**City of Ventspils**

Ventspils is the sixth largest city of Latvia. Latvia is located in the eastern part of Europe by the Baltic Sea. Latvia borders on Estonia to the north, Russian Federation to the east, Belarus to the south-east, and Lithuania to the south. The territory of Latvia occupies 64.6 thousand km2. There are more than 2.5 million inhabitants in Latvia, 55 % of whom are Latvians. The capital of Latvia is Riga.

Ventspils is located in the north-west of Latvia at the estuary of the river Venta into the Baltic Sea. A distance of 189 km separates Ventspils from the capital of Latvia. Transport is the leading sphere ofeconomy and the basis of economic and social development of the city. Most of the residents are employed by the enterprises related to the transshipment, storage and transit of cargoes, as well as by companies servicing Ventspils Free Port.

**Transport**

**Car rental**
The city’s car rentals offer cars of different brands and at different prices. The car rental Eurocar is located at the restaurant Vilnis, one of the biggest hotel at another side of river Venta, the second car rental is in Jēkaba street in the direction of Kuldīga.

**Gas stations**The modern gas stations are located in close vicinity on the way to Riga – Statoil and Shell, and on the way to Kuldīga – Lukoil.

 **Taxi (calling, parking lots)**In Ventspils several taxi firms run their business and provide quality services. Mercedes brand taxi mini-buses operate throughout the city, one ticket costs LVL 0.25. Passengers may request to get off it wherever they want. Taxi mini-buses operate intensely from 5 a.m. till midnight, but during holidays till half past one in the morning.

**Parking lots**Cars may be parked at the road sides in the specially designed parking places, where they do not impede the traffic. However, there are several paid parking lots offering their services as well.

**Buses**Bus transport provides convenient inter-city traffic. The new Mercedes buses, that mostly are used in the route Ventspils-Riga, meet modern requirements and are equipped with air-conditioners, audio, TV and video. On the half way to Riga the bus stops at the River Abava and passengers can have some refreshments and fresh air. The traffic between Riga and Ventspils is very intensive. Every hour it’s one bus to the capital of Latvia.

**City Description**

Ventspils has seen tremendous changes in many spheres during the last ten years. With the completion of the renovation works the Old City, many parks and squares have regained their former beauty. The City Council has created favourable conditions for the renovation of private dwellings. Large sums of money are allotted each year to the maintenance of the city environment and to the upgrading of the living standard of the residents. Because also the Leasure and Hospitality spheres are highly developed.


##### Economy

Transport is dominant in the economy of Ventspils and employs the majority of the residents. It functions as the basis of economic and social development of the city. There are ancient traditions of fishery and woodworking in Ventspils. A number of private companies active in fishery and fish processing offer fresh, salted, smoked, canned and frozen products both to local and export markets.

Chipboards, saw material and furniture are the basic kinds of production in wood-working, and the largest part of production is exported. The construction boom of the last years in Ventspils has promoted the expansion of existing producers of construction materials, as well as the establishment of new firms.

The Ventspils airport renovation project and discussions on the construction of an oil processing plant in Venstpils have been initiated.

**Ventspils Development Agency**

As a developed port city and a place for successful business Ventspils has entered international competition side by side with similar cities in the world. The Ventspils Development Agency was founded by the business organisations of Ventspils and the Ventspils City Council in February of 1998 in order to coordinate the publicity of the city and to implement its marketing strategy.

The main spheres of activity of the Agency:-implementation of the city marketing strategy;-study of the supply and demand structure of Ventspils as a place for business;-local and international publicity of the city and its economical and social partners; -standing up for the interests and needs of Ventspils and its economic and social partners in local and international institutions of the state and in the private sector.

**Culture**

A lot has been done in Ventspils during the last years to develop a rich cultural life in the city. Different cultural activities of local and international significance regularly take place in the city. The regional Ventspils College has been created and the Old City, Ventspils Castle and other historical objects have been renovated.

Regular theatre performances, concerts, different theme activities and conferences take place at the Cultural Centre and the Recreation Centre Juras Varti.( Sea Gates )

The cultural life of the city has also become very active. Various local and international events, opera performances, concerts and art exhibitions take place in Ventspils more and more frequently.

9 secondary schools and several professional educational establishments are functioning in the city. Higher education can be acquired in Ventspils College, the local branch of Riga Technical University, the branch of the Russian Institute in the Baltics, and the branch of the Riga Pedagogical and Educational Management School.

There are diverse recreation opportunities for the residents and guests of Ventspils. One can visit museums and see historical objects and other interesting places in the city and its vicinity in order to study the history and development of Ventspils. In a 20 minutes walk from the city centre one can find oneself on the sandy beach of the Baltic Sea. Sports enthusiasts can enjoy sports in modern sports buildings – a stadium, many sports clubs and the Olympic sports hall, completed in 1997, that accomodates 3000 spectators.

##### Centre Amateur Art

There are 14 different ethnic and cultural societies functioning in Ventspils. People of most different generations have engaged in very many amateur art groups– choirs, dance groups, folklore groups, studios of handicrafts and even two orchestras. The residents and guests of Ventspils can study the history and culture of Ventspils and the vicinity by visiting different: the renovated Ventspils Livonian Order Castle, Ventspils Museum, Ventspils Maritime Open-Air Museum, and the Memorial Museum of the Writer Herbert Dorbe.

**Accommodation**

**Hotels**
Ventspils has two 3-star hotels with a high level of servicing, convenient parking lots and restaurants. The hotel Dzintarjūra is located in the city centre and has tourist-friendly prices. Services at the other hotel Vilnis, which is located in Pārventa, are more business people-oriented.

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| **Hotels** | **Address** | **Phone** | **Price** | **Type** | **Rooms** | **Services** |
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| “Vilnis”\*\*\* | 5 Talsu str, Ventspils | 36 68880 | No 19.00 Ls (room) | 1;2 singlelukss | 75 | Restaurant, bar, currency exchange, car rent, barber’s |
| “Dzintarjūra”\*\*\* | 25 Ganību str, Ventspils | 36 22719 | 30 – 120 Ls(room) | 1;2 placelukss | 156 | Private saunas, restaurants |

**Guest houses**
Guest house Rāte is located in the very centre of Old Ventspils and corresponds to the level of youth hostels. Motel/guest house Leči is situated 13 km off Ventspils on Ventspils-Kuldīga highway close to the Venta. It offers the following facilities: boat rental, water bicycles, a bath house, a small shop, fishing on the river Venta.

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| **Hotels** | **Address** | **Phone** | **Price** | **Type** | **Rooms** | **Services** |
| **Guest houses** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| “Rāte” | Annas str 13,Ventspils | 36 24777 | 4 – 12 Ls | 1;2;3;4 | 27 | Bar, guide driver services |
| “Leču krodziņš” | Vārves pag. | 36 98746 | 10 – 25 Lsroom | 2;3 places | 13 | Café, waterbikes, boats rent |
| “Pulkvedis” | Pulkveža str 27, Ventspils | 9250369 | 7 Lsnight | 4 places | 4  | Celebration apartaments, possibility room service |
| “Irši” | Piltenes pag.  | 9180567 | 5 Ls ( pers.) 20 Ls sauna | 2 -places | 12 | Celebretion apartaments, hunting |
| “Pagrabiņš” | Popes pag. “Kļavas” | 9120707 | 20 Ls room | 2;3 placesi | 6 | Celebretion apartaments, bar, sauna |

**Camps and camping facilities**Ventspils is surrounded by great recreation facilities for nature lovers. Several camps are set up at a picturesque place near Lake Usma. Liepene is located at the seaside. The camps offer a variety of recreational activities, including participation in sea fishing with nets.

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| **Hotels** | **Address** | **Phone** | **Price** | **Type** | **Rooms** | **Services** |
| KEMPINGS  | **and TENT**  | PLACES |  |  |  |  |
| “Liepene” | Tārgales pag. | 36 92223 | 2.50 – 3.50 Ls | dažādi | 92 | sauna, fishing |
| “Dzītari” | Usmas pag. | 36 73759 | 15 -20 Ls (HOME) | 6 PLACE |  | Boat rent, swimming, volleyball place. |
| “Vectīrukši” | Usmas pag. | 36 73623 | 2-2.50 Ls | 2 PLACE | 101 | Boats, water bicykles, tents |
| “Ausekļi” | Usmas pag. | 36 73630 | 2 Ls (place) | DIFERENT | 20 | volleyball place, fire place,  |
| “Upamaļnieki | Užavas pag. | 36 26321 | 1 Ls(tent place) | 2 PLACE | 2 +tents | Boats, water bicycles, tents |
| “Mežmalas” | Usmas pag.  | 9341582 | 5 - 6 Ls (house) | DIFFERENT | 30 | Boat rent, swimming, volleyball place. |
| “Zītari” | Jūrkalnes pag. | 36 97190 | 8 Ls (house)2 Ls tent place | 3 PLACE | 6 | Food services, Boat rent, swimming, volleyball place. |
| “Zaķi” | Jūrkalnes pag. | 36 97139 | 2.50 Ls (place)2 Ls tent place | 8;4 PLACE | 15 | Sauna, boat rent, fishing and another |
| “Lejas” | Popes pag. | 9360225 | 0.50 Ls | TENT PLACE |  | Boats, water bicykles, tents |
| “Atpūtnieks” | Jūrkalne | 36 97181 | 0.50 – 0.70 Ls | TENT PLACE |  | Boat rent, swimming, volleyball place. |
| “Strazdiņi” | Usmas pag.  | 36 736949125416 | 0.50 Ls | TENT PLACE |  |  Swimming possibility, boat rent, fishing. |
| “Ozoldangas” | Usmas pag.  | 36 74710 | 1.00 Ls | TENT PLACE |  | Tents, different sport equipment |
| “Ozoli” | Zūras, Vārves pag. | 36 97529 | 0.50 Ls | TENT PLACE |  | boats and fishing equipment rent |
| Piejūras kempings | Ventspils, Vasarnīcu iela 56 | 36 27991 | Ls 10; Ls 20; Tent rent: Ls 1.50 | 64 PLACES IN HOUSE, TENT PLACES |  | Tent rent, bicycle rent, fire places, kitchen and another |

**Country houses**
Several country houses in Ventspils vicinity offer accommodation with breakfast, a bath house and recreation in nature.

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| **Country houses** |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| “Ozoli” | Blāzma,  | 36 75398 | 5 -8 Ls(room) | 2 place | 8 | Fishing, sauna, boats rent |
| “Eglāji” | Jūrkalnes pag. | 36 97187 | 4 – 10 Ls(personal) | 1;2;3 place | 20 | Fishing, sauna, boats rent, tents place,  |
| “Muižkalni” | Jūrkalnes pag. | 36 97124 | 8 Ls (place with breakfast ) | 4 place | 4 | Sauna, food services |
| “Kalēji” | Zlēku pag. | 6521659 | 2.50 Ls (place | 2 place | 8 | Boats rent, fire place, sauna |
| “Baložkalni” | Puzes pag. | 36 745809361792 | 30 Ls (with sauna) | 2 place | 4 | food services, boats rent, fire place, sauna |
| “Lūķi” | Jūrkalnes pag. | 93643472990395 | 9 Ls(place with breakfast | different | 8 | Sauna, introduction with different places |

**Entertainment**

**Out-door entertainment**
At sunny week-ends local residents and visitors of Ventspils like to walk down Ostas street along the River Venta; other popular places are the fountain “Boats of The Sun” and the tidy and modern city centre. During summers the most popular spot is the city beach, that has been awarded ***the Blue Flag***. The city parks and squares are nice places for having a chat. Some people might love to have good time at the skate-park, but children gather at the *Children’s Town* (the Children’s Recreation park).

 **Theatre**
The city theatre company is 20 actors and actresses. The most outstanding productions have been *Alice in Wonderland* by L. Carroll, *Chairs* by Eigen Junesco, *Macbeth*, etc.

**Museums**
A popular museum in the city is the Open-air museum with its most remarkable exhibit - the functioning Little Train, especially beloved by Ventspils’ guests. In summers this is the place for various cultural events. School children and local writers often visit the Memorial Museum of the writer Herberts Dorbe. Ventspils Museum of History and Arts holds exhibitions of local and visiting Latvian and foreign artists.

**Cinema**
The cinema *Rio* in Old Ventspils holds different events for young people: teen discotheques and parties for students.

**Clubs**
The most popular dance clubs are *Livonija* and *Kurzeme*, that are located in the city centre where it is easy to park the car or use services of the adjacent taxi parking lots. The clubs offer delicious and substantial meals. Prices are very low and many young peoples visit thiese clubs.

**Game and Gambling clubs**
The most popular gambling clubs are *Melnais kaķis (Black cat)*, *Bumerangs*, *Klondaika* and *Jūrnieku klubs (Seamen club)*. Visitors may listen to music, have some drink and play billiards or darts. For those who prefer bowling Ventspils offers the bowling club and the restaurant *Ūpis*. Different competitions and events are organised at game and gambling clubs.

**Refreshment**

**Restaurants**
Just at the very bank of the River Venta the nice restaurant Ūpis is located, where visitors may play some bowling on the ground floor, and dance at week-ends. A classic restaurant Vilnis is located in the hotel’s premises on the right bank of the Venta. Kurzeme is a restaurant that won the first award of the previous-year competition on the best restaurant. It offers disco dancing. The restaurant Krēta, MG in the Seamen’s Entertainment Centre, after a substantial meal offers a play of billiard or dancing in its lovely atmosphere. The special interior design of the restaurant Dzintarjūra reveals the closeness of the sea. Good meals are offered also at the restaurant Olivers.

 **Bars and Pubs**
A popular student spot is the bar Cits Ostgals, where the jovial waiter offers also the special brand of Užava beer and garlic toasts. An intimate atmosphere is in the small bar Landora in the city centre. Recently a new bar was opened in the culture centre Jūras vārti (Sea gate) with live music performances.

**Cafes and bistros**
The cafe Kika, located in the city centre, lures in all coffee and cake lovers. It is also a calm place for a private chat or just for spoiling your kids with some sweets. The café Kāpa, which is located in Pārventa, is an appropriate place for a refreshment together with friends

##### Shopping

**Shops**
Many local residents of Ventspils prefer shopping in the big shopping centres which are located in the most intense housing. One of the most popular shopping centres Diāna, is located at Ventspils College near the 9-storey block houses; the shopping centre Kāpa is on the right bank of the Venta. Before travelling round Ventspils district, it is advisable to do shopping in these shopping centres, as the range of goods supplied in the shops outside Ventspils is not so wide. The rest part of the city, especially its central part, is spotted by various small shops.

**Market**
Ventspils has several under-roof markets with a wide range of goods sold at comparatively low prices. The market in the Old Town is especially busy and offers the widest range of goods on Saturday mornings while on the week days it is open only till the noon. The market offers fresh food, meat and fish products, vegetables, fruit, honey, etc. During fairs traders from all the regions of Latvia and also Lithuania gather in the market of the Old Town.

**Information**

**Tourism Agencies**
Along with Ventspils Tourism Information Centre also several tourism agencies offer their services which include guiding round Ventspils, sightseeing tours, excursions, visas and insurance, air and ferry tickets. The tourism agency Ventspils Excursion Bureau is located on the Town Square in the very centre of Old Ventspils, but the tourism agency Tobago is located in the city centre.

**Contacts**
Ventspils Tourism Information Centre provides all the information on tourism. Other information about the municipality may be obtained at different municipal institutions.

**Co-operation**Ventspils sister-city in Sweden is Vesterviik. Both cities have established close contacts and co-operate in different spheres.

##### For visitors

For Latvia visitors now I think is very good time. Our inhabitants are very frendly and most part of them knows English. If tourists needs to find some place or to know about something, latvian will help them.

Also Tourism Information Centre are highly developed last few years. In airports, stations, and in every hotel or guest house tourists will recieve necessary information about a city and Latvia.

No problems in association between foreign and local peoples.

###### **Welcome in LATVIA!**

###### Source of information

1. : Internet: tourism@ventspils.lv ; www.Ventspils.tourism.lv.
2. Ventspils city guide booklet
3. Information in Hotels and camping
4. Torism information centre ( Tirgus iela 7, Ventspils. tel./fakss 36 222 63 )