



CULTURE GUIDE LATVIA

SERIES 1
PRIMARY (K–6)



JOHN F. KENNEDY CENTER
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

LATVIA CULTUREGUIDE

This unit is published by the International Outreach Program of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University as part of an effort to foster open cultural exchange within the educational community and to promote increased global understanding by providing meaningful cultural education tools.

Curriculum Development

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WHY STUDY CULTURES?

For most of us, cultures are misunderstood; they are nebulous, vague, and hidden. Like the famous iceberg analogy, we know that most of what a culture is cannot be seen. But what does that mean? And why, then, should we study cultures if we do not know what we're studying in the first place?

In the late twentieth century, Brigham Young University did not embrace a new discipline, but rather a new area of study—the study of cultures. Typically, anthropology is the social science that studies cultures. Why should they have all the fun? The study of cultures unites other academic disciplines (as needed), drawing upon literature, political science, sociology, and even the more applied areas of nursing, social work, law, and business. The study of cultures has grown into nothing short of a revolt against disciplines, “a mode of inquiry” that looks at things in new ways.¹

In 1982, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies established International Outreach as a formal program to help build bridges of intercultural understanding. Since then, more than 10,000 *gratis* cultural presentations have been given to local area public schools, taking students to new places using language, multimedia, and imagination. *CultureGuides* derive from the same expertise that has been honed in classrooms—with the exciting exception that these intercultural learning tools are not geographically bound. Thanks to the Internet, accessible multimedia technology, and our trusty iMAC, a limitless audience can learn about different cultures.

Globalization, the driving paradigm of the post-Cold War world, means that now, more than ever, culture matters. Culture is the invisible context that may keep us from understanding important people, places, and ideas; it exists whether or not we think about it. Intercultural education can help us, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also in very practical ways to combat racism, to expand business, and to communicate effectively.

CultureGuides share the same aim as Edward T. Hall, the eminent cultural scholar, to try and “make culture real.”² Even though our “student guides” are not present in every classroom, we hope that *CultureGuides* will make classrooms of the mind and cultural laboratories wherever you may reside.

¹ Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon. *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Totem Books, New York: 1998.

² *The Edge: The E-Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Summer 1998, Vol. 1(3) Posted 10/11/98, <http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i3Summer1998/sum98sorrellshall.htm>.

TRADITIONS

LĪGO: THE SUMMER FESTIVAL

Prior to the crusades, the inhabitants of Latvia were pagan and worshiped multiple deities. Līgo started as a pagan ritual during which the people worshiped their gods and spiritually cleansed themselves. The holiday, celebrated on the night of 23 June, evolved into a popular national holiday celebrating Latvia's past.



Starting Points

1. Play polka music similar to the music the Latvians dance to throughout the night of Līgo.
2. Discuss how the Fourth of July holiday in the United States began. Discuss its significance, traditions, and importance.
3. Write the following words on the board and discuss how these words could be combined into a holiday: wreaths, bonfire, and dancing.
4. Discuss what the word “pagan” means and how some Christian holiday practices are derived from pagan traditions (i.e., Easter eggs, Christmas trees, etc.).



Information

Līgo: The Summer Festival

Līgo, one of the most beloved holidays in Latvia, started as a pagan tradition hundreds of years ago. They gathered together in groups and lit large bonfires. After the bonfires had died down, they jumped over the tops, through the smoke, thus cleansing themselves spiritually. This ritual was often accompanied by feasts and celebrations.

During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, Germanic knights set out on crusades to Christianize the so-called barbaric tribes in eastern Europe. They were very successful; almost everyone was converted to Christianity. When the people's religious ideas changed, they gave up most of their old religious ways. However, some practices, such as Līgo, continued for the sake of tradition.

Līgo is arguably the most popular and most celebrated holiday in modern-day Latvia. It no longer involves merely jumping through a fire, but includes dancing, feasting, drinking, and celebrating with family. Wreaths are made from oak leaves and placed on people's heads or around their necks.

Dancing is a large part of the holiday. Some people participate in pattern dances, which are similar to square dances performed in the United States. Each person takes a position and moves to create patterns with others in the group. Pattern dances usually require some training, but anyone can participate in line dances. For these people join hands and follow a leader as he skips through the fields and woods, weaving

through trees and jumping over things. Just about any type of dancing is acceptable during Līgo.

Music is another important part of Līgo. Many people play instruments, sometimes to accompany the dancers. Stringed instruments, accordions, drums, wooden flutes, and whistles are some of the most common instruments played. Many people play traditional songs written specifically for Līgo, and others love to sing along.

Family is very important to Latvian people, and holidays such as Līgo are a perfect time for family members to get together. As in the United States, people use these gatherings to catch up on news and renew old acquaintances. Extended family members often gather to celebrate Līgo.

As with almost all of their holidays, Latvians enjoy delicious traditional meals during Līgo. They eat heartily and prepare plenty of food for everyone to enjoy. Some favorite dishes include black pea salad, a variety of potatoes, mushrooms, berries, and cabbage wraps, which consist of vegetables and meats mixed together and wrapped in cabbage leaves. The most common drinks are locally-brewed beer or other alcoholic beverages.

Līgo is an all-night celebration. Because it occurs on the shortest night of the year, people stay up until the sun comes up, between four thirty and five thirty in the morning. The festivities last through the night and into the next day.



Activities

1. Divide into three or four teams and participate in a Līgo line dance through an obstacle course. Hold hands and weave in and out of the obstacle course while skipping and dancing. Jump over a hula hoop to simulate jumping over a bonfire.
2. Do the word search (see **Traditions Visual 1**).
3. Cut an oak leaf crown out of paper.
4. Write a short journal entry of a Latvian who just celebrated Līgo, recounting the activities, his or her feelings, etc. Then, split into small groups to share the entries and choose a favorite.
5. Imagine some of the festivities during Līgo while you play Latvian festival music. Then, draw a picture of what you imagined.



Discussion Questions

1. What are some things that have become important symbols for our holidays?
2. Why are families so important during holidays?
3. What are the similarities and differences between the Latvian way of celebrating and the American way of celebrating?
4. Why are food and dancing so important on holidays?

5. Discuss some familiar American rituals such as putting our hands on our hearts during the Pledge of Allegiance or others that students from different cultures may practice. How do these rituals parallel the principle behind them? Discuss how jumping over a fire parallels spiritual cleansing.

FOLKLORE & LANGUAGE

STORIES FROM LATVIA'S PAST

Folklore and historical stories play a very important role in helping people understand their history. The following stories tell of Latvia's history and geography. One of them tells about a great ruler of Latvia named Namejs, and the other tells how a waterfall in the city Kuldiga came to be. These stories help build national pride and cultural understanding.



Starting Points

1. Display pictures of Namejs' ring and the Kuldiga waterfall (see **Folklore & Language Visuals 1–2**), or have the students draw their own pictures of them.
2. Discuss stories about famous American heroes and their influence on modern American culture.
3. Play hangman with the following words. Then, write these two lists on the board separately and ask students how they think each list of words could be combined into a folktale:

- | | |
|---------|--------------|
| a. ring | a. bargain |
| b. war | b. wizard |
| c. king | c. waterfall |



Information

Namejs

More than seven hundred years ago, in a part of the world then called Livonia, now called Latvia, there were a lot of tribes with different rulers. One of the greatest rulers was a man named Namejs. He was brave, smart, loyal, and good to his people. They were free and happy. They were also pagan and worshiped many gods.

About eight hundred miles away, other tribes lived in an area of the world we now know as Germany. Although the people there were also pagans at one time, they had been converted to Christianity by the Romans. The Germanic tribes considered non-Christians to be barbaric. They decided to conquer the so-called barbaric tribes in eastern Europe and Christianize them.

In the early part of the thirteenth century, the Germanic tribes began heading towards Livonia. Namejs found out that they were coming and prepared his people to fight. When the Germanic knights arrived, a war began. The Germanic knights had more people, but Namejs and his people had strong fortifications and defended themselves well for a long time. Eventually, the Germanic knights beat Namejs and

his army. The people loved Namejs so much that they did not want him to be captured. They thought of a plan to protect him from the Germans.

Namejs had a special ring that only he wore (see **Folklore & Language Visual 1**). The Germanic knights knew that in order to find Namejs, all they had to do was find the man wearing this ring, but all the men that lived in the kingdom decided to make and wear rings exactly like Namejs'. When the Germans came to take Namejs away, they could not figure out who he was. Namejs was thus able to escape to Lithuania.

Today, many people in Latvia wear a ring that looks like Namejs'. No matter where you go in the world, if you see someone with that ring you can be sure that that person has been to Latvia. You can also be sure that that person is a friend and is willing to help you.

Kuldiga's Waterfall

About five hundred years ago, a wizard lived in a town named Kuldiga. The wizard lived in a castle next to the river Venta, which runs right by Kuldiga.

The wizard was a smart man, and one night he made a deal with the devil. No one knows what the exact details of the deal were, but we do know the conditions. If the wizard lost the deal, his soul would belong to the devil. If the devil lost the deal, he would make the wizard rich.

The devil lost the deal. Furious, he refused to keep his promise. He decided to kill the wizard.

Because the wizard was so smart, he knew the devil was up to no good. He also knew the devil always slept during the day and woke up at night because he couldn't be seen in the sun. The wizard started staying up at night and sleeping during the day to make sure the devil could not trick him.

It wasn't long before the devil decided to do his terrible deed. One night, he gathered a huge bag of boulders to drop on the wizard's castle. However, the wizard was awake and saw the devil coming. He went up into his tower and started crowing like a rooster. The devil heard the wizard and thought that morning was coming. He dropped the rocks and ran away. The rocks landed in the river Venta and made an enormous waterfall. Today it is called Kuldiga's waterfall; it is the highest waterfall in Latvia and one of the widest waterfalls in Europe (see **Folklore & Language Visual 2**).

The Latvian Language

Although Latvia used to be part of Russia, Latvia has its own language—Latvian. In fact, the Latvian language comes from the same roots as Indo-European and Baltic languages (including Lithuanian and Old Prussian). This is what the Latvian alphabet looks like:

Aa	Āā	Bb	Cc	Čč	Dd	Ee	Ēē	Ff
Gg	Ģģ	Hh	Īī	Ii	Jj	Ķķ	Kk	Ll
Ļļ	Mm	Nn	Ņņ	Oo	Pp	Rr	Ss	Šš
Tt	Uu	Ūū	Vv	Zz	Žž			

Here are some basic phrases to practice in Latvian:

English

Latvian

Yes

Ja (Yah)

No

Ne (Nay)

Hi! Hello! (informal)

Sveiks! (Svayks)

Hello! (formal)

Labdien! (Lahbdee-ehn)

Good Morning!

Labrit! (Lahbreet)

Good Evening!

Labvakar! (Lahbvahkahr)

See you! (Goodbye!)

Uz redzenanos! (Ooz redzejanohs)

Please.

Ludzu (Loodzoo)

Thank You.

Paldies (Pahldee-ehs)

How's it going?

Ka tev iet? (Kah tehv ee-eh)

It's going fine.

Paldies, man iet labi.
(Pahldee-ehs, mahn ee-eh lahbee)

How are you?

Ka jums klajas? (Kah yooms klah-yahs)

Fine, thank you.

Paldies, labi.
(Pahldee-ehs, lahbee)



Activities

1. Provide props and act out the stories of Namejs' ring and Kuldiga's waterfall as you're telling them.
2. Write a folklore story.
3. Draw pictures of what took place in the stories.
4. Find American folktales and share them with the class.
5. Practice pronouncing Latvian phrases.
6. With a partner, practice greeting each other in Latvian.



Discussion Questions

1. Why would the people of Latvia hold Namejs in such high regard to this day?
2. Name some American heroes similar to Namejs.
3. How can folktales of historical events and landforms add to the culture and build patriotism in a country?
4. Folktales are generally based on some truth. Do you believe Latvia's folktales or folktales from the United States? From what truth do you think they could have been derived?

FOOD

THE LATVIAN DIET

Food plays an important role in any culture. Most Latvians get their food from markets, stores, or family gardens. Breakfast is usually a quick meal, and lunch is often eaten in a restaurant or on the street. Dinner is the main family meal and usually consists of Latvian staples such as potatoes and cabbage.



Starting Points

1. Ask students what some of their favorite foods are and what countries the foods come from.
2. Discuss meals. Which meals are considered most important and why?
3. Bring potatoes, cabbage, bread, berries, fish, and mushrooms to class. Tell students that these are the most common foods eaten in Latvia.



Information

Diet of the Latvian People

In Latvia, it is not normal for a family to sit down and eat breakfast together. Most of the time, breakfast is a quick, easy meal. Some of the more common Latvian breakfast foods include pancakes—which are about two inches in diameter and sweet, bread with margarine, cheese or sausage, tea, and sometimes fruits. Breakfast cereals are not common and are quite expensive.

Most people are at work or school during lunchtime, so it is common for people to eat at a restaurant or grab something from a street vendor. Many restaurants specialize in hearty, inexpensive meals for less than three dollars. Most of the time, the meal consists of potatoes with chicken, pork, beef, or fish, a salad, and tea or juice. Vendors sell anything from meat-filled scones or homemade sandwiches to candy and drinks. There are high-class restaurants, but the majority of the people cannot afford to eat there on a regular basis.

Dinner is the main family meal for Latvians. It is common for the whole family, including grandparents, to be at dinner. However, it is not common to carry on loud or extended conversations.

Potatoes and cabbage are main food staples in Latvia and are typical dinner foods. They are often prepared in salads or soups, and potatoes are often baked or boiled. Along with potatoes and cabbage, it is common to have bread, soup, salad, fruits, vegetables, mushrooms, and seasonal berries. Tea, coffee, and juice are typical drinks. Latvians do not use much salt, sugar, or spice, but their food is still flavorful.

Markets are probably the most popular place to get food and other items. The food there is fresh and usually costs less than the food in stores. Most of these markets are outdoors, and the smaller ones often shut down in the winter. At these markets, you can find vegetables, fruits, milk and other dairy products, eggs, honey, berries, meat, mushrooms, candy, canned food, hygiene items, and more.

Supermarkets and shopping centers are not common in Latvia. In fact, until the early 1990s, there were not any. The supermarkets and stores are usually more expensive, but they are slightly cleaner than the markets. They hold almost everything found in supermarkets in the United States.



Activities

1. Stage a market with students playing the parts of the vendors and consumers. Sell items in a Latvian market.
2. Make a shopping list for a week. Include foods necessary for breakfast, lunch, and dinner using Latvia's most popular foods.
3. Play "Upset the Food Basket." To play, divide the students into groups of four or five and assign each group a different Latvian food. Then, have all the students mix up and sit in a circle, with one person standing in the middle. The student in the center then either calls out one of the food items or says "Food Basket." If he calls out a food item, each person from that group must move to a seat vacated by another member of their food group. The person in the middle also tries to get one of the empty seats, leaving someone else in the middle. If the person in the middle says "Food Basket," everyone must change seats.
4. Make Latvian foods as well as plates, utensils, etc., out of construction paper. Then, place each in the proper place settings and enjoy a short "meal" together.



Discussion Questions

1. How does the lunch practice of the Latvians relate to the lunch practices of the rest of the world?
2. How is the Latvian dinner similar to or different from your own dinner?
3. Why is eating with family so important?
4. What are some advantages and disadvantages of shopping at a market?

CROSS-CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

INDEPENDENCE

While most of us have never been dominated by an outside political force, many people in the world have never experienced independence. For most Latvians, independence is a new way of life. Observing other nations' struggle for independence can help us better appreciate our freedoms.



Starting Points

1. Describe what life would be like without certain freedoms, such as reading what you want, talking about what you want, or worshiping how you want.
2. Review America's struggle for independence and relate it to Latvia's struggle.
3. Present the time line that shows Latvia's struggle for independence (**see History and Holidays**).



Information

History from 1200 to 1900

Latvia was inhabited by different tribes of people for thousands of years. These people were mostly hunters and gatherers. Around the eleventh century, people began to settle, farm the land, and raise domesticated animals. These people were pagans, who believed in and worshiped many gods. They traded with and plundered various tribes throughout eastern Europe. By the twelfth century people from southern and western Europe had begun to trade with the tribes living in the Baltic Sea region, including tribes in Latvia. Most of these traders were Christians, and from the twelfth to the fourteenth century, various crusades took place to Christianize the pagan tribes.

The first written history of Latvia dates back to 1201. At this time, a German bishop named Albert started building a church, the Dome Cathedral, in a town called Riga, which is now the capital. This cathedral has been destroyed and rebuilt a few times since then, but it is still standing today. The Germans ruled all or part of Latvia for most of the next four hundred years. In those days, many of the port cities, such as Riga, were part of a league known as the Hanseatic league. In 1561, Riga gained status as a free city. This meant the citizens of Riga were not controlled by other people living outside their city. They could make their own rules and laws.

All the countries wanted to control Latvia because Riga was a great port city. From Riga, people could get anywhere in Europe and also deep into Russia. This was important for trade. In 1629, Sweden took over Riga and a large part of Latvia. They ruled for almost one hundred years until 1710. In 1710, Russia defeated Sweden in a war and took control of Latvia.

For most of this time, the Latvian people were serfs, or unpaid servants, for the people who ruled over them. Very few Latvians had freedom or possessions; everything belonged to their masters. However, in 1861, the Czar of Russia granted freedom to all. They could own land and have their own farms. This newfound freedom ignited pride. For the next twenty-five years, the Latvian people worked to develop a national identity. They wanted to be unique and develop their own way of telling stories, writing music, and doing the things they had done someone else's way for so long. The people were still, however, under Russian rule.

History from 1900 until Today

In 1905, a number of problems began between the Russian government and the Latvian people. The people worked hard but received little pay and little time off. Many people were killed or hurt. On 1 August 1914, World War I started. The Latvians fought for Russia to prevent the Germans from taking over Latvia. Many Latvians were killed.

On 7 November 1917, the Bolsheviks, members of a radical Russian Marxist party, overthrew the Russian government. After taking over, they withdrew from World War I and made a deal with Germany to allow the Germans to take over Latvia. The Latvians fought against this, but they had relatively few military forces. In 1918, Germany surrendered to England and France, and Latvia declared itself an independent country for the first time on 18 November. All the nations fighting against Germany acknowledged Latvia's independence at once, but it took some time for Russia and Germany to acknowledge it. Finally on 20 August 1920, Russia and Latvia signed a peace treaty in which Russia acknowledged Latvia's independence. However, this treaty was eventually broken.

Latvia did well as an independent country. They created an economy that was as strong as any in the world at that time. They traded with many nations, including the United States. They manufactured products that were the best of their kind in the world. The people were happy; unfortunately, things took a downturn. In 1934, a man named Karlis Ulmanis peacefully overthrew the democratic government that was ruling Latvia. He established himself as president but ruled as a dictator. Though many things improved under Ulmanis, some freedoms were limited.

On 23 August 1939, Stalin and Hitler signed a treaty that promised no interference from either Germany or Russia as Germany took over Poland and the Soviet Union took over the Baltic republics of Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia. On 17 June 1940, the Soviet army invaded and occupied Latvia. They abolished the existing government and established communism. They ran an election for a new president, but only the votes for the Soviet president were counted; the rest were destroyed. Even though almost no one voted for the Soviet president, he took over and applied to get Latvia into the U.S.S.R. Latvia was officially made part of the U.S.S.R. on 21 July of that same year.

In 1941, any Latvian who could possibly pose a threat to the Soviet government was shipped, with his family, to Siberia. Tens of thousands of Latvians were sent away, and almost all of them died. In the meantime, Germany attacked Russia and Latvia. The Latvian people were forced to fight for both sides. Many fought for the

Germans, and still more fought for the Russians. The war went on in Latvia for four years. In 1944, Russia gained complete control of Latvia. This control lasted for more than forty years. On 25 March 1949, more than 49,000 Latvians were again shipped to Siberia, where most of them perished.

After Joseph Stalin died in 1953, things improved slightly, but conditions were still poor. Everyone worked for the government, and no one had a chance to do anything on his or her own. The government owned everything, and everyone had the same living conditions and got paid the same amount of money—no matter what work he or she did or how well he or she did it. People quit working hard because they did not get paid much, and most of the people were not happy with their jobs. Even though most people greatly disliked the Soviet government, no one did anything about it for fear of being killed or thrown in jail.

In 1987, the first open protest against Soviet rule took place. Protests took place again throughout 1988, 1989, and 1990. In 1990, a vote was taken to see who would vote for freedom from communism. The votes for freedom far outnumbered the votes for communism, but the Soviet army tried to maintain communism. In January 1991, military forces were sent to put down a demonstration and to restore the Soviet government, which had been ousted by the people. A number of people were killed. This only fueled the desire of the Latvian people to be free again. On 21 August 1991, the U.S.S.R. acknowledged Latvia as an independent nation, as did the rest of the world. Latvia also joined the United Nations. On 7 July 1993, Latvia had its first free election since before World War II. In 1994, the last Russian troops pulled out of Latvia. In 1999, Latvia began official talks with the European Union. On 7 July 1999, the first woman president of Latvia, Vaira Vike Freiberga, was elected.

Even though Latvians were oppressed and controlled by other countries for most of their history, they have a unique identity and are proud to be Latvian. Since their recent independence, the economy has started to improve. People know they can get paid more for better work, so they work harder. Latvia's future looks promising.



Activities

1. Write an essay, poem, or story about what freedom means.
2. Take away some of the students' simple freedoms (sharpening pencils, choosing their own books) for one day, and then discuss how they felt during that time.
3. Form a society where some students are rulers and others are ruled. Role-play how the system will work, and then discuss how they feel about the situation.
4. Play "capture the flag" with one team as the Russians and the other as the Latvians. Then, explain how the winning team taking over the losing team is similar to how Russia won the war with Latvia. Discuss the effects on Latvians.



Discussion Questions

1. What cultural contributions have been made in your country by other countries' influences?
2. How and why would freedom affect a nation's economy?
3. How would life change if you were annexed by another country or town? How would you feel?
4. What would life be like without _____? (Fill in the blank with various things and discuss them with the students.)
5. Discuss the basics of democracy and communism and how they are similar and different.

FACTS ABOUT LATVIA

Official Name: Latvijas Republika

Capital: Riga

Government Type: parliamentary democracy

Location: eastern Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea, between Estonia and Lithuania

Area: 64,589 sq km

Area Comparative: slightly larger than West Virginia

Coastline: 531 km

Climate: maritime, wet, moderate winters

Lowest Point: Baltic Sea 0 m

Highest Point: Gaizinkalns 312 m

Natural Resources: minimal amber, peat, limestone, dolomite, hydropower, arable land resource

Population: 2,366,515 (July 2002 est.)

Ethnic Groups: Latvian 57.7%, Russian 29.6%, Belorussian 4.1%, Ukrainian 2.7%, Polish 2.5%, Lithuanian 1.4%, other 2%

Religions: Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Russian Orthodox

Languages: Latvian (official), Lithuanian, Russian, other

GDP: \$18.6 billion (2001 est.)

GDP Per Capita: \$7,800 (2001 est.)

Unemployment Rate: 7.6% (2001 est.)

Industries: buses, vans, street and railroad cars, synthetic fibers, agricultural machinery, fertilizer, washing machines, radios, electronics, pharmaceuticals, processed foods, textiles

Agricultural Products: grain, sugar beets, potatoes, vegetables, beef, milk, eggs, fish

Exports: \$2.2 billion (f.o.b., 2001) wood and wood products, machinery and equipment, metals, textiles, food-stuffs

Imports: \$3.3 billion (f.o.b. 2001) machinery, equipment, chemicals, fuels

Trade Partners: Germany, U.K. Russia, Sweden, Finland

Currency: 1 Latvian lat (LUL) = 100 santims

Exchange Rate: 0.6384 lats = \$1 U.S. (Jan. 2002 est.)

HISTORY AND HOLIDAYS

TIME LINE

800s C.E.	Vikings raid Latvia
900s	Russian forces attack several times
1200s	War between Latvians and Teutonic knights; Latvians surrender
1201	First written record made of Riga
1561	Riga given status of independent and free city port
1562	Most of Latvia under Polish and Lithuanian rule
1629	Sweden conquers Latvia
1710	Russia defeats Sweden and conquers Latvia
Late 1800s	Latvians move toward organization of independence
1918	Latvia declares independence for the first time
1920	Russia and Germany recognize Latvia's independence
1939	Russia and Germany sign treaty giving Soviets permission to take over Latvia
1940	Soviet forces invade and occupy Latvia
1941	German troops occupy and take over Latvia
1944	Soviets recapture Latvia
1980s	Open demonstrations of anticommunism
Late 1980s	Government agrees to restore Latvian flag, anthem, language, and freedom of press and religion
1988	Formation of Popular Front, or People's Front, a large, noncommunist organization
1989	Communist party voted down by Parliament
1990	Parliament declares independence from Soviet Union (who declares the act illegal)
1991	Latvian independence recognized by Soviet Union and the rest of the world
1998	Bill passed to amend country's citizenship laws to make it easier for Russians in Latvia to become Latvian citizens

HOLIDAYS

1 Jan	New Year's Day
26 Jan	Latvia's International Observance Day
25 Mar	Communist Terror Memorial Day
Mar/Apr	Palm Sunday, one week before Easter
Mar/Apr	Easter Sunday (First Easter)
Mar/Apr	Easter Monday (Second Easter)
1 May	Labor Day
8 May	Victims of World War II Memorial Day
May	Mother's Day
23 Jun	Līgo, the first day of summer
24 Jun	<i>Jani</i> , St. John's Day
4 Jul	Jewish Genocide Remembrance Day

11 Aug	Veteran's Day
18 Nov	Independence Day
25 Dec	Christmas
26 Dec	St. Stephen's Day
31 Dec	New Year's Eve

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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LATVIAN EMBASSY TO THE UNITED STATES

4325 Seventeenth Street North West
Washington, D.C. 20011
Phone: (202) 726-8213, Fax: (202) 726-6785
E-mail: Embassy@Latvia-USA.org
Web site: <http://site.yahoo.com/vestnieciba/>

LATVIAN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

Ratslaukums 6, Riga, LV-1050
Phone: (371) 704-4377, Fax: (371) 704-4378
E-mail: tourinfo@riga800.lv
Web site: <http://www.riga800.lv/lv/tourists/index.asp>

LATVIA'S INSTITUTES

Smilsu iela 1/3, Riga, LV-1050, Latvia
Phone: (371) 750-3663, Fax: (371) 750-3669
E-mail: instituts@latinst.lv
Web site: <http://www.latinst.lv>

BOOKS

Dabolinsh, Aigars. *Latvia: A Guide Book*, Puse Plus, 1999.
Doub, Siri Lise. *A Taste of Latvia*, Hippocrene Books, 2000.
Dreifelds, Juris. *Latvia in Transition*, Cambridge University Press, 1996.
Huggins, Edward. *Blue and Green Wonders, and Other Latvian Tales*, Simon and Schuster, 1971.
Lieven, Anatol. *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence*, Yale University Press, 1994.
Panga, Inara Astrida. *Guide to Latvia*, Bradt Publications, 1995.
Plankans, Andrejs. *The Latvians: A Short History*, Hoover Institutional Press, 1995.
Ruggiero, Adriana. *The Baltic Countries: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—Discover our Heritage*, Dillon Press, 1997.
Williams, N., K. Galbraith, and S. Kokker. *Lonely Planet Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania*, (2nd ed.), Lonely Planet, 2000.
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World Country Study Guide Library. *Latvia: A Spy Guide*, USA International Business Publications, 2000.

FILM

Baltic States, Video Visits, 1992.

INTERNET SITES

Baltic Shop:

<http://www.balticshop.com>

CIA World Factbook:

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook>

CRW Flags:

<http://www.crwflags.com>

Folklore (in Latvian):

<http://folklor.lv>

Food and Beverages:

<http://www.members.tripod.com/~sdaveo/latvia/food-bev.htm>

Kuldiga (in Latvian with English translation option):

<http://www.kuldiga.lv>

LatNet News (in Latvian):

<http://www.latnet.lv/news/>

Latvia: Heartland of the Baltics:

<http://www.latviatravel.com>

Latvian Travel Guides:

<http://www.inyourpocket.com>

Latvian Academic Network:

<http://www.lanet.lv>

Latvians Online:

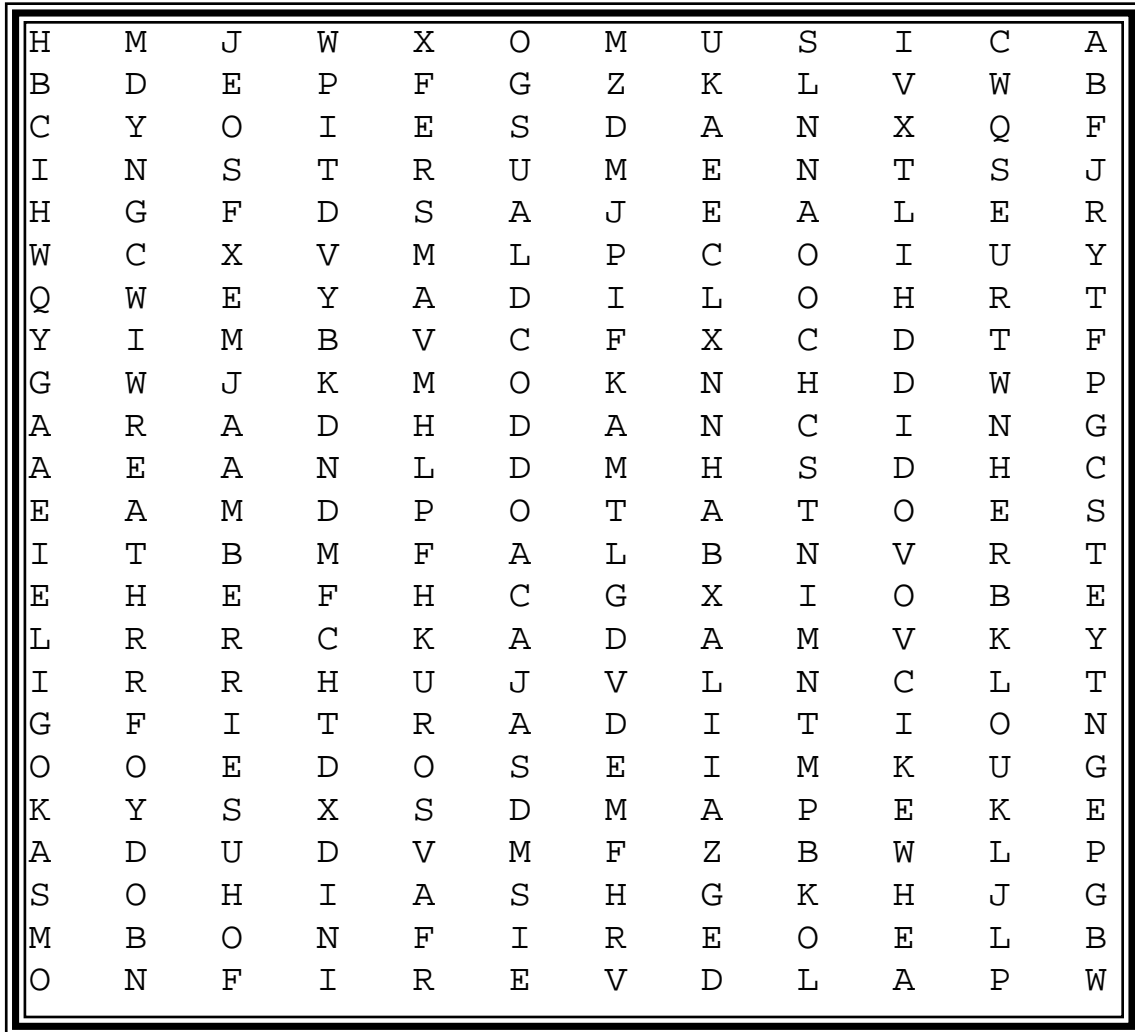
<http://www.latviansonline.com>

MUSIC

Paganu Gadagramata—Folk music, [CD], Various artists, Ugis Praulins, 1999.

Latviesu Danci, [CD], Various artists, Maris Muktupavels, 1999.

Līgo Word Search



WREATH
BONFIRE
POTATOES
DANCING

MUSIC
FAMILY
INSTRUMENTS
PAGAN

TRADITION
LĪGO
BERRIES
HOLIDAY

Līgo Word Search

Answer Key

+	+	+	+	+	+	M	U	S	I	C	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
I	N	S	T	R	U	M	E	N	T	S	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	Y	A	D	I	L	O	H	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	W	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	R	+	+	+	D	A	N	C	I	N	G
+	E	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	A	+	+	P	O	T	A	T	O	E	S
+	T	B	+	+	A	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	H	E	+	+	+	G	+	+	+	+	+
L	+	R	+	+	+	+	A	+	+	+	Y
I	+	R	+	+	+	+	+	N	+	L	+
G	+	I	T	R	A	D	I	T	I	O	N
O	+	E	+	+	+	+	+	M	+	+	+
+	+	S	+	+	+	+	A	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	F	+	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
+	B	O	N	F	I	R	E	+	+	+	+
+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+

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Folklore & Language Visual 2: Waterfall at Kuldiga





FLAG OF LATVIA

The two maroon bands on the flag represent the blood shed in the distant and recent past for the cause of freedom, and the readiness of the people to give the blood of their hearts for freedom. The white band represents right, truth, honor of free citizens, trustworthiness, and, above all, freedom.

Map of Latvia

