

LITHUANIA

Geographic Location: the Republic of Lithuania lies on the eastern coast of the Baltic Sea. In the The country borders on Latvia, Belarus, Poland and Kaliningrad Region of the Russian Federation. Lithuania holds a 90 kilometre long area of the Baltic Sea coast.

As the National Geographic Institute of France confirmed in 1989, **the geographic centre of Europe** lies just 24 kilometres northwest of Vilnius.

Total area: 65,300 sq. km. Nearly one third of the territory is covered by forests. There are over 2,800 lakes larger than 0.5 hectares in size, and 18 rivers longer than 100 kilometres in Lithuania.

Climate: oceanic/continental. Average temperature in July is +17°C, in January – -4.9°C. However, temperatures can soar up to +30°C in summer, and drop down to -32°C in winter.

Local Time: the Central European Time zone (GMT + 2 hours, or same as, for instance, Helsinki, Riga, and Tallinn).

Population: 3.43 million (May 1, 2005). Now it is presumed only 3 million left.

Ethnic Composition: Lithuanians – 83.5%, Polish – 6.7%, Russians – 6.3%, Belarusians – 1.2%, others – 2.3%. Lithuania is home to as many as 115 ethnic groups. Based on ethnic composition, Lithuania is the most indigenous of all the Baltic countries.

Religion: Predominantly, Roman Catholic (approximately 80% of the total population). Other confessions include Orthodox, Old Believers, Lutheran, Reformat, Judaist, Sunni, Karaite and other.

Language: Lithuanian.

Capital: Vilnius. The city was officially established in 1323. The Old Town of Vilnius is one of the largest (360 ha) and prettiest in the Eastern and Central Europe included on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The city boasts excellent public transport with trolleybus, bus and minibus routes; plenty of taxis available. Population is around 540.000.

Lithuania is the only Baltic country with nearly eight hundred years of statehood tradition, while its name was first mentioned almost one thousand years ago, in 1009. Wedged at the dividing line of Western and Eastern civilizations, Lithuania battled dramatically for its independence and survival. Once in the Middle Ages, Lithuania was the largest state in the entire Eastern Europe, where crafts and overseas trade prospered.

In 1579, Vilnius University, an important scientific and education centre of the European scale, was opened. In the 16th century, Lithuania adopted its First, Second and Third Statutes. Not only the Statutes were the backbone of the legislative system of the country, they had a major impact on legislation of other European states of the time. Despite losing its independence, Lithuania managed to retain its Third Statute in effect for as many as 250 years, which was instrumental in preservation of national and civic self-awareness of the public. The Constitution of Lithuania-Poland together with the French Constitution, both adopted in 1791, were the first constitutions in Europe.

The first Byelorussian books, *The Small Travel Book* (1522) and *Apostle* (1525), were printed in Vilnius; the same is true about the first Latvian book, a translation of *Catechism* by Peter Canizius (1585). The capital of Lithuania was also the birthplace of the Polish national opera: Stanislaw Moniuszko wrote his *Halka* in Vilnius and first conducted it here (first public performance in 1847, premiere at the Vilnius Opera Theatre in 1854).



Vilnius has always been a multinational, multilingual, and multicultural European city. Trying to position itself as an informal political leader of the Baltic countries, Lithuania shares its own experiences in democratic developments with other countries of post-soviet block and takes active participation in the EU renewal processes.

CONGRESS VENUE AND ACCOMMODATION

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ARRIVAL

At the airport

If you wish to use public transportation, you can use **city bus No. 2**. Vilnius buses start running at 5 in the morning and stop at midnight.



The bus fare in Vilnius city is 3,5 LTL and purchased directly from a driver. The fares and schedules can be found at <http://stops.lt/vilnius/#bus/en>

It is also available E-Ticket (Electronic ticket). For the first time it's necessary to buy a card. For your visit, you can buy a one-, three- or ten-day ticket.

These tickets are available at the following Lietuvos spauda kiosks:

- Geležinkelio St. 16 (near the Railway Station),
- Gedimino Ave. 9A (kiosk in the V. Kudirkos square).



Furthermore you can take a **minibus**:

- **No. 20** – through the city centre to the outskirts of the city (Airport-Fabijoniškės)
- **No. 23** – through the city centre to the outskirts of the city (Airport-Konstitucijos pr.-Šeškinė)



Minibuses run every 5-15 minutes. A trip on a minibus costs 3-4 LTL, and you pay to the driver. The minibus stops at request, at any place in the street. To save time, drivers stop at your request only, so, remember to tell the driver in advance where you want to get off.

Here also runs a special scheduled **train** from the airport to the Vilnius Railway Station. The railway stop, stairs, and passenger lift are installed just outside the airport terminal, as well as lighting and a video surveillance system for the safety of passengers. The train fare is 2.5 LTL. The train schedule can be found at <http://www.litrail.lt/wwwEN.nsf>



Also you can take a **taxi** from the airport to the hotel. The taxi rank is located just outside the arrivals terminal and is signposted. It is not always possible to pay with a credit card in the taxi. In case you need to change money, you can do that inside the airport. The taxi from the airport to the city is about 50 LTL, it takes less than 20 minutes to reach your hotel.



GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Banks**
Opening times: Monday-Friday: from 8:00 am till 5:00 pm.
- **Credit cards:**
In Lithuania you can use all credit cards (VISA, MasterCard, Maestro, American Express).
- **Currency:**
Lithuanian Litas (LTL)
1EUR=3.4528 LTL
1USD=2.6400 LTL

- **Post Office**
The address of the central post office is in Gedimino ave. 7. Opening times are Monday – Friday from 7:00 am till 7:00 pm, and Saturday from 9:00 am till 4:00 pm.
Mail boxes are yellow and you can find on buildings corners.
Letter. To send a letter it costs 2.45 LTL to European countries.

- **Pharmacies**
CAMELIA is the closest pharmacy to the “Radisson Blu Hotel Lietuva”. It is in the shopping mall “Europa” (Konstitucijos ave. 7A) on the first floor.



NON-SMOKING and NON-ALCOHOL POLICY

Please note that there are NON-SMOKING areas in all public places: shopping centers, restaurants, hotels, etc. and NON-ALCOHOL area in public places in the whole Vilnius city.



EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Police Fire Ambulance Tel. 112

CALLING IN LITHUANIA

+370 - Country code for Lithuania

5- City code for Vilnius

Mobile numbers most often start with 6: + 370 686... +370 699...

INTERNET/WIRELESS

Internet/wireless is available in all Hotels, super markets and restaurants.

ELECTRICITY

The electricity is 220V, 50Hz. The shape of plugs is two round pins.

CLIMATE AND CLOTHING

The temperature is expected to be around 10 °C. A jacket is advisable. Take umbrella with you.

You can check weather conditions in Vilnius: <http://lithuanian.wunderground.com/global/stations/26730.html>

EMBASSIES

<http://www.urm.lt/index.php?-1069647731>

SUPERMARKETS (nearby hotels)

PANORAMA shopping mall is spacious, modern and aesthetic place where you can find 180 shopping and service places, 18 coffee houses and restaurants,

There is also a supermarket (grocery) RIMI.

Opening time: Monday-Sunday, from 10:00 am till 22:00 pm.

Address: Saltoniškių str. 9



EUROPA shopping mall is right across Konstitucijos avenue. Here you can find 78 shops and service places, 10 restaurants and cafes. There is a small food market MAXIMA.

Opening time: Monday-Sunday, from 10:00 am till 9:00 pm

Address: Konstitucijos ave. 7A



CUP: Vilnius Central Department Store has been around for 37 years and has become the capital of history. Trade center has more than 160 shops and service places, more than 10 cafes and restaurants.

The grocery store MAXIMA is located on the ground floor.

Opening time: Monday-Sunday, from 10:00 am till 9:00 pm.

Address: Konstitucijos ave. 16



AKROPOLIS centre with more than 150 shops representing the most popular trademarks in Lithuania and Europe. There is also a big supermarket MAXIMA

Opening time: From 10:00 am till 24:00 pm.

Address: Ozo str. 25



CINEMA showing foreign-language films: Forum Cinemas

Address: Ozo str.25; Savanoriu ave. 7.

(<http://www.forumcinemas.lt/Movies/Vilnius>)



LITHUANIAN SOUVENIRS

Amber and linen can be purchased in small shops in the old city (“Gintaras” and “Linas” in Lithuanian)

PLACES TO SEE

Gediminas' Tower of the Upper Castle

The exposition of the Vilnius Castle Museum displays reconstruction models of Vilnius castles of the second part of the 14th and the beginning of the 17th centuries, armament, iconographic material of old Vilnius. An observation deck on the top of the tower is the best place from which to appreciate a magnificent panorama of Vilnius.



Church of St. Anne

St. Anne's Church, which has survived to the present day without changing for over 500 years, has become a symbol of Vilnius. At a closer look, one can see the letters A and M in the main facade of St. Anne's. The letters A and M could stand for the Latin Ana Mater Maria or Ave Maria, i.e. „Saint Anne – Mother of Mary“ or „Hail Mary“.



Church of Sts Johns

The full name of the church is the Church of St. John the Baptist and St. John the Evangelist. Today, the Church of Sts. Johns performs its main functions once again. It was visited by Pope John Paul II in 1993. The bell tower of the church, which is 68 meters high, is among the highest buildings in the Old Town.



Vilnius University

Vilnius University is one of the oldest universities in Eastern Europe. The complexes of Vilnius University were formed over several centuries and, as a result, consist of the buildings built in Gothic, Baroque and Classical styles. At present, there are 12 faculties and about 23,000 students at Vilnius University. There is a library that was established in 1570. It contains over five million publications and old manuscripts. One of the two known originals of the first Lithuanian book – The Catechism by Martynas Mažvydas – is kept here.



Gates of Dawn

The Gates of Dawn is one of the most visited shrines in Vilnius that is famous not only in Lithuania but also abroad, worshipped by the representatives of other creeds too. This is the only surviving gate of the first original five gates in the city wall that was built between 1503 and 1522. The painting of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Mercy, in the Chapel of the Gates of Dawn is known all over the world.



Presidential Palace

The Presidential Palace, called "Prezidentūra" (President's Office) in everyday life, was built in the square of Simonas Daukantas (a graduate of Vilnius University and the author of the first history of Lithuania published in the Lithuanian language in the 19th century). Free excursions around the Presidential Palace are organized on Saturdays. During these excursions, visitors can see the interior of the historical building and they can even visit the office of the President.



Gediminas Avenue

The avenue had the names of A. Mickiewicz, Stalin, Lenin, and in 1989 it was known as Gediminas Avenue. Buildings of the 19th and 20th centuries were built next to the avenue, currently housing central government authorities and public institutions, trading and catering companies. Gediminas Avenue connects the historical city center, Cathedral Square with the Seimas Palace.



TRAKAI

The old town of Trakai is situated west of Vilnius between the hills, forests and lakes. The shores of the peninsula on which it is located are washed by the waters of Lakes Galvė, Totoriškių and Bernardinų. This town, famous for its picturesque landscape and the legendary Trakai Castle, was a cradle of the Lithuanian statehood, an important military and political centre, headquarters of the Lithuanian Grand Dukes, and the capital of Lithuania. Today, Trakai attracts visitors to a wonderful place offering refuge from a hectic city life, with walks around the beautiful area or yacht trips on one of the numerous lakes.

Trakai is also known for the Karaimes (a people speaking the Turkic language), who have lived there since the 14th century and have preserved their traditions. The kenesa – a Karaime sanctuary – and houses of Karaimes have survived in Trakai, and the national dishes (the most popular is kybyn – a small pasty stuffed with minced meat) of this ethnic group can be tasted at the Karaime Restaurant.



For more info:

- Vilnius visitor's guide
http://issuu.com/vilniustourism/docs/visitors_guide_en_2011?mode=embed&layout=http%3A%2F%2Fskin.issuu.com%2Fv%2Flight%2Flayout.xml&showFlipBtn=true
- Vilnius in Your Pocket guide: <http://www.inyourpocket.com/data/download/vilnius.pdf>
- Vilnius on Lonely Planet: <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/lithuania/vilnius>