



Latvia

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Best Places to Stay

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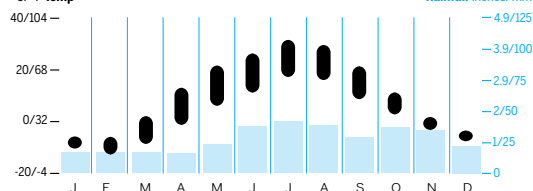
Why Go?

A tapestry of sea, lakes and woods, Latvia is best described as a vast unspoilt parkland with just one real city – its cosmopolitan capital, Rīga. The country might be small, but the amount of personal space it provides is enormous. You can always secure a chunk of pristine nature all for yourself, be it for trekking, cycling or dreaming away on a white-sand beach amid pine-covered dunes. Having been invaded by every regional power, Latvia has more cultural layers and a less homogenous population than its neighbours. People here fancy themselves to be the least pragmatic and the most artistic of the Baltic lot. They prove the point with myriad festivals and a merry, devil-may-care attitude – well, a subdued Nordic version of it.

When to Go

Rīga

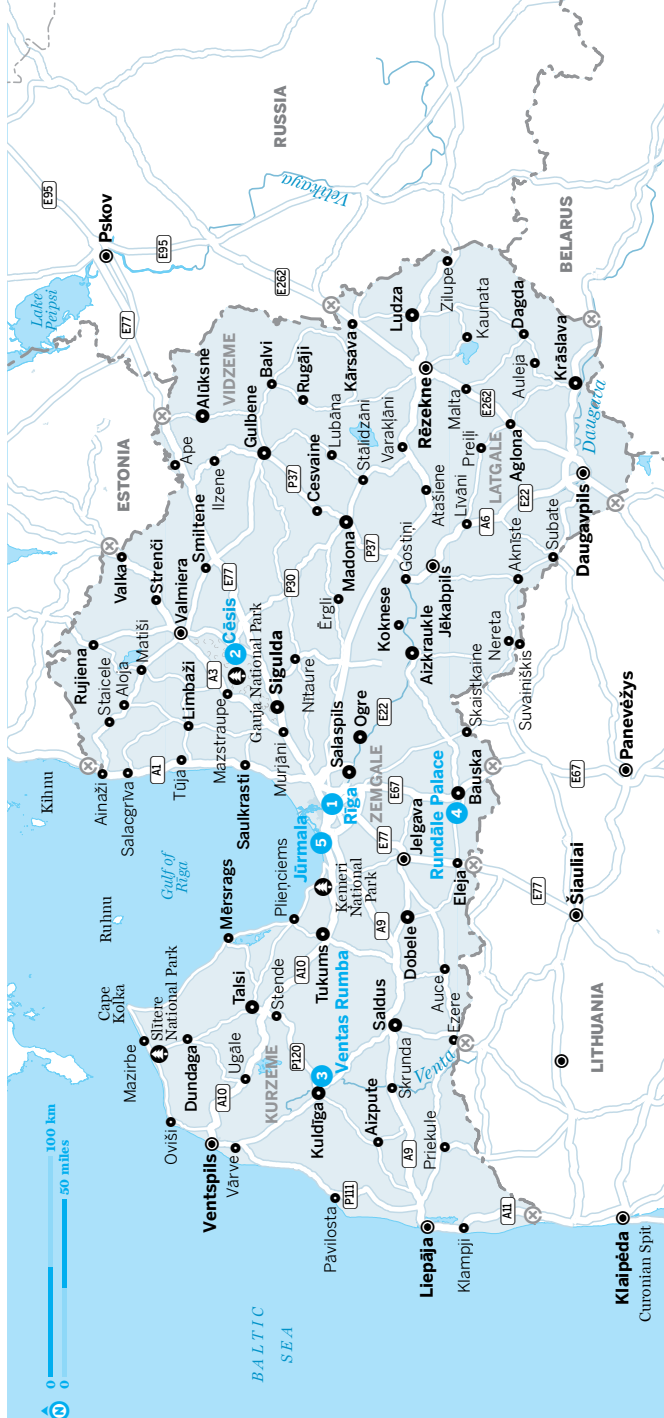
°C/°F Temp



Jun–Aug Summer starts with an all-night solstice romp, then it's off to the beach.

Sep Refusing to let summer go, Rīgans sip lattes under heat lamps at al fresco cafes.

Dec Celebrate the festive season in the birthplace of the Christmas tree.



Latvia Highlights

- 1 Rīga** (p214)
Clicking your camera at the nightmarish menagerie of devilish gargoyles, mythical beasts, praying goddesses and twisting vines that inhabits the city's surplus of art nouveau architecture.
- 2 Cēsis** (p223)
Launching lighting raids into Gauja National Park from the castle fortress.
- 3 Ventas Rumba** (p224)
Joining swarms of fish trying to jump over the waterfall, the widest (and possibly the shortest) in Europe.
- 4 Rundāle Palace** (p215)
Sneaking away from the capital and indulging in aristocratic decadence.
- 5 Jūrmala** (p221)
Hobnobbing with Russian jetsetters in the heart of the swanky spa scene.