



EUROPOS SAJUNGA  
Europos fondas trečiųjų  
šalių piliečių integracijai



Soros International House  
PASAULINIS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ORGANIZACIJOS NARYS NUO 1992 M.

### III. Lithuanian culture

Lithuania is divided into four ethnographic regions: Aukštaitija, Žemaitija, Suvalkija and Dzūkija. Each region has an authentic linguistic dialect, traditions and customs.

Learn more about the ethnographic regions of Lithuania here:

<http://www.tautinispaveldas.lt/zemelapis/index.php?page=regionai>

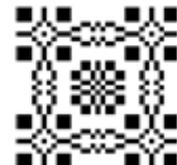
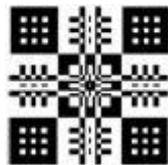
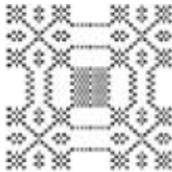
#### 3.1 Traditional crafts

Lithuanian traditional crafts are:

##### § Weaving

It is believed that the fabric retains a person's connection with faith.

Sashes are one of the oldest Lithuanian folk textiles. They are used both by men and women. Women decorated their heads with most beautiful sashes. Currently the hand-made sashes are flourishing. The textile remains a significant gift for Lithuanian people.



Fabric square patterns (katpėdės) are one of the most common in Lithuanian countryside.

Each fabric color has its symbolic meaning, for example:

- red is a symbol of protection;
- green is associated with nature, hope, loneliness;
- purple and black symbolizes sadness.



##### § Beekeeping

In the old Lithuanian culture was believed that bees connect people in a special relationship, therefore the word "bitė" ("a bee") gave origin to the word "bičiulis" which means a special relationship between beekeepers. Nowhere else in Europe such a concept of friendship was known and the special friendly relationship ("bičiulystė") which connected people who were raising bees was not emphasized.





EUROPOS SAJUNGA  
Europos fondas trečiųjų  
šalių piliečių integracijai



Soros International House  
PASAULINIS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ORGANIZACIJOS NARYS NUO 1992 M.

In ancient times honey and wax were like a currency, the people paid the obligatory tributes with it to the church. Honey theft, beehives or swarm destruction was punished even with death penalty.



### § Thatched gardens

Symbolize the creation of the perfect world and are related with the Heaven, garden of the sky. They used to be made at Easter time and hanged over the dinner table.

### § Amber works of art

Amber is also called Nordic Gold. It is an organic mineral that is formed of fossilized tree resin. Hardened resin is washed from the forest soil by rain and rivers to the Baltic Sea. Eventually resin turns to amber.

Amber sometimes contains components of animals and plants, which is called inclusions.

Amber is a decorative material and is widely used for the creation of art and jewelry.

§ **Herbalism** is not only a treatment using herbs. This traditional craft also includes growing medicinal plants, collecting, storing and preparing them.

The best-known and most widely used herbs are those, which treat colds: thyme cures colds, enhance immunity, lime blossom reduces fever, promotes perspiration and inhibits inflammation.



## 3.2 Celebrations and traditions

### § Užgavėnės/Shrove Tuesday

The end of winter celebration. This is a pagan festival formerly called Ragutis holiday. The aims of the celebration are to chase away winter and to invite spring to come. A lot of fatty foods are traditionally eaten on the day; people



dance traditional Lithuanian dances, play games, make Lašininis (winter symbol) and Kanapinis (spring character) fight. Morė (symbolizing winter) is burned in bonfires. Winter is being chased away by chanting "Winter, winter, go away!"



Traditionally, "šiupinys", pancakes donuts and meat dishes are cooked and eaten at this time.

The main attributes of Užgavėnės are masks and disguise. It is important that the celebration costume would be unique and unusual.

It has been said that if you work hard on Užgavėnės, you will not have a rest for the rest of the year.



EUROPOS SĄJUNGA  
Europos fondas trečiųjų  
šalių piliečių integracijai



Soros International House  
PASAULINIS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ORGANIZACIJOS NARYS NUO 1992 M.



### § Kaziuko mugė/Kaziukas fair

The fair started when the St. Casimir's remains were transferred to the Cathedral. After the mass service the market took place, which has grown into Kaziukas fair over the years.

The most important purchases at the fair are bagels, palms and traditional craft products of wood, straw, metal and amber.

There is a saying:

- *What have you brought back from the fair?*
- *A donut hole.*

### § Velykos/Easter

Spring festival. The main attribute of this holiday is Easter Egg (printed, embossed or painted).

Easter celebration is wrapped with traditions and superstitions such as thinking that whoever first return home with the carriage after the mass service, he/she would be the first one with all the works. Firstly the holy eggs were eaten during the Easter breakfast after coming back from the church.



### § Joninės (Rasos)/ St. Johns

Midsummer festival, when the night is the shortest in the year.

Johns and Joannas celebrate the name day. Traditionally oak wreaths are made as a gift for them.



The main attributes of the Midsummer festival are bonfires, flowers and other plants wreaths, which are flown in the river. It is believed that if a guy's and a girl's wreaths meet in the water, they will get married. Traditionally, St. Johns night is the night for the search for the fern flower, which is a symbol of happiness.

### § Vėlinės/ All Saints Day

Traditionally on that day people visit relative's graves, lit the candles and pray for the dead ones.

### § Kūčios/Christmas Eve

It is a night of miracles.

Housewives prepare 12 dishes symbolizing 12 months in a year. Traditional Lithuanian Christmas Eve dishes are Christmas Eve cookies, poppy milk and porridge. Meat products are not eaten instead fish dishes are prepared.

Christmas night is the time for spells. Straws are placed under the tablecloth; each person pulls out a straw. The longest one means the long life. It is believed that on the magical Christmas Eve night animals are able to speak human language, but to hear that is a bad sign because those who hear it would not live long life. It is also believed that the souls of dead come to join the feast, therefore some food is left for them overnight.



EUROPOS SĄJUNGA  
Europos fondas trečiųjų  
šalių piliečių integracijai



Soros International House  
PASAULINIS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ORGANIZACIJOS NARYS NUO 1992 M.



● You can read more about celebrations and traditions here:

[http://lt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lietuvi%C5%B3\\_tradicijos\\_ir\\_papro%C4%8Diai](http://lt.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lietuvi%C5%B3_tradicijos_ir_papro%C4%8Diai)

### 3.3 Traditional Lithuanian Music

Traditional musical instruments:

§ **Skudučiai** is a collective musical instrument, played by men. Traditional music with *skudučiai* is called *sutartinė*.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P\\_SXYEuAov8](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P_SXYEuAov8)

§ **Kanklės**. The origin of *kanklės* is associated with the primitive beliefs. The tree was cut and dedicated to a dead family member. *Kanklės* is an instrument of žemaičiai and kuršiai.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWvpVtwxvpQ>

§ **Birbynė** was made by shepherds in the 19th century. Later, influenced by classical instruments *birbynė* has become more sophisticated and used in professional music.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gF0vowH9I9Q>

§ **Skrabalai** were used by the shepherds. They tied up this wooden bell around the cow's neck, which made easier to find them in the forest.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7OqX5AzSwe8>

Traditional Lithuanian folk songs are called **sutartinės (glee)**. Singers create a special authentic polyphonic performance. The glees were mostly sung in Aukštaitija district. They are officially included into the World Cultural Heritage by UNESCO.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iGPO1kcTTIc>

**Dainų šventė (Song Festival)** is a festival of traditional songs and dances, which is considered to be the largest cultural event in Lithuania. The tradition of Song Festival began in the 19th century. Nowadays these huge celebrations take place every four years and bring together amateur and professional teams, children, youth and adults from all over the world and Lithuania.

### 3.4 Modern Culture

Music

Different music festivals are organized in different parts of Lithuania such as “Gaida”, “Vilnius festival”, “Vilnius mama jazz”, “Kaunas jazz”, “Kristupas summer festival”.



● More information about annual festivals in Vilnius and other Lithuanian towns can be found here: <http://www.vilniusfestivals.lt/LT/>



EUROPOS SĄJUNGA  
Europos fondas trečiųjų  
šalių piliečių integracijai



Soros International House  
PASAULINIS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ORGANIZACIJOS NARYS NUO 1992 M.

§ **“Gaida” festival** is the main and the largest modern music festival in Lithuania, which have being held since 1991 in Vilnius. The festival presents a broad overview of the recent creative art works as well as the latest musical trends from Lithuania, Europe and the world. The most famous performers are invited to the festival. The "Gaida" is an autumn event, organized every year in October-November.

§ **Kristupas Summer Festival** is the largest and one of the most amazing summer music festivals in Lithuania. It lasts throughout two summer months – July and August. During this time 50 original events take place in different areas of Vilnius and Lithuanian regions. The festival's motto is "All genres are good except the boring ones".

§ **Street Music Festival** has been presented by Andrius Mamontovas, a musician and actor, since 2007. The 5th of May is announced to be the Street Performers Day. Everyone is invited to come and play for the people in the streets, parks and other different places.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PiFYOVnGHNA>

§ **Blues Night.** This international festival is held every first July weekend in the same place Varniai near the Lukštas lake. [www.bliuzonaktys.lt](http://www.bliuzonaktys.lt)

§ **The Culture night** is a unique cultural multi genre event. The tradition came from the European capitals and has been successfully incorporated in Vilnius since 2007. Every year one summer night in June the country's capital city do not sleep, because a lot of dancing, film screenings, concerts of different genres of music, performances, poetry readings and all night working museums attract people. [www.kulturosaktis.lt](http://www.kulturosaktis.lt)

## Theatre

### The biggest theatre events:

§ **The Theatre Festival “Sirenos”** is one of the biggest and the most significant theatre events. The best performances of the most interesting directors are selected to be shown. This relevant, intriguing, shocking, embarrassing, dramatic, unusual, breaking stereotypes festival is organized every year in September and October.

[www.sirenos.lt](http://www.sirenos.lt)



§ **New Circus Weekend.** The New circus is juggling, acrobatics, modern dance, complex and unusual, aesthetically appealing stunts. There are not many such circus artists in Lithuania, so many teams come from other countries. The New Circus weekend is organized every September.



EUROPOS SĄJUNGA  
Europos fondas trečiųjų  
šalių piliečių integracijai



Soros International House  
PASAULINIS INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ORGANIZACIJOS NARYS NUO 1992 M.

§ **New Baltic Dance Festival** is the largest event of this kind of art in the Baltic countries. The Lithuanian and foreign dancers take part in it. This is a great opportunity to get to know the latest national and global dancing trends.

<http://www.vilniusfestivals.lt/LT/apie-festivali-6/>

§ **Different Theatre for the Kids** is a modern, interactive, multi genre, and gorgeous festival. Children can participate in various workshops and excursions to become acquainted with the theatre and the play development process. The festival is held every year in mid-January.



## Cinema

§ **Vilnius International Film Festival “Kino pavasaris”** is the largest and most important event of the year in the field of film and film production. There are both Lithuanian and foreign films shown on the screens which received recognition, awards and aroused discussions in various international film festivals. <http://www.vilniusfestivals.lt/LT/apie-festivali-9/>

§ **European Cinema Festival “Scanorama”** every November connects several towns of Lithuania as Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda. The Festival is highly valued for representing the non-commercial films of high artistic value, sharing interesting ideas and discoveries. [www.scanorama.lt](http://www.scanorama.lt)

§ **Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films** is the first and so far the only human rights film festival not only in Lithuania, but also in the Baltic countries. The festival's mission is to raise human rights issues around the world and provide the information about it. [www.nepatoguskinas.lt](http://www.nepatoguskinas.lt)



● More information about Lithuanian films can be found here: [www.lfc.lt](http://www.lfc.lt)

## Literature

§ **Vilnius Book Fair** is the biggest literature and cultural event. This is the main meeting place for publishers, authors and readers to meet and talk. This is a significant cultural event in Lithuania and the largest book fair in the Baltic countries. [www.vilniausknygumuge.lt](http://www.vilniausknygumuge.lt)

The most popular modern Lithuanian authors are Sigitas Parulskis, Jurga Ivanauskaitė, Giedra Radvilavičiūtė, Marius Ivaskevičius, Krsitina Sabaliauskaitė, Renata Šerelytė, Laura Sintija Černiauskaitė.



● More information about Lithuanian writers can be found here:

<http://www.rasytojai.lt/lt/rasytojai#a>