

BETWEEN

CULTURE AND NATURE

Bicycle route: Cathedral Square–Park of Europe–Cathedral Square

Route length: approx. 46 km

Route starting point: Cathedral Square

GPS 54.685911, 25.286885

Route end point: Cathedral Square

GPS 54.685911, 25.286885



Vilnius is a perfect city for cyclists. It takes merely a dozen of minutes from almost any part of the city to leave the urban bustle and escape into the retreat of nature – even from the very centre. You can bypass almost the entire city avoiding busy streets, riding along comfortable, greenery abounding trails. Especially it can be said about the route from the Cathedral Square to the Park of Europe.

Do not be discouraged if you do not have a bike. In Vilnius, it's easy to get it – there are a number of bike rental stations, and the city bike rental system operates during the warm time of the year.

The route can be divided into two parts: Cathedral Square – Trinapolis Church and Trinapolis Church – the Park of Europe. The first segment length is 7 km each way. Almost the entire route consists of bicycle trails, you have to cross the street only in a few places, so it will be a safe and easy ride even for small children and elderly people. The second part of it to the Park of Europe will require better physical fitness, as you have to pedal more than 20 km one-way, on diverse surfaces (gravel, stone-paved road), some rather steep hillsides, and part of the route will stretch on the car road.

So put your doubts aside and embark on a memorable journey, which will offer everything: interesting cultural heritage objects and natural eye catching images!



In the beginning of the route – the Cathedral Square – you will be greeted by the monument of the Vilnius founder, the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas (1275-1341) ¹, the most important Catholic shrine of Lithuania, St. Stanislaus and St. Vladislav Cathedral ², the recently restored residence of the rulers of Lithuania – the Royal Palace ³, and the impressive hill with Gediminas Castle on top of it ⁴.

In fact, you could spend half a day in the Cathedral Square alone – there are so many points of interest here. However, you are going to have an interesting and long journey, so waste no time and turn towards Mindaugas Bridge. First, you will have to cross the square, with the monument to the first and only Lithuanian King Mindaugas (1253-1263) ⁵, which was built to commemorate the 750th anniversary of his coronation. Note the pedestal of the monument surrounding the Solar calendar, marking the most important pagan and Christian celebrations.

Behind the King Mindaugas monument there is a large light building – the New Arsenal, one of the oldest structures in the Vilnius Castle complex. Now, the New Arsenal ⁶ hosts the Lithuanian National Museum, with expositions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Lithuanian peasant household, cross-making, and other displays.

Cross the River Neris by Mindaugas Bridge, at the end of which, on the left side, you will see a building with a sculpture of a woman holding a lantern in her hands. It's the Energy and Technology Museum ⁷.

Behind the bridge, turn right and descend along a great bike path by the river. This marked bicycle path belongs to the European Eurovelo 11 track. It is equipped with resting areas and information

boards, and for quite a long stretch you will follow the River Neris on the right, so this section is highly enjoyable and fun.

After driving for a little more than a kilometre, stop for a while at Tuskulėnai Serenity Park **8**. It was created to honour the victims of the Soviet regime. In 1944–1947 resisters who fought against the Soviet government have been tortured, murdered and secretly buried there. It is difficult to imagine these tragic events while walking in the tranquil park, or looking at the elegant classicistic former Tuskulėnai mansion, equipped with the “Tuskulėnai Estate Secrets” exposition.

Move forward for another kilometre and you will see a small bay on the right, Žirmūnai winter harbour. In the 3rd decade of the last century it was excavated by an entrepreneur who planned to develop trade in the port. In a few hundred meters you will reach Žirmūnai beach **9**, so it is a great opportunity for refreshment on a hot day!

In 2.4 km, after passing under the Valakampiai Bridge, look out for the natural monument – Žirmūnai oak **10** of over 200 years old. Indeed it is difficult to miss it because it is about 35 meters in height!

Take a brief rest under the old oak and travel further – Trinapolis Church **11** is not far away. Here you will have to leave the seclude of nature for a while, and return to the city – to cross the busy Verkių street and then you will see the white towers of the Blessed Trinity, or otherwise the Trinapolis Church (18th century).

If you chose a shorter route, this is the end point of your trip. Meanwhile, if you are considering a longer hike, turn left near the Trinapolis Church and you will find yourself in the Calvary Cross Road track. About 1 km of this section the route will stretch along a forest trail, which is not in the best condition at some points. It's not a problem! While driving your bike, you can admire the beautiful nature and the Stations of the Cross Road. You will see them even without turning out from your trail. The Calvary Cross Road



was founded in this hilly terrain of extraordinary beauty in the seventeenth century as a sign of appreciation to the God for the victory against the Russian army. The place is visited not only by pilgrims. It's a favourite venue of urban resident walks, strolls and picnics. You will find it especially beautiful near the Cedronas (Baltupis) stream.

Turn left to the gravel road behind the 17th station of the Cross Road and reach a paved road. After a short drive of 200 m turn right. Pass the St. Discovery of the Cross Church **12**, usually called simply the Calvary Church (18th century), where the good quality, marked bicycle trail starts again. When travelling this path near Jeruzalės street you will see the Customs Museum **13** on the right side presenting the Lithuanian customs activities from the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

The route then continues along Jeruzalės and Žaliųjų Ežerų streets to Verkių manor **14**. This is truly a special place surrounded with many legends. It's main attraction is the palace of the 17th century famous of its luxury. Only the wings survived to our days. No less impressive are the surroundings of the manor: huge trees, shady park alleys, and the Neris River panorama of extraordinary beauty opening up from the panorama deck.

Although it is difficult to leave the wonderful Verkių palace, let's proceed to Balsys Lake. It is 7 km away. Go back to Žaliųjų Ežerų street, and cross it. The paved bicycle trail will start on the left side of the road. In 2 km it will end. Turn to the forest and take good quality forest trails. Along the way, you will likely notice a lone gravestone dedicated... to the human conscience **15**. It was built in 2002 after someone dumped a large load of concrete waste in this place.

Drive to Balsys lake, it is time to relax. You will find a recreation place on its southern bank. Here you can rent boats and water bicycles, and relax in a beach **16**. The eastern part has an observation deck. Swim, cool down, have a snack, be-





cause now you will go straight to the Park of Europe, 9 km are left to it. From this point to the Park of Europe **17** the major part of the route will pass along the road-way – Žaliųjų Ežerų and Europos Parko streets.

You can spend almost the entire day in the Park of Europe. It's 55 ha open air contemporary art museum with more than 100 works of art, with authors from 34 countries of the world. This is one of

the most impressive museums in the world under the open sky. It is even included in the top 50 of the most exciting artistic places in the world.

After seeing the Park of Europe, turn around and return back to the Vilnius city centre along the same way.



PLACES TO VISIT:

- 1 Monument to Grand Duke Gediminas**
GPS 54.685316, 25.288642
- 2 Vilnius Cathedral Basilica**
☞ Katedros a. 2, Vilnius
GPS 54.685815; 25.287437
☎ +370 5 261 1127
✉ parapija@katedra.lt
📱 www.katedra.lt
- 3 Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania**
☞ Katedros a. 4, Vilnius
GPS 54.685877; 25.289068
☎ +370 5 212 7476
✉ info@valdovurumai.lt
📱 www.valdovurumai.lt
- 4 Gediminas' Hill**
☞ Arsenalo g. 5, Vilnius
GPS 54.686609; 25.290731
☎ +3705 261 7453
✉ pilis@lnm.lt
📱 www.lnm.lt
- 5 Monument to King Mindaugas**
GPS 54.687514, 25.288753
- 6 The New Arsenal**
☞ Arsenalo g. 1, Vilnius
GPS 54.687291; 25.289197
☎ +370 5 262 9426
✉ informacija@lnm.lt
📱 www.lnm.lt
- 7 Energy and Technology Museum**
☞ Rinktinės g. 2, Vilnius
GPS 54.690021; 25.287796
☎ +370 5 278 2085
✉ info@emuziejus.lt
📱 www.emuziejus.lt
- 8 The Memorial Complex of the Tuskulėnai Peace Park**
☞ Žirmūnų g. 1F, Vilnius
GPS 54.698757; 25.303428
☎ +370 5 275 0704
✉ tuskulenai@genocid.lt
📱 www.tuskulenumemorialas.lt

- 9 Žirmūnai Beach**
GPS 54.723474, 25.311992
- 10 Žirmūnai Oak**
GPS 54.727596, 25.308293
- 11 Holy Trinity Church (Trinapolis Church)**
☞ Verkių g. 70, Vilnius
GPS 54.731034; 25.291165
✉ trinapolis@vilnensis.lt
- 12 St. Cross Discovery Church of Kalvarijos**
☞ Kalvarijų g. 327, Vilnius
GPS 54.740406; 25.279868
☎ +3705 269 74 69
✉ info@vilniauskalvarijos.lt
📱 www.vilniauskalvarijos.lt
- 13 Customs Museum**
☞ Jeruzalės g. 25, Vilnius
GPS 54.745009; 25.279079
☎ +370 5 279 6346
✉ arvydas.pranevicius@cust.lt
- 14 Verkiai Manor**
☞ Žaliųjų Ežerų g. 49, Vilnius
GPS 54.748143; 25.292131
☎ +370 5 271 1618
✉ botanika@botanika.lt
- 15 Monument to Human Conscience**
GPS 54.776101, 25.320563
- 16 The Beach of the Lake Balsys**
GPS 54.785169, 25.334924
- 17 Park of Europe**
☞ Joneikiškių k., Vilniaus r.
GPS 54.831012; 25.351461
☎ +370 52 377 077
✉ hq@europosparkas.lt
📱 www.europosparkas.lt



