

DISCOVER THE WONDERS

SPIEKERMANN

TRAVEL SERVICE



**POLAND, LITHUANIA, LATVIA, AND ESTONIA
DISCOVER THE BEAUTY OF THE BALTICS**

**July 29 - August 11, 2024
Led by Local Guides**

Join us to a unique and young destination. The cities of the Baltic countries were some of the wealthiest and most important cities in medieval northern Europe. Estonia and Latvia can boast a glorious Hanseatic and Livonian legacy, while Lithuania was a vital component of the biggest state in medieval Europe, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, for most of the 19th and 20th centuries interrupted only by the interwar period, the Baltic countries were forgotten treasures incorporated into Imperial Russia and later into the Soviet Union. Since the Baltic countries regained their independence at the beginning of the 1990s, the cities have regained their past beauty and glory and have recaptured their natural position on the European map. This tour takes you on a thrilling journey through the three Baltic countries' millennium of history with remarkable contrasts between the medieval past and the modern present and with plenty of beautiful unspoiled countryside in between.

Ihab Zaki,
Managing Director

Monday, July 29

Arrive in Krakow (POLAND)



Upon arrival to **Krakow**, meet assist and transfer to *Hotel Q plus* or similar for check in and overnight.

Tuesday, July 30

Krakow



For half a millennium **Krakow** was the royal capital of Poland and for centuries, the city walls have guarded its traditions and secrets. The morning sightseeing tour takes us to the **Old Town** with the **St. Mary's Church**, built in the early 13th Century, St. Mary's was rebuilt in brick Gothic style in the 14th century and completed in 1347 during the reign of Casimir III the Great. the **Jagiellonian University**, founded in 1364 by King Casimir III the Great, it is the oldest university in Poland and the 13th oldest university in continuous operation in the world, the **Cloth Halls** and **Wawel with the Wawel Castle** and the **Wawel Cathedral** the most magnificent, example of medieval Polish cathedral architecture, imbued inside with the rich artistic flair of Renaissance Europe. In the afternoon, have an excursion to the famous **Wieliczka Salt Mine**, an amazing labyrinth of tunnels going down as far as 327 meters. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Wednesday, July 31

Krakow (Auschwitz)



Begin the day with a morning visit to **Auschwitz Concentration Camp**. Auschwitz was the largest of the German Nazi concentration camps and extermination centres. Over 1.1 million men, women and children lost their lives here. In the afternoon, head to visit the **Podgorze district** situated on the right bank of the Vistula River, at the foot of Lasota Hill and the **Oskar Schindler's Enamel Factory Museum** built by Oskar Schindler (1908-1974) a German entrepreneur and a member of the Nazi party then return to the *Hotel* for overnight **(B)**

Thursday, August 01

Krakow- Warsaw



After breakfast, begin the day with a drive to **Warsaw**, the capital of Poland. on the way, head to **Czestochowa** and visit **Jasna Gora Monastery** one of the largest Marian sanctuaries in Poland with **Black Madonna**. Upon arrival to Warsaw in the afternoon, transfer to *Radisson Blu Sobieski Hotel* or similar for check-in and overnight. **(B.L)**

Friday, August 02

Warsaw



Warsaw is a post-war city with a meticulously reconstructed Old Town. Begin the morning with a visit to the **Royal Route** and the **Old Town** with the **Royal Castle** the former seat of the rulers of Poland, **St. John's Cathedral**, one of the oldest and it was almost completely destroyed during World War II. It has since been painstakingly restored, retaining its noble gothic facade, though having lost its opulent, baroque interior. also visit the **Old Town Market Square** and the **Barbican**, one of the last remaining relics of the extensive network of walls, fortifications, and gates that once surrounded the city. In the afternoon, head to visit to the so-called **Warsaw Ghetto route** - a series of monuments and memorial stones in the area that was once the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw, the largest of all the Jewish ghettos in Europe that the Nazis set up by force during their reign of terror and the Holocaust. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight **(B)**

Saturday, August 03

Warsaw



After breakfast, head to visit the **Fryderyk Chopin Museum**, dedicated to the Polish composer and virtuoso pianist of the Romantic era Frédéric Chopin (1810-1849). The museum is housed in the 17th century city palace designed by Tielman van Gameren that is also home to the Chopin Association and the Chopin Institute in the afternoon, head to visit the **Wilanow Palace** and Park, a former royal palace located in the Wilanów district of Warsaw. The palace and garden remained unchanged

despite annexations, wars, and occupations. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Sunday, August 04

Warsaw - Kaunas - Vilnius (LITHUANIA)



After breakfast, begin the drive to **Lithuania**. Our first stop will be in **Kaunas**, the former capital of Lithuania. Enjoy lunch then head to visit **Kaunas Castle** built in the 14th century to defend against the onslaught of crusaders. This is not only one of the first stone castles in Lithuania, but also the only one that has two rows of defensive walls. Also, visit **Sugihara House museum** which hosted the Japanese consulate in Kaunas, which was at that time the provisional capital of Lithuania before the war. Visit the unique interwar **Art Deco District** then continue the drive to **Vilnius** and upon arrival transfer to *the Hotel* for check-in and overnight. **(B,L)**

Monday, August 05

Vilnius



Vilnius is known for its more than 1.200 medieval buildings and 48 churches. begin the morning sightseeing with a panoramic and a walking tour of the Old Town with visit to **Vilnius Cathedral of St. Stanislaus and St. Ladislaus**, a symbol of Lithuanian baptism, built in the centre of the city on the site of a former pagan temple and next to Vilnius' defensive castle. also, visit **Gediminas Tower** built on the hill in late 13th century - early 14th century with the main purpose to defend the city from enemies, **Peter & Paul Church** recognized as one of the most beautiful Catholic churches in the world, **St. Anne's Church** built for Anna, Grand Duchess of Lithuania, and wife to Vytautas the Great. The 500-year-old church remains a major example of Gothic architecture so beautiful, it's said Napoleon Bonaparte fell in love with the cathedral. Also, visit the **Old University** and the **Gates of Dawn**, were called the Medininkai Gates because they led the way to Medininkai. The current name may have come from the Sharp Gate.

In the afternoon, head to visit **Trakai**, the medieval capital of Lithuania, with the well preserved **Trakai Castle** famous for its gothic architecture and its special location – it stands on an island on Lake Galve, one of the deepest lakes in Lithuania. In the evening, enjoy an authentic dinner at Senoji Trobele then return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,D)**

Tuesday, August 06

Vilnius - Hill of Crosses - Rudale - Riga (LATVIA)



After breakfast, head to visit **Siauliai** and **Hill of Crosses**, one of the holiest sites in Catholic Lithuania and a potent

symbol of faith, hope, and freedom. Head north into **Latvia** and visit to **Rundale Palace** built in 1736-1768 as a summer residence of the dukes of Courland and Semigallia. Enjoy lunch then drive to **Riga**, the capital of Latvia. Upon arrival, transfer to *Radisson Blu Hotel* or similar for check-in and overnight. **(B, L)**

Wednesday, August 07

Riga



Founded in 1201 by the German bishop Albert, Riga is the largest of the three Baltic capitals and boasts a real kaleidoscope of architectural styles. Begin the day with a walking tour of the Old Town that includes visits to the **Riga Castle** one of the largest medieval castles in Latvia, has and still serves as a power center of a larger or smaller territory, the **Dome Cathedral** the seat of the Archbishop of the Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church, **St. Peter's Church** built in 1209, but just some walls and some pillars have remained from that time, the **Swedish Gate** built between the 13th and 16th centuries, was destroyed by time or invaders or torn down in the 19th century and the **Three Brothers**, the Large and Small Guilds and the Freedom Monument. In the afternoon, visit **Jurmala**, the vibrant Latvian sea resort, famous for its wooden architecture and sandy beaches. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

Thursday, August 08

Riga - Sigulda - Cesis - Tallinn (ESTONIA)



Begin the day with the stunning scenery of the **Gauja National Park** and the town of **Sigulda** famous for its castles and picturesque natural surroundings. Listen to the medieval Latvian legend of the **Rose of Turaida** and see the ruins of the **Episcopal Castle** built in 1214 by Livonian Brothers of the Sword, and of the **Castle of the Knights of the Sword**. Enjoy lunch at a local restaurant, then continue to the medieval city of **Cesis** and north to **Tallinn**, the Capital of Estonian. Upon arrival, transfer *L'Ermitage Hotel* or similar for check-in and overnight. **(B,L)**

Friday, August 09

Tallinn



Tallinn is a charming blend of medieval tranquillity and modern urban life. The medieval Old Town is a busy place in the summer with its many shops, galleries, souvenir markets, outdoor cafés, and restaurants. The sightseeing tour takes us around the **old medieval city walls** and into the Old Town to visit **Toompea Castle**, constructed on the foundations of the crumbling eastern wing of the fortress built on this site in the 13th and 14th centuries. In the afternoon, visit **Kadriorg Park**, the most outstanding palatial and urban park in Estonia, covering around 70

hectares. Its construction began in 1718 on the orders of Russian tsar Peter I. Also, visit **KUMU Museum** opened in 2006, preserves and make sense of Estonian art from the 18th century to the present day. It is the award-winning new Estonian Art Museum, with its collections of classic and contemporary fine art.

Visit the Dome Church where we will find gravestones from the 13 to the 18th centuries and coat of arms epitaphs dating from the 17th to the 20th centuries, **Alexander Nevsky Cathedral**, the large and richly decorated Russian Orthodox church, designed in a mixed historicist style, was completed on Toompea Hill in 1900, when Estonia was part of the Czarist Empire. Also, visit the **Medieval Old Town Hall** and **Great Guild Hall** which has been one of the city's best-known places for organising cultural events and parties throughout the centuries. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B)**

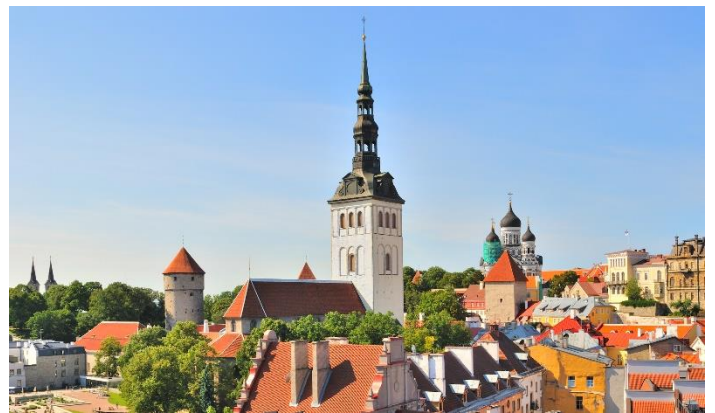


Saturday, August 10

Tallinn - Lahemaa - Tallinn



After breakfast, drive to **Lahemaa National Park**, and visit **Palmse Manor**, a memorial to the **von Pahlen family**, and **Sagadi Manor**. Then visit the charming 16th century **Vihula Manor** and the **Vodka Museum**. Drive back to Tallinn for our farewell dinner at Roof restaurant owned by the former first lady of Estonia. Return to the *Hotel* for overnight. **(B,L,D)**



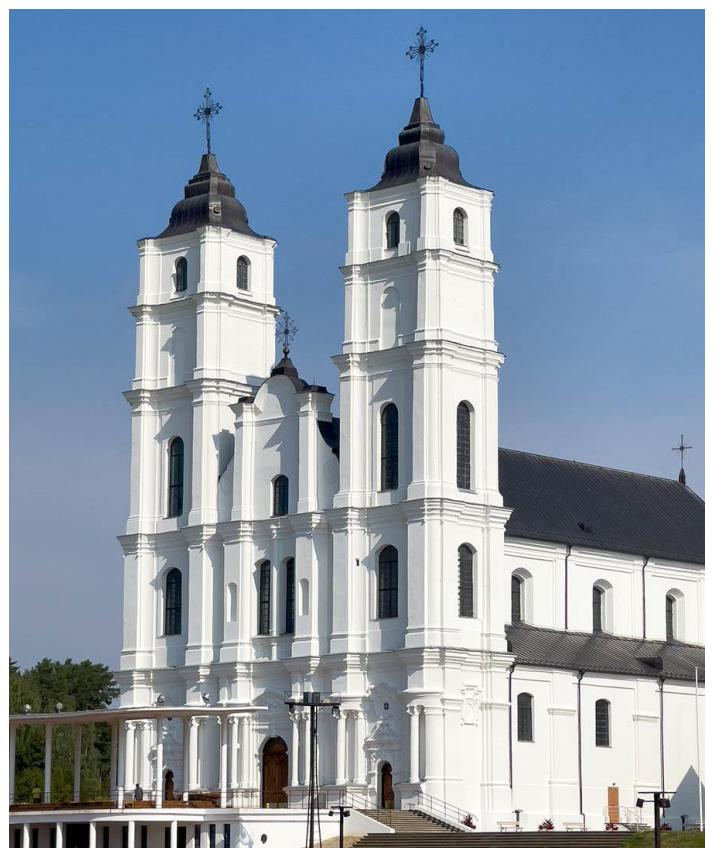
Sunday, August 11

Tallinn - USA



After breakfast, transfer to the airport for your flight back to the US. **(B)**

"We reserve the right to change the order of activities/visits or sites due to unexpected events such as flight cancellations or changes of schedule, or any other reasons beyond our control. We will do our best to ensure that any necessary changes when/if needed to meet the needs of our clients".



Tour Cost (Land Only): \$3,995.00

Per person sharing in double occupancy

Single Supplement: \$800.00

Price based on group size minimum of 10 participants

Trip Grade: II Lodging Level: ****



Tour Includes:

- Airport / Hotel / Airport transfers.
- All accommodation at mentioned Hotels or similar.
- Travel by modern a/c vehicles.
- Meals as mentioned in the itinerary (B: Breakfast, L: Lunch and D: Dinner).
- All Tours as per itinerary & entrance fees to the sites and museums mentioned.
- English Speaking local guide.
- All activities described in the tour.
- Bottled water while on drives.
- Gratuities to guide, drivers, and porters (provided minimum number of travelers is reached).

Tour does not include:

- International airfare USA - Krakow- Tallinn-USA
- Beverages and alcoholic drinks with or without meals.
- Items of a personal nature (camera fees, laundry, excess luggage, etc.).
- Transfers if not arriving/departing on tour dates.
- Dayroom/overnights necessitated by changes in airline schedules or misconnections.
- Trip surcharge to operate below required minimum participants.
- Gratuity to your tour manager (optional).
- Travel protection insurance. (HIGHLY RECOMMENDED).

Trip Grade

II Active – Some hikes, slightly more demanding walks at or to sites, a few elevations, comfortable but busy schedule and some long rides.

Lodging Level:

****** Superior:** Combination of lodges and hotels with additional amenities, refined service, and comfort level acceptable to western standards (4 stars).

