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| **Travelling to Latvia** |

Latvia is a member of the European Union, therefore travelling to Latvia and crossing its borders is as simple as travel to any other European Union country.  Latvia is part of the [Schengen Area](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/index_en.htm) and that’s why people travelling to Latvia from the Schengen Area does not have to go through border controls. Bear in mind, however, that when crossing into Russia and Belarus, border controls are in place.

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**Visa-free travel**

Citizens from specific countries and these include all European Union member states, as well as, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Switzerland, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, Israel, Japan, Korea, Hong Kong, Brazil do not require a visa to visit Latvia.

[Please find here the complete list of the countries whose citizens may enter Latvia without a visa](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/countries-whose-citizens-may-enter-latvia-without-a-visa).

Visa-free travellers may stay in Latvia for up to 90 days within a period of 180 days.

**No border controls for travelling in the Schengen Area**

Latvia is part of the [Schengen Area](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/index_en.htm). There are no border controls on the internal borders between Schengen countries, therefore citizens of the European Union and third-country nationals are free to travel within the Schengen Area. If you arrive in Latvia by car or bus from Lithuania or Estonia, or if you travel by ferry or plane from the Schengen countries, you will not have to go through border controls. However, if emergency situations should arise, Schengen member states do have the capacity to temporarily reintroduce border controls for a certain period of time. So please check on such information and verify the conditions and circumstances before beginning your trip.

While under normal conditions, there are indeed no border controls, this does not mean you can leave your travel document behind. While travelling in the Schengen Area, you must have your passport along, and it is this document that can be used as proof of your identity. Bear in mind that drivers’ licenses and bankcards are not deemed to be valid travel documents and such documents are also not considered valid for purposes of personal identification.

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**Visas to Latvia**

Citizens of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, China and other countries, not included on the [visa-free list](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/countries-whose-citizens-may-enter-latvia-without-a-visa), require a visa to travel to Latvia.

Tourists travel to Latvia on a [Schengen visa](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/index_en.htm), which is valid for staying in Latvia as well as in the other [Schengen Area member states](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen/index_en.htm). Passport control on the border is only done once the person crosses into the Schengen Area. If the person has been issued a visa for a short-stay visit to a Schengen country, the maximum duration of the intended stay is 90 days within a 180-day period. If the person needs to stay in Latvia for longer than 90 days, he or she has to apply for a long-stay visa or a residence permit.

If you wish to visit several Schengen countries, you do not have to apply for a visa in each of the given Schengen country’s diplomatic missions. An application for a visa has to be submitted only to the mission of that country that is your main destination. If there is no main destination, you have to turn to a mission of the country whose external border will be the first to be crossed in order to enter the Schengen Area.

If a third-country national needs to enter a Schengen member state but there are circumstances forbidding him to have a uniform visa valid in all Schengen member states, he or she may be granted a visa with a limited territorial validity. It means that visa is not valid for entering all Schengen member states, but only those indicated on the visa.

[Frequently asked questions about visas](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/entry-into-latvia/frequently-asked-questions)

**Applying for a visa**

To apply for a visa, the following documentation must be submitted: a passport, a visa application form, a photograph, medical insurance policy valid for travel to the entire Schengen Area, documents justifying purpose of entry and other documents which are applicable and pertinent. For further information about the documents required and procedures when applying for a visa, contact a diplomatic mission of Latvia, where you are intending to receive your visa or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia.

[Please find here more information about visas to Latvia](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/obtaining-visas).

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**Customs procedures**

Travelers in the European Union need to take into consideration that there are maximum amount restrictions on several kinds of goods that may be brought into a European Union member state – tobacco products, alcoholic beverages, coffee, and fuel. Should the maximum limit be exceeded, the goods have to be declared and the applicable excise tax on the goods exceeding the specified limit must be paid.

If you are travelling to the European Union from a third country, different restrictions apply. Persons arriving in the European Union, including in Latvia, have to observe stringent rules concerning food products that they may carry. Meat and meat products, milk and dairy products may not be brought into the European Union for one’s own consumption.

[Please find more information here](http://www.latvia.travel/en/article/travelling-latvia-visas-customs-procedures)

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**Know before you go!**

In case of an emergency while travelling in the Schengen Area, dial 112

[Recommendations for your well-being while visiting Latvia](http://www.mfa.gov.lv/en/consular-information/entry-into-latvia/know-before-you-go)