



HANSEATIC CITIES & MEDIEVAL HERITAGE



HANSEATIC LEAGUE

The Hanseatic League was created in 13th century Germany as a medieval trade organization uniting over 300 cities along the Baltic and North Sea area. The goal – to defend their shared interests and to facilitate overseas trade with Northern Europe.






Eight of Latvia's cities were part of the Hanseatic League. As time passed the organization disintegrated, but in keeping with tradition, the Hanseatic League was restored in 1980. Nowadays the organization's main goal is to keep the ancient Hansa spirit alive, to facilitate cultural and economic co-operation and to strengthen people's bond with their city. Among many of the organization's projects, every year one of the Hansa cities hosts the large Hanseatic festival, where almost all of the Hansa cities come together to celebrate.

The main attraction of the Hanseatic Days has always been the large Hansa market, where each city presents itself with information about the city, national delicacies and their craftsmen's products.

HANSEATIC CITIES IN LATVIA

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Symbols

-  Address
-  Phone number
-  E-mail, website
-  Annual city festival
-  Accommodation





For centuries Riga has been a cultural hub of the Baltic sea region – it's been influenced by the Germans, Swedes, Russians and other nations. Riga has been hailed as a gem of Art Nouveau architecture, and the old town has been included in the list of UNESCO cultural heritage sites, but it reveals its true charm to gourmands. In 1282 Riga became a part of the Hanseatic League, at which point trade developed quickly and exotic products began to reach the city.

Taking the best from other nation's traditions, but staying loyal to its own local farmer's fresh produce, modern day Riga has become a capital city of taste that invites everyone to explore the unlimited imagination of the city's chefs and get to know their handiwork.

Restaurant specials will offer common products such as peas, gooseberries and honey, as well as products that are less easy to come by in typical cuisine - red-cap boletus mushrooms, chokeberries, veal liver and more. All of the foods are offered in unique combinations and will surprise not only your taste buds, but will also be a treat for the eyes.



Each meal finds its essence in the produce that goes into it, which can most easily be found in the central market, in the belly of the city. You can purchase farmers goods in the milk, vegetable, fish and other pavilions, which are fresh and ecologically clean. Look up and enjoy the pavilion architecture – they were built during the First World War as zeppelin hangars! If you want to enjoy these products and masterful creations in a more concentrated way, we suggest you visit one of the Saturday markets, for example the Kalnciema Quarter.

Riga Tourism Information Centre

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www.LiveRiga.com

 August: www.rigassvetki.lv





Cēsis is a city of historic and modern significance. Walking through the city you'll be walking down the same cobblestoned streets as during medieval times, as the layout hasn't changed since. Be sure to note the wooden buildings and look for the ancient roof tiles. The city gets its romantic charm from the city's pride gem – the medieval castle ruins and their surrounding parks, where you might be so lucky as to spot the black swans or the legendary "wise father of time", who is said to light the city lanterns.

Cēsis was a significant trade city – it became a part of the Hanseatic league in the 15th century, and was responsible for managing the flow of goods to Russian lands. Having become such a powerful trade city, Cēsis had even developed its own currency – the Cēsis shilling. It is also home to one of Northern Europe's oldest breweries – "Cēsu alus". Among other significant facts – Cēsis is the birthplace of the Latvian flag, and also happened to become the capital city of Latvia for two days.



Nowadays Cēsis has become a centre of art and culture. European and Latvian culture come together here – enjoy the mix of tradition and innovation in the new regional concert hall or at one of the many festivals that happen throughout the year, such as the Cēsis modern art festival, Medieval Festival, the "Gallant Harpsichord" music festival, Museum night, the city festival, the International Architect Summer Plenary and more.

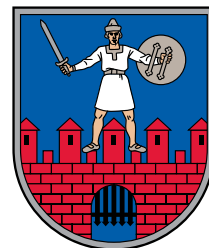
Cēsis Tourism Information Centre

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 July





The ancient Hanseatic city of Koknese lies 100 km from Riga along the historic trade road of that time - along the Daugava river shore. Products would be stored, evaluated, weighed, packed and loaded in Riga and then would be sent to Koknese to be further distributed to the West by road. The city is usually noted for its natural beauty - especially for its rare shimmering dolomite river banks, which are interrupted only by the imposing hydroelectric station. At the place where the Daugava river converges with the Perse river, the Koknese castle stood on the cliffs guarding the city behind it, while today the castle has been reduced to ruins that spark anyone's imagination. It has transfixed many a passers by, and is so beautiful that this landscape has been recreated by all of Latvia's most celebrated artists.

Take a walk down the nature trail and end up at the castle ruins by the Daugava to hear a tale from the local fishermen. Legend has it that the biggest catfish can be found right here. The Daugava catfish is elusive and mysterious, which is why every spring the locals



participate in a "catfish awakening" celebration where you can enjoy the medieval feel and watch the locals at work, keeping the ancient traditions in tact in this heritage site.

Not far from Koknese you'll find the "Zemitāni" nature safari, where by car you'll be given a tour of the park to observe deer, wild boar, bison, and other animals in their natural environment.

Koknese Tourism Information Centre

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 July





A small, medieval city surrounded by untouched nature that hosts unique and unheard of cultural events. This city is a hidden gem and certainly one of the most charming cities of Latvia, hailed by painters as a "painting to covet".

Kuldīga is not only a beautifully alluring city, it's also home to Europe's widest waterfall at 249 meters. For two weeks in April and October you can observe the salmon jumping up the wide, yet low falls. Over the Venta river you'll also find one of the longest brick bridges in existence at 500 feet long, built in 1874. Stroll through one of the rarely-conserved medieval neighbourhoods (and the only remaining one in the Baltics) that was built during the 17-18th century around the small river. The same river goes on to flow through the city and ends up flowing right between buildings, which is what caused Kuldīga to be nicknamed the Venice of Latvia. Walk through the picturesque and quaint city, and enjoy the cozy taverns and hearty meals of the city.




Nature lovers will not be disappointed, as there's much to see and do around the city. Go on an adventure hike along the old narrow-gauge train tracks, or take a boat down the Abava or Venta rivers or fish in the plentiful lakes.

In the summer, taste locally made wines in the wine cellars – one of the few elements that've been preserved from the original fortifications, which were built in 1242, along with a few portions of the fortress walls.

Enjoy the charming collision of history, the countryside, and city all in one.

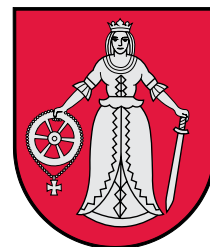
Kuldīga Tourism Information Centre

 Baznīcas iela 5, Kuldīga,
Kuldīgas novads, LV-3301

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 tourinfo@kuldiga.lv
www.visit.kuldiga.lv

 July





One of Latvia's oldest cities, though it was small, it was included as a city of the Hanseatic league and served as one of Riga's archbishop's residences.

Because of its size, the city can be easily enjoyed by foot. Enjoy the medieval castle ruins and its renewed gate watchtower, and imagine yourself in that time, as the city and road plan has been preserved since the 14th century. See the 17th century church, the largest Orthodox church of the Vidzeme region, and 18th century wooden buildings and wall art in the old city hall.

Visit the firefighter museum and then drop by the Silver museum, home to the biggest silver work of art in the Baltics. There you'll be given workshops and demonstrations by the silversmiths, and have a taste of silver water.

Get close to nature by visiting the Lieliezers lake. The lake beach is a certified Blue Flag beach – a symbol of quality and safety. Rent a boat or a water bicycle and




explore the 4,3 km wide lake, or stroll around the lake on the boardwalk.

Limbaži is the home to an international accordion and theatre festival, bringing together accordion enthusiasts from all over Europe. It also hosts a festival centered around the national string instrument called the "kokle", along with other similar instruments from around the Baltic sea.

In 2014 the city of Limbazi was awarded the international award for sustainable culture tourist destinations, why not go and see what it's all about?

Limbaži Tourism Information Centre

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 August





The Great Straupe Castle was built during the 13th century, and is one of the few castles that's still in use today. It was built by von Rozen, one of the German barons whose family continued to govern the area for 700 years. On the other side of the river from the Great Straupe castle, he also built a smaller castle, in order to more effectively govern the territory. His governing was in fact so effective, that the little town of Straupe quickly became a bustling trade city and was then admitted to the Hanseatic league. The Rozens invited the best craftsmen and tradesmen into their properties, supported and trusted the local municipality with their decisions – all of which developed the area even further.

Today, Straupe is a quaint village rich with history and beautiful nature. An ideal place to find peace and harmony in the surrounding. It's no coincidence that many of the country's most creative minds have chosen this area as their home to enjoy the relaxing, unhurried tranquility. The majority of Straupe is included in the Gauja national park, making it rich with forests, moors and bogs.



The people of Straupe are hardworking farmers, craftsmen and woodworkers who take pride in the traditions of their skill, while combining it with modern solutions. Since renewing the Hanseatic League traditions in 2008, Straupe has become home to one of the few farmer's markets outside large cities, keeping the Hanseatic League's tradition of trade alive.



Pārgauja Tourism Information Centre



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July





Valmiera's impressive cultural heritage along with its untouched nature has always made it an appealing destination – situated 107 km from Riga, 50 km from the Estonian border and on the banks of the Gauja river. Valmiera will show you the best of Latvian craftsmen's traditions, paired with modern manufacturing. The ideal place to grab an authentic Latvian souvenir along with the knowledge of how it was made.

The city bloomed during the 14th century, which coincided with the time when the city joined the Hanseatic League. Crafts such as pottery, pelting, woodworking, metalworking and forging were developed, becoming a center for crafts and trade. Even today a yearly market is held in October, bringing together hundreds of craftsmen with their goods.

Visit the city to get a hands-on experience of the tradition of fine crafts. Learn to build wooden barrels, find out how the delicious "Valmiermuiža" beer is brewed along with a tour of the brewery and of course,



taste testing. A short drive away is the picturesque "Brenču" brewery. Try your hand at pottery at "Vaivada ceramics", and learn the traditions of building chairs from the masters at "Lejasbregži". Visit a real forge under the guidance of blacksmith Kriss Dubrovskis, and visit the Valmiera museum to see the old metalworking tools, a tradesman's boat from the Hanseatic times, learn to pour candles, and take a look at the black clay workshop. Further along in the Burtnieki direction learn the traditions of hemp growing and its practical uses.

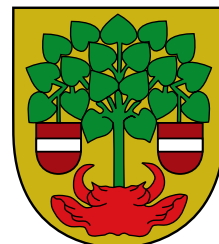
Valmiera Tourism Information Centre

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 July/August





Ventspils – the welcoming seaside city, where the harbor and the safe and qualitative Blue Flag beach live in harmony. The city takes pride in its distinct dialect, flag and currency – vents, and is always happy to have guests.

There's plenty to see and do – families with children will enjoy the playgrounds, the Children's Town and "Fantasy" park. The Adventure park will be exciting both for the young and old. Families can have fun at the Water Amusement park, which features attractions for those who enjoy a more active lifestyle, as well as a SPA zone for those who are looking to relax. In the summer you can also enjoy the beach waterpark.

Those who enjoy culture and history will certainly want to visit the Livonian Order Castle, which is the oldest fortress in Latvia and is almost unchanged since it was first built. The Seaside Open Air Museum tells a story of the ancient Latvian and Liv fishermen. In the museum you can ride a small Narrow-gauge train – a locomotive from 1916 that will take you all the way to



the Adventure Park. While in the House of Crafts you'll have the chance to get to know the local dialect - the Ventin language, the folk costumes of the region, as well as try out the ancient art of calligraphy.

Get closer to the stars by visiting the planetarium, which offers a vibrant 360 degree star show daily. Meanwhile, the deer farm can be visited by animal lovers where they can be observed from the lookout tower.

Visit the beautiful seaside city and get to know it just the way you want to.

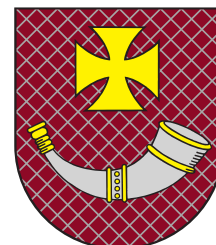
Ventspils Tourism Information Centre

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 July/August





DIRECTIONS

Cēsis	Distance between cities (km)							
833	Gdańsk							
352	481	Kaunas						
118	758	277	Koknese					
247	809	328	264	Kuldīga				
45	832	351	140	246	Limbaži			
172	926	445	253	340	128	Pärnu		
200	957	471	280	437	234	288	Pskov	
88	745	264	95	160	87	181	279	
967	119	615	872	921	944	1037	1093	
24	816	336	112	230	33	160	226	
168	989	509	294	403	182	170	168	
32	853	372	148	267	45	150	192	
273	885	404	292	56	273	367	464	
140	968	488	257	383	154	94	226	

Air traffic

Air traffic is an exceptionally convenient way of reaching Latvia. The Riga airport is the fastest growing airport in Europe; it offers direct flights to more than 80 cities of the world. The main destinations with approximate flight times are:

Less than 1 hour	1-2 hours	More than 2 hours
Helsinki, Minsk, Stockholm, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Tampere, Vilnius, Warsaw	Berlin, Copenhagen, Dusseldorf, Frankfurt, Hamburg, Kiev, Moscow, Oslo, Prague, Vienna	Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Geneva, Istanbul, London, Manchester, Milan, Munich, Paris, Rome, Tashkent, Tel Aviv

✈ Riga International Airport

+371 29311187 (pay per minute)

www.riga-airport.com

TRANSPORTATION

Riga Coach Terminal www.autoosta.lv

Riga Central Railway Station www.ldz.lv

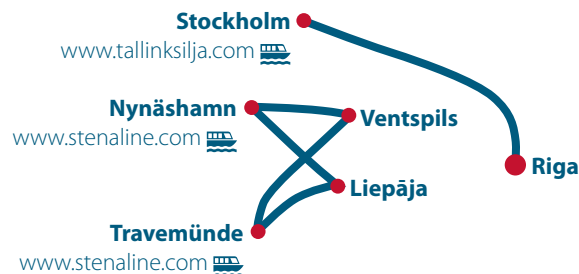
24-hour car help and information service

- Latvian Automotive Club (LAMB): 1888, www.lamb.lv
- Automobile club SOS: +371 67333333, www.sos.lv

Riga								
857	Slupsk							
72	951	Straupe						
245	1124	173	Tartu					
108	988	37	136	Valmiera				
187	1020	257	431	294	Ventspils			
224	1103	146	78	108	409	Viljandi		

Ferry connections

The major ports of Latvia have ferry connections with other ports in the Baltic Sea Region.



- Freeport or Riga: www.rop.lv
- Port of Liepāja: www.liepaja-sez.lv
- Freeport of Ventspils: www.portofventsipils.lv

Āraiši Lake Fortress

Discover the homeliness of the ancient Latgalian wooden settlement on an island in the middle of the picturesque Āraiši lake! The visit will be turned into an unusual experience by the traditionally-clothed guide who will not only tell you about the settlement, but will also demonstrate different tools and household objects. Right by the lake shore you'll find medieval castle ruins, which will give you a wonderful view of the lake fortress. If you're travelling with children, call in advance to arrange ancient latvian rituals and games. @ www.lnvm.lv



Bauska Castle

On the strip of earth between the Mūsa and Mēmele rivers, not far from the place the two converge to become the Lielupe river, you'll find two medieval castles. One of them indeed has turned into ruins, but from its tower the view of the wonderful Bauska city appears along with its surrounding panorama. In the second castle you'll find a museum where you can not only get acquainted with the castle's history, but arranging an appointment in advance, you'll be able to try on medieval outfits, dance a few renaissance dances and enjoy medieval foods. The castle surroundings are as if they were made for leisurely walks.

@ www.bauskaspils.lv



Dundaga Castle

They say that it's still haunted by the gnome king's baronesse sister, who was laid into the brick wall. While in the basement live "crocodiles" - an exhibit about the film's "Crocodile Dundee" main hero's prototype. Take a peek at the castle's history museum and Latvia's only permanent medal exhibit.

@ visit.dundaga.lv



Ēdole Castle

Several movies have been shot in this wonderful castle for its ancient aura. Spend some time at the interesting ancient item collection.

@ www.edolespils.lv



Jaunpils Castle

One of the rare ancient castles that has conserved its original appearance. Dress up in medieval outfits and go take a look at it, forge your own coin or enjoy a candle lit meal in the castle's tavern - just let them know in advance that you're coming. If you come for the Medieval Festival on the 9th of August, you'll be welcomed by a market, medieval entertainment and competitions.

@ www.jaunpilspils.lv



Krustpils Castle

Take a look at the castle's history and art exhibits and climb the tower from which you'll see a lovely view of Jēkabpils city. Applying in advance, you'll be able to stay longer and learn to pour candles and prepare paper dolls, taste the local cheeses and honey with a cup of tea, as well as go on a candlelit tour through the haunted basements or enjoy ancient latvian activities and games.

@ www.jekabpilsmuzejs.lv



Livonia Castle of Sigulda

You can best feel the ancient aura of the castle by walking along its fortress walls and climbing up its reconstructed towers. By giving advanced notice, you'll also be able to go on an exhilarating journey through the Livonian brotherhood's daily life, participating in medieval competition and drinking - something for your stomach to enjoy as well. @ www.tourism.sigulda.lv



Šlokenbeka Manor

Behind the fortified brick walls you'll find the road museum and exciting recreational activities. Let them know in advance that you're coming, and you'll be able to spend time playing ancient wooden games or enjoy wine and other of the castle's luxuries.

@ www.slokenbeka.lv



Turaida Castle

Time will fly in the most popular of the medieval castles of Latvia; walking along the fortress walls, enjoying the view of the wonderful Gauja ancient valley from the tower windows, taking a look at the archaic weapons, jewelry and other objects, and much more. Right next to it you'll find the rock sculpture or Dainu hill, the Turaida wooden church and the Turaida manor buildings. Don't pass up the opportunity to slip into a knight's or farmers role, trying on their medieval outfits and finding out what they did. At the same time get to know Latvia's history and spend time in the museum with an active orienteering game, where you have to locate different objects within the museum territory. Only don't forget to apply in advance to enjoy all of these special medieval adventures!

@ www.turaida-muzejs.lv



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Photos: from the archives of the Latvian Tourism Development Agency, A.Jasinskis, A.Gustovskis.

Not for sale

www.latvia.travel

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www.latvia.travel