The Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation is the oldest public museum in Latvia and the Baltic, and is one of the oldest in Europe. The Museum is located in Old Town, in a noteworthy 13th – 20th century architectural monument – the Riga Dome complex.

The origins of the Museum are to be found in the 18th century. At the heart of this rich and varied exposition is the personal collection of the Riga doctor Nikolas von Himzel’s (1729-1764) scientific and artistic exhibits. After his death his mother, Katrina von Himzel, gave the collection to the city of Riga, in accordance with her son’s wishes.
On 22 February 1773 the Riga Town Council established the Museum, giving it the name of von Himzel, and housing it in the building of the theater of anatomy at Kaleju iela 34/36 (the building has not survived).

In 1791 the Museum was moved to the eastern wing of the Riga Dome complex, which was rebuilt to suit the needs of the city library and the Museum.

The history of the Museum is closely tied to the activities of the society for the study of the history and antiquity of the Baltic Provinces of Russia (founded in 1834), the Riga society for the study of nature (1845), the literary-practical citizens’ society (1802), and the association of practicing doctors of Riga (1822). The collections of all these societies were exhibited in the so-called Riga Museum formed in 1958 and located at Šķūņu iela 11.

In 1932 the Museum with all its collections was included on the list structures to be protected under the Administration of Monuments of the Republic of Latvia. The Riga City administration created the City of Riga Historical Museum, using the materials which they owned (including objects from the Himzel Museum) and had housed in the Dome Museum. The Administration of Monuments added a numismatic collection and other materials of cultural relevance for the history of Riga, from the former Dome Museum.

The Second World War and the Soviet occupation that followed had an impact on the development of the Museum. The Museum lost a part of its holdings because of the departure of the Baltic Germans and the removal of some collections to German-occupied territories. Soviet authorities took action to remove historical objects which they considered inimical to their ideology. Also, the Museum changed its name several times during this period.

The Soviet regime nationalized the Museum in 1940, and since that time it is under the stewardship of the government. In 1964 it acquired its current name – Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation - reflecting its new line of activity. Today the Museum possesses 500,000 objects, organized in approximately 80 collections.

The Museum has three branches: The Ainaži Naval School Museum (opened in 1969), and in Riga – Mentzendorf House. 17th-18th century Rigan house-museum (1992) and the Photography Museum of Latvia (1993)

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Coordinates:
56.948481, 24.104103
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Palasta iela 4, Rīga, LV-1050
+371 67211358, +371 67356676
Languages Spoken:
- English
- Russian
- Latvian

Time:
May - Sept
Monday - Sunday
10:00 - 17:00
Jun - Aug
Friday
12:00 - 19:00
Oct - Apr
Monday - Tuesday
closed
Wednesday - Sunday
10:00 - 17:00

Price (adults):
1.00 € - 5.00 €

Admission Fee:
Paid

Tourism Object Services:
- Activities for children
- Guide service available
- Workshops
- Souvenirs

Tourism Object Features:
Credit cards accepted

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