

A HANSEATIC MERCHANT'S STORY



EAT LIKE JAKOB

WE'VE MARKED THE LOCATION OF A FORMER FISH MARKET IN THIS MAP, AND WE COULDN'T HELP BUT WONDER HOW JAKOB'S COOK PREPARED FRESH FISH. HERE'S AN AUTHENTIC MEDIEVAL RECIPE!

BRAISED, BOILED, AND FRIED PIKE

Take a large pike and scale the head and tail leaving the midsection be. Gut it, mount it onto a skewer, wrap the middle of the pike canvas after moistening it in salted wine vinegar, lace it up, sprinkle the head and tail with salt and place over low heat. Roast, spin, and keep the salted wine vinegar boiling in a pot by the fire, so that you can drizzle the canvas with it often. Beforehand grease the head with olive or plain oil or butter and sprinkle it with a little wheat flour – do it a second and a third time when the fish is cooked. Also, grease up the tail once it begins to brown, but skip the flour. Once the whole thing's hot, remove the canvas. Enjoy!

WHAT'S HANZA?

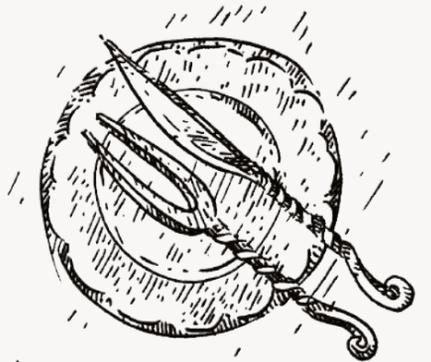
The term *Hanse*, which later evolved into *Hansa*, or *Hanza*, was a Low German word referring to a group of merchants travelling in a convoy by sea or by land. The Hanseatic League was established in the 13th century as a union of Lübeck, Hamburg, and other northern German cities. It intended to contribute to the smooth development of trade in the Baltic Sea and the search for new trade routes along the eastern Baltic Sea coast. Sounds like the great-grandmother of the European Union, doesn't it? The vast majority of North German cities, most of the Prussian and Livonian Order's Baltic Sea coastal cities, as well as those of the Netherlands, belonged to the Hanseatic League during its prosperity (13th-14th centuries), and Swedish cities were also actively involved in this union.



DON'T FEEL LIKE COOKING? LET'S EAT OUT!

Multiple wars and occupations assured the extinction of medieval pubs and taverns in Kaunas. You can, however, sample the authentic tastes in selected restaurants located in the Old Town. Our tip for those looking for Hanseatic details is simple: order rich soups, mushroom and game dishes, and please remember our love for all things potato only started a couple of hundred years ago.

- 20 **MEDŽIOTOJŲ UŽEIGA**
Rotušės a. 10
- 21 **AVILYS**
Vilniaus g. 34
- 22 **BERNELIŲ UŽEIGA**
M. Valančiaus g. 9
K. Donelaičio g. 11



TOURISM INFORMATION

„Kaunas IN“

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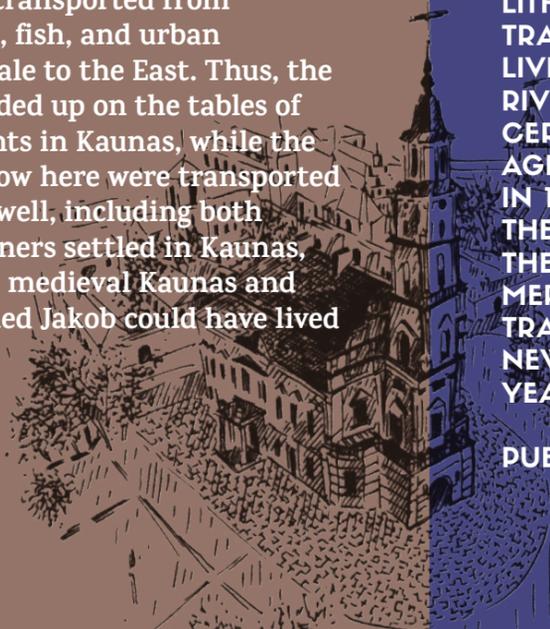
MEET JAKOB THE MERCHANT

The Hanseatic League mainly traded wood its products, tar, honey, wax, and grains that have been transported from the Baltic Sea region, bartered for cloth, fish, and urban shop-fabricated products and sent for sale to the East. Thus, the herring of the North and Baltic Seas ended up on the tables of even rather poor townspeople or peasants in Kaunas, while the Lithuanian forest timber, tar, grains grow here were transported to Western Europe. People migrated as well, including both merchants and craftsmen. Many foreigners settled in Kaunas, especially Germans. Let's travel back to medieval Kaunas and see how a young German merchant called Jakob could have lived here...

HI,

WELCOME TO KAUNAS, THE ONLY HANSEATIC CITY IN LITHUANIA. IT'S A CITY FULL OF MERCHANTS, CRAFTSMEN, TRAVELLERS AND AMAZING STORIES. PEOPLE HAVE BEEN LIVING IN THE CONFLUENCE OF NEMUNAS AND NERIS RIVERS FOR AGES, AND THE LEGEND OF KAUNAS IS MOST CERTAINLY OLDER THAN THE FIRST CHRONICLES. WE ALL AGREE, HOWEVER, THAT THE HISTORY OF KAUNAS BEGINS IN 1408, THE YEAR WHEN GRAND DUKE VYTAUTAS GAVE THE CITY MAGDEBURG RIGHTS. THE LATTER ALLOWED THE FREEDOM OF GROWTH, AND, IN 1441, HANSEATIC MERCHANTS ESTABLISHED THEIR KONTOR (FOREIGN TRADING POST) HERE. KAUNAS, AS THE MEMBER OF THE NEW HANSA LEAGUE, CELEBRATES THIS OCCASION EVERY YEAR IN MAY AS ITS BIRTHDAY PARTY.

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1 KAUNAS ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL CATHEDRAL BASILICA
Vilniaus g. 1

The largest Gothic church in Kaunas and Lithuania is this one, located at the beginning of Vilniaus street. It was first mentioned in 1413, but the construction works were only finished a couple of hundred years later. The present shape of the basilica, however, dates back to 1880 – like many other churches in the country, this one was destroyed quite a few times. Today, it's one of the most important Catholic churches in Lithuania.

2 CHURCH OF HOLY TRINITY (SEMINARY)
A. Jakšto g. 1

The Bernardine sisters first came to Kaunas in Medieval times. The congregation first bought a wooden monastery which they traded for a brick complex in 1595. The buildings were demolished by a fire in the 17th century; the rebuilt church was consecrated in 1703. The interior was destroyed during the Soviet occupation when the church was used as a book warehouse. Since 1982, the renaissance-style house of worship is full of God again.

3 THE KAUNAS ST. FRANCIS XAVIER (JESUIT) CHURCH
Rotušės a. 8

The kaunastic brothers of Kojelavičius-Vijūkas family donated a block of houses in Kaunas for the Jesuit monks around 1642. Soon after, a chapel was established there, as well as a school. In 1666, the monks began constructing the church which today is considered of late baroque style.

4 THE KAUNAS BLESSED VIRGIN MARY OF THE ASSUMPTION (VYTAUTAS THE GREAT) CHURCH
Aleksoto g. 3

Built around 1400, the church is considered the oldest in Kaunas. It was funded by Vytautas the Great, the ruler of Lithuania, and designated for Franciscan monks and foreign merchants. Its cross-shaped layout is unique for Gothic churches in Lithuania. Located on the bank of Nemunas, the biggest river in Lithuania, the church was flooded numerous times. In 1812, it was burned down by troops of Napoleon. In the late 19th century, it was rebuilt as an Orthodox church; the building was also used as barracks and warehouse. It was returned to the Catholic community about a century ago.

5 BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH
Vilniaus g. 31

One church in Kaunas can be visited 24/7 – it's the Blessed Sacrament Church located right by the underground passage of Birštono street. Finished in 1690, the baroque church was converted into a cinema during the Soviet occupation – in fact, it was THE place for art-house movie fans. Today, it fits both religious citizens of Kaunas as well as secular culture lovers.

6 KAUNAS EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Karaliaus Mindaugo pr. 3

This is where you'd most definitely meet Jakob. The Lutheran parish in Kaunas was established as early as 1558, and the church was built in 1683. The Soviets gave the building to the nearby university. In 1989, the remaining Lutheran community came back to the church.



7 ST. GERTRUDE CHURCH
Laisvės al. 101 A

Those who believe in the power of candlelight must visit the little church hidden in one of the courtyards of Laisvės alėja. Built in the 15th century, it's one of the oldest brick Gothic buildings in Lithuania. During the Soviet occupation, in the 1980s, a new building was designed to be built in the church (it was used as a drug warehouse at the time) site. The community of Kaunasiens, led by young architects, protested against the plans and they were cancelled. It was one of the events that inspired the pro-independence movement in Lithuania. Today, the church is famous for the hundreds of candles that can be observed from the outside. The sight, especially when it's dark, is extraordinary.

8 KAUNAS MONASTERY OF ST. BENEDICT SISTERS AND KAUNAS ST. NICHOLAS (BENEDICTINE) CHURCH
Benediktinių g. 8

The ensemble is comprised of the monastery, the church of St. Nicholas and a parsonage. The Gothic St. Nicholas church was built in the 15th century as a parish church; only later it was given for the nuns of the Benedictine congregation. The first sisters arrived in Kaunas in 1627. The house of the convent was built in 1825. During the Soviet occupation, the sisters were forced to leave the convent, the church was closed and the buildings given to the local library. The church was restored and re-consecrated in 1992. Since 2009, the Benedictine sisters live in the convent and take care of the church.

9 ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR (FRANCISCAN) CHURCH AND BERNARDINE MONASTERY
Papilio g. 9

A wooden church meant for Bernardine monks was built in this very location back in 1468. Soon after, an adjacent monastery appeared. A Brick Gothic style church facing the Kaunas Castle stood here as early as 1503. In the 17th century, the complex was heavily damaged by fire and wars. The church was recently renovated, and the monastery is still serving its original purpose.

10 KAUNAS CASTLE
Pilies g. 17

We bet the circumstances of Jakob's travel to Kaunas would be dramatically different if he lived in, say, the 14th century. This was when the Kaunas Castle was sieged and demolished by a "dream team" of crusaders from Germany, Italy and England. The order's history was finished in 1410 when grand duke Vytautas and his soldiers won the Grunwald battle. This allowed the residents of Kaunas to dive into the world of trade and craft and led to a more tolerant welcome of foreigners. What you see today is one tower of the castle built in the 15th century, with a fascinating little department of Kaunas City Museum inside.

11 THE REMAINS OF 17TH-CENTURY DEFENSIVE FORTIFICATIONS OF KAUNAS CITY
Laisvės al. 82 / Kęstučio g.

In the very centre of Kaunas, a small but very important piece of history hides near the Kaunas State Musical Theatre. What's left of the city's defensive fortifications are the remains of the Malūnininko (Miller) Tower and Kaunas city wall. These objects probably date back to the period between 1660 and 1688, although there are other theories. It's somewhat possible Jakob or his servants got their flour here. By the way, an impressive treasure was discovered in this location in 2018. Was it Jakob who buried it hundreds of years ago?

12 FORMER FISH MARKET
Square at the intersection of Šv. Gertrūdės g. and M. Valančiaus g.

Because there was a separate fish market a stone's throw from the market square, following the street currently named M. Valančiaus! We bet this is where the wife of Jakob would buy fresh pike. The golden days of the fish market are long gone, but there's one small yet fascinating building reminding of the past. It's the oil shop built in the 19th century.



13 KAUNAS TOWN HALL
Rotušės a. 15

The first version of a town hall appeared back in the 16th century; very soon the building became the epicentre of the bustling Hanseatic city. There were many reasons to step inside, too, as this is where one would do all the paperwork and taxes. On the other hand, the court also resided in the town hall, and the jail was located in its basement. We hope Jakob never went to prison! Maybe he sent someone there? Anyhow, today the town hall is the home of Kaunas City Museum as well as KAUNAS IN Tourism information centre. Come say hi!

14 FORMER MARKET SQUARE (NOW TOWN HALL SQUARE)

Today, the town hall square is full of happily married couples, tourists and passers-by. This is where significant concerts take place, and, in wintertime, it's home to the Christmas Market. In Medieval times, this was the primary market of Kaunas, with its peak time on Tuesdays. Everyone could trade here, so merchants would flock from all over the region. Exporters and resellers searched for wax, honey, grain, flour, hemp, timber etc. There were permanent shops at the square, too – in them, townspeople would buy meat, bread and salt, sometimes fish. Why sometimes?

15 THE HOUSE OF MERCHANT SIRUTIS
Rotušės a. 13

You might have heard the current name of the palace – the Maironis house, or the Maironis Museum of Lithuanian Literature. The romantic era poet and priest bought the baroque palace when it was in a rather poor state. It's known that brick buildings and a warehouse stood here as early as the 16th century – in fact, you can still notice the traces in the basements. Could Jakob store anything here? He would visit the houses, for sure, as this is where wealthy merchants could have lived.

16 THE ZABIELA PALACE
Rotušės a. 10

Would you like to have a Medieval feast to celebrate a profitable deal or a shipment that has just arrived? Welcome to the basement of the baroque Zabiela palace. The story of the palace is a picturesque one and involves love triangles. Its gothic cellar is home to one of the oldest restaurants in Kaunas. Its speciality is game! We're positive Jakob would have loved some boar stew.

17 THE HOUSE OF PERKŪNAS
Aleksoto g. 6

One of the oldest and definitely the most impressive example of secular Gothic architecture in the city is the House of Perkūnas, named after the Pagan god of thunder. It was once the residence of the Burgermeister, later sold to the Jesuit monks. The house is open for public and, among other activities, invites one to try out Medieval fashion and learn some dance moves.



18 THE FORMER LUTHERAN BLOCK
Muitinės g. 8

While there are many historical residential houses in the Old Town of Kaunas, we have a feeling Jakob might have lived in this very block, today home to a university faculty. The neighbourhood is near the Evangelical Lutheran Church, which lets us presume it was mostly populated by expats from German lands.

19 RESIDENTIAL HOUSES AT THE TOWN HALL SQUARE AND VILNIUS STREET
Rotušės a., Vilniaus g.

Living on the main street or at the town hall square is definitely a privilege throughout history, all around the world. The dense perimeter of the square is intact today; the ground floors of the buildings are most usually occupied by cafes and restaurants. Same as in the Hanseatic times, in fact – we bet Jakob could visit a new tavern each day, sampling locally made brews and stews.