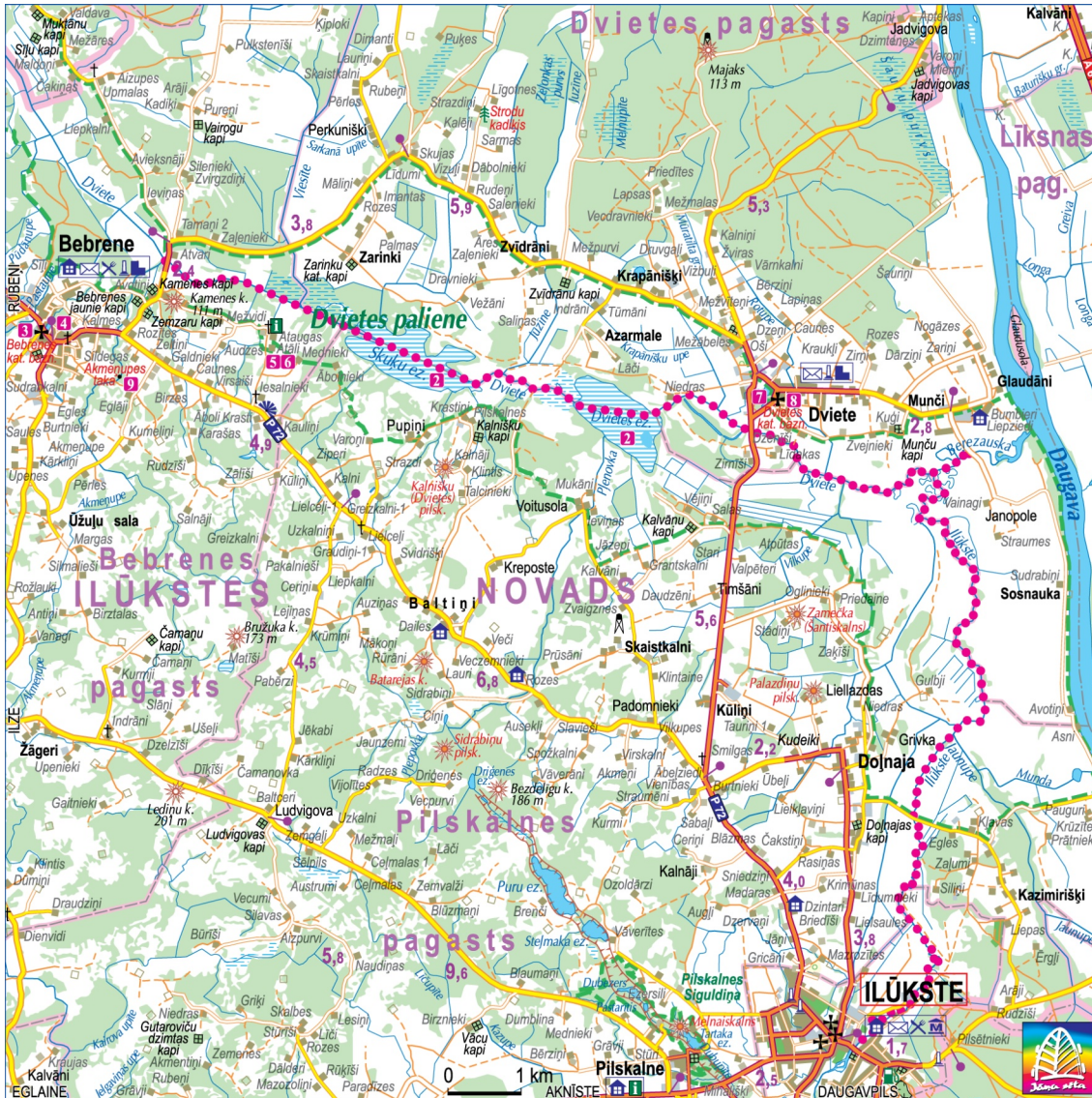




CANOEING FLOODING OF THE DVIETE

Welcome to Dviete!

In the nature park you are free to walk around, ride your bike or your car, watch birds and animals, and take trips in rowboats. Tenting and campfires are permitted only in places that have been improved specifically for that purpose. When observing migrating birds, please try to avoid any disruptions of their routine when they are resting or feeding.



THE ROUTE

This is a route for people who enjoy extreme or non-traditional water tourism, even though the descent in the Dviete River is no more than one metre in this part of the region. During flooding season, vast territories may become flooded, and that will affect your trip. Please remember that depending on floods and the season, parts of the Dviete may still be frozen in the springtime. The route as such is not difficult, but you will have to adapt to the specific situation.

Season: Flooding season (early April to early May). Locals say that the floodwaters rise for two weeks, remain in place for two weeks, and then decline for two weeks. The water level can be high in the wetlands during other times of the year if there has been lots of rain. It is hard to know when exactly the floods will occur and how strong they will be, so make sure that you get information from the locals in advance. During huge floods in the 1930s and 1950s, the water level rose by as much as six metres, flooding some 20 kilometres of the ancient river valley.

Boats: Canoes, seagoing boats, rubber boats, etc.

Beginning: The bridge across the Dviete at Bebrene, where the road is a bit wider and there is an information stand. Locals may call it the Sloboda Bridge (which is what the Dviete used to be called, as well)

End: The bridge at Munči, 1 km before the place where the Dviete flows into the Daugava. The area around the bridge may be flooded to the point where the bridge is not accessible. In that case, you can return to the Dviete bridge (2.5 km). From the Munči bridge, you can continue upriver along the Ilūkste River all the way to Ilūkste

Length: 13 km

Duration: ~ 2 - 4 h

Difficulty: Easy

River fall: Less than one metre

Route: Bebrene – Dviete – Munči
Distance from Riga: 200 km (via Nereta and Aknīste)

Logistics: Arrange for a car to pick you up at the end of the route

Alternatives: You can start in Ilūkste and go down the Ilūkste River. Alternatively, you can go "upstream" to Ilūkste along the flooded wetlands of Dviete

Note! Large areas will flood, and so make sure that your boat is stable. As the floodwaters rise, there can be a strong rush of water from the Daugava in those places where the Dviete wetlands are narrowed by bridges. During windy weather, there can be waves of 0.5 metres or so in height. During the maximum flooding, it can be quite hard to make your way through the flooded area. When the water level declines, there are places which you may not be able to traverse in your boat. If you use a rubber boat, be careful of barbed wire fences around meadows in the area of Lake Skuji. Be responsible for your safety and that of your children. Motorboats are banned on the Dviete, because the engine can get tangled up in underwater plants.

Emergency services: 112

The Dviete Wetlands Nature Park contains a unique natural territory – the ancient Dviete River valley with Lake Skuji and Lake Dviete and the surrounding wetland meadows. During flooding season, these wetlands store up waters from the Daugava River. They absorb a lot of floodwater at first and then slowly return it, thus reducing the level of floods in the Daugava River valley. This process is the reason for the unique ecosystem which exists in this area. It is an important location for plants and birds both during migration and nesting season.

TOURISM SERVICES

Nearby accommodations:

- Strauti, (+371) 29115491
- Dzintari, (+371) 26481223
- Dailes, (+371) 65400328
- Ilūkstē: Pie torņa, (+371) 22427969
- Liepiedi, (+371) 29466687
- Ilūkstē: Glenda, (+371) 29368657
- Rozes, (+371) 29197182
- Ilūkstē: Ilūkste, (+371) 65462175
- Bebrenes Profesionālā vidusskola, (+371) 65444530

Leisure locations: At the Dviete bridge ("Siliņš"). On the bird island, by the "Gulbji" information centre, and on the Akmeņupe Nature Trail near Bebrene

Shops: In Bebrene, Dviete and Ilūkste

Dining: In Ilūkste, in Bebrene (call in advance)

Water tourist camps: None

Boat rental: www.mezmalaslaivas.lv, www.seakavak.lv, www.campjo.lv. You can rent a boat directly from these companies and transport them yourself (you'll need a roof rack and two ropes).

Information:
www.celotajs.lv, 67617600 www.ilukste.lv, 65440826, 26555275
www.dviete.lv www.bebrene.lv, 65407909; 26109353



The bridge at Munči

Look for a list of active tourism routes on www.countryholidays.lv!

POINTS OF INTEREST

1 The Ancient Dviete River Valley - the central focus of the Dviete Wetlands Nature Park. When the Ice age ended, the melting ice created a valley that is approximately 20 km long. That is where the Dviete River flows now.

2 Lake Skuķi and Lake Dviete – important environmental treasures – two overgrown and hard-to-reach wetland lakes, they are the largest lakes of their type in Latvia. During flooding season, the lakes go out of their banks to create one big body of water. The lakes are in the Ancient Dviete River Valley, and the river flows through them.

3 The Catholic church in Bebrene. This beautiful building was erected between 1797 and 1833 in the style of classicism (the exterior) and the Baroque (interior). It is mostly viewable from the outside.

4 The Bebrene Estate – the castle that was built by the nobility in 1896 and houses a high school today, **the castle gates, the kitchen building, the house of the governor of the estate, the little hut that was above the cellars, the windmill (1836), and the stables.** The underground passage from the cellars to the kitchen has been preserved in part. Different thematic events are organised here. The estate is on one of the most beautiful landscape parks in Latvia.

5 The Gulbji information centre. One of the most important information objects in the area offers room for seminars, a set of informative literature, and souvenirs from local craftsmen. A beverage made from beaver glands is available for tasting. To the North and East of the centre is **the Putni island paddock (150 ha)** with horses and cows adapted for life in the wild. There's also a bird-watching tower 500 metres from the centre on the shore of Lake Skuķi.

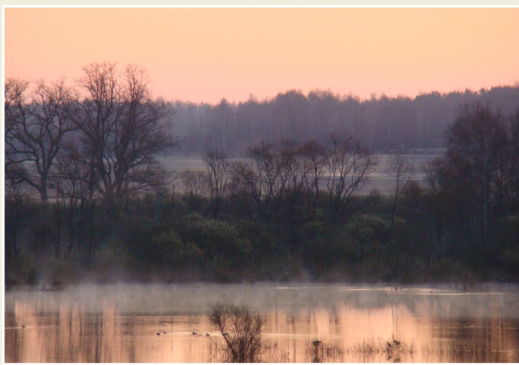
6 An exhibition of wooden objects at a wetlands farm. The Atāli homestead in the Bebrene Parish has a 100-year-old threshing barn with a reed roof. Inside there is an exhibition of archaeological finds, wooden household objects and tools.

7 The Dviete Estate. The mansion of the estate is gone, but the park still contains **the house of the estate's governor**, as well as three **ancillary buildings.** The landscape park with the **stone bridge** dates back to the 19th century. The buildings of the former estate are in the park.

8 The Dviete Catholic Church - was built in 1864 as a Baroque building with one of the most ornate baroque interiors in the Daugavpils area.

9 The Akmeņupe nature trail. The Akmeņupe River starts in the highlands and rushes down to the Dviete wetlands, but the flow of the river is best seen in the spring or after heavy rains. Otherwise it is a shallow river with a rocky bed. Along the shores is a nice trail with several places to relax and build a campfire (firewood is available). The trail is 1.6 km long and will take 20 minutes to one hour to traverse.

Objects **3 – 9** are not on the shores of the Dviete River, so you can visit them before or after a trip down the river.



The Dviete wetlands at dawn



The "Gulbji" information centre in Dviete



Tasting a beverage made of beaver glands



The Dvietes wetlands at the bridge of Munci



The Dviete wetlands from a bird's eye view



The livestock paddock



The Dviete Catholic Church



The Dviete River at the village of Dviete



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