

*Full Itinerary*

## BEST OF THE BALTICS



TALK TO OUR WELL  
TRAVELLED TEAM OF  
EXPERTS

Toll Free US and  
Canada: 1 (855)  
342-4127

Office open: Monday - Thursday  
9:00am - 8:00pm, Friday 9:00am -  
5:30pm (London time). Call  
answered 24/7



### JOURNEY SNAPSHOT

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

Level 2

DESTINATION:

Best of the Baltics

DURATION:

12 days / 11 nights

FLIGHT INFORMATION:

Please arrange your flights into Vilnius Airport  
[VNO], Lithuania on Day 1 and to depart from  
Helsinki Airport [HEL], Finland on Day 12

PICKUP LOCATION:

Vilnius Airport [VNO], Lithuania

## OVERVIEW

Choose your own departure date for your group

From Vilnius to Helsinki, join us as we travel through the best of the Baltics, visiting the highlights of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia & Finland along the way!

The Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia & Finland in North Eastern Europe are a lesser-known corner of Europe, but full of rich culture and history.

Whilst small in size and borders have changed many times over the years, each country has its own distinct culture and proud national identity that we will discover along our adventure. Visiting the four Baltic capital cities of Vilnius, Riga, Tallinn and Helsinki, we'll also discover medieval forts, expansive stately homes, beautiful coastlines and stunning national parks, historic monasteries and cathedrals, traditional country taverns and modern city suburbs.

Join us as we travel from Vilnius to Helsinki and explore the Best of the Baltics on this exciting new journey!

## ITINERARY SUMMARY

**DAY 1** - Welcome to Lithuania

**DAY 2** - Vilnius Sightseeing

**DAY 3** - Captivating Kaunas & Pazaislis Monastery

**DAY 4** - Journey to Latvia - Rundale Palace & Riga

**DAY 5** - Exploring Riga & Jurmala

**DAY 6** - The Castles & Forts of Gauja National Park

**DAY 7** - Travel to Tallinn

**DAY 8** - Discovering Tallinn

**DAY 9** - The Stately Manors of Lahemaa National Park

**DAY 10** - Hello Helsinki!

**DAY 11** - Scenic Suomenlinna & Farewell Dinner

**DAY 12** - Farewell, Finland

## FULL ITINERARY

### DAY 1 - WELCOME TO LITHUANIA

Welcome Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. You will be met on arrival at the airport and transferred your hotel in the city centre.

This evening we will join together our fellow travellers and enjoy a welcome dinner to start off our Baltic adventure.

**Included meals:** Dinner

**Accommodation:** Vilnius

### DAY 2 - VILNIUS SIGHTSEEING

This morning, after breakfast, we head off to explore Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania.

On our sightseeing tour of the city with a local English-speaking guide, we will pass sights such as the Old Town, Vilnius Cathedral, St. Anna's Church, St. Bernadine's Church as well as enter into Vilnius' Old University.

We'll also pass by the Chapel of Dawn with the Madonna of Vilnius and Gediminas Tower, before walking through the bohemian "Republic of Uzupis" area. A collective local community, the Republic of Uzupis is a cultural, artistic, civic and social movement, constantly changing, developing and improving, making it famous in Europe and abroad, often compared to Montmartre district in Paris or Christiania in Copenhagen.

The afternoon and evening are at leisure for you to explore Vilnius at your own pace.

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Vilnius

### DAY 3 - CAPTIVATING KAUNAS & PAZAISLIS MONASTERY

This morning we head out of Vilnius. Lithuania's second city, it is the fourth largest in the Baltic states.

Kaunas has had an important past, and has changed countries many times, being previously being the capital to Lithuania, as well as controlled by Poland and Russia. Modern day Kaunas was the first city in Central and Eastern Europe designated as a UNESCO City of Design, it became a World Heritage Site in 2023 and was declared a European Capital of Culture in 2022.

We'll discover some of the city's highlights on a guided tour, including the medieval Kaunas Castle, and Kaunas Cathedral, which dates back to the 1600s and a visit to Ninth Fort. One of the old fortified posts around the city, the Ninth Fort was built in the late 19th century. Over the years it has been used as a fort, prison and way-station for prisoners being transported to labour camps during WW2.

Afterwards, we'll enjoy lunch together before heading to Pazaislis Monastery. Built for 24 monks but only ever inhabited by 13, Pazaislis Monastery is the largest monastery complex in Lithuania, and the most renowned example of Baroque architecture in the country. On our guided tour, we will discover the beauty of the site, before heading back to Vilnius for an evening at leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Vilnius

### DAY 4 - JOURNEY TO LATVIA - RUNDALĒ PALACE & RIGA

This morning, it is time to check out after breakfast as we say goodbye to Lithuania and make our way north towards Latvia.

We'll cross the border into Latvia and enjoy lunch at a traditional local guesthouse the town of Rundale, before heading to the nearby Rundale Palace and Park. Dubbed by many as the Versailles of the Baltics, Rundale Palace is the largest in Latvia and its beautiful baroque gardens are a sight to behold. Built from 1736 until 1768, the palace was partially destroyed in the in 1919 during the Latvian War of Independence. In the interim years, the palace became the property of the Ministry of Agriculture, a local school and part was reconstructed as flats for Latvian military veterans. In 1972, Rundale Palace Museum was established, showcasing Latvian life and over recent years has been restored to its

former glory. We'll explore the museum with a dedicated guide, revealing its many secrets.

Afterwards, we continue on to Riga, Latvia's capital and our base for the next few nights.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Riga

## DAY 5 - EXPLORING RIGA & JURMALA

This morning we head out on a sightseeing tour of Riga with local English-speaking guide.

Riga, Latvia's capital and largest city is set on the Baltic Sea at the mouth of the River Daugava. Over a third of the country's population live here. Founded in 1201, Riga's historical centre is a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is noted for its Art Nouveau and 19th century wooden architecture.

We'll explore the city, passing sights including National Opera House and Freedom Monument, the Old Town, St. Peter's Church, Swedish Gate, Powder Tower, and the Three Brothers as well as enter into the Dome Cathedral.

After the walking tour, we'll visit Riga Central Market, where we'll enjoy a tour of the market and tasting of local produce.

This afternoon, we'll rejoin our coach as we head out to the coast and visit Jurmala, a resort on the Gulf of Riga. Just a short drive from Riga, it is known for its wooden, art nouveau seaside villas, the many Soviet-era sanatoriums and the long, sandy Jurmala Beach. For those wanting to dip their toes in the sea, there'll be time for a stroll on the beach before we transfer back to hotel and enjoy an evening at leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Riga

## DAY 6 - THE CASTLES & FORTS OF GAUJA NATIONAL PARK

Today we head north east out of Riga as we head to the beautiful countryside of Gauja National Park. The largest and oldest of the national parks in Latvia, it boasts a variety of landforms, natural springs, sandstone outcrops, picturesque views and unique natural, cultural and historical monuments.

We first visit the ruins of the Castle of the German Order in Sigulda, one of the towns in the National Park. First built in 1207, the castle was built for the Livonian Brothers, a fraternity of warrior monks.

We will continue to the nearby medieval Turaida Museum Reserve, Latvia's most visited museum. In the castle ruins learn about the history of archaeology, culture and art and narrates events in Latvia's history dating back as far as to the 11th century.

Afterwards, we enjoy lunch at traditional tavern before making our way back to Riga for an evening at leisure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Riga

## DAY 7 - TRAVEL TO TALLINN

It is once again time to check out after breakfast as we bid farewell to Latvia and continue our journey north to Estonia.

We board our coach as travel along the beautiful Baltic coastline, crossing the border and stopping not long after in the popular Estonian resort town of to Pärnu, famous for its long sandy beaches. There'll be time at leisure to stretch legs and stroll on the beach before we head for lunch nearby.

Later, we continue our journey to Tallinn, Estonia's capital and after check-in, enjoy dinner together this evening.

**Included meals:** Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Tallinn

## DAY 8 - DISCOVERING TALLINN

This morning, we'll head out to discover Tallinn, Estonia's largest and capital city. Located on the shores of the Gulf of Finland of the Baltic Sea.

Whilst Tallinn dates back some 5,000 years, it is known as one of the youngest and most digitally modern cities in Europe, having the highest number of startup companies per person in Europe's capitals and largest cities, and is the birthplace of many international high-technology companies, including Skype.

On our guided tour, we'll discover the Old Town, famous for its cobblestones. Sights here we'll pass include the Dome Cathedral, Lower Town with Niguliste Church and Great Guild Hall. We'll continue to the 13th century Old Town Hall and its square, as well as pass medieval towers, walls and fortifications, Toompea Castle and Hill as well as Alexander Nevsky Cathedral before heading to the newer tour to Telliskivi and Noblessner seafront areas. The latter, once a submarine base, is now vibrant community of apartments, high-level restaurants, shops and cultural venues.

Enjoy the afternoon and evening at leisure to explore Tallinn.

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** Tallinn

## DAY 9 - THE STATELY MANORS OF LAHEMAA NATIONAL PARK

A short drive east this morning leads us to Lahemaa National Park, home of the baroque Palmse Manor and open air museum. Built in 1510, the palace and gardens have been restored to a high standard, and we'll discover the quaint surroundings as we visit.

After lunch at a local tavern, we'll transfer to the nearby Vihula Manor, touring the estate and visiting the historic Watermill Museum, before travelling back via the coastal towns of Vossu, Kaesmu and Vergi to Tallinn

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Lunch

**Accommodation:** Tallinn

## DAY 10 - HELLO HELSINKI!

After breakfast, we check out and make our way to Tallinn port for the short ferry crossing to Helsinki.

Finland's capital city, Helsinki lies just 80 km (50 mi) north of Tallinn across the Gulf of Finland.

Upon arrival in Helsinki, we'll be met by a local English-speaking guide and head off on an sightseeing tour of the city, including the harbour area, Market and Senate Square, Lutheran Cathedral, Mannerheim Street, Parliament House, Sibelius Monument and visit the Tempelaukio Church.

After checking in to our hotel, we'll rejoin together for dinner in the evening.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Helsinki

## DAY 11 - SCENIC SUOMENLINNA & FAREWELL DINNER

Suomenlinna (also often known as Sveaborg) Sea Fortress is one of Finland's most visited sites. An inhabited sea fortress composed of eight islands, of which six have been fortified. It lies to sea a few kilometres southeast of Helsinki city center. Suomenlinna is a popular location for tourists and locals, who enjoy it as a picturesque picnic site.

We'll transfer to Market Square from where we'll take the waterbus out to Suomenlinna, and enjoy a guided tour of Suomenlinna Fortress and the Ehrensvärd Museum. Named after the fortress' founder, it is located in the official residence of the fortress's commandants and showcases the history of the Swedish period of the fortress.

We'll return by waterbus back to central Helsinki and transfer back to the hotel. Enjoy the final afternoon at leisure, before we regroup one final time for a farewell dinner in a local Finnish Restaurant to round off Baltic adventure.

**Included meals:** Breakfast & Dinner

**Accommodation:** Helsinki

## DAY 12 - FAREWELL, FINLAND



Sadly your time exploring northern Europe has come to an end and its time to depart Finland. Transfers to the airport will be arranged according to your onwards flights.

**Included meals:** Breakfast

**Accommodation:** none

## WHAT'S INCLUDED

- Meet & Greet at Vilnius Airport on arrival
- Accommodation as detailed in the itinerary
- Meals as detailed in the itinerary
- Transportation throughout in an air-conditioned deluxe vehicle
- All activities, visits and excursions as detailed in the itinerary
- English speaking tour guides where applicable.
- Porterage/baggage handling in/out of hotels
- Services of a Big Journey Company Tour Director throughout (subject to minimum numbers)

## WHAT'S NOT INCLUDED

- International return flights to Vilnius Airport [VNO], Lithuania and from Helsinki Airport [HEL], Finland
- Transfers on arrival or departure, to/from the airport(s), outside of the tour dates
- Additional food/beverage unless otherwise included in the programme
- Personal expenses
- Personal Travel & Medical Insurance
- Visas (if required)
- Optional excursions
- Gratuities
- Any personal items and anything not mentioned under included in price above

## IMPORTANT INFORMATION

- Please let The Big Journey Company know prior to travelling if you have any medical needs or take any medication that we need to be made aware of to ensure that you have a safe and pleasant tour.
- Check in is after 2-3pm and check out is before 10am unless otherwise specified in the itinerary.
- Cancellation 90 – 0 days prior to departure cancellation fee is 100%. It is your responsibility to ensure the correct travel insurance in place to protect you against the need to cancel your holiday. Deposits are non-refundable and final payments are due 14 weeks prior to departure.
- Further terms and conditions apply and will be provided upon request or at the time of booking. The Big Journey Company reserves the right to withdraw any offer prior to accepting a reservation request. This does not affect your statutory rights. This offer is subject to availability and space is limited.



## BOOK YOUR JOURNEY

*Choose from the list of dates below*

*Call to Book*

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