



## CULTURAL PROGRAM PROPOSAL RIGA, LATVIA

November 29, 2025

- 09.30 Combined walking tour to the Art Nouveau area and Old Town with an Italian speaking guide\*
- 10.00 Visit to the *Art Nouveau museum*
- 10.45 Coffee break with cakes at the *Art Café Sienna*
- 11.20 Guided walk to the *Riga Dome Cathedral* through the Old Town and famous Riga parks
- 12.00 *Concerto Piccolo* at the *Riga Dome Cathedral*
- 12.30 Old Town tour with guide continues
- 13.00 Visit to the *House of the Blackheads*, coin making
- 13.45 The legendary Riga Black balsam story and tasting at the *Black Magic Bar*
- 14.15 Free time

\*With more than 25 persons, they will be divided into 2 groups with 2 guides for the walking tours and museum visits

\*\*If requested, it is possible to offer “sign up” activities and tours, with the minimum amount 10 persons per group.

### Optional “sign up” tours:

- Backstage tour at the *Latvian National Opera*
- Tour to the *Latvian National Art museum*
- Tour and hemp product tasting at the *Mentzendorff house*
- Visit to the *Museum of the Occupation of Latvia*



### Art Nouveau area and Art Nouveau museum

Not everyone knows that Riga has more Art Nouveau buildings than any other city in Europe – there are more than 750 buildings constructed during the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that have the

characteristics of Art Nouveau – the female design language, the flowers, the devil's faces and the abundance of decorations. Riga was a wealthy city just over a hundred years ago, and this is clearly reflected in its architecture. During this tour you will see a wonderful collection of Art Nouveau houses, mostly concentrated to one beautiful area in the city center. The tour continues with a 45-minute long visit to the lovely Art Nouveau Museum, once the residence of one of Riga's architects, an apartment decorated with beautiful furniture and objects from the turn of the last century.

### **Art Café Sienna**

Art Café Sienna offers a 100-year journey through time, Riga's best coffee and tea, divine pastries, art books and a wonderfully pleasant atmosphere. Sit down, relax and melt your impressions from the beauty you have seen.

### **Old Town**

Most of the buildings in the Old Town have the status of cultural monuments. Here you can follow the historical development of the Old Town by exploring Romanesque, Gothic and Baroque buildings, as well as examples of classicism and modernism. In 1997, the historical centre of Riga was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

### **Riga Dome Cathedral**

Riga Dome Cathedral is the largest and one of the oldest sacred buildings of the medieval period in the Baltic region, combining Romanesque, early Gothic, Baroque and Art Nouveau features. Today, Riga Dome Cathedral is the seat of the Archbishop of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, the Riga Cathedral congregation's church, a venue of ecumenical services and one of Riga's organ music centers. The famous pipe organ, built in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has almost 7000 pipes, with the largest being 10 meters long and the smallest just 13 mm.

### **Concerto Piccolo**

Organ music concerts in Riga Cathedral give a unique opportunity to hear and experience one of the most wonderful church organs in the World. Visitors are welcome to enjoy a Concerto Piccolo (20 minutes organ music) almost every day at 12:00

### **Pardaugava**

Riga has much more to offer than just Art Nouveau and the Old town. One of the nicest areas that is still a bit undiscovered to visitors is the area called "Pardaugava", or "on the other side of river Daugava", the

neighborhood that you pass on your way into the city center from the airport. Here, 19<sup>th</sup>-century architecture coexists with several exciting, modern projects, while there are still many cobbled streets and wooden houses that testify that this area was once true countryside, despite the very short distance to the old town. Here you can also visit the island Kipsala with its beautiful, renovated wooden houses and small mansions, and Latvia's new National Library that rises high like a ski slope above the roof tops.

### **Latvian National Library**

The impressively large building on the left bank of the Daugava River is called the "Castle of light" by Latvians. The library fulfills an important function in preserving Latvia's literary treasure while, at the same time, being a comfortable and modern place for its many visitors. From the top hall you will find one of the best views over the city. It took almost 10 years to build this library, which was inaugurated on August 29, 2014.

### **Agenskalna market**

Open since 1898, Agenskalna Market is the largest and oldest market in Pardaugava and has the status of protected national cultural monument. The market reopened in May 2022 after significant renovation works. Today the market offers all traditional market services, and is also an inclusive, versatile and environmentally friendly public space where cultural, educational and various other events take place in collaboration with the local communities.

### **House of Blackheads, coin making**

The House of the Black Heads built in 1334 as a venue for meetings and banquets held by Riga's various public organizations, is a landmark of Riga Old City and a venue for exhibitions, concerts and other events., The building was totally destroyed by bombs in the Second World War but was fully rebuilt in 1999. The only part, which survived the bombings, is the Medieval cellar, which one can visit for a tour and where you also have the possibility to make your own metal coin.

### **Black balsam tasting at the Black Magic Bar**

Riga Black Magic bar is the right place to enjoy Latvia's most famous alcoholic beverage while hearing the legend of the origin of "Riga Black Balsam" and its inventor, alchemist and pharmacist Abraham Kuncce. He invented this miracle healing potion in 18<sup>th</sup> century, an infusion of 24 herbs, that became very popular in the country and was considered a medicine that could cure almost all ailments.

### **Riga Christmas market at the Dome square**

Located in the centre of the Old Town and opened a day before the First Advent Sunday, Riga Christmas market offers traditional Christmas treats such as mulled wine, gingerbread, roasted almonds, Christmas

tea and coffee, delicious smoked meats and other tasty products. The fair also offers a wide range of Latvian handcraft for Christmas gifts - patterned mittens, skillfully turned wooden candlesticks, jarred sunny-smelling Latvian honey, sweet-smelling wax candles, handmade warm socks, hats and scarfs, amber and silver jewelry, ecological wooden toys and rag bears. The Christmas market is known for its charm, lively atmosphere, music and open fire kitchens.

### **Backstage tour to the Latvian National Opera**

Latvians love their white opera house, and they are immensely proud of the success of Latvian singers, conductors and ballet dancers. Names such as Mikhail Baryshnikov, Elina Garanca, Kristine Opolais, Andris Nelsons and Maris Jansons are well known on most international opera stages. The beautiful opera house from the late 1800s was one of the first buildings that Latvia renovated after regained independence in 1991. We offer an hour long backstage tour of the opera house, where one can watch rehearsals, see the costume rooms, step on the stage and see how the stage decorations are operated.

### **Visit to the Latvian National Art museum**

On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Latvia in 2018, the beautiful National Museum of Latvia was completely renovated. This stately building, located in one of Riga's central parks, is home to Latvia's greatest art treasure, with works by Latvian artists from several centuries – from the 1700s to modernism and postmodern art. The collection includes works by Latvians who lived and created both in Latvia and in exile during different eras. In addition to the permanent exhibition, there are often various temporary exhibitions.

### **Tour and hemp product tasting at the Mentendorff house**

The Mentendorff House, with its 17<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> century atmosphere, is the only museum of its kind in the Baltics. The museum, once the home of a wealthy merchant's family, exhibits the every day life in a Riga household. Nowadays the house also serves as a location for different thematic tours and experiences. Hemp products are Latvian superfoods – Latvians make hemp butter, oil, biscuits and other treats, which are both healthy and tasty.

### **Museum of the Occupation of Latvia**

Latvia is a country located in the middle of several great powers – something that the Latvian people have experienced many times over the centuries. German landlords, Russian tsars and Swedish kings have all demanded their share of this land. After the end of World War 1, Latvians were finally able to proclaim their own, sovereign state, but unfortunately this independence only lasted for just over 20 years. During World War II, Latvia was occupied alternately by the Soviet army and by Hitler's German army. After the end of the war, the Soviet occupation power kept its dominance for almost 50 years, but in 1991 Latvia

(together with Estonia and Lithuania) was able to regain its independence. The Riga Occupation Museum tells this story through documents, photographs, objects and historical testimonies of everything that happened during those years of oppression.