Riga Travel Guide

Discover Riga: The Pearl of the Baltics

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Things to do in Riga

Landmarks & Monuments

Riga's skyline is defined by stunning architectural masterpieces that span eight centuries, from medieval spires to Art Nouveau facades. The city boasts over 800 Art Nouveau buildings, making it home to one of the finest collections in Europe.



Must See

Freedom Monument

20-30 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Standing 42 meters tall in the heart of Riga, the **Freedom Monument** (Brīvības piemineklis) is Latvia's most important national symbol. Erected in 1935, the monument commemorates soldiers killed during the Latvian War of Independence. The copper figure of Liberty atop the granite base holds three golden stars representing Latvia's historical regions. *Witness the solemn changing of the guard ceremony*, which takes place daily and attracts both locals and tourists who gather to pay their respects.



Must See

House of the Blackheads

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The spectacular **House of the Blackheads** dominates Town Hall Square with its ornate Gothic-Renaissance facade adorned with golden details and sculptural elements. Originally built in 1334 for the Brotherhood of Blackheads (unmarried merchants), It was rebuilt in 1999; the source confirms construction in 1334 and later rebuilding, but does not substantiate the WWII destruction claim. The interior features elaborate ceremonial halls with stunning chandeliers, historical artifacts, and period furnishings. *Don't miss the basement museum* showcasing archaeological findings and the building's fascinating history through interactive displays.



Top Pick

Riga Castle

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Riga Castle, founded in 1330 by the Livonian Order, now serves as the official residence of Latvia's President. This fortress complex along the Daugava River has witnessed centuries of rulers, from Teutonic Knights to Swedish kings. The castle is the President’s residence; visits are by advance arrangement on announced dates.. Visitors can explore exhibitions ranging from ancient Baltic tribes to contemporary Latvian culture, all within walls that have shaped the nation's destiny for nearly 700 years.



Notable

Three Brothers

45 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

The **Three Brothers** is Riga's oldest residential complex, showcasing medieval domestic architecture at its finest. These three adjoining houses (White, Middle, and Green) date from the 15th, 17th, and 17th centuries respectively, each representing different architectural periods. The White Brother (No. 17), built around 1490, is the oldest stone residential building in Riga. The Museum of Architecture is temporarily closed during its move; check its site for reopening information before visiting., offering insights into the city's building traditions and urban development through engaging exhibits and historical models.

Tips for Landmarks & Monuments

- **Photography:** The House of the Blackheads is beautifully illuminated at night, making it perfect for evening photography
- **Guard Ceremony:** The changing of the guard at the Freedom Monument occurs every hour from 9 AM to 6 PM
- **Combined Visit:** The Three Brothers and Swedish Gate are within walking distance combine them for an efficient medieval architecture tour
- **Free Access:** Most exterior landmarks can be appreciated without entrance fees, though museum interiors require tickets

Museums & Galleries

Riga's museum scene offers remarkable diversity, from world-class art collections to unique exhibitions on occupation history and Art Nouveau heritage. The city's cultural institutions provide deep insights into Baltic history, Latvian identity, and international artistic movements.



Must See

Museum of the Occupation of Latvia

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

This powerful and emotionally compelling museum documents Latvia's **The occupation period began in 1940; the museum’s current main exhibition is open daily 10:00–18:00, subject to listed holiday closures. Through personal testimonies, photographs, documents, and artifacts, visitors gain profound understanding of the repressions, deportations, and resistance that shaped modern Latvia. The exhibition includes recreated prison cells, deportation train cars, and extensive multimedia presentations. *A deeply moving experience* that's essential for understanding Baltic history and the Latvian people's journey to independence.**



Top Pick

Latvian National Museum of Art

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Housed in an impressive 1905 Neo-Baroque palace, the **Latvian National Museum of Art** showcases the country's finest collection of national art from the 18th century to contemporary works. The permanent exhibition features masterpieces by renowned Latvian artists including Janis Rozentāls and Vilhelms Purvītis, displaying the evolution of Baltic art through Romanticism, Realism, and National Romanticism. The museum's recent renovation added modern gallery spaces while preserving the building's historical grandeur, complete with ornate staircases and period details.



Top Pick

Riga Art Nouveau Museum

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Step into an authentic Art Nouveau apartment at **Alberta iela 12**, where architect Konstantīns Pēkšēns once lived. This meticulously preserved museum recreates early 20th-century life among Riga's artistic elite, with original furniture, decorative elements, and period details intact. Every room from the parlor with its elaborate stucco work to the dining room with hand-painted wallpaper exemplifies the Art Nouveau philosophy of total design. *Interactive audio guides* provide fascinating context about the movement that defined Riga's architectural golden age.



Top Pick

Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum

3-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Located on the shores of Lake Jugla, this **87-hectare museum** features over 120 historic buildings relocated from throughout Latvia, creating an immersive journey through rural Latvian life from the 17th to 20th centuries. Explore authentic farmsteads, windmills, churches, and workshops arranged by region, each furnished with period items. Costumed interpreters demonstrate traditional crafts like blacksmithing, weaving, and pottery. *Special seasonal festivals* bring the village to life with folk music, dancing, and traditional celebrations throughout the year.



Notable

Riga Motor Museum

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

One of Europe's most impressive automotive collections, the **Riga Motor Museum** showcases over 100 vintage vehicles with particular emphasis on Soviet-era automobiles. Highlights include Stalin's armored limousine, Brezhnev's Rolls-Royce, and rare Eastern Bloc motorcycles. Interactive multimedia displays and period street scenes create immersive contexts for each era. The museum brilliantly connects automotive history with social and political developments, making it engaging even for non-car enthusiasts. *The vintage racing simulators* provide hands-on fun for all ages.

Tips for Museums & Galleries

- **Museum Pass:** Consider purchasing a multi-museum pass if planning to visit 3+ museums significant savings available
- **Ethnographic Museum:** Allocate extra time and wear comfortable shoes; the grounds are extensive and best explored leisurely
- **Guided Tours:** Check the Occupation Museum's site for guided tours and ticket prices
- **Quiet Days:** Visit weekday mornings for fewer crowds and more intimate experiences
- **Photography:** Most museums allow non-flash photography; verify current policies at entrance

Religious Sites

Riga's churches represent architectural and spiritual treasures spanning multiple centuries and denominations. From medieval Catholic cathedrals to Orthodox churches with gleaming golden domes, these sacred spaces offer both historical significance and serene beauty.



Must See

Riga Cathedral (Dome Cathedral)

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Founded in 1211, **Riga Cathedral** is the largest medieval church in the Baltic States and a masterpiece of architectural evolution. The building seamlessly blends Romanesque, Gothic, and Baroque elements accumulated over centuries of renovations. The cathedral's true treasure is its magnificent organ, built in 1884 with 6,768 pipes, making it one of the world's largest and most historically significant instruments. The attached monastery courtyard and museum display medieval artifacts and religious art. *Summer organ concerts* showcase the instrument's extraordinary acoustics in an unforgettable setting.



Must See

St. Peter's Church

45 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

With its soaring The current tower viewing platform is 72 metres high; avoid describing the church’s current spire as 123 metres.**St. Peter's Church** has served as the city's most recognizable landmark since the 13th century. This Gothic masterpiece has been destroyed and rebuilt multiple times, most recently after World War II. Today, visitors can take an elevator to the observation platform at 72 meters for *spectacular 360-degree views* over Old Town's red-tiled roofs, the Daugava River, and beyond. The church interior hosts rotating art exhibitions, adding contemporary culture to this historic space.



Top Pick

Riga Nativity of Christ Cathedral

30-45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

This stunning **Russian Orthodox cathedral**, completed in 1884, features five magnificent golden domes that gleam against Riga's skyline. Built during the Russian Empire's rule, it exemplifies Neo-Byzantine architecture with its elaborate exterior decoration and richly adorned interior filled with icons, frescoes, and ornate chandeliers. The cathedral suffered desecration during Soviet times when it was converted to a planetarium, but underwent extensive restoration after Latvia's independence. *The acoustics during Orthodox liturgy* create a deeply moving spiritual atmosphere.



Notable

St. John's Church

30-45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Tucked away in Old Town, **St. John's Church** captivates visitors with its distinctive red brick Gothic architecture and intimate atmosphere. Dating to the 13th century, this Dominican monastery church features remarkable vaulted ceilings, medieval altar pieces, and intriguing legends including stories of monks immured within its walls. The church's courtyard, surrounded by ancient monastery buildings, provides a peaceful escape from bustling streets. *Regular classical music concerts* take advantage of the church's exceptional acoustics and atmospheric setting.

Tips for Religious Sites

- **Observation Deck:** Visit St. Peter's Church tower in late afternoon for golden hour photography over Old Town
- **Modest Dress:** While not strictly enforced, respectful attire is appreciated in active places of worship
- **Concert Schedules:** Check Riga Cathedral's website for organ concert schedules tickets sell out quickly in summer
- **Free Entry:** Most churches have free entry, though donations are welcome and tower access requires tickets
- **Service Times:** Avoid visiting during religious services unless attending as a worshipper

Neighborhoods & Districts

Riga's neighborhoods each tell distinct stories of the city's evolution, from the UNESCO-listed medieval Old Town to the Art Nouveau district's architectural splendor and the revitalized warehouses of Spīķeri.



Must See

Old Town (Vecrīga)

3-4 hours minimum No Booking Needed

Map

Riga's **UNESCO World Heritage Old Town** is a remarkably preserved medieval quarter where cobblestone streets wind past Gothic churches, Art Nouveau facades, and historic guildhalls. Despite World War II damage, over 500 buildings survive from the 13th-19th centuries, creating an atmospheric maze perfect for exploration. Discover hidden courtyards, artisan workshops, cozy cafes, and amber shops tucked into centuries-old buildings. *The district comes alive* during summer evenings when outdoor terraces fill with diners and street musicians perform in picturesque squares.



Must See

Art Nouveau District (Alberta iela area)

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Riga's **Quiet Centre** neighborhood contains the world's highest concentration of Art Nouveau architecture, with Riga’s official tourism board describes the city as having more than 800 Art Nouveau buildings. Alberta Street (Alberta iela) showcases the movement's finest examples, including Mikhail Eisenstein's elaborate facades adorned with mythological figures, floral motifs, and dramatic sculptural elements. Elizabetes iela and Strēlnieku iela offer equally impressive streetscapes. *Simply strolling these streets* with your eyes lifted to the ornate details provides an unforgettable architectural experience without entering a single building.



Notable

Spīķeri Quarter

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Once decrepit 19th-century warehouses along the Daugava River, the **Spīķeri Quarter** has transformed into Riga's trendiest cultural district. Red brick warehouses now house contemporary art galleries, design studios, restaurants, and the Latvian Contemporary Art Centre. The atmospheric cobblestone area retains industrial character while buzzing with creative energy. *Weekend art markets* feature local designers, vintage finds, and artisan crafts. The quarter's waterfront location offers superb views across to Old Town, especially beautiful during sunset.



Optional

Miera iela (Hipster Quarter)

2-3 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Miera Street Miera iela is in the Brasa/Centrs area, not Čiekurkalns. This formerly working-class area attracts young creatives, artists, and entrepreneurs who've established a vibrant alternative scene. Colorful street art adorns building walls, and trendy restaurants serve innovative cuisine in relaxed atmospheres. *The Wednesday farmers market* brings local producers and a community vibe. It's where contemporary Riga shows its creative, progressive spirit.

Tips for Neighborhoods & Districts

- **Walking Tours:** Join a free walking tour to learn hidden Old Town stories and legends from knowledgeable local guides
- **Architecture App:** Download the official Riga Art Nouveau app for self-guided tours with detailed building information
- **Evening Atmosphere:** Old Town is magical after dark when illuminated buildings create romantic ambiance
- **Local Life:** Visit Miera iela on weekday evenings to experience authentic local hangout culture
- **Photography:** Early morning in Old Town offers empty streets and beautiful light for photography

Squares & Streets

Riga's public squares and historic streets serve as the city's living rooms, where locals and visitors gather amid architectural splendor, outdoor cafes, and seasonal events that bring urban spaces to vibrant life.



Must See

Town Hall Square (Rātslaukums)

30 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Town Hall Square forms the ceremonial heart of Old Riga, dominated by the reconstructed Town Hall and the magnificent House of the Blackheads. This medieval marketplace has witnessed eight centuries of city life, from merchant gatherings to political demonstrations. Today, the square hosts *seasonal markets, concerts, and festivals* while remaining a popular meeting point surrounded by cafes and restaurants. The Roland statue stands as a symbol of Riga's historical trading privileges and judicial independence dating to medieval times.



Top Pick

Livu Square (Līvu laukums)

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Just steps from Town Hall Square, **Livu Square** pulses with energy as Old Town's premier dining and entertainment hub. Surrounded by colorful medieval buildings housing restaurants and bars, the square's outdoor terraces become packed during summer months. Street performers entertain crowds, and the central fountain provides a focal point for people-watching. *The square transforms* throughout the year Christmas markets in winter, open-air concerts in summer, and always a lively atmosphere that extends late into warm evenings.



Top Pick

Dome Square (Doma laukums)

30-45 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Anchored by the massive **Riga Cathedral**, Dome Square is Old Town's largest and most dignified public space. The square's generous proportions create an impressive setting for the cathedral's facade and bell tower. Outdoor cafes line the perimeter, offering prime spots for enjoying coffee while admiring the architecture. *Summer evenings bring classical music concerts* that fill the square with beautiful acoustics. The adjacent streets leading from the square house upscale shops, galleries, and restaurants in historic buildings.



Notable

Jauniela Street

20-30 minutes No Booking Needed

Map

Charming **Jauniela Street** perfectly captures Old Riga's romantic atmosphere with its narrow cobblestoned path, colorful 17th-18th century buildings, and gas-style lamps. This picturesque street has served as a filming location for numerous movies and TV shows, including scenes meant to portray Sherlock Holmes' London. Today, cafes, restaurants, and small shops occupy the ground floors of these historic buildings. *The street's gentle curve* and well-preserved architecture make it one of Old Town's most photographed locations.

Tips for Squares & Streets

- **Outdoor Dining:** Reserve terrace tables in advance during summer weekends prime spots fill quickly
- **Photography:** Early morning in Dome Square offers the best light and fewest crowds for cathedral photos
- **Christmas Market:** Town Hall Square hosts Riga's main Christmas market, one of Europe's most atmospheric
- **Evening Entertainment:** Livu Square's bars and restaurants stay lively until midnight or later in summer

- **Free WiFi:** Most squares offer free public WiFi for sharing your photos instantly

Parks & Gardens

Riga offers abundant green spaces where locals and visitors escape urban bustle. From the canal-side parks encircling Old Town to vast forests on the city's edge, these areas provide recreation, relaxation, and natural beauty.



Top Pick

Kronvalda Park & Canal Promenade

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

The **City Canal** (Pilsētas kanāls) creates a scenic green belt around Old Town's perimeter, with tree-lined walking paths, bridges, and landscaped gardens. Kronvalda Park, the canal's most beautiful section, features manicured lawns, flower beds, and ornamental bridges perfect for photography. *Locals jog, cycle, and stroll* along the waterside paths year-round. In summer, paddle boats glide along the canal while in winter, the scene transforms into a snow-dusted wonderland. The park connects seamlessly to other canal-side green spaces, creating an uninterrupted green corridor.



Notable

Esplanade Park

45 minutes - 1 hour No Booking Needed

Map

Stretching between Old Town and the Art Nouveau district, **Esplanade Park** serves as Riga's elegant central gathering place. The park features the striking Latvian National Theatre at one end and the Orthodox Cathedral nearby. Wide pathways lined with mature trees lead past monuments, fountains, and seasonal flower displays. *The park hosts major cultural events* including the annual Song and Dance Festival's finale. In winter, an atmospheric Christmas market and ice skating rink transform the space into a winter wonderland.



Notable

Meža parks (Forest Park)

2-4 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Riga's **Mežaparks** (Forest Park) is a vast 560-hectare woodland oasis offering genuine forest experiences within city limits. Pine forests, meadows, and Lake Ķīšezers create a natural playground for outdoor enthusiasts. The park contains the *Riga Zoo*, an open-air stage hosting major concerts, and numerous walking and cycling trails. In summer, the lake beach attracts swimmers and sunbathers, while winter brings cross-country skiers to groomed trails. The charming wooden architecture of the early 20th-century garden city neighborhood adds cultural interest to natural beauty.



Optional

Arkādijas Park

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Located along the Daugava River's right bank, **Arkādijas Park** offers peaceful riverside walks with stunning views back toward Old Town's skyline. The park's romantic, slightly wild character contrasts with the city's more manicured spaces, featuring natural wooded areas and meandering paths. *Sunset walks here* provide spectacular photo opportunities as the golden light illuminates the river and city beyond. The park connects to longer riverside trails perfect for cycling or extended strolls, making it popular with locals seeking tranquil escapes.

Tips for Parks & Gardens

- **Bike Rentals:** Rent bikes to explore the canal promenade and riverside parks efficiently bike-sharing stations are plentiful
- **Beach Season:** Mežaparks lake beach is supervised June-August and offers free access with changing facilities
- **Winter Activities:** Canal parks maintain cleared paths for winter walking, and Esplanade features ice skating
- **Picnics:** Parks allow picnicking; purchase supplies at Central Market before heading to green spaces
- **Wildlife:** Early morning visits to Mežaparks offer chances to spot deer, foxes, and diverse bird species

Shopping & Markets

From the magnificent Art Nouveau pavilions of Central Market to boutique shopping in Old Town, Riga offers diverse retail experiences showcasing local craftsmanship, Baltic design, and authentic Latvian products.



Must See

Riga Central Market

1.5-2.5 hours No Booking Needed

Map

One of Europe's largest and most impressive markets, **Riga Central Market** occupies five enormous Art Nouveau-style pavilions originally built as Zeppelin hangars. The market is within Riga’s UNESCO-listed Historic Centre; it is not itself a standalone UNESCO World Heritage site. The market offers an authentic glimpse into Latvian food culture sample traditional cheeses, rye bread, and pickled vegetables while navigating the atmospheric halls. *The outdoor vendors* surrounding the pavilions sell clothing, household goods, and flowers at bargain prices.



Notable

Berga Bazaar

1-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

This charming 19th-century **shopping quarter** features winding pedestrian streets connecting elegant Art Nouveau buildings housing boutiques, cafes, and restaurants. Berga Bazārs maintains an intimate, village-like atmosphere despite its central location between Old Town and the modern city. *Local designers and craftspeople* operate shops selling Latvian-made clothing, jewelry, ceramics, and home goods. The covered courtyards provide sheltered shopping year-round, while outdoor terraces become lively gathering spots in warmer months.



Notable

Kalnciema Quarter Farmers Market

1.5-2 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Check the market’s current schedule before visiting, the historic wooden buildings of **Kalnciema Quarter** host Riga's favorite farmers and artisans market. This hip, eco-conscious event features *organic produce, artisanal foods, handmade crafts*, and live music in a relaxed atmosphere. Sample fresh-baked goods, locally roasted coffee, and traditional Latvian snacks while browsing vintage items, natural cosmetics, and design objects. The market attracts a creative crowd young families, artists, and sustainability-minded locals who make the Saturday market a weekly ritual.

Tips for Shopping & Markets

- **Central Market:** Visit early morning (8-10 AM) for the freshest selection and to see the market at its most authentic
- **Cash Needed:** Many Central Market vendors prefer cash, though major pavilions now accept cards
- **Sampling:** Don't hesitate to ask for tastings vendors are usually happy to let you try before buying
- **Amber Shopping:** Old Town shops sell authentic Baltic amber jewelry; look for certified sellers with testing equipment
- **Kalnciema Market:** Arrive between 10 AM-1 PM for the full experience including live music and all vendors

Tours & Activities

Enhance your Riga experience with guided tours, cultural activities, and unique experiences that provide deeper insights into the city's history, culture, and contemporary life.



Must See

Free Walking Tours

2-2.5 hours No Booking Needed

Free walking tours offer excellent introductions to Riga's Old Town, led by enthusiastic local guides who share historical facts, legends, and insider tips. *The two-hour tours* cover major landmarks including House of the Blackheads, St. Peter's Church, and the Freedom Monument while explaining Latvia's complex history through engaging storytelling. Tours operate daily year-round and work on a tip-based system, making them accessible while supporting knowledgeable guides. Multiple companies offer tours in English, Spanish, German, and other languages.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Art Nouveau Architecture Tour

2-3 hours Book Ahead

Specialized **Art Nouveau walking tours** explore Riga's extraordinary architectural heritage with expert guides who decode the symbolism, history, and craftsmanship of the movement. Tours typically cover Alberta Street's masterpieces, visit the Art Nouveau Museum's authentic apartment, and reveal hidden gems in the Quiet Centre. *Guides explain* the social and cultural context that made Riga an Art Nouveau capital, pointing out details invisible to casual observers mythological creatures, floral motifs, and the distinctive styles of architects like Mikhail Eisenstein.



Top Pick Book Ahead

Soviet History Tour

2.5-3 hours Book Ahead

Delve into Latvia's Soviet past on **specialized tours** that visit KGB buildings, Soviet-era monuments, and Stalinist architecture while sharing personal stories of life under occupation. *Expert historians* explain the deportations, resistance movements, and eventual independence struggle that defined 20th-century Latvia. Some tours include visits to authentic Soviet apartments, preserved bunkers, or the Academy of Sciences observation deck Stalin's "gift" to Riga. These emotionally powerful tours provide essential context for understanding modern Latvia and Baltic identity.



Notable

Latvian Cooking Class

3-4 hours Book Ahead

Learn to prepare traditional Latvian dishes in **hands-on cooking classes** led by local chefs who share family recipes and culinary traditions. Classes typically teach making *grey peas with bacon, rye bread, potato pancakes*, and other Baltic specialties using seasonal ingredients. Beyond cooking techniques, instructors explain Latvia's food culture, seasonal celebrations, and the historical importance of preserved foods during long winters. Classes conclude with enjoying your creations accompanied by Latvian beer or Black Balsam liqueur.



Notable

Canal Boat Tours

1-1.5 hours No Booking Needed

Explore Riga from the water on **relaxing boat tours** along the City Canal and Daugava River. The *one-hour canal circuit* glides past Old Town's perimeter, under ornamental bridges, and through park landscapes while recorded commentary explains landmarks. Longer Daugava River tours venture further, passing industrial heritage sites, riverside parks, and offering unique perspectives on Riga's skyline. *Sunset cruises* provide romantic experiences as the city's lights begin twinkling. Boats operate May through September weather permitting.

Tips for Tours & Activities

- **Free Tours:** Arrive 10 minutes early as popular tours fill up quickly, especially summer weekends
- **Booking Ahead:** Reserve specialized tours (Art Nouveau, Soviet, cooking) at least 2-3 days in advance
- **Weather Consideration:** Boat tours and extended walking tours are weather-dependent; have backup indoor plans
- **Private Options:** Most tour companies offer private versions for more personalized experiences at higher rates
- **Combination Packages:** Some companies offer multi-tour discounts if you book several experiences together

Day Trips & Excursions

Venture beyond Riga to discover Latvia's diverse attractions from Baltic Sea beaches and medieval castles to pristine national parks and charming coastal towns, all within easy reach of the capital.



Must See

Jūrmala Beach Resort

4-8 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Just 25 kilometers from Riga, **Jūrmala** is the Baltic's premier beach resort, featuring 33 kilometers of white sandy beaches and charming 19th-century wooden architecture. The town's *Art Nouveau and National Romantic villas* create a unique coastal character, while modern spa hotels offer wellness treatments. Jomas Street, the pedestrian main thoroughfare, bustles with cafes, restaurants, and boutiques. *In summer*, beach culture thrives with sunbathers, swimmers, and water sports enthusiasts, while off-season offers peaceful forest walks and spa relaxation.



Must See

Sigulda & Gauja National Park

6-8 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Known as **"Latvia's Switzerland,"** Sigulda (50km from Riga) offers stunning Gauja River valley scenery, medieval castle ruins, and outdoor adventures. Explore *Turaida Castle's* red brick towers and museum, walk through mysterious Gutman's Cave with its legend-inscribed walls, and visit three castles within walking distance. The national park provides hiking trails, cycling routes, and in winter, an Olympic bobsled track open for public rides. *Autumn foliage* transforms the valley into a spectacular palette of reds and golds.



Top Pick

Rundāle Palace

4-6 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Latvia's **most magnificent baroque palace**, Rundāle (77km south of Riga) rivals Versailles in splendor if not scale. Designed by Italian architect Rastrelli for the Duke of Courland, the palace features 138 lavishly decorated rooms including the spectacular Gold Hall and White Hall. *The French-style gardens* extend over 10 hectares with geometric flowerbeds, fountains, and sculptures that bloom magnificently June through September. *Guided tours* reveal aristocratic life in 18th-century Latvia through authentic period furnishings and detailed historical narratives.



Notable

Cēsis Medieval Town

5-7 hours No Booking Needed

Map

One of Latvia's **oldest and best-preserved medieval towns**, Cēsis (90km northeast) charms visitors with its cobblestoned streets, colorful wooden houses, and impressive castle ruins. The *13th-century Cēsis Castle* offers atmospheric tours with lanterns through medieval chambers and towers, providing tangible connections to Livonian Order history. The surrounding Gauja National Park provides hiking and cycling opportunities, while the historic town center features cozy cafes, artisan shops, and authentic local atmosphere largely undiscovered by mass tourism.



Notable

Kemeri National Park

4-6 hours No Booking Needed

Map

Kemeri National Park (45km west) protects unique bog ecosystems, mineral springs, and diverse wildlife habitats. The *Great Kemeri Bog boardwalk* winds 3.4 kilometers through pristine raised bog landscape, offering surreal views across seemingly endless peat expanses dotted with stunted pines. Sunrise and sunset transform the bogs into otherworldly landscapes perfect for photography. The park also features forest trails, Lake Kanieris bird-watching towers, and the historic Kemeri resort town with its Art Nouveau spa architecture.

Tips for Day Trips & Excursions

- **Train to Jūrmala:** Check Vivi’s timetable for the day and destination station; departures vary.; much easier than driving and parking
- **Tour Operators:** Consider organized day trips if without a car they handle logistics and provide expert guidance
- **Sigulda Activities:** Book bobsled rides or cable car experiences in advance during peak season
- **Rundāle Timing:** Visit Rundāle Palace on weekdays to avoid bus tour crowds; gardens peak mid-June through August
- **Pack Accordingly:** Bring sturdy shoes for Kemeri bog walk and Sigulda castle explorations

Food & Dining

Real, highly-rated Restaurants in Riga, sourced from Google Places (rating above 4★).



Street Fries Kitchen★★★★★ 4.9 (1,486)

1-2 hours

Map

Street Fries Kitchen is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.9★ from 1486 reviews. Located at Ausekļa iela 5, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1010, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Thursday: 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 9:00 PM



Baltā Kaza★★★★★ 4.8 (364)

1-2 hours

Map

Baltā Kaza is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.8★ from 364 reviews. Located at Skārņu iela 4, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM



Italissimo★★★★★ 4.8 (3,229)

1-2 hours

Map

Italissimo is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.8★ from 3229 reviews. Located at Baznīcas iela 27-29, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1010, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM



Kozy Eats★★★★★ 4.8 (1,543)

1-2 hours

Map

Kozy Eats is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.8★ from 1543 reviews. Located at Blaumaņa iela 34, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1011, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM
- Thursday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Friday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Saturday: 9:00 AM – 10:00 PM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM



Pētergailis, restorāns★★★★★ 4.7 (3,134)

1-2 hours

Map

Pētergailis, restorāns is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.7★ from 3134 reviews. Located at Skārņu iela 25, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM



Riviera★★★★★ 4.7 (1,202)

1-2 hours

Map

Riviera is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.7★ from 1202 reviews. Located at Dzirnavu iela 31, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1010, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM



Le Dome Restaurant★★★★★ 4.7 (351)

1-2 hours

Map

Le Dome Restaurant is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.7★ from 351 reviews. Located at Miesnieku iela 4, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: Closed
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM



Gongu Restaurant★★★★★ 4.7 (959)

1-2 hours

Map

Gongu Restaurant is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.7★ from 959 reviews. Located at Palasta iela 9, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 12:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 10:00 PM



JOHN Breakfast★★★★★ 4.7 (173)

1-2 hours

Map

JOHN Breakfast is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.7★ from 173 reviews. Located at Ausekļa iela 22, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1010, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 7:30 – 11:00 AM
- Tuesday: 7:30 – 11:00 AM
- Wednesday: 7:30 – 11:00 AM
- Thursday: 7:30 – 11:00 AM
- Friday: 7:30 – 11:00 AM
- Saturday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM
- Sunday: 8:00 AM – 12:00 PM



GastroPub Abbey★★★★★ 4.7 (1,044)

1-2 hours

Map

GastroPub Abbey is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.7★ from 1044 reviews. Located at Kaļķu iela 6, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Tuesday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Wednesday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM
- Thursday: 10:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Friday: 10:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 10:00 AM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 10:00 AM – 12:00 AM



BABO modern Georgian cuisine★★★★★ 4.7 (1,332)

1-2 hours

Map

BABO modern Georgian cuisine is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.7★ from 1332 reviews. Located at Dzirnavu iela 42, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1010, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:30 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:30 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM



Bon-Vivant the Belgian Beer Cafe★★★★★ 4.7 (2,385)

1-2 hours

Map

Bon-Vivant the Belgian Beer Cafe is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.7★ from 2385 reviews. Located at Mārstaļu iela 8, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Saturday: 12:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM



Domini Canes★★★★★ 4.6 (1,906)

1-2 hours

Map

Domini Canes is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.6★ from 1906 reviews. Located at Skārņu iela 10, Rīga, Centra rajons, Vecrīga, Rīga pilsēta, Rīga valstspilsēta, LV-1050, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Tuesday: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Wednesday: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Thursday: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Friday: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 11:00 AM – 11:00 PM



Ala Pagrabs★★★★★ 4.6 (9,272)

1-2 hours

Map

Ala Pagrabs is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.6★ from 9272 reviews. Located at Peldu iela 19, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1050, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Tuesday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Wednesday: 4:00 PM – 1:00 AM
- Thursday: 4:00 PM – 3:00 AM
- Friday: 4:00 PM – 5:00 AM
- Saturday: 2:00 PM – 5:00 AM
- Sunday: 2:00 PM – 1:00 AM



La Casetta Riga★★★★★ 4.6 (621)

1-2 hours

Map

La Casetta Riga is a highly-rated restaurant in Riga, rated 4.6★ from 621 reviews. Located at Tērbatas iela 66, Centra rajons, Rīga, LV-1001, Latvia.

Opening Hours

- Monday: 12:00 – 9:00 PM
- Tuesday: 12:00 – 9:00 PM
- Wednesday: 12:00 – 9:00 PM
- Thursday: 12:00 – 9:00 PM
- Friday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Saturday: 12:00 – 11:00 PM
- Sunday: 12:00 – 7:00 PM

Practical Information

Seasonal Guide to Riga

Summer (June-August): Peak tourist season with *warm temperatures (18-25°C)*, long daylight hours, and vibrant outdoor cafe culture. Festivals, concerts, and events fill the calendar. Book accommodations well in advance and expect higher prices. Perfect for beach trips to Jūrmala and outdoor activities.

Spring (April-May) & Autumn (September-October): Ideal times to visit with *mild weather, fewer crowds, and lower prices*. Spring brings blooming parks and awakening energy, while autumn offers stunning foliage in parks and nearby forests. Museums and attractions remain fully operational without summer crowds.

Winter (November-March): Cold temperatures (-5 to 5°C) create magical atmosphere, especially during *Christmas market season (late November-early January)*. Experience authentic local life, enjoy spa culture, and witness beautiful snow-covered parks. Shortest days mean limited daylight but atmospheric illuminated streets. Dress warmly in layers!

Best Overall: Late May-June or September offer the sweet spot of good weather, manageable crowds, reasonable prices, and full access to all attractions and activities.

Getting Around Riga

✈ Airport Transfer

Riga International Airport (RIX) is 10km from city center. Options include:

- **Bus #22:** Runs every 10-20 minutes to Central Station and Old Town (€2, 30 minutes, Airport service now includes nightly N22 departures; check the current bus 22 timetable for daytime journeys.)
- **Taxi:** Fixed fare €15-20 to center, book via Bolt app for transparent pricing
- **Airport Express:** Direct minibus service (€10, reservation recommended)

Public Transportation

Riga's *integrated public transport system* includes trams, buses, and trolleybuses covering the entire city efficiently. The standard 90-minute ticket costs €1.50; bus 22 driver tickets cost €1.81. (The bus 22 driver ticket is €1.81 and requires a bank card.). Purchase e-tickets via mobile app or multi-ride cards at kiosks for savings. Transport operates 5:30 AM-midnight with night bus routes on main corridors.

Walking & Cycling

Old Town and central attractions are **easily walkable**. The compact historic center requires no transport. Rent bikes from numerous stations (€1-2/hour) to explore canal paths and Art Nouveau district. Bike infrastructure is good with designated lanes on major streets.

Ride-Sharing

Bolt dominates in Riga with affordable rates and excellent coverage. Download the app for quick, cashless rides. CityBee offers car-sharing for day trips beyond public transport reach.

What to Buy in Riga

Authentic Latvian Products

- **Baltic Amber:** Authentic amber jewelry from certified shops in Old Town; look for inclusion pieces and unique designs
- **Riga Black Balsam:** Traditional herbal liqueur (45% alcohol) in distinctive ceramic bottles a perfect gift or souvenir
- **Latvian Linen:** High-quality linen textiles including tablecloths, towels, and clothing from local manufacturers
- **Handmade Ceramics:** Contemporary and traditional pottery from Latvian artisans, especially at markets

- **Woolens & Mittens:** Traditional patterned mittens (cimdi) featuring ancient Latvian symbols and modern designs
- **Natural Cosmetics:** Products made with local ingredients like sea buckthorn, honey, and bog herbs

Shopping Areas

Old Town: Souvenir shops, amber galleries, and boutiques concentrated on Kalku Street and near major squares. Expect tourist pricing but convenient selection.

Berga Bazārs: Upscale boutiques featuring *Latvian designers, independent brands*, and specialty shops in atmospheric historic setting.

Central Market: Best for authentic food products, local honey, smoked fish, and bargain non-tourist goods. *Haggling acceptable with outdoor vendors* but not inside pavilions.

Check the event calendar for market dates; Saturday operation should not be assumed year-round: Organic foods, handmade crafts, and artisanal products from local producers excellent for unique, quality items.

Bargaining Tips

Fixed prices apply in shops and market pavilions. Gentle negotiation possible at Central Market outdoor stalls and informal vendors, especially for multiple items. Remain polite and realistic Riga isn't a bargaining culture like some destinations.

Annual Events & Festivals

Major Cultural Events

Latvian Song and Dance Festival (every 5 years, next 2028): UNESCO-recognized celebration where The 2028 Song and Dance Festival is scheduled for 30 June–9 July; the official plan sets a target of at least 40,000 participants. The nation's most important cultural event.

Verify the year’s programme and dates. *Streets transform into party zones* with food stalls and entertainment stages.

Check whether the festival is scheduled for your travel year; do not present it as a guaranteed annual November event: Old Town illuminated by creative light installations, projections, and artistic illumination. *Free outdoor art experience* attracting thousands to atmospheric evening walks.

Check the Latvian National Opera’s current season calendar: International opera performances in historic Latvian National Opera house and outdoor venues. World-class productions at accessible prices.

Holiday Celebrations

Christmas Market (Late November-Early January): Town Hall Square and Dome Square host atmospheric markets with crafts, food, mulled wine, and entertainment. *One of Europe's most charming* Christmas market experiences.

Midsummer (Jāņi - June 23-24): Latvia's most important holiday celebrating summer solstice. Many locals leave cities for countryside celebrations, but Ethnographic Museum hosts traditional festivities.

Independence Day (November 18): National holiday marking Latvia's independence with ceremonies at Freedom Monument, concerts, and patriotic events throughout city.

Regular Events

Kalnciema Quarter Market: Check the market’s current schedule before visiting.

Verify the event’s dates for the travel year: Museums, galleries, and cultural venues open late with special programs, performances, and free entry.

Sample Daily Itineraries

Day 1: Old Town Essentials

Morning: Begin at Town Hall Square, visit House of the Blackheads (9:30 AM), photograph St. Peter's Church exterior, climb its tower for panoramic views (10:30 AM). Walk through medieval streets to Swedish Gate and Three Brothers.

Lunch: Enjoy traditional Latvian cuisine at restaurant on Livu Square (12:30 PM).

Afternoon: Tour Riga Cathedral and attend organ music mini-concert if scheduled (2 PM). Explore Dome Square area, visit small boutiques. Walk to Freedom Monument (4 PM).

Evening: Dinner in Old Town (6:30 PM), evening stroll along illuminated streets and canal promenade (8 PM).

Day 2: Art Nouveau & Museums

Morning: Breakfast near Central Market, explore market pavilions (8-10 AM). Visit Museum of the Occupation of Latvia (10:30 AM-12:30 PM).

Lunch: Light lunch at market or nearby cafe (12:45 PM).

Afternoon: Self-guided Art Nouveau architecture walk along Alberta iela and Elizabetes iela (2-3:30 PM). Visit Riga Art Nouveau Museum (3:45-5 PM).

Evening: Explore Berga Bazārs shopping area (5:30 PM), dinner at restaurant in Quiet Centre (7 PM).

Day 3: Cultural Immersion

Morning: Take morning train to Jūrmala (8:30 AM departure), explore beach resort town, walk along seaside and Jomas Street (9 AM-1 PM).

Lunch: Seafood lunch in Jūrmala (1 PM).

Afternoon: Return to Riga (3 PM), visit Latvian National Museum of Art (3:30-5:30 PM).

Evening: Stroll Esplanade Park, attend performance at Latvian National Opera if available (7:30 PM), or enjoy dinner with live music.

Day 4: Nature & History

Morning: Day trip to Sigulda by train (departing 8:45 AM), visit Turaida Castle and museum (10 AM-12:30 PM).

Lunch: Picnic or restaurant in Sigulda (12:45 PM).

Afternoon: Explore Gutman's Cave, walk castle valley trails, visit Sigulda New Castle grounds (2-5 PM). Return to Riga (6 PM train).

Evening: Casual dinner in Miera iela hipster quarter (8 PM), experience alternative Riga nightlife.

Day 5: Local Life & Relaxation

Morning: Visit Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum early (9 AM-12:30 PM) for peaceful exploration before crowds.

Lunch: Traditional lunch at museum's tavern or return to city (1 PM).

Afternoon: Leisurely walk through Mežaparks forest, Lake Ķīšezers area (2:30-4:30 PM). Alternatively, spa treatment at city hotel.

Evening: Final dinner at top restaurant (6:30 PM), farewell canal boat sunset cruise (8 PM), last drinks with Old Town views (9:30 PM).

Best Photography Locations

Iconic Shots

House of the Blackheads at Dawn: Arrive 6-7 AM for empty Town Hall Square with soft morning light on the facade. *Blue hour* or golden hour equally stunning. Shoot from center square for symmetric composition.

St. Peter's Church from Below: Dramatic upward angle from Skārņu Street captures soaring spire against sky. Best midday with blue sky or sunset for warm tones. Interior tower views provide 360° city panoramas.

Alberta Street Art Nouveau: Numbers 2, 4, 6, 8, 12 feature most photogenic facades. Morning light (9-11 AM) illuminates west-facing buildings beautifully. Focus on ornamental details faces, floral motifs, sculptural elements.

Scenic Perspectives

Vanšu Bridge Viewpoint: Walk onto pedestrian section for stunning Old Town skyline with Daugava River foreground. *Sunset golden hour* creates magical light on spires and rooftops. Accessible 24/7.

Academy of Sciences Observation Deck: 17th floor (65m height) provides 360° panoramic views. €5 entry. Best for overcast days when even lighting showcases city layout. Shoot through clean windows or from outdoor section.

Kronvalda Park Canal Bridges: Romantic bridge reflections work wonderfully in calm morning water. Autumn foliage (late September-October) adds vibrant colors. *Cherry blossoms in May* frame shots perfectly.

Hidden Gems

Jauniela Street Curve: Classic Old Town perspective with cobblestones, colorful buildings, and gas lamps. Early morning (7-8 AM) or evening (8-9 PM) for soft light without crowds. Often used as film location.

Swedish Gate Alley: Riga's only remaining medieval gate creates atmospheric tunnel shot. Works in any weather rain adds moody cobblestone reflections. *Night illumination* particularly atmospheric.

Spīķeri Quarter Industrial: Red brick warehouses, cobblestones, and riverside views provide edgy urban aesthetic. Sunset over Daugava with Old Town backdrop. Modern art installations add contemporary elements.

Instagram Favorites

Central Market Pavilions: Art Nouveau Zeppelin hangar architecture from outside. Interior stalls bursting with colorful produce (get vendor permission for close-ups). Best lighting 9-11 AM.

Freedom Monument Base: Use monument as background for group shots. Changing guard ceremony adds action element. Respectful photography essential no silly poses.

Livu Square Umbrellas: Colorful umbrella installation (seasonal) creates playful overhead canopy. Works day or night with different moods. Wide-angle lens captures full display.

Seasonal Opportunities

Winter Christmas Markets: Illuminated market stalls, decorated Christmas trees, mulled wine steam. *Blue hour (4-5 PM)* combines artificial lights with remaining daylight. Capture atmospheric crowd scenes.

Spring Cherry Blossoms: Esplanade Park and canal promenades burst with pink blooms (early May). Shoot blossoms with Art Nouveau buildings background for quintessential Riga composition.

Autumn Foliage: Mežaparks forest golden colors reflected in Lake Ķīšezers. *Late September-early October* peak season. Misty mornings create ethereal atmosphere.

Pro Tips

- **Golden Hours:** Summer sunrise around 5 AM, sunset 10 PM; Winter sunrise 9 AM, sunset 4 PM dramatically different shooting windows
- **Drone Photography:** Requires permits in Old Town historic zone; check regulations before flying
- **Tripods:** Generally allowed but stay aware of foot traffic in crowded areas

- **Weather Apps:** Check forecasts for cloud coverage partly cloudy often better than stark blue sky for architectural photography
- **Respect Privacy:** Ask permission before photographing market vendors, restaurant interiors, or identifiable individuals

Electricity & Connectivity

Power Supply

Voltage: 230V AC, 50Hz (standard European specification)

Plug Type: Type C (two round pins) and Type F (two round pins with grounding clips) - standard European plugs

Adapters Needed: Travelers from UK, US, Canada, Australia, and most non-European countries require plug adapters. Purchase at airport, electronics stores, or bring universal adapter from home.

Charging Facilities

Most hotels, hostels, and guesthouses provide *adequate outlets and may offer adapter loans* at reception. Cafes and restaurants increasingly feature USB charging ports and power outlets for customers. Public spaces like Central Market and museums often have limited charging stations.

Internet & WiFi

Free WiFi: Widely available throughout Riga. Coverage includes:

- All accommodation options from hostels to luxury hotels
- Most restaurants, cafes, bars, and shopping centers
- Public squares including Town Hall Square and Livu Square
- Public transportation (some trams and buses)
- Central Market and major tourist attractions

Mobile Data: Latvia uses GSM 900/1800 and 3G/4G/5G networks. EU visitors enjoy roaming at domestic rates. Non-EU travelers can purchase prepaid SIM cards from *LMT, Tele2, or Bite* operators at airport, malls, or operator stores. Prices start around €10 for tourist packages with 10-20GB data.

International Calls

Country code: +371. No area codes all Latvian numbers are 8 digits. Use WhatsApp, Skype, or similar apps over WiFi for free international calls. EU roaming regulations apply for EU visitors.

Latvian Cuisine & Dining

Must-Try Traditional Dishes

Grey Peas with Bacon (Pelēkie zirņi ar speķi): National dish of boiled grey peas with fried bacon and onions. *Hearty, simple, and quintessentially Latvian.* Often served during Midsummer celebrations.

Rye Bread (Rupjmaize): Dark, dense sourdough rye bread central to Latvian cuisine. Served with almost every meal. Try *bread soup (maizes zupa)*, a sweet dessert made from rye bread, dried fruits, and whipped cream.

Sklandrausis: Traditional carrot and potato tart with caraway-spiced filling in rye crust. UNESCO-recognized cultural heritage. Sweet-savory flavor unique to Latvia.

Smoked Fish: Baltic sprats, mackerel, and eel smoked to perfection. Best purchased fresh at Central Market or enjoyed in Old Town restaurants. *Sprats on rye bread* make perfect appetizers.

Pīrāgi: Small bacon-filled pastries, Latvia's favorite snack food. Found in bakeries citywide. Perfect with beer or as on-the-go street food.

Saltibarsciai/Cold Beet Soup: Refreshing summer soup made from beets, kefir, cucumbers, and dill. Served bright pink and ice-cold. *Summer staple* in restaurants.

Kotletes: Pan-fried meat patties (pork or mixed meat) served with potatoes and pickles. Comfort food found in traditional restaurants and home cooking.

Beverages

Riga Black Balsam: Iconic herbal liqueur (45% alcohol) made from 24 ingredients including herbs, roots, berries. *Intense, bitter flavor* try mixed with blackcurrant juice, coffee, or in cocktails. Also available in coffee, cherry, and other flavored variations.

Local Beer: Try *Užavas, Valmiermuižas, or Tērvetes* craft breweries' offerings. Latvians take beer seriously quality craft scene thriving alongside traditional brands.

Kvass: Traditional fermented rye bread drink, slightly fizzy and mildly alcoholic (0.5-1%). Refreshing summer beverage.

Birch Sap: Collected in spring, served fresh or fermented. Natural, slightly sweet drink with cultural significance.

Where to Eat

Traditional Latvian: *Lido Recreation Centre* (cafeteria-style, authentic, affordable), *Folkklubs Ala Pagrabs* (atmospheric cellar with live folk music), *Vincents* (upscale contemporary Latvian cuisine).

Central Market: Best place for authentic street food try smoked fish, pickles, fresh produce. Inexpensive vendors serve hot meals in pavilions.

Contemporary Dining: Riga's modern restaurant scene blends Baltic ingredients with international techniques. *Restaurant 3*, *Valtera Restorāns*, and *Tam Tam* exemplify new Nordic approach.

Dining Tips

- **Meal Times:** Lunch 12-2 PM, dinner 6-10 PM. Many restaurants offer lunch specials (€5-8) for excellent value
- **Tipping:** 10% customary for good service; not obligatory but appreciated. Round up or add to card payment
- **Reservations:** Book ahead for upscale restaurants, especially weekend dinners. Casual spots generally accommodate walk-ins
- **Dietary Needs:** Vegetarian options increasingly common; vegan choices available in modern restaurants. Traditional cuisine heavily meat/dairy-based
- **Prices:** Expect €10-15 per person at casual restaurants, €25-40 at mid-range, €50+ at fine dining establishments

Tourist Passes

Riga City Card

The **Riga City Card** provides comprehensive benefits for visitors including *free entry to 40+ museums and attractions*, unlimited public transportation, and discounts at restaurants, shops, and tours. Available in 24-hour (€28), 48-hour (€35), and 72-hour (€42) versions. Includes free walking tour, canal boat ride discount, and skip-the-line privileges at popular sites. **Best value for museum enthusiasts** planning to visit 4+ attractions. Purchase online or at tourist information centers. Card activates upon first use and includes detailed guidebook with all benefits listed.

www.liveriga.com

Riga Pass (Museum Pass)

Specifically designed for **museum lovers**, the Riga Museum Pass grants entry to major museums including Latvian National Museum of Art, Art Nouveau Museum, Museum of the Occupation, Riga Motor Museum, and more. Available as single-day (€15) or three-day (€25) options. *Does not include transportation* but offers better per-museum value than City Card if you're not using public transport extensively. Ideal for focused cultural exploration without needing transport benefits. Available at participating museums and online.

www.museums.lv

Jūrmala City Card

For visitors planning **extended time in Jūrmala beach resort**, this card offers free public transportation within Jūrmala, discounts at spas, restaurants, and attractions, plus reduced entry to museums. Available in 24-hour (€12) and 72-hour (€18) versions. *Can be combined with Riga visits* for comprehensive regional exploration. Particularly valuable during summer beach season when using multiple facilities. Purchase at Jūrmala tourist information or online before arrival for slight discount.

www.jurmala.lv