Introduction to The Old Riga

• Cognitive information about main historical objects, located in Old Riga (the map is attached)
• List of medieval restaurants, cafes and places with national cuisine
Main objects to visit in Old Riga

Old Riga (was founded in 1201 on crossroads of present-day streets Šķūņu and Kāļķu), since 13th century the Old Riga is the economic, financial and cultural centre of Baltic region. Throughout its history Riga was ruled by different countries. This has affected cultural development of the city; special influence is seen in the architecture of the Old city, where nowadays it is possible to meet the lines of German, Russian, Italian and Dutch architecture.

1 The Dome cathedral

The Dome cathedral is unique church of cathedral type with a monastery in Baltic and also is the oldest and grandest church in Latvia. The first stone of the cathedral basis has been set in 1211. In 1775 the cathedral tower has been reconstructed. The newly constructed tower (which can still be seen today) was built in a Baroque style. The Dome Cathedral is famous for its wind-box, made in 1884 by the German company E.F. Walker & Co. At that time the wind-box was the biggest in the world.

Address: Doma laukums 1; phone number: +371 67 213 213; email: doms@doms.lv (www.doms.lv).

2 The Riga castle

Riga castle has been constructed in 1330, as residence of the master of the Livonian Order. The construction had its courtyard and 4 towers. The castle was destroyed and restored multiple times. During the restoration of the castle in 1491 - 1515 the Lead tower has been constructed which has kept its original shape up to now. In the 30s of the 20th century the tower of Three Stars has been constructed and the castle has been adopted to the needs of the President of Latvia as it serves for its residence now. It is open for visitors and keeps Historical museum of Latvia, Museum of foreign art and Museum of the literature and art.

Address: Pils laukums 3; phone: +371 67 092 106.

3 Konventa seta (Convent Yard)

Convent yard originates in the first half of the 13th century. There were only shelters in the Convent yard since 1554 — the widow house and a shelter of "grey sisters" (nuns). Later besides shelters there were also dwelling houses and warehouses. The Convent yard was burnt and then reconstructed again several times. In the second half of the 20th century the court yard has come to desolation. Only in 1994-1996 the reconstruction of the Convent yard has started. There is a hotel, a porcelain museum, antique shops and numerous cafes in the Convent yard nowadays.

Address: Kalēju street 9/11.
The Swedish gate

The Swedish gate (Tornja Street 11) is an exclusive gate of Riga wall, which have remained up to now. The Swedish gate was constructed in 1698 with a mission to connect the city with houses built behind the City Wall. The Swedish gate (same as other city gates), was closing with a sunset and opening with dawn.

Address: Tornja street 11.

Jacob's Barracks

Jacob's Barracks were built in 1695. Their construction was preceded by the conquest of a Latvian provinces by the Swedish ruler Gustav II. In accordance with the decree of the king, inhabitants of the conquered cities were obliged to provide military with food and lodging. Therefore, inhabitants were forced to participate in Barracks constructions.

After Riga was captured by Russian troops, in 1710 Russian Tsar Peter the First decided to demolish the old Swedish barracks and rebuild new ones. The modern look of the barracks resembles a new building that saw light in the second half of the 18th century. This building is considered to be the longest in Riga - its length is 237 meters.

Address: Tornja street 4.

The Gunpowder Tower

Originally it served as one of Riga's defensive system buildings. Name of the tower — Gunpowder, has appeared later. The first tower for Riga protection has been constructed in this place in 13th century. The first time the tower has been mentioned in the documents was in the 14th century by the name of Sand tower. The modern tower has been constructed on a boundary of the 15th and 16th centuries. The entrance to the tower was at the height of 5 meters, and it was possible to get to inside the tower only by walking upstairs. Last time the tower has endured its reconstruction was after the First World War when the Military museum of Latvia has been placed inside.

Address: Smilšu street 20; museum contacts: +371 67 223 743.

Working hours: every day from 10.00 till 18.00.
Three Brothers

“Three brothers” is the oldest dwelling complex in Riga. It is situated on the Small Castle Street 17, 19, 21 (Maza Pils 17, 19, 21). The name “Three brothers” has appeared on similarity to “Three sisters” of Tallinn. The oldest building — “White Brother”, (on the picture to the right) was constructed at the end of the 15th century, when Riga has established contacts with merchants from Netherlands. Each house represents the various periods of development of dwelling houses construction in the Middle Ages. After the termination of construction works, court yards of all houses have been united together. Now there is a Museum of architecture of Latvia.

Address: Mazā pils street 17,19,21

GPS: 56.9504, 24.1043

The Town Hall Square and the Blackheads House

The Town Hall Square used to act as a market square and up to the 19th century it was the economic and an administrative centre of Riga. A lot of different processions, competitions, tournaments and dances were organized on this square. The square was also a place for a fulfilment of execution. People of Riga were convoked to see it by a bell of the St. Jekab’s cathedral.

One of the major structures of the Town Hall square was the Blackheads House. For the first time it was mentioned in the sources dated by 1334, as the new house of the Big Guild. Originally it was rented by merchants of the Big Guild, and later — by unmarried merchants — a Blackheads’ brotherhood. Blackheads were an association formed by young, unmarried merchants and captains of the ships. The building has been destroyed during the Second World War, and restored in 1999. Now in the building there is a museum and a concert hall, where classical music concerts take place.

Address: Rātslaukums 7

GPS: 56.9475, 24.1066

St. Jekab’s cathedral

The St. Jekab’s cathedral is constructed at the beginning of the 13th century and is the smallest cathedral of Old Riga. Initially it was outside of city walls. The cathedral was burnt several times, then it was reconstructed. Despite all late reconstructions of the cathedral, the original roof of a cathedral tower has been left intact. The cathedral tower used to have a city bell which convoked inhabitants of Riga to gather in the City Hall Square during punishment fulfillment.

Address: Jēkaba street 9

GPS: 56.9508, 24.1047
Large and Small Guilds

The Large Guild was formed in Riga in 1354. The Guild mainly consisted of German merchants and jewellers. The present building of the Large Guild is constructed in 1854—1857 under the project of architect K. Bejne in English—Gothic style. In a new building the basic part of the previous building with the Minstersky room and the "Room of the bride" has been kept. Eclectic forms of an English gothic style and an excellent interior are inherited in a building of the Large Guild. Nowadays the large Guild serves as a home for the Latvian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Address: Amatu street 6; phone: +371 67 224 850; email: lnso@lnso.lv

The Small Guild was formed in the 13th century. The first building of Small Guild has been constructed in the 14th century and then has been reconstructed several times. The present building of Small Guild is constructed in 1864-1866 under the project of architect Felsko in style of an English neogothic. The building has a loggia and a small turret oriented on a small garden. The building has the great interior, the pictures with the views of Riga on stained-glass windows and walls.

Address: Amatu street 3/5; phone: +371 67 223 772, maza.gilde@riga.lv (www.mazagilde.lv)

St. Peter’s Church

The first documentary evidence of the existence of the church is dated by 1209. The present tower of the church has been constructed in 1491, but in March 11th, 1666 the 130 m high tower has fallen due to a strong wind. The new tower has been constructed on its place, but it has burnt down in fire in 1677. In 1690 an architect Rupert Bindenshu has constructed a new tower, but the lightning has struck it in 1721 and it burnt down again. Iogan Vilbern has constructed a new tower only in 1746. The new tower has remained intact up to the end of the Second World War, when St. Peter’s church has been destroyed.

Address: Skārņu street 19; www.peterbaznica.riga.lv/en

Albert’s square

Albert’s square is between Vetspilsetas, Kaleju and Alksnaju streets. The square is named in honour of the first bishop of Riga — Albert. The modern Riga has begun its creation from the construction works in this area. There was a port on the river Rāžene on a place, where Albert square is situated today. In the middle of the 18th century, when warehouses and post station have been taken down, territory have been equipped and have entitled Albert’s square, and in 1923 have changed the name for Albert’s area.

Address: between streets — Alksnāja, Kaleju and Vecpilsētas

John’s Yard

From the beginning of the 13th century until 1234 the first bishop’s city courtyard was located at this place — the first castle of Riga Bishop Albert, which served as his residence. From 1234, this castle was owned by Dominican order. Fragments of the fortress wall, that remain at present days, were parts of the wall surrounding whole Riga. Through a small gate in the side of the wall from the yard of John, you can go to the courtyard of the Convent, where, once, there was a castle of the Livonian Brothers of the Sword. Currently, a traditional beer garden is located in the courtyard — in the same place where the Dominican monks built a monastery garden.

Address: between streets Kaleju and Skārņu.
Restaurants and cafes in medieval style

1. **Restaurant Rozengrals**
   - GPS: 56.94848, 24.1061
   - Restaurant is located in premises that already in 1293 are mentioned in the manuscripts, as the oldest wine cellar and the place of celebrations of the Riga City Hall!
   - Address: Rozena street 1; contacts: +371 25 769 877; www.rozengrals.lv

2. **Restaurant-bar Folkklubs ALA Pagrabs**
   - GPS: 56.94608, 24.1077
   - Restaurant is located in the former wine cellars; there play live folk-music.
   - Address: Peldu street 19; contacts: +371 27 796 914; www.folkklubs.lv

3. **Restaurant-bar Stargorod**
   - GPS: 56.9532, 24.0992
   - A branded Czech restaurant with its own brewery
   - Address: Republikas Laukums 1; contacts: +371 25 730 730; www.stargorod.net

4. **Restaurant Amber Way Taverna**
   - GPS: 56.9515, 24.1074
   - Restaurant in medieval style with national Latvian cuisine.
   - Address: Torņa street 4; contacts: +371 67 321 260; www.latvianfood.lv
Restaurants and cafes with national cuisine

1. **Restaurant-bar Alus Arsenāls**  
   GPS: 56.95107, 24.1027  
   Located in a building that was built in 1750, where at that time worked first hotel in Riga - “Petersburg”  
   Address: Pils Laukums 4; contacts: +371 67 322 675; www.alus-arsenals.lv

2. **Restaurant Key to Riga**  
   GPS: 56.9499, 24.1056  
   Restaurant with traditional Latvian cuisine in an unconventional style.  
   Address: Domlaukums 8A; contacts +371 28 370 747; www.keytoriga.lv

3. **Restaurants Salve and Province**  
   GPS: 56.9472, 24.10734 (Salve)  
   56.9476, 24.1076 (Province)  
   “Salve” — restaurant with urban Latvian cuisine and restaurant “Province” — restaurant-tavern with Latvian cuisine cooked according to ancient recipes.  
   Address “Salve”: Rātslaukums 5; contacts: +371 67 044 317; www.salve.lv  
   Address “Province”: Kafės street 2; contacts: +371 67 222 566; www.provincija.lv

4. **Cafe-bar Lido**  
   GPS: 56.94897, 24.1067  
   Network of the most popular Latvian cafes with a simple Latvian national cuisine.  
   Address: Tirgoņu street 6; contacts: +371 67 222 436; www.lido.lv
The Old Riga

Restaurants and cafes in medieval style
- Rozengrals
- Folkklubs ALA Pagrabs
- Salve Atatūri
- Amber Way Tavern

Restaurants with national cuisine
- Alus Arsenāls
- Salve
- Prezents
- Lido

The Dome cathedral
- The Riga castle
- Konventa sēta (Convent Yard)
- The Swedish gate
- Three Brothers
- The German Tower
- The Tobacco Factory, Blackheads Museum
- St. Jacob’s cathedral
- Large and Small Guilds
- St. Peter’s Church
- Albert’s square
- John’s Yard

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“1765” — apartments in the Middle Age style
Old Riga, Kaleju 61 (Forged street)

We wish you to have wonderful holidays and hope, that you will be satisfied!

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(WhatsApp and Viber are available)

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