

# Cycling Safaris

## LITHUANIA - BELARUS - POLAND

2019

Guided Tour

Guide cycling with group | 310 km | 10 nights / 11 days



Explore a borderland of Lithuania, Poland and Belarus which is the land of gentle hills, sandy plains, vast primeval forests, crystal clear lakes and deep river valleys. The tour starts in the Lithuanian capital city Vilnius and finishes in the Polish capital city Warsaw, both cities famous for their Old towns designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. The tour also includes the Čepkeliai - Dzūkija National/PAN Park with Druskininkai Resort in Lithuania, visa free Grodno region with Augustow Canal in Belarus, Masurian Lakeland with Wigry and Biebrza National Parks in Poland. Experience a wide variety of towns, villages and countryside for an excellent introduction to the very distinct characters of these different countries, especially Belarus, which still remains a blank spot on the map for many foreigners. Now you have a chance to fill up this gap!

### TOUR ITINERARY

#### Day 1 Tuesday (Lithuania): Arrive in Vilnius

Arrive in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania for more than 600 years. Individual transfer to the hotel (not included) and welcome meeting at the hotel with tour guide. Check-in at the hotel. OVERNIGHT: Vilnius; HOTEL: TILTO\*\*\*

#### Day 2 Wednesday (Lithuania): VILNIUS-TRAKAI Insular Castle-DRUSKININKAI Resort (cycling ~35 km/22 miles, by coach ~125 km)

After breakfast a guided tour of Vilnius Old Town. Afternoon trip to Trakai, the former capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. After visit to the 14thC island castle built on a small island in Lake Galvė start your first cycle ride on gentle hills around the lake. Then transfer by coach to Druskininkai which is one of the best climatic and wellness springs resorts in Europe. Arrive in Druskininkai, check-in and dinner at the hotel (included). OVERNIGHT: Druskininkai; HOTEL: REGINA\*\*\*

**Day 3 Thursday (Lithuania): ČEPKELIAI - DZŪKIJA NATIONAL/PAN PARK (cycling ~43 km/27 miles, by coach ~45 km)**

Morning transfer to the Čepkeliai - Dzūkija National/PAN Park, the largest park in Lithuania overgrown with pine forests (90% of the territory) and one of 13 wild PAN parks in Europe. Here begins our cycle route through ethnographical villages. The route also passes through Grūtas Park, which has a unique distinction in Lithuania of being the place where all unwanted statues of Lenin were taken after Lithuania regained its independence from the Soviet Union. OVERNIGHT: Druskininkai; HOTEL: REGINA\*\*\*

**Day 4 Friday (Lithuania-Belarus): DRUSKININKAI-LIŠKIAVA-GRODNO (cycling ~32 km, by coach ~70 km)**

Morning ride on picturesque road along the Nemunas River. Today's cycle route passes through Liškiava famous for its 17-18thC Dominican monastery ensemble on the Nemunas River bank. Here we visit an impressive church (17thC) and it's cellar where lies Jacobin remains and exposition of liturgical heritage. In the afternoon transfer to Grodno in Belarus, the region capital and mysterious place for those, who are fond of history, culture and architecture (Grodno is visa free region for foreigners!). Arrive in Grodno, check-in and dinner at the hotel (included). OVERNIGHT: Grodno; HOTEL: SLAVIA\*\*\*

**Day 5 Saturday (Belarus): GRODNO - the region capital of Belarus**

After breakfast a guided tour of Grodno historical old town located on steep bank of the Nemunas River. The most interesting sights of Grodno include a Cathedral Basilica of St Francis Xavier, Kolozhskaya Church of St Boris and St Gleb (12thC), Old and New Castles, Great Choral Synagogue, Sovetskaya Street, Soviet Square and others. In the afternoon free time for shopping and sightseeing on your own or going for a guided cycling tour around the city and its extensive parks at the Nemunas River. OVERNIGHT: Grodno; HOTEL: SLAVIA\*\*\*

**Day 6 Sunday (Belarus): Along AUGUSTOW Canal (cycling ~39 km/24 miles, by coach ~50 km)**

After breakfast transfer by minibus towards Augustow Canal which was built in 19thC to connect water basins of the Nemunas and Vistula Rivers. This Canal is very special and protected as a historic monument. We'll start our cycle ride from a soviet style village on a country road towards the beginning of Augustow canal near the Nemunas River. Then we'll cycle along the canal on paved roads and forest trails. En route we'll explore several locks and weirs which were renovated 10 years ago. Transfer back to the hotel for the last night in Grodno. OVERNIGHT: Grodno; HOTEL: SLAVIA\*\*\*

**Day 7 Monday (Belarus-Poland): AUGUSTOW TOWN & CANAL (cycling ~53 km/33 miles, by coach ~100 km)**

Morning bus transfer to Poland. Afternoon sightseeing around Augustow, a small but appealing town, the gateway to the Suwałki region at the Netta River and Augustow Canal bearing the town's name. We'll start our cycle ride from the town centre and continue cycling to Wigry National Park along several lakes and Augustow canal using extensive network of cycle trails. Check into the hotel for 2 overnight stays. Dinner at the hotel (included). OVERNIGHT: Wigry National Park; HOTEL: HOTEL NAD WIGRAMI\*\*\*

**Day 8 Tuesday (Poland): WIGRY NATIONAL PARK (cycling ~53 km/33 miles)**

Cycling tour on marked trails around Wigry Lake which is the largest, one of the deepest (73 m) and most beautiful lake in Podlasie region. Its shoreline is richly indented, forming numerous bays and peninsulas, and there are 15 islands on the lake. En route explore a former Camaldolese monastery, built by the death-obsessed Camaldolese monks soon after they were brought to Wigry by King Jan II Kazimierz Waza in 1667. The whole complex, complete with a church and 17 hermitages, is spectacularly located on a peninsula in the lake. OVERNIGHT: Wigry National Park; HOTEL: HOTEL NAD WIGRAMI\*\*\*

**Day 9 Wed. (Poland): BIEBRZA NATIONAL PARK (cycling ~48 km/30 miles, by coach ~35 km)**

Transfer to Biebrza National Park which protects vast and relatively untouched fenlands with a unique variety of plants, rare wetland birds and mammals such as Elk and Beaver. Today we cycle along the GreenVelo route to Goniadz. Check-in and dinner at the hotel (included). OVERNIGHT: Goniadz; HOTEL: BARTLOWZINA\*\*\* or similar

**Day 10 Thursday (Poland) GONIADZ - WARSAW (cycling ~39 km/24 miles, by coach ~180 km)**

Morning is dedicated for the final cycling ride along the Royal Route (Polish: Trakt Królewski) through Biebrza National Park and then transfer by bus to Warsaw, capital of Poland. Check-in at the hotel followed by a guided tour of Warsaw Old Town. OVERNIGHT: Warsaw; HOTEL: METROPOL\*\*\* or similar

**Day 11 Friday (Poland): Warsaw**

Breakfast at the hotel. End of the tour.

## 2019 TOUR DATES AND PRICES

**Tuesdays:**

25 June, 23 July, 27 August

€ 1,350 per person sharing in a twin/ double room

€ 1,545 single room occupancy

## TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 10 nights stay in hotels, including all taxes, plus breakfast daily
- Welcome meeting with a glass of wine or beer
- 5 x 3-course dinners with coffee/tea (1x Druskininkai, 1x Grodno, 1x Wigry, 1x Goniadz, 1x Warsaw)
- Mineral water at your disposal on cycling days
- Rent of trekking bicycle with waterproof pannier (+ helmet on request)
- Services of local tour guide(s) on days 2-10
- Transfers as per itinerary by air-conditioned coach /minibus
- Luggage transport
- Special permission for entrance to Grodno Region in Belarus (visa free region)
- Entrance to museums: Trakai Insular Castle, Grūtas Park of Soviet Sculptures, Liškiava Monastery, Wigry Monastery
- Individual information package (one per room)

**THE TOUR EXCLUDES:**

- › Arrival and departure transfers
- › Other 5 dinners, no lunches

**OPTIONAL EXTRAS:**

- › Per person Vilnius arrival transfer - €35 for one person
- › Arrival transfer Vilnius for a party of 2 persons - €18 per person
- › E-bike supplement - €170 per person (limited availability, on request)

## **PRE/POST TOUR ACCOMMODATION:**

### **Hotel in Vilnius TILTO\*\*\* or similar**

SGL 80 EUR per room per night, including breakfast

DBL 95 EUR per room per night, including breakfast

### **Hotel in Warsaw METROPOL\*\*\* or similar**

SGL 95 EUR per room per night, including breakfast

DBL 105 EUR per room per night, including breakfast

Minimum group size 6 pax.

## **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.

## **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 on request.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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### **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, in Belarus the currency is Belarusian ruble and in Poland the currency is Polish zloty

### **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 in Lithuania, 3 hours ahead in Belarus and 1 hours ahead of GMT in Poland,