

BEST OF THE BALTICS

WITH OPTIONAL STOCKHOLM – OSLO EXTENSION

September 17 – 29/October 2, 2020 (15/19 days)



photo: Simm



photo: Paul Berzinn

LITHUANIA – LATVIA – ESTONIA – FINLAND – SWEDEN – NORWAY

The Baltic countries have a fascinating history extending back many centuries, through the period of Russian occupation up to their more recent independence and incorporation into the European Union.

Memorable experiences await you in their mix of charming cities, traditional villages and uniquely beautiful countryside.



**SPECIAL
TRAVEL
INTERNATIONAL**

SPECIAL TRAVEL INTERNATIONAL

4603 Main Street Vancouver, BC V5V 3R6 Canada

tel: (604) 291-1332 or 1 (800) 665-0998 Fax: (604) 291-1378

e-mail: sti@sticanada.com website: www.sticanada.com

BEST OF THE BALTICS

LITHUANIA – LATVIA – ESTONIA – FINLAND

September 15 – 29, 2020 (15 days)



photo: Pjotr Mahhonnin

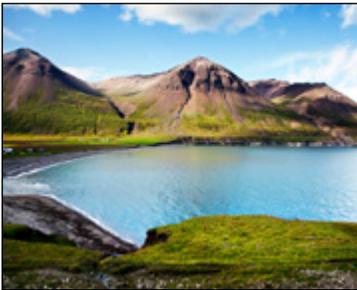


photo: Stephane Martin

Day 1 Tue, September 15

CANADA – VILNIUS

Flight from Canada to Vilnius.

Day 2 Wed, September 16

ARRIVAL IN VILNIUS LITHUANIA

Arrival in Vilnius, capital of Lithuania. After meeting our tour leader and driver, we will transfer to the hotel, check in and have dinner. (D)

Day 3 Thu, September 17

VILNIUS – TRAKAI – VILNIUS

We begin our day with a tour of Vilnius, focusing on the Old Town which includes the Gothic gem of St. Anna's Church, Church of Sts. Peter and Paul, the Cathedral, University, Gates of Dawn and also the ruins of the Upper and Lower Castle. The Old Town of Vilnius, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a maze of richly historic narrow streets. The Cathedral in the center of the Old Town sat within the fortifications of the castle, on the site of an ancient pagan temple to Perkunas.

In the afternoon we have tour to Trakai Castle.

Formerly the capital of Lithuania, Trakai is dramatically situated on an island in the middle of a lake. The 14th century red brick castle, now home to the Art Museum, is iconic of Lithuania and one of the most impressive and picturesque locations in Europe.

We return to Vilnius to enjoy dinner with a folklore performance at local restaurant. (B,D)

Day 4 Fri, September 18

VILNIUS – KAUNAS – KLAIPEDA

This morning we head to Kaunas for a city tour. Lying on the confluence of the rivers Nemunas and Neris, Kaunas is the second largest city in Lithuania with a population of 430,000. As it was spared in World War II, Kaunas is host to a number of ancient monuments. The Old Town is a concentration of the most important: the 13th century Castle, the Old Town Hall nicknamed the "White Swan", the Basilica, the Church of St. Francis Xavier, the Jesuit monastery, Perkunas House and Vytautas Church.

We have dinner and overnight in Klaipeda. (B,D)

Day 5 Sat, September 19

KLAIPEDA – NIDA – KLAIPEDA

We'll orient ourselves in Klaipeda, Lithuania's main seaport, with a city tour. Dubbed the "Gateway to The Sea", Klaipeda's highlights include the Old Post Office, Old Theatre, Simon Dach square and its historical Old Town full of boutiques of handicrafts.

Taking the ferry to Neringa then, we'll head to Nida to explore the National Park of the Curonian Spit. A unique landscape, the Spit is bordered by

the Baltic Sea on the West and the Curonian Bay on the East, and famed for its pristine sand dunes. We'll also visit the scenic fisherman's village of Nida, and Thomas Mann House there.

We'll return to Klaipeda in time for dinner. (B,D)

Day 6 Sun, September 20

KLAIPEDA – SIAULIAI – RUNDALĖ – RIGA

Our first stop today is at Siauliai's amazing Hill of Crosses, Kryžių Kalnas, a prime pilgrimage site and testament to Lithuanian national identity. Hundreds of thousands of crosses crowd this small hill 12 km north of the small industrial city of Siauliai (pronounced Shoo-lay).

We continue to Rundale Palace, the most magnificent Baroque jewel in the Baltic States. Built in the first part of the 18th century by the Italian architect Rastrelli, whose genius created the Hermitage and set the style for St. Petersburg and many of Europe's finest buildings of that era. The palace boasts a beautiful French-style park and rooms restored with authentic 18th century furnishings. Then we travel to Riga. (B,D)

Day 7 Mon, September 21

RIGA LATVIA

We'll spend the day in Riga, capital of Latvia.

A medieval Hanseatic town, Riga displays Europe's greatest concentration of Jugendstil (Art Nouveau) buildings. The style dominated European architecture in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and an architectural historian will highlight details of the finest city facades. We'll see St. Peter's Cathedral from whose steeple the best views in the city are enjoyed, Riga Castle with its three wonderful museums, Dome Cathedral, with one of the world's largest pipe organs, and the Old Guild Houses.

This afternoon we have a tour of the Open Air Museum just outside Riga on the banks of lovely Lake Jugla. Started in 1924, it is one of the oldest open air museums in Europe and contains 107 buildings. Old houses, furnishings and household articles from all regions of Latvia have been collected in its 100 ha grounds, including an inn, mill and several churches, and an exhibition of traditional applied arts.

We return to Riga to take in a folklore show and dinner at a local restaurant. (B,D)

Day 8 Tue, September 22

RIGA – SIGULDA – CĒSIS

We start today's sightseeing in the historical center of Turaida, which comprises a museum of art & archeological artifacts dating back to the 11th century. These include the walled castle and earthworks, an ancient graveyard for the first baptized Liivs, and one of the oldest wooden

churches in the region. The Tomb of Rose of Turaida rests here under the oldest linden tree, a romantic site for newlyweds to leave offerings, honouring the legendary devotion of the maiden who forfeited her life sooner than her love.

About 50 km from Riga in the Gauja River valley is Sigulda, known as the “Latvian Switzerland” for its popularity as a picturesque leisure destination famous for its winter sports resorts. Melt back into the Middle Ages of heroes and romantic legends as we visit the ruins of the 13th-century Crusader Castle and 19th century Kropotkin’s Palace. We’ll drive along the scenic river valley and walk to the sandstone grottoes by the ancient river bank.

After Sigulda we’ll continue on to Cesis and take part in a city tour. Built in the 13th century, Cesis castle was the seat of the Livonian Order and one of its greatest strongholds, providing us with the most impressive and best-preserved ruins in Latvia. Castle Park was established in 1812 and landscaped in romantic style, complete with an island in an artificial pond. A series of sculptures was later added and today it is a popular place for leisure activities.

We have dinner and overnight in Cesis. (B,D)

Day 9 **Wed, September 23**

CESIS – VALMIERA – TARTU ESTONIA

Today we’ll make a stop at Valmiera en route to Tartu.

High above the banks of the Gauja River lays Valmiera, a city rich in history and culture with a lively nightlife & cultural scene. Once a part of the ancient Latvian kingdom of Talava, it prospered under various Orders and became a member of the Hanseatic League before being decimated by bubonic plague in the 1620s. The prosperity regained under Swedish rule continued until the city was destroyed by Russian troops in 1702.

Then we’ll proceed to Tartu, the “Athens on the Emajõgi” and second largest city in Estonia. The Neoclassical style in which central Tartu was reconstructed in the 18th century, combined with an ancient university founded in 1632 inspires this comparison. Situated in the South, it lies 186 km from Tallinn on the banks of the river which connects the two largest lakes of Estonia. During our walking tour we’ll encounter Tartu University, the Museum of Classical Arts and Antiquities, Tähetorni Observatory and Jaani Church, Old Town, Toome Hill and the ruins of the old Dome Church.

We have dinner and overnight in Tartu. (B,D)

Day 10 **Thu, September 24**

TARTU – SAAREMAA – KUESSAARE

We head this morning to Saaremaa island via the ferry to Muhu island from Virtsu. Estonia’s largest island, Saaremaa has retained its historic character and popularity as a locale for enjoying recreation and unspoiled nature through isolation. The archeological record shows this region, now one of Estonia’s most popular tourist destinations, has been inhabited for at least 5,000 years. The unique Dolomite formations, windmills and

junipers are symbolic of Saaremaa, a world apart where beautiful national costumes and local dialects are still in use, villages are populated with stone fences and thatched roofs, and they’re famous for their handcrafted beer.

We finish the day here in Kuressaare, check in and dine. (B,D)

Day 11 **Fri, September 25**

KUESSAARE

The small town of Kuressaare first made its way onto maps in the mid-12th century, and it received its official charter in 1563. Though centred originally on the castle, the architecturally protected and restored current town centre dates from the 17th century.

Kuressaare’s most outstanding attractions are the 13th century castle fortifications and surrounding 19th century park. The picturesque triangular squares of the old town centre are surrounded with one and two-storey Classical buildings, with the 17th century Baroque Town Hall and Scales House from the Swedish era on the Central Square. The dramatic heights of Panga cliff on the north coast of Saaremaa were a site of sacrifice for pre-Christian Saarländers. Stories of animal sacrifices, not to mention the obligatory virgin abound, and well into the 1930s offerings of beer were poured to ensure good catches and calm seas.

At one time, every village had an exposed hill where all the village windmills were built. In 1925, when Angla was home to 13 farms, nine stood here, but even the five remaining are a rare treat to see. (B,D)

Day 12 **Sat, September 26**

KUESSAARE – TALLINN

We depart via ferry to Tallinn, where we will start with a city tour. Tallinn is a famously picturesque old city, where whole districts preserve their Middle Age glory. We’ll visit the Old Town with its quaint narrow streets and beautiful Gothic merchants’ houses, Toompea Castle, the 13th century Dome church, the 19th century Russian Orthodox Alexander Nevskij Cathedral, the 15th century Town Hall square, the Old Guild built to celebrate Tallinn’s membership in the Hanseatic League, and St. Olaf’s church.

Dinner and overnight in Tallinn. (B,D)

Day 13 **Sun, September 27**

TALLINN

We’ll spend half the day on a visit to Kadriorg Palace and the Kumu Art Museum, leaving time at leisure to explore Tallinn on your own.

Kadriorg Palace, constructed as a gift by Peter the Great to his wife Catherine I in the 1720s, is an excellent example of Baroque architecture. The Foreign Art Museum of the Kadriorg Palace showcases art and applied art of Western Europe and Russia from the 16th - 20th centuries.

KUMU (KUNstiMUuseum/Art Museum) is a spectacular modern multifunctional art facility containing exhibition halls, a lecture hall and an



photo: Pin Im. Carter



photo: Mirosław Chochorowski



photo: Ola Ericson



photo: Marcela



Saulenas



photo: Georg Mittnecker



photo: Benson Kula



photo: Flying Saucer



photo: Henrik Trygg



photo: Lee Fernier



photo: Ivo Krusamagi



photo: Marcin Szala

educational centre. Kumu appeals to a variety of people from kids to art aficionados and is foremost a congenial environment in which to develop ideas and examine the role of visual culture in contemporary society.

Free time to explore Tallinn before a farewell dinner at a local restaurant. (B,D)

Day 14 Monday, September 28

TALLINN – HELSINKI – TALLINN FINLAND

We take a ferry to Helsinki and start with an orientation tour, visiting the historic centre with Senate Square, the Presidential Palace, City Hall, the Parliament building, Finlandia Hall and the Opera House. We'll also make stops at the Sibelius Monument and, if services permit, at the spectacular TempPELLIAUKIO Church (the Church in the Rock).

Designed by Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen and consecrated in 1969, the Church in the Rock was literally carved from solid rock and crowned with a solid copper dome. The inner wall is left rough stone, while the wall surrounding the church is constructed of rock quarried on site.

Finlandia Hall is Helsinki's conference and concert hub and home to the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra. The hall was built in 1971 and is one of Alvar Aalto's most famous works.

There is time to enjoy the city at your leisure before returning by ferry to Tallinn for dinner. (B,D)

Day 15 Tuesday, September 29

TALLINN – CANADA

After breakfast we depart for the airport and flight home. (B)

INCLUDED

- Accommodation in comfortable Superior Tourist-Class hotels.
- Private bus and guide.
- Sightseeing, entrances, excursions and special events as per itinerary.
- Breakfast (B) and Dinner (D) every day including 3 special event/folklore dinners as per itinerary.

NOT INCLUDED

- Airfare & departure taxes. Please call our office for details.
- Travel Insurance.
- Departure taxes (varies per departure city).
- Tips/gratuities for driver and guide.
- Drinks and items of a personal nature.

COST per person based on double occupancy

15 day land itinerary in CDN funds	\$3890
Single Supplement	+ \$890

In October 2019 we will have a group flight option available from Vancouver and/or Toronto. You may wish to book on points or otherwise make your own air travel arrangements. If not, please contact our office and we'll arrange the best flight options for your departure city.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION
STOCKHOLM + OSLO
September 28 – October 2, 2020 (5 days)

Day 14 Mon, September 28

TALLINN – STOCKHOLM SWEDEN

Transfer to the airport for the short flight to Stockholm, the capital of Sweden. Upon arrival transfer to the hotel and enjoy an afternoon introductory tour of the city. The evening is free to enjoy at your leisure. (B)

Day 15 Tue, September 29

STOCKHOLM

The day is open for you to explore on your own, offering fascinating destinations such as the Vasa Museum or Skansen Open Air Museum. Or simply take in the sights of this beautiful city on the water and sample the dining and nightlife it has to offer. (B)

Day 16 Wed, September 30

STOCKHOLM – OSLO NORWAY

Enjoy this wonderful train trip through Sweden and Norway to the capital, Oslo. (B)

Day 17 Thu, October 1

OSLO

We will begin with a half day City Tour of the main sites of this cosmopolitan capital.

The afternoon is at leisure for you to explore the beautiful city further or perhaps take a ferry to visit one of the great museums such as the Kontiki or Cultural History Museum. Stroll the spectacular planes that form the roof of the modern Opera, which seems to emerge from the water, or make a few final stops for shopping. (B)

Day 18 Fri, October 2

OSLO – CANADA

Transfer to airport for flight home or onward. (B)

INCLUDED ON EXTENSION

- Airfare Tallinn – Stockholm including taxes
- Train Stockholm – Oslo
- 4 nights' accommodation in superior-class hotels in Stockholm and Oslo
- Breakfast (B) every day
- City Tour in each Stockholm and Oslo
- Transfers: Stockholm hotel – train station; Oslo train station – hotel
- Transfers Stockholm airport – hotel; Oslo hotel – airport

NOT INCLUDED

- Lunches and Dinners.

COST

Approximate, depending on final group size, in Canadian funds, based on double occupancy

+\$1200 - \$1400

RESERVATION FORM

please indicate your tour selection below

BEST OF THE BALTICS

September 15 - 29, 2020 (15 days)

BEST OF THE BALTICS + STOCKHOLM + OSLO

September 15 - October 2, 2020 (19 days)

Please fill out this form in full and mail it with your deposit of **\$600** and the travel insurance payment for each traveller. Insurance is optional but strongly recommended. Please write names **exactly** as listed in passport (e.g.: William, not "Bill").

TRAVELLER #1		TRAVELLER #2	
Mr/Mrs/Ms	First Name	Mr/Mrs/Ms	First Name
	Middle Name(s)		Middle Name(s)
	Last Name		Last Name
Date of Birth:	dd/mm/yy	Date of Birth:	dd/mm/yy
City of Birth:		City of Birth:	
Country of Birth:		Country of Birth:	
Passport #:		Passport #:	
Passport Expiry Date:		Passport Expiry Date:	
Passport Issuing Country:		Passport Issuing Country:	
Preferred First Name (for name tag):		Preferred First Name (for name tag):	

ADDRESS

Street: _____

City: _____ Province/State: _____

Postal Code: _____ Country: _____

Cell No.: _____ Home No.: _____

Email: _____

Accommodation: Single Double Sharing With: _____

Seating Preference on Aircraft: Aisle Window

Special Dietary Meal Request: _____ (where available)

Next of Kin (in case of emergency): _____ Ph: _____

TRAVEL INSURANCE (to be purchased at time of deposit)

All-Inclusive Trip Cancellation Declined Amount of premium (please contact office) \$ _____

PAYMENT

deposit + insurance premium \$ _____

Please make cheques payable to: _____

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4603 Main Street, Vancouver, BC V5V 3R6 Canada
phone: (604) 291-1332 or 1 (800) 665-0998

Visa/Mastercard *A 2% service fee applies to payments made by credit card

Card No. _____ Expiry date _____

Name on card _____ Amount to be charged \$ _____

I acknowledge that I have read and agree to the terms and conditions outlined in the brochure.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

RESERVATIONS AND PAYMENT:

A deposit of \$600 per person is required at the time of reservation on this Special Travel International (hereafter called STI) tour. A second payment of \$600 per person is then due by January 31, 2020. The final payment is due by July 17, 2020. Travel documents will be sent to you approximately 14 days prior to your trip departure, provided full payment has been received.

TOUR PRICES:

All tour prices for land arrangements are based on rates effective at the time of printing and are expected to be in effect at the time of departure. Should these rates change, it may be necessary to surcharge the price of your vacation. Should the tour price increase by more than 10%, the passenger shall have the right to cancel within seven days of notification without penalty.

CANCELLATION AND REFUNDS:

Notice of cancellation must be made in writing. The effective cancellation date is the date when written notification is received by STI. **The deposit of \$600 is non-refundable.** The following scale of charges will apply when cancellation is received prior to departure:

until January 31, 2020	deposit of \$600
February 1 – July 17, 2020	\$1200
After July 17, 2020	100%

P.S.: Different payment/cancellation policies apply to airline tickets; you will be advised at time of booking

RESPONSIBILITY AND LIABILITY:

STI acts only as an agent in securing all services related to the tours described in this brochure, including transportation, sightseeing and accommodation. STI shall not be responsible or liable for any loss, cost, damage, injury, delay or expense arising from the use of any conveyance, accommodation or service or from acts of God, strikes, weather, quarantine, accidents, sickness, government regulations, insufficient documents and any loss/expense resulting from the above contingencies shall be borne by the tour member. In the event it becomes necessary or advisable for the comfort of the passenger, or for any reason whatsoever, to alter the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the operators. Additional expense, if any, shall be borne by the passenger. The right is reserved to withdraw any or all tours should conditions warrant, and also to decline to accept or retain any passenger as a member of the tour. In such instances, full or equitable amounts will be refunded.

INSURANCE:

STI recommends that each tour participant has health, cancellation, interruption, accident and baggage insurance for the duration of his/her travel (in situations where insurance is not included in the tour price).

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

It is entirely the passenger's responsibility to possess whatever documents and visas required by the law of the countries visited on the tour.

AIRLINE RESPONSIBILITY:

Any airliner carrier providing transportation in connection with these tours is not to be held responsible for any act, omission or event during the time the passenger is not on board its planes or conveyances. The passenger contract in use by the airlines concerned, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airline and the purchase of these tours and/or passenger. Similar responsibility as noted applies to all types of carriers, including car rental companies.

INSURANCE PREMIUMS

Following are the main areas of coverage with **Allianz Global Assistance** and the two packages we offer for this particular trip. Please carefully read the brochure you will receive after booking for full details. For insurance purposes the key point is that you are in **GOOD** health. Please note that **PRE-EXISTING CONDITIONS** are not covered. Please contact us if you have any questions or would like further information.

Please Note: Travellers need to have current Provincial Health Plan coverage in order to qualify for the ALL-INCLUSIVE insurance package.

THE ALL-INCLUSIVE PACKAGE consists of:

- Cancellation & Interruption
- Emergency Medical (\$5 Million limit)
- Flight Accident
- Travel Accident
- Baggage & Personal Effects

#1: THE ALL-INCLUSIVE PACKAGE

TOUR:	AGES		Travellers over 74 please contact our office		
	25-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75+
15 days	\$286	\$311	\$350	\$414	
in single room	\$344	\$371	\$415	\$486	

TOUR + EXT:	AGES		Travellers over 74 please contact our office		
	25-59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75+
19 days	\$332	\$439	\$497	\$590	
in single room	\$391	\$499	\$562	\$663	

If you wish you may also choose the Cancellation & Interruption insurance alone; this plan is suitable if you have sufficient medical coverage already.

#2: CANCELLATION & INTERRUPTION INSURANCE

TOUR:	AGES					
	up to 59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79	80+
15 days	\$242	\$255	\$277	\$308	\$423	\$591
in single room	\$301	\$317	\$343	\$383	\$525	\$735

TOUR + EXT:	AGES				
	up to 59	60-64	65-69	70-74	75-79
19 days	\$402	\$353	\$384	\$427	\$581
in single room	\$459	\$415	\$450	\$501	\$667

Note:

If you purchase flights through Special Travel, please add \$1500 to the tour cost in order to calculate the full amount to be insured.

Please Note: The premiums listed are guidelines. The exact premium will depend on whether you are traveling as a single and the final airfare cost. We will provide the applicable premium for your situation at the time of booking.

Insurance rates are valid at time of printing and are subject to change.

Premiums are quoted per person, in Canadian funds, and subject to Provincial Sales Tax: 8% Ontario, 9% Quebec, 7% Manitoba



photo: Blom Olin



photo: Simon Paulin



photo: Ilyia

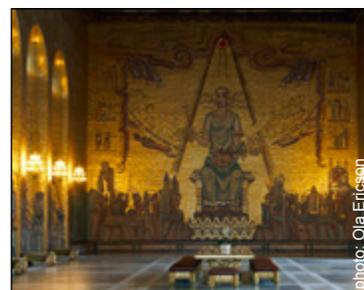


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