



# SEASIDE CYCLE ROUTE Guidebook



Trail guide and map M 1 : 50,000

## DEAR READER AND CYCLIST!

Now in your hands – the description of the Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route. It will lead you along the cycling trails of the Lithuanian Baltic Sea coast. This route is the first to have the new Lithuanian cycle traffic signs. This book was made possible due to the support of the European Union PHARE 2002 programme implementing the project “Marketing of the Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route and Publishing of a Cyclist’s Guide.”

The Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route heads along the 100 km of the Lithuanian Baltic Sea coast from Russia in the South (Kaliningrad Region on the Curonian Spit) up to Latvia in the North. The route shows you three different regions of Lithuania, which differ in their history, culture and landscape: Žemaitija (Samogitia) – also called Lower Lithuania – North from the city of Klaipėda to the Latvian border, the so-called “Lithuania Minor”, also called “Prussian Lithuania” or “Memelland” – South of Klaipėda on the land side, and the Curonian Spit.

Using the Cycling Guide of the Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route you can plan a cycling trip according to your individual desires. In this booklet you’ll find detailed maps at the scale of 1 : 50 000, information on accommodation, catering, bicycling, etc. as well as a description of the sights.

We provide you with a separate map of the Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route (scale 1 : 200 000), which shows you the most beautiful two, three, and seven-day trips on the route. Furthermore you’ll find addresses of local tourist information centres and other useful contacts.

More details on the Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route, its sights, services and geographic co-ordinates in the National Tourist Information System are available on the website [www.travel.lt](http://www.travel.lt) or from the tourist information centres.

We wish you a pleasant ride!

*The Editors*

## CONTENT

|   |    |
|---|----|
| How to Use the Guidebook                            | 3  |
| Map Legend  | 4  |
| The Region of Western Lithuania                     | 6  |
| Klaipėda  | 11 |
| About the Seaside Cycle Route                       | 18 |
| Planning Your Tour                                  | 18 |
| How to Come to the Lithuanian Seaside?              | 19 |
| From Klaipėda Kuršių Nerija to Nida                 | 22 |
| From Klaipėda to the Latvian Border                 | 40 |
| From Klaipėda to Rusnė Island<br>Along the Seashore | 60 |
| General information                                 | 90 |
| Service Index                                       | 93 |
| Locality Index                                      | 98 |

## HOW TO USE THE GUIDEBOOK

First of all choose a route. In the publication you'll find all three Seaside Cycle Route sections described at length along with general information on the Western Lithuanian Region and its centre Klaipėda.

### Maps

The trail maps in the publication are presented in scale 1 : 50 000 (1 cm = 500 m), the Old Town of Klaipėda is in scale 1 : 10 000 (1 cm = 100 m). On page 5 you'll find the Seaside Cycle Route map divided into parts and numbered. Each part is discussed more comprehensively later in the guidebook. In each part the directions of cardinal points and pointers to other parts of the map are indicated. The bright yellow-red-dotted line indicates the Seaside Cycle Route, whereas the red-dotted line shows other possible connections and alternate bicycle routes. Distances between towns are indicated in kilometres. Places to visit and services are indicated by arbitrary signs and symbols. All the places to visit mentioned in the text and

indicated on the map are marked by identical numbers in parentheses, e.g. the Castle Museum (1).

### Texts

The publication presents a detailed description of the route of each part of the map with distances indicated (km), towns, small towns and places to visit. Next to the names of the sites the number of the map where they can be found is specified in brackets, e.g. [map No. 1]. There is also information



on specialised and tourist services (bicycle shops and maintenance, bicycle rentals, bus and railway stations, ferry, etc.) with contacts listed. The descriptions of the main trail routes from Klaipėda to Nida and from Būtingė to Rusnė Island are in red italics.

At the end of the guidebook you'll find the index of services where, in accordance with the order of description of places below each town name, other services and contacts are indicated: hotels, guesthouses, farmsteads, camping, restaurants and medical aid points. The maps indicate public dining and bank branches in all towns as well as bank machines in small towns, since there are lots of them in big towns.

## MAP LEGEND

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
|  Tourist information       |  Viewpoint                                 |  Side street                     |
|  Hotel                     |  Lighthouse                                |  Local road                      |
|  Guesthouse                |  Hill fort                                 |  Road under construction         |
|  Country tourism homestead |  Cemetery                                  |  Railway                         |
|  Camping                   |  Architectural monument (building, estate) |  Ferry line                      |
|  Rest area                 |  Church                                    |  River, canal (width 10–30 m)    |
|  Hospital                  |  Natural monument                          |  River, canal (up to 10 m)       |
|  Ferry / quay              |  Historical monument (memorial homestead)  |  Settlement                      |
|  Museum                    |  Milestone                                 |  Garden                          |
|  Bicycle repair and shop   |  Bicycle route on the Lithuanian seashore  |  Forest                          |
|  Bicycle rental            |  Optional bicycle route                    |  Swamp                           |
|  Bus station               |  Country border                            |  Sand, peat bogs, dumping ground |
|  Railway station           |  Municipal boundary                        |  Cultivated field                |
|  Airport                   |  Protected area boundary                   |  Lake, pond, sea, lagoon         |
|  Customs                   |  Highway                                   |   |
|  Border crossing point     |  Rural road                                |   |
|   |  Regional road                             |   |
|   |  Main street                               |   |



## THE REGION OF WESTERN LITHUANIA

Over 200-metre-long cycle trails, which encircle the most beautiful parts of the Lithuanian seashore, run in three directions from the city of Klaipėda. One section winds through the Curonian Spit from Klaipėda to Nida, another runs north towards Latvia and the third one goes down along the Curonian Lagoon to Rusnė Island. This unique route covering almost the entire Lithuanian coast and seashore offers us the chance to get to know the nature, culture and ethnic peculiarities of the land better.

**Klaipėda–Nida.** “The landscape is such a creation of a nation as is the language, folklore, mythology, and art.” (Marcelijus Martinaitis). The landscape of the Curonian Spit formed under extreme conditions by means of human wisdom and hands, making use of the wind and plants, and correcting the mistakes that had earlier been made by nature, to make it suitable for living, working and resting.

The first mention of the Curonian Spit was made in documents in 1322. This unique

strip of sand, which came to the surface of the Litorina Sea 7,000 years ago, was a real creation of the sun, wind and water streams. Today a high 97-kilometre-long strip of dunes and a dark forest continue from Koggalis to Krantas (Zelenogradsk). It ranges in width from 370 metres near Šarkuva (Lesnoje) to 3.8 kilometres near Bulvikis Horn. The total area of the Curonian Spit is 180 square kilometres (its northern part from Smiltynė to Nida belongs to Lithuania and the southern



*Parnidis Dune.*

part to Kaliningrad District of Russia). Today forests cover about 70 per cent of the spit, nearly all the remaining part is bare dunes and sands. Over 960 species of plants grow there and 37 species of mammals are found there (many of them are entered in the Red Data Book of Lithuania). You can come across insects in the spit that can be found nowhere else in Lithuania. During spring and autumn migration 15 million birds fly over the spit. Over 70 species of fish breed in the Baltic Sea near the spit.

The first residents moved to the Curonian Spit in the Stone Age. A safe environment, luxurious forests, and the abundance of fish and animals allured them there. In the seventh century the Vikings began to attack the residents of the spit. Around the tenth century larger settlements began to be established in the locality: the Prussians and Sembians lived south of Nida, the Samogitians and Curonians lived north of it. In the thirteenth century the place became a “highway” between the Teutonic Order and the Order of the Swordbearers along which armies constantly moved; several

castles were built there. After the Battle of Žalgiris (Grünwald), German colonists started to take up residence in Nerija and in the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries residents from Kuršas and Lithuania moved there. A transit road between Karaliaučius and Riga had an impact on the nature of local settlements – coach houses and inns were opened there. Fishermen’s farmsteads nestled up to them. Specific geographical conditions determined a closed way of life. Each settlement



*Dunes of the Curonian Spit.*

had a cemetery with wooden crosses, called krikštas. However, no settlements of that time have survived – “sand drove away the living and buried once again the dead.”

At the end of the eighteenth century the residents of the spit sensed the threat posed by sand once again; sandstorms buried Karvaičiai, Nagliai, Old and New Nagliai under the dunes. All that was a consequence of the 1756–1763 war and the woods being cut down by the Russian army.

“Perhaps nowhere else in the world can a more sorrowful place be found. Only shifting sand and water: no tree, no shadow, no well to have a refreshing sip of water...” (Russian traveller P. Rozental, 1814). In the nineteenth century measures were taken to put a stop to drifting sand: protective embankments were built, trees, shrubs and forests were planted. The Prussian authorities allocated large funds to carry out these works. Since the middle of the nineteenth century all the settlements in the Curonian Spit have been well-known as resort places; German journalist O. Galgau wrote that there were “eiderdowns filled with crow feathers” in the

hotels in Nida. Pedestrian paths and observation points were made in the dunes, beaches were adapted to the needs of holidaymakers. According to the 1844 regulations each boat of the Curonian Lagoon had to have a weather-cock – over time these weather-cocks have turned into original works of art.

The Curonian Spit was popular with many German celebrities: L. Passarge described “A Trip through the Curonian Spit” in 1868, E. Humperding composed an opera after the fairy-tale “Häsel und Gretel” by the Brothers Grimm at a hotel in Nida. In 1929, German writer and Nobel Prize winner Thomas Mann came to Nida for the first time. Though he spent only three summers there, his creative work and Neringa became inseparable.

A large part of the forest was destroyed during the Second World War and the protective embankment was also damaged then. However, a greater tragedy occurred when, during the war and in the post-war years the natives of Nerija, who had formed the authentic ethnic community of fishermen, disappeared (part of the inhabitants fled to Germany, others were evacuated to the

USSR). At present serious concern is shown to the Curonian Spit. In 2000, it was recorded on the UNESCO World Heritage List as a cultural landscape. Each corner is protected and cherished, because nowhere else can the magnificent Parnadis Dune, traditional fishermen's houses and an authentic kurėnas, an old wooden sailing vessel of the Curonian fishermen, be found.

**Klaipėda–Būtingė.** Many of us, after spending half a day in Klaipėda, are in a hurry to go to Palanga and squeeze ourselves into an overcrowded beach. However, you can have a much more active and enjoyable rest travelling by bicycle and if you are great enthusiasts – on foot from Klaipėda towards the Latvian border. There you will discover a real Lithuanian coast and the flora and fauna of Seacoast Regional Park, which stretches from Giruliai to Nemirset, will leave you with an indelible impression.

In the early Middle Ages the Lithuanian coast from Klaipėda to Palanga was not a densely inhabited area. Swamps and peat bogs covered a larger part of the territory. In the eighth–eighteenth centuries Curonian lands

formed Mėguva (settlements were concentrated along the Akmena River; its centre was Palanga) and Pilsotas (Pilsotas' land covered the lower reaches of the Akmena River with the environs of Klaipėda, Kalotė, Eketės, and Žardė). In the fifteenth century the Teutonic Order found the road from Karaliaučius via Klaipėda towards Riga of great importance. Therefore, the Nemirset and Kalotė inns were built on the way, where travellers could spend the night, change their horses and trade. In

the sixteenth century the Curonians formed the majority of the inhabitants. The chain of calamities in the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries (Swedish occupation, the plague, the Seven Years War) and natural disasters caused by the cutting down of forests reduced the number of inhabitants. Karklė and Nemirset earned their name as resort places only at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Lithuanian–Prussian border once ran where Nemirset ends and Palanga begins.



*Seacoast Regional Park.*



*Amber Museum in Palanga.*

The coast of the Litorina Sea, Dutchmen's cap, Lake Plocis, the coastal military fortifications "dzotai" – these are only some of the sites which can be seen when traveling along the seashore as far as Palanga. Seacoast Regional Park is home to as many as 8 species of orchids and 138 species of birds. In larger woods all over the region you can come across elk, deer, roe, wild boar, and beavers. Seals, which in the olden times were called "daughters of Bangpūtys" (the Pagan wave-driving god) by the Curonians, also visit the Baltic coasts.

It is not only lovers of nature that find Seacoast Regional Park interesting. Palanga and Šventoji are places intended for greater lovers of civilisation. The first inhabitants settled in these localities over five thousand years ago. Pagan "observatories" in the environs of Šventoji and those on Birutė Hill testify to their significance to the Balts. Both towns were Lithuanian ports, however they were unable to compete with Karaliaučius and Riga. During the wars with the Swedes the port of Šventoji was buried under stones and rocks. The towns became well-known

as health resorts at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

After taking a swim in the sea and relaxing in Palanga or Šventoji, you can easily reach Būtingė and if desired you can also visit the neighbouring Latvian seashore.

**Klaipėda–Rusnė.** Choosing the route along the seashore, you can visit many villages and small towns, which are unique in their architectural and ethnographical heritage. The route is crowned with the remarkable nature of Nemunas Delta Regional Park. It differs from other parks not only in its flora and fauna, but also in human activity. Constant floods and natural calamities made people protect themselves, so these low territories are protected against water by dykes that cannot be found anywhere else in Lithuania. Since the olden times the Nemunas Delta has been famous for its abundance of fish. Therefore, traces of this business and the lifestyle of the people and their adaptation to the environment have been left in their everyday activities to date.

However, let's look at all of that in succession. If, on our way, we visit the villages of

Priekulė, Dreverna, Svencelė, Kintai, we shall become acquainted with many Lithuanian writers who once lived there (Ieva Simonaitytė, M. Kybelka, Vydūnas). Kintai prides itself on its unique monument of nature – the Great Thuja. The climax of this route is Ventės Ragas and Rusnė Island. These places are beaten by the wind and water and people live there to a rhythm that is understandable only to them.

The environs of the village of Ventė have been inhabited since olden times. Legend has it that in the 14<sup>th</sup> century the Crusaders built a castle there which was swallowed up by the lagoon. It is thought that a church and the first inn in these environs were built at about the same time. Over time the entire village was moved further away from the lagoon into its present place. At the point of Ventės Ragas a lighthouse has operated for over a hundred years (since 1863). Before the canal that connected the Nemunas with Klaipėda was dug, vessels often wrecked there. The Bird Ringing Station has been established there and it houses a museum, a laboratory, and nets for catching birds; the birds are ringed and migration is studied

there. From the observation point you can see the breakwater, which was built in the lagoon to protect Ventės ragas from destruction, and also the Curonian Peninsula and Nida.

Upon arriving at Rusnė you'll find yourself in the lowest place in Lithuania, as low as 1.3 metres above sea level. This is the largest Lithuanian island and one of the oldest coastal settlements. As far back as 1419 Rusnė had a church. There was no farmland around, but the number of inhabitants

was on the increase. Many of them worked in sawmills, mills, breweries, and distilleries, made cargo boats or went fishing. Today, travellers and lovers of fishing and country tourism frequent this place.

It is impossible to bypass the fishing village of Minija, called by the natives Minė or Mingė, situated astride the Minija River. As far back as the nineteenth century the riverboats anchoring there encouraged tourism. The village, which was largely destroyed in

the Soviet era, has been slow in recovering, however you can see rare birds and various water plants and animals typical of the locality. Due to constant floods life in these villages has always been complicated, but breathtaking beauty and endless latitude of water attract both native and foreign tourists to the land.

However unwilling you are to leave this wonderful corner of nature, the culture of Šilutė, the second largest city in Klaipėda Region (currently its population totals 22,450), should arouse your interest. Landowner H. Šojus had a great impact on its development and history. In 1892, he bought the Šilokarčema Estate, later gave part of his lands to the new settlers, and allocated plots of land to the district hospital, school and fire station. Thanks to him land near the Tilžė–Klaipėda Highway was irrigated, future streets were laid, and a protective pile dike was built along the Šyša River. As in many cities of Klaipėda Region you'll find Catholic and Lutheran cemeteries and churches, testifying to the multicultural nature of the land, which is still alive.



*Uostadvaris.*



*Sunset on the Rusnė Island.*

## KLAIPĖDA

Klaipėda is Lithuania's third largest city, the only port, and an important centre of transport, industry and culture, with about 193,000 inhabitants. In the course of 750 years Klaipėda has gone through a long stage of development, marked by its peculiarities, upturns and recessions.

In 1252, by agreement of the Livonian Order and the Bishop of Kuršas the wooden

Memelburg Castle was erected on the shore of the Curonian Lagoon and consequently the new city being established was named after it. Later, next to that castle a brick castle was built, which became an inseparable part of the city. The Bishop of Kuršas took up residence in Klaipėda. In 1254, the city was granted the Lübeck Law. The city should have become an important economic, cultural and religious centre, however, over time Klaipėda became a prov-

ince of Prussia and the Reich of Germany (in 1447, there were 50 inhabitants).

The name Klaipėda was first mentioned in the documents of the negotiations between Vytautas and the Teutonic Order in 1420. In the fifteenth century Klaipėda was ravaged by wars, pirates, many a time it had to withstand attacks from the Samogitians and Lithuanians, all-consuming fires and other calamities. Seeking to restore the city, in 1475 Klaipėda was granted the Kulm Law. After secularisation of the Teutonic Order and creation of the Prussian State in 1525 a long period of peace elapsed. A strengthened economy and the petty bourgeoisie determined the appearance of the City Council of Klaipėda.

A multicultural nature was characteristic of Klaipėda in the Middle Ages. Until 1620 there were Lithuanian and German Evangelist churches in Klaipėda and the English, Scotsmen, Dutchmen, and Danes were making their homes there. The main business of the inhabitants was related to trade and the sea. In the sixteenth century wealthy merchants started building seagoing vessels that were used for foreign trade.



*Panorama of Klaipėda.*



*Constellation vessel in Klaipėda Seaport.*

Various craftsmen were establishing themselves in the city – shoemakers, bakers, and tailors – which is testified to by the surviving street names. The victory of Reformation in Prussia encouraged the spread of Lithuanianism in Klaipėda, however until the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Lithuanians were ignored: they were prohibited from engaging in trade and crafts, from wearing German clothes, they paid higher taxes, etc. Beginning with the 17<sup>th</sup> century the Jews also started

taking up quarters there and many a time the city was rebuilt with their money after fires. Wars with Sweden in the seventeenth century had a great impact on the urbanisation of Klaipėda – the city was extended and surrounded by bastions. The Old Town and Odų districts, as well as Krūmamiestis, a less prestigious suburb of craftsmen, merchants and innkeepers on the other side of the Danė River, formed. Later on more neighbouring suburbs were annexed. After half the inhabi-

tants of Klaipėda died during the 1709-1711 plague, Prussian King Fridrich I began colonisation of the land (about 200 people from Salzburg arrived in the city). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century the Lithuanian Catholic community, Mennonites, and Anglicans joined the integral Evangelist confession, thus enriching the historical and architectural picture of Klaipėda. At the end of the eighteenth century the population of Klaipėda reached 7,000.

During the Seven Years War (1756–1763) Prussia left the Klaipėda fortress to Russia. That war speeded up the growth of Klaipėda's economy because the scale of trade and military vessels increased. However, due to the increased demand for wood, forests of neighbouring environs and the Curonian Spit (Kuršių Nerija) suffered tremendously. The end of the 18<sup>th</sup>–the 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was the period of upsurge in culture, industry and innovations. The establishment of the residence of King Friedrich Wilhelm III and Queen Luise in the city influenced the changes: on 9 October 1807 the edict on the abolishment of serfdom in Prussia was promulgated in Klaipėda; Klaipėda was presented with a



*Old Town of Klaipėda.*



*Fachwerk of Klaipėda.*

plot of land and funds were allocated to build a shelter for the poor; streets were paved in the centre of the city; the first Lithuanian newspaper *Lietuviniškų Prietelis* (1849) was published. The great fire of 1854 did not bring the city to ruin because wealthy merchants supported the victims. Soon a boy's high school named after Luise was founded, Baptist and Anglican churches were opened, and in 1886 the synagogue was opened. Restoration of the burned theatre in which famous German composer R. Wagner worked, was an important event. As all over Lithuania Minor, Lithuanian culture spread rapidly in Klaipėda and societies were forming.

At the end of the nineteenth century economic development of Klaipėda Region was enhanced by the railway – in 1875, the train could be taken from Klaipėda to Tilsit, Karaliaučius, and Berlin; goods to smaller towns were carried by five lines of a narrow-gauge railway. Chemical, textile, cellulose and other factories were founded and three breweries operated in the city. At the turn of the twentieth century Klaipėda was provided with electricity, water supply, and telephone

communication; in 1904, the first electric tram line connected Turgus St. with Smeltė. Lithuanian publications could be purchased at Sandora Bookshop and on the initiative of publicist V. Gaigalaitis the first Museum of History and Ethnography was established in the city. The number of inhabitants increased to over 20,000 in 1900, including 1,300 Lithuanians. In 1932, Lithuanians accounted for 38.2 per cent of the 35,200 inhabitants of Klaipėda.



Sea Gates.

The twentieth century brought various changes into the political and economic life of Klaipėda. After Germany lost the First World War, in 1918 Klaipėda Region was temporarily separated and control over Klaipėda and its district was transferred from Germany and entrusted to England, the USA and France for temporary administration. In 1923, after a favourable international situation formed, the Government of Lithuania took over governance of the district and after long-lasting negotiations Klaipėda District was annexed to Lithuania with broad autonomous rights. However, due to the peculiar mentality of the inhabitants of Klaipėda, integration into the Lithuanian State did not last for a long time. The tradition of Lithuanian culture began manifesting itself more clearly only in the fourth decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: publishing of the newspapers *Klaipėdos Žinios* (Klaipėda News), *Vakarai* (the West) began, two schools of higher education were opened (a trade school and the Pedagogical Institute), bookshops, libraries, etc. began to operate. The formerly sleepy port of Klaipėda experienced a burst of commercial activity

during the years of autonomy, with many workers from Lithuania gaining employment, however, the German capital prevailed in enterprises. On 11–12 August 1934 the First Sea Festival was held so that the entire nation could come to the sea and “take pride in what has been achieved.”

The 23<sup>rd</sup> of March 1939 started in an unusual manner: the church bells tolled and sirens howled announcing the transfer of Klaipėda to the Reich of Germany. Adolf



*Teatro Square.*

Hitler, who came by ship that morning, was joyfully welcomed by the city's inhabitants. The euphoria soon faded because of the rising prices, closure of Lithuanian schools and societies, and the terror started by the National Socialists. To evade it many Lithuanians withdrew into Lithuania. In 1944, with the front approaching, the townspeople also sensed danger. Soon the order to evacuate into the depths of Germany was issued. By the beginning of 1945 Klaipėda had been largely destroyed (60 per cent of industrial structures and apartment houses and as much as 50 per cent of buildings of culture and everyday use were blow up). On 28 January the last German soldier left the city and the Soviet Army marched in. The original historical-cultural heritage that had been in existence for many centuries was destroyed. Many Germans and inhabitants of Klaipėda did not return and the city itself was rebuilt from scratch, destroying everything that was “foreign” and “German”. Despite all the shocks and disasters, Klaipėda grew. In the post-war period most of the population were Russians from all over the USSR. In

1959, there were 89,900 inhabitants and in 1989 this figure stood at 204,200. Life of the new inhabitants of Klaipėda mirrored that of Soviet Lithuania, with perhaps only the fishermen's festivals and growing fishing needs reminding one of the port city. In the 1970s, restoration of old buildings began, as well as work on the quay and the embankment, and a growing number of higher educational schools enlivened the cultural and intellectual life of the city.

A free-coloured flag that fluttered for the first time during the Sea Festival in 1988 changed Klaipėda's life. Today Klaipėda is called “Lithuania's gateway to the world”. The city, which is constantly strengthening economically and culturally, surprises both its inhabitants and foreign visitors by its beauty, culture and festivals and does not allow us to forget the importance of the port that was with such difficulty won back to Lithuania.

## Klaipėda [map 'Klaipėda'].

Telephone code: +370 46

  TIC, Turgaus St 7 (tourist information and bicycle rentals), tel. 41 21 86, fax 41 21 85, e-mail tic@klaipedainfo.lt, www.klaipedainfo.lt;

 Dviraciai (shopping and service centre), Turgaus Sq 25, tel. 41 19 49, (I–V 10.00–18.00, VI 10.00–15.00) www.fujibikes.lt;

 G. M. Umarai, Kūlių Vartų St 5, tel. 41 10 52, (I–V 10.00–19.00, VI 10.00–16.00);

 Panther dviračiai, Turgaus Sq 23, tel. 41 20 38 (I–V 10.00–18.00, VI 10.00–15.00);

 Du Ratai (bicycle rentals), mob. 91 773, www.bicycle.lt;

 Bus station, Butkų Juzės St 9, tel. 41 15 47, www.klap.lt;

 Railway station, Prie stoties St 5A, tel. 31 36 77, www.litrail.lt.

### Places to visit [map 'Klaipėda']:

**M (1)** Pilies Museum, Pilies St 4, tel. 41 05 24 (III–VI 10.00–18.00). This is a modern museum which tells about the settlement of the city, the development of the castle, reflects the townspeople's mode of life in Old Klaipėda.

**M (2)** History Museum of Lithuania Minor, Didžioji Vandens St 6, tel. 41 05 24 (II–VI 10.00–18.00), www.mlimuziejus.lt. The museum was founded in one of the oldest buildings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the Old Town. The history of Klaipėda and the whole Lithuanian Minor is reflected here in even 56,000 exhibits (archaeological findings, townspeople's items, furniture and dishes of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century).

**M (3)** Smithery Museum, Šaltkalvių St 2, tel. 41 05 26 (II–VI 10.00–18.00). It exhibits cemetery crosses, fences, architectural pieces of the Old Town, fishing tackle, and household items of Klaipėda County (founded by Dionyzas Varkalis).

**M (4)** Clock Museum, Liepų St 12, tel. 41 04 13 (II–VI 12.00–18.00). This museum has one of the largest exhibitions of clocks in Europe, revealing the historical development of time measuring devices: calendars, sun, water, fire, sand and mechanical clocks.

– **(5)** Music Theatre, Danės St 19, tel. 39 74 02, www.muzikinis.ku.lt.

– **(6)** Drama Theatre, Teatro Sq 2, tel. 31 44 53, www.kldteatras.lt.

### Other places to visit in the centre of Klaipėda [map 'Klaipėda']:

– **(7)** Teatro Square is the heart of Klaipėda, the favourite gathering place of Klaipėda residents and city guests. Concerts, the International Castle Jazz Festival, the Sea Festival and other events take place here. Ann from Tharau's statue is the main accent of Teatro Square. It is a monument dedicated to a poet born in Klaipėda, Professor Simon Dach of Königsberg University. Ann is a girl the poet fell in love with at first sight, but she was engaged to another man. Dach dedicated the love song 'Ann from Tharau' to the girl, which is sung not only in Germany, but also in Switzerland and Austria.

– **(8)** Aukštoji St 8 is a beautiful warehouse in fachwerk style which avoided the Great Fire of 1854 and further destructions. In Klaipėda framed structures were extremely popular in the early

- 19<sup>th</sup> century when trade in the seaport flourished during Napoleonic wars.
- (9) Atgimimo Square is the former Lenin Square where in Soviet times Lenin's memorial stood. Here all three seaboard bicycle trail routes merge together.
  - (10) Information Column next to Biržos Bridge is a metrological column built by merchants in 1889. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the column was destroyed while reconstructing the exchange; however, it was rebuilt during the city's 750<sup>th</sup> anniversary.
  - (11) Arka is a memorial to the unified Lithuania built in 2003 on the commemoration of the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Klaipėda County joining Lithuania. The monument weighs 150 tons and is 8.5 m high. The small column made of red granite symbolises Lithuanian Minor and the grey one - Lithuania Greater. The upper cloven part of the monument reflects Königsberg County (Kaliningrad). Ieva Simonaitytė's words carved on the monument are We are one nation, one land, one Lithuania.
  - (12) Klaipėda County administration building, the former Town Hall since 1846 (Danės St 17), is a historical building in Classicism style where Prussian King Friedrich Wilhelm III lived with Queen Louise for one year during the Napoleonic wars.
  - (13) The threemasted sailboat Meridianas is one of the most beautiful symbols of the city of Klaipėda. The boat was built in 1948 in Finland at a Turkish shipyard as a contribution to the Soviet Union after World War II. Today it houses a restaurant in which one can try 'Rainekės' beer brewed in accordance with the old traditions.
  - (14) Jonas Hill complex is composed of three separate territories: the first includes the reconstructed Galdernas, Purmarkas bastions, a defence wall and the old ravelin and foss, the second includes the Prussian bastion remains (now a policlinic), the third includes Malūno bastion remains (now a school).
  - (15) The Central Post Office (Liepų St) is a two-storey building made of red clinker blocks with a mansard, an ornate interior hall and a carillon installed in the tower, whose four bell set was famous as early as in the 14–16<sup>th</sup> century. These bells in the tower's clock struck hours, which is why they were called chimes. Nowadays you can listen to a more modern carillon sound each weekend at noon.
  - (16) Mažvydas Sculpture Park was established at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century on the site of the old Klaipėda cemetery, which was considered to be one of the most beautiful in the Baltic States. An orthodox church was built in 1938 next to the park in Liepų St as a chapel of this cemetery. In the other part of the park a monument was built in the shape of a sword after the reconstruction of the Soviet soldiers' cemetery.

# KLAIPĖDA



Priestocių g.

S. Neris g.

16

S. Dabulėnų g.

M. Mažvydo apleta

H. Marito g.

S. Daukanto g.

Naujoji uosto g.

12

H. Naifejo Ilkosio g.

13

H. Tili g.

Danė g.

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

14

13

12

11

10

9

8

7

6

5

## ABOUT THE SEASIDE CYCLE ROUTE

### Route lengths

The Seaside Cycle Route is composed of three separate sections totalling 216 km in length. Starting the journey in Klaipėda these trail sections are described in the publication in the following order:

1. south along the Curonian Spit to Nida (52 km / 32 miles);
2. north to the Latvian border (49 km / 31 miles);
3. south along Pamarys to Rusnė Island (115 km / 72 miles).

These distances were calculated by travelling the most direct route without any detours, which you should take to visit interesting places on or off the trail. The first trail section along the Curonian Spit can be prolonged by 10 km if you detour to Juodkrantė and want to visit all the points of interest. The third part can be prolonged by almost the same amount if you choose the route through Minija (Mingė) village. But the latter can be shortened by 2 km if you choose

an alternative unmarked route from Klaipėda to Priekulė through Dituva Allotments.

### Trail surfaces and traffic

Two trail sections along the seaboard are fully equipped bicycle trails with a hard surface (asphalt or drags); only a small section overlaps with country roads and town streets, where there are still no equipped high quality bicycle trails. Except for in Klaipėda the third trail section (to Rusnė Island) has almost no trails. It mostly overlaps with roads, mainly gravelled roads, and one 750-metre section between Šernai and Traubiai goes through a field which can be impossible to cross after a rain. From Klaipėda to Priekulė there is an alternative unmarked, however, safer route through Dituva Allotments.

### Markings

This is the first bicycle trail in Lithuania marked with special bicycle trail signs with a bicycle symbol and the trail number against a blue background. The alternative routes indicated in the guidebook are not marked. In the future, plans are to integrate the

Seaside Cycle Route which joins Latvia with Kaliningrad County into the European Cycle Route Net 'EuroVelo©' (No. 10 'Baltic Sea Circuit' [www.eurovelo.org](http://www.eurovelo.org)) and Route R1 (Calais (France)–St. Petersburg (Russia)).

## PLANNING YOUR TOUR

### Tourist information sources

You can find information about places to visit and tourist services on the Seaside Cycle Route with precise geographic co-ordinates in the National Tourist Information System on the internet [www.travel.lt](http://www.travel.lt), or go to a tourism information centre where you can obtain other publications as well (the Seaside Cycle Route map with common routes, maps of towns and other trail tour guides for cyclists). Most of the Seaside Cycle Route publications can be sent from the Internet in PDF format from [www.bicycle.lt/seasideroute/](http://www.bicycle.lt/seasideroute/) (or [www.bicycle.lt/kuستنradweg/](http://www.bicycle.lt/kuستنradweg/) in German). You can find the latest information about specialised services for cyclists in the Virtual Cycle Information Centre established by the Lithuanian Cyclist Community [www.bicycle.lt](http://www.bicycle.lt).

## **HOW TO COME TO THE LITHUANIAN SEASIDE?**

### **By plane**

Bicycle transportation is limited, please check with the airlines in advance. Regular direct flights from / to Palanga International Airport are operated by Scandinavian Airlines (SAS), Air Lithuania, Fly LAL (former Lithuanian Airlines) and Amber Air.

Major regular direct flight destinations during summer season are: Billund and Copenhagen (Denmark), Stockholm and Ronneby (Sweden), Oslo (Norway), Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt and Hannover (Germany), London (Great Britain). Due to good connections to Palanga with SAS and Air Lithuania, it is easy to reach from many European cities via Copenhagen and Billund.

Klaipėda / Palanga International Airport, Palanga, Liepojos St 1, tel. +370 460 52 020, [www.palanga-airport.lt](http://www.palanga-airport.lt).

You may fly with traditional or low fare airlines (i.e. Ryanair, Wizz Air, Air Baltic) directly to Kaunas, Vilnius, or Riga and then take a bus or train to Klaipėda, Palanga, or Nida (2–7 hours).

### **By train**

Bicycles can be easily transported by train using special areas and racks or in the post carriages. In summer it is possible to carry bicycles on the long distance trains Pajūris and Baltija, running from Vilnius to the seaside, in the special places for handicapped and bicycles. Transportation fee per bicycle 1–7 Litās (~0.3–2 Euro) depending on distance. The number of bicycle stands is limited; more than four cyclists may be a problem when ordering tickets in advance. More information on train schedules and prices is available in the train stations or on the web page of the Lithuanian Railways (“Lietuvos Geležinkeliai in Lithuanian”) [www.litrail.lt](http://www.litrail.lt).

### **By bus**

Bus is the most popular means of transport in the Baltic States, and there are many more buses than trains. Even if bicycle transportation by bus officially is not possible, it is usually possible to make an agreement with the bus driver. You can pack your bike in the luggage area (it is usually better to take the front wheel off) for a small fee, if the space

allows. The situation with national and international buses is similar.

You can find bus schedules of companies going to the Lithuanian seaside on the web: [www.klap.lt](http://www.klap.lt), [www.toks.lt](http://www.toks.lt), [www.kautra.lt](http://www.kautra.lt), [www.busturas.lt](http://www.busturas.lt).

For larger groups, travel agencies offer transport services by bus or minibuses and special trailers for 16–20 bicycles.

### **By ferry**

Bicycle transportation on international ferries is not a problem and not expensive, but bear in mind that ferries are booked well in advance. There are international cargo-passenger ferries running to Klaipėda from Kiel (Germany) and Karlshamn (Sweden).

**Klaipėda International Ferry Port**, Perkėlos St 10, tel. +370 46 39 50 50, [www.portofklaipeda.lt](http://www.portofklaipeda.lt).

Since 2006 there is the only operator of the international passenger ferry lines in Klaipėda port:

**LISCO Baltic Service**, Klaipėda, J. Janonio St 24, tel. +370 46 39 36 11, e-mail [passenger@lisco.lt](mailto:passenger@lisco.lt), [www.lisco.lt](http://www.lisco.lt).

Local Ferry (Klaipėda–Smiltynė, Curonian Spit):

*I – Old Ferry Terminal (operating hours: 5.30 a.m.–3.00 a.m.), Žvejų St 8 (in the old town), tel. +370 46 31 11 17;*

*II – New Ferry Terminal – also for busses and cars (operating hours: 6.30 a.m.–11.30 p.m.), Nemuno St 8, tel. +370 46 36 70 03.*

The fee for a return ticket is the same for a passenger with the bicycle and without – 1.5 Litas (~0.45 Euro, in 2005). Schedules and more information are available on the web page of Smiltynės Perkėla [www.keltas.lt](http://www.keltas.lt).

### **By boat (on the Curonian Lagoon)**

Unfortunately there are no regular ferries across the Curonian Lagoon. Therefore you must book a boat to get your group or individual clients from Nida or Juodkrantė to Šturmai, Uostadvaris, Šilutė, Rusnė, or Minija (Minge). You may also take a cruise from Klaipėda to Nida via Juodkrantė or buy tickets to the speed boat from Kaunas to Nida via Rusnė (from May 2006). Schedules and more information: [www.jukunda.lt](http://www.jukunda.lt), [www.nemunolinija.lt](http://www.nemunolinija.lt) and in local tourist information centres.

### **Where to get a bicycle for cycling tour?**

#### **Bicycle shops and repair services**

The largest selection of bicycles and parts as well as bicycle repair services is concentrated in Klaipėda. Several bicycle shops and repair shops may be found in smaller towns and resorts: Kretinga, Palanga, Šilutė. Most of the bicycle shops in Klaipėda listed below offer repair services:

- *Bicycle Shopping and Service Centre, Turgaus Sq 25, tel. +370 46 41 19 49, [www.fujibikes.lt](http://www.fujibikes.lt).*
- *Dviratis Plius, Taikos Ave 56, tel. +370 46 34 49 66, [www.saginda.lt](http://www.saginda.lt).*
- *G. M. Umarai, Kulių Vartų St 5, tel. +370 46 41 10 52.*
- *Panther Dviračiai, Turgaus Sq 23, tel. +370 46 41 20 38.*
- *Sanifinas, Šilutės Rd 79, tel. +370 46 49 69 22.*
- *2 Ratai, Taikos Ave 40, tel. +370 46 38 16 66, [www.2ratai.lt](http://www.2ratai.lt).*

### **Bicycle rental**

There are plenty of places to rent a bicycle in the streets of the seaside resorts of Nida, Juodkrantė and Palanga. But high quality trekking / hybrid bicycles, suitable for longer ride, are available at a limited number of companies in Klaipėda. Countryside farmsteads and hotels offer ordinary bicycles.

Please note that insurance for bicycle rentals is not yet available in Lithuania. Therefore, companies require a deposit and a signed contract.

#### **Du Ratai Public Organisation (BaltiCCycle project)**

Rental of high quality trekking / hybrid bicycles and tourist equipment; bicycle delivery / collection services in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia; cycle maps and tour guides. Mob.: +370 699 56 009, 615 91 773, fax +370 46 49 29 26, e-mail [info@bicycle.lt](mailto:info@bicycle.lt); an online bicycle rental reservation form is available via [www.bicycle.lt](http://www.bicycle.lt).

**Klaipėda Tourist and Culture Information Centre**, Turgaus St 7, tel. +370 46 41 21 86, e-mail [tic@one.lt](mailto:tic@one.lt).

A stylized landscape illustration. The foreground is a teal body of water with white wave-like shapes. A yellow hill rises from the water's edge. On the left side of the hill, two blue silhouettes of people are riding bicycles. The central part of the hill is a large yellow area containing the text 'The Curonian Spit'. To the right, a white staircase leads up the hill. In the background, there are green trees with brown trunks. The sky is light blue with white clouds and a small white bird.

## The Curonian Spit



## FROM KLAIPĖDA KURŠIŲ NERIJA TO NIDA – 52 KM

This cycle route will fascinate you because it is the most impressive in Lithuania. The trip starts from the centre of Klaipėda by ferry to the Curonian Spit (Kuršių Nerija). The escort of squealing seagulls will remind you that Klaipėda is a sea town, which prides itself on the Marine Museum, Aquarium and Dolphinarium. Further the route leads you through Curonian Spit National Park, which the United Nations Organisation UNESCO has recognised as one of the most unique objects of the priceless natural and cultural heritage of the Baltic Sea Region. The landscape of the Curonian Spit is a unique phenomenon, which has exceptional importance in understanding man's relationship with nature. The most attractive thing is the towering dunes – some of which still shift with the wind – scattered among fragrant pine forests, from which spectacular views of the Baltic Sea and the Curonian Lagoon open. The settlements scattered along the coast of the Curonian Lagoon – Juodkrantė,

Pervalka, Preila and Nida – are unique in their architectural and ethnographic heritage. The traditional fishermen's houses are covered with roofs of thatch and tiles. Horse head-shaped weather-cocks and drying nets and coastal lighthouses remind the visitor that fishing is the traditional occupation of the locals, which has penetrated their lives and spiritual culture. You can climb Parnidis Dune with its sundial and calendar, or walk among the wooden folk sculptures on Witches' Hill (Raganų kalnas). Nearby you can see colonies of cormorants and grey herons. Neringa offers spacious clean sandy beaches where you can relax or refresh yourself in the waves of the sea.

On this route you'll reach Nida by asphalt cycling trail, which runs through the pine forests along the entire spit. You can take a boat from Nida to the Nemunas Delta and return to Klaipėda along the roads of Pamarys. Those who crave the Soviet exotic may easily reach Kaliningrad from Kuršių Nerija.

## From Klaipėda to Juodkrantė – 21 km

Atgimimo Square – 0.3 – Pilies Bridge – 0.2 – Old Ferry Landing– 1.4 – the beach at the lifeguard station – 2.4 – Rest area and path to the New Ferry Landing– 4.7 – Meška Ravine (Meškos Dauba) (9 km).

Starting your trip from Atgimimo Square (9), where three sections of cycle trails meet, you go as far as the Old Ferry Landing. First go along the cycle trail by the Danė River past the Fisherman's (Žvejo) sculpture as far as Castle (Pilies) Bridge. Cross the bridge and ride on along the left side of the Danė River (after the Ferry terminal is built in Northern Horn (Šiaurinis Ragas) on the right side of the river, you'll go straight under the bridge). At the supervised crossing you cross Pilies St and going along Žvejų St reach the Old Ferry Landing. Buy a return ticket at the ticket office and in 10 minutes you'll find yourself on the other side of Klaipėda Canal – Smiltynė. You can spend half a day there visiting the Sea Museum and Dolphinarium and enjoy the dolphin and California sea lion shows at the

Dolphinarium (18). If you're in a hurry to go to Nida, when you get off the ferry turn left and follow the cycle trail along Smiltynės St as far as Nerija Bar where you turn right in the direction of the sea. At the lifeguard station it is convenient to cycle to the beach and after chaining your bicycles safely to a metal stand to sunbathe or have a swim. After a short rest proceed along the newly asphalted trail as far as Juodkrantė. At first the trail leads along the seashore among the forest and the protective dune to the turn towards Meška Ravine.

### Smiltynė (Klaipėda) [Map Nos. 1, 7]

Telephone code: +370 46

-  Curonian Spit National Park Visitor Centre, Smiltynės St 11, open June–August I–IV 8.00–17.00, V 8.00–16.00, VI 9.00–16.00, VII 10.00–14.00; September May I–IV 8.00–16.00, V 8.00–15.00, tel. 40 22 57, e-mail [info@nerija.lt](mailto:info@nerija.lt), [www.nerija.lt](http://www.nerija.lt);
-  Smiltynės Ferry Landing (5.30–3.00), Žvejų St 8, tel. 31 11 17, [www.keltas.lt](http://www.keltas.lt).

### Highlights:

- M(17)** Museum of Nature of the Curonian Spit National Park, Smiltynės Rd 10, tel. 39 11 77, Open in May–September III–VII 11.00–18.00, June–August II–VII 11.00–18.00. Expositions displayed in three buildings tell you about the geological development of the Curonian Spit, its geographical peculiarities, formation of the landscape, its fauna and flora. The exposition displays the most characteristic plants of the Curonian Spit, stuffed mammals, birds, collections of butterflies and insects.
- M(18)** Lithuanian Sea Museum and Dolphinarium, Smiltynės Rd 3, tel.: 49 07 40, 49 07 54, [www.juru.muziejus.lt](http://www.juru.muziejus.lt), Open October–April VI–VII 10.30–16.30, shows at the Dolphinarium – 12.00 and 15.00, May–September III–VII 10.30–17.30, shows at the Dolphinarium – 12.00 and 15.00, June–August II–VII 10.30–18.30, shows at the Dolphinarium – 12.00, 14.00 and 16.00. Around the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there was a defensive coastal stronghold in this place. At the

end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the stronghold was restored and the complex of the Sea Museum was opened there, and later on – the Dolphinarium.

†† (19) Cemetery of the village of Kopgalis of the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> century where the first Lithuanian Captain L. Stulpinas (1871–1934) is buried.

☀ (20) The southern pier of the gate of Klaipėda Port from which one can admire the sea and watch the ships.

Smiltynė is a settlement that appeared as a transit point of the Curonian Spit road Karaliaučius–Klaipėda. As far back as the fifteenth century this locality was called Sandberg (Sand Hill). During the time of floating ice and storms, postmen, messengers, merchants, and soldiers seeking to cross the lagoon waited several days or even a week. An inn was opened there where they could stay. Since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century Smiltynė has been forming as a recreational zone of the city. Kurhauzas was built; next to it open-air cafés were set up and harbours were arranged. Several quarters of

inhabitants' summer villas were developed. They were inhabited by families of wealthy residents of Klaipėda – officials, merchants. Before the First World War there was a large folk-style restaurant in the dunes near the sea. After the Second World War some of the summer villas deteriorated, others were occupied by families of foresters and port workers. Currently Smiltynė is part of the city of Klaipėda, where about 100 people live. The famous Sea Museum and Dolphinarium (18),

a yacht club, and a sports centre operate in Smiltynė; the cleanest beaches in Klaipėda are there.

### **Kopgalis [Map Nos. 1, 7]**

Establishment of the village of Kopgalis began next to the ballast yard at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Sailing vessels got rid of their ballast in that place and replenished themselves with it so that they could maintain the stability of an unloaded vessel in a stormy sea. Only after the Prussian authorities granted greater privileges did the first newcomers take up residence in Kopgalis. In 1921, as many as seven farmsteads already stood there. The inhabitants loaded the ballast, strengthened the coasts, covered them with turves, went fishing, and grew potatoes. Kopgalis was the first place of recreation in the Curonian Spit. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century beaches for women and men were opened.



*Kopgalis.*



**Meška Ravine – 0.3 – Old post office road – 9 – “The Green Road” (Žaliasis kelias) – 1 – Prie Švyturio Rest Area – 1.7 – Juodkrantė Trail (12 km)**

At Meška Ravine the cycle trail turns away from the sea and runs into the forest. After it has almost reached the main road of Nida it turns south again and winds along the old post office road covered with mountain pines along the Curonian Spit. On the way to

Juodkrantė you'll see the Prie Švyturio Rest Area where you can stop for a short rest. If you want to build a fire there, you must obtain a permit from Juodkrantė Forestry (22). After resting you continue your trip and soon come to an asphalt pedestrian-cycle trail, which links the beach with the centre of Juodkrantė (1.5 km). If you want to look around Juodkrantė and continue your trip to Nida, you'll have to get over a high dune twice and in the town itself. Go another 6 km as

far as the colony of grey herons and cormorants (28) and back. However, spare no time and pains to visit one of the most interesting settlements of the Curonian Spit.

### **Alksnynė [Map No. 2]**

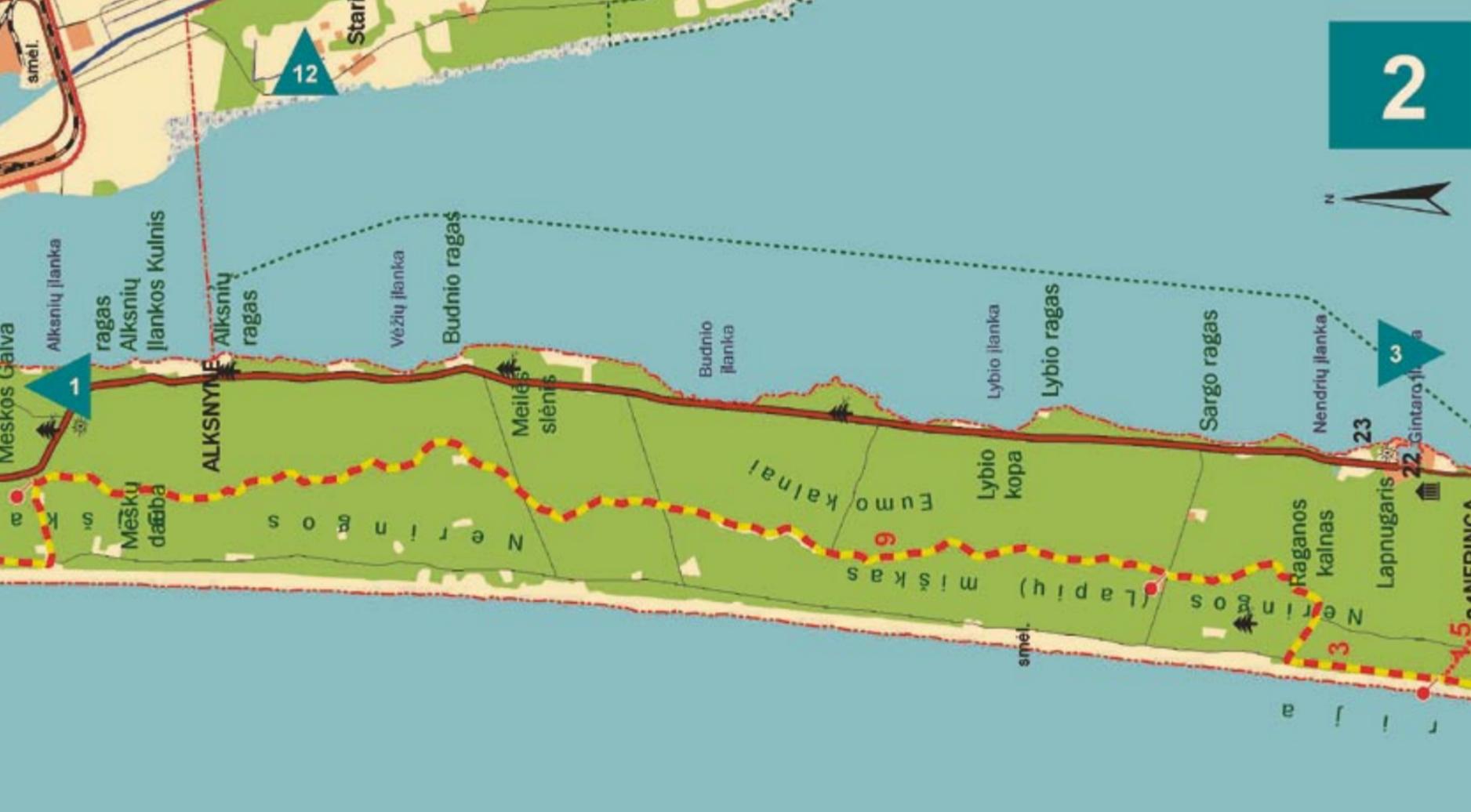
Alksnynė (earlier referred to as Erlenhorst) was founded at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a forestry farmstead. Up to 1945 its permanent residents were the forester and his family. They looked after the fore-dune ridge and organised planting the environs with shrubs and trees. Currently four people live on the Alksnynė farmstead.



*Cycle trail through pine forests.*



*Dunes of the Baltic seashore.*



2



1

ALKSNYNE

3

23

22

5

5

### Juodkrantė [Map No. 3]

Telephone code: +370 469

**i** Tourist Information Centre at the Ažuolynas Hotel, L. Rėzos St 54, tel. 53 490;

**i** Tourist Information Centre Terminal at the Exhibition Hall, L. Rėzos St 8;

**i** Jovila Water Tourist Agency, L. Rėzos St 1–2, mob. 684 78 707, [www.jovila.com](http://www.jovila.com);

**x** Bicycle rent point on the embankment near Hill of Witches (Raganų Kalnas), mob. +370 612 84541;



Cycle trail in Juodkrantė.

### Highlights:

**M (21)** Vėtrungių Gallery, L. Rėzos St 13, tel. 53 357;

– **(22)** Juodkrantė Forestry, Gintaro Jlanka 9, tel. 53 273.

Juodkrantė, the second largest settlement of Neringa and popular destination for holidaymakers and tourists, was first mentioned in historical documents as far back as 1429. Then it was closer to the sea, about 2.5 km north of its present location. Thirteen homesteads were almost buried under the sand. Following the plague epidemic there were only six inhabited homesteads left there. At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century emigrants from the village of Karvaičiai, which was buried under the sand, moved there. They called their village Naujieji Karvaičiai. Later the villages of Naujieji Karvaičiai, Juodkrantė near the church and the village of Senoji Juodkrantė merged into an integral settlement. In the last half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the development of the settlement was determined by the development of the resort and the activities of the amber extracting

company. Juodkrantė became well-known as a resort in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when ships started to sail from Klaipėda to Juodkrantė. After the embankment was completed they sailed from Tilsit and “Krantas”. In 1860–1890 the development of the resort was encouraged by the activities of the amber extracting company W. Stantien & M. Becker. In the nineteenth – beginning of the twentieth century many hotels, summer villas, summer cottages, restaurants, and shops were opened. In the course of a hundred years the number of inhabitants of Juodkrantė grew from 157 to 600. At present about 720 inhabitants are registered in the town. Many of them arrive only on weekends to relax at their summer cottages.



### Highlights in Juodkrantė [Map No. 3]

- ☀️ (23) Amber Bay (Gintaro Įlanka), which formed due to amber extraction by the company W. Stantien & M. Becker in 1860-1890. A port of excavating machines, repair shops, and barracks for workers was built there. Up to 23 excavating machines at a time worked at Amber Bay, which extracted about 2,000 tons of amber during 30 years of activities.
- 🌳 (24) Dendrological trail in the old forest of Curonian Spit (1600). There are 16 shel-



Juodkrantė promenade.

ters in which stands with descriptions of trees and bushes, drawings, and photographs are placed.

- 🏛️ (25) Rock Sculpture Park on the embankment of the lagoon established during the international symposium Earth and Water (Žemė ir Vanduo) held in 1997-1999.
- 🏛️ (26) An open-air exposition of wooden folk sculptures on Hill of Witches (Raganų kalnas) (earlier called Jonas, Ieva) (project of the sculptor S. Šarapovas and architect A. Nasvytis), which abounds in witches and devils from Lithuanian fairy tales and legends. Hill of Witches has witnessed Midsummer's Day celebrations since olden times.
- 🏛️ (27) The Neo-Gothic style Juodkrantė Church (1885) has belonged to the community of Evangelist Lutherans since 1989; Catholic and Protestant services are also held there.
- ☀️ (28) The hatching site of grey herons and great cormorants, which is one of the largest bird colonies in Europe (582 grey herons and 1,361 great cormorant couples hatched there in 2000).

### From Juodkrantė to Nida – 31 km

Juodkrantė (crossing of cycle trails on the seashore) – 3 – Beginning of a separate cycle trail – 4 – Turn into the forest – 5.5 – Grey dunes (Negyvosios Kopos) (12.5 km) [Map No. 3]

From Juodkrantė you take a cycle trail south along the seashore towards Nida. Passing the beached marked with the blue flag, you go on



Rock Sculpture Park.



*Rağanų kalnas (Witches' Hill) in Juodkrantė.*

along the bicycle trail separated from the road by a white solid line. At the information stand you turn into a separate cycle trail and go on through the Nagliai Nature Reserve (Naglių gamtos rezervatas). At first you go along the seashore between the forest and the protective dune, then turn into the forest, go 400 m to the Klaipėda–Nida Road (No. 167) and ride along the side. Cross this road at the rest area, where a pedestrian path leads to the Grey Dunes (29).



*Traditional weather-cocks.*

### **Highlights:**

🌳 (29) A trail in the Nagliai Nature Reserve is a pedestrian path made of boards winding through the reserve, which runs for 9 km between Juodkrantė and Pervalka. You can see the Grey Dunes (also referred to as the Dead Dunes (Mirusios Kopos)) and from their top a spectacular view of the Baltic Sea, the Curonian Lagoon and the Nemunas Delta opens. Lithuanians often call this place the Lithuanian Sahara.



*Path in the Nagliai Nature Reserve.*

## Grey Dunes –7 – Pervalka Road – 1.3 – Pervalka (4 km)

To reach the Dead Dunes from the path you have to go on through the pine forests as far as Pervalka. On your way you cross the road leading to the town. The cycle route takes you to the main street of Pervalka in the southern part of the town. Therefore, if you want to look around the town and see Žirgų Lighthouse, as well as to have a snack or stay overnight,



Cycle trail.

turn left to the centre of town. If you want to continue your trip, turn right and follow the bicycle route towards Preila.

### Pervalka [Map No. 4]

When moving from a village buried under the sand, the Curonians did not leave their houses, but took them in pieces and assembled them in the new place. The inhabitants of Naujieji Nagliai did this. Some of them established the settlement of Pervalka (formerly Perwelk) in 1843. The name Pervalka is related to dragging houses from one place to another. Another origin of the name is derived from the word pervalkas, which means a dry place between two waters through which boats are dragged. It was in this way that, with the change in seasons, that the fishermen of Curonian Spit dragged their fishing boats from the sea to the lagoon and vice versa. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were 5 homesteads with 45 inhabitants in Pervalka, who mainly engaged in fishing. In the course of a hundred years the number of permanent residents increased fourfold (176). In 1900, a school was opened and a lighthouse was

built in Pervalka. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century individual holidaymakers trying to escape a racket of resort area, discovered the village. However, Pervalka is an oasis of peace even today, perhaps due to the fact that it attracts holidaymakers craving peace and quiet. Today Pervalka is the smallest settlement of the Curonian Spit, with only about 20 permanent residents.

### Highlights:

📍 (30) *Žirgų Lighthouse (1900) in the Curonian Lagoon behind Agila Bay (Agilos Jlanka) in front of Žirgų Horn (Žirgų Ragas) of Birštynas Cape (Birštyno Iškyšulys). Rebuilt twice, it is currently functioning and can be reached by boat or seen from the coast of Curonian Spit.*



Agilė

smėl.

smėl.  
Negvosios  
(Mirusios)  
kopos

smėl.

smėl.  
Libio įlanka

Vinkio kopa

smėl.

Lydumo ragas

smėl.  
Agilės (Naglių) įlanka

Garbės  
ragas

smėl.

Smilityne

Nida

5.4

29

smėl.  
Agilės  
(Naglių)  
kopa

4.2

smėl.

Skirpsto  
kopa

30

Birštyno  
iškyšulys

Zirgų  
(Arklių)  
ragas

Pervalka

5

Pervalkos įlanka

4

**Pervalka – 3 – Monument to L. Rėzai –  
0.5 – Karvaičiai Dune (Karvaičių Kopa) –  
2 – Centre of Preila (5.5 km)**

You go from Pervalka to Preila along the bicycle trail, which goes right to the Curonian Lagoon at Karvaičiai Bay (Karvaičių Įlanka). In Preila you can rest, visit the old cemetery, fishermen's houses, buy fresh smoked fish, go to the sea by a bicycle route that has recently been built (about 2 km). Passing Preila on the only street of this town running along the Curonian Lagoon you go on south towards Nida past 53.3-meter-high Preila Hill (Preilos Kalnas) and the new hotel.

**Preila [Map No. 5]**

**i** *Tourist Information Centre Terminal at Preila Subdistrict Office, Preilos St 27.*

The residents of the buried village of Naujieji Nagliai, who moved even the school from their former village, founded the settlement of Preila in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Though life in Preila was not easy, the number of residents was on the rise and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup>

century it totalled about 250 people. Then a new school was built and a hotel was opened. At present 205 people live in Preila and there are about 20 holiday homes and summer cottages.

**Highlights in Preila and its environs:**

- 🏛️ (31)** *Old school of Preila.*
- ✙ (32)** *Ethnographic cemetery of Preila of the 19<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup> centuries.*
- 🌳 (33)** *Karvaičiai Hill, where the village of Karvaičiai stood until the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. When drawing away from shifting sand its residents moved more than once from one place to another. After a long and unsuccessful battle with sand, when the Karvaičiai Church was buried under sand, the people left the village.*
- 🏛️ (34)** *Wooden monument to one of the most famous folklorists and poets of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Professor of Karaliaučius University Liudvikas Gediminas Rėza (1776–1840), who came from the village of Karvaičiai.*
- ☀ (35)** *Vecekrugės Hill (Senosios Smuklės/Vecekrugės Kopa) is the highest dune of the Curonian Spit (67.2 m). Its name is*

*derived from the Curonian word “vece” meaning “old” and “kruogs” meaning “inn”, remembering the inn which once was located at the foot of the dune. The dune is covered with mountain pines. From the top of the dune you can see Bulvikis, Preila Didysis and Mažasis, Ožka, Pervalka, Žirgai and Grobštas horns stretching into the Curonian Lagoon.*



Wooden monument to Liudvikas Gediminas Rėza.



Preila – 2.4 – Vecekrugas Dune – 2.8 –  
Bulvikis Horn – 0.5 – End of the trail at the  
airport – 2 – Thomas Mann Museum –  
1.3 – Centre of Nida (9 km)

At the newly built Preila Hotel next to Preila Minor Bay (Mažosios Preilos Įlanka) the asphalt bicycle trail starts again, protected from careless drivers by barriers on both sides. On your way to Nida you can stop for a short rest at the rest area with a breathtaking



Vecekrugas Dune.

view of Vecekrugas Dune and at the end of the bicycle route, near the turn to the Nida airport, which has generated many controversial discussions, you go on along Purvynės St. as far as the embankment of the Curonian Lagoon. Turn left to the seashore and go along the Nida embankment to the very centre. On your way you pass the Thomas Mann Museum, Nidos Smiltė Hotel and K. Mizgiris' Amber Gallery-Museum.



Near the Curonian Lagoon in Nida.

## Nida [Map No. 6]

Telephone code: +370 469,

-  Agila, Taikos St 4, tel. 52 345, e-mail info@visitneringa.lt, www.neringainfo.lt.
-  The Curonian Spit National Park Visitor Centre, Naglių St 8, tel. 51 256.
-  Terminal at the Public Library of Neringa, Pamario St 53.
-  Bus station, Naglių St 18E, tel. 52 472.
-  Quay, Naglių St 16, tel. 52 333.
-  Trips by boat in the Curonian Lagoon and the Nemunas Delta (from Nida Quay):
-  The Forelle ship, tel. 52 742, mob. +370 615 44 689;
-  The Aistis ship, mob. +370 698 88 815;
-  The Lana yacht, mob. +370 698 11 730.

### Bicycle rent:

-   H. Šlapikas, Lotmiškio St 21–2, mob. +370 678 13 802;
- I. Miliūnas, mob. +370 682 14 798.



5

Preilos kalnas

35

Senosios Smuklės  
(Vecekrugo) kopa

6

Medžių Būd kalnas

Bulvikio kalnas

Giedružės kalnas

Briedžių miškas

PURVYNE

36

Angių kalnas

NERINGA

42

Utių kalnas

41

NIDA

Parnidžio  
(Parnidos) kopānka

43

Parnidžio (Parnidos) kopānka

smėl.

Grobšto įlanka

Sklandytojų kopa



6

The first mention of Nida was made in 1429. The village was established not far from the sea, about 2 km south from present-day Nida. The innkeeper's family, families of 18 fishermen, three part-time fishermen and one lodger lived in Nida in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. At that time bare land turned into a waste ground of shifting sand. Due to worsening living conditions and the plague epidemic that struck, the number of people in the settlement began to decrease at the

beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Early in the 17<sup>th</sup> century Nida was the first to be buried under sand and its residents moved towards the Curonian Lagoon, however a hundred years later that place was also buried under sand. It was only at the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century that residents of Nida moved to the present-day location where a post office (moved there from Kuncai, which was buried under sand) and a school (1743) were opened. The number of residents began to grow.

However, incessant cutting of the forest and breeding of large herds of animals, which trampled down and destroyed the sensitive green cover, allowed sand to spread. Again shifting sand became the main enemy of Nida. At that time, some residents of Nida fleeing from sand founded the village of Skruzdynė. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century two owners of the Nida post office started to battle the sand: father Dovydas Gotlybas and his son Georgas Gotlybas Kuvertai. They built fences and planted the post office road and the approaches of the village with trees. The works started by father and son Kuvertai saved Nida from another migration.

Before 1945 the settlement of Nida was divided into Skruzdynė, Purvynė, the port (Haken oder Ancker) and the village of Nida (Hauptdorf), stretching from the Hotel Jūratė complex to the church. Traces of the former villages are noticeable even today in the winding streets of Nida. Currently about 1,650 people reside in Nida. It is the administrative centre of the town of Neringa, many houses of which are architectural monuments.



*Old homesteads in Nida.*



*Going on a trip by local kurėnas.*



Amber gallery-museum.

**Highlights [Map No. 6]:**

Opening hours of most museums: June–mid-September I–VII 10.00–18.00; mid-September–May II–VI 10.00–17.00.

**M(36)** Thomas Mann Museum, Skruzdynės St 17, tel. 52 260, [www.mann.lt](http://www.mann.lt). This is the summer house of famous German writer Thomas Mann, who liked to relax and work in Nida in the summers.

**M(37)** Neringa Museum of History, Pama-

rio St 53, tel. 51 162. The museum shows traditional occupations of the old local inhabitants of Curonian Spit, the history of the settlement of Nida and the gliding school. Learn about ice fishing and the original occupation of the Curonians – catching crows.

**M(38)** Fisherman's Ethnographic Homestead-Museum, Naglių St 4, tel. 52 372. This is a fisherman's homestead built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the



Thomas Mann summer house.



Golden dunes of Nida.



Ethnographic cemetery with wooden crosses in Nida.

20<sup>th</sup> century where equipment, furniture, textiles, everyday utensils, tools, etc. of that time are displayed.

**M** (39) Kazimieras Mizgiris' Amber Gallery-Museum, Pamario St 20, tel. 52 573, [www.ambergallery.lt](http://www.ambergallery.lt). See a unique collection of Klebsas (also referred to as Juodkrantė's treasure), listen to the stories about different kinds of amber, and admire unique pieces of work of Lithuanian jewellers and amber masters.

**M** (40) Hermann Blode Museum, Skruzdynės St 2, tel. 52 221.

**⛪** (41) Church of Mary the Guardian of Christians and the community home (2003) where concerts, evenings of poetry and exhibitions are held.

**⛪** (42) Neo-Gothic Evangelist Lutheran Church (1888) which in 1966–1988 housed the History Museum of the Curonian Spit. In 1988, the church was given back to the believers; services are held, organ music and chamber concerts are given.

**††** Next to the church there is an ethnographic cemetery with wooden crosses

(19<sup>th</sup> – beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century), which are one of the most ancient forms of tombstones in Lithuania, characteristic of this coastal district only. Wooden crosses were carved from wood and placed at the foot of a departed person.

**☀** (43) Parnidis Dune (Parnidžio Kopa) (height 52 m) and the sundial and calendar (1995), whose granite obelisk (13.8 m) decorated with the symbols of pagan festivals from the 17<sup>th</sup> century calendar of wooden runes was destroyed by lightning during Hurricane Anatolijus in 1999.

**🗼** (44) The lighthouse, which is one of the largest (29.3 m) and most important lighthouses on the Lithuanian seashore (built in 1874, rebuilt in 1956), stands on Urbas Hill (Urbo Kalnas) (51 m).