

Liepāja – follow the notes! Walking route



Route length: **3.5 km or 5.1 km**

Duration: **1-2 hours**

Start and finish point: **at the Liepāja Region
Tourism Information Office**

 **3.5 km**

 **2.6 km**

 **Detour**



**Liepāja Region
Tourism Information Office**

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The route "Liepāja – follow the notes!" is an easiest way to look at Liepāja and get to know the most remarkable historical, cultural and architectural values in the city centre. You are welcome to use our maps and follow the notes embedded in the cobblestones as your guidance.

The route will be conducted clockwise.



A Clef – Rose Square

Rose Square is the heart of the city. A place where people have been setting up their meetings since the 17th century, when there was a marketplace. Two turret buildings built in 1862 that used to be butchery back then have survived until now. Rose Square got its present form and name in the 1911, with the start of green plantations and a rose garden, and with relocating the marketplace to its present location. At the centre of the square, on the border of the rose bed, you can see the coat of arms signs of Liepāja twinning towns.

While continuing the route, take a look left in the Roman garden courtyard. The history of the Roman garden begins in 1882 with the establishment of a trade house and a hotel. Do not miss the underground basements built beneath the courtyard with the arts gallery in there, displaying a vast variety of the artwork collections from the Liepāja artists of the 20th century.

The notes will continue taking you along Zivju Street, named after the fish market that used to be located just off Kuršu Square at the end of the street.



Do – Madame Hoyer's Guest House

There are several unique 17th and 18th century buildings at the intersection of Kungu and Bāriņu streets. The most remarkable building is a former Madame Hoyer's guest house – one of the oldest residential houses in Liepāja, featuring now a 17-19th century interior museum. The stone building located to the left is a typical example of 17th–18th century construction. Whereas one of the city's oldest remaining types of structures is located just behind Madame Hoyer's house – the 17th century log house built on a low stone base foundation with a steep tiled roof. The walls of these old houses shelter tales and stories about the presence in Liepāja of Russian Czar Peter I and Swedish King Charles XII.

Following the route, we advise you to pay attention to the unusual brick-covered pavement on Palmu Street, which was constructed about 150 years ago from over-burned bricks.



Re – Peter's Market

Just opposite the entrance to the Peter's Market, you will see the tallest building in the city centre – St. Anna's Lutheran Church. The church's 60-meter high redbrick spire dominates the skyline in the area. The church was consecrated in 1587 and has been rebuilt several times afterwards. Its most valuable asset is the 9.7-meter-high and 5.8-meter-wide wooden carved 17th century altar. The Peter's Market is the second largest market in Latvia. Here you will always find a big variety of local organic food and homemade products from local farmers.

Architect Ludwig Melville designed the market pavilion hall. It was constructed in 1910 replacing the former barracks, with an innovative form of roof construction and large windows providing good indoor lighting. With the construction of the new market, the old one from the Roses Square was moved here.



Mi – St. Joseph Cathedral

St. Joseph's Cathedral is the largest Catholic Church in Kurzeme region, with magnificent and luxurious interior. The cathedral actually consists of two buildings.

A much larger church was constructed next to the initial small stone church in the 19th century swallowing it as a part of the present interior. The old church however was not dismantled. Its central altar was integrated into the new church as a left-side chapel, which you can easily distinguish by its floor level, located far below comparing to the new church. Outside, to the left of the Cathedral you will see the former Kurzeme Regional Court House, which now houses the Liepāja City Council. But the Cathedral entrance is at your right side, from the Rakstvežu Street.

From here, you can choose your walk direction – either return to the city centre or go to the park and beach.

The 5.1 km route leads to the Seaside Park; please follow the signs with musical instruments.



Drums – Jānis Čakste Square

The square is named after the first Latvian President - Jānis Čakste. Its main feature is the large-scale Latvian flag that flies at a height of 35 metres, and several important quotes from the first president of the Republic of Latvia. Though visually you would not notice, but this is also the city's highest point – only 11 meters above sea level.

As we continue our walk, it leads us to the Peldu Street and your attention is immediately drawn to the neo-gothic style built redbrick residential house, designed in 1902 by the city's chief architect, Paul Max Bertchy, standing out as one of his perhaps most remarkable projects.



Saxophone – Seaside Park

Seaside Park is one of the largest parks in Latvia, planted three kilometres along the seacoast. There are around 170 local and exotic tree species in the park.

The planting was initiated at the end of the 19th century, following the initiative of the city's Mayor, Kārlis Ulihs, to revive the area for the future resort, as well as for purely practical reasons to prevent sanding of the city. At the same time, the park vicinity became a popular place to own a summerhouse; hence, you may see a lot of those kinds of buildings in the area.

From here, you can easily walk down to the beach and see the famous attraction of holidaymakers due to its vast size and unusually white and delicate sand.



Violin – Swan pond

A swan pond with a rotunda gazebo was created in 1902, along with a Kurhaus, or a Bathhouse, seen at the end of the pedestrian alley, 100 metres toward the sea. A small teahouse originally placed on the Swan pond island was serving as a meeting place for holidaymakers.

The residential area with mansions has grown around the pond. The most ornate wooden summerhouses are located on Hika and Vites Streets, adorned with fine decorative carvings.



Trumpet – Kūrmājas Avenue

The residential area along the avenue was flourishing at a time when Liepāja became a popular resort at the edge of the 19th and 20th century. The city's fine guests could hop on the tram to get to the park and the beach. The wealthy Liepāja businessmen considered building their mansions and rental houses on this street as a must to cement their status and prestige among the local society. One of these finest mansion examples, built in 1900, today is a home for the Liepāja Museum, where you can get to know the history of Liepāja and the region of Southern Kurzeme.

Along the entire Kūrmājas Avenue you will also notice bronze sculptures of characters from the city anthem lines "The City where the Wind is Born" – a telephone operator, or a cable man on a pole, amber Latvians in a pub, a crow and a boatman.

The 3.5 km route will continue through the city centre to the next note mark "Fa".



Fa – Art-Nouveau buildings

The Graudu Street features outstanding examples of European scale Art Nouveau architecture. The first development of Art Nouveau houses in Liepāja started at the beginning of the 20th century, building them as shops and tenement houses. It was a time of economic prosperity, when wealthy residents, investing in real estate, at the same time were keen to build houses with a particular finesse architecture. Sadly, most of the city's finest buildings were lost during World War II.

Both routes meet again at the note "Sol" and continue alongside each other.



Sol – Liepāja State Gymnasium

Right behind the sculpture of a boatman, you can see the elegant decorative Art Nouveau building – the State Gymnasium, a former girls Gymnasium. It was built in 1912 according to the Ludwig Melville project. The street-side facade, which looks rather unaccustomed for the architecture of school buildings, is sophisticatedly refined and luxurious.

On the opposite side of Kūrmājas Avenue you can see a white house with the same decorative facade of the building. This is the current district court and the former headquarters of the Russian-East Asian Steamship Company that provided a direct steamboat line between Liepāja and New York. Annually, about 40,000 people transitioned through the port of Liepāja and set out on a long journey from here to the New World. To the right of the boatman's sculpture is the former Navigation School, built in 1876. The central facade is decorated with a turret, used as the observatory for the needs of the nautical school.



Rest – Julianna courtyard

The former industrial area with a commercial printing house and later a garment factory has become a cultural and recreational site called the Julianna courtyard. Thanks to the dedicated and determined entrepreneurs, an attractive environment for work and recreation has been created here. This is a fine place to have a break from the city exploration to enjoy delicious food and refreshing drinks.

The route continues along the Trade Canal, which connects Liepāja Lake with the Baltic Sea. The canal was erected in 1703, and from that moment, the construction of a large and modern port began in the city. Walking along the promenade, you can see fishing boats and yachts. In addition, near the pedestrian ramp, you can explore a model of the surroundings of the canal area and an Amber Clock made from 50 litres of amber pieces donated for this by many residents of Liepāja.



La – The Concert hall "Great Amber"

The symbol of the cultural life of Liepāja is its Concert hall "Great Amber". A venue for high-quality cultural and arts events where audience can enjoy some outstanding acoustics. The eight-storey building accommodates three concert halls, of which the largest is for 1000 seats. The Concert hall is also home to the Liepāja Symphony Orchestra – the oldest orchestra in the Baltics. The Austrian architect Volker Giencke built the Hall in 2015. He took inspiration for the creation of the project from the symbol washed onshore of the Baltic Sea – amber. There are no right angles in the building of the concert hall and inside it always seems that the sun is shining outside. Make sure of this with your own eyes!



Si – Holy Trinity Cathedral

Holy Trinity Cathedral was consecrated in 1758. Its unique and most distinguished feature is the world's largest unaltered mechanical organ. The organ has 131 registers, 4 manual keyboards and more than 7000 pipes, which all together create bold and expressive sound. Finally, you can climb the cathedral tower to observe the full city panorama and watch the tramline passing along the church. In fact, Liepāja was the first city in the entire Baltic region, where in 1899 the most modern means of transport at that time – the electric tram – was first put into operation.

In the meantime, our route has ended. It was a pleasure for us to walk together with you and introduce you to the historical and modern values of Liepāja. See you next time!