The Seashores of Kurzeme

The coastline of the Baltic Sea in western Latvia was once the heavily-guarded western border of the USSR. To this day, Kurzeme shores can boast of pristine natural surroundings, practically untouched by civilisation. You can sunbathe, look for amber stones washed ashore, or fly a kite on a sparkling beach...
Pristine coast

The coast of Kurzeme is an enchanting place for those who love wild nature – you can walk along the sea for hours without meeting a single person. But then you may be lucky to meet someone from the sea – come spring, the beach is popular with seal pups.

After a storm, one can make an unexpected find on the beach – amber stones washed ashore,
mostly like golden-grain, also called pine-tree tears (priedes asaras) on the southern seashore.

**Cliffed coast of the Baltic**

One unusual creation of nature here is the cliffed coast al section, several dozen kilometres long and up to 20 metres high in some places. This part of the coast is especially impressive at Jurkalne, where it is well-suited for paraplane flights. Those in to water sports, try kiteboarding or windsurfing.

**Slitere National Park**

The so-called Liv Coast stretches from Kolka to Ovisi, and part of it is in the territory of Slitere National Park. Liv Coast is known for its centuries-old fishing villages and leisurely activity on the beach.

Great diversity and over 40 species of mammals are found in Slitere National Park. Weather permitting, a guide takes visitors to go watch wild animals. Slitere Park is crossed by the White Sea-Baltic Sea flyway, and the park is home to many rare and protected bird species.

**Cape Kolka**

Cape Kolka is the largest jutted horn in Latvia, located where the Baltic Sea meets the Gulf of Riga, creating impressive vortexes.

Several sailing ships sank at Cape Kolka in the past, and the shipwrecks are now highly attractive objects for divers.

**Laguna-type lakes**

Lake Engure Nature Park has been included on the list of Europe’s most important waterfowl habitats. There are nature trails, visitors can buy angling permits at the boat livery and try their luck at catching remarkable fish.

In the south of Kurzeme, there is Pape Nature Park, an important bird migration stopover. Every autumn, the only migratory bird observation station in Latvia works there and ornithologists mark birds. There are wild horses grazing in the meadows, as well as nature trails and birdwatching towers.

Kanieris – a lake rich in bird and fish resources, popular with birdwatchers and anglers. Lake Kanieris has the status of a Ramsar wetland of international importance.

**Beaches at coastal cities and towns**
Cities and towns on Kurzeme shores take pride in their tidy beaches with amenities – Ventspils and Liepaja beaches regularly win the status of Blue Flag beaches.

- **Liepaja** – the city “where the wind is born”, and the rock ‘n ‘roll capital of Latvia. Liepaja’s impressive military legacy – Karosta. Those who love music are welcome to the summer festivals - Summer Sound and Fontaine, and those culturally-inclined are recommended to visit the just-unveiled Liepaja Concert Hall.
- **Ventspils** – a neat and tidy city with various recreation opportunities, particularly attractive for families with children.
- **Pavilosta** – a paradise for those who prefer outdoor recreation. Every summer, the small town is filled by surfers, kiters and other fans of outdoor recreation, who appreciate the clean beaches and the quaint port of the town, the chance to buy smoked fish from local fishermen and also excellent fishing opportunities.

**Fishing villages**

There is simply something special about the shores of the Gulf of Riga in Kurzeme. The old fishing villages – Bigaunciemis, Lapmeziems, Ragaciems, beckon you with their white, sandy beaches, guesthouses and cottages in the dunes, beer pubs, and fresh-smoked fish.

The fishing villages have a long history, for instance, Roja Port was once used by the Vikings, and it was an important shipyard in the Duchy of Kurzeme.

The stretch of the coast from Kolka to Ovisi is called Liv Coast, as historically it was an area where the Finno-Ugric people of Livs lived. The Liv Coast includes 12 villages, each with its own distinct features and charm.

- **Kosrags** is an urban development monument.
- **Mazirbe** once had the largest population of Livs in Kurzeme, and now houses a Liv culture centre. Visitors can also see a small cemetery of fishing boats.
- **Mikeltoņi** is where the highest lighthouse in the Baltics is located – Mikelbaka.
**Cape Kolka**

Cape Kolka is the most pronounced horn on the shores of Latvia, and it is where the waves from two seas clash – the open Baltic Sea and the...

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Slitere National Park is located in the Northern Kurzeme peninsula washed by the Baltic Sea. The park is known for its incredibly beautiful...

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