

FINLAND

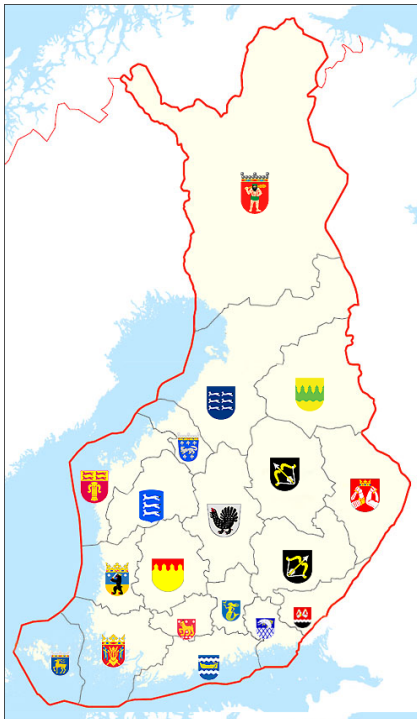


FLAG

On a white background, Finland Flag landscapes a blue Nordic cross, which signifies Christianity. The Finland flag has colors of Blue and White. The national flag of Finland has a coat of arms in the middle, but is otherwise indistinguishable to the civil flag. The swallow-tailed state flag is used by the armed. The presidential normal is undistinguishable to the swallow-tailed state flag but also has in its top left corner the Cross of Liberty. Like Sweden's,

Finland's national flag is founded on the Scandinavian cross.

It was accepted after independence from Russia, when many loyal Finns required a special flag for their country, but its design was created during 19th century. Finnish flag has blue coloring is said to signify the country's thousands of lakes and the sky, with white for the snow that concealments the land in winter. This color blend has also been used over the periods in various Finnish regional, military, and town flags.



FACTS AND STATISTICS

Location: Northern Europe, Scandinavia, bordering Norway 729 km, Sweden 586 km, Russia 1,313 km

Capital: Helsinki

Climate: cold temperate; potentially subarctic but comparatively mild because of moderating influence of the North Atlantic Current, Baltic Sea, and more than 60,000 lakes

Population: 5.5 million (2019 est.)

Ethnic Make-up: Finn 93%, Swede 6%, Sami 0.11%, Roma 0.12%, Tatar 0.02%

Religions: Evangelical Lutheran 89%, Russian Orthodox 1%, none 9%, other 1%



Government: republic

LANGUAGES FINLAND



Of the two official languages of Finland, Finnish is the first language spoken by 93% of the country's 5 million inhabitants. Finnish, unlike Scandinavian languages, is not Germanic but in a class of its own. Theoretically, it is related to Hungarian but in practice the two are not mutually comprehensible.

The other official language, Swedish, is spoken by around 6% of the population, most of whom live in the south west and are also speakers of Finnish.

Sami is a minority language in Scandinavia that is spoken by around 2,000 people living in the north of Finland, which is 0.03% of the Finnish population.

FINLISH SOCIETY & CULTURE

Nordic but not Scandinavian

- Finland along with Iceland is Nordic rather than Scandinavian.

- This is reflected in their language which is not Germanic in origin.
- While many social values are the same, there are subtle differences with Scandinavians.

Finnish Egalitarianism

- Finland is an egalitarian society, which is reflected in their language, which employs gender-neutral words.
- Finns are very modest and downplay their own accomplishments.
- They view being humble and modest as virtues.

Finnish Behaviour

- Finns believe there is a proper way to act in any circumstance and always expect courteous behaviour.
- Talk in moderate tones and do not do anything to call attention to yourself.
- Serial conversation is the rule - i.e. listen to the speaker, wait for them to finish and then reply. Interrupting is rude.

Fancy a Sauna?

- The sauna has a special role in the domestic life of Finns.
- It is an experience **Finnish Gift Giving Etiquette**
- shared with family and friends.
- Important business meetings may be followed by a sauna in which the conversation is continued on a more informal basis.
- Saunas are found everywhere: At the end of calendar year 2002, there were 1,212,000 saunas in private apartments and another 800,000 in summer cottages and public swimming pools. This translates to more than 2,000,000 saunas for a population of 5.2 million. By 2013 (population 5.3 million) there were an estimated 3.3 million saunas! Even more!

ETIQUETTE AND MANNERS IN FINLAND

Finnish Meeting Etiquette

- Greetings are formal, with a firm handshake, direct eye contact, and a smile.
- It is common practice to repeat your first and surname while shaking hands.
- When greeting a married couple, the wife should be greeted first.

- If you are invited to a Finn's home, bring flowers, good quality chocolates or wine to the host.
- Flowers should not be given in even numbers.
- Do not give white or yellow flowers since they are used at funerals.
- Do not give potted plants.
- Gifts are opened when received.

Finnish Dining Etiquette

- If you are invited to a Finn's home:
- Arrive on time. Finns are punctual in both business and social situations.
- Remove your outdoor shoes before entering the house.
- Contact the hostess ahead of time to see if she would like you to bring a dish.
- Offer to help the hostess with the preparation or clearing up after a meal is served.
- If you are invited for coffee and cake, there may be as many as 7 cakes to sample.
- Do not discuss business.
- Thank the hosts for the hospitality before saying good-bye to the other guests.

Table Manners

- Wait to be told where to sit.
- Table manners are Continental -- hold the fork in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
- Always keep your hands visible when eating. Keep your wrists resting on the edge of the table.
- Do not begin eating until the hostess invites you to start.
- Bread and shrimp are the only foods eaten by hand. Even fruit is eaten with utensils.
- Accept second helpings.
- When passing salt and pepper shakers, put them on the table within the person's reach. Do not give them directly.
- Men should keep their jacket on at meals unless the host removes his.
- Finish everything on your plate. Finns do not appreciate waste.
- When you have finished eating, place your knife and fork across your plate with the prongs facing down and the handles facing to the right.

Tipping

- Tipping is not expected, nor widely practiced in Finland.
- Most restaurants include service charge on their bills and serving staff typically receive decent wages, which means they are not dependent on tips.

ESTONIA

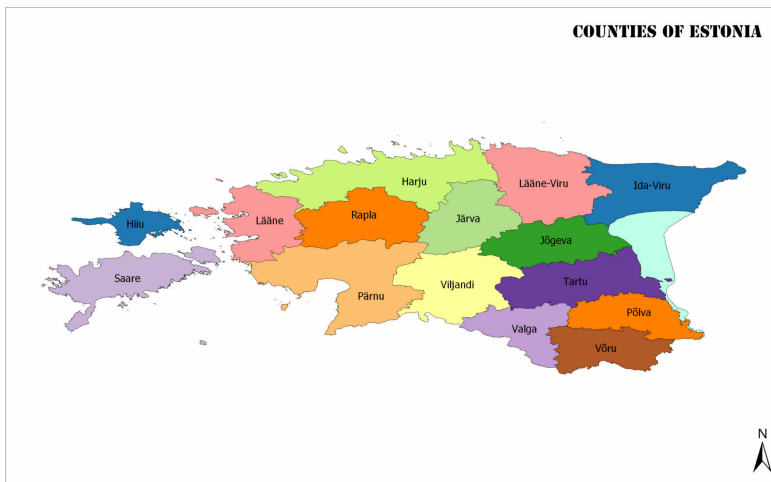


FLAG

On May 8, 1990, the Estonia flag was formally accepted by the unitary parliamentary republic. The color blue signifies loyalty, and the country's lovely blue skies, seas and lakes. The color black in Estonia flag represents the past domination and the fertile soil, and white signifies virtue, winter snows, and Estonia's long struggle for freedom and independence.

Estonia's coat of arms is an excellent shield, surrounded by oak branches, with three blue lions loaded on top of each other. The first of the three lions means the courage in the fight for independence during

early times, the second for revolts in Harjumaa, and the third fight for freedom during modern times. The oak branches characterize perseverance and strength.



Location: Eastern Europe, bordering the Baltic Sea and Gulf of Finland, between **Latvia** and **Russia**

Capital: Tallinn

Climate: Maritime, wet, moderate winters, cool summers

Population: 1.3 million (2019 est.)

Ethnic groups: Estonian 65.3%, Russian 28.1%, Ukrainian 2.5%, Belarusian 1.5%, Finn 1%, other 1.6%

Religions: Evangelical Lutheran, Russian Orthodox, Estonian Orthodox, Baptist, Methodist, Seventh-Day Adventist, Roman Catholic, Pentecostal, Word of Life, Jewish



Estonian is the official language of Estonia.

It is spoken by about 1.1 million people in the country itself and then thousands of others outside it too.

Estonian is a Finno-Ugric language and is closely related to Finnish and distantly to Hungarian.

It has been influenced by German, Russian, Swedish and Latvian, though it is not related to them.

ESTONIAN CULTURE AND SOCIETY

Religion

- During the Soviet administration, religion became a form of silent protest for most Estonians.
- Since independence religious organizations have again begun to appear.
- The largest church is the Estonian Evangelical Lutheran Church.
- In 1989, the largest churches established the Council of Estonian Churches (CEC) with the purpose of uniting the different churches to promote spiritual development for all Estonians

The Role of the Family

- The family is still the central focus of social life.
- The makeup of the family is usually "nuclear" in cities and "extended" in rural areas although this is a slight generalisation.

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- Family ties and very close which means newlyweds will often live with parents until on their feet and the old are generally looked after rather than put in care homes.

Hierarchy in Estonian Society

- Estonia is a hierarchical society.
- Age, experience and position earn respect.
- Older people are generally viewed as wiser and as a result revered and honoured.
- Elders are introduced first and in general, are treated much like royalty.
- Those in senior positions bear the responsibility to make decisions in the interest of the group.
- Due to seniority titles are very important when addressing people.
- It is expected that you will use a person's title and surname until invited to use their first name.

Cultural Traditions

- Estonian culture as an identity is very strong.
- Oral traditions especially have played a key role in preserving traditions, stories and customs during the Soviet administration.
- Singing is a very Estonian activity and the Estonians are known to have sung their way to freedom during the "Singing Revolution" of 1989-91.

Manners

- Estonians on the whole are quiet and reserved.
- They tend to speak softly and do not like to draw attention to themselves.
- Being rational, calm and not going to emotional extremes are all qualities that respected.
- At first, Estonians can come across as aloof. Once a relationship warms up this becomes less so.

ETIQUETTE AND MANNERS IN ESTONIA

Meeting and Greeting

- Greetings can come across as rather formal and rather reserved.
- Men should initiate greetings with women and the younger person always greets the older person.

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- When meeting someone make sure you are stood up, offer direct eye contact and give a nice firm handshake.
 - The most common greeting is "tere" ("hello").
 - Titles are very important. "Härra" is for Mr, "Prova" is Mrs and "Preili" is Miss. All should be followed with the surname.
 - Only use first names once you have been invited to do so.

Gift Giving Etiquette

- Gifts are usually exchanged for birthdays and at Christmas.
- Gifts need not be expensive as it is more about the thought than monetary worth.
- If you are invited to an Estonian's house, a decent gift is a bring a box of chocolates or flowers.
- Flowers should be given in odd numbers.
- Gifts are usually opened when received.

Dining Etiquette

- Arrive on time. Punctuality is expected. Call if running late.
- Check to see if shoes are being worn in the house.
- Do not expect a tour of the house - homes are private.
- Dress conservatively.
- Try and offer to help the hostess with the preparation or clearing up after a meal is served. This will be turned down but is nonetheless polite.
- Do not discuss business.
- Reciprocate any hospitality received.

Table Manners

- Table manners are relatively formal in Estonia.
- Remain standing until invited to sit down.
- Table manners are Continental, i.e. the fork is held in the left hand and the knife in the right while eating.
- Do not begin eating until the hostess starts or someone says "head isu" ("good appetite").
- Avoid resting your elbows of the table.
- Compliment the hostess on the meal.

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- Try to finish everything on your plate.

Tipping

- Although tipping isn't compulsory in Estonia, it is part of Estonian custom to reward good restaurant service with a 10% tip.
- Tips are generally accepted by other service providers, if offered (e.g. by rounding up the taxi bill, or by giving a small tip to porters and housekeepers) but they are not expected.