

Estonia looks forward to hosting young foreign Estonians at language and culture camps next summer

2018 marks the centenary of the Republic of Estonia, and every Estonian living abroad is being invited to visit the country to celebrate its 100th birthday! Such a visit is one of the best gifts you could give the country. There are plenty of reasons to visit, with all sorts of events planned, including the Estonian language and culture summer camps run by the Integration Foundation (www.integratsioon.ee). We've been organising these camps since 2000.

We're happy to announce that with the support of the 'Estonia 100' project, more youngsters living abroad who have Estonian roots will get to take part in the language and culture camps being held in the country in 2018. The camps give people aged 13-18 who have an Estonian background but live outside of the country the chance to study Estonian, get to know local kids their age and learn more about Estonian culture. During the camps, the attendees play sports and go on excursions together and also get the opportunity to see some of the country's best sights. We want young Estonians living abroad to feel a connection with their homeland and the Estonian language.

The camps enable language practice in an Estonian language environment and encourage the kids to talk to Estonians their own age. They also forge a connection with the country, especially for those who want to come and study here or see their future as being linked to Estonia.

In summer 2018 there will be 5 camps, all of which are being held in an area of outstanding natural beauty:

- Camp 1: 25 June-5 July at Venevere Holiday Village
- Camp 2: 9-19 July at Venevere Holiday Village
- Camp 3: 23 July-2 August at Venevere Holiday Village
- Camp 4: 24 July-3 August at Sammuli Holiday Village
- Camp 5: 6-16 August at Venevere Holiday Village

Taking their language skills into account, we recommend that the youngsters choose their camp so that beginners attend Camp 1 or Camp 3, those with intermediate language skills attend Camp 2 or Camp 4 and those with advanced language skills attend Camp 5

The 2018 camps will be held in one of the most naturally beautiful parts of Estonia, at Venevere Holiday Centre (<http://venevere.ee>) and Sammuli (<http://www.sammuli.ee>) in Viljandi County.

The camps provide the following:

- an Estonian-language environment in which to communicate;
- an inviting setting suited to the age of the participants, with the rooms and space required for group activities, sport, catering and accommodation;
- facilities that meet all of the requirements set for camps, including hygiene, catering and accommodation conditions, fire safety, medical assistance, life guards, staff et al.;
- accommodation and three meals (breakfast, lunch and dinner) daily; and
- an opportunity for the attendees to maintain a bond with their parents, other family members or guardians.

It is important that those attending the camps are both interested and motivated in terms of studying Estonian and learning about the country's culture. The camps represent an excellent opportunity for youngsters who live outside of Estonia to take part in purposeful and well-organised language training, to communicate in a camp setting with their Estonian peers, to

participate in age-appropriate activities together, to play sports, to come up with their own activities, to find out about Estonia and its culture and to go on excursions.

Registration for the camps is open until 31.03.2018 on the website of the Integration Foundation <https://www.integratsioon.ee/keelelaagrisse-reg2018>.

If you would like your child to attend one of the camps, please provide us with their details. We will select the applicants to take part based on their Estonian skills, their motivation, how old they are, where they are from, how long they have lived outside of Estonia, whether they have attended camps previously and the travel costs involved.

This year you can apply to take part in two categories:

- 1) young people whose travel costs will be covered by their parents/guardians; or
- 2) young people whose travel costs will be partly or fully covered by the Integration Foundation.

Should the second category not be filled, the foundation will fill the remaining places with applicants from the first category. With this new approach we are looking to give youngsters who have already attended camps a chance at greater participation.

We are looking to offer more camp places for youngsters and to give those who have already attended a number of camps the chance for greater participation.

We will select the applicants to take part based on their Estonian skills, their motivation, how old they are, where they are from, how long they have lived outside of Estonia and the number of times they have attended camps before.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLYING

In order to register your interest in your child taking part in a camp:

- a) **fill in the registration form on the website of the Integration Foundation (<https://www.integratsioon.ee/keelelaagrisse-reg2018>); and**
- b) **write a short letter of motivation** (as part of the registration form).

The registration form requires the following details of the potential participant:

- Given name and surname (as they appear in the child's travel document) (select) and preferred means of travel (plane, train, ship) and point of departure (from which to reach Tallinn)
 - Date of birth
 - Gender
 - 1) return ticket
 - 2) one-way ticket to Estonia
 - 3) one-way ticket from Estonia
 - 4) none (will cover travel costs)
 - Place of residence (country/town or city/village)
 - Name and date of birth of parent/guardian
 - E-mail address:
 - 1) of parent/guardian
 - 2) of child
 - Telephone number (including country code):
 - 1) of parent/guardian
 - 2) of child
 - Information on Estonian origins of family members (mother/father/grandmother/grandfather etc. – names not required)
 - Visa requirements
 - Ticket needs to be purchased/compensated
- Choice of camps:
 - 1st camp: 25 June-5 July
 - 2nd camp: 9-19 July
 - 3rd camp: 23 July -2 August
 - 4rd camp: 24 July -3 August
 - 5rd camp: 6 August-16 August
 - Information on whether the child will come to Estonia:
 - 1) only to attend camp (indicate preferred camp); or
 - 2) for a longer period (indicate length

- of time to be spent in Estonia)
- The number of times the child has attended camps in the past
- The number of years the child has lived permanently outside of Estonia
- Important information on the health of the child (chronic allergies, medicines, doctor's prescriptions etc.)

As part of their application, each potential participant must **write a short letter of motivation** (around 3 paragraphs) entitled 'Why I want to attend a language camp in Estonia'. This should be written by the child themselves, preferably in Estonian. If the child does not know enough Estonian to be able to do so, the letter can be written in either Russian or English.

The Integration Foundation will inform the selected applicants by e-mail by 15 April. Parents/guardians will then be sent contracts which must be signed and returned to the foundation. Please note: a signed contract is the only guarantee of a place in a camp for your child.

COSTS AND OBLIGATIONS

- Participation in the camp is free for the child.
- The Integration Foundation enters into a contract/agreement with the parent/guardian which sets out key issues of liability and obligation for both the foundation and the parent/guardian.
- All children attending the camps must have health insurance that is valid in Estonia. Children coming from countries to the east (Russia, Ukraine, Belarus et al.) must have health insurance that is valid in the Schengen zone.
Please note: health insurance costs must be covered by the parent/guardian.
- Upon arrival at a camp the child must have a certificate of health issued in Estonian, Russian or English. A certificate issued in any other language must be accompanied by a translation in Estonian.
- Please note: **where possible** we shall cover the transport costs of children coming to the camps. Tickets shall be purchased if the children arrive in Estonia on the first day of the camp and leave the country on the last day of the camp. If the child wishes to stay with relatives in Estonia before or after the camp, a one-way ticket will be purchased for them for either the first or last day of the camp.

Support for the running of the camps is provided by the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education and Research via the 'Countrymen programme 2014-2020' and as part of the 'Estonia 100' project of the Government Office.

Wishing you all the best,

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