



Estonia

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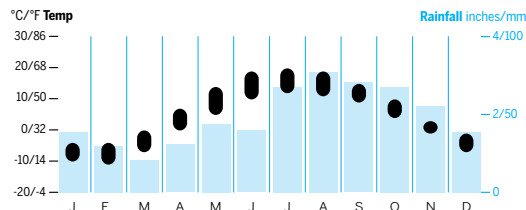
Why Go?

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. 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 Tallinn (p330)

Embarking on a medieval quest for atmospheric restaurants and hidden bars in the history-saturated lanes.

2 Lahemaa National Park

(p338) Wandering the forest paths, bog boardwalks, abandoned beaches and manor-house halls.

3 Tartu (p339)

Furthering your education among the museums and student bars of Estonia's second city.

4 Saaremaa

(p342) Unwinding among the windmills and exploring the island's castles, churches, cliffs, coast and crater.

5 Muhu (p342)

Hopping over for frozen-in-island-time Koguva village and the gastronomic delights of Pädaste Manor.

6 Pärnu (p341)

Strolling the golden
sands and genteel
streets of Estonia's
'summer capital'.

7 Otepää (p340)

Getting back to nature, even if the snow's a no-show, at the 'winter capital'.

