

SAUNA CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

Finland, Estonia, Latvia





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Ask advice from professional rural tourism associations – experts in rural holidays:

South Coast Finland - www.visitlohja.fi

Estonia - www.maaturism.ee

Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania - www.countryholidays.lv

General country information (official tourism website):

Finland - www.visitfinland.com

Estonia - www.visitestonia.com

Latvia - www.latvia.travel



Destination area - South Coast of Finland, Estonia, Latvia

The north-eastern part of the Baltic Sea washes three states – Finland, Estonia and Latvia.

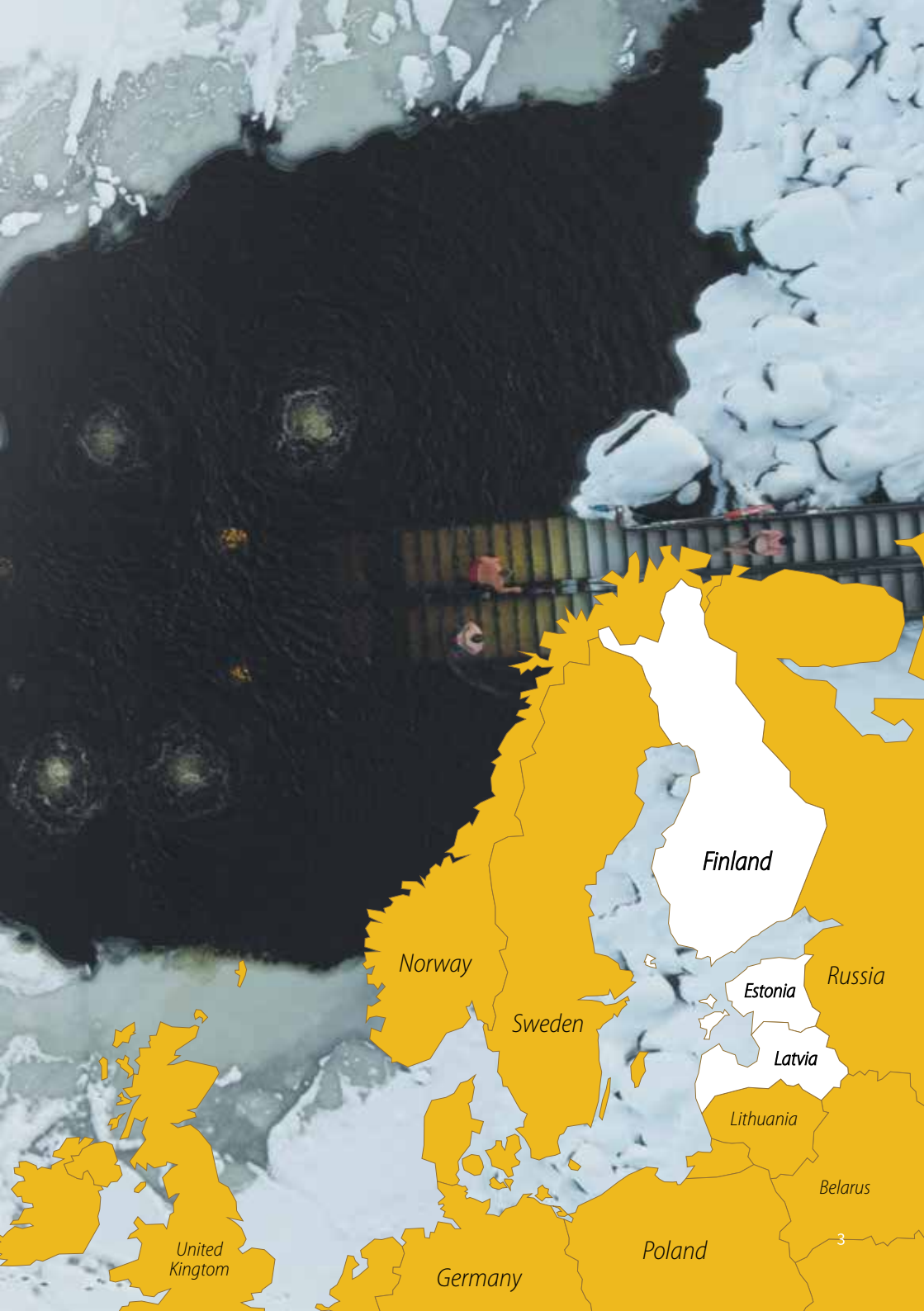
For centuries these countries have shared a common cultural landscape, exchanged and mutually enriched one another's culture. The way of life in this region, characterized by shared cultural context, values and natural resources, has developed traditions specific to each nation yet keeping the common Nordic-Baltic spirit in every cultural expression. For this reason it is worthwhile taking a closer look into the region to find out which heritage values it has to offer.

The sauna tradition is thought to originate somewhere in northern Europe around 2,000 BC and has remained an important part of cultural life to this day in many countries including Estonia, Latvia, and Finland.

The locals indeed like to debate who now has the best saunas, but the truth is that their building techniques and traditions have evolved mostly in parallel for the past few thousand years, which is why saunas are a way of life and in many ways, the history of sauna is really a history of us.

In addition to the sauna traditions the countryside provides a varied ambience of heritage - numerous national parks, contrasting coastlines, historic sites, varied landscapes, rich wildlife, charming small towns full of history and peaceful milieu.

Visiting all three countries in one trip is very easy - relatively short travelling distances between and within the countries due to their small size, no border formalities since all are in EU, the same time zone, the same currency and similar climate.



Finland

Norway

Sweden

Estonia

Russia

Latvia

Lithuania

Belarus

Poland

Germany

United Kingdom



Sauna experience on the South Coast of Finland, in Estonia and in Latvia

Sauna is such a big part of our region's culture that it can't be compared to anything else. Sauna bathing is part of the identity and it is sacrosanct for local people. After the long traditional sauna session, the mind-set of local people will become understandable. Sauna has always been an important facility for many functions. It has in the same time a very practical and a spiritual environment.

The Finnish sauna culture is probably the best-known in the world, but also Estonia and Latvia have a strong sauna heritage that deserves to be explored.



FINNISH traditional sauna is a rustic building with wooden walls, floor and ceiling. There is a stove, which is heated with wood, electricity, oil or gas. The top of the stove is covered with a thick layer of natural stones, which radiate the heat to the room. Humidity is regulated by small doses of water ladled repeatedly onto the stove stones. The temperature varies between 70 and 100 °C, depending on the size of the room. Bathers warming up in the hot room help perspiration by using a whisk made of tender birch twigs. Warming-up is followed by washing and cooling off in the open air.

Finnish sauna became world-famous after the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin, when a small private sauna was built for the participating Finnish athletes. The venture gave publicity to the idea of sauna all over the world.

Contemporary Finnish sauna is a clean, light and silent space renowned for its curative properties as well as a luxurious place of cleansing. Nowadays people see sauna bathing as a social event.



ESTONIANS simply love the sauna and smoke sauna tradition in Võromaa is on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity (UNESCO).

A smoke sauna is a great way to experience ancient traditions. The smoke sauna distinguishes from the other types of saunas in many respects. The rocks in the vaporising stove are heated with logs. The sauna has no chimney and so the smoke from the burning wood circulates in the room before escaping through the door or through a small vent inside the wall. After heating the sauna is ventilated, so that by the time it is ready to use, the smoke has disappeared from the room.

The smoke sauna is heated for up to 6 hours, and the sauna session itself can often stretch for hours. There is even no need to use the detergents in such a sauna, as the body is already clean by repeated hot steaming, whisking, rinsing and cooling. It is also praised that the mind becomes just as clean and light.

Usually, the smoke saunas are next to a body of water and after staying in the steam it is common to bath in open water. In winter, a hole is made into the ice that covers the water body in order to enable bathing. Between series of stays in the hot room people rest, drink herbal tea or water.

Every smoke sauna is a little different and sauna customs can vary from one family to the next, so it would be wise to ask for assistance and observe the local customs carefully.

Although the native inhabitants consider the smoke sauna to be the 'right' kind of sauna to this day, Estonians also 'heat up' a pretty decent Finnish sauna. For the sake of clarity - Estonians market wood-heated stove sauna with a chimney under the name 'Finnish sauna', but these kind of saunas are just as much as smoke sauna a part of Estonian sauna history and it would be more correct to name them using the word 'leilisaun' (a sauna with a wave of steam and heat).

The sauna tradition in LATVIA is unique. By observing the wisdom of the sauna ritual of Latvians, you can escape the problems and troubles of everyday life, get rid of stress, and revive the spirit. The real Latvian sauna ritual is usually held for one, two or most three people at once. It is a deeply personal experience that is usually shared with your closest people or you only and the sauna master (pirtnieks) so you can fully relax and feel comfortable.

Latvian sauna rituals differ from the others in the region because of using many different wild plants and herbs during the sauna session. In Latvian sauna tradition, people go to sauna three or four times per a sauna session. The first entry is just for heating up and relaxation. The second one is to scrub the body with different natural ingredients. The third entry is the main one, when the sauna master will treat you with a whisk, after which you will cool down in cold water.

The entire process of Latvian sauna ritual is not only physical. Deep relaxation, herbal aromatherapy and sudden contrasts between hot and cold environment may expand your consciousness and even blow you into another reality for a while.

Despite the fact that local people cherish the sauna rituals and kindly introduce them to guests, at the same time going to a casual modern sauna with an electric stove, which you can find in many hotels, guesthouses, sports club or SPA´s, is also wide-spread in our region.



Sauna culture is with deep roots

For centuries, sauna has been a place for physical and spiritual cleansing, for getting bare in all senses of the word and entering the core of humanity.

The ancestors of our region used their sauna for healing, the sauna was known as the poor man's pharmacy or cure. It was also the hospital where folk healers practiced their art. They administered baths and massaged people with the whisks, they cupped and cured with the spells and helped women to deliver babies.

Sauna was also a place for performing magic. The wise woman or man called previous generations to help for performing magic. The smell of herbs, darkness, moon and the wise people's spells were the main tools of magic.

Also, sauna had a practical function. It was the first building and shelter when a farm was moved into a new location. The warmth and smoke of sauna was used for drying flax, cereals or herbs, preparing malts, smoking meat and for many other agricultural or domestic chores.

The tradition of the sauna, carried on unbroken for about two thousand years, is deeply rooted in the way of life in our region.







Sauna for the health

Nearly every culture has its own way of using heat for relaxation, therapy and ritual. One of the oldest of these techniques is the sauna.

- Sauna would prevent colds, soften up tense muscles and alleviate any pain, exhaustion or depression.
- Saunas aid in recovery after intense physical activity.
- Sauna flushes toxins from your body and during sauna bath natural chemicals, endorphins, which reduce mental stress are released.
- Studies have shown that going to the sauna regularly reduces the risk of many illnesses such as incidences of Alzheimer's and the risk of fatal cardiovascular disease.
- Hot steam that occurs when water is thrown onto the stones of the stove cleanses the skin and increases heart rate.
- When sitting in the sauna, you might feel as if it is easier to breathe and move. This is the heat doing its magic by expanding your bronchi and relaxing the joints.
- Saunas can induce a deeper sleep - that is why for many the sauna means a way to ensure a good night's sleep.
- One activity in a traditional sauna is whisking. Whisking increases the blood circulation in the skin, speeds up perspiration and produces a pleasant aroma in the hot room.

› Cosmetic care

Sauna can also provide cosmetic care - herbal sauna, body masks, locally made scrubs from salt and honey, oils, peat sauna etc. All of this has its own meaning and benefits - skin is cleansed of bacteria, and dead cells are replaced, leaving you with a soft, glowing appearance.

Taken in moderation, sauna baths suit everyone who is aware of his/her own limitations. In a word, sauna bathing does not only clean the body but it also purifies the mind - it is like rebirth and all unpleasant feelings fly away.



Different types of saunas

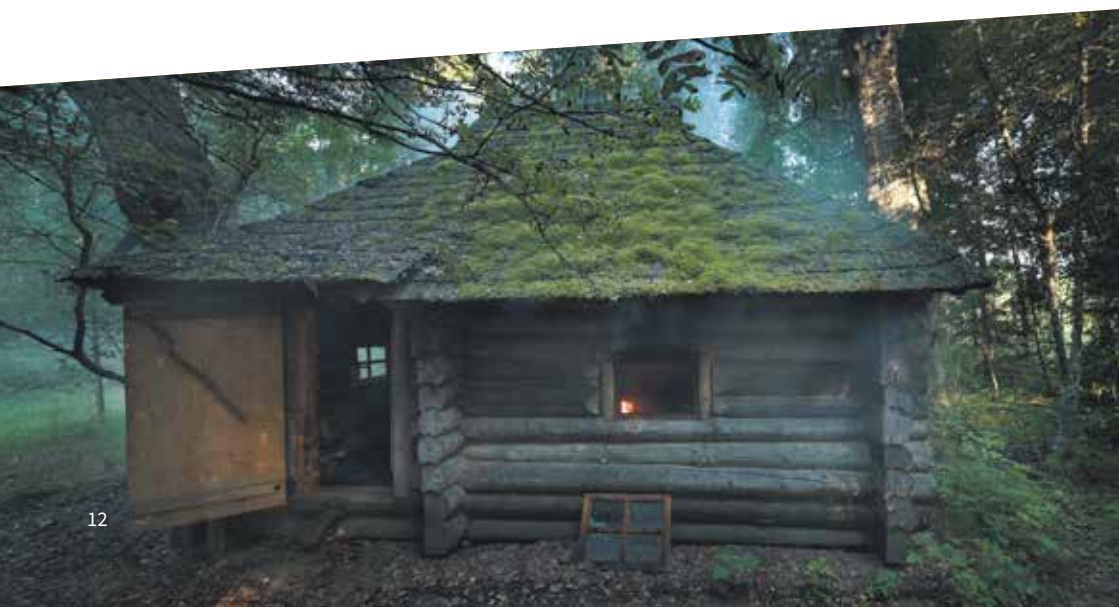
There are several types of saunas – electric saunas, wood-heated saunas, smoke saunas, barrel saunas, steam saunas, Russian saunas etc.

Rural areas in our region are characterized mostly by smoke sauna and wood-heated sauna.

The wood-heated sauna might be more of a traditional type of experience for the first-time sauna-goers, whereas the smoke sauna can give the experienced sauna enthusiasts a chance to step up a notch. But for sure the smoke sauna gives a deeper understanding of the local history and culture.

› Smoke sauna

The smoke sauna is a special type of sauna without a chimney. Wood is burned in a particularly large stove and the smoke fills the room. Natural sauna stones are heated for 6 - 8 hours. During the heating, the ventilation port and the door or window are opened to let the smoke out. When the sauna is hot enough, the fire is allowed to die and the room is ventilated. The residual heat of the stove is enough for the duration of the sauna. The smoke sauna humidity is between 40% and 60%. During the sauna session, the temperature in the sauna reduces and the humidity increases.



Smoke sauna represents the ancestral type of sauna, since chimneys are a later addition. Smoke sauna always has an elevated platform for sitting or lying and usually the hot room and washing room are combined.

Smoke saunas are still extant and part of the culture in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

› **Wood-heated stove sauna (traditional sauna)**

The wood-heated stove sauna is the most common type of sauna outside of the city areas, where the electric sauna is more common. The metal stove with stones on top is heated with birch wood fire, and this heats the sauna room to the required temperature. If birch wood is not available any other wood will do, but well dried birch wood is preferred because of its good quality and smell, and long lasting burn.

The important thing in wood-heated sauna is to have a good steam - that is when the stones are hot enough to evaporate the water thrown on them into steam that rises to the bathers.

The hot room and washing room are separate rooms in a traditional sauna.

The temperature in wood-heated stove saunas is 60 to 100°C (140 to 212°F), usually 70–80°C (158–176°F) depending on the size of the room.



Different types of whisks

Whisking is a kind of massage-like cleansing ritual that accelerates blood circulation and metabolism, opens skin pores and promotes the removal of residues from the body. Whisking improves sleep and the mood and organizes one's thought.

A fresh whisk can be made from virtually any tree, but the most common ones are birch and oak. However, the best time to harvest twigs for making whisks is on a clear sunny morning after the dew has dried. The leaves should not be too large or the tree resinous, and the twigs should be taken in such a way that the remaining twigs of the tree gain strength and light for growth.

The whisk carries the power of plants and the whisk maker binds his/her good thoughts and wishes into the whisk.

The most common types of whisks:

Birch whisk – works well on joint and muscle pain and relieves fatigue. Since birch leaves contain vitamins A and C, whisking with a birch whisk strengthens the immune system and cleanses the skin.

Oak whisk – has a balancing and stress-relieving effect and helps with high blood pressure. In addition, it improves sleep and the mood and invigorates the heart. Tannin in oak leaves relieves joint diseases.

Linden whisk – stimulates kidney function and is anti-bacterial. In addition it relieves headaches, gout and helps to recover from cold.



• Juniper whisk

• Birch whisk

• Oak whisk

Rowan whisk – cleans the air in the steam room and strengthens the nervous system. Fluffiness can be added to the whisk with willow and birch twigs. It is an old belief that all the bad things can be whisked off using a rowan whisk in the hot room.

Ash whisk – the leaves of ash are rich in etheric oils, carotene and ascorbic acid, which makes the ash whisk anti-inflammatory and good for rheumatism and radiculitis.

Juniper whisk – stimulates the skin's blood circulation, and its aroma is good for the respiratory tract. Juniper releases phytocides that reduce allergies and radiculitis. Fresh juniper whisks can be made all year round.

Maple whisk – tones and cleanses the skin and is antiseptic, as the maple contains alcoloids and ascorbic acid.

Common mugwort whisk – is known for curing wounds and erysipelas.

Lilac whisk – is antipyretic, antimicrobial, and has a soothing and analgesic effect.

Hazel twigs – are added to a birch whisk when it comes to arousing spiritual power or curing skin diseases.

Herbs and plants with healing properties are often added to whisks - for example, mint, oregano, melissa, rosemary, blackcurrant, cherry, fireweed, yarrow, hops, cumin, etc.

Recommendations for whisking

- ▶ Drink herbal tea or mineral water before going to the sauna.
- ▶ Before whisking, it is advisable either to dip the whisk in warm water to soften the leaves or to braise the whisk near the sauna stove.
- ▶ Rinse the body with warm water before staying in the steam; do not wash with soap, but rather peel with salt.
- ▶ Lie on the sweating bench and whisk all body parts. Start whisking from the bottom of your feet and move upwards.
- ▶ It is recommended to whisk for 10-15 minutes and have 2-3 sets of whisking per sauna session.
- ▶ Cool your head and observe your state of feeling!

Tips for visiting a sauna

Have you ever experienced a traditional wood-heated sauna or smoke sauna? Do you dare? We encourage you to give it a try - you may like it so much that you come back for this over and over again.

Here are some tips to start with.

► Hydrate!

Drink plenty of water or tea before, during, and after your sauna experience. A light meal before you go is also recommended.





› Get Comfortable with Nudity

Locals usually sauna-bath in nude. However, if you feel more comfortable bathing with a towel around you, that's totally OK. But actually it can be quite liberating to give up on any attempt at modesty.

In the smoke sauna, however, be prepared that the walls are dark and your towel can be stained.

› Watch and Learn

Simply observe and listen the sauna patrons and follow their lead. The most important thing is to relax, socialize and enjoy the moment.

› Shower

Begin your sauna ritual with a wash or shower. Rinse off thoroughly with warm water. The temperature here is moderate and gentle. Sit and relax for a while if it is needed

› Sweat It Out

When you are acclimated to the temperature and well hydrated, it's time to enter the main sauna. The atmosphere here will be extremely hot and dry thanks to a well-stocked fire.

› Benches

There are usually multiple levels of wooden benches, with the heat intensifying as it rises. Sauna aficionados will recline on the top benches and wear woolen caps to trap even more heat in their body, but you should listen to yourself. It's important to know your limits. You can always sit on a lower bench or go outside to cool down whenever you feel like it.

Using your personal bench towel makes your sauna experience more comfortable

› Throwing water onto the stones of the stove

Hot steam awakens the spirit of sauna. When you get used to the initial heat of the sauna throw small amounts of hot water onto the stones of the stove. Relax, listen to the sound and enjoy the warm humid steam. Start easily and throw amounts that feel good for you.

› Skin scrubbing

Once your skin is warm, it's time to exfoliate. Herbs, salt, honey, yoghurt and different mixtures, even special mud or peat– it will really deep-clean your pores. Different sauna entrepreneurs offer different options and mixtures and all of this is good for you and your skin health.

› Sauna whisk massage

Now comes the most interesting part of the sauna ritual - whisking. The sauna whisks are used for gently patting yourself on the legs and upper body. Wet leaves flying through the heat help mix the layers of air in the room and act as a gentle massage increasing blood circulation in your body.

Whisks can be made from a range of trees, birch, oak and maple being the most popular, but also juniper, linden and pine tree are used. The whisks are made of young twigs of the trees and different herbs are sometimes added for aroma or healing purposes.

At the beginning of the summer, making your own sauna whisk is sure to be an experience as well.

› Heat

Sauna can be hot, but it's not dangerous to your body. It's totally normal for your skin to flush and sweat. Hurry and noise are out of the question and so is reckless competition about who stands the heat best. The temperature should be 80-90°C; one session of ten minutes at a time will be enough. In between the sessions take a

break, cool down, hydrate and then go for another exhilarating round. When it gets too hot in the sauna, it is recommended to either move to lower levels, go outside to cool down, take a shower or go for a swim. Sauna is all about relaxation and enjoyment, listen to your body and cool down when needed.

Warming up and cooling off can be repeated as many times as feels good. The optimal time one should spend in the sauna hot room should be no longer than 30 minutes.

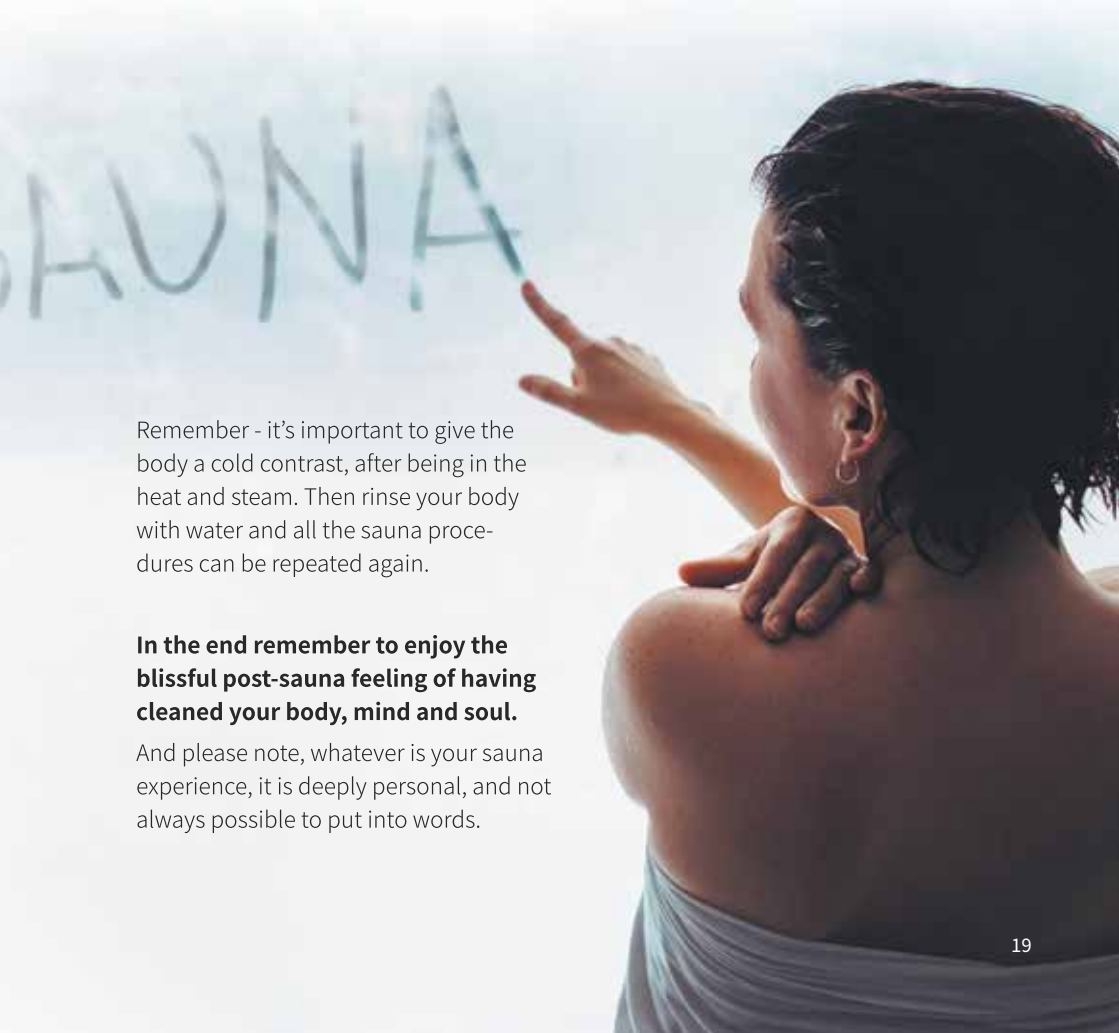
› Refreshing

When you feel all heated up, get ready for the fun side of sauna - rolling in the grass during summer or in the snow during winter, going into a lake or in an ice hole during winter or just letting the steam evaporate on a quiet evening in the nature.

Remember - it's important to give the body a cold contrast, after being in the heat and steam. Then rinse your body with water and all the sauna procedures can be repeated again.

In the end remember to enjoy the blissful post-sauna feeling of having cleaned your body, mind and soul.

And please note, whatever is your sauna experience, it is deeply personal, and not always possible to put into words.



SAUNA TERMINOLOGY

Explanation		FIN	EST	LAT
Smoke sauna/ black sauna	A type of sauna without a chimney, where wood is burned in a particularly large stove and the smoke fills the room while it is heated. Later the smoke is ventilated out.	savusauna	savusauna	meilnāpirts
Sauna	Traditional wood-heated sauna with a stove.	sauna	saun	pirts
Stove with stones		kiuas	keris	pirtskrāsns
Stones of the sauna stove		kiuaskivet	kerisekivid	akmeņi
The hot room	A room where water is thrown on the stove stones to produce the steam and heat.	lölyhuone	leiliruum	pārtnuve
Hot steam or vapour	The wave of steam and heat which is produced by throwing water on the stones of the stove.	löly	leil	gars
Whisk	A bundle of fresh birch (or other tree) twigs that you gently whip yourself with.	vihta	viht	slota
Small pail	A small pail or bucket to contain the water which will later be thrown on the stones of the stove.	kiulu	kibu	ķipis
Sweating bench in the sauna	An elevated platform to sit on in the hot room.	lauteet	saunalava	lāva

More information, exciting reading and videos on sauna and its traditions

Finland



The foreigners' guide to surviving your first sauna in Finland



Sauna - Stop-over Finland Japan



Join the Finns in the Sauna - Finland



Feel the Finnish Sauna



What does a Japanese think about the Finnish Sauna?

Estonia



UNESCO: Smoke sauna tradition in Võromaa



Smoke sauna at Mooska Farm



Estonian smoke sauna



Old Võromaa smoke sauna traditions



How to perform a ritual the #EstonianWay



Smoke sauna and customs

Latvia



Traditional sauna in rural Latvia



Sauna preparation and traditions in Latvia

Sauna related events and attractions

FINLAND

- › Sauna Day in Finland. Time: in the end of July each year.
- › Löyly - sauna experience and an urban oasis in Helsinki. Open all year round. Possibility to swim in iced water during wintertime. www.loylyhelsinki.fi/en/

ESTONIA

- › SaunafESTin Sibulatee (Onion Route). Time: in February each year.
- › SaunaRally in Noarootsi (West-Estonia). Time: in February each year.
- › European Sauna marathon in Otepää (South-Estonia). Time: in February each year.
- › Smoke Sauna Week in Haanja (South-Estonia). Time: In August each year.

LATVIA

- › Sauna museum in Latvia
Address: "Pirts Muzejs", Sējas novads, LV-2142, Latvia
Location: 40 km from Riga, near the Murjāņi–Saulkrasti road.
Sauna Museum is a private open-air museum. The museum's exposition consists of six historic saunas and one newly built sauna. www.pirtsmuzejs.lv

Sauna packages



It is possible to experience an authentic sauna ritual in any of the hundreds of rural accommodations.

Here are some hints of the programmes, where guests are guided through the process by a skilful and experienced sauna master.



Finland

Estonia

Latvia

Finland

SMOKE SAUNA AND SAUNA FOOD BY THE CAMP FIRE AT KETTUKALLION ELÄMYSTILA

Kettukallion Elämystila (Kettukallio Experience farm) is built amongst Finnish nature. You can see beautiful woods reflected from the forest pond and enjoy the silence of the nature. There are plenty of rustic tools and other items all around so there are a lot of things to wonder and watch.

Dinner is served in the idyllic Lapp hut. Dinner is cooked on open fire just for you. Dinner includes a starter salad based on Finnish vegetables and for the main course you'll have traditional Finnish sauna food: sausages and potato salad. After dinner we'll offer you coffee or tea cooked on fire and something very Finnish for dessert. e.g. apple or blueberry pie.

Smoke sauna and hot tub

Then it's time for sauna. We have a traditional smoke sauna, where you can take your time enjoying the refreshing atmosphere. Smoke sauna is the origin of our everyday sauna. Right beside the smoke sauna there is a hot tub where you can sit and relax listening to the nature. The hot tub has room for 8 persons.



Package includes:

- > dinner by the camp fire
- > smoke sauna, hot tub and towels

Optional extras: transportation, some handicrafts at Kettukallion Elämystila, beer tasting at the local brewery, accommodation and breakfast in Kettukallion Elämystila or Hotel Gasthaus Lohja.

Website: www.kettukallio.net

Location: Joenpellontie 145, 08480 Lohja, Finland

Duration: 6 hours or 8 hours including transportation from/to Helsinki.

Season: all year round

For whom: groups up to 16 persons

Distances: Helsinki 70 km, centre of Lohja 15 km

Hosts: Mrs. Terhi & Mr. Tuomas Korpijaakko

Contact: +358 44 988 5760

kettukallio.korpijaakko@gmail.com



SMOKE SAUNA AND HOME VISIT

Kettukallion Elämystila (Kettukallio Experience farm) is built amongst Finnish nature. You can see beautiful woods reflected from the forest pond and enjoy the silence of the nature. There are plenty of rustic tools and other items all around so there are a lot of things to wonder and watch.

Dinner is served in the idyllic Lapp hut. Dinner is cooked on open fire just for you. Dinner includes a starter salad based on Finnish vegetables and for the main course you'll have traditional Finnish sauna food: sausages and potato salad. After dinner we'll offer you coffee or tea cooked on fire and something very Finnish for dessert, e.g. apple or blueberry pie.

Smoke sauna and hot tub

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Accommodation in Hotel Gasthaus Lohja

You will stay the night in a nice small hotel, in the centre of Lohja city. Each person will have a single room, including bathroom with shower. The hotel always offers a high quality breakfast selection and special emphasis is put on its freshness and diversity.

Home visit at Laine family

Laine family home is located by the Lake Lohja. It's time to relax and enjoy the view and the atmosphere.

Berry-picking, mushrooming or fishing

We'll go berry picking, mushrooming or fishing in a nearby area depending on the season and weather. You will hear some stories about Finnish nature.

Picnic lunch in the forest or by the Lake Lohja

We will enjoy picnic lunch including a salad and a roll, accompanied by coffee or tea in the forest or by the lake.

Laine family garden

In our garden you will find many useful plants such as hazel nut bushes, apple trees, berry bushes, lettuces, tomatoes, strawberries etc. Even plants that attract butterflies. There are places where you can sit and just enjoy the view to the Lake Lohja. During the harvest season we can pick fruits, berries and lettuce straight from our garden.

Preparing mushroom soup and blueberry pie

We will together prepare mushroom soup and blueberry pie in our kitchen.

Sauna and swimming in the Lake Lohja

During the night there's an option to have a sauna in our home and swim in the Lake Lohja.

Writing postcards

Then you can enjoy and sit by the fireplace and write postcards back home to your loved ones. We will take them to the local post office to be sent.

Meal with Laine family

In the evening it´s time to enjoy a traditional Finnish meal and taste the food we prepared together earlier. Dinner includes salad, different sorts of fish, potatoes, sauce. For dessert blueberry pie with whipped cream and coffee or tea.

Package includes:

- transportation
- smoke sauna & hot tub at Kettukallion Elämystila
- dinner by the camp fire at Kettukallion Elämystila
- accommodation and breakfast
- 8 hours home visit at Laine family
- berry-picking, mushrooming or fishing in a nearby area depending on the season and weather
- picnic lunch in the forest or by the lake
- Laine family garden
- preparing mushroom soup and blueberry pie
- possibility to have a sauna
- writing a postcard by the fireplace
- a meal with Laine family

Optional extras: some handicrafts or beer tasting at the local brewery at Kettukallion Elämystila; guided visit to Tytyri mine experience.

Website: www.kettukallio.net,
www.gasthauslohja.fi, www.viherpiipertajat.fi
Location: Joenpellontie 145, 08480 Lohja, Finland
Duration: 1,5 days tour
Season: all year round
For whom: groups of 8 - 16 persons
Distances: Helsinki 60 km. You will visit many places throughout the tour.
Hosts: Mrs. Terhi & Mr. Tuomas Korpijaakko and Mrs. Riitta Laine
Contact: +358 44 988 5760
kettukallio.korpijaakko@gmail.com



DAY IN A FINNISH NATURE AND SMOKE SAUNA EXPERIENCE AT KETTUKALLION ELÄMYSTILA

This full day tour will give you a great, healing nature experience and also a relaxing smoke sauna and hot tub to beat your stress. The Karkali strict nature reserve is located 79km from Helsinki and the ride takes 1.5hours. You will find out more about the diverse natural features of the lush forests. There is a beautiful meadow where grass is cut once a year to keep the area open and favourable for many flowering plants, butterflies and other insects. The Torhola Cave is the largest limestone cave in Finland and it is about 30 meters high. The area is surrounded by a forest rich in many rare plant and fungus species. Kettukallion Elämystila is built amongst Finnish nature. You can see beautiful woods reflected from the forest pond and enjoy the silence of the nature. There are plenty of rustic tools and other items all around so there are a lot of things to wonder and watch.

Kettukallion Elämystila is a family owned private place. Services offered in this destination include smoke sauna, swimming, hot tub, meals, nature tours, accommodation and meetings.



Programme

- Departure from Helsinki to Karkali in the morning. The bus ride will take ca 1,5h.
- Karkali Strict Nature Reserve. The 2 km long nature trail in Karkali Strict Nature Reserve will take you to a natural spring that is used by local people and many Karkali visitors to drink water. The guide will tell you about the history of the area, the favourable climate and the rock foundation which is providing special environment for flora and fauna living in the area.
- Picnic lunch at Karkali. Hot mushroom soup, local apple juice and homemade bread.
- Torhola Cave. It is 500m walk to the cave from the parking lot.
- Walk back to the bus and continue to Kettukallion Elämystila - 13km away (~20 min drive).
- Dinner is cooked on open fire just for you and served in an idyllic Lapp hut. The dinner includes a starter salad based on Finnish vegetables and a main course: blazed salmon, baked potatoes, grilled vegetables and sauce. After dinner we'll offer you coffee or tea cooked on fire.
- Smoke sauna and a hot tub. We have a traditional Finnish smoke sauna, where you can take your time enjoying the refreshing atmosphere. Right beside the smoke sauna there is a hot tub where you can sit and relax listening to the nature. The hot tub has room for 8 persons.
- Participants are advised to wear comfortable and warm clothing and hiking boots.

Optional extras in Kettukallio: beer tasting at the local brewery, UG Brewery.

Website: www.kettukallio.net, www.nationalparks.fi/karkali

Location: Karkalintie 1035, 08100 Lohja, Finland

Duration: a day tour of 11 hours including transportation from/to Helsinki.

Season: May-October on request

For whom: groups up to 16 persons

Distances: Helsinki 79 km, Lohja 15 km

Hosts: Mrs. Riitta Laine, Mrs. Hanna Savelainen and Mrs. Terhi & Mr. Tuomas Korpijaakko

Contact: + 358 44 988 5760

kettukallio.korpijaakko@gmail.com



EXCLUSIVE HIDEAWAY RETREAT INCLUDING SMOKE SAUNA IN LÅNGSTRAND

You'll get introduced to the Finnish sauna culture with a completely private access to the sauna complex designed by a famous Finnish architect. This building, made of local logs, is located in a beautiful place by the sea. There is a large wood-heated sauna as well as a traditional smoke sauna. Cool down in the sea water or heat up in the Jacuzzi. Enjoy the heat of the fireplace at the terrace. You'll stay overnight in a premium log house and you will wake up refreshed like a new person. Villa Långstrand is a perfect place for a relaxing vacation with privacy. You can enjoy your vacation in the middle of beautiful nature but still stay in a fully equipped house. Two large log houses, large Beach Sauna and a separate Smoke Sauna with Jacuzzi make your vacation a complete experience. Villa Långstrand is located in the idyllic Tammisaari. Enjoy the Finnish nature.

Programme

- Transportation to / from your hotel / airport
- Welcome drinks
- Large wood-heated sauna / Traditional smoke sauna / Jacuzzi
- Swimming in the Baltic Sea (all-year round)
- Sauna terrace with a fireplace for cooking sauna sausage, sauna refreshments
- Accommodation in a log premium cabin with breakfast

Optional extras: fishing, tennis court, boating (try our rowing boat). Catering service can be arranged.



Website: www.villalangstrand.fi

Location: Transportation from the closest train station (Tammisaari) can be pre-arranged.

Duration: 2 days

Season: all year round

For whom: families / private groups (2-10 persons)

Distances: Helsinki 100 km / 1,5 hour

Host: Mr. Antti Hannula

Contact: +358 40 544 7586

antti.hannula@hbe.fi





Estonia

EXCURSION AND ESTONIAN SMOKE SAUNA AT MOOSKA FARM

Mooska farm is a typical lifestyle farm in southern Estonia. The powerful location at the foot of Vällamäe is amidst the beautiful nature and harmonically connects the farm life with the nature and the heritage of ancestors. The Veeroja family share their life and introduce the local heritage to their guests, the pride of which is their local food and the traditional smoke sauna.

Võromaa smoke sauna tradition, practiced in southern Estonia, has been added to UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.



Programme

- Arrival, meeting the hosts.
- Excursion to introduce the spiritual heritage of the smoke sauna of Vana-Võromaa. The hosts introduce the smoke saunas of Mooska farm. Two of them are for bathing, while the third one is for smoking meat. Visitors get an overview of the construction, heating, sauna rituals and family traditions of the smoke sauna. The excursion ends with a tasting of smoked pork. Duration approx. 1,5 hours.
- Sauna session with the host family. The hosts lead the visitors through the sauna process. The sauna is located near a pond for a cooling swim when the water is ice free or for an invigorating dip in winter. During the experience your hosts will tell you all about and explain Estonian smoke sauna traditions and beliefs.

The programme has been awarded with the EHE (Genuine and Interesting Estonia) ecolabel.

Optional extras: accommodation in nearby tourist farms, meals, nature trips by foot or during winter with snowshoes.

Website: <http://mooska.eu>

Location: Haanja küla, 65601 Haanja vald, Võrumaa, Estonia

Duration: 1,5 h excursion + 3 h sauna session.

Season: all year round

For whom: individuals / groups; sauna session up to 10 persons and excursion up to 20 persons

Distances: Tallinn 270 km, Riga (Latvia) 243 km

Hosts: Mrs. Eda Veeroja, Mr. Priit Veeroja

Contact: +372 503 2341, eda@mooska.eu



SAUNAMARATHON AT LAMMASMÄE HOLIDAY CENTER WITH THE PEAT SAUNA EXPERIENCE

Lammasmäe Holiday Center is located in northern Estonia, on the Kunda River in Lääne-Viru County. The river meandering between the high sandy shores separates the holiday center from the rest of the world, offering the opportunity to be alone in the middle of pristine nature.



Programme

- ▶ Arrival, meeting the hosts.
- ▶ Sauna marathon starts from the **traditional wood-heated sauna** from where there is also access to the cool indoor pool. Here is a good place to test out different sauna aromas with a sauna master and talk about sauna traditions. Wood-heated sauna is familiar, but definitely relaxing.
- ▶ A bracing dip in the pool to prepare yourself for the next experience: **smoke sauna**. Smoke saunas are more characteristic to southern Estonia and this one has also been brought from there and rebuilt here. In smoke sauna juniper is added to the bowl of warm water, so the smoke scent blends with juniper aroma.
- ▶ The next sauna is located in a log building and has a cabinet heater. Sometimes it is also called a **Russian sauna** and the main thing that distinguishes it from the smoke sauna is that it has a chimney. The water will be thrown to the stones by opening the heater on the side. The cabinet heater steam which spreads to the sauna is quite soft. This sauna is therefore suitable also for those who do not tolerate very high temperatures.
- ▶ After that it is time to visit the **steam sauna**, with a milder steam, which is generated by a large steam generator. The steam opens the pores of the skin. The effect can be intensified by rubbing the skin with coarse salt or honey available in the sauna, and rubbing them off using ice. This treatment speeds up blood circulation and culminates with a tingling sensation in the extremities.

➤ Then the body is ready for a **floating peat sauna** on the river Kunda. The sauna is built from peat bricks. Peat bricks and turf make the sauna smells mild. On top of the heater there is a bowl of hot water that gives the peat sauna the proper moisture. To get to the sauna, you will have to walk along pontoons covered with peat tiles and you will also sit on peat tiles in the sauna. Various procedures will be carried out in the sauna. Traditional peat treatments as body masks, facial masks etc., will be combined with sauna sessions so that the heat of the sauna can speed up the processes.

The shower of the peat sauna is also unique – there is a bucket with holes in it that is hanging from an eave. There are boxes on the walls of the sauna where bog plants grow, setting an unforgettable mood.

Peat (in Estonian „turvas”) is a 100% natural product and contains no additives. It is drawn from underground where bioactive ingredients have been combined and have formed a substance with acids and minerals. The therapeutic effects of peat are numerous. It is used for muscle relaxation, skin cleansing, increase of metabolism and body detox.

➤ After or between different saunas it is possible to relax in a **wood-burning hot tub** or go for a swim in river Kunda.

Optional extras: accommodation, meals (local food from local meats, vegetables and fruits), different active tourism services such as canoeing trips on river Kunda, archery, birdwatching in springtime, fishing.

Lammasmägi hill is one of the oldest sites of human settlement in Estonia. This rich historical heritage allows to organize memorable cultural tours in the area to the visitors.

Website: www.lammasmae.ee

Location: Linnuse küla, 44105 Viru-Nigula vald, Lääne-Virumaa, Estonia

Duration: 2-3 h

Season: all year round

For whom: groups up to 40 people

Distances: Tallinn 110 km, Rakvere 21 km, Riga (Latvia) 370 km

Hosts: Mr. Meelis Parijõgi

Contact: +372 501 3397, info@lammasmae.ee



COUNTRYWOMAN'S SPAAT AT KLAARA-MANNI HOLIDAY- AND SEMINAR CENTER

Klaara-Manni Puhke- ja Seminarikeskus (Klaara-Manni Holiday- and Seminar Center) is a pleasant place for holidaymaking. The complex consists of three houses and a lot of family rooms. There is enough space both inside as well as outside; the house is surrounded by a large and beautiful organic garden. The historical small town Tori and Soomaa National Park are located in the vicinity.

Programme

Going to the sauna has been a refreshing activity for the body and soul since the ancient days, and you can learn to understand and enjoy this culture through genuine sauna experiences. The Countrywoman's SPAAT is an exhilarating bathing in the sauna that perks up your body.

- ▶ Depending on the season, anyone can choose a herbal whisk or make one on his/her own: either from linden, oak, rowan or birch. Special bath hats are available.
- ▶ Knowledgeable people will tell you about the power of plants and nature and our own inner energy.
- ▶ Bucket shower to freshen you up.
- ▶ When taking a break from the hot steam, you can learn to use domestic body care products: honey, salt, kefir etc.
- ▶ Sauna towels and a nice sauna snack await in the lobby.

Countrywoman's sauna pleasures with genuine Estonian sauna traditions are meant for women, but also available for men!

The programme has been awarded with the EHE (Genuine and Interesting Estonia) ecolabel.

Optional extras: accommodation, meals.

On pre-booking: hikes, horseback riding, horticultural workshops, local musicians.



Website: www.klaaramanni.ee

Location: Randivälja küla, 86814 Tori vald, Pärnumaa, Estonia

Duration: 2-3 h

Season: all year round

For whom: individuals / groups up to 15 persons

Distances: Tallinn 133 km, Riga (Latvia) 194 km

Hosts: Mrs. Katrin Ruumet, Mrs. Kadi Ruumet

Contact: +372 580 32913, info@klaaramanni.ee



TRADITIONAL ESTONIAN SAUNA EXPERIENCE AT NURKA FARM

Nurka Farm is located in Luitemaa Nature Protection Area in West-Estonia. The farm complex that is over 100 years old has been renovated into a contemporary holiday farm with all mod-cons.

Programme

Experience a traditional wood-heated sauna from 1922. The experience comes with everything you might need for a refreshing and revitalizing sauna experience, including herbal foot bath, a fresh water pond and the surrounding nature.

Package includes: Sauna for up to 6 people, foot baths with herbs (option of picking them in the wild yourself during the summer and autumn seasons), opportunity of swimming in a fresh water pond to cool yourself down, sauna towels, everything for washing up (soaps, shampoos, conditioners) and flip-flops.

Optional extras: accommodation, meals, handicraft workshops, nature hikes.

Website: <http://nurka.ee>

Location: Rannaku tee, Piirumi küla,
86507 Häädemeeste vald, Pärnumaa, Estonia

Duration: 1,5-2 h

Season: all year round

For whom: individuals / groups

Distances: Pärnu 29 km, Tallinn 157 km, Riga (Latvia) 160 km

Can be reached by local county bus from Pärnu, the stop is called "Rannaku tee" and is 1,5 km away from the Nurka farm-manor. The hosts will arrange a transfer service from the bus stop upon prior notice.

Host: Mrs. Katrin Virkus-Sule

Contact: +372 501 9766
vip@vipeisid.ee



SAUNA RITUAL WITH SAUNA MASTER AT ENERGY FARM

Energia Talu (Energy Farm) is located in the ern part of Estonia. This is a medicinal plant centre with its own tea house and information stands among the plants for tourists. All herbs on the farm are grown organically.

There is the Energy Eco-Spa with sauna open in the farm, situated on the shore of the Navesti River. This is the perfect place for people who want to enjoy a natural lifestyle that draws on the traditional wisdom of past generations.



Programme

- Arrival, meeting the hosts.
- Welcome with herbal tea. The sauna master talks about the traditions and rituals of the sauna and their usefulness.
- The following are offered during the sauna experience: Foot bath with warm water, salt and medicinal herbs. First body warming and relaxation. Flower water spraying to the stones of the sauna stove (flower waters are the new products of the Energy Farm) for aromatherapy purposes. Body cleansing with salt and medicinal herbs. Aromatherapy with medicinal herbs and mild steam. Body bathing with plenty of steam. Compress for joints with medicinal herbs.
- Whisking in suitable steam. Hot massage-bath.
- During the entire sauna session herbal tea is offered.
- The service is provided under the guidance of a sauna master.

Optional extras: accommodation, meals, medicinal herb tour guided by a herb specialist, walking trails to relieve stress, eco-spa, Jacuzzi with herbs.



Website: www.energiatalu.ee

Location: Vihi küla, 71402 Põhja-Sakala vald, Viljandimaa, Estonia

Duration: for individuals 1,5 h; for groups 3 h

Season: all year round

For whom: individuals / groups up to 10 persons

Distances: Viljandi 33 km, Tallinn 14 km, Tartu 107 km, Riga (Latvia) 241 km

Hosts: Mrs. Tiiu Siim, Mr. Aivar Siim

Contact: +372 518 5151; +372 510 6193, info@energiatalu.ee



Latvia

SAUNA MUSEUM

Sauna Museum is a private open-air museum. The museum's exposition consists of six historic saunas and one newly built sauna. The historic saunas have been brought here from different regions of Latvia - Latgale, Vidzeme and Kurzeme. All of them are in use, but the hosts especially recommend their guests to enjoy the special atmosphere of the 'black sauna' - the oldest type of sauna in Latvia. It is a wooden log building without a chimney. It has small windows, doors and cracks in the walls. One can notice that the sauna is being heated as the clouds of smoke come out through all openings and spread that special smell of sauna. The fire heats not only the stones piled up inside the sauna house but also the walls. During the heating, the smoke circulates around the sauna room, while the soot accumulates on the stove stones, where it burns completely, as well as on the ceiling and walls, thus ensuring a sterile environment in the sauna.

The museum has been in continuous development since its foundation in 2008, and in the future it is planned to expand the museum to twenty different saunas from all localities of Latvia. The museum has been awarded the label "Latvian Heritage", which is awarded to rural tourism entrepreneurs who preserve the traditional values of Latvia and integrate them in modern life. The Sauna Museum is a recreation place for families and everyone who wants to get to know sauna traditions listening to a knowledgeable guide, or enjoying the unique values of sauna under the supervision of a skilled sauna master. Bath towels and hats are provided.

In addition, the museum hosts are engaged in bee-keeping, thus it is possible to taste

and buy honey. It is possible to pre-order a fish dish - salmon or trout smoked in black sauna, which is prepared there during heating the sauna. Bath towels and hats are available.

Programme

- A tour of the Sauna Museum, presenting the history of the traditional sauna and regional features in both the sauna construction and bathing habits (duration ca 1h).
- Optional 'Black sauna' experience under the supervision of a sauna master (duration ca 2-3 hours). Guests can use scrubs and get a special bathing ritual – gentle beating with special sauna whisks made of plants.
- After the hot sauna the guests can refresh themselves in the nearby pond.
- Relaxing and enjoying herbal teas with honey, up to 10 different sorts of honey are available.

Website: www.pirtsmuzejs.lv

Location: "Pirts Muzejs", Sējas novads, LV-2142, Latvia

Duration of the programme: 3 - 4 h

Season: January - December

For whom: individuals / groups up to 10 persons

Distance: Riga 40 km

Hosts: Mrs. Evita Karlsonē, Mr. Teodors Karlsons

Contact: +371 2835 5778 (Evita), +371 2945 9358 (Teodors)
pirtsmuzejs@inbox.lv



BERGHOF MILK ESTATE BLACK SAUNA

The Milk Estate Berghof (Piena Muiža) is a restored historical estate. The sauna house has been built on the foundations of the former barn. It's stonewall remains pleasantly cool both on very warm summer days and on very cold winter days. That's why the hosts of the estate came up with the idea of setting up a black country sauna. The hosts explored the wisdom and construction assembly of the sauna furnace as well as studied the knowledge of Latvian, Ukrainian and Russian folks. The furnace of the black sauna is built using a huge amount of stones from the seaside. They have to be heated to a very high temperature. Such stones must be hardened, therefore the stones that come from water are most suitable. The black sauna is heated for two days before the stones are hot enough.

Before sauna, guests will be taken to meadows on a master class for collecting sauna plants. Latvians are one of the few people in Europe who still use natural medicines to improve their health: flowers, seeds, fruits, roots, bark, leaves, their juices or extracts. These are often used also in sauna.

Programme

- Meeting the hosts, getting acquainted with the estate and surroundings.
- Master class for collecting sauna plants. Guests will get acquainted with the range of seasonal wild plants, their preparation for use in sauna, and their effects on physical, emotional and mental health.
- Sauna ritual with a sauna master. The process will include an introductory procedure for calming down the feelings and emotions, application of a natural scrub, made from seasonal nature gifts, treatment with sauna whisks made from wild plants. The ritual will be completed with an application of a herbal compress.
- Enjoying a refreshing herbal tea or a glass of warm milk with honey.

Services included: a workshop introducing and picking aromatic wild grasses for sauna + black sauna experience.

Website: www.pienamuiza.lv

Location: Sieksāte, Rudbāržu pagasts, Skrundas novads, LV – 3325, Latvia

Duration of the programme: 3 - 4 h

Season: January - December

For whom: individuals / groups up to 10 persons

Distance: Riga 156 km

Hosts: Sesks family

Contact: +371 2651 8660, +371 6333 1233

piens@pienamuiza.lv



SAUNA AT LIELZEMENES COUNTRY HOUSE

'Lielzemes' is a traditional homestead in Zemgale region offering to learn about the Latvian traditional lifestyle heritage and the sauna ritual. The hosts are professional sauna masters and have established the Latvian Sauna School where they pass on their knowledge and skills to those willing to master sauna rituals. Based on centuries old sauna practices they have developed a range of efficient sauna procedures. To reach the desired effects, Latvian sauna uses lots of material from trees and herbs such as whisks made of birch, oak, linden, various grasses and wild flowers, as well as herbal brews. The hosts are knowledgeable to apply special sauna procedures for stress relief, general invigoration, strengthening immunity, etc. Juris Batņa, the host, is also a psychotherapist. Aelita Batņa, the hostess is also a teacher, a specialist in aromatherapy and the leader of the Latvian Sauna School.

Programme

- Welcome and introduction of the host family and the homestead.
- Warming up in sauna - exercises using vibration, sound and the power of word.
- Diagnostics - the sauna master diagnoses each participant.
- Cleansing - scrubbing with herbal powder to cleanse the body and spirit.
- Bathing in the sauna using different sauna whisks, cooling in the pond.
- Aromatherapy – the sauna procedure ends with choosing essential oils and body treatment with them.
- Drinking herbal tea and relaxing.

Website: www.lielzemenes.lv

Location: 'Lielzemes', Vecumnieki, Vecumnieku novads, LV-3933, Latvia

Duration of the programme: 3 - 4 h

Season: January - December

For whom: individuals / groups up to 8 persons

Distance: Riga 47 km

Hosts: Mrs. Aelita Batņa, Mr. Juris Batņa

Contact: +371 2616 0989
pirts@lielzemenes.lv



We invite you, beyond traditional touristic routes, to discover the diverse countryside area on the South Coast of Finland, in Estonia and in Latvia.

In addition to this publication, a team of professional countryside tourism organisations has gathered into several publications example products based on rural experiences such as visits to country farms, hands-on workshops, tours of UNESCO World Heritage Sites, an overview of our food traditions, stays at rural hotels and guesthouses, and opportunities to get closer to nature or to live like the locals.

All of these products can be linked with the traditional touristic routes and city experiences to bring more variety and attraction.

www.balticsea.countryholidays.info



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