

UŽUPIS: A REPUBLIC INSIDE VILNIUS

WHERE HISTORY MEETS ART



VILNIUS



Užupis is the smallest district in Vilnius, covering an area of 0.6 km² and separated from the Old Town by the Vilnelė River. What used to be a seedy part of the city in the early 90s has grown into an affluent neighbourhood of artists, intellectuals, and a few local moguls. The district declared independence on 1 April 1997, as if to underline the humorous nature of the whole affair. However, the new republic comes complete with its own currency, government, anthem, constitution and an ever-present free spirit.



Welcome



Art



History



Along the border



1. CROSSING THE UŽUPIS BORDER

Maironio/Užupio g.



Just like any other republic, Užupis has a border crossing. Visitors can head to the Bridge of Užupis to see the district's main entrance. Moreover, April 1 is the Užupis Independence Day, and the bridge is where you can get your passport stamped upon entry. And all year-round the bridge is the prime spot in Vilnius for placing love locks.



2. UNDER THE UŽUPIS BRIDGE

Maironio/Užupio g.



If the river is favourable, you can test your destiny under the Užupis Bridge by going on the Destiny's Swing. While swinging, discover another well-kept secret – the Mermaid or Užupis' Maiden. She took a dive once in the flood of 2004 but she's back safe in a niche along the quay. Beware, legend has it that if you look at her long enough she might seduce you to stay in Užupis forever.



3. MAGNETS AND MIRACLES. CURIOSITY ROOM

Užupio g. 2a, www.umi.lt, +370 622 75805



If you suddenly feel drawn to Užupis, it's no miracle. Step into the Curiosity Room - Užupis' information centre - and the photos, artefacts, and stories about the district will work their magic on you. Get a little something to remember, send a postcard off to a friend with the rare Užupis stamp on it, or ask a local about the curiosities in the neighbourhood.



4. SCULPTURES AT THE UŽUPIS ART INCUBATOR



Užupio g. 2a

In 1996, a group of students from the Vilnius Academy of Arts founded an artistic community based out of a house and yard next to the Vilnelė River. It gained support among locals and city officials; therefore, in 2002 the artist community joined hands with the Vilnius City Municipality to establish the Užupis Art Incubator. The UAI is known for its display of sculptures that changes from time to time. Go there to see works that surprise, inspire, make you laugh, or even feel a little uncomfortable.



5. BERNARDINE MONASTERY

Malūnų g. 3



Once famed for its extensive library, today the monastery is a home to the Vilnius Academy of Arts. The atmosphere is liberal, creative, and filled with good vibes. Right across the river from the former monastery is the Tibet Square with a mandala sculpture. Cross the river to Užupis over a nameless bridge burdened with love locks of the couples marrying nearby.



6. JONAS MEKAS VISUAL ARTS CENTER

Malūnų g. 8, www.mekas.lt, +370 614 78470



Named after the legendary filmmaker Jonas Mekas, an Honorary Citizen of the Republic of Užupis, the centre bears the flag of the avant-gardes of all the arts. It houses works by Jonas Mekas and Jurgis George Mačiūnas, the forefathers of the contemporary art movement Fluxus, as well as temporary exhibitions by other contemporary artists who experiment with mixed media. Join an educational project and find out more about the essence of Fluxus.



7. ANGEL OF UŽUPIS



The intersection of Malūnų-Užupio-Paupio g.

Urban legend has it that placing a sculpture of an angel here was a suggestion made by the Dalai Lama on one of his visits in town. But in reality the idea for a sculpture of an angel came when locals were looking for a way to commemorate Zenonas Šteinys, an artist and active member of the local community. He was one of the people who helped turn a once unsightly and dangerous district into the Užupis we know today - a real guardian angel.



8. THE CONSTITUTION OF UŽUPIS



Constitutions Avenue, Paupio g.

How do you describe Užupis' bohemian way of life in one manifesto? Take a look at the Užupis Constitution to find out. Its 41 articles will help you understand what goes on in the heads of locals - 'Everyone has the right to be unique' is indeed true in the neighbourhood. The constitution was written by Romas Lileikis and Tomas Čepaitis in just three hours and published on a plaque on Paupio Street. Now translated into more than 50 languages, the constitution gives visitors a sense of the rules the locals of Užupis swear by. Because, 'Everyone has the right to live by the River Vilnele, and the River Vilnele has the right to flow by everyone!'



9. VILNIUS POTTERS' GUILD



Užupio g. 9/Paupio g. 2-20, +370 659 99040

The ancient art of pottery is revived in this small studio. Using tools from the Middle Ages, the guild masters reconstruct ceramic items according to archaeological findings. Drop by and see the permanent exhibition; the founders of the guild are eager to tell visitors many stories. The best way to learn about their history is by sipping coffee from a reconstructed mug and even trying your hand at making one.



10. ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH



Užupio g. 17, +370 5 272 3340

Standing here since 1824, the church is so tiny it almost blends in with the nearby houses. Find it and you will be rewarded with a wonderful view from the top of the hill. During the Soviet era the church was turned into a sculpture workshop. Today, it's home to a small Belarusian Catholic community and mass is held in Polish and Belarusian.



11. JONAS MEKAS DRAUGHT ALLEY

Užupio g. 24

Step into a piece of avant-garde art. The Draught Alley conveniently connects the Vilnius Academy of Arts with Užupis Street. The narrow alley decorated by painters from all over the world is named after Jonas Mekas, a Lithuanian American filmmaker and godfather of American avant-garde cinema. If you're into looking for something more, cross the Vilnelė over the Fluxus Bridge, the only covered pedestrian bridge in Lithuania, which is dedicated to Jurgis George Mačiūnas.



12. JEWISH HERITAGE

Krivių g. 123

Jewish merchants inhabited Užupis for many years. The Old Jewish Cemetery used to be nestled along the outskirts of the Užupis district. Today, all that's left is a monument with inscriptions in Hebrew. The silhouette of the Jewish Synagogue that functioned until 1941 can be spotted in a modern private house.



13. ALTANA HILL

Krivių g. 18



One of the highest hills in Vilnius got its name from a garden feature - an altana that you can still see standing here today. It was built by Vilnius native Melanija Dluska around 1933 and used by her husband to grow exotic plants under. Although the city council never gave her permission for the structure, that didn't stop her. The view from here is spectacular and there's not much climbing if you just get to the Užupis Gymnasium and take the stairs and path behind it.



14. WOODEN ARCHITECTURE

Baltasis alley



Don't be alarmed if you think you've wandered to a remote village. You're yet in another eccentric part of Užupis. Feel time stand still on Baltasis Skersgatvis. The street's wooden houses and gardens embody the long history of the district. You can see what the first houses in Užupis looked like.



15. BERNARDINE CEMETERY



Žvirgždyno g. 3

Even though visiting a cemetery might not be at the top of your sightseeing list, the Bernardine Cemetery is worth a visit. Since the cemetery resembles a park, it was always a popular place to go for a walk in the 19th century. Established in 1810, the cemetery serves as a resting place for many famous people, such as painters Kanuty Rusiecki and Vytautas Kairiūkštis, as well as Professor Leon Borowski.



16. TYMO MARKET



Aukštaičių g. / Maironio g.

The quarter that stood here from the 16th to 19th centuries was home to the city's leather craftsmen. It was demolished under Soviet rule and recently it was turned into a market space. When the weather's warm, drop by every Thursday to find the very first organic market in Vilnius. Moreover, every Friday and Saturday throughout the summer, Open Kitchen takes over and brings together food trucks that represent some of the town's best fast food spots.

ANNUAL EVENTS IN UŽUPIS:

Weekend of St. Patrick's Day, traditional St. Patrick's celebration when the River Vilnelė turns green
April 1st, Užupis Independence Day
2nd day of Easter, White Tablecloth Day, a picnic in Užupis
Warm season (spring to early autumn), Open Kitchen Food Market on Fridays and Saturdays.
Location to be announced
November, Estonian Film Days
November 11, Wind day, a festival of photography, music, film, and philosophy

VISIT GALLERIES:

Užupio gallery, old traditions of jeweller's art, Užupio g. 3-1, +370 5 231 2318
Menų tiltas, exhibitions of Lithuanian artists, Užupio g. 16, +370 606 28088
V20, contemporary jewellery, Polocko g. 2, +370 600 22700
Edita Suchockyte Art Gallery, Užupio g. 14-1, +370 618 15323
Tartle, Lithuanian art centre, Užupio g. 40, +370 5 2681888

CHEERS WITH A BEER:

Šnekutis, the first craft beer pub in Vilnius, Polocko g. 7A, +370 650 47054
Špunka, probably the smallest pub in Vilnius, Užupio g. 9-1, +370 652 32361
Devinkė, a pub for poets, bartenders and beer fans, Užupio g. 4, +370 61536434

SWEETS AND COFFEE:

Liu desertinė, fancy cakes and luscious desserts, Užupio g. 20, +370 69010644
Thierry bakery, French vibes to the last bite, Užupio g. 13, +370 679 09081
Kmyninė, traditional Lithuanian bread and more, Užupio g. 38, +370 640 49042
Coffee1, artisan coffee and homemade ice-cream, Užupio g. 9, +370 610 60160
Huracán Coffee, a steampunk cafe, Užupio g. 13-9, +370 659 59125

TASTE UŽUPIS FOOD:

Sweet Root, seasons-inspired local cuisine, Užupio g. 22, +370 685 60767
Užupio kavinė, with probably the best view, Užupio g. 2, +370 5 212 2138
Paupio 12, enjoy a gourmet dinner, Paupio g. 12, +370 676 09 12
Šturmuų švyturys, enjoy exclusive and fresh Lithuanian fish, Užupio g. 30, +370 656 98000
Health, a wonderful healthy bite on your trip, Malūnų g. 4, +370 649 09333
Kitch Gallery Restaurant, a place to try the UžBurger, a blue burger inspired by art and the Užupis spirit, Užupio g. 4, +370 607 64614

SHOP FOR SOUVENIRS:

Visokių Daiktų Krautuvėlė, niche perfumes, music boxes, and much more, Užupio g. 20, +370 5 210 5217
Keistotelka, Used books store, postcards, licensed Užupis souvenirs, nice little things, Paupio g. 2, +370 689 40687
Baltic Shamans, traditional jewellery and tribal souvenirs, Užupio g. 2, +370 620 35311
Knapinė krautuvė, everything from hemp seeds, Užupio g. 14, +370 645 37801
Locals.lt, Lithuanian design, clothes, and jewellery, Užupio g. 10-23
Kolekcija, health, beauty products, souvenirs and lots of special gifts, Užupio g. 7, +370 5 212 0012
Vilnius in Love, postcards, magnets, textiles, amber, flower kaleidoscopes, Užupio g. 1, +370 699 56641

MAP

