

## STAGE 1

### **Kretinga – Klaipėda**

Kretinga (0.0 km) – Kretingalė (7.6 km) – Klaipėda (25.6 km)

**County:** Klaipėda

**Episcopate:** Telšiai, **Decanate:** Palanga

***Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. Ps 25.5***

*St. Jacob's (Šv. Jokūbas) seaside road begins in the western part of Lithuania – in Samogitia. You can even take it during the cold season – in late autumn, winter and early spring, because the attractions are open all year round. However, you will need special preparation – warm clothing, and comfortable shoes, because it is advisable to travel this section during the winter season on foot. The first stretch of road connects Kretinga – one of the oldest settlements in Lithuania, and Klaipėda – the largest port city of the Baltic Sea and the third largest city of the Republic of Lithuania.*

### **Kretinga**

Kretinga is one of the oldest West Lithuanian seaside settlements. Kretinga (*Cretyn*) castle was first mentioned in written sources in 1253. In 1572 Kretinga estate was acquired by Jan Hieronim Chodkiewicz and his son Jan Karol Chodkiewicz who built a monastery and church in 1605-1617, where it housed Franciscan monks. In the vicinity of this complex, they founded the town of Kretinga which in 1609 was granted the Magdeburg rights and a coat of arms depicting the Blessed Virgin Mary with the baby. After the death of J. K. Chodkiewicz Kretinga was ruled by other famous noble families of Sapiehowie, Massalscy, Potoccy, Zubowie, and later the estate of Kretinga was acquired by Józef Tyszkiewicz.

### **The ensemble of the church buildings of Franciscan Monastery and the Order of the Holy Annunciation Virgin Mary**

It is the oldest surviving church in Samogitia, built in 1617, with Gothic and Renaissance features. Chodkiewicz family members are buried under the central altar. All the sarcophagi in the crypt are unique cultural monuments. Significant sacred value is attributed to the altar and the painting of St. Anthony allegedly having miraculous (healing) powers.

### **Points of attraction in Kretinga:**

*Kretinga manor (now Kretinga Museum and the Winter Garden), which in 1874 was acquired by Count Józef Tyszkiewicz. He reconstructed the palace and built the conservatory (the Winter Garden). Over the centuries, owners of Kretinga estate wrote an interesting history of the manor and the town. It is now proud of the monumental buildings and collectables of fine and applied art collections, documents, iconographic material and archaeological finds. The estate is surrounded by a mixed-style park, covering the area of 23 hectares. In 2002 the park was decorated with an astronomical calendar and a sundial; Opening hours of the Museum's central chamber and the water mill exposures in winter: I – II – Closed III – VII – 10:00 to 18:00; Opening hours of the Winter Garden: I – Closed II – III -IV -V -VII – 10:00 to 18:00; VI – 10:00 to 19:00*

*Lourdes grotto was built in 1933 according to the French Lourdes example. It is believed that the sculpture of the Holy Virgin Mary and the source in the vicinity have magic powers like in real Lourdes;*

*The tomb of Jurgis Pabrėža (Father Ambrozijus, SFO) – a botanist, a priest, a Franciscan monk. Most of Kretinga population consider Jurgis Pabrėža to be the saint, and visit his tomb, pray here asking for favours and protection from disease and disaster.*

*We leave Kretinga (0.0 km) and travel along the main Klaipėda road towards the south. We leave **Kretingalė town** (7.6 km) and after 6.5 kilometres reach the intersection of the driveway and A13 motorway (14.1 km). We walk right up to the **boundaries of the city of Klaipėda** (15.2 km). Follow the streets of Medelyno, Liepojos and H. Manto to the downtown (25.6 km).*

*The major section of the road in front of us leads through the city streets and the highway, so it is advisable to follow all the necessary safety traffic rules.*

*We take the road No 2219, then turn to the left, where the asphalt paths begin, and then to the gravel road over the Danė river bridge. At the intersection with the minor road, turn to the right and cross the settlements of **Pipirai** (11.7 km), **Gvildžiai** (14.2 km) and **Aukštkiemiai** (16.9 km) and the viaduct of A13 motorway to find yourself in the **city of Klaipėda** → (25.2 km).*

## **Klaipėda**

According to the area and the number of population, Klaipėda city has been recognised third by size in Lithuania (after Vilnius and Kaunas). It is situated at the point of intersection between the Curonian Lagoon and the Baltic Sea. Klaipėda (from the thirteenth century until 1945 the town was called *Memel*) is the oldest city in Lithuania and was first mentioned in 1252. In these old times the Teutonic Knights build themselves a castle at the sea, and a small village was set up around it.

Memel belonged to Sweden, Russia, Prussia, and even... to the French government. After the Second World War in 1945 Klaipėda region went to the Soviet Union (as the socialist Lithuania of the Soviet Union) and became one of the most important Baltic port cities. In March 1990 Klaipėda became the independent port city of the Republic of Lithuania.

Those visiting Klaipėda region, in particular, should not miss the old town, which is very different from other old towns of Lithuania as its buildings feature German and Scandinavian architectural elements. Most buildings have the characteristic Fachwerk style – the architectural style where wooden pillars are set outside the building. The city is crossed by the Dane river, with the old town with cobblestone streets on the left bank. Many houses and other architectural objects have been reconstructed, as the Second World War left behind a significant footprint by destroying more than 60 percent of the city.

### **St. Francis of Assisi Church**

This small church is part of St. Francis oncological centre. Ceiling of the church resembles the ship's bottom, and the windows behind the altar are made of onyx stone, which comes from the paradise location mentioned in the Bible – Iran. The altar is also symbolic, made from the stone delivered from the Sinai peninsula, where Moses and his people wandered for 40 years.

**St. Francis of Assisi Church** at Savanorių g. 4, Klaipėda

### **Points of attraction in Klaipėda:**

*Teatro Square – the heart of the city, adorned by the nineteenth century theatre, and a fountain with Anike from Tarava sculpture for the memory of poet Simonas Dachas.*

*The church of Christ the King built in 1945;*

*Church of Mary Queen of Peace – the only church from the Soviet era in the Baltic countries;*

*Art courtyard (Meno kiemas) with surviving Fachwerk style houses from the eighteenth century.*

## **STAGE 2**

### **Klaipėda – Juodkrantė**

Klaipėda (0.0 km) – ferry (1.1 km) – Juodkrantė (19.6 km)

**County:** Klaipėda

**Episcopate:** Telšiai, **Decanate:** Klaipėda

*We give thanks to You, O God, we give thanks, For Your name is near; Men declare Your wondrous works.; Ps 75.1*

*Take a ferry across the Curonian Lagoon, to find yourself in a totally different place of the world – surrounded with serenity, quietness, with only forest swishing near the lagoon. Due to its geographical position and the wars, the region has long been inaccessible to tourists, but it only protected and did not disturb the current urban landscape.*

*From Klaipėda city centre (0.0 km) we go along the streets of Pilies and Minijos to the ferry, which will take all participants of the pilgrimage across the **Curonian Lagoon** to the Curonian Spit already visible on the other side. We leave the ferry and travel along the tiled path towards Nida – on Smiltynės pl., which takes us directly to the village of Nida across Juodkrantė. Along the way, admire deciduous forests, and the young, recently grown groves.*

### **Curonian Spit**

It is a long and narrow peninsula that separates the Curonian Lagoon from the open Baltic Sea. The length of their peninsular is almost 97 km, out of which 50 km are in Lithuania, and the rest in Russia.

The interesting and unique landscape of the Curonian Spit (sand dunes, and pine forests) has formed over time. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Curonian Spit was used to move cargo from different Western European countries. During the Seven Years War, the shortage of wood for shipbuilding has led to widespread deforestation. In the absence of plants with strong roots that could maintain the stability of the dunes, they become unstable, and began constantly sliding down. Every year the Curonian Spit is visited by about 10 thousand of people. It's a great place to relax in a quiet environment, to focus your mind and energy. In 2000 the Curonian Spit was included in the UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List.

*Approximately in 19 km we reach the beach and the famous Curonian Spit resting place → **Juodkrantė** (19.6 km).*

## **Juodkrantė**

The town's name means the "black shore" and is associated with dark woods, surrounding the shores of the Curonian Spit. Juodkrantė was a small fishermen village, first mentioned in the historic sources in the fifteenth century. The settlement began to develop rapidly at the junction of the nineteenth and early twentieth century, when the news spread around the world on the trip to the sea.

In 1860 a little-known local pub has become a fashionable *Kurischer Hof* hotel (translated as the Curonian yard (Kuršių kiemas)) and since then has welcomed the increasing number of guests. In the beginning of the twentieth century it already had 5 large hotels, 20 boarding homes and several sanatoriums. Juodkrantė (formerly known as *Schwarzort*) has become one of the most famous holiday destinations, most popular among celebrities of the world – the elite.

**Amber** search and its use has contributed to the development of the town. The area is famous for a wealth of amber and the message about amber articles soon spread all over the world – the stone is highly appreciated not only in Europe but also beyond.

The architecture of wooden houses and villas from the twentieth century will definitely attract your attention. Up-to-date, more than 100 such buildings are preserved. After the renovation they continue to perform the primary purpose – to ensure a memorable vacation for every visitor to the town.

## **Juodkrantė church**

The first wooden church was built in Juodkrantė in 1795. Not only the Juodkrantė congregation but the residents of **Nida** (separated by 30 km distance) used to pray in it. Unfortunately, the church burned down in 1798. After 7 years, with the help of devoted residents and some fundraising, the church was rebuilt, this time of brick. The sanctuary operates until now and it is a place of meeting of Christians and Lutherans, and also used for organising musical evenings and all kinds of concerts.

## **STAGE 3**

### **Juodkrantė – Nida**

Juodkrantė (0.0 km) – Nida (30.6 km)

County: Klaipėda

**Episcopate:** Telšiai, **Decanate:** Klaipėda

*Look on my affliction and my distress and take away all my sins. Ps 25.18*

*St. Jacob's (Šv. Jokūbas) seaside road runs through forested dunes of the Curonian Spit. Nida is the most visited and most popular resort in the whole of the Curonian Spit.*

*We leave **Juodkrantė** (0.0 km) and travel towards Nida along the bicycle trail to the south along the sea. At the information board, we turn to the bicycle trail and continue across Nagliai nature reserve. Nagliai nature trail stretches for about 8 km. At the beginning of Nagliai nature reserve the bicycle trail leads along the seashore between the forest and the protective dunes, then the trail heads into the forest and after about 400 m reaches the main area road Smiltynė – Nida (No 167), so let us follow it. Cross the main road at the rest area (at 31 km of Smiltynė – Nida road), were you will find the cognitive trail in Nagliai nature reserve to the dead, or the gray dunes. For the next hour the trip will continue along the bicycle trail in a southerly direction. Here, the trail winds through pine forests to the town of **Pervalka**. Then we continue our journey towards Nida, pass the*

whole village, until we reach the southern part of Pervalka and use the renovated and widened bicycle trail towards **Preila**. After crossing Preila we take the only street of this village running along the Curonian Lagoon and continue further south to **Nida**. We reach the northern part of Nida and continue our journey along the street of Purvynės to the Curonian Lagoon waterfront. Walk along the seaside or the waterfront to the central part of Nida and the harbour. Reach Nida ferry terminal, and go further west on Taikos street. When descending Taikos street, don't miss the arrow on the left to **Parnidis dune**.

## **Nida**

It is one of the best known and most popular resorts in Lithuania, which was thriving at the end of the nineteenth century. Like other settlements of the Curonian Spit, Nida is a small fishing village, first mentioned in historical sources in 1366 as the property of the Teutonic Knights, and part of the lands of Memel (now Klaipėda city). This village was located 5 km south of Memel, but later the moving dunes forced its residents to move to the northern part of the area.

For its extremely sunny landscape, Nida has been visited by many famous artists: Max Pechstein, Alfred Partikel, Karl Schmidt-Rottluff and others. A number of poets and writers have created their works in these countries. A summer cottage in Nida (existing until today) was also built by the famous Thomas Mann.

Nida currently is a well known and visited resort, which attracts about 300 thousand visitors every year, mainly from Germany, Poland, Latvia and Russia.

## **Thomas Mann Memorial Museum**

The famous writer's summer cottage is painted in similar colours as was the original house – in brown, with blue shutters. The windows of the building offer a perfect panorama of the lagoon. The writer bought this house for the money obtained as the Nobel Prize for his novel *Buddenbrooks*, making him famous all over the world. Moreover, in Nida the author wrote another, less well-known work – *Jozeph And His Brothers*. Today the house hosts the display of photos, books and other memorabilia telling the story of life and creative works of the author, and the residence is often used for holding special meetings, exhibitions, and evenings of classical music and poetry. Each year, the Cultural Centre organises an international festival of Thomas Mann.

The museum's winter opening hours (from September 15 till May 10) II – V 10:00-17:00.

## **Old cemetery**

In the nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century a cemetery was set up near the Lutheran church. It still has the old wooden tombstones called *Krikštas*. The oldest gravestones in the Baltic countries are only found here, in the Curonian land. Residents of the Lithuania Minor were always setting up a *Krikštas* at the foot of the deceased so that he can have something to hold on “on the day of the last judgement”. According to the tradition of pagans, the gravestones depicted a mythological tree of the world, with its branches connecting each and every part of the universe. Men's tombstones were carved of masculine trees (e.g. oak (Polish *dąb*), birch (Polish *brzoza*) and womens' – of feminine trees (e.g., spruce (Polish *świerk*)).

Catholic Church in Nida at Kopų g. 2 / Takos g. 17, Nida  
Nida's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Pamario g. 43, Nida