

CYCLE THE BALTICS: ESTONIA – LATVIA – LITHUANIA

(Tallinn – Lahemaa – Tartu – Riga – Curonian Spit – Vilnius)

11 days self-guided supported cycle tour (code SG7)



TOUR CODE:	Language*	TOUR STARTS - Wednesday**	TOUR ENDS - Saturday	Price per person in EUR:
23/SG7-01	EN	June 7	June 17	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-02	DE	June 14	June 24	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-03	EN	June 21	July 1	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-05	DE	July 5	July 15	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-06	EN/DE	July 12	July 22	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-08	DE	July 26	August 5	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-09	EN	August 2	August 12	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-11	EN	August 16	August 26	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-12	EN/DE	August 23	September 2	DBL 1295 SGL 1685
23/SG7-14	EN	September 6	September 16	DBL 1295 SGL 1685

* Language of city guide/s:

EN – English speaker, DE – German speaker

** This tour is available on any other dates May-September with minimum 6 people

The Baltic coast and National Parks of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania explored on very scenic routes, including the three capital cities – Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius – with their old towns designated by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites. Featuring the National Park Lahemaa, which is one of the last unspoiled regions of the Baltic coast, Otepää Lakeland – the so-called “Estonian Switzerland” and the beautiful Gauja River valleys. The tour includes cycling on the Curonian Spit which was previously closed to visitors; nowadays it is often called the Lithuanian Sahara. Travel from Tallinn, Estonia, in the north, through Latvia and on to Lithuania in the south, enjoy a great variety of towns, villages and landscapes, and get an excellent feel for the different characters of these distinctive countries.

The tour begins in Tallinn where you get your tour maps with detailed program and route description. Next day your rental bicycles will be ready for your first ride in Lahemaa. This trip is a half-guided tour ie during the whole trip, except Jurmala and the Curonian Spit, our driver with a minibuss and bike trailer is with you and you can take part in city tours (Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius) lead by professional guides. Our driver will transport your luggage every day to the next hotel. If you have a breakdown, then our driver will take care of everything for you. If you have any problems – contact the driver or our office.



Arrival / departure airports: Tallinn / Vilnius

Cycling Conditions: We rate this trip as Moderate one. Daily biking routes mainly on low traffic roads and cycle paths range from 20 to 57 km (13-36 miles) each day with a possibility for faster riders to cycle more kilometres on some days like Day 2 (more detours on a circular route in Lahemaa national park), Day 3 (extra distance towards Tartu) and Day 6 (exploring Jurmala Resort). The terrain is varied and rolling with a few gradual hills on some riding days (a few steep ups and downs in Otepää region, the Gauja River valley and on the Curonian Spit) and dead flat most of the tour. The tour covers all three Baltic States and therefore it includes a few long minibus transfers between the most interesting cycling destinations and the capital cities. Our walking sightseeing tours in the capital old towns are along cobbled streets.

TOUR ITINERARY

(cycling ~366 km/229 miles or ~344 km/~220 miles, by minibus ~1142 km /714 mi., by boat ~14 km/9 mi.)

Day 1 Wednesday: medieval Tallinn, Estonia.

Arrive in Tallinn. Individual transfer to the hotel (not included) where you get your tour maps with detailed program and route description. Check-in at the hotel.

6:00 pm (18:00) you can join in a guided tour of Tallinn.

OVERNIGHT: Tallinn;

HOTEL: **HESTIA ILMARINE****** or similar

Day 2 Thursday: National Park Lahemaa, Estonia (cycling ~51 km/32 miles or ~59 km/37 miles, by minibus ~100 km)

Meet your minibus driver. After a short transfer you'll begin your first bicycle trip through National Park Lahemaa which is one of the last unspoiled regions of the Baltic coast. The National park is a nature lover's paradise. There are dense woods, marshes, lakes and waterfalls to discover. If you prefer wildlife to landscape, you can see moose, wild boars and over 220 bird species. Check-in and optional dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Palmse or Vihula;

HOTEL: **PALMSE GUESTHOUSE** or **VIHULA MANOR******



Day 3 Friday: Along the Russian border & Lake Peipsi to TARTU, Estonia (cycling ~50 km/31 miles, by minibus ~160 km)

Morning transfer by bus to Mustvee where you'll begin a pleasant bicycle trip along Peipsi Lake shore to Varnja. Peipsi is 4th largest lake in Europe, divided in two by the Russian border. En route, you'll pass many fishing villages. You reach your hotel after a bus transfer to Tartu, a famous, historic university town (the university was founded in 1632). Check-in and optional dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Tartu;

HOTEL: **DORPAT***** or similar

Day 4 Saturday: OTEPÄÄ ("Estonian Switzerland") & SIGULDA, Latvia (cycling ~28 km/18 miles, by minibus ~235 km)

After a short bus transfer to Otepää, a beautiful place with many lakes, start your cycling through the so-called "Estonian Switzerland" and begin to appreciate your surroundings. Finish your cycling for the day in Sangaste which is famous for its 19th century romantic castle built in the style of Windsor Palace. Transfer into Latvia where your destination is Sigulda, in the Gauja River Valley, which is the most popular resort in Latvia. En route stop in Cesis where you can visit the medieval old town. Check-in and optional dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Sigulda;

HOTEL: **SIGULDA***** or similar

Day 5 Sunday: GAUJA National Park & RIGA, Latvia (cycling ~17 km/11 miles, by minibus ~50 km)

Cycling through Gauja National Park, en route enjoy spectacular views of Gauja River valleys with the Gutmana Cave and ruins of 13thC Crusaders Castle in Sigulda and Turaida Castle. Afternoon transfer to Riga, the Latvian capital, where a guided tour of the charming Old Town awaits. After check-in at the hotel exploring the medieval Hanseatic town famous for its Art Nouveau buildings.

OVERNIGHT: Riga;

HOTEL: **HESTIA JUGEND****** or similar

Day 6 Monday: RIGA & JURMALA Seaside resort, Latvia (cycling ~35 km/22 miles, by train ~25 km)

Today is free to explore Riga on your own and take a cycle ride on a bicycle path to Jurmala, a renowned Latvian seaside resort well known for its long, white, sand beaches, mineral waters and mud with healing properties. We recommend that you take the opportunity to bath in the sea and try cycling along the beach – its well worth it! In the evening take a local train back to Riga (30 min; not included).

OVERNIGHT: Riga;

HOTEL: **HESTIA JUGEND ****** or similar

Day 7 Tuesday: Hill of Crosses & Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route (cycling ~42 km/29 miles or 32 km/20 miles, by minibus ~290 km)

Transfer by minibus to Lithuanian Seaside. En-route stop at the Hill of Crosses, the unforgettable sight of thousands of crosses on two small hills. Begin your cycle ride to Klaipėda on a beautiful bicycle path, which lies along the Baltic Coast in the Seaside Regional Park. En route pass Palanga, the well-known Lithuanian seaside resort. Enjoy a break here; perhaps visit the renowned Botanical Park, Amber Museum and the 470m pier heading out into the Baltic Sea. Check-in and optional dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Klaipėda;

HOTEL: **OLD MILL***** or similar

Day 8 Wednesday: CURONIAN SPIT & the Hill of Witches, Lithuania (cycling ~57 km/36 miles)

After breakfast you cross the lagoon by ferry (not included) and start cycling on an asphalt bike path which takes you along the Curonian Spit to Nida, the most beautiful resort in Lithuania famous for impressive sand dunes, the Amber Gallery, etc. En route you can visit the Hill of Witches which houses almost a hundred whimsical wooden sculptures about Lithuanian legends scattered along a forest path. Or, if you prefer, watch a colony of grey herons and cormorants, explore the “Dead” sand dunes on foot, swim in the Baltic Sea or, simply relax, & take in the sun on golden beaches. Check-in and optional dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Nida;

HOTEL: **NERIJA***** or similar

Day 9 Thursday: Crossing the Curonian Lagoon by ship – KAUNAS, Lithuania (cycling ~31 km/19 miles, by minibus ~210 km, by boat ~14 km)

Take a morning boat across the Curonian Lagoon to the mainland, en-route enjoy a beautiful view of the Curonian Spit sand dunes. Cycling to Ventė Horn where you may visit a bird observatory and the 19thC lighthouse which was used for more than 100 years. Afternoon ride along the Curonian Lagoon through the Nemunas River Delta Regional Park followed by a minibus transfer to Kaunas. Check-in and optional dinner at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Kaunas;

HOTEL: **KAUNAS****** or similar

Day 10 Friday: TRAKAI Insular Castle and the ancient city of Vilnius, capital of Lithuania (cycling ~25 km/16 miles, by minibus ~97 km)

After breakfast you are transferred by minibus to the Lake District where begin cycling through picturesque countryside on gentle hills. Arrive in Trakai, the former capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Here you may visit the famous 14thC Gothic island castle erected on a small island in Lake Galvė. Finish the tour with a short transfer to Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania for more than 600 years. The Old Town is stunning with many, varied & beautiful Baroque and Classical buildings. This evening, a guided tour of the city awaits you. Check-in at the hotel.

OVERNIGHT: Vilnius;

HOTEL: **COMFORT HOTEL LT ***** or similar

Day 11 Saturday: VILNIUS

Individual departure after breakfast. You can extend your stay in Lithuania; please ask for details.

THE TOUR INCLUDES:

- 10 nights stay in middle-range hotels, including all taxes
- Breakfast daily
- Transfers as per itinerary by air-conditioned minibus
- Luggage transport as per itinerary
- Guided 2-hour city tours in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius (any entrance fees are payable individually)
- Crossing the Curonian Lagoon by boat from Nida to the mainland
- Emergency contact numbers for our English or German speaking representatives
- Individual information package (city guides, maps, programme and route description)
- GPS Tracks

THE TOUR DOESN'T INCLUDE:

- Arrival and departure transfers
- Lunches and dinners
- Bicycle rent
- Entrance fees
- Tips

OPTIONAL EXTRAS

A. TRANSFERS:

- Arrival or departure transfer by car for a party up to 3 people - 35 EUR per transfer
- Arrival or departure transfer by minibus for a party up to 7 people - 59 EUR per transfer

B. RENT

- Rental of trekking bicycle (*VDV*) with 24-speed Shimano derailleur gears & free-wheel, all supplied with a waterproof back pannier and handlebar bag with a plastic cover for GPS/smartphone (*Ortlieb*) and tachometer (1 x booking) – 99 EUR per person
- Rental of E-bike/Pedelec (*VDV, Kalkhoff*) with Bosch driving system, 8-speed Shimano Nexus hub gears & back-pedal break or free wheel, equipped with waterproof back pannier and handlebar bag with a plastic cover for GPS/smartphone (*Ortlieb*) – 249 EUR per person
- Rental of a helmet (please send your head size in centimetres or helmet size: S, M, L, XL) – 10 EUR per person

C. MEALS:

- 6 x 3-course dinners package at the hotels excluding Tallinn, Riga & Vilnius – 175 EUR per person with Palmse guesthouse or 199 EUR per person with VIHULA MANOR Hotel

D. PRE/POST TOUR ACCOMMODATION:

Hotel in Tallinn HESTIA ILMARINE** or similar**

SGL 99 EUR per room per night, including breakfast

DBL 110 EUR per room per night, including breakfast

Hotel in Vilnius COMFORT HOTEL LT * or similar**

SGL 69 EUR per room per night, including breakfast

DBL 80 EUR per room per night, including breakfast

Minimum group size on fixed departure dates – 4 people, any other dates May-September – 6 people.