



# ALONG THE NARROW GAUGE RAILWAY LINE: VALMIERA – ZILAIŠKALNS



Zilaiskalns



Mujānu viduslaiku pils Baltais tornis



Atpūta "Valmiermuižas pils" restorānā



Kokmuižas saules pulkstenis

Foto: Baltic Pictures

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

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

**☰ Route.** Valmiera Railway Station – Dzelzs 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 – difficult.

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

**📍 Starting point/ destination.** Valmiera Railway Station (57.5216287, 25.4390609) or centre of town Valmiera.

**📍 Way marking.** None on site.

**📏 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**



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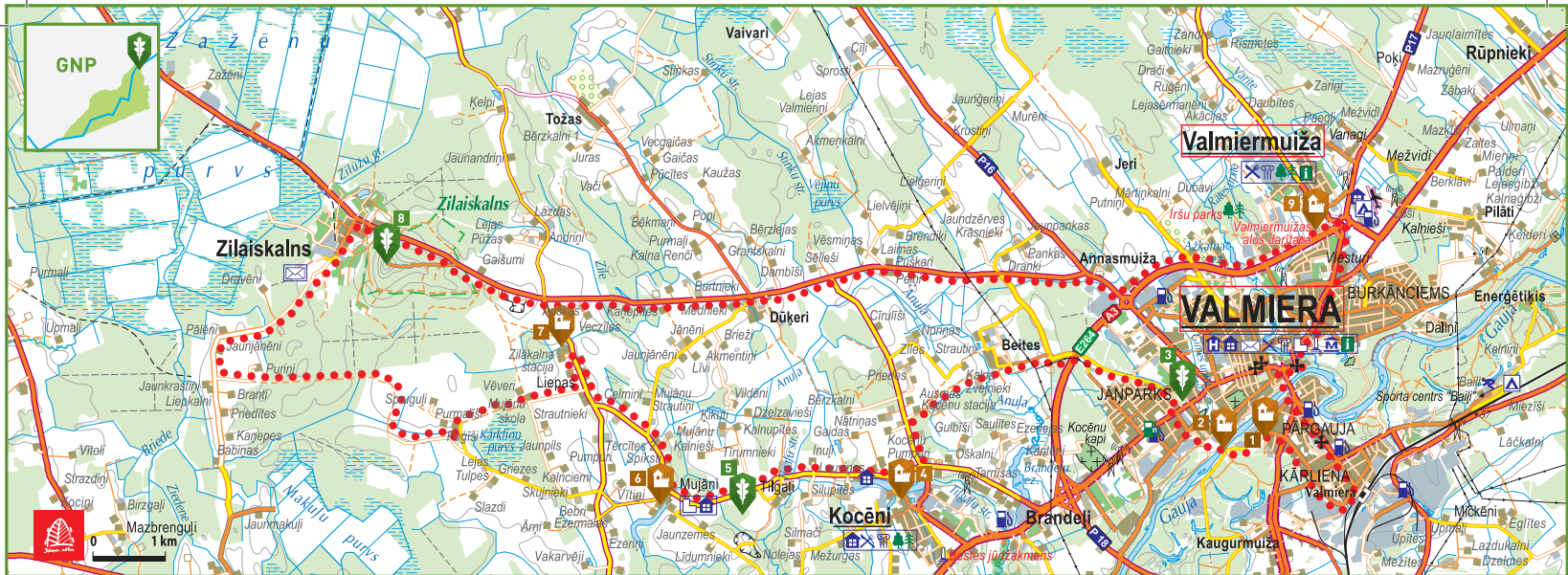
## SERVICE

**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 29135438, info@valmiermuiža.lv, www.valmiermuiža.lv

**🍷 | Brewery "Valmiermuižas alus" and Beer Kitchen**  
Dzirnavu Street 2, Valmiermuiža, Valmiera rural territory, Burtnieki Municipality, +371 20264269 (tours in the brewery), info@valmiermuiža.lv, www.valmiermuiža.lv

**🏠 | Guest house "Lantus"**  
Bērzaines rural territory, Kocēnu Municipality, +371 29214406, +371 28648679, lantus@inbox.lv, www.laukumaja.lv



## SIGHTSEEING OBJECTS

### 1 | Former narrow gauge railway Ainaži–Valmiera–Smiltene

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 (Jāņparks, 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.

### 2 | Narrow gauge railway bridge 57.5283871, 25.4084125

The former narrow gauge railway bridge erected in 1911 is now used by pedestrians and cyclists.

### 3 | Jāņparks Park 57.533582, 25.399511

Small green area (280 × 150 m) on the southern part of Valmiera with its name originating from the former manor. The former Jāņparks narrow gauge railway (opened in 1912) station (red brick building) is located here. The park is an open area in the middle, and is enclosed by a thin pine forest.

### 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 | Vītoleni Devil's Clock 57.51972, 25.29833

At the margin of the forest, ~0.5 km south-westward of the private house “Vītoleni”, 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 | Baltais 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 Hillocks (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 Liiv 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 nevaid 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 | Brewery “Valmiermuižas alus” 57.55605, 25.43228

Visit to Brewery “Valmiermuižas alus” 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.