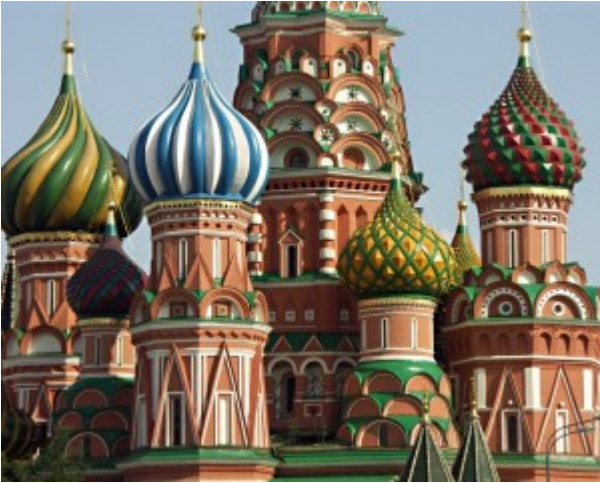


BALTIC AND RUSSIAN HIGHLIGHTS

14 days
13 nights

4
countries

travel type
Cultural



DESCRIPTION

● Day 1. Vilnius (D)

Arrival to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania. Bus transfer to the hotel. Free time in Vilnius. Many tourists after visiting Vilnius and its region tend to fall in love with Vilnius, pegging it as their favorite Baltic city of them all. Vilnius Old Town is one of the biggest in Eastern Europe, there more than 1500 buildings which remained from various centuries: city boasts the most wonderful architectural styles of Southern and Western Europe, Gothic and Renaissance, as well as the original "Lithuanian" Baroque, also called the last vivid flash of Baroque in Europe. Welcome dinner and overnight in Vilnius.

● Day 2. Vilnius – Trakai (B, L)

Breakfast at hotel. Morning City Tour, the 3-hour acquaintance with 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: Vilnius Cathedral erected on the historic site where pagan gods were worshiped and where Vilnius was founded as far back as the 13th c., a nearby Gediminas Castle on the hill rising above the city centre, a gem of the Lithuanian Gothic's – the 16th c. St. Anne's Church, the Vilnius University, a famous centre of science and enlightenment since its very foundation in 1579, Vilnius Town Hall, Jewish Quarter and the Dawn Gate with a miraculous icon of Virgin Mary. Lunch at restaurant in Old town. Afternoon departure to Trakai, former capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, 27 km to the west of Vilnius. Visit at Trakai Castle situated on an island in the midst of Lake Galve. The Castle now houses an interesting museum telling its history, famous in the times of the Grand Duke Vytautas when the country borders were stretching from the Baltics till the Black Sea. Enjoy a small town – Trakai, located on a 2-km-long peninsular with attractive old wooden houses, mostly built by Karaites, a Judaism sect brought by Duke Vytautas from the Crimea and still living here. Transfer back to Vilnius. Overnight in Vilnius.

● Day 3. Vilnius – Hill of Crosses – Rundale – Riga (B, L)

Breakfast at hotel. Departure to Riga (380 km from Vilnius), the capital of Latvia. Stop at the famous Hill of Crosses near Šiauliai (30 km from the Rundale Palace). The Hill of Crosses, a unique historic place in the world. It is probably the best place to get acquainted with cross-making, a branch of Lithuanian folk art, which was inscribed on the UNESCO Non-material and Verbal Heritage Masterpiece List. On this hill more than 100 000 crosses have been discontinuously put up to plead for grace or to express gratitude since the ancient times. It is the only place of its kind in the world, included to the Guinness Book of Records for its uniqueness. Lunch en route. After crossing the border of Latvia, you will visit the Rundale Palace (30 km from Hill of Crosses). The Palace (18th cent.) is the most outstanding monument of Baroque and Rococo art in Latvia. The palace is an example of the early work of Italian-Russian architect Rastrelli who also designed the famous Winter Palace in St. Petersburg. You will be impressed by the authentic beauty the Golden Hall, the White Hall, private quarters of the Duke of Courland Johan Ernst Biron. Interiors are decorated with authentic 18th century furniture, paintings and china. To complete your impressions have an enjoyable walk in a beautiful French-style park. Arrival to Riga. Overnight in Riga.

● **Day 4. Riga – Jurmala (B, D)**

Breakfast at hotel. Riga City Tour by bus and walking tour. Riga has hundreds of ways for enticing visitors – its rich history, architecture, spacious gardens and parks, museums, art galleries and world-class opera...and daily treats like a walk in the enormous colorful central market or going to a cozy café, club or pub. The tour includes the most significant sights of Riga and begins along the central boulevards of Riga, enjoying the view of the City Canal parks, the Art Nouveau buildings of the beginning of the 20th century, the Opera House. In Old Riga you will see the Dome Cathedral, the Church of St. Peter, the old Guild Houses, the Swedish Gate, the architectural ensemble Three Brothers, St. Jacob's Church, the Parliament House, Old Riga Castle, and view the many wonderfully restored buildings, now housing cozy restaurants, cafes, bars and souvenir shops. Afternoon exploring of Jurmala (25 km, 3 h.) – the largest seaside and spa resort in the Baltic States. The town is known for its curative mineral waters, pine forests and sand dunes. The town's architecture is represented by many styles including unique wooden architecture of classicism, Art Nouveau and national romanticism. Dinner at restaurant in Jurmala while watching the sun, setting down into the sea. Transfer back in Riga and overnight.

● **Day 5. Riga – Turaida Castle – Tallinn (B, L)**

Breakfast at hotel. Departure to Tallinn (355 km from Riga), the capital of Estonia. Stop at the Gauja National Park, Sigulda city (70 km from Riga) often referred to as the Latvian Switzerland. Gauja National park includes the valley of the Gauja River and together with its tributaries it forms a particularly original landscape. The territory comprises more than 500 monuments of archeology, architecture, history starting with 11th century. 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. Lunch in Sigulda. Evening arrival to Tallinn. Overnight in Tallinn.

● **Day 6. Tallinn (B, L)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning city tour by bus and a walking tour of medieval Tallinn (2 h.), to feel the aura of the 14th and 15th centuries that survived intact in a maze of medieval walls and towers, soaring church spires and winding streets. It includes the main historical and architectural monuments: Toompea Palace and Castle, Town Hall Square, the Russian Orthodox Alexander Nevsky Cathedral and a visit of Tallinn Dome Church. Lunch at restaurant in Old town. Excursion will continue in a beautiful flower park of the Kadriorg Palace (5 km, 2 h.), which was founded by the Russian tsar Peter. Visit the National Art Museum and stroll through the beautiful park. Overnight in Tallinn.

● **Day 7. Tallinn – St. Petersburg (B, L)**

Breakfast at hotel. Departure to St. Petersburg (370 km from Tallinn). Lunch stop in Narva, the City on the border of Estonia and Russia. Arrival in St. Petersburg. Afternoon panoramic city tour of St. Petersburg (approx. 3 h.), also called as "Northern Venice", to see the famous Nevsky Prospect, the main street of the City, the Kazan Cathedral, the Admiralty with its gilded top, the largest Church in St. Petersburg – the Blood Church and stop by the ensembles of Palace Sq. with Winter Palace, Hermitage and Alexander Column and Mariinsky Palace. Overnight in St. Petersburg.

● **Day 8. St. Petersburg (B, L)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning visit of St. Isaac's Cathedral (approx. 1,5 h.): the largest Church in Russia and one of the finest architectural works and capable accommodate about 10,000 people. Lunch at restaurant. Afternoon visit to the Hermitage (approx. 3 h.), one of the largest and most important art museums in the world. Its art collections include more than 3,000,000 masterpieces and represent the development of world culture and art from the Stone Age to the 20th Century. Overnight in St. Petersburg.

● **Day 9. St. Petersburg – Peterhof – Tsarskoye Selo (B, L)**

Breakfast at hotel. Excursion to Peterhof, the former summer residence of Russian tsars near St. Petersburg (29 km from St. Petersburg). The “Russian Versailles” is known for its elegant gardens, magnificent Castles and numerous fountains and cascades. Lunch at restaurant. Excursion to Tsarskoye Selo (Pushkin) and visit the Catherine Palace with the legendary Amber Room. Tsarskoye Selo is Rastrelli's masterpiece and one of the best examples of Russian baroque, which include Peterhof with the finest residences Tsar of Russia. Overnight in St. Petersburg.

● **Day 10. St. Petersburg – boat tour (B, D)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning boat trip in Neva River and canals (approx. 1,5 h.) 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. Dinner in the city centre with folk show. Overnight in St. Petersburg.

● **Day 11. St. Petersburg – Moscow (B, D)**

Breakfast at hotel. Transfer to the train station. Departure by speed train “Sapsan” to Moscow (approx. 4h). Arrival and transfer to the hotel in Moscow. Free afternoon in Moscow. Dinner and overnight in Moscow.

● **Day 12. Moscow – Kremlin (B, L)**

Breakfast at hotel. Morning city tour of Moscow to see its main historic architectural and cultural monuments (approx. 3 h.) During the tour you will visit 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. The tour will be finished at the Red Square, the so-called heart of the capital. Lunch at restaurant. Visit of Kremlin and it's cathedrals (2 h.) Moscow Kremlin – one of the largest and most beautiful architectural ensembles in the world, which includes visits of Archangel's and Annunciation Cathedrals, the Armory, seeing an exhibition in the Assumption belfry and admire the Tsar Bell and the Tsar Cannon, famous masterpieces of the Russian casting. Overnight in Moscow.

● **Day 13. Moscow – Sergiev Posad – Moscow Metro and Arbat (B, L)**

Breakfast at hotel. 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. Transfer back to Moscow. Lunch. Afternoon continues with discovering other highlights of Moscow – its famous Metro and Arbat street (approx. 3 h.) 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. The tour 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. Overnight in Moscow.

● **Day 14, Moscow (B)**

Breakfast at hotel. Transfer to the airport. Departure.