

Nature conservation authorities on the Slītere National Park

Māris Strazds, *Msc. Biol. Ornithologist:*

"The Slītere National Park is unique with its large natural forest lands. Dense forests lay endless, further than you can see from one spot, say, from the Slītere lighthouse. You can see large areas of real FOREST which is not dotted with clear cut spaces. This is different from the deforested lands we have got used to see in Latvia. This view is like cut diamond, it radiates. If you happen to see how fog rises from the sea over the forest, or how sunrays illuminate some of the majestic scene shining through retreating thunderclouds, you will remember it for the rest of your life.

Many of the park's values are like uncut diamonds. If you do not have the knowledge to make difference between those hidden treasures and useless gravel, you would think they are just "little black shingles". Like pines in a 300 year old forest would differ from 100 year old trees by several growth rings. You would not tell the difference at a glance.

Dace Sāmīte, *Msc. Biol., director of the Slītere National Park, Nature Conservation Agency.*

„Isn't it a miracle that we can witness this breathtaking landscape the same as our great-grand-parents saw it! We can look at these forests which have not been cut for 90 years, and deep in them we can find the same nature values which have puzzled naturalists already in the beginning of the last century.”

Prof. Dr. Horst Sterr, *Kiel University*

"For someone coming from the German Baltic Sea coast, the wilderness and remoteness of Slītere National Park are absolutely fabulous. To walk alone on a beach at the peak of summer, to cross a river that winds its natural way from the spring to the mouth, to cast the view over endless forest – such impressions are impossible to find at home.”

Dr. Beatrix Stoepel, *freelancer author and producer*

„Slītere is the most interesting NP in Latvia as it combines so many different aspects in one place and that it is interesting and worthy to visit it. Many German people travel to the Baltics, but mostly they visit Gauja NP. Also a very nice place, but often crowded. In Slītere one can find interesting things to learn about in culture, geology and nature and in the same time a quiet, peaceful place where one can find recreation. If it will succeed to develop the infrastructure carefully without destroying the nature - which is the real value of the place and the greatest attraction - then tourism hopefully could support also the locals.”

Nature as a visitor attraction in the Slītere national park

Advise to nature watchers in the national park

- Use equipment like binocular and magnifying glass. You will see a completely different, parallel world!
- Watch birds or animals from distance, without disturbing them!
- Choose clothing and footwear appropriate for the weather. Near the sea, even a sunny day can be chilly if there is cool wind.
- Make sure to have insect repellents (to repel mosquitoes, gadflies, ticks)!

The Slītere lighthouse and nature trails

Ina Brauna, zoologist, Nature Conservation agency.

The Slītere lighthouse has become sort of a symbol of the Slītere NP. It is open to visitors from May 1 to October 15.

Nature trails in the park show the diversity of nature. Every trail shows something significant, each one presents own attractions. The Slītere and Pētērezera nature trails were the most popular so far. In 2011 they have been closed for reconstruction.

The Kolka pine trail is about 1km long, and is made of wooden planks to protect the dune. It leads through the dune forest to the beach. In earlier times, the forests in dunes were cut, sometimes

they burned. Earlier it used to be a clearing here with just some old pine trees standing. There are some treetops sticking out from the sand dunes. Other trees are covered in sand up to their branches. There is a very impressive secular tree - a pine which looks as if sitting in the sand on a hill. The trail is especially beautiful in the end of May and in June when the pines are blooming.

From the trail, head towards Cape Kolka, there are good bird watching sites. Cape Kolka is the most popular tourist attraction site in the North Kurzeme region.

The Ēvaži nature trail and bluff is by the NP border. The Ēvaži bluff bank is 15m high, and it is the highest along the Riga gulf. It offers a beautiful view of the gulf with Cape Kolka in the distance. If you are lucky, you can spot the Ruhnu Island in the sea. There are wooden steps leading to the narrow sandy beach.

The park offers a variety of activity options. There are hiking, cycling, driving and boating routes

(see <http://www.celotajs.lv/e/service/list/slitereSnacparks/all>).

Several infrastructure objects will be built in 2011 and 2012 with the EU funding - parking lots on the coast, a bird watching tower in Cape Kolka. **The Pēterezera and Slītere** nature trails will be repaired and improved. We are sorry for inconveniences as some attraction sites will be closed fully or partially in the next years. We hope that these new facilities will improve visitor accessibility and provide for conservation of nature values. See you in the Slītere National Park!

Newly established bicycle trail in Slītere NP

A 7km long bicycle trail is recently developed by the park's administration under the Baltic Green Belt project. Bridges and information boards make the trail an attractive part of a 30 km round tour through the territory of the Slītere National Park. On October 2nd, 2010, five bicyclists set out from Mazirbe to test this tour, among them guesthouse owners, the head of Dundaga municipality tourist information centre, and a tour guide of Slītere. In slightly sunny but chilly weather, they followed the trail of the former narrow-gauge railway "Courland Express" and learned about its history. After an hour, they reached the end of the route in Sikrags.

Plants and biotopes in the Slītere NP

Ilze Rēriha, botanist, expert at the Nature Conservation Agency

Slītere is certainly one of areas of the highest biological diversity in Latvia.

The precipice of the Slītere Blue Hills (the shore of the ancient Baltic Ice Lake) is covered by glen and hillside forests and is one of the few spots in Latvia where extremely rare plant species are found like Braun's Shield-fern and Holly fern, Hard Shield-fern, the Baltic Ivy, European Yew, Wood Speedwell. The mosses growing here are equally exotic.

After the Ice Age, when the sea retreated, an abrasion flatland formed here with spring source of limy water, bogs, and wet swamp forests. Plant species which need limy soil grow here like Lady's-Slipper orchid, common Butterwort and brown Bog-rush. It is the only site where alpine Rush is found in Latvia,

The greatest diversity of plant species is found in fens and sedge mires in marshy depressions called *vīgas*. Here you will find Bog Myrtle, Fen Orchid, Bog Orchid and carnivorous plants: Sundew,

Bladderwort and Common Butterwort.

After the fire in 1992, sphagnum moss carpet has revived in the Bažu swamp. Here you will find Deergrass, which is typical species found in West Latvia, and *Dianthus arenarius* L., protected species in Europe. The swamp is unique from educational point of view and because of its concentration of protected biotopes.

Among the most significant seacoast biotopes found here we have to mention *Linaria loeselii* Schweigg, Red Helleborine and Sea Pea.

Let's watch birds and animals!

Ornithologist Helmutis Hofmanis and zoologist Vilnis Skuja, Nature Conservation Agency

The more birds – the more bird watchers

Hofmanis: over 260 bird species have been observed in the Slītere NP. Birds of 140 species nest here! In Latvia 344 bird species are registered, some of them are really rare and found only in Slītere.

Cape Kolka is one of the most significant bird migration sites in Europe and as such is a bird watching site. In spring, one can see tens of thousands of birds within one hour in Cape Kolka. Among them are all species found in Latvia, and some species which are found exclusively in Kolka, nowhere else in Latvia.

The largest black grouse rut in Europe has been observed and registered in Slītere with 66 cocks rutting simultaneously.

Skuja: Bird watching in Kolka started after the "Iron curtain" fell. Some bird watchers have been coming for 10 years. They arrive in spring, a month before the tourist season starts. It is good for tourism providers.

In Soviet times birds had more privacy here. It was a safe place to rest and birds started nesting here. If the pace is turned into a tourist destination, birds certainly lose advantages. It would not take so much to protect birds - just put a small fence to show the borderline behind which you would have a 50-100m border zone. However, nowadays, holiday makers use to wade over the very spit, the cape. Possibly, the future society will regard the present day people as obscurants.

ABC in Animal Watching

Skuja: it is best to watch animals in spring as they are starved after the winter. April and May are the best months. If you are lucky, you can spot roe, stag, moose, wild boar, fox, badger, racoon dog. Seeing a beaver is guaranteed during warm season. Animal watching groups should not be more than five persons. It has to be stressed that only those who are patient and able to sit still for at least two hours can go animal watching. You have to start in the dawn and you can see the animals in distance, watch them eating and communicating. They are in their natural environment, and what you witness is a short episode of their real life.

Hofmanis: it is exciting to go with a guide and learn to notice and identify footprints of animals and other signs like excrements, sleeping and bathing sites, rutting holes.

Skuja: you can simply walk along a nature trail on your own, but if you are not prepared, you will not notice and learn as much as with a guide. The guide will show where a stag has rubbed his antlers against a tree, or where a partridge has been taking a sand bath. Your nature guide is your eyes.

You can watch animals as well through the window of your car.

Animals and birds are not afraid of cars very much. You can see an eagle in the sky, a roe or a moose grazing on the roadside, or a fox hunting mice.

Variety of Insects in the Slītere national park.

Kristaps Vilks, entomologist, lecturer in the Latvian University.

To my mind, Slītere NP is a special place in Latvia as for the diversity of insect species. 111 insect species are found here which is about a half of all protected and valuable insect species in Latvia. Interesting examples are hermit Beetle, longhorn beetles. There is the greatest variety of butterflies. Many insect species, like dune tiger beetle, live in dunes.

There are several reasons why so many rare and valuable insect species are found in Slītere. First of all, there is wide diversity of habitats. In Slītere, a comparatively small area includes such diverse biotopes as Nordic coniferous forests and swamps, like the Bažu swamp, and, on the other side, there are the broadleaf forests covering the precipices of the Slītere Blue Hills. Fundamentally different biotopes are neighbouring.

Secondly, the diversity of insect species exists thanks to forests here being natural. The seacoast is another great advantage with the relatively untouched dunes and beaches, and the coastal landscape with the pine trunks washed ashore.

Diversity of insect species may puzzle visitors. To help them, the Slītere NP specialists are working on a booklet introducing the plants, mushrooms, animals, and also the most visible insects which can be spotted on the coast. Information boards are placed on the nature trails in the park with photos of the most attractive insects. The visitors can read about them, find them and watch.

Cultural history of the region

A tour in the “fenceland”

Fences around the land plots are a typical feature of the coastal villages in the North Kurzeme. Nowadays they disappear. Nevertheless, visitors can still see some specific types of fencing, called locally *sklandu*, *riķu*, *zedeņu*, and the locals can contribute to their conservation.

Wooden fences are essential part of the Liv villages. They bordered the roads, enclosed yards, paddocks, cattle pathways, fruit, vegetable, hop gardens, apiaries, fields and even meadows. There were fencing systems determined by nature and socioeconomic conditions:

First, the Liv people were trying to make use of every single plot of fertile land on the sandy coast. The wind was carrying sand, and farmers built fences to protect the farmlands. Sand was piling up by the fence, and when it threatened to run over, the fence was raised higher.

Second, old fishermen farms were standing so close that the yards and gardens bordered. Farmers joined efforts and built common fences.

Third, the Liv villages and farmsteads stood between the sea and the woods. The gardens and fields had to be protected against wild animals.

The museum in the Liv centre *Kūolka*

Awakening of the Kolka Liv people and their descendants started 20 years ago. People decided to collect old household things, witnesses of old times, and make an exhibition. Once installed, the exposition was constantly growing as people continued to bring all kinds of exhibits.

A large dowry chest, fishnets, boots, hats, big fish baskets tell about the sea and fishing. A fishnet hook makes us wonder how fishnets were weaved and mended. There are also things washed ashore from time to time. It was long ago when the sea gave a present to the Liv centre – one of the first wooden anchors, now in the exposition.

There is a range of old household appliances - irons, lamps, bee smokers. There is a tobacco cutter and even a flax crusher which means that people grew flax here. Latvians and Livs have similar household items, just their names differ.

In the museum, one can see the photos of Kolka village from old times to present day.

Antler collection in Vaides Purvziedi house

Antlers of different sizes, mainly of moose, collected since mid 1970-ies are on exhibition here. The collection is unique as it has more than 700 antlers, and none of them is a hunting trophy. Edgars, the owner of the collection, tells that after the big forest fire in 1992, he went to forest with his son Ivars and they were picking antlers like mushrooms. Edgars has made chairs from antlers, using 15 antlers for one chair. Burls from birch trees look like decorations, and the unusual root wattling, found on the seacoast, resembles a chair. Things like stuffed animals, woodcutter tools, and staff taken away from poachers can be seen here.

The Dundaga castle offers

Baiba Dūda, director of the Dundaga castle

Dundaga is the regional centre and the biggest town in surroundings. Here you can have a meal, fuel your car and start enjoy the feeling of the area.

Since long time ago Dundaga has been the governance centre of the district. There are traces of old hillforts, and in the centre, there is a 13th century castle enclosed by a 2m high wall. On the first floor, one can witness the medieval architecture. In the cellar, there is an exposition titled “The Crocodile’s Nest” telling about the world famous Crocodile Dundee, whose prototype is Arvīds Blūmentāls (1925-2006), the crocodile hunter and opal miner born in Dundaga. The exposition room hosts a permanent collection of medals which is the only of its kind in the Baltic countries. It was founded in cooperation with the Latvian Club of Medal Art, and every year, on the Day of the Castle, artists bring new contributions to the exposition.

Dairy producers offer tasting of local produce like special cheese, yoghurt and other goodies on prior arrangement.

The castle hotel invites travellers, hosts wedding parties and other celebrations, camps and seminars. Cosy setting, the atmosphere of the castle and the view of the park help to enjoy relaxing holidays.

Festivities in the Dundaga region – 2011

Event	In 2011	Place	About
The Water Day	March 20	Slītere National Park	Around the world, the Water Day is celebrated annually, on the 22 nd of March. At the SNP, the event is held on the third Sunday in March.
The Days of Birds at Cape Kolka	April 23,24	Cape Kolka	Bird watching with an ornithologist
The Day of Castle	May 14	Dunaga castle	Activities and actions in the 13 th century castle
The Environment Day at Cape Kolka	May 27	Cape Kolka	Activities for all, especially for school groups
The Kurzeme Songs' Day at Dundaga	June 4	Dundaga	The 75th Anniversary of the Kurzeme Songs' Day at Dundaga.
The Travel day to Slītere	June 4-5	Dundaga district, Slītere National Park	Tours with the local guides: hiking, driving, boating, cycling. Local food specialties, the market, the news from Slītere and Dundaga!
Summer Solstice	June 23, 00:00	Liv fisherman villages	Each village on the Liv coast will lit a bonfire on the year's shortest night.
The sea festival in Kolka	July 9	Kolka	Boating, fishermen games, sea specialties, market, singing.
The finish of the cycling marathon Barons' Path	July 22,23	Dundaga	Annual cycling event which starts at Tartu in Estonia and finishes at Dundaga in Latvia.
The Slītere Day of Insects	August 6	Slītere Lighthouse	Insect watching at night, against illuminated screen; stories by insect experts
Livs' Festival	August 6	Mazirbe	First Saturday in August
European Birdwatching Day	October 1,2	Cape Kolka	Bird watching with an ornithologist
The Day of the Liv Flag	November 18	The Liv People's house in Mazirbe	On November 1918, 1923 the Liv flag was consecrated. We celebrate the Day of the Liv Flag along with the Independence Day of Latvia. This year we celebrate it in the Liv People's house in Mazirbe.

Dundaga region invites!



Nature watching

www.slitere.lv
www.celotajs.lv

Lighthouse of Slītere

Built in 1849, it is the second oldest navigational building in Latvia. The height of the lighthouse is 102 m above sea level. From there you can have a wonderful view over coastal forests of Slītere National Park and the sea as far as the Saaremaa Island in Estonia. During its operation (until 1999) Lighthouse of Slītere was one of the highest lighthouses on the coast of the Baltic Sea, and also the most distant (5.3 km) lighthouse from the sea in Latvia.

Animals in the Slītere*

If you learn to be quiet and careful while looking at the lives and habits of forest denizens, you have every opportunity to hear hooting owls, rooting bucks and howling wolves. You may smell a racoon dog, run into a doe with her fawns, watch a beaver building a home, or spot a group of stags swimming in a lake during the foggy morning. Animal watching at the Slītere National Park is only possible in the presence of a guide, and only for small groups of one to five people.

Birds at the Slītere*

The geographic placement of the Slītere National Park and the diversity of the environment in this particular place have ensured two wonderful and unique characteristics and values for it. The best places to spot birds during and outside of migration season are the Ēvaži, Pēterezers, pines of Cape Kolka and on the seashore by the village of Vaide and at Cape Kolka.



Hiking routes

Routes are meant for hikers who want a bit more than just a stroll from the car park to a popular destination.

More info:
www.slitere.lv
www.celotajs.lv

Pine Trail of Kolka lies on the coast of Baltic Sea about 1 km from Cape Kolka (Kolkasrags). Along the trail you can follow the changes of dunes in the course of the time. Here you can see the oldest dunes that have become overgrown with forest. Because of the poor soils and the proximity of the sea, dry pine forests specific only to seacoast have formed. Old pine-trees and fallen trees are home to rare species of plants and animals. Near the trail you can see hundred-year old pine-trees covered with sand up to two metres deep. Length: 1,2 km.

Nature Trail of Ēvaži lies near the highway Rīga–Kolka at the border of Slītere National Park. Here you can see Ēvaži bluff, which is about 8–15 metres high. Due to geological processes ground water filter from Bažu Swamp and make the only wet beach in Slītere National Park. At the trail stands with information on coastal forests and the formation of Baltic Sea and the Gulf of Riga are placed. Length: 0,3 km.

Learn about Mazirbe*

Route: Mazirbe church – Mērakmeņi – Liv People's House – Boat Cemetery – Baltic Sea shoreline – Mazirbe church
 Length: 7-10 km

Road cover: Mostly paved and gravel roads

The Kolkasrags Circle *

Route: Kolkasrags visitor centre – Kolkasrags – the Kolkasrags Pine trail – firing range – Kolkasrags visitor centre
 Length: ~3 km

Road cover: Forest roads, beach, paved and gravel roads

Along the Seashore and Coast *

The territory of the Slītere National Park has a sandy beach that is around 40 kilometres long and is appropriate for short hikes or ones that take several days. There are no insurmountable obstacles for people on foot between Melsils and Sikrags. Plan a circular route which leads back to the point of origin. To make the route more interesting, you can walk along the Kolka-Mazirbe-Sikrags route in the Slītere National Park. It passes through small Liv villages and lovely pine forests with lots of natural elements including impressive dunes.



Bicycle route

Routes are appropriate for active tourists who are interested in coastal landscapes and the culture of the Liv people.

More info:

www.slitere.lv

www.celotajs.lv

www.ziemmooseurzeme.lv

Slitere Circle*

Route: Kolka-Vaide-Saunags-Pitrags-Košrags-Dūmele-Ezermuiža-Melnšils-Kolka

Distance: ~50 km.

Road cover: Forest roads along approximately 2/3 of the way, paved roads elsewhere.

Bicycle Route in Liv Villages *

Route: Mazirbe-Košrags-Pitrags-Saunags-Vaide, then the P 124 road back to Mazirbe

Length: ~28 km

Road cover: Approximately half of the route is paved, while roads in the forest are gravelled in some places and paved in others.

Narrow gauge railway path

Route: Mazirbe – Sikrags – Jaunciems – Mazirbe.

Length: ~15 km.

Road cover: 7km forest road, the rest - gravel road

Cirsti route**

Route: Dundaga – Neveja – Lapmežciems – Cirstes – Vidale – Āži – Jaundundaga – Dundaga.

Length: ~ 35 km.

Road cover: Mostly asphalt, but some 12 km of gravel road

Kaļķu route**

Route: Dundaga – Vidale – Lateve – Puiškalnciems – Kaļķi – Dundaga.

Length: ~ 37 km.

Road cover: Mostly asphalt, but some 13 km of gravel road

Piltene route**

Route: Dundaga – Alakste (vai Mazpiltene) – Piltene – Klārmuiža – Dundaga.

Length: ~ 19 km

Road cover: Mostly gravel road, but some 3 km asphalt

Kubalu route**

Route: Dundaga – Kārļmuiža – Gavsene – Kubalu skola – Dundaga.

Length: ~ 18 km.

Road cover: Asphalt 8,6 km, the rest - gravel road

Jumaru route**

Route: Dundaga – Valpene – Jumari – Liepniekvalka alas – Dundaga.

Length: ~ 23 km.

Road cover: Mostly asphalt, but some 8 km of gravel road.

Pāce route**

Route: Dundaga – Pāce - Kalēji – Anstrupe – Dundaga.

Length: ~ 11 km.

Road cover: Mostly gravel road, but some 5km asphalt.



Car routes

These routes 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 Slitere National Park. You can drive down the route, or you can ride a bicycle.

More: www.slitere.lv

www.celotajs.lv

www.ziemmooseurzeme.lv

Around the Slitere *

Route: Dundaga – Šlītere – Sikrags – Mazirbe – Košrags – Pitragi – Saunags – Vaide – Kolka – Melnšils – Vidale – Dundaga.

Length: ~90 km.

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

Mazirbe circle**

Route: Dundaga – Šlītere – Mazirbe – Vidale – Dundaga.

Length: ~47 km.

Road cover: Mostly asphalt, but some 9 km of gravel road

Lielsalas circle**

Route: Dundaga – Valpene – Ķirūļi – Lielsalas – Ģilzde – Dundaga.

Length: ~43 km.

Road cover: Mostly asphalt, but some 13 km of gravel road



Boating

Boating tours are arranged in groups with not more than 6-8 boats.

More: www.slitere.lv

www.celotajs.lv

www.ziemmooseurzeme.lv

Around the Kolka lighthouse*

This route involves boats that are meant for this specific purpose. They are stable and seaworthy. The tour can be taken under different weather conditions, but only if the windspeed is no more than 4-5 m/s. The first 1.5 kilometres of the route are along the western shore of the Gulf of Rīga. At the Kolka shallows, it turns toward the Kolka lighthouse, which is at a distance of approximately 5 km. After an hour or so, the boat sails around the artificial island (it is not legal to step ashore).

Experienced guide is a must.

About the project Baltic Green Belt

- The **Baltic Green Belt** project wants to conserve, use and develop the common natural and cultural heritage of the coastal border areas formerly dividing East and West.
- The **Baltic Green Belt** project establishes a platform for transnational cooperation between stakeholders working in nature conservation and sustainable development of the southern and eastern Baltic Sea coast.
- The **Baltic Green Belt** project demonstrates good practice in sustainable tourism, ecological agriculture, coastal and marine conservation, integrated regional planning and public participation.
- The **Baltic Green Belt** closes the last geographical gap within the international European Green Belt initiative, which develops the backbone of an ecological network, running from the Barents to the Black Sea.

- By preserving natural zones and biodiversity through sustainable coastal development practice, the **Baltic Green Belt** project serves the implementation of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea and the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan.

The project is implemented by 15 governmental and non-governmental organizations from five Baltic Sea countries of eastern and southern coast: Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and the *International Union for Conservation of Nature* (IUCN) in Belgium. Latvia in the **Baltic Green Belt** project is represented by two partners: the Slitere National Park Administration of the Nature Protection Agency and the Latvian Country Tourism Association „Lauku celotajs”.

Travel Day to Slītere, June 4-5, 2011, Dundaga region

Spend two adventurous days with your family and friends in one of the most beautiful sites in the Slītere National park. The park is rich in animal, bird and plant diversity. Among its values is the cultural heritage of the Liv people.

- Over 17 touring routes
- 11 practical and creative workshops for kids and their parents
- Attraction sites
- Market of local crafts and foods
- Traditional food and drinks of Kurzeme region and the Livs
- The Kurzeme Day of Song with a procession, concerts and outdoor dancing party at the end of the day.

Touring and independent routes



The Kolka Cape circle is a 3km walk in the surroundings of Cape Kolka. You will see a pine forest partly covered with sand and visit the Pine Mom.

Through the Liv villages, a 5 km walk with a nature guide: the Košrags village, graveyard, crossing the River Pitragupe, tasting smoked fish, the Pitrag's church.

Traces of people in the forest, a 3km walk in the surroundings of the Slītere estate with tales of an old homestead, a stone piling and a well as deep as the height of the Slītere Blue Hills.

Expedition in the Fishermen Meadows, a hike with Vilnis Skuja, a zoologist, in the Ķikānstrauta floodlands meadow and the surrounding forests.

Up to the ears in the Bažu Swamp, a guided expedition in the Bažu Swamp with Kristaps Vilks, an expert in insects. Learning about untouched nature, diversity of insects and a forest revived naturally after a forest fire.

Plants on the seacoast. Explore the coast at Sīkrags village and the forested dunes with Dace Sāmite, a botanist, and with the plant finder "Get to know the seacoast".

Walk, speak and sing healthy. Learn about the history of the *Dundagas Dakterleja* (the Dundaga Doctor's Valley). Why walk, why speak and why sing healthy, you will learn from your guide.



The Baron's cycling circle, a 30km cycling route in the surroundings of Dundaga visiting the Peldanga caves, the Valpene stone pyramid, the Kubala school-museum, the home of The Crocodiles' Arvids, tasting of Kurzeme traditional foods.

Following the Narrow-Gauge train. A ride from Mazirbe to Sīkrags stations, over the Ķikāns to the Jaunciem's "zastav" (a former Soviet border guard headquarters). Return on the road or along the beach.

Kūolka - Kōr route leads through Kolka - Vaide - Kolka, seeing the Mustamčauka, the Lāžu oak, the antler collection, and having a break at the river Vecročupīte.



Around the Kolka lighthouse. A sea outing along the western coast of the Riga Gulf towards the Kolka Lighthouse, around it and back to Cape Kolka.

A Day in a Fisherman's Life

Your once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to go real sea-fishing and see how fishnets are cast and the catch hauled. Afterwards, you can take part in smoking the fish caught and enjoy the meal.

With the captain to the Great Sea

A motorboat ride around the Kolka Lighthouse with V. Feldmanis, an experienced captain.



Birds in the Cirstu ravine

An early morning in June is the right time and place to listen to bird voices in the Cirstu ravine of the Slītere Blue Hills at Sīkrags if you are guided by ornithologist Helmutis Hofmanis to tell what are the birds singing.



Off-roader ride

~ 90 km ride in a military truck (GAZ-66) visiting military heritage sites: the former tank road along the river Irbene and the Irbene radio-locator.

Blue and green pearl of the North Kurzeme

80 km guided driving route: Dundaga - Slītere - Mazirbe - Kolka - Dundaga. As a bonus, you will enjoy an informative and funny game, and eloquence of stone.

Geocaching

Geocaching is a world known GPS game. You hide "treasures" and find those, other people have hidden. Players put GPS coordinates of the hides on the web.

Creative and educational workshops:

A day with Liv people

Tasting Liv foods; playing a language game "Find out your Liv name"; weaving your part in the big net.

Try on the antlers

Visit a private collection of antlers, try the antlers on and make a photo session.

Forest school

Outdoor class for school groups about animals in the forest.

Lifestyle centre "For your heart"

Visiting the "Mežlīdumi" farm in Cirsta village. Exhibition, lectures, massage, tasting healthy foods.

Hands in Clay

Creative ceramics workshop. Clay modelling with a craft expert.

Great wool

A tour of the wool processing plant in Pāce, the only wool processing facility in Kurzeme.

Where dough rises and a spinning wheel rumbles

Participating in farm activities at the "Jumari" farm - a tour of the farm, weaving, baking pastries and other rural homestead activities.

Steam sauna evening at Pītagi guest house

Making own besoms during the day and enjoying steam sauna in the afternoon. Services: sauna attendant, herb teas, making of twig and leaf sauna besoms, aromas and scrubs.

Horses and riding

A tour of an equestrian farm. Riding horseback or in cart. In the pasture, one can watch semi-wild cows of the Latvian Brown and Latvian Blue breed.

1000 varieties of dahlia

Secrets of dahlia growing. Visitors can buy dahlia tubers. As a bonus you can learn about earthworm growing.

Healthy body, healthy mind

Theoretical and practical lessons: how to accumulate energy in pristine environment.

Foods

Enjoy sklandraušī at Ūši homestead

The hostess demonstrates how to bake *sklandraušī*, carrot buns, which is the local specialty. Stories about Liv traditional foods and history of Liv culture.

Fish smoking with the local fishermen

Take part in smoking and tasting fish. Visitors can buy smoked fish.