

Travel around Belarus

8 days / 7 nights

In these 8 days all-Belarus tour you will see all the main highlights of the country. Come and experience the history of Minsk and Grodno, feel the spirit of ancient Polotsk, get to know the artistic heritage of Vitebsk, be inspired by the heroism of Brest fortress defenders and plunge into the atmosphere of the typical Belarusian village.

DAY 1 MINSK

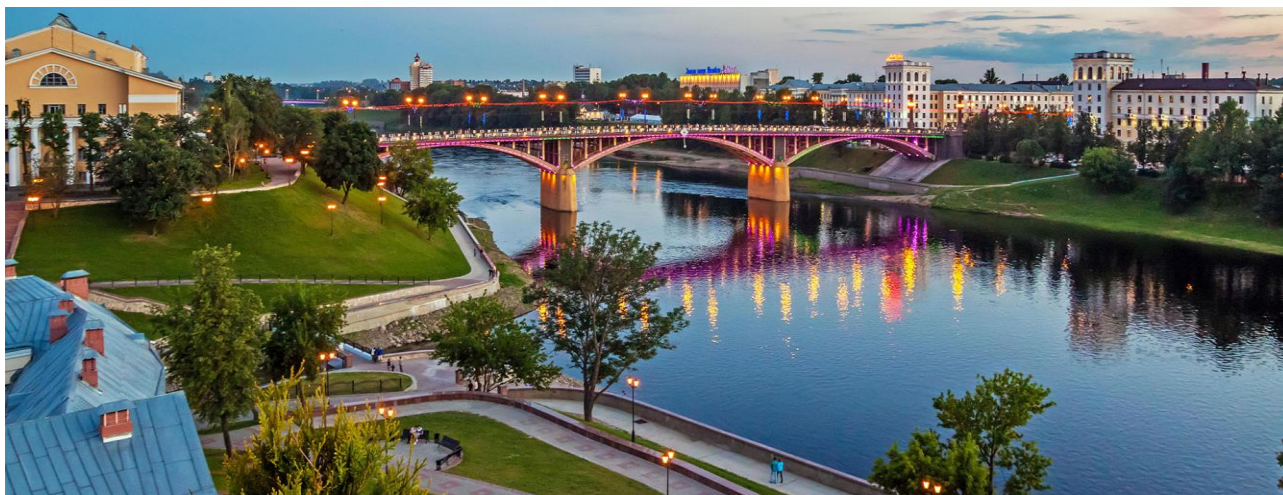
Arrival in Minsk. Check-in at hotel. Minsk city tour



We warmly welcome you in **Minsk** – the capital of the Republic of Belarus, its political and cultural centre. It was first mentioned in the chronicles of the XIth century. Today, it is a dynamic city with expansive boulevards, modern and historical buildings, endless parks and well-developed infrastructure. Being an impressive example of the Soviet planning on a grand scale, Minsk however has a number of outstanding historical sights, proving city's rich history.

Sightseeing tour of Minsk includes the main avenues (Independence Avenue, Victory Avenue) and the architectural monuments of the XVIIth - XXth centuries (the Upper Town with the City Hall, Holy Spirit Cathedral and the Cathedral of Holy Virgin Mary, old streets of the Trinity Suburb). The Victory Monument and the National Library (included into the list of the most outstanding buildings of the world) are waiting to be explored. Overnight in Minsk.

DAY 2 MINSK – VITEBSK



Transfer to Vitebsk. **Vitebsk city tour.** Vitebsk is known today as the cultural capital of the country. It is not only because of the international song festival “Slavanski (Slavic) Bazaar”, taking place in Vitebsk annually, but rather of the city’s rich artistic heritage. Marc Chagall, an outstanding artist of the XXth century, was born here – moreover, Vitebsk became his main source of inspiration for the entire life, the town’s views could be recognizable on lots of Chagall’s paintings. During the city tour you will visit **Marc Chagall Home-Museum and Marc Chagall Art-Centre**, as well other sights, which give Vitebsk an elegant sense of past: the City Hall, Annunciation Church, Holy Resurrection Church, the Governor’s Palace, the famous Kirov Bridge across the Western Dvina River. Overnight in Vitebsk.

DAY 3 Vitebsk – Polotsk. Polotsk city tour. Polotsk – Belarusian village – Grodno



Transfer to **Polotsk** - one of the most ancient cities of the Eastern Slavs.

First mentioned in the Primary Chronicle of AD862 and tightly connected with the Vikings’ influence within the region, it later became the capital of the Polotsk Principality and one of the most powerful centers of Kievan Rus. Under the rule of the Prince Vseslav Charodey (the

Wonder) it gained its maximum prosperity, and the most outstanding architectural monument of those times, **St Sophia Cathedral**, was constructed.

At present this historical site along with the Convent of Saint Ephrosinia are the most honoring and esteemed in the country. Both are included into the Polotsk city tour together with other local sights (Central Square, Epiphany Monastery, Book-printing Museum etc). Transfer to Grodno. En-route visit to the **Belarusian village**. Traditional Belarusian dinner with national cuisine and folklore show. Joining singers and dancers is welcome! Overnight in Grodno.

DAY 4 GRODNO – RUZHANY- BREST



Grodno city tour. The name of the city is tightly connected with the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Indeed, under the rule of Grand Duke Vitautis the town acquired equal status with Vilnius as a second state capital. It also used to be the main residence of the Polish King Stefan Batory in the XVIth century. His influence can be widely seen today in much of the city's architecture. The most interesting sights of Grodno include **Jesuit Farny Cathedral**, Kolozhskaya Church of St Boris and St Hleb, Old and New Castles, Great Choral Synagogue, Sovetskaya Street and others. Departure to Brest.

En-route visits to **Kossovo** to have a look at XIXth century Kossovo Palace and **Ruzhany** - to see the remains of Sapega family palace and to listen to the story of this once powerful aristocratic family.

Overnight in Brest.

DAY 5 BREST - NATIONAL PARK Belovezhskaya Pushcha – BREST

Brest city tour



Visit to the **national park Belovezhskaya Pushcha**. This world-famous park, which is included into the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, has recently celebrated its 600th anniversary! It is one of the last and largest remaining parts of the immense primeval forest which once spread across the European Plain. Some oaks here are really believed to be over 600 years old! The Park once used to be a home and playground of Polish princes and Russian tsars, who spent there much time resting and hunting.

Pushcha's present animal and bird world is very rich and diverse. The reserve is home to around 200 species of bird, including corncrake, eagle owl, white stork, along with 60 species of mammal, including wild boar, wild horses, roaming elk, deer and perhaps most famously, bison, which is supposed to be one of the symbols of the country.

Excursion includes the **tour around Pushcha** and visit to the Museum of Nature.

Return to Brest.

Brest city tour. Brest is a traditional "western gate" of the country. It is a calm and relaxed city, with famous Sovetskaya Street and alike boulevards, which are perfect for promenading. But the main attraction of the city is the **Brest fortress**, which is of course included into the city tour. The fortress made a prolonged defense against the Nazis in 1941 and was ruined in the result of severe battles. Only a handful of men had survived but citizens all over the USSR had been inspired by the heroism of the Brest fortress defenders. Today it is a giant deeply affecting memorial. Overnight in Brest.



DAY 6 BREST – NESVIZH – MIR – MINSK



Transfer to Nesvizh – a delightful historic town, one of the oldest in the country. You will visit the magnificent **Nesvizh Palace** – former residence of the aristocratic Radzivil family, which also includes beautiful park and Farny Roman-Catholic Church of the XVIth century. The complex once numbered around 170 rooms, with a series of underground passages connecting it to the town's monasteries. Today the exposition of the Palace includes more than 30 exhibition halls, including Prince's apartments, Golden and Star halls, Hunter's Hall and others.

Transfer to Mir, which is a small town 90 km to the south-west from Minsk. It is most famous for the fairy-tale **Mir Castle**, still known today as the “medieval flower”. Castle is an impressive architectural monument, included into the list of World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO. It was erected at the end of the XVth century and today it is a combination of Gothic, Baroque and Renaissance architecture that makes Mir Castle so unique. This red brick castle is also a historical monument, which used to belong to several aristocratic families, who have left their mark in the history of the town and of the country in general. Transfer to Minsk. Overnight in Minsk.

DAY 7 MINSK – Dudutki Folk Crafts museum – MINSK



Transfer to Dudutki.

Dudutki museum is a former country landowner's estate, where life as it was in the XVIIIth – XIXth centuries is impressively recreated. Today it is a popular open-air museum, displaying all the traditional Belarusian crafts. Beside the working farm with different animals, it includes an original working windmill and lots of functioning workshops, presenting to visitors carpentry, pottery, braiding, blacksmithing, bakery and even cheese-making. The craftsmen will be happy to show off their skills and guests will be invited to try! And do not miss a chance to have some training in horse-riding or try some splendid traditionally cooked meal accompanied by homemade moonshine (samogon).

Return to Minsk. Free time. Overnight in Minsk.

DAY 8 DEPARTURE