



*Lithuanian*  
**National Heritage**



## *What is Lithuania?*

Lithuania is its unique nature, dynamic cultural life and deep-rooted traditions. This is a country situated on the south-eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. In 1989, scientists of the National Geographical Institute of France by a method of gravitation centres determined that the geographical centre of Europe is in Lithuania. Lithuania borders Latvia, Poland, Belarus and Russia.

Lithuania's name was first mentioned in the written sources in 1009.

The area of the country is almost 65 300 sq km. 33.5% of the territory is covered with forests.

The territory is divided into five ethnographic regions: Aukštaitija (Highlands), Žemaitija (Samogitia), Dzūkija, Suvalkija and Lithuania Minor. Lithuania has some 3 000 rivers and lakes. The total length of the river and channel watercourses is 76 800 km.

The longest river is Nemunas. The largest lake is Drūkšiai.

## *Population*

Lithuania's population amounts to about 2 792 000 residents, of which 1 877 000 are urban, and 915 000 are rural residents.

86.4% are Lithuanians, 5.7% Poles, 4.5% Russians, 1.5% Belarusians and 1% Ukrainians. Diasporas of Jews, Latvians, Tatars, Germans, Roma and other nationalities are smaller. It is estimated that some 1.3 million of Lithuanians live abroad.

The average male to female ratio is 1 000 males per 1 157 females. Lithuanian is the official language.

77.2% of the population are Roman Catholics.



*Kaunas*

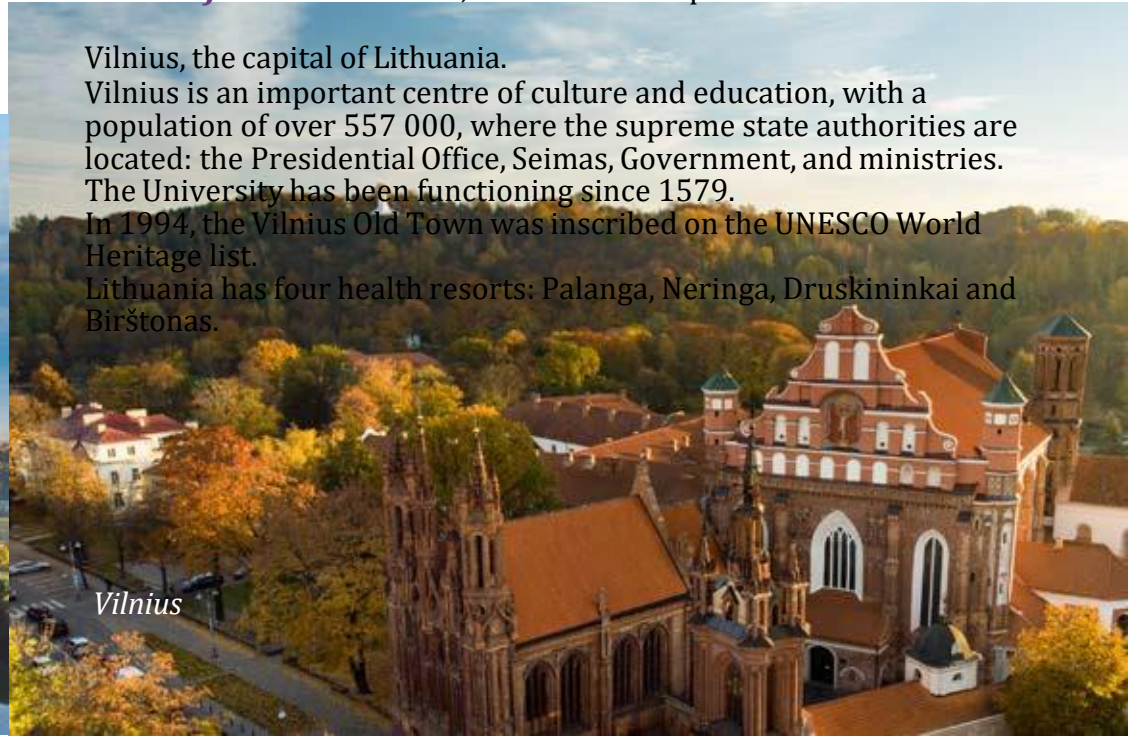
## *The major cities:* Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda.

Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania.

Vilnius is an important centre of culture and education, with a population of over 557 000, where the supreme state authorities are located: the Presidential Office, Seimas, Government, and ministries. The University has been functioning since 1579.

In 1994, the Vilnius Old Town was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list.

Lithuania has four health resorts: Palanga, Neringa, Druskininkai and Birštonas.



*Vilnius*



By assessment of the UNESCO experts and other international cultural organizations, Lithuania has many areas that have still preserved a unique rural character, and each region possesses characteristic architectural features of farmstead planning, residential and household buildings.

The country has 46 villages, possessing either historic or cultural heritage. The cultural heritage of Lithuania consists of 10 000 objects with the status of a cultural monument or value.

Lithuania's national heritage is an important part of ethnic culture of the country, including traditional crafts and products.



About 3 000 traditional products and about 3 500 national heritage products are certified. Traditional products are items of non mass production or food products, hand-made from traditional raw materials or by using old or equivalent new technologies, preserving their unique quality properties and structure.

National heritage products are traditional wares certified in the established procedure, plants and animals of traditional species and breeds, their products, and traditional services, being distinguished by a traditional form of the product that was formed historically in Lithuania or its certain ethnographic region, by its structure and other specific quality characteristics.

Lithuanian bread of horses Žemaitukai is the oldest living national heritage.

National heritage products and other objects are marked with the national heritage product marks of Categories A or B, approved by Order

No 3D-570 “On the Approval of the National Heritage Product Marks” of 27 October 2008 of the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania.



*National heritage products of Category A (on the left) – precisely corresponding to authentic national heritage products in production of which more than half of the processes are a handcraft. Category B products are close to national heritage products and are created with the use of new technologies.*



## Traditional Lithuanian Crafts



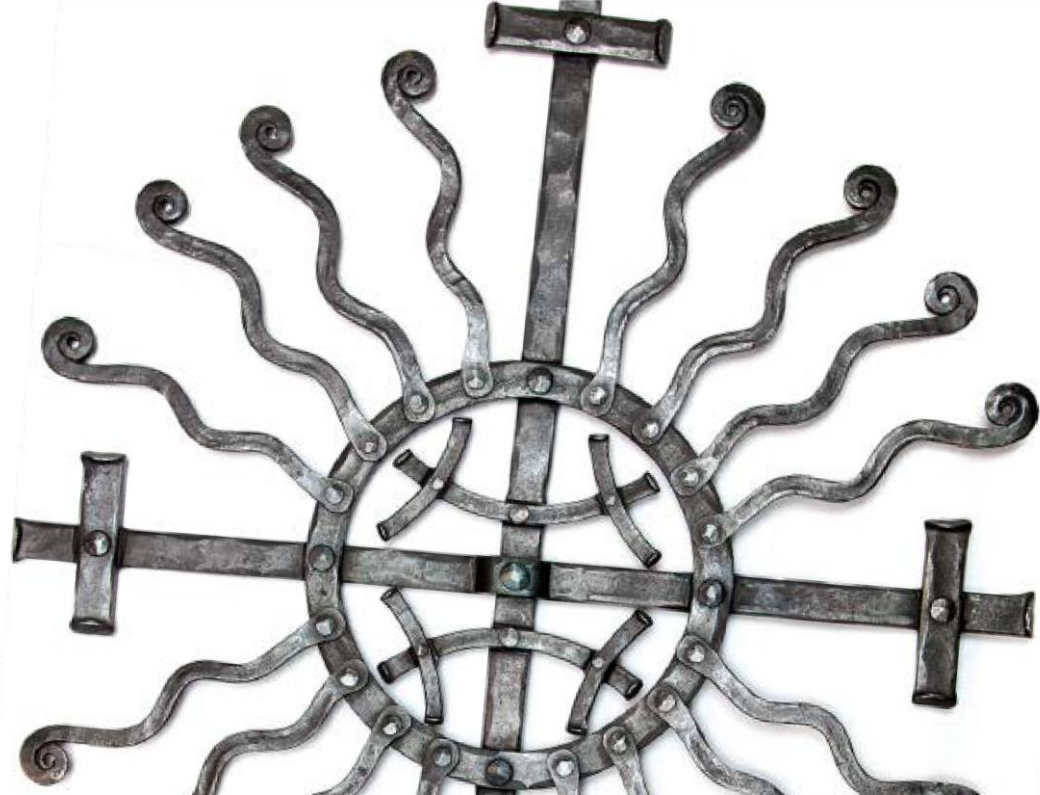
## *Cross-crafting is UNESCO Heritage*

Cross-crafting in Lithuania is a syncretic phenomenon of folk culture from the selection of an idea, site and master, creation process, placing of a cross, its consecration, visiting and communication until incineration of the decayed cross and its replacing. Traditional Lithuanian crosses are a unique synthesis of craftsmanship, art and faith, interconnecting the elements of architecture, sculpture, smithery and painting and possessing exclusive ornamentation and symbols. This is a combination of Christianity, ancient Baltic faith, and relation between human being and nature. In 2001, Lithuanian cross-crafting was inscribed on the Lists of Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity.



## *Metal Crafts are the Most Artistic Works of Smithery*

The most artistic works of one of the ancient crafts – smithery – are crosses, roofs of wayside shrines and pillared crosses. They are created by following traditional forging and joining techniques and methods of decoration where archaic Baltic ornamentation is prevailing.



## *Stone is a Life Companion*

Stones were always abundant on Lithuanian fields. They were used for building foundations of houses, niggling edgestones for grain milling essential to bread baking; stone balls could protect from enemies. Crosses were made of stone to commemorate the dead.



## *National Costume is the Symbol of Ethnic Culture*

We can hardly imagine national heritage without national costume. This is a very important national and state symbol, expressing ethnic and national culture.

The national costume of each region of Lithuania has certain exclusive features: fabrics, ornaments, colours, style, decoration and even the manner of wearing differ.

Traditional clothes were decorated with various inwrought and sometimes embroidered ornaments. For decoration of female clothes, home-made lace was used, stockings and wristlets with different ornaments were matched.



## *Meandrous Ornaments of Sashes*

A sash was an inseparable part of a national male costume. They were created using different techniques: woven, plaited, braided, and using combinations of bright colours. Sashes were commonly woven by young girls. Sashes took a special place in their dowry chests and were used as a gift for a matchmaker, bridesmen and dowrymen.



## *Traditional Female Decorations*

Female costumes were complemented with decorations in a variety of forms and ornaments. They were commonly created of amber and brass.

The present-day jewellers following traditions make amber necklaces that are an important part of the national costume. Applying ancient brass and silver processing techniques they reconstruct Baltic brooches, neck and breast decorations, bracelets.





### *Lithuanian Straw Hanging Ornaments (Sodai)*

Straw ornaments (sodai) are made of cut and strung rye, wheat or oat straws. These unique artworks, used to embellish best rooms, are included in the Collection of Intangible Cultural Heritage Values. The interior decoration was made of garlands and stars with various angles made of strung straws.



## *Carvings and Papercuts*

Wood carvings were popular in Samogitia in the 19th century – paintings were pressed on paper from the carving plank with the carved embossed drawing. Modern carvers follow traditional themes and style – a character is represented in the centre of the composition, details and designs arranged around it forming a harmonious whole.

At the end of the 19th century papercuts became popular in the everyday life of country people – papercuts for window curtains, shelf-spreads and lamp shades. Modern papercut designers also preserve a traditional paper cutting manner, ornamentation and design.



## *Palms (Verbos) of the Vilnius Land*

Since olden times, palms (verbos) have been created using nut tree osiers tied with dried flowers, moss, and corn ears. Until now they are an inseparable souvenir of the traditional Kaziukas fair in Vilnius and interior adornment.



## *Easter Speckled Eggs (Margučiai)*

Painting and specking of eggs is closely related with the Easter celebration. Natural dyes are used for specking by scratching various designs with a sharp tool or drawing them with wax. Modern speckled egg decorators also create artistic, original patterns and designs in egg decoration according to old traditions.



## *Lithuanian Ceramics*

Clay processing is one of the oldest crafts of importance nowadays. Earthenware jugs, bowls, pans and other pottery items are still in demand. Most frequently used techniques are centering and modelling.

Some craftsmen apply black and fermenting ceramic technologies known since prehistoric times. They decorate their items with carved ancient Baltic symbols, plant and animal ornaments or stuck embossed decorations.



## *Traditional Food*

Lithuanians since old were engaged in plant growing, animal husbandry and fishing. They consumed rye bread, fresh, salted and smoked fish, fresh and soured dairy products, drank barley beer and used linseed oil.

Lately, after focusing on traditional food and healthy diet, craftsmen and catering enterprises are reviving the old food preparation technologies. 44% of all certified craftsmen are involved in traditional food production.

A bunch of Lithuanian traditional food recipes are given below.



## Samogitian Kastinys (Sauce)

### Ingredients:

375 g home-made sour cream, 4 tablespoons of butter, 2 garlic cloves, a sprig of dill, a pinch of salt, pepper.



### Preparation:

Place a spoonful of sour cream and butter into the bowl and blend with a wooden spoon until grains are formed. Then float the bowl where kastinys is made into another bowl with hot water and heat to 50–60 degrees. Do not overheat. Remove the bowl from the water, add a spoonful of sour cream and blend while heating. Repeat this until all sour cream is added. Blend until a solid mass is formed.

When the mass starts thickening, add the squeezed garlic, salt, pepper and stir well. Place kastinys into small bowls and season with fresh dill.

*Provided by Petras Bieliauskas*



## *Lithuanian Smoked and Dry Cured Sausage (Skilandis)*



### **Ingredients for 10 kg:**

6.67 kg chilled pork,  
1.665 kg chilled fat,  
1.665 kg chilled  
beef, 300 g salt,  
33 g juniper berries,  
20 g sugar,  
26 g allspice,  
9 pig bladders.

### **Preparation:**

Cut meat into small and larger cubes. Chop fitch into sticks or four-angled pieces. Put salt, juniper berries, sugar and allspice into the chopped meat, stir well and case in well-cleaned and somewhat salted pig bladders. Stuff so as air pockets are non-existent.

After stuffing, prick with a needle, tie and leave hanging in cool premises for 4–7 days, depending on the size of skilandis.

Skilandis is smoked only with cold smoke for 2–3 weeks.



## *Traditional Black Bread*

### **Ingredients:**

5 kg rye flour,  
2.5 liters of drinking water,  
60 g salt,  
60 g sugar,  
a pinch of caraway seeds.

### **Preparation:**

Place the leaven bread in a wooden pail, still containing some dough from the previous baking. Pour flour, add caraway seeds, salt, sugar and brew up with boiling water. After 2 hours pour cold water and stir very well. Cover the dough with a linen cloth and leave for 12-hour fermenting. At the end of dough

fermentation, heat the bread baking oven with firewood. Form the bread loaves while the oven is heating. When the temperature in the oven reaches 250 degrees, sweep out cinder and ashes, place the formed loaves on the pan sifted with flour or covered with calamus, and place them in the oven. Close the oven orifice with a special lid. Bread is baked for about 2–2.5 hours.

Place the bread, baked and taken from the oven, on the wooden table, moisten with cold water, cover with a damp cloth and thick cotton cloth. Store for 12 hours at a room temperature. Then uncover the loaves, turn over and dry the bread base.

*Provided by Vita Stankevičienė*



## Cold Red Beet Soup (*Šaltibarščiai*)



### Ingredients:

500 g beets,  
1 litre sour milk,  
200 g fresh cucumbers,  
0.025 litre boiled  
water, 50 g fresh  
onions,  
10 g dills,  
2 g salt

### Preparation:

Boil and cool the beets, peel and grate them finely. Salt sour milk, whip, dilute with boiled water, put in grated beets, diced fresh cucumber, finely chopped fresh onions and dills.  
Serve the soup chilled.

*Provided by Via Baltica Dvaras, UAB*



## Potato-Meat Dumplings (Cepelinai)



### Ingredients:

#### Grated potato

#### pulp:

0.5 kg boiled  
4 tablespoons of starch,  
20 g

### Filling:

0.5 kg minced meat,  
one half of a fried  
onion, pepper, salt,  
2 tablespoons of  
cracklings, sour

### Making grated potato pulp.

Grate potatoes finely. Place them in the cheesecloth and squeeze through, but not too strong as the pulp should not be very dry.

After the potato pulp is strained and starch is settled at the bottom of the liquid, pour off the liquid carefully into the water where dumplings will be boiled, and place the remaining starch into the pulp.

Add half a kilo boiled (riced or minced) potatoes. Knead well the obtained mass.

### Meat filling.

Chop and fry an onion and put it into the mincemeat. Also, add salt and pepper, pour some broth. Stir everything well.

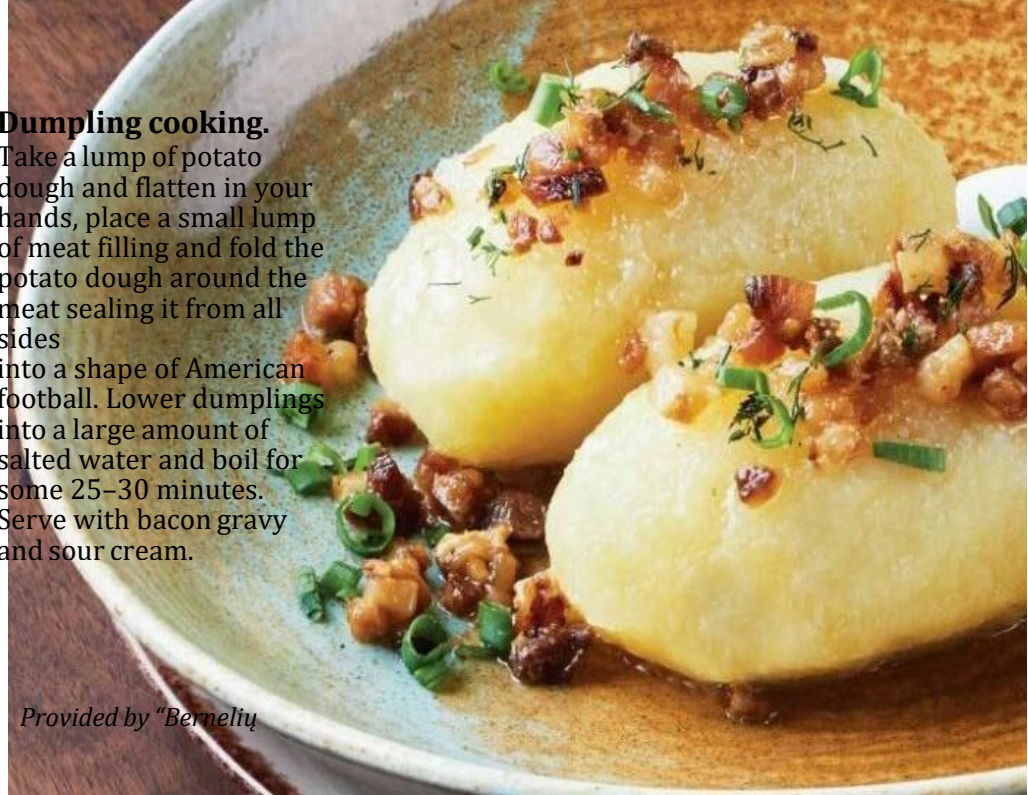
### Dumpling cooking.

Take a lump of potato dough and flatten in your hands, place a small lump of meat filling and fold the potato dough around the meat sealing it from all sides

into a shape of American football. Lower dumplings into a large amount of salted water and boil for some 25–30 minutes.

Serve with bacon gravy and sour cream.

*Provided by "Bernelių"*



## *Smoked Bream*

### **Ingredients:**

1 bream,  
25 g salt,  
3 g pepper,  
5 g garlic.



### **Preparation:**

Cut the bream lengthwise through its back and salt slightly. Keep for about an hour. Then rinse the fish and place on special sieves, season with pepper and chopped garlic. Then place into the firewood heated smoker.

*Provided by Jurijus Belokopytovas*



## *Curd Dumplings (Virtinukai)*

### **Ingredients:**

#### **Dough:**

2.5 glasses of flour,  
0.5 glass of water,  
flitch, 1 egg,  
1 tablespoon of oil.

#### **Filling:**

300 g curds,  
100 g smoked  
1 egg,  
1 handful fresh of onions.

### **Preparation:**

Mash curd, chop flitch and onions to small pieces and mix well.

Put together flour, salt, water, whisked egg and oil and knead to a mildly solid dough. Make patties with your palms from small dough lumps, put filling on them and seal well.

Lower ready-made dumplings into salted water and boil until ready. If dumplings are of bigger size, boil them for some minutes longer. Bring out with a strainer on a special board so that they wouldn't stick together. Place into the bowl and serve with the sauce of cracklings, butter or sour cream.

*From the publication "Traditional Food"*



## *Traditional Dish of the Dzūkai - Buckwheat Pie (Grikinė Babka)*



### **Ingredients:**

500 g buckwheat flour, 500 ml milk, 0.5 glass of sour cream, 1 tablespoon of soda, 2 eggs, 200 g butter, 1 glass of sugar, salt.

### **Preparation:**

Mix eggs and sugar with a wooden spoon. Pour the melted butter into the obtained mass and stir. Then add milk and pour flour. Once again mix everything well. Then mix 0.5 glass of sour cream with soda powder, pour into the dough and stir it well.

The dough should be of thick sour cream texture. Place the dough onto the oiled baking sheet and bake in the mildly heated oven for about an hour.

*Provided by Lina Černiauskiene*



## Traditional Honey Cookies (Meduoliai)

### Ingredients:

500 g flour,  
100 g butter,  
200 g honey,  
150 g sugar,  
2 eggs,  
5 g soda or baking powder,  
spices (cinnamon,  
coriander, cardamom,  
muscat, allspice, star anise,  
ginger).

### Preparation:

Boil water with sugar until it turns into a clear syrup. Cool the syrup to 18–20°C. Pour honey, melted butter, browned sugar, flour, a mixture of spices, add an egg and blend everything. Knead dough until a smooth paste is formed. The temperature of the prepared dough should be no more than 22°C. Let it rest for 10–12 hours.

Knead the dough after rising up to 1.5–2 cm thick and shape cookies using moulds. Oil the baking sheet and bake at a temperature of 180–200°C for 15–20 min. Allow them to cool.

*From the publication "Traditional Food"*



## *Mushroom Cookies (Grybukai)*

### **Ingredients:**

4  
eggs,  
flour,  
1 tablespoon of butter,  
2 tablespoons of sugar,  
0.5 litre of honey,  
clover, cinamon, allspice,  
sugar powder, cocoa,  
poppyseeds,  
2 teaspoons of baking

### **Preparation:**

Parcook honey in the saucepan, add butter and sugar, pour flour, ground clover, a pinch of cinnamon and ground allspice.

Put everything on the boil and mix well. After well-mixing chill, put some flour mixed with baking powder and knead well. Form mushroom caps and stems from the dough, place on the buttered baking sheet.

Bake in an oven of medium heat until

they become nicely brown. Place in a pan for them to cool. For icing, beat the egg whites with sugar powder, paint a stem with it and stick to the cap. Dip the tip of the stem into the poppyseeds. After stems get dried off, pour cocoa to the same icing, stir well and coat mushroom caps with it.

*From the publication "Traditional Food"*



Each year at the beginning of March  
you are invited to visit Kaziukas Fair in  
Vilnius, where you'll be treated to  
traditional food and can acquaint with  
traditional crafts.  
You are welcome!



## Tautinis paveldas

UNESCO ir kitų tarptautinių kultūros organizacijų ekspertų vertinimu, Lietuvoje dar daug kur yra išlaikyti unikalūs kaimo bruožai, regionui būdingos sodybų planavimo, gyvenamųjų ir ūkinių pastatų architektūros ypatybės.

Salyje yra 46 kaimai, turintys arba istorinį, arba kultūrinį paveldą. Lietuvos kultūros paveldą sudaro per 10 tūkst. objektų, turinčių kultūros paminklo arba kultūros vertybės statusą.

Svarbi šalies etninės kultūros dalis yra Lietuvos tautinis paveldas. Tai tradiciniai amatai ir produktai.

Yra sertifikuota apie 3 000 tradicinių gaminių ir apie 3 500 tautinio paveldo produktų. Tradiciniai gaminiai – ne masinės gamybos dirbiniai ar maisto gaminiai, sukurti iš tradicinių žaliavų rankomis arba naudojant senąsias ar jas atitinkančias naujas technologijas, išsaugant unikalias kokybines gaminių savybes ir sudėtį.

Tautinio paveldo produktai – nustatyta tvarka sertifikuoti tradiciniai gaminiai ir paslaugos, tradicinių veislių augalai ir gyvūnai bei jų produktai, pasižymintys istoriškai Lietuvoje ar jos atskirame etnografiniame regione susiformavusia produkto tradicine forma, sudėtimi ir kitais specifiniais kokybiniais ypatumais.

Tautinio paveldo produktai ir kiti objektai ženklunami tautinio paveldo produktų A kategorijos arba B kategorijos ženklais, patvirtintais Lietuvos Respublikos žemės ūkio ministro 2008 m. spalio 27 d. įsakymu. Nr. 3D-570 „Dėl Tautinio paveldo produktų ženklų patvirtinimo”.



Lithuanian National Heritage

Photos used in this publication were provided by:

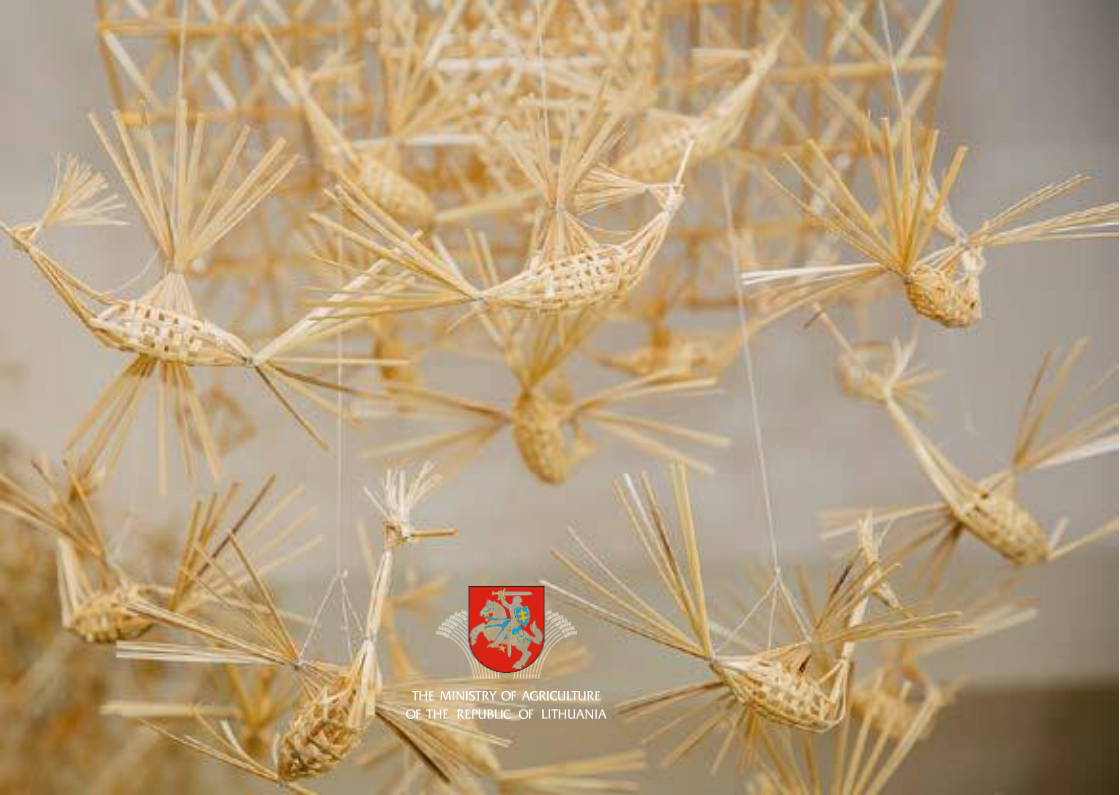
Dalia Bernotaitė, Domantas Pipas, Lithuanian Art Museum, PE “Keliauk Lietuvoje”, as well as persons and enterprises which committed the recipes.

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, 2023

Vilnius

**A** kategorijos tautinio paveldo produktai (kairėje) – tiksliai atitinkantys autentiškus tautinio paveldo produktus, kurių kūrimo procese naudojama daugiau kaip pusė rankų darbo.

**B** kategorijos produktai – artimi autentiškiems tautinio paveldo produktams ir sukurti naudojantis naujomis technologijomis.



THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE  
OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA