



PUNIA

A PLACE BRINGING BACK TO
THE BATTLE OF PILĖNAI

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ALYTUS DISTRICT

Architecture of **St. Jacob the Apostle church** combines baroque and classical style. It was built in 1863. Meanwhile, the first church in Punia was built back in 1425. They say that Vytautas the Great ordered to build it, for this reason, he has been commemorated until nowadays – there is a portrait of the duke next to the coat of arms of Punia in the church. Vytautas the Great liked Punia very much and defended it from enemies on a number of occasions. He also had his residence here. As Guillebert de Lannoy, a Flemish traveller and diplomat and adviser to the Burgundy duke, who visited the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in 1412-1413, stated, to meet Vytautas the Great he had to go to Punia. The grand duke spent two months a year here. The traveller also told that he met the duke's wife and daughter in the residence as well.

 Church of St. Jacob the Apostle in Punia is part of St. Jacob's Trail in Lithuania.



The tower-shaped masonry **chapel** of **St. George** was designed in commemoration of the participants of the rebellion of 1831. The then parson of Punia Juozapas Klikovičius took part in the rebellion, later he was hiding but was arrested in Kalvarija in 1837. It is thought that the modern-day chapel stands exactly where the first church of Punia was built.





The Punia Mound is one of the biggest and most beautiful in Lithuania. It is situated at the confluence of the rivers Nemunas and Punelė. The mound can be easily found – there is a path from the church leading to the west, one has to take the path and follow it for about 200 metres. There is a legend telling that the duke Margiris had his castle on the mound of Punia and it was called Pilėnai. The mound saw the famous battle of Pilėnai in 1336. Defenders of the castle and residents chose to die in flames rather than surrender and be brought into captivity by the crusaders.

According to the legend, on the opposite side of the Nemunas, on the Mound of Rumbonys, there used to be underground caves in the basement of the castle even under the Nemunas. They wound their way for several kilometres and reached the Castle of Punia. The crusaders would not have conquered the castle of Punia, even if they had not found these underground tunnels which were used by Margiris' knights to bring some food and weapons from the castle of Rumbonys. Unfortunately, somebody turned traitor and was tempted by offered treasures. The traitor showed the secret underground way and the crusaders managed to invade the fortress of Punia.

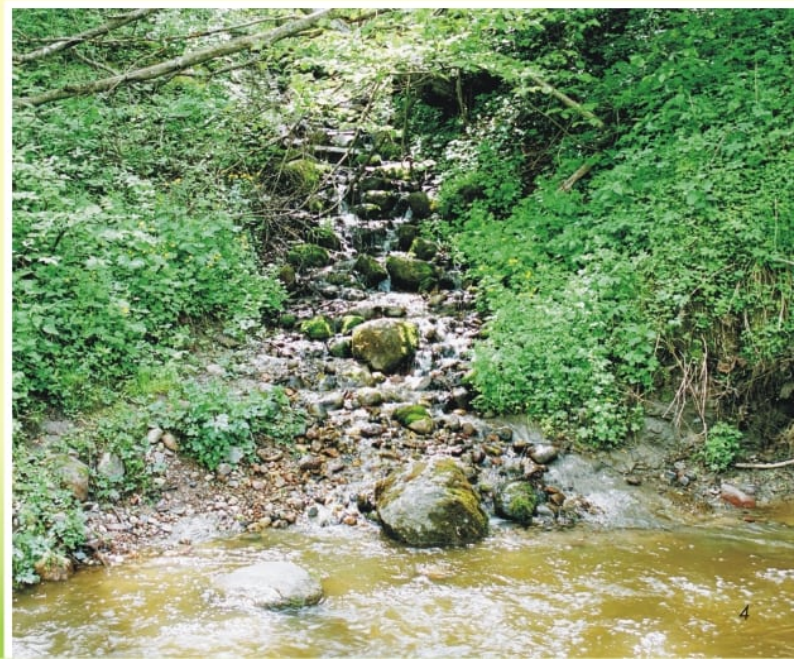


After thorough explorations of the mound, archaeologists identified that there was a castle on the mound in the 13th and 14th century which was burnt down. A new castle was built instead in the 15th century. However, the latter also burnt down in less than a century and at the end of the 16th century a new big mansion was built here. Later it simply rotted away.



Reconstructive painting of Punia castle by S. Mikulionis

At the foot of the mound, the **spring of Nečiukos** falls into the stream of Punelė. The spring was named after a masonry which used to stand nearby.





Places to visit

- 1 Čebatėlis Mythological Stone
- 2 Nečiukos Spring
- 3 Old Jewish Cemetery
- 4 5 6 7 Old Tatar Cemetery
- 8 St. George Chapel
- 9 Vaidagai Old Cemetery
- 10 Partisan Battle Place
- 11 18 Partisan Perish Place
- 12 Punia Mound
- 13 St. Apostle Jacob's Church in Punia
- 14 Old Cemetery in Punia
- 15 Monument to Grand Duke Vytautas
- 16 Raiziai Mosque
- 17 Ethnographic Exposition of Punia.

Culinary and educational programmes in a cottage of an ordinary resident of Panemunė in Punia.

Association "Panemunės Džūkai" (leisure rides in a carriage, one-horse carriage rides, one-horse sleigh rides, Nordic walking sessions).

Legend

- | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| | Municipality, Subdistrict boundary | | Mound |
| | Regional park, reservation boundary | | Stone |
| | Railway, station | | Monument |
| | Hard surface road, motorway number | | Museum |
| | Gravel road | | Culture center |
| | Country, forest road | | Café |
| | Forest | | Educational activities |
| | Gardens | | Library, internet |
| | Lake | | Post office |
| | Swamp | | Shop |
| | River, stream, ditch | | Recreational fishing |
| | Settlement | | Recreational hiking |
| | Catholic church | | Recreational riding |
| | Mosque | | Cycling route |
| | Chapel | | Autotourism route |
| | Cemetery | | Water route |
| | Jewish cemetery | | |
| | Tatar cemetery | | |



On the top of the mound, spectacular scenery can be enjoyed: a wide strip of the Nemunas river and **Punia Pinewood**, which is part of the Regional Park of the Nemunas Loops and is one of the oldest, highest and most interesting forests in Lithuania in botanical terms, is surrounded by water from all sides. The forest has the highest pine in Lithuania, many admire the alley of centenary oaks, the history of the country is reminded by the model of the partisan headquarters bunker of Dainava county; diversity of the forest nature can be discovered in the museum of the forestry office.

Late July Punia traditionally celebrates the feast of fresh bread or **the name-day of Ona**.



The old Jewish cemetery of Punia is found near the Punelė stream going down towards the mobile wharf.

Cemetery of the town features the monuments of the small-scale architecture, namely, the **old wooden crosses of dzūkai** (native inhabitants of the region).

INFORMATION

- **Punia Neighbourhood**, Kauno str. 3, Punia, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 68 640, +370 687 99 594
- **Alytus District Punia School-Multifunctional centre**, Margirio str. 58, Punia, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 68 685
- **Punia Post Office**, Kauno str. 3, Punia, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 68 641
- **Raižiai Post Office**, Mokyklos str. 1, Norgeliškės Village, Punia Neighbourhood, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 42 241
- **Directorate of the Regional Park of the Nemunas Loops**, Tylioji str. 1, Birštonas, phone: +370 319 65 613

INTERNET SERVICES

- **Alytus District Municipality Public Library Punia Branch**
Kauno str. 3, Punia, Alytus District, phone: +370 315 68 677.
Working hours: II-VI 9.30 a.m. – 6.00 p.m.

ACCOMODATION

- **Farmstead "Ymilsa"**, Vytauto str. 5, Raižiai Village, Punia Neighbourhood, Alytus District, phone: +370 615 83 167
- **Association "Dzūkų Ainiai"**, Kauno str. 3, Punia, Alytus District, phone: +370 683 68 872

ENTERTAINMENT

- **Culinary and educational programmes in a cottage of an ordinary resident of Panemunė in Punia**, in which an authentic environment of the 19th century life of residents in Dzūkija (south-east Lithuania) is restored. During the offered culinary and educational programmes you will see how 'banda' – the traditional flat potato dish of inhabitants of south-east Lithuania – is baked and pancakes made of once ground flour ("razavi") are fried; you will also be introduced to traditional dishes and customs of the Advent and Lent (fasting periods). "Bandos" are made of grate potatoes and baked on dried leaves of cabbage in a deep furnace. They are eaten with a sauce made of home-made curds and cream called "darycinis". "Razavi" pancakes are made of rough flour which has to be ground by the guests using a very old edgestone.

Dressed in national clothes the hostesses tell about the local traditions, customs and daily life, make tea made of herbs collected on the Mound of Punia.

Local "bandos" of Punia are included in the top ten winners of the EDEN project "Lithuanian Tourism Attraction Site 2015. Tourism and Local Gastronomy".



Kauno str. 3, Punia, Alytus District, phone: +370 611 45 791





- **Association "Panemunės Dzūkai"** provides guide services, organises events, offers carriage rides, one-horse carriage rides, one-horse sleigh rides on the itineraries designed for ordinary and electrical bicycles, Nordic walking sessions, boat trips (for more contact by phone +370 687 41 068).

Kauno str. 3, Punia, Alytus District, phone: +370 687 99 294



- **Balloon Club "Audenis"** offers hot air balloon flights, a lift into the air in a tied hot air balloon.

Strielčių str. 30,
Strielčiai Village,
Punia Neighbourhood,
Alytus District,
phone: +370 677 79 918,
www.ballooninggoods.lt



- **Ethnographic exposition on regional studies**

"Punia in the Course of Centuries"

(for a visit contact in advance),
Alytus District
Punia School-Multifunctional Centre,
Kauno str. 3, Punia,
Alytus District,
phone: +370 315 68 685,
+370 611 45 791



- **Tours in Punia**

P. Džervus, phone: +370 315 68 683, +370 614 56 686
G. Laukaitis, phone: +370 687 99 294

- **Tours in Algimantas Žemaitis' Flower Farm**

Vilniaus str. 10, Punia Village, Punia Neighbourhood,
Alytus District, phone: +370 686 84 314, www.puniosgeles.lt



- **Tours in Raižiai.** Raižiai, which is 16 km from Punia, is one of Lithuania's Tatar centres. This village was established at the end of the 15th century and at the beginning of the 16th century. Raižiai has a mosque which was built in 1899. Near the mosque two sun clocks were built in 2010. One of them shows local time, the other – the time of the field of the Battle of Grunwald (Žalgiris). They are the only clocks of this type in Lithuania. Further away, on the hill, a monument for Vytautas the Great and the aforementioned battle was built on the occasion of the 600 anniversary to the Battle of Grunwald (Žalgiris). There is a possibility to taste and evaluate a Tatar cake – puff pastry cake with poppy seeds (šimtalapis) – in Raižiai.



For tours and tasting of the cake contact Mr. I. Makulavičius in advance by phone +370 686 56 801

- **Recreational fishing in**

Punia pond (all year round)
Margirio str. 12, Punia Village,
Punia Neighbourhood,
Alytus District,
phone: +370 685 75 778,
www.dideleszuvys.lt

