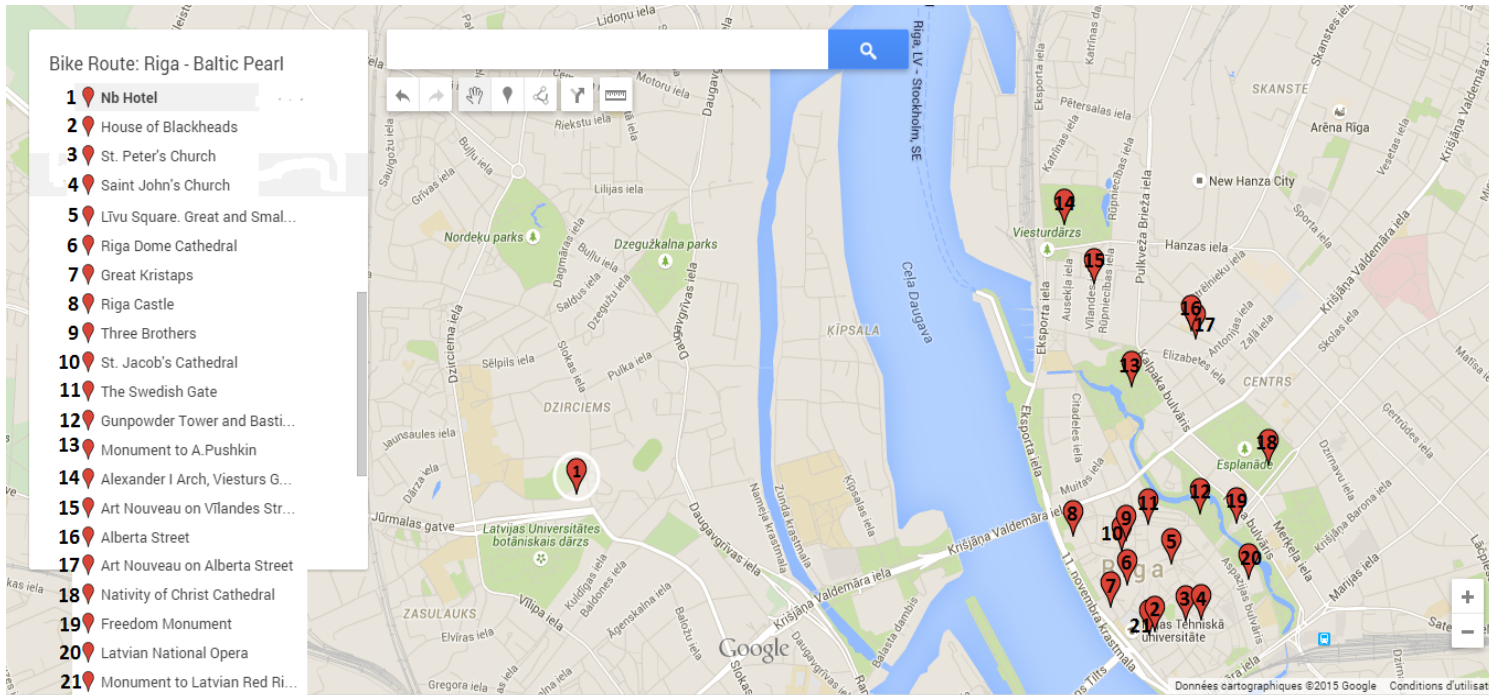


Bike Route : Riga - Baltic Pearl



- **Start/Finish :** NB Hotel
- **Duration:** 1 to 2 hours
- **Length:** 12 kilometres
- **Additional information:** Emergency (medical, fire or police service) phone number – 112

The short, but nice and informative cycling tour will introduce you the most remarkable cultural and historical monuments in Riga's historical centre.

The tour gets underway at one of Riga's oldest and most important market and administration areas - Town Hall Square. Then you'll follow Old Town's narrow and car-free streets to see Medieval churches and buildings. You'll also pass Riga's guardian - Great Kristaps - on the Daugava riverside from where you can enjoy a beautiful panorama of the Riga Castle and the other side of the river.

The you'll see a green zone - Kronvalda Park, which holds a beautiful fountain. Initially the park was set up exclusively for German soldiers, along with a shooting-ground; for public USE it was opened quite late. Some meters further, you'll pass under Alexander I Arch and enter the park which was set up by Russian Emperor Peter the Great in 1771 and still has tree alleys, labyrinths, and pools.

At last, you'll pass through the Art Nouveau district. Here art is everywhere with no strict line between sculpture and architecture. The buildings are ornamented with figures and fantastic images; you can enjoy art like in an open-air museum. You'll see the traditional decorative Art Nouveau style, as well as Latvian National Romantic Style featuring bulkiness, ethnographic ornaments, and windows with an oblique upper

part. In 1997 Riga centre was included on the UNESCO World Culture Heritage List as the best preserved Art Nouveau-style buildings in Europe.

On the way back, you'll pass the Monument of Freedom and some memorials to the Soviet period - the Latvian Occupation Museum and Monument of Latvian Red Riflemen.

1. NB Hotel, Rīga, Slokas iela 49

GPS Details :

DD 56.9531492 24.062489200000073

DMS N 56° 57' 11.337" E 24° 3' 44.961"



NB Hotel is a three star hotel, located in Riga. It has 72 comfortable rooms and it is known by hospitable personnel and exquisite service. NB Hotel has Billiards club with Snooker, Pool and Russian billiards tables, Restaurant, Bar, which works 24 hours a day, summer terrace and Banquet halls with capacity up to 150 persons.

Tip! - Planning your trip through Riga make Your stop in NB Hotel to have tasty lunch or dinner, and play billiards.

2. House of Blackheads

GPS Details :

DD 56.947123 24.106898

DMS N 56° 56' 49.643" E 24° 6' 24.832"



The House of Blackheads was set up as a meeting and banquet venue for members of the Blackheads' Society – unmarried German merchants – in the 15th century. Their patron was St. Maurice, a Black Christian and a Roman soldier, who refused to take action against local Christians and was executed by decapitation. Thus a black head became the society's symbol and was portrayed in their coat of arms. The building's foundation was laid in 1334, but the present Mannerism and Gothic-style appearance came in the 17th century. The building was destroyed in 1941, barraged with shells as the advancing Russian army thought it was facing a waiting German army. It was rebuilt in 1999.

3. St. Peter's Church

GPS Details :

DD 56.947548 24.109320000000025

DMS N 56° 56' 51.173" E 24° 6' 33.552"



The church has been reconstructed several times; the foundation and side walls were built in the 13th century. The present Baroque-style facade was set in the 17th century. The steeple has been hit by lightning six times, and it has undergone four reconstructions, the last one - in 1970. In 1980, an elevator was opened to take visitors to the panorama platform 72 metres above the ground. Tickets: 3 LVL (adults), 2 LVL (students), and 1 LVL (schoolchildren).

4. St. John's Church

GPS Details :

DD 56.9475987000000124.110513500000025

DMS N 56° 56' 51.355" E 24° 6' 37.848"



St. John's Church features two heads with open mouths on its outer wall. According to legend, these heads were used to inform those who were outside about the beginning of a sermon. Below the heads you'll see a cross-shaped hole with a grid. They tell that two monks wished to become saints and were bricked into the southern wall where they spent all of their lives. However, the Pope refused their request due to their ambitions. A few centuries later, their remains were found, but the holes were left for the memory of the monks. The Jāņi Street-side of the church features figures of John the Baptist and Salome.

5. Līvu Square. Great and Small Guild. Cat House.

GPS Details :

DD 56.9496487 24.10518639999998

DMS N 56° 56' 58.735" E 24° 6' 18.671"



Līvu Square is a small green area set up in 1950 replacing the buildings destroyed in the Second World War. The Square faces two important buildings - the Small and Great Guilds which once belonged to the Craftsmen and Merchants' Union. From the original 14th century's constructions, the Great Guild has preserved only two rooms - the Muenster Room (the main meeting room) and the Bride's Chamber (Fireplace Hall) where the just married spent their first night while guests celebrated at home. The present Gothic-Eclecticism-style facade was created in mid-19th century. Cat House building was erected in 1910 by a

wealthy Latvian merchant who was not accepted to the Great Guild. He was so offended that he put cats on top of his building, with their tails poised towards the Great Guild and signalling about what their owner thinks about the members of the union. It caused quite a fuss. The cats were turned the other way around only by order of the city's administrators.

6. Riga Dome Cathedral

GPS Details :

DD 56.949016 24.104759000000058

DMS N 56° 56' 56.458" E 24° 6' 17.132"



One of the biggest cathedrals in the Baltics; built as the Riga Archbishop's central church between 1211 and 1270. Due to many reconstructions the present building features multiple styles. The belfries have burnt down several times, but in 1776 the 100-metre belfry was slanting dangerously and was replaced by a lower one. The organ, with more than 6700 pipes and 124 registers (1883-1884) was once the biggest organ in the world. Its sound is so beautiful that Franz List is said to have composed music especially for it.

7. Great Kristaps

GPS Details :

DD 56.94813 24.10349999999994
DMS N 56° 56' 53.268" E 24° 6' 12.599"



Today you can see a copy of the original sculpture at the Daugava riverside. The 500-year-old sculpture now is on display at the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation. For a long period of time, the figure was one of Riga's symbols and was located at Riga's Gate. This is St. Cristopher (Kristaps in Latvian), a giant man who carried people across the river on his back. Once he took a very old boy across the river who told Kristaps afterwards: "You carried not only the whole world, but the Creator on your shoulders". According to local legend, Great Kristaps found a heap of gold which he used to build Riga.

8. Riga Castle

GPS Details :

DD 56.9506556 24.101864500000033
DMS N 56° 57' 2.36" E 24° 6' 6.712"



Built in 1515, but the foundations come from 1330. Decorated with bas reliefs of St. Mary and Count von Plettenberg. From the very beginning, the building was resided by those who ruled over Latvia; since 1995 it has become the residence of the President of the Republic of Latvia. The premises also house the Museum of Foreign Art, the Museum of the National History Museum of Latvia and Rainis Museum of Latvian Literature and Art History.

9. Three Brothers

GPS Details :

DD 56.9503509 24.104353800000013

DMS N 56° 57' 1.263" E 24° 6' 15.673"



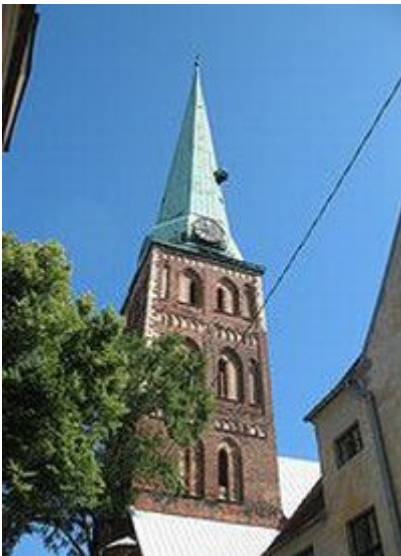
The building at 17 Mazā Pils Street is the oldest dwelling house (from the end-15th century) in Riga. The neighbouring buildings on 19 and 21 Mazā Pils Street were constructed somewhat later. The three medieval-style buildings are called Three Brothers. The ground floor once featured a living room with a fireplace, the other floors were warehouses. This is the oldest preserved complex of dwelling houses in Riga as the rest was destroyed during the Russian siege in the 18th century.

10. St. Jacob's Cathedral

GPS Details :

DD 56.950799 24.104721400000017

DMS N 56° 57' 2.876" E 24° 6' 16.997"



Built in 1225 in Romanesque-Gothic style and reconstructed several times: the central portal dates back to 1782, the lower part of the belfry - to 1756, reconstructed after the invasion of Peter the Great. The vault above the altar and the central aisle still hold the grenades once thrown by the Russian Emperor. One of its features - a bell hung in front of the belfry to hear it far away. One of the main cathedrals - in the Medieval times, the bells informed about public punishment; today Latvian Catholic Archbishop Zbigniew Stankiewicz serves in the church.

11. Swedish Gate

GPS Details :

DD 56.95103 24.10592989999998

DMS N 56° 57' 3.708" E 24° 6' 21.347"



The only gate that remains standing today of eight total in Riga's fortification wall. Constructed in 1698 as a part of the Riga Wall to provide access to barracks outside the city wall. The gate was opened at sunrise and closed at sunset.

12. Gunpowder Tower and Bastion Hill

GPS Details :

DD 56.9508299 24.108119999999985

DMS N 56° 57' 2.988" E 24° 6' 29.231"



The Gunpowder Tower (12.) was built around 1330 as one of the fortification towers. It acquired the present name in the 17th century due to smell of smoke spread by gunshots from the tower. Some people tell that the name comes from the fact that gunpowder was stored in the premises; however, it's hardly believable as the place where gunpowder was stored was a military secret at that time. Today, the building houses the War Museum. Bastion Hill (13.) was created in mid-19th century when the fortification wall (in some places even 4 metres high) was torn down and green areas were set up instead.

13. Monument to A.Pushkin

GPS Details :

DD 56.9496487 24.10518639999998

DMS N 56° 56' 58.735" E 24° 6' 18.671"



Initially, the park was set up exclusively for German soldiers, along with a shooting-ground; the area was kept closed also during the first years of the new Republic of Latvia as the administration of the army wanted to maintain its privileges. In 1927, the park, however, was opened to the public. Originally, the area featured naturally growing trees, later oak-trees, ash-trees, and other deciduous trees were planted here. The park also has a monument to A.Pushkin. The great Russian poet had never been in Riga, but his muse Anna Kern, General Kern's wife, lived here, to whom he has dedicated many poems and letters. A monument to Anna Kern is located outside the Ave Sol Concert Hall.

14. Alexander I Arch, Viesturs Garden Park

GPS Details :

DD 56.9496487 24.10518639999998

DMS N 56° 56' 58.735" E 24° 6' 18.671"



together 12,380 singers.

Here you'll find the Alexander I Arch, which was set up as a symbol of the 1812 victory over Napoleon. The Arch has 4 bronze ornaments with symbols of war and peace. Viesturs Garden Park was set in 1711 according to the order of Peter the Great. Later the area held many entertainment events. A wall to Latvian composers is erected here; and the first All-Latvian Song and Dance Festival also took place in the park in 1873. The tradition is still alive even though the festival is now held in another place and gathers

15. Art Nouveau on Vīlandes Street

GPS Details :

DD 56.9610782 24.102234400000043

DMS N 56° 57' 39.882" E 24° 6' 8.043"



Art Nouveau, also called Jugendstil, is an international movement of art and architecture that peaked in popularity at the turn of the 20th century. Art Nouveau in Riga became several different substyles. Today, you will find many such buildings in the city, among them, the house at 14 Vīlandes Street (arch. K.Pēkšēns, 1909), which features vertical lines and characteristics of Classicism. The building has bee-shaped reliefs, symbolising diligence.

16. Alberta Street

GPS Details :

DD 56.9594999 24.107899900000007

DMS N 56° 57' 34.2" E 24° 6' 28.439"



No. 13 (1904, 17.) - a sample of decorative Art Nouveau according to the design by Mikhail Eisenstein. His son - Soviet film director Sergei Eisenstein - is world famous. No. 12 (K.Pēkšēns, 1903, 18.) - built in the National Romanticism trend of Art Nouveau; many plant and animal-shaped decorations - needles, cones and squirrels, and a tower at the corner. Today the premises houses the Art Nouveau Museum.

17. Art Nouveau on Alberta Street

GPS Details :

DD 56.9592119000001 24.109785699999975
DMS N 56° 57' 33.163" E 24° 6' 35.228'



The decorative Art Nouveau buildings were mostly constructed according to projects by M.Eisenstein. One of the most beautiful buildings is No. 4 as it features many symbols and an unusual facade. The attic is decorated by three heads of screaming jellyfish. The side projections hold lions as symbols of security and protection. The central windows are of interesting shape as on the first floor they resemble the letter T, on the third floor - a keyhole, on the second floor - they form one big oval shape.

18. Nativity of Christ Cathedral

GPS Details :

DD 56.9538683 24.11551170000007
DMS N 56° 57' 13.926" E 24° 6' 55.842"



One of the greatest, most beautiful and superbly renovated Orthodox cathedrals in the Baltics. Built in the Neo-Byzantine style with five yellow-brick domes. The Nativity of Christ Cathedral is renowned for its icons, some of which were painted by Vasili Vereshchagin and Peter Shamshin; now the paintings are restored. In the early 1960s, Soviet authorities closed down the cathedral and converted its building into a planetarium. The bells were taken down and the crosses - sawn off. According to legend, the man who sawed off the crosses at night, fell off a dome and died. The cathedral was re-opened in 1991 and remodeled with money from donations.

19. Freedom Monument

GPS Details :

DD 56.95149 24.11330399999997

DMS N 56° 57' 5.364" E 24° 6' 47.894"



The Freedom Monument was erected in 1935 according to a design by the outstanding Latvian sculptor Kārlis Zāle (1888 - 1942); the Monument is dedicated to 1918 Proclamation of Independent Latvia; it features 4 groups of symbolic figures - Work, Culture, Family and Defenders of the Homeland. The top of the marble obelisk is crowned by a woman hewed in copper. She is holding up three golden stars, which represent the unity of Latvia's historic regions (Kurzeme, Vidzeme and Latgale).

20. Latvian National Opera

GPS Details :

DD 56.9492517 24.114285999999993

DMS N 56° 56' 57.306" E 24° 6' 51.429"



The Classic Eclecticism-style opera house was erected in 1863 according to a design project by architect Ludwig Bonstedt. He is an author of several famous Petersburg's palaces, for instance, the China Palace, the Palace to Elena Pavlovna, the City Duma, and others. The building is decorated with theatrical figures: two women on both sides of a lyre (tragedy and comedy) on top of the Opera House. Genius of Drama who keeps back the panther - furious fantasy - on the pediment, and Apollo - the symbol of poetry and music - with muses at the centre of the pediment.

21. Monument to Latvian Red Riflemen, Museum of Occupation

GPS Details :

DD 56.9470334 24.106469800000013

DMS N 56° 56' 49.32" E 24° 6' 23.291'



This monument features 3 granite figures of riflemen - Commissar, Worker and Farmer defending the bridge. Latvian riflemen once were Lenin's personal guards, many of which were later killed during the 1937 Stalin purges. The Museum of the Occupation of Latvia is the world's only museum set up with the aim of reminding people of the sufferings Latvia underwent during the occupation period from 1940 to 1991. Fact-laden exposition, unique documents, modern planning. Established after the regained

independence, on the basis of the former Museum of the Latvian Riflemen.