

**CET Prague, Fall 2025 | Martha Chestnut**

**Privacy & Sharing:** "I am OK with CET using this piece along with my name and photo in a public manner (on flyers, CET website, etc.)"

**Who are the intended audience(s) of your Perspective Piece?** "Jewish students"

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## **Jewish Identity Abroad**

Fall is the most important time of the year for the Jewish people. What we call the "high holidays" take place over about 25 days, normally in September or October. That same time was when I was just starting my study abroad experience with CET Prague. While I had experienced this holiday season away from the comfort of my family and childhood home before, being abroad during the holidays presented an entirely new set of challenges.

Where would I attend services? Could I find access to traditional holiday meals? Would the songs, prayers, and customs be the same? How would I even go about finding any of this information? Did I pack the right kind of clothing? Would anyone there speak English? Would my professors understand when I miss classes for my holiday observances? It was overwhelming to say the least.

I started with one small step, asking my CET program coordinators. A quick google search paired with the information that was provided to me by the CET staff set me on the right track. I began to sift through different websites on the information about Jewish communities in Prague. I found local community meals and services I could attend. Slowly but surely, I began to feel solidified in my Jewish identity abroad.

While things abroad will always feel a bit different, the experience forced me to stretch beyond my comfort zone. It was the first time I had to make my own decisions about how my Jewish identity fit into my life. The experience was not easy, but I learned a lot about myself and a lot about what I feel is important to me and my Jewish identity. The experiences I had abroad will continue to shape my identity when I return home.