



If there's one part of Tallinn outside Old Town that a first time visitor absolutely, definitely, unquestionably has to see, it's Kadriorg. Though it's only a few minutes' walk from the centre, this quiet area is a world unto itself, a secluded neighbourhood made up of large areas of forested park criss-crossed by paths and dotted with statues and ponds. It's also home to a number of intriguing 19th- and 20th-century villas, and the nation's top art museums.

The jewel in Kadriorg's crown however is the Kadriorg Palace, a magnificent, Baroque structure surrounded by manicured gardens and fountains. This was the centre of an estate that Russian tsar Peter the Great established as a family retreat in the early 18th century. In fact, it was Peter himself who was responsible for creating Kadriorg.

The story started when his forces captured Estonia from the Swedes in 1710, kicking off the so-called Tsarist period of Estonia's history, which lasted for the next two centuries. In 1714, the emperor launched a project to create a park on a large tract of land in what was then on the outskirts of Tallinn. Later, in 1718, work on the summer palace began. It was dubbed Catherine's in honour of the tsar's wife, Catherine I. In Estonian, Kadriorg literally means 'Catherine's Valley.' The emperor never intended the palace to be anything more than a summer villa and knew that the family would rarely visit, so he ordered that the park and its carefully crafted gardens be open to the public.

After Peter died, Russian royalty lost interest holidaying in far-off Tallinn, but the area continued to be associated with culture and splendour. Wealthy families eventually began to build their villas nearby and continued to do so right up through the 20th Century. In 1938, the Estonian presidential palace was built here, just uphill from the Kadriorg Palace. Even today, telling people that you own property in Kadriorg will get you a few envious glances.

These days Kadriorg is also associated with art, since it's home to some of the best art museums in the country. In 2006 the nation's largest and most complete art museum, the Kumu, opened its doors to the public. What's more, the former Tsar's palace itself now houses the extensive Foreign Art Museum of Estonia, while the nearby Mikkel museum displays an impressive number of works, including some Rembrandt etchings. Just as rewarding as walking through the museums and admiring the paintings, visitors can also stroll through Kadriorg's residential streets to find a few architectural gems, or simply meander through the park and ponder the lives of centuries past. A brand new play-park was also recently added for the kids and young at heart.

This year Kadriorg is celebrating its **290th anniversary**, and with it comes a whole slew of activities and events the whole family can enjoy. To find out if you'll be in town for any of them, check the facing page.

Getting there

On your map, look for the big, green patch and you've found Kadriorg. From the centre, walking to Kadriorg is an easy option - it takes about 15 minutes if you're coming from the edge of Old Town nearest the Viru Hotel. The most direct and simple way there is to head down Narva mnt., then follow the tram tracks as they veer off to the right on Weizenbergi tänav. You should continue until you pass the Kadriorg tram stop. Trams N°1 and 3 will also get you there. Once you've arrived, nearly everything you want to see is located conveniently on, or just next to, the same short stretch of Weizenbergi.

What to See

Kadriorg Palace G-5, Weizenbergi 37, tel. 606 64 00, fax 606 64 01, kadrorg@ekm.ee, www.ekm.ee. Italian master architect Niccolò Michetti designed this magnificent, Northern Baroque palace in 1718 at the request of Russian Tsar Peter the Great, who intended to use it as a summer residence for the royal family. The emperor named the estate for his wife Catherine I ('Catherine' is 'Kadri' in Estonian), hence the name of the area. The palace is now home to the Kadriorg Art Museum. In addition to perusing the nation's collection of foreign art, visitors get to see the mind-bogglingly ornate Great Hall, and the room upstairs that served as president's office in the 1930s. Don't miss the lavish manicured gardens, out back. ▶ Open 10:00 - 17:00. Closed Mon. Admission 55kr.

Presidential Palace G-5, Weizenbergi 39. For a few years during Estonia's first period of independence (1918 - 1940), the Estonian head of state worked out of the Kadriorg Palace, but in 1938, this purpose-built presidential palace was opened next to it, just up the hill. The Presidential Palace's style echoes the Kadriorg, albeit without quite so much flourish. Since the building once again serves as the President's office and residence, it's closed to visitors, but you can still wander into the parking area for a better view and, if your timing is lucky, you'll see the honour guards marching out front.

Kadriorg Park Museum G-5, Weizenbergi 26. This small museum is dedicated to the park's history, as well as to the architecture of other parks around Estonia. Changing exhibits and a library. ▶ Open 11:00 - 18:00, Thu 11:00 - 21:00. Closed Mon. Admission free.

Swan Pond Along Weizenbergi. Now beautifully restored to its former glory, this artificial, rectangular pond with a picturesque gazebo in the middle is still a required stop on any tour of Kadriorg, mainly because of its romantic look - like something out of a Chekhov play. From here, you can take also a path up the hill, bypassing Weizenbergi, to reach some new fountain and beautiful rose gardens on the way to the Kumu.

Park paths and statues The entire leafy park northeast of Weizenbergi is criss-crossed with paths, perfect for a wandering visitor. The forest includes several horse chestnuts planted here in 1722 that were supposed to be replanted later in St. Petersburg, but never were. Wander a little further down the path and you'll discover more.

Russalka Monument Across Narva mnt., by the shore. This striking sculpture of an angel facing out into the sea horizon is a memorial to the 177 men of the Russalka, a Russian military ship that tragically sunk while en route to Helsinki in 1893. Created by famed Estonian sculptor A.H. Adamson, the monument has become a Tallinn landmark and a traditional spot for Russian couples to lay flowers on their wedding day.

Summer events

Venue abbreviations

CG Kadriorg Concert Grounds
FG Kadriorg Flower Garden
KP Kadriorg Palace
SP Kadriorg Swan Pond

August

Date	Time	Event	Venue
07	20:00	Muusa puudutus (Touched by a muse) - Laura, R.Tafenau band and S.Bastos	FG
14	18:00	Promenaad Kadriorus: Peeter Saul & concert orchestra, Hanna-Liina Vösa, Voldemar Kuslap & Boris Lehtlaan (vocals)	CG
15	20:00	Autumn Jazz - Liisi Koikson, Torsten Goods & Siim Aimla band	FG
21	18:00	Kadrioru Unplugged: Estonian Superstar 2007 - Birgit Öigemel (vocals)	FG
23	18:00	Academic Chamber music. R.Joost (vocals), I.Tarum (harpsichord), L.Meldere (baroque violin)	KP
25	19:30	C-Jam: four cellos - four rocking men	SP
25	20:00	Fireworks	CG
25	20:30	Timo Tammesalu - ballads accompanied by the piano	SP

Kumu G-5, Weizenbergi 34 / Valge 1, tel. 602 60 00 / 602 61 23, muuseum@ekm.ee, www.ekm.ee. Winning the title 'European Museum of the Year 2008', Estonia's largest art museum makes its home in this enormous, cutting-edge facility built into a limestone cliff in Kadriorg. It serves as both a national gallery, displaying treasured works from Estonia's past, and as a contemporary art gallery, showing the latest trends. While here, be sure to explore the fascinating complex, built by Finnish architect Pekka Vapaavuori. ▶ Open 11:00 - 18:00. Closed Mon. Admission to permanent exhibition 60kr, contemporary art 35kr, exhibitions in the Great Hall 50kr; all exhibitions 80kr.

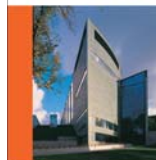
Peter The Great House Museum G-5, Mäekalda 2, tel. 601 31 36, peetri@linnamuseum.ee, www.linnamuseum.ee/peetrimaja. This humble little cottage's claim to fame is that this was where Russian Tsar Peter the Great stayed during his visits to Tallinn before his Kadriorg Palace was complete. In fact it's still filled with Peter's furniture, portraits and other artefacts from his interesting life. ▶ Open 11:00 - 19:00. Closed Mon. In September 11:00 - 19:00, closed Mon, Tue. Admission 15kr.

Mikkel Museum G-5, Weizenbergi 28, tel. 601 58 44, www.ekm.ee. Works by Dutch masters (including some Rembrandt sketches), a fascinating display of Russian icons and intricate Chinese porcelain make up the collection at this museum, located just across from the Palace. This was once the private collection of Johannes Mikkel, who donated it to the Estonian Art Museum in 1994. ▶ Open 10:00 - 17:00. Closed Mon. Admission 25kr. Joint ticket with Kadriorg Palace is 70kr.



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 Mikkel Museum:
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Where to Eat

Cantina Carramba G-5, Weizenbergi 20a, tel. 601 34 31, carramba@hot.ee, www.carramba.ee. Something this, well, Mexican is a surprise find out in the Kadriorg neighbourhood. One advantage Carramba has over its competitors, besides the inviting pueblo décor, is the spice level - Carramba doesn't skimp on the peppers, and even the otherwise innocent-looking rice is fiery. The enchiladas, burritos, fajitas, etc that make up the menu might not be up to expectations. Among the appetisers, go straight for the hot wings. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00, Sun 12:00 - 20:00. (155kr).

Kristjan & Kristiine Creperie G-4, Vase 14, tel. 644 84 62, ootsi@greperie.ee, www.greperie.ee. As with so many of the eateries in Kadriorg, this one is located just at the edge of the district. Like the name suggests, this family-run café specialises in crêpes and gallettes (salty crêpes). Here they make them according to time honoured traditions using a super-hot skillet and no oil of any kind. The resulting creations are healthy and scrumptious, especially if you like blue cheese, which seems to be a 'family favorite'. ▶ Open 12:00 - 22:00, Mon 17:00 - 22:00. Closed Sun. (85kr).

Lydia G-4, Koidula 13a, tel. 626 89 90, lydia@lydia.ee, www.lydia.ee. Hands down, the Kadriorg area's most formal dining is this plush restaurant named after Lydia Koidula, the matriarch of Estonian poetry. In the elegant, softly-lit dining area guests choose mains like salmon in mango puree or ostrich fillet with blackcurrant port wine sauce. The salmon and cheese soup, served in a bread bowl, was delish. Friendly, attentive service. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00, Sun 12:00 - 19:00. (240kr).



NOP - Organic shop and café Kõleri 1, tel. 603 22 70, info@nop.ee, www.nop.ee. Touted as an eco-friendly organic shop and café, this addition to the Kadriorg landscape is certainly fresh and trendy but somehow it lacks in authenticity. The food was nicely prepared and presented but we were left wondering which elements were truly organic and which were not. Even the shop had certain items for sale that were far from organic. We quite liked the place however, it just isn't completely what it claims to be. ▶ Open 08:00 - 20:00.

Park Café G-5, A. Weizenbergi 22, tel. 601 30 40, info@park-cafe.ee, www.park-cafe.ee. This picture perfect café located at the corner of Kadriorg Park's swan pond is the ideal place to while away an afternoon sipping on a cappuccino or nibbling on one of their mouthwatering cakes. During the winter you will find the Viennese style interior quite cosy and in the summer months you can watch all sorts of beautiful birds from the lovely tree-shaded patio. ▶ Open 10:00 - 20:00. Closed Mon.

Restoran & Spaghetteria Kadriorg G-5, Weizenbergi 18, tel. 601 36 36, info@restorankadriorg.ee, www.restorankadriorg.ee. This trendy, glass-covered cube of a restaurant fits perfectly with the poshness of its Kadriorg district surroundings. It's made up of two smartly decorated floors, one with giant forks slyly worked into the design. The menu stretches from cuttlefish spaghetti to stewed deer leg in wine. On our last visit, pasta was fairly good. ▶ Open 12:00 - 24:00, Sun 13:00 - 18:00. (300kr).

Tigu H-4, Vilmsi 45, tel. 56 66 84 93, tigukohvik@tigukohvik.ee, www.tigukohvik.ee. Set in a quaint little house on the edge of the charming Kadriorg district, this modest family-run establishment goes far beyond any other restaurant in its class. The atmosphere is laid back, the service is friendly and attentive and the cuisine takes you on a romantic journey to the Mediterranean. With an emphasis on fresh seafood and fish, the exquisite dishes and extensive wine list will make you want to linger. The Tigu, or 'snail' in English, is truly one of those hidden gems not to be missed, however its popularity with the locals pretty much guarantees the need to reserve well in advance. ▶ Open 17:00 - 22:00. Closed Mon, Sun. Closed until August 19 for summer holiday. (175kr).

Villa Thai G-4, J. Vilmsi 6, tel. 641 93 47, villathai@villathai.ee, www.villathai.ee. A well-established favourite in the Kadriorg district just outside the city centre, the Villa is a quiet, comfortable affair. Sit with the ceramic elephants and drapery of the dining room or head to the bamboo-filled atrium with its gurgling fountain. Interestingly, the menu goes well beyond Thailand, encompassing Vietnamese, Indonesian, Malaysian and Tandoor dishes. Some dishes are on the heavy side. We liked the fish cakes. ▶ Open 12:00 - 23:00. (165kr).



A bit further out from Kadriorg is another district that provides an escape from the downtown bustle - Pirita. The sprawling district is actually within Tallinn's boundaries, only a 10 - 15 minute ride from the city centre. When you get here though, you'd never believe you were in the same universe as the rest of Tallinn; suddenly you're surrounded by dense forest, fresh air and, best of all, the blissful sound of silence.

When most Tallinners think of Pirita, they think of the popular beach, which can get packed with thousands of bodies on any sunny weekend. But there's much more to Pirita.

The region has a history that goes back at least as far as the early 15th century, when the now-famous convent was founded on the banks of the Pirita River in the early 15th century. Pirita stayed fairly rural through the centuries, but after World War II, partitions of land were given out to Estonians to build homes on, and Pirita began to evolve into the residential district it is today. The 1980 Moscow Olympics also had a major impact on the region. When Pirita was to host the yachting events, image-conscious Soviet authorities built the entire coastal Pirita highway, the TV Tower, an extensive beach house and the Olympic Yachting Centre for the occasion.

For visitors though, Pirita's attraction is still its nature, recreation opportunities, some fascinating historic sights and a couple grand, Soviet relics. This time of year, a trip to Pirita is a must.

Getting there

Reaching Pirita from the centre is simple. Take bus No 1, 1A, 8, 34A, or 38 from underground stop at the Viru Centre. For the beach, convent or river area, get off at the Pirita stop, which is the first one after across the river.

Revolutionary real estate

Song Festival Grounds (Lauluväljak) F/G-5/6, Narva mnt. 95. Located directly between Kadriorg and Pirita, lies one of Estonia's most important pieces of real estate, the Song Festival Grounds. In June of 1988 these grounds played host to over 100,000 Estonians who raised their collective voices in songs of freedom that would ultimately lead to Estonia regaining her independence after more than 50 years of Soviet rule. Singing has always had an important place in the hearts of Estonians and the first song festival was held in Tartu back in 1869. Currently a Song Festival happens every couple of years, and still plays a huge part of the national identity. When there isn't a festival happening, the grounds host numerous other events and concerts. If you'd like to take a peek at the historic grounds and the massive bowl structure where the choirs sing, the park is open to the public without an admission fee during non-event times. At the top of the hill you will also see a large golden sculpture of Gustav Ernesaks, the famous conductor who also played a big role in the Singing Revolution. If you want to experience this phenomenon first hand, be sure not to miss the Night Song Festival being held here on Aug 19. See p. 13 for more details.

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What to See: beach/river area

Pirita Beach Without a doubt, Pirita's star attraction is its 3km-long, white sand beach. All the usual tanning, flirting, volleyball and other activity you'd find at any beach in the world you'll find here too. But Pirita's beach also has an extensive, park that fills the area between the highway and the beach itself. This densely forested area is criss-crossed by paved trails, and dotted with benches and children's playgrounds. On the south end of the beach, you can play mini-golf, and sometimes find a couple carnival-type activities. The Beach House itself is home to a bowling alley and a lounge café.

St. Bridget's Convent Ruins (Pirita klooster) Kloostri tee 9, tel. 605 50 44/58 17 35 60, lagle@osss.ee, www.pirita.klooster.ee. Rising up along the banks of the Pirita River, the spectacular ruins of this 15th-century convent make one of Tallinn's more fascinating historic sights. Founded in 1407 by the Bridgetine Order, the convent was unique in that it housed both monks and nuns. The convent crumbled in a siege by Ivan the Terrible in 1577 and its stones were later carted off to construction projects throughout Tallinn. What remains today are the towering Gothic gable and walls of the main hall, as well as some surrounding foundations and cellars. Take bus N°1, 8, 34A or 38 from Viru väljak to the Pirita stop. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00. In September 10:00 - 18:00. Admission 20kr.

Pirita River Boat Rental Kloostri tee 6a, tel. 621 21 05, www.bellmarine.ee. The Pirita River winds through the beautiful, marshy area behind the convent, creating some of the most striking scenery in Tallinn. The best way to explore this 500ha protected nature area is to take a leisurely trip down the river itself. On the riverbank, just north of the bridge, you'll see a shack labelled Paadilaenutus which rents out various types of boats. You can rent a canoe or a water bicycle (pedal boat) for 150kr/hr, or a rowboat for 200kr/hr. Don't forget to pack a picnic lunch! ▶ Open 10:00 - 22:00.

Tallinn Olympic Yachting Centre Regati pst. 1, tel. 639 88 00, www.piritatop.ee. The most prominent leftover of Pirita's Olympic past is its Olympic Yachting Centre, still an active part of life in Pirita. The imposing building itself, built for the 1980 Moscow Olympics, is a fascinating example of Soviet architecture. Nearby you can also see the stand for the Olympic flame, as well as the Olympic rings. A visit to the complex is worthwhile, even if just to stroll along the water, inspect the yachts, and have lunch in one of the outdoor cafés that operates here. Of course, you can also park your yacht here, if you happened to bring it with you.

What to See: Kloostrimetsa area

Tallinn Botanic Garden (Tallinna Botaanikaaed) Kloostrimetsa tee 52, tel. 606 26 66, aed@tba.ee, www.tba.ee. With the richest collection of live plants in Estonia, the gardens are a well-kept secret. Around 8,000 species are arranged on 123ha of land, with hothouse displays of tropical, subtropical and desert plants. Take bus N°34A or 38 to the Kloostrimetsa stop. ▶ Open 11:00 - 18:00. In September 11:00 - 16:00. Open air collections are open 11:00 - 19:00. Call 606 26 66 for tours. Admission 45kr.

Metsakalmistu Cemetery Kloostrimetsa tee 36, www.kalmistud.ee. Tallinn's most famous cemetery, Metsakalmistu was officially opened in 1939. Among its most famous permanent guests are Estonia's presidents Konstantin Päts and Lennart Meri, writers Lydia Koidula and Anton-Hansen Tammsaare, chess player Paul Keres, composer Raimond Valgre and singer Georg Ots. Even if you don't visit these celebrity graves, a stroll through the rest of the cemetery is still a fascinating and peaceful experience. Take bus N°34A or 38 to the Metsakalmistu or Pärnamäe stops.



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