

UDK 77.04(474.5)(084)  
Am-17

Published by:  
VšĮ „Terra Publica“, Tilžės st.18, 47181 Kaunas, Lithuania  
Tel./fax +370 37 32 88 21, e-mail terra@lva.lt

Managing Editor Danguolė Kandrotienė  
Editors: Daiva Čugunova, Marija Tuškevičiūtė  
Designer Jūratė Ruzienė  
Leading photographer Vytautas Kandrotas  
Translation by UAB „Verslo strategija“  
Printed in UAB „ARX BALTICA“

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording or any other information storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher.

© Danguolė Kandrotienė, 2009  
© „Terra Publica“, 2009

ISBN 978-9955-652-57-1



A M B E R  
**LITHUANIA**





△ *The flag of the President of the Republic of Lithuania*



△ *The Coat of Arms of Lithuania*



△ *The national flag of Lithuania*

The Republic of Lithuania is one of the countries belonging to the Baltic States region, situated in the geographical centre of Europe, along the southeastern shore of the Baltic Sea. Lithuania shares its sea and land borders with Latvia, one more country belonging to the Baltic States region (the length of the border 610 km), Poland (the length of the border 677 km), Belarus (the length of the border 677 km), and the Russian exclave of the Kaliningrad Oblast (the length of the border 285 km). The total length of the borders is 1,732 km.

Though Lithuania has a sea access, the Lithuanian coastline of the Baltic Sea is only 90 km long. The total territory of the country covers 65,200 km<sup>2</sup>. Out of 191 countries, Lithuania is 120<sup>th</sup> by size and it is larger than Latvia and Estonia (the other two countries of the Baltic States region), Denmark, Belgium, Slovenia and some other countries.

The population of the country is 3.400 million (2006 est.), 83.45% of whom are Lithuanians and 79% – Catholics. Nearly 70% is urban population (concentrated in Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda). Nearly 7% of Poles, 6% of Russians and somewhat more than 1% of Belarusians are friendly getting along in Lithuania.

The historical Coat of Arms of Lithuania – the armour-clad silver rider on a red field, holding a sword and shield – is also named Vytis (*the Chaser, the Pursuer*). Vytis is known to have been first used as the state emblem in 1366 on the seal of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Algirdas, affixed onto a document published that year. The Lithuanian coat of arms is one of the oldest national coats of arms in Europe.

The national flag of Lithuania was used during the years of Lithuania's independence between the wars. The flag was banned during the years of Soviet occupation and recognised again on March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1989. The Lithuanian flag, also named a tricolour, consists of three equal-sized yellow, green and red stripes.

Vilnius is the capital and the largest city of Lithuania. The republic is ruled by the President, the Seimas (*the Parliament*) and the Government. Lithuania is a parliamentary republic by the type of government. Constitution is the main law of the country.



△ *Lithuania in its shape is similar to a man's profile*

▽ *The largest flag of Lithuania (size 27x45 m)*



◁ *Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania*

# Climate in Lithuania



△ *In the springtime*



△ *Swan in the Galvė Lake*

The climate in Lithuania is transitional between maritime and continental, damp both in winter and summer. The Lithuanian climate is mainly influenced by the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf Stream. Weather conditions seem to be unstable throughout a year. The average annual temperature is about  $+6.2^{\circ}\text{C}$ . Statistically, the difference between the warmest month (July) and the coldest month (January) is  $21.8^{\circ}\text{C}$ .

Springs seem to be the most unstable with regard to temperature and precipitation. Even late in May frosts are threatening Lithuanian gardeners and horticulturists. In Lithuania most cultures start their vegetation in the middle of April, when the day temperature reaches  $15^{\circ}\text{C}$ . May is often the brightest month in a year.

Summers are quite short in Lithuania; the mean summer temperature is  $17^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The hottest month is July. In summer, the temperature is by 2–4 degrees cooler near the sea, and the water is only lukewarm, what is quite sad for Lithuanians and foreign tourists. The Baltic Sea is most friendly for swimming in August. In summer and spring, thunder crashes 19–30 days and precipitation in the warm season (April – October) accounts for 60–65% of the annual precipitation level. So, wherever you go, always have an umbrella with you.

## January



The mean temperature  $-4 - -6^{\circ}\text{C}$ .  
Rainfall average 25-70 mm.

## February



The mean temperature  $-3 - -6^{\circ}\text{C}$ .  
Rainfall average 20-50 mm.

## March



The mean temperature  $-0,7^{\circ}\text{C}$ .  
Rainfall average 30-40 mm.

## July



The mean temperature  $+16 - +18^{\circ}\text{C}$ .  
Rainfall average 80-110 mm.

## August



The mean temperature  $+16,2^{\circ}\text{C}$ .  
Rainfall average 70-80 mm.

## September



The mean temperature  $+11,9^{\circ}\text{C}$ .  
Rainfall average 50-100 mm.

Lithuanian autumns are the least varying, with prevailing mists, slush and steady drizzling. The first mild frosts appear in flower gardens at the end of September. Fogs usually linger on rivers and lakes and surrounding wet meadows. Mizzling and morning frost escapades become scaring for drivers in late autumns.

Though winters are quite mild in Lithuania, during every winter there are at least a few days, when the thermometer drops below -25°C. And during every winter such tricks of the weather cause damage to the lovers of exotic plants. Snow is seen now and then in Lithuania, so sledging is most popular in January and February, though steady snow cover often prevails until the middle of March. Usual thickness of snow is 25–35 cm, but it is always thin in the Pamarys region. Roads are often in the icy conditions in winter mornings; snow coating often makes the roads slippery and difficult to get through, so it is complicated to drive in wintertime. Special winter tyres are obligatory from November 10<sup>th</sup> to April 1<sup>st</sup>.



△ Winter in the Open Air Museum of Lithuania in Rumšiškės

▷ 18–19 p. Uostadvaris Water Boosting Station

### Lithuanian weather records:

The highest recorded temperature – 37.50°C (July 1994, Zarasai region);  
 The lowest recorded temperature – -42.90°C (February 1956, Utena region);  
 The maximum-recorded wind speed – 44 m/s (1999, hurricane Anatoly);  
 The highest recorded atmospheric pressure – 1058.5 hPa (1889, Vilnius);  
 The heaviest recorded rainfall – 25 cm precipitation in 8 hours (1980, Sartai);  
 The maximum-recorded soil frost depth – 145 cm (1969, Lazdijai);  
 The maximum-recorded snow depth – 90 cm (1958, Laukuva).

## April



The mean temperature +5 – +7°C.  
 Rainfall average 33-50 mm.

## May



The mean temperature +12 – +14°C.  
 Rainfall average 40-70 mm.

## June



The mean temperature +14 – +16°C.  
 Rainfall average 45-80 mm.

## October



The mean temperature +6 – +8°C.  
 Rainfall average 40-70 mm.

## November



The mean temperature +1 – -5°C.  
 Rainfall average 40-95 mm.

## December



The mean temperature -2 – -4°C.  
 Rainfall average 30-70 mm.





# Lithuanian Money



△ Lithuanian coins in 1925

The Lithuanian currency and monetary unit is litas. The litas is pegged to the euro at a rate of 3.45 litas = 1 euro. One litas is divided into 100 cents (Lithuanian: sg. *centas*, pl. *centai*). Today 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 litas denomination banknotes and 1, 2 and 5 litas denomination coins as well as 1, 2, 5, 10, 20, 50 cent denomination coins are in circulation. Payments in the national currency are acceptable in all business or service places. After the restitution of independence in 1918, Lithuania didn't have its currency and bank of issue for several years. Foreign currencies were in circulation after the World War I. The Bank of Lithuania was established in 1922. The first litas was introduced on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1922. The value of the litas was ensured with gold, foreign exchange reserves and securities. The exchange rate of the national currency against the dollar (10:1) was set on the basis of the litas gold content. The Bank of Lithuania pursued a tight monetary policy, which helped to maintain a stable exchange rate of the litas in times of economic crises. The litas gained in confidence to become one of the firmest currencies in the world and retained its initial gold parity up to 1940, when Lithuania was occupied by the Soviet Union. During the Soviet period, the monetary unit of roubles was introduced in Lithuania, same as all over the USSR. The Bank of Lithuania was re-established in 1990. In 1992 the temporary currency, the talonas (coupon), was introduced and stayed in circulation for some while together with roubles. The national currency, the litas, was re-introduced on June 25, 1993.



*10 litas banknote*

Averse: a double portrait of pilots S. Darius and S. Girėnas, national heroes of Lithuania, who have flown over the Atlantic Ocean.

Reverse: plane "Lituanica" flying over the Atlantic Ocean, fragments of the continents of America and Europe, ocean waves.



*20 litas banknote*

Averse: a portrait of priest Maironis (Jonas Mačiulis, 1862–1932), famous Lithuanian poet and bard of the Lithuanian national rebirth.

Reverse: The Statue of Liberty against the background of Vytutas the Great War Museum and Belfry (Kaunas).



*50 litas banknote*

Averse: a portrait of Jonas Basanavičius (1851–1927), patriarch of Lithuania, scientist, politician, signatory of the Act of Independence of 16<sup>th</sup> February 1918.

Reverse: Vilnius Cathedral and Belfry, Monument to the Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas, Gediminas Castle Tower and the Hill of Three Crosses.



*100 litas banknote*

Averse: a portrait of Simonas Daukantas (1793–1864), initiator of the national rebirth movement, historian, who has written the first history of Lithuania in the Lithuanian language).

Reverse: a picture of the Old Town of Vilnius.



*200 litas banknote*

Averse: a portrait of Vydūnas (Vilhelmas Storosta, 1868–1953), prominent Lithuanian philosopher, writer and culture educator. Vydūnas was spreading idealistic philosophy and ideas of humanism through his works.

Reverse: an image of extinct Klaipėda lighthouse erected in 1796 is depicted.



*500 litas banknote*

Averse: a portrait of Vincas Kudirka (1858–1899), Lithuanian writer and author of the Lithuanian national anthem.

Reverse: an image of the Bell of the Freedom of Lithuania with the inscription: "Thou shall ring through the centuries to the children of Lithuania: he who does not defend freedom is not worthy of it".

# History of Lithuania



△ Grand Duke Vytautas the Great is the most favourite ruler of Lithuania (his reign 1392–1430), painting in the Kaunas Cathedral Basilica

The first people arrived to the territory of present Lithuania in the 11<sup>th</sup> –9<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. Sedentary people – farmers, the ancestors of Balts – appeared somewhere in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC. The ancient Balts were outstanding for their corded ware pottery, special form of axes, unique fortification system of mounds. The Balts were farmers. They cultivated cereal and gardens. The first cultivated plants included wheat, barley, millets. The Balts ate game, fish, berries and mushrooms.

The name of Lithuania was first referenced in the annals of the monastery of Quedlinburg in 1009, which tell a tragic story about St. Bruno (Bonifatius), who came to pagan lands to carry out Christianisation, but was hit on the head by the pagans.

Lithuania's name *Lietuva* is usually linked to the river Lietauka (a tributary of the Neris), but there also are other interpretations as to the origin of Lithuania's name *Lietuva*. *Lietuviai* (Lithuanians) was also the name of a large Baltic tribe settled between the Neris and the Nemunas (the largest rivers of Lithuania).

Lithuania as a state was formed in the 13<sup>th</sup> century. Its establisher is the only true king of Lithuania, Mindaugas, who had united separate Baltic tribal groups. Mindaugas was a violent warrior and good politician. Though being a confirmed pagan, he was baptised and was authorised by the Pope of Rome to be crowned as King of Lithuania on July 6, 1253. This date is considered to the date of the establishment of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (GDL) and the State of Lithuania. The GDL turned to a powerful martial country extending throughout the entire southwest territory of Eastern



1009 – the name of Lithuania was first mentioned in written sources.

1253 – Mindaugas, the only true king of Lithuania, was crowned. The date of establishment of Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

~ 1280–1321 – Kernavė becomes the capital of Lithuania.

1000

1100

1200

1300

Europe from the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

~ 1280 – Kernavė becomes the capital of Lithuania.

1321–1322 – Trakai with a newly built castle becomes the capital of Lithuania.

1323 – Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas establishes town Vilnius and relocates the capital of the GDL in Vilnius.

1385 – Krėva Treaty is signed, Grand Duke Jogaila is crowned as King of Poland and the epoch of Polish – Lithuanian statehood starts.

1387 – Lithuania convert to Christianity and eventually becomes the easternmost country of Catholic Europe. Samogitia was the last to convert to Christianity (in 1413–1417).

1410, July 15<sup>th</sup> – Lithuania and Poland win the Battle of Žalgiris (Battle of Grunwald) and finally stops the raids of the German Order.

In the Middle Ages, Lithuania was the largest state in the entire Eastern Europe, where crafts and overseas trade prospered.

The first Belarussian books, *The Small Travel Book* (1522) and *Apostle* (1525), were printed in Vilnius; the same is true about the first Latvian book, a translation of *Catechism* by Peter Canizius (1585).

1547 – the first Lithuanian book, *The Simple Words of Catechism*, by Martynas Mažvydas, is published.

1570 – the first performance is given in the Palace of Grand Dukes.

1569 – in order to avoid the increasing influence of Russia, by the Lublian Union Lithuania and Poland replace the union of two countries with the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The Commonwealth is ruled by a single elected monarch, governed with a common parliament (the Sejm) and share common foreign policy.



△ St. Nicholas Church is considered the oldest extant sacral brick building in Lithuania



△ Samogitia was the last to convert to Christianity (in 1413–1417); cross in Žemaitija National Park



1321–1322 – Trakai with a newly built castle becomes the capital of Lithuania.

1323 – Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas establishes Vilnius city.

1361 – Kaunas City was first mentioned in written sources.

1387 – Lithuanian convert to Christianity.

1410, July 15<sup>th</sup> – the Battle of Žalgiris (Grunwald).

In 15<sup>th</sup> century crafts and overseas trade prospered in Lithuania

1400

1500



△ Pažaislis Monastery was closed after 1863–1864 uprising against the Russian government



△ Lithuania School during press banning, sculpture (by Petras Rimša, 1941)



1579 – Vilnius University, an important scientific and educational centre of the European scale, is opened.

Three Lithuanian Statutes – the backbone of the legislative system of a civilised country – are adopted in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. They had a major impact on the legislation of other European countries. The Constitution of Lithuania-Poland together with the French Constitution, both adopted in 1791, were the first constitutions in Europe.

1654–1660 – Lithuania is devastated by Russian and Swedish troops, which badly exhausted the country.

1700–1721 – the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth becomes the battleground for the Great Northern War.

1708–1711 – the worst famine and plague in the Lithuanian history: nearly half of the population dies in Samogitia.

Following the third partition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795, the best part of the present territory of Lithuania was annexed by Russia.

1812 – Napoleon’s army invades Lithuania and ruins a great number of cultural and architectural monuments.

1831 – uprising against the Russian oppression.

1863–1864 – uprising against the Russian government. The uprising was suppressed and followed by abolishment of serfdom all over the country; press in the Latin alphabet is banned; 32 churches and 20 monasteries are closed.

1864–1904 – years of press banning. Any press in the Latin alphabet is banned. Books are smuggled by book-carriers from Lithuania Minor to the country.

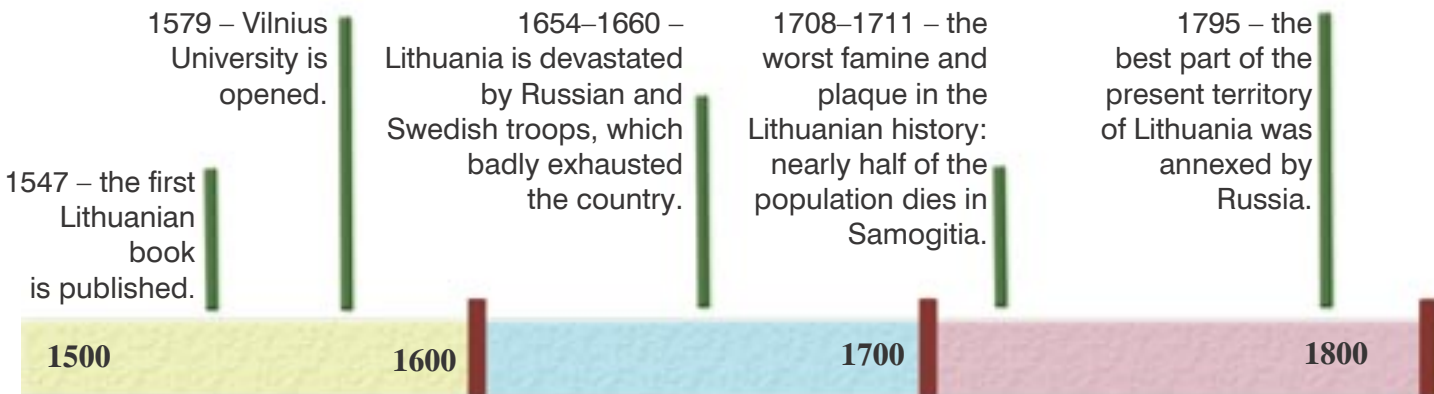
1914–1918 – World War I. Lithuania is occupied by Germany.

1918, February 16<sup>th</sup> – The State of Lithuania is re-established. The country is rapidly recovering and demonstrating prospering economy.

1919–1920 – armed conflict between Lithuania and Poland for the



Baroque epoch in Lithuania (1569–1795)



Vilnius region and Suvalkai region occupied by Poland. Kaunas becomes the temporary capital of Lithuania.

1920 – the Peace Treaty with Russia.

1922 – the Law on the National Currency (Litas) is adopted.

1923 – Lithuania recovers the region of Klaipėda after 700 years.

1924 – the first national festival of songs.

1939 – signing of the Molotov – Ribbentrop Pact.

1940, June – Lithuania is occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union.

First deportations to Siberia start.

1941–1944 – World War II. Lithuania is occupied by Germans.

1944 – Allies defeat Germany and Lithuania is reoccupied by the Soviet Union. Mass deportation campaigns start to exile Lithuanians to Russia.

1988 – the Lithuanian reform movement and political force *Sąjūdis* is founded to seek for Lithuania's independence.

1989, August 23<sup>th</sup> – resisting against the Russian oppression, Latvians, Lithuanians and Estonians join hands in a human. This mass campaign is called the Baltic Way.

1990, March 11<sup>th</sup> – Lithuania proclaims the restitution of Lithuanian independence, becoming the first of the Soviet republics to declare its detachment from the Soviet Union.

1991, January 13<sup>th</sup> – the Soviets forcibly take over the TV tower, which broadcasts the news, and kill unarmed civilians.

1991, August – Russia finally recognises the independence of Lithuania and withdraws its troops.

1992, October 25<sup>th</sup> – the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania is adopted in a referendum of the citizens of the Republic of Lithuania.

2004 – Lithuania becomes a NATO member and joins the European Union.



△ The first President of Lithuania Antanas Smetona (by A.Vaura)



△ 2004 Lithuania joins the EU



1812 – Napoleon's army invades Lithuania.

1863–1964 – uprising

1831 – uprising



1918 – the State of Lithuania is re-established.

1864–1904 – years of press banning.



1922 – the National Currency is adopted.

1940, June – Lithuania is occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union.



1990 – Lithuania proclaims the restitution of Lithuanian independence.

1900

2000





# Contents

<b>General Information</b>	4	<b>Aukštaitija</b>	116
Lithuanian Residents	6	Panevėžys	117
Political System of Lithuania	7	Aukštaitija National Park	118
Lithuanian Language	8	Anykščiai	120
Lithuanian Nature	10	Siesikai	123
Climate in Lithuania	16	Biržai	124
Lithuanian Money	20	Rokiškis	126
History of Lithuania	22	Stelmužė	128
<b>Capitals of Lithuania</b>	26	Pakruojis	130
Kernavė	26	Burbiškis	131
Trakai	30	Kėdainiai	132
Vilnius	36	Paberžė	135
Kaunas	66	Rumšiškės	136
<b>Etnographic Regions of Lithuania</b>	82	Raudondvaris	138
<b>Lithuanian Etnographic Holidays</b>	88	<b>Samogitia (Žemaitija)</b>	140
<b>Lithuanian Traditional Cuisine</b>	90	Telšiai	141
<b>Dzūkija</b>	94	Šiauliai	142
Dzūkijos National Park	96	Kretinga	144
Alytus	100	Žemaitija National Park	148
Druskininkai	102	Raudonė Castle	150
Birštonas	104	Panemunė Castle	152
Sudervė	106	Hill of Crosses	154
Medininkai	109	Tytuvėnai	156
<b>Sudovia (Suvalkija)</b>	110	Šiluva	157
Marijampolė	110	Palanga	158
Griškabūdis	112	<b>Lithuania Minor</b>	157
Paežeriai	113	Nemunas Delta Regional Park	166
Zapyškis	115	Klaipėda	172
		Neringa	180
		<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>190</b>

