

THE EDGE OF EUROPE: BALTIC CAPITALS AND POLAND

JUNE 11-23, 2025

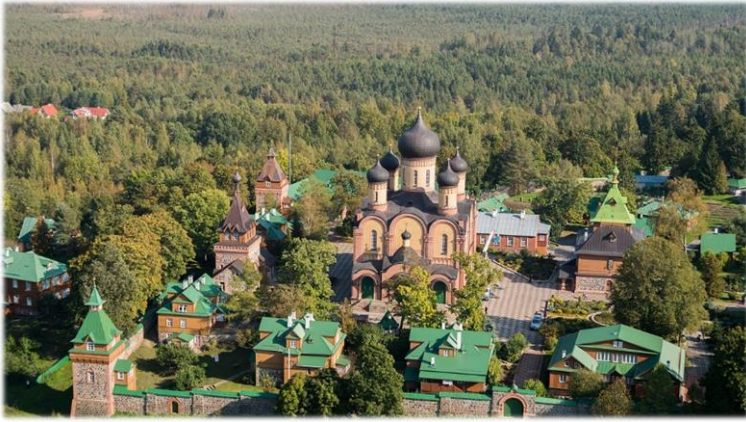
Day 1. Wednesday, June 11, 2025

Arrival to **Tallinn** airport (Airport code: **TLL**), Estonia
Transfer to the hotel. Rest. Welcome dinner and orientation.

Day 2. Thursday, June 12, 2025

Tallinn is one of the best-preserved Medieval cities in the Northeast of Europe. With the population of over 400000 people, it is the most populous city in Estonia, and it is the country's capital. The exact date of the foundation of the city is unknown, but archeologists confirmed the first human presence on the site of the city some 5000 years ago. By 1050 there was a fortress on the site of the city and at the beginning of the 13 century the city was granted status in the **Hanseatic league**, a medieval alliance of towns and merchant guilds that dominated trade in the Baltic and North Seas. The long history of the city is well preserved, as seen in its many spectacular monuments, some of which we are going to visit during our walking tour today. Overnight in **Tallinn**.





Day 3. Friday, June 13, 2025

This morning, we will check out from our hotel and travel East. Our first stop will be at the **Pühtitsa Convent**. Initially, just a small Orthodox Christian church was built in Pühtitsa in the 16th century. The convent was later founded in 1891 and has since grown into the largest Orthodox community in the Baltic states. St. John of Kronstadt, one of the greatest saints of the 20th century took direct interest and participated in the consecration of the **Dormition Church**, the

main church of the convent. The monastery was one out of very few monastic communities that was not closed by the authorities during the Bolshevik yoke. From there we will travel South, along the shores of **Lake Peipus** and will visit a couple of the sites associated with **Russian Old-Believers**, the descendants of the Church movement that separated itself from the Russian Orthodox Church in the middle of the seventeenth century. As the members of the movement were brutally persecuted by the authorities, they had to run and many found themselves just on the other side of the border with the Muscovy. Here they settled and remained until the present day. A small, but engaging exhibit at the old believers' **museum** will provide us with a good introduction into their history and lifestyle. For an overnight we will arrive in **Tartu**.



Day 4. Saturday, June 14, 2025

First thing in the morning, we will explore the ancient, but yet vibrant town of **Tartu**, and will get an introduction into its academic history. Then we will visit The Estonian **National Museum** that in its current



form opened its doors to visitors in 2016. The museum tracks the history, life and traditions of the Estonian people, and it presents the culture and history of other Finno-Ugric peoples, and the minorities in Estonia. After lunch we will cross the border into **Latvia** and here our first stop will be in a picturesque town of **Sigulda**, known for its Medieval **Castle of Turaida**, built in 1214 for the order of the Brothers of the Sword (precursor to the Teutonic order). The castle is also associated with the Romantic and yet tragic story of a girl named Maya, nicknamed for the beauty of the Rose of Turaida. By the nightfall we will arrive to **Riga**.



Day 5. Sunday, June 15, 2025

We will start our day by attending **Divine Liturgy** at one of the local Orthodox Churches. After brunch we will visit the Orthodox **Cathedral of the Nativity of Christ**, built in the late 19 century in the Neo-Byzantine style. The Cathedral was turned into a Planetarium in the 1960's, but served as such for only 30 years, as in 1991 it was returned to the faithful for liturgical use. In the Cathedral we will venerate the **relics of the New Martyr John**, the Archbishop of the Latvian Church, assassinated by unknown killers in 1934. Archbishop John was known as a defender of the Faith and bridge between the ethnic fractions during the time of the first republic and his active position was not appreciated by many. As the Cathedral is located a close walk from the **Old Town**, we will continue to explore the Medieval part of Riga, reveling in its distinct preservation of Germanic character. The old town is considered to be one of the most beautiful in the entire Baltic region. Dozens of stores, restaurants, and cafes located on the narrow streets and medieval squares grant Riga, the capital of Latvia, a very particular charm and ambience. We will visit several Medieval churches, walk the streets



of the town, and visit the city market, located in the former Zeppelin hangars. At one time it was the largest market in all of Europe. For an overnight we will remain in **Riga**.



Day 6. Monday, June 16, 2025

Today we will continue our exploration of **Riga** and the vicinity. Our busy day will start at the Latvian **Ethnographic Open-Air Museum**, founded on the shore of Lake Jugla (in the close suburbs of Riga) in 1924. It spans 87 hectares and offers 118 samples of folk architecture. Cumulatively, they tell a story of peasant life in the rural territories of present-day Latvia from

the late 17th to mid-20th century. Here we will sample some of the local Latvian delicacies. Then we will return to Riga and continue our day with a visit to the **Art Nouveau Apartment-Museum**, which is located on a street consisting entirely of period houses. Weather-permitting, we will take a **boat ride** on the Daugava River, then we will visit the **museum of Janis Lipke**, Riga's dock worker and a Latvian rescuer of Jews in Riga during World War II and the Holocaust in Latvia. For an overnight we will remain in **Riga**.

Day 7. Tuesday, June 17, 2025

This morning, we will check out from our hotel in Riga and will travel further South. Our first stop will be at **Rundale Palace**. It was built over two periods in the 18th century according to the design of the renowned Italian architect Bartolomeo Rastrelli. This massive palace known also as the "**Versailles of Latvia**" was beautifully restored in the second part of the 20th century. With its lavish interiors and French gardens, the palace was added to the tentative UNESCO list in 2021. Rundale certainly lives up to the spectacular glory of European palaces from the same period.



effigies and rosaries have been brought here by Catholic pilgrims. In recent decades you could see more and more Orthodox pilgrims coming to the site, and among the Western crucifixes you can see Orthodox and Armenian crosses. For an overnight we will arrive in **Kaunas**.

Day 8. Wednesday, June 18, 2025.

Kaunas is the first Lithuanian city that we are going to visit. During the Soviet era it grew to become a major city, but the historical center, very distinct and different from what we saw in Riga and Tallinn is well preserved. After the stroll through the historical center of Kaunas we will visit the **Pažaislis Monastery**, the largest monastery complex in Lithuania, and the most renowned example



of Baroque architecture in the country. In the

Our second stop will be at the enigmatic **Hill of Crosses** - a major site of Catholic pilgrimage in Lithuania. The precise origin of the practice of leaving crosses on the hill is uncertain, but it is believed that the first crosses were placed there in the 1830's. Over the generations, not only crosses and crucifixes, but statues of the Virgin Mary, carvings of Lithuanian patriots, and thousands of tiny



of Baroque architecture in the country. In the



afternoon we will stop for a visit at **Trakai Castle**, a 14th century fortress built on the island in the middle of the lake. The view of the historic structure is straight out of a fairy tale. For an overnight we will arrive in **Vilnius**.

Day 9. Thursday, June 19, 2025

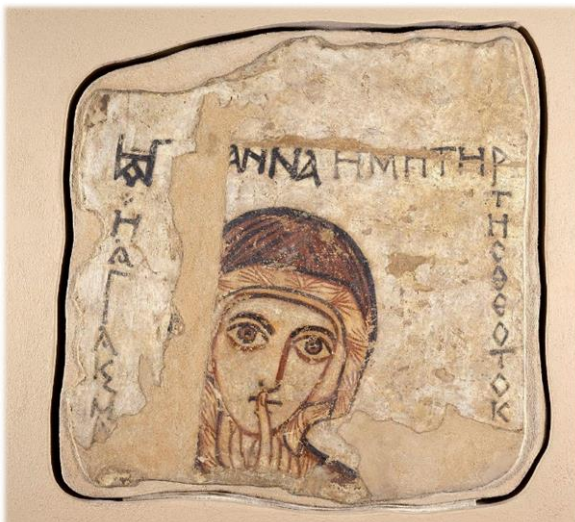
The city of **Vilnius**, the capital of Lithuania is different from the wall-chained Tallinn and Germanic Riga. It gives a rather sunny and open impression even as it preserves its Medieval legacy very well. In particular it is

known for its many baroque churches, a tribute to the historical legacy of the unified Polish Lithuanian Kingdom. However, there are religious edifices of different denominations. Of particular interest is the Orthodox **Holy Spirit Monastery** rebuilt 1749–1753 in the Vilnian Baroque style. The monastery serves as the shrine to Saints Anthony, John, and Eustathius, the first officially recognized Christian martyrs from Lithuania. They lived in Vilnius in the 14th century and served in the court of Grand Duke Algirdas. After converting to Christianity, they were imprisoned, tortured, and killed for refusing to renounce their faith. Another pilgrim stop in Vilnius will be at the **Chapel of the Gate of Dawn**, where the icon of the Mother of God of the same name is venerated by all the Christian faithful of the city. The icon was historically placed above the Vilnius city gate for the blessing of the travelers and for the protection against the invaders. For an overnight we will remain in **Vilnius**.



Day 10. Friday, June 20, 2025

In the morning we will board a plane for a short flight to **Warsaw**, the capital of Poland. The Medieval city of Warsaw was severely damaged during the course of WWII, with relatively few buildings remaining intact. At large, Warsaw remains today a modern city, but there still are some very interesting historic sites to see. For us one of these places will be the **Orthodox churches of St. Mary Magdalene**, that serves as the Cathedral of the Polish Orthodox Church, and the **Church of St. John of Climacus**, the Holy Shrine for the relics of the new martyr, Father Vasily Martysz, who during his tenure was a part of the Orthodox Missionary labors in America. In addition, we will visit the **Faras Gallery** at the National Museum of Warsaw. It features a collection of **Nubian Christian art**, including wall paintings and architectural elements from the Faras Cathedral. The gallery is the only exhibition of Christian Nubian art from the 8th–14th centuries in Europe. For an overnight we will remain in **Warsaw**.



Day 11. Saturday, June 21, 2025

Today we will transfer from Warsaw to **Krakow**. On our way we will make two stops. Our first stop will be in the city of **Częstochowa**, one of the most important pilgrim destinations in all of Poland. Here we will venerate **Our Lady of Czestochowa**, also known as the Black Madonna of Poland, housed in the **Jasna Góra Monastery** in Częstochowa, Poland. Tradition says that the Icon has an Ancient Eastern Provenance and for centuries it was piously venerated by the Orthodox and Catholics alike.

The second stop of the day will be at the **Wieliczka salt mine** which, after being originally excavated in the 13th century, kept producing table salt until 1996, making it one of the world's oldest operating salt mines. The Wieliczka Salt Mine is now an official Polish Historic Monument and a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Its attractions include the shafts and labyrinthine passageways, displays of historic salt-mining technology, an underground lake, four chapels and numerous statues carved by miners out of the rock salt, and more recent sculptures by contemporary artists. For an overnight we will arrive in **Krakow**.



Day 12. Sunday, June 22, 2025

After the **Divine Liturgy** at one of the local Orthodox Churches, we will explore the city of **Kraków**, the second largest city of Poland, and without doubt one of the most beautiful cities of Eastern Europe.

Founded in the 9th century on the crossroads of the major trade routes, its **Old Town** was declared a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1978, one of the world's first sites granted status. Along with the central city square that is the largest in Europe and surrounded by the

row houses and the houses of the nobility, we will see a number of churches, some of which preserved part of its Romanesque ambiance.

Later in the afternoon we will visit the **Museum in Wawel Castle** that houses the Royal Art collection with countless artifacts that illuminate the history of Poland. Farewell dinner. Overnight in **Krakow**.



Day 13. Monday, June 23, 2025

After breakfast transfer to the Kraków John Paul II International Airport (airport code KRK) for the departure.



TECHNICAL INFORMATION:

Price includes:

- Accommodation in good four-star hotels with breakfasts daily.
- Extra meals (all lunches and most dinners)
- City hospitality taxes
- Air-conditioned motorcoach for the transfers all along the tour according to the program.
- Road, local and city taxes for the tourist bus
- Tours and visits as per the above itinerary, accompanied by local guides.
- Whisper sets
- English-speaking tour escort for the whole pilgrimage

Price does NOT include:

- Flights (To Tallinn, Estonia and from Krakow, Poland)
- Meals other than specified
- Beverages during meals (other than water)
- Optional/additional tours and associated entrance fees
- Portage, gratuities* and extras
- Optional extensions
- Entrance to temporary exhibits ... or to any exhibits that cost extra to the general museum fee
- Anything that is not specifically mentioned in "Price includes"

* It is customary for the tour participants to tip, on a personal basis, the tour escort, driver and local guides based on the satisfaction of the services received. Please use the following as a guideline: \$10 (or EUR equivalent) per traveler/per day.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

\$ 3450 per person, in double occupancy in a group of 26 participants; Single supplement: \$700 extra and subject to availability. Please consider that the final price may fluctuate due to the actual number of participants or due to nearly unprecedented spikes in fuel prices that negatively impacted on the economies of the most countries in the region. In case of need for financial adjustment you'll be informed right away. We do apologize for any inconvenience in that regard and appreciate your understanding of the difficult circumstances of the current challenging environment.

All payments should be made by check to: "Palomnik, LLC", and mailed to 668 Pittsburg Road, Butler, PA 16002. Any returned checks are subject to a \$25 fee. If you'd like to register and to pay via the credit card, you can do so via this link: <https://tri.ps/Uqzqt>. Please beware of the extra credit card fees that are charged by the banking institutions. If you'd like to pay by Zelle, please use ortours@gmail.com e-mail address. If you'd like to make a bank deposit or need info for a banking wire, please contact us directly.

REGISTRATION:

A \$850 deposit is required when you sign up for the trip. The deposit is non-refundable, unless it is cancelled by the organizers due to lack of participation. The deadline for signing up for the trip is March 11, 2025. The entire amount is due on March 11, 2025. Failure to pay in full by March 11, 2025, without written notice of explanation may lead to the cancellation of your participation, with no refund of any previously committed funds. To avoid any money loss, emergency/travel cancellation insurance is

strongly recommended. If you decide to join the pilgrimage after the deadline, please contact tour coordinator regarding the availability.

CANCELLATION POLICY:

If you need to cancel after you signed up, please note the schedule of charges in addition to the amount of non-refundable deposit:

- 25% of the tour cost, 91 to 60 days prior to the departure
- 50% of the tour cost, 60 to 30 days prior to the departure
- 100% of the tour cost 30 or fewer days prior to the departure

SPECIAL REQUESTS:

All special requests, concerns and suggestions must be submitted in writing to Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky no later than the date of the final payment (March 11, 2025).

All cancellations must be done in writing as well and sent directly to agent/coordinator - Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky, and must be received for reimbursement by the dates shown in the cancellation schedule. We also have to add that should cancellation or alteration of the program occur due to Covid and associated emergencies, civil disturbances, acts of terrorism, war, natural disaster, and other events of force majeure or acts of God (including threat or fear of same), refunds will be made only to the extent that they are recoverable, and that such cancellation or alteration may result in the total loss of funds paid by participants. It is assumed each participant has reviewed the same with respect to their own comfort level of risk and personal safety. A decision to withdraw from the trip for these reasons or any others will be bound by the same terms of cancellation.

ALTERATIONS TO THE ITINERARY:

Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky reserves the right to alter, modify or withdraw the itinerary if air schedules and/or events beyond his control, including those of Covid and associated emergencies deem it necessary. In the event it becomes necessary for the comfort or well-being of the travelers to alter or modify the itinerary or arrangements, such alterations may be made without penalty to the tour operator and are not grounds for cancellation with refund. Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky assumes no responsibility over any consequences of Covid associated emergencies or anything that is a result of any participant deviating from the group tour. Because of the difference in language and customs, it is expected that the traveler will follow the directions of the Tour Director at all times. The Tour Director reserves the right to restrict a person's participation in the group's activities, including exclusion from the group, when, in the opinion of the

Director, such action is necessary. To avoid any money loss, emergency/travel cancellation insurance is strongly recommended.

REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

A passport with validity for at least six months beyond the end of stay.

Starting in 2024, U.S. passport holders traveling to Europe will need to apply for authorization through the European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) before their visit. For details and authorization, please visit: https://travel-europe.europa.eu/etias_en

IT IS STRONGLY SUGGESTED THAT YOU:

- Obtain insurance covering medical needs and coverage of personal property, possible Covid quarantine and/or hospitalization and treatment
- Be aware that financial coverage for all emergency medical and other emergency needs (including those related to hospitalization, treatment, or quarantine) will be your sole responsibility. We will provide all possible logistical and personal assistance, but the financial aspect is your responsibility.
- Act in a manner consistent with the surrounding environment
- Make arrangements to have access to sufficient funds to cover personal needs and unexpected events
- Be aware that the places that we will be visiting may not have the same amenities that you are accustomed to. Medical facilities in some areas may be limited.

This agreement becomes effective upon acceptance into the tour by Fr. Ilya Gotlinsky

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Telephone: 001-878-221-7041

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**REGISTRATION FORM:
THE EDGE OF EUROPE: BALTIC CAPITALS AND POLAND
JUNE 11-23, 2025**

*To register: please complete this registration form and return it along with
your deposit check (\$850.00) made to PALOMNIK, LLC to the following address:
Palomnik, LLC, P.O.Box 1618, Cranberry Township, PA 16066
Please write "Baltic 2025" on the memo line.*

Full Name (exactly as in your passport):

Date of Birth (day/month/year):

Passport # ; Nationality

Issue and expirations date (day/month/year):

Address:

City, State, Zip/Postal Code

Home phone:

Alt. phone and Email:

Emergency Contact Information (Name, Phone, Relation):

Medical restrictions:

Dietary restrictions:

Would you prefer single accommodations at additional costs specified in the itinerary?

let us know if there is anything else that we should know in order to make your travel experience more comfortable and pleasant:

*Your signature below confirms that you have read the itinerary and agree to abide by Terms and
Conditions that accompany the itinerary.*

NAME/SIGNATURE:

DATE: