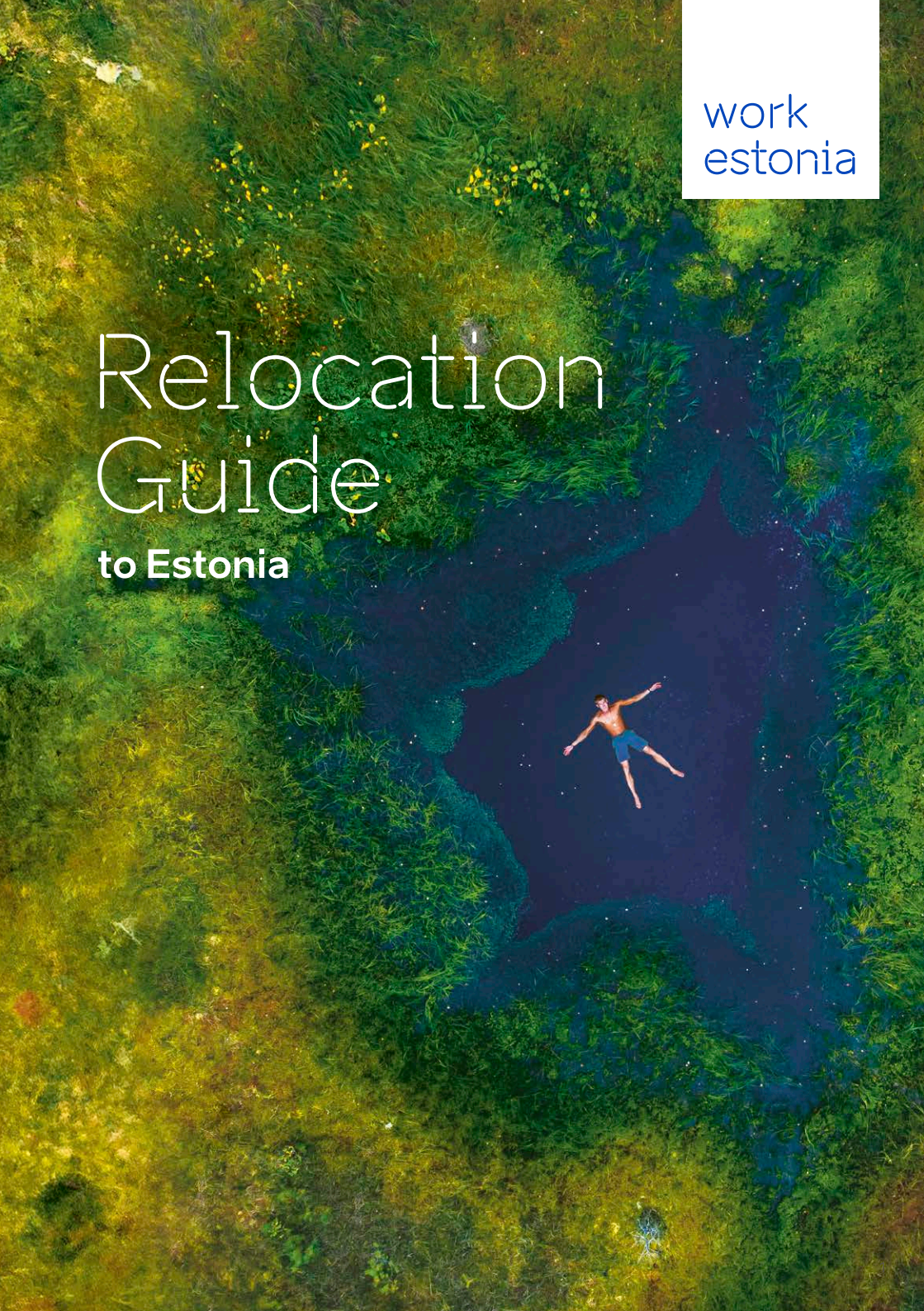
work estonia

Relocation Guide

to Estonia



100 % of state services offered **online**

4th best urban air quality in the world (WHO)

3 min to file taxes & **3 h** to start a company

#1 Internet Freedom (Freedom House)

World record owners 2022: Setting up a company in 15 minutes

The best country in Europe to **get a job** (Business Insider)

51% of Estonia is covered with forests

First country to offer **e-Residency**

#1 Entrepreneurial Activity (World Economic Forum)

Most optimistic people in Europe (Quartz)

Hi!

I'm your relocation guide and personal buddy when navigating your new journey in Estonia.

Here, you'll find all kinds of necessary information, tips, and tricks that might help you when moving here.

Trust me, Estonia is a small country, but you will not get bored here.





Fact sheet

Official name:	**Republic of Estonia** (Eesti Vabariik, Eesti for short)
Official language:	**Estonian**
National flag:	**blue–black–white tricolor** (the *sinimustvalge*)
Emergency number:	**112** (ambulance, rescue workers, and police)
Total area:	**45,227 km²** (17,462 sq. mi.)
Population:	**1.3 million**
Capital city:	**Tallinn,** population 460,584 (2026)
Government:	**Parliamentary democracy**
Currency:	**The euro** (€, EUR)
Member of:	**The European Union, NATO, OECD, WTO, and Schengen Area**
Time zone:	**GMT/UTC +2 (EET)** in winter; **GMT/UTC +3 (EEST)** in summer
Calling code:	**+372**
Internet TLD:	**.ee**
Unicorn companies:	**10 unicorns and counting** per 1 million inhabitants
Climate:	**Temperate**
Seasons:	**4**
Electricity:	**230 V**
Traffic:	**Right-hand**
Clock:	**24-hour**

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Your relocation guide to Estonia

Estonia? Is that a startup or something?

Just kidding—you know all about Estonia, the country you're about to move to—or at least are considering moving to. In which case, could we try to further persuade you with this series of enticing images?

But in all seriousness, Estonia is excited to welcome you. We (yes, we, the entire country collectively) put together this little guide for you as you get settled in. One of your first Estonian friends in the form of a book, if you will.

Once you arrive, be sure to drop by the **International House of Estonia,** a one-stop service centre for expats where you can:

+ Ask for any support you need with your residence permit;
+ Get your Estonian ID code;
+ Register your address;
+ Talk to career and business advisors;
+ Find out everything you need to know about settling in;
+ Attend events and build your personal and professional network.



Book your appointment today and we'll see you soon!

Estonian life

What to expect: the vibe check

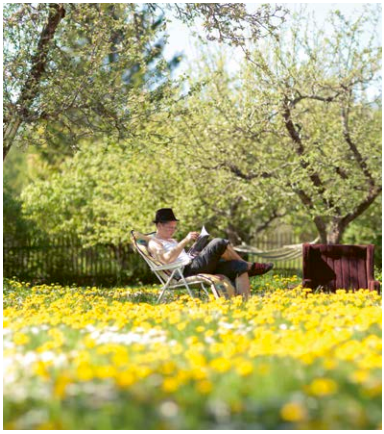
The pillars of Estonian culture could be described with the four major s-words



Sauna



Singing



Summer



Startling lack of small talk

Even though they may have a persistent reputation as a reserved nation, Estonians are, in fact, only human. So give us time, be yourself, and we'll make excellent friends (your mileage may vary)!



Fun facts



Estonians always remove their shoes inside homes and an increasing number of offices. You will be expected to follow suit.



Estonians value their work-life balance. **Downtime is sacred**, especially summer holidays.



Summer days are really long—around midsummer, the sun is out almost **19 hours a day.**

For non-EU citizens **who need an entry visa**

The orange steps are legal requirements

Before coming to Estonia

- Find a job on the workinestonia.com website, if you haven't already.
- Short-term employment registration and Estonian ID code. Your employer will take care of both, usually within 2-15 working days.
- Apply for a D-visa at an Estonian Embassy (takes up to 30 days).
- Move your belongings.
- Give us a call at the International House of Estonia if you have any questions.

workinestonia.com/
up-to-3-months-non-eu

In Estonia

- Start working.
- Apply for a temporary residence permit for employment. This takes around two months to process.
- Get your residence permit.
- Find a home (this is our general recommended order—you can also rent an apartment earlier).
- Register your address at the International House or your local government office.
- If you're in Tallinn, register your public transport card to ride for free.
- Register your tax residency by submitting form R online or by email.
- Open a local bank account.
- Get a contract with a local mobile service provider.
- Find and register with a general doctor.
- Take a little break from the paperwork, look at some cute cat pictures.
- Join the Settle in programme.
- Whenever you have any questions or need help with anything, come see us at the International House of Estonia.

For non-EU citizens
with 90-day visa freedom

Before coming to Estonia

- Find a job on the workinestonia.com website, if you haven't already.
- Short-term employment registration and Estonian ID code. Your employer will take care of both, usually within 2-15 working days.
- Move your belongings.
- Check how many visa-free days you have left to use in the Schengen area.
- Give us a call at the International House of Estonia if you have any questions.

workinestonia.com/
up-to-3-months-non-eu

In Estonia

- Start working.
- Apply for a temporary residence permit for employment. This takes around two months to process.
- Apply for a D-visa if your visa-freedom will not cover the TRP processing time.
- Get your residence permit.
- Find a home (this is our general recommended order—you can also rent an apartment earlier).
- Register your address at the International House or your local government office.
- If you're in Tallinn, register your public transport card to ride for free.
- Register your tax residency by submitting form R online or by email.
- Open a local bank account.
- Get a contract with a local mobile service provider.
- Find and register with a general doctor.
- Take a little break from the paperwork, eat an exotic Estonian snack.
- Join the Settle in programme.
- Come see us at the International House of Estonia if you have any questions.

For EU citizens

Before coming to Estonia

- Find a job on the workinestonia.com website, if you haven't already.
- Give us a call at the International House of Estonia if you have any questions.

The orange steps are legal requirements



Once already in Estonia

- Find a home.
- Apply for an ID code at the International House of Estonia.
- Register your address at the International House or your local government office.
- Within a month of your stay, apply for an ID card at the Police and Border Guard Board.
- If you're in Tallinn, register your public transport card to ride for free.
- Register your tax residency by submitting form R online or by email..
- Get a contract with a local mobile service provider.
- Find and register with a general doctor.
- Register your car.
- Moving is hard. Take a break to do something touristy.
- Join the Settle in programme.
- Come see us at the International House of Estonia if you have any questions.





Deeper dive: Relocation details for non-EU citizens

Here's a closer look at the major steps in your relocation process to Estonia.

Short-term employment registration and ID code

The first big bureaucratic step on your journey will be short-term employment registration and getting your Estonian ID-code. Your Estonian employer will take care of this, but here's a summary so you'll know what's happening.

This simple online registration, usually done before you travel to Estonia, will allow you to start working here before you get your residence permit.

Your employer will need a copy of your passport, a photo, and some personal details. The whole thing usually takes up to 15 business days.

If you need a visa to enter Estonia, the short-term employment registration confirmation serves as a ground for application. If you have children who need to be enrolled at school, they will need an Estonian ID code, which can be applied for separately. In this case, drop by the International House of Estonia for support.

D visa vs Temporary Residence Permit: what's what?

Currently, citizens of a number of non-EU countries can stay in Schengen area (including Estonia) for up to 90 days (within a 180-day period) without a visa. Citizens of all other countries need a visa to enter the country.

For **long-term stay as a citizen of a non-EU country,** you'll have two options:

+ **long-term (D) visa** (for up to 365 days), processing time is usually 14-30 days,
+ **temporary residence permit** (TRP, for stays longer than 365 days), processing time approximately two months.

For both options, you have to have a proven reason to apply: employment, study, accompanying your spouse, etc. The duration is not the only difference between these two options. With a TRP, you can access all the services and benefits offered by the government and the city (free language courses, social benefits, a family doctor etc.). Getting access to most of these public services is a little trickier if you're here on a visa—except for healthcare, if you're here for work.

TRP

There are two options when applying for a TRP for employment.

1. Under a quota.

Sorry about the sudden Latin. Let's take a step back.

Basically, the number of new residence permits issued can't exceed 0.1% of Estonia's permanent population each year.

Unless...

2. Exemptions from the quota:

1. Scale-up companies employees
2. Top specialists earning 1.5x the latest annual average salary
3. US, UK and Japanese specialists
4. US and Japanese citizens

The Police Board's migration advisors can help you understand if your TRP is exempt from immigration quota. The migration advisors also offer consultations at the International House. Book your consultation session and let's figure this out together!





Residence permit card



Once the authorities have decided to approve your TRP application, you'll get your residence permit card, usually within a couple weeks.

This card is your golden key to Estonian life. You can use it for anything from cinema membership discounts to digital signatures. Now you can also register for the free Settle in Estonia programme (including language courses).

Keep in mind that the residence permit card alone is not a valid travel document!

Address registration

Within one month of receiving your residence permit, you have to register your new Estonian address. Once that's done, you can start using public and social services provided by the state. You'll have access to free transportation (if you live in Tallinn) and will be able to register with a family doctor.

Congratulations, fresh resident!

Checklist

- ◯ Make sure you already have your ID code.
- ◯ Book a residence registration appointment at the International House of Estonia or your local government office.
- ◯ Bring your rental contract signed by you and the owner of the property. If the place has multiple owners, you'll need all of their signatures. If you are moving with your family, their names have to be on the rental contract. Note that the contract needs to be signed either on paper or digitally through the DigiDoc application.
- ◯ Fill out the form. If you don't have a printer, you can do this at the International House.
- ◯ Bring a valid ID with you for the appointment.

or... if you have an Estonian residence permit card, you can **register online via eesti.ee** and the owner of your home can confirm the registration. And skip all these steps.

Note that if you move from your registered address, you'll have to register again. With your temporary residence card, you can do it online at eesti.ee in the blink of an eye.

Deeper dive: Relocation details for EU citizens

In terms of red tape, moving to Estonia from another EU country is a bit like moving across town. But there are still a couple of things you'll need to take care of. Here's a closer look at the major steps in your relocation process to Estonia.

ID code

The Estonian identification (ID) code is a unique 11-digit code that you'll keep for life. Your employer will use this to register you in the employment registry. Two weeks after that (like magic!), you will be covered by Estonian health insurance.

Checklist

- ◯ Book an ID code registration appointment at the International House of Estonia or your local government office.
- ◯ Fill out the form. If you don't have a printer, you can do this in our office.
- ◯ Bring a valid ID with you for the appointment.

Moving with kids?
To apply for ID codes for your underage children, you'll need their birth certificates in English or Estonian. As always, get in touch with us at the International House if you need help with this.





Address registration

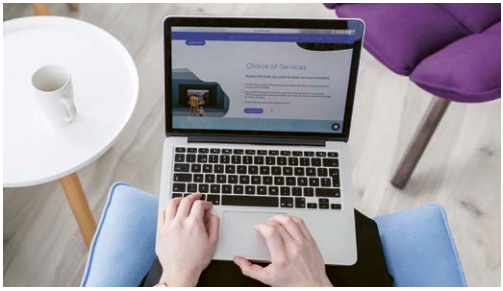
EU, EAA, and Swiss citizens have to register their address within the first three months of living in Estonia.

Once that's done, you can start using public and social services provided by the state. You'll have access to free transportation (if you live in Tallinn) and will be able to register with a family doctor. Congratulations, fresh resident!

Note that if you move from your registered address, you'll have to register again. With an Estonian ID card, you can do it online at eesti.ee

Checklist

- ◯ Make sure you already have your ID code. If not, you can apply for one at the same appointment.
- ◯ Book a residence address registration at the International House of Estonia or your local government office.
- ◯ Bring your rental contract signed by you and the owner of the property. If the place has multiple owners, you'll need all of their signatures. If you are moving with your family, their names have to be on the rental contract.
- ◯ Fill out the form. If you don't have a printer, you can do this in our office.
- ◯ Bring a valid ID with you for the appointment.



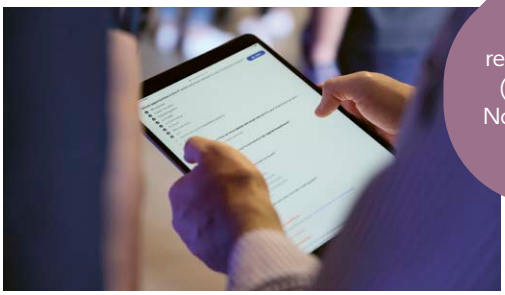
1. Find a job in Estonia



2. Travel to Estonia



3. Start working



4. Apply for a personal ID code

Applying for an ID card

Your ID card is your golden key to Estonian life. Almost everything here works with an ID card, from cinema membership discounts to digital signatures.

Checklist

- ◯ Make sure you already have your ID code.
- ◯ Same goes for address registration.
- ◯ As a first-time applicant for an ID card, you'll have to do it at a Police and Border Guard office. You can either book an appointment or wait in line.
- ◯ Bring a valid ID with you for the appointment.

Fun fact: Now you can also register for free settle-in courses (including language courses)! Not that we want to tell you how to live your life, but...

Notes

Work life

Working in Estonia

We're going to assume that if you're reading this, you're planning to move to Estonia. If you have a physical copy of this book in your hands right now, you're probably already here!

But on the off chance that you haven't made your mind up yet, here are just a few reasons to live and work in Estonia:

+ A work culture that loves flat hierarchies and puts your career on the fast track.
+ A forward-thinking digital society where innovation never stops.
+ Some of the world's best air quality and a lot of open space to enjoy it.
+ A safe environment for you and your family.
+ An affordable lifestyle and healthy work-life balance compared to other major tech hubs.

We've rounded up some of the most important things you need to know about moving to Estonia for work. **For more details, check Work in Estonia's website.**

workinestonia.com

Work culture

The Estonian work ethic is fairly straightforward: Do the work, meet your deadlines, and get straight to the point of your email. Ask specific questions and give specific answers. Being too vague will get you nowhere.

People tend to be humble about their accomplishments (anything else may be considered bragging, which is uncool).

Many people go off the grid for at least a couple of weeks during the peak of summer (June-July) and will not reply to (or even check) work emails.









Work contracts

Work relations in Estonia are mainly regulated by the Employment Contracts Act and the Law of Obligations Act.

+ The law allows for (and most positions come with) a **4-month trial period,** during which it is easier for both you and the employer to get out of the contract if it's not a good fit for some valid (!) reason.

+ Most employment contracts are signed for an unspecified period. To sign a contract for a fixed term, the employer has to demonstrate the temporary nature of the work (such as a short-term increase in workload, or seasonal work).

+ **Salaries are freely negotiable** and usually paid monthly to the employee's (that's you!) bank account.

+ **You get paid the net amount.** It's up to your employer to take care of the taxes.

+ Special conditions apply for pregnant or breastfeeding women and parents of small children. **Women can take 140 days of pregnancy and maternity leave.**

Work hard and love will follow
A.H. Tammsaare

A full-time workload is officially 40 hours a week, eight hours a day. You and your employer can agree on shorter hours for part-time positions. If you're expected to work overtime, at night, or on public holidays, the law requires that you get paid a higher rate.

By law, you are entitled to at least **28 calendar days of vacation** in a calendar year. Even more shockingly, the law actually requires that you take 14 consecutive days of vacation every year. Enjoy—or else!

Read more in the Employment Contracts Act:

riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/Riigikogu/act/511072022005/consolide

Note: Salaries change with the times and depend on the job position. Check the latest stats at Teleport.org and Statistics Estonia.

Entrepreneurial life

Starting a business

Estonia has a booming startup community, already home to more than 1,400 startups and 10 unicorns—the most unicorns per capita in Europe. Whether you have unicorn ambitions or not, setting up your own company in Estonia is easy, especially if you have e-Residency + there is no corporate income tax on retained and reinvested profits.

+ Choose a name for your company. You can check its availability at the e-Business Register.
+ If you have an Estonian ID-card or e-Residency card, register your company online.

OR register your company with a notary and then:

+ Check at the Register of Economic Activities if your area of activity is subject to special requirements. If yes, you'll need a special licence.
+ Register your employees at the Tax and Customs Board.
+ If your company's taxable turnover exceeds €40,000 from the start of the calendar year, you have to register as a VAT payer at the Tax and Customs Board.

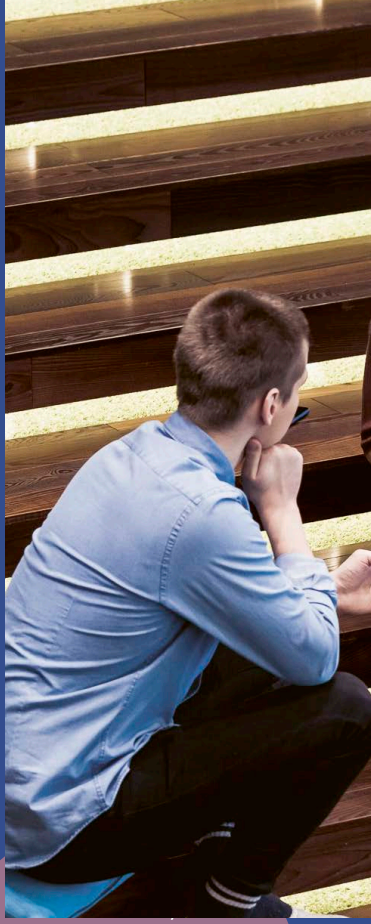
eesti.ee

Your gateway to digital Estonia—for more detailed information about starting your company.

Startup Visa

The Estonian Startup Visa helps non-EU founders grow their startup in Estonia, one of the world's best places to start and run a company. It also eases the process for Estonian startups to hire non-EU talent. If your product packs innovation and has the potential to scale, the Estonian Startup Visa may be just the ticket. As your **business** grows and hiring needs increase, the Scale Up Visa makes it easier to hire **highly skilled non-EU talent.**

workinestonia.com/startup-visa



animal and also the term used in the venture capital industry to describe a startup company with a value of over $1 billion.





Invest in Estonia

Aside from being a great place to step up your career, Estonia is Northern Europe's hub for knowledge and digital business, and a smart, agile location for businesses with global ambitions. So if you're looking to make some good investments, look no further and book your e-consultation with top investment consultants.



Digital Nomad Visa

Estonia´s Digital Nomad Visa allows remote workers to live in Estonia while legally working for a foreign employer or business. Effortlessly accessible and compact, you can take your business anywhere in Estonia and still have all the time in the world. Whether it's enjoying Tallinn's busy startup scene, walking in pristine Nordic nature, connecting with the lively digital nomad community, or simply getting a restful night's sleep. Even with 24 short hours, everything's possible in Estonia.

workinestonia.com/
digital-nomad-visa

e-Residency

e-Residency is a government-issued transnational digital identity available to everyone, anywhere. This identity allows people from across the globe to access a platform built on inclusion, legitimacy, and transparency.

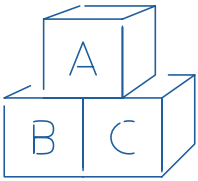
E-residents can access the EU business environment and use Estonian public e-services (!)

E-residency does not grant you access to Estonia, e-residency card is not a travel document (!)



Estonia with family

Kindergarten and schooling





Preschool education
18 months - 7 years

Public preschools (kindergarten, *lasteaed*) fees are set by the local government. Parents pay for meals, and some schools charge monthly fees.

Most **public preschools** operate in Estonian, some in Russian and some in both. **There are private** English-speaking preschools: International Kindergarten, Tallinn European School and International School of Estonia.

Pro tip:

+ Your child can only go to a public preschool in your area. If your child can't go to a public preschool because of a language barrier, you may be eligible for benefits from the local government.



Basic education
7 - 15 years

Basic education is the mandatory minimum education requirement.

Tallinn English College (Tallinn) and Miina Härma Gymnasium (Tartu) are the only public schools that offer basic education in English. **Three private schools** have English programmes: International School of Estonia, International School of Tallinn and Tallinn European School.

All children are guaranteed a place in a public school in their area. More popular schools may require additional tests.



Secondary education
16 - 19 years

Requirements for entry (usually a test and an interview) can be found on the school's website.

Pro tip:

+ If your child is attending an Estonian school and if at least ten children there have the same native language, they're entitled to two lessons in their native language each week.

Social benefits

Parents can apply for different benefits to make life a bit easier.

In addition to monthly child benefits and child care allowances, Estonia offers **generous parental leave** that lets one parent (at a time—you can take turns) stay at home until the child turns three.

The size of the allowance, paid for 435 days, will be calculated like this: Nine months are subtracted from the child's birth. The allowance is the parent's average salary in the 12 months before that. If the parent hasn't been working in that time, they will be paid a standard minimum monthly allowance (this number is subject to change).

More information at the Ministry of Social Affairs

sm.ee









Family life and activities

Estonia will make it easy for your family to live a down-to-earth, slow-paced lifestyle in a safe environment. Children are allowed (and encouraged) to walk or take public transport to and from school independently from an early age.

There are a lot of activities and entertainment available for the whole family. To get started, check out...

+ Theme parks like **Lottemaa**, based on beloved animated characters.
+ **Ahhaa,** the most entertaining science centre in the Baltics.
+ Increasingly popular robotics groups, including girls-only groups like the Unicorn Squad, designed to encourage girls to get involved in STEM.
+ **Kiviõli Adventure Centre,** which offers a variety of activities depending on the season.
+ And, of course, the many hiking trails, museums, theatres, water parks, playgrounds, beaches, and activity centres that will keep your kids busy for hours.



Housing

Renting property

Feels like you've lived here your whole life!

Finding your new home

Renting is the easiest way to find a home. The rental market is quite lively, particularly in Tallinn and Tartu, and good properties don't stay on the market for long.

The **go-to sources** for rentals are city24.ee, kv.ee, and kinnisvara24.ee, but the selection largely overlaps.

The fastest way to book a viewing of a property is to call the listing broker. Most brokers speak English. Note that brokers usually work from 9 to 5 on weekdays, so you may have to step away from the office for viewings.

Leases tend to be signed for at least a year. You will usually be charged a broker's fee equivalent to one month's rent.

Some sites let you filter rental properties by *otse omanikult* (directly from the owner). In these cases there's no pesky broker fee.

Pro tips:

+ Ask the owner if you'll be able to register the apartment as your residence address. This is very important—you need a local address within a month of getting your residence permit.
+ If you can, bring an Estonian with you to viewings to translate and build trust.
+ Pay attention to lease renewal conditions and the termination notice period.
+ Ask for sample utility bills (one for summer and one for winter) to get an understanding of potential costs.
+ Ask for a rundown of the items in the utility bill, to make sure you know what's included and what you're expected to pay for separately (electricity or gas, for example).

workinestonia.com/everyday-life/housing/



Moving your belongings

If you move from a non-EU country, the elephant in the room is import tax. You can import your personal property (such as household items) by applying for tax exemption once you have your residence permit. Clothes and other necessities aren't taxed.

Note that international shipping times vary depending on your country of origin. Don't overestimate the amount of stuff you need to bring with you. Most rental apartments are fully furnished.

When you are **moving with your pets** (dog, cat or ferret) there are some requirements that have to be filled. Check the Agriculture and Food Board's website for more information on this:

pta.agri.ee/en/establishment-agriculture-and-food-board

Good to know:

+ A one-bedroom apartment with a living room is considered a two-room, a two-bedroom + living room setup is called a three-room apartment, etc.
+ Most apartments come with a washer—but rarely a dryer.
+ Air conditioning is not very common. Consider getting a fan for any heat waves in summer.



Utilities

Utilities can run up to €200 and even more during the winter months, significantly less in the summer, depending on the type of building and the size of your apartment.



Recycling

Most residential buildings have different waste containers: general waste, mixed packaging, clean paper/cardboard, and biodegradable waste. Recyclable, sorted waste can also be taken to public containers.

If you're not sure where to take other types of waste (a broken TV set, batteries...), the kuhuviia.ee map will point you in the right direction.

Healthcare

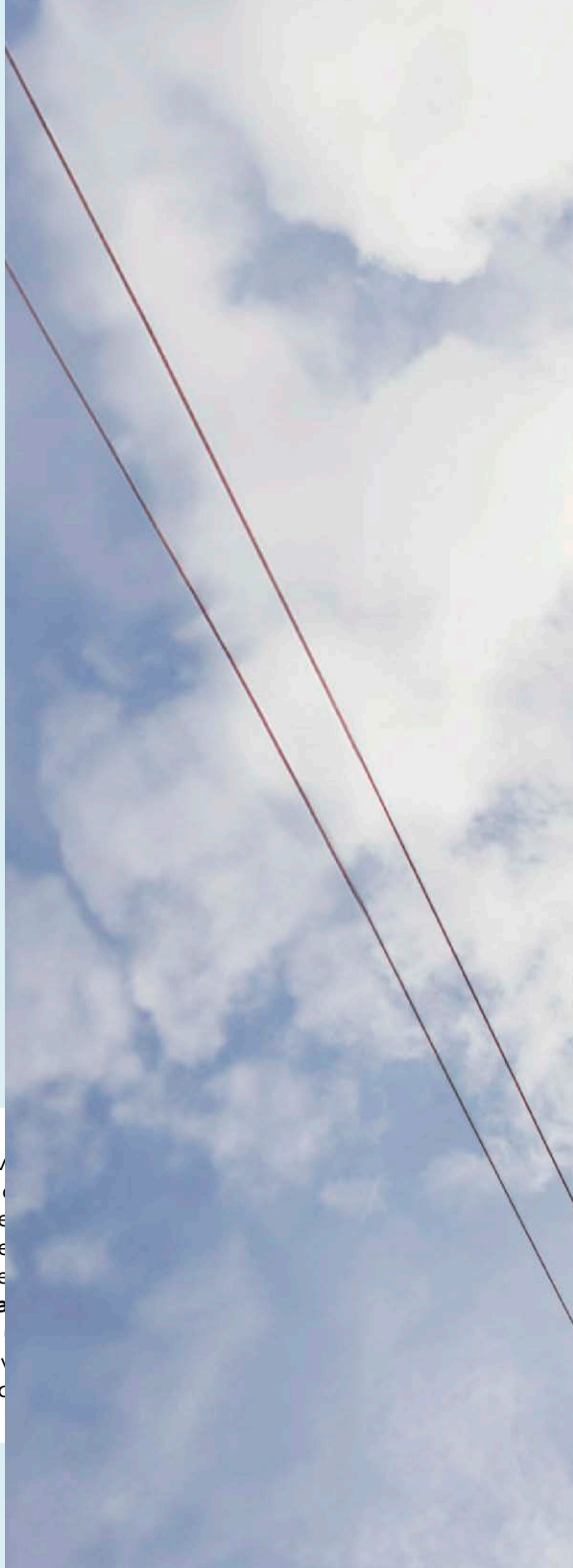
Health insurance

Estonian healthcare is built on solidarity-based financing (read: taxes go in, healthcare comes out). Everyone covered is entitled to the same quality of healthcare, regardless of how much social tax is paid for them.

Estonia provides state health insurance for the following residents:

+ Employees paid at least the minimum salary
+ Students (except foreign students)
+ Pregnant women
+ People under 19 years old
+ People raising a child under three
+ Those registered as unemployed with the Unemployment Fund

Note: If you hav
whether you're
health insurance
health insurance
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To be covered by state health insurance, you need to be registered in the **employment register** (your employer will do this) and have an Estonian ID code. To get a family doctor and health insurance for you and your family, you need a registered address.

Fun fact: this is kiiking - Kiiking is an entertaining sport invented and developed in Estonia, where a person makes a swing oscillate with increasing amplitude until they make a circle around the shaft. Dare to try?



Fun fact: Estonia has a growing set of cross-border electronic health services that allow Estonian residents travelling to a number of other EU countries to buy medication prescribed in Estonia.

Family doctors

As a resident you'll have the right to choose a family doctor in your area to be your first point of contact in case of illness. To get a permanent family doctor in your area, you have to send in a signed application to the doctor in question. Find the application at **tervisekassa.ee.** If you don't find an English speaking family doctor in your area, you can always turn to private healthcare providers (extra cost).

Your family doctor is there to:

+ Diagnose and treat acute and chronic conditions and refer you to a specialist if needed.
+ Start and end your sick leave. Your employer can see this information.
+ Digitally prescribe medication that you can buy from the pharmacy (apteek) showing your Estonian ID-card.

The Family Doctor's Advice Line offers advice in English daily from 3PM to 5PM. Call **1220** or **+372 634 6630** (from Estonia and abroad).



Pro tips:

+ At **Apteegiinfo.ee** you can find pharmacies near you, compare prices, and check which types of medication require a prescription.

+ Family doctors in Estonia don't perform health checks if you're not experiencing any symptoms. If you just feel like getting your health checked, turn to a private clinic like **Meliva** for a health audit or **SYNLAB** for blood tests.

+ **Salu** is a speedy alternative to traditional primary healthcare services, offering unlimited consultations with a doctor every day of the week in English, Russian, or Estonian, prescription drug renewal, sick leave initiation, specialist referrals, and more. provides a cost-effective and fast alternative to current primary healthcare options, including family doctor registration. Their monthly plan includes unlimited consultations with a doctor, in English, any day of the week.



Sick leave

The first thing you have to do when you get sick is to contact your doctor who can then put you on sick leave.

Note: The doctor can't start your sick leave retroactively, so contact them on the very FIRST DAY you get sick and can't go to work. Your doctor will also schedule an appointment.

When you're on sick leave, keep in mind:

+ Estonian law requires no sickness benefit for the first three days of illness.
+ For days 4-8, your employer will pay your sickness benefits.
+ Starting from day nine, the Health Insurance Fund will cover your sick leave.
+ The benefit rate is 70% of your daily salary.

Terviseportaal.ee health portal

Forgot who your doctor is (hey, it happens!) or what they prescribed you? Terviseportaal.ee is a health portal, available in English, where you can access all the medical data health care service providers have submitted about you (referrals, prescriptions, etc.). As always, log in using your ID-card, Smart-ID or Mobile-ID.

EU health insurance card

If you're insured in Estonia and temporarily staying in another EU country, you will get the same healthcare as insured people in that country. You can get your free EU health insurance card from eesti.ee.

Note: You'll still have to pay any self-liability fees that apply, so travel insurance is always a good idea. Read more about the EU health insurance card on the Haigekassa website.



Specialised medical care

To see most health specialists, you need a compelling reason and a referral letter from your family doctor.

You do not need a referral to see a...

+ Psychiatrist
+ Gynaecologist
+ Dermatologist
+ Sexual health specialist
+ Pulmonologist (in cases of suspected tuberculosis)
+ Ophthalmologist
+ Dentist
+ Trauma specialist (within the first 24 hours of the trauma occurring) or surgeon

Note: Whenever you see a specialist, you have to pay a standard appointment fee of 20 € (sometimes more) at the reception desk before your appointment.

Emergency medicine

In a medical emergency, call **112.** Ambulance (kiirabi) transport is free.

If you can, go directly to the accident ward (erakorralise meditsiini osakond, EMO) of your nearest hospital (easily googleable). There will be a small consultation fee, and if you're hospitalised, the in-patient fee is up to 2.50 EUR per day.

How's it going so far?

Contacts





Tallinn

Tallinn is the capital city of Estonia. This is probably not news to you. It's the perfect place for you if you enjoy city living at a smaller scale. From medieval cobblestone streets to ultra-modern seafront living and everything in between, Tallinn has a nice balance of everything.

Transportation in Tallinn

Though most places in central Tallinn are within about a 30-minute walking distance from each other, there are other options for getting around:

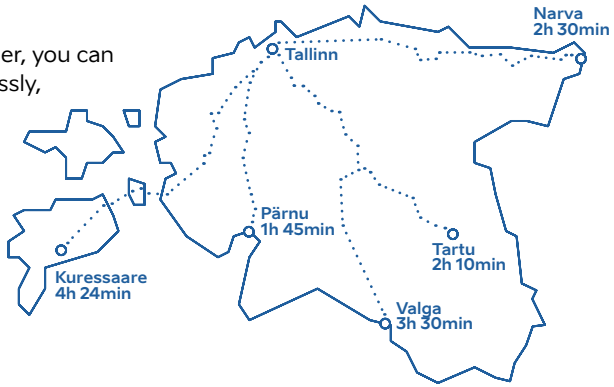
+ Tram
+ Bus
+ Trolleybus
+ Train

If you're an infrequent traveller, you can buy a single ticket, contactlessly, from the orange terminal by the front door (drivers don't sell tickets).

Assuming you'll be riding regularly, get a travel card from your **nearest post office, supermarket, or R-Kiosk.**

Public transport is free for registered Tallinn residents, but you still need to get an ***Ühiskaart*** and validate it every time you ride (other Estonian towns have equivalent travelcards for their public transit systems).

A single fare is valid for an hour, so you can change within that time without getting charged again. You can top up your card online or at an R-Kiosk.



Tartu

Tartu, Estonia's second-largest city, has a vibrant cultural scene and a good quality of life. As a university town and a burgeoning startup hub, Tartu's international community is youthful and growing.

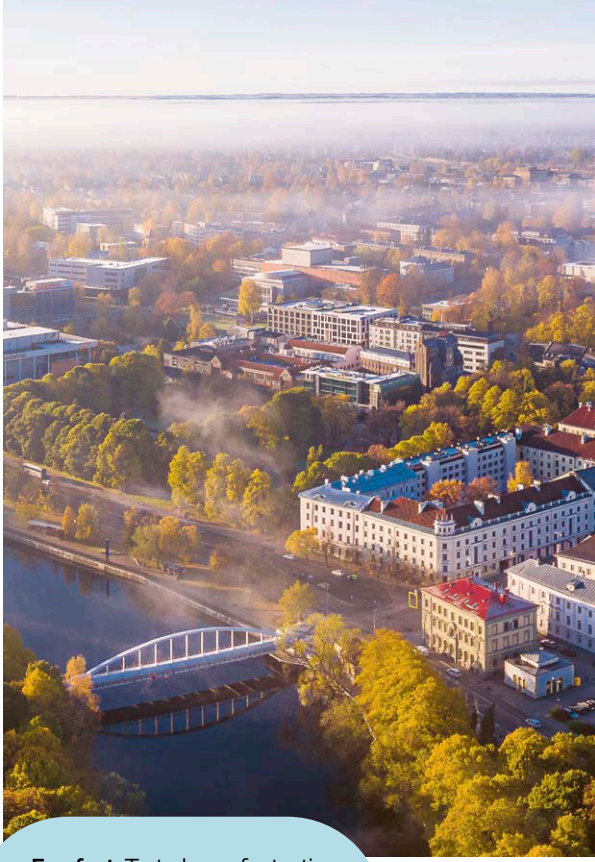
Pro tips:

Drop by **International House Tartu** for information and advice.

Tartu Welcome Centre also helps newcomers get settled.

Transportation in Tartu

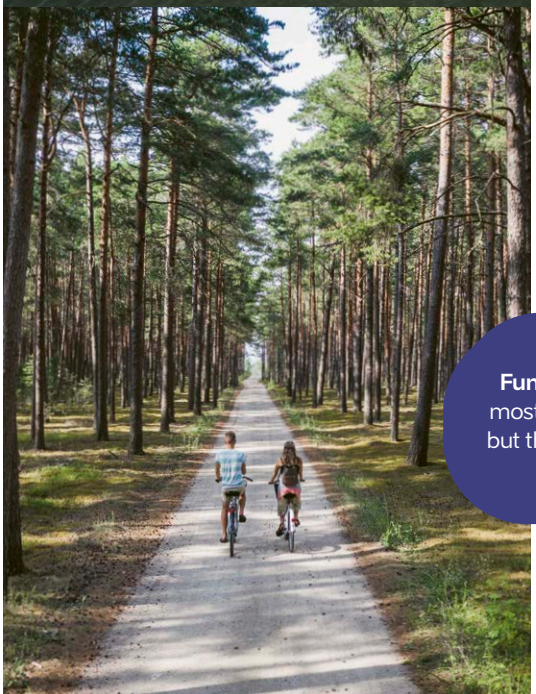
Get your smart card (from R-Kiosk or the bus station, for example) and swipe it whenever you get on a city bus. The Tartu bus card is in cross-usage with Tallinn's Ühiskaart.



Fun fact: Tartu has a fantastic car-free boulevard during summertime. You can enjoy events, stroll, and bike around comfortably without worrying about traffic.







How do you travel around Estonia?

Traveling between cities in Estonia is easy and convenient via bus, train, or even plane. The country has five major national airports and some local airports on smaller islands like Kihnu and Ruhnu.

To visit the islands, it's best to take a ferry, enjoy the sea views, and have a fresh salmon sandwich.

If you're interested in exploring smaller cities or the beautiful nature of Aegviidu, for example, you can purchase a bike ticket and hop on a train with your bike. This is a great way to experience the beautiful scenery of Estonia.

Fun fact: We have the most introverted people but the friendliest airport in the world.



Driving

Driving licence

EU, EEA and Swiss citizens

Driving licences issued by EU, EEA and Swiss Confederation countries are valid in Estonia. As a rule, you don't need to take any tests to renew your licence, unless it expired more than five years ago. Driving licences issued by non-EU countries are valid for 12 months after you become an Estonian resident. Once that's up, you'll need to replace yours with an Estonian one.

Getting a driving licence

You can apply for an Estonian driving licence once you've been here for at least 185 days. For this, you have to go to driving school and take the theoretical and practical exams. English-speaking examiners aren't guaranteed, so you should bring someone along to translate.

For more information, go to the Estonian Road Administration's website.

transpordiamet.ee/en

Registering your vehicle

You **have to** register your car within 5 working days of your arrival, **or as soon as you get your right of residence in Estonia.** Here's how:

+ Take your car to the local Road Administration service bureau for a check-up;
+ Fill out an application;
+ Bring proof of ownership and the car's registration certificate;
+ Pay the state fee and registration plate fee;
+ Drive around in style!

Fun fact: Ice roads open between some islands and the mainland in winter, weather permitting. And yes, when we say ice roads, we mean you drive across the frozen sea. The experience is, to use the technical term, awesome.

Road rules

Drive on the right and keep headlights on at all times.

No right turns at a red light.

The driver must have their licence and registration with them. An ID card is enough if the licence is issued in Estonia and the driver is registered as the vehicle's owner.

There is zero tolerance for blood alcohol levels. That glass of wine with dinner? Forget about it.

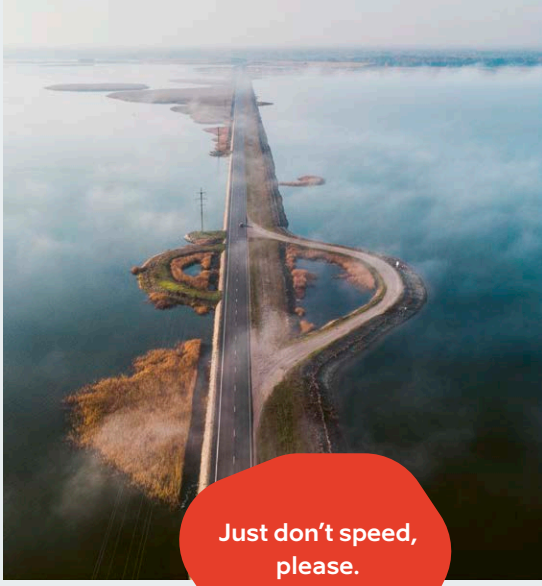
Everyone in the car has to fasten their seatbelt (back seat and taxis included).

You must have a first aid kit, warning triangle, fire extinguisher, reflective vest and wheel chocks in your car.

Strictly no hand-held phones while driving. Hands-free sets are fine.

Winter tires are required between 1 December and 1 March. Studded tires can be used from 15 October until 30 March.

You can check parking zones, fine information, and other parking-related things at parkimine.ee.



Pro tip:

Although cyclists and pedestrians are **legally required to wear reflectors in the dark,** sometimes they just... don't. Keep this in mind and drive extra carefully in winter months. And get yourself a reflector too. They're sold in all supermarkets—or you can grab one from the International House.

Rent a car

If you possess a driver's license but don't own a car, you can still comfortably explore Estonia. In the city, you can use convenient rental services such as Bolt, Citybee, or Elmo. By enjoying life without a car, you can help preserve nature and the quality of the city air.

Speed limits

50 **Towns and smaller urban areas**

90 **Highways**

In summer, speed limits go up to 120 km/h on some two-lane highways. Speeding is frequently monitored.



Essentials

Opening a bank account

Most banking in Estonia happens online.

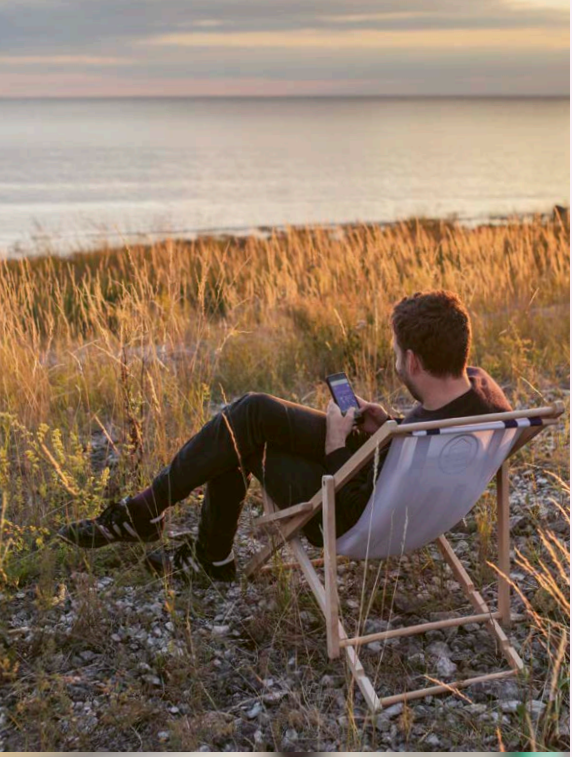
The largest banks are **LHV, Swedbank, SEB** and **Luminor,** all with convenient online banking options and apps.

Opening a **debit** account is affordable/free for resident permit holders, EU nationals. For non-EU nationals who don't have a residence permit yet, opening a **debit** account comes with a fee. Most banks don't open **credit** accounts for people whose residence permit is valid for less than five years.

Note: You can start banking online once you have your residence permit/ID-card. If you'd like to open a local bank account before you get your residence permit, check out Monese and Wise accounts.

e-Estonia.com

e-ID and its ecosystem are part of citizens' daily transactions in the public and private sectors. Everyone can safely identify themselves, digitally sign documents and use e-services with their ID-card, mobile-ID or Smart-ID. To name a few, would paying bills, voting online, signing contracts, shopping, checking medical records, buying real estate etc, sound more convenient when the one thing that gave you access to all of those services was your digital identity?





Telecom services

Until you get your temporary residence permit, your only mobile option is a prepaid SIM.

Good prepaid options are Tele2, Super and Simpel from Telia. You can get them directly from the provider or from R-kiosk.

Once you're officially a temporary resident and have your ID card, you can get a contract one of these three major carriers:

+ Telia (telia.ee)
+ Elisa (elisa.ee)
+ Tele2 (tele2.ee)

TV/Internet

Costs for an internet + TV package vary, depending on your needs (bandwidth, cable). Enter your address on the providers' websites to check what services are available in your location.

Internet and TV providers:

+ Telia (telia.ee)
+ Elisa (elisa.ee)
+ STV (stv.ee)

Note: Without a residence card, you'll have to make a security deposit that you'll get back later. If your home has a connection with the provider, activation usually takes 3-4 hours. If a connection is not set up in the apartment, it might take up to a week.

Taxes

At a glance

The Estonian tax system consists of...

+ **National taxes** such as income tax, social tax, land tax, gambling tax, value added tax (VAT), duty and excise taxes, and heavy goods vehicle tax.
+ **Local taxes** that local governments have the authority to impose but only a few have introduced.

Tax residency

You're considered an Estonian tax resident from your day of arrival (retroactively) if:

+ Your place of residence is in Estonia, **or**
+ Your address is registered in Estonia or you stay at least 183 days over 12 consecutive months.

Bear in mind that it's possible to be a resident of more than one country at a time. In this case, double taxation will be avoided by complying with international tax treaties. Assuming that Estonia has a double taxation treaty with the other country of residence, the determining factor is where your family is and where you actually spend most of your time.

Estonian tax residents have to declare and pay tax on income **from all sources from all over the world** (e.g. income from selling shares, dividends, etc.). Income tax returns must be submitted by April 30 (submissions are open from February 15). You can do this quickly and easily online at emta.ee/en.





Fun fact: VAT 24% is always included in prices, so you won't be hit with surprise taxes at checkout.

Form R

Your **tax residency does not change automatically when you get your ID code**—you need to submit an application (form R). The easiest way to do this is the e-service of the Estonian Tax and Customs Board. You can also email a signed application to emta@emta.ee or go to any Tax and Customs Board service point.

Pensions

As a resident, once you've accumulated 15 years of pensionable service (i.e. years that social tax has been paid for you) in Estonia, you have the right to an old-age pension. Your source for everything pensions-related is the Pension Registry.



Settle in Estonia programme

All new Estonian residents are included in a comprehensive Settle in Estonia programme that covers many important topics like **studying, family life, language, and more.** The Police and Border Guard Board will email you about it once you get your ID-card or residence permit. Contact the International House if you don't qualify for this programme (i.e. if you're in Estonia on a visa).

settleinestonia.ee

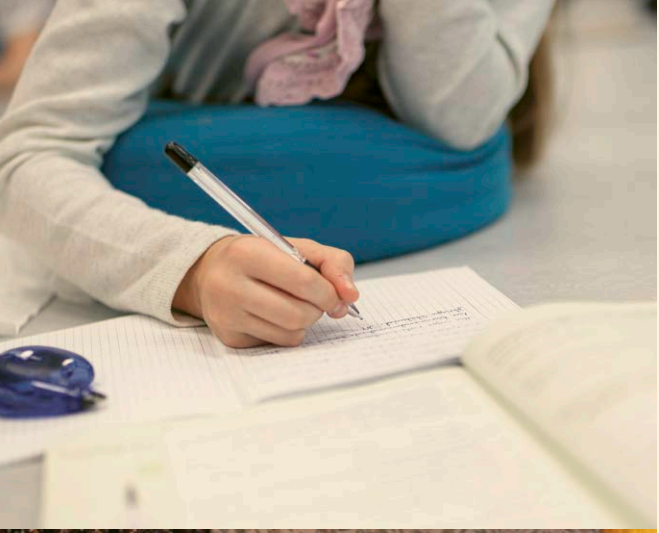
Language

Estonian is the official language of the country and a source of great national pride.

Closely related to Finnish (and distantly to Hungarian), Estonian is a Finno-Ugric language, fundamentally different from most European languages. It uses the Latin alphabet, spicing it up with some extra vowels: ä, ö, ü and the very unique õ (pronounced roughly, but not quite, like eeuuugh).

You'll be able to get by with English in your day-to-day life, but learning at least some level of Estonian will help you win local hearts and minds. **If you decide to learn, get ready for exciting times!**







If you decide to learn, get ready for exciting times!

+ Keeleklikk.ee offers beginners' online courses (A1 and A2 levels).
+ Keeletee.ee offers B1-level courses.
+ The Settle in Estonia programme offers free A1, A2 and B1-level courses.
+ Estonian is available on the language-learning app Lingvist.
+ Speakly.me teaches Estonian for free with the code WorkinEstonia.
+ Once you've completed the Settle in Estonia programme, you can move on to the Integration Foundation's language-learning options, free at all levels.

Pro tips:

+ There are no silent letters in Estonian. Everything that is written down is pronounced, not a syllable wasted.
+ To get a long-term residence permit, you'll need to reach the B1 level.
+ Drop by the International House for (free!) language cafés where you can put your burgeoning language skills to work and make friends along the way.



Things to do, places to go

Sauna

You may find yourself invited to a sauna evening where people strut around in their bathing suits like it's no big deal. This is particularly likely in the summer months—sauna is an integral part of Estonian midsummer celebrations.

If you're completely new to the tradition, here's how to sauna:



1. Sit in a very hot and dark room.



2. Throw water on hot stones to make the hot and dark room hotter and also more damp.



3. Enjoy! (No, really, it's a great time.)

Pro tips:

A good sauna is **not a competition** to see who can take the most heat for the longest time. Step out as soon as you want or need to.

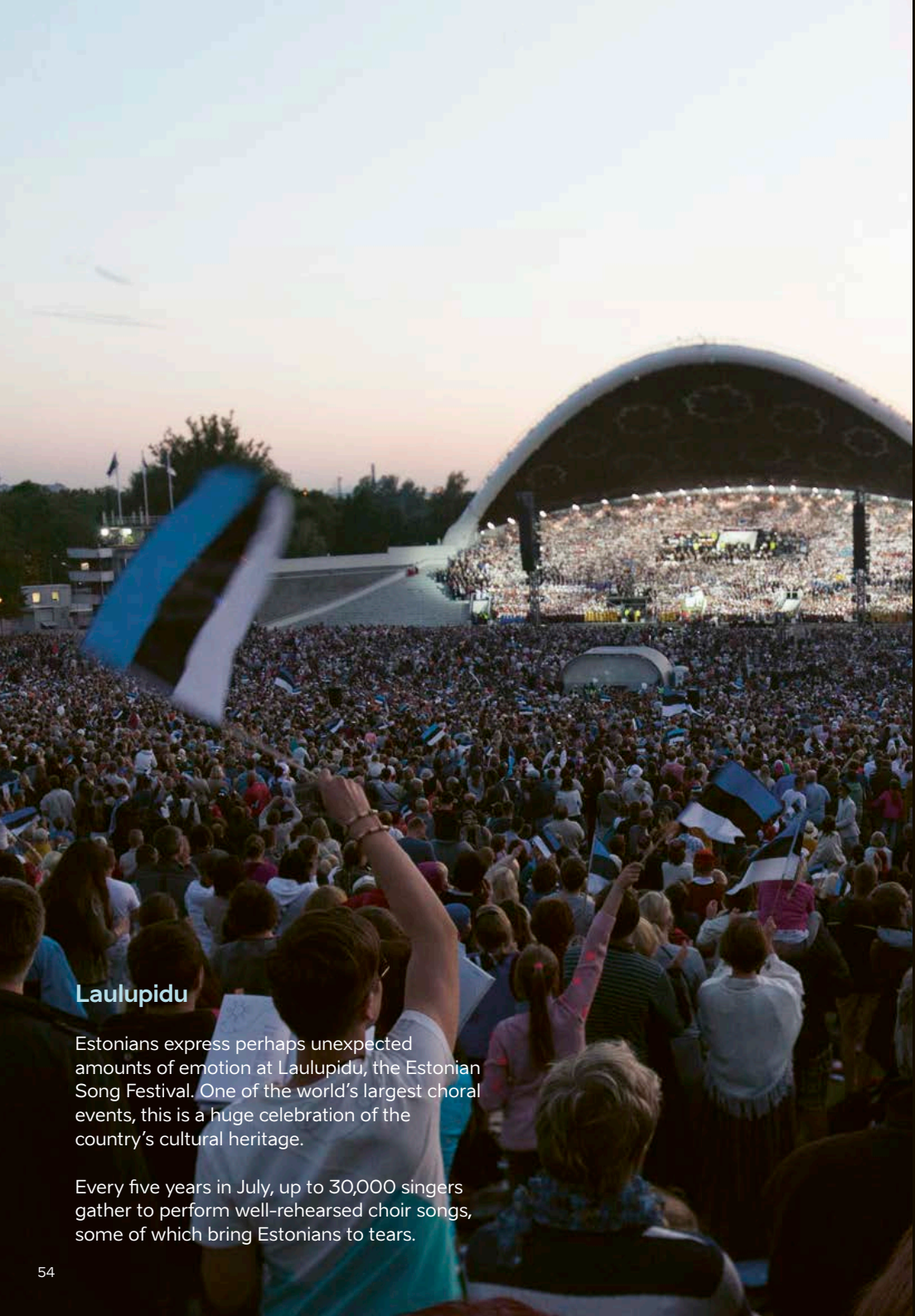
A popular sauna tradition involves **a gentle beating with a bunch of branches.** It's much more fun than it sounds.

Another popular tradition is a **dip in cold water** or snow between sauna sessions.

Some people **sauna naked** in private homes. If you're invited to someone's sauna and unsure about the etiquette, don't be shy to ask.

A sip of cold beer between sessions is great, but focus on hydration first. **Water is your best friend!**

When in doubt, ask a local.

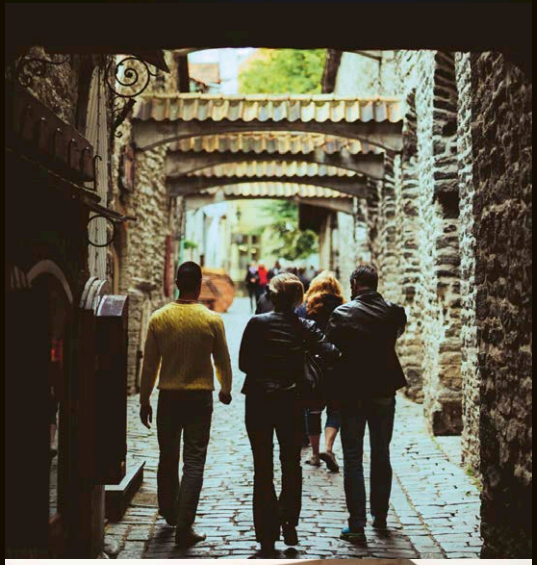


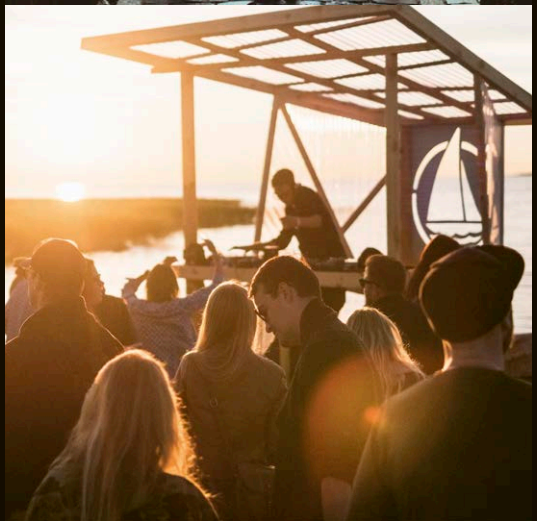
Laulupidu

Estonians express perhaps unexpected amounts of emotion at Laulupidu, the Estonian Song Festival. One of the world's largest choral events, this is a huge celebration of the country's cultural heritage.

Every five years in July, up to 30,000 singers gather to perform well-rehearsed choir songs, some of which bring Estonians to tears.







Nightlife

Tallinn is Estonia's party central. Bars, clubs, and ultra-cool speakeasies are scattered around the city and open pretty late.

Pro tips:

+ Tallinn is generally safe, but Old Town can get rowdy. Have your wits about you. The best way to experience nightlife is to get locals (or more experienced expats) to show you around.

+ People might try to get you to drink the infamous *millimallikas* shot. Make your own decisions, but remember that we warned you.

Want to take your partying off the beaten track?

+ In summer, much of the action moves to the beach town of Pärnu. Contrary to popular belief, Pärnu does still exist in winter and is always worth a visit.

+ Tartu has its fair share of vibrant nightlife, with more of a student life vibe.

+ Festivals at varying levels of craziness are cropping up across the country.



Museums and music

The Art Museum of Estonia has expanded across several locations in Tallinn. The Estonian National Opera starts its season in August.

But Tallinn is just the beginning.

+ Towns and villages across the country are bursting with culture, from street festivals and concerts to theatres and museums.
+ The recently revamped **Estonian National Museum** in Tartu is the perfect place to take a look into everyday life in Estonia throughout history.
+ Head east to check out the museum in Narva Castle and the Mining Museum in Kiviõli.

Estonians are passionate about culture. Tallinn, the country's capital, boasts numerous theatres, cinemas and concert venues, making it a hub for cultural enthusiasts. **Some of the most popular cultural events in Tallinn include:**

The annual Jazzkaar festival jazzkaar.ee

Tallinn Music Week tmw.ee

and Black Nights Film Festival poff.ee

For film lovers, there are special events like

Tartu Love Film Festival tartuff.ee

and Haapsalu horror film festival HÕFF hoff.ee

If you're an art and museum lover, consider purchasing a museum card. It gives you free access to over 100 museums in Estonia.

muuseumikaart.ee

To book tickets for theatres and concerts, visit

piletilevi.ee piletimaailm.com

Nature

In summer, people flock to the countryside to enjoy the forests, lakes, and wetlands—picking berries and mushrooms is a popular national pastime.

Many Estonians have country houses or ancestral homes with gardens that need tending, and getting out of the city is an almost universal drive whenever the weather allows.

Pro tip:

+ Use bug spray to keep away ticks, mosquitoes, and horseflies.
+ There's one species of venomous snake (rästik), but they prefer to keep to themselves.
+ RMK, the State Forest Management Centre, has great resources for hikers.



Some Useful Information to Keep in Mind

The anniversary of the Republic of Estonia is on February 24th. During this time, many businesses, cafes, and shops may be closed. However, if you want to witness the unity of Estonians, make sure to be near Tall Hermann Tower that morning and participate in the national flag hoisting.

During Midsummer's Day (June 23rd-24th) and Christmas (December 23rd-26th), the opening hours of many businesses are shorter, as we take these holidays very seriously!

Estonia is famous for its amazing restaurants, and here, the culinary skills are appreciated more and more each year. Estonian restaurants are evaluated annually by White Guide, a restaurant guide in the Nordic countries that recommends interesting eateries all over Estonia and is constantly updated. You can learn more at:

flavoursofestonia.com/eng/restaurant-guide

Also, tipping waiters is customary.
A 15-20% tip is always appreciated after a great dinner.

It's worth something that we don't have siestas during the day.
Therefore, feel free to go shopping or have lunch at 1 pm without any issues.





Bucket list:

- ◯ Order coffee in Estonian
- ◯ Start a conversation with an Estonian
- ◯ Visit an island in Estonia
- ◯ Try Kiiking, the sport created by Estonians
- ◯ Walk on the edge of the TV Tower
- ◯ Enjoy local sauna rituals
- ◯ Try to say the word jääääär
- ◯ Curse the weather (it helps to find a common topic with the locals)
- ◯ Climb the tower of St. Olaf's Church
- ◯ Invite a local to visit
- ◯ Participate in the flag hoisting on February 24
- ◯ Try winter swimming
- ◯ Jump over a bonfire on Midsummer's Day
- ◯ Eat blood sausage
- ◯ Watch the sunrise in the bog (it is incredible)
- ◯ Try ice fishing on the lake Peipus
- ◯ Eat peas directly from the field
- ◯ Build a stone tower on the Sõrve poolsaar (no one knows why, but everyone does it)





Want to know even more?

All of this barely scratches the surface. Take a look at the Work Estonia website for more information and inspiration.

workestonia.com

Or just ask an Estonian—you're almost guaranteed to get a long list of must-visit spots.

Get in touch with us!

info@workinestonia.com

Work in Estonia

work_in_estonia

Work in Estonia

Work_in_estonia

This little relocation guide was lovinlgy assembled by the Work in Estonia and our partners.

Thank you for reading

...and we hope your Estonian life is off to a great start!

work estonia

eis
enterprise estonia

Republic of Estonia
Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communications

Here's a good place for ranting

Drawings

Notes

Notes

