

LAIPNI LŪGTI RĪGĀ!

Welcome to  
Riga!





# Riga: A Long History

From its foundation in 1201 to its modern status as a vibrant European capital, Riga's history is a tapestry of cultural convergence and resilience.

## 1201 | Foundation

Established as the seat of the Livonian Order, Riga became a major Hanseatic League trading hub.

## 1900s | Art Nouveau

The city blossomed into a global center for architecture, hosting the highest density of Art Nouveau buildings in Europe.

## 1991 | Restored Independence

Latvia broke free from the Soviet Union, marking a new era of European integration and growth.

# Winter in the Baltics

Between December and March, Riga is often blanketed in snow and ice.

## Sub-Zero Temperatures

The daily average temperature in January is between 5 and 23° Fahrenheit, freezing the Daugava River and sustaining snow and ice in the city.

## Winter Darkness

Short days with only 6 hours of daylight are compensated by "Staro Riga," a street festival of lights and illuminations.

## Christmas Markets

The first ever description of a decorated Christmas tree was recorded in Riga in 1510. The local Christmas markets build on that medieval tradition.



# Winter Events

Enjoy the peak of the Baltic winter with cultural festivals, traditional ice sports, and beautiful markets.

05  
JAN

## Staro Rīga: Light Festival

The legendary light festival runs into early January, transforming Riga's Medieval and Art Nouveau facades into glowing canvases.

16  
JAN

## Daugava River Ice Fishing Derby

Join local "blītkotāji" on the frozen Daugava for the annual 2027 mid-winter catch, a centuries-old Baltic tradition.

24  
JAN

## Latvian National Opera Winter Gala

Experience world-class ballet and opera in the "White House" of Riga.



# Tallinn: Medieval meets Modern

Tallinn's Old Town is one of the best-preserved Hanseatic centers in Northern Europe.

## A Medieval City

The St. Olaf Church is a local landmark in the center of the Old Town.

## Picturesque Center

Winding cobblestone streets and snow-covered roofs create a timeless winter atmosphere in the Old Town.

## Tech Hub

Experience the contrast of the beautiful Old Town and exciting contemporary architecture.



# Our Partners



Zaļā brīvība

YOUNG  
FOLKS

# Travel & Logistics

Essential flight booking guidelines and program dates:



## Flight Booking & Deadlines

Book by **Oct 15, 2026**. Purchase directly through airlines using your name as it appears in your passport. Avoid third parties.



## Estimated Costs

Estimated **\$1,000** airfare is paid out-of-pocket, not via student account. This is considered for financial aid awards.



## Arrival & Departure

Arrive at **RIX** by **5:15 PM** on Jan 4 for group transport. U.S. departures leave Jan 3. Check out by 11:00 AM on Jan 28.

**Link to Student Housing:**  
<https://youthments.com/home/>





**Introductions!**