



# SELF-DRIVE THE GREAT KĒMERI 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. Mechanised 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”, +371 29283162
- „Monikas”, +371 26161247
- „Jūras mols”, +371 27099099
- „Līdakas”, +371 29448118
- „Valguma pasaule”, +371 29414022
- „Pilsētnieki”, +371 29497272
- „Eglieni”, +371 29537991
- „Smaidas”, +371 29265552
- „Nordes”, +371 63163563
- „Melnais stārķis”, +371 26751543
- „Lapmežciems”, +371 67298303
- z/s Guntiņas, +371 2954508

**Leisure facilities:** Mostly at the beginning of the route on the shores of the Bay of Rīga (dining services) and at Valguma Pasaule

**Shops:** In Kēmeri, Bigauņciems, Lapmežciems, Ragaciems, Klāpkaļciems, Smārde, Kūdra

**Dining:** In Bigauņciems, Lapmežciems, Ragaciems, Valguma Pasaule

**Guides:** Ineta Jansone, +371 29135543, [hofman23@inbox.lv](mailto:hofman23@inbox.lv); Ērika Berga, [owl95@inbox.lv](mailto:owl95@inbox.lv), +371 29126551; Kēmeru

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### Information:

- [www.celotajs.lv](http://www.celotajs.lv), +371 67617600
- [www.visittukums.lv](http://www.visittukums.lv), +371 63124451
- [www.zemgaletourism.lv](http://www.zemgaletourism.lv)
- [www.jurmala.lv](http://www.jurmala.lv), +371 67147900
- [www.enguresnovads.lv](http://www.enguresnovads.lv)
- [www.daba.gov.lv](http://www.daba.gov.lv), +371 67730078



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 (fully one-quarter of the endangered plants which are listed in the Latvian Red Book are found in the park) 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, Zālās 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), 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 Klāpkaļciems, 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, where there are also accommodations. 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 Kaļķis, 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 (Krāckalni) 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 - Klāpkaļciems - Valgums - Smārde - Ozolpils - Slampe - Lancenieki - Kaļķis - 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 Milzkalne 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

The Kēmeri National Park has several bike, water and automobile routes. Look for a list of routes on [www.countryholidays.lv](http://www.countryholidays.lv) and for markings out in nature!



LAUKU CEĻOTĀJS



PARKS & BENEFITS  
Baltic protected areas and tourism



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## POINTS OF INTEREST

**1 Signs of the Ķemeri National Park** at Rīga-Ventspils highway (A 10). On the left side of the road there is a fragment of a tree with its roots up in the air, while on the right side you will see a brown sign "Ķemeri National Park."

**2 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.

**3 Kūdra** is a small populate area which in the past was the site of peat moss and medicinal mud extraction for the Ķemeri spa. A Soviet-era cement factory in Kūdra provided the region of Kauguri with building materials back at that time.

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

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

**6 The sulphur stream pavilion** was installed at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. One of the most popular sulphurous streams in Latvia, "Ķirzacīņa".

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

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

**9 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.

**10 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.

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

**12 Lake Melnezers** is a swamp lake on the side of the Ķemeri-Jaunkemeri road, with a small car park at its edge. 0.7 km further along, the road crosses the Slocene River.

**13 The Great Pine of Bigauņciems** outside the Dižpriede café. Car parking.

**14 The Kupskalns Nature Trail** - wooden pathway leading from the road to the sea and the remnants of the old Lapmežciems boat plank way.

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

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

**17 The Lapmežciems Museum** - the history of the local parish, its school and its fishing industry.

**18 The Lapmežciems People's Centre** was built in 1957 and is home to the local administrative district's council at this time.

**19 Kaņieris** is a seriously overgrown and shallow seaside lake. 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.

**20 Starpiņupīte** is an artificial canal between Lake Kaņieris and the Bay of Rīga, helps to regulate the water level in the lake with a system

of locks. This is a fine place for bird-watching in the spring and autumn.

**21 The Ragaciems Fish Market** sells smoked fish.

**22 The Slow Mile** – around 6 km long and quite isolated route stretching between Ragaciems and Klapkalnciems. Robbers used to attack travellers 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.

**25 Sausupji birch** – Latvian thickest outdoor birch (circuit 4.3 m), can be seen from the road.

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

Following objects No. **27** – **32** are located out of boundaries of Ķemeri National Park.

**27 The Smārde saloon** 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.

**28 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.

**29 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." The Arsenāls Weapon Museum is also here, featuring various kinds of weapons, uniforms and everyday objects from various parts of the 20th century. Here, too, is the Lāči Bakery with a proper bread oven.

**30 A former air defence missile facility opposite the "Pičas"** - ramps that were used at the base at one time. You can't approach the facility, you can only view it from a distance.

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

**32 The Džūkste Fairy Tale Museum** in the Džūkste-Lancenieki School is the only one of its kind in Latvia. It provides information about the "father of fairy tales" in Latvia, Ansis Lerhs-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, and other activities, too.

**33 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.

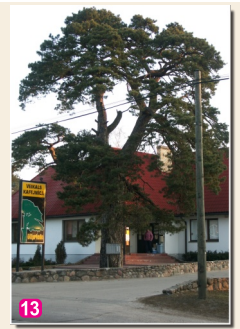
**34 Kaļķis** is a populated area where dolomite is still extracted from quarries in the region (Kalnciems-2 is one such quarry). Some of the quarries are flooded.

**35 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.

**36 The information stand** at the edge of the Kalnciems-Kūdra road has information about the management of the Great Ķemeri Heath and the role of the swamp in maintaining the region's hydrological regime.



Sign of ĶNP



The Great Pine of Bigauņciems



The Ķemeri hotel

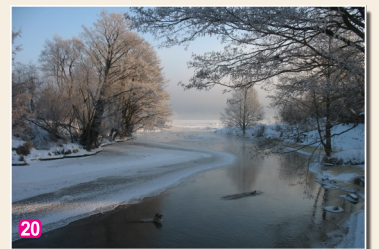


The Dumbrāji trail



Bird-atching tower at Lake Kaņieris

Starpiņupīte



The Ragaciems fish market



The Cinevilla Film Studio



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