



Lithuania

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Best Places to Stay

- » Palanga Hotel (p516)
- » Narutis (p501)
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- » Litinterp Guesthouse (p518)

Best Places to Eat

- » Борщ! (p502)
- » Ararat (p518)
- » Lokys (p503)

Why Go?

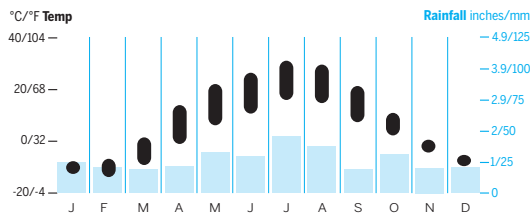
The Baltic countries have a reputation for their dour ways, but this image fades when you enter rebellious Lithuania, a country blessed with boundless energy and studded with reminders of its turbulent history.

It may be a dot on Europe's map, but that didn't stop Lithuania from becoming a mighty empire in the 1400s, its territory extending beyond Kursk in the east and all the way to the Black Sea in the south. Even today Lithuanians brim with pride and confidence befitting their mighty heritage.

From the baroque spires and effortless charm of Vilnius' vibrant streets and the ancient ruins of Kernavė to the ghostly sand dunes of the Curonian Spit and the lakes and forests of the southeast, Lithuania has it all. More and more travellers are making their way to this tiny country with an earthy vibe, where pagan roots run deep and Catholic passion lives on.

When to Go

Vilnius



April Some of the world's best jazz performers are at the Kaunas International Jazz Festival.

June & July Partake in the pagan Midsummer festival, with in Kernavė.

September Vilnius City Days, a celebration of the capital with street theatre, music and fashion.

Connections

Buses, trains and ferries provide numerous travel options to Lithuania's neighbouring countries.

Vilnius is a hub for buses to Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus and Russia's Kaliningrad; from Kaunas there are buses to Latvia, Estonia and Kaliningrad, and the latter may also be reached from Klaipėda and the Curonian Spit.

Trains serve Russia, Poland and Belarus from the capital, but there are no rail connections to Latvia or Estonia. Sweden and Germany can be reached by ferry from Klaipėda, Lithuania's international port.

ITINERARIES

Three Days

Devote two days to exploring the baroque heart of Vilnius, then day-trip to Trakai for its spectacular island castle and the homesteads of the Karaites, stopping off at Paneriai on the way.

One Week

Spend four nights in Vilnius, with day trips to both Trakai and the Soviet sculpture park near Druskininkai. Travel cross-country to Šiauliai and the Hill of Crosses, then spend two or three days exploring some serious nature on the Curonian Spit. Head back east via Klaipėda and Kaunas.

Essential Food & Drink

» **Potato creations** Try the *cepelinai* (potato dough zepelin stuffed with meat, mushrooms or cheese), *bulviniai blynai* (potato pancakes), *žemaičių blynai* (heart-shaped mashed potato stuffed with meat and fried), or the *vedarai* (pig intestine stuffed with potato).

» **Beer snacks** No drinking session is complete without a plate of smoked pigs' ears and *kepta duona* (deep-fried garlicky breadsticks).

» **Beetroot delight** Cold, creamy *šaltibarščiai* (beetroot soup) is a summer speciality, served with a side of fried potatoes.

» **Unusual meat** Try the game specialities, such as beaver stew and bear sausages.

» **Smoked fish** A Curonian Spit speciality; the *rukytas unguris* (smoked eel) is particularly good.

» **Beer and mead** Šytutys, Utenos and Kalnapilis are top beers; *midus* (mead) is a honey-tinged nobleman's drink.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** litas (Lt)
- » **Language** Lithuanian
- » **Money** ATMs all over
- » **Visas** Not required for citizens of the EU, Australia, Canada, Israel, Japan, New Zealand, Switzerland or the US

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 65,303 km
- » **Capital** Vilnius
- » **Telephone country code** 370
- » **Emergency** 112

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	2.54Lt
Canada	C\$1	2.44Lt
euro	€1	3.45Lt
Japan	¥100	2.85Lt
New Zealand	NZ\$1	1.87Lt
UK	UK£1	3.87Lt
USA	US\$1	2.32Lt

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** 180Lt
- » **Two-course meal** 50Lt
- » **Museum entrance** 5Lt
- » **Beer** 8Lt
- » **Bicycle hire (per day)** 40Lt

Resources

- » **In Your Pocket** (www.inyourpocket.com)
- » **Lithuania's Museums** (www.muziejai.lt)
- » **Tourism in Lithuania** (www.tourism.lt)