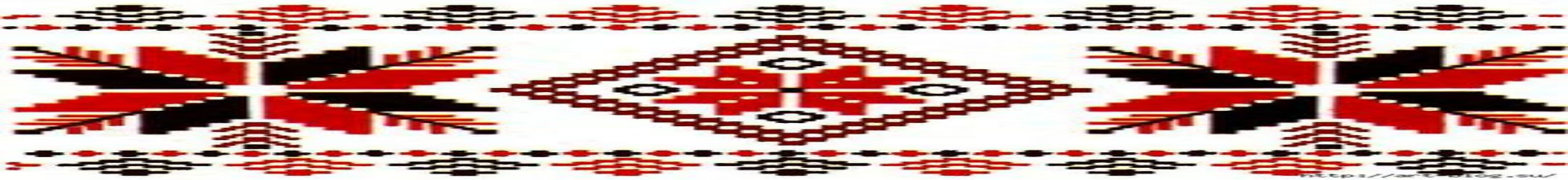
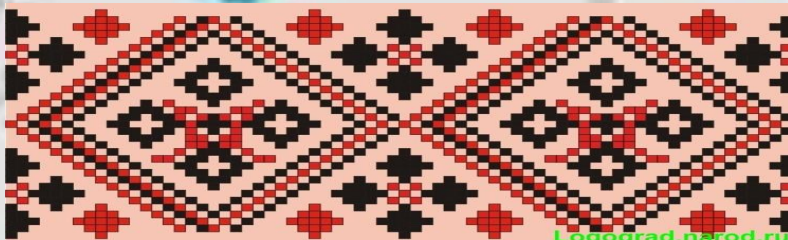


Travelling about Belarus



Belarus is a wonderful country of great past, a hospitable land of friendly people, a small part of Europe, which boasts calm and lovely scenery of great natural beauty. The variety and charm are created by rolling hills and green valleys, thick forests and picturesque woods, golden fields and fragrant meadows, ribbon-like rivers and crystal-clear lakes. Here you can admire the striking beauty of stone palaces, sacred temples, ancient towns and belfries. You will feel the historical and cultural heritage of the land where the past and the present exist side by side. All the sites bear witness to the heroic past, they preserve the spirit of our ancestors.





Travelling about Belarus you will enjoy the discovery of the country in every season of the year; this marvellous land is ready to award you with enchanting images in flowery spring and sunny summer, in golden autumn and snowy winter. We invite you to explore the country, and wish you all the best in search of new spots. And each spot, believe me, is distinctive, unique and attractive. The sights and smells will greet you each step of the way on your journey through the country.

On your routes, short or long, you will see small villages dotted on the hills or scattered on the riverbanks and outlying farms hidden in the woods. You will be surprised, if not struck, to see a family of storks building their nests above the temples, towers and old trees. The white stork is the symbol of Belarus, the Land Beneath White Wings (as Uladzimir Karatkevich called it). And these wonderful wings symbolize life and a bright future. All of this and more await you in Belarus.

YOU ARE WELCOM!!!



Spring



Summer



Autumn



Winter



Figures and facts about contemporary Belarus:

Territory – 207,600 sq. km.

Location – eastern part of Europe

Borders – with Poland, Lithuania, Russia, the Ukraine

Population – 10 mln. people

Capital – Minsk, about 2 10 mln. people

Nationalities – besides Belarusian (81.2%) there live Russians, Poles, Ukrainians, Jews, and a small number of other nationalities.

Languages – Belarusian and Russian

Time – GMT + 2 hours

Currency – the Belarusian rouble

Climate – moderate continental, with mild and humid winter and warm summer

Nature – the terrain is mainly flat and hilly, the highest point is only 345 m above the sea level. 36% of the territory is covered with forests, 45% - agricultural land. There are more then 20,000 rives and brooks and about 11,000 lakes in Belarus. 6.1% of the country is officially viewed as specially protected natural territories.

What can you visit in Belarus?

- 1.The Residence of the President of the Republic of Belarus
- 2.The Mount of Glory
- 3.The Victory obelisk
- 4.Ruins of the Sapega castle in Golshany
- 5.Catholic Church in Novogroudok
- 6.The Church of SS Boris and Gleb in Grodno
- 7.Mansion house of the early XIX century in Volkovysk
- 8.The Brest fortress
- 9.The Mir castle (XVI century).
- 10.St. George's Church in David-Gorodok.
- 11.Kirill Tourovsky monument in Tourov.
- 12.Church in Tourov.
- 13.St. Nicholas' Church in Petrikov.
- 14.The Church of the Ascension in Kashevitsy.
- 15.Catholic Church of St. Bernhard and Cirtercium Followers in Wozyr.
- 16.The Trinity Church in Yelsk.
- 17.Arbor of a mansion house in Narovlia.
- 18.The Intercession Church in Korma.
- 19.Old-Ritualists' houses in Vetka.
- 20.Palace and park complex in Gomel.
- 21.Chapel of St. Euphrosine of Polotsk in Rechitsa.
- 22.St. Sofia's Cathedral in Polotsk.



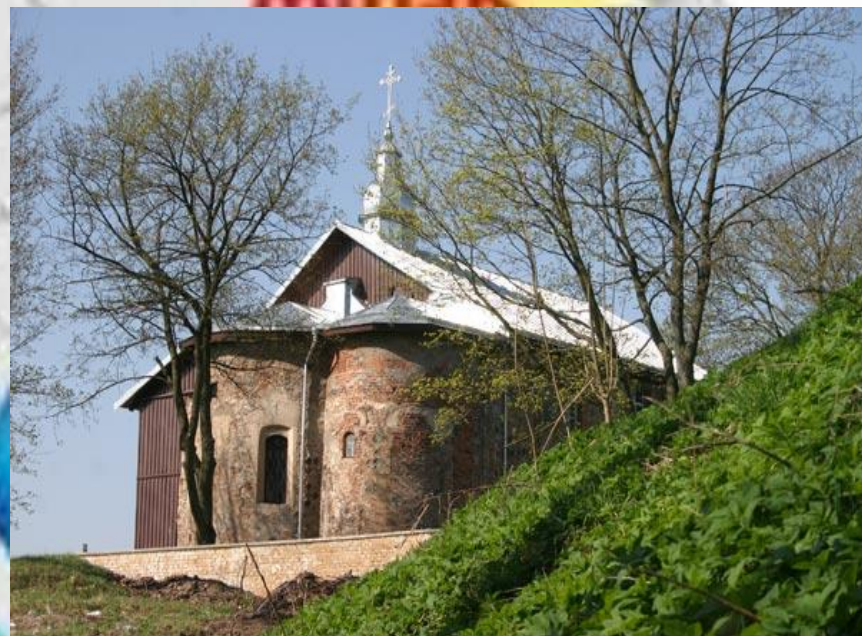
Castles and Towers

The historical paradox is that Belarusians are one of the most peace-loving nations in the world. Tolerance is their inalienable quality. Yet, alas, it did not help the country to become another Switzerland. Due to its geographical position Belarus has always been the battle arena where stronger neighbors clashed. Tiffs of feudal lords, forced introduction of Christianity, raids of crusaders, Mongols and Tatars, inclusion into the Great Lithuanian Principality, then into Rzeczpospolita and finally into the Russian Empire – Belarusian land remembers thousands of bloody battles, fierce fights and wars. And now... Formidable kings and invaders are part of history. Thank God, wars are a thing of the past, too. Only ancient castles and palaces remind us about the stormy past of Belarus. Some of them are being actively restored – for instance, the castle of Mir – a real miracle made of red bricks and looking onto an ancient pond where, as the legends say, uncountable treasures wait to be recovered. But, perhaps, the strongest impression would be left by the castles and palaces that have not been touched by restorers: Khrevo, Golshany, Smoliany, Ruzhany... Formidable and stately ruins covered with the dust of centuries seem to be still living in their times. Touch those gray stones and feel the rhythmic, never interrupting pulse of history.

The Ruzhany castle



Portrait of Katarzhyna and Mary Radzivill. 1646



Land of Lakes

From ancient times Belarus is called “Lakeland” and it is quite justified: there are 11,000 lakes and 20,000 rivers and brooks in the country. Blue, deep blue and almost black mirrors of lakes are either hidden in forest thickets or glimmer joyfully amidst meadows... Lakes are the eyes of Belarus, that is why the country is sometimes referred to as “the blue-eye” Belarus. The most precious jewel in the crown of Belarus is the National park “Braslav lakes”. Local places are often compared with Switzerland or Finland, however, they really absolutely unique. The amazing charm of this land is created due to a constant change in its landscape: lakes, hills, woods and again lakes with a total area of 1,830 sq. km though their exact number has not been counted thus far. The name “Naroch” is well-known not only to every Belarus but also far beyond the boundaries of country – the unique beauty of the place and its soft climate has made the Naroch region a most favored of all the Belarusian holiday resorts and the National park “Narochansky” was set up here in 1999.



Fidgety reed-warbler-a very rare bird



Braslav region

The Animal World

The best way to estimate wood resources of Belarus is to have a look at them through a bird's eye. From above it becomes quite obvious that more than a third of the country's territory seems to be covered with a green blanket. Major forest areas of Europe have been preserved here. They are a real treasure, which is rightfully referred to as "the green gold". To a great extent, Belarus is "the lungs of Europe". However, in addition to their utilitarian value Belarusian woods are also a true cultural wealth due to their unique and, in some places undisturbed beauty. The best way to enjoy it is to visit forest reserves in Belarus.



A Bear



An elk in Berezina reserve



The European bison in
Belavezhszkaya Puscha

The Animal World

The most famous national park is the Belovezhskaya Puscha forest reserve in which a reserve-typical mode of life was introduced.... as early as the beginning of the XV century! Thanks to these measures oaks ages 300 to 700 years, 450-year-old ash-trees and 220-year-old pine-trees have been preserved here. Here you can see meadows, woods and rivers in a state that could only be preserved without man's interference – powerful, crystal-clear and beautiful. And you will, certainly, be particularly impressed meeting a European Bison – an animal that has become the symbol of Belarus.



A Camberwell beauty



A courting black grouse



Nestlings of a tawny owl

Customs and Traditions

In spite of the fact that Christianity has existed in Belarus for more than ten centuries, ancient rituals associated with pagan times to live within the nation. Even now huge boulders with strange pictures on them are found in remote corners and forest thickets of the country. They were worshiped by Belarusian pagans. Yet the most surprising thing is that some of sacrifices made in those places are related to the present day! Paganism is still present in popular festivals. The most colorful of them are Koliady and Kupalie. Koliady is actually the celebration of the New Year as old calendar (prior to 1917) on the night of January 13-14.

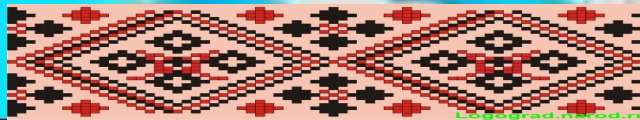
Traditionally, some people dress to look like animals or fiction creatures, and then noisy companies, holding the depiction of the sun and a nanny-goat's head, begin visiting houses one after another singing original Koliady songs: in return people give them food from their tables and sometimes money. Kupalie is the most mysterious of all Belarusian festivals. It is celebrated on the night from 6 to 7 of July.



Shrovetide in Dudutki



National festival 'Zazhinky'



Customs and Traditions

According to popular legends that have existed for thousands of years, a flower of a fern unfolds on the Kupala midnight and the one who finds it will be eternally young and happy. And that person will know the future. On the night young people set off for the forest with a naive, yet romantic hope to pick up this miraculous flower. In the meantime girls make wreaths and let them drift down river steams trying to find out their destiny and marital future. Besides, they move on a round dance and jump over the fire competing in their deftness. It's an amazingly wonderful and ancient pages festival. The Kupala night is the darkest one in the year. One step away from the fire and you plunge into absolute night and stars. But what is that little flame glimmering in the depth of the forest? Is it really a fern flower?



**Thank you for your
attention**

