

# COGNITIVE ETHNO-CULTURAL EVENTS



# LET'S GET TO KNOW THE TREASURY OF TRAKAI ETHNO-CULTURAL EVENTS

The large ethno-cultural treasury of events accumulated in the Trakai region reveals multiculturalism, fundamental values, self-awareness and identity of nations. There is no doubt that in ancient times many things were shaped by ritual beginnings, an authentic tradition that conveyed a caring approach to the nature surrounding the man, its harvest and bliss it provided.

Festivals that subsequently considered to be traditional have evolved over time, and their significance has been affected by social, historical, cultural and religious factors. The substance of the festivals is preserved in their ceremonies and rituals. These are events that reflect our roots, uniqueness, and allow us to maintain national identity and self-awareness. The formation of traditions does not stop even today. In response to our environment, interactions with nature and their history, traditions are repeated, thus giving them even more life and importance in today's context.

The publication presents modern festivals, holiday cycles, specifics of their celebration and features and include such holidays as Joninės/Rasos, Oninės, Šienapjūtė, Christmas, Užgavėnės, etc. Cognitive ethno-cultural events, reminiscent set of old traditions, communion, multiculturalism and just a positive mood, receive attention from participants of all ages.





# A DATE WITH SUMMER IN TRAKAI

**EVENT:** „The Summer of Trakai”

**DATE:** 05 31 - 06 02

**LOCATION:** The city of Trakai

If one sees summer – it’s only where the eyes are dazzled by the brightest colors, if one smells – it’s only where the smell of white transparent apples and lime blossom honey spreads, and if one hears – it’s only in music where the soul is visited by an uncontrollable joy, where one wants to celebrate not only summer but also life. Poet and prose writer Jurga Ivanauskaitė said purposefully that summer can be recognized even with your eyes blindfolded – it’s due to the sweetness of the berries or the bitterness of the wormwood, or the richly bright and abundant peony flowers.

One can experience the arrival of summer by coming to Trakai. Town festival the “Summer of Trakai” involves not only citizens and guests from other Lithuanian cities but also tourists from abroad in its whirlpool of fun every year. The three-day event is fun, full of colors, art festivals, attractions, entertainment, joyful music and good mood – it’s a great opportunity to get acquainted with both intangible and tangible cultural heritage of Trakai district. The event presents everyone with the opportunity to get to know the old capital from every angle. From interactive games and routes to the Town Hall Market, theatrical marches, concerts and spectacular fireworks as well as laser féeries.

The origin of the festival dates back to the 1990, when the priest of Trakai consecrated St. John of Nepomuk Roadside Pole. Then the first Trakai town festival took place. Neither the eco-

conomic blockade nor the rain or the wind prevented the locals from being together, enjoying and having fun. The celebrations begun with Mass at Church of Vytautas the Great, after it the procession went on to the Roadside Pole where people put flowers and candles, told poems and sang songs. Later, everyone were invited to the second and the third as well as subsequent town festivals.

Every year, the festival program is very diverse, therefore children, parents and grandparents always find pleasant festivities for themselves. During the festivities, everyone has the opportunity to experience a sense of community, get acquainted with the multiculturalism typical of Trakai as well as enjoy the abundance and colors that prevail in the festival.

To discover, familiarize and, later, protect is one of the main objectives when fostering and preserving our own cultural traditions. Festival



the "Summer of Trakai" is a great opportunity to familiarize with them and also understand how powerful the past is, and how important it is when creating the present. It is not just an element of our personal identities, it is also a bridge to the communion in which palms our history and culture lie securely.





## THE LONGEST DAY AND THE NIGHT FULL OF WONDERS IN TRAKAI - THE ST. JOHN'S EVE / SUMMER SOLSTICE FESTIVAL

**EVENT: ST. JOHN'S EVE / TRADITIONS OF SUMMER SOLSTICE FESTIVITIES IN LENTVARIS, AUKŠTADVARIS, GREINDAVĖ**  
**DATE: 23RD OF JUNE**  
**LOCATION: LENTVARIS, AUKŠTADVARIS, GREINDAVĖ**

To hold hands and won't let go. Won't let go when jumping over the fire, its burning tongues will test the relationship's strength. A full magic St. John's night has long been a great way to find out if the chosen one is really meant for you. To this day, one is jumping over the bonfire because the real and most important things don't change over time. Traditions remain, allowing to get to know yourself as well as your roots better and better. Releasing

virgin crowns into a river or a lake, fortune telling from grasslands, counting chamomile's petals even today becomes a fun game that turns into a real Prada of self-knowledge.

Who could deny that digging a piece of turf for a girl in a garden on St. John's night and flipping it over to analyze the appearance of a protruding beetle, which tells you about your future husband, is not only fun but also emotionally rewarding. The world of technology and eternal rush is highly engaging, so much so that a man unconsciously begins to move away from nature, often forgetting that the true harmony and balance live right there. So, if a gray beetle comes out, the man will be poor, simple; if colorful, the husband will be a man of authority or a soldier; if green, a farmer. Everything is so easy and simple, right? Everything is like that in nature.

On the 23rd of June, when the longest day

and the shortest night is upon Lithuania, the natives celebrated the summer solstice festival. Later, when Christianity had been adopted in Lithuania, the celebration was identified with St. John's name. Every year, Trakai region frantically celebrates this midsummer holiday and invites one to visit Lentvaris, Aukštadvaris or Paluknis. Summer solstice ceremony can become a unique experience since only here, on St. John's night, we can feel the transformation not only in nature but also in ourselves, when entering through festive, grass-covered gates, searching for a fern blossom, bathing in water from clay jugs, singing multipart songs, tying St John's worts and shrouds together, weaving virgin crowns, watching a hundred-year-old home-made beer making ritual, creating Baltic jewelry.





# SAINT ANNE - LADY OF BREAD

**EVENT: THE TRADITION OF ST. ANNE'S FEAST DAY CELEBRATION**  
**DATE: LIEPOS 26 D.**  
**LOCATION: DUSMENYS**

St. Anne's feast day is summer's harvest ripening festival, also popularly called Nokis or Sirpstas by the Lithuanian folk. It's celebrated on the 26th of July. It's believed that cabbages will grow better if one presses their heads well by hands during this festival. Having adopted Christianity in Lithuania, this festival is identified with St. Anne's name. The legend says that St. Anne was the daughter of a nomadic shepherd named Akar, born in Nazareth and raised in the temple in Jerusalem. At the age of about 20, Anne married Joachim of Nazareth. After twen-

ty years of living together, the spouses still had no children and worried very much because of it. Eventually, Joachim decided to go to the desert and pray there for 40 days and 40 nights, so that they would be able to have a baby. While he was in the desert, an angel visited Ann and said that God had answered their prayers and that they would have a child. At the age of forty, Anne was so happy to have a daughter Mary that she sacrificed her to God.

St. Anne's feast day has always been popular in Lithuania. In the honor of St. Anne indulgencies have been introduced in many Lithuanian parishes, followed by celebrations and feasts. In Dusmenys, it's a traditional festival with almost 60 years of history. The day of the feast is chosen according to the day on which the indulgencies of St. Anne takes place in the Church of Sts. Simon and Jude (Taddeo). Since,

from ancient times, not only the children of Dusmenys residents' but also relatives and friends have gathered to celebrate St. Anne's feast day, the festival received the name of the locals' feast. The festival honors the name Anne as there are many of those in Dusmenai region. Every year, bread also is duly honored, the jubilees of a current year and owners of beautifully maintained homesteads are traditionally congratulated. The concert program is attended by a large number of different amateur art groups from various places as well as professional performers.

St. Anne's feast day is a day of new bread as it's baked from a freshly harvested crop, and Anne is called the lady of bread or a good wife: bread smeared with sour cream. To feel the smell of fresh bread, congratulate Annes, and survive another great summer day – it's all so easy in Dusmenys on St. Anne's feast day.

