



Estonia

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Best Places to Eat

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Best Places to Stay

- » Tallinn Backpackers (p359)
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- » Hommiku Hostel, Pärnu (p366)

Why Go?

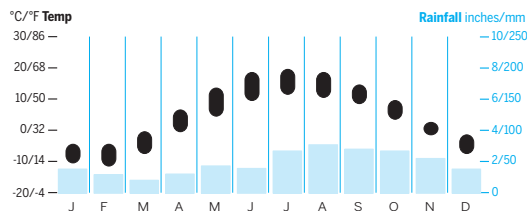
The 20th century was full of twists and turns for Estonia, but it's now primped and primed and waiting to shine in the spotlight.

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 coveted membership of the euro zone, and the country is celebrating its return to the world stage – proud, independent, economically robust and tech-savvy.

And the world is tuning in to the low-key, lovely Estonian charms, an irresistible blend of Eastern European and Nordic. Soaking up Tallinn's long white nights and medieval history, and exploring the country's coastline, studded with islands, 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.

When to Go

Tallinn



Apr & May Beat the summer crowds and see spring sunshine 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.

Connections

Estonia is well connected for visiting the neighbours. It's an easy northern addition to Eastern Europe roaming, as plenty of daily buses connect with the Latvian and Lithuanian capitals. 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 daily buses run between Tallinn/Tartu and St Petersburg.

ITINERARIES

Three Days

Hit Tallinn on a weekend to get in your sightseeing and partying, then join a day trip east to Lahemaa National Park – a bike tour will help blow away the cobwebs.

One Week

There'll be time to explore Tallinn more deeply, then Altja in Lahemaa National Park offers the perfect rustic retreat. If the weather's fine, opt for fun in the sun in Pärnu; 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 & potatoes** Prepared in 100 different ways
- » **Verivorst (blood sausage)** Call it black pudding and it might sound more palatable
- » **Berries & mushrooms** Seasonal delights freshly picked from the forests – in summer and autumn, respectively
- » **Coffee & handmade chocolates** In one of Tallinn's cosy old-town cafes

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** euro (€)
- » **Language** Estonian
- » **Money** ATMs are all over
- » **Visas** Not required for 90-day stays for citizens of the EU, UK, USA, Canada, New Zealand and Australia

Fast Facts

- » **Area** 45,226 sq km
- » **Capital** Tallinn
- » **Country code** 372
- » **Emergency** Ambulance & Fire 112, Police 110

Exchange Rates

| | | |
|-------------|-------|-------|
| Australia | A\$1 | €0.74 |
| Canada | C\$1 | €0.74 |
| Japan | ¥100 | €0.87 |
| New Zealand | NZ\$1 | €0.56 |
| UK | UK£1 | €1.16 |
| USA | US\$1 | €0.72 |

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €40
- » **Two-course evening meal** €10 to €15
- » **Museum entrance** €3 to €5
- » **Beer** €2.50 to €3 for 500mL
- » **Tallinn transport ticket** €1

Resources

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