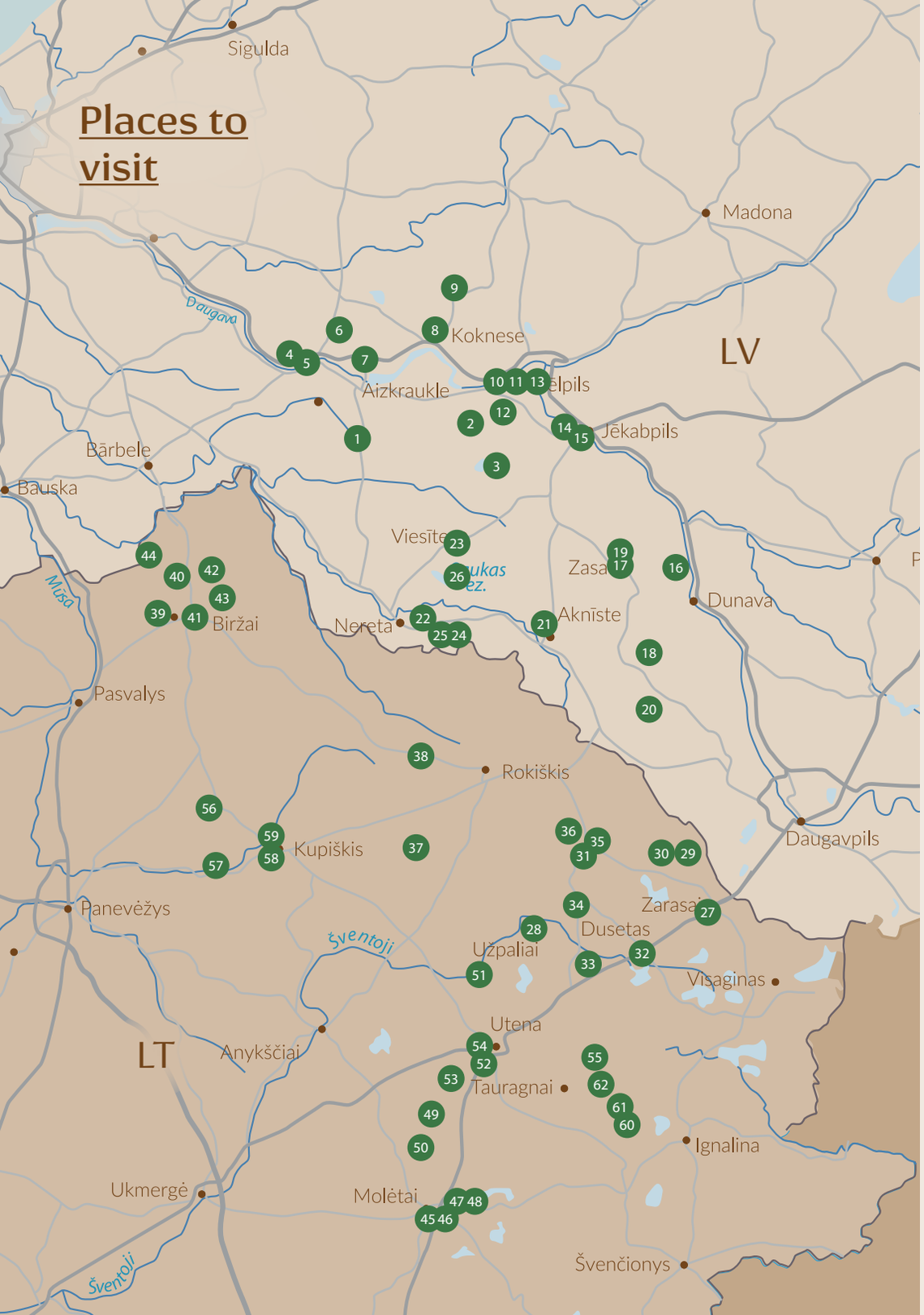
BALTS' ROAD

SELONIANS

travel guide

Places to visit



Marking

Location information

- *Billboard*
- *Paid entrance*
- *Parking*
- *WC*
- *On foot*
- *Bicycle*
- *What you bring, take it away*
- *Waste bins available*
- *Table with bench*
- *Catering*
- *Guest house / hotel*
- *Observe silence*
- *Information in the audio recording*
- *Accessible to people in a wheelchair*
- *Observation tower*
- *Stovyklavietė*
- *Camping*
- *Swiming possible*
- *Boating*
- *Fishing*
- *Boating rent*
- *Allowed to visit with pets*
- *Lenght*
- *Shops*
- *Nature, landscape*
- *Historical places*
- *Active recreation, entertainment*
- *Crafts*
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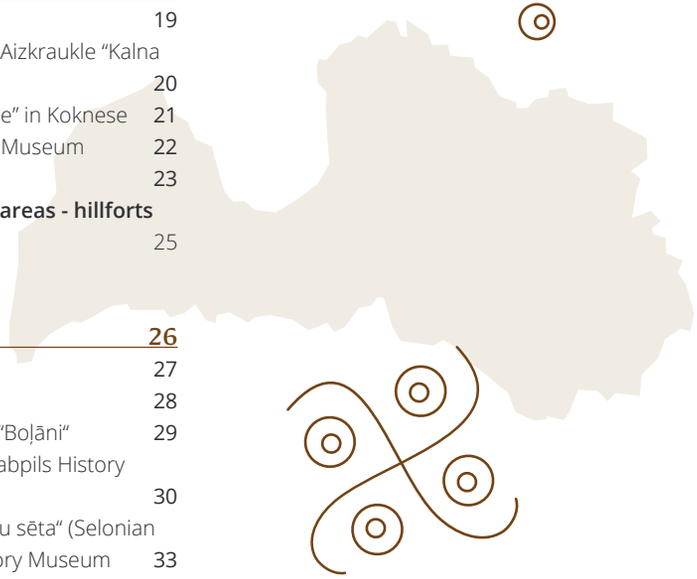

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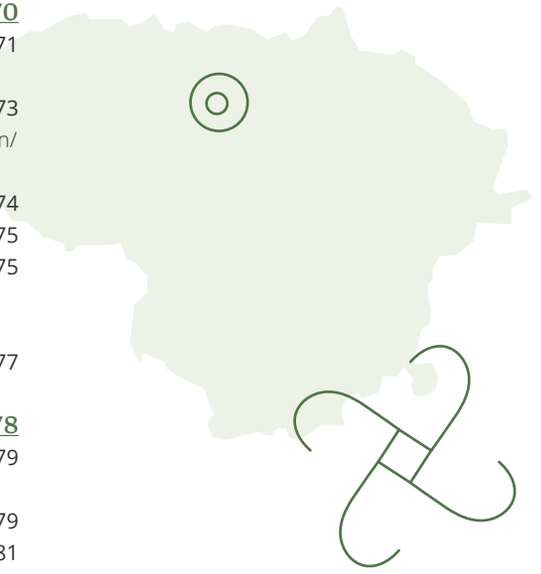


Introduction

TRAVEL ON „BALTS ROAD"!
This tourist guide offers more than 100 of the most interesting, valuable and up-to-date sites in Latvia's selonian part and Lithuania's Selonian and Aukštaitija regions, relating to the past and present of the Balts and the expression of their cultural heritage today.
The map at the beginning of the touristic guide allows to see the territory as a whole, and the more detailed information according to the current municipal boundaries will make it easier and faster for tourists to find their way around and to find the information on baltukelias.lt. The first touristic guides "Balts road" in Lithuanian, Latvian and English were published in 2019, and three more in 2023: "Sėliai", "Žiemgaliai", "Kuršiai ir zemaičiai".

WHO ARE WE IN LITHUANIA AND LATVIA?
We are balts, then Latvians and Lithuanians, then citizens of Latvia or Lithuania, Europeans or citizens of the world.

WHO ARE THE BALTS?
The Balts belong to the old Indo-European group of peoples. The Balts lived in the area from the Vistula to the upper reaches of the Volga-Oka.
The ancestors of the Balts, who now live in Latvia and Lithuania, were formed around the 3rd millennium BC. The indigenous inhabitants, known to archaeologists as the people of the Nemunas and Narva cultures, began to form families with the arriving Indo-Europeans, the people of the so-called ball amphorae and corded pottery culture. This is how our ancestors became The Balts over several centuries.

WHAT WERE THE BALTS TRIBES LIKE?
Semigallians along with the Curonians, Semites, Latgalians, Highlanders, Prussians, Lapps, Lematians, Hounds, Nadruvians, Jotvingians and Galindians, formed the Balts tribes. In the 12th and 13th centuries, the further development of the Balts tribes was interrupted by the arrival of the Teutonic Knights and the conquest of part of their territory, as well as by the creation of Livonia. A unified Latvian nation was formed in the territory of present-day Latvia. The lands inhabited by the Selonians, the Semigallians, the southern Curonians and the Samogitians became part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and its inhabitants became part of the Lithuanian nation.

Travel and get to know the wealth and people of the Selonian region!

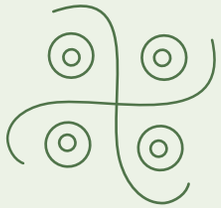
The Selonians

The Selonia region and its history are still an unsolved mystery, but the ancient Selonia lands are rich in beautiful landscapes and a unique history, which is witnessed by the ancient and impressive Selonia hillforts. The oldest reliable written testimonies about the Selonians are found in the 13th century in the chronicles of Henry the Latvian and in verse. In them, the villages of the Selonia are in the neighborhood of the Lyvonian and it is indicated that the Latgalian live behind the villages. The Selonian, as the main inhabitants of the lands, are also mentioned in the 13th century by Johann Renner (German: Johann Renner) in a chronicle written in the 16th century.

The Selonian were an agricultural people who occupied around 10-15 hillforts during the Middle and Late Iron Age. Their distinctive feature: terraces, which are not characteristic of other areas, are often found, which form an additional defense system, thus representing anti-castles. The political and military center of Selonian in the 13th century was Sēlpils (lat. castrum Selonum). The Selonian spoke the Selonian language, which has not survived to this day, but its characteristic strong-pointed accent can still be heard in the dialects of the territories inhabited by Selonian, both in Selonia and in the southeastern part of Vidzeme (Aiviekste river basin).

According to some archaeologists and physical anthropologists, the Selonian in the late Iron Age were an ethnic relic, a witness of the oldest history of the Balts, one of the early branches of the Balt tribes, which is related to the oldest farmers in Europe.

The Selonian as an ethnos is no longer mentioned in the sources from the second half of the 13th century. The cultural closeness to the Latgalian led to their fusion in the 14th century, and both old tribes eventually merged into the Latvian nation. Those villages that became part of Lithuania contributed to the creation of the Lithuanian nation. Since the 15th century, there is no longer any mention of the Selonian lands, they are included in the composition of the state of the Livonian Order.



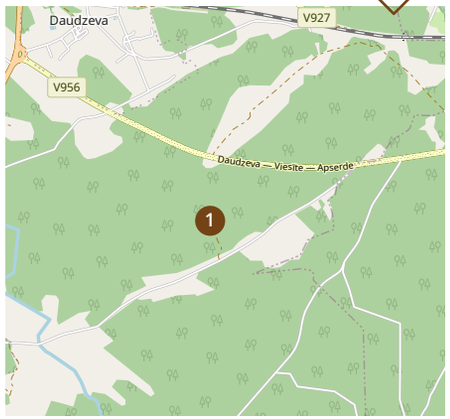
Whatch video –
ancient Selonians.

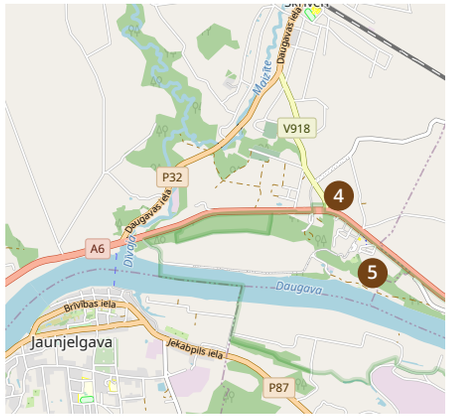
JAUNJELGAVA and surroundings

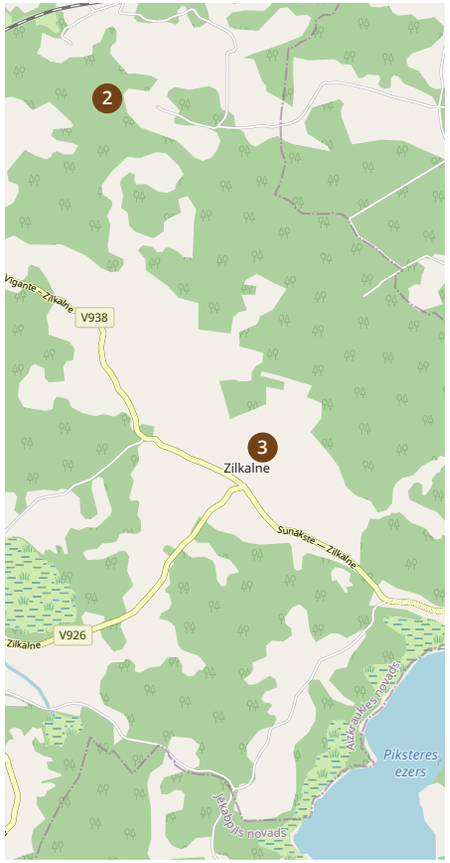
Jaunjelgava - Skrīveri

1. Daudzeses Ellites (Poki) Spring
2. Grūbele (Grūbļa) Hillfort
3. Blue Hill (also Blue Hill of Pikster)
4. Kraukļi Stone
5. Aizkraukle Hillfort

Tourism Information Center:
www.visitaizkraukle.lv



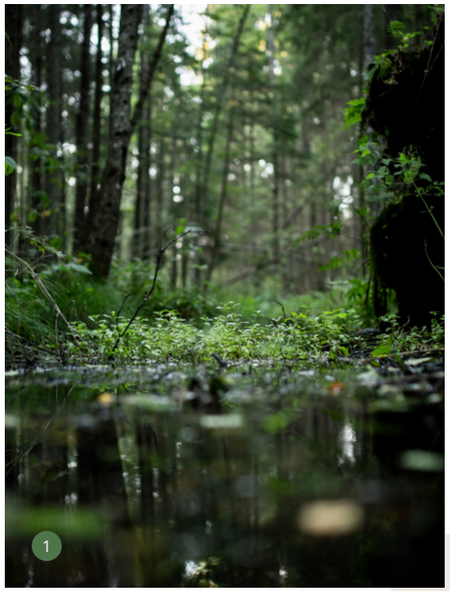




1. DAUDZESES ELLITES (POKI) SPRING

The sacred spring of the Nature Reserve "Ellītes purvs" ("Elytes Bog") is an ancient cult place of the Selonians, inhabited by the Selonians and their predecessors since the beginning of our era. Healthy, sulfur-saturated spring water with a specific taste is widely used by locals even nowadays. A kind of rotten eggs smell, caused by hydrogen sulfide, disappears with time - evaporates. The spring is in a humid, viscous area, so it is well maintained for the convenience of visitors, with an information stand and a rest area. The path around the spring is laid out with dolomite slabs, and a ledge was also made to make it more convenient to fetch water. The forest in the Nature Reserve and its surroundings is recognized as a natural biotope, where rare, protected plants grow - common spotted orchid and Poa remota (a species of grass), as well as other rare and endangered species of plants, animals, lichens, and mushrooms. It is said that you should go to the spring with good thoughts and not wish anyone bad, otherwise the healing water may end up harming you.

However, if you wash your eyes and face in the spring before sunrise on March 25, the day of Mara (Kāpostmāre), you will be alert, cheerful and active throughout the year, and will not be drowsy. Ancient beliefs related to Easter say: "On this night, they usually came in groups of three, four or more. They also came from further by carriages. Those who came to the spring did not stay long - they washed their eyes



and faces, fetched water to take away, placed the sacrifice and went home... Girls used to listen to which side the dogs were barking or the rooster was crowing - that's the side they would marry man from, and usually already in the same year. In Krustainė, Laidenė, Ziedainė, when going to the spring through Saint Jonas' Festival, also known as Rasos (Dew Holiday), they always took a sacrifice (gift) with them - a cute cloth, a ball of yarn, a patterned ribbon, a coin or another cute thing. No one took the gifts left". Another legend says that a very old Devil lived in the Elytes bog. He was not very angry, not trying to harm people, but he was very fond of drinking fun water, and he does so even now, anxiously listening to see if the rooster crows in any house...

Daudzese, Aizkraukle district
GPS - 56.4859833, 25.26055

300 m Daudzeva, 4 km

2. GRŪBELE (GRŪBĻA) HILLFORT

The Grūbele Hillfort is in the territory of the old Selonia and is considered one of the Selonians' hillforts. It is 30-35 meters high, indivudual, round, flat surface, sandy, covered with pine forest. The northwest and southwest slopes are steep, and three terraces emerge on the other sides of the mountain. The hillfort has neither ditches nor ramparts, and its sloping site has been partially leveled due to excavation work. A small cultural layer is barely noticeable on the site, and on the eastern side, under the sand layer, a carbonaceous layer of earth was unearthed at a depth of two meters. At the foot of the hill and on the slopes, many trenches from the First World War can be seen, one of them encircles the hillfort from the top to the foot. The hillfort has been more archaeologically explored than it is mentioned in historical chronicles. In 1926, the measurements of the hillfort were made by Ernests Brastiņš and described in the notes of the exploration expedition of Semigallia hillforts. At the end of the 20th century, the hillfort was also explored by archaeologist Juris Urtāns, who in 1995 found a shard of molded striped pottery in it. This very roughly allows us to date the mound to the 1st millennium BC or the first half of the 1st millennium AD. A number of early and Middle Iron Age graves can be found in the surroundings of the hillfort. Many tales have been recorded about the Grūbele Hillfort, telling of the church that once stood on the hill and then sank. One of the tales says that the church on the hill had a bell and that the whole land rang with its ringing on Sunday mornings. The Devil in the underworld got angry at the disturbance and decided to sink the church, which the Devil did. The story goes that if you go up to the mountain in the morning and put your ear to the ground, you can hear the wonderful sound of the bells.

Sunākste parish, Aizkraukle district
GPS - 56.51119, 25.52311

Sece, 15 km

3. BLUE HILL (ALSO BLUE HILL OF PIKSTER)

In the middle of a field in Zilkalne, there is an isolated, tree-covered hill. It is one of the many Blue Hills in Latvia - the fabled Blue Castle Hill of Sunākste. From the top, you can enjoy a picturesque view of the Sunākste hills and the picturesque Pikstene Lake, which is a favourite place for Sunākstes to relax.
The Blue Hill is 20 metres high, isolated, tree-covered, but on its southern side there is a plateau with a small kump. On the eastern and north-eastern sides there are trenches from World War I. The mound has a cultural layer about a metre thick, containing fragments of rimless, plain, plastered, and streaked pottery, and a stone axe was found at the foot of the hillfort. No extensive archaeological research has been carried out on the hillfort. The first vague information about the hillfort at Pikster was given by August Büllenstein in 1882. Archaeological findings suggest that the Blue Hill at Pikster dates to the 1st millennium BC. A.D. and A.D. The 1st millennium and this period of occupation can be traced back to the culture of the Selonians and their ancestors The Cirši and Mazlāči ancient graves are in its surroundings. The hill is called Blue Hill because it looks blue in the morning. According to the legend, the hillfort was covered with hats and the hillfort-builders were slaves.

Sunākste parish, Aizkraukle district 0,5 km NW of the former Piksteres manor, in the settlement Zilkalne between the houses of Rožkalns and Lukstiņi
GPS - 56.4775, 25.55111

Jēkabpils, 25 km

4. KRAUKĻI STONE

The cult stone is located on the edge of the territories inhabited by the Selonian and Latgalian. The Selonians and their ancestors used the Kraukļi Stone for a long time for various cult rituals. The 40-tonne stone, also called Devil's stone, has not sunk in the marshy soil, but bases upon a supportive construction layer of other stones. Circumference at the bottom - 12.5 m, height - 2 m, length - 3.9 m, and width - 3.8 m. The Kraukļi Stone is not oval, as is typical of the stones brought by the glacier but is in the shape of an axe. Several formations can be seen on its surface, which could have appeared because of certain mechanical processing. It is the only stone of its kind in Latvia, as it differs from classic sacrificial stones with irregularly shaped recesses and other sacred stones. A cultural layer more than a meter thick has been identified, during archaeological excavations in 1974. Finding dated back to the 12th-13th century testify that cult rituals took place here. Aizkraukle field-works' group carried out excavations at the 35 m² area, when removing the topsoil a black, peaty occupation layer (0,8 - 1,2 m thick) was discovered. Predominantly the layer consisted of bluish, clayey sand. Finding: many small coals, shards of glazed tableware, tiny iron waste materials, nails, dross, half of an iron footstep from 12th century, whetstone, remains from a wooden tub, small sawn horn tablet Considering the findings, there was a smithy located close to the stone. The stone and nearby spring have been referred to in the novelettes "Sūnu ciema zēni" (The Boys of Moss Village) and "Zaļā zeme" (Green Earth) written by A.Upitis. Several stories tell that a pot with money is hidden under the stone, and that the devil was sacrificed near this stone because he wanted to dam the Dauguva with it.

„Āres", Skrīveru parish, Aizkraukle district
The Kraukļi stone is located close to the main road Riga – Daugavpils and to the road to Skriveri.
GPS - 56.628345, 25.123436

Skrīveri, 1 km

5. AIZKRAUKLE HILLFORT

Aizkraukle Hillfort is an old hillfort of the Daugava Livs with an ancient city on the right bank of the Daugava surrounded by two streams flowing into the Daugava, the largest of which is called Askere. The steep slopes of the Aizkraukle Hillfort ensured its good protection. The hillfort site is 0.5 ha in size with 0.1 ha of the forecourt, 3 ha of the ancient city and harbour. On its western side stood the main castle, 100 meters long and 45-65 meters wide, which was separated from the anti-castle on the eastern side by a moat. At the south-eastern end of the forecastle, a defense rampart about two meters thick has survived, and the castle rampart was about four meters high. Aizkraukle and Lejasžagaru old cemeteries are in the vicinity of hillfort, where a total of about 100 graves dating back to the 10th-12th centuries have been uncovered. In 1980, archaeologists excavating Livonians' Hillfort uncovered fragments of an ancient brick castle wall. Aizkraukle's Livonian castle was first mentioned in the text of the chronicle of Henrik Latvis about the Livonians and Lithuanians who attacked Riga in 1204. It was the easternmost port of the Livonians on the Dauguva waterway, and the lands of the baptized Selonians and Latgalians - Koknese and Jersika - began further on. During the Livonian Crusades, in the summer of 1205, the Crusaders

WHERE TO TASTE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

SIA "Berico" or "Jāņa smokehouse"
Kalna Čoči Baloži, Seces parish,
Aizkraukle district
+371 22051187
https://www.facebook.com/Janakupinatava

Once tasted, the smoked products of Janis Smokehouse, the taste remains in the memory for a long time. The home-grown company smokes mostly fish from Latvia. Local catfish and carp are particularly famous. Smoke tasting for groups can also be organised by prior arrangement.

burned the castle of Aizkraukle, forced its inhabitants to accept the Catholic faith and give hostages. The Livonian Brothers of the Sword built the Aizkraukle brick castle during Master Wenno's time, not far from the burned castle of Livonians. In the summer of 1211, following the agreement between Bishop Albert and the crusaders, the Order of Sword Brothers acquired the entire Aizkraukle district and a third of the Salaspils and Dole Island districts together with the people of the respective districts, their fields, fishing, courts and clans. Around 1229, the Battle of Aizkraukle between King of Semigallia Viestardas and the troops led by Markvarts, the governor of Aizkraukle Castle took place near it. On March 5, 1279, the Grand Duke of Lithuania Traidenis with the regiments of the Semigallians defeated the Teutonic forces near Aizkraukle. From 1252 to 1478, Aizkraukle was the center of the Aizkraukle Komture of the Livonian Order. It is not known exactly when the new Aizkraukle castle was built at the Karikste estuary in the Daugava, 1.7 km away, which is mentioned in a land survey document from 1420 as the "Aizkraukle house" (husz Ascheraden) of the order opposite the old castle (Olde borch).

Skrīveri, Aizkraukle district
GPS - 56.62194, 25.13027

Skrīveri, 2 km

The material culture of the Selonians

The material culture of the areas inhabited by Balts is similar, however, there are differences in the production of local clothing and jewelry, as well as their use. The Selonians material culture after the 9th century is difficult to distinguish from the Latgalian material culture due to the similarity of jewelry and clothing. The Selonians culture is associated with the eastern group of the early Iron Age burial hillforts with a stone circle at their foundation, which includes the Augszeme, southeastern Vidzeme and the northeastern part of Lithuania. The prevalence of this group largely coincides with the Selonians dialects, which is characterized by circumflex intonation.

The Selonians culture has many similarities with Latgalians. This can be explained by the fact that the Selonians culture played a significant role in the process of creation of Latgalians culture, however, differences are also noticeable. In the Late Iron Age, the Selonians maintained the tradition of burying the dead in barrows as well. There are usually several barrows in one cemetery. Several dead may be buried in it, but there are also individual graves, mostly skeleton graves, sometimes cremated graves are also found. The demographics of the interred individuals – the gender and age structure – do not confirm that the barrow is a single-family burial, but paternal kinship is likely. The Selonians, as well as the Semigallians and the Latgalians, observed the burial of men and women in opposite directions in their cemeteries. Dead Selonians men are buried in the east-west direction, and women in the west-east direction. It is typical for the Selonians to put a set of work tools in the footstool of women's graves.

The Selonians more often than other Balt tribes used horseshoe brooches with ends in the shape of poppy heads, as well as distinctive split bands. Men usually wore only one, less often two or three brooches, which are characterized by massiveness.

WHERE TO BUY SOUVENIRS?

Jaunjelgava Tourist Information Centre
Jelgavas str. 33, Jaunjelgava, Aizkraukles district
+371 27366222
GPS - 56.616924, 25.082409

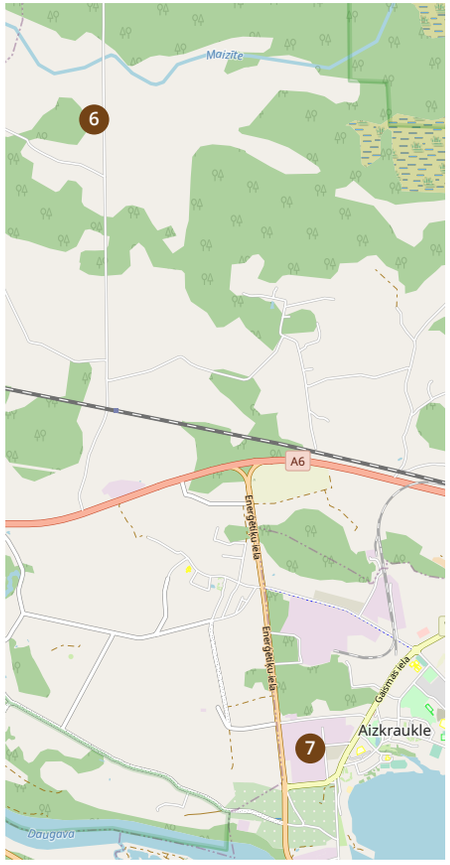
Sells locally produced products and souvenirs.

Middle DAUGAVA and surroundings

Aizkraukle - Koknese - Plaviņas

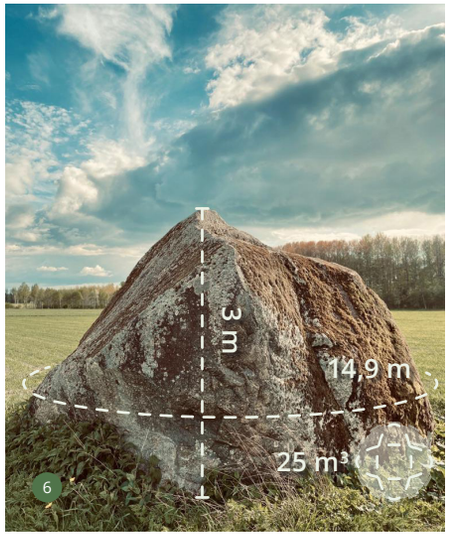
6. Meļķitāru Trough Stone
7. History and Art Museum of Aizkraukle "Kalna ziedi"
8. The Creative House "Baltaine" in Koknese
9. Latvian Beekeeping History Museum
10. Mežmalas Boats

Tourism Information Center:
www.visitaizkraukle.lv



6. MEĻĶITĀRU TROUGH STONE

The Meļķitāru Trough Stone is a culturally and historically significant secular stone with the largest in Latvia hollow in the form of a trough. The stone historically known as the Sacrificial Stone and the Devil's Stone is located on the edge of the residential areas of the Selionians and Latgalians. The height of the bowl-shaped stone - 3 m, the girth - 14.9 m, the total volume is 25 m3, the dimensions of the geld-shaped recess are 95 x 50 x 20 cm. Several grooves are carved into the sides of the stone to reach the trough. An active traveler can step on the stone and feel the aura of ancient ancestors. It is a former place of sacrifice, which according to residents was used until the middle of the 19th century. Archaeological excavations near the stone discovered a bonfire place and clay pavement; but in the middle of the 19th century, small offerings were found, along with the accumulated water, which was used in medicine. Shards of glazed earthenware were found.
In the past, large oak trees used to grow here, a holy spring bubbled in the nearby forest, and people used to sacrifice grain, bells, milk, butter or put money in the hollow of the first threshing harvest next to or on the stone. The water that collects in the trough hollow was considered healing. People threw small coins into it for healing. Later, children were also baptized at the stone.
Once upon a time, Baroness Anna von Schulz promised to give a farm to the person who would take the stone to the manor, but no one was able to do it. Another account says that in ancient times, the Devil would collect water from a nearby lake, pour it into the trough and bathe. This lasted until the lake was drained. Only then the Devil has moved elsewhere. Another story tells that the Devil wanted to bake bread, so he carved a bread pan in the stone, but while carrying the flour to the leaven, the rooster crowed, and all the work went down the drain. It is also said that in the old days, the Devil dragged the owner of the nearest farmhouse under a stone, and when he was released, no one recognized him anymore - so much time had passed.

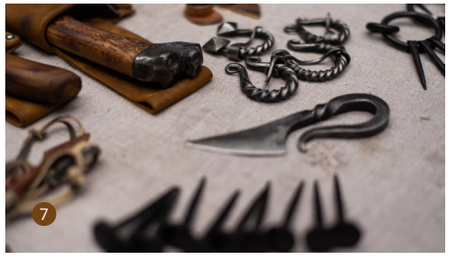


Aizkrauke parish, Aizkraukle district
There is a reference mark on the stone.
GPS - 56.656670, 25.203991
www.facebook.com/melkitarumuldakmens

Aizkraukle, 10 km

7. HISTORY AND ART MUSEUM OF AIZKRAUKLE "KALNA ZIEDI"

The museum is located in the single-yard "Kalna Ziedi" near Daugava. The permanent exhibition is in a building that was erected in 1989 on the foundations of the former home, while the storage building - on the foundations of the barn. The exhibition hall was built where a granary once stood, and the open-air exhibition was built in 2014. The only part of the former farm that remains in place is the cellar, but the placement of the buildings is typical for the layout of a farm in Vidzeme. 100 metres from the museum is the Kalna Ziedi Hillfort. The remains of the trunk of the victim oak of "Kalna ziedi", which was destroyed by humans and natural elements, were moved from the edge of the Pļaviņas hydroelectric power plant water storage to the museum yard to be preserved for future generations as a historical monument and place of worship in the region of Semigallia. Artefacts of the region's material culture, which commemorate the Stone and Iron ages, are stored in the museum's collections. It is a source of research on the material and spiritual culture of the Selonian and other Balts tribes. In the open-air exhibition of the museum, you can see beehives with ownership signs and circular stone crosses, which are rarely seen in Latvia - medieval gravestone. The theme of the permanent exhibition is "The Fate of the Daugava Coast" The museum is actively involved in the history, folk crafts, and art exhibitions, as well as organizing events. Summer solstice events are particularly popular, as well as Blacksmiths' Day in July, Lāčplēsis Day (a Memorial Day for soldiers who fought for the independence of Latvia) in November and candle-making workshops in February. In museum it is possible to celebrate your own life events as birthday, wedding day or baptism.



Muzeja st., Aizkraukle, Aizkraukle district
GPS - 56.598872, 25.2405523
www.aizkrauklesmuzejs.lv

Aizkraukle, 0,5 km

8. THE CREATIVE HOUSE "BALTAINE" IN KOKNESE

The Creative House "Baltaine" in Koknese invites to celebrate not only traditional Latvian annual celebrations (Meteņi, Easter, Ūsiņi, Jāņi, Miķeļi, Christmas), and to organize honour festivities: christening and ritual dressing of newlyweds (mičošana), but also to gain knowledge about these traditions by attending courses and seminars, participating in wedding productions and culinary heritage workshops. The workshops of the Creative House offer a variety of ancient Selonian crafts: spinning, twisting, crocheting, knitting and embroidery. Here you can also learn to play musical instruments – the stave, harmonica, longitudinal flute, mandolin – as well as learn Latvian dances, play games and sing.
The creative house "Baltaine" has been awarded the "Latvian Heritage" cultural mark, because it thoroughly studies and nurtures the traditional culture of the Selonians and the surrounding regions. This venue organises seminars, courses and activities related to Latvian holidays and family celebrations based on old beliefs, traditions and scientific works of folklore, ethnography, and history. The ladies of the house prepare tasty porridges, soups, herbal teas, chicory coffee, pastries, and pierogi.

Pre-registration is required to taste the culinary heritage: "Dauguvos zvirblius" - beans or peas with drippings, "Urgu putru" - porridge according to the recipe of the "Urgu" homestead, pureed soup "Būnīšu biezzupa", pancakes "Barona pankoki", as well as drinks.

Melioratoru st. 1a, Kuoknese,
Aizkraukle district
GPS - 56.644318, 25.442099
www.facebook.com/radosamaja

Koknese, 0,5 km

WHERE TO TASTE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

"BIRDS OF THE MORNING"

"Rīta putni", Bilstini, Koknese parish, Aizkraukle district
+371 29147071
www.ritaputni.lv

"Rīta putni" offers fascinating stories about the quail farm, the history of quails, Olala! and Bučers' varied products. The owners invite you to go on a gastronomic journey and offer a tasting of quail products. A gourmet lunch with the owners is also available.

9. LATVIAN BEEKEEPING HISTORY MUSEUM

Wild-bee keeping and beekeeping, along with agriculture, are one of the oldest branches of Balts farming. In a sense, it is a source of wealth and prosperity, and their beginning must be sought in prehistoric times. Beeswax was one of the main trade products in ancient times. Selonians also kept bees. Honey, used as a food with medicinal properties as well as a sugar substitute, and wax, a commodity and raw material for wax models to cast bronze and silver products in stone and clay molds, were very important in the everyday life of the Selonians. The Latvian Beekeeping History Museum was established in Vecbebri in 1984, next to it the Schools of Beekeeping and Horticulture that were opened in Vecbebri Manor in 1922. There is an educational apiary in the garden of the museum, and

the exhibition, arranged in four halls, provides information about the life of the bee family, its nutrition, beekeeping products and their significance.
Over the last century, beekeeping has radically changed its technological form, but its essence - the bees themselves and working with them - has practically not changed. The arsenal of beekeepers' tools has been supplemented by new materials and powerful devices that would be too small for any museum.
In the museum, it is possible to taste different varieties of honey with black bread and milk or fresh cucumbers, apples, and to buy honey products.

„Dravas", Vecbebri, Bebru parish, Aizkraukle district
GPS - 56.720851, 25.493230
www.visitkoknese.lv

Vecbebri, 0,3 km

10. MEŽMALAS BOATS

Company UAB "A.A. Mežmalas" offers you to enjoy the shipping route of the old Selonians - to sail along the picturesque Daugava and its many bays, past Oliņkalns and the Sēlpilis Hillfort in powerful, large boats built on the model of Viking boats, "Lāčplēsis" and "Nameisis", surrounded by legends and heroic stories. Experience the pleasure of boating and the captain's stories about ancient history can also be heard along the route: Koknese castle ruins-Likteņdārzs-Koknese castle ruins. Daugava was used as a major trade

route, connecting the West with the East, the Selonians with the Latgalians, the Semigallians with the Livonians, and others. It is known that the Balts had many various types of ships. The political and economic center of the Selonians was the Sēlpils Hillfort on the bank of the Daugava. The inhabitants of hillfort managed and controlled trade and shipping on the river. There is no doubt that, controlling part of the largest river in the Baltic region, the Selonians had water transport in the form of ships and boats. It is not known what exactly the water vehicles of the Selonians looked like, but judging by the fragments found in the region, it is likely that the Selonians also had similar vessels.

"Annas klints" Camping, Klintaines parish, Aizkraukle district
GPS - 56.588727, 25.633486
www.facebook.com/mezmalaslaivas.lv

Pļaviņas, 8 km

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Cruises on the Daugava and the Perse
Boat "Swan" from Likteņdārzs
+371 29999436
Boat "Vīgante" +371 28490667

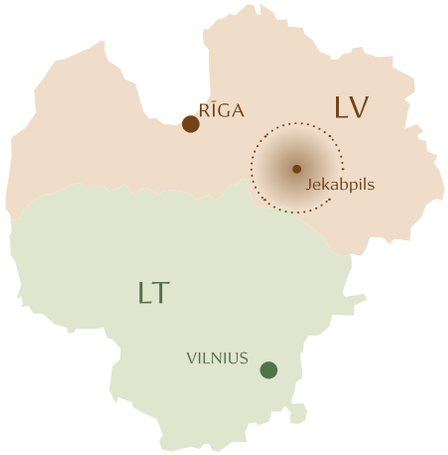
The Daugava River has always been an important trade route from east to west. The ancient trade transport of barges, streams, schooners, uans and rafts is not to be seen on the Daugava nowadays, but you can follow the traces of the ancient trade route on Viking barges and various types of boats. The stories of ancient times about how the Selonians, Latgalians and other Balts tribes once lived on the banks of the Daugava will reveal much about what once was..

The Selonians residential areas - hillforts and settlements

In the Middle and Late Iron Age 10-15 hillforts were inhabited by Selonians around Latvia. They were usually installed on individual hills, less often at the confluence of rivers, between ditches and fortified with ramparts. Compared to other hillforts on the territory of Latvia, Selonia hillforts more often had terraces, which create an additional system of fortifications and represent a fort. This can be considered as a distinctive feature of the Selonians' hillforts.

Ancient cities have been identified near the larger hillforts (centers of the lands), for example, near Dignāja Hillfort, Stupeļi Hillfort and Margaskalns. Settlements or villages were common. Only a small part of the hillforts and settlements have been archaeologically investigated. The hillforts of Dignāja, Stupeļi and Sēlpils are among the most famous centers of Selonians. During archaeological excavations, the oldest evidence of human habitation was found in Sēlpils Hillfort in Latvia - flint flakes, scrapers and arrowheads mixed in the layers of the German brick castle and the wooden castle of the Sēlpils, and according to their shape, are attributed to the end of the Paleolithic or the oldest stone age (dating from around the 9th millennium BC).

In the late Iron Age, the Selonians lived on the left bank of the Daugava in the area from the Jaunjelgava and Taurkalne forests to the Apascia and Roveja rivers. According to the Chronicle of Henrik Latvis, the Selonians castle is Sēlpils, which was captured by the Crusaders in 1208, and the Selonians lived together with the Latgalians in the Koknese region. In the document of 1226, which determined the boundaries of the city of Riga, it was mentioned that the Selonians also lived in the vicinity of Riga.

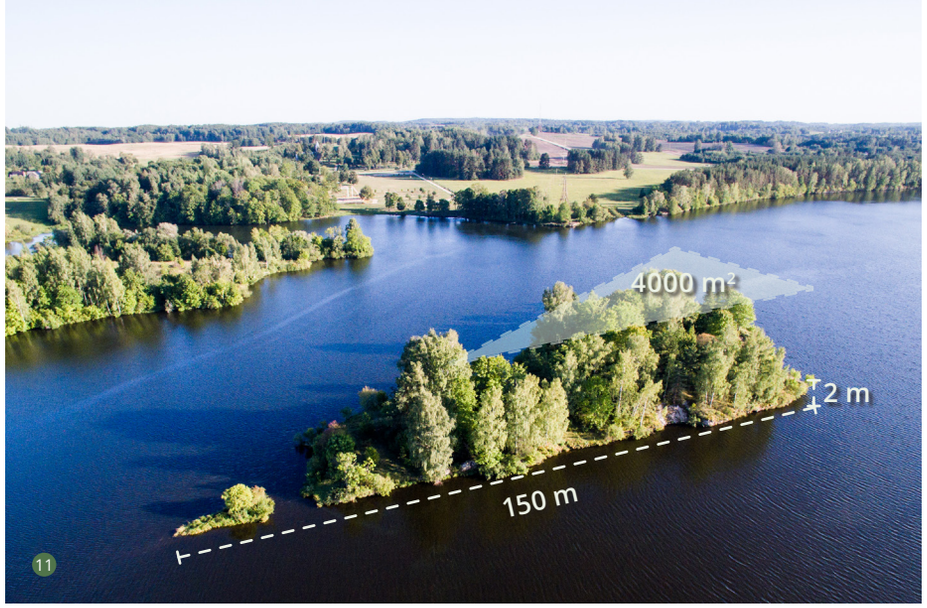


JĒKABPILS city and surroundings

Sēlpils - Jēkabpils

11. Sēlpils Hillfort
12. Pormaļu Silvermound
13. Biological exploration farm "Boļāni"
14. The Krustpils castle and Jēkabpils History Museum
15. The open-air exhibition "Sēļu sēta" (Selonian courtyard) of Jēkabpils History Museum

Tourism Information Center: visit.jekabpils.lv



11. SĒLPILS HILLFORT

Until the beginning of the 13th century, Sēlpils Hillfort with its wooden castle was the Selonian political and economic centre and the seat of ancient Selonian kings. It included several villages. Nowadays, the hillfort is located on an island on the River Daugava with a picturesque landscape all around and a facilitated resting place for visitors. Depending on the weather conditions and the amount of precipitation, Sēlpils Island in Daugava rises to two meters above the water and can reach up to 150 meters in length. Castle ruins are under water. The island can be accessed by boat or viewed from the shore of the River Daugava. In front of the Sēlpils Hillfort on the other bank of the Daugava is Oliņkalns. Sēlpils Hillfort was the political and military center of Selonia from the 6th to the 12th century. The active life in Sēlpils took place from the 10th to the 12th century when the entire hillfort plateau was inhabited. The size of the site of Sēlpils Castle is approximately 4,000 m2, and the forecastle occupied an area of 7,000 m2. Archaeological excavations have resulted in finding the oldest evidence of human presence in Latvia: German stone castle and Selonian wood castle layers were mixed with flint slices, scrapers and arrowheads, which by their shape are attributable to the end of the Paleolithic or the oldest Stone Age (dating back to about 9th century BC). During the archaeological excavations, the layer of the old Selonian castle (VI-XII centuries) with the remains of the hearth, buildings and fortifications was also uncovered. After the territory was ruled by the Livonian Order, a large brick castle of the Livonian Order was built on the Sēlpils hill, and in the 16th century it even served as the residence of the Dukes of The Curonian and Semigallia. The brick castle of the Order was destroyed during the Northern War in 1704.

Watch video - Sēlpils in the Middle Ages 3D

Under the ruins of the brick castle of the Sēlpils, the characteristic of the Balt tribes was found, which can be attributed to the 1st millennium BC, and the cultural layer with finds typical of the Sēlpilis was determined from around the 5th century. Selonian fortifications, which are adapted to the natural relief of the banks of the Dauguva, but it is likely that the old ditches and ramparts were changed during the construction of the castle. Historians believe that the ruins of Sēlpils Castle stand in the same place where the old "castrum Selonum" was mentioned in the chronicle of Henrik Latvis. However, there are no signs left in the appearance of the Sēlpils Hillfort, testifying to the castle of the local inhabitants once standing in this place. There are many old graves in the vicinity of the hillfort. Karātavu Hill is also nearby. The filing says that those people who could not bring the set amount of stones to the hill during the construction of the castle were hanged.

Sēlpils parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.58722, 25.64027

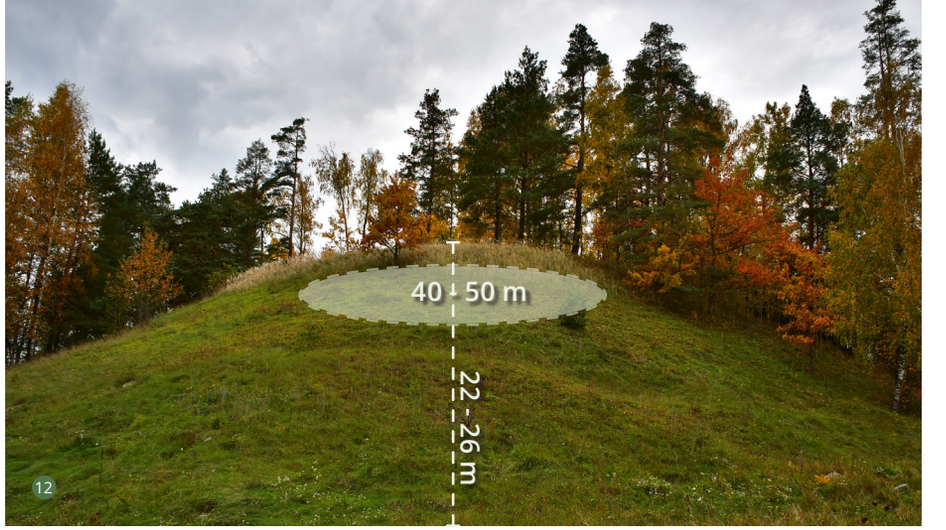
WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Taborkalna observation tower
Daburi, Sēlpils parish, Jēkabpils district

The 28-metre observation tower has been opened on the 158-metre-high peak of Taborkalns, offering a fabulous view of the landscape. At the foot of the tower is the Struve geodetic arc point "Dabors-hill" and information about it is available.

12. PORMAĻU SILVERMOUND

Pormaļu Silvermound is a Selonian Hillfort on the left bank of the Daugava. It blends perfectly into the surrounding landscape and is considered one of the Iron Age hillforts. Silvermound is single, in the shape of a rounded cone and with very steep edges. The mound rises 22-26 meters above the surrounding area. The size of the hillfort site is 45-50 meters, in the middle part of the site there is a small rampart of about three meters, and it does not have any visible man-made fortifications. Stone axes, iron spears, and an iron narrow-bladed ax were found near the hillfort. Next to the hillfort was an ancient city with an area of about two hectares, and the thickness of the cultural layer in it reached 0.6 meters. Ceramics found in the territory of the



mound and the ancient city testify that the hillfort has been inhabited for a long time, probably since the 1st millennium BC to the Late Iron Age. The hillfort was first recorded by Karl von Liouvis of Menar (German Karl von Löwis of Menar) in 1922, and in 1926 it was investigated and measured by Ernests Brastiņš during his exploration expedition of the Semigallia hillforts. Near the hillfort there are several isolated round mounds, possibly cult sites.

Sēlpils parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.550363, 25.648515

13. BIOLOGICAL EXPLORATION FARM "BOĻĀNI"

The core of "Boļāni" farm is plants and their products, as well as tourism services, which are based on local cultural and natural resources. Like other Balts, the household of the Seleonian tribe was closely connected with the gifts of nature, and the farm provides an opportunity to learn a little about the household of the old Selonians, how widely plants and natural gifts were used. During the visit, the landlady Maija, who also sings, will reveal historical dishes, the reality, and traditions of rural life. The landlady even has her own virtual song closet, where you can read 3389 folk songs performed in Sēlpils. In a beautiful country house,

you can taste and buy delicious herbal teas, fruits, candied berries, and special offers - unique savory delicacies that you can learn to make according to a family recipe. You can also go on educational hikes along nature trails, as well as to the "Dabors-kalns" point of the Strūvė geodesic arc.

Homestead „Boļāni", Sēlpils parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.58564, 25.68699
www.bolani.mozello.lv

14. THE KRUSTPILS CASTLE AND JĒKABPILS HISTORY MUSEUM

The artefacts of the Selonian material culture preserved in the museum collections are a source of research into the material and spiritual culture of the Balts.
The oldest record mentioning Krustpils is dated in 1237. For several centuries, the castle was ruled by the family of the Barons von Korf. After big reconstruction and maintenance work, the castle can now be visited with halls and spacious corridors with new expositions about the history of the city. Exhibitions are held in the castle tower and exhibition halls. The museum offers themed tours and educational programs.
The Jēkabpils History Museum has been in Krustpils Castle for more than 25 years. One of the exhibition rooms of the museum is dedicated to the Selonian tribe. The exhibition uses archaeological finds in the museum's collections and reconstructions of Selonian 12th-13th century clothing and jewelry. Every visitor, looking in the mirror, can see herself wearing the clothes of an old Selonian woman. Meanwhile, kids can take on the role of an archaeologist, lifting weights from the dig site with flying kites.

Rīgas st 216B, Jēkabpils
GPS - 56.51096, 25.85884
www.jekabpilsmuzejs.lv

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

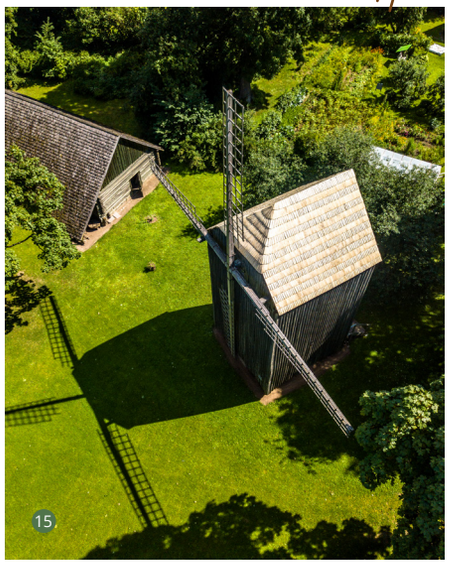
Jēkabpils Forest Park
Mežaparka Street, Jēkabpils,
Jēkabpils district
+371 22000498

The park, located on the banks of the Radži reservoir, was planted in 1966 to protect the town from the dust of dolomite quarrying. Here you can rent boats, go fishing and underwater hunting. In winter, there is a ski slope, and in summer you can go to the Blue Flag beach, the "Foot Trail" and the "Lūša obstacle course", the "Lūša ķepa" disc golf park, beach volleyball or streetball courts, and other activities.

15. THE OPEN-AIR EXHIBITION "SĒĻU SĒTA" (SELONIAN COURTYARD) OF JĒKABPILS HISTORY MUSEUM

The open-air exhibition consists of six 19th century rural buildings of Augšzeme region: a residential house, a grain barn, a small barn, a forge, a windmill, and a bathhouse. The courtyard, architecture and layout of buildings reflect the craft and construction skills of ancient Selonians. "Selonians' farmstead" was founded in 1952. The first structure brought here was a barn from the Skārdupes homestead in the Aknīste area.
The exposition of the newly built Craft House presents the traditions of Selonians handicrafts, and there are also facilities for various educations. The museum is a place to try different countryside works as grinding, spinning, and forging. Thematic exhibitions, restoration workshops, Midsummer Day celebration and other activities are offered. The work tools and household items of a moderately wealthy peasant of the Selonian region of the 19th century can also be viewed in the exhibition. In the practical education "Natural power of plants" you can learn about the effect of Latvian plants on people's well-being and make a scrub for sauna rituals. Those who want to learn more about the work of the artisans of the time should take part in the "Craftsmen's work" education, where you can mill flour, spin yarn and churn butter.

Filozofu st. 6, Jēkabpils
GPS - 56.496162, 25.873688
www.jekabpilsmuzejs.lv



The Selonians Jewelry

Since childhood, Selonians taught the younger generation the traditions of decorating. The jewelry given to children was like that of adults, often adjusted by folding it according to the child's makeup, or specially made in the right size. The Selonians women wore necklaces, bracelets, rings, brooches, crowns. A strand made of Berlock pendants and brass beads were widespread among women. They could be of various shapes - horses, crosses, medallions. One of the most common types of women's jewelry was necklaces, and their various forms are found in a wide area. The Selonians' women loved to adorn themselves and wear rings. This is the second most abundant group of jewelry. A similar number of virtually all known ring shapes were commonly worn on each hand.

It is not uncommon to find in the graves of women and girls very ornate, multi-twisted necklaces made of glass and amber, shells, bronze spirals, bells, as well as various beads - amulets. Like the women of the neighboring nations, the Selonians' women wore ornate bracelets, but they were not found in all graves. Band bracelets with animal head-shaped (zoomorphic) ends were dominant. The ornate large woolen shawls of the Selonians' women, decorated with bronze rings inserted or woven into the fabric, should be singled out.

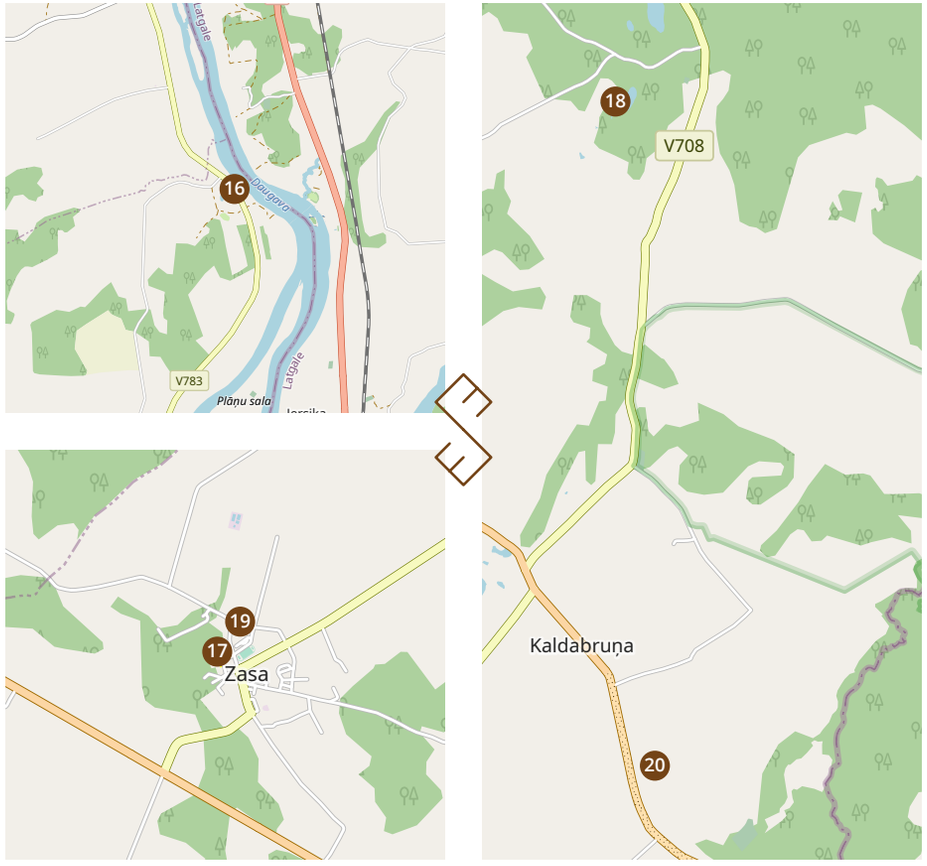
The women wore woolen wrap skirts, linen shirts and a large woolen shawl, and their heads were decorated with wreaths of various shapes, usually spiral, in some cases with decorations attached like a braid. Men wore significantly less jewelry. The most luxurious men's jewelry were belts, they were decorated with bronze or silver fittings and buckles. They also wore brooches to fasten their jacket and cloak, as well as bracelets and rings.

JĒKABPILS county and surroundings

Dignāja - Rubene - Zasa

16. Dignāja Hillfort
17. The Selonia's Cultural Space
18. Selonian farmstead "Gulbji" ("Swans")
19. The Craft Centre "Rūme"
20. Association "Watermarks", The Meadow Museum in Kaldabruņa

Tourism Information Center: visit.jekabpils.lv



16. DIGNĀJA HILLFORT

Once powerful and mighty, Dignāja Hillfort is located about 300 m from the River Daugava, opposite of Jersika Hillfort. According to researchers, until the 10th century, Dignāja was more important than Jersika Castle, during the time of the Livonian Confederation Order, it was called the "duke's citadel", which was mentioned everywhere as the main center of governance and spiritual life in Latgalia. Dignāja was a fortified Selonian settlement was inhabited since the 1st millennium BC, but in the late Iron Age, the hillfort's defence structures were located on the edges of the hillfort. The hillfort of Dignāja was first mentioned in written sources in 1366, which refer to the medieval castle of Dignāja (hus Dubbena) of the Archbishopric of Riga, which was in the vicinity of Dignāja, but did not exist for long. It is believed that this castle stood on the old hillfort of Dignāja. The Dignāja Hillfort is in the southern part of the larger mountain. The hill is oriented in the southwest-northeast direction, and its height on the northern side is only 3-5 m, so the edges of its slopes have been artificially made steeper. At the northeastern foot of the hillfort is a spacious terrace-shaped square where the cultural layer was found. In 1939, under the leadership of Elvīra Šnore, archaeological excavations were carried out in the mound, during which about 700 finds from the early, middle, and late Iron Age were found. Later discoveries link it to the beginning of the 13th century. The fact that there were dwelling houses on the plateau of the hillfort is supported by the remains of clay stucco ovens and fireplace on the plateau There are stories about Dignāja Hillfort saying that there is an underground passage running under the River Daugava and connecting it with Jersika Hillfort on the other side of the river. As the hillfort is not overgrown with trees, it offers beautiful landscape views of the Daugava valley.

"Grantsbedres", Dunava parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.274723, 26.186908

17. THE SELONIA'S CULTURAL SPACE

The exposition of Selonia's Cultural Space is dedicated to traditional Selonian culture, old crafts and traditions. Here you can see the exhibition "Selonian peasant then and now", get to know the handicraft tools, household items and handicrafts typical of Selonia's village of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Facts about the literary giants of the Jēkabpils region - Rainis, Jānis Akuraters, Jānis and Aleksandrs Grīns help you to get to know the Selonian language. You can also see a virtual route around Jēkabpils. The museum offers to watch interactive materials (videos) on craft skills such as beekeeping; carpentry; belt weaving; bread baking; music making; rafting; rope twisting; carpentry; archaeological pottery; insights into the work of the ferrymen across the Daugava. Various activities take place regularly in the museum - poetry days, museum nights and other events, creative workshops are held for audiences of different ages. Excursions around Jēkabpils region, including Zasa Park, are offered to groups. Visitors can relax by playing a variety of board games, such as the Tactile Puzzle "Selonian Brooch" or the sneaky word game "Selonian Pair".

"Ozollejas", Zasa, Zasa parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.29359, 25.97940
www.facebook.com/Seloniaskulturtelpa

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17

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Birdwatching hikes
Kalna parish, Jēkabpils district
+371 29939759

Birdwatching tours with a guide for groups of up to 10 people. Hiking season - from March to October. Pre-registration.

18

18. SELONIAN FARMSTEAD "GULBJI" ("SWANS")

You can experience the spirit and way of life of the old Selonians at the Gulbji farmstead, a place where time has stopped. This is one of the rare places where you can see and get to know the "living" farmstead with its layout and buildings typical of the historical region of Selonian. A self-founded small ethnographic museum, ancient buildings with their own history, decorative greenery and a collection of ornamental plants, a garden and a collection of medicinal plants are in harmony with the ancient structures and harmoniously complement it. Various engaging activities are offered to visitors here: bathing in a smoke bath using meadow plant brooms and a self-made plant-honey scrubber, pressing cheese, churning butter, cooking old-fashioned meals, baking real rye bread, twisting ropes, sowing crops using ancestral methods, and others. The homestead also ensures catering according to pre-registration, organizes tastings of home-made products, local food and drinks - crepes, pearl barley soup, mashed potato soup, stewed beans in a special sauce, sweet semolina porridge (bubert), bread soup with whipped cream, cakes and herbal teas. The household has been awarded the "Latvian Heritage" and "Latvian Kitchen" honors. Here you can get acquainted with ancient signs of Latvian strength, customs, celebrate holidays according to traditions by singing songs adapted

18

18

to the occasion, dance and play games. The farmstead has a barefoot path, playgrounds, and volleyball courts. The country house has a renovated and well-maintained spring, several ponds, and a lake where you can swim and fish, as well as places for tents and fire pits.

„Gulbji“, Rubene parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.137077, 26.064265
www.facebook.com/selulaukuseta.gulbji

19. THE CRAFT CENTRE “RŪME”

The Craft Centre “Rūme” is the place where ancient Selonian crafts are cultivated, studied, and researched. Occasionally, Selonian craftsmen from local areas and nearby Lithuania meet in “Rūme” to work together, to teach each other and create beautiful works of art, to discover and restore ancient tools of crafts, to develop their skills and traditions. Thus, preserving the cultural and historical heritage of Selonians. Here, everyone is welcome not only to watch the craftsmen and artists of the Centre at work, but also to take part, to acquire new skills and to spend time creatively, since “Rūme” offers ceramics, textile painting and woodworking workshops.
The Craft Center offers creative workshops for artists and craftsmen, organizes creative workshops for children and adults, seminars and individual training, boat trips, conducting wedding rituals, activities for families and small groups of interested persons. You can buy souvenirs and works of art, as well as order them.
In the “Rūme“ center, you can familiarize yourself with archaeological reconstructions of Selonians clothing - both male and female - and view the exhibition of reconstructions of Late Iron Age pottery. You can also try to grind grains with a manual stone mill. Latvia’s traditional log architecture and the creative spirit that always reigns in the center of “Rūme“ will enchant you and take you to antiquity, giving peace and rest to your thoughts. If you want to have a creative but peaceful rest, and at the same time get to know the antiquity of Selonia, the craft center “Rūme“ will be the most suitable place for that.

“Rūme“, Zasa, Zasa parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.29458, 25.98139
www.facebook.com/amatniecibas.centrs.rume

20. ASSOCIATION "WATERMARKS", THE MEADOW MUSEUM IN KALDABRUŅA

In order for modern people to understand various processes of nature and flora, which are closely related to cultural and historical heritage, the association "Watermarks" was founded. The most significant event and the face of the "Watermarks" association implemented so far is the "Days of Hay" - a plein air of sculptures made from hay, which has been held in the garden of apples of the Kaldabruņa school for ten years in early July.
In the permanent exhibition "Meadow Museum" created by the "Watermarks" association, you can view the multimedia exposition "Midnight Meadow" dedicated to nature, scenery and traditions. In the museum, you can get to know various meadow plants, including protected ones, warm up with a cup of herbal tea, and participate in creative workshops on glass and woodworking, laser engraving, and working with natural materials. Interior items and original jewelry are born in this workshop, for example, unique glass jewelry with live Selonian plants embedded in it. These workshops result in original ornaments and interior objects, which can be bought and ordered. In the outdoor area of the Meadow Museum you can visit the nursery of medicinal plants and exhibition areas of protected plants.

"Kaldabruņas skola", Rubene parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.09434, 26.06900
www.udenszimes.lv
www.facebook.com/Udenszimes

The Selonians lands

In the written sources, there are mentions of several Selonians lands that were in the south-eastern part of present-day Latvia and in the north of Lithuania. The lands are difficult to place accurately. It is assumed that five Selonians lands are localized on the territory of Latvia - Sēlpils, Kalve, Nīcgale, Peluone and Alekte. And in the 1254 bulla (seal) issued by Pope Innocent IV, five Selonian lands are mentioned – Alekte (Allecten), Kalve (Calve), Sēlene (Selen), Medene (Medene) and Nīcgale (Nitcegale). Larger regions are called lands with well-fortified castles in the center and a string of subordinate villages.

The borders of the territory inhabited by the Selonians include the present-day Jēkabpils region, the surroundings of Ilūkste and Jaunjelgava, and are bordered in Lithuania by the rivers Duseta, Sventosija, Vašuoka, Viesinta and Levens. All the lands of Selonia mentioned in the written sources should be placed in this territory.

The place name Selen should refer to a part of Selonian - a relatively narrow stretch on the left bank of the Daugava from Jaunjelgava approximately to the vicinity of present-day Jēkabpils - Ābeļi, with the center on Sēlpils Hillfort. Medene (Medene) should be sought south of Kalve in the territory of Lithuania, and Nīcgale (Nitczegale) was probably located approximately in front of the present Nīcgale on the left bank of the Daugava in the vicinity of Dviete(Jēkabpils region), where a series of monuments of that time are known. Its center could be Ilūkste's Melnākalna Hillfort, at the foot of which is the ancient city. The land could include the surroundings of present-day Dviete, Ilūkste along the Daugava. In the part of Selonian, which is closer to Riga, you should also look for the land of Kalve (Calve), because it was conquered relatively early and part of it came under the control of both the Riga Cathedral Chapter and the Riga Bishop. Therefore, it is possible to agree with the hypothesis that it should be searched for in the Zalve River. Unfortunately, the area is archaeologically under-explored and no reliable Late Iron Age monuments are known.

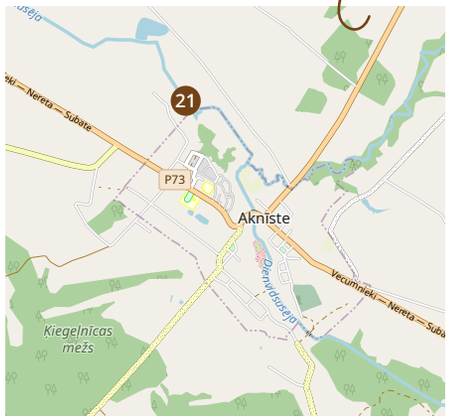
More uncertainties arise from the localization of the lands Alektene (Allekten) and Pelone (Pelone). These place names do not seem to have survived to this day. It is possible that Lone stream and Lone village are named after Pelone. In this case, Pelone should be looked for in the surroundings of Rite and Sauka lakes in the Jēkabpils region. To the south of Luone Rite, two mighty hillforts stand opposite each other - Stupeļi Hillfort and Margaskalns, and spacious ancient cities were located next to them. Since Allekten was mentioned in the bulla (seal) issued by Pope Innocent IV on May 23, 1254 in Assisi, it would be more logical to look for it in the territory of Latvia. This land could have been in the vicinity of Aknīste, Gārsene in the Jēkabpils region and included the vicinity of Obeliai located in the territory of Lithuania - its center could have been the former Hillfort of Papiliai.

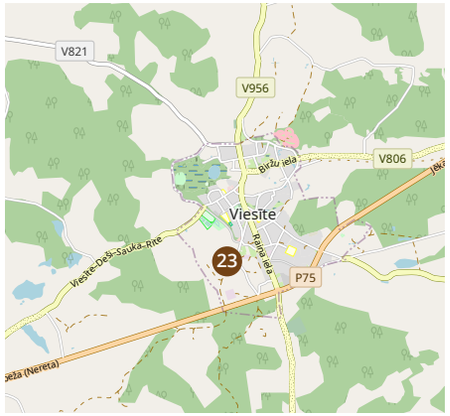
SELONIAN small towns

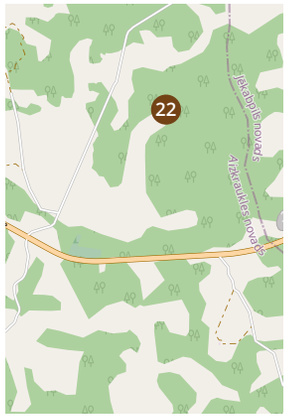
Aknīste - Nereta - Viesīte - Rite - Sauka

21. Saltupju Holy Spring
22. The Museum of Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš – "Riekstiņi"
23. Viesīte Museum "Sēlija" (Selonia)
24. Stupeļi Hillfort
25. The Stone of Stupeļi Hillfort
26. Ormaņu Hill

Tourism Information Center: visit.jekabpils.lv



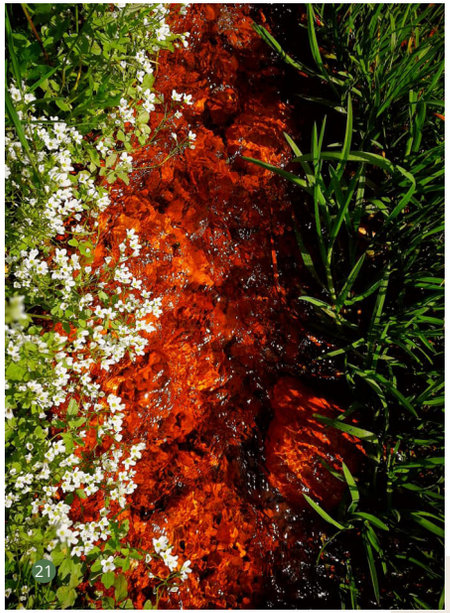




21. SALTUPJU HOLY SPRING

Since ancient times, the Selonians deemed the Saltupju Holy Spring as healing and holy. It is also considered to be a cult place where in ancient times, Selonians performed rituals. The water-rich spring forms a stream called Saltupe, which after about 100 m flows into the River Dienvidsusēja. It is considered one of the longest underground springs in Latvia. The iron and sulphur compounds in the water give it a specific sulphur taste and colour the stream bed in a rusty shade. Alongside the stream is a stone with a small indentation, and it is thought to have been a cult stone long ago. It is said that in ancient times, they performed rites at the spring - offered coins and other small items, on Easter mornings, they would wash their faces with cool spring water. To this day, locals say that streams which flow to the East has healing properties. Nowadays, it is assumed that the linden tree growing near the spring ditch is a cult tree, which, judging by its girth, is much younger than what is mentioned in some records. The spring can be accessed, and travelers can taste the specific mineral water.

Torņa st., Aknīste, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.17129, 25.73505



WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Cafe "Alida"
Dzelmītes, Elkšņi, Elkšņi parish, Jēkabpils district
+371 26582074
www.kafejaalida.lv

Alida's wonderful chicory-apricot coffee recipe is inherited from Alida Kerubina (née Geida), who comes from "Goba" in Prode parish, Subate. It is safe to say that this is the taste of Selonia. At the coffee factory, guests can see the production process, enjoy different coffee varieties and make their own. Here you can take part in a silk-shelling workshop, bake rye bread and enjoy it with chicory coffee.

22

22

22. THE MUSEUM OF JĀNIS JAUNSUDRABIŅŠ – "RIEKSTIŅI"

The Museum of Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš – "Riekstiņi" is established in the central building of an old farmhouse, which reflects the traditions and craft skills of the former times in the Selonian region. The museum has gathered many domestic and household items typical of Latvian material culture. The museum was established in 1967 on the 90th anniversary of the birth of the painter and writer Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš. Painter and writer Janis Jaunsudrabinis spent his childhood in the "Riekstiņi" farmstead, which has preserved the appearance of the 19th century as depicted by Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš in his famous novel "Baltā grāmata" ("The White Book") until now. The museum's basic exhibition introduces the life and work of Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš. Here you can view his books, paintings, photographs, personal belongings, and the household items from the beginning of the 19th and 20th centuries, collected from the Nereta township and nearby homes, allow you to form an opinion about the household of that time in the rural homestead. During the summer, in addition to the exposition, you can visit exhibitions of applied art. The museum regularly hosts various events: art and poetry days, events in memory of Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš, calendar holidays and others.

"Riekstiņi", Nereta parish, Aizkraukle district
GPS - 56.196922, 25.380306
www.visitaizkraukle.lv

23

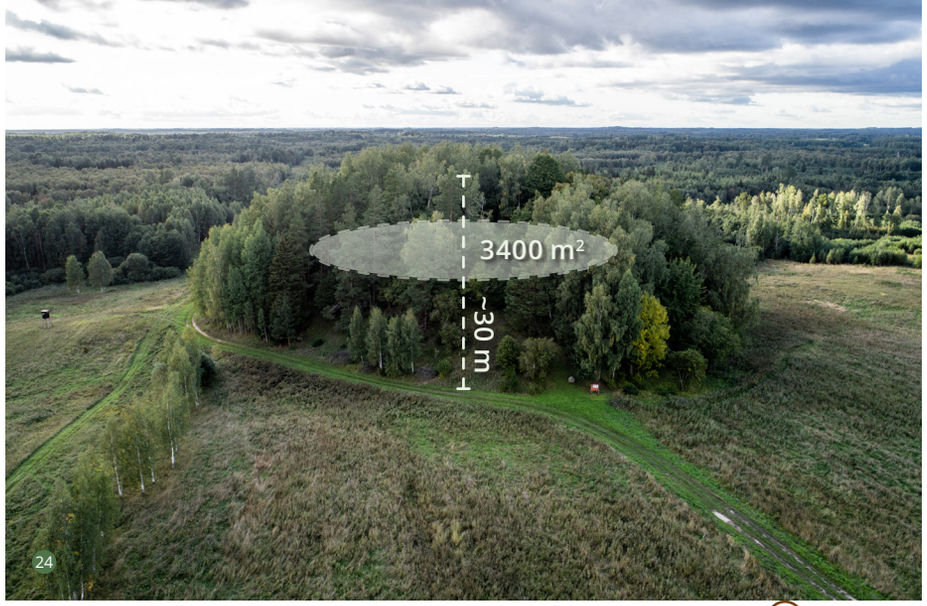
23. VIESĪTE MUSEUM "SĒLIJA" (SELONIA)

Viesīte Museum "Sēlija" keeps the heritage and traditions of Viesīte and Selonia culture alive, encouraging people to preserve and strengthen their Selonian self-esteem. The museum regularly adds collections, carries out cultural and historical research and scientific activities of Selonia and Viesīte counties, the aim of which is to preserve the traditional culture of Selonia. Here you can see expositions about the ethnography of the Augšzeme, Selonians and Selonia, as well as the nature of Selonia. The Crafts Centre on the territory of the museum introduces to the skills of the traditional craftsmen of Selonia region. The craftsmen working in the Centre knit national-pattern socks and gloves, crochet, weave and embroider in cross stitch to incorporate the ancestors' ornaments and signs, while the nearby carpentry is a woodworking workshop. The narrow-gauge train exhibition of the museum is in the former Viesīte depot.

A. Brodeles st.7, Viesīte, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.34141, 25.55454
www.muzejsSelonia.lv
www.facebook.com/muzejsSelonia

23

23



24. STUPEĻI HILLFORT

Stupeļi Hillfort - one of the most powerful cultural and political centers of the Selonia lands - a single, elongated, tree-covered mountain, just a few kilometers from the Lithuanian border. Its slopes are artificially elevated, signs of two terraces are visible. The hillfort, about 30 meters high, is one of the largest mounds in the historical region of Selonia, with a site area of 3400 m2. At the foot of the hillfort a former an ancient city of about 3 hectares in size. The hillfort was in the centre of an area densely inhabited by Selonians, which enabled successful trade and accounted for the control of the road running from Sēlpils to the southern areas of Selonia and Lithuania
The most recent detailed archaeological excavations have been carried out in 1976-1979. Their most significant find was a Damascus steel spearhead, evidence of local metal (iron) mining and familiarity with Damascus steel. Such spears were mostly used in the 11th-14th centuries; a total of 271 such spears have been found on the territory of Latvia, and this is the only one in Jēkabpils region. Other antiquities have been found at various times, such as collars with quotation marks, bronze crosses, horseshoe brooches, buckles, bracelets and fragments of a bronze crown.
At the foot of the hillfort, there is a stone that is an ancient cult site, and it is one of the few cult stones next to which archaeologists have discovered various antiques of the 10th–13th centuries, including pottery and bone fragments, probably, for the purpose of offerings.

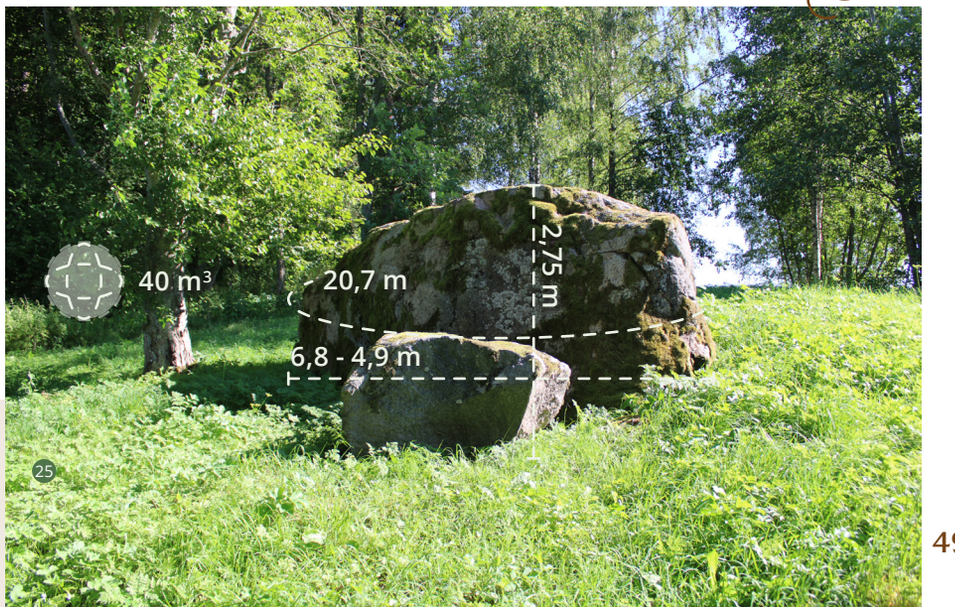
Rite parish, Jēkabpils district
The hillfort is three kilometers south of the Vecumnieki - Ilūkste road.
GPS - 56.1698, 25.46527

25. THE STONE OF STUPEĻI HILLFORT

At the north-western foot Stupeļi Hillfort there is a large memorial stone, length – 6,80 m, width – 4,90 m, height – 2,75 m, circumference – 20,70 m, volume – around 40 m3.There is a small trail leading to it. On the smooth surface of 25 m2 of the stone there is a small natural, flat hollow. This is particularly interesting because a shallow groove is made right next to the stone found in the deepest layers of the soil. On the eastern side of the surface there is a jag from a split-off, due to the effect of fire, it was separated in layers already in ancient times, because these splinters were also found in the lower layers of the cultural layer. The shape of the stone itself somewhat resembles an inverted pyramid, which is made of a special type of granite - viborgite. Archaeologists trying to solve the mystery of the big stone of the Stupeļi Hillfort in the 1980s found that it was probably used in ancient times as a cult stone, where the Selonians performed rituals. Archaeological excavations

took place near the stone in 1977-1978, during which various antiques of the 10th–13th centuries, including pottery and bone fragments, probably, for the purpose of offerings were found.

Rite parish, Jēkabpils district
The hillfort is three kilometers south of the Vecumnieki - Ilūkste road.
GPS - 56.1699, 25.4636833333



26. ORMAŅU HILL

The Ormaņu Hill, or Ürmaņi Hill is 167m high, located near Lake Sauka - the highest peak of the Selonia ridge, from which a beautiful panorama opens. Various submissions and stories testify that Ormaņu Hill could have been a holy or a fortified place in ancient times. The hill has not been archaeologically excavated and so far, it has not been determined what function it performed in prehistoric times when the Selonians lived here. From the old stories and submissions, it can be predicted that it was the cult place for the Selonians - the holy hill. The top of the hill and the steep slopes are mostly open, so it offers a view of the Sauka Nature Park and the Sauka Lake. There is a rest area on Ormaņu Hill, and there is an observation tower on the nearby Borīšu hill, usually called the Watchtower of Ormaņu Hill.
The hill may have been the gathering place of the ancient Selonians. Guards has always been there, who kept a watchful eye on the surroundings and announced the approaching attackers by lighting a fire. Ormaņu Hill could be seen in a wide area, and smoke or other signals announcing the danger from him could warn of the approaching attackers in time. A herald - usually a trumpeter - stood on Ormaņu Hill, from which he could survey the vast surroundings. This is where the name Sauka comes from, which means to summon, to summon people to report both happy and sad news, to inform and warn.

Elkšņi parish, Jēkabpils district
GPS - 56.25442, 25.54015

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Association "Selonian boats"
Skārdupītes, Aknīste parish,
Jēkabpils district
+371 20034392
www.seloniaslaivas.lv

The association "Selonian boats" offers to enjoy the waters of Selonia, enthusiastically exploring the possibilities of the surrounding area and adding new routes to the popular boat routes. A wide range of equipment for hire (kayak, canoe, bowl boat).

The Selonians language

Like other tribes, the language of the old Selonians does not have a single written example, so its research is only based on elements of the name (onomastics) found in historical written sources, as well as sly advice spoken in the territories previously inhabited by the Selonians. There are few sources of any kind on the Selonians language, and scholarly opinions vary widely. The Selonians language belongs to the Baltic language group of the Indo-European language family.

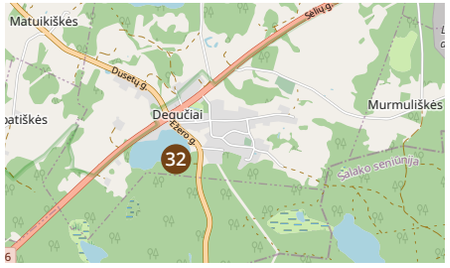
It is believed that in the Selonians language, as well as in other East Baltic dialects, there were diphthongs ie and uo, which were found in place names (toponyms) of Selonian origin: Meduone, Vesinte, Lodenbeke. In the consonant system of the Selonians language, as well as in the Prussian and Yotvings (a tribe of Southern Balts) languages, there were sounds s, z, for example, Maleysine, Mallaysen, Mallaisen, Sentuppe, Swentoppe, Vesinte, Wesinte, Vesyten. Also typical are the equivalents k, g > Selonians c, dz, as in Latvian, for example Alce, Latzedzen, Nertze, Nitczegale. Sometimes consonants č, dž are found in the Selonians language, for example Čedasai.

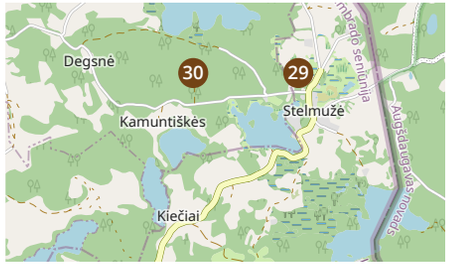
The substratum of the Selonians language is used to explain several features of the Lithuanian language (for example, in the Kupiškėnai and Anykštėnai dialects) and in the Latvian dialects (the presence of the hard ending accusative).

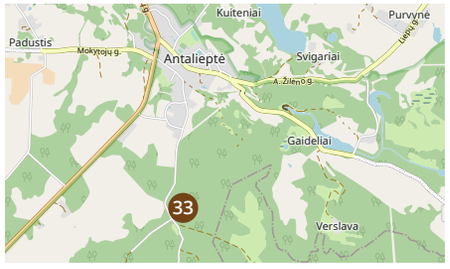
ZARASAI and surroundings

27. Zarasai Observation wheel
28. Vosgėliai Hillfort with settlement/ village (Dragelišskės Hillfort)
29. The Stelmužė oak
30. The Stone of the Plains
31. Velikuškės II (an Island) Hillfort
32. Degučių cognitive path
33. Šavaša cognitive path
34. Ramūno Čižo's Brewery and Exposition

Zarasai District Tourism and Bussiness Information Centre: www.visitzarasai.lt







27. ZARASAI OBSERVATION WHEEL

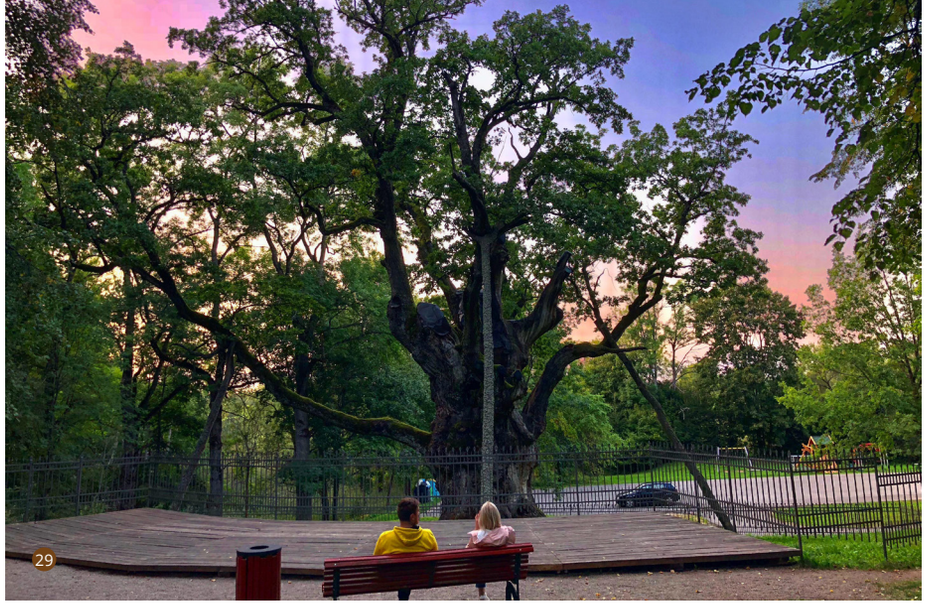
Zarasai Observation wheel (sometimes called a tower) - built n 2011, a unique observation site (path) is the only one in Lithuania that still has no analogues. On the slope of Lake Zarasas, above the lake, rises a 17-meter, 34-meter-diameter, 100-meter-long circular path that both begins and ends just off the street. It is a place where you can see an unseen spectacular sight - the panorama of Lake Zarasas, and relax at the same time, appreciates the natural beauty preserved and preserved by our ancestors and the landscape that has formed over a long period and is constantly being formed.

D. Bukontas str. 20, Zarasai
GPS - 55.72807, 26.24378

28. VOSGĖLIAI HILLFORT WITH SETTLEMENT/VILLAGE (DRAGELIŠKĖS HILLFORT)

Vosgėliai Hillfort with a settlement (or Dragelišės Hillfort) dates back to the 13th century on an area of 1.5 ha. It is believed that there were wooden castles associated with the ruler Vaisgėla from Nalšia. It is one of the most famous and picturesque mounds of Selonia. The hillfort is located on a separate large hill, the site is quadrangular, and the slopes are steep up to 27 m high, surrounded by swamps. During the research, stone axes, bone products, metal moulds, jewellery, iron arrows and tools were found. The finds are preserved in the Vytautas the Great War and Lithuanian History and Ethnography Museums. Just 600 meters southeast, in Dragelišės, in 1934, the treasure of Dragelišės silver alloys and ornaments from the first half of the 14th century was found. Legends about the Vosgėliai Hillfort commemorate the witch Laume, a Swedish church flooded with earth and open the door to the world of Baltic mythology. Next to the hillfort is a stone that, according to legends, covers the entrance to the vault.
In the place where the Vosgėliai Hillfort is now, there used to be a church. The devil didn't like it very much. The devil wanted to pour it over. While taking the ground, he even dug a small lake next to it. The devil poured over the church, but could not hide the door. Then he took a big stone and thought to close the door. But the rooster crowed, and the stone fell and sank into the mountainside.

GPS - 55.72067, 25.74859



29. THE STELMUŽĖ OAK

Oaks grow all over the world, they are closely linked to the growth and development of culture and civilization, and they are highly respected in many countries.
The Stelmužė oak is one of the living witnesses remembering the history of Lithuania, older than a millennium. No one knows the true age of the old oak tree, only the legends remember the nearby altar where people sacrificed to the god Thunderer (Perkūnas).
It is believed that there was once a castle nearby - there are remains of masonry near Lake Stelmužė.
Stelmužė oak is the oldest and thickest (about 13 meters in diameter, requires 8-9 men to cover the trunk) growing in Lithuania, one of the oldest oaks in Europe. A natural monument of Lithuanian.
Stelmužė's oak has been seen a lot - Lithuanian dukes, Knights of the Crusaders and Swordsmen, and the Swedish army stumbled here. Kaiser's and Hitler's armies passed through here. The human skeleton found in the n hollow of a tree and a French rifle testify that it was probably in the hiding place of one of Napoleon's soldiers while he was fleeing Russia.
There are legends and stories about the oak. It was believed that through the tree you can go down to the underworld, that under its roots there can be a treasure and under the branches the holy fire that burned in ancient times. At the roots of the tree altars and offerings to the gods were burnt. It is not known exactly what happened to his top. Legend has it that her serfs blocked the evil tsar from passing by.
Until the 20th century, mysterious rituals were associated with oak: for example, whoever keeps three, seven or nine acorns in their wallet or pocket will be protected from misfortunes, diseases and all evil.
On the order of the Lithuanian Ministry of Agriculture, the oak tree was cloned in the laboratory of the Lithuanian Forest Institute. As many as 200 cloned oaks are grown in the laboratory. In the future, it is planned that the small "stelmužiukai" will take branches to the sky in Lithuanian forests. Tree research

aimed at regenerating clonal shoots and growing trees have been updated since 2007. Scientists hope that the successfully surviving cloned plants will be more resistant to environmental factors and more durable, and will inherit the strength of the Stelmužė oak.

GPS - 55.82998, 26.21758

TRADITIONAL DISH RECIPE

"ACORN COFFEE"

Acorn coffe *is a one of traditional Lithuanian drinks that has been known in Lithuania since ancient times.*

First of all you need to prepare acorns: *dry the picked acorns for a couple days, peel them and boil with milk for one hour until the acorns are soft. Once the acorns are cooked, dry them. Then then roasted and ground in a coffee grinder. Afther grinding pour the ground coffee into a dark glass container, close tightly and store in a dry place.*

Coffee: *add 2-3 teaspoons of ground acorn coffee to the boiling water (enough for one cup of coffee). Boil for 2 to 3 minutes, cover with hot cream or milk, sweeten and serve.*

Enjoy:)

30. THE STONE OF THE PLAINS

Just less than 1 km away from the Stelmužė oak, the Stone of the Plains is hidden in the forest. It has not been explored or excavated to this day, only a wide surface of 18 m can be seen. It is difficult to determine how much this stone descends and whether it is at all inferior to its brother Puntukas, because most of it is hidden in the ground, covered with trees. The shape of the boulder is irregular and angular, it is elongated. Like many unknowns, the Stone of the Plains has its secrets behind the cloak of submission.
The Devil Giant rushed to the Earth, found a stone and is already lifting it on his shoulders, but the stone does not move. One way or another, the Giant Devil tried to move the stone, but it did not budge. The Devil Giant returned to Hell and told the Devil King all this. Then the commander told him to feed him as best as possible and not to force him to work for three days so that he would get stronger. Three days later, when the Devil Giant felt that he was three times stronger than before, the Devil King sent him back to Earth and told him to deliver the stone to the first roosters. The Devil Giant, running to Earth, made a mistake and turned the wrong way. When he turned around, it was already starting to dawn. Fearing the Devil King's punishment, the Devil Giant rushed back, falling, lifted a giant boulder from the fields of Lithuania on his shoulders and began to rejoice that he would hand it to the King. The gates of hell were not far away either... When Thenenly the rooster crowed! Terrified, the Devil Giant let go of the stone and fled to Hell. At the moment when the stone fell, the whole Earth shook from it, and the stone itself crashed into it. Hills, mountains, and ravines appeared from the impact of the stone. In memory of the past, the name of the Stone of the Plains remained for that boulder.

GPS - 55.83165, 26.19742

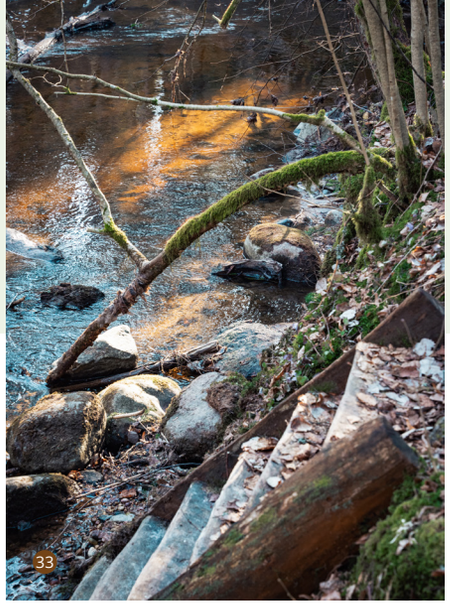
31. VELIKUŠKĖS II (AN ISLAND) HILLFORT

Velikuškės II Hillfort dates back to the first millennium BC to the I millennium. On the slope, in an area of 1 ha, there are foothills of the ancient settlement. The hillfort is located on the eastern shore of the Lake Sartai Bradesiai gulf. The hillfort is surrounded by water on three sides (Lake Zalvė and the Zalvė stream), and on the fourth side it is a wet inter-hill, therefore the hillfort is also known by the name of the Sala (an Island). The slopes of the hillfort are steep up to 25 m high, the site has an irregular quadrangular shape. Fragments of moulded pottery, animal bones and stone axes were found in the cultural layer that survived during the research.

Sartų Regional park, Antazavė municipality
GPS - 55.82727, 25.86818

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

If you want to get to explore the region even more, we recommend travelling with „Zarasų krašto gidė“ http://keliauksudalia.weebly.com/



32. DEGUČIŲ COGNITIVE PATH

The Degučiai cognitive path winds through the heart of the Degučiai Landscape Reserve and shows its different “face” every season of the year. The path unites a century-old pine forest and its flora and fauna, hides a mysterious opening in a pool/marsh, protects the orchids that bloom at the beginning of summer and is listed in the Red Data Book of Lithuania, and protects the picturesque Degučiai Hillfort, from which you can enjoy the panorama. The path will pleasantly surprise you with a variety of natural scents: you will smell the ether-scented air of pines or maybe you will get intoxicated by the strong smell of Rhododendron tomentosum after the rain you will feel the smell of delicious mushrooms and wet moss.

Degučiai, Degučių municipality
GPS - 55.65519, 26.05856

3 km

33. ŠAVAŠA COGNITIVE PATH

The stream, which is only 20 km long, has a cognitive path, which is also divided into parts. The first part is the “Forest cognitive path”, and the second part is the “Geological cognitive path”. This is the first geological path in Lithuania with a length is 1.5 km. Šavaša is a truly special Lithuanian river. Its valleys, like mountain rivers, are incredible in height, with water falling from 8 to 11 meters in every kilometre. A spectacular sight to watch the river during the spring floods or prolonged rains. Then Šavaša sniffs a rocky furrow like a real mountain river. Between the high river valleys in the 13th-18th centuries was the ancient Lithuanian temple, in which the mythological Lūžų Stone with a bowl has survived.

Antalieptė
GPS - 55.64550, 25.86394

1,5 km

34. RAMŪNO ČIŽO'S BREWERY AND EXPOSITION

You can find a wonderful bouquet of scents in one place - in the brewery of the brewer Ramūnas Čižas, which is recognized as a culinary heritage. The glasses have a high tradition of brewing and secrets that have been kept in the family since 1863. Surrounded by Lake Sartai and in the hills of Aukštaitija, the grain goes a long way until it matures into a beer that caresses the palate. The brewery established in Dusetos and the production of "Čižo alus" is also distinguished from other types of beer by the fact that during its fermentation the honey of the forest bee (s) is added, which ensures the exceptional quality of this beer. Ramūnas Čižas is the fourth brewer in the family to produce beer according to ancestral traditions. The brewer inherited not only the recipe but also the equipment, so he set up an exposition of old brewing tools on the homestead.

Šeškamiesčio str. Dusetos farmstead,
Dusetos municipality
GPS - 55.75790, 25.83801
www.cizoalus.lt

WHERE TO TASTE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

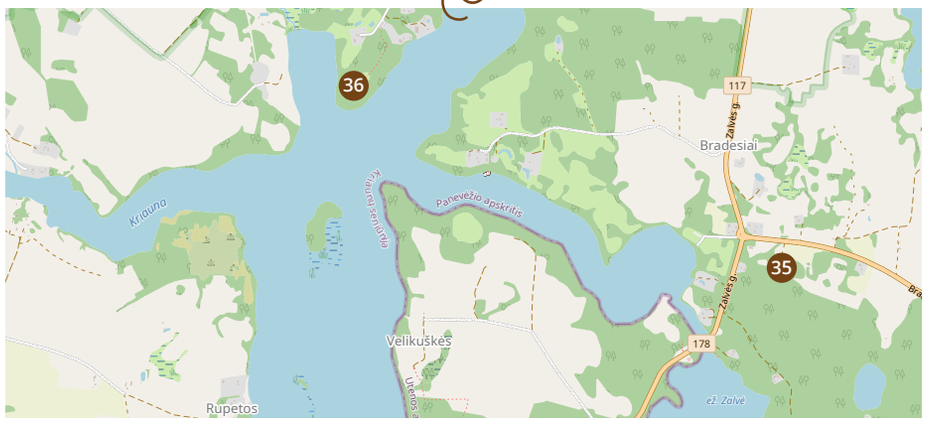
„BEER WITHOUT HOPS"

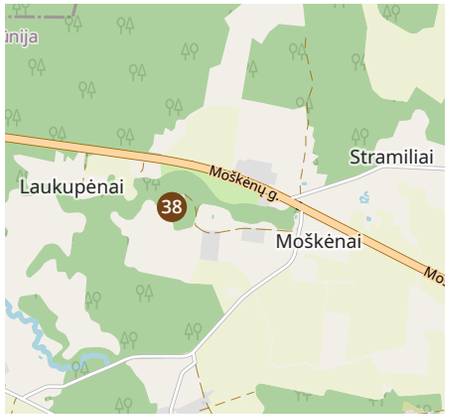
Hopless beer *is an ancient way of brewing beer. Until the 16th century, gruit was brewed in Europe, with the addition of seaside sotvar rather than hops. Sotvar (Myrica gale) is an aromatic shrub up to 150cm tall growing in wet coastal marshes (in Lithuania - Šilutė, Klaipėda, Kretinga districts). Like the hops, sotvar has a bitter taste and preservative properties. In the Baltic Sea region, the use of sotvar in brewing has been known since prehistoric times: in Denmark, on the island of Lolland, sotvar was found in the tomb of a rich woman in a beer vessel dating back to 50 BC. Traces of yeast, barley, lingonberries and traces of seaside sotvar were found in a bronze bucket (Koch1999).*

ROKIŠKIS and surroundings

35. Bradesiai oak
36. Lake Sartai and Baršėnai0(Sartai) Observation Tower
37. Education "Plant prints in clay"
38. Moškėnai (Laukupėnai) Hillfort

Rokiškis District Tourism and Bussiness Information Centre: www.rokiskiotic.lt





35. BRADESIAI OAK

A large oak holy grove once grew in the valley between the Bradesiai Hillfort and the Sartai lake. Holy grove is called Tiltalemiškis (Tilteliomiškis). People remember that there used to be a bridge here. The bridge was considered mythological. It connects Vėliai hill, Velikuškiai and Bradesiai Hillforts. The name of the forest comes from the word "tiltas" (bridge). Now the oak grove is dominated by a few remaining oaks, the most magnificent of which is the Bradesiai oak, and the sanctity of the latter is an altar built by representatives of the white faith. The Bradesiai oak is the brother of the Stelmužė oak, the thickest in Lithuania, which remembers the long and mysterious history of Lithuania. The mighty tree, whose entire crown is green, blooms profusely in spring and litters the ground with acorns in autumn, probably competes in longevity only with the oldest Stelmužė oak, which is rapidly disappearing in Europe. The exact age of the tree is not known, it is only assumed that the tree is 700 years old. Now, the tree has reached its natural maturity and is in the stagnation phase.

There are legends and stories about the oak. Residents say that the growing area of this oak tree is special: this is evidenced by the alley of powerful trees - oaks, lindens and maples - and the place of the altar with the surviving accents of pagan rites. One oak tree was struck by lightning, and now its trunk seems to be pierced by a healed wound. Lightning tore off half of another mighty oak, but the tree quickly healed. In the third oak, in the fork of the trunk, a young oak has grown like an arrow. The Bradesiai oak grows on a private plot of land.

Bradesiai village, Kriaunai municipality
GPS - 55.83161, 25.87749

36. LAKE SARTAI AND BARŠĖNAI (SARTAI) OBSERVATION TOWER

The first in terms of the length of the shoreline, the fourth-largest beauty of the Selonia land in Lithuania - Lake Sartų is located at the intersection of the Earth's crust fracture. The lake has 7 islands, one of which - Dumblynė - is still inhabited. The Selonians lived precisely on the islands. The island Dumblynes is designated as an archaeological monument of several periods because settlements of the end of the Neolithic - the beginning of the Bronze Age and the first half of the 1st millennium were found here. The treasure found on the island by residents' dates back to the 10th-12th centuries. The artefacts are stored in the History Museum of Lithuanian. Unique from a hydrographic point of view - with a special configuration - the shape of the lake is similar to a branched tree, the trunk of which stretches 12.7 km from north to south, and from it, there are branches on both sides and the nearby lakes Zalvė, Zaduojys. The six "branches" have their own names: Duseta, Bradesa (Zalva), Pasartė, Kriaunakumpio (Laše), Audrakampis (Aldrakumpis, Ragava), Kalbutiškis. Fourteen tributaries flow into the lake, the largest of which is the Šventoji river. It can be said that Sartai renews its waters almost five times a year - this amount of water is transported to the lake by tributaries. The origin of the name Sartai is explained by legends that mention "sartas" (red, light brown) horses that drowned in the lake.

It is said that a suspension bridge was once built between the Bradesiai and Valikuškiai Hillforts across Lake Sartai. One gentleman lived on one side of the lake, and another on the other. Once, harnessing several horses, one gentleman was going to visit another. The stay did not go well. When the gentleman was returning home, his friend decided to kill him - while the horses were running across the bridge, he unhooked the bridge and the gentleman with his entourage and horses fell into the depths of the lake. Since the horses were "sarti" (red, light brown), then the lake has been called Sartai.

It is not known how much truth there is in the legends, but horse races have been taking place on the ice of Lake Sartai since 1865. More than a hundred years since this race became traditional. Lake Sartai and the landscape of the Sartai Regional Park can be viewed from the observation tower, which is as 36 meters high. The shape of the tower resembles a tree, which opens up the greens and blues of the landscape.

Bradesiai village, Kriaunai municipality
GPS - 55.84092, 25.83868
www.sartai.info

37. EDUCATION "PLANT PRINTS IN CLAY"

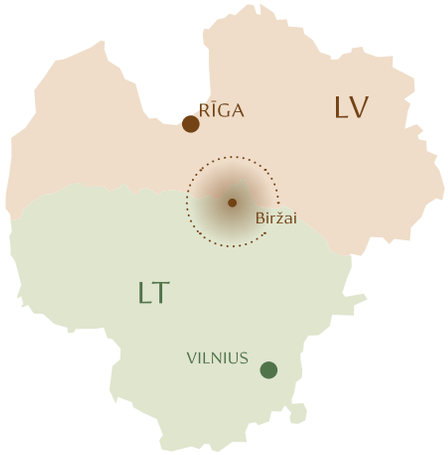
An educational activity combining history, botany and pottery in the craft workshop of the Salų (an Islands') manor. Pottery is like meditation, engaging in the process of creation all the time and thinking about embodying an idea in clay, and clay is the same land that calms us down just with a touch. Pottery - individual - each with its idea and story. During the education, the history of the Salų (an Islands') Manor Park, which lasts for a period of two hundred years, is told, and the species of trees are introduced. During the education, natural samples are collected, which are printed in clay in the practical part of the educational activity. During the education, plant prints are immortalized - green wavy-cut leaves, red and white flowers, moss and everything was taken from nature. The clay seals are dried, burned in an oven and sent home.

Salos manor craft workshop, Kaštonų str. 13, Salos village Kamajai multicipality
GPS - 55.8115, 25.36742

38. MOŠKĖNAI (LAUKUPĖNAI) HILLFORT

Moškėnai (Laukupėnai) Hillfort (Rokiški district) dates back to the 1st millennium BC - the 1st millennium. There is a foothill settlement on all the slopes of the hill, in an area of 5 ha. The hillfort is located on a separate massive hill on the left bank of Laukupė, the site is elongated, surrounded by an embankment, the slopes are steep up to 30 m high, and there are 2 ditches on the slopes - embankment rings. More than 400 "witnesses" of various types of history were found during the research of the settlement at the foothills: a clay spindle, scratched and rough ceramics, slag, and animal bones. The legend about Moškėnai Hill tells that a strong oak castle stood on a steep mountain in the Selonia region, among huge forests, on the bank of a watery stream. Her master, the noble Meškėnas, was a greedy, cruel tyrant. He had two children: the gold digger, the whimsical Laukupela and the calm son Tylutis. Gods were once worshipped where the town of Panemunis now stands, a green holy oak grove. However, troubling news about unknown foreign horsemen reached the land. Meškėnas joined them because he was ready to serve and help defeat the sleuths opposing the newcomers. The greedy nobleman asked for one thing in return - to be allowed to remain the chief vizier in the tribe. The son Tylutis, on the other hand, remained on the side of the Selonians. The old "krivis" (Lithuanian pagan priest) cursed Meškėnas for his betrayal, and he became a stranger and ugly to his beloved daughter Laukupėla. Merciless was the revenge of Perkūnas (God of thunder and lightning among Lithuanians) - he struck the bear's oak castle with lightning bolts, and tongues of flame lit up the sky. No one saw nobleman Meškėnas and his daughter Laukupė again. Revenge of Perkūnas and fire destroyed the traitor along with the castle and all the wealth. After declaring 2017 as the Year of Hillforts, the "Top 10" hillforts were presented by the archaeologist, archaeology historian, and Doctor of Humanities Gintautas Zabiela, who is often called the guru of hillforts. One of them is Moškėnai Hillfort.

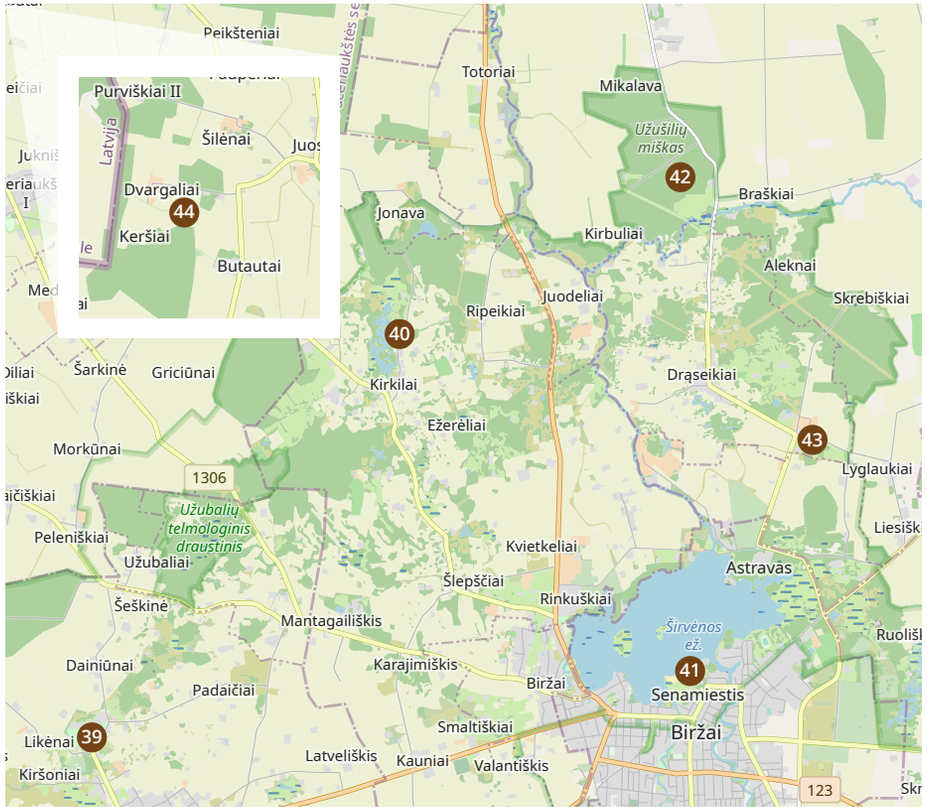
Moškėnų village, Rokiškio rural multicipality, Rokiškio district
GPS - 55.96826, 25.43923

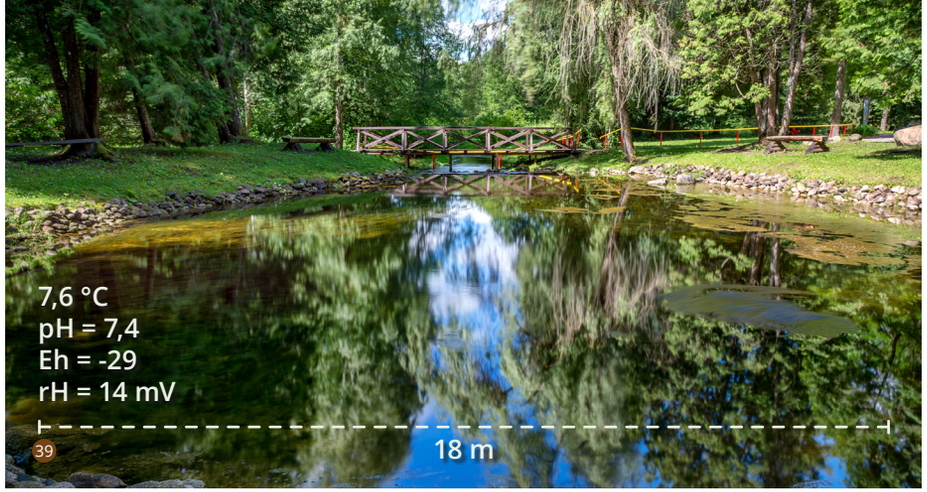


BIRŽAI and surroundings

39. Smardone Spring
40. The Kirkilai Observation Tower with small lakes
41. Biržai Regional Park Visitor Center: Exposition/tour "The edge of the passing land" („Prasmengančios žemės kraštas")
42. Užušiliai cognitive path
43. Eco bare-foot park
44. Milišiūnai Sheep Farm Educational programme "Sheep, Source of Clothing and Food"

Biržai District Tourism and Bussiness Information Centre: www.visitbirzai.lt





39. SMARDONE SPRING

Likėnai Spring (Smardone) - hydrogeological natural object, spring of karst origin, formed after the collapse of a sinkhole. The diameter of the sinkhole is constantly changing and has increased from 15 meters to 18 meters. The banks of the spring are loamy, covered with turf. The flow of the spring is held back by boulders of igneous and metamorphic origin and pieces of dolomite with a diameter of up to 0.6 meters which were thrown in a section approximately 7 meters long and up to 2 meters wide. The stream rushes here, stumbling behind the stone barrier and breaking through the cracks between the stones. Through such a stone barrier, you can also cross the streambed of the spring without getting your feet wet. It was the most energetic spring in Lithuania. However, after the land reclamation works, the power decreased. The spring is the beginning of the Smardone stream. Due to the bitter taste (bitter to drink) and the smell of hydrogen sulphide gas (rotten egg), the residents drew attention to the source of Smardonė a long time ago, and the specific stench logically dictated the selection of the corresponding name. Water with low total mineralization, cold (temperature 7.6 °C), weakly alkaline (pH = 7.4), Eh = -29 mV, reducing environment (rH = 14). The first studies of the composition of spring water were carried out and the results were published in 1816 by Theodoras Grotthuss - a pioneer of the science of electrochemistry, who was born and lived in the Gedučiai manor of the Pakruojis district.
The spring water is suitable for those undergoing treatment to sip, rub their eyes, and simply soak sore hands and feet in the spring. Perhaps the first information about the use of the Smardone spring as having healing properties comes from written documents from 1587. In 1938, after the opening of the Likėnai sanatorium, before there were any wells, mineral water was taken from the springs, and therefore also from the great spring of Smardone, which was used for baths and for diluting the healing mud in the treatment of various diseases.

Likenai village, Pabiržės multicipality, Biržų district
GPS - 56.200122, 24.623523
www.birzuparkas.lt

40. THE KIRKILAI OBSERVATION TOWER WITH SMALL LAKES

The Kirkilai observation tower cannot be confused with anything else. The building of exceptional architecture attracts visitors not only with its appearance but also from above with views of the karst lakelets of Kirkilas. Climbed to the Kirkilai observation tower a rare one who looks around the lands of Northern Lithuania, because all the beauty lies right here - at the bottom. The Kirkilai observation tower offers a view unseen elsewhere - karst lakelets. There are also surrounding homesteads, cultivated fields and a village. The impression is all the more enslaving knowing that there, at the bottom, is a unique prank of nature - landslides, water connected to a common lake. The 30 water-filled sinkholes, called the lakes of the Kirkilas Reserve, are one of the greatest values in the country. Kirkilai, or Long Lake, is the largest karst lake in Lithuania, occupying 3.9 ha. The azure lakes of the sky turn red in summer due to the bacteria that live here, a species found only in Italy. The chemical composition of the lakelets is very similar to the water of the Icelandic geysers.
The water of Kirkilas lakelets is dark but clear. Due to the special hydrological and hydrochemical conditions, the fauna and flora of these lakes are very small, but unique. For example, colonies of green and purple sulfur bacteria can be seen with the naked eye, a species of zooplankton not yet found elsewhere in Lithuania. Detailed investigations are still ongoing. Interestingly, the squid and fish from rivers and large lakes are found in Kirkilai lakelet (the largest lake of this type in Lithuania). It is believed that they come from rivers connected by underground canals.

There is a specially equipped hiking path around the lakelets.

Ežerėliai str., Kirkilai
GPS - 56.248513, 24.690816
www.birzuparkas.lt

41. BIRŽAI REGIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER: EXPOSITION/TOUR "THE EDGE OF THE PASSING LAND" („PRASMENGANČIOS ŽEMĖS KRAŠTAS")

The visitor centre is designed to present a unique region where the earth's surface is actively forming, constantly changing the landscape. Here is brief information about incredible phenomena in one place: the ground collapses after the groundwater have washed away the gypsum deposits in the depths. Mysterious sinkholes are formed: some are dry (the famous Cow's Cave (Karvės ola), where the structure of the earth's layers can be observed), and others are turned into lakelets with sulfur bacteria visible with the naked eye (Kirkilai lakelets).
In the visitor centre of the park, the unique landscape, exceptional natural phenomena, honourable history, old traditions, crafts, culinary heritage of the Biržai region and local beer production traditions are intertwined into one harmonious whole.
The Biržai Regional Park Visitor Center has an exposition about a land famous for its sinkholes, collapses and interesting geological processes - engaging and intriguing. The illusion created in the visitor centre as if you were in a sinkhole: "welcoming" cold glass reception, "feeling" the change of borehole depth and getting to know the change of geological layers, interactive stands - games "The development of the process of sinkhole", "Karst lakelets ecosystem", hourglass imitating the sinkhole collapse, other stands depicting sinkholes before and after the collapse, exposing minerals and rocks.

Rotušės str. 10, Biržai, Biržai district
GPS - 56.202530, 24.755392
www.birzuparkas.lt

42. UŽUŠILIAI COGNITIVE PATH

The 0.6 km long circular educational trail, located in the Užušiliai forest, 11 km from Biržai, aims to make the interaction between nature and man beneficial to both nature and the people living in its environment. An educational trail with rest and respite areas has been installed in the forest, opening up the most beautiful places of the Užušiliai forest, allowing you to rest and spend your free time where the corners of nature have already been adapted for this.
A spacious area with benches has been installed in the rest area next to the educational trail and serves as an educational classroom for schoolchildren, and a meeting place for various public organizations or groups. The "Užušiliai" recreation area with the educational trail is suitable for everyone, regardless of age, physical limitations, or disability. The stands installed on the educational trail introduce forest plants and reveal various curiosities of the natural world.

GPS - 56.267024, 24.753646

0,6 km

43. ECO BARE-FOOT PARK

The Eco bare-foot path in Drąseikiai is one of the first such paths in Lithuania. Here you have to walk without shoes on a specially equipped path. The start is like warming up - sand, a path of wooden planks, and large stones, through which no great effort is required. Those who want sharper sensations will find it on the 1.3 km long path. A list of dozens of points should be made to list all bare-foot pavements. Coatings here are of the widest variety: small pebbles, large stones, rubble, water, sand, gravel, straw, planks, found, pine cones and other surfaces that are difficult to describe. It is not only a fun attraction but also a healthy procedure, as the stimulated active points in the soles have a positive effect on the body. Walking barefoot is the oldest form of reflexology and

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Wonderful place for picnic and don't forget to take a picnick basket of snacks with you when you go.

the best test for foot sensitivity.
In the path fun decorations that attract those who want to take a picture are equipped.
Attendance bare-foot path is paid.

Draseikiai str. 5, Drąseikiai, Biržų district
GPS - 56.234509, 24.785161
www.ekobasukojuparkas.lt

1,3 km

44. MILIŠIŪNAI SHEEP FARM EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME "SHEEP, SOURCE OF CLOTHING AND FOOD"

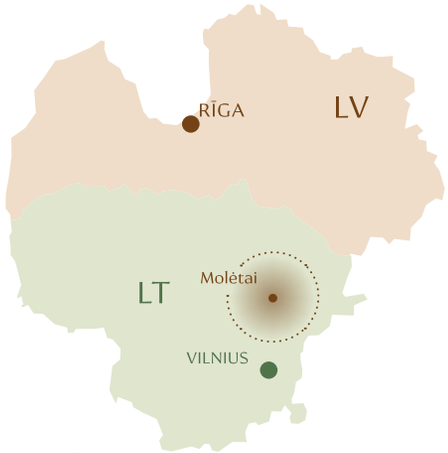
Kristina and Jūris Milišiūnai sheep farm not only breeds sheep of various breeds (old Lithuanian, German, and Prussian breeds dominate) but also conducts a wide variety of educational activities. The farm has five yurts made of sheep's wool - each one adapted to some activity, e.g., in one yurt, there is a room prepared for tasting lamb products (by pre-ordering, you can taste products made from lamb and sheep's milk), a kitchenette, educational activities are held, another has a sauna, and another has an exhibition of lambs collected over the years.
At the farm, you can touch the craft of turning sheep's wool into woollen yarn. In one of the yurts, there are wool carding machines, wool spinning wheels, and later you can wind a roller.

Dvargaliai village, Biržų district
GPS - 56.296042, 24.598469

TRADITIONAL DISH RECIPE

„LAMB ROAST WITH HONEY"

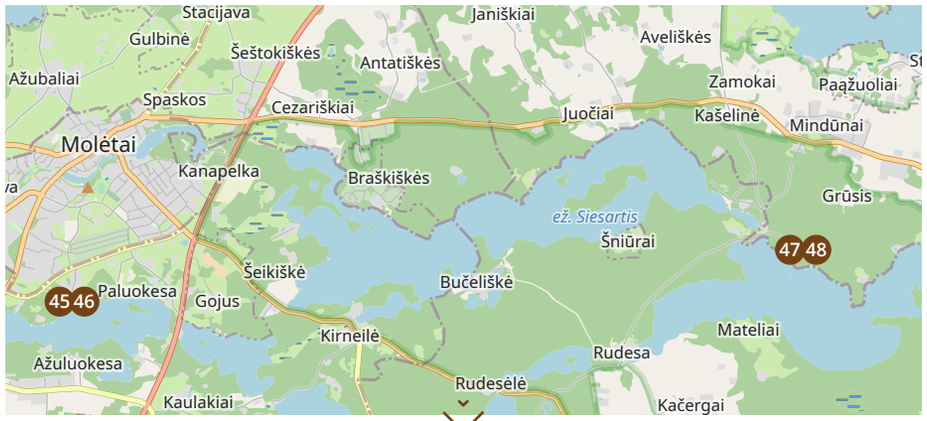
***Lamb and honey** - an unusual combination that brings out the special flavour of the meat.*
You will need lamb ham, 5 tablespoons of honey, 3 teaspoons of mustard, 2 tablespoons of lemon juice, 2 tablespoons of oil and pepper.
Mix everything together to make the marinade. Pour the marinade over the meat and refrigerate for 2 days. Then wrap the lamb in foil or put it in a baking sleeve, pour in the remaining marinade and add ½ glass of hot water. Fold the edges of the foil over carefully or tie the baking sleeve tightly. Bake in an oven at 180 °C for 2-2.5 hours.

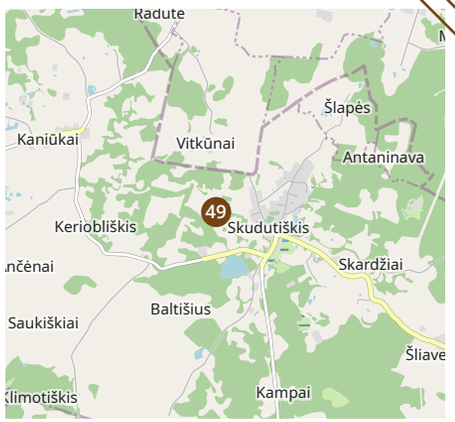


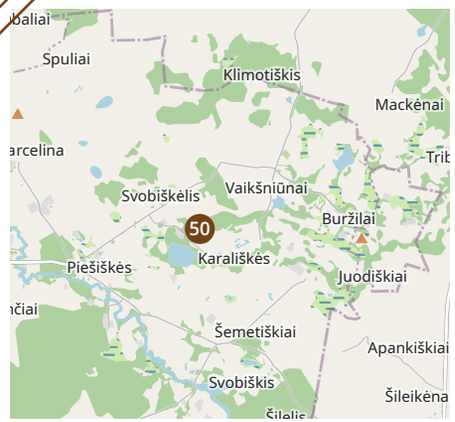
MOLĖTAI and surroundings

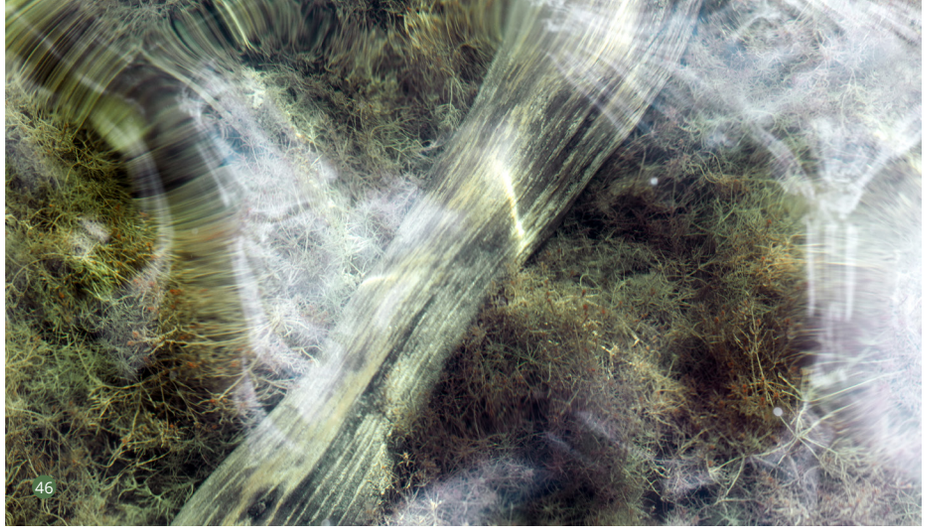
45. Polar settlement (Luokesiai lake)
46. Lakajai lake kayaking (fishing)/ Sightseeing tour of White Lakajai lake "Natural values"
47. The Mindūnai Observation Tower
48. The Fishing Museum
49. Skudutiškis Stones and Spring
50. Valiulis and Valiulis' father (Stones)

Molėtai District Tourism and Bussiness Information Centre: www.infomoletai.lt









45. POLAR SETTLEMENT (LUOKESIAI LAKE)

The Polar settlement is a unique, rare and significant archaeological site that is a new and little-known tourist attraction. In 2000, in the Molėtai region, on the northern shore of Lake Luokesai, the first polar settlement of striped pottery culture, dating to the end of the Bronze Age, was discovered. In 2001, another polar settlement was found on the other side of the lake, a little later (late Bronze Age - early Iron Age). During the archaeological research, the surviving poles were inventoried and the discovered archaeological finds were excavated. The research is ongoing to this day. Studies show a long period of existence of the settlement - the difference between the oldest and the youngest date of the exhibits is about 800 years. After more than a decade of archaeological research, it can now be said that in the Bronze Age in Lithuania it was eaten with spoons, and people had beautiful dishes. The excavated finds are stored in the Lithuanian National Museum. The complex of ancient settlements is one of the unique European

archaeological monuments.

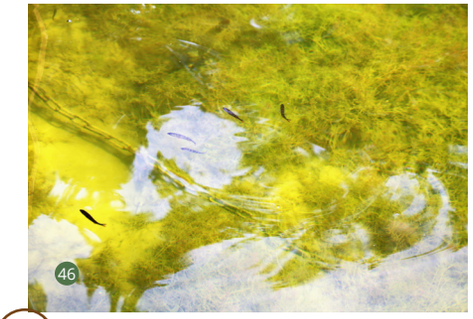
Luokesa village, Luokesa multicipality, Molėtai district
GPS - 55.212328, 25.417600

46. LAKAJAI LAKE KAYAKING (FISHING)/ SIGHTSEEING TOUR OF WHITE LAKAJAI LAKE "NATURAL VALUES"

White Lakajai is a very popular lake for tourists and holidaymakers, with many bays and peninsulas. There are large pine forests near the lake. Beautiful shores of Lakajai, especially the south: sandy, blue pine forests. The openings of the lake are narrow, there are almost no beaches - here and there the waves

bounce directly to the roots of the cliffs. The deepest pit of the White Lakajai - 45 m - on the western edge of the tuna, only 200 m from the shore. There are still 7 pits deeper than 35 m in the lake. That wonderful lake is for boating or kayaking or fishing.
Or get to know of "Nature Values" of Labanoras Regional Park while sailing on a recreational catamaran! Looking around the deck, you will learn about the Labanoras Regional Park, its flora and fauna, and the secrets of the White Lakajai. (paid)

Luokesa village, Luokesa multicipality, Molėtai district
GPS - 55.212328, 25.41760



47. THE MINDŪNAI OBSERVATION TOWER

The Mindūnai Observation Tower, built on the outskirts of Labanoras Regional Park, has been the tallest in Lithuania for a long time. The spiral staircase that rises to the top (you should try to count them) allows you to climb to a height of 36 meters (like a nine-story house), from where you have a great view of the White Lakajai lake. The building, which resembles the trunk of a wooden tree, is made of metal constructions and can fluctuate up to 8 cm during strong winds.
The observation tower of Mindūnai (Labanoras) attracts not only for the views from above, but there are also drinks and delicacies sold by merchants, but a path with stairs is built towards the lake. There is a pontoon pier on the shore.

Midūnai, Molėtų district
GPS - 55.219241, 25.560908

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Recommend a visit to the museum of ethnocosmology.

48

48

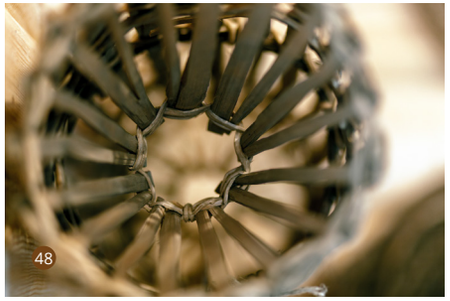
48. THE FISHING MUSEUM

There is nothing similar in Lithuania, it is the only museum of its kind where you can learn all about fishing traditions, and see the accumulated ethnographic collection of lake fishing. It is a unique place where you can see and hear everything related to fishing in the lakes: from various fishing gear to the rarest fish living in the lakes, you can get acquainted with archaic fishing as this business has changed over the years. The oldest exhibit is an impressive 4-meter-long rod drawn from the bottom of the lake in the 15th century. The museum exhibits old eel catching devices, ancient nets, fishing-basket, resistors, hoop nets, and automatic fishing rods. Flax and hemp fibre, the main raw material for knitting nets, are also fishing exhibits. Flax grinders, scrapers, brushes, spinning wheel, bezels - everything you need for nets. The museum is located in the 19th-century ethnographic fisherman's homestead in Mindūnai village, which consists of a high-altitude wooden shop and a barn.

Muziejaus str. 7, Mindūnai village
GPS - 55.219241, 25.560908
www.moletumuziejus.lt/ekspozicijos/zvejybos-muziejus

WHERE TO TASTE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Recommend to taste the fish soup cooked by the museum's educator, it is necessary to arrange and book the education in advance.



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49. SKUDUTIŠKIS STONES AND SPRING

One of the most famous and beautiful sacred places in Aukštaitija is still alive and the attention and prayers of the faithful are not fading. Here one prays fervently for health, well-being, and happiness, kisses the stones and walks around them on the roads; the moss from sacred stones, a source of water is taken home. The mixed nature of the rituals held - a combination of natural religion and Christianity - leaves a deep impression and testifies to real, unplayed experiences of holiness.
The stones and natural spring of Skudutiškis - the sanctuary - is a natural space in which the manifestations of the old natural and Christian faith were assimilated and reflected. The sanctuary consists of four stones and a spring flowing into the Skudutė stream. The Skudutė stream and the natural spring water gushing in the wet meadow merge in the mixed forest site. Spring water is fresh and rich in minerals.
On the right bank of the Skudutė stream, there are also impressive black stones scattered chaotically and protruding above the water. The stones are grey granite with obvious markings. The stone, especially with signs, has long been considered eternal, divine, and considered miraculous, and the spring water is a manifestation of the powers of life and is called sacred.

The biggest boulder is extremely impressive, carved into the veins, with a visible, people's conviction, St. Mary's foot. In other stones, people believe that the foot of God, the cross of Vytis and the heart of Jesus are visible. It is said that this shrine protected the people of the Skudutiškis area from terrible infection during the plague. The prevailing piece of the forest is enchanting. When you stop for a moment on the bridge above the spring, you can feel not only the true harmony with nature but also the long-standing respect for the stones and the rippling water of the spring.

Skudutiškis village, Suginčiai multicipality, Molėtai district
GPS - 55.385453, 25.446774

50. VALIULIS AND VALIULIS' FATHER (STONES)

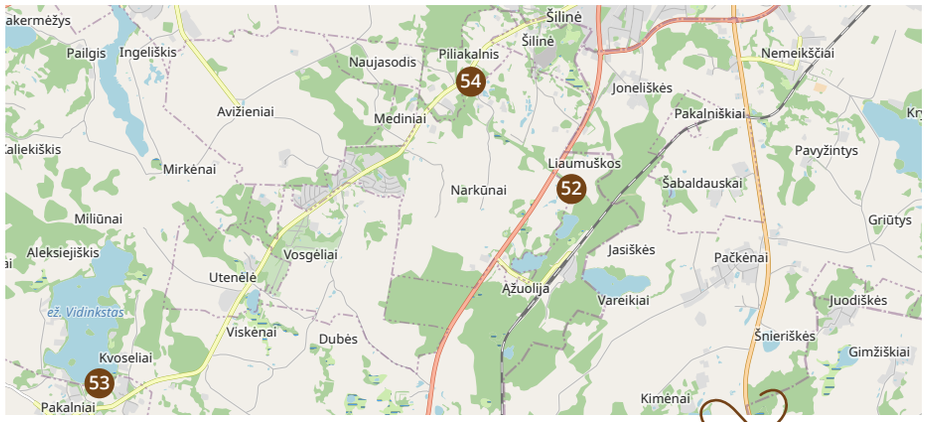
Valiulis and the Father of Valiulis are witnesses of Balts mythology and the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It belongs to the old holy place, so Valiulis should be rightfully considered the name of the local deity - the host; at the same time, this stone is a unique landmark. It should be emphasized that it was the stories and legends about Valiulis that became the basis of the book "The Enchanted Treasures" and encouraged many people to be interested in the antiquity of the region and to study it. The evocative outlines of P. Tarasenko became real spiritual treasures for children, they developed their values and love for their homeland. Part of an ancient sanctuary formed by Goy (Gojs) or Sacrificial Grove and Stone – Father of Valiulis. The last archaeological monument is mythological, irregularly shaped, pink, 3.2 x 3.6 m in size, and 2.1 m high granite. Several centuries ago, in an irregularly-shaped milestone, a horseshoe with a cross and an arrow was carved in. The second sign is much more difficult to explain and date; here, a cross, a sun and a crescent moon are carved in an oval. The second carved sign might be related to the 20th century and designed to draw the attention of the teacher and researcher Petras Tarasenka Legends say that there was a hole under the Valulius stone. The little devil kept sneaking out through that hole and, turning into a shoemaker, was sewing shoes while sitting on a stone... Unfortunate former little boy: as soon as he sits down on the stone and starts hammering the soles of his shoes, the clouds will cover the sky, the rain will fall like a bucket, and the Perkūnas will start pounding. The little devil will get angry, will kick the Perkūnas and immediately fall into the hole. Perkūnas got very angry and said that he would hit the devil: the unfortunate devil was in a hurry to dive under a stone. Many times, Perkūnas wanted to dam the little devil, but only a stone got in the way. He had split off a large part of the stone and driven many of his bullets into the ground near it seven fathoms. They surfaced only after seven years. People often find Perkūnas Bullets near the Valiulis stone. Those bullets are so interesting, just like axes, only forged from stone.

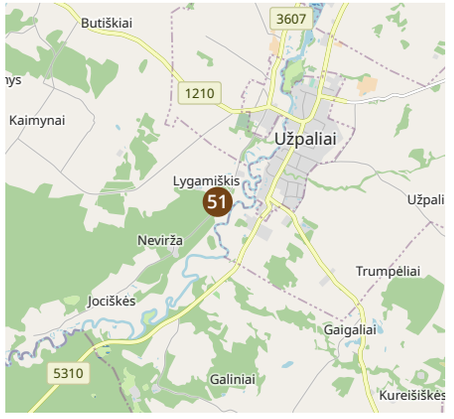
Karališkiai ir Svobiškėlis village, Alanta multicipality, Molėtų district
GPS - 55.34335, 25.39219

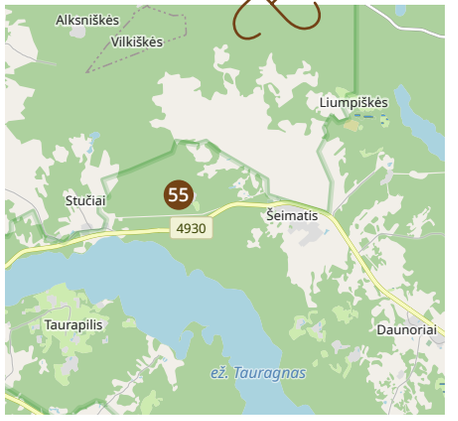
UTENA and surroundings

51. Krokule
52. The Nature path of Ažuolija Nature Reserve
53. Pakalniai Hillfort
54. Narkūnai Hillfort with Laimė valley and spring
55. Mokas and Mokiukas (Stones)

Utena District Tourism Information Centre: www.utenainfo.lt







51. KROKULE

The water of the natural springs was sacred in ancient times, it was believed to have healing properties, and the virgins washed with its water beautified. Make sure that the waters gushing from the depths of the earth today have the same powers. Krokule natural spring, sometimes called Lygamiškis natural spring according to the location, is one of them.
The natural spring is described in mid-19th-century writings. According to local historian A. Namika, in ancient times there was Alkavietė (shrine in the baltic religion), where a powerful oak tree grew. The Krokule is filled with 7 litres of water per second, the temperature of which remains between 7-9 ° C in both winter and summer. It is thought that the name of the spring is derived from the word "cry". The water of the Krokule spring is famous for its magical features because it is said to cure different diseases, bring happiness, and protect from the Pērkons (the Thunderer).
As a natural heritage object, the state-protected source and stone are included in The Register of Cultural Property.

It is said that where the swamp is, "the priest went to the patient with the holiest in this place like this, and entered the swamp, and drowned with the holiest, and then after some time Christ appeared in that place <...>. Christ appeared to the shepherds, blessed them and disappeared. "He was walking home after work and Maria suddenly appeared to him. In the place where Saint Mary appeared, water gushed out. There is a stone near that spring, on which, when wet, you can see Mary's feet" (Vaitkevičius, 2006).

Lygamiškis village, Užpaliai multicipality, Utena district
GPS - 55.6270927, 25.5605088

52. THE NATURE PATH OF AŽUOLIJA NATURE RESERVE

Lithuanians respected trees, including oaks, for several reasons: the tree and its life were compared to man and his life; the trees were the former abodes of spirits and gods; the healing properties of trees; the ghosts of the ancestors lived in the trees. Such a cloudy, wild, natural forest is hidden by the cognitive nature path of Ąžuolija Reserve.
Nature paths in the Ąžuolija Botanical and Zoological Reserve, allow visitors to get acquainted with the original oak trees in the deciduous forest of the northern subzonal forests of Central Europe, the ephemerides blooms in the spring, the abundance of colours in the fall, and the natural diversity of the natural stream.
The area of the oak forest is more than 300 ha. The botanical-zoological reserve occupies 68.2 ha of this forest area. The length of the path winding through the reserve is two kilometres. It is not easy to walk on it: the path is not paved with wooden boards or other types of pavement, the slopes are steep, a springy stream, fallen trees that need to be climbed, low floodplains and other paths of the old forest.

Ąžuolija forest, Leliūnai multicipality, Utena district
GPS - 55.462086, 25.575452

4 km

53. PAKALNIAI HILLFORT

The majestic and picturesque hillfort (as many as eight surrounding churches can be seen from its site) expands the story of happiness in the Baltic culture with the motif of individual struggle and sacrifice for the well-being and happiness of the entire nation. Such were the values and attitudes of the Lithuanian partisans, adopted from the Lithuanian volunteers of 1918-1920 - participants of the Independence struggles and to a certain extent from the contemporaries of the 1863-1864 uprising.
The hillfort standing on the southwestern shore of Lake Vidinkstas, also called the Swedish battery, dates back to the 1st millennium BC II millennium AD. The site is quadrangular, elongated in the north-south direction, and 48x41 meters in size. The site has a cultural layer up to 35 cm thick, consisting of dark soil, with pillar places, the remains of hearths and archaeological finds. In it, a cross was built in 1918 (restored in 1989 and 1998), and there are 4 graves of partisans. The slopes of the mound are steep, 25 meters high, and a system of protective ditches and ramparts has been preserved in them. There was an ancient settlement at the foot of the hillfort. The surviving storey is that fairies covered the hillfort with aprons. Others say that people filled the hillfort with iron caps, that there is something in the hillfort - a church or a castle was filled and that during Easter time the mountain opened and people walked around it, it was seen that gold was burning on the hillfort and in the fields... Next to Pakalniai Hillfort, there is a round hill called Laumė's apron. The legend tells that the fairies, after covering the hillfort with their aprons, had to dump their litter in this place after the roosters crowed... As a cultural asset, Laumė's apron is protected by the state, and the Pakalniai mound has been given the status of a monument.

Pakalniai, Leliūnų multicipality, Utenos district
GPS - 55.437563, 25.472919

54. NARKŪNAI HILLFORT WITH LAIMĖ VALLEY AND SPRING

The valley stretches at the south-eastern foot of the Narkūnai Hillfort, on the left bank of the Vyžuonas stream. The spring gushes out in a suffocating cirque about 10 x 12 meters in size. Brown-coloured, iron-flavoured water flows from the above-mentioned basin through a

wide channel to Vyžuonas. Other health seekers used to sacrifice money here by throwing it into the water.
The Narkūnai Hillfort, on the side of which there is a healthy spring, dates back to the 1st millennium BC - the beginning of the 15th century, according to archaeological research data.
Laima, the Balts goddess of fate and happiness, enters the human world precisely through the waters. Laima itself flows like water, fate meanders like a river, happiness can be increased by splashing, and water washes away misfortunes. It was widely believed that Laima takes part in the first washing of the baby - the clearer this water of "happiness", the happier the person will be. Furthermore, when drawing water from a well or a spring, you must be careful not to pour it back, because you will fill Laima's eyes and start to have bad luck in life... Valley of Laima in Narkūnai with the Health spring is also extraordinary from the point of view that it forms an opposing pair to the mountain - the mound. (In Baltic mythology, the mountains belong to God and the valleys to Laima; this pair of gods very often work together).

Narkūnai village, Leliūnai multicipality, Utenos district
GPS - 55.47426, 25.55063

55. MOKAS AND MOKIUKAS (STONES)

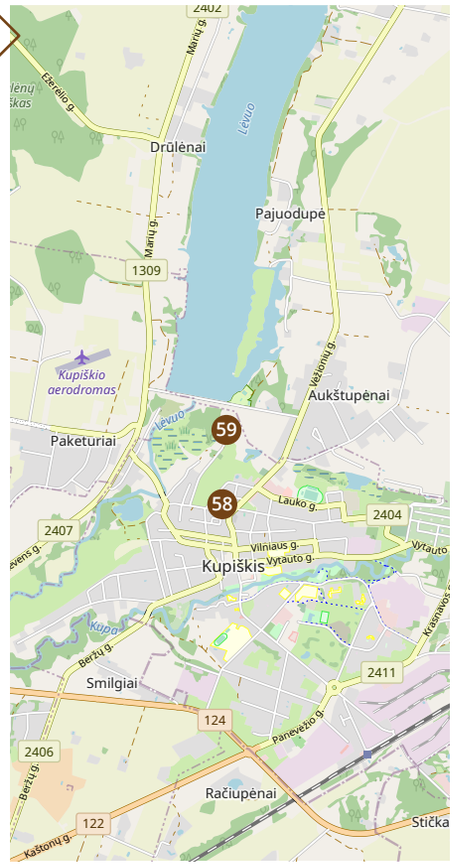
Mokas is an irregular granite pyramid measuring 3.3 x 3.6 m and 2.8 m high. The date 1866 and a cross are engraved on the west side of the stone; on the southeast side - the date 1813, and besides it, the letters M and J in the north, L and M in the east. A stone measuring 1.1 x 1.4 m still lies below on the slope of Moko - the son of Mokiukas. According to people's stories, Mokienė lurks at the bottom of Lake Tauragnai, where she is caught by fishermen's nets from time to time. Legend has it that there was once a man named Mokas who lived here and had a wife and a son. The hard-working Mokas family worked for the whole family. However, frustrated by people's laziness, Mokas himself stopped working. Then people began to scold him. So, he decided to move across Lake Tauragnas and told the family members to swim back without turning. However, the wife turned back and drowned. Mokas and his son swam across the lake, but both were so saddened by the drowned wife and mother that they turned to stone...
Šeimaties Mokai is one of the few Lithuanian sanctuaries that are characterized by extraordinary knowledge and wisdom. Not long ago, residents sent know-nothing people to these stones, saying: "Go to Mokas to learn!" The practise of teaching in the holy place was shrouded in white religious mysteries, directly related to rites and sacrifices. The dates of the 19th century carved on the stone, as well as the sign of the cross the size of a spring, show that the Šeimatis sanctuary was active until the beginning of the 20th century; later turned into a place visited by travellers.

Šeimatis village, Tauragnai multicipality, Utena district
GPS - 55.455919, 25.89514

KUPIŠKIS and surroundings

56. Uoginių crafts centre
57. Brothers honey (Wax candle production)
58. Kupiškis multipart songs "sutartinės" (Kupiškis Ethnographic Museum)
59. Kupiškis (Aukštupėnai) Hillfort

Kupiškis District Tourism an Bussiness Information Center: www.infokupiskis.lt



56. UOGINIŲ CRAFTS CENTRE

Uoginiai village is one of the oldest settlements in the Kupiškis district. The Craft Centre was established in the building built a good five years ago (2015). The Craft Centre coordinates the activities of traditional crafts in the region. The centre organizes various events: lectures, conferences, exhibitions, and educational sessions, emphasizing the traditions of ethnocultural crafts and promoting the entrepreneurship of craftsmen and educational activities.
Z. Vezbergas, who has been engaged in beekeeping in Kupiškis district, Antašava for 50 years, will provide an opportunity to touch the basic knowledge about bee life and their care, the relationship between man and bees in the education "Sweet beetle of bees, but hard work". But you can also choose other educations. Services are paid.

Uoginiai, Kupiškio district
GPS - 55.88691, 24.77745

€ P wc

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Recommend you try out the "pakišuolio" education at the craft centre.

57. BROTHERS HONEY (WAX CANDLE PRODUCTION)

The "brothers' honey" turned into a hobby for the two brothers' twins, when they got to know the bees "their lives are so involved that we now raise more than 200 bee colonies". Not only honey and bee products and their quality are important in this apiary, but also the opportunity to help people overcome their fears, get to know bees better and maybe even fall in love with them. As the beekeepers themselves present, bees and their lives are constantly surrounded by their magic - such a small insect can travel miles and miles, create such magical products, and nurture an ever-evolving family with perfect communication skills. Touch the charming workman bee products and use your abilities to create a gift. Services are paid.

Jaunimo str. 1, Lukonys, Kupiškio district
GPS - 55.796942, 24.775693
www.broliumedus.lt

58. KUPIŠKIS MULTIPART SONGS "SUTARTINĖS" (KUPIŠKIS ETHNOGRAPHIC MUSEUM)

According to ethnologists, and musicologists, "sutartinės" (Lithuanian multipart songs) testify to the nation's cultural heritage even before Christianity, the time when trees, sky, earth, and mounds were mysterious, sacred when the whole nature was a sanctuary, which is worth paying respect to, thanking her for and asking if something is missing or something is bothering you.

"Sutartinės" is an old Lithuanian ceremonial song, an archaic polyphonic singing of the Highlanders, hints about "sutartinės" have survived in the writings of the 16th century. The living tradition has died out, songs are still sung only by folklore ensembles, cherished by lovers of the old Lithuanian faith. Contractual ones were found and recorded in north-eastern Lithuania, there is no reliable data about their prevalence in other regions.
In 2010, Lithuanian "sutartinės" were included in UNESCO's representative list of the intangible cultural heritage of humanity. Interestingly, a singing method close to "sutartinės" and even musical harmonies are recorded in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Corsica, but there are no traces of contract in neighbouring Latvia. "Sutartinės" are characterized by polyphonic polyphony. This is a special way of singing, when two texts sound simultaneous, performed with different melodies and different rhythms. "Sutartinės" were sung by two, three, four, and sometimes a whole regiment of singers. In their sound, there are frequent dissonant consonances that are no longer familiar to our ears, which occur when two melodies sounding at the same time come together within a second interval - two adjacent sounds of the scale. The purpose of the contracts is to "crush" the voices so that they "ring like bells". Such a dissonant sound was perceived as beautiful in the heyday of the contract - "like swans singing", the singers used to say.

Gedimino str. 2, Kupiškis
GPS - 55.842538, 24.975338
www.etnografijosmuziejus.lt

Aukštupėnai, Kupiškis multicipality,
Kupiškis district
GPS - 55.8478073, 24.9756068

59. KUPIŠKIS (AUKŠTUPĖNAI) HILLFORT

Kupiškis (Aukštupėnai) Hillfort dates back to the first millennium BC – the beginning of the II millennium On the left bank of Lėvens, at the confluence with the Aukštupis stream, near the Kupiškis lagoon and the village of Aukštupėnai, there is an oval mound site, elongated in the N-S direction. The site and the eastern slope of the hillfort are covered with trenches dug during the First World War. Remains of a rampart remain on the southern edge of the site, and on the north eastern and southern slopes, below the edge of the site, there is a rampant about 280 meters long and 1.8 meters high, the ends of which reach a terrace about 50 meters long. At the southern and eastern foot of the Kupiškis Hillfort, traces of an ancient settlement can be seen in an area of 5 ha; the pottery with a roughened surface found in the foundry is kept in the Lithuanian National and Kupiškis Regional Museums. The hillfort was inhabited in the period between the middle of the 5th and 8th centuries BC. From the beginning of settlement on the hillfort, the site was surrounded by a structure of sand, wood and stones, which burned down and was reconstructed several times during that time and later. The earliest finds from the hillfort are striated pottery, some of which were contemporaneous with the early fortifications. The cultural layer was found on its outskirts and the slopes of the hillfort. Historians believe that there was a wooden castle-hideout of the community on the hillfort - the earliest beginning of the future town. The hillfort was described in 1943 by P. Tarasenka, its exploratory research was carried out in 1968 by the Scientific and Methodical Council for the Protection of Cultural Monuments, and in 1969 by archaeologists from the Institute of History.

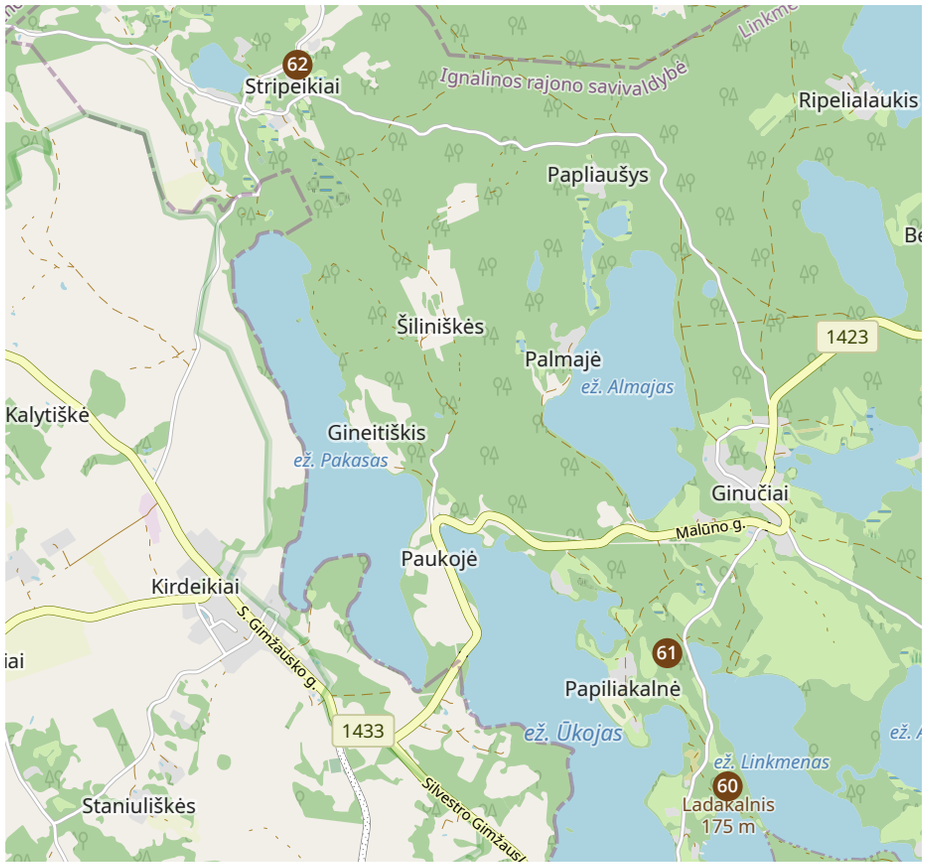
The legend about Kupiškis Hillfort tells that long ago there lived two giants: one in the village of Paketuriai, the other in the village of Aukštupėnai. Both of them were separated by the Lėvens river and the valley. The two of them liked to talk while smoking the pipe. Their pipes were long and connected to the place where the hillfort is now. When the two giants finished their pipes, they would shake the ashes where their pipes met. They lived so long that eventually a mountain, Kupiškis Hillfort, was formed from the ashes of the pipes. Later legends say that Kupiškis Hillfort was poured by Swedish soldiers. When a lot of them died of the plague, they got scared and signed with blood that they would never come here again. When they had thus signed, ordered them to pour the mountain. The Swedish soldiers brought the ground with their hats and poured the Kupiškis Hillfort. Because ancient soldiers wore tall hats with brims. So, cap by cap, the Swedish soldiers took sand and poured it over the mountain. There is a basement in the mountain. There is a chest full of documents. They hid the chest so that no one would take it. It would take a long time to dig if you wanted to unearth it.

Lithuania

IGNALINA and surroundings

60. Ladakalnis
61. Ginučiai Hillfort
62. Beekeeping Museum

Ignalina Tourism Information Center:
www.ignalina.info



60. LADAKALNIS

One of the highest and most picturesque places in Aukštaitija, is often regarded as the place of worship of goddess Lada, but the legends and stories say that the name of the hill might have originated from the evil spirit of the folklore "ladoka" This, as well as Balnakmenis, Piestakalnis near Ladakalnis, the nearby Devyniaveršios Bay in Ukojo, Mergakampis in Lake Alksnos, the burial mounds in Kimbartiškė leave no doubt that the stretch of land between Linkmenass and Ukojas, as well as the bays and peninsulas of these lakes, belonged to a sacred area since ancient times. Ladakalnis is an important part of the landscape and its visitors experience a sense of happiness that fills the soul with peace and joy. 176 m high mountain, geomorphological natural monument, from which a truly unique view opens. Archaeological research has not yielded significant results so far. At the moment, a large, beautiful mountain is levelled with a square at the top (and there is another planted oak) - here you can see the spectacle of seven lakes - with certain reservations it should be considered a holy place; on the southwestern slope of Ladakalnis, there is an alley of oaks of Lithuania's presidents.

Various stories and legends are associated with Ladakalnis itself and its surroundings. One of them tells that the village girls ran away from Napoleon's soldiers and drowned while swimming in a bay of Lake Alksna, which has since been called Mergakumpis. It is also said that the grass-snake Linkmenas lived in Lake Linkmenas, and a large temple was built for him on the mountain.

Papiliakalnė village, Linkmenai multicipality, Ignalina district
GPS - 55.36651, 25.99063

61. GINUČIAI HILLFORT

One of the most famous and grandiose hillforts in Lithuania (the complex includes another mound, two ancient settlements, retreated defensive fortifications on the Linkmen coast). Many stories and traditions testify to the importance of this place in the new centuries, priest Silvestras Gimžauskas, the preacher of national revival, emphasized it in the 19th century. in the second half and the 20th century In the 1940s, the oak tree of President Antanas Smetona was planted on the site of the Ginučiai Hillfort. Therefore, the great story of Lithuanian history unfolds here as a myth of the Lithuanian nation's struggle for freedom, and therefore happiness and prosperity. High, steep slopes rising to a height of more than 40 m, and a fairly wide site - 19 x 47 m in size, surrounded by a rampart - indicate that there was once an important and impregnable castle here. And besides all that, it is obvious that its founders and rulers had a certain artistic inclination because from the mountain there is a stunning view of the surrounding lakes.
It is believed that, as described in H. Vartbergė chronicle, there was a wooden castle on the mound on the shore of Linkmen, associated with Duke Lengvenius (sister of King Mindaugas). In written sources, Linkmenų Castle is mentioned since 1373, it was burned down in February 1433, during an attack by the troops of the Livonian Order. In 2011, during the exploration of the site, shards of pottery typical for the 13th-14th centuries, a stone spindle and the end of a silver key were found. In 2014, a metal melting furnace was discovered in the settlement of the foothills (travellers' cars are now parked there), work tools, fishing hooks, and jewellery dating back to the IV-VII centuries were found.

Papiliakalnė village, Linkmenai multicipality, Ignalina district
GPS - 55.37407, 25.98513

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Recommend a visit to the ginučiai water mill, where you can not only enjoy the unique views, but also refresh yourself by wading in the shallow river, and maybe even go for a swim.

62. BEEKEEPING MUSEUM

Presenting the world of bees and beekeeping on an ethnocultural level is unique not only in Lithuania but also in a global context. The uniqueness of the museum is determined by the possibilities - three in one!
Unique nature and its abundance, educational programs related to beekeeping and bee products, interactive exposition in buildings with an area of 4 ha, adapted for active recreation and communication.
The museum offers unique experiences - through experiential activities, the aroma therapy of nature and bee products in hammocks, historical knowledge about beekeeping, and friendly communication in the museum gazebos.
When you visit the museum, you

will feel the sacred sway of the goddess Austėja and fly through the winged baskets, humming of queen bees, play in the beehive-shaped sandboxes, the unique phenomenon of Lithuanian friendship and many legends and beliefs that reveal the sanctity of bees, nature therapy in hammocks under linden trees.

Papiliakalnė village, Linkmenai multicipality, Ignalina district
GPS - 55.40891, 25.94494
www.biciumuziejus.lt/index.php/home

WHERE TO EXPERIENCE SOMETHING SPECIAL?

Recommend a visit to one of the most beautiful interactive museums in Lithuania.

The guide was prepared with the support of the Interreg V-A Latvia-Lithuania Cross Border Cooperation Programme for 2014-2020 within the framework of project No. LLI-447 “Exploring Balts and Promoting Awareness of the International Cultural Route “Balts’ Road”” (Explore Balts).
The “Explore Balts” project continues the “Balts’ Road” project, within the framework of which the route has been created, including the territories that were once inhabited by Semigallians, Selonians, Curonians and Samogitians in Lithuania and Latvia. The project is aimed at the further development of the established route “Balts’ Road”, promoting its recognition and availability of information. All information about the route can be found at www.baltsroad.eu.
The project is implemented by the Šiauliai Tourism Information Centre in cooperation with 6 partners in Latvia and Lithuania: Zemgale Planning Region, Kurzeme Planning Region, Kuldīga Local Municipality, Bauska Local Municipality, National Regional Development Agency in Lithuania, Klaipėda District Tourism Information Centre.
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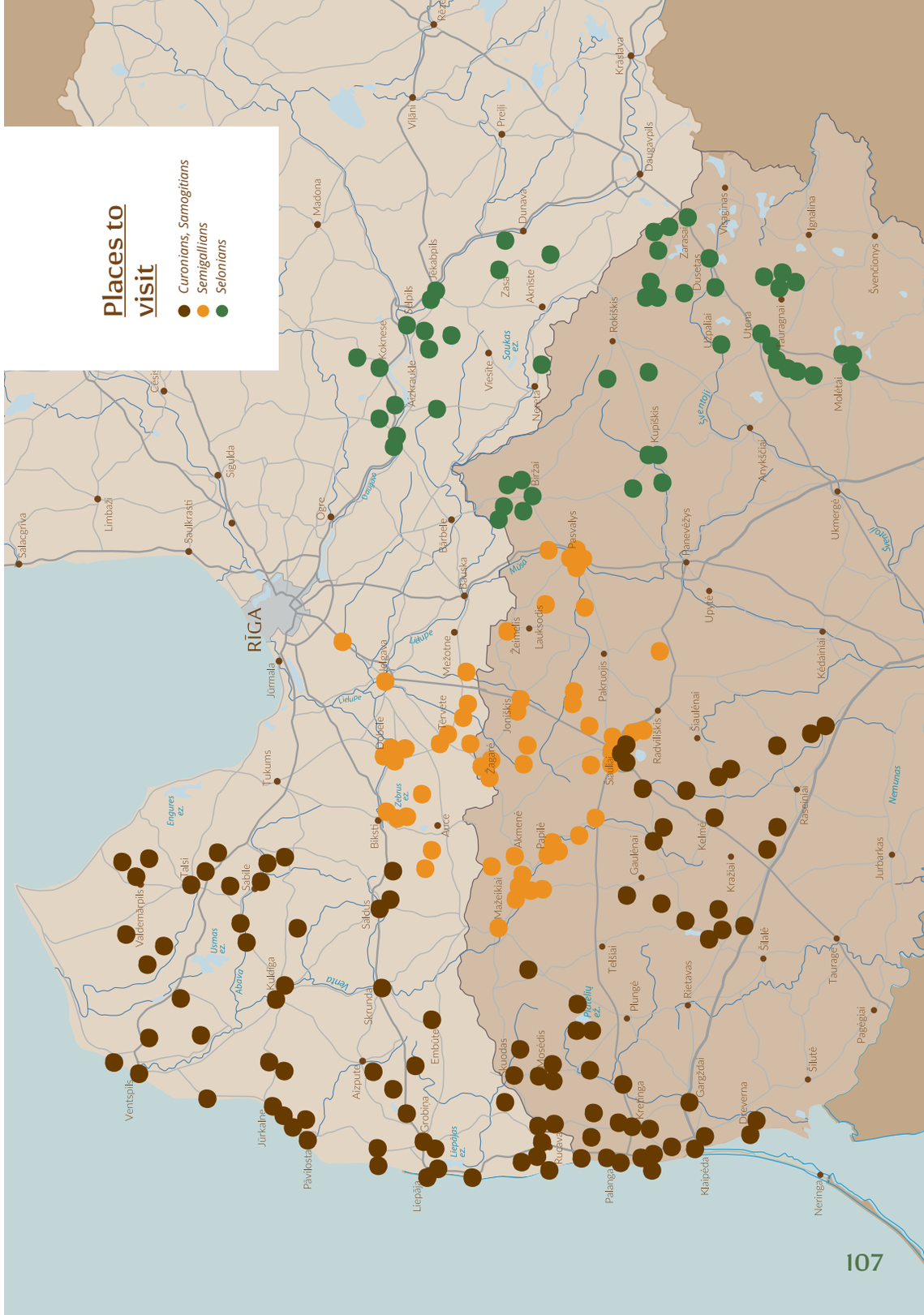
ZEMGALE PLANNING REGION

BALTŲ KELIAS



ALSO LOOK AT THE “SEMIGALLIANS” AND “CURONIANS AND SAMOGITIANS” GUIDES!

BALTS' ROAD

SELONIANS

Explore Balts

Curonians

Semigallians

Selonians