

Let Us Get to Know Tallinn - A region worth knowing

Dr. Jayesh J. Sheth

Most of our readers might not have heard the name 'Tallinn'! It is the capital city of a country called Estonia. This country – region is in close proximity to Russia in the Northern Hemisphere, and had been under the reign of Russia till 1991. Today, it is a part of the countries forming European Union, with the population equivalent to Ahmedabad.

Like India, this country has suffered a lot of slavery and many wars. The Germans used to slave people of Tallinn and nearby regions. Recently, I had an opportunity to travel to this country along with Sweden, and perseverance of their culture. It is worth knowing about the assiduousness, honesty as well as love the people exhibit for their nation.

First, we saw the world famous Nobel Museum, where world's best Noble Prizes are given away.

On hearing the thrilling description of their research, one will be overcome with emotion. We sailed from there through the sea route to reach Tallinn city of Estonia. This region is declared as a World Heritage

Site. One is reminded of many of our 500 to 1000 years old cities, and especially the 'pols' of Ahmedabad in Tallinn. It is pretty much the same city, which can be divided in to the old and the new city with a high wall. We reached the old city of Tallinn. There was 'pol' like streets, tiles over the buildings, but from inside they were very spacious and equipped with all the latest facilities. These 800 to 1000 years old buildings were built by log wood and big river-stones. Yet, each building was clean from inside and outside, painted, and that too, without modifying any old structure. On the streets, just like we pop the corns, 15-16 years old girls would be selling almonds mixed with coco, honey and cinnamon. Due to lower economic potential, the people of Tallinn generally get around 600 – 1000 Euros a month, which makes the lodging and boarding difficult as per their standards and is a little expensive. You will not find any filth, garbage or beggars at any place. Some people would be making chocolates, some clay-utensils; some make different clothing from linen, some sell home decorative items. You will find every second shop to be hotel or selling such handcrafted articles. Hotels are mainly old houses converted so beautifully in to the

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heritage home that one feels like sitting there, if one does not want to have a meal. Food here too, is cheaper than in other European countries. You will find only smiling faces around. There is poverty, but it won't be reflected on any faces, in any dealings or in the behavior of people. Love of every country man towards his country and honesty are the main reasons behind it. Today, in India we claim to be poor, and we see filth, rude behavior, dishonesty etc., which can be attributed to the environment in which we grow up, like schools, where no other values of life, except the marks and bookish knowledge is glorified.

We went to a school of 13th century. Here, each document, important work of teachers and students was placed in a museum and preserved with utmost care. There was a list of teachers and students who went to war during the Second World War. The story of the three students of this school, who invented "Skype", has also been described beautifully.

The beauty of the high wall that divides Tallinn in the old and new cities is that it contains many small restaurants on it. This gives employment to the locals and the

tourists have a completely different feeling – that of viewing the valley from the top of a mountain.

The lesson that we can learn from all this, is that with hard work, honesty, sense of duty and dedication towards one's country, all the economic challenges can be overcome. Secondly, one must participate in the development of a nation by practicing what one learns. Thirdly, one should preserve the country's Heritage and legacy in such a way that tourists are encouraged not only to see it, but contribute towards its perseverance. Today we need Tallinn-like sense of duty, pride for the nation and high level of patriotism. Only then, will we be able to taste the sweet fruits of success in 21st century.

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