

# THE CHEST GAZETTE

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## 6 July – the Statehood Day (the Lithuanian King Mindaugas Coronation Day)

King **Mindaugas** (1200 - 1263), the only king of Lithuania, considered the founder of the Lithuanian state and also the first Lithuanian ruler to become a Christian.

Mindaugas successfully asserted himself over other leading Lithuanian nobles and tribal chiefs, including his brother and his nephews, in 1236. The state thus formed under his leadership included Lithuania and much of Belorussia. In 1250 or 1251 Mindaugas accepted baptism from the Livonian Knights, thus easing western pressure against his state from the Teutonic and Livonian Knights and from Daniel of Halich-Volynia. In 1253 he received a royal crown from Pope Innocent IV and ruled for 10 years.

The historian Edvardas Gudavicius published research supporting an exact coronation date of 6 July 1253.

Despite some disputes as to the accuracy of the date, this day has been an official Lithuanian national holiday since 1991. On the day of the crowning of the only King of Lithuania, Mindaugas, you can witness a modern Lithuanian tradition. In all the towns and cities of the country, and in other countries, Lithuanians sing the national anthem at a certain agreed time. Not even a decade-old tradition, yet it is one of the most successful and beloved in the country.



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