

TRADITIONAL TRADING TIMES



TRADITIONAL TRADING TIMES IN TRAKAI – A PROMINENT NATIONAL PHENOMENON

Traditional markets in Lithuania were held only under the open air, or, as ancestors would say – in the market squares. Everyone traded in the way they could afford, but mostly from carriages. Each fair, or jomarkas, kermošius etc., was held on certain calendar days, at a designated place, from the morning till 12 o'clock noon. There have been cases of trading for more than one day. For strategic convenience, marketplaces were set up at the intersections of roads, to maximise the number of buyers. All the charm of trade was focused from preparations to trade up to negotiations.

A farmer who was ready to trade, in order to determine the price of his goods, was not shy and visited other markets, listened to neighbours, and found out the prices of other traders. As befits the market, the initial price was somewhat raised, just to have room for negotiation. And negotiations as a great ritual of the market was probably the most important at the fairs of that time. Negotiations were evolving mostly about the most popular goods of that time: livestock (cows, piglets, oxen), cereals, artisan items, etc. A sale and purchase transaction was considered successful if hands were cut. The invited bystander cut a deal thus completing the buying-selling ritual. In addition to trade relations, the markets of that time also performed another function – socialisation.

For people, it was an excellent opportunity to walk around, to learn the latest news, get to know each other, meet relatives and acquaintances. Even today, trades taking place in Trakai reiterate the original goals of these events, inviting everyone into a whirlwind of dances, songs and good mood, offering to regain strength, rejoice in the community and repeating the old traditions of the nation.

