

THE BALTIC STATES

The Baltic States (also known as the Baltics, Baltic nations or Baltic countries) are three northern European countries east of the Baltic Sea – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. While the indigenous populations of Latvia and Lithuania are known as Baltic peoples, those of Estonia are Finnic peoples. The Baltics cover 175 000 km², with a population of 6 826 000 people. Baltic States have historically been in the Swedish (or, in Lithuania's case, Polish), German, Danish, and Russian spheres of influence. In the late 1980s a massive campaign of civil resistance against Soviet rule, known as the Singing Revolution, began. Baltic Way was one of the most spectacular events when a two-million-strong human chain stretched for 600 km from Tallinn to Vilnius on August 23, 1989. In the wake of this campaign Gorbachev's government had privately concluded that the departure of the Baltic republics had become "inevitable". This process contributed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union setting a precedent for the other Soviet republics to secede from the USSR. Soviet Union recognized the independence of three Baltic States on September 4, 1991.



Capital cities: Tallinn (Estonia), Riga (Latvia) and Vilnius (Lithuania)

Population: 6.8 million people

Languages: Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, Russian and English

Visa and passport: a Canadian passport valid 3 months after return is required - SUBJECT TO CHANGE - For accurate information, please consult the Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada at: www.travel.gc.ca

Time change : GMT + 3

Currency: Local currency is Euro.

Electricity: 220 volts.

Souvenirs: Wooden, dolomite and glass crafts. Honey and marzipan.



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MAIN CITIES

Tallinn

With half a million citizens, Tallinn is hardly a world metropolis. However: short distances and low traffic are advantages to cherish. Whether you have only few hours or few days, you get to experience a lot. Medieval Tallinn Old Town is one of the best preserved Hanseatic town centres in the world. Tallinn's medieval Old Town is known around the world for its authentic Hanseatic architecture. Enjoy the cobblestone streets and houses dating back as far as to 11th century, visit few of the local galleries and museums, indulge in small cozy cafés or restaurants and buy travel memorabilia from summer or Christmas open air Hanseatic fairs.



Riga

There is so much to discover in Riga. The Old Town, the historic centre of Riga is today included in the UNESCO World Heritage. Despite being more than 800 years old this is a modern European capital that offers numerous open-air cafes, operas and concerts, brilliant architecture, from the medieval to the Art Nouveau, an old city centre, good shopping and small cosy restaurants. You also find hundreds of green areas and parks in the city, forty museums, a lot of theatres and an active artistic life Riga manages to keep in harmony its vast green areas and parks in the very city centre. Or just choose to take a walk in the Old Town on its cobblestone streets

and just look up at the eaves and feel the wings of history. The main sights in the old town are Riga Castle, St Peter's Church and the Dome Cathedral.

Vilnius

Vilnius, the baroque beauty of the Baltic, is a city of immense allure. As stunning as it is bizarre, it easily tops the country's best-attraction bill, drawing tourists like moths to a flame with an easy, confident charm and a warm, golden glow that makes one wish for long midsummer evenings every day of the year. At its heart is Europe's largest baroque old town, so precious that Unesco added it to its World Heritage list. Adding to this heady mix is a combination of cobbled alleys, crumbling corners, majestic hilltop views, breakaway states and traditional artists' workshops – all in a city so small you'd sometimes think it was a village. There are reminders of loss and pain too, yet the spirit of freedom and resistance has prevailed, and the city is forging a new identity, combining the past with a present and future that involves world cuisine, a burgeoning nightlife and shiny new skyscrapers.



For further information,
visit the official tourist board websites:

www.visitestonia.com

www.latviatravel.com

www.lietuva.lt

