

A field guide to

Lithuania.

Cool facts, real places and the stories behind them, from the local guides at openBaltics.



Lithuania, *the wooded south.*

The places, the food, the odd facts and the best months: everything we tell our own friends before they come to visit. Keep it on your phone, or print it for the trip.

Lithuania is the largest of the three and the most southerly, rolling out from the Belarusian border in slow forests and dark rivers until it meets the cold Baltic at Klaipėda. It carries the deepest historical weight, having ruled an empire that stretched from the Baltic to the Black Sea, and it carries that weight lightly. Vilnius, its capital, is a baroque city built mostly of brick, painted in the same cream and ochre as the rest of the old continent, but with a quietness particular to a place that has spent five centuries looking inward.

The country is intensely catholic, intensely literary, intensely fond of basketball, and surprisingly fond of jazz. Outside the capital, the landscape is a low patchwork of pine, birch and water: 6,000 lakes, no real hills, and a coastline that ends in the wildest sand peninsula in Europe.

The openBaltics team, Vilnius



The stork

The stork is our host in Lithuania. It is the national bird, and you will see its nests on poles and rooftops along the country roads.

IN THIS GUIDE

The country in numbers	3
Four places that make Lithuania	4
Six things that surprise people	5
Three bases for a trip	6
Cold beet soup, and a long summer	7
The year, month by month	8
The practical bits	9
Trips we run in Lithuania	10

AT A GLANCE

The country in *numbers*.

Vilnius

CAPITAL

2.8 million

POPULATION

65,300 km²

AREA

33% of land

FOREST COVER

99 km, mostly sand

COASTLINE

March 11, 1990

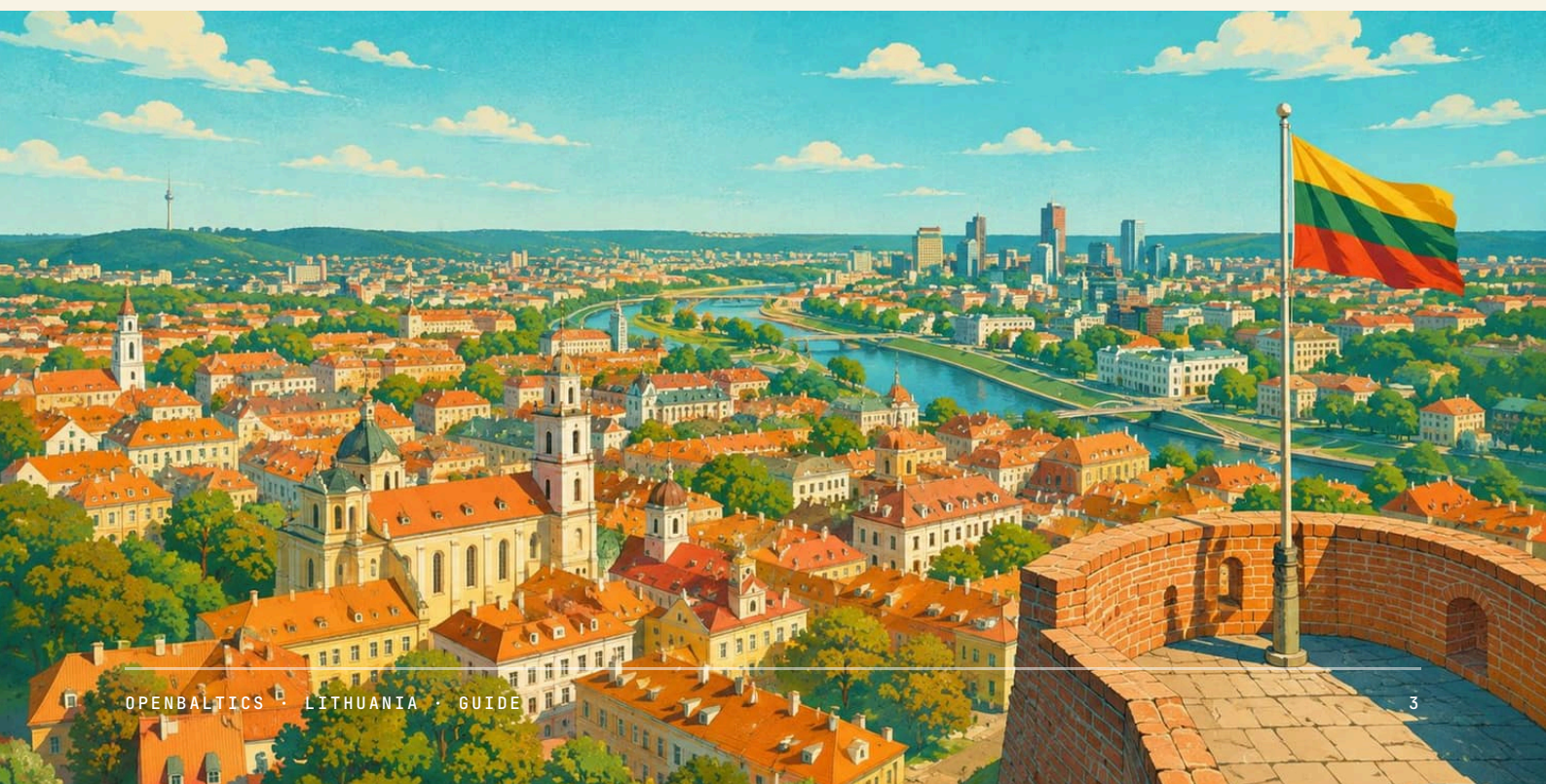
INDEPENDENCE

Aukštojas, 294 m

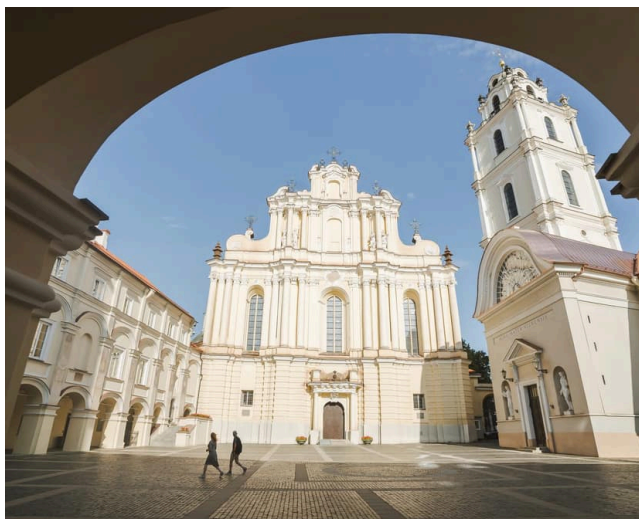
HIGHEST POINT

6,000+

LAKES



Four places that make *Lithuania*.



01

A baroque capital, made of brick

Vilnius has the largest baroque old town north of Florence, built mostly in plain brick and rendered in cream, austere where Italy is theatrical, and all the better for it.



02

The Curonian Spit

98 km of moving sand between a freshwater lagoon and the open sea. UNESCO listed, almost empty, and the most singular landscape in the Baltics.



03

The Hill of Crosses

Near Šiauliai, a single small mound carries over 200,000 crosses, planted by ordinary people in defiance of three Soviet attempts to bulldoze it.



04

Trakai, by water

A red-brick island castle in a lake of three colours, half an hour from Vilnius. Visited by the Karaim community since the 14th century, who still bake the kibinai.

Six things that *surprise people.*

1997

01 A republic inside the capital

Across the little Vilnelė river, the Užupis district declared itself an independent artists' republic in 1997. Its tongue-in-cheek constitution hangs on a wall, in dozens of languages.

Sea to sea

02 Once the largest state in Europe

The medieval Grand Duchy of Lithuania reached from the Baltic to the Black Sea. For a time no state in Europe was bigger.

Sanskrit

03 One of the oldest living languages

Lithuanian is one of only two Baltic languages still spoken, and one of the most archaic Indo-European tongues alive. Linguists compare some of its forms to Sanskrit.

200,000+

04 Crosses nobody could remove

The Hill of Crosses near Šiauliai carries more than 200,000 of them. Soviet authorities tried three times to bulldoze it. Each time, people planted new ones.

Thomas Mann

05 A Nobel writer's summer house

In Nida, on the Curonian Spit, the novelist Thomas Mann kept a summer house above the lagoon. It still stands, and you can visit it.

Basketball

06 Not a sport, a religion

Basketball here is less a sport than the national passion, closer to what football is in the rest of Europe. Ask anyone about it and settle in.



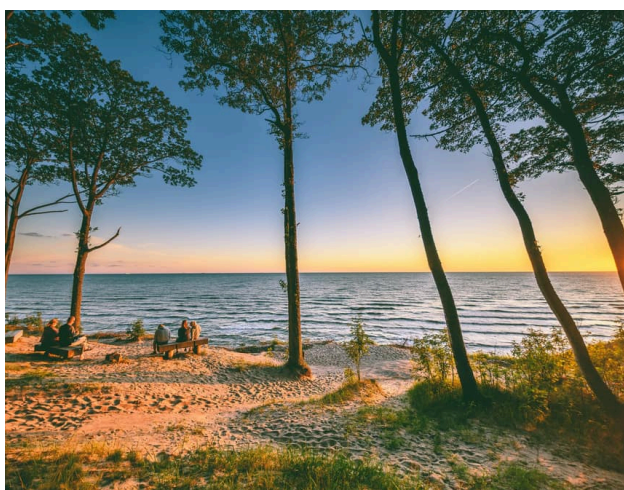
Three bases for *a trip*.



THE BASE

Vilnius and the lake country

Vilnius is the base. Trakai's island castle is half an hour away, Kaunas about an hour and a quarter, and the lakes of Aukštaitija national park under two hours: day trips, back to the same hotel.



TWO NIGHTS AT LEAST

The coast and the Spit

Klaipėda, Palanga and the Curonian Spit are three to four hours west of Vilnius. Stay on the coast rather than drive back: Nida for the dunes and the lagoon, Klaipėda for the old port.



ON THE ROAD WEST

The Hill of Crosses and Žemaitija

The Hill of Crosses near Šiauliai and the lake at Plateliai sit near the northern road between Vilnius and the coast. They work best as stops on the way, not as return trips from the capital.



Black rye bread going into a wood-fired oven.

ON THE TABLE

Cold beet soup, *and a long summer.*

Lithuanian food is rooted in long winters and short, generous summers: rye, dill, mushrooms from the forest floor, fresh-water fish from the rivers, smoked pork from the family farm. In June the markets fill with new potatoes, sour cream and šaltibarščiai, the cold pink beet soup that arrives at the table the colour of a sunset over the lagoon. There is also kibinai, the half-moon pastries of the Karaim of Trakai, baked from a recipe that has not changed since the fourteenth century.

In June the markets fill with new potatoes, sour cream and the cold pink beet soup that arrives at the table the colour of a sunset over the lagoon.

The year, *month by month.*

Jan QUIET Cold, clear 7h light	Feb QUIET Cold, clear 9h light	Mar QUIET Thaw, mud 12h light	Apr GOOD Quiet spring 14h light
May BEST Bloom, mild 16h light	Jun BEST Joninės, the white nights 18h light	Jul BEST Sea swims, busy coast 18h light	Aug BEST Warm, busy 16h light
Sep BEST Berries, mushrooms, gold 13h light	Oct GOOD Forest amber 11h light	Nov QUIET Grey, raw 8h light	Dec GOOD Christmas markets, snow 7h light

BEST MONTHS

May to September

Late May to September brings the long days and the open coast, and in June there is light in the sky until well past midnight. December is the other window, for the Christmas market on Vilnius's cathedral square.



The *practical bits.*

CAPITAL	Vilnius
LANGUAGE	Lithuanian
CURRENCY	Euro (€)
TIME ZONE	EET, UTC+2 / EEST UTC+3
FLY IN TO	Vilnius (VNO) · Kaunas (KUN) · Palanga (PLQ)
VISA	Schengen, 90/180 days
POWER	230V, type F (Schuko)
TAP WATER	Drinkable everywhere
TIPPING	10% in restaurants, otherwise rare
LANGUAGE TIP	Most under-40s speak English; Russian widely understood, Polish in the south



Trips we run *in Lithuania.*

Planned by people who live here, and changed to fit you.
Every trip can be shortened, stretched or rebuilt.

3 DAYS	A long weekend in Vilnius openbaltics.com/itinerary/vilnius-weekend	FROM €1,155
4 DAYS	The Curonian Spit and the amber coast openbaltics.com/itinerary/curonian	FROM €1,435
7 DAYS	Lithuania self-drive openbaltics.com/itinerary/self-drive-lithuania	FROM €575
7 DAYS	Best of Lithuania openbaltics.com/itinerary/grand-lithuania	FROM €2,275
11 DAYS	The Three Crowns openbaltics.com/itinerary/three-crowns	FROM €2,240

Prices in euros per person sharing a room. Prices as of 20 October 2026.
openbaltics.com/country/lt

Nothing quite right?

Most of our trips start as an email. Tell us how many days you have and what you like, and we will build one around you.

openbaltics.com/plan-a-trip



PLAN IT WITH US

Begin in *the south*.

Tell us your dates and what you love. A real person replies within one working day with a day-by-day plan and a clear price.

EMAIL

hello@openbaltics.com

PHONE AND WHATSAPP

+370 641 40294

WEBSITE

openbaltics.com



openBaltics

MB openBaltics · V. Nagevičiaus g. 3, LT-08237 Vilnius, Lithuania

Photos: Simas Bernotas / Lithuania Travel · Giedrius Akelis / Lithuania Travel · Marius Jovaiša / Lithuania Travel. Illustrations by openBaltics. Free to share; please do not sell.