

EUROPE · HISTORY · ARCHITECTURE · CITY BREAKS · HIKING · ISLANDS



Estonia

Tallinn's walled Old Town is one of northern Europe's most complete medieval cities, yet within an hour or two you can be walking boardwalks across raised bogs in Lahemaa or cycling past windmills on Saaremaa. Estonia is compact, efficient and almost cashless, and summer's long white nights make it a fine short-break or road-trip destination.



Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Estonia and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 11 August 2026.

 CAPITAL Tallinn	 CURRENCY Euro (EUR) £1 ≈ €1.19	 LANGUAGE Estonian, Russian English	 BEST TIME Jun–Aug
 DAILY BUDGET £50–£220 ££ Moderate	 PLUGS Type C, F 230V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 2h 50m direct ~£60–£220 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+2 standard time

Estonia is small, flat and forested, with a long Baltic coastline and more than 2,000 islands. Most first trips begin in Tallinn, whose Old Town of merchants' houses, church spires and defensive towers sits beneath the Toompea hill. From there, Lahemaa National Park's manors and fishing villages make an easy day out, and the university city of Tartu is about two hours away by train. A week allows a loop west to Pärnu's beach and the islands of Saaremaa and Muhu, or east to the Old Believer villages strung along the shore of Lake Peipus.

The pace is calm and the infrastructure excellent: trains and buses run on time, wi-fi is everywhere and you can pay by card for almost anything. Prices sit below Scandinavia but above much of central Europe, with Tallinn's Old Town noticeably dearer than Tartu or the islands. Summer brings cruise passengers to the capital and long, light evenings; winter is dark, cold and quiet, though snowy forests and Christmas markets have their own appeal. Visitors are often surprised by how reserved Estonians seem at first, and how readily they open up in a sauna.

Top 5 highlights

1

HISTORY

Tallinn Old Town

A UNESCO-listed walled town of Hanseatic merchants' houses, guild halls and church spires. Climb Toompea for views over red roofs, see the Gothic Town Hall, and walk sections of the medieval wall and its towers.

2

NATURE

Lahemaa National Park

Estonia's oldest national park, on the north coast an hour east of Tallinn. Combine the Viru Bog boardwalk with restored manor houses at Palmse and Sagadi and the boulder-strewn fishing villages of Altja and Käsmu.

3

CULTURE

Saaremaa

Estonia's largest island, reached by ferry, has juniper heaths, the windmills of Angla, the Kaali meteorite crater and the well-preserved episcopal castle in Kuressaare. Pair it with neighbouring Muhu's thatched farmsteads.

4

ADVENTURE

Soomaa National Park

A wilderness of rivers and raised bogs where spring meltwater floods forests and roads, a phenomenon locals call the 'fifth season'. Explore by canoe or traditional dugout boat, or try bog-shoeing in summer.

5

BEACH

Pärnu

Estonia's 'summer capital' has a long, shallow sandy beach, a spa heritage dating to the nineteenth century, wooden villas and a busy July and August calendar of concerts and festivals.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Tallinn

≈ 600,000 people

Beyond the Old Town, explore the converted factories of Telliskivi, the wooden houses of Kalamaja, Kadriorg's baroque palace and park, and the maritime museum in the Seaplane Harbour's concrete hangars.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Tartu

≈ 100,000 people

Estonia's intellectual heart, home to a university founded in 1632, the hands-on AHHA science centre and the Estonian National Museum, housed in a striking building on a former Soviet airfield.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Narva

≈ 53,000 people

A largely Russian-speaking border town facing Ivangorod's fortress across the river, with a restored Hermann Castle and Soviet-era blocks; interesting for its frontier atmosphere rather than its looks.

Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Estonia

Best time: **Jun–Aug**.

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

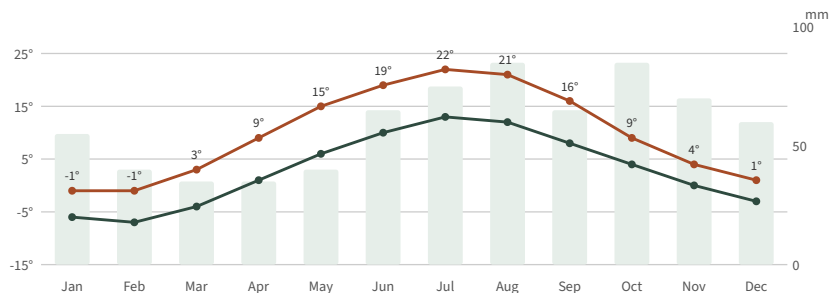
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Tallinn

— High °C — Low °C ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Jun	Jaanipäev (Midsummer) On 23–24 June Estonians head to the countryside for bonfires, singing, beer and grilled sausages, marking both midsummer and Victory Day; many businesses close.
Jul	Viljandi Folk Music Festival Four days in late July when the small town of Viljandi fills with folk musicians from Estonia and beyond, playing on the castle hills and in pubs.
Nov–Dec	Tallinn Christmas Market Town Hall Square fills with wooden stalls, a tall Christmas tree, mulled glögi and blood sausage from late November into the new year.

How much does Estonia cost?

SHOESTRING £50 per person / day ≈ €59.52 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £110 per person / day ≈ €131 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £220 per person / day ≈ €262 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
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Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Mulgikapsad Sauerkraut stewed slowly with fatty pork and pearl barley, a hearty dish from the Mulgimaa region of southern Estonia, usually served with boiled potatoes.	Kiluvõileib Open sandwich of dark rye bread topped with spiced Baltic sprats, boiled egg and herbs; a staple of cafés, bars and celebrations.	Kama A finely ground mix of roasted barley, rye, oat and pea flour, stirred into kefir or buttermilk for breakfast and also used in desserts.
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Getting around

Elron trains link Tallinn with Tartu, Narva and Viljandi, and comfortable coaches from Lux Express and others fill the gaps, with tickets on [tpilet.ee](#). Car ferries cross from Virtsu to Muhu for Saaremaa, and from Rohuküla to Hiiumaa; book summer slots on [praamid.ee](#). Hire a car for Lahemaa and Soomaa. In Tallinn, trams and buses are cheap, and Bolt, an Estonian company, handles taxis.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE  C F 230V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 112 (ambulance, fire, police) Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +372	TIME ZONE UTC+2 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

DRIVING

On the right

TIPPING

Not obligatory, but around 10% is appreciated in restaurants for good service; round up taxi fares and leave small change in cafés.

ETIQUETTE

Estonians value privacy, punctuality and quiet; small talk is minimal and loud conversation on public transport is frowned upon. Remove shoes in homes, and in saunas follow your host's lead.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Lennart Meri Tallinn Airport (TLL), Tallinn

Visas & entry for Estonia

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Estonia, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period without a visa. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Estonia are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Rabies

Tick-borne encephalitis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Estonia

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Thu 24 Dec 2026

Christmas Eve

Fri 25 Dec 2026

Christmas Day

Sat 26 Dec 2026	Second Day of Christmas
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Wed 24 Feb 2027	Independence Day
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Sun 28 Mar 2027	Easter Sunday
Sat 1 May 2027	May Day
Sun 16 May 2027	Pentecost
Wed 23 Jun 2027	Victory Day
Thu 24 Jun 2027	Midsummer Day
Fri 20 Aug 2027	Independence Restoration Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Estonian

ENGLISH	ESTONIAN	SAY IT
Hello	Tere	<i>TEH-reh</i>
Thank you	Aitäh	<i>EYE-tah</i>
Please	Palun	<i>PAH-loon</i>
Excuse me	Vabandage	<i>VAH-bahn-dah-geh</i>
How much is this?	Kui palju see maksab?	<i>kwee PAHL-yoo seh MAHK-sahb</i>

Know before you go

Cruise ships crowd Tallinn's Old Town from mid-morning in summer; explore early or in the evening and spend the middle of the day in Kalamaja, Telliskivi or Kadriorg.

Book car-ferry slots to Saaremaa and Hiiumaa online at praamid.ee for summer weekends and Midsummer, when queues at Virtsu and Rohuküla can stretch for hours.

Cards and phone payments are accepted almost everywhere, even for a coffee, so you will rarely need cash. Ferries to Helsinki take about two hours, making an easy day trip.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.