

HELLO! I AM THE OLD TOWN OF UMERGĖ

Ukmergė is one of the oldest towns in Lithuania. It was first mentioned in 1333, in the Livonian Chronic “Hermanos de Wartenberg’s”. There is a mound in the middle of the town. Earlier on the top of the mound there stood a castle and a village began to spread at the foot of it. Later it turned into a town. The old name of the town was Vilkmėrgė (Ladywolf). It is mentioned in historical sources. A century ago, the town was renamed Ukmergė.

According to the legend, in the olden days, shady forests were the home for a young pretty priestess called Vilkmėrgė (Ladywolf). The other day young Duke Tautvilas was hunting in the vicinity and found himself in trouble. He ran out of arrows and wolves started attacking him. But suddenly, out of nowhere, Ladywolf appeared and subdued the predators, and saved the life of young Duke. Tautvilas’s father Dausprungas built a castle by the river Šventoji and named it Ladywolf (Vilkmėrgė in Lithuanian) to honor the savior of his son. Later on, the name of the castle transferred to the town.

1. The Old Town of Ukmergė. The old town of Ukmergė is one of the seventh most valuable in all Lithuania. It is well preserved urban monument of the end of the 19th– the beginning of the 20th centuries. Brick buildings are built after the great fire in 1877. Almost all central wooden part of the town which used to be until the fire burned down. Most buildings of the old town are one-floor with mezzanines, facing the street with their facades. The complex of the old town of Ukmergė includes Kęstutis Square, various parts of Kaunas, Gediminas, Vytautas and Vilnius streets, and some other smaller streets which are near the center of the town. The exterior of the building has remained unchanged since the beginning of the 20th century until now.

2. The mound of Ukmergė. The mound stands in the town center, in the confluence of the river Šventoji and the stream Vilkmėrgėlė. The slopes are steep, 16 m in height. This mound is very old, used for defense already in the first millennium of our era. At the beginning of the 13 century, Duke Dausprungas, an elder brother of King Mindaugas, built a wooden castle on the mound. This castle withstood many attacks of Crusaders. Unfortunately, in 1391, during the struggles between Vytautas and Jogaila, the castle was burned.

3. The Orthodox Church of Holy Lady intercessor. It is a unique wooden building of architectural heritage. The Orthodox Church was built in 1873. On one side of the building a room for worship is equipped, on the other side there is a residential priest’s room. During World War II the German army installed stables here. In 2006 the Church was renovated. It is currently used as a house of worship.

4. The promenade of the river Šventoji and the panorama of the city. The Šventoji is the longest river in Lithuania. It winds only through the territory of Lithuania and the length of the river is 246 km. It flows through the heart of Ukmergė city - the Old Town. On the bank of the river a kayak’s pier and a freshwater column are erected. There is a walkway on the coastline where citizens can ride bikes or walk, sit on a bench, look over the city skyline and the nature of the riverside. A playground for the little ones is equipped as well.

5. The history museum of Ukmergė. The exposition of the museum tells the local history of Ukmergė’s region since ancient times to the middle of the 20th century. The archeological finds, tools of rural and urban trade are exhibited here. There are some rooms installed, which show the lifestyle of peasants and nobles. In the museum the political events of the 19-20 centuries are demonstrated: rebellions, the period of independence, the history during wars and the period of the resistance. There is also an exhibition for the history of Jewish. In this museum people can find interesting and valuable ancient wayside shrines, artistic tops of crosses of local blacksmiths. The museum presents works of Lithuanian artists.

6. The tower of the old firehouse and the panorama of the city. The 18- meter- high tower was built at the end of the 19th century. From the top of the tower firemen observed the surrounding area. The sound of the bell on top of the tower warned about fire. Nearby there were stables and a carriage with a water barrel. The rescue team rushed to an emergency area using this transport.

This unique building is a perfect place to look around the town. An impressive panorama appears from the top of the tower. The keys of the tower can be found in the history museum of Ukmergė.

7. Sculpture "The Dog“. The old town of Ukmergė is guarded by a cute granite puppy. The author of this sculpture is Ričardas Širvelis.

8. Monument for the independence of Lithuania "Lituania Restituta“. This monument is not original. Its predecessor was built in 1930. Unfortunately, during the Soviet period, in 1951, this monument was demolished and two large parts of the obelisk were buried in this square. In 1989 these parts were dug up, the monument was rebuilt and officially opened in 1990. The great part of the obelisk is genuine. In this monument the high relief is incorporated, which depicts a priestess, nursing the fire on the altar. There is an authentic Chase in the escutcheon on the obelisk and a board with the recording. The height of the monument is about 17 meters.

9. The Church of Holy Trinity. This Byzantine style stone church was built in 1869. The history of the church reminds of many changes. In this place, back to 1788, there was the area of the Piarist’s monastery, that’s why a wooden Piarist Church was built there. However, the Czarist authority closed the monastery in 1845 and the church was burned down shortly after that. In 1869 a brick Orthodox Church was built in this place. In 1919 the church was transferred to Catholics. In Soviet times, the church once again was closed and turned into a storehouse, later it became a Chamber of marriage. Once again, in 1991, the Church was returned to the Catholics.

10. The former Great Synagogue of Jewish. The synagogue is a spiritual, cultural, economic and political center of a Jewish community. In 1825 the synagogue was the only one in the town. In 1877 it burned down during a huge fire, when whole town burned from the chimney of a bakery. Soon, the synagogue was rebuilt without any changes in its image. At the end of the 19 century a whole Jewish worship and study complex of buildings began to form near the Great Synagogue. Other synagogues, a yeshiva, a "Talmud-Torah" school were established. The Great Synagogue of Jewish was functioned till 1941.

11. The castle park and the panorama of the city. In the 14 century, when a wooden castle on the mound was burned, a new brick castle was built on the other hill, near the river Šventoji. It enabled the growth of the town, Ukmergė was granted the rights of Magdeburg. Big markets, trade fairs took places there. Finally in the 18th century the castle collapsed. Nowadays in this place there is a green castle park, which slopes overview a wonderful scenery of the town.

12. A jingling oak. This magnificent tree grows in the neighborhood of Ukmergė Cultural center, near Dukstyna’s stone. In the wind the branches of the oak begin to sound as chimes.

13. Dukstyna’s stone. This stone was found while digging a clay career in Dukstyna’s village. In 1975 it was brought to the center of the town. The boulder is decorated with the blazon of Ukmergė. This stone is a geological monument of nature. The weight of boulders is about 75 tons. The size of Dukstyna’s stone is 3.7 m. x 3 m. x 2.6 m.

14. The Art Gallery of the Cultural Center. The exhibitions of works in photography, painting, ceramics, textiles, blacksmith work and folk crafts by professional artists are organized in a spacious two-hall art gallery. The exhibitions are changed every month. People can visit them every day except Sunday and Monday.