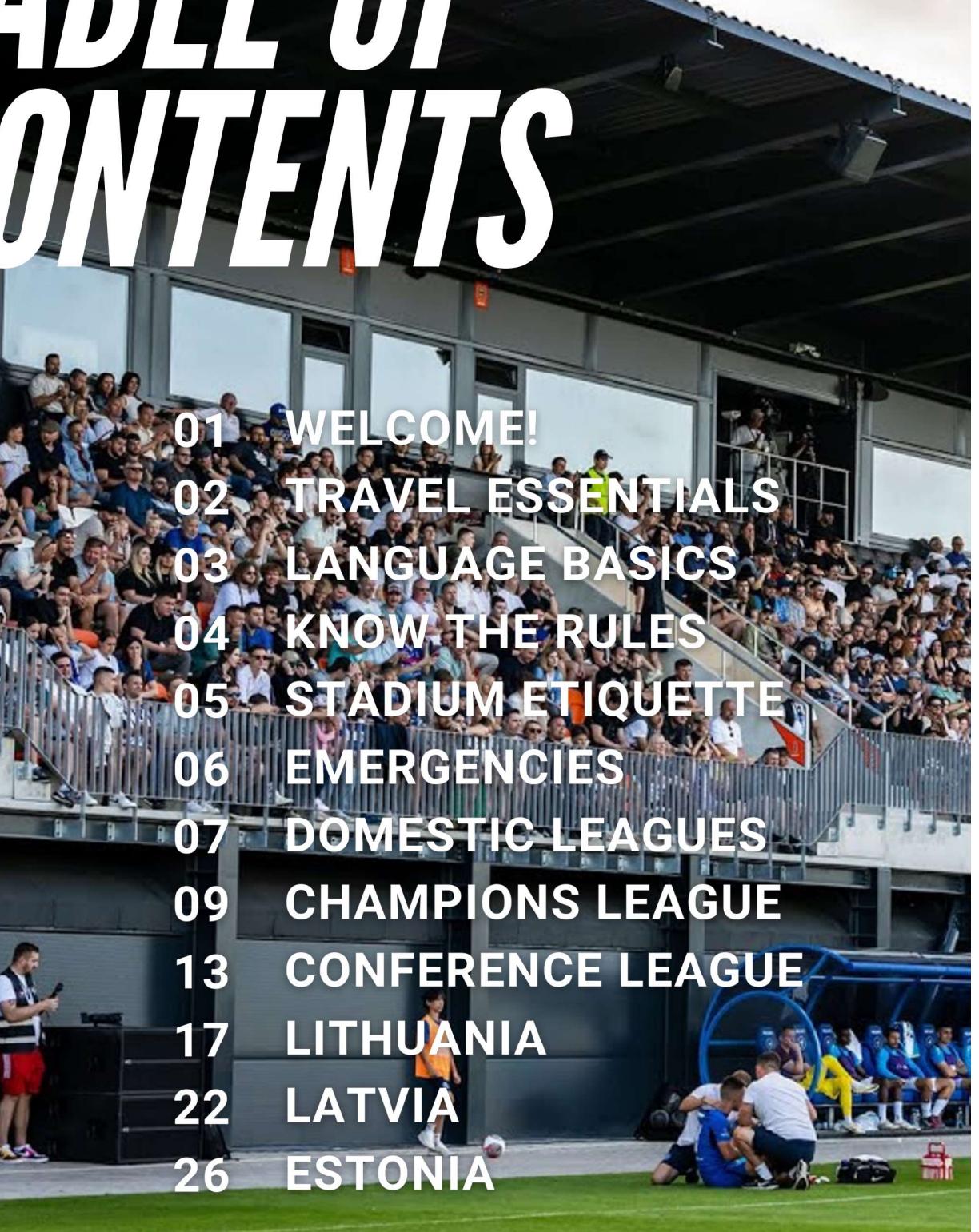


AWAY FAN'S GUIDE TO BALTIC FOOTBALL

LITHUANIA, LATVIA, ESTONIA



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Welcome to your Baltic Football Adventure!

Football fans of Europe and beyond – welcome to an unforgettable journey across Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia!

If you're following your club in the Champions League or Conference League qualifiers, you're not just chasing football dreams. You're about to discover three incredible countries brimming with passion, culture, and the magic of matchday atmosphere.

Football isn't just a sport – it's a celebration of community, identity, and fierce loyalty. Here as much as where you are from. As you travel from stadium to stadium, you'll feel the pulse of local supporters, hear the chants echoing under summer skies, and share in the joy (and heartbreak) that only football can bring. While we may support opposing clubs, we are all one.

But the adventure goes far beyond the ninety minutes on the pitch.

From Riga's art nouveau splendour and buzzing nightlife, to Vilnius's baroque beauty and bohemian spirit, the capitals of the Baltics invite you to wander historic streets, explore vibrant cultural scenes, and savour cozy cafes and lively bars. Just a short ride away, Kaunas enchants with its youthful energy, modernist architecture, and a football scene eager to shine. And in Tallinn, medieval towers rise above modern cityscapes, offering fairytale charm alongside bustling pubs where fans from across Europe unite to cheer on their teams.

Across the Baltics, you'll find a football culture that's growing, ambitious, and fiercely proud. Local clubs may be underdogs on the European stage, but the atmosphere in their stadiums is heartfelt, passionate, and unforgettable. Fans here understand the beauty of the game – the drama, the hope, the togetherness – and they'll welcome you as one of their own.

So bring your scarves, your songs, and your unwavering support! This guide is here to help you navigate stadiums, discover hidden gems, taste incredible food, and connect with fellow fans from every corner of Europe.

LABAS, SVEIKI, TERE!

TRAVEL ESSENTIALS

Visa and Entry Requirements

All three countries – Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia – are full members of the Schengen Area. This means citizens of the EU/EEA, Switzerland, and over 60 visa-exempt countries (including the UK, USA, Canada, Australia, Japan, South Korea, and Brazil) may enter without a visa for stays up to 90 days within any 180-day period.

If you're travelling on a passport from a country that requires a visa (e.g. India, China), you must apply for a Schengen short-stay visa (Type C) through the consulate of the country that is either your first point of entry or main destination.

Required documents typically include:

- A passport (issued within the last 10 years, valid for 3 months beyond your stay)
- Completed visa application
- Travel medical insurance covering at least €30,000
- Proof of accommodation and return travel
- Financial means for your stay

Although internal Schengen borders are open, always carry valid ID (passport or EU/EEA national ID card). It may be needed for hotel check-in, police checks, or internal bus/train travel. Bank cards and driving licences are not valid forms of identification for border or security purposes.

Currency and Payments

The euro (€) is the official currency in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. All three countries have excellent banking infrastructure. Most venues accept:

- Visa / Mastercard / Maestro
- Contactless payments including Apple Pay and Google Pay
- Online top-up options for prepaid services

ATMs are available in airports, shopping malls, and most urban areas. Standard withdrawal limits and service charges apply, depending on your bank.

Tips:

- Carry €20–50 in cash for small purchases, local markets, vending machines, and public toilets (which often charge €0.30–€0.70).
- Avoid using airport currency exchange booths – their rates are unfavourable and service fees high.
- Tipping is appreciated but not expected: rounding up a bill or leaving 5–10% is customary in restaurants and taxis.

SIM Cards & Mobile Data

Mobile coverage across the Baltics is excellent – even in rural areas. Prepaid SIM cards are easily available at international airports, major supermarkets, and mobile operator stores to those not benefiting from EU's "Roam like home" programme. You'll need to present your passport or national ID card to purchase one.

Major providers include:

- Latvia: LMT, Bite, Tele2
- Lithuania: Telia, Bitė, Tele2
- Estonia: Telia, Elisa, Tele2

Many operators also offer eSIM options or virtual SIM services via apps like Airalo.

LANGUAGE BASICS



Each country has its own official language:

- **Latvian** in Latvia
- **Lithuanian** in Lithuania
- **Estonian** in Estonia

While English is widely spoken in tourist areas, particularly by younger people and service staff, using a few polite phrases in the local language is appreciated.

"Cheers" is commonly used in English even in local bars, but saying it in the local language will earn you smiles – and possibly another round.



Language	Phrase	Meaning	Pronunciation (English-style)
Latvian	Sveiki	Hello	<i>SWE-ee-kee</i>
	Paldies	Thank you	<i>PAL-dee-ess</i>
Lithuanian	Priekā	Cheers	<i>PREE-eh-kah</i>
	Labas	Hello	<i>LAH-bahs</i>
Estonian	Ačiū	Thank you	<i>AH-choo</i>
	Õsveikatā	Cheers	<i>Ee svay-KAH-tah</i>
	Tere	Hello	<i>TEH-reh</i>
	Aitäh	Thank you	<i>Eye-TAH</i>
	Terviseks	Cheers	<i>TERR-vee-seks</i>

National Rules and Regulations

When attending UEFA matches in the Baltic states—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—it's crucial to be aware of local laws and customs alongside UEFA regulations. Each country may have specific rules regarding fan behavior, alcohol consumption, and public transportation. For instance, Estonia is known for its strict enforcement of alcohol laws, and it is illegal to consume alcoholic beverages in public spaces. In Latvia, fans are encouraged to use public transport to ease congestion around stadiums, and matchday tickets often include free rides on buses and trams. Lithuania, on the other hand, emphasizes fan inclusivity and often hosts pre-match events to foster a friendly atmosphere.

Stadium Entry Procedures

Baltic stadium entry protocols are typically efficient but thorough. Expect airport-style checks and plan to arrive early to avoid queues.

- Gates open approximately 90 minutes before kickoff
- ID check: Where named tickets are used, ticket names must match your passport or national ID
- Bag inspections and pat downs are standard
- Body searches are permitted and may be randomly applied
- No re-entry allowed if you exit the stadium after entering

Prohibited items include:

- Glass or metal containers (including bottles and flasks)
- Fireworks, flares, smoke bombs, and laser devices
- Sharp objects, umbrellas, tools, or large flagpoles
- Political or discriminatory banners or attire
- Drones, professional camera equipment (DSLRs/telephoto lenses)

Accessibility: Most stadiums provide wheelchair-accessible entrances and seating, but advance notice is strongly recommended.

KNOW THE RULES



STADIUM ETIQUETTE

FAN GEAR AND BEHAVIOUR

Away fan identity (shirts, scarves, flags) is subject to strict rules in most Baltic stadiums but usually not permitted or even strictly prohibited outside of VIP and away sectors unless otherwise specified.

Stewards may ask supporters wearing away colours in home areas to remove items or relocate. Clubs typically include a warning in ticketing terms and conditions.

Inside the stadium, behaviour that is:

- Racist, sexist, homophobic, or otherwise offensive
- Provocative or aggressive (chants, gestures, banners)
- Publicly intoxicated or non-compliant with stewards

...can result in ejection, fines, or bans – including from UEFA competitions.

Approved tifo displays, drums, or large banners must be pre-authorised by the hosting club and included in the stadium safety plan.

ALCOHOL POLICY

Alcohol is usually sold inside stadiums (e.g. Latvia and Estonia), typically in plastic cups, and with ABV restrictions. It is legal to consume alcohol in the stands unless otherwise specified by the match organiser.

Public drinking is illegal on the streets from uncovered containers in all three Baltic states. Lithuania has especially strict alcohol laws, including restrictions on sale hours, a high legal drinking age, and a ban on advertising. Alcohol can only be sold between 10:00 and 20:00 on weekdays and Saturdays, and between 10:00 and 15:00 PM on Sundays. The legal age to purchase and consume alcohol is 20 years old. In both Latvia and Estonia the minimum drinking age is 18 and alcohol is sold until 22:00 on all days.

Drunkenness is not tolerated by police or stadium security – sobriety checks are occasionally carried out at gates and stewards may eject particularly intoxicated individuals.

EMERGENCIES

Emergency Numbers in the Baltics

The emergency system is efficient and multilingual. The standard European emergency number works in all three countries:

- 112 – Police, Ambulance, Fire (Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia)

Operators are trained to take calls in English, and in many cases, also Russian and German. You will be asked for:

- Your location
- The nature of the emergency
- Your contact number
- Whether you require police, medical, or fire response

For non-urgent police contact or documentation (e.g. theft reports, lost passports):

- Latvia: +371 670 86200
- Lithuania: +370 5271 6007
- Estonia: +372 612 3000

Emergency Healthcare Access

Healthcare in the Baltic states is of generally good quality, particularly in capital cities where major hospitals have 24/7 emergency units and English-speaking staff. For football fans, the most important facts are:

- Emergency care is available to everyone, including foreign nationals
- Public ambulances are free in urgent cases, regardless of insurance status
- EU/EEA citizens with a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) are entitled to necessary treatment on the same terms as locals
- UK citizens can use a GHIC (Global Health Insurance Card), which provides similar access post-Brexit

If you do not have EHIC/GHIC or equivalent travel insurance:

- You may be required to pay up front for **non-urgent** or **private** treatment
- Emergency services (ambulance, ER stabilisation) will still be provided, but follow-up care may carry a fee

For serious injuries or medical emergencies during a match:

- **All stadiums** will have designated **first aid stations** and **first aid responders** on standby. Contact stewards if you, or someone you see, require medical assistance

Common ER hospitals near match venues:

- Riga (Latvia): Pauls Stradiņš Clinical University Hospital – Pilsoņu iela 13
- Vilnius (Lithuania): Santaros Klinikos Emergency Centre – Santariškių g. 2
- Tallinn (Estonia): North Estonia Medical Centre – Sütiste tee 19

DOMESTIC LEAGUES



Football in the Baltic states – Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia – is fast-developing, quirky and surprisingly high-quality. Each country has its own top-tier league, all of which are summer leagues, following a **March-to-November** calendar aligned with northern climate conditions and UEFA's early qualifying schedules.

All three are fully professional. Lithuanian and Estonian leagues are run by their respective football associations, while Latvian league is a break-away league, organised by a separate legal entity on a license from the local football association.

Estonia's Premium Liiga is the lowest UEFA-ranked Baltic league but known for its emphasis on youth development and club longevity. Estonia is home to one of the biggest Derbies in the Baltics – **The Tallinn Derby** between FC Flora and FCI Levadia.

Many matches are played on modern artificial pitches and, at the beginning of the season, in football halls. Where available, clubs switch to natural grass from around May.



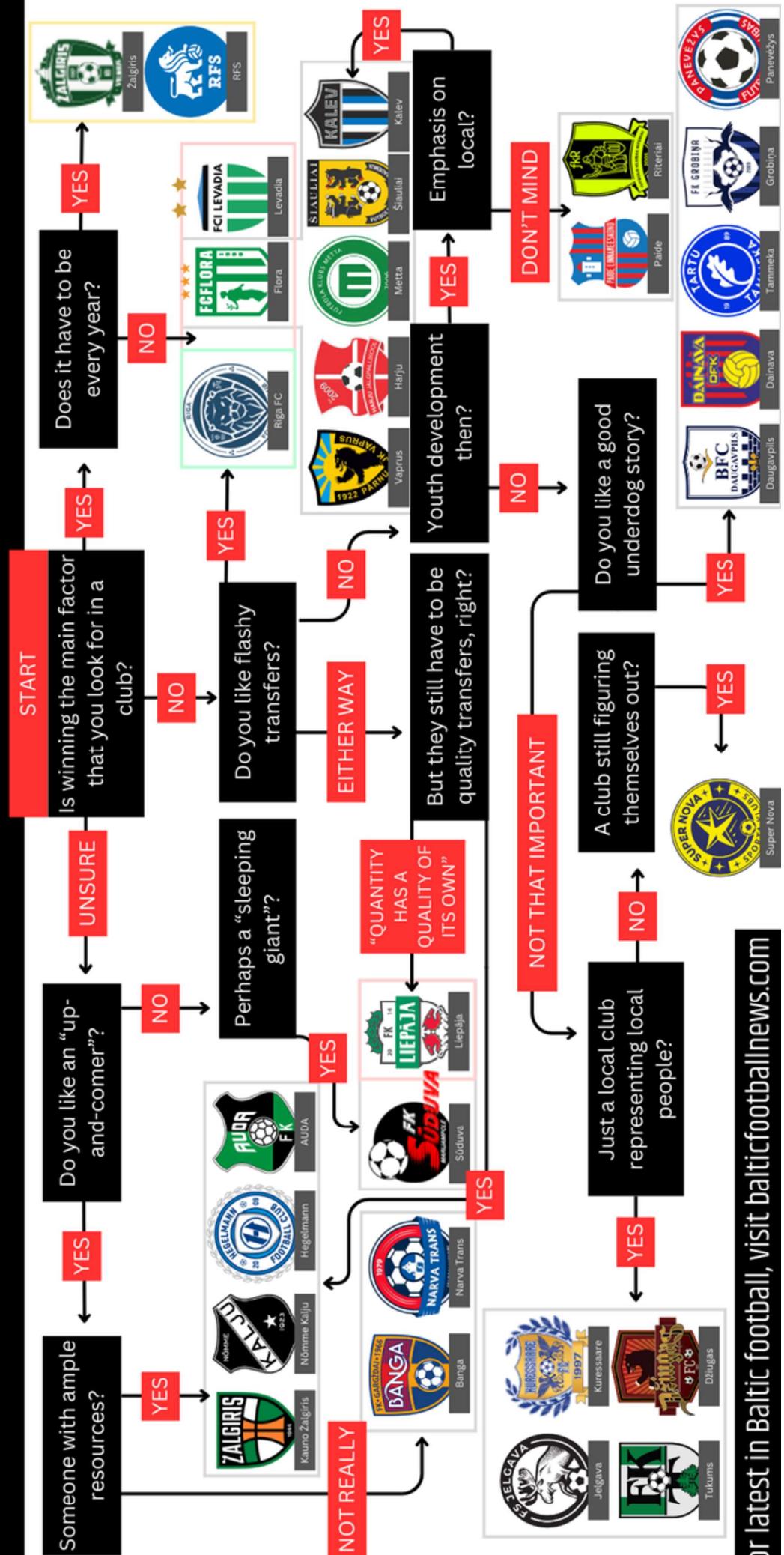
Latvia's Virsliga is the highest UEFA ranked of the Baltic leagues. Founded in 1927, it is compact, competitive, and home to one of the most intense derbies in the region – **The Big Riga Derby** between RFS and Riga FC.

As of 2025, half of the teams are located within or near Riga, ensuring logistical ease for travelling fans wishing to attend local matches. Matches are played on synthetic surfaces from March until May, and on natural grass from May until the end of the season.

Lithuania's A Lyga is known as the most balanced league in the Baltics, with all clubs being within reach of each other on most metrics. Clubs are geographically spread, fostering strong local followings and regional rivalries but few derbies of any note.

Stadium and pitch quality varies, and some clubs occasionally relocate European matches to Vilnius or Kaunas due to facility requirements. Despite smaller average crowds, the league's top end is competitive in early UEFA qualifiers and Lithuania can be proud of having **some of the most passionate football fans in the region**.

QUICK GUIDE TO BALTIC CLUBS



For latest in Baltic football, visit balticfootballnews.com



FC RFS (LATVIA)



FK ŽALGIRIS (LITHUANIA)



FCI LEVADIA (ESTONIA)

FC RFS (LATVIA)

Founded: 2005

City: Riga

Head coach: Viktors Morozs (LVA)

Stadium: LNK Sporta Parks, capacity ~1,800

Supporters: Riverside Lions



FC RFS (not to be confused with "Rigas Futbola Skola", which is a different entity, or "Rigas FS", which does not exist) is Latvia's most dynamic and modern football project of recent years.

Founded as an offshoot of a youth development academy, the club rose from obscurity in mid-2010s to become national champions within a decade. It now stands at the forefront of Latvian football, alongside city rivals Riga FC, albeit with a very different developmental model.

RFS is backed by LNK Industries, a major local construction and logistics firm, which has invested heavily in the club and modern infrastructure (LNK Sporta Parks is one of only a handful of privately-owned stadiums in the region). The club operates with the discipline and ambition of a Western European model – multilingual, with a professional and active scouting network in Europe and Africa and boasting a multi-national coaching staff. The club is built around a long-term development model, favouring low staff and player turnover and gradual, consistent growth.

On the pitch, RFS are a possession-heavy, methodical side. They favour high defensive line, wing play, and intensive crossing. Domestically most often deploying in 4-3-2-1 formation, switching to 5-3-2 for encounters against vastly superior opponents. Under head coach Viktors Morozs, they have beaten teams from Hungary, Northern Ireland, Netherlands, Cyprus in UEFA competitions, including the Europa League main stage last year. RFS are the first ever Latvian club to play in the Conference League group stage (2022), only the second ever Latvian club to play in the Europa League main stage (2024), and the only club in the Baltics to play in the main stage of a major European competition more than once.

Culturally, RFS has carved out a more community-focused, inclusive identity compared to their more transactional rivals Riga FC. Their fans, the Riverside Lions, are friendly, active, and, most importantly, very vocal in their support of their beloved club.

Since 2019, FC RFS are three-time Virsliga Champions and three-time Latvian Cup winners, and also hold one Super Cup and one Livonian Cup.



FK ŽALGIRIS (LITHUANIA)

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Founded: 1947

City: Vilnius

Head coach: Vladimir Cheburin (KAZ)

Stadium: LFF Stadium, capacity 5,067

Supporters: Pietų IV and Žaliai baltas Vilnius



FK Žalgiris is the institution of Lithuanian football — a club that predates the national league and holds iconic status across generations. From its origins just after the end of WW2 to its current reign in the A Lyga, Žalgiris has symbolised both resilience and sporting excellence.

During the Soviet occupation of Lithuania, Žalgiris was one of the only Baltic clubs to regularly feature in the USSR's top flight, achieving a historic 3rd-place finish in 1987 — a remarkable feat that earned them continental recognition. After independence, the club saw boom-and-bust cycles, but, most notably, was rescued from imminent insolvency in 2009 by fans when its corporate parent folded. The rebirth made it a community-first, fan-anchored institution.

Today, Žalgiris are 11-time champions of Lithuania, with an additional 14 Lithuanian Cups and growing presence in Europe. In 2022, they became the first Lithuanian club to qualify for the UEFA Conference League group stage, earning 5 points during that campaign.

Favouring a Scandinavian-style hybrid 4-4-2 diamond formation with emphasis on direct play, quick transitions, and set pieces. They like to dominate possession and attack through the centre.

Žalgiris is unique in the Baltics in that they have two official supporter groups. The primary one - Pietų IV ultras - are some of the most committed and numerous ultras in the country. Known for choreographies, tifos and pyrotechnics displays they anchor the club's proud tradition and image of being the flagship of Lithuanian football.



FCI LEVADIA (ESTONIA)

Founded: 1998

City: Tallinn

Head coach: Curro Torres (ESP)

Stadium: A. Le Coq Arena, capacity ~14,336

Supporters: Levadia Ultras



Levadia is one of Estonia's two major football dynasties, alongside city rivals FC Flora. While Flora is characterised by their close connections to the Estonian Football Association, Levadia began as a privately-owned challenger club that went from strength to strength to win the Premium liiga title in 1999 – just a year after entering the league.

Originally based in Maardu under the name Olümp, FC Levadia moved to Tallinn in 2004. Levadia's 2006 squad is considered to be one of the strongest in Estonian club football history. They became the first Estonian team to reach the first round of the UEFA Cup, where they were defeated by Newcastle United 1–3 on aggregate. In 2017, they merged with FC Infonet, becoming FCI Levadia. With 11 league titles and 11 cups, they are Estonia's second-most decorated club after FC Flora.

Levadia's model blends Estonian talent development with experienced foreign imports, particularly from Georgia, Serbia, and Nigeria. Their football is fast, aggressive, and heavily transition-based. Levadia are known for exploiting the flanks with pace, and their physical centre-backs make them tough to break down.

They are also recognised for running a strong academy, contributing players to the national setup, and maintaining UEFA-licensed operations at the highest level. In recent seasons, they have reached as far as the UEFA Conference League third qualifying round, narrowly losing to stronger Western European sides.





LITHUANIA

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Founded: 2009

City: Raudondvaris / Kaunas District

Stadium: Raudondvario stadionas (capacity ~500)

2024 Finish: 2nd in A Lyga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League First

Qualifying Round (QR1)



FC Hegelmann, founded in 2009 by German-owned Hegelmann Transporte, is a fast-rising Lithuanian football club. Starting in lower leagues and originally based in Raudondvaris, they entered the second division in 2016 but were relegated. Under coach Andrius Skerla, they rebounded, earning A Lyga promotion in 2021. Hegelmann finished 5th and 4th in their first two top-flight seasons, securing a debut in European competition in 2022, though eliminated by Shkupi. After placing 5th in 2023, they achieved a record 2nd place in 2024. Despite no major trophies yet, they've twice reached the Lithuanian Cup final. Fans should check official channels for UEFA match venues, often moved to Kaunas.

Founded: 2004

City: Kaunas

Stadium: Darius and Girėnas Stadium (capacity 15,000)

2024 Finish: 3rd in A Lyga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League First

Qualifying Round (QR1)



FK Kauno Žalgiris, based in Lithuania's second-largest city, Kaunas, was founded in 2004 as FM Spyris Kaunas to provide a pathway for local youth players. Starting in lower leagues, they reached the top-tier A Lyga in 2015. Partnering with basketball giants BC Žalgiris, they adopted the Žalgiris name, sparking legal disputes with FK Žalgiris Vilnius over naming rights. The 2020s have been their strongest era, with third-place finishes in 2020, 2021, and 2024, and runners-up in 2022, positioning them as domestic contenders. Benefiting from BC Žalgiris's professional ethos, the club aims for European success. Kauno Žalgiris plays at the modern Darius and Girėnas Stadium, reopened in 2022, seating 15,000. However, they will play their first European qualifier in Jonava due to a venue clash.

Founded: 1966

City: Gargždai, Lithuania

Stadium: Gargždų miesto stadionas (capacity ~2,300)

2024 Finish: 5th in A Lyga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League Second

Qualifying Round (QR2)



FK Banga Gargždai, known for their orange kits and "Tiger Team" nickname, was founded in 1966 linked to the Gargždai Construction Materials Combine. Throughout their history, Banga has shifted between divisions in Lithuanian football. Key moments include reaching the top flight in 1994, relegations in the early 2000s and 2014, and a return to A Lyga in 2020 after winning a promotion play-off in 2019. Banga's greatest triumph arrived in 2024, capturing their first major trophy by defeating FC Hegelmann on penalties in the Lithuanian Cup final. This success secured Banga's maiden European berth in the 2025 UEFA Europa Conference League qualifiers. Visiting fans can expect an intimate atmosphere fueled by the Tigru Ekipa (Tigers Squad), whose passionate support energizes the club.

LATVIA

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Founded: 2014

City: Riga

Stadium: Skonto Stadium, capacity 8,000

2024 Finish: 2nd in Virslīga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League Second

Qualifying Round (QR2)



Riga FC, founded in 2014 from the merger of FC Caramba and Dinamo Riga, swiftly rose in Latvian football, rebranding after earning promotion in 2015. They debuted in the Virslīga in 2016, won three consecutive titles from 2018 to 2020, and remain Latvia's most financially powerful club, with the region's highest squad value. Despite losing ground to rivals RFS in recent seasons, Riga FC claimed the Latvian Cup in 2023 and the Supercup in 2024, both via penalties against RFS. Frequent coaching changes plague the club, with the average tenure lasting only 128 days. Riga FC has reached European play-off rounds but no group stages yet and is seen as a "sleeping giant." They play at Skonto Stadium in central Riga.

Founded: 2009

City: Daugavpils

Stadium: Esplanade (capacity ~600)

2024 Finish: 5th in Virslīga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League First

Qualifying Round (QR1)



BFC Daugavpils represents the modern football identity of Latvia's second-largest city and the Latgale region. Founded as a youth-focused club, its "Bērnu futbola centrs" origins highlight its ongoing commitment to player development, producing talents like Chinonso Offor and Antonijs Černomordijs. Though yet to win major silverware, BFC Daugavpils achieved its best recent result in 2024, finishing 5th in the Virslīga and earning a first-ever European spot due to another club dropping out. Managed by Kirils Kurbatovs, the club aims to build sustainably, distancing itself from past scandals linked to former Daugavpils clubs like Dinaburg FC and FC Daugava. Home games are usually at Esplanade Stadium, though European fixtures in 2025 will be played in Riga at LNK Sporta Parks.

Founded: 1969

City: Ķekava / Riga (split structure)

Stadium: Skonto Stadium, Riga (capacity 8,000)

2024 Finish: 3rd in Virslīga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League First

Qualifying Round (QR1)



FK Auda, founded in 1969 out of a fishing cooperative, is one of Latvia's oldest football clubs. Auda reached the top flight in 2002 but was relegated after two seasons. In 2005, they moved from Riga to Ķekava, establishing a new stadium and base. After years in lower divisions, Auda returned to the Virslīga in 2021. To strengthen their position, the first team joined the broader Riga FC ownership group, while youth and amateur squads remained in Ķekava. This shift led to rapid progress: Auda won the Latvian Cup in 2022 and finished third in the league in 2023 and 2024, securing consecutive UEFA competition spots. Auda plays home matches at Skonto Stadium in central Riga.

ESTONIA

16

Founded: 2004

City: Paide, Estonia

Stadium: Paide linnastaadion (capacity ~500)

2024 Finish: 3rd in Premium Liiga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League First

Qualifying Round (QR1)



Paide Linnameeskond, founded in 2004 in central Estonia, began as a satellite team for FC Flora and rose to the Premium Liiga in 2008. Early struggles gave way to stability when entrepreneur Veiko Veskimäe became president in 2013, and ex-player Vjatšeslav Zahovaiko took over as coach in 2016, transforming Paide into a professional, top-four club. In 2019, Paide reached European competition for the first time and secured a landmark €100,000 transfer of Gambian talent Alassana Jatta to Viborg. Paide is renowned for developing Gambian players, strengthened by a 2021 partnership with Real de Banjul. The club claimed its first major trophy in 2022 by winning the Estonian Cup and added a Supercup in 2023. They will play their Conference League matches in Pärnu.



Founded: 1990

City: Tallinn, Estonia

Stadium: A. Le Coq Arena (capacity ~14,336)

2024 Finish: 4th in Premium Liiga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League First

Qualifying Round (QR1)



FC Flora Tallinn, founded in 1990 by Aivar Pohlak, is Estonia's most successful football club, created to revive the sport after the country regained independence. Since joining the Premium Liiga in 1992, Flora has claimed 15 league titles and eight Estonian Cups, with their first triumph in 1993/94 coming after a playoff victory following FC Tevalte's disqualification. Flora is known for its nationalistic approach, traditionally signing only Estonian players and producing stars like Andres Oper, Mart Poom, and Ragnar Klavan. In 2021/22, Flora made history as the first Estonian club to reach a European group stage, competing in the Europa Conference League. Now family-run under Pelle Pohlak, Flora remains a domestic powerhouse, coached by legend Konstantin Vassiljev.

Founded: 1923 (re-established 1997)

City: Tallinn, Estonia

Stadium: Hiiu Staadion (capacity ~650)

2024 Finish: 2nd in Premium Liiga

UEFA status: Enters UEFA Europa Conference League First

Qualifying Round (QR1)



Nõmme Kalju FC, founded in 1923 in Tallinn by wrestlers Aleksander Šneider and Mart Liiv, was dissolved in 1944 during the Soviet occupation but revived in 1997 by football figures including Uno Piir. Starting from Estonia's lowest leagues, the club climbed back under businessman Kuno Tehva, who took over in 2002 aiming for professional status. Kalju reached the Premium Liiga in 2008 and claimed its first national title in 2012, debuting in the UEFA Champions League qualifiers that same year. They won another league title in 2018 and the Estonian Cup in 2015. Kalju shares a fierce "Railway Derby" rivalry with FC Flora. Due to limited capacity at their Hiiu Staadion, European games often shift to other stadium in Tallinn (A. Le Coq or Kadriorg).

WAWAWA



ABOUT

Lithuania is a land where medieval history, modern culture, and quirky surprises collide. From gothic spires to creative street art, it's a country that packs a vast amount of character into its compact size—a perfect fit for football fans looking to make the most of their trip.

A Few Facts & Surprising Details

- Lithuania was the last pagan nation in Europe, officially converting to Christianity in 1387.
- Vilnius is home to the world's only "Republic" within a city—the bohemian Užupis, with its own constitution and president.
- The Lithuanian language is among the oldest living Indo-European languages, remarkably close to the ancestral language of the entire family.
- Basketball is a national obsession, but football is gaining ground, especially in Kaunas and Vilnius.
- Lithuania has over 3,000 lakes and endless pine forests, making nature escapes easy.

So whether your visit revolves around a match or a weekend away, Lithuania offers much more than meets the eye.

Lithuanian Food & Drink

Lithuanian cuisine is hearty and flavourful. Don't leave without trying:

- Cepelinai – potato dumplings stuffed with meat or cheese
- Šaltibarščiai – bright pink cold beet soup (Latvians have a very similar soup but Lithuanians made a festival out of it!)
- Kibinai – pastries filled with meat, originally from the Karaim community
- Local rye breads, smoked meats, and mushroom dishes

For drinks:

- Lithuanian craft beers are booming. Genys, Neipa, Sakiškės, TANKER and Dundulės are just some of the ones to try!
- Mead (midus) is a traditional honey wine worth tasting.
- Kvas, a sweet fermented bread drink, is popular in summer.



VILNIUS

19

The capital city, Vilnius, is a fascinating place for away fans. It's where baroque churches stand next to modern glass towers, and where medieval alleys lead you to edgy street art.

The Old Town

Start in Vilnius's Old Town, one of the largest surviving medieval old towns in Europe and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its winding streets are filled with:

- Gediminas Tower, offering panoramic views across rooftops
- Vilnius Cathedral and its elegant square
- The iconic Gate of Dawn, a sacred site for many pilgrims
- Cozy courtyards hidden among baroque façades

It's compact and easy to explore on foot, perfect for filling the hours before an evening match.

Užupis – A Republic Within Vilnius

No visit to Vilnius is complete without crossing the bridge into Užupis, a self-declared republic of artists. You'll find:

- A quirky constitution displayed on plaques in dozens of languages
- Street art, sculpture, and spontaneous performances
- Riverside cafés and small art galleries

It's creative, slightly eccentric, and one of the city's most memorable corners.

Modern Vilnius

Beyond the Old Town, Vilnius has a modern side. The Business District boasts sleek glass towers and shopping centres like Europa. For relaxation, visit:

- Bernardinai Garden, a beautifully restored park behind the cathedral
- The riverside paths along the Neris River
- Art hubs like the MO Museum, showcasing contemporary Lithuanian artists

Transport Around Vilnius

Vilnius is compact, but public transport is reliable for longer trips:

- Buses and Trolleybuses run frequently throughout the city.
- Tickets cost around €0.65 if bought via mobile apps or kiosks. This, however, can be difficult if you do not have a local number, so it's much easier to just buy public transport tickets using contactless card (or ApplePay) already on board. Such tickets cost €0.99 per ticket and *you will need to tell controllers that this is what you did should they board for a ticket check (which they do often and seldom speak much English, but they will understand if you show your phone and say 'beep')*.
- Taxi apps like Bolt are widely used and affordable. €0.65. Bolt scooters and car share (Bolt Drive) are also available.
- Walking remains the best way to explore the Old Town and central areas.

Vilnius Airport is just 6 km from the city centre, making arrivals and departures easy.

KAUNAS

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About 100 km west of Vilnius lies Kaunas, Lithuania's lively second city and a rising football hub. Once the country's temporary capital, Kaunas has a vibrant mix of interwar architecture, street art, and riverside life.

Laisvės Alėja (Liberty Avenue)

Start your visit with a stroll down Laisvės Alėja, one of Europe's longest pedestrian streets:

- Lined with cafés, shops, breweries and chestnut trees
- Great for people-watching and local pastries
- Connects the Old Town with newer districts

Old Town & The Confluence

Kaunas Old Town is smaller than Vilnius's but equally atmospheric, with highlights like:

- Kaunas Castle, a red-brick fortress dating to the 14th century
- The Town Hall Square, surrounded by historic buildings and cafés
- The Confluence Park, where Lithuania's two largest rivers meet

It's a great spot for pre-match relaxation.

Street Art & Modern Vibes

Kaunas is famous for its street art, including:

- The playful mural "The Wise Old Man" on Jonavos Street
- Murals hidden in side streets and underpasses
- Public art celebrating the city's time as 2022 European Capital of Culture

For culture, check out:

- The M.K. Čiurlionis National Art Museum, dedicated to Lithuania's most famous painter and composer
- The new Kaunas Fortress Museum, telling the story of the city's military past

Transport Around Kaunas

Kaunas is smaller than Vilnius, making it very walkable. However:

- Buses and trolleybuses cover all parts of the city.
- A single ticket costs ~€1.00.
- Bolt is the main ride-hailing option with Bolt scooters also available.
- Trains and buses connect Kaunas with Vilnius in ~1.5 hours.

Kaunas International Airport lies just outside the city and connects to the centre by bus or taxi.

QUICK DAY TRIPS



Trakai

Half an hour from Vilnius lies Trakai, famous for:

- The postcard-perfect Trakai Island Castle surrounded by lakes
- Karaim culture, visible in the town's architecture and unique cuisine
- Lakeside walks and boat rides

Perfect for a half-day trip between matches.

Kernavė

Visit Kernavė, Lithuania's ancient capital, where grassy hill forts overlook the Neris River. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, it offers:

- Stunning views
- A glimpse into Baltic tribal history
- Peaceful hiking trails

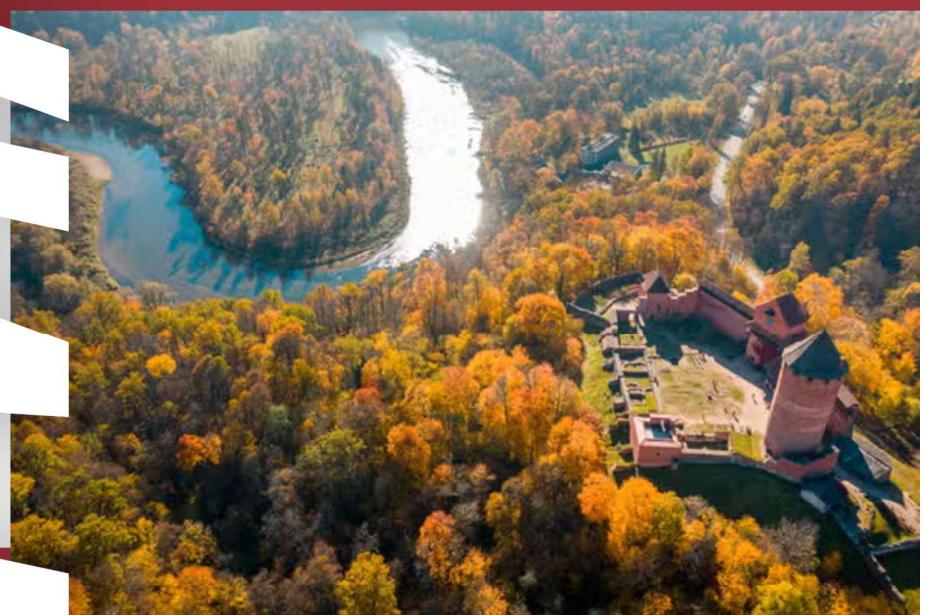
It's about 35 km northwest of Vilnius.

Anykščiai

About 100km away from Kaunas, Anykščiai is a scenic town offering a range of outdoor activities.:

- Narrow-Gauge Railway Museum
- Treetop Walking Path
- Anykščiai Art Incubator

It's an excellent cultural and nature stop for fans with time to spare.



ABOUT

Perched on the Baltic Sea between Lithuania and Estonia, Latvia is a country of deep forests, sandy coastlines, and a history that has shaped both its resilience and its spirit.

Latvia's story is one of endurance and reinvention. One of the oldest European cultures, with its roots tracing back to ancient Baltic tribes who settled in the region thousands of years ago, it has been fought over by Germans, Swedes, Poles, and Russians over the centuries. Alongside Lithuanians, Latvians are 'the last pagans of Europe' and managed to preserve their ancient ways despite centuries of colonization and occupation through one of the richest verbal traditions. You will be able to see ample evidence of this everywhere, in the use of ancient symbols!

Latvia declared independence in 1918, was occupied again during and after World War II, and finally regained freedom in 1991. Today, Latvia is a vibrant European nation—a proud member of the EU and NATO since 2004—with a unique identity built on centuries of cultural crossroads.

For such a small country, Latvia offers plenty of surprising facts:

- It's home to the widest waterfall in Europe, the Ventas Rumba in Kuldīga, stretching 249 meters across.
- Rīga has one of the world's highest concentrations of Art Nouveau architecture, recognised and protected by UNESCO.
- Latvia's 'official' national sports are ice hockey and basketball—but football is by far the most successful club sport!
- The Latvian language is one of only two surviving Baltic languages in the world (the other one is Lithuanian).
- Latvia is one of Europe's greenest countries, with over half its territory covered in forest.

So, whether you're here just for the match or have a couple of extra days to explore, Latvia packs far more into its small size than you might ever expect.

Latvian Food & Drink

Latvian cuisine is hearty and seasonal. Must-try flavours include:

- Grey peas with bacon – a local classic
- Sprats – nobody makes them better (which is why you will find best sprats all over Europe to have been made in Latvia)
- Freshly baked rye bread – often still made in wood-fired ovens
- Summer soup – a pink soup similar to Lithuanian Šaltibarščiai but lighter. Made of kefir and beets, this is a must-try if you are visiting for the first time!
- Sweet treats like Rye bread trifle (Rupjmaizes kārtojums)

To drink:

- Riga Black Balsam – a bittersweet (strong!) herbal liqueur
- Local craft beers, crisp ciders, and fruit wines. Main craft beers to try include Valmiermuiza, Labietis, Viedi and Malduguns, among others. For local fruit and regular wines and ciders, go for Abava or Zilvers products.
- Kvas, a sweet fermented bread drink, is popular in summer.

Rīga is the beating heart of Latvia and the natural base for football fans. The city is easy to navigate on foot, by tram, or via taxi apps like Bolt. Many fans will stay in Rīga regardless of where matches are played, as it's the hub for nightlife, dining, and sights.

Vecrīga – The Old Town

Start your exploration in Vecrīga, Rīga's UNESCO-listed Old Town. Founded in 1201 atop of existing settlements, this maze of cobbled streets tells stories of medieval merchants, Hanseatic wealth, and modern-day life. Wander past:

- Rīga Cathedral with its grand organ - largest medieval church in the Baltic states
- The lively Līvu Square, perfect for a pint before heading to Skonto
- The evocative Museum of the Occupation of Latvia
- Quirky hidden courtyards filled with cafés
- The Freedom Monument - only such monument in the Baltics, unveiled in 1935

Old Town is buzzing day and night, but always safe and welcoming—even on matchday.

Art Nouveau & Centrs

A short walk from Vecrīga lies the Centrs district, famous for Art Nouveau architecture. Alberta iela and Elizabetes iela are particularly striking streets, where façades overflow with owls, lions, and elegant swirling shapes. Don't miss:

- Latvian National Museum of Art
- Rīga Art Nouveau Centre for interior tours
- Upscale cafés and restaurants tucked into ornate buildings

Āgenskalns

On Rīga's left bank, Āgenskalns is an up-and-coming district blending history with modern life. Check out:

- Āgenskalns Market, recently renovated and full of street food and local produce
- The lively Kalnciema Quarter, hosting weekend craft markets and concerts
- The striking Latvian National Library

Also on the left bank of the Daugava River is **Uzvaras Park**—historically known as Victory Park (in honour of the successful defence of Riga in 1919)—has undergone a remarkable transformation since 2023. Once dominated by a controversial Soviet-era monument, the park is now a vibrant recreational space with new infrastructure.

Recent upgrades have introduced redesigned landscapes across 36.7 hectares, featuring boardwalks, water features, scenic paths, a BMX and skate park and an active recreation zone complete with trampolines, outdoor gyms, table tennis, playgrounds, and a scenic loop for skiing and roller-skating; it's a perfect destination if you are travelling with family.

A brand-new Ferris wheel now offers panoramic views of Rīga from above the park, making Uzvaras Park a lively, multi-use venue rather than just a memorial site. It's a perfect stop for fans looking to relax, enjoy modern amenities, or take in the city vista before or after a match.

QUICK DAY TRIPS



Jūrmala

Just 25 km from Rīga, Jūrmala is a popular seaside escape. Unlike Mediterranean resorts, Jūrmala offers miles of white sand beaches backed by pine forests, creating a calm and refreshing vibe.

- Stroll the beach from Majori to Bulduri
- Explore charming wooden villas from the early 20th century
- Visit the Dzintari Concert Hall, hosting classical and contemporary performances
- Relax in a spa—many hotels specialize in mud and mineral treatments

Sigulda & Gauja National Park

Only about an hour from Rīga, Sigulda offers:

- Castles perched above river valleys
- A cable car ride over the Gauja River
- Hiking trails through sandstone cliffs
- The adrenaline rush of the bobsleigh track

It's the "Switzerland of Latvia," perfect for nature lovers.

Rundāle Palace

An hour and a half from Rīga lies Rundāle Palace, Latvia's Baroque gem. Think Versailles on a smaller scale:

- Immaculate French gardens
- Lavish halls with gold leaf and frescoes
- A peaceful café for local delicacies

Rundāle is easily visited by car or organised tour.

STORY
TOLD

Estonia is a country where medieval towers stand beside modern start-ups, pine forests stretch to the sea, and the old and new collide on every street. Small, innovative, and full of character, it's a place that surprises visitors with how much it packs into its compact size.

Estonia at a Glance

- Population: ~1.3 million
- Area: 45,336 km²
- Capital: Tallinn
- Currency: Euro (€)
- Language: Estonian (English widely spoken)

Surprising Facts About Estonia

- Estonia was the first country in the world to hold online voting in a national election.
- Around half the country is forested, making it one of Europe's greenest nations.
- Sauna culture runs deep—Tallinn's oldest public sauna dates back to 1310.
- Estonia's digital society means even parking meters, prescriptions, and government services are online.
- The country is dotted with more than 2,000 islands in the Baltic Sea.

Estonian Food & Drink

Estonian cuisine blends Baltic heartiness with Nordic simplicity. Must-try tastes include:

- Kiluvõileib – Open-faced rye bread sandwich with sprats.
- Verivorst – Blood sausage, a winter delicacy.
- Forest mushrooms, berries, and wild game feature in many dishes.

To drink:

- Kali – A lightly fermented bread drink, mildly alcoholic.
- Estonian craft beers and local ciders are booming. Estonian beers tend to be stronger than Lithuanian or Latvian, so be warned! Some beers to try include: Pühaste, Anderson's, Põhjala, Lehe Pruulikoda, and Purtse, among others.
- For something strong, try Vana Tallinn, a sweet liqueur flavoured with rum and spices.



TALLINN

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Estonia's capital, Tallinn, is a perfect base for football fans. Whether you're here for matches at A. Le Coq Arena or exploring between fixtures, you'll find a blend of medieval charm and modern creativity.

Old Town – The Medieval Heart

Tallinn's Old Town is one of Europe's best-preserved medieval city centres and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Expect cobblestones, spires, and secrets in every alley. Don't miss:

- Town Hall Square (Raekoja plats) – The heart of medieval Tallinn.
- Alexander Nevsky Cathedral – Iconic onion domes dominate Toompea Hill.
- St. Catherine's Passage – A narrow lane with artisan workshops.
- Town Wall Walkway – Climb medieval towers for panoramic views.

The Old Town is compact, perfect for wandering on foot before heading to the stadium.

Kalamaja

Once a working-class fishing district, Kalamaja is now Tallinn's creative heart. Explore:

- Wooden houses with brightly painted facades.
- Hip cafes and small craft breweries.
- Telliskivi Creative City, a complex full of street art, galleries, and restaurants.

Noblessner

Noblessner is an old submarine factory turned seafront hotspot. Here you'll find:

- Cutting-edge architecture.
- Seaside terraces perfect for a drink at sunset.
- Contemporary art exhibitions.

Museums & Culture

Tallinn's compact size means culture is always close. Highlights include:

- Seaplane Harbour Museum – Explore historic ships and submarines in a vast hangar.
- Estonian Open Air Museum – Traditional rural buildings and folk culture, just outside the city.
- Kadriorg Palace – A baroque gem with art collections and manicured gardens.
- Arvo Pärt Centre – Discover how Estonia's landscapes inspired one of the world's great composers.

Even fans short on time can fit in a quick museum visit before match kickoff.

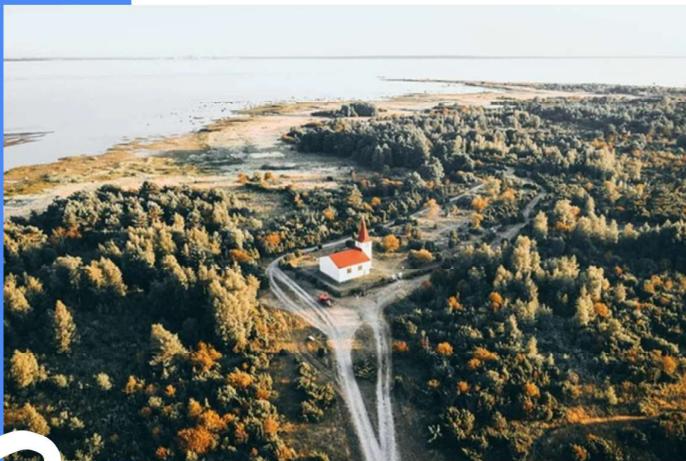
Transport in Tallinn

Tallinn is one of Europe's most walkable capitals, but there's plenty of public transport for longer journeys:

- Trams, buses, and trolleybuses cover the entire city. A single ride costs around €1.50.
- Tickets can be purchased via mobile apps or machines at stops.
- Bolt operates widely for taxi rides and e-scooters.

The Old Town is closed to cars, so be prepared to explore on foot!

QUICK DAY TRIPS



Rummu Quarry

A short drive from Tallinn, Rummu Quarry is one of Estonia's most unusual sights. Once a prison and mining site, it's now:

- A flooded quarry with crystal-clear water.
- Popular for scuba diving, paddleboarding, and photography.
- Home to submerged buildings visible beneath the surface.

A perfect side adventure for fans looking for something unique.

Islands Near Tallinn

Estonia has over 2,000 islands. A couple worth mentioning:

- Prangli Island – A quiet spot with sandy beaches and traditional fishing culture, reachable by boat.
- Naissaar – Once a military zone, now a nature reserve perfect for hiking and berry-picking in summer.
- Saaremaa – Sat at the top of Gulf of Riga, Saaremaa is not only stunning but also home to the only island club in the Baltics, FC Kuressaare.

Pärnu

130 km south-west of Tallinn lies a true Baltic seaside gem - Pärnu, a resort city overlooking the Pärnu Bay and bisected by the Pärnu River, which has paths on both banks, both of which end in stone jetties in the bay. The city is known for its 19th-century timber villas and for sandy Pärnu Beach, with its shallow waters and promenade. It is home to Pärnu Vaprus football club.

- Enjoy strolls on the beach before or after the game.
- Relax in one of the many spas or experience mud baths.



BALTIC FOOTBALL NEWS

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