



Wellness Holidays in Estonia

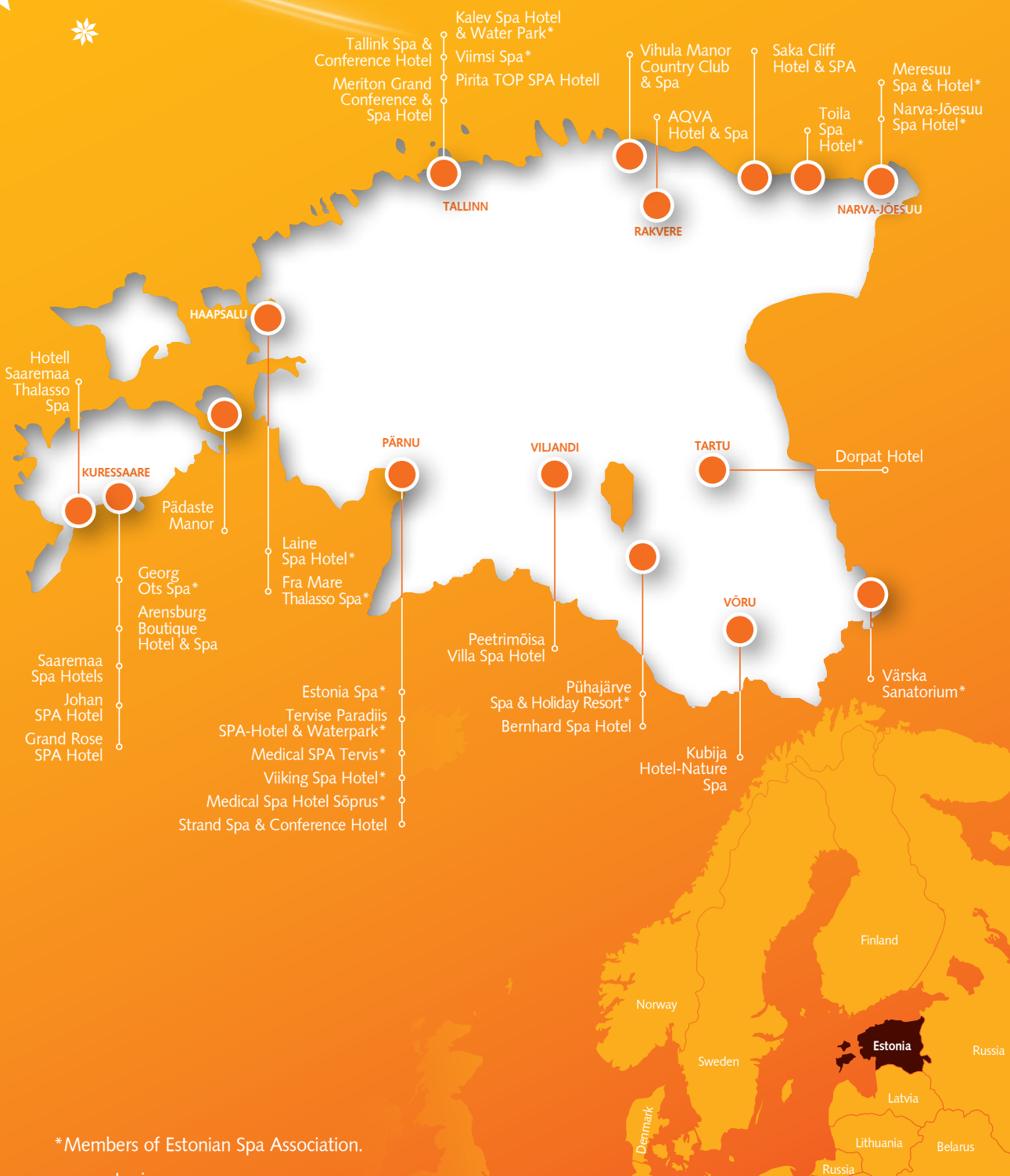
A Source of Vital Energy



Estonia
Positively surprising.

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Medical and Wellness Spas in Estonia



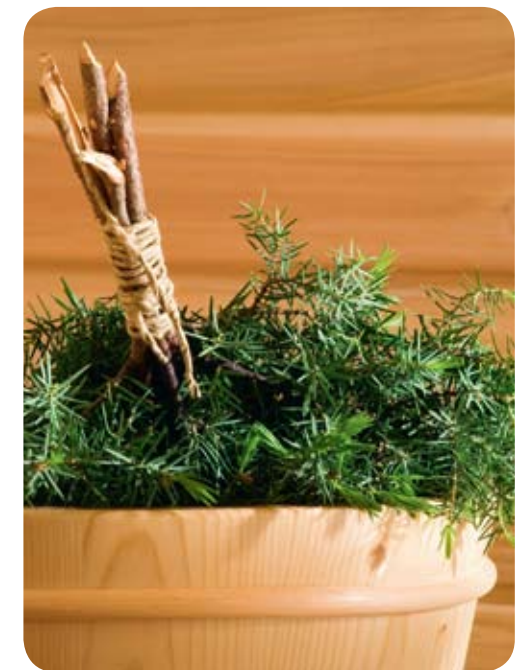
Therapy of Balanced Contrasts

The President of the Republic of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, has said that this small and very special European state is like a giant national park. The president was not suggesting that the Baltic state he leads is undeveloped or wild. He was more acknowledging that in the heart of Europe lies a land with a great deal of uninhabited land and pure, untouched nature. Of course, the characterisation of "untouched" is slightly misleading; almost every square metre is carefully protected or cared for by Estonians.

Small, quaint homes and beautiful, well-tended towns in Estonia's unique architectural style are found between endless forests, bogs, lakes, and nature protection areas. Settlements and villages are mostly located away from main roads, which creates the impression of a national park to anyone traveling the main highways. The fact that there are spas of international quality in some of these small towns, paired with a long history of cultural tradition, creates a contrast in the very best sense of the word.

Estonians live in harmony with their surroundings and are, in a way, the very embodiment of their forests and villages. They naturally and gently care for the land and, as a result, Estonians

have the unique opportunity to offer friends and guests the gift of harmonious nature in the midst of European civilization. The country is characterised by breathtaking views, fresh air, silence, and cleanliness. And all this is paired with tourism at its highest level.



The Nordic spa – juniper branches soaking for the sauna

* Members of Estonian Spa Association.



Out of the sauna and into a bracing bath

The sauna: the Nordic spa

Northerners' resourceful and industrious ancestors knew that a person is a part of nature – and they lived and behaved accordingly. In nature the movement of energy is presupposed and of all living beings it is incumbent upon humans to care for all living things, including themselves. The sauna, the quintessential northern spa, combines the influence of heated air with the employment of thin tree branches against the skin for improvement of circulation, and cold water. Since ancient times, Estonians who have worked in fields, forests, by lakes, or at sea, have developed and loved their sauna culture.

The northern sauna unites all of the planet's base elements: fire, water, air, and earth. The bather warms himself at 100-degree Celsius and then whips himself with birch or juniper branches, charges into cold water with his body steaming, and cleans the skin with salt, honey, milk, and plant infusions.

Being a traditional people, though, does not

preclude development or fantasy. At some tourism farms, guests may energize both body and spirit under the ceiling of the night sky in a barrel sauna or in an Indian-style sweat lodge. At many rivers and lakes, a chimney may be seen protruding from a raft sauna. This floating sauna has become a tourist attraction in itself.



A barrel sauna

A judicious fast and farm labour

Increasingly popular with diet-conscious people are fasting camps that cleanse the body with the aid of natural substances. The fasting person's organs cease to produce poisons which are the result of a poor diet and overeating, the only requirement for cleansing being to undergo a purge. One of the most effective gentle cleaning agents is mineral water. Water containing minerals is suitable for consumption as well as bathing and is not inferior to mountain spring water. Southeastern Estonia's Värskä mineral water, pumped from deep within the earth, along with bottled water from Alpine valleys, is available at almost every cafe, restaurant, and shop in the country.

Estonia's many tourism farms have helped the native health culture thrive. Guests in these environments of wood, reeds, linen, and cotton are fed with locally grown organic foods and the vacationer may augment these with ecologically friendly, classically healthy activities such as hikes in the forest and bogs, canoe trips, or horseback riding. Elderly guests, or those who prefer a more relaxed tempo, may opt for a walk with trekking poles or a bicycle ride in order to



Balance of body and soul

facilitate deep breathing and allow oxygen into the bloodstream.

Tourism farms enable guests to learn ancient crafts by actively taking part in the work of the farm. Fabric weaving, sheep shearing, flax spinning, honey straining, smith work and oven-building all involve intense physical movement. The work is generally not without a bellyful of forest air and ample good cheer. A fairytale existence? This is everyday life for many of Estonia's 1.4 million people. This sort of romanticism isn't a cheaply manufactured souvenir but rather a reality based on the energies of life and experience.



Never out of reach

Closer to the earth and the children

The homes and summer cottages of Estonia's leaders, scientists, writers, and musicians are usually located in the forest or on Estonia's islands. Tourism farms in Estonia offer relaxation and opportunities for self-development to guests from near and far. Often, bread is baked, cheese made, herbal medicines grown and stress is reduced through the maintenance of a beautiful garden. Frequently, these intellectual but primitive farms contain a small training centre, where healthy lifestyles are advocated and guestrooms where the holiday goes lodge. Plenty of these active and intelligent holiday centres are often also family homes in Estonia. Many farms, manors, country spas, and children's camps are created around different themes. One might be a ranch, another a Native American camp, a shaman's domain, or a viking stronghold with a watermill and traditional artificial lake. A child-like nature is the hallmark of a whole spirit and good health.



Breadmaking at a tourism farm



Old friends

A wellness holiday on Estonian islands with some historic hiking trails or in northern Estonia's highest category of spa is ideal for those who want to relax, and free themselves from the burdens of the business environment, and discover the inner child. That inner child can even very happily meet other children. If not while on holiday, then when?

Rowing, swimming, skiing, horseback riding, or archetypal farm work are all activities which lend themselves fully to relaxation and playing with parents. Rocketing down a waterpark slide with father, entering a rowing contest with mother, or making a rug for the children's room together with a brother and sister are the moments which form a happy childhood.

Estonia also features plenty of idyllic hiking trails which are used for more than simply hiking, running, skiing, skating, or just walking. Often the trails are designed or decorated with items of cultural significance, such as wood sculptures which introduce the hiker to pagan gods from folklore or mythological fairies and heroes. This is mythology which opposes no one or no thing and it is in complete harmony with nature.



Dining al fresco—Estonian style

A wide choice backed by quality

It is both pleasant and healthy to be in Estonia. On farms or in the midst of forests one will find an ecologically wise and ancient lifestyle and sparse settlements which drew Baltic-German nobles to build their homes. In Estonian forests and at the edge of lakes, manor homes are frequently encountered. What was once a beautiful castle is now a stylish resort or an especially high-quality spa.

There is a wide choice for the health tourist in Estonia. Is a grass-roofed farmhouse preferred where wooden spoons are carved? Orienteering in primeval forests? Or a week or two in a comfortable city spa? The spas of modern Estonia meet higher standards of quality than anywhere else in the world. The Estonian Spa Association has a rigorous and demanding quality control system, which distributes stars to hotels and spas, by which the guest may judge the spa.

Quality is also found in the kitchen. Famous Estonian chefs cater fully to those who prefer international, gourmet, vegetarian, and national food menus.



Estonia's organic energy drink



Sandy beaches—as far as the eye can see

From roughing it to the top resorts

Resort- and water-treatment culture have been a part of Estonia since 1820. The entire western coastline from Pärnu to Haapsalu, from Toila to Narva-Jõesuu, including the island of Saaremaa, is packed with beaches and spas. There have been periods where vacationers came from Germany and Moscow. Today's visitors come primarily from the Scandinavian countries, but visitors will find Americans, Japanese, and southern Europeans among their ranks. City spas and manor homes alike are designed to inspire guests from anywhere in the world.

Estonia's coastline from Kabli to the northeast, from Hiiumaa to Ruhnu is dedicated to tourism culture, and next to developed areas are found private and untouched sandy beaches where one may be alone with nature.

As early as the 19th century it became clear to spa operators that in addition to water, air, warmth and light, the earth itself was extremely beneficial for improving a person's health. The

chemical properties of mud and minerals are a balancing tonic to the human skin. In addition to mud baths, rocks which have energizing and rejuvenating qualities, including the most magical of all, "shungit" from Karelia, are actively used in modern spas.



Spa pools have something for everyone

An inspiring and harmonious holiday

During a holiday in Estonia it's always possible to combine unique activities which have inspired Estonians to give honorary titles to their beautiful small cities. In the Winter Capital of Otepää, combine healing stones with skiing, chiropractic treatments with snowboarding or snow-tubing. The Summer Capital of Pärnu – like the legendary Haapsalu – offers spa enjoyment combined with sailing, windsurfing, river rowing, rollerskating on the promenade, flights in a Delta plane, and trips to forests from stables near the city where horseback-, carriage- or horsedrawn sleigh options are available. The town of Värskä is the Mineral Water Capital. The unique cities of Võru and Rakvere have built their own spas in order to be dignified 21st-century cities.

Without a doubt, Estonia's health tourism brings added value with concerts throughout the country, festivals, and open-air events

which take place year round. Entertainment is the cherry on the cake of health tourism. Dance evenings of almost any style are as relaxing and stress-alleviating as an adventure park with its wide variety of climbing activities at the top of trees.

While there once was a time when universities issued doctoral degrees in spa medicine, today's institutions of higher education teach physical recreation. This area is truly a complicated and beautiful art. A person is whole when he is healthy. In a healthy body lives a healthy spirit, and this spirit can create and fly only when it occupies a harmonious, pain-free, loved- and well-cared-for body.

Within the capsule of modern and virtual civilization, the idea that we are a part of nature can easily become lost. We are a collection of chemical elements which react and perform impeccably when our body is in motion, when provided enough air and light, and when clothing fits well and activities are suitable for one's age.



An experience in the treetops

Living from morning through evening

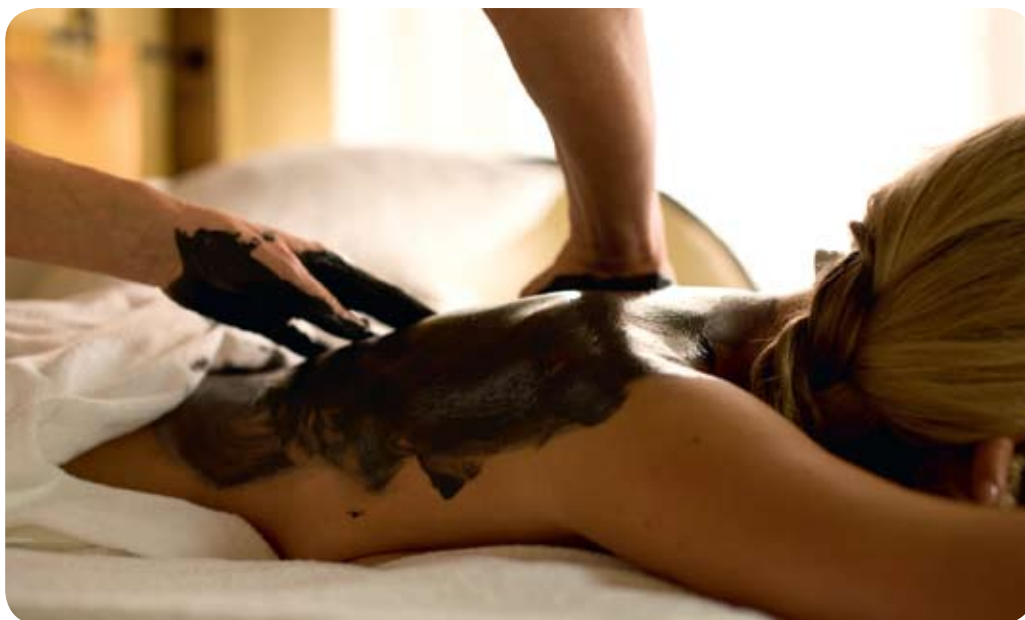
Specifically for the elderly, Estonia has many medical spas of the highest order. Just as a childhood is beautiful, so may be a person's twilight years. In early youth, wellness holidays require a safe, interesting, and fun environment. In the most active years, preference is given to more extreme activities or stylish and educational activities. In later years, bodies require a bit of rehabilitation, and this is possible with the aid of professionally-educated experts who have studied at Tartu University or many higher institutions in Tallinn.

A gem of Estonia is its variety of spas which enrich the setting of theme parks, hiking trails, herb farms, and manor homes. A person's golden years are happy if they are without pain. Physiotherapy, chiropractic treatments, mudbaths, pearl baths, cold-treatments and salt chambers—all the world's top skills and treatments at their highest levels are available in Estonia's medical spas.

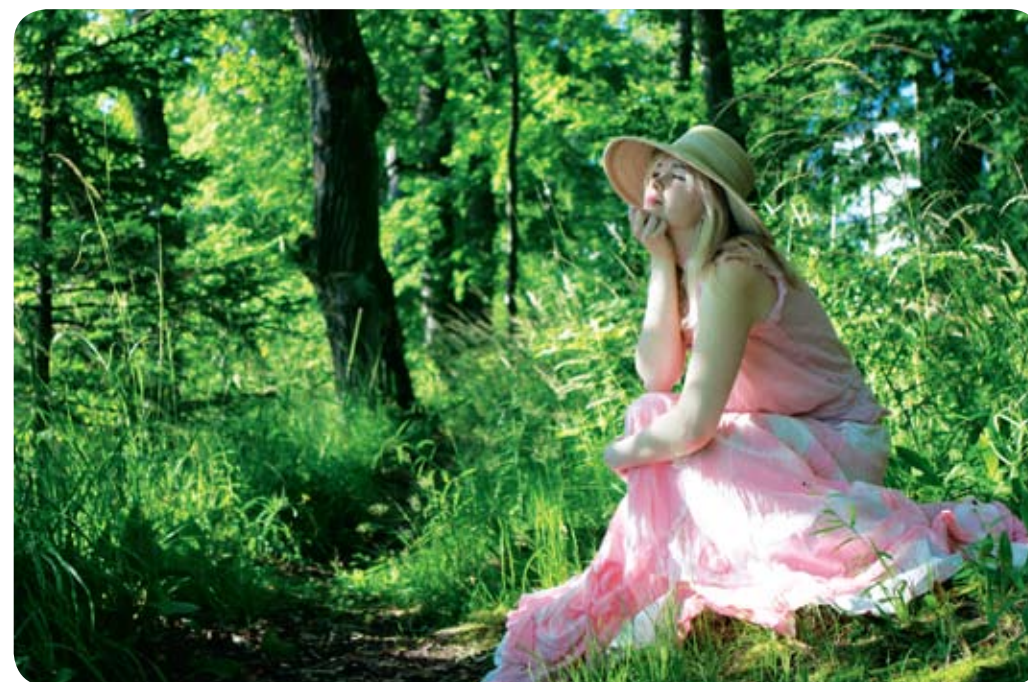


A medical spa procedure

Once joints are invigorated with extreme cold, respiratory organs and the skin's surface soothed with salt, spinal pain removed with massage and stretching, then all that is left is a new hair style and a manicure. Estonia is famous in the pro-



A relaxing wellness treatment



Enjoying the quiet of the forest

fessional world for its unique addition of beauty services to health tourism.

Estonian people are so accustomed to their unique romantic environment that they occa-

sionally forget to be happy about it. But every new and welcome guest brings back the sparkle into the eye of the host and gives new energy to this land of courageous and complicated history, where future guests are then even more well received.

And more and more guests continue to arrive. The reason for this is simple: Estonia's regions are so different from one another that even on a third visit it's impossible to see everything. The Lahemaa National Park and Haanjamaa, the islands, Setumaa, the northern coast and Soomaa are unbelievably different places. They are united in one respect, which is that every place has an exotic holiday village or extremely comfortable and safe city spa.

A fortunate choice and fine vacation – the bread dough has already begun to rise and the linden tea is steeping. By the way, Estonia's national food is kama, a mix of rye, oats, barley, and peasmeal, mixed with the sour milk of cows. It's definitely worth a try!



Refreshments await



Looking forward to meeting You!

www.visitestonia.com