



Lithuania

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Best Places to Eat

- » Борщ!, Vilnius (p807)
- » Ararat, Klaipėda (p811)
- » Senieji Rūsiai, Kaunas (p810)

Best Places to Stay

- » Jimmy Jumps House, Vilnius (p806)
- » Litinterp Klaipėda, Klaipėda (p811)
- » Kauno Arkivyskupijos Svečių Namai, Kaunas (p810)

Why Go?

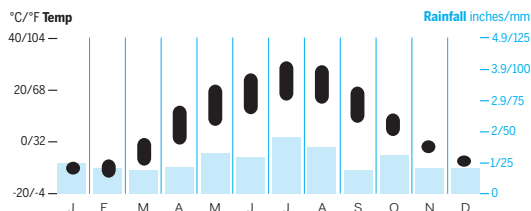
The Baltic countries have a reputation for their dour ways, but this image fades when you enter rebellious Lithuania, a country blessed with boundless energy and studded with reminders of its turbulent history.

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 plenty to offer. 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



Apr Many top jazz musicians take to the stage in the Kaunas International Jazz Festival.

Jul Take part in boat parades and revelry at the Sea Festival to celebrate Klaipėda's nautical heritage.

Sep Vilnius City Days is a five-day celebration of carnivals, masked parades, 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.

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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** *Cepelinai* (potato dough zepelin stuffed with meat, mushrooms or cheese), *bulviniai blynai* (potato pancakes) and *vedarai* (pig intestine stuffed with potato).

» **Beer snacks** Smoked pig ears and *kepta duona* (deep-fried garlicky breadsticks).

» **Beetroot delight** Cold, creamy *šaltibarščiai* (beetroot soup) – a summer speciality.

» **Smoked fish** *Rukytas ungris* (smoked eel) – a Curonian Spit treat.

» **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 everywhere
- » **Visas** Not required for citizens of the EU, Australia, NZ or USA

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 65,303 sq km
- » **Capital** Vilnius
- » **Country code** 370
- » **Emergency** 112

Exchange Rates

| | | |
|-------------|-------|--------|
| Australia | A\$1 | 2.50Lt |
| Canada | C\$1 | 2.48Lt |
| Euro Zone | €1 | 3.45Lt |
| Japan | ¥100 | 2.85Lt |
| New Zealand | NZ\$1 | 1.89Lt |
| UK | UK£1 | 3.90Lt |
| USA | US\$1 | 2.38Lt |

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** 180Lt
- » **Two-course evening meal** 50Lt
- » **Museum entrance** 5Lt
- » **Beer** 8Lt for a bottle
- » **Bus ticket** 1.20 to 2Lt

Resources

- » **In Your Pocket** (www.inyourpocket.com) Extensive, downloadable listings
- » **Tourism in Lithuania** (www.tourism.lt) Lithuanian State Tourism Department
- » **Museums of Lithuania** (www.muziejai.lt)
- » **Litrail** (www.litrail.lt) Train timetable and info