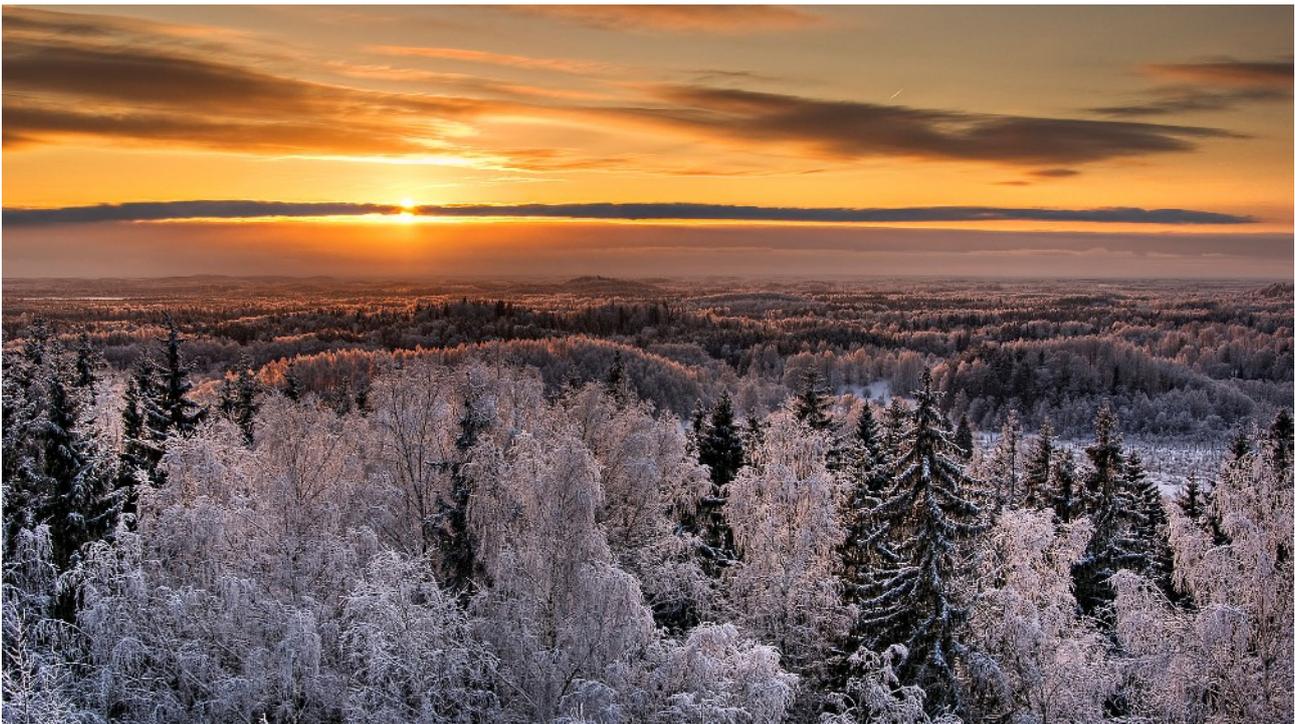


Greetings Taliharja Vanakuri* participant!

**Taliharja means "high winter" and Vanakuri means "old devil"*

"The summit is what drives us, but the climb itself is what matters," said Conrad Anker, an American mountaineer. The same is true with Taliharja Vanakuri ultra-race - it's a long trip out of comfort zone with the finishline shining as motivation, but the true meaning of the event lies in the journey itself. In the snow up to your knees, in the head wind, in the souging forest, in the cheering of a fellow racer, in the unfortunate step into mud under ice, in the farmhouse ruins you are passing, in the warm fire of refreshment point and cold reality when soldiering on through dark forest. But also in blistering, cold fingers, sore muscles, rubbing of the backpack, hunger and fatigue. Traveling through wilderness for such a long time in tough environment is undoubtedly a great challenge and anyone who pushes through this hardship will learn new things about themselves, gain self-confidence and earn the respect of others! This kind of trip helps us to better understand the nature and history of our country and people. The journey takes us through meaningful places and is in a way a journey between the ages. Racer puts in same kind of effort as a centuries-old hunter, pickler, or farmer passing these forests and this creates a special bond!



Karula National Park

There's now only a month and a half left before this mighty ordeal - you can follow the exact countdown [here](#)! It's time to start dealing with practical issues like logistics and lodging. To start off it can be said that there is no snobbery at Taliharja Vanakurja :)! Racers must be prepared for the lack of luxury both on the course and when it comes to lodging before or after race. It's basic, but just fine. As the number of people who want to participate in the race has proved to be high, the planned race center is getting crowded and we need to include new opportunities to make everyone feel comfortable. Please open this [table](#) and

make a choice in the checkbox after your name whether you wish to stay in bed or on the floor for the pre-race night (10-11.01) and also for the race night (11-12.01). Please also note in the table if you would like to use the shuttle bus from the race center/finish from Ähijärve (101km) or Mõniste (48km) on Saturday morning. If you are planning to come to start in Kornei, Latvia with your own transport, leave the box empty, but remember - there will be no organized transport back to the starting place after the finish! You need an assistant to drive you!

The cost of bed accommodation is additional to the already paid entry fee: 15 € / person for the night before the race in bed (5 eur on floor) (10-11.01); 10 eur / person on the night of the competition (11-12.01). Sleeping on the floor during the race night is included in the entry fee (without any guarantee as to the size of the personal floor space - conditions may become tight).



Karula NP visitors center - race center/finish 101km

There are 37 beds in RMK Karula NP Visitors Center (finish) and they are divided between rooms for 2-7 people. There are about twenty places for floor accommodation. On the night of the competition, in addition to the Karula Center, there is a possibility to stay at the Mõniste Peasant Museum in the central camp/finish line of 48km race - up to 15 people on the floor with their own mattress. This is more suitable for the participants of the 48km racers - 10 eur / person to stay overnight. Overnight stay will take place in the same room as the central camp - that means it will become silent when the camp is closed at about 23.00. There is also a smoke sauna for finishers of the 48km course in Mõniste.



A second option for bed overnight stay is in Kaika community house 6km from Karula center (finish), which has 27 beds and a hall to sleep on floor. Kaika community house will be available if we can't fit people in Karula / Mõniste. So first of all, we need to find out the total number of people who want to stay overnight both nights and then we will give people the opportunity to choose a bed to sleep in. We try to set it so that people coming from far away and staying both nights can leave their belongings in the same place, preferably in Karula. Payment for the bed will be made after distribution of places by bank transfer or cash at race center.

Should I stay overnight at all? The bus departs from Karula (race center, 101km finish) on Saturday around 9.30 am, so the people living in South Estonia/north Latvia can surely arrive in the morning without sacrificing much sleep time. Minimum 3.5 hours for driving from Tallinn to the competition center though.

The bus leaves at about 9.30 am, as the first thing we do is drive from Karula to the Mõniste Peasant Museum midcamp, 48km finish), where we take a small excursion and listen to the historical and cultural background of our race area. As Mõniste Peasant Museum is the finish of 48km race - participants taking part of 48km race should arrive there and can leave their cars and board the start bus in Mõniste.

Race time of Taliharja Vanakuri is very dependent on snow conditions. Without snow the course is relatively easy - mostly quite flat or rolling hills and small forest roads (except the first 20km where most is on narrower trails and also some steep hills). Thus, depending on the presence of snow, the time for cyclists may be 5-15 hours and for racers on foot 10-24 hours. After a long effort you will get tired and sleepy, so driving home at night is a risky activity.

NB! Anybody planning to use the lodging options should keep in mind that there may be crunching, rattling, opening beer cans, epic music to greet finishers and other such distractions throughout the night. We recommend packing earplugs that help to pay no attention to all of the above!



Smoke sauna

Sauna - in the finish of both courses there is a possibility to use the Old-Võromaa smoke sauna a UNESCO World Cultural Heritage phenomenon. Depending on the specifics of the sauna however, it can only be used for steam for a couple of hours - it can only be heated once in the evening and steam can be used while the rocks are hot. This in turn means that the first finishers have to wait for the smoke sauna to be ready and the final finishers may have only a cold sauna left. To compensate for this lack of sauna, a trailer-sauna and a barrel-sauna are available so that everyone who wants to warm their cold bones right after finishing can still do so. Karula 101km finish also has enough showers, 48km finish only has 1 shower. We decide on the time when the smoke saunas will be heated according to the snow conditions and the expected speed of completing the course. The saunas are unisex, you can use swimwear if it feels more comfortable.

Equipment - Start testing equipment and assembling it. The website has a list with explanations. For questions, use the equipment questions topic at the FB event.

SUMMARY: Make a choice in the table, which nights you would like to have bed / floor accommodation and whether you would like to use the bus to start from finish.

NB! Overview of the course is visible from this reconnaissance trip: <https://youtu.be/BvbALcX9fLk>

I wish you success in your preparations,

Silver Eensaar
Taliharja Vanakuri
Race director