Folklore and Customs

Latvia is proud of its rich heritage of folklore and folk customs that cannot be encountered anywhere else. A significant part of the modern Latvian lifestyle includes such unique traditions as the summer solstice holiday Jāņi or “Liigo!”, the Latvian Song and Dance Festival, a treasure trove of folk songs (dainas), mythology, traditional dress, and folk dancing.
Century-old traditions

Each deity in Latvian folklore has its own symbol, which protects its wearer, providing strength or beauty, while the folk songs, fairy tales, and legends describe life long ago. Customs are most evidently manifested at the Jāņi summer solstice celebration, via mummery during the winter solstice, the Meteņi festival in February, and specific egg-dying traditions at Easter.

A great place to learn about the history of Latvia, traditional rites, and ancient crafts - the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum in Riga
The best way to learn about the ingrained folk spirit of Latvian singers is to experience the **Latvian Song and Dance Festival**, held once every five years offering the finest choral performances and breathtaking folk dance choreography.

**Festive markets**

Ahead of **Jāņi**, Christmas, and other celebrations, Latvian towns are known for their annual fairs that always provide a good lesson about traditional craftsmanship – weaving, ceramics, basketry, jewelry-making, wood carving, and metal forging. You will be able to try your own hand in these ancient trades.

**Folk and ancient culture festivals**

Every three years, the International Baltic Folk Festival Baltica is organised, where one can get the feel of the ancient customs and rites of Latvia, and those of its closest neighbor-nations.

Ancient traditions in modern execution can be seen at the Baltijas Saule (Baltic Sun) Festival, which is dedicated to the 1236 Battle of Saule (Sun). Held in Riga every year, the festival offers various activities from sword fighting in authentic apparel to ethno-rock concerts.

**Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum**

One of the oldest and largest open-air museums in Europe is located on the banks of Lake Jugla, just a 30 minute drive from downtown Riga.
**Song and Dance Celebration**

Every five years, for one week. This is the time frame for THE main event in Latvian cultural life - the Nationwide Latvian Song and Dance...

**Summer solstice celebrations**

Do not miss the most Latvian holiday of all – Jāņi or "Līgo!", the night from June 23 to June 24 (in harmony with the summer solstice),...

**Culture**

With Latvia being located on the crossroads between Western and Eastern cultures, and having a history of tumultuous developments, it is...