



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BALTICS

Back-Roads | Europe (BRT)

A decadent display of fascinating history, lavish Art Nouveau architecture, picturesque natural beauty and tranquil towns – this tour of the Baltics will journey through some of Europe’s last remaining hidden gems. From the grandeur of Vilnius to Tallinn’s timeless masterpieces, we’ll uncover a local way of life and savour each unique and breathtaking sight along the way.



TOUR CODE:

BBHWH2



Thank you for choosing **Back-Roads**

Your extraordinary adventure awaits!

About your tour notes

These tour notes contain everything you need to know before your tour departs – from where to meet your fellow guests and local guide to what essentials to pack for your journey.

We recommend you print this document out and bring it with you on your tour. Give a copy to loved ones at home so they can follow your adventure, too.

IMPORTANT: please refresh this document as close to your departure as possible to ensure you're equipped with the latest information available.

THE BACK-ROADS DIFFERENCE

- ✓ Explore the rich heritage of Trakai's 14th-century island castle
- ✓ Uncover Cold War secrets and preserved Soviet memorabilia at the Ligatne Soviet Bunker
- ✓ Enjoy a relaxing scenic boat journey along the Riga Canals

TOUR CURRENCIES

- Lithuania - EUR
- Latvia - EUR
- Estonia - EUR
- Finland - EUR

Your itinerary

DAY 1 | VILNIUS

We'll meet the group in Lithuania's dreamy capital – studded with cobbled streets, mysterious church spires and enchanting green spaces. After settling into our hotel, we'll get to know one another better over a sumptuous welcome meal and Lithuanian folk show. Here's to the incredible adventure before us! Accommodation: Hotel Vilnia (or similar)

MEALS:

✓ Dinner

DAY 2 | VILNIUS – TRAKAI – VILNIUS

Our day will begin with a walking tour of Vilnius – taking in the narrow, winding streets of the Old Town, the Cathedral, St Anne's Church and the impressive Vilnius University campus with our expert Tour Leader. After soaking up the views from Gediminas Hill and Tower, we'll enjoy some free time to lunch at our leisure. Then: we'll board the mini-coach to Trakai to visit the famous island castle. There will be plenty of free time to explore the 14th-century castle (located in the middle of picturesque Lake Galve) and various exhibitions at the museum – before making tracks back to Vilnius for an evening spent at our leisure. Accommodation: Hotel Vilnia (or similar)

MEALS:

✓ Breakfast

DAY 3 | VILNIUS – HILL OF CROSSES – RUNDALÉ PALACE – RIGA

Before leaving Lithuania, we'll make a stop at the famous Hill of Crosses – a site of pilgrimage where a vast number of rosaries and crosses adorn a small hill. After crossing the border into Latvia, we'll visit the impressive Rundale Palace – the most outstanding monument of Baroque and Rococo art in the country. After arriving in Riga later this afternoon, we'll have some time to relax at the hotel before regrouping for a sumptuous included dinner. Accommodation: Hestia Radi Un Draugi (or similar)

MEALS:

✓ Breakfast

✓ Dinner

DAY 4 | RIGA

After breakfast at the hotel, we'll board the mini-coach for a driving tour of Riga's stunning Art Nouveau District. Our expert Tour Leader will point out some of the more significant architectural pieces and explain the rich history behind the area's artwork as we go. Then: we'll embark on a walking tour of the city, taking in some of the most important sights including the Dome Cathedral and Freedom Monument along the way. Following an included lunch at a local restaurant, we'll enjoy a leisurely boat trip along the Riga City Canal – taking some time to relax and soak up the UNESCO Heritage-listed Old Town from an alternative angle. This evening, we'll be free to explore the area's culinary delights at our leisure. Accommodation: Hestia Radi Un Draugi (or similar)

MEALS:

- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Lunch

DAY 5 | RIGA – GAUJA NATIONAL PARK – LIGATNE – DIKLI

Today's agenda will see us exploring the breathtaking Gauja National Park – one of the oldest and largest national parks in Latvia. Enjoy a leisurely morning taking in the diverse natural landforms and picturesque views before we continue to regional Ligatne to visit an underground Soviet Bunker. Built during the Cold War, the bunker shelters a unique exhibit of preserved historical artifacts from Soviet times. Our final destination for the day will be Dikli, where a delicious included meal awaits. Accommodation: Dikli Palace Hotel (or similar)

MEALS:

- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Dinner

DAY 6 | DIKLI – TARTU

Today, we'll set a course for the handsome town of Tartu, making a brief stop for a taste of the local beer at a traditional Estonian brewery. Following that, we'll enjoy an orientation tour of Tartu with our knowledgeable Tour Leader – before having the evening free to relax back at our hotel or seek out a charming restaurant for some local cuisine. Accommodation: Dorpat Hotel (or similar)

MEALS:

- ☑ Breakfast

DAY 7 | TARTU – LAHEMAA NATIONAL PARK – TALLINN

This morning we'll head towards the Peipsi region, which straddles the border between Estonia and Russia. Near Mustvee, we'll pay a visit to a fascinating community known as the 'Old Believers'. After sharing tea and Krendel bread, we'll enjoy a little fresh air and a tasty picnic before we get back on the road. Our next stop? Estonia's largest national park, Lahemaa, where we'll spend the afternoon exploring the fascinating ecosystem. Then: the winding streets and ancient castles of Tallinn await. Tonight, we'll clink glasses over one final meal together and look back over what an incredible adventure it's been. Accommodation: Hotel L'Ermitage (or similar)

MEALS:

- ☑ Breakfast
- ☑ Lunch
- ☑ Dinner

DAY 8 | TALLINN – HELSINKI

This morning we'll take the short ferry ride across the Baltic Sea from Tallinn to Helsinki – where our trip will come to a close.

MEALS:

- ☑ Breakfast



Tour information

Meals

INCLUDED MEALS

Breakfast (B) is included daily.

Some of your lunches and dinners are also included, either in hotels or local restaurants. These are indicated by (L) and (D) in the itinerary.

Please note that drinks will not always be included.

We will do our best to accommodate any specific dietary requirements you may have. Please ensure to make these clear to us before your tour begins so we can communicate them to our hotels, restaurants and suppliers.

Other information

Finances

CHANGING MONEY

CASH: Foreign money can be changed at banks, airports, some railway and tube stations, and at major hotels (though at a less favourable rate).

CREDIT CARDS: Visa and MasterCard are widely accepted. American Express is only accepted in some larger establishments.

CASH MACHINES: ATMS are widely available.

TIPPING

Tipping is entirely at your discretion. If you feel you have received exceptional service, it is recommended that you tip £1-2/€ per day for Drivers and £4- 5/€ per day for Tour Leaders.

Insurance

Before travelling with Back-Roads Touring, it is compulsory for all guests to take out comprehensive travel insurance. Please ensure your insurance covers medical expenses (including repatriation), cancellation cover, loss or damage to baggage and personal effects, money and personal liability.

We recommend you carry your insurance details with you at all times. You may be asked to provide details of your medical insurance or a payment guarantee in some countries before medical assistance can be provided.

For more information, please see our FAQ page: www.backroadstouring.com/faqs

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to contact our friendly Customer Service team:

www.backroadstouring.com/contact-us

Passports and visas

Please ensure your passport is valid for at least six months after the last day of your tour.

Some countries will refuse entry if you do not have at least six months validity remaining on your passport after your departure date. Depending on your nationality, you may require a visa to enter certain countries.

It is your responsibility to obtain visas prior to your tour's departure. To determine which visas you'll need, you can consult either your own government's website or the government websites of the countries in which you will be travelling.

PLEASE NOTE: Some visas can take up to six weeks to acquire, so don't leave it until the last minute. Also, bear in mind that the validity of a visa often runs from its date of issue rather than the date of entry into the country. Please check with the appropriate embassy/embassies prior to departure as requirements do change periodically.

We advise you to either carry a photocopy of your passport (and visa, if applicable) with you while abroad, or to ensure that you leave a copy with relatives back at home. This will enable the local embassy or high commission

to arrange a replacement if the original should be lost or stolen. If you do take copies with you on your tour, please ensure that you keep these separate from your original documents.

Medication and mobility

Whilst on your tour, we want you to have the smoothest journey possible which requires some mobility conditions:

- You must be fit enough to get on and off the vehicle on a regular basis, and to walk around towns and villages or to attractions.
- You must be able to walk up and down stairs and use a shower over the bath.

Please note that, unfortunately, we are unable to accommodate mobility scooter or wheelchair users as we frequently stay in traditional-style hotels and the majority do not have lifts or ground-floor rooms.

If you take medicine for certain conditions, such as diabetes or heart problems, please carry it with you at all times.

Please declare any medical conditions you may have in advance of your tour. If you are in any doubt as to whether our tours are suitable for you, please contact our friendly Customer Service team:

www.backroadstouring.com/contact-us

Mental health and wellbeing

Culture shock, homesickness and periods of feeling down happen regardless of age. Be rest assured that if you're feeling low, your Tour Leader and Driver will do their utmost to make you smile.

Measures you can take to look after your mental health and wellbeing while on the road with us are:

- Call loved ones. Hearing a familiar voice whilst in an unfamiliar destination can help ground you and remind you you're not alone.
- Eat well. Nobody feels their best when they're hungry. There are plenty of nutritious culinary delights to be savoured along the road!
- Integrate with your fellow guests. The more you socialise with the group, the less likely you'll feel homesick.

Transport

We travel in premium mini-coaches equipped with comfortable seats, air conditioning and large windows for enjoying the view.

With far more flexibility than a standard-size coach, we're able to take the scenic route – winding through beautiful countryside to the heart of tiny villages and coastal towns.

What to bring

Based on our experience, the following items are essential.

Please note, this is a general packing list for Back-Roads tours. What you pack will depend on the countries you're visiting as well as the time of year you plan to travel.

CLOTHING:

- | | | |
|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| ☑ Sun hat | ☑ Long-sleeved tops | ☑ Light jacket |
| ☑ Sunglasses | ☑ Short-sleeved tops | ☑ Waterproof jacket |
| ☑ Sleepwear | ☑ Shorts/skirts | ☑ Trousers |
| ☑ Warm jacket | ☑ Socks | ☑ Swimwear |
| ☑ Underwear | ☑ Smart casual evening wear | ☑ Walking shoes/comfortable shoes |

OTHER THINGS TO PACK:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|--|--------------------|
| ☑ Multi-use adapter plug | ☑ Toiletries | ☑ Camera |
| ☑ Batteries | ☑ Sunscreen | ☑ Towel |
| ☑ Umbrella | ☑ Reusable water bottle | ☑ Insect repellent |
| ☑ Any personal medication | ☑ Basic medical kit (including paracetamol, aspirin, plasters etc) | |

That's it!

**We look forward to seeing you
on tour.**