

# ĶĪPSALA LANDMARKS

In Ķīpsala, the hustle and bustle of the city is replaced by peace, and every street holds a story. Get to know the island's treasures, people, and their favorite places!

Ķīpsala was formed by the merging of several islands.

The name Ķīpsala originated in the 17th century in honor of the fisherman **Ķīpis**.

- 1 A building with a turret is visible near the Swedbank building, but few people know that it is the **Riga Yacht Club** (1879) building. /Balasta dambis 1/
- 2 **Balasta dambis** (the ballast dam), built at the end of the 18th century, once served as a place for unloading ships' ballast and was the main street in Ķīpsala until the 1970s. Today it is the most romantic walking route with a view of the Old Town.
- 3 One of the most iconic views of Riga opens from Ķīpsala – the **Vanšu (Cable) Bridge** with the silhouette of Old Riga in the background. This view takes on a special magic at dawn and sunset.
- 4 **Ķīpsala Beach** is one of the official swimming spots in Riga, which was located here also at the beginning of the 20th century. In the winter months, it was transformed into a hockey rink, where the Riga Rowing Club team played. During the Soviet years, a sports swimming pool "Dinamo" was built here, which was demolished when the construction of the Vanšu Bridge began.
- 5 In 1945, a potter from Latgale, Staņislavs Kaļva set up a workshop in Ķīpsala. Later, it was incorporated into the industrial complex "Māksla" (Art) and became a creative center where artists combined Latvian tradition with modern experiments, earning international recognition for **Ķīpsala ceramists**. /Balasta dambis 34/
- 6 At the beginning of the 20th century, the **Sēji family** lived in Ķīpsala, whose wealth was rooted in the fish trade and processing. A canning factory was built in the yard of Balasta dambis. The family building was built according to the project of architect Jānis Alksnis with spacious apartments, decorated with luxurious tiled stoves and ceiling decorations. /Balasta dambis 38/40/
- 7 A popular stop for residents of Ķīpsala is the self-service counter "**Dabas veltes**" (Nature's Gifts) with farm produce from the "Mežkūzmas" farm. There is always a surprise waiting for you at the counter – fresh vegetables, flowers, teas and plants, depending on the season. /Mazais Balasta dambis 2/
- 8 The **Žanis Lipke Memorial** is a monument to courage and humanity. The museum reveals the story of Ķīpsala fisherman Žanis Lipke and his family, who saved Jews from death during World War II. /Mazais Balasta dambis 9/

**Freedom Monument** in Ķīpsala? M. Siliņš submitted his vision for the Freedom Monument "Svētkalns" (Sacred Hill) with an oak tree and a sacred fire at the beginning of Balasta dambis in the sketch design competition.



Authentic wooden buildings from the 19th and early 20th centuries have survived in Ķīpsala. With backyard gardens nurtured by generations, each one holds stories about shipowners, fishermen, artists and Latvian intelligentsia who enjoyed the calm of the countryside, as well as the bohemia of the 1930s. Several buildings and the entire historical construction of Ķīpsala are **state-protected monuments**.



- 9 In Ķīpsala there is a **collection of renovated wooden houses** by architect Zaiga Gaile: Collector's House, Philosophers' House, Gatis' House, Baznīcas Street House, Austrāja House, Anrijs' House, Laube's House, Gaiļu House, Līga's House, Briāna Street House, Ksenija's House.
- 10 The **Austrāja House** (the Australian's House) or **Ķengurmāja** (the Kangaroo House) is located at 1a Ogļu Street. The house was purchased by an Australian citizen who had planned to demolish it, but local activists opposed it and bought the house. The new owner installed a bronze kangaroo sculpture by the sculptor Gļebs Panteļejevs on the roof as a humorous memorial.
- 11 The building at Ogļu Street 2a was built by **Matīss Siliņš** – the first Latvian cartographer, translator of "The Chronicles of Indriķis the Latvian", head of the Ethnographic Open-Air Museum of the Riga Latvian Society, Knight of the Order of the Three Stars. The house was originally built in Remte, then dismantled, numbered and transported to Riga by rail. /Ogļu Street 2a/



In the mid-20th century, artists **Elizabete and Voldemārs Medņi** lived here. Their home was a gathering place for painters who had been expelled from the Artists' Union, and the house became an oasis of refuge for free art.

- 12 Did you know that there are two buildings in Ķīpsala that **were brought here from the center of Riga**? A mid-19th century classicist residential building at Baznīcas Street 18 was saved from demolition and moved to Balasta dambis 60. The other building is a Baroque-style log building from the second half of the 18th century, which was moved from A. Briāna Street 11 to Ogļu Street 8.

- 13 In the second half of the 19th century, the **Gypsum Factory** was founded – initially as a family business of Pauls Bēma, which produced stove tiles, chalk and gypsum (one of the examples of the stove tiles can be seen in Jaunmoku Castle). In the 1930s, gypsum board was invented here, which was originally called rīgipsis, combining "Rīga" and "gypsum" in the name. During World War II, the factory was nationalized, but during the Soviet years, an army laundry operated in its premises. In the 21st century, the territory of the factory has been transformed into a modern residential area. /Balasta dambis 70/

- 14 Ķīpsala preserves industrial heritage – two fragments of the former **pontoon bridge**. They ended up here in the early 1980s, when the bridge was demolished to build the Vanšu Bridge.

- 15 The house at Ģipša Street 1 keeps the story of one of the oldest families in Ķīpsala – the **Nariņi**, who were called the Baltic salmon kings. /Ģipša Street 1/

- 16 Did you know that several episodes of the movie **"The Dog Man and Tille"** were filmed at Ogļu Street 28? This wooden house and the scenes of Ķīpsala became a charming background for the movie. The building was built in 1902 according to the project of the architect Jānis Alksnis and is an example of early 20th century eclecticism. In the late 1920s, the poet **Fricis Jānis Gulbis** (pseudonyms: Jānis Trimda, Vilis Veldre) lived here, whose works reflect the connection with the rural environment, nature and the everyday life of ordinary people. /Ogļu Street 28/



- 17 Three buildings designed by the architect Eizens Laube have survived in Ķīpsala. One of them is an **Art Nouveau architectural monument** with a particularly expressive Art Deco exterior, built in 1909 as a workers' house. /Zvejnieku Street 14a/

In the 1930s, the **famous Daugavian (daugaviešu) evenings** – gatherings where poets, writers, artists and thinkers gathered – were held in Ķīpsala at the home of the shipowner Jānis Purmalis and his wife Emīlija.



- 18 The second building designed by E. Laube in Ķīpsala was built in 1910–1912 by request of the owner of the shipping company Kārlis Kronbergs. The building is designed in the **national romantic style with features of Norwegian architecture** and was intended for sailors' widows (therefore it is sometimes called the "widows' house") and captains, with a shop in the basement and rental apartments above. Alberts Kronbergs – a beloved author and illustrator of children's books ("Tuntuļu Jurītis", "Mazais ganiņš" etc.) also lived here. /Zvejnieku Street 9/

- 19 The first independent work of the architect E. Laube in Riga is a building, built in 1908 at the request of the long-distance captain Andrejs Hugo Krauze. In the 1920s, the painter, poet and writer **Hilda Vīka** lived in this house. The shores of the Zunda channel, crooked wooden houses, goats and boats live in her paintings and poetry. /Zvejnieku Street 3/

- 20 A building in the national romantic style was built in 1913, the project of which was developed by the architect Oskars Bārs at the request of the woodcutter Magnus Uppanis. The Uppanis family still owns this building. Valentīns Pāvuls – a well-known diver, painter and founder of a school in Canada – lived there. His childhood memories of Ķīpsala are summarized in the book "Neptūna kalps". /Enkura Street 1/

- 21 In 1912, Jānis Purmalis, one of the so-called "peasant landowners", donated part of his land for the construction of a **volunteer fire station**, which was built with donations. Here, local residents worked as volunteer firefighters, while the Ladies' Committee organized events. /Enkura Street 7/



In 1938, a modern mansion was built at Enkura Street 7 using what was then an innovative material – reinforced concrete. Several decades later, in the 1990s, the building was home to the musicologist **Ligita Viduleja**, one of the founders of the Latvian film music genre, and her daughter **Anna Viduleja**, the director of the movie "Homo Novus".

Stories say that chess player Jānis Liepiņš (Salacietis), after swimming in the Daugava, invented a chess opening variant called the **"Ķīpsalas Steķu Gambit"**. With this sharp game, he achieved many victories, even defeating the former grandmaster Maksis Eivs.



- 22 Hidden among the residential buildings is the **convent of the Sisters Servants of Immaculate Virgin Mary**, with a garden. Services are held in the convent every Sunday. The sisters have lived here since 1992, taking care of those who are most in need and getting involved in the activities of the Ķīpsala community. /Enkura Street 9/

- 23 A **green area** has been created near the **Zunda channel**, where Midsummer's Eve parties can still be held to escape from the rush of the city.

- 24 In Ķīpsala there was once a building that belonged to the captain of the steamship "Saratov" Aleksandrs Remess-Veics, under whose leadership the steamship became a "republic on the water". In 1919, he brought the Latvian Provisional Government from Liepāja to Riga with it. /Former Zvejnieku Street 10/

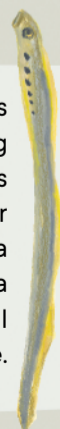
- 25 In the 1970s, the government at the time decided to build an **RTU complex** in Ķīpsala, initially planning to occupy the entire territory of the island. Fortunately, due to insufficient funding, the historical buildings of Ķīpsala were not demolished.

- 26 The **RTU swimming pool** was opened in 1989, and it is still popular with students and other Riga residents.

Two prominent figures from Ķīpsala – **Milda Palēviča** and **Emīlija Purmale** – actively participated in the women's rights movement in Latvia in the first half of the 20th century, advocating for the defense of women's professional and civil rights. In the 1930s, they were members of the Women's Election Committee, organizing women's lists.



If Ķīpsala had a taste, it would be sharp as **horseradish**, delicate as **lamprey** and strong as **sea buckthorn**. Historically, the island has been a gardener's delight – especially for growing horseradish. A free-access sea buckthorn garden once grew by the Zunda channel, while lampreys were once an integral part of the Ķīpsala festive cuisine.



Scan the QR code and read the full version of the story. "Ķīpsala landmarks" were created by the people of Ķīpsala themselves – with respect, pride and love for the Ķīpsala neighborhood and its cultural and historical heritage.



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