



FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

Festivals and Events

Latvia is a very cultural country. There are several annual festivals and events in Latvia always welcoming people to visit and participate.

Summer Solstice and Jānis Day Celebration



People gathering around a bonfire at summer solstice

The summer solstice is celebrated on the 23 of June and the Jānis day celebration is celebrated on the 24 of June every year. They are one of the most important celebrations in Latvia. The summer solstice is celebrated on the longest day of the year. There is a tradition where everyone stays up all night singing songs, eating cheese with caraway seeds, drinking beer, and jumping over bonfires. Women traditionally wear flower wreaths on their heads and men wear a crown of oak leaves.



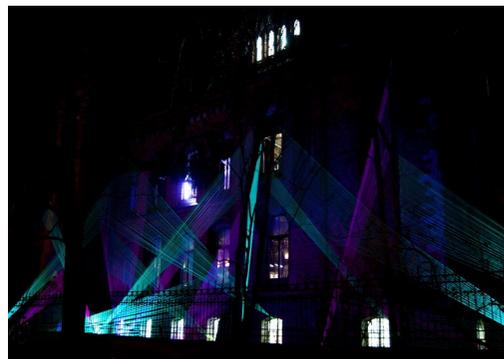
Traditional food eaten at summer solstice celebrations

Museum Night

The Museum Night takes place on the night of the second last weekend of May where most of the Latvian museums, theatres, concert halls, and libraries stay open long after midnight. There are no admission fees this night. The Museum Night gives the chance for people to visit several exhibitions and experience the culture of Latvia.



State Art Museum



Light shows at Staro Rīga

Festival of Light (Staro Rīga)

The Festival of Light Staro Rīga is an annual event that goes on for five evenings from 6 p.m to 11 p.m, on the 14th to 18th of November in old town Rīga. On these evenings there are exhibitions of videos and light installations streaming light on buildings and parks. Many people walk through Old Rīga late at night to admire the beautiful scenes of the event. November 18 is the night with the most people celebrating outside because it is the national independence day of Latvia.

Winter Solstice



People creating a bonfire at winter solstice

The winter solstice is celebrated between 21 and 22 of December which is the longest night of the year. There is a tradition of log rolling which

symbolizes the journey of the sun. Another tradition celebrated is called *Ķekatas* where people dress up with masks and visit from home to home singing songs to ward off evil spirits. The traditional meal eaten on this night is black peas with bacon and pig snouts.

Old Town Christmas Fair

The Old Town Christmas Fair is celebrated from 29th of November to 9th of January, from 10:00 a.m to 8:00 p.m. At this fair tra-



Entrance of the Old Town Christmas Fair

ditional food and treats such as mulled wine, gingerbread, roasted almonds, and smoked meats are sold. Latvian handcrafts, including wax candles, handmade wool socks, handmade mittens, amber, and wooden toys can also be found here for beautiful gifts.

