

ETHNO SOCKS, ESTONIA

If you spend a bit of time in the Baltics, you'll start to notice how much Estonians love to wear their cultural heritage on their sleeve. Now they're also wearing it on their feet thanks to the latest local fashion trend: ethnic-style socks.

Socks might not seem like the most obvious souvenir of your trip to Tallinn, but these are socks with a difference – they're unusual, attractive, highly Estonian, and you can only find them here. Oh, and they also keep your feet warm.

Produced in Tallinn and sold under the brand name 'Etno', this popular line of socks uses designs based on traditional village patterns, the same funky styles you'll see on folk costumes from around the country. These include everything from the brightly coloured stripes of dancers' skirts to the abstract geometric patterns sewn into their belts.

The product range covers short socks, knee socks, tights and leggings, which come in a huge range of colours and themes. Most are designed for women, but men will find plenty of choices too, including black and red socks fashioned after the same traditional coat worn by Estonia's president.

The best place to find the Etno brand in Tallinn is the Suva shop, located downtown in the old Kaubamaja building on Gonsiori 2. The shop is actually owned by the Etno producer, so they'll have the widest selection. You'll also find some whimsical, non-ethnic socks here too, in case you just want to spice up your sock drawer.



PALERMO – TRISKELION, ITALY

This three legged spiral can be found everywhere in Sicily. In Sicilian history the number three has almost talismanic importance. The ancient Greeks who colonized the island called it Trinacria after its triangular shape. Each of the three corners of the island is, in fact, home to proud maritime city shaped by the numerous cultures that invaded and settled Sicily. The insignia of

three legs in spiral was the symbol of ancient Syracuse and later the Napoleonic Kingdom of the Two Sicilies. Today the Triskelion is the insignia for the city of Palermo and Sicily at large. Tourist shops around the island sell t-shirts, shot glasses and thimbles bearing the design. For something more up market, however, visit any shop specializing in porcelain or wood to buy an ornate and hand-crafted Triskelion for your home.

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