

EN

Nature Tourism

Tukums and Vicinity



Tukums
Uz Tukumu pēc smukuma!



Welcome to Tukums!

If you must choose your holiday destination or want to relax away from the hustle and bustle of the big city, why not go to Tukums and enjoy the nature? Here, you can regain balance by walking parks and nature trails, cheer up your heart and mind by observing birds and animals, pamper your body by lounging and catching rays of sun in the fine sand along the nearly 60 km long beach.

**Discover the beauty in Tukums!
Discover peace and quiet!**

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Pictured: Lāčupīte Garden of Well-being
Cover photo: The reed plankway

www.visittukums.lv

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Recommendations for Friendly and Green Travel

- Stay on existing roads and tracks. Don't trample on the surrounding areas!
- Don't be noisy while enjoying nature not to disturb wild animals. Keep dogs on a lead.
- Do not drive your vehicle on the beach and do not park in the dunes.
- Build bonfires and tents only in designated areas. **Never build bonfires in places of high fire risk and during the fire risk season!**
- To wash dishes, scoop water in a bigger dish. Pour out the used water on ground, not in rivers or lakes.
- Avoid using disposable materials as much as possible.
- **Don't leave rubbish behind – pick it up and deposit in designated locations,** so that you can enjoy your future visits, but the best way is to take it back with you!
- If you go picking bounties of the forest, use a knife to cut mushrooms and don't use mechanical devices to pick berries.
- If possible, employ the services of environmental guides – they will be able to explain best what you can see in nature and how important it is to keep it intact for us, the people.
- Do not leave your 'autographs' on rock faces, tree trunks or man-made objects.
- Take care not to damage herbaceous plants, moss, lichen and their habitats. Let us preserve monuments of nature and culture for the future generations!
- **Keep only photographs and positive impressions from the places you visit!**

Environmental guides

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Ķemeri National Park



The Ķemeri National Park was established in 1997. It is a very diverse territory covering an area of more than 38 thousand hectares. On the shore, the current littoral low-lands are surrounded by several rows of inland dunes – Krāču Hills, the Green Dune, which are the prehistoric Litorina Sea shore. In the prehistoric times, as the land elevated and the sea descended, littoral lagoon lakes formed – Lake Kaņieris, Dūņieris, Sloka – with rare saltwater plants. Hilly grooves with 30 m deep Lake Valgums in between them are found in the northwest part of the park. The Great Ķemeri Bog, the Witches Bog and the Green Bog are hiding amongst the large expanses of forests. Underneath them, sulphur-rich water is forming through interaction between bedrocks and bogs, which then flow to the surface in the area of Ķemeri and have been the foundation of the resort for many centuries.

Human activities have had relatively little impact on this territory, mainly only in fishing villages along the shore and in agricultural areas around Slampe, which has allowed the park to provide habitats for rare plant and animal species protected in Latvia and Europe. This is the home of about 25 % of plants from the Latvian Protected Species List. The kingdom of

fauna is represented here by the white-tailed eagle, the Eurasian eagle-owl, and the whimbrel, which are rarely found in Latvia and Europe. The park offers particularly good feeding and nesting conditions for the black stork, crane and the lesser spotted eagle, as well as the corn crake and rare woodpecker species, like the Eurasian three-toed woodpecker, the middle-spotted woodpecker and the white-backed woodpecker. The beaver is a permanent resident here.

The Ķemeri National Park allows visiting and exploring nature throughout the year along various trails by foot and bicycle to observe the diversity of nature.

About the Park

More information:
 Ķemeri National Park Tourist Information and Nature Education Centre, “Meža māja”, Ķemeri, Jūrmala.
 Tel.: (+371) 67730078, 26424972,
www.kemerunacionalaisparks.lv

Pictured: Bog-rosemary or *Andromeda polifolia* (*Andromeda polifolia* L.) in the Ķemeri National Park



Information and Nature Education Centre “Meža māja” (“Forest House”) is located in Ķemeri on the banks of River Vēršupīte surrounded by wet forests. At “Meža māja”, which in 1930-ties hosted one of the most popular restaurants in Jūrmala – “Jautrais ods” or “The jolly mosquito” – today is the home of the Pierīga Regional Administration of the Nature Conservation Agency, which oversees the Ķemeri National Park and ensure the operations of the nature education centre by offering various nature education activities.

1 “Meža māja”

Address: “Meža māja”, Ķemeri, Jūrmala

2 Black Alder Swamp Forest Plankway

Address: "Meža māja",
Ķemeri, Jūrmala



3 Park of the Ķemeri historical resort

Address: Tukuma St. 38, Ķemeri, Jūrmala.
Tel.: (+371) 67147900 (Jūrmala TIC)

Pictured:
Love Islet and pavilion

The plankway of the black alder swamp is one of the shorter trails in the Ķemeri National Park (600 m). It is situated right next to "Meža māja". Here, in a very concentrated and exploratory way, you can learn about wet broad-leaved tree forests – swamp forests, by observing how various tree species have adapted to life on the wet-soiled banks of River Vēršupīte. The walk takes about half an hour.

The plankway is connected to paths of the historical Ķemeri resort park allowing to extend the walk through the spectacular broad-leaved forest (deciduous forest) to Ķemeri Centre, the restored water tower and other objects of interest of the historic resort. The plankway and the park paths of the historical Ķemeri resort park are accessible to people in wheelchairs and prams.

"Musical bridge" and others. The Ķemeri Park is the oldest and largest public garden in Latvia outside Riga. At the park, you will see the monument built in 1861 to honour the founders and directors of the Ķemeri resort, the Russian Orthodox church built in 1893, and architectural objects such as the Love Islet with a pavilion, and the sulphur spring "Ķirzaciņa" with a pavilion. A large-scale reconstruction was completed in the summer of 2021 with the restored pathway network, newly set up benches, lanterns and a playground.

The **Ķemeri Water Tower** is a 42-metres tall structure, which is the tallest in Ķemeri. It was built in 1929; its architect was Frīdrihs Skujiņš. The tower held a sulphur water reservoir and a drinking water reservoir of 100 m³. A viewing platform was set up at the top level of the tower before World War II. Guests of the resort could see the surrounding landscape of Ķemeri from the 42-metre tall tower. After the reconstruction, the water tower has been open to visitors, offering to visit an exhibit of the history of Ķemeri resort and enjoy the surrounding scenery from two viewing platforms at the height of 13 and 42 metres.

The Walking Trail of Lake Sloka is slightly more than 3 km long and winds along the shores of the water fowl rich lake through various forest stands. The trail starts and ends by Lake Sloka, where you will find a parking lot, picnic grounds and a bird-watching tower. At a distance of only about 300 m from the parking lot, another interesting object awaits – the extraction site of medicinal sludge. Sludge here is obtained and used in medical procedures by the resort rehabilitation centre "Jaunķemeri".



The Green Dune is a sand bank overgrown with pine trees formed on the bank of the prehistoric Litorina sea. To explore the diversity of the prehistoric sea shores and forests, a hiking and cycling route has been set up. The main route is circular – it starts and ends in Ķemeri and it is 14 km long (excluding the walk along the Plankway of the Sulphur Ponds). However, you can adapt it to your needs and enjoy the opportunity to visit other objects of interest at the Ķemeri National Park and surrounding areas.

The Kaņieris hillfort nature trail, which is set up in the 8th kilometre of the Antiņciems-Jāņkrogs road, by Lake Kaņieris, leads through the forest and a grassy swamp towards the Kaņieris hillfort. On the way, it crosses a rock wall, which, possibly, was linked to the hillfort.

Historians are still undecided about the age of the Kaņieris hillfort and its settlers. Some believe that it is a very ancient tribal settlement, while others suggest that it was used by sea pillagers to attack ships. It is a circular trail with the total distance of 1.3 km.

4 Walking Trail of Lake Sloka

Address: At the end of sludge road
by Lake Sloka, Ķemeri, Jūrmala

Pictured:
Lake Sloka viewing tower

5 The Green Dune

Address: Smārde parish,
Tukums region

6 Kaņieris Hillfort Nature Trail

Address: 8th kilometre of Jāņkrogs-
Antiņciems road, Lapmežciems parish,
Tukums region

7 Lake Kaņieris birdwatching tower, the juniper stand and the reed plankway

Address: Between Lapmežciems and Antiņciems, Lapmežciems parish, Tukums region

On the left: Nīdrāji Plankway,
on the right: sulphur pond plankway
in the Bog of Witches

Interesting facts

Kaņieris is a vastly overgrown lagoon type lake. The banks are low, with terraces of the ancient Litorina sea basin. It has 14 islands. Area – 11.28 km².

The bird-watching tower is located in the Rieksti peninsula of Lake Kaņieris, and a large section of Lake Kaņieris can be observed from it. It is worth coming here to enjoy the lake scenery, swans and elegant great egret.

On the way to the birdwatching tower on Lake Kaņieris, you will notice a whole **stand of junipers**. This is one of the largest juniper stands in Latvia. Thanks to the limy soil conditions and regular grassland management, juniper stands have emerged in many places along the banks of Lake Kaņieris and on its islets.

One of the more unusual plankways of the Ķemeri National Park starts here – **the Nīdrāji or Reed Trail**. The trail is set up on pontoons allowing to explore an otherwise inaccessible and mysterious world of reeds. The length is about 600 m.



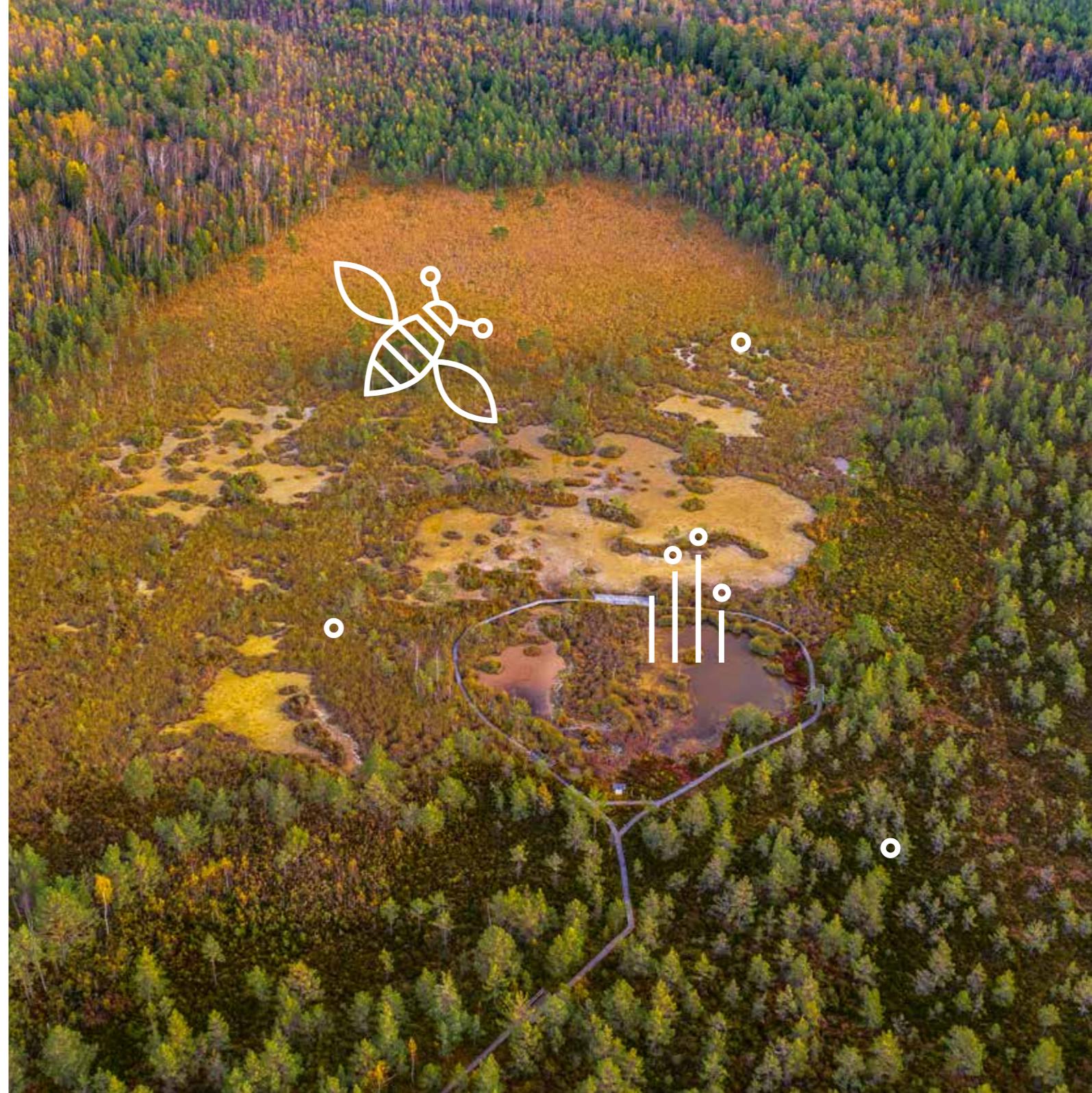
8 Sulphur pond plankway in the Bog of Witches

Address: Between Antiņciems and Ķemeri, Lapmežciems parish, Tukums region

The Bog of Witches (Raganu purvs) is one of the high bogs of the Ķemeri National Park, under which the famous sulphur mineral waters are formed. The plankway set up here, as it winds through the ecosystem and the characteristic flora of the high bog, takes you to an unusual geological object – sulphur ponds which have formed as sulphur mineral waters

flow to the surface layer of the bog. It is the sulphur-rich water that contributes to the unusual flora and colour of the Bog of Witches ponds.

A rather unusual scenery can be seen here in the spring, when microorganisms proliferate in the ponds making them look yellowish. The trail is 0.8 km long.



9 The Great Ķemeri Bog Boardwalk

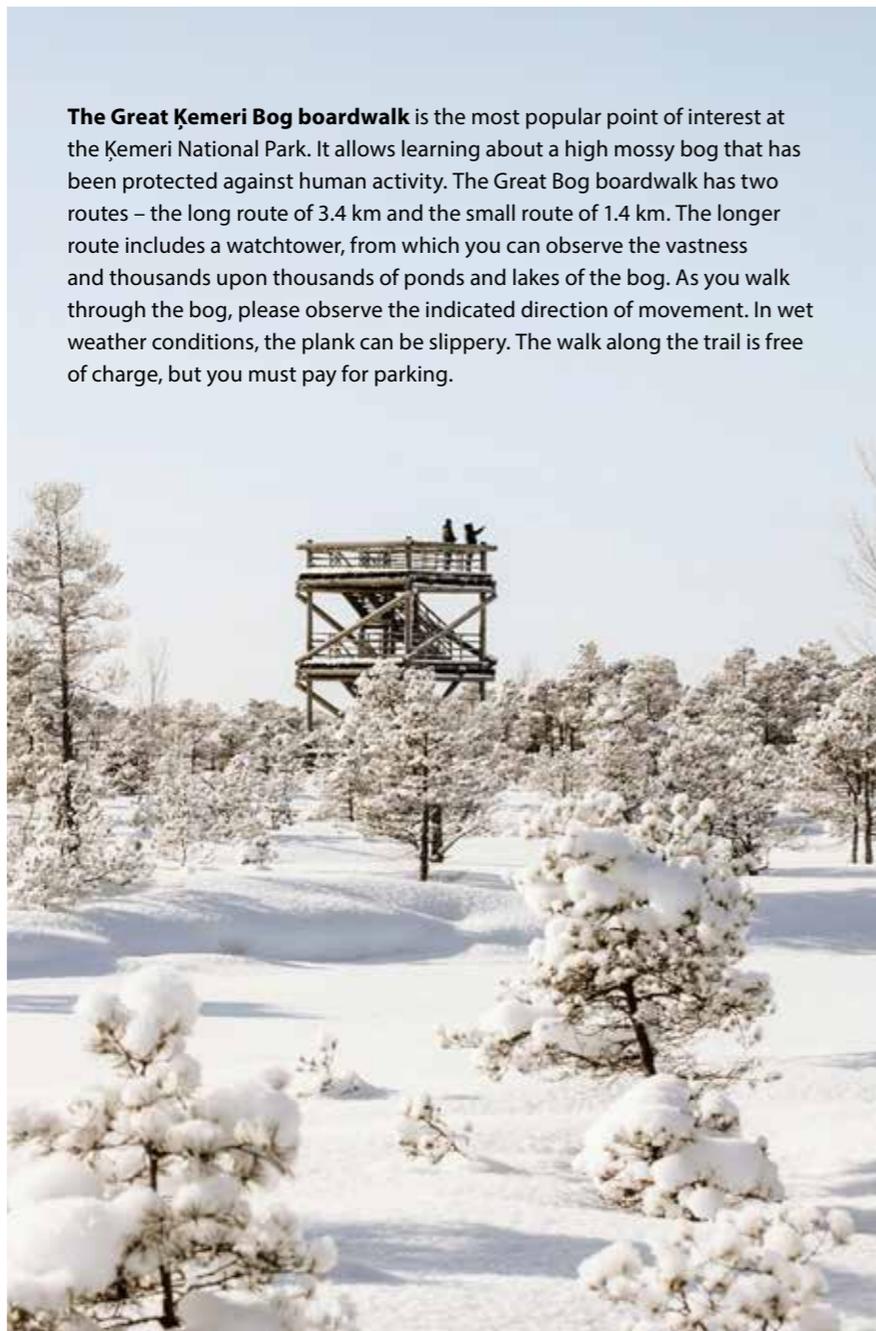
Address: "Tireļi", Slampe parish, Tukums region

Pictured: viewing tower in the Great Ķemeri Bog

10 Kupskalnu Nature Trail

Address: Boundary line between Bigauņciems and Lapmežciems, Lapmežciems parish, Tukums region

The Kupskalnu Nature Trail was set up in 2005 and restored in 2020. It runs along the boundary line between Lapmežciems and Bigauņciems and takes you to the sea along the River Siliņupe where you can see the old Lapmežciems breakwater. Changing facilities, WC and small children's playground are set up here, too. The trail is 0.4 km long. There is a small parking lot by the road at the start of the nature trail.



The Great Ķemeri Bog boardwalk is the most popular point of interest at the Ķemeri National Park. It allows learning about a high mossy bog that has been protected against human activity. The Great Bog boardwalk has two routes – the long route of 3.4 km and the small route of 1.4 km. The longer route includes a watchtower, from which you can observe the vastness and thousands upon thousands of ponds and lakes of the bog. As you walk through the bog, please observe the indicated direction of movement. In wet weather conditions, the plank can be slippery. The walk along the trail is free of charge, but you must pay for parking.

11 Dunduri Meadows

Address: Dunduri Meadows, Džūkste parish, Tukums region

Pictured: Art trail in "Valguma pasaule" forest

The Dunduri Meadows are floodplains surrounded by a forest, where wild cows and *Polski Konik* horses have been grazing for nearly 20 years now. These animal species are specially bred to live in the wild and are very close to their extinct predecessors: aurochs and tarpans. The Dunduri Meadows are great for bird-watching. Here, you will see corn crakes nesting, the lesser spotted eagles and other birds of prey feeding, while the restored bends of the naturalised rivers Slampe and Skudrupite offer feeding grounds for the black stork and the great egret. A 5.5 metres tall watchtower has been set up for observing birds and other animals in the southern section of the floodplains. Two viewing platforms are set up in the area of Melnragi floodplains opening up a panoramic view of meadows from different viewpoints. While at the meadows, mind the electric fence of the enclosure. It is not allowed to approach the animals within the enclosure. Refrain from feeding animals to prevent that they become used to approaching humans and to avoid potential harm.

The Barefoot Trail will be a true discovery for the health conscious. This combines the best of what has been tried in Austria, Germany and Switzerland and supplemented with the characteristic features of our land, Lake Valgums and vicinity of River Slocene, the Ķemeri National Park. The trail surface is made of pebbles, stones, boulders, millstones, moss, pine cones, seashore sand, reed, woodchips, coarse pine bark, clay, refreshing river water. The trail is improved and supplemented each year. The best time to visit is from May till September.

The Art Trail in the forest is formed of large-format photographs by a New Zealand photographer with Latvian roots Andris Apse and a Latvian nature photographer Andris Eglitis.

The Meditation or Gothic Labyrinth follows a drawing identical to the pattern built in the floor of the 13th century Chartres Cathedral in Northern France. In the olden days, the people believed that the labyrinth has healing powers. So, this



offers a place where you can calm your mind.

The Festivities Square invites everyone to meet their very selves in a unique **Mirror labyrinth**, offering some unusual photographing opportunities, warming up under the **Sun sign**, **the Baltic wheel** or by **visiting the Namedays' labyrinth** among other surprises.

12 "Valguma pasaule"

Address: "Valguma pasaule", Smārde parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 63181222, 29414022, www.valgumapasaule.lv

Nature Park Lake Engure



The nature park Lake Engure was formed in 1998, and it consists not only of Lake Engure and the surrounding land, but also the Gulf of Riga shore from Mērsrags till Engure, as well as forests between the shore and the lake. In terms of diversity of flora and fauna and the number of endangered species, the Lake Engure Ornithological restricted nature area (1957) is among the richest in Latvia. During the spring and autumn migrations, you will be able to spot around 900 cranes, in the spring around 250 whooper swans and 170 tundra swans, while in the autumn around 800 taiga bean geese and 1000 white-fronted geese.

In terms of biotopes, the greatest value of Lake Engure is the fresh water biotopes of the lake and the large areas of lime bogs. Mērsrags is among the few places in Latvia where you can see seashore meadows that are typical of salty soils. The vicinity of Lake Engure is among the richest territories in Latvia in terms of flora and it stands out with its untouched nature. This means that forests and meadows alike feature only typical plant species and few plants that have appeared as a result of

intensive human activities. The Engure Ornithological Research Centre (EORC) is the pride of the Engure Lake Nature Park. The Research Centre on the eastern end of Lake Engure has been operating since 1958 carrying out observations and ringing of birds found here. This centre and the scientists' created "floating house" have become legendary amongst ornithologists.

Even though the official tourism season of the park is from 15 April until 15 October, it can also be visited in other times of the year.

About the Park

More information:
Lake Engure Nature Park Foundation.
Tel.: (+371) 29474420, www.eedp.lv

On the left: wild herbivores,
below: birdwatching tower on Lake Engure



To maintain and preserve open park-like landscapes, many countries use the proven method of keeping all-season pastures for ancient domesticated animal species that have adapted to living in the wild. This has been introduced in Engure, too. These domesticated animals have a thicker coat which allows them to stay in the pastures throughout the year and even in adverse weather conditions. They are not picky eaters: in the summer, they feed on grass and young reeds, but in the winter, they happily graze on shrubby branches, bark and needles, whereas in less favourable conditions they are also given hay. They do not require milking either.

Enclosures for domestic animals adapted to life in the wild in the Lake Engure Nature Park cover a total area of more than 100 ha with more than 70 head herd – Latvian blue, Highlander, Charole, Hereford and Alpengrey cows, as well as about 20 Polski Konik horses.

13 Pastures of wild herbivores around Lake Engure

Address: Bērziems, Engure parish, Tukums region

14 Birdwatching Tower on Lake Engure

Address: Bērciems, Engure parish,
Tukums region

Interesting facts

The great white egret or silver egret (*Ardea alba*) is a large bird of the heron family. The egret has 3 subspecies nesting in a large area nearly all across the globe. Since 2000, it has been nesting regularly also in Latvia, even though previously it was only a rarely seen species. The great white egret is often compared to an angel. The bird is white, similar to a swan, only when taking off, a swan's wings make a whooshing sound, while an egret lifts off without sound, almost like "an intangible being".



In order for visitors to the nature park to be able to better see the birds and the beautiful landscape of Lake Engure, a **birdwatching tower** is set up by the lake (or rather, on pontoons in the lake). A scenery of the lake and nearby floodplains opens up from it. From the 12-metre high watchtower, you will be able to spot such birds as the Eurasian eagle-owl, the white-tailed eagle, the great egret, the whooper swan and a range of other bird species. According to ornithologists, during the migration season, you will be able to observe large flocks of cranes, swans and geese, and the watchtowers allow seeing further without natural obstacles, while in the spring and autumn, bird-watchers will not be left disappointed. A trail leads to the tower through lakeside pastures with horses and cows who have adapted to living in the wild, which means that you will be passing animals and therefore you should be careful.

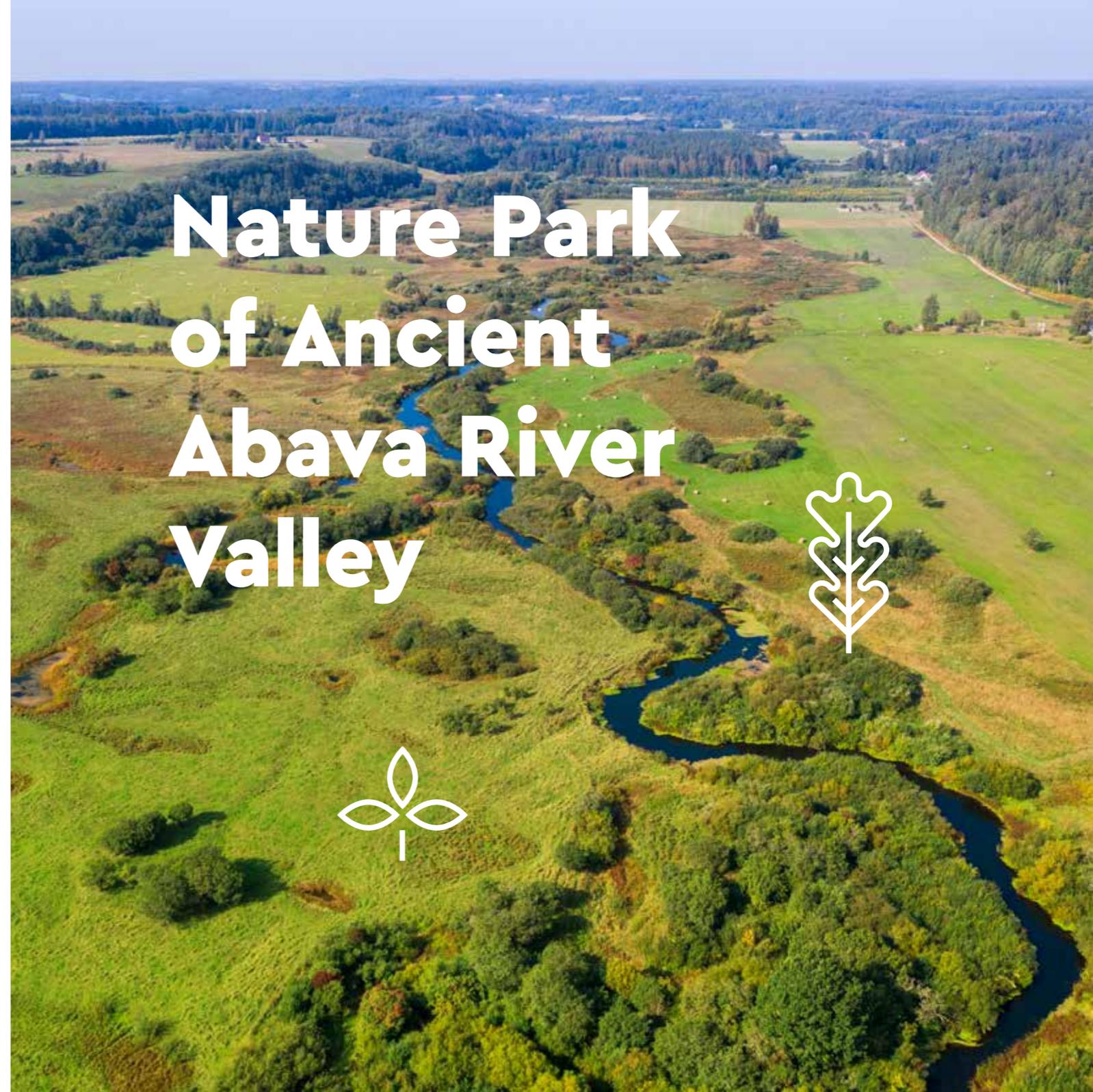


The floodplains, grassy bogs and wet forests of the nature park "Lake Engure" can boast with a **great variety of orchid species** – 22 of 32 wild orchid species found in Latvia can be spotted in the vicinity of Engure. At the nature park, you can also see rich growths of the fly orchid, which is a very rare orchid found only in Kurzeme. This is the orchid that is the reason of setting up the trail. The total length of the trail is around 3.5 km. The best time to visit is June-July.

The flower of the fly orchid (*Ophrys insectifera* L.) does not produce nectar but a fluid similar to the secretions of the insect glands, thus attracting male insects, giving them the illusion that there is a female insect. The nectar-free flower is pollinated in this way.

15 Orchid Trail

Address: Bērciems, Engure parish,
Tukums region



About the Park

More information: Abava Valley Development Centre, Kūrortu St. 1b, Kandava, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 28396830, www.senleja.lv

The Nature Park of Ancient Abava River Valley ("Abavas senleja") was established in 1999, but the territory has been under protection already since 1957. The area of the park is 14,933 ha. The nature park includes the ancient valley of the River Abava in Latvia which formed as a result of melting glaciers. The territory features a great diversity of biotopes, including very rare limy bogs with Davall's sage, juniper stands in limy meadows etc. The territory also boasts outstanding scenic value. Its mosaic-like landscape is made up of river valleys, meadows and ravines, as well as geomorphological values. The nature park includes such geological objects as Sudmaļi waterfall, Imuļa dolomite cliffs, Kalnamuiža precipices, Cimmermaņi precipices, Īvande waterfalls, Muižarāji cliffs, Landsēde cliffs and Abava Devil's Cave.



Interesting facts

The Kandava shrubby cinquefoil growths were discovered by Riga nature explorers' society back in 1846.



The sulphur spring bog with shrubby cinquefoils are a protected nature area on the left bank of Abava River approximately 1 km from Kandava. This is the habitat of a rare post ice age plant – the shrubby cinquefoil (*Pentaphylloides fruticosus*) – a small shrub that blossoms in June and July with yellow flowers. This is where the name originates from – **the Čūžu Bog (Shrubby cinquefoil bog)**.

Besides the shrubby cinquefoil, there are also 17 various plant species, 9 bird species, 14 invertebrate species, 1326 butterfly species and 2 particularly protected amphibian species. In 2005, a previously unknown moss species in Latvia was found here.

The sulphur spring water that flows to the surface near the bog and the sludge were used in early 20th century to treat rheumatism at the medical facility built nearby; it was operating from 1903 until 1940 and was very popular, but today only ruins remain.

All bog waters contain a high level of minerals. The water of **Devil's Eye Spring** contains hydrogen sulphide. **The Devil's Eye Spring** or the **Sauna Spring** flows out of it, but further in the bog, there is the **Smirnieki Spring**. It is best to explore the bog on a trail that is about 4 km long.

16 Shrubby Cinquefoil Bog and Trail

Address: End of Sēravoti and Sila streets, Kandava, Tukums region

Pictured: Post ice-age plant – shrubby cinquefoil

Situated between Kandava and the Vicarage manor, **the Old "Ozolāji"** has long been a popular walking and recreational site for the locals of Kandava. In 1920-ties and 1930-ties, this was the venue of theatre performances, concerts and open-air dances. This was also where the local scouts used to gather. And only later the open-air stage "Ozolāji" was built to hold cultural events in Kandava.

The Trail of Old "Ozolāji" is 1.2 km long and takes you along the steep ancient Abava precipice to the biologically valuable meadows on its current banks. Steps and two viewing platforms are set up on the trail so that the hikers can take care of the steep precipice.

17 Trail of Old "Ozolāji"

Address: "Mācītājmāja", Kandava parish, Tukums region

18

Imula Nature Trails with Lejaslanksēdes Devil's Foot Boulder, Buse Hillfort and Kauķis Hill

Addresses:
1st stage: "Vītiņi", Matkule parish, Tukums region
2nd stage: "Buses", Matkule parish, Tukums region
3rd stage: Kauķis Hill, Matkule parish, Tukums region

Pictured: Buse Hillfort



Imula is one of the biggest tributaries of the Abava River. Its flow is particularly rapid during the spring floods, when the most courageous boaters can test their boating skills.

The banks of Imula are accessible, and the hills of the area can be managed in 3 stages.

The first is about 4 km long and starts where Imula joins Abava near "Vītiņi" farm, from where you can walk to the guest house "Villa Taka", and then along the road to "Rožkalni". By prior arrangement, you can use the bonfire place here, too. On the way, you will be able to spot **the Langsēde Devil's Foot Boulder** which sits in Imula. The boulder is not particularly

large, and on top of it a footprint can be seen. Legend has it that while running the devil stepped on the boulder, but the next step was already across Abava.

The second stage of the trail starts near "Buses". The road will take you uphill to visit **the Buse Hillfort**. Clay archaeological finds suggests that the Buse Hillfort was inhabited already in the 1st millennium BCE and early CE, as well as in the 10th and 14th century. It is believed that Couronians were the last to live on the hillfort, and together with the ancient town it would have been one of the biggest Couronian centres. From there, the trail leads you to **the Church Hill** (Baznīckalns), which is believed to be an ancient cult site, and to Kauķis Hill. This stage is approximately 2.7 km long.

The third stage of the trail starts from **the Kauķis Hill**, which is also referred to as Staburags of Matkule, Kursa or Imula. Kauķis Hill is a tufa rock in the valley of Imula, and it got its name from the regionalism "kauķis". This is how the locals of Kurzeme refer to spring lime. The trail is approximately 3.3 km long, and it takes you to "Grotes". This trail is rather wild and is intended for weathered hikers, as it includes deep ravines, steep precipices, springs shut off by beavers and landslides. However, the "dessert" of this trail is the fantastic views of Abava ancient river valley.

The routes of the trail are marked with white lines on trees. At some places, there are markings on posts. Keep in mind that the trails are set up on private lands.

19

Abava Devil's Rock

Address: "Melderī", Kandava parish, Tukums region

The place where **the Abavas or Melderi Devil's Rock** sits is rich in legends and stories. People believe that if you walk around the rock twice in the direction of sun's travel and once in the opposite direction, then the Devil's Rock can fulfil secret wishes. Another legend has it that in the olden days the Devil wanted to block Abava with a rock, but at the very last moment the cockerel crowed, and the Devil had to rush away dropping the rock at the current location.

The Devil's Rock is considered a secular stone with a circumference of 15 m and height of 1.9 metres at the northern end. The rock is an archaeological monument of national importance which is believed to have been a cult site. Fragments of a bronze bangle dating back to 2nd-4th century have been found.

When visiting the boulder, keep in mind that it is found on private lands.



Pictured: Zāģeri Devil's Rock

The Zāģeri Devil's Rock is hidden on the right bank of River Amula in a ravine near "Zāģeri" house. It is not easy to find it. Its circumference is about 15 m, but height about 3 metres. The rock used to mark the boundary line between Kandava and Vāne rural municipality. A cross is carved in the top surface. When visiting the boulder, keep in mind that it is found on private lands.

Interesting facts

In Latvia, boulders measuring over 10 m³ are considered natural monuments of state importance, but those over 7 m³ are recognised as natural monuments of local importance.

The status of a protected object is granted to those boulders that are in the shore waters and beach within 300 m from the shoreline regardless of their size.

20

Zāģeri Devil's Rock

Address: "Zāģeri", Kandava parish, Tukums region

21 "Zviedru cepure" Nature Trails

Address: Recreation centre "Zviedru cepure", "Piltiņkalns", Matkule parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 26405405, www.zviedrucepure.lv

Pictured: Piltiņkalns Hill

The recreation centre "Zviedru cepure" obtained its name from **Piltiņkalns**. Legends have it that the hill was formed during the Swedish-Polish war, when soldiers had made it with hats as they buried their fallen comrades in a mass grave. To honour their leader, they planted an oak tree at the top, but in honour of his fiancée, who was awaiting her loved one at home, they planted a linden at the foot of the hill. Thus, the oak tree and the linden have been longing for one another throughout centuries. Perhaps, this story inspired **the Love Trail** idea, which is a nearly 1.6 km long track leading from the

recreation centre through a wood uphill, to have a look around the Abava Ancient River Valley in all its splendour from the top of the hill.

Whereas **the Horse Trail** takes you from "Zviedru cepure" to Sabile or vice versa – from Sabile to "Zviedru cepure", offering to enjoy the wonderful landscape of the ancient Abava river valley, while exploring the historic centre of Sabile and finding out what is "Egypt of Sabile". The trail is approximately 3.2 km long. Keep in mind that the trails are set up on private lands.



22 "Drubazas" Botany Trail and Wild Cattle Grazing

Address: "Drubazas", Abava parish, Talsi region. Tel.: (+371) 28370702, www.facebook.com/drubazasvins

The farm "Drubazas" is located between Kandava and Sabile with Galloway cattle grazing in meadows to maintain them in a natural way. **A Botany Trail** has been set up here for nature explorers, winding up and down the slope through meadows typical to Abava river valley. It has 2 circular loops: 1.2 km and 2 km long. The differing levels of soil moisture and various types of soil found on the slopes have contributed to the formation of several types of meadows. Here, you can see one of the densest and most beautiful juniper glades in Latvia. Depending on where the cattle are grazing, the route of the trail might change. It can also be closed to visitors on occasion. Before going to the trail, make sure to check that it is available. Keep in mind that the trail is set up on private lands.



Pictured: Marsh helleborine (*Epipactis palustris*) on the Botany Trail "Drubazas"

The Greiji Hill is one of the highest points in the Abava ancient river valley at 83 m above the sea level. This is one of the most popular viewpoints in the Abava ancient river valley park in the section between Kandava and Sabile. Opposite the Greiji Hill is where Amula and

Imula – the largest and fastest tributaries of River Abava – join Abava. On the steep scenic slopes of Imula are Zvaigžņukalns Hill and Rožukalns Hill.

When you visit the hill and the view point, bear in mind that these are private lands.

23 Greiji Hill

Address: Between "Imulas" and "Saknites", Abava parish, Talsi region

The Kalnamuiža Precipice is an approximately 14 m tall outcrop on the banks of River Amula, and it is also classed as a protected geological and geomorphological natural monument. Ogre suite rocks are exposed on the precipice. Its lower part is made of Lielvārde layer (4.2 m) sandstone, siltstone and red clay. In 1965, complete fossils of armoured prehistoric fish *Bothriolepis evaldi* were first found in Latvia. When visiting the object, keep in mind that it is found on private lands.

24 Kalnamuiža Precipice

Address: "Dalderi", Kandava parish, Tukums region

25

Vecmokas Manor Park Alleys

Address: Vecmokas, Tume parish, Tukums region

The park of Vecmokas was set up in the first part of the 19th century, when the Vecmokas Manor was owned by the Barons von Elsen. Both local and introduced species were growing in the park. Even though the former Vecmokas Manor park is now overgrown with local species and has not been maintained, it still stands attracts attention with three particularly lavish and long over a century old **deciduous tree alley**. Two of these – the small-leaved linden tree (*Tilia cordata*) and maple tree (*Acer platanoides*) alleys lead you to the manor, while the third one – the longest in Latvia alley (1.1 km) of common limes (*Tilia x vulgaris*) with more than 300 majestic trees links the park with the burial place of the former owners of the manor – the Kīļi Cemetery.

Interesting facts

In the second part of the 19th century, historicism was introduced in architecture – it is a mix of various styles that is also observed in the garden fashion. One of the elements are ground cover plant beds as a reverberation from the “**embroidered**” **parterre** of the medieval and baroque eras.

Pictured: Vecmokas Manor Park Alley



Historical parks

26

Jaunmokas Palace Park

Address: Jaunmokas Palace, Jaunmokas, Tume parish, Tukums region

Even though it appears that **the Jaunmokas Palace Park** is only of secondary importance, nevertheless, its serene ambience and shade offered during the sweltering heat of the summer have always been an important part of the palace estate. Although there is not a lot of written or photographic evidence about the park, it appears that the oak trees and ash trees witnessed how the reddish-brown palace was built in 1901, while some of the apple trees and sweet cherries, which still bloom and yield harvest today, were already giving fruit to the manor residents back in the first half of the 20th century. Likewise, bright yellow wild tulips still adorn the lawns in the springtime.

A particular source of pride of the park is the centenarian lime tree alleys, which in mid-July are buzzing and on sunny days exude a mind-blowing scent.

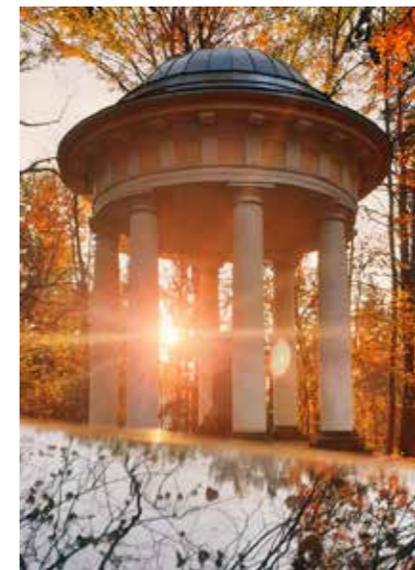
Today, the manor is surrounded by beds of roses, crawling vines, and fruiting apple trees, pear trees, plum trees, cherries and berry bushes, and dotted in amongst it all herbal plants are exuding an intoxicating aroma after the rhododendrons have blossomed in the spring. A new attraction in the park is the walking trail and the beds of tricolour wintergreens and grassy plants, which form the **ground cover plant beds** typical of the era.

27

Durbe Manor Park

Address: Durbe Manor, M. Parka St. 7, Tukums

The Durbe Manor Park in Tukums was created from 1818 until 1838, when Count Medem carried out reconstructions of the Durbe Manor and improved its surroundings. The park was created in line with the designs of English landscape parks as large tree-covered areas are replaced with small clusters and free-standing trees, which together with small ponds, uneven terrain and a web of winding footpaths along vast lawns and the manor as the centre piece constituted an inimitable scenery. Trees brought from Siberia and Germany were planted in the park.

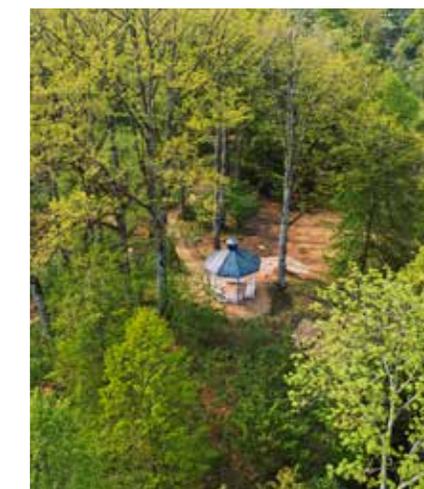


28

Jaunpils Castle Park

Address: Jaunpils, Jaunpils parish, Tukums region

The Jaunpils Castle Park was created during the reign of the von der Recke family. There are several heritage trees growing in its territory. Legend has it that the nobleman had instructed the gardener to plant the trees in a way that, upon bloom, they would form the coat of arms of the Recke family.



The park features a number of interesting objects, including a stone bridge, which bears the engraving and a monogram G. A. v. d. R. – 1905. A romantic path along the river leads you to the Love Stone – previously a favourite meeting place of locals.

29 Ziedonis Garden in Mālkalns

Address: Mālkalns Hill,
Jelgavas Street, Tukums
Visiting period: I–XII

In his memoirs written together with Nora Iksteņa in the book “Nenoteiktā bija” (“The uncertain existence that was”), Imants Ziedonis says: “Tukums is very resonant and full of flowers. Cherry trees all around. And flowering chestnut trees. It is an incredible town, always full of flowers, whether in autumn or summer, there were gardens, all around.”

In 2010, together with members of the foundation “Viegli”, Imants Ziedonis took part in his last public campaign, by starting a cherry garden in Tukums Mālkalns Hill, personally planting the first 77 cherry trees on his 77th birthday. Today, around 500 ornamental and low-growing sour cherry and sakura trees grow on Mālkalns with winding walking paths among them.

The creation of the Garden of Ziedonis is underway. The garden is ever-changing. In addition to the Cherry Orchards, there will be a Tree Garden with a variety of trees, a Black Chokecherry Garden, a Flower Garden and the Latvian Garden, along with a Water Orchard and others.

Pictured: Cherry Orchard on Mālkalns



Parks for Walks and Exploration



30 “The Wind Garden” in Smārde

Address: Smārde, Smārde parish,
Tukums region
Visiting period: IV–XI

Not far from the Smārde railroad station, next to the monument of the outstanding Latvian sculptor Kārlis Zāle, is the Wind Garden. It is a park-dendrium created according to the project of the landscape architect Dace Lukševica. At the small park, you can see more than 100 various species of plants, trees and shrubs with the total number of around 550 units covering an area of 1.9 ha. Each group of plants is accompanied by a unique name. The park is a great place to spend time together with children. From the artificial hillock, you can see the great swing set, the sport trail loaded with fun activities and paths where you can spend enjoyable times.

31 Pūre Alpinarium

Address: Pūre, Pūre parish,
Tukums region
Visiting period: IV–IX

The Pūre Alpinarium is a rock garden with conifers, deciduous trees and shrubs, perennials, bulbs and summer flowers. Around 100 tree and shrub species grow here. Information signs are placed at each ornamental plant. The Alpinarium is located in the Pūre Manor Park and offers a magnificent view of the ancient Abava river valley.



Pictured: Mālkalns

Pictured: “The Wind Garden”





Collection and Decorative Gardens

32

Rose Collection Garden "Rozītes"

Address: "Rozītes", Sēme parish,
Tukums region
Tel.: (+371) 26469604
www.dailasrozes.lv
Visiting period: V–IX
Must arrange visits in advance.

The nursery is the brainchild of Daila and Bruno Trubiņš. They are a third generation rose growers here. It was all started by Daila's grandfather Pauls Salmiņš, who was a gardener at the Strutele Manor Estate. During the first period of Latvian independence, he taught many gardeners and also set up his own plant nursery. Today, the Trubiņš family not only cultivates, tests and selects only the most beautiful and hardy rose varieties for their collection, purchasing the latest seedlings from the largest European rose nurseries and the best Latvian rose growers, but also welcomes people to enjoy the garden, which they have created with more than one romantic and quiet corner. The rose bed dedicated to Imants Ziedonis is very special.

The visitors can explore the plant nursery and receive consultations about rose cultivation, as well as buy rose plants. The garden is located in an open area with hard surface cover and is accessible to people with reduced mobility.



Pictured: *Magnolia*



Pictured: Rose Collection Garden
"Rozītes"

33

Magnolia Garden in Engure

Address: Jūras St. 59, Engure,
Engure parish, Tukums region
Tel.: (+371) 29424424
www.visittukums.lv
Visiting period: V–IX
Must arrange visits in advance.

The biggest pride of the decorative garden of Ligita Čukure – a local resident of Engure – is the numerous varieties of magnolia, alongside various other exotic trees and shrubs, a small collection of peonies, a beautiful selection of English roses and other interesting plants. The garden, which is near the seashore, covers an area of 2000 square metres together with the buildings. It is designed as a landscaped garden with picturesque views from various angles. As the range of plants continues to increase, the garden blooms more and more colourfully each year. Those who want to enjoy the beauty and fabulous fragrance of the exotic and exuberant magnolia flowers in Latvia should visit Ligita Čukure's garden in May, when they bloom most luxuriously, but some magnolia varieties open their flowers later – in June and even in July. The owner will gladly share practical advice in cultivating and tending to magnolia. The owners have also set up a tourist accommodation to enjoy the charm of the garden and the nearby sea at a leisurely pace.

34

Ķesterciems Peony Garden

Address: Gatves St. 1a, Ķesterciems, Engure parish, Tukums region
Tel.: (+371) 28805876

Facebook: Ķesterciema Peonijas

Visiting period: VI–VII
Must arrange visits in advance.



The peony garden in Ķesterciems is the closest peony garden to the sea in Latvia – only 300 metres away. And since everything blooms later by the sea than in southern or central Latvia, you can definitely go here when the peonies have finished blooming elsewhere. The garden owner Elita Zvingule has created a peony collection garden with more than 800 peony varieties, creating another corner of paradise on earth. You can also buy plants for your own garden by contacting the owner. The garden is open from 10.00 to 20.00 during the peony flowering season.



35

Peony Garden “Romju pojenes”

Address: “Romji”, Irlava parish, Tukums region
Tel.: (+371) 26615557

Facebook: Romju pojenes

Visiting period: VI–VII
Must arrange visits in advance.

“Romju pojenes” is a new peony garden in the area of Irlava. Its creation was started in 2020 by Laila Leja. And in honour of his grandmother, she named it not the peony garden, but “pojeņu” garden. Laila once said that peonies would never be in her garden because as a child her grandmother made her weed peonies, and she had to do it carefully so as not to break the buds, but as a child she wanted to do something else altogether. Over the years, the childhood trauma has faded, and now there are around 730 varieties of peonies planted in an area covering around half a hectare. She sees the beauty in every flower and has her own system for choosing which plants make it into the garden. When you visit the garden, you can stroll among the winding peony beds and get to know the flowers and their stories, as well as enjoy the variety of scents, colours and shapes of the flowers. The garden is open from 9.00 to 20.00 during the peony flowering season.



Pictured: Peony Garden “Romju pojenes”

36

Peony Garden “Ziļu peonijas”

Address: “Zīles”, Slampe parish, Tukums region
Tel.: (+371) 29211982

Facebook: Ziļu Peonijas

Visiting period: VI–VII
Must arrange visits in advance.

The owner, Inese Karule, started the garden only in 2019, but now there are around 1000 peony varieties on display. The peonies in the garden are truly magnificent, as they come in almost every colour and shape, showing just how versatile this flower can be. During the visit, the owner will happily share her experience in growing different varieties and can also arrange seedlings for personal gardens. The garden is open from 10.00 to 20.00 during the peony flowering season.

37

Decorative Garden of Dace Lukševica

Address: Lejas St. 1, Tukums
Tel.: (+371) 29177195
www.skaistiedarzi.lv

Visiting period: IV–IX
Must arrange visits in advance.

Dace Lukševica is a qualified landscape architect who has created a wonderful “economic” garden at the foot of the Veļķi pine trees in the Veļķi suburb – the garden is located on the territory of private houses. The garden has an extensive collection of plants, but hosta lovers will be in for a special treat – there are almost 100 varieties of this plant. All season long, you can buy potted perennials grown by Dace’s family in their nursery in the area of Sēme. Visitors can also hire Dace as a guide for a tour around gardens and parks of Tukums and vicinity.



Pictured: Peony Garden “Ziļu peonijas”

38

"Garden of Irises" of Laimonis Zaķis

Address: "Intes", Kandava parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371)29286353 www.irisgarden.lv

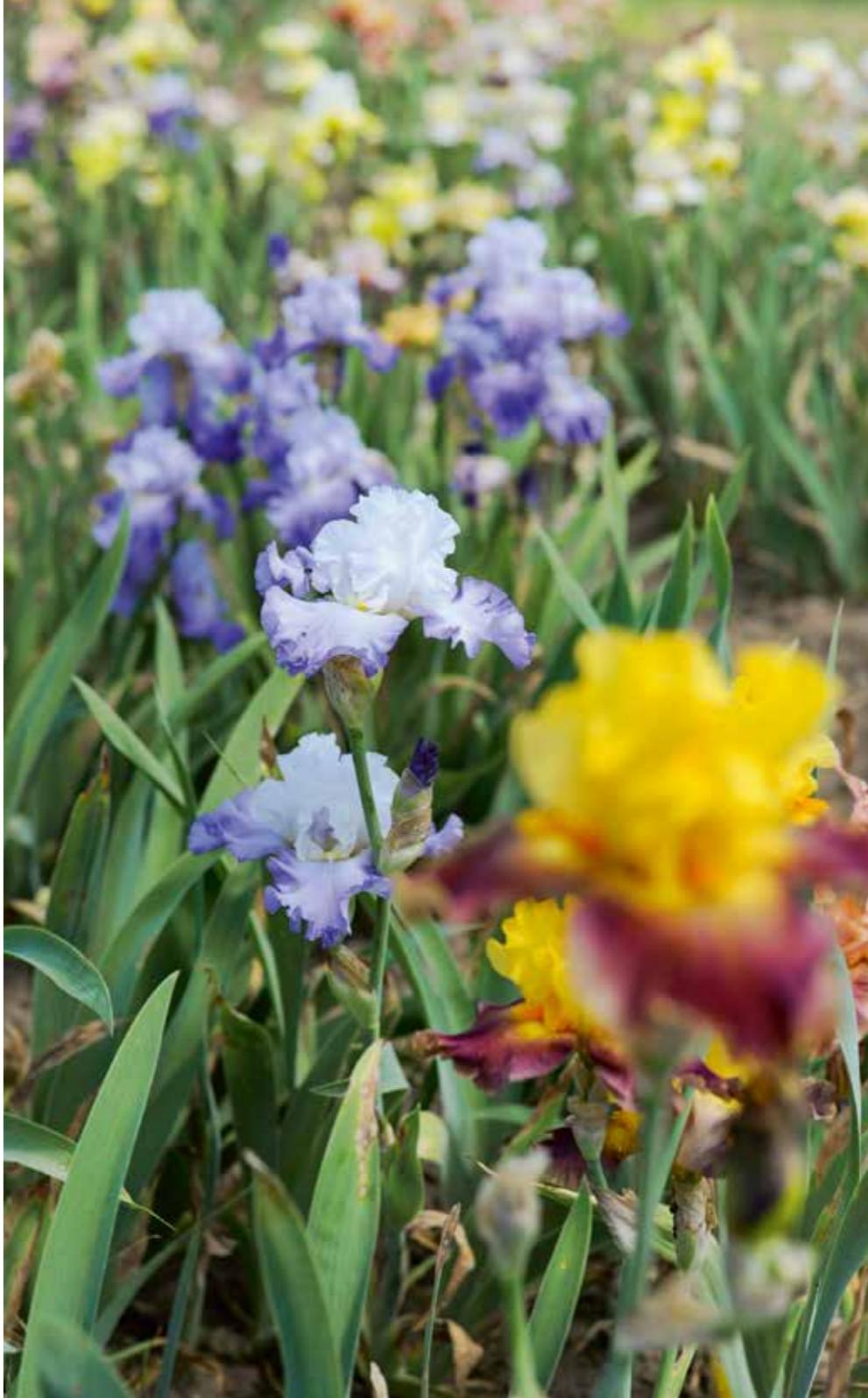
Visiting period: V–IX
Must arrange visits in advance.

"The Garden of Irises" is owned by the selectionist of gladiolas and irises Laimonis Zaķis, who has been selecting plants for more than 30 years. The number of varieties of bulbous flowers – irises, gladiolas and other species – created by him is not exceeding already several hundreds.

The garden has a very large collection of bearded irises (dwarf, medium and tall irises). The owner is also intensively selecting irises and has developed many promising hybrids – more than 100 varieties. Moreover, Laimonis Zaķis is now the owner of the largest collection of dwarf bearded irises in Latvia.

The other love of Zaķis is gladioli, which replace irises in the second half of summer. Laimonis Zaķis also breeds these bulbs and has already developed more than 200 gladioli varieties. Together with colleagues, he publishes catalogues of gladioli and irises.

During the blooming time, the owner opens up his garden to visitors. He offers tours of the farm and tells about the latest varieties of irises and gladioli and their breeding. He can also give practical advice on growing irises and gladioli.



39

Hydrangea Garden of the Nursery "Celmū Pasaule"

Address: "Celmi", Smārde parish, Tukums region
Tel.: (+371) 229150122
www.facebook.com/Celmupasaule
Visiting period: IV–X
Must arrange visits in advance.

The owners – Ineta Rudzīte and Haralds Kronbergs – are produce growers and cultivate seedlings in covered areas. At "Celmū Pasaule", everyone can find plants of annuals and perennials, as well as pre-potted arrangements in balcony boxes and garden tubs, to suit all tastes.

Pictured: "Celmū Pasaule"



The range of flowers on offer here is very wide – from the usual pansies, geraniums and petunias to the more exotic cleome spider flowers, which form large and beautiful clusters, gomphrena or amaranth and other wonders.

But the most beautiful place at the nursery is the owner's newly created hydrangea garden, with shrubs of all sizes and species, both scrubby and woody, snow-white and soft pink flowers and cones. The garden has evolved from a nursery to a gathering place for festivities, as the owners love to host guests, organise events and create a festive feeling not only for themselves, but also for their guests.

40

Collection Garden of Jānis Auziņš "Hederas"

Address: "Hederas", Tume parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 26434558 www.visittukums.lv
Visiting period: IV–IX
Must arrange visits in advance.



Decorative plants are cultivated at the farm "Hederas". This is where various thujas, junipers, decorative spruces, false cypresses, decorative shrubs, as well as wintergreens have been cultivated for more than 15 years now. A total of about 200 varieties. The owner Jānis Auziņš offers to explore the farm and to share advice in cultivating decorative plants. The amazing garden and plant nursery have taken shape in an open field over 10–15 years. Everything in it has been created using own efforts to implement plans and dreams. Gradually, the garden acquired the appearance that the owner Jānis Auziņš had wanted: with the rich plantations, ponds, streams, bridges and masonry garden elements.

41

Werewolf Trails

↑ 2 km and 2.5 km

⌚ 1 hour

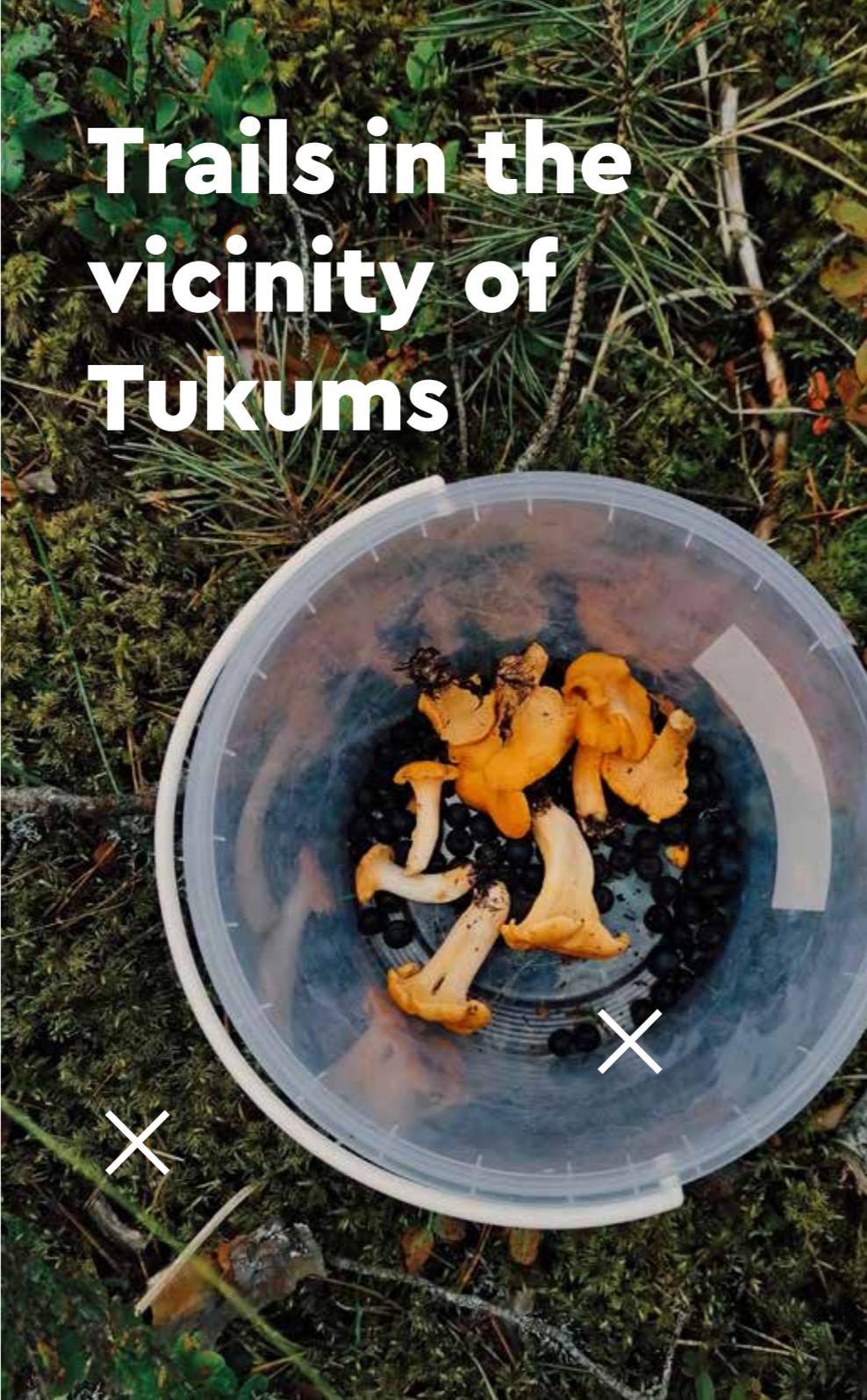
📍 GPS 5.9975190 23.1686864

🏠 Rauda Forest, Sēme parish, Tukums region

Mystical stories and legends abound about **the Rauda Forest** – a truly ghostly forest! Sages say that in the sense of energies, it does not lag behind the legendary Pokaiņi Forest. The Rauda Forest is special with the fact that here – unlike anywhere else in Latvia – one can experience a marked contrast of energies. Here, the positive and the negative energy come face to face, and “the evil spirit” and werewolves allegedly roam the forest.

The Werewolf Trails are created to end in the energetically positive part of the forest, but you should not step off it or change the direction half way. The original Werewolf Trail – “the Wolf howling at the moon” – is marked with a white wolf paw print and is about 2.5 km long. A trail for families – “Wolf-cub’s trot” – is marked with 2 small paws and is about 2 km long. There are information stands set up along the trail where you can use QR codes to read legends about werewolves in Tukums and vicinity.

Trails in the vicinity of Tukums



42

Buck's Hill Trail

↑ ~ 1 km

⌚ 0.5–1 hour

📍 GPS 56.996109 23.173084

🏠 Rauda Forest, Sēme parish, Tukums region



Buck's or Bucks' Hill (Āža or Āžu kalns) is 480–520 metres long and around 109 m tall (though some sources say it is 123 m tall). The name of the hill most likely originated due to its shape because if looking from the side, the outline resembles a buck's body with a tile, small of the back, the curved back, the head with places for horns and the nose. The hike up the hill is like an offer of a small adventure, which is why the trail leading along the top of the hill is called **the Buck's Trail**.

Even though the climb up the buck's tail is steep, the walk on the back of the buck will offer exciting emotions.

43

“Sveikuļi” Nature Trail

↑ ~ 3 km

⌚ 1–1.5 hours

📍 GPS 56.994778 23.136799

🏠 “Sveikuļi”, Tume parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 29232026, www.sveikuli.lv

“Sveikuļi” is a camp-recreation grounds surrounded by a forest near Tukums. Those, who enjoy active recreation and games, will have an opportunity to try out a new type of orienteering – a labyrinth word game and quiz “Do you know Latvia?!", while nature lovers will enjoy the view from the viewing tower on Lake Jumprava and the high or moss bog, as well as **the Nature trail** created by the owners to explore Vejezers Lake beaver habitat, steep banks and the so-called micro-Alpine landscapes.



44

Vagner's Garden Trails

↑ ~ 2 km

⌚ 1 hour

📍 GPS 56.991775 23.136070

🏠 “Vāgneris”, Tume parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 29139800, 29565231, www.vagneris.lv

A large part of the dendrological park “Vāgneris” is made of a natural monument – **the dendrological plantations “Vagner's Garden”**. Its creation started already in 1890, and over 18 years, a large horticultural farm was set up here covering an area of 47 ha. Its owner was the horticulturist Fridrihs Vāgneris. The garden featured many fruit trees and various decorative shrubs from Asia, China and Japan. The garden is said to have had more than 600 varieties of roses, 100 varieties of apple trees, 23 varieties of pear trees and 56 varieties of plums. The horticultural farm was operating until 1909.

However, due to a number of reasons, the garden was abandoned and not maintained for many decades. Today, the most important natural value in the Vagner's Garden are old, mature trees – oak trees, spruces and ash trees which offer a habitat for many living organisms. Its territory is now owned by several owners. Therefore, when visiting the object, keep in mind that it is found on private lands.

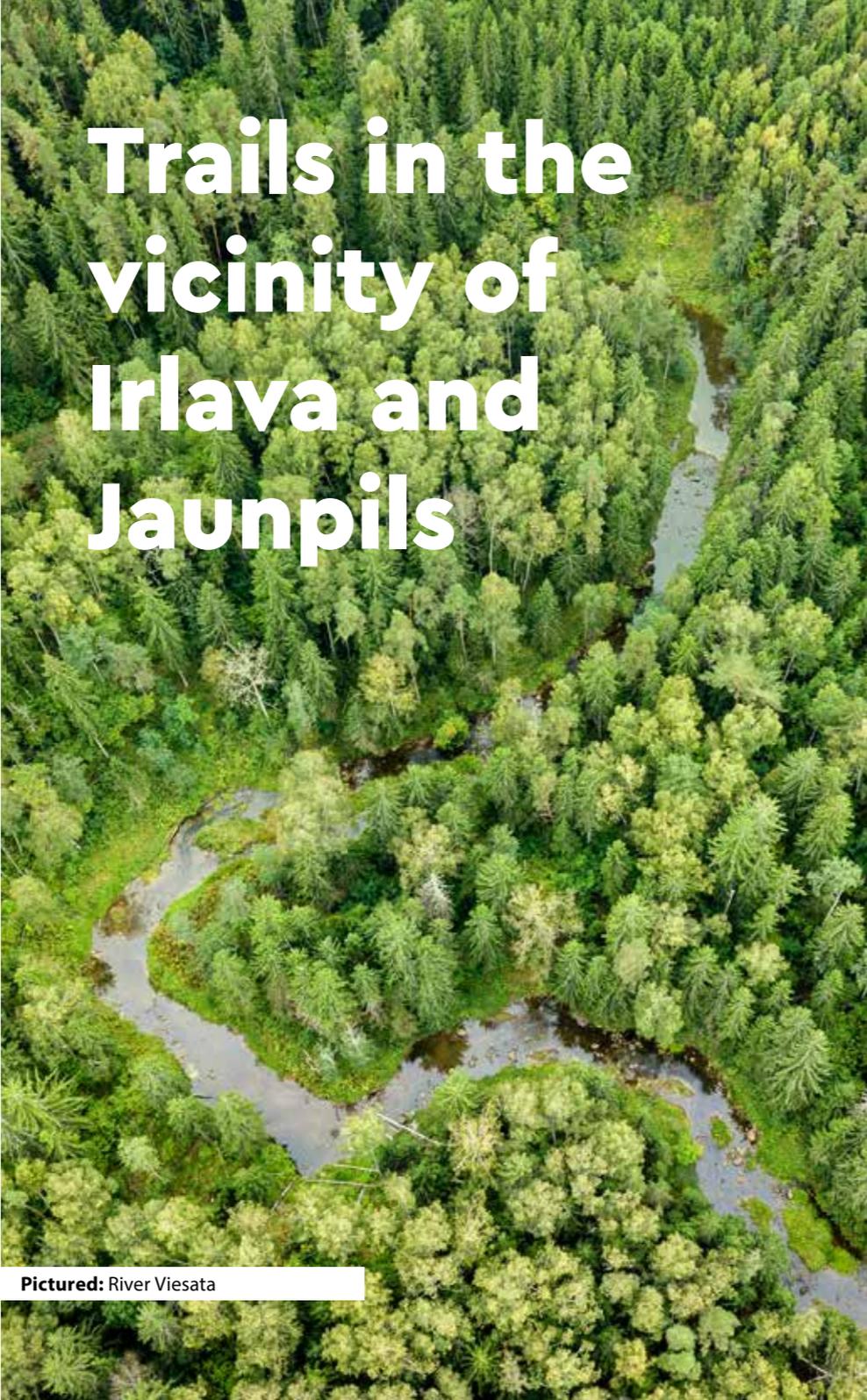
45

Nature and exploration trail "Viesatas upesloki"

-  6–8 km
-  4–5 hours
-  GPS 56.823236, 22.971876
-  Near the country house "Kraujas", Irlava parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 28302871

On the scenic banks of River Viesata between Irlava and Jaunpils, you have the opportunity to discover the nature and exploration trail "Viesatas upesloki". While exploring the nature trail, you can observe steep river banks, a 200-year old pine tree, the brown spring, the pigs' bath, a beaver lodge, logging grounds, black alder stands, large silver birches, Spuņņakmens Boulder and many other objects. The trail has 3 routes, the longest of which in one direction is about 5.1 km long. When returning, you can add another 3 km, because you can reach the parking lot along the shortest route. You can also enjoy a picnic in nature in one of the several picnic grounds set up on the trail; all you will need is a thermos and sandwiches.

The boulder **Spuņņakmens Boulder** or the Spuņnu Boulder found on the trail is one of the large boulders of Latvia. This is a granite boulder carried with melting glaciers, it is 2 m tall and 4.7 m long and wide, and it is found in River Viesata.



Pictured: River Viesata

Trails in the vicinity of Irlava and Jaunpils

46

Jaunpils Kartavu Hill Trails

-  0.5–1 km
-  1–2 hours
-  GPS 56.714914, 23.019995
-  Near Sparvu Cemetery, Jaunpils parish, Tukums region

The Kartavu Hill in the area of Jaunpils is a forest-covered hilly area through which the small Bikstupīte River flows. **Nature trails** are set up here to explore the massive larch alley, the spruce stand on a hilly terrain, the Karātavu (Gallows) spruce, the hillfort rampart and the diversity of the flora with rare tree species. The hill earned its name from the gallows which were ordered to be set up there many centuries ago by the Jaunpils land owner Thies von der Recke to protect from robbers. Later on, Jaunpils barons ordered to plant a larch alley and beech trees on the Kartavu Hill. Legends and stories have it that this place was the location of the Old Castle, as it is believed than in 10–13th century, Semigallian tribes lived in this area. It is also believed that this might have been Babote – the place mentioned in the Rhymed Chronicle of Livonia, as it is the only hillfort with a rampart between Dobeles and Kuldīga. A scenic place with a diverse character and nature trails of varying complexity, a prehistoric settlement mock-up and an observation tower, from which you can enjoy the view of central Jaunpils.

47

Deer Garden "Rudiņi"

Address: "Rudiņi", Irlava parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 29191980

The Deer Garden "Rudiņi" started the breeding of wild animals – red deer, fallow-deer, and moufflons – in enclosed areas in 2003. The deer garden allows observing animals, relaxation and walks on forest trails, as well as photo-hunting.



Pictured: Deer Garden "Rudiņi", Kartavkalni Hill Trail

48

Peņķi Sulphur Spring

Address: Across Abava next to Irlava Sports Hall, Irlava parish, Tukums region

The Peņķi Sulphur Spring or the Health Spring is a prehistoric cult site and a cultural history monument of local importance in the Irlava rural municipality. For several decades already, the locals have been using "Peņķi" spring water to quench thirst, but predominantly to improve health. The spring has clear water with high iron content. The sediments of the spring include lime and iron salts. At the point where the spring comes to the surface, it forms a small pond and then flows down to Abava in a small stream.

49

Hell's Hills

Address: Near "Skujīņas", Veclauki, Jaunpils parish, Tukums region

The Hell's Hills (Elles kalni) in the area of Strutele are worth visiting because of its 30 m long underground passages, which are believed to have been set up in late 18th century and early 19th century as a part of the park forming the Lauki Manor. This was a time when ruins, grotos and other objects appeared in many parks imbuing the landscape with a sense of mysticism and legend. The passages in the hill are covered with a barrel-style valve.

50

Jāņupīte Nature Trail

↑ ~ 1.1–1.5 km

⌚ 1–1.5 hours

📍 GPS 57.111906 23.043813

🏠 “Jāņīšu ceļš”, Dzirciems, Zentene parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 26386611

The Jāņupīte or Jānītis Nature Trail takes you through the natural forest biotopes – a biologically high-value forest stand. The trail is set up in a way to introduce the explorers with the diverse terrain of the location and with the forest ecosystem developed in various soils, which over the last 100–150 years have not been substantially affected by human activities. As you walk the trail, you will observe the diversity of plants, moss, lichen, slopes and ravines, oak tree and spruce forests. The trail also leads you through a pine-tree stand that is estimated to be 170-190 years old and past substantial heritage trees. The trail takes you to one of the tallest trees of Latvia – a spruce tree standing more than 46 metres tall. Steps, bridges and plankways are set up for the convenience of visitors. The plankways can be slippery in wet weather.

Pictured: Jāņupīte Nature Trail



Other trails nearby and further afield

51

Lāčupīte Dendrarium and the Trail of Well-being

↑ ~ 1.5 km

⌚ ~ 1 hour

📍 GPS 57.111906 23.043813

🏠 Near Apšuciems, Engure parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 29393605

The Lāčupīte Dendrarium is a specially protected nature territory. Its area is 7.2 ha. The plantations were started in 1959 by Igors Mednis, by planting a walnut tree from the garden of the sculptor Kārlis Zemdega in the pine-tree forest. The idea behind creating it was to test the possibilities of cultivating dendrologically and silviculturally valuable foreign tree species in Latvia. The plants to set up the dendrarium were obtained from 68 locations in Latvia and abroad. There are 410 tree and shrub species growing in the dendrarium. Several of the trees planted here, such as the sweet or edible chestnut or the rhodiola semenovii, are among the most notable examples of the species in Latvia. However, the most lavish display here can be observed in May and June, when **rhododendrons plantations are in bloom.** At the one end of dendrarium is the **Lāčupīte Trail of Well-being** set up in 2020 taking the visitors around 15 areas of different sensations.

52

Ružciems Nature Trail

↑ ~ 2 un 3 km

⌚ 1–1.5 hours

📍 GPS 57.102267, 23.003837

🏠 “Ružciems”, Lamiņi, Pūre parish, Tukums region. Tel.: (+371) 26353032, www.ruzciems.lv

The owner of the **guest house “Ružciems”**, which is situated near the forest, has set up a nature trail for the visitors to have a chance to enjoy and explore the forest. Hundreds of years old oak trees and a lime tree alley, large spruces and buckthorn stands can be explored on the trail. Here, the springtime brings mountains of bird-cherry trees, and in the summer, you will see gigantic puff-balls, explore a beaver paradise and check out large ant-hills, get lost in the meadow of St. John’s worts, meadow-sweets and willowherbs or to climb the crab-apple hill and observe the tallest buildings of Tukums. The long and the short trail – 2 and 3 km long – promise and guarantee emotions and adventures for the younger and older explorers. Recreational and picnic grounds are set up here, too. The trail can also be visited if you are not staying in the guest house. To visit, you must get in touch with the owner in advance.

53

Smiltiņkalns Hill Nature Trail

↑ ~ 0.5 km

⌚ 0.5–1 hour

📍 GPS 56.854949, 22.749327

🏠 Zante parish, Tukums region



Smiltiņkalns or Kīķerkalns Hill is the highest point in the area of Tukums and is found on the Saldus elevation of the Eastern Kursa plateau. Its elevation is 153.3 m above the sea level. Its relative altitude is 50 metres. In late 18th century, vast agricultural lands were stretching where Smiltiņkalns is now, and the soil was infertile, sandy, but over time pine-trees started growing there. In the 20th century, sand and gravel reserves were found on the hill, and the forest was gradually cut down, and during the construction of the new road, the hill was moved dug across and divided into two sections. Gravel reserves of Smiltiņkalns were used up intensively, and the hill was flattened. Only a small elevation remains from the hill; a viewing area has been set up there – a trail leading to a viewing platform and a picnic site for tourists.

54

Kaive Ancestral Oak Tree

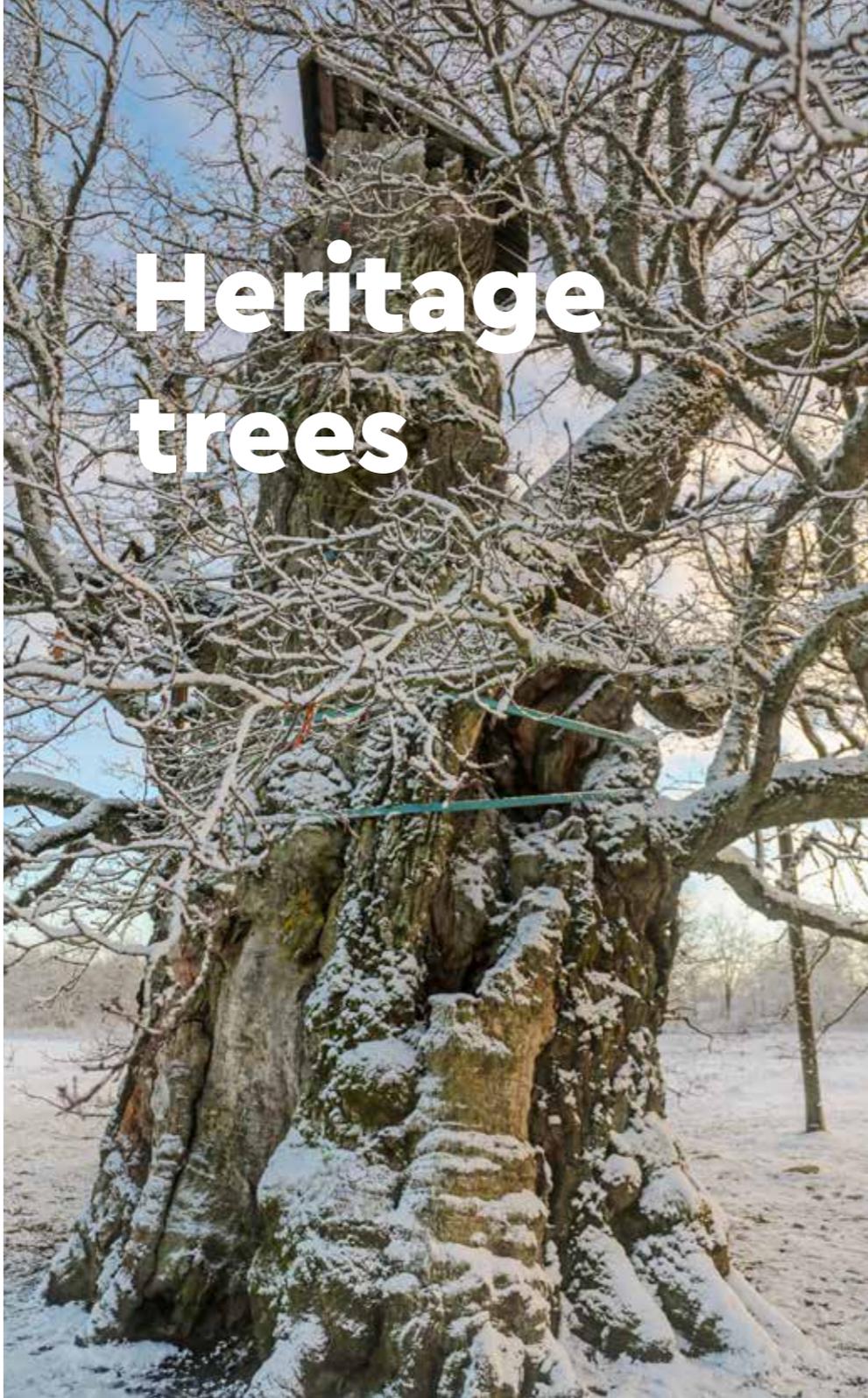
Address: Kaive, Sēme parish, Tukums region

The **Kaive oak tree** is a common oak (*Quercus robur*) – with the biggest circumference in Latvia and the Baltic states, as well as the 11th most voluminous oak tree in Eastern Europe. Its circumference is 10.2 m. Nine grown-ups holding hands can wrap arms around the oak. Measurements show that the oak tree continues growing. Its current height is 18 metres, with branches reaching 13.7 metres. In 1920-ties, a lightning struck the crown of the tree, but in 1990, a half of the oak’s large branch broke off. Now, the remaining large branches are supported by poles, a small cover is installed at the top above the decaying tree trunk, and the rotten hollows at the bottom of the trunk are cemented shut.

The true age of the oak is debated. Some estimate that it is 800–1000 years old. As there are quite a few lone oaks growing in the area, it is presumed that once an oak tree forest stood here.

Even though the former importance of the ancestral tree has not been documented or proven with certainty, it is believed that this used to be a cult site. Up until relatively recently, locals said that before going on a longer journey, you should go to the oak to make sure that the trip is successful. When visiting the oak, keep in mind that it is found on private lands.

Pictured: Kaive Ancestral Oak Tree



Heritage trees

55

English Yew Tree

Address: Zentene Manor Park, Zentene parish, Tukums region

There are 15 foreign tree and shrub species growing in the 20-ha large park of Zentene Manor. Here, **the largest in Latvia English yew tree stands** (*Taxus baccata*). Its trunk measures 2.35 metres in circumference, but height is about 12.5 metres. Yew trees (more often shrubs) grow rather slowly, but under favourable conditions their lifespan can reach even thousands of years. The fruit like cones resemble berries. This resemblance gives the popular name in Latvian “the berry yew tree”.

When visiting the object, keep in mind that it is found on private lands.



56

Yellow Pines

Address: “Bēzrmuiža”, near the Sloka-Talsi highway, Engure parish, Tukums region

The Rocky Mountain ponderosa pines (*Pinus scopulorum* Lemm.) The municipality of Engure has two of the largest and oldest specimens, possibly even the ancestor trees in Latvia. The pines feature an impressive, sparse crown and long needles. These are about 20 cm long. These pines are the only mature specimen in Latvia with large and beautiful cones.

Pictured: English yew tree



Pictured: *Pinus scopulorum* Lemm.

57

The Oldest Rhododendron in Latvia

Address: Kīļi Cemetery, Tume parish, Tukums region

In Europe, rhododendron cultivation started in 1656, when they started growing the hairy alpenrose rhododendron (*Rhododendron hirsutum*) in English gardens. In Latvia, rhododendron cultivation started in 1820-ties, but the rhododendron growing in the Kīļi or Vecmokas cemetery is believed to be the oldest in Latvia. It was brought here from Germany around the year 1860. When visiting the rhododendron, you can also learn about its background and find out a romantic, but sad legend linked to it.

The Coastal Hiking Route

The Coastal Hiking Route is a section of the European long-distance hiking route E9, which starts at Cape St. Vincent in Portugal and ends in the Estonian capital Tallinn. There are 3 sections that can be hiked on the route in the area of Tukums in the so-called *Mazjūra* or Little Wave stage.

Mērsrags – Engure

Length of the section: 22 km

Time: 7–9 hours

Start at Mersrags Information Centre

Finish at Engure, intersection between Jūras and Ostas streets

Engure – Ragaciems

Length of the section: 25 km

Time: 8–10 hours

Start at Engure, intersection between Jūras and Ostas streets

Finish at the beach of Ragaciems lighthouse

Ragaciems – Dubulti

Length of the section: 22 km

Time: 7–9 hours

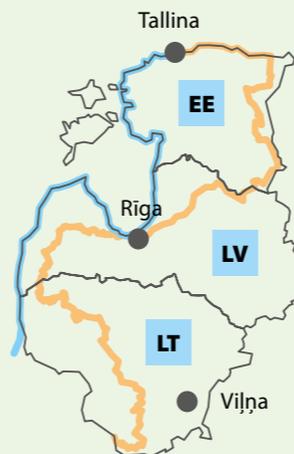
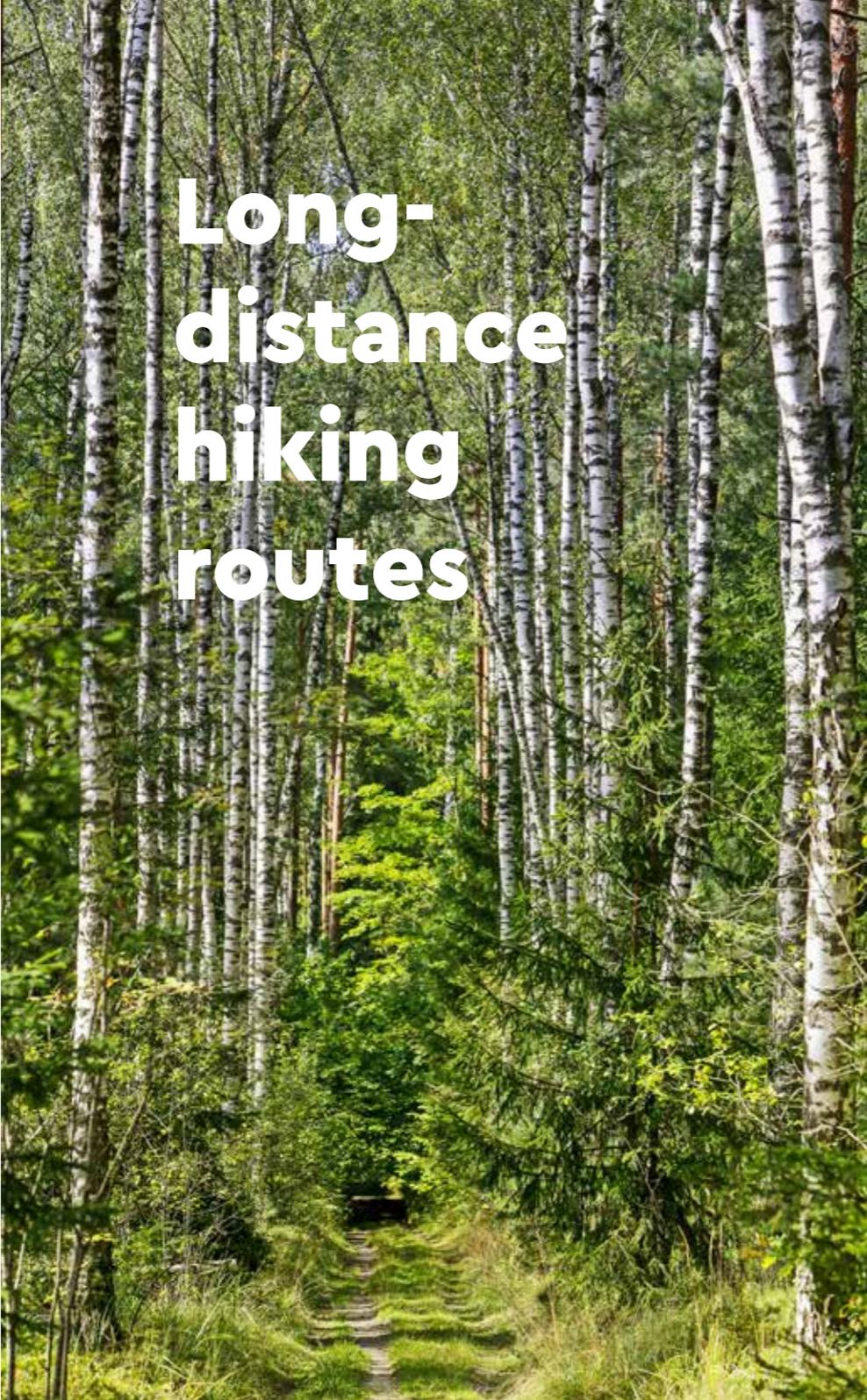
Start at the beach of Ragaciems lighthouse

Finish at the Dubulti beach



More information – www.baltictrails.eu

Long-distance hiking routes



Forest Hiking Trail

The Forest Hiking Trail is a section of the European long-distance hiking trail E11 in the Baltic states, leading through the most beautiful forests of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, regional, nature and national parks. There are 2 stages in the area of Tukums, offering a route through vineyards in the ancient Abava river valley towards Tukums, where manors and their old parks can be visited, and through Ķemeri National Park to the seashore in Bigauņciems.



Ancient Abava River Valley

Sabile – Kandava

Length of the section: 21 km

Time: 5–7 hours

Start in Sabile by the bridge over Abava

Finish in Kandava on the Knights' Hillfort

Kandava – Jaunmokas Manor

Length of the section: 24 km

Time: 6–8 hours

Start in Kandava on the Knights' Hillfort

Finish in Jaunmokas Manor

Tukums and Ķemeri National Park

Jaunmokas – Tukums

Length of the section: 14 km

Time: 4–5 hours

Start in Jaunmokas Manor

Finish in Tukums, Saules Hill

Tukums – Jāņukrogs

Length of the section: 14 km

Time: 4–5 hours

Start in Tukums, Saules Hill

Finish by Kārņiņi Cemetery next to Tukums-Smārde road

Jāņukrogs – Bigauņciems

Length of the section: 28 km

Time: 7–9 hours

Start by Kārņiņi Cemetery next to Tukums-Smārde road

Finish on the Bigauņciems beach opposite the old Ķemeri road

Nature Tourism in Tukums Municipality

Ķemeri National Park

1. "Meža māja" ("Forest House")
2. Black Alder Swamp Forest Plankway
3. Park of the Ķemeri historical resort
4. Walking Trail of Lake Sloka
5. The Green Dune
6. Kaņieris Hillfort Nature Trail
7. Lake Kaņieris birdwatching tower, the juniper-stand and the reed plankway
8. Sulphur pond plankway in the Bog of Witches
9. The Great Ķemeri Bog Boardwalk
10. Kupskalnu Nature Trail
11. Dunduri Meadows
12. Barefoot Trail, Art Trail and labyrinths in the forest of "Valguma pasaule"

Nature Park Lake Engure

13. Pastures of wild herbivores around Lake Engure
14. Birdwatching Tower on Lake Engure
15. Orchid Trail

Nature Park of Ancient Abava River Valley

16. Shrubby Cinquefoil Bog and Trail
17. Trail of Old "Ozolāji"
18. Imula Nature Trails with Lejaslankšēdes Devil's Foot Boulder, Buse Hillfort and Kauķis Spring
19. Abava Devil's Rock
20. Zāģeri Devil's Rock
21. "Zviedru cepure" Nature Trails
22. "Drubazas" Botany Trail and Cattle Grazing
23. Greiļi Hill
24. Kalnamuiža Precipice

Parks and gardens

25. Vecmokas Manor Park Alleys
26. Jaunmokas Palace Park
27. Durbe Manor Park
28. Jaunpils Castle Park
29. Ziedonis Garden in Mālkalns
30. "The Wind Garden" in Smārde
31. Pūre Alpinarium
32. Rose Collection Garden "Rozītes"
33. Magnolia Garden in Engure
34. Ķesterciems Peony Garden
35. Peony Garden "Romju pojenes"
36. Peony Garden "Ziļu peonijas"
37. Decorative Garden of Dace Lukševica
38. "Garden of Irises" of Laimonis Zaķis
39. Hydrangea Garden of the Nursery "Celmu Pasaule"
40. Collection Garden of Jānis Auziņš "Hederas"



Trails in the vicinity of Tukums

41. Werewolf Trails
42. Buck's Hill Trail
43. "Sveikuļi" Nature Trail
44. Vagner's Garden Trails

Nature in the vicinity of Irlava and Jaunpils

45. Nature and exploration trail "Viesatas upesloki" and Spuņņakmens Boulder
46. Jaunpils Kartavu Hill Trails
47. Deer Garden "Rudiņi"
48. Peņķi Sulphur Spring
49. Hell's Hills (Elles kalni)

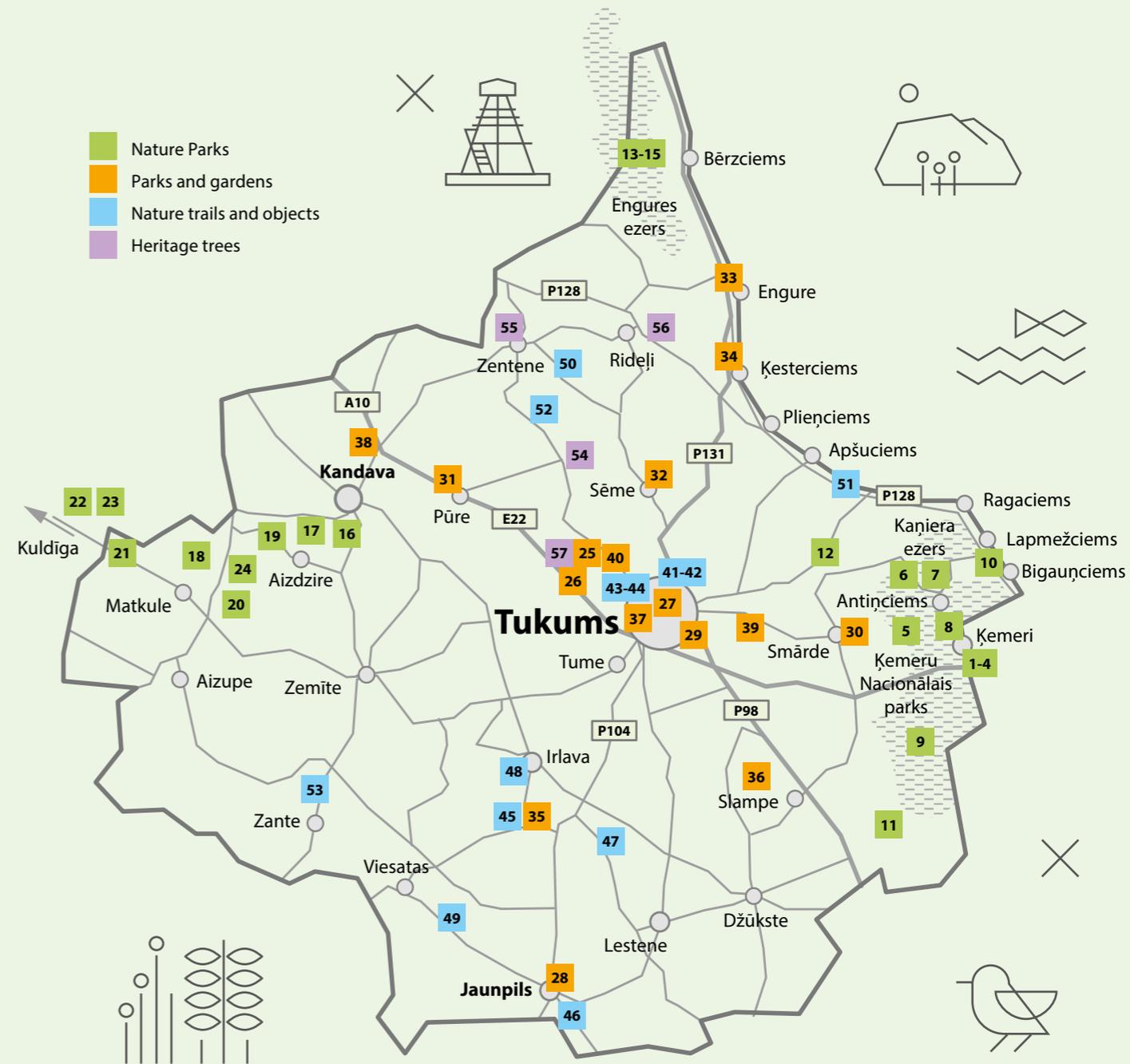


Other trails nearby and further afield

50. Jāņupīte Nature Trail
51. Lāčupīte Dendrarium and the Trail of Well-being
52. Ružciems Nature Trail
53. Smiltiņkalns Hill Nature Trail

Heritage trees

54. Kaive Ancestral Oak Tree
55. Largest English Yew Tree of Latvia
56. Yellow Pines
57. The Oldest Rhododendron





**Tukums Tourist
Information Centre**

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