Riskline / Destination Report

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ESTONIA

Overall risk level

Low	Moderate	Medium	High	Extreme
Take normal safety precautions	Take normal safety precautions	Exercise caution	Reconsider travel	Defer non-essential travel

The Overall Risk Level will be determined by the higher of the Security Risk Level and Covid-19 Risk Level.

Security risk level

Low	Moderate	Medium	High	Extreme
Take normal safety precautions	Take normal safety precautions	Exercise caution	Reconsider travel	Defer non-essential travel
Safe, with few security risks	Generally safe, with some predictable security risks	Not completely safe, but typically presents predictable security risks	Can be dangerous and may present unexpected security risks	Extremely dangerous and presents unpredictable security risks
Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Travel is possible, but there is a potential for disruptions	Chaotic; travel impossible

Covid-19 risk level

Low	Moderate	Medium	High	Extreme
Take normal safety precautions	Take normal safety precautions	Exercise caution	Reconsider travel	Defer non-essential travel
Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to **Low Risk** locations, which have limited or no restrictions on international travel and domestic activities.	Travellers should take normal precautions when travelling to **Moderate Risk** locations, which have few restrictions on international travel and limited or no restrictions on domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should exercise caution when travelling to **Medium Risk** locations, and vaccinated travellers should take normal precautions. These locations may have some restrictions on international travel, but few restrictions on domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should reconsider their need to travel to **High Risk** locations, and vaccinated travellers should exercise caution. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and partially restricted domestic activities.	Unvaccinated travellers should defer non-essential travel to **Extreme Risk** locations, and vaccinated travellers should reconsider their travel. These locations may have severely restricted international travel and domestic activities.

Overview

Upcoming Events

01 February 2024 - 02 February 2024

- **Moderate risk:** Russian authorities to close the Ivangorod border crossing with Estonia in February 2024

  Russian authorities announced that the Ivangorod border crossing between Russia's Leningrad oblast and Estonia's Ida-Viru county will be closed from 1 February 2024 until further notice due to reconstruction works. According to reports, pedestrians will continue to be allowed entry through Narva.

Travel Advisories

Medium risk: Impact of Russian Invasion of Ukraine on Central and Eastern Europe

Exercise caution for travel to Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova until further notice due to the impact of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has triggered the displacement of over 20 million people, with more than five million applying for temporary residence in another country. As the war shows no signs of abating, new waves of displacement are possible in the long-term.

The majority of Ukrainian refugees find their way to Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Moldova, either to escape the violence temporarily or to enter the European Union (EU). The largest influx of people has been recorded in Poland, with over 11.8 million Ukrainians crossing the **Poland-Ukraine border** since the invasion began in February 2022, and more than 1.6 million applying for temporary residence. The influx has resulted in a 15 percent increase in the population of **Warsaw** alone, as the city absorbs some 300,000 refugees from the first wave of departures, driving rental prices up by as much as 30 percent. Over 119,000 refugees have relocated to the Baltic states.

Ukrainian airspace remains closed to commercial airlines until further notice. While borders remain open, except for the crossing between Ukraine and Moldova's **Transnistria region**, crossing points can be closed with little or no warning. Cross-border rail and road transport continue to operate but there is a risk of sudden interruptions. Along border areas, services may be severely taxed and accommodation options may be scarce. Additionally, due to high demand, stores and pharmacies in those areas have experienced depleted supplies of food, medicine and water. Some countries' embassies have established temporary consular services near crossing points; contact your embassy or foreign ministry for further details on locations and services offered. As of 13 September 2023, all vehicles bearing license plates registered in Russia will be denied entry to EU member states. The governments of Finland, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have indicated that nationals of Russia and Belarus entering their countries are subject to travel restrictions, with exceptions for humanitarian cases, family

reunification and accredited diplomats.

There is a small risk of the conflict spilling over the **Poland-Ukraine border**, the main supply route for the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and EU military assistance to Ukraine, with the majority of supplies flown into **Rzeszów-Jasionka Airport (RZE/EPRZ)**, located in the southeastern Polish **Subcarpathian voivodeship**, before being shipped overland to western Ukraine. Russia has threatened to target these shipments but has not in actuality yet done so. Security has been increased at border crossings and roads on the **Poland-Ukraine border**, particularly at night, when convoys are most active. In Poland, two civilians were killed on 15 November 2022 when a Ukrainian air defence missile crash-landed on a farm in **Przewodów**, **Lublin voivodeship**.

Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Finland, following the latter's entry into NATO on 4 April 2023, have become bases for increased numbers of NATO troops. While Russia has threatened provocations over the strategic **Suwałki Gap** between Lithuania, Poland, Belarus and the Russian exclave of **Kaliningrad**, no concrete actions have yet materialised aside from occasional airspace incursions. Romanian authorities have prohibited all manned and unmanned aircraft operating at an altitude below 4,000 metres (13,123 feet) within a 20-30km (12-19 miles) envelope along the **Romania-Ukraine border** from **Sulina** to **Galați** due to repeated airspace violations by Russian drones targeting the Ukrainian **Port of Izmail** on the **Danube River**.

In February 2023, Polish authorities shut down the **Bobrowniki checkpoint** on the **Poland-Belarus border** indefinitely for security reasons. The **Šumskas** and **Tverečius checkpoints** on the **Lithuania-Belarus border** were closed in August 2023 until further notice over security reasons and Latvian authorities also announced that the **Silene checkpoint** on the **Latvia-Belarus border** will be closed for security reasons. From 30 November until at least 14 January 2024, the **Finland-Russia border** is closed, due to repeated illegal entry attempts into Finland from Russia. The **Vaalimaa** and **Niirala border crossings** were temporarily reopened on 14-15 December.

Food and fuel supplies across these countries are not yet under pressure, however, the influx in people and the halt of both Russian and Ukrainian goods has contributed to food inflation across the EU. Domestic tensions are likely to rise the longer Ukrainians are forced to remain in host countries; Poland's long-running disputes with Ukraine and Slovakia over agricultural exports have continued during

the conflict, with farmers blocking highways along the **Poland-Ukraine** and **Slovakia-Ukraine borders** over the issue. Semi-regular protests both in support of Ukraine or in support of Russia take place in major cities, though these rarely result in clashes.

As the war continues, anti-refugee sentiment and aid fatigue will likely drive domestic unrest and protests. However, all neighbouring countries have managed the influx with the help of aid organisations and have not yet shown signs of significant social or economic instability. In border areas, limit outdoor exposure and, whenever possible, remain sheltered in a hardened facility away from windows.

Summary

Overall ● Moderate Risk

Estonia is a **Moderate Risk** destination: take normal safety precautions.

Security ● Moderate Risk

Moderate Risk locations are generally safe, with some predictable security risks. Travel is possible with an expectation of routine disruptions and delays.

Covid ● Low Risk

Starting in early April, authorities have eased most COVID-19 restrictions. There are no COVID-19 restrictions in place for international travel. Around 63 percent of the population is fully vaccinated.

Political Instability ● Low Risk

As a stable parliamentary democracy with a strong economy and a high degree of government transparency, Estonia has experienced a moderate level of party polarisation, and politicians are relatively well-trusted by the public. Despite this, the country's ethnic Russian minority and Estonia's relationship with Russia continue to be sensitive matters. The centre-right Reform Party leader Kaja Kallas has been prime minister since 2021, following the resignation of the Centre Party leader Jüri Ratas over a corruption scandal.

Conflict ● Moderate Risk

International and domestic tensions are centred on Estonia's treatment of its ethnic Russian minority, which makes up approximately 25 percent of the total population. Tensions with Russia have continued since both countries became independent in 1991. Any further escalation of the conflict in Ukraine or intervention by NATO puts Estonia at risk of direct attack from Russian forces. The expansion of the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) into the Baltic region is seen as a provocation by Russia.

Terrorism ● Low Risk

No known domestic terror groups are active in Estonia. Far-right domestic radicalisation is a growing problem among young people. The Estonian government has greatly increased and shifted allocation of funds and resources towards countering terrorism and domestic security.

Unrest ● Low Risk

Civil unrest is rarely a problem in Estonia but has erupted over tensions with the country's ethnic Russian minority. Large public gatherings and demonstrations do take place on occasion, driven mainly by domestic political issues. Strikes among private and public sector workers are unlikely to result in unrest.

Crime ● Low Risk

Crime rates are low across the country and violent crime is rare, but petty theft, such as pickpocketing, bag--snatching and mugging, directed against foreign nationals is common, particularly in and around **Tallinn's Old Town**. Organised criminal syndicates are involved in drug smuggling, money laundering, counterfeiting and human trafficking, primarily out of **Tallinn** and **Narva**; however, these groups pose little risk to travellers. There have also been instances of credit card and ATM fraud and racially motivated physical and verbal attacks, particularly against non-Western ethnic groups.

Natural and Environmental ● Low Risk

Foreign travellers to the country will encounter cold temperatures during the winter months from November through March, with blizzards capable of disrupting travel, as well as possible flooding during the spring season. Estonia’s infrastructure is mostly capable of weathering natural calamities, and disaster management capabilities are of a high standard.

Local Travel ● Moderate Risk

Major roads in Estonia are generally good with paved highways connecting **Tallinn** with Riga, Vilnius, Warsaw and St Petersburg. Roads in rural areas can be of poor standard and drivers are aggressive, leading to frequent accidents. Winter driving can be dangerous due to snow, ice and hazardous weather. Public transport is of high standard, although bus travel is often more efficient for long domestic trips than rail travel. Care should be taken if using taxis, as drivers often try to overcharge travellers. International ferries are frequent and generally safe.

Health and Medical ● Moderate Risk

Modern medical infrastructure and highly trained healthcare professionals are available in the major cities of **Tallinn, Tartu** and **Pärnu**; however, healthcare services are limited in rural areas due to shortage of equipment and resources. Emergency services are available nationwide.

Political Overview : ● Low Risk

Since Estonia's independence, the centre-right Reform Party and the centre-left Centre Party have alternated as the country's ruling party. Following a corruption scandal in January 2021 and the resulting resignation of the then-prime minister Jüri Ratas of the Centre-Party, Kaja Kallas from the Reform Party formed a new coalition and became prime minister. The Reform Party, which had led the previous coalition government with the Social Democrats and the Fatherland Party, ensured a comfortable victory in the March 2023 elections securing 31.2 percent of the vote. Kallas announced a deal with the centrist Estonia 200 Party and the Social Democratic Party a month later, securing her job as prime minister. Her government has faced corruption scandals, economic challenges and the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the Russo-Ukrainian War. Estonia's government is expected to continue making several policy trade-offs in response to the war in Ukraine and its indirect impacts on the Estonian economy. Nevertheless, the country's political stability is anticipated to be only moderately affected by these challenges.

The president of Estonia is elected by the parliament to a five-year term, filling a largely ceremonial role as head of state. The current president is Alar Karis, former director of the Estonian National Museum, who succeeded the country's first female president, Kersti Kaljulaid, on 11 October 2021. The change in the presidency was influenced by Estonia's already tense political landscape, as the previous coalition would have had to agree on jointly nominating Kaljulaid for re-election.

Estonia has been a member of the European Union (EU) since 2003 and of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) since 2004. Its democratic institutions are generally strong and political rights and civil liberties are widely respected, though over five percent of the population, primarily ethnic Russians, are stateless and cannot vote in most elections or hold political office. Relations with Russia have been turbulent since the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the Russian intelligence services orchestrating a major cyberattack in 2007 in response to the removal of a Soviet war memorial in Tallinn. Despite this incident, relations improved after the two countries signed a treaty formally demarcating the Estonia-Russia border in 2014, more than nine years after the Russian Parliament refused to ratify the initial post-independence treaty over accusations of discrimination against Estonia's ethnic Russian minority. However, tensions with Russia have escalated again following the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine and Estonia's unwavering support for Ukraine by

accepting thousands of refugees and providing weapons to Ukraine's military. Russia's war and its proximity to Estonia have weakened Estonia's economy, exacerbated supply disruptions and increased inflation, and posed further risks to external relations and security in terms of military brinkmanship, espionage and cyberattacks. As tensions with Russia rise, Estonia will continue to expand its defence capabilities and attempt to bolster NATO's Eastern flank.

Recent incidents

20 June 2023 - 21 June 2023

Moderate risk: Parliament legalises same-sex marriage

Local media reported that the Parliament legalised the same-sex marriage and adoption right to same-sex couples, becoming the first ex-Soviet Union country to legalise it. Amendments to the Family Law Act will go into effect from 1 January 2024.

05 March 2023 - 06 March 2023

Moderate risk: Parliamentary elections to be held on 5 March

Parliamentary elections to select the 101 members of the Riigikogu will be held countrywide on 5 March.

05 March 2023 - 06 March 2023

Moderate risk: Reform Party projected to win parliamentary elections - Update

Election projections indicated that the ruling Reform Party of Prime Minister Kaja Kallas was projected to win at least 38 seats in Parliament (Riigikogu), retaining control of the government. The EKRE, Eesti 200, Center, SDE and Isamaa parties were projected to take at least 17, 15, 14, nine and eight seats, respectively.

23 January 2023 - 24 January 2023

Moderate risk: Authorities to expel Russian ambassador - Update

Authorities announced during early afternoon hours that, in response to similar demands made by Russian authorities, the Russian ambassador to Estonia was required to leave the country by 7 February. Russian consular staff in Estonia are already at a minimum since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Conflict : ● Moderate Risk

Russia has accused Estonia of discriminating against its ethnic Russian minority, leading to frequent diplomatic complaints and provocations. Both sides stage military exercises in border regions, while Russian aircraft occasionally violate Estonian airspace. Tensions were heightened again in February 2022 following Russia's invasion of Ukraine and NATO forces have subsequently reinforced security in eastern areas of Estonia bordering Russia, including **Narva**. Russia will continue to attempt to assert its presence in the Baltic Sea and Russian confrontation with NATO is also likely to manifest via frequent close marine approaches by Russian naval vessels. Espionage and cyberattacks against Estonia are expected to continue.

Strength of Military Forces: Estonia is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union (EU) and belongs to the regional Nordic-Baltic Eight (NB-8) organisation, which mitigates the risk of conflict. The Estonian Defence Forces (Eesti Kaitsevägi) number about 27,000 active personnel with around 60,000 reservists. A NATO battalion led by the British Army has been deployed in Estonia since 2016. There have been no serious internal security incidents since the 1993 **Pullapää (Nõmme)** mutiny.

Terrorism

Terrorism: The presence of Estonian troops in Afghanistan and Iraq raised Estonia's profile as a potential target for international radical religious organisations. However, Estonia has since withdrawn its forces from both countries and no Islamist militant attacks have materialised. There is a risk of far-right radicalisation domestically. In July 2020, Estonian authorities arrested the leader of a small, online neo-Nazi terrorist organisation called the Feuerkrieg Division, which had about 30 members internationally. Although the leader could not be charged under Estonian law as he was a minor, it is believed that he recruited new members and shared bomb-making instructions online while discussing attacks.

Cyberattacks: Estonia’s public and private sectors are among the most digitised in the world, making the country a frequent target for cyberattacks. In 2022, Estonia was subject to its most extensive cyber attack since 2007 amid heightened tensions with Russia. Although Estonia has made improvements that should lessen the impact, repeat attacks are possible and a risk of cyberattacks on public and private infrastructure remains, especially from Russian perpetrators. The 2007 cyberattack orchestrated by Russia caused chaos in government bureaucracy and banking, as daily transactions could not be completed.

Response Preparedness: The Estonian government has greatly increased and shifted allocation of funds and resources towards countering terrorism and domestic security in the last 15 years. The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has established full defence plans for the Baltic states against any possible regional attacks. Estonia has ratified and complies with United Nations (UN) conventions against terrorism and Estonian experts participate in international organisations aimed at preventing and countering terrorism. Mass casualty responses are of an adequate standard in **Tallinn**, where there are enough emergency hospital beds to deal with a large incident. In the rest of the country, hospitals are not well-enough equipped to provide good care for large numbers of casualties at once.

There are no recent incidents

Unrest : ● Low Risk

Protests and Demonstrations: Protests occur periodically in Estonia and are generally peaceful. They are mostly motivated by domestic or international political events and environmental and socioeconomic issues, and take place in **central Tallinn**, primarily on **Freedom Square, Tammsaare Park** and outside various national embassies. The ongoing tension between Estonians and ethnic Russians, especially following the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, increases the risks of protests in **Narva** and **Tallinn**. Tensions between ethnic Russians and Estonians have in the past resulted in violence, particularly in predominantly ethnic Russian areas such as **Johvi**. Travellers should consult local news sources for details of planned protests and avoid all large public gatherings.

Strikes: Strikes among private and public sector workers periodically occur in Estonia, and have the potential to paralyse transport services.

Extremist Gangs: Neo-Nazi gangs are present in Estonia. Although membership has grown over the last decade, they are still small in size. Assaults on immigrants occur periodically, mainly at night in less economically well-off districts. Foreign nationals from Western countries are not generally targeted. With the rise of the Conservative People's Party of Estonia (EKRE), far-right protests and rallies have become more visible in the public space. For instance, in February 2021, EKRE supporters rallied in several Estonian cities, including **Tallinn, Kuressaare, Pärnu, Haapsalu** and **Paide,** to mark the country's independence day. While similar rallies in recent years sparked counter-protests, they have remained peaceful.

There are no recent incidents

Crime : ● Low Risk

Petty Crime: Crime rates in Estonia are relatively low, although the country has seen an increase in crimes such as pickpocketing and bag snatching in recent years. Petty crime often occurs in airports, train stations, bars, nightclubs, hotels and other areas frequented by travellers and tends to increase during the warmer months (May to September). Hotspots include **Tallinn's Old Town**, **Central Market**, the **Town Hall Square** and the suburbs of **Kopli**, **Lasnamäe** and **Kadriorg**, as well as the cities of **Narva** and **Tartu**.

Beware of your surroundings, do not leave your belongings unattended and exercise general personal safety for travel. Only carry what is needed, do not flash expensive valuables or large sums of money, and keep cash, identification and mobile phones in front pockets, or in a zipped or concealed pocket or pouch rather than in a bag. Secure belongings when using public transport or when frequenting markets and other crowded public areas; secure bags diagonally across the body against the chest, keep bags within sight and away from the street. Refrain from using mobile phones or laptops in congested public places; avoid putting bags containing valuables on the ground. Avoid walking in poorly lit and isolated areas. Stay in groups. Reject rides or drinks from strangers and never leave drinks unattended. Exercise extreme caution when purchasing and consuming alcohol in public venues. Do not accept pamphlets in the street or shopping centres; these could be impregnated with potent and disorienting drugs, which permeate the skin. If you start to feel unwell, tell staff or close friends and do not leave the venue alone or with strangers. Shout to attract attention, if needed.

Violent Crime: Violent crime is rare in Estonia and poses little risk to travellers and foreign nationals. Nevertheless, car theft is common, particularly in **Tallinn** and **Tartu**. Verbal and physical racially-motivated attacks against non-Western ethnic immigrant groups have increased in recent years; however, the risk to travellers remains low. Credit card fraud in Estonia has also been on the rise in recent years. Organised crime groups involved in economic and criminal exploitation operate in Estonia but do not generally pose a threat to travellers, although caution is advised in all gambling establishments.

Commonsense measures are best kept to ensure against becoming the victim of a violent crime. Travellers are advised to remain vigilant at all times and exercise general personal safety for travel: avoid walking alone at night, do not venture down roads

with poor lighting and few access points. Be careful when using taxis and public transport and plot route bypasses around rowdy crowds. Seek local advice for areas to avoid. If you are held-up by an armed robber do not become confrontational as any resistive behaviour may cause more violence by the attackers.

Kidnapping: There is a low risk of kidnapping for travellers in Estonia. There have been no known kidnappings targeting foreign travellers to the country in recent years. Response of law enforcement officials, in the event of kidnapping, is likely to be good.

Travellers should remain aware of their surroundings and follow the latest advisories for their destination. Maintain communications and your itinerary with local contacts, authorities or embassy staff, especially in locations with a higher risk of kidnapping. Consider a local guide or security escort for the highest risk locations.

There are no recent incidents

Law

Overview

Estonia's legal system is based on the continental European civil law model and also has roots in the German legal system. The judiciary is independent from executive interference and considered to be free from corruption.

Corruption

Overview

Estonia's legal framework and independent law enforcement institutions provide important checks on corruption. However, despite several anti-corruption mechanisms, corruption is a persistent challenge, particularly related to party funding and lobbying regulation. In recent years, the Parliamentary Anti-Corruption Committee has held many hearings on prominent cases of alleged corruption, although results have been mixed. Corruption risks exist within public procurement procedures due to the legal system overlooking foreign bribery cases and insufficient regulation of lobbying. Visitors and residents are unlikely to be directly affected by low-level corruption.

Security Services

Security Services: The Police and Border Guard Board is the unified national governmental agency responsible for law enforcement and internal security in Estonia. The police force is considered to be effective and professional. English-speaking personnel may not always be available and visitors should carry emergency contact details for their respective embassy in the event of a stolen passport or other serious crime.

Natural Risks : ● Low Risk

Foreign travellers to the country will encounter cold temperatures during the winter months from November through March, with blizzards capable of disrupting travel, as well as possible flooding during the spring season. Estonia's infrastructure is mostly capable of weathering natural calamities, and disaster management capabilities are of a high standard.

Blizzards

Blizzards occur when severe winter storm conditions are accompanied by strong winds, producing wind-driven snow, dangerous wind chill and excessive accumulation of snow (drifting). Heavy accumulations of ice and snow can immobilise a region and paralyse a city, disrupting supply chains and compromising emergency and medical services. Electrical wires, telephone poles and lines and communication towers are vulnerable to disruption. Even small accumulations of ice may produce extreme hazards for motorists and pedestrians. Prolonged exposure to the cold may result in life-threatening medical conditions, including frostbite and hypothermia.

Heavy snowfall is common during the winter in Estonia. While fatalities are rare, blizzards often disrupt travel and services. In January 2023, blizzard conditions caused several power outages throughout the country.

Refrain from going outdoors during severe blizzards as prolonged exposure to the cold may result in life-threatening medical conditions, including frostbite and hypothermia. If you must go outside, cover your mouth to protect your lungs and walk carefully on snowy, icy pavement. Bear in mind that several layers of lightweight clothing will keep you warmer than a single heavy coat. Motorists should drive with deference to road conditions and avoid driving during severe snowstorms, while pedestrians should walk slowly on icy ground, particularly near stairs.

Flooding

A flood is an overflow of water that submerges land that is usually dry. It is normally triggered by an extended period of heavy rainfall and can be exacerbated by poor

drainage systems in the affected area.

Heavy flooding may occur during the spring season in Estonia, particularly along rivers. However, the risk of flooding is primarily limited to **Soomaa National Park** and other wetlands.

If instructed of the possibility that flash-flooding may affect the area you are in, monitor local updates and move immediately to higher ground away from rivers, streams, creeks and storm drains. Though flash-flooding is commonly attributable to excess upstream precipitation, be aware that flooding can occur without typical warning signs of rain clouds or heavy rain. This is especially true near streams, drainage channels, canyons and other areas known to flood suddenly. If you happen across a flooded road in your car, turn around and drive in the opposite direction. When trapped on a flooded road, vacate your vehicle immediately and climb to higher ground.

Windstorms

Windstorms are generally categorised as storms with wind speeds strong enough to cause at least light damage to trees and buildings. Windstorms typically do not bring heavy rainfall.

Windstorms periodically affect Estonia, and can trigger power outages and cause disruptions. In April 2020, wind warnings were issued for strong winds of up to 100kph (62 mph) across **Harjumaa**, **Läänemaa**, **Hiiumaa**, **Pärnumaa** and **Saaremaa counties**.

Because meteorologists can commonly predict the likely onset of a storm, the most effective way to mitigate physical risk is to monitor local weather updates and consider deferring travel in the event of a storm alert. Anticipate possible disruptions to overland travel caused by downed trees and power lines during and following strong gusts of wind. Confirm the viability of overland travel routes before departure.

There are no recent incidents

Health and Medical: ● Moderate Risk

Overview

Modern medical infrastructure and highly trained healthcare professionals are available in the major cities of **Tallinn, Tartu** and **Pärnu**; however, healthcare services are limited in rural areas due to shortage of equipment and resources. Emergency services are available nationwide.

Before you travel

Consult your doctor or a healthcare provider who specialises in travel medicine at least six weeks before your departure. If you have a medical condition, you should also share your travel plans with your doctor.

Outbreaks and Other Diseases

Malaria
There is no risk of malaria transmission.

Yellow Fever
There is no risk of Yellow Fever infection.

Vaccinations, Medicines and Documentation

Note: Requirements and recommendations for vaccines and other medicines as well

as Yellow Fever vaccine are based on guidelines from the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Yellow Book 2024. All other entry requirements are based on Riskline research.

Routine vaccines

Make sure you are up-to-date on all routine vaccines before every trip. Some of these vaccines include

- Chickenpox (Varicella)
- Diphtheria-Tetanus-Pertussis
- Flu (influenza)
- Measles-Mumps-Rubella (MMR)
- Polio
- Shingles

COVID-19

All eligible travellers should be up to date with their COVID-19 vaccines.

Hepatitis A

Recommended for unvaccinated travellers one year old or older going to Estonia.

Infants 6 to 11 months old should also be vaccinated against Hepatitis A. The dose does not count toward the routine 2-dose series.

Travellers allergic to a vaccine component or who are younger than 6 months should receive a single dose of immune globulin, which provides effective protection for up to 2 months depending on dosage given.

Unvaccinated travellers who are over 40 years old, immunocompromised, or have chronic medical conditions planning to depart to a risk area in less than 2 weeks should get the initial dose of vaccine and at the same appointment receive immune globulin.

Hepatitis B

Recommended for unvaccinated travellers younger than 60 years old traveling to Estonia. Unvaccinated travellers 60 years and older may get vaccinated before traveling to Estonia.

Measles

Infants 6 to 11 months old traveling internationally should get 1 dose of measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccine before travel. This dose does not count as part of the routine childhood vaccination series.

Rabies

Estonia is free of dog rabies. However, rabies may still be present in wildlife species, particularly bats. CDC recommends rabies vaccination before travel only for people working directly with wildlife. These people may include veterinarians, animal handlers, field biologists, or laboratory workers working with specimens from mammalian species.

Tick-borne Encephalitis

For travellers moving or traveling to TBE-endemic areas

TBE vaccine is recommended for persons who will have extensive exposure to ticks based on their planned outdoor activities and itinerary.

TBE vaccine may be considered for persons who might engage in outdoor activities in areas ticks are likely to be found.

Required documentation

Yellow Fever entry requirement (Source: USA CDC):

None

Other entry requirements:

Health Insurance document
For travellers requiring the issuance of a Schengen visa to enter the country, they must purchase travel insurance with a minimum coverage plan of USD33,000.

Note: Documentation requirements are subject to change. Consult your destination embassy or consulate prior to departure for confirmation.

While you are there

Emergency Numbers		
Medical	**112**	
Medical	**1220**	24-hour hotline

Emergency services

Estonia is serviced with a nationwide ambulance service. Emergency medical services are of a high quality and reliable in **Tallinn** and other major urban areas.

Evacuation

In the event of severe or life threatening injury or illness, medical evacuation to a hospital in **Tallinn** or another nearest urban area may be required.

Routine care

Medical facilities at the main hospitals in **Tallinn** and **Tartu** are good. However, healthcare quality and access vary throughout the country. While medical professionals are highly trained and the level of medical care is typically good, facilities outside major urban areas may suffer from a shortage of equipment and may not have multilingual staff available. Medical advice is available on the 24-hour hotline 1220 but assistance is provided in Estonian and Russian only.

Medicine

Most medicines, including aspirin and some ointments available over-the-counter in supermarkets and corner shops in other countries, are sold in pharmacies. High-quality prescription drugs are available in stand-alone pharmacies. Emergency 24-hour pharmacies are available across the country, including **Tallinn's Südameapteek (Tõnismägi 5).** While travellers are unlikely to experience any difficulties in entering the country with their own prescription medicine, they are advised to have all prescription drugs in their original packaging noting the patient's name.

Payment

Everyone in Estonia is entitled to emergency care. The government pays emergency

care for those without health insurance. In addition to free emergency care, travellers with a European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) may also visit a general practitioner free of charge. However, EHIC holders will be required to pay a portion of medical treatment received for a fee up to EUR5, while in-patient treatment costs EUR2.50 per day for up to 10 days of hospitalisation. As EHIC does not cover the cost of treatment at a private facility, EHIC holders are advised to ensure that a healthcare provider has a contract with Estonia's public healthcare system. Most care providers accept only cash payments. Travellers without an EHIC should have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.

Ailments

Hepatitis (A, B, C, D and E)

Hepatitis is inflammation of the liver. The three main variations (A, B and C) are caused by infections from parasites, bacteria or viruses, but are transmitted by different means.

Rabies

Rabies is a serious viral infection, transmitted through close contact with saliva from infected animals (i.e. bites, scratches or licks on broken skin and mucous membranes). Travellers who suspect they may have come into contact with a rabies-infected animal should seek immediate emergency attention: post-exposure treatment has a high success rate if administered early. Late-stage rabies (when symptoms begin to occur) is untreatable and fatal.

Tick-borne Encephalitis (TBE)

Highly endemic and regularly among countries with highest reported incidence in Europe. Endemic areas found throughout the country, with highest incidence in western part of country.

Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) is a viral infection usually transmitted through the bite of an infected tick. Typically the disease occurs in two stages. The first is a mild-flu like illness. The second is a potentially serious infection of the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord). TBE can at times be fatal in up to 20 percent of cases. Long-term neurological complications are common. Individuals are at increased risk if they visit areas where TBE is known to occur particularly in woodland or grassland. Travellers may reduce the risk of infection by avoiding risk areas and taking bite prevention measures.

Recent incidents

04 January 2023 - 05 January 2023

- **Moderate risk:** EU recommends member states to require COVID-19 test for arrivals from China - Update

  European Union (EU) officials recommended on 4 January that member states require a negative COVID-19 test no older than 48 hours prior to departure for all travellers from China. Officials also advised air travellers to and from China to wear medical face masks and members states to implement random testing upon arrival as well as conduct wastewater monitoring at airports. The recommendation is not legally binding; members states may enforce mandates.

Covid-19: ● Low Risk

Summary

Starting in early April, authorities have eased most COVID-19 restrictions. There are no COVID-19 restrictions in place for international travel. Around 63 percent of the population is fully vaccinated.

What is the current nationwide Policy?: Open

Policy starts: 14 February 2022
Policy ends: indef

Policy explanation:

Domestic restrictions have been lifted and international travel has resumed.

Policy source: https://www.kriis.ee/en/covid-crisis-management-qa/crisis-management/current-restrictions

Last update: 27 October 2023

Infection

Infection Level:	Low
Infection rate:	0.0 cases per 100k in the last 14 days
As of date:	09 November 2023
Hotspots:	-

International Travel

International Flights

Is there a ban on international commercial flights? Partial
Through what date? indef

Flight Ban Explanation:

International flights are predominantly operating through Tallinn Airport (TLL/EETN).

Following the European Union (EU) Commission announcement that all EU airspace will be closed to Russian-owned, Russian-registered and Russian-controlled aircraft, including private planes and for overflights, all flights to and from Russia will be banned until further notice, in line with EU sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

Last Update: 28 November 2023

Entry and Borders

Is there a ban on entry for any travellers? No
Through what date? indef

Travellers from where are banned?

Land border: Open
Maritime border: Partially Open

Entry Rules Explanation:

From 1 April, all travellers are permitted entry, regardless of the purpose of travel. Arrivals are not required to show COVID-19 certificates for entry.

Estonian authorities have suspended issuing tourist visas to Russian nationals. Those that already hold a Schengen visa issued by Estonia are denied entry

since 18 August. Effective 19 September until further notice, Russian citizens with a Schengen visa for tourism, business, sports, or cultural purposes are denied entry. Exceptions will be made for humanitarian and family reasons, lorry drivers and diplomats.

Entry Rules: https://www.kriis.ee/en/covid-crisis-management-qa/crisis-management/current-restrictions

Exemptions: https://www.kriis.ee/en/covid-crisis-management-qa/crisis-management/current-restrictions

Last Update:

Testing

Do travellers need to take a COVID-19 test No
When?
Is it mandatory or optional?
Test Type:
Minimum age requirement:
Pre-travel test validity, in hours:
After arrival test days:

Testing Explanation:

COVID-19 certificate requirement was lifted for all travellers on 16 June.

Testing Rules: -

Last Update: 28 November 2023

Health and Travel Documentations

Do arriving travellers need any health and/or travel documentation? Yes

Documentation Explanation:

Health Insurance document
For travellers requiring the issuance of a Schengen visa to enter the country, they must purchase travel insurance with a minimum coverage plan of USD33,000.

Last Update: 27 October 2023

Tracing App

Do travellers need to use a contact tracing app after arriving? No

Tracing App Explanation:

There is no mandatory national contact tracing app at this time.

Last Update: 27 October 2023

Quarantine on Arrival

Who needs to quarantine on arrival None

Travellers from where need to quarantine?

How many days is quarantine?
Is it self-quarantine or operated by the government?

Quarantine Explanation:

Quarantine Rules:	https://kriis.ee/en/travelling-crossing-state-border/travelling-estonia/coming-estonia
Quarantine mandate list:	https://kriis.ee/en/travelling-crossing-state-border/travelling-estonia/coming-estonia
Last Update:	2023-11-28

Exit

Is there a ban on exit for any travellers? No

Are there special requirements to exit? No

Exit Requirements Explanation:

Exit Requirements (URL):	https://www.kriis.ee/en/travelling-crossing-state-border/travelling-abroad-estonia/estonian-citizens-and-foreign-nationals
Last Update:	28 November 2023

Vaccination

Percent vaccinated with at least one dose: 63.459 as of 01 Oct 2023
Percent fully vaccinated: 65.01 as of 13 Nov 2023
Is vaccination mandatory for entry? No
Fully vaccinated are exempt from: -
Minimum age for vaccine requirements for travel:
Exemptions for vaccine requirements for travel:
"Fully vaccinated" is defined by the destination as:
Accepted vaccines, validity and special age restrictions:
Is mixing of vaccine doses authorised? N/A
Are specific combinations of mixed doses required?

"Boosted" is defined by the destination as:
Accepted boosters:
"Recently recovered" is defined by the destination as:
Recovery status is valid from days until after .
Vaccination certificates accepted:
Vaccination certificates accepted in the following languages:
Recent recovery document required:
Recent recovery document accepted in the following languages:

Explanation:

From 16 June, travellers are no longer required to show proof of vaccination, recovery or a negative COVID-19 test for entry.

Sources:	https://www.kriis.ee/en/travelling-crossing-state-border/travelling-estonia/foreign-nationals
Last change to vaccination policy:	16 June 2022
Last Update:	27 October 2023

Other International Travel Restrictions

Exit Requirements Explanation:

Last Update:

Domestic Situation

Areas on Lockdown

Last Update:

Areas under Curfew

Last Update:

Domestic Travel

Domistic Travel Explanation:

Last Update:

Other Domestic Restrictions

Last Update:

Resources

Government COVID Site: https://www.kriis.ee/en

Health Dept COVID Site: https://www.terviseamet.ee/en

There are no recent incidents

Local Travel : ● Moderate Risk

Travel Safety

Air Travel: Tallinn International Airport (TLL/ EETN), located approximately five kilometres (three miles) southeast of **central Tallinn**, is Estonia's main entry point and international airport and the main hub for the national airline, Nordica. The airport offers both domestic and international flights and is serviced by several airlines such as airBaltic, Finnair, Lufthansa, Ryanair, Turkish Airlines and Wizz Air. The airport has adequate facilities, although security can be lax. Although serious breaches are not common, there have been incidents of unauthorised persons gaining access airside. Queues at security checks are often badly managed and slow during peak summer periods, so always leave enough time to pass through on departure. Travellers from Russia may be singled out during security checks.

To reach **central Tallinn**, the number **2 Moigu Reisisadam** bus service operates from outside the terminal building. The journey takes around 15 minutes and the bus stops at the **A. Laikmaa stop** in **Tallinn**. A taxi rank is located outside the terminal building. Only take taxis from the official rank and do not accept offers while inside the terminal building to avoid unlicensed taxi drivers, who often overcharge and may not know where they are going. It is often best to have a pre-arranged taxi or hotel shuttle pick you up from the airport to avoid opportunistic charging from taxi drivers, both licensed and unlicensed. Car hire desks are located in the arrivals hall on Level 0, but their hours are erratic. If you wish to hire a car, it is always better to book in advance.

Airspace: International flights are predominantly operating through Tallinn Airport (TLL/EETN).

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Borders and Entry: From 1 April, all travellers are permitted entry, regardless of the purpose of travel. Arrivals are not required to show COVID-19 certificates for entry.

Estonian authorities have suspended issuing tourist visas to Russian nationals. Those that already hold a Schengen visa issued by Estonia are denied entry since 18 August.

Effective 19 September until further notice, Russian citizens with a Schengen visa for tourism, business, sports, or cultural purposes are denied entry. Exceptions will be made for humanitarian and family reasons, lorry drivers and diplomats.

Road Travel: Major roads in Estonia are generally good. However, minor roads can be poorly surfaced and present a hazard to motorists. Exercise caution when driving at night, as these roads are generally poorly lit. Be particularly vigilant in and around towns and villages for pedestrians, cyclists, livestock, carts and other farm vehicles, many of which lack tail lights or reflectors. Outside urban areas and major road corridors, road signs are not as numerous or comprehensive as in other European countries. Due to poor roads and driving standards, Estonia has one of the highest road accident rates in the EU. Some drivers can be aggressive, recklessly overtaking vehicles and travelling at high speed, even in crowded urban areas. Travellers are advised to drive defensively, maintain a high level of vigilance for other traffic and respect speed limits. Caution is advised when driving in winter as roads can become hazardous due to snow and ice. Winter tyres are mandatory. Drivers should carry an up-to-date map or GPS, be equipped with water, appropriate clothing, a telephone and an emergency kit.

Driving regulations require that all passengers in a car wear seat belts and that drivers keep their headlights on at all times. Speed limits are 50kph (31 mph) in urban areas, 90kph (55 mph) in rural areas and 110kph (68 mph) on some highways. Speeding is common despite regular enforcement action by traffic police.

Rail Travel: International train services link Moscow and St Petersburg in Russia with **Tallinn** and **Tartu**. There are also frequent trains to and from Riga in Latvia. The services are efficient and safe, with no serious rail accidents occurring in Estonia in recent years. Petty theft has been reported on overnight trains, when thieves can target sleeping passengers. If private sleeper cabins are available, it is advisable to get one for security reasons. When sleeping, keep the cabin door locked, secure bags to overhead luggage racks with small chains or belts and store valuables in a money belt or inside pocket on your person.

Estonia's domestic rail network is less efficient than the bus network. Rail links to many parts of the country are of low quality and services can be infrequent. However, the **Tallinn**-**Aegviidu** and **Tallinn**-**Paldiski lines** offer reliable, regular service. Tickets should always be bought before boarding, as fines for buying onboard are high. Petty theft is a problem at busy times, so precautions, such as keeping your bag closed, should be taken.

Public Transport

Ferries and Boats: International ferries link Estonia with Rostock in Germany, Stockholm in Sweden, Helsinki in Finland and St Petersburg in Russia. **Tallinn** is the main international ferry port, and several ferries run on these routes each day. The **Tallinn-Helsinki line** is one of the busiest ferry routes in Europe. The boats used for international ferry transport in and out of Estonia are considered safe and meet EU standards. Incidents of petty crime are reported periodically on international ferries, so travellers should always ensure they lock their cabins and keep valuables secure.

Smaller ferries also operate domestic lines, linking the mainland to all inhabited islands. These vessels are more susceptible to weather conditions and may run infrequently during the winter. Despite their small size, they are considered safe.

Buses: International bus services link Estonia to the rest of Europe. Eurolines offers services to several locations in Russia, Germany and the Baltic states. Their buses mostly terminate or stop at **Tallinn central bus station**. These services can take a long time but are generally comfortable and safe. Infrequent incidences of petty crime are reported, so always keep your bags close to you and ensure valuables are kept in secure pockets close to your body.

Domestic bus services link towns and villages across Estonia. Services to major cities are more efficient than those to rural areas but due to the country's small size, most journeys do not take very long. All major cities have central bus stations from where direct buses leave for other cities. Safety on long-distance domestic buses is good, although the poor standard of driving in Estonia does pose a risk.

Within larger cities, there are fairly comprehensive bus networks. Tickets must be purchased from kiosks near stops or from drivers. A smartcard and e-ticket system is used in **Tallinn** for buses, trolleybuses, trams and inner-city trains. Tickets must be validated in machines on board; otherwise, you may be fined by ticket inspectors. The buses used in Estonia are being upgraded but a few older-style vehicles remain. This has improved safety slightly but dangers from other motorists remain. The night bus services can be scenes of violence between revellers under the influence of alcohol. Try to avoid riding buses alone after dark.

Taxis: Taxis are available in all urban areas and can be called out to rural locations. Despite the use of meters, taxi drivers can overcharge travellers by manipulating the machine to roll around faster. Calling and ordering a taxi in advance can reduce the risk of this occurring; it is best to avoid hailing taxis on the street if possible.

Unlicensed taxi drivers also operate at public transport hubs and can be identified from the lack of an illuminated 'TAXI' light or any other taxi company markings. Do not use unlicensed taxi drivers under any circumstances as they are likely to overcharge and are not regulated by local authorities. There have been reports of unlicensed taxi drivers robbing travellers. Rideshare services are also available.

Trams: Trams provide transportation within the city limits of **Tallinn**. There are four lines that all terminate and start at **Viru Center** in **central Tallinn**. Trams are fast and efficient but service is limited outside the city centre. Safety is good, with many sections of track separated from main roads.

Vehicle Hire: Car rental companies are plentiful in all major cities and car rentals are comparatively inexpensive. The vehicles typically available for rent are new models that are well-maintained. Exercise general caution, especially at night. Petrol stations and rest areas are available along highways connecting cities.

There are no recent incidents

Destination Hotspots

Cities, Towns, Villages: Tallinn is a relatively safe city, though pickpocketing and mugging can happen. The **Old Town** is a well-known hotspot for pickpocketing and theft. Visitors should also exercise caution in the city's **Central Market** and **Town Hall Square**, where thieves often work in pairs.

Safety

Emergency Numbers

Police	**112**	
Fire	**112**	
Hazards	**112**	
Medical	**112**	
Child help-line	**116111**	
Traffic	**112**	
Medical	**1220**	24-hour hotline

Beaches and Public Areas: Estonia's coastal areas have a number of beaches that are popular in the summer months. If considering swimming, ensure that it is safe to do so by consulting local sources. Strong currents and low sea temperatures can pose significant hazards.

Begging: Beggars can be found in some areas of major cities, often near public transport hubs. They do not pose a safety risk but may be persistent in requests for money. Most will leave you alone if ignored.

Drugs and Alcohol: Estonian authorities are intolerant towards the possession, use and trafficking of illegal drugs. Penalties include prison terms and heavy fines, and the possession of even the smallest quantities can lead to up to 10 years of imprisonment.

Drinking and driving is a serious offence, and the drink drive-limit is 0.2 milligrams of alcohol per millilitre of blood.

Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO): Some unexploded mines and other ordnance left over from World War II remain in Estonia. Naval mines have washed up along the coastline of the **Bay of Narva** and areas surrounding **Naissaar Island**. If you come across a mine, leave the area but make a note of where you saw it and contact the local authorities immediately. Never pick up items you find on the ground, even if they look inconspicuous; some Soviet-era landmines are disguised to look like toys.

Security Services: The Police and Border Guard Board is the unified national

governmental agency responsible for law enforcement and internal security in Estonia. The police force is considered to be effective and professional. English-speaking personnel may not always be available and visitors should carry emergency contact details for their respective embassy in the event of a stolen passport or other serious crime.

Culture

Cultural/Political/ Religious Sensitivities: Estonians tend to be quite formal and reserved and like to keep a social distance. Punctuality is expected. Estonians separate their business and personal lives; travellers are advised to wait to be invited before using someone's first name or any informal greetings and to avoid discussing business-related issues or developments. Always greet people when you enter and leave a small shop, restaurant or pub.

Travellers of African or Asian extraction may find themselves as objects of curiosity. Discrimination in shops or restaurants is possible; however, it is not likely to lead to violence.

Estonians are very proud of their nation and their country. Foreign nationals should avoid discussing the Soviet and Nazi occupations of the country, as these remain highly controversial subjects. Do not start a conversation in Russian as this is seen as extremely rude by Estonians.

While Estonia is a predominantly secular society, travellers should always behave with sensitivity if visiting religious sites. Avoid taking photographs during religious services and dress appropriately.

Specific Traveller Advice

Female Travellers

Local Customs and Laws: There are no local customs or laws that a female traveller should take into consideration in Estonia. Familiarise yourself with your destination prior to travel, and be respectful and mindful of any possible cultural sensitivities, which may include dress, behaviour and topics of discussions.

Safety: There are minimal safety concerns female travellers should take into consideration in Estonia. Sexual assault and rape do occur; however, visitors to the country are not likely to face an additional risk as most perpetrators of assault are known to their victim. While isolated incidents of street harassment and assault are reported in large cities, it is not a widespread or rampant concern. Police and emergency services maintain a high degree of professionalism and female travellers will not encounter any problems dealing with first responders or reporting crimes to local authorities. Exercise personal safety awareness if walking alone at night. Stick to main, well-lit streets and avoid walking through desolate areas or unfamiliar neighbourhoods. Refrain from wearing headphones while walking in the evening.

Health and Wellness: Women have access to a full range of gynaecological and reproductive health services, medicines and products in Estonia. These include specialised clinics, abortion services, OTC emergency contraceptives, prescription contraceptives and a full variety of feminine hygiene products. Abortion is available within the first 12 weeks of pregnancy and permitted within 22 weeks under certain medical circumstances.

LGBT+

Homosexuality is legal in Estonia. There are many legal protections for LGBT+ persons in the country. Estonian law bans discrimination and incitement to hatred on the grounds of sexual orientation. Same-sex marriage and adoption are legal effective 1 January 2024. LGBT+ activity and persons are somewhat socially accepted, with LGBT+ travellers likely to find more receptive attitudes in **Tallinn**. Despite the legal status of LGBT+ rights, social conservatism may be prevalent in some parts of the country. Travellers may prefer to be discreet about sexual orientation and avoid excessive public displays of affection in areas where attitudes towards the LGBT+ community are unknown or generally not accepted. Use caution in conversations about sexuality or LGBT+ issues with strangers or recent acquaintances. Exercise general safety precautions.

Technology & Communication Risk

Travellers are unlikely to face risks related to information and communication technology (ICT) in Estonia.

Internet access and social media have no restrictions. While Estonia has anti-hate speech penalties, particularly concerning anti-Semitic content, these restrictions are unlikely to affect travellers. There are no concerns related to device searches or sensitive technology. Device searches and inspections at the border are unlikely. There are no restrictions in relation to bringing or operating sensitive equipment, which may include photo cameras, satellite phones, drones, and other GPS systems, in the country. State or criminal penetration of private data is unlikely. However, cyberattacks on critical infrastructure and financial services are likely. Authorities implement minimal state surveillance of ICT networks in the country.

Travellers should exercise basic ICT safety precautions. However, travellers should note that ICT laws and practices are subject to change on short notice, and travellers are recommended to confirm the legality/appropriateness of their specific ICT needs prior to departure.

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