



Lithuania

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Best Places to Eat

- » Holy Miko's (p491)
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Best Places to Stay

- » Palanga Hotel (p505)
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- » Miško Namas (p509)
- » Litinterp Guesthouse (p506)

Why Go?

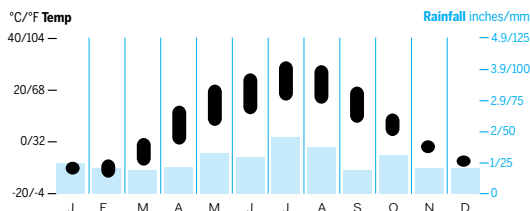
A great little all-rounder, Lithuania has much to offer. Those with a passion for baroque architecture, ancient castles and archaeological treasures will find plenty in the capital and beyond. There are sculpture parks and interactive museums for travellers wishing to delve into the country's traumatic recent history; modern art spaces and exhibitions to titillate those whose interests are more contemporary and all-night clubbing in the cities and on the coast for those requiring something less cerebral. Throw in a whirlwind of great restaurants, beer gardens and bars, and you have urban entertainment aplenty.

Away from the cities, the giant sand dunes on the west coast and the southeast's lakes and forests beckon fresh-air fiends; they come alive in the summer with cyclists, berry pickers and campers.

Combine all that with Lithuania's pagan roots, boundless energy and rebellious spirit, and you're in for a heck of a ride.

When to Go

Vilnius



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

Jun & Jul The loveliest time to explore the forests and sand dunes of the Curonian Spit.

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

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 sq km
- » **Capital** Vilnius
- » **Country code** ☎370
- » **Emergency** ☎112

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	2.82Lt
Canada	C\$1	2.66Lt
Euro Zone	€1	3.45Lt
Japan	¥100	2.86Lt
New Zealand	NZ\$1	2.26Lt
UK	UK£1	4.09Lt
USA	US\$1	2.70Lt

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** 200Lt
- » **Two-course meal** 55Lt
- » **Museum entrance** 7Lt
- » **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)

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. 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 Karaite people, 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 the Hill of Crosses, then explore some serious nature on the Curonian Spit for two or three days. 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) or *žemaičių blynai* (heart-shaped mashed potato stuffed with meat and fried), or the *vedarai* (baked pig intestines stuffed with mashed potatoes).

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

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

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

» **Smoked fish** The Curonian Spit is famous for its smoked fish, particularly the superb *rukytas unguris* (smoked eel).

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