

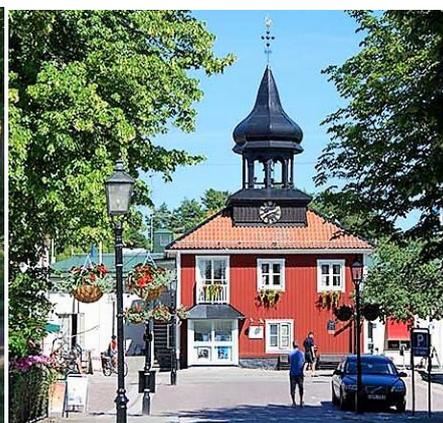


EUROPEAN CYCLING HOLIDAYS

2018

SWEDEN: CENTRAL LAKES & ISLANDS OR WEST COAST BIKE PATH

7 day or 8 day SELF GUIDED inn-to-inn easy to moderate cycling tours



New for 2018, these two self-guided cycling tours offer a Sweden that many visitors rarely experience, cycling in one of the most bike-friendly countries in Europe, with hundreds of kilometres of cycle paths and dedicated cycle routes. Summer (June to August) offers long days, short nights, comfortable temperatures; spring brings blooming wildflowers; autumn colourful trees, wild berries ripening, and cinnamon buns in many local bakeries.

These easy to moderate tours offer two very different sides of Sweden, both in landscape and culture. The first starts and ends in Stockholm and explores the rural landscapes and lush green meadows of **Södermanland** where there are few hills and the cycling is mostly flat. There are castles and palaces to visit, and time to explore the unique small towns and pretty lakes. Viking sites, ancient runestones and rock carvings are on the agenda too, as is the pretty village of Trosa on the Baltic Sea with its iconic red houses and water views.

Alternatively, explore the West Coast, cycling the **Kattegattleden Bike Path**, Sweden's first national bicycle trail, a 370-kilometre bicycle route alongside the Kattegat arm of the North Sea. The path crosses the Halland region, from Helsingborg to Gothenburg, past sandy beaches, through picturesque fishing villages and on small city bike paths with usually very little traffic. Explore historic places including the medieval town of Falkenberg, 13th Century Varberg Fortress, and the Iron Age Li burial site near Gothenburg.

Well-maintained, specially designed multi-gear touring bikes are provided and are ideal for the terrain, or book an E-bike (at extra cost, subject to availability) to make the cycling even more enjoyable.

Vikings, Castles & Lakes from Stockholm (7-days/6-nights)

Departs: Sundays

Cost from: \$1530 per person twin-share
\$1695 per person twin-share
\$1765 per person twin-share
Single supplement \$605

20th – 26th May, 2nd – 8th September 2018
27th May – 16th June, 19th August – 1st September 2018
17th June – 18th August 2018

West Coast: Kattegattleden Bike Path - Helsingborg - Gothenburg (8-days/7-nights) Departs: Saturdays

Cost from: \$1605 per person twin-share
\$1685 per person twin-share
\$1765 per person twin-share
Single supplement \$605

20th – 25th May, 1st – 8th September 2018
26th May – 22nd June, 18th – 31st August 2018
23rd June – 17th August 2018

Includes: Twin-share accommodation (with private bathrooms) in comfortable hotels, with breakfast included; welcome briefing; hire of multi-gear touring bicycle; luggage transfers; detailed route notes and maps; emergency telephone assistance. Stockholm tour also includes Tumba to Stockholm train.

Not included: Meals not mentioned, drinks, personal expenses, entrance fees

Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations



STOCKHOLM: VIKINGS, CASTLES, LAKES & ISLANDS

From Stockholm to Södertälje, Mariefred, Järna and Trosa

This tour begins and ends in cosmopolitan Stockholm, an archipelago of 14 islands on Lake Mälaren, and you are never far from water on this cycling tour, whether one of the many lakes and rivers of Södermanland, Lake Mälaren or the Baltic Sea. There is the chance to learn about Swedish history, from Viking times up until today, and to discover the royal palaces of Drottningholm, Gripsholm and Tullgarn. The route also takes in parks and nature reserves, picturesque towns like Mariefred and Trosa and the lush green landscapes.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive Stockholm

Arrive in Stockholm mid-afternoon in time for a stroll through Sweden's capital. Gamla stan, the city's Old Town, dates back to medieval times, and the narrow cobbled streets and waterfront are lined with colourful buildings. Stockholm Cathedral, the Nobel Museum and the Vasa maritime museum, with its well-preserved 17th Century warship, are all worth a visit if time permits. In the evening a welcome briefing and bike fitting takes place.

Day 2: Stockholm to Södertälje

Cycling distance @ 55km

Ride along an ancient trade route alongside Lake Mälaren that has existed since the Viking Age, passing by the World Heritage-listed 17th Century Drottningholm Palace, the private residence of Sweden's royal family. The gardens, grounds and parts of the palace are often open to visitors; worth a visit is the Chinese Pavilion, built in the 18th Century when the European fashion for *Chinoiserie* was at its zenith, and boasting fine examples of Chinese and Japanese decorative arts and lacquer-work. Afterwards continue by bicycle and ferry to Södertälje.

Day 3: Södertälje to Mariefred

Cycling distance @ 40km

Worth a short detour today is Taxinge Palace at Nykvarn, sometimes called the 'Cookie Palace', known for its elaborate and extensive cake buffet featuring over 60 different cakes, cookies and pastries. Work off all that cake by cycling on quiet roads to Gripsholm Castle in the quiet town of Mariefred. In the 1370s, Bo Jonsson Grip built a castle on a promontory which was expanded several times over the centuries. It houses the national portrait collection of over 4000 works tracing the art of portraiture from the 1400s to the present. You can extend your ride by cycling to Selaön island, which has ancient runestones and a significant gravesite dating to Iron Age times, where stone grave markers were placed to form the outline of a ship.

Day 4: Mariefred to Järna

Cycling distance @ 45km

Cycle through remote nature reserves and the peaceful rural landscapes of Sörmland. The region's many rivers and lakes were formed by glaciation and by tectonic movements creating a rift valley. The cycling is gently undulating, although no hill is taller than 100 metres, and your ascents are rewarded with pleasant views of tranquil green countryside dotted with lakes, rivers and forest. Stay tonight in the small town of Järna, a centre for the study and development of Rudolf Steiner's philosophy of anthroposophy, with bio-dynamic and permaculture farms, Steiner schools, and an alternative bank and hospital.

Day 5: Järna to Trosa

Cycling distance @ 35km

Another day of cycling through tranquil lakeland scenery, from Järna to the idyllic Baltic Sea town of Trosa, which has been a film location for movies and television. En route you may like to detour to Tullgarn Palace, an 18th Century summer palace known for its fine interior décor. End your day with a stroll through the narrow laneways and alongside the Trosa River, with its typical red or yellow painted houses and lovely water views. There are a number of good restaurants serving local seafood – perhaps try the fresh crabs, salmon or smoked fish for dinner.

Day 6: Trosa to Stockholm

Cycling distance @ 55km

Head north – a short ferry ride and (avoiding traffic) the train to Södermalm, then cycle the last few kilometres to your hotel for your last night in the capital, perhaps with a typical Swedish dinner in a nearby restaurant.

Day 7: Departure day

Tour arrangements end after breakfast. Ask us about cost and availability of extending your stay in Stockholm.



WEST COAST: KATTEGATTLEDEN BIKE PATH

From Helsingborg to Gothenburg

The Kattegattleden Bike Path on Sweden's west coast forms a part of the 5,900-kilometre EuroVélo North Sea Cycling Route. This 8-day (7-night) cycling tour allows you to sample a portion of that epic coastal journey. From Helsingborg, the route mostly follows the sea, travelling through open countryside, nature reserves and verdant farmland. As you draw closer to Gothenburg the landscape changes, with scenic cliffs, lush forests, sheltered bays and quaint harbours.

The culinary speciality of this region is seafood – locally caught lobster, prawns, langoustines, mussels, oysters and of course herring, served in almost any way you can imagine – smoked, fried, pickled, marinated, baked, *au gratin*, with dill, beetroot, mustard, onion, or even blackcurrants or lingonberry jam. The region has so much to offer, from picturesque fishing villages to rural countryside to charming, laid-back cities – and this relaxed self-guided cycling tour is the ideal way to discover it all.

Suggested itinerary:

Day 1: Arrive Helsingborg

Arrive in Helsingborg mid-afternoon and check into your centrally located hotel. Helsingborg is just 1½ hours by train from Copenhagen (Denmark), via Malmö (Sweden). You stay in the centre of Helsingborg with easy access to the city's main attractions, including the medieval watchtower Kärnan and St. Mary's Church. In the evening at the welcome briefing you receive your bikes and make any necessary adjustments.

Day 2: Helsingborg to Ängelholm

Cycling distance @ 60km

Begin your west coast journey with a ride along the waterfront promenade in Helsingborg, soon passing by Sofiero Palace, once a summer residence for Swedish royalty. It is noted for its extensive park and grounds, planted with over 500 species of rhododendron. Continue along the coast through quaint fishing villages and past small marinas, to Höganäs, known for its salt-glazed stoneware – there are exhibitions and a shop at the Ceramic Centre. Then, cycle across the Kulla peninsula, passing vineyards, small farms and artists' cottages, before arriving in Ängelholm, with its long sandy beach and numerous art galleries and craft shops.

Day 3: Ängelholm to Halmstad

Cycling distance @ 65km

From Ängelholm follow the coast to Vejbystrand, cycling through open meadows and several small coastal communities. In Magnarp you can stop for lunch at an out-of-the-way (but recommended) seafood restaurant in the harbour area. Cut inland across the Bjäre peninsula to the seaside resort town of Båstad. Continue alongside one of Sweden's longest stretches of sandy beach and the resorts of Skummeslövsstrand and Mellbystrand. You pass the Tönnersa and Gullbranna nature reserve with its shifting sand dunes and pine forest. There is an optional detour to an Iron Age burial ground near Laxvik. Your destination is Halmstad, which like much of this region passed hands between Denmark and Sweden many times.

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Day 4: Halmstad to Falkenberg

Cycling distance @ 55km

Sweden's most famous beach, Tylösand, awaits today. Past the long sandy sweep of Tylösand, continue cycling northwards along the coastline, with sea views at every turn. As you leave Halmstad and the nearby beach resorts behind, the cycle route passes through more rural countryside and nature reserves, and there are a number of small farm gates selling local produce. The route leads you over beautiful Grimsholmen to Falkenberg, which is one of the oldest medieval towns in the region.

Day 5: Falkenberg to Varberg

Cycling distance @ 40km

Fishing villages, artists and artisans are plentiful on your route today. Träslövsläge has a bustling harbour lined with brightly-painted boathouses, and is a centre of the lobster fishing industry – there is a seafood restaurant at the harbour if you arrive around lunchtime.

Varberg, your destination for tonight, is home to an impressive fortress, parts of which date back to the 13th Century. The museum in the fortress is worth a visit, not least to see Bocksten Man, the remains of a 14th Century man who met a violent death and was discovered in a peat bog at a nearby farm in 1936. His clothing, personal effects and even his hair are remarkably well-preserved. Also at Varberg is the UNESCO World Heritage-listed Grimeton radio station, built in the 1920s for wireless transatlantic communication, and the 1903 bathhouse with its mix of Gothic and Moorish architectural styles; it is still in operation if you're game for a traditional sauna.

Day 6: Varberg to Kungsbacka

Cycling distance @ 60km

North of Varberg the landscape changes – sandy beaches are fewer and smaller, while rocky coastline starts to dominate and you begin to get glimpses of islands. In Åsa you leave the sea's edge to bike through farmland and rolling hills to Fjärås Bräcka nature reserve. Take a break and enjoy the views of both lake and sea, and visit the Li burial ground with its more than 100 stone megaliths, including the 5-metre-tall King Frode's Stone. Cycle onwards past horses grazing in pastures to Kungsbacka.

Day 7: Kungsbacka to Gothenburg (Göteborg)

Cycling distance @ 40 - 60km

Leaving Kungsbacka you cycle alongside the Kungsbycka Fjord and may get glimpses of Tjolöholm Castle, a Tudor-style manor house with influences from the Arts & Crafts movement. You pass Vallda and Särö, seaside resorts that were once a playground of the royal family and Gothenburg high society. Afterwards you reach a disused railway line, now converted into a bike path. Cliffs, forests, bays and marinas line your path into Gothenburg, a lively university city with a bustling nightlife, neoclassical architecture, many parks and gardens, and streets lined with rattling, old-style blue and white trams.

Day 8: Departure day from Gothenburg

After breakfast you are free for your onward travel arrangements. Gothenburg is 3 hours by train to either Stockholm or (via Malmö) to Copenhagen, or it has an airport with flights departing to Stockholm and other major European cities. Or, extend your stay in Gothenburg – ask about cost and availability of extra nights.



Outdoor Travel also offer cycling holiday destinations include several areas of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, England and Scotland, Romania, Austria, Poland, Hungary, in the Czech Republic, the USA, Canada, China, Vietnam, New Zealand and Australia. Other group guided Bike & Boat cycling cruises are available in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Tuscany or Naples in Italy, the Dalmatian Coast of Croatia, the islands of Greece, or in Vietnam.

Contact Outdoor Travel for more details and reservations

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