

Overseas Adventure Travel[®]

THE LEADER IN PERSONALIZED SMALL GROUP ADVENTURES SINCE 1978

Your O.A.T. Adventure Travel Planning Guide[®]



Grand Baltic Sea Voyage

2025

Overseas Adventure Travel®

347 Congress Street, Boston, MA 02210

Dear Traveler,

I am thrilled that you are considering exploring the world with O.A.T. There are so many wonderful destinations to discover, and the itinerary described inside is a perfect way to fulfill a travel dream.

When you join us, you will enjoy the thrill of off-the-beaten-path discovery coupled with the convenience of unpacking just once. Aboard our privately owned small ship, you will visit lesser-known ports that larger vessels cannot access—and enjoy intimate interactions with local people in your small group of no more than 25 travelers. You will get to know community leaders and try your hand at local trades during your *A Day in the Life* experience, share traditional fare and lively conversation during a Home-Hosted Visit, discuss the Controversial Topics impacting everyday life, and visit sites supported by Grand Circle Foundation.

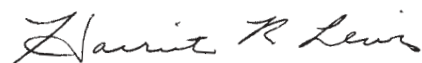
But your personal connections are not limited to your time on land—while onboard, you will enjoy the warm hospitality provided by our friendly, English-speaking crew, as well as the camaraderie of your fellow American travelers. Whether you travel with a partner, sister, friend, or independently, you will feel welcomed and included throughout your journey. And if you do choose to travel solo, you will enjoy an unmatched value, with our FREE or low-cost Single Supplements—just one of the reasons we continue to be the leader in solo travel.

To ensure you experience the true culture and feel supported every step of the way, we provide the services of a local Trip Experience Leader from the beginning of your adventure to the end. Along with introducing you to the history and culture of their homeland, these friendly experts will gladly help you out with any special requests to make your trip even more special. You can also rely on the seasoned team at our regional office, who are ready to help 24/7 in case any unexpected circumstances arise.

Plus, you can put your own personal stamp on your trip, like the, like the **87% of our travelers who personalize their experience**. Perhaps you will choose to see more of your destination by adding an optional trip extension to your itinerary. You can also arrive a few days early to explore independently and get acclimated, customize your air itinerary, and more.

I hope you find this Travel Planning Guide helpful. If you have any further questions, do not hesitate to contact one of our Travel Counselors at **1-800-955-1925**.

Warm regards,



Harriet R. Lewis
Chair
Overseas Adventure Travel

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Visby, Gotland, Sweden

Grand Baltic Sea Voyage

Small Ship Adventure

Denmark: Copenhagen, Bornholm | **Poland:** Gdansk | **Lithuania:** Klaipeda
| **Sweden:** Visby, Stockholm | **Latvia:** Riga | **Estonia:** Tallinn
| **Finland:** Helsinki

Small groups of no more than 25 travelers, guaranteed

14 days starting from \$8,795

including international airfare

Single Supplement: **FREE** or \$1,495

For departure dates & prices, visit www.oattravel.com/crb2025pricing

Set out across the Baltic Sea and discover enchanting castles, whimsical villages, and medieval squares on a voyage on a Baltic and Scandinavian voyage. Discover seven countries and immerse yourself in the distinct and unique cultures of each region, as you explore aboard our privately owned **89-passenger M/V Clio**. Savor the warmth and hospitality of a **Home-Hosted Dinner** in Riga, Latvia, spend **A Day in the Life** of the Danish island Bornholm, and behold the scenic Curonian Spit in Lithuania.

IT'S INCLUDED

- 12 nights accommodations, including 10 nights aboard our privately owned, 89-passenger M/V *Clio*
- International airfare, airport transfers, government taxes, fees, and airline fuel surcharges, unless you choose to make your own air arrangements
- 34 meals: 12 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 12 dinners—including 1 Home-Hosted Dinner—plus all onboard house beer, wine, and soft drinks
- 14 guided tours and cultural experiences
- Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- All port charges
- Baggage handling for 1 piece of luggage per person, including tips
- 5% Frequent Traveler Credit toward your next trip

Prices are accurate as of the date of this publishing and are subject to change.



ITINERARY SUMMARY

DAYS	DESTINATION
1	Depart U.S.
2-3	Copenhagen, Denmark • Embark ship • Bornholm
4	Bornholm
5	Gdansk, Poland
6	Klaipeda, Lithuania
7	Visby, Sweden
8-9	Riga, Latvia
10-11	Tallinn, Estonia
12	Helsinki, Finland
13	Stockholm, Sweden • Disembark ship
14	Return to U.S.

WHAT TO EXPECT

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ Moderately Easy

Pacing: 13 days, with 2 overnight hotel stays and 10 nights aboard the 89-passenger M/V *Clio*

Physical Requirements: Walk 3 miles continuously unassisted and participate in 2 hours of physical activities each day, including activities with stairs and days of possible rough seas requiring good agility, balance, and strength

Flight time: Travel time will be 8-20 hours and will most likely have one connection

View all physical requirements at www.oattravel.com/crb

SCANDINAVIA & THE BALTICS: THE O.A.T. DIFFERENCE

Unbeatable Value: Travel at the lowest price and per diems in the industry.

People-to-People Experiences: Experience *A Day in the Life* of the Danish island of Bornholm, where you may visit a local farm or brewery. And adventure even deeper into daily life when you sit down with a local family in Riga to share a **Home-Hosted Dinner**, providing intimate insight into customs and culinary traditions of the region.

O.A.T. Exclusives: Join us on the only itinerary in the industry to visit these 7 unique countries on one Small Ship Adventure. You'll dock in ports that larger cruise ships cannot access and comparable itineraries don't include—such as medieval Visby, the "City of Roses," where you can see displays of pre-Viking picture stones, medieval wooden sculptures, and the world's largest collection of preserved silver treasure. Plus, discuss **Controversial Topics** with local experts like Latvia's ongoing recovery from Soviet occupation, and immigration in Poland.

PERSONALIZE YOUR ADVENTURE

OPTIONAL EXTENSIONS

Copenhagen, Denmark

PRE-TRIP: 3 nights from **\$1,595**

Stockholm, Sweden

POST-TRIP: 3 nights from **\$1,595**

ARRIVE EARLY

We recommend that you relax after a long flight or explore more in depth before your trip. Prices shown include accommodations and private airport transfer.

- Arrive early in **Copenhagen** before your Copenhagen pre-trip extension or before your main adventure from **\$330** per room, per night

Grand Baltic Sea Voyage

YOUR DETAILED ITINERARY

BEGIN YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL PRE-TRIP EXTENSION

3 nights in *Copenhagen, Denmark*

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Day 2 Copenhagen, Denmark

Day 3 Explore Copenhagen

Day 4 Explore Copenhagen

Day 5 Explore Copenhagen •
Join main trip

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. today on your flight to Copenhagen, Denmark.

Day 2 Arrive Copenhagen, Denmark

- Destination: Copenhagen
- Included Meals: Dinner
- Accommodations: Scandic Spectrum or similar

Afternoon: Upon arrival in Denmark, you'll be met at the airport by an O.A.T. representative or a driver and transferred to your hotel. Upon arrival, you will receive your room assignments, and check in. You'll be joining your fellow travelers who took the *Copenhagen, Denmark* pre-trip extension, as well as those who arrived early in Copenhagen.

Based on your arrival time, your Trip Experience Leader will offer multiple opportunities to join an orientation walk to get acquainted with the area, including nearby grocery stores, pharmacies, and ATMs surrounding your hotel.

Dinner: At the hotel.

Evening: Your evening is free. You might choose to rest in your room after your journey, or continue exploring Copenhagen on your own.

Day 3 Explore Copenhagen • Embark ship

- Destination: Copenhagen
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Following breakfast, we'll set out on a city tour with a local guide, learning about Copenhagen's history and taking in its iconic landmarks. Highlights of our tour include the Gefion Fountain, a massive fountain on the harbor that depicts the legendary Norse goddess Gefion; and Rosenborg Castle, which chronicles over four centuries of Danish royal history, and even houses the monarchy's royal jewels.

And of course we'll pause to see the city's signature attraction—the Little Mermaid monument. Unveiled in 1913, the Little Mermaid was designed from bronze and granite by Edvard Eriksen and given as a gift to the city

from Danish brewer Carl Jacobsen of Carlsberg Breweries. The statue marks the influence of fairy tale writer Hans Christian Andersen, who was born in Copenhagen. Andersen published the original story in 1837 in a collection of children's stories, and since then, the journey of a young mermaid willing to risk everything for a human soul has been retold and adapted again and again. A small, but intricately sculpted statue, the Little Mermaid has guarded Copenhagen's harbor for over a century. In 2013, a celebration of the statue's 100th year took place throughout the city.

Our tour will end in bustling Stroget, one of Europe's longest pedestrian shopping streets.

Lunch: As your tour wraps up, walk with your Trip Experience Leader into the heart of Stroget where you can shop and have lunch at one of the many restaurants and cafés on your own. Perhaps you'll try a traditional favorite among Danish locals, *smorrebrod* (an open-faced sandwich), commonly topped with shrimp, meat, egg, or vegetables.

Afternoon: Following lunch, we'll make our way to our small ship, our home for the next 10 nights. Our ship docks close to Copenhagen's city center for privacy and convenience, where most larger ships are unable to dock.

Upon embarkation, you'll meet the Captain and crew in the lounge and participate in a safety briefing before taking some time to relax and get acquainted with the ship's inviting common areas. The lounge is equipped with couches and chairs and a specialty coffee-maker, while a topside Sun Deck features ample deck chairs for admiring the scenery.

Prior to dinner, you'll meet with your Trip Experience Leader onboard for a Port Talk on Bornholm—your next destination. These

informative conversations will give you an overview of the following day's itinerary, and prepare you for the discoveries ahead.

Dinner: Served onboard in the ship's dining room. As with all the dinners during your cruise, the atmosphere is relaxed, the dress code is smart casual, and you are free to sit at whichever table you please.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish as the ship sets sail for Bornholm. Perhaps you'll enjoy live music in the bar area.

Day 4 Spend *A Day in the Life* of the Danish island of Bornholm • Captain's Welcome Dinner

- Destination: Bornholm
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Activity Note: Depending on availability and departure, you may experience one of several different *A Day in the Life* experiences.

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Because of our ship's small size, we'll be able to dock in Ronne this morning, a port town on Denmark's island of Bornholm. Strategically located in the Baltic Sea—just east of Denmark, south of Sweden, northeast of Germany, and north of Poland—claim to this northerly isle has been disputed for centuries. For most of this time, it was ruled by Denmark, but also by Sweden and Lübeck, Germany. Today, boasting a population of just under 40,000, the primary industries on Bornholm are dairy farming and arts and crafts, namely glass production and pottery using locally sourced clay.

Our day's discoveries include *A Day in the Life* experience on this quaint, breezy island, where we'll first split up into smaller groups to

make for an intimate morning. Your day may be spent learning about the art form of ceramics with local artists, visiting a family-owned organic farm, or exploring a family-owned apple cider production facility.

Lunch: At a local farmhouse or smokehouse, featuring farm-fresh, seasonal fare.

Afternoon: We'll bid farewell to our hosts and drive back to the ship. This island has long been a popular vacation spot for the Danes, but not one that has been discovered by international travelers. Many locals also call Bornholm the "sunshine island" because it gets more sun than anywhere else in the region—all the more reason to take a stroll through its winding streets and soak in the sights.

Perhaps you'll want to explore the fishing town of Gudhjem. Perched high on a hill, you'll find panoramic views of the Baltic Sea as you amble through its quiet neighborhoods. Or, you might rather explore Svaneke to get a sense of small-town life in Denmark, from the town's rose-hued church to its colorful harbor. You may get the chance to chat with locals and learn about their businesses, or walk through the old market square.

Prior to dinner, you'll gather for a Captain's Welcome Cocktail before a Port Talk on Gdansk—your next destination.

Dinner: Gather in the ship's dining room for the Captain's Welcome Dinner. While the dress code at mealtimes is always relaxed and smart casual, some travelers opt to wear a day dress or slacks for the Welcome Dinner. As they say in Scandinavia, "*smaklig måltid*" ("enjoy your meal").

Evening: At leisure. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar.

Day 5 Explore Gdansk, Poland

- Destination: Gdansk
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Depart for the heart of Gdansk, Poland—across from the very spot where World War II began. Our discoveries begin in the *Stare Miasto* (Old Town), which we'll explore alongside a local expert. A maritime city that's existed for a millennium, Gdansk has fluctuated between great prosperity and tragic destruction—and Old Town still shows both wartime scars and rich architectural beauty. As we explore on foot, our local guide will explain what went into the reconstruction of the town following World War II and how it recovered to become what it is today.

We'll wander past the town hall and its Neptune Fountain, rumored to have once spouted Gdansk's trademark liqueur, Goldwasser, instead of water. Along the way, witness the city's many gates—including the Green Gate, Golden Gate, and Upland Gate. We'll also see the Monument to the Fallen Shipyard Workers, three 138-foot-tall steel crosses at the entrance to the city's shipyard. A sudden spike in food costs in 1970 led to mass riots throughout northern Poland that left at least 40 dead and more than 1,000 wounded. This monument was the first to commemorate the victims of a communist regime.

Our walking tour will conclude at the Archaeological Museum, located along the banks of the Motława River. The building itself dates back to the 16th century, though much of it was destroyed during World War II and then later restored. The collections amassed here document and celebrate the cultural heritage of Poland. Once our tour concludes, we'll have some time to explore on our own.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Following lunch, we'll drive to the Solidarity Center, an institution that serves as a museum and library documenting the history of Solidarity, the Polish trade union, and other opposition movements of Communist Eastern Europe. There, a local guide will help us understand how Lech Walesa spearheaded the Solidarity movement as a labor activist. We'll also examine how he is viewed by the Polish population today. Walesa, who worked as an electrician, helped establish the Solidarity trade union in 1980. Solidarity is considered by many to have contributed largely to the fall of communism in the country, making its mark as the first independent workers' union in the Eastern Block that ultimately helped transform Poland into a democratic nation.

After our visit concludes, we'll return to the ship, which sails for Klaipeda, Lithuania, overnight. After some free time to relax onboard, you'll rejoin your fellow travelers and Trip Experience Leader for a Port Talk on Klaipeda.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 6 Klaipeda, Lithuania • Explore the Curonian Spit

- Destination: Klaipeda
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: We'll drive to Klaipeda's ferry terminal, where we'll catch a ferry headed to the Curonian Peninsula. Klaipeda is the gateway to a coastal stretch known as the Curonian Spit,

a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This scenic area is separated by a protected lagoon on one side and exposed to the harsh Baltic Sea on the other.

Boasting 60 miles of curving coastline, this striking stretch of land has undergone quite a transformation throughout the last five centuries. Once a settlement of a now nearly extinct Baltic ethnic group, the Curonians (Kuršiai), the health of this natural environment quickly began declining due to significant human impacts, namely deforestation. As a result of this destruction, the miles of life-giving forests eventually gave way to lifeless dunes, which could no longer sustain the Kuršiai, and as a result, swallowed over a dozen villages. Today, thanks to a reforestation project aimed at stabilizing the dunes, the Curonian Spit has made a remarkable comeback, making it a prime location for outdoor activities such as bird watching.

After disembarking the ferry, we'll drive to the village of Juodkrante. Here, our Trip Experience Leader will help us keep an eye out for the cormorants that make their home here, searching for their daily meals in the waters surrounding this narrow strip of land (much to the chagrin of the local fishermen who are trying to do the same).

We'll then continue driving along the spit, taking in the scenic dunes that typify the local landscape as we make our way to the town of Nida, where we'll have some free time to rest and stretch our legs.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: The afternoon is yours to relax onboard as your ship cruises toward Visby. Rejoin your Trip Experience Leader in the lounge for a Port Talk about our next destination.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish.

Day 7 Explore Visby, Sweden

- Destination: Visby
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: We'll dock in Visby this morning, in a small port that larger ships are not able to access. Situated on the Swedish island of Gotland, Visby is considered the best-preserved medieval town in Scandinavia. Your walking tour begins at the Gotland Museum, where we'll enjoy a guided tour with a local expert. We'll delve into the rich history of the region as we view displays of pre-Viking picture stones, medieval wooden sculptures, and the world's largest collection of preserved silver treasure. Our local guide will provide insight on some of the museum's 400,000 collected objects that create a unique mosaic depicting medieval life in the Baltics.

Then, we'll continue with our local guide on a walking tour of the historic town of Gotland. First, you'll take a stroll through the colorful botanical garden, followed by a walk through the narrow streets of the old town to enjoy towering medieval architecture. As we explore this town from the Middle Ages, our local guide will discuss what everyday life is like in Gotland, and provide insight into the national identity of Gotlanders and their relationship with the rest of Sweden. Now is the perfect time to ask questions about Sweden's local culture, traditions, and current issues. Perhaps your guide can provide personal insight on environmental issues like soil degradation, or the country's centuries-long tumultuous relationship with Russia.

After our tour, you're free to make your own discoveries. Perhaps you'll want to witness the signature *ringmur* (ringwall) encircling the town since the 13th century. Reachable only by boat or plane, and beloved as a holiday destination for Swedes, the "City of Ruins and Roses" is rich with historical artifacts, earning it a designation as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. See its history unfold as its hundreds of warehouses and merchant homes tell the story of its heyday as a major port between Russia and Western Europe for the Hanseatic League.

You may also choose to visit a women's cooperative and talk with the members to gain a deeper understanding of the local culture and what its like to run and own a business in Sweden. The cooperative was established as a space for women to sell their artisan crafts, as well as food like homemade honey and jam and fresh fruit.

If you'd like to pursue a more active afternoon, you may hike to Visby's upper ruins for a panoramic view of Gotland and the harbor perched along the Baltic Sea.

Lunch: Onboard the ship.

Afternoon: The afternoon is yours to relax onboard as your ship cruises toward Riga, Latvia. Later, we'll rejoin our Trip Experience Leader in the lounge for a Port Talk about Riga's past and present.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge.

Day 8 Explore Riga, Latvia • Home-Hosted Dinner

- Destination: Riga
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: After a leisurely breakfast, we'll drive to the Art Nouveau district of Riga. Situated near the mouth of the Daugava River, which travels from the Baltic Sea into Russia, Riga served as an important trade port for centuries. Its prosperity also made it a target for conquest: before Latvia declared itself an independent nation in 1918, Riga was claimed by Russia, Sweden, Lithuania, and Germany.

Upon our arrival, we'll set off on a walking tour of the Art Nouveau district. Accompanied by a local guide, we'll explore facades from the early 20th-century period, during which architecture took a romantic turn in response to the Eclecticism and Revivalist architectural movements of the 19th century. Riga's Art Nouveau buildings are identified by their blend of opulent decoration with practical structure, and are known for unique elements like tall stained glass windows and intricate sculptures. Your local guide will speak to the different styles nestled within the Art Nouveau trend and how each is represented throughout the district.

We'll continue our discoveries with a drive to the Old Town, passing through the city center. Along the way, we'll notice the influence of Soviet architecture here, as Riga's city center functioned as a manufacturing hub for the USSR during Latvia's Communist past. Upon arrival in the Old Town, we'll embark on a walking tour. As a diverse, thriving city with a prominent upper class, Riga experienced radical

change under occupation by the Soviets and Nazis. Buildings from Riga's most prosperous eras still stand throughout the city.

Lunch: Onboard the ship. You also have the option to stay in Old Town for lunch at your own expense. This is a great time to try Latvia's traditional cuisine, such as *pelmeni* dumplings (often described as a cross between Polish *pierogi* and Italian *tortellini*) and *karbonade*—a type of pork that's flattened and fried.

Afternoon: Enjoy free time to relax on the ship and prepare for your local dinner tonight, or take one of the available shuttles to and from Riga's city center for further explorations. During this time, you also have the option to join your Trip Experience Leader for a walk to a local food market for a tasting of regional delicacies, as well as to peruse traditional Latvian arts and crafts. You might, for example, visit a local glassblower or stop by a chocolate stall to enjoy a sweet treat.

Late this afternoon, our group will reconvene and break into smaller groups to drive to the homes of local families for our **Home-Hosted Dinner**.

Dinner: In the home or apartment of a local family in Riga, we'll discuss what everyday life is like and gain a unique understanding of the city's culture over a traditional meal together. Riga is a spirited blend of old and new, with vestiges of Art Nouveau grandeur and cutting edge architecture at every turn. As we'll learn, this dichotomy is also apparent in local culture: a hip, cosmopolitan vibe informed by a turbulent, 800-year-heritage. While we dine, you might ask the family about ever-evolving traditions.

Our meal this evening will consist of traditional dishes made with local organic produce. These dishes will vary; however, you can look forward to the Latvian staple of *rupjmaize*, a variety of rye bread commonly enjoyed by locals.

Evening: We'll bid our hosts farewell and return to the ship, where you'll have the rest of the evening to rest and prepare for another day of discoveries.

Day 9 Riga • Controversial Topic: The removal of Soviet-era monuments in Latvia • Optional Rundāle Palace tour

- Destination: Riga
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: We'll start off the day with a conversation with a local on the **Controversial Topic** of Soviet monuments in Latvia, and why there is a big push from the public today to dismantle and remove these relics of a past era. Just recently, Riga removed the central stone obelisk of a monument that was dedicated to the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany during World War II, due to the fact that it was decorated with Soviet iconography. The monument, built in 1985 while Latvia was controlled by the Soviets, has been a controversial image since 1991, when Latvia gained its independence from a collapsing USSR.

While many in Latvia consider this a way to heal from the traumas of the past, there is a large, ethnically Russian population in Latvia that feels different, and usually lays flowers and other tokens at monuments like this to remember the sacrifices made by the soldiers of the past. Recently, however, with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, tensions have flared, pushing Latvia to remove these monuments.

We'll be able to discuss this recent development and the implications it has for the future with a local.

The rest of your day is free to explore Riga at your own pace. You might return to one of the sites visited on your bus tour, join your Trip Experience Leader for a walk through the city and conversation on locally-made products, or delve into the region's history as you explore sites like St. Peter's Cathedral.

Or, join us for our optional half-day excursion to Rundāle Palace, one of only two baroque palaces in Latvia. After our conversation about Soviet monuments concludes, we'll drive to the palace for a tour of its elegant exterior and opulent rooms. Built in the mid-18th century as a summer residence for the Dukes of Courland, Rundāle Palace was created by Bartolomeo Rastrelli, the architect favored by Russian czars of the same era who also designed St. Petersburg's iconic Winter Palace. After exploring its interior, we'll also have the opportunity to wander the palace's formal rose garden.

Lunch: If you chose to remain in Riga today, you may enjoy an included lunch onboard, or grab lunch on your own in Riga during your day of independent exploration. Travelers on our optional tour will have lunch at nearby Baltā Māja guesthouse.

Afternoon: Those on our optional tour will drive back to the ship after lunch and rejoin their fellow travelers. Enjoy free time to relax as the ship sets sail for Tallinn.

Prior to dinner, sit down with your Trip Experience Leader for a Port Talk on Tallinn, a wonderfully preserved city of the old Hanseatic League. This ancient walled port on the Baltic Sea is a UNESCO World Heritage Site filled with remarkable fortresses, castles, and cathedrals.

Medieval Tallinn is home to several towered gates, all bastion-forts complete with moats and drawbridges.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll head out for a night on the town.

Day 10 Explore Tallinn, Estonia • Optional *Olde Hansa Medieval Feast*

- Destination: Tallinn
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: Following breakfast, we'll view a documentary onboard about the Baltic Singing Revolution that occurred from 1987-1991. In 1987, the Soviet government revealed plans to establish phosphorite mines in the Virumaa region, causing concern among locals regarding the environmental impact of such a large endeavor. Unbeknownst to the Russian government, this decision was the catalyst for Estonia's fight for independence. In response to the mining plans, Estonians began expressing their resistance in an unusual way: through singing. Tallinn's Old Town Festival in 1988 saw the joining of hundreds of Estonians together in patriotic song. At music events and festivals thereafter, locals banded together to sing the same songs as their act of defiance. This sense of unity inspired the peaceful protests that followed, including the Baltic Way in 1989: a nearly 420-mile long human chain made of about two million residents of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The country declared independence on August 22, 1991.

Then, we'll board our private bus for a panoramic tour of Tallinn. On our way, we'll catch a glimpse of sites like the Rotterman Quarter, a time capsule of the city's industrial

period nestled among modern buildings in the city center. We'll also see the sprawling campus of Tallinn University, considered one of the top research universities in the world. Later, we'll discover the district of Viru, which features a quite literal gateway to Old Town Tallinn: the towering stone gates originally built in the 1300s to protect the city now greet visitors as they enter Old Town and the many shops and restaurants within.

Once we arrive in Old Town, we'll set off on a walking tour. Within the city's ancient gated walls, the streets remain much as they were when Danish rulers built them in the 13th century. The historic city center is divided into the Lower Town and the Upper Town.

In the Lower Town, the 600-year-old Town Hall—the best-preserved of its kind in northern Europe—presides dramatically over Town Hall Square (*Raejoka plats*). The Upper Town is on Toompea Hill, where two 13th-century landmarks still stand: Toompea Castle (now the meeting place for the Estonian Parliament) and the Dome Church (Estonia's largest Lutheran sanctuary). Many of the city's historic buildings reflect the prosperity it enjoyed between the 14th and 16th centuries. Under German control, Tallinn flourished during these years as a trade port in the Hanseatic League. Later periods of Swedish and Russian rule also left their marks on Tallinn, whose rich layers of history we'll delve into during our tour.

Lunch: You may choose to return to the ship for an included lunch onboard, or you can stay in town and have lunch on your own. You may want to try a taste of Estonia's national fish—the Baltic herring—and enjoy a cold glass of locally-made beer or a cocktail, such as Saku or Le Coq.

Afternoon: You may want to visit a local marzipan shop, climb the tower of St. Olav's Church to take in the views, or hike approximately one mile to the observation platform in the upper part of town. You also have the option to join your Trip Experience Leader for a walk to discover Old Town's hidden streets. Here you'll find artisan workshops featuring local artists honing their craft in textiles, ceramics, and much more.

Return to the ship via shuttle bus at your leisure prior to our Port Talk this evening. Or, if you'd like, you may join our optional *Olde Hansa Medieval Feast* tour, which takes place in a restaurant that recreates life during medieval times. You'll be seated at long candle-lit tables and enjoy typical dishes of the period prepared from original recipes and cooking methods. Musicians often performing period music will enhance the atmosphere of everyday life in the Hansa era.

Dinner: Onboard the ship. Those on the optional tour will enjoy a medieval feast prepared according to 700-year-old recipes.

Evening: You have the freedom to retire to your cabin, or continue enjoying the ship's amenities.

Day 11 Discover Tallinn's Song Festival Grounds

- Destination: Tallinn
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: We'll begin our day with an onboard discussion led by a local expert about Estonia "now and then."

Then, we'll drive to the Song Festival Grounds: the stage where the historic musical demonstration against Soviet occupation took

place. We'll meet with a local guide to discuss the details of the revolution and the choral traditions of Estonia, including a conversation about the "five patriotic songs" series sung at the Old Town Festival, produced by composer Alo Mattiisen in 1988.

Following our conversation, you have the choice to either return to the ship, or be dropped off downtown for further free exploration of Tallinn.

Lunch: Onboard the ship. If you've elected to remain in the city, your Trip Experience Leader can recommend options for your independent meal.

Afternoon: Free to explore Tallinn's Old Town. You may choose to join your Trip Experience Leader for an elective walk to the city's upper town, where we'll get panoramic views of our new surroundings from a viewing platform. A shuttle bus will be available to return us back to the ship later this afternoon before it begins its short journey to Helsinki, Finland.

Before we arrive, join your Trip Experience Leader for a Port Talk about this Finnish capital.

Dinner: Onboard the ship.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Or, join your Trip Experience Leader for a short walk in Helsinki. Thanks to our ship's small size, we can dock right in the heart of this lovely capital, which makes our evening stroll possible.

Day 12 Explore Helsinki, Finland • Captain's Farewell Dinner

- Destination: Helsinki
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: M/V *Clio*

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: We'll set off on an included tour. As we wind our way through the city, we'll notice how the sea is an integral part of Helsinki—the city spreads out onto islands, peninsulas, and along coves among which boats of all types navigate.

First, we'll stop at the Sibelius Monument, a statue made of hundreds of metal pipes that commemorates the renowned composer Jean Sibelius, for a photo opportunity. Since it was first built in the 1960s, the monument has sparked debate among music lovers; the pipes seem to resemble those of an organ despite Sibelius writing little to no pieces for the organ itself. Beyond the controversy, the Sibelius Monument is a wonder to behold, capturing the highs and lows of Sibelius' intricate musical compositions in a single structure.

Next, we'll drive to the new Oodi public library, which also serves as a meeting place for Helsinki's residents, earning it the nickname "the living room of the city." Take time to observe local life happening around you as you make your way through the building. From there, we'll drive to Senate Square, where we'll make a brief stop to admire many ornate Empire Neo-classical buildings, including the 19th-century Lutheran Cathedral, whose central tower dominates the city. Like Times Square in New York City, this is the place where residents gather to celebrate special occasions, such as New Year's Eve and Independence Day (December 6th).

We'll wrap up our tour with a walk through Helsinki's Market Square in the city center. A lively area full of boutique and souvenir shops, vendors selling fresh produce and traditional Finnish fare, and colorful stands displaying artisan crafts, Market Square is perhaps the best way to immerse yourself in the sights and sounds of the city.

Lunch: Onboard the ship. Travelers who chose to stay in the market can try local favorites like salmon soup with rye bread.

Afternoon: You're free to make your own discoveries. Perhaps you'll take a stroll through Helsinki's design district. Located in the center of the city, the area is home to the works of Helsinki's most creative minds, featuring an array of art galleries, antique shops, fashion stores, and showrooms. You may also want to return to Market Square to mingle with local vendors and snack on staples like smoked fish and fresh berries. Return to the ship late this afternoon before it sets sail for Stockholm.

As we sail, you can enjoy some free time to relax after your day of discoveries. Then join your fellow travelers and Trip Experience Leader for a Captain's Farewell Drink.

Dinner: Enjoy the Captain's Farewell Dinner onboard in the ship's dining room. While the dress code at mealtimes is always relaxed and smart casual, some travelers opt to wear a day dress or slacks for the Farewell Dinner.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. Perhaps you'll enjoy a nightcap at the bar or relax in the lounge as we cruise.

Day 13 Disembark ship • Explore Stockholm, Sweden

- Destination: Stockholm
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hilton Stockholm Slussen Hotel or similar

Breakfast: Onboard the ship.

Morning: After packing up, we'll gather with our Trip Experience Leader for a Port Talk on Stockholm. Then, enjoy scenic sailing as we

make our way towards Sweden's capital. The Sun Deck is a great spot to soak in the vistas as we approach the city.

Upon arrival, we'll bid goodbye to the ship and the crew as we disembark for a city tour of Stockholm. Sweden's capital city, an archipelago within an archipelago, occupies a cluster of 14 islands floating among 24,000 that make up a 60-mile chain.

Our tour begins at *Stadshuset*, the romantic City Hall building famous for hosting the annual Nobel Prize banquet, which your Trip Experience Leader will discuss in detail as you explore. Designed in 1923, City Hall was constructed using eight million red bricks and 19 million chips of gilt mosaic. The *Stadshuset* is not just the city's seat of government, but is also a national symbol, as the building's 300-foot tower, topped with three golden crowns that represent Sweden's coat of arms, will attest.

Lunch: At a local restaurant in Stockholm.

Afternoon: After lunch, we resume our tour and continue to *Gamla Stan*, Stockholm's Old Town nestled at the heart of this great city. When we arrive, we'll set off on a walking tour through the labyrinth of cobbled streets. While the mighty Royal Palace dominates much of the *Gamla Stan*, there's still so much more to do and see. The picturesque isle is a labyrinth of narrow alleyways and staircases, home to antique shops, museums, statues, and churches.

The *Stortorget* (the "Big Square"), is the city's oldest square and site of the infamous Stockholm Bloodbath. Denmark—under the rule of King Christian II—invaded Sweden in 1520 and took the country for its own. Shortly thereafter, Christian rounded up all those who had challenged his rule and on November 8 and 9, he executed more than 80 Swedish nobles

in the Big Square. According to legend, rivers of blood rushed through the streets. Today, the *Stortorget* is a brightly-colored square, home to a handful of cafés, the Stock Exchange, and an annual Christmas market.

After our tour concludes, you'll have free time to explore the ancient city on your own. Experience the gilded 15th-century sculpture of St. George at the *Storkyrkan Church*, or visit the Nobel Prize Museum to learn about the most prestigious award in the world, the world-changing ideas that have earned the prize, and its founder Alfred Nobel. Or, you can take this time to relax and grab a seat at a local café to observe everyday life, or peruse the shops.

We'll make our way to our hotel late this afternoon and check in. You may choose to relax prior to dinner, or head back out for final discoveries in Stockholm.

Dinner: Enjoy dinner at the hotel's restaurant.

Evening: You have the freedom to spend the rest of your evening as you wish. You may want to rest for your flight tomorrow.

Day 14 Stockholm • Return to U.S. or begin post-trip extension

• Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Transfer to the airport for your flight home, or continue on our *Stockholm, Sweden* post-trip extension.

END YOUR ADVENTURE WITH AN OPTIONAL POST-TRIP EXTENSION

3 nights in *Stockholm, Sweden*

Day 1 Explore Stockholm, Sweden

Day 3 Stockholm

Day 2 Stockholm • Optional Vasa Museum
& Skansen tour

Day 4 Stockholm • Return to U.S.

OPTIONAL TOURS

During your trip you will be able to book optional tours directly with your Trip Experience Leader. He or she will ask you to confirm the payment for these tours by filling out a payment form. Optional tours can only be purchased with a credit or debit card. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and Discover credit cards. We also accept Visa and MasterCard debit cards, but it must be a debit card that allows you to sign for purchases.

In order to correctly process these charges, there can be a delay of 2–3 months from the date of your return for the charges to be posted to your account. Therefore we ask that you use a card that will not expire in the 2–3 months following your return.

Please note: *Optional tour prices are listed in U.S. dollar estimates determined at the time of publication and are subject to change. Optional tours may vary.*

Rundāle Palace

(Day 9 \$140 per person)

Embark on a half-day excursion to Rundāle Palace, one of only two baroque palaces in Latvia, where you'll enjoy a tour of the palace's elegant exterior and opulent rooms. Built in the mid-18th century as a summer residence for the Dukes of Courland, Rundāle Palace was created by Bartolomeo Rastrelli, the same architect favored by Russian czars of the same era who also designed St. Petersburg's iconic Winter Palace. After exploring its interior, you'll wander the palace's formal rose garden. Afterwards, savor lunch at nearby Baltā Māja guesthouse, featuring local specialties.

Olde Hansa Medieval Feast

(Day 10 \$135 per person)

This immersion into Hanseatic times takes place in Olde Hansa, the former home of a rich merchant, where our group will be seated by staff in period costumes at a long candle-lit table, and then share family-style platters of typical dishes of the period prepared from original recipes and cooking methods. After dinner, we'll return to our ship.

PRE-TRIP

Copenhagen, Denmark

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » 3 nights accommodations
- » 5 meals: 3 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 1 dinner
- » Copenhagen Card for transit and museum access
- » Services of our local Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

PRE-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Native son Hans Christian Andersen rendered Danish life as a fairy tale ... something you can witness yourself as you revel in a three-night stay in Denmark's capital city. Explore Kobenhavn—and the surrounding area—and discover vibrant architecture, seaside castles, and a unique culture unlike anything you've experienced before.

Day 1 Depart U.S.

Depart the U.S. today on your flight to Copenhagen, Denmark.

Day 2 Copenhagen, Denmark

- Destination: Copenhagen
- Accommodations: Copenhagen Admiral Hotel or similar

Afternoon: Upon your arrival in Copenhagen, you'll be met at the airport and assisted to your hotel. The world's oldest capital city is also among the most welcoming in Scandinavia. The Danes are known for being more extroverted than their neighbors, as you'll experience during your stay here.

After checking in, enjoy a short walk around the vicinity of your hotel with your Trip Experience Leader to introduce you to the area in which you'll be staying. You'll also engage in

discussions with your Trip Experience Leader and fellow travelers regarding the country's green energy movement.

The rest of the afternoon is yours to do as your please. Perhaps you'll explore Nyhavn, the iconic 17th-century waterfront district, for a drink and people watching.

Dinner: You're free to explore Copenhagen's local restaurants tonight. For a quick bite, you can stop by one of the many sausage stands for a traditional *rod polse* (red sausage). *Frikadeller* is another popular Danish dish consisting of meatballs fried in butter, and are often served with boiled potatoes.

Evening: You are free to return to your room to rest after your overseas flight, or you may venture out to experience Copenhagen's lively clubs and cafés—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations. Your hotel is also located within walking distance of theaters, shops, the famous Little Mermaid statue, and the impressive Gefion Fountain.

Day 3 Explore Copenhagen

- Destination: Copenhagen
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch
- Accommodations: Copenhagen Admiral Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: After breakfast, join your Trip Experience Leader and fellow travelers for a Welcome Briefing. You'll also receive a personal Copenhagen Card from your Trip Experience Leader. Your card allows you entry to 75 of the city's attractions and free transportation on the bus, metro, and train lines, and will be your passport to exploring the city on your own over the next three days.

Then, embark on a tour of Copenhagen's winding canals with panoramas of the harbor, ancient castles, and colorful rowhouses.

At the conclusion of our tour, you'll have free time to discover the *Nyhavn* (New Harbor) district on your own. Bars, cafés, and restaurants line the 17th-century waterway, and dozens of vividly-painted 300-year-old houses add to the lively feel of this district. Perhaps you'll relax at one of the many cafés along the harbor and soak in everyday life.

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations. Perhaps you'll explore one of the city's prized museums, including the National History Museum. Or, consider a stroll through historic *Kongens Nytorv* (King's New Square), which was laid out by Christian V in 1670 in an effort to expand the fortified city. The equestrian statue erected of him sits in the center of the square and is surrounded by prominent institutions, such as the Royal Theatre.

Dinner: On your own. Whether you want rustic traditional seafood or high-end "New Nordic" cuisine (in which Danish staples like elderberry, herring, and salmon are infused with modern techniques and ingredients from around the world) Copenhagen boasts more than 2,000 restaurant and café options to satisfy all preferences.

Evening: You may continue making independent discoveries this evening, or rest up for the day of exploration ahead.

Day 4 Explore Copenhagen

- Destination: Copenhagen
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Copenhagen Admiral Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: We'll use our Copenhagen Card to board a local bus bound for the villages Dragør and Store Magleby on the southeast coast of Amager (the island that also contains part of the Danish capital city).

Upon arrival, we'll set off on a tour of the area. Home to thatched-roof houses and bobbing fishing boats, these two adjacent villages present a stark contrast to contemporary Copenhagen. Your Trip Experience Leader will delve into the history of the region with a discussion on World War II and how it shaped the community.

At the conclusion of our tour, you'll have free time to explore the villages at your own pace. Perhaps you'll peruse the quaint shops or take a stroll and soak in the seaside views before we catch the bus back to Copenhagen.

Lunch: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader would be happy to provide suggestions for local fare or a taste of home.

Afternoon: You'll have the afternoon to explore Copenhagen on your own. Now is the perfect time to try one of the recommended activities—explore the world's largest collection of Danish art at the Danish Museum of Art & Design, visit the stately Amalienborg Palace, or discover an impressive ethnographic collection at the National Museum.

Dinner: At a local restaurant.

Evening: Rest up for tomorrow's adventures or continue exploring on your own. If you choose the latter, you may want to relax at one of the city's bars or cafés for a nightcap.

Day 5 Explore Copenhagen • **Join main trip**

- Destination: Copenhagen
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Copenhagen Admiral Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Join your Trip Experience Leader for a discovery walk in Copenhagen. You'll witness some of the city's most famous gems, such as the King's Square, the Old Royal Theatre, Stroget, and Du Nord shopping center.

We'll also walk to Nyhavn where you can see any of the sites you haven't had a chance to explore yet, such as the city's colorful botanical gardens.

Lunch: On your own.

Afternoon: You'll have the rest of the afternoon at your leisure. Rest up for your main trip, or continue your explorations of Copenhagen. Perhaps you want to discover sites like the rococo-style Frederik's Church, famously known as the Marble Church.

Late this afternoon, you'll join your fellow travelers and begin the activities described on Day 2 of the main itinerary.

POST-TRIP

Stockholm, Sweden

INCLUDED IN YOUR PRICE

- » 3 nights accommodations
- » 5 meals: 3 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 1 dinner
- » Guided tour with personal headsets:
Royal Palace
- » Services of our local Trip Experience Leader
- » Gratuities for local guides and motorcoach drivers
- » All transfers

POST-TRIP EXTENSION ITINERARY

Both the modern and the antique blend harmoniously together in Sweden's capital city, built atop an archipelago bound together by a string of stunning bridges. Journey here and witness Old World beauty mingled with cutting-edge design ... and discover a vibrant culture filled with regal palaces, modern art, and verdant parks.

Day 1 Explore Stockholm, Sweden

- Destination: Stockholm
- Included Meals: Lunch
- Accommodations: Hilton Stockholm Slussen Hotel or similar

Morning: We'll set off on a discovery walk to see sites like Wallenberg Memorial—a monument in honor of Raoul Wallenberg, a Swedish diplomat who saved the lives of thousands of Hungarian Jews during the Holocaust.

We may also explore the Neoclassical facades of the city's Parliament House, also known as Christiansborg Palace, where we can venture inside to witness a series of murals that tell the story of Stockholm's past.

Then we'll walk to *Kungliga Slottet*, Stockholm's Royal Palace, with our Trip Experience Leader and enjoy free time to explore. Located in the city's Old Town, the Royal Palace is the official residence of the Swedish Royal Family

(although King Carl XVI Gustaf and his wife Queen Silvia live at the Drottningholm Palace on the island of Lovön).

Lunch: At a local restaurant.

Afternoon: The rest of the day is free for your own discoveries—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations. While the mighty Royal Palace dominates much of the *Gamla Stan* (Stockholm's Old Town, a small island nestled at the heart of this great city), there's still so much more to do and see. The isle is a labyrinth of narrow alleyways and staircases, home to antique shops, museums, statues, and churches.

Dinner: On your own. Now is a great time to discover Swedish culinary favorites, from lingonberries and meatballs to *raggmunk*—a Swedish potato pancake fried in butter and often served with fried pork or lingonberries.

Evening: The evening is free to make your own discoveries or relax at the hotel to prepare for the day of exploration ahead. Perhaps you'll venture to a local café or bar and try Sweden's traditional *brannvin*, a clear liquor that tastes similar to vodka.

Day 2 Stockholm • Optional Vasa Museum & Skansen tour

- Destination: Stockholm
- Included Meals: Breakfast
- Accommodations: Hilton Stockholm Slussen Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations. Perhaps you'll explore the luxurious Dottingham Palace, home to the Swedish royal family and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, or discover the many gardens, parks, and historical buildings throughout the small island of Djurgarden.

Or, join us for an optional tour which begins with a funicular ride to Skansen, located at the top of Djurgarden, a wooded island at the center of Stockholm.

Skansen is the oldest continually-operating outdoor museum in the world, founded in 1891. A 75-acre 19th-century village in which living history performers demonstrate baking, glass-blowing, leather tanning, shoemaking, silversmithing, and more, Skansen immerses visitors in a rural way of life its founder saw disappearing as the 20th century approached.

After exploring Skansen with your Trip Experience Leader, you'll take a funicular to the *Vasa* Museum for a guided tour. In 1628, the *Vasa*, a fearsome warship with 72 cannons and 300 soldiers, set off on a maiden voyage two years in the making—and then sank in the harbor. Like the *Titanic*, the *Vasa* was an epic

ship that became a symbol of tragedy—and Sweden never forgot her. Hundreds of years later, in 1961, the *Vasa* was raised from the seabed and returned to land. Today, restored and preserved, still outfitted with its original masts, deadeyes and blocks, the *Vasa* is one of Stockholm's most well-loved icons. In addition to a tour of the museum, you'll also enjoy a film viewing about *Vasa*.

Lunch: If you opted for an afternoon of free time, you can continue exploring Stockholm's unique culinary scene. *Glavad lox*, or dill-cured salmon, and bread topped with shrimp and caviar called *toast skagen* are other local favorites you may want to try. Lunch is included at the *Vasa* Museum for those on the optional tour.

Afternoon: Those on the optional tour will return to the hotel around mid-afternoon, while travelers who stayed back will continue their explorations of Stockholm.

Dinner: On your own. Your Trip Experience Leader can help you discover cuisine to suit your tastes for the night.

Evening: Enjoy a nightcap at the hotel bar, or continue your explorations of Stockholm. A short driving distance from the hotel is the Sodermalm district, often referred to as “the Brooklyn of Stockholm.” Here you'll find cozy cafés and bars with live music for a true taste of local life in the city.

Day 3 Stockholm

- Destination: Stockholm
- Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner
- Accommodations: Hilton Stockholm Slussen Hotel or similar

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Free for your own discoveries. Ask your Trip Experience Leader for suggestions for visiting the gems of Stockholm that best suit you.

You might delve into the earliest roots of Swedish culture at the National Historical Museum, whose collections span 10,000 years from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages. The museum features artifacts from the Viking era, centuries-old textiles, a Gothic collection, and a “Gold Room” housing 114 pounds of objects (not to mention almost 450 pounds of silver work).

Or, perhaps you want to visit the ABBA Museum, dedicated to honoring the famous pop band with exhibits of the members’ gold records, costumes, and other memorabilia.

Lunch: On your own—ask your Trip Experience Leader for local restaurant recommendations.

Afternoon: Free for your own discoveries—ask your Trip Experience Leader for recommendations. Perhaps you’ll indulge in *fika*—a social institution in Sweden. *Fika* is

a morning or afternoon coffee break enjoyed among friends, family, or colleagues. In fact, more coffee is consumed in Sweden than anywhere else in the world. After your morning explorations, relax at a *konditori* (bakery) while savoring a hot cup of coffee and a *kanelbulle* (cinnamon bun). If you’re feeling extra adventurous, try Sweden’s “egg coffee,” where a raw egg is mixed into the coffee grounds before it’s steeped in boiling water.

Dinner: We’ll enjoy a Farewell Dinner at a local restaurant, where you can reflect with your fellow travelers and Trip Experience Leader on your discoveries.

Evening: Enjoy a leisurely evening in preparation for your return to the U.S.

Day 4 Stockholm • Return to U.S.

- Destination: Stockholm
- Included Meals: Breakfast

Breakfast: At the hotel.

Morning: Make your way to the airport for your flight home.

OPTIONAL TOUR

Skansen & Vasa Museum

(Day 2 \$195 per person)

Your tour begins with a funicular ride to Skansen, the oldest continually-operating outdoor museum in the world. Here you’ll tour a 75-acre 19th-century village in which living history performers demonstrate baking, glass-blowing, leather tanning, shoemaking, silversmithing, and more, immersing yourself in a rural way of life that disappeared as the 20th century approached. Then continue on to the mighty Vasa Museum, dedicated to a historic 17th-century warship that is treasured

as one of Stockholm’s most well-loved cultural legacies. Following an included lunch and guided tour here, you’ll enjoy time to absorb the exhibit at your own pace.

YOUR M/V CLIO SMALL SHIP

Explore aboard our privately owned, 89-passenger small ship

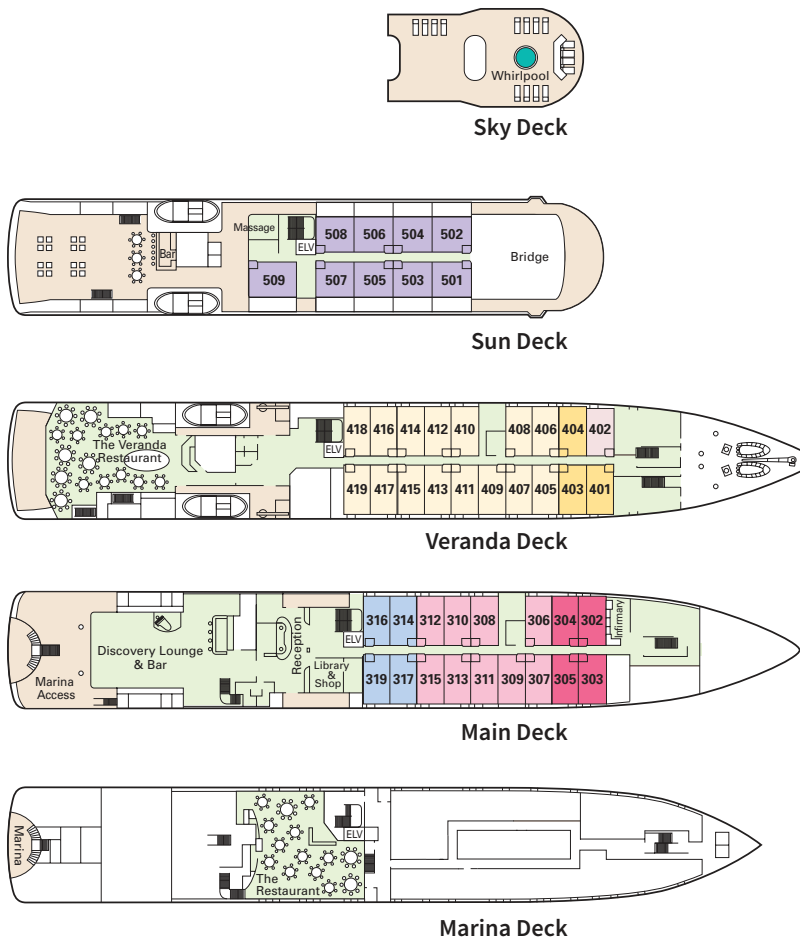
Cruise the world's legendary waterways aboard our 89-passenger small ship, the M/V *Clio*, rated excellent by 96% of travelers. Built in 1998, the *Clio* was purchased and refurbished in 2016, prior to its first departure. The ship holds four groups of 20–25 travelers (with an average of 22), each with its own local Trip Experience Leader, dedicated to bringing culture to life in the Baltics, Portugal, Spain, the Red Sea, and beyond.



SHIPBOARD FEATURES

- **Two dining areas with single, open seating:** Savor regionally-inspired dishes or American favorites during all buffets and table-service meals in the ship's dining room or indoor/outdoor veranda.
- **Comfortable lounge:** Relax with old friends and new, and participate in onboard discussions and lectures.
- **Complimentary beverages:** Enjoy house beer and house wine—as well as soft drinks—at any time of day while onboard.
- **Complimentary wireless Internet access:** Connect online in cabins and common areas. *Please note: Connectivity may be limited at certain points throughout your cruise.*
- **Outdoor common areas:** Relish coastal views from your seat in the indoor/outdoor veranda, Sun Deck, or whirlpool on the Sky Deck.
- **English-speaking crew:** Enjoy dedicated attention from our international staff throughout your voyage. Plus, all shipboard announcements are made in English for your convenience.
- **Zodiac crafts & tenders:** These onboard crafts are available to take you to shore in the most remote ports.
- **Elevator service:** An elevator serves the first four passenger decks (must use stairs to access the Sky Deck).

M/V CLIO



CABIN CATEGORIES	
VS	Cabin with balcony – 205 sq. ft.
A	Cabin with window – 194 sq. ft.
B	Cabin with window – 194 sq. ft.
C	Cabin with window – 194 sq. ft.
D	Cabin with window – 194 sq. ft.
E	Cabin with window – 194 sq. ft.
S	Single cabin with window – 161 sq. ft.

Registry: Malta

Length: 328 ft.

Beam: 46 ft.

Draft: 11 ft.

Cabin Size: 194-205 sq. ft., with a single cabin of 161 sq. ft.

Number of Cabins: 45

Passenger Capacity: 89

Entered Service: 1998

Refurbished in: 2016

International crew: 60

Passenger Decks: 5

Group Size: 25 travelers, maximum, with 1 Trip Experience Leader per group

Elevator service to first four passenger decks

This ship complies with the latest international and U.S. Coast Guard safety regulations and is outfitted with the most current navigational and communications technology. It has retractable fin stabilizers to help reduce discomfort during rough seas.

CABIN FEATURES

- 44 double-occupancy cabins between 194–205 sq. ft.; one single-occupancy cabin is 161 sq. ft.
- All outside-facing with a window or a balcony
- Queen-size bed (convertible to two twins)
- Complimentary wireless Internet access, closet, flat-screen TV, DVD/CD player, telephone, mini-refrigerator, safe
- Private bath with shower, hair dryer, and toiletries



Cabin on the Veranda Deck

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS & ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

Your Passport

- Must be in good condition
- Must be valid for at least 6 months after your scheduled return to the U.S.
- Must have the required number of blank pages (details below)
- The blank pages must be labeled “Visas” at the top. Pages labeled “Amendments and Endorsements” are not acceptable

Need to Renew Your Passport?

Contact the National Passport Information Center (NPIC) at **1-877-487-2778**, or visit the U.S. Department of State’s official website at **www.travel.state.gov** for information on obtaining a new passport or renewing your existing passport. The U.S. Department of State allows for passport renewal by mail or, for applicable citizens, renewal online. We advise you review the process and requirements for online passport renewal on the official website.

You may also contact our recommended visa service company, PVS International, at **1-800-556-9990** for help with your passport.

Recommended Blank Pages

Please confirm that your passport has enough blank pages for this adventure.

- **Main trip only:** You will need 5 blank passport pages.
- **Pre- and/or post-trip extension:** No additional blank pages are needed for most of the extensions.
- **Stopover in Amsterdam, Helsinki, Munich, Barcelona, Copenhagen, Madrid, Paris, or Rome:** No additional blank pages are needed.
- **Stopover in Istanbul or London:** You will need to add an additional page to the applicable total listed above

Visa Required

We’ll be sending you information with detailed instructions, application forms, and fees about 100 days prior to your departure. In the meantime, we’re providing the information below as a guideline on what to expect. This info is for U.S. citizens only. All visas and fees are subject to change.

- **Europe (Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark):** Starting in 2025, U.S. citizens will be required to fill out an online European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) visa-waiver to enter countries in the European Union. There is no confirmed start date for the ETIAS at the time of printing. The ETIAS will be valid for 3 years.

Traveling Without a U.S. Passport?

If you are not a U.S. citizen, or if your passport is from any country other than the U.S., it is your responsibility to check with your local consulate, embassy, or a visa services company about visa requirements. We recommend the services of PVS International, a national visa service located in Washington D.C.; they can be reached at **1-800-556-9990** or **www.pvsinternational.org**.

Traveling With a Minor?

Some governments may require certain documentation for minors to enter and depart the country or to obtain a visa (if applicable). For further detail on the required documentation, please contact your local embassy or consulate.

Emergency Photocopies of Key Documents

We recommend you carry color photocopies of key documents including the photo page of your passport plus any applicable visas, air itinerary, credit cards (front and back), and an alternative form of ID. Add emergency phone numbers like your credit card company and the number for your travel protection plan. Store copies separate from the originals.

If you plan to email this information to yourself, please keep in mind that email is not always secure; consider using password protection or encryption. Also email is not always available worldwide. As an alternative, you could load these documents onto a flash drive instead, which can do double-duty as a place to backup photos during your trip.

Overseas Taxes & Fees

This tour may have taxes and fees that cannot be included in your airline ticket price because you are required to pay them in person onsite. All taxes are subject to change without notice and can be paid in cash (either U.S. or local currency). If applicable, you will receive a list of these fees with your Final Documents.

RIGORS, VACCINES & GENERAL HEALTH

Is This Adventure Right for You?

Please review the information below prior to departing on this adventure. We reserve the right for our Trip Experience Leaders to modify participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their condition would adversely affect the health, safety, or enjoyment of themselves or of other travelers.

GROUP SIZE

- This adventure has a maximum group size of 25 travelers with a local Trip Experience Leader exclusive to O.A.T.

PACING

- 13 days, with two overnight hotel stays and 10 nights aboard the M/V *Clio*
-

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

- Walk 3 miles continuously unassisted and participate in 2 hours of physical activities each day, including stairs
- Good agility, balance, and strength needed for possible rough seas
- Not accessible for travelers using wheelchairs or scooters
- Travelers using walkers, crutches, or other mobility aids will not be able to board the *Clio*
- We reserve the right for Trip Experience Leaders to restrict participation, or in some circumstances send travelers home, if their limitations impact the group's experience

TERRAIN & TRANSPORTATION

- Uneven walking surfaces, including unpaved paths, hills, stairs, and cobblestones
- Travel by 89-passenger small ship and 45-seat coach

CLIMATE

- Daytime temperatures range from 58-77°F during cruising season

Steps to Take Before Your Trip

Before you leave on this adventure, we recommend the following:

- Check with the CDC for their recommendations for the countries you'll be visiting. You can contact them online at www.cdc.gov/travel or by phone at **1-800-232-4636**.
- Have a medical checkup with your doctor at least 6 weeks before your trip.

- Pick up any necessary medications, both prescription and over-the-counter.
- Have a dental and/or eye checkup. (Recommended, but less urgent)

No Vaccines Required

Recommended Vaccines

At the time of writing there were no required vaccines for this trip. The CDC recommends that all travelers be up to date on their routine vaccinations and on basic travel vaccines like Hepatitis A and Typhoid, but these are suggestions only. However, this could change in future so we encourage you to check with the CDC yourself before meeting with your doctor.

Traveling with Medications

- **Pack medications in your carry-on bag** to avoid loss and to have them handy.
- **Keep medicines in their original, labeled containers** for a quicker security screen at the airport and a better experience if you get stopped by customs while overseas.
- **Bring copies of your prescriptions**, written using the generic drug name rather than a brand name to be prepared for any unforeseen loss of your medications.

We recommend checking with the State Department for medication restrictions by country: **travel.state.gov** (Go to “Find International Travel Information”, select “Country Information”, then enter the country into the search bar; if you don’t see any medications specifically mentioned under the “Health” section, then you can presume major U.S. brands should be OK).

Staying Healthy on Your Trip

Jet Lag Tips

- Start your trip well-rested.
- Begin a gradual transition to your new time zone before you leave or switch to your destination time zone when you get on the plane.
- Attempt to sleep and eat according to the new schedule.
- Avoid heavy eating and drinking caffeine or alcoholic beverages right before—and during—your flight.
- Drink plenty of water and/or fruit juice while flying
- Stretch your legs, neck, and back periodically while seated on the plane.
- After arrival, avoid the temptation to nap.
- Don’t push yourself to see a lot on your first day.
- Try to stay awake your first day until after dinner.

Allergies

If you have any serious allergies or dietary restrictions, we advise you to notify us at least 30 days prior to your departure. Please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**, and we will communicate them to our regional office. Every effort will be made to accommodate you.

Water

- Tap water is safe to drink on this trip; however, it may be processed differently than your tap water at home, so you might not like the taste or it may feel “heavy” in your stomach.
- Bottled water is widely available for sale. Another option is for you to bring a reusable water bottle and fill up on board the ship.

MONEY MATTERS: LOCAL CURRENCY & TIPPING GUIDELINES

Top Three Tips

- **Carry a mix of different types of payments**, such as local currency, an ATM card, and a credit card.
- **Traveler’s checks are not recommended.** They can be difficult to exchange and the commission fee for cashing them is quite high. It’s more practical to view them as a last resort in the event of a special situation.
- **It may be helpful to get some local currency before your trip, especially if you are arriving during the weekend or on a bank holiday.** You will not be able to pay with U.S. dollars (cash or traveler’s checks) in most stores, including grocery stores. Occasionally, some souvenir shops or open-air markets may take dollars, but this is not common, and is at the discretion of each shop.

Local Currency

For current exchange rates, please refer to an online converter tool like www.xe.com/currencyconverter, your bank, or the financial section of your newspaper.

Euro Countries: European Euro (€)

Poland: Polish Zloty (zł)

Sweden: Swedish Krona (kr., SEK)

Denmark: Danish *kroner* (Kr., DKK)

How to Exchange Money

If you want to exchange money before your trip, you can usually do so through your bank or at an exchange office. Your departure airport in the U.S., a travel agent, or an AAA office are also possible outlets. Or you can wait and change money on the trip instead—but it might be helpful to arrive with some local currency in case you run into a bank holiday or an “out of order” ATM.

In the Baltic countries, currency exchange is available at money exchange offices, such as FOREX; many exchange offices will charge a set fee regardless of the amount you are exchanging. “Leftover” currency (except small coins) can be converted to that of the next country on your program (or to U.S. currency). In Poland, you’ll get a better exchange rate at one of the privately-run Kantors, open 9 am to 6 pm. Kantors will also change your leftover zlotys back into U.S. dollars.

TIP: Because exchange fees can be high in the Baltics, and are charged each time you make a transaction regardless of the amount, our Trip Experience Leaders suggest exchanging some money before your arrival. By arriving with enough local currency for the first couple of days, you'll be able to track your spending and better gauge how much you'll need overall for the trip. That said, not all of the countries on this trip use Euros, so another possibility is to use an ATM at the airport once you arrive.

Please note that many banks in Europe will only exchange money for their own customers. Never exchange money on the street. All exchange methods involve fees, which may be built into the conversion rate; ask beforehand.

ATMs

When using the ATM, keep in mind that it may only accept cards from local banks, and may not allow cash advances on credit cards; you might need to try more than one ATM or more than one card.

Many banks charge a fee of \$1–\$10 each time you use a foreign ATM. Others may charge you a percentage of the amount you withdraw. We recommend that you check with your bank before you depart.

Lastly, don't forget to memorize the actual digits of your card's PIN number (many keypads at foreign ATMs do not include letters on their keys—they only display numbers.)

In most countries, ATMs are widely available in major cities. If you are in a rural location, it will likely be harder to find an ATM.

The Baltics: Much of the Baltics is cashless. In response, ATMs are less widely available and cash is not accepted in many places.

Nordic Countries: Most Nordic countries are cashless. In response, ATMs are less widely available and cash is not accepted in many places.

Credit & Debit Cards

While traveling, most countries and major cities will accept credit cards. Even if you don't plan on using a credit card during your trip, we still suggest that you bring one or two as a backup, especially if you are planning a large purchase (artwork, jewelry). We also suggest that you bring more than one brand of card (i.e. Visa, MasterCard, American Express) if possible, because not every shop will take every card. For example, although Discover and American Express cards are accepted in some countries outside the U.S., they are not widely adopted, so other brands will work at a much larger range of stores, restaurants, etc.

If you are visiting a country that does not commonly accept credit cards, they will be listed below.

The Baltics: Credit cards are widely accepted in this region, especially Visa and MasterCard. American Express is not widely accepted in the Baltics.

Nordic Countries: Credit and debit cards are readily accepted in Nordic countries. Some cafes, restaurants, and attractions will only accept credit cards. Visa is the most widely accepted credit card in most Nordic countries, followed by MasterCard and then American Express.

Chip Cards

Many countries have adopted credit cards that have an embedded computer chip. These cards are inserted into the reader instead of swiped. The card owner then authorizes the purchase using a PIN instead of signing.

Though this technology is common in the U.S., occasionally there are machines in other countries that can't read U.S. cards or the machine can read the card, but asks for a PIN. This doesn't happen often, and is nothing to worry about. You can usually resolve the situation by asking the cashier to let you sign. (If you don't speak the language, just mime signing on your hand.) If you are not able to sign for a purchase, such as at an automated ticket booth, you can use another form of payment, such as a debit card that has a PIN.

Notify Card Providers of Upcoming Travel

Many credit card companies and banks have fraud alert departments that will freeze your card if they see suspicious charges—such as charges or withdrawals from another country. To avoid an accidental security block, it is a good idea to notify your credit card company and/or bank you will be using your cards abroad. You can do this by calling their customer service number a week or two before your departure. Some banks or credit card companies will also let you do this online.

You should also double-check what phone number you could call if you have a problem with a card while you are abroad. Don't assume you can use the 1-800 number printed on the back of your card—most 1 800 numbers don't work outside of the U.S.!

On Board Ship: Two Separate Bills Will be Issued

- **Shipboard account:** This bill is for any on board purchases (drinks, souvenirs, etc.). You can pay this bill by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept U.S. dollars or Euros (on itineraries in Europe). For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, or American Express are not accepted.
- **Optional tour account:** This bill is for any optional tours taken during the trip and is calculated in U.S. dollars. You can pay for this bill by credit/debit card only; other forms of payments such as cash and checks are not accepted. For more information on optional tours—including which cards we accept for payment—see the “Preparing for Your Trip” chapter.

Please note: Payments made by credit card may take up to three months to process. We ask that you use a credit card that will not expire until three months after your trip ends. Because our headquarters are in Boston, the charges may appear to be from Boston or might be labeled as “OPT Boston” (depending on your credit card company).

Exchange Services

Due to international banking laws, we are not able to exchange money onboard the ship. If you need to obtain local currency, please see the “How to Exchange Money” section for helpful tips and information.

Tipping Guidelines

Of course, whether you tip, and how much, is always at your own discretion. But for those of you who have asked for tipping suggestions, we offer these guidelines:

- **O.A.T. Trip Experience Leader:** It is customary to express a personal “thank you” to your Trip Experience Leader at the end of your trip. As a guideline, many travelers give \$10–\$14 USD (or equivalent in local currency) per person for each day their Trip Experience Leader is with them. *Please note that these tips can only be in cash. If you are taking any of the optional extensions, your Trip Experience Leader during the extension(s) may not be the same as the one on your main trip.*
- **Shipboard:** We recommend a flat tip of \$16–\$18 per traveler, per day. You’ll give this tip once—at the end of your cruise—and it will be pooled among the entire crew. Crew tips can only be in the form of cash.
- **Housekeeping Staff at Hotels:** We recommend \$1 per traveler, per day. (This is for hotels only; on the ship Housekeeping are part of crew, so you don’t need to tip them separately.)
- **Included in Your Trip Price:** Gratuities are included for local guides and motorcoach drivers on your main trip, extensions, and all optional tours.

Time at Leisure

When you are exploring on your own, it’s useful to know when to tip and how much, because local customs often differ from the U.S. Here are a few helpful guidelines for the most common services a traveler might use:

- **Taxis:** Tipping is not customary, but many locals will round up the fare and let the driver keep the change.
- **Restaurants, cafes, and bars:** When dining on your own, check your bill for a service charge. If a service charge is not included in your bill, we suggest you leave about 10% of the check.
- **Public restrooms:** Most public restrooms in Europe have attendants that take care of cleaning and supplies. It is customary to leave a small tip for them—usually a small fraction of whatever currency is in use in that country (in this case, half a euro and 10 krone)—so hold on to those coins! Some restrooms are pay-toilets; you pay the staff at the entrance to the restroom or drop the appropriate coin into the slot on the stall door. Many restaurants, cafes, and shops offer only pay-toilets or reserve their restrooms for patrons only.

AIR, OPTIONAL TOURS & STAYING IN TOUCH

Land Only Travelers & Personalized Air

Quick Definitions

- **Land Only:** You will be booking your own international flights. Airport transfers are not included.
- **Air-Inclusive:** You booked international air with us. Airport transfers are included as long as you didn't customize your trip's dates (see next bullet).
- **Arrive Early or Stopover (select adventures only):** If you chose one of these Personalization options and purchased air through O.A.T, accommodations and airport transfers are included. However, if you chose one of our Personalization options, but did not purchase air through O.A.T., accommodations are included, but airport transfers are not. If you chose one of our Personalization options, and purchase air through O.A.T. but not the accommodations, the airport transfers are not included. We have included transfer options below.
- **Personalization on Your Own:** If you have not purchased air through O.A.T. and decided to arrive early, stay longer, or stop in a connecting city on your own, you are responsible for airport transfers and accommodations. For your convenience, a preliminary list of your included hotels is available on your My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner under "My Reservations" to help you with selecting a hotel for your additional time.

Air Inclusive Travelers

If you have purchased international air with us, there are some points that may be helpful for you to know.

- **U.S. Departure:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who depart the U.S. from your international gateway city, it is our goal to have an O.A.T. Representative assist you at the U.S. airport with the check-in of your flight. Unless there are extenuating circumstances beyond our control, the Representative will be at the check-in counter three hours before your departure time. If you are flying domestically before your international flight, the representative will be stationed at the check-in counter for your departing international flight, not at the domestic arrival gate.
- **U.S. Return:** If you are among a group of ten or more travelers who return to the same U.S. gateway city, an O.A.T. Representative will meet you as you exit Customs and help you find taxis, buses, hotel accommodations, or connecting flights. Again, it is our goal to have our Representative waiting to assist your group. In rare instances, unforeseen circumstances may prevent this service.

- **Flying with a Travel Companion:** If you're traveling with a companion from a different household, and both of you are beginning and ending your trip at the same airport on the same dates, let us know you'd like to travel together and we'll make every effort to arrange this (please note, however, that this is not always possible). If you request any changes to your flights, please be sure that both you and your companion tell us that you still want to fly together.
- **Selecting Your Seats:** If your airline allows pre-assigned seats, you will be able to select and view them directly from the airline's website after booking. Some airlines will not allow seat confirmation until your reservation is ticketed 45-30 days prior to departure, and/or they may charge a nominal fee. You may locate your itinerary on an airline's website utilizing the Record Locator Number found on the Air Itinerary in your My Planner.

Airport Transfers Can Be Purchased

For eligible flights, airport transfers may be purchased separately as an optional add-on, subject to availability. To be eligible, your flight(s) must meet the following requirements:

- You must fly into or fly home from the same airport as O.A.T. travelers who purchased included airfare.
- Your flight(s) must arrive/depart on the same day that the group arrives or departs.
- If you are arriving early, you must have arranged the hotels through our Arrive Early personalization option

Airport transfers can be purchased up to 45 days prior to your departure; they are not available for purchase onsite. To learn more, or purchase airport transfers, please call our Travel Counselors at **1-800-221-0814**.

If you don't meet the requirements above, you'll need to make your own transfer arrangements. We suggest the Rome to Rio website as a handy resource: www.rome2rio.com.

Optional Tours

Optional tours are additional add-on tours that allow you to personalize your adventure by tailoring it to your tastes and needs. And if you decide not to join an optional tour? Then you'll have free time to relax or explore on your own—it's about options, not obligations.

What You Need to Know

- All optional tours are subject to change and availability.
- Optional tours that are reserved with your Trip Experience Leader can be paid for using credit/debit cards only. We accept MasterCard, Visa, and Discover credit cards; we can also take MasterCard or Visa debit cards as long as the card allows you to sign for purchases. (You won't be able to enter a PIN.)

- To ensure that you are charged in U.S. dollars, your payment will be processed by our U.S. headquarters in Boston. This process can take up to three months, so we ask that you only use a card that will still be valid three months after your trip is over. The charge may appear on your credit card statement as being from Boston, MA or may be labeled as “OPT Boston”.
- Your Trip Experience Leader will give you details on the optional tours while you’re on the trip. But if you’d like to look over descriptions of them earlier, you can do so at any time by referring to your Day-to-Day Itinerary (available online by signing into My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner).

Communicating with Home from Abroad

Cell Phones

If you want to use your cell phone on the trip, check with your phone provider to see if your phone and service will work outside of the U.S. It may turn out to be cheaper to rent an international phone or buy a SIM card onsite. If you want to use a local SIM, just make certain your phone is “unlocked”, meaning it can accept a local SIM card. If your cell is “unlocked” then you will be able to purchase a local SIM for it and then buy minutes with “Pay as You Go” cards, so that you have a local contact number for your friends and family.

Calling Apps

Another option is to use a smartphone app like Skype, FaceTime, or WhatsApp. We recommend you use WhatsApp to communicate with home while abroad and with your Trip Experience Leader while onsite. You will need a Wi-Fi connection if you do not have international coverage. Other calling options include smartphone apps such as Skype or FaceTime. You will need a Wi-Fi connection for these apps and the calls may count towards your phone plan’s data allowance. Many smartphones—and some tablets or laptops—come with one of these apps pre-installed or you can download them for free from the appropriate apps store.

Calling Cards & 1-800 Numbers

When calling the U.S. from a foreign country, a prepaid calling card can be useful because it circumvents unexpected charges from the hotel. Calling cards purchased locally are typically the best (less expensive, more likely to work with the local phones, etc.). One reminder: Do not call U.S. 1-800 numbers outside the continental United States. This can result in costly long distance fees, since 1-800 numbers do not work outside the country.

How to Call Overseas

When calling overseas from the U.S., dial 011 for international exchange, then the country code (indicated by a plus sign: +), and then the number. Note that foreign phone numbers may not have the same number of digits as U.S. numbers; even within a country the number of digits can vary depending on the city and if the phone is a land line or cell phone.

Poland: +48

Finland: +358

Lithuania: +370

Sweden: +46

Latvia: +371

Denmark: +45

Estonia: +372

PACKING: WHAT TO BRING & LUGGAGE LIMITS

Luggage Limits

MAIN TRIP LIMITS	
Pieces per person	One checked bag and one carry-on bag per person.
Weight restrictions	Varies by airline. The current standard is 50 lbs for checked bags and 15 lbs for carry-on bags .
Size Restrictions	Varies by airline. Measured in linear inches (length+width+depth). Generally, 62 linear inches is the checked bag limit; carry-on limit is 45 linear inches.
Luggage Type	A sturdy, fabric-sided suitcase with built-in wheels and lockable zippers is recommended.

TRIP EXTENSION(S) LIMITS
Same as the main trip.

REMARKS/SUGGESTIONS
<p>One suitcase and one carry-on bag per person: Due to the space limitations on bus transfers, you'll be restricted to one suitcase and one carry-on bag per person. This is to ensure that we have room for everyone's luggage. We ask that you abide by this limit to avoid inconveniencing your fellow travelers and prevent additional airlines luggage fees (which are your responsibility). Most airlines now charge to check more than one suitcase per person.</p> <p>Luggage rules: Luggage rules and limits are set by governmental and airline policy. Enforcement of the rules may include spot checks or may be inconsistent. However one thing is the same across the board: If you are found to have oversized or overweight luggage, you will be subject to additional fees, to be assessed by—and paid to—the airline in question.</p>

Don't Forget:

- **These luggage limits may change.** If the airline(s) notify us of any changes, we will include an update in your Final Documents booklet.

- It's a good idea to reconfirm baggage restrictions and fees directly with the airline a week or so prior to departure. For your convenience, we maintain a list of the toll-free numbers for the most common airlines on our website in the FAQ section.
- **Baggage fees are not included in your trip price;** they are payable directly to the airlines.

Your Luggage

- **Checked Luggage:** Consider a duffel bag or soft-sided suitcase. Look for one with heavy nylon fabric, wrap-around handles, built-in wheels, and a heavy duty lockable zipper. Due to space limitations on our motorcoaches, you are allowed one piece of checked luggage per person. Porterage at airports and hotels is provided for **one** bag per person. All bags should have luggage tags.
- **Carry-on Bag:** You are allowed one carry-on bag per person. We suggest a tote or small backpack that can be used as both a carry-on bag for your flight and to carry your daily necessities—water bottle, camera, etc—during your daily activities.
- **Locks:** For flights that originate in the U.S., you can either use a TSA-approved lock or leave your luggage unlocked. Outside of the U.S. we strongly recommend locking your luggage as a theft-prevention measure.

Clothing Suggestions Functional Tips

- **Travel light.** A good rule of thumb is to gather together everything you want to bring; then take half of that. Eliminate all but the essentials and start packing a few days before you leave. That way, you'll have time to think—not fret—about what you might be forgetting. We recommend you pick pack color-coordinated separates that can be mixed to create different outfits.
- **Good walking shoes are essential:** For your comfort, you'll need supportive walking shoes that offer good traction. Water-resistant shoes can be handy in case of a heavy downpour.
- **Rain gear:** Regardless of your month of travel, rainfall is certainly a possibility. We suggest you bring a folding umbrella and waterproof shell. Water-resistant walking shoes are advantageous in case heavy downpours pass through.

Style Hints

- **Pack casual clothes.** Comfortable, informal apparel is perfectly acceptable at each of your destinations. Men do not need jackets or ties and women do not need fancy dresses. You may want one or two “smart casual” outfits for the Welcome Reception or Farewell Dinner, but it's completely up to you. You would only need nicer dress if you plan to dine at a deluxe city restaurant on your own.

- **Keep local customs in mind.** During this trip we may visit religious sites where visitors are required to dress modestly. In this context, “modestly dressed” means you should be covered to the knees and you should cover your shoulders—no shorts, no skirts above the knee, no sleeveless shirts, and no low or revealing necklines. Even if you are traveling during warm weather, bring at least one outfit that meets these requirements.

Suggested Packing Lists

We have included suggestions from Trip Experience Leaders and former travelers to help you pack. These packing lists are only jumping-off points—they offer recommendations based on experience, but not requirements. We recommend using www.weather.com and consulting the “Climate” chapter of this handbook.

And don’t forget a reusable water bottle—you’ll need it to take advantage of any refills we offer as we are working to eliminate single-use plastic bottles on all of our trips.

Recommended Clothing

- Shirts: A mixture of short and long-sleeved shirts to layer
- Trousers, jeans, or skirts
- Comfortable walking shoes and/or water resistant shoes
- Light rain jacket/windbreaker with hood
- Sleepwear
- Socks and undergarments
- Light sweater, vest, jacket, or another layer for warmth
- Swimsuit for hotel pools or saunas

Essential Items

- Daily essentials: toothbrush, toothpaste, floss, hairbrush or comb, shaving items, deodorant, sunscreen, etc.
- Spare eyeglasses/contact lenses and your prescription
- Sunglasses with a neck strap
- Insect repellent
- Travel money bag or money belt

- Electrical converter & plug adapters
- Compact umbrella
- Wide-brim sun hat or visor (seasonal)
- Pocket-size tissues
- Moist towelettes and/or anti-bacterial “water-free” hand cleanser
- Photocopies of passport, air ticket, credit cards
- Written prescriptions for your medicines
- Camera, spare batteries, and memory cards

Medicines

- Your own prescription medicines
- Vitamins
- Cold remedies: Sudafed/Dristan
- Pain relievers: Ibuprofen/naproxen/aspirin
- Laxatives: Senokot/Ex-Lax
- Stomach upset: Pepto-Bismol/Mylanta
- Anti-diarrheal: Imodium
- Band-Aids, Moleskin foot pads
- Antibiotics: Neosporin/Bacitracin
- Motion sickness medicine, such as Dramamine

Electricity Abroad

When traveling overseas, the voltage is usually different and the plugs might not be the same shape.

Voltage

Electricity in this region is 220–240 volts. In the U.S. it is 110 volts. Most of the things a traveler will want to plug in—battery chargers, smartphones, tablets or computers—can run off both 110 and 220–240. But you should check the item or the owner’s guide first to confirm this before you plug it in. If you have something that needs 110 volts—like a shaver or a hairdryer—you can bring a transformer to change the current. (But transformers tend to burn out, so it might be better to leave whatever it is at home.)

Aboard the ship, cabins are equipped with 110-volt outlets. In your bathroom you will find a dual 110/220-volt outlet; this outlet is only for low-voltage appliances, like electric shavers. (Your bathroom also comes equipped with a hair dryer).

Plugs

Aboard ship, the plugs are standard American plugs.

In hotels, the shape of plugs will vary from country to country, and sometimes even within a country depending on when that building was built. To plug something from the U.S. into a local socket you’ll need an adapter that fits between the plug and the socket. Because you’ll be visiting multiple countries on this trip, it may be easier to purchase an all-in-one, universal adapter/converter combo. Versatile and lightweight, these can usually be found at your local electronics goods or hardware stores. Sometimes you can buy them at large retailers too, like Target or Walmart. If you forget to bring an adapter, you might also find them for sale at the airport when you arrive at your destination.

Different plug shapes are named by letters of the alphabet. Standard U.S. plugs are Type A and Type B. Here is the list of plugs for the countries on this trip:

Poland: C and E

Lithuania: C and F

Latvia: C and F

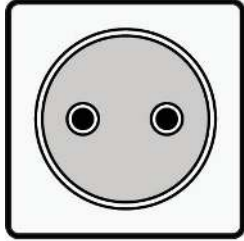
Estonia: C and F

Finland: C and F

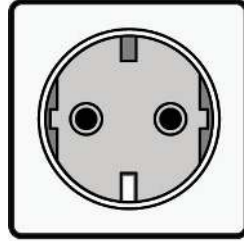
Sweden: C and F

Denmark: C and F

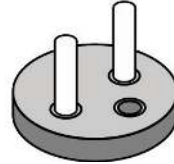
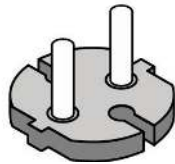
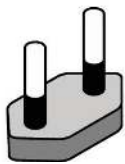
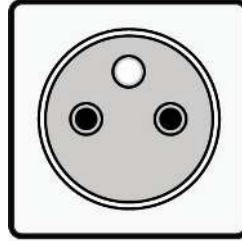
Type C



Type F



Type E



Availability

Barring the occasional and unpredictable power outage, electricity is as readily available on this trip as it is in the U.S.

CLIMATE & AVERAGE TEMPERATURES

Copenhagen, Denmark: The weather in Copenhagen is mild through all the four seasons—with highs usually in the 60s and lows usually in the 50s—although temperatures in winter can drop down into the 30s and 40s. On the other end of the scale, summertime highs rarely go above 80 °F despite the occasional heat wave. Rainfall is moderate too, but spread throughout the year, so showers are possible in any season. Grey skies are the norm rather than the exception in Copenhagen.

Poland: Poland has a long border with the Czech and Slovak Republics in the south and a coastline on the Baltic Sea in the north. Most of Poland has a very similar climate and the same sequence of weather throughout the year. Winter cold increases towards the east and in the southern mountains, while the coastlands of the Baltic Sea have slightly milder winters and cooler summers. Precipitation is well distributed around the year with a summer maximum of rain, often heavy and accompanied by thunder. Much of the winter precipitation is snow. Summer temperatures do not differ very much over the country. It rarely gets excessively hot but fine, sunny spells of weather and occasional droughts occur. Winters are distinctly cold and the length of really cold spells varies considerably from year to year.

Riga, Latvia: Summers in Riga tend to be short and cool with cloud cover; highs are generally in the 60s or 70s in July, but can sometimes go up to the 80s. Winters are usually dark and cold, with heavy snowfall from mid-December to mid-March. The city is overcast for roughly 40 percent of the year.

Tallinn, Estonia: The climate in northerly Tallinn is tempered by its location on the Baltic Sea. In summer, the city gets cooling sea breezes; in winter the same sea air keeps the snowfall in check. That's not to say that Tallinn doesn't get snow—a couple feet a year—but it's considerably less than in nearby Finland or Russia. Spring and fall bring mild temperatures but can also feature sea fog and/or sudden rain. In summer, high temperatures rarely top the low 80s.

Helsinki, Finland: Helsinki boasts a humid continental climate, due in part to the Baltic Sea and the North Atlantic Current, allowing for an average winter temperature around the mid-20s. As Helsinki is situated at the southern tip of Finland, it's weather is significantly warmer than the northern end of the country, with a shorter snow season. In the summer, the temperature does not reach higher than the low 70s and the city experiences frequent thunderstorms.

Stockholm, Sweden: Despite its northern location, Stockholm has relatively mild weather compared to other locations at similar latitude. Summers have average daytime highs of 68–72 °F and lows of around 55 °F, but temperatures can reach the mid-eighties. Winters are sometimes snowy with average temperatures ranging from 23 to 34 °F, and sometimes drop below 5 °F. Spring and autumn are generally cool to mild. Yearly precipitation averages 21.2 inches with around 170 wet days and light to moderate rainfall throughout the year. Snowfall occurs mainly from December through March with some snow-rich winters, while others are milder with more rain than snow.

The Baltics

The Baltic climate might be more temperate than you'd expect. For example, even though Estonia is on the same latitude as parts of Alaska, the climate is closer to that of New England or the Canadian seaboard (due to the influence of the shallow Baltic Sea). During spring and fall, high temperatures tend to be in the 50s. In summer highs are generally in the 60s or 70s. Rain showers are more frequent in summer and early fall. One intriguing climate phenomenon experienced in many cities throughout the region is the "White Nights", a term used to describe the unusually long hours of daylight around the summer solstice.

NOTE: If you are taking one of our optional stopovers before or after your OAT adventure, please be aware the climate and temperatures might be different from what you experienced during your tour. To prepare for weather differences and pack appropriate clothing, we recommend the following world weather sites:

- www.intellicast.com
- www.weather.com
- www.wunderground.com

Climate Averages & Online Forecast

The following charts reflect the **average** climate as opposed to exact weather conditions. This means they serve only as general indicators of what can reasonably be expected. An extreme heat wave or cold snap could fall outside these ranges. As your departure approaches, we encourage you to use **www.weather.com** for a more accurate forecast of the locations you visit.

Average Daily High/Low Temperatures (°F), Humidity & Monthly Rainfall

MONTH	COPENHAGEN, DENMARK			GDANSK, POLAND		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	37 to 30	89 to 85	18	33 to 24	90 to 87	22
FEB	36 to 28	89 to 80	15	33 to 24	89 to 83	18
MAR	41 to 32	89 to 74	15	40 to 29	89 to 75	18
APR	49 to 36	84 to 63	15	49 to 35	87 to 66	16
MAY	60 to 45	76 to 57	14	60 to 43	80 to 62	16
JUN	66 to 52	76 to 59	16	66 to 49	80 to 64	17
JUL	69 to 55	78 to 60	15	69 to 53	85 to 66	18
AUG	69 to 54	82 to 60	16	69 to 53	88 to 65	16
SEP	61 to 50	86 to 67	15	61 to 47	91 to 70	18
OCT	53 to 44	87 to 76	19	52 to 40	92 to 77	18
NOV	44 to 37	87 to 82	19	41 to 33	92 to 87	22
DEC	39 to 32	88 to 85	18	35 to 28	91 to 89	23

MONTH	RIGA, LATVIA			TALLINN, ESTONIA		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Monthly Rainfall (inches)
JAN	29 to 22	87 to 83	1.3	30 to 20	87 to 85	2.0
FEB	29 to 21	86 to 78	0.9	29 to 19	87 to 80	1.3
MAR	37 to 28	87 to 70	1.0	36 to 24	88 to 73	1.4
APR	48 to 35	86 to 61	1.4	47 to 32	86 to 64	1.4
MAY	60 to 45	83 to 56	1.7	59 to 41	84 to 55	1.5
JUN	66 to 52	88 to 61	2.3	66 to 50	87 to 59	2.4
JUL	69 to 56	90 to 65	2.8	70 to 54	91 to 63	3.0
AUG	68 to 55	91 to 65	2.7	68 to 53	92 to 67	3.3
SEP	59 to 48	90 to 69	2.6	58 to 45	92 to 72	3.0
OCT	50 to 41	88 to 74	2.1	48 to 38	89 to 76	3.0
NOV	39 to 33	88 to 83	2.0	38 to 30	89 to 85	2.7
DEC	32 to 25	88 to 85	1.5	33 to 24	88 to 86	2.4

MONTH	HELSINKI, FINLAND			STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN		
	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall	Temp. High-Low	% Relative Humidity (am-pm)	Average # of Days with Rainfall
JAN	26 to 16	88 to 87	16	31 to 22	89 to 87	13
FEB	27 to 15	89 to 82	11	31 to 20	91 to 80	10
MAR	34 to 23	89 to 74	12	37 to 26	91 to 69	13
APR	45 to 31	87 to 59	13	47 to 31	86 to 57	15
MAY	59 to 41	84 to 51	14	60 to 41	75 to 49	17
JUN	66 to 49	85 to 55	17	67 to 49	74 to 52	18
JUL	70 to 53	90 to 59	15	70 to 54	79 to 56	20
AUG	66 to 51	93 to 66	17	68 to 53	87 to 58	19
SEP	56 to 43	93 to 72	15	58 to 45	91 to 64	20
OCT	46 to 36	91 to 80	20	58 to 45	91 to 64	19
NOV	36 to 28	90 to 88	17	39 to 31	91 to 87	18
DEC	30 to 20	89 to 88	16	32 to 23	91 to 89	15

ABOARD YOUR SHIP: CABIN FEATURES, DINING & SERVICES ON BOARD

M/V Corinthian & M/V Clio

Cabin Amenities

Your cabin amenities include a private bathroom with shower, hairdryer, TV, in room heating, internal telephones and a mini-refrigerator. Each cabin is appointed with a sitting area, plus the decks and dining rooms are spacious and attractively decorated, providing welcoming locations for relaxing with your traveling companions.

Cabin Assignments

You will receive confirmation of your deck and/or cabin category upfront in writing; it will be on your invoice and online in My Planner at www.oattravel.com/myplanner. However, your cabin number may not be assigned until you arrive onboard the ship. (This is normal procedure for many small ships.) If there's no cabin number on your invoice or online, you can presume it will be assigned later and communicated to you when you board.

Dining

All meals are taken in the onboard restaurant, which acts as the ship's dining room. Meals will be a mix of regional specialties and familiar American standards, and will feature a variety of entrée options including vegetarian. Complimentary beer, wine and soft drinks are served with lunch and dinner. A selection of fine wines is also available for purchase, starting at approximately \$20-30 per bottle (prices vary according to vintage). Travelers may also bring a bottle of their own favorite wine to dinner to enjoy at their table. Should you care to avail yourself of this service, there will be a corkage fee of approximately \$10 per bottle, charged to your cabin account.

If you require a special diet, please request this in advance, you may do so by contacting one of our Travel Counselors. Dining times will vary according to the scheduled daily activities. In keeping with regional custom, dinner may be served at a later hour (around 7:00 pm) than Americans may be accustomed to.

Electricity

Cabins are equipped with 110-volt outlets that are designed to fit American plugs. In your bathroom you will find a dual 110/220-volt outlet, for use with electric shavers. While your bathroom does come equipped with a hairdryer, please do not use any other appliances that heat up, such as hair irons or curlers—they tend to short out.

Getting Ashore

Getting from ship to shore during an ocean-going voyage is not the same experience as on a river cruise—it requires more balance and agility, plus there are more formalities.

- **Balance and agility are needed:** You'll either walk down a gangway—which can be steep, wet, and slippery—or be shuttled to land in a small boat (a process known as “tendering”). We'll use the gangway most of the time, but tenders will be used when the ship cannot dock closely enough for the gangway to reach the shore. Tenders can differ in size, and some of them maybe open with no covering. From time to time we will use the ship's own fleet of Zodiacs—which are small but sturdy open-air boats holding 8-10 people each—as tenders. To get into one of the Zodiacs, you'll need to go down a steep staircase, and then crew members will assist you as you step from the *M/V Corinthian* or *M/V Clio* into the Zodiac.
- **Clothing note:** Since tenders in general (and the Zodiacs in particular) are small open-air boats, they are more susceptible to being splashed by water. You might want to bring a rain jacket or waterproof cover (like a poncho) to protect your clothing while transferring from ship to shore.
- **Expect formalities on arrival in port:** When the *M/V Corinthian* or *M/V Clio* arrives in a new port, she'll need to be cleared by the local port authorities before you can leave the ship. In some cases, the wait will be as short as 30 minutes, but other times it may take up to 2 hours. Your crew will do all they can to make the wait as short as possible and to minimize the inconvenience to you. (For example, you will be asked to leave your passport with the front desk when you first embark on the ship. That way, it is on hand if the port authorities ask to see it.) However, the procedure can be complex and may take a while to complete. Typically the authorities work directly with the crew, but they do retain the right to speak with you as well.

Headsets

On European cruises, complimentary headsets (often called “whisper receivers”) will be provided on most included and optional tours, so that you can hear better over ambient noise. If you use a hearing aid or have a strong preference for a particular type of headphones, we highly encourage you to bring your own headphones/ear buds with you. The plug size is usually the same as that used by smartphones, computer jacks, etc. Headsets will also be available during the pre- and post-trip extensions in Europe, but not on the transfer day to/from the main trip. On cruises to the Middle East, South America, or Antarctica whispers may not be available or may only be available in certain locations—your Trip Experience Leader will let you know onsite.

Internet Access and Email

Limited wireless Internet service (WiFi) is available for free onboard. If you want to use it, you'll need to bring your own device—a laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc.—because the ship does not rent or loan these devices. Instructions on how to connect will be available at Reception. Please keep in mind that our WiFi access onboard is subject to the challenges of travel: ship location, signal availability, and usage volume onboard will affect connectivity and speed. You should expect that there will be times when the Internet is either slow or not available, and that these disruptions can be brief or longer lasting.

Laundry Services

There is laundry service available on board, but no dry cleaning. Prices are per piece of clothing and will be provided to you on board.

Medical Services

There is always a doctor onboard, as well as all of the basic First Aid supplies. All physician's fees will be payable directly to the doctor. All specific medicines are the responsibility of each traveler.

Recreational Facilities

Our ship features a library, a lounge with a bar, a dining room, and a sun deck. The bar is open from approximately 11 am to 11 pm, and features both complimentary drinks (soft drinks, house beer, house wine, and non-alcoholic cocktails/beer) and drinks for purchase (spirits, alcoholic cocktails, bottled beers, and a selection of wines).

Bicycles

We're pleased to offer complimentary bicycle rentals onboard your ship for use during free time, including all of the necessary safety gear, such as a helmet, brightly-colored safety vest, and a lock. Because there is a limited supply of bicycles available, they will be offered on a first-come first-served basis. For more information or if you are interested in using one of the bicycles, please speak to the Front Desk staff or Hotel Manager onboard your ship.

Shipboard Payments

Payment for shipboard expenses can be made by cash or credit/debit card only. For cash, we accept U.S. dollars or Euros (on itineraries in Europe). For credit/debit cards, we accept MasterCard and Visa. Other forms of payment, such as checks, Discover, or American Express are not accepted.

Ship-to-Shore Communications

The ship has satellite telephone connections which allows you to call anywhere in accordance with the current local tariffs. You can purchase phone cards at the reception desk for \$10, which will give you 15-30 minutes' worth call time to the U.S. (depending on which state you are calling).

Smoking Policy

Smoking is prohibited on board, with the exception of a designated outdoor deck area reserved for smokers.

Wheelchairs

The ship is not built to accommodate wheelchairs.

Lost & Found

Any lost or forgotten items found on board the ship will be held for 90 days from disembarkation. After 90 days, all unclaimed items will be discarded or donated.

Ship Specifications

M/V Corinthian

- **History:** Built in 1990; purchased in 2014
- **Size:** 290x50 ft
- **Capacity:** 98 passengers, 56 crew members
- **Layout:** 49 cabins, 5 decks; Elevator-yes

M/V Clio

- **History:** Built in 1998; purchased in 2015
- **Size:** 328x46 ft
- **Capacity:** 89 passengers, 60 crew members
- **Layout:** 45 cabins, 5 decks; Elevator-yes

ABOUT YOUR DESTINATIONS: CULTURE, ETIQUETTE & MORE

O.A.T. Trip Experience Leaders: A World of Difference

During your adventure, you'll be accompanied by one of our local, Trip Experience Leaders. All are fluent in English and possess the skills, certification, and experience necessary to ensure an enriching adventure. As locals of the regions you'll explore with them, our Trip Experience Leaders provide the kind of firsthand knowledge and insight that make local history, culture, and wildlife come alive. Coupled with their unbridled enthusiasm, caring personalities, and ability to bring diverse groups of travelers together, our Trip Experience Leaders ensure that your experience with O.A.T. is one you'll remember for a lifetime.

Culture of the Baltic Sea Region

There are nine countries with a shoreline that meet the Baltic Sea. On your main itinerary, you will visit seven of these countries: Denmark, Poland, Sweden, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Finland. Your voyage starts in Denmark, a seafaring country that is a hub for commerce. Simplicity, politeness, and equality are the foundations of Danish culture. Material possessions and high income do not hold much weight—even bragging is considered rude. A simpler life is the essence of Danish culture. While Danes pay the world's highest taxes, overall they are a happy population with solid coverage of health care, unemployment, and various other social services provided by the government.

Your next stop is Poland, a country with a thousand-year history and rich traditions. Despite being divided and ruled by foreign powers for centuries, Poland has kept its cultural heritage and national identity intact. Religion plays a vital role in Polish culture with over 85% of the population identifying as Roman Catholic. Religious holidays are considered national holidays and most businesses close for these celebrations. Sadly, prior to World War II, Poland had the highest Jewish population in Europe, but the Holocaust destroyed a flourishing community.

Following Poland, you'll dock in Sweden. Like most of their Scandinavian neighbors, Swedes are egalitarian in nature—best seen through their social welfare system. Lagom is a cornerstone of Swedish culture, meaning “Not too little. Not too much. Just right.” This idea influences the country's entire cultural fabric—from cuisine to communication style. Another cornerstone of Swedish culture is their appreciation and respect for the environment. They are a global leader in organic agriculture, recycling, and renewable energy.

Your voyage then takes you to the Baltic states of Latvia and Estonia. After World War II, Estonia and Latvia were satellite governments dictated through the Soviet Union. On August 23, 1989, two million people joined hands and formed a human chain stretching for 420 miles from Tallinn, Estonia; through Riga, Latvia; and into Vilnius, Lithuania. Known as “The Baltic Way,” it gave powerful expression to the yearning of the Baltic people for freedom from Soviet oppression. It also remains an indelible image of their solidarity. The people of these three states have endured the same historical challenges, and have built a remarkable symbiotic relationship based on mutual cooperation, shared values, and similar societies. With the dissolving of the Soviet Union in 1991, these eastern Baltic states were free and could express their unique cultures.

There are also religious differences. Latvia and Estonia are Lutheran and Orthodox. Latvia and Estonia were the last corner of Europe to be Christianized, and today there is a growing neo-pagan religious movement. It is tolerated and even celebrated by non-believers because it focuses on a reverence for nature and one's ancestry; and is bound up in national myths, customs, folk art, and songs. Song, in particular, is a revered art form. Children learn singing and dancing at an early age, often becoming part of folk ensembles that perform publicly. The importance of these art forms has been recognized by UNESCO, which declared them Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. Not all religions were benignly tolerated. Historically, Latvia had a thriving Jewish populations dating to the Middle Ages. (Estonia's Jewish community was smaller.) In the mid-18th century, Riga, Latvia was a flourishing center of Jewish artistic, commercial, and intellectual life. But tragically, more than 94% of the Baltic Jews were exterminated during the Holocaust, ending a long history of cultural contributions. Today, the small Jewish communities are not remnants but new: They re-emerged due to the influx of Soviet Jewry after the war.

The stereotype of the Baltic people as being polite but reserved (or in the case of Latvia, introverted) is just that: a stereotype based more on outward manners than any ingrained mentality. Ask an Estonian about Skype (they invented it), or ask a Latvian about their favorite basketball team, and you will be engaged in animated conversation for hours.

The final stop on your journey is Finland, where the unshakeable belief of *sisu*—referring to courage, stamina, and perseverance—dominates their culture. The rugged landscape and climate, as well the country's historic struggles against overbearing neighbors from the east and the west, have created a distinct Finnish culture. Many Finnish customs are closely associated with forests, which Finns see as a place of refuge and respite. During weekends and holidays, Finns flee from the stresses of their urban life to the comfort of the forest. Other customs associated with forests are strong in Finland: bonfires lit at Midsummer, doorways decorated with birch, and leafy birch whisks used in traditional wooden saunas.

Personal Space

Our Trip Experience Leaders have remarked that personal space seems to be bigger in the Baltics than the U.S., especially in the countryside. Kissing, hugging, and touching in general is usually not done unless you know the other person.

Hotels

With an emphasis on minimalism and functional design, you'll discover that hotel rooms in this region are traditionally much smaller than in the United States, and tend to feature a sleek, modern look. Rooms are comfortable, clean, and well-equipped, but you should expect to experience how locals make use of limited space, which may mean that the bathrooms are smaller, or the beds are closer together, than you'd find at home.

Taking Photographs

The etiquette of photographing people in most countries is about the same as it would be on the streets of your hometown. You need permission to take a close-up, but not for a crowd scene. Be especially polite if you want to photograph children or older women. If you want to shoot a great portrait, show interest in your subject and try to have a bit of social interaction first. Then use sign language to inquire if a picture is OK.

Please do not take photographs of military personnel, military compounds, or other official institutions/personnel (such as police). This may result in the confiscation of your camera.

In museums or at archaeological sites, there may be restrictions on using your flash. Please obey any signs or directions by staff; the no-flash rule protects the fragile artifacts and artwork from damage by repeated exposure to light. Occasionally, there may also be a small fee levied by the museum or site for the privilege of taking photos.

Safety & Security

As you travel, exercise the same caution and awareness that you would in a large American city. Don't be overly nervous or suspicious, but keep your eyes open. If you are venturing out after dark, go with one or two other people.

Carry a one-day supply of cash, and your passport, in a travel pouch. Don't leave valuables unattended in your hotel room. Most hotels will offer use of a hotel safe at the front desk or an electronic in-room safe (for which you can set your own personal number). Please utilize this.

Pickpockets may create a sudden distraction. In any sort of puzzling street situation, try to keep one hand on your wallet or money belt. If an encounter with a local turns out to be long and complicated and involves money or your valuables, be very careful.

Polish Cuisine

As with many European countries, Polish cuisine feels the influence of many cultures: Lithuanian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Hungarian, German, etc., as well as a pinch of Russian, Italian, and Turkish. The focus is on meat, especially chicken and pork, and winter vegetables (such as cabbage) and spices, as well as different kinds of noodles. Traditionally, Poles take their festive meals seriously, and feast days — like Christmas Eve or Easter Breakfast — can involve days of preparation.

- **Barszcz:** The Polish variation to borscht, *barszcz* is a clear red borscht, made with meat and vegetable stock with mushroom broth and beets. It often includes smoked meats and the tart taste is enhanced with the inclusion of lemon juice, pickle brine, or dry red wine.
- **Pierogi:** A dumpling that can be filled with sweet or savory products, such as fruits, mushrooms, ground meat, cabbage, cheese, or mashed potatoes. The dumplings are cooked in boiling water and then pan fried.
- **Bigos:** Also called hunter's stew. A dish made with chopped meats stewed with cabbage and sauerkraut.

- **Oscypek:** A smoked cheese made from salted goat's milk, only cultivated in the Tatra Mountains. The cheese is often served pan fried with cranberry sauce.
- **Surówka:** A dish of shredded root vegetables with lemon and sugar (carrot, celeriac, beetroot) or fermented cabbage.
- **Makowiec:** A poppy seed dessert pastry.

Lithuanian Cuisine

As a moist coastal country, Lithuanian cuisine often shares similarities with the nearby Scandinavia, with fish and dairy a common staple. Barley, mushrooms, potatoes, rye, and beets appear in many dishes as well, with rye bread being one of the fundamentals of the cuisine, included on the side for most meals.

- **Cepelinai:** The national dish of Lithuania, *cepelinai* are potato dumplings stuffed with meat and served with sour cream, *spirgai* (cracklings), or mushrooms.
- **Balandėliai** (little doves): Stuffed cabbage rolls filled with meat or pearl barley and served with a tomato or sour cream sauce.
- **Kugelis:** A crusty, grated potato casserole baked with eggs, milk, onions, and herbs, served with dollops of sour cream. Served pancake-style, they are called *bulviniai blynai*.
- **Šaltibarščiai:** A cold pink soup of hard-boiled eggs, beets, cucumbers, dill, and scallions with yogurt-like kefir.
- **Kepta duona:** A deep-fried dark rye bread seasoned with salt and garlic, served with a cheese sauce.
- **Grybukai:** Spicy mushroom-shaped cookies.
- **Sakotis:** A hollow cake made by dripping batter over a spit. The spiky-looking tube is drizzled with chocolate and sliced into halo-like servings—the crowning glory of your Baltic repast.

Latvian Cuisine

Latvia is close to the Baltic Sea; therefore, you will find a lot of fish included with your meal. The cuisine also consists of foods high in butter and fat and a lot of the food is based on the crops that grow in Latvia. Some popular dishes are:

- **Piradzīņi:** A Latvian national specialty that looks like a plain yeast roll—until you bite into it and find that it is filled with onions, minced meat, bacon, cabbage, or creamy cheese.
- **Karbonade:** A breaded and fried pork schnitzel with a creamy mushroom sauce.
- **Rasol:** A potato and beet salad with layers of meat or fish (typically herring), hard-boiled eggs, and other vegetables, bound with mayonnaise and sour cream.

- **Maizes zupa:** A rye bread pudding made with apples, cinnamon, raisins, plums, cranberries, and whipped cream.
- **Black Balsam:** A vodka liqueur made with pepper, ginger, linden flower, raspberry, and bilberry.

Baltic Cuisine

The cuisines of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are all rooted in the region's shared climate and coastal and agricultural resources—not to mention the influences of their common invaders. Baltic food is very hearty, but can also be very delicately seasoned. Meat figures prominently, as do potatoes, dark rye bread, and all manner of pickled vegetables. For the dishes below, while some ingredients may vary from country to country, often the difference is in name only.

Estonian Cuisine

Traditionally, Estonian cuisine was heavily dependent on the season, with fresh fruits and vegetables common in the spring and summer, and jams, preserves, and pickled products common in the cold winter. Today, the year-round staples of Estonian cuisine include dairy product, black rye bread, potatoes, and pork.

- **Kiluvõileib:** A ubiquitous sandwich of smoked sprats, buttered dark rye bread, hard-boiled egg and topped with dill or scallions.
- **Verivorst:** A blood sausage accented with barley, onions, allspice, and marjoram, the national dish of Estonia.
- **Mulgipuder:** A dish made from mashed potatoes and groats mixed with lots of butter and a bacon-based sauce.
- **Aspics:** Jellied meat (or seafood) and vegetable loaves, sliced and served on dark bread.
- **Rosolj:** A delicious Estonian potato and beet salad with chopped onions, pickles, and a creamy mustard dressing.
- **Vastlakukkel:** A cream puff dessert that was once reserved as a pre-Lenten delicacy, but is now happily indulged in year round.
- **Kohuke:** A candy bar of sweet cheese curd covered with caramel or chocolate.
- **Vana Tallinn:** A rum-based liqueur served in coffee or over crushed ice or ice cream.
- **Kvass:** A drink that tastes like a cross between beer and soda, and is made from fermented dark rye bread.

Finnish Cuisine

Finnish cuisine forgoes the fancy for simple, hearty, and comforting. The emphasis is on natural ingredients and fresh local produce, with fish and meat also playing a prominent role in traditional Finnish dishes—including pork, beef, elk and reindeer. The country is also known for its fresh-picked mushrooms and berries, such as bilberries and lingonberries, used in cooking and baking. Here are some dishes to try:

- **Ruisleopä:** Part of the Finnish diet for thousands of years, *ruisleipä* is a dense and dark rye bread using sourdough and Finnish yeast that can be enjoyed at any time of day. Varieties of this healthy and hearty staple include *reikäleipa*, meaning “bread with a hole,” *jälkiuunileipä*, a harder bread baked at a low temperature, and several dry and flat versions (like the popular Finn Crisps).
- **Karjalanpiirakka:** Originally from the Karelia region of eastern Finland, this tasty pastry with a rye crust is traditionally filled with rice porridge and topped with egg butter. *Karjalanpiirakka* are favorites for breakfast or anytime as a snack.
- **Kalakukko:** This fish pie from the Finnish region of Savonia is traditionally prepared using rye flour and filled with a small herring-like fish combined with a little pork and bacon.
- **Graavilohi:** A true Finn favorite, *graavilohi* is a Nordic specialty made from raw salmon cured in salt, sugar, and dill. Thinly sliced, it’s often served as an appetizer with a dill sauce on bread or with boiled potatoes.
- **Mustikkapiirakka:** When you’re looking for something sweet and delicious in the summer months, go for the “blueberry pie”—although it’s actually made bilberries, the healthier Nordic cousin of blueberries.
- **Salmiakki:** You could also soothe your sweet tooth with some *salmiakki*, or salty licorice. This Finland favorite of black licorice with ammonium chloride added to give it a salty sourness, might be an acquired taste for some.

Swedish Cuisine

Like other Scandinavian countries, cuisine in Sweden focuses on fresh ingredients and simple preparations—food without fuss. But that doesn’t mean it lacks personality as the spare approach lets the local fish and produce (like lingonberries) shine through. Some dishes to try are:

- **Kanelbullar:** Cinnamon buns with a sticky glaze. During holidays like Christmas, you may also see *saffransbullar* (saffron buns).
- **Toast skagen:** Shrimp, whitefish roe, Dijon mustard, mayo, and fresh dill on toasted bread served as an elegant appetizer or snack. Also popular as starter/snack is *gubbroa*, an open-faced egg salad sandwich with anchovies.
- **Smorgasbord:** Swedish buffet of meatballs, mini-sausages, salmon, pickled herring, and sides like *knackebrod* (crisp bread)

- **Gul artsoppa:** Yellow pea soup, a variant on split-pea soup
- **Kottbullar:** Swedish meatballs, cooked in a cream-based gravy
- **Princess cake:** If you watch *Great British Bakeoff*, you may remember the *prinsesstarta* challenge, where contestants had to bake this elaborate layer cake topped with a dome of whipped cream and a layer of green marzipan.

Danish Cuisine

Twenty years ago one might've described Danish food as peasant cooking—hearty, stick-to-your-ribs Viking fare that would get you through a long day of farming, fishing, or raiding. Today, Denmark is the epicenter of the New Nordic cuisine, a movement begun by Danish chefs René Redzepi and Claus Meyer, who helmed Copenhagen's Noma restaurant (considered the world's best) and influenced chefs everywhere with their philosophy that celebrates sustainable, locavore, and seasonal ingredients—many of which are foraged and were previously forgotten. It has inspired many cooks to revisit and refine some of the classics of Danish cuisine, like these:

- **Smørrebrød:** These best-known Danish delights are open-faced sandwiches built on a base of buttered *rugbrød*, a dense, dark rye bread. These are not random sandwiches, they are artfully composed, so the dish is colorful and the garnishes are complementary. Toppings might include *syltede sild* (pickled herring) with micro greens; shrimp and egg with dill; or roast beef with pickles, onions, and horseradish. A favorite is *dyrlægens natmad*, which translates as “veterinarian's midnight snack” and includes corned beef, sky (Danish meat aspic), and *leverpostej* (liver pâté) topped with slivered red onions, sprouts, and parsley or dill.
- **Stegt flæsk:** The national dish of Denmark. Crispy pork belly chunks served with boiled potatoes and parsley sauce.
- **Brændenkærlighed:** So many Danes have a “burning love” for bacon, they named this dish after this affliction. This dish is mashed potatoes topped with oven-roasted cubes of bacon, caramelized onions, and butter.
- **Forloren hare:** A Danish meatloaf made with ground pork, leeks, and egg. Bacon strips are woven around the loaf, which is then baked till it looks like an elegant brown basket.
- **Rødspættefilet:** A filet of plaice (a mild white fish) that is breaded and fried. It can be eaten as an entrée, or as the *stjernesked* (“shooting star”) of a *smørrebrød* topped with shrimp, lettuce and caviar from the Limfjord.
- **Tarteletter:** These are flaky pastry tartlets filled with chicken and asparagus in a creamy béchamel sauce.
- **Andesteg:** This dish is a holiday favorite. A roast duck stuffed with apples and prunes, then roasted until golden-brown and served with a sauce made with reserved duck fat, whiskey, and wine.

- **Wienerbrød:** For something sweet to go with your coffee (*bica*), order a Danish but call it by its proper name, *wienerbrød*, which means “Vienna bread” and is a more accurate reflection of its provenance. Even though Danes did not invent them, they love these flaky, croissant-like glazed pastries filled with cream or fruit.
- **Kransekake:** The cake that literally towers above them all. It’s a cone of concentric almond cake rings bound together with a white icing glaze, and sometimes decorated with berries or nuts. They are served at festive occasions (especially New Year’s), and the center of the tower might hold candies, chocolates, and even champagne or wine bottles.

Copenhagen in Brief

City Layout and Details

Old Copenhagen is defined as a rough square by Nørreport Station to the north, Rådhuspladsen (Town Hall Square) to the west, and Kongens Nytorv to the east.

Strøget is Europe’s longest continuous pedestrians-only route. It runs east from Town Hall Square to Kongens Nytorv, and is composed of five interconnected streets: Frederiksberggade, Nygade, Vimmelskaftet, Amagertorv, and Østergade and roughly bisects Old Copenhagen. Strøget is a stroller’s and shopper’s heaven: lined with shops, bars, restaurants, and, in season, with sidewalk cafes it is a favorite of visitors and locals alike. On the Eastern end, Pistolstræde is a maze of galleries, restaurants, and boutiques, housed in restored 18th-century buildings.

Fiolstræde (Violet St.), closer to the western end of Stroget, offers antiques shops and bookshops and cuts through the university (Latin Quarter). At the end of Fiolstræde you can turn onto Rosengaarden where you’ll find Kultorget (Coal Square). Here you’ll find join the third main pedestrian street, Købmagergade (Butcher St.) which runs gently south until it meets up with Strøget at the Amagertorv section.

At the eastern end of Strøget you approach Kongens Nytorv (King’s Square), where you’ll find the Royal Theater and Magasin, the largest department store in Copenhagen. Across the square you come to the beginning of Nyhavn, the former seamen’s quarter that now features upscale restaurants, apartments, cafes, and boutiques.

Denmark’s government is centered on the small island of Slotsholmen, which is connected to the center by eight different bridges. The island also features several museums, most notably Christiansborg Castle.

Entertainment

Free time? Try strolling the Strøget, a three quarter mile stretch of shops between Rådhuspladsen and Kongens Nytorv . If you get peckish or thirsty midway, you can hop over a street to the Vestergade, lined with historic buildings, restaurants, stores and bars for a little more variety. Nynhavn (New Harbor) is the place to be on a good day – outdoor cafes abound, and classic buildings overlook the classic ships that line the harbor front.

In summer, a visit to Tivoli Gardens is a must. Tivoli's twenty-one acres encompasses impressive structures (the Chinese Tower, the Glass Hall Theater, and the Pantomime Theater among them), flower beds, fountains and lovely landscaping. The park features 5 roller coasters, including one of the world's oldest wooden coasters, as well as other rides. Locals and visitors alike find the ambience and experience a repeatable pleasure. If you're not interested in the rides or the performances you can simply stroll, take in the view and people watch. (There is an entrance fee, but many of the events inside are included).

You'll find the nightlife in several neighborhoods, including Strøget and nearby areas; in Vesterbro, with its main street on Vesterbrogade just across from Tivoli Gardens; and on Istedgade — home to some of the today's trendier bars and cafés. The area just off Kongens Nytorv on Gothersgade is another busy nightlife spot.

The famed jazz venues of Copenhagen are largely closed. Nightspots now cater to a wider range of music — from ballroom music to house, rap, and techno. Restaurants, cafés, bars, and clubs stay open after midnight, a few until 5 am.

Local Transportation

Copenhagen is sufficiently compact and inviting that most of your travel in the city should be as a result of a leisurely stroll. Many of the major sightseeing attractions are close to one another.

By Bus: Copenhagen's buses are an inexpensive way to get around a little further out, if necessary. Most buses leave from Rådhuspladsen. A basic ticket buys an hour of travel and unlimited transfers within the zone where you started your trip. For information, visit www.visitcopenhagen.com/copenhagen/planning/public-transport

Metro: Copenhagen's Metro is almost 20 years old, and it connects the east to west of the city with the center. It operates 24 hours a day, and Metro fares are integrated into Copenhagen's zonal system. A joint zone fare system works with Copenhagen Transport buses, State Railway, and the Metro. You have the option to purchase a *grundbillet* (base ticket), 10 tickets, or a 24-hour bus and train ticket which allows you to travel through nearly half of Zealand.

Discount Passes: The Copenhagen Card entitles you to free and unlimited travel by bus and rail throughout the metropolitan area (including North Zealand) and free admission to many sights and museums. The card is available for one day or three days. In order to use the Copenhagen Card, you will need to download the card to your smartphone. Your Trip Experience Leader will inform you of the app so you can download prior arriving into Copenhagen and can assist you in activating your card (once the card is downloaded and activated you do not need access to Wifi to use it on public transport, museums etc).

Taxis: Watch for the FRI (free) sign or a green light when hailing a taxi. Be sure the taxis are metered. Tips are included in the meter price and many drivers speak English.

Bicycle: In good weather cycling around the city is a great option. Getting through central Copenhagen can take around 30 minutes on a bike—and may be faster than the metro – and bikes are popular with the residents. Cycle paths are plentiful and quite safe.

Riga in Brief

City Layout and Details

Riga is the capital of Latvia and the largest of all the Baltic cities. It is divided into six administrative districts and its notable historical center has been named a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Throughout this part of the city you can expect to see beautiful wooden architecture dating back to the 19th century. Riga is located on the Gulf of Riga with its main river being the Daugava, connecting it to the Baltic Sea.

Most visitors will want to focus on the historical city center, or “Old Town”. Compact, easy to walk, and charming, Old Town was the heart of the city during the Middle Ages, and as such boasts top attractions like the Dome Cathedral, St. Peter’s Church, and the Riga Castle. To the northeast of Old Town is the Esplanade area, with its manicured parks and well-tended stately homes. This area is also a cultural hub that hosts the National Art Museum and the National Opera. Further north of Old Town (and slightly west of Esplanade) is the Art Nouveau district. Beautiful examples of this sinuous and decorative style can be found on Strelnieku, Alberta, and Elizabetes streets.

Local Transportation

In Riga, you can expect easy access to plenty of trams, trolleys and buses. The capital stays well-connected to the rest of Latvia by way of an impressive network of trains.

Public Transit: The city-wide transit system, which is run by the Rigas Satiksme, includes trams, buses, and trolleys. The entire system uses the reloadable e-talon card, which can be purchased in advance from a ticket office, automated vending machine, or at a newsstand. The best deal for a visitor is probably the 24-hour or 3-day card, which allows for unlimited rides and free transfers during the card’s validity. The cards are activated by using the yellow machine onboard the tram/bus/trolley; you have to activate your card each time you board.

Bike: There are several self-service bike rental stalls throughout the city. (Look for the bike racks marked “SIXT Latvia”.) You must have a cell phone to register, but once registered, the fees are very reasonable; usually less than 10 euros a day.

Riga Card: Like in many other cities, Riga has a tourist card that you can buy that combines some free sightseeing, discounts in shops and restaurants, and use of the public transit system. It is called the Riga Card, and can be bought online at <http://rigacard.lv/en> or in person at the Tourist Information Center in Town Hall Square.

Tallinn in Brief

City Layout and Details

Tallinn’s historic Old Town consists of the hill called Toompea and the larger Lower Town to its east. In medieval times, Toompea was the headquarters of the Estonian government, while the Lower Town was distinct from it as a center for Hanseatic traders. A stone wall still separates the

two, and another city wall encircles much of the Lower Town. Two streets connect the upper and lower parts of town: the Luhike Jalg (short leg), a steep, cobblestone lane leading through a gate in the wall, and the Pikk Jalg (long leg).

Old Town Square (Raekoja Plats) in the Lower Town is a central point from which to explore the city, and is the location of the English-speaking Tourism Office. Here you can purchase a Tallinn Card, which covers public transportation and admission to many sites, for a single day or for longer periods. The entire Old Town is fairly compact and lends itself to exploration on foot.

Local Transportation

The Old Town of Tallinn is best explored on foot (trams, buses, and trolleybuses circumvent it, and cars need a permit to enter it). To explore other sections of the city, there is an easy-to-use tram system whose hub is located in front of the Viru Shopping Center just east of the Old Town. Single-ride tickets can be purchased onboard, and multi-day passes are sold near tram stops at kiosks that are labeled sõidutalongid. If you wish to take a taxi, fares are relatively inexpensive in Tallinn.

Helsinki in Brief

City Layout and Details

Established 450 years ago on the order of the Swedish King Vasa, Helsinki is a youngster of a city by European standards, and it's still the smallest in the world to host the Olympic Games. But its ideal location on lovely peninsulas that jut into the Baltic Sea, its compact size and efficient design, and its stunning architectural variety combine to make a city that is easy to explore on leisurely walks and that holds wonders around every corner.

The bustling Market Square, located on South Harbor, is the charming site of wooden stands and colorful awnings that springs to life every morning. Only a few blocks away is the Helsinki Cathedral, a distinctive landmark with its tall, green dome surrounded by four smaller domes, done in the neoclassical style. It was designed by Carl Ludvig Engel as the climax of his Senate Square layout, and is surrounded by other buildings designed by him.

Another reason for Helsinki's distinctive small-town ambience is the absence of high-rise buildings. No structure here stands more than 12 stories. Nestled near the harbor is the Esplanade, a broad expanse of trees and gardens in the middle of a boulevard that runs from Market Square west to the Swedish Theater. This is the beginning of Mannerheimintie, the city's main thoroughfare. With small shops, large department stores, churches, and outdoor cafes, Mannerheimintie is a visitor's delight. Alive with motion and color from the start of day, Helsinki is no less invigorating at night. The Esplanade was the 1999 winner of the Edison Award for excellence in lighting design, offering a stunning combination of architecture and illumination.

Equally vivid is the work of the internationally honored Finnish architect Alvar Aalto, whose genius sprouts in structures all over Helsinki, from the winged, white marble facade of Finlandia Hall to the cooper-clad curtains of the Academic Bookshop.

Local Transportation

You can purchase a one-day “Transportation Card,” providing free travel on the city’s buses, trams, metro, and local trains. You will receive further information on specific routes and times of operation during your trip. You may want to take a ride on the tram, which passes some of the principal sights of the city. If you want to hire a taxi, you can signal one from the street. Taxis have an illuminated yellow sign taksi/taxi. When the sign is lit, the taxi is vacant.

Stockholm in Brief

City Layout and Details

Stockholm is built on 14 islands in Lake Malaren, which marks the beginning of an archipelago of 24,000 islands, skerries, and islets stretching all the way to the Baltic Sea. Stockholm’s major streets—Kungsgatan (the main shopping street), Birger Jarlsgatan, and Strandvagen (which leads to Djurgarden)—are on Norrmalm (north of the Old Town). Stureplan, which lies at the junction of the major avenues Kungsgatan and Birger Jarlsgatan, is the commercial hub of the city.

East of Stureplan rises Hotorget City, a landmark of modern urban planning, which includes five 18-story skyscrapers. Its main, traffic-free artery is Drottninggatan, a three-block shopper’s promenade that eventually leads to Sergels Torg, with a modern sculpture in its center.

South of Sergels Torg, at Gustav Adolfs Torg, sits the Royal Opera House. A block east of the flaming torches of the opera house is the verdant north-to-south stretch of Kungstradgarden—part avenue, part public park—which serves as a popular gathering place for students and a resting stop for shoppers. From here it is a short walk to the Royal Dramatic Theater and the Royal Opera House, as well as two other city landmarks: the Grand Hotel and the National Museum.

Kungsholmen (King’s Island) lies across a narrow canal from the rest of the city, and is the site of the elegant Stadshuset (City Hall). South of Gamla Stan (Old Town), and separated from it by a narrow but much-navigated stretch of water, is Sodermalm, the southern district of Stockholm. Quieter than its northern counterpart, it’s an important residential area with a distinctive flavor of its own. To the east of Gamla Stan, on a large and forested island completely surrounded by the complicated waterways of Stockholm, is Djurgarden, part of Sweden’s first city national park. This summer pleasure ground of Stockholm is also the site of many of its most popular attractions, including the Vasa Ship museum.

Dining, Evening Entertainment

The city’s favorite spot for both indoor and outdoor evening events is Djurgården. Don’t miss the nightclubs and jazz venues, some of which stay open until 3 or 4 in the morning, and which keep the city hopping.

All the major opera, theater, and concert seasons begin in the fall, except for special summer festival performances. Most of the major opera and theatrical performances are funded by the state, so ticket prices are reasonable.

Stockholm's restaurant scene began revitalizing some 15 years ago and continues to innovate. What was once a dour landscape of overpriced, uninspiring eateries is now a hotbed of culinary creativity: Stockholm's best chefs have stayed way ahead of the game. Increasingly, their talents are rubbing off on mid-price restaurants – and many of those mid-range restaurants now represent the best dining value in town. Recent trends have seen some of the city's better restaurants pick up on this and offer more set-priced tasting menus and increasing numbers of wine by the glass—making otherwise expensive restaurants relatively affordable. In terms of food, New Swedish is still tops, and chefs look to fine, seasonal, traditional ingredients, prepared with a modern twist. Many less-expensive restaurants offer traditional Swedish cooking. Among Swedish dishes, the best bets are wild game and fish, particularly salmon, and the smorgasbord buffet, which usually offers a good variety at a decent price. Reservations are generally necessary.

Local Transportation

All tunnelbana (T or T-bana), metro, and local trains, and buses in the city are run by Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (SL; www.sl.se). A Stockholm Card (available for varied time periods) covers travel on all SL trains and buses. SL Tourist Cards are primarily for transport, but also give free entry to some attractions. Or, purchase individual coupons: the minimum fare is two coupons, and each additional zone costs another coupon (up to five coupons for four or five zones).

Tunnelbanna (T-Bana) Metro: The tunnelbana is the most efficient way around Stockholm. Lines converge on T-Centralen, and are connected by an underground walkway to Centralstationen. There are three main lines, numerous branches and more than 100 stations, making the major sites easy to get to. The blue line features a collection of modern art decorating the underground stations. Stations at other lines are also decorated.

Bus: The bus system contains a number of lines that make stops throughout the city, often servicing areas like the Djurgården neighborhood, which is out of the T-bana's reach. Some night buses run from 1 a.m. to 5 a.m. and are a good alternative to taxis. Bus timetables and route maps are complicated but the system offers useful connections to suburban attractions.

Taxi: Readily available, but very expensive (rides from the airport usually start at around \$45; in town a 15-20 minute ride will be about \$25-\$30). Drivers are required to publish prices, and prices are not regulated. Make sure you know the fare before you get into the taxi.

Bicycle: In good weather cycling around the city is a great option. Getting through central Stockholm' can take around 30 minutes on a bike—and may be faster than the metro. Cycle paths are plentiful and quite safe.

Shopping: What to Buy, Customs, Shipping & More

There may be scheduled visits to local shops during your adventure. There is no requirement to make a purchase during these stops, and any purchase made is a direct transaction with the shop in question, subject to the vendor's terms of purchase. O.A.T. is not responsible for purchases you make on your trip or for the shipment of your purchases.

Returns

If you discover an issue with an item, you should contact the vendor directly and expect that any resolution will take longer than it would in the U.S. We recommend that you keep a copy of all your receipts, invoices, or contracts, along with the shop's contact information. Keep in mind, local practice may vary from U.S. standards, so don't assume that you have a certain number of days after the purchase to speak up or that you are guaranteed a refund.

Crafts & Souvenirs

Poland

Polish folk objects make good mementos and are an excellent value. Some interesting possibilities include embroidery, lace, dolls in folk costumes, prints and engravings, amber, pottery, and woodcarvings. The wide range of chain stores specializing in different local wares makes shopping in Poland relatively easy. Desa stores carry tapestries, painting, sculptures, and porcelain.

The Baltics

Specialties of the Baltics include amber, CDs of traditional music, ceramics, knit goods, lace, leather-bound books, linen, local liquors such as Vana Tallinn and Black Balzam, silverware, and woodcarvings. You can also pick up candies, vodka, glass and woodwork, artwork, vintage items, and USSR-era knickknacks throughout the region in shops and at flea markets.

Finland

While in Finland, we recommend you take the time to pick up some unique traditional souvenirs, including local handicrafts, Kalevala jewelry, hand-woven colorful ryjy rugs or takana wall hangings, furniture, Iittala glassware, ceramics, furs, puukko hunting knives, textiles, and Moomin paraphernalia are some of the world-renowned specialties.

Sweden

Swedish artisans create wonderful handmade glass and crystal (including Orrefors), which will make collectors proud. Swedish designer jewelry is also popular. Other traditional arts and crafts of the region include hand painted wooden Dalecarlian (Dala) horses, Viking and troll figures. If you have a sweet tooth, try Marabou chocolate, or try Glogg – an alcoholic drink served hot.

Denmark

A showcase for world-famous Danish design and craftsmanship, Copenhagen seems to have been designed with shoppers in mind. The best buys are such luxury items as crystal, porcelain, silver, and furs. Look for offers and sales (tilbud or udsalg in Danish) and check antiques and secondhand shops for classics at cut-rate prices.

VAT: Although prices are inflated by a hefty 25% Value-Added Tax (Danes call it MOMS), non-European Union citizens can receive about an 18% refund. For more details and a list of all tax-free shops, ask at the tourist office for a copy of the Tax-Free Shopping Guide.

U.S. Customs Regulations & Shipping Charges

For all things related to U.S. Customs, the ultimate authority is the U.S. Bureau of Customs & Border Protection. Their website, www.cbp.gov has the answers to the most frequently asked questions. Or you can call them at **1-877-227-5511**.

The top three points to know are:

- At time of writing, your personal duty-free allowance is \$800 for items brought with you. Items totaling more than \$800 are subject to duty fees.
- **Items shipped home are always subject to duty when received in the U.S.** Even when the shop has offered to include shipping and duties in the price, this typically means shipping to the nearest customs facility and payment of the export duties—not door-to-door shipping or payment of the import duties. All additional duties or shipping charges would be your responsibility. Unless an item is small enough to send by parcel service (like FedEx), chances are you will need to arrange shipping or pick-up once the item is in the U.S. and will need to pay customs duties.
- It is illegal to import products made from endangered animal species. U.S. Customs & Border Protection will seize these items, as well as most furs, coral, tortoise shell, reptile skins, feathers, plants, and items made from animal skins.

DEMOGRAPHICS & HISTORY

Poland

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 120,728 square miles
- **Capital:** Warsaw
- **Government:** Republic
- **Language:** Polish is the official language. It is a Slavonic language. It uses the familiar Roman alphabet, but with many additional accents. German, English, and French are spoken by most members of the travel industry and in hotels.
- **Location:** Situated in the heart of Europe, Poland's low-lying plains extend from the Baltic shore in the north to the Tatra Mountains on its southern border with the Czech Republic and Slovakia. To the east of the Polish border are Lithuania, Belarus, Russia, and Ukraine; to the west is Germany.
- **Population:** 38,562,189 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Catholic 87.2%, Eastern Orthodox 1.3%, Protestant 0.4%, other 0.4%, and unspecified 10.8%
- **Time zone:** The time in Poland is six hours ahead of Eastern Time in North America: when it is 12 noon in New York, it is 6 pm in Warsaw and Krakow.

National Holidays: Poland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Poland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 Labor Day/May Day

05/03 Constitution Day

08/15 Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

11/11 Independence Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Poland: A Brief History

Poland's sovereignty has never been easy or taken for granted. From its earliest incarnation as an independent state in 966, Poland has been occupied by foreign powers, sandwiched between hostile neighbors and even wiped off the world map for 123 years. But through it all, there have been remarkable leaders and a commitment to cultural preservation that continues to inspire.

The first nation builders were the Slavs. Their most prominent clan, the Polanie (“people of the open country”) gave the nation its name, and the Piast dynasty. The most important Piast ruler was Duke Mieszko. In 966, he consolidated power by being baptized a Catholic and marrying Doubravka, a Bohemian princess. Mieszko’s son Boleslaw expanded his dominion to an area roughly equivalent to Poland’s current borders. He became Poland’s first legitimate king in 1025.

Kazimierz III the Great presided over a period of prosperity and expansion from 1333–70. He was a visionary who promoted legal, educational, and civil reforms. Among them was a law providing privileges for Jews, which set the stage for Poland as a haven for a group that made significant cultural contributions for 600 years. He built universities and founded so many new towns it gave rise to a saying that Kazimierz “found Poland built of wood, but left it in stone.”

When Kazimierz died without heir, the Polish Princess Jadwiga married the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Jogaila. Their two states became the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1569. It had a central parliament and local assemblies, and an elected king. But a fatal loophole was that in the absence of a serious Polish contender, nobles could elect a foreigner. This opened the door for rampant bribery and a series of kings whose allegiances were not with Poland.

By the beginning of the 17th century, foreign invaders carved up the kingdom. Most devastating was the Swedish invasion of 1655–70, called “The Deluge.” Next came the Ottomans, but Poland had a bright moment when King Jan III Sobieski defeated the Turks at the Battle of Vienna in 1683, preventing their further spread into Europe. He was unable to prevent Poland’s collapse: In 1772, the Commonwealth was partitioned by Prussia, Austria, and Russia. It was divided two more times, despite a revolt led by Tadeusz Kosciuszko, hero of the American Revolution.

In 1795, Poland ceased to exist as a nation, its borders erased for 123 years. But its spirit was kept alive by nationalist societies, and by romantic artists like the composer Frederic Chopin. It wasn’t until after World War in 1918 that an independent Polish state came back into existence. The Second Republic only lasted 20 years before the Nazi occupation of World War II. The Germans first targeted Gdansk, then Warsaw, and met fierce resistance. But the Poles were outnumbered and underarmed. The Nazis intended to make Poland their living room by evicting its inhabitants. A million Poles were murdered in camps; nearly all of the nation’s three million Jews were exterminated; and when the Soviets came in 1944, they continued the genocide. By the end of the war, 20% of the Polish population had died, and Poland became a Soviet satellite.

The postwar years saw various protests, but it wasn’t until the Gdansk shipyard strikes of 1980 that change happened. The workers’ main issue was the right to unionize, but in their “21 Demands” they sought far-reaching changes in areas from food supplies to free speech to maternity leave and more. The Solidarity Strike was joined by workers in mines, factories, and more. Through the leadership of Lech Walesa, the protests remained non-violent, but the struggle lasted till the end of the decade. When the Iron Curtain fell, Walesa was elected President, and Third Polish Republic was born. Poland joined NATO in 1999, the EU in 2004, and the Schengen Area in 2007.

Poland is currently run by President Andrzej Duda, a member of the Law and Order party, a right-wing populist and national-conservative political party, who won re-election in 2020.

Lithuania

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 25,213 square miles
- **Capital:** Vilnius
- **Languages:** Lithuanian (official), Russian, and Polish.
- **Ethnicities:** Lithuanian 84.1%, Polish 6.6%, Russian 5.8%, Belarusian 1.2%, other 1.1%, unspecified 1.2%
- **Location:** Lithuania is bordered by Belarus, Latvia, Russia, and Poland.
- **Geography:** Lithuania is the largest and most populous of the three Baltic states, but only has about 55 miles of coastline. The land is fertile, low-lying, and in many places covered with thick pine forests or sparkling lakes. The country's capital, Vilnius, is known for Baroque beauty, artists, and of course, artists' hangouts—cafes and bars.
- **Population:** 2,884,433 (Estimate)
- **Religions:** Roman Catholic 77.2%, Russian Orthodox 4.1%, Old Believer 0.8%, Evangelical Lutheran 0.6%, Evangelical Reformist 0.2%, other 0.8%, none 6.1%, unspecified 10.1%
- **Time Zone:** Lithuania is seven hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 1pm in Vilnius.

National Holidays: Lithuania

In addition to the holidays listed below, Lithuania celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

02/16 Independence Day/National Day

03/11 Independence Restoration Day

05/01 Labor Day

06/24 St. John's Day/Day of Dew

07/06 King Mindaugas' Coronation Day

08/15 Feast of the Assumption of Mary

11/01 All Saints' Day

12/24 Christmas Eve

12/25 Christmas Day

Lithuania: A Brief History

Around 2000 BC, the Balts settled in present-day Lithuania, coming from the southeast. They are considered the ancestors of the Lithuanian people. Early on, Lithuanians showed their disdain for outsiders seeking to change their ways. In 1009 AD, an early chronicler tells of one St. Bruno, who was struck dead by a flying brick for attempting to convert the pagan king to Christianity.

In 1193, Pope Celestine III bade Teutonic knights to crusade against northern pagans. Their attacks continued until 1386, when Jogaila became the Grand Duke of Lithuania and married the Polish Princess Jadwiga. He got Lithuanian pagans to convert to Christianity, kicked the Teutonic knights out, and began a Polish-Lithuanian union that was to last 400 years.

The 1400s saw Lithuania's golden age of prosperity. The Polish-Lithuanian empire expanded to include parts of Russia, Ukraine, and Slovakia. Its capital, Vilnius, grew to a population of over 25,000 and experienced a cultural flowering. A university was founded, there was a literary renaissance, and Baroque palaces and churches were built. So were more than 100 synagogues, as Vilnius had become a hub for Lithuania's large Jewish community. Called "Vilna" in Yiddish, it was the "Jerusalem of the North," with thriving yeshivas, theaters, businesses, and more.

Lithuania's Jews (called Litvaks) experienced varying periods of peace and persecution, but by 1772, when Russia partitioned the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, everyone's fortunes declined. Russia cracked down on Polish culture: Books could only be printed in the Cyrillic alphabet, Polish was banned, Catholic churches were closed and replaced with Orthodox ones. They enacted anti-Semitic rules and by 1881, there were regular pogroms against Jews.

Lithuania gained independence (along with Estonia and Latvia) after World War I. But in 1939, an event happened that continues to impact Lithuanian life: Russia and Germany secretly signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which divided Europe into spheres of influence in exchange for non-aggression. Lithuania was originally to go to Germany, but was reassigned to Russia. In 1940, Germany began to advance eastwards, and 150,000 Red Army troops mobilized in Lithuania. Farms, factories and mines were collectivized, and anyone suspected of being anti-communist was purged. When the Nazis arrived, some anti-Soviet Lithuanians welcomed them. Many also participated in the round up and murder of Lithuanian Jews. By the war's end, the entire Jewish population was gone—a scant few to emigration, the majority to extermination.

Lithuania was annexed by the USSR in 1944 and armed guerilla fighters, known as "Forest Brothers," began rebelling. The Soviets retaliated brutally: Between 1944 and 1952, thousands were executed and over 250,000 families were deported to Siberian gulags. The Soviet grip did not loosen until 1988, as a nationalist revival movement arose. Called the "Singing Revolution," it swept the Baltics as people gathered to sing patriotic songs in defiance of the Soviets. The Reform Movement of Lithuania (along with their Estonian and Latvian counterparts) arranged a grand-scale protest to mark the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. On August 23, 1989, two million people joined hands to form a human chain called "The Baltic Way" that stretched across all three nations. By March 11th, 1990, Lithuania declared independence. The Soviets responded by storming of the Vilnius TV tower, but gave in on September 6, 1991.

In 2004 Lithuania joined NATO and the EU, but the country suffered badly in the recession of 2009. The nation's first female president, Dalia Grybauskaitė, was elected in 2009 and re-elected in 2014. She was succeeded by Gitanas Nausėda, who declared a state of emergency in February 2022 following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Latvia

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 24,938 square miles
- **Capital:** Riga
- **Languages:** Latvian is the official language; Russian and Lithuanian are also spoken.
- **Ethnicities:** Latvian 56.3%, Russian 33.8%, Belarusian 3.5%, Ukrainian 2.3%, Polish 2.2%, Lithuanian 1.3%, other 3.4%
- **Location:** Latvia is bordered by Estonia, Lithuania, Russia, Belarus, and the Baltic Sea.
- **Geography:** Riga, the Latvian capital, is often described as a cultural capital for the entire Baltic region and is home to some of the most elegant and continental architecture in the Baltics. Most of Latvia is rich flat plain, but due to the high water table, only about 28% is arable. Perhaps this explains why nearly 2/3 of the Latvian population is urban.
- **Population:** 2,165,165
- **Religions:** Lutheran 19.6%, Orthodox 15.3%, other Christian 1%, other 0.4%, unspecified 63.7%
- **Time Zone:** Latvia is seven hours ahead of U.S. EST. When it is 6am in Washington D.C., it is 1pm in Riga.

National Holidays: Latvia

In addition to the holidays listed below, Latvia celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

05/01 Labor Day

05/04 Independence Restoration Day

06/23 Midsummer Eve

06/24 Midsummer Day

11/18 Republic of Latvia Proclamation Day

12/24 Christmas Eve

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Second Day of Christmas

12/31 New Year's Eve

Latvia: A Brief History

Modern Latvians descend from the Balts, who arrived around 2000 BC from Belarus, and traded along the Amber Route. By 1000 AD, the Balts had diverged into four tribes, the largest of which, the Latgals, ruled most of Latvia. The Balts were pagans and in 1193, Pope Celestine III asked the Teutonic knights to launch a northern crusade. The knights established a base in Riga, and had some success in converting the Latgals (though many pagan ways continued in secret).

Soon, German settlers arrived and began developing trade. In 1282, Riga joined the Hanseatic League. With its connections to Germany and proximity to Russia, Riga prospered for 300 years. But most of the wealth went to the German overlords, as the Latvians were little more than serfs. From the mid-16th to the early 18th century, Latvia was partitioned between Poland and Sweden, but by 1721 Russia had annexed the whole of Latvia, and held it for the next 200 years.

Forced integration into the Russian empire caused many locals to identify as Latvians for the first time. The move towards a national identity was led by the so-called “Young Latvians” from the 1850s through the 1880s. Also in the late 19th century, the Latvian Jewish community made significant contributions to industry and trade, operating woodworking factories, timber and grain mills, export companies and distilleries. Following the 1917 Russian Revolution, Latvia declared independence. The new nation was recognized by the Soviet Union in 1920.

In 1939 Russia and Germany secretly agreed to a non-aggression pact that carved Europe up between them. Latvia fell into the Russian sphere, and in 1939 the Red Army arrived. During the first year of Soviet occupation, 35,000 Latvians, especially the intelligentsia, were deported to Russia. The terror continued with the Nazi occupation in 1941. Both powers used forced conscriptions, deportations, and executions against the local population. Latvia’s Jews fared worst of all. Prior to the war there were 94,000 of them; in 1944, only a few hundred remained.

Near the end of the war, the Russians returned and annexed Latvia. On top of the devastation of World War II, there were mass deportations that sent 120,000 Latvians to Siberia. At this same time, the Soviets began a process of Russification, resettling thousands of ethnic Russians in Latvia, imposing the Russian language, and instituting a Russian curriculum in schools. By 1989, native Latvians comprised only 52% of the population, as opposed 77% before the war.

The reform of the communist regime under Mikhail Gorbachev inspired Latvia’s independence movement. On August 23, 1989, Latvia joined Estonia and Lithuania in forming a 420-mile, human chain of two million protestors. It was the anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact that had carved the Baltics up between Germany and Russia. The movement gained traction as the Baltics launched the so-called “Singing Revolution,” in which millions of people publicly gathered to sing folk songs that became protest anthems. The crumbling Soviet Union was too weak to stop it. Two years later, Latvia declared independence.

Latvia quickly reached major milestones such as joining the European Union and NATO. Many Latvians credit the leadership of Vaira Vike-Friberga, the Baltic’s first female head of state, who was president from 1999 to 2007. While the EU brought tangible benefits, the global economic crisis of 2008 hit Latvia hard. Many young people left to find opportunities elsewhere. Recently, the economy has begun to rebound. In 2015, Raimonds Vejonis of the Green Party became president, campaigning for the environment and national security. While many people are optimistic, given the Russian incursions into Ukraine in 2014 and the recent invasion of Russia into Ukraine in 2022, it is a cautious optimism.

Latvia elected its 11th President, Edgars Rinkevics, in May 2023, who is also the European Union’s first openly gay head of state.

Estonia

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 17,462 square miles
- **Capital:** Tallinn
- **Language:** Estonian is the official language, with some Russian, Ukrainian, and Finnish also spoken.
- **Location:** Estonia is bordered on the east by Russia and on the west by the Baltic Sea. To the south is Latvia and to the north is the Gulf of Finland. Estonia has numerous lakes and forests and many rivers, most of which drain northward into the Gulf of Finland or eastward into Lake Peipus.
- **Population:** 1,265,420 (estimate)
- **Religions:** Lutheran 9.9%, Orthodox 16.2%, other Christian (including Methodis, Seventh-Day Adventist, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal) 2.2%, other 0.9%, none 54.1%, unspecified 16.7%
- **Time zone:** Estonia is 2 hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, 7 hours ahead of Eastern Time. The country observes daylight savings time from late March until late September.

National Holidays: Estonia

In addition to the holidays listed below, Estonia celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

02/24 Independence Day

05/01 Labor Day

06/23 Victory Day

06/24 Midsummer Day

08/20 Independence Restoration Day

12/24 Christmas Eve

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Estonia: A Brief History

Life in Estonia must've been pretty good for the Finno-Ugric people who'd arrived there during the third millennium BC. They were nomadic hunters with a nature-centered religion, but they gave up their roaming to mingle with the resident Neolithic people, trading along the Amber Route. They never gave up their pagan religion, though others tried to pry it from them. That happened in 1193, when Celestine III called a crusade. Teutonic knights raided Estonia, aided by Danish troops, but the Estonians resisted for 30 years. By the mid-1200s Estonia was ruled

by Danes in the north and Teutons in the south, including land-owning bishops who still tried to convert the pagans. Though some Estonians professed Christianity, they secretly practiced paganism—and occasionally laid siege to monasteries and bishops’ castles.

The Baltic Germans remained and built thriving cities. Tallinn, Tartu, Viljandi, and Pärnu all became members of the Hanseatic League. In the mid-1500s, Ivan the Terrible came crashing down with his Tatar cavalry. To stop him, Poland, Denmark, and Sweden sent troops to fight in The Livonian War. Half the rural population perished. In the end, Sweden retained power in Estonia, and governed through the 17th century. But by 1700, Denmark, Poland, and Russia rose to reclaim lands lost in the Livonian War. This time Russia won Estonia, and held it for 200 years.

By the late 19th century Estonia was swept up in the romantic nationalism movement. The first Estonian language newspaper was published, native folklore was celebrated, and in 1869 the first Estonian song festival was held. But it wasn’t until after the Russian Revolution of 1917 that Estonia felt confident enough to declare independence. The Soviet Socialist Republic sent their military to overrun Estonia, but ceded their claim with the 1920 Tartu Treaty. Estonia was free.

By 1939, Germany and Russia had signed a secret non-aggression pact (the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact) that carved up most of Europe. Estonia went to Russia, and tens of thousands of Estonians were forced into the army or sent to labor camps. When the Germans marched in in 1941, the Estonians initially welcomed them—until the Nazis began executing communist collaborators and forcibly conscripting citizens. Many Estonians fled to Finland and joined the Finnish Army. In 1941 there were about 2,000 Jews in Estonia. Almost all were killed by the Nazis, who murdered 10,000 more (from elsewhere in Europe) in Estonian camps.

With the end of the war the Soviets returned. Executions began, and 2.5% of the population was deported to Siberia. A program of Russification was set in motion, bringing in thousands of Russian immigrants and attempting to systematically dismantle Estonian culture.

In the 1980s, the era of glasnost rekindled Estonian hopes for freedom. One of Estonia’s most powerful acts of resistance was a song festival held in protest 1988, which drew international attention. On the 50th anniversary of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, a human protest chain stretched across the Baltics to Tallinn. Finally in 1991, Estonia gained independence. In 2004, Estonia joined NATO and the European Union. Its expansive economic growth was halted by the 2008 economic downturn, but it rebounded, largely on the strength of its dynamic tech sector.

Today, Estonia is a tech leader. Taxes are done online in under 5 minutes; all public services are available on the web; and voting is done online. In 2007, several Estonian institutions were hit by Russian cyberattacks. The government reported that Russia had instigated a disinformation campaign to split Estonia’s many Russian speakers. With Estonia leading the charge, NATO established the Cooperative Cyber Defense Center of Excellence (CCDCOE) in Tallinn in 2008.

Most recently, Estonia joined the eurozone in 2011 and served as a member of the UN Security Council from 2020 to 2021.

Finland

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 130,558 square miles
- **Capital:** Helsinki
- **Geography:** Finland is heavily forested and contains thousands of lakes, numerous rivers, and extensive areas of marshland. Except for a small highland region in the extreme northwest, the country is a lowland less than 600 feet above sea level.
- **Languages:** Finnish, Swedish
- **Location:** Finland is bordered to the north and west by Norway and Sweden, and to the east by Russia.
- **Population:** 5,518,371 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Lutheran 72%, Orthodox 1.1%, other 1.6%, unspecified 25.3%
- **Time zones:** Finland is two hours ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, seven hours ahead of EST.

National Holidays: Finland

In addition to the holidays listed below, Finland celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Midsummer. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 May Day

12/06 Independence Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 St. Stephen's Day

Finland: A Brief History

While sharing many cultural traits with its Scandinavian neighbors, Finland's linguistic and historic roots differ than those of Denmark, Sweden, and Norway—which share a common root language and Viking heritage. Finland's early history began with settlements of nomadic Sami people, Tavastians, and others during the first millennium B.C. With Vikings choosing not to establish settlements here, Finland developed into an important center of trade during the Viking Age. But Finland's powerful neighbors, Sweden and Russia, would battle for centuries over regional dominance. While Finland was able to preserve its language, culture, and traditions, Sweden would end up ruling it from the twelfth to the nineteenth centuries. And after that, Russia ruled Finland from 1809 to 1917.

After the 1917 Russian Revolution, Finland declared its independence. But the new state was immediately drawn into a civil war between the social classes—with Bolshevik-leaning “Reds” (factory and farm workers) supported by the new Soviet Union on one side, and the “Whites”

(property owners), supported by Imperial Germany, on the other. The Whites emerged victorious and installed a puppet king. After the defeat of Germany in World War I, Germany's influence disappeared and Finland became a republic, electing its first president in 1919. Relations remained tense between Finland and Soviet Union.

Finland's role during World War II made perfect sense to the Finns, but it can make everyone else's head spin. At the war's outbreak, the Soviet Union attacked Finland, expecting a quick victory. Instead, the Finns fought way above their weight while holding the Soviet army back and humiliating Stalin. The Finns were eventually worn down and ended up ceding some border lands to Stalin, but they preserved their independence and gained the admiration of the world, who viewed it as a tiny democratic nation almost defeating an aggressive bully nation. Known as the "Winter War" of 1939/40, the Finns would then find themselves the "Continuation War," which began when Germany invaded the USSR in June 1941. Looking at it more as choosing between the lesser of two evils, the Finns allied themselves with Germany—primarily to gain back the territory they had just lost. But the Red Army was much stronger now, and after Germany's surrender at Stalingrad, Finland entered secret negotiations with Moscow to leave the war. A treaty between Finland and the Soviet Union in 1944 left Finland independent but included a demand that they immediately expel the 200,000 German troops in Finnish Lapland—which led to the "Lapland War," Finland's third stage of the war.

While Finland did ally with Hitler, they weren't looked on as collaborators and refused demands to turn over Finnish Jews. Some say that Finland may have lost World War II, but they won the peace. Other countries bordering the Soviet Union weren't so lucky, but Finland managed to maintain its autonomy, a democratic government, and market economy. It continued to walk a fine line between the two camps of the Cold War—refusing an American offer to participate in the Marshall plan, developing a trade relationship with the Soviet Union, yet all the while working toward becoming a member of the European Union.

As its war-ravaged agrarian economy transformed into technologically advanced market economy, Finland grew increasingly prosperous and stable. Membership in the EU became a reality in 1995. While the political systems in the Scandinavian neighbors of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden are constitutional monarchies, Finland is a republic with a president and parliament system—and on international surveys about nations with the lowest level of political corruption, Finland is often right at the top.

Sweden

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 173,860 square miles
- **Capital:** Stockholm.
- **Government:** Constitutional monarchy

- **Geography:** The countryside of Sweden slopes eastward and southward from the Kjolen Mountains along the Norwegian border, where the peak elevation is Kebnekaise at 6,965 feet in Lapland. In the north are mountains and many lakes. To the south and east are central lowlands and south of them are fertile areas of forest, valley, and plain. Along Sweden's rocky coast, chopped up by bays and inlets, are many islands, the largest of which are Gotland and Oland.
- **Languages:** Swedish
- **Location:** Sweden is situated on the Scandinavian Peninsula, between Norway and Finland. The north of Sweden falls within the Arctic Circle.
- **Population:** 9,960,487 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Lutheran 63%, other (includes Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Baptist, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, and none) 17%
- **Time zones:** Sweden is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time.

National Holidays: Sweden

In addition to the holidays listed below, Sweden celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Ascension Day. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

01/06 Epiphany

05/01 May Day

06/06 National Day

12/24 Christmas Eve

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 Boxing Day

Sweden: A Brief History

Sweden's history began at the end of the last Ice Age, when tribes from central Europe began settling in Sweden's southern regions and the ancestors of the Sami people coming from Siberia, settled in the north. By the 7th century AD, the Svea people would gain supremacy in the region and their kingdom gave the country its name of Sweden. Like in Norway and Denmark, Sweden flourished and expanded through trade and colonization during the 300 years of the Viking Age, ending by the middle of the 11th century, a period that also saw Sweden converting to Christianity.

In the 13th century, the Swedes conquered Finland, but Russia would continue to battle Sweden for control of Finland. By 1323 Finland was firmly in Swedish hands and would remain a province of Sweden until 1809. In 1397, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway were united under a single monarch by the Union of Kalmar. But with Denmark emerging as the dominant power, there was constant infighting between Sweden and Denmark, which came to a head in 1520 when

Denmark invaded Sweden. Sweden would then leave the union that brought the three nations together resulting in the beginning of the Vasa Dynasty and the creation of the first true Swedish nation-state.

Remaining neutral during both World War I and II, Sweden would not have to rebuild from the ground up as many other European nations did. The ruling Social Democrats began implementing welfare protection measures, the economy grew steadily, and Swedes achieved a high standard of living. In the 1970s, Sweden's economy went into a decline, however, and wouldn't stabilize again until the late 1990s. Sweden joined the EU in 1995 and has seen steady improvements to its economy.

With the recent invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022, Sweden, a country who has previously worked with NATO as a non-aligned military, applied to join the coalition. In October 2022, all NATO members (except for Hungary and Turkey) ratified Sweden's assentation. Sweden formally became a full member of NATO in March 7th, 2024.

Denmark

Facts, Figures & National Holidays

- **Area:** 16,640 square miles
- **Capital:** Copenhagen
- **Government:** Constitutional monarchy
- **Geography:** Denmark is the smallest of the Scandinavian countries (it's about half the size of Maine). The country occupies the Jutland peninsula, a lowland area, where the highest elevation is only 565 feet above sea level. But that doesn't mean that the country is entirely flat. Most of its terrain consists of folds, undulations, small, often steep hills, and long, low rises. There are also forests, rivers, lakes, and beaches, many of which are excellent for swimming, though the water may be too cold for some people.
- **Languages:** Danish, Faeroese, Greenlandic (an Inuit dialect), and a small German-speaking minority
- **Location:** Denmark consists of the peninsula of Jutland and a group of islands at the entrance to the Baltic Sea, between Sweden and Germany. The two largest islands are Sjaelland, site of Copenhagen, and Fyn. Denmark also has two self-governing dependencies—Greenland and the Faroe Islands.
- **Population:** 5,605,948 (estimate)
- **Religion:** Evangelical Lutheran 76%, Muslim 4%, other 16%
- **Time zone:** Denmark is one hour ahead of Greenwich Mean Time, six hours ahead of Eastern Time. Daylight Saving Time is in effect in Denmark from the end of March until the end of September.

National Holidays: Denmark

In addition to the holidays listed below, Denmark celebrates a number of national holidays that follow a lunar calendar, such as Easter and Ascension Day. To find out if you will be traveling during these holidays, please visit www.timeanddate.com/holidays.

01/01 New Year's Day

05/01 May Day/Labor Day

05/05 Liberation Day

06/05 Constitution Day

12/25 Christmas Day

12/26 2nd Christmas Day

Denmark: A Brief History

About 10,000 years ago, the glacial ice sheets that covered northern Europe began to retreat, attracting huge herds of reindeer. These in turn attracted hunter-gatherers who arrived from southern and eastern Europe. As the climate further warmed, the reindeer migrated north, but the early Danes remained in this fertile land, establishing farming communities by 3000 BC.

By 1800 BC, these proto-Danes were trading weapons, jewelry, amber and furs with people as far away as Rome. They buried their dead in peat bogs and many of those bodies have been remarkably preserved. The first people identified as Danes came from Sweden around 500 AD. They had a written system of communication based on runes. (The symbol we now use for bluetooth devices is based on the runic signature of Harald Bluetooth, or Harald I, the Danish Viking who became king around 900 AD.)

The Viking Age began in 793 AD with the raid on Lindisfarne, an English island monastery. Sporadic raids had likely occurred before this, by Vikings from Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. They were not unified and the Danish Vikings primarily raided northeastern England, which at the time was a collection of warring Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. Danish Vikings had established a large settlement in Kent by 850 AD, and as more Danish colonists arrived, all of northeastern England fell under their control. The exception was Wessex, which reached an agreement with the Danes granting Wessex sovereignty, while the rest of the region was ruled as the Danelaw.

The Danish King Harald Bluetooth converted to Christianity in 965 AD, possibly to appease the Franks at Denmark's door. Harald forcibly established the new religion, and elevated the status of the Christian clergy. But Christianity did not bring peace. The Danes continued to fight to maintain and expand their territory, conquering parts of Germany and Estonia. After the Viking Age ended in 1066, Denmark's power declined. In 1397, the Union of Kalmar united Denmark, Sweden, and Norway under a single monarch, with Denmark as the dominant power.

Beginning in the 16th century, Denmark and Sweden began a lengthy rivalry. In 1658, Sweden took the Danish regions of Skåne, Halland and Blekinge, which are still Sweden's southernmost provinces. In the ensuing century, Denmark suffered more defeats: in 1814, it had to cede Norway to Sweden. But there were important domestic gains. . . . As 19th-century Europe was swept by nationalist fervor and revolution, Denmark had already abolished serfdom and established universal public education. By the 1830s, social and agricultural reforms had boosted the economy; there was a peasant landowner class; and a free press. In 1849, a new constitution created a legislative democracy, ending the monarchy's previous absolute power.

Denmark remained neutral during World War I, and tried to do the same during World War II. It signed a non-aggression pact with the Third Reich. But Germany invaded in 1940, threatening to bomb Copenhagen. With only a small military, the Danish government yielded. The Nazis at first allowed the Danes some autonomy. But when it began pressuring officials to comply with anti-Semitic policies, the Danish government resigned in protest. The Nazis took over in earnest, and the resistance movement grew. Tipped off by a Nazi diplomat that Germany was about to deport Denmark's Jews to concentration camps, the Resistance and many citizens managed to evacuate 7,220 of Denmark's 7,800 Jews to safety in Sweden.

After Germany's defeat, Denmark joined the United Nations in 1945, and became a founding member of NATO in 1949. The latter half of the 20th century saw Denmark's emergence as a prosperous, stable social democracy with one of the world's highest standards of living. In 2000, Denmark voted by referendum not to adopt the euro. It is one of only 5 countries in the world that meets the UN goal for wealthy nations to provide 0.7% of its gross national income for international development assistance. In addition, Denmark has established Danida, Danish Development Assistance, to fight poverty and improve education in developing countries. The current Prime Minister, Mette Fredericksen, is the second woman and youngest person (at 44) to hold that office. She is the leader of the center-left Socialist Democratic Party.

RESOURCES

Suggested Reading

Poland

Lilac Girls by Martha Hall Kelly (2016, Historical fiction) Loosely based on the true story of an American who campaigned for a group of concentration camp survivors known as “the Rabbits”, this novel follows the intersecting lives of three very different women—a New York socialite, a Polish teenager, and a German doctor.

God’s Playground: A History of Poland by Norman Davies (2005, History) Critics regard this work as the best and most exciting history of Poland, covering 1,000 years in two volumes. The author also offers a condensed version—*Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland*.

Gimpel the Fool and Other Stories by Isaac Bashevis Singer (1957, Fiction) From the master of Yiddish literature (and Nobel Laureate), this collection vividly depicts Jewish life in a rural shtetl, while mixing magic and reality.

The Baltics

We Are Here: Memories of the Lithuanian Holocaust by Ellen Cassedy (2012, Memoir) A heartfelt and personal investigation into the Lithuanian Holocaust by an American journalist who uses her own family history to illustrate this dark era.

The Baltic: A History of the Region and Its People by Alan Palmer (2006, History) The author includes all nine nations who share a common shore, showing how their histories, cultures, commerce and beliefs have evolved over the centuries.

Tula by Jurgis Kuncinas (1993, Fiction) Considered a classic of Lithuanian literature, this quirky love story is set in the late-Soviet era in the so-called “independent republic of Uzupis,” a bohemian quarter in Vilnius.

The Dogs of Riga by Henning Mankell (1992, Mystery) Fans of the BBC series Wallander will love this book, in which the adroit Swedish detective travels to Riga to solve the mystery of two bodies that have washed up ashore. He becomes immersed in a web of bureaucracy, corruption, and secrecy as he navigates his way around post-independence Latvia.

The Czar’s Madman by Jaan Kross (1978, Historical Fiction) In 1818, a nobleman of Livonia (between modern Latvia and Estonia) is imprisoned for having written a critical letter to the czar. Upon his release, spies in his household must decide if his radical ideas are treasonous or simply insane.

Finland

Finland's War of Choice: The Troubled German-Finnish Coalition in World War II by Henrik Olai Lunde (2011, History). Following the bloody Winter War against Soviet Russia, where thousands died and Finland was forced to cede multiple territories to USSR rule, Finland teamed up with Nazi Germany in the Continuation War, from 1941 to 1944, in hopes of winning back their lost land.

The Year of the Hare by Arto Paasilinna (1975, Fiction). The adventures of journalist Kaarlo Vatanen only started when he nearly runs over a hare. After nursing the injured hare back to health, Vatanen decides to leave his old life, job and wife, behind for the open road and wacky hijinks.

The Unknown Soldier by Vaino Linna (1954, Fiction). A war novel narrating Finnish soldiers during the Continuation War of 1941-1944 between Finland and the Soviet Union, a war fought over nationalism and territory lost to the USSR in the Winter War the previous year.

Seven Brothers by Aleksis Kivi (1870, Historical Fiction). A Finnish classic, *Seven Brothers* follows the lives of seven brothers in rural Finland during the nineteenth century.

Kalevala by Elias Lonnrot (1835, Folklore). *Kalevala* is a collection of 19th century epic poetry of Karelian and Finnish mythology, written down from its traditional oral stories. A national epic of Finland, the *Kalevala* tells the story of the Creation of the Earth, all the way to the integration of Christianity.

Sweden

A Man Called Ove by Fredrik Backman (2014, Fiction). Funny and poignant, this first-time novel by Stockholm native Fredrik Backman about an old curmudgeon who regains a will to live when a young family moves in next door made best seller lists around the world.

The 100-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out the Window and Disappeared by Jonas Jonasson (2012, Fiction). A publishing sensation from another first time Swedish author, this one is the riotous exploits of a centenarian with a backstory better than Forrest Gump's who is desperate to avoid his 100th birthday party. And a sequel was just released: ***The Accidental Further Adventures of the 100-Year-Old Man***.

The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo, ***The Girl who Played with Fire***, and ***The Girl who Kicked the Hornet's Nest*** by Stieg Larsson (2007, Mystery) A huge hit when *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* was first released in the U.S. in 2008, this series of mysteries set in Sweden became a worldwide phenomenon. Dark and gritty, they are reminiscent of old-time noir films. Sadly, Larsson died in 2004 shortly after delivering the manuscripts of all three books.

A Year in Lapland: Guest of the Reindeer Herders by Hugh Beach (2001, Culture) An American anthropologist's account of a year spent living with the Sami (Lapps) and learning in depth about their way of life. Though set among the Tuorpon Saami in the Jokkmokk District of northern Sweden, this detailed picture of Sami culture says much about the ways of these people across all their homeland in northern Norway, Sweden, and Finland.

Denmark

We, the Drowned by Carsten Jensen (2011, Fiction) An epic seafaring adventure that follows the inhabitants of the Danish town of Marstal from 1848 to World War II, when the men sail the world and the women who are left behind form a community. The book is long (600 plus pages) and deals frankly with war, violence, and cruelty. But it was a runaway international bestseller and lauded for its use of fantastical elements.

Iceland's Bell by Halldor Laxness (2003, Fiction) Nobel Laureate Halldor Laxness reinvents the traditional Icelandic saga and injects it with a modern sensibility and a satirical undercurrent that speaks to our age. The plot pits an impoverished Danish colony – Iceland in the 17th century – against the grand historical workings of Danish and Icelandic history. Three interconnected stories reveal the political and personal conflicts of the day in historical context.

On Tycho's Island: Tycho Brahe and his Assistants, 1570–1601 by John Robert Christianson (1999, Biography/History) Chiefly famed as an astronomer, this book offers a fuller vision of Tycho Brahe as Renaissance man and scientist. From his private island in Denmark, Brahe assembled and manipulated the artists, nobility and the intelligentsia of the age to create breakthroughs in astronomy, science and research.

Winter's Tales and ***Seven Gothic Tales*** by Isak Dinesen (1934, Stories) Best known for *Out Of Africa*, her memoir of 20 years running and living on a coffee plantation in Africa, Karen Blixen (pen name, Isak Dinesen) also wrote short tales based in her homeland, Denmark. *Winter's Tales* and *Seven Gothic Tales* are generally considered the high water marks of her shorter works.

The Complete Fairy Tales by Hans Christian Andersen (1913, Folklore) There are several different anthologies of these fairy tales, written by Denmark's famous poet, novelist, and writer of short stories. Considered a genius for his inventiveness and imagination, his works continue to captivate both children and adults.

Suggested Films & Videos

Poland

The Pianist (2002, Drama) Three Oscar wins for this unforgettable, harrowing and true story of Wladyslaw Szpilman, an up and coming classical pianist who hid and survived for five years in the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto after his entire family was deported to Treblinka.

Man of Iron (1981, Drama) A dissolute journalist is sent to report on the Solidarity movement in the Gdansk shipyards, knowing that his information is being funneled to state police. But as he becomes involved in the lives of shipyard workers, activists, and their leader Lech Walesa, things change. From one of Poland's premier *auteurs*, Andrzej Wajda.

The Baltics

The Chronicles of Melanie (2016, Drama) In 1941, the Soviets rounded up 40,000 Latvians, Lithuanians, and Estonians, and executed or deported them to Siberian gulags. This is the true story of Melanija Vanaga, who was separated from her husband and sent east with her eight year-old son. To endure her brutal existence, for 16 years she writes love letters to her husband that can never be sent.

The Invisible Front (2014, Documentary) A documentary about the Lithuanian resistance told through the experience of one of its leaders, Juozas Luksa, and his fellow “Forest Brothers.”

The Other Dream Team (2012, Documentary) The 1988 Soviet Olympic basketball team included four Lithuanian starters who never got credit for their contribution. Fast forward to 1992, after Lithuania’s independence. The struggling nation could not afford to send their basketball team to the Barcelona Olympics, until some unlikely champions stepped in: the American rock band, the Grateful Dead. A must for sports fans and anyone who loves a feel-good story.

Loss (2008, Drama) This taut thriller concerns a Lithuanian priest who resettles in Ireland. But when another Lithuanian émigré, Valda, arrives, a secret from his past comes along with her, and disrupts the lives of six different people. This film was the first from Lithuania to be submitted for an Academy Award.

The Singing Revolution (2006, Documentary) Can music change the world? Between 1987 and 1991, hundreds of thousands of Estonians gathered publicly to sing forbidden patriotic songs and share protest speeches. Their revolution succeeded without a single loss of life. This film reveals how it happened.

Finland

Mother of Mine (2005, War/Drama) Amidst the conflict of World War II, Eero, a Finnish boy, is sent to live with a Swedish foster family by his mother. Eero feels abandoned by his Swedish mother, but unwelcomed by his new foster mother. When Eero returns to Finland following the war, his feelings of abandonment and confusion intensify.

Pelikaanimies (2004, Fantasy) A pelican becomes a gawky young man who learns to speak, thanks to his talent for imitation. He befriends two children who—unlike adults—see that their new neighbor ‘Mr Berd’ is not a man but a bird in a suit. The Pelican Man lands a job at the opera and falls in love. When adults discover the truth, trouble starts in this unusual and charming film.

Elina: As If I Wasn’t There (2002, Drama) In rural Sweden of the early 1950s, Elina returns to school again after an illness. From a Finnish-speaking minority, Elina has conflicts with her biased teacher, and finds consolation wandering on the dangerous marshlands while speaking with her dead father.

The Winter War (1989, Drama) An excellent Finnish war film (original title *Talvisota*) that tells the story of the resistance of a platoon of Ostrobothnian Finns, when Russia attacked Finland in November of ‘39. The Finns fought hard against overwhelming odds, with meager supplies, and the movie faithfully presents their action in the forbidding snowy landscape.

The Unknown Soldier (1955, Drama) An adaptation of Väinö Linna's novel this is a story about the Continuation War between Finland and the Soviet Union, told from the view of ordinary Finnish soldiers. Gritty and realistic, the film remains the most successful film ever made in Finland, and more than half of Finland's population viewed it in theaters.

Sweden

My Life as a Dog (1985, Drama) The story of Ingemar, a 12-year-old Swedish boy sent to live with his childless aunt and uncle in a country village when his mother falls ill, resulting in a Swedish look at the adult world through a child's eyes. A lovely, sometimes intense coming of age story with rural Sweden as backdrop.

Smiles of a Summer Night (1955, Comedy) Ingmar Bergman's idea of a bedroom farce brought him international stardom. A melancholy comedy the film depicts the romantic entanglements of three 19th-century couples during a weekend at a country estate. It's also pure Bergman: sharp, serious, thoughtful, and sobering, though there's an undercurrent of humor that the venerable director of such serious film classics like *The Seventh Seal* is not particularly known for.

Denmark

The Danish Girl (2015, Drama) The Danish artist Einar Wegener (later known as Lili Elbe) was one of the first people to undergo sex reassignment surgery. This biopic depicts Elbe's early career and marriage to artist Gerda Gottlieb, and the Bohemian worlds of Copenhagen and Paris in the 20s and early 30s.

A Royal Affair (2012, Historical Drama) The mentally ill King Christian VII comes to rely on his friend and physician, Johann Struensee (Mads Mikkelsen), a radical Enlightenment thinker from Germany. So, too, does the lonely Queen Caroline (Alicia Vikander), who begins a passionate affair with the doctor. The king learns of their liaison, but protects them, and makes Struensee a Royal Advisor who essentially rules in the king's name. But his reforms are cut short when plotting aristocrats use the affair and Struensee's foreign status to bring a tragic end to this true story.

The Danish Solution (2003, Documentary) Filmmakers Karen Cantor and Camilla Kjaerulff, with Garrison Keillor narrating, reveal how the citizens of Denmark protected their Jewish population against Hitler's attempt to impose export his final solution into Denmark.

Pele the Conqueror (1988, Drama) Directed by Billie August, this Danish-Swedish production won the 1989 Oscar for Best Foreign Film, and star Max von Sydow was nominated for Best Actor. It follows the early 19th-century widower Lasse, who emigrates with his 12-year old son Pelle to the Danish island of Bornholm in search of a better life. That is not what they find.

Babette's Feast (1988, Comedy) Set on the rugged coast of 19th century Denmark, this film is from a short story by Isak Dinesen. Two beautiful daughters grow up with a clergyman father, who preaches self-denial. After his death, the sisters uphold his inflexible practices until the arrival of a French refugee, Babette. She cooks and for them, and introduces them to the deep pleasure of a gourmet French meal. Winner of the 1987 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film.

Useful Websites

Overseas Adventure Travel

www.oattravel.com

Overseas Adventure Travel Frequently Asked Questions

www.oattravel.com/faq

International Health Information/CDC (Centers for Disease Control)

www.cdc.gov/travel

Electricity & Plugs

www.worldstandards.eu/electricity/plugs-and-sockets

Foreign Exchange Rates

www.xe.com/currencyconverter
www.oanda.com/converter/classic

ATM Locators

www.mastercard.com/atm
www.visa.com/atmlocator

World Weather

www.intellicast.com
www.weather.com
www.wunderground.com

Basic Travel Phrases (80 languages)

www.travlang.com/languages

Packing Tips

www.travelite.org

U.S. Customs & Border Protection

www.cbp.gov/travel

Transportation Security Administration (TSA)

www.tsa.gov

National Passport Information Center

www.travel.state.gov

Holidays Worldwide

www.timeanddate.com/holidays

History & Culture

en.wikipedia.org

Useful Apps

Flight Stats

Track departures, arrivals, and flight status

LoungeBuddy

Get access to premium airport lounges around the world

Timeshifter

Personalized tips for avoiding jetlag, based on neuroscience and your own data

GoogleMaps

Maps and directions anywhere in the world

Triposo

City guides, walking maps, and more – and it works offline

Rome2rio

Where to go, what to see, and what to do in more than 160 countries

Flush or Sit or Squat

Find a clean toilet anywhere

Uber

Ride sharing around the world

Visa Plus and Mastercard Cirrus

ATM locations

Shows the location of the nearest ATM in your network

TunnelBear

Provides a secure VPN (virtual private network) that will encrypt your browsing data when you use a public WiFi network

What's App, Skype, or Signal

WiFi calling anywhere in the world

Duolingo, FLuentU, or Babbel

Learn dozens of foreign languages

Google Translate

Fast and simple translations

XE

Currency conversions

SizeGuide

Clothing and shoe sizes in all countries

Best Units Converter

Converts currency, mileage, weights, and many other units of measurement

Tourlina

For women only, it connects you with other female travelers

Happy Cow

Locate vegan and vegetarian eateries in 195 countries

Eatwith

Dine with locals all over the world

Meetup

Connects you with locals who share your interests

Skyview

Identifies constellations and heavenly bodies

Travello

Find travel friends on the road

ALIX for One

Created by and for women, it identifies solo-friendly dining spots in major international cities

TripWhistle

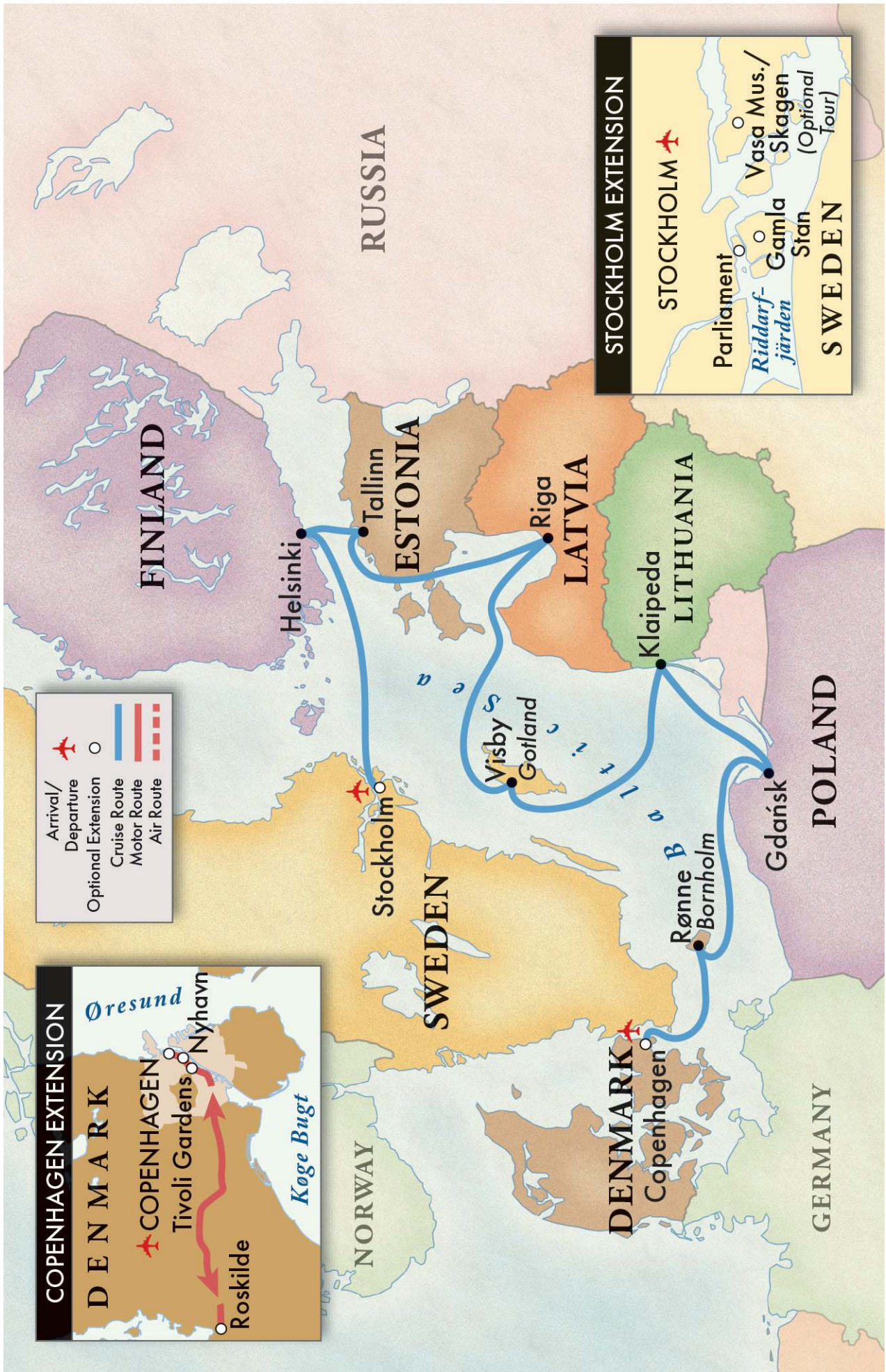
Maps your location and provides emergency numbers for police, medics, and more

GeoSure

Safely navigate neighborhoods around the world

Chirpey

For women only, connect with other women, find out what's safe, meet up, and more



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