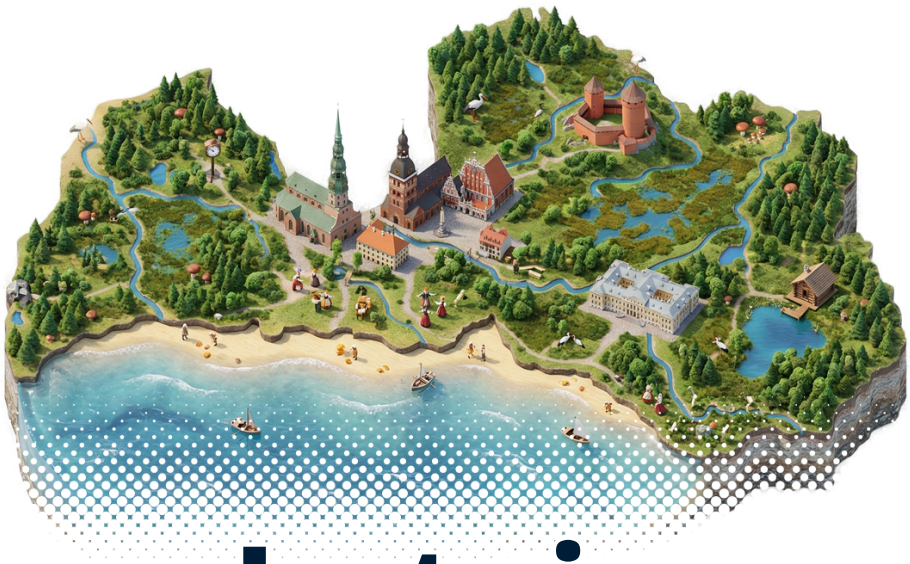
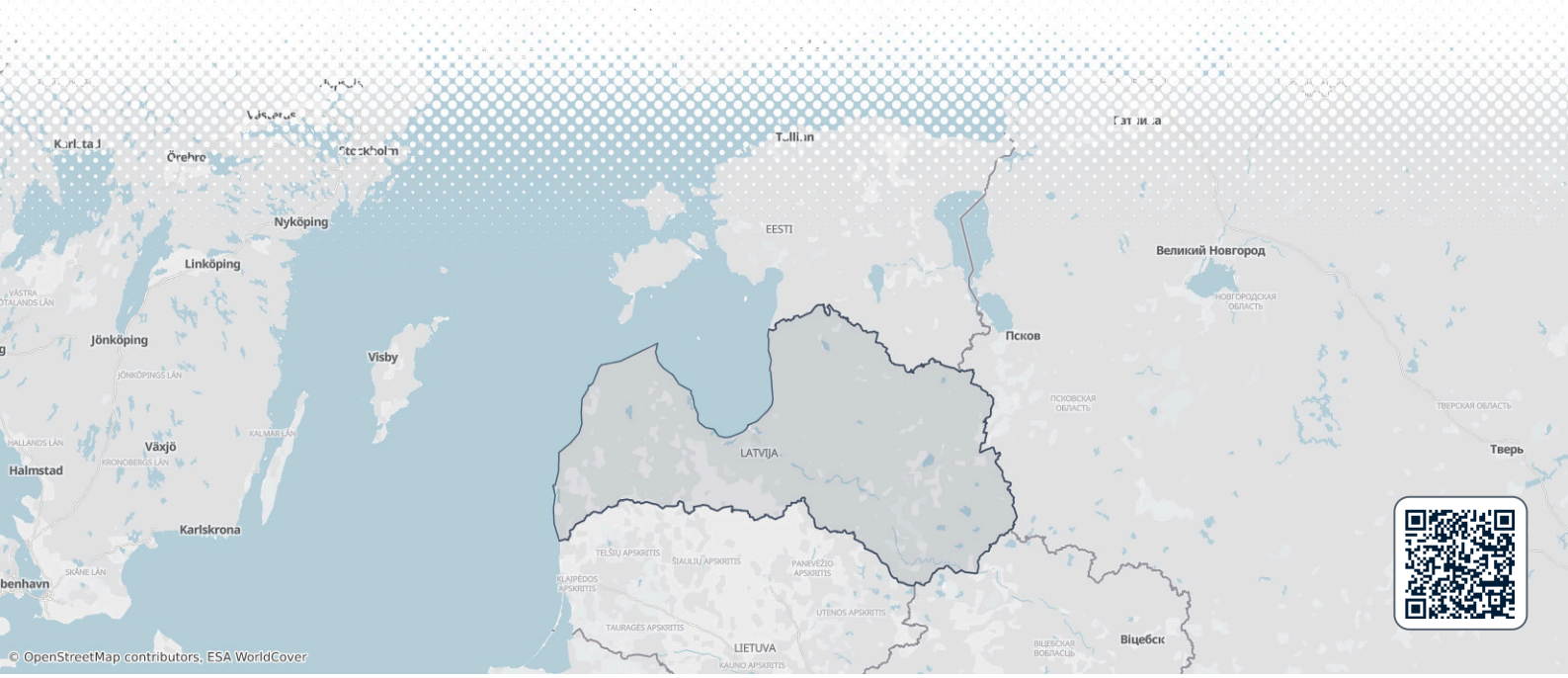


Latvia

TRAVEL GUIDE

Tripomatic



Overview

Latvia is a small Baltic country known for the Art Nouveau architecture of its capital, Riga, dense forests, and a long, sandy Baltic Sea coastline. It borders Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Russia, and much of the country outside the capital is quiet, rural, and forested.

Latvia suits travelers interested in architecture, nature, and beach towns, and works well as a short city break or combined with a wider Baltic trip. Summers are warm with long daylight hours; winters are cold, dark, and often snowy.

Money & payments

Latvia uses the euro, as a member of the eurozone.

Currency

CURRENCY
€
EUR

1 EUR
1.106 USD
1 USD = 0.9043 EUR

Cards widely accepted

Card and phone payment work almost everywhere in cities and towns, including small cafés and public transport. A little cash is still useful in rural areas and at some markets.

Typical costs

Rough prices in touristic areas, per person

Hotel (double room, per night) mid-range hotel, room for two per night	55 – 110 € $61 – $122
Dinner (mid-range restaurant) mid-range restaurant, one person, no drinks	12 – 22 € $13 – $24
Inexpensive meal casual eatery or lunch special, one person	6 – 10 € $7 – $11
Local beer 0.5L draught	3 – 4.5 € $3 – $5
Coffee espresso or cappuccino in a café	2.5 – 3.5 € $3 – $4
Water 0.5L, shop	1 – 1.5 € $1 – $2
Transit ticket single, Riga	1.15 € $1
Taxi (per km) per km	0.7 – 1 € $1 – $1

Tipping

Tipping is not mandatory in Latvia and is far less expected than in North America. Leaving around 10% in a restaurant is a common and appreciated gesture for good service, though for a small bill many locals simply round up instead. Check the bill first, since a few restaurants add a service charge already.

Restaurant ~10%, round up for a small bill	Optional
Taxi round up the fare	Optional

Electricity

Latvia uses Type C and Type F plugs (the standard two-round-pin sockets used across most of continental Europe) at 230 V / 50 Hz.

ELECTRICITY



Type C

ELECTRICITY



Type F

230 V · 50 Hz

Language

Latvian is the official language and belongs to the small Baltic language family, related closely only to Lithuanian. English is widely spoken in Riga and among younger people; Russian is also common, especially in the east and among older generations.

Useful phrases

Hello	Labdien
Thank you	Paldies
Please	Lūdzu
Excuse me	Atvainojiet
Yes	Jā
No	Nē
How much?	Cik tas maksā?
Cheers	Priekā!
Help	Palīgā!
Goodbye	Uz redzēšanos
Do you speak English?	Vai jūs runājat angliski?
Sorry	Piedodiet
Where is...?	Kur ir...?
I don't understand	Es nesaprotu
The menu, please	Ēdienkarti, lūdzu
The bill, please	Rēķinu, lūdzu

Staying connected

Prepaid SIM and eSIM plans from Tele2, LMT, or Bite are easy to buy at the airport or phone shops. Mobile coverage and Wi-Fi are reliable in cities and along main roads, with some drop-off in more remote rural areas.

Safety & emergencies

Latvia is a safe country for tourists, with low rates of violent crime. The main risks are pickpocketing in busy tourist areas of Riga's Old Town, and icy pavements and roads in winter. Latvia has a single emergency number that reaches police, fire, and ambulance services.

Emergency numbers

GENERAL EMERGENCY	POLICE	AMBULANCE	FIRE BRIGADE
112	110	113	112

Health

Tap water is safe to drink throughout the country. Pharmacies (aptieka) are common in towns and cities, with at least one open late in most larger towns. No special vaccinations are required for entry.

Visas & entry

Latvia is part of the Schengen Area. Citizens of the EU/EEA, the United States, Canada, Australia, and many other countries can enter for tourism without a visa for stays of up to 90 days within a 180-day period. Travelers from countries without a visa-waiver agreement need a Schengen visa, applied for through a Latvian embassy or consulate before travel.

Visa and entry requirements change frequently. Verify current requirements with the official immigration authority or your country's embassy before travel.

Etiquette

Latvians tend to be reserved with strangers at first, and small talk is less common than in some other cultures; this reflects a cultural preference for personal space, not unfriendliness. Shoes are almost always removed when entering someone's home. Song and dance traditions are taken seriously and are a genuine source of national pride, especially around the nationwide Song and Dance Celebration held every few years.

Holidays & opening hours

Public holidays can affect opening hours in smaller towns more than in Riga. Līgo and Jāņi, on June 23 and 24, mark the midsummer solstice and are among the most widely celebrated holidays, with many businesses closing as people head to the countryside.

Public holidays

Jan 1	New Year's Day
May 1	Labour Day
May 1	Day of the Convocation of the Constitutional Assembly of the Republic of Latvia
May 4	Day of the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia
Jun 23	Līgo Day
Jun 24	Jāņi Day
Nov 18	Day of the Proclamation of the Republic of Latvia
Dec 24	Christmas Eve
Dec 25	Christmas Day
Dec 26	Second day of Christmas
Dec 31	New Year's Eve
movable — Mar/Apr	Easter Monday
movable — Mar/Apr	Easter Sunday
movable — Mar/Apr	Good Friday

Getting around

- **By train**: Regional trains connect Riga with nearby towns like Sigulda and Jūrmala; long-distance rail options to other cities are more limited.
- **By bus**: Long-distance coaches reach almost every town and are often the most practical way to travel between cities.
- **In Riga**: The Old Town is compact and walkable; trams, buses, and trolleybuses cover the rest of the city well.
- **By air**: Riga International Airport is the main hub for the Baltic region, with more international connections than Vilnius or Tallinn.

Driving

- **Winter tires**: Mandatory from December 1 to March 1; studded tires are allowed from October 1 to April 30.
- **Speed limits**: 50 km/h in towns, 90 km/h on rural roads, up to 110-120 km/h on some divided highways.
- **Headlights**: Must be on at all times, day and night, year-round.
- **Rural roads**: Some minor roads are unpaved gravel, especially outside the main highways; reduce speed accordingly.
- **Fuel**: Stations are self-service, with card payment standard at the pump.

URBAN	RURAL	MOTORWAY
50 km/h	90 km/h	110 km/h

PETROL	DIESEL
Bezsvina 95, Bezsvina 98	Dīzelis

Drive on the right

No motorway vignette needed

Latvia has no motorway tolls or vignettes; all roads are free to use.

Food & drink

Rye bread (rupjmaize) is a staple at almost every meal, alongside potatoes, pork, and freshwater fish. Grey peas with bacon is a classic hearty dish, especially in winter, and smoked fish is common along the coast.

Latvia has a strong foraging tradition, with wild mushrooms and berries appearing in home cooking and on restaurant menus in season. Dark rye bread also appears in desserts, alongside honey cakes and cottage-cheese pastries. Riga Black Balsam, a strong herbal liqueur, is a distinctive local specialty, often taken as a shot or mixed into coffee.

What to eat & drink

LUNCH

Smoked Fish · Kūpināta zivs
Smoked sprats, herring, or eel are a Baltic coast staple, often eaten with rye bread.

DINNER

Grey Peas with Bacon · Pelēkie zirņi ar speķi
Grey peas stewed with fried bacon and onion, a hearty traditional winter dish.

SNACKS & STREET FOOD

Dark Rye Bread · Rupjmaize
Dense, slightly sour dark rye bread that anchors most Latvian meals and even appears in desserts.

Bacon Pastries · Speķa pīrāgi
Small yeasted pastries filled with chopped bacon and onion, a classic snack and party food.

SWEETS & DESSERTS

Curd Cheese Snack · Biezpiena sieriņi
Sweet glazed curd-cheese bars, a popular everyday treat similar to Estonia's kohuke.

DRINKS

Riga Black Balsam · Rīgas Melnais Balzāms
A dark, bitter herbal liqueur made to a centuries-old recipe, often mixed with coffee or blackcurrant juice.

Latvia – Plan Your Trip
Turn the places from this guide into a real itinerary, with smart routing, time estimates, and everything you need for a perfect trip.
3M+ downloads · 4.6 stars · 15 years of trip planning
App Store · Google Play
Scan to download the app

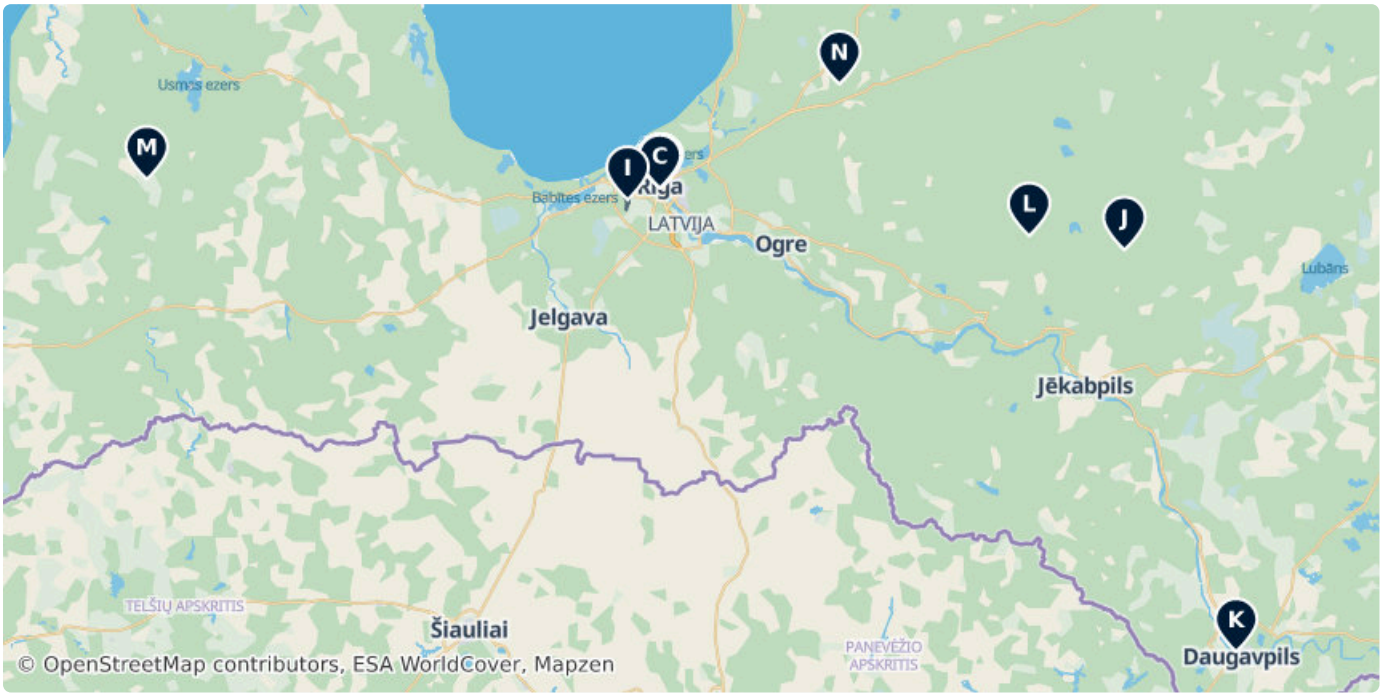
Where to explore

Riga is the capital, with a UNESCO-listed Old Town and one of the largest collections of Art Nouveau buildings in Europe. Jūrmala, just west of Riga, is Latvia's main beach resort town, known for its long sandy beach and wooden villas.

Sigulda, in the Gauja valley, is the gateway to Gauja National Park and its castles, and a popular day trip from Riga. Ventspils, on the west coast, is a tidy port city known for its beaches and cow sculptures, and Daugavpils, in the southeast, is Latvia's second-largest city, with a large 19th-century fortress.

Latvia's Absolute Essentials

This selection spans Latvia's architectural and historical heritage, from Riga's medieval Old Town to regional fortifications. Key sites include the 13th-century Riga Cathedral, the Gothic Three Brothers complex, and the 19th-century Daugavpils Fortress. Natural and scientific highlights include the Venta Waterfall—Europe's widest—and the UNESCO-listed Struve Geodetic Arc. The collection also features the medieval Turaida Castle and the Freedom Monument, a central symbol of Latvian independence.





A Riga Cathedral

Although known as the Dome Cathedral, there is no dome. Still, it is the most impressive church in the city.

Herdera laukums 6, LV-1050 Rīga, LV (56.94905, 24.10497)

doms.lv, +371 6722 7573



B Three Brothers

The Three Brothers is a building complex consisting of three houses, situated in Riga, Latvia.

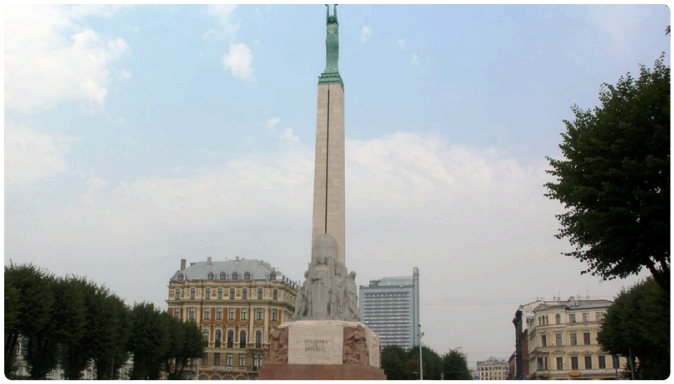
Mazā Pils iela 19, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia (56.95030, 24.10431)



C Jauniela

Riga's most picturesque street surrounded by old colourful buildings in the very heart of the city. A must-see.

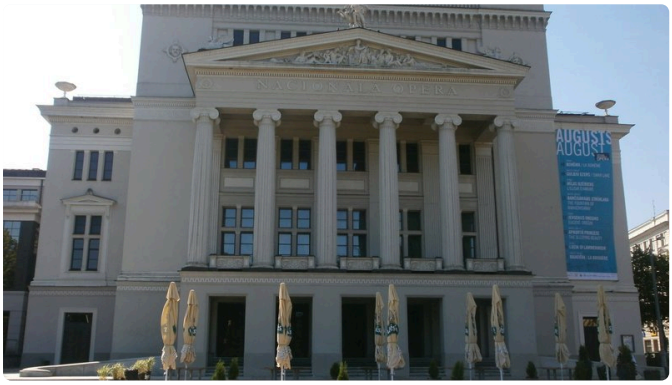
Jauniela, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia (56.94847, 24.10536)



D Freedom Monument

The Freedom Monument is a monument located in Riga, Latvia, honouring soldiers killed during the Latvian War of Independence.

Brīvības iela, LV-1050, Riga, Latvia (56.95154, 24.11336)



E Latvian National Opera

The Latvian National Opera and Ballet is an opera house and opera company at Aspazijas boulevard 3 in Riga.

Aspazijas bulvāris 3, LV-1050 Rīga, LV (56.94933, 24.11443)

opera.lv, +371 67 073777



F Cat House

The Cat House is a building situated at 10 Meistaru iela in the old town of Riga, the capital of Latvia.

Meistaru iela 10, LV-1050 Rīga, LV (56.95015, 24.10872)



G Art Museum "Riga Bourse"

Art Museum Riga Bourse is a museum in Riga, Latvia. It was established in 1920 and contains the most extensive collection of world art in...

Doma laukums 6, LV-1050 Rīga, LV (56.95008, 24.10496)

Tu–Th	10:00–18:00
Fr	10:00–20:00
Sa–Su	10:00–18:00

rigasbirza.lv, +371 67 223434



H Powder Tower

The Powder Tower is situated in Riga, Latvia, and originally a part of the defensive system of the town.

Smilšu iela 20, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia (56.95122, 24.10868)



I Riga International Airport

Riga International Airport serves as the main international airport of Riga and it's also the largest airport in the Baltic states.

10/1 RIGA Airport, Marupe district, LV 1053, Latvia (56.92217, 23.97243)

Mo–Su	Open 24/7

riga-airport.com, +371 293 11187

J Bērzaune castle ruins

Remnants of a 14th-century stone castle built for the Tiesenhausen family, vassals of the Archbishop of Riga. The structure was largely destroyed during the Great Northern War, leaving behind fragments of the original defensive walls.

(Unnamed Road), Bērzaune 4853, Latvia (56.80824, 26.03147)



K Daugavpils Fortress

Daugavpils Fortress, also known as Dinaburg Fortress or Dvinsk Fortress, is an early 19th century fortress in Daugavpils, Latvia.

4 1. Oficieru iela, Daugavpils 5401, Latvia (55.88604, 26.49507)



L Struve Geodetic Arc

The Struve Geodetic Arc is a chain of survey triangulations stretching from Hammerfest in Norway to the Black Sea, through ten countries...

(56.84006, 25.63679)

aluksne.lv/zpp_dlemumi/2018/31.07/Parvaldibas_plans_2...



M Venta Waterfall

Venta Rapid is a waterfall on the Venta River in Kuldīga, western Latvia.

3301, Latvia (56.96817, 21.97888)



N Turaida Castle

Turaida Castle is a recently reconstructed medieval castle in Turaida, in the Vidzeme region of Latvia, on the opposite bank of the Gauja...

(Unnamed Road), 2150, Latvia (57.18232, 24.85054)

turaida-muzejs.lv, +37167972376, +37167971402



Museum of the history of Riga and navigation

Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation is housed by the Riga Dom Cathedral ensemble in the heart of the Old Riga, Latvia.

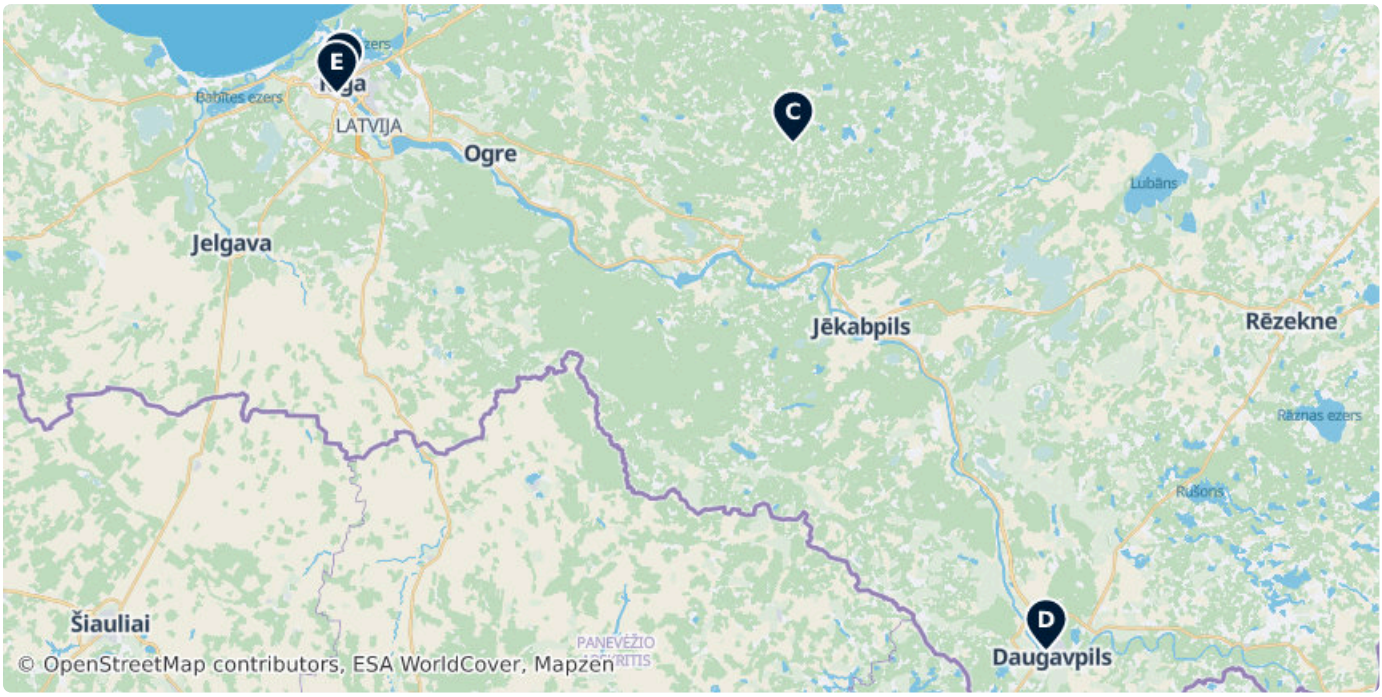
Palasta iela 4, LV-1050 Rīga, LV (56.94850, 24.10431)

May-Sep Mo–Su	10:00–17:00
Oct-Apr We–Su	11:00–17:00

rigamuz.lv, + 371 67 356676

Editor's Choice Latvia

Latvia’s cultural landscape spans from the medieval streets of Riga to the 19th-century fortifications of Daugavpils. This selection features the Three Brothers, Riga's oldest stone dwellings showcasing Gothic and Baroque architecture, and the Art Museum "Riga Bourse," housed in a Venetian Renaissance-style building. The list includes the UNESCO-listed Struve Geodetic Arc, a 19th-century scientific achievement, and the Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre, which preserves original works within a historic arsenal. For landscape design, Arcadia Park offers a 20th-century layout with artificial waterfalls and stone bridges along the Mārupīte river.





A Three Brothers

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Mazā Pils iela 19, LV-1050 Riga, Latvia (56.95030, 24.10431)



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Doma laukums 6, LV-1050 Rīga, LV (56.95008, 24.10496)

Tu–Th	10:00–18:00
Fr	10:00–20:00
Sa–Su	10:00–18:00

rigasbirza.lv, +371 67 223434



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The Struve Geodetic Arc is a chain of survey triangulations stretching from Hammerfest in Norway to the Black Sea, through ten countries...

(56.84006, 25.63679)

aluksne.lv/zpp_dlemumi/2018/31.07/Parvaldibas_plans_2...



D Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre

Mark Rothko Art Centre is a multi-functional institution of culture, arts and education, located inside the arsenal building of the...

Mihaila iela 3, LV-5401 Daugavpils, LV (55.88384, 26.49745)

Tu	11:00–17:00
We–Sa	11:00–19:00
Su	11:00–17:00

rothkomuseum.com, +371 65430250



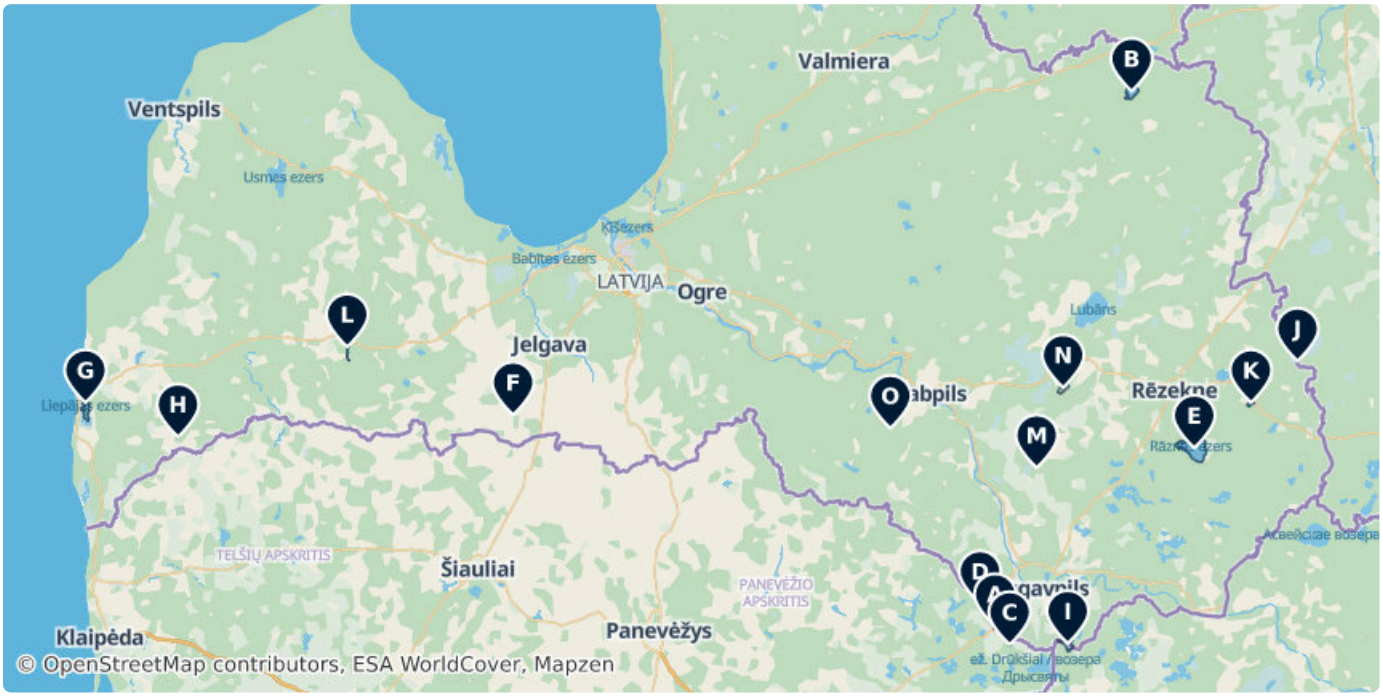
E Arcadia Park

One of Riga's oldest landscape gardens, redesigned in 1911. The park features the winding Mārupīte river, artificial waterfalls, and several arched stone bridges. It is located in the Torņakalns neighborhood on the left bank of the Daugava.

(Unnamed Road), Rīga 1004, Latvia (56.93201, 24.08551)

Lakes and Wetlands of the Baltics

This collection highlights the diverse aquatic landscapes of Latvia and its border regions. It features major water bodies like Lake Rāzna, the country's largest by volume, and Lake Liepāja, a coastal lagoon. The list also includes transboundary lakes such as Rychy and Pitelis, alongside specialized wetland ecosystems like the Ašinieku and Aklais bogs. These sites range from deep glacial lakes to shallow marshes, providing critical habitats for local flora and fauna while showcasing the region's distinct hydrological characteristics.



A ež. Laukesas / Laucesas ezers

A transboundary glacial lake on the border of Lithuania and Latvia, also known locally as Smėlynė.

5460, Latvia (55.75189, 26.29806)

ezeri.lv/database/2034/

B Alūksnes ezers

The eleventh largest lake in Latvia, featuring several islands, including Pilssala, which houses the ruins of a 14th-century Livonian Order castle.

4301, Latvia (57.44951, 27.08526)



C Saločių ež.

An elongated ribbon lake located in the Zarasai district of northeastern Lithuania, west of Turmantas.

32004, Lithuania (55.69374, 26.38107)



D Stelmužės ež.

Also known as Padvarinis, this lake is situated in northeastern Lithuania near the Latvian border and the historic Stelmužė village.

32022, Lithuania (55.82607, 26.21085)

E Lake Rāzna

Rāzna is the second largest water surface and the first in terms of water volume lake in Latvia.

4622, Latvia (56.32689, 27.44592)



F Mūrmuižas dzirnavu ezers

A mill pond created on the Vilce River, located in the Mūrmuiža village of the Jelgava municipality.

(56.43209, 23.51852)

G Lake Liepāja

Lake Liepāja is the fifth-largest lake in Latvia, located near Liepāja in the Liepāja District.

(56.47143, 21.05310)

H Kalētu ezers

A small lake located in the South Kurzeme Municipality of western Latvia, near the village of Kalēti.

(56.36179, 21.58677)

I Lake Rychy

Lake Rychy, Richi, or Richu is a freshwater lake shared by the Braslaw District of Vitebsk Region, Belarus, and Augšdaugava Municipality,...

Belarus (55.69707, 26.71644)

J Pitelis

Pitelis is a lake in Northern Europe. It is located on the border between Latvia and the Pskov Oblast of Russia.

Russia (56.60375, 28.04103)

K Pildas ezers

A lake in the Latgale region of eastern Latvia, situated in the Ludza Municipality near the village of Ņukši.

5730, Latvia (56.47118, 27.77307)

L Lake Ciecere

Lake Ciecere is a lake in the southern part of Latvia, near the town of Brocēni in Saldus Municipality, Latvia.

3851, Latvia (56.64830, 22.56249)

M Ašinieku purvs

A wetland and bog area located in the Preiļi Municipality of southeastern Latvia.

(56.26321, 26.53757)

N Aklais purvs

A protected nature reserve and bog located in the historical region of Selonia, characterized by its peat moss ecosystems.

5331, Latvia (56.51918, 26.69021)

O Melnais purvs

A bog and wetland area situated in the Selonia region of southern Latvia, near the town of Aknīste.

(56.38958, 25.69336)

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