

OTEPÄÄ

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Winter 2009/Spring 2010

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Winter fun guide

More than just skiing

What's on?

Seasonal events

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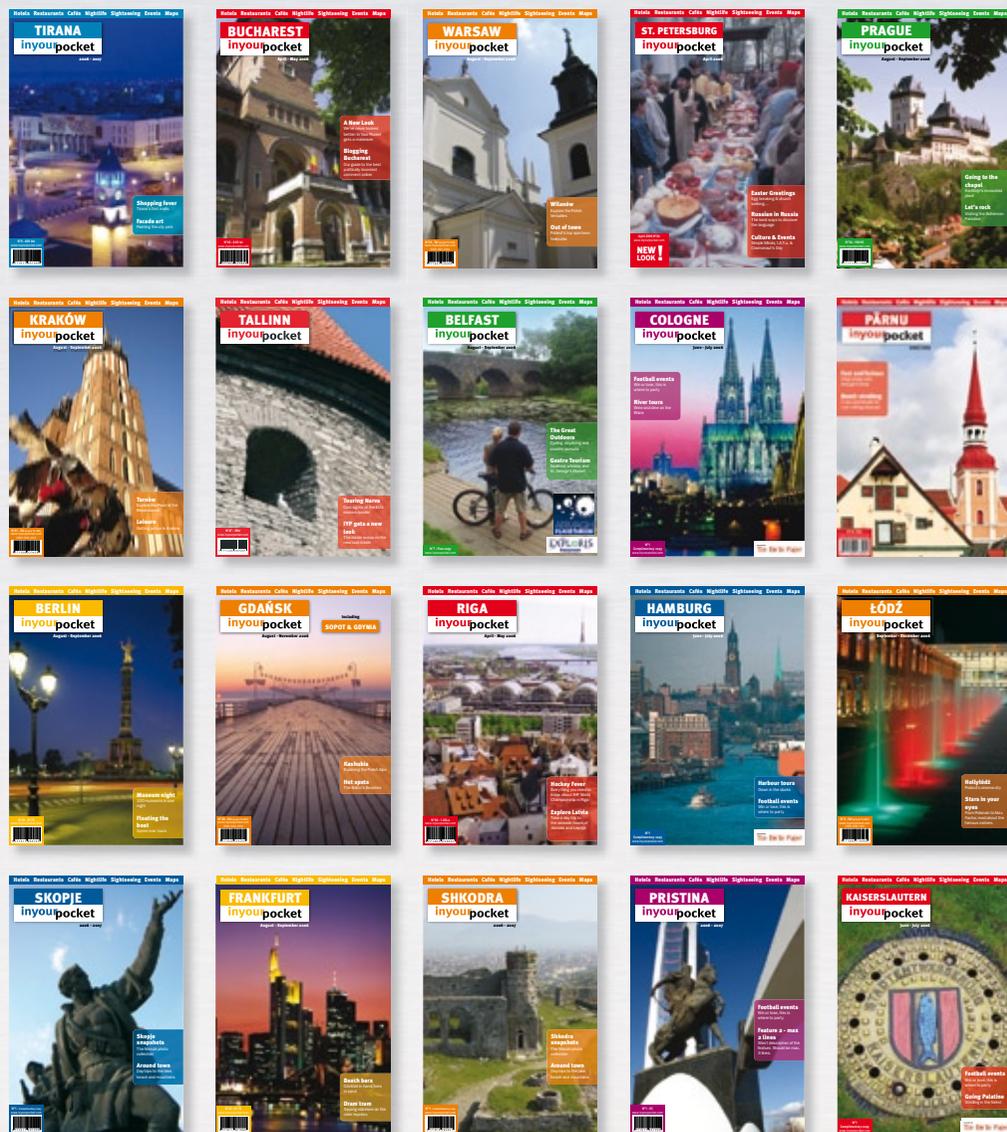
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ESSENTIAL CITY GUIDES

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Photo: Aldo Luud

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Nuustaku Holiday Homes. Photo: Marianne Aldur

For winter getaways in Estonia, there's only one name you need to know: Otepää. Officially dubbed Estonia's 'Winter Capital', this town of 3,925 is located 227 km southwest of Tallinn in the hilly corner of the country. That bit of geographical luck means Otepää is ringed with ski resorts – including the nation's only downhill ski resorts – and attracts thousands of skiers and snowboarders from around the Baltic region and beyond during its winter high season. Otepää is also the centre of annual international ski events such as the Tartu Marathon and the FIS Cross Country World Cup.

There's plenty to do here for non-skiers as well. Snowtubing, snowmobiling, sleigh rides and any other kind of snow-related activities are on offer. The town itself, with its historic church, smart hotels and quirky pubs, is the perfect place to relax with a cup of hot chocolate after an action-packed day. If your idea of a good time is a bit slower paced, you can book a relaxation package in one of the town's two health spas, or check into one of the area's countryside tourist farms to get a taste of rural hospitality and a first-hand glimpse of the nation's stunning, wintertime landscapes.

Whatever your agenda, you're bound to have a fantastic time in Otepää, and we've put together this first stand-alone *Otepää In Your Pocket* guide to help you make that happen. So turn the page and start planning your winter escape!

If you have any questions or comments feel free to write us at nsi@inyourpocket.com. If you want to get even more interactive be sure to check out our Facebook fanpage.

Cover story



The hills of Otepää are a haven for cross country skiers. This photo, taken in 2006, shows the trails of the Tehvandi ski centre and surrounding forests in all their wintry glory.

Photo by: Geoview OÜ

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Europe In Your Pocket



It has been another great year for *In Your Pocket*. We now publish a record **57 guides** and mini-guides across **22 European countries**. We print more than four million *In Your Pockets* annually. This year we launched new guides in **Maribor, Bled, Portoroz, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Brasov, Lviv and Odesa**. Next year you can expect to see **Venice, Vienna and Glasgow** - amongst others - *Pocketed*.

We welcome enquiries from anyone who would like to take part in our Pocket Revolution, starting up an IYP. Send us an email to publisher@inyourpocket.com. We also want to find out how we can make our guides better, so please take five minutes to complete our online survey at inyourpocket.com/survey.

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Editor's note

The editorial content of In Your Pocket guides is independent from paid-for advertising. Sponsored listings are clearly marked as such. We welcome all readers' comments and suggestions. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information at the time of going to press and assume no responsibility for changes and errors.

Otepää sits in the southeastern part of Estonia, 227km from Tallinn. Whatever mode of transport you use to get here, chances are you'll be using southern Estonia's largest city, Tartu, as a gateway. Once you reach Tartu, getting to Otepää is a snap.

Because so many activities and attractions are out of town, we highly recommend having your own set of wheels to get around. That said, with a little planning, it's completely feasible to arrive by bus and get to where you're going by foot or taxi.

By bus

The bus ride from Tallinn takes 4 to 4.5 hours. Though there is one direct bus each morning, the more convenient (and faster) routes from the capital involve an easy transfer in Tartu. Check www.bussreisid.ee or www.peatus.ee for the schedule details and for booking the tickets. You can buy a single ticket for the entire trip on one of the six daily routes, or assemble your own trip by hopping one of the three dozen daily buses to Tartu and catching the next bus to Otepää from there. The whole ride will cost you about 175kr. If you're already in Tartu, you'll find about 10 daily buses to Otepää. These take 45 minutes to an hour and cost 35 - 50kr. From Riga, you should take the daily Eurolines bus to Tartu and continue from there.

Otepää Bus Station Tartu mnt. 1. It's more of a bus stop than a proper station, but it's conveniently connected to the Otepää Visitors' Centre and an R-Kiosk shop.

By car

Travelling by car is by far the easiest and most convenient way to get to Otepää. From Tallinn, the trip to Otepää takes roughly 3 hours. When you reach Tartu, follow the signs to find the road to Valga. Otepää is another 43km south from here.

Tourist information

Otepää Tourist Information Centre I-2, Tartu mnt. 1, tel. (+372) 766 12 00, turism@otepaa.ee, www.otepaa.ee. Conveniently located right next to the bus station in the middle of town, the Tourist Information Centre can provide you with all the maps, info and advice you'll need about Otepää and the surrounding Valga county. Here you can also buy souvenirs, make photocopies and pay to use the internet. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:00, Sat 10:00 - 15:00. Closed Sun. Also stays open when major events are on.



By plane

Reaching Otepää from abroad just got easier thanks to the introduction of international flights to nearby Tartu. Check www.estonian-air.com and www.airbaltic.com for details on routes from Stockholm and Riga. If you're flying to Estonia from elsewhere though, chances are that you'll be landing in Tallinn (see *Tallinn In Your Pocket* for arrival details).

By train

Starting from January 2010 it will be possible to reach Otepää by train... almost. The nearest station is Palupera, 12km from Otepää. Estonia's passenger train operator Edelaraudtee will offer two connections from Tallinn to Palupera each day, one direct and one requiring a change in Tartu. The trip takes about 4 hours and costs 117kr. For schedules, see www.edel.ee.

Town layout

Getting your bearings in Otepää is fairly easy once you get to know its basic layout. Just about everything here including the Tourist Information Centre, the bus station, banks and food shops is built around Lipuväljak (Flag Square). The 'square' is actually almost triangular in shape, bordered by Tartu mnt., Valga mnt. and Lipuväljak tn.

The second built-up zone is about 1km southeast, in the more residential – and scenic – area around Pühajärve lake. From the centre, you reach it by heading out from the square along Pühajärve tee. This is where you'll find the large spa hotels and several more guesthouses.

It's important to remember though that many of the attractions, such as downhill ski resorts, are actually a few kilometres out of town. Most of these are at the south, reachable via Valga mnt.



View of Otepää. Photo: Geoview OÜ



Tehvandi ski jump tower.

Borders

Until 1998, Estonia stood staunchly by the conviction that its border with Russia was set by the Tartu Peace Treaty of 1920. In reality, however, border controls have been maintained along the line unilaterally set by Russia in 1991. Estonia and Russia initialled a border agreement on March 5, 1998, ceding the disputed territory to Russia and now that Estonia belongs to the European Union, its border with Russia is also the border between the EU and Russia. Schengen border zone - Estonia belongs to the Schengen visa area, which includes 22 EU countries, Norway and Iceland. It means that if you are travelling to Estonia from within the Schengen border control-free area, you will not be required to show any documentation when you arrive in Estonia, whether it be by ship, plane or by car. In fact you will not have to go through customs at all, but each individual country still maintains the right to perform intermittent checks. Of course if you arrive in Estonia from outside the Schengen zone you will still be required to show your passport or EU identity card if applicable. For more information on Schengen and how it might apply to your trip to Estonia, log on to the Estonian Foreign Ministry's website at www.vm.ee/eng.

Customs

European alcoholics rejoice! When you leave Estonia headed to another EU country, you can take out as much booze as you can carry (or convince inspectors is for your personal use). Coming into Estonia from another EU country, each individual aged 18 and over may carry in duty-free 90 litres of wine and 110 litres of beer and 10 litres of hard alcohol (over 21%alc/vol), 800 cigarettes, 400 cigarillos, 200 cigars and 1kg of pure tobacco. When leaving, beware of stricter tobacco restrictions if you're headed to the UK, Sweden or Finland. Relatively unlucky travellers from non-EU countries can carry in a measly 2 litres of wine (not exceeding €1.75EUR in combined value), 2 litres of beverages up to 21%alc/vol and 1 litre of hard alcohol; 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g pure tobacco. How much booze and smokes you can take home depends on your own country's restrictions. For more information, contact the Customs Department, Narva mnt. 9j, tel. 696 74 36/696 74 35, info@customs.ee, www.emta.ee.

Basic data

Otepää
Population: 3,925
Density: 18,05 inhabitants/km²

Estonia
Population: 1,299,371
Density: 30 inhabitants/km²
Ethnic composition: Estonians 67.9%, Russians 25.6%, Ukrainians 2.1%, Byelorussians 1.2%, Finns 0.9%, Others 2.3%
Territory: 45,227km²
Elevation: The highest point in Estonia (and the Baltics) is Suur Munamägi (318m) in Võru County
Islands: 1,521. The three largest are Saaremaa 2,673km², Hiiumaa 1,023km², and Muhu 206km²
Lakes: Lake Peipsi, on the Russian border, covers an area of 3,555km², of which 1,529km² is in Estonia. It also holds the title as the 4th largest lake in Europe.
Rivers: Estonia's longest rivers are the Võhandu 162km, Pärnu 144km, and Põltsamaa 135km.
Other cities: Tallinn 396,375, Narva 67,144, Kohtla-Järve 46,032, Pärnu 43,788.

Local time: Estonia is in the Eastern European Time Zone (GMT+2hrs). Summer time (GMT+3hrs) is in effect from the last Sunday of March until the last Sunday of October.

Distances

Otepää is 224km from Tallinn, 42km from Tartu, 165km from Pärnu and 52km from Valga by road.

Electricity

The electrical current is 220 volts AC, 50Hz. Sockets take the standard, round-pinned European plugs.

Ethnic groups

About 68% of Estonia's population is made up of ethnic Estonians, descendants of Finno-Ugric tribes that settled this area about 5,000 years ago. The largest minority in today's Estonia is by far the Russians, at roughly 26% of the national population. Along with Ukrainians and Byelorussians, thousands of Russians moved or were sent here during Soviet times, and chose to remain after independence. Though some integration is taking place among the younger generation, language and cultural barriers tend to keep Estonians and Russian-speakers apart.

Language

Confused? Join the crowd. Estonian is completely unrelated to Russian, Latvian, Swedish, German or any other Indo-European tongue. Along with Finnish and Hungarian, Estonian belongs to the Finno-Ugric group of languages, thought to have originated somewhere beyond the Urals thousands of years ago. Luckily, the younger generation and those in the tourist industry speak English. You can find some of the more essential words and phrases on the opposite page.

Money

The Estonian kroon (rhymes with 'tone') is pegged to the Euro at €1 to 15.65kr. Keep in mind that Euros are not legal currency here yet since Estonia won't join the common currency for several years to come. Paper bills come in denominations of 2, 5, 10, 25, 50, 100 and 500kr. ATMs operating on interna-

Key phrases

Hello	Tere
Goodbye	Head aega
Please	Palun
Thank you	Aitäh
Excuse me	Vabandust
Yes	Jah
No	Ei
Maybe	Võibolla
Zero	Null
One	Üks
Two	Kaks
Three	Kolm
Four	Neli
Five	Viis
Six	Kuus
Seven	Seitse
Eight	Kaheksa
Nine	Üheksa
Ten	Kümme
Hundred	Sada
Thousand	Tuhat
Push (on a door)	Lükka
Pull (on a door)	Tõmba
I would like...	Ma sooviksin...
Big	Suur
Small	Väike
Where is... ?	Kus asub...?
How much does ... cost?	Kui palju maksab...
Bon appetit!	Head isu!
One beer, please!	Palun üks õlu!
Cheers!	Terviseks!
Will you marry me?	Kas sa abielluks minuga?

tional systems are ever present. Credit cards are easy to use in Tartu - major hotels, most restaurants and a pretty much all downtown shops accept Visa, Mastercard and EC.

Religion

Some locals will tell you that Estonians are all tree-worshipping pagans at heart, but the truth is that this isn't a very religious country at all. There is no state religion, and according to the 2000 census, only 31.8% of the population claims any religious affiliation. Of those that do, about 180,000 are Lutheran and 170,000 Russian Orthodox.

National holidays

January 1	New Year's Day
February 24	Independence Day (1918)
April 02 (2010)	Good Friday
April 04 (2010)	Easter Sunday
May 1	May Day
June 23	Victory Day (1919 Battle of Võnnu - Cēsis)
June 24	St. John's Day (Midsummer)
August 20	Day of Restoration of Independence (1991)
December 24	Christmas Eve
December 25	Christmas Day
December 26	Boxing Day

Making the call

Calling an Otepää number To call an Otepää number from any phone in Estonia (including Estonian mobiles), just dial the 7-digit number as is. Because Estonian city codes were phased out in 2004, a few old-timers might quote you a 6-digit number. If this happens, just put a '7' on the front and, presto, you've got your 7-digit Otepää number!

Calling other phones in Estonia To call any Estonian number, fixed or mobile, from within the country, just dial the number as written.

International calls To call Estonia from abroad, dial your country's international access code, then Estonia's country code, +372, then the number. To phone abroad from Estonia, dial '00' then the country code and number.

Roaming If you've brought your mobile in from abroad and want to call a number in Estonia, you may have to dial Estonia's country code, +372, before continuing with the rest of the number.

Taxis

Otepää Taksoteenus tel. (+372) 507 12 56. 4-, 6- and 8-passenger vehicles. ▶ 25kr + 10-12kr/km.
Otepää Takso tel. (+372) 51 48 745. ▶ 25kr + 12kr/km.
Oti Takso tel. 1200/(+372) 516 44 55. ▶ 25kr + 12kr/km.



TAXI SERVICE

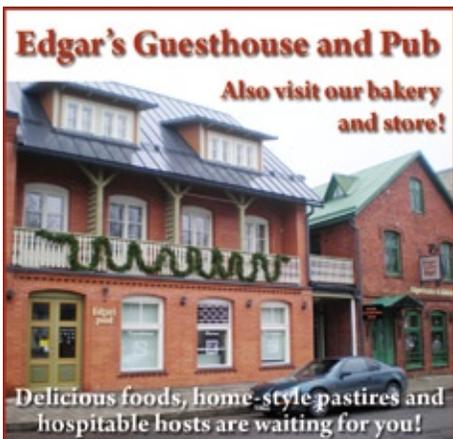
4- and 6-person vehicles

8-person vehicle on special order

RAIDO

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Lipuväljak 3
tel. (+372) 766 65 50/(+372) 53 43 47 05,
karnivoor@hot.ee, www.hot.ee/karnivoor

Mid-range

Edgari Guesthouse H-2, Lipuväljak 3, tel. (+372) 766 65 50/(+372) 53 43 47 05, karnivoor@hot.ee, www.hot.ee/karnivoor. Friendly, comfy and located right, smack in the middle of town, Edgar's place is always a good pick. Rooms come in a range of shapes and sizes, from small doubles that share shower and WC to four-person suites with kitchens or fireplaces. Conveniently, Edgar also has a little tavern and a food shop on the ground level. ▶ 10 rooms (singles 300kr, doubles 600kr, triples 900kr, suites 1600kr). Extra bed 150kr. Breakfast not included. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Hotel Lille H-2, Lille 6b, tel. (+372) 766 39 99/(+372) 511 81 70, info@lillehotel.ee, www.lillehotel.ee. The Lille is a small, friendly hotel located on a residential street right in the centre of town. In addition to decent rooms, each with its own shower/WC, it sports a nice, 4-person sauna and even has its own little bar for guests. ▶ 16 rooms (2 singles 600kr, 11 doubles 800kr, 2 triples 1000kr, 1 suite 1000kr). ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Hotel Murakas I-3, Valga mnt. 23a, tel. (+372) 731 14 10, fax (+372) 769 62 46, info@murakas.ee, www.murakas.ee. It may be on the small side, but the modern Murakas aims to provide rooms that are on par with its larger rivals. Each room comes with its own balcony and drying cupboard for wet clothes. ▶ 10 rooms (singles 475kr, doubles 650kr, triples 850kr). Extra bed 200kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Kesklinna Hotell H-2, Lipuväljak 11, tel. (+372) 765 50 95/(+372) 55 77 414, fax (+372) 766 12 29, info@kesklinnahotell.ee, www.kesklinnahotell.ee. The City Centre hotel has the obvious advantage of being right in the centre of the city. Rooms here come with minimal décor, but are modern, cheerful and comfy, and all have sat-TV. There's also a sauna/

Apartment for rent

Lumelinna Külaliskorter I-2, Munamäe 3, tel. (+372) 51 91 53 31, lumelinna@hot.ee, www.hot.ee/lumelinna. A central, three-bedroom apartment with kitchen. ▶ 2000 - 2500kr. ☎ ☎

fireplace room in the basement that can be rented separately. It doesn't have a constantly-staffed reception, so phone ahead. ▶ 11 rooms (300 - 1200kr). ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Marguse Holiday Centre I-4, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 767 96 50/(+372) 55 61 34 69, fax (+372) 767 96 51, info@marguse.ee, www.marguse.ee. A biggish establishment located just outside town, Marguse is something between a tourist farm and a sprawling, country hotel. Rooms come in 'hotel room' and 'guesthouse room' varieties, and the long list of amenities includes ski and bike rental, trout fishing and seminar rooms. Please note that the hotel was undergoing major renovation in Autumn 2009 but is scheduled to be open by the winter season. Room prices include morning sauna. ▶ 41 rooms (singles 500kr, doubles 750kr, triples 850kr, quads 1000kr, suites 1500 - 1800kr). Extra bed 250kr. Tent site (including sauna) 150kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Nuustaku Guesthouse G-4, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 56 68 58 88/(+372) 766 82 08, info@nuustaku.ee, www.nuustaku.ee. Anyone staying at the well appointed, nicely furnished rooms above the Nuustaku pub gets an extra bonus: a great location on a hill overlooking beautiful Pühajärvi lake. Every room has its own WC/shower and TV, and the more expensive of the suites has its own terrace. ▶ 8 rooms (6 doubles 450 - 750kr, 2 suites 800 - 1200kr). Extra bed 100kr. Pets 150kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Nuustaku Villa H-2, Pikk 41, tel. (+372) 53 67 66 66, kinnisvara@amina.ee, www.nuustaku.ee/villa. Owned by the same folks who run the Nuustaku Pub, this modern residential house has been divided up guesthouse-style. Slightly higher priced rooms come with their own saunas. For an extra fee, you can rent the 'party room' which includes fireplace lounge, sauna and kitchen. ▶ 10 rooms (doubles 600 - 1000kr, Family room 1500 - 1700kr). Breakfast 50kr. Extra bed 200kr. Pets 300kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Reede Villa H-2, Pühajärve tee 3, tel. (+372) 56 56 46 66, info@redevilla.ee, www.redevilla.ee. Occupying a prime location right in the middle of town, this stately art-nouveau villa is home to three tastefully-furnished apartments, each with its own kitchen, digital TV and WiFi. Conveniently the lower floor houses a beauty salon and a sports equipment rental office (skis, snowboards, bikes), so you can stay both beautiful and well-toned. ▶ 3 rooms (3 apartments 500 - 800kr). Extra bed 100kr. Breakfast not included. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Saaremäe Guesthouse G-3, Saare 6, tel. (+372) 766 99 99/(+372) 501 07 51, info@saaremaa.ee, www.saa-remaa.ee. This guesthouse makes its home in a non-descript, two-storey building that stretches along a quiet, residential street. Rooms are minimalist but cheerful, and there's also a little bar area, fireside lounge and a 25-person seminar room, in case you and your friends need a place to decide the fate of the planet. ▶ 11 rooms (10 doubles 600 - 800kr, 1 suite 1600kr). ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Saho Holiday House I-3, Valga mnt. 17, tel. (+372) 521 30 69, info@saho.ee, www.saho.ee. This residential house can be a good option for ski buffs. Not only is it just a couple hun-

dred metres from the Tehvandi ski centre, it also has a special 'ski maintenance room' on its ground floor. Rooms are spacious, all have their own WCs and most come with mini-kitchens. ▶ 5 rooms (3 doubles 450 - 800kr, 2 quads 900 - 1700kr). Extra bed 150 - 200kr. Whole house 3400 - 4500kr. ☎ ☎

Tehvandi Sports Center's Guesthouse I-3, Nüpli küla, tel. (+372) 766 95 00/(+372) 518 07 78, fax (+372) 766 95 03, tehvandi@tehvandi.ee, www.tehvandi.ee. Otepää's in-town ski centre makes its decent rooms available to athletes and non-athletes alike. Guests stay in the part of the complex, which has a definite back-in-the-USSR look, but the rooms themselves have been remodelled, and each has its own private entrance at the back. Because this is a sports centre, you can order a massage, buy energy bars and the like. And if you need to get used to high altitudes for your next ski competition, check into one of the specialised, low-oxygen 'Alpine rooms'. ▶ 42 rooms (21 singles 525kr, 14 doubles 700kr, 4 triples 925kr, 1 suite 2000kr, 2 Alpine oxygen rooms 1700kr). ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Valge Kroon Guesthouse G-4, Kolga tee 33, tel. (+372) 766 32 84, fax (+372) 600 88 50, info@valgekroon.ee, www.valgekroon.ee. There's no mistaking which house is the White Crown - it's the one built to look like a fairy tale castle, complete with towers and a cupid on the roof. Cinderella and Prince Charming will appreciate the immaculate, somewhat frilly rooms. There's also a 'Chocolate Bar' downstairs and a grillhouse out back. ▶ 4 rooms (singles 600 - 800kr, doubles 800 - 950kr, triples 1000 - 1150kr, suites 1350 - 1500kr). ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Villa Ottilia H-2, Oru 4, tel. (+372) 796 20 00/(+372) 53 48 72 33, reservation@villaottilia.ee, www.villaottilia.ee. A Finnish couple, with the help of their two dogs, runs this B&B-style establishment located in a quiet part of town, not too far from the centre. Rooms are brightly decorated in wood patterns, and share a WC/shower in the corridor. The room price comes with what's promised to be a 'large, tasty breakfast'. ▶ 4 rooms (2 doubles 800kr, 1 triple 1000kr, 1 quad 1100kr). Extra bed 100 - 150kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Out of Town

Here's a list of some of the more interesting out-of-town places to stay. The first ones listed are the ones we've visited ourselves, and we've also included basic information for a number of others. For even more countryside accommodation options, check out the tourist farms and rental cabins in the sections that follow.

Cantervilla Loss D-2, Pikajärve village, Valgjärve district, tel. (+372) 53 40 35 23/(+372) 509 61 48, info@cantervilla.ee, www.cantervilla.ee. Staying at this stunning, century-old manor house just outside town is like taking a trip back in time - albeit with WiFi available. The house and its grounds are a tourist attraction in their own right, a wonderful example of early-19th-century Art-Nouveau. Each room is unique, crammed with antiques, and many are individually named. There's even a 'ghost room' for guests who feel brave. A restaurant downstairs caters to guests, and in summer they can try the raft sauna on the adjacent pond. Find Cantervilla Loss 7km east of Otepää toward Põlva. ▶ 21 rooms (doubles 700 - 1000kr, suites 1350 - 2200kr). ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Kääriku Holiday and Sports Centre C-3, Kääriku, Otepää vald, tel. (+372) 766 56 00, fax (+372) 766 56 68, kaariku@ut.ee, www.kaariku.com. Don't be surprised if you find a lot of athletes out here in the Kääriku Centre, 11km from town. It's connected to the stadium where the famous Tartu Marathon starts. The hotel itself is straightforward and

institutional, with servicable rooms. It's roomy lobby comes with a pool table. ▶ 42 rooms (singles 660kr, doubles 990kr, 1 triple 1115kr, 9 quads 1300kr, 1 suite 1625kr). Extra bed 390kr. ☎ ☎

Kuutsemäe Resort C-3, Arula village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 90 07/(+372) 56 47 11 97, fax (+372) 767 14 08, info@kuutsemae.ee, www.kuutsemae.ee. Skiers who truly want to be where the action is can stay right at the area's best-developed downhill resort. There are spiffy, little guest rooms in the main lodge house, site of the vast, carved, wooden restaurant, pool table, sauna and jacuzzi. But families and groups should go for one of the seven spacious cabins next door. Each has its own kitchen, fireplace and sauna. ▶ 8 rooms (1 double 500 - 700kr, 3 triples 600 - 900kr, 4 quads 800 - 1200kr). 7 8-person cabins 2000 - 3200kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Sangaste Rukki Maja C-4, Sangaste, tel. (+372) 766 93 23/(+372) 523 76 37, info@rukkimaja.ee, www.rukkimaja.ee. A great place to indulge in a bit of small-town luxury is Sangaste, a town 22kr south of Otepää. Sangaste is known as the unofficial rye capital of Estonia, and this guesthouse above its Rye House restaurant offers new, smartly-decorated rooms. Management can organise activities like horse riding and skiing, some of which are part of their 'Romantic Package'. Contact them for details. ▶ 12 rooms (2 singles 450kr, 3 doubles 650kr, 7 triples 850kr). Extra bed 175kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Annimatsi Kämping C-2, Annimatsi, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 511 03 17, annimatsi.camp@mail.ee, www.hot.ee/annimatsi. A combination lodge/campground 4km south of Otepää towards Sihva. Bar and billiards in the main house. ▶ 21 rooms (doubles 200 - 300kr, triples 300 - 450kr, quads 400 - 600kr). Tent site 100kr. Breakfast 35kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Arula Guesthouse C-3, Arula village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 767 06 90/(+372) 516 86 55, info@arula.ee, www.arula.ee. A friendly, full-service guesthouse offering Irish cooking, located 11km south of Otepää, 0.5km from the Kuutsemäe ski resort. ▶ 13 rooms, 390kr/bed. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Greete Motell A-3, Soontaga, Puka district, tel. (+372) 767 00 66, fax (+372) 767 00 12, info@greete.ee, www.greete.ee. This 'motel' is actually a beautiful, wooden lodge offering plenty of cool activities for groups. Find it 9km west of Tõrva towards Sangaste. ▶ 20 rooms (singles 400kr, doubles 600 - 1000kr, triples 900kr, Family rooms 1600kr). Extra bed 200kr. Pets 150kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Ilmjärve Home Accommodation D-3, Tõusti village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 517 84 19, tulja.mononen@gmail.com, www.baltol.ee. Rooms in a private house on the shore of a lake, 14km south of Otepää. ▶ 4 rooms (singles 300kr, doubles 500kr, Family room 600 - 650kr). ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Kunstimäe Holiday Home C-3, Risttee village, Sangaste district, tel. (+372) 505 82 31, andres@kunstimae.ee, www.kunstimae.ee. A sprawling, country house 16km from Otepää towards Sangaste. ▶ 10 rooms, 275kr/bed. Tent site 60kr. ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Pohlametsa Holiday Home C-3, Pohlametsa farm, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 509 10 04/(+372) 766 90 11, info@pohlametsa.ee, www.pohlametsa.ee. Individual rooms in a quiet, country house, 5km south of Otepää on the road to Sihva. ▶ 5 double rooms (800kr first night, 400kr subsequent nights). ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎ ☎

Tourist farms & Holiday villages

Staying at a tourist farm can be a great option for those who want to save money and experience the Estonian countryside. These establishments are usually a cross between a rural B&B and a holiday camp. Most offer meals and sporty activities like sledding, hiking, canoeing and paintball.

Andu Holiday Centre C-2, Pedajamäe village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 501 34 35, andu@andu.ee, www.andu.ee. Rural accommodation, complete with paintball and other activities, 4km from Otepää towards Rõngu. Rooms are split between the 8-room 'big house' and the 5-room 'sauna house'. ▶ 13 rooms (singles 200kr, doubles 400kr, triples 550kr, quads 700kr). Extra bed 100kr. 3 caravan spots 200kr. 50 tent sites 50kr.

Järve Farm Holiday Home C-2, Järve farm, Arula village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 53 31 44 01, frants-seer@hot.ee, www.franz.ee. In addition to providing rural solitude, this farm also rents out ski equipment. Find it 10km from Otepää near Arula. ▶ 6-room cabin, 300kr/person. Breakfast 50kr. Whole house 4000 - 5000kr/night, 9000kr/weekend. Tent site 100kr.

Kevvai Turismitalu E-3, Hino village, Kanepi district, tel. (+372) 512 14 58, silna@kevvai.ee, www.kevvai.ee. A newly-renovated, lakeside venue with space for up to 50 guests. Near Kanepi, 20km southeast of Otepää. ▶ 350-400kr/bed, suite 1200kr. Caravan spot 150kr. Tent site 50kr/person.

Kiisatame Tourist Farm C-3, Restu village, Sangaste district, tel. (+372) 507 47 18/(+372) 505 13 79, info@kiisatame.ee, www.kiisatame.ee. This old-fashioned, 2-bedroom house is located 18km from Otepää towards Valga. ▶ 2 rooms (singles 400kr, doubles 500kr, triples 600kr). Extra bed 200kr. Whole house 800kr. Caravan spot 200kr. Tent site 25kr. Breakfast 50kr.

Leigo D-1, Lutike village, Palupera district, tel. (+372) 50 91 344, leigo@leigo.ee, www.leigo.ee. Though it's best known as the site of the classy Leigo Lake Music Festival in August, this tourist farm provides accommodation in idyllic surroundings all year round. It's popular for groups, who get to practice driving around in an armoured Soviet military vehicle and order hearty, Estonian meals in the ultraromantic fireplace hall. Non-group travellers, of course, are just as welcome. ▶ 29 rooms (doubles 600 - 700kr, suites 900 - 1000kr). Extra bed 195kr.

Lutsu Tourist Farm C-3, Arula village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 767 98 93/(+372) 521 86 53, talu@lutsu.ee, www.lutsu.ee. A comfy tourist farm, 12km from Otepää near Lutsu lake. ▶ 4 rooms, totalling 10 beds. 250 - 300kr/person.

Madsa Holiday Village C-2/3, Arula village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 767 96 56/(+372) 503 91 20, madsa@madsa.ee, www.madsa.ee. Find this big, sprawling tourist farm off in the woods, near the road from Sihva to Arula. Its rooms are spread out between five houses, which gives it a kind of holiday camp feel. Rooms come in 2-, 3- and 6-person sizes. The sporty minded will appreciate the 4 ski tracks (equipment rental available) or the football pitch, depending on the time of year. ▶ 17 rooms 180kr/person. 12-person cabin 3500kr.



Mesilinnu Saloon D-1, Nõuni village, Palupera district, tel. (+372) 526 86 70, mesilinnu@hot.ee, www.hot.ee/mesilinnu. Like something out of an old western, this rustic tourist farm has a saloon and even its own museum. Find it 10km north of Otepää towards Tartu. ▶ 7 rooms, 20 beds. 250kr/person.

Sokka Holiday and Recreation Centre D-3, Sokka farm, Viderike village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 53 05 56 66, urvel@sokka.ee, www.sokka.ee. An impressive variety of saunas and recreational activity can be found at Sokka, located 9km south of Otepää of the road to Sangaste. ▶ 12 rooms (singles 150 - 300kr, doubles 300 - 600kr, triples 450 - 900kr, quads 600 - 1200kr). Caravan spot 200kr. Tent site 75kr.

Uhtjärve Ürgoru Nõiarik (Uhtjärve Sorcerer's Kingdom) D-4, Uhtjärve, tel. (+372) 785 71 00/(+372) 53 33 22 53, info@noiarik.ee, www.noiarik.ee. If the Blair Witch ever decided to give up her evil ways and run a kids' holiday camp, it would look exactly like this. One of the most weird and wonderful tourist farms you'll ever come across, the Sorcerer's Kingdom is a collection of nine buildings, a lake, a pond, and a huge number of carved, wooden statues that give the whole place a storybook quality. Guests can stay in the main house, in wooden cabins of various sizes or even in tiny huts on chicken legs. Activities include sledding, skiing, skating, kayaking and canoeing, depending on the season and everyone who visits gets to try their hand at broomstick throwing. Find it east of Sangaste on the road to Võru. ▶ Rooms in main house or farm house 250kr/person. Sorcerer's hut for 2 people 500kr, 4 people 1000kr, sorcerer's suite 700kr.

Väike Trommi Turismitalu C-3, Märdi küla, Otepää vald, tel. (+372) 517 84 51/(+372) 766 74 25, www.trommi.ee. There's plenty to do at this spacious tourist farm set on a gentle hillside adjacent three small ponds. In addition to skating, sledding and snowtubing, you can ski to the nearby trail that's part of the Tartu Marathon track. The rooms are simple, rustic style and share baths. Breakfast can be ordered, but guests also have a kitchen at their disposal, as well as a very nice fireplace room. It's located 14km from Otepää off the road from Sihva to Sangaste. ▶ 15 rooms (4 singles 350kr, 11 doubles 700kr).

Veski Sports and Holiday Camp D-2, Piikuse village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 35 88, fax (+372) 744 84 06, info@tartusport.ee, www.tartusport.ee. Mainly used as a sports camp for kids, this lakeside tourist farm can also make for decent, budget accommodation during the winter months. It's located a mere 2km from town and there's a kitchen for guests' use. ▶ 15 rooms, 115kr/bed.

Rental houses/cabins

If you've got a big enough group, or just want a bit of privacy, renting a house or country cabin can be the way to go. Here's a list of rentals, which places in-town as well as way off in the sticks. Note that if you've got a large enough group, you can often also rent out entire tourist farms as well.

Annemäe Holiday Home C-3, Sihva village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 506 09 87/(+372) 56 66 09 87, info@veetee.ee, www.veetee.ee. An 8-person cabin 8km from Otepää, towards Kääriku. ▶ 2000 - 2500kr/night, not including VAT.

Kakulaane Holiday Centre C-4, Lauküla, Sangaste district, tel. (+372) 53 50 50 56, info@kakulaane.ee, www.kakulaane.ee. 25km on the road to Sangaste, this holiday centre consists of some little huts and cabins situated in the natural surroundings of the Estonian countryside. The larger house has a sauna and paintball is available when booked ahead of time. ▶ Log house with sauna for 25 persons costs 2000 - 2500kr.

Karu-Mati Holiday Homes I-3, Valga mnt 31, tel. (+372) 555 678 00/(+372) 6212 123, fax (+372) 638 13 13, pesorilind@hot.ee, www.pesorilind.ee. These two houses near the Tehvandi Ski Centre come with basic rooms, saunas, TV and fireplace. ▶ 2 houses, 30 beds (200 - 300kr/person).

Lili Holiday Home C-3, Arula village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 56 60 07 38, puhkemajalil@hot.ee, www.hot.ee/puhkemajalil. Perfect for skiers, this three-room house is located right next to the Kuutsemaja ski resort. ▶ 2000 - 3500kr/night.

Lombi Holiday Home D-2, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 565 25 96, fax (+372) 670 92 39, info@puhkemajad.ee, www.lombi.net. A picturesque, modern log cabin, 1.5km from the centre of town. ▶ 11-person cabin, 2000 - 3000kr/night. Pets 300kr.

Martini Holiday Home C-2, Martini farm, Pühajärve village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 505 55 45, argo-raid@gmail.com, www.otepaamaja.ee. A 2-bedroom house, 1km from the Pühajärve Spa Hotel. ▶ 2000kr/night.

Metsavana Holiday Home C-3, Iimjärve, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 505 68 29, olev@okoteh.ee, www.okoteh.ee. A comfortable, country house about 13km south of Otepää. Rooms rented individually. ▶ 5 rooms (singles 400kr, doubles 600kr, triples 800kr, quads 1000kr, apartments 1800kr).

Nuustaku Holiday Homes I-4, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 509 85 84, info@puhkusnuustakul.ee, www.puhkusnuustakul.ee. Three fully-equipped, fully furnished cabins, located 2km from Otepää on the road to Valga, next to the Väike-Munamägi ski resorts. ▶ 3 six-person houses 2000 - 3000kr.

Nuustaku Rantõ 9-2, Pridu, Pedajamäe küla, tel. (+372) 521 69 79, info@nuustakurantso.ee, www.nuustakurantso.ee. This amazingly refurbished stone ranch house, just outside town on the Palupera road, will accommodate 8 - 12 people. ▶ 4-room house 4000kr/day, 7500/weekend, 10500kr/week.

Paju Holiday Village (Paju Püheküla) C-2, Pühajärve village, Otepää vald, tel. (+372) 53 41 28 72/(+372) 765 59 43, paju.puhkemaja@mail.ee, www.freewebs.com/pajupuhkekula. A countryside rental with tasteful, wooden interiors, 3.4km from the centre of town. ▶ House with 4 beds (2 people 500kr, 3 people 750kr, 4 people 1000kr). Extra bed 150kr. Pets 50kr. Caravan spot 100kr. Tent site 50kr.

Palu Veski Guesthouse C-2, Miti village, Palupera district, tel. (+372) 58 02 12 86/(+372) 740 41 76, paluveski@paluveski.ee, www.paluveski.ee. Three houses for rent - a spacious main house, an old-fashioned mill house and a sauna house. 8km from Otepää towards Rõngu. ▶ 20-bed main house 6000kr, 10-bed mill house 1200 - 1500kr, 7- to 10-bed sauna house 2500 - 3500kr.

Partsilombi Holiday Home D-2, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 565 25 96, fax (+372) 670 92 39, info@puhkemajad.ee, www.puhkemajad.ee. This freshly-built log cabin has all the modern conveniences, as well as an easy location just 1.5km from the centre of town. ▶ 6-person cabin, 1000 - 1500kr/night. Pets 300kr.

Piikuse Holiday Home D-2, Piikuse village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 511 71 09, piikusepuhkemaja@hot.ee, www.hot.ee/piikusepuhkemaja. Up to 20 people can sleep in this rustic-style house 3km from town on the road to Kanepi. ▶ 5-bedroom house. 3500kr/night, 6000kr/weekend.

Saare Holiday Home C-3, Sihva village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 56 56 00 15, saare@email.ee. Seven comfortable rooms in a large country house, 6km from town. ▶ 7 rooms (singles 225kr, doubles 450kr, triples 675kr, quads 900kr). Tent site 50kr.

Sangaste Linnamäe Holiday Home C-3, Mäeküla, Sangaste District, tel. (+372) 58 37 71 70, info@sangastelinnus.eu, www.sangastelinnus.eu. This cottage is situated on the waterfront of a pond with floating bridge and has a slide straight into the water. We recommend not using the slide in winter though, unless of course you break the ice first. ▶ 15-person cabin, 3000kr/night.

Vidrike Holiday Home D-3, Truuta village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 502 44 44, vidrikepuhkemaja@hot.ee. Two houses for rent, about 10km south of Otepää, off the road to Sangaste. ▶ 13-room, 26-person house 15000kr. 3-room, 19-bed house 8000kr.

Villa Saska Holiday Home H-2, Kastolatsi tee 9, tel. (+372) 501 11 91/(+372) 509 2259, ressass@hot.ee, www.otepaa.net. This Villa features 4 double bedrooms, 4 bathrooms, complimentary sauna, outside wood heated hot tub and a luxurious living/dining room with open kitchen. As if that weren't enough, you can even enjoy an early morning cup of coffee on your private balcony - weather permitting. ▶ 5000kr/night.

Villa Veerpalu H-1, Põllu 12, tel. (+372) 506 46 11, www.veerpaluvilla.ee. Located 2km from the town centre, this beautifully-decorated, modern log house comes complete with everything you need, sauna and fireplace included. With its playground and winter skating pond, the villa is also a great option for families with kids. ▶ 3 rooms (6 beds). House rental 5000kr per first night and 3000kr for the following nights.

Otepää's small size means dining options here are limited, but that certainly doesn't mean you'll go hungry. Larger hotels and ski resorts have their own restaurants and the local pubs all double as places to get a filling meal. In the entries listed below, the price listed after the opening hours is a rough estimation of what a main course will cost you.

Restaurants

Bernhard Spa Hotell Restaurant H-4, Kolga tee 22a, tel. (+372) 766 96 00, hotell@bernhard.ee, www.bernhard.ee. For a relaxed meal with a lakeside view, the cheerful, little restaurant in the Bernhard is a worthy pick. Here you'll find a small selection of fillets, each with its own inventive, potato puree side. If there's room for desert, try the kama panna cotta with raspberry sauce. ▶ Open 13:00 - 22:00. (140kr). 

Karupesa Hotel Restaurant I-2, Tehvandi 1A, tel. (+372) 766 15 00/(+372) 506 45 28, karupesa@karupesa.ee, www.karupesa.ee. The Karupesa Hotel serves up decent meals in its casual-modern cellar restaurant. In addition to mains of the Oriental chicken and honey glazed pork variety, it also offers something most of its competitors don't: stew. That could be just the thing to hit the spot after a long day of outdoor play. It also has a fairly extensive kids' menu and dessert menu. ▶ (125kr). 

Merano Pizza Bar H-2, Tartu mnt. 1a, tel. (+372) 767 94 44, www.merano.ee. Central, comfy and open late, Otepää's one and only pizza joint is one of the most frequent stopping places for hungry visitors. About 20 kinds of pizzas are on offer, with the good-sized 'small' portions ranging from 60 - 85kr. ▶ Open 09:00 - 24:00, Fri 09:00 - 04:00, Sat 11:00 - 04:00, Sun 11:00 - 22:00. 

Pühajärve Restoran G-4, Tennisevälja 1, tel. (+372) 501 05 04, restoran@gmp.ee, www.clubhotel.ee. The latest addition to Otepää's dining scene, the GMP Clubhotel's brand new restaurant hadn't yet opened its doors when we visited in October. If it's anything like the rest of the hotel though, you can expect a trendy atmosphere and an emphasis on quality. ▶ Open 12:00 - 22:00, Fri, Sat 12:00 - 24:00. 

Pühajärve Spa Hotell Restaurant & Pub G-3, Pühajärve, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 55 00, fax (+372) 766 55 01, pjpk@pjpk.ee, www.pyhajjarve.com. The spa hotel opens its spiffy main restaurant to non-guests on Friday and Saturday evenings. This is a smart affair, complete with aquariums, where you can find sophisticated choices like grilled butterfish and glazed beef tenderloin. The rest of the time hungry visitors can head to roomy, brick-lined pub downstairs, which features pool tables, a menu of grilled fillets and an air of busy recreation. ▶ Restaurant open Fri, Sat 19:00 - 24:00. Pub open 11:00 - 23:00, Thu - Sat 11:00 - 01:00. (170kr). 

Tehvandi Sports Center Dining Hall I-3, Nüpli vil- lage, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 95 00/(+372) 76 69 504, fax (+372) 766 95 03, toitlustus@tehvandi.ee, www.tehvandi.ee. Designed with athletes in mind, Tehvandi's dining hall has a decidedly plain, no-nonsense feel. Still, it offers a menu that's right on par with the town's more elaborate eateries. The hearty, Estonian dishes served here come with inventive names like pig in an apple garden and calfboy's pockets. If you're economising, stop by for the low-priced 'day menu', served weekdays 12:00 - 14:00. ▶ Open 12:00 - 20:00. (90kr). 

Symbol key

 City centre location	 Facilities for disabled
 Child friendly	 Pets allowed
 Live music	 Take away
 Smoking area	 WiFi connection
 Fireplace	 Parking available
 Payment in cash only	

Cafés

Edgari Trahter H-2, Lipuväljak 3, tel. (+372) 53 43 47 05/(+372) 766 65 50, karnivoor@hotmail.ee, www.hot.ee/karnivoor. Cheap, inviting and right on the main square, Edgar's Tavern is a place you might find yourself going back to again and again during your stay. Its brick-and-fishnet motif and markerboard menu give it a relaxed, low-ley feel. Locals gather here to order simple, Estonian meals, mostly of the fried variety. It's also a good stopping place for morning omelettes and coffee. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00, Fri, Sat 09:00 - 20:00, Sun 10:00 - 19:00. (70kr). 

Pühajärve Spa Hotell Tower Café G-3, Pühajärve, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 55 00, fax (+372) 766 55 01, pjpk@pjpk.ee, www.pyhajjarve.com. If you're coming here, bring your camera! Sure, the café at the top of the Pühajärve Spa's tower serves fine desserts and drinks, but the real attraction is the spectacular, 360-degree view of the lake and surrounding countryside. The upper floor even has an outdoor terrace, a truly heavenly spot when the weather is agreeable. ▶ Open 12:00 - 20:00, Fri, Sat 12:00 - 23:00. 

Valge Kroon Šokolaadi Baar G-4, Kolga tee 33, tel. (+372) 766 32 84, fax (+372) 600 88 50, info@valgekroon.ee, www.valgekroon.ee. The little guesthouse that looks like a fairytale castle - Valge Kroon - is also home to a fairytale 'Chocolate Bar,' which is every bit as decadent as its name suggests. At this old-fashioned, beautifully decorated establishment, you can sample chocolate truffles, sip coffee or cognac and forget the rest of the world exists. ▶ Open 15:00 - 22:00. 

Out of Town

Pangodi Fish Restaurant D-1, Pangodi, tel. (+372) 741 18 40/(+372) 501 08 70, kalarestoran@kalarestoran.ee, www.kalarestoran.ee. Fish, fish and more fish - from the pan, oven, pot and grill - makes up the menu at this much-loved stopping place at the halfway point between Tartu and Otepää. In addition to old Estonian favorites like salmon and eel, the bright, modern establishment also offers harder-to-find choices like grilled Shark steak and mackerel. Also available are salads and pasta with, you guessed it, fish. ▶ Open 11:00 - 22:00. (115kr). 

Sangaste Rukki Maja (Rye House) C-4, Sangaste, tel. (+372) 766 93 23/(+372) 523 76 37, info@rukkimaja.ee, www.rukkimaja.ee. The historic Sangaste Rye House is the place to stop when visiting Sangaste Castle or exploring the countryside south of Otepää. With the feel of a homey, countryside pub, it builds on the town's reputation as the unofficial rye capital of Estonia by including a selection of rye-based dishes in its menu. You can try the rye cloud soup, chicken in a rye coat, and there's even a rye pizza for the kids. What's for dessert? Rye bread parfait, of course! ▶ Open 11:00 - 22:00. (80kr). 

Tammuri Farm C-2, Mäha village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 53 58 51 40, erki@tammuri.ee, www.tammuri.ee. Fine, gourmet dining in an old barn? That's exactly what's on offer at the Tammuri tourist farm, and the barn in question is one of the 19th-century property's beautifully restored structures. Picture a kind of rustic elegance. There's no set menu here - you tell the chef ahead of time what you want and he'll rise to the challenge. The farm also has a respectable wine cellar that offers over 100 vintages.

Nightclubs

Comeback I-2, Tartu mnt. 16, tel. (+372) 766 98 40, info@comeback.ee, www.comeback.ee. The more sophisticated of Otepää's two nightclub options, Comeback attracts a slightly older (read 20+) crowd. It's set out in one large, carpeted room filled with cushy, round booths that give it an air of relaxed partying. Expect danceable music and the occasional live band in winter. ▶ Open Fri, Sat 22:00 - 04:00. Closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun. Age requirement 18+. Admission 50 - 100kr. Free until 23:00 winter, until 24:00 other seasons. 

Help H-2, Lipuväljak 4, tel. (+372) 767 92 80, www.clubhelp.ee. Need a dose of high-energy clubbing? Help is here! Painted up in primary colours and occupying a collection of cellar rooms next to the main square, Help is where the town's 18- to 20-year-olds come to party. Here you'll find plenty of chill space, inexpensive drinks and a rotating DJ schedule. ▶ Open Fri, Sat 23:00 - 04:00. Closed Mon, Tue, Wed, Thu, Sun. Admission 50kr. Free during first and last hour. 

Pubs

Hermani Publi H-2, Lipuväljak 10, tel. (+372) 501 10 62, hermanipubi@gmail.com. After some refurbishment, this old-time Otepää classic should reopen its doors by the second half of December. It's known as a laid-back destination, decorated with ski memorabilia and the like. Expect an extensive food menu covering all the pub grub favourites, plus the occasional live band on weekends. ▶ Open 09:00 - 23:00, Fri, Sat 09:00 - 03:00. (73kr). 

Nuustaku G-4, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 82 10/(+372) 56 68 58 88, info@nuustaku.ee, www.nuustaku.ee. This lively pub overlooking lake Pühajärve is a popular stopping place for tourists. The menu features meat-and-potatoes type choices, some with clever names like the 'limping pig' (pork), as well as pastas and rice. Drop by on Saturday nights when bands come to play. ▶ Open 11:00 - 24:00. (135kr). 

Oti Publi I-2, Lipuväljak 26, tel. (+372) 766 98 40, info@otipubi.ee, www.otipubi.ee. This central, two-storey pub is the happening hangout in Otepää. Huddle into a booth with your friends, play a round of billiards or take a turn on the dance floor when the weekend DJs are on. There are even live acts in winter. The pub also serves some pretty good meals of the fillet and pasta variety. Meaty mains come in two sizes, catering to different levels of desire. ▶ Open 10:00 - 24:00. (95kr). 

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Sights in Otepää



Energy Column (Energiasammas) I-3, Mäe tn. Installed in 1992, this thick, wooden post along Mäe tänav marks the spot that local psychics determined was the best place to take advantage of the positive energy fields criss-crossing Otepää. Instructions for how to use the column and commune with the oak trees are detailed on a sign nearby. The metal bears that decorate the column come from a blacksmith's competition held in '93.

Estonian Flag Museum I-2, Kirikumõis, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 765 50 75/(+372) 512 70 02, otepa@eek.ee. Otepää is proud of its history as the birthplace where the Estonian flag, which was rather subversively consecrated here in 1884 by one of the bright lights of the National Awakening period, pastor Jakob Hurt. Of course, back then the blue, black and white was the Estonian University Student Union's flag, and only became the nation's flag in 1922. This small museum on the parish grounds just over the road from St. Mary's chronicles the flag's history, from its origins to its re-emergence at the end of the Soviet period. ▶ Open 11:00 - 16:00. Closed Mon, Sun.

Otepää Hillfort (Linnamägi) I-2, Across Valga mt., east of the town centre. The town traces its earliest history back to around the 7th or 8th century, when Estonians maintained a wooden stronghold on the 30m hilltop next to what's now the town centre. After Germanic crusaders finally seized control here in 1224, Bishop Hermann of Tartu replaced the original structure with a stone fortress, which stood until it was destroyed in 1396. Some of its foundations can still be seen, and are a must-see attraction for history buffs. Signs on the hill detail the hillfort's history and show outlines of its original floorplan.

Otepää Ski Museum I-2, tel. (+372) 766 36 70/(+372) 512 70 02, suusamuuseum@otepaa.ee. Otepää has been known as a centre for winter sports ever since the first ski competition was held here in 1929. This three-room museum, which you'll find in the same building as the Flag Museum, presents that history with displays of antique ski equipment, photos and the like. ▶ Open 11:00 - 16:00. Closed Mon, Sun.



Otepää Town Hall (I-2)

Sights around Otepää

The natural beauty of the hills, meadows and lakes that surround Otepää is something well worth seeing no matter what time of year it is. While exploring the area, visitors with cars can also visit some of the more interesting, nearby landmarks. Before heading out, make sure you have a good road atlas or GPS and a clear idea of your route.

Canterville Loss (Canterville Castle) D-2, Pikajärve village, Valgjärve district, tel. (+372) 53 40 35 23, info@canterville.ee, www.canterville.ee. This stunning, Art-Nouveau manor house was built by a wealthy Estonian family at the beginning of the last century and now operates as a hotel. Visitors can explore the scenic grounds, take a look



at the house's antique-filled interior and stop in for a bite at the café, which is open during the high season. To get here, head out on the road to Kanepi and look for the turn-off towards Pikajärve. It's about 7km from town.

Otepää defined



In an old, southern Estonian dialect, 'Otepää' means 'bear's head' (oti + pää). Historians' best guess is that the town's name originally referred to the bear-head-shaped Linnamägi hill, where locals maintained a fortress for several centuries before Germanic crusaders conquered it in the 1200s. A different school of thought ties the name to an ancient tribal leader.

Whatever the case, during your visit to Otepää you'll probably come across quite a few 'Oti' names, like Oti Pubi, Oti Takso and so on. Though these literally mean 'bear', the 'Oti' here is in fact simply shorthand for 'Otepää'.

Pühajärve War Oak C-2. Towering 22m high and measuring nearly 7m in diameter, this massive oak just past the Pühajärve Spa Hotel is an impressive sight. It gets its curious name from a peasant uprising that happened here in 1841, but the tree is much older, probably dating back 300 - 400 years.

St. Mary's Lutheran Church I-2, Just outside the town centre, on the road towards Võru, tel. (+372) 765 50 75, www.teelistekirikud.ekn.ee. This striking, neo-Gothic church on the northeast edge of town holds a key place in the hearts of Estonians - it was here in 1884 that the blue, black and white tricolour that would become their national flag was consecrated. The event is depicted in a 1930s-era bas-relief on the front of the church. Though it gets its present shape from a rebuilding in 1889 - 90, the church



has a history that goes back centuries. Try to catch a glimpse of the ornate, wood carved interior. In front of the church you'll find a memorial to the country's war for independence. The memorial was put up in 1929, destroyed by the Soviets, and restored in 1989.

Tehvandi Viewing Platform

I-3, tel. (+372) 504 97 83, info@seikluspark.ee, www.seikluspark.ee. From a lofty height of 218m above sea level, you can certainly see a lot of things, some of them quite interesting and others potentially scary. At any rate, if you do decide to climb all the way up this ski-jump tower you'll probably want to bring along your binoculars and a camera with a very large zoom - you know, just in case. ▶ Open Sat, Sun 12:00 - 17:00. Mon - Fri only on prior arrangement (10-person minimum or 250kr for a smaller group). NB! Hours may vary depending on season, see website for details. Admission: 25kr/20min if you use the stairs or 60kr/20min if you use the elevator. Discounted prices for students, seniors and the disabled. Binoculars can be rented and they also have a coin-operated telescope.

Hellenurme Water Mill C-1, Hellenurme, Palupera district, tel. (+372) 767 98 09/(+372) 520 51 42, www.hot.ee/hellenurmeveski. Phone ahead if you want to see this fascinating example of 19th engineering. Built in 1880, the water mill's historic function was to grind grain into flour, but it also produces electricity, which it sells to the national power grid. After the mill keeper turns a few cranks, the entire four floors of the building hum to life with the churning of belts and wheels. It also houses a collection of bric-a-brac from Estonia's first independence period, as well as curious leftovers from what was the mill office in Soviet times. Find it 15km northeast of town. Take the Palupera road, then turn north towards Hellenurme and Elva.

Sangaste Castle B-4, Lossiküla village, Sangaste district, tel. (+372) 767 93 00/(+372) 529 59 11, info@sangasteloss.ee, www.sangasteloss.ee. One of southern Estonia's architectural treasures, this rambling, brick 'castle' is a manor house built from 1874 to 1881 when the manor's last owner, Count Friedrich Georg Magnus von Berg, inherited the estate. He had it built with 99 rooms (only the Tsar was allowed to have 100 or more), and windows in each one are different. In Soviet times authorities noted the castle's cultural value, and duly turned it into a comb factory and a kids' holiday camp. Now it's run by a foundation and used for weddings and other events. A much-needed renovation project is slated for 2010, but visitors can drop in to marvel at the vaulted ceilings, arched doorways and the like. Drive south from Otepää, about 3km beyond Sangaste. ▶ Open 10:00 - 16:00; June - Aug Open 09:00 - 19:00. Admission 35kr.

Tamme-Lauri Oak D-4, Urvaste, Urvaste district. To get an idea of what this sprawling oak looks like, just take a peek into your wallet. This is the tree that adorns the back of the 10-kroon note. It's also the oldest tree in Estonia, dating back to 1326, and the largest, with a circumference of 8.25m. The oak gets its name from a fire spirit, Laurits, once thought to inhabit it, though he would have an uncomfortable time there nowadays - the hollow trunk has been filled with concrete to protect it. Leave Sangaste going east on the road to Võru, then turn north to Urvaste.

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Otepää's 'Winter Capital' designation comes from its role as a winter sports centre, with skiing and snowboarding being the biggest crowd draws. But there are other types of sporty adventure to be found in the area as well. Here's our list.

Cross-country skiing

Cross-country skiing is an extremely popular activity in Estonia, and there are a number of trails in the Otepää area. The most famous is the 63km Tartu Marathon track that runs from the Tehvandi stadium to the town of Elva. There's also a 10km track from the Pühajärve Spa Hotel to the Kääriku ski centre. For shorter, more manageable distances, try these:

Kääriku Resort and Sports Centre C-3, Kääriku village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 56 00, kaarikku@ut.ee, www.kaariku.com. Tracks start from the Kääriku ski stadium, a few kilometres outside town. Tracks are 1km, 2km, 3km, 5km, and 15/20 km. One 2 km track is lit for night skiing.

Tehvandi Sport Center I-3, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 95 00/(+372) 51 80 778, fax (+372) 766 95 03, tehvandi@tehvandi.ee, www.tehvandi.ee. There's a reason Tehvandi, the huge facility at the edge of town, calls itself 'Estonia's no.1 Ski Resort'. For cross-country skiing, this has always been the place to go - or at least since 1978 when it was founded as a training centre for the USSR's Olympic athletes. Nowadays it's still the key site for sports competitions and events like the Tartu Marathon. Families and tourists also come here to enjoy the facilities - which include a guesthouse, saunas, dining hall and fitness centre. T here are a lot of outdoor activities on offer throughout the year, but in winter it's the ski and hiking trails that are the main focus. Anyone can use the trails free of charge - pick up a map from the reception inside. Be warned though that the trails here are fairly tough. Artificial snow track 1 km, training and competition tracks 5 or 7,8 km and a hiking track 10 km.

Other activities

Bowling

Pühajärve Spa Hotell G-3, Pühajärve village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 55 00/(+372) 766 54 00, pjpk@pjpk.ee, www.pyhajarve.com. ▶ Open 17:00 - 23:00, Fri 17:00 - 24:00, Sat, Sun 12:00 - 24:00. Lanes 160 - 275kr/hr.

Canoeing

Yes, one can go canoeing in winter! Contact these guys for details.

Toonus Pluss, tel. (+372) 505 57 02/(+372) 767 9702, info@toonuspluss.ee, www.toonuspluss.ee.

VeeTee D-3, tel. (+372) 767 99 64/(+372) 506 09 87, toomas@veete.ee, www.veete.ee.

Winter Golf

Otepää Golf Club C-2, Maha Village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 56 20 01 15, info@otepaagolf.ee, www.otepaagolf.ee. If you're a golfer, try the winter variation of the sport and then brag to your friends back home. We recommend you phone ahead.

Downhill skiing/snowboarding

There's a very good reason all of the nation's ski resorts are in Otepää: this is in the only part of the country that actually has hills. Most ski centres use artificial snow when needed, which extends the season, but if you're planning your trip around visiting them, be sure to check local conditions before coming.

Ansomäe Ski Centre I-4, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 56 27 62 76. The most low-key of the area's downhill ski resorts, Ansomäe nevertheless offers eight slopes (measuring 280 - 470m), equipment rental, ski and snowboard lessons and snowtubing. ▶ Open 10:30 - 20:00, Sat, Sun 10:00 - 22:00. Lift tickets for adults: 150 - 200kr.

Kuutsemäe Resort C-3, Arula village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 90 07/(+372) 56 47 11 97, info@kuutsemae.ee, www.kuutsemae.ee. For downhill skiing and snowboarding, the area's most developed facility is this seven-slope resort on Kuutse hill, 14km outside Otepää. In addition to the action on the slopes, there's also a ski school, snowtubing for the kids, and a big, country-style tavern where you can sip hot-cocoa or satisfy your post-ski appetite with hearty meals. ▶ Open 11:00 - 20:00, Sat 10:00 - 21:00, Sun 10:00 - 18:00. Lift tickets for adults: 1hr 90 - 120kr, 3hrs 175 - 250kr, 6hrs 200 - 275kr, 1 day 220 - 300kr, 2 days 420kr.

Munakas I-4, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 520 56 11, info@munakas.ee, www.munakas.ee. Built on Väike Munamägi (Small Egg Hill) 2km from town, this respectable ski centre is run by the well-known slalom skier and instructor, Aare Tamme, who also uses it as a base for his ski school. Two slopes accommodate skiers and snow boarders. Equipment rental, food, lodging, etc is available. ▶ Open 12:00 - 21:00, Fri, Sat 10:00 - 21:00, Sun 10:00 - 18:00. Lift tickets: 1hr 100 - 125kr, 2hr 150 - 175kr, 4hr 200 - 225kr, day 225 - 275kr.

Ice Skating

A few hotels and tourist farms have places you can skate. For something more organised though, try this one:

Pühajärve Spa Hotell G-3, Pühajärve, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 55 88, pjpk@pjpk.ee, www.pyhajarve.com. The spa hotel's tennis courts operate as an ice rink in winter, complete with all the lights and music. It's free to use. Skate rental is 50kr.

Sleigh rides

Tobra Hobused D-3, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 766 74 78/(+372) 505 22 82, www.tobrahobused.ee. Ever wondered what it would be like to go dashing through the snow in a one-horse, open sleigh? Contact this horse farm located about 5 to 10-minutes drive south of Otepää to make those bells jingle.

Snowmobiling

Kuutsemäe Mootorkelkude Rendikeskus C-3, tel. (+372) 766 74 14/(+372) 507 46 22, info@saanikuur.ee, www.saanikuur.ee. Operating at the Kuutsemäe Resort, this company rents out snowmobiles, provides instruction and also organises guided snowmobile trips.

Paap Kõlar's Snowmobile Safaris I-4, Nüpli village, near Väike-Munamäe, tel. (+372) 56 25 10 15/(+372) 505 10 15, paap@paap.ee, www.paap.ee. Mr. Paap offers training, snowmobile safaris and even a 5-person, closed 'snowcab' that's pulled by a snowmobile.

Snowtubing

If you've never been snowtubing before, it's kind of like bum-skiing, but on a big cushion. For kids in particular, it's a great alternative to downhill skiing because it doesn't demand much in the way of training. Here are some places where you can try it for yourself:



Ansomäe snowtubing I-4, Nüpli village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 56 27 62 76, anso@hot.ee. Offering the longest tracks in the Baltics, you can 'bum' down a whopping 475m, in total on 3 slopes. ▶ Open 10:30 - 20:00, Sat, Sun 10:00 - 22:00. Mon - Fri 65kr/hr, Sat, Sun 120kr/hr.

Kääriku snowtubing C-3, tel. (+372) 515 14 04, info@mhl.ee, www.mhl.ee. 150 - 200m slopes. ▶ Open 12:00 - 18:00, Sat, Sun 11:00 - 18:00. Mon - Fri 50kr/hr, Sat, Sun 100kr/hr.

Otepää Snowtubing I-2, Town centre, just east of Valga mnt., tel. (+372) 56 26 11, info@snowtubing.ee, www.snowtubing.ee. Located in the heart of Otepää, this high-tech park has got everything from a children's slope for the smaller kiddies to a wonder carpet that takes you up the hill. ▶ Open 11:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 20:00, Sun 09:00 - 18:00. Mon - Fri 75kr/hr, Sat, Sun 150kr/hr. Discount for online pre-booking.

Sports equipment

Fan Sport tel. (+372) 507 75 37, info@fansport.ee, www.fansport.ee. Ski rental through Hotel Karupesa, Bernhard Spa Hotel and Pühajärve Spa Hotel (see p.9).

Hawaii Express H-2, Tartu mnt. 1a, tel. (+372) 53 33 36 29, otepaahawaii.ee, www.hawaii.ee. Sales and rental. ▶ Open 10:00 - 18:00, Sat 10:00 - 16:00. Closed Mon, Sun.

MHL-Sport C-3, Kääriku village, Otepää district, tel. (+372) 515 14 04/(+372) 766 56 44, info@mhl.ee, www.mhl.ee. Ski rental. ▶ Open 10:00 - 19:00. Closed Mon. Also at: **Pühajärve Spa Hotell, G-3, Pühajärve village, Otepää vald, tel. (+372) 766 55 58.** Open 08:00 - 20:00.

ReeDe Villa H-2, Pühajärve tee 3, tel. (+372) 508 73 32, info@reedevilla.ee, www.reedevilla.ee. Ski and snowboard rental. ▶ Open 09:00 - 20:00, Sat 09:00 - 21:00.

Sportland I-2, Valga mnt. 1B, tel. (+372) 766 34 17, www.sportland.ee. ▶ Open 10:00 - 19:00, Sat 10:00 - 17:00, Sun 10:00 - 15:00.

Suusabaas H-2, Pühajärve tee 3A, tel. (+372) 765 52 29/(+372) 56 22 10 03, otepaasuusabaas.ee, www.suusabaas.ee. Ski, snowboard and skate rental. ▶ Open 10:00 - 19:00, Sat 09:00 - 21:00, Sun 09:00 - 18:00.

VeeTee I-2, Valga mnt. põik 2, tel. (+372) 767 99 64/(+372) 506 09 87. Ski, snowboard, snow blade, snow deck rental. ▶ Open 10:00 - 20:00, Fri, Sat 10:00 - 21:00, Sun 10:00 - 18:00.

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Banks

SEB Lipuväljak 11, tel. (+372) 665 51 00, www.seb.ee. ▶ Open 09:00 - 16:00, Mon 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Swedbank Lipuväljak 4, tel. (+372) 631 03 10, www.swedbank.ee. ▶ Open 09:00 - 16:00, Mon 09:00 - 18:00. Closed Sat, Sun.

Beauty Salon

ReeDe Villa Pühajärve tee 3, tel. (+372) 766 36 06, info@redevilla.ee, www.redevilla.ee. ▶ Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 14:00. Closed Mon, Sun.

Food stores

Edgari Pood Lipuväljak 3, tel. (+372) 766 65 53. A small shop with pastries and basics. ▶ Open 08:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 15:00. Closed Sun.

Konsum Lipuväljak 28, tel. (+372) 766 19 80. ▶ Open 09:00 - 22:00.

Maxima Valga mnt. 1B, tel. (+372) 733 03 78. ▶ Open 08:00 - 22:00.

Pharmacies

Aptek 1 Lipuväljak 28, tel. (+372) 766 37 69. ▶ Open 09:00 - 19:00, Sun 09:00 - 16:00.

Post office

Eesti Post Lipuväljak 24, tel. (+372) 767 93 88, www.post.ee. ▶ Open 09:00 - 18:00, Sat 09:00 - 12:00. Closed Sun.

Public internet access

If you're travelling with your own laptop or handheld, you can easily access the internet via free wireless connections in the built-up areas of town. Many hotels, guest-houses and cafés provide this service (look for the WiFi symbol in our listings). To pay by the hour to use someone else's computer, these are your best bets:

Otepää City Library Lipuväljak 13, tel. (+372) 766 48 24, otepaa.raamatukogu@mail.ee. ▶ Open 11:00 - 19:00, Sun 12:00 - 16:00. Closed Fri, Sat.

Otepää Tourist Information Centre Tartu mnt. 1, tel. (+372) 766 12 00, turism@otepaa.ee, www.otepaa.ee. 15kr/15min, 30kr/30min, 45kr/hr. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:00, Sat 10:00 - 15:00. Closed Sun.

Public library

Otepää City Library Lipuväljak 13, tel. (+372) 766 48 24, otepaa.raamatukogu@mail.ee. ▶ Open 11:00 - 19:00, Sun 12:00 - 16:00. Closed Fri, Sat.

Souvenirs

Anni Butiik Pühajärve tee 2, tel. (+372) 765 54 23/(+372) 56 46 67 20. A selection of handicrafts and other souvenirs. ▶ Open 10:00 - 18:00, Sat 10:00 - 16:00. Closed Sun.

Otepää Tourist Information Centre Tartu mnt. 1, tel. (+372) 766 12 00, turism@otepaa.ee, www.otepaa.ee. Along with other services, the centre sells a respectable collection of souvenirs. ▶ Open 09:00 - 17:00, Sat 10:00 - 15:00. Closed Sun.







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