



Kaziukas fair

Kaziuko mugė (Kaziukas Fair) is an annual Lithuanian folk fair held in the very beginning of March. It is a joyful fest of Lithuanian folk arts and crafts where plenty of original art works, thoroughly made utensils and homemade kickshaws are sold in the central streets of Vilnius and Kaunas cities. This event attracts many citizens and city guests every year as every year it offers many new things as well as old and well like traditional ones. In the sheer multitude of craftworks, there is one thing that will definitely catch your eye as soon as you find yourself here. This is verbos – traditional palms made of colourful dried flowers and grasses tied into typical Lithuanian designs. Verbos are commonly taken to church on Easter, so most people take care of buying them at the Kaziukas fair.

What are the origins of the name given to the fair and why is it held at this particular time of the year? There are historical reasons for this. “Kaziukas” is a diminutive name from “Kazimeras” (Casimir), the patron saint of Lithuania. Prince of Poland and Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Casimir lived in the 15th century and died on March 4, 1484. Since his canonization in 1602, March 4, the day of his death, was marked by a feast lasting for several days. Thousands of people would arrive in Vilnius to honour st Casimir. The



commemoration gave rise to the fair: as the feast was quite lengthy, street vendors started selling their products to people participating in the event. Stalls with food, drinks and folk craft-ware became an integral part of the annual commemoration of st Casimir. As time went by, the commercial side overshadowed the religious aspect of the holiday, though for many the latter still remained dominating. Today, while, of course, being aware of the true reasons of the celebration, most people also perceive this day as a perfect opportunity to purchase hand-made artefacts, verbos, as well as to try delicious food and drinks. What makes Kaziukas fair different from other events of such kind is a special atmosphere, typical for the beginning of spring. Nature is awakening and so is a human soul. A lot of music, dances, joy and lively entertainment - that is what most visitors of the fair expect to find at the Kaziukas fair.

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