

NOVEMBER
2020
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Inflight magazine

baltic

outlook

THE ALPS

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FOUR BUSINESS DESTINATIONS
IN GERMANY – WITH A TWIST



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**Our industry is very
vital because it connects
businesses, people,
and ideas**

MARTIN ALEXANDER GAUSS
Chief Executive Officer, *airBaltic*

Dear guests of *airBaltic*,

We see that our customers miss travelling, and we continue to do our best to offer them various safe and flexible travel opportunities for when they feel ready to get back in the air. As you sit on board our aircraft, wearing a face mask and holding a personal copy of this magazine as well as a disposable menu card, each of you sees how much aviation has changed.

Our industry is very vital because it connects businesses, people, and ideas. Without flying, our world would be significantly smaller. Although in the present day it sometimes feels that way anyway. This is why we at *airBaltic* strongly believe that the industry will recover from the crisis and that demand will return as soon as it will be possible to ease travel restrictions. Being able to fly is

a notable part of our lives that has helped societies continue to progress.

In aviation, we usually schedule recurrent training of pilots, cabin crew, and other employees for the winter months. This year we've taken an additional step by launching our own internal *airBaltic* Leaders for Future programme and investing even more in our own people as our airline's most valuable asset. The new programme will develop our internal talent and enhance their potential, which is important for the sustainable development and future growth of *airBaltic*.

Last month we also published our annual sustainability report, highlighting our sustainability results for 2019 (see page 52). At *airBaltic*, we're focusing on environmental, economic, and social sustainability, because the future winners will be those who are already now working on improving these aspects. Considering how challenging the recent months have been in aviation, we will put even more effort towards promoting a sustainable business model as we move forward.

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



Yours,
Martin Alexander Gauss



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baltic outlook

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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 going to any event, make sure that the dates, location, or conditions have not changed. Some photos in this magazine may be only of an informative nature.

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SWAROVSKI

#Swarovski125years

The ultimate November checklist

Photo by Artis Veigurs © Jūrmala City Council



Great Ķemeri Bog Boardwalk

A WALK IN A BOG

November brings a very nuanced palette to Latvia's nature that can best be appreciated in its bogs. These landscapes entice and enthrall with their seductive solitude and wildness. Experts estimate that bogs cover about 5% of Latvia's land, and approximately 70% of those bogs remain relatively untouched and unspoiled. This means that, with their colours, smells, and moods, Latvian bogs are truly a magical world. Nowadays, of course, it's possible to explore a bog and still keep your feet dry. Several of Latvia's bogs now have boardwalks and viewing towers. For example, the boardwalk through Great Ķemeri Bog is the most popular destination in Ķemeri National Park and lets visitors enjoy this unique raised, mossy bog with ease. This particular bog is approximately 8000 years old and contains a labyrinth of small elongated lakes and pools, adding to its gentle beauty. The boardwalk at Ķemeri is 3.4 kilometres long.

One of Europe's longest bog boardwalks can be found in Dunika in the southwestern corner of Latvia. It's almost five kilometres long and leads to Latvia's only pure hornbeam forest, which is at least 150 years old. Fill a thermos with hot tea, dress warmly, put on some comfortable shoes, and you're guaranteed to have a wonderful time!



MUSIC

Skillful improvisation

When thinking about the most suitable musical accompaniment to a leisurely autumn evening, we can't not mention

Latvia's ethno-minimalist duo of Stanislav Yudin and Asnate Rancāne. Yudin plays double bass and specialises in jazz and improvisation, while Rancāne is a singer and ethnomusicologist. Their critically acclaimed first album, *Op. 2* (also available in vinyl format), lifts the listener above hectic daily life and undeniably elicits a deep emotional link with the music.

jersikarecords.com



DESIGN

Cool souvenirs

With Independence Day on the 18th and several other significant events throughout the month, November is a patriotic time for Latvians. Those who appreciate good design can enhance the celebration with t-shirts, notebooks, and other original products by *Miesai*. The company's *Rīga Original*® series is a tribute to the capital city we all share and embrace. The design is a contemporary take on a beloved landmark – the familiar RĪGA welcome signs that have marked the four main highways into the city since 1980.

miesai.com



FASHION

Perfect melancholy

The designer Iveta Vecmane is one of the best-known names in the Latvian fashion world. Having worked as a fashion stylist at recognised fashion and lifestyle magazines for many years, in 2017 she transformed her experience and skills into a high-quality fashion brand for the modern, elegant, contemporary woman. She has named all of her collections to date *Melancholia*, reflecting her desire to blend historical heritage with contemporary fashion trends.

ivetavecmane.com

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THE STYLE OF MADERNIEKS EXHIBITION

November 5 – February 28

This extensive exhibition at the Museum of Decorative Arts and Design marks the 150th anniversary of the birth of Jūlijs Madernieks (1870–1955), who laid the foundation for Latvian applied arts and design. He paved the way for Latvian design by creating significant public interiors and furniture, designing textiles, doing graphic art for books, and also being a talented pedagogue and art critic. Madernieks had studied in Paris and was very well-travelled, which brought a unique dimension to his work.

lnmm.lv

Did you know?

The oldest complex of dwelling houses in Riga was constructed in the 15th century. Known as the Three Brothers – a name given to them a very long time ago – it is said that the buildings were constructed by the men from a single family.

liveriga.com

Words by Zane Nikodemusa

Publicity photos and by *iStock* and Ilze Vītola

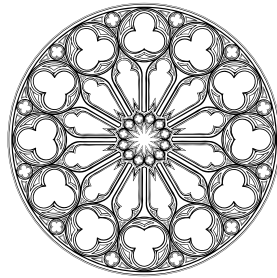
November 2020 / RIGA

CONCERTS AT RIGA CATHEDRAL

Throughout November

The *Piccolo* concert series offers short concerts several times a week by professional organists. Approximately 20 minutes long, they provide an opportunity for visitors to hear one of the most vivid and valuable historical organs in the world. The Riga Cathedral organ is a paragon of organ-building in the Late Romantic period and one of the finest monuments of musical history in Europe. The foundation of Riga Cathedral was laid in 1211; the current organ was built in 1883–84.

doms.lv



Līga Purmale. *Evening II*. 2019.

LĪGA PURMALE SOLO EXHIBITION

Until November 30

For decades, artist Līga Purmale (b. 1948) has been considered the *grande dame* of Latvian art. Her work embodies a meditative rhythm in which nature plays the main role. The dynamism and noise of the modern day makes us appreciate each of her paintings even more. Purmale's newest show, *Tepat tuvumā* (Right Here), can be seen at the Daugava Gallery on Ausekļa iela.

galerijadaugava.lv

Laurence des Cars, the director of the Musée d'Orsay in Paris, regarding the *Wild Souls: Symbolism in the Baltic States* exhibition, which was shown at her museum in 2018 and can now be seen at the Latvian National Museum of Art. Four national art museums of the Baltic states – in Riga, Tallinn, Vilnius, and Kaunas – participated in this joint project that excited the European art scene. See it in Riga from November 21 until February 21.

Quote of the month

I really do feel that late-19th-century art, in general, is extremely important to understand in the context of what we are living and going through now.

SCANORAMA EUROPEAN FILM FORUM

November 5–22



Photo by Ilze Vītola

VILNIUS

Did you know?

Lithuanians bake and eat rye bread all year long, and this food product is the most popular gift to present to Lithuanians living abroad.

govilnius.lt

LITHUANIAN GASTRONOMY WEEK

November 2–8

During this special week, take a gourmet tour of Vilnius' restaurants and discover unexpected flavours, special menus, tasting dinners, and delightful edible works of art by the best chefs in the city. These days, everything from vegan to gourmet, and bagels to burgers are available to diners. You can also help select the Star of Gastronomy Week by voting for your favourite restaurants.

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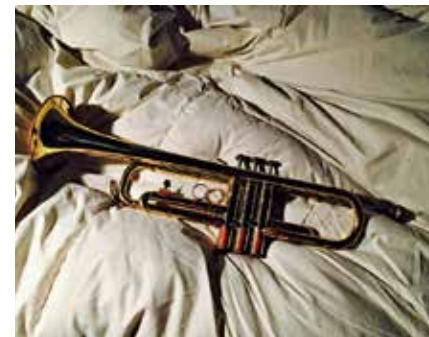
STREET ART TOUR

Throughout November

Appearing here only in the mid-1980s, socially active street art is a relatively new thing in Vilnius. But if you know where to go, you're bound to find urban murals by world-renowned street artists Millo, Os Gemeos, Tank Petrol, and many others. The city's street art often features intricate details that play with lines and geometric forms, or messages that fit well with the building or area surrounding the work of art. Visit walkablevilnius.com for locations and helpful tips.

VILNIUS MAMA JAZZ FESTIVAL

November 11–15



This colourful festival presenting a variety of jazz styles has been held in the Lithuanian capital since 2002. The musical line-ups have encompassed everything from all-star projects to contemporary post-bop, live sound for silent movies, and arrangements of Led Zeppelin classics with a taste of cabbage soup. Quality, originality, and relevance are the unifying factors defining the festival programme. An exciting experience is guaranteed!

vilniusmamajazz.lt



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Franz SCHUBERT Symphony no. 6

WWW.LNSO.LV
WWW.BILESUPARADIZE.LV





Erik Johansson. *Go your own road*

ERIK JOHANSSON EXHIBITION

Until January 17

Swedish photographer Erik Johansson (b. 1985) is a beloved artist and rising star in photography who, with equal parts technical skill, curiosity, and boundless imagination, manages to conjure up surreal worlds that at first feel familiar...until we realise that they are not familiar at all. His show *Places Beyond* can be seen at Fotografiska Tallinn. Located in the heart of the Telliskivi Creative City, Fotografiska Tallinn is a meeting place for world-class art, good food, music, and design. fotografiska.com/tallinn

UNSEEN OCEANS: THE BALTIC SEA IN THE WORLD OCEAN

Until June 30



Did you know?

Town Hall Square at the heart of Tallinn's Old Town is where Estonians greet their heroes when they return home after big accomplishments abroad. visittallinn.ee

This interactive exhibition at the Estonian Maritime Museum provides an exciting look at new and surprising discoveries about the oceans. Put together by the American Museum of Natural History, the exhibition provides a fascinating overview of the current state of these explorations, introducing the newest technologies, beautiful underwater nature, and the researchers themselves behind these amazing discoveries. On this journey, visitors meet diverse sea life from tiny plankton to colossal giant squids, blue whales, and giant manta rays. meremuuseum.ee

EGYPT OF GLORY: ART FROM THE NILE VALLEY

Until March 21

Estonia's first major exhibition of ancient Egyptian art features objects that are thousands of years old from one of the world's most important ancient Egyptian collections, the Egyptian Museum in Turin, Italy. This exhibition at the Kumu Art Museum features 200 items from the Land of the Pharaohs, including coffins, mummies, amulets, funerary offerings, and sculptures. On the one hand, the items tell the story of the ancient Egyptians' world; on the other, each piece is a work of art in its own right.

kumu.ekm.ee

TALLINN



TALLINN RESTAURANT WEEK

November 1–7

Tallinn Restaurant Week is a time to celebrate great food and great restaurants. It's a week full of discoveries, pleasant experiences, and the opportunity to visit and compare many different restaurants at a great price. Sixty-one restaurants are participating this year, meaning that there's no problem finding one that suits your taste for lunch or dinner. Find all the participants on the event's website. tallinnrestaurantweek.ee



© Stine Christiansen

Villa Copenhagen

Words by **Olga Dolina**
Publicity photos

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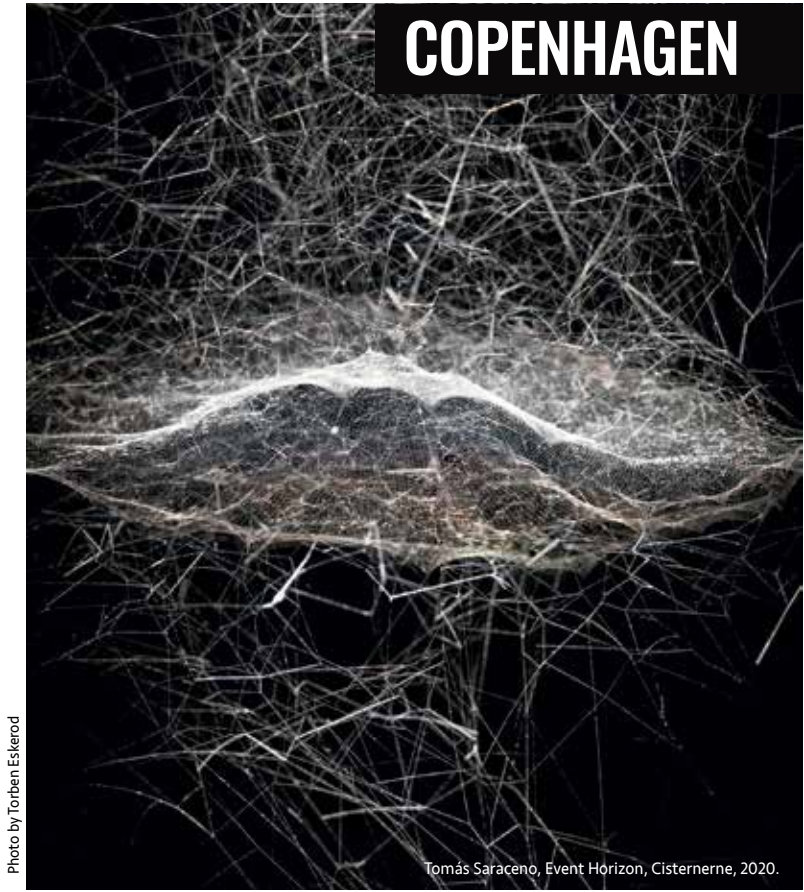


Photo by Torben Eskerod

Tomás Saraceno, *Event Horizon*, Cisternerne, 2020.



Photo by Soren Gammelmark

Restaurant Alchemist

Villa Copenhagen is a new design hotel located in the former Central Post & Telegraph headquarters close to the Tivoli Gardens (Tietgensgade 35-39; villacopenhagen.com). The refurbished interiors in this Neo-Baroque structure built in 1912 were crafted by the award-winning *Universal Design Studio*. Here, a respect for historical ambience is enhanced by a vibrant atmosphere and a conscious approach to luxury. Each of the 390 rooms recalls the grandeur of a traditional Danish townhouse and is adorned with classic herringbone parquet floors, delicate gold accents, and discrete colours that pay homage to 19th-century Danish painter Vilhelm Hammershoi. The Earth Suite was specially designed by Danish architect Eva Harlou and features only recycled materials, textiles, and eco-friendly furniture by *Mater Design*. The hotel is crowned with a panoramic rooftop bar and lap pool that's open year round and warmed with excess heat from the hotel's cooling system.

Built in 1859, Cisternerne was once an underground reservoir filled with 16 million litres of drinking water for the residents of Copenhagen, but now it's a thrilling exhibition space. The gloomy labyrinths under the green lawns of Søndermarken Park usually host one site-specific exhibition per year. This time it's **Tomás Saraceno: Event Horizon** (until November 30, 2021; book in advance at cisternerne.dk). Saraceno, a world-renowned Argentinian artist, has created a unique art experience in which visitors navigate the flooded space by boat. His darkly enchanted universe contains free-floating sculptures of planets, transparent spheres, and illuminated spider webs reflecting in the water. These create an invisible connection between the visitors and the air, sound waves, and dust particles, pointing out that we're all affected by our surroundings, just as much as we tend to affect them.

A world-renowned culinary marvel of the Danish capital, the two-*Michelin*-starred **Alchemist** restaurant delights guests with an imaginative five-hour, 50-course gastronomic journey (Refshalevej 173C). Recently reopened in the former set-building workshop of the Royal Danish Theatre, this new setting features an 18-metre dome with ten mapping projectors that supply guests with a 360-degree visual experience. Just as the alchemists of days gone by, who purified and perfected physical objects, the restaurant aims to transform and transcend the nature of food and dining. Thus, the artistry of high cuisine by chef Rasmus Munk blends with multisensory storytelling to create an unforgettable experience that takes hold of all the senses and expands diners' horizons. The dining experience lasts three to five hours and must be booked in advance at alchemist.dk.



BERLIN



JOE 5 by Duda Paiva Company



Cube Berlin

◀ Katharina Grosse, *It Wasn't Us*. Exhibition view in Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart, Berlin, 2020. Courtesy of König Galerie, Berlin, London, Tokyo, Gagosian, Galerie nächst St. Stephan Rosemarie Schwarzwälder, Vienna.



One of Berlin's most exciting art spaces can be found in a historic railway station built in 1846. It was successfully redesigned into an exhibition hall in 1904, but for the past couple of decades the Hamburger Bahnhof – Museum für Gegenwart Berlin has hosted major exhibitions of contemporary art (Invalidenstraße 50-51; smb.museum). Until January 10, visitors are invited to dive into the kaleidoscopic world of German artist Katharina Grosse. The vibrant large-scale painting titled **It Wasn't Us** unfolds in an uninterrupted, abstract flow of colour. It creates a limitless feeling, as if a rainbow has spilled over the floors, walls, ceilings, and even the outdoor spaces, pavement, and adjoining façade. The painting, which at one point takes the form of crushed paper, also establishes a tight bond with architecture and erases the familiar boundaries between spaces and objects.

The **Theater der Dinge** international festival of contemporary puppet and object theatre invites all to experience forward-looking examples of this versatile and boundless contemporary craft (November 3–10; schaubude.berlin). Bringing together leading artists from all over Europe, this year's edition offers 16 productions focusing on the theme of Artificial Bodies. Taking place at Schaubude Berlin and other venues, an essential part of the programme has also been moved outdoors and online. For instance, *We Have to Talk* by Anna Kpok is a telephone performance held in both German and English in the format of an installation and walk. *1/0/1 Robots – Hacking the Binary Code* by the Manufaktor collective, for its part, deals with body image in the digital age.

The constantly evolving modern architectural landscape of the German capital welcomes a picture-perfect newcomer – **Cube Berlin** (Washingtonplatz 3). Referred to by its architects from the Danish studio *3XN* as Europe's smartest multi-tenant office in a sculpture, the new building's glass façade is situated between the Spree River and the city's central railway station. At 42.5 metres in height, the visually intriguing geometrical form of this sustainable and smart solar-controlled edifice features a triangular projection that creates a series of outdoor balconies. The ten-storey building resembles an origami cube, and the architecture engages in a dialogue with its surroundings, inviting the public to enjoy the urban outdoors. Whether it's a stunning sunset or a grey autumn day, the Cube is also a new, inspiring location for snapshots.

◀ House in Forest (Waldhaus), 2004.



Private collection © Gerhard Richter 2020

VIENNA



Hilton Vienna Park

The **Gerhard Richter: Landscape** exhibition at the Bank Austria Kunstforum Wien presents the artwork of a living legend (Freyung 8; kunstforumwien.at; until February 14). Born in 1932, Richter is a master of abstract and photorealistic art. Visitors to the show float across landscapes of time from the 1960s until today, experiencing oil paintings, drawings, graphic art, photography, and objects by Richter, including some that have never before been exhibited: from romantic, realistic photographic landscapes reminiscent of the dreamy classics by Caspar David Friedrich to subjective and clearly abstract images made in the 1960-70s, and even fictional motifs of the sea, mountains, and other elements of nature created in the 90s. Richter's visionary concepts culminate in his abstract overpainting works, in which he has applied oil paint to images of landscapes, photos, and graphic art to create a paradoxical tension between reality and illusion.

The **Wien Modern** festival offers a blast of contemporary classical music, immersive soundscapes, and a celebration of modern expression joined with visual arts and site-specific performances (until 29 November; wienmodern.at). Established in 1988 by acclaimed conductor Claudio Abbado, Wien Modern soon turned into the biggest festival of contemporary music, bridging tradition and innovation and featuring the fearless avantgarde music of modern-day composers as well as multimedia projects and dance. The 33rd edition of the festival stretches over a whole month and 34 signature venues, from the grand Wiener Konzerthaus to the tiny basement of *Café Korb*. The programme includes 44 new productions and 85 new pieces, ranging from workshops on experimental instrument making to Klaus Lang's massive distanced organ concerto for the Vienna Symphony Orchestra in St. Stephen's Cathedral on November 19 and a walk-around sound bath at the Kunsthistorisches Museum on November 28.

Overlooking the picturesque Stadtpark and the Wien River, the **Hilton Vienna Park** has reopened fresh and sparkling after a two-year renovation and expansion (Am Stadtpark 1; hilton.com). The London-based Goddard Littlefair studio revamped the interior to create a new, modern image of sophisticated Viennese charm. The capacity of the hotel, nestled in a building dating to 1975, was increased to 663 rooms framed in floor-to-ceiling windows and spiced up with natural materials. The newly created spa and fitness area invites guests to ultimate relaxation, while the stylish *Lenz* restaurant celebrates classic Austrian cuisine with innovative tailor-made creations.

Words by Liga Valko
Photo courtesy of
Neiburgs Hotel & Restaurant

A home away from home

It's that time of year again, when the crisp air and long starlit nights draw in, but that doesn't mean you have to stay at home.

Nothing beats a spa or city break to enjoy the peace and tranquillity of Riga this November.

As things stand now, you can spot fewer tourists in the Old Town, and travel has become unpredictable. However, this is a brilliant excuse to get acquainted with the local hotel scene. Throughout November, guests and locals alike can enjoy the best selection of hotels in Riga at special rates.

Riga's hotel establishments are scattered around the city, from luxury five-star hotels to boutique retreats tucked away on the narrow, cobbled streets of the Old Town. Remember that Riga is not a metropolis, and you can literally walk everywhere, no matter where you stay.

As for many economic spheres, this has definitely been a turbulent time for hotels as well. Many have paused and reflected on whether to shut down or remain open. The *Neiburgs* restaurant and boutique apartment hotel (Jauniela 25/27; neiburgs.com), which has decided to stay in the game and continues to welcome guests from near and far, admits there has been a greater interest in long-term stays in the city. The hotel's spacious apartments offer ultimate comfort and amenities, including built-in kitchens and comfortable designer furniture.

In addition to guests from abroad, hotels are inviting locals to explore the city through the eyes of a tourist. Whether it's spas and wellness centres, fine dining, or à la carte breakfasts with a glass of champagne, there are quite a few urban oases in the heart of the Latvian capital where you can treat yourself and the family to a short break and a little bit of luxury.

Of course, hotels are acting responsibly and comply with all regional health safety measures, so guests can feel confident that their stay will be handled with the greatest possible care. One thing is certain: Riga's hotels are willing to do whatever it takes to provide a safe, secure guest experience.



DID YOU KNOW?

The local hospitality scene in Riga comprises **83 HOTELS** and other tourist accommodation establishments (CSP, 2020).

METROPOLE interweaves centuries of remarkable history and architecture. It is the oldest continuously operating hotel in Riga and has kept the same name since 1871, when it was built.

There are 11 luxurious five-star hotels in Riga, of which three are currently **OFFERING SPECIAL PACKAGES**.

At the end of the 19th century, the attractive building of *Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga* housed the glorious *Hotel Rome*, which actually gave rise to an **URBAN PLANNING TREND IN EUROPE** of building hotels right next to a city's opera house.

Check out **SPECIAL HOTEL OFFERS** at liveriga.com.

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AD Beatrice Rossetti - Photo Federico Cedrone

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A sauna for everyone

Public sauna culture in Helsinki is full of historical gems and new urban icons. A small room, heated stones, cold water – and the Finnish rebirth ritual may begin!

Words by Olga Dolina

Photo courtesy of Helsinki Marketing

While some of the oldest written evidence of saunas dates back to the early 12th century, modern statistics claim that Finland has an average of one sauna per household. For Finns, the sauna is likely the most frequent answer to all mishaps and joys, the country's most pleasant and healthy habit, and a national lifestyle treasure worthy of UNESCO heritage status. It's also linked with *sisu* – the Finnish concept of stoic determination, grit, persistence, and stamina. Luckily, anyone can train their inner strength and sense of internal balance, and the first step can be a visit to a sauna. Contrasting hot steam with dips in ice-cold water tempers the character, strengthens the body, and is a fun and relaxing ritual.

In central Helsinki, the urban explorer can still find a few historical gems to experience an authentic public sauna session. These are mostly hidden in the courtyards of high-rise buildings, and their appearance has nothing in common with the glamorous spa interiors of today. Yet visiting such a sauna brings you one step closer to the local urban culture. Public saunas emerged with the rapid flow of citizens from the countryside to the capital, and by 1907 Helsinki boasted 49 public saunas. But once indoor plumbing and showers became widespread in apartments, the popularity of such facilities decreased, until the younger generations and tourists helped to revive the tradition in the 2000s.

The hip Kallio district is home to *Kotiharjun Sauna* (Harjutorinkatu 1), founded in 1928 and the last remaining wood-heated sauna in town. Renovated in 1999, its concept with separate

saunas for men and women has remained unchanged. The stones around the stove weigh about 1500 kilograms, and the iron itself weighs 800 kilograms. The venue also offers massages and cupping treatment sessions. The entrance to *Kotiharjun*, where you'll regularly see a bunch of towel-wrapped characters cooling off outside right on the side of the street, looks like a scene straight out of an Aki Kaurismäki film.

Tucked away in a cosy courtyard behind an imposing iron gate, the atmospheric *Sauna Arla* (Kaarlenkatu 15) with its gas-fired stoves is a year younger than *Kotiharjun* and offers the same rituals. *Arla's* trademark is its metal wash basins, where water can be mixed to a suitable temperature depending on each visitor's preference. Here you can bring your own food and drinks or buy some at the desk.

The demand for new public saunas has been increasing lately. In contrast to historical saunas, the wooden architectural marvel that is the *Löyly* sauna attracts guests with a terrace, bar, restaurant, and picture-perfect views of the sea. Another public facility, *Lonna Sauna*, is located on tiny, 150-metre-long Lonna Island just a ten-minute water bus ride from Helsinki Central Market and features a log cabin with a wood-burning stove. The sauna accommodates 12 guests per two-hour sauna session and has a large terrace overlooking the surrounding islands. Just don't forget to say *Olipas hyvät löylyt!* ("That was one great sauna session!") at the end and enjoy the feeling of being reborn and fully prepared to conquer all the other welcoming sights in Helsinki.

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Words by **Liga Valko**
Publicity photos and
courtesy of **Kristi Pärn-Valdoja**



Kristi Pärn-Valdoja is an Estonian journalist as well as the founder, publisher, and editor-in-chief of the glamorous quarterly magazine *Säde*, which celebrates fashion, movies, and travelling. She has interviewed almost every A-list in Hollywood as well as fashion designers from Jean Paul Gaultier to Paco Rabanne and more. Although Kristi is a passionate traveller, she also enjoys her home city of Tallinn: 'I adore our cute coffee shops and good restaurants, and, because I'm obsessed with the sea, I love long walks on the beach.'

This month, Kristi's favourite event in Tallinn is one of the biggest film festivals in northern Europe – Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival, or PÖFF, from November 13 to 29 (poff.ee).



Café NOP & Reval Café

Café NOP is the neighbourhood café where one can find Kristi almost every morning. It has a cosy and slightly upscale hipster atmosphere, friendly service, fresh fusion food, great coffee, and fantastic cakes. There are many vegan options as well. Most charming of all is its garden, which happens to be very *Instagrammable*. Another of Kristi's casual favourites is the *Reval Café* located next to the *Radisson Blu Sky Hotel*. It serves the best omelette and potato salad in town! Café NOP – J. Köleri 1; nop.ee
Reval Café – Rävala puistee 3; revalcafe.ee

Kadriorg Park

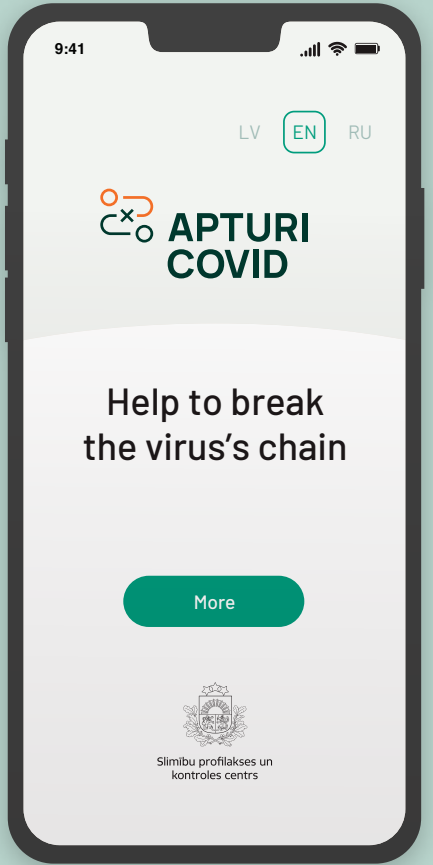
Beautiful Kadriorg Park is just a minute away from Kristi's home. With the Swan Pond, Japanese Garden, Rose Garden, Kumu Art Museum, and even the Estonian White House (Kadriorg Palace), it's a multiplex sightseeing destination. The park is particularly delightful in autumn, when the surrounding nature is at its most colourful. A. Weizenbergi 26

Noblessner Quarter

Having transformed from a hidden corner of industrial heritage to prime urban space, this is a relatively new and trendy area in Tallinn. Known for its distinctive buildings that combine the old and new, this lively neighbourhood has a charming Japanese restaurant called *Kampai*, the Proto Invention Factory, the Temnikova & Kasela art gallery, and the Kai Art Centre. Most importantly, here you're as close to the sea as possible to watch beautiful sunsets. Tööstuse 48

Rahva Raamat

The *Rahva Raamat* bookstore at Viru Keskus in the very centre of the city has been voted one of the best bookstores in the world, and for good reason! It's cosy, beautiful, and full of great books in English and Estonian. *Rahva Raamat* also has another very cool store and restaurant in the hipster quarter of Telliskivi as well as a café-store on the edge of the Old Town. Viru väljak 4
rahvaraamat.ee



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Oslo IN 24 HOURS



Words by Andrew Mellor
Publicity photos and by iStock

Norway's capital is a perfect blend of old and new.

WHERE TO STAY

This relative newcomer to the region's most reliable *Scandic* hotel chain in the heart of Vulkan, one of the newest districts to have sprung up in the Norwegian capital, is full of character. All of *Scandic's* usual amenities are supplemented with a fully equipped gym, plenty of kooky design, excellent views over the Akerselva River and its valley, and a special cycle-themed room (No. 201). *Scandic Vulkan* is also perfectly positioned right next door to Oslo's food hall, Mathallen. Maridalsveien 13 | scandichotels.com



WHERE TO SHOP

It may have relocated 100 metres up the street from its original home at the centre of Oslo's hipster district of Grünerløkka, but *Dapper* has lost none of its edge and remains the most stylish menswear store in the Norwegian capital. It offers the complete package: carefully chosen clothes, bicycles you'd want to be seen astride, and a full barber service. While waiting for any of the above, you can sample *Dapper's* very own coffee. Nordre gate 20 | dapper.no



A CLASSIC NOT TO MISS

Oslo's old *Grand Café* is no more, but there's still one place where you can breathe in the atmosphere of Old Oslo – *Theatre Café* (Theatercaféen), which is now part of the *Hotel Continental*. This dining hall and separate private dining room dates back to 1900 and is an architectural marvel, with a stucco vaulted ceiling above the tables and a classic parquet floor below them, separated by elegant marble columns. All of it was painstakingly restored half a century ago, and the café remains the best place in Oslo for a luxurious brunch. Stortingsgata 24-26 | theatercafeen.no

WHY NOT

The most affordable sightseeing tour can be taken by climbing aboard the No. 19 tram. From the square at Majorstuen, it takes you through the streets of Briskeby, past the Royal Palace Park and the National Theatre to Central Station and the diverse neighbourhood of Grønland before weaving through medieval Oslo and up towards Ekeberg Sculpture Park and finally Ljabru. A round trip takes just under an hour, but you can push the button and hop off if you see anything that takes your fancy along the way. Check out the view of the city at Sjømannsskolen. ruter.no/en



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Point of view

Where to go in London, according to influencer Siobhan Ferguson



My secret spot
‘My favourite spot is *Persephone Books* on Lamb’s Conduit in the beautiful neighbourhood of Bloomsbury. Hidden from the hustle of High Holborn in the heart of central London, Lamb’s Conduit is the loveliest of streets. This charming street, hiding in plain sight and looking as if it could have been plucked from a movie set, is also home to a beautiful selection of cosy eateries, a whimsical florist, and a host of small, idiosyncratic boutiques.
‘*Persephone Books* is an old, worldly store devoted to previously overlooked works by mid-20th-century female writers. There are over 100 books on everything from short stories to memoirs to stunning cookery books. Each book is presented with a bespoke grey jacket, matching the colour of the beautiful shop front.’

Words by Līga Valko
Photos courtesy of Siobhan Ferguson



Siobhan Ferguson
[instagram.com/siobhaise](https://www.instagram.com/siobhaise)
Number of followers: 174k
Siobhan Ferguson is an Irish author, photographer, and social media consultant living in West London with her family. She is a former banker and moved to London in 1999. In 2010 she left her banking job to look after her young family, and it’s then that she discovered photography. Ferguson is self-taught and began her journey by sharing pictures of London on *Instagram*. She now runs several *Instagram* accounts, each showcasing the beautiful and charming side of cities around the globe. She is the author of three guidebooks (London, New York, and Dublin) and is excited to have books on Paris, Amsterdam, and central Italy in the pipeline.



Other locations to check out:
• Never leave this neighbourhood without a visit to *La Fromagerie* for a cheese-centric dish or two. It’s housed in a stunning Georgian building complete with lush green velvet banquettes and a marble-top bar.
• The *Noble Rot* wine bar and restaurant is an equally attractive dining option.
• The *Fabrique* Swedish bakery is famed for its cardamon and cinnamon buns.



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08	B	THE THREE MUSKETEERS	
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12	B	ROMEO AND JULIET	
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Style by Ieva Čečina
Publicity photos and by iStock

For a cosy winter

When heading on a winter holiday, bring along only what's comfortable enough for winter sports or cosy enough to keep you warm on those long, laidback evenings when you can forget about hectic everyday life.



A pair of *Tsaikka* cups for mulled wine, *littala*, EUR 49.90

FOR BOTH



Scented *Baltic Amber* candle, *Voluspa*, USD 30

Unisex cross-country skis, *Rossignol*, EUR 199.99



Wool hat, *Marc O'Polo*, EUR 44.95

Red wool sweater, *Hugo Boss*, EUR 139.95



Sporty winter boots, *Rossignol*, EUR 150

Warm scarf, *Marni*, *matchesfashion.com*, EUR 330



FOR HER



Hat with fur pom-pom, *Max Mara*, EUR 125



Water-resistant down jacket, *Marc O'Polo*, EUR 379.95

Down jacket, *Hugo Boss*, EUR 449



Cashmere trousers, *Cos*, EUR 175

FOR HIM



Patterned sweater, *Max Mara*, EUR 305



Cashmere scarf, *Cos*, EUR 79



Knit dress, *Hugo Boss*, EUR 229



Warm shearling boots, *Bogner*, *matchesfashion.com*, EUR 549

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The sky's the limit

A new viewing platform has landed on the glaciers of the Italian Alps and is designed to take your breath away.

Words by Olga Dolina
Publicity photo

Photo by Alex Fila

Overlooking a gripping panorama of the Austrian mountains, the large new observation deck called Ötzi Peak 3251m is located on the Schnals Valley Glacier in Italian South Tyrol. The imposing structure made of undulating weathering steel was created by the team at *noa* network of architecture*, which is known for its interdisciplinary and context-aware landscape and alpine projects.

The name of the platform pays homage to Ötzi, the iceman mummy discovered nearly 30 years ago in the Ötztal Alps, the area that unfolds right in front of visitors' eyes. At first glance, it may seem that this lonesome, exposed structure stands on top of the ridge all on its own – isolated and challenging to reach. But it actually neighbours a mountain station and the *Hotel Grawand*, which is one of the highest hotels in Europe. Opened this August, Ötzi Peak 3251m attracts hotel guests, hikers, and skiers for an ultimate altitude experience and an encounter with pure, rugged nature.

The flight of stairs leading to the platform rests on the rocky ground at only a few necessary points, thus creating a feeling of levitation and detachment. The 80-square-metre platform is made of *Corten* steel, which

is both a durable and aesthetically gripping material. The texture matches the rough landscape all around, and, depending on weather conditions, its appearance changes, as if reminding us of the ever-shifting shape of the glacier.

The round platform sits on slender crossbeams and is encircled by ribbed vertical steel slats. A darkened steel tunnel leads to a special zone with a transparent glass balustrade that pokes out over the edge, giving visitors an adrenaline rush and a feeling of walking on air. At Ötzi Peak 3251m, enclosed views alternate with wide-open perspectives, and the landscape-meets-architecture effect is intensified as visitors move around the deck to discover new, uninterrupted alpine vistas.

The new structure also incorporates an existing summit cross marking the top of the mountain. The tradition of erecting such signs can be traced back to the 4th century CE. Usually made of wood or iron, they served as a tool to mark out territory during religious crusades but also as trail markers for pilgrims and later for travellers and alpinists. The area along the border between Italy and Austria is rich with such monuments, and Ötzi Peak is no exception.

THE TREASURES OF ITALIAN HISTORY

BOSCA



Since 1831 **Bosca** secrets are being guarded in the *Cattedrali Sotterranee* wine cellars, that stretch under the Canelli town in Italy and are inscribed on UNESCO cultural heritage list.

ALCOHOL CONSUMPTION IS HARMFUL TO ONE'S HEALTH.
THE SALE, SUPPLY AND PROCUREMENT OF ALCOHOLIC
BEVERAGES TO MINORS ARE AGAINST THE LAW.

Self branding

Powerful and visible personal branding is more important than ever

Words by Koen Verhelst
Publicity photo

You might not realise it, but you have a personal brand. 'It's not just for people who want to "sell" themselves,' says independent communications architect Ilze Rassa. 'We all have a personal brand, whether it's conscious or unconscious. Your values, skills, education, personality, goals, and visual appearance all contribute to your brand.' In an increasingly competitive job market, such a brand can give you an advantage when you apply for a long-term job, short assignment, or project.

Two examples of people who have carefully thought about their brands are teenage climate activist Greta Thunberg from Sweden and Australian entrepreneur Naomi Simson. 'Greta has become so famous, creating a brand based on her values and mission by making nearly everything else secondary to that. The fact that she's now often referred to only by first name, says a lot,' explains Rassa. 'And Simson has done a great job with connecting her business experience to her recognisability. She always dresses in red, and her companies often have the colour in their name.'

Even if we might not realise it, we all build a personal brand for ourselves, starting with our actions towards our family, friends, and co-workers. This is because personal branding is not limited to our online persona. 'You might not know your personal brand exists or not know how to polish it the way you would like, but you still have one. In the end, it all boils down to the reputation you build up among the people who know you,' says Rassa.

That said, personal branding has become a hotter topic since social media made it possible for greater numbers of people to present themselves to the outside world independently. Imagine, for example, you were a scientist in

the 1990s. The only way to promote your research and build a reputation back then would have been through appearances in scientific media. Not so many professionals had access to that kind of exposure.

The continuous evolution of social media has also led to the reverse effect of companies using social media to build a personal image. *airBaltic*, for instance, encourages its employees to showcase their work life on their own social channels. Followers of pilots get behind-the-scenes snapshots from the flight deck and can tag along when they spend their downtime in breathtaking locations such as Iceland before returning back to base in Riga. Thus crew members act as important ambassadors not only when you're on board an *airBaltic* flight, but also later when you're daydreaming about that lovely holiday in the Baltics.

Branding, in other words, is a tool to shape how the world sees you. With the outcome, ideally, being that your reputation improves. Rassa advises individual and corporate customers on how to build and fine-tune their brands. But getting to grips with your brand and then taking steps to make it work for you is not a short task.

'You can break it down into five smaller steps,' explains Rassa. 'First off, list all your professional and personal achievements and think carefully about how you've developed over the years.' It can be a good idea at this stage to send out a questionnaire to your friends on how they see you. 'Second, you need to be your authentic self. If you're a Batman-type, you can't pretend to be Superman. The next step is to develop content,' continues Rassa. Think anything from writing to photography. The final two steps are networking actively and keeping up your visibility with your target audience.



Ilze Rassa is an independent communications architect who has more than twenty years of experience in corporate communications in the Latvian corporate world. She also advised the former president of Latvia Valdis Zatlers (2007–2011) on communications. After switching to self-employment in 2018, she has been advising private and corporate clients on how to implement personal branding in their lives, careers, and social media. When designing her own brand, she opted to present herself as a 'communications architect', turning a figurative blueprint for communication strategies into a stable and well-designed personal brand for any client.

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airBaltic

Words by Ilze Pole
Publicity photo

Being well

It's not about the weather. As grey as it now is at this latitude, November could be the right time to spend a quiet weekend away, lost in Latvia's countryside, gazing at the many different shades of neutral from the windows of a cosy spa. And feeling filled with rejuvenating energy or, quite the opposite, letting go of it all.

Latvia has become a well-known spa destination in recent years. While most guests to the country remain in Riga and never see the more distant parts of Latvia, it's worth planning a visit to a hotel or spa centre outside the capital, many of which are located in elegantly restored rural manor houses or former aristocratic summer homes. Latvia has plenty of everything, from skilled craftsmen and distinct local traditions to an abundance of natural resources that get put to use in spa treatments.

For example, take the sauna, which for Latvians was and still is a sacred place. Here, it's called a *pirts*, which is in fact a very different concept. The pirts tradition has always been accompanied by many meaningful rituals, such as keeping the path that leads to the pirts tidy, pouring water on the hot stones, not allowing anyone to whistle in the pirts for fear of attracting the devil, and gently beating oneself and/or others with a whisk made of soft birch branches or oak leaves, whose aromatic oils fill the pirts with a pleasant fragrance. All of this is aimed at fully cleansing the body and the soul (Mazmežotne Manor Spa, Rūmene Manor, Meža Spa).

Some spas work with well-known cosmetic brands, while others prefer to use the gifts of the local natural environment. At Liepupe Manor, specially trained practitioners prepare the materials right before a spa treatment. Latvia has an abundance of blue clay, and the microelements within it are important to rejuvenating the skin; it also works well in a peeling treatment. Silene Resort & Spa obtains its blue clay from adjacent Sila Lake and uses it in various cleansing treatments.

Another valuable natural resource in Latvia is medicinal mud, which forms in bogs over long periods of time. The mud is rich in various minerals, organic compounds, and beneficial microorganisms and has a wide range of medicinal uses. Such treatments are mostly available at spa centres in and near Jūrmala, which is where the mud is sourced (Jaunķemeri Resort and Rehabilitation Centre).

And you never know, November might even surprise you with the season's first snow, providing a clean, fresh coat of white over everything you see. Even if it just lasts a few moments.



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FOR A WEEKEND GETAWAY

Silene Resort & Spa

Located in the far southeastern corner of Latvia, a three-hour drive from Riga, Silene Resort & Spa uses natural plants and materials from Silene Nature Park in its spa treatments. For example, wildflowers and herbs are picked from the surrounding bogs and meadows and then dried so that they preserve their healing properties. The spa also obtains medicinal clay from Sila Lake. Being so close to nature is one of the biggest advantages that Silene offers.
silene.lv

Hotel Villa Santa

At the turn of the 20th century, Russian aristocrats built a series of summer villas near the Latvian town of Cēsis. At the end of the First World War, however, the buildings were transformed into medical facilities and remained so for decades to come. The current owners restored and reconstructed the property, preserving the original size and look of the two smaller villas and establishing a tasteful hotel and spa.
villasanta.lv

Annas Hotel

Located in a picturesque area not far from Sigulda and Cēsis, *Annas Hotel* is a wonderful example of how a manor house dating to the mid-18th century can be brought back to life by carefully renovating the space and adapting it to the needs of a hotel, spa, and restaurant that has for several years been listed as one of the best in Latvia.
annashotel.com

Words by Viesturs Kundziņš
Publicity photos

Made in Latvia

As every November, we celebrate the Independence Day of Latvia and look at some cool and innovative gadgets made in our airline's home country.



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like – and can serve as a night light in a child's room, a decorative sign for a business, and much more.
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piku.lv



JZ MICROPHONES VINTAGE 47

In perfect tune

Latvia is a nation that loves music. The 30,000 participants of the Latvian Song and Dance Festival are a standing testament to that. So it's no wonder that Latvia is also represented in the music industry at its finest. Take *JZ Microphones* as an example – the company makes top-of-the-class microphones for quality sound recording, such as the *Vintage 47* model.
EUR 1299 | jzmics.com

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Pro gaming is way different from just chilling on the sofa with a game console. If you want the best results in video games, you need the best tool to deliver speed, accuracy, and ergonomics. This gaming keyboard features 26 keys and a five-way thumbstick right at your fingertips. It's 3D-printed to your palm size, features fully customisable key assignments, and comes in 12 different colour options.
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azeron.eu



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From EUR 59.99
velosock.com

Ground zero

Waste from food and packaging puts enormous pressure on the environment. Several restaurants are trying to reverse the trend – by producing no waste at all.



A new breed of restaurant does not set itself apart in terms cuisine, but instead by something it does not produce: waste. Steel straws, sugar in jars instead of paper packets, and no trash cans. These zero-waste restaurants are tapping into a growing group of conscious consumers and travellers who prefer to leave a ‘footprint’ on the environment that is as small as possible. Food and packaging waste is a global problem, with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization calculating that 30 percent goes to waste at some point in the chain from field to fork. This sums up to about eight percent of the world’s greenhouse gas emissions annually. To make matters worse, a lot of packaging material ends up in landfills and is not properly recycled.

A handful of restaurants are doing all they can to produce no waste on their premises while at the same time not sacrificing the quality of their food. In fact, the menus of zero-waste restaurants are generally full of high-quality ingredients that are regionally grown or produced: everything from potatoes and tomatoes to oysters and ice cream. Two of our picks even brew their own beer.

They prefer to leave a ‘footprint’ on the environment that is as small as possible

Words by
Koen Verhelst
Publicity photo

ZERO-WASTE RESTAURANTS WORTH A DETOUR

Freia in Berlin

The tables are made of recycled wood, and the lampshades are actually compressed fungi. Animal products are kept far from the kitchen, and the menu features homemade pasta and seasonal vegetables, including pumpkin. Any food that is left over is composted in a machine that sits in the corner of the restaurant. The compost then returns to the farms where the chefs buy the ingredients for the meals. It’s a circular economy right onto your plate.

Torstraße 180; freia.de

Nolla in Helsinki

Up north in Finland, Nolla has thought of everything. The ingredients for its dishes are sourced seasonally and as close to Helsinki as possible, and even the staff’s uniforms are sustainable. Just like its Berlin counterpart, any food waste is composted and given back to the farmers – although you can also opt to bring some home for your own vegetable garden or the basil and coriander growing in pots on your windowsill. Along with oysters, roasted cabbage, and corn ice cream, Nolla also offers beer and wine made in-house that pairs well with all of the dishes.

Fredrikinkatu 22; restaurantnolla.com

Silo in London

How many restaurants can say they have their own flour mill? Silo is one of them. The mill is used to ground wheat like it was for centuries in order to avoid over-processing. That philosophy informs all of the decisions at Silo. The furniture has been upcycled, and the plates are made from old plastic bags. Silo refuses to ‘simply’ recycle, because upcycling actually makes a better product out of the previous material. On the menu you’ll find unusual pairings such as smoked mackerel with sea buckthorn or charred carrots with cheddar. Don’t forget to order a beer from the on-site brewery. Unit 7, Queen’s Yard (Hackney Wick); silolondon.com

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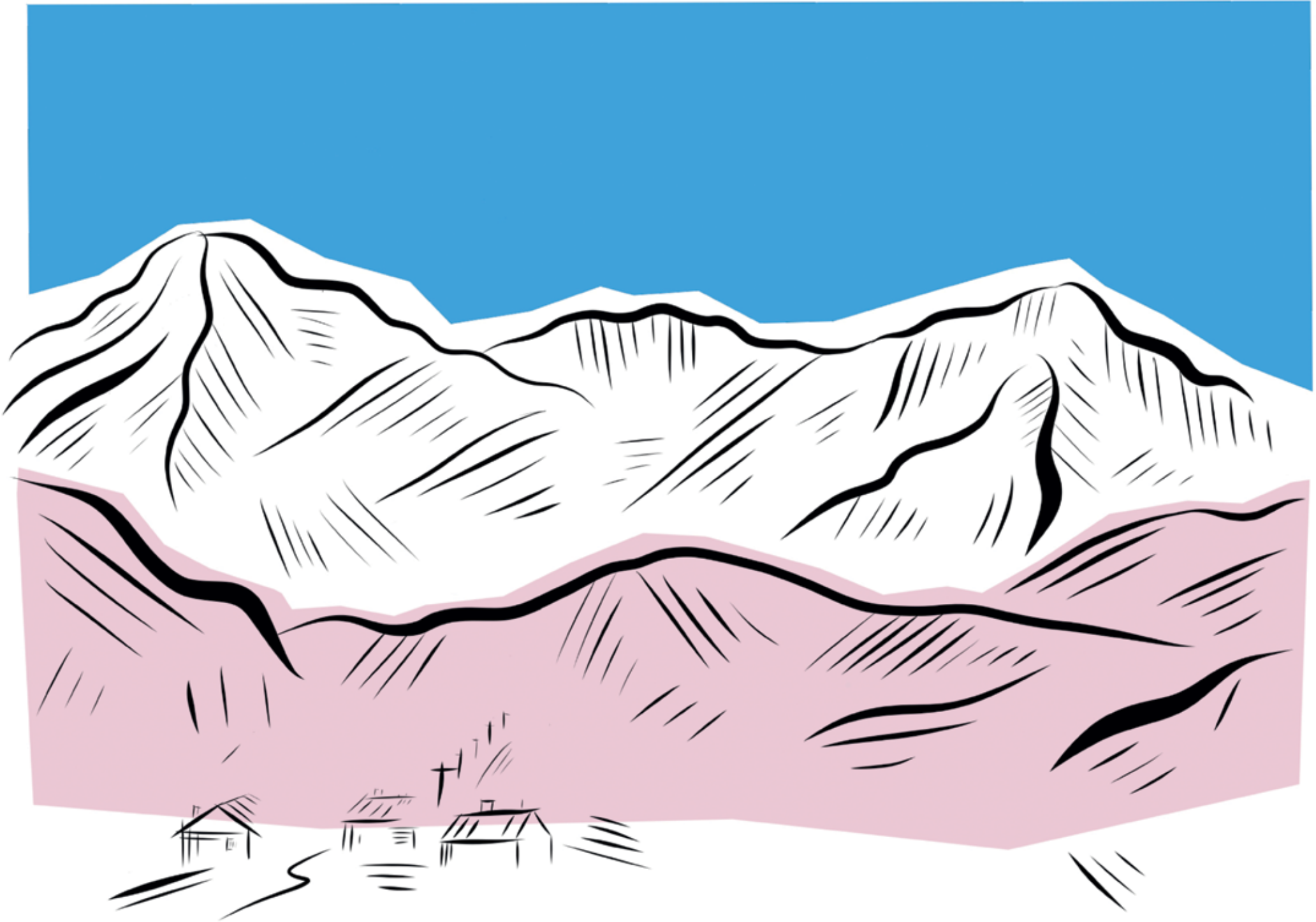
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Words by Flip Byrnes
Photos courtesy of Stuben am Arlberg Tourism Office,
TVB St. Anton am Arlberg, Lech Zürs Tourismus,
Saint Gervais Le Blog
Illustration by Agnese Taurina



IN THE CRADLE OF SKIING

One by one, Flip Byrnes is seduced by the five Arlberg siblings and other Alpine delights on a snowy pilgrimage back to the origins of skiing.

All is quiet in little Stuben, snuggled down a curling ribbon of road from St. Anton. Snowflakes fall like dinner plates, and wandering around feels like strolling through a snow globe, the old buildings sporting charming high-brimmed bonnets trimmed in white frost and cosy open fireplaces inviting travellers in – as they have for centuries in this last *Stube* (or ‘lounge room’) before the high pass crossing into the Arlberg.

YOU PROBABLY HAVEN’T HEARD OF STUBEN, ALTHOUGH THE ARLBERG AREA OF AUSTRIA IS FAMED. BUT THE FIFTH LARGEST INTERCONNECTED RESORT IN THE WORLD, with 305 kilometres of downhill runs, 200 kilometres of freeride terrain, and 88 lifts and cable cars is large enough to keep secrets, such as this one.

Despite its small size, Stuben holds a deep snowdrift of a drawcard. Leaving my companions to feast on dessert in the *Mondscheins Alte Gaststube*, the pull is a nondescript house. Hannes Schneider lived here, a farmer’s son who made skis from barrel planks (much to local derision) and schussed his way over to St. Anton, having the last laugh. He invented the Arlberg Technique, which is still today the blueprint for ski schools worldwide, from the United States to Japan and New Zealand. But it all began here.

As a former snow instructor, this site is as significant to me as the Vatican is to Catholics – if the Arlberg is considered the cradle of skiing, then Stuben is the point of conception. It may be the *Glühwein* talking, but this is a quasi-religious experience. I pray for powder.

‘Stuben is special,’ explains Gebhard Pichler, the tourism director of Stuben. ‘It’s its own little universe.’ This is true. We’ve just been dining on the town’s specialties, such as *Schlutzkrapsen* (little ravioli with burnt butter) and fried corn cakes, which won’t be found even in the next village. It’s clear this town has traditions that die hard – our *Mondscheins* waiters wear velvet knickerbockers with style like only Tyrolean mountain men can.

This one of the five Arlberg villages (the others are St. Anton, Lech, St. Christoph, and Zürs) can be likened to a fluttering cupid – small but with a piercing arrow. And now it’s connected to the rest of the Arlberg by the new 45-million-euro Flexenbahn gondola. However, with 32 guest houses, one grocery store, one ATM, eight restaurants, and three ski schools (one consisting of only one person), Stuben retains a top-heavy ratio many find appealing: little village, big mountains.



Stuben in all its minute glory – arriving by car is like following a piece of string to a well-hidden nest.

By 11 a.m. we haven't seen a soul. This is the ski equivalent of the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow

Many families have opposites, and nothing could be a bigger contrast to Stuben than its big brother St. Anton. It's the Las Vegas of the siblings, all jazz hands and can-can kicking, with the most challenging runs, epic off-piste a stone's throw from groomed slopes, and legendary bars. While Austria exported ski culture to the world, nowhere else has managed to capture the atmosphere of places like St. Anton.

A new initiative introduced by the town is the Ladies First feel-good programme, which this season will run from January 9 to 30 and offer free drinks, mega discounts, and wellness activities. There are even women-only courses, as I discover on my day of Geli-skiing.

Geli-skiing? Like heli-skiing (which you'll find in neighbouring Lech)? No, this is even more fun and adventurous, because ski guide Geli Häusl is not just a local but also a member of *Nordica's* test team developing women-specific skis, the founder of numerous freeride camps, and, on this day, my fearless leader.

We won't be riding the pistes. Geli explains that there are 200 kilometres of marked powder runs; orange diamond signs adjacent to groomed runs indicate areas that are not maintained but are safety controlled. So, if you venture 30 metres to the right or left of a diamond sign, follow the markers and know you are (relatively) safe.

And the Stuben Snow Gods have heard me – after two days of storms, it's a powder day under a yawning blue sky. Having a guide with local knowledge is priceless, and Geli leads me down Piste 57 off the Flexenbahn, down No.1 and No. 24, and by 11 a.m. we haven't seen a soul. This is the ski equivalent of the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow.

BUT WHAT OF THE SNOW-WHITE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM? ESPECIALLY IN TOWNS SUCH AS ST. ANTON, WHICH ARE FAMED FOR APRÈS SKI, HOW WILL THIS YEAR LOOK? With Covid-19, sadly, this year the bars will have table service only. The good news, however, is that the Alps have had months to prepare and templates to follow in the way ski areas in Chile, New Zealand, and Australia were run in the southern winter.

Alongside Alpbach in the Tyrol, St. Anton am Arlberg has also been serving as a prototype for the Covid-19 – Risk Management Winter Tourism project, which has resulted in a risk assessment and management model. It includes the personal responsibilities we're now all familiar with: social



The snowy Arlberg trails are perfect for hiking, or hit the almost 40 km of cross-country ski trails.

distancing, masks, frequent hand washing, no hand shaking, contactless payments. But there are additional elements, such as managing social distancing on ski buses and at bus stops, a wastewater monitoring system as part of a Covid-19 early warning system, and a C19 Service Desk with dedicated personnel. On the slopes, you'll be in what anyone would consider protective clothing (goggles and gloves, tick). And no one will complain when fellow passengers aren't breathing down your neck in gondolas or maintain a ski-tip-to-ski-tail distance in lift queues. Small #covidwins.

'We are ready,' says Wilma Himmelfreundpointner of Tourism St. Anton am Arlberg. 'We're very well prepared for the upcoming winter season with many precautions taken. We can't wait to welcome guests for the season starting on December 4 in our village and ski areas. The experience of being in the mountains and nature will still be excellent.'

Speaking of that outdoor experience, Covid-19 has thrown up new travel trends that ski holidays encapsulate: spending quality time with loved ones, appreciation for clean air and nature, and activities that nourish the soul. For these reasons, areas like Lech, the most discreet and sophisticated of the Arlberg quintet, are experiencing a surge.

Down in Lech itself, as the alpenglow fades, little liquid rainbows run from shop lights and spill onto the snow-slick streets. But at this hour, head above Lech to Tannegg, to what looks like a UFO crashed



Freeriders let loose in St. Anton. The Arlberg has 200 km of off-piste slopes as well as 305 km of groomed areas.



Some of the lifts in the region look more like works of art than ski machinery, such as the new Schindlergratbahn added last winter.

into a hillside. In reality, it's Skyspace Lech, an art installation by James Turrell.

Turrell uses light as a material in the way other artists employ paint. He doesn't want us to see light but experience it, saying, 'Often we look up at the sky and think it's so far away, but my skyspaces bring the sky down to the ceiling of the room you're in.' There are now 100 skyspaces worldwide where chambers open to the heavens through an aperture in the ceiling, including at a children's hospital in Zurich, where children can be rolled in on beds for family sky-watching.

The latter is as heart-warming as the Tannegg version is butt-chilling (these are the Alps, after all). But this is mid-slope ski-in art appreciation at its best. Plus, it's free.

ANOTHER SPOT THAT'S MORE THAN IT SEEMS IS ST. CHRISTOPH, JUST OVER THE PASS FROM STUBEN. Like Stuben, St. Christoph encapsulates the multi-layered Arlberg in a snowflake – there's much more here than meets the eye. Driving in, it's a blink-and-you'll-miss-it kind of village, at first glance just a cluster of small hotels, best at sunset when the sinking rays make the fanged shark-tooth mountains blush and the shadows soften their frozen edges.

Dig a little deeper, and what's that building next to the carpark? That's the academy of the Austrian Ski Federation (ÖSV), only the world's most prestigious ski instructor training school. At the low-beamed *Hospiz Alm* restaurant, head-ducking, ski boot-



The highest peak in the area is the Valluga. At 2811 metres, it's an excellent pursuit for those who like a long ski run.

Photo by Bernadette Otter



Austria's first ski lift began running in Zürs in 1936, and, while modern technology has since taken over, vistas like this directly transport you to the 1800s.

Photo by Bernadette Otter

St. Christoph's personality is akin to a white-skirted debutante

clomping patrons après above a seven-million-euro wine cellar. And the *Hospiz Arlberg Hotel* is steeped in history. Once a medieval refuge for pass crossers, in January 1901 Hannes Schneider schussed here with friends and, over (one assumes) a stein or two, founded the Ski Club Arlberg, which not only invented ski courses but now boasts 9000 members from 60 countries.

And the innovation hasn't paused – the *Hospiz Arlberg Hotel* is part of the *Arlberg1800 Resort*, a radical expansion including an underground tunnel joining a new 200-seat state-of-the-art concert hall, an art studio for guests, and luxury Skyfall Chalets.

But some things haven't changed since Schneider's day. The backdrop for skiing is jaw-dropping, with the area ringed by a garland of frozen summits and dramatic, meringue-shaped peaks. St. Christoph's personality is akin to a white-skirted debutante. There's a lot going on under that snowy tulle, and when it comes to world-class skiing, she's a total bombshell.

She can also be a bit vicious. On this particular day, we should be enjoying those glorious views but are instead snowshoeing in waist-deep drifts in weather that can only be described as spiteful. The wind howls like a chorus of wailing women and whips and claws at our ski clothes with such unleashed fury that even the gondolas are huddled in their stations, refusing to come out. Visibility ebbs, and words are ripped and torn away like sound bubbles, offering a mere taste of what travellers experienced when attempting to cross



Photo by Florian Holzherr

The lights inside the Skyspace Lech sensing room are visible at sunrise and sunset, perfectly framing the sky through the cupola.



Photo by Florian Holzherr

For a guided tour with a James Turrell expert, tickets can be booked online for EUR 15 per person at skyspace-lech.com.

the Passhöhe above in centuries past. Some made it. Many didn't.

This is why the historic *Hospiz* (meaning 'hospice', from the Latin word *hospitium*, meaning 'hospitality' or 'inn') exists. Since the shepherd Heinrich Findelkind, who had been orphaned, laid its foundation in 1586, it's been intended as a refuge for wanderers during inclement weather. Findelkind also founded the world's oldest charitable association, the Brotherhood of St. Christoph. The current owners of *Hospiz*, the Werner family, preserve the original intention of the former inn. It's not spoken of very loudly, but pilgrims on the Camino caught in storms, or others in trouble, have gladly found their way to their open door.

So this isn't just a hotel but the headquarters of The Brotherhood, which has 20,000 members worldwide focused on helping multi-child families in difficult circumstances. Look closely while loitering in the lobby and you'll see people from staff to locals and dignitaries proudly sporting the golden badge with three red crosses, the Brotherhood shield.

Hmm, stomping back to the hotel, I wonder if I'm their ideal customer. A wanderer caught out in the elements? Tick. In need of sustenance? Double tick. Settling in post-adventure, I'm tucked in under a fur rug by a roaring fire and offered a deep glass of Bordeaux. If this is modern-day salvation, I'll take it.

One, two, there, four... ahem, which fifth area are we missing? Ah, sorry Zürs, is that you waving with a white, fur-lined glove? Lech is actually a

twin – and kind enough to share its ski area with the smaller neighbouring village of Zürs. (Like many twins, they are often referred to as a single entity, Lech Zürs). Lech isn't prettier or sportier than Zürs, but it does tend to get in the social pages due to its high-powered friends. The Jordanian royal family, the Dutch royal family, and Monaco's Princess Caroline holiday there, and it was also a favourite of Princess Diana. Some of that celebrity leaks over to quieter Zürs for even more discreet glamour, and, being located slightly higher than Lech, Zürs has the added advantage of receiving a huge ten metres of snow annually. It's the mysterious tsarina of the snow world.

Each one of the Arlberg areas will steal your heart, guaranteed. Until you meet the next one. It's not just the snow, but the history, the personalities, and also the gastronomy that await to pull you back again and again, to rock the cradle where skiing first began.

But zoom out with an eagle's eye. Further, out of Austria. And further yet, across the entire Alps, including countries such as France, Switzerland, and Germany. Austria isn't the only area having fun in the Alps. Multiple countries have their own parties going on. In fact, there's a veritable blizzard of options within these 298,128 square kilometres, and sometimes the best places are the ones that are overlooked, such as Saint-Gervais Mont-Blanc.

WHERE? EXACTLY. WEDGED BETWEEN THE BRIGHT LIGHTS OF CHAMONIX AND THE



Our bilingual instructor Danny Dakin from the Ecole du Ski Français has the local's knowledge to show us the secret spots tucked in these mountains.

Saint-Gervais managed to evade the horrific concrete development of the 1970s

CHI-CHI FUR COATS OF RITZY MEGÈVE, SAINT-GERVAIS MONT-BLANC GOES UNDER THE RADAR. This is where the French go to ski.

And this isn't just any ski area, but part of the Evasion Mont-Blanc ski area, the third largest in France with a stupendous 445 kilometres of terrain and 107 lifts. That's enough to keep one busy, but don't miss dropping down to Les Contamines or Saint-Nicolas de Vérocé with their ancient churches, pause for a champagne in Megève, or join climbers on their way to attempt Mont Blanc on the historic Mont Blanc tramway.

Backing directly onto the slope of western Europe's highest mountain, Saint-Gervais is the chocolate-box type of village that managed to evade the horrific concrete development of the 1970s. From the boulangerie where they remember your order, to the locals who recall the spa town's origins, this is the Haute Savoie, with soul.

And those spa waters are special, confirmed by *L'Oréal*, which has opened Les Thermes Saint-Gervais Mont-Blanc, the Alps' largest thermal bath area. The mineral-rich water emerges from the heart of Mont Blanc at 34 degrees Celsius, having travelled through the earth for 6500 years before reaching the baths. Hop between steam baths,

bubble beds, hydromassage alcoves, massage jets, open-roof bathrooms, and the yoga studio.

And that's not it. This is France, after all, so it's sinful not to indulge in the sublime local produce, from Abondance cheeses to *coeur de boeuf* tomatoes from the Thursday market. Head to *Michelin*-starred *Le Sérac* by the church for fine fare, on-slope *La Folie Douce* for stellar views, and *Restaurant L'Eterle* for drool-worthy three-cheese wood-fired pizza (chèvre, reblochon, and raclette). Ah, Saint-Gervais, *je'taime*.

JUST NEXT DOOR, SWITZERLAND BECKONS WITH POINTY-FINGER MOUNTAIN TOPS. SEVENTY PERCENT OF THE AREA IS PEAKS, MANY OF THEM OVER 4000 METRES HIGH. And the queen of Switzerland? Zermatt, one of the highest ski areas in the Alps.

This is a mountaineering mecca, but pause to read the heart-breaking tombstones in the historical Mountaineers' Cemetery. While couples in fur coats and skiers in high-tech ski gear stride past, you wouldn't be the first to shed a tear for those with lofty ambitions who never made it home. It may make you think twice about climbing that nearby iconic peak, the Matterhorn. But if a mere mortal is content to stay slopeside, there's nowhere in the Alps like Zermatt.

The town's car-free status makes this village the quintessential Alpine refuge, constantly under the gaze of Europe's most dramatic mountains. Above, at 3883 metres between Zermatt and Breuil-Cervinia, lies the Matterhorn ski paradise. There's an



You may have glimpsed Saint-Gervais in summer amongst a blur of Lycra on the Tour de France route, but it has a long history as a French winter destination.



Small groups of hamlets, long empty stretches, rocky peaks, and icy cascades all form the backdrop of one of France's most beautiful skiing areas.



When surrounding resorts become crowded, Saint-Gervais Mont-Blanc always has room to play.



ATTENTION! THIS IS AN ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGE. ALCOHOL MAY CAUSE DAMAGE TO YOUR HEALTH.



Ski guide and St. Anton-born **Angelika (Geli) Häusl** has mountains in her blood. As a professional athlete, she’s had podium finishes in freeriding, has been featured in ski movies, has undertaken expeditions from Tibet to Argentina, married fellow Freeride World Tour athlete Stefan Häusl, is raising their daughter Jana, and coaches women’s-only freeride camps.

Tell us about your perfect day in Arlberg.

My perfect Arlberg day starts with breakfast at the *Hotel/ Café Anton* next to the Galzig Gondola (Galzigbahn), preferably when it’s snowing heavily outside! While eating, I check the weather and avalanche report so I know where it will be safe to ski off piste for that day, and then I take the gondola up to start skiing powder from top to bottom.

If the visibility is bad, I stay in the trees to get more contrast. If the sun comes out, the chutes on Schindler are the place to be. Lunch will be a short lunch break at the *Griabli* mountain restaurant (which has great food) on the mountain just above St. Anton am Arlberg. Then I’ll switch over to Rendl and ski there until my legs are finished.

A nice glass of wine and meeting friends at the *Galzig Bistro* will top off my ski day before enjoying dinner at one of the great restaurants in the village of St. Anton am Arlberg.

What are some of the best parts of the Arlberg that visitors accidentally overlook?

All the quiet, untouched areas of nature. If you can ski well enough to go off piste, take a guide and lose the crowds. If your skiing ability still isn’t up to such adventures, try cross-country skiing in the

Verwall Valley or snowshoeing in the forest around St. Anton. But also don’t miss out on an exciting toboggan run down from Gampen. That’s so much fun!

Eating and drinking is big here. Where do we go?

My favourite restaurants in the village are *Skiing Buddha* located in the Arlrock next to the train station for great Asian food and good value. At *Galzig Bistro*, the boss himself cooks using regional products. *Maximilian* by the church has delicious traditional food. And *Harry’s Burger & Grill* has the best burgers. For bars, *Café-Bar Anton* next to the Galzig Gondola is stylish with good music (no ‘hum da da’ music!). I also love *Underground on the Piste* for the atmosphere and live music. And *Bobo’s Bar and Restaurant* – I like Mexican food, and it’s a nice spot for some drinks at night.

What do you do when not ski guiding?

In my downtime, I love to visit the *Arlflow* yoga room – it feels so good to stretch out my skiing legs. I also enjoy visiting some of the great spas we have in St. Anton am Arlberg. For example, the *Arlberg WellCom* wellness centre offers everything you need. But I also like the more private spa areas in some of the hotels, such as the ones at *Schwarzer Adler*, *Hotel zur Pfeffermühle*, and the *Gletscherblick* hotel.

impressive 360 kilometres of pistes (counting the linked resorts of Cervinia and Valtournenche in Italy), but most importantly, at this altitude there’s also early and late-season snow cover. All linked with Swiss precision.

After skiing, wander the narrow lanes behind the main street and gaze at the eye-pleasing jumble of blackened, weathered, wobbly-looking chalets. But the buzz isn’t reserved just for winter. Zermatt is equally busy in summer, when you can ski on the glacier if you need to scratch that ski itch between seasons.

However, we’re not all glacier skiers excited by endless pistes and extreme James Bond-like slopes. Some of us are at the beginning of the journey, or rather, in *charge* of people at the beginning of their journey. Hello, parents, I mean you.

Just like in a fairy story, once upon a time, a genius parent invented the *Familotels*. They’re a series of magic lands that make ski holidays easy. Because, let’s be honest, with all the equipment, nap times, cold, and lost-glove logistics, skiing with small children is more strategic operation than holiday.

To that end, the *Allgäuer Berghof* (naturally, a *Familotel*) 90 minutes from Munich is a destination within a ski area that’s parked mid-slope in the GO Ofterschwang ski resort. It’s immediately obvious we’re in a family utopia – the foyer is littered with stylish antique rocking horses, next to the reception is a two-storey slide whizzing kids to the playroom below while we check in.... and did I mention the waterslide and indoor pool complex? Sold.

But this is not a daycare centre on ice. Our apartment, all uber-stylish Scandi-cool blonde wood, includes mini bathrobes and sleek, inbuilt change tables complete with wipes. And as I prowls the hotel, I notice there’s no plastic – all of the toys are made of wood. The fine line between adult taste – including an adults-only room with white leather hammocks – and child-appropriate twists is expertly balanced.

As for skiing, we’re ruined forever. The ski-in, ski-out location means we saunter down to the locker room in our thermals (or nappy, as the case may be), and if kids can’t make the 50 metres to the hotel’s ski school (where they warm up with disco dancing), there are sleds to pull our future skiers, Roman demigod style, and a fleet of 4WD *Thule* snow prams raring to go by the door.

With lessons for two hours in the morning, parents get to ski, too. Together. But more often than not, we sneak around the mountain, spying on our children, hearts bursting with pride to see our little ones beginning their snow addiction.

Because it is an addiction. A true love that never leaves. Wherever you decide to go, whatever your yen, a wintery love affair waits. Play the field, fill up your dance card, and luckily the Alps are large enough to keep you heading gloriously downhill for a lifetime.

USEFUL ADDRESSES

WHERE TO STAY

Arlberg1800 Resort
Tyrolean dress for staff, Clefs d’Or concierges, and significant history make this hotel, tucked away in quaint St. Christoph, the choice for those in the know. Located on the site of a medieval refuge and the original *Arlberg Hospiz Hotel*, the traditional exterior will shock your socks off because it now includes a futuristic concert hall, an artist’s studio, a music studio, and luxurious chalets connected by tunnel. St. Christoph 1, St. Anton am Arlberg arlberg1800resort.at

Arlberghaus Hotel

Within a ski pole’s poke of the Zürs cable car, this cosy family-run hotel has a bull’s-eye location and is as Austrian as lederhosen. The personal, mountain-style hospitality from the Eggler family makes this a secret winner. Zürs 126 arlberghaus.com

WHERE TO SHOP

Kamax Boots & More
This store does what it says – it offers not only ski boots but lots *more*. However, this is the place to go for ski gear, especially boots for oddly shaped feet. You’ll also find stylish streetwear for non-snow shenanigans from labels such as *G-Lab*, *Glücksstern*, *Chillaz*, *Rosemunde*, *Lieblingsstück*, and 2117. Gemeindegasse 4, St. Anton am Arlberg kamaxboots.at

Edelweiss

This isn’t just a souvenir shop. Locals shop here, too, partly because some of the products include goods made by Geschützte Werkstätten Salzburg, a business integrating people with physical and mental disabilities into employment. Other small-batch items include local foods, smartphone covers made of South Tyrolean wool, and traditional wood carvings. Warning: it’s a wallet-opener. Dorfstraße 54, St. Anton am Arlberg edelweiss.co

WHERE TO EAT

Museum Restaurant-Café
Stop right here. If there’s one place to eat in the entire Arlberg, this is it. The historic mansion located just steps from a ski run is a local institution for good reason. The home of a former German industrialist, the building is not only an architectural gem but also features, surprise, a museum. Head upstairs for ski history and downstairs for lamb so tender it falls from the bone (also don’t miss the *Kaiserschmarren*). Rudi-Matt-Weg 10, St. Anton am Arlberg museum-restaurant.at

Kaminzimmer at Kristiania Lech

Even if not staying at the swanky *Kristiania Lech*, you’ll want to dine here. This isn’t luxury as you’d expect. Instead, it’s the personification of owner Gertrud Schneider, the daughter of a famous Austrian Olympic skier. Quirky, eclectic, and stylish with curated contemporary artwork interspersed as well as personal knick-knacks. This is the spot for fondue in front of a roaring fire. Omesberg 331, Lech am Arlberg kristiania.at

DON’T MISS Hall of Fame

Ski (and history) lovers, set aside some time for this extraordinarily curated, interactive area devoted to the ski history, heroic pioneers, and glamorous celebrities of the Arlberg. If the digital ski racer machine against virtual World Cup athletes whets your appetite for more, sashay around the Run of Fame, an 85-kilometre circuit with an 18,000-metre altitude difference tracing the big-star ski tracks. skiarlberg.at

Mountain huts

The Arlberg does mountain hut restaurants better than anywhere for sheer variety. From sheepskin-covered seats at the *Grampen Hut* to the jaw-dropping panorama at *Schlegelkopf* to *Krazy Kanguruh*, which includes vegetarian and vegan fare, each restaurant proudly has a signature specialty. Some are accessible by cable car for non-skiers (such as *Rüfikopf* – don’t miss its Friday night raclette evenings). skliarlberg.at **bo**

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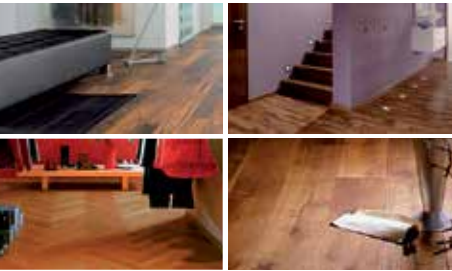
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Words by Agnese Čivle
Publicity photos and by Gatis Gierts

CONTEMPORARY THINKING

Internationally recognised Latvian architect and scenographer Didzis Jaunzems speaks with *Baltic Outlook* about implementing contemporary themes in opera houses, his experience working at one of the world's leading architecture firms, and how to fall in love with a city during a business trip.

The bright young Latvian architect Didzis Jaunzems speaks with conviction about his area of professional activity and its direction and scope. An architect by training but an interdisciplinary virtuoso at heart, he has become one of the most topical names in European opera when the scenography demands flexible, unusual, and architecturally based solutions.

Jaunzems gained experience at the world-renowned *Office for Metropolitan Architecture* (OMA) in Rotterdam, where he worked on such notable projects as the Alexis de Tocqueville Library in Caen, the MEETT exhibition and convention centre in Toulouse, the Danish Architecture Centre in Copenhagen, a Qatari national development plan, and an agglomeration development concept for Moscow.

For his contributions in Latvia, Jaunzems has twice won the annual Latvian Architecture Award as well as a Latvian Landscape Architecture Award. The pavilion/stage his design bureau, *DJA*, created for Dabas Koncertzāle (Nature's Concerthall) received the Latvian Architecture Award in 2015. It is a platform for communication between the arts and sciences on which multimedia shows are presented that place nature in the leading role.

The architectural objects created by Jaunzems embody a structural logic and orderliness, at the same time exuding artistic value. One example is the *Gaiiss* (Air) environmental object in the small Latvian town of Balvi, which is currently the world's largest known wind chime ensemble – a man-made musical instrument played by the wind. The *Uguns* (Fire) environmental object in Kārsava is similar. An identical copy of it was made in 2019 for the Annecy Paysages landscape architecture festival in the French Alps. Constructed of hundreds of pine beams stacked in the form of a bonfire, the installation impressed the festival organisers so much that this summer he was invited to take his *Wicker Pavilion* to Annecy. Its gridshell structure made of 262 wicker cones handmade by Latvian basketweavers lifted the country's tradition of basket weaving to new heights. Naturally, the international media also took note of the slightly futuristic, slightly biosphere-like installation.

While this has been, on the whole, a slow year in terms of culture, for Jaunzems it has been marked by several opera scenography projects he has carried out together with Polish stage director Krystian Lada. While 'cancelled' signs were pasted onto opera posters throughout Latvia, Poland, and Belgium, Jaunzems and Lada continued working on productions adapted to new social-distancing rules, including Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* in Basel, Vivaldi's *Bajazet* in Vienna, and others. They are currently working on five more productions to be shown in spring and summer of next year. Audiences are also eagerly awaiting their

production of *Don Giovanni*, which was prepared for the Ring Award 2020 finals and has been postponed to next year.

In early October, it was announced that Jaunzems' team beat six other teams to win the competition to develop the artistic concept for the main dance event of the 2023 Latvian Song and Dance Festival. The festival is a UNESCO-recognised cultural event and an essential part of Latvian identity. Jaunzems will be in charge of implementing the 'Eternal Engine' theme of this festival edition in scenographic terms.

The premieres of five operas produced by your team are planned for next spring and summer in a number of European cities.

Yes, next year audiences will be able to see five of our opera productions in four different countries. Krystian Lada and I are working on two operas in Switzerland (Basel and St. Gallen), one in Austria (Graz), one in Denmark (Copenhagen), and one in Germany (Cotbuss). The ones in Switzerland are classic operas, while the one in Denmark is being made for the WorldPride global festival planned for

I spent 24 hours there measuring everything, every piece of furniture, every detail

next August. As you might imagine, it's a completely new opera, made by combining arias from many other operas. It's a story about self-recognition, the conditions imposed by society, generally accepted opinions, and what happens when stereotypes are broken and a person can feel free.

Can you tell us about the scenographic aspect of this intriguing work?

We located a motel from the 1950s in Copenhagen – a real time machine of a place. I spent 24 hours there measuring everything, every piece of furniture, every detail. Because we're going to reproduce an exact copy of the motel on stage. And to conjure a feeling of deformation and being stuck, we decided to do all of the scenography in a single material – bare plywood with a very organic pattern. The pattern will symbolise nature that has been tamed and squeezed into the utilitarian forms of everyday objects. Using a single material will also give the production a sculptural, installation-like feel. Beyond the hotel's windows, nature in all its glory will emphasise the contrast with the plywood interior.

Last year, your team was involved in the Symphony of Expectation opera-concert at the Opera Ballet Vlaanderen in Antwerp, which took a critical look



Viewing terrace at Likteņdārzs (Garden of Destiny). The design won the 2012 Latvian Architecture Award.

Photoby Māris Lapins

I felt that working at another firm would have been either the equivalent or a step down. So I decided to establish something of my own

at inequality in society and whose scenography consisted of posters and scenes of protests from the past century. Quite a few of them were linked to Black Lives Matter. This performance, too, was about very visible current issues. How important is it for you that the content accompanying your scenography is relevant to the present day?

Work is much more meaningful if we decide to go beyond the boundaries of an existing libretto and use it as a tool to talk about broader issues. I see that as an added value of our work. And I, in turn, then feel a sense of mission that I'm not just standing aside but actually participating and addressing important issues with my work.

As an example, for the production of *Don Giovanni* in Graz, our team offered the idea of naming it *Don Giovanni Syndrome*. It was produced without the main role of Don Giovanni himself, instead dividing his role among three other main roles: Leporello, Masetto, and Ottavio. By excluding the womaniser Don Giovanni and approaching it instead with him as a desire that infects the minds of the other men, we open up the possibility of not romanticising violence and focusing on the responsibility of the other men towards what takes place on stage. Such an approach allows us to use opera to talk about current processes in the world, in which human lust and cravings have resulted in one continent burning and another melting, but no one taking responsibility for it.

How would you characterise opera audiences today?

In very large part, an audience depends on the opera house itself and how strong the tradition of opera is in that particular country. The more operas in a country, the more varied the audiences. For example, Germany has several dozen opera houses, and therefore each of them can afford to represent a specific niche and attract a broader range of people. The houses can experiment by hosting non-classic productions, thus also educating the public. If there's only one opera house in a country, it has a harder time educating, because to a certain extent it's forced to mainly show only the classic opera repertoire.

That was the case in Latvia when we did Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* with director Margo Zālīte. It was quite daring for the Latvian National Opera, which can't afford many experiments during a season because it needs to keep in mind the classical audience. It's a vicious circle.

At the moment, I believe the German-speaking countries – Germany, Austria, Switzerland – are at the forefront of opera culture. Opera house repertoires are to a large extent determined by their artistic directors, who move around from one opera to another from time to time. For example, as of next year, the Theater St. Gallen will have a new opera

director, Jan Henric Bogen, who has very progressive ideas and has previously worked as the artistic director at the Opera Ballet Vlaanderen in Antwerp.

At which other operas would you like to realise some of your ideas?

I like what I see at Theater Basel, which does experimental repertoire and lots of contemporary shows. We did Vivaldi's *Bajazet* at the Vienna Chamber Opera, but I'd like to do some other productions at the big Vienna State Opera as well. A couple of weeks ago we were at the big new Copenhagen Opera House for a meeting – I'd like to do something there, too. And, of course, a main goal of mine is to do the scenography at the Bregenz Festival in Austria, where the stage is built over the waters of Lake Constance.

I like working on a large scale. I really enjoyed working on *Nabucco* at the Wrocław Opera in Poland. We incorporated the building façade into the scenography and made a large-scale sculpture featuring the faces of the main soloists that reflected what was happening on stage.

Which opera house appeals to you as an architect, in terms of its architecture?

Definitely the Oslo Opera House. When I was going to school in Trondheim, I often had layovers in Oslo when returning to Riga, and I must have walked around on the roof of the Oslo Opera twenty or so times! Back then, I didn't know that one day I would also work with what goes on under that roof. The Oslo Opera House is not a simple building – in fact, it's a whole attitude towards the public. It's like an open invitation: 'Live with me, walk on me, come inside!' Returning to the question about opera audiences – architecture also influences the opera audience, not just repertoire.

Whom do you look up to? Which names on the global scene do you follow in terms of scenography?

Maybe it's because I haven't academically studied scenography, but I don't know very much about the classics. I'm inspired more by other fields, such as architecture and other forms of art. But of course, I do follow the world of British stage designer Es Devlin. I wouldn't say that I admire everything she does, but I do admire her capacity for work – the fact that a single name stands behind such global events as a U2 concert or the 2012 Summer Olympics in London. She motivates me to achieve more than I think is possible. In terms of the mood of productions, I'm inspired by Romeo Castellucci.

How are Covid-19 restrictions being dealt with regarding the scenography of future opera productions?

The restrictions differ in every country and every opera house. In some places they're aimed more at the audience, in others more at the artists

themselves. Regarding scenography, certain distances need to be maintained between certain singers, we need to adhere to a maximum number of artists on stage depending on the size of the space, and so on. If it's impossible to decrease the number of participants, as it was for our production of Monteverdi's *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in patria* in Basel, some of the singers are moved to a higher level. If we can't adhere to distance regulations between singers, we integrate some kind of barriers into the set design. In any case, all productions are done in such a way that they hopefully don't need to be cancelled or postponed due to an escalation in coronavirus cases.

I presume that knowledge of architecture comes in handy in complex scenographic solutions like that.

As an architect, I know how to do magic tricks not only verbally but also physically. I have a clear vision of how to accomplish things and a concept I can justify. The people I work with, as well as the opera houses, appreciate and value that.

Is your company also doing any traditional architecture at the moment?

Right now we're working on several exhibitions and landscape architecture projects. We don't have any classic architecture projects at the moment, but we do have several environmental objects. Soon we're going to set up the *Čiekurs* (Pinecone) pavilion in Jūrmala. It still has to be coordinated with the building authority, so we can call it architecture.

You've had experience working at OMA, one of the leading architecture firms in the world. What's the work culture and daily life like under legendary Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas?

Of everything I've learned, know, and understand about architecture, I'd say 20% of it has come from university, 20% from other places of employment, and 60% from working at *OMA*. They hire the best of the best, and they do fantastic projects. But getting hired is one thing; staying hired is a different thing... It's like an intense work camp. It's like a machine in which you can be one of the screws for a relatively short period of time, and then another screw comes to take your place, and the machine continues humming along.

According to the *OMA* system, you need to work with full dedication and at peak performance, because your abilities and capacity are constantly being reviewed. But in my case, it was different. I had worked there for two years, and after the initial period that's full of new information and knowledge, a kind of routine set in. I realised I needed to progress to the next level, but there really wasn't a next level. I felt that working at another firm would have been either the equivalent or a step down. So I decided to establish something of my own.



Wicker Pavilion at Jardins de l'Europe in Annecy.

Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* at the Latvian National Opera.

I'm trying to learn to value
my free time, planning it
strictly and not allowing it to
overlap with work

And what have you brought along to your new office from that experience?

OMA is a firm that gravitates towards the quantitative production of ideas – lots of ideas and variations are produced for every aspect of a project. Whether consciously or not, but I've brought that tendency for generating lots of different ideas along to my subsequent work. I mean, just imagine the level of conviction you must have in order to believe that the only variant you've developed is the correct one. At *DJA* (Jaunzems' architecture and design office – *Ed.*) we also create several variations for each project in order to identify the poorer and better ideas. I also thank *OMA* for my intense work culture and my principle of finishing everything I've begun.

You operate in an interdisciplinary space between scenography, architecture, and art. Do you feel privileged?

I think each of us looks at privilege as something different. Some people find their niche in designing only private homes, and for them it's a privilege to have lots of clients. My niche is this interdisciplinary space. I don't look at it as swimming between different fields; it's a niche all of its own. When people don't know whether their project is architecture, an installation, scenography, or an art object, they turn to our office.

You usually involve a big group of people in realising your projects. What's your opinion regarding the importance of a team when realising projects?

In the past, it may have been important for me to emphasise the authorship of my own ideas, but now I always try to identify all the participants in a project as objectively as possible. Every architectural or scenographic project is a team effort. Even if you created the scenography, there's always a director's impulse, a lighting technician's perfectly positioned light, or something like that that's present, too. The one-architect phenomenon is losing relevance – *OMA* is also gradually reorienting itself from one name to an office that highlights the role of all the partners.

In your opinion, what's the best destination for contemporary architecture?

If you want to see contemporary architecture, then definitely Rotterdam. The city was flattened in the Second World War, and then afterwards it became a great playground for architects. It's got a lot of contemporary architecture. It's also interesting to compare the local residents' attitude towards architecture in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. If a new building is built in Amsterdam, everyone worries about its impact on the city's historical image. In Rotterdam, on the other hand, each new skyscraper is met with excitement. All kinds of architects, including Rem Koolhaas, Willem Jan Neutelings,

Michiel Riedijk, and Ben van Berkel, have worked there. The city is a contemporary architecture expo!

I also like Copenhagen a lot. In fact, many Dutch architects have played a part in that city's architecture story. But there, contemporary architecture stands alongside the historical in a very dignified way. It's friendlier towards people, too. Copenhagen has thought a lot about the human scale, about the width of streets, about the proportions of public and private spaces – everything is extremely balanced. It's no surprise that Copenhagen has produced a lot of city planners, nor that it's listed among the most liveable cities in the world. I recently had the opportunity to see the completed Danish Architecture Centre in person – a project that I worked on myself at *OMA*. The building is right next to the water, and it's a kind of experimental building with a lot of different functions.

How do you combine business travel with recreation? In your mind, what's good relaxation?

Good relaxation is disconnecting from work. That's hard for me to do, but I'm trying to learn. I'm trying to learn to value my free time, planning it strictly and not allowing it to overlap with work. It's kind of an illusion to think that working on an opera in a city for a whole month can be combined with relaxation. In reality, it means sitting in an opera house from morning to night. During a break you might start thinking about your next opera, but during rehearsals you're working on sketches.

But still, if you go somewhere for work, it's an opportunity to get to know that place from a different perspective – to dig deeper, under the sugar-coated tourist layer on top.

Yes, it's an interesting experience. It's an opportunity to stay in cities for a longer time and experience them more like a local. To go to the store, to go to cafés frequented by locals, to be part of a place for a time, to not be a 'tourist'. Plus, you often get to stay in some interesting accommodations. Every time, it's like a surprise that the opera has arranged. We've stayed in small rooms at shady hotels in Finland and in fancy apartments in Denmark and Austria. We've also stayed at a hostel on a boat in Croatia. But on the whole, operas take care of their artists very well. It's nice to feel welcome.

Is work a form of expression for you?

I regard work as a tool for self-development. As a tool that drives me forward. Work is what has developed me and what has gotten me to where I am in my life today. Sometimes I regard work as a game – I've reached one level, so now I progress to the next level. Once we've gained experience doing scenographies for small events, we're ready for the arenas. Once we've gained experience in the arenas, we're ready for the stadiums. The same thing applies not only

A sketch for the production of *Don Giovanni* prepared for the Ring Award 2020 finals and postponed to next year.Giuseppe Verdi's *Nabucco* at the Wrocław Opera.Antonio Vivaldi's *Bojazyet* at the Vienna Chamber Opera.



I tell people that, as you fly over Latvia, all you can see are forests with a few roads carved into them

to scale but also to content. Work is an incentive for self-development, something that spurs you on to the next levels on the path.

Speaking of big venues, your office just won the competition for the artistic concept for the main dance event at the 2023 Latvian Song and Dance Festival.

I think I have to be careful what I wish for, because the universe is listening to me. I remember sitting in the audience at the last Song and Dance Festival – I sat there and thought that I'd like to be a part of this, I'd like to be more than an observer, next time I'd like to create this festival.

The event we've planned, with the title 'Eternal Engine', is intended as a dedication to the hunger for knowledge and the search for eternal growth. We're going to use dances and stories to depict the experiences, feelings, and conclusions of travellers to Latvia in various different times; to discover the traditions, customs, and unique wisdom and worldview of different regions of Latvia. We'll also use videos, which has never yet been done. The scenography will be created as an art installation – six lines intertwined into a single whole that meet in an eternal engine.

How do you usually introduce Latvia to people elsewhere, to people who know little about our country?

I usually tell about things that seem obvious to us, but which seem special to others. I tell them that in terms of area, Latvia is larger than Belgium, but it has a population of only 1.9 million. We have lots of space, and nowadays that's a privilege. We can feel free – we can go to the forest and not meet anyone there. I tell about the sea, which is accessible to everyone. We can walk for tens of kilometres through a unique landscape of pines and dunes. We have a 300-metre coastal protection zone in which no new construction is allowed; elsewhere, it would be full of hotels. I tell people that, as you fly over Latvia, all you can see are forests with a few roads carved into them. Sometimes I tell them that we have people who speak Latvian and people who speak Russian who have lived side by side for decades but somehow know how to never meet or communicate with each other. That's unique.

What do you think Latvian professionals in your field(s) can offer the world?

Latvians are a very creative people. Sometimes I think it's related to education or mentality, or the fact that we sometimes have to create something out of thin air due to a very small budget. We have lots of good designers, but I wish that Latvians would tell others – other Latvians as well as the whole world – about their work and skills. Sometimes fantastic ideas remain unseen and unnoticed. We need to learn self-confidence and how to communicate our ideas. **bo**



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 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.

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Publicity photos

WHAT DOES THE MODERN AIRLINE LOOK LIKE?

Last month *airBaltic* disclosed its very first sustainability report, covering the year 2019 and demonstrating how its commitment to implement sustainability principles at every step of the way has already led to considerable results. Here are the main principles *airBaltic* applies in its daily operations.



FLIGHT SAFETY AND SECURITY

Safety is an integral part of *airBaltic's* core business, and ensuring safe and secure flight operations is the airline's most important priority. Therefore, the company's safety management system and security procedures are developed considering safety and security objectives of the highest level.

The **safety management system** imposes requirements on the occupational health and safety of *airBaltic* staff and contracting parties. It is integrated across all operational departments and meets the regulatory requirements of the Civil Aviation Authority of Latvia and is subject to regular oversight audits. In addition, the company's fleet and crew are regularly assessed at its home base and through the European Aviation Safety Agency's Safety Assessment of Community and Foreign Airlines (SACA/SAFA) programme, which provides additional and independent assurance of consistently reliable safety standards.

To enable convenient partnerships with a range of recognised partner airlines, **airBaltic was among the first to fulfil the rigorous operational safety accreditation** under the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) programme, through which *airBaltic* has been accredited continually since the establishment of IOSA.

In addition, *airBaltic* is an active participant in the **global aviation safety community**, which engages with industry bodies and organisations, including the European Union Aviation Safety Agency. It also actively participates in various IATA safety collaborations, contributes to fuel and de/anti-icing quality control pools, and has been a member of the Flight Safety Foundation since 1997.

The airline's **security organisation system** implements policies, procedures, and systems ensuring that security risks and threats are minimised to an acceptable level using the most cost-efficient manner.

The development of the **airBaltic Security Management and Compliance Manual** (Security Programme) is based on international, European Union, and Latvian national legislation and requirements. The Security Programme is the key document to refer to for security-related requirements, processes, and procedures. In addition, security-related issues are reflected in the respective sector manuals (e.g., operation manuals, Cabin Crew Handbook, Station Passenger Manual, Cargo Operations Manual, etc.).

airBaltic has developed an **Emergency Response Organisation** consisting of company employees who are familiar with the Emergency Response Manual and procedures that would take place in the case of an emergency or potential crisis situation within the company that could affect the well-being of the airline while at the same time ensuring the continuation of normal operations with minimal disruption.



SERVICE AND CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Satisfied and happy customers are the key to business success and growth. In 2019, *airBaltic* recorded the highest customer retention rate among private customers in the company's history, reaching 78 index points.

One of the main targets for *airBaltic* is to ensure that **99% of all planned flights** are performed within scheduled times and good customer service is provided. In 2019, *airBaltic's* cancellation or regularity rate was 99.6% (99.8% in 2018). Its three-minute punctuality rate was 68.78% (71.17% in 2018), and its 15-minute punctuality rate was 86.28% (87.52% in 2018).

airBaltic aims to be one of the **most punctual airlines in Europe** and has succeeded in this goal for many years. Because flight irregularities do happen from time to time, in order to improve passengers' experience in those rare situations when flights are delayed or cancelled, in 2019 *airBaltic* launched its **flight irregularity improvement project**. A system for automated care and assistance vouchers issuance is already implemented for the Riga hub, while the airline's coverage for outstations will be gradually extended in 2020. In cooperation with the *Amadeus IT Group*, the airline plans to go live with an automated flight rebooking system by the end of 2020, which will significantly reduce passenger handling time during irregular operations. Passengers will receive confirmations of their new flight within minutes after the irregularity is announced.

airBaltic constantly monitors customer mood by analysing

complaints and feedback in public review portals such as *Tripadvisor* as well as via after-flight surveys and a yearly Customer Retention Survey. In order to improve customer service, *airBaltic* is easily approachable on social media such as *Twitter* and *Facebook*.

In spring 2019, *airBaltic* launched its **Facebook Chatbot Service**, designed to simulate a conversation with real users. The *airBaltic* chatbot provides such services as answers to the most frequently asked questions about baggage and booking management and also introduces users to *airBaltic* destinations. According to the current plan, passengers will eventually be able to check in through a chatbot as well as receive their boarding passes via *Facebook Messenger*.

airBaltic is working in **close cooperation with the Apeirons association of disabled people and their friends** and the Civil Aviation Agency of Latvia. *airBaltic* ground staff are trained to help and work with passengers with restricted mobility, and assistance for such passengers is available throughout their journey.

airBaltic's **call centre employees speak seven languages**, and its social media team is available for customers 24/7. Furthermore, all of the airline's brand managers adhere to a specific tone and style of language to keep the marketing communication friendly, focused, and easy to understand.

airBaltic is one of the most awarded airlines in the region in terms of **digital innovation**.

airBaltic's website accounts for 52% of all *airBaltic* flight bookings, and thus digital marketing and e-commerce play a crucial role for B2C sales and the company's revenue stream. 75% of bookings are made on desktops, while 25% are done on mobile phones and tablets. The number of people purchasing flight tickets on mobile devices is rapidly growing every year, and therefore last June a new mobile-friendly version of *airBaltic's* website was launched. It has helped to notably increase mobile conversions, with an **84% increase in the number of mobile bookings** in 2019 compared to the year before.

airBaltic Club allows clients to earn PINS and collect stamps while travelling and receive various rewards. As the currency of *airBaltic* Club, PINS can be earned every time a customer flies with *airBaltic* or uses the services of its many travel and retail partners. *airBaltic* Club has three levels suited to customers' flying habits.

airBaltic is subject to **General Data Protection Regulation** No. 679/2016 (GDPR) of the European Parliament and Council as well as relevant national regulatory enactments, which impose obligations to ensure appropriate processing and protection of personal data. *airBaltic* aims to adhere to these obligations via transparency, lawfulness, and security. To that end, it has established a Privacy Programme, appointed a Data Protection Officer, implemented appropriate policies and procedures, and conducts training for its employees on data protection rules to support compliance with the applicable regulations.

airBaltic
Destination 2025



ENVIRONMENT

As air travel has increased, *airBaltic* continues to seek and find ways to minimise its environmental impact. Moreover, it feels growing concern and expectations from relevant stakeholders and the public at large.

The key points of **airBaltic's environmental strategy** supporting more sustainable procurements are: Protecting the environment; Preventing pollution at all levels; Minimising waste; Reusing or recycling as much as possible; Minimising greenhouse gas emissions by focusing on ground support equipment replacement and fuel consumption and introducing new *Airbus* aircraft Encouraging the use of alternative means of transport and car sharing; Encouraging the adoption of similar principles by our suppliers and other stakeholders.

After the full switch to a single-type fleet of *Airbus A220-300*, *airBaltic* will become the **greenest airline in Europe**. Compared to the previous generation of aircraft of similar size, the new planes feature a 20% reduction in CO₂ emissions, 50% fewer NOx emissions, and a four times smaller noise footprint. Specifically designed *Pratt & Whitney* PurePower PW1500G geared turbofan engines contribute to an aircraft that delivers 20% lower fuel burn per seat than previous generation aircraft.

In 2019, the direct amount of CO₂ emissions from *airBaltic's*

traffic was approximately 540,000 tonnes (approx. 480,000 tonnes in 2018). Modernisation of the fleet and optimisation of landing procedures has allowed the airline to **reduce the amount of carbon emissions by 33%** compared to 2008 (released per passenger km flown).

airBaltic uses a **Lido flight planning system**, which calculates the most suitable route for each flight based on all flight-related data, weather conditions, and the current airspace situation, including any restrictions. Lido enables us to lower our fuel consumption and thus also our costs.

airBaltic implements fuel efficiency practices to reduce the amount of fuel burned. It has **saved more than 300 tonnes of fuel**, and thus 900 tonnes of CO₂ were not released.

Idle reverse is the practice of using the least amount of engine power to slow an aircraft down during landing roll. It increases the comfort of the passengers as well as the engine life, saves fuel, and reduces emissions and noise levels.

Reduced flaps during take-off and landing allows the lowest number of flaps to be used to ensure safe take-off, climb, approach, and landing performance. *airBaltic* uses a performance calculation tool located in each pilot's Electronic Flight Bag (EFB) that takes this into account by planning the lowest flap setting allowed by

aircraft performance. Aircraft drag is thus reduced, allowing for fuel to be saved and emissions to be reduced.

Take-off in the direction of flight is a saving initiative that *airBaltic* uses only at its home base of Riga International Airport. When performance allows, pilots are encouraged to request the runway that ensures the most direct route to their destination. This reduces the amount of fuel spent and also saves time.

Waste management is a complex process, because it involves not only an airline's offices but also its aircraft (domestic/international), tenants, maintenance activities, and ground vehicle operations. *airBaltic* therefore **deals with different requirements for different types of waste**.

One approach aimed at **reducing inflight waste** has been to increase the selection of pre-order meals, which has proved to be a very successful service. In 2019, the number of *airBaltic* passengers who pre-ordered a meal from the menu of more than 70 different fresh meals increased by 49.5%, while the popularity of inflight meals grew by 19.8%. *airBaltic* also aims to follow industry trends and plans to update its pre-order menu once a year. It is important for us to offer fresh options to our passengers and cater to a large variety of dietary needs. This new approach, as well as the launch of a pre-order menu in Tallinn, has helped the service become even more popular.

Starting in 2020, *airBaltic* will carry out a new strategy regarding single-use plastics on board. **Plastic items will gradually be replaced by environmentally friendlier alternatives** such as paper packaging, wooden cutlery, and biodegradable materials.

The *airBaltic* Technical Department **sorts hazardous waste**, which includes several categories that are sorted separately according to the law. A total of 158.5 m³ of construction waste, 0.28 tonnes of end-of-life tyres, 0.42 tonnes of fluorescent lamps, and 22.5 m³ of kerosene, oil, and used absorbent were sorted in 2019.

The amount of municipal waste has been decreasing over the past three years. In 2017, one *airBaltic* employee produced an average 0.42 m³ of household waste, while by 2018 that number had shrunk to 0.38 m³. In 2019, it **fell further to 0.35 m³ per employee** per year. This positive waste reduction is due to various internal initiatives and processes, including ceasing the use of plastic water bottles at meetings and the introduction of more and more electronic documents with electronic approval systems.





EMPLOYEES

airBaltic focuses on diversity and inclusion in the workplace, keeping gender equality close to 50/50 across the organisation, including managerial levels, since 2013. Our gender proportion at the top management level is 59/41.

Since 2015, *airBaltic* has operated with a **low voluntary turnover rate** and has kept this rate below 15% for three years in a row. We are proud to have been named the top employer in the transport and logistics industry in Latvia for eight years in a row.

airBaltic has a strict **zero-discrimination recruitment policy** and is committed to providing an environment with the best people and where respect for the individual is important.

A total of 398 employees joined the *airBaltic* group in 2019. There were **211 internal promotions**, and approximately 40 interns had long-term internships with the airline. *airBaltic* cooperates with universities to provide extensive practical experience and internships for engineering students in the area of maintenance, and around 30 technical apprentices were consequently onboarded in 2019.

The company carries out a continuous listening strategy, has run regular employee commitment surveys since 2013, and also collects feedback on other activities, changes, etc. *airBaltic's* **Commitment Index** is an aggregated measure that demonstrates the state of employee satisfaction, engagement, retention, loyalty, and motivation at work. Overall, its employees demonstrate a moderately high commitment level, resulting in 61 points in 2019.

In all of its recruitment, human resources development, staff promotion, and other interactions, *airBaltic* acts on the basis that **all persons have equal worth**. No one working for *airBaltic* may be discriminated against on the basis of age, gender, ethnic background, religion, sexual orientation, physical disability, political conviction, or marital or parental status. No physical, psychological, verbal, or sexual harassment is acceptable at the company.

In 2019, *airBaltic* together with more than 20 airlines joined and signed the IATA **25BY25 Gender Diversity Pledge**, an initiative committed to increasing female participation at senior levels and in underrepresented groups, such as pilots and maintenance, by 25% by the year 2025.

The *airBaltic* group has implemented **remuneration policies** in the larger employee groups that are based on employee performance, experience, and qualification and avoid any pay gaps. Based on a rough comparison of same position holders (and not taking into account seniority, performance, previous experience, and other deviations for proper equal pay measurements), if a position has both male and female position holders, in the 4.7% of cases that males are paid less, the difference averages 11%. In the 5.3% cases that females are paid less, the difference averages 14%.

The aviation industry is heavily regulated in terms of the maintenance of employee qualifications. Cabin crew, pilots, and technicians also go through

various **recurrent training programmes on an annual basis**. The biggest part of these training programmes in the past few years has been related to our fleet modernisation and operations related to the new *Airbus A220* aircraft. Training has become more efficient with the implementation of more digital solutions, thus reducing instructors' workload.

The **Pilot Academy** has been an immediate success – it has so far received an average of ten applications for one pilot training spot. In 2019, the academy boasted six *Diamond DA40* and one *Diamond DA42* training aircraft. These are fitted with the latest-generation digital avionics, eco-engines, and integrated flight instrument systems with synthetic vision and advanced safety features.

airBaltic ensures **health and accident insurance** for all its employees. It also covers the cost of regular medical checkups and provides compensation for optical expenses. In addition, pilots are provided with loss of license insurance.

The use of substances by *airBaltic's* employees such as alcohol, drugs, or medication with serious side effects are strictly prohibited while in the office as well as on and before flight duty. All company employees, including its board members and management, are **subject to regular checks** on alcohol, narcotics, psychotropic, and toxic substance levels in their bodies. Employees whose duties have an immediate, direct impact on flight safety are subject to mandatory alcohol tests before beginning a work shift.



RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE

In addition to complying with all applicable laws and regulations, it is essential for *airBaltic* to conduct business in line with the highest ethical and moral standards.

airBaltic's **management model** is based on corporate governance best practice and the regulatory framework. To ensure effective company governance, decision-making, and achievement of goals, strategic and operational management are separate.

Mutual respect, high emotional intelligence, a positive attitude, and service orientation are vital when meeting customers as well as for creating a **favourable working climate**.

airBaltic applies the highest possible **transparency** when advertising its services. The airline takes full responsibility for transparent pricing and clear ticket rules, product availability in all channels, a user-friendly

internet booking engine, and available customer service.

airBaltic CEO Martin Gauss holds **weekly staff briefings for employees**, at which he briefs them on various issues regarding the performance and development of the company.

The **top management team, which also includes the executive board**, holds weekly meetings to review the organisation's performance at both the corporate and departmental levels. The top management team provides the executive board with the necessary information and recommendations needed to make sound business decisions that promote profitability in both the short and long term. The supervisory board, in turn, represents the shareholders' interests between shareholders' meetings and supervises the work of the executive

board within the limits set by the Commercial Law and the Articles of Association.

airBaltic highly values its **commitments towards its creditors**. Since the company's bonds have been listed on Euronext Dublin, the company must report all the required information to Euronext Dublin and the respective authorities.

airBaltic has developed an internal manual and policy for each department that defines and explains why and how to act and prepare documentation in the different fields. One of the most recently created internal policies is the **sanctions policy**, which helps employees from various departments ensure compliance with sanctions laws and the company's contractual obligations. The Know Your Client questionnaire is one of the key elements of the overall sanctions policy.



On a business trip, it's worth seeking out accommodations and sites that give you a taste of the city you're in even during short breaks in your schedule. For example, the *Mandarin Oriental* has suites with incomparable views of Munich.

Words by Līga Valko
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A TWIST OF BUSINESS TRAVEL TO GERMANY

Nowadays, corporate travel is much more than just business. Bleisure, a.k.a. business trips with a twist of leisure, has been on the rise for some time already. So, the next time you're travelling for work, consider adding a couple of extra days at your destination to enjoy after-hours fun and downtime and endless sightseeing opportunities. We've rounded up four *airBaltic* business destinations across Germany for you to explore!



FRANKFURT

A metropolis with a chic vibe

A gleaming skyline with skyscrapers of glass and concrete makes Frankfurt, the smallest metropolis in the world, stand out from the rest of Germany's cities. Sometimes referred to as Mainhattan due to its location on the Main River, the city is a high-powered financial and business hub that's home to the Frankfurt Stock Exchange and the headquarters of the European Central Bank.

In addition, Frankfurt boasts the busiest airport in Germany, handling 70.5 million passengers last year alone. Most visitors head to the city for business, but there's more to Frankfurt than finance. In fact, it's an unexpectedly traditional city, with reconstructed half-timbered buildings filling the medieval Old Town, cosy wine taverns, and village-like neighbourhoods. Most of the Old Town was destroyed during the Second World War, and its medieval buildings were later reconstructed.

If you embark on a cruise down the Main River, you'll notice that the river divides the city centre into two stunning halves – the skyscraper district and the traditional neighbourhood of the Museum Embankment (Museumsufer), which is a unique string of about a dozen museums located almost side by side. The most famous of these are the Städel art museum, the Schirn Kunsthalle, the German Film Museum, and the Liebieghaus museum. Frankfurt has long been home to influential art collections, and with theatre and opera as well, it boasts a vibrant cultural scene.

If you prefer to get out of town, Frankfurt is the perfect base for a tour around Germany. A mere 35 kilometres from Frankfurt is Darmstadt, an authentic Art Nouveau gem. Head further down the 85-kilometre German Wine Route to reach the famous grape-growing region of Pfalz, where you can take in a few medieval castles between sips of Riesling, Dornfelder, or Müller-Thurgau. To unwind and relax, a long-time favourite with travellers is Baden-Baden, a spa town that dates back to the Roman era.



Klassikstadt is a car paradise with more than 400 vehicles on display.



Take the train to Burg Eltz, one of Germany's most picturesque castles.

Where to stay

Rocco Forte Villa Kennedy (Kennedyallee 70; roccofortehotels.com; prices from EUR 250) is set in the exclusive neighbourhood of Sachsenhausen close to the financial district and Frankfurt International Airport. The historical, Neogothic-style Villa Speyer and three newly built wings offer 163 spacious rooms and suites, a private courtyard, a restaurant, and a spa.

Where to dine

Housed in a shop conversion from the 1950s, *Heimat*

(Berliner Straße 70; heimat-frankfurt.com) is one of the city's favourite restaurants for fine dining. The menu is short and frequently changes to feature fresh, local produce and classic German cuisine as well as dishes from the wine regions of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland. Reservations required.

Museum to explore

Frankfurt's financial heritage is celebrated at the Money Museum (Wilhelm-Epstein-Straße 14; bundesbank.de). The permanent exhibition

is arranged on six levels and devoted to the evolution of the monetary world, the German central bank, a collection of coins and banknotes, etc.

Not to miss

Located on the outskirts of Frankfurt, Klassikstadt (Orber Straße 4a, klassikstadt.de) is a car paradise with more than 400 vehicles on display. It houses new and classic car dealerships as well as restoration and repair facilities. Such legendary brands as *Lamborghini*, *McLaren*, and *Bugatti* are on display.

MUNICH

An urban hotspot full of life

Munich is nestled between the foothills of the Alps and the Isar River. Despite its relatively small population of one and a half million, Munich is an international centre of business, engineering, and research.

It's a city full of contrasts, where edgy art and high tech collide with the city's traditional side. Munich might at first feel like a lively urban hotspot, but once you get to know the city, you'll understand why it's affectionately nicknamed Millionendorf – a village of a million. Enjoy the relaxed character and slow pace of life in this, one of the most affluent cities in the world. Locals call it *Gemütlichkeit*, which means warmth, friendliness, and a cosy, laid-back atmosphere in which to recharge.

Munich has far more on offer than Oktoberfest. Whether you want to stop by one of the famous beer halls, such as the *Paulaner Bräuhaus* (Kapuzinerplatz 5) or *Hofbräuhaus* (Platzl 9), or people-watch at the English Garden, one of the largest urban parks in the world, there's something here for everyone. The city is easy to navigate on foot or by bicycle. Choose a route along the banks of the Isar or explore the English Garden and stop by the Eisbach River, which is one of the few urban locations where surfers can ride the waves anytime they want and in all weather conditions.

The city also has a wealth of museums and galleries along with many high-end boutiques on Maximilianstraße. While Munich has long been known as a city of beer, it's also known for art. Next time you're here, explore the local art scene at the Kunstareal museum quarter or visit the Deutsches Museum (science and technology) and BMW Welt (cars).

If history and traditions are more your thing, there's central Marienplatz surrounded by many historic buildings, including the New and Old Town Halls and the Church of Our Lady (Frauenkirche). Located just a few blocks from Marienplatz is the Residenz palace, the former home of the Wittelsbach dynasty that ruled Bavaria for more than 700 years.



At BMW Welt you can see all the current BMW production models, including Rolls-Royce and Mini as well as some older models.



Westpark was created as part of the International Garden Expo in 1983.

Where to stay

Located away from the hustle and bustle of the city centre, *Hotel München Palace* (Trogerstraße 21; hotel-muenchen-palace.de; prices from EUR 178) is a charming five-star family-run hotel. Its 89 guest rooms and 15 suites are individually decorated in a classy yet contemporary style. The English Garden and Deutsches Museum are just a ten-minute drive away.

Where to dine

The futuristic BMW Welt is also home to a luxury-class gourmet culinary establishment. Run by Munich-

born top chef Bobby Bräuer, *EssZimmer* (Am Olympiapark 1; bmw-welt.com) offers exquisite French cuisine in a luxurious yet cosy setting. It even has an exclusive chauffeur service that can take guests home anywhere in Munich.

Museum to explore

The Deutsches Museum (Museumsinsel 1; deutsches-museum.de) is the world's largest museum of science and technology. From astronomy to marine biology, clocks and musical instruments to pharmaceuticals, this museum is an active learning space. Can't make it to Munich

yourself? Quench your thirst for knowledge and experience the museum digitally with virtual 360-degree tours or guided tours on *YouTube*.

Not to miss

A 21-kilometre hike through the city from north to south that's full of nature and culture leads from BMW Welt all the way to Hinterbrühl Lake. For a more relaxing stroll, stay in Olympiapark and enjoy the view from Olympic Hill. If the sky is clear, you'll have the city literally at your feet against a backdrop of the Alps.



HAMBURG

A city on the water

Hamburg is the fourth most popular business destination in Germany after Berlin, Frankfurt, and Munich. The city boasts one of the biggest ports in Europe and combines a dynamic scene with unique maritime charm. Every Sunday morning, locals and visitors alike head to the legendary fish market to enjoy the lively spirit and bargain over fresh fish.

Historically called the gateway to the world, Hamburg was a major city of the Hanseatic League and a centre of international trade. Today, its maritime roots remain strong, and it upholds its legacy as one of Germany's wealthiest cities.

Strolling around the historic port city, you'll soon see that the city is shaped by its bridges, canals, and other waterways, such as the Elbe River and Outer Alster Lake. Hamburg is also a green city that, instead of skyscrapers, is famed for its church steeples. With 2500 bridges, parks, and several botanical gardens, it's a perfect place for a low-key stroll. It's no wonder that this is considered Germany's most liveable city. The city-wide policy of planting 2000 trees every year has helped to develop a ratio of 1/3 trees, 1/3 lakes, and 1/3 buildings.

But Hamburg is also a modern and socially progressive town, with vibrant neighbourhoods full of multicultural restaurants and lots of new architecture. Hamburg wouldn't be Hamburg without its nightlife, which centres on the glorious Reeperbahn red-light district. While you're exploring the area, don't miss Freiheitsstraße, where the Beatles made their debut. John Lennon once commented that he grew up in Hamburg, not Liverpool.

The city is filled with music venues, clubs, exhibitions, concerts, and cultural events. For a sophisticated night out, head to Altona. This once shabby area has now become a busy upmarket district where you can attend a jazz night at the *Cotton Club* (Alter Steinweg 10) or an event at the Fabrik cultural centre (Barnerstraße 36) located in a former machine factory.



Where to stay

Situated on the peaceful Alster Canal, the *Sofitel Hamburg Alter Wall* (Alter Wall 40; sofitel.accor.com; prices from EUR 133) offers five-star comfort in the historic heart of the port city and a bold mix of luxury and high-end functionality. It's also within easy reach of many key Hamburg sights, including Mönckebergstraße (locally also called Mö) and the HafenCity and Speicherstadt districts.

Where to dine

Liam Tomlin's *Chefs Warehouse*, one of Cape Town's most

noted gastronomic concepts, can now be found in Hamburg as well. Located in the Elbe Philharmonic Hall, *Chefs Warehouse at Störtebeker* (Platz der Deutschen Einheit 3; stoertebeker-eph.com) offers creative cuisine in a casual fine-dining atmosphere. The globally inspired menu is based on the sharing principle and the farm-to-fork philosophy.

Museum to explore

The International Maritime Museum (Koreastraße 1; imm-hamburg.de) sprawls across ten floors and offers

the world's most extensive private collection of maritime treasures. Pilot ship models, a ship simulator, and the *Queen Mary 2* made of a million LEGO bricks are all on display.

Not to miss

Speicherstadt, the largest complex of warehouses in the world, is best experienced early in the morning or at sunset. The red-brick establishments here are impressive enough, but one of the most stunning buildings is the Elbe Philharmonic Hall, which is built on top of an old port warehouse.

DÜSSELDORF

A city with an old soul

Düsseldorf, the capital of North Rhine-Westphalia, has one foot planted in the modern world and the other firmly in its historical heritage. Founded 730 years ago, the city is steeped in history and known for its narrow, cobbled streets and picturesque medieval Old Town. This city on the Rhine River even charmed Napoleon, who called Düsseldorf his Little Paris.

At first glance, Düsseldorf may seem quite buttoned-up. For centuries, its skyline was defined by four churches: Neanderkirche, Bergerkirche, Sankt Lambertus Basilika, and Johanneskirche. Another traditional sightseeing gem is Benrath Palace, which is considered one of Europe's finest park-and-palace ensembles and also features the unique Museum of Garden Art.

Düsseldorf's Old Town, or Altstadt, is a popular attraction and sometimes referred to as the longest bar in the world. Traditional brewpubs such as *Brauerei im Füchsen* (Ratinger Straße 28) and *Zum Schlüssel* (Bolkerstraße 41-47) are famous for hearty Rhenish cuisine and Düsseldorf-style *Altbier*. Needless to say, the Old Town is the place to try such traditional dishes as *Sauerbraten* (marinated pot roast), *Flöns* (blood sausage), and *Senfrostbraten* (steak cooked with mustard).

But just a short distance from the bar-lined Old Town, Düsseldorf has undertaken some new and daring neighbourhood makeovers, for example, drawing crowds to Media Harbour (Medienhafen), where the old riverfront is now lined with avantgarde and post-modern architecture. Here, visitors are enthralled by Frank Gehry's Neuer Zollhof, a trio of buildings built in stainless steel, red brick, and white plaster. And it's not only the city centre that has been developed. The youthful, boho-chic neighbourhoods of Flingern and Unterbilk are brimming with cafés and boutiques.

While the new architecture is a symbol of the city's rebirth and has transformed the skyline, Düsseldorf's art scene is also expanding and becoming more dynamic, with 26 museums and more than 100 galleries, including contemporary art spaces such as Kunsthalle Düsseldorf and the Philara Collection.



Where to stay

Hyatt House Düsseldorf (Mühlenstraße 34; hyatt.com; prices from EUR 190) is located in the heart of the Old Town, near the Rhine River embankment and the high-end retailers and theatres on Königsallee. Having found a home in a former courthouse in the Andreas Quarter, the *Hyatt House* concept is designed to provide guests with a home away from home. It features 102 rooms and suites ranging from 33 to 122 square metres.

Where to dine

Phoenix (Dreischeibenhaus; phoenix-restaurant.de) is located on the ground floor of a former telephone exchange

in the famed Dreischeibenhaus, an iconic 1960s skyscraper. The restaurant is famous for its experimental cuisine and impressive interior, which combines vintage elements and simple elegance.

Museum to explore

The two separate venues of the North Rhine-Westphalia Art Collection (Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen; kunstsammlung.de) house one of the world's most important collections of European art, with work by Pablo Picasso, Salvador Dalí, Jackson Pollock, and many more. The K20 building is devoted to 20th-century art, while K21 exhibits international contemporary art. The *Mine*



exhibition by Simon Denny at K21 (until January 17) can be entered via the *Minecraft* gaming platform, where it is constructed as if the exhibition spaces were located below the Zollverein Coal Mine Industrial Complex, once the largest coal mine in the world.

Not to miss

There's no way you can skip the oldest brewery in the city, *Brauerei Schumacher* (Oststraße 123; schumacher-alt.de), to try Düsseldorf's specialty, *Altbier*. Here the beer is brewed according to the original family recipe, which dates back to 1838, when Johann Matthias Schumacher purchased the brewery. **bo**

Words by Lana Jūra
Publicity photos and by iStock



A GUIDE TO ROME FOR THE MODERN TRAVELLER

Rome is one of the most iconic and travelled cities in Europe, with a long history to match. At a time when much of the world has fallen somewhat silent, this city can finally be explored in relative peace and quiet. Here's a list of must-sees recommended by locals.

Known as the Eternal City, Rome has attracted visitors for more than 2000 years. Only here can one delve into deep history and also look into the future – all on a short stroll along the city's streets. Rome is a grandiose museum. Rome is a stage for glamour and fashion. Rome is contemporary art and architecture. Rome is fantastic cuisine. And so on and so on... For good reason, all roads continue to lead to Rome. To see and discover what cannot be found or done elsewhere.

VISITING FAMOUS FILM LOCATIONS

Thanks to the gentle Mediterranean climate, Rome can easily be enjoyed in autumn and winter. But of course, as elsewhere in Europe, one must currently take into account the restrictions imposed due to the pandemic. So, before visiting a museum, exhibition,

art gallery, or other such site, check its website, social media accounts, or give it a call to find out whether you must register your visit beforehand.

Social distancing and wearing a face mask are mandatory throughout Italy in public buildings and outdoors, including on the street and in squares and parks. I warmly recommend adopting an Italian attitude to this rule, perceiving the face mask as a responsible, respectful, courteous, and stylish accessory. Besides, fines for not wearing a mask range from 400 to 1000 euros.

Other than that, right now – when the endless crowds of tourists have abated – is a great time to discover the hospitality of the Eternal City. It's also a fine opportunity to indulge a long-held passion for photographing iconic objects and visiting locations made famous by cinema classics. Follow in the footsteps of top models by posing and strutting on the Spanish Steps, where such prestigious fashion houses as *Valentino* and *Bulgari* have previously held shows.

The Spanish Steps, now a UNESCO World Heritage Site, gained cult status after the release of *Roman Holiday*, an iconic 1953 Hollywood film starring Audrey Hepburn and Gregory Peck. The film also sent soaring the popularity of the *Vespa V30T*, a masterpiece of design that the romantic couple rode through the streets of Rome.

Rome is a city of inspiration. It has inspired not only Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Charles Dickens but practically the whole world. In the modern day, much of that can be attributed to Italian director Federico Fellini's film *La Dolce Vita* (1960), which has become synonymous with the glamorous lifestyle. This year marks the centenary of Fellini's birth and the 60th anniversary of this, his most influential film. It was supposed to be a year full of public celebrations but has instead passed quietly. However, that doesn't stop visitors to Rome exploring the city on their own through the stories of movies filmed here.

Despite the passing of the decades, places such as the Trevi Fountain (site of the most famous scene in *La Dolce Vita*) and Via Vittorio Veneto (in whose cafés and bars the paparazzi of the day often found Marcello Mastroianni, who played the lead in that same film) have remained iconic destinations. *La Dolce Vita* has left its magical mark on many, many Roman sites and stories, including *Harry's Bar* and the excellent design of the *Ferrari Roma Coupe 2+*.

ART IN SUPERB ARCHITECTURE

Rome's historical centre is saturated with art museums and galleries. At the top of the Spanish Steps, where the Trinità dei Monti church stands,

The Trevi Fountain is one of the oldest water sources in Rome.



The Spanish Steps gained cult status after the release of *Roman Holiday*.



Harry's Bar rose to international fame when it was featured in Federico Fellini's film *La Dolce Vita*.



Under the direction of celebrated architect Jean Nouvel, the Palazzo Rhinoceros has been transformed into luxury apartments, a rooftop bar, and an art gallery.



The Rome of today is unimaginable without MAXXI, the national museum of 21st-century arts.

begin a stroll through the art world along Via Margutta, a narrow street that was once the home of many an artist and their studios as well as celebrities, including Fellini.

After crossing through the Villa Borghese park complex, the route then leads to the National Gallery of Modern and Contemporary Art, which holds Italy's largest collection of 19th- and 20th-century art. The majority of the permanent collection is devoted to Italian masters, including Alberto Burri, Giacomo Balla, Amedeo Modigliani, and Giorgio de Chirico. Displayed alongside them is the work of such internationally recognised artists as Jackson Pollock, Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso, Claude Monet, Edgar Degas, and Gustav Klimt.

The Rome of today is unimaginable without MAXXI, the national museum of 21st-century arts. Located in the Flaminio district north of the city centre, this impressive building designed by the venerable Zaha Hadid is worth visiting not only for the architecture but also for its contents. MAXXI is not just a structure in which to display art; the complexity of its volumes, its curved walls, and its multi-level intersecting concrete elements form a rich spatial and functional configuration. In 2010, the building won the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) Stirling Prize.

A few minutes by tram back towards the historical centre of the city and you arrive at the Ara Pacis Museum, an expressive symbiosis of contemporary architecture and the antique world. The 'altar of peace' was built in the 1st century BCE but today resides in one of Rome's most modern buildings, constructed in 2006 out of glass and steel according to a design by American architect Richard Meier.

A little further, near the famous Piazza Navona, is a recently restored gem – the DART Chiostro del Bramante cultural centre/art museum housed in a cloister designed by Donato Bramante in approximately the year 1500. While the architecture can be admired from the outside, it's worth heading indoors as well, especially this season. The *Banksy: A Visual Protest* exhibition, on show until April 11, 2021, highlights the world's best-known 'unknown' artist.

But Rome is not just grandiose museums. To feel the hidden charm of this city, seek out a few lesser-known addresses. For example, the Giustini/Stagetti gallery in the heart of the historical district, which specialises in 20th-century Italian and contemporary international design. Here you'll find objects created by Angelo Mangiarotti, Gino Sarfatti, Ettore Sottsass, and many other big names as well as fine examples of Venetian blown glass. The gallery also collaborates with younger generations of designers, including the Campana Brothers, Konstantin Grcic, Formafantasma, and Giacomo Moor, regularly showing their exclusive designs.

It's no exaggeration to say that significant projects in Rome do not happen without the presence of the Fendi dynasty. The Palazzo Rhinoceros in the historical Velabro area of the city is the newest project of the Fondazione Alda Fendi – Esperimenti. Under the direction of celebrated architect Jean Nouvel, the 17th-century building has been transformed into luxury apartments, a rooftop bar, and an art gallery that's not confined to a single space but 'travels' between the six storeys of the building. Thus the whole structure, which integrates seamlessly into the urban environment, can be interpreted as a unique work of art and performance platform in and of itself.

MOST FASHIONABLE SPOTS

Rome is undeniably also a mecca of fashion and shopping, a place for lovers of high fashion as well as those looking for vintage and new niche brands. Because the city is so associated with luxury and the enjoyment of life, a shopping excursion should begin with Piazza Mignanelli and the historic *Valentino* showroom. Then take the two-minute walk to Piazza di Spagna and the Via dei Condotti for more iconic fashion brands.

The splendour spills over into the neighbouring streets as well – Via Borgognona, Via della Vite, Via Frattina, Via delle Carrozze, Via Vittoria, and Via del Babuino – where you can stroll through the ateliers and marvel at the great variety of creativity and diverse understandings of beauty. However, in terms of extravagance, true competition for the fashion legends *Fendi*, *Gucci*, *Gattinoni*, *Dolce & Gabbana*, *Armani*, *Prada*, and *Ferragamo* can only be found in the showrooms of the long-standing jewellery giants *Bulgari*, *Tiffany*, *Chopard*, *Cartier*, *Damiani*, and *Pomellato*.

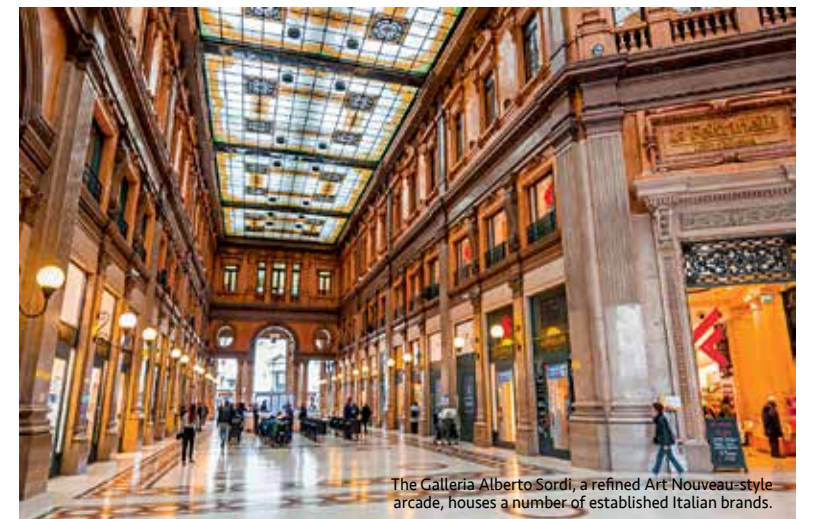
When there's not much time but you want to see everything, check out *Rinascence* on Via del Tritone just a few steps from the Trevi Fountain. Call it 'archaeo-shopping'. This grand department store devoted to fashion, beauty, and design features 800 different brands in an exclusive interior developed by a dream team of architects and designers including *Vincent Van Duysen Architects*, Claudio Silvestrin, and India Mahdavi.

After an intense shopping session here, relax on the terrace while enjoying the breathtaking view and a Mediterranean treat at chef Riccardo Di Giacinto's *Michelin*-starred restaurant. But the real surprise at *Rinascence* is in the basement. The archaeological excavations on show there form a section of the Vergine Aquaduct, which provides water to Ancient Rome's fountains, including Trevi.

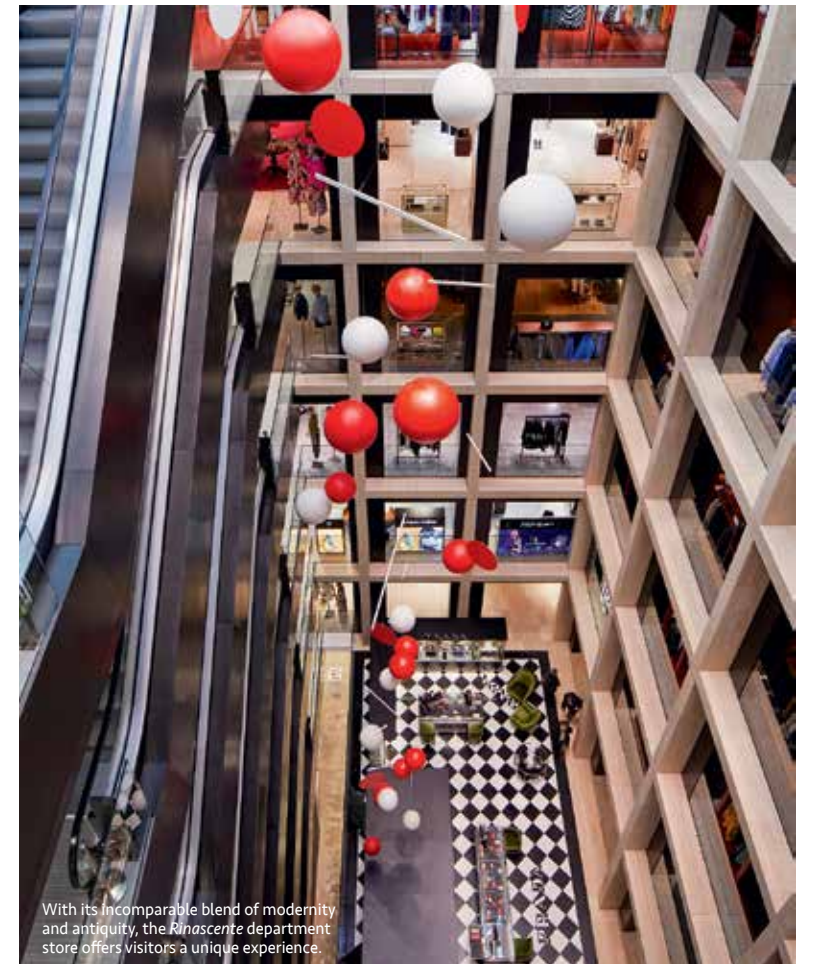
Anything is possible in the Eternal City – at least that's the way it seems from the look of *Dolce & Gabbana*'s new showroom on Piazza di Spagna. The two-level space, which features 15 different types of marble on the floor alone, was designed by American architect Eric Carlson and his *Carbondale* studio.



Set within a 16th-century palazzo in the Piazza di Spagna, the *Dolce & Gabbana* store has been designed for 'a city synonymous with magnificence and uniqueness'.



The Galleria Alberto Sordi, a refined Art Nouveau-style arcade, houses a number of established Italian brands.



With its incomparable blend of modernity and antiquity, the *Rinascence* department store offers visitors a unique experience.



Soft on the inside, crunchy on the outside – everyone appreciates the pizza at Berberè Pizzeria.



A colonial atmosphere and aristocratic charm delight guests at Adelaide, the restaurant at Rome's Hotel Vilòn.



Located near the Pantheon and Piazza Navona, Casa Coppelle is the exclusive restaurant managed by chef Fabio Rossi.

Richly decorated with Baroque and mythological imagery enlivened by ultra-modern special effects, it radiates the *genius loci* of Rome in the superlative.

Another dynamic, pulsating street is Via del Corso, which is basically a two-kilometre-long open-air shopping centre. Halfway down the street stands the Galleria Alberto Sordi, a refined Art Nouveau-style arcade housing a number of established Italian brands, including the *Feltrinelli* publisher and its huge selection of books and music.

When you're ready for a rest from Rome's mightiness and glamour, it's time to head to the charming, green neighbourhood of Trastevere south of the Vatican City. Here you'll find unique little shops, experimental artist-established brands, and vintage fashion. Stop by one of the delightful family restaurants for some traditional Roman cuisine.

CUISINE ALLA ROMANA

Typical Roman cuisine is one of the tastiest in Italy. Based on fresh vegetables and herbs, legumes, and local beef and lamb, the recipes have been passed down in families for countless generations, making it also one of Italy's oldest culinary traditions. Some legendary Roman dishes include hearty *carbonara* pasta (made with egg, cured pork, pecorino romano cheese, salt, and pepper), *carciofi alla giudia* (the 16th-century recipe for these crispy fried artichokes originated in Rome's Jewish Ghetto), *filetti di baccalà* (batter-fried salt cod fillets), *gnocchi alla romana* (oven-baked semolina dumplings), and *crostata di ricotta e visciole* (a tart filled with ricotta cheese and sour cherries). One of the best places to go for local cuisine and wines is the Testaccio neighbourhood, which also has a market with a wonderful selection of local produce.

But reserve at least one evening in Rome for a culinary performance by a titled top chef. For example, a refined assortment of flavours composed by chef Gabriele Muro at the *Adelaide* restaurant. The colonial-style establishment is located in the *Vilòn di Roma Palazzo Borghese* five-star luxury hotel, whose English garden full of lush plants and flowers gives the site a calm yet ornate atmosphere.

Two of the world's best cuisines – Italian and French – meet at *Casa Coppelle*, the exclusive restaurant of skilled chef Fabio Rossi located near the Pantheon and Piazza Navona. The warm and richly decorated interior featuring lots of gold and velvet was created by well-known French architect and interior designer Jacques Garcia, who also designed *Hôtel Costes* in Paris and *Mamounia* in Marrakech.

Of course, one should sample the pizza in every region of Italy. But in Rome it's an absolute must! *Berberè Pizzeria* on Via Mantova makes this classic using a natural sourdough made of organic, stone-ground, semi-whole wheat flour and fresh, local,

seasonal products. Soft on the inside, crunchy on the outside – this is real slow-food pizza that everyone will appreciate.

NEIGHBOURHOODS TO EXPLORE

If you still haven't got your fill of architecture, devote a morning to exploring the Coppedè Quarter. This enchanting corner with 17 villas and 27 palazzos was dreamed up by architect Gino Coppedè in the early 20th century and is located just a few minutes' ride from Rome's historical centre. Here you'll see Art Nouveau and Art Deco mixed with elements of Gothic, Greek, Baroque, and medieval art and architecture, making it look a bit like a fairytale kingdom.

The heart of modernist Rome, for its part, beats loudest in the southern part of the city, namely, the EUR quarter. Sure, it boasts two big shopping avenues – Viale Guglielmo Marconi and Viale Europa – but the main attraction here is architecture. The appearance of this part of the city changed noticeably in the Fascist era, when the political leader Benito Mussolini advocated the construction of several distinctly imposing, very symmetric buildings alluding to the ancient Roman Empire. Thus we now have, among others, the Palazzo dei Congressi (which serves as the hospital in *La Dolce Vita*) and the Palazzo della Civiltà Italiana (a beautiful example of Rationalist architecture also called the Square Colosseum). The latter, recently restored, now houses the *Fendi* headquarters.

A few years ago, a notable example of contemporary architecture joined the EUR quarter as well. The new convention centre and hotel called *La Nuvola* was designed by the Roman architect duo of Massimiliano and Doriana Fuksas. It took 18 years to complete, but it was worth the wait. The complex glass-and-steel structures won a Royal Institute of British Architects award in 2012. The nearby park and lake are nice for a relaxing stroll and a cup of hot chocolate at one of the cafés. It's an activity that fits the city perfectly at this time of year. **bo**

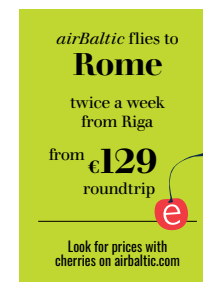


The new convention centre and hotel in the EUR quarter is an eco-friendly complex that has taken 18 years to plan and construct.



In the fairytale-like Coppedè Quarter, Art Nouveau and Art Deco mix with elements of Gothic, Greek, Baroque, and medieval art and architecture.

salute.gov.it – Check the website of the Italian Ministry of Health for the latest information and regulations related to the pandemic. Pay attention to whether you must undergo a Covid-19 test upon your arrival in Italy.





Publicity photos

Photo by Aldo Luud

Timo Kikas and Tharaka Rama Krishna Chowdary Doddapaneni carrying out a torrefaction experiment.

COULD WOOD BECOME CHEAPER THAN FOSSIL FUEL?

Even though coal is a big polluter, it's still cheaper than wood. Scientists at an Estonian lab have found a clever way to change that.

Chopping down and burning trees for energy is a heated issue, literally. Some think it's unethical. Others believe that wood simply has to be utilised more efficiently.

In 2009, the European Union set a target of 20% of renewable energy by 2020. Next to solar, wind, and other carbon-neutral energy sources, biomass – including wood – was put on the list. It became the cornerstone of the so-called renewable energy shift.

The European Union subsidises the use of wood and encourages power plants to switch from coal to biomass. The race to make wood competitive is on, and scientists as well as the industry are looking for the most cost-effective solutions. For now, however, burning coal is still at least four times cheaper than burning biomass such as wood.

One method to increase the value of wood is called torrefaction, a process by which wood is heated, just like bread in an oven, to between 250 and 300 degrees Celsius. This can turn any plant matter

into easily transportable bio-coal pellets. The main argument for torrefaction is the price. Torrefaction reduces the price of wood transportation and handling by 40%.

But wood can still not compete with coal. At the moment, a ton of coal costs about 50 euros, compared to about 200 euros for torrefied wood. This is where the biofuels workgroup at Estonian University of Life Sciences comes in. Led by Professor Timo Kikas, it is creating high-value by-products that could make torrefaction a lot more attractive for investors.

One of the concerns around torrefaction is that it creates a lot of tar that could clog a reactor. A reactor is difficult to maintain and clean because it needs to work non-stop for months in order to be efficient enough. That's one of the reasons torrefaction hasn't really caught on. But instead of worrying about how to keep a reactor clean and get rid of the tar, Kikas' team is making use of the viscous black liquid.

Did you know?

About 50% of the area of Estonia is covered with forests, and the wood from these forests is mainly used to build houses and produce construction materials and furniture. Ideally, however, we could use wood to also make clothing and gradually replace everything that is currently made from oil.

Using fossil oil might be cheap, but it adds extra carbon into the carbon cycle and contributes to global warming. Using wood ensures a uniform carbon cycle, because it is renewable. However, it requires some effort to extract the correct substances from wood.

Estonia has the opportunity to become a technological leader. Currently, the chemical processing of wood is limited to the processing of aspen pulp, but a pilot plant is already being launched, which aims to develop and produce high-value biomaterials from wood of inferior quality.

ResTA, the resource value-adding programme of the Estonian Research Council, supports research and development for adding value to wood (as well as food and other resources from the Earth's crust). In the coming years, 3.7 million euros will be allocated to research in the wood sector. The research is only beginning, and the subsequent years will show how successful the cooperation between researchers and companies for adding value to wood will be, and which changes in the field of this estimable material we can discuss.

‘The real question is not how to clean the reactor, but where and how to collect the tar,’ Kikas says. The end products of tar include various acids and surfactants, which can be used in detergents, soaps, shampoos, toothpastes, lotions, creams, and even in some food products. For now, the tar industry largely relies on fossil-based raw materials. When the fossil-fuel plants will be shut down – and it will happen soon – there will be much demand for replacements.

And some biochemicals just can't be produced by using wind, solar, or other renewable energy sources. Kikas believes that it's not reasonable to use wood for energy, but for some things, burning biomass (which would otherwise go to waste) is simply invaluable.

Tharaka Rama Krishna Chowdary Doddapaneni, a scientist on Kikas' team, came to Estonia to focus on this. Doddapaneni says he can bring the price of torrefied wood down to a point where it will be able to compete with fossil fuels.

Their team at the Estonian University of Life Sciences created Estonia's first continuous torrefaction reactor, funded by the Estonian Research Council. They are now working hard to take things to the next level.

With a background in both thermal and microbial processes and experience gained in Sweden and Finland, Doddapaneni believes their approach is unique. ‘Most of the researchers are focusing on their own narrow field. I'm more interested in the bigger picture, in making torrefaction cost-effective,’ he says.

Doddapaneni believes he can make the overall process of turning wood into energy more cost-effective and environmentally friendly.



Biofuel researchers Timo Kikas (right) and Tharaka Rama Krishna Chowdary Doddapaneni are exploring the use of acids and oils released during torrefaction.



Photo by Aldo Luud



The first torrefaction reactor in Estonia turns organic material into bio-coal.

Photo by iStock

WELCOME ABOARD airBaltic



To get the best flight deals, look for prices with cherries on airbaltic.com!

All flight prices mentioned in this magazine apply to GREEN tickets from Riga, Vilnius, or Tallinn that are booked in advance at www.airbaltic.com. Prices are subject to availability and not available for all flights or days. Special conditions apply. Prices can be changed unilaterally by *airBaltic*.

WINTER SCHEDULE 2020/2021

Every autumn, when daylight saving time ends and the clocks get turned back to 'winter time', airlines also switch to a winter flight schedule. Check out our winter highlights.

We plan daily flights to Europe's major business and transit hubs, such as **Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo** and **London**.

The return of cooler weather also makes us want to seek out the sun. Fly to **Larnaca** and **Rome** to catch some rays.

Other European cities, like **Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Hamburg, Reykjavik** and **Dublin**, will also be reachable several times per week.

There will be also three daily flights from Riga to **Tallinn** and **Vilnius** to ensure smooth transit connections.

NEW FLIGHT TO KITTLA IN LAPLAND

On December 19, *airBaltic* opens a new direct flight from Riga to **Kittila**.

Finland's most popular and biggest skiing resort Levi is located only a 15-minute drive away from Kittila

airport. Besides downhill and cross-country skiing, enjoy a dog sled ride through Lapland's snowy forests and see the amazing northern lights.

The new flight will operate once a week on Saturdays, with ticket prices starting from EUR 129 round trip.

THE SLOPES ARE WAITING

The ski season starts soon, so now's the time to book your tickets to Europe's most popular ski destinations.

Reach the classic ski resorts in the Alps by flying to **Salzburg** directly from Riga and Tallinn as of December. Or choose our flights to **Munich, Vienna, Milan, Geneva, Zurich, Verona**, and more.

If you're up for something different this year, try Scandinavia. Norway's ski resorts feature one of the longest ski seasons, and convenient flights to **Oslo** are available from all three Baltic capitals.

Choose from more than 100 ski resorts in Sweden by flying to **Stockholm** or **Gothenburg** from Riga or Tallinn.

When booking tickets, don't forget to add skis or a snowboard to your booking from EUR 29.99.

NEW *airBaltic* BRAND VALUES

In honour of our 25th anniversary and considering the experience gained over the years and in the present situation, we have introduced reworked mission and vision statements and new core values.

Corresponding to current strategic priorities – stay, revise, grow – we were revising many different business aspects, starting from the business plan itself to its products and digital strategies and solutions.

In July of this year, we began our core values revision project with the active participation of employees, managers, stakeholders, and customers. The aim has been to describe and shape *airBaltic's* core values based on their experience and vision of *airBaltic's* beliefs, philosophy, and the principles that drive the business. We received additional inspiration for defining these values from customer reviews and stakeholders.

As a result, we now have three brand-new core values: **we deliver**, **we care**, and **we grow**.

The next phase of the core values project is to implement these new values as a foundation for our internal and external processes.

— OUR MISSION

Our mission is to ensure vital connectivity between the Baltic States and the world with a significant economic contribution.

— OUR VISION

Our vision sees *airBaltic* becoming a sustainable carrier in the EU aviation market while maintaining a continuous growth path and innovative improvement of passenger experience and developing the Baltic states as one of the key European business centres.

WE DELIVER



Consistent excellence in every aspect of our business is what we strive for every day.



We are strongly **committed to deliver top-notch quality** in all areas of our operations.



We make sure that **travel is safe, punctual and smooth** for our customers.



We are a **reliable partner** for everyone we cooperate with.



By connecting people and places, we bring benefits to the whole of society.

WE CARE



We love what we do and **our passion for aviation inspires others**.



We build **long-lasting relationships** with our passengers, anticipating their needs and **offering the best service** possible.



Sustainability is at the core of all the ways we work – how we do business, how we interact with people.



We care for the environment and **introduce green practices** wherever we can.

WE GROW



We see challenges as opportunities to **develop**.



We **innovate, improve and move forward** in order to be ahead of the industry.



We are a **team of the best professionals** in the field who are constantly working to stay on top.



We believe in the balance of thinking fast and smart – true leaders are **flexible visionaries** and take clear decisions to adapt to change and create a better future.

Your health and well-being are our top priority

To minimise the potential spread of viruses, we have introduced new 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. Your body temperature will be measured at the airport, and you will be allowed on board only if it does not exceed 37.8°C.

Check in and order your inflight meal and other services online to minimise physical contact.



AT THE AIRPORT

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 exempted 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.

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

Our crew wear protective face masks and gloves during the whole flight. Each passenger also receives a complimentary protective mask and disinfecting wipes in order to be able to change his or her mask after the inflight meal.

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

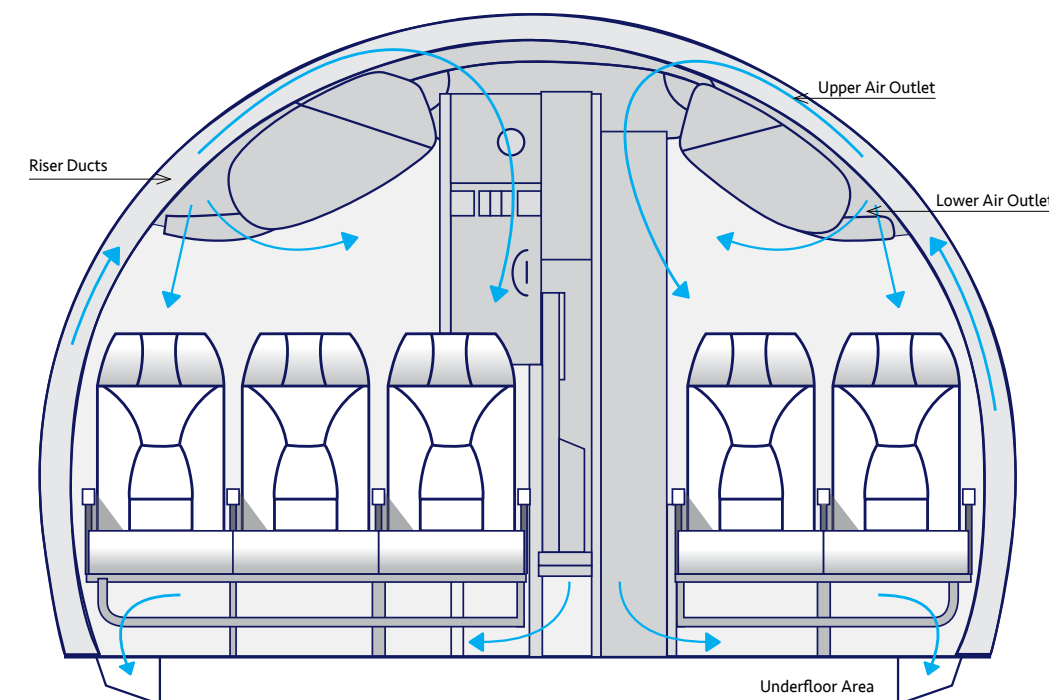
Our *Airbus A220-300* aircraft are equipped with a modern environmental control system using HEPA filters to eliminate all viruses and bacteria. Airflow is routed down towards the floor, thus minimising air transmission amongst passengers.

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 gaspers, 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.



First Officer Veronika Olenika, First Officer Liina Sillam,
Captain Alina Arhipova and Captain Darja Divakova.

Making it happen

Spending a whole afternoon with these women while interviews and photo sessions took place was a lesson to follow if ever one needed encouragement in how to choose a profession or make a life-changing decision, follow a dream, and not let old industry stereotypes get in the way. Although after our conversations, it turned out that there are more stereotypes about female pilots outside the aviation industry than there are within it.

Five percent of the pilots currently working for *airBaltic* are female, which is also the average industry number. But the numbers are looking slightly better with regard to *airBaltic*'s Pilot Academy, where 12% of all applications received have been from women. And 13% of academy students are female.

Here four pilots share their stories about the start of their careers. They talk about the advantages of the job and the challenges they've faced, both professionally and privately. They also share words of encouragement from their own experience.

VERONIKA OLENIKA (43), from Latvia, joined *airBaltic* in 2017, First Officer

Ever since she was a child, Veronika wanted to become a pilot. Her grandparents lived in Uzbekistan, and she and her parents flew there every year to visit them. Just entering Riga Airport always filled her with a pleasant feeling of excitement and anticipation regarding the upcoming flight. And luckily it was a long flight. 'That's also when I decided to become a pilot and fly,' she says.

Veronika wanted to start training as a pilot immediately after high school, but at that time there were no opportunities to do so in Latvia, nor could her parents afford to send her to school abroad. So she began studying radio engineering at the Riga Aviation University, which later changed its name to the Transport and Telecommunication Institute, from which Veronika graduated. She also graduated from Riga Technical University at the same time and holds two master's degrees in technical sciences.

Veronika then began working in the IT sector, initially as a test engineer, earned a third master's degree in business administration (MBA), and eventually became one of the top managers at the company. By that time she was 36 years old, but she decided to finally fulfil her dream and at least obtain a private pilot licence. 'I hadn't become a pilot, but I still wanted to learn to fly, at least for myself,' she says.

After receiving her pilot licence, it was her instructors who encouraged Veronika to continue her training and obtain a commercial pilot licence as well. 'They reminded me that this was my dream,' she remembers. 'I realised that this was what I really wanted to do, and so after 18 years in the IT sector, I decided to leave my job, because I could no longer combine my work with my training.'

It took her eight months to obtain all the other necessary qualifications and ratings, and in November 2016 Veronika also passed the last necessary course, Multi-Crew Cooperation, at the *airBaltic* Training Centre. '*airBaltic* had taken notice of me during these courses. So I sent in my CV, and fairly

soon they invited me to an interview. And a couple of months later they offered me a job.'

Veronika is also a safety manager at the *airBaltic* Training Centre and a flight instructor at the *airBaltic* Pilot Academy, where she was offered a position already at the very beginning. 'I really like teaching people who are just starting their training,' she says. 'I like teaching the practical skills and seeing the glint in students' eyes after their first and second flights, when they realise they can really take off and land an aircraft. It gives me an indescribable sense of satisfaction to see that sparkle in the students' eyes. I love working with them, training them, and seeing the results.'

Looking back on her decision to leave her job in IT, Veronika admits that it was a bold move: 'I had to make the decision before I had my commercial pilot licence, and I had no guarantee of a job in aviation.'

At the age of 36 I still wanted to learn to fly, at least for myself

I don't regret it for one moment, and everything turned out well. I finished my training very quickly, and I found a job quickly. And right here at home, too, in Riga.

But these big changes did affect Veronika's personal life. 'My children, who are now grown, supported me and understood my desire to change my profession, but it was hard for my husband to accept these changes because they were too extreme, and we decided to live separately.'

Veronika urges people to not put off their desire to become a pilot. Also because the practical skills will be easier to acquire. 'The theoretical part was easy for me, but acquiring the practical skills at this age took longer compared to my fellow students at the flight school, who were significantly younger than me,' she admits. 'If it's really your dream, try to fulfil it and start studying as soon as you can.'

Words by Ilze Pole
Photos by Vladislavs Proškins (F64)

LIINA SILLAM (35), from Estonia, joined *airBaltic* in 2014, First Officer

Liina's family lived close to Tallinn Airport, and she saw airplanes every day, taking off and coming in to land. It was fascinating, and she regularly pestered her father to take her flying – flying anywhere. He replied that when she grew up, she'd be able to fly as much as she wanted. 'And I thought, OK, when I grow up, I'll fly as much and as often as I want!' says Liina. 'I knew the only way to do that was to become a pilot, and so I did.'

Liina studied in a government-supported programme at the Estonian Aviation Academy in Tartu for four years and graduated in 2011, which was quite a difficult time, because the world was just recovering from the huge financial crisis. She was lucky to get a job with the Estonian police and border guards and flew an old *L-410 Turbolet*, mostly over Estonian territorial waters, patrolling land borders, and also doing some ambulance flights. She gained very good experience during her three years there: 'Trouble was that I flew only 250 hours per year, but I wanted more! I've also always wanted to fly for an airline, so in 2014 I applied to *airBaltic* and was offered a job.'

The biggest challenge for Liina was returning to work after maternity leave. 'I was away for almost two years doing completely other things and taking care of my baby boy,' Liina recalls. 'When I felt it was time to come back, I started rereading all the manuals and getting back into working mode. That was challenging – focusing again and learning to divide my time between work and home life. But because I like the lifestyle and the way my work is going, it's actually quite easy to manage.'

'When I wanted to apply to the aviation academy, I heard many people around me saying that I wouldn't get in because I'm female,' Liina remembers. 'But ten people were accepted into the piloting program that year, and exactly half of us were women. Three of us are still actively flying.' Liina recalls having the same experience regarding her first job: 'Our chief in the police and border guards was a very experienced older man, and some friends who knew him told me that I had no chance of getting the job and



flying, because I'm female and he would never hire me. But he did. And then it turned out that three out of the six pilots doing the job were female. Therefore, I think people outside the industry have stronger opinions about gender roles than the people actually within the industry. You need to like the job and the lifestyle, and it doesn't matter if you're male or female. The job gets done in exactly the same way.'

'If you think about it too much – and anyway, it's impossible to know everything – it can scare you,' Liina says. 'The thought of being at home for almost two years, the thought of wanting to have a child, that was very scary at first. I felt I would have to end my career. But to be honest, when I returned, I started at the exact same place where I had left off, and I just picked up from there.' According to Liina, thinking that women need to give up more does not help: 'It's not true, and I can say so from my own experience. If

you want it, you can make it work.'

Liina was very young when she decided to become a pilot, and she admits that she didn't consider any other career path apart from becoming a pilot. 'You shouldn't think too much about all the side stuff; it all comes with time and eventually finds the right way to be incorporated into your life. Time takes care of that. But if you have a dream or a passion to fly and you want to become a pilot, you should try! Our Pilot Academy is a very good way to get the necessary education all in one place. It's a first-rate education, and to have that *airBaltic* mark of quality is a very big advantage.'

Continuing with the advantages, Liina says that this job keeps her mind very sharp, because she never stops learning. 'It really keeps the mind active.' Plus, there is no routine, which she loves, because she can't imagine herself working from nine to five, Monday to Friday.

**ALINA ARHIPOVA (45),
from Latvia, joined *airBaltic*
in 1998, Captain**

Since the age of 11, Alina knew for sure that she would become a pilot: 'I saw the airplanes in the sky, saw the white tails they leave, and there was a sadness inside me. Like that of a bird whose wings are tied. It was then that I understood that I wouldn't be able to live my life with that sadness, and I had to become a pilot.'

From that moment on, everything Alina did was focused on becoming a pilot. When the time to begin her training drew near, she was diagnosed with myopia, or short-sightedness, which at the time put a stop to all her dreams. But she decided to study avionics and engineering at the Riga University of Aviation. She liked the technical aspect and was happy that this field would let her work closer to airplanes. With the help of an eye operation, Alina's sight was corrected, but before becoming a pilot, she nevertheless worked as a technician for six years.

'When I applied for a position as a technician at *airBaltic*, I heard a lot of discouraging comments from people around me that I wouldn't get the job because I'm a woman,' Alina remembers. 'It made me very self-conscious, and I made sure all my paperwork and qualifications were in super order so there wouldn't be the slightest chance to hold any inconsistencies in my paperwork against me during the hiring process.'

It was a lucky coincidence that Alina had just graduated from the university six months earlier and *airBaltic* was looking for technicians at precisely that same time. The application and selection process was long, but at the end, Alina and three young men were hired by the airline. 'I remember a question in the interview about why *airBaltic* ought to hire me, and I immediately answered that they would not regret hiring me!' She was the airline's first female technician and repaired its *Fokker 50* aircraft as well. Later on, she flew that same aircraft type and now jokes that she would have been able to repair the airplane during a flight, if needed.

'First of all, the feeling of flying gives me a very strong sense of being alive,' says Alina when asked what she loves about the job.

Likewise, Alina loves the feeling of being able to control and operate an aircraft that weighs many tonnes: 'I want it to land smoothly and nicely so that the passengers are happy. That gives me great pleasure. I always remember that it's all about our passengers and their wellbeing, and I always want to make them feel comfortable.'

Airplanes have become more modern and are easier to fly nowadays, but a pilot nevertheless has to keep all of the relevant information in mind, analyse situations, and make decisions. 'At any moment, we have to be ready to fly without any computer assistance. That keeps us very sharp-minded and doesn't let us relax on duty, because behind us are the lives of many people.'

When it comes to her personal life, Alina laughs and says that flying an aircraft is much easier than raising children: 'At least the aircraft listens to you and does what you tell it to do. But with kids, it doesn't work like that! I have three children, a house to look after, and a garden. ...and I have to manage to do all of it. As soon as I sit down with a book, someone comes to me and says "Mum, let's play!" It's challenging, and serious time management skills are needed. But if you have a wish, if you really want to do something, it's always possible to find ways to do it. I love my job very much, I couldn't not fly, but my family is also very important, and I love them as well. So I have to find ways to combine everything. But so far, we've managed.'

'We spend too much of our lives at work, so we shouldn't waste time doing things we don't like,' Alina says. 'We have to choose and do what gives us a sense of satisfaction. Work needs to inspire. Your choice needs to be very clear. But being afraid of stereotypes that this work is not for women – throw that away! Don't listen to anyone, and follow your heart.'

When Alina joined *airBaltic* as a pilot, she was the airline's only female pilot. Just recently, however, the airline had more than 20 female pilots, and half of them were captains. 'I remember at the beginning I didn't even have a proper uniform; I had to combine pieces from the male uniform, cabin crew uniform, and my own clothes. But now we have beautiful uniforms specially made for us.'

**DARJA DIVAKOVA (59),
from Lithuania, joined *airBaltic*
in 2005, Captain**

When the moment came for Darja to choose a profession, her mum played a very important role. She had always wanted a son, and already planned for him to be in the military or to become a pilot. At first, that seemed as far as possible from what Darja was doing – she was a professional gymnast and wanted to become an interior designer. 'But I didn't have much choice,' Darja now laughs as she tells us how she passed the exams to start training as a flight dispatcher, but the course was cancelled because only two people had applied. 'We were then allowed to choose any other course, and, not denying my mother's influence, I chose to join the pilot course.'

I felt all the difficulty of my profession, but I wouldn't have left the job

In the first summer, all the students moved to Kyviškės, where there was an air base and where they all learned to fly *Cessnas*. 'I wasn't really expecting it so soon, but because I was studying in that programme, I had to fly,' says Darja. 'For my first 10 hours I flew with an instructor, and then he said, "That's it! Now you're going to fly on your own!" It was my first solo flight, and from that moment on I fell in love with flying. So when I was offered to transfer back to the flight dispatcher programme, I refused. I realised that I could do it – I could fly, and I wanted to fly!'

'My whole profession is an advantage,' says Darja when asked about the positive aspects of her job. 'But most importantly, I've learned to love myself through this career. I like how I look in a uniform, I like how people look at me and how they treat me. I like the respect people have towards this profession and therefore towards me. My biggest fan is my daughter. She loves that her mum is a captain.'

At work she really enjoys talking with and getting to know the colleagues she

flies with. 'I'm amazed how intelligent, interesting, and smart the young generation of pilots is, the ones who are just starting out. Those are the most interesting conversations we have on the flight deck!' Darja also praises the *airBaltic* leadership: 'With the people we have running this airline at all levels, I'm convinced that the company will get back on track after this crisis. Moreover, it will become even stronger and grow further.'

Darja's most difficult year – not only professionally but also personally – was when she became a captain on *Dash Q400* aircraft. Her mother died, her father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease, and she got divorced. She was alone in a foreign country with her daughter, who was only four years old at the time. 'That was a moment when I felt all the difficulty of my profession and my work,' she admits. 'I had to work a lot and needed to alter all of my plans, but I got through it. I wouldn't have left my job, though. I had invested so much in it. I had studied for five years, and although I didn't have to pay for my education, I invested my time, my energy, and my effort, and it is very valuable. It was worth it.'

That's why Darja's advice is to make a commitment when you're ready and when the choice is clear: 'Commit yourself to this career when you know you're ready, because it really is a commitment and the profession is demanding. Then, don't hesitate for a moment and go ahead, because it is worth it. Also ask yourself whether you're more tended towards a career or family. Both directions are OK, and the choice is only yours. But for those female students who apply to the *airBaltic* Pilot Academy and begin working for *airBaltic*, we will always support and help them, just as one does in a family.'

'People usually think I am doing complicated math or physics calculations. But that's not the case. Nor is it physically difficult to fly a plane, especially the new *Airbus A220-300*. But we don't just fly airplanes; we're also specialists in meteorology, aerodynamics, and navigation. We know our aircraft type and all of its systems very well. We're fluent in specific English-language phraseology. The pilot profession is actually very broad and interdisciplinary.'

airBaltic's sustainable development goals

At the end of last year, *airBaltic* set quite ambitious goals related to sustainability and corporate responsibility. However, since February the direction of this planned path has changed due to the challenging times the world is facing.

Nevertheless, 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, at the beginning of this 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 this October for a period of one year, *airBaltic* will highlight and contribute to resolving an issue 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>

* Any situation must be evaluated in its entirety, paying attention to details. All of these signs may not be present.



Laila Odina, Chairwoman of the Executive Board at Riga International Airport
Martin Gauss, CEO and President of *airBaltic*
Dimitrijs Trofimovs, State Secretary of Ministry of Interior
Gunta Viksne, board member of the social shelter 'Droša Māja'
Iluta Lāce, Head of the association Martas Centrs

◀ A very special event took place on October 19 as *airBaltic* together with Riga International Airport, the Ministry of the Interior, and two local human rights associations – the *Centrs Marta* (Marta Centre) women's resource centre and the *Droša Māja* (Safe House) shelter – signed a memorandum of cooperation in order to prevent human trafficking in airports, with the main goal of reducing the illegal movement and trade of people around the Baltics, Europe, and worldwide.

The aim of this event was to address society and raise awareness about various aspects of human trafficking, its various forms, the risks and consequences of being trafficked, and the opportunities to receive assistance.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

This phenomenon without borders and without a face, but with serious consequences, is a global, social, and criminal problem.

Any person, regardless of their gender, race, age, or status, can become a victim of human trafficking in any region of the world. Humans are exploited in various spheres and in different ways, including construction, farming, services, fisheries, sexual exploitation, illegal adoption, trade in organs, and as drug couriers. Recruiters may pretend to be a friend or a foreign bride or groom, may be fraudsters, or may even be professional recruiters who use personal relationships, social networks, modelling, dating, or employment agencies to lure victims. They may also operate through work or study offers or place advertisements on the internet.

DON'T BECOME A VICTIM!

If you suspect that you have been recruited for human trafficking: Take a photograph of your documents and send it to your relatives and loved ones. Find out the location of the nearest embassy/consular department of your country. Find out the address of your planned whereabouts and inform relatives/acquaintances about it. Find out the location of the nearest police station. Do not leave the airport premises and request assistance from the flight crew or airport employees. Do not leave your phone or documents unattended, and do not give them to anyone.

If you are from Latvia, contact the *Droša Māja* (Safe House) shelter or the *Centrs Marta* (Marta Centre) resources centre for assistance, including help in organising your return home. See contacts below.

BE ALERT! THERE MAY BE A VICTIM RIGHT NEXT TO YOU!

Human trafficking victims are ordinary people, many of whom do not even suspect on their flight to their destination country that they have been recruited for exploitation. Some signs that could indicate a person is a potential victim:*

The person's clothing does not correspond to the weather.

The person looks confused and/or embarrassed.

The person does not know his/her destination address.

The person is flying without luggage.

The person has only a one-way ticket.

The ticket was paid for and organised by another person, often a stranger.

A person with mental disabilities is flying alone or with a suspicious companion.

They communicate little with each other; the passenger responds to the companion with awe and fear; the companion behaves in a controlling manner, does not let the passenger talk to the flight crew, and/or the companion is a third-country citizen.

Local experience shows that Latvian citizens are most often exploited in **Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and South America**, therefore one must be particularly alert when flying to/from these countries!

IF YOU SUSPECT THAT A PERSON IS BEING TRAFFICKED

Talk to the potential victim, find out the details of the situation, and inform him/her about the risks of becoming a victim of human trafficking.

Inform the flight crew or airport employees about your suspicion.

Give to the potential victim contact details of organisations that can provide assistance:

Droša Māja (Safe House),
+371 28612120, drosa.maja@gmail.com
Centrs Marta (Marta Centre), +371 67378539, centrs@marta.lv
cilvektirdznieciba.lv
patverums-dm.lv
marta.lv

TAKE A PHOTO OF THIS INFORMATION AND SHARE IT WITH YOUR ACQUAINTANCES WHO ARE TRAVELLING!

In October:

October 1 – *airBaltic* implements the new ERO organisational policy.

Since October 6 – *airBaltic* supports the initiative to stop the spread of the coronavirus by internally promoting the *Apturi Covid* (Stop Covid) app.

October 8 – *airBaltic* launches the internal *airBaltic* Leaders for Future (ALFA) leadership programme.

October 12 – *airBaltic* takes part in the *COVIDpass.lv* project to support the Latvian Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in the attempt to limit the spread of the coronavirus.



NEW TICKET TYPES ON *airBaltic* FLIGHTS

Since July, 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 biggest news is that now the date can be changed for all tickets. This will give 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 airBaltic.com	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>

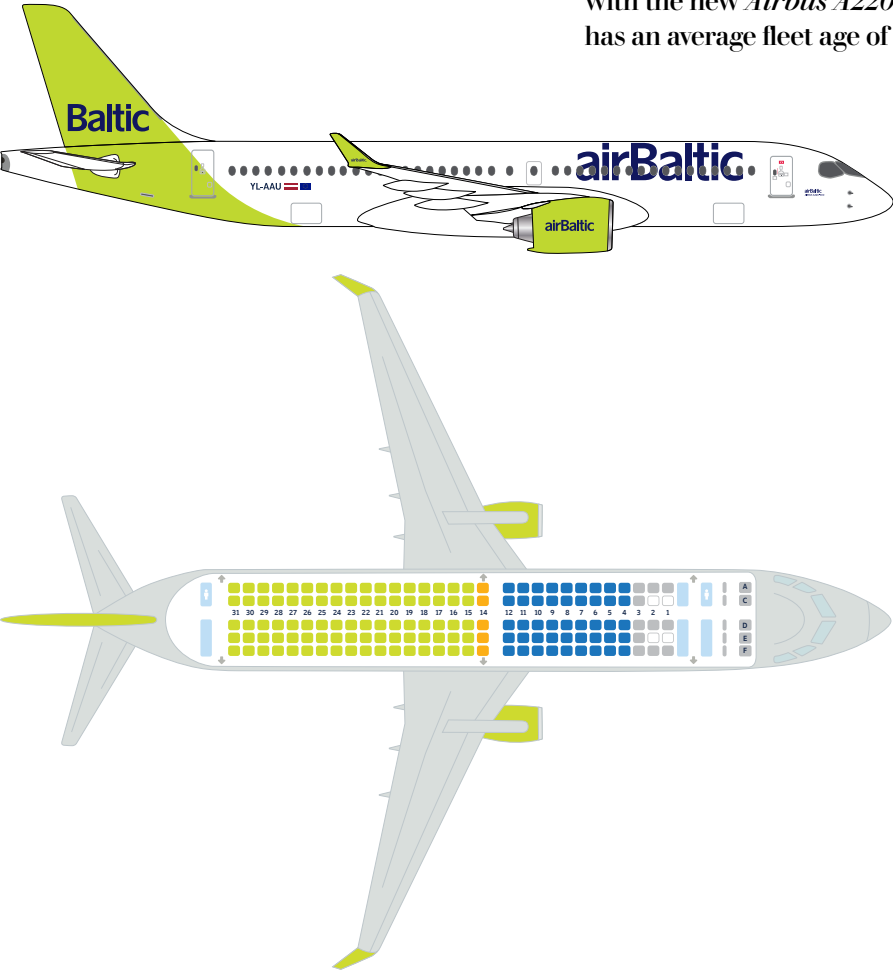
* Fare difference may apply.
** A Flight Cancellation option and Name Change option can be added to your tickets by making the reservation on [airBaltic.com](#).
*** The number of *pins* earned per each Euro spent on a ticket depends on the tier level within the *airBaltic Club*.

Flights from RIGA						Flights to RIGA					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 617	RIX	AMS	1234567	07:35	09:00	BT 618	AMS	RIX	1234567	10:20	13:30
BT 619	RIX	AMS	12345-7	16:25	17:50	BT 620	AMS	RIX	12345-7	18:55	22:05
BERLIN Tegel / Till November 6						BERLIN Tegel / Till November 6					
BT 211	RIX	TXL	1-3-5-7	07:25	08:05	BT 211	TXL	RIX	1-3-5-7	08:55	11:30
BERLIN Branderburg / From November 8						BERLIN Branderburg / From November 8					
BT 211	RIX	BER	12345-7	07:25	08:05	BT 214	BER	RIX	12345-7	08:55	11:30
BILLUND						BILLUND					
BT 147	RIX	BLL	--3-5-7	12:35	13:15	BT 148	BLL	RIX	--3-5-7	14:15	16:50
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 603	RIX	BRU	12345-7	16:35	18:05	BT 604	BRU	RIX	12345-7	19:05	22:25
COPENHAGEN						COPENHAGEN					
BT 139	RIX	CPH	1234567	18:40	19:10	BT 140	CPH	RIX	1234567	20:10	22:35
DUBLIN						DUBLIN					
BT 661	RIX	DUB	-2---6-	07:30	08:45	BT 662	DUB	RIX	-2---6-	09:45	14:35
DUSSELDORF						DUSSELDORF					
BT 233	RIX	DUS	-2---6-	17:10	18:25	BT 234	DUS	RIX	-2---6-	19:25	22:30
FRANKFURT						FRANKFURT					
BT 243	RIX	FRA	1234567	07:25	08:45	BT 244	FRA	RIX	1234567	09:45	12:55
GOTHENBURG						GOTHENBURG					
BT 121	RIX	GOT	-2-4-6-	13:30	14:00	BT 122	GOT	RIX	-2-4-6-	14:50	17:15
HAMBURG						HAMBURG					
BT 251	RIX	HAM	1-3---7	12:35	13:20	BT 252	HAM	RIX	1-3---7	14:20	17:00
HELSINKI						HELSINKI					
BT 303	RIX	HEL	1234567	14:05	15:05	BT 304	HEL	RIX	1234567	15:55	16:55
LARNACA						LARNACA					
BT 657	RIX	LCA	----5--	13:55	17:40	BT 658	LCA	RIX	----5--	18:30	22:30
LONDON Gatwick						LONDON Gatwick					
BT 651	RIX	LGW	----5--	07:40	8:40	BT 652	LGW	RIX	----5--	09:40	14:25
BT 653	RIX	LGW	1234567	15:30	16:30	BT 654	LGW	RIX	1234567	17:30	22:15
MILAN Malpensa						MILAN Malpensa					
BT 629	RIX	MLP	-2-4-6-	07:35	9:20	BT 630	MLP	RIX	-2-4-6-	10:20	14:00
MUNICH						MUNICH					
BT 221	RIX	MUC	-----6-	07:15	8:30	BT 222	MUC	RIX	-----6-	09:15	12:25
BT 223	RIX	MUC	1-345-7	16:55	18:10	BT 224	MUC	RIX	1-345-7	19:10	22:20
OSLO						OSLO					
BT 151	RIX	OSL	1234567	07:15	08:00	BT 152	OSL	RIX	1234567	09:00	11:35
PALANGA						PALANGA					
BT 033	RIX	PLQ	1-3-5-7	23:20	00:05+1	BT 032	PLQ	RIX	12-4-6-	05:50	06:35
PARIS Charles de Gaulle						PARIS Charles de Gaulle					
BT 691	RIX	CDG	1-345-7	07:20	09:10	BT 692	CDG	RIX	1-345-7	10:10	13:55
PRAGUE						PRAGUE					
BT 481	RIX	PRG	1--5--	12:45	13:30	BT 482	PRG	RIX	1--5--	14:30	17:15
REYKJAVIK						REYKJAVIK					
BT 169	RIX	KEF	-2---6-	13:55	16:00	BT 170	KEF	RIX	-2---6-	17:00	22:40
ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino						ROME Leonardo da Vinci Fiumicino					
BT 633	RIX	FCO	--3---7	14:50	16:55	BT 634	FCO	RIX	--3---7	17:55	21:55
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 109	RIX	ARN	1234567	18:40	18:55	BT 110	ARN	RIX	1234567	19:45	21:50
STUTTGART						STUTTGART					
BT 261	RIX	STR	-2---6-	12:10	13:30	BT 262	STR	RIX	-2---6-	14:30	17:40

Flights from RIGA						Flights to RIGA					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
TALLINN						TALLINN					
BT 311	RIX	TLL	1--5--	05:45	06:35	BT 362	TLL	RIX	1234567	05:40	06:30
BT 311	RIX	TLL	-234-67	07:15	08:05	BT 316	TLL	RIX	1234567	14:30	15:20
BT 313	RIX	TLL	1234567	11:55	12:45	BT 318	TLL	RIX	1234567	21:10	22:00
BT 361	RIX	TLL	1234567	23:15	00:05+1						
TBILISI						TBILISI					
BT 724	RIX	TBS	-2-4-6-	13:50	19:15	BT 725	TBS	RIX	-2-4-6-	20:45	22:20
VIENNA						VIENNA					
BT 431	RIX	VIE	12345-7	07:35	08:35	BT 432	VIE	RIX	12345-7	09:25	12:25
VILNIUS						VILNIUS					
BT 341	RIX	VNO	1-345-7	06:10	07:00	BT 350	VNO	RIX	1234567	05:40	06:30
BT 341	RIX	VNO	-2---6-	07:15	08:05	BT 346	VNO	RIX	123-56-	14:25	15:15
BT 343	RIX	VNO	1234567	12:05	12:55	BT 346	VNO	RIX	---4--7	15:05	15:55
BT 349	RIX	VNO	1234567	23:15	00:05+1	BT 348	VNO	RIX	1234567	21:20	22:10
ZURICH						ZURICH					
BT 641	RIX	ZRH	1-3-5-7	07:30	09:00	BT 642	ZRH	RIX	1-3-5-7	10:00	13:25
Flights from Tallinn						Flights to Tallinn					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 621	TLL	AMS	1--5--	07:25	09:00	BT 622	AMS	TLL	1--5--	10:20	13:40
BERLIN Tegel / Till November 7						BERLIN Tegel / Till November 7					
BT 201	TLL	TXL	--3--6-	08:55	09:50	BT 202	TXL	TLL	--3--6-	10:50	13:40
BERLIN Branderburg / From November 11						BERLIN Branderburg / From November 11					
BT 201	TLL	BER	--3--6-	08:55	09:50	BT 202	BER	TLL	--3--6-	10:50	13:40
BRUSSELS						BRUSSELS					
BT 705	TLL	BRU	1--5--	14:25	16:00	BT 706	BRU	TLL	1--5--	17:00	20:25
COPENHAGEN						COPENHAGEN					
BT 195	TLL	CPH	--3--7	16:05	16:45	BT 196	CPH	TLL	--3--7	17:45	20:10
LONDON Gatwick						LONDON Gatwick					
BT 649	TLL	LGW	-2---6-	13:35	14:40	BT 650	LGW	TLL	-2---6-	15:30	20:20
OSLO						OSLO					
BT 199	TLL	OSL	-----7	09:25	10:00	BT 200	OSL	TLL	-----7	11:00	13:30
BT 199	TLL	OSL	---4---	16:05	16:40	BT 200	OSL	TLL	---4---	17:40	20:10
STOCKHOLM Arlanda						STOCKHOLM Arlanda					
BT 191	TLL	ARN	-2-4---	08:55	08:55	BT 192	ARN	TLL	-2-4---	09:55	11:55
Flights from Vilnius						Flights to Vilnius					
Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival	Flight No	From	To	Days	Departure	Arrival
AMSTERDAM						AMSTERDAM					
BT 609	VNO	AMS	1-3-5--	07:50	09:20	BT 610	AMS	VNO	1-3-5--	10:20	13:35
BERLIN Tegel / Till November 4						BERLIN Tegel / Till November 4					
BT 215	VNO	TXL	1-3----	14:35	15:10	BT 216	TXL	VNO	1-3----	16:10	18:40
BERLIN Branderburg / From November 9						BERLIN Branderburg / From November 9					
BT 215	VNO	BER	1-3----	14:35	15:10	BT 216	BER	VNO	1-3----	16:10	18:40
LONDON Gatwick						LONDON Gatwick					
BT 663	VNO	LGW	----5--	13:45	14:45	BT 664	LGW	VNO	----5--	15:40	20:30
MUNICH						MUNICH					
BT 227	VNO	MUC	-2---6-	15:15	16:20	BT 228	MUC	VNO	-2---6-	17:20	20:20
OSLO						OSLO					
BT 155	VNO	OSL	-----7	15:10	16:10	BT 156	OSL	VNO	-----7	17:10	20:00
BT 155	VNO	OSL	---4---	15:30	16:30	BT 156	OSL	VNO	---4---	17:30	20:20
PARIS Charles de Gaulle						PARIS Charles de Gaulle					
BT 701	VNO	CDG	---4--7	07:50	09:45	BT 702	CDG	VNO	---4--7	10:35	14:15

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	23
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						

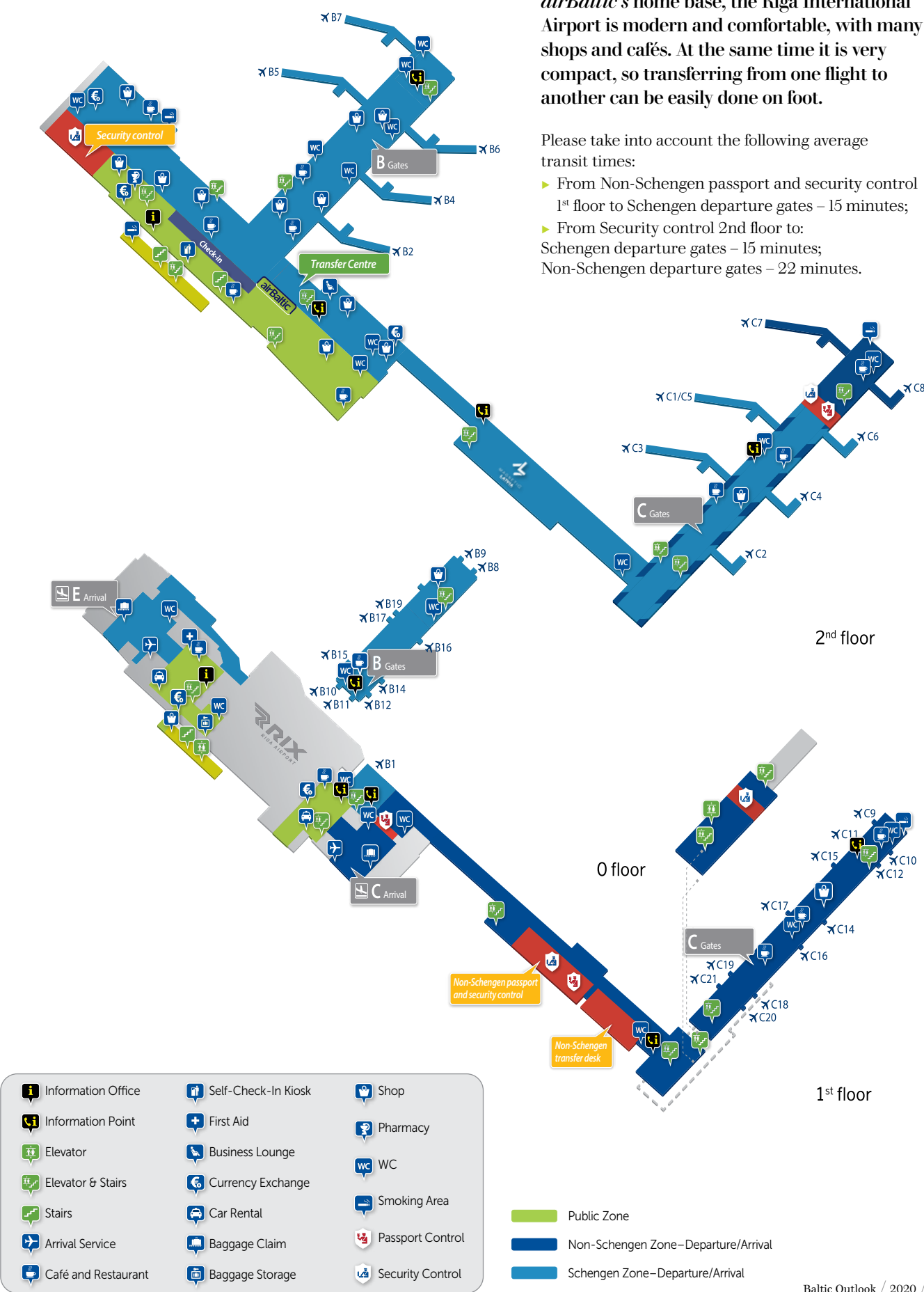
* Shall be stowed in overhead bin or under the front seat inside an appropriate bag.

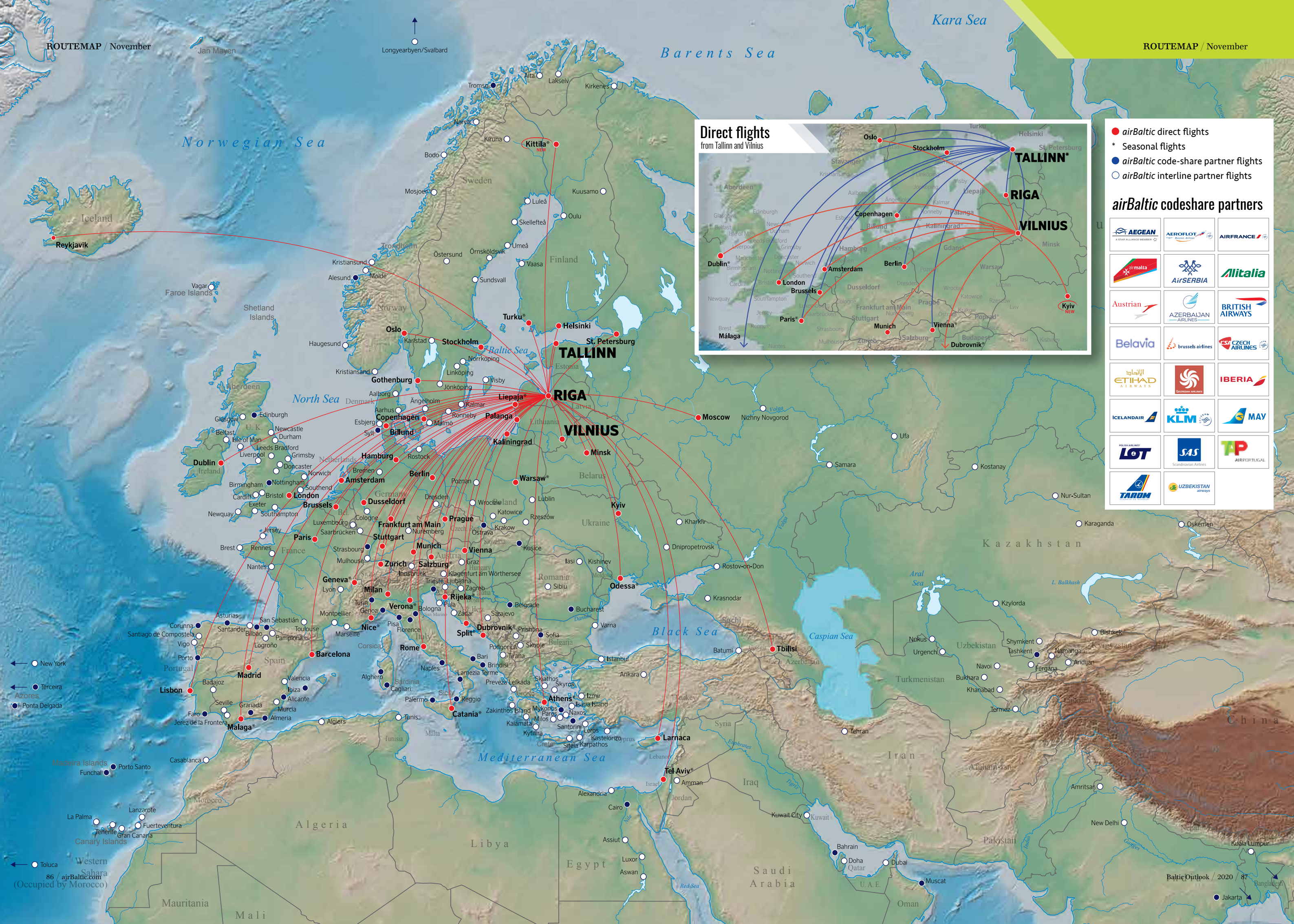
Welcome to Riga International Airport

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.

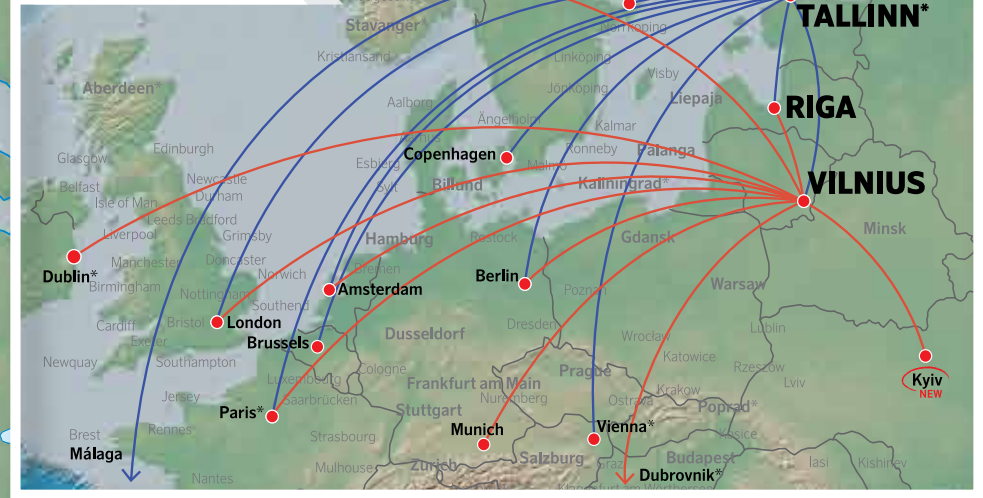
Please take into account the following average transit times:

- 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.





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.



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 for only 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.



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 24.99** 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](https://airbaltic.com) when purchasing *GREEN* or *GREEN plus* tickets.



Checked baggage

Add checked baggage if you want to take up to **20 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.



Pre-order online
on **airBaltic.com**



Freshly made before your flight
Choose from over 25 great value meal sets



Breakfast sets



Hot meals



For special occasions



Vegetarian and gluten free

Choose your meal when booking a ticket on airbaltic.com or anytime later up to 24 hours before departure through *My booking* section. You can also order a meal during online check-in from a smaller menu.

Fly one of the world's greenest aircraft, the Airbus A220-300

Think green
Fly green



20% less
CO₂ emissions

50% less
noise

50% less
NO_x emissions



*Compared to previous generation narrow-body aircraft with the same seating capacity