

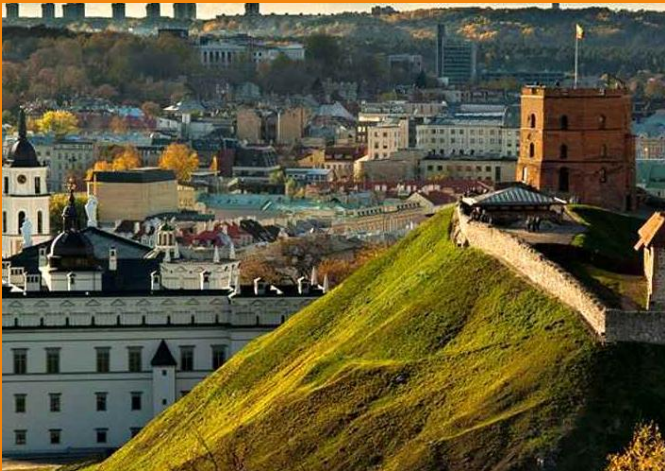
History of Lithuania capital Vilnius

Gediminas grand duke of Lithuania

Besides being the founder of Vilnius and Trakai, *Gediminas* was also one of the most famous rulers of Lithuania. His fame can only be compared to the fame of his grandson *Vytautas the Great*.

Gediminas lived between 1275 and 1341 and ruled the Grand Duchy of Lithuania for 25 years. He moved the capital of Lithuania from Trakai to Vilnius. He was better known as a diplomat who attracted the attention of Europe to Lithuania than as a military chief.

It was in the letters of *Gediminas* to Western Europe that the name of Vilnius was mentioned for the first time in 1323. This year is considered to be the year of the founding of Vilnius.



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Gediminas succeeded in expanding the state borders and the sphere of influence of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania far to the east and south. Under the rule of *Gediminas*, Vitebsk and Volyn were annexed while the lands of Kievan Rus fell into a vassal dependence of the Duchy. On their trip west, the army of *Gediminas* even approached Berlin. The area of the Lithuanian state doubled during the times of *Gediminas*.

