



A TOUR OF LITHUANIA'S NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PARKS ③



DAY 1

Arrival in Druskininkai.

Sightseeing in Druskininkai.

Accommodation: in Druskininkai.

DAY 2



Druskininkai - Žiogeliai

→ 12 km ⌚ 2 - 3 h



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



Easy



Bus to Druskininkai.

Accommodation:
in Druskininkai.



Itinerary: DRUSKININKAI - ŽIOGELIAI - MERKINĖ - BIRŠTONAS - PRIENAI - KAUNAS - KULAUTUVA - VILKIJA - KAUNAS - PLUNGĖ - PAPLATELĖ - PLATELIAI

Hiking route length: → 98 km

Duration: **11 days** Difficulty level: ●●



Druskininkai (there are regular buses from Vilnius or Kaunas)



Plateliai (private transfer to Plungė and from there are regular trains to Vilnius)

This tour of the Forest Trail covers the national parks of Dzūkija and Žemaitija and the Nemunas Loops Regional Park in Lithuania. The starting point of the route is Druskininkai, a popular SPA and mineral water resort on the banks of the river Nemunas. Here, we recommend dipping yourself in mineral water baths, enjoying the trip with the cable car over the river Nemunas, visiting the musical fountain, and walking along the river promenade. For the next two days from Druskininkai, the Forest Trail passes through the Dzūkija National Park to the town of Merkinė. In this most forested and unpopulated region in Lithuania you can enjoy hiking along solitary forest roads, visit ancient mounds and ethnographic villages, where

the traditions of bee-keeping, crafts, mushrooms and berry harvesting are still kept alive.

You will then head to Birštonas, one of the key resorts in Lithuania with its valuable mineral waters. The town finds itself in the Nemunas Loops Regional Park, which includes four large and one smaller loops of the river. The Forest Trail stretches from Birštonas through the entire Nemunas Loops Regional Park up till the town of Prienai. Next, hikers will get to Kaunas, the second largest city in Lithuania and its former capital city. Kaunas is notable for its modernist architecture. The catchment area of the river Nemunas and the river Neris is situated here. Heading on, from Lampėdžiai to Vilkijs, the Forest Trail runs for two days along trails and small countryside gravel roads next to the right bank of the river Nemunas, also crossing resort territory of Kulautuva. This section is characteristic of beautiful riverscapes, waterfront meadows and small villages. For the final section, first you must get to the Žemaitija National Park, where the Forest Trail runs around the Lake Plateliai, which is the largest lake in the historic Samogitian region. Old pine and fir forests and mixed forests are among the most precious natural values of the park. A transfer will take you to Plungė, and from there a train will take you to Vilnius or Kaunas.



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DAY 3



Bus from Druskininkai to Žiogeliai (there are many buses per day).



Žiogeliai - Merkinė

→ 25 km ⌚ 6 - 8 h



Small forest and country roads, gravel roads, in a short section – trails and asphalt (Merkinė), by the castle mounds – stairs.



Medium



The Merkys river must be crossed via the A4 road bridge. You have to cross the road and walk along the side of the road for a few hundred metres. There are hogweeds in the vicinity of the Utieka, which must not be touched, because they cause burns!



There are no shops or catering sites from Žiogeliai to Merkinė, so you need to take a lunch box.



Bus from Merkinė to Alytus.

Accommodation: in Alytus.

DAY 4



Bus Alytus - Birštonas or private transfer.

Sightseeing in Birštonas.

Accommodation: in Birštonas.



DAY 5



Birštonas - Prienai

→ 10 km ⌚ 2 - 3 h



Asphalt and paved sidewalks – coastal promenade, pedestrian / bicycle paths, in a small section – gravel road.



Easy



Public bus to Kaunas.

Accommodation: in Kaunas.



DAY 6

Sightseeing in Kaunas.

Accommodation: in Kaunas.





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DAY 7



Public bus to Lampėdžiai.



Lampėdžiai - Kulautuva

→ 16 km ⌚ 4 - 6 h



Asphalt pavements and pedestrian / bicycle path, in a short section – trails.



Easy

Accommodation: in Kulautuva.



DAY 8



Kulautuva - Vilkija

→ 14 km ⌚ 4 - 5 h



Small country roads with gravel pavement, trails, in a small section – asphalt.



Easy



In wet weather, there may be wet spots and puddles on some sections of the route.



It is worth seeing Vilkija town and trying a round-trip ferry in Vilkija, because such a vehicle is preserved in only a few places in the Baltic States.



Public bus back to Kaunas.

Accommodation: in Kaunas.



DAY 9



Kaunas - Šiauliai

Train: Šiauliai - Plungė

Private transfer to the accommodation by Lake Plateliai.

Accommodation: in Paplatelė or Plateliai.

DAY 10



Paplatelė - Plateliai

→ 20 km ⌚ 5 - 7 h



Forest roads and trails, asphalt pedestrian / bicycle paths and sidewalks, gravel roads.



Easy



During the summer season, there are many holidaymakers around Plateliai Lake.

Accommodation: in Paplatelė or Plateliai.



DAY 11

Private transfer to Plungė.

Train: Plungė - Vilnius (there are 3 trains per day, trip duration ~ 3 h 45 min.).

