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Alberta laukums in Old Riga

# Foreword

After months of isolation, the people of Latvia are finally allowed to leave their homes and many are now gradually withdrawing from their domiciles like reluctant bears leaving their caves after a long session of mandatory hibernation. As of June 3, 2020, Latvia has opened its doors to travellers from most European nations. This means that holidaymakers from these countries need not self-isolate when arriving in Latvia. The criterion for choosing these nations is actually quite simple. A country must have no more than 15 Covid-19 patients per 100,000 inhabitants to qualify. While most European neighbours currently qualify, there are notable exceptions including Sweden, the UK, Portugal, Romania, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Monaco, San Marino and the Czech Republic. Naturally, this information can change quite quickly. For the latest news and changes visit the Latvian Centre for Disease Prevention and Control at <https://spkc.gov.lv/lv/tavai-veselibai/aktualitate-par-jauņo-koronavi/valstu-saslimstības-radītāji-a/>. As of July 1, 2020, citizens of Algeria, Australia, Canada, Georgia, Japan, Montenegro, Morocco, New Zealand, Rwanda, South Korea, Thailand and Uruguay may also enter the European Union without a 14-day quarantine.

**Mārtiņš Zaprauskis** moved from the mean streets of suburban New Jersey to Riga in 1998 and soon after began writing about the city's best bars, restaurants and clubs as editor of *Riga In Your Pocket*. He enjoys playing football, drinking craft brews, reading history books and exploring Latvia and the wider world in general. If you'd like to contact him with any questions or comments, drop him a line at [martins@inyourpocket.lv](mailto:martins@inyourpocket.lv).



## COVER STORY

This digital issue's cover features a new sculpture entitled *Health-care Workers for the World* created by artist Aigars Bikše. It is meant to be a 'thank you' of sorts to dedicated medical medical professionals around the globe who have risked their lives to treat Covid-19 patients and, according to major international news outlets, is the first such statue anywhere in the world.



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Arriving in Riga is fairly simple these days. The bus and train stations are located right on the edge of Old Riga and the airport is only a short cab or bus ride away.

## BY BUS

The first thing you'll notice upon arrival at the bus terminal or *autoosta* (open 05:00 - 24:00) are the impressive hangars of the Central Market to your right just above the murky waters of the Riga canal. Inside, LuxExpress and Ecolines offices are located to your left as well as ATMs, a left luggage room and lockers (€1 - 2 for the first hour, €0.50 each additional hour) and toilets (€0.30 - ask for paper!). You'll also find a number of shops and a pharmacy (07:00 - 20:00, Sat 07:00 - 19:00, Sun 09:00 - 19:00). A bar/cafeteria, a baby-changing station and even shower facilities are available upstairs. At the far end of the hall is the bus information centre (open 09:00 - 18:00; closed Sat, Sun). Outside along the canal is a waiting area and an *e-talons* office (open 09:00 - 19:00, Sat 10:00 - 16:00; closed Sun) as well as a ticket machine where you can buy public transport tickets. **Getting to town:** trams N°1, 7 or 9 stop in front of the bus station; ride one stop into the centre (buy a €1.15 from the Narvesen newsstand outside or a €2 ticket from the driver on old trams or from a ticket machine on new trams). To get there on foot, cross the street, turn left and walk through the underpass. Follow the signs 'Vecrīga-Valņu iela' to Old Riga. The cabs outside are notoriously dodgy, so if you want a taxi, order one by phone (see p.11). ► J-3, Prāgas 1, [www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv).

## BY CAR

Latvia is part of the Schengen zone of European nations and no longer operates passport checkpoints on its land borders with Estonia and Lithuania. Just drive across the border. The Russian and Belarusian borders still require time, patience and, in most cases, a visa. Happy trails!

## BY FERRY

The ferry terminal and yacht harbour lie less than 1km north of Old Riga. A bank machine and café (09:00 - 18:30) are available as well as a Tallink ticket office and a souvenir/alcohol shop. **Getting to town:** go right across the parking lot in the direction of the ugly grey skyscraper. Old Riga is just beyond it. Taxis are also available or you could walk to the nearest tram stop (Ausekļa iela) on Kronvalda bulvāris and take trams N°5, 7 or 9 to Old Riga. ► B-2, Eksporta 3a.



The Latvian National Opera

M. Zapruskis

## TOURIST INFORMATION

### LIVE RIGA TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRES

The Live Riga information centre offers a wide range of information in a variety of languages. The friendly staff can assist with hotel bookings, concert tickets, tours and other useful services. ► I-2, Rātslaukums 6, tel. (+371) 67 03 79 00, [www.liveriga.com](http://www.liveriga.com). Open 10:00 - 18:00. [cc]

## BY PLANE

The airport (Ildosta) is 10km southwest of Riga's city centre. Once you've cleared customs you can rent a car, change money or visit the Welcome to Riga information centre in the arrivals hall. An ATM and a post office are also available as well as toilets. If you've departed from a non-Schengen country such as the UK, you will arrive in a different terminal at the north end of the airport building. You might want to leave the terminal, make a right and then enter the Schengen arrival hall because it offers more services. **Getting to town:** A queue of eager taxis will be waiting for you outside. Now strictly regulated, only **BalticTaxi** and **Red Cab** companies are permitted at the arrivals area of the airport. A typical ride to Old Riga or the city centre should cost roughly €15. You can also download the **Bolt** (bolt.eu) ride sharing app to order a car for a fraction of the price of a taxi with your mobile phone. The only catch is that you have to wait for your car on the second level departures concourse. **Bus N°22** (get off at *11.novembra krastmala* for Old Riga or at *Centrāltirgus* for the city centre) costs €1.15 (€2 if you buy a ticket from the driver) and departs for the city centre roughly every 10 - 20 minutes between 05:45 and 24:00. Express **mini-bus N°322** costs the same, but doesn't stop as often and will take you as far as the Central Station from 06:30 - 21:30. Exit the airport arrivals hall and walk across the parking lot to find the bus stop and ticket machine. ► [www.riga-airport.com](http://www.riga-airport.com).

## BY TRAIN

The train station is an enormous space offering many shopping and eating options. International trains arrive at platform 2. Follow signs down to the Central Hall (Centrālā zāle) where you'll find **pay toilets** (€0.30). A **baggage room** (open 04:30 - 24:00) is available in the basement. **Exchange money** at the Tavex currency exchange (valūtas mainītā) next to the main entrance/exit or at one of the banks here. Several cash machines can be found next to the local ticket counters. Narvesen newsstands sell public transport tickets. The train information office is open 08:00 - 20:00, but doesn't offer tourist information.

**Getting to town:** you are right beside Old Riga. Turn left when leaving the station and head toward the spire of St. Peter's Church in the distance. Walk beyond the clock tower, take the stairs to the underpass and follow the signs for '13. janvāra iela' to Old Riga. ► D-4, *Stacijas laukums*.

# Getting Around

Looking for cheap flights in Europe? Need to know how much a tram or trolleybus ticket costs? Want to know what time a bus leaves for Tallinn or where to catch an overnight train? Read on.

## AIRPORT

### RIGA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (LIDOSTA)

Riga International Airport, known throughout the world as RIX, lies some 10km southwest of the city. A cab ride to the airport will cost you anywhere between €12 - 15, but you can also get there in roughly 30 minutes (depending on traffic) with bus №22, which operates between 05:45 and 23:10. The most convenient stop in Old Riga is at Gēcinieku iela. You can buy a ticket from the machine at the stop for €1.15 or purchase a ticket from the driver for €2. For departure times visit [www.rigassatiksme.lv](http://www.rigassatiksme.lv).

The airport has undergone major improvements over the years and seems to always be expanding to accommodate more and more passengers. A TGIFriday's is available at the far right of the airport and a LIDO Latvian restaurant is open on the top floor of the main terminal for those who want a last sip of a local beer or who just can't stand airplane food. A sushi restaurant, sports bar and lots of local cafés are available on the other side of the security checkpoint as well as a variety of duty free and paid shops, including Victoria's Secret and Furla. For more information visit its comprehensive website. ► **Lidosta Rīga, tel. 1817 (toll call)/(+371) 29 31 18 17 (toll call from abroad), [www.riga-airport.com](http://www.riga-airport.com).**



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## AIRLINES

### AIRBALTIC

The Latvian national airline flies to dozens of destinations throughout Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia. ► **Airport, tel. (+371) 90 00 11 00 (toll call)/(+371) 67 00 60 06 (from abroad), [www.airbaltic.lv](http://www.airbaltic.lv). Open 05:00-23:00.**

### FINNAIR

Direct flights to Helsinki. ► **Airport, tel. (+371) 67 21 12 77, [www.finnair.com](http://www.finnair.com).**

### LUFTHANSA

Direct flights to Frankfurt. ► **tel. (+371) 67 85 21 99, [www.lufthansa.com](http://www.lufthansa.com).**

### RYANAIR

Ryanair offers direct flights between Riga and Barcelona (Girona), Berlin, Bremen, Brussels (Charleroi), Cologne, Dublin, East Midlands (UK), Edinburgh, Frankfurt (Hahn), Leeds (Bradford), London (Stansted), Malta, Manchester, Milan (Bergamo), Paphos (Cyprus) and Prague. ► [ryanair.com](http://ryanair.com).

### WIZZ AIR

Flights to and from Bergen, Doncaster Sheffield, Dortmund, Eilat (Ovda, Israel), Eindhoven, Kiev (Zhulyany), Kutaisi (Georgia), London (Luton), Oslo (Torp), Rejkjavik (Keflavik) and Tel Aviv. ► [www.wizzair.com](http://www.wizzair.com).

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\*chargeable call

(+371) **29 311 817** calls from foreign countries,

**AIRPORT INQUIRIES SERVICE**



Trains and riverboats on and above the Daugava — M. Zaprauskis

## ELECTRIC SCOOTERS

Free-floating electric scooter services are becoming increasing popular as they're quite cheap and easy to use. Bear in mind that helmets are not provided, you may not leave scooters outside of designated riding zones determined by each respective company and age requirements may apply. We recommend, as they do, that you leave scooters near bicycle stands and that you not to block sidewalks. Additional fees may apply if you break the rules provided in the app. Don't forget to end your ride in the app once you've finished. Most companies will remove their scooters from Riga's streets by the end of October, but this will be largely dependent on weather conditions.

## CAR RENTAL

### AUTO

Only €30 - 50/day and an English-speaking driver can also be hired if you don't feel like sitting at the wheel. It also offers 24-hour reservation, unlimited mileage and free delivery to any Riga address. ► Reformācijas laukums 1, tel. (+371) 29 58 04 48, [www.carsrent.lv](http://www.carsrent.lv). Open 24hrs.

### AVIS

Avis rents all kinds of premium sedans including Audis, Volkswagens, Opels and Toyotas as well as SUVs and minivans. ► Riga Airport, tel. (+371) 67 20 73 53, [www.avis.lv](http://www.avis.lv). Open 08:30-20:30; Sun 09:30-20:30; Sat 09:30-19:30. Also at J-3, 13. janvāra 19 (Avalon Hotel), tel. (+371) 67 22 58 76. [cc]

### CARGURU

A car sharing service that lets you rent cars that are parked around the city. Find the closest car on its website, follow the instructions and you're off. Prices depend on duration, kilometers driven and other factors, but petrol is included. See website for details. ► Kungu 8, tel. (+371) 27 33 27 33, [www.carguru.lv](http://www.carguru.lv). Open 24hrs. [cc]

### PANCARS RENT-A-CAR

If you're looking for a unique way to get around Latvia, these guys rent classic, artistically painted Polish Fiats for reasonable prices. ► tel. (+371) 20 26 26 36, [www.pancars.lv](http://www.pancars.lv).

### SIXT

With offices in over 105 nations worldwide, Sixt will have no trouble meeting your rental needs. Hire the latest models from BMW, Mercedes, Ford, Opel, VW and other brand names for competitive prices. ► Airport, tel. (+371) 67 20 71 21, [www.sixt.lv](http://www.sixt.lv). Open 08:00-24:00. [cc]

## ELECTRIC MOPEDS

### SKOK

Simply download its app, create an account and find the nearest electric moped to unlock. Two helmets are provided, but you must be at least 18 and have a valid driving licence and credit card. It costs €1.99 to register and then €0.20/minute or €20 for 24hrs. See website for distance restrictions and parking. ► Ieriku 15, k-3, tel. (+371) 27 00 81 18, [www.skoksharing.com](http://www.skoksharing.com). [cc]

### BOLT

The same company that operates the popular ride sharing app also offers pay-as-you-go electric scooters. Just use the same taxi app to find the nearest scooter. It costs €1 to begin your ride and €0.10 every additional minute. ► Kuģu 26, [www.bolt.eu/scooters](http://www.bolt.eu/scooters). [cc]

### FIQSÝ

This scooter sharing app allows you to find the closest Fiqsy electric scooter, which you can unlock for €1 and then ride for €0.10 per minute. ► tel. (+371) 25 48 00 10, [www.fiqsy.com](http://www.fiqsy.com). [cc]

## FERRIES

### RIGA PASSENGER TERMINAL

If you're travelling to Riga with Tallink from Stockholm then you'll arrive here. ► B-3, Eksporta 3a, tel. (+371) 67 32 62 00, [www.rigapt.lv](http://www.rigapt.lv).

### STENA LINE

Regular passenger and cargo ferries between Liepāja and Travemünde, Germany. ► tel. (+371) 63 62 29 99, [www.stenaline.lv](http://www.stenaline.lv).

### TALLINK

Tallink provides a direct ferry service between Riga and Helsinki every other day. ► B-2, Eksporta 3a, tel. (+371) 67 09 97 00, [www.tallink.com](http://www.tallink.com). Open 09:00-19:00. [cc]

## AIRPORT TAXIS

Local authorities have finally found a way to prohibit dishonest cabs at the airport by creating a special licensing system. The red and white Red Cab taxis and green BalticTaxi cabs queued up outside the terminal are the only officially sanctioned cabs available to the public, so theoretically the chance of getting scammed by a dishonest driver should be slim. However, you can download the Bolt (bolt.eu) ride sharing app and order a car for a fraction of the price of a taxi with your mobile phone. The only catch is that you have to wait for your car on the second level departures area as they are not permitted to enter the Arrivals car park.

# Getting Around

## BUS SCHEDULE

From RIGA			To RIGA	
Dep.	Arr.	CITY	Dep.	Arr.
23:30	07:10	KALININGRAD**	22:30	06:00
12:30	16:40	KAUNAS**	05:45	11:45
18:00	23:40	KAUNAS**	14:40	18:50
22:25	08:20	MINSK**	22:30	06:40
19:15	10:15	MOSCOW**	21:15	10:15
09:00	11:35	PÄRNU*	08:50	11:25
17:00	19:35	PÄRNU*	14:20	16:55
08:00	10:30	PÄRNU**	09:50	12:25
14:15	16:50	PÄRNU**	20:45	23:15
08:55	20:30	ST. PETERSBURG*	11:30	21:00
22:45	10:30	ST. PETERSBURG*	21:00	06:30
09:00	21:20	ST. PETERSBURG**	09:30	21:00
17:00	06:15	ST. PETERSBURG**	20:10	06:00
20:00	07:20	ST. PETERSBURG**	22:00	10:35
22:00	09:20	ST. PETERSBURG**	22:20	07:50
09:00	13:25	TALLINN*	07:00	11:25
12:30	16:55	TALLINN*	08:00	12:25
16:00	20:25	TALLINN*	12:30	16:55
18:00	22:25	TALLINN*	17:00	21:25
02:30	06:50	TALLINN**	06:30	10:35
08:00	12:15	TALLINN**	08:00	12:25
09:00	13:35	TALLINN**	09:30	13:55
12:00	16:30	TALLINN**	13:00	17:40
14:15	18:40	TALLINN**	16:15	21:00
17:00	21:45	TALLINN**	19:00	23:15
19:00	23:45	TALLINN**	22:00	02:20
08:55	12:50	TARTU*	17:20	21:00
19:00	22:55	TARTU**	02:10	06:00
22:00	01:35	TARTU**	06:30	10:30
07:00	11:10	VILNIUS*	07:30	11:40
09:30	13:40	VILNIUS*	12:00	16:15
12:00	16:05	VILNIUS*	17:30	21:45
02:30	06:30	VILNIUS**	02:40	06:40
07:30	11:30	VILNIUS**	07:30	11:45
11:00	15:05	VILNIUS**	09:30	13:55
14:15	18:40	VILNIUS**	14:45	18:45
18:00	22:05	VILNIUS**	18:00	21:55
22:25	02:25	VILNIUS**	22:00	02:20

\* Lux Express \*\* ECOLINES

Schedule subject to change. Local buses to Latvian cities depart frequently. Visit [www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv) for exact departure times.

## LONG-DISTANCE BUSES

### BUS STATION (AUTOOSTA)

The bus is quicker and cheaper than a train journey but they often fill up quickly, especially during the summer. Ticket counters 1–9 sell tickets to all local destinations, but two ticket machines are also available. For buses to destinations abroad visit Ecolines or LuxExpress, which have offices on the ground floor. ► J-3, Prāgas 1, tel. (+371) 90 00 00 09, [www.autoosta.lv](http://www.autoosta.lv). Open 05:00–24:00.

### ECOLINES

As its name suggests, this company has been providing affordable bus service to hundreds of cities in dozens of European countries since 1993. You can purchase a ticket at its service centre in the Riga Bus Terminal or save some time and receive a substantial discount by ordering a ticket online at [www.ecolines.net](http://www.ecolines.net). Most buses offer free coffee or tea onboard as well as electrical sockets for recharging devices, free wi-fi and a toilet. ► J-3, Prāgas 1 (Bus station), tel. (+371) 67 21 45 12, [www.ecolines.net](http://www.ecolines.net). Open 07:00–21:00.  

### LUX EXPRESS

Try its luxury express buses to Tallinn and Vilnius that include free wi-fi, coffee and tea, a restroom and onboard entertainment screens at each seat (bring earbuds if you want to listen to music or watch a film). It also operates routes to a number of other other cities in the region including Pärnu, Tartu, Minsk and St. Petersburg. ► J-3, Prāgas 1 (Bus Station), tel. (+371) 67 78 13 50, [www.luxexpress.eu/en](http://www.luxexpress.eu/en). Open 06:40–20:00.  

## PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Riga has 7 tram lines, 18 trolleybus routes and 51 bus routes that operate from as early as 05:00 to as late as 01:00, depending on the route. You can buy €1.15 tickets at designated Riga Transport (Rigas Satiksme) ticket offices, at public transport ticket machines or at Narvesen newsstands, post offices and Rimi supermarkets. You can also buy a ticket from the driver (on old trams) but it will cost you €2. New trams offer ticket machines on board. Passengers have a wide variety of ticket options including tickets for one (€1.15), two (€2.30), four (€4.60), five (€5.75), 10 (€10.90) and 20 (€20.70) rides or tickets good for one (€5), three (€10) or five (€15) days of travel.



The tickets are valid for trams, trolleybuses and city buses. Press the ticket against the electronic ticket readers on the bus or tram as soon as you board the vehicle. The green light will flash and the display will show you how many more rides are left on the card (e.g. Atlikums: 9). You are no longer required to cover your nose and mouth onboard with a mask or scarf, but we recommend that you do to protect yourself and others from Covid-19.

Read more about routes and exact departure times in English at [www.rigassatiksme.lv](http://www.rigassatiksme.lv). ► J-3, Prāgas 1, tel. (+371) 80 00 19 19, [www.rigassatiksme.lv](http://www.rigassatiksme.lv). Open 09:00–19:00; Sat 10:00–16:00; closed Sun.

## TAXIS

### BALTIC TAXI

The bright green Baltic Taxis are among the most reliable cabs in Riga. ► Čaka 148-7, tel. (+371) 20 00 85 00. Open 24hrs. [\[cc\]](#)

### BOLT

Not unlike Uber, this ride sharing app let's you order and track cabs via an app. Download it and you'll be on your way in no time. Bolt, formerly known as Taxify, is also usually cheaper than taxis, depending on demand. ► Kuģu 26, tel. (+371) 66 16 40 36, [www.bolt.eu/cities/riga](http://www.bolt.eu/cities/riga). [\[cc\]](#)

### RED CAB (RĪGAS TAKSOMETRU PARKS)

These reliable red and white cabs are at your door within minutes of ordering one. Also available at the airport. ► Valdemāra 51, tel. (+371) 8383, [www.redcab.lv](http://www.redcab.lv). Open 24hrs. [\[cc\]](#)

## TOURS & TRAVEL

### AREA TOURS

A jolly, English-speaking Latvian man will drive you anywhere in Latvia, Lithuania or Estonia with a car or van for as long as you like. Make your own itinerary and drive! Available day or night. Recommended. ► Reformācijas laukums 1, tel. (+371) 29 58 04 48, [www.carsrent.lv](http://www.carsrent.lv).

## TRAINS

### CENTRAL STATION (CENTRĀLĀ STACIJA)

Tickets for immediate departures have to be bought in the main ticket hall on the right side of the main entrance, counters №1 to 13. Tickets for international trains are sold at counters №1 to 6. Do not confuse *perons* (the platform) and *ceļš* (the track). They are numbered separately in Latvia and can be quite confusing. *Pietur* means stops and *nepietur* means doesn't stop, so if you see a train schedule with a list of towns and cities in the margin, it is best to check whether the train stops there or not. ► D-4, Stacijas laukums, tel. (+371) 67 23 21 35, [www.pv.lv](http://www.pv.lv). Open 05:00-24:00.

### LATVIAN RAILWAYS (LATVIJAS DZELZCEĻŠ)

► D-4, Gogoļa 3, tel. (+371) 67 23 21 35, [www.pv.lv](http://www.pv.lv).



The River Daugava's left bank

## HISTORICAL TIMELINE

In 2,500BC Indo-European tribes arrive on the Baltic Sea coast. In Latvia the inhabitants split into several tribes: Zemgali, Sēļi, Latgalji and Kurši. The Livonians, a Finno-Ugric group, are equally ancient settlers.

**12th century** German traders arrive with Christianity. A holy war against the Baltic pagans is launched with help from a papal bull from the Vatican.

**1201** Bishop Albert founds Riga by building a castle.

**1211** The foundations of the Dome cathedral are laid.

**1290** The last stand by Latvian tribes is crushed.

**1522** German preachers bring the Reformation to Latvia.

**1600-1629** In the Polish-Swedish War, Sweden wins northern Latvia, while the provinces of Kurzeme and Zemgale are united into a duchy loyal to the Polish-Lithuanian empire.

**1700-1721** Sweden and Russia fight for control of Livonia.

**1795** The Russians occupy Latgale and control the entire country until WWI.

**1802** Poverty leads to a failed peasant rebellion.

**1817 & 1819** Serfdom is abolished in Latvia, but farms remain in the hands of German and Russian owners.

**1873** The first all-Latvian song festival is held in Riga.

**1905** On January 24, a general strike is called and 50,000 workers protest in the streets. 80 people are killed in clashes with Tsarist troops and a further 2,000 are killed by Russian 'punishment brigades'.

**1915** During WWI Russia allows independent Latvian units to defend the country.

**1918** Latvian nationalists declare Latvia's independence at the National Theatre on November 18.

**1921** Russia vows to respect Latvia's independence, which is also recognised by the international community on January 26.

**1934** President Kārlis Ulmanis stages a bloodless coup in May and effectively becomes a dictator for six years.

**1940** The USSR invades Latvia on June 17. On the night of June 13 - 14, 1941, they force tens of thousands into cattle cars and deport them to Siberia.

**1941** The Germans take Riga when invading the USSR in early July. The Nazis murder 90% of Latvia's Jewish population in their three year occupation.

**1944** The Red Army retakes most of Latvia in July and September. Thousands of Latvians flee.

**1949** On March 25, 42,000 people are sent to Siberia. The Stalinist regime begins a russification campaign

**1989** On August 23 some 2 million Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians join hands in a human chain stretching from Tallinn to Vilnius in the 650km-long Baltic Way.

**1990** On May 4 the Supreme Council adopts a declaration restoring independence with a transitional period.

**1991** On August 21 the Moscow coup collapses and the Latvian parliament votes to restore independence. On September 6 the USSR recognises independent Latvia.

**2004** Latvia joins NATO and the European Union.

**2018** Latvia celebrates its centenary.

# Riga Basics

## ALCOHOL

Although we don't recommend binge drinking in the age of Covid-19, we do hope you enjoy a local drink in moderation while in Riga. Užavas and Valmiermužas are among the nation's best beers, but keep your eye out for great craft brews by Contra, Labietis, Malduguns, Nurme and Viedi. The infamous Riga Black Balsam is a potent spirit that Latvians enjoy inflicting on tourists. Bars are open at all hours, but alcohol is only sold in shops from 08:00 - 22:00. You must be at least 18 to buy alcohol.

## COMMUNISM

Most monuments from the Soviet era, which are viewed as symbols of oppression by Latvians, have been removed. However, a red granite monument, once dedicated to the Latvian riflemen who protected Lenin after the Revolution of 1917, still exists on Strēlnieku laukums, but now honours all of the riflemen - Whites and Reds. Another monument, dedicated to the Soviet 'liberation' of Riga, is located on the other side of the Daugava. Hammers and sickles can also be seen on the wrought iron fence on A-B dambis near the Radisson Blu Daugava Hotel.

## MONEY

Latvia adopted the euro as its national currency on January 1, 2014. There are 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 euro cent coins as well as 1 and 2 euro coins. Banknotes are available with the following values: 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500.

## POST

### LATVIAN POSTAL SERVICE (LATVIJAS PASTS)

Send postcards, letters and packages, buy stamps and public transport tickets or do what most locals do here (hence the queues) and pay your utility bills. Take a number and have a seat. ► H-3, Brīvības bulv. 32, tel. (+371) 67 50 28 15 / (+371) 67 00 80 01, [www.pasts.lv](http://www.pasts.lv). Open 07:30 - 19:00, Sat 09:00 - 15:00; closed Sun. 

## ROADS

Latvia has some of the world's worst drivers. It's not that they can't steer or press the break pedal, although for some reason Latvians can't master the art of parallel parking, it's more likely a reckless streak that allows grown men and women to act like children behind the wheel. Passing on blind curves is shockingly common, red lights are ignored by most BMWs and pedestrians on crosswalks tend to become targets for wannabe F1 drivers in tricked out Mercedes jeeps. If, like many locals, you enjoy operating an automobile while intoxicated, you should bear in mind that all perpetrators, including foreigners, face a mandatory ten-day jail sentence and a huge fine. The speed limit is 50km/h in towns, 90km/h on the open road and it is strictly enforced. Speed traps are prevalent and bribes are not recommended.

## SCAMS

Some strip clubs, nightclubs and late night bars take advantage of inebriated patrons. Be wary of attractive girls on Livu Square asking you to join them for a drink in a nearby bar. You'll be shocked to discover that the barely palatable bottle of wine you bought them costs €700 or more. If you refuse the bouncers will pummel you until you give them your PIN code. Avoid seedy bars and try to always pay in cash at nightclubs.

## SMOKING

Latvians love to smoke and until the mid-2000s you could see them lighting up almost anywhere, from barstools in local pubs to hospital beds. But all that has changed. Smoking is now banned in most public places including restaurants, clubs and government buildings. The few establishments which have built completely separate smoking sections with proper ventilation systems have been assigned a smoking symbol. Ironically, the government has largely ignored the root causes of smoking, but new taxes on cigarettes have brought the price of a pack of Marlboros up to just under €4.

## COVID-19

Latvia declared a state of emergency to protect its citizens from Covid-19 on March 12, 2020. For nearly three months, the nation plunged itself into self-isolation, closing its borders to all foreign travellers as it imposed a whole slew of new laws regulating where its citizens could congregate, if at all, and which businesses were allowed to operate. However, as of July 1, most of these restrictions have been lifted. People are still encouraged to keep a distance of at least 2m from people outside of their households, but many regulations imposed on restaurants and bars have been eased as Latvia has seen its already low coronavirus infections dramatically decrease. Restaurants and bars can now operate until 02:00. Cinemas have also opened, but must adhere to strict guidelines. Concerts and events can once again take place, but with a maximum number of 100 people indoors or 500 if the venue is larger than 1,000m<sup>2</sup>. Outdoor events can be held for up to 1,000 people. When using public transport, you are no longer required to cover your nose and mouth with a mask or scarf, but we recommend that you do. Riga's airport has begun receiving flights from most European nations and ferry traffic to Finland and Germany has also resumed. International bus and train travel is now permitted. As of July 5, 2020, there have been 1124 reported Covid-19 infections in the country and 30 deaths. 1,000 patients have recovered from the virus. **If you come from a country with no more than 15 Covid-19 patients per 100,000 inhabitants, a 14-day self-isolation isn't required upon arrival in Latvia.**



## COMFORT FOOD FROM CALIFORNIA IN RIGA

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# Culture & Events

For a full list of concerts, exhibitions and other local happenings see [www.inyourpocket.com/riga/events](http://www.inyourpocket.com/riga/events).

## CINEMAS

Cinemas opened on July 1 and must ensure social distancing by leaving free spaces between filmgoers.

### FILM NOIR

Walk through the opulent foyer past the ticket booth in Riga's oldest cinema and take the stairs to the cellar to discover this retro café with a film theme. The main hall has plenty of seating facing a central screen that entertains patrons (for a small fee) with classic and contemporary Oscar-calibre movies most evenings, but if you're looking for a quiet drink we recommend the so-called 'library' with its green crushed velvet seats, parquet floor and dark wooden bookcases that feature a few famous cinema scenes including a flustered Tippi Hedren fleeing from Hitchcock's birds. Only open for film screenings. ► C-4, Elizabetes 61, tel. (+371) 67 28 90 85, [www.filmmoir.lv](http://www.filmmoir.lv). 

### FORUM CINEMAS

Forum Cinemas is the second largest cinema complex in Northern Europe. 14 viewing halls with 3,200 seats are available to film-goers not to mention the largest movie screen in the Baltic-Scandinavian region as well as a top-floor bar called Vertigo with excellent views. ► I-3, 13. janvāra 8, tel. (+371) 1189, [www.forumcinemas.lv](http://www.forumcinemas.lv). Open 11:00-22:00; Sun 10:00-22:00; Fri 11:00-24:00; Sat 10:00-24:00. 

What's On in Riga?  
It's all In Your Pocket



Free app download: [iyapp.me/app](http://iyapp.me/app)

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 @InYourPocket

## CLUBS & OTHER VENUES

### BIĶERNIEKU TRACK (BIĶERNIEKU TRASE)

The best place in Riga to see car and motorcycle races. ► S. Eizenšteina 16, tel. (+371) 67 02 58 00, [www.bksb.lv](http://www.bksb.lv).

### DE FLOU

Riga's only hip hop club. ► A-5, Aristida Briāna 9a, tel. (+371) 24 82 32 00. Open 20:00-02:00; Sat, Sun 15:00-02:00; closed Mon, Tue. 

### FOLK CLUB ALA

Local folk music concerts most days of the week. ► I-2, Peldu 19, tel. (+371) 27 79 69 14, [www.folkclubs.lv](http://www.folkclubs.lv). 

### KKC (KANEPES KULTŪRAS CENTRS)

This funky, self-proclaimed culture centre is a local hotspot for hipsters who appreciate having drinks, listening to music and doing other arty things in a dilapidated wooden building. Also hosts concerts and art exhibitions ► B-4, Skolas 15, tel. (+371) 29 40 44 05, [www.kanepes.lv](http://www.kanepes.lv). Open 13:00-02:00; Thu 13:00-04:00; Fri, Sat 13:00-05:00.

### NEKĀDU PROBLĒMU

This large terrace and beer garden also offers free jazz, rock and folk concerts in the summer on its open-air stage. ► I-2, Kalķu 1A, tel. (+371) 20 38 99 88.

### SIDRĒRIJA TAPROOM

Live jazz music is performed on a small stage at least four nights a week at this casual, yet refined jazz club and restaurant. ► I-2, Peldu 24, tel. (+371) 25 74 52 99, [www.trompete.lv](http://www.trompete.lv). Open 12:00-24:00; Sun 11:00-24:00; Thu 12:00-02:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-03:00.

## CONCERT HALLS

### HANZAS PERONS

A former warehouse has been completely transformed into a cultural space that hosts concerts and other events.

► B-3, Hanzas 16a, [www.hanzasperons.lv](http://www.hanzasperons.lv).

### ST. JOHN'S CHURCH (JĀNA BAZNĪCA)

This 13th-century church also hosts concerts now and again. ► I-2, Skārnu 24, tel. (+371) 67 22 40 28/(+371) 25 63 55 65, [www.janabaznica.lv](http://www.janabaznica.lv).

## EXHIBITION SPACES

### ART PLATZ

One of Riga's most iconic Art Nouveau edifices has been given a new lease of life as a high-end art space called Art Platz. In addition to information about the building's illustrious architect Mikhail Eisenstein (1867–1920), it also displays a new exhibition by Herberts Ernests Silīņš (1926–2001) entitled *Kaleidoscope*. Other halls host an exhibition called *The Trajectory of Myth* featuring artist Kalvis Zālītis and a café specialising in teas will also soon be available. If, however, you'd like to create your own art, lectures and master classes are also held regularly (see its website and Instagram for details). Ring the doorbell marked Art Platz. ► B-3, Alberta 4-9, tel. (+371) 20 02 50 02, [www.platzkart.info](http://www.platzkart.info). Open 10:00-18:00; closed Mon, Tue.   

## EVENTS

### 14.06 - 14.09 » SKUJA BRADEN. SAMSARA

This exhibition features over 20 years of work created by Latvian artist Ingūna Skuja and American artist Melisa D. Braden. Their porcelain items and paintings often reflect their strong convictions as socially responsible feminists and LGBTQ supporters. ► I-2, Museum of Decorative Arts & Design, Skārņu 10/20, tel. (+371) 67 22 22 35, €3.50, [www.lnmm.lv/en/mdad](http://www.lnmm.lv/en/mdad). Open 11:00-17:00, Wed 11:00-19:00. Closed Mon.

### 08.07 - 31.07 12:00-23:00 » STREET - 2M - FOOD FESTIVAL AT THE KALNCIEMS QUARTER

Street Food at the Kalnciems Quarter. Every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday the Kalnciems Quarter hosts a special 2m social distancing street food festival. Drop by and responsibly partake of what Riga's culinary entrepreneurs have on the stove. ► D-1, Kalnciems Fair, Kalnciema 35, tel. (+371) 26 25 51 48, Free, [www.kalnciemaiba.lv](http://www.kalnciemaiba.lv).

### 26.06 - 23.08 » ROMUALDS GEIKINS. CON-VERGENCE

An exhibition by one of Latvia's most prolific artists. Nearly 100 paintings, watercolours, sketches, miniatures and drawings from the mid-1960s to the present day will illustrate the artist's unique style of combining aspects gleaned from the Old Masters as well as religious icons and works by Russia's avant-gardists. ► F-3, Latvian National Museum of Art, Jāpa Rozentāla laukums 1, tel. (+371) 67 32 44 61, €3, [www.lnmm.lv](http://www.lnmm.lv). Open 10:00-18:00, Fri 10:00-20:00, Sat, Sun 10:00-17:00. Closed Mon.

### EVERY SATURDAY » KALNCIEMS FAIR

The thoroughfare on the other side of the Vanšu bridge is a treasure trove of 19th-century wooden architecture and although many of these old edifices could use some serious renovation work, the beautiful buildings at the corner of Melnsila and Kalnciema iela have been lovingly restored and now host a bustling fair every Saturday from 10:00 - 16:00. You can expect plenty of food and drink, local crafts, fashion by Latvian designers and a lively atmosphere. Take tram №1 from Grēcinieku iela to the Kalnciema iela stop. ► D-1, Kalnciema 35, tel. (+371) 26 25 51 48, Free, [www.kalnciemaiba.lv](http://www.kalnciemaiba.lv). Every Saturday.

### 11.07, 25.07 19:00-21:00 » AVE MARIA. OLGA PYATIGORSKA

Ave Maria. Olga Pyatigorska (soprano) and Jolanta Barinska (organ). Works by J.S. Bach, A. Vivaldi, W.A. Mozart and F. Schubert. ► I-2, St. John's Church, Skārņu 24, tel. (+371) 25 63 55 65, €6 - 15.

### 21.07 19:30-21:30 » VALTERS PŪCE & DAINIS TENIS UNPLUGGED

Valters Pūce & Dainis Tenis Unplugged. Two members of the famous crossover classical group DaGamba. ► D-1, Kalnciems Quarter, Kalnciema 35, tel. (+371) 26 25 51 48, €15 - 35, [www.kalnciemaiba.lv](http://www.kalnciemaiba.lv).

### 28.07 19:30-21:30 » LATVIAN VOICES

Latvian Voices. Female a capella group. ► D-1, Kalnciems Quarter, Kalnciema 35, tel. (+371) 26 25 51 48, €15 - 35, [www.kalnciemaiba.lv](http://www.kalnciemaiba.lv).



## Art Platz



Alberta street 4-9, Riga  
Phone: +371 20025002  
[artplatz.office@gmail.com](mailto:artplatz.office@gmail.com)  
[artplatz\\_office@inbox.lv](mailto:artplatz_office@inbox.lv)  
[www.platzkart.info](http://www.platzkart.info)

# Restaurants

An authentic thin-crust **pizza**, fresh **sushi**, hearty **pork knuckle** or an **Armenian shashlik** are never far from your fingertips in the Latvian capital and many **restaurants in**

**Riga** now offer cheap lunch specials to lure diners into their establishments. The old town is a logical place to look for a good meal, but bear in mind that many of Riga's best restaurants are located in the city centre where most locals also find sustenance. Thrifty Latvians often find it difficult to leave their servers *dzeramnauda* (literally drinking money), but a tip of 10% is expected from foreigners at most Riga restaurants. The average cost of a main course is listed in parentheses.

## AMERICAN

### HOLY MOLY!

Located in the swanky Art Nouveau section of town, the views from its huge windows won't put you in mind of the Pacific, but the bright pink and turquoise interior of Riga's only Californian-style restaurant just might. Order pancakes and waffles for breakfast or try some of its burgers, poke bowls, shrimp tacos or pizza for lunch. For a proper dinner, however, you might try the *cioppino*, a San Franciscan seafood classic, or the surf and turf. A craft brew menu is also available, as well as cocktails and wine from Napa Valley and Washington State, but the smoothies and milkshakes served in unusual pineapple glasses should not be overlooked. ► A-4, Antonijas 6A, tel. (+371) 20 02 19 82, [www.holymoly.lv](http://www.holymoly.lv). Open 12:00-21:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-22:00. (€7 - 18).

## ARMENIAN

### ARAGATS

The family who runs this authentic restaurant fled earthquake-racked Armenia and then opened a little piece of their homeland in Riga. But after decades of serving mouth-watering grilled lamb, veal and pork *shashliks* as well as a wide variety of other delicious cuisine from the Caucasus Mountains on Miera iela, they finally moved to the Art Nouveau district of the city centre at the end of 2015. Personalised service from the family is still a hallmark of Aragats, but in keeping with 21st-century etiquette women are now given menus that include prices! ► C-3, Jura Alunāna 2a, tel. (+371) 67 37 34 45, [www.aragats.lv](http://www.aragats.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-23:00; closed Mon, Sun. (€8 - 14).

## ASIAN

### HUM

Step down into this stylish half-basement for Asian food and interesting design including vertical moss gardens in place of paintings, unique conical wooden lamps that look like deconstructed paddy hats and a delicate mural depicting a rice harvest. The lunch menu offers a soup and main course such as stir fries and *phad thaïs* for roughly €7, while more refined dishes can be ordered à la carte in the evening. ► C-4, Gertrūdes 22, tel. (+371) 66 07 70 77, [www.humasia.eu](http://www.humasia.eu). Open 11:00-23:00. (€7 - 12).

### WOK N KURRY

This cosy restaurant offers a pleasant brown and beige interior that also includes large windows facing the street. A number of Asian cuisines are served here, especially Indian, Chinese and Thai. Delicious curries, stir fries and grilled dishes are freshly prepared each day by a team of Indian chefs who use a variety of exotic spices that they regularly import from their homeland. Expect a fusion of incredible flavours at this Indian-run establishment that proves that authentic Asian cuisine need not be expensive. A lunch special including a vegetarian version is also available on weekdays for under €6. ► C-5, Kr. Barona 52 (entrance from Gertrūdes), tel. (+371) 67 49 68 18, [www.woknurry.lv](http://www.woknurry.lv). Open 11:00-23:00; Fri 11:00-22:00; Sat, Sun 12:00-22:00. (€5 - 8).

### YAKUZA

Not your average sushi joint, this stylish restaurant sparsely decorated with wooden wall coverings in geometric patterns and unique lighting fixtures offers an extensive menu, complete with photos, covering the gamut of Japanese cuisine from sushi and tempura dishes to ramen, stir fries and sashimi bowls. A separate tea menu is also available as well as hard-to-find craft beers from the Land of the Rising Sun. Best of all, despite its name, dodgy Yakuza were nowhere to be found. ► B-3/4, Elizabetes 10, tel. (+371) 67 39 81 60 / (+371) 66 77 78 88, [www.yakuza.lv](http://www.yakuza.lv). Open 12:00-21:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-22:00. Also at Riga Airport. (€8 - 14).



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# SUSHI & BEYOND

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## LATVIAN CUISINE

Although most local food won't make it into any mainstream diets, with perhaps the exception of the Atkins plan, one has to keep in mind that for centuries Latvians toiled in the fields burning off thousands of calories a day, so it's not so surprising that traditional local cuisine is designed for work horses, not office workers. Here then are some dishes you'll come across. *Labu apetiti!* (bon appetit)!

Where to begin? That's easy. A Latvian meal is seldom complete without pork. Even if you order a dish without the national meat, there's a good chance that the chef has snuck it into your food somehow, usually by cooking other food, including vegetables, in bacon fat. *Karbonāde ar kaulu* (grilled pork chops), *karbonāde* (pork schnitzel) and *cūkas stilbs* (pork knuckle) are all favourites, but for more exotic pig dishes keep an eye out for *cūkas ausis* (pig's ears), *grūdenis* (pig's head stew) and *cūkas kājas* (pig's feet). *Kartupeļi* (potatoes) are served with everything and they're usually either boiled, fried, boiled and then fried or mashed.

Sometimes, traditional restaurants will also offer *griķi* (boiled buckwheat) instead of potatoes. If in doubt, stick with the potatoes. *Kāposti* (cabbage) also plays a major role in most Latvian meals. Sometimes it's served cold as a salad or hot as a side dish like *skābie kāposti* (sour kraut). We, however, prefer *škōvētie* or *štovētie kāposti*, which is like sour kraut but sweeter and darker in colour as it's stewed longer with sugar. *Pelēkie zirņi* (grey peas) is another side dish worth trying. Big, brownish-grey round peas are boiled and then fried with bacon and usually served with *kefīrs* (kefir) or *skābais krējums* (sour cream).

All kinds of pickled items are also on offer at most Latvian establishments including beets, mushrooms and, of course, cucumbers. If you see the word *marinēts* on a menu it means that something has been marinated in vinegar. Latvians refer to all salads as *salāti* including the classic local staple *rosols*, which is a combination of pickled vegetables, potatoes and meat held together with loads of *majonēze* (mayonnaise), *sinepes* (mustard) and *mārrutki* (horseradish). Other salads are drenched in sour cream.

Soups are usually hearty like *frikadeļu zupa* (meatball soup), *zirņu zupa* (pea soup) and the Russian favourite *solanka* (tangy tomato soup with potatoes, sausage, pork kidney and pickles). Latvian seasonings seldom stray beyond *dilles* (dill) and *kimenes* (caraway seeds).

Although Latvians love ice cream, cake and chocolate, traditional desserts include *maizes zupa* (rye bread pudding) and *kīselis* (starchy fruit pudding served with milk). Bakeries are also full of sweet and savoury pastries called *pīrāgi* with any number of fillings.

## BAGELS

### BIG BAD BAGELS

This charming little bagel bistro, which is already a hit with the city's American expat population, offers a number of different bagels served with a wide variety of fillings. Although we're quite partial to the big breakfast sandwich bursting with fried eggs and bacon on a jalapeño and cheese bagel, we also recommend the classic cream cheese and lox and pretty much anything else that's listed on the menu. A couple of tables are also available outside on the sidewalk in the summer. ► C-4, *Baznīcas* 8, tel. (+371) 24 55 65 85, [www.bigbadbagels.com](http://www.bigbadbagels.com). Open 09:00-17:00. (€4).

## BAKERIES

### MĀRTINA BEĶEREJA

Martin's Bakery offers a modern, beige environment to enjoy classic Latvian pastries from freshly baked *pīrāgi* (bacon dumplings) with a variety of different fillings like ham, onions and mushrooms to delicious sweet pastries from fragrant *kanēļa maizītes* (cinnamon buns) to gooey *kafijas maizītes* (custard-cream buns). ► I-3, *Valņu* 28, tel. (+371) 67 21 33 14, [www.bekereja.lv](http://www.bekereja.lv). Open 08:00-17:00; closed Sat, Sun.

### TROUBADOUR GOURMAND

*Parlez-vous cholesterol?* Expat Bernard Larane's French bakery brings kilos of buttery pastries to Riga, including the closest thing to a Parisian *pain au chocolat* this side of the Baltic. Fresh bread, homemade croissants, macarons, quiches, strong coffee and fresh-squeezed orange juice also make this boulangerie a favourite retreat. Local and foreign press (not to mention beer) is also available and outside seating can be enjoyed in the summer. ► C-4, *Barona* 52 (entrance from *Gertrūdes*), [www.troubadour-gourmet.lv](http://www.troubadour-gourmet.lv). Open 08:00-22:00.

## BARBECUE

### CHARLESTONS

We've been big fans of this casual, yet elegant restaurant in the city centre for years and if you drop by you'll see why. The main dining hall offers soft, dark colours and much of the space is divided by stacks of alder firewood, which is used to smoke many of its meat and fish dishes. In fact, the delicious pork ribs and other Charleston delicacies are smoked for 4 - 14 hours in a specially-designed smoke room downstairs. Naturally, seafood and a variety of vegetarian dishes are also available for the non-carnivores among us. So if you like good beer, wine and cocktails and mouth-watering barbecued meals, then look no further than Charlestons, which also has a great weekend brunch (Sat, Sun 11:00 - 15:00) that's fun for the whole family. ► C-4/5, *Blaumaņa* 38/40, tel. (+371) 67 77 05 73, [www.charlestons.lv](http://www.charlestons.lv). Open 11:00-20:00; Fri 11:00-21:00; Sat 12:00-21:00; Sun 12:00-20:00. (€10 - 28).

## BELGIAN

### BON VIVANT

Solid wood furniture, a cosy atmosphere and assorted Benelux decorations aren't the only things that make this place an authentic Belgian beer bar and restaurant. A whole page of the menu is dedicated to steamed mussels, sausages are ordered by the half metre and tasty brews from the Low Countries are served in their proper glasses - a rarity in Riga. Most of the delicious food and drink isn't cheap, but Europeans have come to expect that anything from Brussels will cost them dearly. ► I-2, Mārstaļu 8, tel. (+371) 67 22 65 85, [www.bon-vivant.lv](http://www.bon-vivant.lv). Open 12:00-23:00. (€12 - 21).    

## BURGER JOINTS

### BURGER STUDIO

The only thing this hipsterish neighbourhood lacked was a craft burger joint, until now. This minimalist grey space with designer lighting fixtures and chairs is thoroughly modern with the notable exception of the 19th-century tiled fireplace in the corner. Beef, chicken and veggie burgers seem to be truly 'made with passion' as they claim and you can get a variety of sides as well as some extras like chicken wings, which you can enjoy with a soda or a good local draught beer. That's pretty much it. ► C-5, Ģertrūdes 41, tel. (+371) 25 72 47 12. Open 11:00-22:00. (€5 - 7).   

### KK FEAST

Tucked away just behind one of the city centre's biggest churches, KK Feast offers a small menu of big burgers for all tastes from double beef with the works and a truly spicy burger to chicken, portobello and pulled pork burgers with your choice of classic or sweet potato fries. Pasta dishes and salads can also be had and a decent selection of craft brews in bottles is also available at this urban eatery where the walls are covered in street art and hip-hop music completes the atmosphere. ► B-5, Brīvības iela 117, tel. (+371) 20 30 92 10. Open 11:00-22:00; Fri 11:00-23:00; Sat 12:00-23:00; Sun 12:00-21:00.   

### LATE NIGHT MUNCHIES

This simple room on Old Riga's most popular nightlife street is simply decorated with a timber beam ceiling, hardwood floors and walls plastered with Polaroid photos of friends, clients and colleagues. Grab a stool at one of the counters and order pizzas, panini, chicken wings or its most popular item – big, juicy burgers with a side of fries. Beer and spirits are also available so you don't have to sacrifice any drinking time while taking a refueling break from one of the neighbouring bars and clubs. ► I-2, Peldu 21, tel. (+371) 22 33 38 39, [www.munchies.lv](http://www.munchies.lv). Open 11:00-23:00; Sun 12:00-23:00.    

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# Restaurants

## CAFETERIAS

### DELICIO

Riga has nearly as many cheap cafeterias as it has stray cats, but this chain is a cut above the rest. Not only does it offer a big buffet of international and Latvian favourites, but it also boasts a pasta station where meals are cooked to order after you've chosen your own ingredients. Beer, Proseco and wine are also available, not to mention a cosy, yet stylish interior of raised levels and comfy niches, which make you feel like you're dining at a proper restaurant, but for a fraction of the price. Breakfast specials including a 'create your own omelette' are also on offer in the morning. ► F-3, Dzirnavu 49, tel. (+371) 67 28 53 97 / (+371) 67 28 06 66, [www.delicio.lv](http://www.delicio.lv). Open 10:00-19:00; closed Sun, Sat. (€2 - 6).   

## CENTRAL ASIAN

### UZBEGIMS

This authentic Uzbek restaurant housed in one of the city's loveliest art nouveau landmarks includes all of the usual Central Asian kitsch including ceramic plates, traditional instruments and figurines of bearded men with watermelons, yet Uzbegims has a much more upmarket feel with gilded dinnerware, expensive Persian rugs and impeccable service by professional staff. The whole gamut of Uzbek cuisine is on offer, but we chose the stuffed aubergines and assorted grilled meat skewers with delicious homemade bread and spicy *adjika* sauce. ► B-4, Elizabetes 10b, tel. (+371) 66 10 33 34, [www.uzbegims.lv](http://www.uzbegims.lv). Open 12:00-21:00. (€7 - 12). 

## CHEAP & QUICK

### PELMENI XL

As the name suggests, it offers 'extra large' portions of chicken, vegetarian, pork, lamb or cheese *pelmeni* (Russian ravioli) for 'extra small' prices. Also available are two kinds of soups and potato-based salads. Do as the locals do and wash it down with a beer or, if you haven't had enough booze at 03:00, an XL shot of Moskovskaya vodka. ► I-2, Kalju 7, tel. (+371) 67 22 27 28, [www.xlpelmeni.lv](http://www.xlpelmeni.lv). Open 10:00-19:00. Also at D-4, Stacijas 2 (train station). Open 10:00 - 22:00. (€3). 

### PELMENU STŪRĪTIS

This small corner bistro in the Riga Central Market likes to keep things simple. It serves chicken or mixed meat dumplings, *vareniki* (potato dumplings), soup, a few baked goods and that's about it. Just order at the counter, have a seat at one of the tables and take in the exciting atmosphere of the vegetable pavilion until the snappy staff bring you your food. ► J-3, Centrālturgus 3, tel. (+371) 29 77 85 78. Open 09:00-17:30. (€2 - 4). 

## STOCKPOT

This cosy bistro is owned by husband and wife team who have travelled the world and brought back their favourite recipes to Riga, which can include anything from Indian and Cambodian dishes to hearty Irish stews. The menu changes from week to week but you can follow updates on their Facebook page. Although the seating area is quite small, the kitchen in the back seems to be nearly twice as large, which is probably a good thing. The second XL location only a block away is open for business because it's much larger than the original. ► B-4, Ģertrūdes 6, tel. (+371) 27 83 21 65, [www.stockpot.lv](http://www.stockpot.lv). Open 11:00-16:00; closed Sat, Sun. (€3 - 7).   

## CHINESE

### LIELAIS KĀNAS MŪRIS (GREAT WALL OF CHINA)

Red lanterns help to create that Far Eastern feeling in this spacious restaurant specialising in Chinese cuisine. Although you can peruse its extensive menu in the evening, most people come during the day for an affordable buffet (Mon - Fri 11:00 - 18:00) full of noodles, rice, Chinese salads and a number of main courses from duck to beef. Just remember to place your chosen dishes in different bowls as each is weighed separately at the cash register. ► B-4, Baznīcas 31, tel. (+371) 67 24 00 49, [www.lielaiskinasmuris.com](http://www.lielaiskinasmuris.com). Open 11:00-22:00; Sat, Sun 12:00-22:00. (€4 - 9). 

## CHOCOLATE CAFÉS

### 96% DARK

If you're looking for a place in the old town in which to indulge your sweet tooth, 96% Dark will certainly do the trick. With a fine selection of chocolate truffles, delicious cakes, hot cocoa as well as mulled wine, coffee and spirits, this small space with original wooden beams, exposed brick walls and polished floors will keep you in a sugar haze for as long as like. You can also just stop by for some individual sweets to take away. ► H-2, Smilšu 14, tel. (+371) 23 88 20 10. Open 10:00-20:00.    

### RIENZI

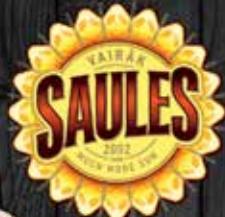
Boasting views of the opera house across the street, the aptly named Rienzi is a refined oasis where chocolate lovers meet to indulge their wildest PG fantasies. Seductive cakes gently rotate in a glass display case while colourful homemade truffles tempt passers-by from dozens of different glass jars at the bar. Custom chocolate bears, cars, dogs, planes, soccer balls and other cutesy gifts nearly draw your attention away from the chocolatiers who occasionally ply their trade for salivating tourists and locals alike. ► H-3, Aspazijas bulvāris 24, tel. (+371) 26 56 64 06. Open 09:00-20:00, Sat 10:00-20:00, Sun 11:00-18:00.    



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## FAST FOOD

### STREET FOOD POINTS

The owners of this fast food restaurant have taken it upon themselves to serve a little bit of everything to be all things to everyone. Burgers, pizzas, kebabs, Japanese bowls and even sushi are available and the slightly less than authentic 'cuisine' is at least quite cheap, even if it is prepared by staff who seem like they're a bit overwhelmed by the variety of the menu. This is not genuine street food that you would find in a trendy city, but for the price, it's not bad either. The stuffed focaccia bread, which is freshly baked, is its speciality and well worth a try. ► G-3, Brīvības bulvāris 30, tel. (+371) 20 28 28 21. Open 10:00-21:00; Sun 09:00-21:00. (€3 - 6).

### STREET FRIES KITCHEN

What began as a tiny street kiosk has evolved into a small bistro serving a wide variety of pancakes, fried snacks, eggs cooked to order, sandwiches and, of course, its speciality – Belgian-style *pommes frites*, French fries, chips or whatever you prefer calling deep-fried potatoes. The interior is modern, yet playful and includes colourful furniture, hardwood floors and lots of white tile on the walls. A kids' table offers games and toys, but adults can sample a dozen or so beers in bottles from around the globe. Try the flap jacks with maple syrup. ► I-3, Vāgnera 18, tel. (+371) 67 22 42 79, [www.streetfries.lv](http://www.streetfries.lv). Open 10:00-21:00; Sun 11:00-21:00; Fri 10:00-22:00; Sat 11:00-22:00. (€4 - 8).

## FINNISH

### KARJALA BAR

Don't expect the sleek, ultra-cool vibe of cocktail bars you might find in Helsinki. Karjala is a cosy bar that you would sooner find in the Finnish countryside, complete with Finnish-language TV, sporting events and radio broadcasts, not to mention karaoke on Fridays and Saturdays (21:00 - 01:00). A full menu of northern cuisine is also available including Karelian pies, meatballs and thinly-sliced beef steak as well as Finnish beer and spirits like salmiakki and kossu. On weekdays, an affordable business lunch is also available from 12:00 - 15:00. ► I-3, Kalēju 50, tel. (+371) 67 22 98 80, [www.karjala.lv](http://www.karjala.lv). Open 12:00-22:00. (€6 - 10).

## GASTRO PUBS

### CYDONIA GASTRO PUB

This gastropub in the posh Berga Bazārs shopping arcade provides a Spartan, industrial style interior with polished cement floors made warmer by the addition of pinewood covered walls and colourful local paintings. International cuisine is made with eco-friendly Latvian produce and you can choose from Mediterranean tapas, fish and meat dishes and vegetarian options like ravioli stuffed with mushrooms and spinach, not to mention a dozen thin-crust pizzas. An impressive selection of wine and beer is available and you can enjoy its lovely summer terrace. ► C-4, Dzirnavu 84 (Berga Bazārs), tel. (+371) 67 28 20 55, [www.cydonia.lv](http://www.cydonia.lv). Open 11:00-22:00. (€7 - 12).

# Restaurants

## HOME DELIVERY

### PIZZA LULŪ

Big New York-style pizzas and salads. Delivery within 49 minutes: free of charge for orders over €15.50. ► tel. (+371) 80 00 58 58, [www.lulu.lv](http://www.lulu.lv). Open 07:00-02:00.  

### VAIRĀK SAULES

Charge: free within the centre and Pārdaugava for orders over €22 (otherwise €2 - 3). Order soups, salads, sushi, international dishes, Asian cuisine or thin crust pizzas to your door. ► tel. (+371) 88 33, [www.vairaksaules.lv](http://www.vairaksaules.lv). Open 11:00-22:00.

## ICE CREAM

### GELATO ITALIA

This authentic Italian-run gelateria is so good it's scary as weight gain is inevitable. Choose from roughly a dozen delicious flavours of creamy gelato or try one of the mouth-watering treats in the refrigerated display case including ice cream sandwiches, Italian ice and other tempting desserts to die for. You can enjoy them on the premises or take away your gelato in a cone, cup or wedged inside a Sicilian brioche. A word to the wise: unless you'd like to be on the receiving end of Seinfeld's 'Soup Nazi' episode, keep your fingers away from the gelato display. ► I-2, Grēcinieku 20, tel. (+371) 67 22 66 53, [www.gelatoitalia.lv](http://www.gelatoitalia.lv). Open 11:00-20:00; Sat 11:00-21:00.  

## INTERNATIONAL

### ANDALŪZIJAS SUNS

The Andalusian Dog has been a staple of the expat eating and drinking scene since it opened over a decade ago. Although its main attractions haven't changed, namely decent Tex-Mex food, a lively atmosphere and an incredible summer terrace, Suns received a facelift to its spacious, industrial-style interior in early 2014. You can expect a dark coat of paint on the walls and shiny white tiles behind a refurbished wooden bar, but otherwise not much has changed. ► C-4, Elizabetes 83/85 (Berga bazārs), tel. (+371) 67 28 84 18. Open 11:00-24:00. (€8 - 15).  

## INDIAN

### INDIAN RAJA

All of the dishes served here are so veritably Indian, it's almost overwhelming. This is hardly Baltic-modified cuisine, which is why the bill won't be small, but it will reflect one of the best dining investments in the city. Although many of them have Indo European roots, most locals still shy away, which means you, expats and tourists, will have the peaceful interior and its incredible views of St.Peter's Church and its medieval surroundings all to yourself. ► I-2, Skārņu 7, tel. (+371) 67 22 32 40, [www.indianraja.lv](http://www.indianraja.lv). Open 12:00-23:00. (€8 - 15).  



[instagram.com/inyourpocket](https://instagram.com/inyourpocket)

### BURGA

Part pub and part café, the oddly named Burga (a reference to the fraternity upstairs) is located in a modern glass building and has a dark grey interior and light hardwood floors with matching tables. You can order anything from chicken wings, pastas and burgers to breakfast food including bagels. Serving sizes are generous, especially the huge salads, which are definitely a meal here and not an appetiser. Valmiermuiža and Tērvetes brews are available on draught or you can take your pick of cocktails from classic mai tais to cosmopolitans. ► B-4, Dzirnavu 36, tel. (+371) 20 51 60 47, [www.burga.lv](http://www.burga.lv). Open 10:00-22:00; Sun 12:00-22:00. (€5 - 9).  

### FAZENDA

Fazenda has come up with a unique dining concept. It offers a bakery, restaurant and farmers' market in a beautifully restored 19th-century wooden building that includes original tile fireplaces, floral print wallpaper and plenty of fresh cut flowers. The nearly Provençal-style interior and its refined, yet affordable menu of gourmet sandwiches, salads and seasonal main courses are all very popular with the local ladies who lunch, so be prepared to raise your pinkie when you take a sip of tea. ► B/C-4, Baznīcas 14, tel. (+371) 67 24 08 09, [www.fazenda.lv](http://www.fazenda.lv). Open 10:00-22:00; Sat, Sun 11:00-22:00. (€5 - 10).  

### SOKRATS (SOCRATES)

Just look for the peach-coloured neo-Gothic building that looks like a castle to find this hotel restaurant serving a variety of international cuisine from upmarket versions of simple dishes like fish and chips to mussels in curry coconut milk sauce. You can peruse the quotes of famous philosophers on the walls while you sip a pinot noir from their extensive wine list. Breakfast is served 07:00 - 10:00, Sat, Sun 08:00 - 11:00. ► B-3, Elizabetes 21 (Monika Centrum Hotel), tel. (+371) 67 03 19 00, [www.monika.centrumhotels.com/en/dining/restaurant-sokrats](http://www.monika.centrumhotels.com/en/dining/restaurant-sokrats). Open 07:00-22:00; Sun, Sat 08:00-22:00. (€7 - 14).  

### VAIRĀK SAULES

The sleek, yet warm and cosy interior of this restaurant chain is cutting edge, the service is genuinely friendly and the food is fantastic. You can choose from two separate menus, one that specialises in Italian and international cuisine like pizzas, homemade pastas, seafood and even vegetarian dishes, and another that lists a variety of Asian specialities from sushi and sashimi to tasty stir fries and noodle dishes. The restaurant has two different entrances, but the space on the left also provides a kids' play area for the little ones. A children's menu is available as well as a great daily special that includes a drink and a main course with either a soup or a dessert. ► C-4, Dzirnavu 60, tel. (+371) 67 28 28 78/(+371) 80 00 90 80, [www.vairaksaules.lv](http://www.vairaksaules.lv). Open 11:00-22:00. (€6 - 12).  

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# Restaurants

## ISRAELI

### SHAMNA VE SALTA

Riga's first proper Israeli restaurant doesn't offer much in the way of decoration, but it does offer a warm, family-style atmosphere that's hard to beat. You can start with delicious homemade hummus with falafel or maybe some baba ganoush (mashed aubergine and tahini) and then move on to generous servings of *shawarma* (grilled with salad), *shakshuka* (tomato, chilli and onion ragout topped with eggs) or the *meorav Yerushalmi* (Jerusalem mixed grill), to name a few. Israeli wines are also on offer. ► H-2, Gleznotāju 7, tel. (+371) 27 77 22 54. Open 12:00-21:00; Sat 12:00-22:00; closed Mon, Tue. (€6 - 10).   

## ITALIAN

### PIAZZA ITALIANA

A beautifully restored medieval warehouse on a quiet, cobblestone street not far from Cathedral Square (Doma laukums), is the perfect location for an authentic Italian restaurant serving refined Northern and Southern specialities as well as classics like pizza and pasta. The antique charm of centuries-old brick walls is seamlessly combined with designer furnishings spread out across a number of levels that are connected by stairs as well as a glass lift. An extensive wine list is also at your disposal as well as an outdoor terrace in the summer. ► H-1, Miesnieku 17, tel. (+371) 25 66 56 65, [www.piazzaitaliana.lv](http://www.piazzaitaliana.lv). Open 12:00-23:00.   

## JAPANESE

### THE CATCH

The Catch brings the best of Japan to Riga, but without any pretension and without the chain-style ambience of commercial sushi restaurants. This family-run business offers sushi and sashimi, meals cooked on a robata grill, tempura dishes, ramen soups and other 'bowls' as well as Japanese beer and signature cocktails. Take a seat at the bar, in the window niche or under colourful murals of mermaids deeper inside this trendy, yet casual half-basement. ► B-3, Antonijas 12 (entrance from Dzirnavu), tel. (+371) 27 77 00 91, [www.thecatch.lv](http://www.thecatch.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; Sun 15:00-22:00. (€8 - 15).   

## KEBABS

### FOOD BOX

After years of searching for a great kebab in Riga, we've finally found one at Food Box. This small, casual eatery offers delicious yet inexpensive *döner* kebabs, falafel and exotic *pide* (a 'pizza' of sorts) served by a young Turkish entrepreneur. The only drawback seems to be the crowds at lunchtime. The hot sauce here is also refreshingly spicy, and not toned down for local palates like at other kebab joints, and free tea is available from a community samovar. ► F-2, Antonijas 6a (entrance from Pumpura), tel. (+371) 28 20 59 98. Open 11:00-19:00; Sat 12:00-18:00; closed Sun. (€3 - 6).  

## REIGYS AUSMENA KEBABS

This is the second Latgalian kebab shop in the world, the first having been opened in the city of Rēzekne. Yes, the small menu of cheap and tasty meat and falafel kebabs is written on the wall in this unusual dialect of Latvian and the delicious meals are served on traditional ceramic plates from that region, which can be enjoyed with a soft drink, beer, kvass (a malted rye beverage) or *šmakova* (Latgalian moonshine). Unlike their supposedly more authentic Middle Eastern brethren, these *čangali* (people from Latgale) don't skimp on the meat and aren't afraid to add sriracha sauce to lend a little heat. Its popularity with local hipsters often makes it difficult to get a table, but it's worth a try. ► B-4, Skolas 12, tel. (+371) 24 22 22 12. Open 11:00-22:30. (€3 - 5).   

## LATVIAN

### AKA

The Well is an old school Old Riga establishment specialising in Latvian cuisine, beer, wine and spirits. Located on a narrow winding cobblestone street, its main decorative feature is its ancient brick and stone wall, which is actually a fragment of the city's original defensive fortifications. Order anything from potato pancakes and hearty sorrel soup to Baltic herring and pork ribs and wash it down with a Latvian brew or perhaps a shot of local moonshine. ► Kalēju 37, tel. (+371) 67 88 08 98, [www.akariga.lv](http://www.akariga.lv). Open 17:00-23:00. (€6 - 10). 

## ALUS ARSENĀLS

This classic brick cellar just off of Castle Square offers a unique interior of low vaulted ceilings adorned with painted fall foliage, stained glass lamps and wooden tables, benches and chairs. The Beer Arsenal specialises in huge servings of Latvian fare like metre-long sausages, beef tongue salad, pig's ears stuffed with caraway cheese and its signature oven baked pork knuckle for two served on a wooden platter with a flaming torch. Naturally, a good selection of beer is also on offer including its own light and dark microbrews. Cheap daily specials under €5 are a bargain. ► H-1, Pils laukums 4 (entrance from Arsenāla), tel. (+371) 20 36 33 35, [www.alus-arsenals.lv](http://www.alus-arsenals.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; Sun 13:00-22:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-24:00. (€6 - 12).   

## FOLKKLUBS ALA PAGRABS

One of Riga's largest Latvian beer bars and restaurants, Folk Club Ala is more of a cavern than a cellar. Descend into the depths of this huge space to find a great selection of affordable local brews and spirits as well as traditional cuisine from *kotletes* (a type of meatball) and grey peas with bacon to hard-to-find country dishes like pork and pearl barley stew. Although it's a favourite among frugal students, it's also popular with anyone who appreciates good food, drink and music under medieval brick vaulted ceilings. Reservations are essential if you'd like a table on a Friday or Saturday evening. ► I-2, Peldu 19, tel. (+371) 27 79 69 14, [www.folkklubs.lv](http://www.folkklubs.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; Sat, Sun 14:00-22:00. (€4 - 10).    

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# Restaurants

## MEXICAN & TEX-MEX

### BAD BURRITO

Many have tried over the years to bring a touch of the Rio Grande to Riga, but Bad Burrito is one of the few that seems to have got it right. A simple concept of serving only burritos, quesadillas and burrito bowls to order allows the staff to concentrate on freshly made ingredients from the tangy salsa and chunky guacamole to the properly spiced rice and grilled vegetables. So-called 'fresh fries' can also be had as well as beer and soft drinks in a pleasant, bright space on popular Ģertrūdes iela. ► C-4, Tērbatas 41/43 (entrance from Ģertrūdes), tel. (+371) 27 34 36 66, [www.badburrito.lv](http://www.badburrito.lv). Open 11:00-21:00. Also at Kr. Valdemāra 24. (€4 - 7).   

### TEX-MEX REPUBLIC (KLONDAIKA)

The designer of this kitschy place has seen one too many westerns, but we love it just the same. Relax outside in one of the best summer courtyards the centre has to offer, head down to the slot machine hall optimistically labelled the *zelta raktuvēs* (gold mines) or try the saloon-style restaurant and bar. The Tex-Mex cuisine is just a couple of degrees shy of authentic, but its tasty, filling and relatively cheap. Food is served from 10:00 - 01:00, Fri, Sat 10:00 - 03:00. ► C-4, Dzirnavu 59, tel. (+371) 67 24 20 65. Open 12:00-22:00. (€7 - 15).   

## MEŽAPARKS CAFÉS

### ŠĀSLIKI MANGAŁOS

The owners of this roadside tavern are so confident in the quality of their shashliks that they chose a remote location on the far end of the park. Order a huge skewer of meat (chicken, pork or lamb) and an Užavas draught and then choose your side dishes: chopped onions, tomatoes, cucumbers or pickles, chives and freshly baked Armenian bread. It's that simple. Take tram №11 to the Mežaparks stop and walk straight past the song festival grounds on Ostas prospekts. This hidden gem is on the right. Cash only! ► Mores 22, tel. (+371) 67 39 52 57. Open 09:00-21:00. (€6 - 9). 

## OUTDOOR TERRACES

### NEKĀDU PROBLĒMU

No Problem is located next to Town Hall Square and includes seating for 1,000 guests as stages for live music. You can order dozens of different brews, traditional Latvian fruit wine and plenty of summer cocktails, not to mention pitchers of sangria. You can also choose from a wide variety of international and local food from gourmet sandwiches and burgers to steaks and you can listen to live music nearly every day. The extensive terrace offers both seating in the shade and in the sun and there's plenty of cover if it rains. ► I-2, Kaļķu 1a (by Town Hall Square), tel. (+371) 20 38 99 88. Open 11:00-23:00; Thu 11:00-24:00; Fri, Sat 11:00-02:00.   

## PIZZA

### MOZZO PIZZA

If you're familiar with the Subway fast food concept of creating your sandwiches, then you'll understand how this pizza place works. The staff will spread out the pizza dough on a baking plate and then you walk along the buffet and choose the sauce, cheeses, meats, veggies and other toppings and within five minutes a steaming hot pizza will be delivered to your table. Soda, flavoured waters, beer and milkshakes are also available as well as a remarkably affordable lunch special, not to mention brownies. You can also add pepper flakes, oregano and Parmesan cheese to your pizza, which is a nice touch.

► H-2, Zigfrīda Annas Meierovica bulvāris 12, tel. (+371) 25 64 14 47. Open 10:00-22:00. (€3 - 5).   

### PICAS MEISTARS

This excellent pizzeria is located just opposite the new Latvian National Library, so you're always guaranteed excellent views here. The Pizza Master prides itself on baking authentic and sometimes unusual pizzas from classic mushroom or salami to chicken curry and the Indian pizza, which uses tomato chutney as a base. Of course, you can also choose from dozens of other toppings and create your own pizza, which can be enjoyed in the bright interior decorated with light wood furnishings and lots of cooking utensils. A fridge is also stocked with fruit juices, water and local beer. ► D-2, Kuģu 11, tel. (+371) 20 49 14 91, [www.picasmeistars.lv](http://www.picasmeistars.lv). Open 11:00-21:30; Fri, Sat 11:00-22:00. Also at B-4, Baznīcas 24, tel. (+371) 25 38 83 88. (€4 - 8).   

### PICU DARBNĪCA

Although primarily a takeaway or delivery joint, the Pizza Workshop also offers ample seating at its city centre location. Adding pickles and creamy garlic sauce to a so-called New York pizza is an affront to all Manhattanites, but in general the thin crust pizzas served here are tasty and very affordable. If you don't feel like basking in the residual heat of the giant oven you can also take your purchase to the beer bar across the street, which is what most locals from the neighbourhood do. ► C-5, Ģertrūdes 44, tel. (+371) 20 76 78 88, [www.picudarbnica.lv](http://www.picudarbnica.lv). Open 11:00-21:00. (€5 - 8).   

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## RAMEN

### RAMEN RIGA

Old plastic soft drinks crates serve as unique lighting fixtures and even as upcycled seating at Ramen Riga's bar. In addition to chicken, pork and beef ramen bowls, you can also order chicken yakitori, gyoza dumplings, sides of kimchi and Japanese mochi balls for dessert. Pork-belly up to the bar and try some local beer or perhaps some sake, but don't forget to add a little sriracha or chilli powder to spice your dish up. In general, the ramen bowls tick most boxes for authenticity, but the noodles were a little too chewy for us and the broth could use some more depth of flavour. ▶ B-4/5, Stabu 14, tel. (+371) 29 11 03 34. Open 12:00-20:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-21:00. (€6 - 9).

## ROMANTIC RESTAURANTS

### MIO

This tiny restaurant has managed to squeeze several tables, a small bar and an open-plan kitchen into a cosy space elegantly decorated with chandeliers, a number of stylish mirrors and other design elements that can best be described as Provençal. Excellent service, dedicated chefs and great international cuisine are the hallmarks of Mio. The day's specials are listed on the blackboard, but you can often order breakfast food well into the afternoon. ▶ C-4, Blaumaņa 15, tel. (+371) 28 14 31 39, [www.restaurantmio.lv](http://www.restaurantmio.lv). Open 11:00-23:00; Sun 12:00-22:00; Sat 12:00-23:00. (€6 - 15).

## RUSSIAN

### TĒVOCIS VANA (UNCLE VANYA)

Walk into this upmarket Russian restaurant and you'll feel like you've strolled onto the set of Doctor Zhivago... before the revolution brought down the aristocracy. Uncle Vanya's elegant interior is loaded with shelves crammed full of old books, ceramic figurines and other antiques and the walls are covered in tsarist-era black and white photos and reproductions of classic Russian paintings. The menu offers modern versions of traditional Slavic cuisine presented in a unique way. You can also order homemade spirits like horseradish flavoured vodka and, our favourite, black currant liqueur served in chilled glasses or carafes. ▶ H-2, Smilšu 16, tel. (+371) 27 88 69 63, [www.unclevanya.lv](http://www.unclevanya.lv). Open 12:00-23:00. (€10 - 20).

## SEAFOOD

### SIĻĶĪTES UN DILLĪTES (HERRING & DILL)

No longer solely the domain of ancient gold-toothed women in hair nets and drooping pantyhose, the fish pavilion of the Riga Central Market is now home to a refined little eatery that specialises in whatever creatures of the sea are fresh that day. Order a Valmiermuža brew and fish and chips and watch the mayhem unfold beyond the confines of this peaceful oasis. Seafood soup, platters and salads are also available to enjoy on the spot or to take away. ▶ J-3, Centrāltirgus 3, tel. (+371) 26 39 11 22. Open 10:00-17:00. (€7 - 10).

# Restaurants

## ZIVJU LETE

The atmosphere is refreshingly casual, the interior modern, yet cosy and the seafood at this popular restaurant is simply fantastic. Businessmen in suits share the same space as tourists in windbreakers, but all of the clientele have one thing in common – a love for the ocean's tastiest inhabitants. Although we were more than satisfied with the delicious seafood sauté for two, the steamed mussels, surf and turf, oysters, grilled octopus and the New England lobster roll have all been added to our wish list for our next visit. Fine wines can also be ordered as well as Guinness on draught, but if you can't make up your mind, just take a gander at what's on ice at the fish counter. Reservations recommended. ► B-4, Dzirnavu 41, tel. (+371) 20 29 16 53, [www.zivjulete.lv](http://www.zivjulete.lv). Open 12:00-21:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-22:00. (€7 - 15).  

## STEAKHOUSES

### CHEF'S CORNER

If you'd like to impress friends, business partners or a special date, this sophisticated restaurant which has spared no expense on its design or menu is an excellent choice. Wine bottles and big slabs of beef become part of the décor here as they age in their own temperature-controlled refrigerators and thankfully they're not just for show as the superb cuts of fillet mignon, tenderloins, chateaubriand, porterhouses and T-bones are simply fantastic. You can also splurge on the surf and turf (lobster and steak) or order the simple burger, which is anything but average and served with rubber gloves so you can eat it the way it was meant to be enjoyed – with your hands. A tartare menu will keep those in need of something raw satisfied and oysters can also be had. ► B-4, Jeruzalemes 5 (entrance from Dzirnavu), tel. (+371) 27 00 11 01, [www.chefscorner.lv](http://www.chefscorner.lv). Open 12:00-23:00; Sat 12:00-24:00. (€12 - 30).  

## SUMMER SOUP

When hearing the word 'summer' most people would probably immediately think of beaches, suntan lotion and sandals and, if you're like us, maybe the taste of a cold brew on a hot day, but many a Latvian might also be reminded of a pink substance that some would call soup. *Aukstā zupa*, or cold beetroot soup, is to the Latvians what gazpacho is to the Spanish. Composed of marinated beets, diced boiled potatoes, cucumber, random pork products, boiled eggs, a generous sprinkling of dill and lots of *kefirs* (a fermented milk drink) as the liquid base, the summer soup is served at nearly every café, restaurant and beer garden throughout the nation during the summer season. Although definitely an acquired taste, it's an essential staple of the Latvian diet from May through August.



## STEIKU HAOS (STEAK CHAOS)

Europeans often make fun of Americans but for some reason they just can't get enough of their 'culture.' If you like thick, juicy steaks with giant Idaho baked potatoes, wait staff in what look like line dancing outfits, then walk through the swinging saloon doors and get ready for a feast. The servings are impressive, but bear in mind that the prices are also Texas-sized. ► I-2, Audēju 2, tel. (+371) 67 22 56 99, [www.steikuhaoss.lv](http://www.steikuhaoss.lv). Open 12:00-22:00. Also at H-2, Meistaru 25, tel. (+371) 67 22 24 19. (€14 - 28).    

## THAI

### ASIA MIX

Really not much more than a hole in the whole with three tables and a few photos of elephants and Southeast Asian views, this tiny takeaway serves some Thai favourites such as phad Thai, tom yum soup and Thai basil fried rice. You won't find green, red or yellow curries here, but it does serve a variety of kebabs if the Asian fast food isn't exactly your cup of green tea. Bear in mind that despite its longer opening hours, Thai food is only available from 11:00 - 21:00, Sat, Sun 11:00 - 18:00. ► C-5, A. Čaka 74, tel. (+371) 24 90 75 88 / (+371) 28 81 00 00. Open 11:00-22:00. (€4 - 8).   

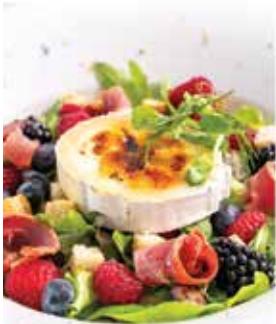
## UPMARKET

### 3 PAVĀRU RESTORĀNS (TAM LABAM BŪS AUGT)

Unlike most restaurants in the historic Jacob's Barracks in Old Riga, this one is located above ground and provides a bright, trendy interior with views and plenty of sunlight. Owned and operated by three local celebrity chefs, hence the name, it's frequented by the moneyed class as well as the occasional stargazer and serves fresh international cuisine prepared in an open-plan kitchen in the centre of the room. Light lunches of soups and salads are served during the day and more substantial (and expensive) dinners are offered after 18:00. We especially liked the lamps made of common drinking glasses. ► H-2, Torņa 4 (Jēkaba kazarmas), tel. (+371) 20 37 05 37, [www.3pavari.lv](http://www.3pavari.lv). Open 12:00-23:00. (€10 - 28).   

## AQUA LUNA

One of the latest hotspots to open on the trendy Andrejsala waterfront is the appropriately named Aqua Luna and you can't miss it. Just look for the stylish white box and its huge summer terrace and lounge on the water's edge. The international cuisine is superb, including the oysters and the stewed Irish beef cheek that we tried. The service is generally attentive and musicians and DJs keep affluent, well-dressed Rigans entertained in the evenings. If you're looking for refined dining with great views then you can hardly do better than this place, but bear in mind that smoking (both hookahs and cigarettes) is allowed on the terrace and most locals like to light up. Reservations recommended. ► B-2, Andrejostas 5k, tel. (+371) 67 65 09 22, [www.aqualuna.lv](http://www.aqualuna.lv). Open 12:00-23:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-02:00; Sun 11:00-23:00. (€14 - 25).   



## Memories

RESTAURANT

Russian cuisine in its modern interpretation. All-day breakfast menu and the beautiful villa interior.

Business hours:  
Th - Su 10:00-22:00

17 Bulduru prospekts,  
building k1, Jurmala  
Phone: +371 67869711,  
memories-restorans.lv



## Russian Cuisine TĚVOCIS VANA

Restaurant is the same as you come for visit to your old friend or a distant relative.

Menu presents classical Russian cuisine receipts, but in modern interpretation.  
Business hours: 12:00- 23:00  
16 Smilšu street, Riga  
Phone: +371 27 886 963  
unclevanya.lv



## Resto-Rātors

[www.restorators.lv](http://www.restorators.lv)



## PIAZZA ITALIANA

Italian food restaurant in Old Riga.  
Classic Italian cuisine, exquisite interior and a wide selection of wines and cocktails.

Business hours: 12:00-23:00  
17 Miesnieku street, Riga  
Phone: +371 25 665 665,  
piazzaitaliana.lv



## KOLONÄDE. OUR STORIES

You couldn't ask for a more perfect location. Housed in an historic building surrounded by Ionic columns, Kolonäde offers postcard quality views of the Freedom Monument and the Laima Clock as well as the National Opera and its gardens. The menu specialises in seasonal gourmet Latvian and international dishes and an extensive drinks list is also available, which includes an incredible selection of wine that has been carefully selected by the restaurant's sommelier. Delicious desserts are also available and best enjoyed in its glass conservatory, whose mood lighting changes with time of day. ► H-3, Brīvības bulvāris 26, tel. (+371) 26 60 88 82, [www.kolonade.lv](http://www.kolonade.lv). Open 12:00-21:00; Mon 12:00-18:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-22:00. (€10 - 18).

## LE SOMMET

For anyone who expects their upmarket international cuisine to be accompanied by fantastic views, Le Sommet can certainly tick both of those boxes. Located on the 11th floor of the four-star Bellevue Park Hotel, this elegant restaurant decorated in subdued beige and brown tones lets the vistas from the floor-to-ceiling windows do all the heavy lifting. Start with grilled scallops or mussels in Gorgonzola sauce and move on to the rack of lamb or perhaps a ribeye steak. In the summer it also has a fantastic outdoor terrace. ► E-1, Slokas 1 (11th floor), tel. (+371) 67 06 90 40, [www.lesommet.lv/en](http://www.lesommet.lv/en). Open 17:00-23:00. (€15 - 22).

## NEIBURGS

One of Riga's finest art nouveau buildings is home to a stylish, upmarket restaurant offering both international and Latvian-style cuisine. Inside you'll find grey walls covered by ever-changing art exhibitions, light parquet floors and spider-like chandeliers made from black reading lamps. Order salads, pasta, Latvian-raised beef and even ostrich fillets as well as seafood or try its affordable lunch specials in a refined setting on a bustling cobblestone street flanked by bars and cafés. ► I-1, Jauniela 25/27, tel. (+371) 67 11 55 44, [www.neiburgs.com](http://www.neiburgs.com). Open 11:00-23:00; Mon 11:00-15:00; closed Sun. (€8 - 20).

## RESTORĀNS 3

Riga's most renowned chefs have created yet another co-operative effort that has been given a rather simple name - Restaurant 3. The number three supposedly symbolises the foundation of a proper restaurant: the trinity of the chef, the wait staff and the sommelier. Even if that does sound a bit haughty, the impressive team manning the ovens and frying pans have the goods to back up their claims. Dine on delicious modern takes on international cuisine in a grey, minimalist interior whose floor-to-ceiling windows allow passers-by to see inside and wish they were you. ► H/I-2, Kalēju 3, tel. (+371) 26 60 00 60, [www.restaurant3.lv](http://www.restaurant3.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; closed Mon, Tue, Sun. (€14 - 20).

# Restaurants

## SNOB BAR & RESTAURANT

Spread out across a number of posh rooms and niches, you can find an interior to suit nearly any mood at this expansive upmarket restaurant or simply dine at the adjoining bar, which not only provides views of the park and the Riga Canal, but also a couple of big flat screens showing sports. The dining areas are a refined riot of blues, greys, browns, golds and even hot pinks and offer an eclectic mix of marble, parquet and brass. You'll find sophisticated international cuisine on the menu, not to mention an impressive selection of wines, which are stored in a specialised refrigerator near the entrance. ► G-2, Raiņa bulvāris 5/6, tel. (+371) 60 00 86 06, [www.grandpoet.semarahhotels.com](http://www.grandpoet.semarahhotels.com). Open 12:00-23:00.

## VEGETARIAN & VEGAN

### MIIT

Although its slogan 'coffee, bikes, food' is certainly to the point, it neglects to inform you that on weekdays Miit is also a vegetarian/vegan bistro that's incredibly popular with local hipsters and affluent arty types. Roughly €5 will get you a tasty soup and a main course, but you'll have to pay extra for the excellent coffee, the mouth-watering brownies or the Valmiermuižas brews. The interior is simple, yet chic, and you can also have your bicycle repaired in the shop behind the bar. Naturally, bike parking is available in the courtyard behind the historic wooden building. ► B/C-4, Lāčplēša 10, tel. (+371) 27 29 24 24, [www.miit.lv](http://www.miit.lv). Open 08:00-21:00; Thu, Fri 08:00-23:00; Sat 10:00-21:00; Sun 10:00-18:00. (€5).

## WHAT'S A SHASHLIK?

When one considers Latvia's 50-year stretch behind the Iron Curtain, it's hard to find a silver lining, yet after lots of brainstorming we've come up with something that's difficult to deny. Close economic and political ties between far off lands such as Latvia and let's say Georgia and Armenia led to the discovery of the shashlik.

Eastern Europe's answer to barbecue is what most Westerners would call a shish kebab. In short, if you impale pretty much any kind of meat or vegetable on a skewer and then grill it over coals or an open flame then it's a shashlik by local standards. The LIDO chain of Latvian restaurants grills a good shashlik and so does Paddy Whelan's in Old Riga, but if you're up for an adventure then head over to Mežaparks to Šašliki Mangalos for old school chunks of chicken, pork or lamb (but bring cash!).



## THE BEGINNINGS

Having a tough time sticking to your diet? Can't live without a little dessert in the afternoon? Don't despair as this café specialises in what it describes as 'sin-free' cakes, pastries and sweets. Step into this modern, grey space enlivened by lots of green plants and order dozens of vegan, gluten- and sugar-free delicacies that will satisfy your cravings without the detrimental effects and, better still, the guilt. A daily vegetarian lunch special is also available and after 16:00 you can order either raw food (cooked under 45°C) or meatless main courses. Raw Garden also serves a large selection of fresh fruit smoothies and you can order takeaway vegan, non-dairy cakes for parties and events. ► C-4, Barona 21, tel. (+371) 24 40 03 70, [www.thebeginningsrestoran.lv](http://www.thebeginningsrestoran.lv). Open 08:30-21:00; Sat 11:00-21:00; Sun 11:00-19:00. (€6 - 9).

## VIETNAMESE

### BEP VIET

Step into this bright and cheerful bistro that proudly displays photos of stunning natural scenes from Vietnam from whence the staff also hail. You can order a wide variety of authentic Southeast Asian dishes from *bánh mì* sandwiches, stir fries and pho soup to spring or summer rolls and broken rice. A buffet of delicacies is also available, but we recommend you try their daily special, which, when we stopped by, was a savoury pancake stuffed with prawns, mushrooms and veggies also known as *bánh xèo*. Sriracha and hoï sin sauces are offered as condiments. ► H-1, Miesnieku 14, tel. (+371) 25 67 90 97. Open 12:00-19:00.

### NICE ASIAN

Friendly Vietnamese staff greet you with big smiles at this Asian bistro that is so popular at lunch time that even infamously reserved Latvians are willing to share tables and sit with strangers here. Order affordable and authentic spring rolls (both fresh and deep fried), stir fried noodle and rice dishes and probably the best pho soup that we've had in Riga. Finish your meal with a slice of banana cake and a cup of Vietnamese coffee strained through a special metal one-cup device that everyone uses from Hanoi to Ho Chi Minh City. ► B/C-5, Kr. Barona 78-27, tel. (+371) 29 49 06 38. Open 11:00-20:30; closed Sat, Sun. (€4 - 6).

### PHO PLUS

Not surprisingly, this stylish city centre half basement specialises in that most Vietnamese of dishes – pho. Order the classic with rice noodles and beef or go fusion and try some egg noodles, chicken, tofu or prawns in your soup, but don't forget to add a little sriracha for an extra kick. Steamed and fried rice dishes can also be had as well as spring rolls, authentic Vietnamese coffee and a weekday lunch special for roughly €5. We ordered the pho for two and were pleasantly overwhelmed by the enormous bowl of broth that was placed on our table. Now we know why the chef in the mural seems so satisfied with his creation. ► Skolas 12, tel. (+371) 20 10 12 12. Open 11:00-21:00; closed Sun. (€4 - 7).



**Le SOMMET**  
restorāns

A PLACE FOR ELEGANT DINING WITH A MAGNIFICENT PANORAMIC VIEW OF RIGA

Bellevue Park Hotel Riga  
Slokas street 1, Riga  
Reservation: +371 29973259  
[www.lesommet.lv](http://www.lesommet.lv)

## BREAKFAST

Latvians always enjoy a proper meal, especially if it's free, but most locals choose to eat breakfast at home rather than at a restaurant. Fried bacon and eggs are always a favourite, especially scrambled, in omelettes or sunny side up, which locals call a *vēršacs* (bull's eye). The more health-conscious might also choose cottage cheese and sour cream, a bowl of oatmeal or some creamy semolina with a little cinnamon, but pancakes are still king at most breakfast tables. They're usually eaten with a variety of berry jams. But just because locals prefer to have the most important meal of the day in their own homes, doesn't mean that you have to. Most hotels provide breakfast with their accommodation but if you'd like to see what else is on offer at different times of the day then keep reading.

### BIG BAD BAGELS

Although we're quite partial to the big breakfast sandwich bursting with fried eggs and bacon on a jalapeño and cheese bagel, we also recommend the classic cream cheese and lox and pretty much anything else that's listed on the menu. ► C-4, Baznīcas 8, tel. (+371) 24 55 65 85, [www.bigbadbagels.com](http://www.bigbadbagels.com). Open 08:00-19:00, Sat 09:00-19:00, Sun 09:00-17:00. (€4).

### CADETS DE GASCOGNE

Fresh bread and pastries, coffee, tea and juice. Very French indeed. ► G-2, Z.A. Meierovica bulv. 8 (Jēkaba ārkāde), tel. (+371) 25 45 19 67, [www.cadets.lv](http://www.cadets.lv). Open 07:00-22:00. Also at B-4, Brīvības 73; B-4, Valdemāra 37. Open 07:00 - 20:00, Sun 09:00 - 16:00.

### OSIRIS

Osiris specialises in omelettes but it also serves bacon and egg sandwiches, pancakes and even oatmeal. ► C-4, Barona 31, tel. (+371) 67 24 30 02, [www.cafeosiris.lv](http://www.cafeosiris.lv). Open 08:00-23:00, Sat, Sun 10:00-23:00.

### TINTO

This stylish wine bar is also open for breakfast early in the morning. ► C-4, Elizabetes 61, tel. (+371) 67 28 90 85, [www.tinto.lv](http://www.tinto.lv). Open 09:00-23:00, Fri 09:00-24:00, Sat 11:00-24:00, Sun 11:00-23:00.

### VEST

This hipster bar also serves a good variety of breakfast food every day until 15:00. Enjoy everything from eggs and bacon and omelettes to rice or buckwheat porridge. ► B-4, Stabu 1, tel. (+371) 26 48 40 88. Open 10:00-24:00, Fri 10:00-02:00, Sat 11:00-02:00, Sun 11:00-24:00.

Not quite restaurants, but not bars either, the following cafés in Riga are laid back places where you can sip a coffee and check your email without receiving dirty looks from the staff. Although Riga no doubt had plenty of historic cafés before WWII of the kind you might see today in Prague or Vienna, Soviet communism ensured that none have survived to the present. On the bright side, this means that many of the cafés you'll find in Riga are modern, hipsterish places embracing contemporary trends and dripping in style. In short, proper French croissants and macarons are quite common in Riga's cafés and bakeries, not to mention gourmet, fair-trade coffee that was brewed in an expensive Italian machine that probably cost more than your first car. Most of these places also provide ample outside seating in the summer months should you prefer your cappuccino al fresco. Some of the cafés listed here also serve brunch at the weekend.

## CAFÉS

### FAZENDA

The rooms of this historic building have only partially been restored as the designers decided to simply sand down the existing wood plank walls and ceilings to create a cosy atmosphere that is only enhanced by the tile mosaic tables, the fireplace and the hanging dried flowers. You can sit down for a full meal of international dishes from salads and seafood to steaks or try something from the vegetarian menu or the breakfast meals (served until 12:00, Sat, Sun 14:00). You can also just grab a slice of cake and a latte at the counter. ► D-1, Nometņu 7, tel. (+371) 67 61 61 96, [www.fazenda.lv](http://www.fazenda.lv). Open 10:00-22:00. (€4 - 11).   

### LA KANNA

Although this block of Tērbatas iela has more than its share of trendy coffee shops, this is the only one that serves proper, though pricey, meals from soups and salads to seafood and international cuisine all prepared in the open-plan kitchen in the back. Decorated with local art and apartment-style furnishings, La Kanna is a good place just to chill out with a slice of cake and a cappuccino or perhaps one of its wines that can also be ordered by the glass, bottle or carafe. ► C-4, Tērbatas 5, tel. (+371) 67 28 68 67, [www.lakanna.lv](http://www.lakanna.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; Sat 11:00-22:00; Sun 11:00-15:00. (€9 - 15).   

### LATTE IT BE

Although many establishments have occupied this large half basement on posh Antonijas iela, we believe that Latte it be has discovered a lasting recipe for success, namely keeping up with the trends and serving food that people actually want. A great selection of affordable breakfast food is on offer (Mon - Fri 07:30 - 11:00; Sat, Sun all day) and the menu has sections dedicated to salads, burgers and noodles as well as more refined and expensive main courses. Great coffee and smoothies can also be enjoyed in the modern interior or out on the terrace. ► B-3/4, Antonijas 12, tel. (+371) 67 80 64 09. Open 07:30-16:00; Sat 09:00-14:00; closed Sun. (€4 - 15).    

### MAÑANA

Upon entering this casual café and tapas bar, our first thought was that it reminded us of a colourful school cafeteria, but with better music and much better drinks (local craft beers and cocktails, instead of chocolate milk or juice). The menu is also an exercise in simplicity with a few tasty tacos, a few main courses, assorted appetisers and three different ramen soups (the one with pork belly was delicious). Despite the generally laid-back *mañana* attitude that pervades the place, the service was both speedy and attentive. If you want to chill out for a while after your meal consider ordering some churros for dessert. ► B-4, Stabu 10/1, tel. (+371) 25 71 76 46. Open 12:00-24:00. (€7 - 12).  

### OSIRIS

The first of former opera director Andrejs Žagars' many café ventures, and the only one to survive, Osiris found a successful recipe in the mid-1990s and stuck with it, but recently its breakfasts, sandwiches and international cuisine have become more expensive, which is, of course, a shame. That said, its romantic ambience still makes this place a favourite of local big shots, politicians and intelligentsia, so definitely make a reservation for dinner. Beware of the stylish metal tables that were obviously created as torture devices for people with long legs. ► C-4, Barona 31, tel. (+371) 67 24 30 02, [www.cafeosiris.lv](http://www.cafeosiris.lv). Open 08:00-23:00; Sun, Sat 10:00-23:00. (€4 - 10).  

### PAGALMS (COURTYARD)

Tennis anyone? Actually this stylish café has very little to do with the sport apart from its unusual location overlooking the clay courts behind the National Theatre. Were it not for the dark wood and the white tiled walls one might mistake this trendy eatery for a surf shack of sorts, but the used boards stored up in the rafters may have influenced our opinion. Although the refined main courses on the small menu, such as tuna steaks and duck breasts, command elevated prices, the three-course lunch special is a steal at only €7.50 and the breakfast and weekend brunch are also quite affordable. Plenty of outdoor seating is also available in the summer. ► F-1, Kronvalda bulvāris 2B, tel. (+371) 25 64 20 30. Open 11:00-22:00; Mon, Wed 11:00-21:00; Sun 11:00-17:00. (€7 - 15).   

### ROCKET BEAN ROASTERY

In keeping with the global trends of bearded millennials, this industrial-style café on Riga's undisputed hipster Mecca, Miera iela, specialises in exceptional coffee, craft brews and a small menu of imaginative international cuisine. The din of spirited conversation and an overburdened espresso machine creates a lively ambience that's hard to beat, especially at lunch when you can order an affordable two- or three-course meal. Pour yourself a free glass of water at the counter, order a slice of cake or do as the locals do and fire up your laptop under funky lamps made of driftwood and recycled beams. You can also take a peek at the coffee roasting operation in the back. ► A/B-5, Miera 29/31, tel. (+371) 20 21 51 20, [www.rocketbean.lv](http://www.rocketbean.lv). Open 08:00-18:00; Mon 08:00-16:00; Sat, Sun 10:00-16:00. (€5 - 10).    

## COFFEE & CAKE

### BEZĒ

Perhaps the most charming and popular of all the cafés in this hip neighbourhood, Bezē bakes a wide range of delicious cakes, pastries, brownies and éclairs on the premises, not to mention its speciality – meringue biscuits. Everything looks amazing here, including the posh interior, but we ordered the passionfruit-blueberry cake, which was too good for words. Coffee, tea and alcoholic beverages are also available and many of the treats can be taken with, especially the multicoloured meringues sold in attractive gift bags. ► C-4, Blaumaņa 7, tel. (+371) 29 19 07 81. Open 08:00-21:00; Sat, Sun 10:00-19:00.

### COSTA COFFEE

When two Italian brothers opened their first Costa Coffee in London in 1978, they could scarcely have imagined that over time they would have hundreds of other cafés across the globe in such exotic locales as Dubai, Moscow and Riga. Hyper-helpful staff serve delicious java in three sizes from normal to huge and you can also try seasonal drinks as well as iced coffee and coffee coolers, which can become addictive in the summer. Delicious cake, pie, muffins and cookies are also available as well as wraps and sandwiches and you can get everything to go. ► C-4, Blaumaņa 5, tel. (+371) 67 22 72 03. Open 07:30-20:00; Sat, Sun 09:00-19:00. Also at C-4, Barona 11; B-4, Valdemāra 21; and other locations.

### FAT CAT EKLĒRNICA

Only a few years ago people couldn't get enough muffins or cupcakes, but the people at the Fat Cat have taken hold of the latest trend for sweet tooths, the humble éclair of yore. Although the staff claim that they can create up to 200 flavours of this French classic, we only spied about 20 variations on offer when we stopped by. That said, the peanut butter éclair was delicious and other types from blueberry, raspberry and even lingonberry to traditional chocolate all looked quite tempting. Coffee, tea and fresh juices are also on offer in this cosy café located behind the office of the city's mayor. ► I-1, Rātslaukums 1 (entrance from Mazā Jauniela), tel. (+371) 20 22 04 40. Open 11:00-18:00; Sat, Sun 11:00-17:00.

### INNOCENT CAFÉ

This red, black and grey café employs some of the city's best baristas so it's a safe bet that you're going to get superb coffee here. Take a seat at one of the elevated booths or on a leather sofa and take advantage of free wi-fi and local press with a glass of wine, beer or maybe even a cocktail or browse some of its upmarket coffee products at its shop in the back. Take away drinks are available and you can even add your own syrups at the self-serve station. It's also a popular destination for weekday breakfasts and weekend brunch. ► C-4/5, Blaumaņa 34, tel. (+371) 29 34 95 07, [www.innocent.lv](http://www.innocent.lv). Open 08:00-18:00; Fri 08:00-20:00; Sat, Sun 10:00-16:00.

### MULBERRY

Don't let the fact that this cosy café only has three tables discourage you from spending time here. You definitely won't regret it. Order fresh pastries and delicious cakes like *baba au rhum*, pavlovas, éclairs, pecan tarts, macaroons and a unique take on a classic brownie. The staff, who toil by the hot ovens behind a glass partition, also bake a wide variety of croissants not to mention takeaway breads like Italian ciabattas, Latvian sourdough and Russian borodinos. A veritable jungle hanging overhead also makes for a unique place to have a great cup of coffee or tea. ► B-4, Jeruzalemes 5, tel. (+371) 27 00 11 10, [www.mulberry.lv](http://www.mulberry.lv). Open 08:30-19:30; closed Sun.

## DOUGHNUTS & MUFFINS

### MUFFINS AND MORE

This tiny white café offers some soups, some stuffed baguettes and dozens of soft, delicious American-style muffins that melt in your mouth. Try traditional blueberry, cranberry, raspberry and chocolate muffins or taste one of their cream-filled concoctions or cupcakes. Although you can sit at one of three small tables, lots of people buy muffins to take away. Naturally, coffee, tea, juice and smoothies are also on offer as well as friendly service. ► B-4, Ģertrūdes 9, tel. (+371) 67 28 00 28, [www.muffinsandmore.eu](http://www.muffinsandmore.eu). Open 08:00-20:00; Sun 11:00-18:00; Sat 10:00-18:00.

### ZE DONATS (THE DONUTS)

Not quite Dunkin Donuts, but pretty darn close. This stylish brown and white doughnut shop offers friendly wait staff, free wireless internet access and even a chillout room with couches and a flat screen TV, not to mention delicious doughnuts. Chow down on Boston creams, glazed and dozens of other sweet concoctions including the green Pistachio Shrek! Coffee, tea and huge brownies are also on offer. ► F-3, Valdemāra 18, tel. (+371) 67 33 23 31, [www.zedonats.lv](http://www.zedonats.lv). Open 10:00-17:00; closed Mon, Sun.

## TEA

### APSARA

Lovers of imported dried leaves can enjoy a wide selection of teas from Asia in a pleasant and relaxing atmosphere. Both outlets are located in charming wooden houses in city centre parks where you can sit on huge oriental-style pillows and let the cares of the world slip away. Rumour has it that the second floor has become a love shack of sorts for amorous couples in the evenings, so you might want to avoid them or get there early depending on your mood and the company you're with. The location in Vērmanes Park also has an exotic business lunch. ► D-4, Barona 2a, tel. (+371) 67 21 24 36, [www.apsara.lv](http://www.apsara.lv). Open 11:00-22:00; Sat, Sun 12:00-22:00. Also at C-4, Tērbatas 2G (entrance from Elizabetes), tel. (+371) 67 21 24 36. Open 14:00-22:00, Sat, Sun 12:00 - 22:00.

# Nightlife

Riga's nightlife scene has had its ups and downs over the years, but, thankfully, neighbourhood **pubs** are still thriving and many **clubs** are once again open until the last paying customer leaves. Sadly, many **bars** still close their doors before midnight on weeknights, but a number of **hipster bars** keep late hours to cater to clientele for whom every day is Friday. Some **strip clubs** and late-night bars, however, are still out to scam tourists, so take those beer goggles off and be vigilant. Although Old Riga offers many fine establishments, it also has its fair share of overpriced tourist traps, so we always recommend that you stray beyond the confines of the old town to discover some of **Riga's best bars**. Whatever you do, don't miss the **Briāna iela night-life district**, which is home to **brew pubs**, hip hop **clubs** and one of the best **rock bars** we've ever seen.

## BARS

### ANDALŪZIJAS SUNS

The Andalusian Dog has been a staple of the expat eating and drinking scene since it opened over a decade ago. Although its main attractions haven't changed, namely decent Tex-Mex food, a lively atmosphere and an incredible summer terrace, Suns received a facelift to its spacious, industrial-style interior in early 2014. You can expect a dark coat of paint on the walls and shiny white tiles behind a refurbished wooden bar, but otherwise not much has changed. If you're into cocktails, A. Suns specialises in gin drinks. ► C-4, Elizabetes 83/85 (Berga bāzārs), tel. (+371) 67 28 84 18, [www.andaluzijassuns.lv](http://www.andaluzijassuns.lv). Open 11:00-24:00.

### DM BAR RIGA

Depeche Mode has some of the most loyal fans that any band could ever hope for and Baltic DM enthusiasts are among the most dedicated. Although Tallinn has had a bar inspired by the iconic group for several years, Latvia's DM-themed pub only opened at the beginning of 2014. Watch live concerts on flat screen TVs and order cocktails named after famous songs like Strangelove, Black Celebration and the non-alcoholic Behind the Wheel. This tiny cellar bar also offers some unusual DM memorabilia and a red and white colour scheme in keeping with the Violator album. ► H-1, Mazā Pils 5, tel. (+371) 29 49 27 29/(+371) 29 49 27 29. Open 19:00-24:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun.

## NIGHTLIFE TOURS

### TRAVEL2RIGA

This experienced company has been arranging special events, tours and excursions for Riga's guests since 2005. Travel2Riga offers low-key or VIP nightlife tours as well as activities like AK47 shooting, go-karting, sailing, paintball, zorb football, bungee jumping and even bobsleighing just to name a few. ► I-2, Tīrguņu 10, tel. (+371) 22 08 46 13, [www.travel2riga.com](http://www.travel2riga.com).

## SYMBOL KEY

	Accepts credit cards		Air conditioning
	Casino		Child-friendly
	Home delivery		Live music
	Old town location		Outside seating
	Smoking section		Takeaway
	Wi-fi		

## EZĪTIS MIGLĀ

Named after a famous Soviet-era cartoon and children's story, The Hedgehog in the Fog is tucked away at the far, quiet end of a popular pub street, which is probably why it seems to cater to locals instead of tourists. Inside you'll find the oft-repeated home-away-from-home theme where the interior is meant to put you in mind of your living room, with the exception of the strangers drinking on the couch. Beer lovers should give it a pass, but if you're into ping-pong then order a cocktail and hit the back room. Although it's an odd concept to franchise, there are at least eight of these neighbourhood pubs scattered throughout Riga. ► I-1, Palasta 9 (entrance from Jauniela), tel. (+371) 25 91 11 93, [www.ezitis.lv](http://www.ezitis.lv). Open 11:00-24:00; Fri, Sat 11:00-02:00. Also at H-2, Aldaru 12/14, tel. (+371) 25 91 11 93. Open 11:00 - 01:00, Fri 11:00 - 06:00, Sat 12:00 - 06:00, Sun 12:00 - 01:00; and many other locations.

## FUNNY FOX (JAUTĀ LAPSĀ)

If you're in the mood for some affordable food and drink and a laid back atmosphere in Old Riga then the Funny Fox might just be a good option for you. A huge blackboard which lists all of the available drinks from coffee to big cocktails runs the length of the long bar and you can sit at a number of tables or chat with a bartender from the comfort of a stool. Order anything from local and foreign brews to chicken wings and fish and chips or try its lunch specials. It's also a good place to watch sports on a number of flat screen TVs. ► I-2, Grēcinieku 1, tel. (+371) 28 48 24 26, [www.funnyfoxbar.com](http://www.funnyfoxbar.com). Open 14:00-02:00.

## KIWI BAR

Over the years Riga has had its share of English and Irish pubs, but this is the first kiwi pub to open its doors in the Latvian capital. Friendly staff pour a good selection of foreign and domestic beers behind a huge rectangular bar while patrons admire the light wood interior and watch sports on a bunch of flat screen TVs. You can order a variety of pub food from burgers, breakfasts and meat pies to sandwiches and ribs or even Indian cuisine from neighbouring Indian Raja. A summer terrace with great views is also available. ► I-2, Skārnu 7, tel. (+371) 67 21 19 17, [www.kiwibar.lv](http://www.kiwibar.lv). Open 14:00-02:00; Fri, Sat, Sun 12:00-02:00.

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## LATVIAN HEROES

This small, slightly cramped bar makes the most of its excellent location on one of Old Riga's most infamous nightlife streets. Worn furniture, beer kegs as impromptu seating and walls littered with eclectic decorations including a Kiss poster and a world map festooned with polaroids and tattered bank notes all put one in mind of a fun watering hole you might come across in a youth hostel. That said, the Latvian craft beers and cocktails are of a more top shelf variety, so you can relive your university days, but with a proper drink this time. ► I-2, Audeju 8, tel. (+371) 27 00 01 67, [www.latvianheroes.lv](http://www.latvianheroes.lv). Open 14:00-22:00.

## LENINGRAD

Workers of the world, get loaded! Soviet era paintings, books, vintage wallpaper, antique radios and busts of infamous commies can all be found here. When live bands aren't playing in the evening you can expect a steady diet of eccentric as well as classic alternative rock that's listened to by students, punks, patriots and even the occasional politician. A small food menu is also available. ► G-2, Kr. Valdemāra 4, tel. (+371) 26 16 13 35, [www.leningrad.lv](http://www.leningrad.lv). Open 12:00-00:30; Thu, Fri 11:00-02:00; Sat 12:00-02:00; Sun 12:00-00:30.

## NEMIERS

We enjoy simple watering holes that don't put on airs and Nemiers (or Unrest), which refers to itself as a dive bar, certainly fits the bill. This dark industrial-style space also sports a small mezzanine above the bar that stocks plenty of top shelf booze behind a cage of sorts. The pretty barmaid assured us, as she cast a disapproving glance at the neighbouring club, that the place is a rock bar. Order affordable cocktails or beer and cider on draught and see why this fun space and its large summer terrace have fast become one of our favourite hangouts. ► A-5, A. Briāna 9a, tel. (+371) 29 19 77 00. Open 17:00-02:00; Mon, Tue, Sun 17:00-01:00.

## CASINOS & GAMING HALLS

Latvian law compels all gamblers to register at each casino they visit, so bring a passport or valid ID.

### OLYMPIC CASINO - OLYBET

Located on the ground floor of the Radisson Blu Hotel Latvija, this is supposedly the biggest casino in the Baltics. A sports bar with live betting opportunities and a 24-hour international restaurant are also available. Its other locations specialise in slot machines, but also have 24-hour sports bars where you can bet on your favourite teams. ► C-4, Brīvības 31 (entrance from Dzirnavu), tel. (+371) 67 82 87 77, [www.olympic-casino.com](http://www.olympic-casino.com). Open 08:00-24:00. Also at H-3, Raiņa bulvāris 15; H-2, Meistaru 10; C-4, Barona 3, tel. (+371) 26 52 23 20; C-4, Marijas 12, tel. (+371) 26 32 89 49; D-4, Marijas 2; B-5, Brīvības 90.

## PIECI VILKI (FIVE WOLVES)

Owned by a prominent member of a local motorcycle club, Five Wolves is sometimes frequented by local neighbourhood types sipping beers and at other times by hard-looking, hard-drinking leather-clad men with beards. The menu offers a bit of everything including fried eggs and bacon served on red-hot cast iron pans, chicken wings in extra large sizes and steak served just right. Shot takers shouldn't pass up the vodka bottle served in a block of ice. ► B-4, Stabu 6, tel. (+371) 29 24 22 26, [www.piecivilki.lv](http://www.piecivilki.lv). Open 11:30-24:00; Sat 15:00-24:00; closed Sun.

## RĪGAS BALZAMS

Frequented by day by diplomats and embassy staff who work in the Jacob's Barracks, this bar/restaurant provides a warm, intimate setting a few steep steps from the old city wall. Named after the national drink of Latvia, Balzams offers far more than just potent elixirs. The atmosphere is convivial in the evenings, with well-heeled locals having a good time with cocktails made from the bitter black herbal liquor which is actually better than it sounds when mixed with something else. It's also a good place to sample some classic Latvian cuisine. ► H-2, Torņa 4 (Jēkaba kazarmas), tel. (+371) 67 21 44 94, [www.balzambars.lv](http://www.balzambars.lv). Open 11:00-23:00.

## SHOT CAFÉ

This popular cellar bar in the Jacob's Barracks offers a full menu of international food and drink during the day, but it's at night that Shot Café shows its true colours. Packed with a young crowd of arty snowboard types dancing to a variety of alternative and house music, it's a great place to go for a long night of short drinks for reasonable prices. Try the *ābolu pīrāgs* or apple pie (a shot of vodka and apple juice topped with cinnamon), a local favourite. You can expect DJs on Fridays and Saturdays. ► H-2, Torņa 4-IIIB (Jēkaba kazarmas), tel. (+371) 67 22 41 65. Open 16:00-23:00; Sat, Sun 11:00-23:00.

## THE ARMOURY BAR

Many people have a fascination with firearms and given the numerous displays of authentic pistols, machine guns, semi-automatic weapons and even grenades at this fun bar, its owners clearly belong to this group. However, the original medieval walls, the roughly hewn wooden bar and the generally stylish ambience make this cosy venue look more like a place where captains of industry might enjoy an aged single malt after a fox hunt, rather than a hole in the wall where tobacco-chewing, pistol-packing rednecks would chug cheap beer and long for Dixie. In short, if you like craft brews from around the globe, only the finest spirits, especially whisky, and, of course, lots and lots of guns (which you're allowed to play with), then this is the place for you to embrace your inner warrior with both locals and expats. Table football is available downstairs, a flat screen displays the latest sports action and a small summer terrace can be found outside. ► I-2, Vecpilsētas 11, tel. (+371) 20 53 81 53. Open 16:00-24:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Sun.

## ZOBENS UN LEMESS

You might feel a bit out of place sitting amongst Latvian heavy metal enthusiasts, 13th-century war re-enactors and the women who love them, but they do all have one thing in common at this retro-pagan bar and that's a love for local craft brews, which are poured here in abundance. If you don't mind replicas of Viking-era shields on the blood-red walls and lots of men with braided beards who look like extras from *Game of Thrones* (think Wildlings), then you'll no doubt enjoy a beer or three here, while listening to folk-metal music. ► B-5, Aristida Briāna 10, tel. (+371) 29 64 52 64, [www.zobensunlemess.lv](http://www.zobensunlemess.lv). Open 17:00-24:00; Fri, Sat, Sun 16:00-24:00. ☎ WEB

## BEACH BARS

### CABO CAFE

Not unlike its namesake, Cabo is a laid back café frequented by windsurfers during the day and wealthy Mežaparks residents with money to burn at night. Its excellent location on the shore of Lake Ķīšezers ensures beautiful views year-round and its tasty drinks and experienced DJs guarantee wild parties at the weekend (in the summer). International-style food is also served, but you can also just pop by for a Belgian brew or a strong cocktail on the beach. You can take tram No.11 from Kr. Barona to the Hamburgas iela stop and then walk down Annas Sakses iela about 10 minutes until the street ends at the beach or just take a taxi. ► Roberta Feldmana 8a, tel. (+371) 28 63 95 56. Open 12:00-22:00; Fri, Sat, Sun 11:00-22:00. ☎ WEB

## BEER BARS

### ALUS MUIŽA

The Beer Manor is perhaps the city centre's cosiest watering hole even though it more than doubled its size in the summer of 2017. Raised wooden tables, colourful lighting and reed mats used as wallpaper all contribute to a comfy, almost beach bar atmosphere that's only trumped by its selection of Latvian craft brews on draught, all of which are poured by its owners, two Latvian brothers. Some small snacks such as salted peanuts and crisps are also available as well as a popular kerbside terrace in the summer. Try the Sazobe IPA, one of our favourites, and don't forget that they'll also pour you takeaway beers in plastic bottles. ► C-5, Ģertrūdes 45, tel. (+371) 25 12 71 72. Open 16:00-23:00; Fri 16:00-24:00; Sat 12:00-24:00. ☎ WEB

## BROOKLYN PUB & WHISKEY ROOM

For a small taste of Brooklyn, but without the women, walk down to the corner of Barona and Lāčplēša. This definitely isn't Williamsburg, but you can order a Brooklyn lager and a dozen or so other delicious craft brews from the States and Europe at this cosy bar, which also happens to have quite a few flat screens showing all the day's sports, hence all of the men. Large servings of pub food can also be had, not to mention an excellent selection of whiskey. ► C-5, Lāčplēša 35, tel. (+371) 26 07 26 27, [www.brooklynpub.lv](http://www.brooklynpub.lv). Open 11:00-23:00; Sat, Sun 13:00-23:00. ☎ WEB

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## DISTILLERS REPUBLIC

This cosy Old Riga bar will offer its very own spirits made on the premises, which include a wide array of potent booze from rum to gin. It also specialises in craft brews and cocktails with top-shelf liquor and unique interior design, which makes the most of its location under vaulted brick ceilings in the cellar of a medieval building. You can also expect custom-made wooden furniture and shiny copper fixtures, not to mention friendly service. Hard-to-find Latvian and Baltic brews are available here on draught and in cans, but you can also buy their handcrafted spirits in attractive bottles as a unique souvenir. ► I-3, Vecpilsētas 8a, tel. (+371) 29 72 62 36. Open 16:00-02:00.  

## MIEZIS UN KOMPĀNIJA. VECRĪGA

One of Riga's most stylish beer bars has an odd location in a modern building on the edge of the old town, but if a giant scoreboard listing 20 different Baltic and European craft brews sounds appealing, then head over to Miezis and Co. and let the beer tasting begin! The friendly staff will make suggestions and even give you a small pour so you can make up your mind, but once you've got your brew you can sit by an enormous map of the city or by the floor-to-ceiling windows and watch the trams and trains roll by outside. Did we mention the vertical walls of moss that stretch towards the 4m-tall ceiling? Be careful leaving the bar. You'll see what we mean when you get there. ► J-2, 13. Janvāra 21. Open 16:00-24:00; Mon, Tue 16:00-23:00.  

## MS&MR BEER

The name is certainly unusual, but the eclectic décor of steampunk accoutrements and petrol head paraphernalia including a rusty car that doubles as a table will certain endear this bar to a certainly clientele. Unfortunately, we didn't find anything on draught to tickle our fancy and the local bottled beers we ordered seemed overpriced at €5.50. Thankfully, they weren't in stock, so we were spared a big bill. A charming terrace is available outside in the summer. ► H-1, Mazā Miesnieku 1, tel. (+371) 25 90 25 25. Open 12:00-23:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-01:00; Sun 12:00-21:00.  

## NURME

This is another beer bar that has shunned the high rents of the old town in favour of a cheaper neighbourhood with much more character. It is, however, different from many other establishments specialising in craft brews in that it's run by a local gypsy brewer called Nurme. Sample five of their own beers for €7 or choose one of dozens of other local beers in bottles. The cosy, often candlelit interior with large windows features a huge chandelier hanging in the middle of room and a pink neon Nurme sign behind the bar. ► C-5/6, Avotu 53-4, tel. (+371) 20 00 19 03. Open 17:00-23:00; Fri, Sat 17:00-24:00; closed Mon, Sun.  



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## PADDY WHELAN'S IRISH PUB & SPORTS BAR

Opened back in 1994, Riga's first Irish pub is also a popular sports bar as well as a place where beer aficionados meet. With dozens of local and international brews to choose on draught or in bottles including Belgian wheats and Trappist offerings as well as American IPAs and ales (to name a few), you really can't go wrong here. On the ground floor you can expect loads of flat screen TVs showing live sports, while upstairs you'll find a more intimate atmosphere with loads of memorabilia on the walls including signed football jerseys. In addition to the usual Irish and international pub food, Paddy's also offers a great barbecue menu and even Indian cuisine cooked in a real tandoor and a good weekday lunch special for only €5. ► I-2, Grēcinieku 4, tel. (+371) 67 21 01 50, [www.pub.lv](http://www.pub.lv). Open 11:30-23:30.

## VALMIERMUIŽAS ALUS (VALMIERMUIŽA BEER EMBASSY)

Although one of Latvia's best brews is produced just outside the northern town of Valmiera, the brewery also has its own so-called embassy in Riga's trendy Briāna iela neighbourhood. Taste a wide variety of its quality brews on draught from refreshing wheat beers and lagers to experimental brews that are being tested out on the general public. But if for some strange reason you don't feel like sampling their creations, Valmiermužas alus also has loads of refrigerators stocked with difficult-to-find beers from smaller Latvian brewers. Browse through the shelves until you find the perfect double IPA for you. ► A-5, A. Briāna 9a, tel. (+371) 28 65 61 11, [www.valmiermuiza.lv](http://www.valmiermuiza.lv). Open 12:00-20:00; Wed, Thu 12:00-22:00; Fri, Sat 11:00-22:00.  

## BREW PUBS

### ALĶIMIĶIS (THE ALCHEMIST)

The Alchemist craft brewery is housed in a lovingly restored 19th-century wooden building, yet its interior has been given a much more modern twist. Much of the space has been designed in keeping with the brewery theme from the tiled walls and floors and the potted plants that grow from upcycled kegs to the copper lighting fixtures, a gentle nod to the vats of old in which beer was traditionally brewed. Here its pale ales, IPAs, saisons, pilsners and seasonal offerings are made in the stainless steel containers seen to the right of the main bar. A small menu is also available and although not everyone will want to shell out €11 for a burger, The Alchemist's magical brews might just convince you to splurge. Its T-shirts and other merch also make for good, non-traditional souvenirs of your trip to Riga. ► C-4, Lāčplēša 12, tel. (+371) 26 68 68 28. Open 12:00-23:00; Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat 12:00-24:00; Sun 12:00-23:00. 

## LABIETIS

Although difficult to find as it's hidden in a small courtyard behind the popular club Piens, once you reach Labietis you're faced with the difficult task of tasting 12 delicious craft brews made on the premises from American-style IPAs and English bitters to special beers made with Latvian herbs. The brewery is clearly visible behind a glass partition and you can enjoy a tasty beer at the bar, by the windows or at an incredibly large wooden table in the middle of the room. You can also bring in food from neighbouring cafés or order takeaway beers in bottles. ► A-5, Aristīda Briāna 9A-2, tel. (+371) 25 65 59 58, [www.labietis.lv](http://www.labietis.lv). Open 13:00-24:00; Mon, Tue 13:00-23:00.  

## ZIEMELU ENKURS

Drop anchor at the latest establishment to join the Latvian craft brew revolution. Northern Anchor offers a clandestine location in a disused industrial building but you'll have to take the stairs to the second floor to find its cosy interior, which offers, you guessed it, a nautical theme of sailing charts and coiled ropes. Choose from a variety of tasty beers with names like Mermaid, Icebreaker and Propeller or order four small tasters for only €3. A menu of burgers and other pub food is available and you can also abandon ship for the comfort of a large terrace balcony when the weather warms up. ► B-5, Matīsa 8, tel. (+371) 20 72 22 00, [www.ziemeluenkurs.lv](http://www.ziemeluenkurs.lv). Open 16:00-24:00; Fri, Sat, Sun 14:00-24:00.    

## LATVIA'S NATIONAL GAME

Latvia's national game *novuss* looks like a mix of billiards and shuffleboard, but it's widely believed that the roughly 1m<sup>2</sup> birch table with four pockets and its circular wooden pieces are based on the Indian game of *carrom*, which was adapted by Latvian and Estonian sailors in the early 20th century. Up



to four people can participate, but it's usually played one on one. Each player is given a large wooden disk often called a *mamma* (mum or mother), which is essentially the equivalent of a cue ball, and this must be struck with a cue to sink eight smaller discs in any of the four pockets. Although the game can become more complicated if you sink your opponents' discs or knock a disc off of the table, the first person to sink all eight of his or her discs wins. Unfortunately, it's become quite difficult to find a bar these days in Riga with a *novuss* table, but you can always play Latvia's national game in the basement of the **Aussie Pub** (see photo; I-3, Valņu 43, [fb.com/AussiePubRiga](http://fb.com/AussiePubRiga)) in Old Riga and at the **Bams** billiards hall ([www.bams.lv](http://www.bams.lv)) at A-5, Cēsu 18.

## CIGAR BARS

### THE OAK LOUNGE

Although cigar bars were all the rage in pre-crisis Europe, the torrent of economic woe that was set in motion after the collapse of Lehman Brothers washed many of them away. But happy days are here again for cigar aficionados in Riga. This classy cigar lounge and shop offers a walk-in humidor full of Cuban Havanas, a relaxed, yet refined interior that includes leather furniture and plenty of single malt scotch, cognac and champagne. ► B-4, Jeruzalemes 10 (entrance from Dzirnavu), tel. (+371) 67 33 87 87, [www.theoaklounge.lv](http://www.theoaklounge.lv). Open Fri, Sat 11:00-22:00; Sun 12:00-22:00; closed Mon, Wed, Thu.  

## CLUBS

### COYOTE FLY

Housed in the exclusive Vernisāža complex in the Vērmanes Park, you pretty much have to be well-heeled, well-dressed and local to gain entrance to this pleasure palace for Riga's elite, which essentially consists of celebrities, TV personalities and the über-rich. Foreign DJs are often imported from around Europe and its stage is also graced by local musicians, rappers and the like. You can expect a trendy atmosphere, expensive cocktails and Champagne and, of course, incredibly beautiful wait staff. ► C-4, Tērbatas 2, tel. (+371) 20 22 60 00, [www.coyotefly.lv](http://www.coyotefly.lv). Open Thu, Fri, Sat 22:00-02:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Sun.    

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Riga isn't the most gay-friendly destination in this corner of Europe, but it's also not the worst we've seen.

### GAYSAUNA

GaySauna provides a sauna for up to 12 people, a small infrared sauna, a Jacuzzi that seats up to five gentlemen, a banquet hall, a dark room and a changing room with showers. Murals of ancient Greek scenery also adorn the walls for a little added authenticity. Only gay or bisexual men welcome on Fridays and Saturdays and access to an erotic gay cinema is available at no extra cost. ► C-4, Alfreða Kalnīņa 8, [www.gaysauna.lv](http://www.gaysauna.lv). Open Fri 19:00-02:00, Sat 18:00-02:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun. Admission: from €14.

### LABI GAY CINEMA

Not only does this sex shop offer private video booths and a huge selection of films, sex toys and other gear to spice up one's love life, but it also has a 24-hour gay cinema in a separate hall. Cold drinks are also available if you need to cool down. ► C-5, Lāčplēša 47, tel. (+371) 67 28 61 15, [www.labigay.lv/en/services/movie-hall](http://www.labigay.lv/en/services/movie-hall). Admission: €5. Open 10:00 - 22:00, Thu 10:00 - 24:00, Fri, Sat 10:00 - 02:00, Sun 10:00 - 18:00. 

### TOP CLUB RIGA

Ring the bell and enter Riga's hottest LGBTQ destination, which is open to all open-minded visitors. Top is much more than your average gay bar as it also offers a lounge and dance floor as well as a labyrinth of niches, nooks and crannies worth exploring. Although disco balls, mirrors and plastic mannequins featuring men's behinds serve as décor in the inner depths of the club, the bar area up front is more casual and includes seating on upcycled cargo palates, black glass chandeliers and an exhibition of portraits of indigenous people in all their finery. Handsome, stylish men pour local beer, Champagne and cocktails and Gay FM radio provides the soundtrack. ► C-4, A. Kalnīņa 4, tel. (+371) 22 80 82 02, [www.topclub.lv](http://www.topclub.lv). Open 17:00-24:00. Admission: Fri, Sat after 22:00 from €1.60 - 6.   

### FRIENDS

This nightclub is located in the basement of Latvia's biggest hotel and conference centre. If you're 25 (the age requirement) or over, take the stairs to the cosy cellar decorated with little niches and comfortable couches. Order wine, champagne or cocktails to give you the liquid courage you might need to engage in this club's speciality: karaoke. Yes, you don't have to go to Tokyo or Seoul to make a fool of yourself in front of strangers or to show off what an incredible voice you have. Choose from over 45,000 songs in English, Swedish, Norwegian, Spanish French, Latvian and Russian and let the crooning begin! If you're too shy to make use of the karoke bar, a dance club and a hall with live bands are also at your disposal. ► C-4, Elizabetes 55 (Radisson Blu Hotel Latvia), tel. (+371) 29 29 94 44, [www.clubfriends.lv](http://www.clubfriends.lv). Open 21:00-02:00.   

### KADAGIPIENS (MILK)

Located in a renovated 19th-century brewery on the edge of the city centre, this lounge bar, café and club is hard to find and that's the way the owners like it. Those in the know know that this is one of Riga's hottest cocktail spots and many don't mind queuing up at the weekend to sit on one of many couches that are each completely different in style from your grandma's sofa to one you'd expect to see in your doctor's waiting room. With three large terraces and a funky, eclectic interior, colourful, hip and laid-back KadagiPiens is hard to beat. ► A-5, Aristīda Briāna 9A, tel. (+371) 66 01 63 00. Open 12:00-23:00; closed Mon, Sat, Sun.  

### LATVIJAS 1. ROKKAFFEJNĪCA

Although this version of Latvia's 1st Rock Café is nowhere near as impressive as the now defunct four-storey food and drink complex that once stood in Liepāja, this establishment located in an historic 17th-century merchant's house on a popular nightlife street in Old Riga does draw plenty of crowds. It's a restaurant, bar and club all in one as well as a museum of sorts for Latvian music memorabilia that's displayed on its walls. You can expect generous servings of affordable international food like steaks, pizzas, pastas and vegetarian dishes and live music at least a few times a week. Our only complaint is the poor selection of local brews, but it is open quite late. ► I-2, Mārstaļu 2/4, tel. (+371) 26 67 85 55, [www.rockcafe.lv](http://www.rockcafe.lv). Open 11:00-02:00. (€6 - 10).   

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## ONE ONE

Although difficult to find, this late night club is actually located in a popular creative quarter home to some of the city's best bars and cafés. Housed in an historic yellow brick building with high ceilings and soaring, cathedral-like windows, One One prides itself on its quality electronic music presented by hip local DJs like Kris Hovel, but big names such as Richy Ahmed of Hot Creations and legendary Romanian DJ Pitcu have also performed here. Bear in mind that things don't get going here until well after midnight, but there are plenty of other venues next door where you can warm up. ► A-5, Šarlotes 18A, [www.oneoneriga.lv](http://www.oneoneriga.lv). Open Fri, Sat 20:00-02:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun. Admission: men €5, women €3.

## PŪCE (THE OWL)

If it looks like a duck, walks like a duck and quacks like a duck common sense would lead you to believe that it actually is a duck, but in this case you'd be wrong. Although visually difficult to differentiate from its legendary predecessor, The Colonel, which was a staple of Riga's alternative club scene for nearly two decades, the Owl is basically a big bar that inherited huge shoes that it just can't fill. On the bright side, if you've never been here before you'll no doubt appreciate the cosy atmosphere, unique interior, free foosball table and the affordable beers and cocktails smack in the middle of one of the city's busiest nightlife streets. ► I-2, Peldu 26/28, tel. (+371) 25 71 41 92, [www.puceklubsnakti.lv](http://www.puceklubsnakti.lv). Open 17:00-02:00; closed Mon, Tue, Sun.

## REPUBLIKA

One of Riga's last remaining rock clubs, the Republic is a maze of rooms that eventually lead downstairs to a vaulted cellar where bands from near and far often play at the weekend. Although the soundtrack is usually hard and heavy, it's a casual place where you don't necessarily have to wear black metal music hoodies and motorcycle boots. All are welcome for a drink and a good time here and although we'd like to tell you more, we started doing shots and things got kind of fuzzy towards the end. ► H-1, Mazā Pils 11. Open Thu 18:00-24:00; Fri 18:00-03:00; Sat 18:00-02:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Sun.

## COCKTAILS

### B-BĀRS

Riga's second Balsam bar is a hit with the in crowd and with good reason. The stylish brown interior of leather couches and chairs spread out over three rooms is warm and inviting, the cocktails, including the ones made with Latvia's national drink, are among the best the city has to offer and were it not for the chef's apparent affection for dill, the pricey international cuisine would also get top marks. That said, nearly €5 still seems like a lot of money for a local beer. ► I-1, Doma laukums 2, tel. (+371) 67 22 88 42, [www.bbbars.lv](http://www.bbbars.lv). Open 12:00-21:00; Thu, Fri 12:00-24:00; Sat 15:00-24:00; closed Sun.

## POOL HALLS

### BAMS

This no-frills pool hall offers little in the way of decoration apart from a few paintings from famous films like *Goodfellas* and *Casablanca*. What it does have in abundance is pool tables, dart boards, foosball tables, ping pong tables and even a knee-high *novuss* table (Latvian billiards) that looks like it's meant for hobbits. Local brews and cider are available as well as cocktails and if you're not averse to exploring the edge of the city centre, there's also lots of space for large groups. ► A-5, Cēsu 18, tel. (+371) 25 60 46 04, [www.bams.lv](http://www.bams.lv). Open 17:00-24:00. 

### NB

Unlike the gritty pool halls you see in action movies, this one is often full of groups of twenty-something boys and girls having a good time as well as the occasional pool shark. You'll find dozens of billiard tables for €3.60 - 5.70/hour right in the centre of Old Riga, not to mention inexpensive draught beers and cocktails. You can also order a variety of snacks throughout the night as it's open 24hrs. ► H-2, Šķūņu 9, tel. (+371) 67 22 63 51, [www.nbclub.lv](http://www.nbclub.lv). Open 12:00-24:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Sun. 

### CLOUD NINE

Yet another exclusive cocktail lounge has opened its doors on posh Strēlnieku iela, but to reach Cloud 9 you'll have to climb downstairs to a dimly-lit, ultra-stylish cellar furnished with plush upholstered chairs and couches. Nine types of mixed drinks (€9 - 11) are poured here from the bar's own signature beverages and aperitifs to proper long drinks, shots and sparkling cocktails, to name a few. DJs entertain an affluent crowd of well-dressed patrons at the weekend and a small menu of refined international cuisine is also available. If you think your eyes are deceiving you, they're not. The wild boar wallpaper in the loo isn't the result of too many strong drinks. It's supposed to look like that. ► B-3, Strēlnieku 1B, tel. (+371) 22 99 99 19, [www.cloudnine.lv](http://www.cloudnine.lv). Open 17:00-24:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Sun.    

### COD BAR

Tired of the same old drinks? Looking for a secluded, yet stylish place to enjoy a cocktail without the noise and the tourists of Old Riga? This exclusive Japanese-style bar complete with a giant *manga* painting on the wall serves expertly poured classic drinks with a Japanese twist and specialises in *shochu* (a distilled spirit) and *sake* (brewed rice wine) as well as Japanese whiskies and craft brews. Just walk past the living wall of moss on the ground floor restaurant and take the stairs to the basement lounge. Naturally, a complete menu of authentic Japanese cuisine is also available. ► C-4/5, Tērbatas 45, tel. (+371) 25 72 56 70, [www.cod.lv](http://www.cod.lv). Open 18:00-23:00; Sun 18:00-22:00.   

### CUBA CAFÉ

The global fascination with Fidel and Guevera is still alive and well in Riga in this dimly-lit café whose walls are adorned with black and white photos of the tropical nation and its immortal leader. Although a few assorted starters are on offer, Cuba Café is essentially a cocktail bar serving island drinks in an intimate setting and also out on its excellent summer terrace overlooking Doma laukums. A two for one happy hour can be enjoyed from 17:00 - 19:00 on weekdays. ► H-1, Jauniela 15, tel. (+371) 67 22 43 62, [www.cubacafe.lv](http://www.cubacafe.lv). Open 17:00-02:00.



### CYNIC BAR

We often embrace our cynical side writing this guide, but have to admit that this stylish cocktail bar was like a breath of fresh air for us and Riga's nightlife scene in general. Walk past the 1980s-style arcade games and take the stairs to the second floor where an industrial space has been enlivened with neon signs and Banksyesque wall art including the Mona Lisa revealing her derriere. Original cocktails around the €8 mark with clever, sometimes obscene, names are prepared by enthusiastic staff and unlike many other bars within this genre, the Cynic also offers craft brews in bottles. ► F-3, Baznīcas 1/3, tel. (+371) 26 97 07 40, [www.cynic.bar](http://www.cynic.bar). Open 17:00-24:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Sun.  

### GIMLET NORDIC COCKTAIL BAR

If you think that beets are only good in borscht, think again. This chic cocktail bar specialises in mixed drinks made from Nordic and Latvian ingredients like quince, sea buckthorn and, yes, beetroot juice, but don't worry as imported citrus fruits are also combined with top shelf spirits here. The friendly, professional staff also use local berry wines and homemade kombucha teas and syrups in the cocktails, which are quite reasonable by Riga standards at around €7.50 each. The small space located in a half basement is cosy, but still manages to exude a sleek Nordic minimalism. A variety of gimlets are on offer, but the bartenders can make nearly any drink imaginable. ► Baznīcas 37, tel. (+371) 28 37 94 22, [www.gimletnordic.com](http://www.gimletnordic.com). Open Fri, Sat 17:00-24:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun.   

### MĀKONIS (CLOUD)

If you're looking for something out of the ordinary then you'll have to leave Old Riga to find this hip space located in a renovated wooden building that has been blessed with a number of huge floor-to-ceiling windows. Difficult to categorise, The Cloud is part hipster hangout, part trendy café and part modern cocktail bar that also happens to serve a variety of cuisine from burgers and grilled cheese sandwiches to Asian soups, pastas and seafood. Expect an unusual interior with a simple black and white colour scheme peppered with art and posters. ► C-5, Stabu 42, tel. (+371) 23 11 11 32, [www.makonis.eu](http://www.makonis.eu). Open 12:00-21:00; closed Sat, Sun. (€4 - 10).   

## ADULT ENTERTAINMENT

### LABI

For over 25 years this chain of sex shops has offered private video booths, live strip shows and a huge selection of films, sex toys and other gear to spice up one's love life. Unlike many clubs that are out to rip you off in Riga, Labi provides professional staff and decent prices. Splurge on some live interactive erotic entertainment like a sensual massage or some saucy time spent in the Dominatrix's BDSM boudoir (at Lāčplēša 47). ▶ C-4, A. Kalnīņa 8, tel. (+371) 67 28 21 71, [www.labiv.lv](http://www.labiv.lv). Also at C-5, Lāčplēša 47, tel. (+371) 67 28 61 15. Open 10:00 - 22:00, Thu 10:00 - 24:00, Fri, Sat 10:00 - 02:00, Sun 10:00 - 18:00.  

### SPOT KAFÉ

This tiny shot café and cocktail lounge offers an interior of stylish couches, hardwood floors, an exposed brick wall and even disco balls. Order expertly poured mixed drinks for affordable prices not to mention incredibly cheap shots around the €2 mark with hilarious, often profane names that will get you giggling before the alcohol even touches your tonsils. If things get too crowded inside on DJ nights you can always take your drinks out on the lovely terrace that offers views of Riga Cathedral's ancient grave markers across the street. ▶ H-1, Jaunielas 19, tel. (+371) 20 44 88 11, [www.spotkafe.lv](http://www.spotkafe.lv). Open 17:00-02:00; closed Mon, Sun.   

### XIII

This exclusive little lounge serves signature cocktails by experienced staff and if you're lucky you might even spot the owner, international footballer Kaspars Gorkss who has named the bar after his number 13 national team jersey. We tried the Lavender Collins with gin, lavender syrup and Earl Grey soda and were not disappointed. A small menu of refined food is also available by one of Riga's top chefs, but olives and gourmet veggie crisps are complimentary. Expect to pay between €11 - 13 for cocktails. ▶ B-3, Strelnieku 1a, tel. (+371) 26 76 13 13, [www.bar13.lv](http://www.bar13.lv). Open Thu 18:00-24:00; Fri, Sat 18:00-01:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Sun.   

## HIPSTER BARS

### AUTENTIKA

Yet another dilapidated wooden building has been transformed into a so-called culture space for artists, hipsters, students and merrymakers. Local beers and cheap cocktails are reason enough to come here but you can also stick around for live music and DJs. From May - September the party spills out into the industrial courtyard, which is littered with shabby furniture and shipping pallets that are apparently meant to be sit on. A menu of street food is also available. ▶ B-4, Brūnīnieku 2, tel. (+371) 22 12 48 84. Open 12:00-21:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-23:00.   

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## CRAFT BREW CRAWL

When in a foreign land we always try to wet our whistle with a local brew, but since we're card carrying beer snobs this isn't always an easy task. After all, we don't want to waste our time on mass-produced pilsners. If you're of a similar mind then here are a few tips on where to get a good Latvian brew that won't make you hurl.

If you're in the old town then head over to **Folkklubs Ala Pagrabs**, which serves roughly 20 Latvian draught beers including delicious offerings like *Sazobe* – a hoppy APA. Just around the corner, **Paddy Whelan's** has a staggering number of beers from around the globe as well as quite a few Latvian brews on draught. A few blocks farther is **Miezis un kompānija. Vecrīga**, where you'll find 20 Baltic brews on draught. Not far, down a hard-to-find street in a medieval warehouse you'll find the **Armoury Bar** that specialises in craft brews from around the globe. Try the *Cilpa* APA on draught. Only a few doors down is **Distillers Republic** pouring both Latvian and Baltic brews including beers by up-and-coming brewers Contra and Hypnos. The **Aussie Pub**, which has a special 14-beer sampler that will give you a crash course in Latvian beer, is only a couple of blocks away. Outside of the old town, the hipster favourite **Čē** offers a great variety of Latvian craft beers in bottles as well as an eclectic selection of German brews. Only a few blocks away at the cosy neighbourhood pub **Alus Muiža** you'll find one of the biggest selections of Latvian craft beers in the city on draught and in bottles. Local brewer **Nurme** has its own little tasting room on nearby Avotu iela where you can try their latest offerings. A few blocks farther is **Ziemeļu Enkurs**, which offers a clandestine location and a variety of tasty beers made on the premises with names like *Mermaid* and *Propeller*.

The main destination for all beer snobs in Riga, however, has to be the **Labietis** craft brewery and the so-called embassy of the **Valmiermuža brewery**. Labietis is constantly experimenting with new recipes that use unusual ingredients such as local herbs and spices. Try its *Three Indians IPA* or the *Forest juniper red ale*. The Valmiermuža brewery, on the other hand, pours their latest creations at this 'embassy'. Try a refreshing wheat beer on a hot summer day or a brew by a smaller boutique brewer in bottles and cans.

If you'd like to buy some interesting brews for the road then we recommend **Lauvas alus** at Tallinas 30. Follow the entire tour at [yp.me/73524f](http://yp.me/73524f).



### ČĒ (EX-CHOMSKY)

Were it not for the legions of hipsters smoking and drinking on the unkempt lawn of this neglected building, you'd never know that one of Riga's best underground bars is hidden inside. After a move in 2017 from its previous location in a derelict wooden edifice on Lāčplēša, Chomsky is back in business pouring cheap Latvian beer as well as some excellent offerings from some of the nation's best craft breweries like Malduguns. Wine and cocktails as well as a few snacks can also be had in the bright bar area up front or in the dark hall in the back. Expect an alternative crowd and an eclectic soundtrack to match. ► C-4, Dzirnavu 82. Open 17:00-24:00.

### EZĪTIS MIGLĀ (TALLINAS KVARTĀLĀ)

Imagine your favourite dive bar decides to become a chain and then opens up similar establishments all over the city you live in. Never happen, right? Well maybe not in Western Europe, but that's exactly what Ezitis Miglā (Hedgehog in the Fog) has done in Riga and beyond. This incarnation located in a former car repair shop is currently our favourite of the dozen or so available. Expect a hipsterish, no frills ambience, affordable pub food from burgers to pancakes, plenty of booze and a generally cool underground vibe. In the summer, the party spills out into the courtyard. ► A/B-5, Tallinas 10 (entrance from Miera 34), tel. (+371) 23 07 04 74, [www.ezitis.lv](http://www.ezitis.lv). Open 11:00-24:00.

### GAUJA

Although the interior isn't as rough around the edges as the original location, Gauja's new home in a dilapidated wooden building on Stabu iela still offers plenty of old school ambience, especially the vintage 1970s Soviet furniture and lighting fixtures. Cheap Latvian beer is the main attraction here and you can even order food, desserts and proper coffee from a fancy machine, which will no doubt be considered a major upgrade by its hipster clientele. Much larger than its previous incarnation on Tērbatas, the new Gauja appears to be ready to take on some serious crowds. Perhaps the mint green walls will have a soothing effect on the neighbourhood's frugal, yet hard-drinking locals. ► C-5, Stabu 32, tel. (+371) 66 90 82 00, [www.bufetegauja.lv](http://www.bufetegauja.lv). Open 11:00-24:00; Sat 12:00-24:00; Sun 13:00-23:00.

### KKC (KANEPEΣ KULTŪRAS CENTRS)

Although *kanepe*s is actually weed or hemp in Latvian, don't get your hopes up. This funky, self-proclaimed culture centre run by a guy whose last name happens to be *Kanepe* is actually a local hotspot for hipsters who appreciate having drinks, listening to music and doing other arty things in a dilapidated wooden building. That said, we've definitely noticed the presence of cannabis smoke on hot summer nights. Its summer courtyard is by far its greatest asset and it's usually full of people knocking back local craft beers on old furniture. You can also come here for concerts, cinema nights and art exhibitions. ► B-4, Skolas 15, tel. (+371) 29 40 44 05, [www.kanepes.lv](http://www.kanepes.lv). Open 14:00-24:00.

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## LIVE MUSIC

### FOLKKLUBS ALA PAGRABS

One of Riga's largest Latvian beer bars and restaurants, Folk Club Ala is more of a cavern than a cellar. Descend into the depths of this huge space to find a great selection of affordable local brews and spirits as well as traditional cuisine and an ever-changing line-up of folk bands guaranteed to get you moving. Although it's a favourite among frugal students, it's also popular with anyone who appreciates good food, drink and music under medieval brick vaulted ceilings. Reservations are essential if you'd like a table on a Friday or Saturday night. ► I-2, Peldu 19, tel. (+371) 27 79 69 14, [www.folkklubs.lv](http://www.folkklubs.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; Sat, Sun 14:00-22:00.

### SIDRĒRIJA & TAPROOM (THE TRUMPET)

One of the city's wildest streets has finally been given a touch of class with the opening of this casual, yet refined jazz club, restaurant and craft cider and beer bar. Its centuries-old brick walls are covered in brass instruments and a working fireplace makes the already intimate ambience even cosier. Order a unique, locally-produced glass of cider, a cocktail or one the draught brews from small Latvian microbreweries available and then head into the main room where live jazz music is performed on a small stage throughout the week. A private courtyard terrace in the summer. ► I-2, Peldu 24, tel. (+371) 25 74 52 99, [www.trompete.lv](http://www.trompete.lv). Open 12:00-24:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-02:00.

## PUBS

### AUSSIE PUB

Riga's first Aussie pub provides plenty of authentic Down Under atmosphere but thankfully without any of the usual trappings of stuffed koalas or, God forbid, any portraits of Paul Hogan. Spread out across three floors, the pub offers plenty of tasty and cheap local beers on draught as well as Australia's best craft brew, Coopers, in bottles and all are served from a bar that's actually an old VW combi van. If you're feeling really nostalgic you can even order a VB. Fun raffles and lotteries are held often and you can also participate in beer pong and sumo nights. If the cheap happy hour prices (17:00 - 19:00 everyday!) are too much for you to handle you can always crash at its hostel upstairs. ► I-3, Valņu 43, tel. (+371) 67 22 34 06. Open 16:00-02:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-02:00.

### LIDOJOŠĀ VARDE (THE FLYING FROG)

A long-time staple in the city, this three-roomed cellar hangout is filled with more than just frogs — though there are lots of them, even in the bathrooms. Build your own burger, chow on unparalleled chicken wings, or go healthy with grilled dishes and salads. Embassy workers and other expats in the area come in droves for lunch, dinner and cocktails or pints of Guinness with their colleagues after quitting time. It also has one of the best summer terraces on this popular street full of cafés. ► B-3, Elizabetes 31a, tel. (+371) 67 32 11 84, [www.flying-frog.lv](http://www.flying-frog.lv). Open 10:00-23:00; Fri 10:00-24:00; Sat 11:00-24:00; Sun 11:00-23:00.

## BRIĀNA IELA BARS

Riga's had a reputation for nightlife since the 1990s when cocktails meant cheap screwdrivers and nightclubs of all genres didn't bother closing as long as people were willing to drink and dance. Much has changed since that golden age and although prices in Old Riga have risen dramatically in recent years, a pint or a mixed is never far away and is most likely a bargain for citizens of most wealthy nations. Fortunately, the selection of brews and booze has improved beyond recognition, not to mention the diversity of the venues. There are still great places to go in the old town, but if you'd like to see where locals eat, drink and dance then we suggest you take tram No.11 from Kr.Barona iela to the Tallinas iela stop and the **Briāna iela nightlife district** where a former brick brewery and a forlorn mansion support a wide array of nightlife options for all tastes.

**Labietis** serves up Latvian craft brews and a unique ambience that's hard to beat every day of the week. At the weekend its next-door neighbour **De Flou** specialises in hip hop music, while **One One** located just opposite hosts late-night parties featuring local and international DJs. On the other side of the building you'll find **Kadagi Piens**, which is a hip sofa bar and club serving food and drinks and **Nemiers**, a hard rock bar that's home to local live acts and no-holds-barred drinking sessions. Just around the corner you'll find **Delisnack Riga**, which is like an alternative 24-hour diner staffed by tattooed youngsters. Keep going and you'll run into the Riga embassy of the **Valmiermuža brewery** that specialises in great beers from the Vidzeme region as well as refined Latvian food. However, if you need a hit of 21st-century globalisation then try **Bento**, an Asian-style eatery with sushi, Caesar salads and pop music. Finally, the crumbling **Von Stritzky's Villa** hosts parties and special events throughout the year. Photo of Labietis by M.Zapraskis



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### PADDY WHELAN'S IRISH PUB & SPORTS BAR

Although it's considered a traditional Irish pub it's also a sports bar dedicated to the finer things in life – namely football and formula one. On the ground floor you can expect a dozen or so flat screen TVs showing different matches, while upstairs you'll find a cosier atmosphere with loads of memorabilia on the walls including signed football shirts. ► I-2, Grēcinieku 4, tel. (+371) 67 21 01 50, [www.pub.lv](http://www.pub.lv). Open 11:30-23:30.

### RUNCIS (TOMCAT)

The kind of place where you wish everybody knew your name. It's totally Latvian in its beer, food, and frequenters, who are usually playing chess, playing cards and exchanging anecdotes. If the thought of seeing another tourist makes you queasy, head here to hide and enjoy some of Old Riga's cheapest beer. In short, it's a place that most women find boring and most men intriguing. ► I-2, Jāņa sēta 1, tel. (+371) 20 05 43 73. Open 14:00-23:00; Fri 14:00-02:00; Sat 12:00-24:00; closed Sun.

### TEX-MEX REPUBLIC (KLONDAIKA)

The designer of this kitschy place has seen one too many westerns, but we love it just the same. Relax outside in one of the best summer courtyards the centre has to offer, head down to the slot machine hall optimistically labelled the *zelta raktuvēs* (gold mines) or try the saloon-style restaurant and bar. The Tex-Mex cuisine is just a couple of degrees shy of authentic, but its tasty, filling and relatively cheap. ► C-4, Dzirnavu 59, tel. (+371) 67 24 03 66, [www.klondaika.lv](http://www.klondaika.lv). Open 12:00-22:00.

### VICTORY PUB

Although the sight of dark red walls and matching curtains is reminiscent of either an English pub or a tart's boudoir, the staff is friendly and the food and drink is just fine. A menu of British and international cuisine including steaks and a cheap lunch special are available as well as a digital jukebox, an arm wrestling table and a separate room with a pool table and a dart board. A dozen or so different beers can be had here for affordable prices and the Victory Pub also has a large summer terrace ► I-2, Tīroņu 10, tel. (+371) 29 22 83 10, [www.victorypub.lv](http://www.victorypub.lv). Open 16:00-23:30.

## SPORTS BARS

### PADDY WHELAN'S IRISH PUB & SPORTS BAR

Although it's considered a traditional Irish pub it's also a sports bar dedicated to the finer things in life – namely football and formula one. On the ground floor you can expect a dozen or so flat screen TVs showing different matches, while upstairs you'll find a cosier atmosphere with loads of memorabilia on the walls including signed football shirts. In addition to the usual Irish and international pub food, Paddy's also offers a menu of authentic Indian cuisine cooked in a real tandoor and a good weekday lunch special for about €5. ► I-2, Grēcinieku 4, tel. (+371) 67 21 01 50, [www.pub.lv](http://www.pub.lv). Open 11:30-23:30.

Licensed to sell fine food  
**Paddy Whelan's**  
The First Irish Pub in Riga  
and drinks since 1994

*Food is our passion  
Beer is our obsession  
Music is our true love  
Sports is our madness*

*Irish joie de vivre in Riga since 1994!*

GRĒCINIEKU IELA 4, OLD RIGA, OPEN DAILY 11-01, FRI, SAT 11-04, WWW.PUB.LV

## STUDENT BARS

### LA BELLE ÉPOQUE (FRANĀU BĀRS)

An unusual mix of teenage boys and girls and curious foreigners congregate in this cellar bar to take advantage of the incredibly cheap beer on draught. Although it often looks like a mix between a high school dance and an all-night rave with scant lighting and lots of bodily contact, the barmen/chaperones encourage mingling with shots of Absinthe and other hard alcohol. ► I-2, Mazā Monētu 8, tel. (+371) 67 39 96 75, [www.frenchbar.lv](http://www.frenchbar.lv). Open 18:00-02:00.

## WINE BARS

### LA CANTINA

La Cantina is an Italian wine shop, delicatessen and bar that only serves products imported straight from Italy, with the noted exception of its freshly baked breads. All of the wine, cured meats, cheeses, olives, sweets and biscuits can be bought to bring home or to enjoy on the charming premises decorated with wood paneling and lamps made from wooden produce crates. Panini as well as huge antipasti boards can be ordered from the menu or you can simply choose the ingredients that seem most tempting to you. ► C-4, Dzirnavu 57, tel. (+371) 27 29 29 47. Open 12:00-22:00; Sun 14:00-21:00.

### LA PROSCIUTTERIA BAR

The owners of this casual wine bar located on the ground floor of a residential building have managed to make a somewhat industrial-style space into something cosy and welcoming and we think the legs of prosciutto hanging in a glass cabinet have something to do with it. Get stuck into meat and cheese antipasti platters while sipping an excellent glass of wine or jumpstart your night with an amaretto sour or an Aperol spritz. Panini, bruschetta and even Swiss-style raclette are also available, not to mention Mediterranean salads and Italian desserts. ► B-4, Antonijas 17A, tel. (+371) 24 20 44 99, [www.laprosciutteriabar.lv](http://www.laprosciutteriabar.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-23:00; Sun 12:00-20:00.

### TINTO

Although this stylish wine bar and café with merlot coloured couches and a large outdoor terrace offers great views of passers-by on busy Elizabetes iela as well as the twisted bronze statues of the Splendid Palace cinema next door, it's tucked away off of the street so you could pass by and never know it's there. An early breakfast and refined meat and seafood main courses are certainly tempting as are over 300 specially selected wines and spirits from around the globe. ► C-4, Elizabetes 61, tel. (+371) 67 28 90 85, [www.tinto.lv](http://www.tinto.lv). Open 12:00-23:00.

# Sightseeing

Whether its medieval architecture and cobble stone streets you're after or extravagant Art Nouveau buildings and manicured 19th-century parks, Riga offers plenty of visual stimulation for all tastes. Explore what's left of the city's Soviet legacy or take a tour of Riga Cathedral (Rigas Doms), the largest house of worship in the Baltics. No trip to Riga would be complete without taking a lift to the top of St. Peter's Church and a walk through the former zeppelin hangars of the Riga Central Market is also a must to say that you've been in the Latvian capital. Farther afield you'll also find some genuine gems including the Latvian Ethnographic Museum as well as more modern museums dedicated to vintage cars.

## ESSENTIAL RIGA

### ALBERTA IELA

Visit the biggest gallery of Art Nouveau architecture by Russian architect Mikhail Eisenstein, father of the illustrious filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein who was born in Riga. Most of the buildings have now been renovated and of particular interest is the house at Strēlnieku 4a. Built in 1905 it has since undergone a complete facelift and is now home to the Stockholm School of Economics in Riga. Don't miss the Riga Art Nouveau Museum at the end of Alberta iela, a must see. ► B-3, Alberta 2, 2a, 4, 6, 8, 13; Elizabetes 10a & 10b; Strēlnieku 4a.

### LATVIAN ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM (LATVIJAS ETNOGRĀFISKĀS BRĪVDABAS MUZEJS)

Take the trip to the north shore of Lake Jugla and you'll be rewarded with nearly 90 hectares of life as it used to be. Farmsteads, windmills, fishing villages, churches and other historic structures have been moved here from their original locations throughout the Latvian countryside and preserved for posterity. Watch craftsmen perform various tasks or try some Latvian food and drink in the tavern. Although the buildings and the ticket office close at 17:00 you can wander around the grounds until 20:00 in the summer. Take bus №1 from Brīvības bulvāris (near Tērbatas iela) to the Brīvdabas muzejs stop. It's also an easy 30-minute bike ride from the centre or you can take tram №1 to the last stop and follow the bike path the rest of the way to the museum. ► Brīvdabas 21, tel. (+371) 67 99 45 10, [www.brivdabasmuzejs.lv](http://www.brivdabasmuzejs.lv). Open 10:00-20:00. Admission: €4 summer (May - September). ☰

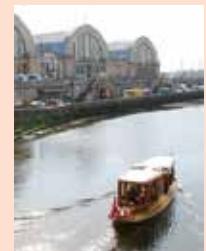
### RIGA CATHEDRAL (DOMA BAZNĪCA)

The largest place of worship in the Baltics, measuring 187 x 43m, with walls two metres thick is currently only open for services. Riga Cathedral also has one of the biggest organs in Europe (6,718 pipes!). It was such a marvel in its day that Franz Liszt composed a piece of music in its honour. The drop from Cathedral Square (Doma laukums) to the church's base shows how the level of the city has risen in the eight centuries since its foundations were laid on the site of a Livonian fishing village in 1211. The price of the ticket also includes access to its Romanesque cloister. ► H-1, Doma laukums, tel. (+371) 67 21 32 13, [www.doms.lv](http://www.doms.lv). Open 08:00-09:00; Thu 18:00-19:00; Sun 12:00-14:00. Admission: €3. ☰

## CANAL & RIVER BOATS

### RIGA BY CANAL

You can climb aboard a unique 100-year-old wooden launch (or a replica) and take a one-hour tour of the city from an unusual perspective - the Riga Canal and Daugava river. You can start your journey at Bastion Hill and the boat trip takes an hour before it returns to your original embarkation point. ► G-2, Bastejkalns, tel. (+371) 25 91 15 23, [www.rigabycanal.lv](http://www.rigabycanal.lv). Open 10:00-18:00. Tickets: adults €15, children (5 - 14) €10, children under 5 free.



### RIVER CRUISES

This company offers a variety of nautical activities from river and canal boat cruises to rowboat rental in Riga. Its Vecriga riverboat departs 11.novembra krastmala on the edge of Old Riga at 10:00 (Sat, Sun), 12:00, 14:00, 16:00, 18:00 and 20:00 (sunset 2.5-hour tour €20) for €10. The cruise lasts one hour and drinks and snacks can be bought onboard. Its canal boats also depart frequently from this location and the roughly one-hour tour costs €15 (€8 children under 10). ► I-1, 11. novembra krastmala, tel. (+371) 29 89 61 38, [www.rivercruises.lv](http://www.rivercruises.lv). Open 10:00-22:00.



### ST. PETER'S CHURCH (PĒTERBAZNĪCA)

First mentioned in ancient chronicles in 1209, St. Peter's was a Catholic church until 1523, when it turned Lutheran. Its wooden tower, the highest in Europe at that time, was destroyed several times. It first collapsed in 1666 and was rebuilt a year later. To see how long it would last, the builders hurled a glass from the top: the more pieces the vessel broke into, the greater the tower's longevity. Alas, a pile of straw cushioned the glass' fall and the spire burnt down one year later. Artillery fire destroyed the structure again in 1941. In 1973 it was finally rebuilt and the glass ritual was repeated, this time with smashing results. Take the lift to the observation platform for spectacular views of the city. ► I-2, Reformācijas laukums 1, tel. (+371) 67 18 14 30, [www.peterbaznica.riga.lv](http://www.peterbaznica.riga.lv). Open 10:00-18:00; Sun 12:00-18:00; closed Mon. Admission: church, exhibitions & tower €9 (tickets on sale until 17:00).



[instagram.com/inyourpocket](https://instagram.com/inyourpocket)

## CHURCHES

### AVE SOL CONCERT HALL (STS. PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH)

Built as an integral part of Riga's old citadel from 1780 - 1785, the Church of Saints Peter and Paul was erected at the behest of Catherine the Great and was originally meant to be a house of worship for the local garrison of Russian troops. In fact, it remained the main church for Orthodox Christians in the city until the gold-domed cathedral in the Esplanade Park was built in 1884. Today, it functions as a concert hall and is easily recognised by its baby blue colour, neoclassical style and unusual Masonic imagery. ► F-1, *Citadeles 7*, [www.avesol.riga.lv](http://www.avesol.riga.lv).

### OUR LADY OF SORROWS CHURCH OF RIGA (RĪGAS SĀPJU DIEVMĀTES BAZNĪCA)

Although the baby blue Our Lady of Sorrows Church of Riga has a decidedly negative name, the story of its construction is positively miraculous. On a trip to St. Petersburg in 1780, Holy Roman Emperor Joseph II saw a tiny wooden chapel on Pils laukums and decided to fund the construction of a proper Catholic church here. The foundations were laid three years later after King Stanislaw of Poland-Lithuania and Paul I (Catherine the Great's son) also donated funds to the pious endeavour. It was expanded in the direction of the river in the mid-1800s at the behest of Tsar Nicholas I. The attractive building with the red-tiled roof on the right was erected as a Catholic school in the late-18th century. ► H-1, *Pils 5*, tel. (+371) 26 18 51 84, [www.dievmatesdraudze.lv](http://www.dievmatesdraudze.lv).

### REFORMATION CHURCH (REFORMĀTU BAZNĪCA)

Built from 1727 - 1733, this is one of the few Calvinist churches in Latvia. After renovations in 1805, its basement was turned into a warehouse, while the Soviets turned the whole building into a recording studio. Now the upstairs is used for occasional concerts and the downstairs is waiting for yet another entrepreneur to open a club here. For now, it can only be admired from the outside. ► I-2, *Mārstaļu 10*, tel. (+371) 67 21 20 36, [www.rrbdb.lv](http://www.rrbdb.lv).

### RIGA CHURCH OF JESUS (RĪGAS JĒZUS BAZNĪCA)

After decades of war in Livonia, the Swedish Empire finally gained control of Riga in 1621. To celebrate an end to war, it was decided that a church dedicated to Jesus should be built outside the city gates. Work was completed in 1638, but sadly peace didn't last long and the church was destroyed by Russian troops in 1656. It was rebuilt in 1688, but was once again destroyed during the Russian siege of Riga in 1710. It rose from the ashes in 1733 only to be razed yet again by the Russian rulers of Riga in 1812 fearing an attack from Napoleon's troops. The current octagonal structure was erected in 1818. It has a 27m-high tower and is the largest wooden church in Latvia. ► E-4, *Elijas 18*, tel. (+371) 67 22 41 23, [www.jezusdraudze.lv](http://www.jezusdraudze.lv). Open Tue 12:00-18:00; Wed 09:30-15:00; Thu 12:00-18:00; Sun 09:00-13:00; closed Mon, Fri, Sat.

### ST. JAMES CATHEDRAL (JĒKABA KATEDRĀLE)

This church beside the parliament was first mentioned in historical sources in 1225. In 1522, it became the first church in Latvia to hold a Lutheran service, but 60 years later during a brief spell under Polish rule it was returned to its Catholic flock, who have held it ever since. It's also interesting to note that St. James was one of the first three churches built in Riga and unlike Riga Cathedral and St. Peter's where mass was held in German, it held services in Latvian until the Reformation. ► H-1, *Jēkaba 9*, tel. (+371) 29 99 16 37, [www.jekabakatedrale.lv](http://www.jekabakatedrale.lv).

### ST. JOHN'S CHURCH (JĀNA BAZNĪCA)

First mentioned in 1297 when it served as the chapel of a Dominican abbey, the monastery and church were closed during the Reformation in 1523. The building was used for a time as the city's armoury, until it was taken over by a Lutheran congregation in 1582. During the building's construction two monks were bricked into the southern wall and lived out their lives there, fed through the window grate. In the summer months organ and vocal music concerts are held here every Saturday at 17:00, which are open to the public. ► I-2, *Skārņu 24*, tel. (+371) 25 63 55 65, [www.janabaznica.lv](http://www.janabaznica.lv).

## JEWISH RIGA

### GREAT CHORAL SYNAGOGUE (DIE GREISE HOR SHUL)

Although the colossal synagogue no longer exists, it's worth the 10 minute walk from the train station to see what remains of this one-time place of worship and to meditate on one of the most beastly crimes committed during the Nazi occupation of Latvia. On July 4, 1941, hundreds of Jewish refugees from Lithuania and local Latvian Jews were herded into the basement of the synagogue which was then intentionally burned to the ground. Only ruins, a metal menorah and a memorial stone remain. A memorial to Žanis Lipke and other Latvians who saved hundreds of Jews is located next to it. ► D-5, At the corner of *Gogoļa* and *Dzirnavu*, [www.jews.lv](http://www.jews.lv).

### JEWS IN LATVIA MUSEUM (MUZEJS 'EBREJI LATVJĀ')

Located on the third floor of the Riga Jewish Community centre, this small, yet informative museum documents, in Latvian and English, the history of Jewish life in Latvia beginning with the 16th century. Visitors can discover the important role Jews played in Latvian society and the contributions they made to intellectual life, the arts and even sports. The exhibits are also a moving testimony to the suffering Jews experienced at the hands of the Nazis and Soviets. The museum hosts a number of events including lectures, seminars and exhibitions. Audio guides are available in English, Latvian and Russian. ► C-4, *Skolas 6*, tel. (+371) 67 28 34 84, [www.jewishmuseum.lv](http://www.jewishmuseum.lv). Open 11:00-17:00; closed Fri, Sat. Admission: donations.

# Sightseeing

## ŽANIS LIPKE MEMORIAL MUSEUM

This modern, interactive museum designed by a prominent local architect tells the little-known tale of Žanis Lipke and the network of roughly 25 people that created an 'underground railroad' of sorts to save Jews from the Nazis during the German occupation of Latvia. ► C-2, Mazais Balasta dambis 9, tel. (+371) 67 20 25 39, [www.lipke.lv](http://www.lipke.lv). Open 12:00-18:00; Wed, Fri 12:00-17:00; Sat 10:00-16:00; closed Mon, Sun. Admission: donations.

## MUSEUMS

### LAIMA CHOCOLATE MUSEUM (LAIMAS ŠOKOLĀDES MUZEJS)

Latvia's largest chocolate producer has opened up a fun and fascinating interactive museum in its historic premises on Miera Street. After registering and receiving your QR-coded admission ticket you can proceed into a number of different exhibits that trace the long history of the company whose traditions date back to 1870. Watch videos about the history of chocolate making or see how Laima produces some of its most delicious treats. You can also create your own chocolate video or have a personalised message printed on a chocolate bar to give as a gift to a friend (or yourself). An adjoining Laima shop and café is also available and if you book well in advance you can also join a creative workshop and make your own chocolates! ► B-5, Miera 22, tel. (+371) 66 15 47 77, [www.laimasokoladesmuzejs.lv](http://www.laimasokoladesmuzejs.lv). Open 10:00-19:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed. Admission: adults €7, children €3 - 5.

## CYCLING IN RIGA

Although we doubt that cycling will ever be as popular in Latvia as it is in the Netherlands, more and more locals have chosen to beat Riga's legendary traffic jams with a two-wheeler. In a controversial manoeuvre that has provoked the ire of local motorists, the city has even created bike lanes on some of the inner city's widest streets, but in truth these can be a bit dodgy as they're often blocked by parked cars and delivery vans. Some brave souls throw caution to the wind and simply pedal with Riga's notoriously irresponsible drivers on the city's streets, while others choose the safer option of sidewalks often terrorising pedestrians in the process. There are, however, better official bike paths including a stretch along the River Daugava behind the Central Market that leads to the Moscow District and three longer routes from Old Riga to Mežaparks, the Ethnographic Museum and the beach resort of Jūrmala. Whichever option you choose, it's a great way to see some of the city's hidden gems outside of Old Riga and the city centre.



### LATVIAN NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ART (LATVIJAS NACIONĀLĀS MĀKSLAS MUZEJS)

After a three-year, €31 million expansion and renovation, the Latvian National Museum of Art has finally opened its doors again. View classic paintings, drawings, watercolours and sculptures by the Latvian masters Purvītis, Rozentāls, Annuss, Valters, Padegs, Liberts and many more. The 100-year-old interior has been completely restored and upgraded with new underground art space, not to mention a charming restaurant. ► F-3, Jaņa Rozentāla laukums 1, tel. (+371) 67 32 44 61, [www.lnmm.lv](http://www.lnmm.lv). Open 10:00-18:00; Sun 10:00-17:00; Fri 10:00-20:00; Sat 10:00-17:00; closed Mon. Admission: museum €3, exhibitions €3.50, combined ticket €6; smart phone or tablet audio guide app free.

### LATVIAN RAILWAY MUSEUM (LATVIJAS DZELZCEĻĀ MUZEJS)

Retrace the tracks of rail history in Latvia in this museum run by Latvian Railways (Latvijas dzelzceļš). Inside the brick hangar you'll find old photographs, antiquated machines and a few specimens of old wagons. Outside you view the largest collection of rolling stock in the Baltics which includes a restored Soviet diesel and electric locomotives built in Ukraine and Russia as well as a German locomotive built in 1942 that no doubt became a spoil of war. Don't miss the Tsarist era prison car. ► E-2, Uzvaras 2/4, tel. (+371) 67 23 28 49, [www.railwaymuseum.lv](http://www.railwaymuseum.lv). Open 10:00-17:00; Thu 10:00-20:00; closed Sun, Mon. Admission: adults €3.50, students and pensioners €2, children free.



### MENTZENDORFF'S HOUSE (MENCENDORFA NAMS)

For fans of antiquity this fascinating historical house that once belonged to a wealthy Riga merchant is a must. Restored furniture, 18th century frescoes and a true medieval atmosphere are all here for your perusal. Not only can you see how the medieval rich lived in their fine apartments, but also how the servants toiled in the massive kitchen area. Guided tours in English, German and Russian are available for €10. ► I-2, Grēcinieku 18, tel. (+371) 67 21 29 51, [www.mencendorffanams.com](http://www.mencendorffanams.com). Open 10:00-17:00; closed Mon, Tue. Admission: €3.

### MUSEUM OF DECORATIVE ARTS & DESIGN (DEKORATĪVĀS MĀKSLAS UN DIZAINA MUZEJS)

Latvian textiles, ceramics as well as glass, wood, leather and metal work are all housed in this gallery/museum. Formerly St. George's church, it's the oldest surviving stone building in Riga and dates back to the 13th century. You can also purchase Latvian National Art Museum souvenirs and books at its shop. Exhibitions usually cost extra. ► I-2, Skārņu 10/20, tel. (+371) 67 22 22 35, [www.lnmm.lv/en/mdad](http://www.lnmm.lv/en/mdad). Open 11:00-17:00; Wed 11:00-19:00; closed Mon. Admission: museum €2.50, exhibitions €3.50, combined ticket €5.

## MUSEUM OF RIGA'S HISTORY AND NAVIGATION (RĪGAS VĒSTURES UN KUGNIECĪBAS MUZEJS)

Enter this unique museum and walk up the stairs to the first floor to discover temporary exhibitions from Latvia and abroad, as well as art and memorabilia from the days of the first Latvian Republic. The second floor displays Bronze Age artefacts and medieval curiosities, such as the sword used by Riga's executioner in the 16th century and the mummified hand of an unlucky criminal. You can also take a peek at Riga Cathedral's courtyard from upstairs. ► H/1-1, Palasta 4, tel. (+371) 67 35 66 76, [www.rigamuz.lv](http://www.rigamuz.lv). Open 11:00-17:00; closed Mon, Tue. Admission: adults €5.

## MUSEUM OF WAR (KARA MUZEJS)

Latvia is one of the most war-ravaged countries in Europe. Crusader, Swedish, Polish, German and Russian armies have all left their mark. This museum of photos and memorabilia documents the struggles of the 20th century, from WWI and the war for independence up to and including the Nazi and Soviet occupations of WWII. One exhibition chronicles the development of the Latvian army from WWI until 1940. ► H-2, Smilšu 20, tel. (+371) 67 22 81 47, [www.karamuzejs.lv](http://www.karamuzejs.lv). Open 10:00-18:00; closed Mon, Tue. Open 10:00 - 17:00 (November - March); Open 10:00 - 18:00 (April - October). Admission: free.

## NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LATVIA (LATVIJAS NACIONĀLAIS VĒSTURES MUZEJS)

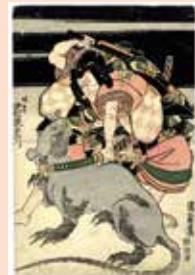
Three floors of artefacts from the Stone Age to the present day await your perusal as well as temporary and permanent exhibitions such as *Latvia's Century* in honour of the nation's centenary and *Money in Latvia*, which is an absolute must for numismatists. View ancient weapons, jewellery and other treasures discovered at archaeological sites, as well 19th-century farming implements, historic folk costumes and an entire hall dedicated to wooden religious sculptures that have been preserved for posterity. Four rooms with period furniture also recreate typical apartments during the Biedermeier, Art Nouveau, Art Deco and Soviet eras of design in Riga. ► G-3, Brīvības bulvāris 32, tel. (+371) 67 22 13 57, [www.lnmv.lv](http://www.lnmv.lv). Open 10:00-17:00; closed Mon. Admission: adults €3; family ticket €4.

## NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF LATVIA (LATVIJAS DABAS MUZEJS)

One of Riga's oldest museums has been modernised in recent years with interactive exhibits, informative touch screens and learning games for the kids. The second floor is dedicated to palaeontology with mock-ups of ancient ecosystems and fossils under glass, while the third floor specialises in zoology with an unparalleled taxidermy collection that includes everything from eagles to lions and even a giraffe. The top floors present exhibits relating to human evolution, marine biology, botany and entomology. An impressive hanging skeleton of a killer whale offsets gruesome exhibits of human skulls and foetuses. ► D-4, Barona 4, tel. (+371) 67 35 60 24, [www.dabasmuzejs.gov.lv](http://www.dabasmuzejs.gov.lv). Open 10:00-17:00; Sat, Sun 11:00-17:00; closed Mon, Tue. Admission: adults €3, children 7 - 18 €1; audio guides in English or Russian €5.

## JAPANESE UKIYO-E

Culture connoisseurs can view unique depictions of kabuki actors from Japan's Edo period (1603-1868) at the Riga Bourse Art Museum (H-1, Doma laukums 6, [Innm.lv/lv/mmrb](http://Innm.lv/lv/mmrb)) until July 26. These miniature wood engravings from the Latvian National Art Museum's collection cover a broad spectrum of subjects from sword-fighting warriors and sumo wrestlers to scenes from local folk tales and erotic illustrations. Most of the works displayed in *Kabuki. Japan's 19th-century ukiyo-e* were created by renowned artists of their day including Utagawa Kuniyada (1786-1865), Toyohara Kunichika (1835-1900) and Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1797-1861). Tickets cost €3.50. Image courtesy of the LNMM.



## RAINIS AND ASPAZIJA'S HOUSE (RAIŅA UN ASPAZIJAS MĀJA)

Two of Latvia's most celebrated and significant poets, authors and playwrights once lived in this building (1926 - 1933), which the couple hoped would eventually become a museum after their passing. It took nearly a century, but Rainis and Aspazija finally have their own museum in Riga, which also includes the couple's personal library of over 6,000 books in 14 languages and another 2,900 periodicals. Upstairs you'll find their apartment that looks much as it did back in the 1920s and you can also listen to music and the scraping of fountain pens on paper in the background as if the mighty duo were still hard at work. Another building in the courtyard has been renovated as an events hall and the basement is available for workshops. ► B-4, Baznīcas 30, tel. (+371) 67 27 26 43, [www.aspazijarainis.lv](http://www.aspazijarainis.lv). Open 10:00-17:00; closed Mon, Sun. Admission: adults €2, children €1; audio guide €3.

## RIGA ART NOUVEAU MUSEUM (RĪGAS JŪGENDSTILA MUZEJS)

This museum is housed in an apartment where one of Latvia's best art nouveau architects once lived – Konstantīns Pēkšēns. The prolific artist and engineer who was responsible for the creation of no less than 250 buildings in Riga also designed this impressive edifice. The historic house was also home to the illustrious painter Janis Rozentāls and the writer Rūdolfs Blaumanis to whom another museum is dedicated on the top floor. View period furniture and artwork from one of the Latvian capital's most creative eras. A must see. Don't miss the grand staircase! ► B-3, Alberta 12, tel. (+371) 67 18 14 65, [www.jugendstils.riga.lv](http://www.jugendstils.riga.lv). Open 10:00-18:00; closed Mon. Admission: adults €5 - 9, children under 7 free.

# Sightseeing

## RIGA BOURSE ART MUSEUM (MĀKSLAS MUZEJS RĪGAS BIRŽA)

Explore an excellent collection of 17th-century Chinese, Japanese and Delft Blue porcelain from the Netherlands, three centuries of silverware from the Baltics, Russia and Germany as well as some lesser-known, but no less impressive paintings by Dutch masters of the Golden Era. Although the lighting could be better in the main hall, you can find some real gems in the exhibit of paintings including a winter landscape by Monet and a bronze of lovers by Rodin. An Eastern gallery is also available, which includes everything from Egyptian mummies to priceless Southeast Asian artifacts. ► H-1, Doma laukums 6, tel. (+371) 67 35 75 34, [www.lnmm.lv/lv/mmrbb](http://www.lnmm.lv/lv/mmrbb). Open 10:00-18:00; Fri 10:00-20:00; closed Mon. Admission: museum €3, exhibitions €3.50, combined ticket €6; audio guide €5. [CC] [WF]

## RIGA MOTOR MUSEUM (RĪGAS MOTORMUZEJS)

If you're an automobile aficionado or a fan of Soviet memorabilia, then it's definitely worth the trip to the city's high-rise housing projects to see this incredible museum which just recently underwent a massive three-year renovation. An eclectic collection of classic cars from vintage Rolls Royces, BMWs and Mercedes' to Soviet mechanical wonders can all be seen here, but don't miss the Benz Patent Motorwagen – the oldest automobile in the world. Take bus N°5 from A. Čaka to the Motormuzejs stop in Mežciems. ► Eizenšteina 8, tel. (+371) 67 02 58 88, [www.motormuzejs.lv](http://www.motormuzejs.lv). Open 10:00-18:00; closed Mon. Admission: adults €10, children 7 and over and seniors over 60 €5. [P]

## PARKS & CEMETERIES

### BASTION HILL (BASTEJKALNS)

This hill was created from 1857 to 1859 to replace the old defensive sand bulwark. Within its precincts are memorial stones to five people killed by Soviet bullets during the January 1991 disturbances. Among the dead were camera operators documenting the stormy events. Despite the popular coverage of the Gulf War at the time, their footage was shown all over the globe, much to the chagrin of the Soviets. ► G-2, Separating Old Riga from the new centre.

### BROTHERS' CEMETERY (BRĀĻU KAPI)

The Cemetery of Heroes is the last resting place for the Latvian soldiers who died defending Latvia from 1915 - 1920. Built by Kārlis Zāle in the constructivist style of the 1920s with white tufa, you can't miss the impressive statue of 'Mother Latvia' that dominates an army of little graves and grieving stone warriors. Take tram N°11 from Barona to the Brāļu kapi stop. ► Aizsauļes 1b.

### FOREST PARK (MEŽAPARKS)

This was the most prosperous part of the city before the war, as many of the beautiful, yet decaying, old houses testify. Check out the Mežaparks estrāde, the open-air auditorium where the mass concerts of the song festivals are held, or hit the zoo. Take tram N°11 from Barona to the Mežaparks stop. ► Meža prospekts.



Sightseeing boat on the Riga Canal

M.Zapruskis

## UNIVERSITY OF LATVIA BOTANICAL GARDENS (LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTES BOTĀNISKAIS DĀRZS)

Although Latvia's oldest botanical garden began its existence in a different location in 1922, the Latvian government allocated the 10ha of land at its current address in 1926. Since then the gardens have flourished and today you'll find thousands of common and rare flowers, plants and trees here as well as a pond, a huge palm house and a butterfly house. The palm house also includes a specimen of *wollemia nobilis*, an ancient tree thought to be extinct for hundreds of millions of years until it was discovered in a remote location in Australia in 1994. The butterfly house is kept at a balmy temperature of 30°C and 90% humidity, so photography is challenging, but you'll be able to see plenty of these beautiful creatures with the naked eye. Take tram N°1 from Kr. Barona to the Botāniskais dārzs stop. ► Kandavas 2, tel. (+371) 67 45 08 52, [www.botanika.lu.lv](http://www.botanika.lu.lv). Open 10:00 - 21:00 (May - August); 10:00 - 19:00 (April, September); 10:00 - 16:00 (October - March). Admission: adults €3.40 - 4.90, children €1.90 - 2.90, children under 7 free; the butterfly house costs extra.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

### ĀGENSKALNS MARKET (ĀGENSKALNA TIRGUS)

Although construction of Riga's third largest market began in 1911, due to WWI it wasn't completed until 1923. Since then this red brick building has become the focal point of the local community. It's home to numerous stalls selling anything from pork and poultry to dairy products and fresh vegetables. Unfortunately, the years have not been kind to this historic landmark, which is why it is currently being renovated. However, a small market is still available to the left of the building in the courtyard and themed evenings are usually on offer Fridays nights (18:00 - 22:00). ► E-1, Nometņu 64, tel. (+371) 24 87 49 39. Open 08:00-17:00; closed Mon.

## CASTLE OF LIGHT - NATIONAL LIBRARY (GAISMAS PILS - NACIONĀLĀ BIBLIOTĒKA)

The Latvian National Library is the brainchild of American-Latvian architect Gunnar Birkerts, who is perhaps best known for his creations in the United States which include the Corning Museum of Glass in New York State and the Law Library Building at the University of Michigan. Its shape is a symbolic expression of the Hill of Glass and the Castle of Light found in Latvian folklore. Legend has it that the Castle of Light sank into an ancient lake and would only arise from the depths when Latvians were once again masters of their own land. The building is open to the public and it hosts a variety of exhibitions, concerts and events. You can take a guided tour of the building, which allows you access to the top floor, or just get a visitor's pass and wander around for spectacular views of Old Riga across the river. For tours call tel. (+371) 22 02 29 20. ► E-3, Mūkusalas 3, tel. (+371) 67 80 61 10, [www.lnb.lv](http://www.lnb.lv). Open 10:00-16:00; Wed, Fri 14:00-20:00; closed Mon, Sun.  

## CAT HOUSE (KAKU MĀJA)

The Cat House is named for two black felines perched on the points of its towers. Not only did the beasts curse their first sculptor, he fatally fell while putting them up, but their purpose was to cause trouble. Roughly 100 years ago, the Latvian owner of the building was excluded from the powerful Big Guild across the road by its ethnocentric German occupants. He ordered the cats to be turned around, backside up, as an insult to his enemies. They were turned around after a lengthy court battle and he was eventually admitted to the Guild. ► H-2, Meistaru 10/12.

## CENTRAL MARKET (CENTRĀLTIRGUS)

When construction was completed in 1930, Riga's Central Market was one of the largest and most modern marketplaces on the European continent. Nearly 90 years later, four of the five pavilions, which were used as zeppelin hangars during WWI, still serve their original function as meat, fish, produce and dairy markets. The bustling atmosphere also hasn't changed much, although most of the hawkers are more reluctant to haggle than in the past. The markets spill out beyond the confines of the hangars and operate throughout the day, some longer than others. Each pavilion has slightly different opening hours, so if in doubt check its informative website. ► J-3, Centrāltirgus iela, [www.rct.lv](http://www.rct.lv). Open 07:30-18:00; Sun 08:00-17:00.

## GREAT & SMALL GUILD HALLS (LIELĀ & MAZĀ ĢILDE)

During the centuries of German economic domination, the guilds were Riga's power brokers. The former, dating from 1384, was the home of the merchants, while the latter held the city's artisans. These slightly different audiences are reflected in the respective usage of the buildings today: while the Great Guild is home to the Latvian Symphony Orchestra, its smaller cousin hosts conferences and the occasional disco. The Small Guild is also open to the public during the day for a small admission fee. ► H-2, Amatu 6 and Amatu 5, [www.gilde.lv/maza](http://www.gilde.lv/maza).

## STREET ART

Although much of the graffiti we see today in Riga's urban landscape are ill-conceived tags by pubescent hooligans, some proper street art can also be found on the 'mean streets' of the Latvian capital if you know where to look. Here are some of our favourites.

### BARONA 114

Although this doesn't exactly qualify as clandestine graffiti as it was no doubt paid for by a private company, the building itself or perhaps the neighbouring parking lot, this full-scale mural covers the entire side of this building on Tallinas iela. A man (or perhaps an ancient pagan god?) with a long white beard and a sword is flanked by two Latvian women in folk costumes – one holds a *kokle* (a string instrument), while the other cradles a pitcher in her arms. All are wrapped up in a traditional *Lielvārdes josta* (a woven belt with intricate patterns and pagan symbols) in front of a background of a forest and a setting or rising sun. ► B-6, Barona 114. **Nearby sights:** Grīziņkalns Neighbourhood and Wooden Riga Museum.

### MIIT COURTYARD

The owners of the popular Miit vegetarian café and bike shop have commissioned a piece of street art that's out of this world. Orange aliens straight out of a Simpsons episode seem to be shooting at four-eyed foxes on bikes. On weekdays it's often partially obscured by cars, but it's usually fully visible at night and on weekends. ► B/C-4, Lāčplēša 10. **Nearby sights & cafés:** Jews in Latvia and Miit café.

### MOSCOW DISTRICT BRIDGE

Some of our favourite examples of street art can be found under the bridges where Elijas, Maskavas and Lāčplēša streets meet. It's an easy walk or bike ride from the Central Market or you can simply take tram No.7 or 9 to the Elijas iela stop, but bear in mind that there's lots of car and tram traffic here, so stick to the sidewalks to be safe. Here you'll find cityscapes, a local beauty casually hanging out (see below), what appears to be a hard-luck drunk sitting on the roof of an old wooden building and lots more. ► E-5, Elijas, Maskavas & Lāčplēša streets. **Nearby sights:** Central Market, Warehouse District and Riga Ghetto Museum.



# Sightseeing



The ornately decorated House of Blackheads

M.Zapauskis

## HOUSE OF BLACKHEADS (MELNGALVJU NAMS)

One of Riga's architectural treasures, the House of Blackheads was erected in 1344, but was embellished and expanded in the 16th, 17th and 19th centuries. It was destroyed in 1941 and its ruins were completely demolished by the Soviets in 1948, but it finally rose from the ashes in the late 1990s in keeping with the medieval saying above its entrance that states 'if I should fall, build me again'. A striking Gothic building with a Dutch Renaissance facade, it was used to house single members of the merchants' guild who were also notorious revellers of their day. It's even rumoured that their parties and feasts were often attended by European royalty in disguise. ► I-2, Rātslaukums 7, tel. (+371) 67 04 36 78, [www.melngalvjunams.lv](http://www.melngalvjunams.lv). Open 12:00-17:00; Sat, Sun 10:00-17:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed. Admission: €3 - 6 (tickets on sale until 17:00); guided tours €15.

## LAIMA CLOCK (LAIMAS PULKSTENIS)

Satikamies pie Laimas pulksteņa - let's meet at the Laima clock! The brown clock in front of the Freedom Monument has been a meeting place since it was erected in 1924, so people wouldn't have an excuse for being late to work. For decades it has advertised Laima chocolate, and many a sweet romance has started here. The famous clock was renovated at the end of 2017 and now also includes a digital countdown clock to Latvia's centenary on November 18, 2018. It also plays one of Latvian maestro Raimonds Pauls' sugary tunes every hour. ► H-2, Where Brīvības and Aspazijas meet.

## OLD CITY WALLS & SWEDISH GATE (VECPILSĒTĀS MŪRIS & ZVIEDRU VĀRTI)

This is the oldest remaining portion of the Old Town fortifications, the rest having been progressively knocked down because artillery made them obsolete. This fragment was built between the 13th and 16th centuries and restored during Soviet times, hence its rather 'new' appearance. It used to run between the Bishops' Castle and the Castle of the Brothers of the Sword. At the end of Aldaru, is the Swedish Gate (Zviedru vārti), built in 1698 to celebrate the Scandinavians' occupation of the city, and the only such structure left in Old Riga. The apartment above belonged to the city executioner or *bende*, who would put a red rose on the window ledge on the morning before a head rolled. ► H-2, At the corner of Torņa and Aldaru.

## POWDER TOWER (PULVERTORNIS)

Dating back to the beginning of the 14th century, only the rock foundations remained after it was destroyed by invading Swedish troops in 1621. It was rebuilt in 1650 with 2.5m thick walls to protect its valuable contents inside and was obviously successful, as nine Russian cannonballs that hardly made a dent were later embedded in its walls by cheeky masons. At the end of the 19th century a German student fraternity bought the building, but today it's part of the War Museum. ► H-2, Smilšu 20.

## RIGA CASTLE (RĪGAS PILS)

Built in 1330 as a base for the Livonian Order, the castle was destroyed several times during battles with the local townspeople. After the Order's destruction, the various occupiers of the city housed their governors inside. Latvia's first post-Cold War president Guntis Ulmanis made it his official office to continue the tradition begun by Latvia's interwar presidents in the 1920s and 1930s. It also once housed the National History Museum of Latvia, but tragically, a fire broke out during renovations on June 21, 2013 and parts of the interior were gutted. It has since been renovated and Latvia's president works and greets dignitaries here. ► H-1, Pils laukums 3.

## RIGA NATIONAL ZOO (RĪGAS ZOO DĀRZS)

Take a look at a wide variety of animals from around the globe including tortoises from the Galapagos, Japanese macaques, Bactrian camels, African zebras, lions, tigers, giraffes and hippopotami, Asian red pandas and European bears, wolves and seals. The zoo also has a top-notch tropical house filled with rare birds, snakes, frogs and insects. Take tram №11 from Barona to the Mežaparks stop. ► Meža prospekti 1, tel. (+371) 67 51 84 09, [www.rigazoo.lv](http://www.rigazoo.lv). Open 10:00-19:00. Admission (tickets on sale until 18:00): adults €7, children 4 - 18 years €5, free for children under four.

## THREE BROTHERS (TRĪS BRĀLI)

The Three Brothers are the oldest stone residential buildings in the city and represent different stages in the architectural development of Riga, from medieval to Baroque. The oldest of the three is №17 and dates back to the 15th century. The other two were built in the 17th and 18th centuries, respectively. Unfortunately, not much is known about the history of these abodes, including who owned them. The Latvian Museum of Architecture is located in building №19 (closed temporarily). ► H-1, Mazā Pils 17, 19, 21, tel. (+371) 67 22 07 79, [www.archmuseum.lv](http://www.archmuseum.lv). Admission: free.

## TOWN HALL SQUARE (RĀTS LAUKUMS)

Most of the medieval square was destroyed during the last war, but has now been rebuilt with mixed results. The reconstructed town hall on the northern side of the square is graced with a baroque tower and a postmodern roof and is now once again open for business. The modern building that obscures the view of the square from Kājķu is simply too ugly for words and has no place in the historic old town. The square is also graced by a statue of Roland, Riga's patron 'saint' of sorts. ► I-2, Rātslaukums.

## SIGHTSEEING TOURS

### KAYAKING IN RIGA

If you're looking for a completely different way to see the city then these guys can help. For years now these professional kayakers have been offering tours of Riga's waterways including the Daugava river and the Riga Canal. Although morning and day tours are fun, the night tours are unique as Riga is one of the few major cities in Europe where this is possible. The guides will also take photos of you throughout the tour, which is given in English, Russian or Latvian for €20/person. ► D-2, Balasta dambis 1, tel. (+371) 27 87 87 57, [www.laivnieks.lv/for-tourists](http://www.laivnieks.lv/for-tourists).

### SOVIET RIGA

#### ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (ZINĀTNU AKADĒMIJA)

This Soviet edifice is a cousin to similar statements of ugliness all over Eastern Europe and local nicknames for the Empire State building copy include 'Stalin's birthday cake' or 'the Kremlin'. Most Latvians just consider themselves lucky that the portrait of Uncle Joe that was supposed to be a part of the facade never came to fruition. If you look closely you can spot several hammers and sickles up top. At a height of 65m, the 17th-floor balcony is open to the public for a fee but only from April - November. ► D-4, Akadēmijas laukums 1, tel. (+371) 20 08 80 97, [www.panoramarija.lv](http://www.panoramarija.lv). Open 10:00-20:00. Observation deck: €6, children under 12 free.

#### SOVIET VICTORY MONUMENT (UZVARAS PIEMINEKLIS)

The Soviet war memorial which commemorates the supposed communist 'liberation' of Riga is the place to meet die hard reds on Soviet anniversary days. Built in 1985 to lionise the Red Army and to dishearten and annoy the Latvian populace, the monument consists of a tall concrete obelisk adorned with five golden stars symbolising the five years of WWII. On either side are bronze statues of Mother Russia and soldiers advancing with their weapons raised. Dozens of hectares of parkland surround this shrine to former Soviet glory. Take tram №1 from Kr. Barona to the second stop (Slokas iela) over the Akmens Bridge. ► E-2, Over the Akmens Bridge in Pārdaugava.

### STATUES & MONUMENTS

#### FREEDOM MONUMENT (BRĪVĪBAS PIEMINEKLIS)

'Milda,' as she is affectionately known, was unveiled in 1935 and is a national shrine for Latvians. Designed by Kārlis Zāle, the friezes around the base of the sculpture depict Latvians singing, working and fighting for their freedom, while the three stars in the maiden's hands represent the three historical regions of the country: Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale. Locals are always placing flowers at the base of the monument, an act for which people were deported to Siberia in Soviet times. When the weather is favourable the honour guard changes every hour on the hour from 09:00 - 18:00. They also 'stretch their legs' every half hour. ► H-3, Where Brīvības and Raiņa meet.

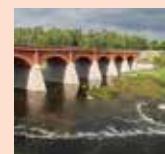
## EXPLORE LATVIA!

Latvia boasts dozens of ancient Crusader castles, nearly 500km of untouched beaches, scores of manor houses that have been converted into hotels and spas, charming medieval towns and pristine nature reserves that are just begging to be explored. Although many of these attractions can be reached by public transport, if you'd like to see more than one in a day, we recommend you contact our English-speaking friend Jānis ([janisis@inbox.lv](mailto:janisis@inbox.lv) or (+371) 29 58 04 48) who will drive you anywhere you want to go in Latvia (or the Baltics) for an affordable fee.

**Cēsis:** located a little farther down the same railway line, the charming town of Cēsis is considered to be the most Latvian city in the whole country and it's also the birthplace of the Latvian flag, one of Europe's oldest. Its main attraction is its enormous Crusader castle, but the town itself and its 12th-century church are also picturesque and worth a visit.



**Kuldīga:** a former Hanseatic city and one-time capital of the Grand Duchy of Courland, this picturesque town is one of the best preserved medieval cities in Latvia. Although its imposing castle was completely destroyed, its 17th-century wooden buildings with terracotta tile roofs are its main attraction as well as its historic churches, cobblestone streets and the widest waterfall in Europe, which can be viewed from one of the longest brick bridges on the continent.



**Rundāle Palace & Bauska:** only an hour bus ride south of Riga you'll find the town of Bauska whose main claim to fame is its giant castle situated at the confluence of the Mūsa and Mēmele rivers. It's also a good place from which to explore nearby Rundāle Palace, the most impressive 18th-century baroque treasure in the Baltics. Find more information about both destinations at [www.iyp.me/71789f](http://www.iyp.me/71789f)



**Sigulda & Turaida:** only an hour train ride from Riga's central station you'll find this historic gem perched atop a valley overlooking the meandering River Gauja. Explore two castle ruins, one renovated castle, a 19th-century manor house and the largest sandstone cave in the Baltics. Adrenalin junkies can also bungee jump from a cable car or take a run on the legendary bobsleigh track. More at [www.inyourpocket.com/sigulda](http://www.inyourpocket.com/sigulda)



# Shopping

Prices of imported goods in Latvia tend to be inexplicably high, but local crafts, food and alcohol are still relatively cheap and can make shopping in Riga a real treat. For amber and silver jewellery, not to mention traditional crafts such as linen and wool apparel and tablecloths as well as ceramics, the Old Riga street vendors on Skārņu iela, Līvu laukums and the beginning of Kalķu iela are a safe bet. For fashion and local boutiques, walk the length of Tērbatas iela and some of its side streets. However, for big international brands, several shiny shopping centres are also available and they often come in handy on Sundays when most small shops are closed. Some can be found right in the old town and the city centre, but you'll have to travel a little farther afield to find Riga's mega malls, which are glittering retail palaces on the edge of Riga. Duty free may apply at some shops, but you'll have to ask the staff to be on the safe side. Veikals means shop in Latvian.

## ALCOHOL & BEER

### LATVIJAS BALZAMS

Latvijas Balzams outlets throughout the city sell over 50 different alcoholic beverages including the famous Rīga Black Balsam. Also sells Balzams t-shirts, beer, mixers, snacks and sweets. ► H-2, Valņu 21, tel. (+371) 67 22 95 77, [www.lbveikali.lv](http://www.lbveikali.lv). Open 09:00-22:00; Sat 10:00-22:00; Sun 11:00-22:00. Also at I-2, Kalķu 2; I-2, Audēju 8; H-2, Šķūņu 16; D-4, Marijas 1; and many other locations. 

### LAUVAS ALUS

This shop sells over 200 different brews by 30 Latvian craft breweries as well as glasses and local beer souvenirs. You can also enjoy a draught beer on the premises. ► B-5, Tallinas 30, tel. (+371) 26 49 69 47. Open 11:00-22:00; Mon 15:00-22:00; Tue 14:00-22:00; Wed 13:00-22:00. 

### SPIRITS & WINE

This huge discount beer, wine and liquor warehouse is popular with frugal Rigans and Scandinavian ferry passengers desperate to buy alcohol for reasonable prices. ► B-2, Andrejostas 5, tel. (+371) 27 86 78 07, [www.spiritsandwine.lv](http://www.spiritsandwine.lv). Open 10:00-22:00; Sun 10:00-18:00. 

### VALMIERMUIŽAS ALUS (VALMIERMUIŽA BEER EMBASSY)

One of the nation's best breweries has a shop in Riga where you can buy its brews by the case, bottle or in plastic bottles poured from the tap. You can also purchase nearly 200 beers from smaller Latvian craft breweries and souvenir glasses. ► A-5, A. Briāna 9a, tel. (+371) 28 65 61 11, [www.valmiermuiza.lv](http://www.valmiermuiza.lv). Open 09:00-22:00; Mon 09:00-21:00; Tue 09:00-16:00; Sun 09:00-20:00; closed Wed. 

## ANTIQUES

### ANTIKVARIĀTS GADSIMTI

Sells all kinds of random antique items including books, magazines, porcelain figurines, coins, medals, paintings, furniture and Soviet memorabilia. ► B-5, Čaka 91, tel. (+371) 27 75 08 00, [www.vitber.com](http://www.vitber.com). Open 11:00-18:00; closed Sat, Sun.

### KOMISIJAS VEIKALS H & PARTNERIS

This shop lets people sell their wares here for a commission. You can find all manner of interesting items from antiques and collectibles to mink coats, porcelain and paintings. We once even spotted Soviet toy cars in their original boxes here. ► C-5, Ģertrūdes 34, tel. (+371) 67 22 45 45. Open 10:00-19:00; Sat 10:00-17:00; closed Sun.

### VĒSTURE

Enter this shop for antique books, postcards and periodicals mostly in Russian, Latvian and German. ► B-5, Čaka 93, tel. (+371) 67 31 11 36. Open 10:00-18:00; closed Sun, Sat.

## BOOKS

### JĀNA SĒTA

Latvia's largest selection of maps and travel books, not to mention *In Your Pocket* guides. Also sells replica antique maps of Riga as well as Soviet-era military maps of world cities in Russian. ► C-4, Elizabetes 85A, tel. (+371) 67 24 08 94, [www.mapshop.lv](http://www.mapshop.lv). Open 10:00-19:00; Sat 10:00-17:00; closed Sun. 

### ROBERT'S BOOKS

This shop sells second-hand English language books. You can find anything from guidebooks and romance novels to award-winning contemporary literature at a discounted price. ► C-4, Dzirnavu 51, tel. (+371) 28 83 40 52, [www.robertsbooks.lv](http://www.robertsbooks.lv). Open 11:00-22:00; Wed, Fri 11:00-17:00; Sat 12:00-21:00; closed Sun.

### VALTERS UN RAPA

This book shop on three floors is probably the biggest in the Baltics. Mostly Latvian and Russian books, as well as local maps and guides like this one and some literature in English and German. A café is also available downstairs. ► H-3, Aspazijas 24, tel. (+371) 67 22 74 82, [www.valtersunrapa.lv](http://www.valtersunrapa.lv). Open 09:00-20:00; Sun 11:00-17:00; Sat 10:00-20:00.   

## ETHNIC & EXOTIC FOOD

### AVOKADO

This cosy shop sells a huge selection of exotic spices, sauces, oils, dried goods and even home brewing supplies. ► C-5, Tērbatas 49/51, tel. (+371) 22 05 99 53. Open 11:00-19:00; closed Sat, Sun. 

### HEREFORD

This butcher shop sells different cuts of organic beef from locally raised Hereford cattle as well as imported Argentinean beef and some other odds and ends to compliment your steak or burger like wine and special sauces. It's not cheap, but the quality is simple incredible. ► C-5, Kr. Barona 45/47, tel. (+371) 26 45 03 36, [www.hereford.lv](http://www.hereford.lv). Open 10:00-19:00; Fri 10:00-20:00; Sat 10:00-17:00; closed Sun. 

### LĀČI

This local bakery and shop sells traditional bread, biscuits and other authentic Latvian treats at the Central Market. ► C-4, Tērbatas 34, tel. (+371) 27 86 70 35, [www.laci.lv](http://www.laci.lv). Open 08:00-20:00; Sat, Sun 10:00-17:00. 

## MOCHI WORKSHOP (JAPĀNU SALDUMI)

This small shop specialises in a dizzying array of Japanese rice cakes from mango and banana to passion fruit and matcha tea, to name a few flavours. You can also enjoy them on the premises with a coffee or an exotic imported fruit drink from Japan. ► F-3, Skolas 4, tel. (+371) 27 26 67 57. Open 11:00-19:00. Also at B-6, Kr.Barona 109. Open 11:00 - 19:00. [\[cc\]](#) [\[fb\]](#)

## FASHION

### ARS TELA

All of the exquisite scarves, dresses, jumpers, pillows, laptop bags and fine fabrics sold here were all woven locally using old fashioned looms. ► H-2, Smilšu 18, tel. (+371) 67 33 45 45, [www.arsleta.lv](#). Open 09:00-17:00. [\[cc\]](#) [\[fb\]](#)

### BANG BANG OLD RIGA

Bang Bang is Riga's first and largest supplier of sneakers and streetwear by the biggest brands from around the globe. ► I-2, Kalēju 18/20, tel. (+371) 67 22 36 87, [www.bangbangshop.lv](#). Open 12:00-18:00. [\[cc\]](#)

### JAUNAIS SALONS A

Latvian designer Asnāte Smeltere has been designing elegant, fashionable women's clothing and accessories since the early 1990s. Her latest collections are made with wool, linen and silk and often include ethnographic motifs. ► I-1, Rātslaukums 1, tel. (+371) 27 80 60 15, [www.salonsa.lv](#). Open 11:00-19:00; Sun, Sat 11:00-18:00. [\[cc\]](#)

### MR. BUNNY (WOOLY ORGANIC)

This modern shop sells all kinds of wonderful items for babies and small children from fashion and shoes to eco-friendly toys like teddy bears and bunnies made in Latvia from organic materials by Wooly Organic. ► B-4, Baznīcas 18a, tel. (+371) 28 35 90 35. Open 10:00-19:00; Sat 11:00-16:00; closed Sun. [\[cc\]](#)

## FLOWERS

### ELIZETE

Elizete has a great selection of flowers and also provides flower delivery in Latvia and abroad. ► B-3, Elizabetes 25, tel. (+371) 29 14 42 83, [www.elizete.lv](#). Open 08:30-19:00; Sat 10:00-17:00; closed Sun. [\[cc\]](#)

### SAKTA FLOWER MARKET (SAKTAS ZIEDU

### TIRGUS)

The biggest market for flowers from near and far has been given a shiny glass home at its usual location on Tērbatas. Some stalls even accept credit cards. ► G-3, Tērbatas 2a.

## GIFTS & SOUVENIRS

### ART NOUVEAU RIGA

The only shop in Riga to exclusively sell art nouveau merchandise. Buy small plaster faces from Riga's most famous facades, silk scarves with art nouveau designs, mugs, greeting cards, books and linens. It's located opposite the Riga Art Nouveau Museum. ► B-3, Strēlnieku 9, tel. (+371) 67 33 30 30, [www.artnouveauriga.lv](#). Open Thu 12:00-17:00; Fri, Sat 12:00-18:00; Sun 12:00-17:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed. [\[cc\]](#)

## BALTU ROTAS (TORNIS)

Ancient Baltic designs as well as modern pieces can all be found here. It also offers a small museum dedicated to Latvian jewellery. ► I-2, Grēcinieku 11-2 (entrance from Pēterbaznīcas), tel. (+371) 67 22 02 70, [www.balturotas.lv](#). Open 10:00-18:00; closed Mon, Sun. [\[cc\]](#) [\[fb\]](#)

### CITA ROTA

Cita Rota sells all kinds of Latvian-style items from its trademark scarves with ethnographic patterns to linen clothing and unique jewellery. ► I-1, 11.novembra krastmala 29, tel. (+371) 20 33 37 73, [www.citarota.lv](#). Open 11:00-16:00; closed Sat, Sun. [\[cc\]](#)

### RIJIA

All of the linen clothing, felt slippers, ceramics and other nick-nacks sold at this upmarket design shop were created by Latvian artists and artisans. ► C-4, Tērbatas 6/8, tel. (+371) 67 28 48 28, [www.rijia.lv](#). Open 10:00-18:00; closed Sat, Sun. [\[cc\]](#)

### SENĀ KLĒTS

The only shop in Latvia to specialise in authentic Latvian folk costumes also sells a wide variety of traditional handmade souvenirs such as Baltic jewellery, wool blankets and colourful wool mittens. ► I-1/2, Rātslaukums 1 (entrance from Mazā Jauniela - Rātes pasāža), tel. (+371) 67 24 23 98, [www.senaklets.lv](#). Open 10:00-17:00; closed Fri, Sat, Sun. [\[cc\]](#) [\[fb\]](#)

## KALNCIEMS MARKET

The thoroughfare on the other side of the Vanšu bridge is a treasure trove of 19th-century wooden architecture and although many of these old edifices could use some serious work, the beautiful buildings at the corner of Melnsila and Kalnciema iela have been lovingly restored and now host a bustling fair **every Saturday from 10:00 - 16:00** that attracts visitors from around Riga. Although the theme changes from fair to fair, you can expect plenty of food and drink, Latvian crafts, fashion by local designers and a lively atmosphere. If you're interested in the historic 19th-century architecture of the area you can also use an English audio guide (at the wine shop from Mon - Sat 10:00 - 22:00) to learn more about the neighbourhood's most significant buildings. Take bus N°53 from the National Theatre to the Melnsila iela stop or tram N°1 from Kr. Barona iela to the Kalnciema iela stop. ► D-1, Kalnciema 35, tel. (+371) 26 25 51 48, [www.kalniciemaiela.lv](#).



# Shopping

## INTERIOR DESIGN

### AN&ANGEL

This exclusive brand of Latvian glassware has been making elegant bowls and other interior design elements with innovative technology since 2004. ► B-4, Antonijas 24, tel. (+371) 27 72 69 55, [www.angel.lv](http://www.angel.lv). Open 10:00-17:00; closed Sat, Sun. [cc]

### IKEA

Swedish design and furniture as well as plenty of food, both fresh and frozen. The best way to get here to the outskirts of Riga is by cab. ► Biķeru 2, tel. (+371) 63 30 10 00, [www.ikea.lv](http://www.ikea.lv). Open 10:00-21:00. [cc] [sk] [P] [ws] [H]

## JEWELLERY

### NELA GEMS

This jewellery shop specialises in bracelets, earrings, pendants, necklaces and accessories made with only the best materials including Swarovski crystals and pearls, natural stones as well as silver and steel findings. All of the items are non-allergenic and are nickel- and cadmium-free. You can also make your own designs or have your jewellery engraved here in a matter of minutes. ► C-4, Pērzes 7, tel. (+371) 23 20 26 26, [www.nelagems.com](http://www.nelagems.com). Open 11:00-19:00; Sat 12:00-17:00; closed Sun. [cc]

## LEATHER GOODS

### RR

Watch leather accessories being made by the professional staff or take a look at the genuine leather belts, purses, bags and jewellery in its showroom. ► B-5, Miera 12, tel. (+371) 27 79 03 79, [www.erer.lv](http://www.erer.lv). Open 09:00-18:30; closed Sat, Sun. [cc]

## MARKETS

### CENTRAL MARKET

This giant bazaar with its five huge aircraft hangars is a truly fascinating place to visit. Buy meat, fish and produce inside or CDs, appliances and clothing outside of the hangars for suspiciously low prices. Opening hours differ slightly for each pavilion. ► J-3, Centrāltirgus 1, tel. (+371) 67 22 99 85, [www.rct.lv](http://www.rct.lv). Open 07:30-17:00; Sun 08:00-17:00.



Fresh produce at the Central Market

M.Zaprauskis

## RIGA FLEA MARKET

A flea market is held twice a month (11:00 - 16:00) in Riga's revitalised Warehouse District, or Spīķeri, not far from the Central Market. The renovated brick buildings are now home to shops, galleries and cafés and this twice-monthly Saturday market where you can buy vintage clothing, antiques, vinyl records, jewellery, furniture and other knick-knacks. The next flea markets will take place on July 11 & 25, August 8 & 22 and September 12 & 26, 2020. ► D/E-4, Maskavas 10, [www.spikeri.lv](http://www.spikeri.lv).



## ORGANIC & ECO-FRIENDLY

### BŪNAS

Although not everything sold here is organic, it does specialise in eco-friendly food from Latvian farms and also sells beer and wine from local microbreweries and vintners as well as homemade pastries and a good selection of souvenirs, edible or otherwise. ► B-4, Dzirnavu 34a, tel. (+371) 27 76 68 88, [www.bunas.lv](http://www.bunas.lv). Open 08:00-22:00; Sun 12:00-22:00. [cc]

### ZALĀ GOVS

This shop sells all kinds of eco-friendly products from organic produce and gluten-free food to eco cosmetics. ► C-4, Kr. Barona 34, tel. (+371) 67 29 19 15, [www.zalagovs.lv](http://www.zalagovs.lv). Open 09:00-19:00; Sat 10:00-16:00; closed Sun. [cc]

## SHOPPING CENTRES

### BERGA BAZĀRS

Riga's swankiest shopping courtyard offers high-end shops, restaurants, cafés and a fitness club. Opening hours vary. ► C-4, Elizabetes 83/85 / Marijas 13, tel. (+371) 67 28 84 18, [www.bergabazars.lv](http://www.bergabazars.lv). [cc] [ws] [H]

### GALERIJA CENTRS

Already a shopping centre in the 1930s, it was renovated in the 1990s and more recently in 2006. It now occupies nearly an entire block of Old Riga and houses cafés, a supermarket, and dozens of trendy shops as well as a spa on the top floor. ► I-3, Audēju 16, tel. (+371) 67 01 80 18, [www.galerijacentrs.lv](http://www.galerijacentrs.lv). Open 10:00-21:00. Rimi, Narvesen open 08:00 - 22:00. [cc] [ws] [G] [ws] [H]

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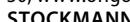
## GALLERIA RIGA

This downtown shopping centre on several floors offers dozens of shops as well as a Rimi supermarket (08:00 - 23:00), a rooftop terrace (in summer) right in the centre of Riga and a whole floor of restaurants and bars (10:00 - 24:00). ► C-4, Dzirnavu 67, tel. (+371) 67 30 70 00, [www.galleriariga.lv](http://www.galleriariga.lv). Open 10:00-21:00; Sun 10:00-20:00.



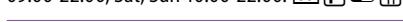
## ORIGO

Straddling the central train station, this vast shopping centre on three floors offers countless shops with everything under the sun. Includes a supermarket (07:00 - 24:00). ► D-4, Stacijas laukums 2, tel. (+371) 67 07 30 30, [www.origo.lv](http://www.origo.lv). Open 10:00-21:00.



## STOCKMANN

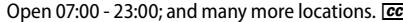
Four floors of retail space are at your disposal including fashion, a huge selection of tableware, appliances and other items for your home, a huge cosmetics shop and, best of all, the Stockmann supermarket. ► I-3, 13. janvāra 8, tel. (+371) 67 07 12 22, [www.stockmann.lv](http://www.stockmann.lv). Open 09:00-22:00; Sat, Sun 10:00-22:00.



## SUPERMARKETS

### RIMI

This large chain of Western supermarkets sells nearly everything a supermarket should, but the hypermarkets on the outskirts of town are still your best bet for service and selection. ► I-3, Audeju 16, tel. (+371) 28 44 79 59, [www.rimi.lv](http://www.rimi.lv). Open 08:00-22:00. Also C-4, Dzirnavu 67 (Galleria Riga), tel. (+371) 67 28 01 76. Open 08:00 - 23:00; G-3, Merķeļa 21 (Mini-Rimi), tel. (+371) 20 00 31 13. Open 07:00 - 23:00; I-2, Grēcinieku 22-1 (Mini-Rimi), tel. (+371) 29 60 38 45. Open 07:00 - 23:00; and many more locations.



## VINTAGE SHOPS

### OTRĀ ELPA (SECOND WIND)

This shop sells second hand clothes, electronics, toys, board games, LPs, DVDs, books (some even in English) and lots of other stuff that people have donated. Proceeds go to local charities. ► C-4, Marijas 8, tel. (+371) 27 73 03 02, [www.otraelpa.lv](http://www.otraelpa.lv). Open 11:00-18:00; Sat 11:00-17:00; closed Sun.



## WINE SHOPS

### ERVINS & FILLES

This family-owned shop specialises in French boutique wines and Champagne for all budgets. Just tell father or son what you like and they'll find you the perfect bottle.

► C-4, Dzirnavu 84 (Berga Bazārs), tel. (+371) 29 26 66 40. Open 10:00-20:00; Sat 10:00-19:00; closed Sun.



### NOBLE WINE

This upmarket wine shop specialises in fine wines from France and Italy and regularly offers tastings and seminars. You can also enjoy wine on the premises at its chic bar. ► F-2, Elizabetes 33, tel. (+371) 20 10 20 20, [www.noblewine.lv](http://www.noblewine.lv). Open 10:00-22:00; closed Sun.



## WHAT TO BUY IN RIGA

**Amber** The petrified sap isn't as plentiful as it is in Lithuania or Kaliningrad, but it still washes up on Latvian beaches. It's sold in all souvenir shops and there are dozens of amber stalls behind St. Peter's Church and on Līvu laukums.

**Art Nouveau souvenirs** Nothing screams Riga like a screaming gargoyle. Buy Art Nouveau silk scarves, postcards, ceramic dishes, books and plaster busts based on beautiful heads seen on the city's best early 20th-century facades at **Art Nouveau Riga** (B-3, Strēlnieku 9).

**Honey** The Latvians revere their honey (medus) like the French do their wine and even claim that it has healing properties so taste some for free at **The Honey Room** (I-2, Pēterbaznīcas 17. Open 10:00 - 19:00).

**Local food** The following can be found in any supermarket: Latvian sourdough (saldskābmaize) bread is delicious and easily transported. Latvian smoked cheese, caraway seed cheese and the Talsu ritulis marinated in herbs are all classic cheeses worth taking home. Sprats (šprotes) in oil, similar to sardines, are the perfect snack to go with the Latvian vodka you bought.

**Music** Music is absolutely essential to Latvian life. **Upe** (I-2, Vāgnera 5. Open 11:00 - 19:00, Sat 10:00 - 16:00; closed Sun) has the best selection of Latvian folk, rock and classical CDs in Riga.

**Riga Black Balzams** Originally intended as a cure-all elixir, Balzams has been made in Riga since the late 18th century and is still used today to alleviate hangovers and stomach-aches and as the main ingredient in many local cocktails. Consisting of over 24 herbal ingredients, it looks like used motor oil and is sold in charming ceramic jugs. Find it at supermarkets and shops.

**Sweets** The Laima factory in Riga has been producing delicious chocolates since 1870. They can be found in any supermarket or at Laima shops around town. **Gotijas**, or little cows, are another local treat that can be found at most supermarkets. They're essentially a semi-soft sweet cream based candy made with sugar.



Souvenir stalls on Skārņu iela in Old Riga

M.Zaprauskis

# Lightweight Latvian souvenirs

It's often hard to find the perfect souvenir when travelling abroad, but it's usually even more difficult to find something lightweight that's easy to stuff into your carry-on bag. With this in mind, we've created a list of affordable souvenirs, which make excellent gifts, yet are easy to transport.

## Traditional wool mittens



Latvians have a long tradition of knitting colourful wool mittens that goes back centuries, if not millennia. Each region of the country uses its own colours, pagan symbols and geometric patterns, but all are impressive. Best of all, mittens make an ideal souvenir or gift, as they are relatively inexpensive, light-weight and can be easily shoved into any carry-on bag. Although they can be bought at nearly any gift shop in Old Riga, we recommend you view them in all their magnificence at **Senā klēts** (I-1/2, Rātslaukums 1, senaklets.lv) where Latvian folk costumes come alive. To learn more about their history and how to knit them yourself, pick up a copy of Maruta Grasmane's classic book *Mittens of Latvia: 178 Designs to Knit* at the **Valters & Rapa** book shop (H-3, Aspazijas 24, [www.valtersunrapa.lv](http://www.valtersunrapa.lv)). Price for mittens: €25 - 40.

## Riga Black Balsam T-shirt

Riga Black Balsam, Latvia's national drink, was originally concocted as a cure-all elixir by Riga pharmacist Abraham Kunze in 1752. The strong black bitter (45% ABV) is still used today to alleviate hangovers and stomach aches and as the main ingredient in many local cocktails. Consisting of over 24 herbal ingredients, it looks like used motor oil and is sold in charming ceramic jugs. Unfortunately, the bottles weigh as much as bricks and you certainly can't stuff them in your carry-on bag, so we suggest you do the next best thing and buy a Riga Black Balsams T-shirt, which is available at most **Latvijas Balzams** shops (H-2, Valņu 21, [www.lbeikali.lv](http://www.lbeikali.lv)) around town for only €5.99! You can even wear it on your trip back home. If you'd like to bring a bottle back as a souvenir then buy one at a duty-free shop at the airport. Price: €5.99.



## Scarf with Latvian symbols



It will certainly come as no surprise that a scarf is an essential piece of kit in Latvia for a bare minimum of four months every year. But why wrap your neck in the usual plaids and other standard patterns when you could don a beautiful, locally-made wool scarf covered in ancient Latvian symbols? The design is based on the traditional *Lielvārdes josta* (Lielvārde's belt) used in Latvian folk costumes, which are steeped in meaning. Although cheap knock-offs abound, you can get a proper scarf made with Merino wool in a variety of colours created by **Cita Rota** (I-1, 11. novembra krastmala 29, [www.citarota.lv](http://www.citarota.lv)) in Old Riga. Price: €35 - 50. They also offer their own designer fashion and jewellery among other gifts and souvenirs.

## Traditional sweets - Gotīnas

Not all souvenirs need to be permanent items that you can hang on your wall, place on a shelf or attach to your refrigerator door. The people who already have all they want or need, namely grandparents, often feel the same revulsion to tacky clutter as they do technological gadgets. For Grandpa and Grandma we recommend a traditional taste of Latvia – *gotīnas* or little cows. These sweet treats made from condensed milk are a Latvian classic and although sweet and creamy, they rarely ever stick to your molars unless they've spent too much time on the shelf. Many companies make them, but those produced by **Skriveru saldumi** ([skriverusaldumi.lv](http://skriverusaldumi.lv)) are among the best. Find them at supermarkets and at their shop at the Riga train station near the local timetable. Price: €1.50 - 3 (depending on the amount).



## Leather belt with Latvian pattern

It's been said that among the necessities of life there are two things that everyone will always require: furniture to sit on and lamps to illuminate their surroundings. Thankfully, the prison chic style of wearing trousers that slide below your backside has largely become a thing of the past, so we'd like to add a third essential item – a belt to keep your pants where they belong, around your waist. The people at **RR** (B-5, Miera 12, [www.ererlv.lv](http://www.ererlv.lv)) have a whole range of attractive leather goods including belts engraved with the traditional *Lielvārdes josta* pattern pictured here. You can also buy them in a number of shops including **M50** (B-5, Miera 17), **Jaunais Salons A** (I-1, Rātslaukums 1) and **MūsMāja** (I-2, Kalēju 7). Price: €35 - 55.

## Silver jewellery

In ancient times, silver jewellery was a symbol of status and wealth worn by Latvians on special occasions. Although there are many traditional designs available at souvenir shops around Riga, **Baltu Rotas / Baltic Jewellery** (I-2, Grēcinieku 11 by the entrance of St.Peter's Church, [www.balturotas.lv](http://www.balturotas.lv)) specialises in rings, bracelets, earrings and necklaces based on jewellery unearthed at 6th - 12th-century archaeological sites around the Baltic region, as well as original designs. The jewellery is aesthetic, affordable and makes a perfect gift or souvenir from Latvia. The pendant pictured here is from its Prussian sun collection, whose design dates back to the 2nd century. The shop also specialises in the legendary Namejs ring and also has a one-room museum dedicated to ancient Baltic jewellery. Price: €25 - 75.



## Organic children's toys

Many travellers also have children, or nieces and nephews at the very least, so if you're looking for something local as well as soft, attractive and locally-made for the little ones in your life, then you can't go wrong with toys, fashion and accessories by **Wooly Organic** ([www.woolyorganic.com](http://www.woolyorganic.com)). Produced from organic natural materials, its full line of teddy bears, bunnies, teething toys, baby blankets, onesies and the like can be found at **Mr. Bunny** (B-4, Baznīcas 18a, [mr.bunny.shop](http://mr.bunny.shop)) in the city centre. The toys are filled solely with corn fibre, which is also hypoallergenic and antibacterial. All of their products are made in the coastal city of Liepāja and can also be bought online. Price: €25 - 35 (bunny).

## BICYCLE RENTAL

### BICYCLERENTAL.LV

This shop rents a number of different bicycles (city, ATB, folding, electric, tandem) as well as Segways. Its team offers guided bicycle and Segway tours of Riga as well as Jūrmala and Sigulda using a professional tour guide system in English, Russian, German and French. Children's seats and even baby trailers can also be rented and special family packages are available. A deposit is required for all rentals. ► I-3, Pils 14, tel. (+371) 29 13 38 67, [www.bicyclerental.lv](http://www.bicyclerental.lv). Open 10:00-17:00.

### MEŽAPARKA NOMA

This will probably be the first rental shop you'll see once you get off the tram in Mežaparks by the zoo. It rents bikes (€6 first hour, €2 each additional), inline skates (€5 first hour, €2 each additional) and one-, two- and four-seat pedal carts (€6 - 12/hour) for kids and adults. ► Kokneses prospekt 39, tel. (+371) 22 02 04 67, [www.mezaparkanoma.lv](http://www.mezaparkanoma.lv). Open 11:00-21:00.

### RIGA BIKE TOURS

Rent one of its mountain or city bikes at their office in Old Riga for as little as €10. ► I-2, Vāgnera 14, tel. (+371) 28 22 57 73, [www.rigabiketours.com](http://www.rigabiketours.com). Open 10:00-18:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu.

## BOWLING

### BOWLERO

This ultramodern entertainment centre offers 24 bowling lanes (€8 - 15 depending on time), pool tables, a bar and a children's room. Take bus No.53 from the Esplanāde stop on Brīvības to the RMR stop. ► Lielirbes 27, tel. (+371) 23 11 00 33, [www.bowlero.lv](http://www.bowlero.lv). Open 12:00-22:00; Sat 11:00-22:00; Sun 11:00-21:00.  

### PEPSI CENTRS

22 lanes, four squash courts, one tennis court, 11 pool tables, indoor mini-football, arcade games and a bar/restaurant. Reservations are mandatory. Call ahead for a lane or a pool table. ► E-2, Uzvaras 10, tel. (+371) 29 18 18 18, [www.pepsicentrs.lv](http://www.pepsicentrs.lv). Open Fri 18:00-24:00; Sat 12:00-24:00; Sun 12:00-21:00; closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu.   

## CANOE TRIPS

### ŽAGARKALNS

A ski resort in the winter, Žagarkalns offers riverside camping, canoe and rafting trips and barbecue and picnic areas just outside of the historic town of Cēsis in the summer.

► Mūrlejas 12, Cēsis, 90km from Riga, tel. (+371) 26 26 62 66, [www.zagarkalns.lv](http://www.zagarkalns.lv). 

## FITNESS CLUBS & GYMS

### MYFITNESS

A large chain of gyms and fitness clubs. During the Covid-19 crisis you must call ahead to reserve a time or book a time and place with via its website. ► C-4, Marijas ielā 13/8 (Berģa Bazārs), tel. (+371) 67 28 85 85, [www.myfitness.lv](http://www.myfitness.lv). 

## GOLF

### GOLFS VIESTURI

A clubhouse, a bar, a restaurant, a putting green and nine holes from May to October. Nearly impossible to reach by public transport you'll have to take a cab or drive here yourself. ► Jaunmārupe, Viesturi 1, tel. (+371) 26 44 43 90, [www.golfsviesturi.lv](http://www.golfsviesturi.lv). Open 09:00-19:00. 

### JURMALA GOLF CLUB & HOTEL

This is the first golf course in the Baltics designed by Nicklaus Design, a prestigious firm founded by golfing legend, Jack Nicklaus. Located between Riga and Jūrmala and only minutes from the airport, the complex includes an 18-hole course, a par three 9-hole course, a driving range and a 17-room boutique hotel with a restaurant and fantastic views of the course. ► Golfa 1, tel. (+371) 67 16 03 00, [www.jurmalgolf.com](http://www.jurmalgolf.com). Open 08:30-20:00. Open from April - October.    

### OZO GOLF CLUB

Founded by former NHL hockey star Sandis Ozoliņš, Ozo offers a clubhouse, restaurant and 18 holes from April to October. ► Milgrāvja 16, tel. (+371) 67 39 43 99, [www.ozogolf.lv](http://www.ozogolf.lv). Open 08:00-20:00. 9 holes €30 - 40, 18 holes €50 - 60. 

## GUN RANGES

### RIGA SHOOT

For €35 (minimum 2 people) you can shoot three different weapons under the supervision of an instructor. Additional ammunition can be bought at a 50% discount. Weapons include Glock 17s, Winchester shotguns, AK-47s and other firearms. Located on the left bank of the river, a cab is your best bet for getting here in a timely fashion. Call ahead as reservations are mandatory. A passport or valid ID card is also required. ► Džūkstes 6A, tel. (+371) 20 28 57 22, [www.rigashoot.lv](http://www.rigashoot.lv). Open 10:00-20:00.

## HORSEBACK RIDING

### AGATES

Professional equestrian instructors await you only a cab ride away from the city centre. Reservation required (€20/hour). ► Kekavas pagasts, Katlakalns, Agates, tel. (+371) 29 12 64 10, [www.izjadesarzirgiem.lv](http://www.izjadesarzirgiem.lv). Open 10:00-19:00.

## ICE SKATING

### AKROPOLE LEDUS

This huge shopping and entertainment complex a short ride away from the city centre also has a year-round ice skating rink. It is popular though, so be prepared to wait before they let you on the ice. Check website for availability. Take trams N°7 or 9 to the Dienvidu tilts stop. ► Mas-kavas 257, tel. (+371) 68 30 43 53, [www.akropoleriga.lv/lv/veikals/akropole-ledus/1950](http://www.akropoleriga.lv/lv/veikals/akropole-ledus/1950). Open 10:00-22:00. Admission: adults €3 - 4, children 8 - 18 €2 - 3, under 8 free. 

# ENJOY THE SUMMER

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## KART RACING

### HIGH VOLTAGE ELEKTROKARTINGS

Take some laps in an eco-friendly electric go-kart made in Latvia. Prices: €10 for 10 minutes. Call ahead to book a time. ► B-5, Matīsa 25 (entrance from Kr. Barona 80 -third floor), tel. (+371) 20 45 43 21, [www.elektrokartings.lv](http://www.elektrokartings.lv). Open 14:00-21:00; Fri 12:00-23:00; Sat, Sun 10:00-23:00.

### XL RIGA KARTINGA NAMS

This course on the left bank of the River Daugava is fun for young and old. Depending on the day or time of day five minutes costs from €7 - 10, 10 minutes from €9 - 14. You must reserve ahead of time. ► C-1, Ūdens 23, tel. (+371) 27 54 55 55, [www.kartinganams.lv](http://www.kartinganams.lv). Open 14:00-22:00; Sun, Sat 12:00-22:00. €11 - 12 for 10 minutes; children €7 - 8.

## PLAYGROUNDS

### CENTRE SPORTS QUARTER

Riga's most extensive outdoor playground is chock full of slides, climbing pathways and other attractions for kids of all ages as well as a skatepark and a pump track for skateboarders, in-line skaters and BMX enthusiasts. ► B-6, Kr. Barona 116a.

### MEŽAPARKS PLAYGROUND

Mežaparks offers two large children's playgrounds near one another. One is meant for toddlers, while the other is more appropriate for older children. Kids can climb aboard a pirate ship, try the swings or take advantage of dozens of other obstacles and attractions. ► Mežaparks.

## WAKEPARKS

### WAKEYOU

Only a short walk from the Riga Airport terminal you'll find a large pond, which happens to be the excellent, yet unlikely location of a great two-tower wakepark. Experts can take advantage of unique sliders, barrels and other obstacles while beginners can learn the basics of the sport from one of Latvia's best wakeboarders. You can rent equipment by the biggest brands like Hyperlite, O'Neill and Bern for a nominal fee or bring your own gear. An hour of fun for you and your friends will set you back only €40, but reservations are required, so call its English-speaking staff and set up a time. From the centre of Riga take bus No.22 to the Miglas iela stop and walk over to the pond. ► Riga Airport, tel. (+371) 20 48 94 89, [www.wakeyou.lv](http://www.wakeyou.lv).



## LATVIAN ROYALTY

Before she ascended the throne of Russia, Anna Ivanovna (1693–1740) was married to Friedrich Wilhelm Kettler (1692–1711), the Duke of Courland, and lived in the Latvian city of Jelgava (Mitau) until she was called back to Russia to become empress. Read more fun facts about Riga and Latvia at [www.iyp.me/74922f](http://www.iyp.me/74922f).

# Useful Addresses

## BEAUTY SALONS

### RIGA TOP HAIR

Professional hairstylists on the edge of Old Riga. ► I-3, Aspazijas bulvāris 30, tel. (+371) 67 21 31 23. Open 08:00-21:00; Sat 08:00-18:00; closed Sun.

## CLEANERS

### CITY CLEAN

Dry cleaners and laundromat. ► C-5, Barona 52 (entrance from Gertrūdes), tel. (+371) 67 27 24 71. Open 08:00-20:00; Sat 10:00-16:00; closed Sun. [cc](#)

### NIVĀLA

Wash your own clothes or just drop them off and have the staff do it for you. Also offer dry cleaning services. ► C-4, Lāčplēša 21 (entrance from Akas), tel. (+371) 67 28 13 46. Open 08:00-20:00.

## CURRENCY EXCHANGE

### TAVEX

A reputable currency exchange outlet. ► B-3, Elizabetes 21A, tel. (+371) 67 20 55 33, [www.tavex.lv](http://www.tavex.lv). Open 09:00-18:00; Sat 10:00-15:00; closed Sun. Also at D-4, Stacijas laukums 2 (Origo shopping centre), tel. (+371) 67 07 31 15. Open 09:00 - 21:00. [cc](#)



[instagram.com/inyourpocket](https://www.instagram.com/inyourpocket)

## FOREIGN EMBASSIES

For a complete list of foreign embassies and consulates in Riga visit [www.mfa.gov.lv/en/diplomatic-missions#](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/diplomatic-missions#).

### CANADA

► B-4, Baznīcas 20/22, tel. (+371) 67 81 39 45, [www.latvia.gc.ca](http://www.latvia.gc.ca).

### GERMANY

► H-3, Raiņa bulvāris 13, tel. (+371) 67 08 51 00, [www.riga.diplo.de](http://www.riga.diplo.de).

### IRELAND

► B-3, Alberta 13, tel. (+371) 67 03 93 70, [www.embassyofireland.lv](http://www.embassyofireland.lv).

### NETHERLANDS

► G-1, Torņa 4 - Ia, tel. (+371) 67 32 61 47, [www.netherlandsembassy.lv](http://www.netherlandsembassy.lv).

### SWEDEN

► F-2, A.Pumpura 8, tel. (+371) 67 68 66 00, [www.swedenabroad.com/riga](http://www.swedenabroad.com/riga).

### UNITED KINGDOM

► F-2, J.Alunāna 5, tel. (+371) 67 77 47 00, [www.ukinlatvia.fco.gov.uk/en](http://www.ukinlatvia.fco.gov.uk/en).

### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

► Samnera Velsa 1, tel. (+371) 67 10 70 00, [www.riga.usembassy.gov](http://www.riga.usembassy.gov).

## JULES VERNE'S RIGA

It's a little-known fact that the famed author and futurist Jules Verne who penned such timeless adventures as *Twenty Thousand Leagues Under the Sea* and *Around the World in Eighty Days* also wrote a mystery novel that takes place in Latvia entitled *A Drama in Livonia*. Unfortunately, critics seem to agree that it's one of his poorest efforts and has rightfully passed into obscurity. The author never visited Riga and glaring errors abound in this forgotten yarn that was written in 1893 but only published in 1904, a year before the author's death. It was first published in English in 1967 and it seems that subsequent print runs were not required.

## DENTISTS

### ADENTA

Professional English-speaking staff. Also available at the weekend in emergencies. ► A-4, Ganību dambis 4, tel. (+371) 67 33 93 00, [www.adenta.lv](http://www.adenta.lv). Open 08:00-19:00; closed Sun, Sat. [cc](#)

### DIPLOMATIC SERVICE MEDICAL CENTRE

English-speaking dentists. ► C-4, Elizabetes 57, tel. (+371) 67 22 99 42, [www.dsdc.lv](http://www.dsdc.lv). Open 08:00-20:00; closed Sun, Sat.

### SANDENT

Call tel. (+371) 29 27 27 01 for an English-language consultation. ► B-4, Hanzas 6, tel. (+371) 29 16 74 04, [www.sandent.lv](http://www.sandent.lv). Open 09:00-19:00; closed Sun, Sat. [cc](#)

## MEDICAL

### ARS

English-speaking doctors. Listed opening hours are for the trauma centre. ► F-3, Skolas 5, tel. (+371) 67 20 10 07, [www.ars-med.lv](http://www.ars-med.lv). Open 08:00-20:00; Sun, Sat 10:00-20:00. For a 24-hour medical consultaion call its hotline at tel. (+371) 67 20 10 03.

## PHARMACIES

### BENU APPIEKA

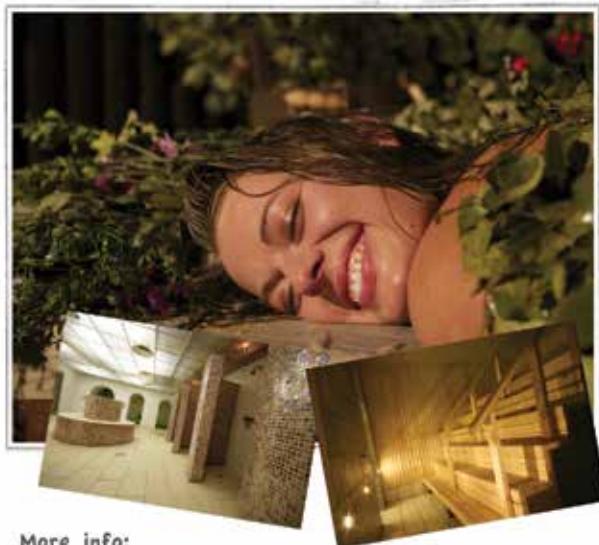
A large chain of pharmacies. ► B-6, Tallinas 57b, tel. (+371) 67 31 42 11, [www.benu.lv](http://www.benu.lv). Open 24hrs. Also at I-3, Audēju 16 (Galerija Centrs), tel. (+371) 67 01 80 59. Open 08:00-21:00; C-4, Brīvības 38, tel. (+371) 67 28 97 61. Open 08:00-20:00, Sat 09:00 - 18:00; closed Sun. [cc](#)

### MĒNESS APPIEKA

A large chain of Latvian pharmacies. ► B-5, Brīvības 74, tel. (+371) 20 37 74 76, [www.menessapptieka.lv](http://www.menessapptieka.lv). Open 24hrs. [cc](#)

### SAULES APPIEKA

This large pharmacy is also one of Latvia's oldest. A medical clinic and a laboratory are located upstairs. ► B-4, Brīvības 68, tel. (+371) 67 50 69 27, [www.saulesapptieka.lv](http://www.saulesapptieka.lv). Open 08:00-22:00; Sun, Sat 10:00-22:00. [cc](#)



More info:

[www.baltapirts.lv](http://www.baltapirts.lv)  
+371 67271733

Traditional Latvian sauna,  
steam rooms, swimming pools,  
massage therapy to help you  
relax and recover!



Latvia's oldest and largest  
traditional Latvian spa.

## RIGA CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Freedom Monument
- ✓ Riga Black Balsam
- ✓ central marketplace
- ✓ Sigulda
- ✓ Art Nouveau architecture
- ✓ nightlife & clubs
- ✓ Occupation Museum
- ✓ St. Peter's Church tower

...now ready to relax?

Try another Latvian tradition:  
✓ Latvian sauna (or pirts!)

## PHOTOCOPYING

### COPYEXPERT

► C-4, Blaumaņa 11/13, tel. (+371) 67 36 53 90, [www.copyexpert.lv](http://www.copyexpert.lv). Open 07:00-22:00; closed Sun, Sat. Also at H-3, Merķela 17/19, tel. (+371) 67 22 15 68. Open 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

### COPY PRO

24-hour copying. ► C-4, Raiņa 17, tel. (+371) 29 24 01 66, [www.copypro.lv](http://www.copypro.lv). Open 24hrs.

## SCHOOLS

### INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF RIGA

Internationally accredited education for children aged 2 - 18 on the left bank of the River Daugava. ► B-1, Zvejnieku 12, tel. (+371) 67 62 46 22, [www.isriga.lv](http://www.isriga.lv).

### KING'S COLLEGE, THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF LATVIA

A relatively new school that currently offers classes from ages 3 - 10, which will eventually expand to pupils up to age 18. ► Turaidas 1, Piņķi, Babītes novads, tel. (+371) 257 59 043, [www.latvia.kingscollegeschools.org](http://www.latvia.kingscollegeschools.org).

### THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL OF LATVIA

A co-educational day school: pre-school to grade 12, EU and US accredited, with qualified teachers from around the world instructing in English. ► Piņķi, Babīte, Meistarū 2, tel. (+371) 67 75 51 46, [www.isl.edu.lv](http://www.isl.edu.lv).

## TATTOOS

### RĪGAS TINTE

Get some ink or maybe a piercing by some of the best artists in Riga. ► C-5, Kr. Barona 45/47, tel. (+371) 67 22 50 55, [www.rigastinte.lv](http://www.rigastinte.lv). Open 10:00-18:00; closed Sat, Sun.

## VETS & PETS

### DR. BEINERT'S CLINIC

Dr. Beinerts runs a number of certified veterinary clinics in Riga including this 24-hour establishment in the city centre. It also has a pharmacy and a pet supply shop. ► C-5, Gertrūdes 101, tel. (+371) 67 28 85 39, [www.vet.lv](http://www.vet.lv). Open 24hrs.



The National Library and a riverboat on the Daugava M.Zapruskis

# Hotels

Riga really has it all when it comes to hotels. You can stay in an ultra modern design apartment in the old town or a beautiful suite with its own Jacuzzi if you don't mind spending your hard-earned cash. Those travelling on a budget can choose from plenty of B&Bs, hostels and even a few low-cost hotels. Unless otherwise noted, breakfast and VAT are included in the prices listed here.

## CREAM OF THE CROP

### GRAND POET HOTEL BY SEMARAH

The Grand Poet Hotel's interior is the brainchild of an award-winning Swedish design firm that's a playful mix of the bohemian and the formal. 168 luxurious rooms offer nearly every amenity imaginable, but we recommend you request a room with a view overlooking the park across the street, not to mention the panorama of Old Riga on the opposite side of the canal. A restaurant, bar, café, swimming pool and spa centre are yet more reasons to choose this five-star hotel as your home away from home in Riga. ▶ G-2, Raiņa bulvāris 5/6, tel. (+371) 60 00 86 00, [www.grandpoet.semarahhotels.com](http://www.grandpoet.semarahhotels.com). 168 rooms.



### HOTEL NEIBURGS

This stylish design hotel is housed in one of Old Riga's most beautiful art nouveau buildings. All 55 of its apartments include a combination of modern minimalist décor and original elements like restored parquet floors that date back to 1903. Kitchens, spacious rooms, huge plasma TVs, free wireless internet access, bathrooms with bathtubs, slippers and robes and excellent views all come standard. iHome dual charging stereo FM clock radios with lightning dock and USB charge/play for iOS devices are also included in the price. Two-storey suites, accommodation with balconies and an excellent restaurant are also available. ▶ I-1, Jauniela 25/27, tel. (+371) 67 11 55 22, [www.neiburgs.com](http://www.neiburgs.com). 55 rooms.

## APARTHOTELS

### RIGAAPARTMENT GERTRUDA

Although Riga has lots of hotels and many more apartments, it doesn't offer many aparthotels. RigaApartment Gertruda offers affordable apartments in one building that are all available for short-term rental, so you can stay for as little as one night or spend a whole week here. The apartments are incredibly spacious with high ceilings and hardwood floors and offer a wide variety of amenities including comfortable furniture, full kitchens, washing machines, flat screen TVs and at least one bathroom and bedroom (depending on the apartment). Some of the flats also have fireplaces, but we preferred the cosy attic apartments. A lift is also at your disposal as well as a 24-hour reception desk and a Latvian restaurant is available on the ground floor of the building. ▶ C-5, Ģertrūdes 54, tel. (+371) 25 46 15 46, [www.rigaapartment.com/about-gertruda](http://www.rigaapartment.com/about-gertruda). 19 rooms.

## SYMBOL KEY

	Accepts credit cards		Air conditioning
	Anti-allergy		Casino
	Child-friendly		Conference facilities
	Disabled facilities		Fireplace
	Fitness centre		Guarded parking
	Old town location		Pet-friendly
	Restaurant		Sauna
	Smoking section		Swimming pool
	Wellness/Spa		Wi-fi

### RIGAAPARTMENT SONADA

This charming five-storey building was completely renovated in 2014 and is located in its own quiet private courtyard, which includes plenty of secure parking and a children's playground. The majority of its rooms are 40m<sup>2</sup> one-bedroom apartments equipped with IKEA furniture, flat screen TVs with satellite channels, fold-out couches, full kitchens, free wi-fi, washing machines and bathrooms with ionic hairdryers. Two of its 22 rooms offer yet another bedroom, but are similar in style. 24-hour customer support is available and you can also rent bikes here. Great for families and guests who have cars. Airport transfers available. ▶ D-6, Ģertrūdes 129 (entrance from Valmieras 7), tel. (+371) 25 46 15 46, [www.rigaapartment.com/about-sonada](http://www.rigaapartment.com/about-sonada). 22 rooms (6 doubles €33, 16 apartments €33 - 60) Breakfast: €4.45.

## MID-RANGE

### RIXWELL HOTEL KONVENTA SĒTA

With foundations that were once part of the medieval city wall, the sprawling Konventa Sēta (Convent Yard) stands its ground against Riga's many hotels. A maze of hallways joins nine historic buildings, and leads to a variety of rooms, some with original oak beams. Standard amenities are available as well as disabled and non-smoking rooms, not to mention plenty of shopping and eating options in its extensive courtyard. Apartments with kitchenettes are also available. ▶ I-2, Kalēju 9/11, tel. (+371) 66 77 88 68, [www.rixwell.com/en/rixwell-hotel-konventa-seta](http://www.rixwell.com/en/rixwell-hotel-konventa-seta). 141 rooms.

## LATVIA FACT

Between 1900 and 1914 Riga's population doubled from 250,000 residents to 500,000. This was largely due to industrialisation and the abolition of serfdom in the 19th century.

## UPMARKET

### BELLEVUE PARK HOTEL RIGA

This enormous hotel on the other side of the river offers over 200 rooms, two restaurants, a bar and a massive conference centre. All accommodation includes cable TV, climate control, mini-bar, trouser press and bathrooms with hairdryer and shower or tub. Higher end rooms also include bathrobes, slippers, balconies and floor to ceiling windows with views. The reception desk, which is essentially a large aquarium, sets the tone for a comfortable stay beside one of the city's largest parks. ► E-1, Slokas 1, tel. (+371) 67 06 90 00, [www.hotelbellevue.lv](http://www.hotelbellevue.lv). 222 rooms.



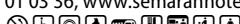
### BOUTIQUE HOTEL KRISTOFFS

When one sees the charming façade of this 18th-century townhouse one might expect a similarly antique interior. That's why the unique reception area is such a surprise. Expect colourful, modern furniture as well as an antique fireplace in a pleasant space where guests sip coffee on mauve or gold chairs and admire the purple walls. Each room is lightly different in style, but most include hardwood floors, flatscreen TVs, free wireless internet, phone, mini-bar and large bathrooms. Ask for one of the rooms with a balcony. Despite its age, the building has been equipped with a lift, not to mention a koi pond. ► I-2, Teātra 6, tel. (+371) 67 21 60 56, [www.hotelkristofs.com](http://www.hotelkristofs.com). 10 rooms.



### METROPOLE HOTEL BY SEMARAH

Although Riga's oldest continuously running hotel has been in operation since 1871, the Semarah group renovated much of the historic premises in 2014. Those who appreciate old world elegance can stay in its more affordable classic accommodation, which retains much of its pre-refurbishment character save a few extra amenities such as flat screen TVs. Anyone who prefers more fashionable surroundings can stay in its contemporary rooms, which boast the same comforts as well as modern interior design. All rooms have bright hardwood floors, climate control and free wi-fi among other conveniences. Conference rooms are also at your disposal as well as a top-notch restaurant. ► I-3, Aspazijas Boulevard 36/38, tel. (+371) 66 01 03 36, [www.semarahhotels.com](http://www.semarahhotels.com). 88 rooms.



### MONIKA CENTRUM HOTEL

This four-star hotel housed in a completely renovated neo-Gothic building built in 1883, offers spacious rooms with satellite TV, climate control, mini-bar, phone, internet access and private bathrooms with bathtub and bidet as well as a bar, restaurant, modern conference facilities and a fitness centre. Many of the rooms also include balconies with excellent views of the park and surrounding 19th-century architecture. Named after the owner's daughter, Monika also offers incredible suites with original decorative artwork and four-poster beds. ► B-3, Elizabetes 21, tel. (+371) 67 03 19 00, [www.monika.centrumhotels.com](http://www.monika.centrumhotels.com). 80 rooms.



## WELLTON CENTRUM HOTEL & SPA

When one walks into the grand lobby of this design hotel they're immediately drawn to the huge aquariums that separate the reception area from the stylish restaurant. All rooms are decorated in a similar fashion with beige and grey tones and light wooden furnishings and amenities include flat screen TVs, mini-bar, safe, coffee/tea sets, free wi-fi, ironing boards, spacious bathrooms and climate control, not to mention bathrobes on each bed. A spa centre including a swimming pool is available in the basement. ► I-3, Kalēju 33, tel. (+371) 67 13 06 70, [www.wellton.com](http://www.wellton.com). 144 rooms.



## WELLTON RIVERSIDE SPA HOTEL

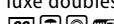
Providing incredible views of the River Daugava from its location on Old Riga's waterfront, the aptly named Wellton Riverside SPA Hotel offers four-star accommodation spread out across three modern buildings. Each of its 222 rooms includes all of the essential amenities such as free wi-fi, mini-bar, safe, coffee/tea sets and large ensuite facilities with either baths or showers, but we recommend the rooms with floor-to-ceiling windows facing the river. A top-floor conference centre with an extensive outdoor terrace is at your disposal as well as the largest spa centre in Old Riga and a ground floor sushi/cocktail bar. ► I-2, 11. novembra krastmala 33, tel. (+371) 66 77 78 50, [www.wellton.com](http://www.wellton.com). 222 rooms.



## HOSTELS

### WICKED WEASEL HOSTEL

The Wicked Weasel, which was rated the No.1 hostel in Latvia on Hostelworld.com in 2018, offers upmarket-style rooms and dorms for affordable prices. Deluxe doubles include king size beds and dorm accommodation has private storage lockers, individual lighting and electric outlets as well as privacy curtains. A full communal kitchen with the latest appliances is also available as well as a laundry room and a bar with a second storey terrace. Did we mention it's in Old Riga? ► I-3, Valņu 41, tel. (+371) 27 73 67 00. 14 rooms (4 deluxe doubles, 2 deluxe twin, 8 4- and 6-bed dorms).



## COUNTRYSIDE VACATIONS

### LAUKU ČEĻOTĀJS (COUNTRY TRAVELLER)

The Country Traveller offers B&Bs and holiday homes outside of Riga. Check out its comprehensive website to find the countryside vacation of your dreams. Ride horses, go fishing, sweat it out in a traditional sauna, enjoy a romantic evening by a roaring fire in a renovated farmhouse or a regal stay in an ancient castle. You can search by region, type of accommodation, amenities offered and other parameters. ► D-1, Kalnciema 40, tel. (+371) 67 61 76 00, [www.celotajs.lv](http://www.celotajs.lv). Open 09:00-18:00; closed Sun, Sat.

# Old Riga Walking Tour

## OLD RIGA WALKING TOUR

Begin at H-3, the **Freedom Monument** on the edge of Old Riga and the famous **Laima Clock**, a Riga meeting place for decades. Walk up to the top of G-2, Bastion Hill for views of the canal and the park and to get the lay of the land. Then walk across ZA Meierovica bulvāris until you reach H-2, the red brick **Powder Tower** and the **Museum of War** next door. Next walk down Torņa. The **James' Barracks** on the right side of the street are home to many trendy shops and cafés and remnants of H-2, the **Old City Walls** are visible on the left side. Walk left through the H-2, **Swedish Gate** and immediately make a right on **Trokšņu**, one of Riga's narrowest streets. Go left, then straight between H-1, **St. James Church** and the **Saeima** (parliament).



Make a left on Klostera to find H-1, the **Three Brothers** ahead. Take a peak inside to see how medieval Europeans once lived. Go right on Mazā Pils to Pils laukums where you'll find H-1, **Riga Castle**, which is also the Latvian president's office.

## RIGA FOR KIDS

**Eating out** Finding child-friendly restaurants and cafés in Riga can sometimes be a bit of a chore, but a few have realised that providing a play area for children can actually add to their bottom line. **Vairāk Saules** (C-4, Dzirnavu 60, [www.vairaksaules.lv](http://www.vairaksaules.lv)) offers a kids' menu and all the legos a child could ever want while **Street Fries Kitchen** (I-3, Vagnera 18, [streetfries.lv](http://streetfries.lv)) has a small kids' area as well as plenty of pancakes and fries. **Charlestons** (C-4/5, Blaumaņa 38/40, [www.charlestons.lv](http://www.charlestons.lv)) has a children's corner and supervised activities during weekend brunch.

**Educational trips** The **Ethnographic Museum** (Brīvības gatve 440, [www.brivdabasmuzejs.lv](http://www.brivdabasmuzejs.lv)) is a great place for kids. Not only can children learn about Latvian customs, but they can also see people in period costume performing various tasks. The **Riga National Zoo** ([www.rigazoo.lv](http://www.rigazoo.lv) - take tram No.11 from K.Barona to the Mežaparks stop) in Mežaparks is also always a good option and if the word 'museum' already has the kids rolling their eyes, then the **Laima Chocolate Museum** (B-5, Miera 22, [www.laimasokoladesmuzejs.lv](http://www.laimasokoladesmuzejs.lv)) might just change their minds.

**Just for fun** **Līvu Akvaparks** (Jūrmala, Lielupe, Viestura 24, [www.akvaparks.lv](http://www.akvaparks.lv)) offers a wave pool, a children's pool, six water slides and a tubing river guaranteed to keep the

Next walk up Pils to **Cathedral Square** (Doma laukums). Take a tour of H-1, **Riga Cathedral**, its Romanesque cloister and the **Riga Bourse Art Museum** on the opposite side of the square. Then walk down Tirgoņu and take a break at one of its many pubs, restaurants and cafés and then proceed to Kāļu iela. Make another right there and walk to I-2, the stunning **House of Black-heads**, the new **town hall**, I-1 and the **Latvian Riflemen Monument**.

Next walk to where Grēcinieku and Kungu streets meet to explore the I-2, **Mentzendorff House**. After a short tour of the house continue down Grēcinieku (away from the river) and make a left on Skārņu. You can take a look at I-2, **St. John's Church** on the right or walk to the entrance of **St. Peter's** (see photo) on the left and take the lift up to the top of the church for excellent views. On Skārņu you'll also find dozens of souvenir vendors. Walk into I-2, **John's Courtyard** (Jāņa sēta) and emerge on Kalēju. Go left until you reach H-2, **Līv Square** (Līvu laukums) which is home to H-2, the Great and Small **Guildhalls**, the **Chekov Russian Drama Theatre** and the **Cat House** as well as some beautiful medieval buildings.

This concludes your walking tour of Old Riga. You can enjoy an over-priced beer at one of the restaurants here or just do some shopping.

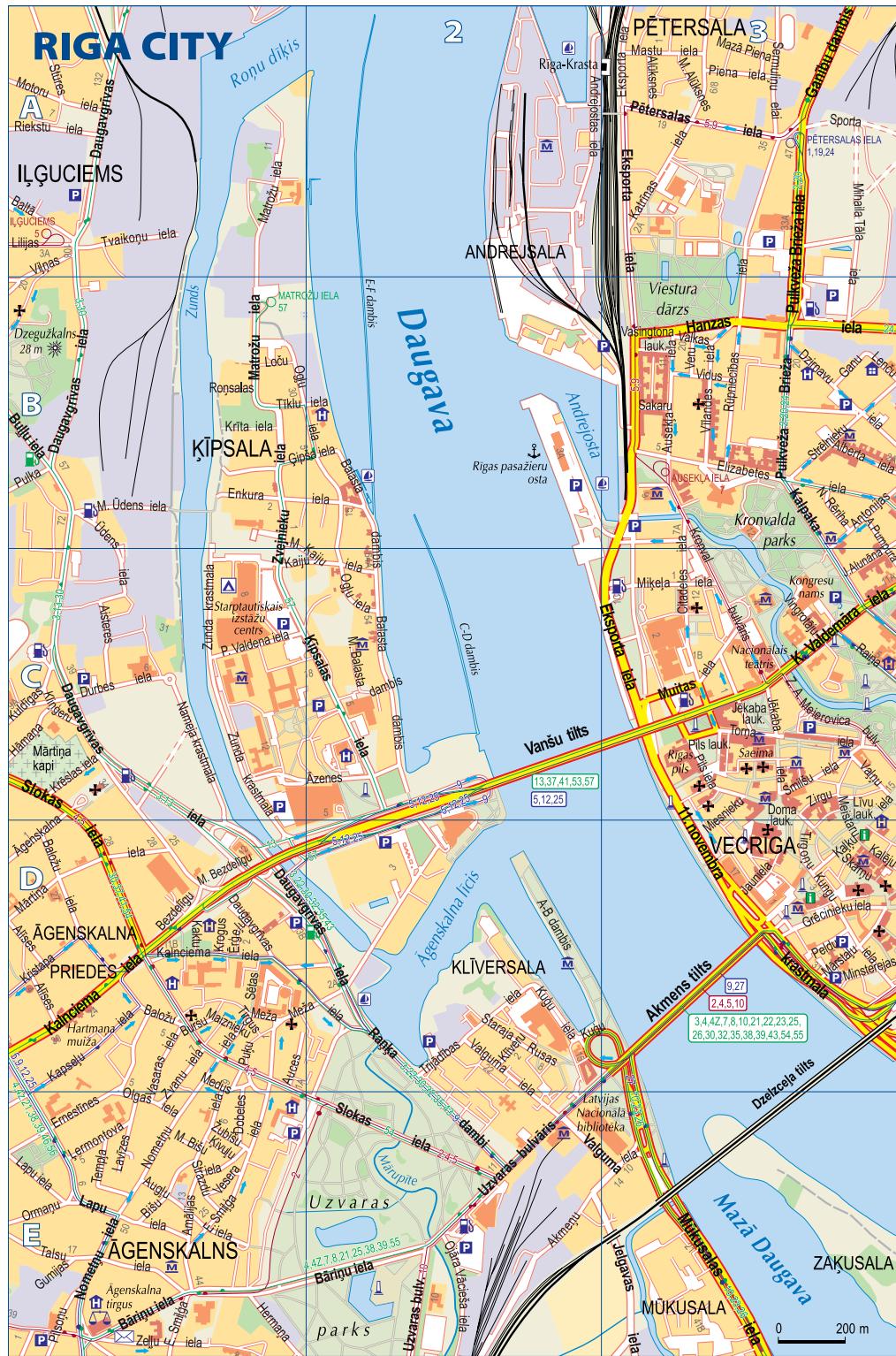
kids happy all day long. Parents can have a drink at the swim-up cocktail bar. If you're child loves bouncy houses, slides labyrinths and climbing obstacles then head over to **City Kids** (A-3, Ganību Dambis 7a, [citykids.lv](http://citykids.lv)). However, both young and old can enjoy **Jump Space Riga** (Krasta 52, [jumpspace.lv](http://jumpspace.lv)), a huge hangar-like building filled with wall-to-wall trampolines.

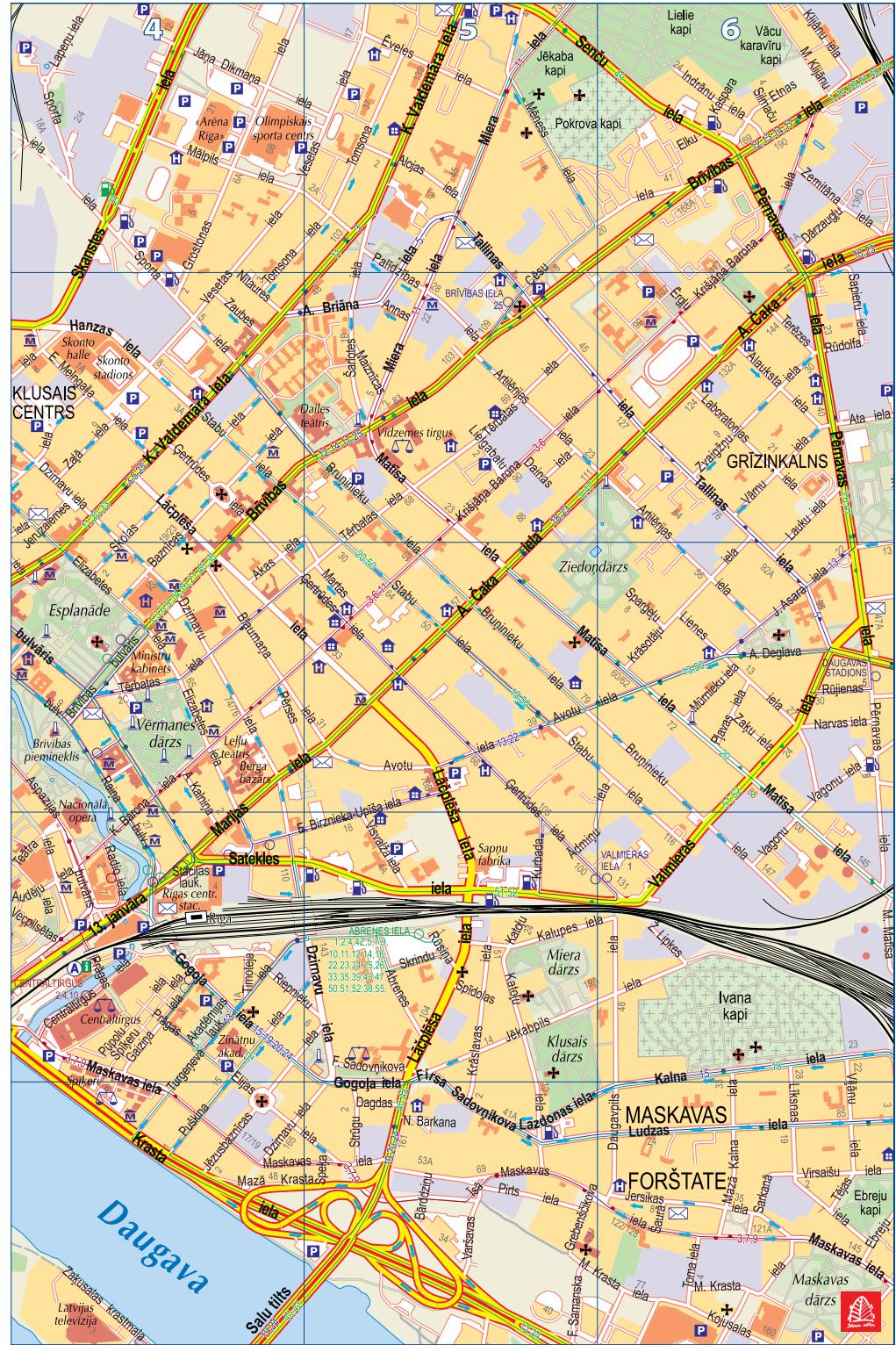
**Playgrounds** In the city centre you'll find a good playground at **Vērmane Park** (corner of K.Barona and Elizabetes) and at **Esplanāde Park** behind the Latvian National Museum of Art (F-3, Valdemāra and Elizabetes). **Mežaparks** offers two huge playgrounds and bike and pedal car rental (see below), but you'll find the **biggest playground** in Riga on Kr.Barona iela. Take tram No.6 to the Sporta nams Daugava stop. The massive outdoor complex is hard to miss.



# OLD RIGA

# RIGA CITY





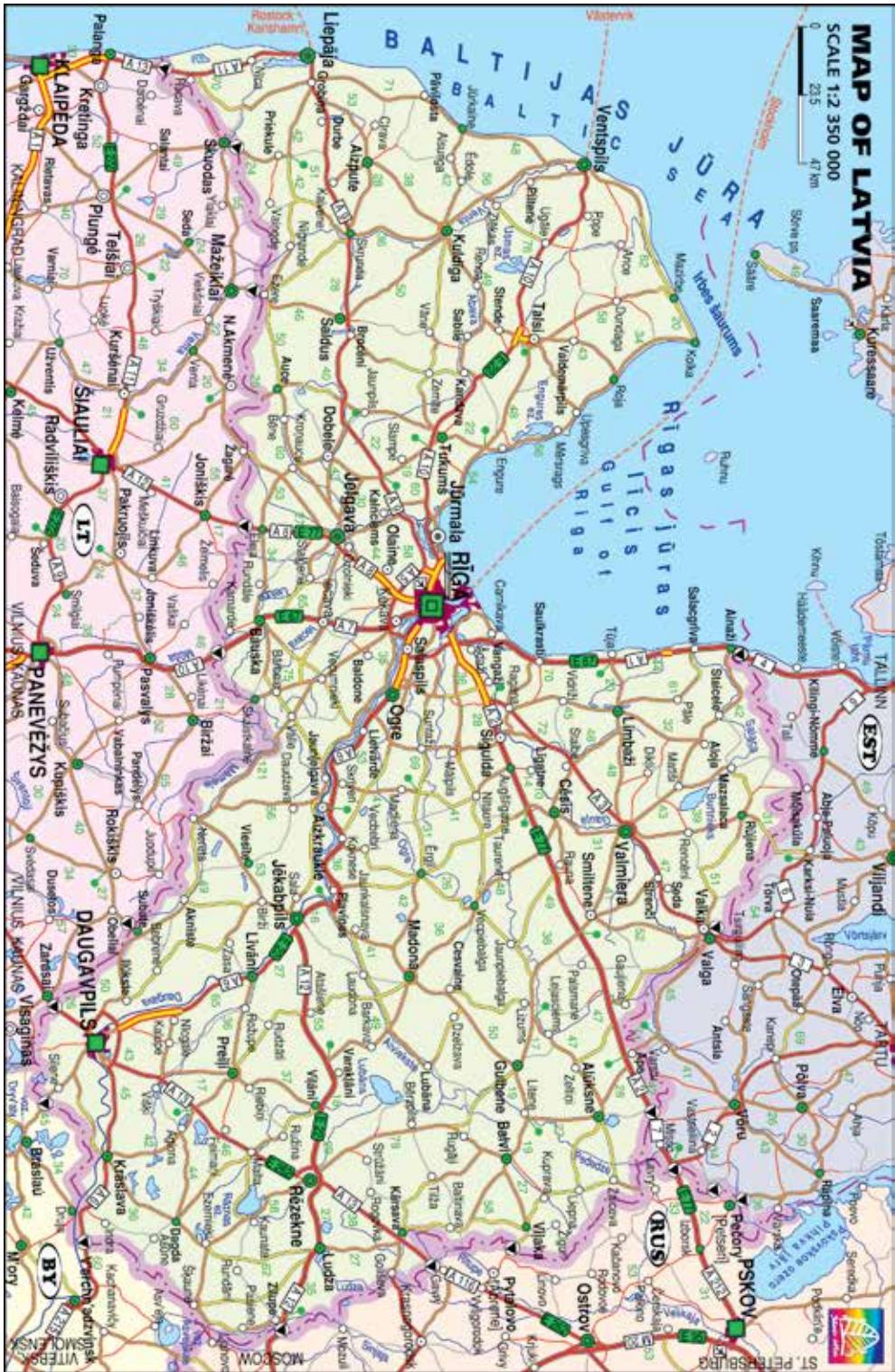
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## OLD RIGA STREET REGISTER

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						Skārnū	I-2	Monument	H-3
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# MAP OF LATVIA

SCALE 1:2 350 000  
25.47 Km





OLD TOWN, Grecinieku street 1  
OLD TOWN, Grecinieku street 1

# KARAOKE

EVERY  
**Monday**  
**Tuesday**  
**Wednesday**  
**Thursday**  
**Friday**  
**Saturday**  
**Sunday**

AT



# 22:00



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