



3 ITINERARIES

3 DAYS

# KAUNAS IN 3 DAYS

## IN THE EMBRACE OF NEMUNAS AND NERIS

### KAUNAS IN 3 DAYS

Since the year dot an active community used to live where Neris embraces Nemunas and floats its waters into the Baltic Sea. The village of this community became the beginning of city Kaunas. Convenient geographical location – the crossing of the main water and overland routes motivated the community to settle down in this place. At all times not only the trade routes, but also the roads of book deliverers used to cross here, and post carriages with famous travelers, diplomats and statesmen used to run through Kaunas. The history of the city is rich of wars, fights, fires and ruinations, however each time Kaunas used to revive again. When the crusades weakened after the battle of Žalgiris in 1410, tranquil times approached. The city developed as an important trading centre. The trade routes from the West to the East – Vilnius, Novgorod, and Moscow used to pass through Kaunas. From the 15<sup>th</sup> century, a fair amount of craftsmen lived and worked in Kaunas. The foremost workshops belonged to weavers, carpenters and armors, and a shipyard worked on the bank of Nemunas. The town boomed and developed and the buildings of red brick walls replaced wooden houses. The war of 1655-1661 ended the period of great prosperity. The city was very ruined; almost all houses were damaged during the war. The difficult period approached, which was marked with wars, fires and epidemics. After the third partition of Lithuania and the kingdom of Poland in 1795 Kaunas became the borderline city – fortress of the Russian empire – the border between Russia and Prussia used to pass there. In 1842 when Kaunas became the centre of the governing the life in the city brightened. The street system of the present-day city centre was designed in 1847. The railway to Warsaw through Kaunas was finished in 1863.

The sailing by Nemunas and consequently the trade with Tilže, Klaipėda, Königsberg and Danzig cities revived. Since 1892, a horse-drawn tram used to take the passengers, which in 1932 was replaced with buses. After the First World War, Kaunas became the provisional capital of the Republic of Lithuania and since then began developing rapidly. The first university with the Lithuanian language used for lectures was established. Solid chambers of Lithuanian Bank, Palace of Officers, Industry and Crafts, Central Post, cinemas, cafes, and restaurants were built.

# 3 ITINERARIES

*Welcome to Kaunas, the city which has mostly preserved the national character of the country, it offers plenty of activities to everyone. Visit the hearth of Lithuania and experience it's unique atmosphere.*



During all occupation periods of the of Nazi Germany in the Second World War, and during the Soviet occupation in the postwar times Kaunas as the most Lithuanian city became the hearth of residence, although Moscow attempting to develop mostly military industry sought to make this city purely industrial. Thus it anticipated to suppress the Humanitarian movement opposition to regime. Indeed, the city rapidly expanded, the population grew fast, as well as the population of educated people and students increased. And the independence spirit remained unbroken and alive. After the restoration of Lithuanian Independence new development possibilities appeared. Kaunas became dynamic, young and progressive city.

# 1<sup>ST</sup> DAY IN KAUNAS

## 1. Kaunas castle

(Pilies g. 17)

Supposedly, the first brick castle at the confluence of the rivers the Nemunas and the Neris was built at the 14<sup>th</sup> century when the attacks of Teutonic Order began. The castle was fence-type, without towers, it had double walls from stones and bricks from the outside. Internal walls contained the area of Irregular Square. This defensive castle framed a powerful barrier and the knights did not resolve to attack the castle for decades, thus they used to bypass Kaunas in war marches. In the beginning of 1362, a huge army from Prussia was made for the march against Kaunas castle where the knights and guests from England, Italy and Germany took part. The castle was reduced to rubble, but in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, the castle was rebuilt and strengthened: height of the walls were 12-15 meters, width to 3.5 meters, it contained 4 angular towers and was surrounded by a defensive moat. The access into the castle was possible through two gates by drawbridges. However, the castle of Kaunas was hardly destroyed by a flood of the river Neris. Both northern towers and more than a half of the castle walls were blown down after the water wash. Especially the wars and fires of the period from the 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> century heavily desolated the castle. The defensive moat vanished in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, because it was swamped. The ruins of the castle for several decades were in a state of neglect and kept dying. The first archaeological researches began to be conducted only in the period of 1925-1930. Only the walls, a part of the round tower and the foundation of the square tower have remained until today. They were conserved in 1954-1961, later partially renewed and covered by temporal roofs in order to protect from the atmosphere affect. The Castle was reconstructed in 2009-2010. Historical plays, concerts and various shows are performed in the territory of the castle.



**Make a wish!** The beautiful confluence of two biggest Lithuanian rivers is well known for a magical saying – the Nemunas river is a male and the Neris is a female. The meeting of two rivers is considered as a marriage of a couple. Two rivers meet in Kaunas, they join and never split up! For those who want their dreams to come true it's a right place to go on rendezvous.

## 2. St. George Church and Bernardines' Monastery

(Papilio g. 7)

St. George church is high and very well seen from every side. It is considered to be one of the first churches in Kaunas. A wooden church near the castle was built for Bernardines monks who settled in the city in 1468. A brick St. George church began to be built in 1471. It is unknown precisely when it was finished, but it has already been functioning from 1503. High span roof, large volume and un plastered brick walls emphasize the gothic nature of the building. The church contains three naves and five spans. The walls of width of 1.4 meter are buttressed by massive abutments. This church suffered from the fires, wars, and was reconstructed more than once. In 1812, Napoleon's army



turned the church to the flour storehouse. For the last time big reparation of the church was performed in 1936. There was the storehouse during the postwar. The monks recovered the church, which was indeed in a sad state, in 2005. A brick building lying next to the church was built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, which maintained many elements typical to the pointed style.

## 3. The church of Holy Trinity

(Rotušės a. 22)

The church as a dominant building of an ensemble began to be built in 1634, and finished in 1703. The Revival Style dominates in the architecture; however the features of the gothic and baroque styles also prevail. The main entrance is in the tower, which is decorated with a renaissance portal.

The church was built on the ruins of burnt constructions of 1624. These constructions in the 15<sup>th</sup> century were the residential houses of citizens, and the remainders of those constructions used for the western facade of the church and for the fence of the monastery were exposed and seen after the restoration. The most ornate building of the former monastery is the





central chamber, which has an inheritance of the forms of the late Renaissance architecture. The monastery building in small frame connects to St. George church and makes united ensemble of the buildings. It is one of the most valuable architectural monuments in Lithuania. In 1864, the monastery of Bernardines by order of the governor was closed and the ensemble with St. George church and the monastery were given to theological seminary and diocese dispossessed to Varniai town. At present one part of the ensemble belongs to Kaunas curia and to Theology faculty of Vytautas Magnus University. The memorial to the diocesan, educator and the fighter for teetotalism Motiejus Valančius was unveiled near the ensemble in summer of 2005.

## 4. Town Hall Square

(Rotušės aikštė)

The history of Kaunas Town Hall square is long and difficult. In 1408, Kaunas was given the Magdeburg rights. The core of the city contained marketplace and the seat of elective government – magistrate. The main trade route to Užnemune (*“Land over the river Nemunas”*) was through the present Town Hall square; the marketplace existed here too. The fire quickened the process of the city centre re planning. Around 1540, the plan of Kaunas was drawn so that figured planned rectangular market-square around which 8 residential blocks were distributed

into 34 domains of various sizes. Newly planned market-square had the features characteristic to Middle and Western Europe cities of the day. The marketplace consisted of the most important streets and trade routes – even 9 of them. Moreover, this spacious square occupying the area of 2.6 hectare was considerably larger than the marketplaces of other cities and it contrasted with densely built blocks that surrounded it. Merchants and craftsmen used to build houses around it. Markets were organized in the square, the decisions of magistrate, adjudgements used to be declared and pillory stood here. The most important building was the Town Hall, which dominated in the silhouette of the city. Only several tens of the houses remained after the fire of 1732, during which not only the houses of citizens but also the Town Hall suffered. Renovation works prolonged till the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the canal Warsaw- St. Petersburg was driven, Post-horse station was built in the square. After the trade was abandoned, the market square began to be



used for military training and was named for the Square of parades. The monument for the victory of the Russian army against Napoleon built in 1812 stood in front of the square till the First World War. When a new part of the city was designed in 1847, the square gradually lost its representative purpose of Kaunas centre. The Town Hall square reflects the shift of styles, the ideas of planning and the construction use. The most expressive features belong to the building of Town Hall.

### 4.1. Town Hall

(Rotušės a. 15)

The Town Hall is distinguished by its slenderness and grace. Its tower of height of 53 meters is the highest in the old city. Present Town Hall located in the square was not the first in Kaunas. The previous one was destroyed by the fire.

New Town Hall started to be built in the marketplace centre on July 28, 1542. The document testifying the celebration dedicated to the beginning of the construction of the Town Hall remained. Magistrate members of the city put one florene and one cask of honey under the corner stone. The mentioned Town Hall was to be of present width and length, of the plan of two naves with irregularly set premises for magistrate, courtroom, the treasury, the archive, commercial premises, including prison equipped in basements. Narrow stairs from courtroom located on the first floor led to prison. Natty and broad east entrance framed by profile bricks led to the trading hall. Opposite to the primitive tower an entryway was up built, the entrance of which was closed by a drawbridge. Ruined after the fire, the Town Hall was reconstructed only during the period of 1771-1780. The tower was mounted by a new clock. The tower steeple ended in a gilt vane with the National and the





City emblems and the symbol of Kaunas Independence – the crown. For its forms and color the Town Hall is often called “The white swan”. After the reconstruction of 1974, the registry office was established in the Town Hall, official Kaunas city mayoral entertainments and city festivals are arranged here. Ceramics museum is founded in the basement. Wax melting furnaces of the 15<sup>th</sup> century were discovered near the tower in 1973. Since 2002, one of the furnaces is exposed in the paving.



**Ceramics Museum**  
(Rotušės a. 15)

In the deep basement of the XVI century Town Hall, also known as the White Swan, there is the unique Ceramics Museum. Under the Gothic vaults the history of the Lithuanian ceramics is revealed starting from the pottery, frying pans, stove and roof tiles, luxurious architectural details of the Middle Ages and ceramics works of the XX century up to fragile and original creations of bone china originally developed in Kaunas City.

One cell of the basement was originally used as a prison. Even nowadays it features five holes where chains could be fixed for prisoners. It is told that Kaunas citizens were

anxious that there were only five places to chain “outlaws” whereas in Kaunas there were six “crooks”. Nowadays the prison cell serves as a space for exhibiting contemporary expositions of ceramics.

## 4.2. Residential houses

### Rotušės a. Nr. 1–6

(Eastern part of the square)

The eastern part of the square is considered to be the oldest. The richest citizens used to live on this side, which was built up with brick-walled residential houses that burnt and collapsed during the war of 1655-1661. They were rebuilt quite a while. Shops or tradesman office often were situated on the ground floor of the houses, whereas the residential rooms – on the first floor. Goods were stored in lofts, basements or in the storages near the houses. In consequence of many reconstructions no authentic interior remained, only the house No. 2 embodies very valuable gothic crystal vaulting in one of its rooms. The former residential houses No. 1, 2, 3 were renovated under the remained original gothic and renaissance fragments, which were keyed to the social purpose.



### Rotušės a. Nr. 23–29

(Northern part of the square)

Only the houses for citizens were built in this part of the square. The old structure of the city planning is shown very well here. Brick-walled houses stood on this side of the square in the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, whereas wooden houses prevailed in depth of the block. The houses strongly suffered during the war of 1655-1661; consequently they were reconstructed more than once, including the changes of their exterior. A little quiet yard typical to the old part of the city was located near the house No. 28. This house, which was built in the pointed style in the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, is reckoned to be the building of three floors with basements. It was reconstructed in Revival style in the 17<sup>th</sup> century; therefore the gables were directed to the neighboring buildings instead of the square. Museum of the History of Lithuania Medicine and Pharmacy was established in this house after the restoration. The residential house No. 29. Next to the house No. 28, a bricked gothic house was built endwise on the square. The basements were applied for the trade. A tavern (Karčema) was on the ground floor, whereas a hotel was on the northern side. The first floor was inhabitable. The other part of the house was characteristic of the Revival style, for instance, horizontal lines. A frieze was the most ornate part of the facades that was separated into little squares, within which the ornamental signs of the post station symbols were laid down. The Post-horse station was one of the first buildings of social purpose in the city. Stabling and a hotel for travelers were situated in a yard. It was very well renewed during the period of 1968-1971, the authentic corps plans were reproduced and the facades were restored. The Post-office, which has a seal with a note “The old post-office 16<sup>th</sup> century”, was founded after the restoration.

## 4.3. Communication Development Museum

(Rotušės a. 19)

The museum contains collections of postal documents, stamps, and 20<sup>th</sup> century communications technology. At the Museum’s exposition and funds there are accumulated more than 400 units about Lithuania’s and other nations’ developments of connections – mail, radio, telegraph, telephone information exponents, documents and photos. A selection of postage stamps is constantly exhibited.



#### 4.4. Museum of the History of Lithuania Medicine and Pharmacy (Rotušės a. 28)

The Museum's collection is made up of personal items of Lithuanian doctors and pharmacists, medical implements, documents, hospital and pharmacy establishments. There one could enjoy the scenes of pre-history of medicine and pharmacy – watching exhibition stands arranged with great inventiveness and authenticity: presenting a shaman curing a baby as well as a Lithuanian sorceress.



#### 4.5. Maironis House (Rotušės a. 13)

Residential house – this mansion was built in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by connecting three former gothic houses. Palatial stairs led to the first floor, where the residential and representative rooms were located. In 1910, the poet and prelate Jonas Mačiulis-Maironis bought this house, part of which he rented out and the remaining part he left for himself. His apartments were decorated by sumptuous furniture, valuable pictures and other art works. Literary evenings were often arranged in this house, where the most famous intellectuals of Kaunas of the interwar gathered. The memorial apartment of Maironis was authentically restored by reviving the former environment of it on the first floor, and many



things, which belonged to the poet, were collected. By pursuing the old traditions, Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum was established in this house and it is presently open to everyone. The museum often invites to the literary evenings, literature readings and to commemorations of the dates related to the literature. The mentioned events are organized in the hall equipped in the house basement.

#### 4.6. St. Francis Xavier Church and Jesuits' Monastery (Rotušės a. 7, 8, 9)

A baroque Jesuits' church with the buildings of the monastery and the school from the both sides predominates in the southern side of the square. Jesuits started establishing in this block since 1642. Brothers Kojelavičiai bought 5 land plots, which they gave to the monastery. The most valuable building of this complex is considered to be the baroque St. Francis Xavier Church, which started to be built in 1666, however was sanctified only in 1759. There were difficulties when building this church; it was burnt even for several times. By adjusting to the composition of the square, the church's fundamental facade is directed not to the West, as it should be, but to the North. When Jesuits' monkhood was liquidated in 1787, the church, the monastery and





the college were given to Franciscans monks. The church, especially its interior suffered during the war of 1812. It stood derelict and unattended till it was made into Orthodox Church by order of the czar Alexander in 1824. And in 1843, it became the church (Sobor) of Alexander Nevski. Nevertheless, Jesuits retrieved the ensemble after the First World War. The construction of two additional floors to the two-storied buildings deformed the architecture of the whole complex. When the Second World War ended, sports hall was equipped in the closed church. The romantic poet Adomas Mickevičius used to lecture and live in a school situated next to the church during the period of 1819-1823. There is the memorial plaque on the school building that proclaims about this. Presently the school is Jesuits' gymnasium of Kaunas and the mentioned church is functioning. There is a panoramic viewpoint in the terrace of Jesuits' Monastery where you can admire the beauty of the Town Hall Square and the Old Town panoramic view.

## 5. Perkūnas (Thunder) House (Aleksoto g. 6)



Perkūnas (Thunder) House is considered to be one of few buildings belonging to the gothic period that stands till now. It is assumed to be a merchant's residential house built at the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. A twin house on its right, which existed till the 18<sup>th</sup> century, contained the storehouses that did not remain. It is one of the most original examples of the flamboyant Gothic architecture in Lithuania. The composition of the building is not united. The side facade possesses simplicity, and is decorated with rhombs of baked bricks. Windows of various sizes, niches, bay window and a rich frieze stripe are typical of the eastern facade, whereas the gable is a wonderful work of the bricks. Even 17 kinds of profile bricks were used for the finish of the facade. Jesuits purchased this house in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and founded the chapel in it. The first Drama theatre of Kaunas was established in this house in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1818, when the reconstruction works were performed, a statue was found in one of the walls of the house, which supposedly belonged to the Pagan God Perkūnas. Due to this statue this house was given a name of Perkūnas (Thunder). The museum of Adomas Mickevičius is established in it now.

## 6. Vytautas Church (Aleksoto g. 3)

Kaunas medieval monument is the Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary's Ascension, which since 1930, since the years of the anniversary of Vytautas the Great is called by the name of Vytautas. The church of Franciscans was built around 1400. According to the legend, the Great Lithuanian Duke Vytautas who build the church, escaped from the lost battle of Vorskla with tartars in Ukraine. In 1439, Franciscans were allowed to celebrate Mass for German merchants that lived in Kaunas at that time. Now the church stands on the bank of the river Nemunas, whereas in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, a land between the church and the Nemunas was densely built with the residential houses, and the banks were shored by wooden piles. The church suffered from the fires and floods many times; however it maintained its initial design, gothic forms. In 1859, by order of the Russian czar, the church became St. Nikolaj church (Sobor). The former monastery of Franciscans next to it was destroyed in 1870, and national hospital of the city was built instead. In 1990, the facades and interiors of the church were restored, while the tower was renewed with an engraving of Makovski.



## 7. Vytautas the Great Bridge (Vytauto Didžiojo tiltas)

The original bridge on wooden poles was built in 1812. It was used by Napoleon's Army fleeing from Russia. There was no permanent bridge from Kaunas to Aleksotas until 1914. Aleksotas was under different laws during the rule of tsarist Russia. Kaunas was then part of the Russian Northwestern region, while Aleksotas and Užnemunė belonged to Poland, where the Napoleonic Code and even different calendars were used. Jokingly, Aleksotas Bridge was called the longest bridge in the world: the Slavic (Julian) calendar was used in the province of Kaunas,

whereas Užnemunė used the Catholic (Gregorian) calendar; therefore, it took 13 days to cross the bridge (the old calendar was 13 days behind the new one). At the beginning of World War II, Aleksotas Bridge was mined on June 24, and then blasted on June 26 by the order of the 8<sup>th</sup> Army General Shlemin. During the Nazi occupation, a temporary pontoon bridge was built and used throughout the period. A temporary wooden bridge served local needs until 1948. When it was swept away by a flood, German war prisoners built the present Aleksotas Bridge (architect L. Kazarinskis). The bridge had a draw mechanism, which did not function properly and, therefore, was never used.



## 8. Aleksotas Funicular

(Amerikos lietuvių g. 8)

This unique device of transportation was built in 1935. Authentic traction equipment, which has functioned for more than seventy years, is still in use today, including the genuine pre-war wagon, wooden seats, and stop platforms.

Even today the funicular takes people up the Aleksotas hill, from which the panorama of Kaunas city centre and Old town is wide open. Kaunas is the only city among Baltic States, where such means of transportation is available.

## 8.1 Panorama of Aleksotas hill

(Amerikos lietuvių g.)

From a high downhill, which is accessible by a unique funicular, the view opens the cradle of Kaunas – the old city. The confluence of the rivers the Nemunas and the Neris below, and Kaunas castle situated nearby, “a bouquet” of three towers: “The white swan” – Town hall and two towers of Jesuits’ church, the gothic church of Vytautas on the bank of Nemunas, Perkūnas (Thunder) House in the neighborhood; the towers of the distant churches, the predominating building of the Arch-cathedral Basilica, the gothic gables of the medieval structures, the mazes of tiny streets leaning on Nemunas, the new city and the surrounding slopes of Žaliakalnis with high sanctuary of the nation – the Monumental Resurrection church.



## 9. Arch-cathedral Basilica of St. Peter and Paul

(Vilniaus g. 1)

The construction of Kaunas Arch-cathedral Basilica lasted more than one century. It started to be built in the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, at the times of Vytautas the Great. It was firstly mentioned in the sourcebooks in 1431. It was a large parochial church. Very few gothic elements are left in interior. One of those elements is a reticulate and split into ogives unique crystal vaulting on both floors of the sacristy. The latter is very well seen through arcade from the presbytery. The crystal vaulting was a work of a great talent of the medieval builders. During the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries the church was expanded, reconstructed, two towers were built, one of which still persists, and interior took the features of renaissance and baroque. The most valuable and artistic cathedral altar is on the left nave. It is wooden,



contains three stages, the composition is typical of baroque. Cored wooden pillars are curved with the motives of grapevines. The altar is graced with the picture of „Mary’s Ascension”, and the picture “Mary’s coronation” is on the second stage of the altar. Unfortunately, in 1732, the huge fire that embraced the entire city destroyed the church towers with bells, the roof and a part of the vaulting of the presbytery. Nevertheless, the church was reconstructed again in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the baroque altars were equipped. In 1864, after the Samogitian Diocese was re-established in Kaunas, the church became the cathedral. A new and the biggest in Lithuania organ was built, interior was decorated with new frescos, pictures. The neo gothic Holy Ghost chapel was built at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In 1921, it was granted a title of Basilica. The grace of the priest and the poet J. Mačiulis Maironis is in the southern wall of the cathedral. The cardinal Vincentas Sladkevičius, who died in 2000, is buried in the Holy Ghost chapel of the cathedral.



## 10. Kaunas city museum

(M. Valančiaus g. 6)

The museum accumulates collections of the city history, science and industry, culture and art, sound and video, and archeology. The museum pursues the activities of the first Kaunas City Museum, which was opened in 1897 under the title and the Museum of Science and Industry. The museum was renewed in 2005 and in 2008 opened for the visitors. Museum was established in a classicism style building, which has a special historical meaning of spiritual and cultural nation’s life.



## 11. Vilnius Street

(Vilniaus gatvė)

It is the oldest street of the city. It is a part of the old medieval road to Vilnius. Majority of the buildings by this road were wooden, later the red-bricked houses of the rich citizens were built, several of which maintained till our days.

### House in Vilnius g. 7

(Vilniaus g. 7)

This place possessed a wooden house, which burnt, and at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century it was replaced by a new gothic brick-walled house with the smart gables in a western and eastern end. After the wars and fires it was reconstructed in 1808 and given to the monastery of Augustines. It was restored in 1984. Brick binding is gothic, outdoor stones were found within a brick wall, several kinds of profile bricks were used for decoration. Entrance to a yard was in the middle of the building. The house distinguishes for its gothic facades and interiors.



### House in Vilnius g. 10

(Vilniaus g. 10)

It is the residential house of rich citizens, which started to be built in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and was constructed in several stages. The gothic basements with stairs and the baroque gables, having renaissance elements maintained. The facade from the side of Vilnius Street contains two parts, which are connected by the entrance.

### House in Vilnius g. 11

(Vilniaus g. 11)



It is the house of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Originally it was one-storied. The first floor and the gable were set in the period of the 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. The gables were not daubed. The walls were bricked from gross boulders; the walls of the ground floor were decorated with small stones and bricked from the outside with the brick shell of the gothic binding. Harmonious combination of the pointed style and revival style prevails in the composition of the gable. The house was restored in 1963, after which the ground floor maintained its authenticity, whereas the gable was renewed according to analogue of the day. The gothic brick wall decorated with the ornaments of black bricks predominates in the eastern facade.







## 12. Jacobins' monastery and the Church of the Holy Body of Lord (Vilniaus g. 31/1)



In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Jacobins received several land plots and began to build a monastery and the church of the Holy Body of Lord. At that time this location was on the outskirts of the city. A pavilion of the monastery divided the land plot into two almost rectangular-shaped yards, in one of which the main entrance to the monastery from Vilnius Street was. It is the only example of such layout of the buildings' ensemble in Lithuania. The church of the Holy Body of Lord started to be built by using the remainders of the former house. An Italian P.

Putinis took the lead in the final construction works in 1682-1690, who used to work with a project of Pažaislis abbey. Two low towers and the gable between them rose in the main facade. All 7 church altars belonged to the baroque style, and the floors were riveted by marble. In 1845, the church and the monastery were closed. During the later period of 1863-1866, the church was turned into the Orthodox Church. The facade took the style of Byzantine. However, in 1920-1921, it was partly restored and again became the Catholic Church. In 1933, the main facade was ornamented with a mosaic from the outdoors stones, the author of which was J. Mikėnas. During the period of the Soviet occupation in 1965-1990, a cinema was established in the church. Presently it is in the possession of Theological faculty of Vytautas Magnus University.

## 13. Synagogue (E. Ožėškienės g. 17)



Chorale synagogue was built in 1872. Chorale synagogues with choir that resemble the Catholic churches emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The architecture of rectangular scheme of this synagogue also reminds of the Catholic Church. The catholic or Orthodox churches used to dominate in the centers of the cities and boroughs, while the synagogues were usually built in the suburbs. The synagogues were to be not higher than Christians' meeting houses and were to be remote from them at a certain distance. Kaunas synagogue is one of the three synagogues functioning in Lithuania (others two are located in Vilnius and Klaipėda).

## 14. St. Gertrude church and monastery of Marions (Laisvės al. 101A)

This place was one of the suburbs of Kaunas till the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Small, gothic St. Gertrude church, which is often called "a chapel", at the beginning of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, was built as a churchyard chapel in the location of the former



burial-ground nearby the city border near the road leading to Vilnius. The oldest part is the presbytery; the tower was built around the middle of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. It was broken down during the war of 1655-1661, however renovated in 1680. The church was not daubed, the walls were bricked by gothic binding, and the floors were brick-built, while the ceiling was wooden. Parsons of Kaunas parochial church took care of this church till the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The baroque altars and a pulpit were built. The church suffered from the war of 1812. Far-reaching changes were made in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. when it was turned into the Orthodox Church, i.e. the facades were daubed, windows were parted, and the roof construction was changed.

Three convents of Rokits, merciful sisters and Marions used to be open nearby St. Gertrude church during different periods. In 1948, the church was closed and a medicine technique shop, which belonged to the Ministry of Health, was founded inside it and worked till 1987. By restoring it in 1992, the gothic elements of the facades and interiors were renovated, and St. Gertrude church with the monastery buildings was given back to Marions' congregation of Immaculate Conception. Very original Stations of the Cross Road from stone mass are located in the church, which were created by the painter V. Kvašys in 1997.

## 15. The City wall and the Miller's Tower (I. Kanto/Kęstučio g.)

In 1655, the king Jonas Kazimieras having a privilege directed the citizens of Kaunas to pale the city by brick wall, but the war of 1655-1661 prevented from the building. The Miller's Tower first time was mentioned only in 1666. In 1668, the building stopped and as the wall was not finished, it could defend only from small robbers. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the fragment of the wall was connected up to a fence of the former cemetery. The tower of the tartars near Laisvės Avenue was demolished in 1894. In 1966, a part of the wall, which was only 40 meters left, and the Miller's Tower were restored and preserved.



# THE 2<sup>ND</sup> DAY IN KAUNAS

## KAUNAS – THE PROVISIONAL CAPITAL OF LITHUANIA

### 16. Presidential Palace

(Vilniaus g. 33)

The building was constructed in 1860. In 1876, the czarist government bought it and established the residence of the governor. When Lithuanian Independence was restored and Kaunas became the provisional capital of Lithuania, this building from 1919 to 1940 was the Presidential Palace of the Republic of Lithuania. The residential premises were on the ground floor, lounge and room of a duty officer were located



near portal. Two parlors for entertainments with furniture of the style of Louis XIV and small dining-room were on the first floor on portal side. Presidents of Lithuania A. Smetona, K. Grinius and A. Stulginskis used to live and work in this palace.

### 17. Maironis gymnasium

(Gimnazijos g. 3)

A school was built in 1868. Lithuanian constitutive Parliament (Seimas) meeting was conducted in 1920. Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania used to sit in this building till 1926. Important laws including agrarian reform, according to which 30 thousand peasants received land, were enacted here. Coinage Law was declared. Litas began to circulate



since November of 1922. After building the House of Ministry of Justice, Parliament sessions used to be held in it, whereas since 1927, a school – girls' gymnasium "Aušra" established again in this house. At present, the gymnasium is granted a title of the former pupil of the school, the poet, historian and priest Maironis.

### 18. District Court

(Laisvės al. 103)

It is the building of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The main facade is rich of eclectic décor of neoclassicism. Yet at czarist times in 1883, the Court of district, the Prosecutor's office and Jury advocacy established in this building. After restoring Lithuanian Independence, in 1918, cases were taken over by the German courts. Political cases were extrminated by the Germans themselves. The first court session in the Lithuanian language was held on May of 1919. The court functions in this building as well at present. The Court House is one of the largest buildings of the city centre of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.



### 19. Laisvės (Freedom) Avenue

(Laisvės alėja)

In the new art project of 1874, this street was indicated as the main city street, intended for transport and pedestrians, and granted a title of the prospect of Nikolaj in honor of the Russian czar. It is the avenue of the length of 1621 meters: two lines of trees planted in the middle of the avenue made up the recreation and walking area. Already from the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it became an administrative, commercial and cultural centre of the city. When starting to build Kaunas fortress, the construction of more than two-storied buildings was forbidden. First electrical street lamps lightened the street at the end of the





19<sup>th</sup> century. After the reconstruction in 1982, Laisvės Avenue became a pedestrian street. Banks, various offices, restaurants, cafes, and many modern shops are situated in this street. It is a favorite place for walk and meetings of Kaunas citizens.

### Architecture. Modernism.

Modernism ideas which spread fast among most countries of the Western World after World War I soon emerged in Lithuania as well. In 1920 when Poland occupied Vilnius, Kaunas became the capital of the independent Republic of Lithuania (1920–1939) and the most important Lithuanian city. As the economy was growing, it was sought to make the capital a modern European city. Lithuanian architects started to design and build houses in the style of modernism, in German called the Bauhaus, which was avant-garde in Europe and the USA at that time. Up to the present day Kaunas is probably the only city in the world where so many buildings of this style were built and have remained intact. Each of the architects who created here had their own individual style which was distinguished for different modern variations. These variations included historical elements, a search for national style or just attempts to convey the main modernism principles.

#### 20. Post office

(Laisvės al. 102)

This is one of most ornate Kaunas buildings of 1930-1940. The author of the project is F. Vizbaras. The house is symmetrical; the facade of this structure is facing Laisvės Avenue. Both the facade and interior are abundant of the symbols of folk art. Only local materials were expediently used for the finish. Portal and a stairwell are made of tooled granite. Folk carvings of tree imitated with ornaments of details and façade, and floor ornamental design resemble patterns of bedspreads. The construction works were finished in 1931. It was possible to reach telegraph, telephone and post-office, cash transactions



unit, including customs. The exchange of post and telegraph remittances was performed with 27 countries, and periodicals – with Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Estonia, France, Italy, Latvia, Finland, Switzerland and Germany. It has maintained its purpose – today it is the general post-office of Kaunas district.

#### 21. Kaunas City Municipality

(Laisvės al. 96)

This building was constructed in 1940 as the Savings bank House under a project of the architect A. Funkas. The ground floor is covered with the slabs of brownish polished granite, whereas the main portal is covered with black polished granite. The first pneumatic dispatch system of Lithuania was equipped inside. The basement contained safe-deposit. After the Second World War, the House was occupied by Executive and party committees. During the period of 1981–1983 some changes within the building were made – canteen, meetings hall, and lounge emerged. At present, the City Municipality is situated in this building.



#### 22. Monument for Vytautas Magnus

(Laisvės al.)

The monument was created in 1930 for the 500<sup>th</sup> death commemoration of Vytautas the Great Duke of Lithuanian. The sculptor is V. Grybas. The original of the Soviet period disappeared; therefore a reproduction of the sculpture was made, which was unveiled in 1990.

#### 23. The garden of the city, Kaunas National Music Theatre

(Laisvės al. 91)

By drawing up a plan of “the new city”, the garden of the city was already marked in the former place of the catholic cemetery. The building of Kaunas National Music Theatre in the garden of the city is not far from Laisvės Avenue. It is the cradle of Lithuanian national opera. On December 31, 1920, the premiere of “Traviata” in the Lithuanian language was shown. This date is considered to be the date of the birth of the national opera. At present operas, operettas and musicals are played in the theatre. The garden of the city is decorated with the busts of Lithuanian composers, art characters and singers.

**The monument for Romas Kalanta** is located in the garden near Laisvės Avenue, who burnt himself in this place in 1972 when protesting against the Soviet occupation. This act caused many demonstrations for the Freedom of Lithuania in the city. The monument was unveiled in 2002 when the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this event was commemorated.



## 24. Kaunas State Philharmonic

(L. Sapiegos g. 5)

On 21<sup>st</sup> of May in 1925, president of the Republic Antanas Smetona solemnly put the corner stone on the new House of the Ministry of Justice under the project of the architect Frykas. There was a sign "Justicia est fundamentum regnorum" written in gilt letters over a colonnade. After the House was built, there were Parliament meetings held in it. The Parliament sessions were held two times in a year in this House – on February and September. Investigation of the suits entered against government representatives was within the competence of the Tribunal that functioned there too. The philharmonic was established in this building after the war.



window in the triangle gable on the main facade. Fortunately, it was protected from destruction during the Soviet period by concreting over the Lithuanian symbols – pillars of Vytis and Gediminas. Antique themes predominate in the Operation hall. It is one of the safest banks. The valuables are secure in the prewar English safe-deposits. Interior of 1929 was restored in 1996-1997. It is one of the most valuable interwar buildings of social purpose. **The Bank Museum** was opened in the bank, which presents exhibits related to the development of banking and monetary relations in Lithuania, videotapes on the Bank of Lithuania, production of currency and its security features.



## 25. Lithuanian Bank

(Maironio g. 25)

International contest of the project of Lithuanian bank was declared, and the first place was taken by the team of the architects from Paris. However, the designed building was too expensive, therefore a new project was assigned to be prepared by M. Songaila, the professor of Lithuanian architecture and the chairman of the jury committee. The construction was finished in 1928. The Bank is the building on the corner, having different facades, which is monumental, and distinguishes for its magnificence. A sculptural group with national and Lithuania's statehood symbols is pictured in front of a half-round

## 26. The garden of Vytautas The Great Military Museum

(Vienybės a.)

This square was marked in the plan of "the new city" of 1847. Originally the market for horses trading and wood was here. Afterwards 8 small shops were built. The staff of the 111<sup>th</sup> Don Infantry regiment and the staff of the 8<sup>th</sup> Smolenskas Dragoon regiment settled on the north-eastern side. Electric station, at that time the highest building of the city in the square was built in 1900. The square







in front of the building was pebbled, and the Orthodox Church was nearby. Only after the restoration of Independence, the **Military Museum** and the **art gallery of M. K. Čiurlionis** were founded in the former buildings of soldiers. The Military Museum garden was altered, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier was buried, the **monument for „Those Who Perished for Lithuania's Freedom”** and the altar of the **Eternal Flame** with wooden crosses were built. In 1928, when commemorating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Lithuanian Independence, the **Statue of Liberty** was unveiled, which became the main accent of the garden and one of the city symbols. **Monumental busts for the most famous Lithuanian politicians, writers and public characters** were

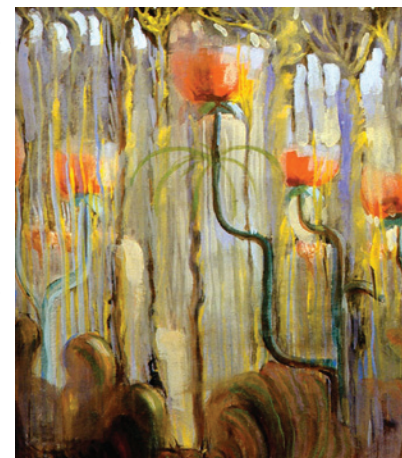
created in 1928-1933. The author of many monuments is J. Zikaras. In 1929, it was decided to build the Nation's Museum in the square; therefore the project contest was declared. Three foreign architects from Germany, Sweden and Finland comprised the jury. 16 Lithuanian architects and one Belgian architect took part in the contest. None of the projects won the contest, therefore V. Dubeneckis, the architect from St. Petersburg, who lived in Kaunas, was assigned to make the project. In 1936, the Nation's Museum was finished. The Military Museum and the National M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum established in it. During Stalin's period, the garden changed a lot, almost all the monuments were destroyed. The monument of Lenin with stelas of "Revolution", "Peace", and "Work" was built in a new part of the garden in 1970 (Lenin was removed from the square of the will of city people). In 1975, the institutes of the City and Industry projection and Political Education House were constructed. These buildings are now applied to the needs of today – offices, auditoriums and administration of the University of Vytautas Magnus are situated there.

This garden recovered its former state of the prewar period from the means of Kaunas citizens. Today it is the representative city square, where the commemoration of many important dates of the country and the city are held. The white-bricked Christ's Resurrection church is very well seen from the square as well.

## 26.1. M. K. Čiurlionis National Art Museum

(V. Putvinskio g. 55)

The Museum was founded in 1921. In 1925 the temporary M. K. Čiurlionis Gallery was opened. In 1936 it was converted into Vytautas the Great Museum of Culture and was transferred to the new premises. In 1944 it was renamed the M. K. Čiurlionis Art Museum. In 1969 the museum was expanded and the gallery of works by M. K. Čiurlionis was opened in the extension. The museum collections: works by M. K. Čiurlionis and his memorabilia, Lithuanian folk art, 17<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century fine and applied art, Ancient Egypt art, foreign fine and applied art, numismatics.



## 26.2. Devils's Museum

(V. Putvinskio g. 64)



The Devils' Museum is included into the list of the most unique museums of the world. The Museum presents a stunning collection of 3000 devils in all shapes, sizes, colors and materials. Every devil astounds: one has mischievous smile, another mysteriously peeks from a dark corner, angrily threatens or giggles. Some you might only recognize from the horns or tail protruded. All of them are happy to leave hell and stay in Kaunas.

### 26.3 Vytautas The Great Military museum

(K. Donelaičio g. 64)

The museum contains archaeological finds, weapons, firearms, ammunition, army uniforms of various states, objects and documents relating to the transatlantic flight of the "Lituanica", a collection of Balys Buračas' (1897–1972) ethnographic photographs.



### 27. Žaliakalnis funicular

(Aušros g. 6)

It is the oldest funicular in Lithuania and was constructed by the engineering office Curt Rudolph Transportanlagen from Dresden, Germany with electric equipment from "AEG" and mechanical parts from Bell Maschinenfabrik, Switzerland. The official opening was on 5<sup>th</sup> of August in 1931 with one passenger car, while the second car was only a platform ballasted with stones used to counterbalance the passenger car. Kaunas is the only city in Lithuania with this type of transport. In the residential district of Žaliakalnis these "climbing cars" serve both as a means of transport and entertainment. Žaliakalnis funicular provides an easy way of reaching the Resurrection Church from the city centre.



**Ride on it!** The Funicular – a unique means of transportation is still in use today, including the genuine pre-war wagon, wooden seats, and stop platforms. Even today the funicular takes people up to the hill, from which the panorama of the Kaunas city centre and Old town is wide open. Kaunas is the only city among Baltic States, where such means of transportation is available.

### 28. Christ's Resurrection church

(Žemaičių g. 31)

It started to be built in 1932 under the project of the architect K. Reison. The church is assumed to be the symbol of the Lithuanian independence. It was built from the contributions of people. When Lithuania lost its independence, the construction was already ending, however, there was no interior and the outside was not daubed. In 1940, the church was confiscated, and machine shop of the Radio factory was founded in 1952. In 1989, the building was returned to religious community and after 70 years from the construction beginning the church was sanctified on December 24<sup>th</sup> in 2004. Visitors have the possibility to go up to the church terrace to enjoy the panoramic view of the city.



### 29. St. Michael Archangel Church (Sobor)

(Nepriklausomybės a.14)

Under the decision of the Russian czar Alexander II, Kaunas became a military fortress of the first class. Kaunas fortress began to be built in 1882, the construction took 10 years, and the city was surrounded by a ring of defence of 25 kilometers long. 9 of the planned 12 forts were built. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, 35 thousand of Russian army soldiers lived in Kaunas, and it contained about 30 % of the city population. St. Michael Archangel Church (Soboras) was built for the military garrison of Kaunas fortress in 1895. The building in the neobyzantine style had all the features of the Orthodox Church. Russian architects designed the church, the masters from Černigov governing performed bricklaying works, and



the painters of St. Petersburg decorated it. In 1919, it was turned into St. Michael Archangel Church. Since 1965, the church became the gallery of Stained glass and Sculpture.

After restoring the Independence, the church began functioning again. The crosses, which were removed in 1978, were raised again, and in 1996, the prerogative right was given to Lithuanian military.



### 30. Mykolas Žilinskas Art Gallery

(Nepriklausomybės a.12)

The Gallery was designed by architects E. Miliūnas, E. Kisielius, S. Juškys and built in 1989, in honor of the art collector Mykolas Žilinskas (1904–1922), who enriched many Lithuanian art collections donating more than 1600 art pieces. The museum collection consists of the M. K. Čiurlionis State Art Museum's most valuable collections of foreign art.

The naked figure of A Man is the work of sculptor Petras Mazūras and has been erected in 1991. It can be found outside the Mykolas Žilinskas Art Gallery.



## THE 3<sup>RD</sup> DAY IN KAUNAS

### 31. Stumbras museum

(K. Būgos g. 7)

Stumbras museum gives an overview on the development of alcohol consumption culture in Lithuania and presents the role of the company in the process of industrialization. Visitors may get acquainted with the history of the distillery: century-old buildings, documents from archives and photographs. The exposition shows a collection of historical things related with Stumbras Company including devices used in the process of production, labels and packing variety. A part of the museum is devoted to a room of Mykolas Velykis who was a co-owner of the distillery in the interwar period. The room is furnished following authentic traditions of those times.

Visitors of Stumbras museum have an exceptional opportunity to walk around the distillery and see how Stumbras' drinks are produced and bottled in present modern factory.



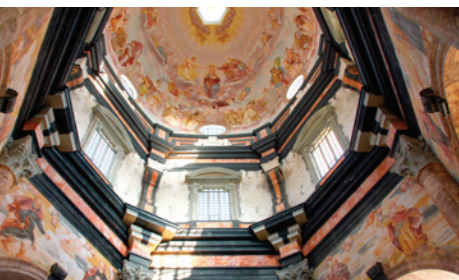
### 32. Kaunas Botanical Garden

(Ž. E. Žilibero g. 6)

The Kaunas Botanical Garden attracts visitors with its romantic environment, rich collection of plants (over 7300 plant taxons) and the largest green house in Lithuania. The old park has preserved its historical spirit with a unique pond system resembling the initials of the founder Joseph Godlevski and reflecting the buildings of Aukštoji Freda Palace in its waters. There is a unique oak grove bearing the name of the famous professor Birutė Galdikas which represents baby plants of the most famous oaks in Lithuania. The highlight of the garden is a decorative hedge of caterpillar centipede of 8 m height and 76 m length, which was recorded as the biggest object of green architecture in Lithuania by "Factum" agency in 2012.

### 33. The ensemble of Pažaislis buildings and Camaldolli abbey

(T. Masiulio g. 31)



It ranks among the most beautiful Baroque-style buildings in Lithuania. The church and abbey were built for Camaldolese (Benedictine) monks in the 17<sup>th</sup> century under the supervision of Italian masters from Florence (Michelangelo Palloni, Joan Merli, and Pietro Pertti).



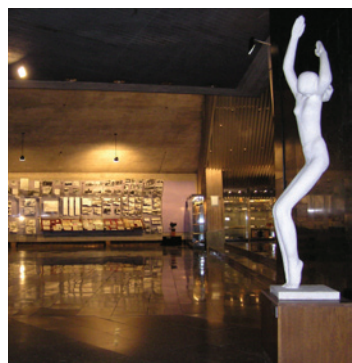
**Interesting!** The beauty of the Abbey was well known in Europe, thus the Abbey was visited by King of Sweden Karol XII and Tsars Alexander I and Nikolaj I. The latter was so delighted by the beauty of the church that he assigned 130 thousands roubles for its reconstruction to the Provoslav one.

### 34. Museum of the Ninth Fort of Kaunas

(Žemaičių pl. 73)

At the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, the city of Kaunas was fortified, and by 1890 it was encircled by eight forts and nine gun batteries. The construction of the Ninth Fort began in 1902 and was completed on the eve of the First World War.

During the years of Soviet occupation, 1940-1941, the Ninth Fort was used by the NKVD to house political prisoners. During the years of Nazi occupation, the Ninth Fort was put to use as a place of mass murder. In 1944, as the Soviets moved in, the Germans liquidated the ghetto and what had by then come to be known as



the "Fort of Death", and the prisoners were dispersed to other camps. After the Second World War, the Soviets again used the Ninth Fort as a prison for several years. From 1948 to 1958, farm organizations were run out of the Ninth Fort. The Ninth Fort museum contains collections of historical artifacts related both to Soviet atrocities and the Nazi genocide, as well as materials related to the earlier history of Kaunas and the Ninth Fort.

The memorial to the victims of fascism at the Ninth Fort in Kaunas, Lithuania, was designed by

sculptor A. Ambraziunas. Erected in 1984, the monument is 32 m high. The mass burial place of the victims of the massacres carried out in the fort is a grass field, marked by a simple yet clearly worded memorial written in several languages. It reads, "This is the place where Nazis and their assistants killed more than 30,000 Jews from Lithuania and other European countries."



### 35. Lithuanian open-air museum of country life

(L. Lekavičiaus g. 2, Rumšiškės, Kaišiadorių r.)

**See it!** The whole Lithuania in one place is in the open air museum in Rumšiškės, which is the biggest open air museum in Eastern Europe. The museum with its collection of authentic wooden villages represents different regions of Lithuania: Žemaitija, Aukštaitija, Dzūkija, Suvalkija and Lithuania Minor.

Open-air museum of country life is an exposition of XVIII c. c. – XX c. c. village, town and country-seat buildings of Lithuania. The area of 174 hectares comprises ancient living and utility buildings brought from different regions of Lithuania. Here they are being reconstructed, creating the appropriate complexes of farms and villages as well as reproducing former minor architecture and plants.

The farms are grouped into five sectors according to the ethnic regions: Lower Lithuania (Žemaitija), Upper Lithuania (Aukštaitija), Central Lithuania (Suvalkija), South Lithuania (Dzūkija) and Lithuania Minor (Mažoji Lietuva). The museum shows village and bowery types that are the most common for the appropriate region.

Farms of Lithuanian country people usually consist of living and utility buildings with some manufacturing units such as mills, smithies, combers and etc. In addition to the buildings the living and the utility space are being created by plants – fruit and flower gardens, separate trees and items of minor architecture, i.e. crosses, chapel posts, hedges, gates and entries, wells, benches, hives and etc.







**KAUNAS**



**Kaunas Tourism Information Center and Convention Bureau**  
Laisvės al. 36, Kaunas  
Tel. +370 37 323 436, fax +370 37 423 678  
E-mail [info@kaunastic.lt](mailto:info@kaunastic.lt)  
[www.visit.kaunas.lt](http://www.visit.kaunas.lt)