



# Baltic

PHRASEBOOK



ESTONIAN • LATVIAN • LITHUANIAN



# Baltic

**PHRASEBOOK**

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## About the Authors

This revised edition of the Estonian chapter with transliterations was prepared by Alan Trei, a marketing consultant and literary translator of Estonian origin living in Northampton, Massachusetts, working with Inna Feldbach. The Estonian section in the first edition was written by Lisa Trei, then a correspondent for the Wall Street Journal and a Fulbright Scholar at Tartu University in Estonia, assisted by Inna Feldbach, a governmental and literary translator.

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Eva Aras updated the Lithuanian section based on the the first edition written by Paul Jokubaitis. Originally a teacher of French and German, then a university librarian, Eva now teaches Lithuanian at the Victorian School of Languages in Melbourne. She also translates between Lithuanian and English and does on-site and telephone interpreting for various agencies and government bodies. All these activities help to keep her well in touch with the language of her birth, despite spending most of her life in an English-speaking environment.



## From the Authors

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Eva Aras would like to thank her son Danielius for his technical assistance and also for some helpful language suggestions.

**From the Publisher**

This book was coordinated by Peter D’Onghia and Ingrid Seebus. Karin Vidstrup Monk and Karina Coates supervised. The book was edited with flair by Emma Koch and meticulously proofread by Lou Callan. The splendiferous illustrations were done by Patrick Marris, who also laid out the book, and Fabrice Rocher supervised layout. Natasha Velleley drew the map.

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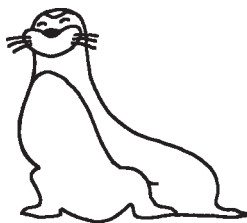
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The three Baltic countries, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, have been occupied by various powers throughout the centuries. During this time, and especially during Soviet occupation after World War II, when Russian was the official language of each of the three countries, language played a key role in maintaining national identity.

After their successful and remarkably peaceful individual bids for independence in 1991, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia have become inextricably linked in many people's minds. However, you may be surprised to learn that the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian languages are not all related to one other. Estonian is a Finno-Ugric language, closely related to Finnish and more distantly to Hungarian. Estonian and Finnish are mutually intelligible and share a large proportion of their respective vocabularies. Latvian and Lithuanian belong to the Baltic branch of the Indo-European language tree and are the only surviving spoken Baltic languages. However, in spite of their close relationship, the two are not mutually intelligible.

This book will enable you to make the most of these exciting and dynamic countries. English is spoken in the cities, but if you learn at least a few phrases in the local language you'll find that you're more than rewarded for your efforts.



## TRANSLITERATIONS

Simplified transliterations have been provided in pink throughout this book. Italic is used to indicate where to place stress in a word.



## POLITE FORMS

When a language has polite and informal forms of the singular pronoun 'you', the polite form has been used in most cases. However, you will come across the informal form of 'you' in some phrases, such as those for talking with children.

## ARTHUR OR MARTHA?

When there are both feminine and masculine forms of a word, it's indicated in either of two ways, with the feminine form always appearing first:

- with a slash separating the feminine and masculine endings of a word:

eg, hungry     **ish-ahl-k-usi/-as**     *išalkusi/ęs* (f/m)

- when the distinction between masculine and feminine is more complex, each word is given in full, separated with a slash:

eg, married     **ish-tak-eh-yu-si/vad-as**     *ištekejus/vedęs* (f/m)



## ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THIS BOOK

f     feminine  
inf     informal  
lit     literally  
m     masculine

n     noun  
pl     plural  
pol     polite  
sg     singular

# ESTONIAN, LATVIAN & LITHUANIAN



## HOW TO USE THIS PHRASEBOOK

### You Can Speak Another Language

Anyone can speak another language. Don't worry if you haven't studied languages before, or that you studied a language at school for years and can't remember any of it. It doesn't even matter if you failed English grammar. After all, that's never affected your ability to speak English! And this is the key to picking up a language in another country. You don't need to sit down and memorise endless grammatical details and you don't need to memorise long lists of vocabulary. You just need to start speaking.

Once you start, you'll be amazed how many prompts you'll get to help you build on those first words. You'll hear people speaking, pick up sounds from TV, catch a word or two that you think you know from the local radio, see something on a billboard – all these things help to build your understanding.

### Plunge In

There's just one thing you need to start speaking another language – courage. Your biggest hurdle is overcoming the fear of saying aloud what may seem to you to be just a bunch of sounds. There are a number of ways to do this.

The best way to start overcoming your fear is to memorise a few key words. These are the words you know you'll be saying again and again, such as 'hello', 'thank you' and 'How much?'. Here's an important hint though: right from the beginning, learn at least one phrase that will be useful but not essential. Such as 'See you later' or even a conversational piece like 'It's nice today, isn't it?' (people everywhere love to talk about the weather). Having this extra phrase (just start with one, if you like, and learn to say it really well) will enable you to move away from the basics, and when you get a reply and a smile, it'll also boost your confidence. You'll find that people you speak to will like it too, as they'll understand that at least you've tried to learn more of the language than just the usual essential words.

## Ways to Remember

There are several ways to learn a language. Most people find they learn from a variety of these, although people usually have a preferred way to remember. Some like to see the written word and remember the sound from what they see. Some like to just hear it spoken in context (if this is you, try talking to yourself in the foreign language, but do it at home or somewhere private, to give yourself confidence, and so others don't wonder about your sanity!). Others, especially the more mathematically inclined, like to analyse the grammar of a language, and piece together words according to the rules of grammar. The very visually inclined like to associate the written word and even sounds with some visual stimulus such as illustrations, TV and general things they see in the street. As you learn, you'll discover what works best for you – be aware of what made you really remember a particular word, and if it sticks in your mind, keep using that method.

## Kicking Off

Chances are you'll want to learn some of the language before you go. The first thing to do is to memorise those essential phrases and words. Check out the basics and don't forget that extra phrase. Try the sections on making conversation or greeting people for a phrase you'd like to use. Write some of these words and phrases down on a piece of paper and stick them up around the place: on the fridge, by the bed, on your computer, as a bookmark – somewhere where you'll see them often. Try putting some words in context – the 'How much is it?' note, for instance, could go in your wallet.

## Any Questions?

Try to learn the main question words. Each language chapter contains a box with the most common ones. As you read through different situations, you'll see these words used in the example sentences, and this will help you remember them. So if you want to take a bus, turn to the Bus section in each chapter (use the Index pages to find it quickly). You've already tried to memorise

the word for 'which' and you'll see the word for 'bus'. When you come across the sentence 'Which bus goes to ...?', you'll recognise the key words and this will help you remember the whole phrase.

## I Have a Flat Tyre

Doesn't seem like the phrase you're going to need? Well, in fact it could be very useful. As are all the phrases in this book, provided you have the courage to mix and match them. We have given specific examples within each section. But the key words remain the same even when the situation changes. So while you may not be planning on any driving during your trip, the first part of the phrase 'I have ...' could refer to anything else, and there are plenty of words in the other phrases that, we hope, will fit your needs. So whether it's 'a ticket' or 'a visa', you'll be able to put the words together to convey your meaning.

## Finally

Don't be concerned if you feel you can't memorise words. You'll find the most essential words and phrases on the Quick Reference page at the start of each chapter. You could also try tagging a few pages for other key phrases, or use the notes pages at the back of the book to write your own reminders.

