

## 4. MANOR GARDENS AND PARKS

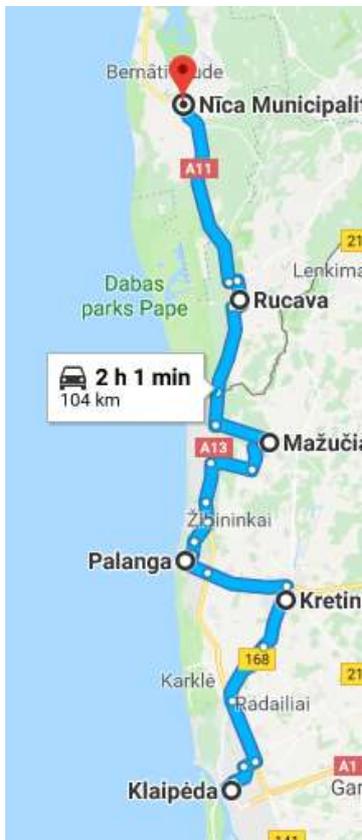
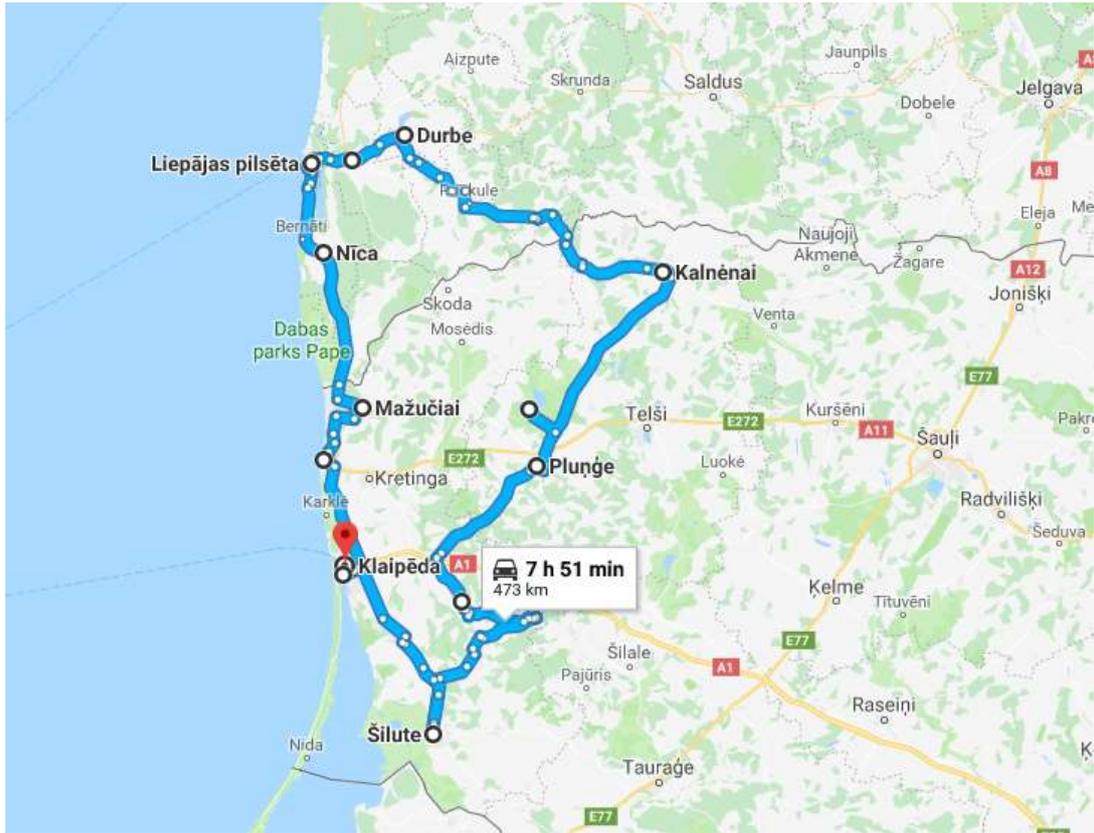
Kurzeme (LV) and Klaipeda (LT) regions

**Tour duration:** 3 days, 460 km

**Tour route:** Klaipeda – Kretinga – Palanga – Mažučiai – Rucava – Nīca – Liepāja – Grobiņa – Durbe – Priekule – Kalnēnai – Beržoras – Plunge – Darius – Švėkšna – Šilutė – Klaipeda

The tour starts and ends in Klaipeda, the most popular seaside resort town in Lithuania. Klaipėda University Botanical Garden has a coastal ethnographic garden with flower arrangements characteristic of this area. Kretinga Manor Park is one of the oldest surviving 16th–18th century manor parks in Lithuania. Palanga Manor housing the Amber Museum and Birutė Park is one of the best-preserved manor complexes in Lithuania. The largest Japanese garden in Europe (16 ha) is a home to collection of traditional aromatic plants and vegetables. Rucava arboretum displays a collection of magnolias. In Nīca village, 7 decorative gardens maintaining the local gardening tradition are open for visitors. Historical cultivars are carefully selected to renew the orchard and romantic landscape park at the 18<sup>th</sup> century Tāšu (Telsen) estate in Grobiņa region, Latvia. The Izidorius Navidanskas Park has over 120 species of trees and shrubs. Visit an outdoor plant exhibition at Jadvyga Balvočiūtė Farmgrowing medicinal herbs and spices, selling organic sprouts, single herb teas and herbal mixtures. Also Beržoras Homestead in Žemaitija National Park grows a variety of medicinal and culinary herbs, garden plants and aromatic herbs. Plungė Manor, called the “Versailles of Samogitia”, is one of the most famous surviving ensembles of its kind in Lithuania. Steponas Darius Birthplace Museum features a unique orchard of impressive size and scope. The Švėkšna Manor Complex features a sculpture park, scenic views, trails, gates, and a Chinese-Japanese maidenhair tree (*Ginkgo biloba*) which stands 18 metres high and 70 centimetres in diameter. Šilutė Manor has two parks – an English landscape park with walking paths and the forest park known as *Varnamiškis*, or “Crows’ Forest”.

**Tour map**



First day

Klaipėda – Kretinga – Palanga – Mažučiai – Rucava – Nīca (104 km) vai Liepāja (125 km)

**Klaipėda** is a city in Lithuania on the Baltic Sea coast. It is the third largest city in Lithuania and the capital of Klaipėda County. It is worth visiting the Klaipėda Old Town and looking for the sculptures that are scattered around the old part of the city. Visit the Clock Museum, the Klaipėda Castle and Castle Museum, and the Lithuanian Sea Museum and Dolphinarium.



**Klaipėda University Botanical Garden** was founded in 1993 in the picturesque valley of the Danė River. It covers an area of approximately 9.3 hectares. Over 250 plant species grow naturally in the garden. In order to give visitors an understanding of the regional traditions, the botanical garden has a coastal ethnographic garden with flower arrangements characteristic of this area. This garden features plants of 14 species, primarily medicinal and culinary plants. The garden offers a variety of educational programmes and invites visitors to picnic in designated areas.

**Kretinga Manor Park** is one of the oldest surviving 16th–18th century manor parks in Lithuania. This is a mixed-style park that covers an area of 23 hectares. It was given its beginnings by a huge orchard started by Vilnius Bishop Ignotas Jokūbas Masalskis. The Zubov counts who later managed the manor added a park alongside which was given the general name of “Summer Garden”. This was like a counterbalance to the Winter Garden, which was the conservatory set up inside of the manor.

During the war and post-war years, the park suffered greatly – only part of the linden and horse-chestnut alleys survived, as well as the historic centuries-old oaks, the thickest of which has a trunk 1.9 metres in diameter. In the southern part of the Kretinga Manor Park, where the orchard once stood, now stands the Astronomy Calendar and Sundial; hedges and alleys have been formed, flower beds and rock gardens have been added, collections of dahlias, peonies and tulips are being cultivated, and fragments of the rose gardens, the walking paths, and the rest areas are being restored. Memory Lane marks the most important dates in the history of Kretinga and the Kretinga Museum, and the restored manor fountain has become a particularly popular place for guests of the town to relax.

**Palanga** is the biggest and the most universal seaside resort of Lithuania. Take a stroll down Basanavicius Street, stop for a second in the Musical Fountain square; spend the afternoon in Birutė’s Park and Amber Museum, relax on Palanga Beach, enjoy sunset on Palanga Bridge.

The Tyszkiewicz residence – **Palanga Manor**, with its magnificent palace (which now houses the Amber Museum) and Birutė Park, is one of the best-preserved, well-maintained and most visited manor complexes in Lithuania. Birutė Park was built in the area where the sacred Birutė Forest and Birutė Hill once were. The landscape garden was created in the late 19th century by the renowned French landscape architect Édouard François André, who had been commissioned by the Tyszkiewicz counts. The place selected for the park is unique in terms of both nature and culture: the palace was incorporated as the main accent between the park’s pond and the

legendary Birutė Hill – an ancient Lithuanian shrine overlooking the sea. The masterfully designed park features a great variety of views and moods, with skilfully crafted paths, grounds decorated with flower gardens, two ponds, and small architectural elements.

**The Palanga Amber Museum** is one of the biggest amber museums in Europe. Housed in the Tyszkiewicz's Palace, the museum is surrounded by the Botanical Garden of Palanga so it is a must-visit if you happen to be in the garden already. The museum exhibits hundreds of interesting and unique amber pieces, and also tells and illustrates the development of amber craft. The palace itself is also a very beautiful landmark built in Italian neo-Renaissance style with an impressive statue of Jesus in front of it.



The largest **Japanese garden** in Europe (16 ha) began to be formed in 2007. The grounds are home to gardens and a collection of traditional aromatic plants where heritage cultivated plant species are nurtured. The heritage cultivated plants include carrots, beetroot, and cabbage, among others. A very large collection of heritage tomato varieties has been assembled. Of note are the onion – especially onion and garlic collections, which are characterised by different varieties. The aromatic and medicinal plant collection includes southernwood, mint, mugwort, oregano, lovage, thyme and other traditional folk medicine plants. Summer is the best time to visit the garden, but it's a nice place to take a walk year round.

#### For meals we recommend:

- Cafe „Pas grafa“, *Kretinga District*  
<http://www.pasgrafa.lt/>
- Cafe „Vienkiemis“, *Kretinga District*  
<http://www.vienkiemis.lt/en/nourishment>

Lithuania / Latvia border.

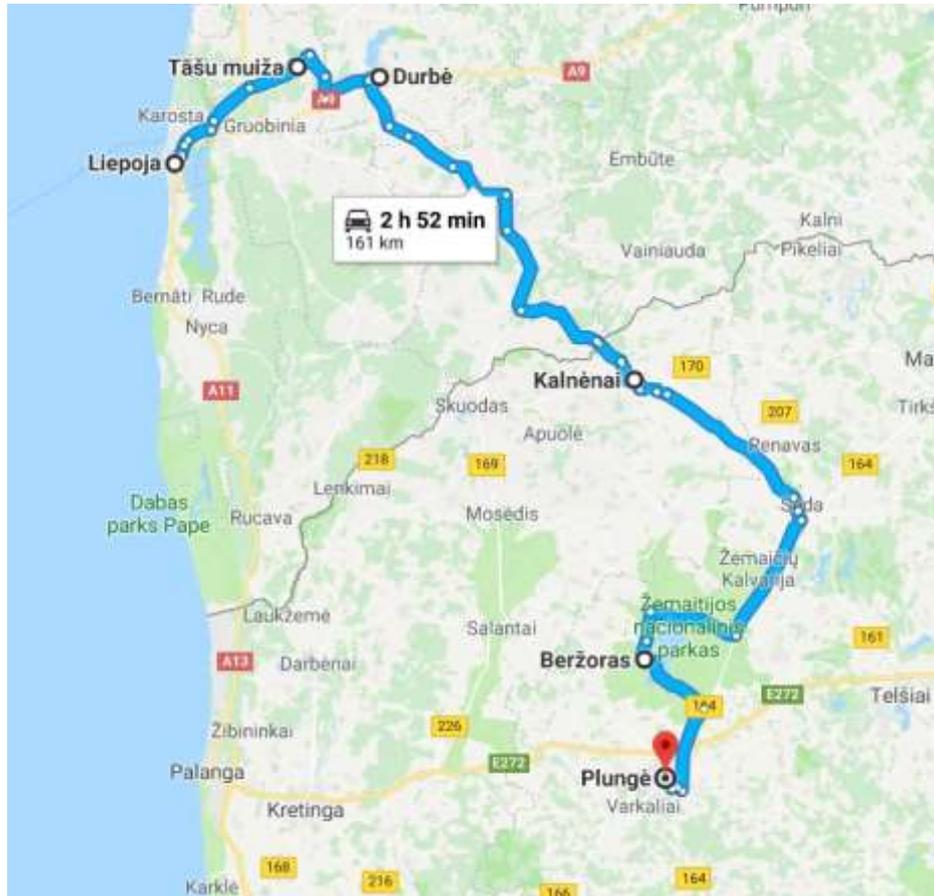
**Rucava Arboretum.** The project for the development of arboretum began in 1996 when representatives of the Salaspils Botanical Garden dendrologists and Rucava municipality representatives agreed on the establishment of experimental plantations on the Rucava Manor Hill. The planting was started in 1998. In the future, the greenery is also located in the centre of Rucava and at Rucava Elementary School. Plantings are replenished annually with new and exotic plant copies from around the world. The "Garden Festival" traditionally takes place in May, during rhododendrons and magnolia blooms.

#### **Garden „Kristapi” in Nica**

"Kristapos" are especially popular hosta's and maples. The hosta's collection has more than 130 varieties, and the number of maples has already reached 25. A large pond can feed fish and enjoy the beauty of the garden. The garden has succeeded in both Nica and the Latvian-based fairy tale competitions.

### Accommodation in Liepāja and surroundings:

- Guest house „Poriņš”
- Cottages „Šķiperi”
- Guest house „Chill in”
- Country house „Brakši”



### Second day

Liepāja – Priekule – Kalnenai – Seda – Beržuoras (161 km)



Historical cultivars are carefully selected to renew the orchard at **Tāšu (Telsen) estate** in Grobiņa region, Latvia. The estate flourished in the 18th century, and the orchard standing in its inner yard, the South side, pleased the inhabitants of the estate with beautiful apple tree blossoms in spring and fruit harvest in autumn. At present, the orchard is in the process of renovation.



**Durbē city museum and gardens.** The city museum displays an exposition about S.Klevera's legacy, a garden part in the city center (about 25 trees) available for

public viewing. A. Birzakas Garden in Kalna Street 4 is a good example of a garden of an old farmhouse (planted in 1933, 3.5 ha), with many traditional and several rare varieties. Durbes Veltes is a small company that manufactures products from local fruits, vegetables and mushrooms.

Latvia / Lithuania border.



The **Izidorius Navidanskas Park** began to be planted in 1928. The park has over 120 species of trees and shrubs, of which 34 species and forms are of local origin. There are seven ponds where birds swim and fish breed, and there is also a river that runs through the park. In the southern part of the park, surrounded by ponds and a natural grove, there is a three-hectare apple orchard that was planted before World War II. Lithuanian natural selection apple varieties that have long been traditionally grown in Lithuania blossom every year and delight all with their fruit: ‘Antaninis’ (‘Antonovka’), ‘Ravelio kriaušinis’ (‘Reval Pear-Apple’), ‘Sierinka’, ‘Popierinis’ (‘White Transparent’), ‘Vytautinis’ (‘Wealthy’), and so on. Little lambs keep the grass under control in the 57-hectare territory of the Žemaitija Botanical Park.

The park is always open to visitors and admission is free. Visitors can only see the park on their own – tour guide services are not available.

**For meals we recommend:**

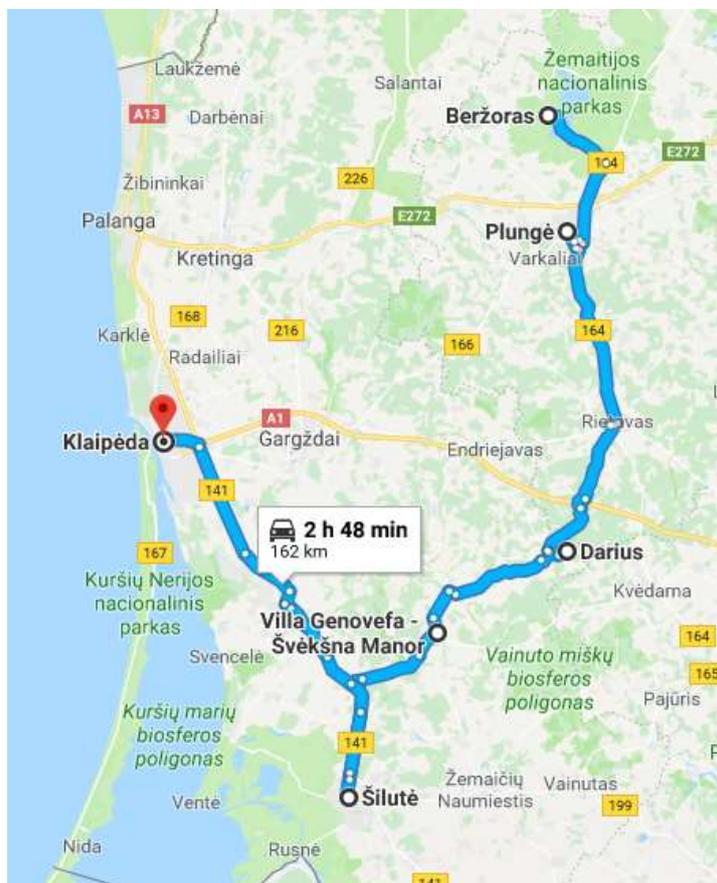
- Restaurant “Linelis”, *Plungė District*  
<http://www.linelis.lt/restoranas.html>
- Restaurant “Beržas”, *Plungė District*  
<http://www.hotelberzas.lt/en/restaurant/>

**Accommodation:**

- Homestead “Pas tėvukus”, *Plungė District*  
<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/en/farmstead/sodyba-pastevukus>
- Homestead “Prie Žiedelio”, *Plungė District*  
<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/en/farmstead/sodyba-prieziedelio>
- Homestead “Iešnalė”, *Plungė District*  
<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/en/farmstead/sodyba-iesnale>

### Third day

**Beržoras – Plungė – Darius – Šveškėna – Šilutė – Klaipėda (162 km)**



**Beržoras Homestead** is just a stone's throw away from Lake Beržoras and not far from one of the cleanest and most beautiful lakes in Lithuania – Lake Plateliai. This is a great starting point to explore Žemaitija National Park by foot, bicycle (there is a bike path that cuts through the homestead), water or car.

The owner of the homestead grows a variety of medicinal and culinary herbs, garden plants and aromatic herbs. Carrots, onions, garlic, and other vegetables are grown in the garden plant collections. There is a wide assortment of medicinal and culinary herbs, including summer savoury, sage, rhodiola, sweetgrass, nasturtium, starflower and catnip. The owners of this homestead carry out educational activities. Hen parties can be organised according to local traditions, and guests are welcome to take part in the Babūnė Tea education programme.

**Plungė Manor** – called the “Versailles of Samogitia”, this is one of the most famous surviving ensembles of its kind in Lithuania. It now houses the Samogitian Art Museum. Plungė is known for the Duke Ogiński Park. This mixed-style 18th–19th century park was built on the site of a sacred Samogitian forest (*alkas*). The pride of the park is the Oak of Perkūnas (the Thunder God), which is one of the oldest and largest in Lithuania, as well as the Weeping Linden, which is cloaked in legend, and

the Five-Trunk Ash. On the instruction of Prince Michał Ogiński, seven cascade ponds were excavated, which are connected by stone bridges/locks. The Babrungas River that runs through the part creates an exceptional landscape.



**Steponas Darius Birthplace Museum.** The homestead features a unique orchard of impressive size and scope. Back in the late 19th century, the pilot's father planted fruit trees and grafted several apple tree cultivars on the branches of a wild apple tree. The garden also has heritage ornamental plants characteristic of the Žemaitija (Samogitia) region. A new garden has started to plant on the grounds of the homestead. There is a campsite next to the museum where you can rest and stay for a longer time.

The **Švėkšna Manor Complex** is one of the most beautiful in Samogitia. Next to the manor there is a spectacular park. Both parts of the park are connected by a broad staircase decorated with vases that offers a beautiful panoramic view of the lower terrace waters. A sculpture of the goddess Diana is still standing on the island in the central pond of the Švėkšna Manor Park. Along the main alley of the park, the ornate sundial, the vase on a pedestal, the sculpture of the Virgin Mary, and the *Angel of Freedom* have been reconstructed. Other elements of the park have also been restored: the scenic overlooks, trails, and gates. Švėkšna Manor Park's greatest embellishment is a Chinese-Japanese maidenhair tree (ginkgo biloba) which stands 18 metres high and 70 centimetres in diameter. This is the largest and most beautiful sample of this species in Lithuania.

These days, **Šilutė Manor** is often called **Hugo Scheu Manor**, after its last owner. Šilutė landowner and park founder Hugo Scheu purchased the manor in 1889. He fixed up the manor buildings and the surroundings, and built two parks: the manor park and the forest park known as "*Varnamiškis*", or "Crows' Forest". Next to the manor he built an English landscape park with walking paths. Three ponds were excavated on the park grounds, and greenhouses were erected which were used for spring vegetables, flowers, grapes and seedlings. The forest park, which was meant as a place for the residents to take walks, was built around the same time as the manor park. Since it was spread out on both sides of the winding Šyša River, it was connecting pedestrian bridges. There were about 150 species of vegetation in the park that stretched along the Šyša River to the old railway bridge. Now the park has 40 species of trees and shrubs.

**Klaipėda** is a city in Lithuania on the Baltic Sea coast. It is the third largest city in Lithuania and the capital of Klaipėda County. It is worth visiting the Klaipėda Old Town and looking for the sculptures that are scattered around the old part of the city. Visit the Clock Museum, the Klaipėda Castle and Castle Museum, and the Lithuanian Sea Museum and Dolphinarium.

#### For meals we recommend:

- Homestead „Po ažuolais“, *Plungė District*  
<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/en/farmstead/sodyba-poazuolais>
- The inn „Karčema“, *Plungė District*

<https://saliakeliokarcema.lt/lt/>

- Homstead “Račkauskų sodyba”, *Klaipėda District*  
<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/en/farmstead/rackausku-sodyba>