

GENERAL INFO:

Package Type: day tour

Season: mid-August to first half of October

For whom: for groups (min 8. - max.15)

Package includes: mushrooming + dinner

Degree of difficulty: moderate (natural forest with no walking trail)

Duration of the tour (excl. transportation): 6 hours (3h picnic lunch + mushroom picking +3h mushroom cooking workshop and dinner)

Type of transport: tourist bus

Distance from Riga: 75km

FB on Latvian mushrooming tradition: <https://www.facebook.com/latvianmushroomtraditions/>

Video on mushrooming: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2DG-L73OR08>

Mushrooming in the Gauja national park

This one day outing will suit small groups (8-15 persons) and can be considered as an extra day in the tour programme. Accommodation for the group up to 24 persons is also possible in the “Kārļamuiža” country hotel. It is the same place where the dinner is served.

Why mushrooming?

Mushrooming is a national passion in Latvia, Estonia and Finland. Trying out a mushrooming experience is part of getting to know the local life and doing things the way locals are doing. Since centuries, wild mushrooms have been part of our cuisine, therefore we know for sure where and how to find edible fungi. Our countries are rich in forests that can be reached as shortly as within an hour's drive from the city. Fungi love mild and wet weather, which is usually from mid August to mid October. This is when the mushroom “hunting” season rules. Quiet forest roads fill with cars on early weekend mornings and people carrying baskets full of mushrooms is a common site on country roads and trains coming into the city. Social networks are full of photos posted by proud mushroom “hunters” as everybody is competing for the biggest, the most beautiful mushroom or for the largest quantities picked in the shortest time. And it is an exciting experience, indeed, when you spot a brown, yellow or red fungi cup between crusty fallen tree leaves or on the green moss carpet in the forest. And the next, and the next It really brings one into positive addiction. Cooking delicious mushroom meals and preserving mushrooms for winter is also a strong and cherished tradition.

N.B. For own comfort and safety the participants are recommended to wear outdoor clothing and footwear.

Location of mushrooming - a forest in the Gauja national park



Mushroom picking takes place in specially selected forest sites in the Gauja national park. Mushroom and berry picking is allowed in state owned and in private forests, including in protected nature areas like the Gauja national park. There are no access restrictions, and no access fees. The Gauja national park, established in 1973, was Latvia's first national park, and it has a wealth of tradition in environmental protection and tourism.

Country hotel “Kārļamuiža” - the place for mushrooming workshop and dinner

Country hotel “Kārļamuiža” is located in the middle of nature, 8 km from the nearest town Cēsis and 18 km from Sigulda town – both are historical sites and popular tourist destinations. The hotel offers 9 suites for staying guests, and a separate cottage for guest accommodation. There is a restaurant in the hotel.



Address: Kārļi, Drabešu pag., Amatas nov.

GPS: Lat:57.24061 Lon:25.21216

Distance from Riga: 75 km


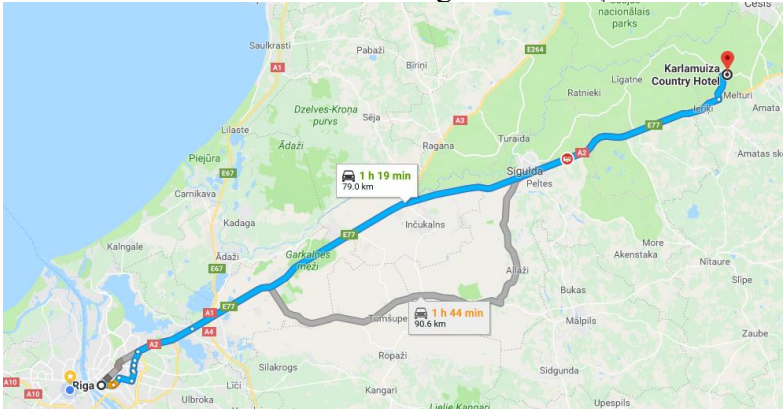


Website:

- <http://www.celotajs.lv/en/e/karlamuiza>
- <http://karlamuiza.lv/en/>

Host: Mrs. Baiba Stepiņa with her family

Tour schedule

This table shows brief overview of the tour schedule. The following chapters explain details like transportation, facilities and other essential information.

 <p>Rīga – Gauja National park</p> <p>1h 30 min</p>	<p>Departure from the hotel in Riga to the country hotel “Kārļamuiža” in the Gauja National park. Distance from Riga 75km. Duration of the ride from Riga to “Kārļamuiža” country hotel 1h 30min.</p> 
 <p>Meeting with the professional fungi guide</p> <p>30 min</p>	<p>At “Kārļamuiža” country hotel: getting lunch box, meeting with the professional fungi guide, briefing and preparation for mushroom picking. Mushrooming equipment - baskets, knives and rain coats will be provided for each person.</p> 



**“Kārļamuiža”
country hotel
- the forest**

**15 min drive
+ picnic lunch
time (~30min)**

Possibility for picnic lunch in the open-air picnic spot by Gauja river.



**Mushroom
picking**

2 hours

Mushroom picking in the forest with the guide.



**Return to the
country hotel
and sorting
the
mushrooms**

30 min

Return to the country hotel “Kārļamuiža”. Sorting the mushrooms with the fungi guide to identify the species found.





Dinner with the chef in “Kārļamuiža” country hotel

2h

Joint mushroom cooking workshop with chef and dinner in the “Kārļamuiža” country hotel. A professional chef will cook a mushroom meal for the group. The cooking is done as a presentation, in front of the group, with explanation of the recipe.

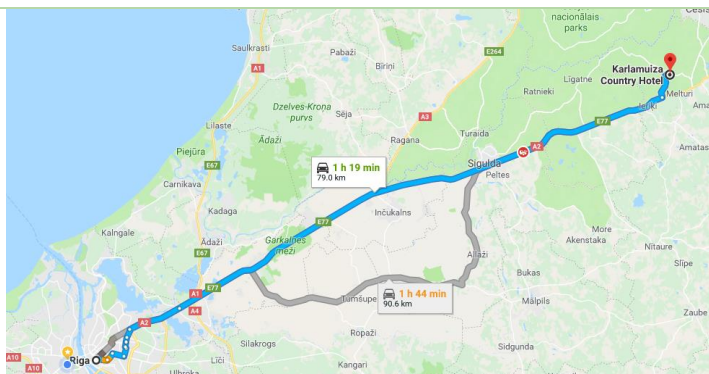
There will be also other foods without mushrooms.

The meal is served for the group in the hotel restaurant or, in good weather, on the restaurant’s terrace.



Departure back to the hotel in Riga

1h 30 min



Your fungi guide: Ms. Diāna Meiere (ENG)

- Professional environmental guide
- Education: Master of Natural Science in Biology
- Board member of the Latvian Society of Biologists
- Permanent job at the Latvian Museum of Natural history
- Owner of two dogs that are trained for truffle fungi

Mushrooming equipment

For own comfort and safety the participants are recommended to wear outdoor clothing (long trousers, warm and weatherproof jackets, etc.) and footwear (rubber boots or hiking boots). It is recommended to have a light raincoat and an umbrella. Group participants are instructed how to look for mushrooms, how to recognise edible mushrooms, and how to collect them. Group participants also are instructed for safety precautions in the forest. Each group participant receives a small basket, a special knife and a pair of gloves to pick mushrooms.



Forest environment

The forest terrain in the selected mushrooming spots is easy to walk, covered with moss, fallen leaves and small plants. Occasionally there are bushes, some fallen trees or wet spots. There is no fear of wild animals as they keep away from people. Mushrooming is a slow process, walking carefully and watching under your feet to spot mushrooms that might be hiding under leaves or in moss. When mushrooming, it is also advised to keep an eye on the group and take care not to stray away. Mushroomers use to call each other loudly when out of sight to make sure that everybody is in easy to reach distance.



Mushrooms

The most popular edible mushrooms are various Boletus and Chanterelles. Selected species: Chanterelles, russulas and various boletus. Chestnut Bolete (Gyroporus castaneus), Lurid Bolete (Boletus luridus), edible tree-fungus – Sheep poly-pore (popular in Scandinavian cooking) (Albatrellus ovinus), Golden corall (Ramaria aurea), (Hapalopilus croceus), Coral Tooth (Heridium coralloides), Parasol Mushroom (Macrolepiota procera), Ceramic Parchment (Xylobolus frustulatus), Wood-rotting fungus (Phellinus nigrolimitatus)



Daļēji finansēts ar Eiropas Savienības un Eiropas Reģionālā attīstības fonda Centrālās Baltijas programmas atbalstu