

# Belarus

## a forgotten country



Belarus is a forgotten part of the new Europe and many imagine the country to be something right out of the pages of George Orwell. Even so, it is one of the last undiscovered treasures of Europe and it has a surprising amount to offer.

- Belarus has its own history, culture and language. The country first emerged as a country in the Early Middle Age and during the 14<sup>th</sup> century it came under the control of Lithuania. For 400 years, Belarus was part of the Polish-Lithuanian superpower before becoming part of Imperial Russia at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Belarus was later an integral part of the Soviet Union. Today, Belarus is a free and independent country
- Belarus has interesting cities – Minsk, a large and growing modern metropolis; Brest, a hectic and lively border town; Vitebsk, a cosmopolitan cultural center; Polotsk, an abundance of historical legacies; and Grodno and Gomel, both cocktails of past glories.
- Belarus has wide stretches of unspoiled nature, endless unbroken birch groves, vast forested marshlands and gentle sloping green fields interspersed with wooden villages. The country has several national parks with flora and fauna that is extinct in many other parts of Europe.
- Belarus has a developing tourist infrastructure – especially Minsk has recently got an impressive number of new 4 and 5 star hotels – and the country offers affordable rates and good value.



From the pages of history...

## A superpower in medieval Europe

In the 14<sup>th</sup> century the present-day Belarus, was gradually taken over by Lithuania, a Baltic power which had resisted the pressure of the Teutonic Knights in the west and had expanded considerably eastwards and southwards. A Royal Union with Poland was established in 1386 when Lithuania's Grand Duke Jogaila was crowned as the Polish King Wydaslaw II Jagiello in Krakow. In the 15<sup>th</sup> century, Lithuania flourished and expanded under Grand Duke Vytautas to reach its greatest extent stretching from the Baltic Sea in the west, Livonia in the north, 150km short of Moscow to the east and all the way through most of present-day Ukraine to the Black Sea in the south. At the same time Poland defeated the Teutonic Knights and seized control of Pomerania and Prussia and the Jagiellonians were also kings of Bohemia and Hungary at the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and the start of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. By the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the Royal Union between Lithuania and Poland developed into a full Union of States. The Union of Lublin in 1569 created a Commonwealth, often known by its Polish name Rzeczpospolita, consisting of the two main countries Poland and Lithuania and their dependencies. Lithuania gradually became the junior partner as Poland asserted more and more power over Lithuania and Belarus. Meanwhile, Russia, under Peter the Great and Catherine the Great, was emerging as a new European superpower. Gradually it started to interfere in the affairs of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, which in turn started to decline. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth finally disappeared as a result of three partitions in 1772, 1793 and 1795, in which the entire state was divided between Russia and its allies, Austria and Prussia. All of Belarus became a part of Imperial Russia.

Via Hansa hereby presents some new products, introducing Belarus in combination with Lithuania and Poland, building on the legacy of 400 years of common history and culture.

For more information about Belarus, please visit: [www.viahansa.com](http://www.viahansa.com)

## 7 days: Warsaw – Vilnius – Minsk

### Program



#### Day 01

Arrival to Warsaw, transfer to hotel, check-in at Hotel Mercure Centrum Warsaw\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 02

Breakfast, 09.00-13.00 Warsaw city sightseeing tour, including visit to the Old Town, Royal Castle (entrance), the Royal Route and Lazienki Park, 14.00-17.00 visit to Wilanow Palace (entrance), 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 03

Breakfast, 09.00 departure via Suwalki to Kaunas, 15.00 walking tour of the Old Town, including visit to the ruins of the Kaunas Castle and Vytautas Church (entrance) and the old Town Hall, 17.00 continue to Vilnius 18.30 arrival and check-in at Hotel Radisson Blu Lietuva\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 04

Breakfast, 09.00-12.00 Vilnius city sightseeing tour, including Gediminas Castle (entrance), the Old University with Library (entrance), the Gates of the Dawn and the Gothic ensemble with St. Anne's Church, 13.00-17.00 excursion to Trakai and visit to Trakai Castle (entrance), return to Vilnius, 19.00 dinner at hotel



#### Day 05

Breakfast, 09.00 departure via Molodechno to Minsk, 14.00-18.00 Minsk sightseeing tour, including visit to the Independence Square, St. Simon and St. Elena's Church, Independence Avenue, Victory Square, the Old Town with the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit (entrance), the Trinity District and the Janka Kupala Park, check-in at Hotel Minsk\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 06

Breakfast, 09.00-12.00 visit to the National Museum (entrance) 13.00-17.00 excursion to Strotschiza, including visit to the Open Air Museum of Belarusian Folk Architecture (entrance), 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 07

Breakfast, transfer to the airport, departure.

VIA HANSA TOURS Ltd.: Jura Alunana Street 3-1, Riga, LV-1010, Latvia, Reg. No 40003135147, VAT No. LV40003135147

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PARENT COMPANY: Via Hansa Holding A/S, Copenhagen - Denmark

Offices in Warsaw, St. Petersburg, Tallinn, Riga, Vilnius, Moscow, Kaliningrad, Minsk, Helsinki and Copenhagen

## 8 days: Warsaw – Vilnius – Minsk – Brest – Warsaw

### Program

#### Day 01



Arrival to Warsaw, transfer to hotel, check-in at Hotel Mercure Centrum Warsaw\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 02

Breakfast, 09.00-13.00 Warsaw city sightseeing tour, including visit to the Old Town, Royal Castle (entrance), the Royal Route and Lazienki Park, 14.00-17.00 visit to Wilanow Palace (entrance), 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 03

Breakfast, 09.00 departure via Suwalki to Kaunas, 15.00 walking tour of the Old Town, including visit to the ruins of the Kaunas Castle and Vytautas Church (entrance) and the old Town Hall, 17.00 continue to Vilnius 18.30 arrival and check-in at Hotel Radisson Blu Lietuva\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel



#### Day 04

Breakfast; 09.00-12.00 Vilnius city sightseeing tour, including Gediminas Castle (entrance), the Old University with Library (entrance), the Gates of the Dawn and the Gothic ensemble with St. Anne's Church, 13.00-17.00 excursion to Trakai and visit to Trakai Castle (entrance), return to Vilnius, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 05

Breakfast; 09.00 departure via Molodechno to Minsk, 14.00-18.00 Minsk sightseeing tour, including visit to the Independence Square, St. Simon and St. Elena's Church, Independence Avenue, Victory Square, the Old Town with the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit (entrance), the Trinity District and the Janka Kupala Park, check-in at Hotel Minsk\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel



#### Day 06

Breakfast; 09.00 departure via Baranovichi to Brest; 15.00-18.00 Brest city sightseeing tour and visit to Brest Fortress and the White Palace, Berestje Museum (entrance) and St. Nicolas Church; check-in at Hotel Hermitage\*\*\*\*; 19.00 dinner at hotel.

#### Day 07

Breakfast; 09.00-13.00 excursion to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park; following the tracks of the European bison (entrance); continue via Siedlce to Warsaw; 17.00 arrival and check-in at Hotel Mercure Centrum Warsaw\*\*\*\*; 19.00 dinner at hotel.

#### Day 08

Breakfast; transfer to airport; departure.

## 8 days: Warsaw – Vilnius – Vitebsk – Minsk

### Program

#### Day 01

Arrival to Warsaw, transfer to hotel, check-in at Hotel Mercure Centrum Warsaw\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 02

Breakfast, 09.00-13.00 Warsaw city sightseeing tour, including visit to the Old Town, Royal Castle (entrance), the Royal Route and Lazienki Park, 14.00-17.00 visit to Wilanow Palace (entrance), 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 03

Breakfast; 09.00 departure via Suwalki to Kaunas, 15.00 walking tour of the Old Town, including visit to the ruins of the Kaunas Castle and Vytautas Church (entrance) and the old Town Hall, 17.00 continue to Vilnius 18.30 arrival and check-in at Hotel Radisson Blu Lietuva\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel



#### Day 04

Breakfast; 09.00-12.00 Vilnius city sightseeing tour, including Gediminas Castle (entrance), the Old University with Library (entrance), the Gates of the Dawn and the Gothic ensemble with St. Anne's Church, 13.00-17.00 excursion to Trakai and visit to Trakai Castle (entrance), return to Vilnius, 19.00 dinner at hotel



#### Day 05

Breakfast; 09.00 departure to Polotsk; 13.00 city sightseeing tour of Polotsk, including visit to St. Sophia's Cathedral (entrance); 16.00 continue to Vitebsk; 19.00 arrival and check-in at Hotel Luchesa\*\*\*\*; 20.00 dinner at hotel.

#### Day 06

Breakfast; 09.00-11.30 Vitebsk city sightseeing tour, including visit to the Town Hall and Marc Chagall House (entrance); 11.30 departure to Beresinsky National Park; 13.00 hiking tour through Beresinsky National Park (entrance); 16.00 continue to Minsk; 19.00 arrival and check-in at Hotel Minsk\*\*\*\*; 20.00 dinner at hotel.

#### Day 07

Breakfast; 09.00-13.00 Minsk sightseeing tour, including visit to the Independence Square, St. Simon and St. Elena's Church, Independence Avenue, Victory Square, the Old Town with the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit (entrance), the Trinity District and the Janka Kupala Park, 13.00-17.00 excursion to Strotschiza, including visit to the Open Air Museum of Belarusian Folk Architecture (entrance), 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 08

Breakfast; transfer to airport; departure.

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## 10 days: Warsaw – Vilnius – Minsk – Brest – Lublin – Warsaw

### Program

#### Day 01

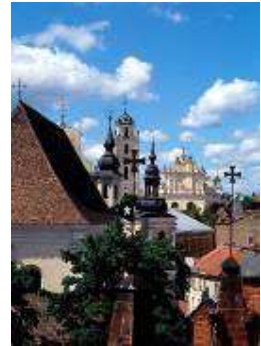
Arrival to Warsaw, transfer to hotel, check-in at Hotel Mercure Centrum Warsaw\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 02

Breakfast; 09.00-13.00 Warsaw city sightseeing tour, including visit to the Old Town, Royal Castle (entrance), the Royal Route and Lazienki Park, 14.00-17.00 visit to Wilanow Palace (entrance), 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 03

Breakfast, 09.00 departure via Suwalki to Kaunas, 15.00 walking tour of the Old Town, including visit to the ruins of the Kaunas Castle and Vytautas Church (entrance) and the old Town Hall, 17.00 continue to Vilnius 18.30 arrival and check-in at Hotel Radisson Blu Lietuva\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel



#### Day 04

Breakfast, 09.00-12.00 Vilnius city sightseeing tour, including Gediminas Castle (entrance), the Old University with Library (entrance), the Gates of the Dawn and the Gothic ensemble with St. Anne's Church, 13.00 departure via Molodechno to Minsk, 18.00 arrival and check-in at Hotel Minsk\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 05

Breakfast, 09.00-13.00 Minsk sightseeing tour, including visit to the Independence Square, St. Simon and St. Elena's Church, Independence Avenue, Victory Square, the Old Town with the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit (entrance), the Trinity District and the Janka Kupala Park, 13.00-17.00 excursion to Strotschiza, including visit to the Open Air Museum of Belarusian Folk Architecture (entrance), 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 06

Breakfast; 09.00 departure to Brest, 10.30 en route visit to Mir Castle (entrance), 13.00 continue to Baranovich, en route visit to the Parks of the Radziwill Palace and to the Catholic Church with graves of the Radziwill family, 17.00 arrival in Brest and check-in at Hotel Hermitage\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 07

Breakfast; 09.00-13.00 Brest city sightseeing tour and visit to Brest Fortress and the White Palace, Berestje Museum (entrance) and St. Nicolas Church 14.00-17.00 excursion to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park; following the tracks of the European bison (entrance); return to Brest, 19.00 dinner at hotel



#### Day 08

Breakfast, 09.00 departure to Lublin, 14.00-18.00 Lublin city sightseeing tour, including visit to the Old Town, Lublin-Museum (entrance) and the Holy Trinity Chapel (entrance), check-in at Hotel Mercure Centrum Lublin\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at hotel

#### Day 09

Breakfast 09.00 visit to the Ethnographical Open Air museum (entrance), 14.00 departure to Warsaw, 17.00 arrival and check-in at Hotel Mercure Centrum Warsaw\*\*\*\*, 19.00 dinner at Hotel

#### Day 10

Breakfast, transfer to the airport, departure.

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