

# Selonia - the beginning is today

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Latvia



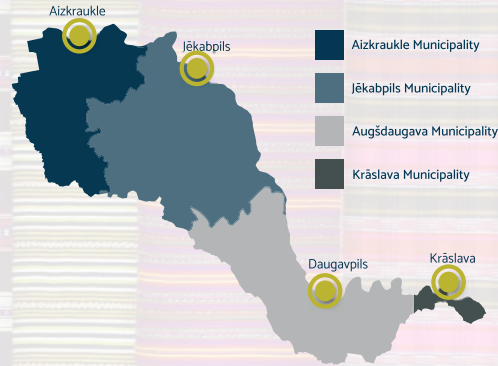
Selonia is a historical land nestled in south-eastern Latvia, bordered by Lithuania to the south and Belarus to the east and shaped by the Daugava River, which served as a vital trade artery. Today's Selonia spans four municipalities: Aizkraukle, Jēkabpils, Augšdaugava, and Krāslava Municipalities.



Coat of Arms of Selonia



Flag of Selonia



developed clusters of isolated farmsteads known as "skrajciemi" – sparse settlements that are not yet villages, not quite hamlets, are locally known as "islands" (human islands in the midst of nature). Following the restoration of Latvia's independence, agriculture and forestry have remained the cornerstones of Selonia's economy, complemented by a growing focus on services and tourism.

Small, winding roads lend the landscape a unique charm, accentuating its scenic views and offering cyclists an immersive experience of nature in its full beauty. More information on cycling routes in Aizkraukle Municipality can be found at [www.visit aizkraukle.lv](http://www.visit aizkraukle.lv) or by scanning the QR code.



A central pillar of Selonia's patriotic spirit is the ongoing tradition of the Selonia Congresses, inaugurated in 1999 on the initiative of academician Jānis Stradiņš. Equally significant is the regional folk arts festival Selonia Adorns (Sēlija rotā).

Today, Selonia's population is a mosaic of ethnicities and faiths. Latvians form the majority in the western and central areas, while the east has a multinational population of various religious denominations. As of early 2025, the historic lands had a population of approximately 61,000 inhabitants. Historically, Selonia

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Co-funded by the European Union



Latvia – Lithuania

Photo: Selonian Farmstead – open-air division of Jēkabpils History museum, photo by: Jānis Lācis

Cover photo: Jaunjelgava Historical City Centre, photo by: Vitālijs Prutskis

# The Duchy of Courland and Semigallia Period

The Duchy of Courland and Semigallia was established in 1562. It united the former territories of the Livonian Order located south and west of the Daugava River, encompassing all of Selonia up to present-day Kaplava Parish in Krāslava Municipality. The duchy functioned as an autonomous vassal state of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and later the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, governed as a constitutional monarchy. The ruler held the hereditary title of duke. Within the duchy, Selonia was referred to as Upper Courland, Upper Land, or Highland, and it was administratively part of the Semigallian portion of the duchy.

This historical period marks a formative stage in the development of Selonia's political, social, cultural and mental landscape, with a legacy that remains

palpable in modern-day Selonia. It distinctly separates Selonia from Latgale in terms of governance and religious influences. The duchy's weak centralisation and liberal stance on religious affiliation fostered the development of individual identity, the freedom of choice, and a reliance on personal and local community resources rather than on distant central authorities. This era facilitated the introduction of Enlightenment ideas into Selonia and boosted literacy rates, particularly through the work of Lutheran congregations. The duchy period nurtured tolerance and acceptance of diversity among the local population. Notable heritage sites in the Selonia region from the 15th-17th centuries include the historic centres of Jaunjelgava and Subate, Nereta Manor and Nereta Lutheran Church, Āži Inn in Viesīte, Lutheran churches in Zasa and Dignāja.

1. Jaunjelgava Tourism Information Point  
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2. Nereta Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.199961, 25.313856
3. Jēkabpils Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
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4. Daugavpils Tourist Service Centre  
GPS 55.870916, 26.517427
5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 55.900801, 27.161148
6. Historic centre of Jaunjelgava  
GPS 56.619647, 25.082809
7. Nereta Manor  
GPS 56.154934, 25.296251
8. Nereta Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.205180, 25.307323
9. Āži Inn in Viesīte  
GPS 56.350240, 25.555726
10. Zasa Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.296087, 25.976684
11. Dignāja Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.301181, 26.172415

12. Ilūkste Jesuit Monastery  
GPS 55.976817, 26.298913
13. Lutheran Church of Egypt and Vilkumiests  
GPS 55.747784, 26.311794
14. Elerne Catholic Church  
GPS 55.890870, 26.712974
15. Historic centre of Subate  
GPS 56.003103, 25.906619
16. Fragment of Duke Jacob's Canal  
GPS 56.134371, 25.862771
17. Skurstenkrogs Inn and Bridge over the Dobe River  
GPS 56.122552, 25.827844

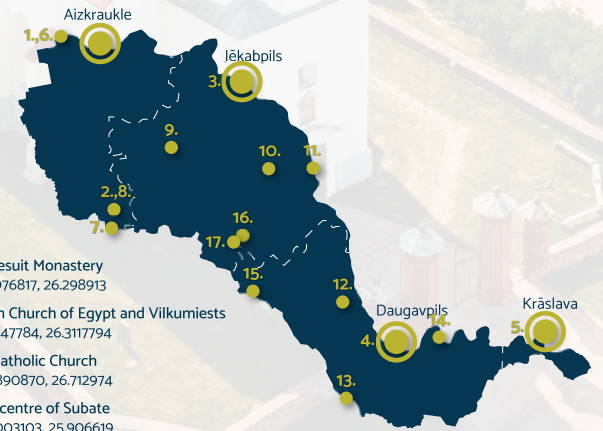


Photo: Nereta Lutheran Church, photo by: Ingus Pugačovs

# Nature and Landscape

The borders of the historical land of Selonia are shaped both by natural geographical features – such as the Daugava River and Selonia Ridge – and by the national frontiers with Lithuania and Belarus. Bogs, forests, meadows, and wild animals are just as essential to Selonia as its people. Latvia's most scenic route is particularly picturesque, running from Jaunjelgava to Jēkabpils and continuing further along the Daugava River to Dviete. From the Jaunjelgava promenade and the Jēkabpils dam, wide panoramic views open up across the river to the opposite bank. For boating enthusiasts recommends enjoying the smaller rivers such as the Mēmele and the Suseja. In spring, during the flood season, the Dviete floodplain provides a truly unique boating experience. A particularly unique natural site worthy of attention is the Korkuļi Swallows, Latvia's largest river water

sink system observable in nature. Lakes Klaucāni and Priekulāni in Kalna Parish, Jēkabpils Municipality, are home to the floating water caltrop, one of Latvia's rarest plant species, found in only four lakes. The plant is listed in Category 1 of the Red Data Book of Latvia, and it is strictly forbidden to pick it. A worthy destination is Sauka Nature Park, home to Ormaņkalns, the Daugava Meanders, the Dviete Floodplain, Medumi Lake Nature Park, Silene and Svente Nature Parks, as well as the Augšzeme and Augšdaugava protected landscape areas. Selonia is also home to three points of the Struve Geodetic Arc: Jēkabpils in Jēkabpils City, Bristene in Sece Parish, and Daborskalns in Sēlpils Parish, near Daborskalns in Sēlpils Parish, near Daborskalns is a 28-metre-high observation tower built on Taborkalns Hill. From the tower can enjoy sweeping views of the typical Selonian landscape.

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6. The Korkuļi Swallows  
GPS 56.569759, 25.243694
7. Bristene Point of the Struve Geodetic Arc  
GPS 56.581358, 25.359522
8. Jēkabpils Point of the Struve Geodetic Arc  
GPS 56.501567, 25.856734
9. Daborskalns Point of the Struve Geodetic Arc and Taborkalns Hill Observation Tower  
GPS 56.584197, 25.692274
10. Lake Klaucāni  
GPS 56.351112, 25.761858
11. Lake Priekulāni  
GPS 56.351436, 25.775600



12. Dviete Floodplain Nature Park  
GPS 56.066895, 26.176782
13. Kaldabruņa Hillfort  
GPS 56.094793, 26.082675
14. Sauka Nature Park  
GPS 56.304369, 25.425111
15. Saltupju Holy Spring  
GPS 56.171765, 25.735202

Photo: Taborkalns, photo by: Kaspars Siliņš

# Craftsmanship and Skills

Selonia boasts strong and still actively preserved traditions of craftsmanship. Selonian artisans are proud of their high-quality standards, aesthetic and design excellence, product diversity, and the depth of their technological expertise. Craftsmanship in Selonia stands on three main pillars: quality, functionality, and the preservation of cultural and historical elements. In Selonia, artisans remain highly respected, and craftsmanship as a whole holds a level of prestige high enough to be considered one of the defining elements of regional identity. Handcrafters and artisans come together in interest groups, which often evolve into associations, thus transforming ancient traditions into a form suitable for modern life and engage in economic activity by selling their handicrafts and handmade products at mobile travelling markets and on-site venues. Among those communities that vividly illustrate the

positive impact of craftsmanship and artisans on modern social interaction are: Kaldabruņa Community with the Ūdenszīmes Association, Dunava Community with the Dzīves prasme Association, Bebrene Community with the Māra Knitting Studio, and Leimaņi Community with its Crafts House Rūķiši. In Selonia it's possible to explore five very different ceramic workshops: Ināra and Guntis Ozoliņš's workshop "Bānītis" and Gunita and Mārtiņš Skaistkalns's workshop "Velniņš" in Daudzeva, Zanda Ragele's workshop in Nereta, Mareks Zavodnijs' workshop in Bebrene, and Anda Svarāne and Ieva Svarāne's workshop in Zasa. Results of research into craftsmanship and traditional skills can be found at the Selonian Crafts Centre Rūme and the Selonia Cultural Space in Zasa, as well as at the Open-Air Museum Selonian Farmstead (Sēļu sēta) in Jēkabpils, specifically at the Crafts House.

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5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
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6. Zanda Ragele's Ceramics Studio  
GPS 56.200581, 25.322732
7. Bānītis Black Ceramics Kiln  
GPS 56.512354, 25.231274
8. Velniņš Ceramics Kiln  
GPS 56.512051, 25.231232
9. Kroniņu kokapstrāde Wooden Frame Greenhouse Factory  
GPS 56.269238, 25.172484
10. Crafts House of the Sēļu sēta (Selonian Farmstead) Open-Air Museum. GPS 56.495963, 25.873599
11. Rūme Selonian Crafts Centre  
GPS 56.294664, 25.981379
12. Ceramicist Mareks Zavodnijs  
GPS 56.06679, 26.17680



13. Selonia's Cultural Space  
GPS 56.293523, 25.978989
14. Māra Knitting Studio  
GPS 56.068679, 26.135058
15. Glassmaker Ingrīda Degtjarova  
GPS 56.095269, 26.068148
16. Rūķiši Crafts House  
GPS 56.310462, 25.922959
17. Dzīves prasme Association  
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Photo: Zanda Ragele's Ceramics Workshop, photo by: Ingus Pugačovs

# Traditional Homesteads and Architecture

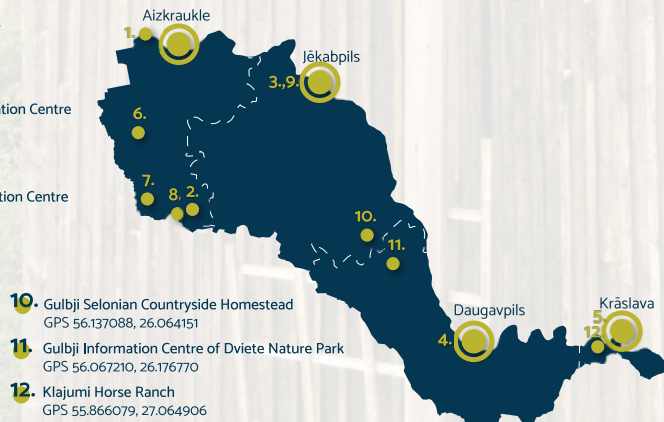
Selonia has long been shaped by the historical migration of diverse ethnic groups, which has left a visible imprint on all aspects of economic and cultural life. As a result, farming methods, homestead layouts, architectural styles, kitchen gardens, interior design, and household customs today still differ noticeably between the north-western and south-eastern parts of Selonia. Today, what is considered as a “traditional” Selonian rural homestead reflects cultural landscape and lifestyle features from the 17th to 19th centuries.

In western Selonia (Augšzeme), homesteads were constructed with harmonious proportions, layouts suited to their functions, and well-thought-out, carefully crafted structures. The central building was typically the residential house, sometimes with a chimney, around which the outbuildings were arranged along the sides of a rectangular courtyard. More fire-prone structures like threshing barns were placed farther away from other buildings.

The yard and sometimes its sections were enclosed with upright timber fencing. Along the roads, fences of various kinds, including post-and-rail types, were built. Some buildings along the courtyard edge also served a fencing function, with their rear walls aligned with the adjoining fencing. Entrance to the yard was through tall, wide double gates: a broad, likely double-leafed section for vehicles, and a narrower, single-leaf gate for pedestrians. The tall gateposts often featured decorative braces, supporting a crossbeam, above which a small gate-roof was mounted.

There are only a few remaining traditional rural homesteads in Selonia today that are both inhabited and accessible to the public. Visitors can explore the Open-Air Museum Selonian Farmstead (Sēļu sēta), an open-air section of the Jēkabpils History Museum. Also old inn buildings deserve special attention. A unique place to visit is Gricgale (Medņi) Inn in Pilskalne Parish.

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5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
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6. Kiermeles Farmstead  
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7. Gricgale (Medņi) Inn  
GPS 56.223698, 25.111781
8. Pilskalne Manor  
GPS 56.188727, 25.242528
9. Sēļu sēta (Selonian Farmstead) Open-Air Museum  
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10. Gulbji Selonian Countryside Homestead  
GPS 56.137088, 26.064151
11. Gulbji Information Centre of Dvieta Nature Park  
GPS 56.067210, 26.176770
12. Klajumi Horse Ranch  
GPS 55.866079, 27.064906

Photo: Selonian Farmstead – open-air division of Jēkabpils History museum, photo by: Kaspars Silīņš

# Culinary Heritage

The influence of diverse cultures, ethnicities, and religions remains strongly felt in Selonia. What makes a dish truly Selonian today is the person who prepares it, the place where it is served, the way it is presented, and the story behind it, including interaction with the hosts.

On special occasions, it is possible to enjoy more than just traditional food. Events like the Home Café Days or a pre-arranged visit with a request for a tasting will allow guests to get to know the cuisine, the farmstead, and the hosts all at once. Public catering remains underdeveloped in Selonia, due more to administrative and infrastructural challenges than people's reluctance.

The beet greens soup with smoked bacon and a boiled egg, called *batviņi*, is often cited as a traditional Selonian food.

*Knapsierīņi* – small salty curd cheese balls dried in a well-ventilated place, *zirņu pikas* – pea patties; plain potato dumplings, *potato sausage and blood sausage*; stuffed pork stomach, *karašiņas* – rye flour flatbreads, *kuģelis* – a baked potato pie with bacon, and its simpler, meatless version, *bāba* – these foods are found in Selonia, also in other parts of Latvia, Lithuania and neighbouring regions.

A culinary heritage journey to savour authentic traditional flavours through Selonia can be found at the Gricgale (Medņi) Inn and at the Pilskalne Manor. Traditional cuisine can also be enjoyed at the Boļāni in Sēlpils, at the Gulbji in Rubene, and the Klajumi horse farm, where after a horseback riding through the scenic bends of the Daugava River is rewarded by hearty Selonian meals.

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8. Gulbji Selonian Countryside Homestead  
GPS 56.137088, 26.064151
9. Klajumi Horse Ranch  
GPS 55.866079, 27.064906
10. Boļāni Biological Farm  
GPS 56.585914, 25.686969
11. ALĪDA Chicory Coffee Factory  
GPS 56.214873, 25.581742



Photo: Home Café Days in Selonia, photo by: Līga Kozlovskā

# Traditional Clothing

The diversity of communities and cultural identities of Selonia can be visible in both local dialects and traditional costumes. No two identical folk costumes were ever worn. While general features may be common within a region or parish, every individual's costume was unique. The characteristics of traditional dress are closely linked to the distribution of dialects and regional identity.

Today, what is referred to as a "traditional folk costume" generally represents festive attire worn in a particular region during the 18th and 19th centuries. Folk costumes across the Selonia region have been documented - tunic-style shirts with sewn-in shoulder inserts, and shirts with shoulder inserts attached along the direction of the fabric grain, white shoulder shawls (villaines) with embroidered patterns made from colourful woollen thread, woven belts (audenes) with alternating patterns in the middle of the belt and decorative narrow sashes (celaines), white knitted mittens and socks with colourful patterned bands. The colors and patterns of skirt fabrics could vary even within the same parish. In Selonia, narrow tie-back crowns worn by unmarried girls were common, for married Selonian women, the festive headwear was a headscarf, often edged with bobbin lace.

The folk costumes also show similarities with the traditional Baltic Finnic attire. One of the most striking similarities is the matpine, a symbolic headband. While crowns were traditional for unmarried girls



Photo: Nereta (Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš Museum) ethnographic crown, 19th century, reconstruction author Māra Krieviņa from "Zasa Cultural Space", photo by: Līga Kozlovskā

in most of Latvia, ribbon-like headbands were traditional in regions with Livonian heritage and other Baltic Finnic people. These were also made on red fabric bands and could be worn together with the maiden's crown. An excellent reconstruction of a matpine can be seen at the Ūdenszīmes Association, where the headband known as "Krievānu Māras josta" is preserved.

Mitten patterns are the greatest "travellers" among traditional textile designs, as mittens were not only gifted during engagements but also given as a gifts so spreading not only the patterns but also knitting techniques across wider regions. Often, mittens from Selonia use only two colours - white combined with dark grey, black, dark brown, or deep blue. Festive mittens were traditionally knitted on a white background. Unique and specific are the mittens from Slate, Zasa, and Aknīste.

# Antique Collections

Antique collections are a distinct part of the contemporary cultural landscape of Selonia. Private collections attract visitors with the opportunity to touch and try out many of the exhibits - to sit in a horse-drawn carriage, handle blacksmith tools, or carefully lift vintage apothecary bottles from times past. The personal stories of the collection creators, their genuine interest, and selfless contribution to building these collections bring the past closer to us. Many of them do not have formal education in history or museum studies. They are people who have managed to add an extra layer of meaning and value to their lives - something tangible, aromatic, and wrapped in living stories.

Three outstanding private collections in Selonia are available to visitors by prior arrangement: the collection of Konrādijs Degro in Nereta Parish, Aizkraukle Municipality, where the owner's personality and extensive knowledge of each item reveal a unique and rich historical picture; Valdis Kalnietis' collection "A Step into the Past" (Solis sendienās) in Gārsene Parish, Jēkabpils Municipality, where you can see various items, photographs, and written historical evidence; and the Stikāns' family collection in Medumi Parish, Augšdaugava Municipality, which displays artifacts from World War I and World War II, military heritage items, household items, coins, and photographs.

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5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
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6. Konrādijs Degro's collection of antiques  
GPS 56.180169, 25.257359
7. A Step into the Past - Valdis Kalnietis' private collection of antiques  
GPS 56.101870, 25.820936
8. The Stikāns family's private collection  
GPS 55.784904, 26.361726



# Literary Figures

When examining Selonia's cultural and historical heritage, it becomes evident that it is strongly shaped by its many writers, poets, and folklore collectors. Several authors are particularly noteworthy. **G. F. Stender's** most significant contribution is related to the reform of Latvian religious, secular, and educational literature and the popularisation of science, with a focus on the alphabet. Today, you can explore Stender's legacy in Eglaine, Viesīte, and Sunākste. The legacy of the most expressive Latvian poet, **Rainis**, can be explored at the Tadenava Museum and Rainis' childhood home, Berķenele. Writer **Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš** in his novel *The White Book* (Baltā grāmata) reflects the nature, traditions, and language of the Nereta region, serving as a clear mirror of both time and place. His legacy can be explored at the Museum Riekstiņi in Nereta Parish. **Aleksandrs Grīns's** two-part novel *Restorers of the Earth* (Zemes atjaunotāji) vividly

portrays the land of Selonia, the characters of its people, while the novel *Blizzard of Souls* (Dvēseļu putenis) is considered one of the great treasures of Latvian literature. **Jānis Akuraters'** works include place names from Selonia and word forms typical of the Selonian dialect area. Writer **Lūcija Kuzāne** - a prolific and truly Selonian writer - her entire literary output of 18 books is dedicated to Selonia. Her home is located in the Gricgale Inn, Pilskalne Parish. Writer **Valdis, or Voldemārs Zālītis**, captured his most memorable childhood impressions in the book *The Children of Staburags* (Staburaga bērni), which also reveals the story of the legendary Staburags Cliff. The countryside home of Latvian prose writer and playwright **Māra Svīre** was located in Vīgante Park, in Staburags Parish. She spent nearly fifty summers here with her husband, writer **Vladimirs Kaijaks**. Vīgante Park is a place that preserves reflections of the author's literary heritage.

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5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
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6. G. F. Stender Museum in Eglaine  
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7. G. F. Stender's grave in Sunākste  
GPS 56.432819, 25.522210
8. G. F. Stender's study in Viesīte  
GPS 56.348343, 25.552485
9. Tadenava - Rainis Museum  
GPS 56.176491, 26.114201
10. Berķenele - Rainis' house  
GPS 55.815968, 26.456939
11. Monument to Rainis in Rubeņi  
GPS 56.139647, 25.985930



12. Riekstiņi - J. Jaunsudrabiņš's childhood house  
GPS 56.196776, 25.379991
13. A. Grīns Park in Kalna Parish  
GPS 56.350871, 25.820877
14. The Grīns family burial site in the Lūcāni Cemetery, Slate  
GPS 56.179330, 25.949685
15. J. Akuraters Literary Trail in Brodi, Ābeļi Parish  
GPS 56.470007, 25.878479
16. L. Kuzāne's house - Gricgale (Medņi) Inn, Pilskalne Parish  
GPS 56.574357, 25.497073
17. Vīgante Park - long-time home of writers Māra Svīre and Vladimirs Kaijaks  
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Photo: Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš museum "Riekstiņi", photo by: Ingus Puģačovs

# Selonian Subdialects

In Selonia, people speak the Auģšzeme dialect of the Latvian language, including both its deep and shallow subdialects. Until the 15th century, the ancient Selonian language was spoken in this region. Traces of it remain in place names and dialects found. Gradually merged with the tongues of other Baltic tribes, contributing to the development of modern Latvian and Lithuanian language. Folklorist Beatrise Reidzāne identifies thirty-eight Selonian subdialects.

Today, the Selonian dialect is still spoken daily in the central parts of Selonia - in and around Aknīste, Bebrene, Dignāja, Subate and Zasa. However, its geographic reach is shrinking, and younger generations rarely speak it fluently. But in recent years, the dialect has started to appear in marketing as a recognisable symbol of Selonia's identity. The speech is notable for its rising-falling or purely rising intonation,

often retained even by those who now speak only standard Latvian.

To experience the diversity of Selonian dialects, it is recommended to visit five women who welcome guests at local tourism sites and speak the rich Selonian language:

- Ilze Līduma, head of the Jānis Jaunsudrabiņš Museum Riekstiņi in Nereta Parish;
- Maija Daina Paegle, hostess of the Boļāni homestead in Sēlpils Parish;
- Līga Jaujeniece, head of the local history department at the V. Ancītis Aknīste Library in Aknīste;
- Anda Svarāne, ceramic artist at the Crafts Centre Rūme in Zasa Parish;
- Ingrīda Degtjarova, glass artist at the Meadow Museum (Pļavas muzejs) in Kaldabruņa, Rubene Parish.

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7. Maija Daina Paegle - Boļāni Biological Farm  
GPS 56.585993, 25.686996
8. Līga Jaujeniece - Aknīste Local History Museum  
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9. Anda Svarāne - Rūme Selonian Crafts Centre  
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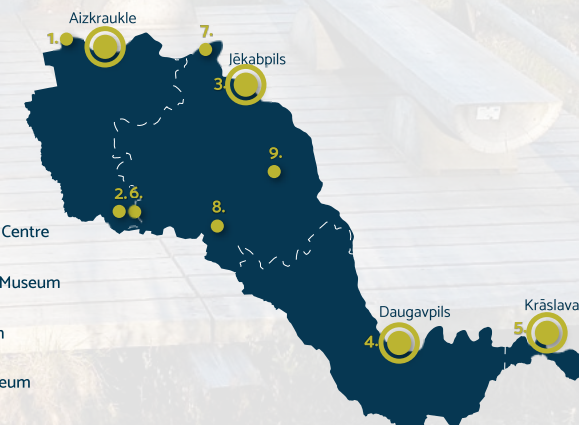


Photo: Aklais (Jūgu) bog, photo by: "4 ceļo gardi"

# Religion and Sacred Spaces

Selonia is a region characterised by remarkable religious diversity, where sacred architecture plays a significant role in both the landscape and social life. Churches are often viewed as symbols of culture, local identity, and history, while their purely religious function is sometimes secondary. This reflects the diverse identity of the region's inhabitants, shaped by both ethnic and religious differences.

Beyond the small towns, churches in villages - and even in places where villages no longer exist - are still worth visiting. In such locations, the church often remains as

the sole witness to the past. Some of these buildings have become important cultural landmarks that transcend denominations. Although many face decline and require restoration, their fragile state between preservation and disappearance makes them especially intriguing.

When exploring Selonia's religious diversity, the towns of Jaunjelgava and Subate stand out. Despite being over 100 kilometres apart, both offer the unique opportunity to see several churches of different Christian denominations within a compact area.

1. Jaunjelgava Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.616916, 25.082449

2. Nereta Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.199961, 25.313856

3. Jēkabpils Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 56.497773, 25.865887

4. Daugavpils Tourist Service Centre  
GPS 55.870916, 26.517427

5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 55.900801, 27.161148

6. Jaunjelgava Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.608086, 25.098115

7. Jaunjelgava Transfiguration of Christ Orthodox Church  
GPS 56.616919, 25.077305

8. Jaunjelgava Baptist Church  
GPS 56.617609, 25.083963

9. Jaunjelgava Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church  
GPS 56.617614, 25.080300

10. Ērberģe Evangelical Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.363092, 25.032257

11. Sece Evangelical Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.558013, 25.380710

12. Daudzese Evangelical Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.476482, 25.220238

13. Nereta Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.205180, 25.307323

14. Kankāļi Church  
GPS 56.444497, 24.980807

15. Sunākste Stender's Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.434199, 25.522253



17. Sēlpils Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.581524, 25.646303

18. Dunava Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Church  
GPS 56.216062, 26.203865

19. Ilzu Church  
GPS 56.158291, 25.496928

20. Asare Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.116523, 25.889001

21. Kaldabrūņa (Červonka) Lutheran Church  
GPS 56.087401, 26.021925

22. Saviour's Lutheran Church in Subate  
GPS 56.001071, 25.914019

23. Archangel Michael Catholic Church of Subate  
GPS 56.002891, 25.905804

24. Subate Old Believers' Prayer House of the Protection of the Holy Virgin  
GPS 56.006941, 25.912100

25. Roman Catholic Church of Saint Stanislaus Kostka in Dviete  
GPS 56.056788, 26.288713

26. Lutheran Church of Egypt  
GPS 55.747784, 26.317794

27. Silene Roman Catholic Church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
GPS 55.752474, 26.782535

28. Kaplava Old Believers' Church of the Protection of the Holy Virgin  
GPS 55.866096, 27.001717

29. Varnaviči Catholic Church  
GPS 55.829208, 27.285834

# Manors and Castles

Through the ages and people, the manor houses of Selonia have been preserved and have not lost their authenticity and unique appearance. Many of them have been affected by the ravages of time and are in need of restoration, but they retain their ancient charm.

Selonia's manors today serve various purposes: some as tourist sites, others as cultural or educational centres. For example, Lielzalne Manor is maintained by the Association "Sēļu klubs", which renovates one room each year, revealing and preserving historical evidence. The oldest items found are a 17th century shilling, doors and a fireplace, which have been preserved from the 18th century. The Vecmēmele Manor is managed by the Association "Atjauno muižu", which aims to

renovate and continue to develop the manor as a borderland tourist attraction, preserving its fundamental, unique beauty and ancient charm, and at the same time organically incorporating modern communications and technologies. The historic Nereta Manor is being saved and preserved as an outstanding architectural and artistic treasure in the history of Latvian agricultural architecture. The priority is to save the old manor house. Ērberģe Manor houses a lower secondary school, and outside regular school working hours, it opens its doors to tourists, offering an engaging programme with the manor's own Baron Hahn. At Gārsene Palace, visitors can find a municipal tourist information center and also serves as a venue for community events.

1. Jaunjelgava Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.616916, 25.082449

2. Nereta Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.199961, 25.313856

3. Jēkabpils Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 56.497773, 25.865887

4. Daugavpils Tourist Service Centre  
GPS 55.870916, 26.517427

5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 55.900801, 27.161148

6. Lielzalne Manor  
GPS 56.326237, 25.247448

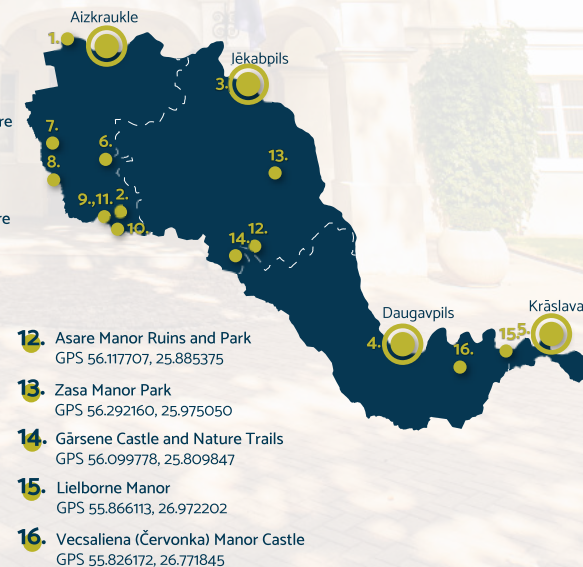
7. Ērberģe Manor (Mazzalve Lower Secondary School)  
GPS 56.365014, 25.017193

8. Vecmēmele Manor  
GPS 56.276646, 25.024874

9. Pilkalne Manor  
GPS 56.188727, 25.242528

10. Nereta Manor  
GPS 56.154934, 25.296251

11. Mazā Kalnamuiža Manor Ruins  
GPS 56.185696, 25.266362



12. Asare Manor Ruins and Park  
GPS 56.117707, 25.885375

13. Zasa Manor Park  
GPS 56.292160, 25.975050

14. Gārsene Castle and Nature Trails  
GPS 56.099778, 25.809847

15. Lielborne Manor  
GPS 55.866113, 26.972202

16. Vecsaliena (Červonka) Manor Castle  
GPS 55.826172, 26.771845

# Contemporary Cultural Spaces in Selonia

The cultural environment of Selonia is still evolving. Nature is its fundamental value. Revealing its sacredness and enriching it with contemporary art forms is a central trend that characterizes the cultural sites created in Selonia over the last decade. They all reflect a shared tendency: the integration of natural elements and landscapes into cultural experiences, are only partially rooted in specific local traditions. The Sansuī Festival in the Susēja Forest presents chamber music in a woodland setting. Even though the festival program includes a lot of chamber music pieces from different centuries and styles every year, one of the main focuses is still on promoting contemporary chamber music. The Jaunjelgava Concert Dome lets music touch the sky and combines jazz, meditative and pop music rhythms, while preserving a

chamber music format. Similarly, the Zasa Light Nights use light installations to reimagine the park's natural scenery and transforming it into another reality. This bright event has become a tradition, with a different theme each year. The sculptural ensemble "Gate of Light" is a multidimensional object where everyone is invited to enter and feel the spiritual light in the open space formed by stone pillars. A particularly noteworthy cultural site, actively cared for by almost the entire parish community, is Ērberģe Manor in Mazzalve Parish. Today, the manor houses a school, but outside regular school working hours, are welcomed by Baron Hahn and his splendidly costumed entourage, offering humorous and theatrical performances both in the manor and around its grounds.

1. Jaunjelgava Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.616916, 25.082449

2. Nereta Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.199961, 25.313856

3. Jēkabpils Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 56.497773, 25.865887

4. Daugavpils Tourist Service Centre  
GPS 55.870916, 26.517427

5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 55.900801, 27.161148

6. Gates of Light - a place of contemplation  
GPS 56.431614, 25.517099

7. Sansuī Arts Residency Centre in Susēja  
GPS 56.148187, 25.797123

8. Jaunjelgava Concert Dome  
GPS 56.619428, 25.107267

9. Selonia's Sun Island in the Eglona complex, Tadenava  
GPS: 56.182117, 26.116037

10. Legends Nights in Zasa Manor Park  
GPS 56.292112, 25.975167

11. Ērberģe Manor (Mazzalve Lower Secondary School)  
56.364762, 25.017188



Photo: Theatrical performance at Ērberģe Manor, photo by: Oksana Bebrīša

# Community Based Tourism

Selonia's relatively poor road infrastructure and the absence of large cities have historically hindered the development of the tourism sector, pushing locals to seek non-traditional approaches to attract visitors to the region. However, thanks to several successful, community-led projects, Selonia has developed an innovative model that sustains a certain level of tourism: Community-Based Tourism - a form of rural tourism whose main goal is to enhance the vitality of a place, the self-esteem of its people, and the attractiveness of the region. In Selonia's historical land, tourism manifests as a tool for shaping the land itself, built on these principles:

- by telling others about our land, we come to know it better;
- by shaping our land, we understand it more deeply;

- by showing our land, we discover its hidden details;
- by collaborating with the people of our land, we awaken its vitality;
- by welcoming guests and taking pride in our achievements, we enhance its appeal.

Many local associations in Selonia, which function as multifunctional community centers, are actively engaged in preserving, sustaining, and promoting traditional lifestyles and crafts. Notable examples include the Associations: Saules aka, Ērberģietes, Ūdenszīmes, Sēlijas laivas, and Dvīetes viņogas. Their programmes often include guided tours, lectures, storytelling, creative workshops, and meals - giving guests the feeling of being truly welcomed visitors, not just tourists.

1. Jaunjelgava Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.616916, 25.082449

2. Nereta Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.199961, 25.313856

3. Jēkabpils Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 56.497773, 25.865887

4. Daugavpils Tourist Service Centre  
GPS 55.870916, 26.517427

5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 55.900801, 27.161148

6. Saules aka Association  
GPS 56.457580, 25.479804

7. Ērberģietes Association  
GPS 56.364734, 25.017297

8. Ūdenszīmes Association  
GPS 56.095317, 26.068082

1. Jaunjelgava Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.616916, 25.082449

2. Nereta Tourism Information Point  
GPS 56.199961, 25.313856

3. Jēkabpils Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 56.497773, 25.865887

4. Daugavpils Tourist Service Centre  
GPS 55.870916, 26.517427

5. Krāslava Municipality Tourism Information Centre  
GPS 55.900801, 27.161148

6. Saules aka Association  
GPS 56.457580, 25.479804

7. Ērberģietes Association  
GPS 56.364734, 25.017297

8. Ūdenszīmes Association  
GPS 56.095317, 26.068082



Photo: Zasa park, photo by: Kaspars Siliņš

## Tourism Information Centres and Points

**Jaunjelgava Tourist Information Point**  
33 Jelgavas St., Jaunjelgava, Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.616924, 25.082409  
☎ +371 27366222  
🌐 www.visitaizkraukle.lv

**Mazzalve Tourism Information point**  
1 Skolas St., Ērberģe, Mazzalve par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.364716, 25.0172  
☎ +371 26156535  
🌐 www.visitaizkraukle.lv

**Nereta Tourist Information Point**  
5 Dzirnau St., Nereta, Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.202289, 25.307286  
☎ +371 26674300  
🌐 www.visitaizkraukle.lv

**Jēkabpils County Tourism Information Centre**  
3 Vecpilsētas square, Jēkabpils, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.497773, 25.865887  
☎ +371 29555950  
🌐 www.visit.jekabpils.lv

**Biržai Tourism and Business Information Centre**  
2 J. Janonio St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.200711, 24.757356  
☎ +370 45033496; +370 68673742  
🌐 www.visitbirzai.lt



### Manors and Castles

- 1 Lielzalde Manor**  
Zalve, Zalve Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.326237, 25.247448  
☎ +371 28709378; +371 27071996
- 2 Ērberģe Manor**  
1 Skolas St., Mazzalve Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.364762, 25.017188  
☎ +371 26156535
- 3 Vecmēmele Manor**  
Vecmēmele, Mazzalve Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.276646, 25.024874  
☎ +371 26436761
- 4 Pīlkalne Manor**  
Pīlkalne, Pīlkalne Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.188727, 25.242528  
☎ +371 29341352; +371 29386604; +371 65129784
- 5 Nereta Manor**  
Nereta, Nereta Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.154934, 25.296251
- 6 Mazā Kalnamuīža Manor Ruins**  
Nereta Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.185696, 25.266362  
☎ +371 26255054
- 7 Asare Manor Ruins and Park**  
Asare, Asare Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.117707, 25.885375
- 8 Zasa Manor Park**  
Zasa, Zasa Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.292160, 25.975050  
☎ +371 25465787
- 9 Gārsene Castle and Nature Trails**  
"Lobieši", Gārsene Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.099778, 25.809847  
☎ +371 26367150  
🌐 www.garsenespils.lv
- 10 Biržai Castle / "Sēla" Biržai Region Museum**  
3 Radvilos St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.204933, 24.753449  
☎ +370 45033390; +370 65543845  
🌐 www.birzumuziejus.lt

### Community-Based Tourism

- 1 "Saulės aka" Association**  
"Kalsnētas", Sunākste Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.457580, 25.479804  
☎ +371 29427418
- 2 "Ērberģietes" Association**  
3 Liepu St., Ērberģe, Mazzalve Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.364734, 25.017297
- 3 "Ūdenszīmes" Association**  
School of Kaldabruņa, Rubene Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.095317, 26.068082  
☎ +370 29548967  
🌐 www.udenszimes.lv
- 4 "Sēlijas laivas" Association**  
8-3 Augšzemes St., Aknīste, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.161260, 25.748223  
☎ +371 20034392  
🌐 www.selijaslaivas.lv

### Educational Programs

- 1 "Sēla" Biržai Region Museum**  
3 Radvilos St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.204933, 24.753449  
☎ +370 45033390; +370 65543845  
🌐 www.birzumuziejus.lt
- 2 Kristīna and Juris Miļižūnai Sheep Farm**  
Dvargali village 1, Biržai Dist.  
56.297665, 24.589793  
☎ +370 68626460
- 3 "Rinkuškiai" Brewery**  
8 Alyvų St., Biržai village, Biržai Dist.  
56.207882, 24.723404  
☎ +370 45035293  
🌐 www.rinkuskiai.lt
- 4 Lavender farm**  
10A Dvaro St., Mockūņų village, Biržu Dist.  
56.006142, 24.736393  
☎ +370 68738636  
🌐 www.levanduukis.lt
- 5 Sodēliškiai Manor farmstead**  
1A Sodēliškū St., Sodēliškū village, Biržai Dist.  
56.291298, 24.638174  
☎ +370 61419177; +370 61963377  
🌐 www.sodeliskidvaras.lt

Objects marked on the map are located in the partner territories of the project "Weekend in Village" in Aizkraukle and Jēkabpils Municipalities and in the Biržai District.

## The Most Important Natural Sites and Landscapes of Selonia

**1 The Korkuļi Swallows**  
Sērene Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.568336, 25.243536

**2 Bristene Point of the Struve Geodetic Arc**  
Secē Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.576763, 25.351868

**3 Jēkabpils Point of the Struve Geodetic Arc**  
Jēkabpils, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.501567, 25.856734

**4 Dabors-kalns Point of the Struve Geodetic Arc and Taborkalns Hill Observation Tower**  
Sēlpils, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.584197, 25.692274

**5 Lake Klaucāni**  
Kalna Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.351112, 25.761858

**6 Lake Priekulāni**  
Kalna Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.351436, 25.775600

**7 Kaldabruņa Hillfort**  
Rubene Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.094793, 26.082675

**8 Sauka Nature Park**  
Elkšņi Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.250061, 25.508122

**9 Saltupe Holy Spring**  
Akniste, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.17128, 25.73520

**10 Cow Cave**  
Karajimīški village, Biržai Dist.  
56.206752, 24.694270

**11 Kirkilai karst lakes**  
Kirkilai village, Biržai Dist.  
56.246100, 24.688300

**12 Lake Šīrvēna and Pedestrian Bridge**  
Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.211191, 24.769184

**13 Astrava Manor Park**  
Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.21857, 24.76787

## The Most Notable Craftsmen of Selonia

**1 Zandas Ragele's Ceramics Workshop**  
"Kalna Gribacāni", Nereta Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.200768, 25.322828  
☎ +371 28685585

**2 "Bānītis" Black Slip Clay Pottery Kiln**  
"Zvirbulī", Daudzeva, Daudzese Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.509655, 25.23308  
☎ +371 29449611, +371 29449592

**3 "Velniņš" Black Slip Clay Pottery Kiln**  
"Velniņi", Daudzeva, Daudzese Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.512051, 25.231232  
☎ +371 29784413, +371 29352377

**4 "Kronišu Kakapstrāde" Wooden Frame Greenhouse Manufacturer**  
"Sproģi", Zāle Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.269238, 25.172484  
☎ +371 28603927  
🌐 www.kronisukakapstrade.lv

**5 Open-air Museum "Sēļu sēta" Craft House**  
6 Filozofu St., Jēkabpils, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.495963, 25.873599  
☎ +371 27029039  
🌐 www.jekabpilsmuzejs.lv

**6 Crafts Centre "Rūme"**  
"Rūme", Zasa, Zasa Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.294664, 25.981379  
☎ +371 29240576

**7 Selonia Culture Centre**  
"Ozollejas", Zasa, Zasa Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.293523, 25.978989  
☎ +371 25465787

**8 Glass Artist Ingrida Degtjotova**  
Association "Ūdenszīmes", Kaldabruņa School, Rubene Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.095269, 26.068148  
☎ +371 29548967

**9 "Rūkiši" Craft House**  
"Rūkiši", Leimaņi, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.310462, 25.922959  
☎ +371 25945299

**10 "Dzīves prasme" Association**  
Dunava, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.210949, 26.205278  
☎ +371 29726110

**11 "Sēla" Biržai Region Museum**  
3 Radvilos St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.204933, 24.753449  
☎ +370 45033390; +370 65543845  
🌐 www.birzumuziejus.lt

## Traditional Architecture, Rural Homesteads

**1 "Kiermeles" Farmstead**  
Ērberģe, Mazzalve Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.383077, 25.073110  
🌐 www.kiermeles.lv

**2 Grīcgales (Medņū) Pub**  
Grīcgale, Pilskalne Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.223698, 25.111781  
☎ +371 28342969

**3 Pilskalne Manor**  
Pilskalne, Pilskalne Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.188727, 25.242528  
☎ +371 29341352; +371 29386604; +371 65129784

**4 "Sēļu sēta" Open-air Museum**  
6 Filozofu St., Jēkabpils, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.495963, 25.873599  
☎ +371 27029039  
🌐 www.jekabpilsmuzejs.lv

**5 "Gulbji" Selonian Countryside Homestead**  
"Gulbji", Rubene Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.137088, 26.064151  
☎ +371 26416231

**6 Sodelišķi Manor Farmstead**  
1A Sodelišķi St., Sodelišķi village, Biržai Dist.  
56.291298, 24.638174  
☎ +370 61419177; +370 61963377  
🌐 www.sodeliskiudivaras.lt

**7 Astrava Manor**  
17 Astravas St., Biržai Dist.  
56.219536, 24.76847  
☎ +370 45031389

## Culinary Heritage

**1 Grīcgale (Medņū) Pub**  
Grīcgale, Pilskalne Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.223698, 25.111781  
☎ +371 28342969

**2 Pilskalne Manor**  
Pilskalne, Pilskalne Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.188727, 25.242528  
☎ +371 29341352; +371 29386604; +371 65129784

**3 "Gulbji" Selonian Countryside Homestead**  
"Gulbji", Rubene Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.137088, 26.064151  
☎ +371 26416231

**4 "Boļāni" Biological Farm**  
"Boļāni", Sēlpils Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.585914, 25.686969  
☎ + 371 26496601

**5 ALĪDA Chicory Coffee Factory**  
"Dzelmites", Elkšņi, Elkšņi Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.214873, 25.581742  
☎ +371 26582074  
🌐 www.kafejaalida.lv

**6 Sodelišķi Manor Farmstead**  
1A Sodelišķi St., Sodelišķi village, Biržai Dist.  
56.291298, 24.638174  
☎ +370 61419177; +370 61963377  
🌐 www.sodeliskiudivaras.lt

**7 "Rinkuškiai" Brewery**  
8 Alyvų St., Biržai village, Biržai Dist.  
56.207882, 24.723404  
☎ +370 450 35 293  
🌐 www.rinkuskiai.lt

**8 "Biržų alus" Brewery**  
22 Rotušės St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.200186, 24.753560  
☎ +370 45036141  
🌐 www.birzualus.lt

**9 Kristīna and Jūris Miļišūnai Sheep Farm**  
Dvargalių village 1, Biržai Dist.  
56.297665, 24.589793  
☎ +370 68626460

**10 "BIRŽŪ DUONA" Bakery**  
6 Plento St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.185286, 24.741504  
☎ +370 45031871  
🌐 www.birzuduona.lt

## Antique collections

**1 Konrādijs Degro's Private Collection of Antiques**  
"Grauzes", Nereta Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.180169, 25.257389  
☎ +371 29206449

**2 Valdis Kalnietis' Private Collection of Antiques**  
"Gāršas", Gārsene, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.101870, 25.820936  
☎ +371 26430814

**3 "Sēla" Biržai Region Museum**  
3 Radvilos St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.204933, 24.753449  
☎ +370 450 33390; +370 655 43845  
🌐 www.birzumuziejus.lt

**4 Sodelišķi Manor Farmstead**  
1A Sodelišķi Street, Sodelišķi village, Biržai Dist.  
56.291298, 24.638174  
☎ +370 61419177; +370 61963377  
🌐 www.sodeliskiudivaras.lt

## Writers of Selonia, Notable Personalities and Families

**1 Lūcija Kuzāne's house Grīcgale (Medņū) Pub**  
Grīcgale, Pilskalne Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.223698, 25.111781  
☎ +371 28342969

**2 Māra Svire and Vladimirs Kaijaks - Home of Writers**  
Vigante Park, Staburags Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.574357, 25.497073  
☎ +371 29391109

**3 "Riekstiņi" J. Jaunsudrabiņš Museum**  
"Riekstiņi", Nereta Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.196776, 25.379991  
☎ +371 29133076  
🌐 www.jaunsudrabinamuzejs.viss.lv

**4 G. F. Stender's Family grave**  
"Ģederti", Viesīte Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.432819, 25.522210  
☎ +371 26785207

**5 G. F. Stender's Study Office**  
7A. Brodele Street, Viesīte, Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.348343, 25.552485  
☎ +371 29116334; +371 28681126a

**6 "Tadenava" Rainis Museum**  
"Tadenava", Dunava Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.176491, 26.114201  
☎ +371 29250484  
🌐 www.memorialiemuzeji.lv

**7 Monument of Rainis in Rubeni**  
Rubene Nature Park, Rubene Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.139647, 25.985930

**8 Aleksandrs Grīns Park**  
Kalna Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.350871, 25.820877

**9 The Grīns Family grave**  
"Lūcānu" cemetery, Slate, Slate Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.179330, 25.949685

**10 Jānis Akuraters Literary Trail**  
13 Aldaunes St., Brodi, Ābeļu Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.470007, 25.878479

**11 The Radvila Family**  
56.20514, 24.75357

## Churches

**1 Martin Baltais Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
13 Meža St., Jaunjelgava, Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.608086, 25.098115  
☎ +371 29542767  
🌐 www.baltabaznica.weebly.com

**2 Jaunjelgava Transfiguration of Christ's Orthodox Church**  
8 Jelgava St., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.616979, 25.077305  
☎ +371 29129578

**3 Jaunjelgava Baptist Church**  
1 Rātūža St., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.617609, 25.083963  
☎ +371 26140274

**4 Jaunjelgava Holy Cross Roman Catholic Church**  
4 Lačplēša St., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.617614, 25.080300  
☎ +371 29853938

**5 Nereta Holy Spirit Roman Catholic Church**  
7 Kalēju St., Nereta, Nereta Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.203095, 25.3177301

**6 Ērberģe Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Ērberģe, Mazzalve Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.363092, 25.032257  
☎ +371 65175257

**7 Secē Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Secē Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.558013, 25.380710  
☎ +371 22431941; +371 22431941  
🌐 www.secebaznica.weebly.com

**8 Daudzese Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Daudzese, Daudzese Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.476482, 25.220238  
☎ +371 26587051

**9 Nereta Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
2 Rīgas St., Nereta, Nereta Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.204879, 25.306962  
☎ +371 28732973

**10 Kankalji Roman Catholic Church**  
Kankalji, Mazzalve Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.444497, 24.980807

**11 Sunākste Stender's Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Ģederti, Viesīte Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.434199, 25.522253  
☎ +371 29297930

**12 Sēlpils Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Sēlpils Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.581524, 25.646303  
☎ +371 26829977

**13 Dunava Saint Joseph Roman Catholic Church**  
Dunava Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.216062, 26.203865

**14 Ilzu Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Kacīte, Rītes Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.158291, 25.496928  
☎ +371 26635035

**15 Asare Evangelical Lutheran Church "Betānija"**  
Asare Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.116523, 25.889001  
☎ +371 29148597

**16 Kaldabruņa (Červonka) Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
Rubene Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.087401, 26.021925  
☎ +371 26590208; +371 26390542

**17 Biržai Church of St. John the Baptist**  
2 Vytautov St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.204063, 24.757066  
☎ +370 45032643

**18 Biržai Evangelical Reformed Church**  
3a Reformatu St., Biržai, Biržai Dist.  
56.207844, 24.758313  
☎ +370 68666383; +370 45035100

## Contemporary Cultural Sites

**1 Ērberģe Manor**  
1 Skolas St., Mazzalve Par., Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.364762, 25.017188  
☎ +371 26156535

**2 Concert Dome**  
"Ceriņi", Jaunjelgava, Aizkraukle Mun.  
56.619428, 25.107267  
☎ +371 25678898  
🌐 www.koncertkupols.lv

**3 "Gates of Light" - A Place of Contemplation**  
Ģederti, Viesīte Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.431614, 25.517099

**4 "Sansusi" Arts Residency Centre**  
Susēja, Akniste Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.148187, 25.797123  
☎ +371 29 729 188  
🌐 www.sansusi.lv

**5 "Sēlijas saules sala" The Egļona Complex**  
Tadenava, Dunava Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.182117, 26.116037

**6 Legends Nights in Zasa Manor Park**  
Zasa, Zasa Par., Jēkabpils Mun.  
56.292112, 25.975167

# Religion and Sacred Heritage

The districts of Biržai, Rokiškis, Kupiškis and Pasvalys are characterised by a rich and varied religious and sacred heritage, reflecting both the deep roots of Christian traditions and the beliefs of the ancient Baltic nations. The region is home to important monuments of Christian architecture - churches, chapels and monasteries - which are an essential part of the region's identity and cultural landscape.

Noteworthy is the Church of St. John the Baptist in Biržai, built in 1879 in the neo-Gothic style with two towers and a spacious interior.

The Evangelical Reformed Church in Biržai, built in 1874, is one of the oldest Reformed churches in Lithuania.

The Church of St. Matthew the Apostle in Rokiškis is one of the largest churches in Lithuania.

Panemunėlis St. Joseph's Church of the Care is the only church in Lithuania with a double-edged tower symbolising the union of Lithuania and Poland.

The Baroque Church of St. John the Baptist in Pasvalys is also noteworthy.

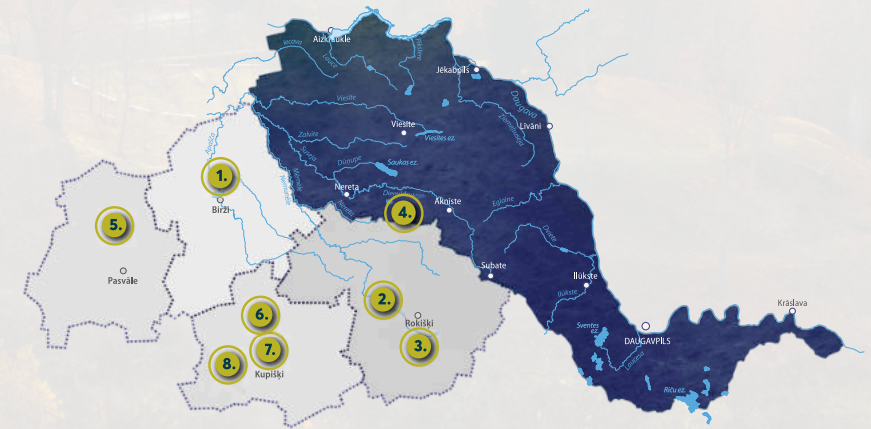
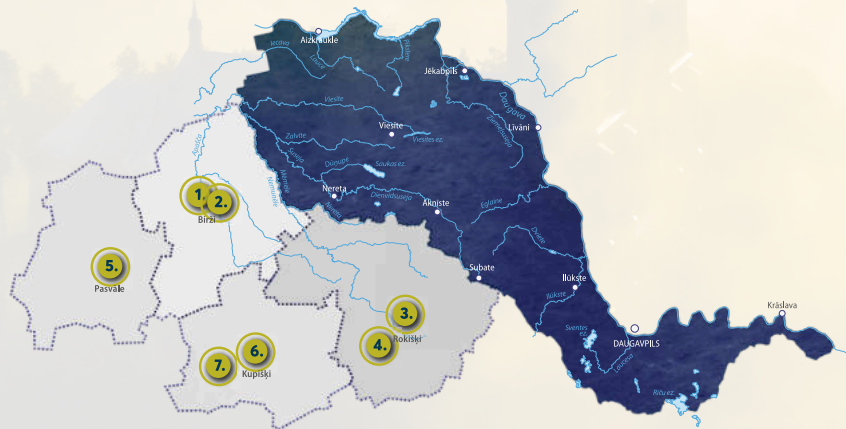
Kupiškis Church of the Ascension is built in the neo-Gothic style, and historians believe that there was an ancient Lithuanian cult or burial area on the site where the church now stands.

The ensemble of the Dominican Church and Dominican Monastery in Palėvenė attracts visitors with the church's interior. Its eight altars are one of the most original examples of the so-called folk Baroque in Lithuania.

Alongside Christian architectural monuments, there are also ancient Baltic sacred places, such as hill forts and other sacred sites. These testify to the importance of these areas in religious and spiritual life since ancient times. Noteworthy is the Biržai

Devil's Mound, situated by the Apaščia River. It is surrounded by legends and notable for its expressive form. The Moškėnai mound has an almost rectangular plateau and is surrounded by a rampart. The Baušiškės mound has been used as a defensive point since the 1st century BC, and its plateau is oval.

The Alksniai mound is situated on the eastern shore of Lake Apvalas. The Ažuolpamūšė mound was a Samogitian fortification. The Bakšėnai mound is also of historical importance. Kupiškis (Aukštupėnai) mound is the southernmost mound of Selonia and, in ancient times, was a settlement place for Baltic tribes. Stirniškės fort hill dates back to the 1st millennium to the early 2nd millennium AD.



- ..... Biržai District
- 1. Biržai Church of St. John the Baptist (*Biržų Šv. Jono Krikštytojo bažnyčia*)**  
GPS 56.20406285437431, 24.757066239088907
  - 2. Biržai Evangelical Reformed Church (*Biržų evangelikų reformatų bažnyčia*)**  
GPS 56.20784344991967, 24.758313183268708
- ..... Rokiškis District
- 3. Rokiškis Church of St. Matthew the Apostle (*Rokiškio Šv. apaštalo evangelisto Mato bažnyčia*)**  
GPS 55.96418645910728, 25.583690181398914
  - 4. Panemunėlis Church of St. Joseph the Guardian (*Panemunėlio šv. Juozapo Globos bažnyčia*)**  
GPS 55.91405677576949, 25.456530477159287

- ..... Pasvalys District
- 5. Pasvalys Church of St. John the Baptist (*Pasvalio Šv. Jono Krikštytojo bažnyčia*)**  
GPS 56.061674, 24.398134
- ..... Kupiškis District
- 6. Kupiškis Church of the Ascension of Christ (*Kupiškio Kristaus Žengimo į dangų bažnyčia*)**  
GPS 55.842214868293226, 24.97596568138967
  - 7. Palėvenė Ensemble of St. Dominic's (Dominican) Church and the Dominican Monastery (*Palėvenės Šv. Dominiko (Dominiko) bažnyčios ir dominikonų vienuolyno ansamblis*)**  
GPS 55.80331229295479, 24.882040076527755

- ..... Biržai District
- 1. Velniakalnis Hillfort (*Velniakalnio piliakalnis*)**  
GPS 56.244639, 24.734028
- ..... Rokiškis District
- 2. Moškėnai Hillfort (*Moškėnų piliakalnis*)**  
GPS 55.968232, 25.439009
  - 3. Baušiškiai Hillfort (*Baušiškių piliakalnis*)**  
GPS 55.8463, 25.5998
  - 4. Alksniai Hillfort (*Alksnių piliakalnis*)**  
GPS 56.155472, 25.544417

- ..... Pasvalys District
- 5. Ažuolpamūšė Hillfort (*Ažuolpamūšės piliakalnis*)**  
GPS 56.123477, 24.460048
- ..... Kupiškis District
- 6. Bakšėnai Hillfort (*Bakšėnų piliakalnis*)**  
GPS 55.92966618541108, 24.92528096623876
  - 7. Kupiškis (Aukštupėnai) Hillfort (*Kupiškio (Aukštupėnų) piliakalnis*)**  
GPS 55.84795381918337, 24.976059824407407
  - 8. Stirniškiai Hillfort (*Stirniškių piliakalnis*)**  
GPS 55.78121830764225, 24.81662382624974

# Notable Families and Figures

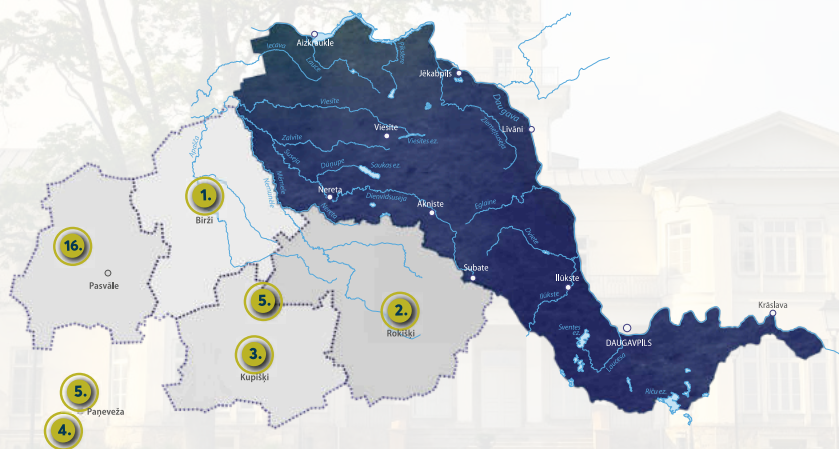
The Selonia region summarises notable personalities and historical families born in or closely related to the appropriate counties. These are writers, poets, musicians, artists, as well as representatives of science, education and culture, who have made a lasting contribution to strengthening the identity of the Selonia region and its common cultural heritage.

The **Radvila family** was the most influential family of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and you can learn about their history at the Biržai Regional Museum "Sėla".

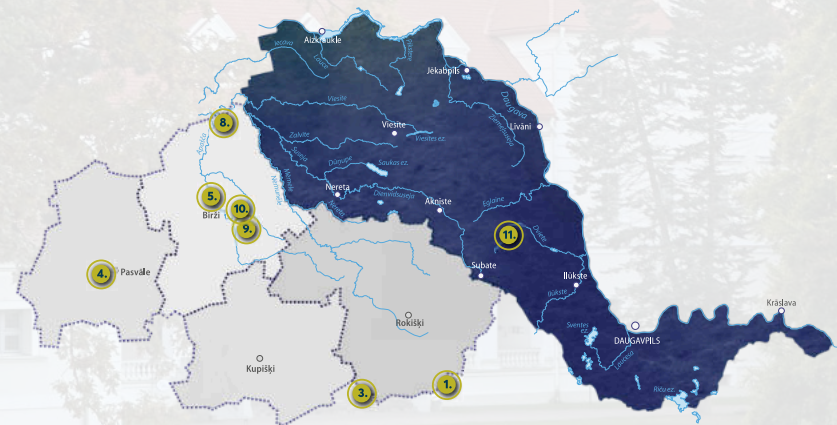
The museum's library has a huge collection of 17 000 books. Other noble families - the **Tiškevičius** not only created manors, but also took care of the development of local communities and engaged in patronage. **The Sapiegas family** - one of the oldest noble families in Lithuania. **The Vidugiriai family** was a partisan liaison who died fighting against the Soviet occupation. **The Nečionys family's** René Nečionienė was a symbol of the repression of the Lithuanian people, and her family were exiled to Siberia. **The Šernųj family** was diplomats

and theologians, the **Daukša family** was promoters of the Lithuanian language and culture, **the Petruļai family's** Alfonsas Petrulis - signatory of the Lithuanian Independence Act, politician and public figure. **The Dauguviečiai family** actively supported Lithuanian culture both in Lithuania and in emigration. **The Ladygos family** was a significant promoter of culture and patriotism in Biržai region. **The Yčiai family** was entrepreneurs and railway infrastructure developers, **the Jakubėnai family** was supporters of music and culture, **the Mačiūskiai family** was activists of the Evangelical Reformed community in the Biržai region, **the Jansonu family** was theatre scholars, **the De Choiseul Gouffie family** was related to the management of estates, diplomatic and cultural activities and **the Vileišiai family** supported freedom of the Lithuanian press.

Notable personalities include **Kazimieras Būga** (Baltic philologist, linguist), **Jurgis Bielinis** (book publisher, participant in the national movement), **Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas** (writer, priest, publicist, one of the founders of modern Lithuanian literature), **Juozas Balčikonis** (linguist and newspaper editor, translator and literary language standardizer), **Konstancija Skirmantienė** (singer (soprano), popularizer of folk music in the interwar period), **Adolfas Sabaliauskas**, also known as *Zaļa rūta* (folklorist, poet, teacher, translator), **Kazimieras Kristupas Daukša** (author of Lithuanian grammar), **Roberts Antinis** (sculptor).



- |  |                                  |  |
|--|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. <b>The Radvila family</b><br>GPS 56.20514, 24.75357   | 6. <b>The Šernas family</b>      | 12. <b>The Jakubėnas family</b>                            |
| 2. <b>The Tiškevičius family</b><br>GPS 55.9570, 25.5895 | 7. <b>The Daukšas family</b>     | 13. <b>The Mačiūskis family</b>                            |
| 3. <b>The Sapieha family</b><br>GPS 55.8434, 24.9821     | 8. <b>The Petruļis family</b>    | 14. <b>The Jansonas family</b>                             |
| 4. <b>The Vidugiris family</b><br>GPS 55.6750, 24.3560   | 9. <b>The Dauguvietis family</b> | 15. <b>The de Choiseul-Gouffier family</b>                 |
| 5. <b>The Nečionis family</b><br>GPS 55.7330, 24.3640    | 10. <b>The Ladyga family</b>     | 16. <b>The Vileišis family</b><br>GPS 56.097691, 24.307102 |
|  | 11. <b>The Yčius family</b>      |  |



- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| 1. <b>Kazimieras Būga (1879–1924)</b><br>( <i>Kazimieras Būga</i> , 1879–1924)<br>GPS 55.74155, 25.76144   | 5. <b>Leonardas Gutauskas (1938–2021)</b><br>( <i>Leonardas Gutauskas</i> , 1938–2021)<br>Biržai                        | 9. <b>Adolfas Sabaliauskas-Žalia Rūta (1893–1952)</b><br>( <i>Adolfas Sabaliauskas-Zaļa Rūta</i> , 1893–1952)<br>Krikščiai, Biržai District |
| 2. <b>Jurgis Bielinis (1846–1918)</b>  | 6. <b>Konstancija Skirmantienė (1901–1990)</b><br>( <i>Konstancija Skirmantienė</i> , 1901–1990)<br>Rokiškis District   | 10. <b>Kazimieras Kristupas Daukša (c. 1820–1880)</b><br>( <i>Kazimieras Kristupas Daukša</i> , ap 1820–1880)<br>Neciūnai, Biržai District  |
| 3. <b>Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas (1869–1933)</b><br>( <i>Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas</i> , 1869–1933)<br>Moleišiai, Svėdasai Parish, now Anykščiai District | 7. <b>Dalia Tamulevičiūtė (1935–2006)</b><br>( <i>Dalia Tamulevičiūtė</i> , 1935–2006)<br>Kupiškis District             | 11. <b>Roberts Antinis (1898–1980)</b><br>( <i>Roberts Antinis</i> , 1898–1980)<br>Kaldabrūna, Rubene Parish, Jėkabpils Municipality        |
| 4. <b>Juozas Balčikonis (1885–1969)</b><br>( <i>Juozas Balčikonis</i> , 1885–1969)<br>Balkonyš Village, Pasvalys District                            | 8. <b>Jakūbas Šernas (1881–1926)</b><br>( <i>Jakūbas Šernas</i> , 1881–1926)<br>Jakiškiai Village (now Biržai District) |   |

# Antique Collections

The districts of Biržai, Rokiškis, Kupiškis and Pasvalys are distinguished by their relatively rich collections of antiques, which provide insights into local craft skills, domestic heritage and folk art traditions. These collections are held in museums, estates and private collectors' assemblies.

The Rokiškis Museum of Regional History has a large collection of blacksmithing, jewellery and ethnographic objects, including jewellery and tools from the 19th and early 20th centuries. The Biržai Region Museum "Sėla" displays exhibitions of antique jewellery, blacksmith's work, national costumes and a personal collection from the time of the Radvila family. Meanwhile, the museums of antiquities and technology at Sodeliškis Manor introduce

visitors to steam tractors, historic cars, household utensils from different eras, and an authentic Aukštaitija homestead with a working smithy and windmill. Pasvalys Regional Museum has a rich exhibition of archaeological finds and testimonies, as well as a collection of ancient tools and jewellery. Adomynė Manor is a beautiful and rare monument of 18th century Romantic wooden architecture, with preserved wood-burning ovens, a bread oven, frescoes, card index doors with metal hardware, and ornamented parquet floors. Kupiškis Ethnographic museum is proud of the collection of traditional Lithuanian clothing and accessories from the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries, as well as the almost 4000-year-old Taurus horn collection.

- ..... Biržai District
- 1. Biržai Region Museum Sėla**  
GPS 56.20497466726925, 24.753460310253015
  - 2. Sodeliškiai Manor Homestead**  
GPS 56.291315236697486, 24.63818959676731
- ..... Rokiškis District
- 3. Rokiškis Regional Museum**  
GPS 55.96551329449618, 25.600941669758065

- ..... Pasvalys District
- 4. Pasvalys Regional Museum (Pasvalio krašto muziejus)**  
GPS 56.06035240668589, 24.398929196749773
- ..... Kupiškis District
- 5. Adomynė Manor (Adomynės duras)**  
GPS 55.74904844809435, 25.304481078604162
  - 6. Kupiškis Ethnographic Museum**  
GPS 55.84234185170991, 24.975418484347482

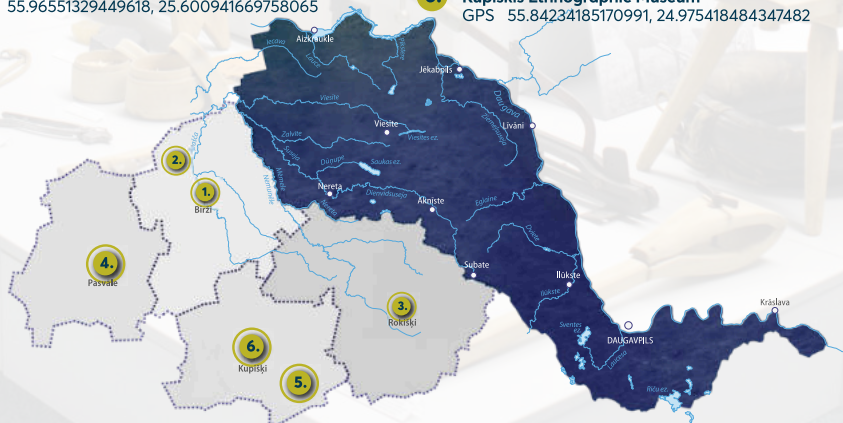


Photo: Pasvalys Regional Museum

# Educational Programs and Tourism Centres

Tourist information centers serve as important support points for both local residents and visitors to the city. They offer up-to-date information on attractions, events, accommodation, and tourist routes, and often organize local excursions and collaborate with businesses that offer not only excursions or accommodation, but also educational programs, which, as a result of mutual cooperation, can be a significant resource for the development of the local community, promoting both the exchange of knowledge and business and cultural tourism in the region. For example, the Biržai Region Museum "Sėla" offers educational programs about princely estates, beer brewing, 16th-17th century warfare, and the sheep farming business of Kristina and Jūra Miļišūni offers an educational program called "Sheep will clothe and feed you," the Rinkušiai Brewery offers seven educational programs on beer brewing, and the Lavanda

Farm offers an educational program called "Lavenda. From seed to product", Sodelišku Manor - educational programs "The way of grain" and "How ancestors baked buns" and other educational programs. Rokiški Regional Museum offers educational programs such as "The cheese route", "Ancient times come alive with brass", and others. Pasvale Regional Museum offers educational programs such as "Ancient rural crafts", "The way of bread", "The way of flax", "Pataiki", and others. The Kupiški Ethnographic Museum offers educational programs such as "Secrets of wood", "The Potter's craft", and "Colours and symbols of national costume".

The opportunities provided by training and education programs, and tourist centers play a vital role in the region, promoting education and the development of local tourism.

- ..... Biržai District
- 1. Biržai Region Museum Sėla**  
GPS 56.20518425178895, 24.753306044086706
  - 2. Kristina and Jūras Miļišūnai Sheep Farm (Miļišūnų alyū ūkis)**  
GPS 56.297665, 24.589793
  - 3. Rinkušiai Brewery (Alaus darykla „Rinkušiai“)**  
GPS 56.20788204980549, 24.72340378326866
  - 4. Lavender Farm (Lavandų ūkis)**  
GPS 56.006142, 24.736393
- ..... Rokiškis District
- 7. Rokiškis Regional Museum (Rokiškio krašto muziejus)**  
GPS 55.965401, 25.600856
  - 8. Rokiškis Tourism Information Centre**  
GPS 55.9646861927119, 25.586516910234927
- ..... Pasvalys District
- 9. Pasvalys Regional Museum (Pasvalio krašto muziejus)**  
GPS 56.060201, 24.398996
  - 10. Pasvalys Tourism Information Centre**  
GPS 56.06031872653541, 24.398995012093433
- ..... Kupiškis District
- 11. Kupiškis Ethnographic Museum (Kupiškio etnografinis muziejus)**  
GPS 55.842421, 24.975395
  - 12. Kupiškis District Tourism and Business Information Centre**  
GPS 55.83105741280093, 24.986830754404256

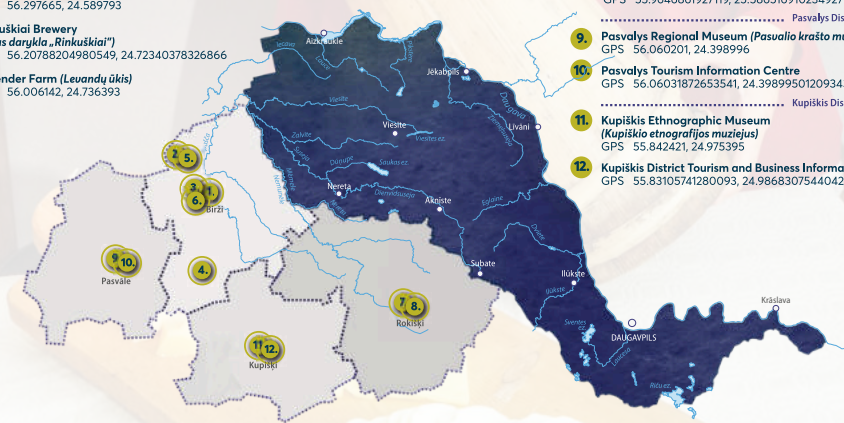


Photo: Educational program "The Cheese route", photo by: Rokiškis Regional Museum

# Culinary Heritage

The culinary heritage of the Selonia region and northern Lithuania provides an insight into the gastronomic identity of Aukštaitija (Highlands), which has been shaped over centuries in close cooperation with local resources and traditional farming. The main foodstuffs - rye, potatoes, dairy products, meat, vegetables and hemp oil - also highlight the traditional farming practices of the border region. Ancestral cooking traditions are still alive in this region. Rye bread with sourdough starter, butter dishes, potato pancakes, rich cereal porridge, honey, refreshing kvass, herbal teas and apple cheese, etc. Particular importance is attached to festive dishes, such as Christmas and Easter, whose symbolic dishes embody the local cultural heritage and community traditions.

Traditional dishes can be tasted (baked bread, butter, kvass, honey, cream cheese) at the Sodeliškės Manor Farmstead. At the Brewery "Rinkušiai" Museum, you can learn about the history of Biržai and enjoy beer soup, dark beer salads, and other beer-inspired dishes to complement the local flavours. Traditional brewery "Biržų alus" offers guided tours, tastings and educational programs that introduce visitors to the beer-making process. You can taste sheep meat and dairy products at Kristina and Jūra Milišūnai sheep farm, where, upon prior registration, you can participate in educational classes and tastings. You can also enjoy the flavors of Selonia at the Ilzenberg Manor, the Raubonės village community, the Kupiškis Ethnographic museum, and Adomynė Manor.

- 1. Sodeliškiai Manor Homestead (Sodeliškių duona sodyba)**  
GPS 56.291262, 24.638179
- 2. Rinkušiai Brewery (Alaus darykla „Rinkušiai“)**  
GPS 56.20788204980549, 24.72340378326866
- 3. Biržų alus Brewery (Tradicinė alaus darykla „Biržų alus“)**  
GPS 56.20018548991394, 24.753560148826036
- 4. Kristina and Jūra Milišūnai Sheep Farm (Milišūnų avių ūkis)**  
GPS 56.297665, 24.589793
- 5. Biržai Bread Bakery („Biržų duona“)**  
GPS 56.1965320212834, 24.755221139088356
- 6. Ilzenberg Manor (Ilzenbergo duaras)**  
GPS 56.159707246290324, 25.524556675292033
- 7. Pyraginės – Traditional Folklore and Culinary Heritage Festival (Valakėlių kaimo bendruomenė)**  
GPS 56.050177, 24.336200
- 8. The Raubonė Village community invites you to savour the ancient cultural traditions of the region**  
GPS 56.123570, 24.476982
- 9. Kupiškis Ethnographic Museum (Kupiškio etnografinis muziejus)**  
GPS 55.84237, 24.97526
- 10. Adomynė Manor**  
GPS 55.748985637800274, 25.304853417002672



Photo: Sodeliškiai Manor Homestead, photo by: Biržai Tourism and Business Information Centre

# Traditional Clothing

The folk clothing of the Selonia region is distinguished by its old traditions, which intertwine Latvian and Lithuanian ethnographic traits, especially vividly depicting the interaction of the cultural heritage of the Biržai and Nereta regions, creating a unique and colourful set of garments. However, it should be noted that Aukštaitija costumes differ from Latvian Selonia clothing. The women's outfits consist of specially cut shirts with horizontally woven ornaments reminiscent of Slavic and Polish traditions, and bright red and green checked skirts. The linen aprons are decorated with red embroidery and

lace, and the headgear varies according to the status of the woman - girls wear wreaths, while married women wear hats with scarves. Men's clothing includes long shirts with embroidered cuffs and collars, woollen waistcoats and dark-coloured coats, and straight-cut linen or woollen trousers. Woven belts and leather shoes add to the overall harmonious and functional look. Today, folk costumes from the Selonia region are used in folklore ensembles, festivals and museums. The Rokiškis Museum hosts exhibitions that help preserve and promote the region's identity.

# Language Features of the Lithuanian part of Selonia

The region has preserved traces of both the old Baltic languages, including the Selonia dialect, and modern Lithuanian dialects. It is dominated by the Eastern Aukštaitija (Highlands) dialect with its own regional characteristics. The peculiarities of the Selonia language are closely related to the Eastern Aukštaitija Leišiai dialects.

The region has preserved traces of both Eastern Aukštaičiai (Highlanders), which also preserves elements of ancient lexis. In the northern part of Pasvalys district, the influence of the Selonian language is noticeable, but in general the peculiarities of the Eastern Aukštaičiai language are typical.

The Biržai district has an Eastern High Saxon dialect with traces of the influence of the Silu language. The Rokiškis district is dominated by features of the Eastern High Saxon dialect, but echoes of the Silu language are also clearly visible. Kupiškis district represents the classical dialect of

Today, these dialects are still alive and well, mainly in the colloquial speech of the older generation, but they are slowly being replaced by literary language. However, place names and phonetic features remain an important cultural heritage, preserving the link with the historical and linguistic heritage of the region.

Photo: Educational Program, photo by: Rokiškis Regional Museum

# Traditional Crafts and Workshops

Traditional crafts are an integral part of the cultural heritage of the border regions of Selonia and Lithuania, and are still being nurtured and passed on to future generations, creating a special link between the past and present. Local clay is transformed into pots and glazed dishes, and the ancient tradition of baking rye bread - bread baked in bakeries and workshops with leaven, as the ancestors of the inhabitants of Selonia did. Craftsmen use ancient skills to make crosses, benches, and pillars out of wood. Weaving plays a special role, preserving a richness of patterns and characters. The tradition of making straw ornaments is still alive in Biržai, where delicate and symbolic Christmas decorations are made.

One of the experts and practitioners of craft skills is the Biržai regional museum "Sėla", which introduces visitors to the life of

the Dukes' Palace, the ancient beer-brewing traditions of the Biržai region, and the old brewing traditions of Biržai region and the 16th-17th century warfare. Various educational programs are also available in the region, such as "The Cheese Route", "Antiquity speaks in brass", "Secrets of Wood", "Potter's Craft", "Colors and Signs of the National Costume", "Ancient rural crafts", "The way of bread", "The way of flax", "Patalki", and others. Also worth mentioning are the folk artists, such as Zita Kumpelienė - a folk artist and preserver of national heritage, who makes baskets and woolen products, and many others who are skilled in ancient crafts such as weaving, crocheting, embroidery, wickerwork, eggshell carving, and traditional paper ornament making. An integral part of this are craft fairs, where artisans can share their knowledge and sell their creations.



Photo: Educational Program "The way of bread"

# Traditional Architecture and Description of the Residence

The cultural-historical heritage of the historic Selonia region and the northern part of Lithuania is reflected in the practical traditional architecture, which is rooted in the Aukštaitija tradition of building wooden farmhouses and manor houses. The windows are decorated with wooden shutters - not only a practical but also an aesthetic element that enriches the facade of the building. The buildings are constructed from massive logs, with roofs covered with reeds, shingles or tiles, creating a lasting and natural harmony with the surrounding environment. The dwellings are usually built on an elongated plan, ensuring a comfortable and functional furnishings, but the the main outbuildings - barns, cowsheds, saunas and granaries - are located around them. Apple trees and other fruit trees often grow in the courtyards, creating a cozy and lively landscape, while

traditional fences mark the perimeter of the homestead.

In the Selonia region, architecture is not just a form of construction - it is a carefully cultivated philosophy of life, the aim of which is to create a unified, harmonious space that corresponds to both natural conditions and human needs. Particularly in Eastern Aukštaitija, a type of street village has been preserved, where rural boundaries of fields were not divided into individual homesteads, but were used for communal grazing of livestock and communal baths..

Features of Selian architecture can be seen at the Sodeliškės Manor Farmstead, the Astravas Manor, the Ilzenberg Manor, the granary of Salamiestras, and the Adomynė Manor.



Photo: Sodeliškiai Manor Homestead, photo by: Biržai Tourism and Business Information Centre

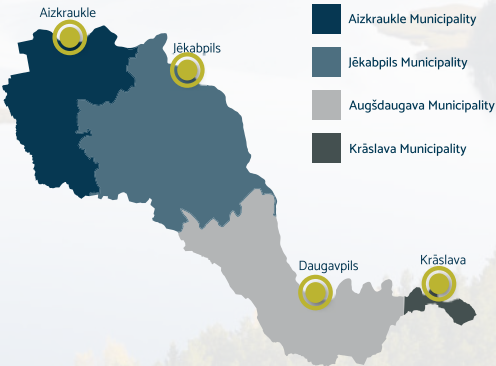
The close cultural-historical, as well as ethnographic-linguistic links between the historical lands of modern-day Selonia and Lithuania have been forged over several centuries. About two-thirds of the territory inhabited by the Selonians is believed to be in present-day Latvia, and the remaining



Coat of Arms of Selonia



Flag of Selonia



land of the Selonians, known as the Lithuanian-Selonian border, always remained open. Only in 1921 the border between Latvia and Lithuania was established. The connection between territories has led to the peculiarities of the population structure of the Selonia region, as well as the landscape of lakes and bogs, which led to the formation of settlements in inhabited areas that today resemble a mosaic of islands. This means that a Selonian would be an inhabitant of a lake and boggy rich area, which is also revealed in the etymology of the word "Selonia". The historical region of Selonia in Latvia has its own heraldic symbols – a flag and a coat of arms.



third in Lithuania. However, the process of the formation of the territory inhabited by the settlers is not straightforward, but also reveals a multi-layered historical picture. Analyzing the position of Selonia in the Duchy of Courland and Semigallia time, it must be clear that in those years there wasn't a concept of "Selonia"; the region was called Augškurzeme, Augšzeme, Augšzemgale or Augšgals and it was a part of the Semigallia region of the Duchy.

The unique genesis of the Selonia region is rooted in the ancient Baltic people, whose languages belonged to the Baltic group of the Indo-European language family. The southern border of the ancient

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# Nature and Landscape

The northeastern regions of Lithuania's borderlands are unique in their synthesis of nature and culture with contrasts between ancient manor houses, rolling hills and wide fields, where the traditional rural way of life still survives. The rural landscape consists of undulating terrain, farmland, meadows, woodlands and villages, dominated by wooden houses and gardens, preserving the ancient Aukštaitija spirit. The homesteads and manor complexes integrate harmoniously into the natural landscape, creating a rich and multi-layered cultural and historical environment. The region's largest rivers – the Apaščia, the Tatula, the Lėvuo and the Šetekšna – add a special touch. On their banks, you can find guesthouses and other rural tourism

facilities that offer peaceful relaxation close to nature, while observation towers allow you to see the surroundings from a different perspective. Each season in this region reveals a distinctive natural aesthetic and mood. In spring, when the valleys flood, the meadows blossom and sowing season begins, nature wakes up. In summer is a time of greenery and vibrancy, with fields ripening, people enjoying active recreation by the lakes, cutting grass for hay and celebrating village festivals. Autumn brings warm colours and bountiful harvests, the smell of apples in the air and the mood of the evening, making it an especially romantic time. In winter, the region turns into a snowy fairy tale.

- 1. Cow Cave (*Karavės ola*)  
GPS 56.206752, 24.694270
- 2. Kirkilai karst lakes (*Kirkilų karstiniai ežerėliai*)  
GPS 56.246100, 24.688300
- 3. Lake Širvėna and Pedestrian Bridge (*Širvėnos ežeras ir pėsčiųjų tiltas*)  
GPS 56.211191, 24.769184
- 4. Astravas Manor Park (*Astravo duaro parkas*)  
GPS 56.218569906495695, 24.76786938195152
- 5. Lake Sartai (*Sartų ežeras*)  
GPS 55.844207096529175, 25.83811874778537
- 6. Lake Ilgis (by Ilzenbergs) (*Ilgio ežeras (pie Ilzenbergo)*)  
GPS 56.163208, 25.52828
- 7. Bradesiai Oak (*Bradesių ažuolas*)  
GPS 55.831724459421366, 25.877405623717078
- 8. Rokiškis Manor Park (*Rokiškio duaro parkas*)  
GPS 55.965800751777934, 25.594012689365282
- 9. The Green Spring (*Žalsusis šaltinis*)  
GPS 56.067329, 24.400188
- 10. Sinkhole Park (*Smeduobių parkas*)  
GPS 56.055764, 24.397234
- 11. Hill of Skaliai (*Skalių kalnas*)  
GPS 56.065823, 24.113400
- 12. Kupiškis Reservoir (*Kupiškio marios*)  
GPS 55.854201, 24.972061
- 13. Stirmiškių Outcrop (*Stirmiškių atodanga*)  
GPS 55.78308403329736, 24.836308644186158
- 14. Dendrological Park of Mother-in-law's Tongue Island (*Uošvės Liežuvio salos dendrologinis parkas*)  
GPS 55.859905, 24.979226
- 15. Kupa River Valley Park (*Kupos upės slėnio parkas*)  
GPS 55.83847295849377, 24.98839013542494
- 16. Simonų girios pažintinis takas „Į girią“ (*Simonų girios pažintinis takas „Į girią“*)  
GPS 55.71927516102254, 25.211680086867233

**Observation towers**

- 1. Kirkilai Observation Tower (*Kirkilų apžvalgos bokštas*)  
GPS 56.248436, 24.690898
- 2. Lake Sartai Observation Tower (*Sartų ežero apžvalgos bokštas*)  
GPS 55.840983, 25.838581
- 3. Adomas Petrauskas Museum Tower (*Adomo Petrauskos muziejaus bokštas*)  
GPS 55.886758453491645, 24.778843925708163



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Latvia – Lithuania

Photo: Sārtu Lake observation tower, photo by: Virginijus Stumbrys

Cover photo: Kirkilai lakes, photo by: Remigijus Baltušis

Photo: Ilzenberg Manor, photo by: Ilzenberg Manor

**Selonia - the  
beginning is today**

**Lithuania**

