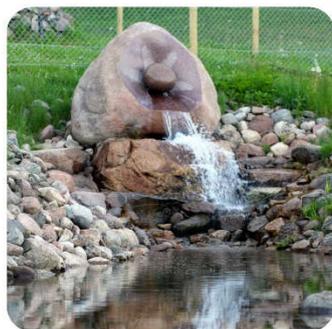


# Vainode and Vainode parish



At the end of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the current area of Vainode Parish was situated on the south side of a Curonian land called **Bandava**. In 1253, Vainode became a part of the **Bishopric of Courland**, which then changed to the District of Piltene in 1585, and subsequently to the Courland Governorate of the Russian Empire in 1795.



Development of Vainode began along with the construction of the **Liepāja- Mazeikiai** railway line in 1871. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the land of Vainode Manor near Vainode Railway Station turned into a village which was **mostly populated** by the brickkiln and sawmill workers, while the nearby land of Lielbata Manor turned into a village of summer cottages. In 1912, construction work of one of the **largest military airbases** in the **Baltic States** was launched. During the independence period this was one of the cradles of aviation in Latvia. During World War I, German forces built two airship **hangars** next to the aerodrome which were dismantled and taken to Riga (now the home of **Riga Central Market**) in the 1920s, **16** hangars still remain at the aerodrome as well as **1800** m of a once 2500 m long runway.



In the 1930s, Vainode was also known as a **resort destination** with very **clean air**. Vainode was the home of a **sanatorium** for state officials, mother and child **care center** as well as tuberculosis **hospital**.

Vainode was occupied by the Red Army during World War II on 9 October 1944. The battlefront was established to the north of the village. The northern part of the parish was completely **destroyed** due to the intense battles.



Vainode Municipality was formed in **2009** as a result of the merger of **Vainode** and **Embute** parishes under administrative territorial reform.

Vainode Municipality is situated in the Embute hills of Rietumkursa Highland, which is dominated by moraines and thus accounts for the mosaic- like landscape where agricultural lands alternate with forests. Small **lakes, ponds** and **meadows** have been formed at the lowlands of the hills. The northern part of Embute Parish reaches into the Bandava hills.

Vainode Municipality may be described as a gentle maritime climate with mild winters. Temperature fluctuations throughout the year are relatively low, while the level of humidity and precipitation may change significantly.

The beautiful landscape of Embute is complemented by Lake. Various different size ponds may be found in the municipality, which may **be used in recreation, aquaculture, and fisheries**. These small- size rivers are significant for the maintenance of biodiversity and fish resources as well as they are useful for fishing. The parish is mostly covered in mixed **forests**. The tree stand is dominated by **spruce, birch** and grey **alder**. The forests are home to a number of hunted animals which is a prerequisite for the development of **hunting tourism**.

The area also has some deposits for building materials, for example, **sand- gravel, sand, clay, loam** and **peat**, yet only a few of them are being exploited. The most significant peat deposit in Vainode Municipality is **Kalsi** Swamp, which is situated in the southern part of Vainode Parish. Kalsi peat deposit lies over 178, 7 ha of land and it is owned by Latvijas valsts meži SIA. The rest of the peat deposits in the municipality are not being exploited.

# Active recreation

## Archery in Embute Valley

Archery is an old and environmentally friendly sport which can be practiced at any age and is equally exciting for children, teenagers, adults and senior citizens. We offer bow and arrow rental that has to be booked in advance. + 371 2619 7185, [www.curland.lv](http://www.curland.lv)



## Vībiņi park

Vībiņi Park includes a campsite, footpaths, benches, and volleyball court. On one side of the park you can find a landscaped Hunters Pond. The pond may also be used for fishing or boating.

Vībiņi, Embutes pagasts, Vainodes novads,  
+ 371 2834 8289



## Multifunctional sports field in Vainode

Dimensions of the field are 15 x 30 m. It has a rubber surface and composite material borders. During summer time it may be used for mini-football, basketball and volleyball. In winters it may be used as an ice rink for hockey or skating. In the nearby park you can also find an outdoor gym that will keep all who want to exercise busy, regardless of age.

Raina 4, Vainode, Vainodes novads,  
+ 371 2636 0817, [www.vainode.lv](http://www.vainode.lv)



## “Volzbahs” recreation site

A steep hillside with a beautiful view over a ravine. In the winter it serves as more than a 100 m long ride on skis, snowboard or sled. During other seasons - a site for picnics, photo shoots and walks. It is situated 2 km to the NW of the central part of Vainode.

Vainode, Vainodes novads,  
+ 371 2939 1023, [www.facebook.com/biedribavolzbahs](https://www.facebook.com/biedribavolzbahs)  
Twitter: Volzbahs



## Elkuzeme Mill pond

Landscaped recreation site with friendly vacationers. Fishing, boating and camping.



# Sights in Vainode municipality

## Lielbāta Spring

Lielbāta Spring is the largest clear - spring in Latvia. The spring flows from west to east towards the sun, thus it has long been regarded as magical or even sacred with healing properties. It is available to everybody and so everyone has a chance to try the spring water.



## The Red Army military cemetery

The Red Army military cemetery with 5800 graves is the second largest burial site for casualties of war in Liepāja Municipality after the cemetery in Priekule. The cemetery was reconstructed in 2010 with funding from the Russian Embassy.



## Vainode aerodrome - Soviet army airbase

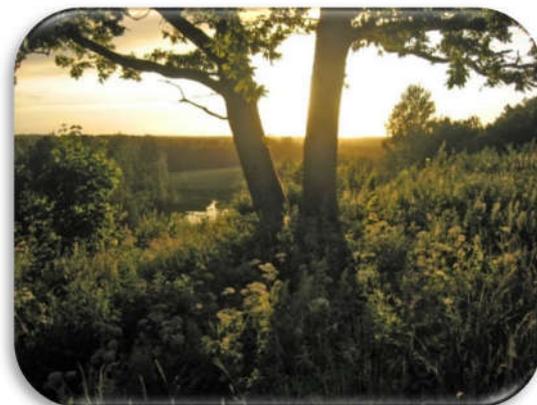
It was once one of the largest military airbases in the Baltic states. Already during the first independence period, it served as a base for the first Latvian airships. During the Soviet occupation the aerodrome was used as a military airbase. 16 hangars and 1800 m of a once 2500, long runway still remain in the territory. The airbase may only be visited under the guidance of a guide.

+ 371 2922 9743



## Krievu (Krīvu) hill

The highest hill in Kurzeme (190 m AMSL). According to legend, this was one of the ancient sacred sites for one of the most well-known mythological characters among the Baltic people- Pērkons (Thunder). Supposedly, there was always a holy fire kept going on the hill, which was watched by the soothsayers- krīvi (holly men) or vaidelotes (holly women). The top of the hill is marked by a large boulder. A house for Krīvaiši was supposedly there before World War II. The hill is overgrown with trees.



# Sights in Embute Valley

## Eco trail of 2,5 km

Embūte Valley is one of the most beautiful places in Kurzeme. It reminds one of a mighty bowl which is surrounded by hills, several tens of meters high, from all sides - Pavārkalns, Vēreskalns, Rādīņkalns, Embūte Castle Mound, and Krievu (Krīvu) Hill which is also the highest of the aforementioned (190 m AMSL). Many places around Embūte often mentioned in history books, legends and tales.



## Embūte tourist information centre

The center was established in 2006 thanks to the EU Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and state aid. In 2012, Embūte Tourist Information center was taken over by Vaiņode Municipality and it was also arranged as a guest house. You can take a look at several exhibitions and find out more about the local sights

[embutes.tic@inbox.lv](mailto:embutes.tic@inbox.lv)



## Embūte Nature Park

Nature Park was established in 1977. Its main natural value is the outstanding virgin ravine and slope forest complex with mineral springs as well as the plant and animal species which may be found there. Embūte Nature Park is home to 7 specially protected plant and animal species in Latvia as well as 9 bird species. The area is also a valuable cultural and historical landscape was formed preserved from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The most significant cultural heritage sites situated in the central part of the park in the historical center of Embūte.



## The ruins of Embūte church

The chapel was built from 1674 - 1684. Embūte Lutheran Church was one of the largest in the Duchy of Courland with 300 seats and was known for remarkable indoor woodcarvings. The church did not suffer from World War I. The church was reconstructed in 1926, but destroyed at the end of World War II. The only remaining parts are the walls and bell tower, where you can still see the traces left by artillery.



## Ruins of the former Embūte manor and German Knights Castle

The German Knights Castle in Embūte was built from 1236 to 1265. From 1290, Embūte Castle was home to several bishops of the Bishopric of Piltene. The castle was destroyed in around 1700 during the Great Northern War. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Embūte Castle became the center of a large manor and home to a noble family. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a manor house was built on the old foundations of the castle. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it was expanded by taking down one of the old gate towers. The manor house burned down in 1920. Ruins of the rampart and certain walls of the castle have remained until today.



## The Symbol of Embūte Valley gates - two Curonian swords

The exploration and preservation work of the local cultural and historical heritage was started in 1980s, which included the installation of two impressive Curonian swords that symbolize the entrance gate of Embūte. The swords and shields left on each side by Indulis and his friend Pudiķis protect the road that goes towards the Embūte and Joda valleys.



## Joda Dam

In many writings Joda Dam in Embūte is described as a dam for water retention or as a defensive structure at the castle mound. However, the dam also has several interesting bioenergetics properties that have possibly been used for weather modification or ritual processions



## The Oak of Indulis and Ārija

The legend tells that the Curonian leader Indulis met Ārija - daughter of a German commander.



## Joda Valley

Joda Valley is situated on the western foot of Indulis Castle Mound - a flat field that has been used to build several open-air stages and has hosted large events - Summer Solstice festival, theatre plays and concerts. There is a recreation site for tourists instead. Campsite, bonfire place, WC. Electrical outlets are also available.



## The Castle Mound spring

A clear spring is flowing at the western slope of Indulis Castle Mound towards Joda Valley. Legend says that they are the tears of a beautiful Latvian girl who sunk along with the castle.



## Curonian or Indulis Castle Mound

Located 400 m north of the central part of Embūte. It is a medium-size castle mound formed on a 26 m high promontory with naturally steep slopes. Based on the scale of modifications, the castle mound may be regarded as a well-fortified settlement of Cours that was populated in the Late Iron Age. Now the castle mound overgrown with trees, with well-maintained surroundings and wooden stairs taking you to the top of it.



## River Lanka

The River Lanka starts at Embūte Forest Pond and connects with the River Dzelda. The River Lanka has been used to ensure the cascade for ponds in Embūte Valley for many decades. The bank of the River Lanka offers a gorgeous view of the hills surrounding the valley.



# Accommodation

## **Embūte Tourist information Center**

Embūte - 1, Embūtes pagasts, Vaiņodes novads,  
+ 371 2663 2134, [embutes.tic@inbox.lv](mailto:embutes.tic@inbox.lv)  
Disable friendly!



## **Vainode Youth hostel**

Raiņa iela 60, Vaiņode, Vaiņodes novads,  
+371 29228885, [visk@inbox.lv](mailto:visk@inbox.lv),  
[reinisulberts@inbox.lv](mailto:reinisulberts@inbox.lv), [www.visk.lv](http://www.visk.lv)



## **Gailiške holiday home**

Kalēji 5, Auguste, Vaiņodes pagasts,  
Vaiņodes novads,  
+371 2933 6085  
[info@gailiske.lv](mailto:info@gailiske.lv), [www.gailiske.lv](http://www.gailiske.lv)



