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TOP 10 FACTS ABOUT LIVING CONDITIONS IN ESTONIA



Estonia [<https://www.borgenmagazine.com/hunger-in-estonia/>], a small Baltic nation, is often perceived by the Western countries as the standard bearer of former communists values that took steps to embrace capitalistic and democratic ideals.

Be that as it may, poverty is still very prevalent in this European nation and living conditions in Estonia are certainly not ideal.

Top 10 facts about living conditions in [Estonia](https://borgenproject.org/10-facts-about-life-expectancy-in-estonia/) [<https://borgenproject.org/10-facts-about-life-expectancy-in-estonia/>], the most important facts, both positive and negative, within the context of Estonians' access to shelter, education, transportation, health and general well-being will be discussed in this article.

Top 10 Facts About Living Conditions In Estonia

1. According to the OECD index, the average Estonian household net-adjusted disposable [income per capita](http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/income/) [<http://www.oecdbetterlifeindex.org/topics/income/>] is \$18,665 a

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year. This number is significantly lower than the OECD average of \$30,563 a year. This figure represents the amount of money available to be spent on necessary goods and services, such as food and heating. With this average, Estonia lacks behind countries such as Slovenia, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic.

2. There is a considerable income disparity between the rich and poor in Estonia. The top 20 percent of the population earn more than five times as much as the bottom 20 percent. In an interview with Estonian Public Broadcasting, the CEO of Swedbank Eesti, Robert Kitt, said that though Estonia has a strong and thriving business sector inequality is also greater than ever before [<https://news.err.ee/640031/swedbank-ceo-economic-inequality-in-estonia-bigger-than-ever-before>].
3. Estonia has the most carbon-intensive economy [<https://www.oecd.org/newsroom/estonia-should-reduce-its-oil-shale-reliance-for-greener-growth.htm>], within the OECD. However, with 51 percent of Estonia's land being forest, Estonians are breathing well. The level of atmospheric particulate matter, air pollutant particles small enough to cause damage to lungs and make breathing harder, is well below the OECD average.
4. Estonia provides hot school lunches, study books and learning materials for free to students in basic education [<https://www.oecd.org/pisa/PISA-2015-estonia.pdf>]. This is a standard since 2006 and is a clear step of the country in enabling education more equitable and accessible to everyone. And it has worked since Estonia has one of the highest levels of educational attainment, with 90 percent of people in the age group of 25 from 64 have completed upper secondary education. Estonian women perform exceedingly well in tertiary education with 45 percent of Estonian women completing the third level of education, compared to 28 percent of Estonian men achieving the same feat.
5. A surprising fact about living conditions in Estonia is that a comparatively high percentage of citizens live below the poverty line. By estimation, 3.4 percent of the population [<https://www.stat.ee/news-release-2018-133>], lives under the poverty line, and by this regard, Estonia is similar to nations such as Ecuador and Venezuela, nations that are perceived as being economically unstable and inequitable.
6. Estonia has a solidarity health insurance system [<https://www.haigekassa.ee/en/people/health-insurance>], ensuring the same quality of care for all insured people, regardless of age, income or health risks. Additionally, citizens with disabilities receive social allowance through the Estonian Unemployment Insurance Fund.

7. Estonia has a very small homeless population. The Foundation Abbé Pierre and Feantsa estimate that around [\[https://www.fondation-abbe-pierre.fr/documents/pdf/chapter_2_-_homelessness_in_the_european_union_a_serious_situation_but_not_a_hop\]](https://www.fondation-abbe-pierre.fr/documents/pdf/chapter_2_-_homelessness_in_the_european_union_a_serious_situation_but_not_a_hop) 1,371 Estonians are homeless. Lodging shelters, homeless shelters and resource centers have stepped in to help those that are indeed homeless, especially in the most populous city in Estonia, Tallinn, where there is the most need for this aid.
8. According to the World Bank, in 1994, the average life expectancy of Estonians was at 66.5 years. In 2016, this number was at 77.8 years [\[https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=EU-EE\]](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.LE00.IN?locations=EU-EE). Although the life expectancy rate has vastly improved, it still lags behind the average of the European Union. Estonia faces a shortage of nurses [\[http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/355978/Health-Profile-Estonia-Eng.pdf?ua=1\]](http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0010/355978/Health-Profile-Estonia-Eng.pdf?ua=1) and family physicians, as funding for such services has dwindled in rural regions of Estonia. At 6.5 percent of its GDP being spent on health care, Estonia is short of the EU member-state average of 9.9 percent.
9. About 94 percent of Estonians [\[http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/377417/hit-estonia-eng.pdf?ua=1\]](http://www.euro.who.int/data/assets/pdf_file/0011/377417/hit-estonia-eng.pdf?ua=1) are insured. The others, uninsured, do receive emergency care, as well as take part in other public health programs and treatments in which the national or city government provides compensation or free care. Tuberculosis and HIV drug treatments are covered by the state in many cases.
10. Bus transportation is free [\[https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/estonia-is-making-public-transport-free/\]](https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2018/06/estonia-is-making-public-transport-free/) for Estonian citizens, as long as they are located in a territory that has accepted national government funds to do so. Because of this, travel from outer regions to urban centers such as Tallinn is very affordable, if not free, allowing for more movement of peoples and funds as well.

Like most Western nations, Estonia is no perfect place for all of its people. Poverty is high while general satisfaction is lower than average, but steps have been taken to ensure better living conditions such as access to transportation, education and health care.

In the article, both the negative and positive aspects of Estonia's current living conditions are presented, as well as the comparison of these living conditions to other nations in order to allow one to more easily discern what life is like for those in Estonia and compare it to their own lives.

- Kurt Thiele

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