

ESTONIA

Country name	Estonia
State title	Republic of Estonia
Name of citizen	Estonian
Official language	Estonian
Country name in official language	Eesti
State title in official language	Eesti Vabariik
Script	Roman
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	EE/EST
Capital	Tallinn
Population	1.366 million ¹ 45,261 km ² (UN data)

Introduction

Estonia is the northernmost and smallest of the three Baltic States on the eastern shore of the Baltic Sea. It has existed as an independent state 1918 to 1940 and again since 1990. In size it is similar to Switzerland or the Dominican Republic and it has international boundaries with Latvia and Russia.

Geographical names policy

PCGN recommends using place names as found on official Estonian-language sources, retaining all diacritical marks. Estonian generic terms frequently appear with lower-case initial letters, and PCGN usually recommends reflecting this style.

The **Place Names Board of Estonia**, <http://www.eki.ee/knn/index2.htm>, which has been the responsibility of the Ministry of Finance since September 2015, is the main advisory and coordinating body of the place name standardisation activities in Estonia.

Recommended Sources for Geographical Names

Official Estonian government-produced mapping can be used as a source for geographical names in Estonia. Official maps of Estonia are produced by the **Estonian Land Board**: <http://www.maaamet.ee>.

Map data is also available through the **Geoportal of the Estonian Land Board**: <http://geoportaal.maaamet.ee/eng/>, which has several public map applications, including the Basic Map, address data map, place names register map, cadastral map, and historical maps. The maps can be queried using geographical names and the interface is bilingual Estonian-English. All spatial data on Estonia can also be found in the Estonian National Geoportal: <http://inspire.maaamet.ee/>.

¹ <https://www.stat.ee/en>

Language

The official language is Estonian (*eesti* in Estonian; the ISO 639 language code is *est*), a Finno-Ugrian language most closely related to Finnish, and rather distantly to Saami and Hungarian. The Finno-Ugrian languages are quite distinct from Indo-European, so Estonian grammar and vocabulary have nothing in common (except for borrowed words) with Russian, German, English, Latvian etc. In south-east Estonia, a dialect called Võro (ISO 639: *vro*) exists, which is sufficiently distinct from standard Estonian to be regarded by some as a separate but closely-related language.

The largest linguistic minority speaks Russian. This group forms the majority in Ida-Virumaa county and in the town of Narva.

A substantial Swedish-speaking minority lived on the islands and along the west coast of Estonia until the end of the Second World War; very few remain.

Inventory of characters

Estonian is written in the Roman alphabet, but seven letters are found only in loan words, or to write foreign names etc. Certain other letters (e.g. B) are quite rare in Estonian. Three distinct diacritics are used to create four more vowel symbols plus two consonants which themselves are not often used. Any vowel can be doubled, but there are no other digraphs.

The usual letters of the Estonian alphabet are:

A B D E G H I J K L M N O P R S T U V Õ Ä Ö Ü

C F Q W X Y Z are not normally used.

Additional characters inventory

Upper case	Unicode encoding	Lower case	Unicode encoding
Õ	00D5	õ	00F5
Ä	00C4	ä	00E4
Ö	00D6	ö	00F6
Ü	00DC	ü	00FC
Š	0160	š	0161
Ž	017D	ž	017E

Alphabetical order

The four vowels with diacritics appear in the order Õ Ä Ö Ü in an Estonian dictionary, after all other letters (i.e. after V). The consonants S Š Z Ž appear in this order in an Estonian dictionary, between R and T.

Territorial issues

Estonia became independent for the first time immediately after the First World War and the Russian Revolution, and was formed from the Russian Imperial provinces of Estland and half of Livland (Livonia). This gave it international frontiers with Latvia and the new Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). The USSR occupied Estonia from 1940-41 and again in 1945, transforming it into the Estonian

Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). At this time, the north-eastern and south-eastern corners were transferred to the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) and remained part of Russia after Estonian independence in 1991. This includes the town named Petseri in Estonian, or Pechory (Печоры) in Russian.

Transnational features

Some geographical features (rivers, lakes etc.) are shared between Estonia and one or more neighbouring countries. On a map they should be labelled in the appropriate language on each side of the boundary, with no preference given to either name, or with the conventional English name if one exists.

Estonian name	Latvian name	Russian name	Note/feature type
Valga	Valka		<i>Town straddling international boundary</i>
Peipsi-Pihkva järv		Псковско-Чудское озеро = <i>Pskovsko-Chudskoye ozero</i>	English: Lake Peipus
Peipsi järv		Чудское озеро = <i>Chudskoye ozero</i>	<i>lake</i>
Pihkva järv		Псковское озеро = <i>Pskovskoye ozero</i>	<i>lake</i>
Lämmi järv		Тёплое озеро = <i>Tëploye ozero</i>	<i>lake</i>

Map of Estonia



Map produced by PCGN for illustrative purposes only, and is not to be taken necessarily as representing the views of the UK government on boundaries or political status.

Administrative divisions

Following the administrative reform of 2016, Estonia’s first-order administrative divisions (ADM1s) are the 79 municipalities (64 rural: *vald* and 15 urban: *linn*). The previous ADM1s, counties (*maa*), are still frequently used for reference (and thus are included in the table below), but no longer have administrative significance.

County (maa)	Municipality (vald – rural; linn - urban)	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre (official list, shown with generic term)	Centre (no generic)	Centre position
Harju	Anija vald	EE-141	Kehra linn	Kehra	59°20’N, 25°20’E
Harju	Harku vald	EE-198	Tabasalu alevik	Tabasalu	59°26’N, 24°32’E
Harju	Jõelähtme vald	EE-245	Jõelähtme küla	Jõelähtme	59°26’N, 25°06’E
Harju	Keila linn	EE-296	Keila linn	Keila	59°18’N, 24°24’E
Harju	Kiili vald	EE-305	Kiili alevik	Kiili	59°18’N, 24°49’E
Harju	Kose vald	EE-338	Kose alevik	Kose	59°11’N, 25°11’E
Harju	Kuusalu vald	EE-353	Kiiu alevik	Kiiu	59°27’N, 25°24’E

County (maa)	Municipality (vald – rural; linn - urban)	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre (official list, shown with generic term)	Centre (no generic)	Centre position
Harju	Loksa linn	EE-424	Loksa linn	Loksa	59°35″N, 25°43″E
Harju	Lääne-Harju vald	EE-431	Paldiski linn	Paldiski	59°21″N, 24°04″E
Harju	Maardu linn	EE-446	Maardu linn	Maardu	59°28″N, 24°59″E
Harju	Raasiku vald	EE-651	Aruküla alevik	Aruküla	59°22″N, 25°04″E
Harju	Rae vald	EE-653	Jüri alevik	Jüri	59°21″N, 24°54″E
Harju	Saku vald	EE-719	Saku alevik	Saku	59°18″N, 24°40″E
Harju	Saue vald	EE-726	Saue linn	Saue	59°19″N, 24°33″E
Harju	Tallinn	EE-784	Tallinn	Tallinn	59°27″N, 24°45″E
Harju	Viimsi vald	EE-890	Viimsi alevik	Viimsi	59°30″N, 24°51″E
Hiiu	Hiiumaa vald	EE-205	Kärdla linn	Kärdla	59°00″N, 24°45″E
Ida-Viru	Alutaguse vald	EE-130	Iisaku alevik	Iisaku	59°06″N, 27°20″E
Ida-Viru	Jõhvi vald	EE-251	Jõhvi linn	Jõhvi	59°22″N, 27°26″E
Ida-Viru	Kohtla-Järve linn	EE-321	Kohtla-Järve linn	Kohtla-Järve	59°24″N, 27°13″E
Ida-Viru	Lüganuse vald	EE-442	Kiviõli linn	Kiviõli	59°21″N, 26°58″E
Ida-Viru	Narva linn	EE-511	Narva linn	Narva	59°22″N, 28°10″E
Ida-Viru	Narva-Jõesuu linn	EE-514	Narva-Jõesuu linn	Narva-Jõesuu	59°27″N, 28°03″E
Ida-Viru	Sillamäe linn	EE-735	Sillamäe linn	Sillamäe	59°22″N, 27°46″E
Ida-Viru	Toila vald	EE-803	Toila alevik	Toila	59°25″N, 27°32″E
Jõgeva	Jõgeva vald	EE-247	Jõgeva linn	Jõgeva	58°44″N, 26°24″E
Jõgeva	Mustvee vald	EE-486	Mustvee linn	Mustvee	58°51″N, 26°56″E
Jõgeva	Põltsamaa vald	EE-618	Põltsamaa linn	Põltsamaa	58°39″N, 25°58″E
Järva	Järva vald	EE-255	Järva-Jaani alev	Järvi-Jaani	59°02″N, 25°52″E
Järva	Paide linn	EE-567	Paide linn	Paide	58°52″N, 25°34″E
Järva	Türi vald	EE-834	Türi linn	Türi	58°48″N, 25°25″E
Lääne	Haapsalu linn	EE-184	Haapsalu linn	Haapsalu	58°56″N, 23°33″E
Lääne	Lääne-Nigula vald	EE-441	Taebala alevik	Taebala	58°57″N, 23°44″E
Lääne	Vormsi vald	EE-907	Hullo küla	Hullo	58°59″N, 23°14″E
Lääne-Viru	Haljala vald	EE-191	Võsu alevi	Võsu	59°34″N, 25°58″E

County (maa)	Municipality (vald – rural; linn - urban)	ISO 3166-2 code	Centre (official list, shown with generic term)	Centre (no generic)	Centre position
Lääne-Viru	Kadrina vald	EE-272	Kadrina alevik	Kadrina	59°20″N, 26°08″E
Lääne-Viru	Rakvere linn	EE-663	Rakvere linn	Rakvere	59°21″N, 26°22″E
Lääne-Viru	Rakvere vald	EE-661	Sõmeru alevik	Sõmeru	59°21″N, 26°26″E
Lääne-Viru	Tapa vald	EE-792	Tapa linn	Tapa	59°15″N, 25°57″E
Lääne-Viru	Vinni vald	EE-901	Pajusti alevik	Pajusti	59°17″N, 26°25″E
Lääne-Viru	Viru-Nigula vald	EE-903	Kunda linn	Kunda	60°00″N, 26°32″E
Lääne-Viru	Väike-Maarja vald	EE-928	Väike-Maarja alevik	Väike-Maarja	59°08″N, 26°15″E
Põlva	Kanepi vald	EE-284	Kanepi alevik	Kanepi	57°59″N, 26°46″E
Põlva	Põlva vald	EE-622	Põlva linn	Põlva	58°04″N, 27°04″E
Põlva	Räpina vald	EE-708	Räpina linn	Räpina	58°05″N, 27°28″E
Pärnu	Häädemeeste vald	EE-214	Uulu küla	Uulu	58°17″N, 24°35″E
Pärnu	Kihnu vald	EE-303	Linaküla	Linaküla	58°08″N, 23°58″E
Pärnu	Lääneranna vald	EE-430	Lihula linn	Lihula	58°40″N, 23°50″E
Pärnu	Põhja-Pärnumaa vald	EE-638	Vändra alev	Vändra	58°38″N, 25°03″E
Pärnu	Pärnu linn	EE-624	Pärnu linn	Pärnu	58°23″N, 24°30″E
Pärnu	Saarde vald	EE-712	Kilingi-Nõmme linn	Kilingi-Nõmme	58°08″N, 24°57″E
Pärnu	Tori vald	EE-809	Sindi linn	Sindi	58°24″N, 24°40″E
Rapla	Kehtna vald	EE-293	Kehtna alevik	Kehtna	58°55″N, 24°51″E
Rapla	Kohila vald	EE-317	Kohila alev	Kohila	59°10″N, 24°44″E
Rapla	Märjamaa vald	EE-503	Märjamaa alev	Märjamaa	58°54″N, 24°25″E
Rapla	Rapla vald	EE-668	Rapla linn	Rapla	59°00″N, 24°48″E
Saare	Muhu vald	EE-478	Liiva küla	Liiva	58°36″N, 23°13″E
Saare	Ruhnu vald	EE-689	Ruhnu küla	Ruhnu	57°48″N, 23°14″E
Saare	Saaremaa vald	EE-714	Kuressaare linn	Kuressaare	58°15″N, 22°30″E
Tartu	Elva vald	EE-171	Elva linn	Elva	58°13″N, 26°25″E
Tartu	Kambja vald	EE-283	Ülenurme alevik	Ülenurme	58°19″N, 26°43″E
Tartu	Kastre vald	EE-291	Kurepalu küla	Kurepalu	58°20″N, 26°49″E

<i>County (maa)</i>	<i>Municipality (vald – rural; linn - urban)</i>	<i>ISO 3166-2 code</i>	<i>Centre (official list, shown with generic term)</i>	<i>Centre (no generic)</i>	<i>Centre position</i>
Tartu	Luunja vald	EE-432	Luunja alevik	Luunja	58°22"N, 26°54"E
Tartu	Nõo vald	EE-528	Nõo alevik	Nõo	58°16"N, 26°32"E
Tartu	Peipsiääre vald	EE-586	Alatskivi alevik	Alatskivi	58°33"N, 27°12"E
Tartu	Tartu linn	EE-793	Tartu linn	Tartu	58°22"N, 26°45"E
Tartu	Tartu vald	EE-796	Kõrveküla alevik	Kõrveküla	58°25"N, 26°46"E
Valga	Otepää vald	EE-557	Otepää linn	Otepää	58°03"N, 26°30"E
Valga	Tõrva vald	EE-824	Tõrva linn	Tõrva	58°00"N, 25°54"E
Valga	Valga vald	EE-855	Valga linn	Valga	57°47"N, 26°03"E
Viljandi	Mulgi vald	EE-480	Abja-Paluoja linn	Abja-Paluoja	58°07"N, 25°20"E
Viljandi	Põhja-Sakala vald	EE-638	Suure-Jaani linn	Suure-Jaani	58°32"N, 25°28"E
Viljandi	Viljandi linn	EE-897	Viljandi linn	Viljandi	58°22"N, 25°36"E
Viljandi	Viljandi vald	EE-899	Viljandi linn	Viljandi	58°22"N, 25°36"E
Võru	Antsla vald	EE-142	Antsla linn	Antsla	57°49"N, 26°32"E
Võru	Rõuge vald	EE-698	Rõuge alevik	Rõuge	57°44"N, 26°54"E
Võru	Setomaa vald	EE-732	Värskä alevik	Värskä	57°57"N, 27°38"E
Võru	Võru linn	EE-917	Võru linn	Võru	57°51"N, 27°00"E
Võru	Võru vald	EE-919	Võru linn	Võru	57°51"N, 27°00"E

Useful references and resources

Estonia

Place Names Board of Estonia: <http://www.eki.ee/knn/index2.htm>

Place Names Act of Estonia: <http://www.eki.ee/knn/kns2.htm>

Estonia Toponymic Guidelines: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/docs/10th-uncsgn-docs/econf/Toponymic_Guidelines_Estonia_2012.pdf

The Institute of the Estonian Language is one of the main research centres for names in Estonia: <http://www.eki.ee>

The National Place Names Register is available at <https://maaamet.ee/en/spatial-data-and-maps/address-data/place-names-register> in Estonian and English. It is maintained by the Estonian Land Board, which ensures the validity and legal compliance of all names entered into the register. The Land Board has integrated the register with its other spatial data, including its Address Data

Register, an online handbook for the management of address data, which includes 259 pages of instructions, one third of which relate directly to geographical names.

General

- BBC Country Profile: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17220810>
- CIA World Factbook: <https://www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/estonia>
- FCDO Geographical Names Index (GNI): <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/geographical-names-and-information>
- FCDO Travel Advice: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/estonia>
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/>
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com; www.omniglot.com
- PCGN Country Names list: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/country-names>
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server (GNS): <http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/>

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