

# Facts about Latvia



MARCH 23, 2020  
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Latvia is in North Europe. In 2019 Latvia's population was 1.92 million and a territory of 64,589 km<sup>2</sup> (24,938 sq. mi). Latvia has regions: Kurzeme, Vidzeme, Zemgale and Latgale.

1. And has sandy beaches

Temperatures can top 20C in high summer, so you might even need sun cream.

2. It's wild

Around 54 per cent of Latvia is forest, making it one of Europe's greenest countries, while 10 per cent is bog (so pack your wellies). Binoculars might be useful too – it's home to black storks, lesser spotted eagles, otters, beaver, lynx, and wolves, and great concentrations of deer, wild boar, elk and red fox.



3. And it has one of the world's oldest flags

Latvia's current flag design has been in use since 1280. Only Denmark's has been around longer.



4. They produced one of the world's greatest (and tallest) female basketball players

Basketball is Latvia's de facto national summer sport (it's ice hockey in winter). Notable Latvians include Uljana Semjonova, a 6-foot 11-inch former basketball player who led TTT Riga to 12 consecutive European titles between 1964 and 1975. She was the first non-American woman to be inducted into the NBA Hall of Fame.

## 5. And invented jeans

The tailor Jacob W. Davis was born Jākobs Jufess in Riga and emigrated to the US as a young man in 1854. In 1870, he was asked by a customer to make a strong pair of trousers for her woodcutter husband – his creation would become the template for modern denim jeans, and two years later, with help from Levi Strauss, he patented the product.

## 6. Its national bird knows how to shake a tail feather

Latvia's national bird is the white wagtail, so called because it almost constantly wriggles its backside.



## 7. It once owned a bit of the Caribbean (not proud)

Latvia, or the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, as it was in the 17th century, established two colonies – tiny St. Andrews Island (now Kunta Kinteh Island) in the estuary of the Gambia River, and Tobago, in the Caribbean.



## Reference

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/destinations/europe/latvia/amazing-facts-about-latvia/>