The following breeds span a large territory, starting in Eastern Europe and ending at the edges of Siberia. This includes the former USSR, which is important due to the exchanges that took place for decades among these various countries. These regions of the world, like Southern Europe, have an extraordinary diversity of horse breeds, which are still little known outside their borders. Russia, in particular, is a rich equestrian land, and although more curious riders may have heard of the best-known breeds (like the Orlov and the Don), these horses are still not bred elsewhere in the world. These breeds do, however, have quite interesting specific characteristics, notably their ability to endure very cold temperatures.
Estonia

The number of horses in Estonia fell dramatically during the twentieth century, going from more than 229,000 in 1927 to fewer than 5,500 today. As elsewhere in the world, mechanization has played a role in this drop, but it isn’t due to that alone. Estonia has, in fact, undergone a true agricultural crisis, as the forest expanded throughout the entire Soviet era.

Estonian Native

Also called: Estonian Native Horse, Klepper Native
Estonian: eesti hobune

**H** 1.35 m–1.55 m; on average, 1.44 m–1.45 m for males, 1.42 m–1.45 m for mares.

**C** Mainly bay, black, chestnut, gray, but also black/brown grayish dun, bay dun, buckskin. They often have a dorsal stripe.

**Description:** The Estonian Native has a rather small head with a wide forehead and a generally straight profile; short, muscular, thick neck; broad chest; unobtrusive withers; short, wide back; very round croup; short legs; and hard hooves. The hair of the mane and tail is thick and abundant.

**Distribution:** Estonia, notably on the islands (Saaremaa) and the west coast; a few in Sweden.

**Origins and history:** This ancient breed, the issue of local horses, has escaped much crossing, although it perhaps received some Arabian blood in the past, but in an insignificant quantity. The studbook has existed since 1921. The breed has itself influenced other breeds in this region, notably the Toric.

**Character and attributes:** The Estonian Native has a pleasant temperament and is lively and energetic, while remaining calm and focused. It is a robust horse with good endurance, endowed with good health and long life. It is easygoing, well adapted to the Estonian climate, and easy to keep.

**Uses:** It is suitable for riding, notably for equestrian tourism, for draft work, and in harness. This horse is good for both young and adult riders.

**Current status:** The breed is considered endangered, with currently approximately 390 broodmares and 1,000 males.

Toric

Also called: Tori
Estonian: tori hobune

**H** 1.58 m–1.66 m; 1.62 m for males, 1.59 m for mares.

**C** Often chestnut, dark chestnut, sometimes bay, dark bay, black, rarely palomino.

**Description:** This horse, of light draft type and with a vigorous constitution, has a head with a wide forehead; strong neck of average length; broad chest; long, wide back; muscular croup; well developed, sloping, short legs; and wide hooves. The hair of the mane and tail is thick.

**Distribution:** Estonia, Ukraine.

**Origins and history:** The breed has been bred since 1862. It is the result of crossings among Estonian Natives and Hackneys, to which were added some Breton Draft, which made the breed more compact, and then more recently some Hanoverian to increase its speed even more. The goal is to have a good horse for transportation and farm work.

**Character and attributes:** The Toric is a docile, yet lively and powerful horse with dynamic gaits. It is reputed to learn easily and to be easy to break. It has endurance and is well adapted to the local climate; it is fertile, with rather good health and longevity.

**Uses:** This horse, first intended for use in harness, can also be used for riding, notably for recreation and equestrian tourism.

**Current status:** This native breed is very rare and endangered, with only around 200 purebred horses remaining.
Estonia has a population of trotters. Given the global development of equestrian sports, the situation in Estonia should certainly improve in the years to come.