



# SIGULDA. THE WILD RAVINE OF THE RIVER VĒJUPĪTE AND MOUND PARADĪZES



Ravine Gorge (Kraukļa aiza)



View from Paradizes (Gleznotājkatns) Hill



Pētera Cave

Photo: Juris Smaļinskis

**i Description.** Sigulda is a place where the nature lies in close interaction with what has been created by men. Only 2-3 km off the central square of railway station, there is the deep ravine of the River Vējupīte and old valley of the River Gauja, where there are interesting natural objects and relatively unchanged nature. Suitable for those not afraid of climbing up and down the steep slopes of the ravine.

**☀ Best time to go**  
April–October. Especially recommended during the blooming of bird- cherry trees, the colourful autumn, and sunny winter days with a few snow which doesn't prevent walking on the paths and Vējupīte Ravine). Early spring is also suitable, since the leafage of trees and bushes does not cover the view over Vējupīte Ravine and the primeval valley of Gauja.

**☰ Route.** Sigulda Railway Station Square – Raiņa Street – Pils Street – Līvkalna Street – Pēteralas Street – Vējupīte Ravine – mouth of the River Vējupīte with Gauja – Mound Paradīzes (Gleznotāju) – Miera Street – Līvkalna Street – Pils Street – Siguldas Jaunā pils (New Castle) and Castle Quarter – Gauja Street – Raiņa Street – Sigulda Railway Station Square.

**➔ Distance.** ~ 10 km

**🕒 Duration.** Half-day or a full day route.

**👤 Difficulty level.**  
Moderate-difficult. Some sections – banks of ravines – might be strenuous due to their steepness.

**📍 Distance to Riga.** 50 km

**🛣 Road pavement.**  
Asphalt (in town), forest roads, paths, wooden stairs on the slopes.

**📍 Starting point/ destination**  
57.15287, 24.85427  
Sigulda Railway Station Square.

**📍 Way marking.** None on site.

**🚆 Public transportation**  
The train Riga–Sigulda operates 8-9 times per day. The route can be started at any place, depending on the location of an accommodation site.

**! Worth knowing!**  
Suitable trekking footwear and a local map is needed. The wooden stairs may be damaged at some places! Respect the information signs placed in objects. Walking outdoors is at one's own risk. Emergency services: 112.

**📱 Enter Gauja mobile application**



GooglePlay



AppStore

## SERVICE

**i | Sigulda County Tourism Information Centre**  
Sigulda, Ausekļa Street 6, +371 67971335  
info@sigulda.lv, www.tourism.sigulda.lv

**i | Sigulda County Tourism Information Centre "Gūtmaņala"**, Sigulda, Turaidas Street 2a, +371 61303030  
info.gutmanala@sigulda.lv, www.tourism.sigulda.lv

**☺ | Cafe "Siguldas saldējums"**  
Pils iela 16, Sigulda, +371 29395394  
info@siguldassaldejums.lv, www.siguldassaldejums.lv

**🏃 | Laser tag game "Poligon 1"**  
Sigulda, Miera street 15, +371 20207293, www.poligon-1.lv

## SIGHTSEEING OBJECTS

**1 | Sigulda Railway Station Square** 57.1531, 24.8537

**2 | Raiņa Park** 57.156216, 24.855773

**Pay attention!** En route from the town centre to the valley of the River Vējupīte, roe deer is seen early in the mornings in the meadow near Līvkalna Street. Along Līvkalna Street, there is an alley of oaks — a place to study lichen, moss, and polypores (e.g. sulphur shelves).

**3 | Satezele Hillfort** 57.17215, 24.87045

The left bank of the valley of the River Vējupīte is crossed by the deep **Pūču Ravine** — home to the **River Kraukļupīte**. **Satezele Hillfort** (sagging 90 × 75 m) is located at the intersection of ravines of both rivers. Before the hillfort on the roadside, there is a great oak. During spring the meadows near the hillfort are covered in beautiful dandelions. From top of the hillfort — view over the primeval valley of the River Gauja (northward).

**4 | River Vējupīte**

Left tributary of the River Gauja. Length — 14 km, gradient — 88 m. For ca. 3.5 km below Rīga-Valka railway line the river flows through a deep ravine, and the vertical drop thereof reaches around 15-16 m/km. Those in for nature can have a look at two small **waterfalls** near the railway line (on side of the River Gauja).

**5 | Vējupīte Ravine** 57.17115, 24.87634

Vējupīte Ravine ends at the Mound Parādīzes, where it merges with the primeval valley of Gauja. The next five objects are located in or close to Vējupīte Ravine.

**Pay attention!** The banks of Vējupīte Ravine are covered in forests of slopes (oak, linden, hazel, maple), large-size decayed wood and deadwood. Here one can spot traces that woodpeckers have left on tree trunks and sometimes hear the birds. Ball-shaped sandstone is found on the riverbed of rivers Vējupīte and Kraukļupīte.

**6 | Pētera Cave** 57.17159, 24.87694

The shallow (3.6 m), but high (6.1 m) Pētera Cave reminds of a crack-like gallery. It is only 0.7 m high at the portal. The cave is located within the reddish sandstones from Gauja suite.

**Pay attention!** The polypodies and common fragile fern are growing on the sandstone outcrops. The patina seen at some places is actually the velvet lichen. The ground cover of the forest reveals common moss like glittering wood-moss, red-stemmed feathermoss, goose-necked moss, and ostrich plume feathermoss. Various species of fern. On fallen trees and stumps — sulphur shelves, red banded polypore, Dryad's Saddle, and other species of mushrooms decaying the timber.

**7 | Kraukļu Ravine** 57.17386, 24.86724

Lateral ravine of the left bank of Vējupīte Ravine with impressive up to 11 m high sandstone cliffs at the feet of which a dark "mouth" is seen — the **Kraukļu Cave**. The 5.2 m long cave is formed in the reddish sandstone from Gauja suite.

**8 | Mound Parādīzes (Gleznotājkalns)**

57.17513, 24.86578

One of the most scenic places in Sigulda. In general, it is not a mound but residual hill of the valley wall, where the primeval valley of the River Gauja is split by the large Vējupīte Ravine. One of the best **views** towards Turaida Castle and the primeval valley of the River Gauja is seen from the top of the mound.

**Nature Conservation Agency** maintaining most of infrastructure in Gauja NP. If you see something wrong, tell the Agency at **+37164107230; +37167509545** or **vidzeme@daba.gov.lv**



**9 | Viewpoint** 57.17513, 24.86578

Located on the upper part of the primeval valley, between Mound Parādīzes and Sigulda cemetery. Magnificent view over the primeval valley and Turaida Castle on the opposite bank. Traces by woodpeckers on the trees are also visible.

**Pay attention!** Area around Sigulda is one of the areas gathering most of insects in Latvia. The reason behind the insect diversity is the old deciduous forests alongside the River Gauja, which is home to rare beetle species, e.g., the lesser stag beetle or cardinal beetle. Various species of butterflies are found in open areas, while the riverside will reveal dragonflies (such as the green snaketail). Best time to watch insects is May–July.

**10 | First luge and bobsleigh track in the Baltic**

At the end of the 19th century, the grand duke Kropotkin erected a 900 m long track with one curve, where it was poured with water and frozen. It is the first of tracks of such type in the Baltics, and starts from the former ditch around the fortified Castle of Livonian Order in Sigulda. In 1913 the Pan-Russian records in bobsleigh were set here. During the war, the track was destroyed.

**11 | Livonian Order Sigulda Castle - New Castle of Sigulda and Castle Quarter**

**12 | Nature Conservation Agency**

It is located in the building (Baznīcas Street 7), built at the end of 19th century as the family home for grand duke Nikolaj Kropotkin. Near the castle there is a pond with wild ducks. In summer evenings the park is suitable for bat watching.