



Essential Baltics

2020 - Vilnius to Tallinn



Essential Baltics – Vilnius to Tallinn

The Best of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia

Flexible Essential Trip – Classic Private Journey – 7 Days

Your choice of dates, start any day of the week

Survey the highlights of the three Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, clustered along the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Small green countries of farms and pastures interwoven with forests and pretty little towns, the Baltics have been ruled over by many European superpowers. Their neat red-roofed Old Towns are UNESCO World Heritage Sites, and their indomitable citizens helped bring down the giant USSR.

In August 1989, about 2 million people formed a 372-mile human chain stretching from Tallinn to the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, to protest the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, a document that affected the fate of Eastern Europe for half a century. Two years later all three of the Baltic countries declared their independence, and in 2004 became members of the European Union. The three cities on this itinerary have all been designated as European Capitals of Culture. In 2009 and 2011, Vilnius and Tallinn, respectively, received the honor. In 2014 Riga took on the same role – an honor that brings with it large-scale art exhibitions, numerous musical performances and special events, demonstrating the breadth and depth of their respective national cultures.



Daily Itinerary

| | |
|-------|---|
| Day 1 | Arrive Vilnius, Lithuania |
| Day 2 | Vilnius |
| Day 3 | Vilnius • Hill of Crosses • Riga, Latvia |
| Day 4 | Riga |
| Day 5 | Riga • Gauja National Park • Tallinn, Estonia |
| Day 6 | Tallinn |
| Day 7 | Depart Tallinn |



Tour Highlights

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|-----------------|---|
| Vilnius | Old Town (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Vilnius Cathedral, Vilnius University, Gates of Dawn, Church of St. Casimir, St. Anne's Church, Town Hall Square, Trakai Castle, Pilies Street |
| Hill of Crosses | Hill covered in thousands of crosses of all sizes |
| Rundale | Rundale Palace |
| Riga | Old Town (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Dome Cathedral, art nouveau district, St. Peter's Church |
| Sigulda | Gauja National Park, Sigulda and Turaida Castles |
| Tallinn | Song Festival Grounds, Kadriorg Park, Old Town (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Toompea Castle, Dome Church, Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Town Hall, Old Town Square |

Daily Itinerary

Day One

Arrive Vilnius, Lithuania

On arrival in Vilnius, transfer to the city and check in to the hotel. Meet your guide tonight for an informative briefing, with touring to begin tomorrow morning.

Meals: Independent – *Hotel Artis, Hotel Novotel or similar*

Day Two

Vilnius

After breakfast, begin with a **walking tour of Vilnius**. Throughout its long history, Vilnius has survived successive attacks by Crusaders, Crimean Tatars, Russians, Napoleon's armies, Poles and Germans. It is now considered to be the largest baroque city north of the Alps and is on the list of **UNESCO World Heritage Sites**.

Start the tour with the imposing neoclassical **Vilnius Cathedral**, which conceals a longer history than its 18th-century exterior reveals. In the 1960s, when architects examined cracks in the church foundations they discovered ancient crypts and foundations of earlier churches and pagan temples. More recently, archaeologists found church jewels that fleeing Russians had hidden in the walls in 1655.

The tour continues with a visit to **Vilnius University**, founded by Stefan Batory, King of Poland in 1579, which developed into an important scientific and cultural center. One of the oldest universities in Eastern Europe, its buildings encompass all the major architectural styles that influenced Vilnius over 400 years.

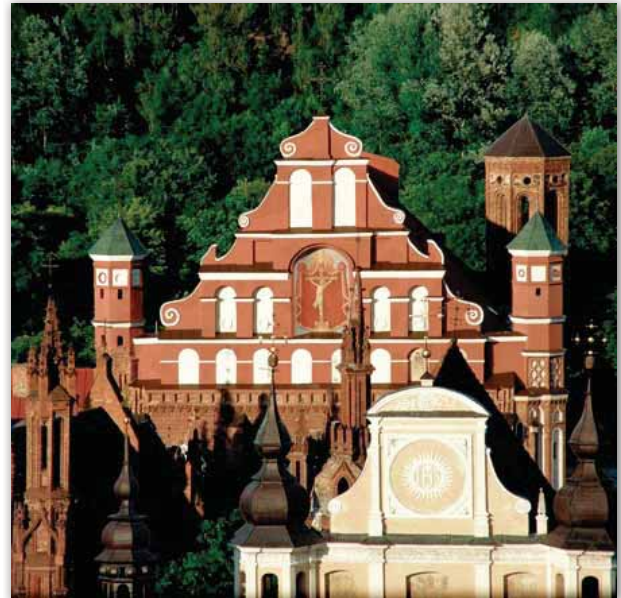
Walk down **Pilies Street**, the main artery of the **Old Town**, with its 16th to 18th century structures lined with artisans selling their traditional wares. Admire **St. Anne's Church**, a diminutive red brick church that represents the pinnacle of Gothic architecture in Lithuania. Built around 1500, the building displays a remarkable 33 kinds of brick. The combination and variety of arches, finials, brick patterns, and spires with metal crosses makes for an elegant and graceful exterior. Legend says that Napoleon Bonaparte expressed his admiration for St. Anne's with the words, "If I can, I will put this church on my



palm and bring it to France.” St. Anne's has survived more than five centuries almost unchanged, and stands today as the most famous building in Vilnius.

Walk through the **Town Hall Square**. The commercial and cultural center of Vilnius, Town Hall Square was a Vilnius feature as far back as the early fifteenth century. Its little shops sold necessary goods, and many performances and events were organized here. Foreign rulers and guests often met with local officials around the square. Today, people use this space to celebrate national holidays and decorate the city Christmas tree; fairs, concerts and other attractions are still held here. The majestic, two-story Town Hall building, now home to the Artists' Palace, stands in the center of the square.

Down the street, pass the **Church of St. Casimir**. Begun in 1604, it is the oldest baroque church in Vilnius. Leave the Old Town through the **Gates of Dawn**, one of the original gates of 16th century Vilnius, and one of the last remaining parts of the old city wall. At that time, city gates often incorporated holy icons to protect the city from invaders. The chapel in the Gates of Dawn is home to one of the most revered icons of Catholic Lithuania, the golden-clad Mother of Mercy.



After an independent lunch, depart for **Trakai**, a few miles outside of Vilnius. The 14th century town of Trakai was one of Lithuania's first capitals, and has two lakeside castles. The peninsula castle was destroyed in the 17th century, and only ruins remain. The restored island castle was built in the style called Brick Gothic on a little island in Lake Galve. (Brick Gothic took root in places like the Baltics where there was little native stone to build with.) At the end of the 14th century, when Lithuania expanded its territories as far as the Black Sea, this castle became the residence of the Lithuanian Grand Dukes. Grand Duke Vytautas brought some 400 families of Karaites (Turkic adherents of Karaite Judaism) from the Crimea to serve as his castle guards. An active *kinessa* – a Karaite house of prayer – is located here, as is the Karaite Ethnographic Museum.

Dinner tonight is independent.
Meals: B – *Hotel Artis, Hotel Novotel or similar*





Day Three

Vilnius • Hill of Crosses • Riga, Latvia

Depart early from Vilnius, heading north. Before leaving Lithuania, stop and independently take in the **Hill of Crosses**, a powerful symbol of faith and perseverance. This small hill, which in early times accommodated a defensive fortification, is totally hidden by a multitude of crosses planted in the ground by local believers. During the Soviet era, authorities regularly tore down and burned the crosses, though many of them were valuable examples of folk art. Undaunted, Lithuanian Catholics, artists and patriots would steal up the hill at night and plant more. The last major attempt at leveling the shrine was in 1975. Since then, local people and travelers

have placed thousands upon thousands of crosses on the hill. The evocative atmosphere of this sacred place draws thousands of believers and pilgrims each year.

After crossing the border into Latvia, stop at **Rundale Palace**, designed in the early 18th century by Rastrelli, who also built St. Petersburg's Winter Palace. The palace was the home of the Duke of Courland, a favorite of Russia's Empress Anna. It has served time as apartments, a primary school and a granary, but in 1972 restoration work began. Today about 40 of the rococo rooms are open for inspection, including the royal kitchens.

This evening **arrive in Riga**, the capital of Latvia. Check in to the hotel before an independent dinner. Meals: B – *Hotel Gutenbergs, Opera Hotel or similar*

Day Four

Riga

Following breakfast at the hotel, embark on a half-day walking exploration of the **UNESCO-listed Old Town of Riga**. Riga was first a fishing village founded by native Livonians. When the proto-Balts, an Indo-European people, arrived, they gradually assimilated most of the Livonians. The resulting mix of people, now called Latvians, lived in small kingdoms, easy prey for the German crusaders who came to spread Christianity to the pagans at the beginning of the 13th century. For the next 500 years, while the leadership of the country changed hands among the Swedes, Poles and Russians, the ethnic German aristocracy hung on to its autonomy and its feudal estates.

Peter the Great conquered Latvia in the early 1700s, and Riga began to grow as a trade and industrial center. Between 1857 and 1863, the medieval town walls were demolished, and parks and green belts were allowed to grow in their stead. Although the town was badly damaged during both world wars and neglected during its Soviet period, today Riga is Latvia's flourishing and lively center of the arts, art nouveau architecture and nightlife.



The tour begins with a visit to the **Dome Cathedral**. With walls six feet thick, the Dome Cathedral in Riga is the biggest working church in the Baltics. Founded in 1211, the church was rebuilt and added to several times. Today its main brick body is 15th century Gothic, while the steeple is 18th century baroque. The cathedral houses one of the biggest organs in Europe, with 6,768 pipes.



On the way to the Art Nouveau district, walk through the Old Town, enjoying medieval buildings and churches. Stop in at **St. Peter's Church**. The spire on this Gothic church is its most famous feature.

The tallest in the world when it was built, it burned twice and was shelled once. In 1973 it was finally rebuilt in steel with a height of 405 feet. Take the elevator up the restored spire to the 236-foot platform for fabulous views of the city.

Walk a few blocks north of the city center, where Riga's most famous **art nouveau** buildings are grouped, many designed by Mikhail Eisenstein (father of film director Sergei Eisenstein). The imaginative and decorative art nouveau style began in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and resulted in beautifully decorated facades adorned with sculpture, iron work, and stylized motifs drawn from nature. UNESCO has declared Riga to have some of the **finest collections of art nouveau architecture** in Europe.

With its cobbled streets, gabled buildings, outdoor cafés and shops, Riga is a delight to explore on foot.

This afternoon is free for independent exploration.

Meals: B – *Hotel Gutenbergs, Opera Hotel or similar*

Day Five

Riga • Gauja National Park • Tallinn, Estonia

Depart early from Riga and journey onward to Estonia's charming capital of Tallinn. Stop en route in Sigulda, the gateway to the **Gauja National Park**, established in 1973. The park embraces some of the most beautiful scenery in all of Latvia and is home to over 200 ancient oak trees (some with a circumference of 10 feet or more). Tour the **Sigulda Castle** ruins (originally built by the Livonian Knights) on the southern bank of the Gauja River. On the northern bank, in **Turaida**, the archbishops of Riga built their castle, which has been restored and is open for touring, with excellent views over the town across the river.

Arrive in Tallinn in the late afternoon. Check in to the hotel on arrival, before an independent dinner.

Meals: B – *Hotel Euroopa or similar*



Day Six Tallinn



Today take a half day to tour the highlights of the city of Tallinn and its environs.

Tallinn's Old Town is the best-preserved medieval town center in Eastern Europe, in spite of various invasions of Danes, Swedes, Teutonic Knights, Russians, Nazis and Soviets. Its winding cobbled streets, red roofs and remaining turreted fortress wall are on the **UNESCO World Heritage list**. Located across the narrow Gulf of Finland from Helsinki, and not far from St. Petersburg, Tallinn has been a trading and strategic center for hundreds of years.

The tour begins with a visit to the **Tallinn Song Festival Grounds** where Estonians defied the Soviet Union in 1988, and where every five years an enormous song festival is held. Estonia's cultural identity is closely linked to music. The

oldest Estonian song type, the runic chant, dates to the first millennium BC. Native traditions were passed down through the generations, preserving the rich oral folklore that survives to this day.

After visiting the Song Festival Grounds, drive to **Kadriorg Park** to walk around the grounds. Peter the Great built a summer palace and park here in 1718, calling it Katharinethal, after his second wife. The architect, Michetti, was later involved in building Peterhof, Peter's summer palace outside of St. Petersburg. The park originally encompassed almost 250 acres and hundreds of trees were planted, including horse chestnuts intended for Peterhof. Continue back to the city center for an independent lunch at a local restaurant.

Continue on a walking exploration of the Old Town at Dome Hill. **Toompea**, the limestone hill in the center of Tallinn is nearly 90 feet higher than the rest of the city. Estonian folklore says that the hill is actually the burial mound of Kalev, father of the country's most important folk hero. **Toompea Castle** sits at the highest point, rebuilt by Catherine the Great over the remains of the 13th century castle of the Knights of the Sword. Toompea is the site of the aristocratic Upper Town, looking down on the workers' town below.

Visit Estonia's oldest church, the Lutheran Cathedral of St. Mary the Virgin, or the **Dome Church**, built in 1223. A Catholic church until 1561, it was later used as a burial place for German and Swedish nobility. The appearance of the church today dates from the 17th century, when it was rebuilt after a fire.

Before descending to the Lower Town visit **Alexander Nevsky Cathedral**, designed in the Russian Revival style and completed in 1900. Commissioned by Czar Alexander III, the church was built to honor the victory of Alexander Nevsky over Estonian foot soldiers fighting alongside the Teutonic Knights on Estonian territory in 1242. Although some Estonians wanted to demolish it after independence, the government ended the controversy by restoring it instead. Walk down the hill to the Lower Town. Tallinn's medieval **Old Town Square**, the focal point of the old town, served as its marketplace since the



11th century. Chief among the square's old buildings is the 15th century **Town Hall**, home of the early Town Council. The weathervane atop its late Renaissance spire is the perch of a squire called "Old Thomas," who guards the town.

At the corner is one of the **oldest continuously running pharmacies** in Europe, which used to sell purported powdered unicorn horn and other medicinal herbs in the Middle Ages. Today it still sells medicine and notions, but there is also a small museum on the premises.

Enjoy a final independent afternoon and evening in the Baltics.

Meals: B – *Hotel Euroopa or similar*

Day Seven Depart Tallinn

Following breakfast the trip concludes with a transfer to the airport.

Meals: B

Flexible Essential Trip – Classic Private Journey

Flexible Essential trip prices may vary by season and start date, and are subject to hotel availability for your travel dates. Extension services and additional nights are available on request. Contact us at 1-800-424-7289 for more information. Private departures of this land itinerary can begin on the day of your choice in 2020.

Private Journey Prices – 2020

Four star hotel basis, hotels as listed in the itinerary, or similar:

2 traveler minimum, from \$2,895 per person, twin share

Single supplement from \$550

Solo traveler rate, in same hotels, inclusive of single supplement, \$4,995

Hotel Upgrade Prices

Hotel upgrade prices depend on the dates/days of travel, and are subject to change based on availability and other factors. Hotel upgrade is based on using the five star Radisson Vilnius, Grand Palace Riga and Telegraaf Tallinn, or similar hotels.

Five star hotel basis:

2 traveler minimum, from \$3,395 per person, twin share

Single supplement from \$925

Solo traveler rate, in same hotels, inclusive of single supplement, \$5,995

Your Private Journey Includes

- Accommodations as noted in itinerary. See **Hotel Upgrade pricing** above for upgrade information.
- All room types, even in upgraded properties, are standard entry-level doubles or twins, please call for room category upgrade pricing and information.



- Breakfast daily, beginning with Day 2, per the itinerary. Lunches and dinners are left independent to allow independent exploration.
- Services of experienced, English-speaking local guides, drivers and other staff in each city.
- One arrival and one departure airport transfer. (Additional arrival and departure transfers are available at additional cost.) MIR arranges for travelers to be met on arrival and seen off on departure whether we make your airfare arrangements or not.
- Ground transportation throughout itinerary by private van or car (type of vehicle depends on the size of your party).
- Guided sightseeing tours and entrance fees as outlined in the itinerary.
- Complete pre-departure information including detailed packing list, reading list, *Touring with MIR* handbook with country-specific information, maps, and travel tips.
- Final document packet including luggage tags, final updates, and more.

Not Included

- International airfare or taxes/fuel surcharges.
- Meals not specified as included on the itinerary.
- Alcoholic beverages.
- Single supplement charge, if requested or required.
- Items of a personal nature (phone calls, email, laundry, alcohol, excess baggage, etc).
- Baggage handling.
- Gratuities to local guides and drivers.
- Visa/passport fees, airport departure fees.
- Expenses incurred as a result of delay, modification or extension of a tour due to causes beyond MIR's control.
- Travel and trip cancellation insurance.

Interested in travel insurance?

To learn more about all the benefits of purchasing a Travel Guard travel insurance plan, please visit www.travelguard.com/mircorp or contact Travel Guard at 1.877.709.5596.



Start Planning Next Year Now

2021 Flexible Essential Trip – Classic Private Journey – 7 Days

At the time of writing, the land itinerary for this program next year is projected to be generally as depicted for this year. Please call if you're ready to book now.

Private departures of this land itinerary can begin on the day of your choice in 2021. Please note you will need to depart the U.S. at least one day prior to your tour start date due to airline flight schedules.

Private Journey Prices – 2021

Four star hotel basis, hotels as listed in the itinerary, or similar:

2 traveler minimum, from \$2,995 per person, twin share

Single supplement from \$595

Solo traveler rate, in same hotels, inclusive of single supplement, \$5,095

Hotel Upgrade Prices

Hotel upgrade prices depend on the dates/days of travel, and are subject to change based on availability and other factors. Hotel upgrade is based on using the five star Radisson Vilnius, Grand Palace Riga and Telegraaf Tallinn, or similar hotels.

Five star hotel basis:

2 traveler minimum, from \$3,495 per person, twin share

Single supplement from \$950

Solo traveler rate, in same hotels, inclusive of single supplement, \$6,095

Flexible Essential trip prices may vary by season and are subject to hotel availability for your travel dates. Extensions and additional nights are available on request. Contact us at 1-800-424-7289 for more information.

Flexible Essential Trips – Classic Private Journeys

Flexible Essential Private Trips are compact, well-designed private tour itineraries – researched and ready to book on the dates you choose. They work perfectly as brief overviews of a country or as effortless extensions to group tours – great for solo travelers, couples, or private parties who prefer to travel independently but appreciate a savvy pre-designed program.

Flexible Essential Trips feature most of the inclusions of our escorted small group tours with just a few exceptions: tours are led by local MIR guides, without an additional tour manager; fewer meals are pre-planned, so you can eat where and when you want; and baggage handling and gratuities are left to your discretion.



Important Notes: Is This Trip Right For You?

It is important to keep in mind that while Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are fairly modern and cosmopolitan, some aspects may not live up to the standards North American travelers expect. Services are improving in the region; nevertheless, you may encounter problems with plumbing, bureaucratic service, road conditions, unpaved sidewalks, uneven surfaces and steps, and availability of public restrooms.

While this program is designed to be the most comfortable possible for travel in this region, this is an adventuresome trip. It is rated as **moderate to rigorous touring** due to the daily walking involved, and the overall shortcomings of the tourism infrastructure. This itinerary features a significant amount of touring on foot. Many streets are of cobblestone, and some attractions are only accessible via steep staircases. Museums rarely have elevators. Flexibility and a sense of humor are essential components of the enjoyment of your trip.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this schedule is accurate. However, trip itineraries are always subject to change. We do our best to inform you in advance of any changes, but due to the nature of travel in these countries, this may not always be possible.

Are You Prepared?

A Travel Guard travel insurance plan can help cover your vacation investment, offset expenses from travel mishaps and provide you with emergency travel assistance. To learn more about all of the benefits of purchasing a Travel Guard travel insurance plan, please visit www.travelguard.com/mircorp

Please read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to Estonia here:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/estonia-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to Latvia here:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/latvia-travel-advisory.html>

Please read the U.S. State Department's Travel Advisory regarding travel to Lithuania here:
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories/lithuania-travel-advisory.html>

If you are not already enrolled in STEP, Smart Traveler Enrollment Program, a free service to enroll your trip with the nearest U.S. Embassy or Consulate, please consider enrolling. For more information:
<https://step.state.gov/step/>

Weather

This region of Europe enjoys a transitional maritime/continental climate, with warm summers and fairly mild winters. Spring and summer are the best times to travel to these destinations, particularly when driving overland. They can be visited year round, however, and holiday markets make December an appealing time frame to arrange your trip. These are all agricultural countries, with the landscape varying from cultivated fields to forests. Expect temperatures to range from 70-85 degrees Fahrenheit in summer time. Rain and slightly cooler temperatures at night are possible.

Please remember, weather at all times of year has an element of the unpredictable. This information comes from weatherbase.com and is based on data from previous temperatures on record. It is always advisable to check with weatherbase.com closer to your departure date for current conditions and forecasts for the specific region you will be visiting.



International Airfare

MIR's in-house, full-service air department is available to assist with your air travel needs. Check with MIR before booking air on your own, as we are happy to research and compare the best fares available through multiple channels. Airfare varies depending on a wide variety of factors, such as dates of travel and seasonality, seat availability, special airline promotions, how restrictive ticket changes are, how long the fares can be held without purchase, routing considerations such as stopovers, and more. Tour dates are based on the land tour only. Our preferred carriers for this tour are Lufthansa and SAS Scandinavian, as they offer convenient itineraries and competitive rates from multiple cities across the U.S. to the Baltic region.

Please call us at 800-424-7289 to discuss air options and routings for this program, and to request a quote for your specific plans and dates of travel. We will be happy to put together a no-obligation suggested air itinerary and estimate for you at your request.

Visas

U.S. passport holders do not require visas for the Baltic countries. Citizens of other countries may require Baltic visas; please contact us for more details. Visa prices are always subject to change.

Pre- and Post-Tour Extensions

You may want to do a post-tour in Helsinki, taking a ferry from Tallinn, or possibly tour St. Petersburg. Belarus or Poland can be easily added for a pre-tour before Vilnius. Call us for more details.

Also Nearby...

For more tours in Eastern Europe and Western Russia, you may want to check out the following:

Flexible Essential Trips – Classic Private Journeys

Essential Russia, 7 days. A compact and compelling survey of Russia's political capital, Moscow, and its cultural capital, St. Petersburg, this tour communicates the character of Western Russia in a succinct and meaningful series of experiences.

Essential St. Petersburg, 7 days. St. Petersburg, home of the czars and their courts, is a rich repository of extravagant palaces, brilliant museums and renowned theaters overflowing with music and dance. Its fashionable boulevards and serene canals glisten in the "White Nights" of summer and dazzle on sunny winter days.

Essential Ukraine, 8 days. Ukraine is the new borderland between Europe and Russia. Explore this resilient region influenced by Polish princes, Cossack *hetmen*, Turkish khans, Russian communists and Ukrainian poets and nationalists.

Essential Poland, 6 days. On this focused tour, visit four Polish UNESCO sites in six days – Warsaw's Old Town, Krakow's Historic Center, the Auschwitz/Birkenau camp and the Wieliczka Salt Mine.

Essential Balkans, 14 days. Visit seven Balkan countries in 14 days on this compact overland journey through history. A remarkably complex region, the mountainous Balkan Peninsula is fascinating, diverse and incredibly beautiful.



Small Group Tours

Russia's Imperial Capitals & Ancient Villages, 11 days. Discover where Russian art, architecture and culture began. In between the urban centers of Moscow and St. Petersburg, experience the Russian countryside. The oldest and loveliest churches in Russia, Sergiev Posad's wooden crafts and Fedoskino's glowing lacquer boxes all put a shine on Russia's Golden Ring.

Kaliningrad & The Baltics, 13 days. This overland journey roves the countryside and urban centers of four distinct nations: the three independent Baltic countries – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia – and Kaliningrad, an exclave of Russia.

Bulgaria & Romania: Frescoes & Fortresses, 16 days. Explore the complex history and fascinating culture of Bulgaria and Romania, two Balkan countries whose rugged terrain and consequent isolation have helped preserve their heritage. Discover the luminous frescoes of the painted monasteries, breathe in the fragrance of the Valley of the Roses, and spend an afternoon visiting with villagers in a tiny Transylvanian town.

Belarus, Ukraine & Moldova, 14 days. Traverse a little known region that has changed hands from its earliest history. Belarus, Ukraine and Moldova are three of the least-frequented and least familiar countries in Europe. Time slowed drastically here after the devastation of World War Two, but these beautiful countries are emerging from the shadows.

Conditions of Participation

Your participation on a MIR Corporation trip is subject to the conditions contained in the 2020 Tour Reservation Form and Release of Liability and Assumption of Risk Agreement. Please read this document carefully and contact us with any questions.

Cancellation and Refund Policy

Payment Terms: Non-refundable deposits are accepted by check, Visa, MasterCard or American Express. Final land payments may be made by check or credit card for reservations made directly with MIR. If booking through a travel agent, please contact your agent to find out what form of payment they accept. (MIR can accept final payment from travel agents by agency check only.) Air fares are subject to change until ticketed; payment policies vary by carrier.

If you cancel your trip please notify MIR in writing. Upon MIR's receipt of notice the following charges apply to land tours (policies for air tickets, custom group trips vary).

Flexible Essential Trips

Cost of cancellation, if received:

61 or more days prior to departure, deposit due or paid in full of \$750;

31-60 days prior to departure, 50% of land tour cost;

30 days prior to or after trip departure, no refund.

References

We encourage you to speak directly with satisfied past travelers. Please request a list of references.



Why MIR?

Regional knowledge is crucial to the success of any trip to our corner of the world. MIR combines detailed information about geography and infrastructure, history and art, language and culture, with the depth of knowledge that comes only from decades of regional experience. You may wonder how we differ from other tour operators...

Destination Specialization

MIR focuses exclusively on the exceptional region at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. This area has been our overriding passion since 1986; we don't do the rest of the world. Our hard-earned expertise gained over the last three decades can take you from end to end of the largest country in the world – Russia – and to all of its neighbors. We specialize in travel to Siberia, the Silk Route, St. Petersburg & Beyond. Our destinations include: Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, the Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), the Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Slovenia), Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), the South Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia), Turkey, Mongolia, China, Tibet, and Central/East Europe (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia).

30 Years of Experience

A travel company doesn't last more than 30 years in the business without a solid track record. MIR has helped thousands of individuals achieve their travel goals. Our dedication and experience have earned us their trust and the trust of many well-respected institutions. Today MIR is the preferred tour operator for museum, alumni and special interest organizations across the country.



Recommended & Respected


MIR has twice been rated one of the “Best Adventure Travel Companies on Earth” by *National Geographic Adventure*. Several of our tours have won awards in top travel publications, such as *Outside* magazine and *National Geographic Traveler*. Our trips have been featured in books such as *Riding the Hula Hula to the Arctic Ocean* and *1,000 Places to See Before You Die*.

More Questions?

Please feel free to call us with questions at 1-800-424-7289, 8:30am-5:30pm Pacific Time.

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