

Estonia

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POPULATION: 1,570,000

- 61% Estonians
- 30% Russians
- 9% others

AREA: 45,200 sq km (17,500 sq miles)

POPULATION DENSITY: 35 per sq km (21.7 per sq mile)

CAPITAL: Tallinn, 453,000 inhabitants

MAJOR CITIES: Tartu 109,000 - Norva 80,000 - Kohtla-Jarve 71,000 - Parnu 52,000

HISTORY

The Finno-Ugric people migrated from the east and reached the shores of the Baltic around 3000 BC. During the following millennia they assimilated with the native people of the Kunda culture as well as North-Germanic and East-Slavonic people. In the 12th century AD, the local tribes developed into a more or less unified nation who called themselves "Maarahvas".

For centuries, Scandinavians, Germans, Poles, and Russians invaded the land. The Christianization was undertaken by German crusaders in the beginning of the 13th century and completed by 1220. During the middle ages, Estonia was an important link in the East-West Trade routes, and the towns of Tallinn, Tartu, Viljandi, and Parnu were members of the Hanseatic League. Estonia became a part of the Russian Empire in 1710. The name "Estonians" came to use in the middle of the 19th century along with the national awakening and the birth of Estonian nationhood. Between the two World Wars (1918 - 1940), Estonia was an independent republic. The Estonians finally regained their independence in 1991 with the collapse of the Soviet Union.