

# "LEIPUTRIJA" SUGGESTS SOME OF MOST INTERESTING PLACES TO VISIT IN LATVIA:



## DAUGAVPILS FORTRESS

In the eastern part of Latvia there is situated its second largest city - Daugavpils. In Daugavpils you must visit the Daugavpils Fortress - the only fortress in the Northern Europe which hasn't been significantly changed since the beginning of 19th century. You can visit it and still see the unique fortification systems of that time.

Daugavpils itself is a nice city quite different from other cities of Latvia mainly because of its population history - Latvians have never been a majority in Daugavpils.

Entrance to the fortress is very cheap but there are no guided tours at the site. You can drive through the fortress and enjoy it in your car, stepping out and watching more closely the most interesting parts of it.



## LARGEST MECHANICAL ORGAN

The Holy Trinity Cathedral in city Liepāja (in western sea coast of Latvia) is the place of world's largest historically unreconstructed mechanical organ. The organ has 131 stops, 4 manuals and more than 7000 pipes. Its sound is just magnificent.

You can listen to the organ music concert there or even visit the Organ Music Festival which takes place in Liepāja every year in August or September.



## HOUSE OF CRAFTSMEN

Liepāja's House of Craftsmen (Amatnieku nams) is the place where you can take a look at the world's longest amber necklace.

In 2003 there was an event in Liepāja "Donate amber to your city". During the event people donated so much amber that the world's longest string of amber beads could be made. The result of donation is the necklace of 123 metres and weight of 19 kilograms.



## LATVIAN ICE HOCKEY FANS

Latvian ice hockey fans are the most attractive, the loudest, the most loyal - there are many names they are called in international media for about ten years, they have been even on CNN. They are called "Brasilians of Ice Hockey" and the name is well earned.

On April 17th 2009 they set a new world record - the largest number of fans in an ice hockey rink. And this new world record is - **3851 people**. There are many ice arenas where they even don't have that many seats!

As the world record is set Latvians again will be looking forward to seeing their team playing

with the big guns in the Ice Hockey World Championships. Every year late April and early May is called "Spring Hockey Madness". When Latvian national team is playing the streets are empty but the bars are packed with cheering people. And when their team wins the embassy of the opponent team gets condolence flowers. This is one of the best times to visit Latvia if you want to see Latvian national pride go alive. But even if you visit Latvia in other season of year, you won't lose much since there is "Riga Dinamo" team participating in new KHL (Continental Hockey League) which is considered the second strongest in world (after NHL ofcourse)... for now...



## ADAZI FIRING RANGE

A large part of the territory of the Adazi Region is formed by the territory of the Adazi Firing Range. Since 1999, 6652 ha and 150 buildings in the Firing Range territory situated in the Adazi Region are owned by the Ministry of Defence, and are used for the purpose of state defence. One of the major military bases in the Baltic States is situated in the territory and consists of 4 subdivisions: the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regional Support Centre, Land Force 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Battalion, Land Force 2<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Battalion and the School of Neutralization of Live Munition.

Though the most part of its objects of interest the firing range got back in times of former USSR: bunkers, kurgans and tank armour pits.

P.S.: Tourist and leisure park "Leiputrija" offers off-road trips on ATV's in the firing ground:

<http://leiputrija.com/en/atputas-iespejas/kvadricikli/>



## SABILE WINE HILL

Sabile Wine Hill is officially the world's most northern vineyard, as mentioned in Guinness World Records Book.

Height of Wine Hill is 33.7m (about 115m above sea level), area of the vineyard is 1.5 hectares.

The production of wine took place here already in 16th century but rebirth of the vineyard began in 1936. Then WWII stopped its development which again restarted in 1989. This vineyard has been so important to the town of Sabile, that the wine grape has become the symbol of the town and is displayed on its coat of arms.



The best time of the year when to visit Sabile and its wineyard is the last weeks of July when Sabile Wine Festival takes place.

## VENTA RAPID (WATERFALL)

Ventas Rapid ("Ventas Rumba" in Latvian) is the widest waterfall in Europe. It falls on the Venta river near town Kuldiga (in Kurzeme region) and is 249 metres wide (up to 270 metres during spring floods). It is not high: 1.80m - 2.20m. The height depends on the water level in the Venta river.

Located about 150km from Riga. You can reach the waterfall by car. From Riga drive in Ventspils direction, then take a left turn to Kandava and follow the signs to town Kuldiga.

In Kuldiga there is also



## KOKNESE CASTLE RUINS

Strategically seated on the banks of the river Daugava, archaeological evidence shows the place to have been inhabited as early as the first millennium B.C. Seat of an important Latvian (wooden) fortress up to the early 13th C. After expanding eastwards, Bishop Albert of Riga built a stone fortress here in 1208. 1397-1562 Seat of Arch-Bishop of Riga.

The city (1277) of Koknese was part of the Hanseatic league, but the ravages of successive wars diminished its importance



## KAROSTA PRISON IN LIEPAJA

Karosta Prison in Liepaja is the only military prison open to public in Europe.

The building was erected about 1900 and until 1997 it has served as a place where military persons served their terms for breach of discipline. Ever since the first years of its existence it has been a place to break people's lives and suppress their free will.

There are only guided tours available in the prison and those guided tours are very high quality with the show in which you participate yourself.

You can stay in the prison for the night as well, instead of staying in hotel.

Of course, if you dare to... because on <http://www.syfy.com/ghosthuntersinternational/index.php> recently Karosta prison has been reported as one of the most haunted places on Earth (.





## BIGGEST OLD BELIEVERS PREACHING HOUSE IN THE WORLD

In the district of Riga not so much attractive to most tourists there is one more place worth seeing. With its 27 000 members it is the biggest Old Believers preaching house in the world - Grebenshikov's Old Believers church.

Old Believers became separated from the official Russian Orthodox Church after 1666-1667 as a protest against church reforms introduced by Patriarch Nikon. Their liturgical practices are the same as the Russian Orthodox Church maintained before these reforms.

At the time of reforms many of splitters from the Russian Orthodox Church had to run away from the persecution, they mostly found their shelter in the northern Russia, and also in Latvia which then was partially Polish and Swedish.

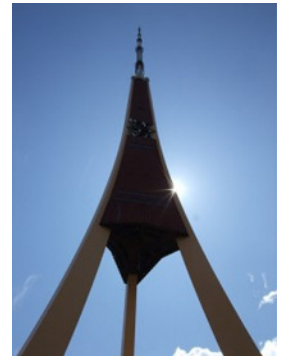
The church is named after a rich merchant who supported it for a good while. It is also the only church in Latvia that has a golden dome.



## RIGA TV TOWER

Riga TV tower is the tallest freestanding structure in the European Union. It is 386.5 meters tall and was built in 1987 (completely finished only in 1989). Today it is used for transmitting TV and radio channels as well as providing telecommunication services for various organisations and state institutions.

The tower reminds us a little bit of Eiffel Tower in Paris. It is located just outside the city center on the Zaķusala island in the river Daugava. The tower invites everyone to visit their observation deck which is located at the height of 97m, it is the highest publicly accessible observation point in Riga. In the good weather Riga Gulf, Riga Hydroelectric Power Plant and even Sigulda can be seen.



## WOODEN ARCHITECTURE OF RIGA

About four thousand wooden houses. Doesn't sound like a typical 21st century European capital, but who says Riga is typical? No other European city has so much wooden architecture left from previous centuries.

You can enjoy these nice old buildings already coming from Riga International Airport to the city center on Kalnciema Street where wooden houses stand between stone houses. And this is how it is almost anywhere in Riga. Stone buildings, brick buildings, art nouveau, modern buildings and between them original wooden architecture even from 18th century.

If you head out of the city center you can even find whole quarters of wooden architecture. Ķīpsala is definitely a must visit! But try other places too - Āgenskalns, Maskačka. Or just walk around just outside the UNESCO heritage city center - you may find some unexpected true treasures!



## IRBENE RADIOASTRONOMY CENTRE

Ex-soviet army top secret military radio spying centre with two RT-32 and RT-16 radio satellites surrounded by abandoned military village. RT-32 antenna is renewed, and is used by scientists from baltic countries, and by Ventspils university students, open for an excursions also. Great place to see, and wonderful feelings when climbed up to RT-32 antenna. RT-16 locator is in renovation process and is closed for tpurist groups or individual explorers. More info [www.virac.lv](http://www.virac.lv) [www.diggers.lv](http://www.diggers.lv) [www.necton.lv](http://www.necton.lv)



## SOVIET UNDERGROUND BUNKER

Soviet time secret facility with a cover name "Vacation Hotel". In the territory of the rehabilitation centre Līgatne, 9 m underground, there is a well-equipped facility with a total area of 2,000 sq.m, whose secrecy grading was removed only in 2003. Bunker was built for needs of political and state authority elite of the 1980-ies for state administration in case of nuclear war. The bunker was:

- Secret concealment of the Secretaries General of the Soviet Communist Party comrades Voss and Pugo!
- One of the most strategically important places in Soviet Latvia



in case of a nuclear war.

- A powerful autonomous self-sustaining structure with all necessary and high-end (for that time) equipment.
- All authentic underground furnishings have been retained!

### **What can be seen there?**

- plans and projections in regard to what would happen if because of a war, dams of all hydropower stations were destroyed, which territories would be under water and how that would affect largest towns;
- autonomous electrical station with diesel generators and fuel reservoirs;
- conditioning equipment for air purification;
- water supply and sewerage equipment which operates in accordance with submarine principle;
- special telecommunication unit that secured direct communication with Moscow Kremlin and autonomous communication with the key services in the entire country;
- books by Marx, Lenin, Brezhnev and other Soviet times politicians;
- unique map with historic names of collective farms;
- materials of the XXII Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union;
- canteen with a typical Soviet menu;
- Various Soviet times memorabilia, household and daily items.



## TURAIDA CASTLE

The Turaida irregularly planned Bishop's Castle was built in 1214. Castle's portentous dwelling tower - Don John - was built in the 13th century. The old medieval castle was regularly extended up to the 17th century.

Now the picturesque castle is a part of Turaida Museum-reserve. Systematic archaeological excavations and restoration works take place in the territory of the castle. Visitors there can see an exposition about the castle history and ancient Livs' life at the Gauja River (11th-13th centuries) in the restored buildings.

The Turaida Manor household center exists for more than 300 years. Present manor-house was built in the middle of the 19th century and it is shaped in the forms of "Swiss house" that was popular for that time. Manor complex includes 14 ponds, also fish ponds and fish cellar. In smithy there is a smith's workshop, premises for thematic works and workshop of woodworks. There also is an exhibition in the bath-house.

