

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT LITHUANIA AND VILNIUS

Lithuania, officially the Republic of Lithuania is located in the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. The country shares borders with Latvia to the north, Belarus to the east, Poland and Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation to the south. Its natural border is the Baltic Sea coast. The geographic centre of Europe lies 24 kilometers northwest of Vilnius.

Languages: Lithuanian is official language. Other – English, Russian, Polish.

Year of EU entry: 2004

Capital city: Vilnius

Total area: 65 000 km²

Population: 3.3 million

Currency: Euro

Local Time: GMT + 2

Climate & Weather

The climate of the Lithuania can be described as typical European continental influenced climate with warm, dry summers and fairly severe winters. Temperature in July is about 20°C. The weather is often breezy and humid due to the proximity of the Baltic Sea.

ATMs and Credit Cards

All major banks in Lithuania have ATMs in most cities. Major credit cards are accepted almost everywhere.

Smoking

Smoking is prohibited in all indoor public places and on all public transport. However, in general pubs and restaurants have a designated outdoor smoking area.

Opening hours

Shops normally open around 9:00 and close around 18:00.

Banks are open Monday to Friday between 8:00 and 17:00.

Restaurants are open Monday to Friday between 10:00 and 22:00.

Emergency Numbers

Call 112, the EU-wide emergency number for police, fire department and ambulance.

Dial Code for Lithuania: +370

PLACES TO SEE IN VILNIUS

Vilnius old town

The Old Town of Vilnius (in Lithuanian: *Vilniaus senamiestis*), one of the largest surviving medieval old towns in Northern Europe, has an area of 3.59 square kilometres (887 acres). The oldest part of the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius, it has developed over the course of many centuries, and has been shaped by the city's history and a constantly changing cultural influence. It is a place where some of Europe's greatest architectural styles – gothic, renaissance, baroque and neoclassical – stand side by side and complement each other.

Pilies Street is the Old Town's main artery and the hub of cafe and street market life. The main street of Vilnius, Gediminas Avenue, is partially located in the Old Town. The central squares in the Old Town are the Cathedral Square and the Town Hall Square.

One of the most elaborate architectural complexes is the Vilnius University Architectural Ensemble, which occupies a large part of the Old Town and has 13 courtyards. It was selected to represent Lithuania in the Mini-Europe Park in Brussels.

In 1994 the Vilnius Old Town was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in recognition of its universal value and originality (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/541>). The definition of "historic center" itself has a broader meaning than the Old Town, formerly encircled with defensive walls. It

embraces the valuable historical suburbs of Vilnius, such as Užupis, which historically used to be outside the city boundaries. Therefore Užupis is often considered a part of the Old Town of Vilnius.

The Centre for Civil Education (Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania)

The Centre for Civil Education was opened in the Presidential Palace (Office of the President of the Republic of Lithuania) on 10 March 2016.

The Centre tells its visitors about the area, population, and sovereign power of the Lithuanian state. The exposition also gives an overview of the history of citizenship, the notion of citizenship and its active forms. The slogan of the Centre is "Freedom to learn and create", thus the visitors are invited to get more knowledge of the Lithuanian state, to participate in its creation, and to get engaged in addressing its urgent challenges.

The vision of the Centre for Civil Education: people proud of Lithuania and ready to assume responsibility for the whole country and its citizens. I live here, in a dynamic Lithuania – that's what the logo of the Centre, an octagonal star originating from folk ornaments, suggests.

For more info please refer to: <http://pazinkvalstybe.lt/kategorija/21>

Vilnius Cathedral

It was built in the middle of the 13th century when the Lithuanian King Mindaugas converted to Christianity and built a Christian temple on the spot where the Cathedral of Vilnius now stands. Parts of the current cathedral are from the middle of the 15th century, but it has been rebuilt, modified and extended many times during the years, and the cathedral got its present appearance in the late 18th century when it was reconstructed in Neoclassical style. The inside of the cathedral is white and bright, and filled with religious paintings dating from the 16th through 19th centuries. And the Chapel of Saint Casimir (with his sarcophagus) is very detailed and beautiful. Well worth a visit.

The Cathedral Square is the main square of Vilnius Old Town, and here you'll find the Cathedral's Bell Tower (57 meters high), a bronze-monument to Gediminas (one of the first rulers of Lithuania), and the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania (the Royal Palace).

Gediminas' Tower

Gediminas' Tower was part of the Upper Castle which was built around year 1400, and is today – besides ruins of some old castle buildings and stone walls - the only remaining part of the castle. The tower was restored in 1930 and is considered the symbol of the city of Vilnius. Inside is an exhibition about the history of the castle and from the top of the tower is a great view of the Old Town and the Hill of Three Crosses. If you don't want to walk all the way up to the tower, you can take the funicular located on the riverside side of the hill.

Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania

The reconstructed Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, the former political, diplomatic, cultural center of the State, was one of the most famous in Europe in the 15th-17th centuries and was demolished in the beginning of the 19th century. This Palace is excellent located just in the heart of Vilnius, within the confines of Lower Castle. Nowadays the Gothic, Renaissance and Early Baroque halls of this multifunctional Museum are ideally applicable to organize a different size and content public events, official visits, conferences, meetings, seminars, concerts, performances, receptions and other.

Part of the reconstructed Palace of the Grand Dukes in Vilnius Lower Castle officially transferred to the Museum. In the reconstructed Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania there are two exhibition tour routes directly related to the historical functions of this residence. The first tour will show the historical and architectural development of the palace by highlighting the ancient ruins still in place, excavated artifacts and by using models and iconographic materials. The second tour route will bring the visitors into the ceremonial halls, which have been reconstructed in such a way as to show the evolution of architectural styles – from the late Gothic to the Renaissance to the early Baroque.

Church of St Ann

A great Gothic masterpiece, St. Anne's Church was designed by Bohemian architect Benedikt Rejt, of Prague Castle. Unlike many other churches in the region, St. Anne's has experienced minimal damage or reconstruction over the years, and is very true to the architect's original vision. The interior is minimalist to counter the Flamboyant Gothic facade, and those so inclined can attend a daily mass at 6:00 pm. Don't miss the Bernardine Church and Monastery right behind St. Anne's.

Hill of Three Crosses

The Hill of Three Crosses is located in Kalnai Park about 20 minutes walk from the Old Town. The hill has been home of a monument of Three Crosses since the 17th century, and a legend says it was erected in honour of some Franciscan monks who in 1333 were tortured to death on the spot where the monument now stands. The present monument is from 1989, raised after the previous one was destroyed during the Soviet period. From the top of the hill is a very nice view of the city of Vilnius.

National Gallery of Art

In the National Gallery of Art one can find 20th-21st Century Lithuanian art collection which includes over 46 000 exhibits: modern and contemporary Lithuanian painting, sculpture, graphic arts, photography, installations and video art. The Gallery is located in Konstitucijos avenue.

For more info please refer to: <http://www.ndg.lt/visitor-information.aspx>

For more info what to see/visit, please refer to:

<http://www.vilnius-tourism.lt/en/what-to-see/places-to-visit/>

Some views of Lithuania: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OStISjdmmSI>

We look forward to seeing you in Vilnius!

OUR CONTACTS

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