

# Estonia Today

## HOLIDAYS IN 2009

### Public Holidays

1 January	<b>New Year's Day</b>
24 February	<b>Independence Day*</b> (1918), the 91st anniversary of the declaration founding the Republic of Estonia. After this declaration Estonia was forced to fight a war of independence against Soviet Russia in the east and Baltic-German forces in the south. During this war Estonia secured its borders and concluded the Tartu Peace Treaty with Soviet Russia on 2 February 1920.
10 April	<b>Good Friday</b>
12 April	<b>Easter Sunday</b>
1 May	<b>Spring Day</b>
31 May	<b>Pentecost</b>
23 June	<b>Victory Day*</b> (Võidupüha) commemorates the victory of Estonian forces over the Baltic Germans' forces (led by Landeswehr) in the Battle of Võnnu (Cesis) in northern Latvia in 1919, during which Estonian forces thwarted an attempt to restore Baltic-German control over the region. This day is marked by important official ceremonies.
24 June	<b>St John's Day or Midsummer Day*</b> (Jaanipäev) and its important Midsummer Eve is a traditional celebration held on the night of 23-24 June. This day marks a day closest to the longest day of the year when twilight and dawn appear to merge. The evening of the 23rd and well into the morning of the 24th is celebrated with bonfires and a traditional festive menu.
20 August	<b>Day of Restoration of Independence.</b> Dramatic developments in the Soviet Union in August 1991 resulted in the three Baltic countries finally regaining their independence. On 20 August 1991, Estonia issued a decision on the re-establishment of independence on the basis of historical continuity of statehood.
24 December	<b>Christmas Eve</b>
25 December	<b>Christmas Day*</b>
26 December	<b>Boxing Day</b>

### National holidays

6 January	<b>Epiphany</b>
2 February	<b>Anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty</b> , which was signed on 2 February 1920 in Tartu between Soviet Russia and Estonia. With this treaty Soviet Russia finally recognised the independence of Estonia.
14 March	<b>Native Language Day</b>
10 May	<b>Mothers' Day</b>
4 June	<b>National Flag Day*</b> . The Estonian tricolour flag was first consecrated as the flag of the Estonian Student Society on 4 June 1884 in Otepää.
14 June	<b>Day of Mourning and Commemoration*</b> . On 14 June 1941 the first mass deportation from the Baltic States took place. Over 10,000 Estonians were deported to Siberia that day. Another largest deportation took place in March 1949, when more than 20,000 Estonians were deported to Siberia. Altogether up to 60,000 Estonians were killed or deported in the 1940s.
22 September	<b>Resistance Fighting Day.</b> On 22 September 1944, units of the Red Army captured Tallinn. The National tricolour was torn from its mast and replaced by the red Soviet flag, the symbol of the new occupation, in Pikk Hermann Tower.
2 November	<b>All Souls' Day*</b>
8 November	<b>Fathers' Day</b>



**16 November** *Day of Declaration of Sovereignty.* On 16 November 1988, the Supreme Soviet of the Estonian SSR adopted a declaration of national sovereignty under which Estonian laws should have the precedence over the Soviet Union ones.

\*For more information please visit the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia at [http://www.vm.ee/estonia/kat\\_459/pea\\_174/](http://www.vm.ee/estonia/kat_459/pea_174/)

## Flag Days

On 1 January 2006, the new State Flag Act entered into force in Estonia. The most important change introduced by the new law is that all individuals have the right to use the state flag as a national flag whenever they feel it fit to do so, but the use of the flag must be appropriate and respectful of time-honoured traditions. State flags are permanently flown over state institutions, local and city governments, and also at border crossing points.

The new law reduces the number of official flag days from present fifteen to thirteen, including 9 May and Europe Day. Election days and referendum days are also flag days. However, flags must be hoisted on all buildings on only three of these days.

Another major change compared to the past situation is the hoisting of state flags on school and university buildings on all schooldays. This regulation entered into force on the 1 September 2005.

### Flag days in 2009 are:

3 January	<i>Day of Commemoration of the War of Independence fighters</i>
2 February	<i>Anniversary of the Tartu Peace Treaty</i>
<b>24 February</b>	<b><i>Independence Day; Anniversary of the Republic of Estonia</i></b>
14 March	<i>Native Language Day</i>
9 May	<i>Europe Day</i>
10 May	<i>Mothers' Day</i>
4 June	<i>National Flag Day</i>
14 June	<i>Day of Mourning and Commemoration*</i>
<b>23 June</b>	<b><i>Victory Day</i></b> (Võidupüha)
24 June	<i>St John's Day or Midsummer Day</i> (Jaanipäev)
<b>20 August</b>	<b><i>Day of Restoration of Independence</i></b>
1 September	<i>Day of Knowledge</i>
8 November	<i>Fathers' Day</i>

**B** - days when flags must be hoisted on all buildings

\* For more information please visit the homepage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia at [http://www.vm.ee/estonia/kat\\_459/pea\\_174/](http://www.vm.ee/estonia/kat_459/pea_174/)

More information about the state symbols and holidays: [www.estonica.org](http://www.estonica.org)

Information on the use of the national flag and other state symbols: <http://www.riigikantselei.ee>

---