



ALONG THE GREEN RAILWAY LINE: VALMIERA – ZILAIŠKALNS



Iron Bridge



View to Iron Bridge



Gime Nature Trail



Neikens Hill

i Description. Will be enjoyed by cyclists interested in the former narrow gauge railway lines, related historic monuments, local landscapes, and nature objects.

🌞 Best time to go. May–October. Particularly beautiful during the blooming of dandelions.

☰ Route. Valmiera Railway Station – Iron bridge – Jāņparks – Beites – bridge over the River Anuļa – Kocēni – Tilgaļi – Mujāni – Zilaiskalns Railroad Station – Zilaiskalns – Valmiermuiža – Valmiera Railway Station.

📏 Distance. ~ 40 km.

🕒 Duration. One day itinerary.

🚶 Difficulty level. Moderate

🛣 Road pavement. Asphalt, gravel roads, forest roads and farm tracks, paths.

📍 Starting point/ destination. Valmiera Railway Station (57.52238, 25.44042) or centre of town Valmiera.

📍 Way marking. In Valmiera there are blue Green Railways cycling route signs. In Kocēni the signs are with number 14.

📍 Distance to Riga. 110 km.

🚆 Public transportation. Circular route with convenient train traffic or cycle rent in Valmiera.

! Worth knowing! Some route sections might be sandy, and muddy during wet weather. Local map is recommended. Prior to walking, one should visit the Valmiera Tourism Information Centre. Hiking outdoors is at one's own risk. Emergency services: 112.

! Recommendation. Those more fit can continue the route to Dikļi and visit the former railway station buildings of Dikļi and Dauguļi.

📱 Enter Gauja mobile application



GooglePlay



AppStore

SERVICE

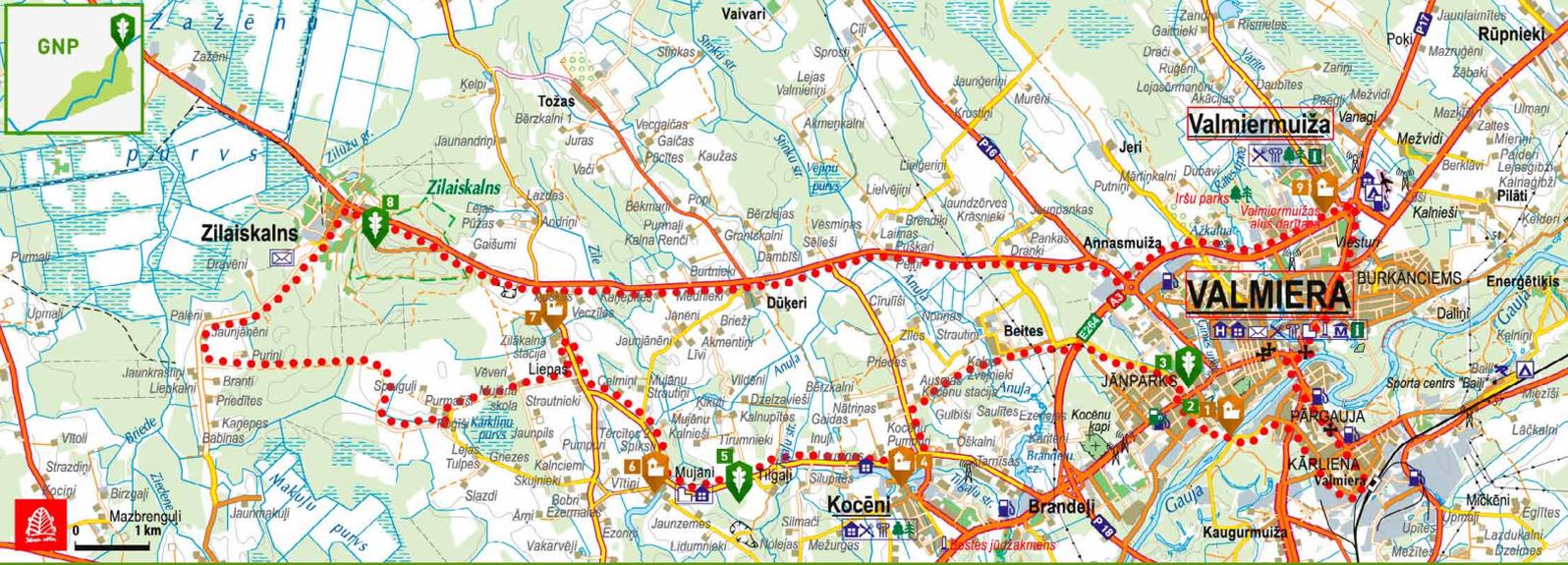
i | Valmiera Tourism Information Centre, Valmiera, Rīgas Street 10, +371 26332213, tic@valmiera.lv, www.visit.valmiera.lv

i | Valmiermuiža Tourism Information Point
Dzirnavu Street 2, Valmiermuiža, Valmiera rural territory, Burtnieki Municipality, +371 20264269, info@valmiermuiza.lv, www.valmiermuiza.lv

i | Zilaiskalns Cultural History and Visitors centre
Kocēnu county, Zilaiskalns rural territory, Zilaiskalns, Parka Street 2, +371 28644530

🍷 | Valmiermuiža Craft brewery and Beer Kitchen
Dzirnavu Street 2, Valmiermuiža, Valmiera rural territory, Burtnieki Municipality, +371 20264269 (tours in the brewery), info@valmiermuiza.lv, www.valmiermuiza.lv

🏠 | Dikļi Palace
Kocēni county, Dikļi rural territory, +371 64207480, +371 26515445, pils@diklupils.lv, www.diklupils.lv



SIGHTSEEING OBJECTS

1 | Iron Bridge 57.52835, 25.40849

The ca. 114 km long railway line was opened on 12 August 1912. The 103.7 km long section had 17 stations and stops. In 1913, two extra branches were commissioned: leading to Kokmuiža Brewery and Staicele Paper Mill. The railway as a strategic object had a crucial role during the battles for independence when it served army trains of Estonia. Section Valmiera–Smiltene was closed in 1970, Ainaži–Pāle – in 1977, and the rest – in 1979. Nowadays, the former embankment and station buildings (**Jānparks**, **Kocēni**, etc.) are still seen at some places, while elsewhere agriculture lands, forests, bushes, trails, or a road is built instead of it. Due to this reason, trips along the former railway lines are sort of expeditions rather than the “traditional” cycling trips. Industrial heritage object, steel structure iron bridge over the River Gauja was built in 1911. It connected the 114 km long Ainazi-Valmiera-Smiltene route, which was completed in 1971. “Green Railway” cycle route section.

2 | Gime Nature Trail 57.53083, 25.40751

440 m nature trail with information boards and interactive elements that introduce the underwater world and its inhabitants. There is a view pavilion, outdoor class, low and high bog.

3 | Jānparks Park 57.533582, 25.399511

From 1911, when the railway line Valmiera–Smiltene was opened, on the right side of the River Gauja was the railway station Valmiera II or John’s Park. There was once a high passenger turnover. Station building survived to nowadays. Opposite the building is a green area with rest areas.

4 | Kokmuiža Manor House 57.5228260, 25.3345238

Located in the centre of town Kocēni. The neo-baroque manor castle was built in the 19th century instead of the former master’s house. The castle was reconstructed in 1930s and in 1937 Kocēni Elementary School was accommodated there. Nowadays, the sports and culture centre is located in the former **barn**. The only **spherical sun clock** in Latvia was erected in 2012 opposite of the manor house.

5 | Vitolēni Devil’s Clock 57.51972, 25.29833

At the margin of the forest, ~0.5 km south-westward of the private house “Vitolēni”, there is a nationwide unique iconic stone. Dimensions: 2.35 × 2.0 × 1.3 m. It has “travelled” to Latvia with a glacier ~12,000–25,000 years ago from the present area of Åland Islands. One of the versions tells it served fertility rituals.

6 | White Tower of Mujāni Medieval Castle 57.5233002, 25.2785317

The castle was built in the 15th century by representatives of Rosen Family – the liegemen of Riga Archbishop, and destroyed during the Great Northern War. Only one of the once two massive towers has survived until nowadays. Have a look at the nearby **Community Centre**, **manor park**, and **barn**.

7 | Zilaiskalns Railway Station

8 | Mound Zilaiskalns 57.55335, 25.21607

Terrain form shaped by the glacier – around 1.7 km long and ~1 km wide large mound consisting mainly of sand (sandy loam and gravel sand at the feet of it) with slight admixtures of pebble. Its absolute height reaches 126.7 m above sea level; however, Mound Zilaiskalns elevates above the local vicinity by 66.6 m. The larger mound has several smaller ones, the so-called Dieva Hilllocks (Mound Avotiņkalns, Mound Jāņa, Mound Oļu, Mound Upurkalniņš). From top of the viewpoint on Mound Zilaiskalns, the broad landscape towards north is seen. On the larger mound, there is a fire observation tower, which is closed to visitors. Mound Zilaiskalns is an ancient place of worship (several iconic stones, cult spring, cult birch-trees, cult trees, etc.) and legends. One of the legends tells the legendary Livv leader Imanta was buried here, who stabbed the bishop Berthold in the battle of 1198 near Riga. The great poet Andrejs Pumpurs has revealed the episode in his poem: “Imanta nevaids miris, / Viņš tikai apburts kluss – / No darbošanās rimis, / Zem Zilā kalna dus!” Not far from the tower, there is the **Worship Stone of Zilaiskalns**. Once a cult spring had been here. The name of Mound Zilaiskalns is associated also with the healer – Ms Marta of Zilaiskalns. The territory is a Natura 2000 listed area and a protected zone.

Pay attention! Forests of slopes and ravines (pre-dominated by aspen-trees, oaks, linden trees, and other deciduous trees) are a protected habitat present on the slopes of Zilaiskalns. Another protected habitat is the so-called boreal (northern) forests, where pines and fir-trees, rarely – mixed forests, are found. Forest fires played a significant role in the evolution of these forests, since the underwood burnt down and glades developed instead; glades and the burnt timber is a significant habitat to various species of insects, e.g., the fire beetle.

9 | Valmiermuiža Craft Brewery 57.55605, 25.43228

Visit to Valmiermuiža Craft Brewery will reveal its history’s impact on the beer-making process, and how the live beer is made from natural raw materials. Everybody can taste the beer as it has once been done by the masters of manors. Next to the brewery, there is an ancient barn, which is home to an excellent catering place and a shop selling beer, delicacies, design pots, items for hot bath, and souvenirs made by Latvian craftsmen from near and far.

10 | Zilaiskalns cultural history and visitor centre

At the foot of Zilaiskalns is the visitor center located at in the premises of an ancient water tower. In the center you can see the historical exposition about a nature object and a sanctuary Zilaiskalns, the village and water tower. For visitors there is an opportunity to take off above Zilaiskalns and take a look at the historic narrow gauge railway locomotive with the help of virtual reality. In addition to the exhibition it is possible to get tourism information and buy Koceni County souvenirs.