

## DAY 1

**Arrival in Rīga.**

Sightseeing in Rīga.

**Accommodation:** in Rīga.

## DAY 2



**Rīga - Jūrmala - Ķemeri - Apšuciems**

→ 80 km

**Sights on route:**

Sightseeing in Jūrmala resort town.



**in Jūrmala from Dubulti till Bulduri** (or the opposite way).

→ 5 - 6 km



**Melnalkšņu swamp forest trail**

→ 0,6 km



**Sloka lake nature trail** and climb the wooden bird watching tower.

→ 3,1 km

• **Ķemeri historical resort and park.**

**Accommodation:** in Apšuciems or surroundings.



Itinerary: RĪGA - JŪRMALA - ĶEMERI NATIONAL PARK - ENGURE NATURE PARK - KOLKA - SLĪTERE NATIONAL PARK - VILLAGES OF THE LIVONIANS - VENTSPILS - JŪRKALNE - PĀVILOSTA - LIEPĀJA - CURONIAN SPIT - KLAIPĒDA - RUSNĒ - DUBYSA RIVER VALLEY - VILKIJA - KAUNAS - BIRŠTONAS - DŽŪKIJA NATIONAL PARK - VILNIUS

Hiking route length: → ~1210 km driving, ~110 km hiking

Duration: **16 days**

Difficulty level: ●●●

🚩 **Rīga**

🚩 **Vilnius**

*This tour is a road trip from Rīga to Vilnius, stopping along the road to hike on nature trails of the Baltic Coastal Hiking Route. In Latvia the route mainly follows the Baltic Coastal Hiking Route/ the Baltic coast, continuing along the coast and the Curonian Spit in Lithuania. Further, the route includes some smaller sections of the Forest Trail in Lithuania leading to Druskininkai and near the Lithuanian/Polish border. This tour will suit travellers who are ready to indulge in some nature trails and have a peek in urban landscapes, but who are not prepared for longer distances with backpacks, tenting and similar. A car will*

*take you from one short hike to the next. Another transfer is planned from the island of Rusnė to the Dubysa valley, thus linking the Lithuanian sections of the Baltic Coastal Hiking Route and the Forest Trail. The tour includes Latvian and Lithuanian nature's jewels – the national parks of Ķemeri and Slītere, Cape Kolka, Pape Nature Park, the Curonian Spit, the island of Rusnė, the river Nemunas, the Dubysa river valley regional park with its rolling terrain, the most forested and secluded area of Lithuania – the Dzūkija National Park. Besides the capital cities of both countries, the route will take you to other major cities – Ventspils, Liepāja, the popular resort town of the Curonian Spit – Nida, as well as historical bathing resorts: Ķemeri, Birštonas and Druskininkai. You will also see the city of Kaunas and the beautiful riverscapes of the river Nemunas.*



## DAY 3



**Apšuciems - Mērsrags - Kaltene - Roja - Kolka**

→ 97 km

Leave the car in Mērsrags.



**Mērsrags - Bērzciems**

→ ~12 km ⌚ 3 - 4 h



Coastal meadows, small trails, forest roads. Asphalt in the villages, a small section of gravel road.



Medium



The coastal meadows can be bypassed using the roads and trails in the villages.



Bus back from Bērzciems to Mērsrags (there are only 5 buses per day!).

### Sights on route:

- **Engure Nature Park** - Mērsrags coastal meadows are a very important nesting and rest sites for migrating birds.
- **Kaltene** rock beach and the bird watching tower.
- **Roja** - the port town and possibility to taste the smoked-fish.

**Accommodation:** in Kolka.



## DAY 4



**Kolka - Pitrags - Košrags - Mazirbe - Ventspils**

→ 90 km

### Sights on route:

- **Coastal hike:** Along the Kolka Cape which is the Northernmost point of the Kurzeme (Courland) peninsula.
- **The Pine Nature Trail** (1,3 km) in Kolka which is part of the Slītere National Park.
- Visit the **Livonian coast and small fisherman villages:** Sīkrags, Pitrags, Košrags, Mazirbe. The Livonian Coastline is the only place where you can learn about the cultural heritage of the other indigenous nation of Latvia. Possible to visit the Livonian National house in Mazirbe village.
- **Ventspils** - a nice and attractive town by the Baltic sea with many tourist attractions.

**Accommodation:** in Ventspils.

## DAY 5



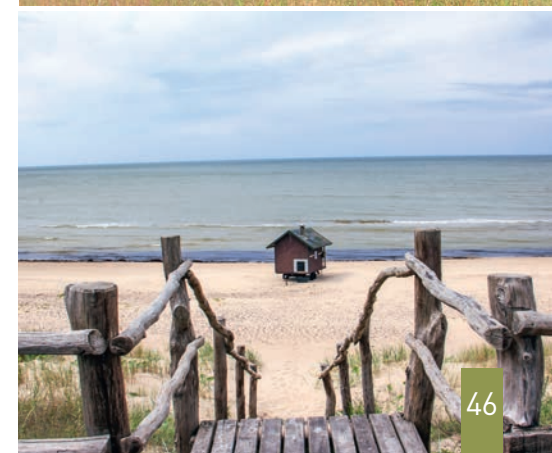
**Ventspils - Jūrkalne - Pāvilosta - Liepāja**

→ 130 km

### Sights on route:

- **Užava lighthouse.**
- **Užava brewery.**
- The most outstanding bluffs around the Baltic Sea in **Jūrkalne.**
- **Pāvilosta** - a small port town located at the mouth of river Saka, former fishermen village, now a popular place for surfers and tourists with cafes, a possibility to taste the local fishes.

**Accommodation:** in Liepāja.







## DAY 6

**Sightseeing in Liepāja.** You can visit the Liepāja beach, Rose square, the Great Amber Concert hall and the Military port.



**Liepāja - Karosta - Northern pier**

→ 6,5 km in one way

**Accommodation:** in Liepāja.

## DAY 7



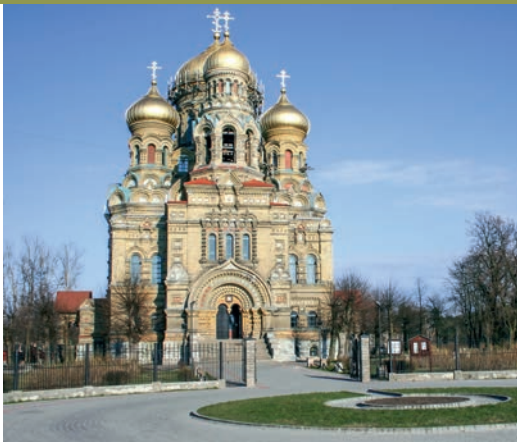
**Liepāja - Pape - Šventoji - Palanga - Klaipėda**

→ 122 km

**Sights on route:**

- **Pape Nature Park**, Pape lighthouse, wild horses.
- **Pape Kõnuciems** authentic village and museum.
- **Šventoji resort town.**
- **Palanga** - hike in the Botanical park and visit the Amber Museum.

**Accommodation:** in Klaipėda.



## DAY 8



**Klaipėda - Smiltynė - Nida**

→ 50 km

**Hike in Curonian Spit.**

**2 hiking options:**

### OPTION 1:



**Nida - Pervalka**

→ ~18 km ⌚ 4 - 6 h



Pavement, pedestrian paths and promenades in populated areas. Forest trails with natural surface elsewhere and sand in some places.



Easy



At high water (in early spring and late autumn), a short section of the trail between Nida and Preila may be flooded. Be careful at the washed-out coastline as it can easily collapse!

### OPTION 2:



**Pervalka - Juodkrantė**

→ ~18 km ⌚ 4 - 6 h



Sandy beaches, single-track forest trails, paved pedestrian/cyclist lanes. Pavement and cobblestones in populated areas.



Easy



From Pervalka, it is recommended to take the circular nature trail (4-5 km) along the coast of the Curonian Lagoon to Horse Cape, which offers amazing views of the Dead Dunes.



Get back to Nida by public bus.

**Accommodation:** in Nida.







## DAY 9



**Nida - Klaipėda - Rusnė**

→ 110 km



**Around Rusnė Island**

→ 23 km ⌚ 6 - 8 h

We recommend exploring the island of Rusnė and the delta of the river Nemunas. The island of Rusnė in the Nemunas Delta Regional Park is enclosed by waters of the river Nemunas and its tributaries. It is a resting place for migratory birds and home to a cormorant colony. The area of the island is 45 km<sup>2</sup> and it is connected to the mainland by a bridge. The island of Rusnė is the lowest place in Lithuania, laying below sea level. The historic centre of the town Rusnė is characteristic of authentic wooden architecture, buildings painted in bright colours, colourful window shutters and decorations.



Gravel roads and footpaths over the Rusnė polders. Approximately 10 km of paved road between the villages of Uostadvaris and Rusnė.



Medium



Exercise caution when walking on the side of the road!



Rusnė Island is an excellent place to observe birds during spring and autumn migration.

**Accommodation:** in Rusnė.



## DAY 10



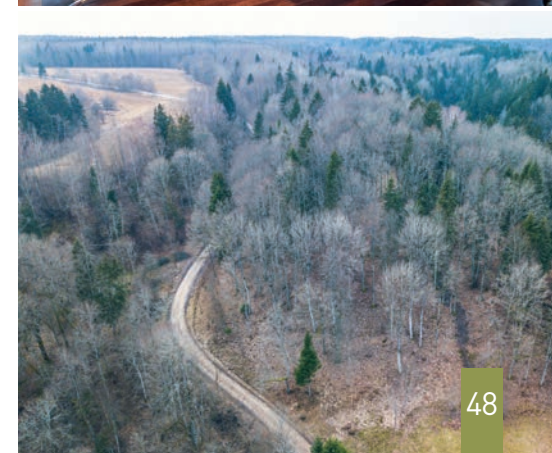
**Rusnė - Lyduvėnai - Kaulakiai**

→ 180 km

**Sights on route:**

- **Šilutė town** - an attractive small town where you can see the architectural style typical of East Prussia.
- **Lyduvėnai** - possible to see the highest and longest railway bridge in Baltics over the river Dubysa.
- **Danutė (Lyduvėnai) castle hill.**
- **Dubysa Regional Park** - it covers the impressive Dubysa river valley, which is up to 40 m deep and 0.5 km wide, where castle-mounds, historical churches and other testimonies of culture and history dot the riverbanks. The Dubysa is a beautiful river favoured by nature lovers because of its rapid flow. The beautiful slopes of the valley are crossed by deep ravines of lateral tributaries. Important habitats that are protected at European level are found here, such as dry grasslands in calcareous soils, species-rich pastures and pasture meadows.
- **Kaulakiai** - village where the Dubysa Regional Park Visitors Center is located.

**Accommodation:** in Kaulakiai or surroundings.







## DAY 11



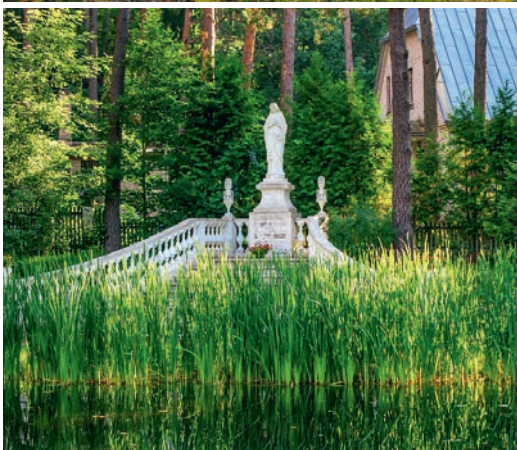
**Kaulakiai - Betygala -  
Kirkšnovė - Ariogala -  
Vilkija - Kaunas**

→ 85 km

### Sights on route:

- **Short hike in Betygala** and surroundings along the Forest Trail (2 - 5 km) - a very small ancient Lithuanian village, can see the castle mound and the Monkey bridge over the river Dubysa.
- **Ariogala** - one of the oldest towns in Lithuania, known since the 13th century. You can see the Song valley, a Suspension bridge or Dubysa river, have a walk in the beautiful Purve park and taste the healthy water from the Ariogala Spring.
- **Short hike in Vilkija town (~3 km)** - an object of urban heritage, which has been known since the 14th century. Its development was determined by the nearby river Nemunas. You can take a small walk in Vilkija along the Forest Trail, you will see the Vilkija outcrop and from here you can admire the breath-taking views of the Nemunas. It is also recommended to try the Vilkija ferry which is the only ferry in Lithuania which carries across the river Nemunas.

**Accommodation:** in Kaunas.



## DAY 12

### Day in Kaunas.

- **Kaunas**, one of the most beautiful Lithuanian cities, is located at the confluence of the Nemunas and the Neris. It is Lithuania's second largest city and former capital. You can see the Old Town, the 9th Fort, Laisvės aleja (Liberty Boulevard), the Kaunas castle, Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul.
- We suggest you to drive till the Three Virgin Bridge, park the car there and then walk along this bridge and Forest Trail in the **Panemunė Pinewood** (hike 2,6 km in one way).
- Another option is



**hike from Kaunas to Lampėdžiai**

→ 9 km ⌚ 2 - 3 h

**Accommodation:** in Kaunas.



## DAY 13



**Kaunas - Prienai - Birštonas**

→ 45 km

### Sights on route:

- **Birštonas** - a popular resort town by the Nemunas river loops, with the mineral water swimming pools, the highest observation tower in Lithuania (45 m).



**Hike in Birštonas** along the Forest trail

→ 5 - 6 km

**Accommodation:** in Birštonas.







## DAY 14



**Birštonas - Druskininkai**

→ ~85 km

### Sights on route:

- **Druskininkai** is a Lithuanian historic health and spa resort with flower gardens, musical fountains, museums and waterpark. You can enjoy the Snow Arena and a trip with the air-tram above the river Nemunas.



**Hike along the Forest Trail** till the Snow Arena (3 km in one way) or till Didžiasalis (11 km) and go back to town by public bus.

**Accommodation:** in Druskininkai.



## DAY 15



**Druskininkai - Žiogeliai**

→ 13 km

⌚ 2 - 3 h



Gravel and forest roads, in Druskininkai – asphalt sidewalks, pedestrian / bicycle sidewalks, pavement.



Easy



Bus to Druskininkai.



**Druskininkai - Merkinė - Vilnius**

→ 135 km

### Sights on route:

- Ancient **castle Hill at Merkinė** provides fine views at the rivers Merkys and Nemunas. There is a 26 m high viewing platform.

Arrival in Vilnius.

**Accommodation:** in Vilnius.

## DAY 16

Sightseeing in Vilnius.

Departure.

