The Jewish Quarter of Barcelona (from far left): Example of common signage indicating points of Jewish interest; The Sinagoga Mayor of Barcelona, dating back to the 3rd century; A street of the Call, or Jewish Quarter, in Catalan (the language of Northeastern Spain)
The Catalanian city of Girona, home to one Europe’s best preserved Jewish quarters (clockwise from top left): The city center; a street of the Jewish quarter; A scene in a Jewish home painted on a sealed window; The entrance to the Jewish museum
Toledo, medieval capital of Spain (from left to right): A street scene in the Christian section of the city; The Santa Maria La Blanca Church, a former synagogue; The El Transito Synagogue exterior, the synagogue also served as a church for several centuries; Stucco carvings on the interior of the El Transito; Another view of the interior of the El Transito; A tile placed by the network of the Jewish Quarters of Spain that indicates a street of the Jewish Quarter, the symbol is the word for Spain in Hebrew, “Sepharad”, in the shape of the Iberian Peninsula; A mosque-turned-church that displayed many architectural elements seen in the aforementioned synagogues.
Granada, one of the last outposts of Spanish Judaism (from left to right): A view of the Muslim Quarter; The Alhambra, a Spanish Muslim fort, palace, and architectural wonder; Another view of stucco work in the Alhambra; A view of the Alhambra from the Muslim Quarter
Cordoba, home of Sephardi Judaism’s Golden Age (left to right): The colorful streets of the Jewish quarter; The cooking class at the 12th International Sephardi Music Festival; Andalusian music at the same event; The Mezquita at night, half cathedral half mosque; Another street of the Jewish Quarter; Casa Sefarad, the city’s Jewish museum; The Statue of Maimonides of Cordoba, one of Judaism’s greatest thinkers.
Chefchaouen, Northern Morocco, first painted blue by the great number of Jewish refugees who resided here (left to right): The city square; The quiet blue streets; Jewish crafts spotted in the city museum; A view over the old quarter of the city
The rural tomb of Amram ben Diwan, one of Morocco’s most revered Jewish saints (left to right): The arched entrance; The grave itself, marked by the piled stones, there happened to be a large Israeli tour group there at the time; The synagogue adjacent the grave; The gated entrance to the compound
Fez, former Moroccan capital, home to my family (Danan) for 800 years (left to right): The tanneries in the old city; A mosque door in the old city; Lunch at the Jewish Community Center; The Jewish cemetery; A grave indicating Danans were descendants of Maimonides; The streets of the Jewish quarter or mellah, distinctive due to its balconies; The door to the Ibn Danan Synagogue; Interior of the Ibn Danan synagogue
Casablanca, home to most of Morocco’s modern Jewish population (left to right): Central Casablanca, where most Jews live; The Shabbat dinner table set and ready; Me with my Moroccan Jewish host, Jordan, in front of the Hassan II mosque which sports the tallest minaret in the world (210 m)
Marrakech, former Moroccan capital and my father’s hometown (left to right): Jamaa el Fna, the central square; Ela’azama Synagogue, where my father’s family prayed; A central street of the mellah; My father’s old street; The decaying state of the Jewish cemetery; The Marrakech skyline; A man selling dessert pastries in the souk, or market.
Rural Morocco, once home to diverse communities of Berber Jews (left to right): A Berber man stands in front of the Imlil Valley in the Atlas Mountains, Berber villages visible in the distance; The desert fortress of Ait Benhaddou, home to an ancient Jewish community; Our tour guide insisted this town in the distance had 9 new Jewish families and a synagogue, though I didn’t have the opportunity to visit; The Sahara Desert; The bottom 3 photos were taken in and around the tomb of Shlomo ben Llhens in the Atlas Mountains, where my father’s family would visit yearly.
Different views of Israel (left to right): The new Moroccan synagogue in Ashdod; The interior of the same synagogue during Thursday prayer for a Bar Mitzvah; My uncle’s photo from the early 1960s, arranging a departure time for Berber Jews about to migrate to Israel, he can be seen in the top right; The Western Wall, one of the only remaining structures from the Holy Temple in Jerusalem destroyed in 70 AD