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LATVIA'S TOP EVENTS GUIDE 2013



Kontinental Ice Hockey League (KHL) season

6.1.-17.2. ☐ Rīga

The Kontinental Ice Hockey League (KHL) is an international hockey league which was established in 2008 and is currently made up of 26 teams from Russia, Latvia, Belarus, Slovakia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan and the Czech Republic. Latvia is represented in the KHL by local ice hockey club Riga "Dinamo", which has qualified for the KHL playoffs all of the past four seasons.



Olympic ice hockey qualification tournament

7.2.-10.2. Rīga

"Arena Riga" will be jumping this February, as it hosts a qualification tournament for the 2014 Winter Olympics in the men's ice hockey. Latvia is in the same qualification group as France, Kazakhstan and the winner of the first qualification round. Only the winners of the three qualification tournaments will qualify for the 2014 Winter Olympics in the Russian city of Sochi, as nine teams have already earned automatic qualification.

International saxophone festival "Saxophonia"

7.2.-17.2. ☐ Rīga

The 9th saxophone music festival "Saxophonia" will once again kick off in Riga this February, which is one of the biggest such saxophone festivals in the Baltics and Eastern Europe. Festival goers will have the opportunity to hear foreign and local saxophone stars play various types of jazz, classical, modern and world music styles. The festival will not only feature wonderful concerts in Riga, but in other Latvian towns and cities as well.

World Cup stage in winter orienteering on skis

11.2.-18.2. Madona

A World Cup stage in winter orienteering on skis will be held at the "Smecers sils" sports base in Madona Region this February. The competition will feature various disciplines, and will also serve as the 2013 European Winter Orienteering Championships for Youth, as well as the Winter Orienteering World Cup for juniors and veterans. Approximately 400 competitors from around the world are expected to compete in this year's event.

Metēņi Day festivities at the Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum and Turaida Castle

17.2. ☐ Rīga, Sigulda

In February, Latvians celebrate one of their traditional calendar festivals Metēņi - a celebration dedicated to bidding farewell to the winter and welcoming the spring. Together with local folklore groups, Metēņi is celebrated in many Latvian towns and villages. The festival is also celebrated each year at the Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum near Riga, as well as at the Turaida Castle Complex and Museum near Sigulda.

Sigulda Winter Festival

2.3.-9.3. ☒ Sigulda

Once again this year, the charming Latvian town of Sigulda, which is also Latvia's winter sports capital, will host its annual winter festival. During the festival, several winter sporting competitions for the public will be held, as well as competitions for professionals. The festival will also have a wide ranging cultural and entertainment program.

International Bach Chamber Music Festival

15.3.-25.3. ☒ Rīga, Jaunmoku pils

The romantic neo-gothic Jaunmoka Manor will once again host the spring session of the International Bach Chamber Music Festival. The festival manifests the organizers' desire to reveal Bach from the "quiet side". Audiences at the festival hear seldom performed interpretations of Bach's chamber music. Furthermore, the responsibility of interpreting music at the festival always rests with world renowned musicians, many of them global authorities in the performance of authentic music.

World Women's Curling Championships

16.3.-24.3. Rīga

For the first time ever in Latvia and the Baltic region, the 2013 World Women's Curling Championships will be held at the "Volvo" sports center in Riga. The world's top 12 women's curling teams will compete for the World Championships, as well as qualification points for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.

"Windstream" spring music festival

20.3.-6.4. ☒ Rīga

The fourth annual "Windstream" spring music festival will be held this year, which is being organized by the professional symphonic orchestra "Rīga". The festival will once again give its listeners the opportunity to hear brass orchestras from Latvia and around the world perform music by Latvian and foreign composers.

Easter

29.3.-1.4. ☒ Latvia

Mixing Christian and pagan traditions, Latvia celebrates Easter. For Christians, this is the time when Christ was resurrected. For those celebrating pagan traditions, this is the Spring equinox - honoring of the arrival of spring and return of the sun. Those celebrating the spring equinox carry out ancient rituals to help the land wake up from its winter sleep and ensure the fertility of the land and bless it.



International Piano Stars Festival

18.4.-21.4. 📍 Liepāja

The annual International Piano Stars Festival in the Latvian coastal city of Liepāja has grown to become one of the most important cultural events of the year, and has become a very prestigious event in the Latvian cultural calendar, gathering many top musicians from Latvia and abroad. The special charm of Liepāja, along with charismatic soloists and the “amber sound” of the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra, attract thousands of music devotees every year, not only from Latvia but also from abroad.

18th International Baltic Ballet Festival

19.4.-1.5. 📍 Rīga

The annual International Baltic Ballet Festival will once again delight audiences for the 18th time this year, and is due to offer varied and rich ballet and dance programs. The festival will once again feature stars from around the world and will allow dance enthusiasts to enjoy world-class performances from classical to avant-garde. The festival will be also complemented by various exhibitions on the theme of dance.

International music festival “Rīgas Ritmi”

24.4.-27.4. / 3.7.-6.7. / 5.12.-7.12. 📍 Rīga

The popular international jazz and world music festival “Rīgas ritmi” will once again be held in Riga in July. Each year, the festival gathers some of the world’s top jazz musicians for unforgettable performances. The festival takes place in various concert venues throughout the city, and also organizes special jam session and workshops together with the visiting musicians.

Renewal of Independence of the Republic of Latvia Day

4.5. 📍 Latvia

On May 4, Latvia celebrates the 23rd anniversary of the Declaration of the Renewal of Independence of the Republic of Latvia. On this day in 1990, the majority of the Supreme Council of the Soviet Republic of Latvia adopted the Declaration “On the Restoration of Independence of the Republic of Latvia”. A number of events, marking the declaration of the renewal of Latvia’s independence, will be held throughout the country on the day.

Night of the Museum

18.5. 📍 Latvia

Once every year, people have the unique opportunity to visit various museums at nighttime and for free, which means that the Night of the Museums has arrived. On this night, most of Latvia’s museums organize special events and interesting exhibitions, which have become almost a pilgrimage for many persons who try to visit as many museums as possible.

“Nordea” Rīga Marathon

19.5. 📍 Rīga

The “Nordea” Riga Marathon will be held once again in the Latvian capital this May, which has over the past several years gained much popularity and increased its prestige globally. This year’s event will once again gather thousands of athletes from all over the world. In 2012, a total of 15,285 people from 59 countries completed the various marathon distances.

European Autocross Championship stage

25.5.-26.5. ☒ Bauskas novads

Once again this May at the "Mūšas" track near Bauska, a 2013 European Autocross Championship stage will be held. This will be the 23rd European Autocross Championships stage held at the "Mūšas" track, and will feature drivers from all over Europe. It remains the largest event in the Baltics.

Traditional Applied Arts Fair at Latvian Ethnographic Open Air Museum

1.6.-2.6. ☒ Rīga

The Latvian Ethnographic Open-Air Museum will hold the 43rd Traditional Applied Arts Fair once again this June, with several thousand of Latvia's best craftsmen participating from all over the country - blacksmiths, basket-makers, weavers, potters, tailors, wood carvers and many others. Furthermore, people will be able to try their hand at making their own crafts, as several workshops will also be held during the fair. There will also be a large cultural program of events, including traditional Latvian dancing, singing and games. Ethnic Latvian food will also be served in the many food stalls.

Riga Festival

1.6.-21.6. ☒ Rīga

The Riga Music Festival will once again delight music lovers this June with concerts performed by various well-known European symphony orchestras and conductors. Over the years, the festival has developed not only as a music festival, but as a dance and visual art festival as well, so that city residents and guests can enjoy a wide range of cultural performances. The culmination of the Riga Festival will take place in 2014, when the Latvian capital will become the European Capital of Culture.

Riga Opera Festival

4.6.-15.6. ☒ Rīga

The Riga Opera Festival, founded in 1998 as the first festival of its size and scale in Eastern Europe, has already become a valuable tradition. The festival is highly anticipated by both Latvian audiences and opera-lovers from abroad which form the biggest part of all Riga Opera Festival's visitors. This year, the opera will celebrate composer Richard Wagner's 200th anniversary by performing all four opera's in Wagner's monumental tetralogy "Der Ring des Nibelungen". Performance of "Götterdämmerung" Richard Wagner's opera "Götterdämmerung" produced by Viesturs Kairiņš; conductor and musical director - Cornelius Meister.

- Opera "Das Rheingold" (4.6.)
- Opera "Die Walküre" (5.6.)
- Opera "Siegfried" (7.6.)
- Opera "Götterdämmerung" (9.6.)



X Kremerata Baltica music festival

26.6.-1.7. 📍 Sigulda

One of the main festivals of this summer's classical music calendar will be held in the picturesque town of Sigulda, where "Grammy" award winning Baltic chamber music ensemble "Kremerata Baltica" will once again be organizing its annual music festival. The chamber orchestra "Kremerata Baltica" was formed in year 1997 by renowned Latvian/German violinist Gidon Kremer, consisting of young musicians from the Baltic States. Gidon Kremer serves as the orchestra's artistic director and solo violinist.



Cēsis Art Festival 2013

29.6.-21.7. 📍 Cēsis

The Cēsis Art Festival will once again be held in beautiful medieval town of Cēsis this year. For three weeks, the festival's program will feature excellent professional art exhibitions, cinema and theater, as well as different concerts taking place in both open air and indoor locations.

XXV Latvian Song and Dance Festival

30.6.-7.7. Rīga

One of the most noteworthy events in Latvia's cultural life is undeniably the Latvian Song and Dance Celebration, which has taken place once every five years since 1873. This is a major event involving thousands of participants from all over Latvia. The Song and Dance Celebration has also been included in the UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. The festivities bring together more than 30 000 participants to Riga - singers, dancers, wind orchestra musicians, folklore groups, amateur theatres, studios of applied and fine arts, and others. The festival features a number of various concerts and lasts for a whole week.



International organ music festival "Rīgas doms"

1.7.-31.7. 📍 Rīga

The Riga Dome Church is one of Old Town Riga's main landmarks, while the church's organ is the city's most beautifully sounding emblem. Every year, the world's top organ musicians gather at the annual International Organ Music Festival to perform concerts on the church's famous organ.

MX1 World Championship+Latvian championship stage at "Zelta Zirgs" race track in Ķegums

6.7.-7.7. 📍 Ķegums

The 2013 MX1 World Championships will be held at the "Zelta Zirgs" motocross track in July, which will gather the top MX1 motocross riders from around the world. The MX1 category remains the most prestigious solo motocross class in the world. The MX2 World Championships and a European Championships stage will also be held at the "Zelta Zirgs" motocross track near the town of Kegums.

International Festival of Early Music

10.7.-13.7. 📍 Rīga, Rundāle

The 18th annual Early Music Festival, which will be taking place once again this July, allows for a contemporary person to sample the feel of Renaissance, Medieval and Baroque periods through music. The festival's concerts attract listeners to the ancient churches and halls of Old Riga, as well as Mežotne Palace, the Koknese Castle ruins and the beautifully restored Lestene Church. Splendid costumes of olden days, early music instruments, authentic performances and fireworks will leave no one indifferent.

Sea and Fishermen's Festival

13.7. 📍 Latvia

The Sea Festival in Latvia is the second largest festival after Midsummer's Night on the Latvian summer calendar. Even though this festival is celebrated in coastal towns and villages throughout the country, people from all over Latvia flock to the coast during the festivities to honor fishermen for their work, the sea for its abundance of life, or just to get away for the weekend and relax by the sea or go to the many traditional open-air concerts.

Positivus festival - music and performing arts festival

19.7.-21.7. 📍 Salacgrīva

The 7th annual music and performing art festival, the largest such festival in the Baltics, will once again be held in the coastal town of Salacgriva this year. The three-day festival will once again feature some of the world's top rock, indie and intelligent pop musicians, as well as many local acts from the Baltics. "Positivus festival" will also feature special cinema and theater pavilions, a market featuring work from local designers, as well as many other fun and enjoyable activities.



International sailing regatta “The Tall Ships Races 2013”

25.7.-28.7. Riga

Riga has been included in the “Tall Ships Races 2013” sailing regatta organized by the international organization “Sail Training International”. The regatta’s route will go through Orhus (Denmark), Helsinki (Finland), Riga and Szczecin (Poland). The “Tall Ships Races” is the largest joint sailing and yacht regatta in the world, with approximately 80-100 yachts participating each year.



XXI Sigulda International Opera Festival

2.8.-4.8. ☐ Sigulda

For the 20th year, the picturesque Latvian town of Sigula will host its annual Opera Festival in the town’s castle ruins. The prestigious festival always gathers many of the world’s top opera singers, as well as opera stars from Latvia and the region.

Ventspils City Festival

2.8.-4.8. ☐ Ventspils

The Latvian coastal city of Ventspils will be organizing its annual city festival this summer in honor of the city’s 723rd anniversary. The festival’s program will include various concerts, exhibitions, sports events, competitions, workshops and special markets.

International music festival “Summertime”

8.8.-18.8. ☐ Jūrmala

Once again in August, the famous Latvian soprano Inese Galante and her friends from various world opera houses will be performing at the 9th international music festival “Summertime” in Jurmala. The festival will include concert performances from a wide range of musical styles - from jazz to flamenco, to chamber music and opera. Galante herself will perform several concerts during the festival together with her friends and other musicians from around the world.



Livonian Festival at Cēsis and Āraiši

10.8.-11.8. 📍 Cēsis

Medieval songs, handicrafts and battle reenactments will once again take place at this year's Livonian Festival in the romantic and historical city of Cēsis and the nearby village of Āraiši. Persons wishing to get a taste of life in medieval Latvia are encouraged to attend this year's festival.

Medieval Festival at Jaunpils

10.8. 📍 Jaunpils

The annual Medieval Festival in the village of Jaunpils will once again be held this year. The festival's program will include various events, including knight competitions, as well as an arts and craft market. The festival will also feature several concerts and performances, with its traditional ball on the final evening.

Virgin Mary Ascension Day

13.8.-15.8. 📍 Aglona

Aglona (eastern Latvia) is the site of the most famous Catholic shrine in Latvia - the Basilica of Our Lady of Aglona. It is a globally known Catholic religious center, where thousands of pilgrims come to celebrate the Ascension of Mary on August 15 each year. Last year, up to 100,000 pilgrims arrived in Aglona to celebrate the Virgin Mary Ascension Day.



Riga City Festival 2013

16.8.-18.8. 📍 Rīga

The Riga City Festival will once again take place in mid-August and will offer city residents and guests the opportunity to participate and attend various concerts, events taking place throughout the city. The festival's events will be held in various venues, concert halls, squares, museums and parks throughout the city. Several events will also take place on the water and in the air.



16th International Spiritual Music Festival

24.8.-7.9. 📍 Rīga

The foundation of the Spiritual Music Festival was laid in 1998, when the state academic choir "Latvija" first organized the festival with the goal of enriching Riga's cultural scene, while at the same time renewing the public's level of spirituality.

International Festival of Contemporary Theater - HOMO NOVUS

2.9.-8.9. ☐ Rīga

The biennial International Festival of Contemporary Theatre "Homo Novus" is an essential part of Latvian performing arts scene and cultural landscape of Riga. It has become an important meeting point for local and international professionals and theatre goers alike. The festival presents new talents and established artists with an interest and curiosity for contemporary world and functions as a platform for development of new artistic initiatives and partnerships.



Baltic Sea Forum for Documentaries 2013

4.9.-8.9. ☐ Rīga

The 17th Baltic Sea Forum for Documentaries will be held in Riga, which has become the most important such event in the region for documentary film professionals. It is a market of ideas for documentary films for all distribution platforms with international potential, and helps assist directors from the Baltics, Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia, France, Germany and other countries attract financing for their projects.

International contemporary art festival SURVIVAL KIT 5

5.9.-15.9. ☐ Rīga

"Survival Kit" is an international contemporary art festival which takes place in Riga, and organized by the Contemporary Arts Centre; each year it has a new thematic emphasis inviting artists and audiences to watch, comment and act. New ideas and challenging artists will also be in the festival program this year.

"Baltā Nakts 2013" cultural forum

7.9.-8.9. ☐ Rīga

The "Baltā Nakts" (White Night) cultural forum is an important date on the modern art calendar in Latvia, where for one autumn night each year, persons have the opportunity to acquaint themselves and participate in special art, theater, music, dance and other projects that are organized specially for the forum.

International art plein air "Mark Rothko"

14.9.-25.9. ☐ Daugavpils

Every September in the city of Daugavpils (southeastern Latvia), which is the birthplace of the world famous abstract-expressionist painter Mark Rothko, an international art plein air is organized, which has become one of the main cultural events on the city's calendar. It is an intensive two weeks of creative work, exchange of experience, discussions, where artists are able to get away from their daily activities and immerse themselves in creativity. On the final day of the plein air, the Daugavpils Regional Art Museum will host an exhibition of the art pieces created during the plein air.

Autumn Chamber Music Festival

15.9.-8.10. 📍 Rīga

The Autumn Chamber Music Festival will once again be held in Riga this fall, with concerts taking place in several Riga concert halls. For several years now the festival has been held under the patronage of the world famous Latvian composer Peteris Vasks. His acceptance of this honorable position encourages musicians to include pieces composed by him or by other Latvian composer into their programs.

Mikēlis Day fair

28.9.-29.9. 📍 Rīga

Mikēlis Day is the Autumn Solstice, when the sun turns towards winter, and day and night are the same length. This is an important point in a farmer's daily rhythm, as the most important chores are finished and activity in fields slowly dies down. Every year, various annual fairs take place throughout Latvia on Mikēlis Day, where local farmers sell their products to hungry city slickers. The fairs are a joyous event, which also gather local craftsmen and musicians, as many various events are also organized throughout the day.

XV international festival for new media culture "Art+Communication"

8.10.-12.10. 📍 Rīga

The annual International Festival for New Media Culture "Art+Communication" is organized by the the Center for New Media Culture "RIXC". The festival offers participants to attend thematic creative workshops, as well as organizes conferences and art exhibitions, thus giving persons the opportunity to acquaint themselves with new media culture.

Riga International Short Film Festival 2ANNAS

21.10.-27.10. 📍 Rīga

Riga International Short Film Festival 2ANNAS, held on the last week of May now for the 18th time, offers an insight into the non-commercial European and world cinema, invites the search for novelties in form and content, explores the trends of local filmmaking, and pulls down from the shelves those examples of visual communication that once were tearing up the silver screens on the other side of the ocean, or have earned a reputation of being artistic boundary breakers right here in Europe.

Freestyle MX World Championship "Grand Prix" Latvia

26.10. 📍 Rīga

Breathtaking and dangerous tricks and stunts performed by elite of freestyle "Moto-X" riders will take place in Riga at this year's Freestyle MX World Championship "Grand Prix" Latvia. The event will take place once again at "Arena Riga" and will include light effects, pyrotechnics and other great performances in a grand motor show, which will be the most extreme sport event taking place in Latvia this year.

XIII World Music Festival PORTA

6.11.-8.11. 📍 Rīga, Ventspils

The "Porta" World Music Festival has been created to bring together persons from different cultures, eras and experiences in one place. The festival's varied program introduces the audience with fresh trends in world music. The festival itself features various concerts, film screenings and master workshops.

Lačplēsis Day

11.11. 📍 Latvia

A large number of various events will take place in Riga and elsewhere in Latvia on November 11 to mark the 93rd anniversary of War Heroes Remembrance Day, also known as Lacplesis Day. Latvia marks Lacplesis Day in memory of the fight for freedom from 1918 to 1920. On November 11, 1919, the rag-tag Latvian Army and Riga residents defeated the 50,000-strong West Russian Volunteer Army led by Russian Colonel Pavel Bermont and German General Rudiger von der Goltz.

Festival of light "Staro Riga"

15.11.-18.11. 📍 Riga

For the fifth year in a row, the festival of light "Staro Riga" (Beaming Riga) will be held in the Latvian capital this November. The "Staro Riga" festival of light is an opportunity for people to see something different from the city they walk through daily, with many light installations set up on various Riga buildings, monuments and other objects. The various objects are set up not using only light installations, but also special lighting using elements of multimedia art, as well as sound.



94th anniversary of the proclamation of the independent Republic of Latvia

18.11. 📍 Latvia

On the 94th anniversary of the proclamation of the independent Republic of Latvia (November 18, 1918), a long list of events will be held in Riga and nationwide November 18, with church services, concerts and parades are among them. Marking the national holiday, the maroon-white-maroon flag of Latvia is raised by all buildings on the day.

Christmas markets

1.12.-14.1. 📍 Rīga

The tempting smell of mulled wine and toasted almonds, shiny gingerbread cookies and items made by local craftsmen - the opening of Old Town's Christmas markets is one of the surest signs that Christmas is right around the corner. Persons visiting the market will be able to try and purchase a wide variety of traditional Latvian Christmas goodies, as well as hot mulled wine, coffee and tea to warm up. The market is also an excellent place to purchase presents for loved ones made by local craftsmen, either it be a pair of knitted mittens, or a wooden candlestick, there is something available for all tastes.



Art Academy students organize annual exhibition and fair "Jarmarka"

17.12.-29.12. ☐ Rīga

This year's "Jamarka" annual winter art exhibition and fair organized by students from the Latvian Academy of Art will once again be held in Riga. Students from the many various departments of the Latvian Academy of Art will present their works at the exhibition and fair. "Jamarka" is one of the best places in Latvia to experience local modern art, as it features a bit of everything from the world of art.

Festival "European Christmas"

2.12.-30.12. ☐ Rīga

Each year, during the beautiful period of Advent, Christmas and New Year's Eve celebrations, audiences have an opportunity to experience the holiday spirit through traditional Christmas music (Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Vivaldi to name a few), pieces by contemporary composers and even through joyful jazz music. Throughout the whole December, the music festival "European Christmas" will please audiences with beautiful concerts in halls and churches throughout Riga.

Christmas tree festival

6.12.-13.1. ☐ Rīga

The annual festival "The Way Through the Christmas Trees" is a fresh and very original art event which is held in Riga every Christmas. Various Christmas trees are decorated throughout the city by students from the Latvian Academy of Art, who compete for various awards. The festival is a modern and original way of celebrating Riga as the home of the first ever Christmas tree.

International dance-sport festival "Baltic Grand Prix"

13.12.-15.12. ☐ Rīga

The annual international dance sport festival "Baltic Grand Prix" is a big event on the Latvian cultural and sports calendar. It is the largest and most prestigious such event in the Baltics, and also one of the largest in Europe. The festival features competitors from all over the world competing in various age groups and categories.

New Year's Eve in Riga

31.12.-1.1. ☐ Rīga

Traditionally, residents of Riga usually ring in the New Year at the Freedom Monument. Thousands of residents gather by the Freedom Monument to watch the New Year's firework show. It is a joyous atmosphere. Afterwards, special New Year's parties, concerts, balls and carnivals are held all throughout the city.

