

# OUR CULTURE

*„MULTICULTURAL EUROPE IS THE KEY“*

*NR. 2020-1-PL01-KA105-078163*



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# Lithuania

After World War II, many Poles living in Vilnius and its surroundings emigrated to Poland. However, they still constitute a large ethnic group living in the region close to the capital, especially in two administrative regions of southern Vilnius: Wilno and Šalčininkai. However, the Russians are the most numerous national minority in Lithuania. Most of them settled in cities, especially in Klaipeda, where they took the place of the Germans displaced after World War II. One of the most interesting ethnic groups are the Tatars, who came from the Tatar prisoners, who settled in the 15th century near Vilnius and Trakai. They speak Polish. An interesting group are Karaims. It is a people of Turkish origin. They are concentrated in the town of Trakai to the west of Vilnius. The participation of different nationalities also influences the diversity of the population in terms of religion. The main religion in Lithuania is Catholicism, so all church saints are associated with the tradition of this church. The Orthodox Church, professed by Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians, has a much smaller share. Protestantism (Lutheranism) in Lithuania is mainly a remnant of the German minority. Islam is professed by the Tatars. Karaites, on the other hand, profess a religion similar to Judaism. The centuries-old ties with Poland mean that the Polish language is often understood in Lithuania, not only by Poles. Similarly, many customs and rituals, e.g. wedding ceremonies, may be familiar to us from Poland. A clear difference, dating back to the times of the community of Baltic peoples, has been preserved in folk music. Some of its elements show closer ties to Finland than to neighboring Poland. One of the older, extinct species is sutartinė. This choral singing often contains unrelated and meaningless phrases that may be a remnant of archaic language. It is often performed by women during dances. The instrument that usually accompanies singing is skuduciai - a kind of flute. Cantel is also used often. It is a 5- or 10-string zither with a trapezoidal shape.



# Greece

The mixing of different cultures has largely contributed to how Greece looks today. They all left behind traces that we can admire to this day: Byzantines - churches and monasteries, Venetians - fortresses in Nafplion and Methoni in the Peloponnese, Franks - castles on top of the rocks. There are also many traces of the Romans, Arabs, Slavs, Albanians and Italy. However, you can clearly see the influence of the Ottoman Turks, especially on the local music, cuisine, language and lifestyle. While these influences were of significant importance, the cultural heritage of Ancient Greece should not be forgotten, which was especially important in shaping its basic values.

The Greeks are a cheerful, melodious and dancing nation. Dancing accompanies the Greeks both during various worlds and traditional celebrations, as well as during everyday life. Sometimes you only need a scrap of free space, the right atmosphere and music to see how wonderful the inhabitants of the homeland of the mythical gods can have fun. In Greece there are 150 local and regional dances. Particularly famous is the zorba dance (in fact it is called the Syrtaki), which was modified for the film "Greek Zorba" - it echoes the melodies and steps of the "butcher's dance" from the old Constantinople. A characteristic element of the dances is moving in a circle or procession. Kalamantianos is also common, and others are: tsamikos - originally a war dance originating from Epirus, sousta - from Crete and tsiteteli - belly dance of oriental origin, performed by women and men in such a way that their bodies do not touch each other. Zeimbekikos is a solo dance for men, played with bouzouki - the most characteristic Greek instrument.



# Romania

Romanians are known for their hospitality, especially in small villages, where centuries-old traditions are still cultivated. He is able to give his bedroom to visiting tourists so that they only feel at home. Throughout their stay with a given family, travelers are treated as closely as possible - they eat meals together, are invited to current celebrations - even to weddings.

Drinking a *cujki*, a *slivovitz* personally driven by the inhabitants of Romania, is inscribed in the tradition of Romanian hospitality. A glass of this drink must be drunk at every social event. It is in the nature of Romanians to constantly seek compromises. They rarely take offense, but rather try to get out of the difficult situation they find themselves in. They do not argue, they are not aggressive, only amicable. Romania has many ethnic minorities who shape the culture of the whole country. Officially, it is said that the population is 2.3 percent. Gypsies, but there may be even 3 million of them. They constitute the largest ethnic minority of the state. They are basically a closed social group, disliked by the indigenous people of the state. They are seen as adventurers, thieves and criminals.

The dominant religion in this country is Orthodoxy, where traditionally the man has a higher position in society and in the family itself than the woman. The patriarchy reigns there to a large extent, and it is the man who earns his family and manages it. The woman is supposed to look after the house and children. Women in Romania usually wear scarves, especially during religious ceremonies in the church. This is a sign of modesty. Tourists coming on trips to Romanian cities, wishing to visit churches and other places of religious worship, should always remember to dress appropriately, as in the case of Muslim mosques or Catholic churches. Knees and shoulders must be covered, and women 's hair.



# Poland

Poland can boast over 1000 years of culture and traditions that are cherished by successive generations. You can discover the influences of Slavic, Russian, German, as well as those from Italy, Eastern Europe and even the Middle East. Since being baptized by Poland, i.e. since 966, the position of the Roman Catholic religion has been strengthening. The vast majority of Poles are Catholics.

The Polish nation likes to celebrate and has many occasions to do so. We are strongly attached to tradition and we are happy to uphold old customs. Poles feel the connection with tradition the most during the celebrations of the greatest worlds, such as Christmas, Easter, All Saints and Corpus Christi.

Poland can be proud of the rich collections of literature, painting and other manifestations of art, which were collected over the following centuries. These include texts by Sienkiewicz, Kochanowski, Rej, Krasicki, Krasiński, Boleslaw Prus, and Orzeszkowa. Among painters, important places in our cultural history are occupied by Jan Matejko or Malczewski. The Polish nation cherishes the memory of great national heroes, eagerly adopts a patriotic attitude and is not ashamed of its origin. Poles are proud of their heritage left by their ancestors.

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# Gallery from our project



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