

APPETISING VILNIUS

*Culinary
guide*



VILNIUS

APPETISING VILNIUS

These days, few things represent a nation as well as its food.

Since the times of the Grand Duke Gediminas in the 14th century, Vilnius has been famous as a capital open to people of all nationalities and religions, and of course, their cultures and cuisines. From Karaite *kibinai* and Jewish bagels, to Italian *lazankos* and German *baumkuchen* – many traditions have found their place in our country's gastronomy without overwhelming the national cuisine.

Lithuanian cuisine is curious, open to the world, and has been historically very advanced. For example, the dishes served at the Vilnius residence of King Žygimantas Augustas in the 16th century included ingredients like melons, parsnips, figs, sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg and more. Most of these ingredients didn't grow locally or anywhere even close to Lithuania.

The nobility of Vilnius brought luxurious wines and various food products to their manors, and invited foreign chefs to apply their culinary knowledge to local products and traditions. This helped form what are now local flavours.

There was a period after WWII when the country's gastronomy was stagnant and had to adapt to the political situation of the time. However, these days, Lithuanian cuisine is being born anew by blending ancestral traditions, local products and contemporary needs.

Although the number of tourists in Vilnius is growing every year, when it comes to eating out, tourist traps are few and far between. In fact, most places are rather oriented towards quality and aim to attract the same customers again and again. And of course, the city's collective openness to global cuisine has made for a thriving and dynamic restaurant scene.

With the help of this guide you'll discover places in Vilnius where you can eat like a Duke in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, a member of a Jewish merchant family, a modern gourmand, someone living in the Soviet era, a descendant of the Karaites, and so much more. Turn the page and SKANAUS!

Skanaus!
Bon appétit!
Smacznego!
Enjoy your meal!
Guten Appetit!
ובאיתח
Смачна есыц!
Приятного аппетита!
慢慢吃！
Head isu! Jätku leiba!
Hyvää ruokahalua!
いただきます
¡Buen apetito!
Labu apetiti!
Smaklig måltid!
Смачного!
Afiyet olsun!

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VILNIUS *Culinary*
guide

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Every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of this publication. The creators cannot, however, accept responsibility for errors or omissions, but where such errors or omissions are brought to our attention, future publications will be amended accordingly. The publication reflects the situation as of September 2019.

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EXPATS TASTING VILNIUS



ERICA JENNINGS

Singer-Songwriter, named Lithuania's Singer of the Year in 2017

Living in Vilnius for 23 years

I like how much the food scene has evolved over the past two decades. It's incredible when we consider how much has changed. Back then there were a precious few places where one could eat well, literally counting them on one hand in the entire country...and now we are inundated with fantastic culinary options, with both established restaurants and new delights opening regularly. Lithuania really has a wonderful selection to choose from now, and price wise you can find something that suits any budget.

Erica's favourite food and coffee places in town:

- *Gaspar's* is exceptional. Gaspar the owner is always surprising guests with mouth-watering dishes, and the presentation and warmth of the place is amazing.

- *Sue's Indian Raja* is the best Indian you'll find in the Baltics and Poland. No doubt. It's been around for a long time and never once lost it's high standards.

- *Bistro 18* has European cuisine that includes scrumptious soups, and is also a great place to have coffee and chat. The private wine room has a lovely ambiance, too.

- *Rise* is an incredible Japanese restaurant that is unpretentious and amazingly affordable, and the food is always out of this world.

- *RoseHip* is a new vegan restaurant and I have to commend them on being pioneers here in creating tasty, flavourful and original vegan dishes.

A must gastro experience while in Vilnius:

If you're making a long evening of it, *Sweet Root* is a good option because it uses only local and seasonal products, and it's the first restaurant in Lithuania to have a menu dictated entirely by the local nature and weather conditions. Expect a five-course dinner along with something special from the Chef, wine pairing and stories about the food being served, too. Great service, ambience, and the space is lovely, too - it's in Užupis, a district that you should definitely visit while in Vilnius.



Ethiopia

ESKEDAR

Entrepreneur, Founder and Manager of Eskedar Coffee

Living in Vilnius for 12 years

I would define Vilnius as a miniature melting pot of cultures. You just need to push the tiny doors of mini restaurants in the Old Town, Užupis and various gastro spaces such as *Uptown Bazaar*, *Open Kitchen* etc.

Eskedar's favourite food and coffee places in town:

- *Say Cheese bistro*: I order a combo of Lithuanian cold beetroot soup with goat cheese served with grilled potatoes, and I top it off with a perfect cup of Ethiopian coffee.
- *Rūdninkų knygynas*: I love the vibe and the interior, which is beyond a coffee shop. Jazz music takes you back and forth from Vilnius to Paris, or Vilnius to New York.

- *Open Kitchen*: The idea is to gather the city's best food trucks in one spot every Friday throughout the summer. It takes place right in the heart of Vilnius Old Town close to the riverbank of the Vilnelė.

- *The Lebanese restaurant Leyla and Chaika Cafe* are must-visits for all vegetarians.

- *Baziliskas* on Raugyklos Street is great for traditional craft beer tasting. It's small, cosy and authentic.

Also, there are many more hidden gems on the streets of Savičiaus, Vilnius, Vokiečių, Pilies, and the district of Užupis. For an industrial set-up, head to *Backstage Cafe*.

A must gastro experience while in Vilnius:

Kaziukas Fair is a place where I've experienced real Lithuanian cuisine. Also, *Open Kitchen* is one of the contemporary food experiences you can have if you're around in summer. If you want to experience a culture within a culture, go to Belmontas. It's a restaurant in the middle of a forest that serves barbecue and a set of six Lithuanian beers in one serving. You could also try all the other Lithuanian dishes at this place.

MAX BRATSUN

Web Designer and Entrepreneur

Living in Vilnius for 13 years

The best thing about the gastro scene in Vilnius is that it's been ever-changing and growing since the introduction of the Euro. Competition grows together with purchasing power, and it stimulates both restaurants and fast food stalls to feature more diverse dishes and to improve the overall dining experience for customers. Personally, I'm a big fan of small Italian places and the new food courts popping up around the city.

Max's favourite food and coffee places in town:

- *Backstage Cafe* is the absolute best coffee spot in Vilnius for great roasted coffee and delicious brunches.
- The Italian restaurant *Le Travi* serves fantastic homemade pasta and one-of-a-kind sparkling wine in a cosy and welcoming environment.



Belarus

A must gastro experience while in Vilnius:

Visit the fish restaurant *Šturmy Švyturys*; it deserves the highest marks by all means, especially when they have seasonal smelt dishes available. It's the only restaurant in the country serving fresh Lithuanian fish and the menu changes daily depending on what they are able to catch. One cannot miss this place when in Vilnius. Both the service and the food are spectacular and make for an unforgettable dining experience.

GASPAR FERNANDES

Chef and Owner of Gaspar's Restaurant

Living in Vilnius for 5 years

I like the fact that the food culture here has changed so fast and so much in the last five years. It's unbelievable to see so many new places, concepts, experiences etc. and I like that I happen to be a part of this too – it allows me to contribute my part and to present Vilnius as a foodie destination that's just as good as London, Paris, or Barcelona. But Vilnius has its own charm, which makes it different and unique.

Gaspar's favourite food and coffee places in town:

- *Crooked Nose & Coffee Stories* for coffee enthusiasts.
- The local specialty coffee bar *BREW*.
- The Mexican-inspired restaurant *Sofa de Pancho*.
- *Narushi*, an authentic Sushi Bar in the Old Town.

A must gastro experience while in Vilnius:

For visitors from abroad I would say don't get caught up at the restaurants that are in the main touristic places, but do a little research on where to eat good local food, or for that matter, you could even go check the TOP 30 restaurants in Lithuania list as you will be better off following this.



India



Peru

ANTONIO BECHTLE

Creative Director at Bechtle & Milzarajs, Co-Founder of the content house Clandestinos, and Head Teacher of Creativity at The Atomic Garden Vilnius

Living in Vilnius for 11 years

I've been lucky enough to experience the gradual transformation of Vilnius' gastronomic culture into a blooming and beautiful bouquet, full of passion and variety. And then there is the price. Still quite affordable compared to most of Europe. Every time I have guests from abroad, they are surprised about the quality/price ratio of the food in Vilnius.

Antonio's favourite food and coffee places in town:

- The cold brew flask at *Huracan Coffee*.
- The spicy rice with pork at *Vathaitau*.
- The Dal Makhani at *Sue's Indian Raja*.
- The duck sandwich at *Spiritus Bar*.
- The atmosphere in *Saint Germain*.
- The oysters at Assorti Gourmet in *Halės Market*.

A must gastro experience while in Vilnius:

Go to *Halės Market* (more about this place on page 22), pick some snacks and food from the different stands/shops/bakeries that you have there, a bunch of fresh fruit and veggies, and with that nice mixture of imported and local products, go to a park or by the river to have a picnic with your local friends on a sunny day.



HISTORICAL CUISINE

GOTHIC
RENAISSANCE
BAROQUE
ENLIGHTENMENT
PRE-WAR
INTERWAR
POST-WAR
INDEPENDENT
LITHUANIA

AN INTRODUCTION TO REAL LITHUANIAN FLAVOURS

Long before potatoes first came on the scene, Lithuanian cuisine was already incorporating ingredients like olives, saffron, and ginger, which is why those popular potato dishes hardly reflect Lithuania's entire culinary tradition. Our country's long and colourful history helped form Lithuania's rich culinary heritage, which still even surprises native Lithuanians with its diversity.

13th–15th century

THE GOTHIC PERIOD

Lithuania's land was covered in dense forests, was full of lakes, far from the sea, and yet among the least fertile in the region. For this reason, the most common products used in the kitchen were freshwater fish, rye, buckwheat, and goods found in the wild (mushrooms, honey, hogweed, etc.). However, as the Gothic period saw the formation of the Lithuanian State, the following also found their way into our cuisine:

- Various exotic spices
- Root vegetables
- Gastronomic culture and dishes (*kibinai*, *koldūnai*, etc.) brought by the Tatars and Karaites when they settled in Lithuania

"The public began to appreciate culinary skills in this period. This is indicated by the fact that under the rule of Vytautas, decadent spices were traded and used to season dishes served to the rulers and nobility."

Chef Tomas Rimydis

THE RENAISSANCE

In terms of gastronomy, the Renaissance is marked by Lithuania's links to Italy. This period was defined by Bona Sforza, the Duchess of Milan, who married Sigismund I the Old, the King of Poland and Grand Duke of Lithuania, and came to Poland and Lithuania. Various gastronomic innovations appeared in Lithuania during this time:

- An increased use of wine and olive oil
- A greater assortment of wheat grain dishes
- All sorts of products unfamiliar to northerners, especially leafy vegetables and spices

"The northern Renaissance differs from the one in Italy. Lithuania's Renaissance is a mixture of the continuation of the Gothic period and innovations adapted from Italy."

Professor Rimvydas Laužikas



THE ENLIGHTENMENT

At the end of the 18th century, the French ideas of the Enlightenment spread to Lithuania, although at the same time the State was destroyed and Lithuania become a distant corner of an enormous empire. Romanticism and French cuisine were the primary inspirations of Lithuania's gastronomic identity under the rule of the Russian Empire. The most characteristic features of cuisine in this period are:

- An increase in eating of venison
- Experiments with simple peasant ingredients in *grande cuisine*
- The first books on gastronomy aimed towards the public, not professionals
- The spread of Lithuanian gastronomic traditions to other countries

"Lithuania enters French gastronomy. In French cookbooks from this period, we can find recipes labelled 'à la Lithuanienne'."

Professor Rimvydas Laužikas



16th century

late 18th–early 19th century

17th–late 18th century

late 19th– 20th century



BAROQUE PERIOD

In this historical period, the Lithuanian noble Radziwiłł family were notable for their love of gastronomy. They were not only one of the richest families in the territory of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, but in all of Europe as well. The Radziwiłł family and other nobles constantly travelled abroad and followed the latest trends in gastronomy, which is why during the Baroque period the following became popular in their manors:

- The influence of French cuisine and its aesthetics
- Baked goods from butter dough: cookies, pâtés and the like
- Coffee from the Ottoman Empire
- From the Americas – potatoes, cacao, Jerusalem artichokes, tomatoes, turkey, etc.

"Baroque cuisine brought together a variety of unexpected ingredients and different flavours."

Professor Rimvydas Laužikas



PRE-WAR AND INTERWAR CUISINE

This was the historical period that formed the understanding of our nation as we know it today. The identity of a Lithuanian as someone who spoke Lithuanian, was of peasant origin and critical towards Christianity formed during this time. This identity shaped the basis for the understanding of what our national gastronomy is. During this period:

- Books on gastronomy were published in Lithuanian
- Recipes and various tips and tricks became popular in the press
- Attempts were made to create a national Lithuanian *grande cuisine*
- The general level of the country's gastronomic culture was raised
- Potato dishes increased in popularity

POST-WAR CUISINE

The Soviet occupation brought Lithuania's culture down, taking gastronomy with it. There was a shortage of food products and the Iron Curtain severed links with other countries, which is what had previously kept the culture alive. The select teaching of chefs was replaced by mass training, and most dishes were prepared according to standardised recipes.

- Communication with Western gastro-culture was cut off
- A list of standardised dishes was introduced
- A shortage of products
- A formation of the understanding that Lithuanian dishes are primarily potato-based

"During this period, very few recipe books were published. This is the period where all the 'cornerstone' dishes of Lithuanian cuisine came from: *cepelinai*, potato pancakes, cold beet soup, potato sausages, *balandėliai*, etc. And of course, chefs could only cook from a standardised list, and in that period there was a shortage of products, so variety in a menu was neither permitted, nor possible."

Chef Tomas Rimydis



second half of the 20th century

21st century



THE CUISINE OF INDEPENDENT LITHUANIA

1990 marked the rebirth of Lithuanian culture, including gastronomy. A connection to foreign flavours was re-established, particularly with regard to Italian, French, and Scandinavian cuisine. Our own deep roots were also rediscovered – more and more restaurants turn to our history and interpret the dishes from the old manors or urban culture, as well as those potato dishes that defined us during the Soviet era – they too are a part of Lithuania's culinary tradition. For more about Lithuania's contemporary gastronomy – turn the page.

Restaurant

WHAT DID THE LITHUANIAN NOBILITY EAT?

ERTLIO NAMAS

Ertlio Namas invites guests to taste the cuisine familiar to Lithuania's noble class. Although the dishes are prepared using modern culinary technologies and served according to current aesthetic standards, this restaurant offers a menu that is closest to Lithuania's historical cuisine.

EXPERIENTIAL. *Ertlio Namas* offers one of the most radical menus in Lithuania and is home to much more than just delicious food – it's a historical experience that lets guests taste authentic Lithuanian dishes once reserved for the nobility, and learn about the country's history with every bite.

APPROVED. *Ertlio Namas* was named the most hospitable restaurant in Vilnius for two consecutive years and has made it onto the list of Lithuania's 30 Best Restaurants twice. In recent years, both *Forbes* and the *Financial Times* were generous in lauding *Ertlio Namas* for its culinary excellence. Located in Vilnius Old Town, *Ertlio Namas* recently opened an additional seating area to accommodate more people.

STRICT. *Ertlio Namas* has one of the strictest menus in Lithuania, and though short, it's based on historical facts. You can choose from a four-course (35 Eur) or six-course (45 Eur) tasting menu. Each option includes the chef's special. The menu is always created in close collaboration with historians.

Location: Šv. Jono g. 7

Opening hours: I-IV 17:00-22:00, V 17:00-23:00,
VI 13:00-23:00, VII 13:00-22:00



Capitals around the world are melting pots for many different nations, their cultures and, of course, their flavours. Vilnius is no exception, especially since this city has historically been open to people of different nationalities and their traditions. Today, a wide variety of global flavours can be found all under one roof at modern food halls and a few older marketplaces still operating in the city.

UNDER ONE ROOF



UPTOWN BAZAAR

Since 2017

When *Uptown Bazaar* first opened its doors in Vilnius' Naujamiestis neighbourhood, the first impression was, "finally, Vilnius has its very own next-generation gastro-market." The olives at this market will transport you to Crete, the ramen tastes like it comes directly from Sapporo, the pancakes will remind you of the Hague, and the schnitzel is just like in Vienna – and yet it all feels like home, like Vilnius. *Uptown Bazaar* has over 20 mini restaurants, and you can also buy fresh produce and edible gifts for family and friends.



Location:
Kauno g.
16



Opening hours: I-II 9:00-17:00,
III-V 10:00-20:00,
VI 10:00-21:00, VII 10:00-17:00



You'll enjoy it if you are looking for
a lively and vibrant atmosphere to
taste world cuisine.

BENEDIKTO MARKET

Since 2018

You'll get the impression of being in a Mediterranean marketplace once you step foot in *Benedikto*. This modern food market is a little bit outside the city centre but definitely worth a visit for its wide variety of food on offer and the pleasant atmosphere. Not only can you treat yourself to a meal at *Benedikto Market*, but you will also find all sorts of Lithuanian products and edible souvenirs at a non-touristy price. In total, there are 32 shops and 9 places to eat.



Location:
Ukmergės g.
259A



Opening hours:
I-VI 9:00-20:00,
VII 9:00-18:00



You'll enjoy it if you like
to visit spots that are
popular among locals.



HALĖS MARKET

Since 1906

One of the oldest market areas in Vilnius where people have been trading since the 15th century, the *Halės Market* building dates back to 1906. It's where you'll find produce sold by both small farmers and larger-scale businesses, remnants of the Soviet-era, as well as trendy new spots with delicious food, like bakeries, butchers, cheese and wine shops, a bagel deli, and a bistro.



Location:
Pylimo g.
58



Opening hours:
II-VI 7:00-18:00,
VII 7:00-15:00



You'll enjoy it if you appreciate places that are really authentic yet at the same time slightly eclectic.



GOURMET PANORAMA

Since 2018

Located in a shopping centre, this is the first and largest gourmet food hall in the Baltics. There are 19 different restaurants represented here, including quality steaks and burgers, fresh seafood, a wide variety of authentic baked goods, a range of Asian (Vietnamese, Thai, Japanese), Caribbean and Middle Eastern choices, as well as pizza and other Mediterranean delicacies.



Location:
Saltoniškių g.
9



Opening hours:
I-VI 10:00-22:00,
VII 10:00-21:00



You'll enjoy it if you fancy a gourmet meal while shopping. ▶



DOWNTOWN FOOD HALL

Since 2018

Downtown Food Hall and Kino Deli is the first place in Vilnius where a food hall is also...a movie theatre.

Housing 14 mini restaurants, *Downtown Food Hall* has examples of all kinds of global cuisine: sushi, a South-East Asian menu, some of the best falafel in the city, various vegan options, juicy burgers, chicken, Chinese food, fish & chips, and, last but not least, desserts. You can enjoy your meal at the tables spread out like a food court both inside and on the terrace, or you can take it with you into the movie theatre.



Location:
A. Smetonos g.
5



Opening hours:
VII-IV, 11:00-21:00,
V-VI 11:00-23:00



You'll enjoy it if you are looking for a place with different meal options right in the city centre. Plus, you can get kill two birds with one stone: a movie and a meal!



KALVARIJŲ MARKET

Since 1903

This is definitely a different kind of market than the other ones in this guide. It isn't cool or contemporary, but it is full of very different people selling all kinds of different things. *Kalvarijų* is where you can find a lot of local produce. Part of the market is located in pavilions, while the rest of the stalls are outside (no matter the weather – snow in winter or heat in summer). Even if you don't buy anything, *Kalvarijų Market* is worth the visit for its truly authentic vibe and characteristic Stalinist architecture.



Location:
Kalvarijų g.
61



Opening hours:
II-VII
7:00-17:00



You'll enjoy it if you're not looking for something trendy and modern, if you're interested in the remnants of the Soviet era, and if you want to buy fresh produce rather than ready-made meals.

COFFEE CRAWL

This guide is for coffee lovers who make a ritual of their favourite warm drink and care about where and what kind of coffee they drink.

Archival sources reveal that residents of Vilnius started drinking coffee in the early to mid-17th century.



TASTE MAP

📍 **Location:** M. K. Čiurlionio g. 8
🕒 **Opening hours:** I-V 7:00-20:00,
VI 9:00-20:00, VII 10:00-19:00

Taste Map owners Ieva and Domas run three cosy places where they offer coffee roasted at their family manufactory. Although *Taste Map* is more of a café than a place for food, you can also find desserts, salads, pies and cheesecakes at each of their locations.

⚠️ There are two more *Taste Map* coffeehouses in Vilnius (Gynėjų g. 14C and Antakalnio g. 17), both are part of the startup ecosystem as they are both located in popular start-up hubs – *Rockit* and the impressive *Vilnius Tech Park*.

HURACAN

This is one of the most respected coffee culture brands in Vilnius (formerly *Šviežia Kava*) and one of the oldest coffeehouse chains operating in Lithuania. Its founder, Vytautas Kratulis, started roasting and selling coffee in a tiny Naujamiestis shop back in 2001. Much like his coffee's aroma, word spread far and wide of his products, so Vytautas opened his first coffeehouse for his regular customers at the Central Department Store in 2004. *Huracan* currently has nine locations in Vilnius and also supplies coffee to some of the best restaurants in the country.



Vytautas Kratulis

Owner of *Huracan*, coffee connoisseur and organiser of the first International Coffee Championship in Lithuania

I believe Vilnius is well ahead of its neighbouring Baltic capitals Riga and Tallinn in terms of its coffee culture. We have a lot of places where you can discover some interesting and unusual coffee flavours. Plus many coffee shop owners have a keen interest in coffee preparation processes and take the time to educate their customers. This is very important to me, which is why we don't serve and have no plans to ever serve food at *Huracan* (except for small coffee desserts). The focus here is on the coffee. My personal goal is to be part of our urban culture and to multiply quality, that is, to provide people with the flavours of different coffee varieties that have been awarded prizes at various events or have been discovered at some priceless auctions – all that at a reasonable price.

STRANGE LOVE

📍 **Location:** Barboros Radvilaitės g. 6B
⌚ **Opening hours:** I-IV 8:00-21:00,
V 8:00-22:00, VI 10:00-22:00,
VII 10:00-20:00

Positioned next to the main entrance to what is arguably Vilnius' most charming park (*Bernardinai*), *Strange Love* is a three-in-one: a coffee shop, a cafe, and a place to escape from the bustle of the city without having to leave its very centre.



BREW. SPECIALTY COFFEE

📍 **Location:** Pylimo g. 19
⌚ **Opening hours:** I-V 8:00-21:00,
VI-VII 9:00-21:00

Brew is a cosy cafe right next to the *MO Museum*, in an area full of other well-regarded cafes and restaurants. *Brew* offers its own roasts accompanied by wholesome desserts, delicious *bouls*, sandwiches, and of course, smiling baristas.



CROOKED NOSE & COFFEE STORIES

📍 **Location:** Šaltinių g. 20-17
⌚ **Opening hours:** IV-VI 10:00-16:00

It's a rather niche place where guests are invited to enjoy their coffee slowly, so it's best if you come here when you're not in a rush. The owner, Emanuelis, roasts coffee from different parts of the world himself and prepares it using different methods. As he puts it himself, the day either has a taste or it doesn't. Meaning a day is tasteless without good coffee. ▶



RAŠTINĖ

📍 **Location:** J. Basanavičiaus g. 2
 ⌚ **Opening hours:** I-VI 10:00-19:00, VI 11:00-18:00

Run by a couple, Ieva and Saulius, this is not only a quality coffeehouse, but also a shop selling a selection of stationery, books and magazines. This combination is perfectly complemented by the minimalist decor and wholesome desserts, such as gluten and sugar-free vegan sweets.

❗ *Raštinė* is located close to the *MO Museum*, one of the top modern cultural spaces in the city.



VERO CAFE

There are currently 14 *Vero Cafe* locations in Vilnius. When ordering, you always have a choice of freshly roasted beans, usually one of the standard varieties and one specialty. *Vero Cafe* is known for its unpretentious ambience, which attracts people of various age groups.



BACKSTAGE CAFE

📍 **Location:** Ševčenkos g. 16h-9
 ⌚ **Opening hours:** I-IV 9:00-19:00,
 V 9:00-23:00, VI 10:00-23:00, VII 10:00-17:00

Backstage is located in a fashionable area – the maze of lofts and creative workshops in the yard of the Ševčenkos Street 16 compound. The owners, Vytenis and Ieva, once had a photo studio here, but then they converted it into a cosy coffeehouse with a roasting room on the first floor. You can also have a snack here, and the local *signature dish* is key lime pie.



Photo by Monika Rukaitė

MY PERFECT FOODIE DAY

According to Blogger *Simona Burbaitė*
[@geriausiaidrauge.lt](mailto:geriausiaidrauge.lt)

START THE DAY

I would start my perfect gastronomic day at *Elska Coffee*; they serve absolutely delicious coffee and decadent desserts that you can enjoy guilt-free.

COFFEE BREAK

I would go to *Huracán Coffee*; I've been a fan of their coffee for the past five years. To me, they have the absolute best coffee in Vilnius and all of Lithuania, for that matter.

LUNCH!

For a perfect lunch, I would go to *Daily Poison* and order the zucchini noodles. By the way, the idea for this café came from Bali. It has a fantastic atmosphere, and I really like the interior here.

SWEETS

For my afternoon tea and dessert I always go to *Liu Patty*, so for a perfect foodie day I would obviously go there. I always order the sugar-free coffee cake.

DINNER

To end my perfect day, I would choose *Džiaugsmas*. However, a few times I wasn't able to get a table, so make sure to reserve a table in advance, or you may be disappointed.

ELSKA COFFEE

📍 **Location:** Pamėnkalnio g. 1
 ⌚ **Opening hours:** I-V 7:00-21:00,
 VI-VII 9:00-21:00

Elska is where you'll meet all kinds of people: those enjoying their coffee quietly and watching passers-by, professionals working on their laptops, and groups of friends or colleagues. You will also find some balanced food free of any additives. Avocado toast and chia pudding are said to be among the café's most popular food choices.

❗ *Elska* is located on a busy intersection and shares a space with the *Pamėnkalnio Art Gallery*, where exhibitions have been on display since 1960!



BRUNCH IN VILNIUS

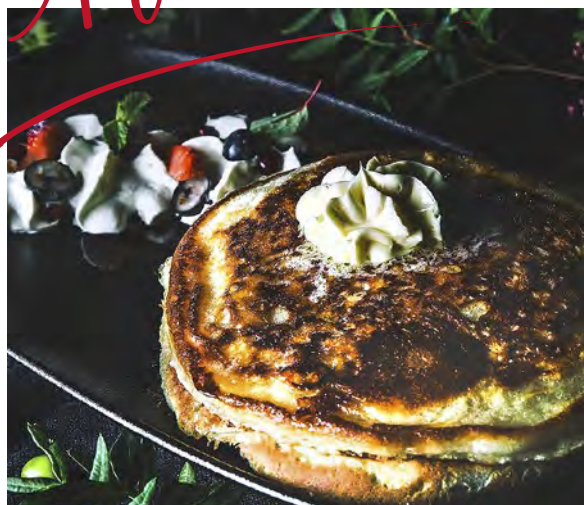
SPOILED FOR CHOICE

There are many restaurants in central Vilnius that offer weekend brunch menus, but this guide only highlights the most popular ones that have already made their name among residents of Vilnius. Be warned though: it's always better to book in advance.

A la carte

MEAT

MEAT, a steakhouse opened by one of Lithuania's top chefs, is tucked away just across the Neris River from the hustle and bustle of the Old Town. It normally emanates an elegant restaurant ambience, except from 10:00 to 17:00 on Saturdays and Sundays, when families gather for brunch. The buzz they bring with them is welcome on weekends. As for the menu, it offers as many as 10 variations of Eggs Benedict (classic, Korean, Israeli, Mexican, etc.). Other breakfast icons include Spanish Churros and American pancakes. They also offers a kids menu.






		
Location: A. Juozapavičiaus g. 13	Brunch time: VI-VII 10:00-17:00	Average price: 6 Eur per item

STEBUKLAI

When this restaurant started offering breakfast, it was an instant hit. Of course, it all comes down to chef Martynas Praškevičius, who has been voted the country's best chef several times and was one of the first to start promoting brunch in Vilnius. Incidentally, the *Stebuklai* weekend brunch menu is a little bit more extensive than the one served on weekdays. *À la carte*, your choice ranges from Eggs Benedict, a hearty English Breakfast, French omelettes and Mexican eggs, to shakshuka, sandwiches with excellent homemade bread, as well as fried and boiled *varškėtukai* curd dumplings, which, by the way, are *Stebuklai's* bestseller at breakfast.






		
Location: Gynėjų g. 14	Breakfast/brunch time: I-V 8:00-11:00, VI-VII 8:00-14:00	Average price: 8 Eur per item

GASPAR'S

Gaspar, the chef and owner of the restaurant that borrows his name, is known for a culinary style that is trail-blazing in Vilnius. His brunches are no different. They mostly experiment with traditional Indian and Goan cuisines, mixing them with familiar local ingredients. Sundays at Gaspar's are a true gastronomic feast as soon as the doors open in the morning. For example, English Breakfast is served on Indian bread with homemade spicy sausage, mushrooms, bacon, tomato *confit*, and asparagus. Whereas the masala omelette comes with crab meat, green asparagus and garlic sauce. Vegetarians also praise *Gaspar's* English Breakfast on Indian bread with homemade vegetable sausage and a nice assortment of sides.

However, this internationally acclaimed local restaurant doesn't have many tables, so it is advisable to make a reservation in advance.




		
Location: Pylimo g. 23-3	Brunch time: VII 10:00-15:00	Average price: 6.5 Eur per item ▶

TIME

At *Time*, brunch begins with a glass of sparkling wine and continues to amaze you at every turn. On Sundays, the restaurant's tables are laden with plenty of food to choose from, even some items you wouldn't necessarily expect for a weekend breakfast. In total, they serve about a dozen cold starters, several fish and meat main courses, a few soups, and a selection of desserts. And they almost always have *Time's* own sweet trademark, *crème brûlée*. This is undoubtedly one of the top gourmet brunches in town.




Location:
Mindaugo g.
27


Brunch time:
VII
12:30-16:30



Price:
29
Eur

All inclusive

KABLYS/ SAULĖS JĖGAINE

Kablys (The Hook) is a legendary building that once served as a clubhouse for railroad workers and is now home to some of the city's noisiest parties and conceptual events. On weekends, residents of Vilnius and guests to the city gather here to share their impressions over brunch. On Sundays, *Kablys* offers a brunch buffet (snacks, hot meals, salads, desserts and fruits). The 12 Eur price includes Eggs Benedict with a side of choice, coffee or tea, and a mimosa or orange juice. On Saturdays, brunch is also served all day long, but only *à la carte*.



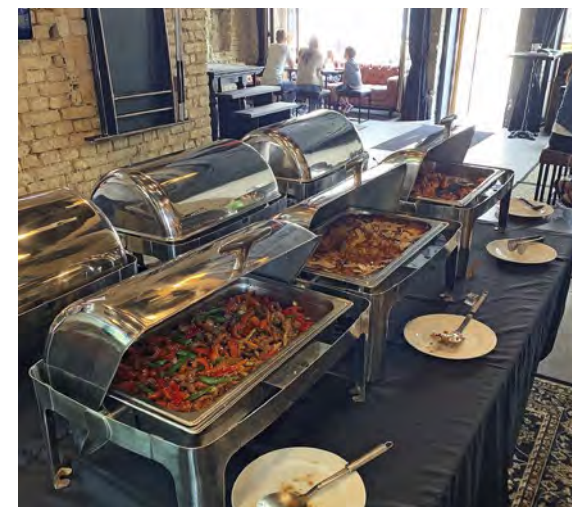

Location:
Kauno g.
5


Breakfast/brunch time:
VI-VII 11:00-17:00



Price:
12
Eur

BARDAKAS

Bardakas, the Lithuanian word for anarchy and craziness, is located in the very centre of the city on the boisterous Vilnius Street. The bar owners say that it's filled with insane people who come here for insane parties at night (by the way, they tend to play more pop music than *Kablys*), and on Sundays they serve a hearty breakfast buffet with a wide selection for all tastes: from traditional *varškėtukai* curd dumplings and buns, pancakes and omelettes, to ribs, lasagne, mussels, baked potatoes, and much more. The price doesn't include beverages.




Location:
Vilniaus g.
22


Brunch time:
VII
12:00-15:00



Price:
12
Eur

TELEGRAFAS

The restaurant at *Grand Hotel Kempinski Vilnius* has a royal brunch with one of the best views in the city – right onto Vilnius Cathedral Square. A rich buffet selection includes items like caviar, while dishes and drinks can also be ordered *à la carte*. Once you've decided to pamper yourself like this, you'd be well advised to dress up a little. After all, there's never too much joy in life!




Location:
Universiteto g.
14


Brunch time:
VI-VII
7:00-14:00


Price: 35 Eur,
55 Eur (including
Champagne) ▶

DAILY POISON

Daily Poison offers brightly coloured super-foods, which are real energy bombs, from morning to evening at a good price. The breakfast menu includes a number of egg dishes, wholesome bowls made with organic products, and amazing American pancakes. There are also quite a few vegan options. The atmosphere here is completely casual and minimalist-industrial in style, but some details (including the menu) make it similar to the trendy breakfast lounges of Bali.



All day breakfast



Location:
J. Jasinskio g.
14A-101



Breakfast/brunch time: I-IV 7:30-17:00,
VI-VII 9:00-15:00



Average price:
5 Eur
per item

THE LITTLE BAGEL SHOP (BEIGELIU KRAUTUVELE)

Read more about this place and its mission in the chapter on Jewish culinary heritage in Vilnius (page 76). It is the only place in the city that serves *kosher* breakfast. Kosher Challah is pulled from the oven here every Friday at noon. At the *Little Bagel Shop* you can also enjoy shakshuka, matza, kneidlach soup, all sorts of bagels, and other kosher dishes every day (except on Saturday, the Sabbath).



Location:
Pylimo g.
4



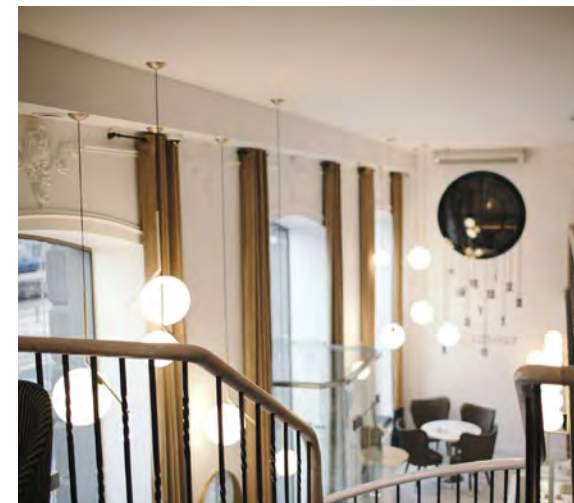
Time: I-IV 10:00-19:00,
V 10:00-16:00,
VII 10-18:00



Average price:
3 Eur
per item

SUGAMOUR

This dessert boutique is known for its eye-catching interior and exterior, which changes with the seasons and is visible from a distance. It's a distinctive landmark in one of the busiest areas of the Old Town – Vokiečių Street. Another important reason to keep coming back to *Sugamour* is its wide selection of exquisite handmade desserts as well as the possibility to have breakfast all day: from 7:30 until late at night. Their menu is really extensive (more than just breakfast) and appeal to foodies, travellers, health food fans alike, as well as those looking for fine dining or an elegant setting for a business meeting. *Sugamour* was voted the friendliest dessert lounge in Vilnius in 2018.



Location:
Vokiečių g.
11



Brunch time:
I, VII 7:30-23:00,
II-VI 7:30-00:00



Average price:
6.5 Eur
per item

KAVOS ERA

Kavos Era is run by a family that believes you should eat breakfast whenever you feel like it, not when the clock tells you to, which is why they serve breakfast all day every day. The first *Kavos Era* breakfast club opened five years ago in Vilnius' Naujamiestis neighbourhood. Two other locations have popped up since, but only as parts of larger food halls. At *Kavos Era* you can actually try Guatemala Santa Elena coffee, which is grown between two volcanoes at an altitude of 550 metres.



Location:
Savanorių pr.
6



Brunch time:
I-V 7:30-18:00,
VI-VII 9:00-18:00



Average price for a meal:
5 Eur

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

The vast majority of the restaurants mentioned in this guide didn't even exist a decade ago. Needless to say, the past few years have been very productive, to the delight of foodies in Vilnius hungry for fine dining experiences, vegetarian and vegan options, exotic cuisine, and food that supports a healthy lifestyle.

Newly opened places are now subject to high standards, which motivate them to push their limits in the kitchen while providing exceptional service and interior designs, creative drink lists and chef's specials, and of course, top-quality products. Each restaurant also sees the value in forming close relationships with farmers, suppliers, fishermen, and their clientele.

Vilnius has a long history of being open to diverse cultures and their culinary traditions, and this has never been truer of the curious city than it is today. It's had a huge impact on the current food scene, which can be experienced at the country's top restaurants (30bestrestaurants.lt), where guests can eat great food and witness the evolution of modern Lithuanian cuisine.

A gastronomic renaissance coincided with Lithuania gaining its independence in 1990. First, we wanted to try everything that people in the Soviet era couldn't even dream of, like Italian classics, French delicacies, fancy seafood, sushi, American burgers and more.

Once we tried everything, we came to a collective realisation that some of the best flavour combinations can be found right here in our own country. As a result, more and more restaurants are focusing on incorporating local produce into their menus and revisiting techniques and ingredients popular among our ancestors. So, let us begin this guide to eating out in Vilnius with a foray into modern Lithuanian flavours.

**Location:**

Didžioji g. 7 until 01/01/2020,
Dominikonų g. 11 from
01/05/2020



**Price of
dinner:**
€€€€

NINETEEN18

This restaurant owns a farm 77km outside of the city known as the *Farmer's Circle*, where it sources a large part of the unusual, wild, and seasonal products that it serves to customers. Undoubtedly, *Nineteen18* and its talented chef, Matas Paulinas, will even surprise the foodies who think they've seen it all. The search for the identity and taste of Lithuanian cuisine will make your head spin at this restaurant, so don't expect an easy approach to this topic.

📍 Degustation dinner at *Nineteen18* –
115 Eur per person.



SWEET ROOT

This is the first restaurant in Vilnius that decided to become completely dependent on the changing seasons. All of the food products used here are Lithuanian, and the menu is updated not on a seasonal basis, but micro-seasonally. This means that *Sweet Root* always has something interesting to offer throughout the year. Their dishes are presented based on a constantly changing menu and served as a degustation dinner: seven dishes and seven single-bite stories. It has been like this for six years, four days a week.

🕒 *Sweet Root's* degustation dinner is 75 Eur per person.



Lithuanian
modern
cuisine

📍	🕒	💰
Location: Užupio g. 22	Opening hours: III-VI 18:00-23:00	Price of dinner: €€€

DŽIAUGSMAS

Although they've been voted the best restaurant in Lithuania for the past two years, *Džiaugsmas* does not claim to be a *fine dining* establishment. In fact, it's quite the opposite – *Džiaugsmas* chef and owner, Martynas Praškevičius, invites people to relax while really tasting and sharing their meals, some of which are even meant to be eaten with your hands. Quality is the recipe for success at this place – all of the main ingredients on the menu are Lithuanian and of the highest class, purchased directly from local farmers.

🕒 *Džiaugsmas* has both an à la carte and tasting menu consisting of nine dishes at 60 Eur per person.



📍	🕒	💰
Location: Vilniaus g. 28	Opening hours: I-VI 17:00-23:00	Price of dinner: €€

ŠTURMU ŠVYTURYŠ

The only fresh, non-frozen wild Lithuanian fish restaurant in the country, *Šturmu Švyturys* creates a unique coastal atmosphere several hundred kilometres from the sea in Vilnius' Užupis neighbourhood. It's where you can always find the delicious *šturmu* fish soup, as well as several cold dishes, one hot dish, and a dessert that are always changing. The short but well thought out menu changes daily and is dependent on the success of the fishermen off Lithuania's coast. By the way, this restaurant asks that you only bring children ages 12 and older.



📍	🕒	💰
Location: Užupio g. 30	Opening hours: I-VII 12:00-22:00	Price of dinner: €€€

QUEENSBERRY

With a big focus on Lithuanian wine and modern local cuisine, *Queensberry* offers their take authentic Lithuanian recipes from different regions across the country. The menu offers classics like *cepelinai*, *zrazai*, and country-style herring, as well as all sorts of different traditional Lithuanian meals, but with a *Queensberry* twist. Their wine list is worth mentioning separately – about 50 of their wines are made following old Lithuanian recipes.



📍	🕒	💰
Location: Didžioji g. 18	Opening hours: VII-IV 11:00-00:00, V-VI 11:00-01:00	Price of dinner: €€



How about some Italian dishes?



Location:
Vilniaus g.
23



Opening hours:
I-V 11:00-23:00,
VI-VII 12:00-23:00



Price of dinner:
€€€

LE TRAVI

If you're looking for something simple but definitely not subpar, *Le Travi* is a good choice for an Italian meal. This restaurant's chef specialises in pasta and wines, so their menu is not very long. However, the good Italian food and cosy atmosphere are definitely delivered by the chef and host, Mattia.

DA ANTONIO

This restaurant should appear on the radars of those looking for classic Italian flavours combined with a little something new. Their long-time chef, Dmitrij Babenko, is constantly searching for unusual forms and combinations of Italian dishes on the basis of the cuisine's classic canons, and his significant experience studying Italian cuisine. The menu here, as is common in Italy, begins with first and second courses, followed by a meat or fish course cooked on the grill, with the grand finale being dessert.



Location:
Užupio g.
19



Opening hours:
II-IV 17:00-22:00,
V 17:00-23:00, VI 12:00-23:00, VII 12:00-22:00



Price of dinner:
€€

SAINT GERMAIN

Saint Germain is one of the oldest restaurants in Lithuania, offering a high level of service and an à la carte menu appreciated by movie stars like Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich, Daniel Craig and Naomi Watts, who all ate here while shooting films in Vilnius. By the way, beyond its unwavering loyalty to French cuisine, this restaurant also boasts a very impressive wine list.



Location:
Literatų g.
9



Opening hours:
I-VII
11:00-23:00



Price of dinner:
€€€

French classics?

STIKLIAI

This is the longest-operating private restaurant in Lithuania, and is a culinary institute known for bringing up and inspiring several generations of local chefs. Since its very beginning, *Stikliai*'s menu has been faithful to the tried and true school of French cuisine. Prior to joining the *Stikliai* team, Chef Gerdvilas Žalys worked at one of the 15 best restaurants in the world for three years with French gastronomy legend Joël Robuchon, at his *L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon Saint-Germain*.



Location:
Gaono g.
7



Opening hours:
I-V 18:00-00:00,
VI 12:00-00:00



Price of dinner:
€€€€



Seafood?

SELFISH

You can eat seafood at many places in Vilnius, but you would be hard-pressed to find another restaurant where the extensive menu is dedicated entirely to seafood. *Selfish* is rather popular among residents of Vilnius, which allows the restaurant to offer fresh and quality seafood at affordable prices.

📍 *Selfish* also has locations at *Uptown Bazaar* and *Gourmet Panorama*.



Location:
Vilniaus g.
29



Opening hours:
I-III 17:00-23:00,
IV 17:00-00:00,
V 17:00-01:00,
VI 14:00-01:00,
VII 14:00-23:00



Price of dinner:
€€

A taste of Scandinavia?

AMANDUS

One of the most renowned chefs in the country, Deivydas Praspaliauskas, is devoted to Scandinavian cuisine. After studying and interning in Copenhagen, he returned to Lithuania where he was the first to invite people to degustation dinners, which still take place to this day. Together with his knowledge of Scandinavian cuisine, he also brought with him the ideas of zero waste and ecologically balanced meals.

📍 The ten-step degustation dinner at *Amandus* is 55 Eur per person.



Location:
Pilies g.
34



Opening hours:
I-VII 12:00-23:00,
II-VI from 19:00



Price of dinner:
€€€

Spanish cuisine?

EL MERCADO

This is a restaurant-marketplace where, in line with all the Spanish traditions, you can snack at the bar, eat a hearty meal at one of the tables, or shop for some gourmet food. *El Mercado* prepares meals from various regions of Spain, like Catalonia, Galicia, Murcia, Andalusia and elsewhere. All the dishes are carefully selected by the restaurant's owner, Vilija, who spends a lot of time in Spain.



Location:
Didžioji g.
3



Opening hours:
I-IV 17:00-23:00,
V 17:00-01:00,
VI 12:00-01:00,
VII 12:00-22:00



Price of dinner:
€€€

Mexican cuisine?

SOFA DE PANCHO

The team at *Sofa de Pancho* are the Mexican cuisine experts of Vilnius, and the host Diana has spent a lot of time in Mexico, where she delved deep into the country's varied flavours. For the past eight years, together with her husband Rimvydas, in Vilnius (and Lithuania's resort town Nida), they have created a restaurant inspired by Mexico, which you go to when craving something exotic.



Location:
Visų
Šventųjų g. 5



Opening hours:
II-V 17:00-23:00,
VI 13:00-23:00



Price of dinner:
€€€



GASPAR'S

Gaspar himself comes from the island of Goa in India, and he brings a special spice mix prepared by his family to his restaurant, which distinguishes its menu from all others in the city. Not too long ago, Gaspar had to expand and add tables, because there's a pretty high demand for his modern take on Indian cuisine, which uses only the freshest local products.

Indian dinner?



Location:
Pylimo g.
23-3



Opening hours:
I-IV 12:00-22:30,
V-VI 12:00-23:00,
VII 10:00-20:30



Price of dinner:
€€

SUE'S INDIAN RAJA

📍 Odminių g. 3
💰 Price of dinner: €€

Sue's Indian Raja offers a wide variety of Indian cuisine, including spicy curry, tandoori baked in a real clay oven, appetisers like samosas, *pakora*, *chaat*, and more. However, most of all, *Sue's Indian Raja* is known for its stable quality and the spices and rice it uses, which are brought all the way from India. By the way, the host himself hails from India, too! And yet another delightful detail – the restaurant's windows look out on to city's iconic Cathedral Square!



Location:
Odminių g.
3



Opening hours:
I-VII
11:00-23:00



Price of dinner:
€€

TELEGRAFAS

Part of the *Grand Hotel Kempinski*, the dishes at *Telegrafas* suit all sorts of different tastes. Nearly all of them have a certain Lithuanian twist.

Dinner at this restaurant is both delicious and healthy: appetisers at *Telegrafas* are fat-free, while the desserts are perfectly balanced and the main courses are served with lower-calorie side dishes.

🕒 *Telegrafas* has both an à la carte and tasting menu that starts at 60 Eur per person.



Location:
Universiteto
g. 14



Opening hours:
I-V 7:00-10:30,
VI-VII 7:00-14:00,
I-V 12:00-15:00,
I-VII 18:30-22:30



Price of dinner:
€€€



Some modern classics?



Location:
Gedimino
pr. 35



Opening hours:
I-III 11:30-22:00,
IV-VI 11:30-23:00



Price of dinner:
€€€

DINE

Dine is perfect for those who appreciate privacy, high-class service, and a carefully selected menu. People return to *Dine* again and again for their favourite dishes, which always stay on the menu (for example, the exquisite octopus with young potatoes and homemade duck sausage), as well as the professionally selected wines. One of the hosts of *Dine* is Arminas Darasevičius, a sommelier who is considered to be among the best in Lithuania.



RAMENAS IR PAGALIUKAI

This restaurant lets you quickly slurp up some noodles, devour a Yakitori chicken skewer and some Gyoza dumplings, and then be on your merry way. In the evenings, the atmosphere seems to calm down and feels more like a Japanese gastro pub. By the way, they make their noodles fresh daily and the broth is constantly being boiled anew.

📍 You can also find *Ramenas ir Pagaliukai* at *Uptown Bazaar* and *Ogmios Miestas* shopping mall.



Location:
L. Stuokos-Gucevičiaus g. 7



Opening hours:
I-IV 11:30-14:30,
I-IV 16:30-21:00,
V 11:30-21:00,
VI 12:00-21:00,
VII 12:00-18:00



Price of dinner:
€

Something Japanese?



NARUSHI

Looking for authentic Japanese flavours? Come to *Narushi*, located not far from the legendary *Halės Market*. They only opened their doors in 2019 and are already on their way to becoming the best sushi place in Vilnius.



Location:
Pylimo g.
60



Opening hours:
II-VI
11:00-22:00



Price of dinner:
€€



BRIUSLY

This place is popular among the city's youth, partly because the restaurant's second floor is home to *Opium*, one of Vilnius' trendiest nightclubs. Nevertheless, this place can be enjoyed by anyone who appreciates pan-Asian flavours. The food at *Briusly* is both delicious and reasonably priced.



Location:
Islandijos g.
4



Opening hours:
I-IV 11:00-00:00,
V 11:00-05:00,
VI 12:00-05:00,
VII 12:00-02:00



Price of dinner:
€



Pan-Asian?

SAIGON

If you're looking for Vietnamese cuisine, the extensive and delicious menu at *Saigon* is something you should look into. Chef Minh Thui is responsible for curating Saigon's menu, while a team of Vietnamese cooks work in the kitchen. The *pho* soups here are exceptional.

📍 *Saigon* can also be found at *Gourmet Panorama* and *Ogmios Miestas* shopping malls.



Location:
A. Jakšto g.
7



Opening hours:
I-V 11:00-15:00,
17:00-22:00,
VI-VII 12:00-22:00



Price of dinner:
€€

VEGETARIAN RESTAURANTS IN VILNIUS

Until just recently, Vilnius barely had any vegetarian eateries, but these days there are plenty to choose from, with the selection as varied as it is colourful. All you need to do is decide where you want to eat today.



CASA LA FAMILIA

📍 **Location:** Rūdninkų g. 18
🕒 **Opening hours:** VII-IV 11:30-22:00,
V 11:30-23:00, VI 12:00-23:00

A pizzeria with its own clay oven used to make some of city's best vegetarian and vegan pizzas. Even non-vegetarians appreciate these exceptionally delicious pizzas. Long lines always form at the *Casa La Familia* booth when they set one up at festivals and other celebrations, which obviously means that their food is very good!

📌 This place is especially family-friendly and has a spacious playroom.

HOLIGANS

📍 **Location:** Verkių g. 29, Ogmios miestas
🕒 **Opening hours:** I-IV 12:00-20:00,
V-VI 12:00-21:00, VII 12:30-18:00

Not far from the city's largest outlet mall, *Holigans* is a bistro that serves local organic vegetarian food. All of their dishes are bursting with colour and leave you feeling good, both inside and out. Buddha bowls, burgers, Indian food, and tacos – everything is prepared according to the *happy food* concept (i.e. made only from plant-based products).

📌 You can also find a *Holigans* at the *Downtown Food Hall*.



RADHARANĖ

📍 **Location:** Gedimino pr. 32
🕒 **Opening hours:** I-VII 11:00-21:00

A family-owned restaurant that feels like home. Grandmother Vidutė grows the teas and berries, local farmer Ričardas provides the cheese, and the pastries are baked daily. *Radharanė's* extensive menu is filled with stews, cutlets, salads, samosas, bakes, and more. Their cakes, Indian sweets and oven-baked bread deserve an additional round of applause.

📌 You can also find a *Radharanė* at the *Ozas* shopping centre food court.





ROSEHIP

📍 **Location:** B. Radvilaitės g. 7
 🕒 **Opening hours:** I-IV 11:30-22:00,
 V-VI 11:00-22:30, VII 11:00-22:00

RoseHip is a restaurant that offers an exclusively vegan menu. However, it can still be a place of new discoveries and experiences for those who do not usually eat vegan. Guests will find a variety of interesting combinations, flavours, and techniques, which will no doubt inspire them to taste more of what this restaurant has to offer. *RoseHip*'s most popular burger is made with pulled jackfruit, which in flavour and texture is actually reminiscent of pulled pork.

📍 You can also find a *RoseHip* at the G9 food hall.

VEGAFE

📍 **Location:** Totorių g. 3
 🕒 **Opening hours:** I-V 11:00-22:00,
 VI-VII 12:00-22:00

Vegafe observes the principles of an Ayurvedic diet, which is why their vegetarian menu doesn't contain any eggs, broth, mushrooms, yeast, flavour enhancers, animal gelatine, garlic, or onions. Do you know what a lactovegetarian diet is? If not, then come to *Vegafe* and find out!



ZATAR FALAFEL & HUMMUS

📍 **Location:** Vokiečių g. 9
 🕒 **Opening hours:** I-IV 11:00-23:00,
 V-VI 11:00-1:00, VII 11:00-21:00

Falafel with hummus is a meal option that many vegetarians know and love. This dish, as presented by the vegetarian bistro *Zatar* in the heart of Vilnius, is practically just as delicious as it is in its homeland. By the way, *Zatar* is open until very late, which makes it the perfect place for a late-night snack.

📍 You can also find a *Zatar Falafel & Hummus* at the *Downtown Food Hall*.



VIETA

📍 **Location:** Šv. Ignoto g. 12-1
 🕒 **Opening hours:** I-V 11:30-23:00,
 VI 12:00-23:00

Located on a small cosy street in Vilnius Old Town, *Vieta* offers delicious and affordably priced vegetarian and vegan lunch options, which change depending on what fresh produce the kitchen receives that day. They also have an *à la carte* menu. By the way, a lot can happen behind the bar on weekends...and sometimes all over it! So come to *Vieta*, even if you're not just hungry.

BALTI DRAMBLIAI

📍 **Location:** Vilniaus g. 41
 🕒 **Opening hours:** I-III 11:00-00:00,
 IV 11:00-02:00, V 11:00-4:00,
 VI 12:00-4:00, VII 12:00-00:00

At nearly two-decades old, *Balti Drambliai* was the first vegetarian restaurant of its kind in the city.

It was here that many people in Vilnius had their first experience with interesting vegetarian dishes. *Balti Drambliai* often hosts concerts, poetry nights and other cultural gatherings, and it's worth noting that this restaurant is located in the underground tunnels of the Radziwiłł Palace. Beware, once you go down those steps, you will lose all track of time.



GYVAS BARAS

📍 **Location:** Trakų g. 11
 🕒 **Opening hours:** I-III 11:30-22:00,
 IV-V 11:30-23:45, VI 12:00-23:45,
 VII 13:00-21:00

Lithuania's first vegan restaurant is also home to a collection of vintage TVs that broadcast football and basketball matches. This is why, unlike other vegan places, *Gyvas* also serves beer, including a wide variety of Lithuanian and foreign craft beers.

LUNCH ON A BUDGET



One can still eat at any one of these places for less than 5 Eur

FEATURES OF A TRADITIONAL CANTEN

- Lunch at canteens is usually prepared earlier in the day
- Guests order at the counter and pick up their own food
- Often there is a choice between several side dishes
- You pay at the checkout before eating
- Usually, there are no servers at canteens, so you have to put your own dishes away.

Some of the canteens in Vilnius can take you back in time to the 1980s, or even earlier. The food served in these establishments is usually the same as it was decades ago. For curious travellers, these canteens are the perfect opportunity to sample the same meals that several generations grew up with in the Soviet era.

Since canteens are rapidly disappearing nowadays, or some of them are transforming to become more and more like modern fast food places or bistros, it is becoming difficult to find authentic options. The *Montuotojas*, *Pas Žilviną*, and *Sultiniai* canteens can easily be considered classics in Vilnius.



MONTUOTOJAS

📍 **Location:** Naugarduko g. 34
🕒 **Opening hours:** I-V 9:00-16:00

This legendary canteen is familiar to most people in Vilnius. Although it's not very big and is only open for lunch, it's worth coming here to try the inexpensive and hearty meals on offer, especially if you're on your way to visit the trendy Ševčenkos loft quarter, which is a must-see in Vilnius' Naujamiestis neighbourhood.

UPĖS BISTRO

📍 **Location:** Žvejų g. 2
🕒 **Opening hours:** I-V 10:00-16:00

Not too long ago this was the location of a real canteen, *Prie Neries*, but even when the place changed its status to a bistro, the walls, counter, and canteen-style serving of food remained the same. In addition, every day you can choose from around 7 or 8 dishes, most of which are examples of traditional cuisine from previous decades.



PAS ŽILVINĄ

📍 **Location:** Švitrigailos g. 26
🕒 **Opening hours:** I-V 8:00-19:00

This spot's owner, with his down-to-earth attitude and attention to each and every customer, leaves a lasting impression. He spends his time in the kitchen, making traditional dishes and conversing with customers. And even though *Pas Žilviną* has been a legendary canteen for years, Žilvinas is ready to rebrand. "If McDonald's can be called a restaurant, why not us, too?" he once said.

SULTINIAI

📍 **Location:** Jogailos g. 8
🕒 **Opening hours:** I-V 9:00-19:00, VI 10:00-18:00

This canteen located in the city centre transports you back in time as soon as you step foot in it. Food has been prepared and served here since 1969, but it seems like it was only yesterday – nothing much has changed. The authentic interior draws in the older generation who come for the nostalgia, curious visitors to the city, and even young people. The menu changes daily and you can be certain to find all the classics our grandparents once enjoyed.



NOS- TALGIC PAS- TRIES

BY BLOGGER
RENATA
NIČAJIENĖ

Despite these desserts not even being Lithuanian, they are familiar to nearly every person in Lithuania. To a greater or lesser degree, almost all of these pastries are a source of nostalgia. So, here is a short introduction to each of them. Maybe you'll discover your favourite one as well.



Skrudėlynas

With a shape that is reminiscent of an anthill, this aptly named dessert is made from the same dough as žagarėliai. A *skrudėlynas* is made by carefully placing thin sheets of deep-fried dough on top of one another, and then drizzling them with honey and sprinkling them with poppy seeds or chopped hazelnuts to resemble tiny ants. ▶

Braided yeast roll with poppy seeds (*Riestė*).

More of a seasonal dessert, *Riestė* has been baked for generations during the holiday season and fills homes with the aroma of Christmas. Poppy seeds are an archaic local ingredient and have been widely used in Lithuanian cooking for a long time; as a filling for pastries, an ingredient in *kūčiukai*, and for making poppy milk.

Žagarėliai.

A seasonal dessert usually baked in February for the traditional *Užgavėnės* holiday (Shrove Tuesday), when winter is symbolically banished. There are many different types of *žagarėliai* – they can be baked from puff pastry, curd, or yeast dough – but they are always deep-fried, traditionally in lard. A final touch is added by sprinkling some powdered sugar on top.

Curd cheese doughnuts (*Spurgos*).

Although they can be found around the world, curd cheese doughnuts likely originated in Lithuania. Like *žagarėliai*, these deep-fried pastries are traditionally an *Užgavėnės* treat, although they are enjoyed much more often than just once a year.

Riestainiai.

Bagels, popular worldwide, are actually a relative of Lithuanian *riestainiai*. A traditional staple of street fairs in Vilnius, they were popularised by the local Jewish community. Traditionally, *riestainiai* are made from yeast dough, boiled in water, baked, and sprinkled with poppy seeds.

TWO OF THE MOST POPULAR DESSERTS IN LITHUANIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



Photographs from the book *Nostalgiški skanumynai*; photographer: Eglė Juzumienė

Napoleon cake. Russians (*tort Napoleon*) and Poles (*Napoleonka*) also make this type of cake, which makes it difficult to say which nation started baking the Napoleon first. Only one thing is clear: it rose in popularity during Napoleon Bonaparte's march into Russia. However, experts disagree on the true origin of the Napoleon, since a cream-spread puff pastry cake can be found in many countries, such as the French and Italian *millefeuille* (1000 layers), the British vanilla slice or cream slice, and other examples.



Honey cake. A favourite among anyone with a sweet tooth, honey cakes can be found at most bakeries in Lithuania. Many people associate this dessert with fond memories, but it actually has its roots in the East among the Slavs, and it likely came to our country and became popular only in the Soviet era.



Photopastalė

Renata is a food blogger and author of the cookbook *Nostalgiški Skanumynai* and postcards collection *Sweet Treats From Lithuania*.

Lingonberry mousse.

This type of mousse, which has become somewhat forgotten these days, is an old dessert made from berries, egg whites and sugar. Sometimes available at restaurants with a menu representing historical cuisine, it is nevertheless a simple treat that can easily be made at home.

Grybukai.

With their delightful mushroom shape (hence their Lithuanian name), this dessert can be found on the shelves of any Lithuanian bakery. They are made either from gingerbread or biscuit dough. The former are then moulded by hand, while the latter are shaped with moulds. *Grybukai* used to be intricately decorated with multi-coloured icing to make them resemble boletus mushrooms and the red and white amanita muscaria toadstools as well. ▶



SOVIET DESSERTS THAT ARE STILL ENJOYED

Tinginys is one of the most simple and popular desserts in Lithuania. It is made from store-bought biscuits, sweetened condensed milk and cocoa powder; so many Lithuanians make it by themselves at home.

Choux pastry biscuits (*Plykyti sausainiai*) are baked in steam and resemble éclairs, except they have no filling. Fresh out of the oven, they smell divine and are highly addictive – you just cannot stop eating them!

Draugystė is a cake with a generous curd filling. It remains very popular in Lithuania and can be found at many bakeries to date.

Apple crumb pastries are made by shaping dough into thin strips, which are then glued together with apple jam and sprinkled with chopped nuts.

Grietiniečiai are butter pastries filled with sweet curd.

WHERE CAN YOU GO IN VILNIUS TO SATISFY YOUR SWEET TOOTH?

Pilies Kepyklėlė	📍 (Pilies g. 19) – one of the oldest bakeries in the Old Town
Liu Patty	📍 (Užupio g. 20) – even the pickiest will find something delicious here
Sugamour	📍 (Vokiečių g. 11) – one of the most popular dessert places in the Old Town
Druska Miltai Vanduo	📍 (Geležinkelio g. 3) – pastries you won't find anywhere else in Vilnius
Ponių Laimė	📍 (Stiklių g. 14) – one of the oldest dessert spots in the city
Chaika	📍 (Totorių g. 7) – Vilnius' largest selection of vegan desserts
Beigelių Krautuvėlė	📍 (Pylimo g. 4) – kosher Litvak sweets

Recipe

CURD
DONUTS

For 30 small curd donuts:
400 g curd • 200 g flour • 50 g sugar • 1 teaspoon baking powder • 2 eggs • 1 teaspoon vanilla sugar • 30 fresh cranberries • 500 ml oil for deep-frying • powdered sugar for decoration

Strain the curd through a sieve, add eggs, pour in both the regular and vanilla sugars, and mix well. Pour flour into the curd mass and knead into a stiff dough.

From this dough, you should be able to make 30-35 small donuts. When making donuts, moisten your hands with water, press one big or a few smaller cranberries into each donut, and roll them into small balls between your hands. Heat the oil up to 180 °C. Depending on the size of the pot, deep-fry 4-6 donuts at a time so that they can fry freely without touching each other. It takes about 5 minutes on average for small donuts to fry completely on both sides. Leave the fried donuts to cool on a paper towel so that it can absorb the excess oil. Once the donuts are cool, sprinkle them with powdered sugar.





Photo by Ed Reeve

OUR PERFECT FOODIE DAY

According to Theatre Director Dalia Ibelhauptaite and Actor & Director Dexter Fletcher



START THE DAY ☀

Dalia: My perfect foodie day would start with breakfast at *Shakespeare Hotel*, a great place for a very tasty breakfast. They serve wonderful pastries, different styles of eggs, traditional Lithuanian breakfast dishes, and really good coffee in a relaxed setting.

Dexter: For the last 20 years, my favourite place to start the day has been *Pilies Kepyklėlė*; they make the most wonderful crepes with sweet and savoury fillings. So, that would definitely be my first stop.



☀ LUNCH!

Dalia: I would choose *Vegafe*, a superb vegetarian restaurant that serves very tasty vegetarian food all day long, but for lunch you can get specials and lunch deals.

Dexter: I'd go for *Gaspar's*. It has a unique taste – a combination of Indian inspired flavours in a clean and contemporary setting. Moreover, I love meeting Gaspar himself, who studied and worked in London some years ago.

COFFEE BREAK ☀

Dalia & Dexter: Some of the best coffee we've ever tried in Vilnius was at *Crooked Nose & Coffee Stories*. We would definitely go there on a perfect foodie day. For the best sweets in town, we would go to the vegan dessert bakery *Chaika*, which, by the way, also serves Crooked Nose coffee.



DINNER ☀

We both appreciate *Amandus*, so we would go for dinner there. Why? We are partial to this place since chef Deivydas Praspaliauskas is a great friend of ours. He serves a Scandinavian inspired tasting menu, which is like seeing and tasting a super food show with unexpected combinations of flavours.

Dalia: If I were to have my perfect foodie day alone, I would choose *Delta Mityba*, as they offer Japanese and Korean inspired cuisine – interpretations of ramen, *pho* and *nabe* soups, the most fantastic *bao*, and dumplings. By the way, they make their own kimchi and have a buzzing, artsy, underground and cool Berlin feel to their space.

Dexter: Alone I would go for *Džiaugsmas* – it's been named the best restaurant in Lithuania for the second consecutive year, and it's been my favourite from the very beginning. They have a great innovative menu based on the best quality Lithuanian produce, and possibly the best meat in town.



A GUIDE TO LOCAL BEVERAGES

No introduction to local gastronomy would be complete without tasting local drinks. It's no secret that Lithuanians are proud of their brewing traditions, and one of the oldest drinks in the country is mead. Lithuanian wines are also unique since they are made from berries and fruits, not grapes.

When it comes to non-alcoholic drinks, gira is a typical Lithuanian beverage made of fermented bread, and the herbal teas gathered from meadows across Lithuania help soothe both the body and soul. A more unique flavour can be found in the local coffee made from the acorns of oak trees.

WHY ARE THESE DRINKS INTERESTING?

Beer – because brewers still follow many ancient traditions and Lithuanian beer is often lauded as one of the most authentic beers in Europe.

Mead – one of Lithuania's oldest alcoholic drink is made from honey and was developed as a result of wild beekeeping.

Berry and fruit wines – were only commercially available starting in 1926, and already started winning international awards by 1938.

Acorn coffee – because it doesn't contain caffeine yet is full of vitamins that are beneficial to the brain and has body-strengthening properties that purify the blood, eliminate toxins, and improve digestion.

Herbal tea – a great opportunity to taste a bit of Lithuania's nature in a teacup while improving your health with herbs that are also used in folk medicine.

Gira – a historical drink made from rye bread (or from fruits, berries and caraway seeds), yeast, and sugar that Lithuanians consumed on a daily basis.



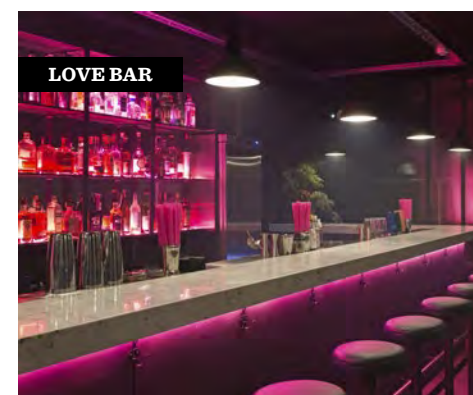
MILILITRAI



SANATORIJA



DISTILERIJA



LOVE BAR

WHERE SHOULD YOU GO IN VILNIUS FOR AN APERITIF?

BARS

Most of the city's bars are located either on or around Vilniaus or Islandijos streets. For something gourmet, head to *Alchemikas*, where Lithuania's 2019 bartending champions will mix your cocktail.



GRINGO PUB

Fancy cocktails can also be found at *Mililitrai* and *Distilerija*, or if you go deeper into the Old Town you will find *Apoteka*, *Love Bar* and *Young's Club*.

Gin connoisseurs gather at *Sanatorija*, rum aficionados can be found at *Rhum Room*, bubble-lovers flock to *Champagneria*, and beer fans tend to choose *Gringo Pub*. All are located on Vilniaus Street. True whisky connoisseurs should definitely go to *King & Mouse* (Trakų g. 2), and if you're looking for mescal and tequila, check out *Spiritus* (Aušros Vartų g. 4).

TAP WATER? YES, PLEASE!

One of Lithuania's most beloved treasures is its deep well water, which is of such excellent quality that people in Vilnius can drink it straight from the tap.

What makes it special?

Science has long proven that groundwater is protected from external chemical and microbiological contamination by minerals that are beneficial for the human body. Everyone living in the city has access to safe, clean, high-quality drinking water. So, drink up!



ATELIER

BEERHOUSES

On the same street as *Queensberry* (Savičiaus g.), *Špunka* offers many different kinds of Lithuanian beer. An even more extensive menu is offered at *Alaus Biblioteka* (Trakų g.). In addition to its selection of beers, *Stiklių Aludė* (Stiklių g.) has many different local dishes. Another place with an extensive food menu and beer list is *Beerhouse* on Vokiečių Street.



ALAUS BIBLIOTEKA



KING & MOUSE



SOMM

WINE BARS

If you really care about what wine you're drinking, or if you want to learn more about it, come to *Somm* (Pylimo g.), home to six sommeliers who can offer their advice and help you pair it with an appetiser. In addition, *Somm* has a collection of more than 500 bottles of wine.

For wine tastings, locals and tourists also love *Burbulio Vyninė*, which has a homey feeling and an excellent wine list; *In Vino* for its bohemian atmosphere, friendly staff and delicious snacks; and *California Tapas & Wine* for its quality service and extensive drinks menu.

For an even more luxurious experience, *Atelier* is a wine boutique and tasting bar located in the *Grand Hotel Kempinski Vilnius*.

Meanwhile, the largest selection of Lithuanian wines is at *Queensberry*, not far from Vilnius Town Hall (Savičiaus g.).

LOCATIONS:

Alchemikas	Ⓜ (Islandijos g. 1)
Sanatorija	Ⓜ (Vilniaus g. 22)
Distilerija	Ⓜ (Vilniaus g. 28)
Gringo pub	Ⓜ (Vilniaus g. 31)
Mililitrai	Ⓜ (Vilniaus g. 33)
Champagneria	Ⓜ (Vilniaus g. 35)
Rhum Room	Ⓜ (Vilniaus g. 39)
King & Mouse	Ⓜ (Trakų g. 2)
Alaus biblioteka	Ⓜ (Trakų g. 4)
Apoteka	Ⓜ (Visų Šventųjų g. 5)
Spiritus	Ⓜ (Aušros Vartų g. 4)
InVino	Ⓜ (Aušros Vartų g. 7)
California Tapas & Wine	Ⓜ (Subačiaus g. 2)
Queensberry	Ⓜ (Didžioji g. 18)
Špunka	Ⓜ (Užupio g. 9 and Savičiaus g. 9)
Beerhouse	Ⓜ (Vokiečių g. 24)
Somm	Ⓜ (Pylimo g. 21)
Love Bar	Ⓜ (Pylimo g. 59)
Young's Club	Ⓜ (Pylimo g. 58)
Atelier	Ⓜ (Universiteto g. 14)
Stiklių Aludė	Ⓜ (Gaono g. 7)



MY PERFECT FOODIE DAY

According to Food Blogger Dervynas
@urte_dervynas

START THE DAY

I like to start my mornings off with a bike ride to *Halės Market* where I buy fresh fruit, berries, vegetables, bread, cheese, herring, ham, and on Saturdays I treat myself to brunch. By the way, *Young's Club* at *Halės Market* is a great spot to hang out at in the evenings.

COFFEE BREAK

My go-to coffee spot is *Taste Map* on Čiurlionis Street (after that I might take a walk in the nearby Vingis Park), but another good option is *Huracán Coffee*. Both places serve perfectly roasted coffee.

LUNCH!

I would definitely recommend the seafood at *Season*, the bao at *Ping Pong* and *Peri Peri's* chicken at *Downtown Food Hall*.

SWEETS

When it comes to treating myself to local sweets, I'm a big fan of *Pilies Kepyklėlė*.

DINNER

Option I – I would go to *Sofa de Pancho*, which serves exceptionally high-quality Mexican food. After eating, I would drop by the nearby *Apoteka*, one of the best cocktails bars in Vilnius, which feels like a vintage New York Apothecary.

Option II – If I were craving something more Lithuanian with local ingredients, I would go to *Džiaugsmas*, followed by the bar *Alchemikas* for a *digestif*.

Life in modern times is rapidly changing, so it's no surprise that culinary traditions are no longer the same as they were 100 or so years ago. However, there are some holiday traditions that have lived on from generation to generation.

WHAT DO LITHUANIANS EAT FOR THE HOLIDAYS?

EASTER

One of the most important Easter traditions that lives on to this day is the act of decorating eggs. This is very much the main custom, as eggs are the first to be eaten at the Easter table.

A traditional Lithuanian table for Easter serves:

- Salt, bread, and horseradish
- Broth with pastries
- Dairy dishes, such as cheese
- Pork dishes: sausages, rolled and pressed shanks, meat jelly
- Meatloaf: minced meat seasoned with herbs, vegetables, and fruit
- Easter cake (*Velykų boba*) – tall, puffed, colourfully decorated and pretty like a *Boba*
- Wheat flour pastries and/or *šakotis*

① People used to prepare for their Easter feasts six months in advance: animals were butchered, meat salted and smoked, cheese dried, vegetables pickled, and eggs decorated.

① To this day, most Lithuanians decorate their Easter tables with garlands of greenery.

① Easter eggs are not cracked on the table or with a utensil, but are rather cracked by hitting one egg against another. They are a symbol of plenty, goodness, and fertility.



CHRISTMAS EVE

It used to be that families sat down at the table on Christmas Eve with the rising of the evening star, but these days, many people have stopped adhering to this tradition. Most families still begin their Christmas Eve dinner by breaking the *kalėdaitis* (a wafer baked from flour and water in a special form and blessed at church). The *kalėdaitis* is considered a symbol of a family's unity, which is why it must be shared with everyone before any of the other dishes can be eaten.

Making the food to serve on Christmas Eve is a serious task for any host. Why? The traditional Christmas Eve feast consists of twelve separate dishes, each of which should be made without any meat or dairy products:

- *Kūčiukai*
- Poppy milk
- Beet salad (beets have always been one of the most popular ingredients)

① According to old traditions, people sit down for Christmas Eve dinner only after going to the sauna, or at least after a bath – i.e. cleansing both their souls and their bodies.

① At the end of the Christmas Eve meal, there is no rush to clear the table. Many believe that leftover food ends up being eaten by the spirits of visiting dead relatives throughout the night.

- Oatmeal or cranberry jelly – a ritual meal since ancient times
- Different fish dishes – always at least one type of herring with added extras
- Pastries with dried mushrooms and/or poppy seeds
- Dishes with mushrooms or mushrooms with added extras
- Yeast dough cake (with poppy seed filling)

CHRISTMAS DAY

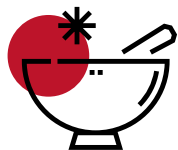
The table on Christmas Day is filled with food that is much heartier than the evening before. Pigs used to be butchered and served with a wreath placed on their heads. Today you would rarely see something like that, except in the countryside. Nevertheless, no table on 25 December is complete without meat.

People serve stewed meat, buns with meat fillings, ham, shanks, and meat jelly. To this day, the authentic Christmas feast also includes intricate herring dishes, stuffed fish, and sweets (such as *saldī boba*).



10 FOODS THAT REPRESENT VILNIUS

Lithuania's gastronomic culture is curious and collaborative, which means we've adapted all sorts of flavours from neighbouring countries and used them to improve our own. Some of these recipes came to Lithuania in the 14th and 15th centuries from the Tatars, Karaites and Jews who settled in the country. Influences also came from the Byzantine, Greek, and Ottoman empires, as well as Italian, German, and French culinary traditions. Let us present ten foods that best represent Vilnius.



ŠALTIBARŠČIAI (COLD BEET SOUP)

Anyone who dives into the tasty world of Lithuanian cuisine knows about this pink soup. It's hard not to! However, sometimes people are wary of trying it because of the intense colour. The basis for this soup is beets with kefir, which mix together to create the vivid pink colour. A hard-boiled egg, cucumbers, dill, and green onions are also added to the dish. Most importantly, this soup is eaten cold, which is why it is traditionally a summer staple.



BREAD

For Lithuanians living abroad, rye black bread is one of the clearest symbols representing their homeland. It's one of the oldest foods in our country and historically speaking, nothing else has been revered as much as this hearty bread. Lithuanian bread is eaten daily with all sorts of different meals, especially soups.



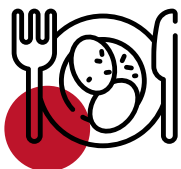
GIRA



The Chinese have their world-famous kombucha and Lithuanians drink *gira*, a beverage also made through the process of fermentation. This drink has existed for centuries in the territory of Eastern Europe inhabited by Baltic tribes. To this day, it is among the most refreshing traditional drinks in Lithuania, favoured by young and old alike. Three main types of *gira* are associated with Lithuania's gastronomic history: malt *gira* (also a type of beer), bread *gira*, and fruit *gira*. For example, a recipe for an apple or pear version of this drink, called *Lithuanian gira*, has existed since 1594.

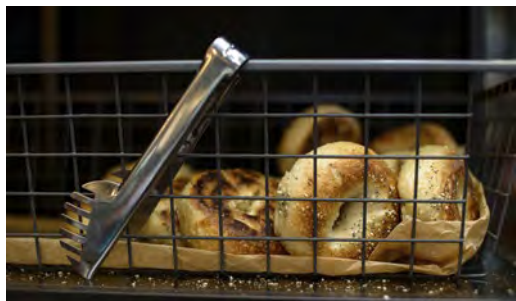
WHERE TO TASTE FOODS THAT REPRESENT VILNIUS:

Senoji trobelė	📍 (Naugarduko g. 36) 💶 Price of dinner: €€	Stikliai Tavern	📍 (Gaono g. 7) 💶 Price of dinner: €€€
Etno Dvaras	📍 (Aušros Vartų g. 2) 💶 Price of dinner: €	Medininkai	📍 (Aušros Vartų g. 8) 💶 Price of dinner: €€
Leičiai	📍 (Stiklių g. 4) 💶 Price of dinner: €€	Šnekutis	📍 (Šv. Mikalojaus g. 15) 💶 Price of dinner: €



CEPELINAI

If you were to ask a local what traditional Lithuanian dish is the most popular, almost everyone would say *cepelinai*. These zeppelin-shaped grated and stuffed potato dumplings are such an integral part of Lithuania's cuisine that no one dares argue the extent to which it belongs to our culinary heritage. Nevertheless, *cepelinai* were first made here just a little more than a century ago. Both their idea and the inspiration for their shape came from Germany.



BAGELS

If we were to search for a dish from our region that is available worldwide, no doubt it would be bagels. Similar baked goods (related to bagels) were mentioned as far back as 1394 in Lithuania. The original bagels appeared and became popular among Jews in Lithuania and Poland, in time becoming an attribute of fairs and a common choice for gifts.



KOLDŪNAI (DUMPLINGS)

Dishes characterised by thin sheets of dough, leaves, or hollowed-out vegetables with various fillings are common in southern cuisine, particularly in the regions from China in the east, to Northern Africa and Spain in the west. In Europe, this dish is best known in the Mediterranean region. No one knows when *koldūnai* became popular in our country. However, we can be sure that this happened a long time ago. No doubt, some of these recipes came to Lithuania in the 14th and 15th centuries from southern settlers – Tatars and Karaites.



ŠIMTALAPIS

Melt-in-your-mouth delicious, this sweet came to us from the Tatars and has been known for nearly 600 years. The sheets of dough for a šimtalapis have to be paper-thin, nearly transparent. Because of the necessity for the highest quality products, the complicated process (the dough is often kneaded by two people), and the time needed to make it (around five hours), šimtalapis is usually a dessert reserved for special occasions.



ZRAZAI

This meat dish is still popular in Lithuania and Poland. We can read about them in nearly all cook books from the 17th to 19th centuries. There are different versions of *zrazai*, but the Lithuanian ones are special. They are made by rolling meat (usually beef) with a filling. They are eaten with the same broth in which they were boiled and with potatoes or other mashed vegetables.



ŠAKOTIS (BAUMKUCHEN)

Culinary specialists believe that this dessert came to Lithuanian from Germany in the early 19th century. This dessert's authentic recipe and form have survived thanks to local homemakers. The same can't be said for Germany, where it has been lost – thankfully it's thriving in Lithuania. This dessert requires around 30–50 eggs and 1 kg of flour. In selecting a *šakotis*, keep in mind that the more sharp points the cake has, the more valuable it is, and the more respected its baker.



KIBINAI

This is a dish that came to us from another ethnic minority in Lithuania – the Karaites. *Kibinai* are crescent-shaped yeast pastries with a chopped mutton or beef filling that are baked in an oven. Today, these pastries can be made with a vegetable, cheese, or poultry filling. To accompany them, a hot natural broth can be served, or tea, bread *gira*, or even a Karaite bitter.



Lithuania has a long and colourful history, which sometimes makes tracing the origin of some popular dishes mastered by local chefs a little difficult. Russians, Poles, Belarusians, Tatars and Karaites (who settled here in the period of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania) have all left their mark on Lithuania's cuisine. However, Lithuania's Jews (known as Litvaks) have had a particularly significant impact on the country's culinary heritage.



Carrot and orange peel imberlach sweets.

If not in Israel, then in Vilnius, where Jews have lived for centuries, you should taste this nation's rich culinary heritage – a cuisine that has already become an integral part of Lithuania's gastronomy.

Lithuanians very much enjoy Litvak recipes, particularly stuffed fish called *gefilte fish*. Also popular are traditional Litvak sweets, such as *teiglach*, carrot and orange peel *imberlach*, and bagels.

These foods and various others, still made using authentic recipes, can be tasted in Vilnius to this day, except on Saturdays, the Jewish Sabbath. Jews are forbidden from doing any kind of work from sunset on Friday until Saturday evening, which is why no Jewish dishes are prepared on the Sabbath.

WHERE IN VILNIUS CAN YOU TRY REAL JEWISH FOOD?

Beigelių krautuvėlė (The Little Bagel Shop) only has five tables and their day usually starts with baking bagels (the ones with lox are most popular), pastries (cinnamon buns are the first to sell out), *imberlach*, *teiglach* and other sweets. And every Friday at noon kosher challah is sold fresh from the oven.

This is the only place in Vilnius that serves kosher food and is open to the public. Jewish or not, anyone who wants to taste authentic Jewish cuisine can visit *Beigelių krautuvėlė*. The experienced chef Riva Portnaja makes everything on site.

To ensure that all the food adheres to the kosher standards, a *mashgiach* appointed by Rabbi Šolom Ber Krinsky of the Choral Synagogue of Vilnius supervises the baking and cooking process daily.





A *mashgiach* is a religious Jew who, from the first minute to the last, is involved in all the work taking place in *Beigelių krautuvėlė*'s kitchen: he turns on the oven, breaks the challah, sifts the flour, looks over the fresh herbs for the salads, checks whether the products used are in line with kosher requirements, and cracks the eggs to ensure that there is no blood in them.

However, you should not expect an elaborate multi-course lunch here – the tiny kitchen staffed by just five people is too small for that. Still, it is definitely worth a visit to taste the *shakshuka*, soups, salads, bagels and cakes they serve.

In addition, *Beigelių krautuvėlė* is located on the premises of the Lithuanian Jewish (Litvak) Community's headquarters, where various cultural events and gatherings take place all the time. On Jewish holidays, special non-menu items are offered. For example, during Hanukkah, Riva makes special doughnuts (*sufganiyah*) as well as *latkes* (potato pancakes) with applesauce.



During Hanukkah, Riva makes special doughnuts (*sufganiyah*) as well as *latkes* (potato pancakes) with applesauce



Location:
Pylimo g.
4



Opening hours:
I-IV 10:00-19:00, V 10:00-16:00,
VII 10:00-18:00



Average price:
3 Eur
per item

Recipe

LITVAK BAGELS



1 kg flour • 1/2 cup oil • 1/2 cup water • 25 g yeast
• Pinch of salt • 1 tsp. sugar • Egg white

PREPARATION: mix the yeast with sugar and put in a warm place until it rises. Combine the flour, salt and warm water, adding in the yeast and oil. Knead everything together and let the dough rise. Form fist-sized bagels from the dough, making a hole in the middle.

Let them rise for 30 minutes. Before baking, boil the bagels for several minutes in boiling water, brush with the egg white and add your favourite toppings: poppy seeds, raisins, sesame seeds, or chopped nuts. Bake in an oven at 200° for 25–30 minutes.



EVENTS

Vilnius



VILNIUS COFFEE FESTIVAL

February
vilniuscoffeefestival.lt

This annual event focuses exclusively on the exceptionally aromatic and tasty black drink that is coffee.

Keywords: coffee making and latte art championship, coffee tasting championship, coffee making technique presentations, coffee and dessert tasting, presentation about coffee, movies about coffee, meetings with coffee roasters.



VILNIUS WHISKY FESTIVAL

April
vilniuswhiskyfestival.lt

The largest annual whisky festival in the Baltics grows even larger in scale every year.

Keywords: more than 300 types of whisky, whisky tastings, makers from whisky distilleries around the world, beer matured in whisky barrels, whisky and cheese tasting, whisky and meat tasting, ice cream with whisky, *speakeasy* bar.



VYNO DIENOS (WINE DAYS)

May
vynodienos.lt

The first and largest wine exhibition in the Baltics, where wines from around the world are presented and tasted.

Keywords: wine tasting, foreign winemakers, Lithuanian wine and mead makers, gourmet products, wine tours, educational programme, discussions, stories, presentations of international vineyards.

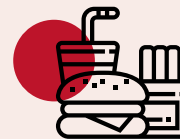


VEGFEST

June

The largest plant-based food festival in Lithuania.

Keywords: vegan and vegan-friendly businesses, food tasting, organic goods, natural cosmetics, books on healthy lifestyles and plant-based diets, kitchenware, ethically-made goods, lectures, food making lessons, movie screenings.



BURGER FEST

July

An annual festival celebrating gourmet burgers, hops, music, and having fun together.

Keywords: hand-made burgers, gourmet burgers, craft beer, music, entertainment, for the whole family, food trucks, festive mood.



OPEN KITCHEN

All summer
openkitchen.lt

Every Friday and Saturday during the warm summer months Tymas Square becomes packed full of restaurant stalls and food trucks.

Keywords: new flavours, world cuisine, music, child-friendly, dogs, friends, new ideas, summer, Vilnius Old Town, open-air.



OYSTER FESTIVAL

November
austriufestivalis.lt

An annual celebration for seafood lovers and curious foodies who have never tasted these molluscs before – taking place at different bars and restaurants around the country.

Keywords: oysters, dishes with oysters, new flavour combinations, new types of oysters, festive mood, gourmet experiences, tens of thousands of oysters.



VILNIUS BEER FESTIVAL

November 2020
vafest.lt

The largest independent beer fest in Lithuania, bringing together different brewers and craft beer enthusiasts.

Keywords: international festivals, more than 200 types of beer, craft beer enthusiasts, food trucks, food and drink combinations, tastings, entertainment, barbers.



LITHUANIAN GASTRONOMY WEEK

November

One week each year when the country's best restaurants offer a special menu at a good price, inviting people to taste their new ideas.

Keywords: the best restaurants, special menu, affordable price, fresh tastes, gastronomic experiences, festive mood, new acquaintances, new favourite places.

You probably know the feeling of visiting a country and wanting to bring a little piece of it back home with you. Without a doubt, Lithuania's nature and the goods that are derived from it are among the best souvenirs to bring back from Vilnius.

DELICIOUS SOUVENIRS FROM VILNIUS

BREAD

Over the course of a year Lithuanians bake and eat the most rye bread in the world, and this food product is the most popular gift to bring to Lithuanians living abroad.

HERBAL TEA

Teas made from herbs that grow wild in Lithuania's national parks not only taste unique, but also have healing powers. Also available are teas made from matured herbs.

MEAD

One of the world's oldest alcoholic drinks, Lithuania has made mead its own over the centuries. The Stakliškių mead distillery still makes this drink according to old recipes.

ŠAKOTIS

This many-branched dessert made from many eggs can keep for a long time without losing its shape or flavour. By the way, no wedding in Lithuania can be held without this dessert.

ACORN COFFEE

Acorns don't contain any caffeine, yet they are full of proteins, vitamins and minerals that have all sorts of health benefits. They can help strengthen the body, purify the blood, remove toxins, and more.

HONEY

The sweetest souvenir you can find in Lithuania. For centuries, honey was used in place of sugar and to this day it is still a healthy alternative sweetener.

CHEESE

Lithuania is one of only a few nations that makes cheese from sweet white curd. Also, there are cheeses that have been baked and seasoned with caraway. For something more unique, try some apple cheese.

BERRY WINE

Lithuanian wines – made from blackberry, lingonberry, black currant, chokeberry or other fruit or berries – are exceptional, and make for the perfect gift for any wine lover.

Where in Vilnius can you buy edible souvenirs?

Halės Market (Pylimo g. 58), Uptown Bazaar (Kauno g. 16), Benedikto Market (Ukmergės g. 259A), Senamiesčio Krautuvėlė (Literatų g. 5), Tymo Market (Thursdays until 15:00, junction of Aukštaičių g. and Maironio g.).



govilnius.lt