

The Baltic States

25th June – 23rd July 2019



Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia

Positioned in the north east corner of Europe the Baltic States provide one destination with 3 countries, each having a unique culture and varied cuisine/ history. See them now before they are changed forever, and whilst travelling at a time of year to enjoy the 10:30pm summer sunsets that occur being this far north.

All three Baltic capitals of Vilnius, Tallinn and Riga are included in the tour and we have English speaking guides arranged in each to ensure you miss none of the major sights. Outside of the main cities the States remain very rural with little traffic making for a relaxed driving experience. Crossing each country you will see evidence of the Soviet occupation that lasted until 1991 when the States took their independence through the 'Singing Revolution'.

For the Baltic people singing has a strong tradition as an expression of their heritage, and in Tallinn once every five years they join together for a unique event featuring 20,000 singers on stage supported by an audience of over 100,000. Our tour is timed to participate in this 'not to be missed' event and we have tickets arranged for you, be prepared for a very memorable experience.

Throughout the second half of the tour we travel along the Baltics Amber Coast, including a stay on the sea's second largest island of Saaremaa, famed for its locally produced food and beers. Throughout the tour we have many group meals included, so trying local produce will not be a problem. Also try not to leave the Baltic States without taking home at least one small piece of Amber.

28 Nights

Day One – Tuesday 25th June

We meet in the east of Poland in the heart of the countries Lake District region. This evening the Tour Directors will host a welcome drinks reception and tour briefing at their motorhome.

Day Two – Wednesday 26th June

Today we cross into Lithuania and travel to our campsite located on the lake at Trakai. This evening we celebrate our arrival in the Baltics with an evening in the campsite bar/restaurant with Lithuanian beer & wine accompanied by traditional hearty food. **170 miles**

Day Three – Thursday 27th June

Trakai is famous for its 'Island Castle' and today has been left free for you to visit. This is easy with boats running directly from the campsite jetty across Lake Galve to the castle entrance.

Day Four – Friday 28th June

Today we visit the first of three Baltic capitals, Vilnius in Lithuania. The 'Jerusalem of the North', a city of 45 churches but whose bells never ring otherwise the city would not rest. Our coach collects and return us direct from the campsite and our English speaking guide will help us appreciate our time in this fascinating city. Included is lunch in an old city centre restaurant.

Day Five – Saturday 29th June

For the time being we leave Lithuania and arrive in Latvia. On this our first of two visits to Latvia we cross its rural eastern side where our destination is to the pilgrim town of Aglona; receiving around 250,000 people each year its basilica is the most important Catholic monument in the Baltic's. For tonight we have been granted permission to overnight (no facilities so we will use our motorhomes own) within the grounds of the basilica, which we tour in the afternoon. In the evening we visit a nearby bread museum for a rustic supper. **165 miles**



Day Six – Sunday 30th June

Our drive today takes us across the Latvia – Estonia border and our first Estonian night is spent in the Lake District. Being more closely tied with Finland than its Baltic neighbours Estonia has a different feel with Nordic connections particularly prevalent. **165 miles**

Day Seven – Monday 1st July

A free day. Our campsite is situated within an area of lakes & nature with lovely walks all around, where the pretty town of Voru is a comfortable 25 minutes walk away. Being this far north the sun now sets around 10.30pm each evening with darkness arriving an hour later so there is plenty of time for exploring.

Day Eight – Tuesday 2nd July

Picturesque drive through rural areas to arrive at Vosu in the heart of the Lahemaa National Park, Estonia's most protected area. **160 miles**

Day Nine – Wednesday 3rd July

Late afternoon we are taken to the Lahemaa visitor centre where we have an opportunity to learn about the National park. From here we move to an eighteenth century Manor House for the evening. Open to the public throughout the day as the doors close we enter for a private function. We take a tour of the baroque Manor House cumulating in the banqueting hall where we are treated to a private dinner with wine.

Day Ten – Thursday 4th July

Completely free for exploring the Lahemaa National Park. This can be done by walking, cycling or using the local bus which passes in front of the campsite.

Day Eleven – Friday 5th July

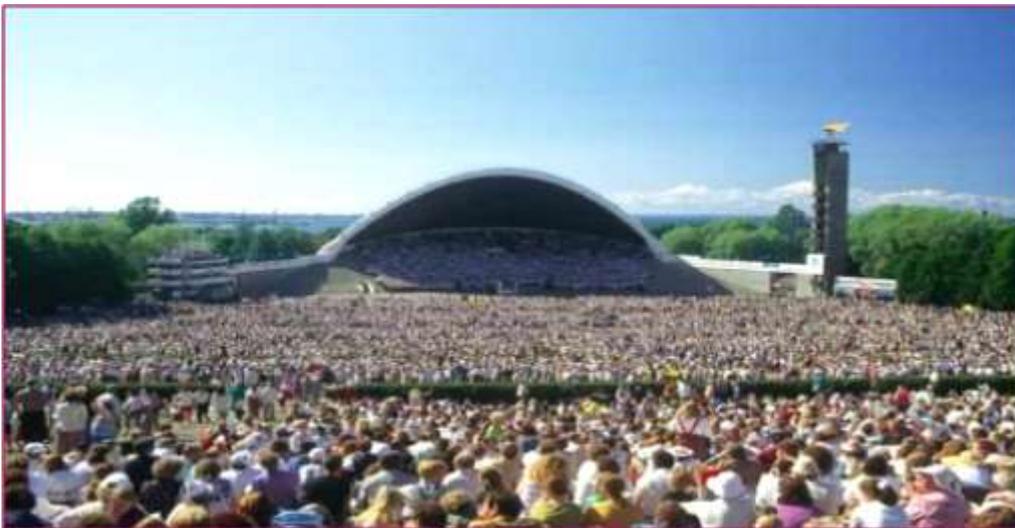
Short drive to Tallinn, Estonia's beautiful capital. Late afternoon we go into the city for a guided tour of the historical centre followed by an evening of dinner and drinks in a central city restaurant. **55 miles**

Day Twelve – Saturday 6th July

A free day and opportunity to see the preparations taking place for tomorrow.

Day Thirteen – Sunday 7th July

Today may well be one of those 'once in a lifetime' experiences as we join the audience at the Estonian Song Festival. Founded in 1869 the festival takes place just once every five years, miss it this time and the next chance will be in 2024. Throughout the day you will see many people in traditional costume performing in national and international choirs as they build up to the 'Joined Choirs' finale featuring 20,000 people singing in unison to create a very moving experience. So moving the event has been designated by UNESCO as a masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.



Day Fourteen – Monday 8th July

We leave Tallinn today with a drive to Haapsalu on Estonia's west coast. Surrounded by water on three sides it is imaginatively known as the 'Nordic Venice'. Tonight we have dinner in a restaurant overlooking the lagoon. **140 miles**

Day Fifteen – Tuesday 9th July

A free day. You may choose to relax around the campsite or visit Haapsalu centre with its old castle and decommissioned Victorian train station now a railway museum.

Day Sixteen – Wednesday 10th July

We move to the Island of Saaremaa, the second largest in the Baltic Sea. Now part of Estonia it has in the past been ruled by Germany, Denmark, Sweden and Russia giving it many unique features still visible today. The islanders are known for their talents as brewers of beer and makers of traditional handy crafts. Ferry crossing time to Saaremaa is around thirty minutes (2017 - £25 payable locally). **70 miles**

Day Seventeen – Thursday 11th July

An excursion to the island's capital, Kuressaare, today. The town is home to the medieval episcopal Castle, the only intact medieval fortress in the Baltic States and today housing the Saaremaa Regional Museum. Within the town the islands handy crafts can be viewed and there are many interesting coffee bars and restaurants to explore.

Day Eighteen – Friday 12th July

A free day. Our campsite is located in a lovely rural setting and ideal for a relaxing day.

Day Nineteen – Saturday 13th July

We cross back to the mainland by ferry and with our drive leave Estonia returning to Latvia, this time to its Amber coast. Our first stay on the coast is near the Baltic's largest city of Riga, capital of Latvia and home to one of Europe's leading collection of Art Nouveau architecture. **240 miles**

Day Twenty – Sunday 14th July

Riga is our destination for today. We visit the Art Nouveau district by coach and take a walking tour of the pedestrian historic centre, both guided in English. Included will be a restaurant lunch within the old city and free time for a wander.

Day Twenty-one – Monday 15th July

A completely free day.

Day Twenty-two – Tuesday 16th July

We drive south from Riga to Latvia's grandest Baroque building, the Rundale Palace, which has 138 rooms furnished in the Rococo style. We will stay in our motorhomes overnight in the Palace car park, no facilities so an opportunity to use your motorhomes own. Throughout the afternoon you will have unlimited access to the magnificent grounds and gardens. This evening there will be a private guided tour of the Palace interior followed by dinner in the Palace's own restaurant from where it is no more than a short walk back to your motorhome beds at the end of the evening. **65 miles**



Day Twenty-three – Wednesday 17th July

Leaving Rundale we return to the Amber coast to arrive at Ventspils, Latvia's city of flowers and number one daytrip destination. However, do not be misled, with mass tourism yet to reach Latvia Ventspils remains a calm resort. **100 miles**

Day Twenty-four – Thursday 18th July

Today has been left completely free for you to enjoy the attractions, parks and beach that surround our campsite. One being the adjoining open air museum recreating Latvian rural life from the past century, complete with fully functioning narrow gauge steam train.

Day Twenty-five – Friday 19th July

Transport has been arranged for a visit to Kuldiga, a picturesque provincial Latvian town.

Day Twenty-six – Saturday 20th July

We leave Latvia and cross back into Lithuania, heading for our next campsite on the UNESCO protected Curonian Spit nature reserve (2017 - £25 for a motorhome to enter, payable locally). To reach the Curonian Spit we take a short ferry journey across the Curonian Lagoon (2017 - £35 return, payable locally). **180 miles**

Day Twenty-seven – Sunday 21st July

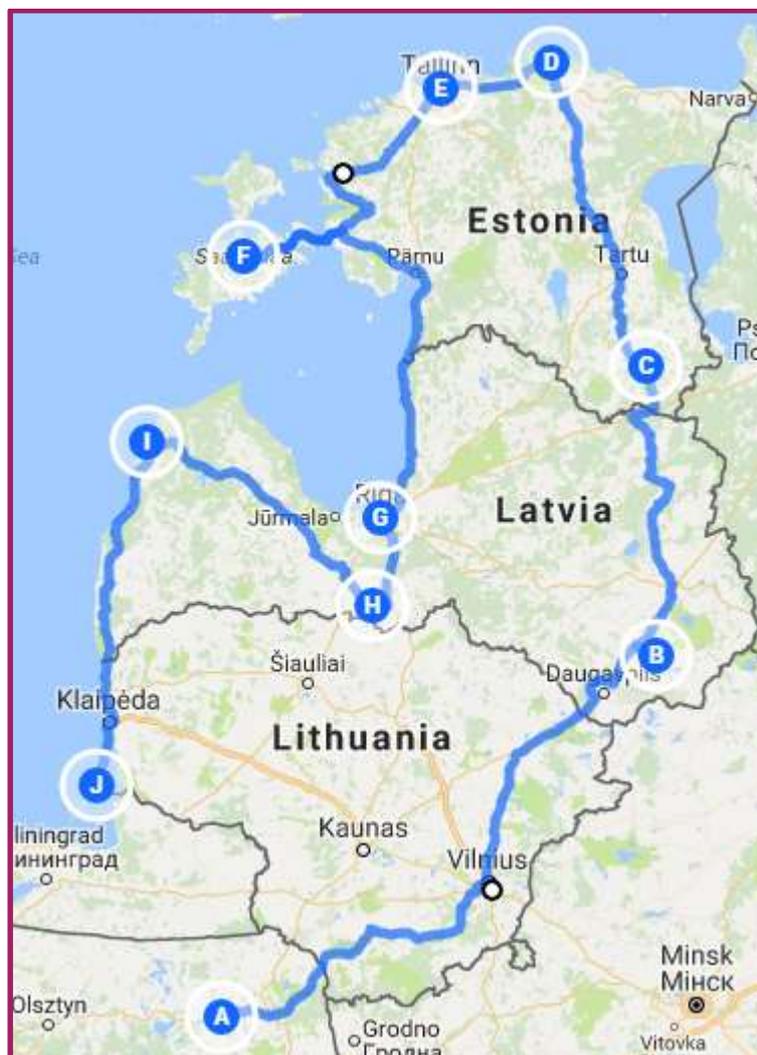
Sandwiched between the Curonian Spit and the mainland is the Curonian Lagoon Nature Reserve. Today we see much of this protected area with a boat cruise on the lagoon accompanied by a light lunch.

Day Twenty-eight – Monday 22nd July

A free day to relax in preparation for the evening. Having spent 28 days in the Baltic's, tonight we have a 'Farewell Evening' in the campsite bar/restaurant with local music, dinner and drinks, a time to enjoy and reflect on the many places visited over the last month.

Day Twenty-nine – Tuesday 23rd July

Tour Ends. You may choose to make your return journey home overland through Poland or alternatively take the overnight ferry from Klaipeda, Lithuania (just a few miles from our last campsite) to Kiel in northern Germany from where it is a two-day drive back to Calais. The Tour Directors will be travelling back this way and if you would like to travel with them the ferry and return campsites can be arranged for you as part of the optional package below.



PRICE

TOUR DEPOSIT £400

Motorhome with 2 people = £1,849 per person

Motorhome with 1 person = £2,299

INCLUDED IN PRICE

- 26 campsite nights with hook-up
- 2 nights overnight parking – No facilities
- All transfers required for included excursions
- Entrance fees on guided excursions
- Services of two experienced Tour Directors in their own motorhome
- Tour Information Pack including suggested routes, GPS co-ordinates
- Michelin Map
- DK Baltic States Guidebook

EXCURSIONS, EVENTS & MEALS INCLUDED

- Drinks reception with Tour Directors
- Welcome to the 'Baltics' evening with drinks and local food
- Guided excursion of Vilnius, capital of Lithuania with city restaurant lunch
- Tour of Aglona Basilica
- Evening at bread museum with rustic dinner
- Visit to Lahemaa National Park visitor centre
- Tour of Manor House with Dinner & wine
- Guided tour of Tallinn centre
- Evening Dinner with wine in Tallinn city restaurant
- Entrance tickets to Estonian Song Festival
- Dinner in Haapsalu lakeside restaurant with wine
- Excursion to Kuressaare, capital of Saaremaa Island
- Guided excursion of Riga, capital of Latvia with city restaurant lunch
- Entrance to Rundale Palace grounds and gardens
- Guided tour of Rundale Palace interior
- Dinner in Rundale Palace restaurant with wine
- Excursion to Kuldiga
- Boat trip on Curonian Lagoon with light lunch
- Farewell Evening with Dinner & wine

This tour starts in Eastern Poland and ends in Lithuania. If you would like to travel at the same time from the UK as the Tour Directors and return to the UK with them, please book the optional tour package so that everything can be arranged on your behalf. Within the optional package is included your Lithuania – Germany overnight ferry as well as your Dover/Calais return crossings.

OPTIONAL EXTRA PACKAGE

- Return Dover/Calais Ferry with 60 day Flexible Ticket + Club Class Lounge
- 7 additional campsite nights with electric hook-ups on the outward journey, starting in Kent on Tuesday 18th June 2019 then in Belgium, 2 x Germany and 3 x Poland
- Dinner at campsite in Poland
- At the end of the tour, Klaipeda in Lithuania to Kiel in Germany overnight ferry with en-suite inside cabin
- 3 additional campsite nights with electric hook-ups back to Calais
- Tour information pack with suggested routes and GPS co-ordinates
- Services of Tour Directors travelling in their own motorhome

OPTIONAL PACKAGE PRICE

Motorhome with 2 people @ £649 per person

Motorhome with 1 person @ £1199