

Culinary History

Learning about Tallinn's history and enjoying a great meal is what *Food Sightseeing Estonia* is all about.

TEXT KRISTINA LUPP, PHOTOS KRISTINA LUPP

If you are like many modern day globetrotters, the average tourist group tour is not your thing. You would much rather wander around a new place on your own, while secretly trying to hide your guide book so as not to be spotted as a non-local. Or better yet, you'd like to meet some locals who could tell you what the locals do, and better yet, where they go to eat.

This is what Food Sightseeing Estonia is all about. Visitors get to tour the city with a local guide and stop at a few restaurants and cafés along the way, all while learning about Tallinn's cultural and culinary history. Paul Toots has been running the tours since March after learning about their popularity in the US. He decided to try

it for himself over here in Estonia. Having worked many years in the tourism industry, he assembled some of the best tour guides and sent them to Estonian culinary legend Dimitri Demjanov to learn about Estonian culinary history, and the current restaurant scene. Demjanov is one of the top chefs



Peke Eloranta tells us about Luscher & Matiesen's fascinating history.

in Estonia, and founder of the Culinary Institute of Estonia.

The Baltic Guide decided to try the *Tallinn of the Locals Dinner Tour*. This tour starts at 17.00 and includes stops at four different restaurants, as well as a pleasant walk through the Old Town – mostly for digestion.

First on the list: Fish & Wine. Here we got a taste of traditional Estonia with a bowl of fish soup. Delicately cooked fish in a light broth with dill certainly whet the appetite. Next, we walked down towards the historic Viru Gates and stopped in at the Vertigo café

for a glass of sparkling cider and some local snacks. Vertigo café's own preserves were served with traditional Estonian black bread that had been baked with nuts and dried fruit. After filling up it seemed impossible that we still had two more stops left in the tour. The next destination was on Toompea. This digestive walk came at just the right time in the tour. Luscher & Matiesen was the third stop. Here we listened to the tales of owner Peke Eloranta as he described the wines of this historical Tallinn cellar. It was difficult to leave this picturesque patio that

overlooked Tallinn's Old Town, but dinner was calling. Final stop: Musi. This wine bar/restaurant was a lovely end to a great tour. We had a choice of fish or rabbit for our main course paired with a glass of wine.

The tour was professional, yet casual at the same time. Everyone in the group got along very well and the atmosphere was that of an evening out with friends. ■

Food Sightseeing Estonia
www.foodsightseeing.ee

Perfection at Vihula Manor Country Club & Spa

Vihula Manor is an elegant and charming 16th century estate amid lush parklands, set alongside a romantic river in the Lahemaa National Park.

TEXT TOOMAS KÄBIN, PHOTOS KRISTINA LUPP

Tallinn is an hour away; the romantic coast is only 4 kilometres away.

Vihula Manor Country Club & Spa is a full service manor resort catering to the needs of the most demanding guests under the management of German Michael Stenner and his well motivated, professional team.

Just to give you an example of how efficiently things work around here: you have ordered a gala buffet for 100 people but – gosh – when the function begins

you realise that you forgot to order dessert! While the guests enjoy a delicious meal, chef Toomas Lääts prepares a wonderful fluffy cake that arrives just in time with no one the wiser!

Another example: all of a sudden conference guests realise that their technical equipment does not work. Minutes later the problem has been resolved by the knowledgeable and helpful staff! As we know, details make up the whole picture or as the saying goes, you can only leave a first impression once!

Vihula, like all other manors

in Estonia has changed ownership over the centuries. The oldest traces of Vihula go back to 1501 when it was in the hands of Danish baron Hans von Lode. Until ten years ago Vihula was in a sad state. Now it is like a shining star, it has been fully renovated and looking better than ever.

The interior is a perfect blend of traditional and daring modern. There is a clear touch of contemporary Scandinavian minimalism. It is an elegant and secluded estate, a perfect escape from the city and a supremely comfortable and luxurious place to stay. Whether



you are here on business, attending a family celebration or relaxing on holiday, Vihula takes care of your needs.

The conference facilities are excellent, weddings and family functions are popular. It is the perfect place for romantic weekends. The restaurant offers gourmet dining. The spa is there for those who want to relax.

The beautiful Lahemaa National Park is located beside Vihula, and offers many outdoor activities. No doubt, you feel rich and full of energy when you leave thanks to the impeccable service in an immaculate atmosphere.

Vihula Manor Country Club & Spa is located approximately 100 kilometres east of Tallinn and

slightly north of the main road to Narva/St Petersburg. ■
www.vihulamois.ee

Estonian Manor Tourism

In 1913, there were 1,245 manors in Estonia. These architectural pearls in the Estonian landscape have survived over time and carry the memory of the past. Most of the manor houses belonged to the Baltic-German nobility. During Soviet times they fell into decay. Today many have been carefully renovated and some are used as hotels and spas. The manors play a significant role in the Estonian cultural history and have influenced and shaped the Estonian society.

www.manor.ee