

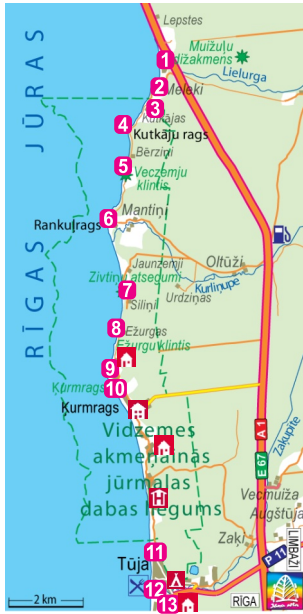


HIKING, SKIING ALONG THE ROCKY SEASHORE OF VIDZEME

Welcome to Northern Vidzeme!



In the nature reserve you are free to hike, watch birds and animals, hunt for mushrooms and berries, take a sunbath and use rowboats in the sea. You may drive a car only along the roads. Tenting and campfires are permitted only in improved locations that have been set up for that purpose – at the Veczemes cliffs and where campsites and tourist accommodations are available.



The rocky seashore of Vidzeme is covered with rocks of different sizes, and there are different little capes and bays along this phase of the eastern shore of the Bay of Rīga. Between Tūja and the estuary of the Vitrupe River, you will find the only place in Latvia where the abrasive waves of the sea have unveiled Devonian sandstone cliffs that are several metres high. One of the best examples of this are the Veczemes cliffs, which are a bit less than 500 kilometres long and up to four metres high. The area around the cliffs has been improved. The shoreline is very variable and dynamic here, particularly after big storms. The Rocky Vidzeme Seashore Nature Reserve has been established to protect the area. The territory is part of the Northern Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve.



Walking along the rocky beach

TOURISM SERVICES

Leisure facilities: At the Veczemes and Ežurģi cliffs
Shops: In Tūja
Dining: In Tūja (seasonal)
Information:
www.salacgriva.lv, (+371) 64041254

www.limbazi.lv, (+371) 64070608
www.celotajs.lv, (+371) 67617600

Emergency services: 112

THE ROUTE

This is a route for active tourists who are not afraid of a very rocky seashore with unique coastal landscapes with horns and lovely sandstone cliffs. This is an excellent place to start a trip around Latvia. The great storm of 2005 changed this part of the shoreline very substantially, indeed. If you were there before 2005, that's a reason to go and take a look at it again. During the winter, when the snow is thick, cross-country skiing is possible in this part of Latvia.

Season: April to October, as well as on lovely winter days

Length: 19 km

Duration: ~ 7 h

Difficulty: Medium – there are places where it's easier to walk along the shoreline road

Road cover: Beach, mostly covered with rocks and pebbles. Around the Vitrupe River and Tūja, there are some sandy beaches.

Beginning: At the seashore, at the Vitrupe River estuary - **P**

End: Tūja (the breakwater, the Zaķupe River estuary and **P** nearby the beach). The Tūja bus stop is approximately 700 metres from those places.

Markings: None

Route: Vitrupe – Mantīģi – Ķurmragi – Tūja

Alternatives: You can hike the road which passes along the seashore. There are places where the road has been washed out, however, and there you will have to walk along the beach.

Distance from Rīga: 90 km to the start, 70 to the end point

Logistics: There are, on average, two buses a day that pass through Tūja, but make sure that you check the schedule for the day when you are travelling. Other busses pass by on the highway, and the turnoff to Tūja is around three kilometres from the village centre. There will be 8 to 10 such buses each day. It is easier to have someone pick you up at the end of the route in a car. You can leave a car at Vitrupe and come back by bus.

Note! Wear appropriate footwear, and make sure that you are in appropriate shape for the hike. You can cross the Vitrupe River on the bridge. After heavy rains and during flooding season, you will have to ford the Kurlinupīte and Zaķupe rivers on foot.

Nearby accommodations:

- Korki, (+371)29239788
- Vējavas, (+371)64071667
- Jafa Tūja, (+371)25807788
- Saules ligzda, (+371)29445465
- Ķurmragi, (+371)29113777
- Olnieki, (+371)29111919
- Klintskalni, (+371)29212885
- Jūras bura, (+371)29847299
- Rakari, (+371)64071122
- Jūrasdzeņi, (+371)26550574
- Bērziņi, (+371)29425352



The Veczemes cliffs in winter



The ruins of the old Ķurmragi lighthouse



Historical buildings along the Vidzeme seashore

Look for a list of active tourism routes on www.countryholidays.lv!

POINTS OF INTEREST

1 The Bay of Meleki, where the nature reserve begins. A storm in 2005 changed the shoreline substantially here.

2 Historical buildings along the shoreline in Vidzeme. There are several historical farms along the seashore between Meleki and Cape Kutkāji – **Lielkalni** is the farm of a family of seafarers, and **Dzeņi** belonged to the Graši family, which owned sailing ships. The house that has been preserved was built in 1866. There are old farm buildings, as well. At **Kutkājas**, the main house was initially built for servants. The farms are privately owned today and can only be looked at from the road.

3 The shipbuilding facility at Vitrupe was established in the latter half of the 19th century between the Dzeņi and Lielkalni farms. It was one of the largest shipbuilding facilities of its era, but no trace of it is left today. Twenty-eight ships were built here between the 1860s and 1929.

4 Cape Kutkāji is small but beautiful, covered with large rocks. The Veczemes cliffs, which are the next point of interest, can be seen from the cape.

5 The Veczemes cliffs are the most impressive and colourful group of sandstone cliffs along the Vidzeme shore. The steep shore is up to 6 metres high, and the red sandstone cliffs with shallow abrasion-made cliffs, niches, grottos and other elements can be seen here for quite a distance. There are tenting and leisure facilities at the cliffs. To the North is **the Veczemes homestead**. Its central house was built in 1925, and there are buildings on the farm that date back to the turn of the 19th century. Two movies were filmed at the farm – “The Long Road to the Dunes” and “The Nest of the Old Seaman.”

6 Cape Rankuļrags is the next notable cape, and it is also covered with rocks of various sizes.

7 The Zivtiņas cliffs are an impressive set of sandstone cliffs which appeared after the great storm of 2005. Before that there were several separate cliffs. The site is not as beautiful as it once was because of many landslides in the area.

8 The Ežurgi cliffs are a few metres high, and during the spring and after the rain, there are small waterfalls there. They can change shape and size after major storms. There are leisure and campfire locations above the cliffs.

9 Cape Ķurmragi is one of the most distinct capes in this part of the Vidzeme shoreline. The waves and ice in the area have brought together large piles of rocks, and the steep shore is made up of sandstone cliffs. This is a location which changes appearance after every major storm. This was a dangerous place for ships. In 1924, a ship crashed here, and 22 people died. The bay that is next to the cape is known as a smugglers' bay. The story is that there were Estonian alcohol smugglers who were active here at one point.

10 The old Cape Ķurmragi lighthouse was still in use some 15 years ago, but now the facility is in ruins. The waves have carried the lighthouse down to the level of the sea, and it is quite far now from where it once stood.

11 The Tūja breakwater and pier was built in the summer of 1938. There was a brick factory here, and a railroad spur was installed for the transportation of high-quality bricks. After World War II, a fish processing plant was opened here. There was a pipe running across the breakwater and into the sea which was used to transport fish from ships that were at the pier. The fish processing plant was closed down in the late 1980s.

12 The Tūja cliff is fairly impressive. It is to the South of the Zaķupe River estuary. There is a staircase for the cliff, and the landscape around here is very pretty.

13 The Tūja brick factory dates back to 1936. Clay from the Devonian period was used. The factory produced high-quality bricks for structures such as the Gunpowder Tower in Rīga when it was renovated. The factory remained open, with some interruptions, all the way until the late 1980s. The ruins of the factory can be seen from the Tūja village centre as you walk toward the sea.



Leisure facilities on the seashore



Rocks near the shore



Cape Kutkāji in the spring



The Vitrupe River estuary



The Tūja cliff



Skiing on the seashore



The Tūja brick factory



Hiking along the seashore

