

IECAVA

The Iecava municipality is located in the central part of Latvia where Zemgale Plain, the sandy lowland of Riga, and the Middle Latvian Lowland meet. The administrative centre is 43 km from Riga, 33 km from Jelgava and 23 km from Bauska.

The municipality's territory is crossed by such transport infrastructure objects as Via Baltica (the main national highway, A7, Riga-Bauska-Lithuanian border (Grenctāle)), two regional roads, namely, P92 Iecava–Stelpe and P93 Jelgava–Iecava, as well as the Rail Baltica track and the Jelgava – Krustpils railway route.

The municipality consists of several villages: Iecava, Zālīte, Zorģi, Rosme, Dzelzāmurs, Dzimtīsa, Dimzūkals and Audrupi.

EDUCATION

There are two preschools in the municipality: “Cālītis” and “Dartija”. Primary and secondary education is provided by the Iecava Primary School, Zālīte Specialised Primary School, and Iecava Secondary School.

In order to ensure that the children study in a high-quality, safe, and pleasant learning environment, the local government regularly allocates funds for the improvement of educational institutions' grounds and infrastructure: playgrounds are repaired, classrooms are renovated, and equipment is purchased.

In 2017, Skolas Street was completely redesigned so that the pedestrians would be able to get to Iecava Primary School and Iecava Secondary School safely. In the same year, Iecava Park acquired lighting and a pedestrian path to ensure that the walk to Iecava Music and Art School is both comfortable and pleasant.

As a result of the implementation of various projects, the students' academic achievements have improved, and students with learning

disabilities receive extra attention; career support events, during which the pupils get to know various professions, take place; the available sports equipment is improved with high-quality additions in order to promote students' understanding of a healthy lifestyle and to enhance their willingness to regularly participate in sports activities. In order to attract a higher number of children to open air sports activities, as well as to diversify leisure activity options, the municipality has installed three net pyramids for climbing.

Children and youths learn how to play various musical instruments at Iecava Music and Art School. The basics of dance and art are also taught there. The building where the school currently resides was unveiled in 2016. It is located in two blocks; the newer block was added to the building which housed a library during the time of Count Peter Ludwig von Palen. It is one of the surviving old manor complex buildings.

COMMUNITY. HEALTH

The Iecava Municipality Social Service provides social assistance, as well as organises and provides social services -- it offers home care, consultations with social pedagogues, consultations with a social worker, consultations with a psychologist, and provides assistant services or free rental of technical aids, as well as accommodation in an emergency crisis/respite flat, if necessary.

Social Service in Iecava Municipality carries out preventive and educational work, organises events for various target groups, and cooperates with different institutions.

Self-government provides financial support for the residents of the municipality who wish to improve their living environment of their own volition. For instance, the residents of the municipality implement projects in order to create a better environment for children (setting up/repairing playgrounds), as well as improve the courtyards of apartment buildings, create parking lots and improve

the buildings' visual appearance as part of the project "Residents Creating Their Own Environment". The best project of the year is honoured at the formal celebration of the Proclamation Day of the Republic of Latvia.

The "Competition for the Co-Financing of Projects of Associations, Foundations and Religious Organisations" facilitates cooperation among self-government and public organisations, associations, societies, foundations and traditional religious organisations, promotes the residents' activity, and supports the implementation of many creative ideas in the municipality.

This project gave birth to the now traditional "White Tablecloth Celebration", various Museum Night events, exhibitions of photos, paintings and crafts, inspired painting classes and plein air painting events, educational lectures, concerts, sports competitions and other events. The funding has also been used to set up outdoor art objects and to improve the infrastructure of various public places.

Self-government also offers co-funding for the implementation of energy-efficiency measures in multi-storey apartment buildings.

The municipality has six operating libraries which feature a large selection of books and press. The libraries regularly invite guests and host amateur theatre productions, exhibitions, painting, floristry and gymnastic classes, creative camps for children and talk nights.

In order to promote health, the municipality has approved and is implementing the "Health Promotion Strategy of Iecava Municipality for 2019–2024"; sporting events are held regularly. As part of the project "Local Public Health Promotion and Disease Prevention in Iecava Municipality", residents of different age groups attend gymnastics, Nordic walking, swimming and water aerobics classes, as well as lectures and seminars on healthy nutrition, and meet with a variety of doctors and specialists. Group exercises take place both at

the stadium and at the fitness club “Jautrais apelsīns” (The Jolly Orange).

In cooperation with other municipal institutions, activities for the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, such as orienteering, hiking, and flash mobs, are carried out. Challenges via the mobile app Endomondo are quite popular, with the residents competing against each other and accumulating kilometres for Iecava by running, cycling, walking and Nordic walking.

The providers of health care for the residents are the specialists of the Municipal Agency Iecava Health Centre – both the family doctors and providers of specialised medical services.

The Iecava Health Centre provides environmental and health care services that are accessible to persons with functional disabilities. In order to make the institution more accessible to the residents of the municipality, in 2018 the grounds of the Agency underwent development, gaining a huge parking lot, renovated pavements, street lighting and benches.

FOR THE YOUNG

The Iecava Youth Centre provides an opportunity to obtain new knowledge and skills in a friendly, open and supportive environment outside of formal education. The youths are granted a chance to be more active in youth organisations and volunteer work, take part in various projects, as well as to spend quality time with their peers.

Different thematic events, educational lectures and summer camps are held regularly. Several times a year the centre organises active, creative and widely attended events both for families and groups of friends. For instance, it organises the Earth Hour orienteering game, orienteering competitions, organised hiking, the Youth Day event, as well as skiing and boating trips. It is a great way of improving relationships and to encourage friends, as well as parents and children, to spend more time together.

The centre started to operate in February 2016, and ever since then it has gained great popularity among the youth. It was created as part of the project “Creating a Multifunctional Youth Initiative Centre in Iecava”, funded by the Swiss Confederation.

Each year self-government supports pupils by implementing the initiative “Pupils’ Employing over the Summer Holidays”. It allows the pupils to spend their free time in a meaningful manner and earn their first salary, and some of them would go on to gain new friends and their first work experience. The pupils are employed at municipal educational institutions, libraries, capital companies, self-government administration, social services and the youth centre.

The self-government holds the “Iecava Youth of the Year” competition, for which youths (aged 13–25) that have proven themselves in various areas or done volunteer work during the past year can be nominated.

SPORT

The most popular sports in the municipality are basketball, table tennis, track and field athletics, football and hockey.

The residents are welcome to use the Iecava municipality stadium (unveiled in 2014) for their sport and leisure activities. It features facilities for track and field athletics, courts for tennis, volleyball, football and basketball, as well as eight outdoor training devices and a pull-up bar. The stadium has become a favourite leisure spot for the residents of Iecava.

The stadium infrastructure is actively used for both the implementation of the educational process and the practice sessions of the school athletes, as well as for hosting sports events of municipal, regional and national significance.

It should be noted that in Iecava not only children and youths are active participants of sport activities and competitions; there are

veteran athletes as well, who engage in track and field athletics and play basketball, hockey and table tennis, for example.

As per tradition, every year on the first Saturday in June Iecava holds a sport celebration which allows every resident and visitor to measure their strength and skills against each other in various disciplines. In autumn, the “Iecava Autumn” run is held; winter sees competitions in skiing and table tennis, as well as basketball and amateur hockey competitions; and summer offers beach volleyball competitions.

The Iecava municipality sports school “Dartija” offers professional education in three sports: basketball, track and field athletics and table tennis. Open international competitions are held in these disciplines, and for the pupils of Iecava municipality's educational institutions and pre-school educational institutions varied sports competitions are organised. Iecava municipality's residents make use of the sports school's facilities as well.

At the end of each year, the municipality awards cash prizes to athletes for achievements in sports, and the sports school holds the annual event “Iecava Municipality Athlete of the Year”.

In order to promote sports activities and the development of the sports sector, self-government may grant financial support to local individual athletes and teams.

CULTURE

The Iecava Culture House is located in a historic building constructed in 1894. The great hall has 350 seats; the small hall, 200. Its doors are open to all generations and needs. Throughout the year, various events are held for visitors of all ages. Exhibitions take place regularly.

The Culture House hosts more than ten amateur creative groups, including a choir, dance groups representing various generations and dance styles, a theatre studio, a folk ensemble, and a vocal studio.

It also has a stage, which is located in a beautiful park that was planted by Count Palen by the Iecava River. In summer, events are held there.

Every year, Iecava Municipality celebrates the annual festivals – Meteņi, Easter, Midsummer, Christmas. The “White Tablecloth Celebration” has become a traditional part of the 4 May celebrations; other traditional events in the Iecava municipality are the vocal competition “Cālis” for young performers, the Museum Night, the Lāčplēsis Day torch march in November and the celebration of the Proclamation Day of the Republic of Latvia when the honorary title “Iecava Person of the Year” is awarded. October 2018 saw the first event dedicated to International Egg Day, in cooperation with the largest egg producer “Balticovo”.

Every five years, the Iecava anniversary celebration is held over the course of several days, encompassing various exhibitions, concerts and village decorating. An event that is eagerly awaited in each celebration is the reenactment of a Napoleonic battle, allowing the visitors to visit the past for a while and to observe the 1812 Battle of Ekau (Iecava), the confrontation between the military forces of the Russian Empire and the Grande Armée of Napoleon.

The next celebration, marking the 530th anniversary of Iecava, is going to take place in 2022.

THEY MAKE US PROUD

The honorary title “**Iecava Person of the Year**” is an award for an individual demonstrating outstanding achievement in the past year or for an individual's sustained, exemplary and successful performance or achievements over a longer period of time regarding the development of the Iecava Municipality, economic or social

activities or any other area of interest for the municipality. The title **“Honorary Citizen of Iecava”**, on the other hand, is awarded for outstanding and sustained achievements benefitting Iecava Municipality. The awards are traditionally presented during the formal celebration dedicated to the Proclamation Day of the Republic of Latvia.

In 2017, Jānis Pēlis was honored with the title of “Honorary Citizen of Iecava”- for his long-term public activities in the municipality, contribution in growth of Iecava Municipality and significant personal contribution in development of the national economy.

Iecava Municipality has been recognised as the winner of the **“European Municipality of the Year 2013”** in the municipality category.

Each year, the self-government holds a competition **“Iecava Municipality Annual Entrepreneurial Award”**. The aim of the competition is to seek out and recognise the entrepreneurs and businesspersons who are active and honest participants in their respective areas; to promote the recognition of the entrepreneurs of the municipality and popularise examples of good business practice in the municipality by the facilitation of the development of the business environment in Iecava municipality.

The entrepreneurs are nominated for the following categories: “Farmer of the Year”, “Business Innovation of the Year”, “Home Producer/Craftsman of the Year”, “Most Daring Entrepreneur of the Year”, “Most Hospitable Entrepreneur of the Year”, “Self-Government’s Partner of the Year”, “Pupil’s Business of the Year” and “Entrepreneur of the Year”.

In 2018 LED luminaire production and sales company “Vizulo” became the “Entrepreneur of the Year”.

In 2018 Ģedule bridge, after it was renovated, was nominated for the Latvian Construction Industry's Annual Awards, winning third place in the Engineering Structure category.

WELL WORTH A VISIT

One of the most important places of Iecava is the **Iecava Park**. It is an architectural monument of national importance (the Iecava Manor building complex with the park, respectively). It was created simultaneously with the construction of the manor building complex (from 1795 to 1800) in the style of an English landscape garden. The park is characterised by its vast variety of deciduous trees, as well as its high number of exotic tree species. On the former banks of the Iecava River stands the **Monument of Freedom** (1936; chiselled in stone) by Pēteris Banders. The river banks are connected by a pedestrian bridge.

Although the central building of the manor (the palace) has not survived, the buildings that have been preserved to this day give an idea of the character of the manor building complex. The surviving buildings are the former Iecava palace library, the old granary, former stables and three **park guard houses**. One of them is home to a successful and cosy cafe where you can enjoy a leisurely cup of tea and the view of the nearby **Ģedule bridge**.

Dievdārziņš or God's Garden, is an archaeological site (an ancient Latvian burial ground) on the banks of Iecava River. The viewing platform (built on the steep bank of the river) offers a magnificent view of the Lutheran church and Iecava River. Located nearby is the starting point of a 210 m long wooden footpath that leads to the Pārupe pedestrian bridge. While walking along the trail, you can have a look at the dolomite outcrops.

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