

3-Day Travel Itinerary for Estonia

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Introduction

My name is Mark Litwintschik. I'm a dual Canadian-British citizen and I first visited Estonia back in 2005. I used to do photography at Estonian cultural events in the UK and at the Estonian Embassy in London in the early 2010s. I've been resident here in Estonia fulltime since 2014.

I believe I've visited every major and minor settlement in Estonia over the 18 years I've known this country.

I made this guide to share the parts I most enjoy in Estonia and to challenge myself to creating a short travel guide, complete with maps using QGIS and a few other tools.

The guide is best used in the summer months but could be used in the winter without too many compromises. I won't recommend any pubs or clubs as Estonia's spas all have a liquor license and beautiful guests running around.

The points of interest in this guide are numbered in the order they should be visited as to minimise the number of taxi trips needed during your stay.

The last census in Estonia reported that the majority of the population here can speak English. If you do happen to come across a service worker that can't speak English, ask another customer to translate for you.

A note about Estonian addresses: at the end of each description there will be a <street name> or <place name> followed by a building number, postcode and town name. Copy and paste these as is into any ride sharing app or online map service.

Estonian addresses will drop the word for street 'Tänav' in an address so instead of seeing Pikk Tänav 16, 10123 Tallinn, it'll just be Pikk 16, 10123 Tallinn.

Estonians re-use street names in different neighbourhoods in Tallinn and every other settlement in the country (there are at least 60 Pikk Tänavs in Estonia) so make sure to either include the postcode or check on the map that it's pointing to the part of town you're interested in.

Day 1: Tallinn's Old Town, Kalamaja & Väike-Õismäe

1. Toompea Castle is one of the highest points in the Old Town so you'll only need to walk downhill from here. Estonian Parliament sits within the castle. Lossi plats 1a, 10137 Tallinn

2. Patkuli Viewing Platform can see much of the North-Western Old Town, Kalamaja and Tallinn Bay. The islands of Naissaar and Aegna can be seen off in the distance. Rahukohtu 5, 10130 Tallinn

3. Kohtuotsa Viewing Platform faces East and can see almost all of the lower Old Town with Viru Hotel and the central business district off in the distance. Kohtu 12, 10130 Tallinn

4. St. Nicholas' Church and Museum has had an elevator installed in recent years and has an up-close view of Alexander Nevsky Cathedral as well distinctive views of the rest of the Old Town. St. Olaf's Church doesn't have an elevator and its claustrophobic stone staircase has left my legs tired for days on end every time I've walked up it. Niguliste 3, 10146 Tallinn

5. Cafe Maiasmokk has been running for 159 years making it 7 years older than Germany and 3 years younger than Italy. It's the oldest cafe still operating in Estonia. Pikk 16, 10123 Tallinn

6. Olde Hansa has probably sold me a million euros worth of food and drink over the past 18 years. Every floor of the building is unique and staff normally won't complain if you wonder around. They don't use ingredients that weren't available in the 15th century in this part of the world so

no noodles, fries, Fanta, burgers, spaghetti, fried chicken, hot sauce, ketchup, bubble tea or ice cream. This is the most distinctive restaurant in the Baltics. Few other establishments have a translation of their menu in Japanese. Vana turg 1, 10140 Tallinn

7. Must Puudel was probably the trendiest cafe and lounge in Tallinn when it was on Mürivahe street. The Estonian President ate dinner a table away from me there once in 2014. I haven't been to its new location but the Old Town doesn't have a lot of great coffee shops. This one is right next to Olde Hansa and should be fine. Kuninga 4, 10146 Tallinn

8. Balti Jaama Turg (Market) had a huge renovation a few years ago and has one of the best concentrations of small restaurants and a bunch of souvenir shopping upstairs. This part of town used to be rough as nails back in the day but the hipsters saw an end to that. Kopli 1, 10412 Tallinn

9. The Seaplane Harbour Museum has a large collection of ships and even Estonia's first submarine. Tons of dramatic lighting, interactive displays and loads of pieces telling Estonia's nautical history. The whole coastline outside has been turned into a fantastic promenade in what was an off-limits area to non-military personnel during the Soviet occupation. Vesilennuki 6, 10145 Tallinn

10. The KGB Museum is on the top floor of the Viru Hotel. This floor had restricted access during the 1970s and 80s as secret

agents would spy on guests inside the hotel. The language guests spoke dictated the floor in the hotel they stayed on as each floor was wired to agents fluent in that language. There is a cafe and lookout just behind the "Hotell Viru" sign at the top of the building. The building is also attached to a mall; the supermarket on the bottom floor is fantastic. Viru väljak 4, 10111 Tallinn

11. Stroomi Beach has a lot of nearby forest and parks. There are well-maintained paths that will take you all the way to the Open Air Museum and beyond. Pelguranna 57, 10316 Tallinn

12. The Estonian Open Air Museum is the size of a small village and has buildings from every major construction period in Estonia over the past few hundred years. Lots of windmills, the coastline is accessible, they have horse-drawn carriage rides and they're dog-friendly. My wife used to work in the restaurant years ago. Vabaõhumuuseumi tee 12, 13521 Tallinn

13. Puri Restaurant is recommended by the 2023 Michelin Guide. From every table in the restaurant, you can see Kakumäe Harbour and Kopli Bay. The bread they serve is amazing. Nooda tee 8, 13516 Tallinn

14. F-Hoone is a good choice if Puri is too expensive. Telliskivi 60a, 10412 Tallinn

15. Ring Spa & Sauna opened up in the last year or so. Expect to eat and drink a lot while you're there. The architecture of the neighbourhood is the stuff of nightmares but I've never had any security issues there. Õismäe tee 130, 13513 Tallinn

16. Metropol Spa Hotel has a new spa area for anyone not tough enough for Ring Spa. Tons of hot tubs and saunas. Every single guest spoke English when I visited. Roseni 9, 10111 Tallinn

Day 2: Kadriorg, Pirita and Rotermann

17. Rukis is one of the best places for breakfast in the Old Town. It's rare for an Estonian business to open before 10AM so breakfast cafes are few and far between. Viru tänav 11, 10140 Tallinn

18. The Estonian Art Museum "KUMU" is one of the largest art museums in Northern Europe. Each floor is distinctive. The museum is situated in Kadriorg park across the street from the President's Office. The cafe on the ground floor is really good. Valge 1, 10127 Tallinn

19. Oko is a fairly fancy restaurant on Haabneeme Beach. It's a few years old and popular both in the summer and winter. There are three floors but I've only ever seen the first floor and the outdoor seating area open to walk-ins. They place sofas on the beach in the summer. This place is slightly cheaper than Noa which I discuss later on in this guide. Kesk tee 27, 74001 Haabneeme

20. Kohvik Haabneeme is a good choice if Oko is too expensive. The 1990s never ended here. Food is really tasty and filling. I would say it's proper Estonian food but I doubt many Estonians put this much effort into their home cooking. The menu changes daily and is handwritten in chalk on a board. I can't recall meeting any English-speaking staff in all the years I've eaten here so ask one of the customers to

translate the menu and convey your order to the staff. The entrance is right next to the automatic doors for the supermarket. Rohuneeme tee 32, 74001 Haabneeme

21. Tallinn TV Tower played a critical role during the collapse of the Soviet occupation in Estonia. I won't get into politics in this guide but this place is more than just a tall tower in the forest. You can see Helsinki a bit on clear days. Kloostrimetsa tee 58a, 15026 Tallinn

22. The Film Museum is on a compound with a large playground and some decent restaurants and cafes. Any film the Estonians make about World War 2, the Cold War or personal tragedy is usually really well done. Pirita tee 56, 12011 Tallinn

23. The Tallinn Song Festival Grounds (Lauluväljak) is popular for carnivals, concerts and festivals in the summer and is used as a free tobogganing hill in the winter. There's a great view of the sea from the top of the hill. Robbie Williams made a concert DVD here in 2014. Narva mnt 95, 10127 Tallinn

24. Pirita Beach, the neighbouring forest, the Yacht Harbour and nearby nature area on the other side of Pirita Tee are great for wondering around. There is an R-Kiosk at the very southern end that sells cheap drinks and snacks as does the Rimi supermarket on the other side of Pirita Tee. Merivälja tee 33, 11911 Tallinn

25. Noa was named the best restaurant in Estonia a few years back and was the first in Estonia to earn a Michelin Star. It's rare for those stars to be handed out in this part of Europe so it was huge news here when it happened. The waiting staff will

help you put your coat back on after the end of your meal and they probably have the best view of Tallinn of any restaurant I know of. Ranna tee 3, 12112 Tallinn

26. Thai Lotus Spa has a large number of masseuses from Thailand. It's best to book an appointment the day before you want to visit and make sure you get a confirmation email back. Sometimes you can just walk in as well but it seems less and less likely they have staff available at the drop of a hat these days. Mere pst 4B, 10111 Tallinn

27. Apollo Kino Coca-Cola Plaza has some of the best sound systems of any cinema in Northern Europe. They also have luxury rooms where there is dedicated bar staff and reclining chairs. Most Hollywood films will be shown here with the original English audio and Estonian and Russian subtitles. The yearly "Black Nights" Film Festival shows a good chunk of their films here. Hobujaama 5, 10151 Tallinn

Day 3: Viimsi & Prangli

28. Viimsi Lyon Café & Boulangerie has a french-inspired menu and is probably the best place to eat breakfast in Viimsi. I've seen a number of Estonian celebrities eating here over the year. Staff are kind and friendly. If you're going to Prangli Island, buy some snacks for the boat rides at one of the four big supermarkets next to this cafe. Paadi tee 3, 74001 Haabneeme

29. Viimsi Karulaugu Haabneeme Terviserada is a hiking trail across the road from Lyon Café. Towards the northern end of the trail there is a new culture centre and ski hill. They're clearing out some of the trees to make the cave near

the northern exit of the trail more accessible. Karulaugu tee 9, 74001 Haabneeme

30. Kreegi Tee is a trail that runs north-south through Krillimäe Forest. Walking through here reminds me of being back in Canada. From October till May is when the fewest bugs are around. It might be icy in winter as the trees block a lot of sunlight. Plenty of deer running around during spring and autumn. Nurme põik 29, 74001 Haabneeme

31. Rohuneeme raketibaasi tuumalõhkepeade hoidla was a Soviet-era S-75 and S-300 rocket storage facility hidden inside of Rohuneeme forest. It's empty today and the surrounding area is now popular with hikers and cross-country skiers. Kalmistu tee 18, 74012 Rohuneeme is about 500 meters north of the disused military area.

32. Kelvingi Beach has a playground, small concert area, sports facilities and a small harbour. The forest nearby is great for exploring. Prangli Island can be seen from the shoreline. Eha tee 51, 74018 Kelvingi.

33. Leppneeme Sadama is a harbour that has ferry services to and from Prangli Island. This place is probably as far as you can get from any shops in Viimsi. Coop on Rohuneeme tee 96, 74013 Püünsi is probably the closest but you'll most likely need to use a ride sharing service like Bolt to get a taxi there. The harbour's address is Leppneeme Sadama tee, 74009 Leppneeme

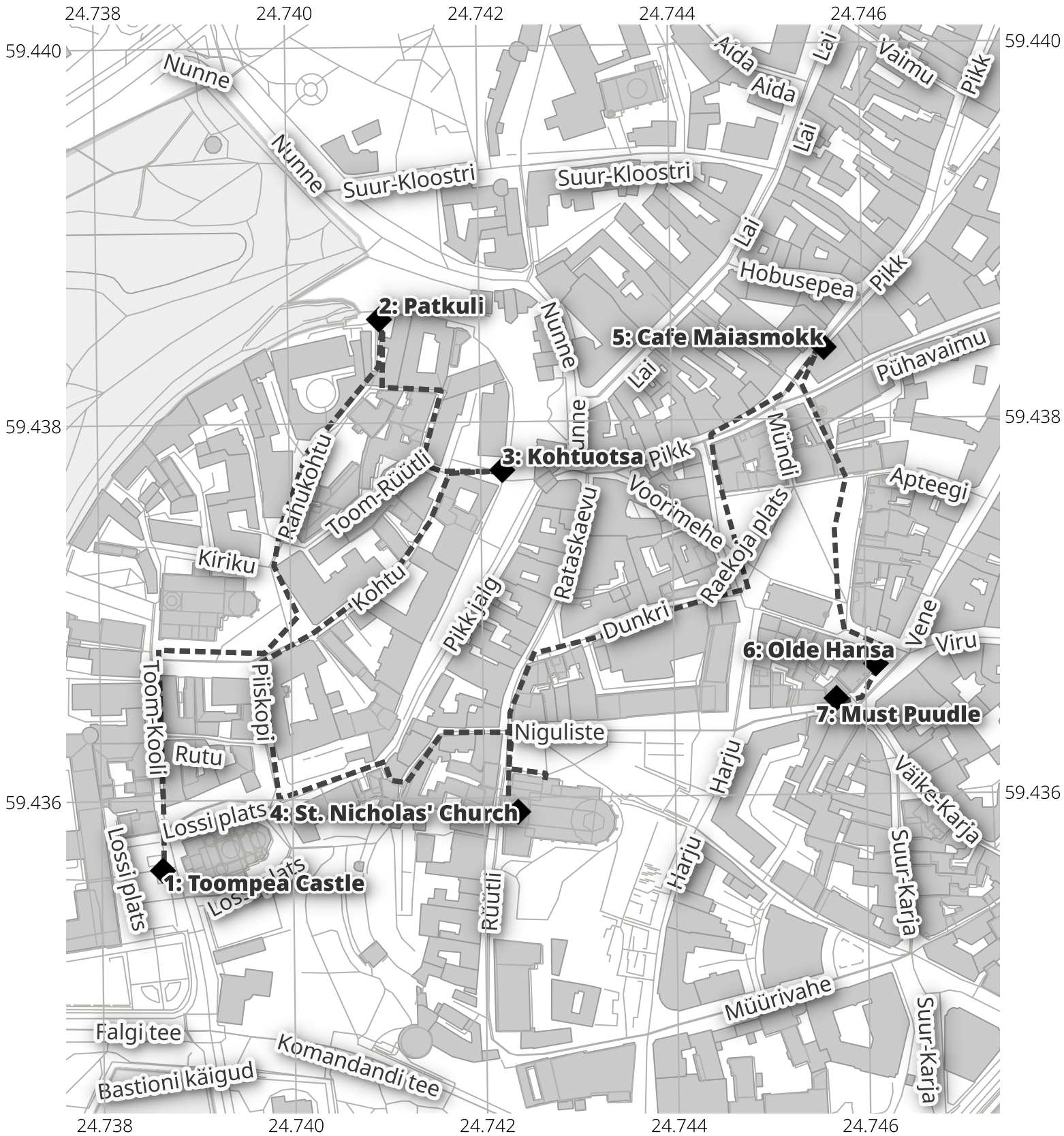
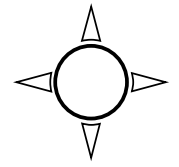
34. Prangli Island can be easily explored on foot. There are a few shops, a school, lots of beaches, forest trails and a few people working away in the harbour that might be able to help you out. A lot of Estonian families have had at least one kid go work or study abroad so these places, as remote as they are, still have a lot of fluent English speakers around.

35. Pandju Island is accessible on foot when the tide has gone out in the evenings. If you decided to not go to Prangli then this is your chance to visit an Estonian island during your stay. You can see a lovely view of Tallinn off in the distance. Rohuneeme tee 96, 74013 Püünsi

36. Tallinn Viimsi SPA and Waterpark has three different spas under one roof. The first has a pool for doing laps, a relaxation pool with occasional rain showers and ~7 different saunas. The second spa is for people aged 21 and over and has two floors with several pools and saunas. The third area is a water park with five different slides and a huge communal hot tub. The Estonians do a really good job with their spas. Randvere tee 11, 74001 Haabneeme

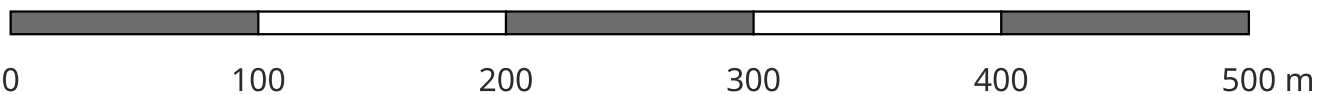
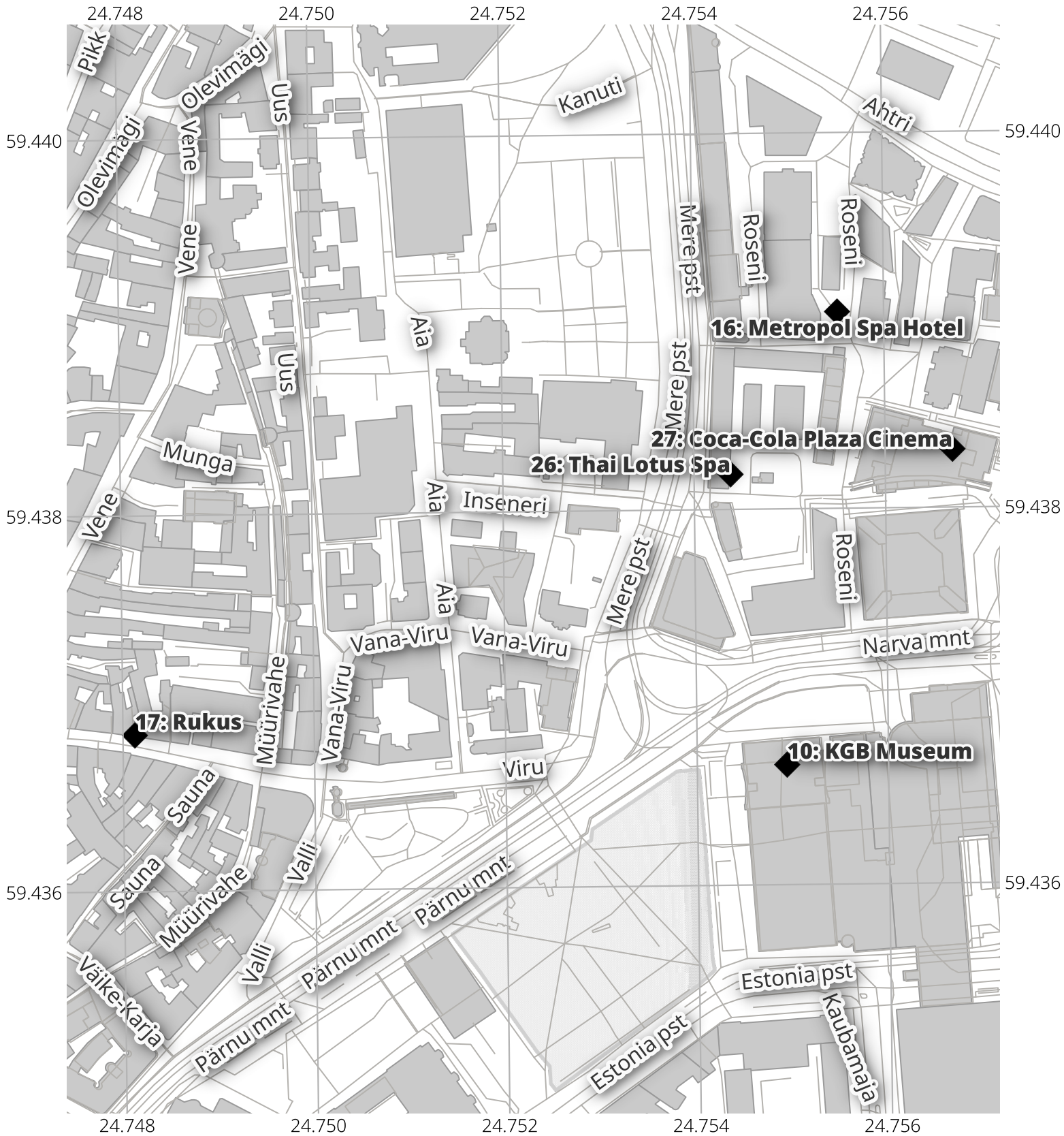
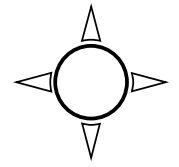
37. FK Keskus is a Go-kart track and an alternative way to spend the day if you don't go to Prangli. There are arguably only two breaking points at turns 7 and 9. The day's leaderboard will have a list of Finnish 10-year-olds at the top of it. Call ahead to make sure the track isn't booked for a party. Paldiski mnt 229, 13520 Tallinn

Tallinn's Old Town



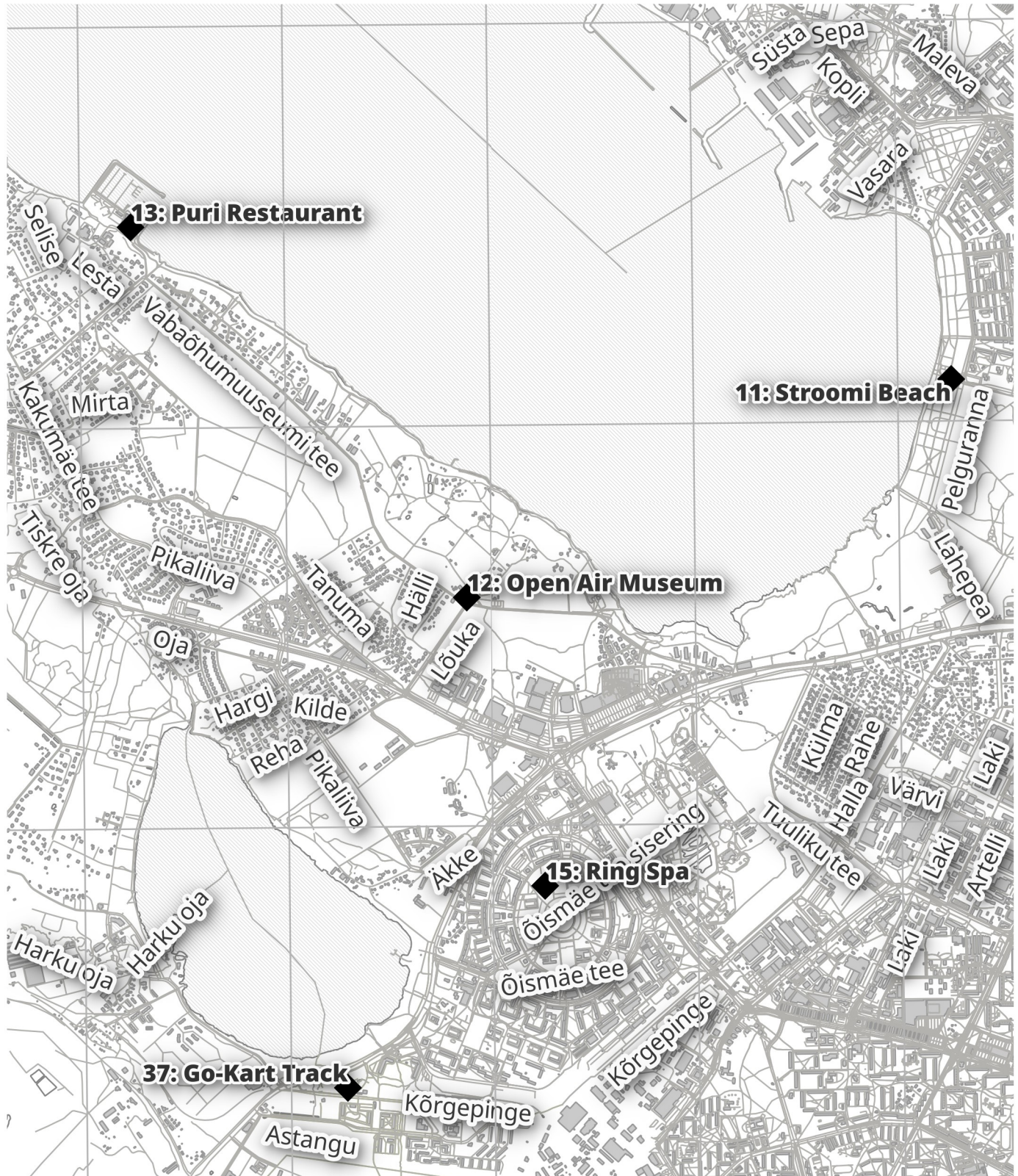
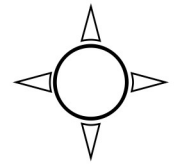
Credits: OpenStreetMap Contributors and the Estonian Land Board.

Tallinn's Old Town & Rottermani Quarter



Credits: OpenStreetMap Contributors and the Estonian Land Board.

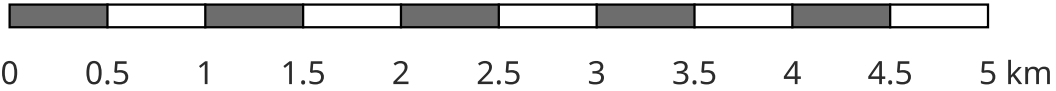
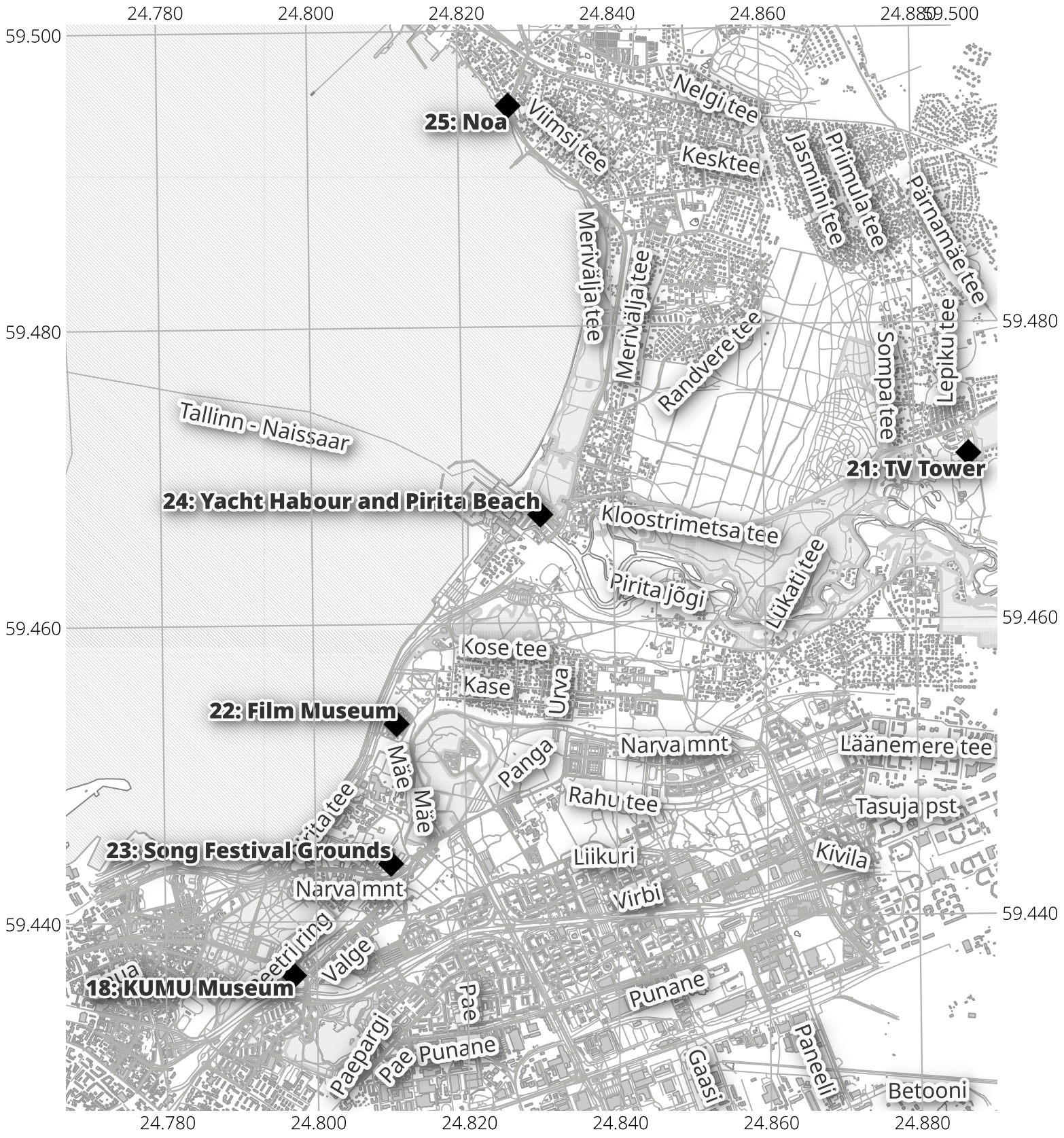
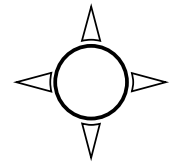
Stroomi, Väike-Õismäe and Kakumäe Harbour



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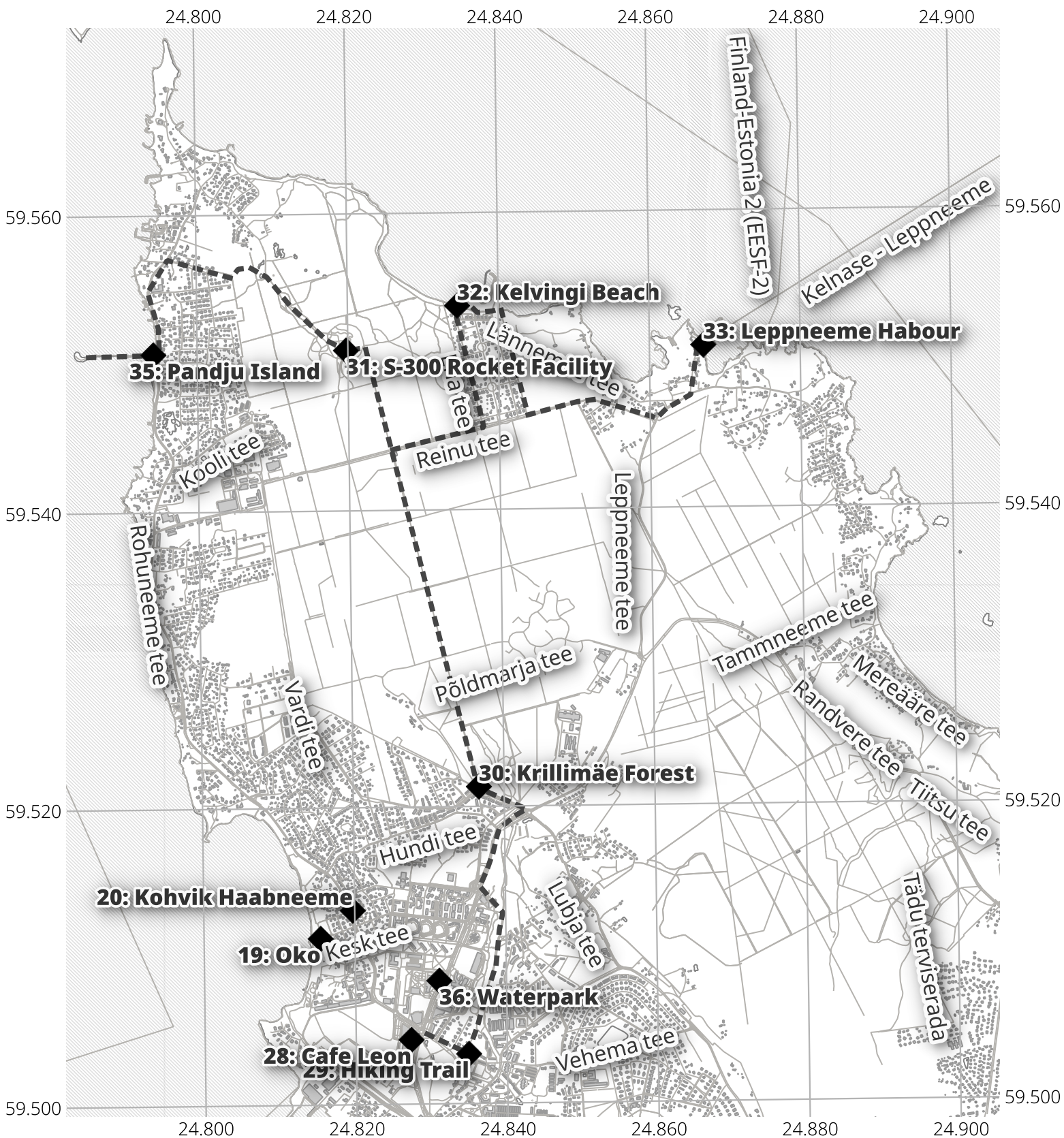
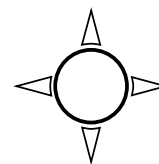
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Kadriorg & Pirita



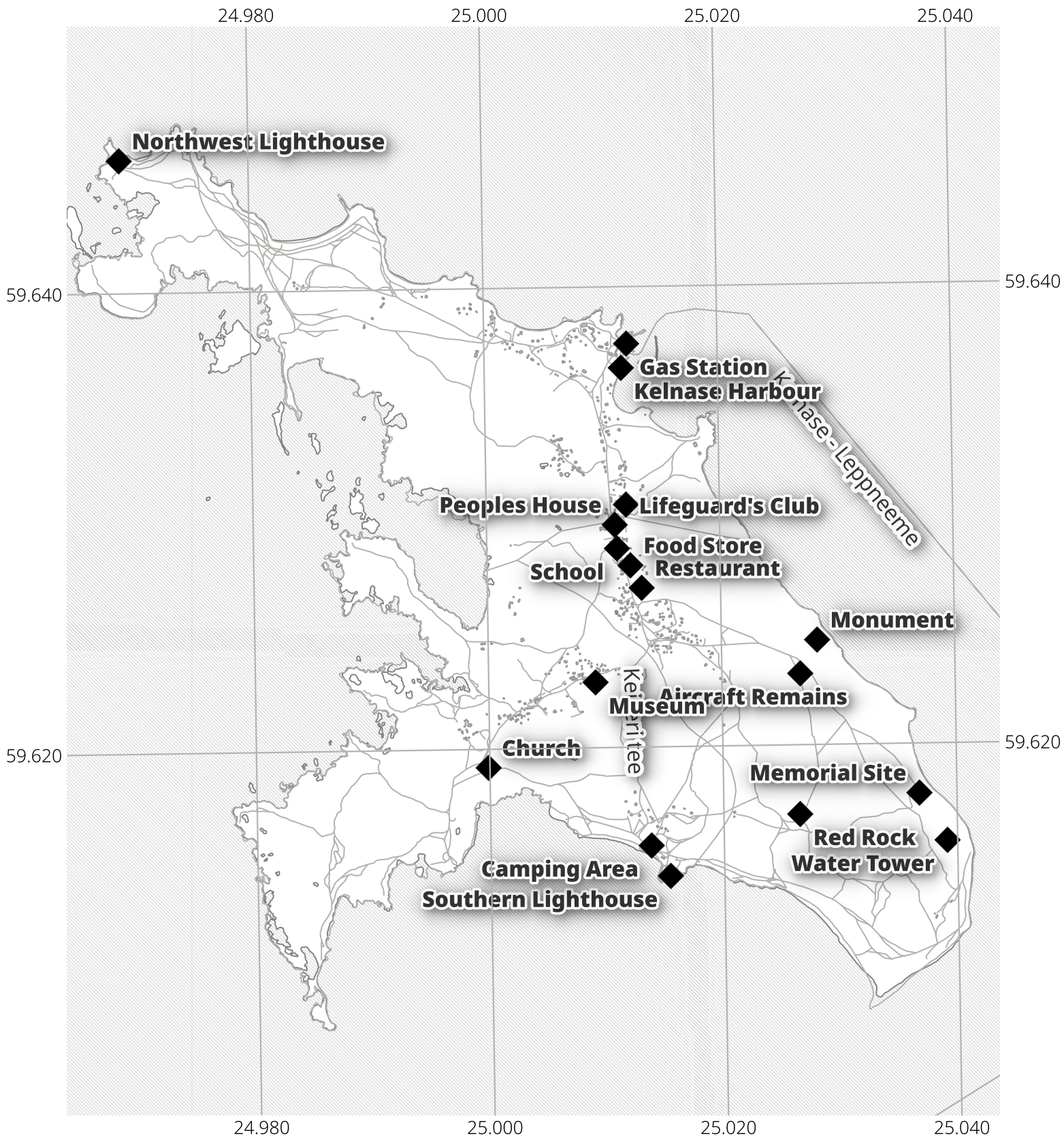
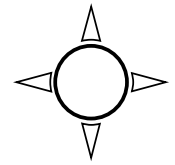
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Viimsi



Credits: OpenStreetMap Contributors and the Estonian Land Board.

Prangli



Credits: OpenStreetMap Contributors and the Estonian Land Board.