



Estonia

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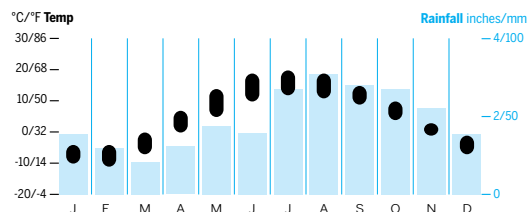
Why Go?

Estonia doesn't have to struggle to find a point of difference; it's completely unique. It shares a similar geography and history with Latvia and Lithuania, but it's culturally very different. Its closest ethnic and linguistic buddy is Finland, yet although they both may love to get naked together in the sauna, 50 years of Soviet rule have separated the two cultures. For the past 300 years Estonia has been linked to Russia, but the two states have as much in common as a barn swallow and a bear (their respective national symbols).

In recent decades, and with a new-found confidence, Estonia has crept from under the Soviet blanket and leapt into the arms of Europe. The love affair is mutual: Europe has fallen for the chocolate-box allure of Tallinn and its Unesco-protected Old Town, while travellers seeking something different are tapping into Estonia's captivating blend of Eastern European and Nordic appeal.

When to Go

Tallinn



Apr & May See the country shake off winter's gloom.

Jun–Aug White nights, beach parties and loads of summer festivals.

Dec Christmas markets, mulled wine and long, cosy nights.

Estonia Highlights

- 1 Embark on a medieval quest for atmospheric restaurants and bars in the history-saturated lanes of Tallinn's **Old Town**.
- 2 Follow in the footsteps
- of Russian royalty within the rarefied confines of Tallinn's leafy **Kadriorg Park** (p165).
- 3 Delve into Estonia's history of foreign occupations in Tallinn's excellent **museums**,

- knowing there's the pay-off of a happy ending.
- 4 Stroll the broad golden sands and genteel streets of **Pärnu** (p173), Estonia's 'summer capital'.

- 5 Further your local education in the museums and bars of the university town of **Tartu** (p170), Estonia's second city.

- 6 Cycle between manor houses and discover your own slice of deserted coast in **Lahemaa National Park** (p170).

