



THE ROUTE

This route will allow you to learn about the diverse environmental and cultural heritage of northern Kurzeme peninsula. You will also find the loveliest views in the Slītere National Park. You can drive down the route, or you can ride a bicycle.

Season: Preferably April-October, but year-round if conditions permit

Type of car: No specific requirements

Type of bike: Mountain bike

Difficulty: For bikers, not very hard if you take two days

Road cover: Mostly asphalt, but some 19 km of gravel road

Distance from Rīga: 170 km

Beginning: Dundaga or other places (Melnsils, Sīkrags) – this is a circular route

End: Dundaga or other places

Route: Dundaga-Šlītere-Sīkrags-Mazirbe-Košrags-Pitrags-Saunags-Vaide-Kolka-Melnsils-Vīdale-Dundaga

Markings: None

Alternatives: The route can be taken in either direction and can be started and stopped anywhere.

Length: ~90 km. If you're driving, we recommend that you take two days if you want to take a detailed look at everything that you want to see and if you hike all of the trails.

Duration: One or two days

Logistics: A circular route which returns to where it started Note: Bring a printed map with all of the necessary information

Emergency services: Ring 112

The Slitere National Park (established in 1999 as a strict nature reserve) is known, with good reason, as an open-air museum which shows the historical development of the Baltic Sea. Nowadays evidence of geological events is seen in the Blue Hills of Slitere, which stand 20 to 30 metres high above what was the shore of the Baltic lake of ice 10,000 years ago. The Stiebri hills were former 8,000 or 9,000 years ago, while the Littorina Sea formed Europe's largest set of dune ramparts and damp hollows between those ramparts. This occurred between 4,000 and 7,000 years ago. The gentle climate of Northern Kurzeme is the reason why so many rare plants are found in the park – some 860 in all including Common Yew (Taxus baccata) and Baltic Ivy (Hedera helix var. baltica). Of certain value in the preservation of these treasures was the Soviet military machine, which has left behind army bases and other military objects in the area. The presence of the military meant that the area of what is now the Slītere National Park remained largely undisturbed for 50 years. The park includes one of the most popular tourist destinations in Latvia – the Cape of Kolka, which is visited by more than 50,000 travellers each year. During the spring migration of birds, tens of thousands of birds fly over the cape within one hour. Along the shore of the Baltic Sea is the so-called Livonian coast, which stretches from Kolka to Sīkrags and Ovīši. Fishing villages and other cultural objects established by the world's smallest ethnic minority, the Livonians, can be found here. Tourists will enjoy interesting four nature trails, bicycling routes, viewing tower, and the Šlītere lighthouse which is open for visitors.

Nearby accommodations: Sīkrags 3 Jaunklāvi 29469614

Lapmežciems 🚡 Jaunlīdumi 29467556

Mazirbe 1 Upeskalni 29259510; Mazirbes Kalēji 28829474, 29213412,

Dzintarini 26173009

Košrags Jauntilmači 29412974, 😭 👗 Pītagi 29372728; www.pitagi.lv Saunags 🖍 Krūmiņi 29452512

Vaide X Purvziedi 63200179, 29395624

Kolka 👗 Ūši 63276507, 29475692; www.kolka.info

The tenting area Melnsils in Melnsils 28605606

Resting place: In Kolkasrags and Melnsils

Shops: In Dundaga, Mazirbe, Kolka, Melnsils and Vidale **Dining:** In Dundaga, as well as in Kolka (seasonal)

Bicycle rentals: At Mazirbes Kalēji, Ūši, Pītagi and Jaunlīdumi

Information: www.talsurajons.lv 63224165; www.kolkasrags.lv 29149105;

www.ziemelkurzeme.lv 63232293, 29444395; www.livones.lv;

www.countryholidays.lv 67617600

standstone cliffs. e Slitere National Park features several other hikes, as well as bike, water and auto routes. Look for a list of routes on **www.countryholidays.lv** and for markings out in natur

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THE MOST INTERESTING DESTINATIONS

Baltic Ice Sea (the Seashore lowlands today).

exhibition about the Liv nation at the hall.

walls, and there is a central information stand, as well.

The **Pitrags Baptist Church** is at the centre of the village – built in 1902.

different kinds to see.

Barn from the outside

Dundaga: The centre of the Dundaga Administrative District has many interesting and historical objects such as the **Dundaga castle** (housing the Tourist Information, the hotel, the Arts and Music school), the park, the Lutheran church, the "Crocodile," the workshop of the ceramics artist Velga Eizenberga, etc.

3 Šlītere: Here you will find Latvia's highest lighthouse at the edge of the Blue Hills of Šlītere.

It is a viewing tower at this time, and if the weather is perfectly clear, you can even see

Saaremaa Island in the distance. There is a small exhibit of information here. The Šlītere Nature

4 A viewing tower alongside the Dundaga-Mazirbe road offers a view of what used to be the

5 The Peterezers Nature Trail – one of the most beautiful trails in northern Kurzeme, some

3.5 km long, and passing through the pine forests of Slītere, offering views that are unique in

Europe. There is also a mossy swamp in the area. The Great Lake Pēterezers and the Small Lake

6 Sikrags is a Liv village, part of which has been declared a national monument of urban design.

The Liv People's Hall, built in 1939, is a symbol of the Liv identity. There is a photo

landscape, and accessibility. The names and history of the various buildings are posted on outer

III Pitrags is a former fishing village with many legends about sea pirates and sunken ships.

2 Saunags is an extensive fishing village with many buildings for travellers, both old and new. The name Saunags was first mentioned in documents in the 14th century. The **Niglinas linden**

13 Vaide – a village in the middle of the forest known for a Horn collection – Museum at the Purvziedi

14 Kolkasrags is the most distinct horn along the Latvian seashore, and it is the place where the

Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Rīga come together. The horn extends under the sea for another five

kilometres and up to the Kolka lighthouse. The sun rises and sets in the sea at Kolkasrags, and those

are some really fantastic views. Swimming is not recommended here because of shifting currents

and sand. A monument by the sculptor Girts Burvis, "Those Taken by the Sea," has been installed in

the dunes at Kolkasrags. The monument represents a gate through which the Kolka lighthouse can

be seen. Other points of interest include a wrecked ship, a rock marking the centre of Europe,

information stands dedicated to the founder of Latvia's maritime industry, Krišjānis Valdemārs, and

viewed only from the outside. During spring migration, there are lots of birds at Kolkasrags, and

this is of interest to bird watchers. There is a convenient car park, benches with tables, a visitor

15 The old Kolkasrags lighthouse is just a set of ruins right now. The lighthouse at the tip of the horn was built in the 16th century and renovated several times. The ruins are slowly

decaying because of storms and ice during the winter. They had been standing well away from

16 The Kolka lighthouse is on an artificial island which was created between 1872 and 1875. The original lighthouse was made of wood, and its light was first lit in June 1987. As the island

settled into the sea, the current tower was built. It began operations on July 1, 1884. Today the

lighthouse is six kilometres from Kolkasrags at the end of its sandy shallows (back when it was

built, it was just five kilometres away). The island still has the building for the lighthouse

supervisor, as well as several outhouses. The metal lighthouse which is there now was built in

🚺 Ūši – a campsite and guesthouse in Kolka where, if you apply in advance, you can see how

18 Kolka is the only Liv village in which intensive fish processing and other business activities

were preserved even after the imposition of the Soviet regime in Latvia. The population of

12 The churches of Kolka – Lutheran (built in 1886), Orthodox (built in 1890 and used as a graveyard

chapel in Soviet times before returning to its status as a proper church), and **Catholic** (built in 1997).

20 The Ēvaži shoreline. A 0.3 km long walking trail leads to the steep shore which is 8-15m

22 Vidale is a small village which is accessed via the impressive Šlītere Blue Hills valley and its

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centre, and, during the summer season, a small café where you can have a delicious meal.

the shoreline once, but now are slowly disappearing under water.

St Petersburg. It has been an automated lighthouse since 1979.

the traditional carrot buns known as "sklandu rauši" are baked.

Kolka increased even as the population of other local villages decreased.

high. It's worth it – the view of the Gulf of Rīga is magnificent here.

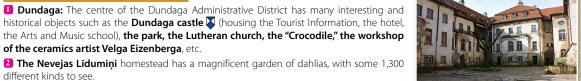
21 Melnsils is an ancient Liv village where ships were built at one time.

40, Kalnciema street, LV-1046, Latvia

homestead, as well as the Vaide Pond. There is a beautiful and massive oak tree in Vaide, as well.

Trail is right here, too, but it can be toured only in the company of a guide.

Pēterezers are in one of the deepest and widest hollows between the dunes.

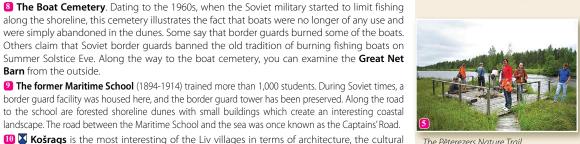


The Dundaga castle





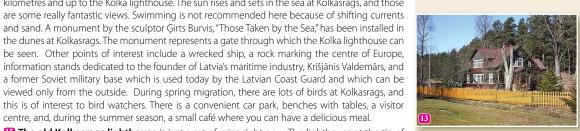














The Lutheran church of Kolka



The sea by the Saunags

The Catholic Church of Kolko



The Kolka Orthodox Church



The Evaži shoreline

Photo: Lauku Ceļotājs (Juris Smaļinskis)

