

IN LITHUANIA



ŽAGARĖ MANOR HOUSE AND THE VISITOR CENTRE

The neoclassical Žagare manor house was built in the mid-19th century. The building was adapted to host the visitor centre and the nature school of Žagare Regional Park. The visitor centre offers an interactive exposition "Mysteries of Dolomite", as well as exhibitions of hunting trophies, antiquities etc.; educational services and lodging can be booked as well.



THE PARK OF ŽAGARĖ MANOR

The park of 70 hectares consists of two parts. The western part located next to the Manor House was formed in the time of Counts Zubovs in the first half of the 19th century. The major part was formed by the famous dendrologist Georg Kuphaldt (1853–1938) from 1898 to 1900. He set up an English landscape park on a flat arable field. More than 200 species of trees and other plants were planted. Walking along the paths of the park, visitors can get acquainted with different species of trees and greenery, as well as visit the manor buildings and memorial sites along the way.



THE HISTORICAL PART OF ŽAGARĖ TOWN

Žagare (Sagera) was first mentioned in written sources in 1253. Since old times, the town has included two independent parts: the Old Žagare (on the left bank of the Švėtė) and the New Žagare (on the right bank of the Švėtė) with their own churches, synagogues, cemeteries and market squares. By the end of the 19th century, those parts merged into one town with the main streets converging into two market squares on both sides of the Švėtė River.



ŽAGARĖ HILLFORT (ŽVELGAITIS HILL)

The hillfort was arranged on Žagare esker, on the left bank of the Švėtė River. Most likely, the castle was built by the Germans seeking to get hold on their new lands. This is implied not only by the finds which are not of Baltic origin, but also by the shape of the hillfort – a rectangular trapezoid with ditches and terraces (the Balts preferred the oval shape). Archaeologists have established that in the 16th to 18th centuries the hillfort hosted a manor which was built at the location of an unfortified settlement from 13th century. The manor has been mentioned since 1495. The hillfort was named after the Lithuanian duke Žvelgaitis only in the first half of the 20th century.



ŽAGARĖ ESKER NATURE TRAIL AND THE RECREATIONAL AREA

The 3.6 km long trail winds through the esker and Žagare Hillfort (Žvelgaitis Hill) encircling Žvelgaitis Lake. Along the trail you can admire the picturesque landscape and beautiful nature (meadows, fresh pine forests, wetlands), watch birds and other animals, recuperate and have fun at camp sites and picnic areas along the way.



RAKTĖ HILLFORT (RAKTUVĖ HILL)

Raktė Castle stood on the right bank of the Švėtė. Constant Order attacks caused Semigallians to retreat from Tėrvete and Dobele to Raktė Castle. However, in 1289, the Semigallians were forced to abandon the castle and flee to their last stronghold Sidabrė. Meanwhile, Raktė Castle was burned down and never rebuilt. Later, the New Catholic Cemetery of Žagare was established on the hillfort. Raktuvė Chapel stands in the old part of the cemetery (on the hillfort).



MUŠA TYRELIS NATURE TRAIL

Traveling along the 6.7 km trail, you will get acquainted with the extremely beautiful Muša Raised Bog, visit Minkaičiai Lake, Tyrelis boulder, the location of the Lithuanian partisan camp and many other sights. The trail is listed in the Lithuanian Book of Records as the longest boardwalk in wetland. At the beginning of the trail, there is a picnic area with a shed, a fireplace and an information stand for visitors. When on the trail, please keep quiet and don't smoke.



KALNELIS HILLFORT (SIDABRĖ)

The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle mentions Sidabrė as the last castle of the Semigallians destroyed by the forces of the Livonian Order in 1290. Some of its inhabitants moved to Mitau (Jelgava) together with the Teutonic knights but others retreated to Lithuania and continued to fight the Livonian Order side by side with the Lithuanians. Now the hillfort hosts a cemetery and there is a church built on its top.



THE JONIŠKIS MUSEUM OF HISTORY AND CULTURE

The museum hosts permanent exhibitions presenting archaeological, historical, ethnographical heritage of the Joniškis region. One of the exhibitions is dedicated to the culture of the Semigallian tribe. The museum carries out educational and cultural activities, organises excursions and expeditions.



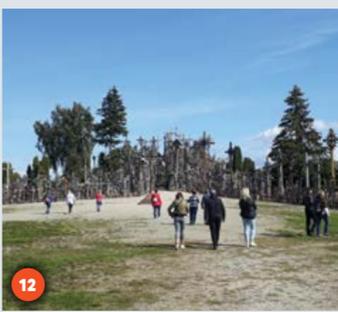
JAKIŠKIAI MANOR

The manor charms with its authenticity. It includes the late 19th century manor house, the icehouse, the cellar, the steam mill building and fragments of the park. The manor hosts cultural and art events and there is also a permanent exhibition of paintings that gives the site a bohemian vibe.



THE MEMORIAL OF THE BATTLE OF SAULĖ

The Battle of Saulė (Šiauliai) was fought between the Lithuanian forces and the army of the Order of the Sword Brothers in 1236. The Order suffered a devastating defeat at this battle and consequently was annexed by the stronger Teutonic Order in 1237. The exact location of the battle is still not clear. According to one of the hypotheses, it took place at the confluence of the Muša and the Tautinys rivers. The memorial of the battle was started to be built there.



JURGAIČIAI HILLFORT (THE HILL OF CROSSES)

Jurgaičiai Hillfort located on the left bank of the Kulpė River is identified with Kuliai Castle burned by the Teutonic knights in 1348. For many years the hillfort had stood bare. In the mid-19th century, crosses were started to be built on the hillfort and in the early 20th century the Hill of Crosses became a popular venue of pilgrimage. In 1993, it was visited by Pope John Paul II. Presently, the hillfort is regarded as a Lithuanian Catholic shrine and visited by thousands of pilgrims and tourists every year.



SALDUVĖ HILLFORT

Salduvė (Žuvininkai) Hillfort stands in the eastern outskirts of the city of Šiauliai. It used to host a mighty wooden castle that protected Lithuania from the attacks of the Sword Brothers and the Teutonic Order from the north in the 13th and 14th centuries. Nowadays, the hillfort is often visited by the residents and guests of Šiauliai: the city festivals are held here.



THE BALTIC CULTURE EDUCATION CENTRE BALTŲ KELIAS

The interactive centre called "Baltų kelias" (The Balt's Road) promotes travelling and learning the cultural and natural heritage of the Baltic tribes. Here, the history, culture and lifestyle of the Baltic tribes are presented using modern technologies.



THE ŠIAULIAI HISTORY MUSEUM

Modern exhibitions of the museum introduce history, archaeology and ethnography of the Šiauliai region. Educational spaces complement the exhibitions. Visitor groups can order various educational programmes; the museum also hosts exhibitions and events.



KURŠĖNAI MANOR HOUSE AND PARK

The manor of the grand dukes of Lithuania in Kuršėnai had existed since the 14th century. From 1630 to 1940 Kuršėnai Manor was owned by the Grużewski family. The current wooden manor house was built by carpenters from East Prussia in 1811. Presently, it hosts the Centre of Ethnic Culture and Traditional Crafts of the Šiauliai District Municipality. The manor house is surrounded by an English landscape park created in the mid-19th century. A pedestrian bridge over the Venta River connects the park to the town centre. It is a popular promenading venue.



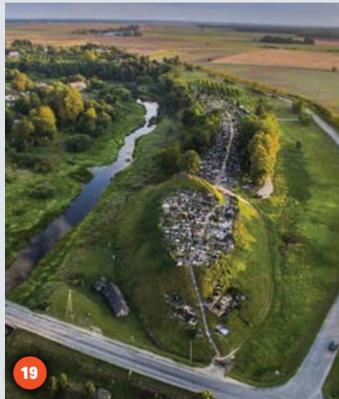
ŠILĖNAI HILLFORT

Šilėnai Hillfort located on the left bank of the Venta River could have been the centre of the Semigallian land Silene mentioned in the 13th century sources. An ancient settlement and a burial ground have been discovered nearby. The hillfort was inhabited until the early 14th century. During the Soviet period, a part of slopes of the hillfort suffered due to gravel excavations, but the top of the hill remained intact.



REKĖIAI HILLFORT

The hillfort stands in a picturesque location on the right bank of the Venta River. A foot settlement was found nearby. The hillfort was inhabited till the 14th century. Various legends are told about the hillfort. Eventually, the hillfort became the venue of celebrations and festivities of the local folk.



PAPILĖ I HILLFORT

The hillfort was arranged on the ridge of hills stretching on the left bank of the Venta River. It used to host Papilė Castle that was attacked by the Teutonic Knights of Livonia in 1339 and 1359. There used to be an ancient settlement stretching westwards and northwards from the hillfort. A burial ground dated from the 7th to 14th centuries has been found nearby. In the 19th century, the cemetery appeared on the hillfort.



THE OUTCROP AND THE SIGHTSEEING TOWER OF JURAKALNIS

Considering the nature, Jurakalnis is a unique place. Traveling along the nature trail, you can explore the erosive forms of the terrain (the ravine, washes and gorges where springs come out), as well as outcrops of the Jurassic rocks on the slopes; moreover, the sightseeing tower also offers the magnificent view of the Venta River valley.



THE VISITOR CENTRE OF VENTA REGIONAL PARK

Venta Regional Park features fossils of the Jurassic period animals. The modern visitor centre has an exhibition hall with exhibits reminiscent of the dinosaur times, interactive information terminals and stands, and reproduced sounds of nature.



THE AKMENĖ REGIONAL MUSEUM

The museum exhibits fossils, the largest collection of daytime butterflies in Lithuania, folk art pieces and artefacts from the Papilė Burial Ground. You can also enjoy live tropical butterflies there. Tourist groups can be offered educational programmes.



LUOKAVA HILLFORT (LOKAVA HILL)

The mysterious hillfort of Luokava located in a remote area surrounded by wet forests dates back to the 1st millennium to the early 2nd millennium AD. Written sources do not mention any castle to stand there. Eastward from the hillfort a foot settlement was found and westward there used to be a burial ground dating from the 11th to 13th centuries (now it is destroyed). In the 19th and 20th centuries part of the hillfort was destroyed by excavating gravel.

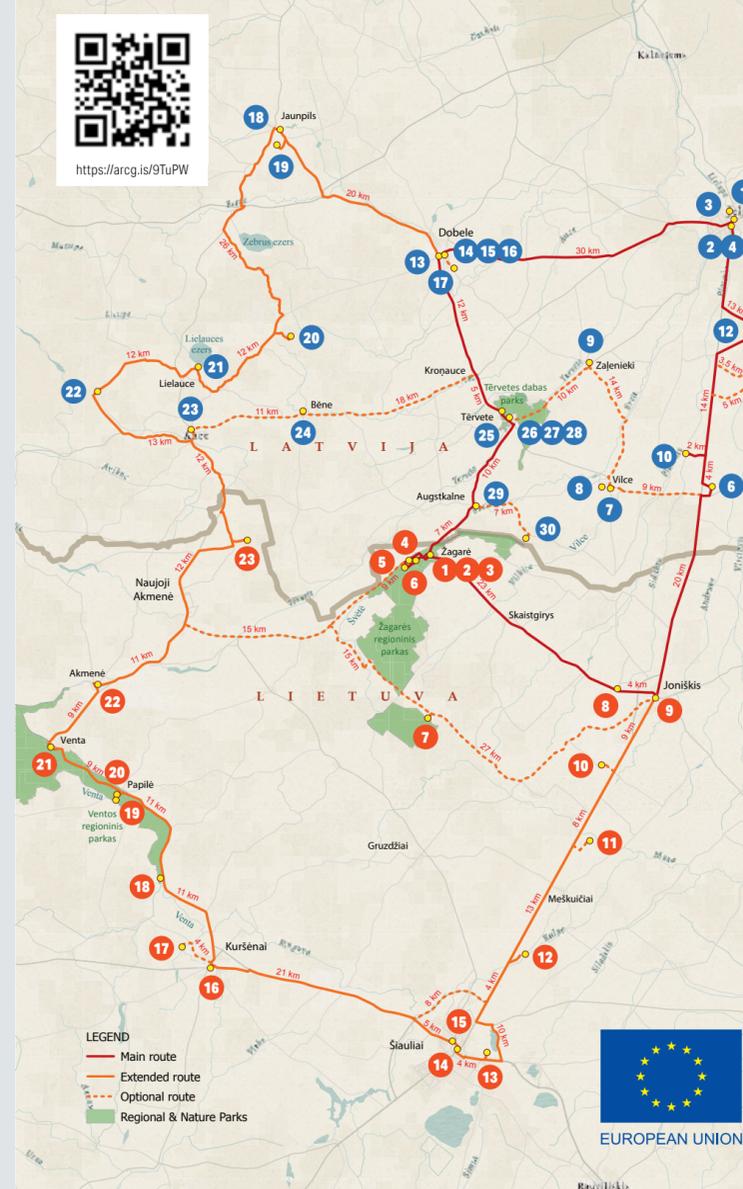
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Cultural tourism route through Western Semigallia
The Circle of Heritage



<https://arcgis.is/9TuPW>



LEGEND
— Main route
- - - Extended route
- - - - - Optional route
■ Regional & Nature Parks





1 THE PALACE AND THE PARK OF JELGAVA (MITAU)

The old Castle of Mitau was built on the island of the Lielupe River by Livonian Landmaster Conrad Mandern around 1265 to 1266. The castle was rebuilt in stone in the 14th century. It was used for attacks against the Semigallians. The Order's castle was demolished in 1738 to clear the site for the construction of a residence of the Dukes of Courland and Semigallia. Now the 18th century palace hosts Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. Next to the palace, there is an English landscape park which was established at the beginning of the 19th century.



2 POST ISLAND AND THE MITAU BRIDGE

Post Island is a recreation and entertainment area favoured by residents of Jelgava. There are hiking and cycling trails, playgrounds for children, and a sightseeing deck at the far point of the island. You can enjoy the beach and swimming in summer and the public skating rink in winter. The island also hosts various events, concerts and festivals. The modern pedestrian and cyclist bridge of Mitau of a unique construction connects the island to the old town of Jelgava.



3 THE MEADOWS OF THE LIELUPE RIVER, WILD HORSES AND THE SIGHTSEEING TOWER

The nature reserve of the flooded meadows of the Lielupe River sprawls in the castle island. More than 50 wild horses of the Konik Polski breed (a Polish breed of small horses that has resulted from the attempt to restore tarpans) clear the meadows from shrubs and trees. You can walk in the reserve along the trail and there is a sightseeing tower next to it.



4 THE HISTORY AND ART MUSEUM OF G. ELIAS IN JELGAVA

In 1818, the museum was founded in a historic building known as the Academia Petrina. For a long time, it had hosted the famous Gymnasium of Mitau, where the first presidents of Latvia and Lithuania were schooled. The crown jewel of the museum is the collection of paintings by Gederts Elias (1887–1975), the classic of the Latvian art. The exhibitions of the museum also reveal the history of Jelgava and Semigallia. From the tower of the Academia Petrina, visitors can enjoy the panoramic view of the entire city.



5 THE TOWER OF ST. TRINITY CHURCH IN JELGAVA

This is the oldest masonry building in Jelgava. The tower offers three interactive exhibitions of history: on the symbols of Jelgava and the first four presidents of Latvia; on St. Trinity Church and the most significant periods in the history of Jelgava; and on the Semigallian national costumes and Latvian patterns. The ninth floor of the tower hosts an exhibition hall and a sightseeing deck from which a panoramic view of the city can be enjoyed. Meanwhile, one floor below, there is an elegant restaurant.



6 THE PARK OF ELEJA MANOR

The early 19th century English landscape park of Eleja Manor is a popular venue for promenading and events. Visitors can enjoy picturesque sites, old trees and paths, the remains of the manor house and the tea house. Those who want to try the ritual of drinking herbal tea must register in advance. There is also the sculpture "For Love", a bridge over the pond, the interactive object "Conversation" and the old cemetery of the local barons. A newly built Eleja Exhibition Hall invites to cultural events of Jelgava district.



7 VILCE MANOR AND PARK

The manor house was built in the mid-18th century as a hunting castle of the Barons von Medem. It was reconstructed in the early 19th century. Presently, the manor house hosts the primary school of Vilce; there is also a historical exposition and a tourist information desk. The house is surrounded by the 7-ha large mid-19th century English landscape park with a disco golf available. Guided tours for groups include the sightseeing of the manor house and its cellars, as well as Vilce Nature Park located nearby.



8 VILCE NATURE PARK, THE HILLFORT, AND THE MEADOW OF HARES

Vilce Nature Park is located in the forest at the confluence of the Rukuīza and the Vilkija brooks, near Vilce Manor. When you walk along its paths, you can enjoy both nature and cultural monuments. The Baron's Path from Vilce Manor leads to Vilce Hillfort. The pedestrian bridge over the Vilce River will lead to the Meadow of Hares, where there is a camping site and a picnic area.



9 ZAĻENIEKI MANOR AND PARK

The hunting palace of Zaļenieki (The Green) Manor is a unique 18th century architectural monument of the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia. The palace is in a good condition. It has never suffered a fire or destruction, hence many authentic elements are preserved. Presently, it hosts Zaļenieki School of Trade and Crafts. The palace is surrounded by the 19th century English landscape park; its natural terrain, greenery and ponds promote a romantic view. There are a lot of large and unique trees in the park.



10 LIELPLATONE MANOR AND PARK

Lielplatone Manor is located at the confluence of the Sidabre and the Platonis brooks. It hosts a primary school, a library and a tourist information desk, as well as open workshops (ceramics, textiles, and woodworking) and the museum of bells. The manor house is surrounded by the mid-19th century English landscape park with old alleys, promenades and bridges stretching over brooks and ponds. Pre-agreed in advance, tourists can visit the manor house, the laundry and the gardener's house. The restored laundry offers an interactive experience of the old-way laundering.



11 LIELVIRCAVA MANOR AND PARK

The manor located on the left bank of the Vircava River had been owned by the family of Barons von Kloppmann for 400 years. The present manor house was built in the 19th century. Since 1924 it had been hosting a school. Currently, the house hosts various events and an exhibition hall. A guided tour that can be arranged on request introduces you to the history of the manor and the family of Barons von Kloppmann. A special program for tourist groups has been prepared by the Liel.Barons Society; they offer visitors an introduction to the authentic 19th century fashion and clothing of the landlords.



12 VIRCAVA MANOR AND PARK

The manor complex built in the period from 17th to 19th centuries is located by the Vircava River. It was the favourite suburban residence of Peter von Biron, the Duke of Courland and Semigallia. The manor used to be surrounded by a huge Baroque style park (garden) with ponds, the impression of which can still be felt when walking along the old lime alley. If pre-arranged in advance, tourists can visit the buildings of the manor – the partially preserved Manor House, the Cavalier House, the horse riding arena which presently hosts Folk House, as well as the outbuildings (the kitchen, the warden's house, and the barn).



13 DOBELE HILLFORT WITH TEUTONIC CASTLE REMAINS

The hillfort rising on the right bank of the Bērze River once was the centre of the Semigallian land of Dobeles and one of the strongest Semigallian castles with a large foot settlement. In 1279 to 1289, the Castle of Dobeles withstood six attacks of the Livonian Order. However, constant attacks forced Semigallians to burn their castle and to retreat to Raktē. From 1335 to 1347 the Livonian Order had built a masonry castle where the Semigallian wooden one once stood and a church which also served as a castle chapel appeared nearby. After 1730, the castle was abandoned and gradually turned into ruins. Recently, the ruins have been adapted for tourism and the chapel was turned into a museum; next to the castle, the medieval garden of Duchess Elisabeth Magdalena was planted.



14 THE DOBELE LOCAL HISTORY MUSEUM

The permanent exposition Once upon a Time in Dobeles introduces you to the history of the castle and the town of Dobeles. In the part of the exposition dedicated to the Semigallians you can see some reconstructed Semigallian costumes, authentic household utensils, jewels and weapons. The museum also hosts various thematic exhibitions and expositions. Tourist groups can order educational programmes.



15 THE MARKET SQUARE IN DOBELE

A spacious square dating back to the 15th century is the heart of the town of Dobeles. Life is thriving and many events take place here. The square is decorated by the original fountain and surrounded with historical buildings, including Lutheran Church of Dobeles.



16 DOBELE CRAFTS HOUSE

When visiting Dobeles Craft House, you will learn the ancient crafts of the land of Semigallia. Here, you can learn weaving, knitting, wool felting and other handicrafts. The Crafts House also organizes various exhibitions and presents national traditions.



17 THE LILAC GARDEN AND THE GARDENING MUSEUM OF PĒTERIS UPĪTIS

In the lilac garden that covers more than 4 hectares more than 200 sorts of lilacs and their hybrids go into full blossoming. The garden was established in 1957 by gardener and selectionist Pēteris Upītis (1896–1976) who dreamed of turning the entire Latvia into a blooming garden. You can learn about his personality and achievements in the museum. His work is continued by the scientists of the Institute of Horticulture who grow more than 5 thousand fruiter sorts and hybrids in the area of 45 hectares.



18 JAUNPILS CASTLE

Jaunpils is the former Neuenburg castle of the Dobeles Commandery of the Livonian Order, first mentioned in 1411. It is a typical water castle built of boulders and bricks on a small peninsula protected by the mill pond on three sides and by a defensive moat on the eastern side. In the 17th century the castle was rearranged into the residence of the local baron. Presently, the castle hosts a museum, a hotel and a medieval style inn. Tourist groups can enjoy tours, medieval meals and theatrical performances.



19 BABOTE HILLFORT (THE HILL OF GALLOWS)

The hillfort is located on an elevation near the Bīkstupe Brook. It is believed that the county of Babote Castle belonged to Dobe Land (Dobene). In 1279, there was a battle near Babote between the Semigallian forces led by Nameisis and the fleeing army of the Livonian Teutonic Knights and the Curonians led by Johann von Ochtenhausen, Vogt of Goldingen (Kuldīga). There is a nature trail in the forest where the hillfort stands, and the nearby Jaunpils can be quickly reached on foot along the path-way across the fields.



20 SPĀRŅI HILLFORT (SPARNENE)

Historians believe that the well-fortified hillfort near Spārņi Lake was the centre of the Semigallian land named Sparnene. The hillfort is 30 m high, with extremely steep slopes. There was an ancient settlement nearby. Archaeologists stated that the hillfort had been inhabited from 9th to 13th centuries.



21 LIELAUCE MANOR AND PARK

The manor house and the park located on a picturesque bank of Lielauce Lake make a perfect place for stopping and resting. In the early 17th century, the manor was owned by Duke Friedrich of Courland and Semigallia; later it went into possession of Medem and Pahlen counts. The manor house is surrounded with a park of 57 hectares developed in the 19th century, when the manor was owned by the Medem counts. Nowadays, it is under the supervision of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. Tourists can see the manor house only from the outside. There is also a resting site and a boat rental on the bank of the lake.



22 DOBE (INCĒNI) HILLFORT AND MEŽAKALNS HILLFORT

Dobe hillfort stands out in the surrounding landscape as a 20 m high well-distinguished hill with an outer bailey. It is believed that the hillfort was the old centre of the Semigallian land named Dobe (Dobene) with a well-fortified castle and a large foot settlement. Across the road, there is Mežakalns Hillfort. It is believed that it hosted the wooden castle of the Livonian Order, mentioned in the Livonian Rhymed Chronicle, which was built in the winter of 1259 and 1260 after an unsuccessful attack on Tērvete. However, after the Battle of Durbe, the Livonian Order abandoned the castle. Two large hoards were found at the foot of this hillfort. The first one including 1260 finds with a total weight of as much as 120 kg was discovered in 1869. The second one including 130 finds with a total weight of 16 kg was discovered not far from the first one in 1929.



23 VECAUCE MANOR AND PARK

The manor was mostly owned by the family of Medem counts (from 1768 to 1921). The neo-Gothic manor house was built in the mid-19th century, forming the large English landscape park of 10 hectares. Now the manor hosts the training and research farm of Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies. The inside exposition presents the history of the manor and the 19th century costumes of the local nobility. You can also go to the tower to enjoy the views of the surroundings.



24 BĒNE MANOR AND PARK

The manor house was built in the 2nd half of the 19th century. It is surrounded with a landscape park of 6.6 hectares where you can walk and see other surviving buildings of the manor. An alley of old linden trees leading to the manor house is a natural monument. Tourists can get only the outside view. The Ace River flows nearby, with a beautiful boulder bridge connecting its banks. There is also a large and well-preserved steam and water mill with a dam built in the 19th century. It used to host a wool processing and weaving factory as well.



25 TĒRVETE NATURE PARK

It is one of the most beautiful natural, historical and cultural sites in Latvia. It attracts visitors because of its picturesque landscapes, a unique pine forest, a fairy-tale world and leisure opportunities for the whole family. Here you can see the wooden sculptures depicting characters of plays by A. Brigadere and even meet "live" characters from fairy-tales.



26 TĒRVETE HILLFORT

Tērvete Hillfort is one of the most impressive and magnificent hillforts not only in the Western Semigallia, but also in all the lands of the ancient Balts. The Livonian Rhymed Chronicle tells a lot about Tērvete mentioning the wooden castle and its surroundings, as well as its 13th century rulers, namely Viestards and Nameisis. Only 200 meters northwest, the Holly Hill stands. Its name can be associated with the place of the Semigallian cult. In 1286 the Livonian Order built Heiligenberg Castle here. Unable to expel the Teutonic knights from it, the Semigallians burned down their Tervete Castle and retreated to Raktē.



27 THE 12TH CENTURY WOODEN CASTLE OF TĒRVETE (RECONSTRUCTION)

The exposition of the wooden castle of Tērvete tells the old history of Tērvete and the Semigallians. It includes many artefacts of the Semigallian material culture: household utensils, jewellery, weaponry, clothing. Also, you can see the largest exhibition of swords in Latvia.



28 THE MEDIEVAL CASTLE RUINS IN TĒRVETE

The ruins of a masonry castle stand on an oblong elevation near the main hillfort of Tērvete. These are the remains of a hunting castle of dukes of Courland and Semigallia. The name of this place Kalnamuiža literary means a manor on a hill. The hunting castle is assumed to be built in the late 16th century on the foundation of the considerably older (from the early 14th century) castle of the Teutonic Order. The hunting castle was abandoned and went into decay after the Great Northern War. The castle had a plane of a square; it was two-storey and built of boulders. The surviving fragments of the castle were conserved and adapted for visitors.



29 THE ENSEMBLE OF MEŽMUIŽA MANOR

The neo-Gothic manor house is surrounded by a 12-hectare large park. The building has been hosting Augstkalne secondary school since 1954. The manor house has been reconstructed several times; its well-preserved halls have been restored. The unified landscape ensemble consisting of the manor house, the park and the pond also included a Lutheran church.



30 THE HIGH (FOREST) HILL

The hillfort in the forest near the Latvian and Lithuanian border called the High Hill or the Forest Hill could have been the centre of the Semigallian land named Silene mentioned in the 13th century sources. The hillfort is 20 m. Archaeological excavations imply that the hillfort used to be inhabited already before our era; habitation continued from the 9th to the 13th centuries, too. There were two fortified baileys eastwards from the hillfort.