

BEST OF BALTICS IN 10 DAYS



Tallinn – Lahemaa National Park – Lake Peipus – Tartu – Cesis – Gauja National Park – Riga – Kemer National Park – Jurmala – Rundale – Hill of Crosses – Kaunas – Kernave – Trakai – Vilnius

DAY 1: ARRIVAL IN TALLINN

Welcome to Estonia! Arrival in Tallinn. Check in to the hotel.

Overnight: Tallinn

DAY 2: TALLINN – LAHEMAA NATIONAL PARK

Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, offers a thrilling blend of romantic medieval streets, breathtaking modern architecture, an alternative vibe, and a leisurely seaside atmosphere. Tallinn is most famous for its stunningly photogenic **medieval Old Town**, which is considered to be one of the best-preserved Hanseatic town centers in the world. Join the **guided walking tour** and stroll around the narrow cobblestone streets of the Old Town and let it cast a spell on you: noble merchants' houses, gothic churches, curvy paths, medieval fortification walls, red tile roofs, and lovely yards will charm you. On the tour, you will see the most famous sights of the Old Town, such as Toompea Castle, Tallinn Town Hall, St. Mary's Cathedral, Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, and others. At the end of the tour, you will visit the **Great Guild Hall**, once a medieval guild for merchants, but now – home to the Estonian History Museum.

Later you will explore **Lahemaa National Park**, the oldest and largest national park in Estonia that offers a great diversity of landscape: vast wetlands, deep forests, picturesque fishermen's villages, as well as sandy and rocky beaches. On the way to Lahemaa, you will stop by the impressive **Jagala Waterfall**, the widest natural waterfall in Estonia. The next stop will be **Viru Bog** where a wooden boardwalk will allow you to discover the beauty of the bog.

One of the most unique things to do in Lahemaa National Park is visiting old fishermen's villages that are scattered along the coastline of the Baltic Sea. You will stop by **Altja**



fishing village to discover the life of local fishermen, explore the rural architecture and fishing net sheds, and stroll along the beach.

Lahemaa National Park is also known for several beautiful manors. You will visit the most popular of them – **Palmse Manor and Open-Air Museum**, an impressive baroque mansion that provides a great overview of the Estonian manor lifestyle and offers wonderful parks, gardens, and historical buildings.

Overnight: Lahemaa National Park

DAY 3: LAHEMAA NATIONAL PARK – LAKE PEIPUS – TARTU

You will start your day by going to the **Lake Peipus** area. Lake Peipus, located on the border between Estonia and Russia, is known as the **largest transboundary lake in Europe**. Lake Peipus area historically has been a very diverse region where three different cultures used to live side by side: Estonian peasants, Russian Old Believers, and the Baltic Germans. You can still see lovely Old Believers' villages with colorful wooden houses scattered along Lake Peipus, explore aristocratic manors and stories of noble people's lives, as well as discover local farmers' lifestyle.

One of the most beautiful manors in the area is **Allatskivi Castle** which looks just like out of a fairytale. You will make a short stop at the castle and then continue your way to **Peipsimaa Museum** where a very unique experience awaits you – the **Old Believers' Tea Ceremony**. Afterward, you will see such one-street **Old Believers' villages** as **Kolkja, Kasepaa, and Varnja**.

Later you will go to the **oldest city** in the Baltic States – the famous student town **Tartu**. Thanks to Tartu University, the city serves as the educational center for the whole region, and historically it has played a very important role in the cultural development and national awakening not only among Estonians but also among Latvians. Even today, many students from abroad come to Tartu, creating a vibrant and juvenile atmosphere in the city. Join the **guided walking tour** and explore the romantic **Old Town**: visit Tartu Town Hall Square and the famous Kissing Students Fountain, see the main building of Tartu University, St. John's Church, and the impressive ruins of Tartu Cathedral.

Overnight: Tartu

DAY 4: TARTU – CESIS – LIGATNE – SIGULDA – RIGA

This day will bring you across the border and to the **Gauja National Park**, the largest and oldest national park in Latvia. First, you will go to **Cesis**, a real medieval gemstone surrounded by picturesque nature. You will join the **guided walking tour** and explore this beautiful town: Rose Square, Princesses' House, St. John's Church, and other places in Cesis Old Town will create a wonderful atmosphere and allow you to travel back in time.

Afterward, you will visit **Cesis Medieval Castle**, the best-preserved medieval castle in Latvia. To make your visit more special, you will be given a lantern with a candle to illuminate the dark passages of the castle. You will also visit **Cesis New Castle** and have a wonderful panorama from its tower.

In the afternoon you will go to the nearby **historical paper mill village Ligatne** which still allows you to experience the 19th century vibe. Once, the Ligatne paper mill produced such high-quality paper that it was used for the most important documents of the Russian Empire. Today, Ligatne is a peaceful and calm village, perfect for nature and history lovers. Walk



around the historical village, explore its **sandstone caves**, used as cellars for storing different food products, or stop by the **local winery** to try out some fruit wine.

Later you will go to **Sigulda**, one of the most popular places in the Gauja National Park. You will enjoy a fun and scenic ride in the **Sigulda Cable Car**. The cable car connects both sides of the Gauja River, offering picturesque views of the river valley, three castles, and the Sigulda Bobsleigh Track. The ride above the tree tops and the river is about one kilometer long. Afterward, you will stop by **Gutman's Cave** – the biggest cave in the Baltics and the oldest tourist attraction in Latvia.

In the evening you will arrive in Riga.

Overnight: Riga

DAY 5: RIGA

Founded in 1201 by German bishop Albert, **Riga** is the largest of the three Baltic capitals. Riga is famous for its sophisticated **Art Nouveau** architecture – about 40% of the city center consists of Art Nouveau buildings, more than in any other city in the world. Join the **guided walking tour** and explore the most famous Art Nouveau buildings on Alberta Street and Elizabetes Street. On the tour, you will also discover the jewels of the lovely **Old Town**: House of the Blackheads, City Hall Square, Riga Cathedral, St. Peter's Church, Riga Castle, the oldest dwellings in the city – Three Brothers, and others.

The afternoon is reserved for the **guided walking tour of Other Riga**. This tour will bring you to a completely different scene of Riga and show around the so-called Moscow Suburbs. You will also have a chance to visit the Latvian Academy of Sciences, an impressive Stalin-era skyscraper that offers **the best panorama of Riga**.

Later you will dive into the rich and colorful aisles of the **Riga Central Market**, one of the largest covered markets in Europe. Riga Central Market was opened in 1930, and it consists of five former Zeppelin airship hangars. Riga Central Market is a perfect place for tasting local products, such as smoked meat and fish, pickled vegetables, rye bread, Latvian craft beer, various dairy products, and seasonal treats.

Overnight: Riga

DAY 6: RIGA – KEMERI NATIONAL PARK – JURMALA

In the morning you will go to **Kemer National Park** and start exploring it by visiting the must-see sight in the park – the **Great Kemer Bog**. The bog is a magical place with an inexplicable beauty at any time of the year. Follow the boardwalk and enjoy the mesmerizing beauty of the bog: vast landscapes, tiny pine trees, mysterious mist, dark lakes, and the dizzying smell of marsh Labrador tea.

After falling in love with the bog, you will visit Kemer village, once a very famous **sulfur water and mud resort**. Go for a walk to discover the splendor of the former resort: Kemer water tower, sulfur water spring Kirzacina, Love Island, and Kemer Hotel.

Later you will go to **Jurmala**, a popular **seaside resort** famous for its wonderful **wooden architecture from the 20th century**, fancy lifestyle, and **white-sand beach**. Stroll along Joma Street, a very lively pedestrian street full of restaurants and cafes, walk around the town to see the most beautiful wooden villas with **magnificent woodwork**, or simply enjoy the beach and wait for the sunset.



Overnight: Jurmala

DAY 7: JURMALA – RUNDALE – HILL OF CROSSES – KAUNAS

In the morning you will go to the magnificent **Rundale Palace**, the former summer residence of the Duke of Courland. Join the **guided tour** and get to know the most exciting secrets of the palace. The Rundale Palace surprises its visitors with impressive **baroque architecture**, wonderful interiors, breathtaking paintings on the ceilings, and wonderful gardens. The splendor of Rundale offers to experience the vibe of Versailles in the Baltics.

Later you will cross the border and continue your trip to the **Hill of Crosses**, one of the most sacred Christian pilgrimage sites in Lithuania. It is believed that people have been leaving crosses of different sizes on this hill since the 1830s. In some historical periods, this activity was perceived as a resistance against the regime, but generally, the Hill of Crosses serves as a place for hope. If you want to leave a cross on the hill, but you don't have one, don't worry – people often create symbolical crosses from whatever they can find around, little branches, grass, or tiny stones.

In the evening you will arrive in Kaunas.

Overnight: Kaunas

DAY 8: KAUNAS – KERNAVE – TRAKAI – VILNIUS

You will start your day by exploring **Kaunas**, the second-largest city in Lithuania. Kaunas is famous for its Interwar architecture, mostly **Art Deco**, and amazing pieces of street art, but it also has a lovely **Old Town**. Join the **guided walking tour** and see the most beautiful landmarks of Kaunas, such as the Town Hall Square, the 15th-century House of Perkunas, and the 14th-century Kaunas Castle, a gothic fortress built on the hill overlooking the confluence of the Neris River and the Nemunas River. During the tour, you will take the **Aleksotas Funicular** which has been operating since 1935. The funicular will bring you up to **Aleksotas Hill**, a wonderful viewing platform, offering **the best panorama of Kaunas**.

Later you will go to **Kernave** where the first capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania once stood. Today, the **Kernave Archaeological Site** is a great place for exploring Lithuanian history starting from the late Paleolithic Period to the Middle Ages. In Kernave, you will see the remains of five picturesque **hillforts**, a reconstructed 13th – 14th-century settlement, as well as interactive expositions at the Kernave Archaeological Site Museum.

In the late afternoon you will go to Trakai and visit **Trakai Island Castle**, one of the main tourist attractions in the country and the symbol of Lithuanian statehood. Being built on an island on Lake Galve, one of the deepest lakes in Lithuania, the red brick medieval castle looks just like out of a fairytale. Trakai Island Castle used to be a residence of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, and you will learn more about them by visiting the **Trakai History Museum** located in the castle.

In the evening you will arrive in Vilnius.

Overnight: Vilnius

DAY 9: VILNIUS



Vilnius is a lively and vibrant Baltic capital that is especially famous for its sophisticated **baroque architecture**. The city offers a great contrast – the Old Town charms you with wonderful gothic, renaissance, baroque, and neoclassical architecture gems while other parts of the city are known for a buzzing alternative culture scene. Lithuania is very proud of its history as the Grand Duchy, and many cultural monuments in Vilnius still speak of those times, for example, **Gediminas Tower**, a very distinctive landmark of Vilnius that offers a wonderful panorama of the Old Town. Another important monument is **Vilnius Cathedral**, an impressive neoclassical building that once served as the coronation place of the Grand Dukes, but today is the main Catholic cathedral in Lithuania. Join the **guided walking tour** and discover the most beautiful places in **Vilnius Old Town**.

Around lunchtime, you will have a unique opportunity to join the **Cepelinai Culinary Master Class**. Cepelinai, potato dumplings filled with meat and onions, is the most popular traditional dish in Lithuania. You will make cepelinai with your own hands and dive deep into Lithuanian food culture.

The afternoon is reserved for your free time in Vilnius. To discover the alternative face of Vilnius, visit the **self-declared artists' republic Uzupis**. It is a very charming bohemian district with its own "constitution", "president", "flag" and even "money". Uzupis is full of art pieces on the streets and secret artists' yards, and it offers many exciting discoveries that reveal themselves only to the most attentive observers. Go for a leisurely walk around the Uzupis, sit at a cafe, and enjoy the creative atmosphere of the artists' republic.

Overnight: Vilnius

DAY 10: DEPARTURE

Departure day. Check out from the hotel. Transfer from the hotel to the airport.