

# TRAVEL

**Investment and Development Agency of Latvia**

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NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN 2020

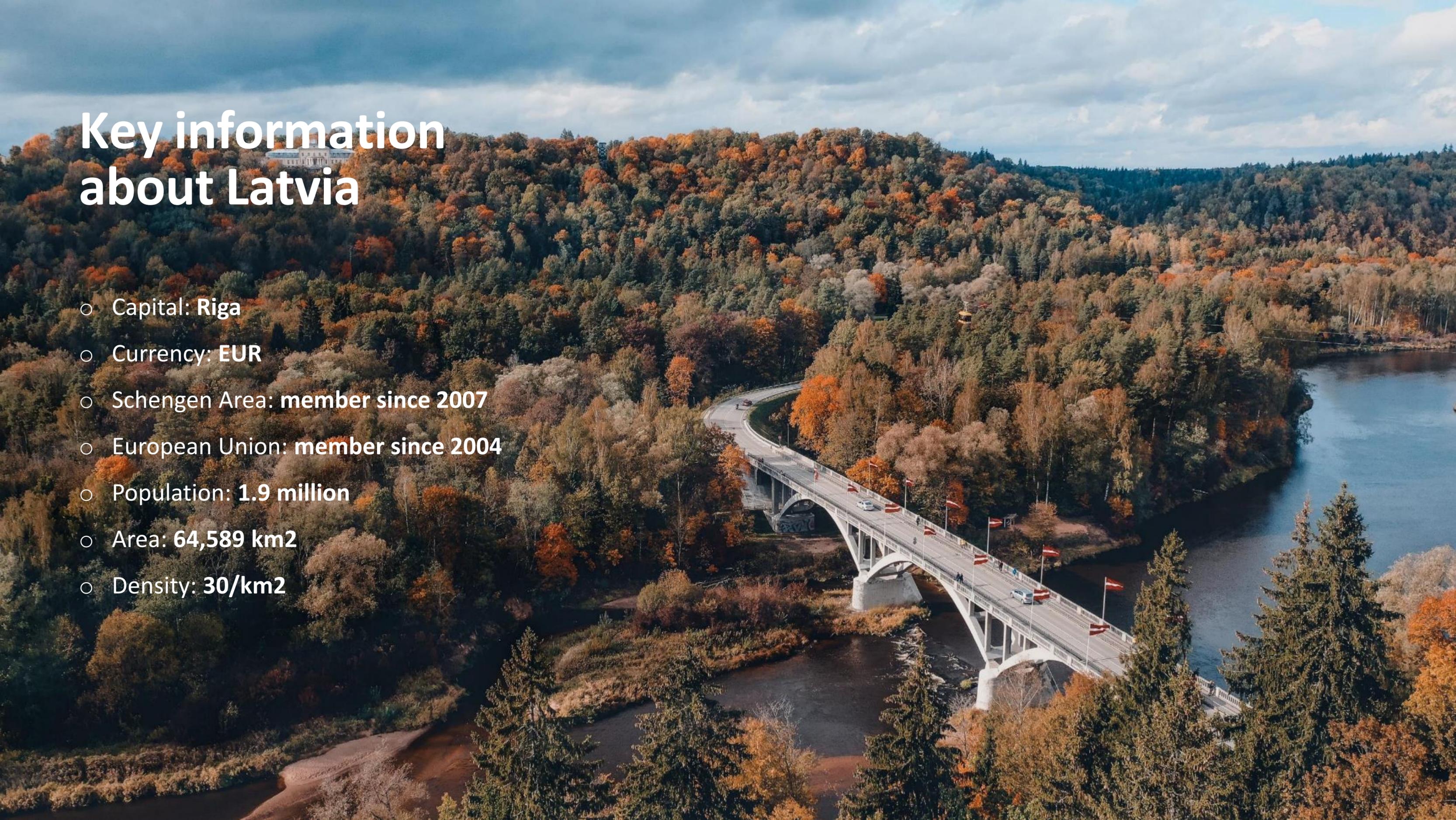


**EUROPEAN UNION**  
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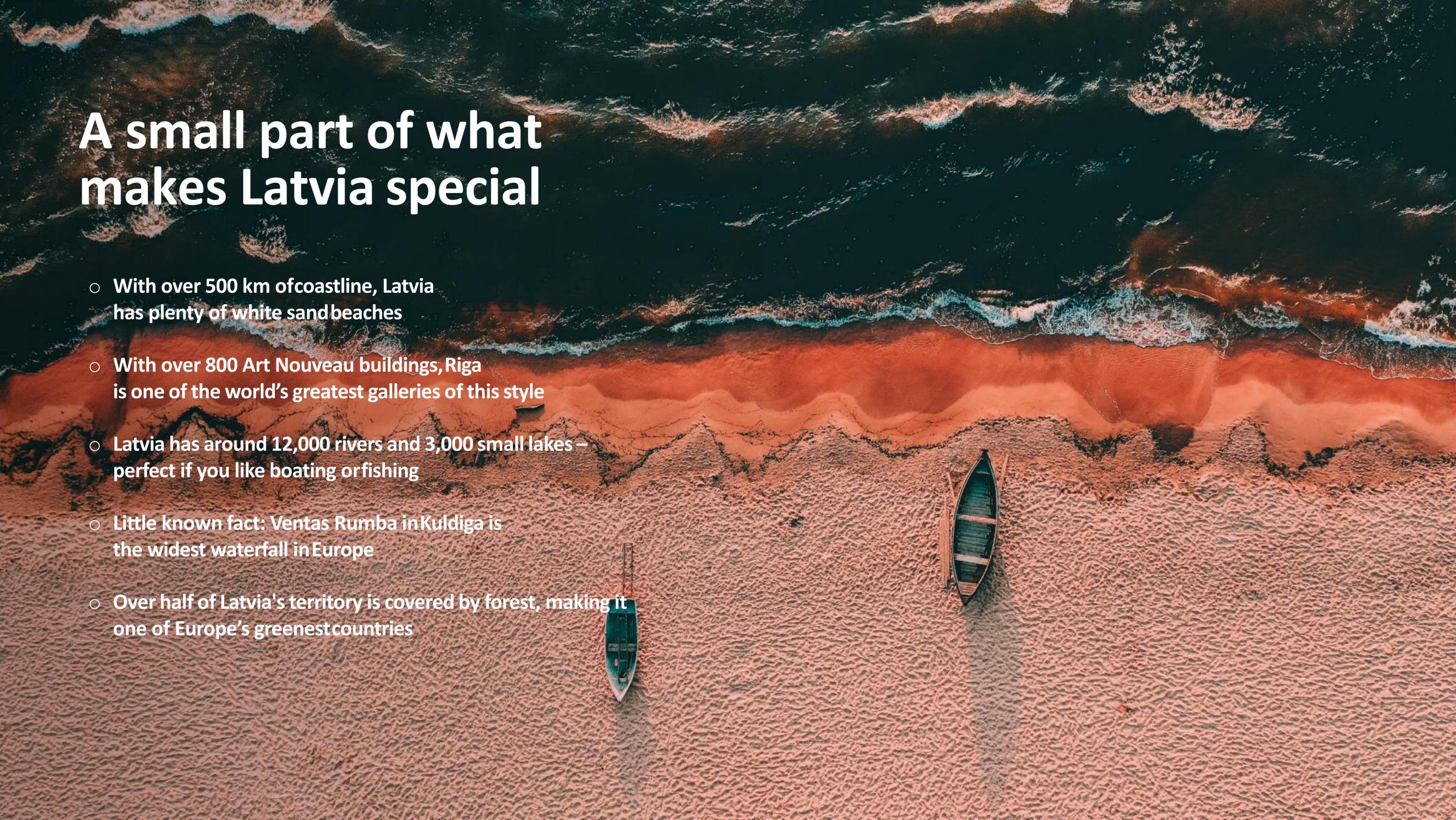
# Key information about Latvia

- Capital: **Riga**
- Currency: **EUR**
- Schengen Area: **member since 2007**
- European Union: **member since 2004**
- Population: **1.9 million**
- Area: **64,589 km<sup>2</sup>**
- Density: **30/km<sup>2</sup>**



# A small part of what makes Latvia special

- With over 500 km of coastline, Latvia has plenty of white sand beaches
- With over 800 Art Nouveau buildings, Riga is one of the world's greatest galleries of this style
- Latvia has around 12,000 rivers and 3,000 small lakes – perfect if you like boating or fishing
- Little known fact: Ventas Rumba in Kuldiga is the widest waterfall in Europe
- Over half of Latvia's territory is covered by forest, making it one of Europe's greenest countries



# Latvia in Europe

Less than 3 hours away from the majority of European capitals



# Riga - home of airBaltic

Air traffic hub of the Baltics

More than 100 direct flights

airBaltic Codeshare partners:



# Coaches

Comfortable coaches operate not only to and from neighbouring countries but also connect Latvia with France, Greece and other further countries



# Ferry lines

Ferries operate to and from 2 port cities in Latvia – Liepaja and Ventspils.

The ferry between Liepaja and Travemunde in Germany operates up to 5 times a week with sailing duration from 26 hours.



# Some facts about Riga

- Home to almost half of country's population
- Riga was founded in 1201
- Its historical center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site
- Over 800 Art Nouveau buildings
- More than 800 free WIFI connection points

- Riga Central Market is one of the biggest markets in Europe. It is famous for its pavilions housed in giant zeppelin hangars.



# Kurzeme (Courland) region

Situated in western Latvia, Kurzeme has a 350 km border with the Baltic Sea. The highlights include the picturesque Jurkalne seashore buffs and the Cape Kolka - a unique place where the Baltic Sea collides with the Gulf of Riga.

The region can be proud of more than 200 lakes and small rivers. Combined with the Baltic Sea, it's a natural fisherman's paradise, also perfect if you're rather interested only in eating delicious fish.

Need a drink with your meal? Sabile's Wine Hill is included in Guinness Book of World Records as the northernmost vineyard in the world - suited both for romantic walks and wine tastings.



# Kuldiga - heritage of centuries

Situated 150 km from Riga and 100 km from Liepaja, this ancient town was one of the capitals of the Duchy of Courland (1562-1795).

The architecture is still well-preserved and admired by many.

In the Restoration center of Kuldiga everybody is invited to learn more on how to preserve a building's authenticity by performing conservation and restoration works.

The historical centre of Kuldiga has the European Heritage Label and is included in the UNESCO World Heritage Latvian Tentative List. Don't just look with your eyes – take the chance to stay in one of Kuldiga's unique, little hotels.



# Liepaja never sleeps

The port city Liepaja can be proud of its lively cultural life, enriched by an artistic and independent spirit. European Capital of Culture 2027.

Liepaja Theatre, concert hall “Great Amber” and art gallery “Romans Darzs” are just a few of places in Liepaja to enjoy culture.

During the summer, Liepaja also hosts the annual pop music festival Summer Sound that takes place right on the sandy beach, but if you'd like to enjoy more spiritual sounds – visit the Holy Trinity Cathedral where you can hear the world's largest mechanical organ.

Fun fact: Liepaja is considered to be the birthplace of the best Latvian rock music singers.



# Zemgale (Semigalia) region

Situated in southern Latvia, Zemgale's landscape stands out with extended cultivated fields. Here are the highest chances to spot majestic storks that Latvians hold sacred – a stork's nest close to a home is considered a blessing.

Zemgale is significant with its large number of remarkable palaces and manors, with Jelgava Palace and Rundale Palace being the most renowned ones.

The Region's central town Jelgava annually holds international ice sculpture and sand sculpture festivals, making it worth paying a visit either in summer or winter.



# Bread barn of Latvia

Locals pay tribute to Zemgale with this sweet nickname for centuries. Since ancient times, bread making traditions in Latvia have been considered sacred.

When in Latvia, definitely taste locally baked bread or even take a chance to participate in the baking process.

# Rundale Palace

Rundale Palace is the most notable 18th-century Baroque and Rococo architectural monument in Latvia.

Designed by Italian architect F. B. Rastrelli, this impressive palace and its gardens are now a museum – one of the major tourist destinations in entire country.



# Latgale region

Also called the Land of Blue Lakes, this is where the largest number of lakes in Latvia are congregated – of course, full of delicious fish.

Latgalian themselves are famed by their warm hospitality, unique mentality and traditions. Interestingly, language used in Latgale also differs from the rest of the country.

Latgale is also famed for its craftsmen – ceramists, weavers and wickerwork makers. Their work in its widest range is available during the solstice market in Ludza.



# Mark Rothko

Not everybody knows that the acclaimed artist Mark Rothko was born in Daugavpils.

Now Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre is the only place in Northern Europe providing an opportunity to get acquainted with his original works.

# Vidzeme region

Literally meaning "the Middle Land", Vidzeme covers the central and northern parts of Latvia. Coastline, hills, rivers and cliffs – Vidzeme is diverse and simply meant for nature lovers.

Even though the region is recognized for the outstanding landscapes and historical sites like medieval castles, this is also where you can visit Riga and Jurmala - cities buzzing with life and different events.

Bordering Estonia, Vidzeme can be proud of a unique town that is split between the two countries - called Valka on our side and Valga across the border. The inhabitants have learned to coexist and take the best from each country.



# Cesis

**Ancient meets trendy, that's the charm of Cesis – one of the best-preserved medieval towns in the Baltics. Though 800 years of history is no obstacle for the most innovative and creative cultural events to be held exactly here.**

This is where architects move to live, leaving the capital behind. This is where cafes are the trendiest and events – most stylish and up to date.

# Gauja National Park

**Gauja river valley and its vast diversity of plant and animal species are protected by a park that connects ancient times with modern hotels, restaurants and exciting activities.**

Things to do include hikes in nature, boating, bike tours, excursions through the impressive number of castles, manors and churches and so much more. This is not the place for only one or two days, be ready for a lengthy adventure!

# Unique activities in Gauja National park

- Sigulda Medieval Castle ruins
- AERODIUM vertical wind tunnel
- Soviet Secret Bunker in Ligatne
- Sigulda bobsleigh track
- Turaida Museum Reserve
- Cesis Castle complex
- Bungee Sigulda
- Zipline Zerglis

# In all Latvia

Latvian cuisine, our love for handmade crafts and ancient traditions spread across the country. Special occasions like the summer solstice are celebrated in all Latvia without exceptions.



# Rebirth of manors

Latvia has inherited plenty of manors and castles from previous rulers over time. Now is the time that the once splendid buildings are regaining former glory.

Many today serve as state-of-art boutique hotels, workshop centers or museums.



# Gastronomy and local cuisine

Fishing in rivers, lakes and the sea, foraging mushrooms and berries, hunting - local people have always embraced everything nature has to offer. It's clearly noticeable in Latvian cuisine - natural ingredients, including ecologically grown vegetables and fruits, are a must-have.

Because of the long winters, Latvians are also the masters of pickle and jam making, preserving food in delicious ways. These goods are typically sold in farmer's markets like the Night Market and Kalnciema Quarter Market.



# Latvian crafts

Craftsmanship is no stranger to Latvia. Black clay, knits and handmade national costumes are just a small part of what we're masters of.

Regular craft markets are held and goods often can be bought straight from their maker, while hearing their story and perhaps even receiving a discount in exchange for a smile.



# Latvian Bath house

Latvia has deep-rooted sauna traditions that can't be separated from nature - it's not a sauna without bath brooms from birch and other plants. Many countryside saunas offer sauna rituals held by the bather – master of pagan traditions.



# Must-see events

Latvia always offers opportunities to visit open air performances, artshows, exhibitions and festivals dedicated to themes like art, creativity, music, sports and even science. Day or night, all seasons of the year are saturated with things to see and shows to attend.



# Song and Dance celebration

Since 1873, once every 5 years approximately 30,000 performers altogether participate in the song and dance event. Hundreds of choirs and folk dance groups perform in front of thousands of viewers. It's not an exaggeration to call it the main event in Latvian culture.

Song and Dance celebration has been in UNESCO heritage since 2008. The next celebration will be held in 2023 and lasts a week.



# Riga Marathon

Largest running event in Latvia and the most ambitious public sporting event in the Baltics. Marathon's course is set on both sides of river Daugava, goes through Art Nouveau district, medieval Riga old town and even wooden architecture district.

Recently World Athletics has awarded the marathon with Gold Label, once again placing it among the most prestigious marathons in the World.



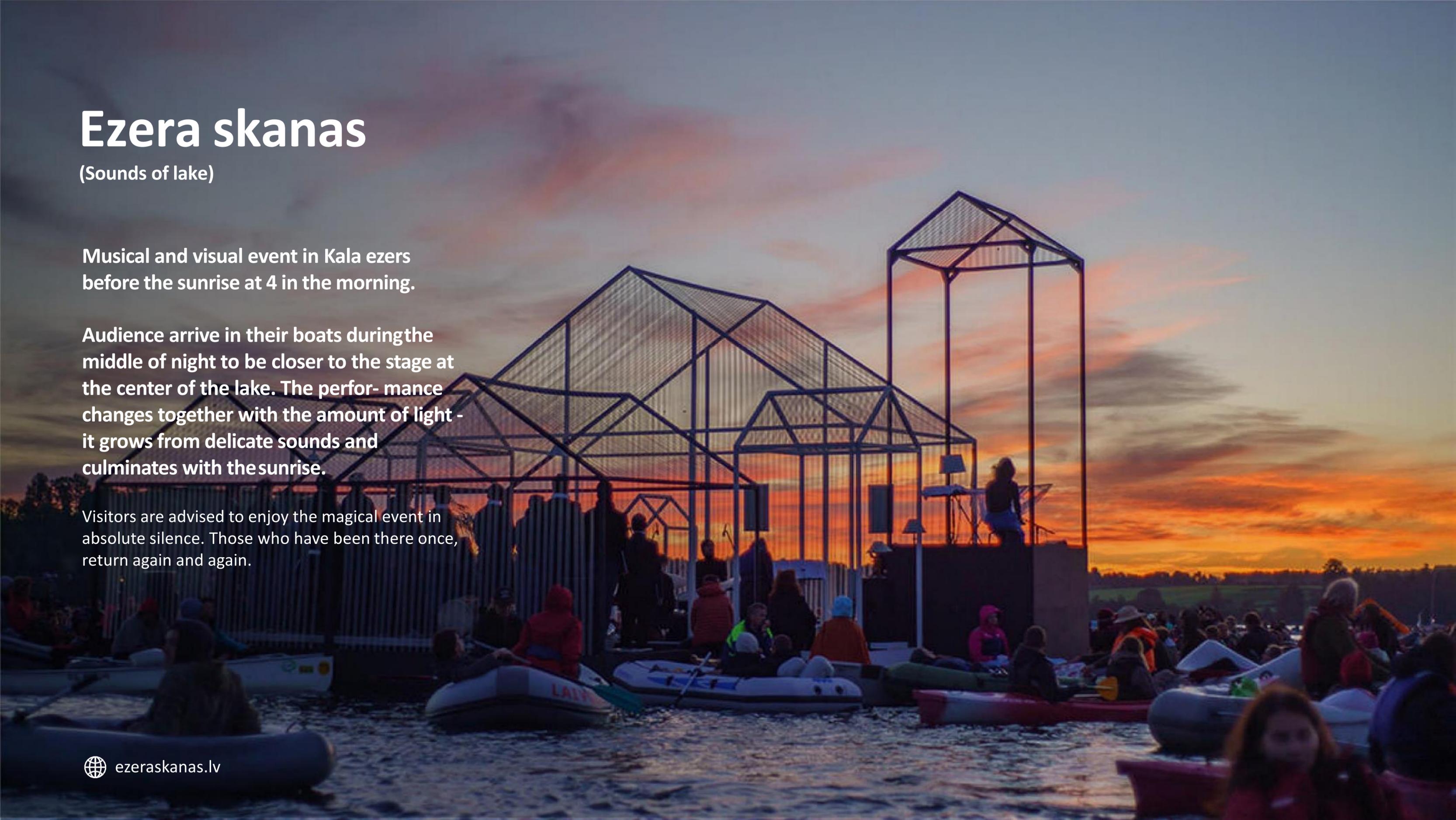
# Ezera skanas

(Sounds of lake)

Musical and visual event in Kala ezers before the sunrise at 4 in the morning.

Audience arrive in their boats during the middle of night to be closer to the stage at the center of the lake. The performance changes together with the amount of light - it grows from delicate sounds and culminates with the sunrise.

Visitors are advised to enjoy the magical event in absolute silence. Those who have been there once, return again and again.



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