

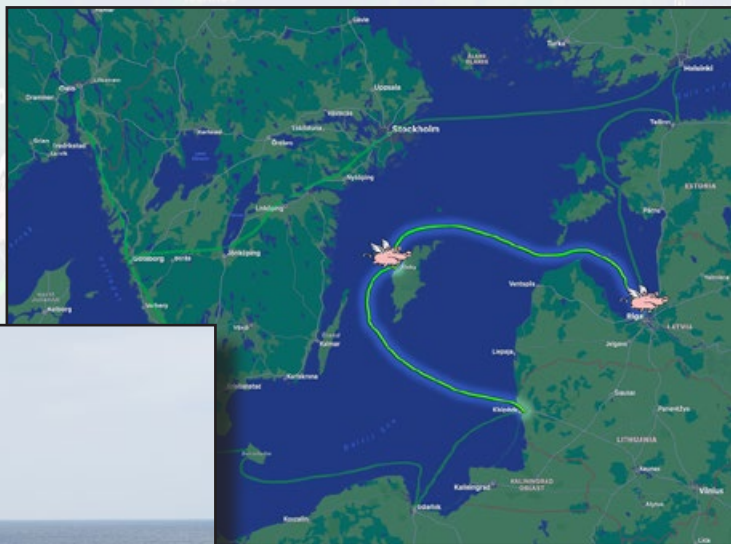
THE BALTIC SEA: PART 3

VISBY ON GOTLAND ISLAND, SWEDEN & RIGA, LATVIA

Our next stop was on the Swedish island of Gotland, at the port town of Visby. With an area of about 1,200 square miles (about 110 miles x 32 miles), Gotland is Sweden's largest island.

Gotland has the world's northernmost established vineyard and winery, so there would be no more sampling of 'local' wines from here on.

As with most ports, there were many different kinds of ships and boats to see. While the many different kinds of commercial vessels and vessels of character drew most of my interest, I did notice a ship that indicated we would most likely NOT be the only tourists exploring the small town of Visby.



Gotland's main sources of income are agriculture along with food processing, tourism, and IT solutions.

Some 'world travelers by bicycle' people we know from our Tucson, Arizona days were on a bike tour on Gotland about the time we were there, but we did not see them.



We visited the Fornsalen ('Hall of Antiquities'), more commonly referred to as The Gotland Museum. Below is the gallery containing the 'Picture Stones'.



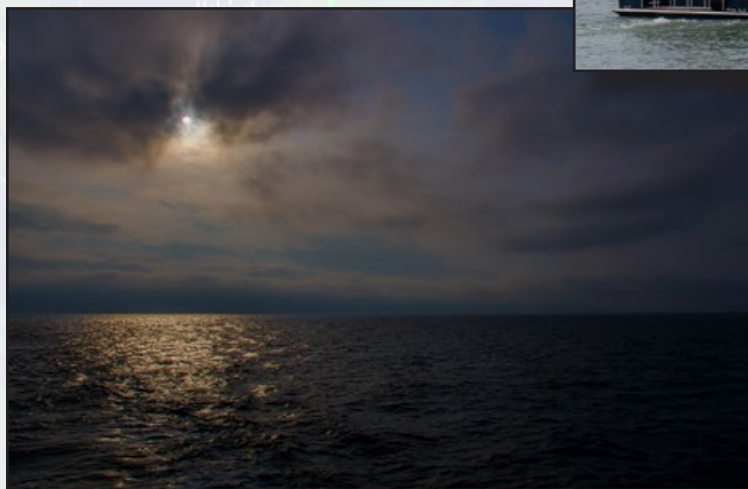
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We saw many of these sheep bollards in Visby. I can't remember for sure (I've slept since then) but I recall seeing them other places on this trip too. A little research tells me that there is a sheep that is named for the island of Gotland, *Gotland Sheep*, but these bollards are not those as the Gotland sheep have no horns. However, the Gotland sheep are thought to be a result of crossbreeding between Karakul and/or Romanov sheep and the native Gute sheep of the island. Primitive horned Gute sheep still exist on the island of Gotland today, though they are now rare, but those do have horns. Sooo... my conclusion is that these are *Gute Sheep Bollards*.



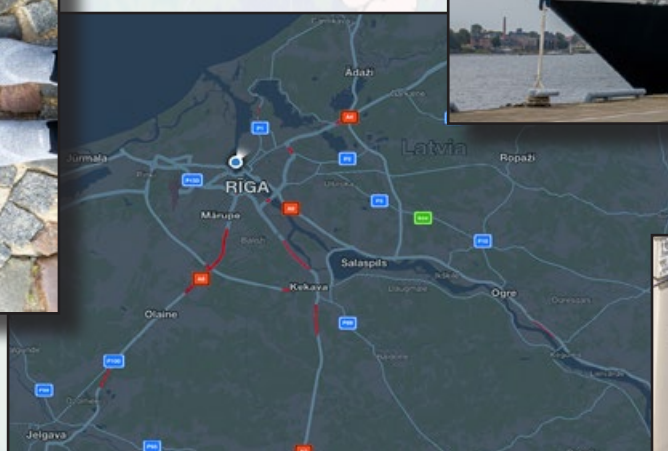
Back to our little ship we set off on another overnight passage, this time yet further north to Riga, Latvia. I envied yet another yacht ("Trooper" from Jersey) as we left Visby Harbor.



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The next morning we disembarked our small ship to explore Riga.



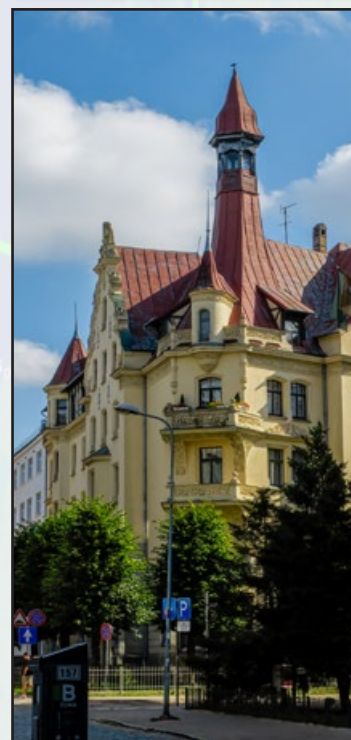
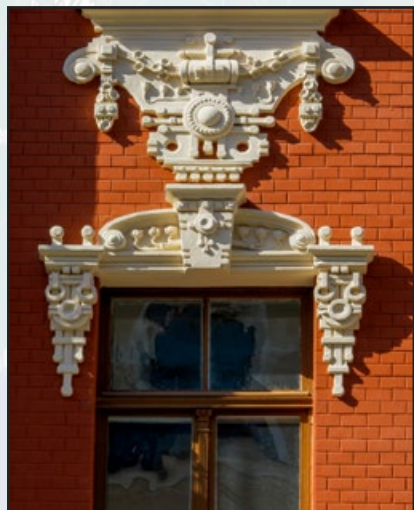
Riga is the capital and largest city of Latvia with over 600,000 inhabitants (a third of Latvia's population). Riga's historical center is a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is noted for its Art Nouveau architecture, one of the largest collections of Art Nouveau buildings in the world, with at least 800 buildings.

This is because at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries, when Art Nouveau was at the height of its popularity, Riga experienced an unprecedented financial and demographic boom.



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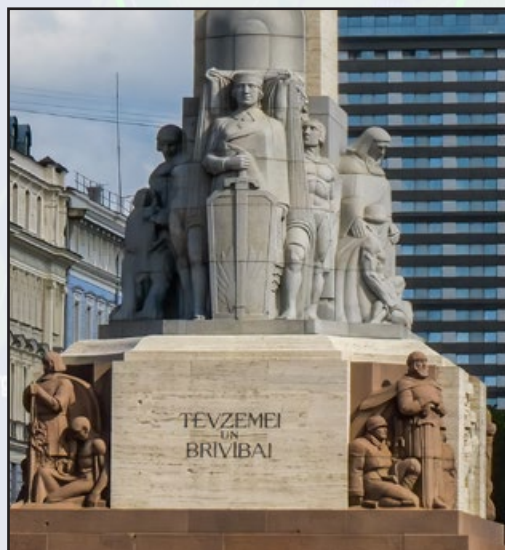
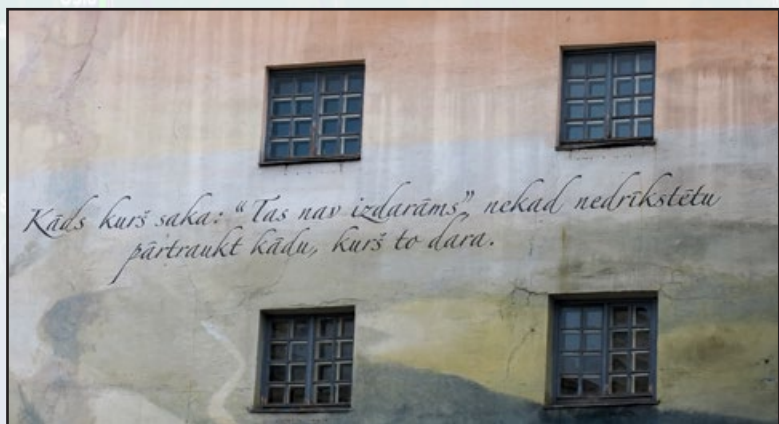
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Roughly translated... Someone who says, "It can't be done," would never hesitate to stop someone who is doing it.



THE BALTIC SEA: PART 3

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After learning about the legend about the cats on top of The Cat House, I've ordered some replicas for my own "potential" use.

The Cat House was built in 1909 and is styled as medieval architecture with some elements of Art Nouveau. It is known for the two cat sculptures, with arched backs and raised tails, on its roof. It is said that the owner of the house wanted the cats to be placed with their tails turned towards the house of the Great Guild, which is nearby, as he held a grudge against its members. It was later ordered that the cats should be turned so as to face the guild house.

The legend known by most Rigans comes in at least two versions. One version of the legend has it that the wealthy tradesman who commissioned the building was refused membership of the Riga Tradesmen's Guild, the Great Guild. Seeking retribution the tradesman had two copper statues of angry-looking cats with arched backs and raised tails placed on the turret rooftops with their tails turned towards the house of the Great Guild, situated across the street.

The other and perhaps older version of the cat legend has it that the wealthy tradesman placed the two statues of angry-looking cats on the building turret rooftops with their tails towards the Riga Town Hall, following a dispute with Riga City Council, after which he encouraged the erection of the building. The Riga Town Hall at the time was in the same direction as the Great Guild, but it burned down during World War II, was demolished in 1954 and rebuilt in the very same place between 2000 and 2001.

Subtle and yet not so subtle, either way, a couple of these cats might come in handy some day as I can see the city hall from my house.

I liked the design on this door and was curious what the place was. When I got back home I researched what it was. It is an interesting and very contemporary apartment complex designed by a company called Open AD.

From the Open AD web site:

The 'flying' trees are both an homage to Art Nouveau with its nature-inspired motifs, and a way to bring nature into the city. Grown in a special nursery, the conifers and bonsai trees are particularly robust and resilient. We designed special stands and boxes for them to 'fly' at many levels and be constantly present.

If you are interested in seeing or learning more, this is a link to the web site:

<https://www.openad.lv/project/hoft/>



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We ran across this bronze sculpture on the outside of a building. It is of Philippe Halsman who was a well known American portrait photographer born in Riga in 1906. Halsman died in New York City in 1979.

In September 1928, 22-year-old Halsman was accused of his father's murder while they were on a hiking trip in the Austrian Tyrol, an area rife with anti-Semitism. After a trial based on circumstantial evidence, he was sentenced to four years of prison. His family, friends and barristers worked for his release, getting support from Thomas Mann and various important European Jewish intellectuals including Sigmund Freud, Albert Einstein, Jakob Wassermann, Erich Fromm, Paul Painlevé, Heinrich Eduard Jacob and Rudolf Olden, who endorsed his innocence. Halsman spent two years in prison, where he contracted tuberculosis. His letters from prison were published as a book in 1930. He was pardoned by the President of Austria, Wilhelm Miklas, and released in October 1930.

Halsman left Austria for France, began contributing photographs to fashion magazines such as Vogue, and soon gained a reputation as one of the best portrait photographers in France, renowned for images that were sharp rather than in soft focus as was often used, and closely cropped. When France was invaded by Germany, Halsman fled to Marseille. He eventually managed to obtain a U.S. visa, aided by family friend Albert Einstein (whom he later famously photographed in 1947).

In 1947 Halsman photographed a mournful Albert Einstein, who during the session recounted his regrets about his role in the United States pursuing the atomic bomb; this became one of Halsman's most famous photographs. The photo was later used in 1966 on a U.S. postage stamp and, in 1999, on the cover of Time magazine, when it called Einstein the "Person of the Century."

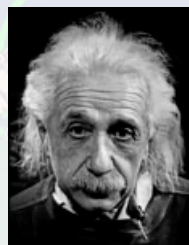
In 1941 Halsman met the surrealist artist Salvador Dalí and they began to collaborate in the late 1940s. The 1948 work Dalí Atomicus explores the idea of suspension, depicting three cats flying, a bucket of thrown water, and Dalí in mid air. The title of the photograph is a reference to Dalí's work Leda Atomica which can be seen the photograph behind the two cats.

Other celebrities photographed by Halsman include Alfred Hitchcock, François Truffaut, Martin and Lewis, Judy Garland, Winston Churchill, Marilyn Monroe, Dorothy Dandridge, Pablo Picasso, and Jean Cocteau.

In 1958 Halsman was listed in Popular Photography magazine's "World's Ten Greatest Photographers", and in 1975 he received the Life Achievement in Photography Award from the American Society of Magazine Photographers.

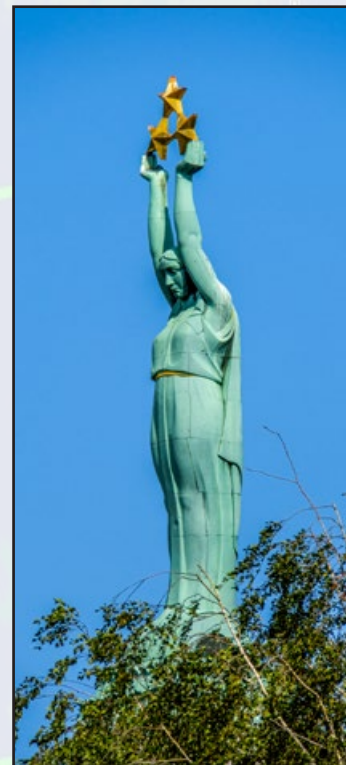
In 1967 Halsman also received the Golden Plate Award of the American Academy of Achievement.

In the 2007 film *Jump!*, Halsman was portrayed by Ben Silverstone.



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We passed a restaurant with the name melnais kīploks (Black Garlic). It was hard to pass up. Had we been on our own in Riga, I'd have found the nearest hotel and booked a few extra days in Riga just based upon the restaurant name and menu.



CHEF RECOMMENDS

Snack plate "Black Garlic" with herb sauce	16.80 €
Hot fish selection "Black Garlic" with white wine sauce	33.50 €
Meat soup "Black Garlic"	7.50 €
Pork Burger "Black Garlic" with tomato sauce	13.50 €
Veal Chop with "Black Garlic" sauce	22.50 €
Dessert "Black Garlic"	8.50 €
Garlic parfait with berry sauce	6.50 €

STARTERS

Vegetarian plate	9.20 €
Salmon tartare	13.30 €
Beef tartare	15.30 €
Selection of cheese with garlic honey	14.50 €
Selection of fish	23.20 €

HOT STARTERS

Gently salted herrings	11.30 €
Potato pancakes with little salted salmon	13.90 €
Mozzarella cheese in Parma ham with Herb sauce	9.60 €
Tiger shrimps and squid tray	14.30 €
Foie grass duck with red bilberry sauce	17.20 €

SALAD

Greek salad	8.50 €
Caesar Salad with Chicken	9.90 €
Caesar Salad with Bacon	9.60 €
Caesar Salad with Tiger Shrimps	13.30 €
Duck salad with Black garlic-plum sauce	13.30 €
Goat cheese salad with raspberry sauce	13.30 €
Hot seafood salad with sweet cream sauce	15.30 €
Salad with Beef medallion and mustard-truffle sauce	15.30 €

SOUPS

Onion soup	6.50 €
Mushroom cream soup	6.90 €
Fish soup	9.90 €

MEAT DISHES (GARNISH INCLUDED IN THE MAIN COURSE)

Pasta "Penne"	11.60 €
Chicken burger with tomato sauce	12.20 €
Beef burger with tomato sauce	13.90 €
Fried pork ribs with with adjika-horseradish sauce	16.80 €
Beef fillet stroganoff	17.90 €
Slowly cooked duck breast with red bilberry sauce	17.80 €
Slowly cooked veal cheeks with Demi-Glace sauce	18.50 €
Beef fillet steak with Demi-Glace sauce	23.90 €
Grilled Iberian pork chop with Demi-Glace sauce	22.90 €
Beef entrecote with Demi-Glace sauce	28.90 €
Lamb Care with Demi-Glace sauce	29.90 €

FISH DISHES (GARNISH INCLUDED IN THE MAIN COURSE)

Mussels in cream sauce	13.50 €
Fillet Catfish with forest mushroom sauce	17.90 €
Halibut fillet with horseradish-herb sauce	18.50 €
Grilled salmon with white wine-ginger sauce	19.50 €

DESSERTS

Assorted ice-cream	6.50 €
Chocolate Fondant	7.50 €
Creme-Brulee	7.50 €
Cold Marzipan Cake	7.90 €
Cheesecake	7.50 €

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From the plaque on the monument:

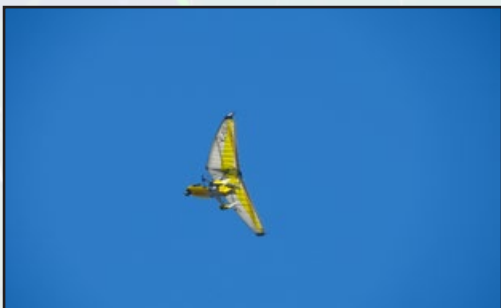
REMEMBRANCE MEMORIAL
TO THE VICTIMS OF THE
SOVIET OCCUPATION

TO THE INHABITANTS OF LATVIA -
VICTIMS OF THE CRIMES OF
THE COMMUNIST OCCUPATION
REGIME (1940-1991)

Something that was recurrent in the monuments we saw in these Baltic countries was that they were monuments to a period much much longer than just the Germany invasion and the Holocaust, yet inclusive and usually noted.

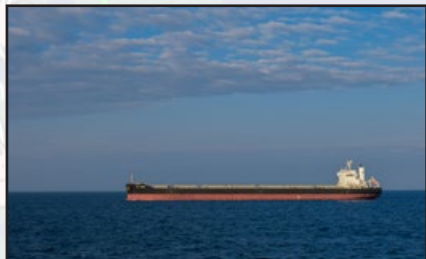
These countries were occupied, terrorized and endured the atrocities of communist occupation before (some way before) Germany invaded and did so as well. And then for decades after Germany was defeated, the communist regime returned and continued with the atrocities.

It is really hard to imagine the Holocaust as 'just another chapter' in their victims of occupation history... but by some measure it is so.



We hitched a ride with this pilot back to the ship (okay, we walked then), re-boarded, left Riga via the Daugava River, entered the Baltic Sea again and headed north to our next port of call.

Of course, there were a few ships to draw my interest on the way out.



The next Flying Pig Adventures travelogue will be about our stops in Tallinn, Estonia and Helsinki, Finland.

.END



There were two sides to the monument.

