



SELF-DRIVE THE GREAT KEMERI CIRCLE BY CAR



Welcome to Kēmeri!



The Kēmeri National Park, apart from its nature reserve zone is open to hikers, plant, animal and landscape watchers, berry and mushroom hunters, swimmers, sunbathers, bicyclists and boaters. Mechanized motor vehicles are allowed only on general use roads. Please let's make sure to nurture the values which led us to visit the park in the first place!



TOURISM SERVICES

Nearby accommodations:

- 🏠 „Stēršītes”, 29283162
- 🏠 „Monikas”, 26161247
- 🏠 „Jūras mols”, 27099099
- 🏠 „Līdakas”, 29448118
- 🏠 „Valguma pasaule”, 29414022
- 🏠 „Pilsētnieki”, 29497272
- 🏠 „Smaidas”, 29265552
- 🏠 „Melnais stārķis”, 26751543
- 🏠 „Lapmežciems”, 67298303
- 🏠 „AAK Service”, 29118209
- 🏠 „Veldres”, 25916974
- 🏠 „Upesloki”, 29141840
- 🏠 „Mīlzkane”, 26545521
- 🏠 „Kalna Žagari”, 29414584
- 🏠 „Roniši”, 26305551
- 🏠 „Ezermalji”, 28336456
- 🏠 „Ezermalas”, 29446828

Picnic places: Mostly at the beginning of the route on the shores of the Bay of Rīga (at dining services) and around Lake Valgums („Valguma Pasaule”, „Ezermalas”, „Upesloki”)

Shops:

In Kēmeri, Bigauņciems, Lapmežciems, Ragaciems, Klapkalnciems, Smārde, Slampe.

Dining: In Bigauņciems, Lapmežciems, Ragaciems, Valguma Pasaule

Guides:

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www.celotajs.lv, 67617600
www.daba.gov.lv/kemeri/eng, 67730078
www.turisms.tukums.lv, 63124451
www.jurmala.lv, 67147900



The Kēmeri railway station



The Kēmeri National Park was established in 1997, primarily for the purpose of protecting wetlands – the shallow western shore of the Bay of Rīga, overgrown seaside lakes, extensive swamps, damp forests, and lowland meadows as important locations for plants and animals (particularly nesting and migrating birds). The park territory also includes one of the largest swamps in Latvia – the Great Kēmeri Heath, as well as other fairly large swamps such as Raganu Swamp, Zālais Swamp, Čaukciems Swamp and Sloka Swamp. Some of these were once used for peat extraction. The area around Kēmeri has long since been known as a source of sulphurous streams, and it remains an important location for obtaining sulphurous water and medicinal mud which at one time served as the foundation of the widely known Kēmeri Spa. Interesting historical objects in the park are completely linked to the seashore as a place where people could relax and recover their health. Today the territory of the national park includes educational nature trails (the Melnalkšņi Marsh trail, the Lake Sloka trail, the trail in Great Kēmeri Bog (from 2013), the Kaņieris Castlemound trail (from 2013)), bike routes, three bird-watching towers, etc. The administrative and informational centre for the park is found in the “Forest House” (Meža māja) in Kēmeri.

ROUTE

This route circles perimeter of the Kēmeri National Park, offering a very good idea of the natural, cultural and historical treasures that are found in the park. The beginning of the route passes through Kēmeri and seashore fishing villages such as Bigauņciems, Lapmežciems, Ragaciems and Klapkalnciems, which are charming and offer a chance to buy some smoked fish and spend some time at one of the small local saloons. You can eat at Valguma Pasaule or at a café in Smārde or Slampe. The route past Smārde leaves the park territory, but does offer a look at some of the most interesting points of interest in the former Slampe Parish. At Kalkis, you will return to the Kēmeri National Park, with the route taking you along the Rīga-Liepāja highway and the Kalnciems-Kūdra road. You will cross the Krāču Hills (Krāčkalni) to return to your starting point.

Season: Yearround, best between April and October

Type of car: No specific requirements

Beginning: Kēmeri National Park (KNP) boundary on the Rīga-Ventspils highway (A 10), the Kēmeri railroad station, or the Kēmeri Forest House, which is the park's administrative and informational centre

End: Depending on the selected starting point, the circular route will lead you back to where you began

Length: ~120 km (another 20 km on to Tukums)

Duration: One or two days, depending on the points of interest at which you stop

Difficulty: Easy

Road cover: Paved

Route: KNP boundary – Kūdra – Kēmeri – Jaunkēmeri – Bigauņciems – Lapmežciems – Ragaciems – Klapkalnciems – Valgums – Smārde – Ozolpils – Slampe – Lancenieki – Kalkis – Kūdra – KNP boundary

Distance from Rīga: 40 km

Logistics: Circular route which will bring you back to where you began

Alternatives: You can drive in the opposite direction, or extend the route to Mīlzkalne and Tukums

Note! The Rīga-Ventspils highway between Sloka and Kūdra is narrow and of very poor quality, plus it is very busy with traffic. Please drive carefully, and when you stop at a point of interest, only leave your car at a place which is specifically meant for parking and which is safe from the perspective of road traffic. You are responsible for your own safety and that of your children while on the route.

Emergency services: 112

More information on tourism products and services in Kēmeri National Park www.countryholidays.lv and www.daba.gov.lv/kemeri/eng

POINTS OF INTEREST

1 The Cemetery of the Brethren. A wood pathway leads from the Rīga-Ventspils highway (A10) to a memorial rock dedicated to men who fell during World War II.

2 The Ķemeri railway station dates back to 1877. A bike rental facility is found inside.

3 The Ķemeri school (1934) has preserved an historically valuable interior and exterior, including allegorical images on the façade.

4 The sulphur stream pavilion was installed at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. It holds one of the most popular sulphurous springs in Latvia, "Kīrzaciņa".

5 The Ķemeri hotel was built between 1933 and 1936 in the style of Neo-Classicism. It is known as the "white ship", it was a symbol of the independent state.

6 The Ķemeri Park was established in the mid-19th century as a landscape park.

7 The former Līva sanatorium recalls the might of the all-Soviet spa town at one time, the buildings were supposedly erected on large gas pillows so as to keep them from sinking.

8 The Forest House (1933) used to house an enormously popular restaurant "Merry Mosquito", a children's sanatorium was installed here after World War II. When the Ķemeri National Park was established in 1997, the building became its headquarters and a modern visitors' centre.

9 The Dumburāji trail is a wooden pathway that allows to take a look at wetland forests which are flooded by the Vēršupīte River each spring.

10 Lake Sloka – at the lake, you will be able to watch birds from the floating viewing tower and see the sulphur springs. From the parking place starts a 3.1 km long nature trail along the coast of the lake and through the picturesque forest.

11 Lake Melnezers is a swamp lake on the side of the Ķemeri-Jaunkemeri road, with a small car park and an information stand.

12 The Great Pine of Bigauņciems is located just outside the Dižpriede café. Car parking.

13 The Kupskalns Nature Trail – wooden pathway leading from the road to the sea and the remnants of the old Lapmežciems pier.

14 A Stone Age site at Lapmežciems. There was a fishing and hunting settlement here during the 3rd and 2nd millennium BC. The memorial rock was sculpted by Oļegs Skarainis.

15 A memorial stone to Augusts Muizulis (recipient of the Lāčplēsis Military Order) a lieutenant (1893-1941) colonel in the No. 4 Valmiera Infantry Brigade.

16 The Lapmežciems Museum – the history of the local parish, its school and its fishing traditions.

17 The Lapmežciems People's Centre was built in 1957 and is home to the local culture events, administrative district's council and library.

18 Kaņieris is a shallow seaside lake rich in birds. It is one of the best birdwatching sites in Latvia. At the south-eastern shore of the lake is a boating facility (only rented boats are permitted on the lake). A bird-watching tower was erected on the Riekstu peninsula in 2009.

19 Starpiņupīte is an artificial canal between Lake Kaņieris and the sea, it helps to regulate the water level in the lake with a system of sluices. This is a fine place for bird-watching in the spring and autumn.

20 The Ragaciems Fish Market sells smoked fish.

21 Ragaciems sedums (fishermen's wharfs) – a traditional gathering place of fishermen – a building for common meetings discussing fishing, making fishing tools, while fishermen's wives and children fixed up the nets.

22 The Slow Mile – around 6 km long and quite isolated route stretching between Ragaciems and Klapkalnciems. Robbers used to attack travelers in the olden days here.

23 A monument alongside the Klapkalnciems-Tukums road to commemorate victims of World War I.

24 Lake Valgums is 3 km long and 27 m deep, and it dates back to the last Ice Age. In the surroundings of lake Valgums you will find three marked bicycle trails: Lustūžkalns Circle (22 km), Forest Circle (16km) and Šlokenbeka Circle (17 km). A Nordic Walking Trail (3.1 km) and a Barefoot Track (1.2 km) await you at the recreation centre „Valguma Pasaule”, were you can also rent Nordic walking sticks and bicycles.

25 A monument to the dead of World War I near Smārde.

Following objects No. **26 – 30** are located out of boundaries of Ķemeri National Park.

26 The Smārde Pub has a very long history, and food is served here. There is a car park, and approx. 100 m to the East is a **cemetery** and **monument** to commemorate soldiers who fell during World War II.

27 Ozolpils has a farm where you can see livestock both ordinary and exotic – beef cattle, goats, fowl, ostriches and wild boar. The **Ozolpils Estate** is being renovated at this time.

28 The Cinevilla film studio is the largest and most impressive outdoor studio in the Baltic States. It was built in 2004 for the film "Guards of Rīga," while later it was used by the director Jānis Streičs for his "Heritage of Rūdolfs".

29 A memorial stone at the turnoff to the centre of Slampe. The impressive rock was installed in honor of the last reclaimed hectare of agricultural land in the village of Slampe.

30 The Džūkste Fairy Tale Museum in the former Džūkste-Lancenīki School provides information about the "father of Latvian fairy tales", Ansis Lerhis-Puškaitis, who was a specialist in the folklore heritage of the Latvian people. There is a Fairy Tale Classroom and a small theatre for the younger visitors.

31 Dunduri meadows – in these quiet and secluded meadows you can watch wild Konik horses and Heck cattle grazing in the floodplain meadows of renaturalized river Slapme. It is a great place for birdwatching.

32 The Kauguri canal was dug in 1932 and 1933 to divert the waters of the Džūkste and Slampe rivers to the Lielupe River and thus avoid broader flooding and emergence of swamps in the region.

33 Kaļķis is a populated area where dolomite is still extracted from quarries in the region (Kalnciems-2 is one such quarry). Some of the quarries are flooded.

34 The Krāču hills (Krāckalni) are a series of wavy hillocks dating back to the Litorine Sea. There is a lovely view of **Lake Liliņas** from here. Opposite the lake, on the eastern side of the road, are dolomite stairs which lead to a **monument** dedicated to 90 Latvian riflemen who lost their lives in battles in 1917 in the region.

35 Naturalised peat pits in the Great Ķemeri Bog A gravel road (2 km) leads through flooded peat pits and milled fields where you can watch birds and beavers.



The Ķemeri hotel



The Dumburāji trail



Sloka Lake



The Great Pine



Bird-watching tower at Lake Kaņieris



Starpiņupīte



The Ragaciems Fish Market



The Cinevilla Film Studio

Photo: Juris Smalinskis, Aija Pendere



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