

A taste of

TALLINN

Savour the flavours of Estonia and beyond in Tallinn's increasingly-impressive food and restaurant scene

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Estonia's colourful, pocket-sized capital is fast becoming a culinary centre for food lovers. Restaurants specialising in a new, modern style of Estonian cooking are growing, and hotels, spas and manor houses with award-winning chefs and restaurants can easily be found.

There are also wonderful specialist food producers making chocolates, wines, beers and marzipan confectionery, and places to learn to cook, such as the Kõök Food Academy. Specialist and locally-produced food can be purchased from local growers and suppliers at the Rotermann Market in the trendy Rotermann Quarter, where old renovated industrial buildings rub shoulders with high-tech modern ones. Rotermann was also home to Estonia's first cheese festival, held earlier this year. Breti is a small cheese producer who has been making artisanal cheeses since 2004, and is the only producer of blue cheese in Estonia.

When it comes to the restaurants themselves, instead of formal dining rooms with white tablecloths, the trend is for modern, relaxed interiors and a comfortable dining experience. Traditional Estonian flavours (with a twist) and local produce are the centre of attention, with a lot of restaurants cooperating with small, local food producers, such as dairies.

The focus is on going back to classical cooking methods for inspiration and accentuating nostalgic flavours from the past – “grandma's cooking” – instead of modern styles of food, like molecular gastronomy.

Flavours of Estonia, a programme supporting the development of culinary skills and promoting Estonia as a “land of good food” →

(www.flavoursofestonia.com/eng/flavours) published a list in May of the top 50 Estonian restaurants for 2013, which was not only based on the quality of food, but also on service, atmosphere and the dining experience as a whole. At the moment, the list is in alphabetical order, but the full rankings will be published in November. You can find the list at: www.flavoursofestonia.com/eng/restaurants#2013

We've chosen a selection from the top 50 to show what Tallinn has to offer:

Fine dining

- **Chedi** (www.chedi.ee; *Old Town*): a restaurant offering a modern approach on Asian cuisine
- **Dominic** (www.restoran.ee; *Old Town*): A wine restaurant with a focus on European/French cuisine
- **Egoist** (www.egoist.ee) and **Gloria** (www.gloria.ee; *Old Town*), a restaurant with a long history and an extensive wine cellar, represent a classical approach to fine dining and are run by Dimitri Demjanov, a "grand old man" of Estonian restaurant culture and president of Bocuse d'Or (the world chefs' championship in Estonia)
- **Tchaikovsky** (www.telegraafhotel.com/restaurant-tchaikovsky; *Old Town*): From 2011 to 2012, French-Russian restaurant Tchaikovsky has been one of the top two Estonian restaurants, being the best restaurant in Tallinn
- **"Ö"** (www.restoran-o.ee; *Old Town*): This restaurant focuses on local products with a modern twist

Estonian cuisine

- **Aed** (www.vonkrahl.ee/toit/restoranaed; *Old Town*): Aed is a restaurant-café centred on healthy choices with a special focus on vegetarian dishes. There are also gluten-free, lactose-free and eggless options for vegetarians and non-vegetarians
- **Leib resto ja aed** (www.leibresto.ee; *Old Town*): Leib focuses on local produce and flavours. It is owned by probably the best food-wine pairing in town, sommelier Kristjan Peäske (winner of several Wine Spectator Awards of Excellence and the Baltic Sommelier Vana Tallinn Grand Prix) and the accomplished chef, Janno Lepik. It also has a fabulous garden
- **MEKK** (www.mekk.ee; *Old Town*): Expect modern Estonian cuisine with a focus on fresh and raw local ingredients. Their name, Mekk, has a double meaning; while being an abbreviation for their mission (modern Estonian cuisine – Moodne Eesti Köök), it also means taste

Others to try

- Tallinn has many good authentic Italian restaurants, for example, **Bocca** (www.bocca.ee, *Old Town*), **La Bottega** (www.labottega.ee, *Old Town*) and **Gianni** (www.gianni.ee; *city centre*)
- **F-Hoone** (www.facebook.com/pages/F-hoone/146165262101253; *Kalamaja*): This trendy bohemian bar-restaurant is located in a former factory building
- **Kolm Sibulat** (www.kolmsibulat.eu; *city centre*): The 'three onions' serves a mixture of flavours from all over the world and the restaurant is run by an accomplished team of chefs
- **Moon** (www.kohvikmoon.ee; *Kalamaja*): Fresh local food is served with a Russian twist by the same top-rated team as in Kolm Sibulat
- **Neikid** (www.neikid.ee; *Old Town/city centre*): This restaurant serves up Mediterranean cuisine
- **Salt** (www.facebook.com/Saltrestoran; *Kadriorg*): Bistro-style restaurant
- **Sesoon** (www.facebook.com/KohvikSesoon; *Kalamaja*): This new restaurant opened in Spring 2013 and serves seasonal dishes



PREVIOUS SPREAD. THE FABULOUS GARDEN AT LEIB RESTO JA AED
LEFT: LEIB IS OWNED BY THE BEST COMBINATION – A NOTED SOMMELIER AND A TOP CHEF
CLOCKWISE FROM BELOW LEFT: CLASSIC FINE DINING AT GLORIA; TRENDY F-HOONE IS LOCATED IN A FORMER FACTORY BUILDING; MEKK STANDS FOR MODERN ESTONIAN CUISINE – AND ALSO MEANS TASTE; TCHAIKOVSKY SERVES FRENCH-RUSSIAN CUISINE AND IS ONE OF ESTONIA'S TOP TWO RESTAURANTS OPPOSITE: TCHAIKOVSKY'S SALMON TRILOGY – PERFECTION ON A PLATE

