

STOCKHOLM IS SUMMER

10 REASONS

TO GO TO THE SWEDISH CITY NOW

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Having mastered the art of merging tradition with cutting edge design and innovation, Stockholm has been focusing on keeping its environmental footprint low, making this photogenic Scandinavian city one of the greenest and cleanest cities in the world to visit, and one of our must-do destinations for 2013. In the Swedish capital, you have edgy neighborhoods like Södermalm and Östermalm to explore, Michelin-starred Nordic cuisine to savour, some fabulous shopping to do, from browsing vintage clothes stores to buying contemporary Swedish design, and traditional daily rituals to partake in, such as fika – sharing coffee and sweet buns with family and friends. And when all that fresh city air becomes too much for you, you can do as the Swedes do and take to the islands to soak up some nature. Or dance around a maypole.





TAKE IN HISTORY AT EVERY TURN

Stockholm creatively combines cutting edge architecture with its traditional roots in Gamla Stan (Old Town), making the city centre very photogenic. Within ten minutes, you can walk from the modern Normalm district with its towering buildings, fine hotels, and the city's iconic shimmering waterfront congress center to the historic Gamla Stan to kick back on cobblestoned streets, catch the procession and changing of the palace guards, and explore the majestic Royal Palace itself. Even parts of Stockholm that have undergone gentrification have still hung on to their historical landmarks. When fires destroyed major sections of Gamla Stan during the 17th century, only structures made of stone and brick were allowed to be rebuilt. This forced working class and poorer residents who could only afford wooden houses to move south to the island known as Åsön, now called Södermalm (or Söder). You can find a few remnants of these red wooden cottages at the end of popular street Åsögatan on Söder.



REATHE DEEPLY ON GREEN DJURGÅRDEN

Lush green Djurgården is home to the city's most popular attractions and you'll find locals on Stockholm's greenest island any given day, hiking, biking, picnicking, lounging along its waterfront, and queuing patiently for freshly baked pastries and sandwiches made from biodynamic flour at Rosendals Trädgård Kafé and Bageri, a popular café set amidst greenhouses, flower gardens, and orchards. You can travel back in time at Skansen which is the world's oldest open air museum, operating since 1891, where, you can observe how Swedes lived before the industrial era, see artisans crafting traditional jewelry, and spot Nordic wildlife such as reindeer, elk and bears. You'll also find Gröna Lund amusement park and Vasa Museum, home to a fully salvaged 380 year-old warship, which sank in 1628 during its maiden voyage right in Stockholm's harbor. Or you can just stroll around and inhale the fresh air.

ONSUME CREATIVITY AND CONTEMPORARY ART

Stockholm is synonymous with classic and contemporary minimalist design and the city certainly doesn't disappoint with a myriad of modern design and art museums and cultural centers like newly launched Artipelag (www.artipelag.se), where until 12 May you can see Poul Gernes Made in Sweden. Even the city's entire subway system, the underground Tunnelbana (T-bana) network, is a living work of art. Touted as the world's longest art exhibition at 110 km long, you'll discover provocative and playful cave art, paintings, sculptures, mosaics, installations, and other durable art displays created by 150 artists in over 90 of the city's 100 stations, with the most impressive work at Kungsträdgården station. Storstockholms Lokaltrafik (SL) runs free weekly guided tours of its underground art led by certified guides. The contemporary photography museum Fotografiska (www.fotografiska.eu) which opened in 2010 and is housed in a 1906 red-brick art nouveau-style industrial building features international photographers like Annie Leibovitz and Anton Corbijn alongside Scandinavian photographers like Christer Strömholm and Maria Friberg. On show until 3 March 2013 is a David LaChapelle exhibition **Burning Beauty**, highlighting the artist's originality.



XPLORE STIEG LARSSON'S SÖDERMALM

If you're a fan of late Swedish author Stieg Larsson's award-winning book **Girl with the Dragon Tattoo**, spend some time exploring the local settings of this suspenseful Swedish crime drama series, remade by Hollywood director David Fincher using Södermalm as a key backdrop. Formerly a 17th century slum, busy bohemian Södermalm (known as Söder to locals) cleaned itself up to become Stockholm's heartbeat and the hottest neighborhood in town. Its main appeal is its mash-up of cultures and cuisines, and its atmospheric nooks and crannies. You can simply follow the locals in Söder to find the edgiest vintage shopping and offbeat dining experiences on offer or do a guided walking tour of Söder, visiting spots like Mellqvists Kaffebär (Hornsgatan 78) where both fictional journalist Mikael Blomkvist and real-life author Stieg Larsson heavily frequented, and Fiskargatan 9 – an expensive 21-room apartment with stunning views over Djurgården and Gamla stan (Old Town), which protagonist Lisbeth Salander buys in the books.



OUNT GASTRONOMIC STARS

Centuries of fishing for their daily sustenance from the North and Baltic Seas has meant Swedes have not only mastered the art of cooking seafood but have also uncovered its true versatility, preparing and pickling it in more ways than humanly possible. Nordic cuisine is shining, with some of Stockholm's finest restaurants recently being awarded Michelin stars. Leading the pack with two stars each are Frantzén/Lindeberg in historic Gamla Stan, and the highly lauded Mathias Dahlgren located within the luxurious Grand Hôtel. Frantzén/Lindeberg uses fresh organic vegetables and fruits, including berries grown on its own farms, while Mathias Dahlgren's creative eight-course Scandinavian menus are centered on different Nordic themes. Nabbing one Michelin star each are the Paulo Coelho-inspired Esperanto restaurant, contemporary Fredsgatan 12 (F12), Lux Stockholm, where the cuisine blends salty, sour, smoked, and spiced tastes, and Mathias Dahlgren's more casual Food Bar.





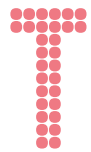
OAK UP THE SUN ON STOCKHOLM'S ARCHIPELAGO

Stockholm has over 28,000 islands in its greater archipelago and the city itself sprawls across 14 islands. Summer is the best time to head out into the archipelago to take in the panoramic vistas and colourful contrasts of lush green and blue waters and classic Falu red Swedish cottages. Life in Sweden moves outdoors at the first sign of sunshine and the government's institution of Allemansrätten (Every man's right) makes it easy to enjoy Sweden's own brand of island living by allowing you to freely and responsibly camp, hike, go sailing, and pick berries and mushrooms anywhere, unless signs specifically prohibit trespassing. Ferry companies such as Strömma Kanalbolaget and Waxholmsbolaget regularly shuttle travelers around the islands, especially Fjärderholmerna (The Feather Islands), Vaxholm, Sandhamn, and to the exquisite Drottningholm Palace where the royal family lives. www.stromma.se



HOP STOCKHOLM'S CHIC STREETS

Stockholm's chic sense of style centers on casual clean lines, monochromatic hues and multiple layers, and this Nordic modernist taste is spotlighted annually during Stockholm's own annual Fashion Week, on par with New York, London, Paris, and Milan. Its main shopping districts are centralized around Biblioteksgatan, Kungsgatan, Hamngatan, Birger Jarlsgatan, and Drottninggatan – all walking distance from each other. You can pick up high-end designer names like Gucci, Armani, Swarovski, and Louis Vuitton along Biblioteksgatan and Birger Jarlsgatan in Östermalm or at upmarket Nordiska Kompaniet (NK) mall located on Hamngatan. The newest upscale shopping district called MOOD spans an entire city block and is home to exclusive brands like Royal Copenhagen, Victoria Beckham, Ralph Lauren, and Club Monaco, and is a regular haunt of Stockholm's elite and local celebrities. For retro fashion, antiques and flea markets, head to Södermalm, which has more vintage boutiques per block than any other neighborhood in Stockholm. The area south of Folkungagatan known as 'SoFo' is the place to find offbeat shops.



TAKE HOME EDIBLE SOUVENIRS FROM THE SALUHALLS

Skip pretty postcards as mementoes of your stay and head to one of Stockholm's three iconic food markets or Saluhall, to pick up some edible souvenirs instead such as gourmet pickled herring, cured meats, local cheeses, Swedish preserves, handmade chocolates, and other delicacies. Dating back to 1886, Östermalms Saluhall, located in Stockholm's most expensive neighborhood Östermalm, holds roughly 20 stalls selling high-quality gourmet meats, cheeses, seafood, breads, chocolates, and more. You can buy fresh hand-made chocolate pralines from Betsy Sandberg Choklad (founded in 1926), a wide selection of local and imported deli cheeses and cured meats from M Seger Eftr. Kött & Ost, and freshly prepared seafood specialties from Lisa Elmqvist, which has been operating for over 80 years. While Östermalms Saluhall is quintessentially Swedish in its offerings, the other two markets – Hötorgshallen located at Hötorget, and Söderhallarna located at Medborgarsplatsen – house international food stalls alongside Swedish vendors.



FIKA LIKE A LOCAL

There's a strong coffee culture in Stockholm, which is fueled by the Swedish tradition of 'fika' –socializing over cups of coffee and sweet pastries, multiple times daily. Stockholm is one of the highest-ranking coffee consuming cities per capita in the world and travelers can't help but be drawn into the city's deep-rooted coffee culture. Pronounced 'fee-car', it literally means 'to drink coffee', but is widely translated as taking a break (fikarast) or pause (fikapaus) from whatever you're doing to spend time over cups of coffee with friends, colleagues, and family. Fika is almost always accompanied with sweet pastries such as classic kanellbular (cinnamon buns), marzarin (marzipan tarts), kladdkaka (chocolate brownies), and other sugary buns, all collectively called fikabröd (fika bread). For a memorable fika experience, especially during the winter months of December through March, head over to award-winning VeteKatten on Kungsgatan to dig into oval shaped buns stuffed with almond paste and full whipped cream known as semlor. www.vetekatten.se



CELEBRATE MIDSUMMER AROUND A MAYPOLE

No other celebration brings otherwise reserved Swedes out of their shells more than the summer solstice festival of Midsummer when the city explodes into life. While its roots are traditionally pagan, Midsummer is celebrated by all levels of society and you'll find people wearing handmade wildflower wreaths on their heads as they dance and hop around the maypole (majstång), decorated with flowers and greens, singing traditional Swedish folk songs. Along with dancing and singing, locals also like to dig into hearty smörgåsbords, which include various types of pickled herring (sill), gravad lax (cured salmon), yellow almond-shaped potatoes, and a wide range of alcoholic snaps and aquavits to loosen up the nerves and get people into celebratory spirits. Skansen on Djurgården is the place to find locals picking flowers, making wreaths, and tucking into new potatoes with dill and sour cream, followed by strawberries and cream. 🍓