

## **Baltic countries**

### **Long-lasting Evasion from the Baltic Countries**

### **9 days / 8 nights**

**Must-Sees of Three Countries on an Unusual 9-Day Trip**

### **Sustainable – Responsible – Solidarity**

**From € 2815 € vat included**

**Summer 2025**

Small Guided Group of up to 12 Travelers: An Intimate, Personalized, and Sustainable Experience. A Unique and Well-Balanced Itinerary: Discovery – Learning – Relaxation. 6 Stops by Regular Trains: Modern and Nostalgic – Covering a Total of 925 km.

Central & Comfortable Hotels, Half-Board: Local Cuisine and Tastings. Carbon Footprint Compensation: Your Participation Helps Plant Trees!



## BENEFITS OF OUR SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

- Small Group of up to 12 Travelers: Everyone gets the attention they deserve.
- Experienced Guides and Tour Leaders: Local experts (one guide per country), licensed and highly knowledgeable.
- Extraordinary Itinerary Designed by Locals: Minimizing the impact of mass tourism.
- A True Delight for Food Lovers: Authentic meals, tastings, organic farms, market visits, and dinners with drinks included.
- Scenic Hikes, Bike Rides, Boat Excursions: Plus various trams, buses, and cable cars.
- Eco-Friendly, Diverse, and Public-Transport-Focused Travel: 6 trains, minibuses, boats, buses, trams, cable cars...
- Learning Experiences: Vilnius University Library, Gauja National Park, Singing Revolution.
- Social Evenings & Local Immersion.
- Carbon-Neutral, Environmentally Friendly Journey: ~30-50 trees planted (receive your personal certificate!).
- Drinkable Tap Water Along the Route: Every traveler gets a free BPA-free reusable water bottle.
- Relaxed Pace with a Wide Choice of Affordable, Unique, and Authentic Optional Activities.

## Itinerary

### DAY 1 | PARIS / VILNIUS

Flight to Vilnius.

Upon arrival, you'll be greeted at the airport and transferred to your hotel in the historic Old Town (UNESCO World Heritage site). Check-in and free time for your first exploration of Lithuania's capital, depending on your flight schedule. Dinner at leisure.

Many cultures have shaped the beauty and charm of Vilnius, founded in 1323—Lithuanians, Poles, Jews, and Russians. The easternmost Western European city, Vilnius, boasts a rich cultural crossroads within its UNESCO-listed Baroque quarter. An evening in Vilnius is a chance to enjoy its many charming courtyards, now transformed into lively terraces. Strolling through the Old Town's narrow streets and visiting the Republic of Artists is the perfect way to soak in the city's unique atmosphere.

OPTION: Hot air balloon flight over Vilnius' red rooftops or the Trakai Castle!

Overnight in Vilnius, 4-star hotel in the Old Town.

### DAY 2 | ACADEMIC SPIRIT, WORLD HERITAGE, AND BAROQUE ARCHITECTURE OF VILNIUS ; TRAKAI, A TYPICAL LAKESIDE VILLAGE AND ITS CASTLE (60 km – 09h/18h)

During breakfast, meet your tour guide to discuss the trip schedule. You will also receive your booklet with a detailed road book, a treat, and a BPA-free reusable bottle.

Discover the must-sees during a walking tour: the Gate of Dawn with the remains of the city walls and the famous Chapel of Mercy, a sacred site for pilgrims and Catholic believers. The upper part reveals magnificent churches, among which the most interesting are the Orthodox Church of the Holy Spirit, the Catholic Church of St. Casimir, and St. Theresa's Church. Stroll through Town Hall Square, which houses the former merchants' guilds, and the adjacent Jewish quarter, marking the rich Jewish history of Vilnius, which accounted for almost half of the city's population before World War II.

Visit the Vilnius University with its 16th-century courtyards, its frescoed rooms, and St. John's Church with its beautiful baroque organ. Private visit to the Vilnius Library. And, of course, visit the Church of St. Anne, made of red bricks, considered a masterpiece of Northern Gothic architecture, as well as the Cathedral of St. Stanislaus and St. Ladislaus, known for the Chapel of St. Casimir.

In the afternoon, depart for Trakai, the former capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, located 27 kilometers from Vilnius by train (Skoda electric duplex train), in a National Park dotted with 15 glacial lakes. It is a picturesque village inhabited by the Karaite minority from the East; only 60 descendants remain in the village today, but they have managed to preserve their culture: they have their own temple, a school, and maintain their culinary traditions.

Visit the historic district with its small wooden houses, and board a boat for a ride on the lake around the famous red-brick island castle. Tasting of Karaite specialties at a typical restaurant. Free time for a pleasant walk along the lake.

Return to Vilnius and discover the magnificent Church of St. Peter and St. Paul, a baroque masterpiece with 2,000 stucco sculptures. Accompanied by your guide, enjoy a welcome dinner with Lithuanian specialties and local craft beer.

Overnight in Vilnius, 4-star hotel in the Old Town.

### **DAY 3 | THE INSPIRATION OF VILNIUS TO HILL OF CROSSES, REUNIONS AT RUSTIC MANOR, AND THE ROCOCO OF RUNDALĖ PALACE (380 km – 08h30/19h30)**

This morning, depart for Šiauliai, where the famous Hill of Crosses (Kryžiu Kalnas) is located. Two twin mounds are covered with thousands of crosses, attracting pilgrims and tourists from all over the world. With a few hundred crosses erected at the end of the 19th century, believed to bring spiritual and physical healing, this site grew significantly during the Soviet period as a symbol of resistance against imposed atheism, especially after the visit of Pope John Paul II in 1993.

Next, take time to visit a rustic manor run by a family of architects—meet the owners, tour the manor, and enjoy a homemade lunch.

Continue to Rundalė, known for its extravagant palace set in a bucolic natural landscape. Guided tour of the palace, designed by Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli, the master architect of the Russian imperial court, and creator of the Winter Palace (Hermitage). Discover the rooms of this baroque-rococo ducal summer residence, including the throne hall, white hall, galleries, the duke's apartments, and the duchess's boudoir.

The former Duchy of Courland, which existed between 1561 and 1795, was wealthy from agriculture, had two overseas colonies, and gave rise to Dorothee of Courland, companion of Talleyrand and heir to his riches.

Final leg of the journey to Riga, check-in at your hotel in the Old Town, and dinner at a traditional restaurant featuring local specialties.

The capital of Latvia and the metropolis of the Baltic States, Riga has nearly 800,000 inhabitants. Founded in 1201, it preserves its UNESCO-listed medieval Old Town, the ring of gardens and grand elegant boulevards, the picturesque canal, and the famous Art Nouveau district.

Overnight in Riga, 4-star hotel in the UNESCO Heritage district.

### **DAY 4 | RIGA : EXTREM RICHNESS OF ART NOUVEAU AND DAILY LIFE ON ITS STREETS, SQUARES, FOOD MARKET, AND LOCAL TRAMWAY (09h00/14h00)**

This morning, meet for a discovery of the Art Nouveau district. This dominant architectural style in Riga boasts more than 800 impressive facades. Guided tour of the magnificent Art Nouveau Museum, which houses objects and furniture from this iconic style of Riga.

Take a walking tour of the Old Town, discovering the essential landmarks: the House of the Blackheads, the castle, the Three Brothers, the Freedom Monument, the ancient city walls, and the churches of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John.

Interior visit of the Dome Cathedral, featuring its immense central nave, its 6,718-pipe organ—one of the largest in the world, and its historic cloister. Organ concert (20 minutes). Lunch at a local restaurant during the visit.

Enjoy a cruise on a small historic boat along the canal and the river. Then, take a local tramway past the National Opera to reach Riga's famous Central Market. It is housed in five former Zeppelin airship hangars and is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, just like Riga's Old Town. Dating back to 1930, each hangar is dedicated to a specific specialty: butcher shop, vegetables, etc. A great opportunity to discover local specialties!

Evening free for individual exploration. Let yourself be surprised or ask your guide for the best recommendations!

Overnight in Riga, 4-star hotel in the UNESCO Heritage district.

OPTION: Take a historic boat cruise on the canal and river, followed by a visit to the House of the Black Heads, where you can enjoy a glass of sparkling wine.

## **DAY 5 | FREE DAY IN RIGA OR OPTIONAL ESCAPE TO THE HISTORIC SEASIDE RESORT OF JURMALA**

Free day to deepen your experience in Riga: explore the typical neighborhoods of Agenskalns, Grizinkalns, and Mezaparks, or take the train to the seaside!

OPTION: Join the optional half-day escape to the historic seaside resort of Jūrmala by local electric train: admire the architecture of the train stations every 5 minutes. Discover Jūrmala, a seaside resort stretching along 30 km of sandy beach. Take a stroll through the streets, admiring the wooden architecture and enjoy a walk along the beach. Lunch by the Baltic Sea.

Overnight in Riga, 4-star hotel in the UNESCO Heritage district.

## **DAY 6 | GAUJA NATIONAL PARK : ESCAPE INTO PICTURESQUE NATURE FULL OF FOLKLORE AND PAST SECRETS (120 km, 09:00-18:00)**

After an urban experience, this morning, head to Gauja National Park, nicknamed "Latvia's Switzerland." Founded in 1972, this park protects the deep valley of the Gauja River with medieval castles, unusual villages, and natural monuments. Take the cable car to cross the Gauja Valley and admire "The Great Green". The short walk through the forest leads you to Gutman's Cave.

In Turaida, spend about an hour in the open-air museum. This large green space includes the manor with its typical buildings and pond system, the park of the famous sculptor Indulis Ranka, the 17th-century wooden church still in use, the tomb of the legendary Rose of Turaida, and finally the ruins of the red-brick episcopal castle. Lunch at a local tavern.

Pass through the village of Ligatne, the former paper mill center of the merchant Mentzendorff, who supplied high-quality paper to the Russian emperors. The paper mill provided its workers with housing, firewood, schools, and daycare, in exchange for a salary lower than average. Today, with the paper mill closed, the village has become a tourist site full of curiosities: the old mill, the typical workers' houses, hiking trails, and 365 caves carved into sandstone to store products.

Continue the visit to Ungurmuiža – a beautiful 18th-century baroque wooden manor that survived wars and fires intact, preserving its wall paintings. Surrounded by a stunning oak park with centenary trees, it is truly a magical place. Dinner at the manor.

Arrive in Cēsis, the town where the Latvian flag was born. Free evening and overnight at a 3-star hotel in the heart of Cēsis.

## **DAY 7 | IN SEARCH OF BALTIC MODUS VIVENDI IN BUCOLIC COUNTRYSIDE AND ON THE SANDY BEACHES OF THE BALTIC (320 km, 09:00-18:00)**

This morning, stroll through the Old Town of Cēsis and visit the massive ruins of the medieval castle, once the largest fortress of the Livonian Order.

To better understand the local life in the Latvian countryside, visit a biological farm that produces goat cheese and ice cream – enjoy a bio-tasting and lunch with the locals.

Head towards Pärnu, a seaside town on the Baltic Sea, for a relaxing walk along the sea to the Old Town of this former Hanseatic port of Embecke.

Then, continue the journey directly to Tallinn. Upon arrival, enjoy a panoramic tour of the third Baltic capital and its surroundings: the Pirita district, a marina developed for the 1980 Olympics, and the stage of the Singing Revolution.

Check-in at the hotel. Orientation walk and dinner at a local restaurant. Free evening for a first encounter with the city, which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Tallinn's Old Town, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1997, is one of the most beautiful medieval cities in Europe, with its fortifications, cobbled and steep streets, many churches, and beautiful houses. Walking tour of the city's old quarters. Over the centuries and successive occupations, the city has accumulated numerous monuments built in a wide variety of architectural styles.

Overnight in Tallinn, 4-star hotel in the city center.

## **DAY 8 | TALLINN THE MEDIEVAL AND DYNAMIC : FORTRESS WITH INCREDIBLE RAMPARTS AND TURRETS, UNKNOWN FINE ARTS, AND DIGITAL CULTURE (09:00-15:00, 4 hours of walking)**

Stroll along the medieval ramparts and continue with a visit to the Lower Town, which has preserved its medieval spirit since the 13th century. Enjoy handmade marzipan at Tallinn's oldest café, founded in 1864.

Visit Town Hall Square, surrounded by magnificent medieval buildings and wealthy Hanseatic homes, which testify to the city's prosperity and merchants of the time. Explore the Passage of St. Catherine with its Estonian craft guilds.

To conclude the visit, enjoy a meal at a medieval-style restaurant.

Discover the Upper Town, dominated by the Toompea Fortress, which houses the Estonian Parliament, the Orthodox Cathedral, and beautiful historic houses. Visit the Dome Church with its collection of coats of arms and tombstones.

From a higher vantage point, you can enjoy views from the Patkuli and Kohtu lookout points. Among other things, you will have an unobstructed view of the ramparts that surround the Lower Town.

Free afternoon for your personal discoveries – take a stroll through the Old Town of Tallinn.

OPTION: Authentic afternoon – 3 hours with a guide: visit the food market in the popular wooden neighborhood, the industrial district of the former brick factory converted into creative and playful spaces, and the Nobel Port with its unique architecture. Visit the maritime museum located at the historic Hydroplane Port, with access to a submarine.

Dinner at leisure. The friendly bars of Tallinn offer a pleasant continuation of the evening.

Overnight in Tallinn, 4-star hotel in the city center.

## **DAY 9 | LAST DAY IN THE BALTIC STATES – TALLINN / PARIS**

Depending on your flight schedule, free morning/afternoon. Then, organized transfer to Tallinn International Airport and return flight.

Meeting with your guide - GINTA VILSONE:

I am Latvian, but I lived in France for six and a half years. I have dual artistic training: French and Latvian. In Latvia, I studied at the Secondary School of Applied Arts (Ceramics Department) and at the Academy of Fine Arts (Textile Art Department). In France, I studied at the Regional School of Saint-Étienne (Art Department; Master's degree). All my studies in France were conducted exclusively in French.

While living in France, I wrote articles on culture that were published in the Latvian press: in the art magazine "Studija" and in the cultural newspaper "Literatūra, Māksla un Mēs" ("Literature, Art and Us"). I also did translations from French into Latvian (on culture and philosophy topics) that were published in the "Literatūra, Māksla un Mēs" newspaper and in the philosophy magazine "Kentaurs" ("Centaur"; Latvia).

I love nature and enjoy hiking. I can find beauty even in the simplest landscapes. When I was a teenager, I practiced climbing. Now I am learning Argentine tango. I have been working as a guide for 19 years. I do not like over-tourism. I want tourism to have a human face.

Looking forward to welcoming you to the Baltic States,

Ginta Vilsone

Long-lasting Evasion from the Baltic countries  
Summer 2024

<b>Price per person in Euros vat included</b>	
Adult in twin or double room	€ 2815
Single supplement	€ 375

Minimum 5 people per group.  
Supplement for 2-4 people: 350 euros.

Departures 2025:

- May 22 to May 30
- June 26 to July 4
- August 14 to August 22
- September 11 to September 19

**OUR RATES INCLUDE:**

- Regular Air Baltic flights Paris/Vilnius-Tallinn/Paris
- Airport taxes 148 euros to date, subject to change
- Small group guarantee - never more than 12 travelers
- 8 nights: 7 in 4-star hotels and 1 night in a 3-star rural hotel. Hotels located in historic neighborhoods (sights and restaurants within 3-7 minutes walking distance)
- Full board (4 free meals): 8 buffet-style breakfasts; 6 typical lunches, including at locals' homes and featuring local specialties; 4 typical dinners with drinks; 3 tastings/snacks
- Native francophone guide from the region
- Transport in a 19-seat air-conditioned minibus (Euro 6 pollution standard, CO2: <200 g/km)
- Organized airport transfers in Vilnius and Tallinn
- Boat trip on Lake Galve in Lithuania (in case of bad weather, an indoor visit to the castle); historic boat cruise in Riga
- Cable car ride across the Gauja Valley in Latvia
- Private guided tours as per the itinerary, including UNESCO cities, Pakruojis Manor, Rundale Castle, Riga's Art Nouveau district, Ungurmuiza rural manor, biological farm in the Limbazi region
- Special experiences: organ concert in Riga

- Entrance fees as per the program
- Carbon footprint compensation: neutralization of the round-trip flight (direct) and the travel impact on-site: 5 trees planted per person + individual certificate
- Travel booklet with maps, tips + reusable bottle + artisanal chocolate
- O-Nord Premium assistance available 24/7 in case of emergency
- Complimentary assistance insurance

#### **OUR RATES DO NOT INCLUDE:**

- Luggage handling
- Tips for the guide and local guides if their service exceeds your expectations (suggestion: 25 euros per traveler) and for the driver (suggestion: 15 euros per traveler): 100% of tips go to the guides and drivers
- Extra night in Vilnius or Tallinn: EUR 110 (double room); EUR 100 (single room)
- Airport transfers outside the organized hours: supplement EUR 10 per person
- Premium Multi-risk cancellation insurance (please contact us)

#### **Optional Extras:**

- OPTION VILNIUS: 165 € per person: hot air balloon ride over the red roofs of old Vilnius (total 3 hours, 1 hour of flight)
- OPTION RIGA: 55 € per person: train trip to Jurmala by the sea – wooden villas and lunch by the Baltic
- OPTION TALLINN: 65 € per person: guided tour “behind the scenes of Tallinn”: food market, industrial area converted into creative spaces, old workers' houses, Nobel Port with sea views, maritime museum at the seaplane harbor + access to the submarine; drink (beer or wine); bus ticket (3 hours total)