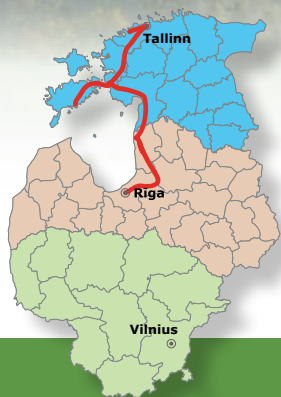


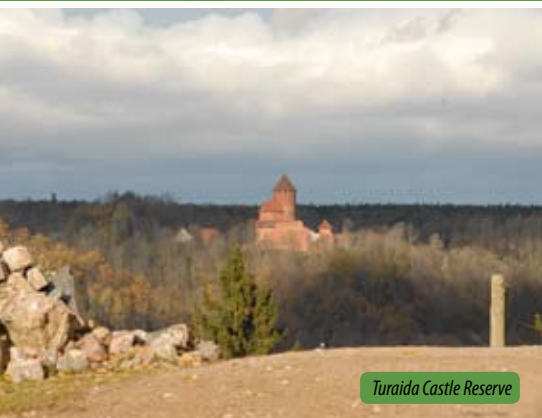
Cycling from Rīga to Tallinn through the Gauja and Sooma national parks and the largest Estonian Islands



This tour connects the two beautiful Baltic capitals of Latvia and Estonia. In between, the route passes through National parks, charming provincial towns and villages, beaches, dunes, coastal meadows, various forests and mires. Highlights include: Old Town and Art Nouveau district of Riga, Old Town of Tallinn, Turaida Castle Reserve and the picturesque River Gauja Valley in the Gauja National Park, the wilderness trip in the Sooma National park, Saaremaa island with wind mills, medieval churches, Kaali meteorite crater, Bishop's Castle at Kuressaare and ethnographic fishermen village Koguva at Muhu island. It is possible also to go one day to the Hiiumaa island, Panga cliffs in Saaremaa, Naissaar Island or Türisalu cliff, Keila waterfall and Paldiski near Tallin. From Kuressaare you take the public bus to Tallinn.



May – September, Cycling ~45-80 km daily (15 days, 619 km)



Turaida Castle Reserve



The Igate castle



Cycling between Salacgrīva and Ainaži

General Route: *Rīga – Sigulda – Limbaži – Salacgrīva – Pärnu – Varbla – Virtsu – Koguva – Leisi – Kuressaare – Tallinn*

Day 1


Arrival in Rīga.

Arrival in Rīga. Transfer to the hotel. Pick up the info package with the map and detailed itinerary at the hotel's reception. Free time in Rīga. Sightseeing of the Hanseatic Old Town, the Art Nouveau district, 'wooden Rīga' at the Pārdaugava district and the Ethnographic open-air museum is recommendable. Overnight in Rīga.

Day 2

Rīga – Sigulda – Turaida – Igate.

Cycle: hotel – train station (~0.5 hour). Take the train: Rīga – Sigulda (55 km, ~1,55 LVL per person, ~0.80 LVL per bicycle, ~1,14 hour). Cycling: Sigulda – Turaida – Ragana – Igate (~45 km, 99% asphalt).

The route leads through the Gauja national park  located on both sides of the ancient valley of the Gauja river. It is known for sandstone cliffs, hilly landscapes, deep boreal and steep slope and ravine forests as well as for castles, manors and many other culture heritage sites.

Visit the Turaida castle en route where there is a museum, castle tower with observation platform and a sculpture park. Overnight in the surroundings of Igate (shared bathroom).

Day 3

Igate – Limbaži – Salacgrīva.

Cycling: Igate – Limbaži – Salacgrīva (~63 km, 80% asphalt). The road goes through the Limbaži – a typical provincial town of Latvian. Further the route leads towards the Baltic Sea coast and Salacgrīva town, which is famous for its fishing traditions. Here you will cross the river Salaca, which flows into the Baltic Sea in the town. Overnight in Salacgrīva. In the evening – explore the wooded dunes or relax at the sandy beaches at the town.

Day 4

Salacgrīva – Ainaži – Haademeeste – Voiste.

Cycling: Salacgrīva – Ainaži – Häädemeeste – Võiste (61 km, 99% Asp-halt). The road leads along the Baltic Sea coast. Outside Salacgrīva town, on the left side of the road, there is a birdwatching tower and nature trail that cross the coastal meadows and lagoons named 'Randu pļavas'  (an important bird area and habitat for many rare plant species). After crossing the Latvian-Estonian border point, the road winds through coastal villages – Ikla, Treimani, Kabli, Häädemeeste, and join the Via Baltica road at Rannametsa. There is a signpost to Rannametsa–Tolkuse nature trail  (Rannametsa – Tolkuse Öpperada). It is worth climbing up the viewing tower to enjoy the view over the bog from the Rannametsa dune – the highest dune in Estonia. Overnight in Võiste.



Day 5

Võiste – Pärnu - Surroundings of Tori.

Cycling: Võiste – Pärnu (~30 km, 99% asphalt). Sightseeing of the Pärnu town – the most popular spa resort of Estonia. The Old town, the Ruutli pedestrian street, the old fortifications. Cycling: Pärnu – Surroundings of Tori (~24 km, 100% Asphalt). Overnight in the surroundings of Tori.

Day 6

Wilderness Daytrip in Sooma National Park

At about 09:00 am private transfer to the Sooma National Park – the Wilderness Capital of Estonia. Guided walking in the forests and bog-shoeing on the mires (3 hours, ~4 km). Lunch in the wilderness. Guided canoeing on the river or on the flooded fields, yards and forests during 'fifth season' (usually at late March and early April when the spring flood rise the water level by as much as five meters) in the afternoon (2 hours, ~7 km). Alternative offer – berry or mushroom picking, nature trails or exhibitions and media programmes in the National Park's visitor centre. Transfer back to the guesthouse. Overnight in the surroundings of Tori.

Day 7

Surroundings of Tori – Surroundings of Liu

Cycling: Surroundings of Tori – Surroundings of Liu (~55 km, 100% Asphalt) (~41 km, 98% asphalt). The route goes back to Pärnu and then through Audru village, where is a church built in 1680, and a dendro park around the manor complex. Further you will cycle through Lindi towards Pootsi to the nice guesthouse. Overnight in surroundings of Liu.

Day 8

Surroundings of Liu – Surroundings of Varbla.

Cycling: Surroundings of Liu – Surroundings of Varbla (~41 km, 98% Asphalt). On the route you will see the picturesque Lindi Mire (watching platform), Pootsi village with the 19th century's Manor, the Tõstamaa Manor and Kastna village where the Sooni Church and the biggest oak-tree in the region are located.



Bird watching tower at the end of the nature trail at Randu meadows



Ferry Virtsu Kuivastu



The Angla windmills



Guesthouse near ethnographic Koguva village at Muhu island

Further you will reach the ancient village Varbla where is the memorial stone to the wrestling hero Kristjan Palusalu. Overnight in surroundings of Varbla.

Day 9

Surroundings of Varbla – Virtsu – Koguva (Muhu island).

Cycling: Surroundings of Varbla – Virtsu (~40 km, 98% Asphalt). Before you reach the Virtsu port, the Varbla church and Illuste Manor House located on the route is worth seeing. Take the ferry Virtsu – Kuivastu at 14:00 (2.24 EUR per person + 0.96 EUR per bicycle, 0.5 h). Cycling: Kuivastu – Hellamaa – Nõmmkülla – Piin – Koguva (Muhu island) (~41 km, 70% asphalt). The route to the ethnographic fishermen's village Koguva leads through the small island Muhu where the landscapes with juniper stands are typical. Before Nõmmkülla there is a unique nature attraction – Üügu pank (signposted) – an impressive dolomite steep bank. Overnight in Koguva.



Panga cliff in Saaremaa

Day 10

Koguva – Orissaare – Jaani – Mujaste.

Cycling: Koguva – Orissaare – Jaani – Mujaste (~55 km, 58% asphalt). Spend some time at the ethnographic fishermen's village Koguva, then cross the 3 km long sea dam to reach the Saaremaa island. It is worth to see the ruins of Maasi Order Castle near Orissaare, Leisi village with historical stone buildings, small fishermen's villages, coastal meadows and stands of junipers along the route to Mujaste. Overnight in Mujaste

Day 11

A day trip to Hiiumaa Island or Panga cliffs.

Option A: Day trip to the second largest island of Estonia – Hiiumaa that is known for lighthouses, unspoiled nature and the sense of humour of its inhabitants. Cycling: Meiuste – Triigi (9 km). Ferry: Triigi – Sõru (Price 2.24 EUR per person + 0.96 EUR per bicycle, 1 hour). Cycling: Sõru – Jausa – Orjaku – Kassari – Käina – Sõru (~63 km, 100% asphalt). Ferry: Sõru – Triigi. Cycling: Triigi – Meiuste (9 km).



View of Kuresaare city center



You can enjoy the picturesque beaches, nature trail and bird watching platform in Orjaku village, Sääre trip cape or tourism offers in local villages during the day. Option B: Day trip to the highest cliff of Saaremaa – Panga cliffs (~45 km, 98% gravel road). Overnight in Meiuste.

Day 12

Meiuste – Leisi – Angla – Viira – Kaali – Kuressaare.

Cycling: Meiuste – Leisi – Angla – Viira – Kaali – Kuressaare (~57 km, 97% asphalt). In this day you will see two of the most famous sights in Saaremaa – the Angla windmills that is the only windmill hill in the Island that has retained its former look, and Kaali meteorite crater that is one of the biggest and the most impressive in Europe.

The route will end in Kuressaare – the capital of Saaremaa. We recommend visiting the Bishop's castle – one of the best-preserved medieval strongholds in all Baltic states. Overnight in Kuressaare.



Cycling in Saaremaa

Day 13

Kuressaare – Tallinn.

Take a bus: Kuressaare – Tallinn (~216 km, 97% asphalt) (Price 2011: 14.50 EUR per person, 7.25 EUR per bicycle). Free time to get familiar with the Old Town of Tallinn. Overnight in Tallinn.



Kaali meteorite crater

Day 14

Tallinn or Naissaar Island 🚢 or Keila waterfall.

A day in Tallinn or other 2 options: Option A: Take the one-day cruise to Naissaar Island (11 km long, 4 km wide) and explore the island by bicycle! Ferry: Tallinn Old town to island (1h, price 25–40 EUR/ return trip). Former Soviet military base and mine factory, nowadays – a nature reserve with sandy and stony beaches, boreal forests, lighthouses and many industrial objects that remind of its military history.

There are 3 cycling routes (Military, Northern and Southern) through the island. Option B: Cycling to the one of the most impressive cliffs in Estonia at Türisalu, Keila waterfall and Paldiski

where is former military base of Soviet submarines. Cycling: Tallinn – Tabasalu – Muraste – Turisalu – Keila – Joa – Paldiski (~67 km, 100% asphalt). Take the train: Paldiski – Tallinn (45 km, 1,10 h). Overnight in Tallinn.

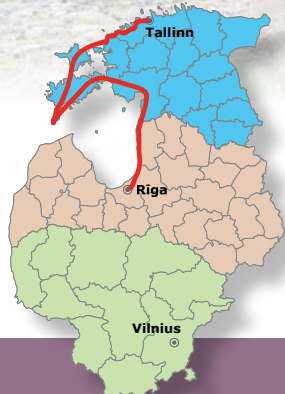
Day 15

Breakfast. Transfer from hotel to the Tallinn airport. Departure.



Tallinn Old Town

Nature Trails in Latvia and Estonia



Tour begins in the Latvian capital Riga, which is known for its Art Nouveau architecture, and it ends in the Medieval town of Tallinn. Along the way you will enjoy lovely landscapes and walk 15 exciting nature trails (about 40 km on foot in total) that crosses dunes, marshlands, meadows and forests along the shores of the Baltic Sea.

Highlights: Riga Old Town and Art Nouvea district; Estonian islands – Saaremaa and Hiiumaa with distinctive nature, medieval churches and windmills; Mighty Kuressaare Bishop's Castle; Charming medieval Old Town of Tallinn; Sandy beaches, coastal meadows, white and wooded dunes, stands of junipers and diverse forests.



April – November, Driving in total ~1270 km (7 days)



Riga Old Town and river Daugava



Forest walking trail of the Baron von Munchhausen at Dunte



View from Maatsalu National Park

General Route: Riga – Pärnu – Saaremaa – Hiiumaa – Haapsalu – Tallinn

Day 1

Arrival in Riga

Pick up the hired car at the airport. Free time in Riga. Overnight in Riga.


Day 2


Riga – Salacgrīva – Pärnu (190 km, 100% tarmac).

Breakfast. Pick up your info pack with the map and detailed itinerary from the hotel's reception.

Sightseeing and walking trails en route (totally about 10 km walking): Saulkrasti White Dune – a nature trail through the wooded dunes and sightseeing platform on the coast (1 hour).

The Münchhausen trail – a nature trail through the swamp forest that begins at the Dunte Manor, where a museum to commemorate the legendary storyteller Baron von Münchhausen is found (3 hours). Along the trail there are many places to rest and enjoy a variety of attractions connected with the tales about Surprising Adventures of Baron Münchhausen.

Randu meadows  close to Ainaži – a nature trail through the coastal meadows and birdwatching tower on the coast (1 hour). An important bird area and a place where almost all coastal habitats of Latvia can be seen.

Lutemaa Nature Reserve  near Pärnu – a nature trail through the coastal meadows, picturesque mires and the highest wooded dunes in Estonia and birdwatching towers and sightseeing

platforms on the coast (2 hour). Overnight in the surroundings of Pärnu.


Day 3


Pärnu – Muhu – Kuressaare – Sorve – Kuressaare (275 km, 100% tarmac).

Breakfast. Sightseeing in Pärnu – historic spa resort of Estonia. Ferry from Virtsu to Kuivastu at Muhu island (0,5 hours).

Sightseeing and walking trails en route (totally up to 10 km hiking):


The ethnographic fishermen's' village Koguva at Muhu island where the landscapes with juniper stands are typical (1,5 hours).

Koigi Mire  at Saaremaa Island – a nature trail through the mire and bog woodland (2 hours).


The Sörve horn  in the western part of the Saaremaa Island – an excellent place to explore the landscape typical at Estonian and Swedish seashore - alvars - and one of the best places in the Baltic States for birdwatching during autumn migration. A former military basis for Soviet army (1,5 hours). Overnight in Kuressaare.

Day 4


Kuressaare – Kärdla (150 km, 70% tarmac, 30% gravel road).


Breakfast. Sightseeing at Kuressaare. Attractions include impressive medieval castle, town's centre with its art galleries, little shops, cafes and restaurants. Ferry from Triigi to Sõru (1,5 hours). Sightseeing and walking trails en route (totally about 7 km walking): Saaremaa island Viidumäe Nature Reserve  a forest

trail through the forests and wooded meadows and an observation tower at the seaside (1 hour).

Panga cliff  - about 22 m high dolomite cliff at the coast (1 hour).

Hiiumaa island


The Ojarku trail  on the Kassari Island through the coastal meadows and stands of junipers and the observation tower near Käina bay (bird watching available) (1 hour).

The Sääre horn  on the Kassari Island – a nature trail at the stripe of land covered with junipers (bird watching available) (1,5 hour). Overnight in Kärkla.

Day 5

Kärkla – Haapsalu – Matsalu National-park – Haapsalu (140 km, 90% tarmac, 10 % gravel road)

Sightseeing and walking trails en route (totally about 5 km walking):

Matsalu National Park  – a nature trail through the coastal and floodplain meadows and many birdwatching towers (3 hours). An excellent place for birdwatching during all seasons. Sightseeing in Haapsalu. Overnight at the hotel at Haapsalu.


Day 6

Haapsalu – Paldiski - Tallinn (180 km, 98% tarmac, 2% gravel road).

Breakfast.

Sightseeing and walking trails en route (totally about 8 km walking):

The walking trail at the Paldiski peninsula – the trail starts at the fortification which was build by the Peter 1st and leads along the steep Baltic sea banks, sightseeing of the former military basis of the Soviet military (2–3 hours)

Keila Nature Park  – walking trail through the broadleaved forest to the Keila waterfall (1–2 hours). In the evening free time in Tallinn. Overnight in Tallinn.

Day 7

Drive back to Riga

Breakfast. Return the car at Tallinn Airport. Departure from Tallinn. Or return to Riga and leave the car at Riga Airport.



Keila waterfall in Estonia

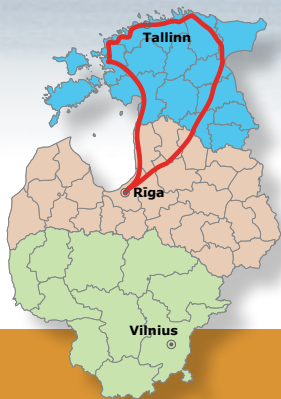


Panga cliff in Saaremaa



View of Tallinn Old Town

Along the National Parks of Latvia and Estonia



Your tour will start with one-night stay in Riga and then drive to Sigulda, where you will see the ruins of the Livonian Order's Turaida castle. You will also visit two lovely towns – Cēsis and Valmiera. Further you will head to the Otepää Nature Park in Estonia. You will visit Estonia's second largest city, Tartu, the castle ruins in Rakvere and then continue to the oldest national park in the Baltic States – Lahemaa. It stretches along the northern seashore of Estonia. There you will see massive rocks, small and authentic fishing villages, and lovely baronial estates with their parks. Your tour will continue to the Estonia's capital Tallinn. On your way back to Riga you will visit one of Estonia's most popular birdwatching sites – Matsalu Nature Park – and spa towns – Pärnu. Along the way you will see coastal meadows, wooded dunes and quiet beaches – some of them wild and rocky, others with white sand and a chance to take a swim.



April – October, ~1270 km (7 days)



Sigulda castle ruins



Palmse manor (18th century)



Boulders at the Lahemaa seaside

General Route: Riga – Gauja National Park – Otepää Nature Park – Tartu – Rakvere – Lahemaa National Park – Tallinn – Haapsalu – Matsalu Nature Park – Pärnu – Riga

Day 1

Arrival in Riga

Pick up the hired car at the airport. Free time in Riga. Attractions include medieval Old Town, Art Nouveau district, Open-air ethnographic museum and boat trip along the canal and river Daugava. Overnight in Riga.

Day 2

Riga – Sigulda – Cēsis – Valmiera – Valka/Valga – Otepää (225 km, 100% Asphalt).

Breakfast. Sites and attractions en route: Gauja National Park – the most popular tourist destination in Latvia with distinctive valley of the Gauja River, charming towns and wealth of nature and cultural monuments. The chief destinations are Sigulda town with great views across the valley of Gauja River, air-cable car route, walking trails, medieval castle ruins and manor estate, Turaida museum reserve in the Livonia Order castle; Cēsis Town with its Livonia Order castle ruins and the Medieval Old Town and Līgatne Nature trails where wild animals living in conditions close to natural ones is possible to observe. Overnight in the hotel in Otepää.

Day 3

Otepää – Tartu – Kallaste – Mustvee – Lahemaa (210 km, 100% Asphalt).

Breakfast. Sites and attractions en route:

Otepää Nature Park in the central part of the hilly Otepää Highlands with beautiful Lake Pühajärve, several nature trails and an open-air adventure park.

Tartu Old city with university, observatory and Toomemägi hill.

Lake Peipsi – the 5th largest lake in Europe often called a sea since one cannot see its opposite shore.

Rakvere city sightseeing and ruins of medieval Rakvere castle. Overnight in the manor-hotel in Lahemaa National park.

Day 4

Lahemaa National Park – Tallinn (100 km, 100% Asphalt).

Breakfast. Sites and attractions en route: Lahemaa National Park – the oldest and the largest national park in Estonia that represents the nature and cultural heritage characteristic of North Estonia. Beautiful beaches, huge stones, boreal forests and mires with attractive nature trails as well as small fishermen's villages and manor houses are typical. One of the highest and the widest waterfall in Estonia at Jägala (8 meters in high and more than 50 meters in width). Overnight in the hotel in Tallinn centre.

Day 5

Tallinn – Keila-Joa – Haapsalu (~136 km, 98% asphalt, 2% gravel road)

Breakfast. Sites and attractions en route: Sightseeing of the Tallinn medieval Old Town, the port district and the ethnographic open-air museum.

The Keila waterfall with walking trail through the Valley of Keila River to the



one of the most beautiful waterfall in Estonia. Sightseeing of Haapsalu city – a seaside resort with long spa history, famous music festivals and marvellous wooden architecture. Overnight in the hotel in Haapsalu.

Day 6

Haapsalu - Lihula - Paarnu - Rīga (299 km, 100% Asphalt).

Breakfast. Sites and attractions en route: Matsalu National Park – one of the best birdwatching sites in the Baltic States with many nature trails and birdwatching towers.

Sightseeing of Pärnu city, known as Estonia's Summer Capital due to active beach life and music festivals.

The Randu meadows near Ainaži with nature trail through the coastal meadows and birdwatching tower on the coast. seacosta meadows and lagoons, overgrown with reed are favourite rest stop for migratory birds. An important bird area and a place where almost all coastal habitat's types of Latvia can be seen.

A nature trail and sightseeing platform on the White Dune in Saulkrasti. Overnight the hotel in Rīga.

Day 7

Rīga

Breakfast. Return the hired car at the Rīga International Airport / Departure from Riga.



Waterfall in Lahemaa National Park



View of Tallinn Old Town



View of Pärnu Old Town



Haapsalu medieval castle ruins