



HIKING CYCLING KEMERI - THE HISTORICAL SPA

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!



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.

THE ROUTE

This route will inform you about the most important cultural and historical monuments in the town of Kēmeri, most of which are linked to the development of the town as a spa town. For several centuries, Kēmeri was a flourishing spa of international importance. It was established in 1838, and it had a fine infrastructure with a wide range of services. In Soviet times, Kēmeri was a spa of pan-Soviet importance, and it shut down when the Soviet system collapsed in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The ruins of hotels and the former swimming facility have now turned into a small and quiet little town with a certain sense of abandonment. The careful eye, however, will notice many important treasures, and it will be worth spending at least half a day in examining these. The route is also appropriate for Nordic walkers or bikers. The historical part of Kēmeri is a monument to urban construction.

Season: Yearround

Type of bike: Any

Beginning: The Forest House, administrative and informational centre for the Kēmeri National Park. This is a circular route which can also be begun from the Kēmeri railroad station, where there is a free car parking.

End: The Forest House or Kēmeri railroad station

Length: ~8 km

Duration: ~3-4 h

Difficulty: Easy

Road cover: Paved

Route: Forest House - Kēmeri Park - Karogu Street - Robežu Street - Tukuma Street - Brocēnu Street - E. Dārziņa Street - Sēravotu Street - Tūristu Street - Forest House. A more detailed description of the route is found in the "Points of interest" section.

Distance from Rīga: 45 km

Markings: None

Logistics: Circular route which returns to where it began

Alternatives: You can merge this route with the "Along the Green Dune" hiking route or the "On a Bike Around the Kēmeri National Park" biking route.

Note: The Forest House will offer you additional information about the Kēmeri National Park. If you want to learn more about the former spa and its history, hire a guide to accompany you. Bicyclists need to observe traffic rules and polite practices. You are responsible for your own safety and that of your children along the route.

Emergency services: 112

TOURISM SERVICES

Nearby accommodations:

„Monikas”, (+371)26161247

„Jūras mols”, (+371)27099099

„Melnais stārķis”, (+371)26751543

Shops: In Kēmeri

Dining: None in Kēmeri

Bicycle rental: Kēmeru velonoma, www.velonoma.lv

Train time schedule: www.pv.lv

Guides: Ineta Jansone, (+371)29135543, hofman23@inbox.lv; Dagnis Mukāns, dagnis.m@apollo.lv, (+371)29216431, Erika Berga, owl95@inbox.lv, (+371)29126551; Kēmeru takas, (+371)29224618, www.takas.lv

Information: www.celotajs.lv, (+371)67617600

www.visittukums.lv, (+371)63124451 www.enguresnovads.lv

www.jurmala.lv, (+371)67147900 www.daba.gov.lv, (+371)67730078



The Kēmeri hotel



The Kēmeri water tower



A pavilion and rotunda on the Island of Love

The Kēmeri National Park has several bike, water and automobile routes. Look for a list of routes on www.countryholidays.lv and for markings out in nature!

POINTS OF INTEREST

1 **The Forest House (Meža māja)** was built in 1933, and this is one of the most outstanding buildings in Latvia from the style of National Romanticism. It used to house an enormously popular restaurant, "Merry Mosquito" (Jautrais ods). The restaurant was popular among the spa's guests, but also among prominent people of the day. A children's sanatorium was installed here after World War II for kids from all over the Soviet Union. When the Ķemeri National Park was established in 1997, the building became its headquarters and today it is a modern visitors' centre.

2 **The Dumbrāji trail** is a wooden pathway presenting the most important aspects of the park – wetland forests which are flooded by the Vēršupīte River each spring.

3 **Vēršupīte** is a small river which curves through the town of Ķemeri and has more than 10 small and romantic bridges across it – each with its own name.

4 **The site of the Oak tree of love**, which was once a symbol of the growth of Ķemeri on the left bank of the Vēršupīte.

5 **The remnants of the Vardīte sulphurous spring** – not easy to find, but the location is between the Forest House and the Ķemeri Hotel.

6 **Marking of the Jānis Lībietis Alley** in the Ķemeri Park – Lībietis directed the institution which managed the Ķemeri sulphurous springs from 1928 until 1944, and the monument to him is at the end of the Jānis Lībietis Pathway.

7 **The Ķemeri Park** was established in the mid-19th century as a landscape park. Many small architectural elements and the little Vēršupīte River which could at one time be traversed in small boats, attracted many visitors. In the 1930s, we know, the total length of pathways in the park was 15 km. Objects **7-13** and **25** are in the Ķemeri Park.

8 **The Ķemeri hotel** is a five-story building with a tower, and it was built between 1933 and 1936 in the style of Neo-Classicism. It is known as the "white castle" or "white ship." This is one of the most outstanding buildings from the first period of Latvian independence, and it was a symbol of the independent state. The building has survived. The interiors are only partly still there – the vestibule, the music salon, the library and the dining hall. A few artworks have also been preserved.

9 **The Ķemeri water tower** was built in 1929 and used to be a reservoir for drinking and mineral water. Until World War II, there was a viewing platform at a height of 42 metres from which one could see the surroundings of Ķemeri.

10 **The former Ķemeri swimming facility** used to have a building of wooden bathtubs in the 19th century. The mud treatment facility which is designed in the style of Classicism was erected in 1924. The Ķemeri clinic was opened here after World War II. **A monument to Ivan Pavlov**, a distinguished Russian doctor and physiologist is on the western end of the ruins, and no one has taken much care of it, either.

11 **A monument to the founders and directors of the Ķemeri spa** (1861) on the banks of the Vēršupīte.

12 **The garden of the Ķemeri hotel** – on the West side of the building.

13 **A pavilion and rotunda on the Island of Love**, designed in the style of Classicism in 1928. There was once a boat pier here. The object is run down and dangerous for visitors, but there are plans to restore it.

14 **The Orthodox Church of St Peter and St Paul** (Katedrāles Str.1) is the oldest church in

Ķemeri. Built in 1893, it was designed in the typical forms of wooden churches in Northern Russia. 97 fallen Russian soldiers are buried outside the church, and **a monument** was installed there in 1925. Near the church is **a cemetery of the brethren** and **a monument** dedicated to Soviet soldiers who perished in World War II. Legend has it that the church was built without a single nail.

15 **The Ķemeri Lutheran Church** (A. Upīša Str.18) is Neo-Gothic in form, built in 1897. It is one of the few stone buildings from the 19th century still left in Ķemeri. Outside the church is **a monument** to 80 Latvian riflemen who fell during World War I and are buried at the cemetery near the Vēršupīte. It was designed by Eižens Laube (1926). Also buried at the church are two men who took part in the Battle of Kauguri on May 18, 1919 – J. Kārklīšs and F. Siliņš.

16 **The Miervaldis Ķemers Museum** (Durbes street 21) is dedicated to a well known cultural worker in Latvia (1902-1980) who was also a clergyman and a painter.

17 **Karogu Street** – the street in Ķemeri where wooden buildings have been preserved to the best degree.

18 **Robežu Street** passes along what used to be the historical border between the Latvian regions of Vidzeme and Kurzeme.

19 **A former pharmacy** recalls the fact that Ķemeri at one time was a spa of all-Soviet importance. Symbols devoted to the subject of pharmacies are still on the wall.

20 **The Great Oak** which grows in front of the Pienenīte preschool on Tukums Street is of local importance and is protected.

21 **The Ķemeri school** was built in 1934. It is one of the few school buildings in Latvia to have preserved an historically valuable interior and exterior, including allegorical images on the façade.

22 **The Ķemeri railway station** dates back to 1877, when the rail line was opened. A train from Moscow travelled to Ķemeri for awhile, and until 1920, there was a tram leading from the train station to the beach at Jaunkemeri. The station building was rebuilt once again after World War II. A bike rental facility is found inside.

23 **The Roman Catholic Church of St John the Baptist** (Sēravotu Str. 10) was built in wood and in the style of Historicism in 1899 and is the newest church in Ķemeri.

24 **Mud ponds for regeneration** are used by the spa and the rehabilitation centre. The mud is purified from biological additives over the course of a longer period of time, after which it can once again be used for the famous treatments offered at Ķemeri.

25 **The sulphur stream pavilion** was installed at the turn of the 19th and 20th century. One of the most popular **sulphurous streams in Latvia**, "Ķirzaciņa", is on the right bank of the Vēršupīte river. The stream flows from an image of a lizard which was created in 1949. The water is healthy for internal and external use.

26 **"Folk Dancing"** – a 1950 monument with decorative and figural reliefs erected near the former iron spring which is dry today. The monument is known as "Folk Dancer."

27 **The former Līva sanatorium** recalls the might of the all-Soviet spa town at one time. Two wings of the hotel are in ruins and dangerous for visitors. You can look at them from Tūristu Street. Interestingly, the buildings were supposedly erected on large gas pillows so as to keep them from sinking into the unstable soil of Ķemeri.



The Dumbrāji trail



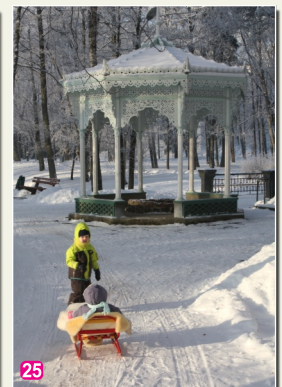
The former Ķemeri swimming facility



The Great Oak



The Orthodox Church of St Peter and St Paul



The sulphur stream pavilion



The sulphurous stream "Ķirzaciņa"



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