



Cycling route

Around Straupe –

world's smallest Hansa town



Description of route

The route challenges the participants to get to know Straupe from the beginning of its development until nowadays by visiting places that are mentioned only in stories and tales, enjoying and feeling the nature's enchantment, and the charm of cultural history by meeting the people thanks to whom the word of world's smallest Hansa city crosses borders.

- ☀ end of April – middle of September
- 25 km
- 🕒 ~ 4–5 h
- 👨‍👩‍👧‍👦 easy (Families with small children can also participate)
- 🛣 roads with asphalt and gravel, forest roads, trails
- 🏠 from Dog keeper's house (Braslas street 2, Straupe)
- 🐕 Dog keeper's house
- 🏰 Dog keeper's house (Straupe) – Underground lakes Vējiņi – horse post deliveries of Straupe – Lielstraupe – Castle of Lielstraupe – Plācis – lake Riebiņi – Dog keeper's house (Straupe)
- 📍 75 km from Riga
- 🔄 route can also be done in the opposite direction or started in any spot of the route
- + 112

! Depending on different meteorological and other conditions, some parts of the route can have bad road quality, sand, mud. After incessant rain the forest roads have puddles. It's advisable to take a region map and navigation equipment.

Tourism services

- 🏠 ● guest house and campsite "Vējiņi", ph. +371 29289796, www.pazemesezeri.lv;
- holiday house "Upeslejas", ph. +371 29441970;
- guest house "Burtakas", ph. +371 29451234, www.burtakas.lv;
- guest house "Bērzi", ph. +371 26797667
- 🏹 hunting sport and recreational place "Mārkulīči", ph. +371 29464946, www.markulici.lv
- 📍 in centre of Straupe village: "Airas" and "Straupe"; in Plācis village: shop "Elvi", "Senā Hanza" and shop of dairy producers' cooperative company "Straupe"
- ☕ cafe "Šķesteri", ph. +371 29409182
- 📍 by the Dog keeper's house and the shop "Airas"
- 🏠 campsite "Apalkalns", ph. +371 29448188, www.apalkalns.lv, apalkalns@inbox.lv
- 📍 www.pargaujasnovads.lv, ph. +371 26620422

Most interesting places to visit

1. 🏠 **Dog keeper's house** used to be the house of huntsman – the hunting dog-keeper of Mazstraupes manor house, where one end was inhabited by the huntsman, but the other – by hounds.
2. 🏰 **Castle of Mazstraupe** was built in 14th century with almost 2 meters thick stone walls, surrounded with protection ditches. Initial castle function was a fortress. For a long time the castle belonged to Rosen, but the last owners

were Meyendorff. Since 1930 the castle premises are used for school.

3. 🏰 **Castle mound of Panūte** is by the house Panūti, on a high land cape by Panūte river entry in Brasla. The mound slopes are very steep.
4. 🏰 **Underground lakes of Vējiņi.** The only underground lakes in Baltic States. Caves of Vējiņi together with hell's pits create the most impressive field of active suffosion in Latvia. These lakes

have occurred due to underground springs creating empty spaces and caves underground, the length of which in Straupe reaches several dozens of meters, but the sinkholes show that the total underground cave and lake network exceeds an area of 3 hectares. Object visiting only with a guide!
Ph. +371 29354189,
pazemesezeri@gmail.com,
www.pazemesezeri.lv





5. **Old post Station Straupe** was one of the main points in Vidzeme province in 18th–19th century. It was a wide net of buildings – post station building, horse stable, granary and coach-house, smithy, hay barn, ice basement, bathhouse and stable for the sick horses. The operation of the station reduced in the end of 19th century and it closes down in 1887. Later there is a big farm, but in 1949 the owners are deported to Siberia. In Soviet period the complex of buildings serve as collective farm, but the house was inhabited by different people who didn't care much about the state of buildings. Since 2014 the station has new owners that restores it and understands the cultural history of this complex of buildings. But since 21st August 2016 the Horse Post Station is home to Slow Food Straupe farm goods market that takes place on 1st and 3rd Sunday every month.
6. **Lielstraupe** – village that was formed in 19th century, in the cross-point of two important roads. One of them led from Līgatne crossing to Straupe, the other – from Brasla to lake Ungurs. Later on it became the centre of education, administration, crafting and trading in the region, because opposite to house Plaudīši there was a market place where people used to organize dances and even sports competitions. Nowadays the village is a great place to seek the power of nature and regain peace for daily rush.
7. **Castle of Lielstraupe.** The symbol of Straupe identification, whose roots can be found in the 13th century. It has kept its uniqueness, because it's the only castle in Latvia that is connected with a church in one of the building

blocks. Over the centuries the castle has burned several times and built again. The appearance that it has now, it gained after a fire in 1905. One of the rare properties in Latvia that has been in the hands of one family for several hundreds of years. Since 13th century it belonged to von Rozen baron family that managed the household with small interruptions until 1939. Until 1959 here was machine tractor station administration of Lielstraupe. The tractor drivers had accommodation here. Now it's narcological hospital of Straupe.

8. **Pole of versts.** A road sign that was placed in the time of tsarist Russia to determine distances from cities and other important places. The poles that are restored in 2016 are like a bridge between past and present that signify the values and traditions that used to exist.
9. **Stonecutter's workshop.** Here works graduate of Applied Art High School – Arnis Lūsiņš, who introduces with stone treatment technologies and allows every visitor to feel the stone and carve some symbols. Visits to workshop only by booking. Ph. +371 29471887.
10. **Baukalns** – place, where the first Christian church was built and a cemetery in Straupe region.
11. **Shop "Senā Hanza"** – here is a wide range of products that are produced by people in Straupe region.
12. **Dairy producers' cooperative company "Straupe"** – milk processing company with rich history that produces high quality dairy products. Company's speciality – country butter and traditional

summer solstice cheese. On 2nd and 4th Sunday every month the Straupe Hansa domestic producers' market takes place in the company's yard.

13. **Cakes of Aija** – home cakes with cream, cakes with curd, whipped cream and other fillings, patties, big pretzels, eclairs that melt on your tongue, buns that leave you wanting another one, cheese sticks and more. Orders by previous requests. Ph. +371 29388378, aijas.kukas@gmail.com.
14. **Hill Baterija** – castle mound placed on 8 m high, steep hill by the Brasla river and spring junction, so from both sides it's protected by water and gullies. Well preserved castle and castle-front place. There is about one meter thick cultural layer in the castle mound. Remains of a regular quadrangular fortification in Baterijas hill leads the historians to think that this was the first support point for crusaders in Idumeja (land where Līvs and Latgalls lived). **For convenience:** accessing the castle mound is suggested from Brasla street by crossing pedestrian bridge opposite the house "Dzīpari".
15. **Blacksmith workshop of Dainis Mežāncis**
Metal blacksmith Dainis Mežāncis is a master of craftsmanship and widely known for his works of metal. In his workshop visitors can learn about the process of forging, ask the master questions and maybe even try out the blacksmith trade. Visits to workshop only by booking.
Bēzu street 2, Straupe, ph. +371 26520523.

You are in a specially protected nature territory – Gauja National Park! We invite you to preserve and respect the natural and man-made values!