

BALTIC AND RUSSIAN HIGHLIGHTS

14 days
13 nights

4
countries

travel type
Cultural

This a 2-week journey through the Baltic States and Russia that offers an intriguing mix of the top World Heritage sites and special places hidden outside the capital cities:

- Discover beauty of the three Baltic Capitals – Baroque Vilnius, Art Nouveau Riga and medieval fairytale-like Tallinn, which are all UNESCO World Heritage sites;
- Relax in Jurmala – the Latvian seaside resort and relax in possibly the best white, sandy beach in Northern Europe;
- Explore Moscow, the “Mother of Russian cities” with one of the most recognizable sites in the world – the ensemble of Kremlin and the Red Square;
- Admire Saint Petersburg, also known as the “Cultural Capital of Russia”. It houses hundreds of museums, including the world’s largest museum, the Hermitage, the world’s top ballet and the former elegant winter and summer palaces of the Russian Emperors;
- Venture outside the capitals to see some extraordinary sites: the town on water, Trakai, the Hill of Crosses with more than 100,000 wooden crosses, and a beloved holy place for Russian Tsars – the Holy Trinity Lavra in Sergiev Posad (UNESCO world Heritage).

DESCRIPTION

● Day 1, Vilnius

Arrival in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. Free time to explore the the biggest Old Town complex in Eastern Europe with outstanding examples of “Lithuanian” Baroque, also called the last vivid flash of Baroque in Europe. Meals: D Overnight: Vilnius

● Day 2, Vilnius – Trakai

Highlights: Vilnius Old Town, Trakai Castle Start the day with a walking tour of Vilnius’ Old town, where you can feel the atmosphere of the city’s history of the 16-19th centuries while walking along its narrow winding streets or visiting the most exiting architectural and historic monuments, including Vilnius University, the Dawn Gate with a miraculous icon of Virgin Mary. Spend you afternoon in Trakai, the former capital of Grand Duchy of Lithuania with it’s beautiful insular castle of the 14th century, situated on an island in the middle of a lake. Trakai’s unique location on the peninsula surrounded by five lakes has it dubbed itself the “town on the water”. Meals: B+L Overnight: Vilnius

● Day 3, Vilnius – Hill of Crosses – Rundale – Riga

Highlights: Hill of Crosses, Rundale Palace This morning you will travel towards the Latvian capital and make two stops to see remarkable sights on the way. The first stop at the famous Hill of Crosses, a mystical and unique pilgrimage site with more than 100 000 crosses from all around the world on it. It is the only place of its kind in the world, included to the Guinness Book of Records. After crossing the border of Latvia, you will visit the Rundale Palace – an

outstanding monument of Baroque and Rococo art with authentic 18th century furniture, paintings and china and a beautiful French-style park. Meals: B+L Overnight: Riga

● Day 4, Riga – Jurmala

Highlights: Riga city tour, Jurmala beach In the morning experience a guided tour of Riga Old Town, the liveliest capital among the Baltic States, where you will see old Gothic churches and stunning Art Nouveau buildings living side by side. Afternoon will be spent in Jurmala, the “trademark” resort in the Baltic States. Enjoy a walk amongst pine forests and along sand beaches of Jurmala with healing air and fresh sea breezes and have a look at many fairy-tale like wooden Jugendstil houses here. Meals: B+L Overnight: Riga

● Day 5, Riga – Gauja National Park – Tallinn

Highlights: ruins of Turaida Castle This morning we will travel to the Estonian capital and make one stop at the Gauja National Park on the way. Enjoy beautiful vistas of the Gauja River Valley, visit the 13th century Turaida Castle, now housing a small History Museum, and relax walking in the adjoining Sculpture Park, featuring works of Latvian sculptors. Later stop by a natural sight Gutman Cave. Free evening in Tallinn. Meals: B+L Overnight: Tallinn

● Day 6, Tallinn

Highlights: Tallinn city tour, Kadriorg palace Join the guided tour to discover the Tallinn Old Town, which is one of the best-preserved and authentic medieval capitals in Europe, filled with churches and merchant houses. The walk through the hilly cobblestone streets will become a memorable ending to your travels. Excursion will continue in a beautiful flower park of the Kadriorg Palace, which was founded by the Russian tsar Peter. Visit the National Art Museum and stroll through the beautiful park. Meals: B+L Overnight: Tallinn

● Day 7, Tallinn – Saint Petersburg

Highlights: St. Petersburg city tour Morning departure to St. Petersburg (370 km from Tallinn). Afternoon panoramic city tour of St. Petersburg, also known as the cultural capital of Russia. For three centuries St Petersburg has been impressing visitors from all over the world and it doesn't take much time to fall in love with this splendid city. On the way to your hotel you will admire views of magnificent palaces, cathedrals, canals and world-renown theatres. Meals: B + L Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 8, Saint Petersburg

Highlights: St. Isaac Cathedral, Hermitage museum Morning visit of St. Isaac's Cathedral – the largest Church in Russia and one of the finest architectural works and capable accommodate about 10,000 people. Afternoon visit to one of the world's greatest art museums – the Hermitage, located within the Winter Palace, baroque masterpiece and residence of the Russian tsars. It boasts a collection of art from the Stone Age to the 20th century. The Hermitage is so large that according to expert's it would take you 9 years to look at each item of the museum collection for one minute! So, don't get frustrated if you can't see it all, but take away some special memories from this visit, because the Hermitage is definitely a “must see” museum for any art lover. Meals: B+L Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 9, St. Petersburg – Peterhof – Tsarskoye Selo

Highlights: Peterhof Palace, Catherine Palace This day is devoted to exploring one of St. Petersburg suburbs – Peterhof, where famous summer residence of the Russian tsars is located. This palace is Russian answer to French Versailles with an impressive park with 200 fountains that make its major attraction. World best artists designed the unique ensemble of fountains and cascades over long period of over 100 years. You stay in St. Petersburg would

not be complete without visit of another outstanding suburban residence of the Russian tsars – Catherine Palace, named after the Empress Catherine I, its the first royal owner of the imperial palace. It is the best example of Russian baroque with incredible collection of art, where you will admire breath-taking interiors of its 29 halls, including the legendary Amber Room assembled with over 500,000 pieces of amber like a huge puzzle. Meals: B + L Overnight: St. Petersburg

● Day 10, Saint Petersburg

Highlights: boat trip in Neva River Morning boat trip in Neva River and canals. Getting around St Petersburg by boat is one of the best ways to enjoy a romantic sightseeing in the city of rivers and canals. The combination of fascinating architecture and water in St. Petersburg, as well as in Venice, has a special charm. Free time in the city. Exploring St. Petersburg on your own is a chance to see some of its main highlights including the fairy-tale like cathedral “Our saviour on the Blood” or other significant monuments. St. Petersburg has numerous ways to surprise its visitors and you will find your own way to enjoy it in your free time. Dinner in the city center with folk show. Meals: B + D Overnight: Saint Petersburg

● Day 11, Saint Petersburg – Moscow

Morning departure by speed train “Sapsan” to Moscow (approx. 4h). Enjoy a free afternoon in Moscow by visiting one of the many fancy restaurants, bars or simply having a stroll on its streets while admiring the lights and bright facades of its impressive buildings by night. Meals: B + D Overnight: Moscow

● Day 12, Moscow

Highlights: Moscow city tour, Kremlin Start today with a tour to the heart of Russia – the world-famous Red Square, Moscow’s Kremlin and the stunning St. Basil’s Cathedral. Once you see this incredible ensemble, you will never forget it! Visit the Kremlin and learn about its history, tightly connected to the dramatic history of the country, listen about traditions of Moscow, which left their mark in the names of ancient towers. After the Kremlin the tour continues to Vorobyevi Hills where you will get an incredible view of the city, you will proceed to Moscow State University which is an example of architecture from the time of Stalin, the Diplomatic Village, Triumphal Arch and much more. Meals: B + L Overnight: Moscow

● Day 13, Moscow – Sergiev Posad

Highlights: Sergiev Possad, Moscow Metro and Arbat Morning departure to Sergiev Possad (70 km from Moscow, approx. 6 h) – the city founded around the sacred place of the Russian land and the World Cultural Heritage sight – the Trinity Sergius Lavra, which is Trinity Sergius Lavra monastery named respected Russian saint Sergius. Afternoon continues with discovering other highlights of Moscow – its famous Metro and Arbat street. This tour introduces the history and architecture of the Metro subway system and includes travels by Metro to see the most famous stations that are uniquely designed with decorative elements including mosaics, statues and marble staircases. You will proceed to Old Arbat street, one of Moscow’s oldest streets. The street has gone from being the headquarters of Ivan the Terrible’s secret police to the center of aristocratic life in Moscow in the 18th century to finally being the center of the Russian bohemian life. Meals: B + L Overnight: Moscow

● Day 14, Moscow

Breakfast at hotel. Transfer to the airport. Departure.