



# JŪRMALA

your holiday  
destination



# 11 REASONS TO CHOOSE JŪRMALA AS YOUR HOLIDAY DESTINATION

## 1 ● A UNIQUE SPA TOWN FOR WELLNESS

Jūrmala is the largest spa town on the shores of the Baltic Sea. It is a veritable oasis of natural healing and health that prides itself in an almost unbelievable concentration of natural resources in both the air and underground – more than can be found at spas in more southern climes. In fact, the entire Jūrmala area is a natural spa. The gentle, ionised seaside air heals the respiratory tract and strengthens the immune system. The pine forest aroma promotes a healthy heart. And the legendary mud and mineral waters (containing sulphur, bromine and sodium chloride) beneath Jūrmala help in eliminating toxins that have accumulated in the body. People have been bathing in the mud and mineral water baths at Jūrmala's spa houses, spa centres and sanatoriums for over 180 years.



## 2. NORTHERN RIVIERA

Jūrmala is often called the “Northern Riviera”. Similarly to the Vidzeme coastal resort area northeast of Riga, Jūrmala was formed by uniting several older fishing villages and swimming settlements. Similarly to the French Riviera, the opening of a railway line in the second half of the 19th century – which today runs the whole length of Jūrmala and right through its heart – promoted greater numbers of visitors to the area and helped the spa culture to flourish.

Over the years, the “Northern Riviera” feeling in Jūrmala has only grown stronger. Today Jūrmala is one of the few oases from the stress and chaos of our age, where one can still find that rare luxury of harmony between nature and the urban environment. The sea, the wind and stands of majestic pines calmly coexist alongside a vibrant cultural scene, a combination that inspires, refreshes and enriches all who spend time here.

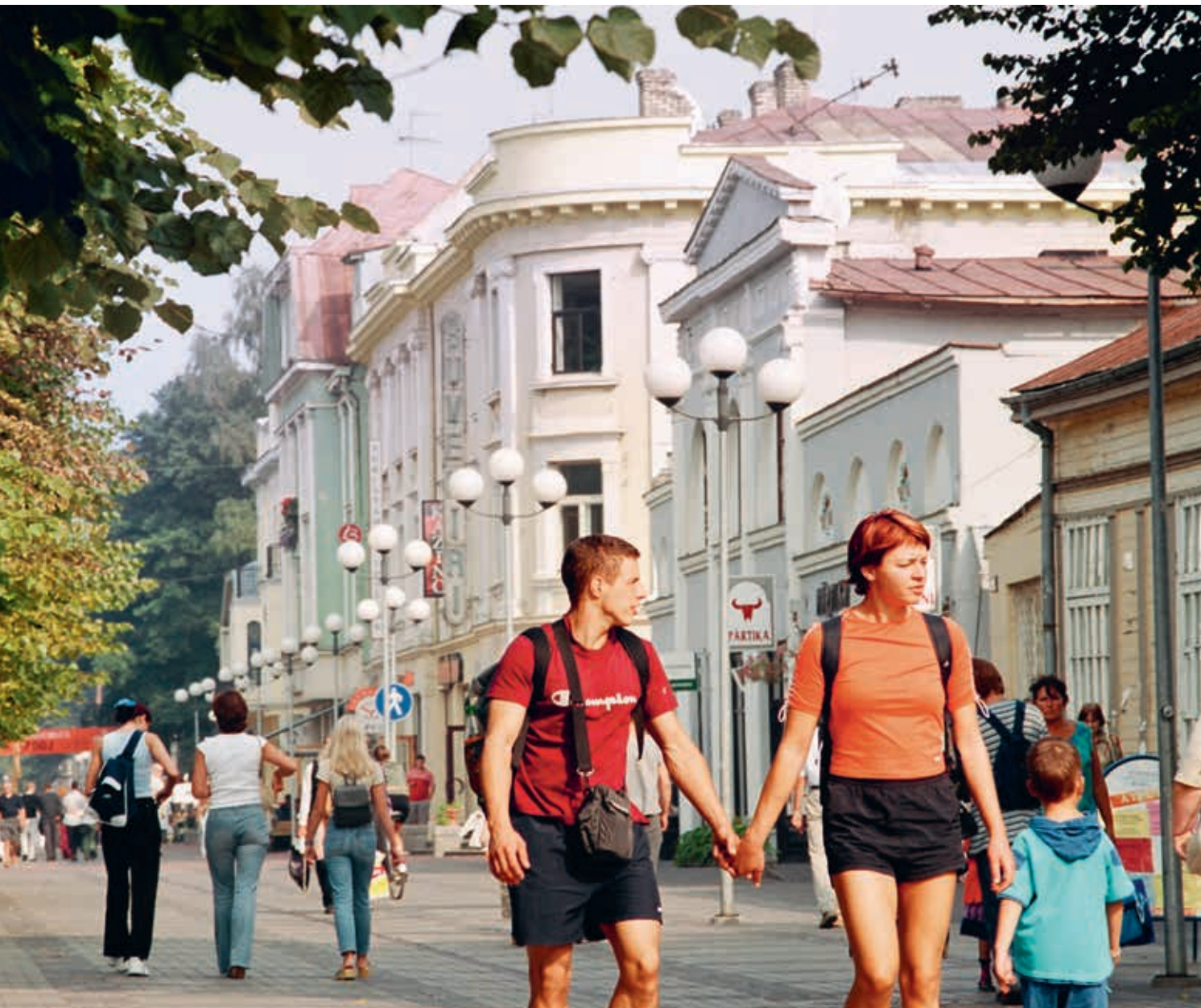


### 3. FORESTS AND DUNES IN THE CITY

Jūrmala is one of the few cities in Europe where one can not only breathe fresh seaside air but also enjoy the natural aromatherapy provided by pine forests. A third of the city's area is forested, and in most places the beach is hidden behind a belt of pine-covered dunes. Here the forest has literally entered the city, bringing with it a sense of calm and harmony as well as a very welcome feeling of balance to the inhabitants and guests alike.

One of Jūrmala's gems is Ķemeri National Park with its 8000-year-old mossy high marshes untouched by human industry. 97 species of protected plants and almost 260 of Latvia's 342 bird species can be found in the park, among them such rare birds as the Black stork, the Lesser spotted eagle, the White-tailed eagle and the White-backed woodpecker.





## 4. JOMAS STREET

Jomas iela (Jomas Street) is the heart of Jūrmala. Holiday-makers fill the city's main street every summer, and it's said that this is the place where Jūrmala began. Back when Jūrmala was still mostly just large expanses of sand, the wind blew it here and there, naturally forming a series of dunes and valleys. In Latvian, such a valley is called a "joma", and a main road, now called Jomas iela, was eventually established along one of these valleys. From the very beginning, this street served as the town's central stage, used almost like a fashion catwalk by summer holiday-makers and spa guests. This is where the town's fanciest boutiques and its most popular cafés and restaurants are located. It is also the site of the traditional annual Jomas Iela Festival that draws thousands of people.



## 5. EXPRESSIVE WOODEN ARCHITECTURE

Wooden architecture is one of the distinguishing features of Jūrmala, in particular, quaint homes with decorative towerlets and glazed verandas. Wood was chosen as a building material for spa houses already in the mid-19th century, when summer holidaymakers began escaping the city to relax in Jūrmala. The special aesthetic of wood embodied the Neo-Classical, Art Nouveau and National Romantic motifs of that era. Today, new Functionalist-style constructions strive to join the long-standing tradition of wooden summer-home architecture.



## 6. MUSHROOM AND BERRY PICKING IN THE CITY CENTRE

Believe it or not, but it's possible to pick edible wild berries in the very centre of Jūrmala. While taking a morning jog through the pine-covered dunes or Dzintari Forest Park, pick a handful of bilberries from the bushes growing next to the path, thereby fulfilling your daily requirement for vitamins A, C and K, or pick a few boletus mushrooms that have just emerged through the moss. Latvians are crazy about mushroom picking, and they believe that autumn has not begun until you've made mushroom sauce from that first crop of hand-picked mushrooms.



## 7. COMFORTABLE BEACHES AND A LONG TRADITION OF NUDISM

Jūrmala's swimming culture is centuries old, although it has changed over the years and bent to each era's style and habits. Today, Jūrmala's 24-kilometre-long beach has 11 established swimming areas. Those who wish to get as close to nature as possible may want to head to the mouth of the Lielupe River, where Jūrmala's nudists have traditionally flocked.



## 8. THE FORCES OF NATURE PLAYING UPON THE BEACH

Jūrmala's beach is the perfect stage for witnessing both the beauty and strength of nature. In the daytime, the sun heats, cools, lights up and shades the broad expanses of sand and water, while in the evenings it paints the sky in a wonderful palette of colour. The wind etches ever-changing designs on the fine quartz sand and also influences the temperament of the sea, from calm and mirror-like waters before sunset to angry storms, from the cover of ice in winter to springtime's thaw, when the sea dumps its mask of ice onto the shore.

## 9. OPEN-AIR MUSIC AND ART IN NON-TRADITIONAL SETTINGS

Jūrmala's historical stages and gardens have delighted audiences with open-air concerts for over a century. Even today, guests can enjoy music at the open-air Dzintari Concert Hall and Dzintari Forest Park as gulls call in the distance and the sun provides natural lighting and stage design. Jūrmala is also a place to view art in public settings, especially at the buzzing Dubulti railway station, which has recently become a platform for contemporary art.







## 10. RELAXATION BY THE SEA

Sun, sea, wind, white sand, kilometres of beaches, pine-scented air... Jūrmala's environment is made for a great variety of outdoor activities and sports. Some choose long, peaceful walks, jogging or Nordic walking along the beach, through the forests and over the dunes, while others prefer a game of beach volleyball or football. Lovers of the wind and more extreme sports take to water skiing and wakeboarding.

# 11. THE MOST ROMANTIC SUNSETS IN EUROPE

It's impossible to imagine or describe Jūrmala's sunsets – one must experience them. In fact, watching the sunset here has become something of a ritual. Firstly, no two sunsets are ever alike in Jūrmala. Secondly, these are probably the most colourful sunsets you'll see. Each has a prelude and postlude of unique hues that play out against the different shapes of the clouds on that evening's horizon – from shallow, floating watercolours to flaming, surreal displays.





# BEACH AND SWIMMING AREAS

What makes Jūrmala's 25.6-kilometre-long beach unique is not only its fine, sugar-like white quartz sand, but also its spacio-usness. In the city centre, the sandy area measures from 25 to 50 metres wide from the water to the first line of dunes. This means plenty of sun and sea, and plenty of room for everyone. The nearby pines provide shade and natural aromatherapy for sunbathers, and the comparatively low salinity (5.5 per mille, or 0.55%) of the Baltic Sea decreases their need to search for for a shower after every swim. The water becomes deeper very gradually and evenly, almost meditatively, allowing one to wade towards the horizon for almost a hundred metres in some places...to the accompaniment of splashing footsteps and the mild breeze.

Jūrmala's beach has always hosted a lively social life. In the 19th century ladies with parasols paraded along the promenades, while in the 1960s the white beaches became a colourful mosaic of bikinis and towels. Today, selfies in front of a magnificent sunset are common. But there have always been two sides to the social scene in Jūrmala, namely, that of the locals and that of the summer holidaymakers. Each group uses the beach very differently. The locals rarely lounge on the beach in the middle of the day; they're more likely to head to the beach for a walk or healthy jog early in the morning or late in the

evening. Holidaymakers, on the other hand, make full use of the beach from midday until sunset.

Currently, Jūrmala has 11 developed swimming areas along its beach, of which five (Jaunķemeri, Dzintari, Bulduri, Majori and Dubulti) received Blue Flag certification in 2015, meaning that they meet stringent standards for environmental sustainability as well as water quality and beach management. The swimming areas also accommodate people with special needs.

Various annual sports events – both on the local and international scale – have recently become one of the most significant aspects of social life on Jūrmala's beach. In the summer, beach football and beach volleyball tournaments as well as beach races attract crowds, while in the winter the beach becomes a cross-country ski trail. The playgrounds and various climbers are also popular and bring a special energy and joy to the beach.

# RESORT TRADITIONS



The history of the Baltics' largest resort town stretches back more than 180 years. The heart and drive behind the development of the area can be found in Ķemeri, whose sulphur-rich mud and hydrogen sulphide mineral waters began to be used in professional medicine in the mid-19th century. Today, scientists have identified 682,080 tons of therapeutic mud in Ķemeri's marshes, with an additional 129,540 tons available for use, as well as plenty of sources of sodium- and bromide-rich mineral water, thereby ensuring material for at least another 1000 years of treatments.

Over almost a century and a half, local medical institutions have amassed valuable experience in the use of these resources to treat a variety of ailments, including such 21st century problems as seasonal fatigue and burnout brought on by the stress of an urban lifestyle. In addition to contemporary diagnostics, the Belorusija sanatorium offers patients mineral-water baths and mud treatments. The Jaunķemeri Resort Rehabilitation Centre offers authentic mud and sulphur-water baths as well as pearl baths and an Ayurvedic treatment programme. The Jantarnij bereg (The Amber Shore) sanatorium, nestled among the pines and once considered one of the best retreats in the entire Soviet Union, has lost none of its professional qualities... nor any of its former aura and image.

SIVA, a more modern rehabilitation centre, is located in Jaundubulti and offers many different therapeutic services, including medical procedures, aquatic exercises and rehabilitation programmes. The Vaivari National Rehabilitation Centre, a technologically well-equipped and professional medical establishment, is the largest such institution in Latvia. High-quality spas with a wide range of therapeutic and relaxing treatments can also be found at Jūrmala's newer boutique hotels and spa hotels.



# NATURAL WONDERS AND MYSTERIES

Latvia is among the greenest nations on Earth, and nowhere in this country is the symbiosis between nature and the urban environment as powerful as it is in Jūrmala. Jūrmala has Latvia's greatest concentration of specially protected areas of European importance. The Gulf of Riga borders the city to the north, while Latvia's second-largest waterway – the Lielupe River – flows along its southern border. Thus, water-formed features define the city, from open beaches and grassy flood plains to steep sand dunes. The western edge of Jūrmala, between Sloka and Ķemeri features many lakes, marshes and wetland forests. Natural forests also grow in Dzintari, Vaivari and Valteri.

Two hundred years ago, a new mouth of the Lielupe River was formed when the river broke through the strip of land now known as Jūrmala to the sea. Right next to the new mouth of the river stands the dazzling, almost 20-metre-high White Dune (Baltā kāpa). Climb the loose sand to the top to get a better view of the river's marvellous loops and branches. For a walk through a fairy-tale-like forest of 340-year-old pines, head to the western side of the river mouth and Ragakāpa Nature Park, located on one of the highest dunes in Latvia.

Experience the mystery of nature at Ķemeri National Park. Marshes representing all three marsh types –

low, transitional and high – cover a fourth of the park's area. The biggest treasure hidden here is the sulphur-rich mineral water, which flows to the surface around Ķemeri from more than 30 springs. The waters from the Lūžņu grāvis sulphur spring are said to have the strongest therapeutic effect; a 3.1-kilometre-long hiking trail leads to the spring. Another place to experience the wilderness of the 8000-year-old marsh is the 3.4-kilometre-long boardwalk trail through the Ķemeri Marsh. The path leads past small marsh lakes and pools and a kingdom of mosses, small pines and northern Labrador tea.

The silence of the marsh is punctuated only by natural melodies, including the songs and calls of various bird species. Almost 260 of the 342 bird species found in Latvia, 67 of which are protected, can be encountered at Ķemeri National Park. Search for rare forest, meadow and water bird species on your own, or sign up for a bird-watching tour led by an ornithologist. The park also offers special tours to learn about the construction habits of beavers and nighttime tours to spy on the lives of bats.

A photograph of a white building facade with a window and a tree branch in the foreground. The text 'CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE' is overlaid in large, bold, dark grey letters.

# CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL HERITAGE

Jūrmala is full of cultural markers and events. The city's visual character contains elements of German and Russian, National Romanticism and Soviet Modernism, Postmodernism and contemporary style. The best place to learn the story of Jūrmala is at the Jūrmala City Museum, which contains 50,000 artefacts.

The presence of artists, musicians, literary figures and architects has always contributed significantly to Jūrmala's aura. In fact, the city itself has served as a creative springboard for many of them. This phenomenon dates back at least to the Tsarist Russian era, when celebrities of the Russian literary scene such as Ivan Goncharov, the author of *Oblomov*, arrived to spend the summer in Jūrmala.

In the late 19th century the contractor and philanthropist Kristaps Morbergs built a Neo-Gothic-style summer home complex in Dzintari, which has now been carefully restored. The famous Baltic-German architect Wilhelm Bockslaff designed the Dubulti Lutheran Church, which is a fine example of Jugendstil architecture and one of the tallest and most monumental buildings in Jūrmala. During Latvia's first period of independence, Rīgas Jūrmala was the home of Latvia's most famous literary couple, the poet Rainis and his wife, the feminist writer Aspazija.

Two of the properties belonging to them have now been turned into memorial museums. Rainis' poem *Lauztās priedes* (Broken Pines), which holds such emotional significance for Latvians, inspired contemporary sculptor Kristaps Gulbis to create a large-scale work of art full of symbolism. Titled after the famous poem, the sculpture is located amongst the pines growing in the dunes by the beach in Pumpuri.

During the Soviet era, a number of "creative houses" existed in Jūrmala. Like the Dubulti railway station, it also serves as a contemporary art space. Iconic witnesses to their time, some of the sanatoriums built during the Soviet era are still in operation and open to the public today. But the most visually impressive mark of Jūrmala's history as a spa is, of course, the Ķemeri Sanatorium, designed by architect Eižens Laube and built in the 1930s. Like a giant white ship, it stands in the romantic resort park. In Majori, the house that belonged to the local Benjamiņš family of media tycoons is steeped in legend. It was once considered the most modern building in the Baltic States.

# DZINTARI CONCERT HALL

Dzintari Concert Hall, one of the most recognisable landmarks in Jūrmala, represents the finest example of synergy between architecture and acoustics along the shores of the Baltic Sea.

The historic building was constructed in 1936, and its Neo-Classical style is supplemented with Romantic motifs on the facade and interior. It consists of the open-style Great Hall (seating capacity 2124) and a three-section wooden construction housing the Small Hall (seating capacity 562). The Small Hall has reopened after a restoration in 2015 and now hosts high-quality concerts year round. The open-air Great Hall, for its part, provides a superb acoustic environment during the warmer months, from May to September.

Music lovers as well as the best musicians from Latvia and abroad return to the Dzintari Concert Hall again and again for the unforgettable experience of music, architecture and nature. It is the only concert hall in Latvia to be included on the Latvian Cultural Canon list of the country's best architectural monuments.

Turaidas iela 1, Dzintari  
[www.dzintarukonzertzale.lv](http://www.dzintarukonzertzale.lv)





# THE TASTES OF JŪRMALA

Jūrmala has a specific taste all its own, in which various gastronomic traditions have melded together with this area's wild, unique natural bouquet. Impressions of the past, the newest culinary fashions, classic local cuisine and nods to fishermen's daily rituals can all be found at the city's restaurants. A gastronomic tour of Jūrmala can lead one to a wonderful meal amongst the dunes or on the banks of the river, with a grand view of nature and yachts calmly sliding by. But it's just as easy to find oneself in a space styled after the Caucasus or featuring exotic foods from the Orient. Or, catapulted back to the Soviet era. Of course, it's just as possible to remain in the cosmopolitan here and now, where Italian and French cooking is a self-evident occurrence.

Another option is to head out into the natural world. In the autumn, for example, wade through the bilberry bushes growing in Jūrmala's forests. But you can just as well find a handful of the dark blue, vitamin-rich berries in the undergrowth on the dunes or amongst the two-hundred-year-old pines growing in Dzintari Forest Park right in the centre of the city. When it's time for dinner, pick a few forest mushrooms to cook up. At the height of the harvest season, aromatic produce from the forests also fills the market in Kauguri, which is the largest in Jūrmala.

But undeniably the most mouthwatering taste along this former fishing coast is that of smoked fish. Almost every household in Jūrmala once had its own smokehouse. Today, hot-smoked fish – moist, lightly salted and fully steamed – can be enjoyed every Thursday throughout July at the Jūrmala Open-Air Museum.

The catch of the day is also commonly found on the menu at most of the city's restaurants.





# ACTIVE RECREATION

Located on a strip of land stretching between the Gulf of Riga and the Lielupe River, Jūrmala lets fans of water sports enjoy two different worlds: kiteboarding and windsurfing on the sea, and wakeboarding and water skiing on the river. Windsurfing and kiteboarding instructors can be found right on the beach, and equipment can be rented at the Lielupe Yacht Club, a favourite gathering place for those who enjoy the glamour of riding on a yacht or the adrenaline rush from a motor boat.

An outdoor game of tennis also befits the resort atmosphere. The pine-shaded courts at the Lielupe Tennis Centre are steeped in legend; after all, this is where Latvia's best tennis player, Ernests Gulbis, has trained. But Jūrmala has a number of other tennis courts as well, both indoor and outdoor.

Jūrmala has a great variety of jogging and bicycle paths. The 20-kilometre bicycle path from the Latvian capital of Riga to Jūrmala also provides a good workout. A refreshing dip in the sea, with an average summer water temperature of 18° C, is a welcome conclusion to such a ride. The water in the Lielupe River tends to be warmer, up to 20° C.

But if weather conditions are not favourable for outdoor swimming, there are plenty of indoor pools to choose from. In fact, some of the pools are filled with sea water or local mineral-rich water and can provide an experience quite similar to swimming in the sea.

In the winter, when snow covers the ground, active people enjoy strapping on a pair of cross-country skis and skiing along the beach or on the meanders of the frozen river. The coldest time of the year is also perfect for visiting Northern Europe's largest indoor water park. This is the season when Jūrmala's popular bicycle races, inline skating competitions and marathons are replaced with ice hockey and ice skating. The Majori Ice Skating Hall is one of the favourite places for these sports.

A vibrant photograph of a water park. In the foreground, a young boy in blue briefs is crouching on a wet concrete surface, looking towards the camera. Behind him, several other children are playing under various water fountains and slides. A large yellow and blue inflatable slide structure is prominent in the background. The scene is bright and sunny, with water splashing everywhere.

# ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

The Jūrmala dictionary does not contain the word “boring”. The broad range of activities for children – both in the city itself and the sur-rounding area – make boredom a foreign concept in Jūrmala. In the summer, the waterfront becomes an exhibition of spontaneous sand art, with each sculpture larger than the previous. Sand castles made by children of all ages have always been an iconic part of Jūrmala’s beach. The youngest artists partake in this activity just as passionately as they splash around or ride colourful inflatable rings in the water. Another source of adrenaline is climbing on the rope pyramids or climbing walls, flying to dizzying heights on a swing or simply sliding down a slide on one of the many playgrounds.

The city itself also offers a variety of activities and entertainment. The pools, slides and other features at Līvu akvaparks water park are open year round and include the 51.8-metre-long Tornado slide, which is the third largest such slide in the world and the only one in Europe.

Climb the 38-metre-tall viewing tower at Dzintari Forest Park for a view across the tops of the pines to the sea. On a clear day you can even see the towers of Riga in the distance. The 14-hectare park is a wonderful place to engage in a variety of athletic activities, from climbing, sliding,

swinging and skating to playing tag, doing somersaults and just plain running. For those who enjoy something more extreme, the park has a BMX ramp and inline skating trail.

Children are also welcome at the Lielupe tennis courts, and in winter the skating rink in Majori is open not only for serious skaters but also for those on skates for the very first time.

In addition to sports, Jūrmala offers a number of creative activities as well. Museums organise special programmes for children who wish to paint and draw. Nature lovers can head to Ķemeri National Park or Ragakāpa Nature Park and get to know the local birds and plants. History lovers, for their part, enjoy the Jūrmala Open-Air Museum and the appealing way it teaches about the area’s history and its age-old industry, fishing.

Even restaurant owners in Jūrmala have kept children in mind when preparing their menus, as have spa owners, who often offer specials for children.



# CULTURE AND SPORTS EVENTS ALL YEAR ROUND

In addition to pristine nature, an intensive and teeming cultural and social life has always been an important part of Jūrmala's image, no matter the era or political regime. The resort town hosts almost 1000 culture and sports events each year, making Jūrmala a veritable hotspot of activity.

Thousands of visitors flock to Jomas iela in July for the street's annual festival. The highlight of the summer is the Spa Festival (Kūrorta svētki) with its parade, many open houses, performances on the beach by Latvia's best musicians and fireworks over the Gulf of Riga. The beach is one of the main venues for socialising all year long, both among holidaymakers and locals. In summer, when Jūrmala's calendar is packed full of various local and international sports competitions, it hosts the CEV Jūrmala Masters, the European championship for beach volleyball. On New Year's Eve, Jūrmala puts on an ambitious show of fireworks that fills the sky along the entire length of the beach.

One of Jūrmala's most significant cultural events takes place in the Dzintari Concert Hall, just a few steps from the beach. The programme of opera diva Inese Galante's Summer-time Festival is as varied as a kaleidoscope and includes symphonic music, opera and ballet as well as musicals and popular music. The most recent newcomer to the events scene is the Jūrmala Festival, which aims to unite the most diverse forms of musical and theatrical expression. Each winter the Dzintari Concert Hall hosts the Christmas Festival, a series of vibrant concerts that begins with dedications to Catholic and Lutheran Christmas and concludes with a special programme for Orthodox Christmas.

[www.visitjurmala.lv](http://www.visitjurmala.lv)



## FISHING

Small fishermen's houses and boats have been a characteristic part of Jūrmala's landscape since time immemorial. And up until the 1830s, when swimming establishments began to rapidly spring up in Rīgas Jūrmala, fishing was the mainstay of the local economy. Fishermen harvested fish from the sea (Baltic herring, flounder, eelpout, ide) as well as the rivers (bream, vimba bream, pike, European eel). Their pro-sperity depended on luck, the weather and increasing fish populations; therefore, as several fish species began to disappear from the rivers in the early 19th century, the local fishermen supplemented their incomes by developing other economic spheres, such as vegetable and dairy farming. But, as the number of summer holidaymakers in Rīgas Jūrmala increased, providing accommodation for them became a much more lucrative and regular source of income. Fishing nevertheless remained a significant part of local life throughout the 20th century. The Fishermen's Society of Rīgas Jūrmala was established at the

# A SUMMARY OF JŪRMALA'S HISTORY

beginning of the 20th century. Later, during the Soviet era, it went on to become the Uzvara fishing kolkhoz, and in 1991 the fish processing business was renamed AS Jūras līcis.

## ORIGINS OF THE RESORT TOWN

The first swimming guests arrived in Kaugurciems in the 1730s. The first seaside spas were also opening around this time in England and France. The development of the swimming industry in Kaugurciems was halted in 1812 due to the war between Russia and France, and the spa was subsequently relocated nearer to Riga, in Dubulti. At first, holidaymakers lived in rooms rented out by the local fishermen, but, as the local transportation system was developed, in particular the opening of the railway in 1877, construction

of summer homes boomed and the first sanatoriums and warm sea bath establishments were created. The so-called Dīveļa (Duevel) Hotel was built in Dubulti in 1834, and it became a centre of local social life. The first spa house was built in 1847. At the time, Rīgas Jūrmala did not yet have its own local government, so holidaymakers formed swimming societies (Badegesellschaften) that maintained and improved swimming areas and also hired orchestras for concerts and parties as well as a doctor to tend to guests during the swimming season.

## DEVELOPMENT OF THE RAILWAY

Jūrmala's development as a spa and resort town was in large part facilitated by the opening in 1877 of one of the oldest railway lines in Latvia, namely, the Riga–Tukums line. From then on, large numbers of people arrived in Jūrmala by train, and the area also became easily accessible for travellers from further reaches of the Russian Empire. Railway stops were established near existing swimming areas, which had in turn developed alongside the old

fishing villages, and today Jūrmala has 14 railway stops, from Priedaine to Ķemeri. The railway stations feature an eclectic collection of architectural styles, ranging from the late-19th-century wooden station at Pumpuri to the concrete “wave” built in the 1970s at Dubulti.

## THE FLOURISHING OF THE ĶEMERI SPA

In the late 18th century medical professionals turned their attention to the sulphur springs at Ķemeri, which the local residents had already long been using for therapeutic purposes. The first chemical analysis of the waters was performed in 1818. The first patients in Ķemeri stayed at the home of the local forester. Sulphur-rich water was brought from the springs in buckets and barrels; it was then heated and poured into large oak tubs for guests to bathe in. Baltic Governor-General von der Pahlen helped secure state financing and land for the construction of a rehabilitation resort in 1838, and therefore this year is considered the official founding of the Ķemeri spa. Ķemeri flourished from the late 19th century up until the First World War –

establishments offering sulphur and mud baths were opened, a park was created, and a tram line connecting Ķemeri with the beach at Jaunķemeri was built. But the front line during the First World War passed through Ķemeri, and the spa was entirely destroyed. It experienced a second flourishing between the two world wars, and the new Ķemeri spa hotel built in 1936 became especially popular. During the Soviet era following the Second World War, a number of sanatoriums hosting guests year round were built in Ķemeri. Here, patients received treatments for joint, skin and gynaecological conditions as well as ailments of the nervous system.

## THE CULTURAL BACKDROP

Jūrmala's popularity as a resort and the significant increase in visitors also led to a blossoming of cultural life. Summer concerts had been taking place in Dubulti since the 1840s, and in 1870 concerts began in Majori as well, at Horn's Concert Garden. It was here, in 1879, where the first concert of symphonic music

in Jūrmala took place (Beethoven's Symphony No. 5 in C minor). Concerts began at the Edinburgh Spa House (nowadays known as the Dzintari Concert Hall) in 1897.

## FAMOUS PEOPLE

Over the years, many well-known people from Latvia's cultural circles – architects, artists, musicians – have chosen Jūrmala as both home and a source of inspiration. Jūrmala is inseparably linked with the grand Latvian literary duo of Rainis and Aspazija. Maija Tabaka, one of the most prominent Latvian painters, still paints at her home in Lielupe. World-renowned pianist Vestards Šimkus, violinists Elīna Bukša, Paula Šūmane and Vineta Sareika and other Jūrmala natives regularly perform at the Dzintari Concert Hall.

# GETTING TO JŪRMALA

## BY CAR

Jūrmala lies about 20 km west of Riga along the A10/E22 highway. All cars entering Jūrmala city limits between April 1 and September 30 must pay a daily entrance fee (EUR 2). If you are arriving from the east (Riga), pay at the toll point in Priedaine. If you are arriving from the west (Tukums), pay at the toll point in Vaivari. The entrance fee can be paid for with cash or payment card as well as by mobile app.

## BY TRAIN

The train line runs through the entire length of Jūrmala, from Priedaine to Ķemeri, with 14 stops within the city limits. A Tourist Information Centre is located in Majori, the centre of Jūrmala. Passenger trains to Jūrmala leave Riga Central Station (Stacijas laukums 1) from Tracks (ceļš) 3 and 4 on Platform (perons) 4. Look for trains going in the direction of Tukums, Ķemeri or Sloka. Depending on your selected destination, the ride from Riga to Jūrmala takes between 20 to 50 minutes and costs between EUR 1 and EUR 1.85 (for example, Riga–Majori takes 30 minutes and costs EUR 1.40). Buy a ticket at the counters in the main ticket hall or, for a slightly higher price, directly from the conductor on the train. If you plan on taking your bicycle with you on the train, make sure to also buy a baggage ticket. Find train schedules and other information at [www.pv.lv/en](http://www.pv.lv/en).



### BY TAXI

The centre of Jūrmala, Majori, is 13 km from the Riga International Airport, which serves airlines flying to 69 destinations. A taxi ride from the airport to Majori should not cost more than EUR 17.

The Baltic Taxi (T. +371 20008500, +371 8500; [www.baltictaxi.lv](http://www.baltictaxi.lv)) and Red Cab (T. +371 8383; [www.redcab.lv](http://www.redcab.lv)) taxi companies are available to guests arriving at the airport. However, you may hail any taxi to take you to the airport. A taxi ride from central Riga to Majori costs approximately EUR 20.

### BY BICYCLE

A EuroVelo 10 bicycle route leads from Riga to Jūrmala. The 20-kilometre-long route begins at Vanšu tilts (Vanšu Bridge) and follows the route Daugavgrīvas iela–Kliņģeru iela–Kuldīgas iela–Slokas iela–Kandavas iela–Jūrmalas gatve–Imantas 2. līnija. From there it runs parallel to the train tracks all the way to the Jūrmala city limits.

### BY RIVER FERRY

The New Way ferry runs between Riga and Jūrmala daily from May 1 to September 30. It leaves the landing by the Lielais Kristaps statue on the banks of the Daugava River in Riga at 11:00 AM. En route to Jūrmala see the Riga port, the old mouth of the Lielupe River and the riverbanks of Bolderāja. The ferry returns to Riga from the ferry landing in Majori at 5:00 PM. Tickets cost EUR 20 for adults (return trip EUR 30) and EUR 10 for children (children 6 and under are free). The ferry trip takes 2.5 hours in each direction. T. +371 29237123, [www.pie-kapteina.lv](http://www.pie-kapteina.lv).



Publisher: Jūrmala City Council / Writing: [Anothertravelguide.com](http://Anothertravelguide.com) / Design: Augusts

Translator: Amanda Jātniece / Printed: Sia Adverts / Photography: Čaika family Beach club, Jānis Salaiņš, Ojārs Martinsons, Alise Landsberga, KRC "Jaunkemeri", Kristīne Zavele, Dzintari Concert hall, Baltic Beach Hotel, Jūrmala Tourism Information Centre, Līvu Akvaparks, Volleyball Federation of Latvia, Jūrmala City Museum, Jēkabs Andrušaitis.