

AUGUST
2021
airBaltic
Inflight magazine

baltic

outlook

PISA

THE PROUD GATEWAY TO TUSCANY

VALENCIA: SUN, SEA,
AND PAELLA

CITY TRIPS FOR YOU AND
YOUR PET

A RURAL GREEK GETAWAY

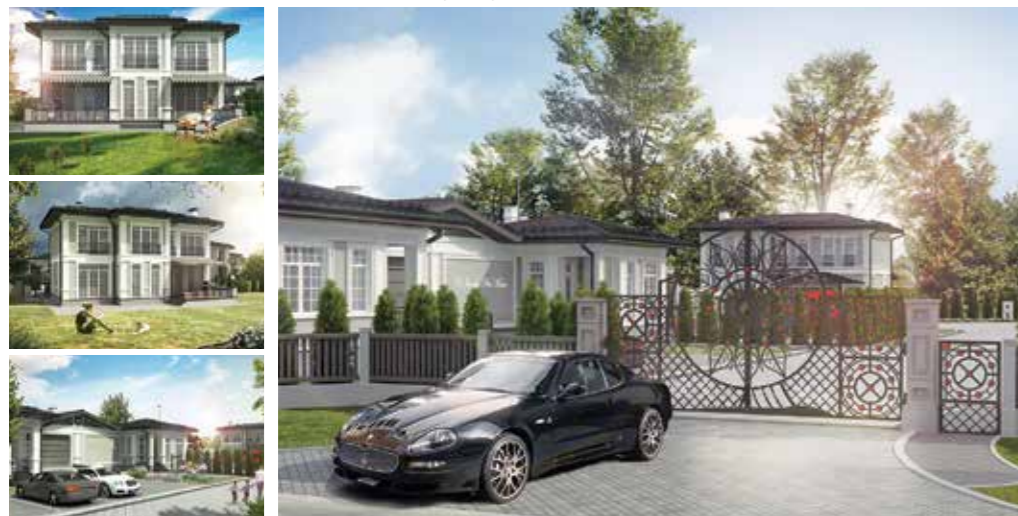
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* The International School of Latvia, the Exupéry International School, Kings College Latvia, and local municipal schools Babīte Secondary School and Babīte Music School.



Le Jardin des Muses (Pinki) - a village of ten homes and a club house with a common area, with one entry gate and separate exit gates that form a secure area which kids can enjoy and be safe in.
The living community was built with the most modern, internationally accepted living standards and features concierge service and 24-hour security patrols. Architect - Dipl. Lic. Ing. Architect Martin Edler von Schiffer

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**We have now reached
the point at which we
require additional staff,
and we have resumed
active recruitment**

MARTIN ALEXANDER GAUSS
Chief Executive Officer, *airBaltic*

Dear guests of *airBaltic*,
We are very happy to see you onboard! This summer has provided an opportunity for plenty of people in Europe to travel, and many have been eagerly waiting for this moment to arrive. Our figures clearly reflect that. The load factor of *airBaltic* flights recently reached its highest level since the start of this global crisis. We are not yet at 2019 levels, but we are seeing the demand for travel returning. The focus this summer was mainly on leisure travel, and we're seeing the first sign of business travel picking up for the autumn season as well.

airBaltic is not only operating many point-to-point routes from Tallinn, Vilnius, and Riga; it also has a very important hub in Riga, which connects many cities in Europe via transfer in

the Latvian capital. Both leisure and business traffic are essential for us to be able to offer nearly 80 destinations from the Baltics.

To address the current uptick in demand, we have significantly improved our network, offering a large number of sunny leisure destinations as well as connections to various cities across Europe. Last month alone, we launched direct flights from Riga to Valencia, Pisa, and Kos as well as Edinburgh, Manchester, Bergen, and Trondheim. Notably, by this time next month we will offer two new long routes to our schedule: Riga–Dubai and Riga–Tenerife.

We want to maintain the high quality of service we provide and to continue offering the best connectivity to and from the Baltic region. To be able to do that, we have now reached the point at which we require additional staff, and we have resumed active recruitment.

It was recently my pleasure to rehire and personally welcome back our first 20 cabin crew members. Another 60 are in the process of re-joining the company. In addition to that, we have more than 40 open vacancies across the company for highly motivated professionals. Perhaps you would like to join our modern team?

Hope to see you on an *airBaltic* flight again soon!



Yours,
Martin Alexander Gauss



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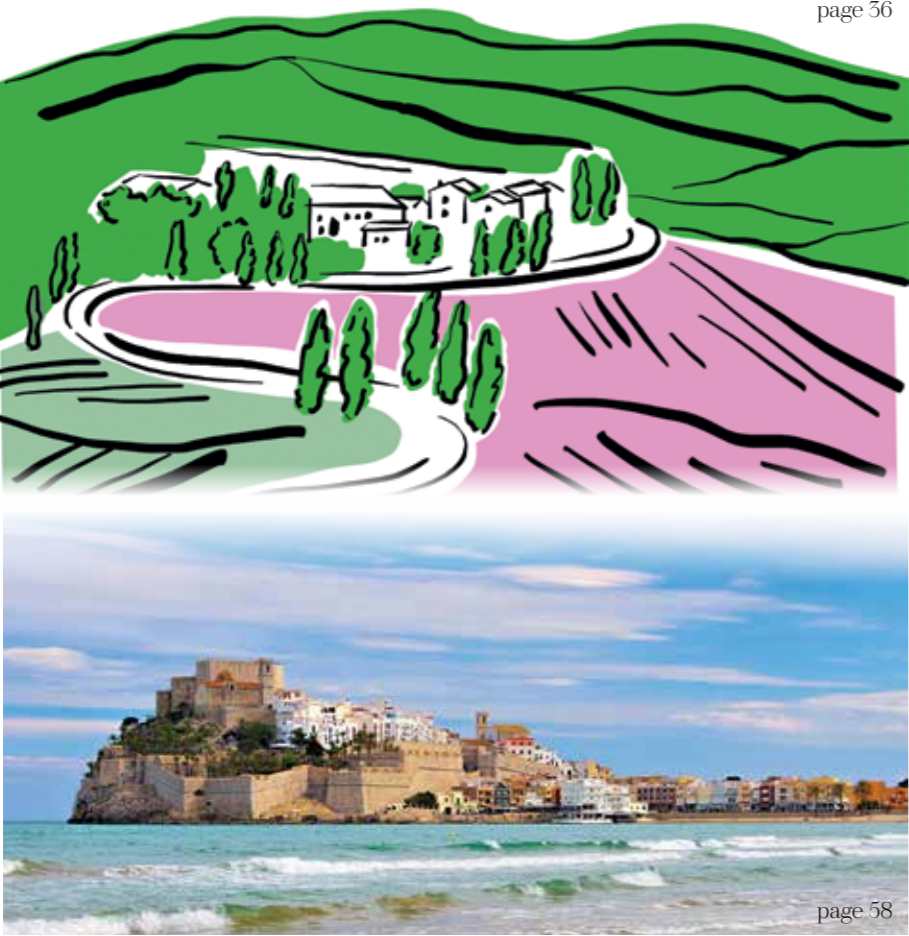
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baltic outlook

Editorial Staff

Chief Editor: Ilze Pole
e: ilze@frankshouse.lv
Deputy editor: Zane Nikodemusa
e: zane.nikodemusa@frankshouse.lv
Copy editor: Amanda Zaeska
Design: Marika Kossatz
Layout: Inta Kraukle
Cover: iStock

Frank's House

Baltic Outlook is published by
SIA Frank's House
Stabu 17, Riga, LV 1011, Latvia
ph: (+371) 67293970
w: frankshouse.lv
e: franks@frankshouse.lv
Director: Eva Dandzberga
e: eva@frankshouse.lv

Advertising managers:

Indra Indraše
e: indra@frankshouse.lv
m: (+371) 29496966

Ieva Birzniece
e: ieva@frankshouse.lv
m: (+371) 26416866

Advertising manager in Lithuania:

Renata Olisova
e: renata@frankshouse.lv
m: (+370) 60623762

Advertising manager in Estonia:

Urmas Oja, Media Station
e: urmas@mediastation.ee
m: (+372) 56151111



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Please follow all of the safety measures and restrictions at each *airBaltic* destination, and stay updated on what, if any, actions are required upon returning from them. Also, before attending any event, confirm the time and place as well as any special conditions that may apply. Some photos in this magazine may be only of an informative nature.

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Printed at *Poligrāfijas grupa Mūkusalā*, Latvia, phone (+371) 67063187



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Baltic International Bank

Words by Zane Nikodemusa
Publicity photos



The ultimate August checklist

Ziedlejas wellness resort
in Gauja National Park

A RELAXING SAUNA RITUAL

If one needed to describe in only a couple of words how many of us would like to spend the month of August, those words would most likely include ‘pleasure’, ‘wellness’, and ‘relaxation’. One of the ways to achieve those things in Latvia is with a sauna ritual. Although it may at first seem that sitting in a hot sauna is the last thing one would want to do in the summer heat, August is in fact a great time for it, because nature is at its fullest, making the ritual especially relaxing and enriching.

Many guest houses and wellness resorts in Latvia offer authentic sauna rituals. Of these, *Ziedlejas* has become one of the trendiest among *Instagram* users. Located in picturesque Gauja National Park, here one can enjoy a variety of sauna rituals in a tasteful, contemporary setting. Juris Batņa, for his part, offers his services at the *Lielzemes* property in the Zemgale region of Latvia. One of the best-known sauna attendants in the country, Batņa is not only the founder of a sauna-attendant school but also a professional psychotherapist. Spending a day amongst the freshly picked herbs, aromatic grasses, and birch-leaf whisks at *Lielzemes* may turn out to be one of the summer’s most beautiful events.

ziedlejas.lv
lielzemes.lv

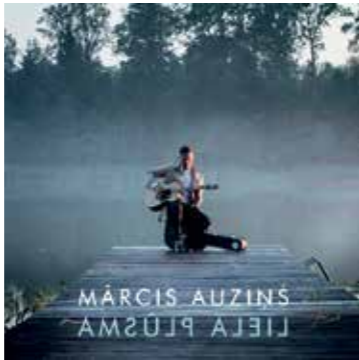


ART

Postcards of summer

Those who have experienced summer in Latvia and wish to keep the memories alive as long as possible have discovered the works of Latvian painter Alise Mediņa (b. 1984). Critics describe them as intimate, refined, and sensitive, while summer residents see in them the August fog, the first light of Indian summer, and Latvia’s aromatic meadows.

In addition to natural landscapes, Mediņa also paints scenes of Riga. Her work can be purchased from the prestigious *Saatchi Art* online gallery. saatchiart.com



MUSIC

Warm and tender

One of the most virtuoso Latvian guitarists, Mārcis Auziņš (b. 1983) compositions are characterised by a light, meditative mood. Hearing him live in concert is a true delight, and this summer many are trying to do just that. But his recordings also make a wonderful addition to any music collection. Auziņš’ newest album, *Lielā plūsma* (The Big Flow) is perfect for listening to alone during a long drive, or as a beautiful backdrop to dinner with close friends. marcisauzins.com



SOUVENIR

Secrets of the meadow

When nature is in full bloom, Latvians have for millennia collected many different plants to make delicious herbal teas. Not only do these drinks warm or refresh a person, they also contain a variety of medicinal properties.

If you’re looking for an elegant souvenir from a summer in Latvia, check out the *Plūkt* brand. The team at *Plūkt* collects the intoxicating aroma of summer meadows and offers it to clients in its special line of teas. These hand-picked organic teas from wild meadows and forests have quickly become favourites among connoisseurs of herbal teas. plukttea.com



Kate

JOY OF LIFE – LOUD OR SOFT, JUST LIKE LIFE

Création Baumann presents the 'JOY OF LIFE' collection 2021

The new home collection is as powerful as it is versatile, conveying optimism, joie de vivre and a subtle sensuality that is a response to our turbulent times. The high-contrast collection contains unique products and includes natural, delicate fabrics with a special feel as well as classic plain fabrics that stand in tension with expressive designs that use mirrored foils, sequins and embroidery to make noble statements in the room. The extensive colour palette of the intricately crafted collection spans from neutral, muted tones to expressive colours such as fir, lemon-green and coral.

The new collection describes the joy of life by way of two worlds - one loud, one quiet. In the loud world, the fabrics set playful accents and make statements in the room with their extraordinary look and powerful colours.

In the quiet world, delicate patterns, flowing materials and restrained colours create sensual moments at the window. With their lightness, the fabrics blend discreetly into the room yet remain playful in their restraint.

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kate.lv



Words by **Zane Nikodemusa**
Publicity photos, by *iStock*
and *Unsplash*

RIGA JURMALA MUSIC FESTIVAL

The Riga Jurmala Music Festival launched its inaugural season in 2019 to international acclaim. This year, the world's leading symphony orchestras and conductors will again anchor each weekend of the festival from July until September, offering a range of symphonic concerts and recitals featuring leading stars and up-and-coming young talent. Festival concerts take place at the Latvian National Opera, the Great Guild Hall, and the most in-demand location of the summer season, Dzintari Concert Hall. riga-jurmala.com

Eglē Einikytē-Narkevičienē.
Gust of Wind. 2021.
Ceramics,
pigments.



August 2021 /

RIGA

BALTIC CONTEMPORARY CERAMIC ART

From August 3 until October 8, the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design in Riga is hosting a unique exhibition featuring work by the most prominent contemporary ceramic artists in the Baltics. Ceramics have been growing in popularity and recognition in the art world and are increasingly also included in various biennials, including Venice. So it's worth checking out what the Baltics are doing in this genre. Also remember to check the website for any pandemic-related changes to the exhibition schedule. lnmm.lv

Did you know?

Located in front of the majestic Neo-Baroque building that houses the *Splendid Palace* cinema, a new open-air cinema offers a selection of the finest contemporary European films. liveriga.com



JAZZ IN OLD RIGA

The Baltics have long had a very strong community of professional jazz musicians. In the summer, Latvia's best jazz artists can be heard in the garden of the Small Guild in Old Riga. Various jazz ensembles meet there every Thursday at 17:00 to perform free concerts that are open to the public. Stop by if you want some beautiful memories of summer evenings! mazagilde.lv



RIMI RIGA MARATHON

The *Rimi* Riga Marathon is the largest and most international running event in the Baltics. This year, it will take place on August 28–29. Choose your preferred distance: full marathon, half marathon, 10K or 5.5K. The route takes runners to some of the most charming locations in Riga, through the streets of Old Riga, past architectural gems, and across the city's bridges. Find your rhythm and enjoy the run! rimirigamarathon.com

Roman Payne, novelist and poet, whose quote can inspire one to check out the annual Riga Bubble Parade on Saturday, August 7, in the courtyard and garden of the Art Academy of Latvia. It's the biggest parade of champagnes and sparkling wines in the Baltics. rigawinechampagne.lv

Quote of
the month

Wine gives one ideas,
whereas champagne
gives one strategies.



Vastint Latvia office in Busines Garden Riga

A developer with strong roots

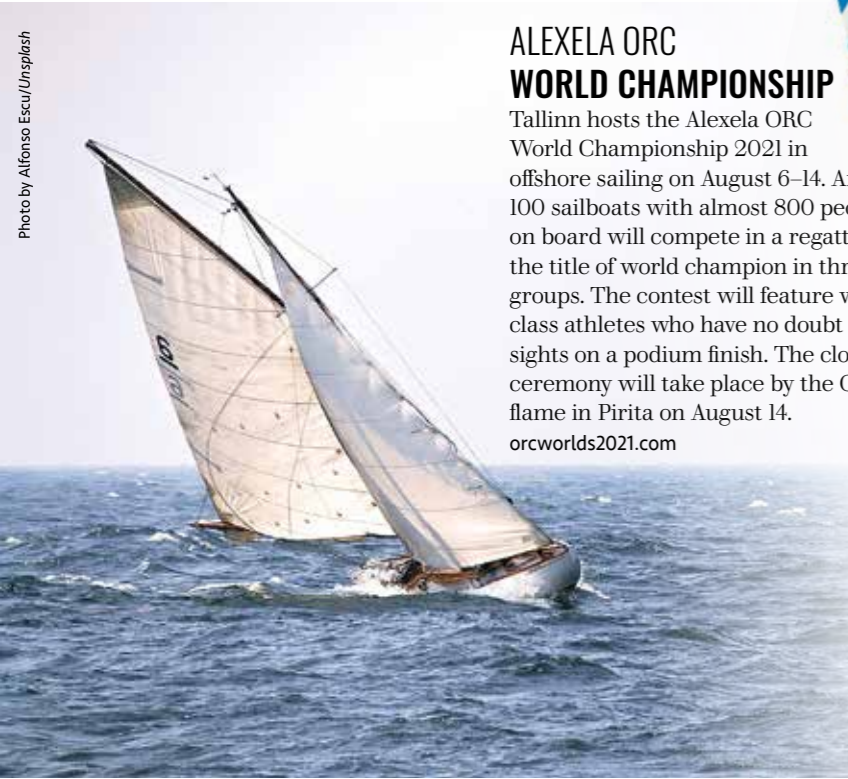
Vastint Latvia is one of the leading real estate developers in Latvia. Since 2003, the company has excelled in the management of portfolio properties and the development of commercial real estate, including residential development and sales.

Vastint Latvia is part of the Vastint Group — an international real estate organisation with more than 30 years experience in Europe.

VASTINT

www.vastint.eu

Photo by Alfonso Escaú/Unsplash



ALEXELA ORC WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Tallinn hosts the Alexela ORC World Championship 2021 in offshore sailing on August 6–14. Around 100 sailboats with almost 800 people on board will compete in a regatta for the title of world champion in three groups. The contest will feature world-class athletes who have no doubt set their sights on a podium finish. The closing ceremony will take place by the Olympic flame in Pirita on August 14. orcworlds2021.com

TALLINN

Did you know?

Old Tallinn's streets are far from straight and seem to curve and bend in every which way, but they do so in the general direction of Town Hall Square, the old marketplace. visittallinn.ee

JANIS ROZENTĀLS EXHIBITION

Kumu Art Museum is currently showing an extensive exhibition of work by the Latvian artist Janis Rozentāls (1866–1916), who helped modernise Baltic art. In addition to being a theorist and art critic, he was a brilliant talent whose work is still loved today. Rozentāls primarily painted portraits – of cultural figures, friends, and family members – and often worked on commission. But he also painted images of everyday life and religious motifs. This show is a must-see for art lovers! kumu.ekm.ee



Janis Rozentāls. *Princess with a Monkey*. 1913. Latvian National Museum of Art.

TALLINN OLD TOWN DAYS

Since 1982, Tallinn Old Town Days has meant the celebration of summer in the city. The festival, which this year takes place on August 12–15, fills the streets with concerts, exhibitions, theatre, fairs, and many other fun activities. It's the biggest festival in Old Tallinn dedicated to the local cultural heritage and community. Guests can peek into the old courtyards, learn about the city's long and impressive history, and participate in various activities. vanalinnapaevad.ee



Photo by Konstantinos Hasandras/Unsplash

JAZZKAAR JAZZ FESTIVAL

Jazzkaar (August 23–29) is the biggest jazz festival in the Baltic region, filling Tallinn's music stages with top stars and exciting music from the global jazz scene. Over the years, Bobby McFerrin, Pat Metheny, Chick Corea, Gregory Porter, and Angélique Kidjo have performed at Jazzkaar. In recent years, the festival has been experimenting with new formats and venues, bringing music from concert halls into the urban space and inviting families with children to enjoy jazz as well. jazzkaar.ee



VILNIUS

LOFTAS OPEN GALLERY

If you like huge, fantastic murals, you have to go to Loftas Open Gallery in the post-industrial district of Naujamiestis. The gallery is driven by alternative creative projects such as paintings on factory walls, installations, sculptures, performances, and film sessions. In fact, Vilnius has in recent years organised several street-art festivals with the participation of world-renowned artists, resulting in a bigger presence of this form of art in the city. open-gallery.menufabrikas.lt

Did you know?

In a quiet corner on Stiklių gatvė in Vilnius there's a small courtyard with a statue of the Annalist. It marks the location of the first printing house in the city. govilnius.lt

HALĖS
MARKET



One of the oldest market areas in Vilnius, where people have been trading since the 15th century, the present Halės Market building dates back to 1906. Here you'll find produce sold by small-scale farmers as well as larger businesses and trendy new spots serving delicious food, such as bakeries, butchers, and cheese and wine shops. You'll definitely love this place. halesturgaviete.lt



BALTIC TRIENNIAL

Every three years, the Contemporary Art Centre in Vilnius organises one of the most important contemporary art events in northern Europe, the Baltic Triennial, which reflects current artistic processes and changes its form with every edition. The 14th Baltic Triennial, which ends on August 15, has run throughout the summer at various art spaces in Vilnius. Take this opportunity to become acquainted with what's new in the world of art! cac.lt

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Words by Olga Dolina
Publicity photos



The Human Image: Art, Identities, and Symbolism at the CaixaForum Madrid (Paseo del Prado, 36; caixaforum.org; until January 16, 2022) is a transcultural journey across different eras, cultures, geographies, and styles that explores the representation of the human body throughout history. It travels from ancient civilisations to contemporary art and from stylisation to hyperrealism, with a final stop in modern art and audiovisual compositions. The oldest piece presented is a skull dating to around 8000 BCE. In all, the showcase features 155 artefacts – sculptures, paintings, coins, photos, films, etc. – and displays such grand names as Goya, Dürer, Manet, Matisse, Hockney, and many others.

Las Meninas, a masterpiece painting by Diego Velázquez depicting the daughter of King Philip IV of Spain, is a symbol of Spanish art. It has also inspired the opening of the new **Velázquez Tech Museum**, where entertainment meets education and art meets technology in a 360-degree sensorial audiovisual experience (Calle de Atocha, 12; velazqueztech.com). Eight rooms equipped with dozens of projectors invite visitors to step into the world of painting via a 4D canvas, video mapping, holograms accompanied by a stylish mix of Baroque and contemporary music, and plenty of other spectacles. Visitors can have a chat with Velázquez, design their own *Meninas*, or step into the painting for a snapshot. The culmination is a grand journey through time, events, and cultural codes with videos projected onto massive figures of *Las Meninas*.

Atocha Hotel Madrid is the first European hotel of the *Tapestry Collection by Hilton*, a hotel chain that particularly reflects the heritage and culture of specific areas around the world (Calle de Atocha, 107; hilton.com; from EUR 104). The hotel has 46 originally crafted rooms located just a few steps away from Madrid's top art museums. It has also developed an in-room wellness concept that allows guests to work out right in their rooms. The hotel's design has taken inspiration from the *esparto* grass that is used in the traditional basketry of southern Spain. Moreover, the building in which the hotel has found a home was once the Atocha Train Station, where merchants from the south disembarked in Madrid to sell their goods. In keeping with these themes, the rooms and communal spaces feature rattan furniture and a nature-inspired style, and guests receive a personalised *esparto* gift upon arrival.



The 11th edition of the Göteborg International Biennial for Contemporary Art, also titled **The Ghost Ship and the Sea Change**, coincides with the 400-year anniversary of the founding of Gothenburg itself. The event takes place in two stages: the first part is in the art spaces at the urban Röda Sten Konsthall (Röda Sten 414; rodastenkonsthall.se; until August 22), while the second part will be held at cultural venues all around the city until November 21. As curator Lisa Rosendahl puts it, the double title of the biennial alludes to the dual ambition of honouring the ghosts of the past and attempting to move beyond them in order to create a more sustainable future. The event reflects on the layers of the city, juxtaposing its past and future, while its team of international and Swedish artists are engaged in historical narration, current social, economic and climatic processes, and futuristic visions.

Set amidst lush parkland, **Liseberg**, the largest and most famous amusement park in Scandinavia, has been expanded and reopens for children and adults with some exiting novelties (Örgrytevägen 5; liseberg.com). The Rabbit Land children's area welcomes a new underground dark-ride journey called 'Underland', the renovated Carrot Journey river ride, and the *Bergs Bistro* thematic restaurant. But the almost century-old park is not only about thrilling roller-and-dive coaster rides. A real hidden gem here is the Liseberg Gardens, which stretch across 6250 square metres and date back to the 17th century. Once used as a cow pasture, then a tobacco plantation and nursery for the first dahlias grown in Sweden, it's now a perfect picnic spot with the Pleasure Garden open-air sculpture gallery.

With Italian flavours as well as local ingredients from Sweden, **Tavolo** restaurant offers authentic regional Italian cuisine (Magasinsgatan 15-19; tavolo.se). The restaurant is located in the former artillery stables, which are almost two centuries old. It has an alluring menu, serves a selection of the finest wines, and also has a welcoming and cheerful atmosphere with an eye-catching design and unique details. For instance, the ceiling fans are from windmills in Napa Valley, the mosaics are inspired by those in Pompeii, and the painting *Next to Last Meal* is a free interpretation of Leonardo da Vinci's masterpiece by the artist Peter Apelgren.



The Paradise Garden at RHS Garden Bridgewater

MANCHESTER



Manchester Jewish Museum exterior



Kimpton Clocktower Hotel



The vibrant, new **RHS Garden Bridgewater** is Europe's largest project of its kind (Occupation Road, Worsley, Greater Manchester, M28 2LJ; rhs.org.uk). Designed by landscape architect Tom Stuart-Smith and an award-winning team of garden designers, the Royal Horticultural Society's 154-acre marvel has opened its historic fields at Worsley New Hall in Salford to the public. The site has all one needs for a pleasant and engaging day full of nature and discovery: a new visitor centre, one of the largest walled gardens in the United Kingdom, a blend of Mediterranean and Asian plants in the exotic Paradise Garden, Victorian-style glasshouses and romantic lily pounds, and the Chinese Streamside Garden featuring a fusion of Chinese and British horticulture. The youngest visitors can enjoy adventures in the Woodland Play area. The RHS Garden Bridgewater stretches across picturesque meadows, woodlands, and lakes offering frequent thematic exhibitions and workshops.

The **Manchester Jewish Museum** is housed in a stunning Victorian building with stained-glass windows (190 Cheetham Hill Road; manchesterjewishmuseum.com). The former synagogue built in 1873 has just been restored and has received a bold contemporary extension with a rust-coloured façade and ornate etched patterns by *Citizens Design Bureau*. The museum, which holds a rich collection of more than 30,000 artefacts of Jewish history, now boasts a new gallery, a shop, a learning studio, and a kosher vegetarian café. The reopening of the museum is being celebrated with a special installation by Turner Prize-winning artist Laure Prouvost. On display until October 30, *The Long Waited, Weighted Gathering* is also a part of the Manchester International Festival 2021. It's an immersive experience that fills the space with voices and echoes from the past via film, sound, and textiles.

The new **Kimpton Clocktower Hotel** occupies a grand Victorian edifice with a noble terracotta clock tower guarding its landmark façade that's visible from all around (Oxford Street, Manchester M60 7HA; kimptonclocktowerhotel.com; from EUR 139). The lobby features an impressive glass dome and a signature bronze sculpture by artist Sophie Dickens, while many of the 270 loft-style rooms have double- and triple-height ceilings. The design and ambience is a genuine escape from the ordinary. The original preserved decorations include glazed bricks, tiles, stained glass, and an imposing wooden staircase. The contemporary room fittings and bold graphic wall prints pay homage to the Manchester music scene and create an elegant contrast with history. *The Winter Garden* glasshouse and *The Refuge* restaurant make a perfect setting for cocktails and dining.



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Words by Ilze Vitola
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Scotland's crowning glory

Like a sip of genuine Scotch whisky, no trip to Edinburgh is complete without a visit to Edinburgh Castle.

A glorious structure rises above the city of Edinburgh. Perched on a volcanic crag, Edinburgh Castle is the symbol of Scotland and one of the oldest fortifications in Europe. When you climb Castle Hill, you walk in the footsteps of soldiers, kings, queens, and even prisoners.

No other structure in Britain has seen as many sieges as Edinburgh Castle. In the 13th and 14th centuries, the castle was twice taken over by the English. Its strategic advantage is clear, and thus from the 17th century onwards, the castle mainly served as a military base and the most secure prison in Scotland – visitors can still marvel at the hole that 49 French prisoners made in the castle wall in 1811. All but one got away by hacking their way out and using ropes to lower themselves down and escape. The castle's military role finally diminished in 1991, when the Scottish government took over the reins. However, some sections of the castle still remain in military use.

What makes a visit to Edinburgh Castle truly great is the fact that you can dive into every single part of its buildings, from the spooky prisons to the National War Museum and the incredible Crown Room housing the crown jewels. Some other highlights of this spectacular complex include the six-tonne siege gun known as Mons Meg; the Great Hall, which has hosted many historical banquets; and the Royal Palace, which has accommodated several monarchs. The oldest edifice on site is St. Margaret's Chapel, built in the 12th century in honour of Queen Margaret.

But undoubtedly the most senior and shiniest residents here are the Honours of Scotland – the oldest crown jewels in Britain – which can be admired in the Crown Room. Visit the castle around midday to experience the One o'Clock Gun. According to this tradition dating back to 1861, the gun is still fired every day (except Sundays) at 1 pm, and the blast resounds down below in the city streets.
edinburghcastle.scot



FOR PICKY TRAVELLERS

flyfromriga.lv



Vienna IN 24 HOURS



Billy Joel sang 'When will you realise... Vienna waits for you?' Now we're asking you the same question. Here are some recommendations to help you plan a quick 24-hour trip.

© WienTourismus/Christian Stemper



WHERE TO EAT

The Palmenhaus in the garden of Vienna's imperial palace is the perfect place to stop by when you need a bite to eat or fancy a refreshing cocktail. In summer, the spacious terrace offers shade and a beautiful view of the garden, and in winter, you can soak up the daylight under the 15-metre-high glass dome while enjoying breakfast or a drink after a long workday.

Burggarten 1; palmenhaus.at

CLASSICS NOT TO MISS

As one of the leading opera houses in the world, the Vienna State Opera is a dream venue for performers and offers a breathtaking experience to visitors. Witness world-class acts every evening or take part in a guided tour during the day. The 2021/2022 season begins on September 3 with a performance of *Tosca*, one of Giacomo Puccini's greatest operas.

Opernring 2; wiener-staatsoper.at



© WienTourismus/Paul Bauer

WHERE TO SHOP

Whatever you need when in Vienna, you can find it on Mariahilfer Straße. This street has hundreds of shops in every price range, from boutiques to supermarkets. Trends, accessories, and everyday life all merge here. Numerous cafés and hip restaurants let you take a break from shopping, and don't forget to explore the surrounding streets as well for shops, shops, and more shops!

WHY NOT

When travelling, it's hard to avoid local food... and why would you want to? Viennese cuisine is famous and much loved for its variety of sweets. Dazzling glass-fronted display cabinets laden with sweet temptations promise no end of enjoyment. Treat yourself to an Apfelstrudel or a slice of sweet Sachertorte to feel and enjoy Vienna to the fullest with your taste buds!



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Point of view

Where to go on Kos, according to adventurer George Theocharides



My secret spot

‘Kos has a great abundance of places to visit, some of which are very well known. However, at the top of my list of secret spots is the St. George Karidias chapel. Hidden in its yard, behind the roses and eucalyptus trees, is a wooden gazebo that offers a staggering view of the Aegean Sea and the Turkish coast. Located outside the city of Kos, it emerges from the camouflage of dense pine forest just below the top of Mount Simpetro. The signs to the chapel are evident along the way. Park your car at the end of the dirt road and get a thrill out of the short hike.’



The islet of Kastri

Other locations to check out:

- Located in the Gulf of Kefalos right in front of St. Stephan’s Beach, the islet of Kastri mesmerises visitors and dominates views all around. Bursting with culture, ancient history, and stunning landscapes, it’s arguably one of the island’s most photographed places.
- When visiting the birthplace of Hippocrates, don’t miss the Asklepion of Kos, where the father of medicine practised long ago. It’s now a well-known archaeological site. For an all-around experience, add visits to the Museum of Ancient History of Kos, the Casa Romana, and the Castle of Neratzia.

Words by **Līga Valko**
Photos by *iStock* and courtesy of **George Theocharides**



George Theocharides

[instagram.com/george_theo](https://www.instagram.com/george_theo)
George Theocharides is a law school graduate, a passionate adventurer, and a nature enthusiast. The splendid natural and urban diversity of the Greek island of Kos is like fuel for him to constantly seek out new experiences. He believes that physical and mental challenges combined with culture and history contribute to personal growth. In his search for new places and getaways in the wilderness, Theocharides doesn’t hesitate to go solo. But when accompanied by friends, one of them is his dog, Max. The adventures he shares with his loyal Labrador Retriever are what keep him motivated.



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Take your friends TO... RIJEKA AND TASTE KVARNER SHRIMP



Fish Market in Rijeka

Words by Jane Foster
Photos by Shutterstock



Grilled shrimp in the restaurant



Old town of Krk on the Croatian island Krk

Fly to
Rijeka
from
€129
roundtrip

Each morning at dawn, Rijeka's fishermen unload crates of seafood on the quayside, next to the elegant fish market dating from 1916. Stallholders display the night's catch on mounds of crushed ice, and among the array of glistening silver fish, you'll see piles of orange-pink shrimp. These are Kvarner škampa, beloved by connoisseurs for their firm flesh and delicate sweet flavour.

According to locals, rustic *Konoba Fiume*, a restaurant located on a narrow street next to the market, is the best place to eat reasonably priced Kvarner shrimp. Try the restaurant's delicious *skampi na pariški* – shrimp tails deep-fried in batter and served with a creamy tomato sauce. Some of Kvarner's best seafood restaurants are owned by families of fishermen-chefs, who both catch and cook the shrimp themselves.

Close to Rijeka, in Malinska on the island of Krk, the Šabljak family has its own fishing boat and runs the excellent *Konoba Bracera* restaurant. 'The most popular dish is shrimp *buzara*,' says Deni Šabljak. 'Toss the shrimp in a pan with olive oil and garlic. When they start to change colour, pour on some Žlahtina, which is white wine from Krk, and light it to flambé. Then add chopped tomato, salt, pepper, and basil, and let it cook.' The result is delicious, and diners mop up the *buzara* sauce with fresh, crusty bread. Every local chef has their favourite shrimp dish. In Krk Town, just a few steps from the 12th-century cathedral, *Konoba Sime* serves traditional seafood specialties at tables on a waterside terrace. 'We catch our own shrimp, so they're fresh every day,' says owner Iris Radivoj. Here, the classic dish is šurlice sa škampina i blitvom, a homemade pasta unique to Krk served with shrimp and Swiss chard.

Back on the mainland, in Mošćenicka Draga, find *Konoba Zijavica* on one of the region's loveliest beaches. Come here for a swim in the turquoise sea followed by a gourmet lunch. The restaurant's shrimp dishes include innovative delights such as marinated shrimp tails with apple and celery mousse, and shrimp risotto with asparagus and sun-dried tomatoes. The Vunić family have been fishermen for over 40 years – father Bruno mans the boat, while son Stiven is in charge of the kitchen. Needless to say, all the seafood on their menu has been pulled from Kvarner Gulf that very same day.



HOFT, new building façade.

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The main hall of Philosophers Residence.

PHILOSOPHY IS THE ART OF LIVING

The Philosophers Residence is an inspiration for future residents to pursue their own philosophy of life and make their own choices. To achieve that, masterpieces of renowned writers are located in the libraries of the main lobbies, encouraging quotes are portrayed on the walls, and the territory is filled with spaces for meditative rest and active leisure spots – basketball and sports grounds, ping-pong and Novuss terraces.

A core feature of the project are the spacious terraces in each apartment that offer breathtaking views of the skyline of Riga Old Town.

WWW.PHRESIDENCE.LV



The main façade of Villa Milia.

CONNECTION BETWEEN GENERATIONS AND TIMES

Villa Milia is a contemporary interpretation of the famous Villa Benyamina, dedicated to the esteemed Press Queen Emilia Benyamin – one of the very first female entrepreneurs in Latvia. In memory of the great people that made their life stories and historical contributions a part of the city, the country and, indeed, the world; people for whom the words: «I'm doing it for my country!» were not just an empty phrase. These are the important things that we pass down to future generations: not to compromise in choosing between either beauty or quality, between good infrastructure or privacy. With all of the comforts of modern technology, Villa Milia is the perfect place for those who aspire to and expect nothing but excellence in everything.

WWW.VILLAMILIA.LV

For a beach holiday

Pink sunglasses, Gucci, EUR 290



Stylish water bottle by Loewe, Mytheresa.com, EUR 175



Headband, H&M, EUR 6.99



Floral cotton hat by Erdem, Mytheresa.com, EUR 250



Woven beach bag, H&M, EUR 24.99

Seven Days in June by Tia Williams, Amazon.com, USD 13.99



Blue swimsuit, & Other Stories, EUR 59



Pink bikini top, Cos, EUR 25



Green swim shorts, Cos, EUR 29



Pink woven bag, Cos, EUR 39



Cotton beach towel by Valentino, MyTheresa.com, EUR 690



Blue slides, Hugo Boss, EUR 99

Sea, sun, and white sand are the three things you need to completely indulge and lose yourself in summer. And your minimum kit? A sexy swimsuit, romantic sunglasses, and a passionate novel about love!

Style by Ieva Čečina
Publicity photos and by iStock

BOSCA

Taste of Life



ALCOHOL FREE SPARKLING WINE

Words by Liga Valko and Zane Nikodemusa
Photo courtesy of
Rishab Lamichhane/*Unsplash*

Passion in the desert

No matter how glitzy Dubai is, its soul will forever be found in the desert.

Once a small fishing village, Dubai is today one of the most cosmopolitan cities in the world. As one of the seven emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates, Dubai offers a truly memorable experience to all visitors. And with an unparalleled coastline, a beautiful desert, and magnificent cityscapes, memories are just waiting to be made here.

Experienced travellers say that in order to discover Dubai's true essence, one should head out into the desert. That doesn't have to mean an intense, many-day expedition full of adventure and few comforts. The country's history, culture, and traditional lifestyle can be easily savoured on a day trip into the Arabian Desert. The imposing beauty, rolling sand dunes, and towering mountains will leave you in awe.

The Arabian Desert buzzes with life and activity. From graceful gazelles to oryx and falcons, keep an eye out for these native animal and bird species when you explore the desert. If you're lucky, you might also meet some Bedouins, the oldest inhabitants of the Arabian Desert. In the past, these tribes were constantly on the move and traversed thousands of kilometres across the sand dunes. Today, their descendants are still familiar with the overwhelming beauty and special, hidden places in that landscape and are willing to share them with special guests. Although at first glance it may seem that an unworldly silence dominates the desert, this is in fact not the case. If you listen closely, you'll hear the sand singing.



DESERT EXPERIENCES TO INCLUDE IN YOUR TRAVEL PLANS

Sleep under the stars

Dubai represents the perfect fusion between rustic, old-world charm and modern contemporary class. That's why overnight camping tours are a perfect way to embrace all that is Arab: the desert, dining, and lifestyle. As you sit by a campfire after a delicious dinner and enjoy a clear view of the Milky Way streaking across the sky, you won't believe how beautiful the world can be. This experience, which is heightened the following morning by a vivid sunrise over the dunes, will take you back in time to experience Dubai as it was before the city was born.

Go on an off-road adventure

A desert safari is one of the most popular day trips in Dubai. It's an intriguing way to get to know the local culture and see the desert first-hand. After a day of dune bashing or off-roading across the sand dunes, experience authentic Bedouin life through henna painting, falconry displays, and an alfresco feast. If you're interested in sustainable adventures, choose *Platinum Heritage*, a desert safari company that champions ecotourism.

Experience a coffee ritual with Bedouins

When visiting a Bedouin camp, guests are usually greeted with the utmost respect. A warm Arabian welcome is accompanied by a jug of rose water, dates, and refreshing Arabic coffee (called *gahwa*), which is a symbol of hospitality. Coffee has long been a part of the local culture, and there are numerous customs associated with this simple drink. Hold your cup out for a refill, or shake it to say that you've had enough. And when the host fills your cup up to the top, know that it's time to say goodbye after getting a taste of the Arabian Desert and Bedouin lifestyle.

DUBAI



NEW FROM SEPTEMBER



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A place to meet and listen

Highlighting the multicultural traditions of London's versatile gathering places, the Serpentine Pavilion celebrates its 20th edition.

Words by Olga Dolina
Publicity photo

To extend boundaries and promote contemporary architectural experimentation, each summer the Serpentine Galleries commission a leading architect from around the world to create a temporary pavilion in the heart of Kensington Gardens. This year, the founder and director of the Johannesburg-based *Counterspace* practice, Sumayya Vally, is the youngest architect to have been invited for this significant mission.

'My practice, and this pavilion, is centred around amplifying and collaborating with multiple and diverse voices from many different histories, with a specific interest in themes of identity, community, belonging, and gathering,' Vally explains. Narrative, identity, memory, and archaeology play a crucial role in the works produced by her practice.

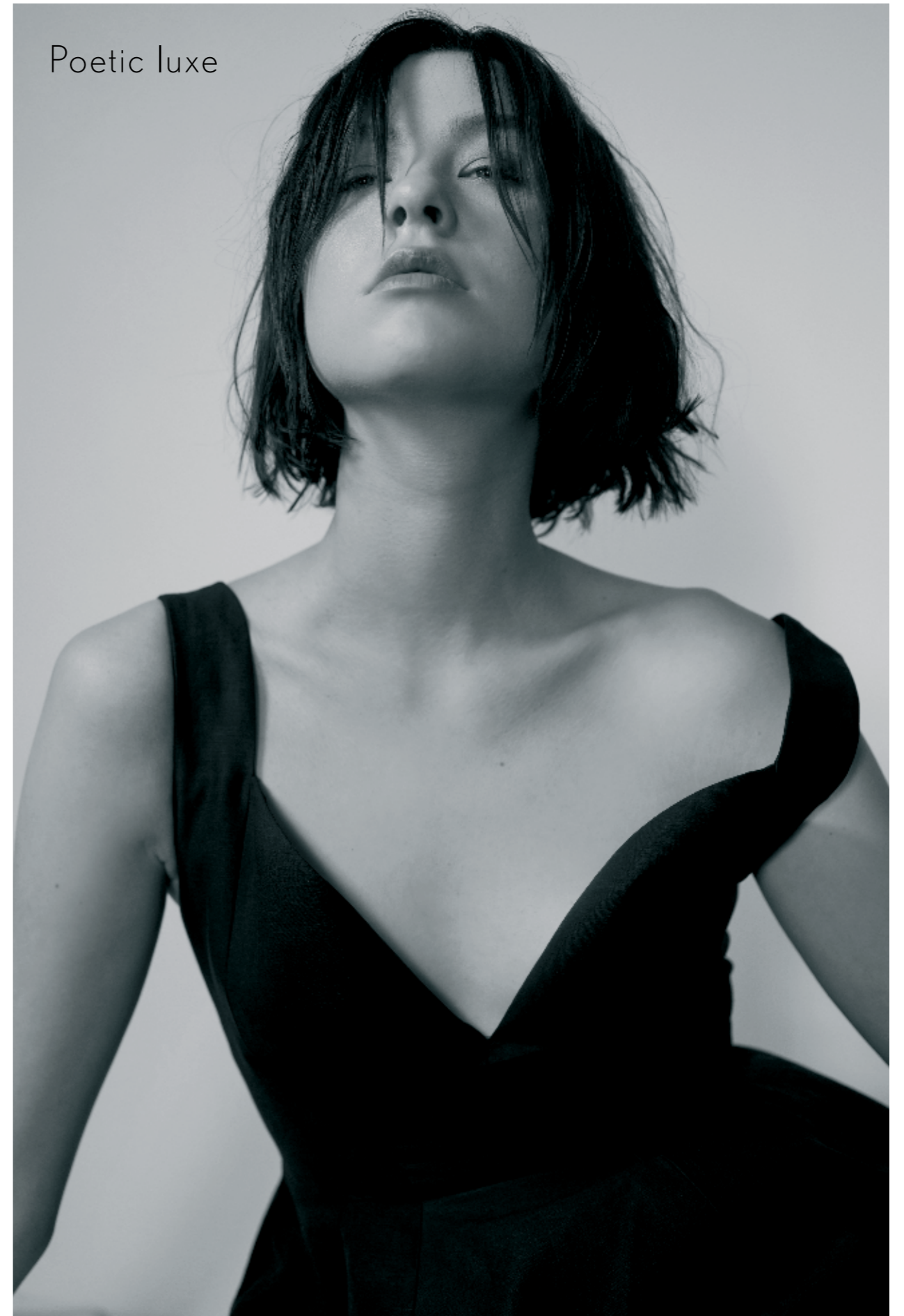
The main inspiration for Vally's design was the variety of cross-cultural, marginal, and diasporic neighbourhoods in London, such as Brixton, Hoxton, Peckham, and others. But above all, it is about a sense of belonging, communities, and their past or present meeting places, such as entertainment and cultural sites, underground clubs, cooperative bookshops, places of worship, markets, and restaurants – as well as their diverse appearances.

In order to translate the architectural language and shapes of more than 50 sites into the form of this monumental pavilion, they were abstractly spliced and superimposed in different scales and levels of intimacy. Pieces of those communal venues – steps, columns, plinths, mouldings – interlay and physically meet to create a new, united space of power. The pavilion, which measures 541 square metres and is six metres high, has a circular roof and is made from reclaimed steel, cork byproduct cladding, and micro-cement covering. The finishing in various textures and creamy hues of pink and brown was drawn directly from London's architecture. Like a labyrinth, the pavilion is filled with nooks to sit and relax in as well as wider spaces to wander around.

For the first time in the history of the Serpentine, four Fragments of the Pavilion are scattered across London in cultural hubs to honour the gatherings of local communities and to decentralise the architecture so that a broader spectrum of voices can be heard and engaged. Meanwhile, the specially commissioned Listening to the City art programme connects visitors to the stories and sounds of select London neighbourhoods.

Until October 17; serpentinegalleries.org

Poetic luxe



Mixing it up on social media

Should we be mixing personal and professional content on our social media channels? The latest trends tell us that it generates leads for our businesses.

Words by James Taylor
Publicity photo

Social media jumped to the forefront of our lives during the pandemic. As we were stuck at home, it became central to staying connected with friends, checking up on family, and even our professional lives. Social media also fast-tracked a growing trend in the industry: people want things to be more authentic and personal. And this is changing the way we should use social media to build our individual brands.

‘People speak to people on social media now. Communication has become much more personal,’ says global social media expert Ieva Drāzniece. ‘Nobody wants all this polished content anymore – nobody wants to be sold to.’ As a result, mixing personal and professional content on your social media profiles is no longer taboo – in fact, it’s encouraged.

‘Because of the pandemic, brands have begun to realise that it’s the people who actually speak on behalf of a brand. It’s not sales anymore – companies need to make their communication more individual, more personal,’ she says. And if you’re not a brand? The shift towards a mix of personal and professional content goes for individuals as well.

Drāzniece explains that posting personal information is the best way to warm up and engage a cold audience. It’s a way to let other people, employers, or potential clients know who we are. ‘There’s a layer of trust created with a management team when they already know your values and interests.’

Personal content is an important part of building brand awareness, the first of three pillars that Drāzniece focuses on when working with her clients. Personal content is the foundation for credibility

and valuable relationships, so it’s perfectly fine to post vacation photos or posts from a family gathering or vacation. But that’s just the beginning.

‘Once you’ve completed the first pillar, your audience is going to be much more receptive to a sales pitch. This is my offer; this is my service. They already trust me a little bit more,’ Drāzniece continues. ‘This then leads to the third pillar, which is all about long-term loyalty, brand love, credibility, and trust.’

But it’s that first pillar that’s key to everything. So how should we be using social media in 2021? Drāzniece prioritises engagement: ‘A great way to engage an audience on social media is to post about your profession. What do you know more about than anyone else? It’s that extra 10% of knowledge you have that could inspire someone.’ She says that people jump on good content, but you have to be there to engage with them as well – this is how you can gain followers across your social media profiles.

Expanding our social media horizons can also be good for us. ‘Don’t be afraid of the new platforms – jump on, try them out, see what they’re about. You never know if you’ll connect with your audience there or not,’ says Drāzniece.

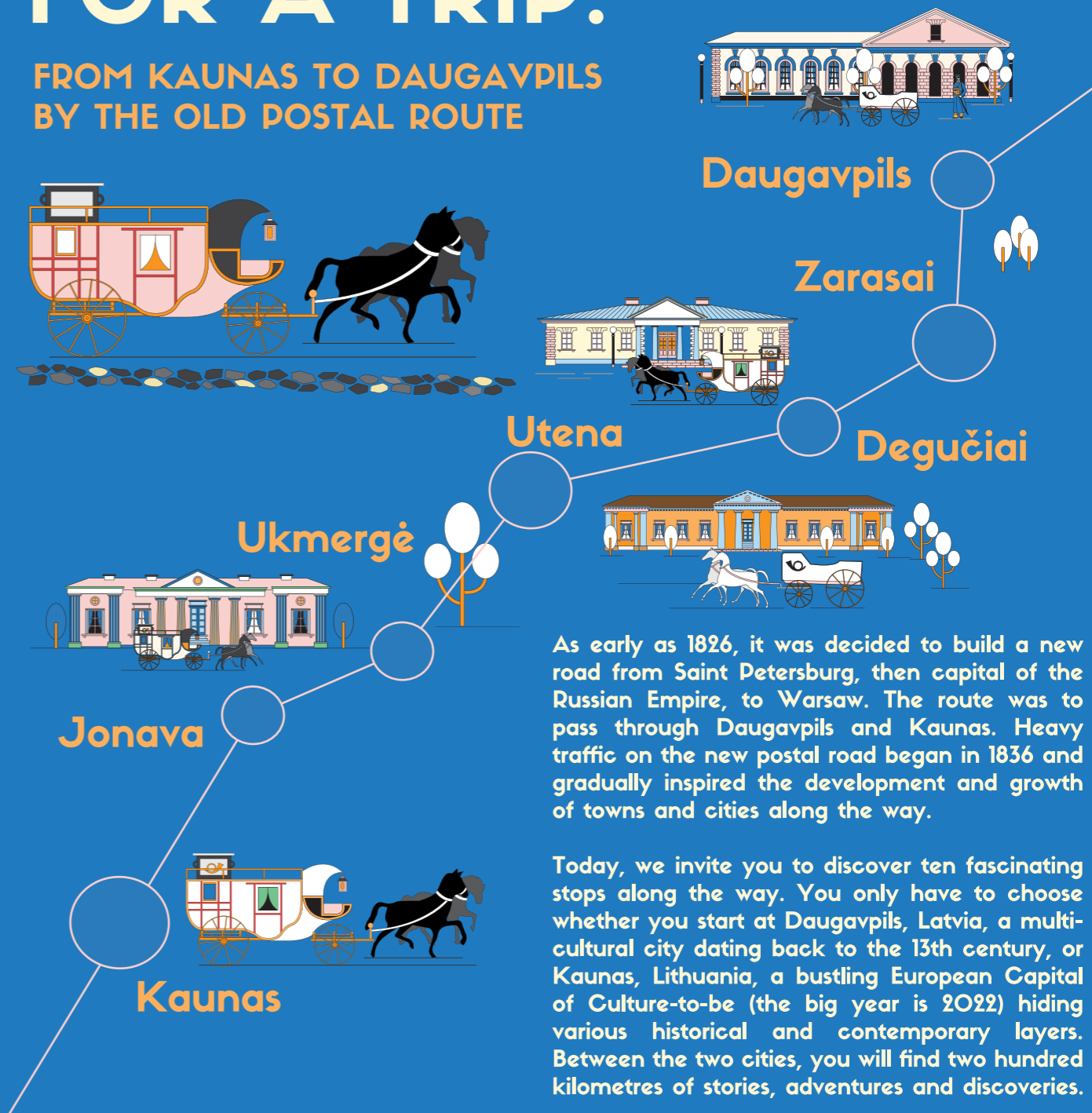
And the age-old question about social media – in the end, does it connect or disconnect us? For Drāzniece, it’s all about the connections: ‘The relationships that start on social media can transform into so many different things. You can find like-minded people, share ideas, and work on new projects. And now you can even jump on a plane again to visit someone, co-work with them, have a brainstorming session, or just go surfing together.’



Ieva Drāzniece
runs a marketing and consulting business and has worked with international brands and professionals across the world. She’s an expert at building brand awareness, whether it’s a large company or an individual.

AN IDEA FOR A TRIP:

FROM KAUNAS TO DAUGAVPILS BY THE OLD POSTAL ROUTE



As early as 1826, it was decided to build a new road from Saint Petersburg, then capital of the Russian Empire, to Warsaw. The route was to pass through Daugavpils and Kaunas. Heavy traffic on the new postal road began in 1836 and gradually inspired the development and growth of towns and cities along the way.

Today, we invite you to discover ten fascinating stops along the way. You only have to choose whether you start at Daugavpils, Latvia, a multi-cultural city dating back to the 13th century, or Kaunas, Lithuania, a bustling European Capital of Culture-to-be (the big year is 2022) hiding various historical and contemporary layers. Between the two cities, you will find two hundred kilometres of stories, adventures and discoveries.



Project "Cross-border Increase in Regional Cultural Heritage Tourism (CIRCUIT)" No. LLP326 is funded under the Interreg V-A Latvia-Lithuania Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2014-2020.

The aim of the project is to promote cross-border tourism in Lithuania and Latvia by preserving cultural heritage and publicizing tourism services.

This publication has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The total project budget is EUR 705 856.00 Of these, the total financing of the European Regional Development Fund is EUR 599 997.59.

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Capture the moment

We take photos or film videos every day, but some moments deserve a special capturing.



Photo by Kevin Oetiker/Unsplash



THE NEXT LEVEL

Sony Alpha 9II

If you want to go full bananas on your photo equipment, you need a *Sony Alpha 9II*. This full-frame camera has super-fast and precise auto focus, blistering burst speed, and in-body stabilisation. The downside is that it's bulky, so you'll need an extra bag along. Also, the camera body alone costs a small fortune, and you'll want some lenses as well. But the pictures... well, those will be spectacular.

EUR 5400 | sony.com

Words by Viesturs Kundziņš
Publicity photos and
by *Unsplash*



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ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION HAS A NEGATIVE EFFECT. SELLING, PURCHASING
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Luxury experience

Why are luxury fashion houses opening cafés and restaurants?



Over the past couple of decades, fashion houses have been investing in the high-end gastronomy, patisserie, and winery segments. One of the protagonists in this field is Italian fashion designer Giorgio Armani, who has established more than 20 food outlets worldwide since 1998. In the world of international luxury business, which enjoys turnovers in the billions of dollars, the revenues from these segments are insignificant, but that hasn't stopped *Armani* and other fashion brands from opening cafés and restaurants. The main goal is to enrich and expand their empires and brand identities, gradually transforming from fashion brands to lifestyle brands.

For many fashion houses, the gourmet segment has become a perfect ally to get on the same wavelength as the new generation of consumers, who are looking for luxury experiences. They don't stop at buying branded products; they also want to enjoy an elegant lifestyle and have unique, engaging, unforgettable experiences. What beats a dinner performance at a restaurant designed in the traditional style of your favourite brand and which satisfies all the senses? And what better start to a wonderful day than a superb morning coffee in the exquisite interior of a fashion house? In this online age, these are additional ways for fashion houses to attract customers to their boutiques and showrooms, reach new customers, secure their loyalty, and strengthen their brand aesthetic.

But the pandemic has led to adjustments in this area as well. Surprisingly, most of all in terms of menus. Adapting to the circumstances, a trend for haute cuisine that's accessible to everyone is among the new business models. In addition, the spotlight is on menus that respect the health of the planet and of people by being based on vegetables, cereals, and sustainably caught fish. These are complemented by organic wines and simple, traditional recipes that are close to the soul, underscoring their link with a fashion house's country of origin.

People want to enjoy an elegant lifestyle and have unique, engaging, unforgettable experiences

Words by Lana Jūra
Publicity photo

FASHION SPOTS THAT SHOULD BE ON YOUR LIST

Bar Luce in Milan

Bar Luce is situated in the Fondazione Prada centre for contemporary art and culture and is positioned as a cultural project of the foundation. American film director Wes Anderson developed the design concept, which reflects the iconic aesthetic of Italian films of the 1950s and 60s. The bar exudes the aura of a classic Milanese café, and Anderson's beloved palette of pastels permeates the space. The menu features *foie gras d'oie*, vegetarian snacks, cocktails, and a particularly photogenic cake covered with pink marzipan. Largo Isarco 2; fondazioneprada.org.

Ralph's in Paris

Ralph's restaurant beautifully complements *Ralph Lauren's* showroom. Its warm, inviting interior is designed in the brand's signature style and has a sophisticated vintage charm. The menu embodies the personal vision of American fashion designer Ralph Lauren and a palette of flavours based on traditional American cuisine. Here you can enjoy a juicy Double RL cowboy steak from the brand's own RL Ranch in Colorado, as well as a Ralph's brownie and New York-style cheesecake. 173 Boulevard Saint-Germain; ralphlauren.fr

Nanushka in Budapest

The café of the Hungarian label *Nanushka* in Budapest is harmoniously integrated in the elegant architecture of the fashion boutique. The comfortable interior with traditional and modern accents and large windows provides a welcoming feel. It's said that the coffee here is some of the best in the city, and it pairs very well with leisurely shopping in a relaxed atmosphere. 3 Bécsi út; nanushka.com



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PISA: THE PROUD GATEWAY TO TUSCANY



Words and photos by Una Ulme
Illustration by Agnese Tauriņa

The city's labyrinth of small streets are like a game in which you're rewarded at every step of the way with a surprise of some kind. At one moment you hear only your own footsteps, but the very next moment you find yourself in a loud square where the locals are drinking aperitifs and talking about the results of the most recent football game. There are no insignificant buildings or squares here; each has its own story. Because Pisa isn't just a crooked bell tower, a cathedral, and a baptistery.

This is a place with an old, melancholy soul, a place that has been under the control of others for most of its existence. As you look up, you see countless small towers that were once built to symbolise the grandeur of Pisa. They remind us that no one can take away our pride in a place, and the residents of Pisa will confirm that... although each in his or her own way. While the older generation tries to preserve the heritage of the past, the young do the exact opposite and try to find ways to make their city more modern.

Every now and then I ask a local what else there is that's noteworthy in Pisa, besides the bell tower. It turns out that here one can see the sunrise, while in Florence one sees only the sunset. Pisa is also the birthplace of Galileo Galilei, the artist Pisanello, the writer Rusticiano, and many other historical figures. In the Middle Ages, this was the first place in the world to abolish the death penalty. 'Since then, we've all been free here,' says a bartender proudly. This somewhat naïve boasting is characteristic of the local people precisely due to their history; there have been so many quarrels between the neighbouring towns that jealousy gets passed down from one generation to the next.

I'VE RESERVED AN APARTMENT IN THE CITY CENTRE, IN A BUILDING DATING BACK TO THE 12TH CENTURY, IN ORDER TO FEEL THE HISTORICAL AURA OF THIS PLACE TO THE FULLEST. It's still early, and while my rooms are being prepared, I decide to have some breakfast. But I don't open *Foursquare* or *TripAdvisor*, because my goal is to discover my own Pisa. Incidentally, travelling with a backpack is a big advantage, because it's much easier to get around; a suitcase significantly complicates things.

I dive into the labyrinth of small streets and find myself in the commotion of locals starting their day. I hear snippets of excited conversation between the unloading of trucks, the smoke of cigarettes, and dogs being taken for walks. There's not a tourist in



It really does lean, doesn't it? But there's no need to worry. Following relatively recent engineering work, the tower's stability has been guaranteed for at least 300 years.

The entire tower has, on the whole, sunk almost three metres into the earth

sight, which surprises me at first, although I later find out that they rarely come this far into the city. Their path leads only from the central train station to the tower and back. Some arrive by bus, take their longed-for snapshot, and head back. I randomly select a breakfast spot and get myself some coffee, tuna salad, and focaccia – all for less than ten euros. I'll say more about Tuscan food later, but right now it's time to put away my backpack and head to the famous Piazza dei Miracoli to put myself 'in the shoes' of the tourists, I laugh to myself.

This square – which contains the bell tower, cathedral, baptistery, and cemetery – was originally called Piazza del Duomo in honour of the cathedral. Now it's called Piazza dei Miracoli, or Square of Miracles. Which is quite logical, because there's no better word to describe the architectural masterpieces situated on these 8.8 hectares of land. Construction on the complex of buildings began in the mid-11th century after the Pisan victory against the Saracens, as the Arab Muslims were called by the people at that time, in Palermo. The gold looted from the Saracens allowed the Pisans to build their own cathedral and the other structures in the city's famous square. But, considering that Pisa found itself in an almost constant state of warfare, construction did not take place very quickly and was only finished in the 14th century.

First to be built was the cathedral, which took two centuries to complete. It was begun by Italian architect Buscheto and



Pisa's time of glory was short, but the towers attesting to it are many. So look up as you stroll through the city!



Scooters are not only a comfortable way of getting around; they're a calling card of the city. The brighter, the better.



Pisa's small restaurants are the best place to enjoy seafood, which is fresh and ultra delicious here.

finished by the architect Rainaldo. Pisa was competing with Venice in terms of power at that time, and so Buscheto was tasked with designing a building to rival, even surpass, the beauty of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice. To achieve this, he incorporated several architectural styles in the building, including Byzantine and Islamic elements, giving rise to a fundamentally new architectural style, Pisan Romanesque.

Everything here is done on a grand scale: the altar, pulpit, ceiling, columns, sculptures, and artwork. A fire in the late 16th century destroyed the wooden structures in the cathedral, but the interior was soon rebuilt even more ornately. For example, the gilded ceiling decorated with the coat of arms of the Medici family was created after the fire. As I leave the cathedral, I notice that the entire façade is clad with marble tiles, creating a peculiar three-dimensional effect. I can only imagine how long it took to arrange the tiles in such a manner. All the more so given that the other buildings in the square are also covered with the same kind of tiles.

The eight-storey bell tower weighs more than 15 tonnes and is 55.8 metres high on its shortest side and 56.7 metres high on its tallest side. The reason for the tower's tilt is very simple: because it was built intermittently over the course of two centuries, the materials used in its construction varied. In addition, the ground beneath it consists of three different, relatively unstable layers: soft sedimentary rock, marine clay, and gravel. Experts believe that if the tower had been built to its full height all at once, it probably would have toppled over. But the gradual pace of construction ensured that the clay and gravel had time to compact. This is confirmed by the fact that the entire tower has, on the whole, sunk almost three metres into the earth, demonstrating how easily the ground beneath it is compressed.

As early as 1370, when the tower was completed, attempts were made to stabilise it, as shown by the different number of steps from the roof eaves to the floor of the bell chamber – four on the north side and seven on the south side. In addition, the blocks used to construct the tower were of different thicknesses, with the intention of tilting the centre axis of the tower in the opposite direction of the lean. What all else hasn't been done to stop this process? The foundations have been filled with cement, the tower has been wrapped with steel wires, and lead weights have even been added to the tower. But nothing had the desired effect.

The situation deteriorated even further in 1934, when the tower's foundations were fortified... and the tower suddenly lurched southwards by about 12 millimetres and slowly continued to lean in subsequent years. A special commission was set up in 1990 to develop and implement measures to stabilise the tower. But the process has been compared to treating an elderly patient who forbids the doctor to listen to his chest and objects to the use of any medicines.

Finally, the commission decided on soil extraction using a drill as the most suitable method. The resulting empty spaces gradually compressed, leading to a slight subsidence of the soil, and the tower began to actually move a little in the opposite direction, towards the north. Thanks to this intervention, which cost approximately 25 million U. S. dollars, the tower has been stabilised and its tilting has been halted. Experts believe that the tower has now completely stabilised and should remain in its present position for at least 300 years. Its tilt towards the south has been diminished from 5.5 to 3.9 degrees. But, although the tower has seven bells, we will not hear them ring, because moving the heavy bells would cause vibrations that may harm the structure.

I DECIDE TO DEVOTE ONE DAY OF MY TRIP TO EXPLORING THE SMALL TOWNS AND VILLAGES ALONG THE LIGURIAN COAST. I rent an e-bike, which lets me reach Marina di Pisa in 40 minutes. Located 15 kilometres from Pisa, it's mostly locals on the cliff-lined beaches here, and they've brought along their sun umbrellas and beach chairs to shelter from the summer heat. Known for its beach bars and clubs (the most popular being *Sunset Caf * and *Pia Para Ti*), Marina di Pisa is popular with young people. Arriving here by bicycle is also a great way to discover the Tuscan countryside. I had in fact planned to go hiking – good routes can be found using the *Komoot* app – but abandoned that idea due to the heat.

The next day I rent a car and visit two other popular coastal towns, Viareggio and Livorno. The former is a true vacationers' paradise. The whole coastline, all the way to the port, is a parade of sun umbrellas in a rainbow of colours. Each beach zone belongs to a specific hotel and is lined with countless bars and restaurants. Although locals consider this a place for the rich, there really is something for everyone here. The same applies to the selection of restaurants, which range from *Michelin*-starred establishments to comfy little joints in the port, where I had the most delicious seafood I've ever had, all for a mere ten euros. If you want to try some *fritto misto* (fried seafood), buy it from the boats along the canal. The catch of the day is prepared right in front of you and tastes so good that the large portion disappears in the blink of an eye.

Twenty kilometres to the south of Pisa lies the coastal city of Livorno, whose history is closely linked with that of Pisa and the Medici dynasty, which was also influential in Pisa. In the 16th century, the architect Bernardo Bontalenti was tasked with designing the ideal city here. Because canals were used to transport goods from the old part of Livorno to the port, he



The small coastal villages charm visitors with their simplicity and hospitality and even make foreigners feel like they belong.



Tuscan landscapes look like postcards so beautiful you want to frame them and put them on the wall.



The truffle hunter Meia and her owner, Salvatore, show off their 'catch' – three black truffles.

applied building techniques from Venice, and this area was named New Venice.

When in Livorno, definitely take a stroll along the Terrazza Mascagni promenade. It's lined with 34,000 black and white tiles, and at the centre is an orchestra pavilion. Next to the promenade is the Livorno aquarium and aqua park. Depending on how much time you have in the city, you can choose between visiting the historical sites, the beach, or perhaps a day trip by boat to one of the nearby islands. Livorno is, incidentally, the birthplace of the famous artist Amedeo Modigliani and home to a museum devoted to him.

I'VE TRAVELLED AROUND THE WORLD QUITE A BIT, BUT THE BEST SEAFOOD I'VE EVER HAD IS HERE, ON THIS TRIP. I suggest going for fresh or only minimally processed seafood, which will let you experience the many different nuances in flavour. A must-try in Livorno is the fish stew called *cacciucco*, which originated in this port town when fishermen didn't know what to do with the small fish that didn't sell. Livorno even has a group of restaurants that guarantee the authenticity of this recipe. I choose *Antico Moro*, a trattoria that's been around for a century, and don't regret my choice. In fact, the portion is so big I cannot finish it by myself. According to tradition, cacciucco must contain at least as many kinds of seafood as there are c's in the name of the dish. These are usually octopus, shrimp, calamari, mussels, and a variety of fish, all of which are prepared with tomato sauce and served with bread at the bottom of the bowl.

Bread is held in high regard here and is cleverly integrated into many local foods. For breakfast, I select a *panzanella* salad, which looks kind of like bulgur with bell peppers and tomatoes. But it turns out I ate a whole plate of soaked bread! Many

traditional soups – such as *ribollita*, *pappa al pomodoro*, and *acquacotta marenmmana* – are also made with bread in them. Approximately 40 kilometres from Livorno is San Miniato, a small town that's known for its truffle forests. Depending on the season, white as well as black truffles are harvested here, all with the help of specially trained dogs. Some local farms offer truffle hunting as an activity for tourists, so I have to try it out. I'm welcomed by Letizia Cucchiara and her father Salvatore, who come from a truffle-hunting family. There's even a statue of Letizia's grandfather in the centre of San Miniato. In 1954, he found a truffle that weighed 2.5 kilograms, which was sent as a gift from Italy to U. S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower. We're introduced to Meia, the dog who will lead our hunt, and head to the nearby forest in the hope of finding at least one of the world's most expensive delicacies. While Salvatore, armed with a *vangino* (a tool used to pull a truffle out of the ground), surveys the truffle sites with Meia, Letizia takes us behind the scenes of this specific business. It turns out there's fierce competition here – there are 300 licensed truffle hunters in the immediate area, each of whom works with trained dogs.

'We use puppies from parents that have also been truffle hunters. When they're a month and a half old, we begin training them, and we use fresh truffles to do so, of course. Each dog has its own habits, and the hardest thing is to teach the dog not to eat the truffle after finding it. But even well-trained dogs sometimes can't resist the temptation. The guilty look in their eyes and the smell of truffles gives them away,' Letizia laughs. At that moment, Salvatore stops by a tree where Meia is happily wagging her tail – that's her signal that there's a truffle nearby. She runs back and forth, then returns and starts scratching at the soil with her paws. I can't believe it, but we've found our first black truffle!



so when they try a real truffle, they're sometimes disappointed.' Now I know that, for example, the strong flavour of truffle oil is really the result of a chemically synthesised additive rather than real truffles. In fact, the flavour of a real truffle changes when it's soaked in oil, becoming like any other dried mushroom.

THE GRAPE VARIETIES THAT GROW IN THIS PART OF ITALY ARE ALSO VERY EXPRESSIVE AND AROMATIC, WHICH GIVES THE WINES A SPECIFIC NUANCED FLAVOUR THAT'S HIGHLY VALUED WORLDWIDE. The most typical Tuscan grapes are Sangiovese, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Trebbiano, Pinot Grigio, and Malvasia. However, my revelation on this trip is Ansonica, a grape that produces a very fresh, 'crunchy' wine that goes well with seafood. I later visit Tenuta Di Ghizzano, an old organic, biodynamic winery that was established in the late 14th century by the Venerosi Pesciolini family, the 26th generation of which currently lives and works here. The old winery building, the villa next to it (where the Pesciolini family has lived for many centuries), and the Italian Renaissance-style garden across from it are all worth seeing.



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Classic Tuscany: wine, history, wine, history, and more wine.

My heart is rejoicing because of this great trip I've taken

In all, Tenuta Di Ghizzano owns 300 hectares of land. It grows grapes and olives on 40 of those hectares, grain on 150 hectares, and the rest is a nature reserve with wild animals. During my visit I learn that one olive tree produces only about one litre of olive oil. 'Producing oil is very complicated,' says Luciana, the manager of the winery. 'Olive harvests are significantly influenced by the weather. If it's cold and rainy when the trees are flowering, the fruits don't ripen and *basta!* They're also threatened by insects. But, because we're an organic farm, we don't use chemical pesticides; instead, we spray the trees with a kaolin mixture, which must be reapplied after every rain.'

After I've tasted the excellent wines aged in oak barrels, I explore the rest of the village. The Via di Mezzo in Ghizzano is a street lined with brightly painted houses – a public art project by British artist David Tremlett. This symphony of green, brown, and ochre (a natural clay pigment) colours symbolises the earth, nature, and bricks, thus underscoring the identity and deep sense of belonging of the people who live here.

IF YOU WANT TO GET TO KNOW THE REAL ITALY, STAY WITH LOCALS! In my couple of days in Pisa, I never once meet the owner of the apartment I rented. But I do meet Francesca Malloggi, the owner of the place where I stay on my third day. She's a philosopher, an author of essays, and also works in journalism. It's very difficult to describe in words how I feel as I step over the threshold into her noble, old villa. The place is full of books, artwork, antique furniture, and musical instruments. 'I've given this place the name Templa, and it reflects my values:

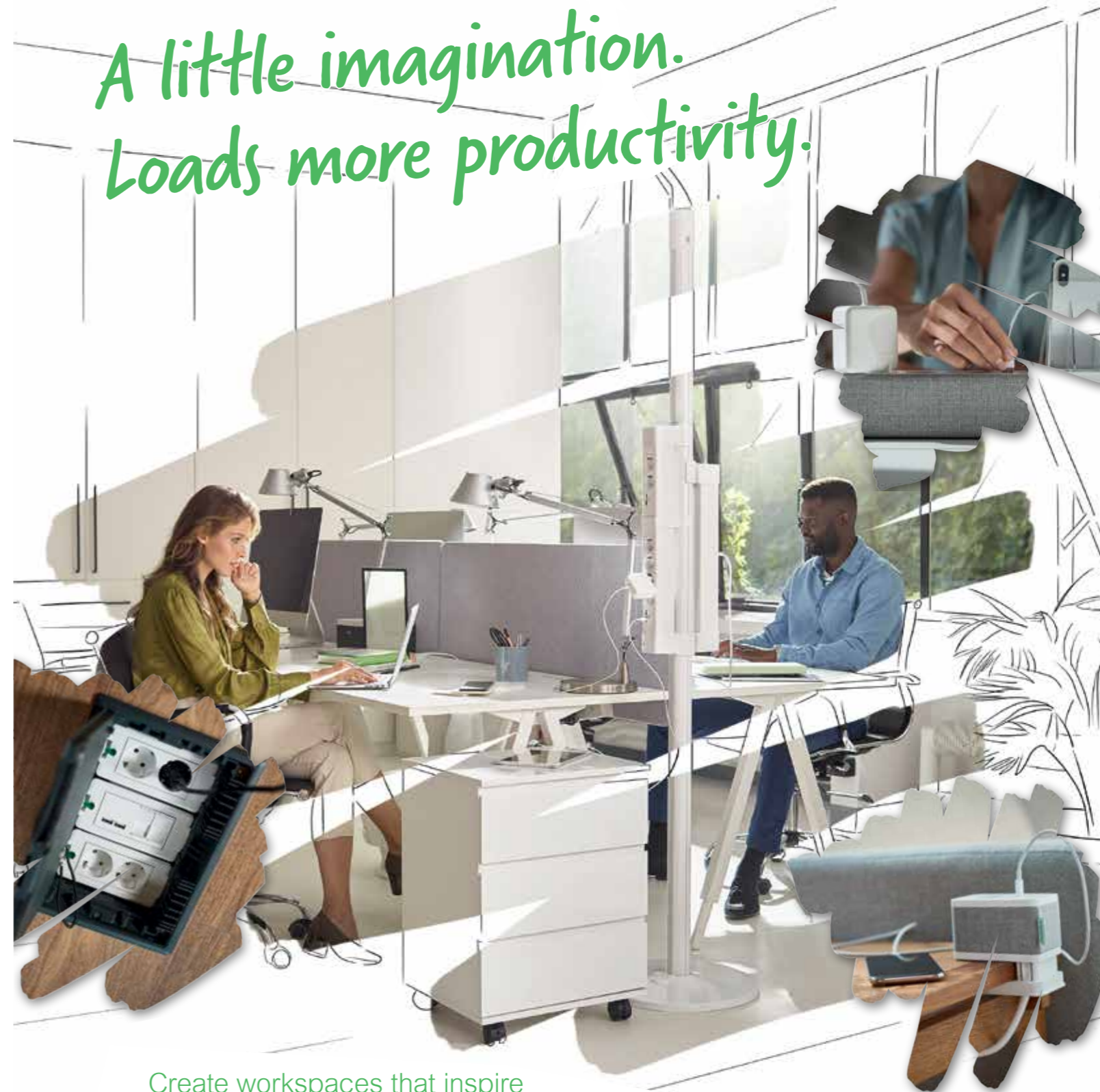
a love for art, friendship, solidarity, compassion, and a fight against overabundance and a lack of meaningful values that I see in other places,' she explains.

Francesca's house is located in Ponsacco, where I stop for two reasons. First, it's on the way from San Miniato to Pisa. And second, my friend Pinta works at the local wine producer. Francesca shows me to my room and tells me she has a surprise for me. I've already written to her beforehand to tell her that I'd like to learn about a significant thing or site I could mention in my article. And it turns out she's taken my request very seriously.

We get in her car and drive to the nearby town of Palaia, where she has organised a meeting with two historians, the author and researcher of symbols Marco Barsotti and the editor of *Tagete Edizioni* magazine Michele Quirici. We take a seat at the local pub, where Francesca is like a member of the family, and between wine and food I am educated in the history of Pisa. Having heard us talking about history, a British man sitting at the next table joins our conversation and asks whether we can recommend someone to restore the old stained-glass windows in his apartment. He's been living in Palaia for already a year and plans on staying. 'There are young people here and a young kind of energy that inspires me,' he says, justifying his choice of residence. And oh yes, he's also adopted a dog from a shelter in Latvia.

My notebook is full of notes about important facts in Pisa's history, but my heart is rejoicing because of this great trip I've taken. I will return. Francesca and I agree that it will be in September, and on my way back to Pisa I stop in Pontedera, home of the *Piaggio* factory, where the famous *Vespa* is made. The museum is closed even though, according to the sign on the door, it should be open. So there's time for an aperitif with Pinta, who's currently involved not only in the wine business but also in the production of *Ginepraio* gin. When I return to Pisa, I visit Keith Haring's legendary mural and conclude my trip with a delicious dinner at *La Buca*, one of Pisa's best restaurants.

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Fausto Bigongiali, Giacomo Colantuono, and Riccardo Carli – the owners of the *Jeffer* cocktail bar in Pisa, Lungarno Mediceo, 24.

What should one definitely see in Pisa?

Most of the tourists who visit Italy stay in Pisa for just a day, to see the tower. Most of them follow the same route, which leads from the central station to the tower and back. The buses stop at Cathedral Square, there are always crowds there, and that's why the street merchants flock to that area. But that's not where you'll get to know the city. You need to get a little bit away from the centre to find the locals' favourite places. Only there can you learn about the local cuisine, traditions, and lifestyle.

How do you suggest one get to know Pisa better?

Pisa is interesting precisely for its small streets, which host a lot of great places such as galleries, museums, small boutiques, bars, and restaurants. Stay in Pisa for more than one day to enjoy it at a relaxed pace. Stroll along the Arno River, cross a few of the city's five bridges, compare the right and left banks of the river. There are also very many small, historical villages and towns around Pisa, such as Palaia and Buti. Just half an hour's drive by car from Pisa, and you'll discover the true essence of Tuscany.

How would you describe Pisa from a modern perspective?

Pisa is growing. Maybe not as quickly as Milan or Rome, but it's slowly moving forward. Eight years ago, when we were all students, there was only one institution of higher education

here. Now there are three. And it's precisely students who are the driving force behind this change. As are we – we want this place to be different from a typical cocktail bar, we want to infuse it with the spirit of modern Pisa. People come to us for something new, for something they can't find in every other cocktail bar. And so we're also becoming bearers of change in our own way, because there are very few places like this in the city. So, the change is slow, but it's happening.

In which direction?

A good direction (*all laugh*)! Always only in a good direction.

What do you imagine Pisa will be like in five or ten years?

Pisa is becoming a university town, and that means it will only become more dynamic, with many more modern places for entertainment and recreation. Right now, the city lacks a contemporary feel. But, like we said, that's changing.

What are your favourite places in Pisa and the surrounding area?

We like pizza, and the best pizza in Pisa can be found at the *Zenzero*, *Pancino*, and *Montino* pizzerias. When we're not working at the bar, we enjoy travelling around Tuscany. Whether it's dinner by the sea or a relaxing dip in the warm pools at Casciana Terme Lari, everything's nearby, just half an hour by car.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

WHERE TO STAY

Palazzo Cini Luxury Rooms in Pisa

A small, stylish hotel with a garden on a beautiful Art Nouveau street in a quiet part of Pisa. The little design details and unique works of art make a stay here particularly special. This hotel receives high ratings from guests and is justifiably listed among Pisa's best hotels.

Via Alessandro Manzoni, 12
palazzocinilux.com

Rinascimento Bed & Breakfast

Situated in a medieval tower house, this hotel is a unique example of historical Pisan identity. It has retained its authentic character, which is reflected in the interiors and furnishings as well as in the ceiling paintings. It's sure to appeal to art and culture lovers who want more than simply a place to stay.

Piazza Donati Giovan Battista, 13
rinascimentopisa.it

Hotel Bologna

A simple but very pleasant hotel in the quiet part of Pisa's historical centre that offers good value for money. It has spacious double rooms that are ideal for families with children. Close to the central railway station, there's also a shopping street and several good restaurants just around the corner. Another bonus is the friendly, outgoing staff who add a sparkle of positivity to the day.

Via Giuseppe Mazzini, 57
hotelbologna.pisa.it

WHERE TO EAT

La Buca

If you're looking for fresh, deliciously prepared seafood and traditional Tuscan cuisine for a reasonable price, this is the place! The chef has owned this establishment for the past 30 years and takes immense pride in his loyal suppliers and consistently high-quality ingredients. He also has an extensive wine list that will satisfy the most demanding connoisseurs.

Via Massimo d'Azeglio, 6
labucapisa.it

Filter Coffee Lab

A breakfast place for those who appreciate good specialty coffee. This is also one of the rare places in Pisa that offers more than just sweet pastries and sandwiches for breakfast. The accent is on healthy foods, and you can even put together your own breakfast plate. Open from 7:30 to 15:00.

Via Santa Maria, 30
FB/filtercoffeelab

Osteria dei Cavalieri

The only restaurant in Pisa included in the prestigious Michelin guide, where

it's described as 'an establishment renowned for its homemade and aromatic cuisine, at really reasonable prices. Informal, warm hospitality.' Come here for traditional Tuscan food served with a modern twist and at truly reasonable prices.

Via San Frediano, 16
osteriacavalieri.pisa.it

Pizzeria Da Pancino

This small, long-established pizzeria is a favourite among locals and considered the best in the city. Of course, Pisan pizza may differ from what you're used to, but it's definitely worth a try. Low prices and friendly service.

Via Benedetto Croce, 59
+39 050 49201

WHERE TO SHOP

Il Bello Ritrovato Vintage Luxury

'Vintagistas' will definitely delight in finding a great piece from an old Gucci, Chanel, or Louis Vuitton collection here. All of the items in this vintage shop are authentic originals. However, making an appointment beforehand is recommended, because the owner is often not on site.

Via Francesco Crispi, 73/75
ilbelloritrovato.com

Blanc du Nil

This shop sells only all-white clothing, which suits Tuscany and its climate well. Located in the very centre of Pisa, on a street leading straight to the leaning tower, it's pretty much impossible to miss. In addition to men's and women's fashions, here you'll also find a nice wide-brimmed hat (white, of course) to protect you from the sun on a hot day.

Via Santa Maria, 167
blancdunil.com

GAMEC

CentroArteModerna Pisa

Lovers of contemporary art will enjoy this art gallery and perhaps even find something by an Italian contemporary artist to bring home. Until the end of August, the gallery is hosting the *Colorful: Il piacere del colore* exhibition, which translates to 'the joy of colours'. Free admission.

Lungarno Mediceo, 26
FB/gamecpisa

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Words by Ilze Pole
Publicity photos and by
Daniel Harding

THE FLIGHT



Photo by Julian Hargreaves

Daniel Harding (45) is a qualified airline pilot and also the music and artistic director of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra. On the last weekend of August, he will conduct Amsterdam’s Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in two concerts as part of the Riga Jurmala Music Festival.

We met in Milan. Daniel Harding was there to rehearse *Le Nozze de Figaro* at La Scala. The premiere was due in a few days, and he had spent most of his time at the theatre. He invited me for a coffee the day before our actual interview, ‘just to say hi’, he said, and I agreed it was a good decision to meet beforehand. As an opera lover, my knees were getting weaker and weaker as I approached the famous building on Via Filodrammatici, which opened in 1778. And then I met this person whose ease and relaxed appearance strongly dissonated with the image I had of him from reading his interviews and reviews of his recordings. ‘Never trust the written word,’ I smiled to myself.

However, it was precisely the energy I sensed in his recordings that first intrigued me. Even his recording (with the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra and pianist Maria João Pires, who will also be performing at the Riga Jurmala Music festival in September) of the second movement of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3 – one of the most delicate piano pieces I know – has such a driving force behind it. Or Beethoven’s Coriolan Overture (1807), which Harding recorded more than 20 years ago. Or his highly regarded 2018 recording of Mahler’s Symphony No. 5, about which a music critic noted Harding’s ability to create wonderfully clear textures. While talking with the conductor himself, I realised that the energy in this person is the same as that in his recordings.

But at that moment in front of La Scala, the only reminders of who this man is were the orchestra musicians passing by and greeting their maestro. Harding, in turn, responded to them in Italian. During this short break between rehearsals, we had coffee together, and I told him about the festival and Dzintari Concert Hall, where he and the orchestra will be performing and which is situated almost on the beach. We agreed to meet again the next day after rehearsal and have a longer conversation. ‘You think a couple of hours will be OK?’ he asked. ‘England’s playing at nine o’clock...’ The Euros were still going on. Harding was born in Oxford.

Harding attended Chetham’s School of Music in Manchester. At age 16 he assembled a group of his fellow students to record Arnold Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire* and sent the recording to Simon Rattle, a very well-known British conductor who at the time was the music director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and is now the music director of the London Symphony Orchestra. After hearing the tape, Rattle hired Harding as his assistant.

Harding made his debut in Birmingham at the age of 17. Later, the legendary Italian conductor Claudio Abbado named him as his assistant at the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra. Harding first conducted this famous orchestra at the age of 21. He’s also the

youngest-ever conductor to appear at the Proms (in 1996), an eight-week-long series of classical music concerts organised and broadcast every summer by the BBC. At the age of 22, Harding worked with British theatre and opera director Peter Brook on a production of Mozart’s *Don Giovanni* at the Aix-en-Provence Festival. And the rest, as they say, is history...

Harding is now himself a renowned and awarded conductor – this January he received the honour of CBE, Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. Working at La Scala, the Wiener Staatsoper, Covent Garden, festivals in Aix-en-Provence, Salzburg, and elsewhere with the best orchestras – it all feels like such a fast and smooth ride. But none of that has stopped Harding from also pursuing another career. In June of last year, he was meant to start flying *Airbus A320* aircraft for *Air France*. Flying is something he’s been interested in his whole life, and he finally took the steps to fulfil that dream. Now he’s waiting for the moment *Air France* starts hiring again.

It was precisely the energy I sensed in his recordings that first intrigued me

The next day, at the same table at the same café in front of La Scala, Harding and I spoke about conducting, flying, and the experiences we’re privileged to have through music. But before I left my hotel room for the café, I once again put on Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 3. The windows were open, and suddenly the sound of church bells filled the room, creating an atmosphere I’ll never forget. I continued to listen to the concerto on my headphones on my way to La Scala, letting it drown out the sounds of the city. All the way until I arrived at the café.

You confused me slightly yesterday. How did I manage to do that?

From what I gathered about you by reading and listening to your interviews, and going through the list of the orchestras you’ve worked with and the honours you’ve received – it created a very different image of you. But then I met you and didn’t know anymore how to approach the interview; I didn’t really know whom I would be talking to. Yeah (*laughs*). I had a concert in Vienna a week ago [*Summer Night Concert 2021 with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra – Ed.*]. A friend of mine

In the *Airbus A320* simulator during his last proficiency check

In Milan

If you have no time to reflect, then the lessons get knocked away by the next experience

came to the concert, and he brought some other friends along, and he told them, ‘You have to come, you have to come! You don’t understand, it’s still Daniel, but he’s like a different person! He changes completely!’ Every time he comes to a concert, he says to me, ‘I can’t believe it’s you up there. Because one moment it’s you, this normal guy I know, and then you go up on stage, and I don’t know who you are anymore.’

I felt that, too.

The thing with music is that when we’re rehearsing or performing music, like actors, we become the music we do. I can be a very boring, normal person, but if I’m given the joy of working with great music, it fills me up inside and I can become somebody else. I think the musicians’ job is to somehow become that piece of music they’re performing, to become the composer. I don’t think you should go to a concert to listen to the performer; you should listen to the music. And the great performers are the ones who become the music themselves, rather than make the music become them. Music is always more interesting than we are.

Therefore, I don’t like this personality cult surrounding musicians, because we’re just there to become the intentions of somebody else, not for people to talk so much about us.

But there’s still a wall of protection around you – agencies and agents and so on.

It’s not for protection, it’s for organisation (*laughs*). I think that anybody who’s doing a job where there are so many demands and so many things to organise, one needs help. I’ve seen how, over time, some of

my colleagues have learned to build a wall around themselves. If you do a job where people create images about who you are without actually knowing you, then it can be complicated. Any job in the public eye, where you embody something special or become a representation of something people admire, even if it’s not really true, of course it can attract strange attention. There can be that as well, but for me that wall is not to protect me; it’s to protect me from my own disorganisation!

You were meant to start flying for *Air France* in June of last year. And then they said you’ll have to wait.

Like with every airline in the world... For a few months everything was frozen and nobody was flying anywhere; even the flight simulators were shut down. For those of us pilots who were meant to join *Air France* during the first lockdown and who had been given a starting date, we were somehow protected socially as being kind of half inside the family. But we now have to wait until the time comes when the company sees the return of enough air traffic and demand for flights that we’ll be needed again.

But we’re fortunate because of how pilot training works. I’m qualified to fly the *Airbus A320*, but I still have to go back to the simulator, and there are other courses I have to do on the ground before I actually start flying. Then there’s line training, and that takes time at the moment because there isn’t so much activity. It could take a few months... If this summer we get a hint that activity is picking up, then there’s hope that before next spring I could be flying. It was a shock, of course, because flying was something I’d been planning to do for a long time, and I was looking forward to it for a long time, and then suddenly there was a huge question of whether it was ever going to happen. But, yes, it will happen, and that’s great.

Are you going to cancel your concerts because of flying?

I’ll have to organise some things, yes. The first time around, I didn’t cancel anything, because I hadn’t

planned anything for a certain time. I had kept it free for myself. I knew that for the first year I really wanted to have space just for flying and space for myself. After 25 years of conducting, it seemed like a good idea. I can’t do that again; now it’ll have to be a more difficult organisational task to make it happen. But everybody’s plans have gone to nowhere because of Covid-19, and we’ll all have to try to adapt now.

You planned to take time out from conducting to fly. But as you’ve said, it was also to make time to let some lessons sink in. May I ask what kind of lessons those are?

I’ve been conducting since I was 16, this year I’ll be 46, so the maths is easy. I’ve been conducting professionally for 30 years, and all the time for the past 25 years. I’ve gathered an enormous amount of experience from conducting 40 weeks a year.

We always think about how much time we need to prepare a new piece to conduct – I need time to learn it, I need time to get ready – but the time after performing is also important. Time to stop and say, ‘OK, I did these concerts, and in the rehearsals I learned this and this about the piece, I discovered things I did not know. I did it one way and it didn’t work, so I did it another way and OK, that was better.’

It’s the same for pilots: you brief before you fly, but it’s very good to also debrief at the end of the flight, to go over what happened, what we learned, what we could have done better. If you have time to brief and time to learn, but no time afterwards to reflect, then the lessons get knocked away by the next experience. So I said to myself that after 30 years of conducting, I should take some time to think about everything I’ve done and take time to digest, not just go on and do the next thing.

And then everything came to a full stop. How was the year of the pandemic for you?

Compared with a lot of my colleagues, I was very lucky. I’m the music director of the Swedish Radio Symphony Orchestra, and in Sweden we were lucky, because the orchestra did not stop playing. My diary was quite empty, though, and I had a lot of flexibility. After the first three months of lockdown, when I was just at home really doing nothing, activity started to pick up again starting last summer.

People were creating projects rather spontaneously, saying, ‘OK, the thing we planned is impossible, but we can do this other thing.’ There were a lot of orchestras I’d never worked with before but which I had often spoken with, saying OK, one day I’d like to come, but it’s difficult to find the time. But last year I finally went and met a lot of new orchestras and created a lot of nice projects. I’d say that from July of last year onward, I’ve been working most of the time. Most of the things were not quite normal, but at least I wasn’t at home doing nothing.

Workwise, I think it was worst for musician colleagues who really didn’t have any activity for a whole year. Because it’s essential to not lose the connection with the music, with the instrument, or with your voice or your arms, as for conductors. It can take quite a lot of time to build that back up again.

There’s also the exchange of energy between the artists and the audience, which no kind of streaming can replace.

No. In Sweden and other places I worked, we decided to not replace concerts with virtual ones, because it makes no sense. You can’t pretend there’s an audience when there’s no audience! And to put a camera there instead is a terrible thing! I went to some orchestras where that was done, and it felt kind of empty. But some said, ‘OK, there’s no audience, we can’t do anything about it, but we can do different things.’ So, we created projects specifically for the camera. I think that should be the philosophy. If we can’t have this, we won’t try to do a shitty version of it; we do what we can do, and we’ll do it properly. I think that the institutions that saw it this way had much more success in terms of keeping people’s morale up.

In Stockholm, we did quite a few projects that were designed to be filmed, an artistic product that can only be seen on screen. I think the worst thing is to play a concert and then bow at the audience, but you’re actually bowing at an empty space. Don’t do that! Do something that’s adapted to your current situation. And then when the audience comes back, you’ll be happy to go back to the other model.

How does it feel now, here at La Scala, where you’re rehearsing *La Nozze de Figaro*, the first full-scale opera since last spring?

It’s a very special moment, and a very interesting one... This is one of the world’s great opera orchestras, they know their house so well, they know their pit, and yet every day we talk, and they say, ‘Yeah, it’s been more than a year since we sat down here, and it still feels strange, it sounds strange.’ They also needed time to adapt and feel comfortable again in their own home. That’s strange. Of course, it will be beautiful to have the audience back, and it will be beautiful to make real theatre again, because opera is a very complicated, very tricky art form. But when it works, it’s also one of the most extraordinary.

It’s so important for all the people here. Milan is a special city, the Milanese are so proud of their opera house, it’s such a central part of life here. So it will be a huge moment for everyone. You might imagine that, after more than a year of not doing it, it would be so easy to jump back in again, but it’s not, and that’s a bit of a shock. But I think everyone’s really excited for the premiere.



Photo by Julian Hargreaves

From the outside, your flight to the heights of this profession seemed so smooth and so fast, but how did it really feel?

For a lot of conductors, the most difficult thing can be getting started. In that sense, I was incredibly lucky – at a very early age I was taken in by Simon Rattle and also by Claudio Abbado, and these two people, who have all the possibilities to open all doors, said that they believe in this young man, and they supported me. I never had a problem being invited to conduct an orchestra for the first time, but in the end it was my own responsibility to be invited for the second time. Nobody can make it work for you, but you can be given an opportunity to be seen and to have a chance. That's incredibly useful and valuable.

Also, if you come recommended by someone people admire and trust, they'll be a little bit more patient with you: 'OK, he's young and inexperienced, but so-and-so says he's good, so, we'll be kind and we'll see.' I was very well supported and protected at the beginning, but I wouldn't say that anybody's development as a musician, as an artist, is ever going to be a simple and smooth ride. I think if it is, they didn't try hard enough (*laughs*).

I think it's a general principle for a musician that if you achieve everything you've set out to do in a performance or during a week of rehearsals, and you say, 'Yes, everything I wanted to do was successful,' then you didn't set the bar high enough. In a way, being an artist is always about trying to achieve something that's beyond you. I hear musicians and

think, 'Oh, that was such a perfectly finished and accomplished performance!' But for me, that's always slightly disappointing, because it just means that there wasn't enough ambition...

In my early 20s, I was really lucky to be given a very good start. But it's a very difficult job, and it comes with a lot of responsibility; it's a job that takes a lifetime to learn how to do. At some point, you have to become aware of how difficult it is and how much you still have to learn. If you're someone who's just always happy with everything – 'Ah, this is so beautiful, I'm so lucky!' – that means you didn't look deep enough at the challenge. So, for me, the period between age 25 and 35 wasn't easy at all. I was just starting to understand how the job works, just starting to deal with the difficulties of the job, making all the mistakes, trying to find my way, trying to figure out how to be someone who's a leader and takes responsibility, also searching and realising who do I want to be as a person, not only as a conductor. How to give space to all these huge personalities and other people around me. Everybody needs that space, but at the same time you have to be very clear about what you yourself want. It can be very difficult.

That age you mentioned is also a time when we're forming ourselves as a person, no matter what kind of work we do.

Of course, and if you're a conductor, you're forming yourself as a person in front of 200 people (*laughs*). It's not very private. But I have absolutely no regrets or hang-ups about any of the things, any of the mistakes, or any of the hard times I had. It's all part of personal development.

What were your strong points at that young age?

My strong points... I've always had a great capacity for work. From when I was very young, and still now, if you give me a hundred rehearsals, it won't be quite enough – I'll always find something to say and try to make it better. No matter how good the piece is becoming, I can always see how we can improve it. For me, that's an important quality. Sometimes we're encouraged in the modern world, as musicians, to be very efficient and to say very quickly, 'Wonderful, you're fantastic, thank you!' Yes, you need to know when to stop and tell a colleague they're wonderful, but you also need to know what the next thing would be that you would do if there were more time, how you would make the performance better. Because it's an unending journey.

I had a lot of energy when I was younger, and I had a lot of imagination, a lot of ideas. So, with the right people and the right trust, I could get people to do very exciting performances, because I had a very clear idea of what I wanted, and I would go 100 percent for it. Probably most of my ideas were terrible, but at least I could make them happen (*laughs*).

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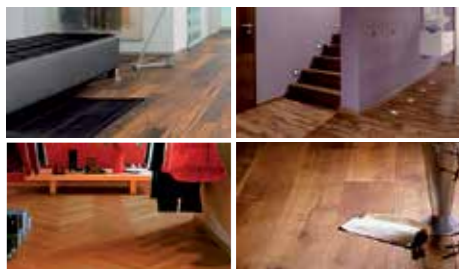
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INTERVIEW / August

In one of your interviews you said that your main character trait is obsession. Yeah... Those interviews... People ask questions and you have to say something to make them go away (*we both laugh*)! Obsession would not be a good word to use. But if I decide to do something, I'm capable of going all the way. I learned to fly airplanes because I was interested in airplanes, and I ended up with a job offer from *Air France*. If you gave me a piece of music that's 20 minutes long and we had a whole week to rehearse it, on our last rehearsal on Friday I would still be finding things to work on with the orchestra. If I put my mind to something, I'll go very far with it. I don't know if that's obsession, but I take the things I do very seriously.

In Jūrmala you'll be conducting Bruckner's Symphony No. 7. You were once asked what you would say to people who hate Bruckner, and you replied that it's not his fault, it's usually the musicians who treat him very badly. (*Laughs*). I think there's a tradition of playing Bruckner in a very monumental manner that was fashionable for a while. There's this image of Bruckner as this man sitting at the organ in this beautiful church in Sankt Florian, where he was an organist. You imagine him there, surrounded by this amazing architecture, playing grand, slow, powerful music. This monumental, beautiful, cathedral-like, church-music side of Bruckner is very important; it's absolutely part of his music. But his music contains so much more than that!

I think sometimes we flatten Bruckner to make everything fit into this one image of it as being grand and powerful. But, like in works by other Austrian composers, there's so much folk music. Bruckner was also an incredibly bizarre man, neurotic even, and that comes out in his music, too. I think that with any artist, any composer from whom you take one aspect of their personality and try to make everything fit to that one thing, you're going to damage the music. Yes, Bruckner's pieces contain some of the most impressive sonic images we have in music, but it also contains a lot more than that. That's probably what I meant.

How are you going to approach this piece of his?

I don't know how to answer that (*laughs*)! I'll do what's in the music!

When we talk about the interpretation of music, a lot of it is how you understand the relationship between one note and the other, what's the speed and the character of the music. But those are not things I can describe. What's very important in Bruckner is that his music is so unbelievably well constructed. It takes a long time, and you need to be incredibly patient in the way you perform it so that it retains its shape.

A cathedral needs to have a regular shape, but it's not enough to only draw the shape. You also have to have the fine engravings and the woodwork and the marblework. If you get too busy in each little detail, you can lose sight of the whole piece. I think that's the challenge, and that's what the interpretation of music is about. How do I do justice to all the different personalities and characters that are in this music? At the same time not damaging this enormous shape that has to hold it all together so that it feels like one piece. And when you arrive at the end, you're blown away by the satisfaction of the completion of the unity.

I once left the opera at Covent Garden after the third act because I couldn't take it in anymore. It was too overwhelming. Which one was it?

The Sicilian Vespers. That's a wonderful piece... If it's sung in the original French, it's really a grand piece. I think when music like this becomes unbearable, that means somebody did something right (*laughs*).

Like paintings. They shouldn't be only something pleasant on the wall to look at. There are pieces of music that are not supposed to send you home feeling like, 'Oh, that was so nice.' These pieces of art are supposed to confront us with things that are beyond our imagination. Either by how moving they are or by how terrible they are. A lot of art exists for that reason. We live in a world where a lot of banal things are celebrated. I have nothing against the banal – it's part of life – but that's not what *The Sicilian Vespers* or a Bruckner symphony is. These are big experiences that we're privileged to have available to us. It's not a coat to put on and then take off again after an hour; it becomes a part of you. **bo**



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WELCOME BACK!

Last month *airBaltic* rehired its first 20 flight attendants, who were welcomed back by the airline's CEO, Martin Gauss, in a special event at the end of June. Gauss said that, despite the tough decision last year to let many of the company's employees go, today the airline is proud to be in a position to rehire: 'We are confident about our future and know that soon we will return to our growth path, which will mean hundreds of new, highly skilled job opportunities.' *Baltic Outlook* asked the rehired employees about their feelings as they return to their jobs and what they've been doing over this past year.

Words by Ilze Pole
Photo by Gatis Gierts



1 / Māris Skunstiņš
‘Returning to *airBaltic* is the most awaited moment of the year!’ says Māris. ‘This job was and still is my calling, and so returning to it is a very good feeling – my eyes are smiling.’ Māris also admits that this past year was very difficult for him: ‘I felt like I had lost a part of myself.’ He spent the year working in non-aviation customer service and appreciates the experience, but he says it also helped him to see that being a flight attendant is what he truly wants to do. He enjoys his skilled and knowledgeable colleagues at *airBaltic* and the fact that he gets to see the sun every day.

2 / Evelīna Livija Predibailo
‘Returning has generated the most positive emotions. I’ve been very happy to again meet the colleagues I’ve flown with before. Sometimes it feels like I’ve never been away,’ says Evelīna. She spent almost the whole pandemic in Sweden, where the restrictions weren’t as strict as elsewhere. She travelled from the south of Sweden to the very north and spent lots of time in nature and hiking. She even learned computer programming but admits it wasn’t very exciting. Evelīna realised that she’s most suited to being a flight attendant and that *airBaltic* is a great place to work.

3 / Marta Lēnerte
Marta has been waiting to be rehired since she was laid off, so she’s very happy to be back. She spent the intervening year working as a project leader’s assistant. As she returns to the airline, she most appreciates the constant activity, meeting different co-workers on each flight, and the specific rhythm and order of working a flight that helps, for example, to mobilise and make the right decisions in non-standard

situations. She believes being a flight attendant is actually a combination of several different professions; one needs to know about psychology, marketing, service, and also how to provide first aid.

4 / Anete Jaunzeme
Anete really enjoys the field of aviation as a lifestyle, so she was elated to return to her job. She spent the past 15 months working at a call centre for a different company, where she helped clients from Norway with bank transfers and other issues, which was a good way for her to improve her knowledge of the Norwegian language. She also took up Nordic walking, which she had wanted to do for a long time. But she says she likes her ‘office window’ on an airplane the best.

5 / Anna Paula Bidīņa
‘I have only positive feelings about returning to work and am very happy to meet my colleagues again,’ says Anna. She saw the past year as an opportunity to contemplate her life and appreciate things that she otherwise takes for granted. She also tried to use this time as productively as possible, learning new things and going to school. What she likes most about her job is being in constant motion and interacting with other people. And of course, the sunrises viewed from high up in the sky.

6 / Kristīne Ikerte
Kristīne confesses that she hadn’t expected such a radical change in her life. She was overwhelmed with uncertainty about what to do when a job she really liked wasn’t available anymore. So she spent the summer relaxing and then decided to begin studying for a bachelor’s degree at the University of

Latvia and become a teacher. ‘It’s a profession that will always be in demand, and the knowledge and skills one learns are versatile,’ she says. She also began working at an educational institution and was able to combine work and school quite well. The year went by quickly, and then she received the invitation from *airBaltic* to return to her job. ‘I didn’t have to think twice and seized the opportunity, because I knew that my career at *airBaltic* isn’t over yet.’

7 / Denita Ivaško
‘It’s great!’ says Denita. ‘Considering that the past year was not easy, returning to work feels like catching my breath after a marathon.’ After being laid off, the first thing she did was take some time to relax and understand what she should do next. She did try some other jobs, but her heart remained with *airBaltic*. ‘I often looked at photos taken while I was working at *airBaltic*. I won’t lie – once in a while I even got a little teary-eyed. So now I’m very happy and excited to return and meet all of my wonderful co-workers again. I’m also really happy that we smile to each other when we meet in our uniforms. So I head to the airplane with a smile on my face and wings on my lapel!’

8 / Kristīna Mirzabajeva
‘I’m finally back home again!’ says Kristīna. ‘This job is my lifestyle, and so I waited every day to return to my usual routine. At first it was hard to accept that I wasn’t flying anymore, and for a long time I didn’t want to do anything. But this past year gave me time to fulfil a childhood dream of mine – to raise a puppy. I also started a mini business of my own making individualised gift boxes.’ At work, Kristīna most

likes her ‘office’ (the airplane), the conversations with people, and being part of a different team every day.

9 / Ritvars Emss
‘I really like what I do. I put on my uniform, and I head to work with a smile on my face and my head held high,’ says Ritvars. ‘Even if it’s at four in the morning. Because I do it with joy. This job is like a hobby, and so returning to it is a very big and happy moment.’ Ritvars also likes working with people and helping *airBaltic*’s guests, so his smile is always genuine. The past year without flying was difficult for him; it felt like losing everything he had strived for. ‘I tried finding myself in some other field, and I believed that everything that happens must happen for the best,’ he says. ‘I gained new, valuable experience that will serve me well in the future. But I appreciate the opportunities that *airBaltic* provides even more.’

10 / Anna Pozdņakova
‘I came back to *airBaltic* with a feeling of unbelievable joy and excitement,’ says Anna. ‘For me, it’s the best job ever, and I feel over moon. The best part of it is that, no matter the weather, I can always see the sunshine. What also warms my heart is the feeling that we help people to get home to their loved ones safe and sound, and at the end of the day, that’s what really matters.’ Like for everyone, the past year was not easy for Anna. But she spent lots of time with her family and reading books. She also found a different job, but she says she always knew she would return to *airBaltic*.

11 / Juta Bluka
‘I’m pleasantly anxious – but also very happy and pleased – to be one of the first employees given the

opportunity to return to *airBaltic*,’ says Juta. For her, the past year was full of emotion and events. She moved to Germany, which was hard at first because she didn’t know the language. But she began studying at the Goethe Institut, quickly achieved B1 level, and is committed to continue learning German. Anna lived in Bavaria, near the Alps. She also applied to flight school, began learning how to paraglide, and earned a paragliding pilot licence. ‘Now I’ll definitely choose holiday destinations in the mountains. The equipment is relatively light and fits in a backpack, so my favourite activity now is hike & fly. But I missed my home, so as soon as I found out we could return to *airBaltic*, I applied.’

12 / Amanda Anna Cirule
‘I’m overjoyed to meet my former colleagues again. I really didn’t expect our welcome to be so sincere – almost every day I meet a co-worker who says, “I’m so glad to see you again!” from the bottom of their heart,’ says Amanda. ‘It’s also a great feeling to be back in an airplane.’ She says that the past year was full of challenges. ‘Everything that could go wrong did go wrong,’ she laughs. ‘But I believe that everything turns out for the best. So these months let me look at life from a different perspective. I focused on self-development while I was away from *airBaltic*: I read books, I worked on my hobby of bouldering, I devoted a lot more time than usual to my family and friends, and I finally also got my driver’s licence.’

13 / Gints Hūberts Mednis
Although the year was difficult for Gints, it also brought many positive things, the biggest of which was welcoming a new

addition to the family. ‘I feel very good about returning to the airline, because I can finally again do what I really like doing,’ he says. ‘I really appreciate that every flight is different; there’s no routine. But most of all, I like my colleagues! You couldn’t find better, more responsive, more cheerful co-workers anywhere else!’

14 / Eva Eininge
‘To be honest, I don’t feel like I’m starting anew. Instead, it’s a very pleasant feeling of continuing to do what I like and what is important to me,’ says Eva. ‘Last year was very uncertain, but hope for better times never left me. Like everyone, I tried to do my best to survive by working at various places, such as Camel Park and a window factory, and I appreciate the experiences I had and the people I met. But at the same time I’m very happy to be back, and I strongly believe that people and the whole world will become better after this Covid experience.’

15 / Kristīne Griška
‘In a way, returning to *airBaltic* means getting my life back. I’ve been a flight attendant for ten years, and it’s no longer just a job for me; it’s a lifestyle.’ Emotionally, this past year was difficult: ‘I felt that I had lost a family and home, because that’s exactly how I’ve always perceived my colleagues and *airBaltic*. I often went to the airplane spotting site at Riga Airport, and my heart ached when I saw the emptiness and silence there. I was on the ground for a year and four months, but never once did I lose hope that everything would work out, everything would pass. I told myself that I only needed to be patient and I’d soon be “back on my wings”. So I didn’t look for other work; I just patiently

waited for this day to arrive. I did, however, focus on a long-held dream of mine to work with horses. I worked at a stable, took care of the horses there, and helped people prepare for horse rides.’

16 / Baiba Haņeckā
‘I’m full of joy to be returning to *airBaltic* and happy to be doing this work again. I’m full of energy and ready for new challenges,’ says Baiba. ‘Over the past year, I worked as a client services specialist and worked from home, which was a completely new experience for me. The longer I was away from *airBaltic*, the more I longed for my job as a flight attendant and understood that I love aviation.’ However, Baiba gained a new hobby during this break in her career – cooking and baking. She also began taking a long walk every evening.

17 / Elīna Grava
‘Already with the first flights, I felt like I had never been away; I felt like I had continued working and flying the whole time. Having colleagues who were so happy to welcome us back definitely helped,’ says Elīna. While laid off, she enjoyed summer to the fullest, because summer had always been the busiest time of year at work. She spent a lot of time in the countryside with her family, and she took a spontaneous trip to Champagne with a girlfriend. In the autumn, she wanted to return to *airBaltic* and applied for an opening in its call centre. That gave her a new perspective on the process that takes place before a passenger gets on the airplane. ‘I saw what it was like to work in a different department, and I got to know new colleagues who are open, positive, focused on teamwork, and always responsive.’

18 / Elīza Anna Andrejenko
‘As I return to work, I feel that now everything is really alright,’ says Elīza. ‘This good feeling is what I lacked during the pandemic.’ That said, she found that this period of being on the ground went by quickly. She began studying medicine and was busy with books, tests, and reports. What she appreciates most about her work as a flight attendant is the opportunity to travel and learn about other cultures. She also says that *airBaltic* uniforms are some of the most beautiful in the industry and that it’s a joy to wear them.

19 / Arta Apiņa
Arta admits that the past year has been a mix of happy and sad moments; it’s been very varied. She loves flying, working with people, and seeing the world so much that she couldn’t find any better job to do during this time. So she began training to become a makeup artist and will continue with this endeavour. ‘I return to the airline with new experiences and feelings, greater motivation, confidence, and tons of joy,’ she concludes.

/ Gundega Rukola
Gundega spent this time away from *airBaltic* by working in the profession she trained for after finishing high school, namely, pedagogy. But she returned to the airline as soon as she was able to, because the work culture at the company is very well organised and gives employees a feeling of stability. ‘Being a flight attendant brings me lots of joy,’ she says. ‘It’s a job that’s close to my heart and gives me fulfilment, because I get to travel at the same time as I’m working.’

Words by David Palacios
Photos by *Unsplash*, *iStock*, and *Alamy*



SUN, SEA, AND PAELLA IN VALENCIA

The sunny Mediterranean climate, brilliant beaches, nature, culture, and delicious food make Valencia an ideal vacation hotspot.

The sea breeze gives a unique touch to this coastal town that presents itself to the world as a lively and modern destination with unlimited opportunities to not get bored. The sandy beaches, authentic paella, and the avantgarde architectural mecca that is the City of Arts and Sciences make this, the third-biggest Spanish city, a great weekend getaway. Here we've collected a list of experiences worth including in your travel plans.



Every neighbourhood spends the year building a giant figure, only to set it alight at the end of the Fallas festival.



The City of Arts and Sciences, developed by Santiago Calatrava, is a large-scale urban recreation centre for culture and science.



The City of Arts and Sciences was inaugurated in 1998.

Photo by Jurre Houtkamp/Unsplash



During Fallas, Valencia turns into a big street party.

HISTORY, TRADITION, AND MODERNITY

Considered one of the most ancient cities in Spain, Valentia – meaning ‘land of the brave’ – was founded by the Romans in 138 BCE. One of the first areas they built was Plaza de la Almoína, which is where the Roman forum was located. Nowadays, the square hosts an archaeological museum with the remnants of Roman buildings and other elements, such as the thermal baths. More relics can be found throughout the city, including the former Roman circus, the best-preserved part of which has now been incorporated into a hotel.

After the Romans, the city was ruled by the Moors and then the Christians. All of these different influences have had an impact on today’s cityscape. Ruzafa, one of Valencia’s most creative and trendy neighbourhoods, has its origins in the construction of the Al-Rusafa garden by Abd al Rahman I. Nowadays it’s one of the *barrios* not to be missed, thanks to the many art galleries, design studios, coffee shops, and restaurants run by young local chefs.

One of the achievements of the Christian era was the so-called Book of the Consulate of the Sea, a piece of maritime legislation promulgated by King James I that governed trade in the Mediterranean Sea. As a result of these laws and the subsequent growth in maritime commercial activity, the Port of Valencia is now the biggest on the western coast of the Mediterranean.

Valencia is also known for its lively local culture. Perhaps one of the most bizarre traditions – but fun at the same time – is Moros y Cristianos (literally,

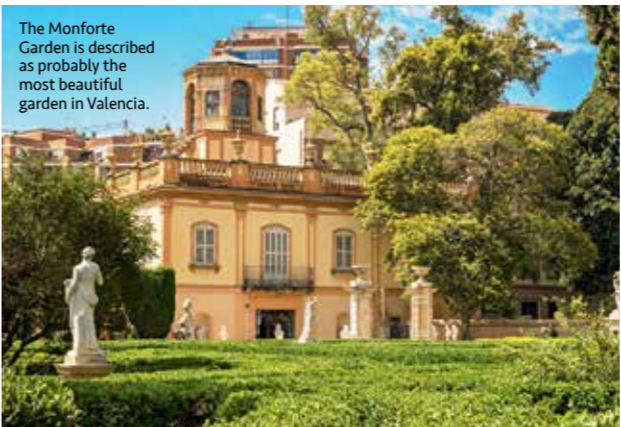
‘Moors and Christians’), a historical reenactment of the battles between both groups from the 8th to the 15th centuries. The event takes place every year in several cities and villages across the region.

But if there’s one festivity that Valencians feel most proud of, it’s Fallas. Taking place every March along with the arrival of spring, it’s basically fireworks going off all day long. The celebration has its origin in an old carpenters’ tradition of using cast-off pieces of wood to build human-looking figures and then burning them. Nowadays, hundreds of these *ninots* – giant handmade puppets with satirical themes commenting on current social and political life – are put on display in the city for several days and then burned in what’s called the day of La Cremà. Every year, however, one of the puppets is pardoned, and the Museo Fallero has exhibited them all since 1934. The museum is also a good place to learn more about this tradition, which was added to the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage list in 2016.

Valencia is also considered an architectural marvel in southern Europe thanks to the work of local architect and engineer Santiago Calatrava. He’s the



There are almost 20 kilometres of beach waiting for you in Valencia.



The Monforte Garden is described as probably the most beautiful garden in Valencia.



Valencia's Botanical Garden has one of the largest collections of palm trees in Europe.

mastermind behind the imposing City of Arts and Sciences, a stunning architectural complex and recent hotspot of local cultural life. This modern and futuristic district, which features a group of variously shaped buildings surrounded by water, has put Valencia on the international scene.

FROM CROWDED BEACHES TO GREEN LUNGS

Situated on the Mediterranean Sea, Valencia offers endless possibilities for those wanting to relax, sunbathe, or take a dip along its 20 kilometres of coastline.

One of the most famous and lively beaches in town is Malvarrosa, conveniently located just a short walk from the historical centre. It also has a broad promenade with shops, restaurants, and bars to enjoy after a sunny day of lying on the sand. If you prefer something less crowded, head to the wilder beach at El Saler. Surrounded by dunes and a small forest, it’s considered one of the best in the area and is also the preferred location for windsurfers due to the big waves. Go to Perellonet-Recati in the southern part of the city if you’re into water sports: surfing, paddling, windsurfing, even canoeing in the crystal-clear waters. Many locals also visit this beach to get away from the more crowded and touristy hotspots.

But not all is beach in Valencia. Especially in autumn, when the brown trees and cool temperatures invite one to discover the city from another angle. The Túria River, which crosses the

city from north to south, is its main ‘green lung’. After a major flood in 1957, a decision was made to divert the Túria’s flow, and the old riverbed was turned into a pedestrian path after citizens demanded the creation of new green spaces within the city limits. The resulting Jardín del Túria, or Garden of the Túria, is the biggest urban garden in Europe. It’s ten kilometres long and visited by more than three million people every year. It’s also an excellent place to engage in sports, take a morning run, or enjoy a stroll with the family along the promenade.

Another place worth checking out is the Botanical Garden, which has thousands of species of trees and plants from all around the world as well as one of the largest collections of palm trees in Europe. It’s also a centre for the scientific study of the local flora that’s hosted by the University of Valencia. The school established the garden back in the 16th century to grow medicinal herbs and teach botanical studies. The site then stood abandoned for a time in the 20th century, until restoration work began in 1987.

Perhaps one of the least known places in the city, even by locals, is the Monforte Garden at Plaza de la Legión Española. A highlight of 19th-century urban planning, it’s not only a green oasis within the busy city but also an architectural gem. Here you can find trees and flower beds as well as Italian sculptures and decorative vases. If you’re looking for a moment of inner peace and relaxation on your city trip, this is the place to go.



La Sastrería, located in a former tailor's shop, presents an interesting concept of fine-dining seafood tapas.

Publicity photo

The Valencia region has plenty of restaurants that make the most of fresh-from-the-water seafood.



THE WHOLE MEDITERRANEAN DIET IN A SINGLE CITY

Be aware that Valencia is a true paradise of the Mediterranean diet. The region is known for growing rice according to the traditional method of flooding the paddies before the harvest, which takes place every year at the end of the summer holidays. Rice is, of course, the main ingredient in the most famous Spanish dish worldwide: paella. It's believed that paella was invented right here in the 10th century and that only in Valencia can one find the authentic recipe.

For truly traditional paella, try *paella valenciana*. It's made with round short-grain rice, a local variety of green beans, artichokes, and meat – rabbit, chicken, or even duck. If you're into seafood, go for *paella de marisco*, and certainly order *paella del señorito* ('gentleman' in Spanish) if you want something easy to eat, because all the seafood comes peeled and ready to eat.

Several restaurants feature this delicacy on their menus, and a popular place to enjoy it is on the boulevard next to the sea. *La Alegría de la Huerta* on Malvarrosa Beach offers a good range of paellas. It does get busy, however, especially on weekends, so booking a few days in advance is highly recommended.

La Sastrería serves up a menu focusing on locally caught seafood.



Publicity photo

The old fishing quarter of El Cabañal is also an excellent place to enjoy the local gastronomy. *La Sastrería*, located in a former tailor's shop, presents an interesting concept of fine-dining seafood tapas. Although the main dishes are certainly tasty, don't skip the starters. The foie and parmentier grilled taco and the red-prawn croquette are simply mouth-watering.

Markets play a crucial role in the social life of Valencia. The Central Market, located in the heart of the Old Town, has hundreds of stands selling fresh fruit, fish, and all kinds of seafood. Here you'll find some of the best Valencian oranges and local oysters known as *Les Perles* (The Pearls).

The mild temperatures in Valencia nearly all year long are the perfect excuse to try *horchata*, a popular beverage made from nuts. It's especially popular in the afternoon, during the *merienda*, a small break between lunch and dinner. Check out *Horchatería de Santa Catalina*, which has been making and serving this drink for more than 100 years. And if you're tempted to accompany it with a sweet bite, make sure you order a traditional sweet breadstick called a *fartón*.

Not all cities can say that they have their own cocktail recipe, but Valencia can. Don't get on the plane back home without trying Agua de Valencia, which is made of sparkling wine (cava or champagne), orange juice, vodka, and gin. Legend says that this refreshing drink was invented in the bohemian *Café Madrid*, one of the most famous spots in the city.



The town of Peñíscola and its famous castle on the rock overlooking the sea is a must-visit.

Follow the Utiel-Requena Wine Route to visit wineries, participate in tastings, and learn more about local grape varieties.



JUST A STONE'S THROW AWAY

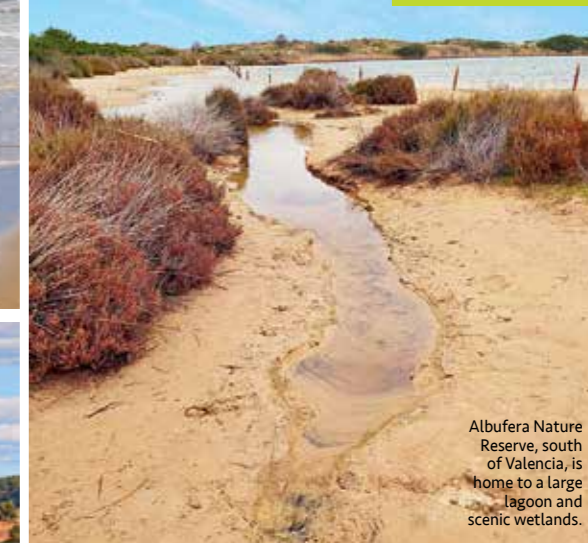
Valencia offers endless options to discover the city, but it's not a bad idea to consider a day trip to some nearby destinations as well.

About ten kilometres from the city centre lies the Albufera, a natural saltwater lagoon located on the Gulf of Valencia. It's part of a protected natural park and is separated from the sea by a thin, sandy strip of land and dunes. This is an important area for natural biodiversity. It's also home to sea bass, eels, and prawns, so expect to see fishermen working with the catch of the day in the early morning or late evening. And if that's not enough, the Albufera is known for flamingos and migratory birds that stop here in autumn and winter on their way from Europe to Africa.

The Albufera is easily reachable by bus from the city centre in less than an hour. Or arrive by bicycle along the scenic way bordering the Valencian coast. The village of El Palmar is certainly the liveliest part of the park and a good place to unwind and enjoy some good food surrounded by rice paddies. From there you can explore a variety of hiking trails in

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Albufera Nature Reserve, south of Valencia, is home to a large lagoon and scenic wetlands.

the park or rent a small boat to explore the canals. If you're looking for a stunning sunset, you're also in the right place.

Valencia is increasingly becoming known as a wine region. Although still young, the Utiel-Requena area has more than a hundred producers. Follow the Utiel-Requena Wine Route to visit some wineries, participate in tastings, and learn more about local grape varieties, such as Bobal. This variety was documented as early as the 15th century and now represents approximately 70% of the vines in the area.

The town of Requena played an important role in the Middle Ages and has a pretty historical centre, where many of the houses are decorated with traditional tiles. Under the city, a series of old caves were formerly used, among other things, as wineries. And while you're there, visit the local museum in an old convent to see some interesting exhibitions related to the town's history.

In the neighbouring province of Castellón, the town of Peñíscola and its famous castle on the rock overlooking the sea is a must-visit. The fortress, built between the 1st and 2nd centuries BCE, served as a centre of power. Nowadays, you can visit it with a free audio guide on your smartphone. Enjoy breathtaking views of the sea from the elevated Old Town, or head to the lighthouse, built in 1892, for another rewarding, picture-perfect view.

And last but not least, the ancient Roman city of Sagunto is a truly historic place. Founded more than 2000 years ago, today it features Roman ruins and a sprawling hilltop castle divided into seven sections, or plazas. There's also a Roman theatre that can seat up to 8000 people. However, be aware that the theatre has been reconstructed in a more contemporary style using concrete. **bo**



Words by James Taylor
Photos by iStock, Shutterstock, Alamy, and Unsplash

BEST CITY TRIPS
FOR YOU AND
YOUR PETS

Fancy treating your pet to a city break abroad and letting them indulge in their wanderlust? It's easier than you think. From canine-friendly hotels to cafés and restaurants that welcome animals with open arms, make your next trip one to remember by bringing along your four-legged friend to one of the following pet-friendly cities.

MILAN, ITALY: for the fashion hounds



Milan is very fashionable, chic, and elegant.

Photo by Alex Vasey/Unsplash



The charming
vibe of Milan

Photo by Julia Salomina/Unsplash



The streets are filled with
locals walking their dogs.

Fashionable, chic, and elegant, Milan with its loads of green spaces, pet-friendly restaurants and bars, and a wealth of things to discover is also a fantastic choice for a vacation with your pet.

If there's one thing that Italy is known for, it's the cuisine. And that goes for Milan as well, which is the birthplace of the famed aperitivo. Generally, wherever you choose to go, there will be outdoor terraces for you and your pet to enjoy the aperitivo hour, sipping on a cocktail while sampling olives, cheese, cured meats, and more. A popular spot to visit for this Milanese ritual is the Navigli district, where bars and restaurants line the beautiful canals. Head straight to *Mag Café* or *Fonderie Milanese* to enjoy this classic tradition.

The streets of Milan are filled with locals walking their dogs. Taking in the sights of the city centre with your pet is a must, from the imposing and stunning Duomo cathedral to the world's oldest shopping centre, the *Galleria Vittorio Emanuele II*. The latter is open to dogs, letting you admire the stunning architecture and high-end shops with your four-legged friend in tow.

From there, it's only a short walk to the *Quadrilatero della moda*, or the fashion

quadrangle. Milan is one of the world capitals of fashion, and this neighbourhood is the epicentre of it all, with streets lined with some of the world's most famous designer labels. You might see a stylish pup or two walking with their equally fashionable owners, ducking into the stores to purchase a new *Prada* bag or pair of *Louis Vuitton* shoes. Dogs are allowed inside almost all the stores, unless otherwise posted.

For those who are craving some of Milan's greener spaces, there are plenty of options to go with your pet. The largest park in the city is Parco Sempione, just north of the city centre. There's plenty of green space to explore on the leash as well as two separate dog parks for when your pet needs to run free and meet some of the local Milanese dogs. Another great park is the Indro Montanelli Gardens, where you'll find the Mobility Dog Park.

Milan also has a great range of pet-friendly hotels. Check out *Hotel Galles* in the city centre, with rooms that include dog beds, litter boxes for cats, food and water bowls, and hygienic bags. Another great option is the *Hotel Pierre Milano* in the historic centre, with a fabulous central location and pet-friendly facilities.



Flying with pets: everything you need to know

The logistics of travelling with your pet means that you're going to have to be extra-prepared before you leave home. Luckily, we've gone over the main details.

Essential items for travelling with your pet

- Collar: if you haven't already, remember to put a tag on the collar with your pet's name and your contact details. That way, if you get separated while abroad, it will be easier to reunite with your furry friend.

- Leash: just as important as a collar is a leash. Even if your pet is the most well-behaved animal in the world, in public spaces across the world it still needs to be on a leash.

VALENCIA, SPAIN: sun, sea, and sand



Valencia has
several
canine beaches.



With sunny weather all year,
Valencia is a fantastic choice
for a holiday.



It is believed there are now more
pets in Spain than children.

With year-round sunny weather, a beautiful and walkable historic centre, and boundless parks and gardens to enjoy, Valencia is another fantastic choice of holiday for you and your pet. Spain is a country that seriously *loves* dogs, but Valencia takes this to another level completely. In 2019, the city was awarded the 'pet-friendly city' stamp thanks to its extensive open spaces, all of them welcoming for you and your pet. From the over 2000 years of history contained in the centre to dog-friendly beaches and beautiful parks, this is one holiday you and your pet won't forget.

Regarding food, you won't want to leave Valencia without trying a paella – after all, this is the birthplace of Spain's most famous dish. For one of the best paellas in the city, stake out a seat on the terrace at *Restaurante la Ferrera*, south of the city's main port. Specialising in traditional Valencian paellas with rabbit, chicken, and duck, there's also a bounty of seafood to try that's freshly plucked from the Mediterranean. But the best part? The restaurant is right on one of the city's most dog-friendly beaches, the Playa de Pinedo, which has a special area reserved for dogs and their owners.

Back in the city centre, the pleasant old quarter is well worth a ramble with your furry friend. With over 2000 years of history and relics from the Romans, the Visigoths, and the Muslims, there's something to discover around every corner. Luckily, there are plenty of sunny restaurant terraces scattered throughout the old quarter's plazas for a bite of tapas for you and your pet. Restaurants are also more than happy to bring out a dish of water on those warm Spanish summer days.

Open spaces in the city are easy to come across. Valencia boasts plenty of spaces for letting loose with your dog in the open air, but nothing beats the Turia Gardens. Cutting through the middle of the city and following the old course of the Turia River, this extensive collection of green spaces has more than 50 kilometres of trails for walking. There are also areas where you can let your dog off the leash, letting them run free with the other locals. For a central hotel that welcomes pets with beds, foods, and walking services, consider *The Westin* or the *Casual Vintage Valencia*.



- Container, kennel, or cage: remember that when travelling with your pet on a flight, you'll need to provide your own container, kennel, or cage to transport them safely.

- Waste bags: whether it's in the airport or at your destination, it's always the responsibility of pet owners to clean up after their little friends.

- Food and water: travelling is not only tough on us, but also on our pets. That's why having some extra food on hand to keep their energy levels up is a great idea when flying.

PARIS, FRANCE: pet-friendly dining

Exploring the magical Eiffel Tower is a dog-friendly activity.



One often encounters professional dog walkers on the streets.

One of Europe's most timeless and romantic destinations, Paris is also a fantastic city to visit with your pet. Thanks to the tiny apartments in Paris and lack of private backyards, Parisians tend to take their dogs with them everywhere. Whether they're popping down to their corner store to pick up a baguette for lunch or travelling across town to meet friends for a drink, dogs are often along for the ride. As such, whenever you leave your hotel, taking your dog with you isn't a problem. Exploring the romantic boulevards, sighting the magical Eiffel Tower, and enjoying coffee and croissants around town are all pet-friendly activities.

At the forefront of pet-friendly services in Paris are the restaurants and cafés. Most owners will do their best to accommodate you and your pet, greeting them with a friendly pat before immediately whisking over a container with some water. In fact, some people even think that the dogs get better service than the humans. One popular pet-friendly pilgrimage is a visit to *Le Moulin de la Galette* in the Montmartre neighbourhood. Serving all the classics, from escargot to boeuf bourguignon, this restaurant

was immortalised in paintings by famous artists such as Renoir, Van Gogh, and Pissarro.

Surprisingly, many of the parks in the city are off limits to dogs, so you'll have to seek out the handful of areas where you are allowed to roam with your four-legged friend in tow. There are dog enclosures to run free at the north end of the Tuileries Garden and the southern end of the Luxembourg Garden, but by far the best park to go with your dog is Buttes Chaumont Park in the 19th arrondissement. Dogs are allowed to run free there, and the park is beautiful – you'll even find a waterfall and a set of ruins.

There are around 800 pet-friendly hotels across Paris, meaning that you'll be able to find something for you and your pet no matter the budget. If you're looking to splash out on an extravagant experience for your pet, consider staying at either the *Hôtel de Crillon* or *Le Meurice*. The former will welcome your dog with a personal butler who takes them for walks (charges apply), while the latter offers personalised name tags and an embroidered carpet with your pet's name on it.



Restaurants and cafés are at the forefront of pet-friendly services in Paris.



Flying with pets in Europe: the rules

Of course, there are certain rules and regulations that you must follow if you're planning on flying with your pet.

- For flights within the EU, it's mandatory that you'll need to show the following documents:
 - ID-marking microchip
 - Pet passport
 - Anti-rabies vaccination

- There are some EU countries where additional requirements must be met. Always remember to check the import and export regulations of each country before you book your ticket.

- If you're travelling to and from the United Kingdom, Ireland, Iceland, or the United Arab Emirates, special rules apply when flying with your pet. On flights TO these countries, pets are only allowed to be checked in as manifested cargo. On flights FROM these countries, all pets (except service animals) will have to fly as checked baggage or manifested cargo.

PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC: pooches of culture



Rubbing the bronze dog on Charles Bridge is said to bring good luck.



With its stunning architecture, Prague is one of the most beautiful cities in Europe.

For culture, history, and plenty of beer, it's hard to pass up an opportunity to travel to Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic. One of the biggest draws for doggie travellers to this city is the law that allows dogs to walk alongside their owner without a leash – if they're under the control of their owner, of course. You'll also love the fact that dogs are allowed in many restaurants and cafés across the city. And that's a great thing, because the food in the city is fantastic. There are plenty of hearty meals to try in the restaurants and pubs, such as *vepřo-knedlo-zelo* (roast pork, bread dumplings, and stewed cabbage) and *guláš* (stewed meat in gravy with vegetables). For either, check out *Konvikl Restaurant*, a traditional restaurant and pub that's more than welcoming for dogs.

As far as hotels go, more than half the hotels in Prague will let you stay with your pet. Conditions apply, though, and most often you'll have to pay an extra charge between EUR 10–20. An excellent choice is the *Hotel Pod Věží*, located right next

to Charles Bridge and with fantastic views from a rooftop terrace. Another great option is the designer *NYX Hotel* near Wenceslas Square. With neon lights and street art filling the hotel, it's an atmospheric urban stay for you and your pet.

There are plenty of green spaces and parks to enjoy with your pet in Prague. One of the most popular and easy to reach from the city centre is Letna Park, with breathtaking views over the city from the vast grassy areas and shady gardens. To get there, head north across the river. Another fantastic spot is Petřín Hill east of the river in Mala Strana, where a miniature Eiffel Tower from the 1891 Prague Exhibition still stands.

Finally, it's hard to leave Prague without relaxing with a crisp glass of pilsner beer – this is a capital of beer, after all. *Pilsner Urquell* is the city's most famous brew, alongside the popular *Kozel*. Both can be sampled at beer halls, bars, and restaurants across the city, most of which will also welcome your dog with a friendly pat and bowl of water.



There are plenty of parks to enjoy with your pet in Prague.



How to organise in-cabin air travel for your pet

• Small cats and dogs are allowed to be classified as hand luggage and transported in the cabin. The passenger must provide their own carrier box. The weight of the box and pet inside must not exceed 8 kg and needs to be kept under the seat in front of you for the entire flight.

• To organise in-cabin air travel for your pet, you'll need to inform *airBaltic* when booking the ticket. Contact us here: airbaltic.com/contact-us.

• The maximum dimensions of the container are 55 x 40 x 23 cm (length x width x height). The cost of transporting a pet in the cabin is EUR 50 per direction.

SPECIAL / August

**BERLIN,
GERMANY:**
for the cool cats
and dogs



Berlin is considered a mecca for urban art and street art.



The German capital is
lauded for its green spaces.



BRLO Brwhouse is one of the
most popular spots for pet
owners looking for a cold brew.

Berlin is one of the greenest cities in Europe, with boundless parks, gardens, and forests to explore with your four-legged friend. Add in plenty of dog-friendly restaurants and laid-back locals who love animals of all kinds, and you've got one of the best city trips for you and your pet.

As you wander throughout this fascinating city, a leash is necessary. But there are also plenty of dog parks where you can let your pet run free and meet some new friends. The city's most accessible area where you can let loose is Tempelhofer Feld, an expansive green space on the grounds of a former airport. For an even bigger green space, head further into West Berlin and you'll find the popular Grunewald Forest. With boundless walking paths to discover, a beautiful waterfront, and a dogs-can-run-free rule, this is a great spot to discover with your pet. Getting there doesn't have to be that difficult, either; pets are allowed on all public transport in Berlin. Small dogs must be kept in a suitable closed container, while larger dogs will need their own ticket (at a reduced cost, of course).

When you've worked up a hunger, there are plenty of pet-friendly restaurants across the city for you and your pooch to choose from. In fact, most restaurants, bars, and cafés welcome dogs with a friendly hello and bowl of water. But this is Berlin, so it's time to join the locals and settle in for a cold beer. One of the most popular spots for pet owners looking for a cold brew is *BRLO Brwhouse* in the heart of Gleisdreieck. It's a brewery, restaurant, and taproom all rolled into one, housed in 38 shipping containers. The large beer garden out front is perfect for you and your dog, enjoying a craft brew and some of the brewhouse's specialty vegetarian cuisine or regional meat dishes. Your dog might even make it onto the establishment's *Instagram* page for dogs, @TheDogsOfBRLO.

After a long day of exploring, collapse at *Pestana Berlin Tiergarten*, a dog-friendly hotel conveniently located right next to Tiergarten, another fantastic inner-city park to enjoy. **bo**

Fly to
Berlin
from
€29
one way

For larger pets

- Any larger animals that exceed the weight restrictions of the in-cabin allowance must be transported as checked baggage. Again, passengers must provide their own carrier box, and the total weight of the animal and box must not exceed 75 kg.

- The maximum dimensions of the container are 117 x 84 x 84 cm (length x width x height). The cost of transporting a pet in the cargo hold is EUR 100 per direction if the weight of the animal and container is between 1-32 kg, and EUR 200 per direction if the weight of the animal and container exceed 32 kg.

- Extra-large animals that exceed 75 kg must be checked in as manifested cargo.



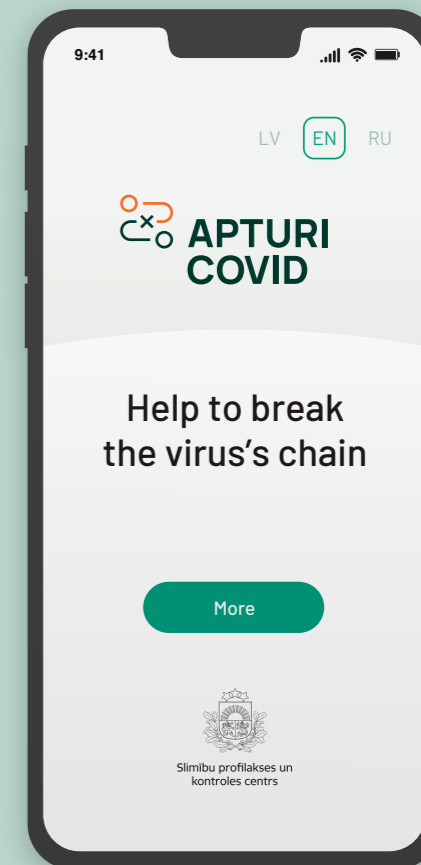
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Words by Olga Dolina
Photos by Vasileios Thanopoulos and
Vasileios Mathioudakis

A RURAL GREEK GATEWAY

If mythological creatures lived in our times and could choose where to spend their slow-paced, sun-kissed vacation, they'd find this summer house on Crete irresistible.

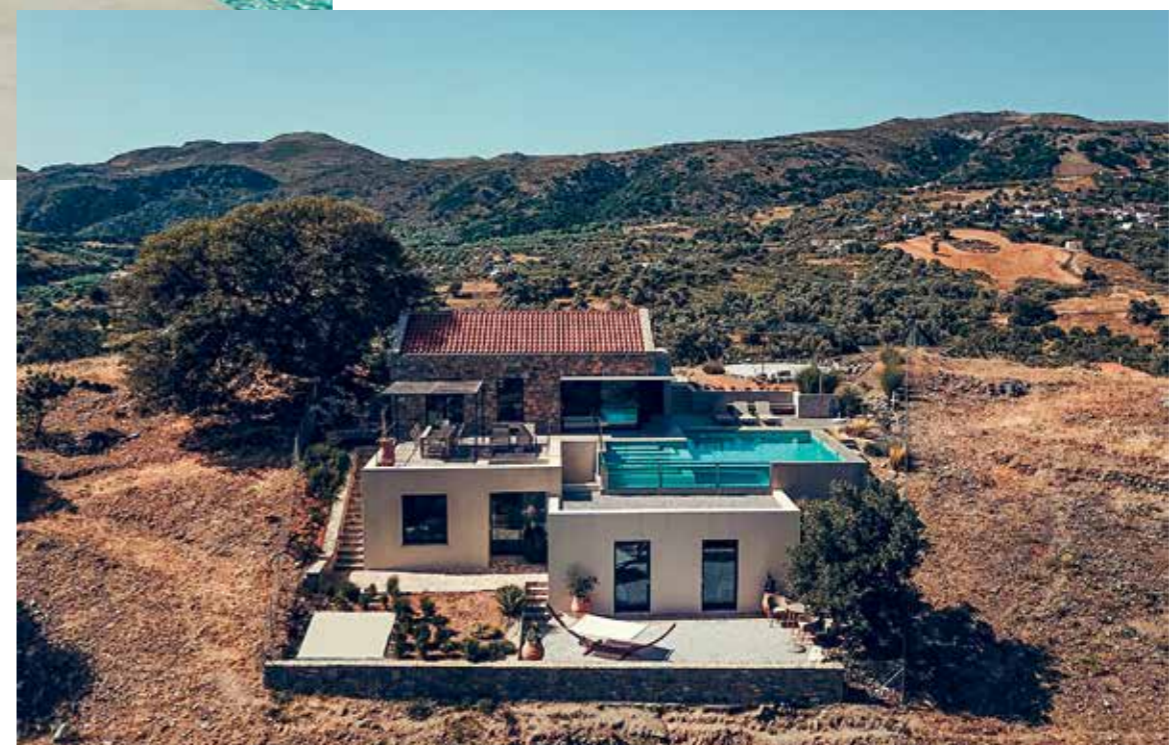
Back when mighty gods and brave heroes inhabited Greece, Crete was a cradle of the arts and impressive architecture, such as the must-visit palace of Knossos. To this day, the island's hilly, rural terrain also produces delicious olives, citrus fruit, wines, and cheeses. Once a centre of Minoan civilisation and still embraced by raw, unspoiled nature, Crete offers unpretentious serenity, which makes it a perfect setting for modern homes integrated into the surrounding landscape. The architects from the locally based practice *Polyergo* (polyergo.gr) certainly agree.

Many elements of the contemporary design of this villa set among the foothills in the picturesque countryside near the village of Kato Mixorròuma refer to the rural construction techniques of the island's Cycladic past, such as the earth-retaining stone walls once used in agriculture. An old oak tree stands on one side of the home's entrance, and on the other is another historical reference – a low, circular outdoor floor made of stone. It's the ancient remains of an *aloni*, a threshing circle for grain.

▲ Uninterrupted views of the landscape to the south are a key element of the layout. Large glass windows provide a maximum amount of natural lighting and ventilation. The swimming pool is set on top of one part of the sleeping zone and creates a dialogue between the exterior and interior of the house.

▼ With contemporary forms that harmonise with the rural surroundings, the house is constructed of stone, wood, plaster, and metal. Two solar panels provide the home with electricity and warm water in the swimming pool throughout the year.

▼▼ The house is composed of three main volumes revolving around two fulcrum points: the funnel-shaped staircase and the *avli*, a courtyard with a skylight and a tree. The architecture provides a direct reference to the traditional housing of this area, which fits perfectly in the hilly Cretan terrain.



▼ A unique feature of the property is its bioclimatic design – the house does not require air conditioning. The stair axis in the centre of the house acts as a natural ventilation chimney, while the upper floor is well insulated against the heat thanks to its thick masonry walls.



◀ Three bedrooms are located on the cooler lower floor, some of which have direct access to another sun-kissed terrace with a chaise longue. On the second floor, the staircase separates the kitchen from the living zone, which opens out onto the poolside terrace.

▲ The interior design blends modern solutions with traditional details, featuring a calm and warm colour palette with oak, jute, linen, and cotton textures. Most of the furniture is custom made, except for the iconic mid-century wing-like *CH07* lounge chairs by Hans Wegner. **bo**



TEMPTECH

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UV filters. The internal LED lighting in the cabinets does not give off any heat.

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TEMPTECH DISCOVER THE BEST OF YOUR WINE

How do you store your wine? Maybe you already have a wine cabinet that needs an upgrade? *Temptech*, the Nordic wine cabinet expert with 15 years of experience, is convinced that storing wine correctly should be easy.

Wine is a living product that develops over time. This makes storing wine correctly very important, whether you are keeping it for a long period or intend to drink it soon. A wine cabinet provides the perfect storage conditions for your wine, whether it is white, red, or sparkling.

Here at *Temptech*, we know what makes a good wine cabinet. *Temptech* is the largest producer and supplier of wine cabinets in the Nordic countries. Our quality wine cabinets ensure optimal storage conditions for your wine collection. With over 75 different models in a variety of sizes and colours, we have a wide selection of wine cabinets for private or professional use: apartments, homes, public spaces, restaurants, bars, and hotels. We guarantee that you will find a wine cabinet that suits you and your needs.

Many famous restaurants, wine bars, wine importers, and wine connoisseurs in Norway, Denmark, Sweden, and Finland choose our wine cabinets. *Temptech* products are now available in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as well.

Check out these five rules compiled by *Temptech* that lead to perfect wine storage. The result is better durability, improved taste, and an even better wine experience.

1. Correct and stable temperature
Wine must not be stored in conditions that are too hot or too cold. The ideal storage temperature in a wine cabinet is between 6° and 10°C for white wine and between 14° and 18°C for red wine. Storing at these temperatures will also ensure that the wine is at the correct serving temperature.

2. Optimal humidity
The correct humidity level for wine storage is between 50 and 70 percent. Lower humidity can cause the cork to dry out and draw in air, which can reduce the quality of the wine. *Temptech's* HumidFlow technology ensures that all our wine cabinets maintain the correct humidity level.

3. Protection against heat and sunlight
Too much light can speed up the wine's ageing process. Sunlight also contains UV rays, which can damage wine. Most of our wine cabinets have glass doors containing protective

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Raimonds Pauls
in Riga Russian Theatre



Mikhail Chekhov Riga Russian Theatre / 16 Kaļķu Street, Riga, Latvia / Рижский русский театр имени Михаила Чехова / www.mct.lv

АВГУСТ / AUGUST 2021

Премьера / Premiere
ЧАК. РИГА. ЖЕНЩИНА
/ ЧАК. RIGA. A WOMAN
03.08., 04.18., 18.08., 19.08.,
25.08. / Во дворике ресторана "Kaļķu vārti"
07.08., 08.08., 21.08., 22.08.
/ Во дворике кафе "Parunāsim. Kafēteeka"

Премьера / Premiere
РАЙМОНД ПАУЛС
В РИЖСКОМ РУССКОМ
ТЕАТРЕ / RAIMONDS
PAULS IN RIGA RUSSIAN
THEATRE
05.08., 06.08., 07.08., 08.08., 12.08.,
13.08., 14.08., 15.08. / Большой зал

ВОПРЕКИ / DESPITE
11.08. / Большой зал

Премьера / Premiere
МАМА / MOM
13.08., 15.08. / Пространство
музыки и драмы "OratoriO"

МОСТ
РИГА-ГОЛЛИВУД
/ RIGA-HOLLYWOOD
BRIDGE
20.08., 22.08. / Большой зал

ГРАНЁНКА
/ A FACETED GLASS
25.08. / Большой зал

КАНКУН / CANCUN
27.08. / Большой зал

Премьера / Premiere
PARADIZZY
27.08., 28.08. / Пространство
музыки и драмы "OratoriO"

Билеты / Tickets

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ATTA CENTRE

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR FOR THE BALTIC EVENT INDUSTRY



Atta Centre is the largest convention centre in the Baltics. Here it is possible to hold a variety of events: exhibitions, conferences, and banquets as well as cultural and sporting events. The total area of the centre is 22,700 square metres. The centre's high-tech, multi-modal system lets the layout of the entire first floor be changed according to an event's needs without loss of sound insulation quality.

Throughout 2020 we witnessed the rise and fall of industries, the introduction of new regulations and mandates, and critical changes in how we lead our daily lives. But as the fear of the pandemic slowly fades with the rise of vaccination rates, a new question arises: what changes are here to stay, and which aren't? A prime example of this is the events industry, which is expected to experience an 11.2% annual compound growth rate from 2021 to 2028. This growth is primarily attributed to the rise of virtual and hybrid events. The experience of *Atta Centre*, the largest convention complex in the Baltics, confirms that hybrid events have proved to be most popular, because they combine the in-person aspect of events and gatherings with the virtual.

Despite it being the height of the pandemic, *Atta Centre*, which is located in Riga, was put into operation in August 2020. It's one of the first centres of its kind in this region and offers a unique and professional environment for events and gatherings of all sizes. *Atta Centre* offers a platform and services to host events both online and in person, with a dedicated staff and facilities for web streaming, dinners/galas, concerts, and much more.

Although event attendance has increased over the course of 2020 and 2021 due to the introduction of the aforementioned hybrid and virtual events, the profitability of the industry has fallen significantly. Ninety percent of industry professionals reported having lost most of their business, with only 25% maintaining profitability. But even though profitability rates have fallen significantly, this is not to say the business part of the industry has suffered. This

sudden drop in profit was for the most part intentional so as to increase event attendance during the pandemic,' says Nadia Ignase, the general manager of *Atta Centre*.

This new, modern method of event planning has been implemented around the world, but particularly in the Baltics, where hybrid and virtual events are becoming common practice since the rise of the pandemic. Specifically, taking into account the high demand for hybrid and online events formats in Riga, *Atta Centre*



has launched three video studios equipped with professional audio, video, and lighting equipment. As one of the largest convention centres in the Baltics (with a total area of 22,700 square metres), *Atta Centre* also offers modern office premises and equipment, high-speed internet, a lounge area, free secure underground parking (including for electric vehicles), and a tailor-made customer loyalty programme. Qualified technical specialists at *Atta Centre* are able to implement online events of any format and level of complexity.

Pre-pandemic numbers indicate that Riga is one of the prime locations in the Baltics to host events and meetings, with 50 major business exhibitions annually involving 7000 event organisers and more than a million people in attendance. Although these numbers were recorded prior to 2020, they still indicate a healthy and growing corporate and business-minded atmosphere with newer and improved facilities to match. This is due to the country's well-developed infrastructure and event venues.



22,700 total area of *Atta Centre* in square metres

5500 total number of guests the centre can accommodate at one time

3070 maximum number of guests for a banquet-style event

400 area of the *Atta Centre* kitchen in square metres

3 widescreen displays measuring 40 m² each

15 -min-drive from the airport



Krasta iela 60,
Riga, Latvia
Phone:
+371 26357845,
+371 28227884
E-mail:
info@attacentre.com
attacentre.com



KING'S COLLEGE

THE BRITISH SCHOOL OF LATVIA

For over half a century, King's College schools have been providing children with the best-quality education both within the United Kingdom and abroad. Since opening its doors in Latvia in 2017, the school has focused on academic excellence whilst keeping in mind that students' achievements also depend on their emotional wellbeing and an inspiring learning environment.



Tel. +371 257 59 043
latvia@kingscollegeschools.org
latvia.kingscollegeschools.org

students and their families within these areas.

The new campus building includes more primary school classrooms, allowing for two form entry in each year group, as well as specialist secondary school classrooms. There are fully equipped science laboratories, performance spaces, music and art rooms, computing spaces, and an additional library and study centre.

The development of high-quality sporting facilities goes hand in hand with the vision of becoming a leading school for sporting achievement in Latvia. New facilities include two indoor swimming pools, a dance room, and two all-weather sports pitches to allow for the playing of football, tennis, basketball, and netball even in the winter months. The physical education teachers and swimming coaches will work with the children throughout the school day and after school in a variety of extra-curricular classes. King's College, The British School of Latvia is the only international school in Latvia with sporting facilities of this level.

The youngest students have newly built classrooms with direct access to the outdoors, where a dedicated playground and garden area is located. The opportunity to enjoy fresh air and recharge during the school day is an

important part of the British curriculum, and outside learning is an essential aspect of life at King's College Latvia as it allows the students to be curious, creative, and investigative.

Over the past year, the school staff has gone the extra mile to make sure that the students have been in school as often as possible. Despite the fact that much learning has had to be conducted remotely, the school is now ready to restart the new school year with in-person learning. The teachers have developed a thorough recovery curriculum that will support all students back to full-time in-person learning. This programme is designed to not only focus on academic learning but, equally important, it also takes into account the social and emotional support that will be needed after such a long time learning remotely.

'King's College has adapted every step of the way to maintain academic excellence and continues to use innovative teaching techniques and technology to provide students with the best learning experience and an individual approach,' emphasises Mrs. Adele Stanford, Headteacher of King's College, The British School of Latvia. With over 25 years of experience working in the world of education, she remains passionate about creating an environment that meets the needs of all learners and develops students academically, socially, and emotionally.

King's College is proud that its teaching staff like to stay in Latvia for a long period of time, allowing them to form strong, stable relationships with the students. The careful recruitment process contributes to the stability of the team and ensures that all teaching professionals are knowledgeable, motivated, and highly skilled native English speakers. All of the group's schools are accredited by the British government, and most of the graduates continue their studies at the top universities in the United Kingdom, North America, and Europe and pursue fulfilling careers all over the world.

When asked what she is most proud of, Headteacher Mrs. Adele Stanford answers without hesitation: 'My pride comes from the moments when I take a step back and look at the students interacting with each other and working together. I am humbled by their amazing resilience, their ability to adapt to changing situations, and the positivity with which they embrace challenges. Our school provides a unique educational environment that puts our students and their families at the heart of all we do. I am thrilled that now we are able to offer our learners the best facilities of any school in Latvia. I am proud to be leading The British School of Latvia at such an exciting time in the development of the school.'

latvia.kingscollegeschools.org



CONQUER THE ESTONIAN ISLANDS LIKE A VIKING



The flatfish and fresh potatoes

There are many reasons to visit Estonia's islands – take your pick and conquer your holiday as powerfully as a Viking! Estonian islands feel remote, and therefore they fascinate us. Geographically, however, they're close and thus you save time that can be used for really enjoying your stay.

In today's busy world, Estonia's islands are a place where taking it easy is appreciated. Especially Saaremaa. This is an island where tastes are simple and local. On Saaremaa, there's room for solely what is deeply real and has character. Every self-respecting islander is a little bit of a gatherer. Instead of sales in department stores, here people carry home buckets full of mushrooms and berries picked from our fruitful forests. Even at the grocery stores, the preferred products are those marked with the blue Saaremaa Ehtne Toode label, which indicates they are made locally.

'Simple and real' also means being connected to nature. Estonians have always believed that a holiday requires lots of fresh air and plenty of space for just you and your selected companions. A walk

on a beach on the edge of the world or a weekend get-away at a remote holiday house might just do the trick to get your mind off everyday hassles. On Saaremaa, peace and quiet – in addition to breathtakingly beautiful nature – are not only guaranteed but also essential.

Just as everything local is deeply valued here, so are the island's historical roots and legacy. Not many people know about it, but about ten years ago, the wrecks of two ancient ships were found in Salme village on Saaremaa. It was soon discovered that these had been Viking ships, and subsequent excavations and study provided valuable evidence and clues that rewrote European Viking history as it was known up until then. On Saaremaa, 2021 has been declared the Year of the Viking to celebrate the island's Viking heritage. Come

along on the eventful journey to conquer the Estonian islands, and enjoy your holiday like a Viking!

This year, Saaremaa is full of Viking-themed adventures. Whether you enjoy the fine arts or bird watching, relaxing at a spa or gastronomic experiences, and whether you travel alone or with friends or family, you're sure to find something fun to do. Numerous special events and places await this year, including an exhibition of Viking-era findings at Kuressaare Castle as well as events at Asva Viking Village, Hiievälja Archery Range, and Archebald Medieval Activity Centre. You can also take a ride out to sea on a real-life Viking ship, such as the *Orm*, or on the *Hoppet* schooner. *Orm's* captain built his vessel from start to finish, helped only by his family. He is an example of the potent Viking blood flowing in the veins of the people of Saaremaa. The *Hoppet* began sailing the Baltic Sea about 1200 years after the Vikings and is the oldest historical sailboat built in Estonia that is still in use today.

How to get there?

Visitors are an important part of island life, so locals are very hospitable. Saaremaa is always a good place for a vacation, but especially in the summer. Is it even a proper summer without some island vibes? The ferry ride from Virtsu harbour to Saaremaa takes only 28 minutes. Book your ferry ticket at praamid.ee. Does your *airBaltic* flight land at Tallinn Airport? A domestic flight to Saaremaa departs 12 times a week, and the flight takes only 40 minutes. See the flight schedule at flynyx.com.

Even though Saaremaa is the biggest of Estonia's islands, there are many more islands you can visit to prolong your stay, and it's difficult to find reasons not to go. Abruksa is right off the coast of Saaremaa's capital, Kuressaare. Muhu Island is connected to Saaremaa by a bridge and is only a drive away. Although small, the feeling there is amazing! And Vilsandi is only a short walk off the coast of Saaremaa in summertime, although you can also access it in a more classic manner – by boat.

Get inspired and truly experience Saaremaa! visitsaaremaa.ee

 visit
saaremaa



Thanks to the discoveries at Salme, European Viking history has been rewritten.



Saaremaa women proudly showing off their festive national clothing



Saaremaa is a Viking island.



When it comes to the health of the Baltic Sea, scientists recommend eating smaller fish at the end of the food chain instead of consuming mostly farm-grown salmon.

THE BALTIC SEA IS RECOVERING WITH THE HELP OF SCIENTISTS

The Baltic Sea is coming back to life, and there's no need to stop eating fish, says Estonian scientist Joonas Plaan.

The popular *Netflix* documentary *Seaspiracy* made waves this spring showing how big fishing companies scrape the ocean floor with giant, football stadium-sized nets and dump the contents afterwards, polluting the waters, and how bycatch and overfishing destroy marine wildlife. To stop the massacre, the filmmakers proposed we should stop eating fish in the hope that reduced demand will rein in the industry.

'While the documentary highlighted an important topic – the state of our waters – it doesn't reflect what is happening in our region,' says Joonas Plaan, an Estonian fish expert and lecturer of environmental anthropology at Tallinn University. On the contrary, in the Baltic Sea, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean squeezed between the countries of northern Europe, some fish should be eaten.

'Eating small fish benefits the Baltic Sea,' says Plaan. 'It helps to take the excess nutrients out of the water.' The biggest problem in this North European sea is actually eutrophication, a process in which the water fills with too many minerals and nutrients. The main blame for this can be laid on the fertiliser-dependent agricultural industry, which releases nitrogen and phosphorus into the sea. Plaan has a simple recommendation: eat local fish, especially the little ones at the end of the food chain, such as Baltic herring and sprats.

'Round goby, ide, carp-bream, Prussian carp, and white bream are also in abundance, even though they rarely end up on our dinner table,' says Plaan. Over the past decades, the populations of these small fish have grown due to increasing temperatures and nutrients. At the same time, some of the larger predatory fish are endangered. Cod is at critically low levels in the Baltic Sea, and the numbers of perch, pike perch, and plaice are decreasing.

Each year, Plaan studies large databases to evaluate the state of various fish in Estonian waters. Based on these numbers, he publishes his recommendations in the WWF Fish Guide regarding which fish are safe to eat and which are not. Plaan's WWF guide recommends staying away from fish that are brought in from faraway places and where the fishing conditions are not known.

Europeans love fish, and their favourites are tuna, cod, and salmon. Most salmon, however, is grown on fish farms, which are associated with a list of problems. Among these are concerns about the levels of antibiotics, pesticides, and heavy metals in farmed salmon. Therefore, Plaan recommends limiting the intake of salmon to special occasions. He also recommends not buying canned tuna, if possible. 'We usually don't know how the tuna

has been caught,' he explains. 'Even if there are certificates on the labels that give information about the fish, there aren't any guarantees. Eating locally is best for the environment and for us, too, because it makes us eat seasonally.'

Even though it is seeing the impacts of climate change, the Baltic Sea is actually recovering, largely due to the end of devastating Soviet fishing practices three decades ago, when the Soviet Union collapsed. Back then, fishermen were expected to fish as much as possible and were told to eliminate fish-eating seals. In the 20th century alone, hunting reduced the Baltic seal population by 90–95%.

When the Soviet regime collapsed, the giant trawlers that used to dock in Tallinn disappeared. In fact, bottom trawling – the most harmful method of fishing – is no longer done in most of the Baltic Sea, with the exception of fishing for Western cod. For now, this is still the only way to catch some of the species that live at the bottom of the sea.

'The ecosystem in the Baltic Sea is changing, and some fish are being replaced by others. But overall, things are getting better, even if not as quickly as we would like them to,' says Plaan optimistically.

'Estonia stands out in many ways when it comes to protecting marine life,' says Kaire Märtin, an expert in fishery resources at the Estonian Ministry of the Environment. With the country's simplified bureaucracy, changes can be implemented quickly and data can be collected seamlessly, which, in return, helps lead to science-based decisions for more accurate state legislation.

One example is the online application system for anyone wishing to apply for a permit for angling or recreational fishing. It only takes a minute to fill out the application, but this helps the government document and monitor what is going on in Estonia's waters.

Estonia is also fiercely fighting to open up its rivers to create better conditions for fish. Clogged and dammed rivers can be harmful for the whole ecosystem. To reverse the situation and restore biodiversity, discussions are taking place with a number of hydroelectric power stations that have destroyed or significantly reduced migratory fish populations.

researchinestonia.eu



Photo by Piotr Wawrzyniuk

Plaice are at risk due to 'dead zones' in the middle of the Baltic Sea.



Photo by Andrew Lincoln

Environmental anthropologist Joonas Plaan is optimistic about the future of the Baltic Sea.



Photo by Andrew Lincoln

Kaire Märtin, an expert in fishery resources working with the Estonian government and a former fisheries attaché to the European Union, knows that fishing is heavily regulated in the EU.



Publicity photos

A22 AN EXCLUSIVE BOUTIQUE HOTEL WITH A STORY

Elements of 1960s style combined with a variety of exclusive details – plus the fact that one of the most beloved American presidents, John F. Kennedy, once stayed in this building – make the newly opened *A22* hotel a desirable place to stay for residents of Riga as well as visitors to the city. It's a place for those looking for something unique instead of a predictable chain hotel.

The five-star *A22* is located in Riga's most elegant neighbourhood, the Quiet Centre, and features views of Viesturdārzs, the city's oldest park. This part of Riga is known for its unique Art Nouveau architecture and lets visitors experience the ornate atmosphere of a century ago. The design concept at *A22*, for its part, conveys contemporary chic and inviting ambience. The history of the building and the vision of the design team are vividly embodied in every detail, reflecting a desire to surprise guests in the most positive sense of this word.

Each of the hotel's 20 rooms has its own character, style, and layout. The design concept combines icons such as exclusive *Moooi* and *Bert Frank*

lighting with unique details created by the designers themselves. Rooms include state-of-the-art sound systems, white porcelain dishes by the Latvian brand *Laima Ceramics*, and toiletry products by New York-based brand *Le Labo*, which are renowned not only for their unconventional look but also their luxury. Original elements in the interior, such as parquet flooring and Art Nouveau ceiling decorations, have been carefully preserved and integrated into the interior.

A22 offers not only refined guest rooms, a modestly sized yet elegant meeting room, exercise facilities, and a sauna complex but also an exclusive presidential suite on its mansard level.

With 111 square metres of private, ornate sophistication, the suite tastefully combines unique design with modern interior elements and top-quality furnishings. It has two bedrooms, a dressing room, a spacious living room, an elegant kitchenette, and a luxurious bathroom. History buffs will find it interesting that U. S. President John F. Kennedy stayed in these same rooms more than 80 years ago. At that time, he was still just a student interested in international relations and had set out to explore Europe and the countries of the Soviet Union. To make his stay in Latvia as comfortable as possible, the top floor of this building at Ausekļa iela 22 – then the home of the embassy of the United States, was converted into an apartment. Fifty-five years after Kennedy's visit to Latvia, a commemorative plaque was affixed to the façade of the building to mark the fact that the future U. S. president had once stayed there. The plaque is still there, enticing guests to explore the history of the *A22* hotel.

Kennedy and his wife, Jacqueline, inspired the design concept at *A22* as well as the hotel's unique restaurant (named *John*) and the only ladies' bar in the Baltics (named *Jackie*). 'John and Jackie were pioneers in many ways. For example, they completely changed the existing format of receptions at the White House, introducing new and unique elements, such as French cuisine, which was still relatively unknown in the United States and considered very sophisticated,' says Māriņa Vaisūna, the general manager of the *A22* hotel. 'We also want to discover and show our guests something new, allowing them to experience a true boutique atmosphere. *A22* is the perfect place for people who want to enjoy a unique experience and a personal touch in every detail. If a guest has a special request, for example, a particular kind of pillow or a specific number of ice cubes in a drink, we're happy to accommodate it.' The team at *A22*, *John*, and *Jackie* is ready to build a relationship in which customers' values and lifestyles become a pleasant responsibility through harmonising their stay, providing enjoyable flavours, and making every visit a wonderful adventure.

The *A22* hotel is suited for romantic weekend getaways, small celebrations, and special occasions such as bridal parties dressing and preparing on the morning of a wedding. Hotel staff are always on hand for assistance and recommendations; they also enjoy preparing a small surprise for guests, thus adding to the feeling that returning to *A22* again and again will be a great experience.

A22

HOTEL

Contacts
Address:
Ausekļa iela 22, Riga
a22hotel.com





***John*, the restaurant located in the right wing of the recently opened five-star *A22* hotel, is a new gastronomic gem in Riga. The open kitchen at the very centre of the restaurant and the special menu created by its chef are only a couple of the things that characterise this place.**

RESTAURANT JOHN A PREMIUM TASTE EXPERIENCE

John is named in honour of former U. S. President John F. Kennedy, who visited Riga in 1939 and stayed at the embassy of the United States. At that time, the embassy was located in the building at Ausekļa iela 22, which has now been converted into the elegant *A22* hotel. Appearing hand-in-hand with *John* is *Jackie*, the only ladies' bar in the Baltics – naturally, named after Kennedy's wife, Jacqueline.

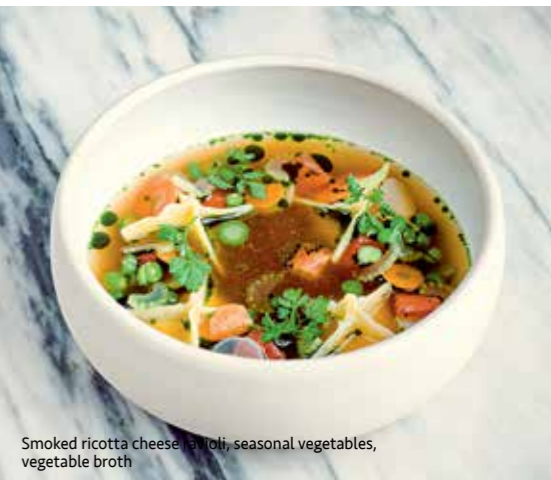
The team at *John* takes pride in the quality of its food and service, and it offers guests a choice of three different concepts: the terrace menu, the restaurant's à la carte menu, and the refined cocktails made by expert bartenders at *Jackie*. *John* serves delicious breakfasts and light snacks as well as dinners featuring a rich adventure of flavour over the course of an evening in the company of friends or business partners.

At *John*, everyone can find something to their liking. Kristaps Silis, one of Latvia's most renowned chefs, sees to that. In the past 15 years, he has not only been a chef in several of Riga's best restaurants; he has also had several internships at the world's best restaurant (*Noma* in Copenhagen) and the restaurant of renowned British chef Tom Aikens in London. For Silis, being a chef is not a profession – it's a way of life.

Silis is convinced that every visit to a restaurant should be an experience of sensations and flavours. That's why he tries to not limit himself in his cooking and is always ready to surprise his guests. He's convinced that cooking is an art and that every dish he creates is a work of art involving flavour combinations. That's why his dishes don't have strict recipes, because the seasonal



Smoked burrata cheese, pickled cherry tomatoes, basil, pine nuts, tomato water



Smoked ricotta cheese ravioli, seasonal vegetables, vegetable broth



Milk chocolate mousse, raspberry sorbet, hazelnut cream, meringue



Smoked sturgeon fillet, sturgeon croquet, Jerusalem artichoke purée, apple purée, mushroom sauce

availability of different produce and his own experimentation constantly provide new opportunities to try something completely different. 'By experimenting, I discover recipes that later become very popular with our guests. This is one of the reasons why every visit to our restaurant will be a unique experience,' says Silis. One of his signature dishes on the dessert menu at *John* is definitely the honey cake. The recipe has been perfected over a decade and is said to be one of the most delicious cakes in the city.

John is a place where two cultures meet: American and European. While the American accent involves steak, the European influence is felt in sophisticated dishes based on molecular gastronomy. Gourmets will appreciate the American, Argentinian, and Japanese Wagyu steaks. However, *John* prides itself not only on the quality of its steaks but also on the quality of its other seasonal products, such as sturgeon and black caviar, which the restaurant obtains from a local farm.

Of course, *John's* menu also takes into account those who do not eat meat or fish, offering several vegetarian dishes. At the same time, the restaurant's sommelier will carefully select the best wines to accompany the meals guests choose. And when heading to *Jackie*, definitely try the signature and classic cocktails

made with distinction, for example, the Bloody Mary and the strawberry daiquiri.

John is accessible to everyone, offering meals to suit all tastes. Gourmets will especially appreciate the tasting menu created by Chef Silis. With more than ten different courses, it's a most exquisite selection of dishes served at *John*. The tasting menu consists of specially selected and seasonal products and emphasises local seafood.

The uniqueness of *John* is also revealed in the design of its space. Guests will definitely notice the use of polished walnut wood, which highlights the exclusive feel of the interior. In the open kitchen, the *Josper* charcoal grill gives guests a glimpse into the nuance and mastery involved in preparing excellent food.

With its fine dining, luxurious interior, and beautiful location, *John* is also the perfect place for special gatherings and celebrations. The team at the *A22* hotel and *John* offer personalised service and tailor-made solutions for every occasion. The roof terrace on the 4th floor of the hotel is also a great place to celebrate. It overlooks Viesturdārzs, Riga's oldest park, which guests can gaze at while enjoying a menu individually designed by the team at the *John* restaurant.

JOHN
RESTAURANT

Contacts
Address:
Ausekļa iela 22, Riga
a22hotel.com
Hours:
Mon-Sat: 12:00-22:00



RESTAURANTS AT THE *GRAND HOTEL KEMPINSKI RIGA* FLAVOURS OF BARCELONA IN RIGA

The *Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga*, a five-star luxury hotel in the heart of Riga, invites visitors and locals alike to enjoy an exceptional menu, a pop-up seafood bar, authentic cocktails, and the best service in its ground-floor *Amber* restaurant and *Stage 22*, one of Riga's most beautiful and modern rooftop bars and restaurants.

As of June, chef Javier Lopez is at the helm of the *Amber* and *Stage 22* restaurants at the *Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga*. Born in Barcelona, Lopez wants to bring the vibe of his native city to Riga. For the first ten years of his career, he focused on perfecting his culinary techniques while holding positions with renowned chefs from *Michelin*-starred restaurants, such as *Sea Grill* in Brussels, and with Gert Jan Raven from Antwerp. After that he landed back home as the executive chef at *Fira de Barcelona*. His career then took him to different corners of the world, and in 2008 he had his first experience with the Baltic states as the executive chef at the *Grand Hotel Kempinski Vilnius* on Cathedral Square in the Lithuanian capital.

Lopez's culinary philosophy consists of using natural ingredients, focusing very much on quality organic vegetables. In other words, he follows the farm-to-table approach. He stands for sustainability and advocates for environmental protection and preservation. He also supports minimum-waste values and takes a harmonious, sensitive approach to the environment and cultural surroundings. 'I've become acquainted with the Baltic region and see that there's great potential here. I'm therefore delighted to have the opportunity to introduce local Rigans, as well as guests to the city, to new flavours and bring a little bit of Barcelona to this city,' says the chef.

The *Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga* has some of the most beautiful terraces in the city. Chef Lopez and his team have



Grand Hotel
Kempinski

RIGA

Amber
Contacts

Address: Grand Hotel Kempinski
Riga, Aspazijas blv. 22, Riga
Email: amber.riga@kempinski.com
Tel.: +371 6767 0109
kempinski.com/riga
Hours:
Mon-Sun: 7:00-23:00



BAR & RESTAURANT

Email: stage22.riga@kempinski.com
Tel.: +371 6767 0122
Opening hours:
Wed-Sun: 12:30-00:00
Mon-Tue: Closed

Kindly be informed that
the last food order in both
restaurants is at 22:00.

managed to convey a genuine feeling of summer in Spain on the terrace of the *Amber* restaurant, located on the ground floor of the hotel and abutting one of the liveliest streets of the Old Town. Here you'll find a fine selection of seafood, creative hors d'oeuvres, a chill zone with water pipes, and a stand featuring homemade ice cream to cool down *Amber* guests as well as passers-by strolling through Riga.

Lopez certainly knows Mediterranean flavours and good seafood. That's why this summer his special pop-up seafood and oyster bar offers a variety of seafood platters, oysters, lobster, the catch of the day, and, of course, the finest caviar. The pop-up bar is particularly suited to gourmets from near and far who choose their travel destinations according to the seafood served there. This summer, such a unique experience is available also right here in Riga.

Amber is not only a hotel restaurant; it's also a place for gourmets, both international and local. Chef Lopez has ensured that the menu has plenty of variety, with something for everyone, including several unique pizzas and a variety of authentic tacos. On the dessert menu, the ice cream prepared on site is a definite must-try. It's made of goat's milk and takes guests on a journey of flavours, from traditional pistachio to exotic maracuja.

'We highlight different flavours and products. For example, we make our pizza dough from specially milled flour. *Amber's* menu is not overly extensive, but it's one where every dish is worth trying,' says Lopez, inviting people to also try the restaurant's excellent breakfast menu, available every morning starting at 7 a.m. *Amber* also serves a business lunch on weekdays, changing the menu every two weeks.

This summer, the *Amber* terrace is operating in conjunction with the *Laurent Perrier* champagne house, which has prepared a number of special offers for guests. Lopez has also taken into account these offers when creating the restaurant's menu.

Stage 22, the rooftop bar and restaurant at the *Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga*, also awaits guests this summer. It offers not only a superb hors d'oeuvres and fine-dining menu as well as authentic cocktails, but also a one-of-a-kind view. As they gaze across at the Latvian National Opera and its square, guests here can imagine they're on stage themselves. *Stage 22* is perfect for hotel guests as well as small gatherings and celebrations (made especially convenient by the separate entrance to the restaurant).

Chef Lopez plans to put his 20 years of experience to use in organising a variety of special projects. One of these is already planned for October, when the *Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga* will host an interesting and unique collaboration that will delight all gourmets. Over the course of three days, guests and locals alike will be able to enjoy a selection of dishes prepared together with *Michelin*-starred chef Matthias Schmidberger, who is currently the executive chef at the *Kempinski* hotel in St. Moritz, Switzerland. But while we await autumn, we should enjoy the magic of warm summer evenings and enjoy a wide range of seafood with a glass of chilled champagne on the terraces of the restaurants at the *Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga*.



Executive Chef
Javier Lopez



Publicity photos and by Shutterstock

WELCOME ABOARD airBaltic

The main port of Kos island, Greece



TOP PICKS THIS SUMMER

Now's your last chance of the year to get in a summer vacation, whether you choose a weekend city break to a European metropolis, a nice beach getaway, or a trip to Europe's most exotic destination, *airBaltic* has it all.

ITALY. Enjoy the local delicacy (pizzal) in **Naples**, or take a picture by the world's most famous leaning tower in **Pisa**. Fly to both cities two times per week. Enjoy the emerald blue Mediterranean Sea on the islands of Sardinia or Sicily with once-a-week flights to **Olbia** and **Catania**. For a glamorous city break, explore art, fashion, and history in **Rome** or **Milan** with flights up to four times per week. Or live the *dolce vita* in **Venice** with flights two times per week.

GREECE. With lots of sunny days, soak up the extra 'vitamin Sea' on **Kos** and **Rhodes** with flights up to two times per week. Enjoy the ultimate holiday cocktail on **Santorini** and **Heraklion** on Crete. Fly to Santorini once a week and to Heraklion two times per week. Or choose the coastal city of **Thessaloniki** with flights two times per week. If you've been dreaming of sand between your toes and warm winds, visit **Corfu** with flights on Saturdays.

SPAIN. **Valencia** and **Palma de Mallorca** are a treat, whether it's history, culture, or food you're after. Fly to both cities two times per week. Visit **Malaga** and **Barcelona** for scenic beaches and landscapes, or **Madrid** for a modern metropolis. Fly to these cities up to four times per week.

CROATIA. The three most popular Croatian resorts on the shores of the Adriatic Sea are available up to two times per week: **Rijeka**, **Dubrovnik**, and **Split**.

The Scottish capital, **Edinburgh**, is a centre of culture and the arts. Fly there two times per week. We also continue to offer convenient and safe connections between Riga and **London**, **Aberdeen**, and **Manchester** in the United Kingdom.

When it comes to direct flights from Tallinn, think of flying to sunny **Malaga**. *airBaltic* operates a total of 13 direct flight connections from Tallinn.

As for new additions from Vilnius, fly to **Kyiv** or **Dubrovnik**. There are now 11 direct flight destinations served from Vilnius.

Flights from Riga to Tallinn and Vilnius run three times per day to ensure convenient transit from Tallinn and Vilnius.



SUMMER HOLIDAYS AT LEGOLAND® BILLUND RESORT

Holidays with the kids can lead to a family's most cherished memories. Plan an unforgettable summer holiday in Denmark at **LEGOLAND® Billund Resort**.

Describing itself as the Capital of Children, **Billund** is where 'children learn through play and are creative world citizens'. Along with the world-famous **LEGOLAND®** theme park, which celebrates everyone's favourite building blocks, Billund is close to many other attractions – including

waterparks, zoos, and museums – ensuring family-friendly fun for children of all ages.

Thanks to Billund's amazing location smack in the middle of western Denmark, all of the region's family-friendly attractions are just a short distance away. It's also surrounded by a vast amount of breathtaking nature – from lakes and forests to parks and beaches – making it ideal for fun-packed family holidays.

Fly from Riga to Billund two times per week.

NEW *airBaltic* SKY SERVICE

Now you can order inflight meals and do onboard shopping from your mobile device.

Use our SKY service to shop for food and drinks, watches, jewellery, fragrances, and other accessories. You can also read *Baltic Outlook* magazine and blog articles or just get to know more about us and our destinations.

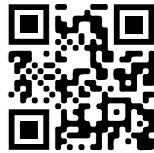
Follow these three simple steps to start using *airBaltic* SKY service:

- After take-off, connect to Wi-Fi by selecting the absky.net network.

- Open your camera app and scan this QR code or type absky.net into your browser.

- Enjoy meals, shopping, and entertainment during the flight.

- Please note that *airBaltic* SKY service begins only after take-off and is switched off before landing.



NEW BAGGAGE SELF-SERVICE PORTAL

Even though we do our best to make your experience with us as pleasant as possible, sometimes things just do not run according to plan.

In case your baggage has been mishandled, from now on it's easier to **submit a report online on our new self-service portal**, avoiding queues and crowds at the airport. Find the baggage self-service portal at mybag.aero/airbaltic.

Through the portal you can keep track of your baggage status and see when the

bag has been found, put on another flight, received at the airport, or handed over for delivery.

The search process starts immediately as soon as you report your baggage as delayed and enter the necessary information on the portal. Remember, however, that it is important to provide as accurate information as possible when creating your report. Also, the report must be submitted immediately upon arrival.



Hotel Burj Al Arab, Dubai

NEW DESTINATIONS THIS AUTUMN FROM RIGA

This autumn you can prolong the summer with some great new holiday spots easily accessible via direct flights from Riga.

From September 1, we will open a new flight between Riga and **Dubai**, the most populous city in the United Arab Emirates. Consider visiting Expo Dubai starting from October 22. A celebration of culture and innovation, it's a once-in-a-lifetime event to explore the achievements of the United Arab

Emirates and other nations around the world. Flights to Dubai will operate up to four times per week.

With year-round sunshine, **Tenerife** is the largest of the seven Canary Islands. Tenerife also offers the widest range of nature and climate diversity. Visit Teide National Park, watch dolphins from a kayak and whales from boat, enjoy black-sand beaches, or kick back and play some golf. Flights will start on September 2, three times a week.

airBaltic – THE WORLD'S FIRST AIRLINE TO ISSUE NFTs ON OPENSEA

After being the first airline to accept Bitcoin as a form of payment, offering non-fungible tokens (NFTs) is the next step for us in blockchain technology. As of April, we have become the world's first airline to issue limited collector NFTs. The artwork showcases an individual *Airbus* aircraft with its registration as well as the most beloved Latvian cities.

In honour of Latvia's centenary in 2018, *airBaltic* invited everyone to vote for their favourite towns and cities in Latvia. The company's *Airbus A220-300* aircraft were then named after those towns and cities. The locations are now also represented on the works of digital art issued by *airBaltic*.

The first NFT featured **Kuldīga**, a town at the heart of Latvia's westernmost region of Kurzeme. The second NFT featured the picturesque medieval town of **Cēsis**, and the third featured **Alūksne**, the most beautiful lakeside town in Latvia. The fourth NFT from the collection has just been released and features the authentic seaside getaway of **Liepāja**.

The issuance of the limited NFTs serves as a tourism campaign for Latvian towns and cities, which for many people are certainly still undiscovered destinations.

All of our NFTs have been issued on the *OpenSea* marketplace.



FLY&STAY! NEW ONLINE SERVICE – *airBaltic* HOLIDAYS

In June we announced a new online product, *airBaltic* Holidays. With one click, our customers can now choose dynamic travel packages that include both a flight and a hotel reservation. The new service is provided in cooperation with *TripX*, a Swedish tour operator and travel technology company.

Travel packages include thousands of carefully selected hotels with verified

customer reviews. Customers can cancel their trip up to seven days before departure and get a full refund for the flight and hotel booking, excluding the service fee. The service is also secured by the EU Package Travel Directive. In addition, customers can earn five *airBaltic* Club points for each euro spent.

Easy, safe, and secure!



We are growing and have more than 40 vacancies in various fields

- ✈ Digital marketing and E-commerce
- ✈ Passenger handling in the airport
- ✈ IT
- ✈ Call Centre
- ✈ Aircraft Technical Maintenance
- ✈ Ground Operations

Join us now!

Find more information about these job vacancies at careers.airbaltic.com

airBaltic

Your health and well-being are our top priority

To minimise the potential spread of viruses, we have introduced health measures on board and at airports. We kindly ask you to act responsibly and follow the new rules, because only together can we ensure that travel is safe and healthy.



BEFORE THE FLIGHT

Only travel if you are in good health. Check in and order your inflight meal and other services online to minimise physical contact.

Check the latest information about travel regulations on official websites and with local embassies of the respective countries.



AT THE AIRPORT

Arrive on time – no later than two hours before the flight.

Wear a protective face mask during the whole trip – from the moment you enter the terminal until you walk out of the airport at your destination. Children under six years of age and people with certain medical conditions are exempt from wearing face masks.

Try to keep your distance from other people and use the hand disinfectants available throughout the airport.

Check-in and bag drop counters are equipped with protective barriers. All airport staff wear protective face masks and gloves. Temperatures are taken before security control. Passengers with a body temperature above 37.8°C will have to postpone their flight.

BOARDING

To minimise physical contact between passengers, boarding starts from the rear part of the aircraft. Self-scan your boarding pass and show your travel document to the boarding agent.

As long as there are enough free seats, we try to leave an empty seat next to each passenger. If this is not possible for all passengers, families and groups are seated together. Please be aware that last-minute seat changes may apply due to distancing reasons.

ON BOARD

During the whole flight face masks must be worn by all passengers and our crew, which also wears protective gloves.

Choose food and drinks from the disposable menu cards that the cabin crew hand out to Economy class passengers. Meal service is included with Business class tickets. All meals are prepared and packed separately in our

kitchen under strict hygiene standards. Payment is possible by card only.



CLEAN AIR INSIDE THE CABIN

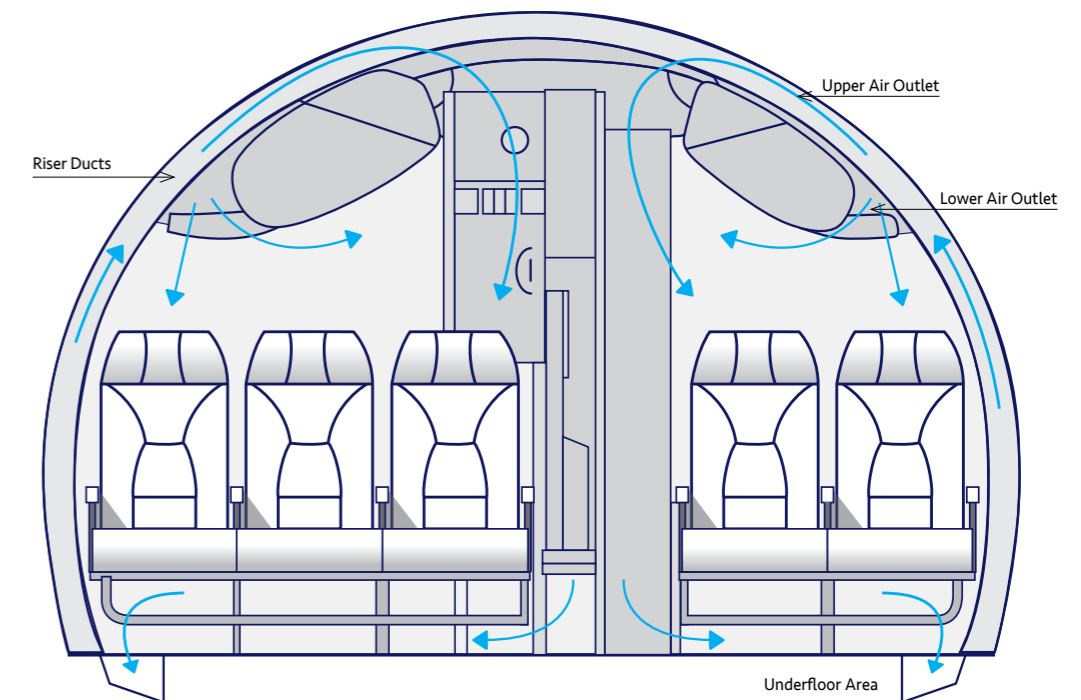
Our *Airbus A220-300* aircraft are equipped with a modern environmental control system using HEPA filters to eliminate all viruses and bacteria. Airflow is routed down towards the floor, thus minimising air transmission amongst passengers.

AIRCRAFT DISINFECTION

After each return flight, we carefully clean all commonly used surfaces inside the aircraft, such as armrests, backrests, meal tray tables, seatbelt latches, air and light controls, and other equipment. Every night we perform a more in-depth disinfection, and a full cabin disinfection is done twice a week.

The science behind keeping cabin air clean

Words by Līga Vaļko



According to a recent survey by the International Air Transport Association (IATA), 37% of passengers are concerned about breathing the air on an airplane. Because there is a lack of knowledge about how air is filtered and supplied in aircraft, most consider it a threat. But with its modern environmental control system, *airBaltic* has set a high standard for minimising the potential of spreading viruses.

The *Airbus A220-300* fleet is equipped with cutting-edge technologies, making flying as worry-free as possible. For the production of *Airbus A220-300* aircraft, the manufacturer has used a cabin air recirculation system and High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filters that provide better performance compared to those used in any other type of public transportation.

Cabin air is continuously replenished with fresh air from the moment the aircraft engines or auxiliary power unit is turned on. The air is collected from outside the aircraft through the engine. For your comfort and wellbeing, it is mixed with filtered air from the cabin. The ratio between filtered air and fresh air from outside is 25:75, which sets a high benchmark among jetliners used by other carriers across Europe.

75% of the fresh air is taken from the engine compressor and passed through the air cycle machine at a temperature well above 100°C to ensure aseptic air quality. The rest of the cabin air consists of the HEPA-filtered and recirculated cabin air. The HEPA filters

are very effective at trapping microscopic particles as small as bacteria and viruses when the air passes through the system. In such conditions, airborne pathogens from the cabin air are captured and eliminated with 99.99% efficiency, making our aircraft cabin air exceptionally clean.

Inside the passenger cabin, the airflow is supplied from above the overhead compartment and flows directed towards the floor, eliminating airflow along the cabin and minimising lateral air transmission amongst passenger rows. According to IATA, the air circulation in planes is many times better than in classrooms, supermarkets, conference rooms, and offices. In fact, the risk associated with viruses on jets is probably lower than in any other confined space thanks to next-generation cabin air filtration systems equipped with HEPA filters.

In addition to the modern environmental control system, other preliminary steps also help to ensure a safe environment inside *airBaltic* aircraft. 'We are taking care to keep our passengers and aircraft safe while travelling. The airline has introduced measures following the recommendations of the local government and healthcare agencies, the aircraft manufacturer, and IATA,' says Lauris Miķelsons, VP Compliance and Safety at *airBaltic*.

'*airBaltic* is doing its utmost, and the team comes together to ensure safe flights for travellers and the crew,' concludes Miķelsons.

Words by Ilze Pole
Photo by Mārtiņš Zilgalvis (*F64*)

Your chance to become a pilot

KRISTAPS LAPSA, general manager, *airBaltic* Training Centre

With future plans to expand and also offer helicopter pilot training and drone maintenance, the *airBaltic* Training Centre currently houses *airBaltic*'s Pilot Academy and a training centre for *airBaltic* pilots who are preparing to do their routine simulator checks or recurrent training. At the same time, the centre is working to attract and train aviation technicians for *airBaltic*. Our conversation revolved precisely around this training of future pilots and technicians, because, despite the current circumstances, *airBaltic* is still actively focused on growth.

The Pilot Academy was opened three years ago. How do you see its future?

The virus is probably not going to go away; instead, we will have learned how to live with it, and the aviation industry will emerge from this experience stronger than before. This has been confirmed by all the other crises that have impacted the industry over the past 25 years. Because no quicker way of getting from point A to point B has been discovered, and time is very much of the essence.

On the whole, I think the industry will become greener, although *airBaltic* is already a front-runner in aviation with its fleet of the world's greenest commercial aircraft. That's why we're continuing to train pilots and hire new pilots. It takes about two years to train a pilot, and I believe that the best time to begin doing so is during a crisis. Because then in a couple of years, when the crisis is over, we'll be at the head of the line and ready to work.

Lots of pilots lost their jobs at the beginning of the pandemic, but just the same, over those couple of years there would have been pilots who retired or found different work or established their own businesses and no longer wanted to return to the aviation industry. So, even when aviation returns to its 2019 levels, we will not be able to rely only on the resources we had before the pandemic. Our Pilot Academy is one of the very few schools in the world that is continuing training and also continuing to take on new students, because we see potential. We're continuing to prepare students and hope that they'll be our future *airBaltic* pilots.

airBaltic plans to increase its fleet to 50 aircraft by 2024. In order to ensure commercial operations, we need ten pilots per airplane. Right now we have 200 pilots. So that means we're going to need another 300 pilots in the next two to three years. And that's why we're continuing to work and train. We don't think the students graduating from our academy will lack job opportunities. Yes, maybe they won't have a job

waiting immediately the day after they graduate, but they will be able to fly in the foreseeable future.

Attracting mechanics and technicians is also a major focus for the airline now.

Last year, the first students were admitted to the new aircraft mechanics programme at Liepāja State Technical College. The 18-month course is designed for young people who have completed secondary education. This year, we've expanded the range of opportunities even further and have started enrolling students who have completed 9th grade, who will study in a four-year programme. This way, they'll complete both their secondary education and a qualification as an aircraft mechanic. Currently, the first group of mechanics are doing their apprenticeships with us both in Riga on large commercial aircraft and in Liepāja on aircraft from the Pilot Academy.

Aircraft mechanics is a very broad field, and we see promise in that, too. *airBaltic* currently flies the world's most modern aircraft, and the same applies to our Pilot Academy as well – both the *Diamond 40* and *Diamond 42* that we use for training are the greenest, most efficient, most modern aircraft of their type in the industry. So, already from day one, our students get the most up-to-date knowledge and skills. We place a strong emphasis on what is needed today – the latest technology. This is still a young education programme, but it offers a promising future for people who like practical work. And, it's a well-paid profession.

Our up-and-coming pilots at the Pilot Academy are taught by active commercial aviation pilots, and, because many of the instructors are themselves pilots on *Airbus A220-300* aircraft, they're able to pass on the most current information in the field. We've also applied this approach to our technician training – the course is taught by people from *airBaltic* who actively work on aircraft documentation and maintenance – in other words, they're all industry insiders. Because in a way, that's also our goal: to transfer the knowledge and skills that we have to Latvian society, thus helping it to become more competitive.

How does training take place at the Pilot Academy during the pandemic?

Last spring we had to organise it all very quickly, which we did successfully, also taking into account that all our training programmes have to be coordinated with the Civil Aviation Agency. The theoretical training didn't suffer much. We set up separate rooms for the instructors equipped with internet, several monitors, a whiteboard, camera, microphone, speakers, and so on, so that the instructors could hear their students well and vice versa.

Just as with *airBaltic*, we had introduced the paperless concept already before the pandemic, which means that, when they begin training, each student receives a tablet that contains all of the training materials and databases. Everything is maximally digitalised, and the students become accustomed to these technologies from the very first day. That helped us to reorient to distance learning more quickly.

Practical training, on the other hand, became twice as difficult. Especially at the beginning of the pandemic. Later on, we were able to start flying again, and we flew very actively up until the beginning of December, when a state of emergency was declared again. But we joined forces with colleagues from other transport sectors and advocated that vocational training should again be allowed, of course, adhering to all possible safety measures. And we succeeded – by spring, the Cabinet of Ministers allowed the resumption of vocational training in aviation, maritime transport, and automobile driving.

How many pilots have completed training?

Twenty by the end of last month, and I think another 20 will complete their training by the end of this year. We still have lots of students in our backlog who have completed their theoretical training and are currently flying. It'll take a bit of time, but they'll get their licences soon, too.

What are the main requirements to enrol in *airBaltic*'s Pilot Academy?

The main thing is a desire to learn! We accept students who are at least 18 years old and have a secondary education. In the selection process, we do an in-depth assessment of skills in maths, physics, and English, which must all be at a good secondary-school level. Then the next step is a psychological test to make sure that applicants are mature enough and ready to take on the responsibility, because this job requires an immense amount of responsibility. This is followed by an interview with our human resources department and management, where applicants present themselves again. I also recommend that all applicants undergo a thorough medical examination to make sure they have no health issues that might prevent them from becoming a pilot.

We place a strong emphasis on what is needed today – the latest technology

But it all begins with a desire to learn and become a pilot. If a person has that, I by all means recommend that they apply to our training programme! The Pilot Academy holds an online open-house event on the first Friday of every month at 13:00 o'clock, which anybody can join on our *Facebook* page. There we show, tell, and answer any questions. Some potential applicants have even visited us in person, and we're happy to meet with them and show them around.

I have one more question. How did you arrive at *airBaltic* yourself?

I joined the airline as a fleet project manager when it had made the decision to acquire the *Airbus A220-300* (then *Bombardier CS300* – Ed.) series of aircraft. We began preparing for their entry into service to start commercial operations. I can tell you the reason behind every single detail, every single pictogram on that aircraft. We handled the acquisition of the aircraft, their delivery to Latvia, all of the flight and cabin crew training...

At the point when we had more than 20 aircraft in operation, I transferred to the Training Centre to develop the Pilot Academy and manage the simulator acquisition project – from the tender to putting it into service, or RFT (ready for training). At the same time, we've also been developing the Pilot Academy base in Liepāja, where hangars have been built for the storage and maintenance of the *Diamond* aircraft. During the course of the pandemic, we've become an official service centre for *Diamond* aircraft, which allows us to carry out maintenance on behalf of the manufacturer, both warranty and post-warranty, and to issue warranties for our work. We've developed this technical aspect because this is also a direction we want to go in as an airline.

Words by Ilze Pole
Photo by Mārtiņš Zilgalvis (F64)

Pilots out of their office

Baltic Outlook introduces you to some of the most important people at *airBaltic* – its flight crew members, who have some of the most interesting hobbies.



Matiss Veiss (30), captain on *Airbus A220-300* aircraft, from Latvia

HOBBY

Matiss Veiss has been training for triathlons for about a year, but it took him six years of work to get to this point. It all began by reading *Velokāpiens Muztagatā* (Cycling Up Muztagata) by Latvian author Bruno Šulcs. It's the story of how Šulcs wanted to set a Guinness World Record by building his own bicycle and riding to the top of one of the tallest mountains in the world and back down again. The book left such an impression on Matiss that he resolved to do something just as amazing – at least for himself.

So he decided to ride a thousand kilometres on his bicycle, carrying all he needed with him. 'I got so excited about it and presented the idea so well to my fiancée, that she agreed to a honeymoon on bicycle,' Matiss says. 'We rode 850 kilometres from Nice to Rome, doing about 70 kilometres a day, and I came to the conclusion that I really like long distances.'

Matiss continued cycling long distances until one day he made a bet with a friend to run a half marathon.

Matiss completed that first half marathon but understood that he could have done it much, much better. Later, after running the Tallinn Half Marathon, he was much more pleased with his result. And that, of course, led to the idea of a full marathon...

He completed his first marathon last spring by running laps around the airport, because the Riga Marathon had been cancelled due to the pandemic. However, runners were encouraged to run a marathon course of their own. 'That's when I knew that I like both cycling and running long distances. All I needed to do was add swimming, and I could start competing in triathlon races. So I set a goal for myself: for my 30th birthday, I'd give myself the present of being in the best physical shape I've ever been in – and I succeeded.' In August Matiss will compete in Half Ironman races in Tallinn.

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Matiss' parents worked at the airport, and he worked there in the summers as well, as a PRM assistant, helping passengers with reduced mobility board and unboard airplanes, helping them with their baggage, and so on. It was at Riga Airport that he also decided he wanted to become a pilot.

'The airport wasn't yet that busy back then, and I remember there were massage chairs in the place where the duty-free store now stands right after you go through the security check,' says Matiss. 'My friend and I would sit in those chairs, watching the take-offs and landings, and my friend said it sure would be nice to be a pilot and fly. That thought caught my imagination, although at the time it seemed unrealistic.'

However, Matiss' desire grew so strong that he began training as soon as he graduated from high school. Initially, he studied right here in Latvia, and then he learned about an *airBaltic* project in which students were invited to apply for paid pilot training. Four hundred people applied to eight openings, and Matiss was one of the lucky few to be selected. He trained as a pilot in the United States and began working for *airBaltic* in 2013. Matiss became a captain at the age of 26, becoming the airline's youngest captain at that time. 'It was serendipity that everything went so smoothly. I had been in the right place at the right time.'

Words by Ieva Šmite
Photos courtesy of Ilja Ivanovs, Aleksejs Zablockis, and Viesturs Kronbergs

Let's take a look at where our technicians love to travel and at the fascinating hobbies and talents that they have!

1/ Ilja Ivanovs arrived at *airBaltic* in 2011, with a recommendation from the Aviation Institute of Riga Technical University. He began working at the airline as a student-apprentice. He then became a mechanic, earned A Category certification, and has now been a BI Category technician for two years.

2/ Ilja and the family pet, a Staffordshire Bull Terrier named Sia. This photo was taken a couple of years ago, when Ilja, his wife, and Sia went on a hike along the Gauja River in Latvia.

3/ At the Bakuriani resort in Georgia last February, right before the pandemic began. Ilja's wife taught him how to snowboard, and now it's his favourite winter activity.

4/ Aleksejs Zablockis joined the airline two years ago. His previous job was performing base maintenance for business jets, but he decided to move on and applied for a position at *airBaltic*. He received a callback in a few days' time.

5/ One thing Aleksejs loves most about his job is the team he works with. All of his colleagues are supportive and cheerful, and even when the work itself is hard, they create a positive atmosphere all around.

6/ This photo was taken in July of last year while on holiday



9 SNAPSHOTS from the lives of our technicians

Interested in working for *airBaltic*? Find out more about the latest vacancies at the Technical department at careers.airbaltic.com

airBalticTechnics
General Aviation Services

on Crete. Aleksejs enjoyed the relaxing, no-rush flow of life there. The people were friendly, and the sunsets over the sea were magnificent!

7/ Viesturs Kronbergs began working at *airBaltic* in 2007. After graduating from the Riga Aeronautical Institute, he had worked at the Cēsis Aero Club, served in the armed forces, and serviced private airplanes before arriving at *airBaltic*.

8/ While working at the Cēsis Aero Club, Viesturs had the opportunity to try jumping with a parachute. It eventually became a favourite activity of his, and one that he has continued to do to this day.

9/ Viesturs' son saved up money to buy a telescope, and right now they travel the night skies together instead of the globe, which explains this picture of the moon.

Photo courtesy
of *airBaltic*

Think green
Fly green

airBaltic's sustainable development goals

Since launching the Sustainability Development Goals calendar in October 2020, *airBaltic* continues to actively work on reaching the set goals.

The present situation has strengthened the company's brand values and inspired it to revise its vision, mission, and core values. After carrying out a survey of *airBaltic*'s customers, colleagues, partners, and opinion leaders, *airBaltic* came to the conclusion that its revised brand values are to deliver, to care, and to grow.

In addition to this, last year the management of *airBaltic* came up with a materiality matrix, which prioritised sustainability as one of the main goals of the company. This encouraged *airBaltic* to explore in detail 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations. Even though *airBaltic* contributes to all of the SDGs, it has decided to focus on the five goals that

are most relevant for its business: decent work and economic growth; industry innovation and infrastructure; responsible consumption and production; climate action; and peace, justice, and strong institutions.

This has also encouraged the company to go further with various creative solutions related to sustainability and corporate responsibility. Therefore, starting October 2020 and for a period of one year, *airBaltic* will highlight and contribute to resolving matters related to one of the five selected SDGs. Each month *airBaltic* will set a goal in connection with one of the five SDGs and dedicate one specific day or week in that month to implement this particular goal.

SUSTAINABILITY CALENDAR

 <p>OCTOBER SDG 16 UN DAY: UNITED NATIONS DAY (24TH OCTOBER)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS"</p>	 <p>NOVEMBER SDG 12 UN WEEK: INTERNATIONAL WEEK OF SCIENCE AND PEACE (6TH –12TH NOVEMBER)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION"</p>	 <p>DECEMBER SDG 9 UN DAY: INTERNATIONAL CIVIL AVIATION DAY (7TH DECEMBER)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE"</p>	 <p>JANUARY SDG 8 UN DAY: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF EDUCATION (24TH JANUARY)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH"</p>
 <p>FEBRUARY SDG 16 UN WEEK: WORLD INTERFAITH HARMONY WEEK (FIRST WEEK OF FEBRUARY)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS"</p>	 <p>MARCH SDG 13 UN DAY: WORLD WILD-LIFE DAY (3RD MARCH)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "CLIMATE ACTION"</p>	 <p>APRIL SDG 8 UN DAY: WORLD HEALTH DAY (7TH APRIL)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH"</p>	 <p>MAY SDG 13 UN DAY: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LIGHT [UNESCO] (16TH MAY)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "CLIMATE ACTION"</p>
 <p>JUNE SDG 13 UN DAY: WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY (5TH JUNE)</p> <p>MONTH OF "CLIMATE ACTION"</p>	 <p>JULY SDG 12 UN DAY: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF FRIENDSHIP (30TH JULY)</p> <p>MONTH OF "RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION"</p>	 <p>AUGUST SDG 16 UN DAY: WORLD HUMANITARIAN DAY (19TH AUGUST)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS"</p>	 <p>SEPTEMBER SDG 9 UN DAY: WORLD TOURISM DAY (27TH SEPTEMBER)</p> <p>—MONTH OF "INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE"</p>



Silver Category in the Sustainability Index



SILVER CATEGORY FOR CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY

For several years now, *airBaltic* has been actively working on improving many aspects of sustainability at the company, including environmental impact, employee development and satisfaction, a healthy workplace, innovation, and corporate governance. This year, *airBaltic* was assessed by the Sustainability Index organised by the Institute for Corporate Sustainability and Responsibility in Latvia and awarded the Silver Category. The index is a strategic management tool based on an internationally recognised methodology helping to identify the sustainability of company operations and their level of corporate responsibility. It also lets companies know how they can improve in this regard. In addition,

the index provides the public as well as governmental and non-governmental organisations with objective criteria to praise and support companies that help strengthen the Latvian economy in the long run.

FIRST FOREST CLEAN-UP DAY

This year, *airBaltic* organised the first Forest Clean-Up Day in cooperation with *Latvia's State Forests*. With World Environment Day (the United Nations' principal vehicle for encouraging awareness and action for the protection of the environment) marked annually on June 5, *airBaltic* was more than excited to also organise the forest clean-up event in June. Airline employees spent half a day picking up rubbish in a seaside forest in Engure. *airBaltic* believes that every small action matters, and we invite people to be more responsible when they spend time close to nature.

WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS

In June and July, *airBaltic* continued its project for the wellbeing of its employees. Posts on a variety of topics were placed on *airBaltic*'s internal website every Wednesday. The benefits of writing, skin

protection in summer, outdoor dining, intellectual wellbeing, and travel were some of the topics discussed in more detail. As this summer spoils us with lots of sun and hot weather, people are spending lots of time outdoors. It's therefore very important to remember to take care not only of our mental health but also our skin and body.

INTERNAL COACHES JOIN THE ALFA PROGRAMME

Since September 2020, when *airBaltic* announced the *airBaltic* Leaders for Future (ALFA) programme, many goals have been achieved. *airBaltic* believes that the development of an internal coaching culture will prompt more rapid growth of the company, and to that end, a number of employees were selected to begin comprehensive coaching training in June. These new coaches will receive certificates after successfully passing the exam in October of this year, and in November they will begin applying their acquired skills and offering coaching sessions to all employees of the airline who wish to develop with a goal towards excelling in personal and business performance.

Same loyalty programme, more benefits!



airBaltic Club is our loyalty programme, where you can earn points and collect stamps while travelling and receive various rewards.

airBaltic Club has digital loyalty cards which members are able to download to their mobile wallets – Wallet app on iOS devices or Passbook app on Android devices, and use the digital card to collect points. Scan your card during the payment process to collect points for onboard purchases while flying with *airBaltic* or for Riga International long-term airport parking. If you are a holder of Executive or VIP status, use your digital card for Fast Track and Business Lounge access in airports.

EARN POINTS WITH *airBaltic* AND PARTNERS

The *airBaltic Club* currency is points. You can earn points every time you fly *airBaltic* or use the services of other travel partners.

- ➔ Up to three points per each euro spent on *airBaltic* tickets and extra services.
- ➔ One point for each euro spent while shopping on board.
- ➔ With *Booking.com*, *Rentalcars.com*, long-term parking at Riga International airport and other partners.

SPEND POINTS ON FLIGHTS AND OTHER PRIZES

Use points to book flights to more than 70 destinations as well as *airBaltic* gift cards, baggage vouchers, and other rewards. Check out your *airBaltic pins* account balance and choose your prize.

Flights to/from Riga	The Baltics	Scandinavia, Poland, Belarus	Central and Eastern Europe	Western and Southern Europe	Asia and the Middle East
In Economy class	3300 points	5000 points	7500 points	10 500 points	16 000 points
In Business class	11 800 points	20 000 points	30 000 points	34 000 points	45 000 points
Upgrade to Business class	6500 points	9000 points	12 000 points	15 000 points	19 000 points
Heavy cabin baggage	1650 points				
<i>airBaltic</i> gift cards	from 4167 points				



Earn a free flight faster with the stamp card!

If you travel at least five times per year, you can easily earn a free flight with *airBaltic Club*. But there are also great rewards for those who travel less. All you need to do is start collecting stamps.

COLLECT STAMPS THROUGH THE APP

To collect stamps, you must be a member of the *airBaltic Club* loyalty programme.

You will receive a stamp for each one-way flight booked on the *airBaltic* website. These stamps can earn you valuable prizes such as baggage vouchers, flight discounts, bonus points and a free ticket.

BENEFITS OF JOINING THE STAMP CARD

- ➔ Choose your favourite seat for free on your next flight after joining.
- ➔ Receive a baggage voucher after your first return flight.
- ➔ Get a free ticket* when you complete five return flights.

To start collecting stamps, download or update the *airBaltic pins* app on your smart device and tap the *Stampcard* icon.

THREE MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

If you collect 24 stamps and finish your stamp card over the course of one year, you will reach the *airBaltic Club* Executive level. If you take at least 60 one-way flights within a year, you will earn *airBaltic Club* VIP status. The Executive and VIP status allows you to enjoy special privileges when travelling.

More information at airbalticclub.com



DOWNLOAD THE *airBaltic pins* APP



*After five round trips you will receive 7000 points, which can be used to book a ticket for a flight operated by *airBaltic*. Airport taxes not included. Special conditions apply.



TICKET TYPES ON *airBaltic* FLIGHTS

Whenever you reserve an *airBaltic* flight, you can choose from four different ticket types depending on your needs and wishes: GREEN, GREEN plus, GREEN classic and BUSINESS.

The date can be changed for all tickets. This gives our guests extra flexibility and security when planning their trips.
Check out the chart to see what services are included in each ticket type, and choose the one that’s best for you.

	GREEN	GREEN plus only on <i>airBaltic.com</i>	GREEN classic	BUSINESS
	The simplest ticket for the lowest price – with the option of changing the flight date.	A great price that includes checked baggage and the option of flexibility. Plus regular discounts on different ancillary services.	A smart choice! The most important services plus greater flexibility in changing or cancelling the flight.	Our proven value – enjoy plenty of benefits, sophisticated service and total flexibility.
CABIN BAGGAGE	✓	✓	✓	✓
CHECKED BAGGAGE	from EUR 14.99	✓	✓	✓
SEAT RESERVATION	from EUR 3.99	from EUR 3.99	✓	✓
DATE CHANGE*	EUR 50 per direction	EUR 50 per direction	✓	✓
REFUND	✗**	✗**	EUR 50 per direction, or EUR 25 per direction, if you choose a refund in the form of a gift voucher	✓
NAME CHANGE*	✗**	✗**	EUR 70 per ticket	✓
MEAL	from EUR 9.99	from EUR 9.99	from EUR 9.99	✓
AIRPORT CHECK-IN	EUR 14.99	EUR 14.99	✓	✓
FAST TRACK	✗	✗	✗	✓
BUSINESS LOUNGE	✗	✗	✗	✓
<i>airBaltic Club</i> ***	Earn 1–3 <i>pins</i> per euro spent	Earn 1–3 <i>pins</i> per euro spent + 50 bonus <i>pins</i>	Earn 1–3 <i>pins</i> per euro spent + 100 bonus <i>pins</i>	Earn 1–3 <i>pins</i> per euro spent + 200 bonus <i>pins</i>

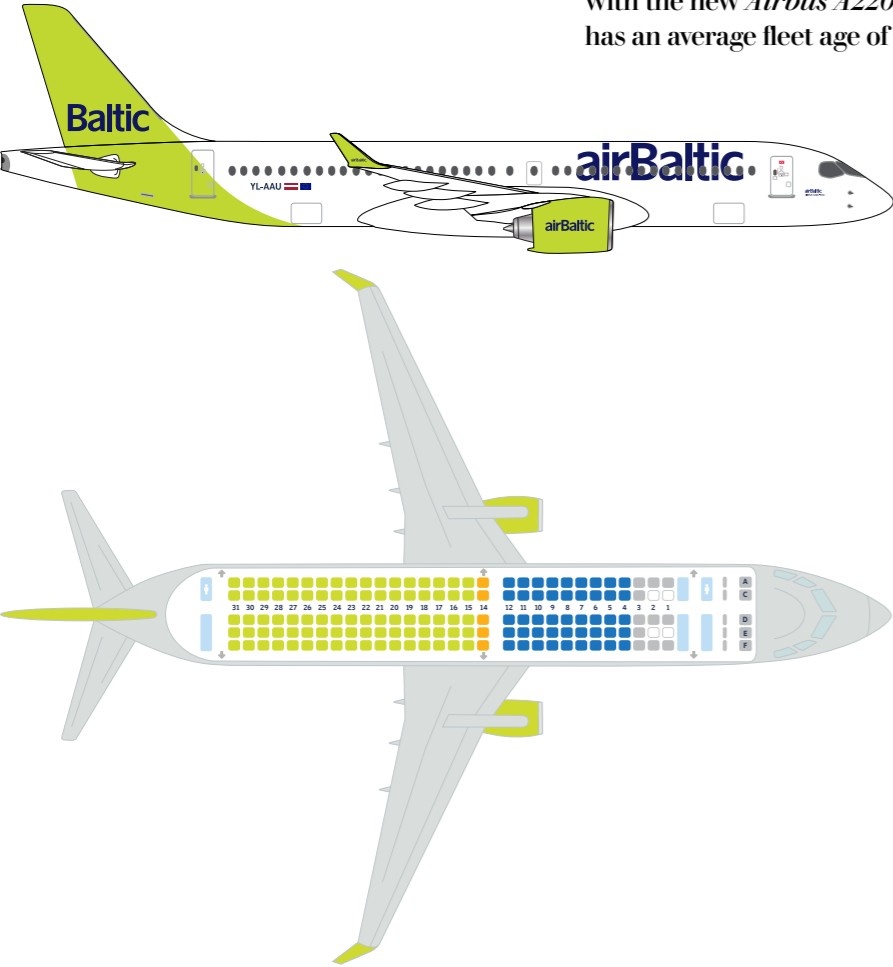
* Fare difference may apply.
** A Flight Cancellation option and Name Change option can be added to your tickets by making the reservation on *airBaltic.com*.
*** The number of *pins* earned per each Euro spent on a ticket depends on the tier level within the *airBaltic Club*.

The given information is subject to amendments and cancellations taken unilaterally by *airBaltic*.

Flights from RIGA						Flights to RIGA					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
ABERDEEN						ABERDEEN					
BT 659	RIX	ABZ	-2--6-	16:40	17:10	BT 660	ABZ	RIX	-2--6-	17:50	22:20
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 617	RIX	AMS	1234567	7:45	9:05	BT 618	AMS	RIX	1234567	10:20	13:35
BT 619	RIX	AMS	1234567	16:30	17:50	BT 620	AMS	RIX	1234567	18:35	21:50
ATHENS						ATHENS					
BT 611	RIX	ATH	-2--6-	7:55	11:05	BT 612	ATH	RIX	-2--6-	11:45	14:55
BARCELONA						BARCELONA					
BT 681	RIX	BCN	-----7	07:30	10:10	BT 682	BCN	RIX	-----7	11:10	15:45
BT 683	RIX	BCN	-2-4-6-	13:30	16:10	BT 684	BCN	RIX	-2-4-6-	17:10	21:45
BERGEN						BERGEN					
BT 171	RIX	BGO	-2--6-	12:55	14:00	BT 172	BGO	RIX	-2--6-	14:40	17:35
BERLIN Brandenburg						BERLIN Brandenburg					
BT 211	RIX	BER	12-4567	07:35	08:10	BT 212	BER	RIX	12-4567	08:50	11:25
BT 213	RIX	BER	--3-5-7	18:15	18:50	BT 214	BER	RIX	--3-5-7	19:30	22:05
BILLUND						BILLUND					
BT 147	RIX	BLL	----5-7	13:00	13:40	BT 148	BLL	RIX	----5-7	14:20	16:55
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 601	RIX	BRU	-2-----	07:30	08:55	BT 602	BRU	RIX	-2-----	09:40	13:05
BT 603	RIX	BRU	1-45-7	16:25	17:50	BT 604	BRU	RIX	1-45-7	18:30	21:55
BUDAPEST						BUDAPEST					
BT 491	RIX	BUD	-2--6-	12:40	13:35	BT 492	BUD	RIX	-2--6-	14:15	17:15
CATANIA						CATANIA					
BT 639	RIX	CTA	-----7	07:15	09:45	BT 640	CTA	RIX	-----7	10:35	14:55
COPENHAGEN						COPENHAGEN					
BT 131	RIX	CPH	1234-6-	07:45	08:15	BT 132	CPH	RIX	1234-6-	08:55	11:20
BT 139	RIX	CPH	--345-7	18:20	18:50	BT 140	CPH	RIX	--345-7	19:30	21:55
BT 139	RIX	CPH	1..... From Aug 23	18:20	18:50	BT 140	CPH	RIX	1..... From Aug 23	19:30	21:55
CORFU						CORFU					
BT 643	RIX	CFU	-----6-	08:25	11:20	BT 644	CFU	RIX	-----6-	12:20	15:20
DUBLIN						DUBLIN					
BT 661	RIX	DUB	--3-5-7	07:25	08:35	BT 662	DUB	RIX	--3-5-7	09:15	14:10
DUBROVNIK						DUBROVNIK					
BT 497	RIX	DBV	---4-6-	15:45	17:25	BT 498	DBV	RIX	---4-6-	18:05	21:40
DUSSELDORF						DUSSELDORF					
BT 233	RIX	DUS	1-3-5-7	16:25	17:40	BT 234	DUS	RIX	1-3-5-7	18:25	21:30
EDINBURGH						EDINBURGH					
BT 669	RIX	EDI	1--5--	16:00	16:50	BT 670	EDI	RIX	1--5--	17:35	22:15
FRANKFURT						FRANKFURT					
BT 243	RIX	FRA	12-456-	07:50	09:10	BT 244	FRA	RIX	12-456-	09:50	13:00
BT 245	RIX	FRA	1-3-5-7	16:35	17:55	BT 246	FRA	RIX	1-3-5-7	18:45	21:55
BT 245	RIX	FRA	---4... Until Aug 12	16:35	17:55	BT 246	FRA	RIX	---4... Until Aug 12	18:45	21:55
GOTHENBURG Landvetter						GOTHENBURG Landvetter					
BT 121	RIX	GOT	-----7	12:15	12:40	BT 122	GOT	RIX	-----7	13:20	15:40
BT 121	RIX	GOT	--3----	13:15	13:40	BT 122	GOT	RIX	--3----	14:20	16:40
HAMBURG						HAMBURG					
BT 251	RIX	HAM	1-3-5-7	12:50	13:40	BT 252	HAM	RIX	1-3-5-7	14:20	17:00
HELSINKI						HELSINKI					
BT 301	RIX	HEL	1234567	08:05	09:05	BT 326	HEL	RIX	1234567	05:35	06:35
BT 325	RIX	HEL	1234567	23:20	00:20+1	BT 302	HEL	RIX	1234567	09:50	10:50
HERAKLION						HERAKLION					
BT 635	RIX	HER	-2-----	12:00	15:35	BT 636	HER	RIX	-2-----	16:30	20:05
BT 635	RIX	HER	-----6-	13:20	16:55	BT 636	HER	RIX	-----6-	18:00	21:35
KOS						KOS					
BT 593	RIX	KGS	-2...6-	13:50	17:15	BT 594	KGS	RIX	-2...6-	17:55	21:20
KIEV Boryspil						KIEV Boryspil					
BT 402	RIX	KBP	1234567	12:50	14:45	BT 403	KBP	RIX	1234567	15:30	17:20
BT 404	RIX	KBP	----5-7	18:00	19:55	BT 405	KBP	RIX	----5-7	20:40	22:30
LARNACA						LARNACA					
BT 657	RIX	LCA	-2--6-	22:45	02:30+1	BT 658	LCA	RIX	--3--7	03:10	06:55
LISBON						LISBON					
BT 675	RIX	LIS	-2-5--	12:50	15:25	BT 676	LIS	RIX	-2-5--	16:10	22:30
LONDON Gatwick						LONDON Gatwick					
BT 651	RIX	LGW	12-4-6-	07:50	08:40	BT 652	LGW	RIX	12-4-6-	09:25	14:05
BT 653	RIX	LGW	1-345-7	15:50	16:40	BT 654	LGW	RIX	1-345-7	17:25	22:05
LVIV						LVIV					
BT 408	RIX	LWO	---4-6-	23:30	01:00+1	BT 409	LWO	RIX	----5-7	4:55	6:30
MADRID Adolfo Suarez Barajas						MADRID Adolfo Suarez Barajas					
BT 685	RIX	MAD	1-4-7	13:00	16:10	BT 686	MAD	RIX	1-4-7	16:50	21:55
MALAGA						MALAGA					
BT 677	RIX	AGP	--3-6-	12:45	16:20	BT 678	AGP	RIX	--3-6-	17:00	22:20
MANCHESTER						MANCHESTER					
BT 671	RIX	MAN	--3--7	16:05	16:55	BT 672	MAN	RIX	--3--7	17:35	22:10
MILAN Malpensa						MILAN Malpensa					
BT 629	RIX	MXP	1-3-5-7	08:05	09:50	BT 630	MXP	RIX	1-3-5-7	10:40	14:20
MOSCOW Sheremetyevo						MOSCOW Sheremetyevo					
BT 424	RIX	SVO	1-4----	07:25	09:00	BT 425	SVO	RIX	1-4----	09:45	11:25
BT 422	RIX	SVO	--3--7	18:20	19:55	BT 423	SVO	RIX	--3--7	20:40	22:20
MUNICH						MUNICH					
BT 221	RIX	MUC	1-34-6-	07:40	08:50	BT 222	MUC	RIX	1-34-6-	09:30	12:35
BT 223	RIX	MUC	12-45-7	17:20	18:30	BT 224	MUC	RIX	12-45-7	19:10	22:15
NAPLES						NAPLES					
BT 645	RIX	NAP	1--5--	07:30	9:35	BT 646	NAP	RIX	1--5--	10:25	14:20
NICE						NICE					
BT 695	RIX	NCE	-2-456-	08:05	10:10	BT 696	NCE	RIX	-2-456-	10:50	14:45
ODESSA						ODESSA					
BT 410	RIX	ODS	1--5-7	23:35	01:50+1	BT 411	ODS	RIX	12--6-	04:05	06:15
OLBIA						OLBIA					
BT 655	RIX	OLB	-----6-	15:20	17:40	BT 656	OLB	RIX	-----6-	18:20	22:30
OSLO						OSLO					
BT 151	RIX	OSL	1234-6-	07:55	08:35	BT 152	OSL	RIX	1234-6-	09:15	11:45
BT 153	RIX	OSL	1-45-7	18:00	18:40	BT 154	OSL	RIX	1-45-7	19:20	21:50
PALANGA						PALANGA					
BT 033	RIX	PLQ	1234567	23:40	00:25+1	BT 032	PLQ	RIX	1234567	05:40	06:25
PALMA DE MALLORCA						PALMA DE MALLORCA					
BT 687	RIX	PMI	-----7	7:55	10:45	BT 688	PMI	RIX	-----7	11:30	16:10
BT 687	RIX	PMI	-2-----	14:15	17:05	BT 688	PMI	RIX	-2-----	17:45	22:25
PARIS Charles de Gaulle						PARIS Charles de Gaulle					
BT 691	RIX	CDG	12-456-	07:20	09:00	BT 692	CDG	RIX	12-456-	10:05	13:50
BT 693	RIX	CDG	1-34-7	15:55	17:45	BT 694	CDG	RIX	1-34-7	18:30	22:15
PISA						PISA					
BT 647	RIX	PSA	1--5--	07:30	09:20	BT 648	PSA	RIX	1--5--	10:05	13:55

Welcome aboard our new *Airbus A220-300*

We are proud to have the Europe’s youngest fleet of aircraft. All *airBaltic* flights are operated with the new *Airbus A220-300* aircraft, which has an average fleet age of two years.



Number of aircraft	27
Number of seats	145
Max take-off weight	67.6 metric tons
Max payload	16.7 metric tons
Length	38.7 m
Wing span	35.1 m
Cruising speed	870 km/h
Commercial range	4575 km
Fuel consumption	2200 l/h
Engine	PW 1521G

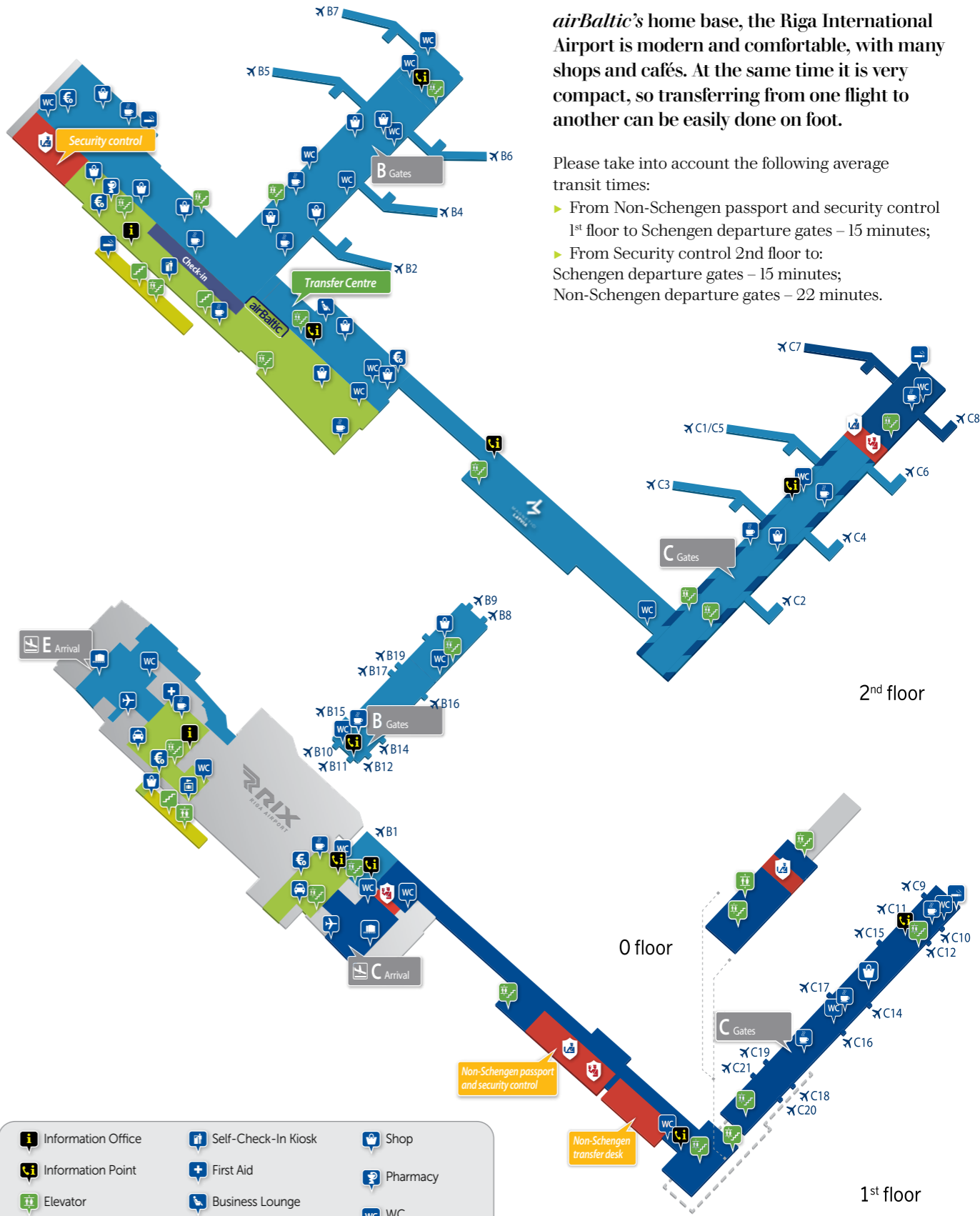
- Business class seats
- Priority seats
- Extra legroom seats
- Regular seats

Use of portable electronic devices

	BOARDING	TAXI BEFORE TAKE-OFF	TAKE-OFF	CRUISE	APPROACH AND LANDING	TAXI AFTER LANDING
Connectivity GSM, Bluetooth, Flight Mode						
Handheld devices e.g. tablets, e-readers and mobile phones						
Heavy devices e.g. laptops and notebooks						

* Shall be stowed in overhead bin or under the front seat inside an appropriate bag.
In case a battery or device is damaged, hot, produces smoke, is lost, or falls into the seat structure, immediately inform the cabin crew.

Welcome to Riga International Airport

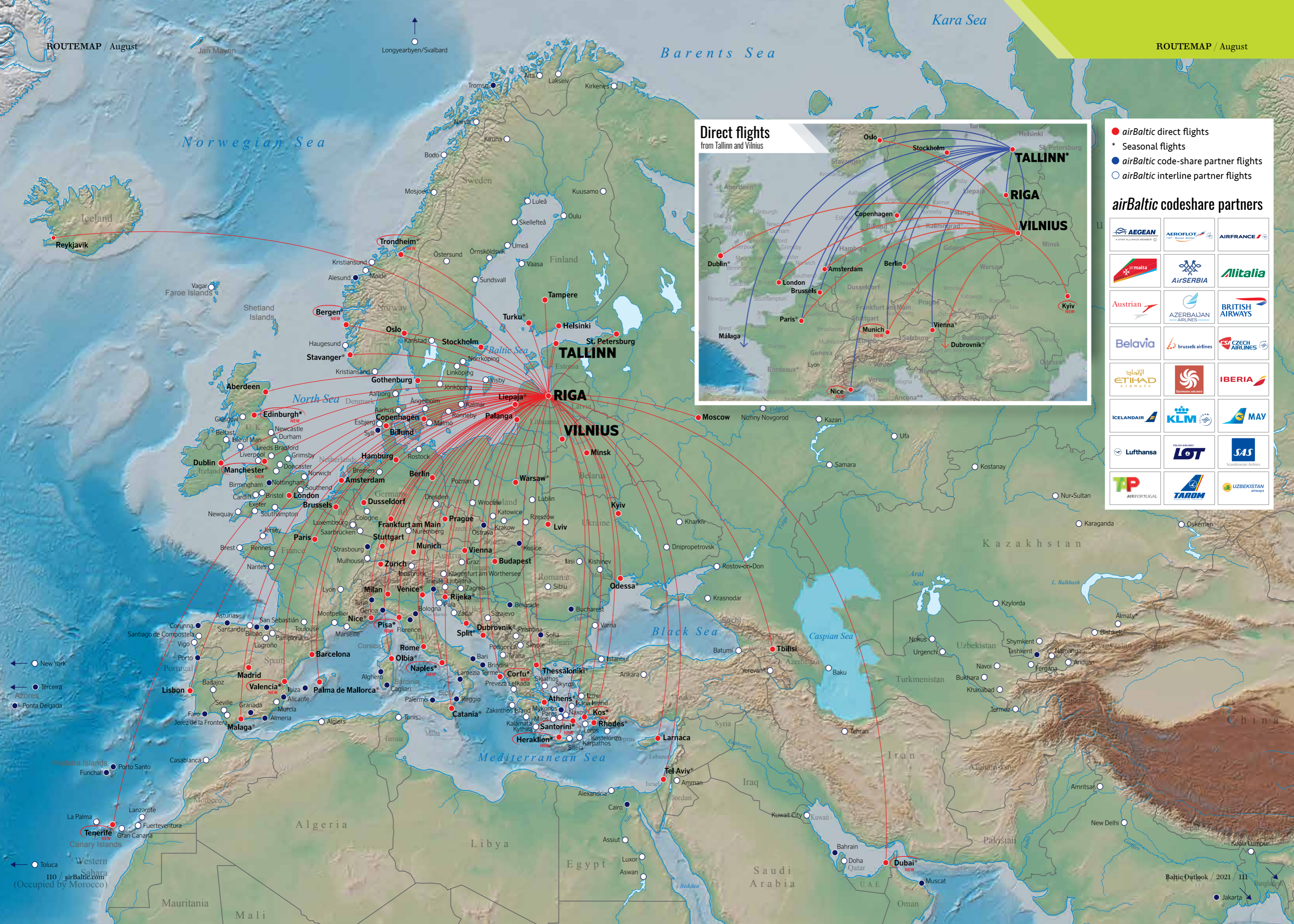


airBaltic’s home base, the Riga International Airport is modern and comfortable, with many shops and cafés. At the same time it is very compact, so transferring from one flight to another can be easily done on foot.

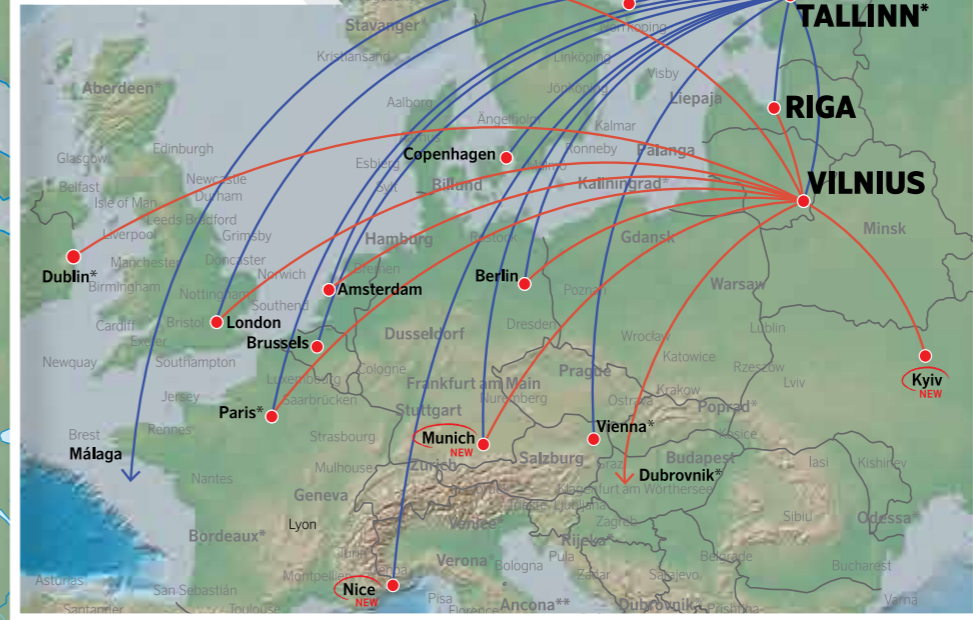
- Please take into account the following average transit times:
- From Non-Schengen passport and security control 1st floor to Schengen departure gates – 15 minutes;
 - From Security control 2nd floor to: Schengen departure gates – 15 minutes; Non-Schengen departure gates – 22 minutes.

Information Office	Self-Check-In Kiosk	Shop
Information Point	First Aid	Pharmacy
Elevator	Business Lounge	WC
Elevator & Stairs	Currency Exchange	Smoking Area
Stairs	Car Rental	Passport Control
Arrival Service	Baggage Claim	Security Control
Café and Restaurant	Baggage Storage	

- Public Zone
- Non-Schengen Zone–Departure/Arrival
- Schengen Zone–Departure/Arrival



Direct flights from Tallinn and Vilnius



- **airBaltic** direct flights
- * Seasonal flights
- **airBaltic** code-share partner flights
- **airBaltic** interline partner flights

airBaltic codeshare partners

Spice up your trip with our extras!

Book these useful services along with your ticket at airbaltic.com or add them to your booking later on.



Flight cancellation and name change options

For your peace of mind, add the option to cancel your reservation and get a full refund in the form of an *airBaltic* gift card in case your travel plans change. This service costs **EUR 19.99** per passenger per direction.

Or add the option to change the passenger name in your ticket for a fee of **EUR 7.99** per flight segment.

Both services are available only on airBaltic.com when purchasing *GREEN* or *GREEN plus* tickets.



Heavy cabin baggage

You can take on board one cabin bag (55x40x23 cm) and one personal item (30x40x10 cm) with a total weight of eight kilograms free of charge.

However, sometimes you may need to carry more but want to avoid waiting for a checked suitcase at the baggage belt. Now you can **add an extra four kilograms to your cabin baggage from EUR 11.99** and take a total of 12 kilograms on board.

Please note: If you purchase extra cabin baggage weight, your cabin baggage must still remain within the above-mentioned dimensions. Exceeding the allowed cabin baggage weight or size limits will cost **EUR 60** at the airport.



Checked baggage

Add checked baggage if you want to take up to **25 kilograms**, including liquids over 100 ml, which are not allowed in cabin baggage. The cheapest option is to book checked baggage along with your ticket at airbaltic.com starting from **EUR 14.99**. You can also add baggage anytime later at a higher price.



Pre-order a meal

Order a meal before your flight and be among the first served on board. Choose our great value meal sets, which include a main course, dessert, and a drink starting from **EUR 9.99**. All meals are freshly prepared and packed separately under strict hygiene standards. Special vegetarian and kids' meals are also available.



Reserve a seat

Are you a window person, or do you favour more legroom? Want to avoid the middle seat or sit together with your family? Or do you want to sit in the front to be the first off the plane?

Whichever it is, you can secure your favourite seat in advance starting from **EUR 3.99**. With a reserved seat you will enjoy an additional bonus – the opportunity to **check in for your flight already five days before departure** (instead of the usual 36 hours).



Fast track in Riga

Add fast-track security check to your booking for only **EUR 9.99** and skip the security lines at Riga Airport.



Special equipment

Whatever your hobby, you don't have to live without it during your trip. Take your bicycle, skis, or golf bag with you from **EUR 29.99**.

*Guitars, cellos, and other fragile musical instruments that do not fit in cabin baggage can be transported on the seat next to the passenger if a special ticket has been purchased for their transportation.



Assistance for children flying alone*

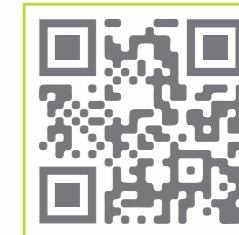
If you are unable to accompany your children, our crew can take care of them from the time they check in to the moment when they meet a parent or guardian at the destination airport. Unaccompanied minor service costs from **EUR 60** and is available for children aged 5 to 17.



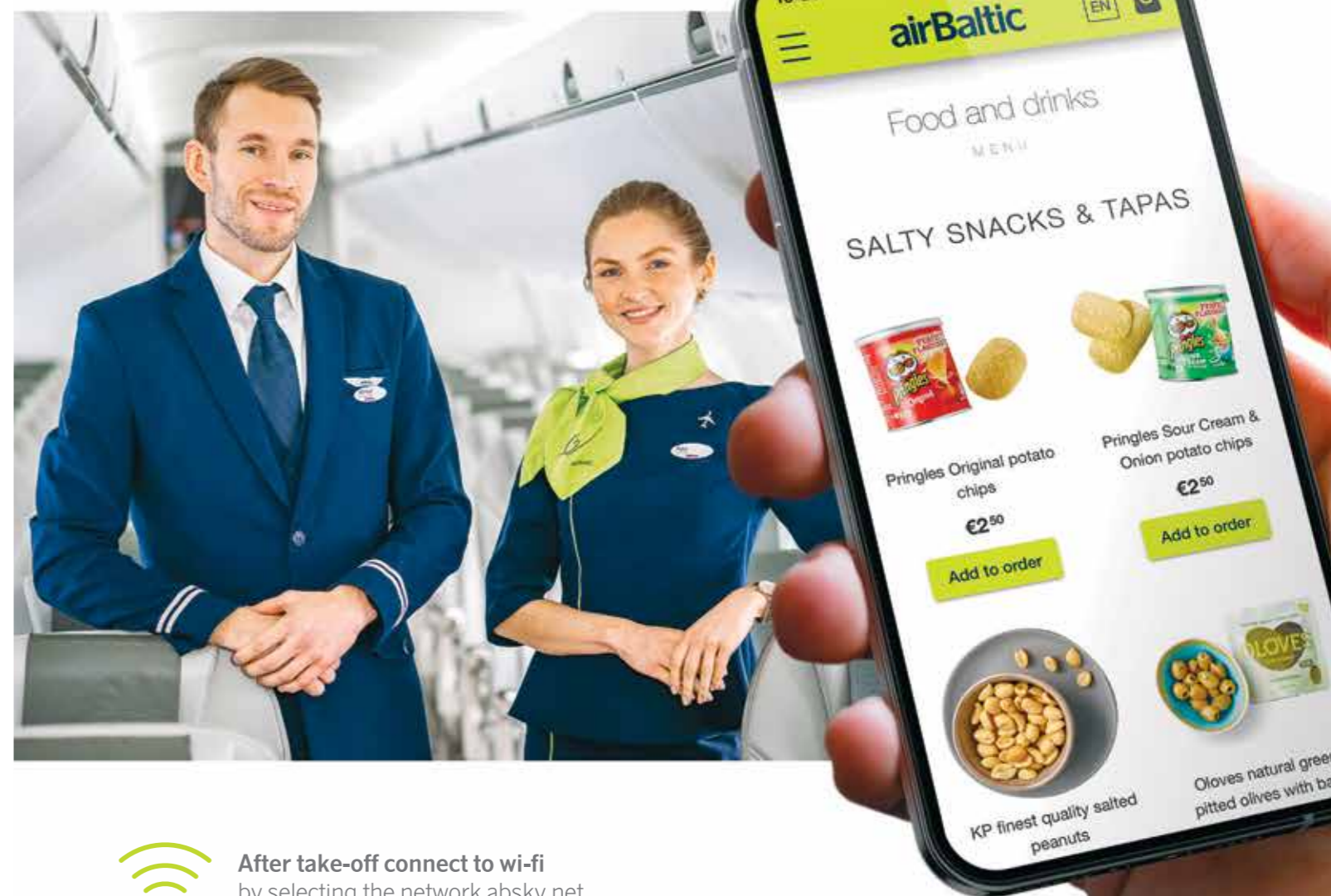
Travelling with pets*

Your furry friend can travel in the cabin if its crate fits under the seat in front of you. Larger animals are placed in the cargo hold during the flight.

WELCOME TO AIRBALTIC SKY SERVICE!



Order inflight meals and do onboard shopping from **your mobile device** during the flight!



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Shop for food, drinks and souvenirs on your phone. Also read the latest articles from the [airbaltic](http://airbaltic.com) blog and the [baltic outlook](http://balticoutlook.com) magazine

Please note, airBaltic SKY service will start to work **only after take-off**



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Nissan Juke

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Nissan Juke stock cars starting from
only **€ 16 790**

Offer includes:

- Great equipment
- 5-year warranty
- Cars available in the showroom

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Norde

Skanstes iela 31a, Rīga
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www.norde.lv

Pictures are illustrative. Nissan Juke average fuel consumption: 5.9 - 6.4 l / 100 km (WLTP), CO2 emissions: 134 - 144 g / km (WLTP). The offer is valid until 31.09.2021 or until there are cars in stock. *5-year / 100,000 km (whichever comes first) warranty consists of a 3-year / 100,000 km manufacturer's warranty and a 2-year Nissan 5★ extended warranty offered by Nissan International Insurance Limited as an insurance service. You can obtain full information on warranty coverage and the terms and conditions of the Nissan 5★ extended warranty from your Nissan dealer.