



CYCLING

# Welcome to Kēmeri!



## AROUND THE KĒMERI NATIONAL PARK

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!



### ROUTE

This is a route for active and athletic people. It encircles the perimeter of the Kēmeri National Park, offering a very good idea of the natural, cultural and historical treasures that are found in the park. This is a diverse route in terms of what can be seen, but also in terms of biking conditions. The first half runs through the forests of Kēmeri. There are the seashore fishing villages of 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. The second half of the route is meant for more durable bikers, because most of the roads in the Dunduri meadows and the area of the Kauguri canal are gravelly or earthen (often of very, very poor quality indeed). Watch for markings between Kūdra and Kēmeri. These will be off-road pathways with some segments where you will have to get off the bike and push it by hand when conditions are damp (peat moss, roots, potholes).

**Season:** April-October, recommended during the summer

**Type of bike:** Mountain bike, particularly for the latter half of the route from the Smārde saloon to Krāčkalni and from Kūdra to Kēmeri

**Beginning:** Kēmeri railway station, where there is a free car parking

**End:** Kēmeri railway station

**Length:** ~ 80 km; Excellent athletes will cover it in one day, most people will take two

**Duration:** ~ 8 h (without stopping anywhere)

**Difficulty:** Medium in two days, comparatively hard in one

**Road cover:** Gravel and earthen roads for about half the distance

**Route:** Kēmeri - Jaunkēmeri - Bigauņciems - Lapmežciems - Ragaciems - Klapkalnciems (via the forest route between the P 128 road and Lake Kanjēris) - part of the Lustuzkalns Circle bike route - "Valguma Pasaule" - Smārde - Dunduri meadows - Krāči hills - Kūdra - Kēmeri

**Distance from Rīga:** 45 km

**Markings:** The Lustuzkalns Circle bike route is marked with orange markings, and part of it coincides with this route

**Logistics:** Circular route, returning where it started

**Alternatives:** You can travel the route in the opposite direction. In Kēmeri you can return by train from Smārde or Kūdra to avoid the most difficult part of the route, between Kūdra and Kēmeri

**Note!** The A 10 highway between Rīga and Ventspils is inappropriate for biking, because it is narrow, of poor quality and with intensive traffic, particularly in the area between Sloka, Kūdra and Smārde. Some parts of this route are difficult. There is a peat cement factory nearby, and that means that there can be glass and other sharp objects on some parts of the route - watch out! During the tourism season, travel along the Jūrmala-Tukums highway is not recommended, because there will be kilometres of parked cars along the way. This is the so-called Slow Mile, and you are advised to take the forest par thereof. Watch your bike and equipment always. You must be responsible for your own safety and that of your children when you travel the route!

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, Zaļais 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.

### TOURISM SERVICES

#### Nearby accommodations:

- „Stērštītes”, +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
- „Lapmežciems”, +371 67298303
- „Melnais stārķis”, +371 26751543

**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, Klapkalnciems, Smārde, Kūdra

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

**Bike rentals:** Kēmeri velonoma „Valguma pasaule”

[www.velonoma.lv](http://www.velonoma.lv)

[www.valgumapasaule.lv](http://www.valgumapasaule.lv)

**Train time schedule:** [www.pv.lv](http://www.pv.lv)

**Information:** [www.celotajs.lv](http://www.celotajs.lv), +371 67617600

[www.visittukums.lv](http://www.visittukums.lv), +371 63124451

[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

**Emergency services:** 112



The Dunduri meadows

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!



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## POINTS OF INTEREST

- 1  **The Ķemeri railway station** dates back to 1877. A bike rental facility is found inside.
- 2  **The Ķemeri school** (1934) have preserved an historically valuable interior and exterior.
- 3 **The Great Oak** on Tukums Street.
- 4 **Robežu Street** passes along what used to be the historical border between the Latvian regions of Vidzeme and Kurzeme.
- 5  **The Roman Catholic Church of St John the Baptist** (Sēravotu Str.10) built in wood (1899) in the style of Historicism.
- 6 **Mud ponds for regeneration** are used by the spa and the rehabilitation centre.
- 7 **The former Ķemeri swimming facility** used to have a building of wooden bathtubs in the 19th century. The Ķemeri clinic was opened here after World War II. A monument to Ivan Pavlov, a distinguished Russian doctor-physiologist is on the western end of the ruins.
- 8  **The Ķemeri water tower** (1929) used to be a reservoir for mineral water.
- 9  **The Ķemeri hotel** - built in 1933-1936 in the style of Neo-Classicism, known as the "white castle" or "white ship" and it was a symbol of the independent state. The Ķemeri park and its various historical monuments are nearby.
- 10  **The sulphur stream pavilion** was installed at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. One of the most popular sulphurous streams in Latvia "Ķīrzaciņa" is on the right bank of the Vēršupīte river.
- 11 **"Folk Dancing"** - a 1950 monument near the former iron spring (Tūristu str.) which is dry today.
- 12 **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 into the unstable soil.
- 13  **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 the building became its headquarters with a modern visitors' centre.
- 14 **The Dumbrāji trail** is a wooden pathway to take a look at wetland forests.
- 15 **Lake Melnezers** - swamp lake on the side of the Ķemeri-Jaunķemeri road, 700m further along, the road crosses the Slocene River.
- 16 **The Great Pine of Bigauņciems** outside the Dižpriede café
- 17 **The Kupskalns Nature Trail** - a wooden pathway leading from the P128 road to the sea.
- 18  **A Stone Age fishing and hunting settlement site** at Lapmežciems.
- 19 **A memorial stone to A.Muižulis** (recipient of the Lāčplēšis Military Order) - lieutenant (1893-1941) colonel in the No. 4 Valmiera Infantry Brigade.
- 20 **The Lapmežciems Museum** - history of the local parish, its school and its fishing industry.
- 21 **The Lapmežciems People's Centre** (1957) is home to the local administrative district's council at this time.
- 22 **Kaņieris** is a seriously overgrown and shallow seaside lake. At the south-eastern shore of the lake is a boating facility.

**A bird-watching tower** was erected on the Riekstu peninsula in 2009.

23 **Starpīņupīte** - an artificial canal between Lake Kaņieris and the Bay of Rīga regulates the water level in the lake with a system of locks. This is a fine place for bird-watching in the spring and autumn.

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

25 **Cape Ragaciems** - ends with a shallow and rocky submarine shallows reaching several hundred metres into the sea. The **Ragaciems Lighthouse** is at the tip of the cape.

26 **The Slow Mile** - around 6 km long isolated route between Ragaciems and Klakalnciems. Robbers used to attack travellers in the olden days here.

27 **Lustužkalns Hill** (72 m ASL). A hunting castle owned by Livonian Order master Walther von Plettenberg was located here in the 16 century. During the reign of Russian Empress Catherine the Great, a recreational castle was built here. A legend from the time says that a golden carriage is at the bottom of the local Lake Valgums.

28 **Lake Valgums** is 3 km long and 27 m deep, and it dates back to the last Ice Age.

29 **A monument** to the death toll of World War I near Smārde.

30 **Smārde** is a small populated area with a railroad station and a store. Major events occurred in this region during World War I.

31 **The Dunduri meadows** - important because of the curvy Slampe River, thanks to which species of flora and fauna typical of natural meadows and rivers are returning to the region. Livestock adapted to life in the wild graze can be seen from the local **bird-watching tower**.

32 **The Kauguri canal** - dug in 1932-1933 to divert the waters of the Džukste and Slampe rivers to the Lielupe River to avoid broader emergence of swamps.

33 **The Cemetery of the Brethren of Lāčukrogs** offers a final resting place to men who fell during World War I.

34 **Kalkis** 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 **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. There are dolomite stairs which lead to a monument dedicated to 90 Latvian riflemen (1917).

36 **The Kurzeme-Vidzeme border marker** - the border between the Duchy of Courland and the Russian province. Marker dates back more than 200 years.

37 **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.

38 **The peat cement factory.** This is an abandoned but unique industrial landscape. Follow markings when crossing the factory's territory.

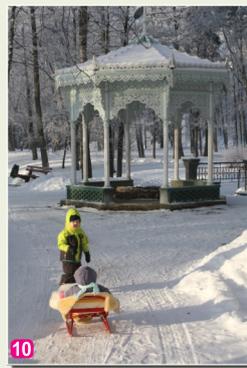
39 **The old peat quarries** is the next place beyond Ķemeri where vast amounts of peat were extracted, primarily during the first period of Latvia's independence.



7 A monument to I. Pavlov



8 The Ķemeri water tower



10 The sulphur stream pavilion



16 The Great Pine



Cafe at "Valguma pasaule"



13 Forest House



14 The Dumbrāji trail



22 Lake Kaņieris



25 The Ragaciema lighthouse



27 Cycling up the Lustužkalns Hill



31 Bird-watching tower in Dunduri meadows



37 Information stand at the edge of hte Kalnciems - Kūdras road



Lauku ceļotājs

40, Kalnciems str., Rīga, LV-1046, Latvia  
Ph: +371 67617600, F: +371 67830041  
lauku@celotajs.lv, www.countryholidays.lv

Photo: Lauku ceļotājs (Juris Smajlinskis)

www.countryholidays.lv