

JEWISH LANGUAGE

FACT SHEET

Variety of Languages

The Jewish Language Project has pages devoted to 31 Jewish languages, listed below. This is by no means a comprehensive list, but provides a glimpse into the astounding breadth of languages spoken by Jews in the Diaspora.

- **Algerian Jewish Sign Language**
- **Ancient Judeo-Aramaic**
- **Judeo-Amazigh**
- **Judeo-Arabic**
- **Judeo-Catalan**
- **Jewish English**
- **Jewish Ethiopian**
- **Jewish French**
- **Judeo-French**
- **Judeo-Georgian**
- **Jewish German**
- **Judeo-Greek**
- **Haketia**
- **Jewish Hungarian**
- **Judeo-Iranian**
- **Judeo-Italian**
- **Jewish Latin American Spanish**
- **Jewish Malayalam**
- **Jewish Marathi**
- **Jewish Neo-Aramaic**
- **Jewish Papiamentu**
- **Judeo-Persian**
- **Judeo-Portuguese**
- **Judeo-Provençal**
- **Jewish Russian**
- **Jewish Swedish**
- **Judeo-Tajik/Bukharian**
- **Judeo-Tat/Juhuri**
- **Karaim**
- **Krymchak**
- **Ladino**
- **Yiddish (Eastern)**
- **And more...**

Origins of Jewish Languages

Ancient Jews spoke Hebrew and shifted to Aramaic with Hebrew influences due to empire change and migrations. As Jews migrated around the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and elsewhere, they acquired diverse languages. There are several Jewish languages so distinct from the local non-Jewish language that the two cannot be mutually understood, including Yiddish, Ladino, Juhuri, and Neo-Aramaic.

Vitality and Endangerment

Yiddish and Juhuri are still spoken by young members of their communities. All other Jewish languages, aside from some newly formed varieties like Jewish English and Jewish Latin American Spanish, are considered endangered.

For more information on the status of a language, statistics can be found at jewishlanguages.org/stats.

Commonalities and Features

Jewish languages have strong Hebrew influences and are often written with the Hebrew alphabet. In addition, they often have influences from the languages of areas previously inhabited by a Jewish community. Jewish cultural insularity also creates linguistic evolution distinct from the local language, leading to archaic and/or innovative pronunciations, grammar, or intonation.

To learn more about the history of Jewish languages, check out jewishlanguages.org/about, or head to the Jewish Language Project on YouTube, Instagram, or Facebook.