

Cycling Safaris

LITHUANIAN SEASIDE 2017

Guided Tour

Guide cycling with group | 215 km | 7 nights / 8 days



Discover the Baltic Sea coast visiting Palanga Resort and the Curonian Spit National Park, designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site; discover the scenic routes by bike with a help of experienced local tour guide. Enjoy traditional Lithuanian country life when cycling in the Nemunas River Delta region. This tour partly covers the Seaside Cycle Route which was opened 7 years ago. The tour begins & ends in the historic coastal town of Klaipėda (known as Memel for many years) which boasts a rich, turbulent history from 13thC. Nowadays, it's a bustling, modern town offering many excellent leisure options ranging from history tours, to water sports. There's a wide range of cafes & restaurants & many annual festivals, e.g. jazz, folklore. You will spend 2 nights in Nida the largest town on the Curonian Spit. It's the perfect place to enjoy a relaxing seaside break or explore on foot, by cycle or canoe its unique surroundings.

TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1 KLAIPĖDA

Arrival in Klaipėda. Individual transfer to the hotel (not included). Check-in at the hotel.

7:00 p.m. (19:00) welcome meeting at the hotel, where you will be greeted by your tour guide.

HOTEL: **OLD MILL** *** or similar

Day 2 KLAIPĖDA-PALANGA Seaside Resort

(cycling app. 30 km, by minibus app. 30 km)

Cycle to Palanga resort along the Seaside Cycle Route leading through Giruliai Forest and the Seaside Regional Park. En route explore the Dutchman's Cap - a 24-meter-high coastal cliff and Plaze Lake. In Palanga visit the Botanical Park and Amber Museum, cycle along J.Basanavicius car-free street featuring plenty of cafes, restaurants and a pier heading 470 meters into the Baltic Sea. Finish cycling at Zemaiciu Alkos, the ancient place of Samogitians with a paleo-astronomical observatory, in Sventoji. Then get a transfer back to Klaipeda.

HOTEL: **OLD MILL ***** or similar

Day 3 KLAIPĖDA-VEIVIRŽĖNAI-ŠILUTĖ (cycling app. 45 km, by minibus app. 45 km)

Sightseeing tour around the Old Town followed by a transfer to the inland. Collect rental bicycles and start your cycling ride through Pamarys Meadows to Šilutė. En route stop in Švėkšna villages to explore the estate with its beautiful park and impressive neo-gothic church of St.Jacob the Apostle. Then cycle on forest trail to Šilutė with a possible stop at small winery famous for its wines produced from different local berries.

HOTEL: **GILIJA ***** or similar.

Day 4 ŠILUTĖ -RUSNĖ ISLAND & NEMUNAS River Delta (cycling app. 45 km)

Explore Silute town named after "Silokarcema" (a pub in the pine forest) and go for a return cycling trip to Rusne Island, the only big island in Lithuania, located in the Nemunas River Delta Regional Park. En route you will explore the traditional fisherman's homestead - a museum of Rusne, the old water pumping station and the 19th century lighthouse in Uostadvaris Harbour.

HOTEL: **GILIJA ***** or similar.

Day 5 ŠILUTĖ-VENTĖ Horn-NIDA (cycling ~35 km, by boat ~14 km)

Cycling to Ventė Cape where you visit a bird ringing station with a museum of ornithology and the C19th lighthouse which has a panoramic view of the unique landscape including a glimpse of the glistening Curonian Spit sand dunes. En route you will stop for a short walk on nature trail leading through a raised bog. Finally, catch the boat for a crossing the Curonian Lagoon to Nida. Arrive in Nida followed by a bike ride to the hotel.

HOTEL: **NERIJA ***** or **NIDAS BANGA***** or similar.

Day 6 NIDA - leisure time by the Baltic Sea

Free day in Nida which is an old fishermen's village on the Curonian Spit washed by the Baltic Sea from one side and the Curonian Lagoon from other side. Today Nida is the largest settlement of the town of Neringa and one of the most beautiful resorts in Lithuania. Cycling or walking along impressive sand dunes and visiting the most popular places of interest - the Fisherman's House, the summer house of famous German writer Thomas Mann, and the Amber Gallery.

HOTEL: **NERIJA ***** or similar.

Day 7 NIDA - CURONIAN SPIT, the Hill of Witches - KLAIPĖDA (cycling ~40 km, by mini bus 21km)

Cycling on an asphalt bike path part of the Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route which takes you along the Curonian Spit to Klaipėda. En route you can explore the "Dead" sand dunes, watch a colony of grey herons and cormorants, visit the Hill of Witches which houses a hundred fanciful and folksy wooden sculptures of Lithuanian legends scattered along a forest path, go swimming in the Baltic Sea or, simply relax, and enjoy the sun on golden beaches. Take a mini bus transfer back to the Old Town of Klaipėda.

HOTEL: **OLD MILL HOTEL***** or similar

Day 8 (Saturday) KLAIPEDA

Breakfast at the hotel. End of the tour with the possibility to extend your stay in Lithuania.

2017 GROUP TOUR DATES

- The tour can be started any day between May 1 and Sept 30 except Mondays & Fridays in June
- A minimum booking of 6 people is required for tours departing in June - August
- A minimum booking of 8 people is required for tours departing in May or in September

2017 GROUP TOUR PRICE

Off peak: May 1 - June 27 & August 28 - September 30

€700 per person sharing

€900 per single room

€535 for third person in room

Peak: June 27 - August 28

€730 per person sharing

€960 per single room

€560 for third person in room

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights stay at the hotels including all hotel taxes
- Breakfast daily
- Welcome meeting with a glass of beer or wine
- Guide cycling with the group on days 2-5 & 7
- Rent of trekking bicycle with waterproof pannier (+ helmet on request)
- Transfers by minibus on days 2, 3 & 7
- Ferry ticket from the Curonian Spit to Klaipėda
- Luggage transport on day 3 (Klaipėda-Šilutė), day 5 (Šilutė-harbour-Nida) and day 7 (Nida-Klaipėda)
- Boat trip across the Curonian Lagoon to Nida
- Individual information package (city guide, maps, program and route description)

*Entrance to museums not included

Optional Extras:

- If you wish to avail of 7 dinners during your trip a supplement of €135 per person will apply.
- E-bike supplement - €90 (limited availability, on request)
- Transfers
Arrival or departure €25 per person (based on 2 people) from Palanga airport (€50 for 1 person)
Arrival or departure €18 per person (based on 2 people) from Klaipeda ferry terminal (€35 for 1 person)
- Additional accommodation:
Hotel in Klaipeda OLD MILL HOTEL *** or similar
Hotel in Klaipeda OLD MILL HOTEL or similar
Single: €70 per room per night, including breakfast
Double/twin: €80 per room per night, including breakfast

WHAT TO BRING

Cycling gloves; cycling shorts; long pants; waterproof jacket; sunglasses; sun cream; sunhat; stiff-soled shoes suitable for cycling; water bottles. Although it is not compulsory to wear a helmet in the Baltic States, we strongly recommend that you wear one (*please bring your own as these are not provided*).

BIKE AND FITNESS

Here is an example of the type of touring bike used:



- Aluminium frame
- 21 speed
- Choice of a front or rear pannier bag (please note that the pannier is smaller than the one you see on the bike)
- Water bottle carrier
- Back carrier
- Bicycle lock
- Pump
- Repair kit (carried by tour guide)
- Map support

Helmets are not included.

Cycling terrain is generally flat to gently undulating so the riding is not very demanding physically. The majority of the trip is on tarmac; there are a few stretches on unsurfaced tracks, but no technical riding experience is required for this.

GROUP, GUIDE AND BACKUP SERVICE

Group size will vary between 2 and 15, and will be accompanied by a local Lithuanian tour leader and driver almost all the time when travelling from Vilnius to Riga, and local city guide for sightseeing tour in Vilnius.

Please note there will be no support vehicle when cycling distances from Nida to Klaipeda (60 kms) and from Klaipeda to Palanga (30 kms).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Weather

This itinerary takes place at the same latitude as Scotland, and the area has a continental climate – long cold winters, short hot summers, and it can rain a lot. Daytime temperatures should vary from 20C degrees to 33C degrees, cooler in bad weather. Nights will be cool to warm, never being cold – perhaps chilly in bad weather. There is generally a good amount of sunshine during summer months and the days are very long in June and July.

Passport and Visas

Lithuania and Latvia were among the ten accession countries that joined the EU in May 2004. Most nationalities require a full passport that must be valid for 6 months beyond the intended length of stay, (the exception being a list of nationalities from EU countries who are only required to produce a personal identification card). It is your responsibility to have the correct documents and to obtain your own visa, if required. We are not responsible for the actions of local immigration and customs officials, whether at points of entry or otherwise and any subsequent effects.

Currency

In Lithuania, the unit of currency is the Euro

Additional expenses and spending money

All lunches are at your expense. You may order picnic meals for extra charge payable in cash to your tour leader. Your tour leader and driver will prepare the picnic meals.

You should allow €20-25 per person per day for meals in Vilnius and Riga. The amount you spend will depend on the standard of restaurant chosen.

Local Time

Local time conforms to Eastern European Time which is 2 hours ahead of GMT.