

A field guide to

The Baltics.

Cool facts, real places and the stories behind them, from the local guides at openBaltics.



The Baltics, *three countries, one trip.*

The places, the food, the odd facts and the best months: everything we tell our own friends before they come to visit. Keep it on your phone, or print it for the trip.

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia sit in a row along the eastern Baltic Sea, from the forests of the south to the islands of the north. They are often spoken of as one place, and they share a coast, a climate and a recent history. But each has its own language, its own capital and its own character: baroque Vilnius, Art Nouveau Riga, medieval Tallinn.

The distances are short. Vilnius to Riga is three to four hours by car, Riga to Tallinn four to five, and seven days is enough to see all three capitals properly. Between them lie a long and quiet coast, the dunes of the Curonian Spit, the Gauja valley, raised bogs and more than two thousand islands.

The openBaltics team, Vilnius



Our three hosts

The stork in Lithuania, the heron in Latvia and the seal in Estonia. Each country guide has its own.

IN THIS GUIDE

The region in numbers	3
Four places that make the Baltics	4
Six things that surprise people	5
Three countries, three characters	6
Rye, curd, and the forest	7
The year, month by month	8
The practical bits	9
Trips we run in the Baltics	10

AT A GLANCE

The region in *numbers*.

Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn

CAPITALS

About 6.1 million

POPULATION

175,200 km²

AREA

33% to 53% of land

FOREST COVER

Two Baltic, one Finno-Ugric

LANGUAGES

Euro, in all three

CURRENCY

2,222 in Estonia alone

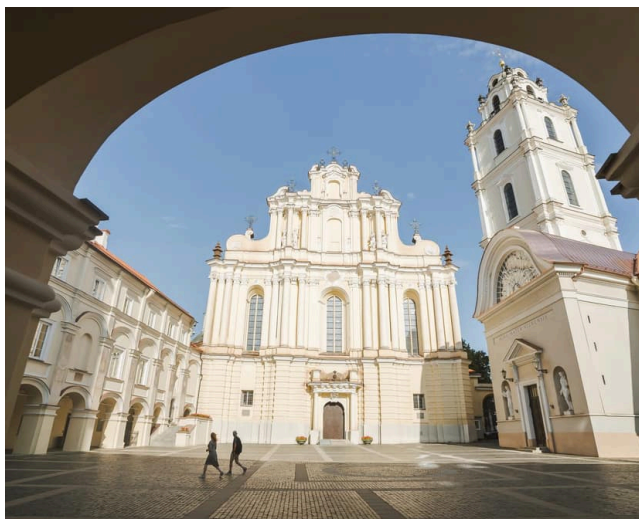
ISLANDS

Suur Munamägi, 318 m

HIGHEST POINT



Four places that make *the Baltics*.



01

Vilnius, baroque and brick

One of the largest baroque old towns in northern Europe and a UNESCO site, quieter and less crowded than the other two capitals.



02

Riga's Art Nouveau

More than 750 Jugendstil buildings, about a third of central Riga: the densest concentration of the style anywhere in the world.



03

Tallinn's old town

Walls, towers and merchant houses largely intact, one of the best-preserved medieval old towns in northern Europe, and small enough to walk in a morning.



04

The Curonian Spit

A thin peninsula of pine and drifting dunes between a lagoon and the open sea, shared with Kaliningrad and listed by UNESCO.

Six things that *surprise people.*

1989

01 A human chain across three countries

In 1989 the Baltic Way, a single human chain, linked Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn. People held hands across all three countries.

Not Baltic

02 Three languages, two families

Lithuanian and Latvian are the only two living Baltic languages. Estonian is not one of them: it is Finno-Ugric, related to Finnish.

Song

03 Nations that sing together

All three hold Song and Dance Festivals, recognised together by UNESCO, where tens of thousands sing at once.

1510

04 The first Christmas tree?

Riga claims the first decorated Christmas tree, raised on Town Hall Square in 1510, and leans into the story every winter.

2 hours

05 A ferry to a fourth capital

From Tallinn the ferry to Helsinki takes about two hours, so Finland fits into a Baltic trip as an easy day out.

2,000+

06 Islands, mostly empty

Estonia alone has more than 2,000 islands off its western coast. Only a couple of dozen are properly inhabited.



Three countries, *three characters*.

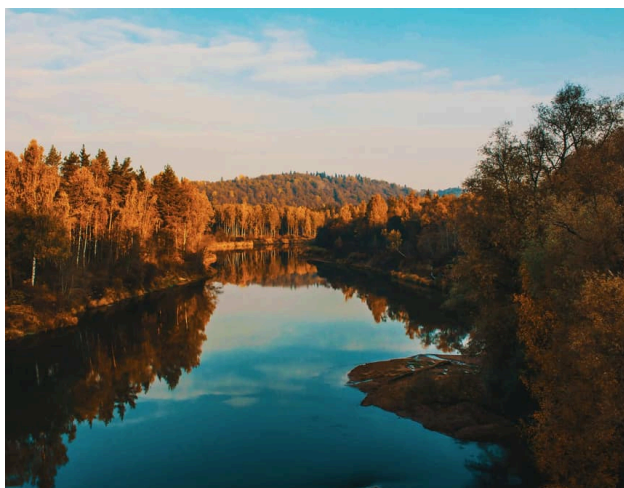


THE WOODED SOUTH

Lithuania

Baroque Vilnius, Trakai's island castle, the Hill of Crosses and the dunes of the Curonian Spit. The largest of the three, with the deepest history.

[FREE GUIDE \(PDF\) →](#)

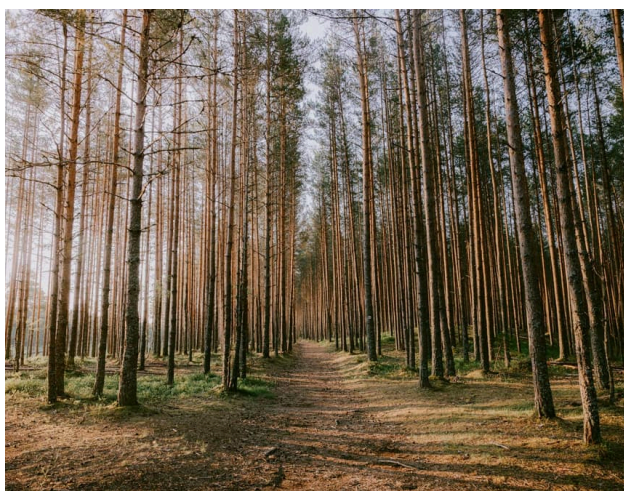


THE ART-NOUVEAU HEART

Latvia

Riga and its Central Market, the beaches of Jūrmala, the castles of the Gauja valley and Rundāle Palace. More than half the country is forest.

[FREE GUIDE \(PDF\) →](#)



THE NORDIC EDGE

Estonia

Medieval Tallinn, the bog boardwalks of Lahemaa, the islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa, and smoke saunas in the southeast.

[FREE GUIDE \(PDF\) →](#)



Riga Central Market, in five former Zeppelin hangars.

ON THE TABLE

Rye, curd, *and the forest.*

Across all three the constants are dark sourdough rye bread, fresh curd cheese, smoked fish, forest mushrooms and berries, and sour cream on nearly everything. Then each country adds its own: cold pink beetroot soup and cepelinai in Lithuania, grey peas with bacon and Black Balsam in Latvia, black bread with sprats and kama in Estonia. The weekday set lunch is the best value meal in the region.

Mushrooms and berries are not a garnish here. They are a food supply.

The year, *month by month.*

Jan QUIET Cold, clear 7h light	Feb QUIET Cold, clear 9h light	Mar QUIET Thaw, mud 12h light	Apr GOOD Quiet spring 14h light
May BEST Bloom, mild 16h light	Jun BEST Midsummer, the white nights 18h light	Jul BEST Warm sea, busy coast 18h light	Aug BEST Warm sea, festival weeks 16h light
Sep BEST Forest gold, mushroom hunts 13h light	Oct GOOD Forest amber 11h light	Nov QUIET Grey, raw 8h light	Dec GOOD Markets, snow 7h light

BEST MONTHS

Late May to September

Late May to September brings long days, open coasts and midsummer, when the light barely leaves the sky. December is the other window, for the Christmas markets of Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn.



The *practical bits.*

FLY IN TO

Vilnius (VNO) · Riga (RIX) · Tallinn (TLL)

VISA

Schengen, 90/180 days, no border checks between the three

CURRENCY

Euro (€) in all three

TIME ZONE

EET, UTC+2 / EEST UTC+3

POWER

230V, type F (Schuko)

BETWEEN CAPITALS

Vilnius to Riga 3 to 4 hours, Riga to Tallinn 4 to 5 hours by car

LANGUAGE TIP

English widely spoken, especially by under-40s



Trips we run *in the Baltics.*

Planned by people who live here, and changed to fit you.
Every trip can be shortened, stretched or rebuilt.

7 DAYS	A Baltic Christmas openbaltics.com/itinerary/baltic-christmas	FROM €1,850
8 DAYS	Three capitals by rail openbaltics.com/itinerary/rail-baltic-capitals	FROM €1,095
8 DAYS	Behind the Curtain: Soviet & Cold War Deep Dive openbaltics.com/itinerary/soviet-legacy-deep-dive	FROM €2,555
10 DAYS	Baltic capitals self-drive openbaltics.com/itinerary/self-drive-baltic-capitals	FROM €870
11 DAYS	Four Capitals: Warsaw, Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn openbaltics.com/itinerary/four-capitals	FROM €1,895
11 DAYS	The Three Crowns openbaltics.com/itinerary/three-crowns	FROM €2,240

Prices in euros per person sharing a room. Prices as of 20 October 2026.
openbaltics.com/tours

Nothing quite right?

Most of our trips start as an email. Tell us how many days you have and what you like, and we will build one around you.

openbaltics.com/plan-a-trip



PLAN IT WITH US

Three capitals, *one trip.*

Tell us your dates and what you love. A real person replies within one working day with a day-by-day plan and a clear price.

EMAIL

hello@openbaltics.com

PHONE AND WHATSAPP

+370 641 40294

WEBSITE

openbaltics.com



openBaltics

MB openBaltics · V. Nagevičiaus g. 3, LT-08237 Vilnius, Lithuania

Photos: Simas Bernotas / Lithuania Travel · Giulio Gröbert / Visit Estonia · Giedrius Akelis / Lithuania Travel · Dāvis Bērziņš / Latvia Travel · Mihkel Sillaots / Visit Estonia · LiveRiga / Latvia Travel. Illustrations by openBaltics. Free to share; please do not sell.