

Cycling Safaris

LITHUANIAN SEASIDE 2017 Self-Guided Tour

Family friendly | 250 km / 163 miles | 8 days / 7 nights



Discover the Baltic Sea coast visiting Palanga Resort and the Curonian Spit National Park, designated by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site, explored individually by bicycle on very scenic cycling routes. Experience traditional Lithuanian country life when cycling in the Nemunas River Delta region. This tour partly covers the Seaside Cycle Route which was the first officially signposted, high quality cycle route in Lithuania 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. Guests can choose to spend extra nights here either at the beginning or end of the tour. Guests spend 2 nights in Nida the largest settlement 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; its geology, birdlife, the influence of the Lagoon etc.

TOUR ITINERARY

Day 1 Saturday: KLAIPĖDA

Arrive in Klaipėda. Individual transfer to the hotel (not included).

HOTEL: THE OLD MILL*** or similar

Day 2 Sunday: Along the Seaside Cycle Route to Palanga / KLAIPĖDA-PALANGA Seaside Resort -KLAIPĖDA, (~55 km/35 mi.)

9:00 a.m. information meeting at your hotel where you will be greeted by our representative. Cycle to Palanga resort along the Lithuanian 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 Plazė Lake. In Palanga you can visit the Botanical Park and Amber Museum, cycle along J.Basanavičius pedestrian street with many cafes & restaurants and explore the 470m pier heading into the Baltic Sea. Return to Klaipėda using the same or slightly different route.

HOTEL: THE OLD MILL*** or similar

Day 3 Monday: On Countryside Roads through Pamarys Meadows / KLAIPĖDA-ŠVĖKŠNA-ŠILUTĖ (~55 km/40 mi., by minibus ~30 km/19 mi.)

Transfer by minibus to the inland where you start your cycling ride on picturesque countryside roads through Pamarys meadows to Šilutė. This region is known as a land of storks and the White Stork truly deserves its place as Lithuanian's national bird. En route stop in Švėkšna village to explore the estate with its beautiful park and impressive neo-gothic church of St.Jacob the Apostle.

HOTEL: GILIJA*** or similar.

Day 4 Tuesday: RUSNĖ Island & NEMUNAS River Delta (~ 45 km/28 mi.)

Explore Šilutė, a town named after "Šilokarčema" (a pub in the pine forest) and go for a return cycling trip to Rusnė Island, Lithuania's only island, located in the Nemunas River Delta Regional Park. When you stand on the bank of the Nemunas River in Rusnė you see the Russian oblast of Kaliningrad just 100 metres across the river. En route you can explore a traditional fisherman's smallholding at the Rusnė museum, the old water pumping station and the 19th C lighthouse in Uostadvaris Harbour.

HOTEL: GILIJA*** or similar.

Day 5 Wednesday: ŠILUTĖ-VENTĖ Cape- crossing the Curonian Lagoon to NIDA (~35 km/22 mi., by boat ~14 km/9 mi.)

Cycling to Ventė Cape where you may visit a renowned bird ringing station with a museum of ornithology and the 19th C lighthouse which has a panoramic view of the unique landscape including a glimpse of the glistening Curonian Spit sand dunes. Today, one million birds pass through the station each migratory period. Take a boat to cross the Curonian Lagoon to Nida. Arrive in Nida followed by a bike ride to the hotel.

HOTEL: NERIJA*** or NIDOS SMILTĖ*** or similar.

Day 6 Thursday: NIDA - leisure time by the Baltic Sea (~10 km/6 mi.)

Free day to explore Nida which is a former old fishermen's village on the Curonian Spit washed by the Baltic Sea on one side and the Curonian Lagoon on the other. Today Nida is the largest settlement in Neringa region and one of the most beautiful resorts in Lithuania. Cycle or walk along impressive sand dunes, visit 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 NIDOS SMILTĖ*** or similar.

Day 7 Friday: Along sand dunes of the Curonian Spit NIDA-JUODKRANTĖ-KLAIPĖDA (~60 km/38 mi.)

Cycling on an asphalt bike path of the Seaside Cycle Route which takes you along the Curonian Spit to Klaipėda. En route you can explore the “Dead” sand dunes on foot, 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, swim in the Baltic Sea or, relax, take the sun on golden beaches. Arrival in Smiltynė where you take a ferry to the Old Town of Klaipėda.

7:30 p.m. (19:30) Meeting with our representative who will collect the rental bicycles.

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

Day 8 Saturday: KLAIPĖDA

Breakfast at the hotel. End of the tour. It is possible to extend your stay in Lithuania.

2017 TOUR DATES

Set Departure dates (all Saturdays)

May 27	Off peak
June 3, 10, 17, 24	Off peak
July 1, 8, 15, 22, 29	Peak
August 5, 12, 19, 26	Peak
September 2	Off peak

Minimum group size on fixed dates 2 people.

Tour departure on any date from May – September with a group of 4 pax or more.

2017 TOUR PRICES

Off Peak:

€560.00 per person sharing
€750.00 single occupancy

Peak:

€590.00 per person sharing
€820.00 single occupancy

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights in hotels with breakfasts
- 24-speed hybrid bike rental with waterproof pannier
- Luggage transfers on day 3, day 5 & day 7
- Transfer by minibus on day 3
- Boat trip across the Curonian Lagoon to Nida
- Route description, maps, city guides
- Emergency number

Optional extras:

Half board – (7 x 3-course dinners) - €135 per person

E-bike available for €90 (limited availability, on request)

Odometer - €10 per bike

Waterproof map holder - €15 per bike

Child reduction

Tour price for children up to 5 years old in parents room – no cost

Rental for child seat - €15 per bike

Rent bike trailer – (from 6 month) €60

Tag a long bike - €40

The tour excludes

- Arrival and departure transfers
- Lunches & dinners (dinner optional)

- Additional accommodation available
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
- Transfers (based on a minimum of 2 people)
Arrival or departure transfer €25 per person (based on 2 people) (Palanga Airport)
Arrival or departure transfer €18 per person (based on 2 people) (Klaipeda Ferry Terminal)

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.

The tour is easy as there is flat terrain, the route partly follows gravel roads but mainly asphalt roads including ~100 km of signposted cycling paths.

BACK UP SERVICE

As this is a self led trip you do not have the back-up of a guide and support van. Our aim is to allow you feel like an independent traveller, free to cycle each day at your own pace while at the same time having the security of knowing that your luggage will be waiting for you in your next accommodation.

If you experience small problems with the bike (e.g., a puncture) you will have a spare tube, pump and tyre lever. You also have access to a 24 hour helpline.

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 was 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

Foreign currencies and local currency can be exchanged at all banks.

Additional expenses and spending money

All lunches/drinks are at your expense.

Local Time

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