Welcome to Slītere!

In the Slītere National Park, except for restricted areas, you may walk freely through it to look for plants, animals and landscapes, to pick mushrooms and berries, to go swimming (except at Kolka, where it is dangerous), to get a suntan, to ride a bike or a boat. While doing it, let’s respect the nature values!

THE ROUTE

This route is appropriate for active tourists who are interested in coastal landscapes and the culture of the Liv people. The old forest road passes through five Liv villages: Mazirbe, Košrags, Pitrags, Saunags and Vaide. Some trace of the old days and fishermen lifestyle is still found here. Returning by the Ventspils – Kolka road (P124), which is paved and marked in the route map. It is possible to start touring the villages at any point.

Season: April–October
Length: ~28 km, doable in one day
Time: ~5 h if you stop and look at the villages
Type of bicycle: Mountain bike
Difficulty: Medium
Road cover: Approximately half of the route is paved, while roads in the forest are gravelled in some places and paved in others
Beginning: Mazirbe, Liv People’s Hall
End: Mazirbe, Liv People’s Hall
Route: Mazirbe–Košrags–Pitrags–Saunags–Vaide, then the P 124 road back to Mazirbe
Markings: Between Mazirbe and Vaide, the route is marked with poles and green signs with cycling symbol
Alternatives: You can ride the route in the opposite direction or continue along the Kolka–Mazirbe–Siķrags bike route (passing through the forest back to Kolka, this will add 11 km to your route). Because this is a circular route, it can be started or finished anywhere.
Distance from Rīga: 170 km
Logistics: A circular route which returns to where it began
Note: The forest roads between the Liv village can be in poor shape – they’re sandy and can have big puddles when it rains, and tree roots on the surface.
Emergency services: Ring 112

Tourist services

Nearby accommodations:
- Upeskalni 29259510
- Dzintariņi 26173009
- Pitagi 29372728
- Jauntīlmači 29412974
- Krūmiņi 29452512
- Purvziedi 63200179
- Mazirbe 29395624

Resting place: At the Vaide pond in Vaide

Shops: In Mazirbe
Dining: In Mazirbe, in Kolka, in Pitagi guest house (only groups, by prior arrangement)

Bicycle rentals: The Pitagi and Mazirbes Kalēji guest houses

Information:
- www.talsurajons.lv
- www.kolkasrags.lv
- www.ziemelkurzeme.lv
- www.countryholidays.lv

The Slītere National Park (established in 1999 as a strict nature reserve) is known, with good reason, as an open-air museum which shows the historical development of the Baltic Sea. Nowadays evidence of geological events is seen in the Blue Hills of Slītere, which stand 20 to 30 metres high above what was the shore of the Baltic lake of ice 10,000 years ago. The Stiebri hills were former 8,000 or 9,000 years ago, while the Littorina Sea formed Europe’s largest set of dune ramparts and damp hollows between those ramparts. This occurred between 4,000 and 7,000 years ago. The gentle climate of Northern Kurzeme is the reason why so many rare plants are found in the park – some 860 in all including Common Yew (Taxus baccata) and Baltic Ivy (Hedera helix var. baltica). Of certain value in the preservation of these treasures was the Soviet military machine, which has left behind army bases and other military objects in the area. The presence of the military meant that the area of what is now the Slītere National Park remained largely undisturbed for 50 years. The park includes one of the most popular tourist destinations in Latvia – the Cape of Kolka, which is visited by more than 50,000 travellers each year. During the spring migration of birds, tens of thousands of birds fly over the cape within one hour. Along the shore of the Baltic Sea is the so-called Livonian coast, which stretches from Kolka to Siķrags and Ovīši. Fishing villages and other cultural objects established by the world’s smallest ethnic minority, the Livonians, can be found here. Tourists will enjoy interesting four nature trails, bicycling routes, viewing tower, and the Šlītere lighthouse which is open for visitors.
The Black Plague rock, which has engraved text that can still be seen to a certain extent – it tells future generations about the local pastor who died from the plague, about how the parsonage was established at Sīkrags and then moved to Mazirbe. The rock is also a monument to six pastors of the nearby location of a former pub at the edge of the Mazirbe-Cirste road in Ūbeles.

The Liv People’s Centre – a building erected in 1939 which represents the identity of the Liv people and houses a photographic exhibition devoted to the Liv people.

Provisions for fishing and shipping. Today we know of Mazirbe as the site of the Liv People’s Hall and the annual Liv festival that is held in the town.

The name Saunags was first mentioned in documents in the 14th century. The Saunagas is an extensive fishing village with many buildings for travellers, both old and new. The name Saunagas was first mentioned in documents in the 14th century. The Nīgliņas linden tree is very impressive in size.

Vaidas – a village in the middle of the forest known for a Horn collection - Museum at the Purvziedi homestead, as well as the Vaide Pond. There is a beautiful and massive oak tree in Vaide, as well.

The location of a former pub at the edge of the Mazirbe-Cirste road in Ūbeles.

The Mazirbe Lutheran Church. Built in 1868. In its time, the church has been useful to sailors as a landmark. This church has suffered much damage over the course of time, particularly after World War II. It was restored in the early 1990s. Worship services in the Liv language were held here at one time. The so-called cross of cross, which is a unique symbol, can be seen in three places on the building’s façade.

The Nīgliņas linden tree is very impressive in size.

The Old burial mound. This is a Medieval and contemporary graveyard. Legend has it that a holy place existed here in ancient times. There are several interesting objects here (13-16).

The Old Taizelis monument. This monument is dedicated to the fisherman Niks Freimanis (1845-1908), who served as the prototype for the character Old Taizelis in stories and a play written by Mažergs Zarins.

The old burial mound

The Nīgliņas linden tree is very impressive in size.

The skeleton oak tree at Lāzis, Vaide

The Old Taizelis monument

The pine tree

The great Black Plague rock

The Big Black Plague rock. Its circumference is 3.17 metres. According to one story, a guest worker in Soviet times cut a hole in the tree with a motor saw (it can be seen from the side of the cemetery) so as to access honey that was inside.

The former Maritime School (1894-1914) trained more than 1,000 students. During Soviet times, a border guard facility was housed here, and the border guard tower has been preserved. Along the road to the school are forested shoreline dunes with small buildings which create an interesting coastal landscape. The road between the Maritime School and the sea was once known as the Captains’ Road.

The Liv People’s Centre

The former Maritime School

The Nīgliņas linden tree

The skeleton oak tree at Lāzis, Vaide

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