

FINLAND AND THE BALTIC STATES



Date: 25 June – 09 July 2010
Type of Tour: Long Distance, Adventure, Mountains & Lakes

New for 2010 is a tour which combines the delights of Scandinavia with the Baltic States. The 15-day tour will travel through Denmark, Sweden and Finland before crossing into Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This trip is packed with woodland, lakes, unspoiled nature, fine architecture and culture alongside a turbulent communist history.

Day 1 (25 June) – Harwich to Esbjerg

The tour begins with the overnight ferry sailing from Harwich to Denmark. En suite cabin accommodation will be reserved for everyone. Couples will have their own cabins and solos will be asked to share twin berth cabins (sole occupancy and upgrades may be possible subject to availability and a supplement). Once on board, there will be a group dinner and briefing on the tour ahead, given by the Tour Leader.

Day 2 (26 June) – Esbjerg to Helsingborg (Sweden)

Upon arrival in Denmark we will head east across the country, using the excellent motorway system. First we will cross the bridge at Odense and then the huge bridge to Malmö in Sweden and north to Helsingborg. (There is also the option of taking the ferry from Helsingør to Helsingborg.) Helsingborg will be our first overnight

stop on Scandinavian soil. As we anticipate a late arrival and an early departure, the hotel is located on the north-east edge of the city – ideal for a prompt get-away. Hopefully we will have enough time to enjoy this three star hotel's pool, sauna and bistro restaurant, before fully charging our batteries for the following day's long ride to Stockholm. (Mileage: 220)

Day 3 (27 June) – Helsingborg to Stockholm and Turku (Finland)

Today will be a long day in the saddle. The reliable Swedish motorway system will enable us to cross the country at a good pace, riding from west to east. Once in Stockholm, we will make for the port area to catch the ferry to Finland, which leaves at 19.30hrs. En suite cabins have been reserved and there are plenty of dining options on board for you to choose from. (Mileage: 350)

Day 4 (28 June) – Turku to Hameenlinna

On arrival in Turku, at approximately 07.00hrs, we will take a ride through the tranquil south west corner of Finland on small roads, visiting the Hame Nature Centre and Liesjarvia National Park. We may even enjoy a traditional Finnish 'smoke-sauna', before arriving in Finland's oldest inland city and birthplace of Jean Sibelius, Hameenlinna. Here, accommodation has been arranged at a three star, centrally located hotel which uniquely includes a morning sauna with the price of breakfast! For those who feel equipped, this is also the first chance to put your skills to the test on some gravel-roads. (Mileage: 150 – 200)

Day 5 (29 June) – Free day

Today is a free day for you to spend at your leisure. The sauna will be open before breakfast and thereafter you are free to relax at the outdoor recreation area of Ahvenisto. Alternatively, take a sail on the beautiful Lake Vanajavesi, or explore the central lakes area of

Finland on your bike – the Päijänne National Park is well worth a visit! If the weather is dry, those who wish can do some riding on sand and gravel roads. (Mileage: Approx. 250)

Day 6 (30 June) – Hameenlinna to Helsinki and Tallinn (Estonia)

This morning we will take a short ride south to the capital: Helsinki. We will arrive in time for some lunch and a quick look around the city before boarding the ferry to Estonia. If there is extra time, we will take a look at the old fruit, vegetable, meat and cheese market by the harbour, which is housed in beautifully decorated long buildings. The ferry leaves at 14.30hrs and is scheduled to arrive in Tallinn at around 16.30hrs. From the port we will proceed straight to the centrally located four star hotel where accommodation has been reserved for the next two nights. Your Tour Leader will advise on the choice of restaurants for the evening. (Mileage: 120)

Day 7 (01 July) – Free day in Tallinn

This is a day for you to do "nothing" and get lost in the 14th and 15th century cobbled streets, or climb the Toompea Castle hill. You can also visit the Occupations Museum, which reflects developments in Estonia from 1940 to 1991, when Estonia was alternately occupied by the Soviet Union and Germany. Otherwise, you can visit the old farm buildings, church, tavern and schoolhouse at the Open Air museum. There will also be the option of taking a daytime sauna before experiencing the 'white midsummer night' of the Baltic. Should you fancy a ride, head out to the Lahemaa National Park on Estonia's north coast. If you are a racing fan, you will be able to pay your respects at the sight where Joey Dunlop was tragically killed.

Day 8 (02 July) – Tallinn to Tartu

After breakfast and a relaxing start to the day, we will leave Tallinn and head south-east into rural Estonia, passing

near Paide and Poltsamaa. Here, should you wish, we can arrange a visit to a private motorcycle museum. We will then continue to Lake Peipsi, which forms the border with Russia, where we will pause for a break. This region is also the centre of onion production for Europe! This evening, the tour we will stay in the town of Tartu, where hotel accommodation has been reserved at a centrally located three star hotel. All rooms are en suite and comfortably equipped. Tartu is a university town and considered by many to be 'the most Estonian city'. Tonight you are free to select your own restaurant, either in the hotel or locally. (Mileage: 160)

Day 9 (03 July) – Tartu to Daugavpils

This is a 'rural' day when we skirt close to the frontier with Belarus. There will be a choice of main, minor, and very minor roads, or even gravel / unsealed roads for those who want to put their GS's to the test. In the second half of the day we will enter what is known locally as the Latgale Upland area – the Latvia Lakeland. It is seldom visited by tourists. Towards the end of the day we will reach Daugavpils: a city much more Russian and old style communist, than Latvian. Tonight we will stay at another three star hotel. (Mileage: 220)

Day 10 (04 July) – Daugavpils to Riga (Latvia)

We could just follow the River Daugava and hydro-dammed lakes all the way from Daugavpils to Riga, but we won't. Instead we will have another relaxing start, in readiness for some sightseeing in the rolling rural Latvian countryside – and more dirt roads if you want them. Alternatively, we will make a prompt start to make the most of an early arrival in Latvia's capital city, Riga, where another four star hotel has been booked for the next two nights. (Mileage: 140)

Day 11 (05 July) – Free day

Today you will have a free day to explore Riga. It's worth getting up early to visit the fascinating market in Zeppelin

airship hangers, before returning to the hotel for breakfast! Riga is a city to enjoy at leisure, spending time soaking up the Art Nouveau buildings east of the Old Town. Time can also be spent 'people-watching' in the parks and boulevards around the Freedom Monument. For those with an interest in motorsport, there is even a fantastic motor and motorcycle museum, featuring many makes of vehicle that have never been seen in the West. For those interested in history, there are many sobering reminders of the WW2 conflict in the 'Occupation Museum', and a beautiful Open-Air Ethnography Museum, only a tram ride away on the outskirts of the city. Your Tour Leader will be able to advise on the best places to eat.

Day 12 (06 July) – Riga to Klaipeda (Lithuania) and on to the ferry

Today we have a boat to catch and, as the departure is at 17.30hrs, we will have to be prompt in leaving Riga. You will have a choice of routes to the Lithuanian port of Klaipeda and we will take time to ride through the Zemaitija National Park. On arrival in Klaipeda we will enjoy a quick tour around the small town, or maybe even a short ferry trip across the lagoon onto the sand-spit feature that lies off Klaipeda. We will then make for the ferry quay to catch the overnight ferry to Kiel in Germany. Cabins have been arranged and you will be free to decide on how you wish to dine. (Mileage: 135)

Day 13 (07 July) – On ferry and Kiel to Bremen

The ferry arrives in Kiel at approximately 14.00hrs. Once disembarked, we will proceed south to the city of Bremen – a port city on the Weser River – for our next overnight stop of the tour. Accommodation has been reserved in a comfortable, centrally located three star hotel. As we have now begun our journey home, this will be our last night on foreign soil, so dinner will be a group affair in the hotel. (Mileage: 120)

Day 14 (08 July) – Bremen to Rotterdam

After an early breakfast we will leave Bremen and ride across northern Germany towards Holland, before heading on to the port of Eurpoort / Rotterdam to catch the 21.00hrs ferry back to Hull. Along the way, there may be time to stop and see life as it is lived amongst the dykes and polders of the Netherlands. Cabin accommodation will have been reserved on the ferry and tonight you are free to make your own dining choices. (Mileage: 265)

Day 15 (09 July) – Hull

Arrival back in Hull is at 08.00hrs in good time for the ride home.

Rider Price: 1,695
Couple Price: 2,275

Tour includes: ferry with cabin accommodation and dinner from Harwich to Esbjerg; B&B accommodation in Helsingborg; ferry with cabin accommodation from Stockholm to Turku; B&B accommodation for two nights in Hameenlinna; ferry fare to Tallinn; B&B in Tallinn (two nights) Tartu, Daugavpils, Riga (two nights); ferry fare from Klaipeda to Kiel with cabin accommodation; halfboard accommodation in Bremen; ferry with cabin accommodation from Rotterdam to Hull; the programme as outlined; all the necessary maps and route details; travel pack; local overnight parking charges; a World of BMW Tour Leader to accompany the group; and VAT.

Not Included: fuel; meals other than those specified; wine & drinks; local entertainment not included in the programme; any admissions; local ferries; tolls; local bike insurance or travel insurance.

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