Located on the crossroads of trade routes leading to both Hungary and Russia, this Galician town emerged as a significant commercial center between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. Jews are mentioned in records dating from the fifteenth century. Beginning in 1581, the Polish nobles who owned the town offered Jews attractive charters of privileges to settle there. Wars, fires and epidemics caused Tarnów's decline in the second half of the seventeenth century.

After Poland's first partition, Tarnów began to recover under Austrian rule; Jews came to play an important role in its revival, establishing factories that produced agricultural equipment and glass. While most Tarnów Jews were Hasidim, Haskalah became increasingly influential in the nineteenth century, as did Zionism by the end of the century. Expanding cloth and hat industries employed many Jews, and concurrently a strong workers' movement also developed. The greatest Jewish historian of the twentieth century, Salo Wittmayer Baron, was a native of Tarnów.

Shortly after the Germans occupied Tarnów on September 8, 1939, they began to deport Jewish leaders to Auschwitz. In March 1941, a ghetto was imposed. During the summer and fall of 1942, some 23,000 Jews were deported to the Belzec death camp; most of the remaining Jews were sent to Auschwitz and Plaszów in September 1943. In December, the town was declared Judenrein (free of Jews). After the war, over 700 Jews settled in Tarnów, but most soon left.

**SYNAGOGUES**

ul. Żydowska (Jewish Street)
Old Synagogue dating from 1630, situated in a park. All that remains is the Bimah and a segment of iron fence surrounding the Old Synagogue.

ul. Góldhammera 1
Formerly a prayer house, now a private apartment.

ul. Nowa
Site of New Synagogue dating from 1908. Destroyed by Nazis in 1939. There is a memorial plaque on the building occupying the site today.

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JEWISH CEMETERY

ul. Szpitalna (between ul. Słoneczna and ul. Nowodąbrowska)
Cemetery dates from 1734.
Remaining tombstones: 3,000.

OTHER JEWISH SITES

ul. Goldhammara 5
Former home of local Jewish Credit Company.
Memorial tablets commemorating Herman Merz, former head of the Jewish community, and Eliasz Goldhammer, deputy mayor.

ul. Kelątaja 14
Former Jewish orphanage from 1913.
Current use: preschool.

Rynek 20
Regional Museum with Judaica exhibition.

Pl. Więźniów Oświęcimia (formerly ul. Bóżnica)
Mikvah, constructed in 1904.
Current use: under renovation.

ul. Szpitalna
Jewish hospital, founded in 1842.
Current use: hospital.

ul. Nowodąbrowska 25
Jewish Home for the Aged, founded in 1913.
Current use: hospital.

ul. Baluta 6 (formerly ul. Topolowa)
Hebrew High School, founded in 1899.
Current use: boarding house for students.

ul. Św. Anny 1
Hebrew School, founded in 1923.
Current use: boarding house.

ul. Sienna 5
Talmud Tora for poor families, constructed prior to World War I.
Current use: medical school.

DEPORTATIONS

Auschwitz-Birkenau, Bełżec, Płaszów, Szebnie.
HOLOCAUST MEMORIALS

ul. Szpitalna (Jewish cemetery)
Memorial to 20,000 Jewish victims incorporating column from devastated New Synagogue.

Plac Więźniów Oświęcimia
Memorial to local residents of Tarnów, including Jews, transported to Auschwitz-Birkenau, June 14, 1940.

Zybiłowicka Góra (forest near Tarnów)
A memorial commemorating 800 Jewish children from Tarnów murdered in June 1942.
A second memorial commemorating 10,000 victims of Nazi terror erected by Tarnów government officials.

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