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**Travel Agents Study trip
Jewish Heritage and highlights of the Baltic States
(Lithuania/Latvia/Estonia)
May 5-13, 2016
8 nights/9 days**

**Travel with Sophia Kulich in a small group of 6-12 people.
Learn Baltic History and Jewish Heritage. Eat delicious local food, enjoy
scenery and architecture, and come out with the know-how to sell this rich,
under-rated destination.**

**May 5, Thursday, Vilnius, Lithuania
Individual arrivals Vilnius, transfers to hotel.**



Some sightseeing in Vilnius. Otherwise, depending upon arrival time, sightseeing can begin the next day.

We'll walk through the medieval Jewish Quarter of Vilnius, called "Lithuanian Jerusalem." This includes: the Jasha Heifetz Music School; the historic ORT school building; the famous Tarbut Gimnazia, which is now the JCC; the former Yiddish theatre, and the Rabbis' Council, which hosted Theodor Hertzl's visit to Vilnius. We'll peruse the lanes and courtyards, learn of the historic and the sad fate of the Great

Vilna Synagogue, and feel the personality of the "Gaon of Vilna," one of the greatest spiritual figures in the Jewish history.

We'll see: the small and large Ghettos, where more than 40,000 Vilna Jews were concentrated; the building of the Judenrat on Rudninku Street; the activities of the F.P.O. - the United Partisan Organization - under the leadership of Itzik Vitenberg and Abba Kovner; medieval Ghetto streets and Vilna Gaon's house; the location where the Great Synagogue stood; the "butchers' street;" the Judenrat office; the cellar hiding place; the Ghetto theatre, and more.

Dinner in a characteristic restaurant in town.

Overnight Vilnius.

B, D

May 6, Friday, Vilnius

Breakfast at hotel



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Continuation of Vilnius tour from the previous day.

Lunch – taste local food at the market. "Hales Market," one of the oldest in Vilnius
<http://www.halesturgaviete.lt/>

Visit the site of the "Cheap Houses" – imposing dwellings built by Baron Maurice de Hirsch for the Jewish poor people after the great flood in Vilna in 1896. Sightseeing tour of Vilnius, including: Gediminas Castle, Cathedral square, Old Vilnius University, the Presidential Palace, St. Anne's and St. Peter and Paul's Churches, a walk along the medieval pedestrian street in the heart of the Old City, the Amber Museum, City Hall Square and the "Gate of Dawn."



Overnight Vilnius. Free time for dinner.
B, L

May 7, Saturday, Vilnius – Trakai - Kaunas
Breakfast at hotel and check out.

Visit Trakai, the ancient capital and the residence of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, with its 14th Century insular castle. Visit the Museum of Lithuanian History, showcasing life of different estates and ethnic groups. Learn about the story of Karaims - this small ethnic group that confessed Judaism and was brought here from Crimea by Vytautas the Great 600 years ago.

Lunch at Kybynlar <http://www.kybynlar.lt/>

In the heart of its old town, this restaurant features traditional Karaims cuisine, "KYBYNLAR". Uniquely situated between the two lakes and close to the Karaims ethnographic exhibition and "Kenesa," the Karaime Temple, it offers a wide choice of typical Karaims dishes.

Continue to Kaunas: If time permits, we will stop en-route at Zezmariai (Zhezhmer), where a remarkable Jewish community settled before the war and a large wooden Synagogue survives today.

Upon arrival, we begin walking through the Old Town of Kaunas, with its chic art galleries and cozy cafés.

Mapu and L. Zamenhoff Streets: The pre-war Jewish Real and Schwabe gymnasiums. We will tour Slobodka (Vilijampole), a Jewish suburb of pre-war Kaunas and the site of the ghetto during WWII. The Great Action at Demokratu Street: The Synagogue and the Children's Memorial in its courtyard. We will tour the Seventh and the Ninth Forts, which were the murder sites of thousands of Jews from Lithuania, France and Germany.

Overnight Kaunas.

Dinner at Beer House Apynys <https://www.facebook.com/BravorasApynys>

B, L, D



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May 8, Sunday, Kaunas – Cironian Spit – Klaipeda - Palanga

Breakfast at hotel and check-out.

The Baltic Sea coast of Lithuania, an area stretching almost exactly 100 km (62 miles) and featuring the three fascinatingly different settlements of Klaipėda, Nida and Palanga, offers visitors to the western perimeter of the country an extreme diversity of options. Home to a busy port and two waterside resorts that couldn't be more different than each other if they tried, the region has witnessed the kind of historical turbulence usually only encountered in historical novels. Since the re-establishment of Lithuanian independence exactly 25 years ago, this region has grown into a serious vacation destination that, once discovered, isn't easily forgotten.



We'll stop at Juodkrantė. This resort town, with a permanent population of only 720 people, is a quiet Lithuanian seaside village, located on the Curonian Spit. A part of the Neringa municipality, Juodkrantė is the second largest settlement on Lithuania's part of the spit.

The remarkable Curonian Spit that runs along the southeastern coastline of the Baltic Sea, is a highlight of any visit to Lithuania. The spit, divided between Lithuania and Russia's Kaliningrad province, extends south from the Lithuanian seaport of Klaipėda. It's a fragile, peaceful ecosystem of pine groves and sand dunes that offers something for everyone. Pristine sand beaches attract sunbathers during Lithuania's short summer season. Others come to hike the dunes, cycle, or simply recharge their batteries, nourished on a steady diet of smoked fish and heady sea air.

Smoked fish for lunch – not to miss in Nida.

Taste some freshly smoked fish. Fishing has always been more than just business on the Curonian Spit. It is a way of life, and hence the main dish is fish! In the past, they ate fish instead of meat, bread or vegetables! Smoked fish is meat for the festive table. When you walk around Neringa, you will encounter the beckoning aroma of freshly smoked fish, and already you will be hungry. You may taste smoked eel, bream, bass, smelt at local cafés and restaurants. You can also purchase directly from the local smokehouses, such as Tik Pas Jona or similar:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/lithuania/nida/restaurants/seafood/tik-pas-jona>



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We continue on to "Klaipeda," known historically as Memel. Located on the Baltic Sea coast, it is the third largest city in Lithuania and the capital of Klaipėda County.

The city has a complex recorded history, partially due to the combined regional importance of the usually ice-free Port of Klaipėda at the mouth of the Akmena-Danė River. It was controlled by successive German states until the 1919 Treaty of Versailles.

As a result of the 1923 Klaipėda Revolt, it was added to Lithuania and has remained a part of Lithuania to this day, except for the period between 1939 and 1945, when it returned to

the Third Reich following the 1939 German ultimatum to Lithuania.

Overnight in Klaipeda. Dinner on your own.
B, L

May 9, Monday, Palanga – Siauliai - Riga

Breakfast at hotel and check-out.

Depart for Riga, Latvia:

On the way visit the Hill of Crosses near Siauliai, a symbol of Lithuanians' resistance against foreign rule, with its over half-million crosses.

City tour of Siauliai, including the: city center, Jewish neighbourhood, Chaim Frenkel tannery, and synagogue.

Lunch on the way included.

If time permits, visit Rundale Palace

Rundale, an 18th-century Baroque palace in Latvia, was built for Duke Ernst Johann Von Biron, by the Italian architect Francesco Bartolomeo Rastrelli, as a summer residence. Some have called the palace the Versailles of Latvia. <http://rundale.net/en/>

Arrive at Riga in the afternoon, check into hotel.

Lithuanian guide leaves.
 Meet Latvian guide.

Afternoon tour of Riga: Walking tour in the Old Town, including: the Dome Cathedral built in 1211 and its extraordinary organ with 6781 pipes. We'll see the Great and Small Guild houses, the House of the "Blackheads" – the single merchants' guild, St. Peter's church and its tower, etc.





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Visit the chic "Art Nouveau" District, where many prominent Jewish Latvians, among them the philosopher Sir Isaiah Berlin, once lived. Riga has one of the world's most impressive collections of authentic Art Nouveau architecture, and uniquely offers streets with buildings preserved almost entirely in this early 20th Century style.

Visit the synagogue.

Dinner at a restaurant in town: <http://www.halesturgaviete.lt/> (the oldest market place in Vilnius, circa 1906) or similar

Overnight Riga.
B, L, D

May 10, Tuesday, Riga – Jurmala - Riga



Breakfast at hotel.

Sightseeing tour of Jewish Riga, including: the memorial of the burnt Great Synagogue of Riga, the Jewish school founded in 19th C by Rav Dr. Max Liliental, the Synagogue, the museum "Jews in Latvia," and the Jewish community Center.

Visit Spiker quarter – the ghetto museum, Hospital Bikur Holim, and the Jewish Getto-- only small traces remain of past, brave Jewish life.

Visit the Rumbula and Bikierniki Memorials, where Nazis murdered tens of thousands of Jews from Latvia, Germany and Czechoslovakia. Visit

Salaspils - the memorial site of a concentration camp.

Lunch at Jewish the Community Center.

After lunch, leave for Jurmala. On the way, visit Janis Lipke Memorial place in Kipsala; learn how Jannis Lipke saved 55 Jews, during World War II.

Jurmala is one of the oldest resorts on the Baltic coast. It also has a long tradition as a spa resort. It was a very elegant and fancy spot during the 1930s and very popular during the Soviet Union period.

Today it is still an attractive vacation resort destination, with nearly 20 miles of white sand beaches, pure air and a mild climate. Besides beautiful beaches, we will visit the city center, with picturesque wooden houses in Art Noveau style, interesting monuments and modern spa buildings.

We will also stroll along Jomas Street, the central promenade of Jurmala, where we will pass the Dzintari Concert Hall and a famous bronze sculpture of a Turtle, which is one of the symbols of the city.

Dinner will be held in one of the waterfront restaurants in Jurmala.

Back to Riga.



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Overnight Riga

B, L, D

May 11, Wednesday, Riga – Sigulda – Tallinn.

Breakfast at hotel and check-out.

Depart for Sigulda.



Due to its hilly location, Sigulda is referred to as the Switzerland of Vidzeme. The town provides a great deal of fascination, thanks to its landmarks, its opportunities for indulging in outdoor recreation, and the culture and wild nature that takes one's breath away and shows the true beauty of Latvia.

The history of Sigulda began in the Eleventh Century when Finno-Ugric tribes - the Livonians - the indigenous peoples of Latvia, built settlements on the territory of present Sigulda. In this area, Livonian traditions and culture were strengthened, making modern Sigulda

one of the most Latvian towns in the country.

Lunch on the way in Pjarnu.

Continue to Tallinn, Estonia. If time permits, we'll stop at Pjarnu, a popular and picturesque vacation resort.

Arrival late afternoon: Latvian guide and driver leave.

Check into hotel.

Dinner in Tallinn included.

Overnight Tallinn.

B, L, D

May 12, Tallinn, Thursday



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Meet your guide at hotel's lobby. Start your day with a tour of one of the best-preserved medieval towns in Europe.

Tallinn sightseeing includes: the Old Town, with its City Hall Square, Town fortifications, the Toompea Castle, Dominican Monastery, Alexander Nevski Cathedral, "Kiek in de Kok", the Convent of St. Bridget, and Kadriorg Park and Palace, built by Peter the Great of Russia, which is now the home of the President of Estonia.

Lunch at a characteristic restaurant in the Old Town.

Sightseeing includes touring around the walls of the Old town, visiting the site of the "Singing Field," the site where Estonian national independence (from the former Soviet Union) began; Pirita suburb - the site of the sailing competition during the 1980 Olympics; the ruins of St. Bridget Convent; Kadriorg Park and Palace; and finally, "Rusalka" an imposing monument for a Russian battleship that sank in 1883, not far from Tallinn harbour.

Continue with a visit to the modern Tallinn Synagogue, the JCC, and the Jewish Museum.

Back to hotel. Free time.

B, L

May 13, Friday, Tallinn, Departure

Breakfast at hotel.

Transfers to airport or extend your stay and take the ferry to Helsinki.

Total Price per person based on minimum 6 people \$2500.

Single supplement: \$850

The price includes:

- Accommodations in hotels as per itinerary, tax and breakfast included, double occupancy
- 5* hotels in capitals and best available in countryside.
 - 5* Vilnius: Radisson Blu Astorija <https://www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-vilnius>
 - 4* Kaunas: Daugirdas: <http://www.daugirdas.lt/en/>
 - 4* Klaipeda: Amberton <http://ambertonhotels.com/lt/klaipeda/>
 - 5* Riga: Grand Palace Hotel <http://www.grandpalaceriga.com/>
 - 5* Tallinn: St. Petersburg <http://www.hotelstpetersbourg.com/>
- Private guide services, Jewish specialists in each country, as per itinerary



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- Arrival and departure transfers to/from airports
- Private transportation via minibus
- Entrance fees as per itinerary
- 24-hour assistance
- 6 lunches/food experiences and 6 dinners

Extra:

- **Airfare to Baltics:** As of now, it shows around \$1100 from Florida on Lufthansa via Frankfurt; usually it is about \$1500. From JFK, it shows \$813 on Finnair, with a connection in Helsinki. This is a very good price. You will need to fly into Vilnius (VNO) and back from Tallinn (TLL).
- Other meals not specified above
- Gratuities
- Evening entertainment – Please inquire.

**Please note – minimum 6 people required for this study trip.
Companions are welcome at the same price!**

Study Trip Reimbursement Incentive

Travel Agents who participate in this trip can earn reimbursement from Sophia's Travel up to maximum of the total study trip cost: Each new booking will earn 20% of the cost of the study tour in bonus commission. Valid for bookings with minimum value \$2000, from June 1, 2016 until June 1, 2017

Payment:

Full prepayment is required.

Credit card form: <http://www.sophiastravel.com/creditcard-authorization-form>

Once the minimum of 6 people number is reached, the tour will be guaranteed. Only after that will we advise participants to book airfare. Please do not buy airfare until we have tour confirmed with minimum number of participants. If no minimum is reached, the tour will be cancelled and payment be returned.

CANCELLATIONS & REFUND POLICY

Since it is a small study group and price depends on minimum number of people, deposit and full payment are non-refundable. Travel insurance is strongly recommended.

PROOF OF CITIZENSHIP AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

All travelers must have a valid passport. To obtain a passport, please visit:
http://travel.state.gov/passport/get_first_apply.html

Passports valid for at least 6 months beyond completion of your visit will be accepted. We also suggest bringing additional identification, such as a driver's license or other type of government-issued photo ID. We urge non-US citizens to contact the appropriate embassy or consulate of the destination you are visiting to determine what travel documents are required.

Hotels



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In the capitals (Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn), we use 5* boutique, historic and luxury hotels, all with personality and all located in heart of the city.

Vilnius – Radisson Blu Astorija 5*

<https://www.radissonblu.com/en/hotel-vilnius>



The Radisson Blu Royal Astorija hotel is a cultural landmark in the Old Town of Vilnius dating back to almost the XV century. The hotel is famous for its significant architecture that combines NeoBaroque and Secession (Viennese Art Nouveau) architectural styles. Major effort has been made to maintain the building's authenticity. Today, even after refurbishment, the Radisson Blu Royal Astorija still maintains the legacy of this venerable spirit as great care was taken to preserve its unique history.

The Radisson Blu Royal Astorija has been famous for its splendor throughout its history – many distinguished and noble people from all over the world have enjoyed the hotel's opulence and elegance during their stay. The hotel has been home to such notable people as His Royal Highness Frederik, Crown Prince of Denmark, Count of Monpezat, His Royal Highness Charles, Prince of Wales, Her Majesty Queen Maxima of the Netherlands, His Majesty Carl XVI Gustaf, King of Sweden, and Her Majesty Queen Silvia of Sweden, His Majesty Juan Carlos I, the King of Spain, and Her Majesty Queen Sofia of Spain with their family, Akihito, the Emperor of Japan, and Empress Michiko, George W. Bush, the President of the United States of America, and his wife Laura L. W. Bush, Herman Achille Van Rompuy, the President of the European Council, Algirdas Brazauskas, the President of Lithuania, Angela Merkel, the Chancellor of Germany, Horst Köhler, the President of Germany, Serzh Sargsyan,



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the President of Armenia, Mikheil Saakashvili, the President of Georgia, Ilham Aliyev, the President of Azerbaijan, among numerous others. The Radisson Blu Royal Astorija suits not only the discerning tastes of influential politicians and royal families, but also is appreciated by fashionable celebrities. Among the many famous guests who have stayed in the Radisson Blu Royal Astorija Hotel are singers Andrea Bocelli, Vaneessa-Mae, Billy Idol, Eros Ramazzotti, Marilyn Manson, Patricia Kaas, Seal, Sir Roger Moore, Lithuanian basketball legend Arvydas Sabonis and many more.

Riga

Grand Palace Riga hotel 5*

<http://www.grandpalaceriga.com/>



On pushing open the massive doors of the luxurious Grand Palace Hotel in Riga, you may get the feeling that you are finally back home. Built in 1877 as the Central Bank of Latvia, it was turned into a boutique 5-star superior hotel in the year 2000 and now offers a place of warmth and comfort, accompanied by attentive and impeccable service.

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Voted as Latvia's Leading Hotel for 8 years, the magnificent Grand Palace Hotel is located in business, shopping and sightseeing district – Riga Old Town. In May 2015 the official rating for the hotel has been upgraded from 5-star to 5-star Superior.

Grand Palace Hotel is the only member of "The Leading Hotels of the World" and "Virtuoso" in Latvia and is also highly recommended by its guests on TripAdvisor.

Grand Palace Hotel is located in the quiet centre of the historical Riga Old Town. It is surrounded by prestigious UNESCO World Heritage monuments, central to major city tourism objects, shopping streets, corporate offices and embassies. Such sightseeing objects as the Dome Square, Dome Cathedral, Riga Castle and Daugava River are less than 200 meters (218 yards) away from the hotel. Blackheads House, St. Peter's Church, Freedom Monument and Opera House are within a 7 minute leisurely walk.

Tallinn



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St. Petersburg Hotel 5*

<http://www.hotelstpetersbourg.com/tallinn-hotels/>



St. Petersburg Hotel is one of the finest boutique hotels Tallinn has to offer, where modern and history join forces. St Petersburg dates back to the 14th century and is the oldest hotel in Estonia, but without a hint of stuffiness.

The 27-room hotel invites you to disappear under the arches of the romantic Old Town and enjoy the charms of the building with dignified history. The luxurious 5-star hotel is located in Tallinn's historic center – Old Town – offers the ideal place to explore this unique UNESCO World Heritage city. In a building on Rataskaevu Street – built in the style of Russian traders – luxury, elegance and Russian cuisine come together. In the course of renovations the historic architecture of the building was fully preserved, making it a unique boutique hotel, where timeless splendor meets the heights of modern comfort. The bedrooms have been designed by the award winning Andrew Martin, offering contemporary touches, creative photography and interiors influenced by theater and film. It's like staying at a wealthy aristocrat's home who surrounds himself with works of art, sumptuous fabrics, crystal chandeliers and believes in kick-starting the day with a scrumptious Estonian buffet breakfast.

Kaunas

Kaunas does not have any 5* hotels yet, so we chose one of the nicest 4* properties.

4*Daugirdas: <http://www.daugirdas.lt/en/>

The boutique, 48-room, 4* Hotel "Daugirdas" is situated in the Old Town of Kaunas, in a restored 16th-19th Century building, a ten minute walk to Town Hall and Kaunas Castle.

Hotel Features

There is a restaurant, bar/lounge, and conference rooms, free public area WiFi, laundry facilities, and 24-hour front desk. Room amenities include deep soaking tubs, free in-room WiFi, satellite TV, minibar, and room service.



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DAUGIRDAS
VIESBUTIS RESTORANAS
HOTEL RESTAURANT



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Klaipeda

4* Amberton Hotel <http://ambertonhotels.com/lt/klaipeda/>



Located right next to the Baltic Sea, AMBERTON KLAIPĖDA hotel is situated only a few minutes walk from the town centre, most striking attractions of Klaipėda and the old part of the historic city. Discover a place, where coziness of home blends with stylish comfort – a place you want to come back to.

It provides free Wi-Fi in all areas of the property, stylish interiors, bowling and an entertainment center, as well as an indoor pool. All rooms at the Amberton are bright and include a minibar, satellite TV and a spacious bathroom with a hairdryer and toiletries. Most rooms have a sitting area and a flat-screen TV. Standard rooms are with a sea view. Guests can enjoy a game of billiards, work out in the fitness center, or simply relax in the hot tub or sauna. They are also welcome to visit the on-site spa center. The front desk staff are available 24 hours a day and can arrange concierge and room services.

Guests can visit one of 4 on-site restaurants serving exotic dishes and a wide selection of cocktails, two of which offer a panoramic view of of the city and the sea. Guests can enjoy a drink at the Lobby Bar.



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<http://www.cdc.gov/travel/> - Center for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.who.int/en/> - World Health Organization

<http://www.state.gov/travel/> - Department of State Travel (USA)

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Thank you for your business,

Sophia Kulich, CTC