

“Introduce Estonia” sub-strategy of tourism

INSTRUCTIONS FOR FOCUS TOPIC OF WELLNESS HOLIDAY



Euroopa Liit
Europa
Regionaalarengu Fond



Eesti arengufond



Clearly the main motivation for visiting Estonia on wellness holidays is to improve one's health and look better. We have plenty of opportunities for wellness and spa holidays with very affordable prices. In addition we have many spas focusing on medical treatment and rehabilitation. Services offered include curative mud, healing water and other treatments using the resources of our pure nature.

An Estonian wellness holiday can first and foremost be positively surprising, as the top level spa experiences with city-like comfort is often offered literally in the middle of a thick forest or at a quiet beach. Nevertheless, the trip from the capital city to these spas only takes up to 2–3 hours. In addition we should note the potential offered by our cold and wet winter. Several elements of a wellness holiday that sound extreme to many tourists are perfectly normal here. Take jumping into ice cold water straight from a sweating bench, for example. A jacuzzi with a view through a window protecting you from a blizzard – this is a good example of memorable relaxation.





Arguments:

- * THERE ARE A LOT OF RESORTS WITH LONG TRADITIONS IN ESTONIA, where you can enjoy top-notch spa and wellness packages.
- * OUR SPA HOTELS ARE LOCATED IN VERY CALM PLACES SURROUNDED BY INCREDIBLE NATURE.
- * ESTONIA IS A SPA PARADISE – taking into consideration its small territory and population we have an impressive number of spas – more than 40.
- * A WIDE RANGE OF SERVICES IS OFFERED, starting from simple relaxing and beauty procedures, and ending with specialised medical treatment.
- * ESTONIAN SPAS OFFER SOME COMPLETELY UNIQUE PROCEDURES NOT FOUND ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE – for example, only here you can take baths in Värskä mineral water and cure yourself with mud from Pärnu or Haapsalu.
- * WELLNESS HOTELS ARE NOT ONLY APPEALING BECAUSE OF THEIR TREATMENTS – these are accompanied by top-notch cuisine and culinary experiences. For example, the Pädaste wellness hotel on Muhu Island has repeatedly been awarded several titles – lately a British trend magazine Tatler listed Pädaste among the 101 best spas in the world naming it a “small pearl”.
- * THERE ARE PLENTY OF HEALTH TRAILS NEAR THE ESTABLISHMENTS OFFERING WELLNESS HOLIDAY PACKAGES, so you can do sports, hike, watch nature, etc.





Symbols:

- 1 **HAAPSALU** – the first resort in Estonia, the favourite summer holiday destination of Russian celebrities and noblemen still charms with its beautiful wooden old town, promenades, castle and beaches.
- 2 **PÄRNU** – a place that during the first republic became the prime resort of Estonia with its curative mud facility opened in 1927, numerous spas and water parks is officially the summer capital of Estonia and attracts most wellness tourists.
- 3 **KURESSAARE** – for Estonians the capital of spa is Saaremaa. Probably the most luxurious wellness and spa hotels of Estonia, GO Spa, Grand Rose, etc. are located in its centre, Kuressaare.
- 4 **NARVA-JÖESUU** – Riviera of the North. One of the four resorts with long traditions, that could boast of its 7.5 km long sandy beach, the longest in Estonia, and a 4-star wellness hotel of Meresuu.





5 NOSTALGIC MEDICAL SPAS – despite renovations and active development projects the spas of Värskä, Toila, Narva-Jõesuu and Laine in Haapsalu still have a feel of the past and previous political order.

6 SANDY BEACHES – Estonia can be proud of its beautiful sandy beaches. There are plenty of them for all tastes. Our public beaches are safe, clean and popular, but you can also find completely private and undiscovered loughs welcoming you for a swim. In addition we have countless beautiful lakes with sandy shores.

7 HEALTH TRAILS – Estonia is known to have close to 80 official health trails open all year round. In winter you can find more than 600 kilometres of well prepared ski tracks here. All of them running through beautiful and crisp Nordic nature.

8 SAUNA – the sauna is Estonians' ancient health centre. You can find a sauna or even a complex of saunas as an integral part of all modern spas in Estonia. It is a positive feature of our spas that, for example, the famous Hungarian thermal spas don't offer.





Interesting facts about wellness holidays in Estonia

- * **ESTONIANS RESPECT THE SAUNA** to such an extent, that they have built them into buses, rafts and even into a cistern of an old fire-engine. The most well-known floating sauna called Püha Müristus (Holy Moses) is on the River Navesti in Soomaa National Park. Sauna-barrel is a mobile sauna that you can take with you even to a winter forest next to a ski track.
- * For cultures not familiar with the sauna, **SLAPPING WITH TWIGS IS A SIGN OF PURE INSANITY** – to heat up your body to an edge of endurance and then beat it with thin twigs. The habitual slappers don't even say no to using stinging nettles and juniper twigs for that purpose.
- * At the most popular events on Estonian health trails **12,010 PEOPLE WERE REGISTERED SKIING OR DOING SOME OTHER WINTER SPORTS ON THE SAME DAY**. Adding up all health kilometres of the participants the distance was 97,304.2 km. This is more than two spins around the world.
- * **THE ESTONIAN MUD TREATMENT TRADITION STARTED IN HAAPSALU**, and dates back to the 1820s. The healing powers of our unique mud have been thoroughly studied, and its diverse usefulness is scientifically proven. Mud from Värskä is one-of-a-kind in the world containing a lot of oestrogen, the female hormone that makes the mud unbeatable in its skin rejuvenating characteristics.
- * For giants of Russian culture, Pyotr Tchaikovsky, Nicholas Roerich and others coming here following the **RUSSIAN CZARS** – starting from Peter I until the last czar Nicholas II – Haapsalu was a highly valued place of creation and recreation, where their world-famous works were born.
- * No other place has as many spas per capita as there is in Estonia – **MORE THAN 40 SPAS FOR 1.3 MILLION PEOPLE**.
- * **KURESSAARE** has only 15,170 permanent inhabitants, while there are **1,230 BEDS IN THE SPAS**, making Kuressaare probably the most spa-dense town in the world.

Business tourism in the context of a wellness holiday

From the point of view of a business traveller elements of a wellness holiday may work as significant added value, when deciding in favour of Estonia – both in the case of conference tourism and when travelling for more personal reasons. The high-quality health, wellness and beauty procedures offered here might be used as necessary relaxation during a business trip, or work as an argument to extend business travellers' stay in Estonia. In any case wellness holidays could be combined with elements of nature and culture holidays. We have great golf courses and ski tracks in beautiful nature, excellent for people, who value active nature holidays. Certainly it is possible in Estonia to smoothly join the intense work life with a routine free, healthy and relaxing vacation.

Let us also remember, that for business tourists the possibilities offered by Estonia as an innovative e-country work as a significant added value: first and foremost good cell phone and Internet connections allowing one to read stock exchange news, and send e-mails both in forests, at beaches and by swimming pools. For business travellers with fast-moving lives we can also offer spa hotels straight in the capital city or at close quarters – let us mention Tallink Spa and Conference hotel, Pirita Top Spa, and Viimsi Spa.

Exciting and memorable experiences could also be offered in such natural "health stations" as barrel-saunas, floating saunas and smoke saunas.





Family tourism in the context of a wellness holiday

Aspects of a wellness holiday could also be important extra arguments in promoting family holidays in Estonia concentrating on discovering nature or doing sightseeing – starting from a joint visit to an aquapark, and finishing with enjoying a health procedure package suitable and necessary for all members of the family.

Spa hotels and aquaparks are initially created keeping in mind a good family holiday. Different water slides, pools for children and games rooms, self-evidently present in each of those establishments, offer children inexhaustible friskiness, thus giving the parents an opportunity to loosen up for a couple of hours.

In summer during the high season of tourism families also look for beaches – the sun, sea, fresh air, an ever-exciting opportunity for children to build sand castles, etc. If this is still not enough, Pärnu, Haapsalu, Stroomi and Kakumäe beaches also have massive complexes of playgrounds, where all members of the family can find entertainment of their type and feel comfortable.

KEY SYMBOL

CURATIVE MUD

The main symbol of the topic is curative mud. Curative mud, useful in many ways, can be used for muscle toning purposes both in baths and poultices, plus as an extra in massages.

Mud from Värskä is considered as a unique curative sweet water mud, that arguably has no equivalent. Thick mud is diluted with 570-million-year-old extremely salty Värskä water that in its turn makes a truly unique combination not found any where else in the world.

Mud baths offered in Saaremaa use ideal mud from Mullutu-Suurlahe, rich in hydrogen sulphide and organic substances.

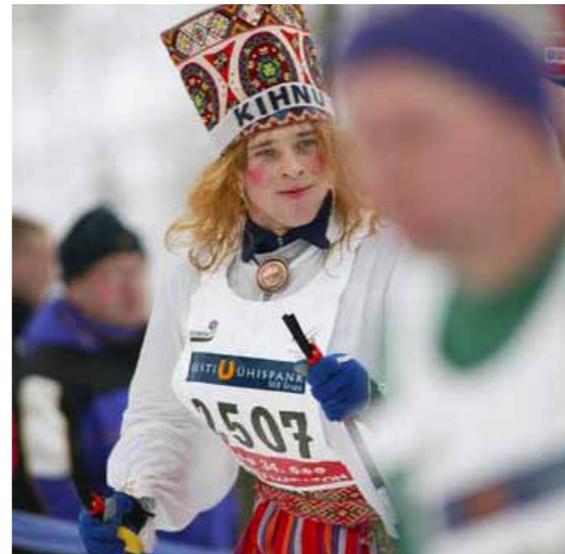
Also mud from the Gulf of Käina and Gulf of Haapsalu have very good healing powers – these could be tried out in spas of Haapsalu and Pärnu.

Mud procedures with long traditions that at the first glance look quite unappetising work as an ideal source to create materials and commercials introducing wellness holidays in Estonia. A dark and slippery substance that brings no associations with an enjoyable vacation to inexperienced people, but is known for rejuvenating skin, healing joints and at least 100 more diseases, offers a lot of interesting contrasts when combined with regular spa holiday symbols (female body in relaxed position, clean towels, fancy and healthy meals, etc.). If photos cannot bring a surprise to the commercial another option is to twist it with the text, emphasising the fact that this unattractive looking substance is one of the most pure natural things in the whole of Europe.



Photos of wellness holidays

Photos of wellness holidays should emphasise the sensuous pleasures offered here. Spas and sanatoriums on photos of architecture or interior design are not exactly informative and will not make one go there. Thus shots of relaxed people should be preferred, as the message important for us can only be conveyed through a person – a wellness holiday in Estonia is truly relaxing and a full – on pleasure.



Ideas for souvenirs in the context of a wellness holiday

- * Set of mud creams
- * Special soaps made from local nature – mud soap, mineral soap, sand soap, tar soap
- * Värska water in exclusive package
- * Juniper sauna scoops
- * Slapping twigs for sauna
- * Sauna sits with WTE branding





Experts and sources of information on the area

Estonian Spa Association www.estonianspas.com

A book: "Eesti saun" by Tamara Habicht, Ilo 2008



www.visitestonia.com