



TO EAT SO MUCH THAT THE BELLY WOULD BE HARDER THAN THE FOREHEAD

EVENT: MARDI GRAS FAIR IN TRAKAI
DATE:
LOCATION: THE CRIMEAN
KARAITES (CABBAGE ISLAND)

It's not Mardi Gras without a crowd of locals and visiting guests from abroad in Trakai, right? They are attracted by a Mardi Gras fair decorated by colors and the most delicious smells. This annual fair has been organized since 2009 and it always brings together over 40 craftsmen who present, demonstrate and promote their craft. The Mardi Gras fair is also attended by 6 or 7 district communities, which present their products,

culinary heritage, talk to participants, have fun, sing Mardi Gras songs.

Communities, craftsmen and merchants gather in the Town Hall Square near St. John of Nepomuk Roadside Pole. From the ancient times, this place reminds us of the historical center of Trakai, where large fairs, market and festivals took place. In 1409, the town hall was built here. It's thought that the triangular market square in front of the peninsula castle began to form around the 15th century in the middle of the former enemy shooting within the castle area. At that time, when the quarrels between the dukes and the struggles with the German orders had ended, favorable conditions for the

city expansion were created. Historical sources mention that in 1470 this former market square was inhabited by people of various nationalities, probably traders, for whom the plots around the square were commercially important.

There's no Mardi Gras fair without pancakes, following the most delicious scents, one will discover favorite pancake bakers and other cooks of meaty as well as rich dishes. And then... you can eat. After all, it's said that during Mardi Gras you need to eat so much that your belly would be harder than your forehead and you'll be full not only for the period of Lent but for the whole year. However, it's not enough just to eat all you want. It would be good to take some leftovers of Mardi Gras dishes with you. It was believed that if you carry the leftovers in your bosom in a little bag during the year, chickens would lay more eggs and the witches' spells would do no harm, and if you spread the leftover fat on Sokha's plow-



shares before the first spring plowing, field thistles won't grow in the area.

The Mardi Gras fair provides an excellent opportunity for the craftsmen and creators of Trakai region to present their activities and products, and for all those who come – to celebrate the end of winter, communicate, get to know the customs of their region better and enjoy talented and creative performers.

