

[Latvia](#)

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POPULATION: 2,700,000

- 52% Latvians
- 34% Russians
- 5% Belorussians
- 4% Ukrainians
- 5% Others

AREA: 65,000 sq km (25,000 sq miles)

POPULATION DENSITY: 41 per sq km (25.4 per sq mile)

CAPITAL: Riga, 900,000 inhabitants

MAJOR CITIES: Daugavpils 128,000 - Liepaja 115,000 - Jelgava 75,000 - Jurmala 66,000

HISTORY

The various Latvian tribes functioned under local self-government until the end of the 13th century when the territory was conquered by the German Teutonic Knights. Latvia was subject to sporadic invasions by the Poles and the Swedes until the 18th century when Russia, under Peter the Great, emerged as a major European power. By 1795, the entire Latvian territory was under Russian control. The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 heralded the end of Russian suzerainty and Latvia could assert its independence for the first time in over 600 years. In 1940, the Russians again took over, and Latvia was incorporated into the Soviet Union. Latvia's independence was finally secured in August 1991, when the attempted coup in Moscow Failed.