



The Port Briefing Series

Landfall

Klaipeda

Lithuania's only seaport - the old German Memel, and gateway to the Curonian Spit



Klaipeda in a Nutshell

A half-timbered Baltic port that spent seven centuries as German Memel and is Lithuanian only since the 1920s - now the ice-free gateway to the great dunes of the Curonian Spit



Port Day

Saturday 25 July 2026

A short orientation before you step ashore

Provisional Timings for the Day



0900
Alongside

>



0930
Gangway Open

>



1630
All Aboard

>



1700
Departure



The Old Town
A 10-Minute Walk

flat and easy from the ship - no shuttle today



The Spit
A Short Ferry

the Curonian Spit lies just across the lagoon



About 6 Hours
Time Ashore

the town easily, or the Spit if you move smartly



The Euro
No Change Needed

Lithuania is in the eurozone - a relief after next door



Watch For - Sailing In and Out



The Curonian Spit - the long, wooded dune peninsula forming the far shore as you approach



The Meridianas - the elegant white sailing ship moored in the Dane, a city landmark



A working port - Lithuania's busy, ice-free harbour, all cranes, ferries and shipyards



Time Ashore

About 7 Hours

a short day - the town at leisure, or the Spit at a brisk pace
Walkable town - but the Spit needs the ferry, so plan the crossing



Next Port of Call **Saaremaa**
Sun 26 Jul, 0930 - the Estonian island up the coast

Where in the World



On the Baltic

Lithuania's only major seaport, and ice-free - set where the River Dane and the Curonian Lagoon meet the sea



Gateway to the Spit

the great Curonian Spit - a 98-km ribbon of dune and forest, and a UNESCO site - begins just across the water



Local Time - Eastern European

Two hours ahead of the UK - follow the ship's daily programme for all-aboard

+3h

vs GMT

+2h

vs UK

+7h

vs New York

The Facts at a Glance



2.8 Million People

in Lithuania - Klaipeda is the third city, about 150,000 of them



The Euro

Lithuania joined the eurozone in 2015
- no need to change money



A Baltic Republic

the first to break free of the USSR, in 1990 - in the EU and NATO since 2004



An Ancient Tongue

Lithuanian is among the oldest living Indo-European languages, close to old Sanskrit



Basketball Mad

the closest thing to a national religion
- Lithuania punches far above its weight



The Amber Coast

Baltic gold has been gathered and traded on these shores for millennia



The Lithuanian Flag

yellow for the sun and the fields, green for the forests and countryside, red for the blood shed for freedom

What Lithuania Is Known For



Amber

Baltic gold - gathered on these shores, and worked into jewellery for thousands of years



Basketball

The national passion - a small country that regularly beats the giants of the game



The Curonian Spit

The UNESCO dune peninsula of shifting sands and pine - shared with Russia to the south



Cepelinai

The national dish (tseh-peh-lee-NYE) - potato dumplings shaped like little zeppelins



An Ancient Language

Lithuanian is among the oldest living Indo-European tongues, cousin to old Sanskrit



The Baltic Way

First to break from the USSR, joined hand to hand in a 600-km human chain in 1989

What Klaipeda Is Known For



Old Memel

Seven centuries as a German port - a half-timbered Old Town of Fachwerk houses



The Only Seaport

Lithuania's single major, ice-free harbour - the country's window on the sea



Gateway to the Spit

The jumping-off point for the Curonian Spit's dunes, forest and beaches



Sea Museum

The Lithuanian Sea Museum and Dolphinarium, in an old fort across the lagoon



The Black Ghost

A striking bronze sculpture climbing from the harbour wall, a modern city favourite



Annchen von Tharau

The Simon Dach fountain in Theatre Square - the emblem of the old town

A Famous Son of the Town



Simon Dach

1605 - 1659

Born here in Memel, the German poet whose tender love song 'Annchen von Tharau' became one of the best-loved lyrics in the language - and whose fountain, crowned by its heroine, is the emblem of Klaipeda's Old Town



Annchen von Tharau

His 1636 wedding poem, later set to music, is still sung across the German-speaking world



The City's Emblem

The Simon Dach fountain in Theatre Square, its Annchen statue re-cast in 1989, is Klaipeda's landmark



A Poet of Königsberg

He led the Königsberg poets' circle and wrote many hymns still heard in church today

Three Things They Will Not Tell You

1



You Can Simply Walk In

Unlike many Baltic ports, the Old Town is a flat 10 to 15-minute stroll from the ship - no shuttle or tour needed to reach the heart of the city – that said, the ship will provide a free one if you needed. The Klaipeda Sail Festival is also happening 24-26 July

2



It Is Euros Here

Lithuania is in the eurozone, so there is no money to change - a relief after the zloty in Gdansk next door - and cards work almost everywhere

3



The Spit Takes Time

The famous dunes are at Nida, 50 km down the peninsula - a ferry and bus, about an hour each way; Smiltyne, just across, is the quick and easy taste



Don't Mention... for seven centuries this was German Memel, Lithuanian only since the 1920s - a delicate, layered heritage; and Lithuania is proudly Baltic and European, never 'Russian'

Money - What It Buys



The Euro

Lithuania joined the eurozone in 2015 - the same notes and coins as much of Europe

£1 buys about **€1.18**

£1 buys about **\$1.35**

Lithuania is good value - your pound goes further here than at home



Cards work everywhere - even the ferry and small cafes take contactless

Indicative mid-market rates, late July 2026

What You Might Reasonably Pay



Coffee

€3.00

about £2.60



Water

€1.50

about £1.30



A Svyturys

€4.00

about £3.45



Cepelinai

€9.00

about £7.75



Top Tips to Save



Wandering the half-timbered Old Town and Theatre Square costs nothing



The sculpture park, the Black Ghost and the Meridianas are all free



The passenger ferry to Smiltyne and the Spit is only about 2 euros



The Spit's pine forest and wild Baltic beaches cost not a cent

Why Here? The Founding



1252

The Knights' Northern Castle

In 1252 the Livonian Order raised the castle of Memelburg at the mouth of the lagoon - the northernmost outpost of the crusading knights. A German trading town of amber and timber grew around it



Memelburg, 1252

The Order's fortress guarded the narrow mouth of the Curonian Lagoon - the key to this stretch of coast



Timber and Amber

Down the great rivers came timber from the forests of the interior, and amber was gathered on the shore



Prussia's Far Corner

For centuries the northernmost town of Prussia, and then Germany - remote, Protestant and proudly Hanseatic

Memel, March 1939

The Last Prize Before the War

In March 1939, with Europe holding its breath, Hitler forced Lithuania to hand Memel back to Germany by ultimatum. He sailed into the harbour aboard the warship Deutschland and spoke to the crowds from the theatre balcony. It was the Reich's last bloodless conquest - and just five months later, a little way down this same coast, the guns at Westerplatte would open the Second World War



The same coast, the same year - Memel taken in March, and the war begun at Westerplatte in September

Two Hundred Years Ago



1820s

The Far North of Prussia

Two centuries ago Memel was the northernmost town of the Kingdom of Prussia - a busy, remote timber and amber port at the mouth of the Nemunas (NEH-moo-nas), German-speaking and far from any capital

Prussia's edge

The northernmost town of the kingdom, looking out to a Baltic of sail and timber rafts

Timber and rafts

Great rafts of timber floated down the Nemunas from the interior to be shipped across Europe

A Hanseatic feel

Gabled warehouses and the Fachwerk houses that still give the old town its distinctive look

A Century to Now



1923

Lithuania Takes It

After the Great War, Lithuanian forces seize the League-run territory and make it Klaipeda



1939

Hitler Takes It Back

Germany reclaims Memel by ultimatum, the last prize before the war



1945

Soviet Klaipeda

The German population gone, the ruined port rebuilt as Soviet Lithuania's window on the sea



Today

Reborn

Independent Lithuania's thriving, ice-free seaport and ferry hub, and a lively festival city

Where You Berth - Alongside



Alongside, and Walkable

We dock at the cruise terminal by the mouth of the Dane - no tender - and the Old Town is a flat 10 to 15-minute walk, or a short taxi



The Spit, a Ferry Away

For the Curonian Spit, take the passenger ferry to Smiltynė - a few minutes across; buses run on from there to Nida's dunes

The Best View - and the Walk



The Best View

The Dane and the Meridianas

The white sailing ship moored on the little River Dane, framed by the old town - the prettiest, most photographed corner of Klaipeda



The Meridianas - the elegant white barque on the Dane, a restaurant now - the city's postcard view



The Curonian Lagoon - the wide, calm water between town and spit, busy with ferries and small craft



From the Spit - cross to Smiltynė to look back at the port, or south to Nida's great pale dune



Walking Old Memel

Terminal to Theatre Square

1.5 km / 0.9 mi · 15 min · flat, easy

Theatre Square and market

in the middle · linger · the heart of town

The Black Ghost and the quay

0.3 km / 0.2 mi · 5 min · on the Dane

The sculpture park

0.5 km / 0.3 mi · 10 min · green and quiet

The half-timbered Old Town is small, flat and easily walked - an hour or two takes in the square, the market, the quay and the sculpture park

The Old Town, or the Spit - Two Sides of the Day



The Old Town

On Foot from the Ship

- Theatre Square and the Annchen von Tharau fountain
- The Black Ghost sculpture and the Meridianas on the Dane
- The half-timbered streets, the old market, and amber shops
- The leafy sculpture park - all a short, flat walk



The Curonian Spit

By the Ferry Across

- The ferry to Smiltyne (SMIL-tih-neh) - a few minutes over the water
- The Sea Museum and Dolphinarium, in an old coastal fort
- Pine forest and wild Baltic beaches, right off the ferry
- Buses on to Nida's great dune, an hour south

Klaipeda on a Budget



The Old Town

Wandering the half-timbered streets and Theatre Square costs nothing at all



Annchen von Tharau

The Simon Dach fountain, the emblem of the town, is free to admire and photograph



The Black Ghost

The much-loved bronze climbing the quay wall, and the Meridianas nearby - both free



The Sculpture Park

A leafy park of Lithuanian sculpture on an old cemetery site - open and free



The Ferry to the Spit

The passenger crossing to Smiltynė is only about 2 euros return



The Spit's Beaches

Pine forest and wide, wild Baltic sands, just off the ferry - free to all



Landfall · Klaipėda

For the Cultured



Lithuanian Sea Museum

Aquarium, seals and a dolphinarium in a 19th-century coastal fort at Smiltynė



History of Lithuania Minor

The story of this German-Lithuanian borderland, in a handsome old-town house



The Clock Museum

A charming collection tracing timekeeping through the ages, a local favourite



The Blacksmith's Museum

Wrought ironwork and old grave crosses, a craft for which the region was known



The Sculpture Park

Over a hundred works by Lithuanian sculptors, set in a green former cemetery



Nida and Thomas Mann

The great Parnidis (par-NEE-dis) dune and the writer's summer house, an hour down the Spit

If You Do One Thing

Cross to the Curonian Spit

Take the little ferry over to the Curonian Spit, a UNESCO wonder of shifting dunes, pine forest and wild Baltic beach. The quick crossing to Smiltynė gives you the Sea Museum, the woods and the sands - and if time and legs allow, buses run south to Nida's great pale dune, the 'Lithuanian Sahara'



Rather stay dry-shod? The walkable old town of Memel is a fine and easy alternative

One Drink, and One Dish



If You Have One Drink

Svyturys

Klaipeda's own beer (SHVEE-too-riss), brewed in the city since 1784 and named for a lighthouse - a crisp, clean Baltic lager and the local pride. Ask for it fresh on draught in an old-town bar



If You Eat One Thing

Cepelinai

The national dish (tseh-peh-lee-NYE) - big potato dumplings stuffed with meat, shaped like little zeppelins, under sour cream and bacon. On a warm day, try saltibarsciai (shal-tee-BAR-shchay), the startling cold pink beet soup, or smoked fish from the lagoon

With Fair Winds

Klaipeda in a Slide



Wander old Memel's square - half-timbered and full of charm



Cross to the Curonian Spit - dunes, forest and wild beach



Raise a Svyturys - brewed here since 1784



All Aboard 1600 - Sail 1630 a short day, so watch the ferry times - then on to Saaremaa

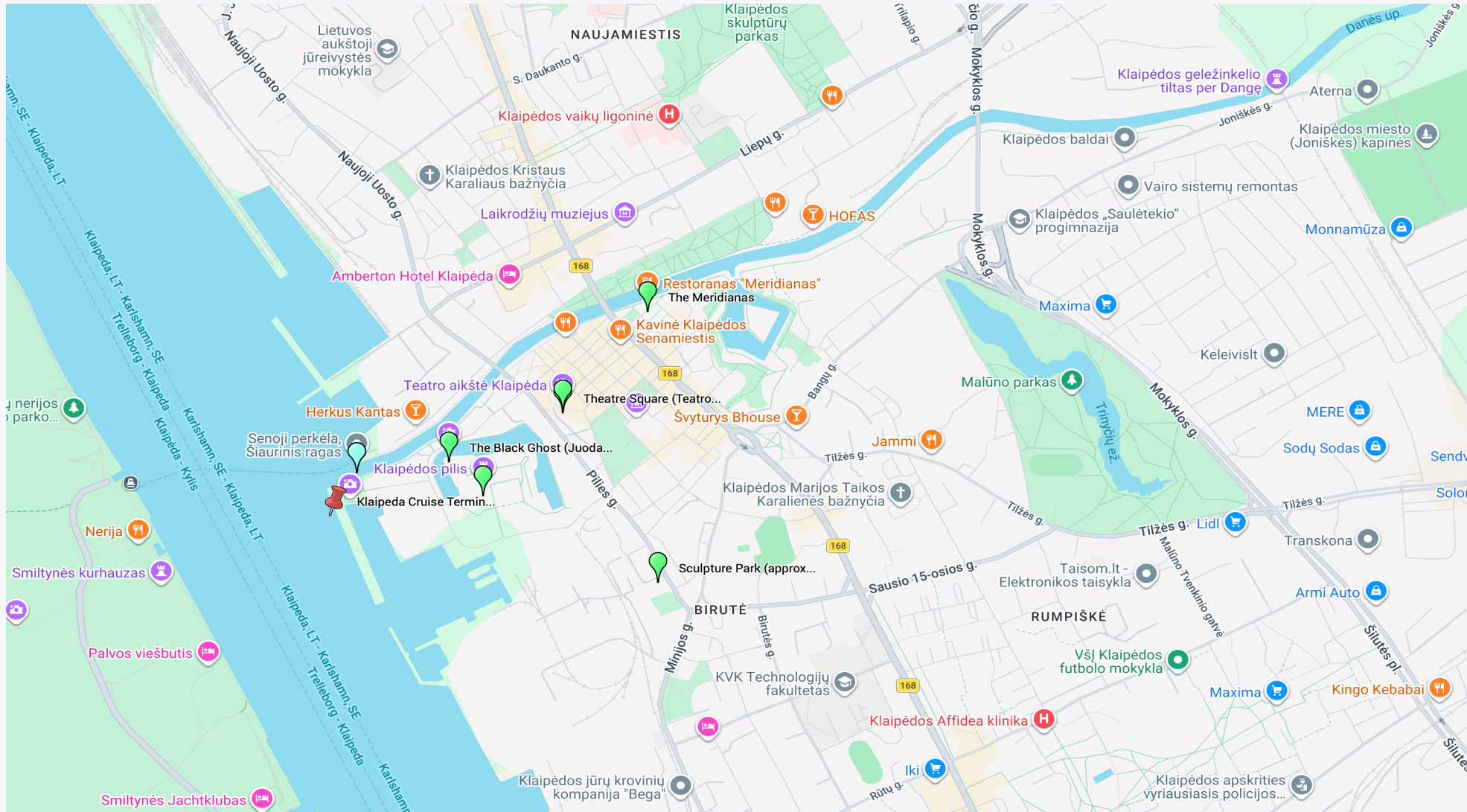


Klaipeda in Motion

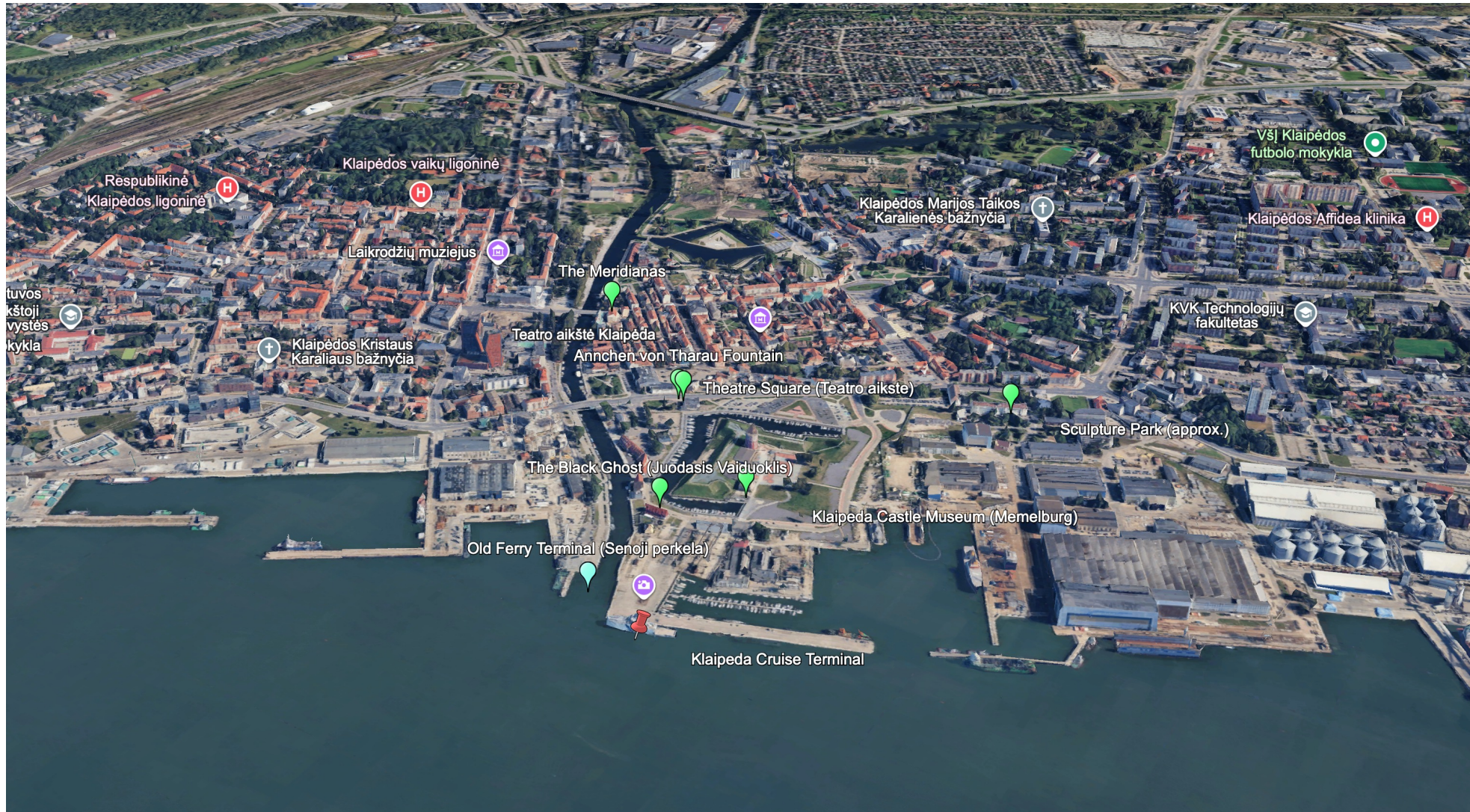


[World & Travel's Klaipeda Guide](#)

The Lie of the Land - Klaipeda



The Lie of the Land - Klaipeda



Prefer It Organised?

Explore with a Ship's Excursion

With a short day and the ferry to juggle, a guided tour takes the strain. The favourites cross to the Curonian Spit for Nida's great dune, or to the Hill of Witches sculpture trail at Juodkrante (yood-KRAN-teh); visit the Sea Museum and Dolphinarium; walk old Memel with a guide; or drive north to the amber resort of Palanga and its museum



Book at the Shore Excursions Desk

Apps Worth a Download

A few apps to smooth and enrich your day ashore - grab them on the ship's wi-fi before you step off



Google Maps

The walkable old town, and the ferry terminal - save the area to use it offline



Smiltynes Perkela

The ferry operator's site for live Smiltyne crossing times to the Curonian Spit



Google Translate

Lithuanian is a tricky old tongue - the camera and phrase tools are a real help



Your Cruise App

The all-aboard time in your pocket - vital on a short day with a ferry to catch

Forecasted Weather

Local time	12 AM	03 AM	06 AM	09 AM	12 PM	03 PM	06 PM	09 PM
Wind direction	↖	↗	↖	↖	↖	↖	↗	↗
Wind speed (kts)	8	12	13	12	11	10	7	9
Wind gusts (max kts)	10	15	16	13	12	13	11	11
Cloud cover	☁	☁	☁	☁	☁	☀	☀	☀
Precipitation type								
Precipitation (in/3h)								
Air temperature (°F)	62	62	62	63	64	65	67	67

