The Baltic States
by rail, road, sea and air

with Scott McGregor and Bernadette Eichner
15 August – 29 August 2019

• ST PETERSBURG • HELSINKI • TALLINN • RIGA • DAUGAVPILS • VILNIUS • WARSAW • KRAKOW OPTIONAL POST-TOUR •
29 August – 1 September 2019

• RUSSIA • FINLAND • ESTONIA • LATVIA • LITHUANIA • POLAND •
OVERVIEW

Forever on the crossroads of European culture and history the Baltics have tenaciously retained their own proud traditions and civilisations. As various overloads imposed their influence the character of the region grew ever more complex. From the Vikings through to the powerful kingdoms of the Poles, Swedes and Russians the Baltics have retained their individuality. Even under the more recent oppressive rule of the Nazi and Communist Russian regime’s. Here is a land of rich history and proud cultures that are building new societies based on their unique place in the world.

Explore a part of Europe teeming with stories, characters and wonder at every turn. Immerse yourself in the great imperial city of St Petersburg, admiring magnificent palaces and cathedrals, strolling past busy canals, and discovering the city’s treasure trove of art and culture. Head to Finland to experience Helsinki’s streamlined, stylish design, chic restaurants and cafes and intriguing architecture. Then on to the Baltic States – Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – lands of imposing castles, opulent cathedrals and solemn history. Finally, explore Poland’s complex history, with Warsaw the vibrant, urban capital, city of transformation and reinvention, and Krakow, its spiritual and cultural heartland. Along the way, enjoy UNESCO World Heritage Sites, old cities, beautiful scenery, and fascinating historical sights.

Join us as we uncover the cultural riches, historical intrigues and beautiful scenery of six fascinating countries on a once-in-a-lifetime journey across Eastern Europe.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Enjoy guided tours in St Petersburg, Helsinki, Tallinn, Riga, Daugavpils, Vilnius and Warsaw
- Study unparalleled cultural treasures at the Hermitage Museum in the spectacular Winter Palace in St Petersburg
- Cruise the scenic Neva River in St Petersburg
- Explore Peterhof, once the residence of the Russian imperial family and the location of the opulent Catherine Palace
- Visit numerous UNESCO World Heritage Sites, such as the historic centre of St Petersburg, Suomenlinna fortress in Helsinki, and more
- Visit the Estonian Open Air Museum, showcasing the country’s rural and cultural architecture and way of life
- Witness the impressive Daugavpils fortress and be entertained by an optional show at the breathtaking Latvian National Opera in Riga
- Enjoy a 2-hour chartered trip on the scenic Aukstaitijos narrow-gauge railway in Lithuania, from Panevezys to Anyksciai
- Explore the historic and beautiful old towns of Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, Warsaw, all listed as UNESCO World Heritage Sites
- Choose an option to extend your journey to the medieval and magical city of Krakow

MEET YOUR TOUR LEADERS

BERNADETTE EICHNER

Bernadette is a trained actor, psychologist, successful businesswoman and writer. She is also a skilled conference presenter and a sought-after business coach and facilitator. Passionate about the arts, culture and how others live, Bernadette’s travel experiences are many and varied, from the wilds of the Kimberly to the port caves of Portugal, the treasures of Angkor Wat, cultural meccas in Europe, the souks of Morocco and the bright lights of Broadway. Bernadette has navigated groups of kids through Eisteddfod competitions, teens through personal development programs and adults across countries. She’s been a big part of our inspection team and has co-hosted tours with Scott McGregor, so a love of train travel is now coursing through her veins.

SCOTT MCGREGOR

Scott has always been fascinated in rail travel and history. During his 40 years in the media as an actor, presenter, writer and producer, he was drawn back to stories about all things rail time and time again. And his rail memorabilia business, Off the Rails, was the best known in Australia. When the time came for a new business, it was never in doubt that it would be sharing his love of travel, and particularly great railway journeys. Graduating from NIDA in 1979, he appeared in a wide range of stage, film and TV roles, and has presented and hosted numerous prime-time ratings-winners, including many years with Better Homes and Gardens and as the host of Room For Improvement. He also presented two series of his own, Railway Adventures with Scott McGregor, for Channels 10 and 7 and a number of programs for The History Channel. During this time, Off the Rails continued to grow, in both size and reputation and he was leading tours for other tour companies. In 2012 he launched Railway Adventures, a company dedicated to honouring the joy, fun and romance of train travel in Australia and around the world. Scott also owns and operates his own set of trains, RUWENZORI, an Orient Express-style tourist retreat consisting of nine restored railway carriages, atop the Great Dividing Range near Mudgee.
WHY TRAVEL WITH US

The joy of travel is not confined to the destination. How you travel is a large and rich part of the experience. Railway Adventures offers a truly unique perspective on some of the world’s most spectacular holiday destinations, with the confidence that the journey will be just as magical and memorable as what you find at the end of the line.

WITH US, YOU CAN EXPECT:

- **Unique itineraries** — each itinerary has been meticulously developed by a team of expert travellers with many years’ experience, an intimate knowledge of the destination, and with great cultural awareness. You are guaranteed to experience the best that each destination has to offer.

- **Authentic local experiences** — whether it’s a little-known yet impressive steam railway, a small boutique hotel or an authentic restaurant, you can be sure of experiencing something special on our tours.

- **Expert local guides and operators** — we employ local guides to share their passion and knowledge of the place they call home, while our partners on the ground provide the best possible support and backup all the way.

- **Small group sizes** — a small number of passengers per trip guarantees an intimate experience with less time spent queuing, more time with your guide, and better access to sightseeing destinations.

- **Fully escorted** — our tour leaders are experienced and capable, entertaining and considerate, and together with our local guides have your needs well covered. They help with everything along the way, providing peace of mind, and enabling you to relax and enjoy the journey. And you’ll find them jolly good company, to boot!

- **Customer satisfaction** — our testimonials speak for themselves. Thousands have travelled with us over the years and many come back year after year, often bringing friends along. Our customer satisfaction ratings show that over 97% would recommend us to others and/or travel with us again.

SOME WAYS YOU’LL TRAVEL

The best train trips possible, private luxury coach for off-train travel, guided walking where suitable, and other appropriate wand appealing options to make exploration easy.
Day 1 – Thursday 15th August: ST PETERSBURG
Upon your arrival in St Petersburg, you’re welcomed by your local guide and transferred to your centrally-located hotel. After some free time to freshen up at the hotel, join your fellow travellers and board a comfortable sightseeing boat for a river cruise along the Neva river and the canals. St Petersburg is often called the “Venice of the North”, as the city is a conglomeration of 42 islands and 86 canals. The boat ride gives you the opportunity to admire its majestic river quays, and its fine bridges and canals from another perspective, before enjoying a welcome feast in a local restaurant.
Overnight: Domina 5* or similar, St Petersburg (B, D)

Day 2 – Friday 16th August: ST PETERSBURG
After breakfast you will board a comfortable high-speed hydrofoil that will take you to Peterhof Palace, St Petersburg’s most famous and spectacular imperial estate. Nestled on the shore of the Gulf of Finland, the palace was built by Peter the Great initially as a resting place. But the Tsar was quick to recognize the attractiveness of the area and masterminded a vast estate intended to rival the famous gardens of Versailles. The Grand Palace, filled with fascinating and elaborate interiors, sits on top of a high seashore ridge overlooking the vast Lower Park. The enormous park is adorned with statues and pavilions, and boasts the world’s largest system of fountains, earning it the title of the “Russian Versailles”. After lunch in a local restaurant, we return to St Petersburg with the rest of the day free to explore the city from our centrally located hotel. One of the options you might consider is a visit the Central Museum of Railway Transport (own expense and arranged by your tour leader), here you can learn about all the aspects and components of rail transport: locomotives and carriages and engineering. The rest of the evening is yours at leisure.
Overnight: Domina 5* or similar, St Petersburg (B, L)

Day 3 – Saturday 17th August: ST PETERSBURG
This morning we’re up early so we can take advantage of your special early admission tickets to the astounding State Hermitage Museum, the world’s second-largest art museum, and home to the largest collection of paintings anywhere in the world. It contains 460 rooms, and about 3 million exhibits, dating from prehistoric to modern times. Enjoy a full morning wandering around the masterpieces of Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian, Rembrandt, Rubens, and much more. After some free time for lunch around the Hermitage, we will be met at a convenient location to board a specially chartered vintage tram from the Museum of Russian Electrical Transport. On board we will to learn about the history of city from the vantage point of its extensive tram system, one of the largest in the world. The rest of your afternoon is at leisure and then we re-group for dinner close by in a popular local restaurant.
Overnight: Domina 5* or similar, St Petersburg (B, D)

Day 4 – Sunday 18th August: DEPARTURE or ST PETERSBURG – HELSINKI
After breakfast we bid farewell to some of our fellow travellers who end their Trans-Siberian Railway Adventure tour today, while your incredible journey through the Baltic Countries continues to our next destination, Helsinki. Your coach will transfer you to Finlyandsky Railway Station, where you’ll board the train for a trip across the border into Finland. Our train to the capital Helsinki will take approximately 3.5 hours and on arrival you’ll check in to our centrally-located hotel, with time to have lunch on your own.
This afternoon enjoy a short guided tour of the city before a delicious local dinner later in the evening.
Overnight: The Fabian 4*, Helsinki (B, D)

Day 5 – Monday 19th August: HELSINKI
This morning after breakfast, our local guide takes us on another city tour to see the sights of Helsinki, also known as “The Daughter of the Baltic Sea”. We’ll pass by Senate Square, the colorful Market Square by the sea at the end of Esplanade Park, where the sellers offer their fresh catch of the day. We also visit the Sibelius Monument, the main railway station designed by famous Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, and much more. We then head to the UNESCO World Heritage Suomenlinna fortress, originally built by the Swedish in the mid-18th century, and learn about how this important stronghold has been a historic key part of the Swedish empire’s naval defence system. Enjoy the rest of the day at leisure to explore Helsinki on your own or relax at the hotel.
Overnight: The Fabiane 4*, Helsinki (B)

Day 6 – Tuesday 20th August: HELSINKI – TALLINN
Enjoy a free morning before being transferred to the port for our ferry departure to the capital of Estonia, Tallinn. You have the option to join your tour leader for a trip to the excellent Finnish National Railway Museum - Suomen Rautatiemuseo. Here we can soak up the extraordinary collection in an authentic historical setting. We re-group in the hotel at lunch time to transfer to the ferry to Tallinn, a journey across the Gulf of Finland of approximately two hours. Upon arrival we meet our local guide, who takes us on a short introductory tour of the city before checking in to our centrally-located hotel. This evening gather together to enjoy a sumptuous dinner in a local restaurant.
Overnight: My City Hotel Tallinn 4*, Tallinn (B, D)

Day 7 – Wednesday 21st August: TALLINN
This morning we embark on an exciting tour of the medieval city of Tallinn, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. With its fortified walls, centuries-old buildings with red tile roofs, hidden courtyards and winding cobblestone streets, Tallinn’s Old Town is considered to be the best-preserved medieval town in Northern Europe. Our tour takes us to Toompea Hill, where you’ll see the ancient Toompea Castle, the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral (built in 1900 during the period when Estonia was part of the Russian Empire) and the Cathedral of Saint Mary, also known as the Dome Church. Then we continue to the lower part of the city, walking among beautiful historic buildings until we reach the Town Hall Square. Tallinn’s Gothic-style Town Hall, built in the 15th century, is the oldest surviving town hall in the Baltic countries. Our tour ends with a short stroll through the garden and past the Swan Pond, up to the splendid Kadriorg palace. The palace was once the summer residence of Tsar Peter the Great, who conquered the Baltics in the early 1700’s. Then we’re back in the city and have free time for lunch and the rest of the day at leisure.
Overnight: My City Hotel Tallinn 4*, Tallinn (B)

Day 8 – Thursday 22nd August: TALLINN – RIGA
After breakfast this morning we leave the beautiful city of Tallinn and cross the border on a 4-5 hour coach journey into Latvia and onto its capital Riga. On the way we make a short stop in Parnu, a relaxing summer holiday resort which is very popular with Estonian, Russian and Finnish families, and famous for its mineral mud baths. At Parnu we also visit the unique little railway museum based on one of the old forest narrow gauge railways and then continue down the coast arriving in Riga later in the afternoon. Check in to our centrally-located hotel and have some time at leisure to relax and wander the atmospheric city before regrouping for dinner in a handy local restaurant.
Overnight: Relais le Chevalier 5*, Riga (B, D)
Day 9 – Friday 23rd August: RIGA
This morning, after breakfast at the hotel, we take a guided tour of Riga, founded in 1201. Explore narrow streets of the old town, which has over 150 monuments scattered in a maze of streets, unchanged since the 13th century. Our guide will share local stories, legends, and history as we walk through the Powder Tower, the Swedish door, the House of Blackheads (the new town hall), the Cathedral, as well as St Peters Church and its tower. St Peters offers a breath-taking panoramic view of the red roofs of Old Town, the modern part of the city and the bay of Riga. The afternoon and evening are at leisure. We may have the option to dress up to attend a show at the Latvian National Opera (ballet or opera, depending upon season and availability).
Overnight: Relais le Chevalier 5*, Riga (B)

Day 10 – Saturday 24th August: RIGA – DAUGAVPILS
This morning, after breakfast at the hotel, we travel south by train to the city of Daugavpils. The town, with Dinaburg Castle at its very heart, was founded by the Livonian Order and has been ruled over by Poles, Swedes, Russians, and Germans. This history has left its mark on Daugavpils, in its architecture, the diversity of its residents, and its culture. On arrival we spend some time exploring the city and visiting its iconic fortress, the only early 19th century military fortification of its kind in Northern Europe that has been preserved without major alterations. The construction of the fortress began during Napoleon’s attack on the Russian Empire in 1810 and was resumed immediately after the War in 1812. After some time at leisure in the afternoon, we’ll re-group for dinner in a restaurant in the evening.
Overnight: Hotel Park Latgola 3*, Daugavpils (B, D)

Day 11 – Sunday 25th August: DAUGAVPILS – VILNIUS
We depart Daugavpils early this morning for our coach journey to the town of Panevezys, the departure point of our chartered trip on one of the greatest and most unique objects of Lithuanian cultural heritage, the Aukstaitijos narrow-gauge railway. We board our private train and travel for two hours from Panevezys to Anyksciai. The narrow-gauge railway reached Anyksciai at the end of the 19th century and was used to transport timber (forests were being cut down intensely) and passengers. During the post-war period, it was the main means of transport. Feel the century-old history and spirit of this unique railway, and enjoy the cliffs and valleys of Anykstas rivulet, referred to as “the Switzerland of Anyksciai”. After lunch in Anyksciai, we continue to Vilnius for a 1.5-hour coach journey. On arrival, we check into our centrally-located hotel and meet for dinner in a local restaurant.
Overnight: Shakespeare Hotel, Vilnius 4*, Vilnius (B, L, D)

Day 12 – Monday 26th August: VILNIUS
This morning, our local guide takes us on a city tour of Vilnius, Baroque capital of Eastern Europe, founded in the thirteenth century. We explore the Old Town – UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1994 – with its narrow streets and courtyards dating from the 15th century, and the former Bishop’s Palace where Napoleon lived in 1812. We also visit the University, founded in 1579 by the Jesuits, the Bernardine Monastery, the current large Gothic church with Baroque and Renaissance elements, as well as St. Anne’s Church, a jewel of the late Gothic style. We will pay a visit to the Cathedral, which separates the old city from the new. Vilnius Cathedral found its current form in the 15th century and houses the Chapel of St. Casimir where lie the remains of royals and Lithuanian nobility. After some free time for lunch in the city, we board our coach and head to Trakai, 30km away from Vilnius, to visit its Gothic castle, built on the island of Lake Galve. Restored in the mid-twentieth century, this red brick castle is unique in Eastern Europe. We then return to Vilnius and enjoy the evening at leisure.
Overnight: Shakespeare Hotel, Vilnius 4*, Vilnius (B, L, D)

Day 13 – Tuesday 27th August: VILNIUS – WARSAW
After breakfast this morning, we catch our flight to Poland’s capital, Warsaw. On arrival our local guide takes us to the city centre to check in to our centrally-located hotel and enjoy lunch at leisure. Warsaw is an unusual city situated in the centre of Europe, on the intersection of communication routes connecting the West with the East and the North with the South of the continent. It’s been the seat of Poland’s government since the 16th century and it has a rich and tumultuous history. Almost completely destroyed during World War II, as depicted in the famous movie The Pianist by Roman Polanski, Warsaw was rebuilt with great attention to detail and is now a thriving cultural, commercial and political centre. In the afternoon, we go on a guided tour of the fascinating Old Town. A UNESCO World Heritage Site, the Old Town will charm you with its colourful townhouses and the exceptional atmosphere of its narrow streets. When in the Old Town Market Square, you will meet a mermaid, the official symbol of the city. We’ll pass through the Barbican, stop by the bell on Kanonia Street, walk along the old city walls and visit the Royal Castle, completely rebuilt and reconstructed after its destruction during World War II. The tour will take us through the Kings’ apartments and chambers, heavily adorned with paintings of famous Polish historical events. After some time at the hotel to freshen up, we’ll head to a local restaurant for dinner.
Overnight: Hotel Bristol 5*, Warsaw (B, D)

Day 14 – Wednesday 28th August: WARSAW
We start the day with a visit to the POLIN Museum, which restores and honours the memory of the rich, thousand-year shared history of Poles and Jews. The interactive exposition will take us on an incredible journey across the centuries. We’ll have the chance to walk the streets of a pre-war Jewish shtetl and discover how Polish and Jewish cultures have intermingled. The edifice of the museum is itself an architectural attraction and a landmark of modern Warsaw. After lunch, we make our way to the beautiful Wilanow Palace. In the early 17th century this Baroque palace and garden was turned into the summer royal residence. After the war it became a museum with a rich collection of Polish portraits, original furniture and interior decor. We transfer back to Warsaw later, before regrouping in the evening for a special farewell dinner.
Overnight: Hotel Bristol 5*, Warsaw (B, L, D)

Day 15 – Thursday 29th August: DEPARTURE or WARSAW – KRAKOW
Our tour comes to an end after breakfast this morning. Transfer to the airport for flights home or onward for more adventures in Poland’s cultural and entertainment centre, the medieval city of Krakow.
EXTENSION TO KRAKOW

Day 15 ● Thursday 29th August: WARSAW – KRAKOW
After breakfast this morning we travel by train to Krakow. On arrival, our local guide takes us to our centrally-located hotel to check in and have lunch at leisure. In the afternoon, we go on a guided city tour of ancient Krakow. Having escaped destruction during World War II, the city retains its charming medieval shape. The central Market Square – the largest in Europe – is where several of the city’s architectural and cultural landmarks can be found, and also where the life of the city focuses. In the middle of the square, we’ll see the 14th century Cloth Hall and St. Mary’s Church, world-famous for its altar carved by Wit Stwosz. The Royal Route leads along Grodzka Street up to Wawel Hill from which the Royal Residence and the Cathedral overlook the Vistula River. We visit Wawel Castle, an interesting example of Renaissance architecture, which houses one of the largest collections of tapestries in Europe. Tonight dinner will be served in a local restaurant.
Overnight: Hotel Grand Ascot 4*, Krakow (B, D)

Day 16 ● Friday 30th August: KRAKOW
Today take your time and enjoy the atmosphere of the city at leisure. Go for a walk, stop for a cup of coffee in one of the numerous cafes, visit museums or galleries, do some shopping or join our optional guided tour to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps, today the Museum of the Holocaust. The Auschwitz concentration camp complex was the largest of its kind established by the Nazi regime. It was a network of concentration and extermination camps built and operated by the Third Reich in Polish areas annexed by Nazi Germany during World War II. After the war the Polish government decided to restore Auschwitz-Birkenau and turn it into a museum. It honours and preserves the memory of the victims of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Nazism and is now part of the UNESCO list of World Heritage Sites. Original fences, wooden watchtowers and railway ramps have been preserved. The collection of the museum contains original documents, suitcases, shoes and other belongings of murdered prisoners. We transfer back to Krakow later in the day for dinner in a local restaurant.
Overnight: Hotel Grand Ascot 4*, Krakow (B, L with optional excursion, D)

Day 17 ● Saturday 31st August: KRAKOW
After breakfast we head to Wieliczka Salt Mine, Europe’s oldest functioning salt mine, also recognised by UNESCO as a World’s Heritage Monument. Our local guide will take us through the chambers and corridors decorated with sculptures and figures, and the Blessed Kinga’s Chapel, where everything is carved from salt, including the stairs, bannisters, altar and chandeliers. After some time for lunch on your own we head down the road to the Chabowka Rolling Stock Heritage Park “Skansen” or Open Air Museum built on the site of the old steam depot which was constructed during World War II. We will go through the collection of historical exhibits and take a scenic steam hauled excursion down the line to Kasina Wielka. Later we return to Krakow for our last night and enjoy a folklore farewell dinner with typical Polish cuisine in one of the Old Town’s restaurant.
Overnight: Hotel Grand Ascot 4*, Krakow (B, L, D)

Day 18 ● Sunday 1st September: DEPARTURE
Our epic adventure in Poland concludes today after breakfast in the hotel.
WHAT’S INCLUDED
Main Tour 15D/14N

• 14-night accommodation in comfortable, centrally located in 4 and 5-star hotels
• Airport transfers on arrival and departure
• Daily breakfast, 3 lunches and 10 dinners
• Drinks included with welcome and farewell dinners
• Luxury chartered coach, with luggage transport throughout the tour
• Comprehensive sightseeing with expert local guides
• All excursions and entrance fees to attractions, as listed in the itinerary
• Flight from Vilnius to Warsaw
• Tipping and gratuities

WHAT WE DON’T INCLUDE
• International Flights (except Vilnius to Warsaw)
• Meals and services not mentioned in the itinerary
• All other personal expenses such as drinks, phone calls, laundry services, camera fees where applicable
• Excursions listed as optional and extra in the brochure

WHAT’S INCLUDED
Extension Krakow 4D/3N

• 3-night accommodation in comfortable, centrally located in 4-star hotels
• Daily breakfast, 1 lunch and 3 dinners
• Drinks included with farewell dinners
• Public train 2nd class Warsaw – Krakow
• Comfortable luxury chartered coach
• Comprehensive sightseeing with expert local guides
• All excursions and entrance fees to attractions, as listed in the itinerary
• Tipping and gratuities

WHAT WE DON’T INCLUDE
• Meals and services not mentioned in the itinerary
• Optional excursion to Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camps (lunch included): $185/person
• All other personal expenses such as drinks, phone calls, laundry services, camera fees where applicable
PRICES
MAIN TOUR 15D/14N
Per person twin share............................................. $9,875
Single supplement.................................................. $1,785

PRICES
EXTENSION KRAKOW 4D/3N
Per person twin share............................................. $1,875
Single supplement.................................................. $315
Deposit (per person).................................$1000 at time of booking
Final payment due by..............................15 June 2019

*If you wish to start your tour in Helsinki please request an adjusted price from the office.
**SOME PLACES YOU’LL STAY**

Hand-picked hotels and resorts based on location, customer feedback, value and atmosphere.

Shakespeare Hotel, Vilnius

Domina Hotel, St Petersburg

The Fabian, Helsinki

Hotel Bristol, Warsaw
THE RAILWAY ADVENTURES STORY

Railway Adventures, launched in 2012 by well-known Australian TV personality and self-confessed rail fan, Scott McGregor, has entertained and enlightened more than 1200 travellers on over 100 tours from Sweden to Sri Lanka, Tasmania to Transylvania, Britain to Burma, Venice to Vietnam and all manner of adventures in our own wonderful country. New tours are launched regularly, inspired by new trains, new routes and what our travellers are telling us they want—travelling by train in a small group of like-minded people to some of the world’s most fascinating destinations. A lifelong passion for travel has taken Scott to scores of countries and his preference for rail has seen him exploring many of the world’s great train journeys, confirming his belief that the most relaxing, romantic and engaging way to see a country is by rail.

1300 800 977 railwayadventures.com

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