



Rediscover the
meaning of travel

Tour Notes

Baltic Highlights – Tailormade Tour

Tour Duration – 8 Days



Tour Rating

Fitness ●●○○○ | Off the Beaten Track ●●○○○ | Culture ●●●○○ | History ●●●●○ | Wildlife ●●○○○

Tour Pace

Busy

Tour Highlights

- ✓ Highlights tour of the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia
- ✓ Explore the enchanting and history filled Baltic capitals of Vilnius, Riga, and Tallinn
- ✓ Quaint fishing villages on the Baltic Sea
- ✓ Stunning valleys in Gauja National Park
- ✓ Forests and marshes of Lahemaa National Park
- ✓ Medieval castles
- ✓ Wild and pristine beaches





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Tour Map Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - Baltic Highlights - Tailormade



Tour Essentials

- Accommodation:** Comfortable hotels with private en-suite bathrooms
- Included Meals:** Daily breakfast (B), plus lunches (L) and dinners (D) as shown in the itinerary
- Group Size:** Private Tour
- Start Point:** Tallinn (Estonia)
- End Point:** Vilnius – (Lithuania)
- Transports:** Private air conditioned transport
- Countries Visited:** Estonia, Latvia & Lithuania



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Baltic Highlights – Tailormade

Suffering under both German and later Soviet occupation, following the dissolution of the Soviet Union the once more independent states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were enthusiastic proponents of the European project and have since joined the NATO alliance. The miserable grey of Soviet conformity has gone, in some cases quite literally as new paints and colours arrived from the west to once more embellish traditional wooden houses. The capitals of Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius once subdued under communist authoritarianism are now lively cultural hubs, hives of economic activity, eager to further progress and expand. This relatively short tour allows the traveller to explore three different countries with diverse national characteristics which not only share a seashore but also a major segment of their contemporary history.

Tour itinerary notes

While our intention is to adhere to the day-by-day itinerary as printed below, a degree of flexibility is built in. As this is a tailormade tour, overnight stops and activities can vary from those suggested here and on occasions alternative accommodation, of a similar standard to that named below, will be used if there is no availability on your chosen dates.

Tour Guide

Our guides are a key strength, chosen for their knowledge of and passion for the areas in which they work. All of our guides are carefully hand-picked, and are not just passing through these countries, but are usually locally born. Unlike some companies it should be noted we do not send a guide or tour leader from Undiscovered Destinations in the UK as we have every confidence in our locally appointed representative who is responsible for operating the tour on our behalf. On this tour you will have different English-speaking guides in each country. Journeys in between cities are not accompanied with a guide.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrive Tallinn

On arrival in Tallinn transfer to your centrally located hotel accommodation. If you arrive earlier in the day you can start to explore the city and your leisure. Overnight Hotel Tallink. No meals or activities are scheduled today.

Tallinn

Tallinn is a modern city with a medieval twist; a place where the past is still alive and kicking. Despite the boom of 21st century development, Tallinn remains loyal to the fairy-tale charms of its two-tiered Old Town – one of Europe's most beguiling walled cities. It's an intoxicating mix of old and new, with ancient church spires and glass skyscrapers, baroque palaces and shiny shopping malls. Increasingly sophisticated without being overly sanitised and forward focused whilst embracing the past, Tallinn is truly a fascinating city.

Day 2: Tallinn sightseeing – Lahemaa National Park – Tallinn (Approximate driving time: three-hours)

This morning explore Tallinn with a local guide, visiting Pirita and Saint Briggita's convent ruins, Kadriorg Park and Palace, and Russalka Monument. A guided walk takes in the mediaeval city walls of the upper city of Toompea and Toompea Castle, Aleksander Nevsky Orthodox Church, Saint Mary's Cathedral and the lower city, including the Town Hall Square, the House of the Brotherhood of Black Heads, Fat Margarita Tower and Viru Gates. After lunch at your own leisure (own expense), we drive out of the city and to picturesque Lahemaa National Park situated on the Gulf of Finland and take a walk on the Viru Bog nature trail, 3.5km of boardwalk which passes through a forest and marsh environment. Learn about the park's flora and fauna and climb a viewing tower which allows an elevated perspective on the landscape.



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Later we visit the beautiful 18th century manor of Palmse which contains remarkable period furniture and clothing and here you can take a stroll in the attractive grounds before returning to Tallinn. Overnight at Hotel Tallink (B)

Day 3: Tallinn – Parnu - Saulkrasti – Riga (*Approximate driving time: four-hours*)

Today enjoy some leisure time in Tallinn now you are orientated with the city after the tour yesterday. This afternoon, journey to Parnu (driver only from Tallinn to Riga), a coastal city of Estonia famous for its beautiful scenery and white sand beaches. After a short stop in Parnu where you can stroll on the white sand beach in fine weather, we continue south, following the Baltic Sea coast towards Latvia. It is also possible to stretch your legs and admire the natural dunes at Saulkrasti before arriving at Latvia's capital, Riga. Overnight at Hotel Semarah Metropole (B)

Riga

Riga, Latvia's capital is the largest, liveliest and most cosmopolitan of the Baltic capitals. A heady mixture of the medieval and the contemporary, the city has much to offer architecture and history enthusiasts in the narrow-cobbled streets of Old Riga and the wide boulevards of the New Town, where beautiful examples of Jugendstil Art Nouveau architecture – “music in stone” – line Strēlnieku iela and Alberta iela. The city also has all the trappings of a modern capital, with efficient and affordable public transportation, excellent shopping, and a lively restaurant and bar scene.

Day 4: Riga - Ragaciems – Jurmala - Riga (*Approximate driving time: two-hours*)

This morning we explore Riga with a local guide, first visiting the outstanding Art Nouveau district and its fascinating museum. Later we head to the city's Old Town, taking in the National Opera House, the Freedom Monument, the big and small guildhalls, Riga Cathedral, Riga Castle, the mediaeval Three Brothers houses, Saint Jacobs's church, the renovated house of the Brotherhood of the Black Heads, and Saint Peter's church. From Riga, drive a short distance to Ragaciems, a fishing village situated on the Gulf of Riga coast beyond Jurmala. Here there's the opportunity to see traditional architecture and possibly chat with local fishermen. Continue to Lake Kanieris, a site of special scientific interest, and take a stroll on the boardwalk and visit a birdwatching tower. Later, drive to the summer resort of Jurmala where white sand beaches once attracted holidaying Soviet leaders such as Nikita Krushchev and Leonid Breshnev. Today the town's authentic wooden houses have achieved UNESCO World Heritage status. Spend some time late in the afternoon strolling on the shores of the Baltic Sea before a return to Riga for your overnight stay. Overnight Hotel Semarah Metropole (B)

Day 5: Riga – Gauja National Park – Sigulda - Riga (*Approximate driving time: three-hours*)

The first stop today is Riga's atmospheric central market, Europe's largest, where fresh produce together with arts and crafts fill one of the city's most notable structures, a UNESCO World Heritage Site constructed from former German Zeppelin hangars. Afterwards we travel inland to the picturesque green valleys of Gauja River National Park, sometimes called North Switzerland. Enjoy a fascinating visit to the workshop of a master amber craftsman who will explain how to determine real amber and talk us through his unique family collection of amber. Afterwards, drive to the town of Sigulda and visit the mediaeval castle of Turaida, Gutman's Cave and Sigulda Castle's ruins before returning to. Overnight Semarah Metropole Hotel (B)

Day 6: Riga – Hill of Crosses - Vilnius (*Approximate driving time: five-hours*)

This morning after breakfast we drive south and cross into Lithuania. Some 12 km's over the border, stop at the Hill of Crosses whose origins lie in the 1831 and 1863 uprising against the Russian Empire. The number of crosses is estimated at over 100,000 and is a truly remarkable sight. After lunch (own expense), continue onward to Vilnius (driver only) and check-in to your hotel. Overnight at Hotel Tilto where any remaining time will be at leisure (B)



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Vilnius

Vilnius, Lithuania's capital is a city of immense allure with Europe's largest baroque old town at its heart. Despite its troubled past with the Soviets and Nazis, the spirit of freedom and resistance has prevailed, with the city forging a new identity combining the past with a present and future that involves world cuisine, a burgeoning nightlife and shiny new skyscrapers.

Day 7: Vilnius – Trakai Castle – Vilnius (Approximate driving time: Two hours)

This morning we explore the city of Vilnius with a local guide. Highlights include Peter and Paul Church, the Old Town and Cathedral Square, Vilnius Cathedral, Gediminas Castle and Tower, Gediminas Statue and Saint Anne's Church. Also walk up Subacius Hill for a panoramic view of Vilnius. Finally, visit the Dawn Gate, one of the most important symbols of Vilnius. This afternoon it's a short journey from Vilnius to Trakai Castle, a picture-postcard mediaeval castle located on an island on Lake Galve. After crossing the drawbridge and moat, take a tour of the painstakingly restored castle, through the many halls and rooms that chart its history. Return to Vilnius. Overnight at Hotel City Gate (B)

Trakai Castle

Trakai Castle is a picture postcard island castle situated on Lake Galve. The castle dates from the 15th Century and is attached to the shore by a footbridge. A moat separates the courtyard from the main tower.

Day 8: Departure from Vilnius

Any remaining time today will be at leisure before an airport transfer ends our services (B)

Note – We would be happy to quote you for any further arrangements either pre or post tour or even to add extra days of activities to this tour. Do contact us to tailor your perfect tailormade tour.

Tour Inclusions / Exclusions

Inclusions:

- Arrival and departure transfers
- All accommodation on twin/double share (unless single supplement paid)
- Services of English-speaking local guides for excursions– different local guides will be used
- Meals as listed (B – Breakfast, L – Lunch, D – Dinner)
- Entrance fees for sites listed in the itinerary
- Private transport

Excluded:

- International flights
- Travel Insurance
- Visas if applicable
- Meals not mentioned on the itinerary
- Drinks
- Items of a personal nature
- Tips (discretionary)
- Accompanying guide between Tallinn and Riga and between Riga and Vilnius



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Important Information

Foreign Office Travel Warnings

Before booking your tour please familiarise yourself with the country specific information provided by the UK's Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) - <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>. This includes important information such as latest immigration requirements, and details of any travel advisories.

At the time of writing the FCO does not have any warnings in place against travel to the areas we visit on this tour.

Non UK nationals should check with their own government, as the information and advice may differ to that provided by British authorities.

Accommodation and Meals

Hotel Check-in Times

As a general rule most hotels will allow guests to check-in from 2pm. Please note that the price of your tour does not include guaranteed early check-in. Therefore please advise us if you would like to ensure that your room is available for an earlier arrival. This is particularly relevant on the first day of the tour and for early morning arrivals. One option is to pre-book and pay for an extra night at the beginning of your tour which will guarantee your accommodation is available irrespective of what time you arrive. Please contact us for information and costs.

Accommodation Rating

On this tour you will be staying in comfortable small to mid-size hotels. On this tour hotels have private bathrooms. In general, you will find your hotel has a restaurant and/or bar.

We welcome solo travellers and single rooms will be allocated subject to the applicable tour supplement. Please note that on occasions you may not always be allocated a double or twin room, as some hotels have designated single rooms. These may be smaller in size. However, the supplement payable takes this into consideration.

Food & Drink

Daily breakfast only is included on this tour.

Dietary Requirements

If you have any special dietary requirements you must notify us at the time of booking. While we will make every effort to cater for you, we cannot guarantee that this will be possible.

Budgeting for your Tour

You will need some extra money to cover meals and drinks not included in the tour price, any optional sightseeing, souvenirs and items of a personal nature such as laundry.

Food

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more. Indicative costs below are per person.



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Estonia / Latvia / Lithuania

Lunch - £10

Dinner - £15

Drink

The prices for drinks can vary greatly depending upon location and the prices detailed below are an average guide. In general, you would expect that drinks purchased in a supermarket or local bar to be less expensive, whilst drinks in an upmarket bar or restaurant may be more expensive.

Estonia

Bottle of local beer - £2.50

Bottle of mineral water - £0.50

Latvia

Bottle of local beer - £3.00

Bottle of mineral water - £0.50

Lithuania

Bottle of local beer - £1.50

Bottle of mineral water - £0.50

Tipping – Guide and Drivers

Tipping is appreciated but not mandatory. As a guide, 10 Euro per day for a local guide for excellent service and 5 – 10 Euro for a driver.

Foreign Exchange

Estonia / Latvia / Lithuania

ATM Availability: ATM machines are widely available

Credit and Debit Card Acceptance: Cards are widely accepted except in rural locations.

Local Currency: Euro

Joining your Tour

Flight Information

Our advertised prices do not include the cost of international flights. Please contact us if you would like a quotation to book a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a free airport transfer, both on arrival and departure. In order that the transfer can be arranged please ensure that you advise us of your flight information once available. Please advise the date, time and flight number for your arrival/departure. If we have not been advised of this information at least 2 weeks before travel, then you will be required to make your own way to the hotel on Day 1 of your tour.

Travel Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Undiscovered Destinations that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country and be valid for the entire duration of your holiday.



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Visa Information

Estonia: Some nationalities including British, US and Canadian citizens do not require a visa for tourist visits to Estonia. All other nationalities, please consult your nearest Embassy for up to date advice on necessary visa requirements for Estonia.

Latvia: Some nationalities including British, US and Canadian citizens do not require a visa for tourist visits less than 3 months to Latvia. All other nationalities, please consult your nearest Embassy for up to date advice on necessary visa requirements for Latvia.

Lithuania: Some nationalities including British, US, Canadian and citizens do not require a visa for tourist visits to Lithuania. All other nationalities, please consult your nearest Embassy for up to date advice on necessary visa requirements for Lithuania.

Please be aware that visa information is subject to change, therefore please refer to your nearest embassy for up to date advice. Please note that the price of your tour does not include visa costs but does include visa support documentation if required.

Passports

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, valid for at least six months after the date of return to your country. We strongly advise that your passport contains a minimum of two blank pages for each country visited, as this may be a requirement of the local immigration authorities. In addition, certain countries will stipulate that the two blank pages are opposite each other. If you are unable to meet these requirements you may be refused boarding by your airline or denied entry by the immigration authorities.

For specific information about the requirements for your destination please check with the country's embassy or consulate. Alternatively, UK citizens can visit www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice and visit the Entry Requirements section.

Vaccinations & Protection

Estonia/Latvia/Lithuania

There are no compulsory vaccinations to visit the Baltic States. We recommend that you consult a doctor or travel clinic 6-8 weeks prior to the tour to discuss any recommended vaccinations.

The legal status and regulation of some medicines prescribed or purchased in your home country can be different in other countries. If you're travelling with prescription or over-the-counter medicine, read this guidance from NaTHNaC on [best practice when travelling with medicines](#). For further information on the legal status of a specific medicine, you'll need to contact the embassy, high commission or consulate of the country or territory you're travelling to.

Preparing for your tour

Climate

Average temperature by day during the main tourist season (May – October) can range anywhere between 12-25 degrees centigrade. By night temperatures can drop down to 5 degrees centigrade. Rain showers and longer spells of rain can occur at any time of the year in the Baltic region.



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Weather and climate is notoriously unpredictable in the Baltic region and in extreme cases temperatures can be warmer or colder than noted above. June enjoys long summer days and is a nice time to experience the Baltic region. September can also be a lovely time to travel for autumn colours although it can be cool.

Clothing

Clothing in general should be layered and reasonably lightweight but take warmer clothes for nights and early mornings or days that can be on the cool side in the Baltic region. Being a maritime climate, it can rain at any time of the year so make sure you have a waterproof or umbrella.

Equipment

Take a torch for any dimly lit areas, water bottle, sunhat and sunblock. Binoculars are useful for birdwatching, as is a telephoto lens for keen photographers insect repellent may prove useful. In mid-summer.

Footwear

Lightweight trail boots or shoes with grip for walking plus trainers or sandals for general travelling.

Luggage on tour

One main piece of luggage (we recommend a soft bag or holdall) plus day sack.
Luggage allowance on tour: 20kg (please note airline allowances may vary)

Electric Supply & Plugs

Estonia - European two circular pin style plugs
Latvia - European two circular pin style plugs.
Lithuania - European two circular pin style plugs

Tour Itinerary Versions

Please ensure that you have an up-to-date copy of these tour notes immediately before you travel, as from time to time our itineraries may be amended, either for operational reasons or in response to feedback from customers. You will be informed of any major changes to your tour but small changes may just be added to these tour notes. These tour notes were prepared on 21st July 2020.