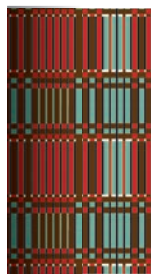


LITHUANIAN ETHNOGRAPHIC REGIONS



Žemaitija (commonly known as Samogitia) is notable for its hilly landscape. The majority of locals here are Roman Catholics, although Samogitia is home for various ethnic and religious groups. This region saw the rise of the so-called gentry democracy and the Lithuanian national movement, as well as the evolution of Lithuanian writing, unique culture and the Samogitian dialect.



Largest in territory and population, Aukštaitija, or the Highlands, traces its formation back to the period of the Lithuanian national revival, and is distinct for its diverse ethnic culture.



Dzūkija, the southeastern region of Lithuania, is home for the so-called *šiliniai* (from Lith. *šilas*, meaning pinewood) whose life revolved around forests, *gruntiniai* (from Lith. *gruntas* – soil) who made their living from agriculture, and *panemunių dzūkai*, settlers near the Nemunas river. All of them are well known for their dialect which is referred to as *dzūkavimas*, as well as their diverse and archaic ethnic culture.



Suvalkija is distinguished by its fertile plains, hills, lush forests as well as educated, wealthy and hard-working farmers whose well-kept homesteads look like smaller versions of Lithuanian manors. People in Suvalkija have the most colourful and intricately patterned folk costumes, while their songs are calm and uplifting.



Situated near the right bank of the lower reaches of Nemunas, the Curonian Spit, the shores of the Curonian Lagoon and the Baltic Sea, Mažoji Lietuva, or Lithuania Minor, is inhabited by calm and honourable people who respect their tribe, cherish the Evangelical Lutheran faith and appreciate books.

