Green Railways in Latvia

Greenways are the routes that are established using the former railway lines.

Green Railways are the greenways network in Northern Latvia and Southern Estonia, which passes through the picturesque landscapes and forests, and can be used by cyclists, hikers, horse riding, and skiing during the wintertime. The trails run mostly on gravel and forest roads. Green railways trail and connection routes are signposted.

There are 5 greenway lines that are part of the Green Railways network:
• Melturi – Gulbene,
• Lāde – Rūjiena,
• Ainaži – Valmiera,
• Valga – Ape (Estonia/ Latvia border),
• Viljandi – Moisakula (Estonia).

On the greenways, there is a possibility to use railbikes (in Valka and Gulbene), drasines (in Gulbene, Moisakula), or you can enjoy the ride with the narrow-gauge railway that connects Gulbene - Aluksne.

Some of the former stations have been reconstructed and offers various services.

In Aluksne the former railway luggage shed is converted into multi-media exhibitions about the railway history.

Along the way, there is a wide variety of natural objects, beautiful rivers, and lakes, districts with natural heritage. The Green Railway goes through Gauja National park and North Vidzeme Biosphere Reserve where you can find great biological diversity, variety of landforms, natural springs, sandstone outcrops, picturesque views and unique natural, cultural and historical monuments.

The best time for visiting the Green railways is the time from May until October. During the wintertime, it is possible to ski or to enjoy the ride with the horse or husky-drawn sledges.

Ainaži – Valmiera

The trail goes through countryside, over the rivers, through swamps, and begins/ends at the Ainaži pier. On the route, you can visit Dikļi where the Song and Dance Festival traditions were born, Valmiera city and Valmiermuiža craft Brewery.

Lāde – Rūjiena

The route goes though Hansa city Limbaži. On the way to Rūjienas ice cream factory, you can stop at the mini zoo Priedites. Even though the times have changed, Limbaži has retained a unique, historical magnetism due to the unchanged planning of the old city centre.

Melturi – Gulbene
You can start your journey from existing train station Melturi where you can start your trip towards Gulbene. The trail goes through the countryside and small villages. From Gulbene you can continue your trip to Alūksne with Bānīti. The Vidzeme Banitis or Gulbene - Alūksne railway is the last operational narrow gauge railway in the Baltics. In Alūksne you can visit Bānīša railway stations multimedia exposition. There you will discover facts about the railway’s history. You will hear 10 unique train station stories. You will see who’s friend, helper, workplace and inspiration source the narrow–gauge train has been.

Valga/Valka – Ape

Valga and Valka – one town, two countries with quickly developing city centre. Green Railways offers rail-bike rides by former Valka railway station.

On a way from Valga to Ape the former railway crosses twice Estonian – Latvian border in the woods. The trail passes beautiful landscapes, including banks of the rivers Mustjõgi and Gauja.

Viljandi – Mõisaküla

Viljandi is the most charming town in Estonia sitting on the hillslopes by Lake Viljandi.

On the way from Viljandi to Mõisaküla a diner in Halliste is a must place for visit. It is one of a kind canteen in Estonia with a time-travel back to 1980s. The food is authentic and tasty with a very customer-friendly price range. NB! Open only on weekdays from 12 – 2 PM.

Mõisaküla is a sleepy former major railway junction, where big wooden railway barracks originally built for railway workers remind of good old days.

Green Railways offers draisine rides on the only stretch of rails that have been left in Mõisaküla and there is a local museum focusing on the railway that is worth a visit.

More information about Green Ways in Latvia you can find [www.greenways.lv](http://www.greenways.lv)

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