



From  
**£8,872** GBP

Single Room

£10,032 GBP

Twin Room

£8,872 GBP

Prices valid until  
30th December 2024

21 days

Duration

Denmark, Estonia

Destination

Level 2 - Moderate

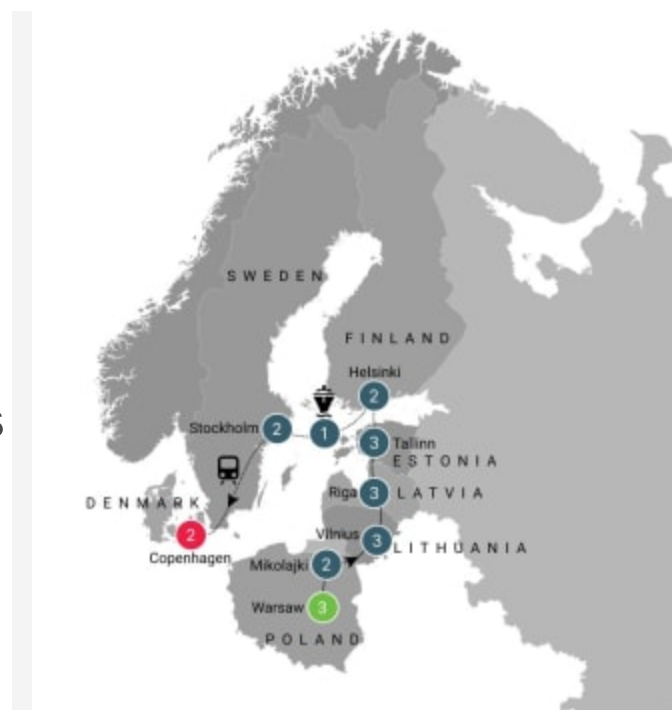
Activity

# Baltics Small Group Escorted Tour: Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania, Stockholm

Oct 03 2024 to Oct 23 2024

## Small Group Tour of the Baltic states

This Baltic small group tour for senior and mature travellers examines how Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania have developed historically and culturally since the 1980s. The Baltic tours group formed for each guided tour is typically made up of senior travellers, be they couples or solo travellers who are interested in learning as they explore the Baltic countries. The adoption of change and integration into Europe and



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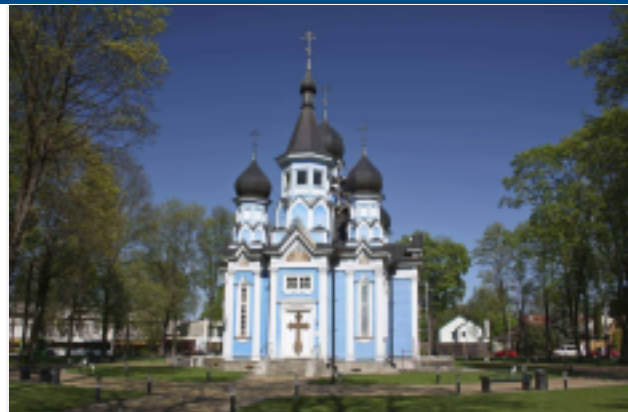
04-May-2024

Scandinavia has been an important transition. This small group tour explores the way our destinations flex their economic muscles, continuing to become a focus of interest for the rest of the world. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent reunification of Germany bound the region into the engine of the European economy. Rarely, though, have any places been comprised of so many differing ideologies, peoples, and languages: German, Polish, Russian, Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, and Finnish. It is this diversity that makes the Baltic nations small group tour so fascinating.

## Baltics Small Group Tour Itinerary & Highlights

The Baltic small group escorted tour explores the diverse histories of the Baltic countries, and influences on, the countries that make up the Baltic state. During this fully escorted tour you study how each of the Baltic republics is making the most of its different form of independence. This group tour with a tour leader covers the history of the Baltic region, seeking to show how it has developed since the 1980s. We also recognise the events and significant places associated with the Second World War and the Baltic nation relationship with the former Soviet union and Moscow. We visit many significant places following the seaboard of Northern Europe that contributes to our overall understanding of world history in the last century.

We stop in 8 places and 7 countries over the 21 days. We travel through Poland , Latvia , Estonia , Lithuania, Finland, Sweden and Denmark. This Baltic tours group has some 16 days on a escorted tour with local guides who share their knowledge of each of our destinations with the group often as part of a managed walking tour through the cobbled streets of the old town of the Baltic capitals and significant places along





our way.

## Poland

Poland lies at the heart of the European continent, between Western and Eastern Europe, and because of that, the country's history is full of wars, invasions, occupations, partitions, and ever-changing borders. They finally gained independence in 1991 after the collapse of the Soviet Union and was the first post-communist country to reach its pre-1989 GDP levels thanks to a booming economy. Memories of the turbulent history are visible all over the country, but Poland also made great efforts to preserve and restore its monuments. Our tour takes us to Warsaw and its Old Town, which is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site thanks to its unique architectural style.

## Lithuania

Melding pristine nature and historic cities, Lithuania is a nation with a truly unique history and culture. The Baltics region has always been a clash zone between Russia, Western Europe and Scandinavia, and the country often struggled to maintain its independence. Finally being able to leave the Soviet Union in 1991, the country successfully converted to a market economy, joined the EU and the Schengen Area and adopted the Euro as its currency. The capital city, Vilnius, is a baroque masterpiece, dotted with churches and cathedrals, while the power of medieval Lithuania is tangible at the looming Trakai Castle. And Lithuania is also a natural wonderland, home to pristine beaches on the Baltic coastline and a lakeland seemingly designed for summer boating, kayaking, and berrying, and we'll be able to see the best of the country during the next leg of our trip, as we stay in Vilnius and make daytrips to nearby attractions and monuments.

## Latvia

Latvia is one of Europe's hidden gems, despite the fact that the history of the country has been one of centuries of foreign rule, invaded by

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Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Poland-Lithuania and Russia through the years. Latvia finally declared its independence in 1991 (just as all the other Baltic countries) and been on the rise since then, successfully converting to a market economy, and joining the EU to strengthen their Western ties rather than Russians. We pause in Latvia in the second of the Baltic capitals, Riga. The capital city, Riga has a cosmopolitan atmosphere with a distinct and well-preserved historic quarter. It is home to architectural jewels both medieval and modern, including the 13th century RigaCathedral and the world's most extensive collection of Art Nouveau architecture, and we all get to see it often on a walking tour with a local guide through the old town as we continue to make our way North. Outside the capital, Latvians claim some of Europe's most pristine landscapes, including dense forests contrasted with beautiful sandy beaches.

## Estonia

Estonia is often labelled as the 'most Scandinavian' Baltic state as it is the northernmost and culturally the closest to Sweden, Norway, Denmark and Finland. It is also the smallest of the three Baltic republics, but it embraced modern times the best: faced with the struggle of adapting economically after the fall of the Soviet Union, Estonian leaders saw the fledgling internet as an opportunity for a small country to make a mark, and put considerable resources into getting Estonia online. The country became a tech hot spot when Skype was invented here, and anyone can become an e-resident of the country to found a 100% paperless e-company within minutes. The capital, Tallinn itself will take visitors on an amazing journey through time: the Old Town with its castles, domes and spires mixing with cafés, restaurants and start-up hubs, and we'll have plenty of time to explore this blend.

## Finland

Influenced by Russia and Scandinavia, yet maintaining its own distinct culture, Finland is one of Europe's most intriguing countries though sits outside the Baltic tour. Even though they're sharing 700 years of history with Sweden, Finns often pride themselves in not being Scandinavian due to their different origins, and most notably, their distinctively different language that is only one of the 6 in Europe not part of the

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Indo-European language family. They are also the only Nordic country to join the Euro zone. After World War 2 Finland managed to maintain its independence and have a market economy despite some very strong ties to the Soviet Union, and achieved rapid growth, building one of the most extensive welfare states. Finnish education is also world-famous and often cited as a role model by other countries. The capital, Helsinki, is a showcase for architecture both old and new. Under the Russian rule, it was built in a neoclassical style, modelled off the then Russian capital, St. Petersburg. At the turn of the 20th century, Finnish architects inspired by the nationalist movement designed in art nouveau style, incorporating influences from Finnish folklore and nature into the ornate style. And we'll spend a day exploring the best of this mix.

## Sweden

A captivating Nordic country with a rich history and stunning natural landscapes, Sweden shares a special relationship with the Baltic states. Situated on the eastern coast of the Scandinavian Peninsula, Sweden's close proximity to the Baltic Sea has fostered centuries of cultural, economic, and political connections with its Baltic neighbors. From ancient trade routes to modern-day collaborations, its relationship with the Baltic states has shaped the region's development, creating a unique blend of shared traditions, mutual influences, and an enduring bond. During the medieval period, Sweden played a significant role in the Baltic region through the powerful Hanseatic League, a trading alliance of Northern European cities, including several Baltic ports, established a strong economic presence in the area. In terms of political influence, during the Swedish Empire in the 17th and 18th centuries, Sweden expanded its territories to include parts of present-day Estonia and Latvia and this era left a lasting impact on the region, with traces of Swedish influence still visible in architecture, culture, and local traditions. More recently, Sweden has played a supportive role in the Baltic states' pursuit of independence. When Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania declared their independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Sweden was among the first countries to recognize their sovereignty and actively support their integration into the European Union and NATO.

## Denmark

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Situated on the Jutland Peninsula and numerous islands, Denmark shares a significant connection with the Baltic states, since it's located just across the Baltic Sea. Danish merchants and traders have long ventured across the Baltic sea, establishing important commercial links with cities like Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius. These connections have fostered the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultural influences between Denmark and the Baltics. Additionally, the Kingdom of Denmark has had historical territorial claims and political alliances with certain Baltic states. For instance, during the medieval era, Denmark ruled over parts of Estonia, leaving a lasting impact on the region's architecture, governance, and cultural heritage and in more recent times, Denmark has been a steadfast supporter of the Baltic states' independence and their integration into the European Union and NATO.

If you're interested in learning more about the Baltics and this classic Baltic tour, we prepared a [Baltics State Guide](#), and the article on their [history](#). You can learn more about each country this tour visit with our profiles: [Germany](#), [Poland](#), [Latvia](#), [Estonia](#), [Lithuania](#), [Finland](#) and [Sweden](#).

**For more details about this Odyssey Traveller tour, click the 'Top 5' or 'Itinerary' buttons above! If you're keen to experience this tour, please call or send an email. Or, to book, simply fill in the form on the right hand side of this page.**

## Tour Notes

- On ferry journeys single cabins cannot be guaranteed and single travellers may need to share with another traveller from the group.

## Highlights

1. Tour Warsaw and the Old Town, with its unique architectural style. A UNESCO World Heritage site.

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2. Explore the historic old town of Tallinn, Estonia, an exceptionally complete and well-preserved medieval northern European trading city, a UNESCO World Heritage site due to it
3. Visit Stockholm and explore Gamla Stan, one of the largest and best preserved medieval city centres in Europe.
4. In Vilnius, view the remnants of the Communist era including the KGB museum.
5. Take in Riga's remarkable Old Town (Vecrīga) vibrant atmosphere. Also a UNESCO World Heritage site.

## Itinerary

### Day 1

**Locations:** Warsaw

#### Overview:

Upon arrival in Warsaw, make your own way to the group hotel. If arriving early in the day, there will be an opportunity to enjoy a walk around the area with your Odyssey program leader before the tour briefing at the hotel and welcome dinner.

(D)

#### Accommodation:

3 nights at Hotel Mercure Warszawa Centrum or similar

### Day 2

**Locations:** Warsaw

#### Overview:

Poland has long suffered from the vicissitudes of war as its geographical location on the flat northern European Plain means that it has acted as a thoroughfare for great armies of Europe. From Swedish invasions to the north, to Napoleonic armies from the west, the Grand Duchy, and later Kingdom of Poland, never benefited from great periods of peace. The latest occupation by the Soviets followed an almost complete



destruction of the city of Warsaw by bombing raids. It took the efforts of Solidarity to commence the removal of the Soviet forces from Polish territory. Warsaw, therefore, is a completely reconstructed city rebuilt from medieval plans and follows the painstaking paintings of the Italian artist Canaletto.

We explore the city on a full day tour with a local guide. We will visit the mains sightsof the city, including the Palace of Culture and Science, a gift to the city from Stalin. During De-Stalinisation in the 1950s, after the dictator's death, any reference to Stalin (including his name in the title) was removed from the building. We take time to visit the Warsaw Uprising Museum that focuses on events of 1944, followed by a trip to the regal Wilanow palace and gardens.

The remainder of the day is at leisure for you to explore on your own.

(B)

#### **Accommodation:**

Hotel Mercure Warsawa Centrum or similar

### **Day 3**

**Locations:** Warsaw

#### **Overview:**

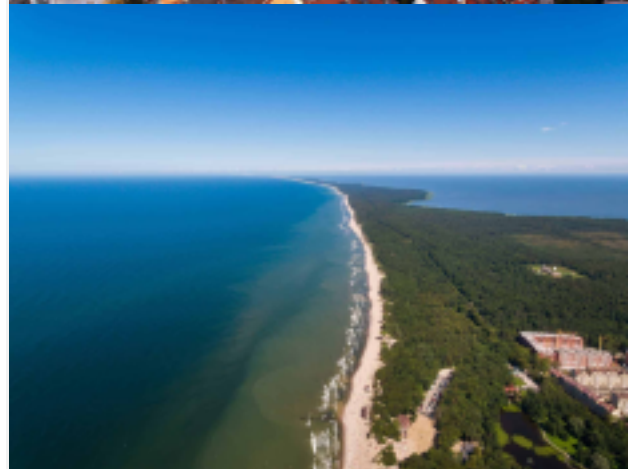
For our third day in Warsaw we will first travel to the Royal Castle, a shell of a building made from contributions from the Polish people around the world, which stands in contrast to the the Wilanow palace viewed the day before. We will then visit the Chopin Museum and learn about Poland's greatest cultural hero, the composer Chopin. We return to our hotel and enjoy some free time.

In the evening we enjoy a recital of his most famous works a the Archdiocese museum, which will offer a unique insight into Poland's cultural history.

(B)

#### **Accommodation:**

Hotel Mercure Warsawa Centrum or similar





## Day 4

**Locations:** Mikolajki

### Overview:

As we journey across Poland to the Baltic states, we stop along the way to view historical sites and natural wonders of regional Poland. The first stop is at the Treblinka memorial, on the site of the infamous concentration camp. We then travel to the Polish lake district to the very pretty town of Mikolajki. We take a cruise around the lake. Tonight, we enjoy a group dinner at our hotel. Mikolajki is a very small place, but it is beautiful and the perfect place for a pleasant stroll.

(B,D)

### Accommodation:

2 nights at Amax Boutique Hotel or similar

## Day 5

**Locations:** Mikolajki

### Overview:

Now an excursion in the area, first to the marvellous baroque church at Swieta Lipka – the interior is astonishing. Additionally, the Roman Catholic church was an important part of the people's resistance to communism. Then, in the afternoon we continue to Ketryzn and a trip to the infamous Wolf's Lair. Now a collection of ruins hidden away in the forest, Hitler spent more time here than in Germany during WWII.

(B)

### Accommodation:

Amax Boutique Hotel or similar

## Day 6

**Locations:** Vilnius

### Overview:

We continue our journey across the countryside to Vilnius. We make a couple of stops to break the journey. One of these stops today is at the



Grutas park – it has lots of old Soviet era statues and other memorabilia. The owner made his fortune in the post-Soviet era, but wanted to create something to remind people of the repressive past.

We arrive in Vilnius in time for dinner.

(B,D)

#### **Accommodation:**

3 nights at the Novotel Vilnius or similar

### **Day 7**

**Locations:** Vilnius

#### **Overview:**

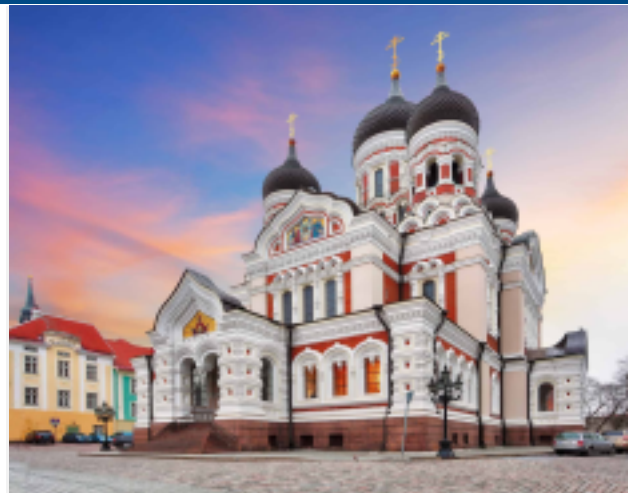
Lithuania is the southernmost Baltic state and in some ways the most vibrant. Along with its neighbour, Poland, it once shared an empire stretching to the Black Sea. Like Poland, it harnessed the devout faith in Roman Catholicism to strive for independence from the Soviet Union. Vilnius is the historic and lively capital of Lithuania and is often regarded as the greenest of the Baltic capitals. It has winding medieval streets and many fine Baroque and classical buildings.

We will learn about Lithuania's history and culture, as well as its economic and political situation, with an introductory lecture on the country and its capital. We take time out to stand on the Stebuklas (Miracle) paving slab near the cathedral – this site marks the end of a two million person, hand-to-hand human chain that spanned 650 km, from Tallinn to Vilnius. This remarkable event took place in 1989, and represented the locals' protest for their freedom from the Soviet Union. We will follow up with a visit to Vilnius's Museum of Occupations and Freedom Fights, to further understand the country's fascinating but complex relationship with its own past. We will then head out of the city center, and sample Lithuania's rich heritage with a guided tour of the 13th century castle of Trakai.

(B)

#### **Accommodation:**

Novotel Vilnius or similar.





## Day 8

**Locations:** Vilnius

### Overview:

We will take a full day tour of Kaunas, the country's second-largest city and an important cultural and historical hub. Kaunas is the former Lithuanian capital (founded in the 13th century) and it is often considered to be more "Lithuanian" than Vilnius.

Here we meet our local guide for a tour of the city and visit the Ninth Fort Museum, situated on the outskirts of the city and stands as a somber reminder of the atrocities committed during World War II and the subsequent Soviet occupation. The fort itself was originally built in the late 19th century as part of the Kaunas Fortress, which served as a defensive structure for the Russian Empire. However, its history took a dark turn during the Nazi occupation. The museum, serves as a memorial and a tribute to the victims of this horrific era.

(B)

### Accommodation:

Novotel Vilnius or similar.

## Day 9

**Locations:** Riga

### Overview:

En route to Riga, we will stop off at the Hill of the Crosses in Sauliai. We then cross over into Latvia, where our first stop will be a guided tour of the fine 18th century Baroque Palace of Rundale and its famous gardens. From Rundale we head straight to Riga. Latvia lacks Estonia's close proximity to Western Europe, and Lithuania's fame achieved on its path to independence. But Riga has always been the Baltic States' major metropolis. In lieu of the picture postcard appeal of Tallinn or Vilnius, it has a distinctive cosmopolitan atmosphere, and a well-preserved Historic Quarter. During the 1930s, the city was the West's major post for listening in to "the Russian Bear" to the east. It was a thrumming mix of diplomats, traders and intrigues, earning it the



accolade, "the Paris of the East." Later, we enjoy dinner at the hotel.  
(B,D)

**Accommodation:**

3 nights at Radisson Blu Elizabete Hotel or similar.

**Day 10**

**Locations:** Riga

**Overview:**

In the morning we will visit some of Riga's most iconic sites with our local guide. We will see the facade of the Blackheads House, a 14th century guild hall which was recently renovated, before visiting St. Peter's church and the iconic Cathedral followed by viewing some of the many Art Nouveau buildings and visit to the Art Nouveau museum, which offers some context to Riga's iconic architecture, most of which dates to the decade before world war one.

The remainder of the afternoon and evening is at leisure for you to continue to explore the city at your own pace.

(B)

**Accommodation:**

Radisson Blu Elizabete Hotel or similar.

**Day 11**

**Locations:** Riga

**Overview:**

Today we spend the day outside Riga with a local guide.

We first make our way to Kemer National Park for a walk along the Great Kemer Bog Boardwalk and view a world of moss, small pine trees, deep pools. We will then visit the Baltic Sea resort of Jurmala, where we will have lunch at a local restaurant and a guided tour of the



city, before returning to Riga in the evening.

(B,L)

**Accommodation:**

Radisson Blu Elizabete Hotel or similar.

**Day 12**

**Locations:** Tallinn

**Overview:**

Today we travel onto to Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. En route, we visit Sigulda Castle and Turaida castle (one of the oldest in Latvia), before heading on to Tallinn.

We arrive late afternoon and have dinner together at the hotel.

(B,D)

**Accommodation:**

3 nights at Radisson Blue Olympia or similar.

**Day 13**

**Locations:** Tallinn

**Overview:**

This morning, we learn about Estonia's history and culture, as well as its economic and political situation, with an introductory lecture on the country and its capital. Estonia is the most northerly of the three Baltic States, and the most Scandinavian in atmosphere. Ethnically, the Estonians and Finns are cousins, and with Estonia just 80 kilometres across the Gulf of Finland from Helsinki, the country is creeping socially and economically closer week by week to the western-style economy of Finland. Tallinn has an aura of the 14th and 15th centuries, with its jumble of medieval walls and turrets, spires, and winding cobbled streets.

We will experience the history and architecture of Tallinn with a guided walk of the city. Our walking tour includes a visit to the Dome Cathedral, views of the Town Hall, and St. Nevsky Russian Cathedral. We also benefit from a fascinating insight into the rural economy of Estonia, with

a visit to the open-air Estonian museum.

(B)

**Accommodation:**

Radisson Blue Olympia or similar.

**Day 14**

**Locations:** Tallinn

**Overview:**

Today is your opportunity to relax and explore at your own pace, there are no group activities planned.

(B)

**Accommodation:**

Raddisson Blu Olympia or similar.

**Day 15**

**Locations:** Helsinki

**Overview:**

Finland is a large country with friendly people, pristine nature, and interesting culture. It is usually considered a Scandinavian country, a categorisation based on geographic proximity that ignores Finland's unique character. Finland has shared almost 700 years of history with Sweden, but the Russian tradition has also been a strong influence in the East. The Finns have one of the longest traceable tenancies and have stubbornly resisted servitude or eviction. However, the blooming of Finnish nationalism was late and delicate. Helsinki is a small and intimate city with buildings designed by C. L. Engel, who had been responsible for much of the work in St. Petersburg.

We depart after breakfast and travel to Helsinki by ferry. On arrival we'll be met by a local guide and enjoy a city tour of Helsinki. We'll visit Helsinki's Cathedral and National Museum. The Cathedral overlooks Helsinki has become a symbol of the nation's capital and one of the two national shrines together with Turku Cathedral that is used for special



occasions by the state and university.

Dinner tonight will be at our hotel

(B,D)

**Accommodation:**

2 nights at Original Sokos Hotel Presidentti Helsinki or similar

**Day 16**

**Locations:** Helsinki

**Overview:**

In the morning we continue with our sightseeing of the city with a visit the famous Temppeliaukio Church (Rock Church), a Luthern church designed by architects Timo and Tuomo Suomalainen and constructed in 1968 and 1969. The idea behind the design was to preserve the open, rocky nature of the site. The interior is circular, and the walls are either natural rock or quarried rock. The space is covered by a copper dome that is supported by the rock. The minimalistic interior design is in harmony with the atmosphere of the space created by the unique light and dripping water.

Following, we take briefly to the water for a short archipelago cruise, from where we can see the Suomenlinna fortress, then winding through the small islands, glimpse the waterside homes of the more wealthy Finns.

(B)

**Accommodation:**

Original Sokos Hotel Presidentti Helsinki or similar

**Day 17**

**Locations:** Helsinki - Stockholm Ferry

**Overview:**

We spend our morning visiting the charming old town of Porvoo, the second oldest city in Finland that is best known for its Old Wooden Town, charming cafés and boutiques, and the painted red-ochre riverside warehouses. The cobbled streets lined with old dollhouse-like

houses are embedded with excellent restaurants, handcraft and homeware shops, and galleries. Here we view Finland's oldest supermarket – Simoln Oy Ab followed by the Cathedral and Castle Hill.

After our visit we return to Helsinki and take the afternoon at leisure to explore on your own. We meet again later for our transfer to the port where we'll board the overnight ferry to Stockholm.

Dinner will be on board.

(B,D)

**Accommodation:**

Overnight ferry

**Day 18**

**Locations:** Stockholm

**Overview:**

We arrive in the morning and will be met by our local guide for a full day tour of Stockholm.

Situated across 14 islands, Stockholm is renowned for its stunning architecture, picturesque waterfronts, and a harmonious blend of modernity and tradition. We'll explore this cosmopolitan city and learn more about its heritage as we visit the main sights with visit to Gamla Stan, one of the largest and best preserved medieval city centres in Europe, and the Royal Palace.

After a short break for lunch (own arrangements) we'll visit the ABBA Museum and then make our way to our hotel.

Dinner this evening will be at a local restaurant.

(B,D)

**Accommodation:**

2 nights at Elite Hotel Adlon or similar



## Day 19

**Locations:** Stockholm

### Overview:

Today we continue our tour of the city and visit the impressive Vasa Museum. This unique museum houses the Vasa, a 17th-century warship that sank on its maiden voyage in 1628 and was salvaged in remarkably well-preserved condition centuries later.

The afternoon and evening today are free for you to take in the sights at your pace.

(B)

### Accommodation:

Elite Hotel Adlon or similar

## Day 20

**Locations:** Copenhagen

### Overview:

This morning we depart Stockholm by fast train and travel to Copenhagen. The journey takes a little over 5 hours and travels through some scenic areas, including the famous Øresund Bridge which crosses the strait between Denmark and Sweden, the bridge is considered one of the longest combined road and rail bridges worldwide, extending over 8 kilometers.

On arrival in Copenhagen, we'll meet our local guide for a tour of the city and view the main sights including the Little Mermaid Statue, the Nyhavn port area (17th-century waterfront, canal and entertainment district) followed by a harbour and canal cruise.

Later we'll be transferred to our hotel and the remainder of the day is at leisure.

(B)

### Accommodation:

2 nights at Hotel Skt. Annæ or similar

## Day 21

**Locations:** Copenhagen

### Overview:

Our day starts with a transfer to Helsingør, where we'll visit Kronborg Castle, a World Heritage Site. This iconic Renaissance castle is steeped in history and is famously known as the setting for Shakespeare's play "Hamlet." Here you can yourself in the grandeur of this impressive fortress as you explore its beautifully preserved rooms, regal halls, and imposing ramparts. Admire the intricate architectural details, picturesque courtyards, and sweeping views of the Øresund Strait.

We later transfer back to Copenhagen and enjoy free time to explore on your own. In the evening we'll enjoy our farewell dinner at a local restaurant.

(B,D)

### Accommodation:

Hotel Skt. Annæ or similar

## Day 22

**Locations:** Copenhagen

### Overview:

Our tour concludes today after breakfast at the hotel.

(B)

## Inclusions / Exclusions

### What's included in our Tour

- 21 nights accommodation.
- 20 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 9 dinners.
- Applicable entry fees and services of local guides.
- Touring by comfortable and modern coach and rail services.

- Service charges and gratuities.
- Services of an Odyssey Tour Leader.
- Detailed tour information booklet.

#### **What's not included in our Tour**

- International airfares and departure taxes.
- Comprehensive travel insurance.
- Meals not specified in the itinerary.
- Items of a personal nature.
- Visa fees (if/where applicable).

#### **Level 2 - Moderate**

Participants must be able to carry their own luggage, climb and descend stairs, be in good health, mobile and able to participate in 3-5 hours of physical activity per day, the equivalent of walking/hiking up to 8 kilometres on uneven ground.

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any requests for further information about this tour or any others offered by Odyssey Travel.