



**Baiba Altēna,**  
Kurland  
Woodcakes



“Kurland Woodcake” started as any other successful business – there was a problem. The author of the idea and a proactive mother BAIBA realized that most of the board games for children available in the market do not address the need of them being educating, naturally made and durable, thus she reached out to her acquaintance Anna, who is a designer, and they came up with an alternative for expensive cardboard games. During the aftermath of an economic crisis, this was also seen as a more predictable safety net. Together they came up with the complete production cycle and Baiba was not afraid to get her hands dirty, so she created the first wooden games from scratch with the designs of Anna.

<https://kokmaizites.lv>

**“It is not a secret that children have a very clear and universal perception of things.”**

- BAIBA ALTENA

The company name in Latvian – “Kokmaizites” [Woodcake] was the idea of Baiba’s son, who was 4 at the time and it came as a mixture of having breakfast and the topics of environment protection.

As foreseen- educational, affordable, wood-based board games with a clever design were seen as an idea worth developing. Since these games had an emphasis on Latvian culture and language, soon enough some financing became available from the Culture department of Kurland as well as from Latvian Culture Capital Fond and the idea was taken to production.

From the birth of idea back in 2009 to now, Kurland Woodcakes has put at least 11 board games through production in more than 11 thousand copies and has received several awards for both visual design as well as board game mechanics design. As the amount grew, they started looking for partnerships for large-scale production and later found themselves collaborating with several of the biggest wooden material production companies in Latvia.

An important question rests in Baiba’s mind – if in a very long time some of their games would be found in an excavation, would they be looked at like Latvian cultural heritage, like we tend to look at different artifacts found these days.

