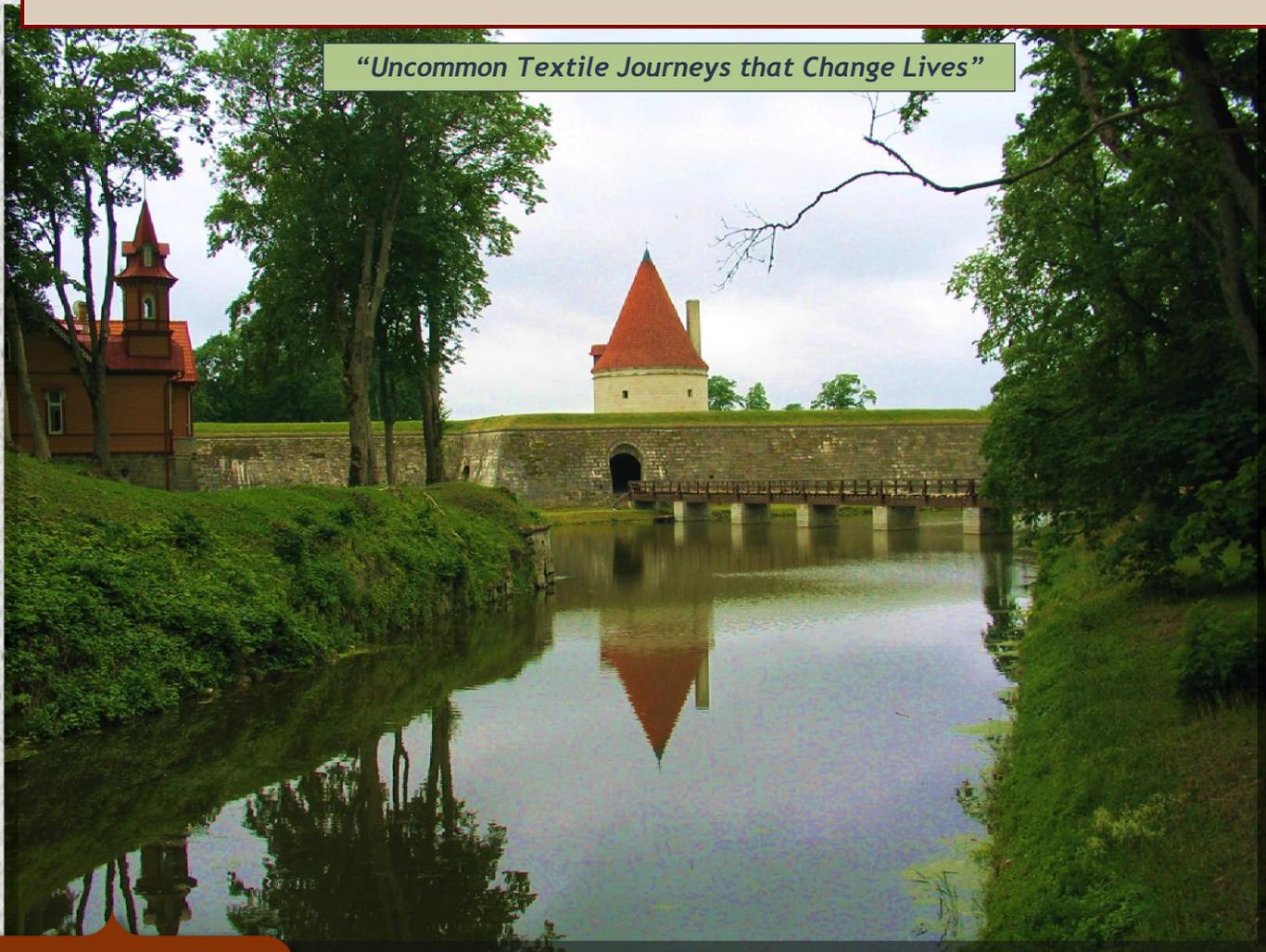




Discover Estonia

A Fairy Tale Land of Castles, Forested Islands, Wooden Windmills, Lighthouses and a Legendary Textile Culture

"Uncommon Textile Journeys that Change Lives"



You don't have to be a knitter to enjoy this trip!

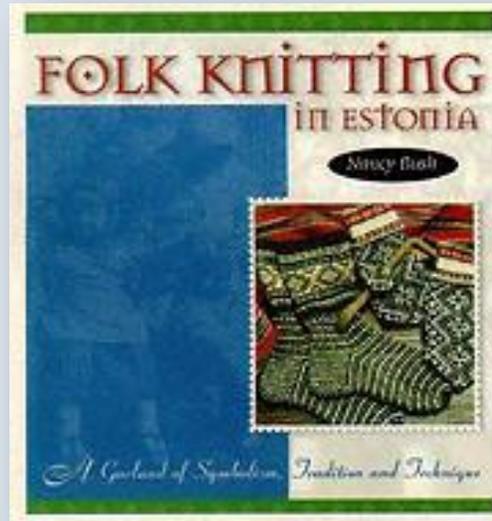
"Estonia is a huge inspiration for anyone interested in historic textiles and fiber arts, even if you don't knit a stitch!"

*~Nancy Bush,
Author*

*An Exclusive Knitting Adventure
with Author and Expert, Nancy Bush
Plus Exploring Native Handicrafts at a Hands-On Retreat*

July 14 - 23, 2016
Native Crafts Retreat
with Viljandi Cultural Academy
July 9 - 15, 2016

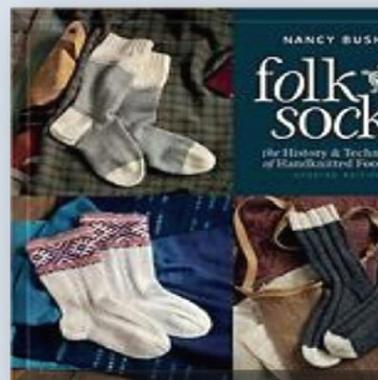
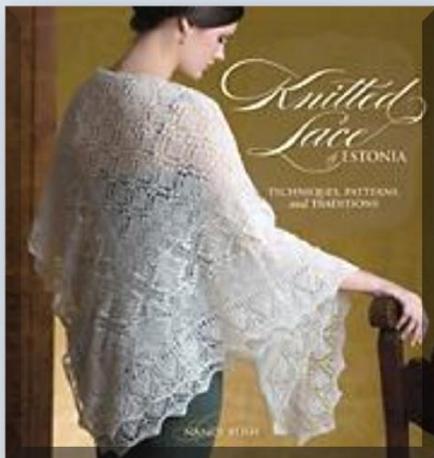




Nancy Bush, Knitting Expert and Author of Five Books

We are so blessed that Nancy Bush will be our knitting mentor, with an exclusive workshop in the Western Islands of Estonia, as well as our guide throughout the tour. Nancy has a passion for traditional knitting techniques and ethnic knitting patterns. For the last two decades, her main interest has been on studying and preserving the extraordinary knitting of Estonia. She has traveled there yearly since 1995 and has developed a great love and respect for the country. In 2015 she was honored by the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs with a Letter of Thanks for her work promoting Estonian culture and crafts.

Nancy has published articles and designs in many magazines including PieceWork where she is currently a member of the editorial advisory panel. She teaches knitting workshops focused on the techniques and traditions of Estonian knitting, from colorful gloves to delicate Haapsalu lace in the United States and abroad, including in Estonia, Finland, Sweden, France and the UK, and is the author of Folk Socks (1994), Folk Knitting in Estonia (1999), Knitting on the Road, Socks for the Traveling Knitter (2001), Knitting Vintage Socks (2005) and Knitted Lace of Estonia: Techniques, Patterns, and Traditions (2008), all published by Interweave Press. Her web site is www.woolywest.com, where she offers knitting yarns, her books and books from Estonia to knitters.



Come feed your imagination and creative soul in an Old World Wonderland...

Why Estonia?

Knitting and rich textiles are the cornerstone of Estonian folk culture and the idyllic setting for a knitting and handicraft adventure! Bordering Russia and Latvia, and located just across the Baltic Sea from Finland, its closest ethnic neighbor, Estonia has a rich culture and colorful handicraft history. Its legendary medieval market towns were the haunt of the Tsars of Russia, knights, merchants, monks, and royalty.

Old Town Tallinn, the Medieval Gem of Estonia

What better place to begin our journey than the Old Town of Estonia's capital, Tallin? Lonely Planet names it "one of the most beguiling walled cities in all of Europe." Wandering its narrow, cobbled streets is like stepping back in time to the 15th century. In fact, we will do just that with the annual celebration of The Medieval Days, an important event of the Estonian Folk Art and Craft Union since 2000. We will indulge our imaginations and relive the Hanseatic era beginning with the Opening Procession from the city's ancient gates and ceremony.

A Hands-On Immersion into the Native Handicrafts of Estonia

Hosted by the University of Tartu's Viljandi Cultural Academy, whose focus is on culture, creativity, innovation and heritage, you can spend a glorious week-long, hands-on retreat immersed in a variety of Estonian handicrafts. In the quaint town of Olustvere, located 138 km from Tallin in southern Estonia, the objective of this retreat is to introduce Estonian handicraft with an overview of techniques of your choosing in four one-day workshops. You will learn the modern usage of these ancient techniques. Located in beautiful forest and field scenery, all activities will take place at different locations of the manor site such as the distillery, the stables, the craft house, etc. One day will be devoted to a field trip of your choice into the rich countryside. Read more about our retreat on Page 6.

Folk Knitting with Nancy Bush, Author of Five Books and Estonia Travel Expert

Considered one of the Baltic's most alluring regions is the west coast of Estonia and its islands. Its verdant landscape is a tapestry of forest covered islands, 19th century lighthouses, old wooden windmills, and fairytale seaside villages towered over by medieval castles. This is our playground and the setting for our Estonian Knitting workshop with Nancy Bush. Estonia and knitting are forever woven together, playing an important role in the country's culture for centuries. In fact, it was not uncommon that hundreds of pairs of mittens were knitted as gifts for the guests of a wedding. We will spend several days in an exclusive knitting workshop with Nancy learning Estonian knitting techniques. Our amazing mentor and guide deserves a page of her own. Read more about Nancy on Page 2.

Our Adventure includes an exclusive knitting workshop with renowned author, Nancy Bush, who will be our guide throughout our odyssey!

The Itinerary at a Glance

July 8: Arrive Tallinn

July 9: The Medieval Days Celebration; To Olustvere

July 10 – 14: Native Handicrafts Retreat with 4 Workshops in Olustvere and a Field Trip

July 15: Travel to Pärnu: a beach, spa or shopping afternoon

July 16: Sheep Farm; To Saaremaa Island and Kuressaare

July 17: Knitting Workshop with Nancy Bush and Exploring Saaremaa including a visit to KNOWSHEEP

July 18: Exploring Muhu Islands

July 19 – 20: Knitting Workshop and Exploring

July 21: To Haapsalu and Tallinn

July 22: Exploring Old Town Tallinn

July 23: Flights Home

Short on time?

You may join our group on July 15 for our Western Island Knitting Adventure. See Page 4 for logistics or call our office.



Friday, July 8 Arrive Tallinn, the Medieval Jewel of Estonia

Today you arrive in Tallinn, the capital of Estonia. We will be happy to help you with your travel arrangements. Transportation options to Tallinn include either a ferry from Helsinki, Finland or flights into Tallin from other airline hubs in Europe. Transfer on your own via taxi to Old Town to rest or explore this city. Exceptionally well-preserved, the Old Town of Tallinn is a medieval northern European trading city on the coast of the Baltic Sea. During the 13th-16th centuries, it was an important center of the Hanseatic League during the major period of activity for this trading organization. Its wealth is apparent by the opulent architecture of the ancient buildings, churches and merchant houses.

We'll meet in our hotel lounge this evening for a welcome drink and orientation. Overnight in the Old Town Tallinn. (No meals included)



Note: The Viljandi Cultural Academy's Craft Camp operates July 9 – 15 (see page 6 for details). If you do not plan on participating in this week-long event, we recommend that you arrive in Tallinn on July 14 and join up with our group on July 15 in Pärnu. Your itinerary will then begin on Page 7. Your hotel in Tallinn on July 14 is included in trip cost.



Saturday, July 9

Celebrate the Medieval Days in Old Town

Today is truly a treat! It is the kick-off of this very important celebration of the flourishing Hanseatic era. A large medieval market is set up in the Town Hall Square with merchants and workshops. Musicians and dancers from near and far take the stage. A medieval procession opens the event followed by the Opening Ceremony.

Afternoon Travel To Our Handicraft Retreat

In the late afternoon, we travel by bus to Olustvere, located 138 km from Tallinn in the southern part of Estonia in Viljandi County. Our week-long retreat will be held at Olustvere Manor, one of the best preserved manors in all of Estonia. The main part of the manor is encompassed by old trees and an English garden, enclosed by tall stone walls, all surrounded by old forests. Our workshops will be held in at different locations throughout the manor grounds such as the distillery, the stables, the craft house, etc.

Our accommodations will be the dormitory of Olustvere School of Service and Economics located on the manor site. While somewhat basic, all rooms are en suite and equipped with a shower and toilet. Bedding and linen will be provided.

Tonight will be a group dinner and a welcoming event. Overnight at Olustvere Manor (photo below). (B,D)





Estonian Native Craft Camp at Olustvere**

Staying at Historic Olustvere Manor

Sunday, July 10 Native Estonian Handicrafts Workshop

Today begins with a tour of Olustvere and a workshop of your choice (Please see <http://www.kultuur.ut.ee/en/craft-camp/ws> for a complete description of each various workshop. The workshops last from 10am to 1pm and 3-6pm. In the evening, the teachers will give a presentation. Overnight at Olustvere Manor. (B,L,D).

Monday, July 11 Workshop

Today you participate in another workshop of your choice with the same times as above. In the evening, it's "Shameless Self-Promotion" Monday, a show-and-tell of your personal crafts, skills and experiences. Overnight at Olustvere Manor. (B,L,D)

Tuesday, July 12 Field Trip of Choice

You can choose the field trip of your choice today to either Viljandi country or to Setomaa (please see <http://www.kultuur.ut.ee/en/craft-camp/field-trip> for a full description each excursion). In the evening, there will be a showing of the movie "Keepers of the Loom" and an opportunity for a sauna. Overnight at Olustvere Manor. (B,D)

Wednesday, July 13 Workshop

Today you participate in another workshop of your choice with the same times as above. In the evening, there will be a showing of the movie "The Women of Muhu" which tells the wonderful story of the island we will be visiting in a couple of days. Overnight at Olustvere Manor. (B,L,D)

Thursday, July 14 Workshop

Today you participate in another workshop of your choice with the same times as above. In the evening, there is a dinner in the manor with a concert. Overnight at Olustvere Manor. (B,L,D)

Friday, July 15 Retreat Finale

We finish our wonderful week of handicrafts workshops with an exhibition of the items we have created followed by a certificate ceremony. (B,L)

****Loom Dancer Odysseys has organized our tour around this amazing event.**

Registration and participation costs for Craft Camp are separate from our trip costs.

Please visit the official web site for a complete retreat overview and registration

<http://www.kultuur.ut.ee/en/craft-camp/about>

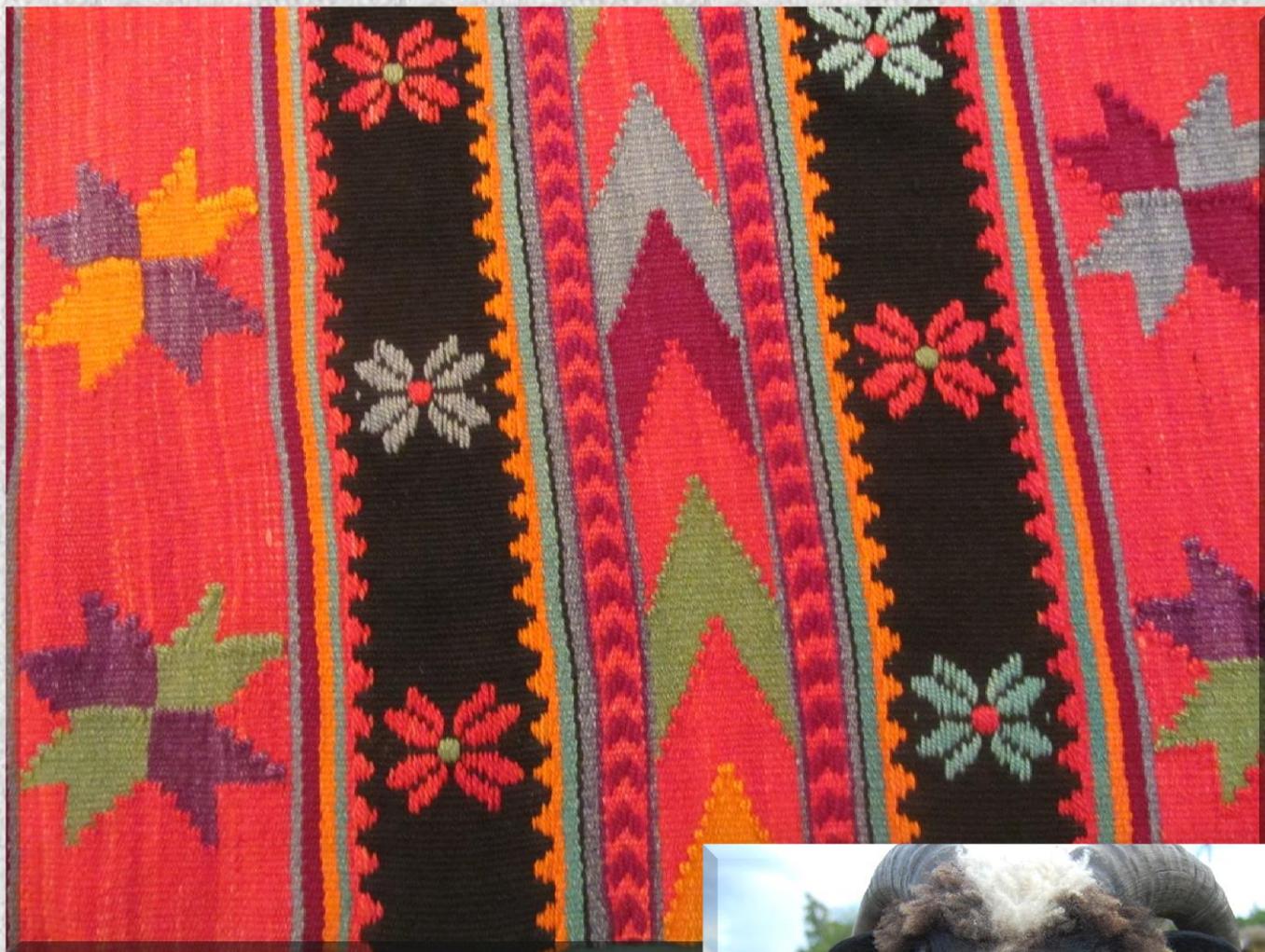
Links for detailed information and workshops can be found on the menu on the left side of the web page.

Click on the link below to see a video of Craft Camp

<https://vimeo.com/149003610>

Friday, July 15 **Estonian Handicrafts Finale / To Pärnu**

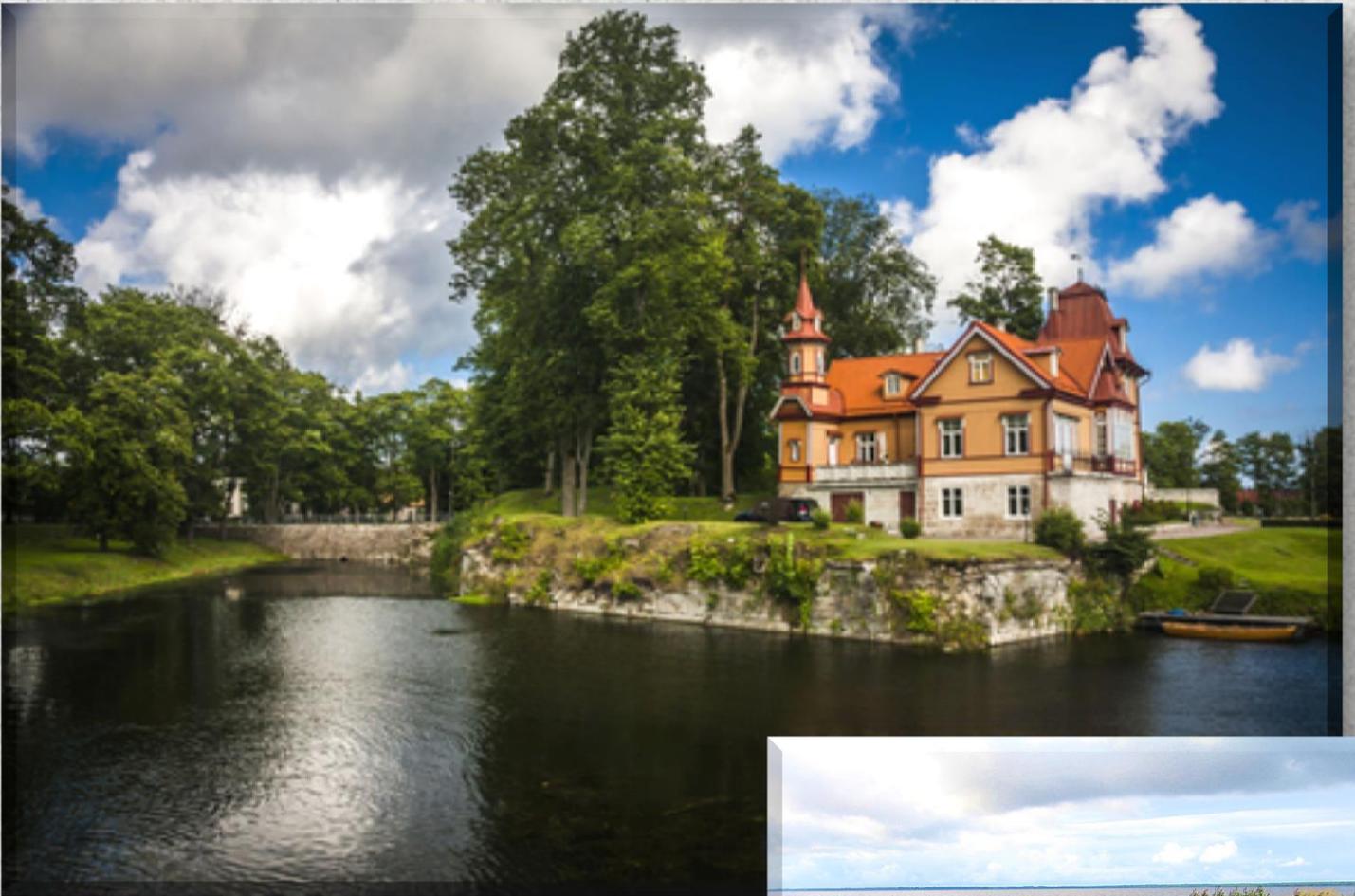
We finish our wonderful week of handicrafts workshops with an exhibition of the items we have created followed by a certificate ceremony. After lunch, we depart in our private bus for the next phase of our adventure in Estonia. We'll travel about an hour through the countryside to the seaside city of Pärnu, Estonia's premiere seaside resort. The city has leafy streets, an historic center, golden beaches, relaxing spas and wonderful shopping. The afternoon and evening are at your leisure to explore and relax. Dinner is on your own tonight to try one of the many dining options. Overnight at Estonia Resort Hotel and Spa in Pärnu with unlimited spa and sauna use. (B,L) <http://www.spaestonia.ee/resort/en/estonia-resort-hotel-spa/>



Saturday, July 16 **Mikken Sheep Farm and Islands**

This morning we get an early start, traveling about an hour to Mikken Sheep Farm where we can get our "sheep fix." Here they raise Kihnu native sheep with the goal of preserving Estonian native sheep and foster an appreciation of their archaic wool. They will talk to us about the history of this breed and, of course, we will have the chance to pet them and give them treats. They will also offer their wool, yarn, woolen handicraft items and sheep skins for purchase.





We continue on our way along the coast to Virtsu where we catch the ferry to Muhu Island and across the causeway to Saaremaa Island stopping along the way for some interesting sites. Our destination is the picturesque town of Kuressaare with its magnificent 13th century castle in its midst (see photo on Page 1). This will be our base for five nights. Our hotel, Ekesparre Boutique Hotel, with only ten luxuriously furnished rooms and cozy lounge, is actually located on the castle grounds (photo above).

Crackling logs in the fireplace and the mysterious spirits of beloved Estonian writers, make this hotel a refuge of inspiration just right for our upcoming knitting workshop with Nancy Bush. This evening, Nancy will share her knowledge and give us an orientation to Estonian knitting to prepare us for our upcoming workshop Overnight at Ekesparre Boutique Hotel. (B) <http://www.ekesparre.ee/hotel>





**You don't have to
be a knitter!
Other activities
can be arranged
while others knit!**

*"Estonia is a huge
inspiration for anyone
interested in historic
textiles and fiber arts,
even if you don't
knit a stitch!"*

~Nancy Bush,

Sunday, July 17 Knitting with Nancy Bush and Exploring Saaremaa Island

With our newly learned history of Estonian knitting and the importance it has played in the folk culture, today we begin our first hands-on knitting adventure with Nancy! For this exclusive workshop, Nancy will design a scarf pattern especially for our class. The pattern will have elements taken from Haapsalu lace patterns. Our class will include a further overview of the history of Haapsalu lace knitting and also the basic techniques of knitting Haapsalu lace patterns. We will be able to work on our projects during our days together while in the islands.

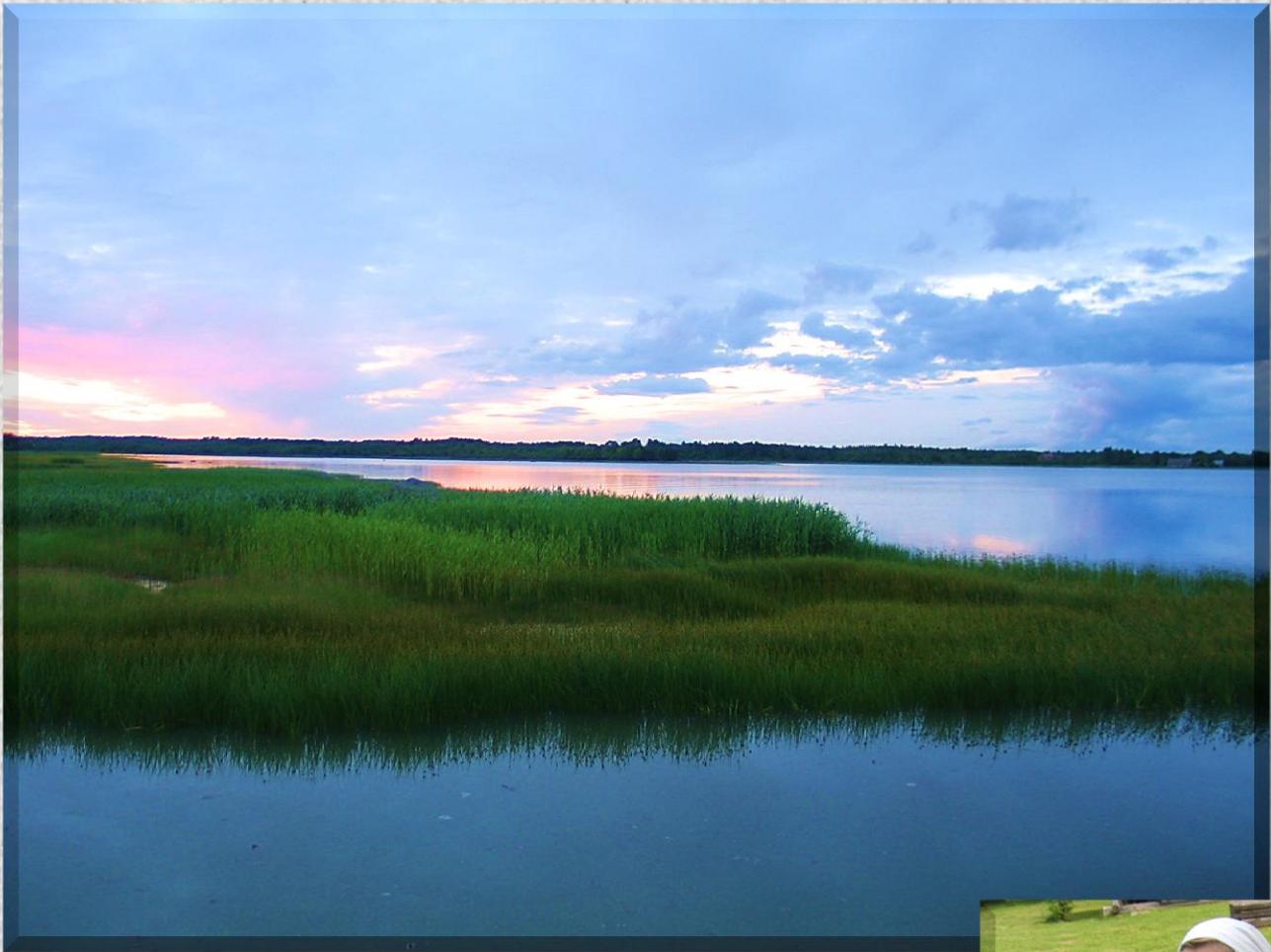
Our second workshop in the coming days will continue our Haapsalu lace experience. In this class, we will make a small sampler of a traditional Haapsalu shawl. This will include all the parts of a real shawl or scarf that are unique to this type of lace knitting, including the traditional sewn-on outer edge. We will begin our sampler one morning and complete it during another morning session.



This afternoon, we visit the KnowSheep Project which is dedicated “to facilitating the collective success and sustainability of the sheep industry on the Estonian and Finnish Baltic Islands. Sheep farming has traditionally played a vital role for the Baltic Islands in preserving the rural landscape, providing meat and wool, offering local craftsmen and farmers a livelihood and contributing to cultural heritage.” We will learn more about this important project firsthand.



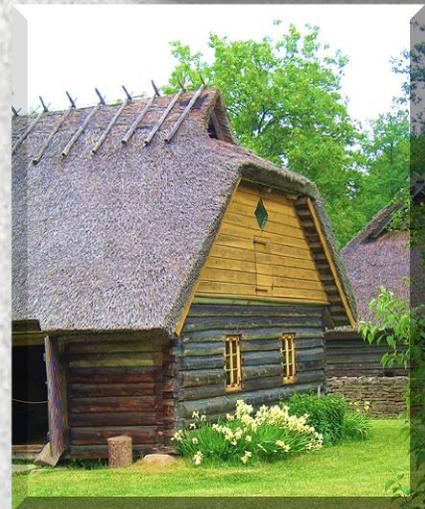
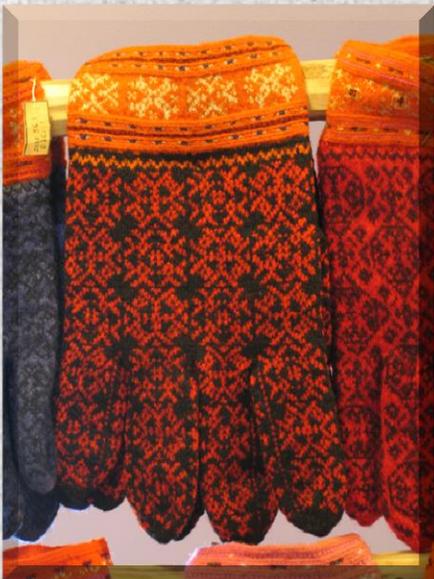
The rest of the afternoon is at your leisure to stroll around the town and shops of Kuressaare. Overnight at Ekesparre Boutique Hotel. (B)



Monday, July 18 Exploring Muhu Island

Connected by a 2.5 km causeway to Saaremaa is Muhu Island, one of the most culturally rich islands in Estonia and cherished for its vibrantly colored textiles and folklore. It is quintessentially Estonian with its traditional thatched cottages, art, beer, natural beauty and its unique style of textiles. Its nature and traditions have not changed much over time. According to www.visitestonia.com, it literally “oozes romance

with its ancient culture, colorful villages and deserted beaches like nowhere else.”



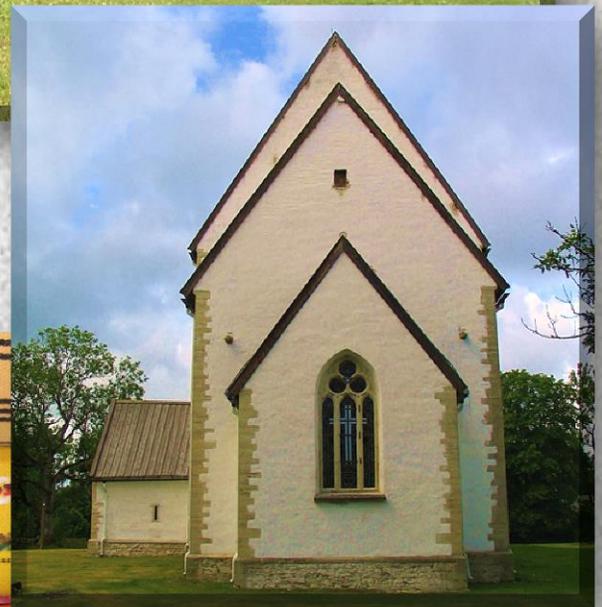


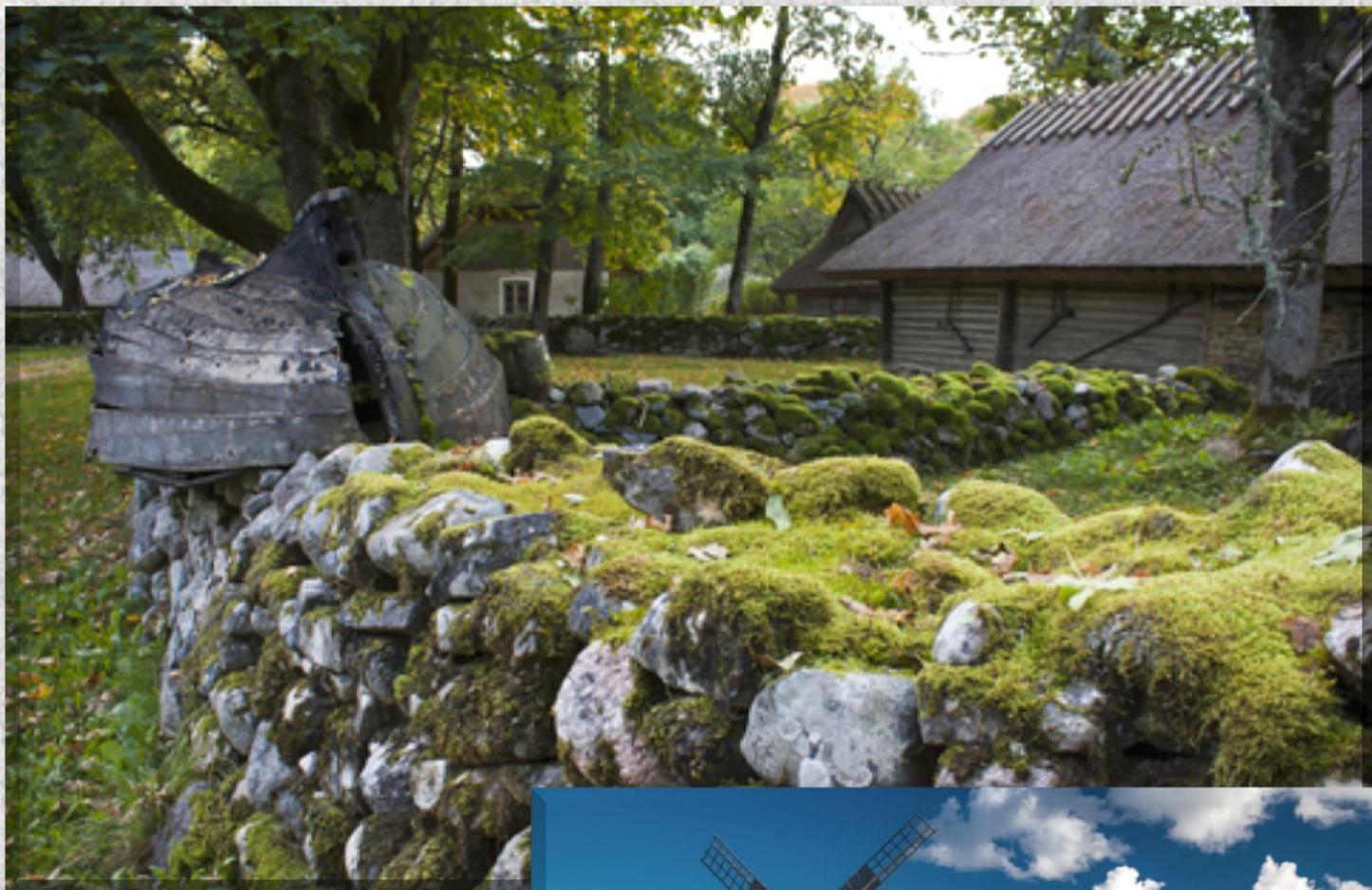
We will explore this paradise and its wonders. A must for any textile enthusiast is a visit to Koguva, a fairytale fishing village and its open air museum. Here traditional textiles are displayed along with folk costumes. While knitting is a big deal as in all of Estonia, but their embroidery with bright colors is the most prevalent textile art.



We'll also check out a site where pagan Estonians made their last stand, St. Catherine's Church with pagan tombstones and a

working wooden windmill that sells baked bread from its milled flour. We'll stop for lunch at Padaste Manor, whose origins date back to the 14th century, and is considered by many to offer some of the finest dining in all of Estonia. In the late afternoon, we return to Kuressaare. Overnight at Ekesparre Boutique Hotel. (B,L)





**Tuesday, July 19
Knitting Workshop
with Nancy Bush
and Exploring
Saaremaa Island**

This morning we continue with our knitting workshop with a Haapsalu shawl sampler as described earlier.



In the afternoon, we will set out to explore the island's natural wonders including its sandy beaches, old ruins, a 13th century church, lighthouses, peninsulas, and the most wonderfully photogenic grouping of wooden windmills on the islands. We might explore one of the rarely visited peninsulas as well. Overnight Ekesparre Boutique Hotel. (B)

Wednesday, July 20 Knitting Workshop

We enjoy another morning of knitting again today working on our Haapsalu sampler. The rest of the day is at your leisure to relax, shop or explore the cafes and shops of Kuressaare. Overnight Ekesparre Boutique Hotel. (B)

Thursday, July 21 Haapsalu & Old Town Tallin

We depart after breakfast for the small and historic seaside resort of Haapsalu. This quaint town, with its wooden houses along narrow streets, has wonderful shopping, museums and galleries. On the seaside promenade sits the Kuursaal, considered to be one of the finest wooden buildings in Estonia. Perhaps the most striking feature is the 13th century castle, one of the best preserved in the country. We will spend most of the day in this wonderful city, roaming the streets, lunching in one of the cafes, and enjoying the romantic promenade.

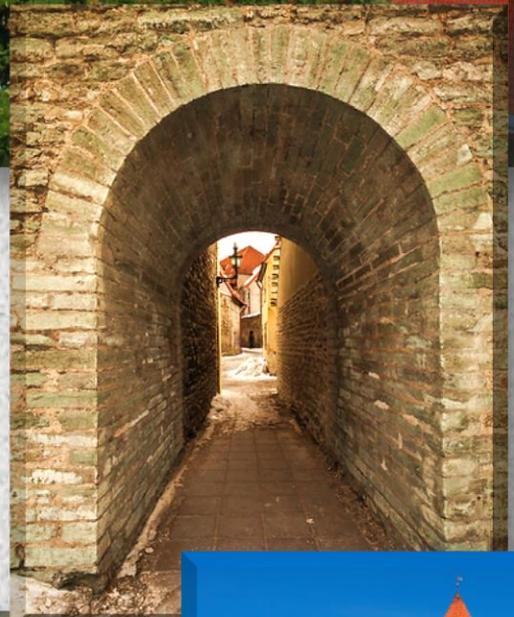


A highlight of our time here is a visit to the Hapasalu Lace Centre. “The tradition of knitting lace-like shawls and scarves in Haapsalu dates back to the second half of the 19th century. They became highly sought-after luxury items thanks to wealthy German tourists. Thus, normal wool used for knitting was replaced with a much finer thread. The skills required to make the shawls – the true test of which is whether they can fit through a ring – have been passed on from generation to generation.” (quoted from visithaapsalu.com) Late in the day, we will travel back Tallinn (less than two hours). We return to Old Town for the next two nights to give us time for a final exploration of the city. Overnight at in Old Town Tallinn. (B)



Friday, July 22 Old Town Tallinn

Today you have a full day to explore this medieval jewel on your own. We can provide you with a suggested walking tour, a list of the knitting and yarn shops in town, or set you up with a guided tour of Old Town (additional cost). The choice is yours. Overnight in Old Town Tallinn. (B)



Saturday, July 23 Flights Home

Today you will transfer on your own to the airport or harbor to begin your travel home. (B)



Land Costs Include:

- 9 Nights' Accommodation based on double occupancy; single accommodations available with supplemental cost
- Meals as described in the itinerary
- Private tours and transportation
- Ferry transportation
- 3 Days of knitting workshop with Nancy Bush
- All applicable service charges and taxes (excluding some international or domestic airport departure taxes)
- Pre-departure materials containing destination information, packing list, reading list and CDC health recommendations

Land Costs Exclude:

- International air transportation
- Airport transfers as indicated
- Any item not specifically included in your program including all snacks, extra personal beverages & bottled water, etc. other than during designated meals, alcoholic beverages
- Tips for your guide, ground staff, drivers, hotel porters and other service staff
- Additional Insurance of any kind; any and all expenses resulting from delays arising beyond our direct control due to bad weather, sea and/or road conditions, sickness, or any other transportation delays for any reason beyond our direct control; optional activities, free-day activities, including any additional stopover arrangements not specifically included in the itinerary. We can make additional arrangements for you. Extra charges will apply.

Cost:

\$\$\$ Per Person Based on Double Occupancy

For those wishing single accommodations: Single Supplement \$\$\$

Cost of Viljandi Cultural Academy Crafts Camp: €900 (approximately \$995 USD) per person, dbl. occ. All inclusive. This is an Early Bird Discount until March 14, 2016

Please refer to <http://www.kultuur.ut.ee/en/craft-camp> for all details and registration

Please call us with any questions

800.369.3033 or 970.728.6743



Loom Dancer Odysseys

does not believe in large group, bargain or "ordinary" tours. Instead, we strive to immerse the discerning and adventurous traveler into the wondrous world of global fiber arts with quality cultural encounters. Our typical group size is limited to 10-12 participants to allow for a more hands-on, intimate travel experience.

We invite you to join us;
be a creative traveler, not a tourist.

