

L A T V I A

NATACHA 38



BIGCYCLING.EU





You, cyclists who like to climb, discover in these few pages what makes the list of the national challenge in Latvia so rich.

GEOGRAPHY

MEDIA

TOURISM

SPORT

Latvia

Geography

Latvia (Latvian: Latvija), in its long form the Republic of Latvia (Latvijas Republika), is a sovereign state in Northern Europe whose territory stretches along the eastern flank of the Baltic Sea. It shares land borders with Russia and Belarus to the east, and is surrounded by Estonia to the north and Lithuania to the south.



Derived from the regional name Latgale, originally Lettigalli. Let- is associated with several Baltic hydronyms. Possible common origin with the beginning of the name of its neighbour, Lithuania. -gale can mean "land" or "border" (of Baltic origin).

As far as cycling is concerned, most of Latvia is less than 100m above sea level. The highest point in Latvia is Gaiziņkalns, at 311.6 m. Latvia's Baltic coastline is 494 km long.

The network of roads and motorways has a total length of 57,972 km. This represents 30.81 metres for each of the country's 1.88 million inhabitants. You also have to bear in mind the country's population density, which is very low at around 29 inhabitants per km². The distances to be covered to reach the most remote regions of the country are therefore proportionately longer.

With an average of 189 deaths per year (2014 - 2019), road traffic in Latvia is considered to be relatively safe.

On the whole, the main communication and transport routes are well laid out and in fair condition, but nothing more.

Compared to its neighbours, the Latvian secondary road network is probably a little less smooth, as the road infrastructure fund is lower. What's more, Latvia naturally has a low population density, with individual farms scattered across the countryside. This means a very long road network to maintain per inhabitant.

Let's take a look at the topographical map to see how densely populated the country is.



Latvia is a penneplain; 97% of its territory lies below 200 metres above sea level (the highest point, Gaiziņkalns, is located in Livonia, in the region known as Livonian Switzerland). Visitors to Latvia sometimes find it hard to understand its nickname as the "Switzerland of the Baltic States". One tenth of the country lies below sea level, sometimes as low as -50 m, and the terrain is one of the flattest in the world.

The east of the country is hillier than the west.

There are three hilly areas in Latvia

- 1) **the Vidzeme Hills**, the country's main range of hills, in the north-east
- 2) **the Alūksne Hills**
- 3) **the Latgale Hills.**

To the west, the Curonian Spit covers an area of 13,600 km² (21% of Latvia), slightly undulating as a result of the melting of the glaciers during the Quaternary period.



the Gaiziņkalns and its hillsides in the Vidzeme



The rolling coast of the Curonian Spit

Latvia is divided into four historical regions which also have a secondary administrative value:

Semigalie (Zemgale) to the south ;
 the Curonian Spit (Kurzeme) to the west ;
 the Latgale to the south-east;
 the Vidzeme to the north.



Latvia has a total surface area of 64,559 km², 1.5 times the size of Estonia, but even less relief than its northern neighbour. So we opted for 50 natchas.

The division into 4 regions is too great for a harmonious distribution of elected women.

Our national challenge finally opted for a division into 2 zones with equivalent quotes

- LV01 - Kurzeme, Riga & Zemgale 25 (a large south-west)
- LV02 - Vidzeme & Latgale 25 (a large north-east)



Latvian tourism

Latvia attracts many tourists because of its history and its capital Riga.

There are a number of great Latvian national parks, some of which have been selected from our list.

Latvia has 4 national parks. Two of them are ideal for climbing.

La Gauja National Park

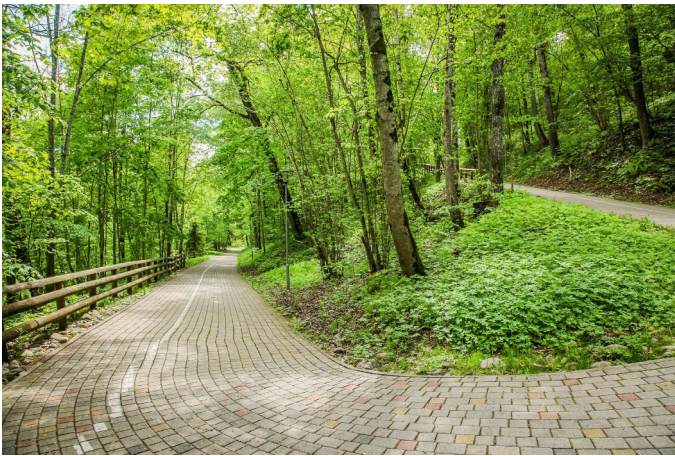
- LVA-014 Turaidas pils / Turaida Castle*
- LVA-015 Krimuldas muiža / Krimulda Manor (Serpentīna ceļš)*
- LVA-016 Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)*
- LVA-031 Meijermuiža-Cīrulīši*
- LVA-032 Veselavas muiža / Veselava Manor*
- LVA-033 Zvārtes iezis / Zvārtes Rock*
- LVA-034 Kārļi*
- LVA-035 Ligatne-Ķempji*

Rāzna National Park

- LVA-045 Volkenbergas pilsdrupas / Volkenberg Castle Ruins (Mākoņkalns)*
- LVA-046 Lielā Liepu kalna skatu tornis / Observation Tower*

Slītere National Park

Ķemeri National Park



The cobbled serpentine of Sigulda



Platform at the Volkenberg ruins

Latvia's UNESCO World Heritage sites are represented by

Old town of Kuldiga

- LVA-005 Krauļu priedes*

Struve geodesic arc

Historic centre of Riga



Aerial view of Kuldiga

Natural parks and biospheres

Nature reserve (Kaļķupes ieleja Dabas liegums)

LVA-001 Kaļķi Talsu pauguraines dabas parks / Nature Park

LVA-003 Talsu ebreju kapi / Jewish Cemetery of Talsi

Abava Valley Nature Park

LVA-006 Sabiles Vīna kalns / Wine Hill of Sabile

LVA-007 Zviedru Cepure

LVA-008 Lielā iela (Kandava)

Embūte Nature Park

LVA-011 Krievukalns

Tērvete Nature Park

LVA-013 Pļavnieku ceļš (Tērvetes dabas parks / Tērvete Nature Park)

Sauka Nature Park

LVA-025 Borīšu kalna skatu tornis / Watchtower of Ormaņkalns

Veclaicene Protected Area

LVA-028 Dēliņkalna skatu tornis / Dēliņkalns Sightseeing Tower

Daba Natural Park

LVA-042 Numernes skatu tornis / Numerne Watchtower

Augšzeme Protected Area

LVA-048 Eglūkalns (Slēpošanas bāze / Ski Center)



Sabile Wine Hill



Lielā iela and its round hats

There are also a number of castles and manor houses

- LVA-002 Popes muiža / Pope Manor*
- LVA-010 Durbes pils / Durbe Castle*
- LVA-014 Turaidas pils / Turaida Castle*
- LVA-015 Krimuldas muiža / Krimulda Manor (Serpentīna ceļš)*
- LVA-030 Cēsu pils / Cēsis Castle*
- LVA-032 Veselavas muiža / Veselava Manor*
- LVA-038 Dzelzavas muiža / Dzelzava Manor*
- LVA-041 Bikšēres muiža / Bikšēre Manor-Kalnagravas*
- LVA-045 Volkenbergas pilsdrupas / Volkenberg Castle Ruins (Mākoņkalns)*



Turaidas welcomes you



The serpentine towards Krimuldas



Bikzere Manor in winter



Entrance to Cēsu castle

The country's history requires many monuments. We have chosen some of them.

Vietalvas brāļu kapu memoriāls / Vietalva Brethren Cemetery Memorial

LVA-018 Veseta

Kārļa Skalbes memoriālais muzejs / Kārlis Skalbe Memorial Museum

LVA-037 Kārļa Skalbes memoriālais muzejs / Kārlis Skalbe Memorial Museum

Ančupāņu memoriāls II Pasaules kara upuru piemiņai / Ančupāni Memorial to the Victims of World War II

LVA-043 Ančupāņu skatu tornis / Ančupāni Observation Tower



The top of the Vietalva Memorial



Skalbe has inherited a high-rise museum

Lakes

Lake Talsi

LVA-003 Talsu ebreju kapi / Jewish Cemetery of Talsi

Odze Lake with Mežezers Recreational Base

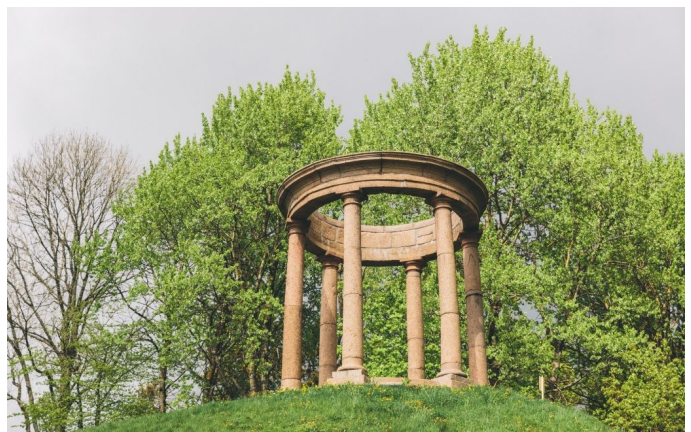
LVA-019 Mežezers

Lake Alūksne

LVA-029 Tempļa kalns / Temple Hill (Alūksne)



Odze Lake



The Temple Hill Rotunda

Panoramic views or observation towers

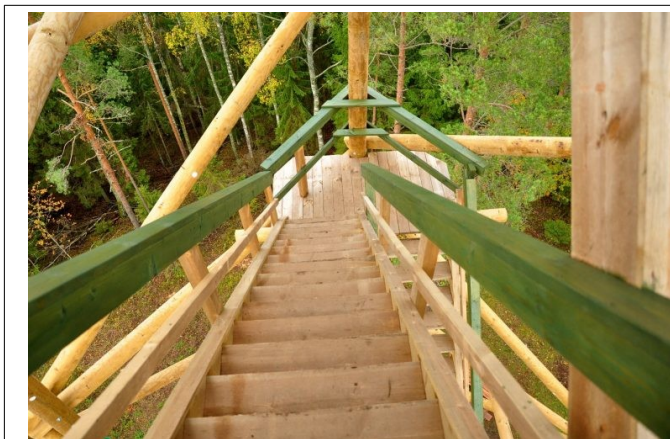
- LVA-022 Taborkalna skatu tornis / Taborkalns Sightseeing Tower*
- LVA-025 Borīšu kalna skatu tornis / Watchtower of Ormaņkalns*
- LVA-026 Imanta kalniņš*
- LVA-028 Dēliņkalna skatu tornis / Dēliņkalns Sightseeing Tower*
- LVA-042 Numernes skatu tornis / Numerne Watchtower*
- LVA-043 Ančupāņu skatu tornis / Ančupāni Observation Tower*
- LVA-046 Lielā Liepu kalna skatu tornis / Observation Tower*



Arrival at Taborkalna tower



And to Ormankalns



Invitation to continue the climb to Ančupāni



The Liepu tower is close by

The list includes a number of ski resorts

- LVA-009 Milzkalns-Rauda*
- LVA-017 Riekstukalns*
- LVA-048 Egļukalns (Slēpošanas bāze / Ski Center)*



Winter resort in summer



Welcome to snowy Egļukalns

And local originality

The Black Rocks

LVA-033 *Zvārtes iezis / Zvārtes Rock*

A Dendrological Park

LVA-036 *Lazdukalni (Špakovska parks)*

The highest point in Latvia

LVA-040 *Gaiziņkalns*

Village of the Old Believers Slutiški

LVA-049 *Slutiški*



The Black Rocks site



The Gaiziņkalns tower



Dendrological garden



Arrival at the village of the Old Believers

The sporting side of Latvia's climbs

Here are the TOP10 longest Latvian climbs

11	W	Durbes pils / Durbe Castle	6,5 km
35	NW	Ligatne-Ķempji	6,3
4	SE	Rezidence Kurzeme	4,2
9	NE	Lielā iela (Kandava)	3,9
1	E	Kaļķi	3,8
9	E	Milzkalns-Rauda	3,7
2	E	Kaļķi	3,5
31	SW	Meijermuiža-Cīrulīši	3,4
20	S	Juči	3,2
22	NW	Taborkalna skatu tornis / Taborkalns Sightseeing Tower	3,1



The castle and its cobblestones at Durbe



The hills of Ķempji Piltiņkalns

The TOP10 most uneven climbs

35	NW	Ligatne-Ķempji	96 m
9	NE	Lielā iela (Kandava)	83
31	N	Meijermuiža-Cīrulīši	81
11	W	Durbes pils / Durbe Castle	80
16	N	Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentiņa ceļš)	79
9	E	Milzkalns-Rauda	78
22	NW	Taborkalna skatu tornis / Taborkalns Sightseeing Tower	77
11	NE	Krievukalns	76
31	SW	Meijermuiža-Cīrulīši	74
20	S	Juči	74



Sigulda and its wonderful surroundings



To Krievu

Here are the top 10 Latvian cycling climbs by average percentage

39	NE	Līkā iela (Ērgļi)	10,5 %
34	SW	Kārļi	7,9
43	SW	Ančupānu skatu tornis / Ančupāni Observation Tower	7,7
49	NE	Slutiški	7,6
18	SW	Veseta	7,2
7	NE	Zviedru Cepure	7
43	NW	Ančupānu skatu tornis / Ančupāni Observation Tower	7
36	SW2	Lazdukalni (Špakovska parks)	6,6
28	NE	Dēliņkalna skatu tornis / Dēliņkalns Sightseeing Tower	6,5
16	NW	Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)	6,1

And that of the maximum upper hectometric percentage

16	NW	Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)	23 %
50	SE	Ūdrīši	20
39	NE	Līkā iela (Ērgļi)	16
43	SW	Ančupānu skatu tornis / Ančupāni Observation Tower	15
43	NW	Ančupānu skatu tornis / Ančupāni Observation Tower	15
16	N	Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)	15
19	N	Mežezers	15
46	SW	Lielā Liepu kalna skatu tornis / Observation Tower	15
34	SW	Kārļi	14
20	S	Juči	13



The Zviedru cepure play complex and its hillside



Lazdukalni (Špakovska parks) and its ramps

In terms of total energy expenditure, what are Latvia's top 10 europoints?

16	NW	Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)	107,6 €-points
16	N	Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)	87,4
20	S	Jučī	83
35	NW	Līgatne-Ķempji	78,5
31	N	Meijermuiža-Cīrulīši	74
15	NE	Krimuldas muiža / Krimulda Manor (Serpentīna ceļš)	70
28	NE	Dēliņkalna skatu tornis / Dēliņkalns Sightseeing Tower	65,4
31	SW	Meijermuiža-Cīrulīši	64,9
19	N	Mežezers	62,5
34	SW	Kārļi	60,4

In terms of explosiveness, here are the 10 most powerful bombs

16	NW	Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)	30,2
39	NE	Līkā iela (Ērgļi)	27
43	SW	Ančupānu skatu tornis / Ančupāni Observation Tower	23,2
50	SE	Ūdrīši	23,2
34	SW	Kārļi	22,5
43	NW	Ančupānu skatu tornis / Ančupāni Observation Tower	22,5
16	N	Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)	20,5
18	SW	Veseta	19,6
19	N	Mežezers	19,4
28	NE	Dēliņkalna skatu tornis / Dēliņkalns Sightseeing Tower	19,1



The Sigulda slope



And the one in Ērgļi

Latvian cycle races

A number of Latvian cyclists have made or are making their mark on the professional peloton

* *Krists Neilands* is a fine example. Winner of the Grand Prix de Wallonie 2019.

* On 29 September 2024, *Toms Skujiņš* finished fourth in the road race at the World Road Championships in Zurich.

Ladies,

* *Lija Laizāne* was a frequent national champion



Krists Neilands wins the GP de Wallonie in Namur



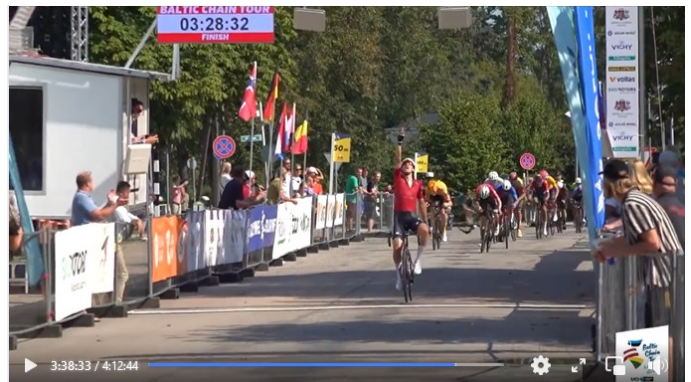
Lija Laizāne

Baltic Chain Tour

Stage race linking the three Baltic countries. Latvia, right in the middle, is an unavoidable stopover.



Une étape du Baltic Chain Tour 2023



Et l'arrivée au sommet de la ville

Our list has found its queen:

LVA-016 Sigulda (Gaujas iela & Serpentīna ceļš)

Baltic Chain Tour 2013, 2014, 2017, 2018, 2023 Uphill finish

There is also an ultra event with very long distances

La Gaujas iela Baltijas ceļa velobrauciens (Serpentīna ceļš Baltic Ultra Championship)



The leading group in the 800km race in 2024



And his 2022 poster

All these races pass through the centre of Sigulda and face these famous signs



EDITIONS BIGCYCLING

www.bigcycling.eu