



Estonia

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Best Places to Stay

- » Pädaste Manor (p375)
- » Villa Hortensia (p354)
- » Toomarahva Turismitalu (p362)
- » Antonius Hotel (p366)
- » Georg Ots Spa Hotel (p374)

Best Places to Eat

- » nAnO (p356)
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- » Altja Kõrts (p362)
- » Sadhu Cafe (p375)
- » Supelsaksad (p372)

Why Go?

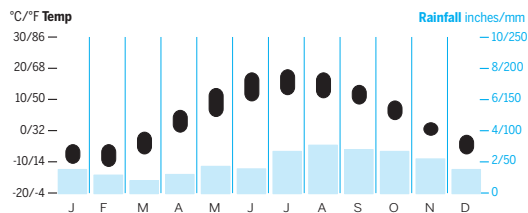
These are heady days for Estonia. In only one generation this diminutive country has shaken off the dead weight of the Soviet era and turned its focus to the West, and to promises of a richer, shinier future. In recent years it's claimed EU membership and rather miraculously joined the eurozone, and now it's celebrating its return to the world stage: proud, independent, economically robust and tech-savvy.

And the world is tuning in to low-key, lovely Estonian charms, an irresistible blend of Eastern European and Nordic. Soaking up Tallinn's long white nights and medieval history, or exploring the country's island-studded coastline, are joys to be savoured. National parks provide plenty of elbow-room, quaint villages evoke a timeless sense of history, and uplifting song festivals celebrate age-old traditions.

The 20th century was full of twists and turns for Estonia, but it's now primed and primed and waiting to shine in the spotlight.

When to Go

Tallinn



April–May See the country shake off winter's gloom.

June–August White nights, beach parties and loads of summer festivals.

December Christmas markets, mulled wine and long cosy nights.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Euro (€)
- » **Language** Estonian
- » **Money** ATMs all over; banks open Mon-Fri
- » **Visas** Not required for citizens of the EU, UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 45,226 sq km
- » **Capital** Tallinn
- » **Telephone country code** 372
- » **Emergency** 112 (ambulance and fire), 110 (police)

Exchange Rates

Australia	A\$1	€0.72
Canada	C\$1	€0.71
Japan	¥100	€0.82
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.54
UK	UK£1	€1.12
USA	US\$1	€0.69

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €40
- » **Two-course meal** €10-15
- » **Museum entrance** €3-5
- » **Beer** €2.50-3
- » **Tallinn transport ticket** €1

Resources

- » **VisitEstonia.com** (www.visitestonia.com)
- » **Tallinn Tourism** (www.tourism.tallinn.ee)
- » **Estonia Public Broadcasting News** (<http://news.err.ee/>)
- » **Estonica** (www.estonica.org)

Connections

Estonia is well connected for visiting the neighbours. It's an easy northern addition to Eastern European roaming, as plenty of daily buses connect with destinations in Latvia and Lithuania. There's the option of following the white nights to Scandinavia – Tallinn has daily ferry connections to/from Stockholm and Helsinki. If you're hearing the siren call of Russia, nightly trains connect Tallinn and Moscow, and plenty of daily buses run between Tallinn or Tartu and St Petersburg.

ITINERARIES

Five days

Hit Tallinn at a weekend to get in your sightseeing and partying, then head east to Lahemaa National Park or southwest to the island of Saaremaa – two (or four) wheels will offer the chance to really explore.

Two weeks

There'll be time to explore Tallinn more deeply; a retreat to Lahemaa National Park or Saaremaa could also be on your agenda. If the weather's fine, opt for fun in the sun in Pärnu, then get back to nature at Soomaa National Park, and finish with a pub crawl with local students in Tartu.

Essential Food & Drink

- » **Vana Tallinn** A syrupy, sweet liqueur of indeterminate origin, best served in coffee, over ice or in champagne. There's also a cream version.
- » **Pork and potatoes** Prepared in a hundred different ways.
- » **Verivorst** (blood sausage) – call it black pudding and it might sound more palatable.
- » **Berries and mushrooms** Seasonal delights freshly picked from the forests – in summer and autumn, respectively.