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Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union

Cultural Heritage of Lithuania



**Created by Kaunas region
Vilkija Gymnasium**

A white bird, possibly a egret or heron, is captured in mid-flight, its wings spread wide, gliding over a field of tall, golden-brown grasses. The background is a soft, out-of-focus expanse of the same grasses, creating a sense of depth and tranquility. The overall color palette is warm and natural, dominated by the golden tones of the grass and the stark white of the bird.

Cultural heritage: Architecture

Nida is a small resort settlement in the Curonian Spit. It is not an ordinary Lithuanian settlement; all houses in Nida are blue, red and white. Other colors are not acceptable. In the old folk architecture only various details were painted: windows, doors, windshields, fenders. Two basic colors were used for these elements: white and blue. Painting the building with blue made it especially stand out against the background of yellowish sand dunes, fishermen returning from the lagoons saw these buildings much earlier and home seemed closer. As the research states red colour was introduced in the 19th century, when extensive trades with the Swedes began, and the color is now considered characteristic of Nida.

Nida



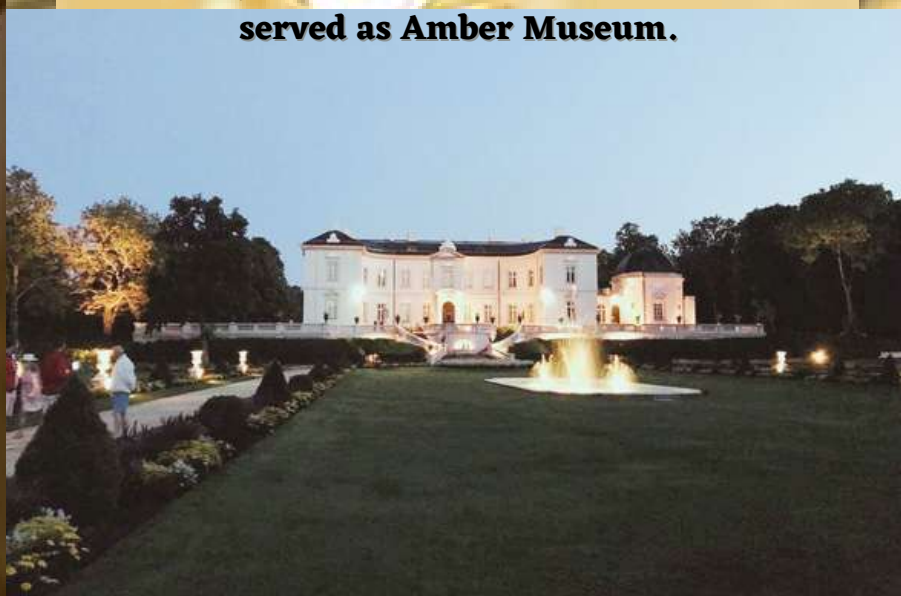
Tiškevičiai Palace in Palanga

Tiškevičiai Palace in Palanga is widely known in Lithuania. The Palace was built in 1897-1902 and projected by German architect Heinrich Schwechten. It is a neoclassical palace with elements of renaissance, baroque and classicism.

Palanga Botanical Park surrounds the palace, where visitors can also find the preserved Birutė mountain a chapel, a guardhouse, Lourdes grotto. The park has a mesmerizing landscape with a beautiful fountain, flower beds and a rose garden.

The building was significantly damaged during the Second World War and the post-war years.

It was only restored in 1957 and since then has served as Amber Museum.



Panemunė's castle

In the Middle Ages, castles formed a large part of the Duchy of Lithuania. Grand dukes and nobles used to build the most luxurious castles. One of them is Panemunė's Castle in Jurbarkas district.

Panemunė's Castle is the best-preserved Renaissance residential castle in Lithuania. There are five cascading ponds and a park near the castle.

Panemunė's Castle stands out for its impressive size and preserved wall paintings reminiscent of the times of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. A special value is the combination of different eras and the styles that reflect them: Renaissance, Baroque and Classicism.

Now it has been partially restored and belongs to the Vilnius Academy of Arts. It can now be visited and you can see many interesting things: classical wall paintings, 18th century castle kitchen, archaeological findings, a castle prison, an observation tower, a park.



Trakai castle



The castle is famous for its gothic architecture and its special location – it stands on an island on Lake Galve, one of the deepest lakes in Lithuania.

The castle was built in the 14th century on initiative of Grand Dukes Kęstutis and Vytautas and served as a residence for the Grand Dukes of Lithuania. However, the structure fell into disarray in the 17th century and was only rebuilt in 1951. In 1962, the castle became a part of the Trakai History Museum.

Mills - mechanical devices for crushing or grinding raw materials using water, wind or other energy were largely used in Lithuania starting from the 13th century. Initially, mills were built by feudal lords and merchants, later by peasants.

Most of the mills are now recognized as national or European cultural heritage.

Mills





Cultural heritage: Traditions

Lithuanian song festival

Lithuanian Song Festival is the ultimate Lithuanian festival, taking place once in every four years. During the Lithuanian Song Festival, Lithuanians from all over the country and the Lithuanian diaspora come to Vilnius to sing Lithuanian songs together. The Festival spans over a week, but the final "Day of the Songs" when ~50 000 of the participants march into the purpose-built grandstand in Vilnius Vingis Park for a mass performance is undoubtedly the magical pinnacle of the event. Everybody is invited to sing together.

The Lithuanian Song Festivals have been inscribed into the UNESCO list of immaterial world heritage.



Sutartinės

Sutartinės (“sutarti” means to be in accord) is a phenomenon of Lithuanian traditional music interlinking singing, words and movements representing an archaic form of two – four voiced polyphony, usually sung by women. The poetic texts encompass many themes, including work, calendar rituals, weddings, family, wars, history and moments of daily life. Song are usually accompanied with certain simple Choreography such as walking in the form of a circle or star while linking arms and stamping feet.

Sutartinės, Lithuanian multipart songs were inscribed on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



St. John's day, or Rasos, is the midsummer festival celebrated in Lithuania. It takes place on the 24th of June. While midsummer day is celebrated throughout Europe, many Lithuanians have a particularly lively agenda on this day. The traditions include singing songs and dancing until the sun sets, telling tales, searching to find the magic fern blossom at midnight, jumping over bonfires, greeting the rising midsummer sun and washing the face with a morning dew, young girls float flower wreaths on the water of river or lake.

St. John's day



Easter is a sacred holiday in Lithuania and its old traditions remain the same from our ancestors. It's a time when whole family meets around the big table to eat Easter Sunday Feast and play Easter games. Beforehand families spend their evening hand-painting Easter eggs (margučiai). Decorating Easter eggs (margučiai) plays a big part in Lithuania's Easter celebrations. One of the oldest methods involves using sharp objects, such as tips of needles, to paint various patterns with wax. The egg must be boiled, and the wax needs to be hot, otherwise it will not apply correctly.

Easter eggs decoration



Christmas Eve dinner

Christmas Eve in Lithuania is considered the most important day of the whole holiday season. This is the time when all the family gathers together to sit down around Christmas Eve table. One of the most important traditions is to prepare 12 dishes on the table. The 12 dishes symbolise the months of the year or the 12 apostles. The most important dishes on the Kūčios table are kūčia – a boiled cereal dish with dried fruit and honey, and kūčiukai – sweet nuggets made from leavened dough and served with poppy seed milk. You won't find any meat, dairy products or eggs though – the old tradition encourages fasting, however, one should at least taste each of the 12 dishes.



A white dove is shown in flight, its wings spread wide, flying over a field of tall, golden-brown grasses. The background is a soft, out-of-focus field of similar grasses, creating a warm and natural atmosphere. The dove is positioned in the center of the frame, with its head turned slightly to the right.

Cultural heritage: Cuisine

Cepelinai



One of the best known Lithuanian cultural heritage dish is „Cepelinai“. They are potato dumplings made from grated potatoes and stuffed with minced meat, dry curd or mushrooms, usually served with sour cream and bacon cracklings.



Šaltibarščiai

This refreshing, cold beetroot soup is a part of traditional Lithuanian cuisine. It consists of a creamy blend of pickled or boiled beetroots and sour milk, poured over chopped cucumbers and hard-boiled eggs. The whole soup is generously seasoned with dill, and is usually left to set until all the flavors are thoroughly combined. It is usually prepared in the summertime, and is best served chilled, preferably with potatoes on the side.



Šakotis

Lithuanian „Šakotis“ ("tree cake") is one of the main Lithuanian traditional cakes served in all important family festivals. It is made of butter, eggs, flour, sugar, and cream and is cooked on a rotating spit in an oven or over an open fire.



Bulviniai blynai

„Potato pancakes“ are very popular in the whole country and is usually made from grated potatoes. Traditionally, they are served with sour cream or apple marmalade.



Lithuanian curd cheese is a traditional Lithuanian dish and is an integral part of Lithuania's culinary and national heritage. It is made from goat or cow milk when milk is curdled using only lactic acid bacteria instead of enzymes. The cheese is usually eaten as the top of a sandwich or with honey.

Curd cheese



Cultural heritage: Art



Cross crafting

Cross craft is a part of historical and cultural heritage of Lithuanians. It symbolises the path of the Lithuanian nation and reflects its main stages. The term “cross craft” itself includes elements of national spirit, mentality, faith as well as creative process of the author, his believes and national customs.

Cross craft is a unique phenomenon. In 2001, Lithuanian cross-crafting was included in the UNESCO list of masterpieces of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.





Straw gardens

Straw gardens represent one of the Lithuanian traditional art forms. Their volume decorations of precise geometric forms carry aesthetic and sacral functions. The most usual forms are of four-sided pyramids. The gardens are decorated with traditional elements symbolising life, fertility and wellbeing. The straw gardens represent an important part of the Lithuanian and the Baltic cultural heritage reflecting the old worldview, therefore, they are compared to the World Tree – the universal symbol of harmonious universe.

Verbos (Palms)

Verbos (Palms) – a decoration made of dried flowers, plants, moss. It is traditionally used for Palm Sunday celebration, known since 16th century. In folk tradition it was a posy made from willow and juniper twigs – early spring trees and shrubs and evergreen plant twigs. It was believed that the exploding green plants have magical powers that will be recruited to touch the animals to be healthy, and people – happy and beautiful. Currently it is developed into a specific branch of a folk art spread in whole Lithuania.





Folk dances

Lithuanian folk dances is Lithuanian traditional choreographic heritage consisting of dances, round dances and games. Majority of them were created for entertainment, but there are some interesting ritual roundelays and dances, which are closely related to the calendar, work and wedding ceremonies.



In Lithuania people began weaving during the Neolithic period, using wool from animals and various plant fibers.

The pattern, properties and appearance of the fabric is always different, since this depends on the colours of the yarns and the way they interlace. Researchers have observed that the old Lithuanian folk fabrics were not so much about technical perfection as they were about an abundance of details.

Lithuanian weaving



**Cultural heritage:
Nature**

Lithuania has almost 3,000 lakes. Tauragnas is the deepest lake in Lithuania, with its deepest point reaching 62.5 meters. Lake Žuvintas is the shallowest lake in Lithuania, with average depth of only 0.6 meters and deepest point reaching only 3 meters and is part of UNESCO protected Žuvintas Biosphere Reserve.

Lakes



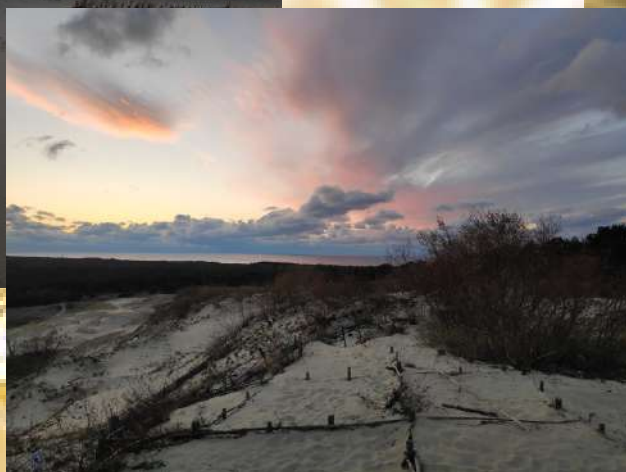


Mounds

Mounds are an inseparable part of Lithuanian culture and history, they are the most important legacy of the pagan Baltic culture. Approximately 850 mounds have remained in Lithuania. All of them remind of rich history and witness the life and battles of the Baltic tribes.



The Curonian Spit



The Curonian Spit has been named as a UNESCO World Heritage Site because of outstanding natural beauty. It is also a Lithuanian National Park. Curonian Peninsula starts at the sea gate of Klaipeda and runs for a 100 km south. Nida is the main settlement on the Spit. Here you can see the authentic fishermen's cottages and beautiful weathervanes.

Weathervanes



Curonian weathervanes are a unique part of the heritage of Lithuania's coastal region, with details and ornaments from traditional fishing boats marked with symbols and meanings. You can take them and read them like a book – they reflect the story of the fisherman's life.

Stelmužė's

Oak



Stelmužė's oak is Lithuanian natural monument, one of the oldest oak trees in Europe and the oldest tree in Lithuania. It is estimated that the age of the oak is 1500 - 2000 years. Oak is 23 m in height, 3.5 m in diameter and 13 m in girth on the ground level.

Stelmužė's oak is a tree, which has seen a lot during its life: Lithuanian dukes, crusaders, Knights of the Sword, Swedish army.



Erasmus+

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within an Erasmus+ project

Cultural Heritage Album RAW Makers

2020-1-PL01-KA229-O81774

Co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union

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