



“Kuldīga / Goldingen in Courland” Latvia

Culture nomination



- Two important centuries on the global cultural and economic map (1561-1795).
- A politically neutral formation located among the opposite powers of Sweden, Poland-Lithuania and Russia with a historically significant mediator's mission.
- An important international centre for trade, crafts, intercultural exchange that provided a global network of mutual cooperation from Europe to the African coast and the Caribbean.

Duchy of Courland and Semigallia – a dynamic, rapidly growing civilisation that existed in the 16th – 18th century

“The Duchy of Courland and Semigallia was known in Europe, it maintained political and economic ties with many countries. The familiar ties of the dukes with foreign courts greatly contributed to the cultural development and compliance of this part of Latvia with the artistic settings of Europe.”

Imants Lancmanis, Latvian art historian

Kuldīga and its role in the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia



- A unique place where during the Duchy “fish were caught in the air” or in special baskets on Ventas Rumba waterfall, with thousands of vimba fish that each spring for centuries in their spawning path jump up the waterfall and give a glorious view to any spectator.
- Urban planning and landscape elements, authentic building structures, facades and original construction materials are of unflinching and stable value still today, thanks to the Kuldīga residents’ endless care and love of the urban environment and the phenomenal cultural heritage of the town.
- A place where a new architectural and artisanal language – new types of building structures, constructively sophisticated front doors with ornaments and glass windows for letting light into the building, glazed wooden windows with shutters and special switching mechanisms, wall ovens for warmth, red tile roofs, where glass, tiles and bricks were made in the local thriving manufactories – was created and developed under the influence of the international contacts.

- The historic centre is exceptionally well-preserved and a wonderful reminder of the flourishing of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia and of intercultural exchange in the 16th to 18th century when the town was known as Goldingen.
- The main residence of the first Duke Gotthard Kettler and an important administrative centre since the establishment of the Duchy with an important role in the administration of the Duchy.
- One of the oldest towns in the west of Latvia and the Baltics that has developed from a small medieval village into a nationally and internationally important trading hub.
- A member of the Hanseatic Union since 1368 that continued to grow dynamically during the Duchy.

“The ancient buildings of Kuldīga allow us to discover significant knowledge of historical crafting techniques and traditional materials. Thus, these houses can be considered as an open lexicon for learning knowledge. It is important not to forget the soul of the town when carrying out restoration work in the old town of Kuldīga.”

Kalle Saarinen, director of Rauma Restoration Centre



Ancient crafts skills – intangible heritage developed during the Duchy under the influence of different countries and continues to exist nowadays ensuring the continuity of traditions from generation to generation.



“I like the creative process, not just the result – going through the evolutionary journey with a building and seeing it get a new lease of life. Centuries ago, someone built it to be beautiful. And while not all buildings get a second chance, some do, and I'm glad to be part of that.”

Artis Rozītis, Kuldīga citizen, owner of the famous Stavenhagen's house, craftsman



Kuldīga – cherished by nature and spoiled by humans

The beautiful nature landscapes and the authentic, exceptionally well-preserved historic centre of the town form a unique ensemble and allow everyone to feel the breath of history.

“Imagine – you sleep all night with a wide window open and you hear the widest waterfall in Europe. Oh, how the air smells full of the freshness of the river! I have travelled almost half the world, but no window, no view has made me so happy.”

Ieva, Kuldīga visitor

@ieva_jau_sen

“In the Kuldīga exists no pre-fab high rises or modern design, the tiny tangle of chocolate-box streets perfectly preserved relics of 'old Latvia'. A town set in the past, and more than deserving of its UNESCO candidacy.”

Emily and Andrew, travellers and authors of the blog alongdustyroads.com. About their experience in Kuldīga

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“A positive decision of the UNESCO would be a great success not only for Kuldīga and Courland, but also the whole Latvia and the world, as it would make this pearl of culture shine on the cultural map. The residents of Kuldīga take good care of their heritage and understand the unique qualities and meaning of it. Historically and politically this heritage represents the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia as a modern state located in Latvia. A state, which has been almost independent for 225 years or much longer than the Latvian State exists. I believe the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia should be given a more prominent place in our common history, a place it truly deserves.”

Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia



See more about Kuldīga – enjoyment of scenic beauty and uniqueness:

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- Pleasure for the eyes
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