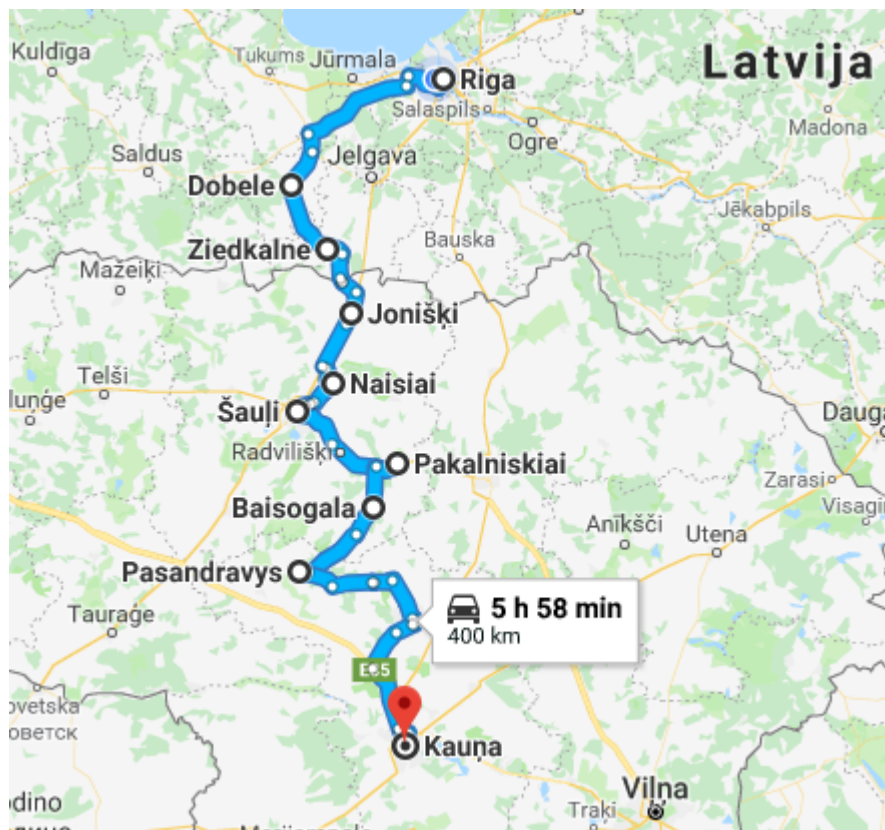


6. GARDENS – THE BEAUTIFUL AND PRACTICAL

RĪGA -KAUNAS

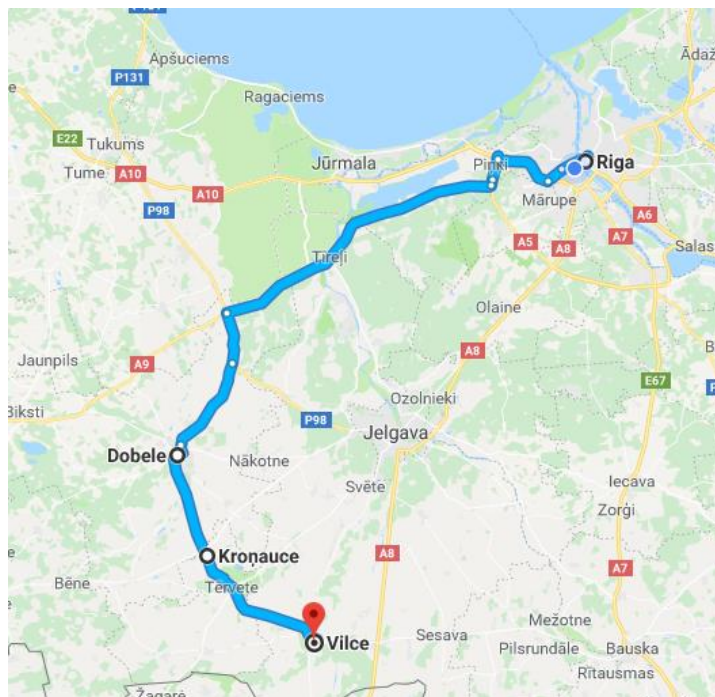
Tour duration: 3 days, 423 km

Tour route: Rīga – Dobele – Ziedkalne – Vilce – Blankenfelde – Joniškis – Naisiai – Šiauliai – Pakalniškiai – Baisogala – Pasandravys – Kėdainiai – Babtai – Kaunas



The route leads from Riga, the capital of Latvia through beautiful countryside areas to Kaunas, the second largest city of Lithuania. Klūgu landscape garden and park is famous for begonias. Institute of horticulture in Dobele owns a collection of over 200 types and forms of lilac plants. The “Beautiful&Practical” garden is proud of its collection of conifers, and the hosts offer tastings of herbal spice powders, dried berries and fruit. “Rūķīšu tea” is one of the largest farms for medicinal plants in Latvia (purple coneflowers, marigolds, chamomile, etc). Enjoy the beauty of peonia in the collection garden by Andris Berkins. Viestardi tulip garden also grows and processes buckthorn. Next stop is at the vegetable and herb farm “Healthy” producing herbal ointments. Visiting Mint House you will taste mint tea, biscuits, honey with peppermint and peppermint syrups. At Blankenfelde manor you will see a collection of bells and will enjoy natural juices, syrups and pickles produced in-house. In Joniškis, you can visit the White and Red Joniškis Synagogues, the Joniškis Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, and the Joniškis Museum of History and Culture. Jakiškiai Manor has not been renovated and shows authentic elements like ovens, shutters, stairs, doors. There are about 30 different species and varieties of plants growing on the grounds of the Baltic Plant Museum. Šiauliai University Botanical Garden demonstrates heritage rural plant gardens arranged

according to the traditions of pre-war, inter-war and post-war periods. Burbiškis Manor and its beautiful landscape and sculpture park is a home to the annual tulip festival. Authentic homesteads representing Aukštaitija region can be seen at Kleboniškių Rural Household Museum. Baisogala Manor is called royal, since it once belonged to a Lithuanian Grand Duke, its 12-hectare park is one of the most beautiful in Lithuania. There are two beautiful heritage gardens surrounding the museum of Mačiulis-Maironis, a famous Lithuanian poet. Home produced “Happy Foods” can be bought from Garsi Tyla homestead, and you can have a walk in their 100-year-old orchard and see the culinary herb garden. The Lithuanian Institute of Horticulture carries out both scientific and experimental/production activities. You can also buy seedlings, and seasonal fruit and vegetables. At Tadas Ivanauskas Homestead at Obelynė Park you will see a collection of 300 species and forms of plants, including some of the oldest trees on the planet – the ginkgo biloba and the dawn redwood. In Kaunas you will see the Oldest Apple Tree in Lithuania – almost 360 years old, 8 metres tall, with a girth of 285 centimetres at a height of 1.3 metres. The Vytautas Magnus University Kaunas Botanical Garden exposes the Lithuanian Heritage flower garden plants according to their botanical classification. The tour ends in Kaunas that was the capital of the country from 1920 until 1939.



First day

Rīga – Dobele – Ziedkalni – Vilce – Blankenfelde (120 km)

Štelmaheru rock garden on the banks of the Berze river is called both a stone fairy tale and a miracle garden. Various shapes and sizes of stones, millstones, milled posts and parks border are placed in the garden. The rock exposition is complemented by decorative plants and plant compositions, which are taken care of by the owner of the garden.

Klūgu family Landscape Garden is recognized as one of the most beautiful gardens in Latvia, and its owners propose to enjoy their diverse landscapes in the month of July, when the most diverse summer flowers flourish.



Institute of horticulture in Dobele owns the largest collection of lilac plants in the Baltic States (~200 types and forms). Tour the garden, visit the Pēteris Upītis Museum, purchase plants, and taste and purchase fruit, berries, juices and candies.

Beautiful and practical ideas garden- gorgeous flowering plants and a wide range of conifers delight your eyes throughout the year. Behind the house in the economic zone is a garden of roots and greenhouses.



Herb grower Rūķīšu tea

This is one of the largest farms for medicinal plants in Latvia (purple coneflowers, marigolds, chamomile, etc. You can tour an introductory garden, purchase plants and mixed teas, and taste them.

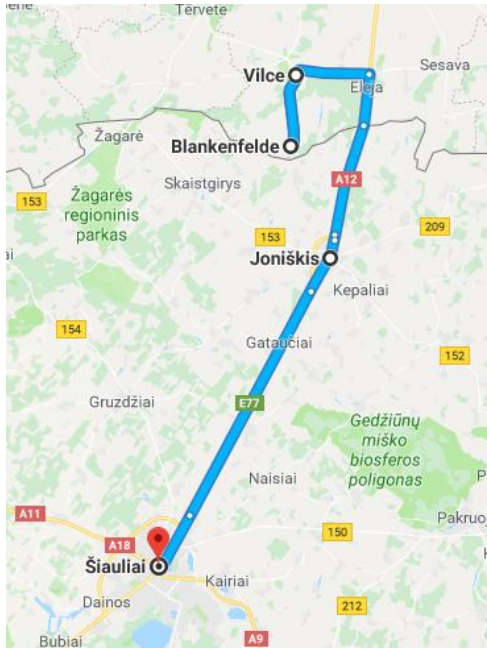
Peoniju dārzs „Galdnieki”. Peony collector Andris Berkins not only opens his garden to the people in the spring, but also popularises and celebrates Tervete's name, delivering beautiful flower stories in the world, offering the seedlings to buy the beauty of his garden. It is advisable to visit the garden during the flowering of June.

Tulip garden „Viestardi” The main activity of the farm is tulip cultivation, with nearly 400 different tulip bulbs. In the spring, there is the Tulip festival, but in the autumn there are tulip bulbs. A small animal garden - pony, cats, rabbits.

Accommodation in Blankenfelde

Second day

Blankenfelde – Vilce - Joniškis – Jakiškiai – Naisiai – Šiauliai (93 km)



Farm „Droši vesels” The property is located in Vilce rural municipality of Jelgava. Grows greenhouse vegetables and plants, makes various ointments from herbs and offers lectures on healthy diet and lifestyle. Available country sauna.



In **"Mint house"** there is the opportunity to taste different mint tea, biscuits, honey with peppermint and peppermint syrups. There are workshops with making peppermint soap, painted plates with peppermint, decoration of candles and much more. The owner makes also peppermint powder and face tonic.



Blankenfelde manor

Blankenfelde Manor is located in Zemgale, Vilce rural municipality of Jelgava. Manor is a national monument with many centuries of history. The beautiful manor park, which has a modern children's playground, has been restored, while in the renovated stable is located bell museum and modern hotel rooms. Offers 100% natural juice, delicious and healthy syrup from elk, apples, currants, pumpkins and carrots, as well as preserved casseroles from gardens grown in manor gardens.

Latvia / Lithuania border.

In the centre of **Joniškis**, you can visit the White and Red Joniškis Synagogues, the Joniškis Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, and the Joniškis Museum of History and Culture.

Jakiškiai Manor has been mentioned in historical sources since the end of the 16th century. The manor has features of Classical architecture. Of all of the original manor buildings, only the manor house, the ice-house, and the steam mill have survived to

this day. The manor has not been renovated, so it is still authentic – various items that have survived from the times of the von Koskull lordship (authentic elements: ovens, shutters, stairs, doors) and Soviet times keep the artistic spirit alive. Some fragments of the manor park (about two hectares) have survived next to the manor house: the old linden entrance alley to the homestead, valuable old larches, poplars and pines, as well as a small pond.



There are about 30 different species and varieties of plants growing on the grounds of the **Baltic Plant Museum**. Created in the shape of a distaff, the flower garden is divided into three parts for sacral, household and cultural plants. Plants used in rituals that are considered to be holy (poppy, flax, cornflower, wormwood, meadow sage, etc.) are grown in the sacral part. The household part contains herbs that are used for medicinal, wellness and culinary purposes (strawberry, thyme, yarrow, horse mint, etc.). The cultural part is decorated with Lithuanian iris, peony, dahlia and lily species, and violets are also cultivated. The museum plants reflect the ornamental plant variety assortment of Lithuanian heritage gardens and introduce visitors with Lithuanian natural selection crops. The plants can be visited in spring and summer.

Šiauliai is a city in the north of Lithuania. Šiauliai is also called the city of the Sun. The most magnificent building in the downtown of Šiauliai is the Cathedral of Saint Peter and Saint Paul. In Šiauliai, it is easy to spend a spare afternoon at thematic museums as the city has many of them (photography, bicycles, chocolate, radio / TV, railroad, cat memorabilia...). In the Sundial Square you will see one of the main dominants of the city - 'The Archer'. Not far, on Talksa lake shore, stands 'The Iron Fox', which is included in the Lithuanian Guinness Book of Records as the largest animal sculpture.



Šiauliai University Botanical Garden is the newest and the smallest (6.54 ha) botanical garden in Lithuania. It has over 4,000 different species and varieties of plants. At the botanical garden, you will find three heritage rural plant gardens arranged according to the traditions of the relevant period – pre-war, inter-war and post-war. The garden hosts events and educational games and can arrange lectures.

For meals we recommend:

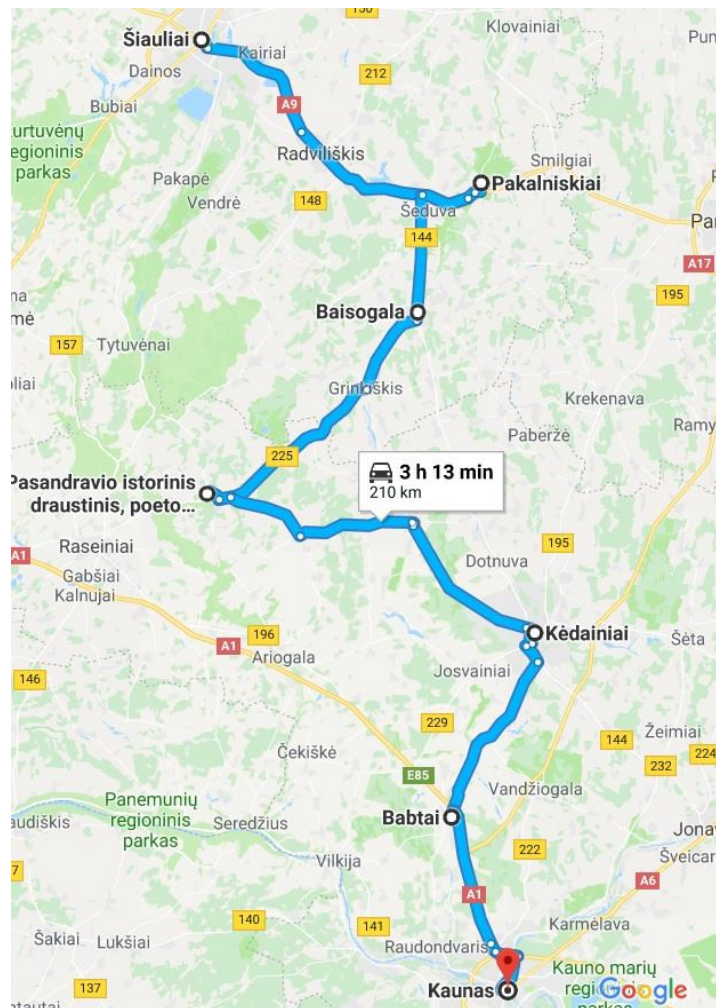
- Restaurant “Audruvis”, *Joniškis District* <http://www.horseaudruvis.lt/>
- Cafe “Medžiotojo užeiğa”, *Joniškis District* <http://www.medziotojouzeiga.lt/>
- Homestead “Girelė”, *Šiauliai District*
<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/en/farmstead/sodyba-girele>

Accommodation:

- Homestead “Girelė”, *Šiauliai District*
<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/en/farmstead/sodyba-girele>
- Questhouse “Žarija”, *Radviliškis District*
<http://www.atostogoskaime.lt/en/farmstead/sodyba-zarija>

Third day

Šiauliai – Pakalniškiai – Baisogala – Pasandravys – Kėdainiai – Babtai – Kaunas
(210 km)



Burbiškis Manor has been in existence since the 17th century. In 1991, the Daugyvenė Museum of Cultural History was established here – a reserve that covers an area of 28 hectares. The park is mixed in style, with wonderful, picturesque ponds embellished with little islands. The islands have cosy rest areas accessed by elegant wooden and stone bridges. Both the manor house and the park grounds are full of sculptures. Since 2000, the Tulip Bloom Festival has been organised here, during which some 300 species of tulips are on display.

There are surviving fragments of orchards in three parts of the manor grounds. The largest and most valuable orchard is located farther off from the manor buildings. It has seven rows, each of which once accommodated 14 fruit trees. Most of them are now gone, but the surviving apple trees of the ‘Antaninis’ (‘Antonovka’), ‘Sierinka’ and ‘Kosztela’ varieties are in fairly good condition.



Klebonišķiai Rural Household Museum was established in 1991 over an area of 18 hectares, where authentic homesteads represent the Aukštaitija region. Village buildings typical of the 19th–20th centuries have been moved from the surrounding areas to the open-air museum: farmhouses, granaries, saunas, barns and sheds – a total of 28 buildings. Part of an apple orchard that goes back to the inter-war period is still standing near one of the homesteads. The museum is rich in ornamental plants that are characteristic of that area. Special attention is given to dahlias.

Baisogala Manor is one of the older ones – it is called royal, since it once belonged to a Lithuanian Grand Duke. The manor house belonged to the Komaras family of landowners since 1830. The ornate, Neoclassical (Empire) manor house that was built in the mid-19th century has survived to this day. People are drawn to the manor's mill, and the 12-hectare park is one of the most beautiful in Lithuania. The Baisogala landscape garden was created in the first half of the 19th century. A horse-chestnut alley leads you to the manor from town. From the gate, the main alley runs between two winding ponds and across a bridge with lion figures. Behind the manor, a wide variety of trees surround the winding alleys and narrow park paths. There is a pond on both sides of the park's main alley, and another pond with an island in the depths of the park.



Birthplace of the Poet Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis. There are two gardens on the museum grounds: the old garden that Maironis loved so much was planted by the poet's father, while the other garden was cultivated by his sister. The heritage apple trees - 'Popierinis' ('White Transparent'), 'Sierinka', 'Rudens dryžuotasis' ('Autumn Streaked') and pear 'Citrininė' ('Lemon'), 'Klepo mėgstamoji' ('Clapp's Favourite') produce fruit to these days in these gardens. The homestead features ornamental plants characteristic of a traditional flower garden of central Lithuania: rue, lilies, phlox and the nasturtiums (sweet peas) that the poet adored.



At the Garsi tyla (Loud silence) homestead, which is perched on the slope of the old Nevėžis riverbed, 'happy food' is produced from everything that is grown on the farm. The homestead has a 2.3-hectare, 100-year-old orchard with about 113 apple trees, 18 pear trees and 8 sweet cherry trees. The owner of the homestead also grows culinary herbs such as tarragon, lovage, peppermint and sage, as well as ornamental plants such as hollyhocks, peonies, dahlias and daylilies.



Institute of Horticulture LAMMC carries out both scientific and experimental/production activities. Its experimental base is made up of experimental gardens, test greenhouses, and a nursery. This institute grows Lithuanian fruits and vegetables, and uses them to produce healthy and natural products of exceptional quality. At the institute, you can also purchase various fruit tree and fruit bush seedlings as well as seasonal fruit and vegetables.



Tadas Ivanauskas Homestead at Obelynė Park. This is where you can see a collection of 300 species and forms of plants, including some of the oldest trees on the planet – the ginkgo biloba and the dawn redwood. The orchard growing at the homestead of the famous naturalist, Professor Tadas Ivanauskas, is one of the richest sources of heritage apple genetic resources. The garden is home to the ‘Vytis’ apple variety that was created by Professor Ivanauskas himself. Obelynė Park covers an area of about 6.5 hectares. This is also home to the huge *Beržininkai Pineapple* apple tree – also known as the Garden Mother, it is 11 metres tall and its crown is 12 metres wide.



Continue driving from Obelynė for another 15 minutes or so and visit the **Oldest Apple Tree in Lithuania**, which is almost 360 years old and still yields fruit. Even though the apple tree grows on a private plot, it is marked with an informational stand. The wild apple tree is 8 metres tall, with a girth of 285 centimetres at a height of 1.3 metres. Only a few branches of the apple tree are still alive, but they are covered with lush foliage and yield fruit which, though rather acidic, is extremely fragrant.



Take a stroll around the **Vytautas Magnus University Kaunas Botanical Garden** to see the unique plants growing there. The garden covers an area of over 60 hectares, with about 30 hectares of exhibits that are open to the public. This garden has the largest conservatory in Lithuania, and hosts various exhibitions and meetings, celebrates the weeks of blossoming and arranges educational events. Heritage Lithuanian flower garden plants are displayed in different plant communities according to their botanical classification. More than 20 species of traditional heritage vegetables varieties are grown in the educational garden. In the Lithuanian heritage apple orchards, visitors can see the rare purple-leaf apple tree.

Kaunas is Lithuania's second city and was the capital of the country from 1920 until 1939. The Old Town, Town Hall, the Cathedral Basilica of St Peter and St Paul the Apostles, and the House of Perkūnas are all worth visiting; also take a stroll down Laisvės Alėja, and stop by the M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art and the Devil Museum.

For meals we recommend:

- Restaurant „Siesta”, *Kaunas District* <http://restoranassiesta.lt/>
- Restaurant “Višta puode”, *Kaunas District* <https://vistapuode.lt/>