

Baltic Trails Adventure

Trip Code: BSH

Version: BSH Baltic Trails Adventure



WALK & TREK



GUIDED GROUP



LEISURELY



HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy walking tours through the beautiful cities of Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn
- Hike amongst ancient forest and rich flora in Lahemaa National Park
- Visit Trakai Castle and stroll through the colourful fishing village of Nida
- Discover protected wetlands and beautiful bogs in a wonderful ecosystem
- Walk over the dunes of the Curonian Spit and try your hand at Amber Hunting in the Baltic Sea.

AT A GLANCE

- 7 days walking and sightseeing
- Join at Vilnius / end Tallinn

ACCOMMODATIONS & MEALS

- 8 Breakfasts
- 8 nights Hotel

[VIEW DATES, PRICES & BOOK YOUR HOLIDAY HERE](#)

Introduction

The Baltic States are one of Europe's best kept secrets filled with wonderful culture, fascinating history, beautiful architecture, charming cities, delicious food and captivating scenery. This historical region offers a kaleidoscope of colour, which is perfect for a walking and cultural holiday. Along with the medieval heart of Vilnius and labyrinth of cobbled streets in Tallinn, you'll explore the Gothic Spires of Riga, the breath-taking dunes of the Curonian Spit and, if you decide to extend your trip, the laid back Finnish capital of Helsinki. A variety of lovely walks takes you over Estonia's protected bogs, through ancient protected forest and over the mysterious Hill of Witches. Picturesque fishing villages, dramatic castles and magnificent palaces are a wonderful contrast to the Cormorant and Grey Heron colonies. From local food markets to meeting the local Karaimes with their mouth-watering pastries, this holiday will open your eyes to Baltic flavours.

Is this holiday for you?

This lovely holiday includes active walking tours in cities, a variety of easy walks and wonderful cultural highlights of the Baltic States. Walks are up to 3 hours on easy trails, forest paths and wooden walkways, with a relaxed and gentle pace. As the holiday covers the highlights of the three main Baltic States, there are some days with longer driving days. However we'll be using comfortable transport and staying in pleasant hotels throughout the holiday. This holiday is perfect for regular walkers who are looking for a combination of easy walks, active sightseeing and some free time to explore cities at leisure.

Itinerary

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DAY 1

Meet at the group hotel in Vilnius Airport. A single group airport transfer is included.

Meet at the group hotel in Vilnius. A single timed airport transfer is included. Described as the Baroque Beauty of the Baltics, Vilnius has the largest baroque style ancient town centre in Eastern Europe. The city is great for strolling through, and is dotted with cobbled streets which are home to galleries, beautiful Orthodox and Catholic churches and pavement cafes for people watching. Other highlights include the Road of Freedom, a 60m sculpture. The sculpture symbolises the 2 million people who, joined hands, stretching for over 600 kilometres to connect the three Baltic States striving for independence. For a bird's eye view of Vilnius, a 15 min walk from the centre takes you to the Three Crosses Monument which offers a panoramic view of the city. This evening we'll meet with the leader for a briefing before heading out for dinner in a local restaurant.



Accommodation
Hotel

DAY 2

Hiking from Varnikai Bog to Trakai Castle. Overnight Vilnius.

This morning we will take a short transfer to Varnikai Bog, where we start our walk from the Varnikai Zoological Reserve. We walk through beautiful forests and meadows before opening to spectacular views over the Ilgelis Bog and lakes. Passing through old villages we approach Galve Lake where we will get our first views of Trakai Castle. Walking over the wooden walkways and bridges we find ourselves in the cozy medieval town of Trakai, once the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. With its beautiful location and castle perched on an island, we'll walk along the lake shore and learn about the local Karaimes. A proud ethnic group, the Karaimes have preserved their ancient traditions since arriving in Trakai in the 14th Century. Known for speaking the ancient language of Turkic, they produce mouth-watering filled pastries called kybyn. This delicious empanada-style snack includes a wide range of fillings, perfect for an afternoon snack or early dinner. Here we'll have the opportunity to taste and buy some directly from the local community. After Trakai we head back to Vilnius for a final night in the city.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
4 hrs walking

DAY 3**Hiking in Pavilniai Regional Park. Visit Uzupis Neighbourhood. Train to Klaipeda.**

Reached by short train ride, today we will explore a Regional Park within Vilnius' city boundaries. The pristine Pavilniai Regional Park is a protected area that includes the 65m high Puckoriai Rock exposure in the Vilnia River Valley. twenty thousand year old formations are visible from the lower side after an easy 1km hike. From here we can admire a wonderful panorama of Vilnius surroundings, the bends of the Vilnius River, Puckoriai Manor and the former cannon foundry.

We then return to the city to visit Uzupis neighbourhood. Located within the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, Uzupis is one of the smallest republics in the world, covering less than 1 sq km. But don't be fooled by its size - it boasts its own president, government, constitution and currency, and even has a navy consisting of three or four small boats (used mainly for ceremonial purposes). Until recently, it also had an army of around 10 men, but given the republic's peace-loving attitude, it has been retired.

After picking up our luggage from the hotel, we head to Vilnius Railway Station to take the train (3hr45) to Klaipeda.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
3 hrs walking



Distance
12KM

DAY 4**Curonian Spit Day Trip**

This morning we start early with a short bus ride to Juodkrante to walk in the mystic 'Hill of Witches'. The Hill of Witches is a unique open air museum of wooden sculptures, where devils, witches and other folklore heroes reign, opening the natural-mystical spirit of this place to visitors. After this we visit a superb Cormorant and Grey heron colony which is one of the biggest in Europe. After a short transfer we then hike from Nida Beach to Parnidis Dune, passing white sand beaches, blueberry-laden forests and Nida Lighthouse before reaching the charming town of Nida.

If you have one meal on Curonian Spit, make it smoked fish with rye bread and an ice-cold beer. The region is famed across Lithuania for pike, eel, mackerel and other fish hot-smoked (often with fragrant juniper twigs) and served simply. Curonian Spit's restaurant scene places its emphasis on homespun Lithuanian dishes. Nida has the broadest spread of restaurants but you'll also be well fed in Juodkrante.

Finally we visit the Grey Dunes Nagliai Reserve to walk a short trail (1.2km) through the sand dunes that lead us to Curonian Lagoon. before transferring by bus (30 minutes) back to Klaipeda and our hotel.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
2 hrs walking



Distance
4KM

DAY 5**Hiking Dutchman's Cap. Amber Catching Workshop. Hill of Crosses. Transfer to Riga.**

Today our hike starts from Karkle where our route leads us through a diverse and beautiful area within the Baltic Seaside Regional park. One of the most remarkable sites of the route is Dutchman's Cap Cliff - a parabolic dune emerging 24.4m from the sea which is constantly being eroded by the sea. After the spectacular views of the cliff we continue walking on an ecological "Litorina" nature trail, leading us through forest before again reaching the beach. Where we will see the WW2 fortifications 'Memel Nord' and a glacial boulder field, a remnant of the last ice age retreat from Lithuanian territory.

After our walk we will meet a group of professional amber hunters who will lead us on an amber hunting workshop. We will learn about the origin and properties of amber and if you are brave enough, will have the chance to try your luck amber catching in the Baltic Sea!

From here we take a 2hr15m transfer to The Hill of Crosses, one of the most extraordinary sites in Lithuania. The Hill of Crosses is one of the most extraordinary sites in Lithuania. The 14th century hill-fort is covered in more than 100.000 crosses that symbolise Lithuanian nationalism and beliefs. Some of the crosses are devotional, while others are memorials for many people deported to Siberia. They vary greatly in size: a few are finely carved folk-art masterpieces and some are accompanied by mournful statues of the Virgin Mary. This is definitely a place where you will learn and better understand the local community's difficult past, learn of its unshakable faith, and feel hope for the future. From here it is a 2 hour transfer to Riga.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
4 hrs walking



Distance
10KM

DAY 6**Walk in Gauja National Park and discover Riga on foot.**

Today we start with a drive to the Gauja National Park, the largest and oldest national park in Latvia. The park is known for its magnificent sandstone landscape and is dotted with cliffs and caves including Gutman's Cave of which we'll walk through. The cave is a protected geological sight which is the largest in the Baltics measuring 10 meters high, 12 m width and 19 m deep and considered the oldest tourist attraction in Latvia due to the visitor's inscriptions, signatures and carvings dating back to 1677. After Gutman's Cave we pay a visit to the atmospheric Turaida castle ruins before heading back to Riga for a walking tour. Walking around we'll visit the Old Town including Riga Castle, Cathedral, Saint Peter's Church, Swedish Gate, the Large and Small Guild House, Freedom Monument, plus the magical Three Brothers building. After the walking tour, the rest of the afternoon will be for you to explore Riga at leisure.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
2 hrs walking

DAY 7

Visit the medieval town of Cesis. Hike the Cirulisi Nature Trails. Craft beer tasting.

This morning we visit the medieval town of Cesis, dating back to the 14th century the defensive stone walls, old town hall all add to the characterisit medieval feel. We then take a relaxing walk on the Cirulisi Natura trails, meandering through forest, rivers and lake shores, admiring the beauty of the Gauja River. During the walk we will see many natural fascinations including the impressive Cirulisu Cliffs which beautifully reflect in the water of the oxbow lake.

After our walk we transfer for 35 minutes to Valmiera, where we the Valmiermuiza Craft Brewery to sample the local offerings. The beer is produced from the highest quality ingredients, following the principles of slow brewing. While visiting the factory, you will have a chance to find out how the rich history of the manor has influenced the production of the beer. During a 1.5 hour brewery visit you will witness how they brew fine beer from a combination of Valmiermuiza well water, delicious malt, aristocratic hops and natural yeast. We then transfer to Tartu by bus (2hrs).

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
2 hrs walking

DAY 8

Visit Lahemaa National Park and enjoy an ancient forest walk and the Viru Bog trail.

Today is spent walking and exploring the rich forest, cascading waterfalls and protected bogs of Estonia. We start by heading to Jagala Waterfall, the largest natural waterfall in Estonia. At 8m high and more than 50m wide, this wonderful natural body of water is home to large trout and salmon. After Jagala we'll enter the Lahemaa National Park. Established in 1971 to protect the nature and culture of North Estonia, Lahemaa is one of the most important forest reserves in Europe. Here we walk along the Oandu Old Growth Forest Nature Trail (5km), home to ancient pines. We'll also look out for bark that has been scratched or eaten by wild boar, bear and elk. Next it's one of Estonia's most protected landscapes, the Viru Bog. This 6km loop introduces us to wonderful flora and fauna as we walk over wooden walkways and look over this incredible area from the observation tower. After a full day in the park we head back to Tallinn for our final night in the city.

Meals: **B**



Accommodation
Hotel



Time
4 hrs walking

DAY 9**Final Day In Tallinn. Transfer to the Airport. Possible extension by ferry to Helsinki.**

After breakfast the morning is free for a final walk around Tallinn before the group transfer to the airport. From Tallinn it is possible to take the ferry to Helsinki, Finland on this holiday's extension to add a final country to your Baltics adventure!

Meals: **B**

Holiday Information

What's Included

- A professional and qualified tour leader
- Single timed airport transfers on arrival and departure
- All accommodation as described
- Meals as described in the Meal Plan
- All road and ferry transport (including public transport) as required by the itinerary

Joining Arrangements & Transfers

The group will meet at the hotel in Vilnius.

A single timed transfer from Vilnius Airport to the first nights hotel is provided in the early evening of Day 1 of the Land Only itinerary.

On the last day of the Land Only itinerary, there will be a single transfer to Tallinn Airport (Estonia) for flights departing in the late afternoon.

Anyone may join the group transfers by prior arrangement. Travelling as a group or on public transport saves energy. If this is not practical, we can provide private transfers at an additional cost. Taxis are also available.

Hotel contact details and an emergency number will be provided with your booking confirmation.

Meal Plan

Breakfasts are included in the holiday price. The area has a fantastic range of restaurants to suit all budgets and tastes. The cost of meals varies depending on location and courses, we suggest you allow 10 - 15 euro for a lunch and 25 - 30 euro for dinner.

Food & Water

Breakfasts are included and continental buffet-style with a choice of bread, cold meats, cheeses, eggs and jam. The food of the Baltics is influenced by Russia, Scandinavia and Germany. Rye bread is very popular, and when made fresh, it's pretty delicious. Estonian kiluvoileib, or sprat sandwich, consists of buttered rye bread, topped with Baltic herrings and egg and is very popular. Kartupeļu pankūkas (potato pancakes) are delicious and can be found in all Baltic countries. The calorie-rich cepelinai potato filled with meat, cheese or mushrooms are very good and popular. Dumplings are originally a Russian dish and popular in Estonia - where they're known as pelmeenid, in Lithuania - where they're called koldunai and in Latvia where they're called pelmeni. Similar to ravioli, the dough is rolled thin and filled with minced meat or mushrooms. Served with broth, butter, or sour cream, they are quite addictive.

Beetroot soup is a vibrant pink soup and very popular in the Baltics. Made with beetroot, cucumber, buttermilk, sour cream, hard-boiled eggs and dill, it is refreshing packed with flavor. Pickles are on every menu, and not only cucumbers. Mushrooms, beans, cabbage, peppers, and beetroot are popular but you'll also find pickled garlic, which is surprisingly delicious. Different herbs and spices are used so each one you try is a little bit different than the one before. Fried bread is not for watching the waistline, but it is a common snack in Lithuania and delicious. Pieces of rye bread are fried, rubbed with garlic, and topped with salt. Sometimes served with melted cheese or garlic aioli, it goes well with beer or cider and is impossible to eat just one piece! You'll also find a variety of dishes containing beans, sauerkraut, potato salads, breaded pork, herrings, smoked fish and mouth-watering meat patties.

Group Leader & Support Staff

The group will be led by a professional and qualified tour leader.

Spending Money

Approximately 300 - 350 euro should be budgeted for miscellaneous expenses including the non-included meals, drinks and tips. With regard to meals, we suggest you allow 10 - 15 euro for a lunch and 25 - 30 euro for dinner. There are a number of excellent restaurants through the Baltic States and the leader will recommended ones that cater for a wide range of tastes and budgets. It is also good to remember that if you enjoy a number of courses plus wine for dinner, you'll need to budget significantly more. The national currency of all four countries is the Euro. There are many ATMs in the cities and larger towns, plus on arrival at the airport. Credit and debit cards are accepted for payments in many shops and restaurants.

Baggage Allowance

For this holiday you should take one piece of luggage and a daypack. Luggage with wheels is useful for this holiday. For international flights please check your baggage allowance with your airline.

Group Size & Holiday Status

For each holiday there is a minimum number of participants required to enable it to go ahead. Once the minimum number is reached, the trip status will change from 'Available' to 'Guaranteed to run'. You can check the trip status for each departure in 'Dates and Prices' table. Other than in exceptional circumstances, we will not cancel a trip once it has achieved this guaranteed to run status and so you are free to proceed with your international flight booking and other travel arrangements.

General Information

Climate

Baltic summers are warm with daytime temperatures ranging from around 20 to 30 degrees Centigrade. Evenings may be slightly cooler and although rain is unlikely, it is best to be prepared for all weathers. Because of the northern location, summer days will be lovely and long, with up to 17 hours of daylight in the summer.

Travel Aware

As a reputable tour operator, KE supports the British Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's 'Travel Aware' campaign to enable British citizens to prepare for their journeys overseas. The 'Travel Aware' website provides a single, authoritative source of advice for all kinds of travellers and we recommend that prior to travel, all KE clients visit the official UK Government website at travelaware.campaign.gov.uk and read the FCDO Travel Advice for their chosen destination. North Americans can also check out the U.S. Department of State website: www.travel.state.gov for essential travel advice and tips.

KE treat the safety and security of all clients as the most important aspect of any trip we organise. We would not run any trip that we did not consider reasonably safe. Should the FCDO advise against travel for any reason, we will contact everyone booked to travel to discuss the situation. We receive regular updates direct from the FCDO and are in constant touch with our contacts on the ground. If you have any questions about government travel advice, please call our office.

Single Use Plastic

KE do not encourage the use of single use plastic items. We are ensuring that our agents all over the world are working together to reduce the problem and educate those around them. We are leading by example in our KE office by reducing our plastic use.

Books

- Baltic Capitals – Bradt Guides
- The Merry Baker of Riga – Boris Zemtzov
- To the Baltic with Bob – Griff Rhys Jones
- A History of the Baltic States – Andres Kasekamp

Equipment Information

Equipment List

Please try to keep the weight of your baggage to a minimum. See the 'baggage allowance' section for further details.

- Lightweight walking shoes
- Socks
- Underwear
- Walking / sightseeing trousers
- Waterproof jacket
- Waterproof trousers
- Shorts, T-shirts and/or casual shirts
- Lightweight fleece jacket or warm jumper
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Day pack min 15 litres
- Sun protection (including for lips)
- Water bottle 1 Litre
- Washbag and toiletries
- Antibacterial hand wash
- Basic First Aid Kit including: Antiseptic cream, throat lozenges, diarrhoea treatment (Imodium) painkillers, plasters and blister treatment, Insect repellent (DEET), and re-hydration salts (Dioralite).

Optional Items

- Camera
- Travel clothes
- Small padlock to lock your luggage

Cotswold Outdoor



Many of the Equipment items listed above are available from [Cotswold Outdoor](#) - our '**Official Recommended Outdoor Retailer**'. When you book a holiday with KE you will receive 12.5% discount voucher from Cotswold Outdoor and other retailers.
[>> Find out more](#)

Land Only Information

The LAND ONLY dates and prices are for the itinerary joining at the hotel in Vilnius, Lithuania. A single timed transfer is included from Vilnius Airport. The holidays ends in Tallinn, Estonia, A single timed transfer on departure is included.

Flight Inclusive Information

The FLIGHT INCLUSIVE dates and prices are based on UK flights from London Heathrow or to Vilnius, and returning from Tallinn. Outbound flights will depart from the UK in the morning, arriving in the early evening of the same day (day 1 of the Land Only itinerary). Return flights will depart in the afternoon of the last day of the itinerary, arriving in the UK later that same evening.

Why Choose KE

Why KE

Join KE the walking experts and explore the Baltic States on foot. See its beautiful capitals on walking tours, hike in national parks and eat where the locals eat. Walking, culture and food is KE's recipe for that perfect adventure holiday.

Please Note This document was downloaded on 20/05/2024 and the trip is subject to change