



Photo: Tarmo Haud / Source: Visit Estonia

Welcome to Tartu!

Tartu, the intellectual heart of Estonia, welcomes you with its rich history, vibrant culture, and picturesque landscapes. This travel guide is designed to help you make the most of your visit, providing reliable details on transportation, accommodation, dining, and must-see attractions.

City Overview

Tartu, located in southern Estonia, on the banks of the Emajõgi River is known for its prestigious university, charming Old Town, and lively atmosphere. The city seamlessly blends together its medieval history with its technologically advanced modernity, offering something unique for everyone.



Getting to Tartu

Discover your flight options to reach Estonia, with convenient gateways such as Tallinn Airport, Tartu Airport primarily connected from Helsinki, or Riga Airport offering strategic entry into the Baltic region.

You can find affordable flights via [Skyscanner](#), [Google Flights](#) and [Kiwi](#).

Flights

→ TARTU AIRPORT (TAY)

The nearest international airport to the city of Tartu is Tartu Airport (TAY), offering flights exclusively from Helsinki, with services commencing on the 31st of March.

→ TALLINN AIRPORT (TLL)

Major airlines operate regular flights to Tallinn from European cities.

→ RIGA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (RIX)

It is also possible to travel to Riga International Airport in Latvia. Then you can travel to Tartu by taking a bus or a train from Riga.



Getting to Tartu

If arriving from neighboring countries, such as Finland or Sweden, consider ferry services connecting major ports like Helsinki and Stockholm to Tallinn. Numerous ferry companies operate regular routes across the Baltic Sea, providing a scenic and convenient maritime journey to Estonia.

Voyages

→ HELSINKI TO TALLINN

Explore Helsinki before taking a 2-hour ferry to Tallinn, then continue your journey to Tartu by train or bus. Tallink Silja Line, Viking Line, Eckerö Line operate ferry services between Helsinki and Tallinn.

→ STOCKHOLM TO TALLINN

A scenic overnight ferry journey can be taken from Stockholm to reach Tallinn. This can be booked on the Tallink Silja Line website. Please note that booking a cabin is required as well.

Once you reach Tallinn via these ferry options, you can follow the domestic travel options.



Tallinn - Tartu

→ COACH

COACH FROM THE AIRPORT

The bus stops at the airport are situated at the northern (city) end of the passenger terminal, providing direct accessibility to the buses. You can take a direct bus from Tallinn Airport (Tallinna Lennujaam) to Tartu Coach Station (Tartu Bussijaam), with buses departing approximately every 30-60 minutes.

COACH STATION /BUSSIJAAM

The coach station is situated a bit southeast of the Old Town, and you can easily reach it by public transportation, taxi, or walking, depending on your proximity to the station.

TICKETS

You can purchase tickets in advance from T-pilet or Lux Express sites. You can also buy a ticket directly from the driver by card or in cash.



Tallinn - Tartu

→ TRAIN

Elron operates frequent train services between Tallinn and Tartu, with a journey time of around 2-3 hours.

'ÜLEMISTE' STOP

The closest train stop to Tallinn Airport is 'Ülemiste,' which is a 20-minute walk from the airport.

Alternatively, you can take Bus number 15 from the airport bus station to reach Ülemiste. From there, you can catch a train to Tartu. For the route from the airport to the 'Ülemiste' train stop, please see [link](#).

RAILWAY STATION / BALTI JAAM

Tallinn Railway Station is the main railway station in Tallinn. Close to the Old Town and City Centre you can easily reach it by public transportation, taxi, or walking, depending on your proximity to the station.

TICKETS

You can secure your tickets for Elron trains by purchasing them [online](#) up to one week in advance. Alternatively, tickets can also be acquired from the dedicated [ticket machines](#) conveniently located at each entry point of the train.



Riga - Tartu

→ COACH

The bus from Riga Airport to Tartu Coach Station departs twice a day. Alternatively, you can take a bus or a taxi (for example, Bolt) to reach Riga Coach Station, from where you can catch the coach to Tartu. Schedules and tickets can be checked and purchased here. The Riga bus station is a 5–10 minute walk from Riga train station.

→ TRAIN

This option is tailored for adventurers seeking to experience Latvian trains and the countryside. There is only one train 'connection' per day, which includes a 4-hour layover at the border town of Valga/Valka. Despite the layover, Valga/Valka is worth exploring, with its cafes offering a delightful experience. Board the Latvian Railways (Vivi) train to Valga at 11:00, arriving at 13:59. Then, catch an Estonian (Elron) train from Valga at 17:29, reaching Tartu at 18:50.



Public Transport

→ TALLINN

Tallinn is very compact and easy to get around. Reaching farther out destinations is simple thanks to the city's network of buses, trolleys and trams. The public transport network operates from 5:00 to 00:00 daily (see [timetables](#) for further information).

One hour ticket with contactless payment can be purchased on board for €2. Be sure to use the validators equipped with the wireless payment logo (in the front of the vehicle).

Alternatively, you can buy a Public Transport Card (Ühiskaart) from R-Kiosk for 2€, which can be used for public transport across Estonia. You can add money to the card in kiosks or on [web](#). R-Kiosks are located in all major stations, including the airport, train station, port, and coach station.

→ TARTU

There are 13 bus routes in Tartu, two of them night routes. A total of 64 buses, with frequent departures, are equipped with air conditioning, low bottoms and running on an environmentally-friendly source of fuel.

One hour ticket with contactless payment can be purchased on board for 1.5€. Public Transport Card can be purchased similarly to Tallinn and works in both cities. You can add money on kiosks or on [web](#).



Alternatives to Public Transport

→ BOLT

Bolt offers the convenience of on-demand rides, allowing cost-effective transportation option compared to traditional taxis. Prices are typically transparent and displayed in the app before confirming a ride, allowing travelers to make informed decisions based on their budget and preferences.

[Get the app.](#)

→ TAXI

In Estonia, taxis are readily available and can be hailed on the street, booked by phone, or through various taxi-hailing apps (e.g. [Forus](#)).

→ SCOOTERS

Bolt Scooters offers an efficient and eco-friendly mode of urban travel. With the convenience of a mobile app, users can effortlessly locate, unlock, and enjoy electric scooters.



Accommodation

For those planning to book accommodation in Tartu for May, it's advisable to secure reservations in advance, as popular options tend to fill up quickly.

Trusted platforms such as [TripAdvisor](#), [Booking](#), and [Airbnb](#) offer a range of choices, and for additional recommendations, Tartu 2024 provides a [curated list](#) of lodging options for a seamless stay.

[Hektor Design Hostel](#) and [Looming Hostel](#)¹ are among the closest housing options to our scheduled activities. These hostels not only offer affordability but also provide a unique and vibrant atmosphere, enhancing the overall experience of your stay in Tartu.

[Lydia Hotel](#) and [Soho Hotel](#) stand out as prime choices for those seeking accommodation with convenient access to the city's attractions. You can enjoy a blend of comfort and proximity to explore the cultural and historical gems that Tartu has to offer.

¹ Fun Fact: Old bedsheets from the Looming Hostel are brought to TYPÄ for upcycling. These old bedsheets are either used for making paper, or they are converted into rags for cleaning oil paints which then eventually get used as notebook covers.



Dining

Below, you'll discover dining options catering to various budgets, providing the opportunity to experience both authentic Estonian cuisine and a diverse range of international flavors. These options are ideal for those arriving earlier or planning an extended stay in the area.

Pub Illegaard (€): Bar, Pub, Vegetarian

Puhvet (€): Cafe, Lunch specials, Vegan, Vegetarian

Cafe Smile (€): Eastern European, Armenian

Ruunipizza ja Pancake cafe (€): European, Vegetarian

Werner Cafe & Restaurant (€€): Cafe, European, Fusion

Gunpowder Cellar (€€): Pub, Bar, European

Kolm Tilli (€€): Pizza, International, European

Spargel (€€): European, GastroPub, Healthy

Vilde & Vine (€€): European, Central European

Restaurant Hõlm (€€€): International, European, Healthy

Antonius Restaurant (€€€): European, International

JOYCE (€€): International, European, Central European

Fii Restaurant (€€€): International, European, Scandinavian



Attractions

→ MUST-SEE

University of Tartu

Explore one of Europe's oldest universities.

(Ruins of) Tartu Cathedral

A historical gem with stunning architecture. You can also find The University of Tartu Museum there.

Toome Hill Park (Toomemägi)

Relax in this picturesque park with scenic views.

AHHAA Science Centre

Interactive science exhibits for all ages.

→ CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Estonian National Museum

Learn about Estonian history and culture.

Tartu Art Museum

Discover a rich collection of Estonian art.

Tartu Old Town

It is possible to book a free walking tour of the charming Old Town here.



Additional info

→ LANGUAGE

While Estonian is the official language, English is widely spoken in most areas of the city.

→ CURRENCY

The official currency is the Euro (EUR). You can pay by card or ApplePay/GooglePay almost everywhere in Estonia.

→ SHOPS

The local grocery shops (Rimi, Coop, Maxima etc) remain open from 8:00-22:00 during the weekdays as well as weekends. In case of any emergency, you can go to the store called Prisma which remains open for 24 hours.

→ PHARMACY

The most central pharmacy is Tartu Raeapteek that is situated at Town Hall and open for 24 hours. Additionally, there are many pharmacies all around the city which can be found by searching the keyword 'Apteek' in Estonian.



Additional info

→ WEATHER IN TARTU

As per the 2024 weather forecast, the temperature in May will range from 6–17 degrees Celsius along with occasional rains. So, it is advisable to pack your suitcase accordingly.

→ INTERNET

Wifi is widely available in Estonia - most cafes, restaurants, even bigger shops and some public transportation buses have free public wifi.

→ SIM-CARDS

Estonia is a part of the European Union, so all participants from the EU should be able to use their regular roaming service with the same price as back home. If you wish to purchase a SIM-card, you can buy them at small kiosks (for example, R-kiosk or Circle K)/shopping centers as well. Prices for SIM-cards are relatively cheap, for example, you can get 4 GB of data for 4 Euros.

→ TIPPING CULTURE

Tipping is somewhat new to Estonia, so it's not expected. Only in restaurants it is good custom to tip 5-10% of the bill, assuming the service was good.



Additional info

→ **VISIT TARTU**

'Visit Tartu' is the official tourism website for the city and the county.

→ **VISIT ESTONIA**

'Visit Estonia' is the official travel guide to Estonia.

**Enjoy your time in Tartu, Estonia!
If you have any questions or need
further assistance, feel free to
reach out to the friendly locals.**

**Safe travels!
See you soon.**

Contact

→ **FIRST POINT OF CONTACT**

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