

CYCLING AROUND THE CURONIAN LAGOON (LITHUANIA – RUSSIA): Curonian Spit National Park and Kaliningrad District

12 days Self-guided cycling tour from/to Klaipėda (code: SG5)

Discover the Baltic Sea coast in Lithuania and the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad by cycling around the Curonian Lagoon. On this tour you will experience traditional country life when cycling in the Nemunas River Delta region, explore the Curonian Spit National Park with its former fishermen's villages, an impressive, unique landscape of dunes and enjoy typical, shady East Prussian tree lined avenues. Everywhere you'll discover traces of rich culture and fascinating history, especially in Russian towns like Sovetsk (Tilsit) and Kaliningrad, the former Königsberg, which has been redeveloped after the war to become a true Soviet city - don't miss your chance to experience it. The tour begins & ends in the Lithuanian 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 with a wide range of cafes, restaurants and many annual festivals, e.g. jazz, folklore. Guests can choose to spend extra nights here either at the beginning or end of the tour.

Please note that since 2019, citizens of 51 countries can apply for free of charge e-Visa to Kaliningrad Region of Russia!!! (more information and e-Visa application form here http://electronic-visa.kdmid.ru/klgd_home_en.html)

Cycling grade: We rate this trip as moderate level. Daily biking routes mainly on low traffic roads and cycle paths of the Lithuanian Seaside Cycle Route range from 53 to 75 km (33-47 miles) each day. A few stretches are on main roads with more car traffic, especially on weekends (Kaliningrad City with suburbs and the Curonian Spit in Russia). The terrain is varied and rolling with some gradual hills on some riding days on the Curonian Spit.

ITINERARY (cycling ~566 km/353 miles)



1. Day: Klaipėda (Memel)

Arrive in Klaipėda. Individual transfer to your hotel (not included). OVERNIGHT at a central 3* hotel in KLAIPĖDA.

2. Day: Klaipėda –Šilutė, ~63 km/39 miles

Information meeting and delivery of rental bicycles at the hotel where you will be greeted by our representative. Then start cycling on countryside roads through Dituva allotment gardens and Pamarys Meadows to Šilutė. En route you will cross the 24-km long Klaipėda Canal, also known as King Vilhelm's Canal, which was dug in the 19th century to link the Minija River with the Curonian Lagoon in Klaipėda. OVERNIGHT at a central 3* hotel in ŠILUTĖ.

3. Day: Šilutė–Pagėgiai, ~53 km/33 miles

Explore Šilutė, a town named after “Šilokarčema” (a pub in the pine forest); cycle along the Nemunas River Cycle Route, on roads with little traffic to Pagėgiai. OVERNIGHT at a 3* hotel in PAGĖGIAI.

4. Day: Pagėgiai – Sovetsk (Tilsit) – Sosnovka, (~73 km/46 miles)

Cycle over the Queen Louise Bridge to the Russian border which you cross and enter the Russian enclave within the EU. Explore the city of Sovetsk, formerly Tilsit, known for its rich traditions of cheese production (Tilsit cheese) before continuing to cycle to Sosnovka. OVERNIGHT at hotel in SOSNOVKA.

5. Day: Sosnovka – Matrosovo - Polessk, 20 km+49 km= 69 km/43 miles

Cycling to Polessk (20 km), a small town, 3 km away from the harbour's edge where you can visit the 17th century castle ruins. Then you can make a return cycle trip along the Curonian lagoon to explore beautiful nature and extensive system of water canals with polders made in the East Prussian times. OVERNIGHT at a guesthouse in POLESSK.

6. Day: Polessk – Kaliningrad (Koenigsberg), ~65 km/41 miles

Today there's a beautiful bike ride which, from time to time, passes through shaded lanes lined with trees. Arrival in Kaliningrad, former Koenigsberg, the previous capital of East Prussia. The city has developed enormously since its 750th celebrations. The most important being the King's Gate and the Cathedral. OVERNIGHT at a central 3* hotel in Kaliningrad.

7. Day: Kaliningrad – Svetlogorsk, ~ 55 km/35 miles

Free morning to discover Kaliningrad. Visit the old market, the newly designed Hansa Square and Dohna Tower. Afternoon cycling on picturesque country roads with little traffic along tree lined avenues to Svetlogorsk. Or you could spend the whole day in Kaliningrad and take an evening train to Svetlogorsk which is an old spa town with 60 meter high coastal cliffs. OVERNIGHT at a 3* hotel in Svetlogorsk.

8. Day: Svetlogorsk – Yantarnyj– Zelenogradsk , 45 km+30 km=75 km/47 miles

Cycling through West Sambia to Yantarnyj which means "amber" in Russian and everything here is related to the amber business before cycling on to Zelenogradsk. This used to be a popular seaside resort with elegant old villas some of which have now been renovated. It's an interesting place with its own interesting atmosphere. OVERNIGHT at a 3* hotel in Zelenogradsk.

9. Day: Along the Curonian Spit, ~ 56 km/35 miles

The route today takes you along the Russian part of the Curonian Spit washed by the Baltic Sea on one side and the Curonian Lagoon on the other. En route visit the world's first ornithological station in Rybacznoje, an interesting museum and huge hunting sites. As many as one million birds migrate to this area every year. There is plenty of time today to visit the dunes and go for a swim before crossing the Lithuanian border in late afternoon and cycling on to Nida. OVERNIGHT at a 3* hotel in NIDA.

10. Day: Free day in Nida

Free day to explore Nida for swimming, sunbathing or simply strolling around this former old fishermen's village on the Curonian Spit. Nowadays Nida is the largest settlement in the 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. OVERNIGHT at a 3* hotel in NIDA.

11. Day: Nida – Juodkrantė– Klaipėda, ~ 57 km/36 miles

Cycling on an asphalt bike path (part 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 in the sun on golden beaches. Arrival in Smiltynė where you take a ferry to the Old Town of Klaipėda. Check-in at the hotel and drop off the rental bicycles (if any). OVERNIGHT at a central 3* hotel in KLAIPĖDA.

12. Day: Klaipėda

Breakfast at your hotel. Individual departure or extended stay in Klaipėda.

THE TOUR PRICES:

Price per person in DBL/TWIN – 699 EUR

Seasonal supplement (June 20-August 25) – 50 EUR

Single supplement (Low/High Season) – 425 EUR / 465 EUR

Supplement for 1 person travelling alone – 20 EUR

LOW SEASON: May 1 – June 19 & August 26-September 30, 2021

HIGH SEASON: June 20 – August 25, 2021

THE TOUR PRICE INCLUDES:	THE TOUR PRICE EXCLUDES:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 11 nights at the hotels/guesthouses with en-suite facilities (WC and bath or shower)- All hotel taxes- Breakfast daily- Official invitation for Russian visa- 24 hours emergency hotline- Individual information package (city guide, maps, program and route description)- GPS Tracks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Arrival and departure transfers- Lunches & dinner- Bicycle rent- Train tickets- Luggage transport- Entrance to museums- Russian visa- Tips

OPTIONAL EXTRAS:

TRANSFERS

- **Arrival or departure transfer by car (1-3 people)** – 49 EUR per transfer (Palanga Airport) or 30 EUR per transfer (Klaipeda bus/train station, Klaipeda central ferry terminal – ferries from Sweden and Germany);
- **Luggage transport** (Klaipėda-Šilutė, Šilutė-Pagėgiai, Pagėgiai-Sosnovka, Sosnovka-Polessk, Polessk-Kaliningrad-Svetlogorsk, Svetlogorsk-Zelenogradsk, Zelenogradsk-Nida, Nida-Klaipėda) – 799 EUR per group (up to 8 People)

B. RENTAL

- **Rental of hybrid trekking bicycle** (*VDV, KTM or Kalkhoff*) equipped with 7-speed Shimano Nexus hub gears or 24-speed Shimano derailleur gears (optional) – 110 EUR per person (Day 2-11), 12 EUR for each extra day*
- **Rental E-bike / Pedelec with Bosch driving system** (*VDV, Kalkhoff or KTM*) equipped with 7-speed Shimano Nexus hub gears – 280 EUR per person (Day 2-11), 30 EUR for each extra day*
- **Rental of cyclocross bike** (*Kona Jake*) – 225 EUR per person (Day 2-11), 23 EUR for extra day*
- **Rental & fitting of bicycle tachometer** (*min. 4 functions*) – 10 EUR per bicycle
- **Rental of a pair of waterproof panniers** (*Ortlieb*) for mounting on back rack (total capacity of 40 litres) – 30 EUR per bicycle (Day 2-11), 3 EUR for each extra day
- **Rental of helmet** (*size S, M, L, XL*) – 10 EUR per person, 1 EUR for extra day

* included extra equipment and services:

- waterproof handlebar bag with a map/smartphone holder (Ortlieb)
- repair set with spare inner tubes (one repair set per booking)
- tachometer (one per booking)
- delivery of bikes to/from the hotel in Klaipeda

C. MEALS

- 9 dinners package (3 courses + coffee/tea), in all places excluding Pagegiai and Kaliningrad – 225 EUR per person

OTHER RATES & CONDITIONS

- Minimum group size – 1 person
- Start any day from 01.05-30.09.2021
- Tour price discount when using extra bed in DBL/TWIN room – 15 %