

Traditions

Traditions. Traditional Festivals in Lithuania

Easter - March / April

Easter is a Christian festival and a holiday celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Easter is also nature's awakening from winter sleep. Majority of people go to church to listen to the Mass-Resurrection services in Lithuania on Easter morning. Afterwards, everybody hurries home for family breakfast or lunch. After the meal Easter games are played. Egg-breaking contest reveals who possesses the strongest Easter egg.

"Joninės" St. John's Day" - June 24th

It is celebrated on 24 June. It is considered to be the longest day and the shortest night in Lithuania. The festival's customs can be linked to pagan times. The traditions include telling tales, singing songs and dancing, jumping over bonfires till the sun rises. Young girls float flower wreaths on the waters of a river or a lake. The rising sun is greeted in the morning and everybody washes their faces with a morning dew.

All Saint's Day - November 1th

This day is devoted to honor the souls of family members that have passed away. On this day people visit cemeteries, decorate graves, light candles on the graves and attend church to pray for the dead. People believe souls of the dead return to earth on this day.

Christmas Eve (Kūčios) - December 24th

This celebration commemorates the birth of Jesus. Christmas Eve is unique in Lithuania, even more celebrated than Christmas. On Christmas Eve, all family gathers and prepare meals excluding meat and milk products. The dinner must consist of at least 12 meals and every participant should taste each meal. The most popular dishes are: herring, kūčiukai (traditional Lithuanians Christmas Eve snack) with poppy milk, kissel (a popular fruit or berries drink in Lithuania), vegetable salad, mushrooms, boiled potatoes, bread, and fish.

Traditions. Traditional crafts in Lithuania

Like every country in the world Lithuania has its own remaining traditional crafts. They are smithery, weaving, textile weaving and knitting, fur making, wood carving, products from clay, stoneware, jewelry, binding of Easter palms, production of traditional musical instruments.

Smithery. Lithuanian smiths are famous in the world as great craftsmen. They have accumulated significant experience in processing and applying metal products in household. Decorative household items, fences, gates, various decorations, Lithuanian crosses with little suns and many other products by our blacksmiths represent Lithuania as a land of talented craftsmen.

Weaving. It is woven from wicker, sapwood, roots, bark, straw and other local materials. Wicker furniture (tables, chairs, etc.) has a substantial demand in the country and abroad. In addition, wicker-raising also provides workplaces and livelihoods here. This can be done by a large number of farmers, even those with small areas of low fertile land. Basket-weaving of separated sapwood, especially in Dzūkija, allows a better exploitation of wood resources. Weaving of roots, particularly pine trees, encourages more effective use of cut forests. Removal of roots reduces the risk of rotting and provides basis for a healthy, ecologically based reforestation. Weaving of straw also creates opportunities for better use of agricultural waste.

Textile weaving and knitting. Lithuania has been famous for linen fabrics since ancient times. This is a wide area of activity not only for flax growers and processors, but also for manufacturers of yarns, natural dyeing products, clothing designers, etc. Knitting of wool yarns reveals many opportunities to promote traditional sheep breeding, especially in less fertile land.

Fur making. Breeding of sheep, goats and cattle encourages the use of fur. From ancient times, Lithuanians have been able to sew fur coats, hats, gloves, and to make shoes, fancy bags, wallets, etc. This is also a wide ground for the ingenuity and fantasy of the craftsmen.

Wood carving. Sculptured wood carvings of cross and god is a very deep tradition obtaining Lithuanian folk art.

Moreover, from wood, especially from its residues, the craftsmen are able to produce a great deal of household items, tools and instruments. It is a great area of self-expression for carpenters building traditional wooden houses and for woodworkers creating home decorations. Their produced wood works have already become popular export goods.

Products made of clay. Since ancient times, clay has been a great raw material for our craftsmen. There is a great ground not only for pottery, but also for other saleable ceramic products (whistles, decorative clay bricks, tiles for fireplaces, etc.).

Products made of stone. Lithuania is famous for its stone cutters. They create tombstones, memorial stelas, monuments, various decorative accents, etc.

Jewelry. The production of jewelry from metals, amber, wood and other materials has been especially developed in Lithuania. It is also a highly encouraged area of activity which particularly represents Lithuania locally and abroad.

Binding of Easter palms. This is a unique, especially typical for Vilnius region, folk art area that makes Lithuania famous all around the world. This activity provides a lot of jobs not only for binders, but also for various plant growers as raw material suppliers.

Production of traditional musical instruments. Instruments are in great demand not only among ethnographic or folk ensembles, but also as souvenirs for foreigners. The secrets of the production of various instruments from the old masters must be developed and fostered in every way. Baltic psaltery, multi-pipe whistles, pipes, wipe whistles, drums, and many other unique musical instruments are a great ethnocultural heritage of Lithuania. Masters of this craft might be especially fostered and protected (Source: LR Seimas).