



MUSHROOMS OF GAUJA NATIONAL PARK



Austrijas agrene (*Sarcosypha austriaca*)



Lielā dižsardzene (*Macrolepiota procera*)



Zarainā dižsardzene (*Herizium clathroides*)

Foto: Juris Smaļinskis

Description

There are more than 4000 various mushroom species in Latvia. Mushrooms are extraordinary organisms combining the features of plants and animals. Not for nothing they have their own fungi kingdom. Mushrooms vary very much in terms of colours and shapes, and therefore are interesting to watch. There is a huge biodiversity in Gauja National Park — dry and wet forests, forests of slopes, secular trees, old and decayed trees, deadwood, former manor parks, etc., which create a rich variety of mushroom habitats. During the respective time, the number of spotted species and shapes will be impressive! A well-prepared guide is needed to complete this “mission” with success.

Best time to go

Mushrooms are spotted during the whole year (also in winter), but the best time is July–September demonstrating the largest variety of species.

Route

We recommend picking one or two of the listed places, and create your own sequence. All of the listed places cannot be visited within one day.

Road pavement

Mainly forest paths, unpaved roads, natural underwood.

Distance

The routes are mainly short — within a range of few kilometres from the car parking lot or bus station / railway station.

Duration

Depending on the interests of participants, presence of mushrooms, presence of a guide (or without a guide), time spent in one place. Usually one up to several hours.

Difficulty level

Easy.

Way marking

None on site, except for the section along the right bank of the River Amata where there are blazes (orange painted circles, red diamonds) on trees.

Worth knowing!

Be careful on the slopes during wet weather. Consider immunisation against ticks. The activity is at one's own risk. Emergency services: 112.

SERVICE

Sigulda Municipality Tourism Information Centre

Sigulda, Ausekļa Street 6, +371 67971335, info@sigulda.lv, www.tourism.sigulda.lv

Amata Municipality Tourism Information Centre

Kumadas Street 2, Ieriķi, Amata Municipality, +371 64119024, +371 28681083, turisms@and.lv, www.amata.lv

Cēsis Tourism Information Centre

Cēsis, Pils Square 9, +371 64121815, +371 28318318, info@cesis.lv, www.tourism.cesis.lv

Valmiera Tourism Information Centre

Valmiera, Rīgas Street 10, +371 64207177, tic@valmiera.lv, http://visit.valmiera.lv/


G | Adventure Ride, Pērle 1, Alderi, 29269559, info@adventureride.eu, www.adventureride.eu

Pārgauja Tourism Information Point

“Ezeriņi”, Stalbe, Stalbe rural territory, Pārgauja Municipality, +371 26620422, turisms@pargaujasnovads.lv, www.pargaujasnovads.lv

Hotel “Karlamaiza Country Hotel”

Kārļi, Drabeši rural territory, Amata Municipality, +371 26165298, info@karlamaiza.lv, www.karlamaiza.lv (catering to be announced in advance)

 **Holiday house “Vējiņi”**, “Vējiņi”, Straupe rural territory, Pārgauja Municipality, +371 29354189, pazemesezeri@gmail.com, www.pazemesezeri.lv (also camping “Paegli”)

G | Baltic Wildlife +371 28808440, laura@balticwildlife.eu, www.balticwildlife.eu

MOST INTEREST PLACES TO WATCH MUSHROOMS



1 | Forests of Silciems (Map 1)

1–1.5 —km range around the Silciems Railway Station is among the most popular place to go for mushroom picking in the Greater Riga Area. Here you might find edible mushrooms popular in Latvia — various species of chanterelles, russulas, king boletes and other boletes, woolly milkcaps, orange milkcaps, gypsy mushrooms, etc. Most interesting is the chestnut bolete (*Gyroporus castaneus*), lurid bolete (*Boletus luridus*), edible polypore — sheep polypore (*Albatrellus ovinus*; an edible mushroom popular in Scandinavia) and the coral mushroom (*Ramaria aurea*). Silciems is conveniently located on the Riga–Valka railway line.



5 | Vicinity of Lake Vaidavas (Map 5)

Wooded area (within a range of ca. 1 km) eastward of Lake Vaidavas, and slopes of the lake shores. Here you might find the summer bolete. Park your car near in the parking lot near the swimming place of Lake Vaidavas.



2 | Forests of Lielstraupe (Map 2)

A large forest 1–2 km southward, south-westward of Lielstraupe, where the largest of cap mushrooms in Latvia can be found — parasol mushroom (*Macrolepiota procera*). It is edible uncooked, or fried like pork chop. Wide range of cap mushrooms, including edible mushrooms. The car can be parked in the centre of Lielstraupe.



3 | Vicinity of Zvārte Rock (Map 3)

Excellent landscapes and ideal places to pick mushrooms along the banks of Amata, heading along the nature trail from Zvārte Rock to Veclauču Bridge (~4 km). The medical mushroom chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*), as well as alder bracket (*Inonotus radiatus*) can be found here. The alder bracket has surface of changing colour depending on the viewpoint angle. Various mushrooms with a decaying effect are found on fallen trees. Park your car at the visitor centre of Zvārte Rock (charged during V–X). The left bank of the River Amata, in the section from Zvārte Rock to Veclauču Bridge is a part of Roči Forest Reserve, and entrance is prohibited!

4 | Ungurmuiža Park (Map 4)

Notable due to the old oaks. Interesting polypores are growing on the trunks of fallen oaks. One might be lucky and spot the bright-coloured polypore *Hapalopilus croceus*, as well as other mushrooms related to oaks in autumns. Park your car near Ungurmuiža Manor.

Dress code and tools:

- suitable clothes for various weather conditions and types of forests (including wet forests);
- rubber boots;
- basket and knife;
- mushroom identifier;
- magnifier;
- notebook;
- smartphone to post your special moments on social networks or make use of mobile applications — guides in the identification of mushrooms;
- navigation device in order not to get lost.

Nature-friendly mushroom watching

- Once identified, leave the mushroom untouched. Let the spores distribute themselves and enrich the eco-system of the forest.
- Take a photo of excellent or previously unseen mushrooms.

- Write down species of mushrooms you have seen in the particular area, country, continent.
- If you cannot identify any of the mushrooms, place it in your basket and identify it later in a place where you have all the relevant tools.
- Pick only those mushrooms which are not protected.
- Cut the mushroom with a knife, and do not damage the mushroom spawn.
- Once you have spotted a rare or protected mushroom, tell this to the mycologist — expert specializing in the study of mushrooms.
- Pick mushrooms you wish to make a meal from, or mushrooms you have not tasted before.
- Never eat mushrooms, if you are not sure, whether or not they are edible.
- If you are picking mushrooms for food, never place the toxic and edible mushrooms in one basket.
- If you are a beginner, take a mushroom identifier or an expert in mushrooms with you.