditional Hebrew names, but they were granted equal rights during the reform era of the early 19th century, after which they played an increasingly important role in the growth of trade and industry. From 1840, Jews were allowed to do business in Hungary, a move that attracted immigrants from other European countries where conditions were less favourable.

The Budapest Jewish quarter with its art nouveau buildings and enormous synagogue is a fine and unique example of their influence on city life right up until WWII, when the population was all but wiped out. Although many fewer Jews now live in what is still known as the Jewish ghetto, their legacy remains in this lively and historically remarkable district.



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