**Breathe the Cleanest Air In The World**

A potpourri of digital Infrastructure

Estonia gives you the time and space to immerse yourself in the scenery, history, cuisine, and local community. Music is the heartbeat of the nation. TravelJingles in a conversation with H.E. Ms. Marje Luup, Ambassador of Estonia to India.

**The Lahemaa National Park is one of the most famous places to visit in Estonia. Tell us about the three must-do things.**

Lahemaa is a small magical place where nature and humans live in harmony, it is home to the best that Estonian nature has to offer. Lahemaa covers Estonia's northernmost capes and islands. In the space of 725 km2, you will find lush native forests, wetlands stretching to the horizon, and both rocky and sandy beaches. Lahemaa has been recognized for the sustainable development of nature tourism, it has the largest deposit of erratic boulders in Europe. Lahemaa is home to many wild animals - moose, wild boar, bears, and lynx. The northern coast attracts many migratory birds every year. The National Park is crossed by several well-signposted long-distance hiking trails and several astonishing old manor houses are located here. The best time to visit is spring and summer.

Three must-do things in Lahemaa are discovering the nature and enjoying the beaches, bird and wildlife watching and getting a sauna experience.

**Sustainability or eco-friendly mindset has long been a part of the Estonian ethos. Comment.**

In Estonia sustainable living is a timeless tradition, not a trend. Estonians cherish the nature, we all have our ways of reaching out: a cottage in the countryside with a sauna, jogging along green paths, berry picking in forests, bog walks, surfing, kayaking and fishing.

World Cleanup Day is a world-changing Estonian initiative, one of the biggest civic movements of our time, uniting 180 countries for a cleaner planet. This began in Estonia in 2008 with 50,000 people cleaning up the entire country in just five hours. Our capital Tallinn earned the prestigious title of European Green Capital 2023, embracing it with pride.

**Hearty black bread is an Estonian staple food. Tell us about the gastronomy of the country.**

Estonians have a specific relationship with food, and part of that is knowing where it comes from. The more local, the better. We enjoy harvesting and preserving our own food. The menu changes with the seasons.

“Black bread” is a dark rye bread with a thin crispy crust. It is quite healthy, a range of options is available in local markets. Other Estonian staples include potatoes and pork. Estonians also eat lots of fish and dairy products like cheese and yogurt.

Estonia is a top destination for foodies - 35 restaurants in Estonia earned a place in 2024 MICHELIN Guide.

**The five pillars of Estonian culture: music, sauna, nature, food, and innovation forms the culture of Estonia. What makes it so special?**

Estonian culture is a blend of medieval and modern, handmade and high-tech, Baltic and Nordic. We have many records on World Heritage list of UNESCO, among others the Tallinn Old Town and the over 150 years’ old tradition of Song and Dance festivals (30,000 singers and 10,000 dancers).

Estonian sauna tradition remains strong, a smoke sauna is a unique experience. Our food is a combination of regional cuisines made of pure local products. Estonia is a great nature holiday destination, with clean air, free campsites, beautiful bogs, and diverse wildlife. There are more than 2000 islands, most of them inhabited.

**Estonia is considered the potpourri to the world's most sophisticated digital infrastructures. Comment.**

Estonia is well-known for its efficient e-governance, cybersecurity and the use of blockchain technology. We offer several progressive platforms like e-Residency, Startup Visa Program, Digital Nomad Visa to create an interface with our dynamic ecosystem. Despite its small size, Estonia is a heavyweight in the European tech and start-up ecosystem. We produce more start-ups and unicorns per capita than any other country in Europe. Estonia has been the birthplace of 10 unicorns – to name a few, Skype was developed by Estonian engineers; Wise (previously Transferwise) facilitates transferring foreign currency, Bolt is an analogue of Uber and Ola, and software developer Playtech.

**Tallinn’s old town is a UNESCO World Heritage site. Comment.**

Tallinn is one of Northern Europe's best-preserved medieval cities and was added to UNESCO's list back in 1997. The origins of Tallinn date back to the 13th century, when a castle was built there by the crusading knights of the Teutonic Order. As part of the influential Hanseatic League, Tallinn was home to wealthy merchants who left their mark on the city's architecture. The city's iconic skyline is dotted with church spires and red-roofed towers. Professional photographers and amateur Instagrammers will find endless options for the perfect backdrop, while history buffs can spend hours, even days, working their way through Tallinn's museums.

**The country is home to 200+ ethenic groups & 220+ mother tongues.**

According to 2021 census, there are people of 211 ethnic nationalities living in Estonia. The official language, Estonian, belongs to Finno-Ugric language family, one of the few language groups in Europe not of Indo-European origin. Estonian is one of the smallest national languages in the world. 2021 census shows that 243 different mother tongues are spoken in Estonia. Estonian is spoken as a mother tongue by 67% and as a foreign language by 17% of the population. Therefore, a total of 84% of the population speaks Estonian. An estimated 76% of Estonia’s population speak at least one foreign language.

**Winter is fun time in the country. Tell us about the winter activities Estonia offers.**

Cross-country skiing, post-sauna swims in icy ponds, cozy firesides, and twinkling Christmas lights makes the winter special in Estonia. Once the weather gets colder, seasonal ice rinks and skiing trails pop up all over Estonia, that’s where many Estonians spend their time during the winters.

Tallinn's world-famous Christmas market on the Town Hall Square is one of Europe's best Christmas markets. Snowflakes float down over the red rooftops and cobblestone streets. Candles illuminate cafe windows, beckoning you in for a cup of hot mulled wine. Though the nights may be dark, winter is when you find Tallinn at its most enchanting.

Mountains or beaches…**one word.** Beaches **☺** The highest “mountain” of Estonia is 318 m high.