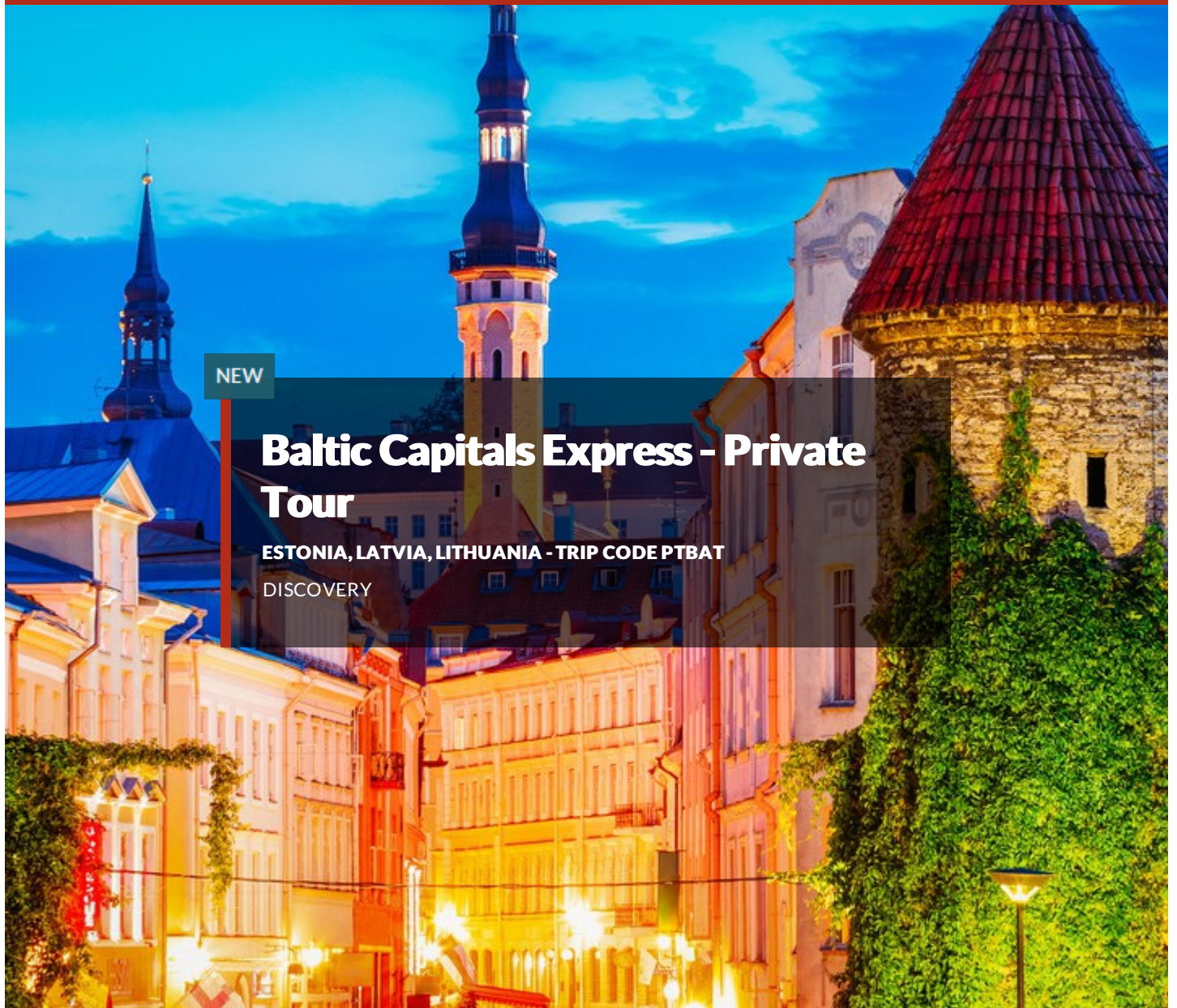


# EXPLORE!

Book with confidence



NEW

## Baltic Capitals Express - Private Tour

ESTONIA, LATVIA, LITHUANIA - TRIP CODE PTBAT

DISCOVERY

### Why book this trip?

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Travelling on a mixture of public transport and exploring on foot, this trip is the perfect introduction for first-time visitors to the Baltic States. Local guides will help you to discover hidden gems in each of the three Baltic capitals, and you'll taste traditional Lithuanian wines and cheese in Vilnius and Latvian produce at Riga's bustling Central Market. With some time at leisure in each city, this trip strikes a perfect balance between a busy city break and relaxed solo exploration.

- **Vilnius** - Explore the city on foot and taste Lithuania's fruity homemade wines
- **Riga** - Discover the old town and shop for food specialties at the huge Central Market
- **Tallinn** - See the stunning medieval architecture and opt to go under the city walls in the Bastion Tunnels.



**INCLUDED MEALS**  
Breakfast: 6



**TRIP STAFF**  
Local Guide(s)



**TRANSPORT**  
Bus



**ACCOMMODATION**  
6 nights  
comfortable hotel



**TRIP PACE:**  
Moderate

## Itinerary

Itineraries on some departure dates may differ, please select the itinerary that you wish to explore.

### DAY 1 - Trip begins in Vilnius, Lithuania

Arrive in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital city, where you can get a first taste of the city's vibrant cafe and restaurant scene.

You will be met on arrival at Vilnius International Airport (VNO) by a local guide, and driven to your centrally-located hotel, which is around 10 minutes from the airport. There are no activities planned today, so feel free to arrive in Vilnius at any time. For those booking their own flights, you will just need to let us know your flight details no later than three weeks prior to departure, in order to be met on arrival.

If your flight arrives earlier in the day, we recommend walking into the old town and taking the opportunity to taste some traditional food this evening. The majority of visitors to the Baltic States will be surprised by the quality, variety and value of food and drink on offer. The majority is locally sourced and part of the regions heritage is being able to forage for food and make local brews. There's a wide variety on the menu including soups, casseroles, salads, meat and fish dishes. Beer is locally brewed and you can find light and dark beers, filtered or unfiltered all for a reasonable price. You can also find flavoured wines such as raspberry and cherry wine and each country has its own herbal liquor which is a popular after dinner tittle.



**ACCOMMODATION:**  
Panorama Hotel (or similar)

Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: NONE

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## **DAY 2 - Walking tour of Vilnius and wine tasting; afternoon at leisure to visit to the KGB Museum**

The Catholic influence on Vilnius is very evident from the numerous Baroque churches. By the turn of the last century, Vilnius also had an 80,000-strong Jewish community. However, by the end of World War II, it had been completely decimated. Head out on foot with a local guide this morning to visit the ancient university founded by the Jesuits - a centre of the Counter Reformation and a source of Lithuanian culture, as well as the cathedral and Church of the Dawn. In the newer part of Vilnius lies the main shopping street with the opera house, parliament building and a number of cafes. After the walking tour, a local restaurant for a tasting of traditional Lithuanian wine and cheese. Surprisingly, this small country has a deep history of wine-making, and until the 20th century wine was produced in most rural houses from the nobility to the humblest farmer - particularly dessert wine, handmade from berries and fruits that thrive in the area. Taste four distinct wines, each paired with a different local cheese.

You'll have the afternoon free to do some solo exploration. One recommended visit is to the KGB Museum, which is located in the former KGB Headquarters and has exhibits documenting the crimes that were planned and committed from this very spot during Soviet rule. The displays show how the Lithuanians fought back to re-claim their independence, and you can see the inner prison cell that has been preserved in the same condition as when the headquarters closed in 1991. Alternatively, if you wanted to get out of the city, you could visit the fairytale-esque red castle of Trakai, just 30 minutes outside of Vilnius. This 14th-Century castle is situated on an island and only accessible by a footbridge connecting it with the mainland. In summer, paddleboats are available to rent here, so that you can circumnavigate the castle by paddling around the lake. It's possible to get a train or bus here (the bus and train stations are right next to each other in Vilnius centre), and well worth a visit if you want to escape the city.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Panorama Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



### DAY 3 - Take a coach to Riga, Latvia

Take a public coach to Riga this morning, in Latvia. The coach station is only a three-minute walk from your hotel. We endeavour to book a ticket for a 10am departure, arriving into Riga at 14.15pm, but final timings will be on your tickets when you arrive into Vilnius. The Baltic states have an excellent long-distance coach service which benefits from comfortable seats, WiFi throughout, seat-back screens with films and TV shows available, a restroom and hand sanitizers on board. We recommend taking a packed lunch, snacks or sandwiches on board with you for the journey.

In the afternoon, arrive into Riga and head to your hotel, only a 10-minute walk from the bus station. The rest of the day is free for you to discover more of the city. Riga is an old Hanseatic city on the banks of the Daugava River and is arguably the most beautiful in the Baltics. Its skyline is pierced with spires, towers and weather vanes, making the streets a joy to amble through. The Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum and Riga Castle are well worth a visit or you may choose to enjoy a long lunch in one of the many restaurants. Cheese and meat filled pastries served with wild berry preserves are popular, especially when washed down with a local beer or perhaps a glass of Riga Black Balsam, a traditional herbal liqueur - an acquired taste!



ACCOMMODATION:  
Konventa Seta Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 4 - Walking tour of Riga; taste produce at Riga Central Market

Most of the important sights in Riga are concentrated in a small area, so walking is the most effective way to explore. Head out with a local guide to learn more about the history of the city, taking in the Freedom Monument, Gunpowder Tower, Saint Jacob's Church and the city's cathedral. Buildings have been painstakingly restored over the last twenty years and commanding Gothic structures sit adjacent to Baroque and lavish Art Nouveau architecture. Also visit the huge and lively Central Market, where you'll find traditional produce on sale here, such as smoked fish, sauerkraut, pickled garlic and crusty cheeses - many of which you can try before buying!

This afternoon is free for you to relax. You could look to get out of the city with a visit to the largest seaside resort in the Baltics - Jurmala. Only 30 minutes outside of Riga, and easily accessed on the train to Majori or Dzintari station, this town is unsurprisingly popular in summer among the city-dwellers. More surprisingly is that it still holds interest in winter - in the bitterest temperatures the sea in the Gulf of

Riga can freeze over, forming ice ridges several metres high. The town itself is mishmash of architectural styles - from art nouveau and classical to Soviet-era buildings.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Konventa Seta Hotel (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 5 - Coach journey to Tallinn, Estonia

This morning, bid farewell to Latvia and head for Tallinn, the capital city of Estonia. Travelling again with the same coach company, we aim to purchase a ticket for a 10am departure, arriving at 14.30pm. You'll be met on arrival and driven to your hotel, only a 10-minute journey.

With just half a million citizens, Tallinn is not a sprawling metropolis. This adds to its charm, as it is easy to explore on foot, with minimal traffic. Famed for its medieval architecture, the Old Town is one of the best preserved Hanseatic city centres in the world and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On arrival you'll have some free time, and you might want to visit the Bastion Tunnels, beneath the city. The tunnels were constructed in the 1670's and were used by the military as defensive tunnels beneath the city walls and buildings above. The tunnels lay unused for many years, but at the start of World War II they were renovated to be used as bomb shelters and then during Soviet rule they were installed with electricity, ventilation, water and telephones. During the excursion you'll get to see the tunnels still in their Medieval state and those that have been modernised in the 20th century. It's worth noting that the tunnels are closed on Sundays and Public Holidays, so you may like to check the dates of your trip if this is of interest.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Go Shnelli (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE





MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 6 - Walking tour of Tallinn; optional visit to the Bastion Tunnels

Less than 100 kilometres across the water from Helsinki and midway between St. Petersburg and Stockholm, Tallinn has come under several different cultural influences since the first stronghold was built in the 10th century. Linguistically and economically, Estonia's closest ties are to Finland, despite the best efforts of other nations. In 1561, as a coveted trading port, it was seized by the Swedes and held for 150 years until the Russians took over and industrialised much of the medieval town. Perched on a hill overlooking the sea, explore the cobbled Old Town on foot with a local guide this morning. The colourful houses of the crooked streets reflect the German, Scandinavian and Russian periods of Tallinn's history. Walk through the quarter where merchants once traded and take in the historical and architectural highlights. The busy town square is a hectic mix of pavement cafes and shops, dominated by the 14th century Gothic Town Hall. The pink Parliament buildings and Toompea Castle lie near the imposing deep yellow Alexander Nevsky Cathedral.

You're free for some solo exploration this afternoon. The city has a lot of charm, so you might want to stay here and stroll through the atmospheric Old Town, sipping coffee and trying local treats like Vastlakukkel - wheat buns stuffed with whipped cream, traditionally eaten before Lent but now available in most bakeries throughout the year.



ACCOMMODATION:  
Hotel Go Shnelli (or similar)



Grade: Comfortable Hotel



SINGLE ROOM AVAILABLE



MEALS PROVIDED: BREAKFAST

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### DAY 7 - Trip ends in Tallinn, Estonia

Your trip ends today, and you will be taken to the airport to meet your international flight. There are no activities planned today, so you are free to depart from Lennart Meri Tallinn Airport (TLL), which is about 10 minutes' drive. If your flight is departing later in the day, luggage storage facilities are available at the hotel.



## Trip information

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### Climate and country information

#### Estonia

##### Climate

Summer days in Estonia are warm though changeable with the occasional thunderstorm. Temperatures are commonly around 20-25°C, but can reach 30°C or more especially in July. At night temperatures are cooler. Winters can be harsh with very low temperatures, especially in January. Sometimes it drops as low -30°C, but more commonly it'll be around -5°C. Snowfall usually starts in November and lasting through to March. Being a maritime climate it can rain at any time of the year and it can be foggy in the autumn.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Evangelical Lutheranism	Estonian

#### Latvia

##### Climate

Summers in Latvia are generally hot and sunny and less humid than in Central Europe, with temperatures commonly around 18-22°C, but can reach 30°C. Summer is normally the rainiest time of year on a count of the afternoon thunderstorms that occur on some days. It can be windy on the coast at any time of year. Temperatures begin to drop in autumn and September can quite cold with temperatures between 8-15°C. Winters are normally below freezing with the first snows starting in November and lasting to the end of February. Temperatures regularly reach as low as -5°C, but can go down as far as -35°C.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Christian	Latvian

#### Lithuania

##### Climate

Summer days in Lithuania are warm though changeable. Temperatures on the coast are usually around 19°C and between 22-23°C further inland, but they can reach over 30°C. At night temperatures are cooler. Winters are cold, with temperatures regularly below freezing, so be prepared for snowy and icy conditions. Temperatures regularly reach as low as -5°C, but can go down as far as -35°C. Snowfall usually starts in November and lasting through to March. Being a maritime climate it can rain at any time of the year.

Time difference to GMT	Plugs	Religion	Language
+2	2 Pin Round	Roman Catholic	Lithuanian

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## Budgeting and packing

### Optional activities

The following excursions and/or activities are usually available and may be arranged locally. Estimated costs are provided below for guidance only, are on a per person basis unless shown otherwise, and may depend on the number of participants. Prices quoted are correct as of the date these tour notes were originally issued but may change at any time due to currency fluctuations. Please note: These activities are booked and paid for direct with the supplier and do not form part of your Explore holiday contract.

In each of the three capitals visited during this tour, you'll have a local guide with you for half a day, who will introduce you to the main sites and hidden gems of their city. You then have at least half a day at your leisure to discover the museums, cafes, bars and markets of these diverse countries. In our itinerary we have given some recommendations of what is possible to do with your time here, and for those options we have listed prices below, in order to help you budget for your tour.

#### Vilnius:

Trakai Island Castle - €8.00 entrance fee + €2-4 train or bus fare

KGB Museum - €4.00 entrance fee. Guided tours and audio guides are available at an additional cost.

#### Riga:

Jurmala - €2-4 train fare

Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum - €2-4 entrance fee (dependant on the season)

#### Tallinn:

Bastion Tunnels - €14 entrance fee

### Clothing

In spring and summer, lightweight clothing is best during the day plus warmer clothing for colder nights. We also recommend taking a lightweight raincoat and an umbrella, as rainfall is possible at any time of year. During autumn and winter layers work best. We recommend taking a hat, gloves, scarf and a fleece/jumper. In winter a thick waterproof and windproof jacket is required and you may also find thermal underwear useful.

Ladies should take a headscarf to cover their head when entering religious sites.

### Footwear

Comfortable shoes for walking and sandals or trainers for relaxing. If you're travelling in winter then it may be slippery underfoot, so please ensure that your footwear is waterproof and that it has a good grip.

### Luggage

20kg



## Luggage: On tour

One main piece of baggage and a daypack for personal items. Remember that you'll have to carry your own luggage so don't overload yourself.

## Equipment

We recommend taking insect repellent (especially if travelling in summer), a water bottle, sunscreen, sunglasses and a personal first aid kit. Most importantly don't forget your camera.

## Tipping

### Local crew

Although voluntary, tipping is a recognised part of life in this region of the world. Some local staff will look to members of the group for personal recognition of particular services provided. As a guideline, we would suggest approximately 3-5 Euros per person for the city guides during your tour, but this is completely at your discretion and should be based on the service that you have received.

## Estonia

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

Lunch price	Dinner price	Beer price	Water price
£10	£15	£2.4	£0.5

### Foreign Exchange

Local currency	Recommended Currency For Exchange
Euros.	EUR, GBP or USD

### Where To Exchange

US Dollars, GBP Sterling and Euros can be changed in most places.

### ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn from ATM's in most cities.

### Credit Card Acceptance

Credit cards are generally accepted only in the larger hotels and restaurants.

### Travellers Cheques

Travellers cheques are not always easy to exchange.

## Latvia

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

<b>Lunch price</b>	<b>Dinner price</b>	<b>Beer price</b>	<b>Water price</b>
£10	£15	£3	£0.5

## Foreign Exchange

### Local currency

Euro

### Recommended Currency For Exchange

We suggest you take most of your spending money in cash (in small denominations). US Dollars and Euros are more easily converted than Pounds Sterling. N.B. US\$ notes should be in good condition (not torn or marked). Notes prior to 1990 (of any currency) are often not accepted.

### Where To Exchange

Most major towns - your Tour Leader will advise you on arrival.

### ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn from ATMs in all major towns.

### Credit Card Acceptance

In major restaurants and shops.

### Travellers Cheques

Are very difficult to cash on this tour.

## Lithuania

### Food and drink

The costs for meals may vary depending upon location, type of restaurant and number of courses eaten and so the prices given are an average guide. Local restaurants located off the beaten track may be less expensive, whereas an upmarket restaurant located in the centre of a major city may charge more.

<b>Lunch price</b>	<b>Dinner price</b>	<b>Beer price</b>	<b>Water price</b>
£10	£15	£1.5	£0.5

## Foreign Exchange

### Local currency

Euros

### Recommended Currency For Exchange

EUR, GBP or USD

### Where To Exchange

US Dollars, GBP Sterling and Euros can be changed in most places.

### ATM Availability

Cash can be drawn from ATM's in most cities.

### **Credit Card Acceptance**

Credit cards are generally accepted only in the larger hotels and restaurants.

### **Travellers Cheques**

Travellers cheques are not always easy to exchange.

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## **Transport, Accommodation & Meals**

### **Transport Information**

Bus

### **Accommodation notes**

In each location we endeavour to get you well located, in order to make it simple and easy for you to get to and from the bus stations, as well as being right in the centre of the cities. In Riga and Vilnius, you will be accommodated within walking distance from the bus station. In Tallinn, the station is located slightly out of town, so you will have a private taxi waiting for you on arrival.

The majority of hotels in the Baltics don't have air-conditioning, and it can get quite hot in summer so you may wish to bring very light sleepwear during July and August.

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## **Essential Information**

### **Government Travel Safety Advice**

We strongly recommend that you check your government's travel advisory for up-to-date information and advice about your destination: safety and security, entry requirements, health, local laws and customs. For UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advice [click here](#).

For more information from Explore about travel advice, [click here](#)

### **Under 18 immigration guidance**

Please note that some countries require proof of parental consent when travelling overseas with under 18s. Please check requirements with the relevant embassy or consular office well in advance of travel if this applies to your party.

### **Price Guarantee**

Once your booking has been confirmed we guarantee the price will not increase, whatever the circumstances. Before booking please ensure you have read our important tour pricing information. [Booking Conditions](#)

### **Visa and Passport Information**

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia: Visas are not required by UK, Australian, New Zealand, US and Canadian citizens. Other nationalities should consult their local embassy or consular office. You should confirm all

visa related questions with the relevant Embassy prior to departure. Visa regulations in the Baltics are often subject to frequent change so ensure you check before you travel.

If you do require assistance in obtaining a visa then you may be able to apply through Explore's recommended visa service in the UK, Travcour. See [www.travcour.com](http://www.travcour.com) to download the relevant visa application for your trip, if applicable (UK citizens only), along with details of how to apply for your visa through Travcour. The Team at Travcour will be happy to answer specific questions relating to visa applications, please call them directly on 0208 5431846.

It is your responsibility to ensure that you are in possession of a full passport, with the correct validity for your chosen destination.

## Booking conditions

Before booking your Explore trip, please ensure that you read both our Essential Information and Booking Conditions.

## Transfers

Find out more about [Trip Transfer Terms and Conditions](#) before you book.

### Booking a land only package with Explore

Customers who have chosen to book on the 'Land Only' arrangements of our tour, please ensure that you have checked your tour specific 'Joining Instructions' prior to booking your own travel arrangements. Your joining instructions can be found below in the dates and prices information.

You may also be eligible for the Free Explore Transfer.

### Joining Tour Abroad

Customers booked on the 'Land Only' arrangements will receive a Free Transfer, provided you arrive and depart on the tour only itinerary start and end dates. The complimentary transfers will be arranged from the Explore designated airport or train station to your trips joining point, and then back from the ending point to the designated airport or train station. Generally the airport or station that Explore have selected will be the one that is closest to the town or city where the trip starts, or the one nearest to the joining point. It will be either an airport or train station but not both.

The exception to this rule is customers who are booked on a tour where the joining and ending point is at the designated airport or train station.

Free transfers are not available for Self-Guided, Polar, Tailormade or Tours for Churches customers.

If you are not eligible for the Free Transfer then you will need to make your own way through to the joining and ending point. On a majority of our tours Explore will be able to provide a private transfer at an additional cost. Please ask for a quote at the time of booking.

For more information regarding the Explore Free Transfer [click here](#)

## Insurance

It is a condition of booking with Explore that you have adequate valid travel insurance. It is your responsibility to arrange appropriate travel insurance and ensure you have read and understood the full terms and conditions of your travel insurance policy to ensure that you are covered for all activities you intend to undertake whilst on the tour, including all optional activities. Your Insurance Policy must fully

cover you for medical expenses and emergency repatriation to your home country. Please ensure your policy includes medical emergency helicopter evacuation in the event of illness or injury and covers the entire duration of your holiday. If you are trekking at altitude please ensure that there is no upper altitude limit which may limit or exclude cover for your trip. The cost of many of our Polar Voyages will exceed the capped amount covered by standard insurance premiums and you will be required to pay an additional premium to cover the full value of your trip. Please ensure that you are covered for the full amount of your holiday cost, as insufficient cover could invalidate a claim under the policy. Medical and repatriation insurance cover is not mandatory for UK residents who are travelling on trips within the United Kingdom.

Read more information about what travel insurance is required.

## **Flight information**

Explore offers a wide range of flexible flying options to make joining and leaving our trips easy. Read more about them here.

### **Flight Information**

You are able to book this tour on a 'land only' basis or as a 'flight inclusive' package. Your flight inclusive package will be fully protected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) ATOL protection scheme.

### **Booking a flight inclusive package with Explore**

We have a good selection of flights not only from London but from many regional airports around the UK allowing us to compare fares between scheduled carriers as well as low cost and charter airlines. Our dedicated flights team will match the best flight options to your arrival and departure airport.

On our website we display a UK flight inclusive package guide price which is generally based on a London departure. To avoid paying supplements or to secure your preferred flight option, we recommend booking as early as possible, especially for peak travel dates.

## **Ability to swim**

No

## **Estonia**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus and hepatitis A. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

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## **Latvia**

### **Vaccinations**

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus, typhoid, hepatitis A, polio and diphtheria. Consult your travel clinic for further advice. tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by

following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

## Lithuania

### Vaccinations

Nothing compulsory, but we recommend protection against tetanus and hepatitis A. Tick-borne encephalitis is recommended by some medical sources if travelling in certain areas of Eastern Europe, at specific times of the year. Please check the latest requirements with your travel clinic or doctor prior to departure. The above is not an exhaustive list. Further information regarding vaccinations and travel health advice can be found by following the NHS and NaTHNaC links at Explore Travel Health and from your local healthcare provider. Visa and vaccination requirements are subject to change and should be confirmed by you before travelling.

### Additional Information



## Tour Staff

Unlike our group tours our private journeys do not have a Tour Leader. However, you are still in safe hands as we work closely with our expert local suppliers on the planning and organisation of your holiday to ensure that you have a fantastic time. You'll be met on arrival in Vilnius by an english-speaking driver, who will answer any questions you may

have. The guides in Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn are excellent, and will help to bring the destinations to life. At times you will travel unaccompanied, but you will have all the information that you need to explore and there is always the reassurance that you have someone on hand with our 24/7 emergency contact number.

## Why book this trip

See the main highlights and lesser-visited sights in three beautiful Baltic capital cities - Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn, in just one week. Travelling between cities by comfortable coach, this trip perfectly blends local guiding with free time to strike a balance between a busy city break and relaxed solo exploration.

Traditional Christmas markets are popular in the Baltics, so if you travel over this period then our local guides will make sure they factor these into the city tours.

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## Reviews

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AWARD WINNING  
EXPLORE LEADERS



PRICE GUARANTEE  
PROMISE



AIRPORT  
TRANSFERS