

Cycling Safaris

LITHUANIA – CURONIAN LAGOON Self-Guided Tour 2010



Our Safari explores the unique countryside, coastline and towns that make up this fascinating country that was formerly part of the USSR. The biking is very leisurely as the country is not hilly.

Our safari begins in Klaipėda from where you cycle on asphalt bicycle paths on the newly reconstructed Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route; en route you will cross the 24 km long Klaipėda Canal (also known as King Wilhem's Canal); you will explore Šilutė town and River Delta Regional Park. On the way to Vėntė Cape you may visit a bird ringing station with a museum of ornithology and 19th century lighthouse which offers amazing views of the colossal sand dunes on the Curonian Spit (reached by boat trip across a lagoon).

If this is your first experience of cycling in Lithuania we can guarantee that it will not be your last!

Day 1 Saturday: KLAIPĖDA

Arrival in Klaipėda. Individual transfer to the hotel (not included). If you arrive early we recommend you take the opportunity to explore this bustling historic town before dinner.

Day 2 Sunday: KLAIPĖDA-PALANGA-KLAIPĖDA (app. 55 km)

9:00 a.m. Welcome meeting at the hotel, where you will be greeted by one of our representatives who will provide you with your bike and all necessary information.

Your safari begins with a delightful cycle to the seaside resort of Palanga. You pedal along the Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route leading through Giruliai Forest and the Seaside Regional Park. En route you may explore the Dutchman's Cap – a 24-meter-high coastal cliff and Plazė Lake. In Palanga you may visit the Botanical Park and Amber Museum, cycle along J.Basanavičius car-free street or relax in one of the many cafes and restaurants to be found here. Don't forget your swimming things for that refreshing dip in the Baltic Sea!

Day 3 Monday: KLAIPĖDA-PIEKULĖ-ŠILUTĖ (app. 65 km)

Today you cycle along forest trails and countryside roads passing the orchards of Dituva and Pamarys Meadows. En route you will cross 24-km long Klaipėda Canal, also referred to as King Vilhelm Canal, which was dug in the 19th century to link the Minija River with the Curonian Lagoon in Klaipėda. Your final destination to day is the town of Šilutė where you can relax over dinner after your active day.

Day 4 Tuesday: ŠILUTĖ-RUSNĖ ISLAND-ŠILUTĖ (app. 45 km)

Today you have might like to take some time to explore Šilutė town before getting on your bike again. The route is a round trip to Rusnė Island, located in the Nemunas River Delta Regional Park. The island is a paradise for anglers and bird watchers. There are lots of other sights along the way; the ethnographic museum, the old water pumping station and the 19th century lighthouse in Uostadvaris Harbour.

Day 5 Wednesday: ŠILUTĖ-VENTĖ-MINGĖ-NIDA (app. 55 km)

Cycling to Ventė Cape where you may visit a bird ringing station with a museum of ornithology. There are amazing views of the landscape and a glimpse of the shining sand dunes of the Curonian Spit. The fishing village of Mingė (called the Lithuanian Venice), is unique experience as the River Minija serves as the main street! You take a break from the saddle and enjoy a boat ride across the Curonian Lagoon to Nida where a short cycle brings you to tonight's accommodation.

Day 6 Thursday: NIDA

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. You can choose to explore the area by bike or on foot. Don't miss the impressive sand dunes and other popular places of interest – the Fisherman's House, the summer house of famous German writer Thomas Mann, and the Amber Gallery.

Day 7 Friday: NIDA-JUODKRANTĖ-KLAIPĖDA (app. 60 km)

Your final day on the bicycle brings you along a pleasant asphalt bike path on the Seaside Cycle Route. There is lots to see along the way - you may decide to stop at "Dead" sand dunes and see the colonies of grey herons and cormorants, visit the Hill of Witches which houses a hundred fanciful and folksy

wooden sculptures scattered along a forest path, swim in the Baltic Sea or relax in the sun on golden sand beaches. Upon arrival in Smiltynė you take a ferry to the Old Town of Klaipėda. One of our representatives will be at the hotel to collect your bicycle and welcome you back from your safari.

Day 8 Saturday: KLAIPĖDA

Your tour ends after a final breakfast in the hotel.

TOUR DATES 2010

Set Departure dates (all Saturdays)

May 29	Off peak
June 5, 12, 19	Off Peak
June 26	Peak
July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31	Peak
August 7, 14, 21	Peak
August 28	Off Peak

TOUR PRICES 2010

Off Peak:

€610.00 per person sharing
€790.00 single occupancy

Peak:

€640.00 per person sharing
€830.00 Single occupancy

WHAT THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES

- 7 nights in hotels with breakfasts
- 7 dinners (3 course)*
- Bike rental with waterproof panier
- Luggage transfers form hotel to hotel
- Boat trip across the Curonian Lagoon from Nemunas Delta Park to Nida
- Route description, maps, city guides
- Emergency number

The tour excludes

- Arrival and departure transfers
- Lunches
- **Please note: If you do not wish to avail of half board, there is a reduction in your tour booking of €88.00 per person. (you need to specify this when booking the tour - otherwise a €25.00 administration fee will apply)*
- *Additional accommodation available*
Hotel in Klaipeda OLD MILL HOTEL or similar
Single: €60 per room per night, including breakfast
Double/twin: €72 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.

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

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 Litas (LTL), (1 EUR = 3.45 LTL approx.)

Foreign currencies and local currency can be exchanged at all banks. The Euro and US Dollar are the most popular foreign currencies accepted everywhere in banks. You can use only local currencies for paying in shops and for services, but Euros and US Dollars are accepted by people selling handicrafts in markets. You should bring a mixture of cash and traveller's cheques. Cash machines are available in many places the capital, larger towns and resorts.

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.

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.