



MILITĀRAIS
MANTOJUMS
MILITARY
HERITAGE

MEDIA TOUR PROGRAMME

25.-29.08.2025

“Strong Yesterday, Free Today” - The Story of the Independent Baltic States from 1914 to the Present Day

The history of the Baltic States' independence is an integral part of European modern history. The military heritage of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia shares many similarities since 1918, when Latvia and Estonia became independent states, and Lithuania regained its independence in the wake of World War I. This tour is dedicated to military heritage tourism sites in Latvia and Lithuania.

The common Baltic context is presented in the Timeline featured on the military heritage tourism website www.militaryheritagetourism.info, where military heritage sites, key events, people, and stories are organized by historical periods:

- World War I 1914-1918
- Wars of Independence 1918-1920
- Independence of the Baltic States 1920-1940
- World War II 1939-1945
- National Partisan Movement - Forest Brothers 1944 -~1957
- Soviet Occupation and the Cold War 1945-1991
- Restored Independence 1991- ...

For deeper insight, the website features **943 military heritage sites** in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, including museums, fortifications, military equipment, trails, bunkers, battlegrounds, military towns, infrastructure, and memorial sites, with descriptions and contact details for each location. The website covers **270 events** and **139 topics** related to military history. It also includes over **330 memory stories** submitted by history enthusiasts and offers options for comments and discussions.



Possible to split the tour in 2 and take part only in one:

- 1. TOUR = Day 1 - Day 3**
- 2. TOUR = Day 4 - Day 5**

www.militaryheritagetourism.info

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Latvia – Lithuania



TOUR ITINERARY:

DAY 1



Rīga - Žemaitija National park - Klaipėda



08 30 - 10 00

Īle National partisan's Bunker

The largest partisan bunker in the Baltic States was built in 1948 in the forests of Īle by Latvian and Lithuanian partisans resisting Soviet rule. On 17 March 1949, 24 partisans made their final stand against 760 Soviet security forces, or Cheka; 15 were killed, and nine were captured and deported to Siberia. Rebuilt in 1992, the bunker has been restored to its original state as it was when the partisans lived there and serves as a historical testimony and memorial site.

11 00 - 11 45

Saldus German Soldiers' Cemetery

The cemetery is the final resting place of German soldiers who fell during the Courland Pocket siege in World War II. Between October 1944 and May 1945, German forces in Courland suffered 154,108 casualties, including killed, wounded, and missing. Since 1997, ongoing surveys and reburials near Saldus have identified 27,000 fallen soldiers. A memorial room with an exhibition and soldier registers provides further historical insight.



12 00 - 13 00 Lunch in Saldus



13 30 - 14 30

Ezere History Repository "Muitas Nams" (Customs House)

The Ezere Customs House is located at the Latvian-Lithuanian border. The act of surrender of the German Army Group Courland (Heeresgruppe Kurland) was signed in this building on 8 May 1945. The customs house has an exhibit covering the events of the end of World War II.

15 30 - 17 00

Cold War Exposition, Ballistic Missile Complex at Plokštinė

The exhibition is housed in the former Soviet Union ballistic missile launch complex, the only fully equipped facility of its kind in Europe. It once housed four SS-4 "Sandal" medium-range missiles with 2-megaton thermonuclear warheads aimed at Western European countries. After being discovered by US intelligence in 1978, the base was closed and the weapons removed. In 2012, following reconstruction, an exhibition was opened showcasing this historical site.



18 30

Old Mill Hotel in Klaipėda
www.oldmillhotel.lt

Approx. 19 00

Dinner at GRASSO Restaurant in Klaipėda
www.facebook.com/grassobar/



TOUR ITINERARY:

DAY 2



Klaipėda - Palanga - Liepāja

09 00 **Departure from the hotel**

09 15 - 10 15

Anti Mine Ship - museum M52 "Sūduvis"

The ship, belonging to the "Lindau" mine trawler class, was built between 1956 and 1958 in West Germany. It served in the German Navy before being transferred to the Lithuanian Naval Forces in 1999. The ship served Lithuania for 22 years, participating in both international and national exercises and operations. In 2021, it completed its service with the Lithuanian Naval Forces and was handed over to the Lithuanian Maritime Museum.



10 45 - 11 45

"Memel Nord" Coastal Artillery Battery

The "Memel-Nord" coastal artillery battery was built in 1939 as part of the German Navy's coastal defense system after the Klaipėda region was annexed by Germany. The battery includes three buildings: a concrete fire control post and two artillery blocks with ammunition storage. Since 2002, one of the artillery blocks has housed an exhibition about the history of the Klaipėda region.



12 00 - 13 00 **Lunch at "Olando Kepure", between Klaipėda and the old part of Palanga**

14 45 - 16 30

Liepāja Karosta Prison or Northern Fort

The **Karosta Prison** in Liepāja built around 1900, is the only military prison in Europe open to the public, offering guided tours. It served as a site for temporary disciplinary punishment until 1997, and adventurous visitors can take part in the 'Behind the Bars' reality game or even spend the night in a prison cell. The prison also features a visitor centre, a Soviet-era buffet, and a souvenir shop.



The Northern Forts are the best known and visually most impressive part of the Liepāja Fortress. Built by the Russian tsarist army in the late 19th century, less than 10 years after its construction, the Liepāja Fortress ceased to operate, because its construction was acknowledged as a strategic mistake. The Northern Forts were a closed military territory during the Soviet occupation.

16 45 - 18 00 **The Redan**

The Redan at Karosta in Liepāja is a late 19th-century sea fortress. In November 1919, following the failure at Riga, Pavel Bermont-Avalov's forces launched an intense attack on Liepāja. The battle also took place at the Redan. In a swift assault on November 14, the Bermontians managed to capture the Redan. However, a counterattack by Latvian troops soon followed, and the Redan was retaken.



Aprox. 18 30

Promenade Hotel in Liepāja
www.promenadehotel.lv

Approx. 19 00

Dinner at Promenade Hotel



TOUR ITINERARY:

DAY 3



Liepāja - Rīga

08 30 Departure from the hotel

10 30 - 11 00

Lestene Brothers' Cemetery

This is the second-largest cemetery for soldiers in Latvia, where more than 1,300 Latvian legionnaires are buried. The Latvian Legion was a combat unit within the German army during WWII, primarily formed from Latvians who were illegally conscripted. The soldiers saw their service in the Legion as a fight for the restoration of Latvia's independence, despite serving in the German armed forces and being part of a German-occupied Latvia. The Latvian legionnaires fought against the Red Army, which had abolished Latvia's independence, destroyed its military, and committed atrocities against civilians.



11 45 - 12 15

Ložmetējkalns (Machine Gun Hill) Observation Tower

Ložmetējkalns is the site of the World War I battles known as the Christmas Battles. The name "Machine Gun Hill" originated during a time when the German army's fortifications were particularly difficult to breach, defended by heavy machine gun fire. In 1917, Latvian Riflemen and Siberian units of the Russian army launched an attack on Ložmetējkalns and successfully occupied it.



13 15 - 14 15 Lunch in Riga

14 30 - 16 00

Museum of the Occupation of Latvia/or Exhibition in the KGB Building "History of KGB Operations in Latvia"

The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia showcases the history of Latvia from 1940 to 1991, during the occupations by Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union. The 'House of the Future' is a reconstruction and expansion project of the Occupation Museum, designed by the renowned American Latvian architect Gunārs Birkerts, and also includes a new exhibit.



The exhibition "History of KGB Operations in Latvia"

is located in the former KGB building, where the USSR State Security Committee (commonly known as KGB or the Cheka) imprisoned, interrogated, and executed Latvian citizens regarded as enemies of the occupation regime. The site also includes an exhibit from the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia, documenting the KGB activities in the country. Guided tours offer visitors the opportunity to explore the prison cells, corridors, basement, and courtyard.

Hotel in Riga





TOUR ITINERARY:

DAY 4



Rīga - Daugavpils

08 30 Departure from the hotel



12 00 - 13 00

First World War Museum in Medumi, Soldiers' porridge tasting

During World War I, the "Life and Death" front line crossed present-day Augšdaugava municipality, with trenches and bunkers on both sides. Concrete bunkers built by the German army still stand in the forests of Medumi, Demene, and Svete parishes. The exhibition explores World War I events in Latvia and Europe, as well as soldiers' daily lives.

13 30 - 14 30

Daugavpils Fortress

The Daugavpils Fortress is Northern Europe's only 19th-century fortress that has remained nearly unchanged. Built between 1810 and 1878, it played a key role in the war of 1812 and later housed military units, including during the Soviet era. Today, the fortress is a cultural and historical hub, featuring museums, art galleries, and unique exhibitions, including the Daugavpils Mark Rothko Art Centre and the World War I Museum.



14 30 - 15 30 Lunch at the Daugavpils Fortress, Cafe "Arsenāls" www.sanmari.lv/arsenals

16 30 - 17 30

German Army Bunker (Command Post) in Kimbartiše

Between 1915 and 1918, the 88th Division of the German 8th Army fought the Russian army along this front line. The command bunker, built from reinforced concrete, was designed as a passive fortification to protect soldiers and supplies from artillery fire. Equipped with electricity, water, stoves, and wooden bunks, it featured officer quarters, communication units, and a dressing station, with traces of whitewashed walls still visible today.



18 00 - 19 00

Museum of Military Vehicles in Svete Manor

The exhibition features Soviet Army tanks, including a T-34 medium tank and IS-2 and IS-2M heavy tanks named after Stalin, along with BRDM-1 and BRDM-2 armored reconnaissance vehicles, Jeep Willys and GAZ-67 military vehicles, self-propelled artillery, cannons, and other equipment. It is the largest tank collection in the Baltic States.



Aprox. 19 00

Hotel Sventes Muiža at Svete Manor
www.celotajs.lv/en/e/sventesmuiza

19 30

Dinner at Sventes Muiža



TOUR ITINERARY:

DAY 5



Daugavpils - Rēzekne - Viļaka - Stompaki - Rīga

08 00 Departure from the hotel

09 00 - 10 00

World War II Museum in Aglona

The exhibition features over 1,000 items displayed up close, without showcases, allowing visitors to fully immerse themselves in the atmosphere of the era. Collected from active World War II battle zones, auctions, and trades, it includes one of Latvia's largest collections of Eastern Front weaponry, soldier's personal belongings, ammunition, and uniforms. Visitors can also try on uniforms, handle model weapons, and take photos on a vintage motorcycle with a sidecar.



11 15 - 12 15

Hitlers' Bunker in Malnava, Tasting of Local Drinks

Hitler's visit to the Army Group North headquarters in Malnava on 21 July 1941 lasted only a few hours and was documented in German newsreels and local schoolchildren's memories. The headquarters, based in Malnava Manor from 12 to 28 July 1941, was chosen for its modern amenities, while the local agricultural school continued operating in part of the building. A nearby anti-aircraft bunker, built in early 1944 as Soviet air dominance grew, was not directly linked to Hitler's visit but served the retreating German forces stationed there until mid-July 1944.

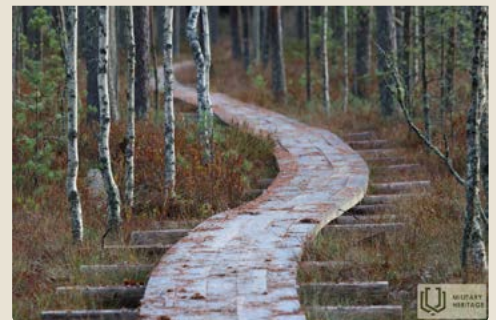
12 15 - 13 15 Lunch at Malnava, guest house "Dzīles" www.celotajs.lv/en/e/maiznica_dziles

! Along the way to the next visit - view of the Russian border with a barbed wire fence

14 15 - 15 15

Trail and National partisan memorial in Stompaki bog

The Stompaki Bog features a 1.5-kilometre marked trail with wooden footbridges leading to five islands where national partisans built residential bunkers. In early March 1945, one of the largest national partisan settlements in the Baltic States was established here, housing around 350 people and including a bakery, a church bunker, and 25 residential bunkers. The site was also the location of the Battle of Stompaki, the largest battle in Latvian national partisan history, where partisans fought against Soviet NKVD forces.



Aprox. 19 00 Return to Rīga



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