

# Day Trips

In and around Riga



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# Introduction

Are you a couple on your first visit to the Baltics? A family looking for a memorable trip for the kids and adults alike? Or are you the kind of lone traveller eager to explore the paths less taken by the crowds?

Whichever applies to you, it's great you have come to Latvia – the country that bids a hearty welcome to everyone, whatever your age and interests. Nature lovers and culture vultures, urban explorers and those fond of the countryside, medieval history addicts and fans of all things contemporary, will all find what they are looking for.

Riga is the beating heart of the whole region, worth being explored on its own – and our picks will help you get the best out of your visit! But ignoring everything else would mean limiting your experience of Latvia to only a collection of the most well-known spots.

With this guide, we wish to help you discover the other magnetic destinations of Latvia. Taking Riga as your springboard into exciting new places, we offer seven one-day routes reflecting the enticing diversity of Latvia.

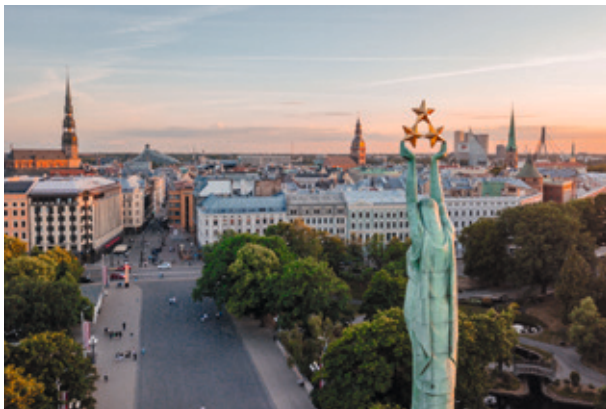
Are you up for a relaxing beach walk and a swim in the Gulf of Riga? Head to Jūrmala, the largest resort in the Baltics, or Saulkrasti, the less well-known but no less charming seaside spot in the opposite direction from the capital.

Those wishing to explore the rich history of the region are encouraged to visit Rundāle, Bauska, Jelgava, Sigulda and Cēsis. Medieval castles, elegant manor houses, and spectacular baroque palaces with lush gardens await you here, not to mention a range of dining options and spa treatments to match every taste.

The hiking trails near Sigulda, with dazzling views of the Gauja River, the magnificent sandstone banks of the River Līgatne, and the stately pine forests of the Tērvete Nature Park are the best pick for those looking to immerse themselves in the serene beauty of the Latvian landscape.

We hope that our guide will help you fall in love with Latvia and come back for more unforgettable experiences!

# Riga



Riga's charm comes in many guises: from the dainty houses of the Old Town and the Art Nouveau grandeur of the historic centre, to hip spots around Miera iela and the wooden gems of Pārdaugava. Season it with local slow-food and craft beers or take a dive into Riga's world-class cultural offering, for the perfect memorable package.

Why not start with a bird's eye view of the city from the Academy of Sciences? The skyline is much changed since the high-rise was completed in 1961 – the banks of the Daugava now feature the 368.5-metre TV Tower and the magnificent “glass hill” of the Latvian National Library.

Head to Riga Central Market for an abundance of fresh produce, antiques and bric-à-brac. From there, just cross over the city canal, and you arrive in the Old Town. The oldest buildings here date from the 13th century, when Riga was as much a magnet for merchants and craftsmen as it was for knights and bishops.

The cobble pathways of the Old Town contrast sharply with the spacious green boulevards of the historic centre. Walk up Elizabetes iela to admire the lavishly decorated buildings of the embassy district or explore other stunning examples of the Art Nouveau style all around the city centre.

As you head further into the city, discover the hip cafes and nightlife hotspots of Miera iela, the Tallinas iela quarter and Aristīda Briāna iela. Chocolate lovers should follow the sweet smell coming from the Laima factory and chocolate museum, while beer connoisseurs are welcome to enjoy the Beer District Tour from the Valmiermuiža “beer embassy”.

And this is all just one half of the city! On the left bank you'll find lush parks and streets lined with dainty wooden houses. Don't miss the opportunities the river itself provides – boats big and small are ready to take you on tours with some magnificent views of the Latvian capital.

## Riga Tourism Information Centre

📍 Rātslaukums 6, Riga

+371 67037900

[info@rigatic.lv](mailto:info@rigatic.lv)

→ [www.LiveRiga.com](http://www.LiveRiga.com)



## The House of Blackheads

The House of Blackheads was constructed in the 14th century and housed a guild for unmarried merchants. It was the most prestigious and grand building in the city at the time. Sadly, the building was ravaged and pillaged during WWII. In 1999, the House of Blackheads was restored as a precise replica of the original building, with its characteristic Dutch Renaissance style facade and astounding ceiling paintings.

📍 Rātslaukums 7, Riga (D4)

→ [www.melngalvjunams.lv](http://www.melngalvjunams.lv)



## St. Peter's Church

St. Peter's Church is an imposing red brick edifice, originally built from timber in 1209, then rebuilt in stone. A lift inside the spire takes visitors to an observation platform offering a fantastic panoramic view over the red roofs of the Old Town and across the River Daugava.

📍 Reformācijas laukums 1, Riga (D4)

→ [peterbaznica.riga.lv](http://peterbaznica.riga.lv)



## Latvian National Opera

The opera house, located next to the city canal, is the pride of Latvian musical and cultural life. It was constructed in 1863 as the German Theatre. In 1995, a full restoration was completed. The building has excellent acoustic properties and serves as a venue for world-class opera, ballet and contemporary music performances. The exterior of the building shows similarities to the Moscow Bolshoi Theatre. The interior is lavishly decorated.

📍 Aspazijas bulvāris 3, Riga (D4)

→ [www.opera.lv](http://www.opera.lv)

## The Freedom Monument

The Freedom Monument is a symbol of Latvian independence and is one of Riga's major landmarks. Located on the city's main street – Brīvības iela – it can be seen from a great distance. Its three stars shine above the trees of the city's central parks. The construction of the monument was crowdsourced in the 1930s.

📍 The Freedom Monument, Riga (D3)



## Dome Square

The current appearance of Old Riga's largest square dates back to the 1930s, when a number of its medieval buildings were torn down. On the edge of the square stands the grand Riga Cathedral. It was built as Bishop Albert's Cathedral in 1211 and has since been rebuilt several times, so today it displays a mixture of late Romanesque, early Gothic and Baroque architectural styles. The cathedral is famous for its organ, which is used in many concerts and recitals.

📍 Doma laukums, Riga (D4)



## Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation

The Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation is the oldest public museum in Latvia and one of the oldest in Europe, having been founded in 1773. It is located in a significant architectural monument, in one of the group of buildings that constitute the Riga Cathedral ensemble. The Museum's 16 exposition halls tell the story of the creation and development of Riga, as well as the history of maritime travel and shipbuilding.

📍 Palasta iela 4, Riga (D4)

→ [www.rigamuz.lv](http://www.rigamuz.lv)





### Art Museum Riga Bourse

The Riga Bourse was built between 1852 and 1855, with its design based on the forms of Venetian Renaissance palazzo, symbolising wealth and abundance. Since 2011, the Riga Bourse has been home to the foreign art collections. Its splendid interior, with plenty of gilded surfaces and artificial marble, makes the Riga Bourse one of the must-see sites of Riga. The museum regularly curates international exhibitions as well as significant cultural and art events.

□ Doma laukums 6, Riga (D4)  
→ [www.lnmm.lv](http://www.lnmm.lv)



### Art Nouveau

About a third of Riga's city centre is built in the attractive Art Nouveau style, making it the premier Art Nouveau destination in Europe. Many of the best examples can be found on Elizabetes and Alberta iela, some designed by the well-known architect Mikhail Eisenstein, father of the famous Russian filmmaker, Sergei Eisenstein.

□ Alberta, Elizabetes iela, Riga (D2)  
→ [www.jugendstils.riga.lv](http://www.jugendstils.riga.lv)



### Powder Tower

The Powder Tower (Pulvertornis), part of the city's fortifications, was originally called the Sand Tower and dates from around 1330. Rebuilt numerous times, it gained its current name in the 17th century when the tower was used for gunpowder storage. Since 1919, it has housed the Latvian War Museum.

□ Smiļšu iela 20, Riga (D3)  
→ [www.karamuzejs.lv](http://www.karamuzejs.lv)

### Three Brothers

Three Brothers is a charming group of residential houses, each from a different century, the oldest dating back to the late 1400s. The name – Three Brothers – was given to them a very long time ago and, according to legend, the buildings were constructed by men from the same family. Today, the premises house the Latvian Museum of Architecture and the State Inspection for Heritage Protection.

□ Mazā Pils iela 17, 19, 21, Riga (D3)  
→ [www.archmuseum.lv](http://www.archmuseum.lv)



### Riga Castle

The foundation stone of the castle was laid in 1330. Through the centuries, it has witnessed destruction, numerous rulers and wars. In 1922, it became the residence of the President of the Republic of Latvia, while during the Soviet Era the castle housed the young communists' organisation and became known as the Pioneer Castle. It has served again as the presidential residence since 1995.

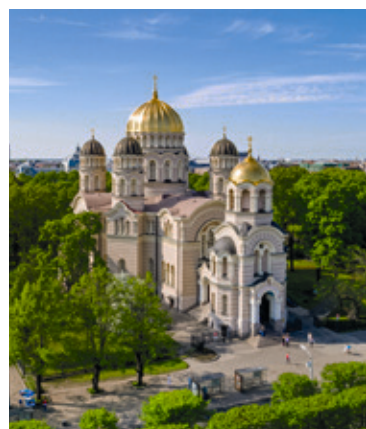
□ Pils iela 1/3, Riga (C3)



### Riga's Nativity of Christ Cathedral

Nativity of Christ Cathedral is the largest Orthodox church in the city. Having served as a planetarium and a restaurant during the Soviet Era, the building has been completely restored as a church. Orthodox services are now held regularly there. The cathedral stands on the edge of one of Riga's loveliest parks – Esplanāde.

□ Brīvības bulvāris 23, Riga (E3)





## Latvian National Museum of Art

The museum building was constructed in 1905 based on a design project by the German architect Wilhelm Neumann. Now the Latvian National Museum of Art is Latvia's most significant depository of works of art. The museum reopened in May 2016 after a major renovation and modernisation. On the re-opening day, so many Rigans wanted to see it, that a long line started forming at around 7 in the morning.

📍 Jāņa Rozentāla laukums 1, Rīga (D3)  
→ [www.lnmm.lv](http://www.lnmm.lv)



## The Central Market

The Central Market is one of the largest markets in Europe with five food pavilions located inside the vast converted Zeppelin hangars. Vendors at the stalls around and between the pavilions sell everything from clothes to flowers. The marketplace is always busy and a great place to observe local people, try local produce and find some good bargains.

📍 Rīga Central Market, Rīga (E4)  
→ [www.rct.lv](http://www.rct.lv)



## National Library of Latvia

Facing the Old Town, on the left bank of the River Daugava stands the new building of the National Library of Latvia (LNB) – nicknamed the Castle of Light. It is one of the most impressive cultural buildings constructed in Latvia in recent decades. The new library is a modern knowledge centre and multipurpose space for major cultural and social events, drawing both local residents and the city's visitors.

📍 Mūkusalas iela 3, Rīga (C5)  
→ [www.lnb.lv](http://www.lnb.lv)

## Kalnciema Quarter

Across the River Daugava, in Pārdaugava, lies the Kalnciema Quarter of freshly renovated wooden houses. The renovation of the stately wooden buildings on both sides of Kalnciema iela began as a private initiative, but Riga's wooden architecture has since been recognised as a valuable cultural heritage by UNESCO. Kalnciema Quarter is a great place to see this unique architecture in its renewed glory.

📍 Kalnciema iela 35, 37, Rīga (A4)  
→ [www.kalnciemaiala.lv](http://www.kalnciemaiala.lv)



## Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum

One of the oldest and largest open-air museums in Europe is just a 30-minute drive from downtown Riga. 118 examples of historical buildings from all four of Latvia's historic regions – Vidzeme, Kurzeme, Zemgale and Latgale – are on display at the museum.

📍 Brīvdabas iela 21, Rīga  
→ [brivdabasmuzejs.lv](http://brivdabasmuzejs.lv)



## Riga Motor Museum

Riga Motor Museum holds the largest and most diverse collection of antique motor vehicles in the Baltics. The museum's exhibition has been curated as a story about unique motor vehicles, the prominent people and most important historical events of the automotive world.

📍 Sergeja Eizenšteina iela 8, Rīga  
→ [www.motormuzejs.lv](http://www.motormuzejs.lv)



# Map of Riga

1. The House of Blackheads
2. St. Peter's Church
3. Art Museum Riga Bourse
4. Dome Square
5. Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation
6. Three Brothers
7. Powder Tower
8. Riga Castle
9. Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum
10. Riga Motor Museum





# Jūrmala on foot



Majori, Jūrmala



Beach in Jūrmala



Līvu Aquapark

The most popular resort in the Baltic States promises a great holiday at any time of the year!

The city of Jūrmala, easily reached in only 20 minutes, stretches along the coast for 32 km, but Majori has always been the heart of the resort and holidaymakers' favourite spot. The laid-back, unpretentious atmosphere of Majori is best experienced on Jomas iela, visiting souvenir shops, having lunch or enjoying a cappuccino at one of the many cafes.

The area's wooden architecture, on Lienes, Viktorijas and Konkordijas iela in particular, tells the most vibrant tales of Jūrmala's residents and guests. Both the restored historical villas and contemporary buildings range from models of sophisticated elegance to boundless flights of fancy.

However, the tranquil Gulf of Riga remains Jūrmala's greatest treasure. After a refreshing dip in the sea on a summer or early autumn afternoon, you can await the amber-coloured sunset with a picnic; while in winter, a crisp walk can be followed by relaxation at one of Jūrmala's modern spa centres.

If you are visiting Jūrmala during the summer, it's worth checking out the event schedule at the Dzintari Concert Hall – several international festivals and concerts take place here every year.

Families should definitely visit the Līvu Aquapark, the biggest waterpark in the Baltics.

Jūrmala can be reached by minibus, train ([www.pv.lv](http://www.pv.lv)) or bus ([www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv)) and also by the Riga–Jūrmala bike path.

## Jūrmala Tourism Information Centre

📍 Lienes iela 5, Majori, Jūrmala

+371 67147900

[info@jurmala.lv](mailto:info@jurmala.lv)

## Riga Jūrmala Music Festival

→ [riga-jurmala.com](http://riga-jurmala.com)

## Dzintari Concert Hall

📍 Turaidas iela 1, Dzintari

→ [www.dzintarukonzertzale.lv](http://www.dzintarukonzertzale.lv)

## Līvu Aquapark

📍 Viestura iela 24, Jūrmala

→ [www.akvaparks.lv](http://www.akvaparks.lv)

→ [www.visitjurmala.lv](http://www.visitjurmala.lv)

# Jūrmala by car



*Jūrmala Golf Club & Hotel*



*Ragakāpa Nature Reserve*



*Great Ķemeri Bog Boardwalk*

Yes, it is very comforting to enjoy the capital city, knowing that the beach is just a 15-minute drive away. Going to Jūrmala by car offers even more opportunities for extraordinary pastimes – historical nature parks, romantic villas and restaurants, plus the sea of course!

Are you a golfing enthusiast? Then visiting Jūrmala Golf Club in Piņķi, on the way from Riga to Jūrmala, is a must. Its facilities, designed by the world-famous Nicklaus Design, boast an astounding 18-hole golf course and meticulously planned 9-hole par-3 Academy golf course, and are bound to rank highly on any golfer's list.

Visiting Jūrmala Open-Air Museum in Lielupe, you will become acquainted with a time when fishermen's huts – rather than fancy villas – stood along the coastline. As a bonus, it is located within the scenic Ragakāpa Nature Reserve, a unique biotope with 17-metre-high white sand dunes and 350-year-old pine trees.

Just another 20-minute drive and you are in Ķemeri – an amazing place revealing Jūrmala's history as an elite health resort and spa, which has its origins here. You can still stumble upon the sulphur springs and therapeutic mud in the vast (over 38 hectares) Ķemeri National Park. It's a true paradise for those who enjoy indulging in spellbinding scenery and birdwatching, as well as those looking for an experience off the beaten path, such as the numerous guided bogshoeing routes through the wetlands or the 1.2 km barefoot walk.

## **Jūrmala Golf Club & Hotel**

📍 Golfa iela 1, Babītes novads

→ [jgch.lv](http://jgch.lv)

## **Jūrmala Open-Air Museum**

📍 Tiklu iela 1, Jūrmala

→ [www.jbmuzejs.lv](http://www.jbmuzejs.lv)

## **Ķemeri National Park**

→ [www.kemerunacionalaisparks.lv](http://www.kemerunacionalaisparks.lv)

## **Bogshoeing**

→ [www.purvubrideji.lv](http://www.purvubrideji.lv)

→ [www.visitjurmala.lv](http://www.visitjurmala.lv)

# Rundāle and Bauska



Rundāle Palace



Mazmežotne Manor



Bauska Castle

Just the two of you or the whole family – romantics at heart will appreciate these sumptuous castles and parks!

Rundāle Palace, the brightest jewel in the crown of Latvian architecture, is located 80 km from Riga. The palace of Johann Biron, favourite of Russian Tsarina Anna Ivanovna, was built by legendary Russian court architect Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli, and is an outstanding monument of Baroque and Rococo art. Visitors will appreciate the palace's impressive facade, lavish interiors and fantastic Baroque garden, home to Latvia's largest collection of roses. The palace also regularly hosts first-class concerts and performances.

A mere 5-minute drive will take you to Mazmežotne Manor, an exquisite hotel perfect for a romantic stay, with a fine restaurant and a range of indulgent spa treatments on offer. Head here to savour delicious international dishes prepared with the best local ingredients and to enjoy the unforgettable sauna ritual in the Latvian style (remember to book the spa treatments in advance). Follow the nature trail around the grounds to complement your stay with fantastic views of the River Lielupe and the glen, best enjoyed during the golden autumn in late October.

On the way back through Bauska, stop at Bauska Castle between the Mūsa and Mēmele rivers – Latvia's only example of Mannerist castle architecture, hosting a collection of applied arts typical of the Duchy of Courland. Several displays on the castle's history and historical garments are on show here, and you can climb the central tower for a panoramic view of Bauska.

You will need a car to travel the full route, but Bauska can also be reached by bus ([www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv)).

## Bauska Tourism Information Centre

📍 Rātslaukums 1, Bauska  
+371 63923797 | +371 27746484  
[tic@bauska.lv](mailto:tic@bauska.lv)

## Rundāle Palace

→ [rundale.net](http://rundale.net)

## Bauska Castle

→ [www.bauskaspils.lv](http://www.bauskaspils.lv)

## Mazmežotne Manor

→ [www.mazmezotne.lv](http://www.mazmezotne.lv)

→ [www.tourism.bauska.lv](http://www.tourism.bauska.lv)

# Fairytale at Tērvete



Tērvete Nature Park



Holy Trinity Church Tower in Jelgava



Jelgava

Visit a forest where Latvian folk tales come alive. Tērvete Nature Park – one of Latvia's most popular family-friendly tourist destinations – lies within easy reach, just about 70 km from Riga. The park, offering picturesque walking trails and children's playgrounds, all surrounded by fairytale characters and over 100 wooden sculptures of animals and insects, is recognised as a European Destination of Excellence by the EDEN project. It is truly a fantastic place to spend a whole day out with your family.

Within the park, you can go for an unhurried bike ride, take the fairytale train or try horse riding. Paths lead through the magnificent 300-year-old pine forest. There are several picnic spots and cafes in the park, so you can comfortably spend a whole day there. Between May and October, the park's youngest visitors can also make friends with the fairytale characters – bears, dwarves, witches and folktale mothers – brought to life by animators.

On the way back, stop at Jelgava. Take a look at the restored Holy Trinity Church Tower – it was the first stone church in Europe built for a Lutheran congregation. If you decide to spend a day, definitely visit the Jelgava History and Art Museum of Ģederts Eliass, Jelgava Palace and Valdeka Palace. Jelgava Palace is the former residence of the Dukes of Courland and Zemgale. A mesmerising work of famous Russian court architect Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli, it is the largest baroque-style palace in the Baltic States. It now houses the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. The history of this place is most felt in its lantern-lit cellars, where you can pay a visit to the crypts of the family of Peter von Biron, the Duke of Courland, and the Kettler family. There are many charming 19th-century manors nestled in and around Jelgava, which are definitely worth visiting if you are in the mood for a romantic day trip.

You will need a car to travel the full route, but Jelgava can also be reached by minibus, train ([www.pv.lv](http://www.pv.lv)) or bus ([www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv)).

## Jelgava Tourism Information Centre

□ Akadēmijas iela 1, Jelgava  
+371 63005445  
[tic@tornis.jelgava.lv](mailto:tic@tornis.jelgava.lv)

## Tērvete Nature Park

→ [www.mammadaba.lv](http://www.mammadaba.lv)

→ [visit.jelgava.lv](http://visit.jelgava.lv)

## Leisure Activities in Sigulda



*Aerodium vertical wind tunnel*



*Mežakaķis Adventure Park*

### **Sigulda Tourism Information Centre**

📍 Ausekļa iela 6, Sigulda  
+371 67971335  
[info@sigulda.lv](mailto:info@sigulda.lv)

### **Gauja National Park Tourism Cluster**

→ [www.entergauja.com](http://www.entergauja.com)

### **Sigulda Adventures**

→ [siguldaadventures.com](http://siguldaadventures.com)

→ [www.tourism.sigulda.lv](http://www.tourism.sigulda.lv)

Sigulda, located less than 50 km from Riga, is a great destination for a day trip or a weekend getaway. This historical town offers excellent leisure opportunities in a stunning natural environment.

On your way to Sigulda, on the right of the highway, don't miss the Aerodium – a unique vertical wind tunnel. Here with the help of professional trainers you will be able to spread your wings and fly like a bird!

Further along, stop at the Mežakaķis, Sigulda's famous adventure park. There you'll awaken your hidden Mowgli-like agility to overcome the challenges set by the testing forest trails, offering adventures at seven levels of difficulty.

Popular skiing slope Reiņa trase transforms into a golf course in summer and offers more action-packed activities, including mountain boarding and roller skating.

The breath-taking views of Sigulda adventure park Tarzāns make every visit unforgettable – the Tarzan obstacle course, the tobogganing (runnerless sled) track, Sigulda Ferris wheel and more.

The bobsleigh and luge track, also boasting great views, gives visitors the chance to try rides on a vučko (soft bob), or, depending on the season, winter or summer bobsleighs.

Take in the splendour of the ancient Gauja River valley while taking a ride in a cable car. Real adrenaline seekers can even bungee jump from its 55-metre height or “fly” down the zipline with a speed of up to 60 km/h. Zērglis is the first such attraction in the world.

You will need a car to travel the full route, but Sigulda can also be easily reached by train ([www.pv.lv](http://www.pv.lv)) or bus ([www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv)).

### **Mežakaķis Adventure Park**

📍 Senču iela 1, Sigulda  
→ [www.kakiskalns.lv](http://www.kakiskalns.lv)

### **Reiņa trase**

📍 “Kalnzaķi”, Krimuldas novads  
→ [www.reinatrase.lv](http://www.reinatrase.lv)

### **Bobsleigh and Luge Track**

📍 Šveices iela 13, Sigulda  
→ [bobtrase.lv](http://bobtrase.lv)

# History of Sigulda



*Baltu Rotas workshop*



*Paradīzes kalns*



*Turaida Castle*

In the Middle Ages, Sigulda stood at the boundary of the Riga archdiocese and the lands of the Livonian Order. Today these three historical centres – Sigulda, Turaida and Krimulda – remain intact.

Not far from the centre of Sigulda you will find the Livonian Order Castle ruins, which becomes an open-air concert venue in summer. It has proudly hosted the annual Sigulda Opera Festival for the past 20 years.

Right next door is the New Sigulda Castle built by Prince Kropotkin – an impressive example of Latvian neogothic architecture. Nowadays it has regained its status as a popular leisure spot – the historical centre's buildings have been restored and transformed into workshops operated by the creative craftspeople of Sigulda. Visitors have a chance to take part in making a walking stick (one of Sigulda must-have souvenirs), as well as to learn about its history. Other workshops offer even more crafts to discover – Baltic jewelry making, ceramics, textile workshops, leather working, paper art and the Aromabreathe fragrance workshop, which can all be followed up with delightful local treats from Sigulda Ice Cream shop.

One of Sigulda's most popular tourist attractions is Gutman's Cave – the widest and highest cave in the Baltic States, located further away from the town centre towards Turaida. It is famous for its enchanting legend: the cave was carved out by the hands of a local gardener as a meeting place with his beloved Rose. No spoilers – discover how it all ended yourself!

Turaida Castle is one of the most popular tourist destinations in Latvia. Every year, it draws large numbers of visitors, as well as local craftspeople with their wares. This 13th-century fortress is one of the most impressive examples of the so-called Brick Gothic style in the Baltic Sea region. Fascinating excursions are available at the castle complex, which also includes the Vidzeme region's oldest wooden church. At the Turaida Museum Reserve you can take a walk along the picturesque Dainu Hill – a garden of sculptures dedicated to Latvian folk songs and characters from folklore.

## **Sigulda Castle Quarter**

📍 Pils iela 16, Sigulda  
→ [www.tourism.sigulda.lv](http://www.tourism.sigulda.lv)

## **Turaida Castle**

📍 Turaidas iela 10, Sigulda  
→ [www.turaida-muzejs.lv](http://www.turaida-muzejs.lv)

→ [www.tourism.sigulda.lv](http://www.tourism.sigulda.lv)

# Līgatne



Vienkoči Park



Līgatne Nature Trails



The once-top secret Soviet bunker in rural Līgatne

Nature? History? Architecture? Food? Or wine? Līgatne will let you check off all five in one trip. Built around a paper mill founded in 1815 and still functioning today, Līgatne is the most well-preserved example of a 19th-century manufacturing town.

Līgatne looked like a good location not only to 19th-century manufacturers, but to the Soviet military as well. It is exactly here, in the forest outside the town, that they built a top-secret underground bunker. So secret, that even rehabilitation centre employees, who for 30 years worked just atop of it, knew nothing about it. The rehabilitation centre itself was built there only to mask the need to provide electricity, water and ventilation for the bunker. Yet it is by no means fake and still offers a variety of health and beauty treatments, complete with Soviet interior and charm. The bunker below it is impressively large – 2000 square metres – and had everything needed to house top government officials of Soviet Latvia in case of nuclear war. Guided tours here even include authentic pelmeni (meat dumplings) for lunch.

Feeling a bit overwhelmed by history? Head to Līgatne Net Park (Tīklu parks) to follow an intricate net maze 8 metres above the ground, the first one of its kind in the Baltics. If you prefer walking to jumping, take some of Līgatne's many nature trails, one of which features impressive sandstone rocks and 333 man-made caves along the Līgatne River. One spacious cave stores a wine cellar with tasting options (non-alcoholic drinks are offered for kids and drivers). Another trail winds through a natural-habitat zoo with bears, moose and owls. Another one takes you to Vienkoči Park, filled with one-piece wooden sculptures, created according to an ancient tradition.

You will need a car to travel the full route in one day and will probably still feel your feet in the evening, but all the fresh air will help you sleep like a baby.

## Līgatne Tourism Information Centre

☐ Sprīņu iela 2, Līgatne  
+371 29189707  
[info@visitligatne.lv](mailto:info@visitligatne.lv)

## Vienkoči Park

☐ Vienkoči, Līgatnes novads  
→ [www.vienkoci.lv](http://www.vienkoci.lv)

## Līgatne Rehabilitation Centre

☐ Skaļupes, Līgatne  
→ [www.rehcentrsligatne.lv](http://www.rehcentrsligatne.lv)

## Līgatne Net Park

☐ Gaujas iela 4, Līgatne  
→ [www.tikluparks.lv](http://www.tikluparks.lv)

## Līgatne Nature Trails

→ [www.ligatnesdabastakas.lv](http://www.ligatnesdabastakas.lv)

→ [www.visitligatne.lv](http://www.visitligatne.lv)

# Medieval Cēsis



*Cēsis Medieval Castle*



*St. John's Cathedral*

## Cēsis Tourism Information Centre

📍 Baznīcas iela 1, Cēsis  
+371 28318318  
[info@cesis.lv](mailto:info@cesis.lv)

## Cēsis Castle Complex

📍 Pils laukums 11, Cēsis  
→ [cesupils.lv](http://cesupils.lv)

## Cēsis Art Festival

→ [cesufestivals.lv](http://cesufestivals.lv)

## Vidzeme Concert Hall Cēsis

📍 Raunas iela 12, Cēsis  
→ [cesukoncertzale.lv](http://cesukoncertzale.lv)

## Archeological Park Āraiši

📍 Āraiši  
→ [www.araisi.com](http://www.araisi.com)

## Burning Conscience

📍 Pils iela 12, Cēsis  
📌 [sirdsapzinasugunskurs](https://www.facebook.com/sirdsapzinasugunskurs)

## Gauja National Park

→ [www.entergauja.com](http://www.entergauja.com)

→ [visit.cesis.lv](http://visit.cesis.lv)

Cēsis and its surroundings are a real treat for history fans. While the old town of Riga has gone through a series of redesigns, Cēsis has retained much of its medieval planning and charm. Study it in detail on the model in the main square and then see it in real life around the town.

Founded 800 years ago, Cēsis Castle was one of the first stone buildings in the territory of Latvia and remains the most impressive and well-preserved medieval ruin in the country. Next door is the New Castle, now home to the Cēsis Museum of History and Art. Guided tours here are not of the boring kind – you can try out medieval amusements like archery or tests of strength and agility.

Another highlight – St. John's Cathedral – is just around the corner. The square outside the cathedral was used for all kinds of activities during medieval times – from important announcements to executions and trade. Rīgas iela, running alongside the square, has the highest concentration of cafes in the town, including one built in a former guard's house – back in the medieval times Cēsis was surrounded by tall, thick walls, fragments of which are still visible today.

Visitors more interested in recent history should head to the former Soviet prison on Pils iela. A permanent exhibition “Burning Conscience”, created by a team of outstanding artists, guides you through the lives of people who resisted the Soviet occupation.

Cēsis has a remarkable cultural scene. Its Concert Hall regularly hosts classical and pop music concerts as well as theatre and dance performances. Every July, contemporary art connoisseurs gather at Cēsis Art Festival – a month-long celebration of visual arts, music, theatre, and cinema held at locations throughout the town and its scenic surroundings.

The beautiful River Gauja with its cliffs, caves, and serene lakes is within walking distance from the centre of Cēsis. The scenic Cīrulīši Nature Trails are the perfect introduction to the beauty of the ancient Gauja Valley.

Not far from Cēsis, Āraiši has a number of sites worth visiting, including a restored 9th-century settlement, a romantic windmill and a miller's house.

You will need a car to travel the full route, but Cēsis can also be reached by train ([www.pv.lv](http://www.pv.lv)) or bus ([www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv)).



# Saulkrasti



*Saulkrasti beach at White Dune*



*Munchausen Museum*



*Liepupe Manor*

Spend a day on the Vidzeme coastline – enjoy white sand beaches, explore museums and pay a visit to Baron Munchausen, the magnificent liar!

Saulkrasti, one of Latvia's coastal gems, is located next to the Riga–Tallinn highway, about 30 km from Riga or just an hour-long train ride away. Here you can walk along the White Dune, visit the intriguing Bicycle Museum, or just relax on the Saulkrasti beach, stretching over 15 km.

Continuing towards Tallinn, you'll arrive at a real kingdom of fantasy – the Munchausen Museum at Dunte, one of Latvia's most visited museums for a number of years. This unusual museum honours the charismatic Baron von Munchausen – the unsurpassed king of lies and fantasy, whose life was almost as strange as his wonderful stories. Being a real historical character, the Baron spent the best years of his turbulent life at the Dunte Manor. There you can also take a look at a wax museum depicting the important individuals in the history of Latvia, reach the sea along a walking trail or visit a pub.

You can plan the grand finale of your day 10 km further on, staying at the 18th-century Liepupe Manor complex. Do take the time to enjoy the peculiar historical ambience of the manor, built in the first half of the 18th century, and the park created as a complement to the estate. Having been a family house, a school, an office and a library of a collective farm, it was finally restored to its previous bohemian glory in 2004. Nowadays it is an exquisite 16-room boutique hotel, a restaurant (also offering different cooking masterclasses) and a spa designed in a style of rural romanticism – a great place to enjoy a couple of days.

You will need a car to travel the full route, but Saulkrasti can also be reached by train ([www.pv.lv](http://www.pv.lv)) or bus ([www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv)).

## **Saulkrasti Tourism Information Centre**

📍 Ainažu iela 13b, Saulkrasti  
+371 67952641  
[tic@saulkraستي.lv](mailto:tic@saulkraستي.lv)

## **Saulkrasti Bicycle Museum**

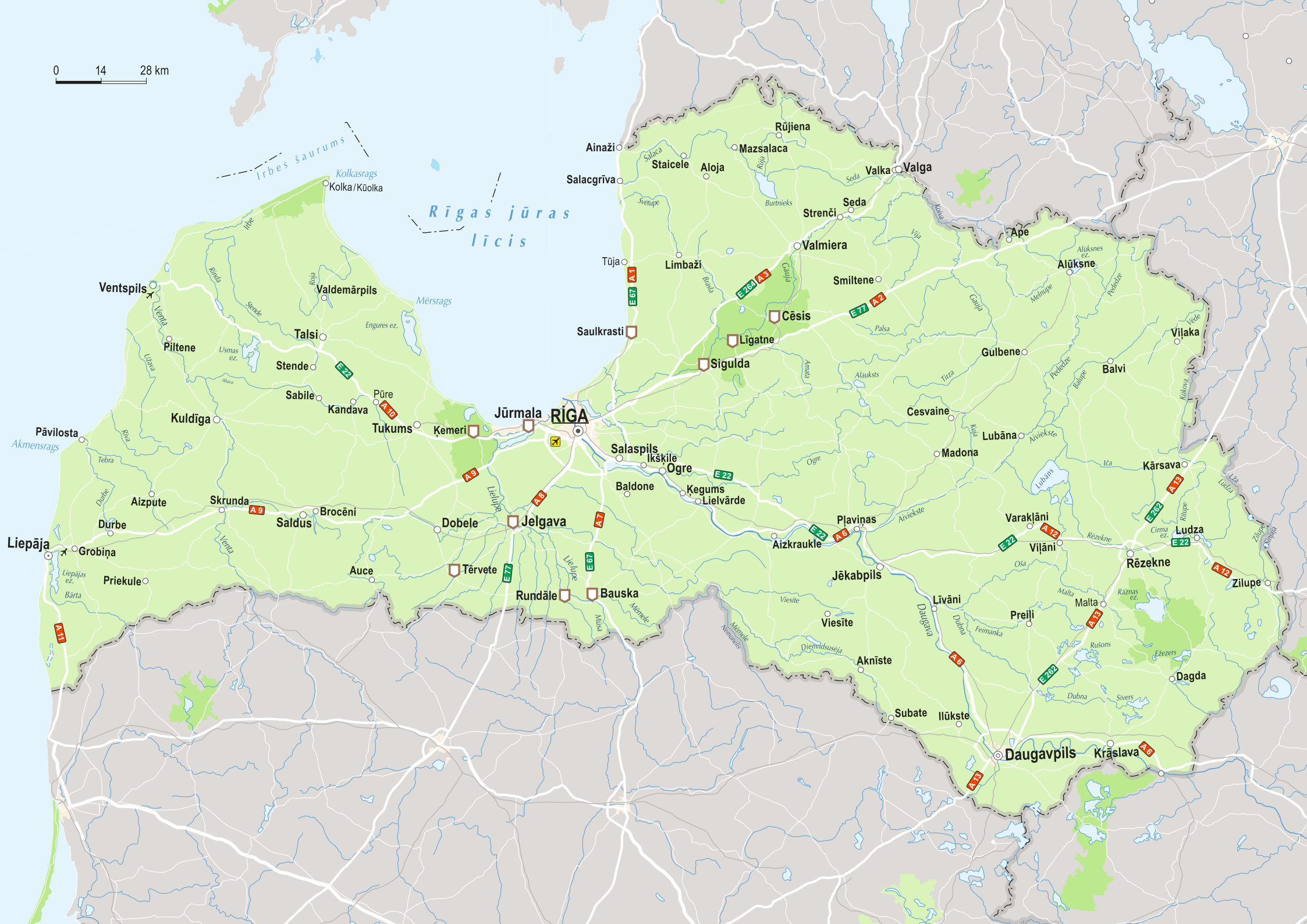
📍 Rīgas iela 44a, Saulkrasti  
→ [www.velomuseum.lv](http://www.velomuseum.lv)

## **Liepupe Manor**

📍 Liepupe  
→ [www.liepupesmuiza.lv](http://www.liepupesmuiza.lv)

→ [www.visitsaulkraستي.lv](http://www.visitsaulkraستي.lv)

0 14 28 km



# Travel Latvia

## BY BUS

Latvia has an extensive coach transport network connected to almost all the major cities in Europe and the Western part of Russia. The Riga Coach Terminal is located next to the Central Market. From here, buses depart to all corners of Latvia. Comfort and price may vary according to individual routes and operators. Some routes are served by minibuses and express buses. Tickets can be bought at the ticket desk inside the station as well as onboard, payable by cash (if space permits). For travellers' convenience there is an information centre in the main terminal building.

### Riga Coach Terminal

Address: Prāgas iela 1, Riga

Bus schedules: [www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv), [www.1188.lv](http://www.1188.lv)

Online booking: [www.bezrindas.lv](http://www.bezrindas.lv), [www.buseurope.eu](http://www.buseurope.eu)

Information line: +371 90000009 (pay phone)

Ticket desk opening hours: 6:00–22:00

### Riga International Airport bus: No. 22

Travel time: about 30 min

Bus schedules, tickets: [www.rigassatiksm.lv](http://www.rigassatiksm.lv)

## BY PLANE

Riga airport is among the fastest growing airports in Europe, offering direct flights to more than 80 cities around the world.

Less than 1 hour	1–2 hours	More than 2 hours
Helsinki, Minsk, Stockholm, Tallinn, St. Petersburg, Tampere, Vilnius, Warsaw	Berlin, Copenhagen, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Kyiv, Moscow, Oslo, Prague, Vienna	Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Geneva, Istanbul, London, Manchester, Milan, Munich, Paris, Rome, Tashkent, Tel Aviv

## Cycling routes

The bike is a great choice to get to know Latvia. There are three International EuroVelo long-distance routes (EuroVelo 10, 11 and 13), five Greenways (routes of non-motorised tourism along former railway tracks), two national and more than 80 regional routes within Latvia.

Eurovelo: [www.eurovelo.com](http://www.eurovelo.com)

Greenways: [www.greenrailways.eu](http://www.greenrailways.eu)

## BY SEA

The major ports of Latvia have ferry connections with other ports in the Baltic Sea Region.

### Freeport of Riga

[www.rop.lv](http://www.rop.lv)

### Ferry lines

Riga–Stockholm: [www.tallink.lv](http://www.tallink.lv)

Ventspils–Nynäshamn: [www.stenaline.lv](http://www.stenaline.lv)

Liepāja–Travemünde: [www.stenaline.lv](http://www.stenaline.lv)

Latvia also has a number of smaller ports, open to those who prefer travelling by yacht. A list of contact information of yacht ports and wharfs: [www.eastbaltic.eu](http://www.eastbaltic.eu)

## BY CAR

In Latvia, vehicles drive on the right-hand side of the road. The speed limit in urban areas is 50 km/h, outside urban areas is 90 km/h, with some sections having a 100 km/h speed limit. Short-distance lights must be used all year round, including in daylight hours. Blood alcohol concentration must not exceed 0.2 ‰ while driving. Seatbelts and baby car seats must be used at all times. Non-EU residents entering Latvia by car must have a European Green Card insurance.

### Road Traffic Safety Department (CSDD):

[www.csdd.lv](http://www.csdd.lv)

### Parking in Riga:

[www.rigassatiksm.lv](http://www.rigassatiksm.lv), [www.europark.lv](http://www.europark.lv)

### Car rentals:

[www.sixt.lv](http://www.sixt.lv), [www.avis.lv](http://www.avis.lv), [www.ambercar.eu](http://www.ambercar.eu)

### Latvian Automotive Club (LAMB):

[www.lamb.lv](http://www.lamb.lv)

## Hiking routes

Do not miss the opportunity to walk along the coast of the Baltic Sea while travelling around. The Baltic coastal walking route is the first long-distance walking route in the Baltic countries. It starts at the Lithuanian–Latvian border in the village of Nida, Latvia, and ends in the port of Tallinn in Estonia. The route is part of the E9 European long-distance path.

### Baltic Coastal and Forest Hiking routes:

[www.baltictrails.eu](http://www.baltictrails.eu)

### European Ramblers Association:

[www.era-ewv-ferp.org/latvia](http://www.era-ewv-ferp.org/latvia)

[www.latvia.travel](http://www.latvia.travel)

 *EnjoyLatvia*

NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
PLAN 2020



**EUROPEAN UNION**

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