

The Sarajevo Haggadah

Contributed by [Muslim-Jewish Solidarity Committee](#)

Source:

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A remarkable story of interfaith solidarity and care:

The Sarajevo Haggadah is considered the most elaborately decorated codex remaining from Spanish Jewry's Golden Age. It is named after the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Sarajevo where it is kept in the National Museum.

The 14th century text is remarkable not only for its exquisite design, master-craftsmanship and rare drawings from pre-Inquisition Spain, but also for its own exodus story. It traveled through many different cultures and different people took care of it and helped it survive. In the 14th-century, the Haggadah escaped the Spanish Inquisition together with Jews expelled from the Iberian Peninsula and was brought by refugees to Venice. It was again spared; this time from burning after it was labeled not heretical (17th century Latin inscription on its final page attests to its approval by the Church). In the next three centuries, it travelled from Venice to the crossroad city of Sarajevo, at that point a home to a thriving Jewish community since the Ottoman times.

During World War II and the Nazi occupation of Sarajevo, the Haggadah was again under threat. After Nazis unsuccessfully tried to take the Haggadah from the Sarajevo museum, the museum's chief librarian, who was an Islamic scholar, tucked the Haggadah under his garb and took it to the Mosque on the outskirts of the city where it survived the war. Afterwards, the book was back in the museum by 1992 when the city came under heavy shelling during the Bosnian war. Another Muslim librarian risked his life to retrieve the manuscript from the burning building and put it in a bank vault. Today, the Sarajevo Haggadah is back at the National Museum and represents a symbol of Exodus, survival and co-existence.