



THE FIGHT BETWEEN WINTER AND SPRING OR NO WAY OUT WITHOUT PANCAKES

**EVENT: TRADITIONS OF MARDI
GRAS FESTIVAL IN TRAKAI
(I QUARTER)
DATE: 23RD OF FEBRUARY
LOCATION: TRAKAI**

Winter, winter get out of the yard! Tired of cold and darkness, say the people in disguise and everyone who gathered to celebrate the end of winter in Trakai. Mardi Gras (Užgavėnės in Lithuanian) is a winter festival that symbolizes the banishment of winter in order to summon spring as soon as possible. It's the time when the post-Christmas fun ends and the period of pre-Easter concentration begins.

The festival is full of not only creative solutions but also folk humor. The main highlights of the festival are the fight between Porky and Hemen man,

the burning of Morė, masks and pancakes. All of this symbolizes the struggle of an unwilling-to-leave Porky i.e. winter with spring people are longing for i.e. Hemen man. Porky portrays satiety and over-eating. He usually is fat, thick, sometimes with a piece of salo in his mouth. Hemen man embodies Spring, he's skinny, ragged with a long stick in his hands to banish Porky from the village. Hemen man and Porky are pushing, threatening each other while fighting until Hemen man defeats the fat Porky and he runs away. It's important that people would see the fight, and, then, speak loudly that spring has finally defeated winter.

Another symbol of Mardi Gras is Morė, it symbolizes fertility as it's burned at the stake to be reborn later. Burning Morė "banishes" accumulated evil, all the illnesses, anger and, of course, boring winter. It's believed that with Morė the darkness burns as well, and life becomes better, easier and more fun. Having

rolled in the snow, one will be healthier and happier.

If there is snow during Mardi Gras, one needs to go sleigh riding. There is a race on the day of Mardi Gras: If one goes further than others, grain will be better, flax fiber will be longer. Much needs to be done during Mardi Gras to make the upcoming time better: eat a hearty meal (seven to nine or even twelve times is advisable), play, find out one's fortune, and go sleigh riding, but, most importantly,



to spent time with everyone and experience the joy of communion.





OUR TABLE SMELLS LIKE HONEY

**EVENT: BEEKEEPERS FESTIVAL
“OUR TABLE SMELLS LIKE HONEY”
DATE: THE SECOND SATURDAY
OF SEPTEMBER
LOCATION: SQUARE OF THE
TILTAI COMMUNITY**

Diligent like a bee, worked like a bee – such and similar comparisons have been used for a long time to emphasize man’s devotion to work. Bees have been respected and worshiped since the ancient times, and beekeeping has always been one of the most important sources of Lithuanian business. Honey was not only as a delicious sweet but also a medicine, and wax was used to make molds for candles, bells, and other bronze castings. Hon-

ey and wax traveled from Lithuania via the Amber Road to Europe, where developed agriculture greatly reduced forested areas and natural meadows. Lithuanian honey was recognized as extremely clean and rich in wax.

Today, Lithuanian beekeepers are not only restoring the oldest methods of beekeeping, but also creating new ones. The festival “Our table smells like honey” in the village of Tiltai is the only festival in Trakai district, where beekeepers, craftsmen, farmers present their products, share work experience, achievements, and organize a seminar.

The village of Tiltai was purposefully chosen as a place of the festival. Tiltai is a linear settlement, part of the southern Dzūkija region, an architectural monument of local significance, the only one that has remained in Trakai district, it still protects the uniqueness of the region’s culture and traditions. Everyone who visits the festival has a great opportu-

nity to feel the cultural identity of Dzūkija region, get acquainted with beekeeping and farming traditions, customs, songs, crafts and other things that have developed in the region over a long period of time.

Rural history, architecture, traditions and their preservation are important for the dwellers of each place, for the whole community. Therefore, no one else will put as much heart into something as the organizers of put in the festival. Do you want to feel what the most delicious honey in the world smells



like? Then you must visit Tiltai!





THE WAR OF MUSHROOMS IN PALUKNYS

EVENT: MUSHROOMS FESTIVAL IN PALUKNYS
DATE: 22ND OF SEPTEMBER
LOCATION: PALUKNYS

“These mushrooms colonel
Was the fat boletus.
Under a birch he wiggled his mustache
Counting the mushrooms from a stump.”,
J. Marcinkevičius “The war of mushrooms.”

Where there are mushrooms, there are competitions, and where there are boletus, it seems that things cannot get any better than that. The town of Paluknys, which has been famous for its variety of mushrooms for several decades, delights the locals and the town guests with the annual festival “Bole-

tus of Paluknys”. Here, the mushroom gatherers test their mushrooming skills against each other. When the participants return from the forest, the catch is weighed and the winners are chosen.

One of the most important goals of the festival is to revive the fading tradition of the locals to go to the forest not only to get a breath of fresh air, relax but also to provide themselves with the goods of nature. Mushroom gathering in the forest is only the beginning of the festival – after this fun competition, an exclusive and full-of-attractions program awaits the participants and the guests of the festival. During the improvised concert, the teams of mushroom gatherers can reveal their artistic nature. There are various competitions, from mushroom basketball, where adults demonstrate their accuracy while trying to throw as many mushrooms into a bucket as possible, to the delightful “war of mushrooms”. This is the name of the competition, when the teams

compete following the rules of the famous game "Square", only mushrooms are used instead of a ball.

The audience is entertained by a fun concert program. Participants of the festival are kindly invited to attend in various educational activities that encourage fostering of the region's ethnoculture and traditions. For years, the festival has been bringing together the community of Paluknys town as well as the guests who have come to share a common delight and foster the old customs. At first glance,



it may seem that the most important accent of the festival is to gather as many mushrooms as possible, however, to be, discover, and rejoice, to gather again and again, to have a communion in everyone's heart is much more important.





AUTUMN'S COLORS IN ONUŠKIS FAIR

EVENT: ONUŠKIS FAIR
DATE: 28TH OF SEPTEMBER
LOCATION: KIPRAS PERTAUSKAS
SQUARE IN ONUŠKIS

Autumn came with pockets full of gold and colors, it inevitably brings along a bit of nostalgia and sadness. To scatter it, the Onuškis community gathers for an event that has become an annual tradition – “Onuškis Fair”. As the long-standing tradition of weekly gatherings in the heart of the town – Kipras Petrauskas Square gradually started to fade, the local community took actions to change that. The idea, which has matured for many years, become a reality by adapting to current standards of entertainment without forgetting local customs and tradi-

tions – to organize Onuškis Fair every year, which brings together all the communities, institutions, local artists, cultural nurturers, craftsmen, locals and guests that carry out activities in the eldership.

When the autumn jobs are completed and the barns are filled with the most delicious vegetables and fruits, the residents are invited to visit the village goodies fair, where everyone can not only buy but also sell their own sweetest pastries, hand-made pieces or other goodies. Every local is also kindly invited to take part in a variety of fun activities that provide an opportunity to feel the importance of intangible cultural heritage. During the festival, villages, institutions, communities and organizations of the eldership present themselves and the achievements of their activities in the uniquely decorated yards. Culinary heritage dishes are being made and tasted, the most active participants of the festival compete in various competitions and contests.

Traditional ceremonies of the town, fun songs and dances are indispensable to the festival. The mood of the participants is traditionally brightened by cheerful nominations and congratulations, which are dedicated to farmers of the region, jubilees of the festival and the best maintained homesteads as well as institutions. "Onuškis Fair" strongly enriches the leisure time of the local community, actively encourages not to abandon the old traditions of the region, strengthens relations among people, and gives visitors the most fun experiences, memorable as well as joyful emotions.

