



mammadaba

It means Mother Nature.
And it's true.



Latvia's State Forests and mammadaba welcomes you!



LATVIA'S STATE FORESTS -
OPEN DAILY, NO ENTRANCE FEE

OWLINATOR

PRODUCER: LATVIA'S STATE FORESTS DIRECTOR: MAMMADABA

STARRING: EAGLE-OWL AND NIGHT ANIMALS

SOUND: NIGHT SILENCE LIGHTS: MOON & STARS DRESS DESIGN: MAMMADABA



LATVIJAS VALSTS MEŽI

WWW.MAMMADABA.LV





Come and enjoy genuine outdoor recreation!



A growth industry	2
Forest Fun For Everyone	4
Around Lake Niedrājs	8
Flights of fancy	10
Put a spring in your step	14
Gone fishing	18
Tīrumnieki mind-boggling beauty	22
Learning, leaves and life	24
A tour of northern Vidzeme	26
Magic among the mosses	28
Fruits of the forest	30





A growth

industry



It means Mother Nature.
And it's true.

When people ask me what it is about Latvia that makes me want to live here, I give the usual answers: friendly people, beautiful cities, good food and drink, fascinating history. But if I am completely honest there is another answer that I am too polite to give: "Because wherever I am in Latvia, I know that in about 20 minutes I can be somewhere you can't find me." Slightly antisocial perhaps, but it keeps me sane.



In today's world, true tranquility is one of the rarest commodities, but the best place to find it is the forest. I will always remember spending my first night alone in the woods in Latvia. I had just got comfortable in my sleeping bag when, in the distance I heard a rhythmical thump-thump-thump noise. My heart sank. "Even here," I thought, "even here I cannot escape the loudspeakers and all-night parties!"

Then I realised: it wasn't a party. I was hearing the sound of my own heart beating. It kept me awake for quite a long time. Luckily, there were glow-worms crawling around to keep me amused.

It really is true that a day spent in Latvia's forests recalibrates your brain. What seemed very important in the morning – paying the next bill, seeing the next movie, buying the next cellphone – seems completely unimportant when you are standing on the edge of a swamp, watching deer splash through the water, or foraging around a tree stump with your hands exploring the cool moss, convinced there is a delicious mushroom hiding from you in there somewhere.

It's not even necessary to do anything in the forest. One of my greatest pleasures is just to stand there among pine, birch and oak, looking, listening, sniffing and breathing, deciding what to do next. Nine times out of ten I decide to stand there a little bit longer. If anyone happened to be passing, they might look at me and decide I was crazy. But no-one ever does happen to be passing and even if they did, you just know they would do the same thing as soon as they were safely out of sight.

Latvia's State Forests (LVM) is not only one of the most important companies to Latvia's national economy, it's a provider of recreational opportunities to a large part of the population, which in turn regards LVM with the watchful eye of the shareholder as well as the consumer. It's a symbiotic relationship not unlike the ones you will find in abundance in the forest itself, and it means that LVM inspires pride in people just as long as it continues to look after the forests, to keep them clean and healthy and to allow as much unrestricted access as possible.

If Latvia's forests could be canned or bottled – complete with fresh air, pine fragrance, woodsmoke and the taste of a thousand wild berries – LVM would probably be among the wealthiest companies in the world. Luckily, they have yet to fully develop the technology, so until then you'll have to enjoy the experience the old-fashioned way by pulling on your boots, packing your bag and getting away from it all.

Useful information:

Meet and explore
Mammadaba yourself:
www.mammadaba.lv/en/

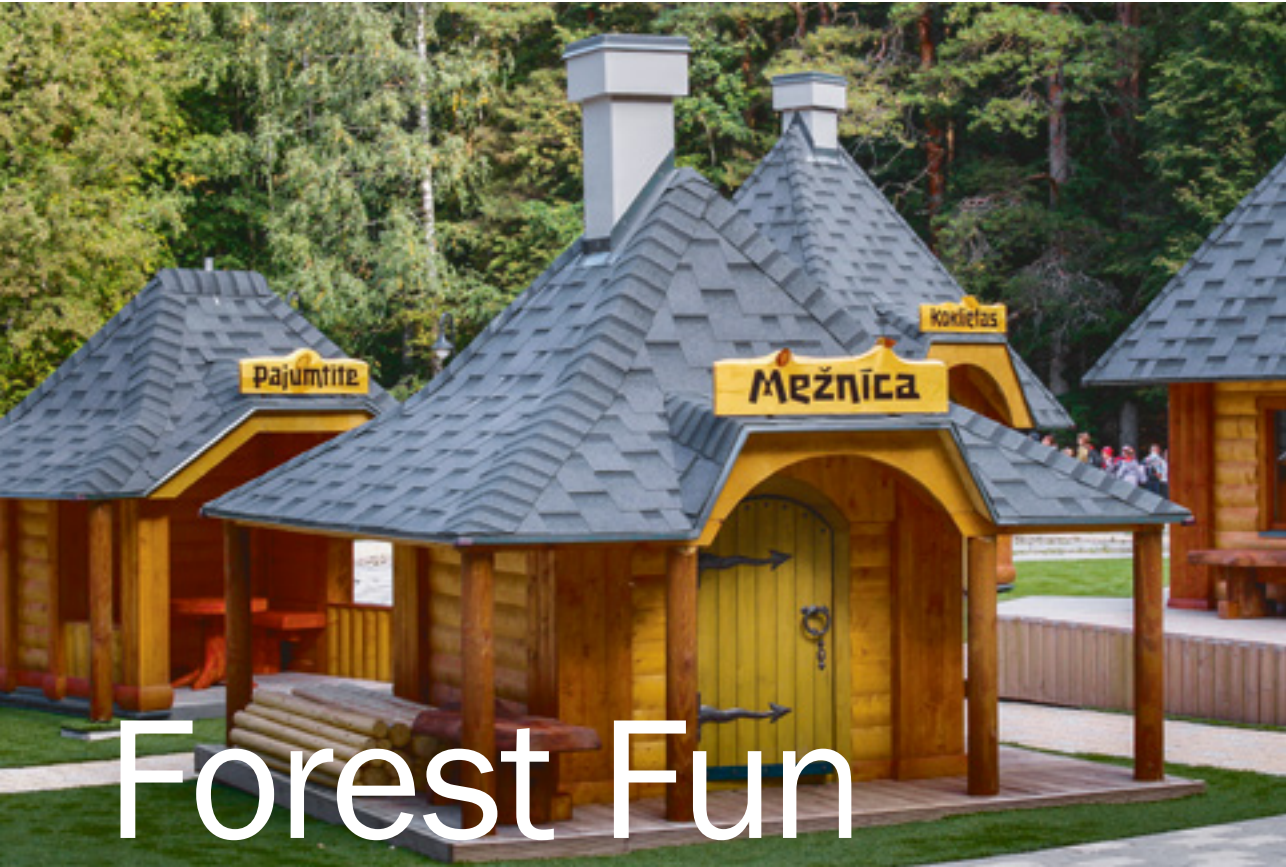


Tweet us:  @mammadaba



Mike Collier, journalist, writer





Forest Fun

For Everyone

LVM

Tērvete Nature Park

"Tērvetes sils", Tērvetes pagasts, Tērvetes novads



+371 63726212, +371 28309394

@tervete@lvm.lv

Follow on: [f](#) @LVMdabasparksTervete

Park open every day from 09:00 until 19:00



Rīga – 80 km
 Ventspils – 181 km
 Jēkabpils – 197 km



Tērvete Nature Park is not just Latvia's State Forests' showcase for all the most imaginative things that can be done with forests, it is part of almost every Latvian family's annual routine. As one of the top tourist attractions in the country, with particular appeal to families, it is a unique and delightful mixture of nature reserve, museum, theme park, walking trail and outdoor school.

Many of its thousands of visitors come time and time again for the simple reason that the park is in a constant state of development and seasonal change, so that no two visits are ever alike.

Located far enough from Rīga – close to the Lithuanian border – to be a “real” forest, but not so far as to be impractical for a day trip, Tērvete Nature Park has evolved over the years so that it consists of various different parts in which people of all ages can find something to get them involved both physically and mentally. First founded over 60 years ago, between 2000 and the present day, Tērvete Nature Park has welcomed more than 1.5 million visitors. In the last five years, more than 100,000 visitors per year have made their way to this special place, more than 40% of them coming from outside Latvia.

A Fairytale Forest, playground and Dwarfs' Forest are favourites with younger children and far from being just places to run wild, special themed tours take around three hours so visitors are learning even as they enjoy themselves. More than a hundred wooden sculptures, many of them based on the characters of famous local writer Anna Brigadere's fairy tales, are dotted around the park and tracking down as many of them as possible while hearing the stories is an adventure in itself.

History buffs can climb the three impressive castle mounds of the Semigalian tribes who once inhabited the area and imagine how the iron-age landscape might contrast with today's. The Playground is a large, family-friendly area with swings, play houses and climbing frames plus everything needed to enjoy an open-air picnic in the heart of the forest. For those who prefer a hot meal, the Mammadaba cafe is also on site serving delicious seasonal dishes.

After that, you might like to get on the move again aboard the Fairytale Train, cycle one of the special bike trails or put your best foot forward with some Nordic walking or a leisurely stroll among the park's stately pines, filling your lungs with the freshest of forest air. Special routes around the Dwarfs' Forest are available for people with restricted mobility and trained staff are also on hand to provide assistance in other parts of the park if required.

A tower with 94 steps peeks above the Dwarfs' Forest. At the top of the stairs, a wooden bench can be found on a small platform – a place to recover your breath, and look across the treetops at a spectacular natural landscape. Also for those with a head for heights is the Lucky Land Skyway, a rope and wire route among the trees. Seeing the forest from several metres up adds a whole new perspective to a day spent at Tērvete.

The LVM Nature Park at Tērvete has been recognized as a European tourism destination of excellence in Latvia within the framework of the EDEN project. Every year LVM's Tērvete Nature Park hosts more than 30 different events, with the most notable perhaps being the Latvian Forest Days in May when, spread over several hectares, there is a unique chance to discover the different plants that can be grown from seeds in the forest, to get familiar with forestry equipment, participate in a woodworking workshop and learn all about long-term care of the forest environment.

The attractions of the park are so varied that sometimes it is impossible to do everything in one day, so brand new on-site accommodation options are available. At the nearby reservoir, a boating base extends the park's reach from the trees onto the waters. With the opportunity to stay on site, an unforgettable day at Tērvete Nature Park can now be extended into an unforgettable weekend or week.





Latvia's State Forests Warning

DON'T LITTER!
YOU WILL TURN INTO PIG!



Around Lake Niedrājs



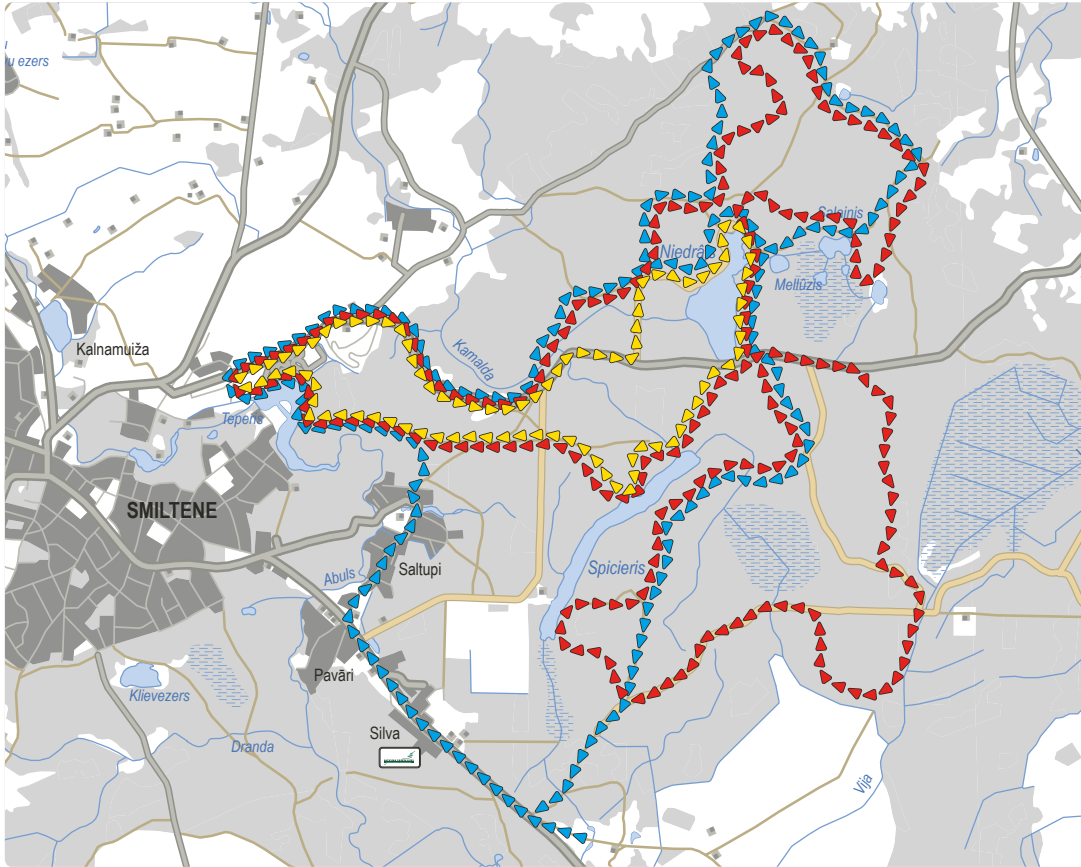
Rīga – 128 km
Valmiera – 35 km
Rēzekne – 152 km

Smiltene, Smiltenes novads



The landscape around the northern Latvian town of Smiltene is among the most picturesque and unspoiled in all of Latvia, where sandy pathways wind through vast expanses of pine forest full of wildlife and the occasional pure spring popping up to provide refreshment.

One of the most notable locations of all is Lake Niedrājs. Despite being just 5 kilometres from the centre of Smiltene, it does a good impression of being infinitely removed from the hustle and bustle of city life, with clean water and numerous opportunities for relaxation and exercise. Indeed, though it is a source of pride for locals, Niedrājs is little-known in the rest of the country and it's hard to avoid the conclusion that while the people of Smiltene are famously friendly and hospitable, this is one of their best-kept secrets.



The lake is fed by six streams and has an average depth of 4 metres. Several dedicated swimming places can be found provided by Latvia's State Forests along the banks, with easy access to nearby roads. The waters of the lake are so clean and clear that this is also a popular location for divers, and in 2002 it was one of these underwater enthusiasts who discovered a boat which had buried beneath the surface for several hundred years. It was successfully raised and now sits in a museum in Jūrmala.

The surrounding forest is an excellent place in which to find tasty mushrooms, blueberries, wild strawberries and other examples of nature's bounty when they are in season, but don't expect the Smiltene folk to point you towards the best picking-spots – you'll have to find those for yourself! Within a relatively small area you can find contrasting landscapes of forest, hills and swamp, all readily accessible by foot and by bicycle. With the latter, you have various options around special marked cycle routes of 10 km, 20 km and – if you are feeling particularly energetic – the king of them all, a challenging but exhilarating 32-kilometre route that is often used for training purposes by serious cyclists. Of course, the routes are not the exclusive property of cyclists, with hikers and – in the winter months – cross-country skiers also making the most of the beautiful surroundings. Luckily it is not necessary to do the whole thing in one go: there are places for rest and recreation along the way.

If you want to see even more trees, LVM's Silva Dendrological Park lies along the blue route contains more than 200 different species. Ideal for a warm-up or cool-down walk.





Flights of fancy

Whether you call them bird-watchers, twitchers or ornithologists, they all agree: Latvia is an exceptional place to see a wide variety of our feathered friends in some of the most spectacular and varied natural scenery you are likely to encounter – and that's particularly true of territory under the care of Latvia's State Forests.



The return each spring of the first migratory birds – particularly the geese, storks and cranes – is an event of national importance and the sight and sound lifts the spirits of the entire nation after a long, hard winter. A large bird migration research station is located by the Baltic sea in Pape, Rucava district, where migratory birds are ringed and recorded.

But it's not only these long-distance residents who herald the return of spring. Even before then, in the February forests the woodpeckers can be heard rhythmically marking out their territories. Around the same time in the parks and countryside the finches are equally busy getting their nests in order for the coming season. They are quickly joined by blue tits and other members of the tit family.

Then, when the migratory birds arrive, the action really becomes intense. Geese love the large lakes of Latvia and are accompanied by immense numbers of quail, pigeons and others, all engaged in a race to secure the best real estate for their nests. Soon the most majestic of birds, the swans, storks and cranes can be admired too, and the fields and meadows begin to shudder and reverberate with birdsong just as varied and beautiful to the ear as the wild flowers are to the eye. Nor is this just a daytime phenomenon – one of the most thrilling sounds you will ever hear is the hoot of an owl as it performs its midnight patrol.

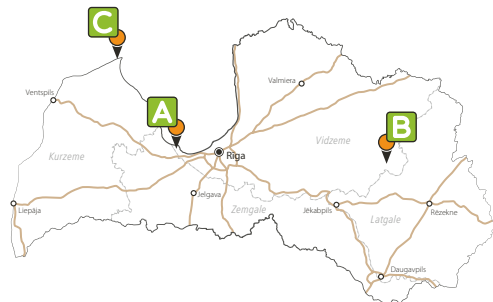


3

LVM bird

of the best watching spots

Technically, the arrival of the migratory birds lasts from the end of February until the beginning of June, depending on the species. Meanwhile departures are scheduled from the end of June until the end of November, though the most noticeable time to wave goodbye is in late September and October when the larger and louder birds bid us farewell once more as they depart in large groups.



One of the most popular webcams in Latvia is operated by LVM and allows viewers to watch the daily life of a golden eagle's nest.



A Lake Kaņieris

A large lake with extensive reed beds. In the south-eastern part of the lake at Lapmežciems-Antiņciems is a purpose-built bird watching tower. It's a good place to watch ducks, geese, swans, gulls, terns and waterfowl, as well as the reed and shore-nesting land birds. There is plenty to see here in spring, summer and autumn.

B Lake Lubāns

Lubāns is the largest lake in Latvia, which, when combined with the fish ponds of Kvapani, Ideņa, Nagļi and Zvejsala/Ļodāns, forms an even larger wetland complex. An excellent site at which to observe ducks, geese, swans, gulls, terns and waterfowl, as well as wildfowl nesting on the shores and even some birds of prey. Spring, summer and autumn seasons are all active.

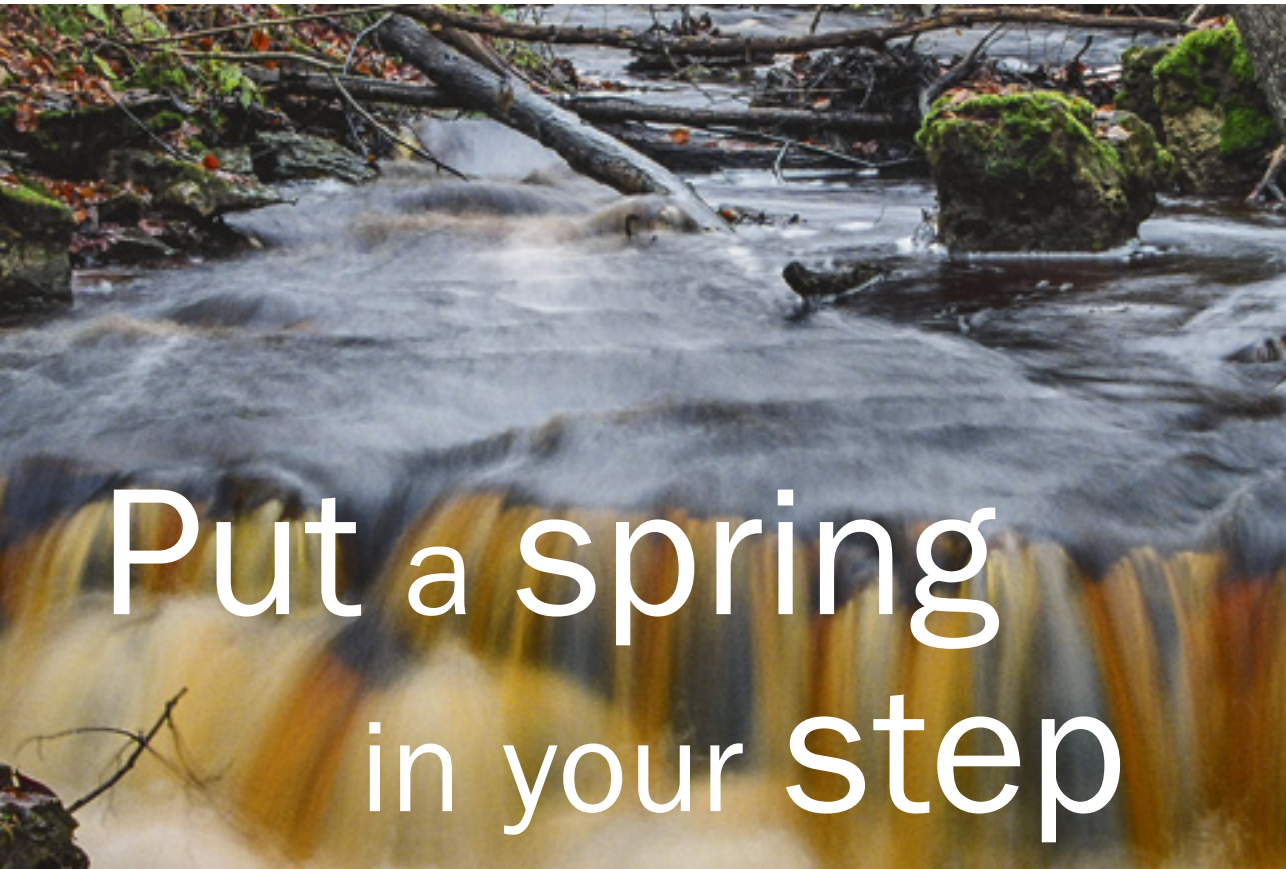
C Kolkasrags

Undoubtedly one of the most outstanding birdwatching locations in the whole of Europe each spring. The isthmus of land extending into the Baltic Sea is thronged with wading birds, songbirds, birds of prey and others. Spring is the standout season, but it's still of interest in the rest of the year as the coastal location makes temperatures warmer than much of the rest of the country.



- *Latvia's migratory birds winter in various different places – in Africa, India, Southern Europe, Western Europe and Central Europe.*
- *The tits we feed in winter time are actually migratory birds. Studies have shown that while adults birds can still be found in nesting areas, but the younger ones leave and move some distance to the south and south west. It's a similar story with crows, woodpeckers and some other species.*
- *In Latvia, there are also groups of birds that do not go to warmer lands for the winter, such as woodcocks, grouse and corncrakes.*
- *The height at which a bird can fly depends on both the species and weather conditions. It can range from a few tens of meters above the ground to several kilometers in height. Among the high-fliers are geese, who have been measured at 8,830 metres.*
- *The peregrine falcon (rarely seen in Latvia but not unknown) can reach speeds of 320 km/h as it dives on its prey.*
- *The long distance masters are sea terns (nesting in small numbers in Latvia). During one year, they have been recorded covering distances of more than 70,000 kilometres flying between Arctic and Antarctic.*





Put a spring in your step



In Latvia, springs are not just places to fill bottles with clean water (which you will see people doing in large numbers) but very special places: sacred sites, locations for legends and places where the spirits are likely to tap you on the shoulder and whisper something significant in your ear. For example, on Midsummer morning, before the sun rises, a woman who washes her face in spring water is assured of great beauty. Maybe it works, maybe it doesn't – but it's a much cheaper and more natural experience than a visit to the spa.

Each village and parish has its own special springs, with some famous for their taste, others for their healing properties and still others for their picturesque location. Many are marked on maps, some are not and will require a good contact within the local community to reveal just why everyone in the village appears to be twenty years younger than their real ages!

In total there are more than 2,400 natural springs listed in Latvia. Here are just a few of the most famous examples for you to visit, but don't forget the most important thing of all: be sure to thank the spring for its waters before you leave...

A Lūrmaņu spring

Lubes pagasts, Talsu novads

Located in the beautiful valley of the River Roja you will find the Lūrmanis cliffs, a six-metre-high outcrop of grey-red sandstone and clay which is particularly unusual here in Kurzeme region. The tourist trail starts from Mārkciems and lets you follow the course of the the Lūrmanis cliffs, past boulders and ancient oaks until you reach the Lūrmanis spring itself, which takes the form of a miniature waterfall tumbling one metre from the face of the cliff. Wooden steps allow easy access to the waters. Since ancient times, the cool and refreshing water of the Lūrmanis spring has been renowned for its healing properties. It is quite acidic, but very tasty nevertheless. For the quickest way to the spring to fill up your plastic bottles with a week's worth of water, a sign points to the nearest road.

B Bolēnu spring

Bērzaunes pagasts, Madonas novads

In Vidzeme region on the side of Bolēnu hill about nine kilometres from the center of Berzaune parish, you will find a place that is officially known as Bolēnu spring but which goes by several other, much more evocative names in local folklore. It also called the Eye spring, Laima's spring (Laima being the Latvian goddess of luck and destiny) or the Spring of Health. It is the highest spring in Latvia, being located 262 metres above sea level and running out of a grove of beautiful ash trees. As its many names suggest, it appears in numerous legends, particularly those related to Laima, and many of these legends were collected by local folklorist Jānis Krūmiņš. According to him, the spring never freezes, even in the depths of winter and the water continues to bubble away just as in summer. It remains one of the most popular and well-known springs in Latvia, so don't be surprised to see people paying a visit, singing to the spring, waving the branches of nearby trees for good luck and possibly even leaving a lucky token or two behind. All perfectly normal behaviour for Latvia.

C Ellītes sulphur spring

Daudzses pagasts, Jaunjelgavas novads

Such is the Latvian taste for natural water of all sorts that a sulphur spring (sēravots) is differentiated from a regular spring (avots) in the Latvian language itself. One of the most renowned and apparently powerful of these is the Ellīte sulphur spring, located in a pristine bog in Jaunjelgava district in the south of the country. The spring water has a distinctive aroma of sulphur which may not be to everyone's liking but has long been considered to have potent healing abilities.

Consequently, people come here from far and wide, hoping that spring water will help with whatever ails them and provide an energy boost at the same time, as it is reputed to be excellent at ridding the system of lethargy and laziness. There was even a plan at one time to build a sanatorium here with healing mud baths and folk medicine has long used the mud from around the spring, as shown by the evidence of excavation. An easy 300-metre trail provides easy access. Resting places and an information point let you do a bit of medical research into the bargain, though it should be noted that the trail is not suitable for people with wheelchairs or pushchairs. But there is one important thing to remember, according to local custom: people visiting Ellīte spring should think good thoughts and not harm anyone or anything else, otherwise the power of the water can turn sour in more ways than one.



THRILLER

SAPŅU



mammadaba



LATVIJAS VALSTS MEŽI

WWW.MAMMADABA.LV

HE CATCHES WHAT WE

PRODUCER: LATVIA'S STATE FORESTS DIRECTOR: MAMMADABA STARRING: GREAT ANTLER STAG

DABAS
STEREO

ĶĒRĀJS*

LATVIA'S STATE FORESTS -
OPEN DAILY, NO ENTRANCE FEE

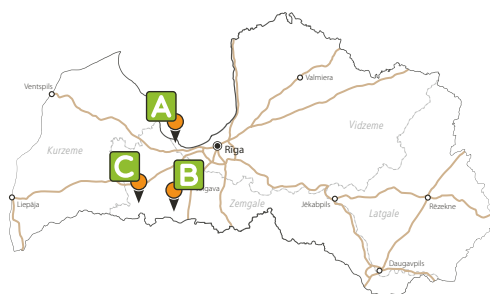
DO NOT DARE TO THINK

SOUND: NIGHT SILENCE LIGHTS: MOON & STARS DRESS DESIGN: MAMMADABA

* DREAM CATCHER

Gone

fishing



Fishing is a year-round sport in Latvia, and there's always an opportunity to fish, whether it's a shady summer trout stream, some coarse sea angling on a blustery autumn day or joining crowds of ice fishermen on a frozen lake in the depths of winter.

Despite being a relatively small country, Latvia has a number and quality of fishing opportunities that are the envy of many larger nations. For starters there is a 500-kilometre coastline and 3,922 lakes, of which 2,256 are larger than one hectare in size and 16 of which are larger than 1,000 hectares.

At many of these lakes, plus smaller ponds, rivers and streams, you will find information boards, places for campfires, picnic sites and other facilities provided by Latvia's State Forests for the convenience and enjoyment of fishermen, and indeed anyone else who would like to make use of them.



But it's fishing using the "spinning" technique that is currently the most popular style in Latvia's waterways and each year from May to September LVM runs a spinning championship series that visits several of the lakes under its care, providing enjoyable competition while spreading the word about the best nature-friendly practices and education among the fishing community. In 2017 the championship even involved a pike 1.16 metres in length being caught in Lake Kanjieris. After being recorded, it was released back into the wild – but you should have seen the one that got away!

Licensed to fish

Before you cast your line anywhere other than on private property, remember to obtain the correct fishing licence, available from post offices, tourist information points and angling shops, and check any local regulations regarding what you can catch and when. LVM staff will be happy to help.

Did you know?

The largest fish ever caught in Latvia was hauled ashore near the town of Aizkraukle in 2010: an 84 kilo catfish more than 2 metres in length.



3 of the best

fishing places

A Lake Kaņieris

Lapmežciema pagasts, Engures novads

Size: 11.28 km²

Average depth: 0.6 - 1.8 m



 +371 29253514

Rīga - 44 km

Ventspils - 150 km

Jelgava - 50 km

In terms of the sheer amount of bird and fish life upon and beneath its waters, Lake Kaņieris is one of the richest lakes in Latvia. The most sought-after fish here are pike and many local anglers refer to the lake as “pike paradise”. The largest one caught in recent years weighed in at 11.7 kilos. Other popular catches include tench, roach, and perch.

A dedicated fishing base with car park, more than 40 boats for hire and full amenities is on hand and fish stocks are monitored in the lake under the care of LVM. This involves not only artificially boosting the population when necessary but also allowing spawning fish access to the nearby sea via a special water channel. As part of this care for the environment, please note that fishing in Lake Kaņieris is prohibited in March and April.

B Tērvete reservoir

"Tērvetes sils",
Tērvetes pagasts, Tērvetes novads

Size: 70 hectares
Average depth: 1.5 – 3 m



+371 26115333

@ tervete@lvm.lv

Rīga – 70 km
Ventspils – 184 km
Rēzekne – 299 km

This expanse of water is of fairly recent origin, having been created in 1980 by flooding meadows to create an artificial lake or reservoir, which you might hear the locals cheekily calling "Gulbju ezers" (Swan lake). Located very close to LVM's Tērvete Nature Park, the 2.3 kilometre-long banks contain log cabins for rest and recreation, places for campfires and sports, a birdwatching tower and a place to rent a boat for a fine day's fishing. You don't necessarily need to float into the distance, as there are also wooden jetties from which to fish alone or in competition groups.

The main target for fishermen in these waters is carp, which has been known to grow to a prodigious size. The record catch so far is a 12-kilo specimen, and there are pike, perch, crucian carp, bream, roach, tench and other species to provide variety, with 1.5-kilo roach and 10-kilo pike among their number.

The cabins for hire are just a few metres from the water's edge. Each cabin can sleep up to five people and has all modern conveniences. As every good fisherman knows, an early start is essential. Here it's simplicity itself to watch the sun come up on another day of fishing and be reeling them in within minutes.

C Lake Lielaucē

Lielaucē pagasts, Auces novads

Rīga – 109 km
Ventspils – 151 km



+371 26556771

Size: 372 hectares
Average depth: 1.5 – 3.5 m

Less well-known than some of the more popular fishing lakes, Lake Lielaucē nevertheless has more than enough variety and challenge to keep even the most demanding fisherman happy. It guards its secrets well, being surrounded on all sides by swampland so that the sight of the clear waters opening up in a great expanse comes as a bit of a surprise.

But once you're here, there's no need to hurry away. LVM operates a fishing base with 15 boats for hire and even four floating holiday homes that are also available for rent. If you're so keen on fishing you want to do it while you sleep, this is your chance – just tie the fishing line around your big toe when you retire for the evening!

In the vicinity is picturesque Lielaucē Castle, connected to the lake by a footpath, and as with most other Latvian lakes, the bird life on display is every bit as impressive as the fish life.





Tīrumnieki

mind-boggling
beauty



Rīga - 220 km
Valmiera - 169 km
Daugavpils - 117 km

Tīrumnieki bog

Nagļu pagasts, Rēzeknes novads



For a walk that will remain in the memory long into the future, head for the east of Latvia where you will find Tīrumnieki bog trail, a hiking trail like no other. Bogs sometimes get a bad press. In English the word is harsh, almost dismissive and the popular image of them is of a damp and slightly smelly place where little of interest happens but which nevertheless is quite dangerous. A day on the Tīrumnieki trail is guaranteed to change all those misconceptions.

The name appears to derive from the word “tīrs”, meaning “clean” so while in English a bog is associated with mud, in Latvia the associations are completely different: this is about unspoiled purity.

A well-maintained boardwalk with hand-rails where necessary and several viewing points leads you around 2 kilometres through pristine bog parallel to Lake Tīrumnieks (or Teirumnieks in local Latgalian language), a delicate and unique ecosystem where you can see an amazing variety of rare plants flourishing. Bear in mind that in order to minimise the environmental impact, the boardwalk is no more than 60 cm wide, so you still need to watch where you put your feet and unfortunately the route is not suitable for wheelchairs or pushchairs.

Tīrumnieki bog and its surrounding area forms part of the drainage basin of Lake Lubāns, and is an internationally-recognised protected territory. It is what is called a typical “high” bog landscape and the plants growing here include sedge, sphagnum peat moss wild cranberries.

According to local lore it was created when a meteorite landed and consequently retains an otherworldly quality that allows visitors to find tranquility and restore flagging energy. Whether or not this is true, you will have to find out for yourself, but Tīrumnieki's beautiful and atmospheric landscape, its shifting mists and subtle sounds and smells can come close to giving you sensory overload, particularly during the autumn season when leaves, moss and creeping plants are all changing colour.

The bog is under the care of LVM, and within half an hour's drive is LVM's “Ezernieki” recreation and tourism centre, located on the shore of Lake Sala. It may not be among the largest lakes in Latvia, but fisher-folk agree that for comfort and conveniences it is hard to beat. Guest houses, a landscaped camping ground with electricity connections and showers and even a conference centre and sports pitches mean there is far more than fishing to keep you busy, while the location tucked away in the east of the country puts it nicely off the beaten track in an area of unspoiled natural beauty. It is perfect for escaping the stress of city life in order to concentrate on the things that really matter.

With several other excellent fishing lakes and rivers in the surrounding area, Ezernieki also operates as an excellent base from which to venture to other angling, hiking and bird-watching adventures. Orienteering is a popular activity, too, and experienced guides are available to lead you through the surrounding countryside while making minimal impact on everything except your memory.

How to enjoy the landscape?

- *Take along your paints and canvas to record the riot of colour*
- *Try capturing the light and atmosphere with a camera*
- *Near the start of the trail is a picnic site*
- *At Lake Tīrumnieks there is a dedicated swimming place*
- *Count how many different bird species you see*



Learning,



Rīga – 140 km
Valmiera – 119 km
Daugavpils – 122 km

Kalsnava arboretum

"Ogu īves", Jaunkalsnava,
Kalsnavas pagasts, Madonas novads

+371 27841099 @ arboretums@lvm.lv



leaves and life

One of the largest and most beautiful of Latvia's State Forests' arboretums, Kalsnava arboretum is sometimes called Latvia's "third botanical garden", after the official ones in Rīga and Salaspils. It is a place to see trees and other plants from all over the world, with the total collection running to around 4,200 different specimens and more than 1,000 different species. The arboretum covers 144 hectares, of which trees and shrubs account for 98 hectares.



Kalsnava is a wonderful destination all through the year, though as might be expected, spring blossoms and autumn leaves are the crowd-pleasers of the annual calendar. Among the recreation places within the arboretum territory is a 25-metre-high tower that can be climbed to open up spectacular views over the treetops and far away. Activities of different sorts for all ages are regularly organized by LVM, which takes its role as an educator very seriously, though in a fun and informal atmosphere. In educational workshops, everyone has the opportunity to grow their own tree from seeds, so that one day back yards and gardens across Latvia and beyond will have a little piece of Kalsnava growing in them. Of course, if you prefer to simply walk between the alleys and stands of trees brushing up on your tree-spotting knowledge and smelling the blossom, that is allowed, too!

A few of the recent educational initiatives are listed below.

Green foundation school

An LVM initiative to provide a grounding in the year-long cycle of forest life, suitable for schoolchildren and pre-schoolers alike. Discover and understand the basic principles of how the forest grows and spreads and the reasons why it needs to be maintained by good forestry practices to thrive. It is a real hands-on experience with lots of games to play and open air learning that can be taken back to the classroom for further study and development.

Witches' broom ball

One of the unique traditions of Kalsnava is the so-called Witches' broom ball. It does involve magic of a kind, though probably not of quite the sort you would expect. The "witches' broom" in question is the name of the twigs or small branches found in the crowns of conifer trees which signal a genetic mutation. These are valuable things for tree planters and grafters and the "ball" is a grand get-together in which this and other dendrological matters are discussed around a camp fire.

LVM forest expeditions

A project run by LVM and several other partners designed for 6th grade students. Running all year round, students can participate in an expedition along a 2-kilometre trail during which they learn about 10 different aspects of the forest and its maintenance, all of which are integrated into their school curriculum and with a particular emphasis on how the forest has an impact on their daily lives.

At the beginning of September to coincide with the start of the new school year there is also the Forest Knowledge Day when all members of the family are invited to Kalsnava to take part in activities to get the next twelve months of academic studies up and running in a fun and informative format.

- *Dendrological advice on growing trees and shrubs*
- *Landscaped recreation and picnic areas*
- *Viewing tower (25 m high)*
- *Seminar room and outdoor terrace rental (up to 60 people)*
- *Marriage ceremony venue*
- *Tree and shrub seeds*

For more information about activities at Kalsnava arboretum, follow its dedicated Facebook page: LVM Kalsnavas arborētums.

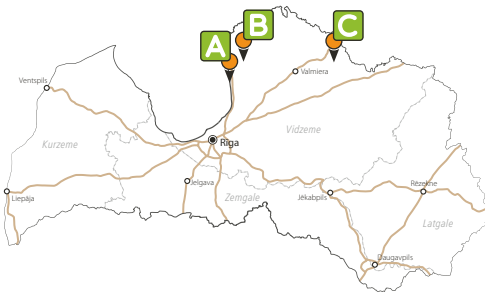




A tour

of northern

Vidzeme



All of Latvia's regions have their own particular charms and Vidzeme, the part of the country extending north and west of the capital, Rīga, is no exception. Here you'll find a characterful coastline, surprisingly varied forests, highland and lowland, rivers and lakes of all sizes and, of course, several different locations under the Latvia's State Forests banner. Northern Vidzeme is perhaps the most "Nordic" part of the country so why not connect a few locations together to form a mini-tour of the Latvian north? Here's a suggestion.



A Vidzeme stony sea shore

Salacgrīvas novads

Whether you prefer winter winds or summer sunshine, the coastline of the Baltic Sea has a character all its own. Sandy beaches are peppered with stones of various sizes and other large rocks jutting out of the waters a few metres offshore, smoothed by the waves over the course of the centuries, are local landmarks that often have their own names and legends attached to them. LVM's "Vasas" recreation area near Tūja is a specially designed resting place located in a protected dune zone and a popular destination for people from the town of Limbaži for a summer swim or a winter walk.

B Ķirbiži forest museum and trail

"Vālodzes", Ķirbiži, Viļķenes pagasts, Limbažu novads

Ķirbiži has the only forest museum in northern Latvia, renamed the Ķirbiži Environmental Education Centre since 2009, and located in the former grain-drying barn of Ķirbiži Manor. Fans of the forest will find a fascinating and eclectic collection of exhibits and activities including information about the flora and fauna of northern forests, the traditional lifestyles and clothing of forest folk and examples of the tools they used to earn their livings and maintain the environment over the centuries. After a visit to the museum, you can follow the nearby nature trail, which leads along the beautiful banks of the River Vitrupe to the enormous Vālodze oak, with a 6.5 metre circumference. The trail, which is around 2 km

Please note that visits to Ķirbiži Forest Museum should be arranged in advance by calling + 371 29288916

long includes a well-equipped picnic area and has information boards pointing out things of note. Guides can be provided too, if you would like to learn even more about your surroundings.

C LVM Vijciems cone drying facility

Vijciema pagasts, Valkas novads

Between the large city of Valmiera and the Estonian border is one of the most fascinating of LVM's sites. In the late 19th century, northern Vidzeme was hit by huge forest fires. As a result, it was decided to build a cone drying facility in Vijciems, a place where seeds are carefully extracted from cones so that they can be sown for the purposes of reforestation. Still working today, the Vijciems cone drying facility operated without any interruptions from 1895 until the 1970s, and reopened in 1992 after extensive renovation under LVM's care. During a visit to the Vijciems cone drying facility, you can witness for yourself how seeds are extracted from pine cones with the help of the original equipment, more than 100 years old, and the important role this plays in keeping the forests of north Vidzeme as extensive and beautiful as they remain. Nor is it just a treat for the eyes and ears as the pleasant smell of pine resin and pine cones has to be experienced to be believed! Tours can be arranged for individual visitors and larger groups alike, and children in particular seem to gain special enjoyment from discovering how a tiny seed can become a towering pine.

A call in advance, though not compulsory, will mean you can be informed of any special or additional options ahead of your visit: +371 26478620



Magic

among the mosses

Dunika marsh

Dunikas pagasts, Rucavas novads



Rīga – 210 km
Ventspils – 148 km
Liepāja – 45 km

Tucked away in the far south-western corner of Latvia is a place that is worth every bit of the effort it takes to reach it: Dunika marsh. This is an extensive area just inland from the Baltic coast where LVM has created a 5-kilometre-long boardwalk that allows access to what would otherwise be an impenetrable landscape for much of the year.

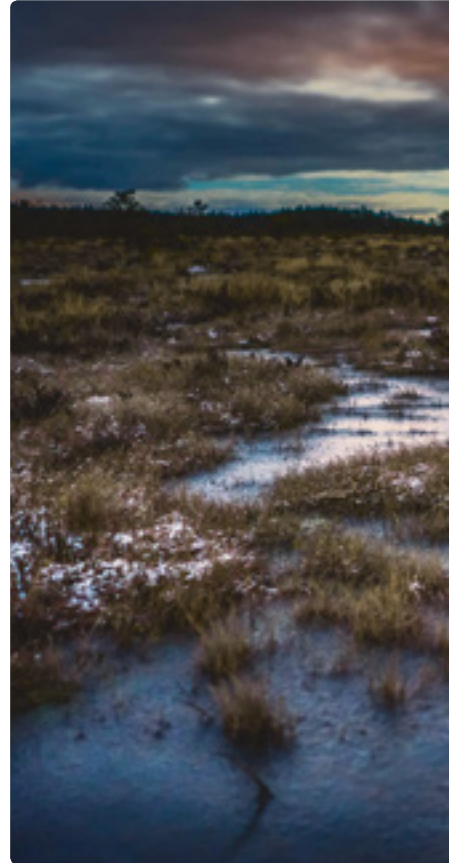


At the end of the trail are hornbeam trees 25 metres tall and more than a hundred years old. Here they are at the very limit of their growing latitude, making them a very unusual and striking sight to Latvian eyes in particular and adding to the magical nature of this reserve.

Visitors should be aware that the trail is not a circular route, so a good deal of time should be set aside to follow it, or a pickup should be arranged at one end if you do not want to retrace your steps. But with the character of Dunika marsh changing from hour to hour, what looked a certain way in the morning is likely to look completely different in the afternoon.

There are very few such marshes in Europe, and Dunika is considered the longest trail of its kind in the continent. It is characterized by a peculiar landscape with open bog, pools and ponds, lakes and islets. Early morning and evening sunset are particularly beautiful times for a visit, but make sure you dress accordingly to stay warm and dry on the trail. There are a number of well-equipped rest areas with benches and places for fires on the walking route.

This type of marsh is known as moss or “high” bog due to its subtle dome-like shape that evolves as the bog develops. The main plant in the bog is sphagnum moss, which forms peat when it dies, which in turn provides a fertile base for the next generation. Since sphagnum can absorb and retain a lot of water, it contributes to the formation of marshes. This one was formed about 7,000 years ago, and in its central part the layer of peat can reach a thickness of up to seven metres.



Dunika appears in the writings of legendary Latvian poet Imants Ziedonis (1933–2013) in which he describes taking “a beautiful walk through the evening sun” here during which he says he “lay down on the warm boards and listened to the silence of the marsh”. The same inspiration is open to everyone.

Many geese visit Dunika as part of their migratory cycle and there are various species of protected plants. A small number of wolves are settled here, too.

In Latvia each swamp, bog and marsh has its own legend, often involving objects that are believed to have sunk beneath the surface, and Dunika is no exception. One ancient tale says that Dunika formed when a dark storm cloud fell from the sky to the earth. A more recent story says that during the Second World War, German tanks were swallowed up as they tried to cross the marsh, though none have been found. In times of persecution and war, Dunika is also believed to have acted as a place of refuge for local families, who could pick their way safely through the treacherous paths while outsiders would stray, with predictable results. Luckily, LVM's path is well maintained and clearly signposted!





Fruits of the forest

In Latvia, the forest is a concept that extends far beyond a description of a large number of trees standing in one place. Forest (mežs) is not so much a place as an entire system of life, including physical and mental aspects, the passage of time and what could be called folk philosophy. On a more practical level it also signifies food, drink, medicine and much, much more than “the place we get wood from”.

So here are a few of the things we look for in the forest, in the hope that you will be inspired to seek them out and experience their tastes, colours, smells and sounds for yourself!

Wild cranberries

Berries ripen in September. Located in marshes and swampy pine forests. Among the most glorious of berries. The farmed and frozen cranberries you can buy in the supermarket are fine but comparing them to a freshly-picked wild cranberry is like comparing a doodle with the Mona Lisa: similar in a way, but infinitely better!

A natural source of energy and purported to have youth-retaining powers, cranberries contain lots of minerals, as well as vitamins C, B and P (bioflavonoids). They have an antimicrobial action, antipyretic effects, help counter some kinds of inflammation, lower cholesterol, help skin problems, and normalize blood pressure. Widely used in Latvian cooking in desserts, main courses and drinks.

Forest raspberries

Fruits ripen in late July and August. Smaller than farmed raspberries, these grow in forest clearings and the edges of woodland. Very aromatic, with a subtle taste. Forest raspberries contains organic acids plus vitamins C and B. Healthy properties include strengthening immunity and treating colds and chills. Raspberry tea is used for lowering temperatures and treating the upper respiratory tract, as well acting as being an anti-inflammatory.

Lingonberries

Scandinavians have a well-known passion for lingonberries and visitors from the other side of the Baltic Sea will be delighted to learn that they can be found here in considerable quantities, too. Lingonberries mature at the end of July, and in August and are most often found in pine forests, clearings and marshes. Those from the deep forest are regarded as the tastiest. Berries contain organic acids, vitamins A, B, E and C, plus various minerals. Lingonberry seeds also contain Omega 3 fatty acids. Lingonberries have many medical applications, being used for the prevention and treatment of colds, reducing blood pressure, detoxing the body, and promoting appetite. Berries are also used in beauty treatments. And who could forget lingonberry jam?



Rowanberries

The rowan tree or mountain ash grows in deciduous or mixed forests, often on the edge of the forest and they were traditionally placed along driveways and at other important spots to act as a “guard” against evil. Fruits are collected in September and October. They contain high concentrations of vitamin C. Carotene and iron in the rhizomes give them a special value as organic acids, and amino acids. However, it is not advisable to consume them raw in significant numbers. They benefit from freezing or simmering in salt water. Rowanberries are believed to improve memory, reduce anxiety, and help with various other mental disorders including fatigue and depression.

Blueberries

Ripening in July. No summer in the Latvian forest is complete without a blueberry-picking expedition. Most often found in pine forests, marshes, bogs and clearings. Berry size and juiciness can vary considerably according to location and season. A powerful antioxidant that helps protect and regenerate cells, the blueberry has a beneficial effect on vision. It is also believed to restore digestive system function and improve metabolic function. Helps against anemia, rheumatism, reduces sugar levels in the blood, promotes brain function and – reputedly – prevents ageing.





Wild strawberries

Wild strawberries are usually ready in late May and June. Not only are they an endlessly healthy and addictive snack as you walk through the woods, they are also rich in vitamins even when dried, and their medicinal properties were highly prized by the Ancient Greeks and Romans. Fresh wild strawberries are used for the treatment of anemia, liver and gall bladder problems plus stomach and kidney disease. They contain malic acid, vitamins, minerals (potassium, magnesium, calcium, iron, zinc, copper, cobalt and phosphorus), carotene, and pectin. Often used in aromatic teas as well as a desserts or as a wild salad ingredient.

Did you know?

Mushrooms, berries, nuts and medicinal plants can be harvested for personal use by everyone in the forests of Latvia, unless there are signs indicating otherwise – for example, that it is a nature reserve.



Arnis Ansons is one of a new breed of Latvian chefs who are rediscovering and innovating with the ingredients traditionally grown in Latvia. Here are a couple of his recipes.

Arnis Ansons, chef

Rowanberry and orange jam

Heat the rowanberries with the brown sugar to the consistency of a thick syrup, add a fresh sprig of thyme and grate in piece of orange peel. Heat and put in a jar to cool. Great as an accompaniment for game and duck dishes.

Ingredients:
1 kg rowanberries,
500 g brown sugar,
50 ml water,
2 oranges, thyme

Cranberry, red wine and rosemary candies

Heat the cranberries with rosemary leaves and palm sugar to make a syrup, then add red wine and boil gently until the mixture has reduced to the consistency of jam. Pass the mixture through a sieve, add the melted gelatin and spread out on a tray. Place the tray in the refrigerator to allow the mass to freeze. When the mass is frozen, cut it into pieces and roll the pieces in sugar.

Ingredients:
1 kg cranberries,
300 g palm sugar,
250 ml red wine,
30 g gelatin,
30 g water,
10 g rosemary



Anyone for tree juice?

Early spring is the traditional time for collecting juice or sap from trees to drink. First are the maples in mid- to late-March, followed a couple of weeks later by the birches. A small hole is made in the trunk from which the juice is collected. When done correctly it does no harm to the tree and provides a delicious, slightly sweet drink that can be boiled down to make a variety of products such as syrups and sugars.

ABC: Always Be Certain

There's much to enjoy in the forest but it comes with a warning: NEVER touch, pick, or eat anything you find there unless you are 100% sure what it is and how to use it properly. The most obvious examples are mushrooms, but the same applies to berries, leaves and other things. If in doubt, consult someone with expert knowledge or your nearest LVM location or tourist information centre. Similarly, always consult a medical professional before using herbs or berries for medical purposes.





She always awaits, listens, provides food and healing, nurtures, brings peace.
She is your mother.

She is also Nature, because Nature is a mother to all.

We at "Latvijas valsts meži" call her – **Mother Nature** – **mammadaba**.

Warm, sincere and personal.

1 397 824 ha forests

About **350**



comfortable **rest** areas

4 lakes



15 footbridges and **90** boats



Castle and **2** guest houses



41 walking paths



70 km long

358 bird

species



Visit Mother Nature
and find yourself cleaner, wiser and happier.

Welcome!

Our doors are always open!



mammadaba

It means Mother Nature.
And it's true.



www.mammadaba.lv

