

הקשר היהודי שלך

Your Jewish Connection

Brought to you by the Lifelong Learning Committee – By Linda S Trapasso

Avlo Ladino?



Ashkenazi Jews have their own language – Yiddish. And Sephardi Jews have their own language – Ladino or Judeo-Spanish. Ladino, known by many names (see [My Jewish Learning](#) and [Wikipedia](#)), is not being taught to younger generations. In fact, Israel declared Ladino an endangered language. According to an [article on the Chabad](#) web site:

“The question is whether Ladino will become extinct. It is the language of Maimonides, the poet Yehuda Halevi, and the entire tradition of Kaballah, the Zohar, and the Code of Jewish Law by the Sephardic rabbi Joseph Caro.”

The number of persons who speak Ladino is low, perhaps 200,000 in the world. But you can't keep a good language down – Ladino is having a resurgence through [music](#) and writings. According to [My Jewish Learning](#):



“The rewards for the student of Ladino include the ability to read the classic *Me'am Loez* in the original. *Me'am Loez*, the 18th- and 19th-century commentary on the Bible, is the major work of Ladino writing. The Ladino reader can also enjoy the many collections of proverbs and folk tales that are wise, funny, and very Jewish. Efforts to collect these treasures are making them more widely available than ever, and English translations are also being prepared.”

Autoridad Nacional del Ladino is a national Israeli organization created in 1997 with the goal of preserving and safeguarding Judeo-Spanish or Ladino (see [here](#)). It publishes a magazine in Ladino called [Aki Yerushalayim](#). [eSefarad](#) is an online magazine with articles in Ladino and English. To learn about present and past Sephardic culture, go to [Sephardic Horizons](#).

Two women who have made a difference to Ladino are [Matilda Koén-Sarano](#) and [Gloria Ascher](#). Read their story at [The Jewish Daily Forward](#). They are among the few who teach Ladino in Israel, the U.S., and Europe. The [Jewish Languages Research Website](#) includes a bibliography on Ladino. It also provides samples of texts and sounds.



To learn Ladino, you can check out videos on [www.YouTube.com](#) – do a search on Ladino to find the lessons. [Ladinokomunita](#), started by [Rachel Amado Bortnick](#) in 1999, is a web site where you can chat with others using Ladino and learn about the language. The [Endangered Languages Project](#) has a section on Ladino that includes audio and video files.



The [Judeo-Spanish \(Ladino\) Language](#) site displays a map showing where Sephardi Jews traveled throughout the world. The site includes information on grammar and a short vocabulary list. [Byki](#) has a flash card system (visual and audio) for learning Ladino words.

Temple Beth Abraham supports the Ladino music revival. As a venue for the Boston Jewish Music Festival, this year TBA presents Cantor Gaston, who hails from Argentina and has a decidedly Hispanic twist to his music. Check out [his web site](#) and listen to some music samples. Then come and join TBA when it presents Cantor Gaston on March 8 (see details elsewhere in the bulletin).