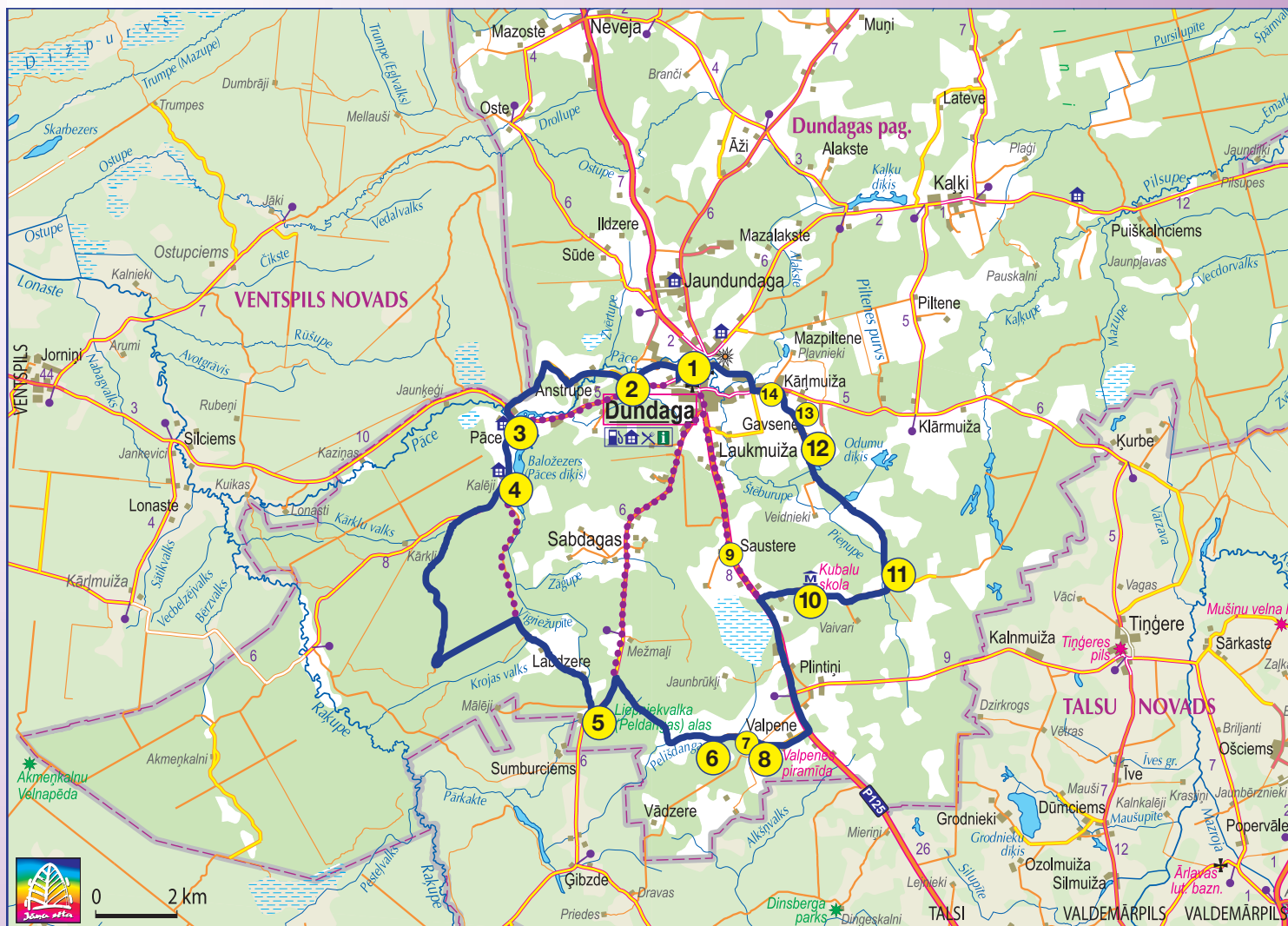




# Dundaga cycling circle «Baron bōgans»

Dundaga cycling circle which covers about 40 km in the vicinity of Dundaga (alternatives: 12, 20 and 30 km)



## Characteristics of the route

The ecotourism route gives an opportunity of visiting nature and historical objects around Dundaga: Dundaga castle, Pāce wool plant, horse farm „Kalēji”, Liepniekvalks caves, biological farm „Jumari”, Valpene stone pyramid, Kubalu school-museum, dwelling places of Krišjānis Barons, the collector of Latvian folk songs, „Būdeni”, ruins of the former native house of Arvids Blumentāls, the crocodile hunter in Australia, degustation of the Latvian national dishes: sklandraušī pies and pūtelis in „Jaunsniķeri” farm, original trees, stones.

**Most interesting objects of the route:** Narrow-gauge railway station and track, old Barons' cemetery, lake Baložezers, Pāce wool plant, horse farm, Liepniekvalks caves, „Jumari” old farm, Valpene stone pyramid, Kubalu school-museum, sklandraušī pies in „Jaunsniķeri” farm.

**Specific features of the route:** the route is diverse, packed with culture heritage and nature objects, opportunities of recreation and cognition. The dwelling places of the collector of Latvian folk songs Krišjānis Barons and his family.

**Length of the route:** the length of the route is about 40 km, still there is a possibility of distance diversion from the main circle and other alternatives according to the wishes of the participants.

**Alternatives:** 1) returning from Pāce to Dundaga; 2) skipping Pāce and surrounding objects by visiting Liepniekvalks caves instead; 3) other options (look in the map).

**Time limit:** the time necessary for covering the route may last from half a day to one day depending on the travel speed and number of sightseeing and recreation places.

**Accommodation:** Dundaga castle, tel. +371-20275095, 29478393; „Jaunemari”, tel. +371-29432740; „Krūziņi”, tel. +371-29174944; „Pūpoli”, tel. +371-29197900; „Pasaku namiņš”, tel. +371-29462622; „Annes” in Pāce, tel. +371-29452512.

**Road surfacing:** Asphalt, gravel, forest trails, unpaved roads.

**Starting and finishing point of the route:** Dundaga.

**Course of the route:** Dundaga – Pāce – „Kalēji” – Liepniekvalks caves – „Jumari” in Valpene – Kubalu school – „Būdeni” farm – „Jaunsniķeri” in Gavsene – Dundaga.

**Marking:** Blue standard signs with a bicycle icon, though at some turnings there are posts with green bicycle signs.

**Alternatives:** It is a round route which can be started at any point or done in the opposite direction.

**Bicycle rent:** „Jumari” in Valpene (6), tel. +371-29469425; „Annes” in Pāce, tel. +371-29452512; „Pūpoli” in Dundaga (2), tel. +371-26554001.

**Shops and cafes:** in Dundaga.



## Major sightseeing objects

### 1 Dundaga castle and park. The largest and oldest castle in North Kurzeme.

Its building dates back to the 3rd quarter of the 13th century. During the long period of existence it has experienced wars, numerous changes of owners, several rebuildings. The castle has been on fire twice, though renovated and even enlarged. The castle obtained its present look before the 1st World War, the interior of this period has partly remained on the second floor.

There are many stories and legends connected with Dundaga castle – about dwarfs' wedding and Green maiden, about the small shepherd, etc. Tel. +371-29444395.

Nowadays the castle is the cultural, recreation and tourism centre of Dundaga region. It houses Dundaga art and music school. The castle provides an opportunity of staying overnight in the hostel, hiring rooms for seminars, conferences and weddings. Tel. +371-2947 8393.

The park with the territory of 21.7 hectares situated next to the castle calls for taking a walk. Trees of 48 different species, including 15 giant trees, grow in the place cultivated in the 17th century. One of them, the so-called 'Money Oak', has decorated the 100-rouble banknote issued in Latvia in 1919. The park is separated from the castle by a pond floated from the Pāce river.

**2 Narrow-gauge railway station and track.** The wooden building of the narrow-gauge railway station was constructed during 1930s and was in use until 1968 when the railway traffic was stopped. Nowadays the building houses the old people's home „Station”. The narrow-gauge railway was established during the 1st World War. The train could complete the 50 km long distance from Stende to Dundaga in 3,5 hours. This train used to be one of the major initiators of the economic activity of the region. The bikers can use the railway embankment section up to the old barons' cemetery.

**3 Pāce wool plant.** Wool processing has been a traditional craft in Pāce since late 1800s. It used to be the only place in Latvia where a full circle of wool processing was provided. During the years of the 1st Republic of Latvia broadcloth was manufactured here. During the soviet times Pāce used to be the second biggest consumer service workshop in Latvia for sheep's wool manufacturing. Tel. +371-26151720.

**4 Horses in „Kalēji” farm, Pāce.** We offer sightseeing around the farm and horseback riding. One can be lucky enough to taste mare's milk and ride a line-cart. There is also a possibility to look at Latvian brown pedigree cows and semi-wild cows. Tel. +371-26497430.

**5 Liepniekvalks sand caves.** One of the longest natural sand cave systems in Latvia (about 70 metres long). Sandstone caves have been dug up by a group of natural scientists under the guidance of Guntis Eniņš in 1988. It is only possible to examine the caves from the outside.

**6 Biological farm „Jumari”.** The old farm belonging to the branch of Krišjānis Barons family offers the opportunity of visiting the household, taking a walk into the nature, tasting herb tea and acorn coffee, having lunch. Cultivated billberries are also grown here. The visit should be reserved beforehand. Tel. +371-29469425.

**7 Valpene village.** The name „Walpene” was mentioned in the document from 1290 about arguments between the bishop of Kursa and Riga Dome capitule. The Father of Latvian folk songs Krišjānis Barons once lived in Valpene half a manor and studied in Kubalu school under the guidance of Ernests Dinsbergs. K.Barons' mother Enģele was buried in Valpene cemetery but the branch of his sister's children still live in this village.

**8 Valpene pyramid.** A heap of stones – dedication to the Father of Latvian folk songs Krišjānis Barons – was piled at the beginning of 1990s by a group of people under the guidance of Latvian poet Imants Ziedonis and sculptor Vilnis Titāns. Krišjānis Barons lived in Valpene half a manor and studied in Kubalu school. The names of the neighbouring houses have been carved on the stones.

**9 Saustere village.** Kubalu school-museum is situated in this village and several celebrities were born or have worked here: writer, teacher and founder of Kubalu school Ernests Dinsbergs, teacher and journalist Frīdis Dravnieks, teacher and linguist Sofija Dravniece, crocodile hunter in Australia Arvids Blūmentāls. The vast territory is quite deserted nowadays.

**10 Kubalu school – museum.** The house was built as a structure of horizontal wooden logs in 1842 and it was the first school in Dundaga area (closed in 1964). You can visit the museum and become acquainted with the living and working place of a teacher and writer Ernests Dinsbergs from May 1st to October 31st by reserving your visit. Tel. +371-63254335, 26332238.

**11 „Būdeni” farm.** It is the native home of Arvids Blūmentāls, crocodile hunter (Crocodile Harry) in Australia (1925–2006). At the age of 17 Arvids applied for the legion and went to war. Long time after the war there was no news about him. Arvids' family – his mother, father and younger brother – had been sent to Siberia. After the treatment of a serious injury Arvids had



left Germany for Australia and started his life as a crocodile hunter there. In his letters to Latvia he wrote he would never come back to his fatherland as it would be too unbearable for him to see his family and home destroyed.

**12 „Jaunsniķeri” farm.** Degustation of the Latvian national dishes sklandraušis pies and pūtelis by reserving your visit. Tel. +371-26111364.

**13 Gavsene village.** Elma Zadiņa, the landlady of „Jaunsniķeri” says: „Gavsene ... what has been left in this village nowadays? People live in „Jaunsniķeri”. There are people in „Sniķeri” house, but the land is not being cultivated. Almost all houses have broken down. There is still the „Springi” farm, but the heirs stay there just during summers. The situation became worse when the land amelioration was started during the soviet times – people were paid a little to move to the centre and their houses were pulled down. „Kluči”, „Odumi”, „Pupavi”, „Pļavsargi” – all these farms were destroyed. Now the village is totally deserted – as a result of deportations, broken families and difficulties of returning back.”

**14 Kārļmuiža village.** According to the data of 1924 a lot of landlords named Kārlis lived in this village and this name was very popular during that time. One of the farms was also named „Kārļi”. Besides this, the fact that the major-domo Karl Ludvig Ferdinand fon Osten-Zacken was in charge of Dundaga manor during the end of the 19th century and also his marriage with Klara fon Keidel in 1857 made a contribution to the belief of the natives about the link between the name Kārlis and the name of the village. „Kārļmuiža village has been named after the landlord's name but Klārmuiža village which is situated a bit farther – after his wife's name.” Though the mentioned concurrence is not a sufficient reason for the interpretation of the name of the village.

Translated by Sandra Salceviča