

ESTONIA

NATACHA 37



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You, cyclists who like to climb, discover in these few pages what makes the list of the national challenge in Estonia so rich.

GEOGRAPHY

MEDIA

TOURISM

SPORT

Estonia

Geography

Estonia (Estonian: Eesti), in long form the Republic of Estonia (Estonian: Eesti Vabariik), is a sovereign state in Northern Europe, whose territory extends over the eastern flank and almost 2,200 islands of the Baltic Sea. The mainland has land borders with Russia to the east and Latvia to the south, while the western archipelago makes up the bulk of the country's islands.



The name "Estonia" derives from the Estonian people. The origins of this people's name throughout history may have come from Germanic roots via the Gothic tribal name aistan ("respect, honour"), or via the words āst, eest ("barn, granary"), or aistmar ("amber sea").

As far as our cycling is concerned, the terrain in Estonia is straightforward. There are higher areas to the south and east. Estonia's terrain is characterised by fairly low altitudes and a large number of lakes and around 150 rivers. The highest point is Suur Munamägi, located in the south-east of the country. Ten per cent of the country is made up of an archipelago of more than 1,500 small islands in the Baltic Sea, the two largest of which are Hiiumaa (989 km²) and Saaremaa (2,673 km²).

The road and motorway network has a total length of 89,382 km. Another factor to consider is the country's population density, which is very low at around 30 inhabitants per km². Distances to the most remote parts of the country are therefore proportionately longer.

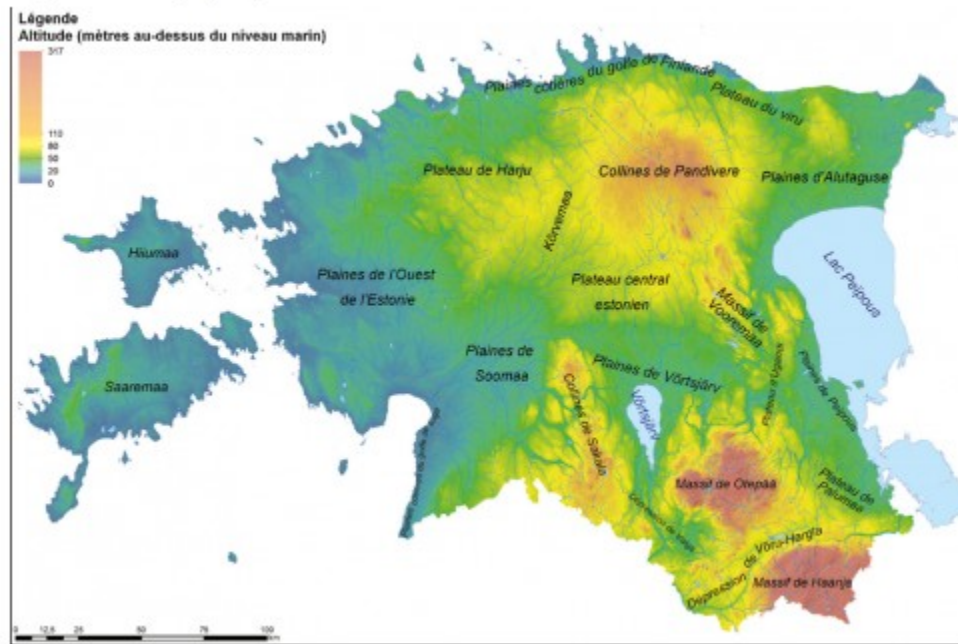
Compared with its Baltic neighbours, Estonia has a road network that lends itself well to cycle tourism. The secondary roads are almost all tarmac, as long as you don't enter remote areas. Study the map carefully, and beware of western maps, particularly IGN, which do not always have surfacing information.

- As far as tyres are concerned, semi-slicks (or city tyres) are the best choice. They also allow you to drive in neighbouring countries without too many problems.

- Watch out for spare parts. Few towns have bike shops. You may have to travel fifty kilometres.

Let's take a look at the topographical map to see how densely populated the country is.

Figure 2 : Topographie de l'Estonie



Estonia's topography is not very pronounced, with only slight differences in height and altitude (rarely more than 30 metres).

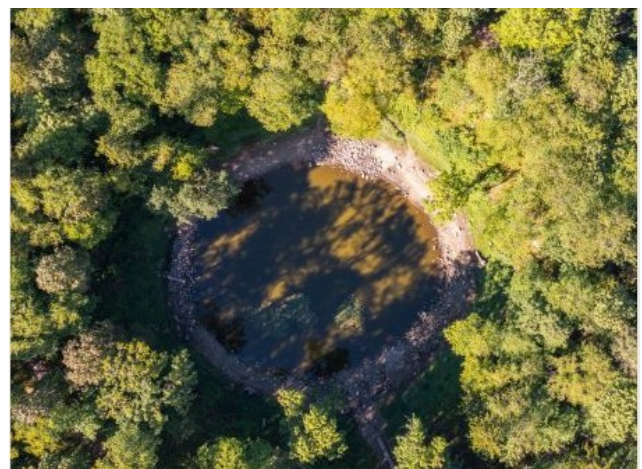
Estonia has five main hill ranges

- 1) The **Haanja range** (in the extreme south-east) is the highest massif, and is home to the highest point in Estonia and the Baltic states: the "Great Egg Hill" (Suur-Munamägi, 317 m).
- 2) the **Otepää range** (to the south)
- 3) The **Karula range** (to the south) is linked to the previous massif.
- 4) The **Pandivere range** (north-east) is fairly flat.
- 5) The **Sakala range** (south-west) is characterised by the presence of numerous valleys.

There are also more than 100 man-made hills in the north-east of the country, formed from the waste products of oil shale mining: the highest are the Kiviõli hills, which are 101 and 115 metres high respectively (higher than the natural hills, the highest of which (Vällamägi, in the Haanja massif) is only 88 metres high in relative terms (at 304 m, it is the second highest peak after Suur-Munamägi). There are also a number of meteorite craters (such as Kaali, on the island of Saaremaa, a group of 9 craters formed around 9,500 years ago).



Vällamägi



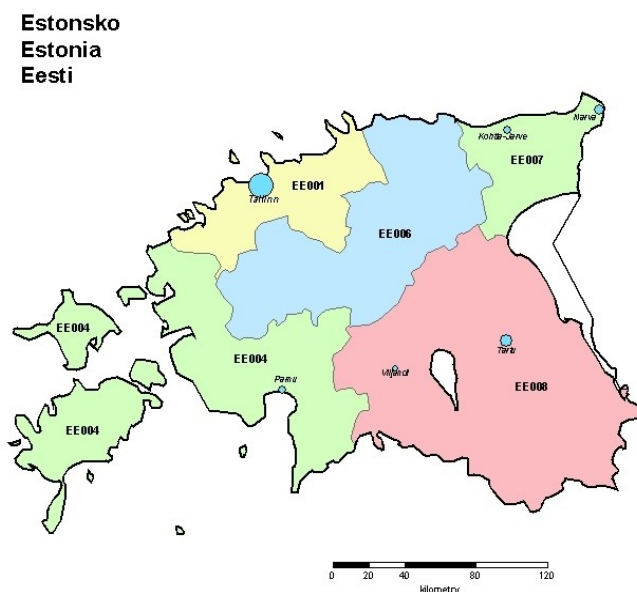
The Kaali meteorite crater

Estonia is divided administratively into 15 regions known as "maakond".



Its surface area (45,227 km²) and general relief are close to that of the Netherlands. A challenge comprising 50 natchas seemed appropriate.

The NUTS3 breakdown gives 5 regions, which is a lot for 50 elected women.



Our national challenge has been divided into 2 zones

EE01 - Põhja-Eesti (North), Kesk-Eesti (Centre), Kirde-Eesti (North-east) 15 (yellow, blue and green to the north)

EE02 - Lääne-Eesti (West), Lõuna-Eesti (South)

35 (green and red to the south)

Estonian tourism

The Estonian people are proud of their identity and culture, which they have managed to preserve throughout the ages, despite various periods of occupation.

Estonians know how to make the most of their distinctive features and make the experience easier for tourists. You'll have no trouble accessing points of interest that will help you discover the essence of their culture.

There are 6 Bulgarian national parks, with the top two selected from our list

Lahemaa inland. A varied landscape, from the coasts of the Gulf of Finland to the vast forests and peat bogs

EST-005 Silla Allika

Karula Cultural landscapes in the hills of southern Estonia.

EST-042 Rebäsejärv (Lake)

Soomaa Vilsandi fauna. Large network of wetlands in the Pärnu river basin. the eastern part of the island of Vilsandi and the small islands around it. Rich in flora and fauna.

Matsalu Coastal wetlands, refuges for an extremely rich avifauna.

Alutaguse Peat bogs, forests. Fairly rich fauna.



Lahemaa National Park and its peat bogs



The hills of Karula National Park

One of Estonia's two UNESCO World Heritage sites is represented

Official Unesco Heritage

1) Historic Centre (Old Town) of Tallinn (1997)

EST-004 Toompea (Tallinn)



The historic centre of the capital

2) Struve Geodetic Arc (2005)

There are nature parks and protected areas

- 1) Toila rand / Beach + Toila-Oru park MKA / Protected Landscape Area
EST-009 Oru park (Toila)
- 2) Emumäe MKA / Protected Landscape Area
EST-015 Emumägi
- 3) Luua mõisa park / Manor Park + Vooremaa MKA / Protected Landscape Area
EST-020 Luua mõis / Luua Manor
- 4) Viljandi järv / Lake + Viljandi MKA / Protected Landscape Area
EST-022 Pikk (Viljandi)
EST-023 Kõrgemäe & Tartu-Mäe (Viljandi)
- 5) Karksi MKA / Protected Landscape Area
EST-030 Karksi-Nuia
- 6) Rutu MKA / Protected Landscape Area
EST-031 Rutu MKA / Protected Landscape Area
- 7) Otepää looduspark / Nature Park
EST-034 Tehvandi suusahüppetorn / Tehvandi Ski-jumping Hill
EST-035 Tornimäe
EST-036 Küljemäe
EST-037 Harimägi
- 8) Piusa-Võmmorski hoiuala (Võru) / Nature Reserve
EST-045 Kiksova
- 9) Andsu järvede MKA / Protected Landscape Area
EST-046 Raudsepa
- 10) Haanja looduspark / Nature Park
EST-047 Vaarkali
EST-048 Süür Munamägi
- 11) Mõisamõtsa LKA / Nature Reserve
EST-050 Suure-Tamme



Oru Park



The road to Süür Munamägi

There are 3 castles, a manor house and a cathedral.

Toompea loss / Castle

EST-004 Toompea (Tallinn)

Toolse ordulinnus / Toolse castle

EST-006 Toolse park

Luuu mõisa park / Manor Park

EST-020 Luua mõis / Luua Manor

Vastseliina piiskopilinnus / Episcopal Castle

EST-049 Meremäe vaatetorn

Aleksander Nevski katedraal / Alexander Nevsky Cathedral

EST-004 Toompea (Tallinn)



Toompea Castle



Alexander Nevsky Cathedral

The country's history has left us 2 monuments on our ascents:

Monument in memory of the deportees from Rakvere in Siberia

EST-011 Küüditatute mälestusmärk Okaskroon / Okaskroon Monument

The sleeping lion

EST-029 Anrepi lõvi / Sleeping Lion (Kabelimäe)

There is also a cave:

Piusa koopad / Caves

EST-046 Raudsepa



To the Piusa caves



The Okaskroon monument

Three of Estonia's many lakes have the privilege of being included in our climbs:

Lake Viljandi

EST-022 Pikk (Viljandi)

EST-023 Kõrgemäe & Tartu-Mäe (Viljandi)

Lake Saadjärv

EST-025 Salu

Lake Pühajärv

EST-036 Küljemäe



Lake Viljandi



Lake Küljemäe

Panoramic views from observation towers or lighthouses

EST-010 Sinimägede vaatetorn / Sinimäe Observation Tower

EST-016 Kõpu tuletorn / Lighthouse (Hiiumaa)

EST-037 Harimägi

EST-048 Süür Munamägi

EST-049 Meremäe vaatetorn



Meremäe observation tower



Harimägi and its pretty gravel



Kõpu lighthouse



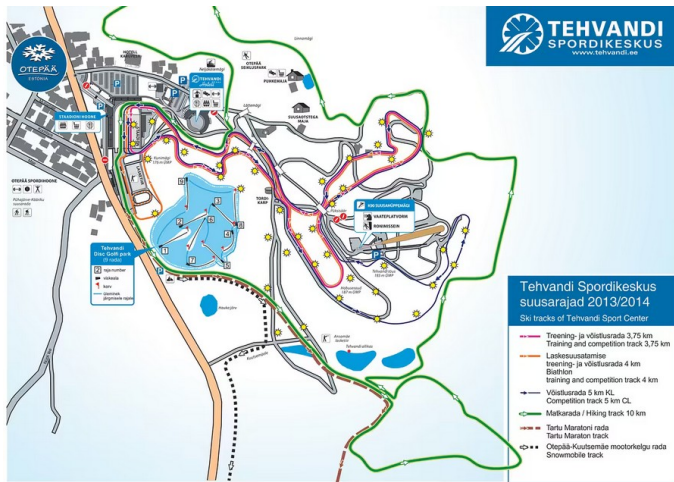
The Sinimägede observation tower

A ski resort has been elected

Otepää suusakeskus / Ski resort

EST-034

Tehvandi suusahüppetorn / Tehvandi Ski-jumping Hill



Otepää resort

The sautoir is next to the road

And local originality

A movie museum

EST-003

Mäe

Adventure parks

EST-007

Rakvere maantee / Rakvere Street (Kunda)

EST-012

Tuhamägi / Ash Hill (Kiviõli)

The highest point in the country

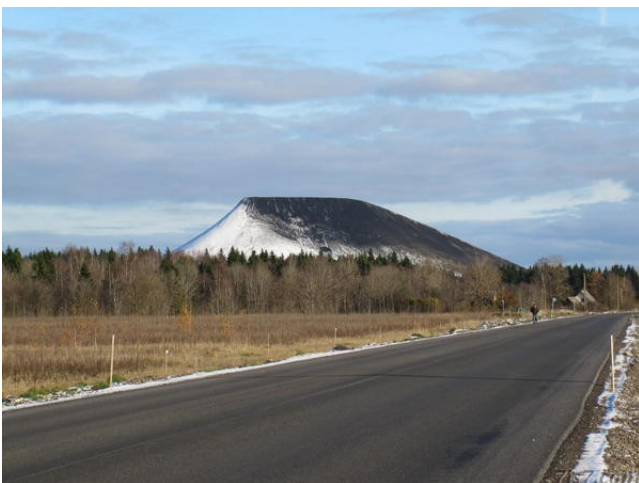
EST-048

Süür Munamägi

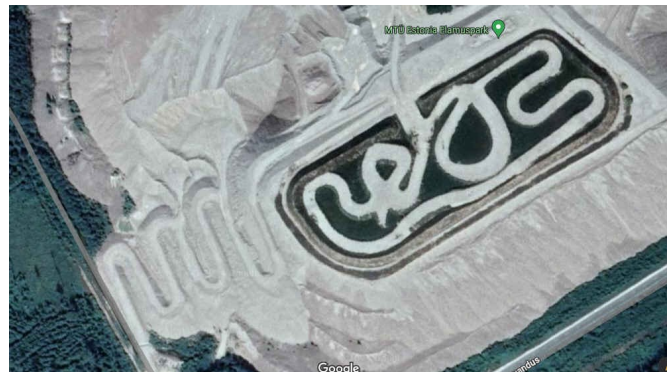
The artificial hill of Motomägi

EST-013

Motomägi



Tuhamägi / Ash Hill (Kiviõli)



Motomägi or how to build laces on sand

The sporting side of Estonia's climbs

Here are the TOP10 longest climbs in Estonia

49	NE	Meremäe vaatetorn	8 km
47	N	Vaarkali	6
17	W	Laiuse mägi	4,8
10	NE	Sinimägede vaatetorn / Sinimäe Observation Tower	4,4
49	N	Meremäe vaatetorn	4,4
49	SW	Meremäe vaatetorn	4,4
15	W	Emumägi	4,3
39	SE	Kulli	3,7
37	N	Küljemäe	3,2
29	NE	Anrepi lõvi / Sleeping Lion (Kabelimäe)	3,1

We can conclude from this that the climbs are often fairly short.



The road to Meremäe



The sleeping lion

The TOP10 most uneven climbs

47	N	Vaarkali	121 m
49	NE	Meremäe vaatetorn	117
37	S	Harimägi	96
35	NW	Tornimäe	92
37	N	Küljemäe	77
49	N	Meremäe vaatetorn	73
34	N	Valgjärve	72
29	NE	Anrepi lõvi / Sleeping Lion (Kabelimäe)	71
46	N	Raudsepa	70
28	NW	Paluküla	68

Here are the top 10 Estonian cycling climbs by average percentage

48	NW	Süür Munamägi	8,9 %
12	N	Tuhamägi / Ash Hill (Kiviõli)	7,7
18	NE	Tammeallee	7,6
19	SW	Raadivere	7,6
23	S	Kõrgemäe & Tartu-Mäe (Viljandi)	7,2
42	S	Rebäsejärv (Lake)	7,2
44	N	Kundruse	6,8
27	W	Erumäe park	6,6
45	N	Kiksova	6,5
38	SW	Kirikuküla	6,3

And the top 10 for maximum hectometre percentage

23	S	Kõrgemäe & Tartu-Mäe (Viljandi)	17 %
22	E	Pikk (Viljandi)	17
19	SW	Raadivere	14
27	W	Erumäe park	14
38	SW	Kirikuküla	13
49	NE	Meremäe vaatetorn	13
18	NE	Tammeallee	12
44	N	Kundruse	12
1	N	Paldiski gaasikompressorjaam / Gas Compressor Station	12
26	N	Salu	12



The tower at the top of Estonia



A wall of Viljandi

In terms of total energy expenditure, what is the top 10 Estonian europoints?

49	NE	Meremäe vaatetorn	90,9 €-points
48	NW	Süür Munamägi	82,5
35	NW	Tornimäe	76,5
47	N	Vaarkali	66,5
37	S	Harimägi	57,9
40	S	Kulli	54,9
17	W	Laiuse mägi	54,6
18	NE	Tammeallee	53,2
15	W	Emumägi	52,6
34	N	Valgjärve	51,5

As for explosiveness, here are the TOP10 bombs

23	S	Kõrgemäe & Tartu-Mäe (Viljandi)	24,7 Points-Bomb
22	E	Pikk (Viljandi)	22
19	SW	Raadivere	22
27	W	Erumäe park	21
18	NE	Tammeallee	20,1
38	SW	Kirikuküla	19,7
12	N	Tuhamägi / Ash Hill (Kiviõli)	19,2
44	N	Kundruse	19
42	S	Rebäsejärv (Lake)	18,5
1	N	Paldiski gaasikompressorjaam / Gas Compressor Station	18,2

Estonian cycle races

Some Estonian cyclists are well known in the professional peloton

* The best known is **Rein Taaramäe**. In 2011, he took fourth place in Paris-Nice and finished as the best young rider in the event, before winning a stage of the Vuelta in a summit finish. In 2014, he won the stage of the Tour of Turkey, the finish of which was marked by the famous Elmalı. He has been Estonian champion several times.

* In 2012, **Tanel Kangert** had his best season ever, winning a stage in the Tour de Suisse and the Estonian road championship.

* There are also a number of Estonian female cyclists, including **Laura Lepasalu** and **Laura Lizette Sander**.



Rein Taaramäe escapes over a mountain pass



Tanel Kangert wins Swiss stage



Laura Lepasalu

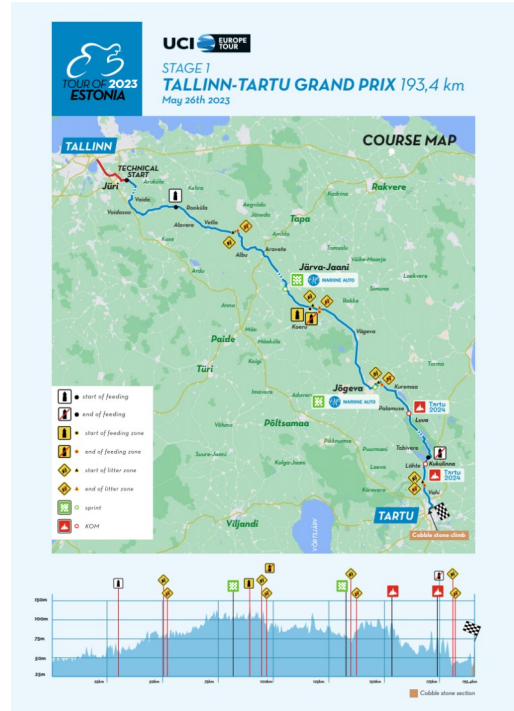
Tour of Estonia

The Tour of Estonia (officially Tour d'Estonia) is a cycling event created in 2013. It takes the form of a stage race. It has been part of the UCI Europe Tour in category 2.1 since its creation in 2013. The 2020 edition has been cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

A women's event was launched in 2022, in the form of a one-day race.



Mixed race



Saw-tooth profile



A Swede leads the way in an Estonian climb



*Women's podium 2024
Olivija Baleišyte (2nd-LVA), Eline Van Rooijen (1st-NED), Laura Lizette Sander (3rd-EST)*

Our list includes two climbs that have become classics:

EST-020 **Luua mõis / Luua Manor**

EST-026 **Lossi & Lai (Tartu)**



The profile of the stage passing the Luua GPM



And the cobbles from Lossi to Tartu

The Baltic Chain Tour

The first international cycle race in the Baltic States took place in 1889, from Riga (Latvia) to Tallinn (Estonia), and the first Baltic Tour was held in 1955.

Since 1959, the tour has visited three Baltic countries. For many, it was a preparation for the Peace Race.

The current record holder is Estonia's Ants Väravas, who won the race three times, in 1959, 1962 and 1964.

The Baltic Chain Tour is a stage race for professional cyclists organised as part of the UCI continental circuits.

This tour lists 3 of our finest cycling products for climbers

EST-015	Emumägi	BCT 2022 in particular and Tour of Estonia 2018
EST-023	Kõrgemäe & Tartu-Mäe (Viljandi)	classical
EST-028	Paluküla	BCT 2021 in particular



The folder



And the finish at the top of Tartu



Emumägi and its 8% panel



Viljandi's 18% panel ahead of the actual 18% from Kõrgemäe & Tartu-Mäe

Finally, there is a well-known cyclosporitive event, the **Gran Fondo Tartu Rattaralli**



The 2024 edition



The cyclospor riders ready for the Gran Fondo Serie

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