

Tallinna Keskraamatukogu: best "all around" local resource

The COVID pandemic has significantly shifted how people spend their time. Some have spent more time on personal goals, while others have struggled to manage - needing additional support. As restrictions to address the pandemic continue, Tallinna Keskraamatukogu [Tallinn Central Library] remains a valuable resource by providing reading materials and other items for city residents.

The Tallinna Keskraamatukogu library system includes 17 branches outside of the city center and a "mobile library" that travels between several areas of Tallinn. While the main branch is conveniently located steps from Vabaduse väljak [Freedom Square], the real gem for non-Estonian speakers is located in the Keldrimäe neighborhood at Liivalaia 40. The Department of Literature in Foreign Languages is tucked away behind a small, orthodox church on the ground level of a multi-story, residential building. Those who find it are rewarded with a collection of items in Russian, English, and other languages. The premises have reading/working

spaces and a separate area that houses a children's collection for young readers and soon-to-be readers.

Due to the current restrictions, visitors are asked to limit their time inside the libraries. However, a 21-day lending period for up to 30 items at a time should make that easier for patrons. In addition, most items can be renewed three times, including online, helping limit in-person interactions. Libraries now accept contactless borrowing by taking "pre-orders" via phone or email for an agreed upon pick-up time. The items will be checked out and left for the patron in a dedicated spot, allowing for pick-up without interaction with librarians.

The city's library system has several features to make reading easily accessible - not just for times of restrictions. Signing up to be a library member can be done online, in minutes, with a digital signature. Members can borrow physical materials from any location, but also receive access to a variety of digital content. Ebooks and audiobooks in English and other languages are available via the OverDrive and Libby apps. They allow

users to search by various criteria and Tallinna Keskraamatukogu adds new titles regularly. RBdigital app provides access to magazines on a variety of topics, primarily in English. Since borrowing digital items does not require a library trip, patrons can become members and start reading safely and quickly, from the comfort of home.

The library system can even help members with resources to promote physical health. Many branch libraries lend sports and leisure equipment, such as basketballs, light weights, and yoga mats. Meanwhile, the music department, housed in the main branch, offers instruments for home lending and in library usage.

For the time being, some classes and groups are taking place virtually while others are on hold. Additional details, as well as information about available materials, procedures, and events can be found on the library's website - almost all available in English. Ultimately, the library remains a valuable resource at all times.

Vira Suarez

City Centre resident

Pavement produces solar electricity

By the end of last year, seven sections of pavement producing solar electricity were installed in Tallinn.

E-pavements are a solution for the future in the case of smart city roads, which also support the goals that Tallinn has in mind as a green and innovative city. The smart pavement installed covers an area of more than 250 square metres, including the area by the Song Festival Grounds on Pirita Road at the intersection of the bicycle road and footpath. In addition to generating solar electricity, these areas increase the safety of pedestrian crossings by duplicating traffic lights and melting ice. "As this is a unique project in the Nordic countries, the technology certainly has strong potential for exporting. However, Estonian companies have now the opportunity to offer a modern solution for road infrastructure to owners of pathways, bicycle parking areas and private residences," said Deputy Mayor Kalle Klandorf.

20% of light energy in the production of solar electricity is converted into electricity, the rest into heat. This means that at temperatures close to zero, the surface of e-stones is warmer than the surrounding air, thus melting the snow and ice on e-stones. However, the use of electricity to control slipperiness is not the main function of the e-pavement, more of an added plus.



From the beginning of February, a big heart of light will shine in the Police Garden. Valentine's Day is coming!

A special year came and went

We will all remember 2020 for a long time, and we'll probably continue to deal with the effects of the global health crisis for many years to come. We had to cope with unexpected situations, be it our children staying home from kindergarten and school in spring and suddenly having to take over the role of teacher, losing a job, relatives or acquaintances getting sick or dealing with loneliness.

On the one hand, the health crisis has taken from us, on the other, it has given to us and taught us many lessons. For me, the most important thing has been the reminder of what is really important to us and what gives life its meaning: humanity, noticing others, caring about one another and being together, be it our loved ones, our neighbours or a complete stranger.

Last year in Tallinn also goes down in history due to the fact that, for the first time, all citizens of the city had the opportunity to have a say in shaping their neighbourhood thanks to the launch of an inclusive budget. The idea is simple: come up with an idea of your own and, if it gains the support of others, the idea will be implemented with money granted by the city. Residents of the city centre submitted more ideas for improving their living environment than residents in other districts - 71. Ideas ranged from installing a hydrant near the health trail to improving playgrounds and bicycle traffic. Contributing ideas makes the mind feel good and the heart warm.

However, we also need the help of the residents as follows. Experts have selected 98 of the 420 ideas submitted across Tallinn that are feasible within the given time frame and financial budget. In the city centre, 17 ideas were selected and will now be voted on by all residents aged 14 and over. In order for the idea with the biggest support from the people to come to life, at least 1000 people in the city centre must participate in the vote. So let's all vote and take the opportunity to help make the best project possible!

You can vote both electronically (www.tallinn.ee/kaasaveelarve) and in the service centres of local governments until the end of January. Voters in the service centre must bring an ID card or passport. You can be sure that voting will be fair and secure.

Finally, we are here to welcome the long-awaited winter, so it is perhaps not too much to invite homeowners to take care of the pavement in front of their house so that its slipperiness does not diminish the joy of the residents or passers-by. Those who cannot or will not be able to remove snow and slipperiness on their section of the pavement can order the service from the city. Snow ploughs and sand spreaders working in the city do their best to ensure safe traffic for everyone.

Just before the new year, 100 days had passed since my first day as City Centre Governor. I have not taken this as a time free of criticism or settling in, but in addition to the day-to-day issues related to urban life, I have also been involved in the preparation of a number of major topics that the people of our district have considered important. I hope that, as with an inclusive budget, we can take the necessary steps and decisions here as well after having as broad a discussion as possible. But more about that in the future. Until then, happy new year, enjoy the beautiful winter and be safe!

Monika Haukanõmm

City Centre Governor



34 people over 100 years old live in Tallinn

At the end of last year, there were 34 people aged 100 and over, all women, living in the capital. The average age of people living in Tallinn is 41.7 years.

According to the Population Register, the population of Tallinn as of 1 January was 445,688, whereas last year the population of the capital increased by 1762 people, or 0.4%. The city centre saw the largest increase in the number of residents (+1388), while the population decreased

in Nõmme, Mustamäe and North Tallinn.

There were more women living in Tallinn, 1.2 times more than men, as of the end of last year. The percentage of children (0-14 years old) in terms of district population is largest in Pirita, the percentage of working age people (15-74 years old) is highest in Lasnamäe and North Tallinn and most elderly people (75+) live in Mustamäe.

A good idea brings joy to many people

Thanks to the winning idea of the participatory budget initiative, drinking taps will be installed by the health trails in the City Centre.

Tallinn's first participatory budget brought together hundreds of interesting proposals, 99 of which were put before the people of the city for voting. In the voting, which lasted from 18-31 January, a project entitled 'Drinking taps by health trails' gained the biggest support out of the 17 ideas in the City Centre. 557 residents of the City Centre supported the implementation of this proposition.

The winning idea was submitted independently by Monnika Kitt and Taimi Saar. According to the ladies, they both love to exercise and miss having drinking taps along health trails. In their opinion, this possibility could significantly boost physical activity among the population, which can only be welcomed.

The idea "Eliisabet's dream: a playground for children aged 10+" won second place, with exactly 500 votes. Third place with 475 votes went to the proposal 'Bicycle parking in the Old Town'. The city centre government is hopeful that with the help of a supplementary budget it will be possible to start implementing at least one more idea this year.

2531 people took part in the voting in the City Centre and since it was possible to vote for two ideas, a total



of 4482 votes were cast. Thank you to everyone who submitted ideas and partook in the voting process! We can also declare the success of the com-

petition – the process of inclusive budgeting will continue. A new brainstorming session will take place in the second half of this year.

Brexit and residence permit

British citizens' interest in Estonia is growing. It is often asked how it is possible for British citizens to come here after 1 April when they have to apply for a residence permit to live in an EU country.

As of 1 April, our population registry offices will no longer accept applications from British citizens regarding the right of residence. To live in Estonia, as well as in other EU countries, British citizens need a residence permit.

Worth knowing

1) Until 31 March, British citizens will be able to apply for the right of residence, the same as other EU citizens. To do this, you must turn to your local government (city district government) based on your address, then provide a document as proof of identity and citizenship in order to get your personal identification code

along with the lease agreement or the owner's consent in order to register the residential address. Registration of address of residence gives an EU citizen automatic right of residence in Estonia for five years. The necessary forms can be found on the Tallinn City website or on the website of the Ministry of the Interior. After obtaining the right of residence, you must apply for a document at the Estonian Police and Border Guard Board (PPA).

2) After 31 March, British citizens who have already acquired the right of residence of an EU citizen in Estonia can come to the Police and Border Guard Board and receive a document certifying the status of an EU citizen, while entering the country visa-free or using other methods (visa from another Schengen country, etc.). At the request of the person, an extract from

the Population Register in English can also be issued by a local government to those who have already registered their address of residence, which MAY facilitate their mobility by confirming their EU citizenship status (while not yet having the document).

3) As of 1 April 2021, British citizens must first apply for a residence permit from the Police and Border Guard Board to live in Estonia. Only after that can registration of the address of residence be started, i.e. applying for registration of residence (notice of residence) at the local government.

More detailed explanations are provided on the website of the Ministry of the Interior, also in English: www.siseministeerium.ee/en/activities/citizenship-and-migration/united-kingdom-withdrew-european-union

Lady Wait-Rose from Japan

Starting from this month, I will be writing for the monthly Kesklinna Sõnumid as Lady Wait-Rose from Japan. Since I got inspiration and encouragement from an interviewer from the Tallinn City Centre Expats Chat, I think it is time for me to reveal my thoughts about my life in Estonia and share them with you in my own words.

If you have seen TV3's Duubel on Friday nights, I am 'Yuri, naine Jaapanist'. It was my very first speed dating experience, and it was on TV, plus in the new language I am learning. I just wanted to do something crazy that I would not have done back in Tokyo!

Thankfully, most of the audience received me with warm hearts. On the other hand, so many people frowned upon the man when he did not stand up to welcome me or offer his hand in greeting. Many Estonians worried that I must have felt insulted by his attitude.

I must admit that I felt awkward

for a moment, but that was simply because I was partially educated in London, where a presentable lady should expect a man to stand up in acknowledgement in such a setting. Yet, I was not surprised, as I always keep in mind that each place has its own culture.

However, some Estonians even described him as racist for believing that Japanese people eat sushi every day or for not slowing down his Estonian speech or trying to converse in English for me. Yes, he had a stereotypical view of Japanese people, but I would never recognise him as racist. The awkwardness derives from the simple fact that we came from different sociocultural backgrounds, and nothing he said or did insulted me.

As an Asian face being the target of real racism attacks ever since the outbreak of COVID-19 here, I find this kind of cheap application of the term racism absolutely problematic, as this

usage dilutes the impact of real racism incidents. I will not dive into this topic today, but here are two things I would like to say out loud as an expat in Estonia:

(1) Cross-cultural life becomes much more enjoyable when we stop applying our own notion of 'normal'. While we are in that psychological trap, every little cultural discrepancy becomes a stressful encounter.

(2) And our fear of 'others' comes from not being able to understand what 'they' are thinking. When we start understanding the language of 'theirs', the fear fades away and the excitement of human interaction kicks in!

This is where I am after experiencing a full year living outside Tokyo for the first time in my life. COVID-19 is ongoing, the outside is freezing cold and the sun does not shine down on us. But I love that people are keeping me warm and bright inside this winter!

City Centre New Arrivals Council

We're sitting in the small fireplace hall in Hopner House. Helen, Ozan, Fabio, Katerina and Ekaterina – none of them has ever been here before. The medieval room is impressive. This is the third meeting of the City Centre New Arrivals Council but the first time meeting in real life. This time, the topic is the mission and identity of the council. It's not easy to formulate because nothing like this has been done in Estonia before.

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In November, in the "Tallinn City Centre for Expats" group, we announced the opening of the City Centre New Arrivals Council. The precondition for participating in the competition was a person's desire to actively participate in the life of the city and district and help other foreigners adapt to their life in Estonia. Each candidate submitted a letter of motivation explaining why they should become a member of the Council. 26 expats sent in their application and 12 of them became members of the Council: Aarthi, Fabio, Ozan, Dashiell, Ekaterina, Helen, Chantel, Sunil, Janne, Yiyang, Leonardo and Katerina.

Reading motivational letters with colleagues, we were pleasantly surprised to see how many interesting people have come to live in our city. This was confirmed by excerpts from their letters:

• "I would like to contribute and collaborate with the international community and local government to improve the quality of life and accessibility of services for the English speaking community. I have experience living in a large city, as I am from Sao Paulo."

• "Tallinn and Kesklinn are my home and I'd like to be more involved in what goes on in the district. I also think the international community lacks a voice and I'd like to be part of strengthening it."

• "I love Tallinn and I would like to make the city centre as functional as possible. I am very interested in environmental topics and quite experienced on this."

• "I love living here in the city centre. For the last 1.5 years, me and my family have been living in the Uus Maailm neighbourhood. Though it is a fantastic place, some improvements can be considered to make it better."

We are very grateful to everyone who submitted their application! Those who were not elected – don't worry, most of the council meetings are open to everyone and you can also have a say in the life of the city centre and the international community in Tallinn. You can submit your ideas and get answers to questions from the city and state officials who also take part in council meetings (depending on the topic). For example, two weeks ago, specialists from the Transport Department and Tallinn City Centre Government participated in a web meeting on the subject of transport. More events like this are still to come.

As for the identity and mission of the Council, however, these will become clear in the course of the Council's work in cooperation with the various parties at the city, state and neighbourhood level. We strive to ensure that every resident in Tallinn lives a good and comfortable life in our city!

Svetlana Štšur

Project Manager



Tallinn is preparing for the new cycling season

This season in Tallinn City Centre, we will be paying special attention to the smooth flow and safety of electric scooter traffic.

"The safety of the scooter users, as well as other road users – especially pedestrians – is very important to us," explains City Centre Governor Monika Haukanõmm. "More and more people are using electric scooters, especially in the City Centre, where different groups of road users have to fit into a very limited space. To do this, each road user must choose a safe driving style, taking the conditions of other road users and the road surface into account. The skills of the scooter users, awareness of traffic safety and

proper parking need constant improvement."

During a meeting with the police, the Tallinn Municipal Police Department and officials from the Transport Department, the representative body of the City Centre Government discussed the conditions for using electric scooters, such as speed limit, the presence of reflectors, clocks and lights, the obligation of wearing a helmet and driving alone, as well as monitoring compliance and parking.

In the past two years the City Centre Government has entered into agreements with various enterprises to enable the installation of electric scooters on land belonging to the



city. The organisation of the scooter rental service throughout Tallinn this year needs to be discussed with all parties, including service providers, to ensure the best service – one that is safe, comfortable and re-

spectful to other road users. The district government is also making the necessary preparations for the upcoming bicycle season by planning new bicycle parking lots and installing them in the near future.

March is green

In the February issue we talked about the establishment of the City Centre New Arrivals Council and its search for a mission and an identity. The remarkable thing about the council initiative is that the councilors are people with different cultural backgrounds, interests and ways in which they feel comfortable expressing themselves. In March, we became quite close with Ekaterina from Russia and Katerina from Greece while working on the webinar 'Waste Sorting and Recycling in Tallinn'. Learning about one another and exchanging knowledge and ideas was a truly fulfilling experience for me.

For example, Ekaterina has a background in literature and urban planning and is super passionate about

modern, well-planned and environmentally friendly city infrastructure. I remember talking about cycling opportunities in Tallinn during our council meet-up in Hopner House. The weather on this day was quite snowy – a classical Estonian winter fairy tale. I said that the realities of the Estonian climate discourage cycling to work or the shops comfortably for most of the year. Ekaterina replied, "I would totally cycle to work if there were more light traffic routes adjusted for year-round cycling." This actually made me think that I might try cycling in these conditions as well! We then argued about the Reid Road project and its pros and cons. During this discussion, I was pleasantly surprised at how

much Ekaterina cares about Tallinn and how much she knows about the city after living here for just three years.

Katerina struck me with her professionalism and her incredibly responsible attitude towards everything she does. While working on the webinar (negotiating with speakers, writing advertising texts, creating visuals for social media), Katerina was particularly attentive to detail and was strict and precise about aspects of teamwork which I would not have thought about before and which I am now paying attention to thanks to her.

So, going back to the webinar – it went really well. We had some amazing speakers: Krista Kupits from the Ministry of the Environ-

ment, Kristiina Martin from the Stockholm Environment Institute Tallinn Centre and Katerina representing her company Binfree (an innovative solution that utilises reward mechanisms for environmental actions, offers recycling pick-up services in Estonia and gives practical information for moving towards a greener lifestyle). One and a half hours flew by and left us craving for more inspiring and useful information. If you have any questions regarding recycling or are simply curious about what happens to our waste in Tallinn, we recommend visiting the official YouTube channel of the City Centre Government (Kesklinna valitus) where you can watch the recording of the webinar 'Waste Sorting and Recycling in Tallinn'.

A greener city is still a city

Tallinn strives to become a green capital that's good to live and spend time in. Thinking of the greenery that will be reappearing soon, our common goal should be to not sacrifice any more green areas to concrete. That means not seeing grassy spaces as blocks waiting to be built up, but as vital parts of the urban space instead. Unlike the native forests of our nature reserves, the greenery in cities requires maintenance and planning.

It's understandable that forests need protection and commendable that people protest against senseless clear-cutting. However, the balance in the urban space between artificial environment and nature does not evolve on its own course. Well thought-out maintenance work is what ensures the necessary biodiversity here in the limited areas available and does not allow more powerful species to take over. And in a city, the importance of one tree can extend far beyond its immediate surroundings.

There are many examples in the City Centre where nature has been able to grow freely but the result hasn't been a diverse recreation area, rather an overgrown corner without any access for sun to shine through or people to pass by. Such places can also obscure city views from people passing from a distance. One example is the back of the Skoone bastion. That is why several of our short-term plans include essential maintenance work in the green areas around the Old Town.

The redoubt of the Goths reconstructed last year by Snelli pond is a great example of how such remodelling enriches urban space. At a time where people are not encouraged to travel, enjoying beautiful views in your home town is also a lovely change of scenery. It will also be a nice surprise for guests in the future when travelling resumes.

Man is also part of nature. While living in civilization, he occasionally goes to the hairdresser's and makes himself presentable when going out to enjoy the company of others. In the same way, the nature in our city needs a caring hand too. If there is something positive to find in these difficult times, it's people spending more time in their home area, discovering parks and health trails. This is another important reason for why the volume of green spaces in the city shouldn't decrease, even in the City Centre. Being able to access and enjoy those green spaces is equally important.

The month of April is dedicated to the heart. Let's take care of our health, including our hearts – green spaces in the City Centre offer a great way of doing it. By allowing yourself regular physical activity, you strengthen your health, and from time to time you may be surprised by the new landscaped areas and unprecedented views of our architectural heritage.



Monika Haukanõmm
City Centre Governor

How to furnish your new life in Tallinn for under €200?

I moved into my flat in Tallinn in November 2019. This was my very first housing rental experience in my whole life. Little did I know that properties for rent in Estonia usually come with all of the essentials so that the tenants can literally make themselves at home from day one. In Japan, nothing comes with a flat, so I was simply grateful that mine came with a king-sized bed, a washing machine, a dishwasher, a dining table, a sofa and two coffee tables in the living room. I had to urgently get everything else, but I did not wish to spend much, not being sure about whether I would live in Estonia after one year of sabbatical. Thankfully, Estonian society upholds the eco-friendly value of recycling quite extensively, so I was able to fully furnish my flat under XXX!

Uuskasutuskeskus (new usage centre = recycle shop)

This is the first place you should look when you want to start your new life without much expenditure. The last three business days of the month are the best time to go to Uuskasutuskeskus. Clothes are only €1 per piece and everything else is 50% off.

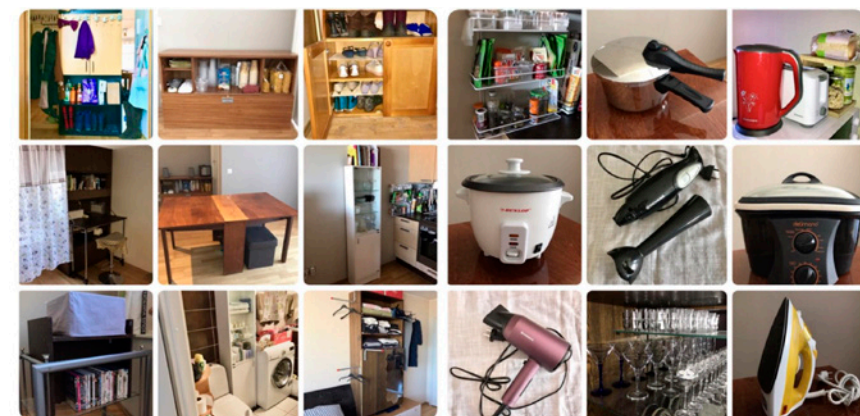
On the very last business day before 4 p.m., they have this amazing offer: pay only €8 and bag any clothes, shoes and bags in a 150-litre plastic bag!

Online platforms: osta.ee / okidoki.ee / olio.ee

Locals offer giveaways or sell things on these platforms. Unfortunately, okidoki only works in Estonian and Russian languages, but the other two operate in English (although you need to manage communication with the owners, possibly in Estonian).

Maxima

Unlike normal Japanese people, I like second-hand goods because I feel as though I am inheriting the love from the previous owner and cherishing their used goods in my possession. But I still prefer buying certain items new and freshly out of the box, such as kitchen and beauty appliances, underwear and shoes. From my private field research and quality assurance tests, I can confidently recommend Maxima as a place where good quality products are sold at noticeably cheaper prices. Just like they say in their brand motto, Maxima is truly "See, mis vaja." (Gram-



matically speaking, it would have been much clearer for Estonian learners like me if it were "See on, mida vajame." / It is what we need," but their motto is still linguistically correct and carries the meaning of "It is (our) need. / It is what is needed.")

See my blog for the full list of items I got, from where and at what price, how I transported them to my flat and how I made the most of them!

Lady Wait-Rose
from Japan



SCAN ME

International project „Urban Eco Islands” successfully completed in Aegna

At the end of March, the EU project “Urban Eco Islands” was officially completed on the island of Aegna, which developed a number of environmentally friendly solutions.

The international project lasted for two years, from 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2021, and developed sustainable tourism solutions and infrastructure on the islands of Aegna and Vasikkasaari, Finland. The project was co-financed by the INTERREG Central Baltic Program and the city of Tallinn was represented by the City Centre Government, in whose jurisdiction Aegna is located.

“We can say that the eco island project was very successful and beneficial for Aegna, because thanks to the investments made, the island’s waste management and recreational infrastructure were improved. The new smart solutions make it easier to plan the visitations to Aegna and collect data to assess the island’s visitor capacity and weather conditions. The hiking trails of the island were also repaired and mapped, and information stands were set up to introduce the nature and history of Aegna. In addition to all this, promotional materials have been created to introduce Aegna



Island as an attractive holiday destination with abundant nature,” Monika Haukanõmm, Head of the City Centre Government said, summarising the results of the project.

A new administrative map has also been drawn up for Aegna, integrating the island’s hiking trails and military heritage sites. The map is installed in four places on the island, and it, as well as the e-magazine introducing the island, can be found on the updated website www.tallinn.ee/aegna/. In addition, a hand-

book was prepared in the partnership of the Tallinn Centre Government of the Stockholm Environmental Institute, which provides an overview of the possibilities of developing peri-urban eco islands with the help of smart solutions. The new solutions of the development project allow to preserve the natural environment of two popular holiday islands – Aegna and Vasikkasaari – even if the number of tourists increases. The total budget of the project was a little over one million euros, of which the share of

the city of Tallinn was 215 thousand euros.

“We are very grateful to our partners in the eco island project for good cooperation – the City of Helsinki Environmental Board, the Tallinn Centre of the Stockholm Environmental Institute and Forum Virum Helsinki,” said Monika Haukanõmm. “Aegna has been one of the hidden pearls of the city centre, which is worth discovering, especially this coming summer, when it might be difficult to visit farther destinations for travel and leisure.”

Tallinn University's 'Green Month' champions sustainable development

“This year, Tallinn University has organised a series of online events related to sustainable development to celebrate Green Month, which takes place throughout April.”

Tallinn University has organised a series of online events related to sustainable development to celebrate Green Month, which takes place throughout April.

The events have been organised by the universi-

ty's Student Union and aim to address social, cultural, economic, health-related, and environmental issues related to sustainable development. They can be attended by everyone.

There will be workshops, movie screenings, and events that focus on eating sustainably, living with less, responsible consumerism, upcycling coffee grounds, how to cut plastic waste, and the benefits of bees. Mental and physi-

cal health will also be discussed.

The events will be held in English and special guests from across the world will share their knowledge and expertise.

“My vision for Green Month is to organise impactful and meaningful activities for everyone, so that the environmental action will not end with Green Month but each participant can learn something and put it into action in their

lives afterward and define their own sustainability path in their everyday life,” said Green Month project manager and Master’s student Katerina Chantzi. All the events can be found on the Tallinna Ülikooli üliõpilaskond / TLU Student Union Facebook page.

For any questions, please contact the Green Month project manager at rohelinenadal@esindus.ee.

Urban Maintenance Month and spring have arrived

Spring is a beautiful season when everything starts to bloom. Nature is slowly starting to turn green and people in their summer cottages are reaching for their gardening gloves again. We do the same here – it’s time to set up all the summer flowers in the City Centre.

Besides the budding flowers, we can also find quite a bit of dust in the spring air. We need to clean the gritting remains from the winter and any other surprises that appear under the melted snow before the greenery covers them up again. In the city, we clean our streets and pick up the grit that has been put down during the winter. Cleaning is not only the spring routine of the institutions in the city, but also of the residents of apartments and houses. We would like to remind you that you are not allowed to use leaf blowers to remove grit.

When the spring sun melted the ice from Snelli Pond, the cleanup that had been put on hold for the winter months continued. We will finish the cleanup of the pond by Tallinn Day on 15 May – we hope that it will become a place that is pleasing to the eye as well as for the local birds and fish.

Unfortunately, regardless of the season, we face a lot of issues with the increasing scribbling on the walls. While years ago, our headaches were caused by graffiti artists painting colourful artworks on the walls, now the few large pictures have been replaced by many quickly drafted “tags”. This means that the number of walls with graffiti has increased. When the offender cannot be caught, the owner of the wall needs to pay for the damages. In many cases, the city has to pay for them at the expense of other expenditures. Urban art can be great in the right places, where it pleases the people passing by instead of frustrating them.

We are celebrating Urban Maintenance Month for the 30th time in Tallinn. In addition to the traditional activities (street cleanup, cleaning park paths, inspection of benches, preparation of playgrounds for the season), this year we will focus on sustainable circular economy. Many communities have joined Urban Maintenance Month. We would like to thank the hard-working team at Hilton Hotel who voluntarily came to help us clean Skoone Bastion. We offer to help many communities organise projects in their neighbourhoods. Tallinn City Centre Government’s office employees have a project of their own: we are going to clean a fascinating alley in the city wall so visitors of Tallinn City Museum can hopefully explore it.

In addition to the spring cleanup, we are also constructing many new cycling paths and tracks. This year we will be extending the network of cycling paths and we hope that this encourages people to exercise more – whether by bicycle or scooter or other similar means of transport. We would like to emphasise the importance of respecting others and moving around safely in the limited urban space.

We hope that the awakening of spring will also bring new opportunities for our social life as COVID-19 backs down. A clean and safe city is in all of our hands!

Monika Haukanõmm

City Centre Governor



Top 10 Details of Estonian Life That May Surprise Non-Estonians

#10. Where Do We Wash Pots?

So far, I have stayed in 9 different properties in Tallinn. In each of them, the kitchen sink was too small, even in the family houses. I honestly wonder where Estonians wash big deep pots and oven trays.

#9. No Microwaves

Since it is not a mainstream home appliance here, I can easily wow Estonians by boiling water in a mug, making crisps, or baking some cupcakes, all within 3 minutes in a microwave.

#8. Redefining Fast Delivery

Whoever is from Amazon-serviced countries, behold! When you see “kiire kuller (fast delivery)” on an online shop, don’t expect same day delivery. Here, fast delivery to your door often takes 3-5 business days. Collection from a parcel machine is much faster and cheaper if you can opt for it.

#7. Minimal Packaging

1 litre of milk or yoghurt comes in a plastic bag. Minced meat is also sold without a plastic tray.

#6. Punctual

Buses come precisely on time, hurry!!

#5. No Feedback Is Positive Feedback

When you pitch an important strategic plan and the CEO approves it with a plain “Yes” with no signs of emotion on their face, would you be confident in leading the company’s future with your plan? English speakers would interpret this as 20% “Yes, I appreciate your effort” and 80% “No, I’m not fully convinced yet”.

Or when your Estonian guests all go silent while they eat up your killer dish, you might start convening a feedback session in your head, with your internal dialogue whispering all possible negative comments.

In both cases, Estonians meant

well! Estonians are absolutely honest and they do not use frill words to decorate their statements. Speaking less is better. Silence is a peaceful joy. If they do not like your idea or food, they will probably say “huvitav (interesting)”.

#4. Where Are The Repairmen?

Big name electric appliance manufacturers do not have repair centres in Estonia. So how do the locals get by? Impressively, Estonians repair most



electric things by themselves. Eventually, you will also find the repairman within yourself. During my first year in Estonia, I learned how to repair a Philips Sonicare and an electric kettle and to rewire electric cables to change or attach plug sockets.

#3. It's A Small World After All

Estonians do not talk to strangers, but they are already connected with those strangers by just 2 or 3 degrees of separation.

#2. Unbelievably Safe

The local TV channels zealously produce crime dramas while in reality there are almost no reported murder cases. Estonia is by far the safest country amongst the 25+ countries I have been to. I can walk alone in the dark after 10pm, totally safe.

#1. The Postmen's Secret

I once went to deliver a letter to my

friend, but the postbox was inside the locked door. So how do postmen manage to deliver letters? I just asked a passerby, and she kindly told me that Omniva postmen have the secret keys to access every building. I had to ask her, “tõesti (really)?” again and again. This is a good indication of how safe Estonia is!

Lady Wait-Rose

from Japan

Craving for more to read? Follow her life in Estonia here!



SCAN ME

From Rubens to Raves at the Art Museum

From the beginning of May, the Art Museum of Estonia will surprise visitors with several new exhibitions in its five branches.

The Kadriorg Art Museum houses an exhibition about the works of the Dutch masters "From Memling to Rubens: The Golden Age of Flanders". For the first time, the Estonian audience can get acquainted with the works of Peter Paul Rubens, Anthony van Dyck, Hans Memling and other artists of the golden age in Dutch art. In addition to the works of the masters, female artists and scientific developments of the time are also introduced, giving the visitor an overview of the society and culture of the golden age. The exhibition is curated by Katharina Van Cauteren (The Phoebus Foundation) and Greta Koppel.

At Kumu Art Museum, you can visit the exhibition "Up All Night: Looking Closely at Rave Culture", which takes a look at rave and club culture and its related subcultures. Exhibition "Art Is Design Is Art" explores the boundaries of design and art. In the great hall, the exhibition "Janis Rozentāls: The Dance of

Life" that was curated in cooperation with the Latvian National Museum of Art provides the first extensive overview of the works of one of the most popular and versatile Latvian artists in Estonia.

In the cozy Mikkel Museum, visitors can admire the works of Ignacio Zuloaga, a leading figure in traditional Spanish art. The Basque artist Zuloaga's works, his activities as a collector and the promotion of Spanish cultural heritage played a major role in preserving this heritage as well as its international reputation.

Niguliste Museum has just opened an exhibition from Antwerp entitled "Crazy about Dymphna" focusing on the altarpiece painted by Goossen Van der Weyden, which tells the story of the tragic fate of the martyr Dymphna.

Adamson-Eric Museum is undergoing an extensive renovation and will open its doors with a new and exciting exhibition programme in June.

Sirje Helme, director general of the Art Museum, is pleased that the spring-summer exhibition programme is diverse and the



Peter Paul Rubens (1557-1640). A Sailor and a Woman Embracing. ca. 1614-1615. The Phoebus Foundation

share of high-quality international exhibitions is exceptionally high. Our own Estonian culture will not be forgotten either: there is an exhibition on the relationship between applied art

and fine arts at the end of the last century, and a permanent exhibition "Landscapes of Identity" in Kumu, which offers a lot of joy for discovery.

Businesses are expanding into urban space

District governments alongside Transport Department are in the process of developing solutions to make urban space available to entrepreneurs in order to open more outdoor cafes and restaurants.

The aim is to revive entrepreneurship in Tallinn and support tourism, trade

and service sectors that have suffered the most during the COVID pandemic. Deputy major Aivar Riisalu says that solutions are being sought for the summer period during which entrepreneurs could use car parks and streets for outdoor cafes, restaurants and events.

District governments

are in talks with entrepreneurs and the local community about where outdoor areas of cafes and restaurants could be expanded or which street areas and other spaces to temporarily close in order to make them available to businesses. Solutions will then be discussed with the Transport Department

of the city. District governments along with the business service are conducting a survey among entrepreneurs to determine their interest in the use of additional outdoor areas. The Transport Department will offer solutions for temporarily closing parking areas and street sections to traffic.

Summer will not be cancelled! It may be different but it will come!

As the mid-May heatwave proved, this year's summer is definitely coming. Let's just stay sensible, happy and creative – and we'll get plenty of sun and fun this year too.

A new outdoor gym at Tuvi park was completed at the beginning of the month, providing space for working out and moving your body in the fresh air at any time. What's great is that the facility accommodates people with reduced mobility as well! As always when considering people with special needs, it has resulted in solutions that enrich the lives of people without disabilities too. Thus, the training device in the outdoor gym of Tuvi Park that is intended for wheelchair users, also offers various flexible training options for everyone else as well.

Perhaps you would like to go on a trip to discover new places without taking any unnecessary risks? Be our guest! Most of the residents of Tallinn have certainly not visited Aegna, despite the fact that it is part of the City Centre – albeit an overseas part. During the summer season there is a regular ferry service to Aegna. On the island you can discover beautiful nature and exciting military heritage, and you can camp, hike and enjoy the beach as well. Aegna Nature House also organises nature camps and excursions for children and young people. This is a real gem waiting to be discovered!

The easing of restrictions will allow the Tallinn City Centre Government to continue on with the summer culture programme. Soon open-air concerts can be enjoyed in the district parks again. Traditional and long-awaited park performances for children will also be held. However, we have decided that the district government will not be organising Midsummer's Eve festivities this year. Firstly, the situation is still too fragile for organising events that big, and secondly, if the situation still allows, it would be more reasonable to let catering and entertainment businesses that have been suffering for a long time to seize the opportunities of this public holiday. In other words, instead of one big party, let there be several smaller ones!

New flower arrangements and also renovated park benches have been added to the city centre cityscape. Canopy vegetation has been maintained in several places where it had started to obscure the sunlight needed for grass growth or interfered with the use of parks. So we are ready for the summer to come to town.

Let's enjoy the sun and flowers, not take unnecessary risks and hope to find as much excitement, education and fun as we can in the days to come. I wish you all a lovely summer!



Monika Haukanõmm

City Centre Governor

Why I Think Estonia is the Ideal Country for a Startup Business

I was living through the winter of my personal life in 2019 back home in Japan. So I decided to take a year of sabbatical in Estonia, where I would say the Bohemian spirit still shines onto us instead of sunlight in the winter-time. I totally liked my new life because Estonians see the value in what you can do or your potential, not how old you are or

what gender you were born with. I am convinced that Estonia is the place for me, so I have been trying my best to find a way to stay in Estonia past my visa expiry.

As soon as I saw the ad for the business idea contest Prototron, which "helps you create a functional prototype and start a successful business" (quoted from its website), neurons sparked in my

head and connected all my struggles and vague ideas in a second. Let's submit my business idea, get help in making a startup company, and receive the residence permit as a startup founder! It was already the night of the deadline, so I quickly named my idea for an eco-friendly platform of restaurant meal subscriptions as "Meal Plan" and wrote up 2400 words of my business plan in a 2 hour adrenaline rush. That is how my startup journey suddenly began, and I could see for myself why Estonia is known to be the ideal place for startups.

For entrepreneurial-minded people, Prototron offers free workshops on Zoom for the selected contestants and on their FB page for anyone interested, plus a maximum €35,000 equity-free fund for the first prize winner. For innovative tech startups, Technopol offers a 6-month incubation programme on an equity option agreement without any monthly fees. The government only takes 20% for corporate income tax, the labour costs in Estonia are more affordable

than those of other developed countries, and the immigration policy opens favourable gateways for startup companies. It seems to me that in Estonia, if you know what you want to achieve and have the courage and commitment to work for it, people will give you the help and opportunities you need. Not just for startups – I feel this in everything I do here.

Are you curious about what kind of business ideas are developing through the contest? You can support the emerging teams of innovative entrepreneurs on the Estonian crowdfunding community, Fundwise! The campaigns run until 18 June. You can also follow their startup journey on Prototron's Facebook page!



Lady Wait-Rose
from Japan

Using light electric vehicles in the city

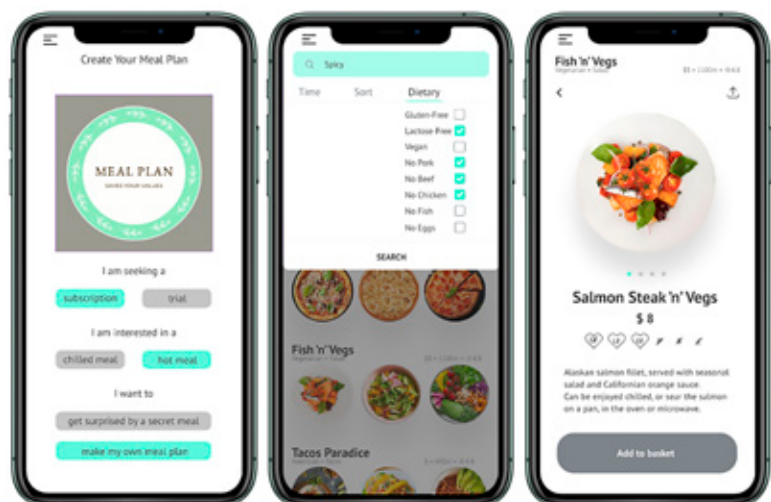
Statistics show that all registered traffic accidents involving electric scooters in Tallinn of the past few months have resulted in injuries.

A vehicle that does not meet requirements or does not work properly increases the risk of accident. Requirements for riders of light electric vehicles are similar to requirements for cyclists:

- the vehicle has to work and be in order,
- it has to have working brakes, a signal bell (except for vehicles without a handlebar), a light source or a reflector in the front, back and on the sides (except for vehicles without a handlebar) and a setting to prevent self-propulsion.

A light source is mandatory when driving in darkness and the maximum allowed driving speed of a light electric vehicle is 25 km/h.

The Road Traffic Act states that riders of light electric vehicles under the age of 16 have to wear a strapped helmet but the police recommends it for everyone. You can find further information here: www.liikluskasvatus.ee



During the contest, I learned how to make a mobile app prototype for the first time in my life. Anyone can do this on the free web-based design software, Figma!

Tallinn has a diverse cultural program in place for the summer

This summer, Tallinn will be holding a grandiose maritime festival and several other traditional summer events like Medieval Days (July 7-11), the maritime festival (July 16-18), the Birgitta Festival (August 6-14), and the Old Town Days (August 12-15).

During the Medieval Days, from 7 to 11 July, you can feel the atmosphere of the flourishing Hanseatic era. A large medieval market is set up in the Town Hall Square with merchants and workshops. Musicians and dancers from near and far take the stage. A medieval procession opens the event, followed by various workshops, excursions, and theatre performances. The children's area is situated on the Niguliste hill, where children can participate in workshops, knight tournaments, and other exciting activities. The handicraft market is open, and the workshops take place at Town Hall Square every day.

In the five ports of Tallinn City Centre, from 16 to 18 July, a great maritime festival will take place, where the ships traditionally participating in The Tall Ships Races regatta

will also take part, and a smaller regatta will take place in cooperation with three cities – Tallinn, Klaipeda, and Szczecin. Following all restrictions and the instructions of the Health Board, a maritime and family festival will be taking place in the Old City Harbour cruise area, as well as in the Kalaranna Quarter, around the Paterei Sea Fortress, at the Seaplane Harbour, and in the Noblessner Port area. Artists from Estonia and abroad will be providing entertainment in the ports as well as on the water. There will be outdoor cafés, children's play areas, a fish market, and a handicraft fair, as well as a sea taxi which will be transporting participants from one port to another.

Birgitta Festival 2021 will take place in Tallinn from 6 to 14 August. Puccini's opera "Sister Angelica" will be completed especially for this year's Birgitta Festival. Tchaikovsky's opera "Yevgeny Onegin" and Verdi's opera "Aida" can be enjoyed in the performance of the Dmitry Hvorostovsky Krasnoyarsk State Opera and Ballet Theatre. The festival will feature two one-act ballets



by Ivan Vassiliev, one of the most famous contemporary ballet artists in Russia, which premiered in 2018 – "The Beginning" to the music of Igor Stravinsky and "Amadeus" to Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. The ballet troupe consists mainly of the best ballet artists of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow and the Mikhailovsky Theatre in St. Petersburg. The performing arts company NoGravity offers the musical spectacle "Leonardo", in which the famous paintings of the Renaissance artist and inventor Leonardo da Vinci come to life.

This year, the Tallinn Old

Town Days "Stories and Legends" will take place from 12 to 15 August. In addition to an impressive concert program, the Old Town Days also offer numerous thematic tours, a film program, architectural excursions, special programs in museums, distinct exhibitions, street theatre, children's area, folk culture area, etc. Activities take place all over the Old Town, and you can enjoy concerts of pop, folk and classical music. This year's main focus of the Old Town Days is on stories and legends, and a separate exhibition-concert is dedicated to the friendship between Tallinn and Helsinki.

New bicycle lanes in the City Centre

In June, the City Centre started making the bicycle lane markings more visible. The Tallinn City Centre Government has developed solutions to help create safer lanes and trails of more than 16 kilometres for cyclists in the City Centre.

The renovations started at the beginning of June on Endla Street, then moved onto Kaarli Avenue, Estonia Avenue, Gonsiori Street and Narva Road. This summer, around the Old Town and in the City Centre, there will be better and safer cycling opportunities.

The aim is to ensure smooth cycling through places that currently hinder uninterrupted cycling. A total of approxi-

mately 3.8 kilometres of new bicycle lanes will be built in the City Centre, and improvements to existing cycle paths and roads are planned to the extent of approximately 5 kilometres.

By reducing lanes for cars, cyclists will get an additional kilometre of bicycle lanes on the road. By redistributing the pavement, cyclists will have an extra 2.7 kilometres of cycling space. In addition, Väike-Ameerika and Hariduse Street will become more bicycle-friendly thanks to changes in traffic management and better markings.

Initially, the mobility space will be redistributed using simple solutions that do not require large-scale design

or construction work, but infrastructure improvements on the same routes are planned for the future. Separate bicycle paths are also planned for the extensive reconstruction of the streets.

Constructions to improve cycling opportunities will be completed in July at a cost of around 1.5-2 million euros. The preparation for the construction of the facilities and making the agreements necessary for restructuring took nine months in cooperation between the Urban Environment and Public Works Department, the Urban Planning Department, Tallinn Transport Department and Tallinn Strategic Management Office and the infrastructure holders.

Where to catch the best "lõunapakkmised" in Tallinn?

I have to be honest, I do not want to share my favourite lunch places! I would be disappointed if I couldn't get my own meal because they became too popular... Instead, let me begin by helping you find your own new favourites, so my hidden gems can remain my little secret for now!

Locals know the best deals in town.

If there's a rich yummy smell in the air outside and the majority of customers seem to be locals, you are in the right place.

Estonian "kohvik" (cafe) is so much more than just a cup of coffee!

In most cases, the Estonian "kohvik" (cafe) is actually the ideal place for freshly-cooked lunch meals. You can go to a kohvik purely for lunch and leave without ordering any drinks!

Learn Estonian through dining out.

Welcome to the land of generous "lõunapakkmised" (lunch offer) and "päevapakkmised" (offer of the day)! Because we are on the hunt for locals' favourites, please do not expect the caterers to be fluent in English. Let's learn some food-related vocabulary in Estonian!

My recommendations: The detailed version of this list with photographs, opening hours, and a link to the menu are available on my blog.



SCAN ME

€3.5 quick lunch: Grenka

A broth and your choice of pirukas.

Lunch offers are also available on weekends, but only from 1pm.

Bread-lovers' lunch from €4.5: Kalamaja Pagarikoda ja Bistrot

A main dish with your choice of carbs and 2 types of salads.

The artisan breads and kid-friendly atmosphere await you!

Lunch with an amazing salad bar from €4.4: Uudistemaja Kohvik

A main dish comes with your choice of carbs or vegs. You can toast your bread while you fill your plate with delicious salad!

€4.6-4.9 all-day lunch until 7pm: Sõõrikukohvik

Päevapraad includes a main dish with your choice of carbs, 3 types of salads, and breads. As the name of the cafe suggests, the doughnuts here are always nice and impossible to resist!

Train your plating skill for the €5 buffet: Lime Buffet

Choose a main dish, then get your salads and several hot

side dishes – as much as you can put on your plate!

Lunch from €5.2 for tennis fans and all: Herne Kohvik

A main dish with your choice of carbs, 2 types of salads, and breads.

The best discounted deal is the "Komplekt" (set) which complements the lunch with a soup or sweet pancakes!

Late lunch discount: Poogen

Go there at 3:30pm, and you can enjoy the buffet lunch at half price, instead of the usual €1.2 per 100g!

€6 weekend lunch: Yurina This is actually my Japanese restaurant.

At €6, you can have either a Tonkotsu Ramen (dinnertime price: €9) or a lunch special along with a fluffy steamed cake for dessert!

Lady Wait-Rose

from Japan

Summer is finally here!

Several of the restrictions that have been affecting people's everyday lives for months have been lifted. When thinking about what these restrictions affected the most, it had to do with ordinary activities which we did not consider anything special – eating in restaurants, visiting museums, getting together with friends, shopping. All the things that we were able to do regularly or on the go, things that were only a phone call away. The abrupt end of such activities left a void in people's lives. However, places have gradually started to open up again.

During the month of June, the City Centre Government has also been focusing on things whose results may not be easy to notice at first glance but whose absence would be immediately noticeable. Whether it be the reconstruction of inner quarter roads or the maintenance of the park paths. When the autumn weather brings rain, a walker might suddenly realise that they were able to pass even the furthest corner of the park without getting wet. Snelli pond was cleaned this year, which likely makes the birds nesting there very happy, but as the results showed, it was extremely necessary – the amount of sludge removed from the pond was four times higher than originally thought, not to mention the various findings that came out of this. In addition to tyres and rubbish bins, many decades had left behind military legacy!

Anyone who has had anything to do with construction or renovation work recently is certainly aware of the rising prices and extended queues for both projects and construction materials. The city hasn't been left untouched either – the prices are far from what they were at the time of this year's budget-making. Therefore, the city of Tallinn has decided to postpone some of the construction projects planned for this year. Every city resident likely agrees that it would not be fair to overpay just to be able to cut ribbons before elections. Instead, we manage the city wisely, make sure everything we need is done and wait for the market to cool down.

People spending quality time outside is still a priority for the city. Sports opportunities at Ingliand are constantly evolving under the leadership of beach volleyball enthusiasts – we would like to thank them for that! Tallinn Sports and Youth Department repaired the broken ring of the basketball court on the edge of Toompark, so now both baskets are up and ready for use. The ball court at 32 Lastekodu St will soon have a new location as well because a unique family playground for all ages will be built in the courtyard this autumn inspired by Härjapea River and the mills that used to exist in the area. Apparently, many of you have noticed the construction of bicycle lanes to create safer opportunities for riding bicycles and scooters in Tallinn – different bicycle lanes will be connected in the city centre and cyclists won't find themselves deadlocked. Unfortunately, it is not possible to build a separate bicycle lane on each side, so we have to share and respect one another's space.

And finally – what would summer and life in the city be without culture? As mentioned earlier, many of the usual events have changed in time and form, but now is the time to get back into a regular rhythm. A series of summer concerts in the city centre was opened by the legendary Kukerpillid, whose performance brought numerous people of all ages to the summery Kadriorg Park. A series of summer plays for children has also been introduced. In addition, there are excursions and many other exciting things to come. Be sure to find out what's on in your area! Nature rejoices when we enjoy culture close to home, without having to take longer trips to experience it. And the environment in the city centre is just what you need this summer!

Monika Haukanõmm

City Centre Governor

