

Gauja National park, Latvia

Experience autumn season in Gauja National park region



Gauja National Park Tourism Association Latvia

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Autumn transforms Gauja National Park into a tapestry of golden forests, misty river valleys and crisp, refreshing air — a season made for slowing down, exploring and experiencing nature at its most atmospheric. There is something magical about watching Gauja National Park slowly change with the season — as the deep greens of summer soften into warm shades of gold, amber and red, and every walk through the forest feels like witnessing nature paint a new landscape before your eyes.



Into the Forest: Mushroom Foraging in Amata valley

Autumn in Gauja National Park invites you to look a little closer — beneath golden leaves, among moss-covered roots and along the quiet forest paths of the Amata River Valley. Join Kārļamuiža Country Hotel for a guided mushroom foraging experience and discover just how rich the forest can be.

With an experienced nature guide, you will learn to recognise edible and medicinal mushrooms, distinguish them from toxic species and uncover the fascinating role fungi play in the forest ecosystem. Along the way, enjoy the landscapes of the Amata River Valley, with its ancient forests, sandstone cliffs and winding river, before pausing for herbal tea and picnic snacks. The 3–5 hour experience is adapted to the season and suitable for different ages and fitness levels.

And perhaps the most delicious part? Your freshly gathered mushrooms can later become part of a meal prepared at Kārļamuiža restaurant — bringing the flavours of the autumn forest straight to the table.

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Taste Local, Taste Autumn

As the crisp air of autumn settles in, the season of harvest unfolds its vibrant tapestry. Venture into bustling local markets, where the scent of ripe produce mingles with the earthy aroma of freshly turned soil. Here, amidst a kaleidoscope of colors, you can engage with the farmers who have nurtured these bounties. Taste the fruits of their summer and autumn, each bite a testament to.

Some of the best places:

Slow Food Straupe Market

Get ready for an amazing experience! Twice a month, on the first and third Sunday, this place comes alive with the vibrant energy of local farmers, home producers, and artisans showcasing their incredible, hand-crafted goods. Picture this: a market set in the enchanting Straupe Horse Post Station, where history and culture collide in the most delightful way. It's a place bursting with authenticity and a creative spirit that will leave you inspired and eager to explore every corner!

Time: 11:00AM - 3:00 PM

Address: Slow Food Straupe tirdziņš, zirgu pasts, Straupe, Straupes pagasts, Cēsu novads, Latvija

Our Bio Market

Prepare yourself for a remarkable gathering where the paths of organically certified farmers, gifted home producers, and masterful artisans converge in a lively setting! Uncover a treasure trove of local, natural delights and inventive masterpieces that promise to ignite your inspiration and leave you yearning for more!

Date: 2nd Saturday of every month

Time 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Address: Rūdolfa Blaumaņa iela 2, Sigulda, Siguldas novads, Latvija

Cēsis Market

Discover the flavours of the season at Cēsis Market, where local farmers and home producers bring fresh vegetables, fruit, berries, honey, meat and handmade delicacies to the stalls. Visit on Friday or Saturday for a livelier market atmosphere, or stop by the Friday Evening Market from 4:00PM to 7:00PM

Address: Uzvaras bulvāris 24, Cēsis, Cēsu novads, Latvija

Simjūda Fair

Step into one of Vidzeme's oldest market traditions and experience autumn in the heart of Valmiera! The historic Simjūds Fair brings together local home producers and skilled artisans, filling Rīgas Street and Vecpuišu Park with the flavours, colours and craftsmanship of the season. Browse stalls laden with autumn produce, homemade delicacies and handcrafted goods while celebrating the end of the year's harvest and the fruits of local makers' work.

Date: 10 October 2026

Address: Rīgas Street and Vecpuišu Park, Valmiera, Latvija



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Warm up with a Latvian sauna ritual

The ritual unfolds gradually. Warm steam fills the room with the scent of forest leaves and herbs, gentle whisking stimulates the skin, and moments of deep heat alternate with cooling air or water. Every part of the ritual is intentional — a quiet dialogue between warmth, nature and the body.

Afterwards, there is often a remarkable feeling of lightness. Muscles soften, the mind grows quieter, the skin tingles with warmth, and the outside world seems to move a little slower. Wrapped in a robe with a cup of herbal tea in your hands, you leave the sauna feeling deeply relaxed, refreshed and wonderfully present.

Special sauna rituals in Gauja National park:

Ziedlejas Wellness Resort

At Ziedlejas, the Latvian *pirts* is much more than a place to warm up — it is a slow, deeply sensory ritual guided by an experienced sauna master. Heat and aromatic steam are combined with locally gathered plants, leafy birch and other tree whisks, body scrubs, honey, cooling water and moments of quiet rest. Each ritual is adapted to the guest, allowing warmth to build gradually before contrasting it with fresh air, a dip in the pond or cool water. Afterwards comes perhaps the most important part: simply resting, wrapped in warmth, with Ziedlejas herbal tea, homemade bread and honey.

The experience unfolds in three remarkable sauna houses, each offering its own relationship with the surrounding landscape. The contemporary **Glass Pirts** opens towards nature through wide windows and stands beside a pond, filling the sauna with daylight and views of the changing seasons. Hidden deeper at the edge of the forest, the **Smoke Pirts** takes you closer to one of Latvia's oldest sauna traditions — darker, more intimate and filled with the characteristic aroma of wood smoke, with a cool spring-fed pool nearby.

The **Wool Pirts** is perhaps the most unusual of all. A winding pathway leads into its circular interior, where natural sheep's wool covers the walls and creates a warm, cocoon-like atmosphere. After the gentle heat, step outside for a refreshing dip in the outdoor tub or lie suspended in nets among the trees, letting the cool forest air settle over your skin.

Black clay sauna and Bunny sauna

At **Mākoņi un Māls – Clouds and Clay**, clay is part of the very identity of the place. Ancient black pottery traditions meet Latvian sauna culture in a peaceful landscape of forest and water. During a sauna ritual led by an experienced *pirts* master, the body is gradually warmed with gentle steam and aromatic herbal infusions, followed by leafy sauna whisks, clay applications and the invigorating contrast of an ice-cold dip.

The clay ritual brings the experience even closer to the land. Local Devonian clay is used in body treatments and scrubs, while herbs gathered from the surrounding nature add scent and texture to the ritual. Heat, clay, water and plants come together in an experience that feels wonderfully elemental — warm earth against the skin, fragrant steam in the air and cool water afterwards.

When the ritual is over, there is nowhere to rush. Settle down with herbal tea and look out towards the forest, letting the warmth slowly linger in your body. You leave feeling grounded, light and deeply relaxed — as though the quiet rhythm of Gauja National Park has followed you from the landscape into the sauna itself.

Zaķīša Pirtiņa (Bunny Sauna) is a wonderfully earthy sauna built from natural materials — hay, branches, leaves and moss — blending almost seamlessly into the surrounding landscape and turning the Latvian *pirts* ritual into an intimate experience of warmth, forest scents and nature.

Bee Sauna House

At **Bee Sauna House (Bišu PirtsMāja)** in Līgatne, the sauna ritual is designed as a deeply personal journey into warmth, stillness and traditional *pirts* culture. Experienced sauna masters adapt the experience to the individual, taking into account temperament, preferences and the desired intensity of the ritual. Aromatherapy, natural scrubs, massage techniques and sound therapy with musical instruments can all become part of the experience, creating a ritual for both body and mind.

The ritual can be gentle or more intensive according to the guest's wishes, with relaxation, renewed energy or simply a quieter state of mind among the possible intentions for the visit.

Kārļamuiža Sauna

At **Kārļamuiža Country Hotel**, the Latvian sauna experience unfolds in a small, traditional wood-fired sauna surrounded by forest, just a short walk from the hotel. The scent of soaked birch whisks, warm steam and locally gathered herbal tea sets the mood, while cooling off in the nearby pond, evening dew or even winter snow brings the refreshing contrast that is such an important part of Latvian *pirts* culture.

For a deeper experience, the **Sensual Sauna ritual with certified sauna masters** lasts around 4–6 hours and is tailored to each guest. It begins with gentle warming and soft whisking, followed by a scrub massage made with Himalayan salt and dried herbs, a dip in the pond, rest outside on hay mattresses wrapped in blankets, another round of whisking and warming, and finally a soothing massage with warm honey. Guests can also experience the vibrations of sensory drums, adding another layer to the ritual.

Between the rounds, there is time simply to lie beneath the pine trees, listen to birds or look up at the stars.



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Where Autumn Paints the Landscape: Chasing the Best Views of Gauja National park

As autumn settles over Gauja National Park, the landscape seems to glow from within. Forested slopes turn from deep green to gold, amber and crimson, while morning mist drifts above the river and soft light reveals every curve of the ancient valley. From high viewpoints, castle towers and sandstone cliffs, the season unfolds slowly before your eyes — a changing panorama worth stopping for, breathing in, and simply admiring.

Enter Gauja suggests:

Emperor's chair in Sigulda. Kalna iela 22, Sigulda, Siguldas novads, LV-2150

Paradise Hill in Sigulda. Skolas iela 8, Sigulda, Siguldas novads, LV-2150

Turaida Castle Tower. Turaidas iela 10, Sigulda, Siguldas novads, LV-2150

Krimulda manor tower. Mednieku iela 1, Sigulda, Siguldas novads, LV-2150

Festivity square. Cēsu iela 14, Sigulda, Siguldas novads, LV-2150

Sigulda Bobsleigh and Luge Track. Šveices iela 13, Sigulda, Siguldas novads, LV-2150

Sigulda Cable Car. Jāņa Poruka iela 14, Sigulda, Siguldas novads, LV-2150

Cēsis New Castle tower. Pils laukums 9, Cēsis, Cēsu novads, LV-4101

Eagle cliffs. Gaujas NP Priekuļi, Priekuļu pagasts, Cēsu novads

Zvārtes rock. Zvārtes līcis, Drabešu pagasts, Cēsu novads, LV-4139

Ozolkalns camping. Saulkrasti, Drabešu pagasts, Cēsu novads, LV-4102

Landscape cliff. Drabešu pagasts, Cēsu novads, LV-4139

Ānfabrika cliff. 57°13'50. 25°02'47, Sprīņu iela 4, Līgatne, Līgatnes novads

Sietiņiezis rock. Vaidavas pagasts, Valmieras novads, LV-4228

Zilaiskalns Wieving tower. Imanta iela 8, Zilaiskalns, Kocēnu pagasts, Valmieras novads, LV-4222

Steep banks of river Gauja.

Gauja National park

Gauja National Park is Latvia's largest and oldest national park, where ancient river valleys, sandstone cliffs, forests and picturesque towns create a landscape full of discoveries. It is a place where nature, adventure, gastronomy and cultural experiences come together at a slower and more meaningful pace. Whether exploring scenic trails, enjoying local flavours or finding peaceful moments in nature, every season reveals a different side of Gauja.

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