

General info about photography tours in Estonia

Photo skills

Does not matter if you are novice or professional, all skill levels are welcome to join our tours. In case you don't feel comfortable with your camera, we can offer you basic training about photography. That would include basic knowledge of photography concept and technical explanations, composition, techniques and tips for different situations and gear guide.

In case you need basic training please inform us in advance. Basic training is free of charge! We are always there for you on the field so feel free to ask assistance when you need it. For enthusiasts we try to give some new creative ideas or certain new viewpoints that would bring some fresh air to your portfolio.

At the hides we suggest to use minimum following:

- If you use 200mm telephoto lens, 300+mm or 300+ TC it is perfect match with the hide. You can use also shorter lenses- those give you nice surroundings shot and bit different view than usual.
- Please stock up some batteries and memory cards and don't forget to bring your tripod.
- In the bear hide you can shoot until 10.45 pm in summer. Early evening ISO 200-400 (at F4) would do the job nicely. In the autumn sunset is near 8 pm so the time frame for the bear is shorter and light conditions require minimum ISO 800.

When participating the tour, you are welcome to bring your 20 best shots with you, so everyone get a chance to share their images and stories with others.

Nature tracks

If you are in average fit and without major health problems no track will be difficult for you. Estonia has excellent nature tourism infrastructure with trails, wooden pathways and watching towers.

As our goal is photography, the pace is really low and we will not cover tens of kilometers per day! Maximum daily walking distance will be less than 5 kilometers. If you feel comfortable with the area and like to wonder around you will always have a possibility to take longer walks. We will also use car for driving small forest service roads. It's so quicker to check larger area; car provides comfortable shelter and it works as an excellent hide to capture wildlife.

Gear

Bring the camera and lenses you have. We will shoot different kind of subjects so from wide angle to tele and macro- it's all welcome. Still, leave behind what you don't use, as some hikes can be longer and the less your backpack weights, the better. Would be good if your photo backpack has room for water bottle and extra clothing layers.

Bring all your batteries and memory cards, tripod, filters, everything you use on daily bases. If you need any equipment, consult us for possible rent options. We have some reflectors, diffusers, grad filters, low end tripods what you are welcome to use. Also binoculars and spotting scope is available. We have basic cleaning kit for cleaning lenses, but for sensor cleaning you have to bring your own kit.

We take no responsibilities of loss and damage of your gear so please make sure you have proper travel insurance.

Clothing

Estonia has 4 seasons so clothing and footwear should be according to one. During spring and autumn there is occasional night frost so be prepared having a zero temperatures during mornings and evenings. Bring warm underwear, fleece, jacket, hat, gloves. Also bring some backup layer in case you get wet or cold.

During summer wear long sleeves and trousers that keep you out of reach from mosquitos and other annoying insects. Although days can be as warm as 35 degrees, it can be much cooler and moist under the forest so have an extra layer that keeps you warm if needed.

During winter it can be as cold as -30 degrees. We suggest to have multiple warm layers + windproof layer. Even if you feel warm while you are walking you will freeze within minutes when you stop, so have extra layers with you.

Footwear - As we visit many wetlands, wear waterproof hiking boots (Gore-Tex or such), gaiters would do good in spring and autumn.

Insurance

Be insured! Your travel insurance covers many of possible situations.

We take no responsibilities of damage and/or loss of your equipment, clothes or other belongings. We take no responsibility if your flight is cancelled or will be late. We take no responsibility of your health, but please let us know if you have significant health risks, allergies or nutritional limits so we can be prepared.

However we are always open to help you and find a suitable solution whenever possible.

Hazards

There are no significant natural hazards. Mosquitos and ticks are most annoying threats. Although we act respectfully to the nature, mosquitos and ticks need radical approach. During May to August please take suitable mosquito repellent with you.

There is two serious tick-borne diseases to be aware of:

- Lyme Disease
- Tick-Borne Encephalitis (TBE): TBE vaccine is recommended. The TBE vaccine is only available in Europe and by special release in Canada.

Risk of transmission occurs from April to first frosts in the Autumn (October). Travelers engaging in outdoor activities in rural areas are advised to take measures to prevent tick bites during the peak transmission season. Tick-bite prevention measures include applying a repellent to exposed skin or clothing and gear. It is wise to check yourself over after walking in vegetation.

Vipers are common in some areas. Normal precautions and good hiking boots is enough for your safety. Vipers are not aggressive and their bite is not dangerous for a healthy person, only risk is it to your health in case you are highly allergic to similar bites (wasp, bee).

Animal attacks are highly unlikely event. All large mammals are game animals in Estonia. They try to avoid direct contact with humans. You should not worry when you follow your instincts and your guide's instructions.

Our guides have passed the training of first aid and there is first aid kit always available.

Behavior in the wild

We do not leave any garbage to the nature. Smoking and making fire is allowed only followed by local rules and not allowed in case of long dry period.

In case of photographing wildlife we act silently and respectfully without disturbing habitation in their natural environment.

Perfumes and similar are not allowed as it lowers the chance to animal observation.

On wetland areas it's not allowed to deviate from marked trail. If you want to wonder around by yourself inform your guide about it and make sure you are comfortable about orientating the area.

Make sure you know your way back. Further safety instructions will be given at the beginning of your tour. Always follow your tour guides instructions.