MERKINĖ

To Ryliškės

To Kaunas 100 km

To Vilnius 100 km

Mergelės akelės

To Druskininkai 28 km

Kalvių str.
Naujoji str.
Pušyno str.
Kauno str.
Nemunaičio str.
Maksimoniu str.
Seinų str.
Taurakalnio str.
Jazminų str.
Merkinės str.
Kalno str.
Sodų str.
Sakų str.
Vilniaus str.
Gilšės str.
Vilties str.
Daržų str.
Smilties str.
K. Jagmino str.
Stangės str.
J. Bakšio str.
J. Slackevičiaus str.
Piliakalnio str.
Gardino str.
Seinų str.

Strauja

Stangė

13

13

14

11
12
10
9
1
4
3
2
5
6

15

8 Jonionys stones

106,4 m
7

To Lazdijai 56 km

NEMUNAS

Merkys

Orientation map for the most important buildings in the city centre according to a 1797 map

3
4
5
1
2
7
6

1. City hall
2. Dominican church and monastery
3. Site of the Church of St Peter
4. Jewish school
5. House in which Vladislovas IV Vaza died
6. Parish church
7. Jesuit church and monastery

Legend

Džūkija National Park and Čepkeliai State Strict Nature Reserve headquarters
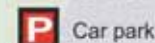Merkinė visitor centre, Art gallery

Eldership   Educational institution   Town territory

Sites worth visiting:
1. Monument to mark Merkinė's jubilee: the Royal Seal of Jogaila
2. Wayside shrine, marking the site of the Dominican church and monastery built in the 17th century
3. Local lore museum
4. "Vaza's house"
5. Church of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary
6. Wayside shrine, marking the site of the Jesuit church and monastery built in the 17th century
7. Mound (hill-fort)
8. Jonionys stones
9. Wayside shrine, to mark the attack on Merkinė in 1945
10. Monument in memory of Vincas Krėvė-Mickevičius
11. Hillock of crosses
12. Wayside shrine, marking the site of the Church of St Peter, which stood there in the 17th century
13. Poles to mark Merkinė's city limits in the 16th century
14. Monument to St Casimir, patron saint of Lithuania
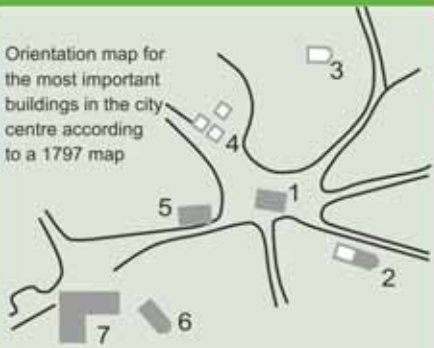15. View tower

P Car park
P Dock   Campsite

Cemeteries:
1. Town cemetery
2. Russian Orthodox graves
3. Graves of Soviet soldiers
4. 15th century burial ground site
5. Jewish civil cemetery
6. Jewish genocide graves
7. Graves of German soldiers

MERKINĖ

From the 16th to the first half of the 17th centuries, Merkinė was one of the most important cities in Lithuania. Kings and dukes hunted in the forests, the bells of four Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches rang out in the city, monks in two monasteries taught their students Latin, poetics and rhetoric, Jews gathered to pray in synagogues starting at the beginning of the 17th century, a magistrate presided over court sessions at the city hall. Here historical traces were left by Vytautas Didysis ir Jogaila (Vytautas the Great and Jogaila), who while in Merkinė in 1387 authorised the granting of Magdeburg Rights to the city of Vilnius. Many Lithuanian rulers granted privileges to Merkinė, and in 1569 Žygimantas Augustas (Zygmunt II August) granted the city Magdeburg Rights and approved the city's coat-of-arms, featuring a unicorn.

Vladislovas IV Vaza, the King of Poland as well as the Grand Duke of Lithuania, died in Merkinė in 1648.

The city's prosperity was brought to an end by the 1655-1661 war with Russia. Merkinė was burned to the ground and never returned to its previous level. In 1776, when self-rule was abolished for smaller cities, it was also abolished in Merkinė, but on 1 August 1791, the city's residents assembled at the city hall and elected new bodies for the free city's government and court, and a celebration was held in which cannons were fired to mark the occasion. In 1794, during the T. Kosčiuškos Uprising, the city was burned by the Russian army as it fled from Vilnius. Some historians claim that three churches, the city hall, the clock of its tower and the bell tower burned during a fire in 1882, but the final collapse of the city can be connected with the abolition of Lithuania's statehood in 1795. The remnants of the city hall were demolished in 1885, and in its place a Russian Orthodox church was built in 1888. In Merkinė in 1935, "Senovės diena" (Antiquity Day) was first celebrated in Lithuania. In the present day, Merkinė is a pleasant small town, attractive not only for its history, stories and legends, but also the beauty of its untouched nature and its cultural sites.

Merkinė's hillock of crosses is a monument in memory of Lithuania's resistance fighters.

The Church of the Assumption of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary is the oldest in the Dainava area. It is thought that the first church here was built from a fort prior to 1387.

The Merkinė castle, built in the 14th-15th centuries, stood on a famous mound (hill-fort) and was often mentioned in the chronicles of Wigand von Marburg and Johann von Posilge and in descriptions of the Teutonic Order's roads.

The view of the confluence of the Merkys and Nemunas rivers that opens up from Merkinė mound (hill-fort) is one of the most beautiful of Lithuania's landscapes.

The Merkinė visitor centre's exhibition reveals the beauty of the Park's rivers, streams and springs as well as their significance and influence on the region's settlement, residents' way of life and the local culture. In the art gallery, you will see a permanent collection of works by the wood carver Jonas Grigoravičius and temporary shows of works by folk artists and professional artists. Here you will find brochures and maps, you can purchase books and souvenirs, and find out about sites to visit and recreational opportunities.

Merkinė Visitors Centre
Vilniaus g. 3, Merkinė, LT-65334 Varėnos r.
Tel. +370 310 57245; +370 672 46275
E-mail: merkine@dzukijosparkas.lt,
website: www.cepkeliai-dzukija.lt