

study in  
estonia

# Survival Guide

## For International Students in Estonia



European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund



Investing  
in your future



# Vocabulary

## Hello

Good afternoon/evening

Good bye

Thank you

Please

How are you?

I'm doing fine

Bon appetit

My name is ...

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Yes

No

Excuse me

Where is ...?

I do not speak Estonian

What are you doing tonight?

You have beautiful eyes

Cheers

I love you

I like Estonia

I love you all!

One beer, please!

Bus stop

Dormitory

## Tere

Tere päevast/õhtust

Head aega/Nägemiseni

Aitäh/ Tänan

Palun

Kuidas läheb?

Mul läheb hästi

Head isu

Minu nimi on ...

Üks, kaks, kolm, neli, viis,

kuus, seitse, kaheksa,

üheksa, kümme

Jah

Ei

Vabandage

Kus asub ...?

Ma ei räägi eesti keelt

Mida sa täna õhtul teed?

Sul on ilusad silmad

Terviseks

Ma armastan sind

Mulle meeldib Eesti

Ma armastan teid kõiki!

Üks õlu, palun!

Bussipeatus

Ühiselamu



"In every port in the world, at least two Estonians can be found." – Ernest Hemingway

# Dear international friend,

Study in Estonia team is happy to have you over in our small and wonderful country! We believe you made a great choice coming here and you will enjoy your time spent — be it only months or maybe even a lifetime!

We put together this book for you to find your way around easier and start your adventure faster.

You are also welcome to visit our webpage [www.studyinestonia.ee](http://www.studyinestonia.ee) to read news, alumni stories, blog posts and other updates.

**Discover, experience and enjoy Estonia!**



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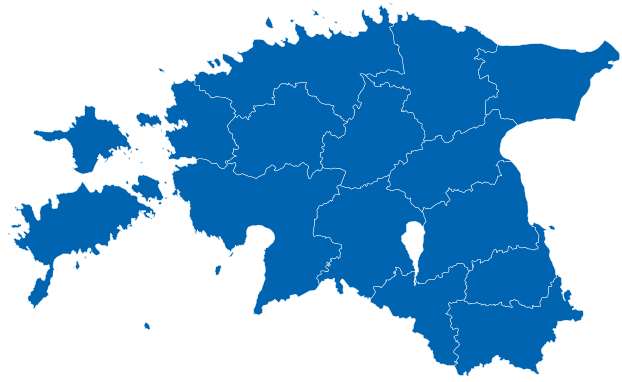
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# Estonia



## Location

The capital of Estonia is **Tallinn**, located by the **Baltic Sea**. It is the **smallest** of all three **Baltic states**. Over the sea to the north is Finland and the distance from Tallinn to Helsinki is around 80km, while to the west is Sweden whose capital Stockholm is about 380 km from Tallinn. Our southern neighbour is Latvia whose capital Riga is only 310 km from Tallinn and 245 km from Tartu by car, and Russia is our eastern neighbour with Saint Petersburg lying 370 km from Tallinn. The land area of Estonia is 45,227 km<sup>2</sup>.

## National Symbols

- The blue, black and white Estonian flag
- The Estonian coat of arms
- Cornflower (rukkilill), our national flower
- Barn swallow (suitsupääsuke), our national bird
- Limestone (paekivi), our national stone
- Wolf (hunt), our national animal
- Baltic herring (räim), our national fish



# The Estonian national anthem

## **Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm**

music **Fredrik Pacius**

lyrics **Johann Voldemar Jannsen**

Mu isamaa, mu õnn ja rõõm,  
kui kaunis oled sa!  
Ei leia mina iial teal  
see suure, laia ilma peal,  
mis mul nii armas oleks ka,  
kui sa, mu isamaa!

Sa oled mind ju sünnitand  
ja üles kasvatand;  
sind tänan mina alati  
ja jään sull' truuks surmani,  
mul kõige armsam oled sa,  
mu kallis isamaa!

Su üle Jumal valvaku,  
mu armas isamaa!  
Ta olgu sinu kaitseja  
ja võtku rohkest õnnista,  
mis iial ette võtad sa,  
mu kallis isamaa!



# Sing with us!

## **My native land, my joy, delight**

My native land, my joy and delight,  
How fair thou art and bright!  
And nowhere in the world all round  
Can ever such a place be found  
So well beloved as I love thee,  
My native country dear!

My little cradle stood on ground soil,  
Whose blessings ease my toil.  
With my last breath my thanks to thee,  
For true to death I'll ever be,  
O worthy, most beloved and fine,  
Thou, dearest country mine!

May God in Heaven thee gave birth to me,  
My best, my dearest land!  
May He be guard, may He be shield,  
For ever may He bless and wield  
O graciously all deeds of thine,  
Thou dearest country mine!



**Did you know?** Estonia is the fourth smallest country by population in the EU (after Malta, Luxembourg and Cyprus).

# People

## Population: 1.3 million

- About 100 different nationalities and ethnic groups.
- 70% of population is ethnic Estonians, 24% ethnic Russians and 6% other nationalities (Ukrainians, Belarusians, Finns etc.) according to Statistics Estonia.

## Religion

The most practiced religion in Estonia is Lutheran Christianity. Besides that Estonia has large numbers of Orthodox Christians.

Estonia is one of the least religious countries in the world with only 16% of the population considering religion an important part of their daily life (according to Gallup Poll).



## Estonians and their character

- Estonians are reserved and composed people, although the better you get to know them, the more friendly they become.
- Estonians are open-minded.
- Estonians don't smile much, probably because of the weather.
- Estonians are hard-working and honest.
- Estonians like to use hi-tech gadgets and have high expectations of technology when visiting other countries.





**Did you know?** Estonian is one of the Uralic languages, just like Finnish and Hungarian. Most Northern Estonians understand basic Finnish, Finnish people however, on average, don't understand Estonian that well.

# Language

**Languages widely spoken in Estonia: English, German, Finnish and Russian.**

- The **Estonian language** belongs to the **Uralic language family** and is closely related to Finnish.
- Although Estonian is a distinct language, it uses words borrowed from Swedish, German and Russian.
- It's a melodious language.
- There are 14 cases in Estonian.
- There are present and past tenses but there is no grammatical future tense.
- There is no grammatical gender and no distinction is made between 'he' and 'she'.
- Native Estonian words and adapted loanwords have stress on the first syllable.
- In south-east Estonia, people speak a separate **Seto and Võro languages**.





Estonian Academy of Arts



**Did you know?** The annual number of hours of sunshine varies between 1600 and 1900.

# Climate and nature

## Weather forecast

[www.ilmateenistus.ee](http://www.ilmateenistus.ee)



Estonia's weather offers as many surprises as the country itself.

## Climate

- Is temperate and mild, with warm summers and fairly severe winters.
- Is often breezy and humid due to the Baltic Sea.
- Has four distinct seasons: spring, summer, autumn and winter.
- Is famous for **white nights** with more than 18 hours of light in summer.
- Has almost 19 hours of full daylight on the longest day of the year on June 21.
- Usually sees snow from December to March.

## Average daily temperature is

– **4,7° C** (22° F ) in February

but can go below –30 °C in winter

**16.7° C** (62° F ) in July

but can rise to 30 °C and above in summer

## Record temperatures

**High 35.6° C** (11/08/1992, Võru)

**Low –43.5° C** (17/01/1940, Jõgeva)

## Nature

- Almost half of Estonian territory is covered by forest and woodland.
- About one fifth of Estonia is covered **with swamps and bogs**.
- Millions of birds stop in Estonia on their migratory paths.
- In Estonia you can find wild bears, wolves and lynx.
- There are many national parks including **Lahemaa, Soomaa, Vilsandi, Karula and Matsalu**.
- The highest point is **Munamägi** (Big Egg Mountain) at 318m, which is the highest point in the entire Baltic region.
- The largest rivers are **Narva** and **Suur Emajõgi**, the longest river is **Võhandu**.



- The highest artificial waterfall is **Valaste** (30.5 m), the highest natural waterfall is **Jägala** (8 m).
- The deepest lake is **Rõuge Suurjärv** (38 m) and the biggest lakes are **Peipsi**, which is the 4th largest lake in Europe, and **Võrtsjärv**.
- There are 2222 islands, of which the biggest are **Saaremaa** and **Hiiumaa**.

# Economy



**Ministry of Foreign Affairs:** [www.vm.ee](http://www.vm.ee)

**Statistics Estonia:** [www.stat.ee](http://www.stat.ee)

**Bank of Estonia:** [www.eestipank.ee](http://www.eestipank.ee)

- The economy is liberal and innovative.
- Estonians tend to prefer products produced by local companies.
- IT is one of the most popular areas of business with the main focus on simplification, innovation and customer-friendliness.
- One of the highest internet penetrations in the world with 90% of the population having internet access at home and 98% of 16-44 year olds using internet daily.
- The tax system has a 20% income tax, zero tax on reinvested corporate profit, and VAT of 20%.
- Estonia's main trading partners are Finland, Sweden and Germany.
- The Wall Street Journal and Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom 2022 ranks Estonia as one of the freest economies in the world - 7th out of 184 countries.
- The World Bank ranks Estonia 18th in its ease of Doing Business in 2019 report, which covers 190 countries.

# Exports of Estonia 2021

## Statistics Estonia

- Electrical equipment and mechanical appliances 23,1%
- Mineral fuels 16,9%
- Wood and articles of wood 11%
- Base metal and articles of base metal (iron and steel etc) 8,2%
- Furniture, lighting fittings, prefabricated buildings and other manufactured articles 7,5%
- Transport equipment 6,3%
- Products of the chemical or allied industries 5%
- Prepared foodstuffs, beverages and other articles 3,2%
- Others - 20%



**Did you know?** Estonian euro coins feature a silhouette map of Estonia. The design was chosen in a public vote.

## Currency

**The official currency of Estonia is Euro.**

- Major foreign currencies can easily be exchanged in banks and exchange offices.
- Cash can be withdrawn from ATMs, which are widely available in bigger cities.
- Credit cards like Visa and Mastercard and many international debit cards are widely accepted.
- Use Wise (formerly TranserWise) when transferring money abroad. It saves you a lot of money on bank charges. The company was started by young Estonian entrepreneurs.

## Time

Estonia uses Eastern European Time (EET) (UTC+2) during winter, and Eastern European Summer Time (EEST) (UTC+3) during summer.



**Did you know?** The former President of Estonia, Kersti Kaljulaid was the first female head of state of Estonia since the country declared independence in 1918, as well as the youngest ever.

# Political system

**Estonian Parliament:** [www.riigikogu.ee](http://www.riigikogu.ee)

- Estonia is a parliamentary republic and the Parliament is called the Riigikogu (with 101 members).
- The Head of State is the President, who is elected by the Riigikogu for a five-year term.
- The Head of Government is the Prime Minister, who is appointed by the President and approved by the Riigikogu.
- The Government system is parliamentary democracy.
- The highest judicial body is the Supreme Court.

## Membership of international organisations:

- United Nations **UN** (17 Oct 1991)
- World Trade Organisation **WTO** (1 Jan 1999)
- North Atlantic Treaty Organisation **NATO** (29 Mar 2004)
- European Union **EU** (1 May 2004)
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development **OECD** (9 Dec 2010)

## Estonian Presidents

**Alar Karis** (2021—....),  
**Kersti Kaljulaid** (2016—2021),  
**Toomas Hendrik Ilves** (2006—2016),  
**Arnold Rüütel** (2001—2006),  
**Lennart Meri** (1992—2001),  
**Konstantin Päts** (1938—1940)

Alar Karis is an Estonian molecular geneticist and developmental biologist. He has been the rector of the University of Tartu and the Estonian University of Life Sciences.





**Did you know?** The first public Christmas tree in Europe was put up in the old town square in Tallinn in 1441.

# History

**Encyclopaedia about Estonia :** [www.estonica.org](http://www.estonica.org)

The oldest known traces of human settlement in modern Estonian territory date back to 9000 BC.

**1030** - First mention of Tartu by chroniclers of Kievan Rus'

**1154** - First mention of Tallinn by Arab geographer Al-Idrisi

**1248** - Tallinn was granted Lübeck law

**13th cent.** - Trading guilds operate as part of the Hanseatic League

**13th cent.** - Livonian order and Danish rule

**1558 - 1582** - Livonian War

**1558 - 1710** - Estonia under Swedish rule

**1632** - The University of Tartu was founded

**1700 - 1721** - Great Northern War, beginning of Russian rule

**1869** - The first song festival was held in Tartu

**24 Feb 1918** - First Estonian Declaration of Independence

**1918 - 1920** - Estonian War of Independence

**2 Feb 1920** - The Tartu Peace Treaty was signed

**1941 - 1944** - German rule

**1944 - 1991** - Estonia was part of the Soviet Union

**1989** - The Singing Revolution

**20 Aug 1991** - Re-Independence of the Estonian Republic

**1 May 2004** - Estonia joins the EU

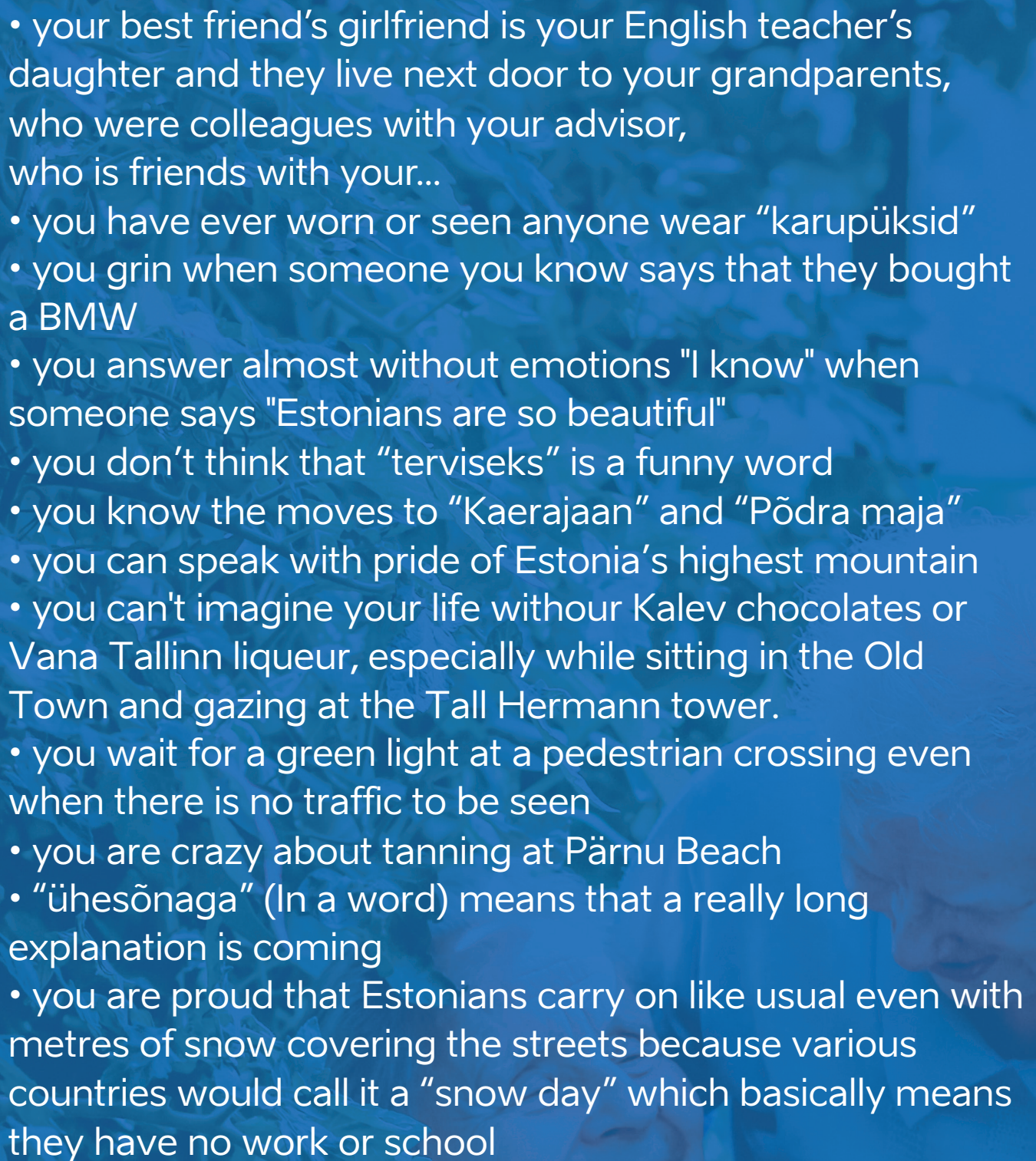


# Jokes about Estonia and Estonians

## **You know you are from Estonia when...**

- you declare your taxes on the internet like all modern people
- “kohuke” belongs to your menu
- you would agree that wife-carrying is a real sport (at least as long as Estonians are winning)
- you want WiFi to be free of charge everywhere
- you use the word ‘normal’ if something is OK
- you say ‘Noh’ even when you speak English, just to confuse people
- you know that going to the sauna is 80% about networking and 20% about washing
- potato to you is the same as rice to a Japanese
- you know very well what “mhmmh” means
- swimming in +18 C water is a perfectly normal summer activity for you
- when summer does come around, you tend to be working that day



- 
- your best friend's girlfriend is your English teacher's daughter and they live next door to your grandparents, who were colleagues with your advisor, who is friends with your...
  - you have ever worn or seen anyone wear "karupüksid"
  - you grin when someone you know says that they bought a BMW
  - you answer almost without emotions "I know" when someone says "Estonians are so beautiful"
  - you don't think that "terviseks" is a funny word
  - you know the moves to "Kaerajaan" and "Põdra maja"
  - you can speak with pride of Estonia's highest mountain
  - you can't imagine your life without Kalev chocolates or Vana Tallinn liqueur, especially while sitting in the Old Town and gazing at the Tall Hermann tower.
  - you wait for a green light at a pedestrian crossing even when there is no traffic to be seen
  - you are crazy about tanning at Pärnu Beach
  - "ühesõnaga" (In a word) means that a really long explanation is coming
  - you are proud that Estonians carry on like usual even with metres of snow covering the streets because various countries would call it a "snow day" which basically means they have no work or school

**Try to pronounce:** "Jüriöö ülestõus", "veoauto",  
"täieõiguslik", "jää-äär", "vanapagana rahapada"

- you also know that if there is going to be another Ice Age the Estonian people are more likely to survive than South or Western Europeans
- you eat pea soup and a bun with whipped cream on Vastlapäev every year
- you wear reflectors during winter
- you feel butterflies in your belly when you hear Tõnis Mägi's song "Koit"
- you undress yourself as much as possible when the sun is shining
- you go looking for a fern flower on Midsummer Eve (Jaaniõhtu)





**Did you know?** The name Tallinn comes from the words "Taani linn" ("Danish town" in Estonian).

# Arrival in Estonia

**Tallinn Airport :** [www.tallinn-airport.ee](http://www.tallinn-airport.ee)

**Tartu Airport :** [www.tartu-airport.ee](http://www.tartu-airport.ee)

You probably got your first view of Estonia from the plane or boat. All means of transport bring you to the Tallinn and Tartu city centre.

# International transport

**By plane: Lennart Meri Tallinn Airport (TLL) has direct connections to more than 30 cities.**

**Tartu airport has direct connection to Helsinki.**

- Air Baltic, Finnair, Ryanair, Turkish Airlines, Lufthansa and many other fly to Tallinn.
- The airport is only 4 km from the city centre.
- In addition to Tallinn and Tartu, you can also use the airports of Kuressaare, Kärdla and Pärnu.

## **By boat: many ferries run from Helsinki and Stockholm**

- Ferries are operated by Tallink, Viking Line and Eckerö Line.
- The port is a 15 min walk or 3 min by public transport from the city centre.

## **By bus: buses connect to many European cities**

- Services are run by Lux Express (with WiFi in many buses) and Ecolines.
- The bus station is just a few stops by public transport from the city centre.



# Public transport

In Tallinn, you can use trolleybuses, buses, trams and minibuses. Tartu is smaller and only has buses. To get to other towns, you can use buses, minibuses and trains. Taxis are widely available.

**Tallinn:** [www.transport.tallinn.ee](http://www.transport.tallinn.ee)

As of 2013, all residents of Tallinn, including international students who have registered their residence in Tallinn, are entitled the right of free travel by Tallinn public transport. In order to travel free of charge, you need to get yourself an electronic Smartcard (Ühiskaart), which is available in different food stores and post offices. The Smartcard can also be replaced with an ISIC card.

**For more information, please see:** [www.tallinn.ee](http://www.tallinn.ee)

**Tartu:** [www.tartu.ee](http://www.tartu.ee)

## Between towns

**Buses:** [www.tpilet.ee](http://www.tpilet.ee)

**Trains:** [www.elron.ee](http://www.elron.ee)



# Finding accommodation

## Apartments for rent:

[www.city24.ee](http://www.city24.ee)

[www.kv.ee](http://www.kv.ee)

The places of residence for international students are mostly provided in student dormitories with single, double or triple rooms. You can also find private apartments for rent in newspapers, internet advertisements or real estate agencies. International Relations office in your university can also help you and give you advice.

## Housing costs

Depend on the **location and quality** of the accommodation. Monthly rent can vary from €100-150 in the dormitories to about €300-550 for a single bedroom private flat in Tallinn. Of course, prices in the city centre might be higher.

Dormitories usually require a deposit. Real estate agents usually take a commission fee equal to one month's rent.

**Don't forget** to contact the international relations office (or student service) of host institution before arrival.

# Counselling at universities

- Many institutions of higher education offer their students **academic and professional counselling**
- **Tutors** — 2nd or 3rd year students who know about university procedures, student rights and student organisations
- **Student Ambassadors** — Study in Estonia ambassadors and ambassadors in bigger Estonian universities
- **Student Organisations** like **ESN** (Erasmus Student Network), the **International Club** or the **Student Council**
- **Student Career Service**

**Don't miss it!** At the beginning of the semester, universities run **Orientation Days** (usually in August and in January) for all incoming international students to introduce them the university and explain any academic and study related issues.



# Residence permit for studies

All students who are not Estonian citizens or EU citizens (including EEA countries and Switzerland) need a temporary residence permit for study. **EU citizens should obtain a temporary residence permit in Estonia. The temporary residence permit for study is usually issued with a period of validity until the end of the nominal study period.** In order to obtain a temporary residence permit, the student should register their place of residence at the Local Government Authority of the place of residence within 1 month from the day that residence received notification of being granted temporary residence permit. In addition, the student has to apply for an Estonia ID-card within 1 month from obtaining the temporary residence permit. More information can be found on the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board website: [www.politsei.ee](http://www.politsei.ee)

Students who are **third country nationals (not EU citizens) have to apply for a temporary residence permit for study at the Estonian embassy in their home country** (or, if you don't have an Estonian Embassy in your country, at the nearest Estonian embassy). If you're a Master's or a PhD student, you can also enter the country with a visa and apply for a temporary residence permit in Estonia.

If your temporary residence permit is issued for 1 year then it should be renewed at least 2 months before the date of expiration at the Police and Border Guard Board.



The Estonian ID-card issued to a student is a document stating that an international student was issued a temporary residence permit for studies in Estonia. Contact your international office for details about where to renew your temporary residence permit. Students from third countries have to register their place of residence at the Local Government Authority within 1 month from the arrival to Estonia on the basis of residence permit for study.

## With an ID card, you can

- Travel within EU
- Use it as an identity document
- Use Digi-ID



## With a Temporary Residence Permit, you can

- Use it as an identification document within Estonia
- Use Digi-ID
- Travel within EU

## For additional information, please visit the web pages

**Estonian Parliament:** [www.vm.ee](http://www.vm.ee)

**Estonian Police and Border Guard Board:** [www.politsei.ee](http://www.politsei.ee)

**City Government in Tartu:** [www.tartu.ee](http://www.tartu.ee)

**City District Government in Tallinn:** [www.tallinn.ee](http://www.tallinn.ee)

Should you need help - you can always turn to your university. The international offices will always help you!

# Road map

How to become an international degree student in Estonia?

You are welcome to share this info to your friends who would also like to study in Estonia!

## PhD applicants

**Find a suitable supervisor** for your PhD thesis from the chosen university. PhD's admission office will assist you.

**Find the most interesting and suitable study programme(s) in Estonia**

## BA, MA applicants

Visit the programme specific websites.  
Read about programme(s) requirements and deadlines.  
Contact the university. Prepare the needed documents (certified copies of previous education documents, proof of English etc.).

Go to **[www.estonia.dreamapply.com](http://www.estonia.dreamapply.com)** and start your online application. You can apply to different universities and programmes with one online application.

Upload required documents and fill out the needed information.  
**Submit your application!**

If the programme(s) you applied to require an application fee, then cover it. Application fee is paid once per applicant per university.

**Book your tickets  
and see you  
in Estonia in fall!**

If you are applying for a **programme with tuition fee**, pay it in advance if required so by the chosen university.

**Confirm your acceptance** in the online system if you have been accepted.

Check your admission results in **DreamApply** system.

**If your feedback  
is positive,**

print out the application, sign the confirmation page and post it with all required certified documents to your 1st choice university by the deadline.

**If your feedback  
is negative,**

please contact the university. Maybe additional documents are needed or you have entered incorrect information.

**Wait for feedback  
from the university**

# International house of Estonia

## **Service centre for internationals in Tallinn**

International House of Estonia is a service centre for internationals in Estonia (one-stop-shop) to communicate with the state, to receive counselling and to create a network.

### **Purpose**

To create a common service centre for internationals (mainly specialists) who have relocated to Estonia and for the companies that hire international specialists in order to provide information and services in one place, to support a smoother relocation process and to help the international specialist adapt better into the society.

International House is also open to all international students, so feel free to pay them a visit!

Services are free of charge, but please keep in mind to register online: [workinestonia.com/internationalhouse](https://workinestonia.com/internationalhouse)





# Tartu Welcome Centre

## Are you new to Tartu?

Tartu is a vibrant, entrepreneurial and friendly city with various different nationalities and cultures represented. Getting settled in a new place can be a rewarding yet challenging experience. As a newcomer, you are building a new social network, learning a foreign language and getting accustomed to a new culture and way of life. It's very likely that you have a number of questions yet unanswered.

## Tartu Welcome Centre

Tartu Welcome Centre is a team of local advisers with the mission of supporting you in the process of settling in. The centre makes your relocation as pleasant as possible.

With that in mind, they provide the following free services for newcomers in Tartu and South-Estonia area:

- Free consultations
- Registry services
- Cultural and networking events
- Useful information

Contact: [tartuwelcomecentre.ee](http://tartuwelcomecentre.ee)

**Did you know?** Estonian Mud (Peloid) is used for health treatments and is highly active.

# Health and security



## Health insurance and medical care

According to European regulations, medical insurance which is purchased in one of the of the EU countries is valid within the whole European Union area. However, in order to be able to use medical services abroad, EU citizens should hold a **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** which is issued in the country which is registered as the individual's permanent place of residence, i.e. their home country. As a holder of the EHIC, you have the same right for the provision of medical services in Estonia as all Estonian citizens. For more information about doctor visits, legislation, and the Estonian health care system please visit the Estonian Health Insurance Fund website: [haigekassa.ee/en](https://haigekassa.ee/en).

**International students who do not work in Estonia do not automatically have the Health Insurance Fund coverage!**

You can get health insurance with the insurance companies. If you need any help, turn to your international relations office for assistance. International students are strongly encouraged to keep up any **social and health insurance** payments that they make **in their home country**.

Students who have applied for the temporary residence permit need to sign a health insurance contract **within 2 months** after their arrival to Estonia.

Please note that you have to present the copy of the health insurance contract to the university and to the Police and Border Guard Board!

All insured people have a **general practitioner** who treats minor illnesses, refers them to specialists and can make home visits if needed.

**No referral is needed** to visit **a medical specialist** like a psychiatrist, gynaecologist, eye specialist, dentist, lung specialist for tuberculosis, STD specialist, infection specialist for HIV/AIDS, surgeon or trauma specialist.

International students are **advised to sign up with a general practitioner** at their host institution of higher education. The International Relations Offices can give you more information.



## For a doctor's visit, you should bring

- **European Health Insurance Card**, which is issued to European citizens by your home health institutions
- Or **private insurance documents**

## How to choose a family physician?

Source: Republic of Estonia Health Board  
[www.terviseamet.ee/en](http://www.terviseamet.ee/en)

Each family physician has their own service area, mostly a municipality or municipalities.

When choosing a family physician it is important that:

- your address of residence registered in the population register falls within the family physician's service area,
- there are less than 1,600 persons registered in the family physician's patient list.

## How to register to the family physician's patient list?

To register your family doctor, you must submit a signed application to the doctor you have chosen. The application will be reviewed within 7 days, after which the selected family doctor will let you know if you have been accepted to the doctor's list. After the doctor has confirmed accepting you, you are officially registered with the clinic starting from the first date of the following month.



As it takes time to get the appointment at family doctor, we recommend private hospitals and clinics:

- Valvekliinik — [www.valvekliinik.ee](http://www.valvekliinik.ee)
- Fertilitas — [www.fertilitas.ee](http://www.fertilitas.ee)
- Qvalitas — [www.qvalitas.ee](http://www.qvalitas.ee)
- Elite — [www.elitekliinik.ee](http://www.elitekliinik.ee)
- Sinu Arst — [www.sinuarst.ee](http://www.sinuarst.ee)
- Confido — [www.confido.ee](http://www.confido.ee)

Free doctor's info line on 1220 operates from 15:00—17:00 daily in English.

## Coronavirus disease COVID-19

- Official information about coronavirus in Estonia:  
[www.terviseamet.ee/en/covid19](http://www.terviseamet.ee/en/covid19)
- How to get tested:  
[www.terviseamet.ee/en/testing-virus](http://www.terviseamet.ee/en/testing-virus)
- Travelling and COVID-19:  
[www.terviseamet.ee/en/travelling-and-covid-19](http://www.terviseamet.ee/en/travelling-and-covid-19)
- Latest COVID-19 statistics:  
[www.terviseamet.ee/en/coronavirus/coronavirus-dataset](http://www.terviseamet.ee/en/coronavirus/coronavirus-dataset)

If any additional coronavirus-related questions arise, please call state helpline 1247.

**Police, emergency, ambulance – call 112!**

# In case of emergency

**Police :** [www.politsei.ee](http://www.politsei.ee)

**Rescue Board :** [www.rescue.ee](http://www.rescue.ee)

**Estonia is a safe country to live in. But as in all countries, accidents can happen:**

- Most accidents are caused by drunk driving.  
If you have been drinking, then do not drive. Estonian police and locals have a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to drinking and driving.
- Don't leave valuables and bags in your car.
- There have been a few rare racist attacks.
- There are many pickpockets operating, especially in Tallinn, so be careful in public transport and public places.

Emergency numbers are the same and free of charge from all phones, including mobiles, anywhere in Estonia.

Please report **What happened? Where did it happen? Who is calling? Is somebody injured? What is their condition? Can somebody give first aid?**



If you are contacting the police, you should describe as precisely as possible the people and/or vehicles involved. Remain calm and answer any additional questions you might be asked. Do not end the phone call before you have been told to do so.



# Communication

Estonia first adopted information and communications technologies (ICT) in the early 1990s. **Estonian enthusiasm for ICT innovation and development is one of the reasons why Estonia is often referred to as the Baltic Tiger.**

**When you come to Estonia, you will find all kind of new IT solutions:** identity cards with electronic chips, bank accounts that you can open in five minutes, mobile phone car parking payments, online voting in elections, e-health system and much more.

## Internet

You can access the Internet very easily in Estonia. The number of wireless hotspots is growing constantly, and **wireless Internet can be found in countless pubs, hotels, parks, petrol stations and public buildings.** There are public internet access points in most libraries. Using a computer is generally free, or there may be a small fee and a time limit.



## ICT statistics

- 98% of the Estonian population aged 16-74 are Internet users
- Most users use the Internet for searching info, sending e-mails, reading news or using online banking services.
- Lots of Estonians conduct their everyday banking over the internet, making bank transfers, paying service fees and taxes, and communicating with the Estonian Tax and Customs Board
- **e-Estonia** is known for its **e-schools, e-government, e-elections, e-health, mobile-payments, and ID-card functions**

National Internet Domain Extension: .ee

## Computers and students

- All universities have computer labs that offer university support for computing and networking and free computer use for students and university staff. Most universities in Estonia have free WiFi.
- Students in Estonia and student organisations use email to communicate and pass on information. Email is commonly used for communication between teachers and students.



**Did you know?** SKYPE was created by Estonian developers.

## Postal services

**Estonian Post :** [www.omniva.ee](http://www.omniva.ee)

It is nice to send your family and friends a **hand-written letter or a postcard** with a picture of a beautiful place in Estonia. Look for the orange post-boxes. Before returning to your home country, it might be a good idea **to send** some of your stuff **by post so as to avoid excess baggage charges at the airport.**

**Post offices are usually open: Mon–Fri 9–19 / Sat 9–15**

## Telephone

[www.telia.ee](http://www.telia.ee) • [www.elisa.ee](http://www.elisa.ee) • [www.tele2.ee](http://www.tele2.ee)

**Calling to Estonia:** Dial 00 372 followed by the subscriber's number. Estonia has mobile phone network access almost everywhere: you can even use your phone in the forest, on the smaller islands and at sea.

**Local calls:** You can either buy a pre-paid mobile calling card or sign a contract with a mobile company. Usually, signing up with a mobile company will allow for cheaper calls and texts, as they often have discount campaigns for new customers.

**You can also use SKYPE:**

- **Free calls over the internet** to anyone who also has Skype
- Calls to a traditional landline or mobile phone at a low rate.

**Did you know?** Postimees, the oldest Estonian-language newspaper still published, first appeared in 1857.

## Media

There are two news agencies operating in Estonia: Baltic News Service (BNS), which is a regional news agency covering Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and the Estonian Public Broadcasting (Eesti Rahvusringhääling).

## Local Newspapers

**Postimees • Eesti Päevaleht • Äripäev • Eesti Ekspress • Õhtuleht • Baltic Reports**

You can also find The Baltic Times in some shops, as well as many other newspapers in different languages.

## News Websites

[news.err.ee](http://news.err.ee) • [news.postimees.ee](http://news.postimees.ee) • [www.delfi.ee](http://www.delfi.ee) • [estonianworld.com](http://estonianworld.com)

## Local TV channels

**ETV1 & ETV2 • Kanal2 • TV3**

## Cable operators

**Elisa • STV • Telset • Telia**

## Radio stations

**Raadio2 • Klassikaraadio • Vikerraadio • MyHits • Raadio Elmar • Sky Plus • Sky Radio (in Russian) • Russkoe Radio (in Russian) and many other stations...**

**Did you know?** From 1549 to 1625, the 159-metre spire of St. Olav's Church made it the highest building in the world.

# Living in Estonia

**The lifestyle of Estonians comes from their character, the weather and the different seasons.**

- In winter, Estonians are more home-centred and work-focused.
- In summer, they find more time for open-air activities and holidays in the countryside and abroad.
- Some even say that winter Estonians and summer Estonians are different people.

## Some tips

- Don't cross the road unless the pedestrian light is green because you can be fined for it.
- You should wear a reflector to make you visible on the streets during the dark time of the year. A reflector is obligatory when visibility is low or when it's dark. Police can fine you for not having a reflector!
- Most food stores and shopping centres are open until 22.00 or 23.00 every day.



- If you need a ride, the easiest is to use an app like Uber or Bolt. You can also order a taxi by calling a taxi company.
- Every taxi must have a meter, and if you think you have been over-charged, ask for a receipt. If the taxi driver does not give you a receipt you have the right not to pay.
- In the pubs, you normally need to order at the bar.
- All take-away alcohol sales are prohibited from 22.00 to 10.00.
- Tap water is drinkable in the whole country.
- In a formal situation, Estonians usually greet each other with nothing more than a handshake or sometimes a hug; kisses are very rare.
- Take off your shoes when visiting an Estonian's home.
- Fastening your seatbelt in a car is mandatory (even in the back seat and in a taxi).

## Cost of living

A student wishing **to travel and lead an active social life** should expect to **spend several hundred euros per month**.

- At a minimum, students need **300 euros per month** in addition to housing costs.
- Estonians usually buy all their food and general goods from supermarkets (Prisma, Rimi, Selver etc.). Bakeries and butcher's shops are not common.
- In case you need to stay in **self-isolation** and cannot leave your home, there are options for you to order food from different supermarkets, restaurants, bars, cafeterias and pharmacies.

## Some prices

**White Bread:** €0.70

1 kg of **cheese:** €5 - 9

1 kg of **tomatoes:** €2 - 3

1 kg of **potatoes:** €0.60

1 kg of **bananas:** €1.00

1 l of **milk:** €0.60

2 l of **Coca-Cola:** €1.90

0.5 l of **beer:** €1 - 3 (shop),  
€4 - 6 (bar)

1.5 l of **mineral water:** €1

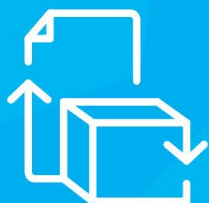
1 l of **juice:** €1

1 l **yoghurt:** €1.50

The prices might change depending on the season and the region in Estonia. For example, prices in Tallinn are higher than in Tartu.

# Sorting waste!

It is compulsory in Estonia to sort waste. Here is a manual, to make sorting simple for you!



## CARDBOARD AND PAPER PACKAGING

Fold large cardboard packaging or tear it into pieces so that it takes up less space. Make sure the material is clean and dry.

### SUITABLE

- Paper and cardboard packaging (cardboard crates and boxes, paper bags, wrapping paper)



## PLASTIC AND METAL PACKAGING, BEVERAGE CARTONS

Rinse if necessary to prevent soiling of other packaging. Do not remove corks and lids.

### SUITABLE

- Plastic bottles, boxes and cups for consumer goods, food, beverages, cosmetics and grooming products
- Plastic bags, plastic packaging
- Metal packaging (tin cans, canisters, aluminium jars, metal corks and lids)
- Beverage cartons (for milk and dairy products, juices and wines)
- Packaging from other materials (except packaging from cardboard, paper and glass)



## GLASS PACKAGING

Rinse if necessary to prevent soiling of other packaging. Remove corks and lids, but labels can stay.

### SUITABLE

- Glass bottles and jars (bottles for soft drinks and alcoholic beverages, jam jars)

### UNSUITABLE

- Soiled/moist paper and cardboard
- Soft paper (toilet paper)
- Newspapers, magazines, books
- Paper for copying or drawing
- Paper, cardboard, cartons containing foil or plastic film (for instance: juice cartons, candy and chocolate wrappers)
- Wallpaper

### UNSUITABLE

- Plastic and rubber items that are not packaging
- Construction materials
- Clothing and footwear
- Packaging that contains products with hazardous substance markings

### UNSUITABLE

- Window glass and mirror glass
- Lamps and light-bulbs
- Ceramic, crystal and porcelain items (crockery, vases, etc.)
- Heat-resistant glass (oven dishes)



It is recommended to place the packaging in the container loose. And large packaging must be compacted.



## BIODEGRADABLE WASTE

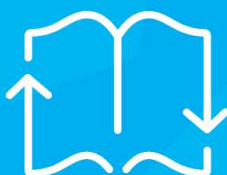
Place biodegradable waste in the container either loose, in a paper bag or in a fully biodegradable and compostable bag.

### SUITABLE

- Spoiled food and leftovers
- Solid spoiled fruits and vegetables, their skins
- Meat and fish waste, fish bones
- Egg and nut shells
- Household paper
- Paper tissues
- Coffee grounds, paper filters
- Cut flowers, indoor plants without pots

### UNSUITABLE

- Ordinary plastic bags, food packaging
- Cat litter sand, ash, cigarette butts
- Liquid food waste, cooking oil, large bones
- Paper bags with a plastic coating, waxed surface or plastic aperture
- Baking paper
- Old medication
- Nappies, sanitary pads
- Vacuum cleaner bags
- Artificial flowers, candles
- Flower and salad pots



## WASTE PAPER

Collect paper and cardboard separately from other waste, even if there is no dedicated container in your house. Place waste paper in the container loose.

### SUITABLE

- Newspapers, magazines
- Catalogues, advertising materials
- Exercise books, paper and cardboard folders
- Writing and drawing paper with or without print
- Office paper
- Cardboard
- Craft paper
- Envelopes without plastic
- Old books (softcover)

### UNSUITABLE

- Dirty or wet paper and cardboard
- Household paper
- Used paper dishes
- Adhesive tags, tapes
- Foil, parchment paper
- Candy wrappers, ice-cream wrappers
- Wallpaper, laminated paper or paper with a plastic coating
- Tetra Pak containers
- Anything that contains materials other than paper and cardboard



## MIXED DOMESTIC WASTE

When you collect packaging waste and food waste separately, you contribute to a substantial reduction of mixed domestic waste.

### PLEASE NOTE!



#### UNFIT TO USE

large waste items should be taken to a waste management facility.



#### FIT TO USE

furniture, electronics and clothes should be given to friends or recycling organisations.



#### HAZARDOUS

waste, such as paint, glue, varnish and solvent leftovers in retail packaging, expired medications, chemical and pesticide waste, discarded items containing mercury, combustible and explosive waste and ordinary and rechargeable batteries, should be taken to a waste management facility.

**Bank opening hours:** Even though some banks have offices that are open on Saturdays, it is best to plan your visit during the week from 9-18.

# Opening a bank account

**SEB :** [www.seb.ee](http://www.seb.ee)

**Swedbank :** [www.swedbank.ee](http://www.swedbank.ee)

**Luminor :** [www.luminor.ee](http://www.luminor.ee)

**LHV :** [www.lhv.ee](http://www.lhv.ee)

**COOP pank:** [www.cooppank.ee](http://www.cooppank.ee)

The Estonian banking system is modern and efficient and uses advanced **Internet** and **telephone banking**.

## **It is very simple to open a bank account in Estonia:**

- Choose which bank you want and find the nearest branch
- Bring your personal identification document (passport or ID-card)
- You may need a signed letter from the university proving that you're a student
- It will take a maximum of ten minutes to open an account
- You can apply for an ISIC student bank card in SEB and in Swedbank - in this case, your card combines two cards in one: student and bank card
- Don't forget to get Internet bank access as well

- If you lose your bank card, contact your bank immediately
- ATMs of larger banks can be found everywhere
- Use the ATMs of your own bank because there is a fee for using those of other banks
- Closing your bank account is free of charge

**Did you know?** The ISIC card is valid in 130 countries and gives 130,000 discounts, and there are 4.5 million ISIC cardholders.

**Debit and credit cards are widely used** but **cheques** are almost never used in Estonia.

## Discounts for students and student cards

**Your status as a student gives you a lot:**

- Discounts in shops, bars and restaurants
- Travel discounts
- Discounts on tickets for transport and entrance to concerts and museums
- Leisure time discounts

**You can get most of the discounts by presenting:**

- **An ISIC card**
- **A Youth Card** for the under - 25s, which is a bank card issued by Swedbank or by LHV
- **An ESN card**

**ISIC card info :** [www.isic.org](http://www.isic.org)

**Youth Card info :** [www.lhv.ee](http://www.lhv.ee)

**Federation Of Estonian Student Unions :** [www.eyl.ee](http://www.eyl.ee)





**The ISIC International Student Identity Card** is most commonly used in Estonia as a proof of student status. You can get the card from your University Student Council, the Estonian Student Union, Swedbank, or SEB bank.

**An ESN card** proves your international or exchange student status and gives you many advantages. You can get one from ESN [www.esn.ee](http://www.esn.ee). **The card costs 12 EUR.**

Some universities in Estonia also have their own student cards – **find out more from your university!**

## Financing your studies – scholarships

The Estonian Government offers a number of scholarships intended for university students, researchers or lecturers studying and doing research at Estonian public universities and institutions. Most scholarships are for master's and doctoral students, but some bachelor's scholarships are also available.



Most universities in Estonia offer scholarships for international degree programmes. It is possible to use other international scholarships (for example, Compatriots' scholarships, Erasmus Plus, your government scholarships, funds, grants, companies, etc.)

Doctoral studies and Internationalisation Programme "Dora Plus" activities are intended for master's students, doctoral students and members of teaching staff who are already working or studying at Estonia higher education institutions, or are planning to do so.

For further information, contact the universities or check the section "scholarships" on web page [www.studyinestonia.ee/scholarships](http://www.studyinestonia.ee/scholarships)



**Did you know?** Birthday celebrations at work are surprisingly elaborate and formal, involving line-ups, handshakes and speeches.

# Working in Estonia

**Police and Border Guard Board:** [www.politsei.ee](http://www.politsei.ee)

International students in Estonia **do not need an additional working permit to work while studying** and they are allowed to work on the condition that it does not interfere with their studies. All non-EU students can also stay in Estonia for an additional 9 months after their graduation (with the permission of the university) to look for a job in Estonia. Upon finding a job after graduation, they can use this time to apply for the temporary residence permit for work. Although Estonian language is required for many jobs, Estonian job market also offers various (local and international) positions which require only English language skills or a number of different language skills (Swedish, Finnish, Chinese, French, Spanish, Turkish etc.). This gives international students a great career advantage.

## **More information:**

- Estonians work **40 hours** per week
- The working day is usually **08.00–17.00** or **09.00–18.00**



- Salaries are usually **paid once a month**
- Salary is usually **paid to your bank account**, not in cash

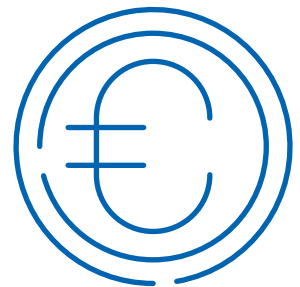
## How to find a job?

### Job offers

[www.workinestonia.com](http://www.workinestonia.com) • [www.cv.ee](http://www.cv.ee) • [www.cvkeskus.ee](http://www.cvkeskus.ee)

In Estonia, it is usual to **email** a potential employer; phone calls may work but are not normally preferred. You should send a CV, and a motivation letter is often requested. Be ready for an interview. The employer might ask for a preferred salary. Most Estonian students work and study at the same time. Having a **part-time job** is very common.

### Places where you can look for job vacancies



- Career centres and info desks at universities
- Websites
- Friends, classmates and local students
- Direct contact with someone from the company, which can be made from the company's website

## How much will they pay me?

- average monthly salary: **€1548 gross per month** (2021) for full time work
- minimum salary: **€654/month gross** (2022)

**Did you know?** The University of Tartu was founded in 1632 by the Swedish king Gustavus Adolphus.

# Studying

**Universities that offer international degree programmes in English in Estonia:**

## Research universities:

**Estonian Academy of Arts:** [www.artun.ee](http://www.artun.ee)

**Estonian Academy of Music and Theatre:** [www.ema.edu.ee](http://www.ema.edu.ee)

**Estonian Business School:** [www.ebs.ee](http://www.ebs.ee)

**Estonian University of Life Sciences:** [www.emu.ee](http://www.emu.ee)

**Tallinn University:** [www.tlu.ee](http://www.tlu.ee)

**Tallinn University of Technology (TalTech):** [www.taltech.ee](http://www.taltech.ee)

**University of Tartu:** [www.ut.ee](http://www.ut.ee)

## Universities of applied sciences:

**Estonian Aviation Academy:** [lennuakadeemia.ee](http://lennuakadeemia.ee)

**Estonian Entrepreneurship University of**

**Applied Sciences:** [www.euas.eu](http://www.euas.eu)

**Tallinn Health Care College:** [ttk.ee](http://ttk.ee)

**Tartu Health Care College:** [nooruse.ee](http://nooruse.ee)

For more information about degree programmes, check the website of universities or [www.studyinestonia.ee](http://www.studyinestonia.ee)



According to International Student Barometer 2019 91% of international students in Estonia are happy with their life at university and 97% feel safe in Estonia.

## Student life

Student life in Estonia is active and full of events. There are many events for students in Tallinn and Tartu including conferences, workshops, visits, sporting competitions, parties and much more. Tartu is well-known as a student town - fifth of its citizens are students of higher education.

Estonians say that your **student years are the best part of your life**. And it's true!



**Did you know?** In 2021 more than 7000 international degree and exchange students were studying in Estonia from all over the world.

## Student events

**There are events for students for every taste:**

- Autumn and Spring Student Days (in Tartu)

Many events are organised by students and for students over four or five days, including a traditional student parade, a night singing festival, parties and sporting events. Many museums are also open for free for students.

- Jaanipäev — Midsummer celebration on June 23rd
- Winter science conferences
- Summer/Autumn science schools
- Student camps
- Student summer sports days
- Student fancy dress parties in various clubs
- Events organised specially for international students
- Sporting competitions

# Student organisations

**ESN:** [www.esn.ee](http://www.esn.ee)

Whatever your hobby in your home country, you are sure to find something similar in Estonia, or you might like to try something totally new. Many student organisations will help you find what you want. Members of all student organisations deal with foreign students each semester, so they will be happy to welcome you and you don't need to worry about not speaking Estonian.

- ESN Tallinn/ESN International Clubs in Tallinn
- ESN Tartu
- BEST
- AIESEC in various cities in Estonia
- AEGEE in Tallinn and Tartu
- Choirs
- Music groups and orchestras
- Theatre
- Many dance groups for folk, modern, Latin and ballroom dancing.
- Science clubs including robotics, IT, sustainable development or geology.
- Sports teams for football, volleyball, handball or other sports.
- Academic student organisations — fraternities and sororities, plus a few similar student organisations (mostly connected to the University of Tartu, but many have representatives in Tallinn as well).

**Did you know?** Tallinn Zoo houses more than 10,000 animals representing more than 500 species ([tallinnzoo.ee/en](http://tallinnzoo.ee/en))

# Free time

## Sport:

- All universities have well-equipped sport centres
- Universities run many different sport teams
- Throughout the year, there are many marathons for runners, skiers and cyclists
- In summer, you can go cycling or roller-skating by the sea or in the forest
- Estonians are especially keen on basketball. Cross-country skiing, volleyball, football and motor sports are also popular
- A well-known winter event is the 63-km **Tartu skiing marathon**
- In winter, you can go sledging or **cross-country skiing**
- Downhill skiing and snowboarding are possible in the south of Estonia
- **Open-air skating rinks** are open in the winter, with many indoor skating rinks open all year round
- For Estonians, the forest is not just a nice place for a walk but also the place for **picking mushrooms and berries**



## Water sports and relaxation:

- Many rivers and the sea off the northern coast of Estonia are good for canoeing and kayaking
- There are swimming pools in all larger towns and cities
- During the summer, you can **sunbathe on lonely beaches** and **swim in the sea** and numerous lakes
- **Spas** are popular, such as KalevSpa in Tallinn, Toila Spa, Tervise Paradiis in Pärnu, Aqva Spa in Rakvere, Aura Keskus in Tartu and Georg Ots Spa in Kuressaare
- There are **sanatoriums** in Haapsalu, Pärnu, Toila, Värskä, Narva-Jõesuu and Kuressaare
- For Estonians, the sauna is not just a hot place for washing: it's a place to recover after a hard week of work. After the sauna, Estonians often jump into a lake, a river or even the snow. You should try not only the classic Finnish sauna, lost in the forest or with a view over the city, but also the barrel sauna (tünnisaun), the Estonian smoke sauna, and the floating sauna (parvesaun)



**Did you know?** Võrumaa smoke sauna tradition ("suidsusanna kombõ") belongs to UNESCO cultural heritage list

**Other leisure ideas:**

[www.360.ee](http://www.360.ee)

[www.veematkad.ee](http://www.veematkad.ee)



**Cinemas** at Apollo (various Estonian towns), Cinamon, Kino Artis Tallinn, Tartu Elektriteater, Viljandi Centrum

**Theatres** in Tallinn (Estonia Opera, Drama Theatre, City Theatre), Vanemuine theatre in Tartu, Endla theatre in Pärnu, Ugala theatre in Viljandi and several theatres in other towns

**Shopping centres** at Ülemiste, Rocca-al-Mare, Viru and Kristiine in Tallinn; Tasku centre, Kvartal and Lõunakeskus in Tartu; and open-air markets

**Numerous museums** all over Estonia.

Tallinn: Seaplane Harbour, Art Museum of Estonia KUMU, Rocca-al-Mare open-air museum

Tartu: Estonian National Museum, Sports and Olympic Museum, Tartu Toy Museum

**Summer barbecues, food festivals, various theatres, museums and cultural centres all over Estonia.**



**Did you know?** Estonia is second only to Ireland in Europe for folk history, stories, legends and songs.

# Estonian culture and cultural events

**Estonian cultural events :** [www.culture.ee/en](http://www.culture.ee/en)

- Estonian literature and culture is rich in **legends, myths, ghost stories, history** and **fairy-tales**. The epic poem Kalevipoeg written by Friedrich Kreutzwald is Estonia's national epic and many Estonian traditions and myths are based on this hero.
- Southern Estonia contains the **Seto region**, which has its own language and culture.
- Each region of Estonia has its own colourful national costume. You can see them on Estonian national holidays and at events like the **Song and Dance Celebration**, where around 40,000 singers, dancers and musicians come together to sing and dance for the Estonian public. The first Song Festival was held in 1869. Now the Song Festivals take place at Tallinn Song Festival ground.



- **Jaanipäev (St John's Day/Midsummer)** is celebrated on 24th June and is the biggest Estonian holiday. On the night before Jaanipäev, it is hard to find many people in the cities, because everybody tries to escape to the countryside with friends and family to make bonfires and jump over them while making a wish, make flower crowns, dance and sing all night long and enjoy the light summer nights.

- **Christmas** is the second biggest holiday for Estonians and is mostly family-centred.
- **Shrove Tuesday** is a holiday which is especially popular among students as everybody goes sledging.
- **St. Martin's Eve** (9 Nov) and **St. Catherine's Day** (25 Nov) are when children in costume go from house to house, earning sweets with their singing and dancing.
- **Independence Day** (24 Feb) is very important and is celebrated with a student parade in the early morning and a flag raising ceremony whatever the weather, followed by a military parade. In the evening, the majority of Estonians watch the President's reception on television.
- Every summer, many open-air concerts are held on different islands, at manor houses and in other beautiful places. One of the most famous classical music concerts is the **Leigo Lake Music Festival** at the Leigo farm in southern Estonia. The site has lakes and ponds with thousands of floating candles creating a magical atmosphere for the music.
- For Jazz music lovers there is the annual **Jazzkaar Festival** in various towns across Estonia.
- Every year, film festivals like **The Black Nights Film Festival (PÖFF)** and **Tartu Love Film Festival (TARTUFF)** present many interesting films from all over the world.
- Every summer, there are many festivals held in Estonia. **Saaremaa Opera Festival, Viljandi Folk Music Festival, Viru Folk, Juu Jääh** and **Hiiu Folk** are some of them.

For sports lovers, there are running, cycling and roller-skating marathons taking places all over Estonia.

**More information:** [www.tartumaraton.ee](http://www.tartumaraton.ee), [www.jooks.ee](http://www.jooks.ee)



## **Estonian holidays**

(shops are usually closed or open for a short period of time):

1 January - **New Year's Day**

24 February - **Independence Day**

March/April - **Good Friday**

1 May - **May Day**

May/June - **Whitsun**

23 June - **Victory Day**

24 June - **Midsummer**

20 August - **Re-Independence Day**

24 December - **Christmas Eve**

25 December - **Christmas Day**

26 December - **St Steven's Day**



# Eating habits



- **Estonian cuisine:** [www.eestitoit.ee](http://www.eestitoit.ee)

Historically, Estonian cuisine was that of the farmer and the fisherman. Over the centuries, Danes, Swedes, Germans, Russians and Finns have influenced Estonian traditional cuisine. Modern cuisine, eating habits, food, and ways of cooking are similar to those in other Nordic countries. Estonia's four seasons mean there is always food made from fresh, flavourful seasonal ingredients.

- Breakfast is traditionally savoury and cereal-based, with barley porridge with jam, fruit and bread with ham or cheese.
- Lunch is eaten between 11.00 and 15.00, but normally earlier rather than later.
- Estonian lunch often consists of soup or a fresh vegetable salad, a main course and a dessert; sandwiches are not very popular.
- Dinner is eaten on returning home from work around 18–19 and is usually meat with vegetables, potatoes, rice or pasta.
- Supermarkets and department stores: Coop, Selver, Rimi, Prisma, Kaubamaja, Stockmann, Lidl and Maxima.

## Typical and traditional Estonian dishes

- **Student meal:** fried potatoes, pasta.
- **Dairy products:** kefir and pett (fermented and bitter milk), various yoghurts and "kohuke" - made of curd coated in chocolate.
- **Fish:** Baltic anchovies (Tallinna kilud), smoked fish, herring, carp, sprat, eel, flounder, crayfish, many types of fish from Lake Peipsi.
- **Meat:** Estonians particularly love pork, and also game from the forest including pheasant, elk, boar and wild goat. It is even possible to find bear meat.
- **Delicacies:** marinated and salted forest mushrooms, forest berries, wild leek, sorrel, black rye bread, garlic bread, potato salad.
- **Non-alcoholic drinks:** kama (made of mashed cereals) mixed with kefir; kali (kvass) a drink made from dark bread.
- **Alcoholic drinks:** Saku, A le Coq and Puls beers; Vana Tallinn liqueur; Liviko and Saaremaa vodka; numerous ciders; Põltsamaa berry and fruit wine. Craft beer making has recently been on the rise in Estonia.
- **Christmas festive dishes:** blood sausages (verivorst), roast pork, sauerkraut (hapukapsas), marinated pumpkin, roast potatoes, cowberry jam, jellied meat (sült), gingerbread (piparkook), mulled wine.
- **Shrove Tuesday dishes:** pea soup, Shrove buns with whipped cream (vastlakuklid).

University canteens have a wide range of dishes for students at affordable prices.

# Eating out



**Tallinn info:** [www.visittallinn.ee](http://www.visittallinn.ee)

**Tartu info:** [www.visittartu.com](http://www.visittartu.com)

**Pärnu info:** [visitparnu.com/en](http://visitparnu.com/en)

**Viljandi info:** [visitviljandi.ee/en](http://visitviljandi.ee/en)

**Narva info:** [visitnarva.ee](http://visitnarva.ee)

**Your friends have come to visit you and you are hungry. Looking for somewhere nice to eat out?**

## In Tallinn

- **Medieval restaurants:** Olde Hansa, Peppersack
- **Estonian cuisine:** Talukõrts, restaurant Tule Estonia, Kaerajaan, Konrad
- **Student-friendly places:** pancake café Kompressor, F-Hoone, Boheem
- **Pubs:** Karja kelder, Hell Hunt, Drink baar, Hopner, Must Puudel
- **Fast food:** Vapiano, McDonald's, Hesburger, Peetri pizza, Subway
- **International cuisine:** Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, French, Greek, Brazilian, Georgian, Hungarian, Spanish, African and many other international restaurants are available
- **There are many cosy cafes in the old town to snuggle up in:** Bogapott, Kehrwieder Chocolaterie, Maiasmokk, Pierre Chocolaterie, Reval Café



**Did you know?** 2 Estonian restaurants (NOA Chef's Hall and 180° by Matthias Diether) were awarded with Michelin stars in 2022.

## In Tartu

- **University Café:** [www.kohvik.ut.ee](http://www.kohvik.ut.ee)
- **Püssirohukelder (Gunpowder Cellar):** [www.pyss.ee](http://www.pyss.ee)
- **Cafe Crepp:** [www.crepp.ee](http://www.crepp.ee)
- **Cafe Pierre:** [www.pierre.ee](http://www.pierre.ee)
- **Vilde & Vine:** [www.vilde.ee](http://www.vilde.ee)
- **Willy&Rudy:** [willyjarudy.ee](http://willyjarudy.ee)
- **La Dolce Vita:** [www.ladolcevita.ee](http://www.ladolcevita.ee)
- **Meat Market:** [www.meatmarket.ee](http://www.meatmarket.ee)
- **Fii:** [fiiresto.ee](http://fiiresto.ee)
- **Aparaat:** [aparaadiresto.ee](http://aparaadiresto.ee)
- **Barlova:** [karlovakohv.ee](http://karlovakohv.ee)

You can also find true culinary gems among the 50 Best Restaurants' list given out each year:  
[www.flavoursofestonia.com](http://www.flavoursofestonia.com)

There are a lots of interesting places all over Estonia – just keep your eyes open and do not hesitate to explore the nicest places yourself!

**Did you know?** White Guide Nordic 2022 recommends great eateries all over Estonia. Global Masters Level also includes Alexander Restaurant at Pädaste Manor (Muhu Island) and GMP Pühajärve restaurant (Otepää). See more: [flavoursofestonia.com/eng/restaurant-guide](https://flavoursofestonia.com/eng/restaurant-guide)

In Estonian restaurants, you are expected to **pay for a bottle of water**, tap water is also served if you ask for it and it is safe to drink as it meets European standards. They usually don't charge for it. If you like the service, you can tip the waiter/waitress but it's not expected. Usually, the tip is around 10%.



**Did you know?** Estonia has the most meteorite craters per square kilometre in the world.

# Travelling

**State Forest Management Centre:** [www.rmkk.ee](http://www.rmkk.ee)

**Visit Estonia:** [www.visitestonia.com](http://www.visitestonia.com)

**Estonian maps:** [www.regio.ee](http://www.regio.ee)

## Places to visit in Estonia

Estonia is pretty small, distances are small, travel is cheap and bus connections are good. This means you can visit the whole country without spending too much money and you can do it in a short time.

- **South Estonia:** Tartu, Taevaskoda, Seto museums, Forest Brothers Farm, Suur Munamägi, Otepää, Meenikunno Bog, and Saatse — an Estonian village which you can reach only by a road that runs through Russia, visa-free.
- **Central Estonia:** Rakvere Castle, Viljandi castle ruins and Lake Võrtsjärv.
- **West Estonia:** Haapsalu, Pärnu, and Matsalu National Park.



- **North Estonia:** Medieval Tallinn, Oleviste and Niguliste churches, Rocca-al-Mare open-air museum, the northern coast, Lahemaa national park, Viru bog, and the Jägala and Keila Waterfalls, Tuhala Nõiakaev.
- **East Estonia:** Lake Peipsi, Narva Castle, Kuremäe Convent, Valaste Waterfall, and the oil shale mines.
- **The islands:** Hiiumaa and Saaremaa with Kuressaare, the lighthouses, the Kaali meteorite crater, Panga Cliff, Kihnu Island. Don't forget to look for typical Saaremaa souvenirs made from dolomite and juniper and to try the smoked fish and home-made beer.

There are numerous **manors and churches** around Estonia, and beautiful countryside in all seasons with national parks, **bogs**, deserted beaches, **forest camping places, hiking trails** and small villages.

There are many well-known and popular markets. **Tallinn Old Town Days** and the **Hansa Days in Tartu** are good places to listen to concerts, see medieval traditions enacted and find a good present for your relatives. **The Christmas Market in Tallinn** is famous for its charming Christmas holiday atmosphere, with the smell of hot wine and gingerbread on the streets and children singing Christmas Songs.



# Transport

## How to be safe on Estonian roads:

- In most towns, public transport runs regularly from 06.00 to 24.00
- If you want to rent a car just look for the word **autorent**
- Speed limits: **50 km/h** within cities, **90 km/h** on open roads, in summer 110 km/h on some highways
- **Headlights must be switched on** at all times
- Main types of fuel: Petrol 95, Petrol 98, Diesel
- Parking: usually the first 15 minutes are free with a parking-clock but check the rules for parking when entering the parking lot. More information: [www.parkimine.ee](http://www.parkimine.ee)
- Fastening your seatbelt in a car is mandatory (even in the back seat)

The cold winter is not a problem for Estonians, and if it is cold and freezing enough you can use **ice roads** to drive from the mainland to some of the islands (usually Saaremaa, Vormsi or even Hiiumaa) - a truly unforgettable experience!

## The biggest Estonian towns are:

Tallinn, Tartu, Narva, Pärnu, Kohtla-Järve, Rakvere, Sillamäe, Maardu, Viljandi, Haapsalu, Valga, Võru and Kuressaare.

You can get information about tourist sites from any tourism office. They also sell tourist cards for one-day visits.



**Did you know?** Lake Peipsi, the largest lake in Estonia, is the fourth largest lake in Europe and the biggest lying across a border.

# Travelling abroad

**In your pocket:** [www.inyourpocket.com](http://www.inyourpocket.com)

**Smartertravel:** [www.smartertravel.com](http://www.smartertravel.com)

**Rural tourism:** [www.maaturism.ee](http://www.maaturism.ee)

In 2004, Estonia joined the European Union, making travelling easier. Since the end of 2007, Estonia has been a member of the Schengen zone, making it much easier to travel in the Schengen area. Non-EU students studying in Estonia with a Temporary Residence Permit can travel within the Schengen Area visa free. Estonia's location makes it simple to visit neighbouring countries:

- Finland (2-3h by boat)
- Sweden (overnight boat)
- Russia (6h or overnight by bus or boat) — requires a visa
- Latvia (5h by bus)
- Lithuania (8h by bus)
- Poland (10h by bus)
- Central and Western Europe by long-distance international bus



# Become one of us

## Become an e-resident

- Estonia is the first country to offer e-Residency, a government-issued digital identity and status that provides access to Estonia's transparent business environment: a new digital nation for the world.
- When you join Estonia's digital nation, you can start a company 100% online, run your EU business remotely, and eliminate paper and bureaucracy.
- E-residency is open to individuals from all countries.
- Most e-residents are entrepreneurs who work digitally, are location-independent and want to start and run an EU company.
- Source: [www.e-resident.gov.ee](http://www.e-resident.gov.ee)



**Did you know?** Tartu is the European Capital of Culture 2024. Find out more: [www.tartu2024.ee/en](http://www.tartu2024.ee/en)

## **Visit and enjoy Estonia with your family and friends!**

- Hiking trails in the bogs
- Rakvere Castle
- White Lady Days in Haapsalu
- Lahemaa National Park with its fishing villages
- Islands of Saaremaa and Hiiumaa
- Camping on the shore of lake Peipsi
- Participating in the Song and Dance Celebration
- Supporting the Estonian football team
- Driving on ice roads across the frozen sea
- Sledging, snow tubing and cross-country skiing
- A hot sauna with a whipping from birch or juniper branches and ice swimming
- Kalev chocolates
- Bear or elk meat
- Looking for fern flowers and jumping over the bonfire at midsummer night

**Did you know?** Gustav Faberge, creator of the world-famous jewel-encrusted Fabergé eggs, was born in Pärnu.

# Famous Estonians

## Singers and groups

Trad. Attack!, NOËP, Kadri Voorand, Curly Strings, Ewert and the Two Dragons, Kerli Kõiv, Anne Veski, Tanel Padar, Ivo Linna, Tõnis Mägi, Metsatöll, Tommy Cash

## Artists, writers and celebrities

Andrus Kivirähk (writer), Tanel Toom (film director), Kaie Kõrb (ballerina), Edward von Lõngus (street artist), Leelo Tungal (writer), Navitrolla (artist)

## Sportsmen/women

Kelly Sildaru, Anett Kontaveit, Ott Tänak, Kaia Kanepi, Rein Taaramäe, Tanel Kangert, Erika Kirppu, Julia Beljajeva, Irina Embrich, Katrina Lehis, Maicel Uibo, Magnus Kirt

## Estonian start-ups and unicorns

Wise, Bolt, Fortumo, Veriff, Zego, ID.me, Playtech, Pipedrive, Gelato, Erply, Click and Grow, Glia



## Historical figures and writers

Anton Hansen Tammsaare, Eduard Vilde, Gustav Ernesaks, Eduard Viiralt, Oskar Luts, Lydia Koidula, Paul Keres, Jaan Kross, Veljo Tormis, Eri Klas

## Composers and conductors

Arvo Pärt, Neeme Järvi, Hirvo Surva, Tõnu Kaljuste, Olav Ehala

This is only a small selection of famous Estonians. You are more than welcome to discover and choose your own favourites!



...Nüüd oled sa  
tõeline  
eestlane!...

"Now you're a real Estonian!"

# Estonia



Tallinn

Kärđla

Haapsalu

Rapla

Pärnu

Kuressaare





Rakvere

Kohtla-Järve

Narva

Paide

Jõgeva

Viljandi

Tartu

Valga

Põlva

Võru

# Tallinn

KOTZEBUE

EAA

PÕHJA PUJESTEE

RANNAMÄE TEE

KOPLI

PÕHJA PUJESTEE

RANNAMÄE TEE

SUURTÜKI

LABORATOORIUMI

TOLLI

LAI

BALTI JAAM

KOOLI

AIDA

LAI

PIKK

OLEVIMÄGI SULEVIMÄGI

NUNNE

SUUR-KLOOSTRI

TOOMPUIESTEE

PIKK

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PÜHAVAIMU

MUNGA

KIRIKU

KIRIKU PÕIK

KOHTU

PLISKOP

RUTU

PIKK JALG

RATASKAEVU

PIKK

RAEKOJA PLATS

VENE

MÜÜRIVAHE

VIRU

NIGULISTE

KUNINGA

LÜHIKE JALG

RÜÜTLI

HARJU

VÄIKE-KARJA

VALLI

FALGI TEE

KOMANDANDI TEE

MÜÜRIVAHE

SUUR-KARJA

PÄRNU MNT

G.OTSA

VABADUSE  
VÄLJAK

KAARLI PST

ROOSIKRANTS

KAARLI PST

TATARI

ESTONIA PUJESTEE

KENTMANNI

SAKALA

EMTA

TALTECH





UNIVERSITY  
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ÜLIKOOI

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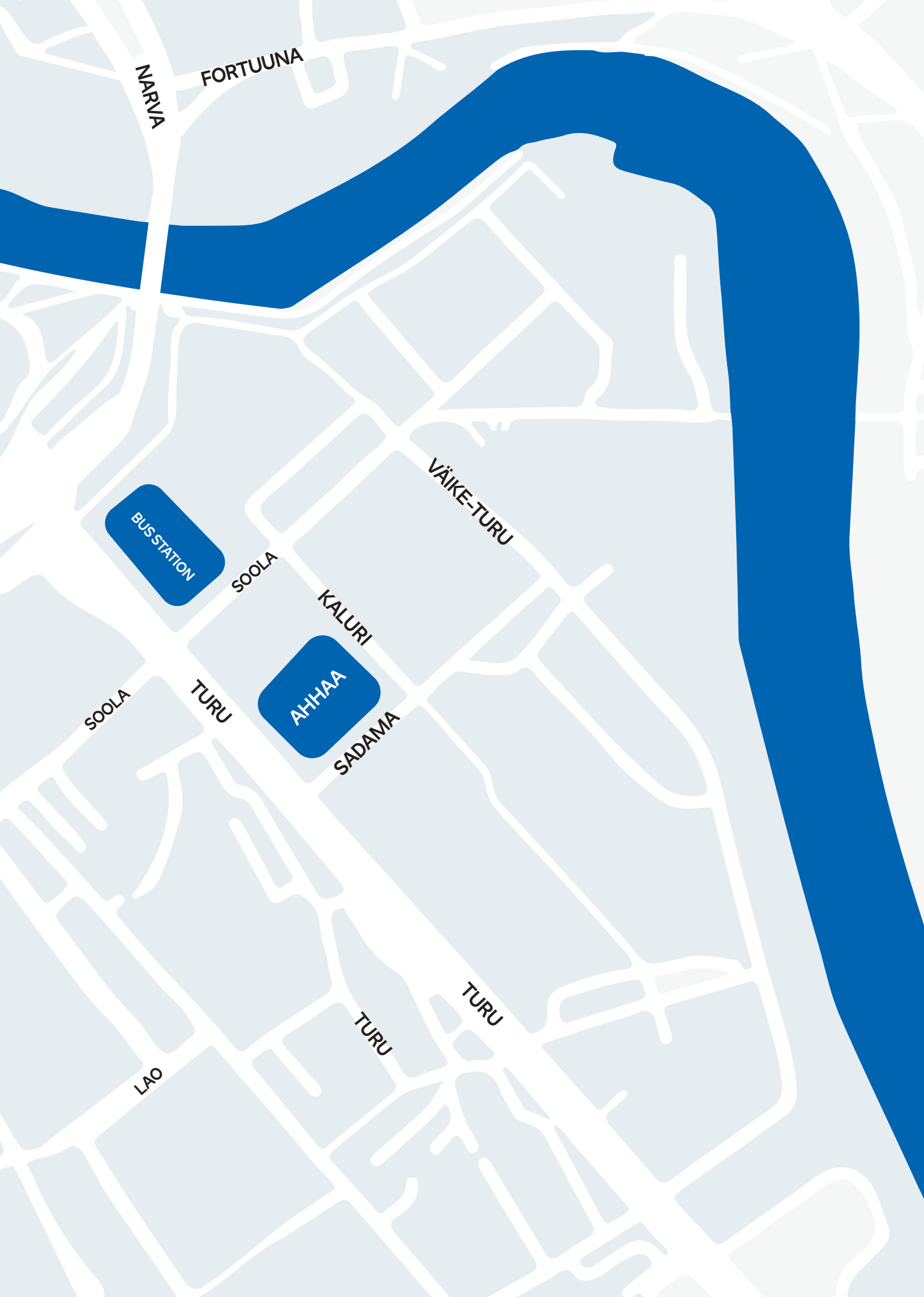
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Tartu



NARVA

FORTUUNA

BUS STATION

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Dear international  
friend,

Thank you for coming to Estonia!  
It takes a person with a brave and  
big heart to survive this country.  
in the North.

We hope you will love it!

Enjoy your stay - take a lot of pictures,  
collect great memories and  
make fantastic new friends!

Hopefully, this is the beginning of a  
beautiful friendship!

Thanks for everyone who contributed! to  
making this survival guide,  
you've been a big help.

See You!

And feel free to tag us on social media:  
[#studyinestonia](#)