

Bicycle route:

Trakai Peninsula Castle –

Trakai Castle – Užutrakis

Route length: approx. 18 km**Route starting point:** Kęstučio str.

GPS 54.645402, 24.936529

Route end point: Kęstučio str.

GPS 54.645402, 24.936529



Trakai is called the “land of lakes” for a reason. Trakai district has almost 200 lakes. Many of them surround the town of Trakai: Galvė, Luka (Bernardinai) Nerespinka, Totoriškiei, Gilušis, Lovka, Babrukas, Skaistis, Akmena and other lakes, big and small. It seems that water reigns the country, and land humbly gives way to it. It's a great fun to travel around the places like this. Not only for a good swimming opportunity but also for the wonderful sceneries around the lakes.

All Trakai lakes are beautiful, but nothing compares to remarkable Galvė. It is one of the largest lakes in Trakai region and one of the deepest in Lithuania. It's banks are carved with many small bays, moreover, the lake is ornamented with 21 island – each with its own legend, and remarkable history. People tell many legends about the lake itself. It is said that the lake's name comes after the word “head”. Ostensibly, the lake used to take away at least one life – a “head” – every year.

The picturesque Galvė is a favourite among water tourists, divers, vacationers, it is used for rower training, competitions and regattas, so it is usually teeming with life every day.

You can look around Galvė not only by sailing a canoe, a boat, a yacht or a steamboat, but also riding a bicycle. We invite you to the 18 km trip along Galvė



from Trakai Peninsula Castle to Užutrakis Manor, and back.

The route starts in the peninsula surrounded by the waters of Luka (Bernardinai), near the Trakai Peninsula Castle. Although this Lithuanian fortress, one of the most powerful in the fourteenth century, did not survive to our days, the remaining towers, the defensive wall and the ancient sanctuary site Aukų Hill makes a long lasting impression. While visiting the castle site, take a look to the former Dominican convent chapel which now hosts the sacral art exhibition **1**.

From the castle descend to Luka (Bernardinai) Lake, where the bike trail begins. It is believed that the name Luka comes from the word meaning an arch. A monastery in which Duke Vytautas the Great was christened stood near the lake in the fourteenth century. On this occasion, the Duke donated a stretch of the lake – an arch. The lake is also called Bernardinai after the Bernardine Monastery that stood on its shore in the sixteenth – nineteenth century. The monastery owned the lake.

Go along the bike trail, turn left and pedal along Luka (Bernardinai) lake, which in 300 m will merge with lake Galvė. Soon you will reach the Old Town of Trakai, and on the right you will see the magnificent Trakai Island Castle **2** – the only island castle in the Eastern Europe. The island is called the Castle Island. It is the largest island of Lake Galvė, occupying 2 ha. The legend tells about mysterious vaults under the island, where the last chief warlock of the old Lithuanian religion Krivių Krivaitis still resides.

You will reach the castle by the bridge, with a lot of pedestrians, so be careful. Drop by and look around the castle and the History Museum. It will be interesting to see how the inhabitants used to live in the castle a few hundred years ago, to inspect the coin treasure room, and the exhibitions of archaeology, applied art, history, Karaim and Tatar cultures and history.

From the castle island go back to the bicycle trail and travel for another few hundred meters until you reach the observation deck, with a magnificent panorama of Galvė and the Castle Island.





In around 100 m the bicycle trail will end. In that spot, turn left and you will reach Karaimų street. Turn right and drive along the roadway. Here are many cafes on both sides of the street, where you can savour traditional Lithuanian and Karaim meals.

In about a kilometre you will reach the roundabout, then keep right. Immediately after the roundabout you will see the Rowing Museum **3**, exhibiting many rowing-related attractions from around the world.

Ride 200 m behind the museum where the bicycle trail starts again. Pedal for about a kilometre to see the arrow to the Akmena Lake beach **4** – a great place to take a swim. Yet for half a kilometre, at the intersection, turn right and drive 1.6 km along Galvė, until you see the turn to Užutrakis Manor. If you are not in a hurry, skip Užutrakis for a while, and drive for 300 meters to the observation deck **5**. It will offer you the breathtaking panorama of Galvė Lake and Trakai Island Castle.

Another interesting site – the Angelų Hill **6** – is very close from the observation deck, in 400 m. During the celebration of the millennium of Lithuania, and to commemorate the 600th anniversary of Trakai Blessed Virgin Mary Church, they built nearly three dozen 5 m long oak angel sculptures here, symbolising the fundamental Christian values: Love, Hope, Faith, Life, Spirit Strength, Spirit Peace, Peace, Compassion, Sacrifice, Camaraderie, Union, etc. Believe me, the view is spectacular!

From the Angelų Hill goal back to the turn to Užutrakis Manor **7** and pedal to the manor 2 km along not a busy road near the lake. At any time of the year Užutrakis will greet you with its festive glamour. The newly renovated manor house shines with whiteness and elegance. It

was built in the 19th century by Count Juozapas Tiškevičius, who was cherishing and decorating this place nearly all his life. The count was not only proud about the luxury palace, but also the wonderful park, embellished with ponds, miniature bridges, sculptures, and carved with mysterious paths. It was designed by the landscape architecture celebrity of the time, Édouard François André.

When you enter the palace grounds, leave your bike and take a stroll in the park, quietly reminding of elaborate count Tiškevičiai dinner parties, music and poetry evenings; take a rest on the terrace from which the entire Galvė will be in your palm. In summer, the terrace is turned into a stage for concerts – just imagine the impression Galvė gives, embellished by the combination of music, the fascinating palace and the setting sun!

After admiring the romantic Užutrakis, slowly, accompanied by Galvė waters, go back the same road to Trakai.

PLACES TO VISIT:

1 Exposition of Sacral Art

☞ Keštučio g. 4, Trakai
GPS 54.662654, 24.909995
📞 +370 528 55 297
✉ info@trakaimuziejus.lt
🌐 www.trakaimuziejus.lt

2 Trakai History Museum

☞ Pilies sala, Trakai
GPS 54.652633; 24.933611
📞 +370 528 53 946
✉ info@trakaimuziejus.lt
🌐 www.trakaimuziejus.lt

3 Rowing Museum

☞ Karaimų g. 93A, Trakai
GPS 54.653906; 24.918044
📞 +370 698 13 777
✉ info@academia.lt
🌐 www.academia.lt

4 Akmena Lake Beach

GPS 54.662654, 24.909995

5 Observation Platform

GPS 54.672879, 24.931658

6 The Hill of Angels

GPS 54.676518, 24.928315

7 Užutrakis Manor Estate

☞ Užutrakio g. 17, Trakai
GPS 54.659721; 24.943707
📞 +370 528 55 006
✉ tinp@seniejitrakai.lt
🌐 www.seniejitrakai.lt

