



ITK TIPS

Our Riga

#itktips

#ourRiga

ABOUT

Since we set up our off-line shop in the capital of Latvia, we have been constantly asked by our relatives, friends and acquaintances: "What is of interest in Riga? Why is it worth visiting? What kinds of landmarks and entertainment are available there?" As a result of our numerous conversations on the forums and telephone we have realized that it is time for us to dot all the "i"s and come up with our own guide-book of Riga, a guide-book from ITK Brotherhood. Here is the first page of this guide-book which we intend to amend and update regularly for you. Be sure that there will be enough information in it for you to base on so that your stay in Riga will be differently pleasant and trouble-free.

Riga and its suburbs are definitely worth visiting. Its architecture, as well as its unique flora and fauna, local food and alcohol are sure to impress you and

stay in your memory. Besides, Riga is famous for its numerous venues, where you can unwind leaving the stress of everyday life behind. We have been to all of them, so you can trust us on our commentary and follow into our steps. Sprats, balm, crafted beer, Riga's Art Nouveau district, local herring, wild boar and venison, cozy parks and pristine nature, sandy or rocky beaches, crystal lakes as well as the rich historic heritage spanning over several regimes and civilizations – these are only some of the attractions Riga can offer.

ITK Brotherhood

FUN FACTS

Every guide-book contains this kind of section. Frankly, we always omit it when studying other guide-books, but let it be here for the sake of tradition: at least it will help you get a better idea of how to while away your time on board the airplane or on your way from the airport to the city.

- Log on to www.ss.lv, where you can find the best offers on car hire or accommodation as well as any other information you may need.
- Alcohol in Latvia is only sold until 10 p.m.
- Latvia boasts many kinds of beer, which is its national drink. The only thing it lacks is bad beer
- Latvian brewing traditions originated a long while ago. The Old brewery in Cesis is known to be the oldest in Northern Europe. Local beer has been brewed here since 1590.
- Fines may be imposed for crossing the road on the red light.
- Grey peas served with pork fat ("salo") is Latvia's signature dish. The most exotic one, to our mind, is herring served with cottage cheese and soured cream.
- The average life expectancy for women and men is 77 and 82 years respectively.
- Keeping fighting dogs as pets is prohibited in Latvia.
- Dartz Motorz makes "Prombron", the world's most expensive armoured off-road vehicle.
- The share of fashion models amongst the local population is second to none in the world.
- Edgars Gauracs is known as the No 1 fashion icon in the world of sports after David Beckham's retirement.
- German composer Richard Wagner witnessed a devastating storm while crossing the sea on his way from Riga to London. The composer was so appalled by the storm that it apparently became the inspiration for his world-famous opera "The Flying Dutchman".

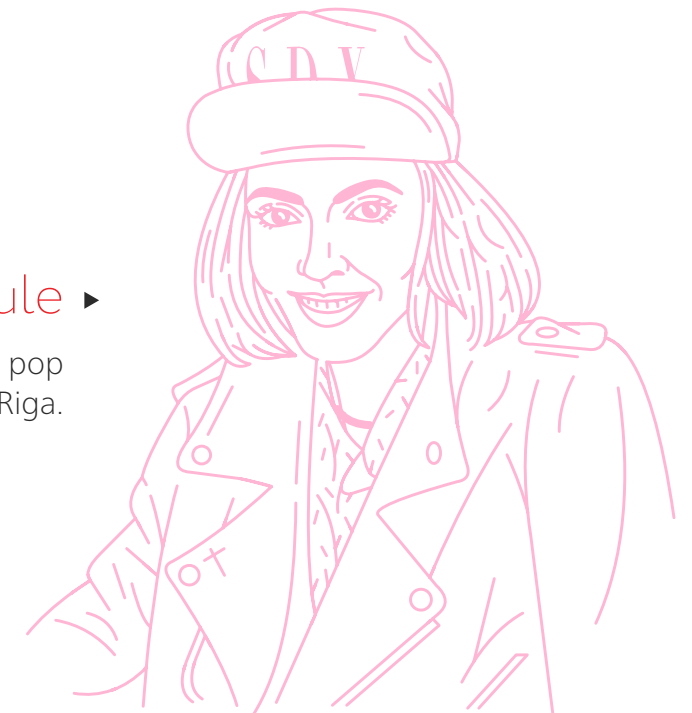


◀ Michail Baryshnikov

One of the world's most renowned ballet dancers, Michail Baryshnikov, was born in Riga to a family of the Soviet Army officer.

Laima Vaikule ▶

Laima Vaikule, a famous pop singer, comes from Riga.





◀ Valdish Pelsh

Valdish Pelsh, a showman and musician, and Michail Zadornov, a comedian, were both born in Latvia.

Ulyana Semjonova ▶

Ulyana Semjonova is Latvia's ever most prominent basketball player. Standing at 2.10 m (6 ft 11 in) Semjonova was the leading women's basketball player in the world in the 70s and 80s. For most of her career she played as a centre for TTT Riga. With TTT, she won 15 championships in the Soviet Union and 15 European Champion's Cups. Semjonova was also very dominant in international play, eventually winning Olympic Gold medals while playing for the USSR. In 1993 she became the first non-US woman enshrined into the Basketball Hall of Fame. She was an inaugural member of the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame in the class of 1999. In 2007, she was enshrined in the FIBA Hall of Fame.



◀ Arvids Blaymentals

The Latvian hunter Arvids Blaymentals became a prototype of the main character of "Crocodile Dundee" comedy series. He left for Europe in 1944 to join the French legion in 1947. Soon afterwards he found himself in Australia, which is where he took to hunting crocodiles. He is claimed to have caught as many as 40,000 crocodiles over his hunting career.

Hockey ▶

Latvia is one of the three countries (the other two being Canada and Finland) where hockey is the nation's most favourite sport. The top-2 in Latvia is closed off by basketball.



◀ Baron Munchausen

A famous day-dreamer Baron Munchausen is a real person born in Germany, but who made Latvia his home country.



Jackie Chan ▲

Shot several episodes for his movie in the wind tunnel in 2012, praising the professionalism of the Latvian team.

- The town of Sigulda offers one of the world's few bobsleigh, luge and skeleton tracks open for general public. Tourists are offered a ride in a winter or summer bob piloted by experienced athletes.
- Latvia is on the list of top 10 countries with the highest speed of Internet connection. You may benefit from this should you need to check your e-mails while staying in Riga.
- Latvians were the first to make a show of the AERODIUM wind tunnel, which is now known all over the world after the closing ceremony of the Olympic games in Turino. Jackie Chan shot several episodes for his movie in the wind tunnel in 2012, praising the professionalism of the Latvian team.
- It was the Jewish tailor Jakobs Jufess of Latvian origin who was the first to make denim trousers which later became known as jeans. Levis Strauss was just his business partner, having, however, received the credit for making the first pair of jeans all over the world.
- Many Soviet movies set in western European countries were actually shot in Riga.
- The pavilions of the central market in Riga used to be the hangers where zeppelins were stationed.
- Latvia's most famous band is "Brainstorm" ("Prata Vetra" in Latvian), founded 1989.
- Berzynch is the most widely spread Latvian surname. The most popular first name is Yanis.
- Vayra Vike-Freiberga was elected President of Latvia in 1999. She was the first woman to be elected President in Eastern Europe.
- ITK KIT at Z.A. Meierovica Blvd., 18 boasts the best collection of modern menswear in the Baltic countries. The building housing our shop is known as Redlich's tenement building. It was constructed in 1864 and used to house "Otto Shwartz" restaurant until 1933, which was then converted into "Mona" cafe famous for its orchestra and later into "Luna" (moon) cafe. In the 90s it was a McDonald's restaurant.

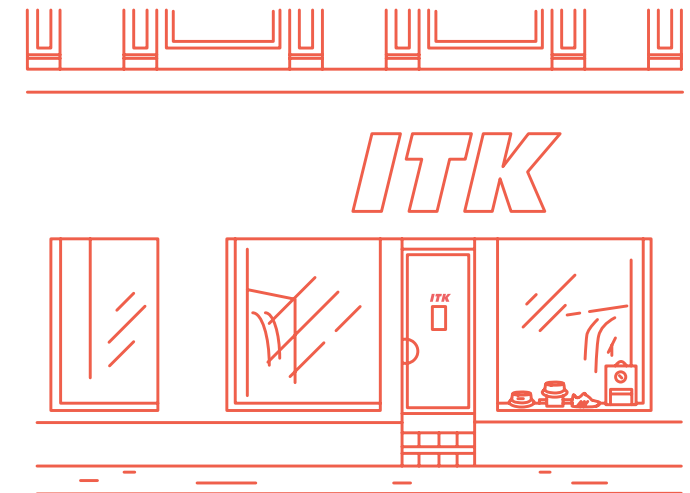


◀ Ligo

Latvia's most beloved holiday is Ligo – the day of the summer equinox – which is celebrated by all Latvians at a scale prevailing that of the celebration of the Christmas in Europe.

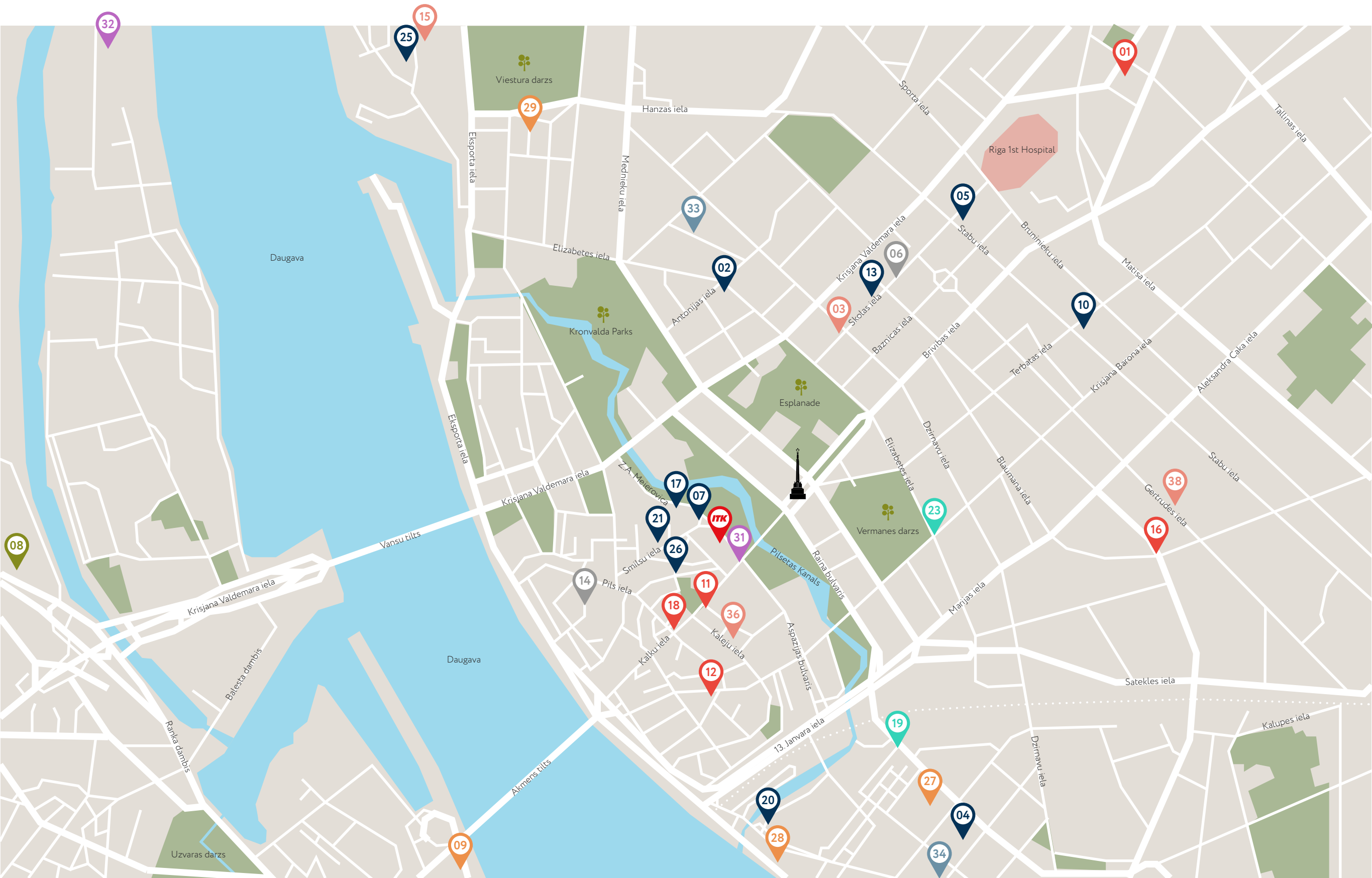
ITK KIT ▶

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MAP

- Cafe & Restaurants
 ● Bars
 ● Shops
 ● Art & Culture
 ● Nightlife
- Parks
 ● Living
 ● Barbershop
 ● Active sports
 ● Market



01 **LABIETIS** / Aristida Briana 9A-2

The best place to get the feel of the local traditions of brewery. The lads brew a few kinds of their own beer as well as provide you with a detailed commentary on the specific features of each type of beer. Visitors are welcome to taste them all, so do not hesitate and have a go at whatever is on the taps on the day of your visit. Besides crafted beer, the menu features light snacks. So if you feel hungry, decent burgers (including those with venison) can be found to the left of the bar entrance. The bar itself is located off the beaten tourist tracks on the site of what used to be a tobacco factory. But take our word, seeking it is definitely worthwhile.

02 **FOODBOX** / Antonijas iela 6A

A Turkish restaurant housed in the Embassy of Turkey, which already speaks for itself. The menu features a wide range of Turkish specialties along with traditional drinks, such as lemonades, ayran, homemade and local beer, dry wine and Turkish tea, which is available free-of-charge (you can find a samovar on the windowsill). Pleasant atmosphere, friendly staff, a cozy terrace, superb meat, generous helpings and, last but not least, authentic kebab make it one of the musts in Riga.

03 **ROBERT'S BOOKS** / Dzirnavu 51

The bookshop was founded in 2008 by Robert Kotterl, who was driven by the idea to make his dream of establishing a perfect bookshop come true. The place boasts a great choice of books and magazines both in Russian and English. Friendly staff and visitors sharing the same interest in reading are a bonus. In other words, the best bookshop in Riga and a must visit for all book worms.

04 **ALA** / Peldu iela 19

A traditional Latvian tavern housed in the medieval wine cellars in the very heart of the Old Town. The restaurant specialises in traditional and modern Latvian cuisine with a solid emphasis on seasonal products. One of the favourites – peas served with shlek – is the cheapest dish on the menu and at the same time a local specialty. Great food is accompanied by an impressive list of drinks including 27 kinds of local beer, homemade wines and herbal teas. Live music and dancing create a warm and relaxing, yet lively and vibrant atmosphere, so bear this in mind if you plan to have a quiet evening.

05 **VEST** / Stabu iela 1

A modern urban café which is equally good whether you are going to meet with your colleagues, friends or girlfriend. A stylish interior and friendly staff add to the charm of the place. The café often hosts live music concerts. However, it is drinks which are its signature. By the way, in the same building you will be able to find a cool in-house barbershop where the staff will be pleased to take care of your hair, beard and moustache.

06 **KANAPE KULTURAL CENTRE** / Skolas iela 15

Feel like having a long night up and painting the town red? Then Kanape Kultural Centre is your pick. But do not turn up before midnight in order to find yourself in a really warmed up atmosphere created by the hum of chatting and dancing. Why not have a glass of wine or a pint of beer in between the two? Another attraction is a massive plasterboard lion overhanging the summer open-air terrace. The day-time menu features a decent selection of food and drinks. However, the place is not just a club and café, it is home to various experimental art venues. The building it occupies is worth paying special attention to. Built back in 1895, it was first inhabited by German and Russian aristocrats, then was taken over by bohemian artists and students of the Arts Academy and Riga Technical University during the times of First Republic, and finally became a home for children – students of a music school. All in all, this is a great place to hang out in the town centre whilst among an interesting crowd.

07 **CADETS de GASCogne** / Z.A. Meirovica blv. 8

At first glance, no more than a typical coffee shop: it's all coffee, tea and pastry. Nothing really extraordinary. But all this is misleading. If you are still not convinced, here is a sneak peak: this business only employs young women, each of them having a truly unique appearance. Nota bene: Ildar's top place to go. A deserved 100% ITK.

08 **LATVIA BOTANICAL GARDEN** / Kandavas iela 2

Whatever you would expect of an ideal botanic garden, it won't be much more than a nightmare of vegetation all around and that's exactly what this garden houses, along with a butterfly house and a summer café. Your best pick for a lengthy and relaxed stroll. If you do get irrevocably bored, you always have the chance to waste some battery life on your smartphone and see your Instagram likes shoot up as your subscribers endeavour the capricious exuberance of the plants you will see here. The garden, by the way, was first open to the public back in 1922.

09 **NATIONAL LIBRARY of LATVIA** / Mukusalas iela 3

We realise that a trip to a library might not just be the thing you are most anxious about when on holiday. But if you happen to have the interest and ample time, then we promise that a visit to the National Library will make a great day out: it's ambrosial use of space in combination with an imposing collection of books, manuscripts, maps and loads more will allow you to enjoy a little mental effort as you scrutinise the footprints of European culture.

10 **BUFETE GAUJA** / Terbatas iela 56

A very relaxed buffet set in Soviet style from the 60-70s. Its artistic environment and truly alternative experience offer refreshment for those sick and tired of humdrum interiors. Lively conversations, a retro style library, classic board games, movie nights, music sessions and other neat surprise events are no oddity in this venerable canteen. What's more, the local prices will attract you with their welcoming affordability.

11 **MOLONEY'S PUB** / Riharda Vagnera iela 3

Nothing can go wrong in a town or city that has an Irish pub and Riga is no exception. This is it, guys. An Irish pub in Riga. Beer, more beer, a club sandwich, chicken wings, crowds of Brits, football broadcast and grumpy staff - though we can excuse the guys at the bar counter for the last bit: imagine the stress they go under when dealing with the drunken lot.

12 **PADDY WHELAN'S** / Grecinieku iela 4

A good old, pub-type joint, Paddy Whelan's has withstood all challenges that time presented them. Having existed for quite a while now, it has become a favourite amongst by-passers. Anyone could drop by for a pint of beer: tourists, idle spectators, fashion people, programmers, businesspeople and local sport fans. The list could go on forever. And, once we bring up the exact year it opened its doors to the public, 1995, all that becomes even more apparent. You have to admit that this on its own speaks for itself. Typical Irish pub-cuisine and endless sport broadcasts apply.

13 **MIIT** / Lacplesa iela 10

A lovely café. Perfect for having a break after a long walk about the city, especially if you are in need of a gorgeous cup of coffee and if – wait for it – your bike needs a pit stop. The café stashes an epic bicycle workshop which is a beloved place of

pilgrimage amongst cycling devotees. To whom it may concern: the guys at Miit have not forgotten to offer a vegetarian menu. Not our top-1 location, but will surely be of interest to a lot of you.

14 **KROGS APTIEKA** / Maza Miesnieku iela 1

A rock-n'-roll bar that serves as a stage for independent musicians and DJs. Concerts almost guaranteed every night. Try to come after midnight on a Friday or Saturday and endeavour the relaxing spirit that prevails the rock club. As for the menu, we recommend you order a burger and enjoy the gorgeous combo of a burger and a pint of beer. A cute add-on is the option of putting up music of your choice in a jute box. That, of course, is free of charge...

15 **SPIRITS & WINE** / Andrejostas 4

An "alcohol outlet" located in the harbour. An excellent range of beers from crafted types to elite beverages at maladroitness prices. The place to go to stock up your supplies of alcohol if you, say, rent a house or flat and the idea of repetitive trips to town for topping up your stocks exasperates you. Why not empty a few bottles right on the spot and admire the views of the city? The best night clubs in Riga will soon open their doors in this district when the day turns into night.

16 **CHOMSKY** / Lacplesa iela 68

A well-renowned moto-café. It remains occupied mostly by the locals, who have been regulars here for a number of years. Movie nights and music concerts, lectures and parties as well as the sale of vinyl disks are housed at Chomsky. There is nothing but drinks on the menu, although rumour has it that bringing your own food won't be lethal. A sandwich or something similar should suffice. The right place to feel the city and immerse in the local culture.

17 **3 PAVARU RESTORANS** / Torna iela 4/2 b

We can't avoid saying that here it won't be *cheap at all*, so prepare your wallet in advance. Not everyone has the taste for food from here, but anyone favouring such an iconoclastic, in its own kind, manner of service, will not leave disappointed. Such non-trivial service and generous portion sizes will allow you to have a good taste of your meal but will not be enough to stop your mouth watering by any means. And, yes, everything is for a reason. If perplexed by the sophisticated menu, ask the first waiter and don't doubt their advice. The staff here are simply prodigious. Note that you are likely to think the same of the quality of the ingredients that will make up your meal. To be on the safe side, try to follow an ade-

quate dress code. To us, there is nothing here for a gang of friends, yet not much can be better for a get together with your parents, a date with your girlfriend or a meeting with your business partners.

18 **BLACK MAGIC** / Kalku iela 10

A down-the-line tourist oriented place. It's Black Magic's location that saves the day and makes it worth a visit. Initially a pharmacy, it is the birthplace of the well-known Riga balm. Not surprisingly, you will dip into a place with a unique medieval atmosphere and bloody-bloody-blah. As a matter of fact, all you need to do is to come here for a shot of the said balm. Done with a few shots? This is the time to leave. Everything else on the menu and whatnot can be found in other places at more decent prices. They do offer a wide range of desserts though, but we have not had a chance to get our hands on them just yet. There is a sort of lab of magic tricks and surprises in the basement that kids will be frisky about.

19 **RIGA CENTRAL MARKET** / Negu iela 7

Latvia is internationally renowned for its organic food products. You can take our word that this is no myth – local products are indeed exceptional. The Central Market is precisely worth visiting for its fish, meat and dairy products. You are bound to find something to do in any case. Five pavilions, former hang-ers for aircraft and zeppelins, now function as fresh food stalls, all leading to a divine and inexpensive experience. ITK – recommended.

20 **SILKITES UN DILLITES** / Centraltirgus iela 3

One of those marketplace cafes that you would want to visit early in the morning, in this case not to miss the aroma and taste of freshly caught fish stocked up on the shelves. It couldn't be simpler: pick a sea creature and how you want it cooked. An individual approach guaranteed. Whatever you do you must try the herring, of course. The hard core guys at the counter know what they are doing and will serve you with great care.

21 **UNCLE VANYA** / Smilsu iela 16

If you are suddenly in the need of Russian food go to Uncle Vanya. It's a supreme collection of all the highlights of the Russian cuisine, nothing else. Meanwhile, the bar holds a sharp focus on strong alcoholic drinks and home-made liqueurs.

22 **SUESASIA** / Jomas iela 74

So, you end up in Urmala and need a snack after, presumably, a hike or a swim. Luckily, an Indian restaurant in the central street of the city is ready to stun you with its dishes and prices. With not much to choose from in Urmala, it may well be the only of its kind. (At least, from what we gather.)

23 **BERGA BAZARS** / Elizabetes iela 83/85

A market brought to life by local farmers and craftsmen that runs on Saturdays 11.00-16.00. A good one to purchase local handicrafts or to simply apprehend the principles of Latvia's Eco farming.

24 **VALMIERMUIZAS ALUS** / Dzirnavu iela 2, Valmiermuiza

Beer is Latvia's national baverage and, hence, consuming it is one of the main pastimes. Ready to set off on a quest for local beer? If yes, rent a car or take a train and head for Valmiermug's estate. The first record of the place dates back to 1624. According to it, more than 130 barrels of beer were sold here. It now houses a full-blown brewery, which makes beer to its original recipes. The history of the mansion house and estate is eventful due to their vantage location – namely, on the route from Europe to Saint-Petersburg. Many monarchs stopped here in the past, and among them are Kings of Poland and Sweden, the Queen of Prussia and the Impress of Russia Cathrine II. So, you are sure to find the trip to the place both pleasant and educational.

25 **KOYA RESTORANT** / Andrejostas 4

Set on the bank of the Daugva on the site of what used to be a shipyard, its spacious open-air terrace offers a panoramic view of Riga. The average bill is 20-30 euros. The menu features European, Mediterranean and French cuisine.

26 **PELMENI XL** / Kalku iela 7

Pelmeni (dumplings) XL is cheap and nasty. Pop in here if you wish to save on time and money. What's more, the eatery is open through the whole night, which is, trust us, a rare thing. The menu is mostly enriched by pelmeni with different stuffings along with side salads. Vodka accompanied by kefir are the favourites. Only basic stuff, just how we like it.

27 **LATVIAN ACADEMY of SCIENCES** / Akademijas laukums 1

The building of Latvian Academy of Sciences is situated in the vicinity of the Central market and very much mimics one of Stalin's seven sky scrapers in Moscow. We have it on our map as it offers the best panoramic view of the city. The entrance fee is 4 euro, which is even lower than that to St. Paul's cathedral. It closes at 10 p.m., so you can marvel at night-time Riga, so allow some time for it to get dark and the city to light up before you get there in the evening.

28 **SPIKERI QUARTER** / Maskavas iela 6

Spikeri, in the past an industrial district, is now a creative area hosting theatres, museums, art-cafes, restaurants, concert halls as well as various artistic open-air events. Have a leisurely stroll around it and you will definitely find something to your liking. Riga's Ghetto museum, Modern Art museum and Balms outlet are located in the district. And we have only mentioned those venues which may be of interest to you as ITK fans.

29 **ART NOUVEAU QUARTER**

40% of the buildings in the historic centre of Riga are in Art Nouveau style and Riga is justly considered the capital of Art Nouveau architecture. Thus, when strolling along its streets do not look at the pavement or shop windows, but look up and admire the surprising architecture. You are sure to like what you will see even if you are not an Art Nouveau person. Numerous atmospheric boutique shops and cafes offer a pleasant break should you feel tired.

30 **GAUJAS NACIONALAIS PARKS**

If you feel like finding a retreat from the hustle and bustle of the city, head for the Gaujas national park. The park is known for its Devon-era sand cliffs on the banks of the river Gauja. Some of them are as high as 90 metres. The south-western part of the park is the locals' favourite recreation venue. It was referred to as Levon Switzerland and was a popular tourist attraction as early as the 19th century. Take a leisurely walk along the winding paths and enjoy the natural beauty and tranquillity of the place or have a refreshing swim. As Latvia is a very compact country, getting to the park should not be much of a problem.

31 **HOSTEL LIBERTY** / Z.A. Meirovica 18

This hotel/hostel which is next door to our shop is our only pick should you require accommodation when in Riga, as we are sure that alternative offers can

be easily found on the net. The hotel was only recently refurbished and provides clean rooms, democratic prices and a convenient location in the historic centre of Riga. All this coupled with its proximity to ITK KIT, where our team are always happy to see you, makes it a perfect place to stay at. The rooms include singles, doubles and group ones.

32 **CAMPING in the centre of Riga** / Reitumi iela 2 или Matrozu iela 15

A unique camping experience on the bank of the Daugava on the island of Kipsala. Sounds intriguing, doesn't it? The available facilities include electricity, sewage, drinking water, wi-fi, laundry services, a terrace and a swimming pool. All in all, a somewhat different way of spending your time in a city.

33 **WOOD RELIGION** / Kalku iela 28

Legend goes that it is the oldest barbershop in Latvia. The lads render a standard range of services: haircuts, shaving, beard trimming. Besides, it sells men's cosmetics of such brands as Wood Religion, Uppercut Deluxe, Truefitt and Hill, Proraso, MR, Natty, Murrys, Suavecito. Pop in to get a refreshing experience, both literally and figuratively.

34 **CHOP-CHOP** / Marijas iela 16 - 215 или Gertrudes iela 10

Yet another representative of barber art in Riga. Chop-chop is not a beauty parlour, so don't expect any frills like having your hair washed 5 times in a row. All you can hope for is a neat and quick haircut. To cut a long story short, a reliable place to have a basic or trendy haircut.

35 **STAG** / Alberta iela 1-8A

A tiny shop in the Art Nouveau district. The stocked brands feature Woolrich, Uniforms for the Dedicated, Happy Socks, Red Wings and others. The assortment is far from being a comprehensive one, but it fully reflects the owner's tastes and preferences. Just pop in if you happen to find yourself nearby. Bear in mind, though, that you may find it shut as Armen The Owner serves the clients himself and, thus, needs regular breaks.

36 **BANG BANG SHOP** / Kaleju iela 18/20

The shop stocks typical street culture brands: Carhartt WIP, Supra, Element, Vans, Volcom, Obey and the likes. Other brands include Adidas, Nike, Asics and New Balance.

37 **ITK KIT** / Z.A. Meirovica 18

We stock Adidas, Nike, Asics, New Balance, Umbro Pro Training, Gosha Rubchinskiy, Norse Projects, Manastash, Alden Shoes, Barbour, Champion, LVC, Wood Wood, Han Kjobenhavn, 6878 and many other brands which speak for themselves. We, on our part will be absolutely honest with you by saying that we offer the best assortment of modern menswear in the Baltic countries. Just drop in even if you are not in the shopping mood and we'll be there to help you by answering your questions or giving advice on where to go and how to keep yourself busy while in Riga.

38 **MODERNISTS** / Gertrudes iela 62

A contemporary retail area, where one can find a good selection of wines, furniture and interior accessories, as well as books, magazines and vinyl disks along with some trainers. In other words, all that the lads who run the place favour themselves. Besides, they publish their own magazine (a very good one to their credit), which also reflects their lifestyle values.

39 **BALTVILLA** / Sencu prospekts 45

Batvilla hotel located on the lake of Baltezers offers a wide range of water sports facilities: wakeboarding, water skiing, etc. If you are into something more relaxing, here goes: you can always hire a boat or play volleyball or do yoga or practise Nordic walking. Fancy horse riding? No problem. Whatever your choice, you are bound to have a great time. The local nature is so diverse that spending time in the countryside is always enjoyable.

40 **KOKLITES** / Koklites 1

As Latvia is a sea country, one can do all sorts of water sports here. The Koklites centre in Saulkrasty provides facilities for kiteboarding, windsurfing, skimboarding and wakeboarding, you name it. All the necessary gear can be hired on the spot. There are also tennis courts and volleyball and basketball grounds as well as football pitches at your disposal.

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