

Sample Itinerary – Vilna, Lithuania

Day 1. Vilnius

Tour of the historical center of Vilna. Gediminas Castle and Cathedral Square; the history of the Lithuanian Capital. The President's Palace and the historical events connected to that place. Vilnius University. The old Jewish quarter: narrow streets and courtyards of the middle-age Ghetto; the Great Vilna Synagogue and the shulhojf; Vilna Gaon - the great Jewish scholar; Vilna - a center of the struggle between mitnagdim and hasidim; the famous Jewish sculptor Mordechai Antokolski; the territory of the Large Ghetto; the courtyard of the Judenrat; the fight of the Ghetto prisoners against the Nazis. Visit Ponar Forest near Vilnius, where more than 100.000 people, mostly Jewish were murdered by the Nazis. Visit to the Jewish State museum.

Day 2. Vilnius

Visit to the only functioning Vilna Synagogue. The Jewish cemeteries of Vilna, their past and present; the grave of the Vilna Gaon and of other prominent Jewish figures. Visit to the Jewish Sholom-Aleichem secondary school. The "Cheap Houses" – big dwelling houses built by baron Hirsch for Jewish poor people after the great flood. Building of the world famous printing house "Widow and Brothers Romm". Afternoon tour of the Christian places in Vilnius: the Cathedral, St. Peter and Paul's Church, St. Anne's Church, the Gate of Dawn, the Orthodox Church of the Holy Spirit.

A tour of Trakai, the ancient Lithuanian capital and the residence of Grand Dukes of Lithuania, located 28 km from Vilnius, famous for the lakes and sights of the area. There is a 14th century red brick insular castle with a museum of Lithuanian history and the mode of life of different estates and different ethnic groups. Visit the Karaite museum and the story of this small ethnic group confessing Judaism, brought by Vytautas the Great from Crimea 600 years ago. Trakai National Park with its beautiful sights. On the way back to Vilnius visit the former partisan base in the Roudnicki forest, where the Jewish fighters and those Vilna ghetto prisoners that succeeded to escape, among them Aba Kovner, fought against the Nazis.

Day 3. Vilnius-Kaunas-Vilnius

Full day tour of Kaunas (Kovna), the second large city, the interim capital of pre-war Lithuania includes Slobodka, a Jewish suburb of Kaunas and the ghetto during WWII, the Old Jewish cemetery. The Seventh and the Ninth Forts - death sites of thousands of Jews from Lithuania and other countries. The Holocaust museum and the Memorial in the Ninth Fort. The Synagogue and the Children's Memorial in its court. The house where Leah Goldberg, the prominent Israeli poetess, lived. The Art Gallery of M. K. Ciurlionis, the outstanding Lithuanian painter and composer, the Devil's Museum with hundreds statues of devils. A walk in the Old Town with its Catholic churches, narrow streets and cobbled squares, cosy

cafes and art galleries. Continue the walk along the main street, *Laisves aleja*, boulevard, with its 2-3 storey buildings, restaurants, shops, as they looked before the war. On the way back to Vilnius, visit the country life open-air museum in Rumsiskes representing Lithuania's major ethnographic regions' 18-19 century way of life, architecture, traditions and crafts.

Day 4. Vilnius

The itinerary of the day depends on the time of departure.