

# **The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania**

## **A Curriculum Guide for Secondary School Teachers**



Created by the **Center for Russian and East European Studies**  
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# INTRODUCTION

*The Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, A Curriculum Guide for Secondary School Teachers* was created to provide information on the historical and contemporary development of the Baltic region, and in so doing, to assist teachers in meeting some of the criteria indicated in the Pennsylvania Department of Education's Academic Standard Guidelines, which can be found on their website at [http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state\\_baord\\_of\\_education/8830/state\\_academic\\_standards/529102](http://www.portal.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt/community/state_baord_of_education/8830/state_academic_standards/529102). To fulfill the fundamental themes for many of the disciplines prescribed by the state guidelines, this curriculum guide provides the following information:

- A description of the unique traits of Baltic cultures.
- A description of the effects of political, economic and cultural changes and how these changes shaped these three countries.
- Identification and explanation of the contributions of key historical individuals and groups in politics, science, the arts, and religion in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.
- Examination of the changing economic and political systems of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and how these changes have affected their societies.

These and other areas of Baltic societies and cultures are explored in an attempt to assist the secondary school teacher in fulfilling the Academic Standard Guidelines. As the unique transitions in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania provide a laboratory for studying political, economic and cultural change, this guide may be additionally useful as a means for comparison with our own country's development. Whether as a tool for meeting the Academic Standard Guidelines, or as a means to explore issues affecting a society in transition, we expect that this guide will be useful in your classroom preparation.

Each section of this guide is designed to be suitable for classroom use either independently, or as part of a comprehensive study of the Baltic region covering the entire guide. Therefore, you may tailor your use of the guide to fit the amount of time that you have available and the specific topics that are most relevant to your subject area. The guide also contains references to sources of additional information.

This guide was prepared by the Center for Russian and East European Studies at the University of Pittsburgh, with funding from the U.S. Department of Education. It is part of a series of curriculum guides on post-communist countries in East Central Europe that entered the European Union in 2004.

## About the Center for Russian and East European Studies

Founded in 1965, the Center for Russian and East European Studies (REES) at the University of Pittsburgh is designated by the U.S. Department of Education as a National Resource Center. This distinguishes REES as one of the nation's strongest language and area studies centers. The Center is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the University of Pittsburgh in teaching, research, and public service related to the former Soviet and Central/East European world region. The 71 faculty members affiliated with REES are based in 14 arts and sciences departments and five professional schools at the University of Pittsburgh.

REES offers undergraduate and graduate certificates to students who complete a multi-disciplinary study of the area and attain proficiency in a language of the region. The Center coordinates the collection of materials on its world region in the University of Pittsburgh's library system, publishes the *Carl Beck Papers in Russian and East European Studies*, maintains academic exchanges with 26 overseas partner institutions, and sponsors lectures and special events on a weekly basis. REES also sponsors study abroad programs and, since 1986, a Summer Language Institute for students throughout the U.S., offering intensive courses in nine Slavic and East European languages.

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# Estonia



## Basic Facts

**Official Name:**

Republic of Estonia

**Bordering Countries:**

Estonia is situated on the Baltic Sea, on both the Gulf of Finland and the Gulf of Riga. It neighbors Latvia, which is to its south, and Russia, which is to its east. Finland is to its north.

**Cities:**

Capital- Tallinn (pop. 397,150).  
Other Cities- Tartu (101,190); Narva (67,752); Kohtla-Jarve (46,765); Parnu (44,781); Viljandi (20,509).

**Area:**

17,462 sq. miles (slightly smaller than New Hampshire and Vermont combined)

**Terrain:**

Mostly flat with slightly higher elevation in the east and southeast.

**Climate:**

Temperate and wet; moderate winters and cool summers (similar to New England).

## **People**

<b>Nationality:</b>	Estonian
<b>Population:</b>	1.37 million.
<b>Ethnic Groups:</b>	Estonian 65%, Russian 28%, Ukrainian 2.5%, Belarusian 1.4%, Finnish 0.9%, other 2.2%.
<b>Religions:</b>	Lutheran, the Estonian Apostolic Orthodox subordinated to Constantinople, the Estonian Orthodox subordinated to the Moscow Patriarchate, Baptist.
<b>Languages:</b>	Estonian (official), Russian, Ukrainian, Finnish
<b>Education:</b>	Compulsory for nine years.
<b>Literacy:</b>	98.2%
<b>Infant Mortality Rate:</b>	8.08 deaths/1,000 live births
<b>Life Expectancy:</b>	Women 76 yrs., Men 65 yrs.
<b>Work Force (704,500):</b>	Agriculture 11%, industry 20%, services 69%

## **Government**

<b>Type:</b>	Parliamentary democracy
<b>Constitution:</b>	Ratified current constitution on June 28, 1992; current constitution is based on the 1938 model, which was drafted prior to Soviet occupation.
<b>Branches:</b>	Executive- president (head of state), prime minister (head of government).  Legislative- unicameral parliament called the Riigikogu (101 seats; members are elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms).

Judicial-Supreme Court (judges appointed for life by the Parliament).

**Principle Political Parties:**

Estonian Center Party (left-centrist); Estonian Reform Party (liberal right-wing); Pro Patria Union (national Christian-democrat); Estonian People's Union (national-conservative), Estonian United People's Party (left-centrist), Estonian Social Democratic Labor Party (social-democratic), Estonian Christian People's Party (national Christian-conservative), Estonian Democratic Party (national-democratic), Republican Party (national conservative-opposed to EU membership).

**Suffrage:**

Universal at 18 years of age.

**Economy**

**GDP:**

\$8.3 billion

**Growth rate:**

5.1%

**Per capita GDP:**

\$ 6,071

**Inflation:**

1.3%

**Unemployment:**

10%

**Natural Resources:**

oil shale, phosphorite, limestone, blue clay

**Agriculture:**

potatoes, vegetables, livestock, dairy products, fish

**Industries:**

engineering, electronics, wood and wood products, textiles, information technology, telecommunications

**Exports:**

machinery and equipment 33.5%, wood and paper 15%, textiles 14%, food products 8%, furniture 7%, metals, chemical products

**Imports:**

machinery and equipment 33.5%, chemical products 11.6%, textiles 10.3%, foodstuffs

9.4%, transportation equipment 8.9%

**Export Partners:**

Finland 20%, Sweden 12%, Russia 10%,  
Latvia 8%, Germany 8%, U.S. 2%

**Import Partners:**

Finland 16%, Germany 11%, Russia 12%,  
Sweden 8%

**Currency:**

Estonian Kroon (EEK); Exchange rate  
(2005): 1 US Dollar= 12 EEK.

**Foreign investment:**

Sweden 39%, Finland 30%, Netherlands  
6%, U.S. 7%, Norway 3%, Denmark 2%,  
Germany 2%

**References:**

Background Note: Estonia, U.S. Department of State

<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/lg/>

Estonia, CIA- The World Fact Book

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/en.html>

# Latvia



## Basic Facts

**Official Name:**

Republic of Latvia

**Bordering Countries:**

Latvia is located in Eastern Europe on the Gulf of Riga, which flows into the Baltic Sea. Latvia is bordered by Estonia to the north, Russia to the east, Lithuania to the west, and Belarus to the south.

**Cities:**

Capital- Riga (pop. 739,232). Other cities-Daugavpils (112,609); Liepaja (86,985); Jelgava (65,754); Jurmala (55,156); Ventspils (44,010); Rezekne (37,777).

**Area:**

25,640 sq. miles (about the size of West Virginia)

**Terrain:**

Mostly fertile low-lying plains, highlands in the east, and hilly moraine in the western region. Forests cover one-third of the

	country.
<b>Climate:</b>	Maritime, wet, moderate winters.
<b><u>People</u></b>	
<b>Nationality:</b>	Latvian
<b>Population:</b>	2.3 million
<b>Ethnic Groups:</b>	Latvian 57.7%, Russian 29.6%, Belarusian 4.1%, Ukrainian 2.7%, Polish 2.5%, Lithuanian 1.4%, other 2%.
<b>Religions:</b>	Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox.
<b>Languages:</b>	Latvian (official), Lithuanian, Russian
<b>Education:</b>	Compulsory for nine years.
<b>Literacy:</b>	99.8%
<b>Infant Mortality Rate:</b>	9.67/ 1,000 live births
<b>Life Expectancy:</b>	Men 65.91 yrs.; Women 76.09 yrs.
<b>Work Force (1.18 million):</b>	Agriculture 15%, industry 25%, services 60%
<b><u>Government</u></b>	
<b>Type:</b>	Parliamentary democracy
<b>Constitution:</b>	February 15, 1922. In 1998, an amendment on fundamental human rights was added to the constitution.
<b>Branches of Government:</b>	Executive- president of the Republic (chief of state), prime minister (head of government).  Legislative- unicameral parliament called the Saeima (100 seats,

members are elected by direct, popular vote to serve four-year terms).

Judicial- Supreme Court.

**Principle Political Parties:**

New Era Party, People's Party, Latvia's First Party, Alliance of the Greens and Farmers, National Harmony Party, Union for the Fatherland and Freedom, For Human Rights in United Latvia, Social Democratic Union, For Our Latvia, Latvian National Front, United Social Democratic Welfare Party.

**Suffrage:**

Universal for those over age 18.

**GDP:**

\$23.9 million

**Real Growth Rate:**

7.4%

**Per capita GDP:**

\$10,200

**Natural Resources:**

peat, limestone, dolomite, amber, hydropower, wood, arable land

**Agriculture:**

grain, sugar beets, potatoes, beef, pork, milk, eggs, fish

**Industry:**

buses, vans, street and railroad cars, synthetic fibers, agricultural machinery, fertilizers, washing machines, radios, electronics, pharmaceuticals, processed foods

**Exports:**

wood/wood products 33.6%, metals 13.2%, textiles 12.8%, machines 6.5%, food/food products 7.1.

**Imports:**

energy 9.7%, machinery 21.3%, chemicals 10.4%, food/food products 21.8%, metals 8.4%, vehicles 9.8%.

**Export Partners:**

Great Britain 15.6%, Germany 14.8%, Sweden 10.5%, Lithuania

8.2%, Estonia 6.6%, Denmark 6%,  
Russia 5.4%

**Import Partners:**

Germany 16.1%, Lithuania 9.7%,  
Russia 8.7%, Finland 7.4%, Estonia  
6.4%, Sweden 6.3%, Poland 5.1%,  
Italy 4.4%

**Currency:**

Latvian Lats (LVL); Exchange rate  
(2005): 1 US Dollar = 0.5 LVL

**Major Markets:**

Germany 17.2%, Lithuania 9.8%,  
Russia 8.8%, Finland 8%, Sweden  
6.4%

**References:**

Background Note: Latvia, U.S. Department of State  
<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/lg/>

Latvia, CIA, The World Fact Book  
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/lg.html>

# Lithuania



## Basic Facts

**Official Name:**

Republic of Lithuania

**Bordering Countries:**

Lithuania is located on the Baltic Sea. Belarus is situated to the southeast, Latvia to the north, and Poland to the south.

**Cities:**

Capital- Vilnius (pop. 553,373).  
Other cities- Kaunas (376,575);  
Klaipeda (192,498); Siauliai  
(133,528); Panevezys (119,417).

**Area:**

26,080 sq. miles (slightly larger than West Virginia)

**Terrain:**

Lowland, many scattered small lakes, fertile soil.

**Climate:**

Transitional, between maritime and continental; wet, moderate winters and summers.

<b>Nationality:</b>	Lithuanian
<b>Population:</b>	3.6 million
<b>Ethnic Groups:</b>	Lithuanian 80.6%, Russian 8.7%, Polish 7%, Belarusian 1.6%, other 2.1%.
<b>Religions:</b>	Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Russian Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical Christian Baptist, Muslim, Jewish.
<b>Languages:</b>	Lithuanian (official), Polish, Russian
<b>Education:</b>	Compulsory for nine years.
<b>Literacy:</b>	99.6%
<b>Infant Mortality Rate:</b>	7.8/1,000 live births
<b>Life Expectancy:</b>	Men 66 yrs.; Women 77 yrs.
<b>Work Force (1.73 million):</b>	Manufacturing industry 18.3%; agriculture 17.1%; wholesale and retail trade 15.5%; construction 6.3%; transport 6.3%; public administration and defense 5.1%.

### **Government**

<b>Type:</b>	Parliamentary democracy
<b>Constitution:</b>	Adopted October 1992.
<b>Branches of Government:</b>	Executive- popularly elected president (chief of state); prime minister (head of government).  Legislative- Seimas (parliament-141 members, four-year term).  Judicial- Constitutional Court, Supreme Court, and Highest Administrative Court.

**Principle Political Parties:**

Electoral Action of Lithuanian Poles, Homeland Union/Conservative Party, Labor Party, Liberal and Center Union, Liberal Democratic Party, Lithuanian Christian Democrats, Lithuanian People's Union for a Fair Lithuania, Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party, the Lithuanian Social Democratic Party, New Democracy and Farmer's Union, Social Liberals (New Union), Social Union of Christian Conservatives.

**Economy**

**GDP:**

\$40.88 billion

**GDP per capita:**

\$11,400

**Natural Resources:**

peat, arable land

**Agriculture/Products:**

grain, potatoes, sugar beets, flax, beef, milk, eggs, fish

**Industry:**

metal-cutting machine tools, electric tools, electric motors, television sets, refrigerators and freezers, petroleum refining, shipbuilding (small ships), furniture making, textiles, food processing, fertilizers, agriculture machinery, optical equipment, electronic components, computers, amber

**Exports:**

mineral products 19.0%, textiles and textile articles 15.0%, agricultural and food products 10.8%, transport equipment 15.9%, machinery and mechanical appliances 9.9%, wood and paper products 6.7%.

**Imports:**

intermediate goods 55.9%, investment goods 18.6%, final consumption goods 17.5%, passenger cars 7.2%.

**Export Partners:** Great Britain 13.5%, Russia 12.1%,  
Germany 12.1%, Latvia 9.6%,  
Poland 3.6%

**Import Partners:** Russia 22%, Germany 16.1%,  
Poland 5.2%, Italy 4.3%, France  
4.2%

**Currency:** Lithuanian Litas (LTL);  
Exchange rate (2005):  
1 US Dollar = 2.61497 Lithuanian  
Litas

**Major Markets:** Russia 20.2%, Germany 19%,  
Poland 6.4%, Denmark 4%

**References:**

Lithuania, CIA- The World Fact Book  
<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/lh.html>

Background Note: Lithuania, U.S. Department of State  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5379.htm>

# History of the Baltics

## Estonia- Early History

Until the 13<sup>th</sup> century, Estonia was made up of many separate peasant groups. In the 1200s, German crusaders invaded the region in an effort to convert Estonians and other Baltic populations to Christianity. By 1227, Germans completely controlled the region and Estonians became their serfs. Estonia and Latvia were combined to become Livonia.

By the mid-16<sup>th</sup> century, the fighting capacity of the Germans diminished and the power of Muscovy dominated. Muscovy, the Moscow Principality, succeeded Kiev Rus and predated the Russian Empire between the 14<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century. Muscovy and later the Russian Empire continued to focus on control of the Baltics for centuries, because control of the region meant access to much needed water outlets for the land-locked Russia. In 1558, the tsar of Russia, Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) invaded the region. Ivan defeated the Germans and gained much of the territory, but other kingdoms also coveted control of the Baltic region.

In 1629, Sweden challenged Russia's dominance over the Baltic region and gained most of the territory. The Swedish government merged Estonia and Latvia into Estland and Livland. One important development under Swedish control was the founding of the Estonian university, Tartu University, in 1632. Education became more widespread throughout the country with the emergence of a number of parish schools.

In the Great Northern War, Russia and Sweden continued to battle over the region. In the first part of the war, Sweden had several victories and managed to drive back the Russians. However, under the new leadership of Peter the Great, Russia allied with



Denmark-Norway, Saxony (a former free state within modern-day Germany) and Poland, and eventually triumphed against Sweden. Russia's introduction of scorched earth tactics was significant to the victory. Scorched earth tactics are tactics used by the military to destroy crops and other resources for food in one's own territory to prevent the enemy from using any of these resources. This is usually carried out through burning or salting the land.

Russia successfully scorched the earth and prevented Sweden from advancing. Russia controlled the area for the next 200 years. The first real reform of serfdom, which gave some rights to peasants, took place in 1804. In 1816 and 1819, the serfs were formally emancipated in Estland and Livland.

By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Estonians became more aware of their cultural identity and strong sentiments of nationalism developed. During this period, Estonians embraced their

own traditions, language and customs. Tsarist Russia reacted with a Russification campaign, which was an attempt to force Russian culture and ideas over Estonian separatism. Despite Russia's attempts, the Estonian cultural awakening continued.

In the early 1900s, Estonia found itself in the midst of growing tensions between Russia and Germany. Both countries were determined to control the region. In 1917, Russian Bolsheviks had taken over St. Petersburg and their authority was imposed throughout the Baltic states; however, Bolshevik power turned out to be temporary since German troops took over the region in 1918. Estonians responded by fighting against both the Bolsheviks and the Germans in a 15-month war of independence. Estonia had about 3,600 casualties and left about 14,000 wounded, but succeeded in gaining temporary independence. In the Tartu Peace Treaty, signed in 1920 between Russia and Estonia, Moscow gave back all lands to Estonia. In 1921, Estonia gained international recognition as an independent country when it became a member of the League of Nations. Newly independent Estonia established a parliamentary system and also launched land reform programs, which included the reallocation of lands formerly controlled by German nobles.

The Estonian economy was mostly agricultural. With the reallocation of land, small farms doubled. Estonia had greatly depended on Russia, but after the War of Independence, Estonia needed to build new relationships with the West. Estonia's early independence was marked by instability and frequent government turnovers. The first Estonian constitution required parliamentary approval of all major acts taken by the prime minister and his government.

In 1924, leaders of the Estonian Communist Party conspired with the Communist International Comintern leaders from Moscow. Together they organized a takeover of the government, expecting workers to rise and support them, but their plan failed and instead made the party less popular. In addition to the failed attempt by the Communist party, radical groups and supporters of fascism threatened to overthrow the government. In 1934, Konstantin Päts, the prime minister, allied himself with the military and carried out a pre-emptive coup in order to protect against the threats from the opposition. He imposed authoritarian rule. Päts disbanded a number of political parties and arrested several hundred people who were allegedly involved with acts against the government. Päts' authoritarian regime controlled the country until the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact divided the Baltic states, including Estonia, into "spheres of influence." The Soviet Union rule lasted for one year in 1940. Under Soviet control, there were political purges. Nearly 10,000 Estonians were deported to Siberia. Soviet domination was interrupted by Germany occupation of the region during World War II.

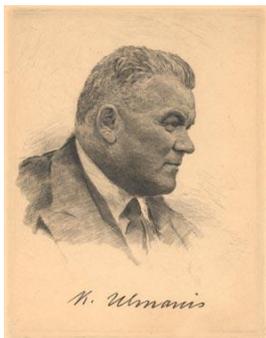
## Latvia- Early History

Until the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Latvia consisted of non-unified tribes. For most of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, Latvia was taken over by a number of foreign states, including Denmark, Prussia, and Poland-Lithuania.

While various foreign nations controlled Latvia throughout different periods, German nobles preserved their wealth and land even when the country was no longer controlled by Germans. The German nobles greatly influenced culture and social aspects of the country, and also retained control over Latvian serfs. Apart from the German nobility, Russia also shaped Latvia. Russia first directed its attention of Latvia under Peter the Great (1682-1725). German nobles and the Russian bureaucracy virtually shared the country between them for 200 years. The German nobles controlled economics and local politics, while the Russian bureaucracy was in charge of higher politics and government administration. Latvians were more influenced by either German or Russians depending on their career or status in society. Some Latvians were closely connected to the Russian culture, while others shared more commonality with the German culture.

Latvian nationalism emerged in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. A new Latvian elite appeared and urged a stronger voice for Latvians in the politics and governance of their country. Control of Latvia was of great importance to Russia because of Latvia's coastline on the Gulf of Riga, which leads to the Baltic Sea. Russia had already developed the port of Riga, which became the third largest port for Russia by World War I. Russia had built many factories in Riga and this increased jobs for Latvians. However, with the rise in nationalism, many Latvians no longer supported the Russian government. In 1905, there was a massive strike by the workers, which Russian forces suppressed, resulting in 3,000 deaths. A number were exiled to Siberia.

Latvian independence was proclaimed in 1918, but really took effect in 1920 when foreign forces left the state. In 1920, Russia signed a peace treaty that recognized Latvia's independence. Latvia became a member of the League of Nations in 1921. Latvia's independence lasted for 20 years and has been romanticized in Latvian history. This period of independence is called the "second awakening". Welfare services were made widely available. The state played a very active role in the direct economic programs. However, this period was soon plagued by economic instability and many factions because of too many battles for powers between right and left parties.



In 1934, Karlis Ulmanis took over power as a result of the squabbling between the other parties. Ulmanis was a populist who banned all opposing parties and most of the press. Ulmanis is a Latvian hero who represents “selfless dedication”. Although he was a dictator, many Latvians think fondly of the memory of Ulmanis. Ulmanis tried to remain neutral between the Soviet Union and Germany, but after the Pact was signed, Latvia was forced under Soviet Control. Ulmanis was deported to the Soviet Union and died in captivity.

## **Lithuania- Early History**

Lithuania emerged around 1230 under the leadership of Duke Mindaugas. He united Lithuanian tribes to defend themselves against attacks by the Teutonic Knights, who were crusading knights from an independent state of Germany at the end of the 12th century. The Lithuanian tribes were unified, but continued to be threatened by the Teutonic Knights.

Under Grand Duke Jogaila, Lithuania finally defeated the crusaders. In 1385, Jogaila was offered and accepted the crown of Poland in exchange for converting Lithuania to Christianity. Jogaila’s decision would create new alliances for Lithuania in a majority-Christian Europe. In 1569, Lithuania and Poland formed a single state, Poland-Lithuania, which existed for 226 years. During this period, Lithuania’s political elite was dominated by the Polish nobility and church, resulting in neglect of the Lithuanian language and introduction of Polish social and political institutions. Western models in education and culture also were introduced at this time.

In 1795, Russia formed an alliance with Prussia and Austria and folded Poland into the Russian empire. The Russian leadership removed Polish influence in Lithuania, and introduced Russian social and political institutions. In 1905, Lithuania was the first of the Russian provinces to demand autonomy. After World War I, both Germany and Russia continued to battle for dominance in the Baltics. However, Lithuania affirmed its independence in 1918, and it still celebrates February 16, 1918 as its day of independence. Lithuania successfully fought with Poland to defend its independence. At the end of 1920, however, Poland annexed Lithuania’s capital city and province of Vilnius, which it held until World War II. Lithuania fought against a German-sponsored group of militants that sought to preserve German influence in the Baltic region, and also fought against Russia. In November 1918, the Red Army invaded the country but ultimately was repulsed by the forces of the young Lithuanian government. On July 9, 1920, Soviet Leader Vladimir I. Lenin signed a peace treaty with Lithuania, “forever” denouncing Russia’s claims to the territory and recognizing the Lithuanian state.

Independent Lithuania, led by political leaders mostly in their thirties or early forties, became a democratic republic with a strong legislature, a weak executive, a multiparty system, and a proportional system of representation. Almost a third of the country was illiterate, and farmers were unfamiliar with the democratic processes. In 1926, the Socialist-Populist party coalition government was removed by a military coup. Antanas

Smetona, a former acting president, was elected to the presidency by a rump parliament. Within three years, he established an authoritarian regime. Political parties were outlawed and the press censored, but Smetona did not completely suppress civil rights. Smetona established Tautininkai, a nationalist political party, which reappeared in the parliament in 1991 after Lithuania regained independence from the Soviet Union.

In 1939, the Soviets sent 20,000 troops into Lithuania. More than 30,000 people were deported to Siberia on the night of June 14, 1941. Germany interrupted the wave of terror when it launched an attack against the Soviet forces. The Lithuanian Activist Front revolted against the Soviet troops. Partisans took over the largest cities—Kaunas and Vilnius—and declared restoration of Lithuanian independence. But the Germans imposed their own government shortly and the Lithuanian leadership “went underground”. Under German control, many Lithuanians, mostly Jewish Lithuanians, were killed in prisons and concentration camps.

### **Baltic History-The Soviet Era**

In 1939, Nazi Germany signed the Nazi-Soviet Nonaggression Pact, which arranged the initial dividing up of Eastern Europe into spheres of influence. The Soviet Union soon sent in thousands of Soviet troops. Stalin forced a “pro-Soviet government” in each of the Baltic countries. Only the official communist party could be represented in elections; and therefore, only one party was on the ballot for elections. Once the communist governments were successfully elected, the new communist administrations requested admission into the Soviet Union. Under Soviet control, the Baltics had a centrally planned economy and collectivization of agriculture. Stalin carried out political purges removing nationalist leaders. The secret police terrorized private citizens. Additionally, under control of the Soviet Union, religion was staunchly suppressed, and those who refused to abandon their faith were persecuted. There quickly emerged underground dissident movements in each country. Despite the opposition, the Baltic region remained part of the Soviet Union for decades.

However, by 1987, the region was greatly affected by the new liberalization introduced by Mikhail Gorbachev’s programs of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (economic restructuring). Once the path to liberalization emerged, each of the Baltic states attempted to break away from Soviet control. In 1989, which was the fiftieth anniversary of the Nazi-Soviet Pact, the three government administrations organized a truth commission to investigate the motivations of the original Pact; the commissions’ findings verified that the Soviet Union and Germany carved up both the Baltic states and Poland to control the area.

Upon these conclusions, nearly 2 million citizens from all three Baltic countries linked up in a human chain for nearly 600 kilometers. In the next year, the states raised issues of independence more actively. By 1990, the Baltic states each announced their independence from the Soviet Union. The initial reaction by the Soviet Union appeared rather permissive, but shortly Moscow attempted a coup to take control of the national

governments. The coup failed, but the Soviet Union continued its aggression against the Baltics. Though there were some casualties as a consequence of Soviet military assaults, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania triumphantly became independent in 1991, when the Soviet Union was on the brink of collapse. By 1993, all three countries had democratic elections.

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# **Estonia and Its Membership into the European Union**

## **Overview**

Estonia began its accession process in 1998 in its first negotiation with the EU. Estonia's early attempt to align itself with the EU stemmed from its desire to create new allies in order to combat its economic problems. Estonia's new government focused on cooperation with other EU Member States as integral to its survival as a young nation. The EU required Estonia to harmonize its laws and policies with EU requirements. Estonia began its pre-accession by passing new laws. It requested for the EU to allow it to have transitional periods concerning its transition in certain areas that appeared to be more challenging. The EU itself required transitional periods for free movement of persons, transport and agriculture. In other sectors, Estonia was able to fully implement EU measures on Company Law, Competition Policy, Economic and Monetary Union, Statistics, Social Policy and Employment, Industrial Policy, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Science and Research, Education and Training, Telecommunications and Information Technologies, Culture and Audiovisual Policy, Regional Policy and Coordination of Structural Instruments.

## **Steps Taken**

In August 1991, the European Community recognized Estonia after it had regained its independence. The European Commission officially opened its Delegation in Tallinn in 1996. Estonia submitted its application to accede to the EU in November 1995 and started negotiations in March 1998. These were concluded at Copenhagen in December 2002. The draft Accession Treaty was approved by the Estonian Government on April 8, 2002, and Estonia joined the EU on May 1, 2004.

EU financial and technical assistance to Estonia was first provided under Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of their Economies (PHARE), which was expanded to apply to other Central European countries in their transition to market-based economies and democracies. PHARE's objectives included strengthening public administrations and promoting economic and social stability. Early assistance focused on legal reform, infrastructure restructuring, and privatization. Estonia's trade practices have been largely transformed under early programs.

Estonia also implemented rural development programs. Estonia received monetary assistance through the Special Accession Program for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD). SAPARD was a program established to assist countries of Eastern and Central Europe that needed to have their agricultural policies comply with the EU. The main objectives focused on agricultural reform to improve the efficiency of agricultural competition and production. The following chart outlines the objectives and funding allocations for those objectives:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Share of total allocation of EU funds</b>
<b>Improving the competitiveness of agriculture and the agri-food industry</b>	<b>60.1%</b>
1. Investments in agricultural holdings	42.0%
2. Improving the processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery products	18.1%
<b>Rural regeneration and development</b>	<b>36.0%</b>
3. Development and diversification of economic activities	17.6%
4. Development and improvement of rural infrastructure	12.2%
5. Renovation and development of villages	3.5%
6. Agricultural production methods designed to protect the environment and maintain the countryside	1.4%
7. Forestry	1.3%

### **Public Awareness and Education**

A referendum on Estonia's entry into the EU was held in September 2003. The ballot addressed both accepting new text in the Estonian Constitution, which allowed for accession into the EU, and whether Estonia should join the EU. Estonia's voter turnout was estimated at 64.02%. 66.84% of those who participated in the referendum supported EU accession. The Parliament then ratified the Accession Treaty by simple majority.

An important task during the accession process and throughout integration into the EU has been public awareness campaigns. Estonia has provided complete news on the accession process to be available on Estonia's Foreign Ministry webpage. Also, citizens are provided with a number of EU information centers and free EU "infophone" service. Two major centers are located in the National Library and the Eurodocumentation Centre, which is located in the Tartu University Library. There are information distributors attached to each of the county governments. Many governmental institutions also regularly publish information leaflets that are available in libraries, information centers and other public buildings. More specific information is distributed by all institutions whose work involves dealing with the EU. Every citizen has the right to turn to whichever institution interests him/her and request additional information.

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# **Latvia and Its Membership in the European Union**

## **Overview**

In March 1993, the EU began trade and commercial economic negotiations with Latvia. In order for Latvia to enter the EU, it needed to illustrate that it could meet the obligations of membership. Latvia created a schedule identifying when it would meet certain steps necessary for accession. Some of the objectives included elimination of its tariffs and quantitative trade restrictions for all goods. Latvia needed to open public procurement markets and liberalize its fisheries. In the mid-1990s, Latvia received large amounts of funding to support its transition from democracy and market economy. Most of the funds supported institution building, which aimed to strengthen public administration and institutions. In 1995, Latvia officially applied for EU membership. In 2003, the European Parliament signed the Accession Treaty at Athens, and Latvia entered the EU in 2004. Latvia has 9 members represented in the EU Parliament. It has 4 votes in the Council of Ministers. In a number of sectors, Latvia has been provided special transitional periods in order to completely harmonize with EU standards. The EU continues to closely monitor these transition periods.

## **Steps Taken**

In 1992, Latvia first received funding under Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of their Economies (PHARE). The PHARE initially began as a means to assist Central European countries in their transition to market-based economies and democracies. By 1997, Latvia created new departments within its Ministry of Finance to decentralize the finance industry, which was an essential preliminary step towards accession. Because Latvia's markets had formerly been controlled, Latvia needed to illustrate its ability to decentralize its bank and finance institutions.

Funding through the Instrument for Structured Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) began in 2000. ISPA financed major environment and transport infrastructure projects. Financial assistance was granted for environmental projects, which enabled Latvia to comply with the requirements of the EU's community-based environmental laws. ISPA financed transportation infrastructure initiatives that promoted sustainable mobility.

The Special Accession Program for Agricultural and Rural Development (SAPARD) assisted in the harmonization of the EU's agricultural policy and in identifying agricultural and rural sector problems. SAPARD supervised the improvement of the competitiveness of the Latvian agricultural sector, focusing on environmental protection, and enhanced the adaptation capabilities of rural areas. Some projects financed included investment in agricultural holdings, improvement of agricultural and fisheries products, financing and marketing, development and diversification of economic activities providing alternative income, improvement of general infrastructure and environmentally friendly agriculture methods.

## **Public Opinion and Awareness**

The Latvian referendum on EU accession was held in 2003. Of those who participated in the referendum, 69% voted in favor of Latvia joining the EU. Before the referendum, Latvia launched a public awareness campaign through town meetings and public debates. One of Latvia's most unique tactics was its launching of a reality TV show, which aired for several weeks in the country before the referendum. The reality program focused on eight Latvian individuals from different professions and social groups. The reality "stars" included a waiter, a German language teacher at a Russian school, a farmer, an agriculturalist, two pensioners and two businessmen. The program was a very large success and attracted many viewers.

Latvia also opened the Eurolibrary, which offers more than 2,100 publications on different EU-related subjects. The Eurolibrary contains all EU legislation, a number of periodicals and multiple magazines that focus on the EU. Latvia has also launched a program designed to educate young people. The targeted audience is between 15 and 25 years old. The program promotes youth exchange programs with other EU countries. Also, the program works to promote democracy and independence of young people.

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# **Lithuania and its Membership in the European Union**

## **Overview**

Lithuania presented its application for EU membership in December 1995. Lithuania's main goal was to harmonize with its European neighbors and become part of the greater European community after being isolated for decades under the Soviet Union. Lithuania was a strong candidate for membership due to its largely successful transformation into a democratic state and establishment of effective rule of law, human rights protections, and special legal safeguards developed for minorities. Lithuania's success also included its implementation of a functioning market economy and privatization within most of its sectors. These changes illustrated Lithuania's desire and ability to make serious changes and accept obligations as a member of the EU.

## **Steps Taken**

In 1995, Lithuania and the EU entered into a Free Trade Agreement, which allowed free trade for six years. By 1997, Lithuania adopted customs programs, standardized numerous laws, and cooperated on trade issues to comply with EU regulations. In 1992, the EU provided financial and technical assistance under Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of their Economies (PHARE), which was expanded to apply to other Central European countries in their transition to market-based economies and democracies. Early assistance focused on legal reform, infrastructure restructuring, and privatization. Trade has been largely affected by these reforms; the EU has become Lithuania's largest trade partner.

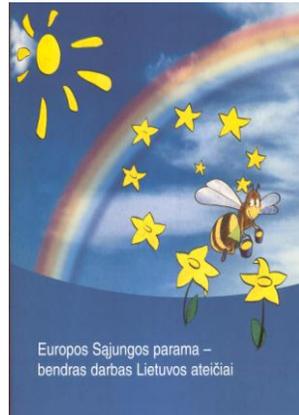
Lithuania has also implemented rural development programs. Lithuania has received monetary assistance through Special Accession Program for Agricultural and Rural (SAPARD), which was created to support the efforts being made by the Central and Eastern European applicant countries in the period of pre-accession. Under SAPARD, there have been new rural development programs aimed at making livestock production more competitive with other markets. Many of the programs have focused on agricultural reconstruction, and the following chart outlines the objectives and funding allocation for those objectives:

<b>Objective</b>	<b>Share of Total Allocation of EU Funds</b>
<b>Improvement of agricultural production including the food industry (57.49 %)</b>	
1. Investments in agriculture and agri-food industry	60.1 %
2. Improving of the processing and marketing of agricultural and fishery production	42.0 %
3. Support of establishment of producer groups	4.49 %
<b>Sustainable rural development: (35.54 %)</b>	
4. Diversification of activities in rural areas	14.97 %
5. Forestry	7.43 %
6. Agricultural production methods designed to protect the environment and maintain the countryside	3.45 %
7. Land consolidation	9.69 %
<b>Human resources development: (4.99 %)</b>	
8. Development of human resources (training)	1.92 %
9. Technical assistance	3.07 %

Additionally, Lithuania also received funding from ISPA (Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession). ISPA supported large-scale infrastructure and environmental projects. Specifically, ISPA financed transportation infrastructure initiatives that promoted sustainable mobility.

Lithuania successfully concluded accession negotiations and signed its Accession Treaty in Athens in April 2003, and it became a Member State in May 2004. As a member, Lithuania has 12 seats in the EU Parliament, and 3 votes in the EU's Council. Lithuania has made remarkable progress and successfully implemented a number of reforms as part of the accession process. Although Lithuania became a member in 2004, it still needs to reach a number of its obligations set forth by the EU. Specifically, the EU has identified Lithuania's need to improve investment services and securities markets. It needs to improve its conformity with animal welfare and animal nutrition. Though an overall taxation program has been implemented, improvements are needed in customs practices. Lithuania must also advance financial management in the areas of public procurement and environmental protection programs. Moreover, Lithuania continues to fail to meet standards in professional training, most notably in healthcare fields. These shortcomings prevent Lithuanians in this field from working freely in other EU countries. Additionally, Lithuania continues to have very high levels of fraud and corruption, particularly attributed to organized crime, which discourages foreign investment and transactions.

## Public Education and Opinion



In order to advance public awareness about Lithuania's accession into the EU, the Information and Communication Programme was created. The Information and Communication Programme's role has been to collect and make available information about the EU. Part of its main objective has been to make the goals and key stages of EU accession understandable to the general population. Other tasks of the Programme include training and organizing workshops and seminars. The information center provides brochures, films, books, and other media sources for adult audiences, as well as for young audiences. There are many books designed especially for elementary school children to learn about the EU integration process. These brochures have been distributed to libraries, information centers, schools, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations.

According to public polls, Lithuanians have strongly supported Lithuania's membership in the EU. The government took a nation-wide referendum in May, 2003 where over 70% of those who participated in the referendum supported membership. Public support continues to be strong since Lithuania's formal entry into the EU.

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## Estonia: Economy



In 1987, Estonia began its transition to a market economy. Previously, as part of the Soviet Union, the country had a centrally controlled economy. Estonia needed to open its markets and begin privatization. The transition first led to a decline in living standards, but by 1992, the economy began to slowly improve.

Though Estonia encountered problems in its transition, within four years, the international community considered Estonia “a model for economic reform”. Estonia’s economy benefited from earlier mechanisms that were put in place providing the country with a head start toward market reform. Under Gorbachev’s perestroika, the local Estonian governing party implemented Isemajanav Eesti, which was known under the acronym IME. IME became the official economic policy by 1988. Though the plan was made unworkable due to bureaucrats in the Kremlin, this plan was the beginning of reforms implemented by economists and administrators. In 1989, the Bank of Estonia was created, and later Estonia created a new tax system.

After its split from the Soviet Union, Estonia needed to create new partnerships in trade. Most critically, Estonia had relied on Soviet republics for raw materials. Estonia was also experiencing high inflation; one key reason for the inflation was that Estonia did not have its own currency and continued to use the Russian ruble. An unprecedented fuel and food shortage in January 1992 created a new crisis. Desperate to alleviate the problems, the Estonian government decided to introduce its own currency, the kroon. After a few days of fluctuations, the kroon was pegged by special agreement to the deutsche mark to ensure its stability. In its early stage, the kroon was the only Baltic currency that had official value outside of its own country.

During the early 1990s, unemployment rose dramatically in Estonia. However, the unemployment figures failed to reflect the reality of the situation. These figure

represented the proportion of working-age people officially registered as unemployed with the government's employment board, but did not include the large group of individuals who were not registered. Although the employment board's figures reflected unemployment at 4.3%, in actuality, the unemployment rate was at 12%. One of the main reasons for the increase in unemployment stemmed from the transition from collective economy to a market economy. In 1990, some 95% of the labor force was employed in state-owned enterprises or on collective farms. Only 4.3% worked in private cooperatives or on private farms. In 1993 a public opinion survey indicated that less than half of the respondents received their main income from a state enterprise. As privatization continued and the privately owned share of production increased, the share of state employment was expected to drop even more.

By the early 1990s, Estonia received international assistance for fuel, grain and medical supplies. Within a few years after its independence, Estonia had a number of new investment partners, including Finland, Sweden, Japan, the US, and the EU. Unlike other former Soviet countries, Estonia had no prior foreign debt, since it refused to accept the financial obligations of the former Soviet Union. In August 1992, Estonia signed its first US \$32 million loan from the International Monetary Fund and US \$30 million from the World Bank. As conditions of the loans, Estonia agreed to balance its budget, monitor wage increases, and privatize state enterprises. After the International Monetary Fund was satisfied with Estonia's initial reforms, Estonia received its first loan installment in the amount of US \$16 million. By 1992, Estonia became a member of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Estonia has also received a large amount of funding from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as well as from the European Investment Bank through the European Union PHARE program. Apart from its received assistance, Estonia has struggled with its trade deficit. Estonia increased its imports by 131% from 1992 to 1993, compared with a 91.8% increase in exports. The country's trade deficit reached a troubling US \$389 million in 1994.

One of Estonia's main goals in the early 1990s was property reform and privatization. Estonia has had much success in this endeavor. By 1993, more than half of its enterprises were privately owned. Some property issues have remained particularly troublesome. A number of enterprises remain state-owned because they appear unable to turn profits. There have also been a number of problems concerning property compensation and remedies of property originally taken by the state under the Soviet regime. The rights to these properties by owners prior to Soviet control and owners after recent Estonian independence have created many complications.

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## Latvia: Economy



Latvia enjoyed an earlier period of prosperity during its brief period of independence (1919-1939). Although Latvia was unable to secure foreign partners to help it in its postwar reconstruction, the Latvian economy grew during this period. The government successfully implemented agricultural reforms. Remarkably, a system of farmsteads appeared that provided a network of loans along with credit programs that encouraged regional investment. During this time, currency was stabilized and inflation remained relatively low in comparison to most of Europe.

Today, many Latvians reminisce about this “golden era.” After the recent split from the Soviet Union, Latvians have carefully reviewed their earlier independent history to forge their way toward a healthy modern economy. Latvia first separated itself from Moscow economically in 1989 with the passing of a new economic law. This early law created the mandate for Latvia to move away from Soviet central planning. Initially, the economy shrunk. However, within only a few years, Latvia’s economy bounced back and began to grow. Nonetheless, the economy continued to face obstacles, including its increased state deficit as a result of the Russian economic crisis in 1998. Also, due to increased inflation, Latvia faced a decrease in its exports because the prices of its goods were too high and not competitive. Latvia continued to experience problems with its production of equipment and improvement of qualifications of its work force.

Like its neighbors, Latvia had depended solely on republics of the Soviet Union for trade. In the early 1990s, Latvia had much success in its first period of independence. Russia continued to be its main trading partner, and Latvia mainly continued to export to Ukraine and Belarus. Western countries received very small percentages of Latvian goods, with the Netherlands importing the most with only 8.2%.

In 1992, Latvia received about US \$73 million in humanitarian aid. In 1993, Latvia received aid from the European Union through the Poland and Hungary Assistance for Restructuring of their Economies (PHARE). Latvia also received money and loans from the World Bank and European Investment Bank. The International Monetary Fund promised loans contingent upon Latvia's agreement to follow specific economic reform plans, which Latvia did successfully. Latvia was required to greatly limit its printing of money in order to decrease inflation. The strict control of the money supply has enabled Latvia to average less than 3% inflation annually.

Privatization in Latvia has been very successful. Most industries are presently privately owned. Foreign investment has increased in the last five years, a trend that economists hope will continue.

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## Lithuania: Economy



Once Lithuania separated from the Soviet Union, it quickly implemented a number of programs in order to transform from a controlled economy into a market economy. Privatization began rapidly in the early 1990s. The government provided residents with investment vouchers to encourage the purchase of housing and other property. By 1994, over 4,000 companies had been successfully privatized.

Another major endeavor was transforming the agricultural sector. The agricultural region of the economy previously had been organized into collective farms. Lithuania implemented an aggressive reform plan. Nationalized land was returned directly to the government and sold to private parties for a market price, while unclaimed land was sold to farmers. For agricultural purchases, the government encouraged the use of long-term payment plans that allowed farmers to make small monthly or yearly payments. Within only a few years, over 80% of the agricultural sector was privatized. However, even though farms became privatized, many were very inefficient. Also, there were many cases of theft of land and fraud in land title issues.

Lithuania was also troubled with inflation. Upon lifting price controls, prices soared, while salaries and wages plummeted. The government followed the strict International Monetary Fund program and did not compensate those who lost pensions and other savings.

Lithuania introduced its own currency, the litas, in 1993. The litas has remained largely stable, and has been considered a success. The government also introduced personal income taxes, corporate taxes, and property taxes. Additionally, the government made another major reform in its elimination of subsidies. Meanwhile, the government has in

the past five years managed to improve its social reform services, which now provide social security, welfare, housing and communal activities. During its transition, Lithuania has been mostly successful in continuing to provide many of the same services that had been offered during the Soviet period.

Lithuania faced many difficulties in implementing successful bank reform. In the early 1990s, Lithuania's bank system remained largely decentralized, and banks initially were too lenient and disorganized in its lending policies. However, since 1994, Lithuania's banks have improved. Banks have better implemented capital requirements, followed International Monetary Fund plans for commercial banks, and have more strongly enforced bankruptcy legislation.

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# Government & Politics

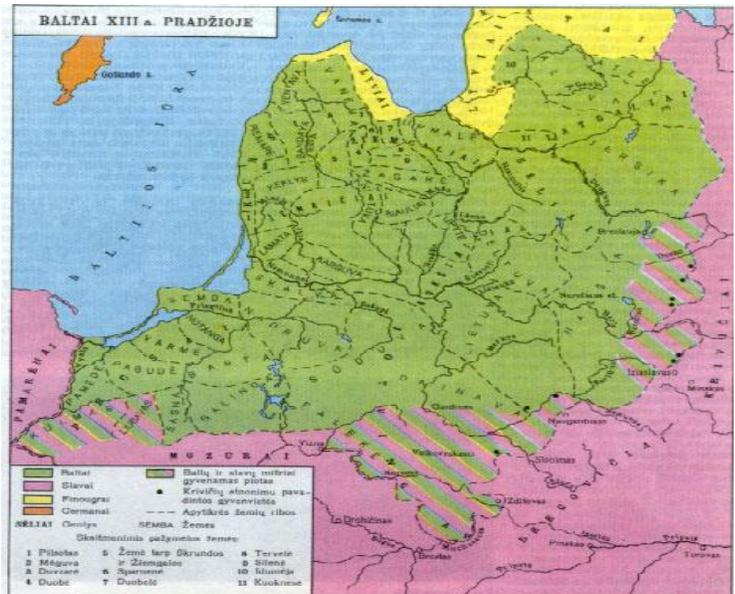
## Estonia

### Executive and Legislature:

Parliamentary democracy. President, elected for term of five years, is head of state and armed forces. Riigikogu (parliament), with 101 members, has broad organizational legislative functions. Members are elected in direct elections for term of four years. The prime minister forms a new government after the Riigikogu has approved the basis for its formation; after selection, the president formally appoints the government, which has executive power.

**Political Parties:** First post-Soviet elections, held in September 1992, yielded center-right coalition government led by Fatherland Party (Isamaa). The Isamaa-led coalition disintegrated in June 1994. Center-left Coalition Party-Rural Union Alliance won March 1995 elections. The last parliamentary elections were in 2003. The Center Party won 25.4%, closely followed by the Res Publica, which won 24.6% of the seats. A number of other parties also have representation in the parliament, including both conservative and liberal parties.

**Judicial System:** Post-Soviet criminal code introduced in 1992, based on civil law system, with no judicial review of legislative acts. Criminal justice is administered by local first-level courts as well as second-level appellate courts. Final appeal may be made to the National Court, which sits in Tartu. Court system comprises rural and city, as well as administrative, courts (first-level); district courts (second-level); and National Court, the highest court in the land.



## Latvia

**Executive and Legislature:** Parliamentary democracy. Electoral system based on that existing before Soviet annexation; 1922 constitution restored in 1993. Saeima, supreme legislative body, composed of 100 members elected on basis of proportional representation. Saeima elects president (head of state), who appoints prime minister. Cabinet of Ministers, headed by prime minister, has executive power.



**Political Parties:** Parties include Latvia's Way (Latvijas Cels), centrist in orientation; Democratic Party Saimnieks, center-left; Latvian National Independence Movement; Popular Front of Latvia; For Latvia, far-right; Latvian Farmers Union; Christian Democratic Union; National Union of Economists; and Ravnopraviye (Equal Rights Movement), a Russophone group.

**Judicial System:** Inherited from Soviet regime; undergoing reorganization. Regional, district, and administrative courts, as well as Supreme Court. Final appeals in criminal and civil cases are made to Supreme Court.

## Lithuania

**Executive and Legislature:** Independent democratic republic. President, elected for term of five years and a maximum of two consecutive terms, is head of state. Seimas, a unicameral legislative body, holds supreme legislative authority. Its 141 members are elected for four-year terms. It initiates and approves legislation sponsored by prime minister. Cabinet, known as Council of Ministers, is headed by prime minister, who is appointed by president with approval of Seimas.



**Political Parties:** Two main political organizations: Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party (LDLP), successor to Communist Party of Lithuania), which won more than half of seats in Seimas elected October 1992; and Fatherland Union, main opposition group and successor to Sajudis independence movement. Numerous overlapping factions, coalitions, and smaller parties.

**Judicial System:** Based on civil law system, with no judicial review of legislative acts. Independent of authority of legislative and executive branches of government, but subject to their influence. Judicial power held by Supreme Court; Seimas appoints and dismisses its judges on recommendation of head of state. Other courts include Constitutional Court, Court of Appeals, and district, local, and special courts.

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## Health and Welfare



In the 1990s, the healthcare systems in the Baltic region were far behind western standards. The healthcare systems were plagued by shortages of staff, medicine and supplies. The ratio of hospital beds to patients was disproportionate. The main shortage was in support staff, including nurses and paramedical professionals. Estonia and Latvia suffered the greatest number of shortages in medical personnel.

While other countries were increasing life spans, all three Baltic countries actually experienced a decrease in life expectancy in the early 1990s, largely attributed to a decline in living conditions. The main cause of death was heart disease. Cancer and accidental deaths also accounted for a large percentage of fatalities. Suicide rates were very high immediately following the breakup of the Soviet Union. Some of the Baltic countries had suicide rates that were twice that found in the United States. Alcohol consumption rose drastically, as did substance abuse. Both of which were linked to accidental deaths and other fatalities. Other risk factors for disease included a high percentage of smokers, a diet high in saturated fats, hypertension, and environmental pollution.

The tradition in these countries has been “cradle to grave” benefits. People enjoy free healthcare, special services for retirees, unemployment compensation, childbirth coverage and child supplements, and disability pensions. The new governments began the painful process of decentralization of their health facilities. Some areas that were particularly hard hit by such reforms were the pension programs. The age for retirees to receive pension benefits was raised, resulting in protests from the populations. Another consequence of the medical reforms was a rise in cost of medicines. There were also increased shortages of medical supplies including disposable needles, anesthetics, and antibiotics.

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## **Baltic Minority Groups**

Russians have been the largest minority group in the Baltic region since the Soviet period. Soviet authorities encouraged Russians to immigrate to the Baltic states. So many Russians flooded the cities that in Riga and Tallinn, Latvians and Estonians were actually a minority.

After independence, the large numbers of Russians in Estonia and Latvia were perceived as a threat. Consequently, both Latvia and Estonia have passed local laws that reflect anti-Russian sentiments. Such laws include the restriction of languages other than Estonian or Latvian to be used officially. Russian language schools, newspapers, and television channels have been restricted. Estonia and Latvia refused to grant Russian residents citizenship after independence. Therefore, Russians, who are approximately 20% of the population, have been without voting rights in these countries.

Lithuania in comparison has been more tolerant to its Russian population. The new independent Lithuania did not see its Russian minority population as posing as great a threat, because it has a larger native Lithuanian population in comparison to Estonia and Latvia's native populations.

The second largest ethnic minority in the Baltic region is the Polish. Lithuania has the highest number of Polish minorities. This is attributed to Lithuania's former unification with Poland as an empire. There are Polish minorities in Estonia and Latvia, though they are in far fewer numbers.

Belarusians are another minority group within the region. The majority of Belarusians are Russian speakers. Most of the regional minority resides in Latvia.

Ukrainians are a newer minority to the region. Many have come only in the past few decades. Few ethnic Ukrainians actually have Baltic citizenship.

The Jewish minority is very small in comparison to other groups. The number has always been small, but the Jewish population was virtually destroyed during World War II. However, since independence, their number has greatly increased. The largest Jewish population of the Baltics resides in Latvia.

The presence of Roma has increased in recent years. This group is politically unrepresented. Roma are victims of human rights violations in each of the Baltic states. Roma usually live in the poorest conditions, as is the case throughout much of Eastern Europe.

The German minority has greatly decreased since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. There are fewer than 9,000 Germans in all three Baltic states. This decrease is mostly the result of emigration in the past few decades.

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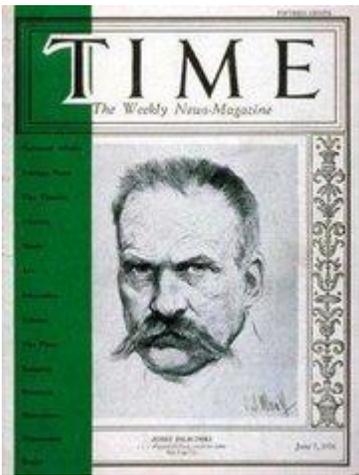
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## Famous People from the Baltics

### Political Figures

**Emma Goldman (1869-1940):** Lithuanian-born anarchist known for her writings and speeches. Goldman played a pivotal role in the development of anarchism in the U.S. and Europe throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. She immigrated to the United States at 16 and was later deported to Russia, where she witnessed events of the Russian Revolution. She spent a number of years in the South of France, where she wrote her autobiography and other works, before taking part in the Spanish Civil War in 1936 as the English-language representative in London for a Spanish anarchist group.



**Józef Piłsudski (1867-1935):** Born in Lithuania, he was a revolutionary, statesman, first chief of state and dictator of Poland. Though he came to power in a military coup d'état, Piłsudski has been nicknamed “the benevolent dictator.” His main objective while in power was to maintain Poland’s independence on the international scene. When Adolf Hitler came to power in Germany in January 1933, Piłsudski sounded out Poland’s ally, France, regarding the possibility of joint military action against Germany, which had been openly rearming in violation of the Versailles Treaty. When France declined, Piłsudski was compelled to sign a nonaggression pact with Germany in January 1934. After his death, Joseph Conrad, the great writer, said that “Piłsudski was the only great man to emerge on the scene during the [First World] war.”



**Abraham Isaac Kook (1864 - 1935):** Originally from Latvia. Kook became the first Chief Rabbi of then British-controlled Palestine (a position which was later succeeded by that of Chief Rabbi of Israel). He established the foundation of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, the *Rabbanut*, and Israel’s national rabbinical courts, *Batei Din*, which work in coordination with the Israeli government, having jurisdiction over much law relating to marriage, divorce, conversion, and education. He built bridges of communication and political alliances between the secular Jewish Zionist leadership and believers in Religious Zionism. The two groups conflicted over the foundation of Israel because religious Zionists felt that it was blasphemous to return to Israel through human acts, rather than the act of the Messiah. Kook helped to bridge large differences between these two groups. He even reached out to the non-religious Jewish youth population. He believed, according to his theological system, that the youthful, secular and even anti-religious Labor Zionist pioneers were actually part of a grand divine scheme whereby the land and people of Israel were finally being redeemed from the 2,000-year exile (*galut*) by all manner of Jews who sacrificed

themselves for the cause of building up the physical land, thus laying the groundwork for the ultimate spiritual messianic redemption of world Jewry.

**Isaiah Berlin: (1909-1997):** Berlin spent his childhood in Riga and St. Petersburg, where he witnessed both of the Russian Revolutions of 1917. He arrived in Britain in 1921 and was educated at Oxford. He remained at Oxford for the remainder of his life, with the exception of a period working for the British Government in the U.S. during World War II. Berlin was awarded the Order of Merit in 1971, and also received many other honors, including a Knight Bachelorship in 1957. His famous essay “Two Concepts of Liberty” (1958), in which he distinguished between positive and negative liberty, also called positive and negative freedom, has informed much of the debate on liberty since then. His essay “Historical Inevitability” (1953) has proved a very influential discussion of one crucial controversy in the philosophy of history. In Berlin’s words, the choice is whether one believes that "the lives of entire peoples and societies have been decisively influenced by exceptional individuals" or, rather, that whatever happens occurs as a result of large impersonal forces oblivious to human intentions. Berlin is also well known for his writings on Russian intellectual history.

**Edmund S. Valtman (1914-2005):** Born in Tallinn, Estonia. He was an editorial cartoonist and winner of the 1962 Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Cartooning. When the USSR took over Estonia, he and his wife fled the country and spent the next four years in a displaced persons camp in Germany, which was still under the control of Allied occupation forces. They immigrated to the United States in 1949. Once in the US, Valtman worked for the *Hartford Times* from 1951 until his 1975 retirement. He was noted for his caricatures of Cold War-era communist leaders like Khrushchev and Brezhnev. He won the Pulitzer Prize for his August 31, 1961 cartoon that illustrated Fidel Castro telling Brazil that they needed a revolution like his own.



[This Hurts Me More Than It Hurts You](#), 1962  
Published in *The Hartford Times*,  
October 30, 1962; Edmund Valtman,  
*Valtman: The Editorial Cartoons of  
Edmund S. Valtman, 1961-1991*.

In 1962, the United States discovered that the Soviet Union was installing missiles in Fidel Castro's Cuba. During the ensuing “Cuban Missile Crisis,” President John F. Kennedy (1917-1963) announced that he was placing a blockade around Cuba to prevent the delivery of any more weapons. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev (1894-1971) threatened war if Russian ships were stopped but finally backed down and agreed to remove the missiles.

Baltimore, MD: Esto, Inc., 1991, p. 17.  
Ink, tonal overlay on paper  
[Prints & Photographs Division](#) (4)  
LC-USZ62-130423

Valtman portrays Fidel Castro (1926/7- ) towering above small figures who represent Cuba and Brazil. As Castro advises Brazil to have a communist revolution like the one he led, Brazil looks back at the Cuban leader in puzzlement, perhaps pondering the fate of Cuba in rags and chains. Shortages of food and consumer goods were reported in the island nation in late August 1961, when Valtman made this drawing. At the same time, Brazil was facing the economic challenge of debt and a crisis of leadership when President Jânio Quadros resigned on August 25. Though Latin American countries that desired social reform initially regarded Castro with sympathy, Valtman seems to suggest that Brazil has come to view his example with skepticism. This drawing was one of the group submitted when Valtman won the Pulitzer Prize in 1962.

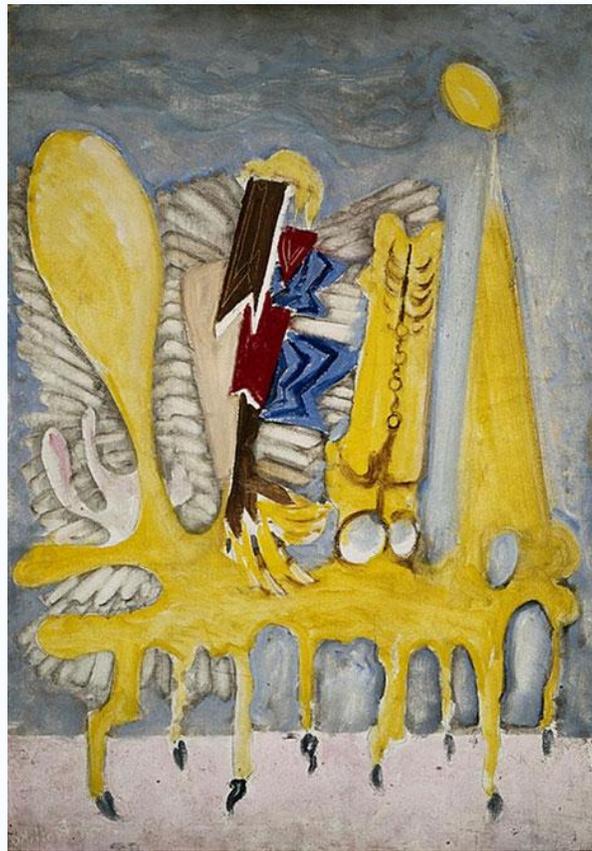


“What You Need, Man, Is a Revolution Like Mine!”, 1961

Published in *The Hartford Times*,  
August, 31, 1961; Edmund Valtman,  
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Ink, tonal overlay on paper  
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## Art

**Mark Rothko (1903-1970):** Born in Latvia and emigrated to the United States in 1916. His work concentrated on basic emotions, often filling the canvas with very few intense colors, with little immediately apparent detail. Although respected by other artists, Rothko remained in relative obscurity until 1960, supporting himself by teaching art. In 1958 Rothko was commissioned by Philip Johnson to paint a series of murals for the Four Seasons restaurant in the Seagram Building in New York, a project he worked on for most of a year. Ultimately Rothko was not happy having his paintings as the backdrop to gourmet dining, so he gave a set of nine of the maroon and black paintings to the Tate Gallery, where they are on permanent display in an installation designed by Rothko. Numerous other works are scattered in museums throughout the world.



Following his death, the settlement of the Rothko estate became the subject of a famous court case between the painter's daughter and the directors of his gallery Marlborough Fine Art. Rothko made gifts of certain key paintings that he had retained to his two children, in the belief that his key patrons would pay inflated prices for the works following his death and therefore provide financial security to his children. However, it was revealed that when still a struggling artist with a young family, Rothko had made a deal with the gallery so that all of his paintings would be sold through the gallery in exchange for a set monthly fee. The gallery had filtered payments for his works through accounts in Switzerland and Lichtenstein to ensure that values were under-presented.

During the 1960s this led to a huge underestimate by the artist on the value of his works; as a result he agreed to consignments of dozens of paintings to the gallery and collectors without appreciating the full value. Also it was that revealed the gallery had been stockpiling works to ensure a heightened value in the market after his death. Certain directors at Marlborough were found guilty of defrauding the Rothko family.

**Jaan Kross (b. 1920):** Most well-known contemporary Estonian writer, nominated several times for the Nobel Prize in Literature. Born in Tallinn, he attended the University of Tartu, graduated from its School of Law in 1944, and taught there as a lecturer until 1946 (and again as Professor of *Artes Liberales* in 1998). He was arrested in 1944 by the Nazis and in 1946 by the Soviets, who deported him to Siberia, where he remained in the Gulag until 1954. Upon his return to Estonia, then a Soviet republic, he became a professional writer. Kross' novels (and short stories) are almost universally historical; indeed, he is often credited with the revival of the historical novel. His more popular works include *The Czar's Madman*, *Professor Martens' Departure*, *Between Three Plagues*, and *Excavations*.

**Konrad Mägi (1878-1925):** Estonian landscape painter. After leaving Estonia, he pursued an art education in 1903-1905 in Saint Petersburg. In the autumn of 1907 he went to Paris. There he studied at a free academy. In 1908-1910 he lived in Norway. In 1912, he returned to Tartu where he worked as an art teacher. Konrad Mägi was one of the most color sensitive Estonian painters of the first decades of the 20th century. He was influenced by Art Nouveau, Impressionism, and Fauvism. From 1918 onward the influence of Expressionism on his work is manifest. His painting captured a sense of anxiety and precariousness, which mirrored the feeling within the country due to political and social events.



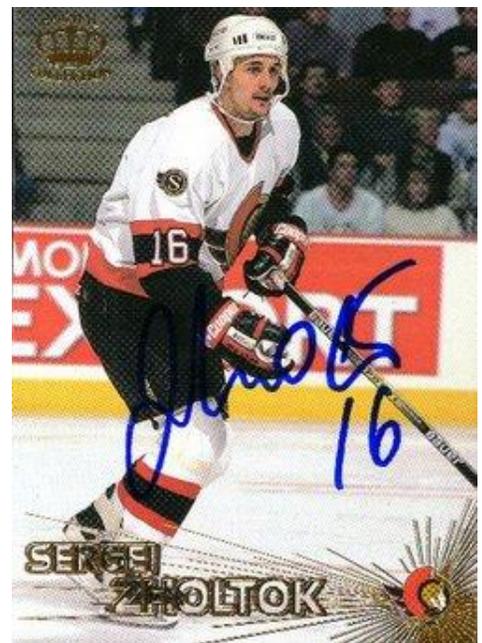
## Entertainment

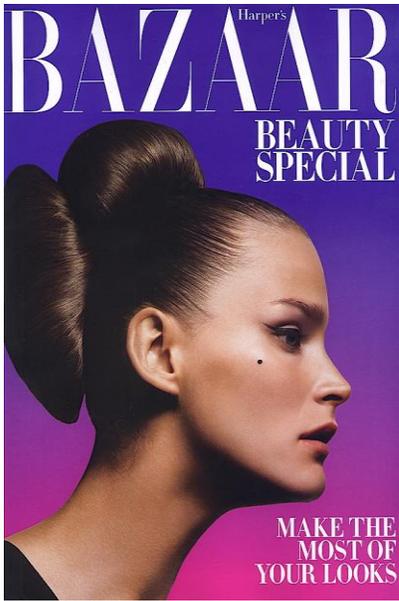
**Darius Songaila (b. 1978)** Born in Lithuania, he is a professional basketball player, who currently plays in the NBA for the Sacramento Kings. He is 6'8" tall and weighs 240 pounds. Songaila came to the United States to attend high school, and went on to a four-year career at Wake Forest University. He was drafted by the Boston Celtics 50th overall in the 2002 NBA Draft. After playing in Europe for a year, Songaila came back to America, his rights traded to the Kings. He has been with the club since 2003. A good defensive player, Songaila's career averages are about six points and four rebounds a game. An important member of the Lithuanian national team, Songaila played for helped his country to the 2003 European Championship and played at the 2004 Summer Olympics.



**Uljana Semjonova (b. 1952):** 7-foot-tall Semjonova was the leading women's basketball player in the world in 1970s and 1980s. For almost all of her playing career, she played for TTT Riga. With TTT, she won the championships of the Soviet Union 15 times, and the European Champion's Cup also 15 times. Semjonova was also very dominant in international play, winning two Olympic gold medals with the team of the Soviet Union in 1976 and 1980, and never losing a game in an official international competition. In 1993, Semjonova became the first non-U.S. women player enshrined into the Basketball Hall of Fame.

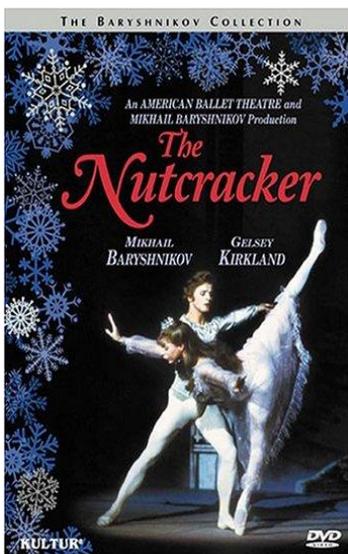
**Sergei Zholtok (1972-2004):** Born in Riga, Latvia, he was a professional ice hockey player. Zholtok was drafted by the Boston Bruins, the 55th overall pick in the 1992 NHL Entry Draft. Prior to being drafted, he won a gold medal with the USSR national team in the IIHF Junior World Championships in 1991. After playing 26 games with the Boston Bruins in the 1992-93 and the 1993-94 NHL seasons, Zholtok spent the next years playing in the minor leagues. Zholtok returned to the NHL in the 1996-97 season with the Ottawa Senators. During the 2004 NHL lockout, Zholtok returned to Latvia and played for the "Riga 2000" team in the Latvian national hockey championship and the Open Belarus hockey championship. On November 3, 2004, his cardiac arrhythmia resurfaced during the game between "Riga 2000" (Latvia) and "Dinamo" (Minsk). Zholtok left the game with five minutes remaining, collapsing and dying after returning to the dressing room. During his 10 years in the NHL, he played in 588 regular-season games, scored 111 goals and had 147 assists.





**Carmen Kass (b. 1978):** Born in Tallinn, Estonia. Supermodel, who was discovered by modeling agents at the age of 14. She received exposure on the cover of magazines worldwide, such as *L'Officiel* and *Vogue* (France) in 1997, *Elle* (Australia), *Image* (UK), *Madame Figaro*, *Numero France*, *Vogue* (France), and *Vogue* (US) in 1999. In 1999, Kass strutted down the catwalks for top designers such as Alberta Ferretti, Anna Sui, BCBG, Bill Blass, Calvin Klein, Chanel, Christian Dior, DKNY, Dolce & Gabbana, Gianfranco Ferré, Gianni Versace, Gucci, Jill Stuart, MaxMara, Michael Kors, Moschino, Nicole Miller, Prada, Oscar de la Renta, Ralph Lauren, Tommy Hilfiger, Louis Vuitton, and Valentino. Kass has posed in advertisements for Calvin Klein, Chanel, Donna Karan, Guy Laroche, Krizia, and Versace. She is also recognized for her appearances in a Gap denim advertising campaign. Kass is a spokesperson for Sephora, one of the world's leading cosmetics retailers, and the Christian Dior perfume, *J'adore*.

**Alexei Shirov (b. 1972):** Born in Riga, Latvia. He is one of the top chess grandmasters in the world today. In the January 2005 chess rating system, he was number 10 in the world. In 1998, Shirov had a book published called *Fire on Board: Shirov's Best Games*.



**Mikhail Nikolaevich Baryshnikov (b. 1948):** Baryshnikov was born in Riga. He first entered a ballet academy at the age of 15. Due to his talent, he joined Leningrad's Kirov Ballet in 1966. However, Baryshnikov applied for political asylum in the United States in 1974. From 1974 to 1979, he was principal dancer with the American Ballet Theatre (ABT), though he also danced with ballet and modern dance companies around the world. He then joined the New York City Ballet for 15 months. He returned to ABT in 1980 as dancer and artistic director, a position he held for a decade. He was a recipient of Kennedy Center Honors in 2000. As of 2004, he was actively involved in the establishment of the Baryshnikov Arts Center in a new performing arts complex in New York City. He received an Oscar nomination for his first film role, in 1977's *The Turning Point*. He starred in the 1985 film *White Nights*. He played a recurring role in the final season of *Sex and the City*, opposite Sarah Jessica Parker.

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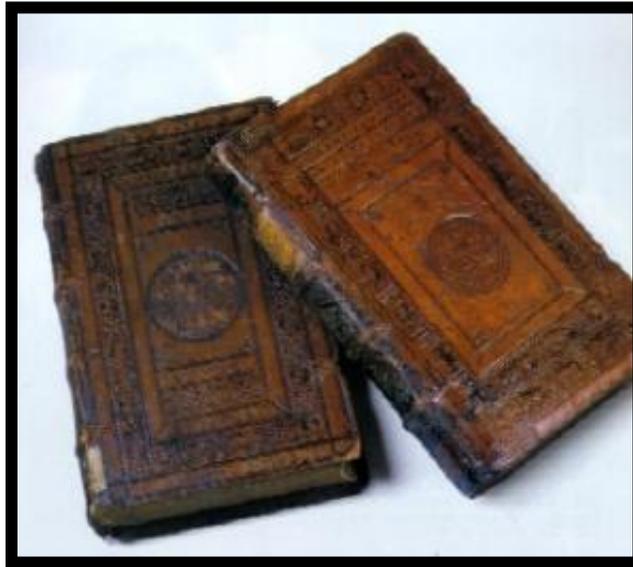
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## Language



### Estonian

The Estonian language is part of the Finno-Ugric family. Its closest modern relations are Finnish and Hungarian. With 14 cases, it is considered one of the most difficult European languages. Estonian does not have articles, and it also does not use gender distinctions. Though Estonia is a small country, there are a number of dialects and accents, especially on various islands. Estonia has borrowed words from German, Russian, Finnish, and English.

#### Estonian Tongue Twisters

*Pagari piparkook* (repeated)  
Baker's ginger biscuit

*Musta lehma saba valge lehma taga, valge lehma saba musta lehma taga* (repeated)  
Black cow's tail behind a white cow, white cow's tail behind a black cow

*Asjaajaja ja jaamaülem* (repeated, sobriety test)  
Procurator and stationmaster

*Kummikutes kummitus kummitas kummutis* (repeated, sobriety test)  
A ghost with rubberboots haunted in the chest of drawers

*Õunapuu õitseae on Jüriöö ülestõusust jõululaupäevani*  
Blossom-time of an apple-tree is from the Jüriöö uprising until the Christmas Eve.

Õueiaäär

Edge of a yard fence

## Latvian

The Latvian language is part of the Indo-European family of languages. Latvian is greatly influenced by German. It is an inflective language. Written Latvian first appeared in 1585 in catechisms, which are religious writing doctrines. Because such a large number of Russians and other Slavs were encouraged by the Soviet government to immigrate to Latvia, almost one-half of the country's population does not speak Latvian. Nearly all Latvians speak Russian, as well as German.

### Latvian Basics

Thank you.	<i>Paldies!</i>
Thank you very much	<i>Liels paldies!</i>
Please.	<i>Ludzu!</i>
I love you.	<i>Es tevi milu!</i>
Hello.	<i>Labdien!</i>
Bye.	<i>Uz redzesanos!</i>
All the best!	<i>Visu labu!</i>
I apologize.	<i>Atvaino!</i>
Please forgive.	<i>Ludzu, piedod!</i>

## Lithuanian

The Lithuanian language belongs to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language family. The size of the territory in which Lithuanian was spoken shrank considerably through the ages. Lithuanian is mostly spoken only by those within Lithuania; there are some areas of Lithuanian speakers in Poland and Belarus. Also, there is a Lithuanian Diaspora living in the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Latin America, Australia, and even Siberia. Historically, the Lithuanian language was mainly used by the peasant class. The nobles and educated people used foreign languages. In 1988, Lithuanian was declared the official language of Lithuania.

## Lithuanian Common Expressions

All in a day's work	<i>viskas iprastu darbu</i>
Back to reality	<i>atgal i realybe</i>
Cat got your tongue	<i>ar liezuvi prarijai</i>
Every Tom, Dick and Harry	<i>nieks neduoda ramybes</i>
Failure is not an option	<i>neseikme nepasirenkama</i>
He's got a chip on his shoulder	<i>jis uzsikrove ant savu peciu</i>
If it ain't broke, don't fix it	<i>jei nesupranti, tai ir neliesk</i>
If the shoe fits, wear it	<i>jei tai teisinga, prisiimk sau</i>
Practice makes perfect	<i>igudimas daro meistru</i>
That's the way the story goes	<i>taip sakoma</i>
When in Rome, do as the Romans do	<i>budamas Romoje elkis kaip romietis</i>

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## Education



The educational systems that currently exist in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania originally were created after World War I and modeled after Soviet education. The educational structure includes primary, secondary, and higher education institutions. In all three countries, education is compulsory through the first nine years of school, and literacy rates are very high in all three countries. There is a general trend that those in the more urban areas are more educated in comparison to those in rural areas. Significantly, ethnic Jews, Russians, and Ukrainians are generally more educated because of their tendencies to live in urban centers.

Schooling normally begins for children at the age of six. There are different types of elementary schools: grades one to four, one to nine, and one to twelve. Students may continue on to secondary school, which consists of three years in general studies and vocation programs. The general studies curriculum focuses on the humanities, mathematics, and sciences. Vocational schools train in the areas of technology, agriculture, specific services, and art. Vocational schools are programs that range from one to six years.

After the break from the Soviet Union, there have been some changes to the educational system. For example, rather than five-year universities, most universities are presently modeled after the American and Western European system of four-year bachelor degrees.



Another major change that occurred in the 1990s was the emergence of many ethnic schools. Ethnic language schools had originally existed prior to 1940, but except for Russian schools, all were closed after Soviet occupation. A number of schools teach in minority languages, including Hebrew, Swedish, Belarusian, Polish, and Ukrainian, as well as Russian. There are well over 300 special language schools.

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# Religion



## Early Religion

Conversion to Christianity in the Baltic region occurred later in comparison to other countries in Western and Eastern Europe. Baltic tribes successfully battled against Christian crusaders, including Teutonic Knights, for generations.

Early religion in the region was polytheistic. The main deities included the god of the sky, the god of thunder, who was the most powerful, and the god of the underworld, against whom both the god of the sky and god of thunder fought. The sun, moon, and stars were thought of as the heavenly family, who gave wedding blessings. Baltic tribes had their own star constellations, which were characters in stories including spirits of animals. For example, it is common today to have wooden carvings of cults on top of roofs; these were part of the region's original religion.

Also popular in the period before Christianity were a number of lesser deities, who were associated with agricultural labor cycles and who directed various aspects of nature and everyday life.

## Modern Religion

Estonians were Christianized in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The Lutheran Church in Estonia was officially established in 1686. However, in comparison to the other Baltic States, Estonia has always been less religious. In the years after Estonia's initial conversion, the Lutheran faith was closely tied to German feudal rule, and thus remained unpopular especially in the more rural areas. Also, religion was discouraged under Soviet rule for decades.

Other religions in Estonia are Orthodox Christians, as well as another minority faith, the Old Believers. Old Believers were originally a persecuted faith that left tsarist Russia. There is also a very small Jewish community, and there is a synagogue in Tallinn.



Latvia converted to Christianity between 1237 to 1561, while it was under the control of the Teutonic Knights. Before 1935, nearly 55% of Latvians identified themselves as Evangelical Christians. Roman Catholics make up the second largest religion with about 25% of the population. The Orthodox Church has a small following of about 10%. Latvia also has a group of Old Believers. Additionally, the Jewish minority was once 5%.

World War caused many changes in religion identification. Because the Lutheran Church was more complacent to Soviet doctrine, they lost a number of their constituents. Conversely, the Roman Catholic Church was quite resilient and insisted on the continuation of schools for its clergy and the holding of its services. Tragically, the Jewish community was decimated by the Nazis. Jews who reside in Latvia today originally came from other neighboring countries after World War II.



Lithuania first converted to Christianity in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century. Historically, Lithuania has largely remained a Roman Catholic Country since its initial conversion. In 1991, nearly 70% of the population considered themselves Roman Catholic. One of the main reasons for Catholicism's success was its firm protest against Communist repression during Soviet rule.

In addition to Roman Catholicism, other religions in Lithuania include Orthodox Christians, the Evangelical Reformed (Calvinists), and the Evangelical Lutheran. Lithuania also has a small Jewish population, as well as a small group of individuals who identify themselves as Old Believers. According to the 1992 Constitution, "freedom of thought, religion, and conscience are guaranteed to all, and the government officially recognizes traditional churches and religious organizations."

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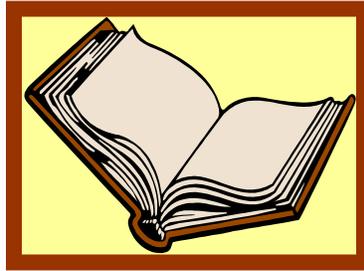
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## Estonian Art and Literature



Estonia is well-known for its national epics and poetry. Estonian writers have played a major role in political and national issues. Throughout Estonian history, national identity and patriotic themes have been strongly expressed in literature and poetry. The first major national epic was the *Son of Kalev*, which was written in the 1850s by Friedrich Reinhold Kreutzwald. The *Son of Kalev* was very much influenced by folk stories and the historical origins of the Estonian people. Written in verse, the epic tells the story of Kalevipoeg, the mythical ancient ruler of Estonia. Another great author who focused on national poetry and songs was Jakob Hurt. He authored and organized one of the first collections of Estonian folk songs. Hurt was also a preacher, who was known for his famous speeches about Estonian culture and values. By the 1800s, a number of poets embraced patriotism and centered on this theme. Romanticism and love of country were common expressions in Estonian poetry. During the first independence period, Estonian culture thrived. During 1926-33, writer Anton Hansen Tammsaare published his five-volume epic novel, *Tõde ja Õigus* (Truth and Justice), which covered the period 1870-1930. Lyrical poetry grew with the works of Marie Under, Henrik Visnapuu, and Betti Alver.

Under Stalin, Estonian culture became the victim of propaganda for the regime. The Soviet government forced uniform ideas in order to promote the interests of the administration. Many writers and artists, accused of nationalism, were deported. For most of the Soviet period, Estonia's culture remained stagnant. By the mid-1980s, Estonia's culture awakened once again under *glasnost*, which was Gorbachev's reform campaign fostering openness and specifically free speech. One of the first groups to mobilize in 1987 was the Estonian Heritage Society, which led volunteer projects to restore many of Estonia's cultural landmarks. At a 1986 writers' conference, writers were the first Estonians to announce in a public forum protest over censorship and forced propaganda. Literary magazines became an outlet for opinions about banned topics.

Many Estonian artists, poets, and writers made the transition into politics and were elected in the new democratic government. Nearly 20 writers and artists were elected to the new legislature in 1992. Unfortunately, during the economic decline in the early 1990s, paper shortages limited the number of books and journals that were made available. However, Estonia's culture was opened to the west, allowing for the exchange of ideas and new opportunities for creative works.

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## Latvian Folksongs



Latvian culture is strongly influenced by folklore and patriotism. Ancient folksongs, or *dainas*, which were first collected and published in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, most notably by Krisjanis Barons, are a cultural treasure. Originally singers, both men and women, wore costumes similar to Scottish kilts.

*Dainas* are often short and poetic and have been compared to the Japanese haiku. Over 1.4 million folk lyrics and 30,000 tunes have been written down in Latvia. The *dainas* are unique ancient Latvian folksongs that are intended to be sung. The *dainas* cover all aspects of ancient Baltic life including mythology, nature, and astronomy. The songs often focused on three important life events – birth, marriage and death. The first collection of *dainas* was published between 1894 and 1915 as *Latvju Dainas* by Krišjānis Barons. Today, *Dainas* are most popularly sung in the Latvian highlands.

These ancient verses have been handed down through oral tradition from generation to generation in Latvia, often at great cost. During one stage of German occupation of Latvia in the 16th century, women caught reciting the *Dainas* were burned at the stake as witches, which only strengthened the cultural resistance.

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## Lithuanian Folk Art

The folk art of woodcarving is seen throughout Lithuania. There are many sculptures and molding designs on buildings, homes, and churches. Lithuanians are very proud of these highly detailed wooden masterpieces. The most popular kind of woodcarving is that of crosses. This has been a tradition since Lithuania's conversion to Christianity. The art of cross-carving is seen throughout the country. There are so many crosses in Lithuania that the



country has been nicknamed "Land of Crosses". As part of the tradition, woodcarvers of crosses seldom identify their work, because it is believed that the "inner joy" one experiences in creating such a masterpiece is enough gratification for one's work.

The largest collection of crosses is located on the Hill of Crosses, where there are millions of crosses! The origins of the hill remain unknown. However, the Hill has become a famous part of Lithuanian history. During Soviet occupation, the Soviet secret police attempted to prohibit access and even destroy the Hill of Crosses. However, crosses continued to appear even during this period of adversity. Today, Lithuanians erect crosses in memory of loved ones, including those who were lost during wars and those who disappeared under the Soviet regime. The Hill of Crosses has gone beyond its religious purpose, and is also a symbol of nationalism for Lithuanians.



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## **Myths of the Baltics**

Baltic myths offer rich plots and compelling, as well as tragic heroes. At the heart of each tale are powerful life lessons that serve to explain a practice or belief of the Baltic people.

### **The White Wolf**



A king had three daughters, the youngest of whom was the most beautiful. Before departing on a trip, the king asked his daughters what presents he should bring them upon his return. The elder daughters requested jewels and finery, but the youngest princess asked for a blanket of living flowers.

The king easily obtained the first two gifts, but had difficulty fulfilling the youngest daughter's request.

Unhappily, he began his journey homeward, when he encountered a magnificent white wolf in the forest that had a blanket of blooms. To obtain the flowers, the king had to promise the wolf the first thing that greeted him on his return. The king promised, and fatefully, the first to greet him was his youngest daughter.

A servant girl was sent in place of the princess, but the wolf discovered the deception. Angered, the wolf went to the kingdom and demanded the true princess or else he threatened to attack the entire kingdom. In order to protect his kingdom, the king painfully surrendered his daughter to the wolf.

The wolf carried her off on his back to his beautiful manor, where she lived alone for one year. After one year, the wolf returned and announced to the girl that her eldest sister was

marrying and that he would take her to the wedding. But he made her promise to return to him as soon as she heard his howls. After the wedding, the young daughter heard his howls and returned to the wolf's manor, where she lived alone for another year.

At the end of this period, she was told that her elder sister was marrying. This time the wolf accompanied her to the feast and afterwards to the bedchamber, where he shed his wolf-skin and emerged as a beautiful youth.

The old queen spied and saw how the wolf shed his skin; she grabbed the fur and threw it into the fire. Immediately there was a great howling of winds; the young man changed back into a wolf and fled, which left the princess heartbroken.

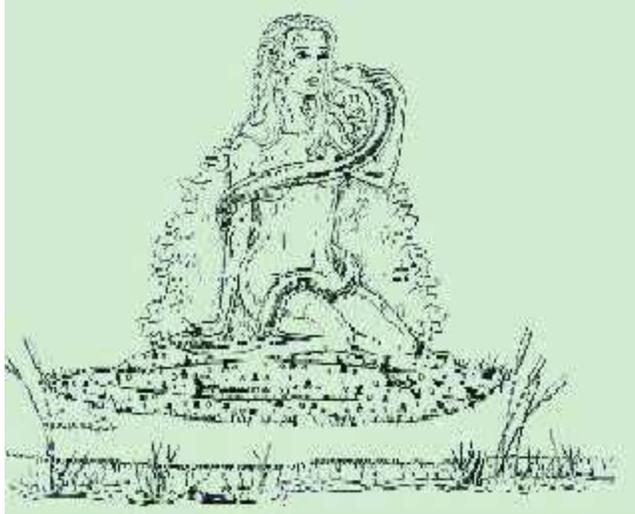
The princess searched long and traveled far in her quest to find her wolf. She requested the aid of the four winds, Star and Moon. They did not know of the wolf's whereabouts, but they gave her a magical pair of shoes to travel great distances with a single step.

Finally, Mother Sun, who was sympathetic to the prayers of young women, told her that she would find her betrothed high on a mountain. At the side of the mountain, she was to find a smith who would fix her hands and feet with iron, so that she would be able to climb the mountain. The princess also received a gift from the Sun – a magical wheel that spun moss into silken threads.

The princess did as she was instructed and found her way to the manor of the wolf to discover that he was about to wed another maiden. She found work in the house as a spinner, and the second wife-to-be noticed the princess' wondrous spinning wheel. She asked for the magical wheel, which the princess agreed to give, but only if she could be granted an audience with the wolf-master.

Upon his arrival, the wolf recognized his princess and claimed her as his true bride. She had proven her love for him, despite hardships and sorrow. The spell was broken and he became a man.

**Egle**  
*(pronounced AG-lay)*  
**Queen of Serpents**



In another time, long ago, there lived an old man and his wife. They had twelve sons and three daughters, the youngest of whom was named Egle.

One summer evening, the three sisters went bathing in a lake, and after swimming and playing they climbed out onto the shore to dress. The youngest looked and gasped in surprise to find a large serpent curled up in the sleeve of her robe.

Quickly, the eldest sister grabbed a staff and prepared to chase the snake away, but the serpent suddenly turned to Egle and spoke in a human voice:

“Give me your word that you will be my wife and I will go willingly.”

Egle cried, “Indeed, how can I marry a serpent? Please leave us and go in peace.”

But the Serpent refused to budge unless Egle would pledge herself to him. And the young girl, not thinking that such a promise could ever be fulfilled, agreed to be the Serpent King’s bride.

Three days later, Egle looked out her window to see an amazing sight. Thousands of snakes surrounded her home. They filled the yard with their writhing, twisting forms and some even entered the house to speak with her parents.

At first, the old man and woman could not believe the creatures’ request and refused to surrender their daughter. But against the vast multitude they were helpless, and so, with many tears and much heartache, they watched as Egle was taken from her home.

She was led by her escorts to the seashore, and there, awaiting her, much to her delight, was a handsome, smiling bridegroom – the Serpent King in human form.

Together they crossed the sea to an island where they descended into his kingdom. The Serpent King's halls were beautiful beyond imagining. Egle became enamored with her bridegroom and their wedding celebrations lasted three weeks.

In the Serpent's palace, all was provided and Egle never toiled. She soon forgot her old home and lived happily with her new husband, enjoying the wonders of his magical kingdom.

Twelve years passed and Egle now had three sons and a daughter. One day, Egle's eldest son asked, "Mother, where are your parents? Why do we never visit them?"

Suddenly Egle remembered her parents, brothers and sisters and her heart was filled with longing.

She went to her husband and told him how she wished to visit her family. The Serpent was disturbed to hear her request, but since he loved his wife so dearly, he could not refuse her. He granted her permission to leave, but only if she agreed to complete three tasks.

He showed Egle a spinning wheel and a ball of silk and told her that she could depart once she had spun all the thread from the silken ball.

Egle spun day and night, but the ball of silk never grew any smaller. Finally, she went to a wise woman and asked for her aid. The wise old crone instructed Egle to throw the ball into a fire or else the thread would never end.

Egle did as she was told, and as the ball of thread burned, out jumped a toad, which had been producing the silk thread all along.

Thus she finished her spinning, and once again approached her husband.

This time, the Serpent gave her shoes of iron and told her that she could leave once the shoes had been worn out. Egle put on the iron clogs and walked for many days and nights in an effort to wear out the shoes, but to no avail.

So again she went to the old crone for advice. The wise woman told her to take the shoes to the blacksmith, who would weaken them with his great hammer and anvil.

This was done and within a few days, Egle wore out the shoes of iron.

Then a third time, she went to her husband. The Serpent King told her that she must bake a cake for her relatives, for how could she visit them with empty hands? Egle agreed.

But the Serpent had secretly ordered that all the cooking vessels be smashed and destroyed in order to make this task impossible. Egle couldn't even carry water from the well. Hence, she sought help from the crone.

The old woman showed her how to repair the pots with clay and complete this final task

And so it was that Egle finally brought her baking to the Serpent King and asked his permission to leave.

Much saddened, the Serpent took Egle to the shore with their children and turning to them said, "After nine days you will return alone and call out over the waves to me in these exact words--

'Zilvine, Zilvineli! If you live, foam of milk, and if not, foam of blood.'"

So telling them, he bid Egle and the children farewell, warning them not to reveal to anyone how he was to be called.

Upon arriving at her parents' home, Egle was greeted with much rejoicing and merriment. All were curious to know how she had lived with the Serpent, and Egle had much to tell of what she had seen and learned in the enchanted kingdom.

The days passed quickly and happily and her time for leaving was soon approaching.

Everyone wanted Egle to stay, and her brothers wondered how to make it possible for her to remain with them.

The men decided that they must discover the Serpent's name and how he could be called.

So they took Egle's eldest son to a grove and threatened him to divulge the Serpent's secret. But the boy would not utter a word and so they let him go. They took the second and third son, but likewise, learned nothing from them.

Finally, they took the youngest, Egle's daughter. At first, she also refused to speak, but after they threatened her, she told all.

The brothers took up their scythes, went down to the sea, called the Serpent and struck him down.

Then they returned and did not say a word to Egle about what they had done.

On the ninth evening, Egle bade farewell to her family and went to the sea to call her Serpent husband:

"Zilvine, Zilvineli! If you live, foam of milk, and if not, foam of blood."

The sea surged and from the depths the waves cast forth blood, and Egle knew that her husband was no more.

As the waves crashed, she heard his voice:

“Your brothers murdered me with their scythes and our beloved daughter betrayed me.”

Her heart broken, Egle turned to her children and spoke.

“My brave sons, because of your courage and fortitude, you shall stand as the strongest of trees for all the day. But, you, my daughter, shall tremble at the slightest breeze and the rains shall ever wash your mouth.

I, your mother, shall remain on this earth as the Evergreen Fir.”

So it was spoken, and so it came to pass. Egle’s sons, Azuolas, Uosis and Berzas, are the strongest of our trees – Oak, Ash and Birch. But the Poplar, Drebulė, still trembles at the slightest breeze...

### **The Bear Slayer**



In the castle of the God of Thunder, the Baltic gods gather to give audience to the Father of Fate. The gods and goddesses huddle amongst themselves and discuss how they can give assistance to the Baltic mortals. Staburadze, who lives in a crystal palace in the depths of the mighty Daugava River, comes forward to tell the other deities of her encounter with a youth whom she saved from death. She would like to keep him with her beneath the river, lest he return to the surface and turn into stone. The God of Thunder, however, proclaims that the youth has been blessed and that he is destined for glory.



Some time later, the youth leaves the waters beneath the river. The chieftain Lielvarde adopts the youth as his own son. One day a vicious bear attacks the chieftain. The youth intervenes and wrestles the bear to the ground. Grabbing the beast by the jaws, he rips the bear apart with nothing but his hands.

The old chieftain is amazed by the boy’s strength and courage, and so he decides to reveal what has been said by the gods about the destiny of the impressive

young man: he is to become a hero of his people. Henceforth, the youth is known as Lacplesis, the Bear Slayer. The chieftain provides him with a fine horse, sword, shield, silver spurs and a marten-fur hat. The Bear Slayer then rides off to gain wisdom in the ancient Burtnieku school of wisdom.

On his way to Burtnieku, the Bear Slayer asks for lodgings at the castle of Aizkraukle, which stands in a desolate spot, far from the shores of the Daugava River. It is a place of notorious gloom. Here the Bear Slayer encounters Spidala, the gorgeous but evil daughter of the chieftain of Aizkraukle. The Bear Slayer is enraptured by the sultry, dark-eyed Spidala. But to his horror, he discovers that she has made a pact with the devil.

One night, the Bear Slayer secretly follows Spidala into the Devil's Pit. He draws close to a large house. Inside, he witnesses evil that is ghastlier than he can imagine. They partake in a bloody feast. The feast is then disrupted by the old Devil. He explodes into the chamber on a golden carriage that is pulled by a fire-breathing dragon.

The demonic bunch then encircle a trembling mortal: it is Kangars, deemed by his people to be a holy man. But, as the Bear Slayer quickly discovers, Kangars is the most despicable and lowly of traitors. Kangars is spared from being chewed up by the Devil's dragon by promising to disavow his god and to betray his people, condemning them to slavery at the hands of the foreigners now heading across the Baltic Sea.

The Bear Slayer has had enough of this hideous scene. He slips out of the house to make his way back to Aizkraukle castle. But an old witch sees the Bear Slayer and tells Spidala to dispose of him. She pursues him on a river, where the Bear Slayer's log is sucked down into a whirlpool and he expects death. But the gods spare him. The Bear Slayer wakes up unscathed in the crystal chambers of Staburadze, where he encounters the beautiful Laimdota, the daughter of the wise old chieftain, Burtnieks. She has brains to match her physical charms! It is love at first sight.

Eventually, the Bear Slayer must take leave of the beautiful Laimdota. Back on the river, the Bear Slayer meets Koknesis – another youth of legendary strength – and they become friends. Together, they journey back to the Aizkraukle castle, where the evil Spidala is shocked to find that the Bear Slayer is still alive.

After some time, the two friends, the Bear Slayer and Koknesis, depart for Burtnieku Castle to learn the wisdom of the ancients.

Three soulmates come together: the traitor Kangars, the hell-bent Spidala, and Dietrich, a German priest whose ship is saved on the stormy sea by the Latvian Livi tribe. Little do the Livi people know that they have actually saved their future oppressors from death!

Some years pass. The Bear Slayer and his friend Koknesis continue their studies at Burtnieku Castle. They do not know that the traitor Kangars has given word to the Estonian giant Kalapuisis that this is a good time to pillage and plunder Latvian villages. Kangars and the evil Spidala are certain that the Bear Slayer will shrink from challenging

the invincible Estonian giant, knowing he would meet his death.

As Kalapuisis goes on a rampage, the old chief of Burtnieku summons warriors to face the Estonian tyrant. He promises his daughter Laimdota's hand in marriage to the man who defeats the mighty giant. The Bear Slayer goes to face the Estonian giant and roundly defeats him. Later, the two make peace. Kalapuisis says that the whole Baltic area is under threat and that they must unite their forces to defend their lands against the outsiders.

The old chief arranges the marriage between the Bear Slayer and his daughter, Laimdota. Their bliss is cut short when Laimdota and the Bear Slayer's friend Koknesis are kidnapped and then spirited away on a ship bound for Germany. The vessel is also carrying the Livi chieftain Kaupa to Germany and then on to Rome, where he is to learn more about the Christian faith. This is all a devilish scheme of the evil Spidala and the traitor Kangars, and it nearly crushes the spirit of the Bear Slayer.

The villains lie to the Bear Slayer, telling him that Laimdota and his best friend have been lovers all along. Shattered, the Bear Slayer returns to his father's home, believing the story. He then resolves to sail north to find the sublime daughter of Ziemelis. Perhaps this northern beauty will cool his feverish head and help him forget the sorrow that is raging in his heart.

The lovely Laimdota has been locked up in a cloister somewhere in Germany. She is rescued from the lusty advances of a German count by the Bear Slayer's friend, Koknesis. The two make their escape, boarding a ship bound for the north.

Meanwhile, the Bear Slayer has sailed even further northwards. At the edge of the sky, he encounters the legendary daughter of Ziemelis. Her eyes are like the color of the sky on a clear day in the north. The astonishing beauty is surrounded by her weapons of war, but she is kind and offers the Bear Slayer and his ship's crew a chance to rest. The exhausted wayfarers are led to a fabulous garden, where they rest in the glow of a flame that shines up from the center of the earth. But the Bear Slayer becomes bored. He announces that it is time to pack up and return from whence they came. The lovely daughter of Ziemelis warns him: his that trip will be full of dangers. He will have to take special care to avoid the Island of Dog Muzzles, which is full of bloodthirsty creatures.

But the Bear Slayer and his ship's crew do come across the Island of Dog Muzzles, where the hero barely survives an attack by vile beings. The weary crew finally make it to the edge of the earth. One of the Bear Slayer's last heroic deeds before his final battle back home is to hack off the heads of three many-headed demons on the Last Enchanted Island, where he is miraculously reunited with Laimdota and his friend Koknesis. It is here that he also manages to release a repentant Spidala from her pact with Satan, whereby she and Koknesis become lovers.

The Bear Slayer and Laimdota, and Koknesis and Spidala are wed. The festivities, which take place on Midsummer Day, are overshadowed by a distant, fateful storm which is

brewing misery for the Baltic peoples that will last for 700 years. One by one, the Livi and other tribes succumb to the German crusaders. In a last-ditch effort to defend their freedom, the Bear Slayer unites his people against the alien forces and succeeds in driving them all the way back to the walls of Riga.

Victory, however, is short-lived, for the air is heavy with deceit.

A bitter and brooding Kangars, forsaken by his own kind, is sought out by the German priest Dietrich. The traitor Kangars then beseeches the Devil to learn the secret of the Bear Slayer's great strength. What is its source? What he learns is that the strength of the giant, the greatest hero of the land, is in his bearish ears!

Shortly thereafter, a band of roving knights come to the Bear Slayer's castle. A mysterious knight dressed in black steps forward and challenges the Bear Slayer to a fight. The Dark Knight knows about the source of the hero's strength, and in the course of the ensuing duel, he duly lops off the Bear Slayer's ears, infuriating the great giant. These forces of good and evil, the Bear Slayer and the Dark Knight, engage themselves in a pitched battle.

Finally, as they swipe at each other and then wrestle to the ground, they both tumble over a cliff above the mighty Daugava River, crashing into the waters below and vanishing underneath the dark waves forever.

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*Translation of this myth has been provided by Rita Laima Krievina, Delegation of the European Commission in Latvia.*



## Baltic Cuisine



### Little Mushroom Squares

*Ingredients:*

3 cups flour  
2 eggs  
2 cups chopped, raw mushrooms  
1 medium onion, finely diced  
2 tbs. butter  
2 tbs. sour cream  
Salt and pepper  
Water

*Preparation:*

**Mushroom stuffing:**

Sauté onion in butter.

Add sautéed onion to finely chopped mushrooms; add egg; season to taste with salt and pepper.

Mix well.

**Dough:**

Sift flour in a bowl and add eggs, a pinch of salt and enough water to make a dough similar in consistency to that of pasta dough.

Roll out the dough thinly and cut into 2 inch squares.

Place a spoonful of mushroom filling in the middle of each square and fold over, forming a triangle.

Pinch around the two sides, so stuffing does not leak out during boiling.

Take the opposite corners and pinch together.

Bring to a boil salted water in a large pot and boil the squares for 7 minutes.

Remove with a slotted spoon and place into a deep dish and pour melted butter over the squares.

Simmer gently with sour cream and salt to taste.

## Baked Potato Pudding



### *Ingredients:*

4 pounds of peeled potatoes  
1 pound of bacon  
1 cup of milk  
2 onions  
2 eggs  
2 bay leaves  
2 teaspoons of marjoram  
Salt and ground black pepper (for taste)

### *Preparation:*

Grate potatoes and set aside.  
Dice bacon and fry or bake, and add to grated potatoes.  
Combine with hot milk and mix up.  
Mix together with eggs and chopped onions; add pepper, broken bay leaf, marjoram, salt.  
Add the mixture to a greased baking dish. Mixture should be 5-6 cm in thickness.  
Bake in oven for 1-2 hours.  
When finished cut into quadrangular pieces and eat with sour cream.

## Baked Spare Ribs



### *Ingredients:*

2 lbs. pork spare ribs  
2 medium onions, chopped  
3 cloves of garlic, minced  
2 medium carrots, diced  
3 tbs. seasonings (black pepper, cloves, marjoram, parsley, salt)  
4 tbs. vegetable oil

*Preparation:*

Wash the meat and make small slits between the bones.

Rub well with the mixture of seasonings and minced garlic cloves, and allow the ribs to marinate in a cool place for 2 hours.

Oil a deep baking pan with 4 tbs. vegetable oil.

Cook ribs in baking pan together with the carrots and onions for about 45 minutes at 325°F.

Turn meat to other side after 20 minutes.

When done, cut up and place ribs in serving dish and pour baking juices on top of the ribs.

Serve with mashed potatoes and sauerkraut and/or dill pickles.

## **Stuffed Veal**

*Ingredients:*

½ lb. ground lean veal

½ lb. lean pork

½ cup white bread crumbs

½ cup sour cream

1 cup minced onion

2 cups chicken stock

Salt and pepper to taste

2 eggs

5 lbs. boned shoulder of veal

4 hard-boiled eggs, peeled

*Stuffing Preparation:*

Combine ground meats in a large mixing bowl and add bread crumbs, onions, water, eggs, 1 tbs. salt and 1 tsp. pepper.

Mix with your hands and a large spoon until all ingredients are mixed thoroughly; knead mixture for 3-5 minutes.

*Veal Preparation:*

Preheat oven to 350°F.

Spread the veal skin-side down flat on a table.

Using a small, sharp knife, make small cuts in the thickest areas of the meat to make it lie even flatter.

Cover the veal with wax paper and with the side of a cleaver or meat mallet, pound meat to a fairly uniform thickness.

Remove wax paper and season veal with salt and pepper.

Spread half of the stuffing on the veal, leaving a 2-inch border of veal exposed all around the sides.

Lay hard-boiled eggs in a row down the length of stuffing and spread remaining stuffing in a layer over them.

Bring one long side of the veal over the filling to the middle and tuck in the two ends. Bring the other side over the filling and seal tightly. With kitchen cord, tie rolled veal crosswise at 2-inch intervals, then with more cord tie it lengthwise. Place the rolled veal seam-side down in a shallow roasting pan large enough to hold it. Pour in 1 ½ cup chicken stock and roast for 2 hours; continue to baste veal with juices in pan. When meat is golden brown, carefully transfer it to a serving platter, then remove and discard cords. Bring remaining juices in pan to a boil over high heat, and add remaining ½ cup chicken broth to pan. Remove from heat, then stir ½ cup sour cream into sauce 1 tbs. at a time. Taste for seasoning and pour into a gravy-boat. Slice veal roll crosswise into 1-inch rounds and arrange slightly overlapping down center of a large preheated platter. Moisten them with a few teaspoons of sauce and serve remaining sauce separately. Usually rolled shoulder of veal is served with crisp fried potato patties.

### **Latvian Potato-Wild Mushroom Soup**



#### *Ingredients:*

1 cup dried mushrooms rinsed and soaked in warm water for one hour  
5 cups water  
2 tsp. salt  
6 russet potatoes, peeled  
4 slices of bacon finely chopped  
1 onion finely chopped  
½ tsp. paprika  
Freshly ground white pepper  
Chopped fresh dill for garnish.

#### *Preparation:*

Add mushrooms (including their broth) and water to a large soup pot, and bring to a boil over high heat. Add salt, reduce heat, then simmer for 30 minutes. Add the potatoes, raise heat to medium, and cook until the potatoes are tender, about 20 minutes. Remove from heat. Fish out the mushrooms, let them cool for a minute, then chop them roughly and set to the side. Fry the bacon crisp in a separate skillet, then drain. Pour off all but a tablespoon of bacon grease, and add the onion and mushrooms to it.

Sauté over medium heat for about 15 minutes, until the mixture is nicely browned.

Stir the bacon back into it.

Meanwhile, puree the potatoes with a cup of broth, then whisk the potatoes back into the pot, beating hard to remove any lumps.

When the bacon mixture is ready, bring the potato soup back to a simmer, add the cream, and let heat for several minutes, until the soup is about to boil.

Stir in the mushrooms, bacon, and onion, season with paprika and pepper and adjust for salt.

When ready to serve, ladle into bowls and garnish with fresh dill.

### **Poppyseed Coffee Cake**



#### *Ingredients for Dough:*

2 ½ lbs. flour  
1 ½ cups milk  
2 oz. fresh yeast  
4 egg yolks  
1 whole egg  
½ cup sugar  
1 tsp. salt

#### *Ingredients for Poppyseed Filling:*

1 ½ cups whole poppy seeds  
¾ cup sugar  
1 egg  
¼ cup chopped nuts  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
¼ cup candied orange peel, diced

#### *Preparation for Poppyseed Filling:*

Grind poppyseeds.

Beat egg with sugar, add nuts, orange peel, vanilla and ground poppyseeds, and mix well.

Let rest until dough has risen.

#### *Preparation for Dough:*

Mix yeast with 1 tbs. sugar, then dissolve in 1 tbs. milk.

Take 1 ½ cups flour, mix with warm milk, beat until all flour is incorporated.

Add the yeast solution, mix well, dust lightly with flour, cover and set in a warm place to rise for 2 hrs.

Beat egg yolks with sugar until pale and add to the risen dough. Mix thoroughly.

Add the remaining flour, salt. Knead the dough for 30-45 minutes.  
Let rest in warm place for a second rising.  
After the second rising, punch down the dough, divide into two.  
Roll out the half of the dough to a ½ inch thickness and spread on it half of the poppyseed filling, staying away from the edges. Roll it up gently and place seam down on baking sheet.  
Repeat with second half of dough.  
Allow to rise in a warm spot.  
Before baking in a preheated oven at 350°, brush tops with an egg wash.  
Baking time is about 40-50 mins.

When the poppyseed cakes are done, remove them from the oven, but keep on the baking sheet, covered lightly so that they do not dry out as they are cooling.  
Remove from the baking sheet only after they have cooled.

### **Blue Noses (Blueberry dumplings)**



#### *Ingredients:*

2 cups flour  
2 whole eggs  
½ cup water  
½ cup sugar  
1 cup sour cream  
1 cup fresh blueberries or blueberry preserves  
Pinch of salt

#### *Preparation:*

Make dough using flour, eggs and water. On a floured surface, roll out the dough thinly, to about 1/8 inch thickness.  
If using fresh blueberries, mix with sugar. If using preserves, remove some of their liquid.  
Put a teaspoonful of berries on the dough, spaced evenly, fold dough over and press with round cookie cutter or use a medium-size glass to cut the dumplings.  
Press the dumpling sides together so that the berries do not leak out  
Repeat until all dough and berries are used up.  
Bring a large pot of lightly salted water to a boil, and gently drop in the dumplings, stirring lightly.  
After 5 to 8 mins. of boiling, strain dumplings and place on a serving dish, cover with dollops of sour cream and sprinkle with sugar.

Blue noses are also eaten cold, then they are placed on a serving dish so that they do not touch each other. They are also eaten with sour cream and sugar.

### **Spice Cookies**



#### *Ingredients:*

½ sugar  
1/3 cup butter  
¼ cup honey  
¼ cup pure maple syrup  
¼ teaspoon cardamom  
¼ teaspoon ground cloves  
¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
¼ teaspoon cinnamon  
3 cups all-purpose flour  
1 egg  
½ teaspoon ground ginger  
1 egg, beaten

#### *Preparation:*

In a large pan, combine sugar, butter, honey, syrup, cardamom, cloves, nutmeg, and cinnamon.

Bring to a boil then remove from heat.

Stir in ½ cup of the flour and beat with a wooden spoon until smooth.

Let cool.

Beat in 1 egg.

Stir in remaining flour.

Cover and refrigerate 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 375°F.

Lightly grease cookie sheets or line with parchment paper.

Let dough stand at room temperature until soft enough to roll.

Roll out dough between two pieces of wax paper until 1/8 inch thickness.

Carefully remove the top sheet of wax paper.

Cut out cookies with 2 inch round cookie cutters.

Brush cookies with beaten egg.

Bake 7-10 mins. or until golden brown.

Transfer to wire racks to cool.

## **Additional Resources:**

About Lithuania

<http://www2.omnitel.net/ramunas/>

Central & Eastern Europe: the Baltic States

<http://www.mythinglinks.org/euro~east~baltics.html>

CIA- The World Fact Book

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/xx.html>

City Paper, Baltic States

<http://www.balticsww.com/timeline.htm>

Countries and Other Areas, U.S. Department of State

<http://www.state.gov/p/eur/ci/>

Country Studies, Library of Congress

<http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/cshome.html>

Europa, Gateway to the European Union

[http://www.europa.eu.int/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/index_en.htm)

The Government of the Republic of Estonia

<http://www.riik.ee/valitsus/index.php?lang=en>

Government of the Republic of Lithuania

[http://www.lrv.lt/main\\_en.php?cat=0](http://www.lrv.lt/main_en.php?cat=0)

Latvia in Europe

<http://www.latvija-eiropa.gov.lv/en/13>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

<http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/>

We, the Balts

<http://postilla.mch.mii.lt/Kalba/baltai.en.htm>

Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)