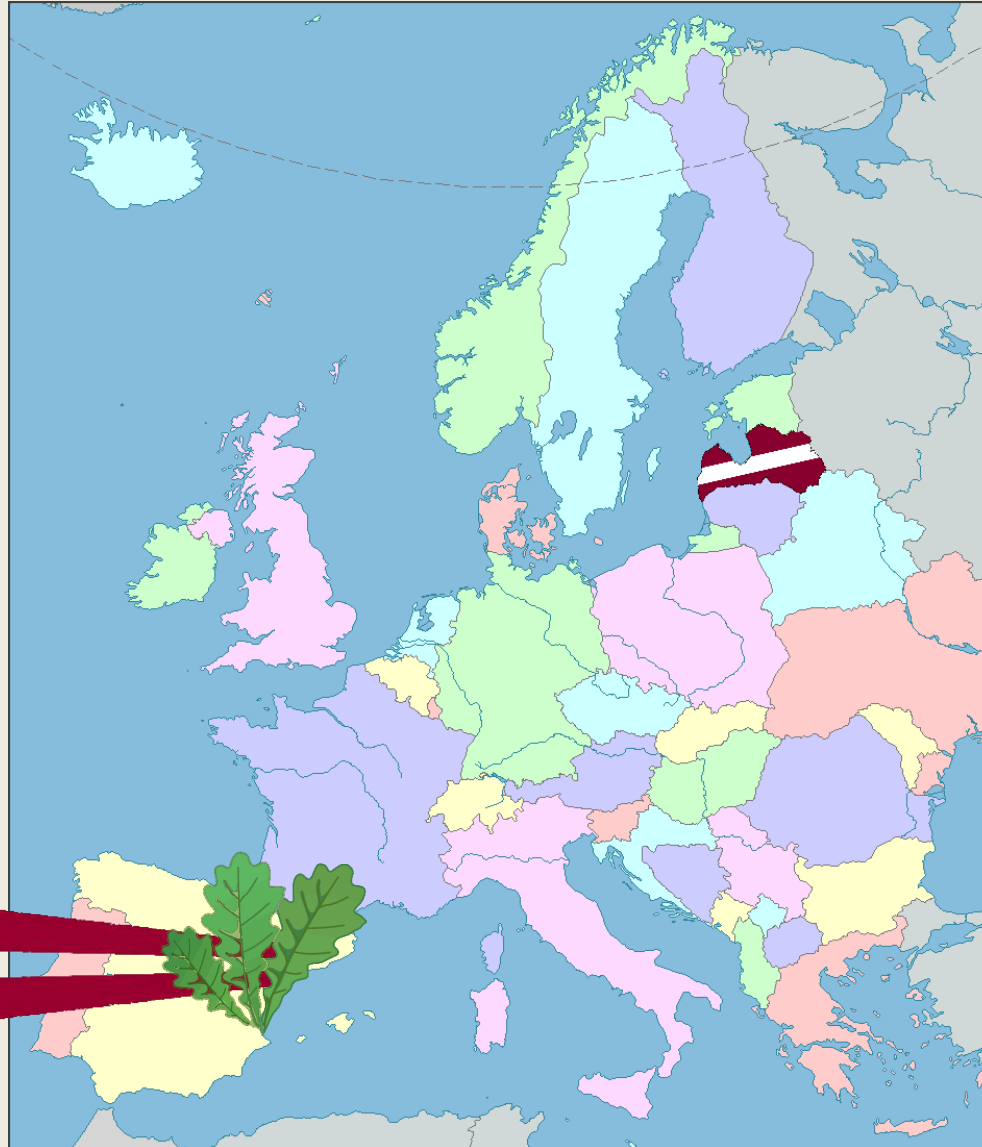


# LATVIA



# Location



# Location

- Located in Northern Europe
- One of the three Baltic states together with Estonia and Lithuania, also has land borders with Russia and Belarus
- Maritime border with Sweden



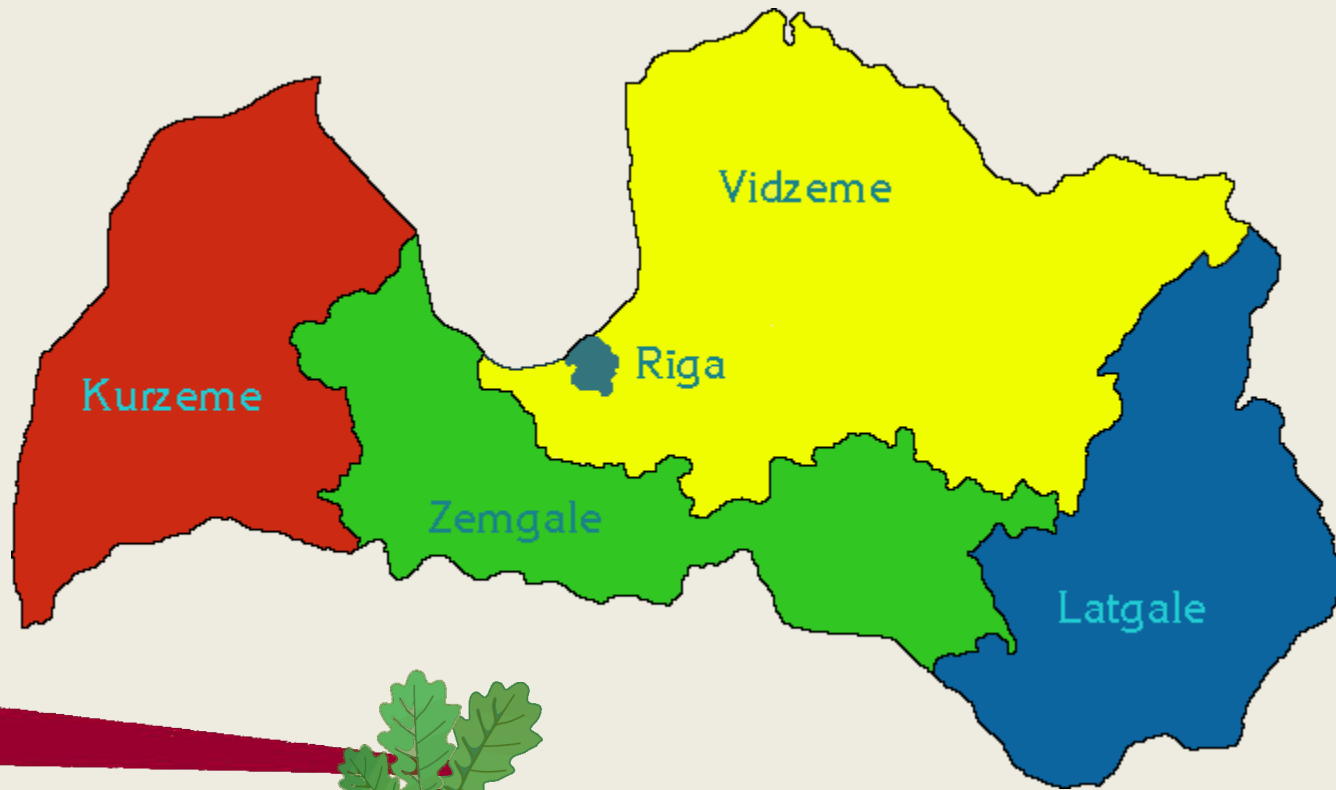
# Geography

- Total area - 64,559 km<sup>2</sup>, of which 34,964 km<sup>2</sup> is land covered by forests and 2,402 km<sup>2</sup> is water
- Total border length - 1,866 km, of which 498 km is maritime border
- Latvia is rich in natural resources. There are more than 12,500 rivers, 2256 lakes (larger than 1 ha)



# Geography

Municipalities of Latvia and the capital city



# The highest hill - Gaiziņš

- Height - 311.5 m
- Located in Vidzeme, Madona municipality



# The longest river – the Gauja

- Length – 452 km
- Located in Vidzeme
- Beautiful, deceitful (frequently changes its depth)



# The deepest lake – Drīdzis

- Depth – 63.1 m
- Located next to the city of Krāslava, Latgale municipality
- Has 9 islands



# Lubāns



- The largest lake in Latvia
- Its surface is about 100 km<sup>2</sup>
- Located between Rēzekne and Madona

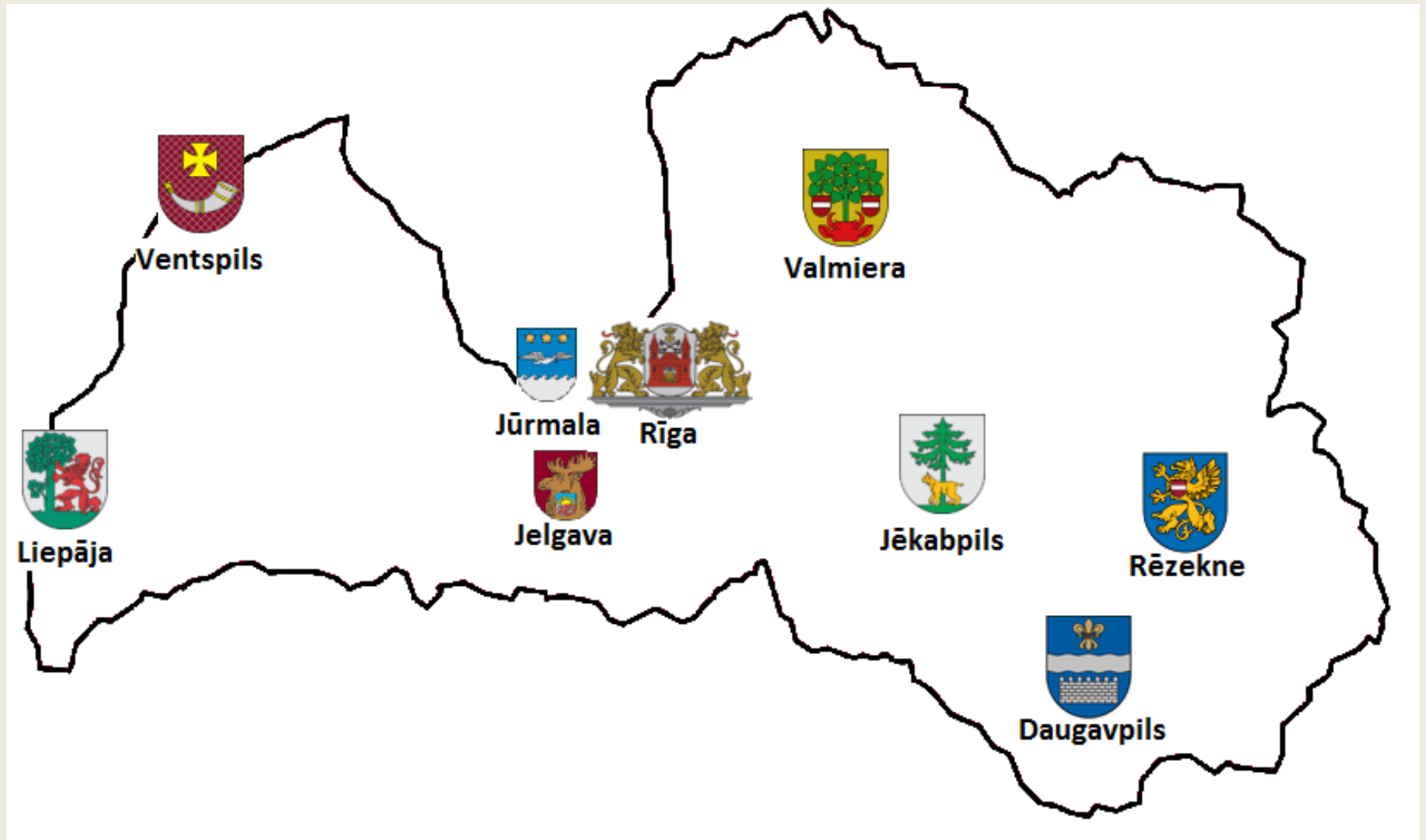


# Population

- Approx. 2,013,400 citizens
  - Latvians – 62.1%
  - Russians – 26.9%
- Official language: Latvian
- Languages protected by law:
  - Livonian (nearly extinct),
  - Latgalian (historical variation of Latvian)
- Most popular religions:
  - Lutheranism (34%)
  - Catholicism (24%)
  - Russian Orthodox (18%)



# Major cities



# Major cities - Riga

- Riga is the capital city, and the largest city
- Approx. 696,618 citizens
- Founded in 1201, former Hanseatic League member
- Hosted the 2006 NATO Summit, the 2003 Eurovision Song Contest and the 2006 IIHF Men's World Ice Hockey Championships.



# Major cities - Riga



Dome church at Dome Square – the heart of Old Riga

# Major cities - Riga



House of the Blackheads and Saint Peter's church tower in Old Riga are famous architectural monuments

# Major cities - Riga



Monument of Freedom (designed by Kārlis Zāle)

# Major cities - Ventspils

- Approx. 41,998 citizens
- The busiest port in the Baltic States – has an ice-free port
- Important mercantile city since the times of the Hanseatic League
- Shipbuilding center since the times of Duchy of Courland
- Economically second most active and profitable city in Latvia
- Major tourism center



# Major cities - Ventspils



Ventspils Castle - one of the oldest and most well-preserved Livonian Order castles remaining

# Major cities - Ventspils



The main building of Ventspils library

# Major cities - Ventspils



The Travelling Cow – a tourism object located on the Promenade of Ostas street, one of several cows scattered throughout the city

# Major cities - Jelgava

- Approx. 64,000 citizens
- Old name: Mītava
- Largest town in the region of Zemgale (Semigallia)
- Ex-capital of the united Duchy of Courland and Semigallia, as well as the Courland Governorate
- Popular tourist site



# Major cities - Jelgava



Jelgava Palace (designed by an architect: Bartolomeo Rastrelli), contains the sarcophagi of almost all Curonian dukes, except the last one. Currently functions as a university.

# Major cities - Jelgava



Academia Petrina (Jelgava Gymnasium) – the oldest higher educational establishment in Latvia, established in 1775 by Duke Peter von Biron, last Duke of Courland. Almost destroyed during World War II, now functions as a history and art museum.

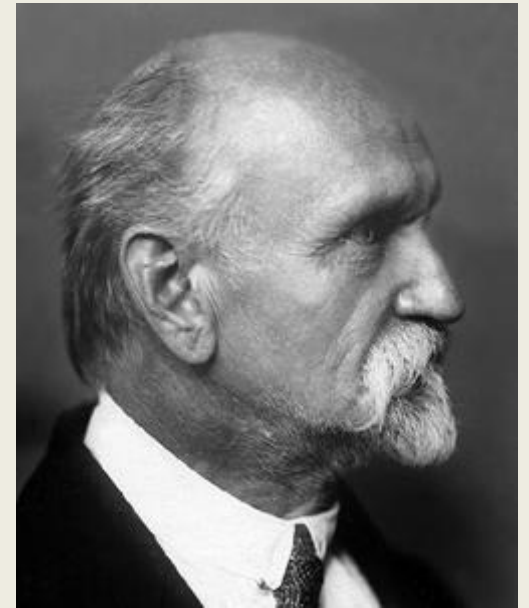
# Major cities - Jelgava



St. George and St. Maria Roman Catholic Cathedral (architect: Carl Edward Strandman)

# Daugavpils

- 98 922 citizens
- Located in Latgale
- 51,8 % Russians  
18 % Latvians  
14,4 % Poles
- First childhood city of poet J. Rainis





Daugavpils seagull –the border of  
the city





Daugavpils Regional and Art Museum





Daugavpils Evangelical Lutheran church of  
Martin Luther



# Liepāja

- 73 469 citizens
- "The city where the wind is born"
- Latvia's furthest west city
- The capital of Latvian rock music
- The oldest tram line in the Baltics





Tram in 1993 year





Liepāja market





Rose Square in Liepāja



# Economy

- **Latvia is a Member of the World Trade Organization since 1999**
- **Member of the European Union since 2004**
- Almost all companies in Latvia are private, i.e. only a few large, politically sensitive companies are state-owned (e.g. the country's main energy company, *Latvenergo*)
- GDP per capita – \$18,100
- GDP by sector:
  - services: 69.3%
  - industry: 26.3%
  - agriculture: 4.4%
  - **Latvia joined the euro area on 1 January**

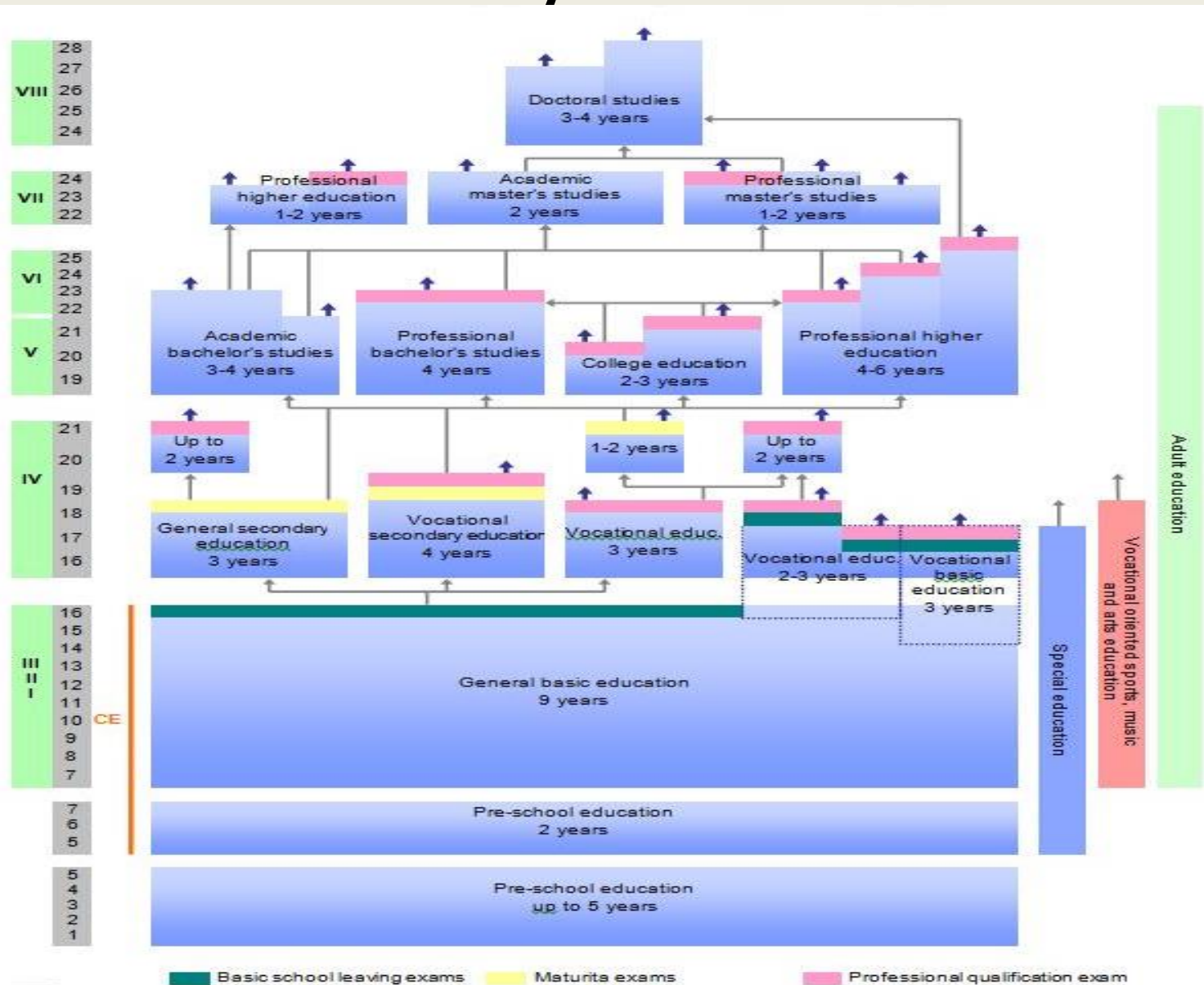


# Education

- **All 9 ISCED education levels are available**
- **ISCED levels 0, 1, and 2 (pre-school and basic education) are free and compulsory**
- **Secondary education (ISCED level 3) is free, but not compulsory**
- **Higher education is not free, except for budget places, where available**



# Education system in Latvia



# Official language - Latvian



**Sveiki!** – Hello!

**Uz redzēšanos!** – Good bye!

**Labrīt!** – Good morning!

**Kā tev sokas?** – How are you?

**Daudz laimes dzimšanas dienā!** – Happy Birthday!

**Atvainojiet!** – Sorry!

**Lūdzu!** – Please!

**Paldies!** – Thank you!



# Latvian Song and Dance Festival

- Since 1873
- Every five years



# Christmas



**1st Christmas tree was decorated in Latvia more than 500 years ago**

# Easter



# Jāņi

- Celebrated the night between June 23 - 24
- **The celebration of summer solstice**
- Closely related to the countryside – people try to spend that day/night outside residential areas, drink beer, eat cheese and search for the fern blossom





# Traditional food



**Uz redzēšanos! Visu labu!**

Good bye! Best wishes!

