

Baltic States

Three-in-one vacation



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Tours through the Baltic States

Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are a great attraction for many distant nations. These are EU countries that have yet to be discovered. It is curious that those coming to us are always surprised by the beauty of the cities that have remained largely intact across time, by many European links between our culture and history, as well as by unspoilt, sparsely populated landscapes.

We have some tour routes through Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for you to learn about historical, cultural and scenic diversity of these three countries. They serve as an initial orientation and kindle a desire for more.

Further information about particular attractions and events can be received in regional tourism information offices on the spot.



Girl from Kihnu



Tallinn

Tour 1

This route brings you closer to the capital cities of the Baltic States that could hardly be more diverse: the Nordic-medieval Tallinn near the Baltic Sea, the glamorous Riga nourished by the wide Daugava River with its elegant Art Nouveau boulevards, and almost Mediterranean-like Vilnius rich in baroque and churches.



Nida in Lithuania

Tour 2

The second route presents very different landscapes and the cultural characteristics of the Baltic States: Saaremaa, the largest Estonian island with its stony coasts and mysterious medieval churches, port cities of the Latvian West Coast and with its secluded beaches, and, finally, Klaipėda, the gate to the Curonian Spit with its dune landscape.



Turaida Castle in Latvia

Tour 3

This tour acquaints you with smaller, less familiar Baltic pearls: traditional, student-dominated Tartu in Estonia, beautiful natural landscapes in Sigulda, Hanseatic city Cēsis in the Latvian Switzerland and old Kaunas, the once proud capital city of Lithuania.



Wooden church of Ruhnū

Brief historical knowledge

Lithuanians and Latvians are Balts by their ethnographic and linguistic origin. Lithuanian and Latvian languages are relatively closely related languages. As it is commonly known, Estonia is also a Baltic state, although Estonians are Finno-Ugric people (linguistically closely related to Finns).

In the 13th century, the homeland of Estonians and Latvians was conquered and forcibly converted to Christianity by the Livonian Order (by Danish troops in the north). For example, there was Livonia, Order state in the territory of today's Estonia and Latvia with German upper class, named after Livonians, residents of the Gulf of Riga. It existed till the middle of the 16th century. By 1710 the territory was conquered by Poland and Sweden. Only Courland (today's Western and Southern Latvia) was a stand-alone duchy in between 1561-1795. In 1710, Russia conquered the former Swedish territories, in 1795 Courland also fell to Russia. It was not until 1918 that Estonia and Latvia became independent states for the first time.

Lithuania, however, already formed an independent Grand Duchy in the 13th century, it could resist its neighbours in the 14th and 15th century – the Teutonic Order in Prussia and the Livonian Order in the north. At the end of the 14th century, the Lithuanian Grand Duchy made a union with Poland, which resulted in the Christianization of the country. Part of Lithuanian territories became Prussian. In the second half of the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, dualistic state, went under the division of Poland; Lithuania fell to Russia. It was not until 1918 that Lithuania was re-established.

In 1940, as a result of the Hitler-Stalin Pact of the Soviet Union, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were de facto annexed and forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union. They did not return their independence (1941-1944) even after the German occupation. It was only in August 1991, at the time of the Moscow coup, that their independence was restored. In 2004 all three countries became members of the EU and NATO.



Sailing boat

Capital city tour

Tallinn - Riga - Vilnius
(ca. 600 km)



Old Town of Tallinn, Toompea

Estonia

The tour begins in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, formerly known as Reval with real open-air museum's medieval architecture. Towers and walls of the urban armaments system from the 15th and 16th century are still present to approximately two-thirds. Toompea, the limestone hill, hosts a cathedral (with more than one hundred panels with coats of arms and various tombs of Estonian knights), a palace (today the Parliament), as well as numerous former state palaces of Baltic German nobility. Terraces of Toompea are an ideal viewpoint to one of the busiest ports in the Baltic Sea. The "short" (Lühike jalg) or the "long leg" (Pikk jalg) descends from the upper town into the humming life of the lower town. Amid Gothic houses of merchants and Guild houses, churches and warehouses, Tallinn's old town offers a medieval flair that no other city in the Baltic region can offer. Medieval and arts mar-

kets, as well as concerts held regularly on the Town Hall Square are breathing life into the old city. You should also take a walk into the oldest Gothic town hall in Northern Europe to contemplate the unique wooden decorations of the Holy Spirit Church and the famous pictures depicting the death dance in St. Nicholas' Church. You can look over the shoulder at the artisans in St. Catherine's Guild. A visit to the Pirita suburb is a contrast to the bustling old town. Picturesque ruins of the huge St. Birgitta's Monastery, the marina with a beautiful panoramic view of the distinctive old town's silhouette and the long beach make a trip here really enjoyable. The small baroque palace of Peter I with its rose garden, the presidential palace and the new KUMU Art Museum, that won the title of the European Museum of the year in 2008, are all waiting for visitors in the district of Kadriorg.



Town Hall of Tallinn



Kadriorg castle



Tallinn Song Festival Grounds

Those who leave Tallinn without having seen its Song Festival with a large shell will miss a lot! The Estonian language belongs – not only when singing – to one of the most melodic languages of the world. Estonians have been organizing large Song Festivals since 1869, they take place every 5 years – at the beginning of July 2014 and then in 2019. These splendid festivals are among the most impressive experiences of a visit to Estonia!

One of the attractions that enriched the cultural life of Tallinn in the last years has been, without any doubt, the new maritime museum, housed in a former seaplane hangar and attracting both the young and the old, men and women, with its spectacular and very modern exhibition. The television tower, reopened at the gates of the city in 2012, is also worth a visit not only because of its fresh, retro-style designed decoration of the highest restaurant in the city, but also because of the fantastic view it offers.

Architecture enthusiasts should in any case take a walk in the Rotermanni Quarter (Rotermanni-keskus) located close to the old town. On a factory site of the 19th century, young local architects created a modern symbiosis of residential and business markets – like an island in the middle of the city – showing in an exciting way how industrial architecture of bygone days and the life of the 21st century complete each other.

Rocca Al Mare open-air museum invites tourists to a trip to the old Estonian countryside. In a prominent place near the sea bay located in the forest, you can go on a journey through time to the 18th-20th century – by bike, on foot or in a horse-drawn carriage. Then you can take some refreshment in a rural hotel at a typical Estonian court.

Pärnu with about 44,000 inhabitants is waiting for your visit approximately half way between Tallinn and Riga. The former Hanseatic town developed into a seaside resort in the 19th century and was frequently visited also by members of the tsar's court of Petersburg. Today Pärnu is the summer capital city of Estonia, as it is the only coastal city in the Baltic states that has to offer on several kilometres Southern beaches!



Estonian KUMU Art Museum



Old Town of Riga

Latvia

Driving past the Jugla Lake and the ethnographic open-air museum, you get into the capital city of Latvia – Riga, the metropolis of the Baltic countries. It pulses with life. Latvians also like to celebrate, especially the summer solstice. Nobody sleeps in the night of June 23 and 24, but this archaic celebration is celebrated everywhere with singing. The old town is full of live music in beer gardens and full of cheerful people in summer. A good reference point is the tower of St. Peter's Church (with an elevator to the observation platform), from where visitors can have the best panoramic view of the old town and the wide Daugava River. The nearby St. John's Yard with reconstructed city walls and the Convent Yard with its

small alleys are very romantic. From here, you can reach the town square with the impressive House of the Blackheads. The reconstructed town hall is also worth seeing. St. Mary's Cathedral is the largest medieval church of the Baltic States that has been preserved; it still shows traces of its Romanesque past. The organ from the end of the 19th century was once the largest organ in the world. The cathedral is also the former monastery of the cathedral chapter with its late Romanesque cloister. Other attractions in the old town are the former castle of the Livonian Order, the Swedish Gate with former Jacob's barracks, the building of Saeima (the parliament), the Powder Tower and the Small Guild and the Big Guild.



Riga Dom



National Opera

The Freedom Monument, a female figure that stretches three stars from the Latvian national coat of arms to heaven, forms the transition of the old town to the city centre. Each tourist must visit the stunning Art Nouveau Quarter at the corner of Elizabetes Street and Antonijas Street, Alberta Street and Strelnieku Street. The central market housed in five former Zeppelin hangars is also worth seeing. Primarily domestic foodstuff is sold here.

From Riga, the route leads in the direction of Bauska, one of the last castles built by the Livonian Order (mid 15th century). Medieval castle ruins border closely on the reconstructed renaissance castle of the first Duke of Courland.

Rundāle Palace stands on the fertile plain of Zemgale (Semigallia). The palace complex of Rundāle is one of the most outstanding architectural monuments of the Baroque and Rococo epoch in Latvia. It was a summer residence of the Courland Duke Ernst Johann von Biron in the middle of the 18th century built by St. Petersburg's court architect Rastrelli.



Art Nouveau in Riga



Castle Bauska



Palace and museum Rundāle



Church of St. Peter and St. Paul



Bernardine Church

Lithuania

Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, is located in a picturesque place, embedded in the valley of Neris and Vilnia Rivers and shaped by seven hills. The silhouette of Vilnius, which is one of the largest old cities in Europe, is characterized by countless church towers. A wonderful view to the Old Town opens to visitors from the observation platform of

the Gediminas Castle Tower. The Cathedral of Vilnius, the Gothic brick building of the Church of St. Anne and the Bernardine Church, the colourful orthodox Holy Spirit Church and the Baroque Church of St. Peter and St. Paul located outside the old town with more than 2,000 stucco figures are mentioned as highlights for a more detailed exploration.



Cathedral Square



Trakai peninsular cCastle

The university was founded in 1579 and is considered to be one of the oldest universities in Eastern Europe. The Gates of Dawn is a meeting place for many pilgrims from all over the world. In the upper area of the gates, there is a chapel with a miraculous painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary dated 17th century. Gediminas Avenue leads from the Cathedral Square past the site of the former KGB Building (now a museum) to the Parliament building. The remains of the barricades here still remind of the dra-

ma of 1991, when Lithuania had to regain its freedom. The Užupis District ("beyond the River") forms a creative place. The old capital Trakai with its beautiful castle that served as a residence for the Lithuanian Grand Duke Vytautas, is located in the vicinity of Vilnius. Trakai was once also a religious centre of the Lithuanian Karaites, Turkish people who were followers of the Jewish religion. Its few members still maintain their culture. Typical dishes of these people are still served in national restaurants.



Surroundings of Trakai town

Coastal route

Saaremaa – Ventspils –
Liepāja – Klaipėda
(ca. 730 km)



Muhu Island

Estonia

This tour offers the maximum Baltic Sea experiences – from sparsely populated Estonian islands with their natural and cultural beauty to Latvian cities Ventspils and Liepāja and further on to the Lithuanian seaside town of Klaipėda and dreamy sandy beaches and dunes of the Curonian Spit.

Estonian islands Muhu and Saaremaa are a starting point. From the Estonian perspective, the Baltic Sea would be understandably called “the Western Sea”; especially for those who live in Tallinn – in the West! The port of Virtsu comes first in the

land route. A ferry to Kuivastu located on the small Muhu Island departs from here. From the Muhu Island there is a causeway to Saaremaa.

Islanders are cheerful and hospitable people. On islands, feasts are celebrated as they come. Those who have such an opportunity should not miss their chance to try brewed beer on Saaremaa!

The islands offer relaxation in intact nature, for example, on the coasts of the North of Saaremaa and in numerous juniper heathlands. Panga Cliff (“Panga pank”) is particularly worth mentioning.



Windmills of Saaremaa



Farmhouse of Saaremaa

The accommodation ranges from a farmhouse with sauna on the edge of the forest, up to an exclusive country hotel with a sea-view. There is no place for boredom here. Interested visitors will find jewels of fine art here, discovering exciting secrets on closer inspection, such as the Gothic St. Catherine's Church in Liiva on the Muhu Island and the largest fortified church of Saaremaa in Poide. Knights of the Livonian Order and bishops left behind various castles. Ruins of the Maasi fortress at Orissaare are especially worth seeing. In Kuressaare, the capital of the island, one must visit the castle, without any doubt the best preserved medieval castle of the Baltic States. In addition to its wellness hotels, cafes, its marina, lovable parks, and colourful wooden buildings, the tranquil town offers resort atmosphere by excellence. Further special features of Saaremaa are the post mills of Angla and the Kaali field of meteorite craters, that even today are a place surrounded by countless myths and legends. On the Muhu Island, it is a must to make a trip to the Koguva museum village, which brings visitors back to the 19th century.

Pärnu with about 44,000 inhabitants is waiting for your visit approximately half way between Tallinn and Riga. The former Hanseatic town developed into a seaside resort in the 19th century and was frequently visited also by the members of the tsar's court of Petersburg. Today Pärnu is the summer capital city of Estonia, as it is the only coastal city in the Baltic states that has to offer on several kilometres long Southern beach!



Blue flag beach in Ventspils

Latvia

Ventspils, former Hanseatic town on the Venta River, today is the most important port city of Latvia. The best view of the city is provided during the Harbour Cruise with the "HercogsJekabs" boat on the Venta River.

The wealthiest city in Latvia is family-friendly and well-kept, there are fountains and flower bushes, playgrounds and modern art objects everywhere. The only ski mountain in Latvia is also located here – even though it is an artificial one. You can always find something interesting in Ventspils no matter what time of the year it is. Active visitors will like the adventure park; families with children will be excited by children playgrounds, the wide, white beach with the blue flag or the Maritime open-air museum with fishermen's buildings and the narrow-gauge railway.



Ventspils Cow Parade



Maritime open-air museum in Ventspils



Liepāja Promenade

A water adventure park and spa facilities, the most modern observatory of the Baltic States and the only digital planetarium in Latvia are also located in Ventspils. Those who have once tried the beer brewed in the nearby town called Užavas, will hardly be enthusiastic to change it to another Latvian beer.

Liepāja is the city where the wind was born, as a popular Latvian song tells. This song is immortalized in bronze sculptures. Everyone walking in Kūrmāja Avenue along the sea passes by the crowd looking at everyone with curiosity, by the boatmen and by Latvians sitting around the table...

Although Liepāja was chartered as a commercial port only in the 17th century and had to toughly compete with Ventspils and Riga, it was still an important naval base near the border.

Karosta District (military port) with remains of once erected Russian artillery mountings and the orthodox St. Nicholas Church even today are an evidence of the large Russian naval garrison. In the centre of Liepāja, visitors should look at the Evangelical Trinity Church with the largest mechanical organ in Europe and to admire the world's heaviest amber necklace (123 m/19.5 kg) in the arts and crafts house. Town houses mingle with charming wooden buildings in the cityscape, there is a bit of art nouveau and a great deal of resort atmosphere, because Liepāja has been a popular seaside resort since 1900. The easiest way to explore all the attractions of the city is through the city tour "Notes to follow" starting at the Tourism Information Bureau. A view of port facilities with boats, yachts and military ships and of the fountain that reminds a sea wave, opens from the Promenade. The Bernstein Clock counts the beautiful hours you spend in Liepāja.



Naval Port Prison of Liepāja



Naval Port of Liepāja



Curonian Spit

Lithuania

Lithuania's Baltic Sea coast is the shortest of the three Baltic countries, but it is here that the most popular and very well-known holiday resorts are located. From the north you first come to Palanga. The largest amber museum of the world is located in the botanical park of the castle, that once belonged to the Count Tiskevicius. The port of Klaipėda that underwent air attacks in the second world war and was half destroyed lies further south; however, it preserved a number of interesting attractions: the remains of the castle (13th century), the ark, the largest granite monument in Lithuania, the sailing vessel "Meridianas", the dolphinarium and the Sea Museum, the sculpture park and "Ann from Tharau", monument by Simon Dach on the Theatre Square in the heart of the old town. Klaipėda is also a gateway to the Curonian Spit. According to the legend, the beautiful giant Neringa held sand in her apron to raise a line of defence that should protect fishermen from the huge waves of the Baltic Sea. Since 2000, this region has been the world heritage of UNESCO. The Curonian Spit is divided into two parts – 52 kilometres belong to Lithuania, 46 to the Russian territory of Kaliningrad. The main town of the spit on the Lithuanian side is Nida. After a day spent in Nida, you will understand why Thomas Mann built his summer house just there. In the vicinity of the former Artists' House of Hermann Blode – where Nida Artists' Colony was originated – there is an old Nida fishermen's cemetery

with its original wooden tombs. Summer concerts and church services in German take place in the Protestant Church.



Old Town of Klaipėda



Pier in Palanga

Away from
the capital cities

TARTU - SIGULDA -
KAUNAS
(ca. °600 km)





Adventure Park Otepää



Tartu Town Hall

Estonia

The small university town of Tartu in the south-east of Estonia is a starting point of this away from the Baltic capitals tour. Tartu has its charm, especially as a young students' town. Tartu is known as a "University with a city", or as the «talent foundry of Estonia» with the single full university status in the country. The Swedish king Gustav Adolf II founded Universitas Dorpatensis in 1632. The neo-classical main building of the university is located at the foot of Toompea. At the beginning of the 18th century, the university overtook a large part of the territory of the former bishop's castle, who settled in Dorpat in the Middle Ages. In Tartu, there are many monuments like in other cities of the Baltic States – in the parks of the Toompea they remind of a number of famous alumni and teachers of the university.

Tartu was not only a bishop's palace, but also a Hanseatic city. Merchants settled around the today's Protestant Jaani Kirik (St John's Church). It is a unique gem, because more than 2,000 terracotta figures decorated the brick church in the 14th century. Part of the figures have been restored in the last few years. Here you may look into the faces of former burghers!

Tartu is an important science site. The downtown Ahhaa Science Centre (Ahhaakeskus) is the largest of its kind in the Baltic States. On 10,000 m² science and research were made tangible for visitors. A visit here will be an extremely exciting experience – for example, to 4D-Cinema, the Planetarium, the "Theatre of Science", the Technology Hall or the "Hall of life".

A visit to the Toy Museum in the immediate city centre – one of the most fantastic buildings of Tartu – will be an amusement both for children and adults. A drive on Lodi, an archaic sailing barge of the region, with which you can go along the Emajõgi River through the city and out of it, is also particularly relaxing and exciting.

When driving in the direction of Latvia, it is worth making a small detour to the hilly countryside around Otepää in the "Estonian Switzerland". Otepää can certainly be described as the winter capital of the country. It is the centre of Estonian winter sports with the possibilities for cross-country skiing, ski jumping and ice skating. World champions and Olympic champions are at home here. Every year an international ski marathon takes place in Otepää.

The trip continues in the direction of the Latvian border. The Estonian Valga and the Latvian Valka, two towns on two sides of the border, benefit today from the advantages of the Schengen Agreement – years ago these were two distinct places separated by a fence.



Science Center AHHA

Latvia

Behind Valmiera, the road branches off to Cēsis. This former Hanseatic town was characterized as “the pearl in the Livonian Kron” up to the 20th century. The most powerful castle of the Livonian Order has been preserved here. The new castle was erected on the remains of the wall of the area in front of the castle and a defence tower in the middle of the 18th century. In St. John’s Church, you can see remains of tombstones of masters of the Order and impressive armorial windows of founders of the church. In winter, you should not miss the hustle and bustle on ski slopes of Žagarkalns or Ozolkalns (road sign “Cīrulīši”). Latvians are a nation of skiers and not cross-country skiing is meant here!

Sigulda is the most beautiful place in the Gauja National Park on the way to Riga. Due to its environment, German travellers already called it Livonian Switzerland in the 19th century. The Gauja Valley has its deepest expression here. If you have time, take a map and walk through forests of Sigulda castle ruins, cross the bridge over the Gauja River to reach the neoclassical castle of Krimulda and continue walking till you see the reconstructed Turaida castle. The mighty Gauja Valley offers one of the most beautiful views from the cable car that goes from Sigulda to Krimulda and this is the only cable car in the Baltic States. As they say, here there is just flat land! On your way back from Turaida to Sigulda you can walk directly along the Gauja River and visit possibly the oldest tourist attraction of the Baltic States – Gutmanis Cave (Gūtmaņala) lo-



Gauja National Park

cated nearby, a grotto with a pure spring flowing from it (when you drink from it, you will certainly gain the eternal youth!). For centuries visitors inscribed their initials on the soft reddish sandstone. The oldest inscriptions date back to the 2nd half of the 17th century. The Russian Tsar also visited Gutmanis Cave in the 19th century. If you just want to go further south, you can choose the bypass road around Riga (A4). You need to travel through Salaspils and on the dam of the Riga Reservoir and continue on A7 until the road branches off to Jelgava. This city was once a proud capital of the Duchy of Courland, an important station on the old mail route from Königsberg to St. Petersburg, and is well worth a visit. At the entrance of Jelgava on the bridge of the Lielupe River, the first thing you see is the impressive Jelgava Palace with the family tomb of Kettlers and Birones, Courland’s dynasties of Dukes. The former Academia Petrina housing the museum of history and art is also worth seeing. The restored tower of the Holy Trinity Church – the first church in Europe erected for Lutheran congregation – is worth a closer look. The park of the Castle Island houses romantic canals, bridges, interesting buildings and the so-called Island of Governors. Wild horses live on the Palace island.



Jelgava Palace



Turaida Museum Reserve



Hill of Crosses

Lithuania

Some kilometres before Šiauliai, follow the road sign “Kryžių kalnas”. On the top of a hill, on the bank of a small river there is a so-called Hill of Crosses, one of the most famous places in Lithuania. Tens of thousands of crosses have been standing here since the 19th century following the uprisings against the tsarist rule. In the Soviet period, many Lithuanians built crosses here to commemorate the families sent

out to Siberia. Meanwhile, there are countless crosses made of wood, metal and other materials on the hill. Some visitors also hang small pieces of paper with intercessions and prayers.

The journey continues to the second largest city in Lithuania – Kaunas. In the middle of the 14th century, a Lithuanian castle was mentioned here fighting against the German Order, its remains are



Old Town of Kaunas



Old Town of Kaunas

still present today. In the 15th century, the town developed into a trade hub between the Hanseatic League and Lithuania. Eye-catching features of the old town are the Merchants' houses, including the Gothic House of Perkunas, the town hall square, the Jesuit Church and the seminary. The main post office, the Vytautas monument, the musical theatre and the Statue of Liberty are built in the style of Art

Deco. Aleksotas hill, on which a funicular opened in 1935, offers visitors a magnificent panorama. The Church of the Resurrection of Christ of the 30s is the largest modern church in the Baltic States. The Devil's Museum must be unique in the world. Paza-
islis Monastery Complex outside the city is a gem. A classic music festival takes place on this baroque coulisse every summer.



Pažaislis Monastery Complex



House of Perkūnas

Estonia in brief

Official name: Republic of Estonia
(in Estonian: Eesti Vabariik)

Area: 45,227 km², 1.34 million inhabitants

Capital city: Tallinn (416,000 inhabitants)

Official language: Estonian

Form of government: Parliamentary democracy

National holiday: February 24
(The Independence Day)

The Republic of Estonia is a member of the European Union and NATO

Estonia is party to the Schengen Agreement

Estonia is located in the Eastern European time-zone (GMT + 02:00)

Money and credit cards

Currency: EURO (EUR)

Most shops, restaurants, hotels and other service providers accept the most common international credit cards. You can exchange money in banks or in currency exchange offices (in the Port of Tallinn, Tallinn Airport, Tallinn Railway Station). In cities, there are automated teller machines everywhere, though you should better take cash before you travel to the countryside. In Estonian restaurants a service fee is included in the bill, however, a 10% tip is welcome and is considered to be friendly.

Shops and restaurants

On weekdays most of the shops are open from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM, on weekends they close earlier.

Supermarkets and large shopping malls are open seven days a week from 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Souvenir shops and other tourist sights are usually open every day from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. Most of the museums are closed on Mondays. The majority of sales staff in shops speaks well or at least sufficiently English, Finnish and Russian, only some speak German.

Telephone and Internet

Estonia's country code is +372. If you make an international call from Estonia, you need to dial 00 before the number. Prepaid Cards (Simpel, Pop, Zen, Ultra, Smart) for mobile phones are available in petrol stations, kiosks, post offices, information booths and grocery stores.

There are more than 1,100 WLAN internet hot-spots in hotels, bars, libraries, gas stations, city parks and elsewhere (www.wifi.ee); many of them can be used free of charge. Should you need answers to all possible tourist and non-tourist questions, use Express Hotline with a short number 1182 (www.1182.ee) or Infoabi at 1188 (www.1188.ee).

Emergency telephone numbers in Estonia: police: 110, ambulance and fire brigade: 112.

Weather forecast on www.weather.ee,

Road reports on www.balticroads.net.

Traffic regulations and rules

Maximum speed: 50 km/h in build-up areas; 90 km/h outside build-up areas and on motorways, unless otherwise stated. When driving, always switch on dimmed headlights and fasten seat belts in all seats both front and rear. Note: The driver must have zero ppm of alcohol in his or her blood. Fee is charged for parking in most city centres. Look out for more information on special signs and parking meters. In case of a traffic accident, we recommend to call the police. However, if there are no injured and the drivers involved are in agreement about the incident, you can prepare a written statement in two copies without calling the police.

visitestonia.com

Latvia in brief

Official name: Republic of Latvia

Area: 64,589 km², 2.1 million inhabitants

Capital city: Riga (706,000 inhabitants)

Official language: Latvian

Form of government: Parliamentary democracy

National holiday: November 18
(The Independence Day)

The Republic of Latvia is a member of the European Union and NATO

Latvia is party to the Schengen Agreement

Latvia is located in the Eastern European timezone (GMT + 02:00)

Money and credit cards

Currency: Lats (LVL)

Most shops, restaurants, hotels and other service providers accept the most common international credit cards. Currency exchange is possible in all banks or currency exchange offices in Riga Airport, Riga Central Railway Station, in many hotels, supermarkets and many other places. In cities automatic teller machines are everywhere, but you can hardly find them in the countryside. In restaurants a service fee is included in the bill, however, a 10% tip is welcome.

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On weekdays most of shops are open from 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM, on weekends they close earlier. Supermarkets and large shopping malls are open seven days a week from 9:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Souvenir shops and other tourist sights are usually open seven days a week from 10:00 AM to 6:00 PM. The majority of sales staff in shops speaks well or at least sufficiently English and Russian, some speak German as well.

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Traffic regulations and rules

Maximum speed: 50 km/h in build-up areas; 90 km/h outside build-up areas and on motorways, unless otherwise stated. When driving, always switch on dimmed headlights and fasten seat belts in all seats both front and rear. Note: The driver may have only 0.5 ppm of alcohol in his or her blood.

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www.latvia.travel

Lithuania in brief

Official name: Republic of Lithuania (in Lithuanian: Lietuvos Respublika).

Area: 65,300 km²; 2.99 million inhabitants.

Capital city: Vilnius (523,050 inhabitants).

Official language: Lithuanian.

Form of government: Parliamentary democracy. Head of State – the President.

National holiday: February 16 (The Independence Day)

The Republic of Lithuania is a member of the European Union and NATO

Lithuania is a part of the Schengen Area.

Lithuania is located in the Eastern European time-zone (GMT +02:00).

Money and credit cards

Currency: Lithuanian Litas (LTL).

Litas is tied to the euro currency. The exchange rate is 1 EUR=3.4528 LTL. Most shops, restaurants,

hotels and service providers accept the most common international credit cards. Foreign currency can be easily exchanged in banks. Automatic teller machines (ATMs) are everywhere in the country. In Lithuanian restaurants the tip is not included in the bill, although a 10% tip is welcome and it is polite to give it.

Shops and restaurants

Most shops are open from 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM on working days, but close early on weekends. Supermarkets and larger department stores are open seven days a week from 8:00 AM to 10:00 PM.

Souvenir shops and other tourist sites are usually open seven days a week from 10:00 AM to 7:00 PM. Sales staff in shops is usually good in English and Russian; some also speak German or Polish.

Telephone and Internet

The country code of Lithuania is +370, and when you make an international call from Lithuania, you need to dial 00 before the number.

Prepaid cards for mobile phones (Omnitel Extra, Ezys, Pildyk) are available in gas stations, newspaper kiosks, post offices, information offices of department stores and calling shops; the largest service providers are Omnitel, Bite and Tele2. Wireless high-speed Internet access is available in most supermarkets, cafes, on motorways and in hotels in larger cities (usually free of charge). You can receive a response to vital or everyday questions of any nature, if you dial a short number 118 or +370 700 55 118 to access www.118.lt.

Emergency number: 112. Weather forecasts at www.meteo.lt; number for technical assistance on the road: +370 210 4422.

Traffic regulations and rules

Maximum speed: 50 km/h in build-up areas; 90 km/h outside build-up areas; 110 km/h on motorways, unless otherwise stated. When driving, always switch on dimmed headlights and fasten seat belts in all seats both front and rear.

Fee is taken for parking in most city centres. Look out for more information on special signs and parking meters.

In case of a traffic accident we recommend to call the police. However, if there are no injured and the drivers involved are in agreement about the incident, you can prepare a written statement in two copies without calling the police.

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