

630

versts of feelings

A guide to
an unforgettable journey
into the world of heritage

Trip full of emotions

Nine places in North Vidzeme, Latgale and in the borderland in Russia:

romantic Krāslava, beautiful Arendole, diverse Preiļi, inspiring Lūznava, legendary Varakļāni, amazing Litene, breathtaking Alūksne, ancient Izborsk and harmonious Pavlovsk – nine pearls of one route.

Start your trip from any of these places, and try to visit all of them. Each of the nine places is unique with its location and well-considered offer for travellers: with cultural and entertainment programs, accommodation and meals, history and legends, with fascinating stories told by the locals, but mostly with the imprint it leaves in one's memory and with the specific and characteristic feeling it owns.

This is how 630 versts or 680 kilometres of feelings have been created –

a route combining the places that are not yet described by many tourist guides or pampered with people's attention, but have an incredible beauty. Only a few people know some of them, so you can experience the joy of the first discoverer.

May this little guidebook be your helper on a wonderful trip full of feelings and discoveries. Turn a page and get ready for each of the stops!

630 versts of feelings

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630
versts of feelings
or **680** kilometres

Krāslava → 52 km → Arendole

Arendole → 27 km → Preiļi

Preiļi → 42 km → Lūznava

Lūznava → 55 km → Varakļāni

Varakļāni → 100 km → Litene

Litene → 28 km → Alūksne

Alūksne → 71 km → Izborsk

Izborsk → 305 km → Pavlovsk

Baltic Sea

Jūrmala ○ Rīga ○

Estonia

Alūksne

Luhamaa /
Shumitkino

Pskov ○

Izborsk

Pededze /
Brunishevo

Litene

Varakļāni

Preiļi

Lūznava

Arendole

Krāslava

Belarus

St. Petersburg

Pavlovsk

○ Luga

Russia

Lithuania



love



Do you know that once it was possible to buy an entire town?

14 thousand thalers almost three centuries ago and Krāslava was owned by its first admirer – Count Jan Ludwig Plater.



Owned by the active Plater family, the town began a rapid development process - the count's intention was to make it the economic and intellectual centre of the region. First, a large market square, a town hall, a majestic Catholic church and a library, then, the most colourful business card of Krāslava – a palace ensemble with household buildings, a conservatory, a pheasant farm and a landscape park were developed. Today you will not meet any descendants of the Plater family in Krāslava, but the love that is laid in the foundations of the town can still be felt with every step you take in the town.

We can only imagine how luxurious once the palace was. Its interior walls were decorated with paintings, showing the sights of ancient Rome, illusory drawings and figural compositions. Today, the palace ensemble is gradually experiencing its revival – there is a tourism information centre, a museum, craftsmen's workshops and a restaurant. The carefully maintained landscape park invites for a walk entwined with the breath of antiquity – a grotto built of boulders and limestone and a palace guard, the lion, next to it create a special atmosphere in the park.

The nearby Spring of Love on picturesque Karnicki's Hill recounts a beautiful but also sad story about great but impossible love between the Count's daughter, Emilia, and the Polish officer, Łózef Karnicki. It is best to find out in person what the story ended up with, but we warn you: most likely it will be the beginning of a new love story – a love story between you and Krāslava.



sincerity



Do you know that Arendole offers time travel?

Indeed, in the beautiful manor you can go on a unique tour full of historical facts, which will take you back to the past and allow you to experience life in the manor personally.

But let's list everything in chronological order. Before the nationalization in the 1920s, the last owners of the manor were the Plater-Zieberg family, honest and loyal to Latvian peasants. The family owned almost 50 properties but only three of them have remained intact by wars and human madness to this day – Arendole, Bebrene and Svente.

The success story of Arendole continues today. Since 2001, it has new owners. The manor is restored with great love and reverence for every detail, the original layout has been preserved, the rooms are tastefully furnished with the original furniture and interior items from the Arendole Manor and the other manors of the Plater-Zieberg family.



Sincere Arendolians – historian Arvīds and his wife Faimja keep house. The cosy and peaceful manor is open to guests at any time of the year – you only need to register in advance. Larger groups will be able to enjoy an unforgettable trip in history here, but smaller companies will have an opportunity to spend the night in the former counts' bedrooms, have a cup of delicious tea in the hall with a fireplace and listen to equally delicious stories about the beautiful manor. Book your visit in advance.

diversity



**Do you know
that Preiļi is called
the cheese capital of Latvia?**

There could not be another name for the place where the famous Preiļi Cheddar cheese is made. Have you already tasted it?



However, Preiļi could just as well be called the kingdom of dolls. There is a fabulous gallery of hand-made dolls: for adults it is like returning back to childhood, changing into princes and princesses, but the eyes of the little ones flick in all directions here. Once a year, people from all over the world come to Preiļi to attend the International Doll Festival.

Preiļi can also be called one of the greenest and most beautiful small towns in Latvia – it can be proud of the largest landscape park in Latvia located in an urban environment. The third part of the 41.2 hectares of the park is occupied by canals and ponds reflecting the history: the ancient willows, the palace stable, romantic Love Hill, the Eve and Adam's Island. The heart of the park, the palace, is currently being restored, but in the soul of the park, the chapel, built in 1817, you can enjoy beautiful singing at an almost private concert, just book it in advance.

Yes, Preiļi can definitely be called the most diverse small town in Latgale. Counts Borchs, who ruled here for 500 years, have left not only the beauty they created but also a lot of stories. If you want to hear them, visit Preiļi!

Preiļi



inspiration



Do you know that in the manor park of Lūznava the brown long-eared bat named Mūzis lives?

No one knows how old it is, how many artists, poets and musicians it has inspired, but one thing is for sure - not only bats but also muses fly in Lūznava. Lūznava

Where does the uniqueness of the manor, its unusual and creative aura come from? What has made the pearl of Latgale Art Nouveau so special and different from its sisters?

The presence of the bat is just one version. The real answer, perhaps, lies in history. The manor was designed by the famous railway bridge engineer, Stanisław Kierbedź. While living here, he designed most of his legendary inventions, whereas the last owner of the manor, patroness of culture, Eugenia Kierbedź, created a paradise for young artists here – a place to fly and dream, to grow and work. It seems that the air here has always been charged with intentions and ideas.

It is probably the reason why Lūznava has such an active cultural life - exhibitions and creative workshops, poetry and prose readings, art and jazz festivals take place here, and then Lūznava opens its doors to anyone eager for creativity and beauty, music sounds and poetic words.

The manor is surrounded by an equally inspiring 23.7-hectare landscape park, ideal for leisurely walks, with seven picturesque ponds, a beautiful statue of Madonna, the intriguing installation 'Apple Tree' and a charming playground for the little idea generators.

If you haven't met any muse for a long time, go to Lūznava – it is definitely the right place to meet!



imagination



Do you know that Varaklāni is home to the most popular Love Stone in Latvia?

Entwined in legends, it lies on the bank of the River Kažava, waiting for new love affirmations.

The Varaklāni Manor Palace captivates with its ancient aura – here you can see historical exhibitions, ancient staircase made in a wood carving technique and other authentic things that have been preserved according to the project of architect Vincenzo Macotti. The unique wall paintings of the 18th century will inspire the imagination about the trips the naturalist Count Michael Johann von der Borch went on and the things he saw there.

The walk in the palace promises unforgettable feelings – the photo laboratory of feelings 'Green Wall', the Living Sword embedded in one of the palace walls, the mystical steps of the Big Boot... Maybe you will meet an unusual young man from the 19th century whose stories and knowledge about Varaklāni and the palace will take you on the craziest journeys of imagination. Miracles continue in the park as well – it is said that the relentless spirit of the beautiful count's daughter, Jadwiga, is still wandering along the path of the park, looking for her beloved, but a dandified gentleman is walking along the Devil's Bridge, waiting for the thirteenth love couple to sow discord in it.

The Varaklāni Manor Park delights its visitors with the beautiful three-row alleys around the park, whereas the centre of the small town fascinates with the 19th and 20th century architectural gems and amazing historical stories, which stimulate not only the imagination but also the desire to return to Varaklāni again and again.



surprise



Do you know that once it was possible to find pea-sized pearls in the River Pededze?

On the banks of the winding river, you can still enjoy the pearl – it is the Litene Manor, which has the sonorous name of the small village. It is located in an unusually picturesque place where Vidzeme and Latgale meet.

Wherever you cast a look, everything is surprisingly beautiful. The stately and majestic manor, built in the 19th century, was the 'pet' of Baron Otto von Wolff, who was endowed with good taste and sense of success.

Take a walk full of surprises: study the historical household buildings preserved in the territory of the manor complex surrounded by a stone fence, view the paintings on the manor hall walls, which come to life in three dimensions, and have a rest in the romantic Tea House. Nowadays it has become the place where proposals of marriage and wedding vows are made. Continue your walk along the marvellous Pededze green promenade, and enjoy the roses surrounding it.

The best views of the river are from a boat – the Pededze is a favourite river of the most passionate boating enthusiasts. The big oaks on the banks of the river and branchy bird-cherries leaning over its waters have inspired the poets. Though the river is only 15-20 meters wide, almost every bend of the Pededze has a surprise, including a tasty campfire soup at the end of the fantastic trip. Would you like to taste it?



freshness

Do you know that there is a whispering lantern in Alūksne?



Indeed, the mysterious lantern is there at the crossroads of the Manor Park, waiting for you to introduce the Vietinghoff family!

The great art lovers and travellers Barons von Vietinghoffs brought such a fresh breath of the world to Alūksne that it is still felt with almost every step you take in the town. It is both in the historical buildings and in the attitude of people. The interaction between the ancient and the modern, the cultural heritage and the advanced opportunities creates the environment which makes the locals proud of but the guests eager to stay here longer.

The Alūksne New Palace, built during the heyday of the Vietinghoffs, stands in the centre of the town. The neo-Gothic, neoclassical, neo-Renaissance, neo-Rococo and even exotic Moorish style coexist in harmony with each other here. Today, the palace is home to the Alūksne Museum, housing both the historical evidence and creative expressions of contemporary artists, and to the Nature Museum 'Environment Labyrinth' with its dazzling collection of fluorescent minerals. The



walk as if through the book of architecture continues in the park, where you can see the richest collection of small architectural forms: pavilions, fountains, temples, an obelisk and even a mausoleum together in one place!

The picturesque Lake Alūksne is absolutely noteworthy - it is beautiful at sunrise and at sunset, it is beautiful when it reflects clouds or falling stars. You will never forget a breathtaking flight over the lake along a 350-meter-long zip line Zzzipp! If Ernst Glück translated the Bible today, he would go straight there to relax his mind, or, maybe, he would just sit on the shore of the lake enjoying a breath of fresh air in his chest... Would you like to join?



valour

Do you know that Izborsk is considered to be the cradle of vast Russia?

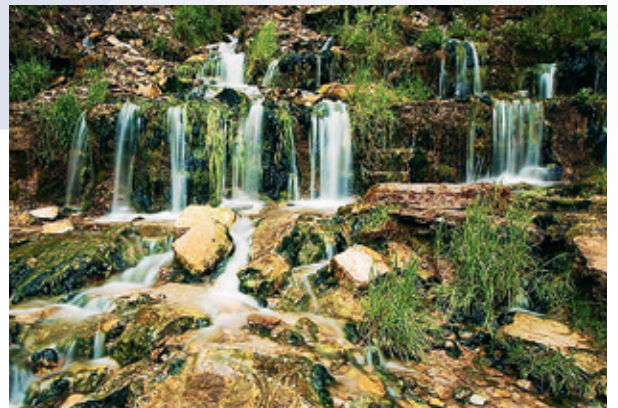


The name of Izborsk first appeared in written records as early as in the 9th century, when a brave and ambitious man, Truvor, arrived in the picturesque area. Enchanted by his courage and determination, the locals soon proclaimed him their prince. This is how the glorious history of Izborsk began. Later, when a mighty fortress was built on a hill, Izborsk became an impregnable fortress for its enemies, therefore it was called 'An Iron Town' for centuries.

Izborsk is a special place, glorified by several generations of poets, artists, historians and ethnographers. Its beauty and atmosphere enchants its visitors. The ancient past will come to life if you come to Izborsk when a historical re-enactment festival takes place there. At the foot of the hill, on which the fortress stands, you will hear how bagpipes, drums and zithers become alive in the hands of medieval wandering musicians and see skilful artisans creating amazing things. The atmosphere is so inspiring that you will also want to put on medieval clothes and completely forget about the present time.

The mighty stone fortress is not the only place worth seeing in Izborsk. Orthodox churches, merchant manors with museum exhibitions, houses of local people together with the scenic landscape create a unique environment, where history, architecture and nature coexist harmoniously.

It is probable that the attractiveness of this powerful place lies in the Slavonic sacred springs welling out of the hill slope not far from the fortress. All the guests of Izborsk visit them. Legend has it that even a single sip of spring water gives people incredible strength and inspires them to perform heroic deeds. Will you go and check it?



harmony

Do you know that the harmonious landscapes of the Pavlovsk Park are created in accordance with the rules of theatrical scenery?



The person who created this splendid park was the Italian decorator, Pietro di Gottardo Gonzaga. The opportunity to become a landscape designer was entrusted to him by the Empress Maria Feodorovna, the wife of Emperor Paul I and the daughter-in-law of Catherine the Great. Under her leadership, Pavlovsk achieved its peak of prosperity, becoming one of the most sophisticated emperors' residences in the neighbourhood of St. Petersburg.

The fusion of architecture and nature, the magnificent palace, the exquisite interior decor, the selection of unique works of art, the great park – everything in Pavlovsk makes you breathless. Surprisingly, the Pavlovsk Palace and Park ensemble has preserved its stylistic unity to the present day. Pavlovsk has been included in the UNESCO World Heritage List.

A walk through the halls of the palace will make you feel like a guest of the imperial couple and experience the exciting stories from the past again. For example, the amazing Sevres service, made in one copy in the famous porcelain factory near Paris, was a present from King Louis XVI of France to the first owners of Pavlovsk, and there are hundreds of such stories here.

With each step of your walk in the park you can get new impressions – the sunny valley of the Slavyanka River with Italian Stairway and the Temple of Friendship, the mysterious 12 paths with antique statues of Muses, the stunning Private garden with the Pavilion of the Three Graces re-echoing in the Centaurs Bridge and the Apollo Colonnade. All you have to do is to surrender yourself to the harmonious beauty of Pavlovsk.

What do you need to know to have only good emotions during your trip of feelings?



Visas required



Latvia

Russia

www.latvia.mid.ru



Other
EU countries

Russia

www.mfa.gov.lv/ru



Russia

Latvia

Please note:

a visa processing takes time.
Find out about the visa at the nearest consulate
or inquire a travel agency.

Each country has its own currency



EUR



RUB

We recommend

that you have cash in local currency before the trip.

You can also withdraw money at ATMs.



It is usually possible to pay
with a bank card



Border crossing

Latvia: Pededze / Brunishevo

Estonia: Luhamaa / Shumilkino

When approaching the border, prepare your passport with a visa.

Border crossing documents must be filled in a
the border crossing point.

Read all the information before crossing the border:

www.rs.gov.lv

www.nwroads.ru/mapp-shumilkino

www.ps.fsb.ru/



Time zone

Latvia GMT+2h (summer time +3h)

Pavlovsk and Izborsk
(Moscow Standard Time) GMT+3h



Communication

In Latvia – Latvian, Russian, English

In Russia – Russian, English



Technologies

WiFi is mostly available everywhere in Latvia.

WiFi is available in designated areas in Russia.

You can buy a local SIM card for your phone.



Transports

The route is best enjoyed by car.

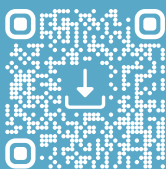
You can travel by bus, bicycle or on foot.

Public transport will have to be combined with
taxi services or hiking.

Feelings in your pocket

Download the Versts of Feelings app

Versts *of Feelings*



Here you can find the most important information about the nine places included in the route – their location, visiting times and contacts, the major tourist attractions in their vicinities and places to have a meal and spend the night. In a separate section you will also find information about the nearest tourist information centres.

A special surprise for users will be the Virtual Storyteller – in each of the nine places it will come to life and tell an unforgettable legend, if you go there and scan the image placed on the easel.



The app is available on iPhones and Android devices in Latvian, Russian and English.