

LITHUANIA

HISTORY, CULTURE, POLITICS AND TRADITIONS

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THE HISTORY OF LITHUANIA

- This presentation aims to explain the often turbulent history of Lithuanian. Told as clear as possible, with lots of maps and pictures all for a dynamic presentation.



WHERE IS LITHUANIA?

- Okay, where is Lithuania? It's in Europe, a small country nestled in the North Central part, on the Baltic Sea.
- It's bordered by Latvia, Belarus, Poland, and Russia. It is part of the European Union and the NATO Alliance, so it's about as European as you can get. The currency is the Euro.
- It is considered one of the Baltic States, along with Latvia and Estonia which lie to the north



HISTORY AND FACTS

- Lithuania has a population of 2.8 million people, but there's more all around the world, so Lithuanians consider themselves as being three million. Its tri-color flag is yellow, green, and red

- The Baltic sea was populated by the Baltic tribes for thousands of years. Lithuania's language (Lithuanian) can be traced back a long way, having roots with archaic features found in the ancient language of Sanskrit, so it is considered to be one of the oldest languages in the world.



HISTORY AND FACTS

- In 1569, the Union of Lublin was signed in Lublin, Poland, and it created a single state, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, joining the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.

- But this only lasted until 1795, when after Napoleon's failed invasion of Russia, Lithuania was invaded right back by the Russian Empire, annexing most of Lithuania's territory. Lithuania pretty much disappeared from the map and the territory remained occupied by Russia until 1918, suffering repression and attempts by Czarist Russia to steal the Lithuanian identity, Catholic religion, and language. Several times Lithuanians rose up in revolt only to be crushed by the Russian Army.



HISTORY AND FACTS



- In 1917, with the Bolshevik revolution, Lithuanians saw an opportunity to break away from Czarist Russia, and on February 16th, 1918 they declared their independence. The Bolsheviks, at first resisted losing Lithuania, but with the losses in some battles, they relented and allowed Lithuania to exit their new Soviet Union. At the left there is the map of Lithuania in 1918.

LITHUANIAN HOLOCAUST

- In 1939, Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact , and thus the Soviet Union quickly invaded and annexed Lithuania along with Latvia and Estonia while Germany invaded Poland without consequence.
- The Soviets, in order to prevent resistance from the Lithuanian population, began to gather up all government officials, professors, teachers, prominent merchants, business leaders, and their entire extended families, the so-called intelligentsia, and put them on cattle cars and deported them thousands of miles away to labor camps in Siberia.

LITHUANIAN HOLOCAUST

Often rounded up in the middle of the night with no belongings, many died en-route from exposure to the cold. Those who survived were forced to work and live in harsh conditions. They were not allowed to return to Lithuania until 1954 after Josef Stalin died. This has often been considered the Lithuanian Holocaust. Below is a picture of People being loaded onto cattle cars for deportation to Siberia.



LITHUANIAN HOLOCAUST

- In 1941 Nazi Germany broke the pact and launched an invasion of the Soviet Union, occupying Lithuania along the way, and putting Lithuanians under Nazi rule.
- Some Lithuanians, having secretly fought the Soviets, now turned their attention to fighting the Germans. But the invasion led to the second Lithuanian Holocaust, as thousands of Lithuanian Jews, LGBT, and mentally ill were gathered up in ghettos in the cities, and then sent by train to concentration and death camps. Others were executed on the spot, or in secret prisons like the Ninth Fort.

NINTH FORTH PICTURES TAKEN BY ME



LITHUANIA A PART OF THE SOVIETIC UNION

- In 1944, the Soviets retook Lithuania from the Germans as result of the World War 2, and reoccupied the country, annexing it and calling it LTSR, one of the fifteen republics of the Soviet Union. The capital Vilnius was returned to Lithuania. Below there is a map of Lithuania as part of the Soviet Union in 1945.



THE FIGHT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE

- Then finally, in the late 1980's, Lithuania had hope on independence again, and as the Polish Solidarity movement began to succeed down south, Lithuania too had their Sąjūdis movement for independence. On March 11th 1990, the Act of the Re-Establishment of the State of Lithuania was signed. So now we can say that Lithuania has two independence days!
- The Soviets tried to put down this independence.
- Mikhail Gorbachev called the Act of Independence illegal and the USSR demanded revocation of the Act and began applying sanctions against Lithuania including an economic block. In addition, on January 13, 1991 Soviet forces stormed the Parliament building in Vilnius along with the Vilnius TV Tower. Unarmed civilian Lithuanians confronted Soviet soldiers. Fourteen people were killed and seven hundred injured in what became known as the January Events.

THE FIGHT FOR THE INDEPENDENCE

- On February 11, 1991, the Icelandic parliament voted to confirm that Iceland's 1922 recognition of Lithuanian independence was still in full effect, as it never formally recognized the Soviet Union's control over Lithuania.
- They were followed by Denmark, Slovenia and Croatia, and Latvia. The tide was rolling. Lithuanian independence recognition was then reconfirmed by the United States on September 2, 1991.
- Finally, on September 6, 1991 Lithuania's independence was recognized by the Soviet Union



CULTURE OF LITHUANIA: POLITICS

- **Politics of Lithuania** takes place in a framework of a unitary semi-presidential representative democratic republic, whereby the President of Lithuania is the head of state and the Prime Minister of Lithuania is the head of government, and of a multi-party system.
- Executive power is exercised by the President and the Government, which is headed by the Prime Minister. Legislative power is vested in both the Government and the unicameral Seimas (Lithuanian Parliament). Judicial power is vested in judges appointed by the President of Lithuania and is independent of executive and legislature power. On your right you have some pictures of the Seimas taken by me!



CULTURE OF LITHUANIA: POLITICS

- The judiciary consists of the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court, and the Court of Appeal as well as the separate administrative courts. The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania established these powers upon its approval on 25 October 1992. Being a multi-party system, the government of Lithuania is not dominated by any single political party, rather it consists of numerous parties that must work with each other to form coalition governments.



CULTURE OF LITHUANIA: RELIGION

- Since the Christianization of parts of Lithuania proper (a region which existed within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and where the Lithuanian language was spoken) in 1387 and of Samogitia in 1413, the majority of Lithuanians have been members of the Roman Catholic Church. According to the 2001 census, 79% of Lithuanians are Roman Catholic. Approximately 4.9% of the population are Eastern Orthodox, mainly the Russian minority. Under Article 26 of the Constitution of Lithuania, people can freely practice a religion of their choosing.
- Several Catholic priests were leaders of the anti-communist movements, and thousands of Latin rite crosses were placed on the Hill of Crosses near Šiauliai, despite its being bulldozed in 1961.

PICTURES OF THE HILL OF THE CROSSES TAKEN BY ME



CULTURE OF LITHUANIA: EDUCATION

- Education in Lithuania exists from pre-school to adult education. Colleges and universities in Lithuania have undergraduate and higher education. Pre-school is for children aged three to six years. After pre-school, children enroll in primary school from seven to ten years of age. At eleven, students begin secondary school until the age of 18. Once the general education is completed, students go to college or university. Students can take the UK exam to study overseas. Below there is pics of the school Julius Janonis Gymnasium in Siauliai, one of the most important schools in the country!



CULTURE OF LITHUANIA: GASTRONOMY

- Lithuanian cuisine features the products suited to its cool and moist northern climate: barley, potatoes, rye, beets, greens, berries, and mushrooms are locally grown, and dairy products are one of its specialities. Since it shares its climate and agricultural practices with Eastern Europe, Lithuanian cuisine has much in common with other Eastern European and Ashkenazi cuisines. Below you have some pictures of traditional food like **Cepelinai (Potato Dumplings Filled with Minced Meat)**, **Šaltibarščiai (Cold Beet Soup)**, and **Bulviniai Blynai (Potato Pancakes)**.



CULTURE OF LITHUANIA:TRADITIONS

- Rasos & Joninas Day: This tradition is celebrated on Midsummer. During the morning, young women have to wash their faces only with fresh dew. Later, in the evening, bonfires are organized around the cities and in the countryside, and people make wishes and put spell bags in the water to make their dreams come true. There is a picture of the Fern Forest above.
- Easter Granny: This endearing old lady known as Velyku Bobute is the one that brings the Easter eggs to the children, although it is true that she has some bunnies that act as her assistants and help to decorate the eggs and load her cart before she goes to deliver them. There can see the Eastern Eggs at your right!













JULIAUS JANONIO GIMNAZIJUS







Su senelių
pagalba
taupyti
lengviau...

Su senelių
pagalba
taupyti
lengviau...

Stori būti
laimingas?
Būk...

Žvejyba
retkai
rimtas...

Svajonių
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Atostogų
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Gerų
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SANDRO

GINNY

VIRGINIA

JULIA

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THE END! I HOPE YOU LIKED IT!

