



Estonia

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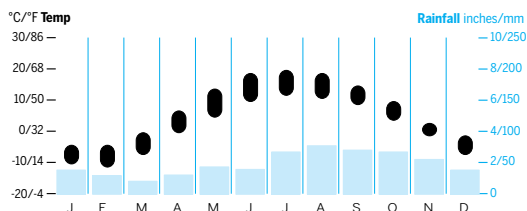
Why Go?

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 may love to get naked together in the sauna, 50 years of Soviet rule have separated the two. For the past 300 years Estonia's 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.

AT A GLANCE

- » **Currency** Euro (€)
- » **Language** Estonian
- » **Money** ATMs all over
- » **Visas** Not required 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	€0.82
Canada	C\$1	€0.77
Japan	¥100	€0.83
New Zealand	NZ\$1	€0.65
UK	UK£1	€1.18
USA	US\$1	€0.78

Set Your Budget

- » **Budget hotel room** €45
- » **Two-course meal** €8–15
- » **Museum entrance** €3–5
- » **Beer** €2–3
- » **Tallinn–Tartu bus ticket** €11

Resources

- » **Visit Estonia**
(www.visitestonia.com)
- » **Tallinn Tourism**
(www.tourism.tallinn.ee)
- » **Estonica**
(www.estonica.org)

Connections

Estonia is well connected for visiting its neighbours. It's an easy northern addition to eastern European roaming, as plenty of daily buses connect with Riga and Vilnius, the Latvian and Lithuanian capitals. There's the option of following the white nights to Scandinavia – Tallinn has daily ferry connections to and from Stockholm and Helsinki. If you're hearing the siren call of Russia, daily trains connect Tallinn with Moscow or St Petersburg, and plenty of buses run to St Petersburg from Tallinn and Tartu.

ITINERARIES

Three Days

Hit Tallinn at a weekend to get in your sightseeing and partying. Get your bearings by heading to Raekoja plats to climb up the town hall tower. Follow this with an in-depth exploration of the Old Town streets down below: museums, shops, churches, courtyards – whatever takes your fancy. That night treat yourself to a medieval feast at Olde Hansa. The following day, do what most tourists don't – step out of Old Town. Explore Kadriorg Park for a first-rate greenery and art fix, and/or consider a cycling tour. Finish with a walk around Kalamaja district and dinner at F-hoone. After the weekend, head northeast to Lahemaa National Park – two (or four) wheels will offer the chance to really explore.

One Week

There'll be time to explore Tallinn more deeply, then Altja in Lahemaa National Park offers a rustic retreat. If the weather's fine, opt for beachside fun in Pärnu; finish with a pub crawl in student-savvy 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 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.
- » **Coffee and handmade chocolates** In one of Tallinn's cosy cafes.