



## **ADELAIDES VILNIAUS TUNTAS**

## **ADELAIDE LITHUANIAN SCOUTS**

*This manual has been specially prepared for the Adelaide Lithuanian Scout Group and is primarily for the use for the non-Lithuanian Speaking Scouts.*

*This manual has been prepared and endorsed by the Vilnius Tunto Štabas 2004.*

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# Lithuania General



**Territory:** 65 303 km<sup>2</sup>

**Population:**  
~3,48 mln. (81,8 % Lithuanians, 8,1 % Russians, 6,9 % Polish, and 3.2 % of other descents)

**Climate:**  
average winter temperature - 4.9°C  
average summer temperature +17.0°C  
annual precipitation - 748 mm

**State language:** Lithuanian  
**Currency:** Litas

**Major religion:**  
Roman Catholics

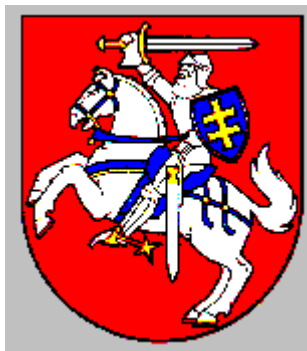
**Lithuanian border co-ordinates:**  
northern - latitude of 56°27' North  
southern - latitude of 53°54' North  
western - longitude of 20°56' East  
eastern - longitude of 26°51' East

**Lithuania has:**  
816 rivers longer than 10 km  
2,834 lakes larger than 0.5 ha

**Highest point:**  
Juozapine Hill (293,6 m)  
**The largest river :**  
Nemunas (937 km, 475 km in the territory of Lithuania)  
**The largest lake:**  
Druksiai (42,26 km<sup>2</sup>)

# LITHUANIAN NATIONAL SYMBOL

## VYTIS



The state emblem of the Republic of Lithuania is the *Vytis* (the White Knight). The heraldic shield features a red field with an armoured knight on a white (silver) horse holding a silver sword in his right hand above his head. A blue shield hangs on the left shoulder of the charging knight with a double gold (yellow) cross on it. The horse saddle, straps, and belts are blue. The hilt of the sword and the fastening of the sheath, the charging knight's spurs, the curb bits of the bridle, the horseshoes, as well as the decoration of the harness, are gold. The charging knight is known to have been first used as the state emblem in 1366. It is featured on the seal of the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Algirdas, which marks a document belonging to that year. The old prototype of the present *Vytis* depicts a knight on horseback holding a sword in his raised hand. The symbol of the charging knight on horseback was handed down through the generations:

from Algirdas to his son, Grand Duke Jogaila, then to Grand Duke Vytautas and others. By the 14th century, the charging knight on horseback with a sword had begun to be featured in a heraldic shield, first in Jogaila's seal in 1386 or 1387, and also in the seal of Vytautas in 1401. As early as the 15th century, the heraldic charging knight on horseback became the coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and of its central part - the Duchy of Vilnius. 16th century documents refer to it as *Vytis* (it is believed that the word *Vytis* was used in the 15th century). At first, the charging knight was depicted riding in one or the other direction and sometime held a lance. But as of the first half of the 15th century, he is always shown riding to the left (as seen by the viewer) with a sword in his raised hand and a shield in the left hand.

In the 15th century, the colours of the seal became uniform. The livery colours became fixed: a white (silver) charging knight on a red field of the heraldic shield. The shield of the charging knight was blue then and set against the blue field was a double (gold) cross. The coat of arms featured the grand duke's headgear on the crest.

At first, the charging knight showed the figure of the ruler of the country, but with time it came to be understood and interpreted as that of a riding knight who was chasing an intruder out of his native country. Such an understanding was especially popular in the 19th century and the first half of 20th century. The explanation has a sound historical foundation. It is known that at the Zalgiris (Grünwald) battle, where the united Polish-Lithuanian army crushed the army of the German Order, thus putting an end to its expansion to the east, thirty Lithuanian regiments out of the total forty were flying with the sign of the *Vytis*.

With minor stylistic changes, the *Vytis* coat of arms remained the state symbol of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania until 1795. When the Lithuanian - Polish Commonwealth was formed in 1569, the *Vytis* was featured on the state emblem alongside the Polish Eagle. As time went by, the *Vytis* gained popularity and constituted part of the coat of arms of most provinces and towns. It was widely used in public life during festive ceremonies and so on. The *Vytis* sign on the Ausros vartai (Ausros Gate) in the 16th century defence wall of Vilnius, surviving to this day, was to signify that Vilnius was the capital of Lithuania. The Byelorussians also consider the *Vytis* to be their national emblem.

When Lithuania was annexed by Russian Empire in 1795, the *Vytis* was incorporated into the imperial state emblem. Slightly modified in 1845, it was used as the coat of arms of the city and province of Vilnius. While restoring the independent Lithuanian state in 1918-19, due care was taken to restore the state emblem too. A special commission was set up to analyse the best 16th century specimens of *Vytis* to design a state emblem. Only the crest with the grand duke's headgear was rejected. The *Vytis* was the state emblem of the Republic of Lithuania until 1940.



When on June 15, 1940 Lithuania was occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union, the symbol of the *Vytis* came to be viewed as hostile to the new authorities and its portrayal was punishable (during Stalin's rule this could mean imprisonment or even deportation). It was only in 1988, when a revival movement began in Lithuania, that the *Vytis* was again legalized as a national symbol. As of March 11, 1990 the *Vytis* is once again the official state emblem and symbol of the Republic of Lithuania. On April 10, 1990 the Supreme Council of Republic of Lithuania approved the description of the state emblem and determined the principal regulations for its use. On September 4, 1991, the old colours of the *Vytis* seal were re-established.

# LITHUANIAN FLAG

## The Flag



The state flag of the Republic of Lithuania is cloth consisting of three horizontal stripes: yellow (the upper), green (the middle) and red (the lower). The colours of the flag arise from various aspects of nature and Lithuanian values. The ratio of the width and length of the flag is 1 to 2.

In olden times, Lithuanians had many flags. During the Zalgiris battle, the flag of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was red, with white coat of arms, the *Vytis*, embroidered on it. The Lithuanian public renewed discussion as to what the Lithuanian national flag ought to be only towards the end of the 19th century. Various combinations of two or three colours prevailing in traditional national dresses (red, yellow, green, white) were used in national flags. The present-day flag and its colours were chosen by a special commission (Jonas Basanavicius, Tadas Daugirdas, Antanas Zmuidzinavicius) set up by the provisional supreme body of state power - the Lithuanian Council - of Lithuanian state under restoration. On April 19, 1918 the Lithuanian Council approved the design proposed by the commission. After Lithuania's occupation and annexation by the Soviet Union, the flag was placed under a ban and anyone flying it incurred severe punishment. A great many of these flags appeared at various rallies held by the Sajudis movement in the summer of 1988. Soon the flag was legalized: first, recognized as the national and later as the state flag on November 18, 1988, and on June 26, 1991 (the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania law "On the state flag of the Republic of Lithuania").





## LITHUANIAN NATIONAL ANTHEM

Lyrics and music:  
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Translation:  
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**Lietuva, tėvyne mūsų,  
Tu didvyrių žeme,  
Iš praeities Tavo sūnūs  
Te stiprybę semia.**

Lithuania, land of heroes,  
Thou our Fatherland that art,  
From the glorious deeds of ages  
Shall Thy children take heart.

**Tegul Tavo vaikai eina  
Vien takais dorybės,  
Tegul dirba Tavo naudai  
Ir žmonių gėrybei.**

May Thy children ever follow  
Their heroic fathers  
In devotion to their country  
And good will to others.

**Tegul saulė Lietuvos  
Tamsumus prašalina,  
Ir šviesa ir tiesa  
Mūs žingsnius telydi.**

May the sun of our loved shore  
Shine upon us evermore;  
May the right and the truth  
Keep our pathway lighted.

**Tegul meilė Lietuvos  
Dega mūsų širdyse,  
Vardan tos Lietuvos  
Vienybė težydi.**

May the love of our dear land  
Make us strong of heart and hand,  
May our land ever stand  
Peaceful and united.