



Baltic
Country
Holidays

countryholidays.lv

GO RURAL

Latvia



**MANUAL OF RURAL
TOURISM IN LATVIA**

Rural Holidays
Self-Drive Tours
Food and Crafts Tours for Groups
Children Summer Camps and School Trips
Rural Tourism and Agricultural Study Tours



-  Autobahn
Motorway
Автомобильная дорога
-  Hauptstrassen
Main roads
-  Andere wichtige Strassen
Other important roads
Другие значительные дороги
-  Andere Strassen
Other roads
Прочие дороги
-  Eisenbahn - Railway
Железные дороги
-  Fähre • Ferry • Паром
-  Grenzübergang
Check point
Пункт перехода границы
-  Flughafen • Fähre
Airport • Ferry
Железные дороги
-  Autobusbahnhof • Bahnhof
Bus terminal • Station
Автомобильная станция • Станция
-  Staatsgrenze
National boundary
Граница государства
-  Hauptstadt eines Staates
National capital
Столица государства
-  Stadt
City
Город
-  Ländliche Siedlung
Rural settlement
Сельский населенный пункт
-  Kolka

RIGA

**Valmiera
Sabile**

HOW TO TRAVEL TO AND AROUND THE BALTIC STATES



CAR RENTAL

www.car.countryholidays.lv

We can help you to rent your preferred car for the tour. We work with international companies - Avis, Budget, Sixt and Hertz as well as local company Car4Rent. Detailed offers are on our website.



FERRIES

www.ferries.countryholidays.lv

FERRY TICKETS

Several ferry ports connect the Baltics with Germany, Sweden, Finland and St. Petersburg in Russia. The ferry ports are Riga, Liepaja and Ventspils in Latvia, Klaipeda in Lithuania and Tallinn in Estonia. Local ferries connect the Estonian islands with the mainland.

Tallink Silja
Stena Line
Finnlines
Viking Line
DFDS Seaways
St.Peter's Line

LOCAL
Tuule Leavad
Keltas



COACHES

There are good bus services among the largest cities of the three Baltic states and neighbouring countries.

Main bus terminals

Riga www.autoosta.lv,
Vilnius www.autobusustotis.lt,
Tallinn www.bussijaam.ee

Bus between the Baltic States

Lux Express www.luxexpress.eu,
Ecolines www.ecolines.eu,
Euroline www.eurolines.eu,
Simple Express www.simplexpress.eu



AIRPORTS

Main airports are located in the capitals: Riga, Vilnius and Tallinn. However there are also smaller regional airports where international airlines operate - Kaunas in Lithuania and Tartu in Estonia.

LATVIA

Riga www.riga-airport.com

LITHUANIA

Vilnius www.vilnius-airport.lt
Kaunas www.kaunas-airport.lt
Palanga www.palanga-airport.lt

ESTONIA

Tallinn www.tallinn-airport.ee
Kuressaare www.kuressaare-airport.ee
Kärdla www.kardla-airport.ee
Pärnu www.parnu-airport.ee
Tartu www.tartu-airport.ee



TRAINS

International train routes from Riga are to St.Petersburg, Moscow, Pskov in Russia and border town Valga in Estonia. Trains go from Vilnius to St.Petersburg, Moscow, Kaliningrad in Russia and Warsaw in Poland. From Tallinn, trains depart to Moscow.

Latvia www.ldz.lv
Estonia www.edel.ee
Lithuania www.litrail.lt



ACCOMMODATION

www.countryholidays.lv

We have substantial accommodation directory online, over 1000 places in the Baltic States, ranging from farm stays to manor houses. Generally our accommodation is planned at the carefully selected good quality three star hotels or guest houses. We give priority to smaller hotels or guest houses which provide truly personal service and care. Sometimes we also use former manors' hotels according if a tour has such specialization. Accommodation can be upgraded in the most cases, extra meals, lunch boxes as well as other related services can be added upon your prior request.



TOURS

www.tours.countryholidays.lv

ABOUT OUR TOURS:

Our well-researched tours and sites are based around small-scale accommodation, open farms, local producers, living traditions and sincere people.

None of our tours are particularly difficult and most routes of active tours are suitable for beginners. Some tours are specially designed for families with children. We would like to stress our flexibility and ability to tailor-make tours for each client's individual needs, wishes and fitness level.



Baltic Country Holidays

www.countryholidays.lv

WHAT IS GO RURAL?

Go Rural is a manual of rural tourism in Latvia for tourists as well as travel professionals.

In this brochure we try to show Latvia through its best products and people who produce and grow them. We bring out rural feeling and places where you could go and relax as if visiting your grandma in the countryside. Fruits and vegetables in the gardens are available for your own picking. There are also several places which organize seasonal berry and fruit collecting events.

Several our self-drive tours are ideal for families with children. During these tours children can see and learn from where the food is coming, feed and pat some farm animals and enjoy nature. We also organize school trips to introduce with the rural life, food growing and production as well as all the fun what offers nature and lots of space.

In our tours we would like to bring out the typical Latvian taste providing various tasting opportunities at the farms, country houses, local pubs and restaurants. We have several food and drink tours for groups. There are also crafts tours which allows to learn some useful skills.

Using our many years' experience we also organize professional agrotours and provide consultation about rural tourism.

ABOUT US

We are incoming tour operator established in 1993 and based in Latvia. The company grew out of the Association of Countryside Travel (in Latvian: Lauku Ceļotājs) which unites small family-run accommodation providers, open farms, small food producers in the Latvian countryside. We specialize in self-drive, active, nature and agrotours in rural areas providing a personal touch and detailed local expertise.



www.countryholidays.lv

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SYMBOLS



Self-drive tours



Family tours



Bus tours



Study tours



Farm Stay



Countryside Goodies



By the Sea



Castles and Manors



Mushroom picking



Local life



Wellness



Agriculture



Food and drink



Green Certificate -

accommodations complying with strict criteria of environmental and service quality



Latvian Heritage -

tourism entrepreneurs who use and promote Latvian traditional heritage in tourism



01

RURAL HOLIDAYS

You can enjoy rural holidays at the beautiful and pristine countryside staying at country homes, farms, cottages, campings and manor houses. You can get tasty home made meals from local products there, eat fruits and berries grown at the garden, feed and cuddle the farm's animals. Lots of space and open air awaits for cycling, walking and boating. Relaxation at traditional sauna is very common in the countryside. Hosts are also able to teach you some useful skills and share folk knowledge inherited from generation to generation.

www.countryholidays.lv





FARM STAYS

Farm Stays are working farms which offer different type of accommodation and engage with tourists. There you can feel real rural atmosphere, see the farm's life and true sincerity. We have selected few examples here but we have more on our website: www.countryholidays.lv





EZERSETA



Comfortable holiday cottage for families at the farm. Facilities for children. Chickens, rabbits and Hereford cattle. Charming town of Cesis 11km away.



KEMPENI

Ecological farm has seminar rooms, accommodation for 120 persons, sport fields, fishing and country style sauna. The farm specialises in sheep breeding. The host offers meals from the farm's products.



KLAJUMI STABLES



Daugava River and 12 km from Krāslava. Horseback riding, hiking, cart and sled rides, boating and rafting, trails along the Daugava river and Latvian-Belarusian border. Horses, rabbits, chickens, cows and cats.



INDANI



Guests can communicate with the farm's animals, view a collection of ancient tools, enjoy a country sauna, taste herbal tea and traditional carrot buns. Accommodation in former granary.



OGRENI



Located on the shores of the Ogre river. For guests there are two bedrooms in the mansard with a living room, country sauna and boats. The farm has large herd of cows and guests can purchase fresh milk.





GREEN HOLIDAYS

Look for accommodations, which have received the “Green Certificate” which means that management of the facilities is environment friendly while ensuring comfort and amenities for guests. Here are some examples and more on our website: www.countryholidays.lv

EZERKLABI

Located in a picturesque area, amongst large and small lakes, ideal for quiet family vacations, and for those interested in bird watching, hiking, nature walks, and fishing. Owners are breeding fish and are happy to share their experiences with their guests.



GARIKAS

An old baronial estate. The owner specialises in Shitaki mushroom growing and processing. For guests there is a seminar room, a vaulted fireplace room and sauna. Bedrooms for 2, 3 and 4 people. Pick-nick place by the pond. Tennis, basketball and volleyball facilities.



PITAGI

Cosy guest house and small camp-side near the sea located amongst the pine trees. Historic villages of one of the smallest ethnic groups in the world - the Livs. Plenty of space for peaceful holidays. Sandy, empty beaches, forest trails and locally smoked fish.



DZIRNUPES

Traditional organic farmstead. Visitors can participate at the fieldwork - gather hay, make sauerkraut, pull weeds, milk a goat, feed geese, catch some fish, help to bake bread, collect herbal teas. Accommodation at the former granary.



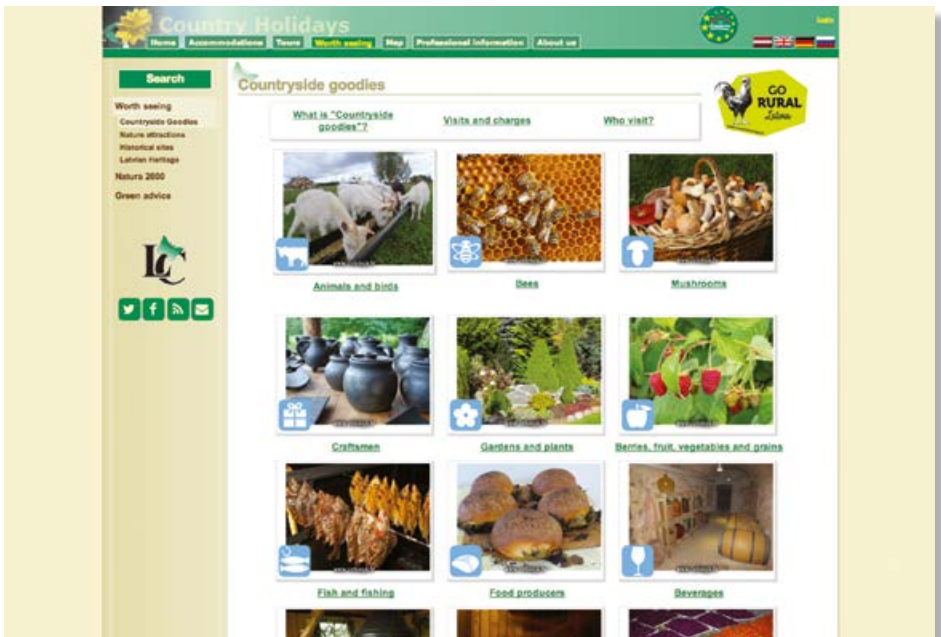


Local produce always adds authenticity to the tourist experience since regarded as a an element of the regional culture. We have visited, tested and filtered more than 300. Latvian farms, small food producers and craftsmen which are open for the tourists.

Tourists can visit the farms and see food production from its very bottom and then taste and buy the ready produce. Some places provide the participation opportunities. Visitors

can learn how to make cheese, bake bread, smoke fish, carve wooden spoons or other skills. Children particularly enjoy interaction with some animals and fowls.

There are several farms which offer PYO (pick your own) concept for gathering berries and fruits. For example: Gundegas at Birini specialises in cranberry growing at the former peat swamp. www.lasisev.lv



In order to put the tourist and producers together, we have created the database "The Countryside Goodies":

www.celotajs.lv/goodies



02

TOURS

Our tours will help you to get to know the Baltic States beyond the main tourism sites. With booking we provide a detailed information and maps - sites, attractions, pubs as well as practicalities.

A separate section is dedicated to the families with children. For more details and more tours - cycling, boating and nature - look in our website.

www.tours.countryholidays.lv





FAMILY TOURS

Designing these self-drive tours we have particularly thought about families with children. Attractions are chosen to keep the little ones engaged and excited. Accommodation places are comfortable and children friendly.





THROUGH NATIONAL PARKS, ALONG THE SEA COAST TO THE "KIDS TOWN", 10 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1

Riga

Day 2

Riga - Sigulda - Turaida - Ligatne

At Sigulda the adventure centre Tarzans awaits with many activities. Three medieval castles stand on the bank of Gauja Valley. Take a cable car from Sigulda to Krimulda to enjoy the view.

Day 3

Ligatne - Cesis - Ligatne

At Ligatne walk Nature trails to see the local wild animals in their enclosed territories, visit craftsmen at their cave workshop. Cesis has impressive medieval castle and pleasant old town.

Day 4

Ligatne - Sigulda - Dunte - Saulkrasti - Carnikava

Enjoy sandy beaches, great for walking, playing and swimming. Visit the museum of the biggest fibber in the world - Münchhausen and listen to his fantastic adventure stories.

Day 5

Carnikava - Riga - Engure

The route goes to the Western part of Latvia and focuses on the sea and coastal life. Visit popular sea and spa resort Jurmala.

Day 6

Engure - Roja - Kolka - Kosrags

Stop at Pure Chocolate Museum to treat yourself and then continue along the coastal fishermen villages to Cape Kolka where open sea meets the Riga Bay.

Day 7

Kosrags

Relax at the empty, sandy beach, go for little bike ride through pine forest and visit local fishermen for some smoked fish.



Day 8

Kosrags - Ventspils

At Ventspils enjoy endless facilities for children - kids town, narrow gauge train, aqua parks, well equipped beach, adventure park and also pretty old town and promenade.

Day 9

Ventpils - Kuldiga - Sabile - Riga

Visit charming Kuldiga with well preserved wooden architecture and widest waterfall in Europe. Stop at the farm where kids can communicate with different farm animals.

Day 10

Riga

Photo below: Kids can pat and feed farm animals





FROM RIGA TO VENTSPILS, THE "KIDS TOWN", 7 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1

Riga - Kemeru - Pure - Ventspils

Walk a board-walk trail through enigmatic bog scenery at Kemeru National Park. Activate senses at the Barefoot Trail and then treat yourself at Pure Chocolate Museum.

Day 2

Ventspils

Enjoy the Blue Flag beach, Kids Town with activity zones for different age groups, travel on narrow gauge steam train. Walk at the breakwater and promenade to see ships passing.

Day 3

Ventpils - Paviosta - Kuldiga - Ventspils

Watch the windsurfers at Paviosta. Visit charming Kuldiga with its wooden architecture and Europe's widest waterfall.

Day 4

Ventspils

Enjoyed water pleasures at indoor or outdoor aqua parks and be active at the adventure park. Explore the old town and try out the ancient school's classroom. Go for a boat trip in the sea.

Day 5

Ventspils - Kolka

Go along the tranquil wild beaches and fishermen villages where you can get smoked fish. Experience overnight at the romantic pods on the beach at Cape Kolka with amazing sea view.

Day 6

Kolka - Talsi - Jurmala - Riga

Stop at the farmstead to see various farm animals and feed some rabbits. Adults might like a stop at the local wine maker. Visit Jurmala, famous historic sea and spa resort.

Day 7

Riga



Photos: Endless entertainment for kids at Ventspils





FARMS, CASTLES AND THE SEA, 10 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1 - 2

Riga

Day 3

Salaspils - Skriveri - Koknese - Madona

Visit National Botanic Garden, cuddle and feed rabbits, taste some wonderful home-made ice-cream, see the legendary Koknese castle ruins and have a ride on the Viking boat.

Day 4

Madona - Piebalgas - Raunas - Cesis

See some exotic animals at the private mini zoo, visit ceramics factory where you can see how the hand-made clay items are made, walk around Rauna medieval castle ruins.

Day 5

Cesis - Līgatne - Sigulda

Explore mighty medieval castle and pretty old town of Cesis. Walk nature trails where you can see local wild animals at Līgatne.

Day 6

Sigulda - Birini

Be active at the adventure centre, take a cable car from Sigulda to Krimulda castles. Climb up to the viewing tower at Turaida medieval castle. Visit Birini Manor with its large park and some horses.

Day 7

Birinu - Saulkrasti - Carnikava

Walk dune trail and enjoy white sand beach and sea at Saulkrasti and Carnikava.

Day 8

Carnikava - Riga

More time to enjoy the sea and also possibility to try Latvian delicatessen - lamprey and learn how it's caught. Visit a farm with goats and ponies where you can cuddle animals and taste the products.



Day 9

Riga - Jurmala - Riga

Visit famous sea and spa resort Jurmala with wooden 19th century's villas, many outdoor cafés and well equipped beach. Walk board-walk trail through the bog at Kemerī National Park.

Day 10

Riga

Photos below: Kids can cuddle farms' animals, try local food and enjoy healthy lunch outside





SELF-DRIVE TOURS

Besides some main attractions, our tours are based around small-scale accommodation, open farms, local producers and food, living traditions and sincere people. We are ready to tailor-made the tour to every client's needs.





NATURE AND RURAL GOODIES OF VIDZEME, 7 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1 - 2

Riga

Day 3

Riga - Ikšķile - Sigulda

Taste traditional birch juice at Ikšķile and goat cheeses at the farm in Malpils. Explore three medieval castles located on the steep banks of the river Gauja - Sigulda, Turaida and Krimulda.

Day 4

Sigulda - Cēsis - Koni

Explore Cēsis, charming town with medieval castle ruins and new castle. Visit hemp grower. Enjoy Koni Mill where wool is processed old fashioned way and warm blankets are hand-made.

Day 5

Koni - Mazsalaca - Salacgrīva

Experience the Mazsalaca nature park along the beautiful steep riverbanks of Sa-laca. The river is also famous for its lamprey and you could see the traditional lamprey catching at Salacgrīva.

Day 6

Salacgrīva - Saulkrasti - Birini - Riga

Walk the dune trail and enjoy the beach at Saulkrasti. Visit cranberry swamp where you can taste healthy berries. Stop at the elegant Birini Manor with spacious park and great restaurant.

Day 7

Riga



Photo center: Try a snake! Actually they are lamprey - fished and prepared traditional way.

Photo bottom: Sorrel soup is very common in the spring





TASTY ADVENTURES AT KURZEME REGION, 8 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1 - 2

Riga

Day 3

Riga - Kemerī - Valgums

Walk the bog trail at Kemerī National Park, special for its sulphur springs. Enjoy recreation centre at the lake Valgums - Bare Foot Trail, swimming in the lake, spa and excellent restaurant.

Day 4

Valgums - Pure - Kuldīga - Skrunda

Treat yourself at Pure Chocolate Museum, stop at historic Wine Hill in Sabīle. Visit Pedvale Open-Air Art Space and picturesque Kuldīga with well preserved wooden architecture.

Day 5

Skrunda - Liepāja

See how shitake mushrooms are grown and try some meal made from them. Enjoy vibrant city of Liepāja with significant military heritage accessible for everyone now and beautiful sandy beach.

Day 6

Liepāja - Jurkalne - Ventspils - Kolka

Visit a goats farm and taste their excellent cheeses. Walk along the steep banks of Jurkalne. Explore Ventspils with its many parks, castle, breakwater and well maintained beach.

Day 7

Kolka - Engure - Jurmala - Riga

Stop at Cape Kolka where open sea meets the Gulf of Riga. Try some smoked fish from the fishermen and see how its made . Stop at Jurmala sea resort with characteristic wooden villas.

Day 8

Riga



Photo center: Historic Sabīle Wine Hill. Grapes grown since 16th cent. in Latvia.

Photo bottom: Rucavas woman in traditional costume







BALTIC COUNTRY LIFE TOUR, 17 DAYS, LATVIA, ESTONIA, LITHUANIA

Day 1

Riga (LV)

Explore medieval Old Town and the Art Nouveau district. Central Market is one of the largest in Europe and is worth a visit to see the local products and atmosphere.

Day 2

Riga - Sigulda - Cesis

Drive to Gauja National Park with its castles, manors and walking trails. Climb the tower of medieval Turaida Castle for amazing views over the valley and visit the ancient jewellery master at the castle of the charming town of Cesis.

Day 3

Cesis - Ainazi - Parnu (EE)

Visit Ungurmuiza Manor, wooden baroque architecture with preserved 18th century wall paintings, stop at Arts Studio in Staicele and walk streets with elegant villas at Parnu sea resort

Day 4

Parnu - Kuressare on Saaremaa island

Visit ethnographic Koguva village, mighty Bishop's Castle at Kuressaare, ancient churches and windmills typical of the island and observe embroidering tradition.

Day 5

Saaremaa - Haapsalu - Tallinn

See Panga Rock and relax at Haapsalu – a nice seaside town with the castle where White Lady is in residence, open-air ethnographic museum.

Day 6

Tallinn

Explore medieval walled Old Town, Kadriorg area with relaxing park and the modern art museum KUMU. For handicrafts visit St. Catherine's Passage where local crafts workshops are located.

Day 7

Tallinn - Lahemaa - Tartu

Explore rocky landscapes of Lahemaa National Park with some impressive boulders, fishing villages of Kasmu and Altja. Stop at Palmse, Vihula, Kolga or Sagadi manors.

Day 8

Tartu - Gulbene (LV) -Madona

Visit Tartu where the first Baltic university and the old observatory is located. Stop at Vecgulbene Manor and Cesvaine Manor. Taste excellent goats cheese at the farm and see the animals.

Day 9

Madona - Koknese - Skrunda

Stop at the traditional bakery Liepkalni. Visit scenic Koknese castle ruins on the river Daugava. Walk a trail and climb the viewing tower at the Cena Heath with vast bog sceneries.

Day 10

Skrunda - Liepaja - Klaipeda (LT) - Silute

Explore Liepaja with its old town, promenade, nice sandy beach and also impressive military history. Visit excellent Amber Museum at the sea resort Palanga.

Day 11

Nida

Take a boat to Nida, Curonian Spit for a relaxing day trip without the car. There is a famous white sand dune, charming Nida village with traditional architecture and Thomas Mann House.

Day 12

Silute - Kaunas - Drunskininkai

Drive along the valley of the river Nemunas with beautiful vistas from various castle mounts. Visit Kaunas Old Town formed between Nemunas and Neris rivers, walk pedestrian Laisves Avenue with shops, cafés and restaurants.



Day 13

Drunskininkai - Vilnius

Visit Grutas Park with its bizarre Soviet statuary. Explore Dzūkija National Park with several well preserved traditional farmsteads and villages where you can see Lithuanian crafts and traditions.

Day 14

Vilnius

Enjoy Vilnius with its many churches, mostly in Baroque style, atmospheric Old Town and hilly relief which provides scenic views.

Day 15

Vilnius - Trakai - Bauska (LV)

Visit Kernave with four impressive ancient mounds, then proceed to picturesque Trakai Castle built on island in the lake. Go to the museum of Karaites, Tatars which settled here during 14th century

Day 16

Bauska - Pilsrundale - Riga

Visit Rundale Palace – the grandest palace in the Baltics with outstanding Baroque and Rococo architecture and carefully restored interior. Climb tower of the medieval Bauska Castle

Day 17

Riga



Photo bottom and next page left: Auskaitija National Park, Lithuania

Photo next page top right: Long and empty beaches of the Baltic Sea in Latvia

Photo next page bottom right: A windmill, so characteristic to Saaremaa's landscape, Estonia









GRAND TOUR OF THE THREE BALTIC STATES, 12 DAYS, LATVIA, ESTONIA, LITHUANIA

Day 1 Riga

Enjoy Old Town, Art Nouveau district, the wooden buildings of Pardaugava, Ethnographic Open-air museum.

Day 2

Riga - Sigulda - Valmiera

Explore Turaida castle museum complex with medieval castle and working estate's buildings. Walk Līgatne nature trails where you can observe wild animals. Visit Cēsis medieval castle and old town.

Day 3

Valmiera - Parnu - Saaremaa

Enjoy sea resort Parnu with elegant villas. Explore Saaremaa island which is a pleasure to drive around with good quality, quiet roads, windmills, medieval churches and ethnographic villages.

Day 4

Saaremaa - Haapsalu - Tallinn

See Panga cliff and relax at Haapsalu – charming seaside town with castle and open-air ethnographic museum. Explore Tallinn Old Town and Kadriorg Park.

Day 5

Tallinn - Lahemaa - Tartu

Explore Lahemaa National Park where coastal landscape is covered with massive boulders. Visit Kasmu fishing villages and elegant manor houses - Palme, Sagadi and Kolga.

Day 6

Tartu - Aluksne - Aglona

Go through sleepy villages in eastern Latvia with distinctive pottery, ancient culinary traditions, and the Catholic pilgrimage site of Aglona.



Photos above: In this tour - different landscapes, castles and manors, provincial towns and three capital cities of the Baltics



Day 7

Aglona - Daugavpils - Vilnius

Explore Daugavpils fortress and museum of famous painter Mark Rothko. Relax at Aukstaitija National Park passing picturesque landscapes, traditional villages and lakes where to swim.

Day 8

Vilnius - Trakai - Kaunas

Walk through Vilnius Old Town with its numerous churches up to Gediminas Hill. Visit picturesque Trakai castle on the lake and learn about the Karaitis ethnic community and traditions.

Day 9

Kaunas - Rusne - Klaipeda

Stop at Kaunas Old Town and enjoy drive along the valley of the river Nemunas with beautiful vistas from various castle mounds. Visit Rusne with a small ethnographic open-air museum.

Day 10

Klaipeda - Nida - Klaipeda

Enjoy the massive sand dunes of the Curonian Spit and Nida village with its characteristic blue framed windows which are among Lithuania's most attractive sights.

Day 11

Klaipeda - Liepaja - Riga

Walk nature trails of Lake Pape with wild horses in the meadows. Explore Liepaja with pleasant promenade, old town and suburb which was former military town and holds interesting heritage

Day 12

Departure from Riga



Photo bottom: Vegetable seller in Tallinn Old Town



FOOD AND DRINK TOURS

Fundamental part of the Latvian culinary is dairy products and we are particularly proud of our ice-cream. Black bread is traditional, healthy and much loved. Our way of preserving meat and fish is by smoking. You can see and taste smoked fish all along the coastline. In the meals there is a lot of nature's ingredient used. Latvians love mushroom and berry picking.

Regarding drinks - beer is the main alcoholic drink. There are large number of independent breweries as well as few small traditional family breweries. When we are here talking about wine then usually it is made from everything but grapes. Typical ones are made from black-current, raspberries but more exotic ones from birch juice, lilacs, oak leaves, rhubarb and other. However grapes are grown in Latvia since 16th century and it has experience a real regeneration nowadays. You can visit vineyards and hear about grape growing in Nordic climate as well as taste already results of it.





MILK TOUR OF VIDZEME, 6 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1 - 2

Riga

Day 3

Riga - Malpils - Skriveri - Koknese

Taste exclusive goat cheeses at the farm and other local cheeses at the Malpils Manor. Visit factory of traditional hand-made milk toffees, taste home-made ice-cream and learn how to make it.

Day 4

Koknese - Cesis - Rujiena - Koni

Visit Cesis with its medieval castle and hemp growers to taste them prepared traditional way. Enjoy Rujiena ice-cream factory. Stay at Koni mill where wool blankets are made old-fashioned way.

Day 5

Koni - Salacgriva - Saulkrasti - Riga

Visit the lamprey fishermen. Hear adventure stories at the museum of the biggest fibber in the world - Münchhausen. Taste Latvian cuisine at the traditional pub and have a stroll on sandy beach.

Day 6

Riga



Photo bottom left: Tasting of the soft goat cheese at the farm

Photos below: Sweet and savoury ice-creams at Skriveri Saldejums.





MILK TOUR OF KURZEME AND ZEMGALE, 7 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1 - 2

Riga

Day 3

Riga - Jurmala - Kandava - Dundaga - Roja

Stop at the sea resort Jurmala, visit goats farms to taste cheeses and exclusive ice-cream. At Dundaga Castle try local dairy products. Experience local fishermen traditions and meal at Roja

Day 4

Roja - Kolka - Ventspils - Kuldiga - Skruna

Walk unspoiled beach of Cape Kolka, visit Ventspils old town, breakwater and promenade, picturesque Kuldiga with well-preserved wooden architecture. Enjoy spa treatments at Milk Manor.

Day 5

Skruna - Saldus - Jelgava

Follow the milk route from a cow to the tables, try to make butter at the Milk Museum. Spoil yourself with traditional hand-made toffees in Saldus and ice-cream at Druva.

Day 6

Jelgava - Eleja - Bauska - Riga

See tombs of the Duke of Curland at Jelgava Palace. Taste cheese at Eleja. Visit splendid Rundale Palace, a beautiful pearl of the Baltics and climb the tower of Bauska Castle for panoramic view.

Day 7

Riga

Photo center: Tasty and healthy goat's cheese

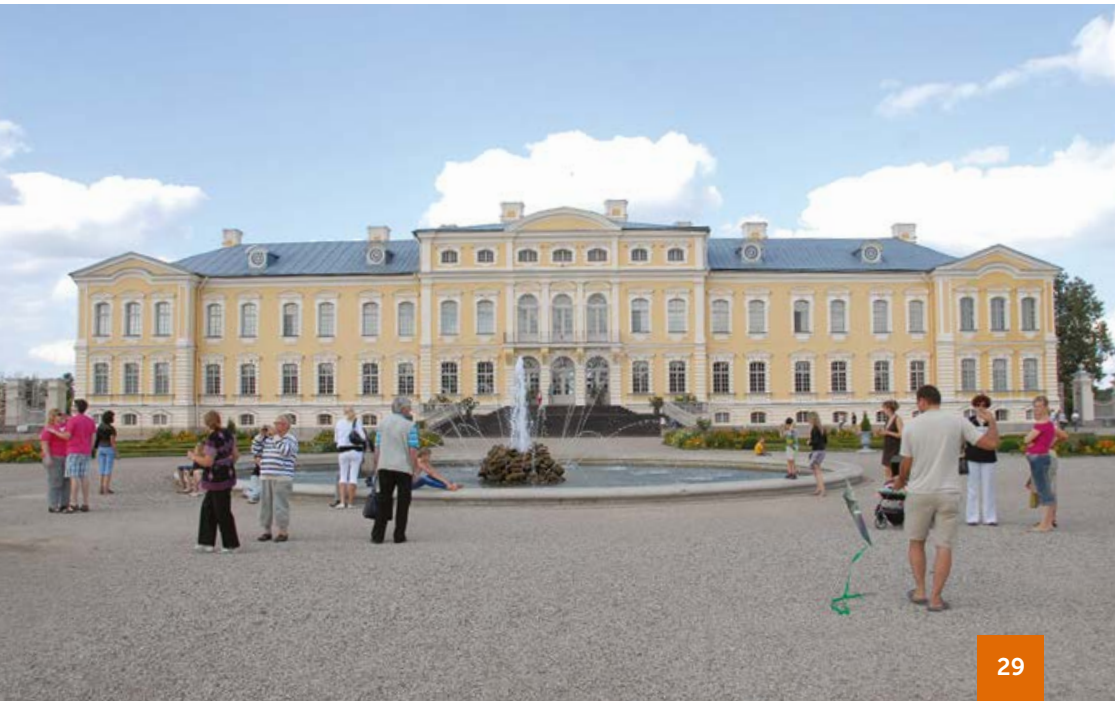
Photo bottom: Learn how to milk a cow at the Milk Museum





Photo below: Relaxing Milk Spa treatments available at the Milk Manor

Photo bottom: The Baltic pearl - Rundale Palace





WINE AND TRADITIONS AT KURZEME REGION, 5 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1

Riga - Jurmalas - Pure - Sabile - Kuldiga

Stop at the sea resort Jurmala and Pure Chocolate museum. Visit vineyards and taste seasonal drinks at Sabile where historic Wine Hill's located. Enjoy old town of Kuldiga and taste local wines.

Day 2

Kuldiga - Aizpute - Liepaja

Visit eco wine producer at Aizpute and fruit farm at Durbe. Explore the city of Liepaja with lovely sandy beach, arty atmosphere and significant military heritage at Karaosta suburb.

Day 3

Liepaja - Pavilosta - Alsunga - Ventspils

Have a trip in traditional fishermen boat at Pavilosta. Taste cuisine and enjoy singing and demonstrations of local traditions by Suiti women. Walk along the steep sea coast at Jurkalne.

Day 4

Ventspils - Kolka - Talsi - Riga

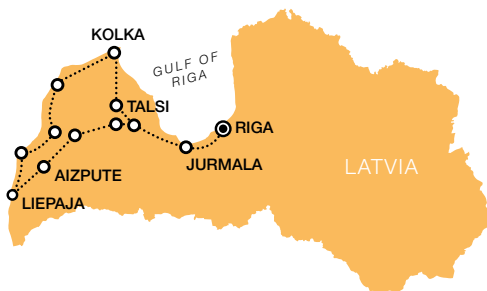
Explore old part and sea at Ventspils. Visit fishermen to see fish smoking process, climb up the viewing platform at Cape Kolka where open sea meets the Riga Bay. Visit wine maker at Talsi.

Day 5

Riga

Photos right: In the wineries you can try black-current, raspberry, rhubarb, oak-leave and other exotic wines. Grape wine is available in limited quantity.

Photo opposite: Suiti women. Culturally colourful community which heritage is listed in UNESCO







CASTLES, MANORS AND WINE AT VIDZEME REGION, 6 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1 - 2

Riga

Day 3

Riga - Sigulda - Turaida - Sigulda

Go to Sigulda where on the steep banks of Gauja valley sits three castles. Visit Turaida and Sigulda medieval castles. Taste wine at Krimulda Manor and at the family winery in Sigulda.

Day 4

Sigulda - Līgatne - Cēsis - Diklī

Explore Līgatne historic village with local wine shop at sand cave. Stop at impressive Cēsis medieval castle and Ungurmuiza Manor. Stay at Diklī Manor with great restaurant.

Day 5

Diklī - Saulkrasti - Igate - Riga

Stroll along sandy beach at Saulkrasti. Visit farm of local winemaker and taste his various wines and then visit Birini Manor for a dinner and relax in their huge park.

Day 6

Riga



Photos below: Enjoy local wines as well as those at the manors' restaurants

Photo opposite: Mighty Livonian Order Castle at Cēsis



Photo below: Food at the Diklī Manor's restaurant







BEER AND FISH AT KURZEME REGION, 7 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1 - 2

Riga

Have a tasting of the beers from all four Latvian regions and typical snacks at the tavern.

Day 3

Riga - Bauska - Tervete - Skrunda

Visit Bauska Brewery which takes pride in their products free of preservatives. Enjoy Rundale Palace and the reconstruction of an ancient Semigalian castle at Tervete. Visit Tervete Brewery.

Day 4

Skrunda - Aizpute - Liepaja

See how beer is made at home using traditional methods. Go to Liepaja - the city with nice beach, atmospheric town centre and significant military heritage at Karaosta, nowadays used for tourism.

Day 5

Liepaja - Kuldiga - Ventspils - Roja

Visit picturesque Kuldiga with well-preserved wooden architecture, another brewery - Uzavas Brewery which specialises in live beer. Experience fishermen meal and games at Roja.

Day 6

Roja - Engure - Jurmala - Riga

Go along the coastal fishermen villages stop to see traditional fish smoking process. Walk Kemeris bog trail and stop at Jurmala with characteristic wooden villas. Have lunch at potatoes restaurant.

Day 7

Riga



Photos below centre: Just smoked fish and its tasting along the coast of Kurzeme

Photo below bottom: Uzavas Brewery which makes excellent live beer





BEER, CHEESE AND BREAD AT VIDZEME AND ZEMGALE REGIONS, 7 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1 - 2

Riga

Day 3

Riga - Bauska - Pilsrundale - Skriveri

Taste whole grain flour cracknels at the farm. Climb the tower of Bauska Castle, visit brewery and Rundale Palace. Try to make traditional piragi (beckon pasties) at the ethnographic museum.

Day 4

Skriveri - Koknese - Cesvaine - Gulbene

Try savoury home-made ice-cream, go on Viking ship around the Koknese castle ruins. Visit the goats farm and taste their various cheeses. Enjoy spa at Vecgulbene Manor.

Day 5

Gulbene - Smiltene - Trikata - Valmiermuiza - Cesis

Make your own traditional black bread, go to cheese producer at Trikata. Visit Valmiermuiza Brewery which produces upmarket beer and visit Cesis where the Latvia's second largest brewery is located.

Day 6

Cesis - Araisi - Sigulda - Riga

Explore Cesis castle, visit the brewery followed by traditional mill's porridge at Araisi windmill. Visit Turaida Castle complex and have a great view across the Gauja Valley from its tower.

Day 7

Riga



Photo below: Valmiermuizas Brewery which makes up-market beer

Photo bottom: Beer tasting at Bauska Brewery



**GIFTS OF NATURE: MUSHROOMS,
BERRIES, PLANTS
AT KURZEME REGION,
6 DAYS, LATVIA**

Day 1

Riga

Day 2

Riga - Kemeru - Kuldiga - Pavilosta

Go to Kemeru National Park, special for its sulphur springs. Learn about different plants at the farm which specialises on herbs. Visit Kuldiga and have fishermen soup on the bone fire at the coast.

Day 3

Pavilosta - Liepaja - Pape

Have a trip by the fishermen's boat along the river and learn how to make meals using wild products. Visit Liepaja with exiting military heritage. Enjoy Pape Nature Reserve.

Day 4

Papes - Rucava - Skrunda - Dobele - Vilce

Experience ancient cultural environment and typical meals at Rucava tradition house. Visit Shitaki mushroom grower. Learn local history visiting ancient Semigalian Castle.

Day 5

Vilce - Bauska - Serene - Ikskile - Riga

Participate at wild mushrooming expedition into forest and learn how to prepare them. Visit birch juice producer and learn how to extract the juice from the tree, taste the juice and sparkling wine.

Day 6

Riga

Photos center and bottom: Picking of cultivated cranberries at the swamp and collecting plants for teas

Photo opposite page: Mushroom hunt is almost a national sport in Latvia







BIRCH JUICE, CHEESE AND MEDIEVAL CASTLES 1 DAY, LATVIA

Riga - Turaida - Malpils - Ikskile

Stop at Turaida Medieval Castle with beautiful view across Gauja river valley. Visit goats farm, Malpils Manor and taste typical locally made cheeses. Visit the family birch juice producer and learn about juice extracting techniques, taste some juice and sparkling wine.

CASTLES AND WINE 1 DAY, LATVIA

Riga - Turaida - Sigulda - Krimulda

Visit three castles - Turaida and Sigulda medieval Castles located at opposite sides of the steep banks of the river Gauja. Then go to Krimulda where is a medieval castle ruins and later day manor house. Taste the manor's wine and see production. Then have a lunch at the Latvian style taverna followed by another home-made wine tasting in Sigulda.



Photos bottom: Birch juice is collected in April and is extremely healthy. But Liberts family makes even refreshing sparkling wine out of it.

Photo opposite: Turaida Medieval Castle







COOKING CLASSES

COOKING AT MALPILS MANOR, 2 DAYS, LATVIA

Riga - Malpils

Spent two days enjoying the comfort of Malpils Manor and participate at the cooking class with the manor's chef. Visit local goat farm and taste their cheeses, go to family birch juice and wine producer which makes wonderful healthy and refreshing drink typical for Latvia.



BLACK-BREAD AND JAMS 2 DAYS, LATVIA

Riga - Sigulda - Smiltene - Cesis

Learn to make Latvian traditional and healthy rye bread by humorous baker-lady at Smiltene. While the bread is in the oven, have Latvian lunch there. Stop at local cider maker. Visit charming town Cesis with Livonian Order Castle. Stay at the guest house near Sigulda whose owner specialises in making various jams. Make the next day - the sweet one. Participate in the jam making class. Visit Turaida Castle estate.



Photo bottom: Malpils Manor where to taste excellent Malpils cheese





BLACK-BREAD AND BEER 2 DAYS, LATVIA

Riga - Babite - Tervete - Aizpute - Kuldiga

Visit bakery which makes traditional black bread and make your own loaf. Then visit ancient Semigalian wooden castle and Tervete Brewery. Next day visit farmstead at Aizpute and learn about beer traditions in Latvia and how to make one at home. On the way to Riga, visit picturesque town Kuldiga.



Photo left centre: Traditionally baked black rye bread

Photo bottom: Making traditional rye bread at "Donas" bakery at Smiltene





FROM FARMS TO RIGA RESTAURANTS 2 DAYS, LATVIA

Riga - Malpils - Burtnieki - Salacgriva

On the first day visit a farm specialised in goat breeding and making exclusive cheese, a farm which grows and processes hemp in several generations, berry and fruit grower as well as traditional lamprey fishermen. Next day have a master-class with famous chefs in the restaurant in Riga where these ingredients will be used to prepare first class meals.

Photos below and opposite top: Cooking class at "3 Pavaru restorans" in Riga

Photo opposite bottom: Fish smoking tradition is especially strong along Kurzeme coast

FISH SMOKING AND CANNING 2 DAYS, LATVIA

Riga - Roja

From Riga go along the coastal fishermen villages to Roja. There learn traditional way of fish smoking and canning. In the evening have a fishermen meal with music, fish soup on bone-fire and games. Overnight stay in Roja. It is possible to join fishermen in the sea very early in the morning.







CRAFTS TOURS

CRAFTS AND FOOD OF LATGALE REGION

6 DAYS, LATVIA

Day 1

Riga

For the introduction into the Latvian craftsmanship make a visit to the Open-Air Ethnographic Museum in Riga where skillful masters will show you traditional skills.

Day 2

Riga - Lielvarde - Koknese - Gulbene

Visit birch juice producer who shows how the birch juice is extracted and preserved. See Lielvarde Belt with ancient symbols. Go on Viking boat around the picturesque Koknese castle ruins.

Day 3

Gulbene - Balvi - Rezekne - Ludza - Andrupene - Aglona

Visit hemp grower, goats farm, home-made beer producer and Latgale "black" ceramics workshops. Stop at Ludza Crafts Centre to see great hand-made products. Experience traditional sauna ritual.

Day 4

Aglona - Kraslava - Daugavpils

Go to Aglona Basilica which is a pilgrimage place. Visit Bread Museum, a farm which produces tasty cheeses and healthy dairy products, a herbal tea grower and learn few health tips there.

Day 5

Daugavpils - Jaunjelgava - Pilsrundale - Riga

Explore Daugavpils historic centre and impressive 19th century's fortress, visit Lead Shot Factory where is a biggest shot tower in Europe. Enjoy the Baltic pearl - Rundale Palace.



Day 6

Riga





**WOOD - CRAFTING SKILLS -
DUGOUTS, BARRELS AND SAUNA
ACCESSORIES
7 DAYS, LATVIA**



Day 1
Riga

Day 2 - 3
Riga - Ligatne

Visit Wood-crafting museum and dugout workshop in Ligatne where you can choose what item to make. Explore historic village. Soviet Secret Bunker is also nearby and possible to visit.

Day 4 - 5
Ligane - Cesis - Vaidava

Stop at Cesis town with mighty medieval castle. Visit the barrel master near Vaidava who will demonstrate his skills and you could try your hand in that work.

Day 6
**Vaidava - Gulbenes - Cesvaine -
Ikskile - Riga**

Learn how to build sauna and what accessories to use during bathing. Try traditional Latvian sauna ritual. Taste birch juice at the producer and learn the ways of extracting juice from the birch tree.

Day 7
Riga



Photo opposite centre: Latgalian table. Latgale region has distinctive culinary traditions

Photo opposite bottom: On Your way stop at Ludzas Crafts Centre for hand-made products

Photos right: You can learn how to make all this





03

CHILDREN SUMMER CAMPS AND SCHOOL TRIPS

www.countryholidays.lv





We have an experience putting together children summer camps and school trips for different interests. We find appropriate places to stay, organize meals, excursions, group activities and provide other necessary support.

EXAMPLES FOR SUMMER CAMPS:



GUEST HOUSE "MAURINI", SUITABLE FOR CULTURAL HISTORY AND NATURE FOCUS

- 50 km from Riga
- accommodation for 40 persons
- the owner cooks tasty meals and provides homely atmosphere
- a hall for events, 2 saunas, pool
- street-ball and volley- ball grounds
- nature trails through the forest and meadows. Nearby Sigulda and Turaida medieval castles, Līgatne historic centre, nature trails with local wild animals and Soviet Cold War secret bunker.
- nearby working goats farm where to see the farms life and communicate with the farms' animals
- boating and cycling at Gauja National Park



RECREATION CENTRE "TURBAS", GREAT FOR SPORTS ACTIVITIES

- 40 km from Riga
- hotel, guest house and 3 cottages, 2 saunas, catering
- the big playing field (100-2000 participants) with changing rooms and terrace, a couple small sports fields, pick-nick and swimming places. Football field, 2 beach-ball grounds, basketball field, dance ground with stage.
- challenge trail in the forest, pentaki
- nearby Ogre ice-hall for skating and ice-hockey trainings
- excursions to home-made ice-cream producer, traditional bakery etc.
- trip on the Viking boat on the river Daugava





SCHOOL TRIPS

For school groups we offer choice of the countryside accommodation places and tailor-make tours which are focused on nature, wildlife and rural lifestyle. During our nature trips, kids learn about the geology, plants and animals. During our rural living trips, kids learn where the food comes from and its route to our tables.

POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES:

- **exploring various biotops** (forest, bog, meadows etc.) with a nature guide talking about plants, animals, birds, insects and other at Kemeru National Park and Gauja National Park.

- **milk excursion:** visit to the farms where possible to feed and cuddle the animals, see milking process, visit to the ice-cream factory.

- **grain excursion:** visit to the farm specialised in grain growing, see combines, learn about the grain's route from the field to our bread, pancakes, porridges. Excursion at the traditional bakery and making bread themselves.

- **honey excursion:** visit to the bee keeper, dress like bee-keeper and go to apiary, learn about the bees, make wax candles and have pancakes made on bone-fire with honey





04

RURAL TOURISM AND AGRICULTURAL STUDY TOURS

www.tours.countryholidays.lv





RURAL TOURISM STUDY TOURS

Since the very beginning of our association, we are constantly developing and updating our rural tourism products and services. We are active members and on the board of the European umbrella organization for rural tourism Eurogites. We can share our experience in the following issues:

- association's membership, structure and strategy
- quality system and control
- accommodation reservation system
- Green Certificate, national eco-label: creation and implementation
- Latvian Heritage certificate: creation and implementation
- Product development: tours, packaging and other services
- Go Rural campaign, marketing of small food producers and open farms
- experience working with EU projects
- local and international cooperation

We organize study tours for rural tourism professionals - training, showing the best practises, visiting sites, meeting with the owners who share their various experiences. For training we have prepared various materials and hand-outs and we run e-training site [www. macies.celotajs.lv](http://www.macies.celotajs.lv)



TYPICAL STUDY TOUR

3 - 5 DAYS

First day is a full day training at the Baltic Country Holidays office in Riga. We will cover any of the above mentioned subjects of your interest. Then have a lunch break. The following days we will go on a study trip. For example, we visit different category accommodation places, open farms or eco-labeled places. On the way we arrange also some destination sightseeing, lunch, dinner and overnight stay places. You will have services of our tour leader. We can extend the tour to Estonia and Lithuania if required.

Photos from our various study tours. Work in the office and visits to the sites





AGROTOURS

Agriculture is one of the most important and traditional economic sectors in the Baltic states. We organize special interest group tours for agricultural organizations, farmers, students and other interested persons who wish to learn about grain and vegetable growing, dairy farming, organic farming, horse breeding, food processing, breweries, forestry in the Baltic states.

We have personal contacts with farmers, associations and government officials. Since we are also incoming tour operator we tailor made each agrotour for your needs and interests, book hotels, arrange transport, guides and translators. Apart of professional visits we can arrange sightseeing excursions, tastings and other activities.

INNOVATIVE FARMING, PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND DAIRY FARMS 7 DAYS, LITHUANIA, LATVIA AND ESTONIA

**Vilnius - Kauna - Panevezys - Bauska -
Riga - Turaida - Tartu - Tallinn - Saku**

This is professional agricultural tour with visits to local farms typical of the region. We will meet and greet you in Vilnius and have a city tour. Next day we go to Kaunas, for professional meetings and sightseeing of the city. On the way to Riga, we visit picturesque Trakai Castle situated on a lake. At Panevezys we visit an apple grower. In Riga we have sightseeing tour as well as a visit to Central Market. In Bauska we have a professional visit to a farm specializing in implementing innovative farming (grains, vegetables, potatoes). From Riga on the way to Tallinn, we visit medieval Turaida Castle with great panoramic views to the ancient Gauja Valley. In Tallinn we have an Old Town tour through narrow cobbled streets followed by a professional visit to a dairy farm in Saku, meeting with the Estonian Farm Union and visiting another cattle and crop farm near Tallinn.







CROPS, CATTLE, SHEEP AND MULTI-SECTORAL AGRICULTURE ENTERPRISE

7 DAYS, LATVIA AND ESTONIA

Riga - Tervete - Riga - Turaida - Cesis - Valga - Tartu - Tallinn

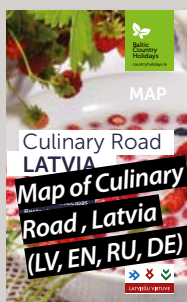
Our tour leader will meet you at the Riga airport. Excursion of Riga Old Town and the Central Market listed in UNESCO World Heritage list. Next day we visit potato grower near Iecava and successful local multi-sectoral agricultural enterprise at Tervete which combines horse breeding, brewery, crop growing, dairy farm and bio energy production. Also we will visit one of the biggest medical herb growers and producers of the herbal teas. After full day of professional visits, we'll taste Latvian traditional food and beer. Then we visit two cattle growers at Sigulda and Cesis area, climb up the tower of Turaida Castle for a great panoramic view and walk charming streets of Cesis. Afterwards we visit ecological sheep farm near Valka and stay overnight at the Koni Mill where wool is still processed traditional way. Across the border in Estonia we visit crop growers in Valga area. We meet Estonian Farmers Union and see Tartu. Then we have a tour in picturesque Tallinn old town. We visit dairy farm at Saku and finish with a trip to the Lahemaa National Park.



OTHER PUBLICATIONS OF BALTIC COUNTRY HOLIDAYS



Go Local - The Baltic States and Beyond, tour manual (RU, EN, DE)



Map of Culinary Road, Latvia (LV, EN, RU, DE)



Tourist guide - National Parks in Latvia (LV, EN)



Map of Cultural heritage (LV, EN, RU, EE, FI, DE)



Forest guide - Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Belorussia (LV, EN)



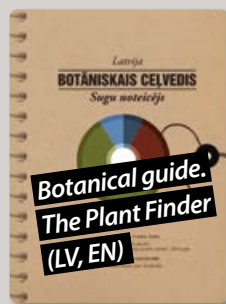
Baltic National Park Guide (LV, EN)



Slitere National park (EN, LV)



Nature holidays in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia (LV, EN)



Botanical guide. The Plant Finder (LV, EN)

Travelling around the Baltics you might find our guidebooks and maps useful

www.countryholidays.lv



Baltic Country Holidays

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Atbalsta Zemkopības ministrija
un Lauku atbalsta dienests

