



## Estonia

**Formal name:**  
Republic of Estonia

**In Estonian:**  
Eesti Vabariik

**Flag:**  
Three equal horizontal bands of blue, black, and white.



*Adopted 1918 at independence from Russia*



**Population:** 1,300,000 (2023 est).  
The same as in 1970.

**Population Trends:** Growth rate is minus 1%. Declining due to ageing and emigration.

**Literacy:** 99.9%.

**Median Age:** 44 (USA: 39).

**Life Expectancy at Birth:** 78 years.

**Capital and largest city:** Tallinn.

Best-preserved medieval city in Northern Europe.



**Tallinn population:** 440,000.

**Public transport:** Free for all residents of Tallinn.

**Wifi:** Free throughout Tallinn.

**High tech city:** Most well-known product is Skype.

**Land Area:** 17,500 sq miles  
(2X size of New Jersey)

**Mainland plus 2,200 islands.**

**Coastline:** 2,357 miles.

**Subdivisions:**

15 counties.

15 towns and

64 rural

municipalities.



**Time Zone:** UTC+2 = 7 hours ahead of New York.

**Altitude:** Highest 318 mt = 1,043 ft.

**Land Use:**

– Agriculture: 22% (2/3 crops, 1/3 pasture). USA = 45%.

– Forest: 52%. USA = 33%.

– Other: 26%. USA = 22%.

## Climate

**Cool summers.** Sun and clouds.

**Severe winters:** Long, freezing, snowy, mostly cloudy.

**Warmest month: July.** 64° F avg.

**Coldest month: Feb.** 25° F avg.

**Sunniest:** July. 313 hours sunshine.

**Cloudiest month:** December. Just 21 hours sunshine.

**Language:** Estonian (official).

- 84% of people speak Estonian.
  - Estonian is first language: 69%.
  - Russian is first language: 30%
- 54% speak English.**

*I spent two weeks in Estonia in July.*

*Veetsin juulis kaks nädalat Eestis.*

## Ethnic Groups - Residents (2021):

Estonians 69%

Russians 24%

Ukrainians 2%

Belarusians 1%

Others 4%

**Plus refugees from Ukraine in Estonia April 2023: 71,215 Temporary?**

## Religion (self-declared 2021):

No religion 71%

Russian Orthodox 16%

Lutheran 8%

Others 5%

**Driving:** Right.

**Internet country code:** .ee

**Illicit drugs:** Significant problem both as user and shipper.

**Citizenship:** One parent must be Estonian citizen. No dual citizenship.

**Currency:**  
Euro.



**Head of State:** President Alar Karis (since 2021). Elected by Parliament. Can veto laws. Represents Estonia in foreign relations.

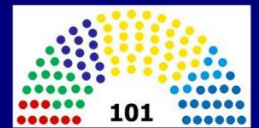


**Head of Government:** Prime Minister Kaja Kallas (since 2021). Leader of majority party in Parliament. Chief Executive of government.



**Parliament = Riigikogu.**

- Unicameral.
- 101 members. 4-year terms. **71 men, 30 women.**
- Historically, always coalition governments. **Last election 2023 six parties got seats in Riigikogu.**
- Constitution allows laws to be passed by public referendum. **Only one ever was to join EU (2003).**



**Estonian Parliament Building aka Toompea Castle**  
Baroque. Built 1767-1773.



**Riigikogu (Parliament) Meeting Chamber**  
Free guided tours of the building are offered 11am Tues and Thurs during summer.



## Estonia is heavily into e-government.

- 99% of matters are online.
- Local elections are 100% internet voting since 2005.
- More than half of parliament voting is internet.



“The role model for governments should be Estonia, a country where almost every bureaucratic task can be done online.” *NY Times*

## Estonia has pursued close relations with Western countries.

### Member:

- NATO.
- OECD.
- European Union.
- Eurozone (use Euro).
- Schengen Area (passport-free travel in EU).



## Feb 2024: Russia puts Estonian PM on criminal "wanted list".

PM Kallas dismisses it as Moscow's "familiar scare tactic."

Russia puts the leader of NATO member Estonia on a wanted list over the removal of Soviet-era monuments



1/27/24 - Estonia's Prime Minister Kaja Kallas speaks with the media on the arrival for a NATO summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2024. Estonian Prime Minister Kallas was put on a wanted list in Russia because of her efforts to remove Soviet war monuments in the Baltic states, officials said Sunday on Telegram. (AP Photo/Markus Soderstrom)

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Updated 11:45 PM EST, February 23, 2024

https://apnews.com/article/russia-estonia-kallas-wanted-list-46a3074892eae6142eef1a3a4a23e6

Share

## Estonia History - 1

**Before 1200s:** Pagan tribes.

**1208-mid-1300s:** Crusades. Eventual Danish control.

**Mid-1300s to 1561:** German control.

**1561-1710:** Part of Swedish Empire.

**1710-1917:** Russia defeated Sweden in a war in 1710. Estonia became part of Russian Empire.

## Estonia History - 2

**1917:** Russian Revolution.

**1918** Estonia declared independence 24 Feb 1918. War with Russia. Estonia won. Russia left Estonia.

**Feb 24 is Estonian Independence Day!**

**1939:** Russia invaded. Took over Estonia again. Russian rule not recognized by US or West.

## Estonia History - 3

**1940:** Estonia declared neutrality. But Stalinist Russia took control in 1940.

**1941:** Nazi Germany took control.

**1944:** Russia bombed Tallin. Retook control.

**1944-1991:** Estonia part of Soviet Union. "Estonian SSR".

**1949:** Russia shipped to Siberia 20,000 Estonians opposed to Russian control.

## Estonia History - 4

**1988:** Parliament of Soviet-controlled Estonia "sovereignty declaration".

**1990:** Changed name to Republic of Estonia.

**1991:** Referendum: 90% backed independence. 10% against. Declared independence from Russia Aug 1991.

**1991** Soviet Union collapsed. "Republic of Estonia" again.

## Estonia's Economy

*World Bank Data 2022*

GDP: **\$38.1 billion.**

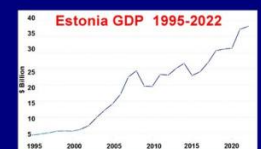
GDP Per Capita nominal: **\$26,905.**

GDP Per Capita PPP: **\$46,697.**

Public debt: 24% of GDP:

– **Average all countries: 67%.**

– **USA: 126%.**



## Energy

**Natural gas:** Russian imports ended 2022. Now comes from Finland and Lithuania.

**Electricity:** Local shale oil produces > 70% of electricity. High pollution.

*3 Baltic countries committed to leave Russian electricity grid early 2025 latest.*

**Crude oil:** No reserves. Petroleum is imported, mostly from Russia.

# Tallinn

Pop. 2023 est. 450,000  
Estonia total 1,300,000

## Town Hall Square Marketplace and Center of Tallinn since 13th Century



## Town Hall Square

- Cobblestone Streets.
- Buildings from 14th c. Onwards.
- Dozens of Cafes.



## Town Hall

- Built 1404.
- Oldest town hall in Northern Europe.
- Gothic arches, precious artworks, tapestries.



## Estonia History Museum Great Guild Hall Gothic - 1410.



## Estonia History Museum 1410 Guild Hall



## Estonia History Museum





European Herring Gull  
Found throughout Europe.

Year-round  
in Estonia



Balti Jaama Market.  
Next to train station  
300 traders on 3 floors  
Ground floor is food  
Other floors are antiques,  
housewares, clothes.



Balti Jaama Market  
Berries in season in July. Goose berries

Price in Euros For 1 kilo = 2.2 lbs Where from



Balti Jaama Market  
Salmon = lõhe



Balti Jaama Market  
Latikas = Bream



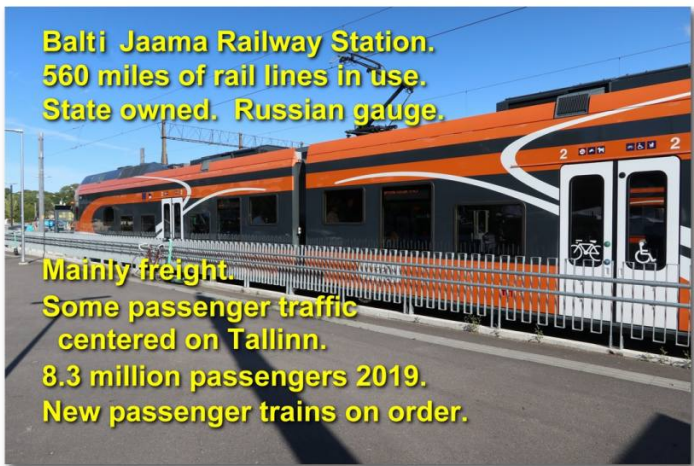
Balti Jaama Market

Pig's tongue



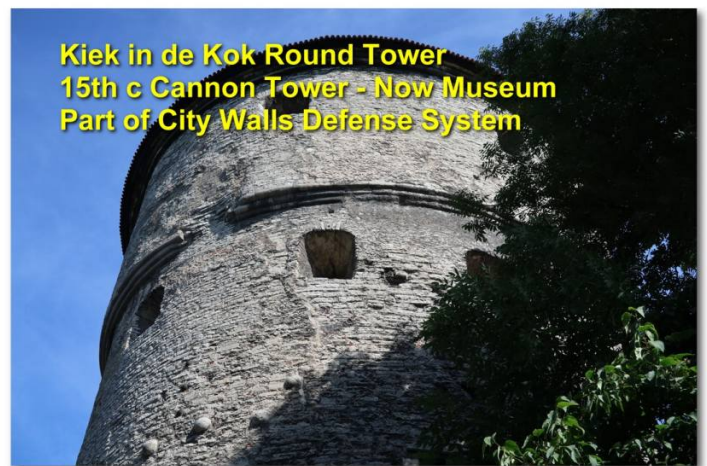
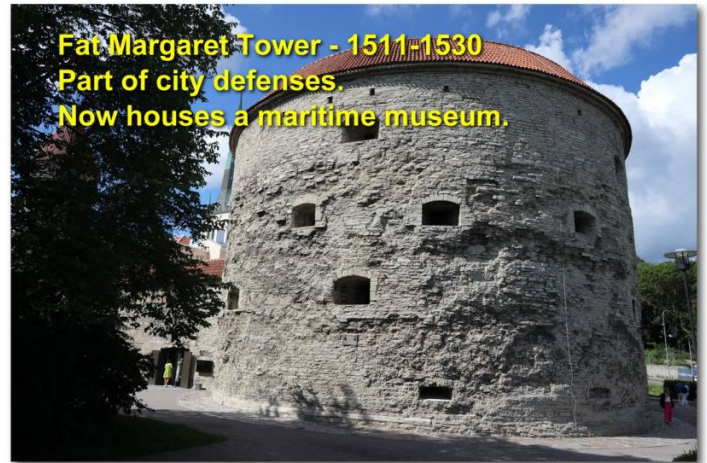
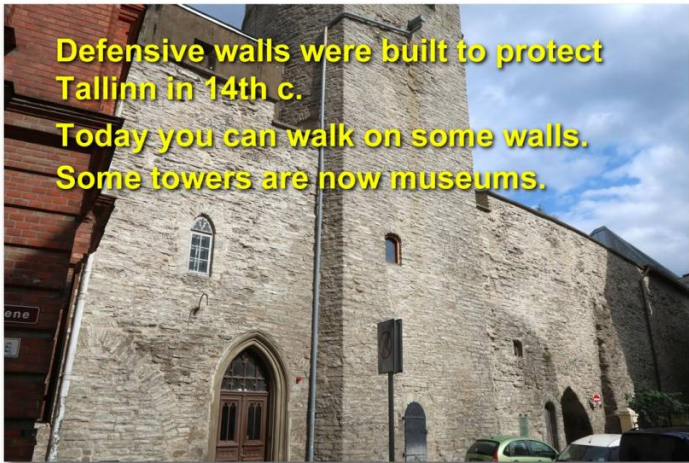
Canned Estonian Wild Game

Available in all supermarkets in Tallin  
(higher prices at souvenir shops)



Balti Jaama Railway Station.  
560 miles of rail lines in use.  
State owned. Russian gauge.

Mainly freight.  
Some passenger traffic centered on Tallinn.  
8.3 million passengers 2019.  
New passenger trains on order.



**Kadriorg Palace - 1718**  
Russian imperial summer palace.  
Inspired by Italian palaces of the time.



Houses the Estonian Art Museum's collection of foreign works from 16th to the 20th c.

**Kadriorg Palace - 1718**  
**Ballroom.**



**Kumu Art Museum**  
In Kadriorg Park.  
Estonian art: from the Academic Style to Modernism,  
from Soviet Era art to contemporary art.



Art museum = kunstmuuseum = kumu

**KUMU - Painting of Tallinn in Mid-19th c**



**KUMU Art Museum**



**Mikkel Museum in Kadriorg Park.**  
Western and Chinese art.  
Collected by Estonian Johannes Mikkel.



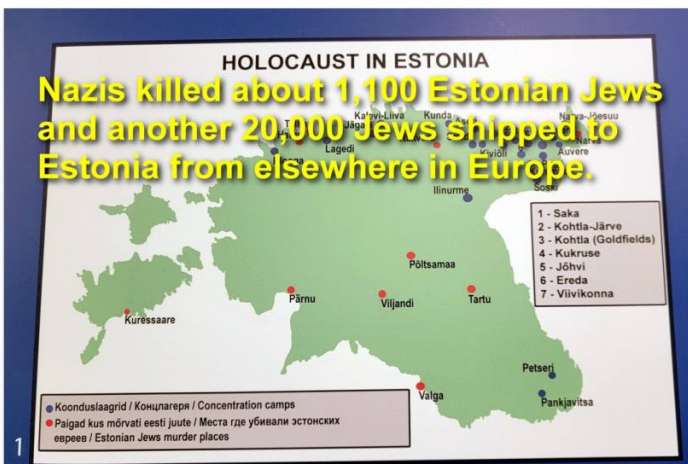
**Mikkel Museum in Kadriorg Park**



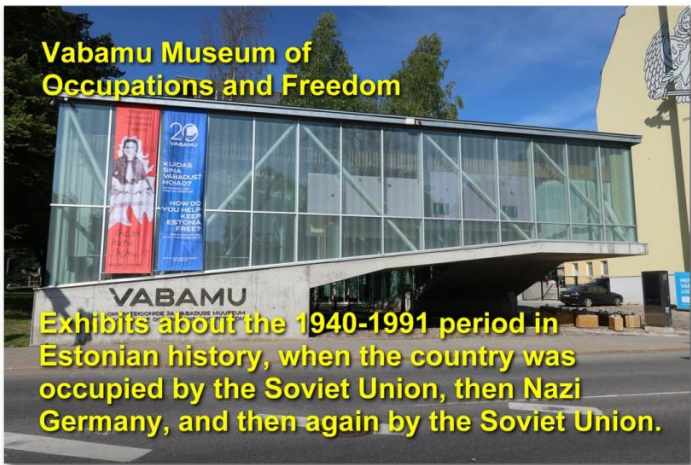
**Maarjamäe Castle - 1872**  
Now Estonian History Museum  
Former Summer Palace  
of an Estonian Aristocrat



10-minute taxi from central Tallinn







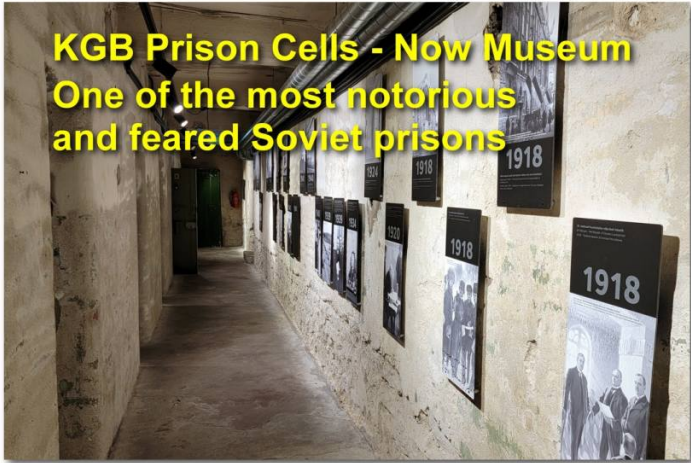
### Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom

Exhibits about the 1940-1991 period in Estonian history, when the country was occupied by the Soviet Union, then Nazi Germany, and then again by the Soviet Union.



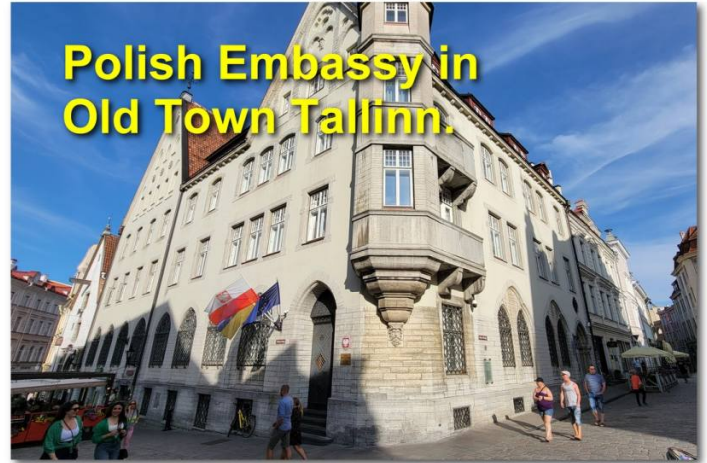
### Vabamu Museum of Occupations and Freedom

Boat used by Estonians to escape to Sweden and Finland during WWII



### KGB Prison Cells - Now Museum

One of the most notorious and feared Soviet prisons



### Polish Embassy in Old Town Tallinn.



### Nightly (and noisy) protesters at the Russian Embassy in Tallinn.

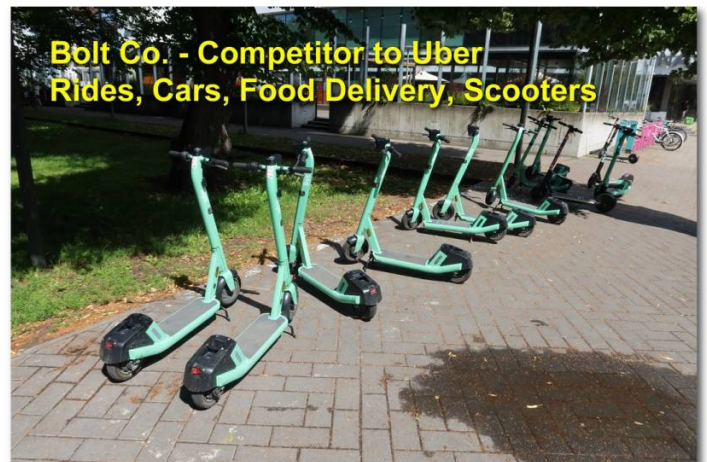


### Because Tallinn is far north, in July still daylight at 10pm and sun is rising 03:30am (this photo).



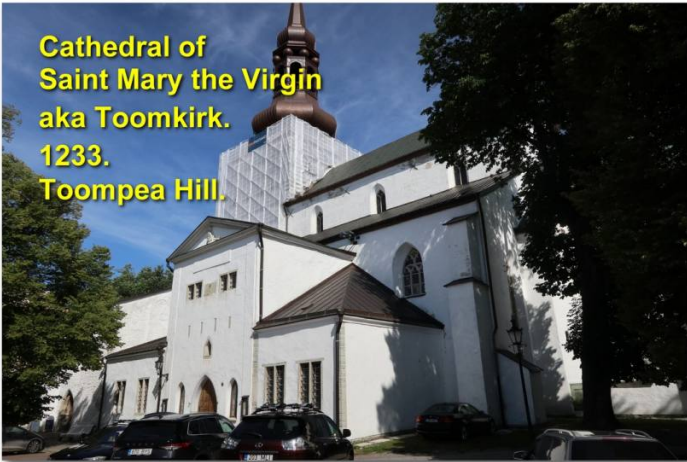
### Estonian License Plate

Also Latvia and Ukraine



### Bolt Co. - Competitor to Uber

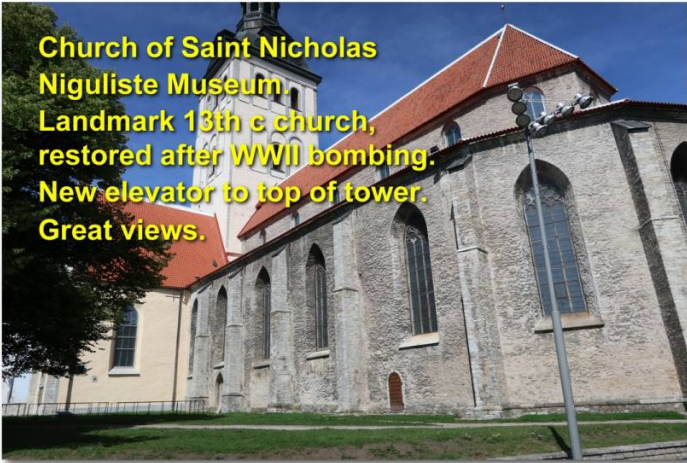
Rides, Cars, Food Delivery, Scooters



Cathedral of Saint Mary the Virgin aka Toomkirk. 1233. Toompea Hill.



Toomkirk Gravestones 13-18th c. Coats of Arms 17-20th c.



Church of Saint Nicholas Niguliste Museum. Landmark 13th c church, restored after WWII bombing. New elevator to top of tower. Great views.



View from St Nicholas Church Tower

Toompea Hill



View from St Nicholas Church Tower

Baltic Sea

Ministry of Justice

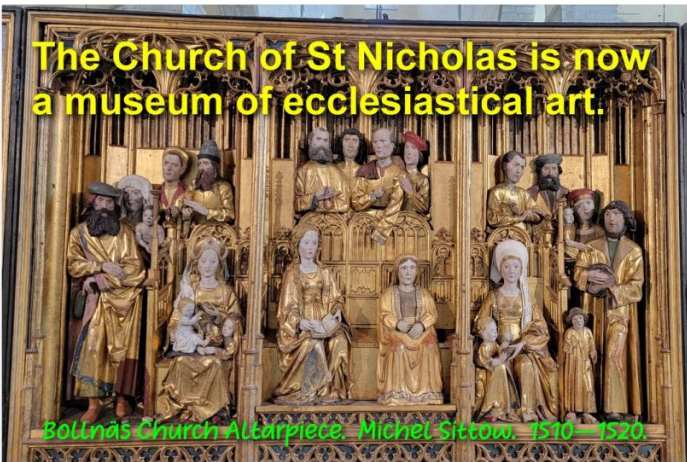


View from St Nicholas Church Tower

Parliament

Herrmann Tower

Aleksander Nevsky Cathedral



The Church of St Nicholas is now a museum of ecclesiastical art.

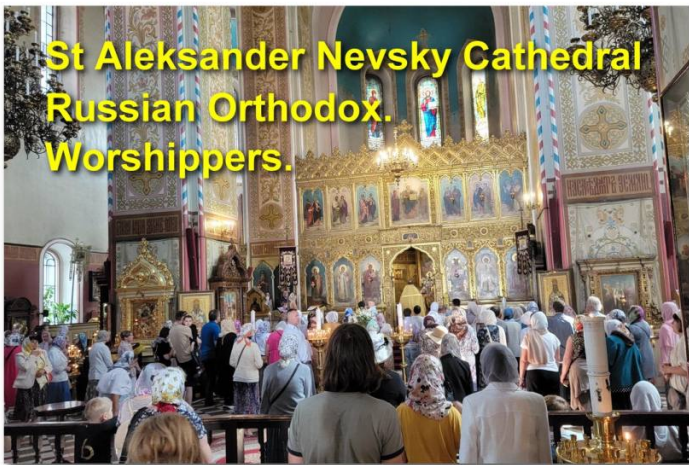
Bollnäs Church Altarpiece, Michel Sittow, 1540-1520.



St Aleksander Nevsky Cathedral Russian Orthodox. 1894-1900.

Controversial today because it symbolizes Russian domination of Estonia.

Directly across from Estonian Parliament.



**St Aleksander Nevsky Cathedral**  
Russian Orthodox.  
Worshippers.



**St Olaf's Church**  
12th c.  
Can climb tower.  
Russians used  
it as KGB  
Broadcast Tower.

Since 1950: Baptist.  
Tallest Medieval building in Europe.  
252 steps to viewing platform atop tower.

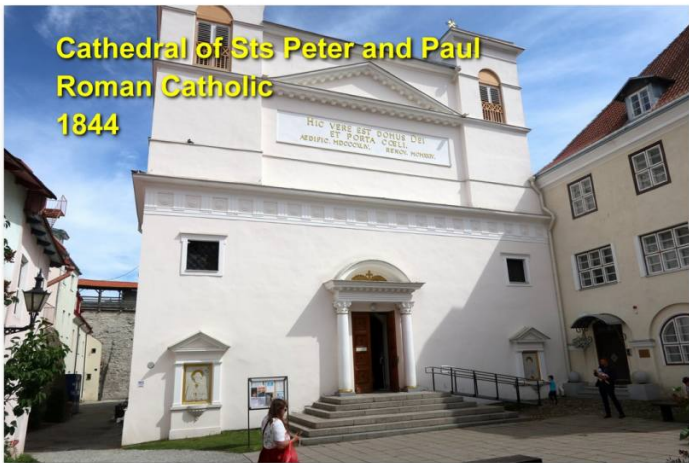


**Church of the Holy Spirit**  
Püha Vaimu Kogudus.  
14th c.

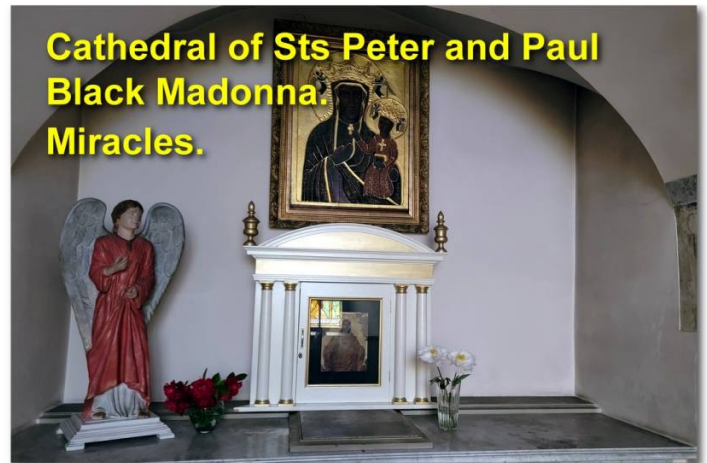
Don't let the plain exterior put you off!  
Pay the €2 and go in.



**St John's Church**  
At Freedom Square.  
Neogothic - 1867.  
Lutheran



**Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul**  
Roman Catholic  
1844



**Cathedral of Sts Peter and Paul**  
Black Madonna.  
Miracles.



**St Nikolas Church**  
Orthodox  
Built 1820-1827.



**Ruins of St Catherine's Convent**  
Dominican - 1236



**Tallinn City Life Museum  
Linnamuuseum**  
In a 14th c merchant's house.  
History of Tallinn from its  
founding to 1991.  
Exhibits of historic  
porcelains, ceramics,  
copper, brass, and pewter.



**Tallinn City Life Museum  
Linnamuuseum**  
Copperware



**The Three Sisters  
Medieval Merchants' Houses.**  
Built 1362.



**Toompea Post Office**  
Across from Parliament.  
Built in 1600s as private home.



**Tallinn Old Town**



**Tallinn Old Town**  
Building dated 1666



**Street Musicians**  
Taamsaare Park



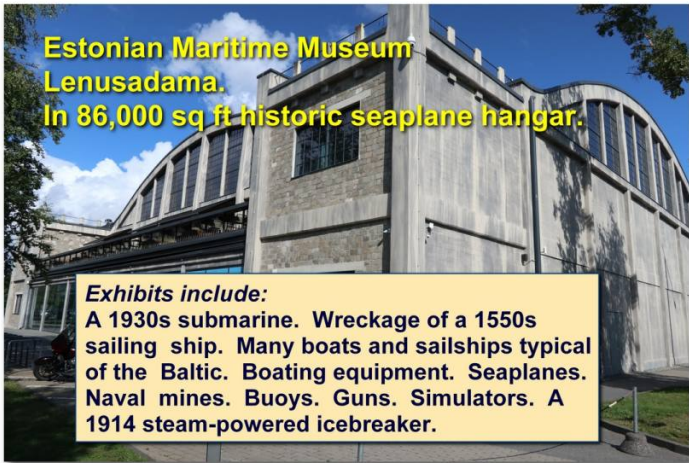
**Flower Market**  
Next to Viru Gate



**Raeapteek - Town Hall Pharmacy**  
Continuously operating in the same building since early 15th c.



**Raeapteek - Town Hall Pharmacy**  
Crocodile hanging from ceiling symbolizes mysterious benefits of drugs.

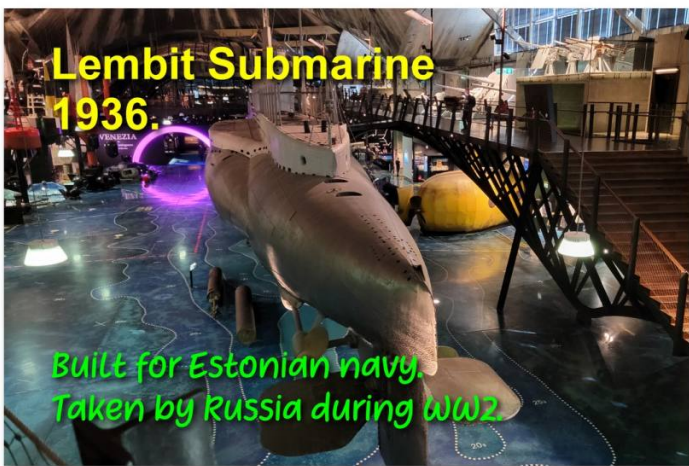


**Estonian Maritime Museum**  
Lenusadama.  
In 86,000 sq ft historic seaplane hangar.

**Exhibits include:**  
A 1930s submarine. Wreckage of a 1550s sailing ship. Many boats and sailships typical of the Baltic. Boating equipment. Seaplanes. Naval mines. Buoys. Guns. Simulators. A 1914 steam-powered icebreaker.



**Wreckage of Sailing Ship**  
Maasilinn  
Built 1550s in Estonia.  
Sunk 1560s.  
Discovered 1985.



**Lembit Submarine**  
1936.

Built for Estonian navy.  
Taken by Russia during WW2.



Onboard the Lembit 1930s Submarine



**Suur Tõll Icebreaker**  
Built in Germany for Russian Empire 1914.  
Steam operated.

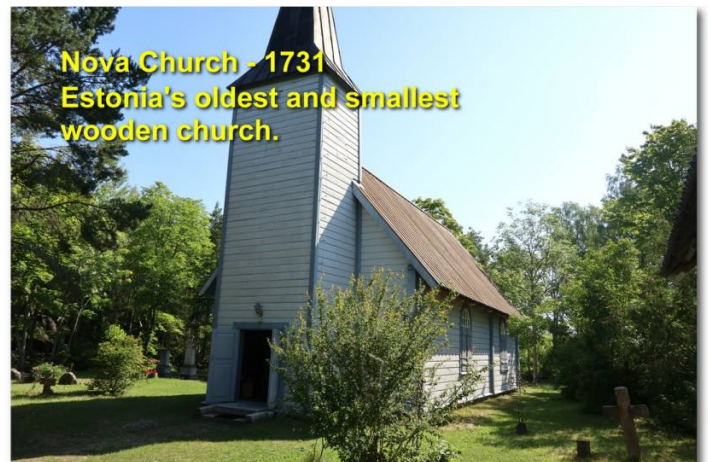
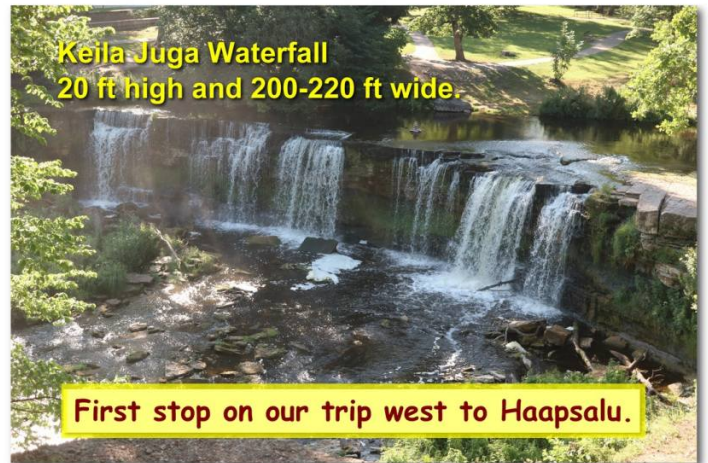


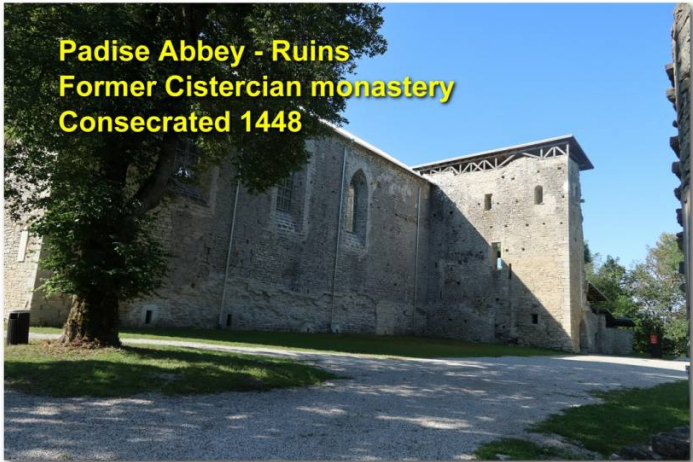
**Estonia Open Air Museum**  
15-minute Drive from Center of Tallinn  
Open Year-Round

14 farms with 74 17th-20th c buildings.  
Estonian farming and fishing communities.  
School. Blacksmith's forge. Windmill.  
Country store. Fire station. Chapel.

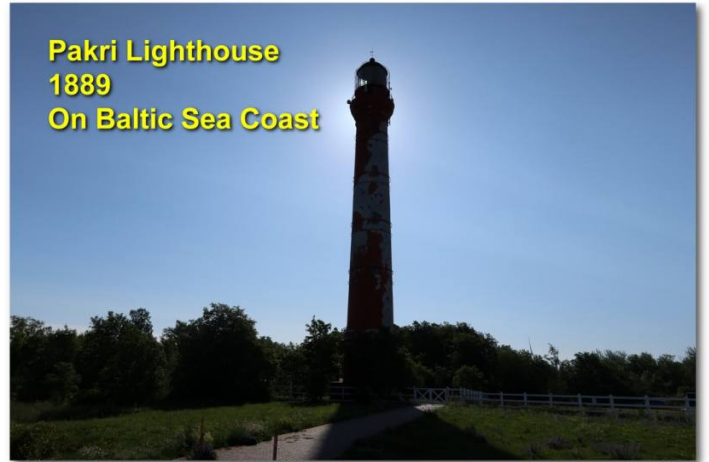


# Places Other Than Tallinn





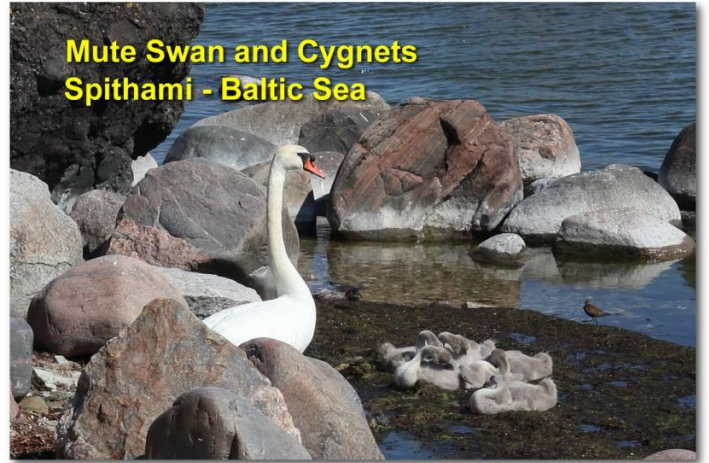
**Padise Abbey - Ruins**  
Former Cistercian monastery  
Consecrated 1448



**Pakri Lighthouse**  
1889  
On Baltic Sea Coast



**Spithami Lighthouse**  
On the Baltic Sea



**Mute Swan and Cygnets**  
Spithami - Baltic Sea



**Birders' Blind at Spithami**  
Very cold outside of summer.



Estonia has around  
12,000 elk (aka Moose).  
These signs are  
everywhere.



**Wheat Field**



**Haapsalu Castle Ruins**  
13th c

Haapsalu Town (Pop. 9,300)  
West Coast of Estonia



By chance - "American Beauty Car Show"

Haapsalu - American Car Show



Haapsalu - American Car Show



Haapsalu - American Car Show



Haapsalu - American Car Show



Haapsalu City Museum



Haapsalu Promenade

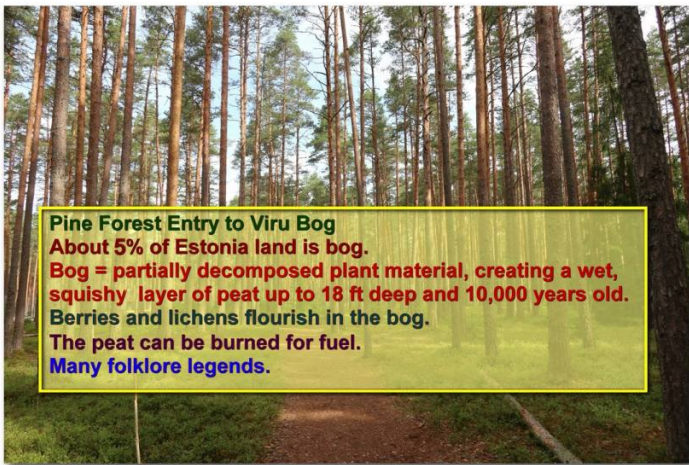


Jagala Waterfall  
Largest natural waterfall in Estonia  
175 ft wide, 28 ft high



First stop on our trip east to Lahemaa National Park





**Pine Forest Entry to Viru Bog**  
 About 5% of Estonia land is bog.  
**Bog = partially decomposed plant material, creating a wet, squishy layer of peat up to 18 ft deep and 10,000 years old.**  
 Berries and lichens flourish in the bog.  
 The peat can be burned for fuel.  
 Many folklore legends.



**Viru Bog**  
 This area is wet and not walkable



**Walkway over the wet peat in Viru Bog**



**Peat in Viru Bog**



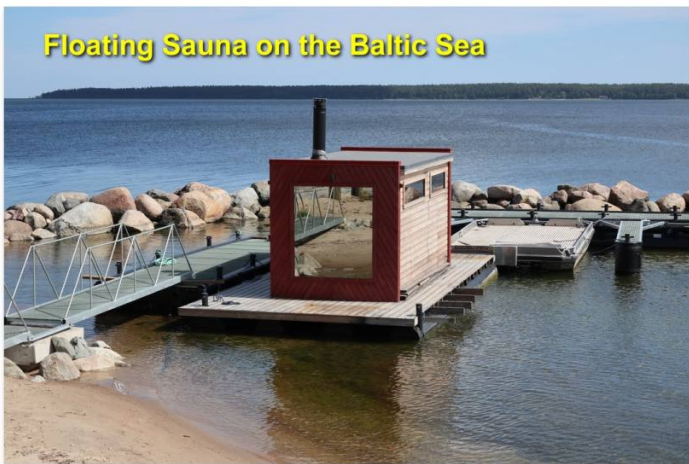
**Altja Fishing Village on the Baltic Sea**  
 WWII Russian Naval Captains' Training School



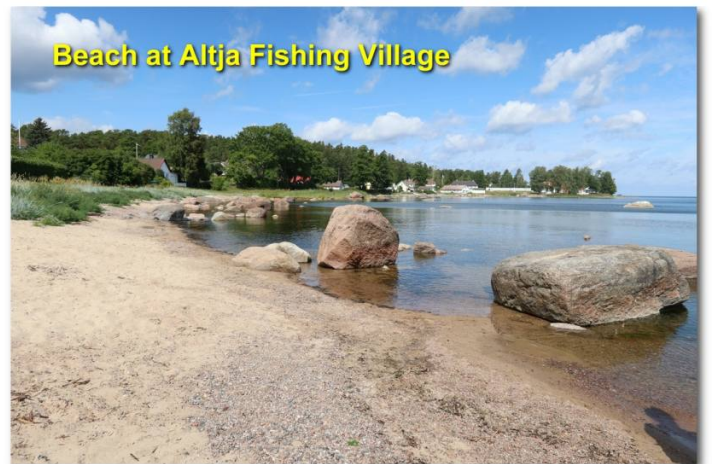
**Russian Military Coastal Watch Tower**

**МЕРЫ БЕЗОПАСНОСТИ**  
 1. ПОСЛЕ ПОДЪЕЗДА НА ДОРОГУ ОБРАТИТЬ ВНИМАНИЕ НА ПЛОТНОСТЬ ОТСИЧКИ.  
 2. ПИЛЕН И СНИЖ ПЛОТНОСТЬ ПИЛЕНИЯ ПИЛЕНИЕМ ДЛИНА ПИЛЕНИЯ ЗА СТОЛБ.  
 3. ПРИ ПИЛЕНИИ ОБРАТИТЬ ВНИМАНИЕ НА ПЛОТНОСТЬ ПОСЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬНО ПОДЪЕЗДА И ПОВТОРНО ПОПЫТАТЬСЯ ПОСЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬНО ПОДЪЕЗДА К ВОЗДУШНОМУ КОЛЕСУ И ЗАКРЫТЬ ЕГО.  
 4. ПРИ ПОДЪЕЗДЕ НА ВОЗДУШНОЕ КОЛЕСО ПОСЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬНО ПОДЪЕЗДА И ПОПЫТАТЬСЯ ПОДЪЕЗДА К ВОЗДУШНОМУ КОЛЕСУ И ЗАКРЫТЬ ЕГО.  
 ЗАПРЕЩАЕТСЯ:  
 НЕСТИ СНАРЯД В РУКАХ. ПРИ ПОДЪЕЗДЕ НА ДОРОГУ НЕ НА НЕОБРАЩЕННУЮ И НЕОБРАЩЕННУЮ СТОРОНУ ДОРОГИ.  
 КАТЕГОРИЧЕСКИ ВОЗБИРАЕТСЯ:  
 ВОЗВРАЩАТЬСЯ НА ПИЛЕНИИ И ЗАКРЫТИИ ВОЗДУШНОГО КОЛЕСА.  
 В СЛУЧАЕ НЕОБРАЩЕНИЯ К РАБОТНИКАМ ОБЪЕДИНЕНИЯ ПОЖАРНОЙ ОХОНЫ.

**Warnings**



**Floating Sauna on the Baltic Sea**



**Beach at Altja Fishing Village**



Sagadi Manor - Built 1793-1795  
Owned by Baltic German Aristocrat Family



Sagadi Manor - Built 1793-1795



Bus trip to Parnu  
80 mi S of Tallinn

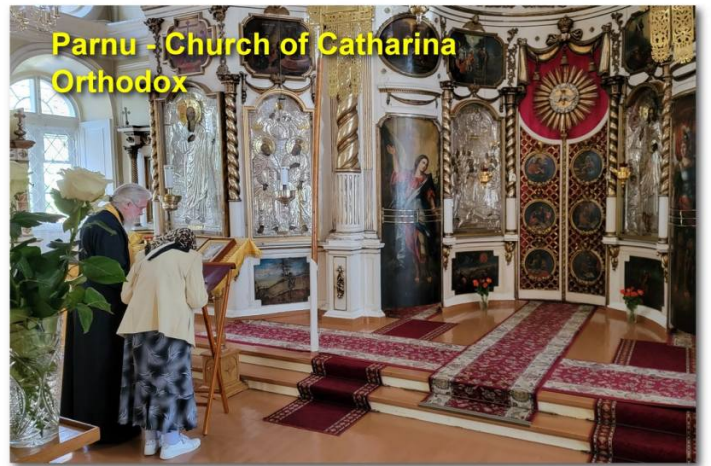
This is a Hungarian remake of a classic  
Communist-era "Ikarus" bus 1948-1989.



Bus Trip to Parnu (pop 40,000)  
Estonian Countryside



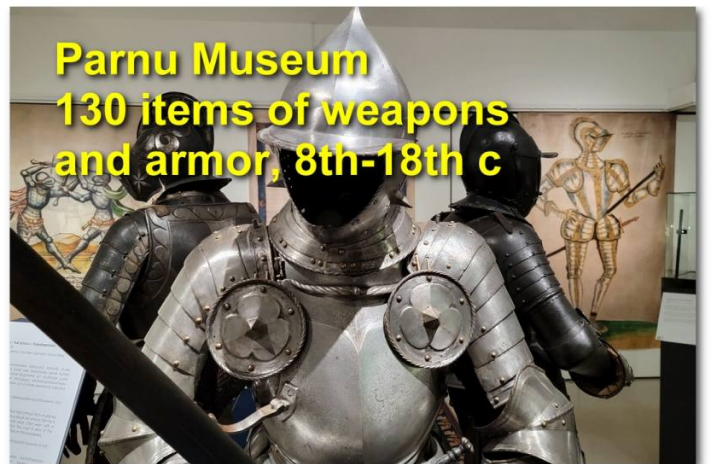
Parnu - Church of Catharina - 1768



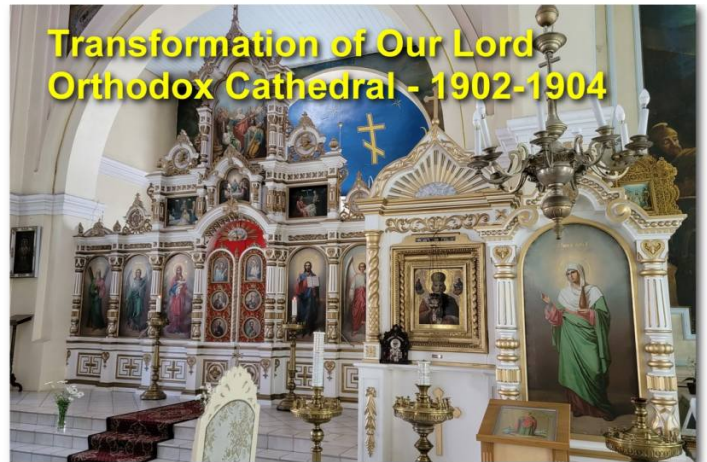
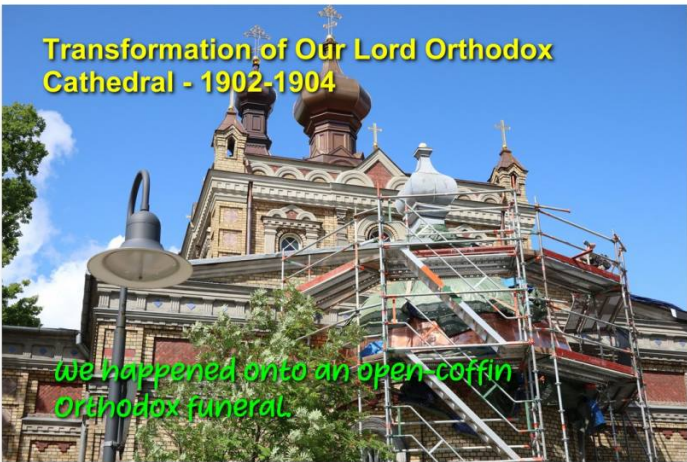
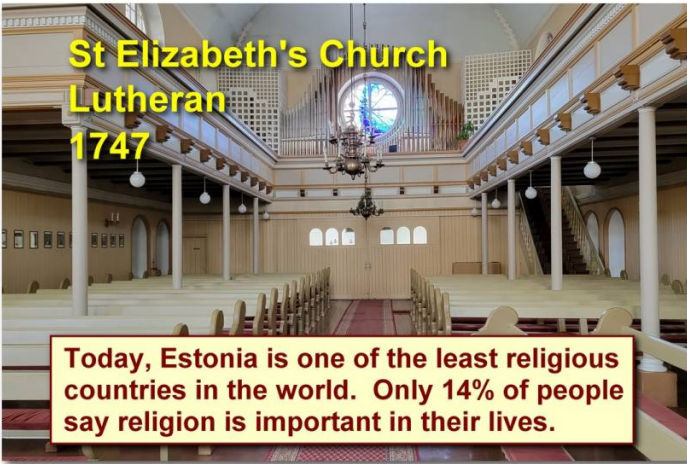
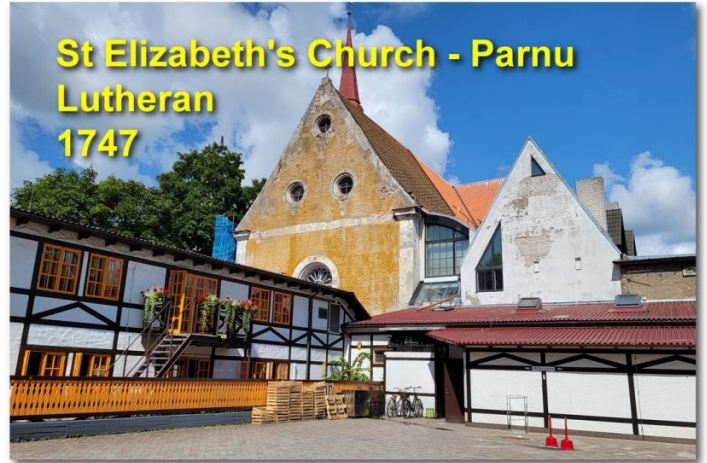
Parnu - Church of Catharina  
Orthodox

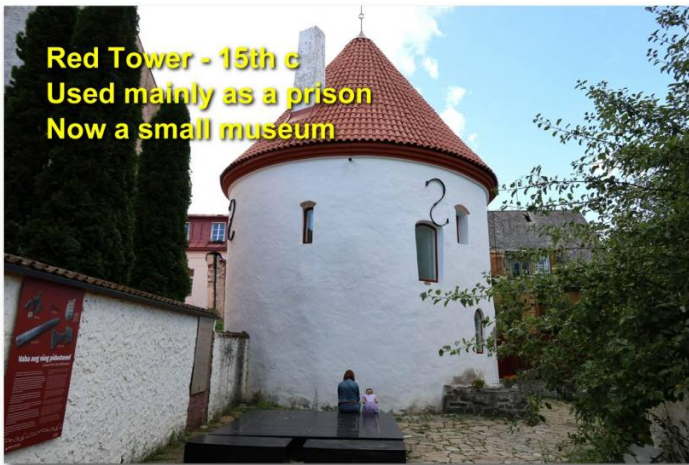


Parnu Museum  
Exhibits highlighting local history  
from Neolithic times up to the late 1980s.  
Mini-cinema showing archival films.



Parnu Museum  
130 items of weapons  
and armor, 8th-18th c





**Red Tower - 15th c**  
**Used mainly as a prison**  
**Now a small museum**



**Pärnu – Rüütli Pedestrian Street**



**Shopping Center in Central Parnu**

**Why indoor shopping?**  
**Average HIGH temp in F:**  
**Dec Jan Feb Mar**  
**32° 29° 29° 36°**



**Parnu Old Town**

# Estonian Cuisine

**Cuisine:** The most typical foods in modern Estonia are black bread, pork, potatoes, and dairy products. Plus fish in coastal areas.  
**First course:** Cold dishes (meat, pickles, cheeses).  
**Soups:** Either before the main meal or AS the main meal.  
**Main course:** Dumplings. Pork. Potatoes. Sausages. Dark rye bread.



**Savoy Boutique Hotel - Tallinn**  
**Breakfast includes:**  
 – 2 kinds of herring.  
 – 2 kinds of caviar  
 – Smoked salmon.  
 – Crepes.  
 – Local fruits, cheeses, meats.  
 – Fresh breads and pastries.



**Savoy Boutique Hotel Breakfast**



**Savoy Boutique Hotel Breakfast**

**Caviar**



**Savoy Boutique Hotel Breakfast  
Smoked Salmon**



**Savoy Boutique Hotel Breakfast  
Omelet**



**Savoy Boutique Hotel Breakfast  
Gooseberry Crepes**



**Solyanka - Estonian Fish Soup**

**Served with  
sour cream**



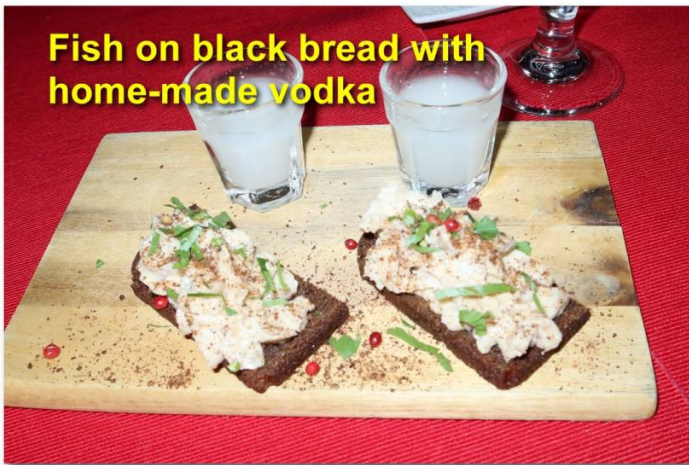
**Borscht (beet soup) with  
smoked meats, prunes,  
sour cream**



**Pelmen - Estonian Dumplings with Shrimp  
and Salmon - Served with Sour Cream**



**Pelmen - Estonian Dumplings  
with Beef and Pork - Served  
with Sour Cream**



**Fish on black bread with home-made vodka**



**Stuffed Cabbage Rolls Kapsarullid**



**Dumplings with Duck and Orange**



**Potato Fritters with Tongue Deruny**



**Meat-filled Blini and Pancake**

**Always with sour cream!**



**Uzbeki Beef Pilaf  
Balti Jaama Market, Tallinn**



**Uzbeki Spinach and Feta Cheburek  
at Balti Jaama Market**



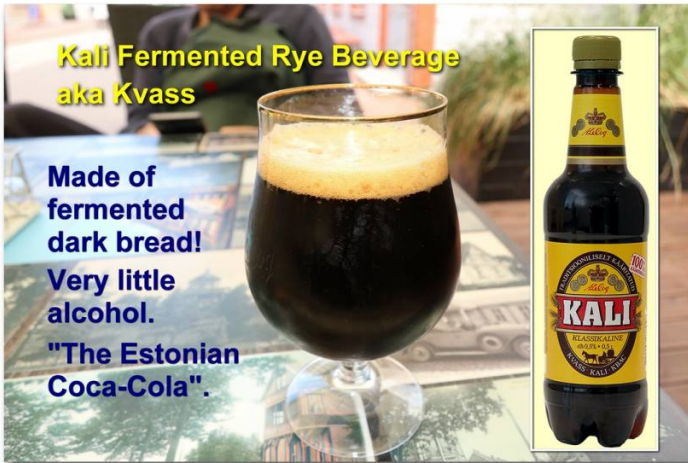
**Many Italian restaurants in Tallinn.  
Carbonara pizza.**



**Lasagna**



**Stuffed Portobello Mushroom**



**Kali Fermented Rye Beverage aka Kvass**

Made of fermented dark bread!  
Very little alcohol.  
"The Estonian Coca-Cola".



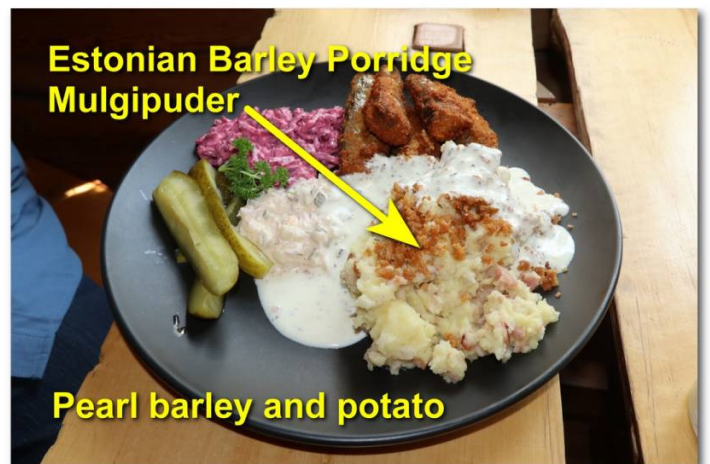
**Georgian Vegetable Salad**

Georgia the country, not the state!



**Hinkali Georgian Soup Dumplings With Pork**

Sour cream with chili



**Estonian Barley Porridge Mulgipuder**

Pearl barley and potato

**Coming Up at Baker Senior Center All 3 to 4 pm**

Southern France	Monday, Apr 1, 2024
Rome Part 1	Monday, May 6, 2024
Rome Part 2	Monday, June 3, 2024
Albania	Monday, July 1, 2024

PDFs of Slides Posted at [www.PaulVisits.com](http://www.PaulVisits.com)

**My upcoming Collier County Public Library presentations in first half of 2024:**

- Naples Regional Branch, 650 Central Av, Naples Italy: The Other Naples, Wed, Mar 6, 2-3:30pm
- Headquarters Library, 2385 Orange Blossom Dr, Naples
- Everglades City and Chokoloskee: The Pioneers of Collier County, Thurs, Jun 6, 2-3:30pm
- Easy Nature Hikes: Naples, Thu, Jun 20, 2-3:30pm
- Harry Potter Studios, Thurs, July 11, 2-3:30pm

PDFs of Slides Posted at [www.PaulVisits.com](http://www.PaulVisits.com)

