



# ENOUGH CULTURE TO GO AROUND IN RIGA AND THROUGHOUT LATVIA



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Welcome to Riga 2014!



EIROPAS KULTŪRAS GALVAPILSĒTA  
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE



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**Riga** has always been a capital of culture. Ancient, but at the same time youthful, multicultural and European, today's Riga surprises visitors with its diverse and rich cultural life.

Despite years of Soviet occupation, Latvia has managed to safeguard its language, traditions and cultural heritage.

Riga vibrates with energy, it inspires creative expression – not for nothing are the biographies of many world-renowned artists, musicians and singers inextricably linked with both Latvia and Riga. It is only natural that the city was granted the title of 2014 European Capital of Culture.

In 2014, life in Riga promises to be stimulating. Other Latvian towns and cities are also preparing for this year, but scenic small town **Sigulda** will be particularly cooperating with the capital in the 2014 programme.

The European Capital of Culture programme, **Force Majeure**, will be launched from 17-19 January 2014. It will be a celebration for Rigans and visitors alike, with several major exhibitions being opened and the premiere concert performance of Richard Wagner's opera **Rienzi**. The central axis of the opening, however, promises to be a symbolic people's action, transferring books, hand to hand in a human chain, from the old **National Library of Latvia** building on one side of the Daugava River to the new, modern building on the other bank. Overall, around 200 cultural projects and events are planned for Riga through the year, in addition to the already traditional cultural events.

To make your impressions while travelling through Riga and Latvia as diverse as possible, this booklet offers routes which supplement major 2014 events in Riga with thematically linked cultural, historical or leisure attractions and activities throughout Latvia. While in Riga, take the opportunity to visit elsewhere, and remember that Latvia is best enjoyed slowly!



## Riga, Wagner, opera

Latvian National Opera

Both Wagner and opera feature strongly in the Capital of Culture programme, Riga and Wagner having a special relationship. Wagner, as a young man, spent two years in Riga's Old Town, living in the street now named after him. Latvians love and respect opera. Latvian National

Opera (LNO) productions tend to be provocative, but the ballet troupe is firmly rooted in the classical tradition. Many opera and ballet stars, now performing in packed venues around the world, started here.



Inese Galante, Summertime international music festival

A multimedia **concert performance of Wagner's Rienzi**, created by the LNO and renowned Danish director and set designer Kirsten Delholm, will be part of the opening events. Wagner began composing Rienzi in Riga itself, where he was a theatre musical director from 1837-9. New operas are also being created in honour of the Capital of Culture. Kristaps Petersons **opera Šahs (Chess) premieres** in March 2014. It is dedicated to one of Riga's best-known residents – world chess champion Mikhail Tal and his famous 1960 championship match. Another Riga life story, of film and theatre critic Valentīna Freimane, inspired composer Artūrs Maskats to create his new **opera Valentina**, set to open on 19th of September.

In the world of music, Riga and Latvia are known for such famous musicians and opera artists as Mariss Jansons, Andris Nelsons, Gidon Kremer, Mischa Maisky, Elīna Garanča, Maija Kovaļevska, Kristīne Opolais, Inga Kalna, Egīls Siliņš, Baiba Skride, Iveta Apkalna and others. Hence the particular interest in the **Born in Riga** on 6th of July **Gala Concert** on a special stage at the LNO, with performances by world-renowned artists from Latvia. The **Latvian National Opera House** will provide a magnificent backdrop. This architectural monument, in the very heart of the city, displays a facade of restrained classicism, but its lavish interior possesses a variety of renaissance, baroque, classicism and Empire style features. The building was painstakingly renovated in the early 1990s and is well worth a visit – to the **Riga Opera Festival** in June for example, the traditional conclusion of the season, showcasing the year's best.



Opera Festival in Sigulda

The now traditional **Opera Festival in Sigulda** serves as proof that our love of opera extends beyond Riga's borders. In early August, the open-air stage by the romantic medieval castle will host concerts featuring international stars.

But even closer to Riga – the **Summertime international music festival** attracts many music fans to the **Jūrmala** beach resort every August. Its patron is famous soprano Inese Galante. The festival offers both symphonic and chamber music and attractive inter-genre fusion. The festival's special atmosphere owes much to its part-open-air venue, the **Dzintari Concert Hall**, where music is complemented by pine-covered dunes and the sounds of the sea. Home to a popular concert garden since the 19th century, the reconstructed concert stage has five levels well-suited to symphonic, choral or jazz concerts.



## The Book – 500

National Library of Latvia

1514 was a landmark year – the first book was printed in Arabic characters, the first Jewish printing house established, the first printing of the Torah, the first book published in Polish ... The first Latvian book would arrive a little later. Today, book publishing is often referred to as the 'second coming

of Gutenberg'. In our computer age, what actually is a book? Have readers changed along with the information and book-publishing technical environment? Has the significance of content changed? Such issues will be addressed in the 2014 events in the new National Library of Latvia building.



The first Bible published in Latvian

You too can participate in a unique people's action – a **living chain of books**, passing from hand to hand, from the old National Library of Latvia building to its new home. The path of books to Gaismas pils (Castle of Light) as it is popularly known, will cross the river Daugava, symbolically demonstrating the victory of true values over the insubstantial. Just remember to bring warm hats and gloves, because this action will be one of 2014's opening events from 17-19 January!

The newly built **National Library of Latvia**, scheduled to open before the Capital of Culture year, can itself be considered a major attraction – it offers modern-day access to its extensive collections.

Here, in August 2014 will see an international conference bringing together researchers, literati, and authors to discuss mankind's reading history and the 21st century content of books. Visitors will be welcome at an **exhibition, The Book 1514-2014**, dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the printed book, all through 2014. Displays will include the most striking examples of 1514 book production from Europe's largest book repositories. The contemporary building will also host other exhibitions, such as the gift from the city of Ravenna, Italy – its famous mosaics – in July.

As you walk through Riga's centre, you cannot miss the massive granite statue in the middle of **Esplanāde Park**. This is Latvia's most distinguished poet and playwright keeping an eye on the bustling city. The **Rainis monument** is the work of eminent sculptor Kārlis Zemdegis and was erected



Līgatne paper mill village

in 1965, immediately becoming a gathering place for Latvia's intelligentsia. Here, at the annual Poetry Days, despite wind, rain and censorship of the Soviet era, more than a few free-thinking words were said out loud. To this day, every September sees a gathering of poets and their readers marking Rainis's birthday.

Latvia also has other sites linked to the history of books. Visit the **Ernst Glück Bible museum** in one of the most beautiful towns in Vidzeme, **Alūksne**, to see the first Bible published in Latvian, in 1694, translated by German priest Ernst Glück while living here. Even as late as the 20th century, the Glück Bible was the largest work ever printed in Latvia. The museum's exposition tells of Glück's important work for the good of Alūksne and Latvia, as well as displaying numerous Bible editions, right up to the present day.

Heading northeast from Riga, pass through picturesque **Turaida**, known as the 'Switzerland of Vidzeme', to reach the **Līgatne paper mill village**, recognised in 2011 as Latvia's outstanding destination in Europe-wide ratings. Līgatne's history has been closely linked with the paper industry for at least two hundred years. The village is a unique testament to 19th century town planning, built as the most advanced workers' village in Europe and remains fundamentally intact. The Līgatne paper mill continues to operate, and that can only mean one thing – the good old printed book lives on!



## Amber Road

### Amber

The amber found by the Baltic Sea is considered to be the purest in the world. In ancient times, amber served the Baltic peoples (not only) as currency – an ancestor of the euro! The old Baltic amber trade route linked the Baltic with the Mediterranean and Black Seas. Baltic amber was

even found in Tutankhamun's tomb. The New Amber Road has been nominated as a Capital of Culture theme, a symbol of exchanges in cultural values. Latvians know how to appreciate the unique qualities of amber and use it wherever possible – even in science and cosmetics!





The world's longest amber necklace

Throughout the year, visitors will be able to travel the **Amber Road**, visiting a number of exhibitions devoted to amber in Riga museums and galleries. Early in the year, **From Amber To Amber Thread** will open at the Natural History Museum, displaying textiles created from amber-composite thread by Latvian artists and an installation composed of different amber materials. The production process for amber thread will be on display, together with potential uses for amber biomaterial and the latest popular scientific information on research into amber from around the world. **Egyptology** and the **Baltic Amber Story** will come together at the **Riga Bourse** gallery late in the year. Look out for more exhibitions on the theme of amber at the Latvian National History, History of Medicine and Decorative Arts and Design museums.

To complete your appreciation of the splendour of amber, visit the amber salon and museum of manufacturer **Belinda**, in one of the most beautiful places in the Old Town, **Konventa sēta**. See both classic amber jewellery and artefacts featuring amber with wood, silver, gold, pearls and precious stones.

Unquestionably, most of amber washed up from the sea is found on **Latvia's west coast**, sluiced by the open sea. After a windy day (best after storms), amber scavengers are bound to find a fine example on the beach, anywhere from Kolkas rags to the Lithuanian border. The steep sandstone bluffs of **Jūrkalnes stāvkrasti** are a particularly attractive venue for such strolls by the Baltic.



Amber spa treatments

The **Amber Clock** on the Liepāja promenade was created completely from such amber beach finds. It utilises around 50 litres of amber pieces donated by Liepāja residents. It is interesting to reflect that the beachfront was a specially guarded, restricted area during the Soviet era – the dividing line between the Soviet Union and the capitalist west!

Any doubts that Baltic amber may be in short supply are dispelled by the world's longest amber necklace on display at **Liepājas Amatnieku nams**. As with the clock, the 123 metre-long necklace is made from donations by Liepājans.

Latvian amber is not used only ornaments, but also for beauty in its fullest sense. Find out about **amber spa treatments**, amber oil, powder and other amber applications available in Latvia's beauty salons in the internet, before your trip, but while here, ask also about the use of amber in cosmetics. Amber is everywhere in Latvia – no wonder we are also known as the Land of Amber!



## 100 years after the war

Jēkabs Kazāks. Bēgļi. 1917. Oil painting

1914 was a year that changed Europe. Centuries' long superpower empires disappeared, but the Europe we know today – with 11 new countries, including Latvia – was formed. Throughout the 20th century, Riga found itself in either a post-war or pre-war situation, between

loser and winner. In a sense, the war only ended here in 1991. Latvians' memories of historical events are real and alive, as for many Europeans. Looking back and evaluating World War I, its impact on Latvia and Europe – exactly one hundred years after its outbreak – is an absolute necessity.



Cinevilla

The exhibition entitled **1914** at the **Latvian National Museum of Art** is intended to be a visual documentary message. It will bring to life historical accents and personal stories, both from the World War I era and through the eyes of contemporary artists. This international exhibition will be viewable from 17 January to April in Riga's largest **exhibition hall Arsenāls**. The Arsenāls building is an architectural monument: built in the early 19th century in the late Russian classicism style as a customs warehouse or arsenal.

Find out more about historic World War I events at the **Mangaļi branch of the Latvian War Museum** in the Jelgava District. One of the World War I front lines was right here and the legendary **Christmas battles** were fought here. The site features a reconstruction of German army front-line fortifications, the so-called German valnis (rampart), the only such example in the Baltics. Nearby is **Ložmetējkalns** – a memorial symbol to the heroism of the Latvian Riflemen. Climb the 27 metre observation tower for a spectacular panorama of the Christmas battle sites.

Although World War I was over and Latvia declared her independence on 18 November 1918, hostilities continued in the **Fight for Freedom** against both the Germans and the Russians who sought to destroy the new state. The events of this time are depicted in the film *Rīgas sargi* (defenders), filmed at a specially constructed open-air site. This backlot, **Cinevilla**, 15 km from Tukums, is now a popular tourist attraction. You really can lose yourself in the Riga of 100 years ago.



Daugavpils Shot Factory

If military heritage interests you, **Karosta of Liepāja** is well worth a visit. Its history dates back to Tsarist Russia and it is from here, in 1905, that the impressive Russian fleet headed for the Pacific Ocean to fight in the Russo-Japanese War. The Liepāja military port continued as a secret facility in Soviet times. Now, this quaint township is a popular tourist attraction with somewhat extreme entertainment, such as 'imprisonment' in the **Karosta Prison**. The **Ziemeļu forts** (northern) are particularly popular with photographers, so visually impressive on the beach itself.

Latvia's second city Daugavpils also retains striking evidence of Tsarist Russian military history. The **Daugavpils Fortress**, fundamentally unchanged, is the only first-half 19th century fortress in the Baltic States. Close by is the **Daugavpils Shot Factory** – the oldest ammunition plant in northern Europe but visits require prior arrangement. Latvia has always found itself in a crossfire between different superpowers, so the abundance of historical evidence is hardly surprising.



## Solstices and ancient traditions

Midsummer Herbs and Grass Market in Old Riga

Everybody in Latvia celebrates Līgo, Jāņi or the summer solstice. These are ancient pagan fertility festivals, best enjoyed as close as possible to nature. But, for those who do not have the option or desire to leave civilization, the magic enchantment of the shortest night can also be savoured in

Riga, on the Daugava Embankment. Music, dancing, bonfires, oak crowns, beer and the river itself, at which to await sunrise. In 2014, the Solstice celebrations in Riga and partner Sigulda are certain to be the biggest ones in all Europe, as Latvian rituals are complemented by other nation's traditions.



Ethnographic Open-air Museum in Riga

The official **Midsummer holidays** are 23 and 24 June, but according to ancient Latvian calendars, real Midsummer arrives two days earlier. The more festivities the better! Let's start celebrating on the 21 June in one of Latvia's most beautiful places, **Turaida**. A great festive programme, specifically for the European Capital of Culture year, is planned for the Turaida Museum Reserve with its dominating, legendary medieval castle. Oak and floral crowns will be woven, cheese made and bonfires lit, but the singing and dancing with Latvian folklore groups will continue until the first rays of the sun. (For those of you who have never visited Europe's north: at Latvia's solstice, the sun rises at around 4:30 am and won't set for some 18 hours.)

On 23 June, having rested a little, or on the contrary, completed last-minute chores, everyone who can decorates their car with oak branches and heads for the countryside to visit relatives and friends. More public, but nevertheless authentic Midsummer celebrations can be experienced at places like **Andrupene** in Latgale – Latvia's eastern province on the Russian border. The Andrupene Farm Ethnographic Museum is an early 20th century group of buildings where, if you book in advance, you can taste traditional Latgale delicacies. The Museum also offers winter tours, sledding and hot teas from local herbs.

If you can't make it to Latvia for midsummer, head to the **Ethnographic Open-air Museum** for the best insight into our ancient traditions. Only half an hour's drive from the city centre, experience the lives of Latvian farmers, craftsmen and fishermen in ancient times on the shores of Jugla Lake, see



Ventspils Seaside Open Air Museum

their homes, ways of life and implements. Every weekend, there are opportunities to participate in craft activities, but the first weekend in June, when the annual fair sees the museum teeming with hundreds of Latvian artisans and thousands of buyers from all over the world, is by far the most popular.

Head to the Jūrmala resort for a similar experience at the **Jūrmala Ethnographic Open-air Museum**, located in the nature reserve between Bulduri and the Lielupe estuary. This is an ideal place of natural peace and quiet to regain balance and discover that before Jūrmala became the most popular resort in Latvia, the locals were nearly all fishermen. The wonderful, locally smoked fish is a tasty reminder of those times.

Further west, the fishing boats, anchors and farmsteads of Kurzeme are on view at the **Ventspils Seaside Open Air Museum**. Children especially will delight in a ride on the narrow-gauge railway, one of the museum's most attractive exhibits which operated regularly between fishing villages, as recently as after World War II.

Rest assured that there will be no shortage of Midsummer bonfires on the Kurzeme coast and the strains of Līgo, līgo! will stay with you for days after the festivities!



## Freedom Street

Karosta Prison in Liepāja

Military and workers' parades, choirs in traditional dress are some of the march pasts Riga's main street Brīvības iela (Freedom St) has had to host over the years! How many power shifts has it taken to finally live in long-awaited freedom! The Freedom Monument – symbol of independence – is on

this street, but the junction, between what was variously named after Tsars, Hitler and Lenin, and Stabu iela is the site of the House on the Corner, once KGB headquarters but still the repository of many tragic secrets. During the Capital of Culture year, even this, Riga's darkest edifice, must see light!



Brīvības iela and the Freedom Monument

In April 2014, the building at the corner of Stabu iela and Brīvības iela, where hundreds of innocent people were interrogated and tortured in the KGB cellars, will be open for several specialised exhibitions with a common theme, the **Museum of Fateful Objects**. Things tend to outlive their owners and continue to bear witness. Here they will tell us about their owners and their destinies. What were the most expensive, the most needed items that Latvians put in their suitcases when forced to leave their homeland by different powers? That is the subject of the exhibition **A Latvian's Suitcase**. But the exhibition **10 Objects About Bygone Times** from the repositories of the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation will reflect the relationship between power and culture. Passing along a specially created route, it will become clear what exactly was found and occurred in the building popularly known as the House on the Corner. Materials prepared by the Museum of Occupation will illustrate the operations of the Cheka (KGB) in Latvia, but one floor of the building will be devoted to the idea of resistance to official culture during the Soviet era in an exhibition curated by the **Latvian Museum of Naïve Art**.

Foreign visitors and younger-generation Latvians alike often find it difficult to comprehend the complexity of Latvia's history between 1940 and 1991. That is why the exhibit by the **Latvian Museum of Occupation** will help visitors learn more about both the first and second Soviet occupations and the German National-Socialist occupation, about repressions and the resistance movement, Latvia's efforts to preserve



Secret bunker in Līgatne

its culture and regain independence. Examine historical documents, photographs and items attesting to the policies of the powers occupying Latvia.

Now Latvia is free once more and traces of former military occupiers remain only at a few specially maintained sites. Those interested in Latvia's military history and heritage should be sure to go to the **Karosta of Liepāja** (naval port) where those keen on extreme experiences can 'visit' the Karosta Prison. To the north of Liepāja, between Ventspils and Kolka, the **Irbene radio telescope** still juts out of the pine trees. Once a top-secret and guarded military counterintelligence radar, it now serves, through the support of the European Union, scientific purposes: the 32 metre-wide, 600 tonne antenna peeks into the furthest corners of the universe. Arrange a tour guide in advance to discover the mysteries of this once-Soviet army settlement.

**Līgatne**, 75 kilometres north-east of Riga, is home to a secret bunker, nine metres underground, revealing the Latvia of the Cold War era. This was a shelter built for the local Communist elite in case of nuclear war. It isn't just tourists who find this place exotic, because very few locals were aware of its existence. Try the Soviet-style lunch. Who could ever have imagined that drinking juice from the ubiquitous graņonka (a cut glass beaker) would seem exotic!



Look for art!

Gustavs Klucis. Postcard design for the Moscow Spartakiada 1928.

Artists possess the ability to see things more clearly, more vividly, perhaps differently, but most importantly, to portray their perception to others. Searching for truth, they pull down old realities and create new ones, whether by travelling the globe or by looking into themselves, their

internal world. 2014 will see a number of world-renowned artists, whose roots are Latvian, returning to Riga. These exhibition-room encounters with world-class art promise to be amazing, both for connoisseurs of art and for all residents of and visitors to the European Capital of Culture.



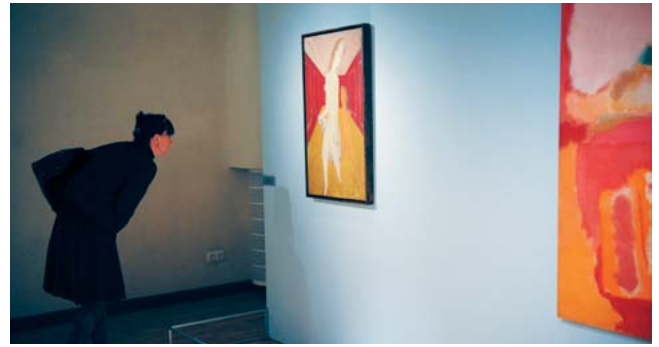


Pedvāle Open-air Art Museum

Latvian-born artist **Vija Celmiņš** has sought answers to key questions in the desert and the ocean. She helps us really see the stars and admire the intricacies of spiders' webs. Her ability to concentrate the infinite on to a small surface is remarkable. The eminent New York artist was born in Riga, but she and her family became refugees in Germany in autumn 1944, later moving to the United States. The Vija Celmiņš solo exhibition from 11 April to 30 June at the Riga Bourse, a European Capital of Culture highlight, will be a unique opportunity to see her works, loaned by major American, French and British galleries.

In the autumn, Riga will delight art lovers with an exhibition of the works of **Gustavs Klucis**, the world's best-known, to date, constructivist, with more than 200 exhibits from the **Latvian National Museum of Art** and other European museums. The life and art of Gustavs Klucis symbolically reflect the fate of those Latvians who remained in Soviet Russia after World War I.

The founder of Abstract Expressionism, **Mark Rothko**, was also born in Latvia. He left his native city of **Daugavpils** with his family at the age of ten to emigrate to the United States. A number of the distinguished painter's works will be on display at the Mark Rothko Art Centre in Daugavpils, but September 2014 will see renowned art experts gather in Riga and Daugavpils to discuss Rothko's contribution to world art.



Mark Rothko Art Centre in Daugavpils

Maybe it was his first childhood impressions which formed the unique perspective of this outstanding individual. In any case, the picturesque beauty of the Latvian landscape affects us all, not just artists. See for yourself by hiking up **Sigulda's Gleznotājkalns** (Painters' hill). Latvia's most-painted landscape, the view of the Gauja River valley from **Paradīzes kalns** (Paradise hill), has been immortalised in paintings by Jūlijs Feders, Vilhelms Purvītis, Jānis Rozentāls and many others. It really can inspire you to pick up a paint brush, or at least your camera!

Sculptor Ojārs Feldbergs has created an imaginative, whole ecosystem of art at the **Pedvāle Open-air Art Museum**. The artists who participate in his plenaries and workshops draw inspiration from the **Abava River valley**, but their creative deliberations manifest themselves as works of art that again become a natural part of the landscape. The museum's permanent collection consists of more than 150 works exhibited in the open air over an area of more than 200 hectares.

Travelling around Latvia is also a way to discover the core values of Latvian painting. A prime example is Latvian old master **Ģederts Eliass** (1887-1975) and the collection of his works on permanent display at the **Jelgava History and Art Museum**. This building, constructed in 1775 and known by its historical name Academia Petrina, was once home to Latvia's first university.



## Voices from the Darkness

Žanis Lipke Memorial

"Our duty is to commemorate these victims forever, so that future generations are raised with the awareness that humane values stand above all others" stated Ints Dālderis, at the time Latvia's Minister for Culture, when opening the Riga Ghetto Museum.

It is their work which defines people, whereas cities and even countries are evoked by certain individuals. It is likely that for many people, Riga is associated with Žanis Lipke. In a year when so many eyes will be on the European Capital of Culture, Riga must simply remain dignified in memory of this man.



Ghetto Museum in Riga

Mazā Balasta iela 8 in Ķīpsala is where Latvian Žanis Lipke rescued more than fifty Jewish people from the Holocaust during World War II. The **Žanis Lipke Memorial** is one of the most imaginative museums created in Latvia, addressing visitors at an emotional rather than information level. The shed, whose cellar bunker hid so many people, has been turned into a symbol that resonates with another sanctuary of lives, Noah's ark. For Riga 2014, the Žanis Lipke Museum will create a special exhibition entitled *Voices from the Darkness or Squaring Žanis Lipke's Circle*, which will address humanity in a cross section of different powers and values.

The **Ghetto Museum**, established in the Spīķeri quarter, calls to mind the unfathomable number of victims of World War II. It is located adjacent to the former Riga Ghetto, almost unique in Europe in that its architecture has remained unchanged for 60 years, which is why thousands of interested people from all over the world come here every year. Many of them find the names of loved ones in the list of remembrance created as a museum exhibit from the names of Latvian Holocaust victims. The pathway beneath this display is made of paving stones taken from the streets of the Riga ghetto. Sometimes, stones can also speak and these stones certainly have something to say...



Kuldīga Great Synagogue

The **Salaspils Memorial Ensemble** is one of the biggest monuments to the victims of fascism in Europe. It is located near Riga on a site where, from 1941 to 1944, the occupying German authorities had built a concentration camp to house civilians. To find out about the lives of Jewish people in pre-war and today's Latvia, visit the **Daugavpils Synagogue**, a Kaddish prayer house and also home to the Museum of Jews in Latgale and Daugavpils. The displays tell the story of the Jewish way of life and traditions in Latgale and Daugavpils since 1935. In contrast, the **Kuldīga Great Synagogue complex**, which consists of three buildings – the synagogue, built in 1875 during the reign of Tsar Alexander II, the prayer house and Jewish chapel – has seen many and different changes, having now become Kuldīga's main library. The former site of the synagogue's altar has been turned into a memorial.

To prevent the memories of the past becoming unbearably painful, visits to Latvia's Jewish heritage sites can be combined with celebrations of the Jewish New Year, 5775 in Riga. September will see a three-day international Jewish Cultural Festival 5775 with concerts also featuring Jewish musicians from other countries.



## Contemporary Art Survives and Thrives

Survival Kit contemporary art festival

Joseph Beuys claimed that anyone could be an artist. Riga 2014 is inviting everyone to become an active participant and reveal their creative side. And away from formal exhibition halls – as close as possible to places where real life is in full swing! This idea of decentralising art and culture

is finding more and more new supporters, not only in Riga, but also in Liepāja, Cēsis and other Latvian localities. One has to ask – how did we ever manage without the Miera iela, Spīķeri, VEF and other informal oases of creative expression?

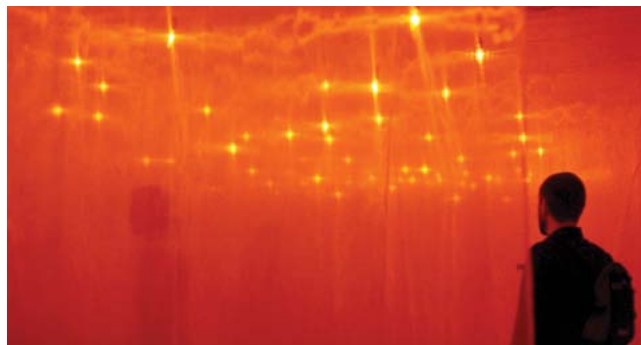


Survival Kit contemporary art festival

The **Survival Kit contemporary art festival** originated in 2009 as a response to the changes in Latvia induced by the economic crisis. It inspired a new creative initiative and the creative quarter movement. In September 2014, this event, by now having acquired international scale, will offer art exhibitions in non-traditional locations, urban installations, and creative projects involving the public, workshops, film screenings, lectures and discussions.

Riga's creative quarters – each with its own charm, range of activities and characters – will be offering cultural programmes throughout the European Capital of Culture year. All of the Miera iela, Kalnciema iela quarters, and VEF and many other places will be abuzz with non-stop action. The Spižkeri quarter showroom complex **kim?** too will be actively involved in the largest Riga city and cultural festival programmes, offering showings by Latvian and foreign contemporary artists. The exhibition complex's name comes from the initials of the question "what is art?" – but each person has to find the answer to this question for themselves.

If time constraints or other reasons prevent you from visiting one of the major 2013 biennales, Riga will be giving you a great opportunity to catch up in 2014. From March till August, the European Capital of Culture programme will feature the **exhibition Re:visited** at the Railway Museum where a selection of the best works from the world's major 2013 art biennales will be on display.



Cēsis Arts Festival

In recent years, the medieval town of Cēsis in Vidzeme has also made a significant contribution to the development and promotion of contemporary art in Latvia. The first **Cēsis Arts Festival**, in this compact town with its Livonian Order castle ruins, was held in 2007, continuing its long tradition as a centre of intelligent thought. The Cēsis Arts Festival can already be considered one of the city's most recognisable features and has undoubtedly contributed to the town's boom in cultural tourism, because every self-respecting lover of contemporary art in Latvia considers it their duty to be present at festival events. The secret of the festival's success is its synthesis of different forms of professional artistic expression. The visual arts and music, performing arts, opera and cinema are all represented. Exhibitions and performances take place both outdoors and indoors in interesting and unusual venues, often adapted to the needs of the events.



It's time for jazz!

Rigas Ritmi Music Festival

The sunny summer month of July 2014 promises the richest of musical lives for Latvia because that is when Riga will host the World Choir Games. The middle of summer also sees the main jazz events, both in the city and outside, in a mix of venues. The jazz tradition has strong

roots in Latvia. Over the past twenty years, developing contacts has given our musicians more opportunities to perform outside Latvia, while jazz lovers here are regularly delighted by musicians from all over the world. Now, summer in Latvia is unimaginable without our jazz festivals.



Saulkrasti Jazz Festival

In early July, great virtuosos of jazz and other genres arrive in Riga from all over the world to take part in one of the leading music festivals in the Baltic States – **Rīgas Ritmi** (Riga Rhythms). 2014 will be no different, as it is held over the first week of July, more precisely, from 30 June to 6 July. In conjunction with the Riga 2014 Force Majeure cultural programme, the international contemporary jazz and world music festival will offer an additional special project called **Mare Balticum**. In cooperation with Half Note Records, the Latvian Radio Big Band will create new jazz arrangements of Latvian sea shanties which will be performed in concert, recorded, and released.

**Rīgas Ritmi** started out with a programme of largely rhythmic music, but over the years it has evolved into a festival representing musical genres from blues and jazz through to ethno- and world music. Master classes and workshops led by internationally recognised performers draw a great response. The festival's esteem is demonstrated by the acclaimed artists who have already performed here, including Patti Austin, Take6, Richard Bona, Victor Wooten, Dianne Reeves, Maria Joao, Scott Hamilton and Earth, Wind & Fire.

To attract even more new music lovers, the festival has created a tradition of special children's concerts given by Latvian children's ensembles and established artists. Children get opportunities to participate in the concerts themselves, and they clearly love it!



Blues Festival in Sigulda

You may be lucky enough to hear a concert put on by Rīgas Ritmi in the spring or winter, because they put on a series of first-class concerts throughout the year.

Thousands of listeners also gather annually for the **Saulkrasti Jazz Festival**, held for more than 15 years at this welcoming Vidzeme seaside resort. Latvia's very own Costa del Sol provides perfect relaxation by the sea. The combination of the town's unhurried lifestyle and open-air concerts in the fresh seaside air give this event a tranquil and joyful atmosphere, but on a solid jazz foundation. And could there be a better place for a summer camp than Saulkrasti, where young musicians learn jazz skills from world-class teachers and masters?

And Sigulda – a partner in Riga's cultural programme – also enlists in the joint July wave of music, holding its international **Blues Festival** in the last days of the month. The festival features a series of concerts on the open-air stage in front of the stunning Sigulda castle ruins. The festival culminates in a concert with all the festival's acts joining in an electrifying jam session. Come along and be in no doubt that blues in Latvia is very much the blues!



## Science for large and small

Scientist

During the last hundred or so years, a variety of scientific discoveries and inventions have changed our everyday lives beyond recognition. Riga also has its share of scientists whose research results have been significant. What issues are our brightest minds working on today? In 2014, Riga will not

only be a centre of culture, but also one of creative scientific research – calling for the awakening of natural curiosity and the exploration of the invisible. Let's look at the commonplace from unexpected perspectives and not be afraid to experiment! May minds meet with emotions, science with art!





Cēsis Z(in)oo Children's Science Centre

September 2014 promises to be unique in that studies will resume not only for those in Latvia's education institutions – those whose years of study have long gone will also be able to acquire new knowledge. The **RīgaPunkts** Creative Science Festival will give visitors opportunities to explore the world in new ways. In the same way that digital images are formed from countless dots, visitors to the RīgaPunkts festival will be able to increase the resolution of their knowledge. How do you get electricity from a potato? How do you construct your own personal robot? Which flowers have medicinal properties? These are just some of the topics the project will provide answers for. Various exhibitions, science cafes, concerts and experimental laboratories are being planned. People will even be able to visit authentic research laboratories where University of Latvia scientists and researchers work and carry out experiments. The festival's closing event on 27 September will be a unique concert, the outcome of a cooperation project between scientists and musicians.

Children repeatedly drive their parents crazy with questions about the structure of the world. Now, children and their parents can discover answers to many of these difficult questions at the **Cēsis Z(in)oo Children's Science Centre**. Here, the cognitive process is made as stimulating as possible, especially important for children. Z(in)oo presents interactive exhibits so that visitors can test the laws of nature for themselves: enjoy gravity swings, see sounds, view optical illusions, observe lightning, move objects with the power of thought and a lot more. Z(in)oo is home to more than 30 interactive displays.



Baldone Astrophysical Observatory

**Dabas koncertzāle** (Nature's Concert Hall) invites visitors not only to view, but also listen to nature's sounds. In 2014, this event combining science, music, poetry and the visual arts will invite its fans to the ancient Sigulda valley to astound them with its unique natural values through exploratory hikes, creative workshops, research laboratories and an evening concert. Look out for the Armoured Fish who will be a key character in the proceedings!

If you feel that the planet Earth has been completely explored, you will have to investigate what happens on other planets in outer space! This can be done at the **Baldone Astrophysical Observatory**, the 12th largest observatory in Europe and home to a Schmidt system telescope, or also at the **Ventspils Jaunrades nams** (Creativity House). The latter hosts Latvia's largest digital planetarium, the most up-to-date in the Baltics, and an observatory with a telescope for observing the Sun and planets.



## Design and craftsmanship, then and now

Ladies' Paradise

Laconic forms, harmonious colour combinations, natural materials – these are the most highly valued qualities in contemporary design and the ones which typify the work of Latvian craftspeople and designers. Using tradition in contemporary ways, they create an authentic

style, characteristic of Latvia. Riga's craft fairs and shops feature household items, textiles and jewellery perfectly in harmony with the most contemporary of interiors and which will satisfy the most sophisticated requirements!



Craft fair at the Ethnographic Open-air Museum

Design and craftsmanship stand side by side in the Riga 2014 **Force Majeure** cultural programme, emphasising the link between the traditional and the contemporary. In the early 20th century, Riga was known for the VEF Minox camera, and later became renowned throughout the USSR for its contemporary western-European cafe interiors and the Rīgas Mode fashion house. Today's Riga holds its former values in high esteem and continues to create new ones. The **Dizaina komplekts** (Design Set) project will present pearls of Riga design together with classic European values in a series of exhibitions from May to October. One of the project's key events will be the Annual Contemporary Art Fair at Latvia's Ethnographic Open Air Museum which will feature diverse contemporary craft displays, exhibiting articles whose functions have survived the passage of time but now acquired new added value. The exhibition **Neparastās mežģīnes** (Unusual Lace) at Riga's Railway Museum will explore the relationship between natural lacework and that seen in man-made art, design, architecture and the virtual space.

Townfolk have always strived to be fashion setters. That their tastes have changed through the last century will be demonstrated at the end of July by a series of interactive shows under the common title **Ladies' Paradise**, where audiences will be gradually introduced to the history of fashion, by decades through that century. Meanwhile, Riga's most-renowned fashion designers will offer their visions of the future of fashion.



Piebalga Porcelain Factory

National costume is a value that transcends changing fashion trends. The **SENĀ KLĒTS** national costume centre in Riga's Rātslaukums (Town Hall Square) has displays of more than 45 national costumes from different Latvian districts. The centre has accumulated a wide range of materials about the making of national costumes and the traditions involved in wearing them. Senā klēts will contribute to the Riga 2014 programme by researching three archaeological and three ethnographic costumes – clothing worn by past residents of Riga (12-13th and 19th centuries) – and reproducing them for exhibition.

The best way of affirming that ancient Latvian craft skills have been passed down from generation to generation is by going to the annual craft fair at the **Ethnographic Open-air Museum**, which traditionally brings together lovers of craftwork in the first weekend in June. The museum also hosts permanent artisan exhibitions and visitors can watch master craftspeople carve out spoons, forge horseshoes and turn pottery at weekends throughout the summer.

Those wanting to participate in making porcelain can do so at the **Piebalga Porcelain Factory**. The factory workshop offers visitors opportunities to try their hand at porcelain painting. Your very own, hand-made souvenir will be ready in just one and a half hours!



## An Ocean of Bach

Riga Doms

History reveals that little Latvia has twice possessed the world's largest organ! And Latvia can be proud of the organs at the Riga Doms and Liepāja's Holy Trinity Cathedral to this day. The European Capital of Culture programme will oblige these instruments to sound out in full force

– and who better than Bach to expose the power of this instrument. In his famous quotation, Beethoven said “He is no Pond (Bach, in German), but Ocean is his name” about Bach. Let’s tour around Latvia and get to know the Queen of instruments, the organ, and the ocean of music!



Riga Doms

Many Latvian churches are fortunate to have antique and outstanding organs. Every year, organ music festivals take place in Riga Doms, Liepāja's Holy Trinity Cathedral and the Dubulti Evangelical Lutheran Church. These three churches have also been chosen as the central venues for the Riga 2014 concert series entitled **Organnetwork LV**. They may also be joined by other Latvian churches with organs in working order. In a total of 18 concerts between March and September, Latvia's 'organ network' will present Bach's greatest organ works.

In total, Latvia has 300 or so historic organs, that is, instruments made before 1945. The **Riga Doms organ** can be counted among the world's most valuable examples of the late Romantic period, alongside the organs in Freiberg Cathedral and Hamburg's St. Jacobi Church. They were all built between 1883 and 1884. Franz Liszt composed a special piece of music *Nun danket alle Gott* for the consecration of these organs. The divine sound of the Doms organ can be heard at church services every Sunday as well as at the concerts frequently held there. The annual Rīgas Doms Organ Festival in early July features performances by acclaimed local and foreign organists. This is the Latvian Archbishop's cathedral and the parish church of the Doms congregation.



Liepāja's Holy Trinity Cathedral

**Liepāja's Holy Trinity Cathedral** prides itself on its magnificent wood-carved interior and organ in the Rococo style. When built in 1885, the organ was acknowledged to be the world's largest. It only managed to keep this title until 1912 when overtaken by an organ at Hamburg in Germany. Today, it is still the world's largest historic mechanical organ to never have been rebuilt. September sees Liepāja's Annual Organ Festival.

Visitors to Latvia's most popular resort Jurmala can also call in on the **Dubulti Evangelical Lutheran Church**. It is an original Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) building with national romanticism features. The **Vox Angelica Organ Music Festival** is a series of Sunday concerts every September.

The Ventspils region **Ugāle Church organ**, with its original, more than 300-year-old pipes, can also be considered unique. Just around the corner, look out for Latvia's only organ workshop, where new baroque-style organs are built, as well as instruments not tied to a specific style. Clearly, this ancient instrument still has a future in Latvia!



## Autumn and winter pleasures

Light festival Staro Riga

The end of the summer by no means marks the end of activity in Riga – autumn's darkest month sees the outdoor cafes replaced by kiosks selling mulled wine and in the trees, bright lights displace leaves. The annual festival of light has started, coinciding also with the 18 November

national independence anniversary celebrations. Winter too, is not lacking in reasons for holding festivities. Who cares if the temperature has fallen to minus 20C in some places, that's just what skating rinks and ice sculptures need!



Light festival Staro Riga

In 2014, Northern Europe's largest light festival **Staro Rīga** will offer an astounding international programme with countless light and multi-media installations. Riga residents and visitors already perceive this traditional multi-day event as an integral part of Latvian national independence day celebrations.

Buildings, squares, bridges, monuments become unique exhibition objects complemented by performance art, musical and theatrical events. With the help of the latest lighting and video technologies, familiar Riga landscapes change beyond recognition and take on new colours. The greatest response is evoked by those installations which actively involve their audience. During the light festival, crowds and activities do not desert the nocturnal streets until midnight strikes.

Neither is the end of the year boring elsewhere in Latvia. **Sigulda**, Riga's partner in the year of culture programme, actually runs two annual winter festivals! And why not indeed, for this town is home to one of only 17 world-class bobsleigh and luge tracks! One of Latvia's most beautiful towns, whose motto is 'Sigulda captivates!', it really knows how to delight its visitors at any time of year, offering activities for both mind and body. In summer, its scenic hills host an opera festival and a blues festival, but the **Nature. Urban. Future** festival will launch as 2013 gives way to 2014. The main theme of this urban art and participation festival is the relationship between nature and the urban environment. Visitors can choose between passive observation and active creative participation.



Jelgava Ice Sculpture Festival

In turn, **Sigulda's Winter Festival** tempts visitors in the first week of March, when cross-country and Alpine skiing and snowboarding competitions are held, as well as snow sculpture championships, concerts, and art projects.

The main requirement for running an ice sculpture festival is intense cold! In Jelgava, the largest city in Zemgale, winters tend to be as much as several degrees cooler than on the coast – so it is no surprise that the **Jelgava Ice Sculpture Festival** is held here. The festival features around 30 of the best ice sculptors from almost all over the world. Uzvara Park in the heart of the city hosts an entertainment programme over several days with an exhibition of ice sculptures, accompanied by fire and firework displays, concerts and multimedia performances. Warming themselves with tea or mulled wine, viewers can watch ice-sculpting demonstrations, but the joys of winter don't end there. Even if there is no snow in Riga or other Latvian cities, more and more outdoor skating rinks are opening, enticing winter sports lovers right through to spring!



## Eco-city

Riga Central Market

For Latvians, a connection with nature is very important. If they don't have an allotment, they will at least be growing spring onions in a jar on their windowsill. In spring, the forest provides health-giving birch sap, in autumn, tasty wild mushrooms. Latvians eat produce from their own

gardens or head for farmers' markets where everything is fresh and bought from the farmer who grew it, hence its special energy. Visitors to Riga also like going to the market – easily the best place to find out about the character and traditions of the local people. And you can haggle, too!





Riga Central Market

The Riga 2014 cultural programme also intends to raise Riga's potential as an eco-city. A public participation campaign – **The Balcony, a Rigan's Handbag** will help nature invade the city by promoting the growing of plants on windowsills, balconies and terraces. The urban gardening project will begin with planting in May. Another interactive ecological project, **Augu Segs** (Plant Quilt) will also be starting its growth around then. French artist Joanes Simon Perras will incorporate strips of seeds into traditional quilts! The living green quilts will then be exhibited at the **Vidzeme market**, where they will continue to grow for the pleasure of city dwellers.

The Vidzeme market in the centre of Riga is well-liked by local shoppers, but most city visitors find their way to the popular **Riga Central Market**, which stands out with its architecturally dramatic pavilions. These were once hangars, built for the giant airships of the Imperial German Army during World War I. When the war ended, it was decided to utilise the impressive edifices as market pavilions. At the Central Market, you can buy Latvian countryside produce harvested by farmers themselves, as well as exotic fruits and consumer goods.



Berga Bazārs quarter

Latvia is seeing an increasing number of farmers engage in organic farming and their products are in great demand in the cities. They are best found in one of Riga's eco-markets, for example, the **Kalnciema iela quarter**, where farmers' and artisans' markets have become a tradition. In winter, they are held every other Saturday, but from late May to early September – every Thursday. This Riga quarter, on the other bank of the Daugava River, features charming, renovated, late-18th/early 19th century wooden houses and is well worth a visit to experience exotic Pārdaugava. In summer, when the evenings are long and warm, open-air concerts and film screenings are hosted here.

Back in the city centre, the Slow Food farmers' market organised by the sophisticated **Berga Bazārs quarter** is particularly popular with the gourmet crowd. Here you can buy homemade bread, cheeses, preserves, pickled vegetables, bakery goods, fresh meat and milk as well as smoked meat and fish products. Smoked fish is a traditional Latvian delicacy, along with Riga Black Balsam, rye bread, hemp butter and caraway cheese. For more such inviting delicacies, head for the **coastal fishing villages** along the Riga-Talsi highway, strung out along the Gulf of Riga coastline. Bigauņciems, Lapmežciems, Ragaciems – just follow your nose and you will soon find a local fisherman selling his aromatic smoked wares.



## Riga Tourist Information Centres

Rātslaukums 6. Phone: +371 67037900

Kaļķu iela 16. Phone: +371 67227444

Riga International Coach terminal  
Prāgas iela 1. Phone: +371 67220555

Working hours

October-April: 10:00-18:00

May-September: 9:00-19:00

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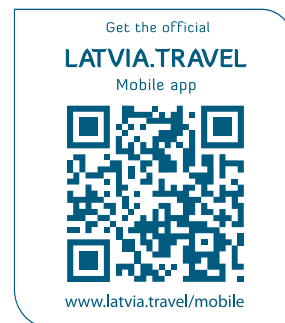
IEGULDĪJUMS TAVĀ NĀKOTNĒ

### Latvia.travel Mobile app for iPhone and Android (free)

Your official guide for travelling in Latvia. In Latvia.travel mobile app you will find:

#### Tourist sites and attractions

In application you will find more than 500 sites, places to visit and attractions in Latvian regions (Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale, Latgale) and Riga city.



#### Accommodation

Hotels, guest houses, bed & breakfasts, holiday houses, hostels in Riga, Jurmala and Latvian regions.

#### Events

Festivals, activities, concerts, events calendar.

#### Restaurants and cafes

Top restaurants in Riga, Latvia; organic, natural food.

#### Tourist information centres

List of tourism information centres in Riga and Latvian regions (Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale, Latgale).

#### Map of Latvia

Map of Riga, Latvia, location and directions.

Application supports the following languages: English, German, Russian, Latvian.

Developed by Latvian Tourism Development Agency in cooperation with Ltd. "Mobile Rams".

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