Useful words and phrases

Latvian is the official language of Latvia. To feel more comfortable while enjoying your holiday in Latvia, we wish to offer you a number of useful expressions and words in the Latvian language that will certainly make communicating with the people of Latvia easier and the journey even more pleasant!

Around a million and a half people consider Latvian to be their native language, of whom most, or ca. 1.4 million, live in Latvia. Latvian is a rare language; it is part of the Indo-European language family and together with Lithuanian forms the Baltic branch. The Latvian language began to emerge in the VII Century as the languages of the ancient Latvian tribes – the Latgarians,
Semigallians and Selonians – fused, incorporating many borrowed words from the language of the Livonians, a Finno-Ugric tribe of Latvia.

Also, shades of the German, Scandinavian, Old Russian and Latin languages have influenced the Latvian language over the course of the centuries.

It is worth remembering that Latvian is related to Lithuanian, yet the languages are not mutually freely intelligible to their speakers. Whereas in the third Baltic country, Estonia, the completely different Estonian language is spoken, which belongs to the Finno-Ugric family. It also has to be noted that in Latvia, especially in Riga and the second largest city, Daugavpils, a large segment of the local population are ethnic Russian and thus, speak Russian.

While travelling in Latvia, some frequently used Latvian phrases may come in handy:

**Expressions of politeness**

Thank you - Paldies

Please/you’re welcome - Lūdzu

Good morning - Labrīt

Good day/afternoon - Labdien

Good evening - Labvakar

Hello/greetings - Sveicināti

Good-bye/see you again - Uz redzēšanos

Good night - Ar labu nakti

Cheers! - Priekā!

**Useful words**

Yes - Jā

No - Nē

Taxi - Taksometrs

Bus/coach - Autobuss

Shop - Veikals
Discover Latvia

Discover the small Baltic country of Latvia, starting with its capital city of Riga. A legend has it that Riga, - a city full of cultural...
See & do

Visit Latvia to enjoy strolling pristine Gauja National Park, hit the beach in the resort city of Jurmala, or get an adrenaline rush at the...

Plan

Visit the regions of Latvia, and plan your trip using a route planner. Find out where you can have dinner at top-level restaurants in...

Source URL: https://www.latvia.travel/en/article/useful-words-and-phrases