

PADDLING ON THE RIVER VENTA

- ▶ The River Venta is enjoyed both with canoes, kayaks, and SUP boards.
- ▶ Start and destination points of the most popular sections of the route – Nīgrande, Skrunda and Kuldīga – can be conveniently reached by public transport.
- ▶ You must hold a passport or ID at the starting point in Grieze, on the Latvian-Lithuanian border.
- ▶ You will find kilometre marker posts next to bridges and other important milestones, marking the distance to Lake Lielais Nabas (Lielais Nabas ezers).
- ▶ Should you take an angling-rod with you, remember to buy a fishing card. In the route section from the old bridge in Kuldīga till the mouth of the River Abava, you have to buy a fishing license. The licenses can be purchased electronically: www.epakalpojumi.lv, in the application “Mana cope” or at the fuel station “Rietumu nafta” at 31 Ganību Street, Kuldīga. Fishing regulations – www.manacope.lv.

PROJECT “VISIT VENTA”

The River Venta water tourism map has been prepared as part of the project No. LLI-293 “Visit Venta!” (ViVa), which is funded by the European Union under the Interreg V-A Latvia – Lithuania Programme 2014-2020.

The project aims to increase the number of overnight tourists in the project partners’ territories: Kurzeme region, Kuldīga, Saldus, Skrunda, Mažeikiai, and Akmenė. The river connects all partner territories and it is one of the most diverse tourist attractions in the region.

Total project size is EUR 321,607.77. Out of them co-funding of European Regional Development Fund is EUR 273,366.56.

The contents of this guide are the sole responsibility of Kurzeme Tourism Association and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

Photo credit: Artis Gustovskis, Aivita Staņeviča, Jēkabs Aleksandrs Krūmiņš, Inese Krone, riverways.eu

Base layer of the map: @OpenStreetMap

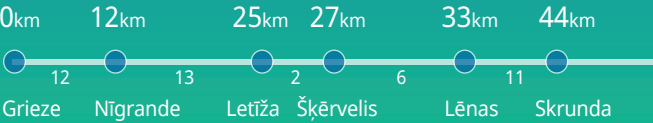
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GRIEZE – NĪGRANDE – SKRUNDA

44 km, 2 days

Start: at the Church in Grieze, on the right bank
Finish: Skrunda, behind the bridge, on the left bank



This is the most popular section on the river, which can be customised into 1-day and 2-day routes, even with the starting point in Lithuania!

The starting point is next to the mouth of the River Vadakste, from where for 2 km the River Venta becomes the border river between Latvia and Lithuania. Around 30 m wide, shallow stream with a good slope; during summer, there are patches of soft rushes and beautiful sections of river banks covered in trees.

Leaving the mouth of the left bank tributary Vārduva behind, the paddlers can celebrate another milestone – from now on, they are entirely in Latvia. First islets appear; and their number is growing. On both banks there is active agriculture development, along the river – shrub groves.

10 km from the beginning of the route, one should highlight the mouth of the left bank tributary Losis. 600 m downstream of Losis, there is the mouth of the right bank tributary Zapa; and in less than 2 km the paddlers will welcome the Nīgrande bridge and the long awaited shop.

Here, the nicest section of the River Venta begins. The next 13 km downstream till the mouth of Letīža greet with a series of small islets, sandbanks and rapids. Another ca. 2 km downstream, the mouth of the next river – Šķēvelis – is found. Venta still flows quite rapidly, and beautiful forests appear on its banks. Behind a broad right curve, the River Venta makes its way through an approx. 13 m high dolomite outcrop. You have reached Gobdzīņi Cliffs. There is a rapids spot here, but the place is beautiful and it is definitely worth stopping by and climbing up to take a view from above.

Downstream of Gobdzīņi Cliffs, the banks of the meandering river become less and less forested, and in 5 km the paddlers see the towers of the Catholic Church in Lēnas emerging in the landscape. Here is the mouth of the River Kojā. During the next 8.8 km to Skrunda the River Venta flows through a busy agriculture area. Nothing extraordinary to see; this is where you will depend on your peers and motivation to get to the finish point in Skrunda.

SKRUNDA – KULDĪGA

44 km, 2 days

Start: In Skrunda at the bridge, on the left bank
Finish: Kuldīga, waterfall Ventas Rumba



This is a less popular canoeing section. It is recommended to watch the weather forecast and avoid paddling with prevailing north winds, which will surprise you with a tough headwind.

Tailwinds (south wind) guarantee a charming ride, and more experienced paddlers are able to complete the route within one day!

In Skrunda, between road and railroad bridges the River Ciecere joins Venta from the right. And in the next 44 km till Ventas Rumba, the only relevant milestones are the different tributaries. Another 14.6 km downstream from Skrunda, there is the mouth of the right bank tributary Ponakste; in another 600 m Ēnava joins from the left; in another 10 km there is the mouth of the River Lējējupe; and in another 4.6 km there is the mouth of the right bank tributary Ēda.

Here, the River Venta is wide, shallow and slightly slower; you will have to apply some manpower and paddle! From time to time, seemingly out of nowhere small rapids appear, which will give you a



slight boost.

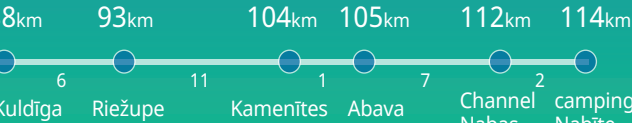
A high radio tower and patches of small allotments on the left bank will signal the nearing town of Kuldīga. Then, there is the bridge of Kuldīga bypass and 2 km downstream – the widest waterfall in Europe, the Ventas Rumba.

It is a must-see! Make a stop to enjoy the waterfall and beautiful landscapes of Kuldīga. Note: you cannot cross the waterfall in your watercraft! Carry it around on either side of the waterfall. Be prepared to navigate through a bizarre rapids section between the waterfall and the Old Bridge: watch out for multiple large concrete blocks with sharp edges. Take care of yourself and of your watercraft!

KULDĪGA – LIELAIS NABAS LAKE

26 km, 1 day

Start: In Pārventa Park, behind the Old Bridge, on the right bank
Finish: Lake Lielais Nabas, Camping “Nabīte”



Downstream of the Old Bridge, the river gets a new life with rapids and sinuous windings. Many islands and islets are now seen in a 2 km long and fast course. At the end of this section there is a sharp bend to the right. On the left, there is an approx. 15 m high steep bank. This is an interesting spot, where a higher velocity accounts for backrush and small whirlpools. Clumsy paddling and watercraft position perpendicular to the stream will result in a guaranteed refreshing swim. After 3.2 km a nice resting site is found – the mouth of the right bank tributary Riežupe.

Once you get to the place where the right bank tributary Abava meets Venta, a mere 9 km will be left until the finish in Lake Lielais Nabas. The lake is connected to the River Venta by a 1 km channel, the Channel Nabas. The key milestone to look out for in order to find the channel leading to the lake is a grey house on the left bank and the high-voltage line.

▶ The water tourism route of Venta might as well be started already in Lithuania. The most popular starting point for a 1-day paddling trip from Lithuania up to the Latvian border in Grieze is in Mažeikiai. In Lithuania one can even plan a 3-day paddling trip on the River Venta, starting the route in the vicinity of Kuršėnai.



WORTH KNOWING!

- ▶ **BE RESPONSIBLE** and use a life jacket. It is mandatory for children under the age of 12!
- ▶ When in water, **DO NOT STAND UP** – the rocking watercraft can flip over! Be careful when getting in the watercraft and when approaching a bank – this is when you are subject to the highest risk of falling into water!
- ▶ At least one mobile phone shall be inserted in a **WATER-PROOF** pouch! Make sure to have the phone number of the tourism operator in case you need evacuation! And the odds are rather high since the river flows near larger and smaller roads for most of the time.
- ▶ **AVOID** drinking alcohol!
- ▶ Choose **SAFE PLACES TO SWIM** considering your swimming skills!
- ▶ It is recommended to use a portable cooking stove **FOR COOKING**. If you opt for a campfire, set it up only in designated places. Do not leave fire without supervision. Before leaving, put out the campfire.
- ▶ **RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY AND NATURE**. When leaving, the sites should be left clean and tidy. Remember to take your waste with you, even if waste bins are present. This is how you **CONTRIBUTE TO A CLEANER RIVER AFTER YOUR VISIT!**

PADDLING EQUIPMENT HIRE

Abavas Brīvdienas
+371 26825352
www.laivo.lv

Abavas laivas
+371 29286489, 29178593
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AtvarsLaivas
+371 29181657
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Biedrība „Pārcēlājs”
+371 26426992
inars.jaunzems@inbox.lv

Campo
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www.laivas.lv

Jenču laivas
+371 20607509
www.jenculaivas.lv

Jūras Laivas
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▶ 3 ROUTES ▶ 114 KM ▶ 5 DAYS

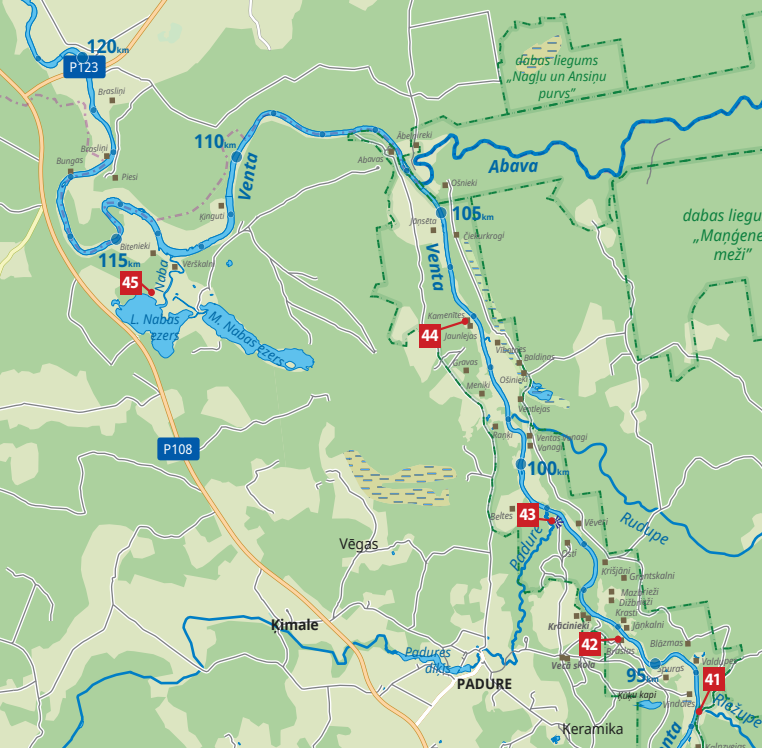
THE RIVER VENTA

WATER TOURISM ROUTE MAP

From the border of Latvia-Lithuania to Lake Lielais Nabas



VISITVENTA.LV RIVERWAYS.EU



1 The Lutheran Church of Grieze



The church was built in 1580 and has undergone a number of reconstructions. It was worst hit during World War II. Located at the Lithuanian border where the River Vadakste joins Venta. You can leave your car parked next to the church, where you will also find a small resting site. **+371 22009892, 22316912**
www.griesebaznica.lv

2 Hostel Lose

Kalni 2, Kalni
+371 26436947, 63842501
kalnuvidusskola@saldus.lv

3 Resting place Kalni



4 Campsite and canoe rental Ievas

+371 29412804, 29341073
ievas-ag@inbox.lv
www.laivasventa.lv

5 The Losis Outcrop

It's time to stretch the legs while taking a short walk. 200 m upstream along the River Losis, an outcrop is found on its left bank. It exposes sand, clay and limestone along with fossils of maritime organisms – shellfish, ammonites, shells, and wood residues washed in limestone.

6 Holiday house Kraujas

+371 29104119

7 Resting place near the bridge in Nīgrande



8 Nīgrande Manor barn

It's time for a walk! The barn of Nīgrande Manor (1790) now houses a collection of Nīgrande local heritage. A mock-up model of a mammoth's tusk, found in the vicinity of Nīgrande, is exhibited in the barn. **+371 26497699**

9 The Lutheran Church of Nīgrande

Built in 1775, it still has the tower bells and rooster of the 18th century. **+371 26458880**

10 Resting place Nīgrande



11 Lime Kiln in Alši

Chimneys of the lime kiln are visible from a far distance. The lime kiln with shaft-like furnaces was built in 1906–1908. It is currently in a bad condition and closed for visitors.

12 The Plieņi Outcrop

Sandstone (up to 6.5 m high) and clay outcrop from the Lower Carboniferous period.

13 Resting place Sudmaļi

+371 29173742, 26433706
gunars.vilumsons@inbox.lv

14 Campsite Šķērvelis



It's time for a walk! The campsite near the mouth of the River Šķērvelis joining Venta is not facilitated, yet it is a popular starting and end point of paddling trips. Šķērvelis is a 15 km long river, with many springs flowing into it, hence, even in the hottest summer days its water is freezing cold. In summer, one can go for a small hike upstream the shallow river bed.

15 The Ātrās Cliffs (Ātraiskalns)

A rapid section of the river with up to 20 m high dolomite outcrops on the left bank of the river.

16 The Gobdzīņi Cliffs

A scenic valley section with approx. 11 m high cliffs on the right bank and a 26 m long, 2 m wide and 30–40 m high cave on the edge of dolomite and sandstone layers. A spring is coming out of the cave.

17 Camping Varkaji

+371 26598643

18 Resting place Jaunvarkaji

+371 28618596

19 Guest house Vecvanagi

+371 28643994 **inaliona@inbox.lv**

20 The Ketleri Outcrop

A steep slope on the right bank.

21 Campsite Pilsžogi

+371 29236371

26 The Skrunda Manor

Pils iela 2, Skrunda
+371 63370000, 22113355
www.skrundasmuiza.lv



27 Walking Trail in Skrunda



A convenient stop to tie a boat and get to the bank is found immediately behind the bridge, on the left. The 1.5 km long walking trail runs around Skrunda Castle Mound. The furthest point of the trail is located in the highest place in Skrunda – on Hillock Ventas. There is a facilitated resting area with a solid wood table, benches, a “photo frame”, a fixed BBQ “Venta”, a campfire site, Barefoot Trail. A sculptural object – Venta's Stega – is installed on the hillock. Ventastega Curonica is a unique animal, a forerunner of dinosaurs, who, about 365 million years ago, came out of the ocean and whose fossil residues were found in the Ketleri Outcrops in Skrunda region.



22 The Lēnas Manor

A once large complex of buildings has suffered several reconstructions and only farm buildings remain as an evidence of its former grace.

23 Camping and paddling equipment hire Ventmalas

www.ventmalas.lv **+371 29633991**

24 Holiday house Gāznieki

+371 29129091 **www.gaznieki.lv**

25 The Roman Catholic Church in Lēnas

The church was built in 1756. Two church towers slowly appear in the landscape when approaching Lēnas. In the basement of the church there are tombs of the last two bishops of Piltene. **+371 63881081**

28 Guest house and paddling equipment hire Ventas

+371 29106069 **www.ventas.lv**

29 Guest House Lapsas

+371 29135682 **www.laivubaze.lv**

30 Campsite Mailītes

+371 29406697

31 Outcrop on Brieži Rapids

On the left bank of Venta, consisting of colourful, greenish grey and violet brown outcrops.

32 Campo's paddling equipment hire Straumēni

+371 29222339 **www.laivas.lv**

33 Resting place Mārtiņšala



A popular facilitated beach area with an outdoors playground for children and activities for adults, changing rooms, toilets, life-saving station and a 'health trail'. It is located in an exclusive area, at the waterfall Ventas Rumba.

34 Ventas Rumba

The height of the waterfall varies between 1.6 m and 2.2 m. Do not cross it by paddling! Carry your boat around the waterfall on either bank of the river. Enjoy the natural SPA under the waterfall in summer. During spring, the unique phenomenon of salmon and vimbas trying to overcome the natural barrier to reach their spawning grounds can be seen.

35 Walking trails along the River Venta



The 2.5 km long trail on the left bank links both bridges in Kuldīga, the beginning of which is immediately behind The Kuldīga Museum and it is illuminated at night. The 0.5 km long Pārventa Park Trail starts immediately behind the old brick bridge and takes you along a rolling terrain to enjoy a view of the town from the right bank of the river. Both of the wooden plank trails are facilitated with recreation sites and viewing platforms to offer a moment of peace and relaxation.

36 Kuldīga District Museum

Pils iela 5, Kuldīga
www.kuldigasmuzejs.lv
+371 63350179, 27025463

37 The old brick bridge across the River Venta

Built back in 1874 and with its 164 m it is among the longest brick bridges in Europe. At night, the bridge boasts of its beautiful lighting patterns.

38 Melnā Kolka

A 15 m high rock with outcrops on the left bank of the River Venta, on the outer curve.

39 Veckuldīga Castle Mound



It's time to stretch the legs! The Veckuldīga castle mound is located on a steep hillock next to the mouth of the River Krāčupīte joining Venta. The castle mound was once among the largest and best-fortified in the ancient Curonian land Bandava. At the foot of the castle mound, there is a small resting place from which wooden stairs lead to the top of the mound.

40 Riežupe Sand Caves

The caves stretch for a total of about 2 km, of which 460 m are open for visitors. The entire cave maze is made by people. Sand was used for the production of glass in Ilģuciems. Caves have a constant air temperature of +8°C throughout the year. **+371 29555042, 28636831, 29896646**
www.smilsualas.lv

41 Resting place near the mouth of the River Riežupe



42 Resting place Braslas



43 Sandstone rock Sarkanā siena

Approximately 15 m high sandstone rock 100 m along the left bank of Venta. The red colour originates from the Devonian red clay.

44 Guest house Kamenītes

+371 20372600, 29478628

45 Camping Nabīte

+371 26327997, 29458904
nabite@inbox.lv

