

# Latvia.

Get to know it!



The Latvian Institute

# Location

Situated in Northern Europe,  
on the coast of Baltic Sea,  
linking the East and the  
West.

64,589 km<sup>2</sup> of scenic plains  
and rivers, lakes and hills,  
including a majestic  
coastline.



# Latvia in Europe



# The Name “Latvia”

comes from the ancient Latgalians, one of four Indo-European Baltic tribes who formed the core of modern Latvians.







**The Republic of Latvia  
was founded  
on November 18, 1918.**



# Republic

In 1918 Latvia proclaims independence.  
In 1920 Latvia wins the War of Independence.  
In 1921 Allies recognize Latvia *de iure*.  
In 1922 *Satversme*, the Constitution, is issued.

Latvia is a parliamentary republic.

*Saeima*, the parliament, has 100 deputies elected every four years.





# Freedom

After 50 years of Soviet and Nazi occupation (1940-1990), Latvia declared the restoration of independence in 1990 and regained it fully in 1991.





# Raimonds Vējonis

President



# Ināra Mūrniece

Speaker of *Saeima*



# Māris Kučinskis

Prime Minister



# Benchmarks

2004: Latvia joins European Union and NATO

2014: Latvia joins the Eurozone

Riga – the European Capital of Culture

Latvia hosts the 8th World Choir Games

2015: Latvian Presidency of the Council of the EU

XI Latvian Youth Song and Dance Festival

2016: Latvia joins the OECD

2017: Riga - Gauja Region – The European Region of Gastronomy

2018: Latvia's Centenary



# Back on the Track

## **2003 – 2007**

Economy skyrockets and overheats.

## **2008**

Financial crisis, economic nosedive.

## **2009 – 2012**

Fiscal discipline, reforms and return to positive GDP growth rate in 2012.

## **2013 – 2017**

Stable growth, among the fastest in the EU.



# Economic Revival\*

\*2010-2012 average growth

- 12% increase of total exports.
- 19% expansion in investment (2011-2012).
- 14% increase of tourism.
- 10% growth of industrial production.





# Economy and Exports

Trade.  
Transportation.  
Manufacturing (incl. wood processing).



# Latvia Joins the Eurozone



January 1, 2014.

Increased credit rating and a stable outlook.

10% increase in foreign investment expected.

No currency conversion costs within Eurozone.



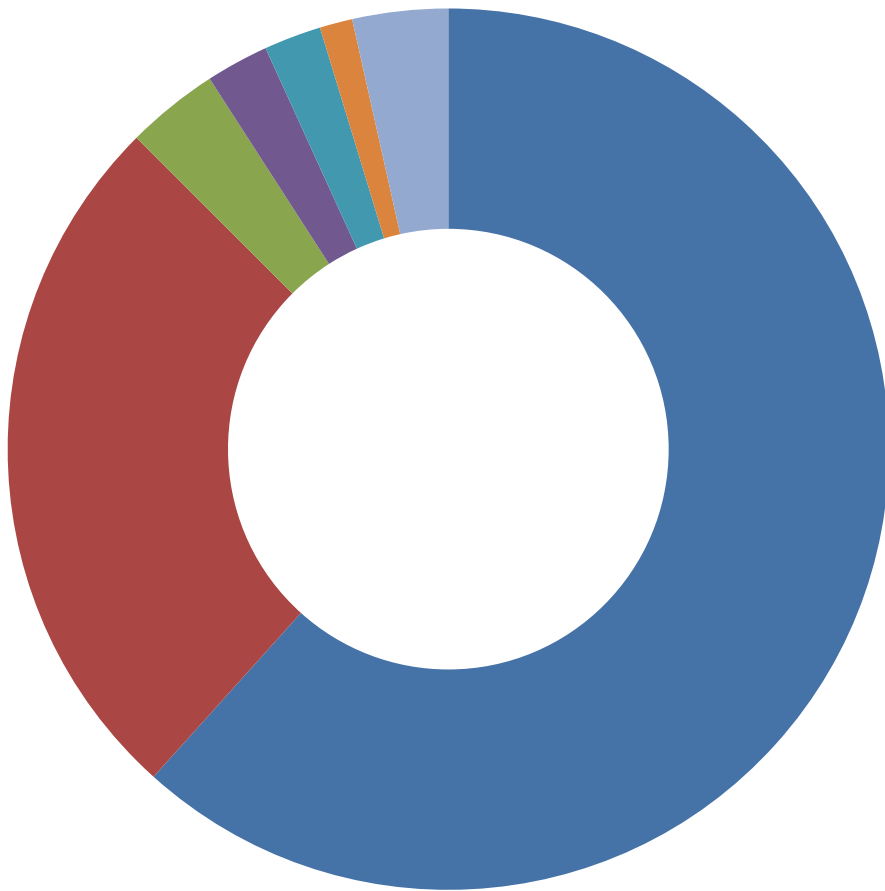
# Economic Stats 2017

Annual GDP growth 4,5%  
International credit rating: A-  
7<sup>th</sup> most sustainable pension system  
Unemployment rate: 8,7%  
Public debt to GDP ratio: 40%



# Ethnic Composition

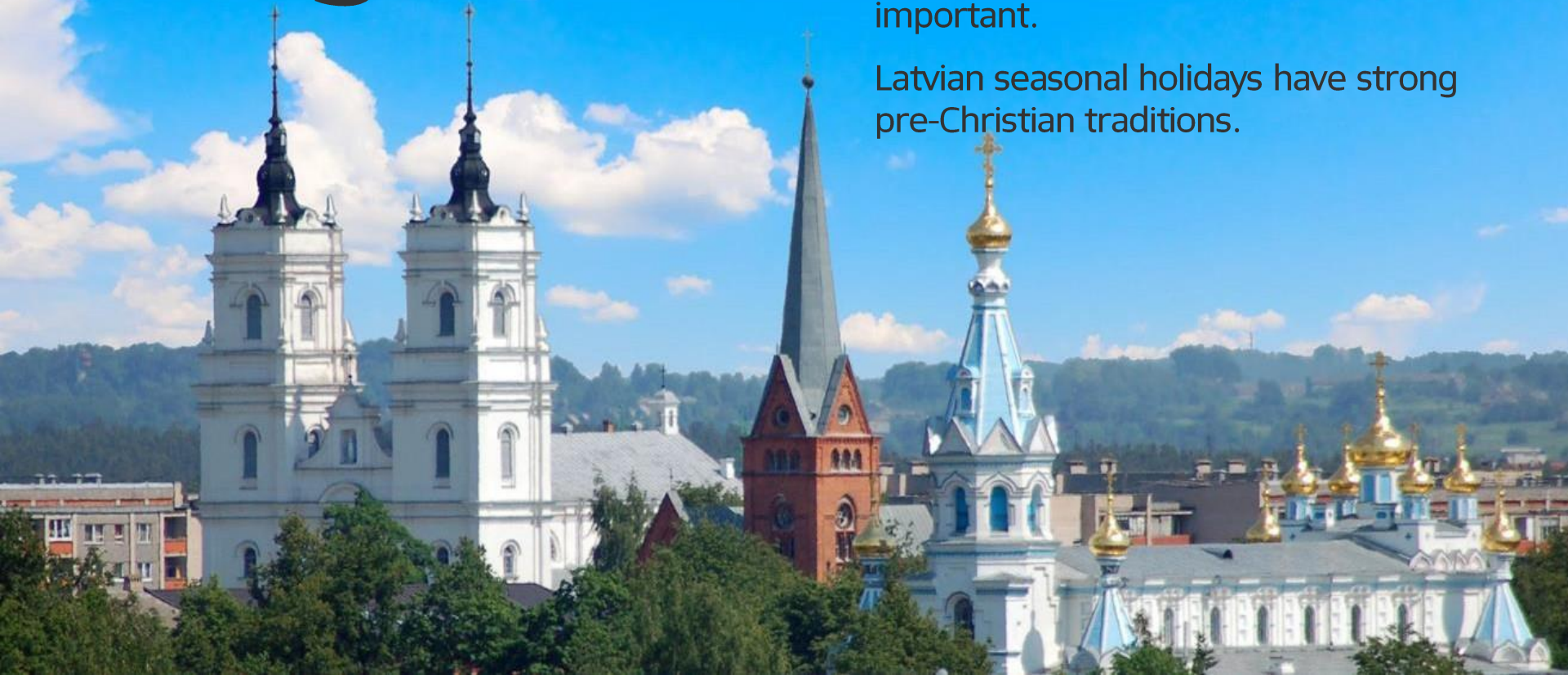
- Latvians 61,8%
- Russians 25,6%
- Belarusians 3,4%
- Ukrainians 2,3%
- Poles 2,1%
- Lithuanians 1,2%
- Other 3,5%



# Religion

Most believers in Latvia follow Christianity. Ecumenical tradition is important.

Latvian seasonal holidays have strong pre-Christian traditions.







# Heritage

Latvian cultural heritage dates  
back well over a thousand years.

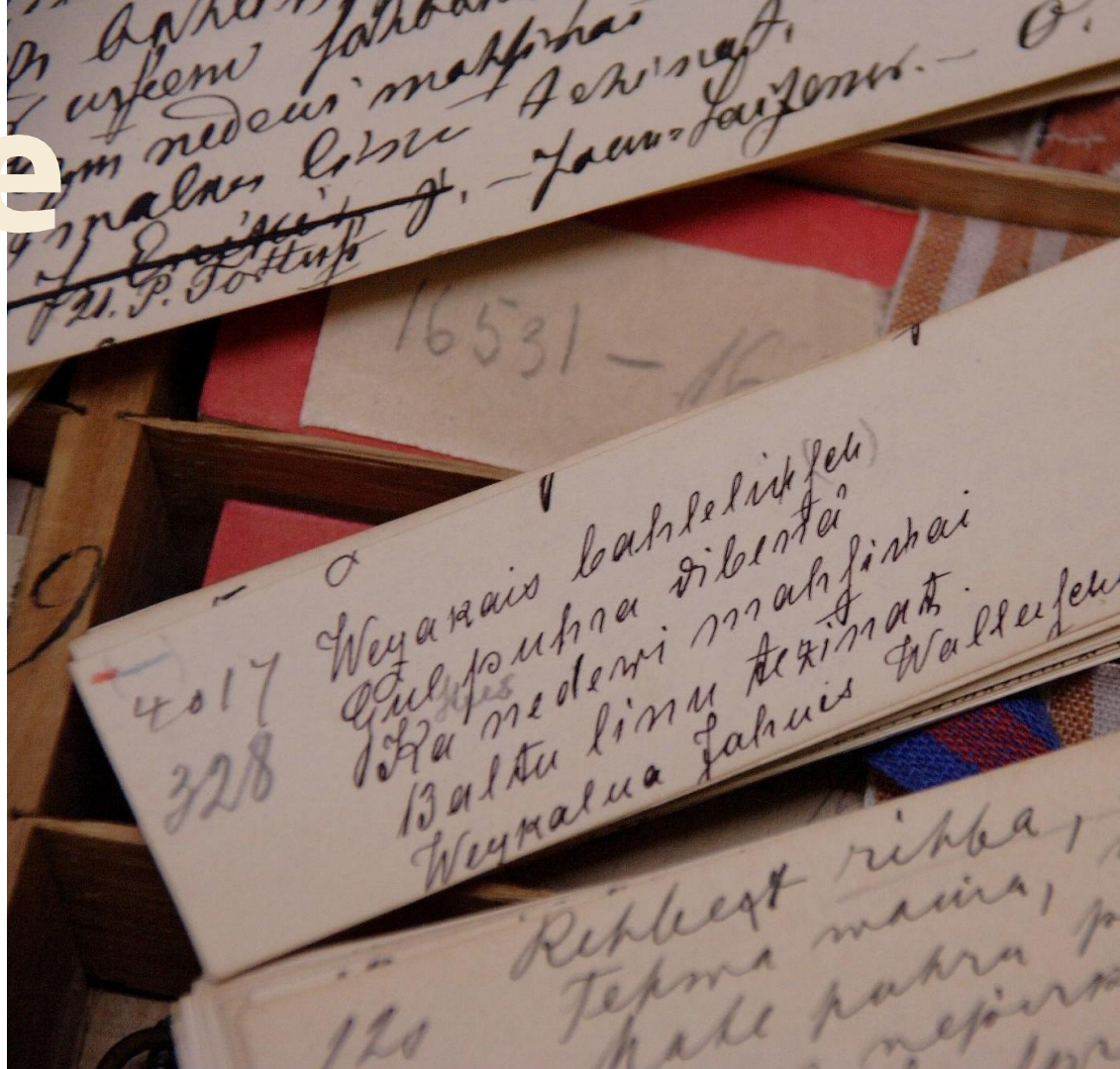


# Language

Latvian is a Balt language,  
but neither Slavic nor  
Germanic.

Folksongs *Dainas* are a part  
of the UNESCO Memory of  
the World Register.

Popular foreign languages  
are English, Russian, German.



# Celebrations

Most popular holidays are *Jāņi*, Easter, Christmas and New Year's Eve.

Tradition of decorating the Christmas tree originated in Rīga (1510).





# Summer Solstice

A large crowd of people is gathered on a grassy hill at dusk, celebrating the summer solstice. In the center, a large bonfire is burning brightly, casting a warm glow over the scene. To the right, a tall, lit street lamp stands prominently. The background features a body of water and distant hills under a darkening sky. The overall atmosphere is festive and communal.

The celebration of the summer solstice *Jāņi* is one of the oldest and most popular pre-Christian traditions in Latvia.





# Culture

Latvian traditions, costumes, decorative designs and rituals, passed down from generation to generation, are rooted in our land and nature.

# Singing Together

Singing unites us.

It brought Latvians together as a nation, and led to the creation of the state.

The 'Singing Revolution' was key to restoring independence in 1991.







# Song and Dance Celebration

The Nationwide Song and Dance Celebration has thrived for 150 years.

40,000 participants,  
2 million spectators.

UNESCO Masterpiece of the  
Oral and Intangible Heritage  
of Humanity.



# Performing Arts

Latvian performers have stunned audiences all around the world.

Music, opera, ballet, theatre, cinematography, animation...





# Classical Pearl

Our opera singers, conductors, musicians and composers perform on the most prominent stages.

Elīna Garanča, Kristīne Opolais, Mariss Jansons and Pēteris Vasks are some of the most famous Latvian musical figures globally.



# Theatre

Going to the theatre is a much loved occasion. Riga has the busiest theatre scene, but all cities and towns have their own stages, including open-air theatres.

Alvis Hermanis is one of the leading directors in Europe. Other big names in theatre are Vladislavs Nastavševs, Andrejs Žagars, Māra Ķimele.







# Literature

Literature and writers helped crystallize the idea of the Latvian state and bring forth the courage to lay its foundations.

Inga Ābele, Nora Ikstena, Kārlis Vērdiņš, Inese Zandere, Jānis Jonevs are just few contemporary Latvian talents whose works have been translated into English, French, Czech and other languages.

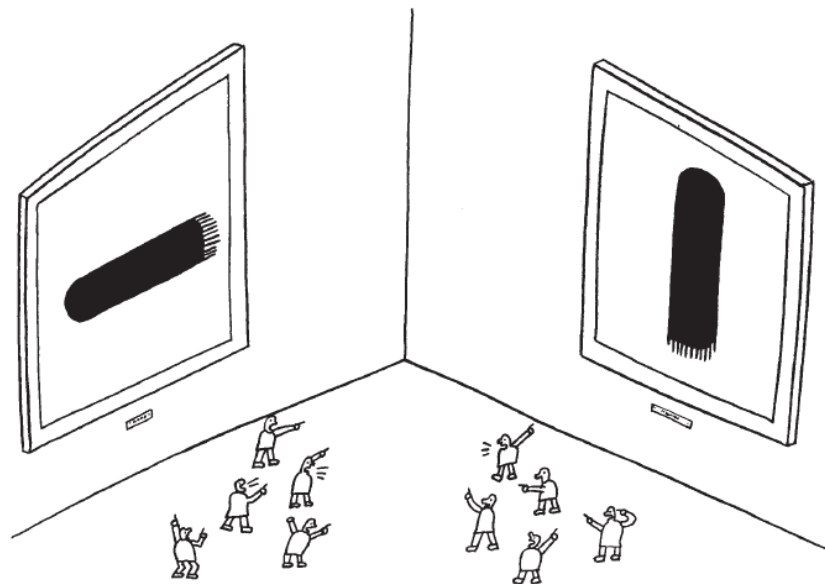
# Film Industry

The Latvian film industry will charm you with unusual stories and talented storytellers.

Laila Pakalniņa, Jānis Nords and Renārs Vimba are international recognition film directors.

Latvia also is a great place for shooting both historical and contemporary films.





LATVIANS LIKE TO DISAGREE,  
BUT NOT DISAGREEABLY SO

# Art

The Latvian contemporary art scene is poetic, often executed in refined techniques.

Inta Ruka, Katrīna Neiburga, Arnis Balčus, Krišs Salmanis, Kristaps Ģelzis, Māris Bišofs are some of the most visible artists on the Latvian contemporary art scene.



# Hip

Creative quarters: how Riga became a hipster's paradise.

From alternative to electro pop to folk metal.

Out-of-the-box art, fashion and design.





# Speciality Food Items

Rich in fibre, vitamins and antioxidants, rye bread is the monarch of Latvian cuisine.

Succades from high-quality dried fruits, berries and vegetables are excellent snacks.



# Innovations



# Cutting-edge Solutions

Electronics.  
Computing.  
Information technology.





# Natural in Essence

Biosan.  
*Madara* cosmetics.  
*Spodriba* chemicals.

# Creative in Design

Amber textiles.  
Atex textiles.  
Velo sock.  
Clothing design.







# Pharmacy

Therapeutic and aesthetic products.  
Cancer and infarction treatments.

# Education

Latvia has 466 students for every 10 000 inhabitants in around 60 institutions.

Latvia has a long history of vibrant academic life, outstanding literacy, providing a rich human capital.





# Schools

Almost all children attend public schools.

Free primary and secondary education is provided.

Latvia funds ethnic minority schools or classes for Polish, Belarusian, Estonian, Jewish, Lithuanian, Roma, Ukrainian and Russian children.







# Architecture

Latvia's rich architectural traditions thrive on imagination and innovation, evident in wooden buildings.



# Architectural Styles

Latvian cities hold exquisite examples of Gothic, Baroque, Classicism and Art Nouveau.

Over 8500 objects are protected monuments.





# Nature

Latvia can truly be viewed as one huge nature park – white sandy beaches, green forests, clean air and water, and a pristine ecosystem.

Latvia is among the greenest countries in the world.





A wide-angle photograph of a lush, green forest landscape. The foreground is filled with dense, vibrant green trees, likely deciduous. In the middle ground, the forest continues, with some mist or low clouds rising from the canopy, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere. The background shows rolling hills covered in forest, with a few small structures visible on the horizon. The sky is overcast with soft, grey clouds.

# Forests

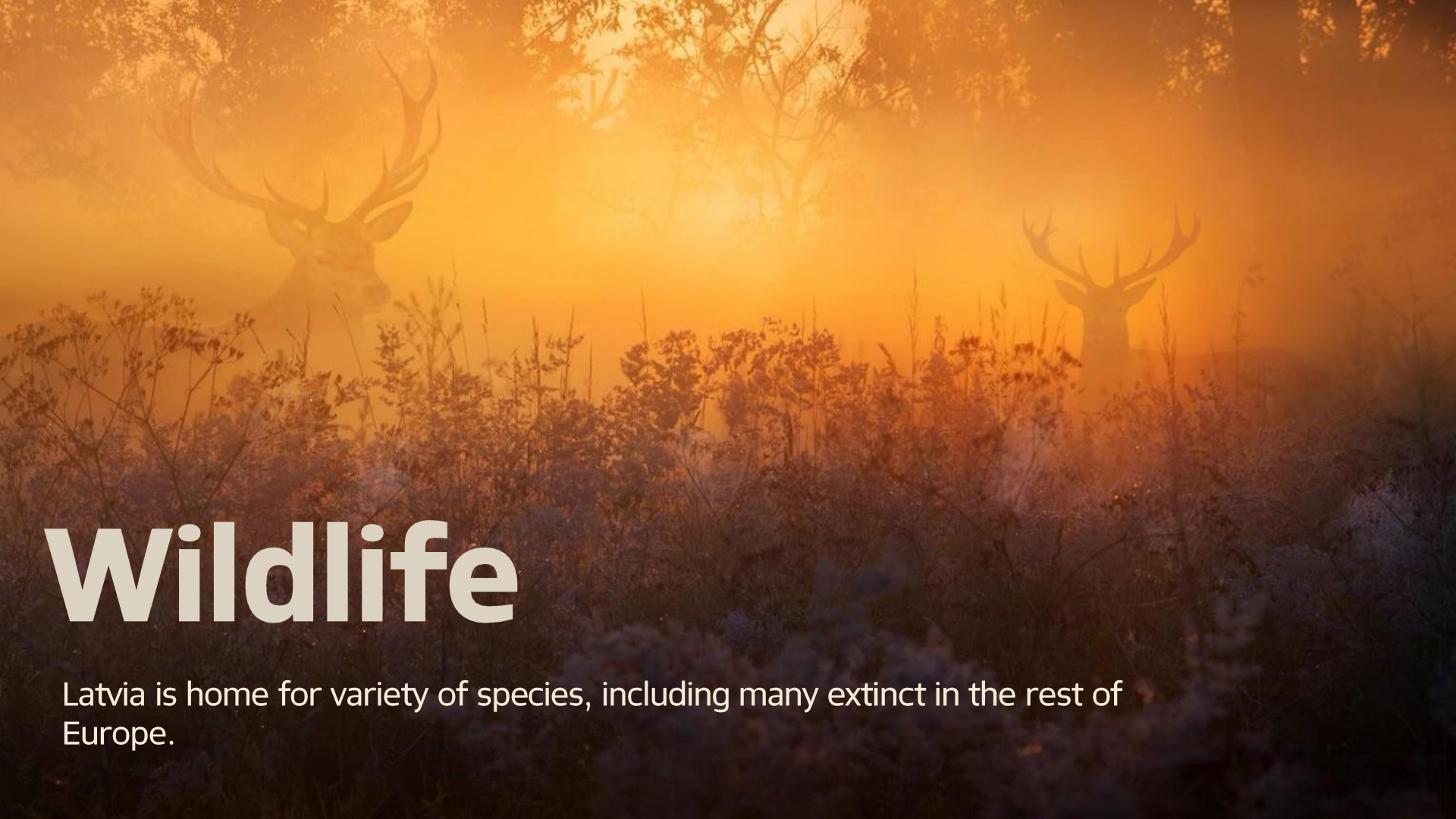
Only half of Latvia is not covered by lush forests.

An aerial photograph showing a vast, curved coastline. A long, narrow strip of white sand beach runs along the edge of a deep blue body of water. The water's surface is marked by numerous long, parallel ridges and grooves, likely from wind or currents. In the foreground, a dense, dark green forest covers a hillside, with its edge meeting the sandy beach. The overall scene is a dramatic landscape of water, sand, and forest.

# Waters

The longest beach in Europe.  
500 km of white sand  
coastline. 2 256 lakes and  
12 500 rivers.





# Wildlife

Latvia is home for variety of species, including many extinct in the rest of Europe.



# Sports

Latvia has won 3 Gold, 15 Silver and 9 Bronze Olympic medals since 1924.

Ice hockey is #1. The men's team plays in the Olympics and World Championship's Elite Division since 1996.





# Champions

## **Martins Dukurs**

2x Winter Olympics silver medalist in skeleton racing, current World and European champion.

## **Aleksandrs Samoilovs and Jānis Šmēdiņš**

Professional beach-volleyball team, European champions.

## **Ineta Radeviča**

Athlete, European champion, World Championships bronze medalist.

# Māris Štrombergs

The first two-time Olympic  
Champion in BMX cycling  
(Beijing 2008, London 2012).





# Cities



A silhouette of the Riga Cable Bridge, a tall A-frame structure with numerous stay cables, stands prominently on the left side of the image. In the background, the city skyline of Riga is visible, featuring several church spires and domes. The entire scene is set against a vibrant sunset sky with shades of orange, red, and pink.

# Rīga

Population – 698,529

The capital of Latvia, founded in 1201. Home to ⅓ of Latvia's population. Financial and economic hub.

Popular tourist destination.



# Daugavpils

Population –95,467

The leading city of the „land of thousand lakes” - *Latgale*.

Hometown of Mark Rothko, expressionist painter in USA.

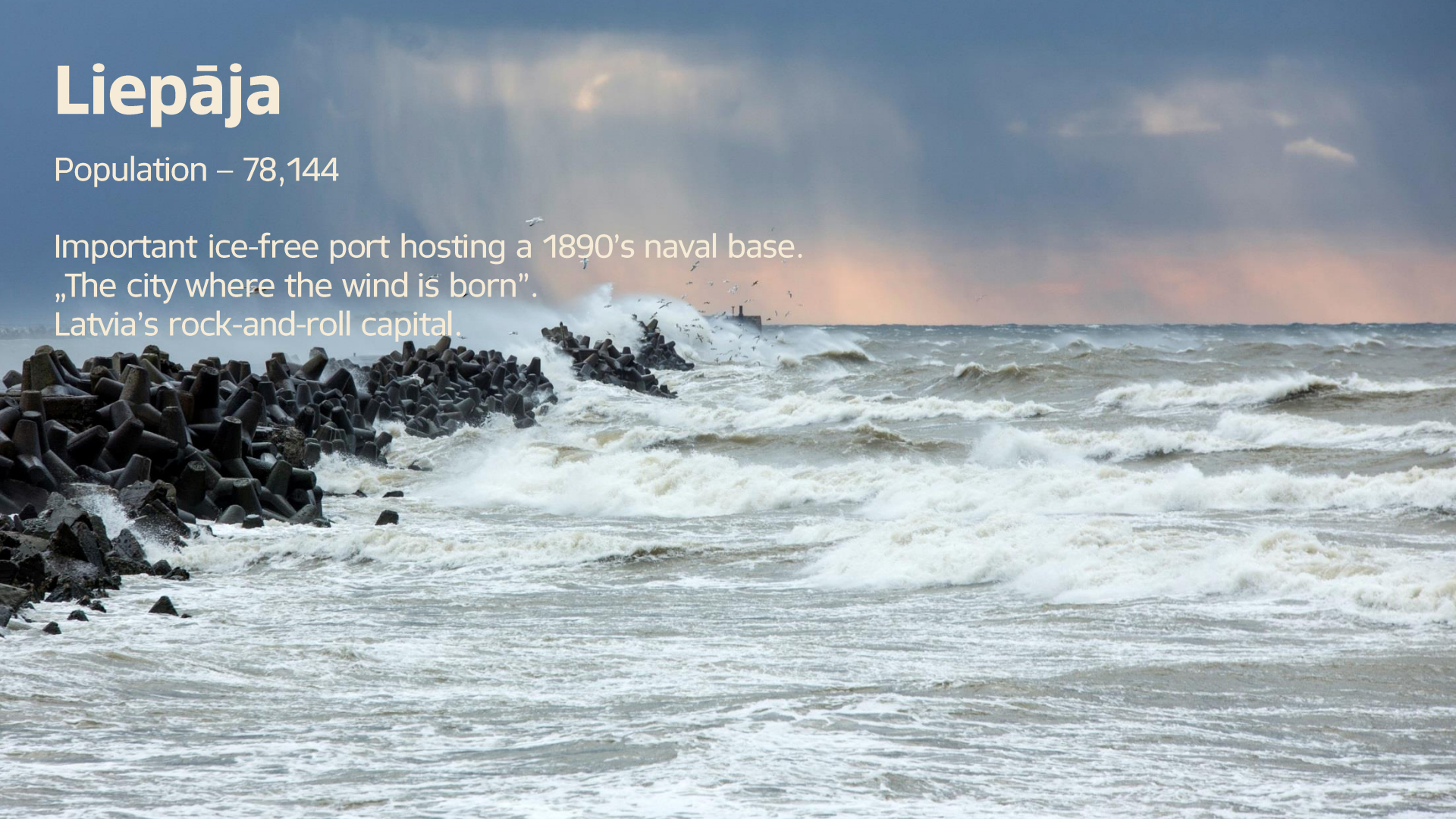




# Liepāja

Population – 78,144

Important ice-free port hosting a 1890's naval base.  
„The city where the wind is born”.  
Latvia's rock-and-roll capital.



# Cēsis

Population – 17,170

Among the oldest cities in Latvia (1206).

The beautiful castle ruins host open-air cultural events.





# Jūrmala

Population – 57,371

The largest resort city in the Baltics, famous for its ideal sandy beaches and exclusive spas.



# Kuldīga

Population – 11,768

One of the longest brick bridges in Europe overlooks the widest waterfall in Europe “Venta Rapids”.





The Latvian Institute deals with promoting awareness and providing a wide range of information about Latvia. It works closely with local and foreign dignitaries, diplomats, academics, students and international media in developing an understanding of Latvia, its branding and its people.

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