



TRAKAI AND VILNIUS DISTRICTS

CASTLES AND CASTLE SITES





TRAKAI ISLAND CASTLE

GPS: *54°39'7"N 24°56'0"E*

Address: Karaimų str. 43C (Lake Galvė, Castle Island), Trakai town, Trakai eldership, Trakai district municipality

ABOUT

The masterpiece of medieval defence architecture, the only water castle in Eastern Europe, sometimes also referred to as the Crown of Lake Galvė, offers visitors both glorious Lithuanian history and a great variety of present-day cultural events.

Senieji Trakai, Naujieji Trakai Peninsula and Island Castles are the main features of the region, as during the years of formation of the Lithuanian state, Trakai was one of the most important political and military cities. At the very beginning of the 15th century, the Castle was built on one of many islands of Lake Galvė (with an excellent strategic location) and expressed the most advanced ideas of fortifying (defence). Interestingly, at the time when the Castle was built, the level of water in the lake was 2 metres higher than it is now! The current island used to be a group of three small islands.

The construction of the Castle was started by Grand Duke Kęstutis of Lithuania and finished by his son Vytautas the Great. The latter managed to strengthen and modernise the initial design of the Castle. A new Gothic-style brick castle was built with a smart combination of residential and defensive purposes. In 1409, it was made the capital of Lithuania and moved the state treasury and the Metrics of Lithuania there. Vytautas the Great died there on 27

October 1430. Trakai Island Castle was home to all the Grand Dukes of Lithuania and only Zygmunt August broke the tradition when in the middle of the 16th century he built a palace in Vilnius, at the bottom of Gediminas Hill.

The year 1951 saw the start of large-scale research works on the territory of the castle, and Trakai History Museum moved in to the restored palace in 1962. Visitors are able to admire its austere interior and the many interesting items on display. Sixteen additional exhibition displays are based in western casemates, where the crew of the castle lived. Its halls now hold a variety of applied art collections including pipes, watches, furniture, porcelain, glass and bone art works, etc. Among the display items one can find collections of coins, medals, ancient maps, hunting trophies, dress jewellery, utensils, armoury of the knights, and oil paintings. Today, the museum holds close to 400,000 exhibits!

In addition to the permanent museum exposition, various exhibitions, conferences, musical festivals and performances are regularly held in the courtyards and halls of the castle. Just like centuries ago, Trakai Island Castle hosts official foreign delegations, royal families, presidents, ministers and ambassadors.



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

Various theoretical and practical events for children and adults are held in a specifically designed classroom located in the defensive tower above the gates of the Castle. Participants can get to know more about knighthood in the Middle Ages, the inquisition, military equipment or secrets of military victories, Gothic architecture, forming coats of arms and others. Trakai Island Castle is surrounded by Lake Galvė, which has 20 islands! Special educational classes present participants with a variety of interesting facts and legends about the lake and its islands.

VYTAUTAS THE GREAT CELEBRATION

Vytautas the Great is without doubt one of the most prominent and important figures in Lithuanian history. His glorious victory in the Battle of Grunwald, the expansion of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania from the Baltic to the Black Sea and other important achievements mark very important milestones in the history of Lithuania. Every year, on the day of Vytautas' death, 27 October, everyone is invited to Trakai Island Castle to take part in the events commemorating the Grand Duke.

ANCIENT ARTS AND CRAFTS DAYS

A very special event, which lasts for a few days in August, takes everyone back to medieval times introducing people to ancient arts and crafts. The celebration dates back to 1495 when it was first mentioned in a statute approved by Duke Alexander. The statute granted privileges to the first guild of Goldsmiths of Vilnius. Jewellers present their creations and introduce people to the intricacies of their craft. They display pieces that would have been used by knights and noble women of the medieval times. Many other crafts are displayed including wood carving, bookbinding, smithy, archaic fishing gear production etc. as well. Everyone can learn how to make beads, butter, squeeze cheese or cast bronze alloy.

NEARBY:



WWW.TRAKAIMUZIEJUS.LT/EN/



THE COMPLEX OF TRAKAI PENINSULA CASTLE AND OTHER STRUCTURES

GPS: *54°38'44"N 24°56'10"E*

Address: *Kėstučio str. 4, Trakai, Trakai eldership, Trakai district municipality*

ABOUT

Trakai region is rich in its abundance of stunningly beautiful lakes and has been heralded for centuries because of its three castles. Nearly four kilometers south of Trakai old town, is Senieji Trakai Castle – birthplace of Vytautas the Great built by Duke Gediminas. Naujieji Trakai Island Castle presents itself as a masterpiece of 15th-century defensive architecture of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania! At the time Trakai Peninsula Castle was one of the biggest and most important and stood as proof of Lithuania's economic and military might.

The Peninsula Castle, much bigger in size and importance than the Island Castle, was one of the largest 15th-century enclosure castles of Lithuania. These types of castles were usually constructed in hard to reach places, surrounded by water. An inner courtyard is surrounded by defensive walls with embrasures, towers, and gates. Such castles were surrounded by bodies of water, steep embankments and deep trenches which were meant to prevent enemy soldiers from entering the castles. As time went on, the role of Trakai Peninsula Castle changed. Earlier it was the place of residence of Lithuania's grand dukes and their sons and later it served as a prison for high profile enemies of Lithuania, a Dominican monastery opened at the end of the 17th century, and

the Russian empire made it a place for police and the court. Finally, the Gestapo operated from there during WWII and the KGB converted it to a prison after the war. Today the restored Peninsula Castle is open to the public. The exposition of liturgical art opened in 2005 in the territory of Trakai city, in the former Dominican monastery, has more than 200 unique exhibits that reveal the life of the church of the time.

The knowledge about Trakai Peninsula Castle comes from limited written sources. They tell us that the castle was constructed before the end of the 14th century. Surrounded by Lakes Galvė and Luka (Bernardinai), the castle, fortified with masonry defensive walls, was part of Trakai and Vilnius defensive complex system. The 15th century marked the decline in importance of the Main Castle and castle lands were parceled away.

Sacrifice Hill is the highest point on the peninsula, 1 of 1,000 hill forts in Lithuania. Full of deciduous trees, the 17-m high hill fort allows visitors to enjoy some of the most beautiful views – Trakai Lake which surrounds the peninsula and the red gothic style Island Castle. According to a legend, the name of the hill finds its roots in sacrificial pagan ceremonies that took place at the time.



LITURGICAL ART EXHIBIT

The first Dominican monks arrived in Trakai in the 17th century. After they secured a piece of land in Peninsula Castle territory, they began the construction of a three nave two tower classical style church, but the construction wasn't finished.

Much later, after theological doctor L. Glovickis became the prior of the monastery the church naves were rebuilt and in 1822 the chapel was consecrated and given the name of Saint Michael the Archangel. A year later a monastery with a sacristy, dining room, and a kitchen were opened.

A liturgical art exhibit has been welcoming visitors since 2012. It contains pieces of liturgical and church wardrobe, altar utensils, 18th century bells, and representations of visual arts. A portrait of the Grand Duke of Lithuania stands out among the pictures and sculptures of saints.

THE RISE OF THE MIDDLE AGES

Every year in mid-June a procession along Karaimų Street, the main street in Trakai old town, moves towards the Peninsula Castle. The area at the foot of Sacrifice hill fills with various craftsmen (shoemakers, jewelers, leather tanners, wood carvers, potters and many others), traders, knights, traditional and street artists and countless guests. Sounds of traditional music and forge hammer blows, dance ensembles along with martial art performances recreate the magical atmosphere of the medieval city and its castle. The highlight of the event is the battle of knights. Group battle tournaments and international archery competitions are also held. Those brave enough are invited to try out their skill in axe throwing or archery. One cannot miss the dazzling burning arrows show!

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SENIJEJI TRAKAI CASTLE SITE AND VYTAUTAS THE GREAT ROAD

GPS: *54°36'20"N 24°59'05"E*

Address: Pilies str. 1, Senieji Trakai village, Senieji Trakai eldership, Trakai district municipality

ABOUT

...Once upon a time Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania, who lived in his native Kernavė at the time, was hunting on the other side of the River Neris and saw a beautiful hill in the plains. The duke was mesmerised by the magnificent place and decided to build a castle here. This is how a castle came to be built and a new town, which we now call Senieji Trakai, quickly began to form around it. Beginning in 1316 Senieji Trakai served as the capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for seven years. After the prophetic dream of Gediminas about an iron wolf and when Vilnius became the new capital, this place served as the capital of Trakai duchy and the Samogitian elderate. Trakai derives its name from the word 'trakas' (track), meaning 'a raised place in the forest'. The woods have disappeared, but the memory of the old landscape has remained engrossed in the name of the area. Today's archaeologists tell us that these surrounding areas were inhabited a very long time ago. Close to a small lake (now marsh) a large settlement was functioning in the first millennia BC. Some interesting artefacts from various periods, such as animal remains, knives, keys, tips of crossbow arrows, manicure scissors and others were found. Senieji Trakai Castle is one of Lithuania's oldest masonry castles and was very conveniently situated in a strategic area. It was surrounded by a trench up to 35-40 m wide

and up to 8 m deep and protected by a 10-m high defensive wall. The year 1350 marked the birth of one of the most prominent future Lithuanian historical personalities who was born into the family of Duke Kęstutis and Priestess Birutė. At the time when the Duke Vytautas was the ruler, Lithuania expanded from the Baltic sea to the Black sea! When the country was fighting with the Teutonic Order, the Castle suffered numerous attacks and attempts to destroy it. A fatal battle occurred with the order in 1391 when the castle was almost completely destroyed and has never been rebuilt since. About 14010 when he moved to Naujieji Trakai Vytautas the Great assigned Benedictine monks from Tyneco (near Krakow) to his birthplace. The duke built them a wooden church and allocated them some land along with two lakes. So, one of the first monasteries in Lithuania was established here. It operated until the mid-19th century when it was closed by the administration of the Russian empire.

Today the top of the old castle site is occupied by a monastery and neo-gothic style church ensemble rebuilt at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Senieji Trakai street village is nestled around the old castle site and has the status of an architectural sanctuary.



VYTAUTAS THE GREAT ROAD

Commemorating the 570th anniversary of the death of the duke, the symbolic Vytautas the Great road revived. The Trakai–Senieji Trakai route includes nine stops, roadside poles that symbolise important events and achievements in the life of Vytautas. Travellers first encounter a roadside pole dedicated to Saint Jurgis built at the earliest, in 1998. This reflects the Great Duke's militant character, the fierceness of his battles and victories. The place marks the beginning of the road to the historical capital of Lithuania – Senieji Trakai.

Saint Casimir's wayside shrine tells the story of Vytautas the Great as a builder of castles and churches. And the arrival of Benedictine monks to Senieji Trakai is commemorated with the roadside pole of Saint Benedict. 'The escape to Egypt' serves to remind about the arrival of Karaites in Lithuania. The woman holds a basket with cucumbers and tells us that it was the Karaites who introduced cucumber and how to grow it into Lithuania.

Saint Catherine of Alexandria, the patron saint of students reminds us about Vytautas' campaign to send youth to study in western Europe and the first Lithuanian student at Krakow University was Mykolas who came from Senieji Trakai!

Near the entrance of Senieji Trakai stands a sculpture honouring

Kęstutis and Birutė. They hold a crown from Vytautas which never reached them. 'A Suffering Pietà' recalls a painful time when Kęstutis was killed in Krėva castle. This roadside pole is held in special esteem by locals who frequently pray here. There is a sculpture of Blessed Virgin Mary with Baby Jesus in the old castle place which symbolises the purity of motherhood and love of the homeland. Finally, the last sculpture built depicts a sitting Duke Vytautas with a sword in one hand and Lithuania's statehood symbol Vytis – in another.

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SACRIFICE HILL

GPS: *54°38'48"N 24°56'16"E*

Address: *Kęstučio str. 4, Trakai town, Trakai eldership, Trakai district municipality*

ABOUT

Sacrifice Hill marks the highest point of the Trakai Peninsula. It offers beautiful landscape views of Trakai Peninsula Castle and its surrounding lakes, a unique old history and an opportunity to embrace the atmosphere of medieval life. A hill fort, which is 17 metres above the ground on the west bank of Lake Luka (Bernardinai), is called Sacrifice Hill – although there is no known reason for the name. According to a well-known legend, the hill was used to make sacrifices to the pagan gods.

The main function of Sacrifice Hill, like most other mounds, was to protect the castle and the surrounding settlement. The locals as well as troops would gather on the platform (now it is 45 m long and 17 m width) at the top of the hill to defend themselves from attackers.

Additional protection of the castle was ensured by the construction of natural obstacles like man-made ground piles or ditches – a 18-metre-wide and 3-metre-deep ditch surrounds it. The height and steepness of the hill's slopes were important signs of the mound's inaccessibility. Climbing the 17-metre-high Sacrifice Hill can be a serious challenge. Fortunately, today you can use steps to climb the hill and enjoy the view.

Today, it is especially difficult to find a mound in Lithuania that would still have its original appearance. Often you need to use your imagination to picture their former steepness, ditches and barriers. Alternatively, try to imagine the significant weight of the armour and weapons that knights had to carry – they could weigh anywhere up to 40 kg!



THE PENINSULA CASTLE

It is believed that the construction of the Peninsula Castle in the 14th century was carried out at the order of the Duke Kęstutis. Before that, Senieji Trakai Castle, located 3 km from the town of Trakai was the residence of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. Under the rule of the famous Grand Duke Vytautas (15th century), the Trakai Peninsula Castle, also known as the Great Castle, was one of the Grand Duke's residences. It was an integral part of the defence complex of Trakai and the capital city of Vilnius. After the death of Vytautas, the Grand Castle became the residence of the Dukes Švitrigaila and Žygimantas Kęstutaitis.

Over time, the castle was abandoned by the dukes and was consequently used for different purposes. Interestingly, at the beginning of the 16th century, the messengers of the Grand Duke of Moscow and other high-ranking enemies or captives were imprisoned there. In 1655, the Peninsula Castle was destroyed. It was only two centuries later, at the end of the 19th century, with the revival of archaeological research, that restoration works of the defence complex began.

THE MEDIEVAL FESTIVAL

Events held at the foot of Sacrifice Hill every summer in June attract thousands of visitors. Participants of these unique medieval celebrations compare the experience to one of being in a time machine taking them to the hustle and bustle of a medieval town. Lots of merchants and craftsmen sell the various creations of potters, blacksmiths, sculptors, jewellers and other artists. The Festival features a special coin mint which allows visitors to mint their own medieval coin. An open kitchen offers an impressive variety of cuisine choices. Street performers, knights showing their stamina, courage and serenity, sounds of old music ensembles and blacksmiths' hammers – all create a unique ancient spirit and bring the atmosphere of a medieval castle and city life alive.

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MAIŠIAGALA HILL FORT AND THE MONUMENT TO GRAND DUKE ALGIRDAS

GPS: *54°51'58"N 25°03'50"E*

Address: Algirdo str., Maišiagala town, Maišiagala eldership, Vilnius district

ABOUT

Maišiagala settlement, located about 28 km north-west of Vilnius, offers guests a rich history. Maišiagala was mentioned in the written Prussian Annals as early as the 13th century. Later, these lands belonged to the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Algirdas. However, it is likely that the first settlements appeared here in the first part of the first millennium AD: this is evidenced by the hill fort and the remainders of a settlement at its foot.

Lithuanian hill forts never stood alone and formed a solid and rather tight network of state defence castles. Maišiagala's wooden castle probably belonged to the inner ring of Vilnius castles. Historians believe that the golden age of Lithuanian hill forts was the time of Algirdas' reign, when fierce battles for freedom and religion took place. In about 40 years, the Knights of the Tectonic Order held 96 crusades against Lithuania and destroyed 22 castles! In response, Lithuanians attacked the Order 50 times and destroyed 17 of their castles. These were the achievements of Algirdas, the last pagan Grand Duke of Lithuania, and his brave men.

The wooden castle of Maišiagala was repeatedly burnt down and then rose again from the ashes. The turning point came in the 15th century, when the Tectonic knights burnt the castle to the

ground, and captured and led away more than 1,000 prisoners. The castle has never been restored since. In 1992, Maišiagala Hill Fort, located on the right bank of the Dūkšta Stream, was recognised as an architectural, historical and monumental landmark.

Ten years later, a monument in honour of Grand Duke Algirdas was erected at the south-west base of the hill fort. Algirdas was sometimes called 'The Victorious Warrior'. During his reign, he encouraged urban growth, trade and culture, and made Lithuania a stronger and more centralised state.

Each year, at the beginning of autumn, an annual celebration to honour Algirdas is held in Maišiagala. Following a service at the local church, guests are invited to march towards the Hill Fort. There they enjoy performances of various musical ensembles, theatrical concerts, national celebrations around the bonfire, etc.



MAIŠIAGALA HILL FORT

The impressive 18-metres high hill fort is sometimes called Queen Bona's (Bona Sforza) Castle. The oval-shaped look-out deck at the top of the hill fort is 60 metres long and 40 metres wide. In order to strengthen the defence, back in the medieval times a ditch 4 metres deep and even 30 metres wide was dug and a dyke that was 4 metres high and 25 metres wide was formed. Today, the natural character of the hill fort has changed (like that of the majority). The naturally changing environment as well as ongoing archaeological excavations were behind these changes.

Archaeological excavations revealed a considerable cultural layer inside the hill fort: ductile ceramics, a variety of metal items, tools and jewellery, fragments of burnt wooden houses, and remains of animals were discovered. All of that proves that Maišiagala Hill Fort's history dates back to the first millennium AD. A settlement spanning over 1 ha was located at the foot of the Hill Fort. At the beginning of the second millennium, a wooden castle was erected, which was a serious threat to the Tectonic Order knights advancing towards Vilnius in the 13th and 14th centuries.

MONUMENT TO GRAND DUKE ALGIRDAS

According to an ancient Lithuanian tradition, the Grand Duke Algirdas had to be burned in Šventaragis Valley in Vilnius. However, in 1377, the city was attacked by the crusaders and was severely damaged. It is possible that the Temple was also damaged. The solemn burial of Algirdas was held in the holy wood of Kukovaitis, nearby Maišiagala Castle. The last pagan Grand Duke of Lithuania was burned alongside his finest horse. It is said that they were both decorated with precious stones and pearls. In 2002, the year of the 625th anniversary of Grand Duke Algirdas' death, a monument in his honour was erected at the foot of the Maišiagala Hill Fort. A composition made using field stones was created by the sculptor Domas Čiapas.

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BRADALIŠKĖS HILL FORT

GPS: 54°49'31"N 24°56'37"E

Address: Bradeliškės village, Dūkštos eldership, Vilnius district

ABOUT

Bradeliškės Hill fort is the biggest hill fort in the Neris River Regional Park. It has been extensively researched by archaeologists and very well adapted for tourists. It is located in the impressive Dūkšta Brook valley and with the help of modern technologies you can travel back to the times of our ancestors.

The first hill forts were built by the Balts in 2000 BC. There was a time when they comprised a very dense defensive complex. It is estimated that today there are nearly 1,000 hill forts in Lithuania – no other country in Europe has more hill forts than Lithuania!

Today there are ten hill forts in Neris Regional Park from different eras; the park is known for its magical splendour of nature and abundance of cultural heritage objects. A hill fort on the left bank of the River Dūkšta, not far from Bradeliškės village, is worthy of special attention. This was thought to be the earliest place inhabited by people and started being used for defensive purposes in 2500 BC. Local people were hiding here from enemies up until the 14th century.

As time passed, Bradeliškės Hill Fort has changed considerably. An informational display created in 2017 allow visitors to view the hill fort the way it looked several centuries ago. This three-dimen-

sional stand shows us the once great, but now extinct steep embankments of the hill fort, the hill's fortifications, and the River Dūkšta that followed a different route back then. Many centuries ago there stood a wooden castle that was protected by natural obstacles and defensive measures implemented in addition to that: ramparts and ditches. This hill fort was one of the two very important defensive points between two Lithuanian capitals, Kernavė and Vilnius.

We can see for ourselves how drastically different today's scenery is: a large part of the hill has slid down to the brook that runs along the foot of the hill, the defensive rampart suffered erosion and wooden fortifications that stood on the upper platform have disappeared altogether. Now it is well adapted for visitors. Wooden stairs lead to the very top of the 16-metre high hill fort. There is one interesting detail about the hill fort – the hill's surface area equals that of a football pitch and spans more than 110 metres and is 60 metres wide! Once on top, visitors have their breath taken away by the magnificent views of the Dūkšta landscape. Autumn is an especially picturesque period of the year for this is the time when the many forests of the valley burst out in many colours.



BUIVYDAI HILL FORT

Buivydai hill fort stands less than half a kilometre from Bradeliškės, also on the left bank of the River Dūkšta. It is known for its steep 40-metre high embankments. Today there is an observation deck in place of the former castle platform which serves as an open vista to the impressive view of the Dūkšta valley.

Buivydai hill fort is called the most curious mystery in Neris Regional Park. Due to the lack of archeological findings it is not possible to confirm that the site was the site of a small ancient castle.

Two sides of the hill fort border the River Dūkšta and a ditch which is fed with waters from the brook and snow runs along the other. On the side free from natural obstacles Lithuanians once built an elaborate defensive system that consisted of three ditches and three ramparts.

Address: Buivydai

GPS: *54°49'19"N 24°56'25"E*

KARMAZINAI HILL FORT

The strange small, pyramid-like Karmazinai hill fort stands in the vicinity of the junction of the Neris and Dūkšta. According to archeologists it is about 2000 years old which, as time passed, lost its defensive capabilities and became a sacrifice hill. A sacrifice hill was an ancient sacred place, where pagan Lithuanians held ceremonies to honour their gods. Today there is an altar and bonfires are lit on special occasions; wedding and other ceremonies are also held here as well. Karmazinai hill fort, also called Viršupis Sacrifice hill, is entwined in many legends. It is said there once stood a stone idol and the hill itself was surrounded by two circles of 18 mighty large oak trees. Another legend tells us a church was built here, but suddenly disappeared. That explains midday bell rings coming up from deep down.

Address: Karmazinai

GPS: *54°49'09"N 24°55'52"E*

NEARBY:



WWW.PILIAKALNIAI.LT



MEDININKAI CASTLE

GPS: *54°32'21"N 25°38'59"E*

Address: Šv. Kazimiero str. 2, Medininkai village, Medininkai eldership, Vilnius district

ABOUT

Medininkai Castle stands firmly on the Medininkai Elevation. It is not only well-preserved, but also one of the biggest in Lithuania. It is well worth coming here to both admire the castle and to take part in the events held here. Medininkai town grew alongside one of the oldest and largest trade routes in Lithuania, used by Lithuanians to get to the Russian lands. Burial mounds, hill forts and traces of ancient settlements are often found along this trail and testify to the fact that its history dates back to the first millennium. Due to the lack of architectural sources, we cannot know precisely when the castle was built. It is believed that the settlement and the castle appeared during the reign of Grand Duke Gediminas of Lithuania in the first half of the 14th century. In the 14th century, Medininkai Castle was mentioned in written sources for the first time. It was a document detailing one of the crusades. The Castle is located in close proximity to the Aukštojas and Juozapinė Hills, the highest peaks in Lithuania. Medininkai Castle has undergone restoration, and now invites visitors to explore its permanent expositions held in the main tower and to enjoy the view of the Medininkai Highlands from the observation deck. The present owners invite the curious to various events, its premises are also used for conferences and expositions including photography, graphics and painting. The castle has four

permanent exhibition halls. The tower of the castle is five storeys tall and invites visitors to learn more about the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and its brick castles and explore unique archaeological findings. The latter include weaponry of the time: cannons, stoneware and other military equipment. One of the halls houses a display of hunting trophies and a collection of hunting knives belonging to former Lithuanian President, A. M. Brazauskas. The top floor has a great representative hall.

Medininkai Castle is rectangular-shaped and is classed as an enclosure castle. It is the largest castle of this type in Lithuania and one of the largest castles in Central and Eastern Europe! Double defensive ditches (one of them filled with water) and a brick wall surround it. Its total area including defensive moats and fences is close to 6.5 hectares. Medininkai Castle has four towers, which are connected by walls almost 2 metres thick and up to 15 metres tall with gates and embrasures. The main defensive and residential tower (the dungeon) is about 30 metres high. The Castle's architecture is modest and simple. Although it is difficult to distinguish more prominent style features, the gates and tower windows have sharp arches, which could be considered the rudiments of the Gothic architectural style.



MEDININKAI CASTLE GAMES

Every year on the last weekend of September Medininkai Castle hosts the extraordinary Medininkai Castle Games. During this celebration, the castle brings together knights, craftsmen, artists and countless guests.

The castle is full of hustle and bustle while guests enjoy all sorts of entertainment including games. Knights and archery tournaments are held here, and riders have a chance to demonstrate their prowess. A traditional craft fair takes place in the castle's courtyard, and dozens of craftsmen display their creations. Visitors can create their own crafts or souvenirs. Visitors are welcome to relax and have a drink and a snack in a special pub set up for the occasion. The event celebrates the castle's history, its importance in Lithuania's history as well as key historical figures and legends associated with the castle. The sounds of ancient music, ritual hymns and altar smoke – all create a special medieval atmosphere.

EDUCATIONAL CLASSES

One can learn a lot at Medininkai Castle not only theoretically, but also use the tools hands-on, as festive educational classes for children and adults take place here. Elementary school students can take part in the class about Ancient Pagan Religion, which talks about the hierarchy and diversity of ancient gods, dukes and the role of ancient priests and priestesses of that time. A different class reveals the aspects of the medieval city's architecture, various clothing peculiarities and specific societal life that existed here hundreds of years ago. Older schoolchildren can learn more about the history of money in the world and in Lithuania as well as the subtleties of moneymaking. A class about bows is held at the Castle's courtyard where you can also learn how to use them.

NEARBY:



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