

Latvia

Continent: Europe

Languages Spoken: Latvian

Population: 1,870,000

Currency: Euro (EUR)

Area: 64,589

Main Landmarks:

- {'name': 'Riga Old Town', 'writeup': 'A UNESCO World Heritage site known for its medieval architecture and vibrant cultural scene.'}
- {'name': 'Gauja National Park', 'writeup': 'The largest national park in Latvia, famous for its natural beauty, hiking trails, and historic castles.'}
- {'name': 'Rundbilde Palace', 'writeup': "An 18th-century Baroque palace often referred to as the 'Versailles of Latvia'."}

Head of State / Government:

Edgars Rinkēvičs (President as of 2024)

Main Cultural Events:

- {'name': 'Latvian Song and Dance Festival', 'writeup': 'A massive cultural event held every five years celebrating Latvian folk music and dance.'}
- {'name': 'Jāņi (Midsummer Festival)', 'writeup': 'A traditional celebration marking the summer solstice with singing, dancing, and bonfires.'}

Food & Cuisine:

Latvian cuisine features hearty dishes with rye bread, potatoes, pork, and dairy products, emphasizing seasonal and locally sourced ingredients.

Brief History:

Latvia has a history of foreign rule by Germans, Swedes, Poles, and Russians before gaining independence in 1918. It was occupied by the Soviet Union during WWII and regained independence in 1991.

Important People:

- Rainis - Poet and playwright, a key figure in Latvian literature.
- Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga - Former President and influential political leader.
- Mārtiņš Pļaviņš - Olympic beach volleyball player.

Current Conflicts:

Latvia is not involved in any active internal or external conflicts but remains vigilant due to regional security concerns related to Russia.

Youtube Links:

- Discover Latvia: A Journey Through the Baltic Gem

- Top 10 Things to Do in Latvia
- Latvian Song and Dance Festival 2023 Highlights
- Exploring Riga Old Town - Latvia's Capital
- Latvian Cuisine: Traditional Foods You Must Try