

OUTDOOR TRAVEL

THE ACTIVE HOLIDAY COMPANY

# EUROPEAN CYCLING HOLIDAYS

2018

## SWEDEN: FROM STOCKHOLM TO THE LAND OF LAKES & SAGAS

8-days / 7-nights Small group GUIDED QUALITY inn-to-inn easy to moderate cycling tour



Visit beautiful Sweden at the height of summer, when we will have long days and short nights. It is a joy to cycle in this bike-friendly country, with its many cycle paths and dedicated cycle routes. On this easy to moderate cycle tour we concentrate on the capital Stockholm and the nearby rural landscapes and lush green meadows of Södermanland (sometimes nicknamed Sörmland), where the cycling is mostly flat and easy.

We see inspiring castles and palaces, spend time in unique small towns and stay in historic hotels with modern amenities. Viking sites, ancient runestones and rock carvings are on the agenda too. We'll partake of a traditional Swedish smörgåsbord, with its huge variety of hot and cold dishes, including perhaps Jansson's Temptation, a casserole of potatoes, onions, cream and pickled sprats (small anchovy-like fish). With its alluring combination of forests and water, wide open spaces, ancient history and modern Stockholm, this cycling tour in Sweden is a temptation that is hard to resist!

Cycle with a small group of like-minded travellers, staying in quality hotels in outstanding locations. With a unique itinerary that focuses on the history and architecture of each intriguing destination we offer an emphasis on gourmet food and wine, local specialities and fresh produce. Tours are escorted by multi-lingual leaders, with local guides adding expertise in cities and towns along the way. These tours offer everything you need for a relaxing yet active holiday. There are some longer daily distances but the support van is always available if you need a rest. 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.

**Cost from:** \$2750 per person twin-share      Single supplement from \$525

**Departs:** 29<sup>th</sup> July, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2018

**Includes:** 7 nights' twin-share accommodation in carefully selected 3- and 4-star hotels (all rooms with private bathrooms), 7 breakfasts, 6 dinners, luggage transfers, multi-lingual cycle tour guide, hire of multi-gear touring bicycle, support vehicle, luggage transfers, entry fees as per itinerary, transfers and shuttles as per itinerary, Stockholm guided city tours and guided tours of Drottningholm Palace and Gripsholm Castle, sightseeing boat trip in Stockholm, visitor and tourist taxes.

**Not included:** Meals not mentioned, drinks, personal expenses, entrance / tasting fees unless specified

### Suggested itinerary:

#### Day 1: Arrive Stockholm

Arrive in Stockholm mid-afternoon and check into our 4-star hotel in a fantastic waterfront location in the Gamla Stan, Stockholm's Old Town. Aim to arrive before 4pm for a guided sightseeing tour of the Old Town, walking on the narrow cobblestoned laneways and passing waterfront houses painted vivid colours. Afterwards, the evening is yours to enjoy, with dinner at own arrangements. There is a wide variety of restaurants offering local specialities as well as international cuisine.

**Call OUTDOOR TRAVEL on 1800 331 582 for details or reservations**

**Day 2: Stockholm to Södertälje****Cycling distance @ 56km**

Our bike tour starts in the morning outside the hotel. Central Stockholm is an archipelago of 14 islands located where the large freshwater Lake Mälaren flows out to the Baltic Sea. Sweden is an immensely enjoyable place to cycle – there are over 760 kilometres of cycle paths in Stockholm alone, which we use to ride to Drottningholm Palace, the principal residence of the Swedish royal family. A magnificent staircase leads to the northern wing which is open to the public. After our visit to Drottningholm, we cycle across bridges connecting little islands in Lake Mälaren until we reach Södertälje. Here we stay in a charming 3-star hotel with elegantly furnished rooms.

**Day 3: Södertälje to Trosa****Cycling distance @ 57km**

Over the next few days we traverse the heart of Södermanland. This mostly flat region between Lake Mälaren and the Baltic Sea was favoured by Charles IX in the late 16<sup>th</sup> Century and there are some 400 manor houses and small castles. We cycle past lakes, forests and small islands to the lovely 12<sup>th</sup> Century country church of Old Trosa. Tonight we stay at a stylish and cosy 4-star hotel and spa in Trosa, Sweden's smallest town. We dine at the hotel's restaurant which is popular with both locals and visitors.

**Day 4: Trosa to Katrineholm****Cycling distance @ 44km**

Södermanland is the focus again today. Expansive forests, wide fields, boulders strewn across moorlands and over 400 lakes characterise this unique landscape formed by glacial activity. The human touch is reflected in the charming red-painted wooden houses and elegant manor houses dotted through the region. We cycle to Gnesta then take the train to Katrineholm. A short bike ride and we arrive at our destination for two nights, the Dufweholms Herrgård, one of Sweden's Historic Hotels. The hotel is set in a historic manor in a picturesque lakeside location. Rooms have been decorated with antiques and period furnishings. Talented chefs prepare remarkable cuisine and the hotel boasts a well-stocked wine cellar.

**Day 5: Floda Kyrka Circuit****Cycling distance @ 42km**

This unspoiled rural region offers calm and solitude as we cycle on quiet trails, hoping to spot elk or rare ospreys. Shortly before our lunch break we reach the church at Floda (Floda Kyrka), notable for its beautiful and well-preserved 15<sup>th</sup> Century liturgical frescoes. In the afternoon, we return by train to Katrineholm for our second night at the Dufweholms Herrgård manor. Before dinner there should be time for a swim or sauna, or perhaps borrow the hotel's rowboat for a quick paddle around the lake.

**Day 6: Katrineholm to Mariefred****Cycling distance @ 56km**

We travel by bus to Sundbyholm to view the remarkable Sigurd carving which depicts some of the central events of the Völsunga saga (which later inspired Richard Wagner's monumental opera cycle, the Ring of the Nibelung). The carving is believed to be nearly 1000 years old and also features a mysterious runic inscription. After this we travel to Strängnäs, with its Gothic cathedral on a hill. This is where Gustav Vasa was elected king in 1523 before he led Sweden to independence from Denmark. Nearby is the imposing Gripsholm Castle, on the shores of Gripsholm Bay of Lake Mälaren, overlooking picturesque Mariefred, a charming little town of timber houses and crooked lanes. In Mariefred we stay at the pleasant Gripsholms Vårdshus, another Historic Hotel. Rooms are beautifully decorated and the restaurants are renowned for the excellent cuisine using local produce.

**Day 7: Mariefred to Stockholm****Cycling distance @ 33km**

In the morning we tour Gripsholm Castle, one of the ten Swedish royal palaces. Built in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century by Gustav Vasa, it is now home to the National Portrait Gallery of Sweden, and has an adjacent nature reserve where we are almost certain to spot one of the royal deer. We cycle alongside Lake Mälaren to Taxinge Castle, best-known for its tempting cake buffet, with some 65 different types of cakes and pastries. Afterwards we work off all that cake by cycling the last few kilometres of our bike tour. From Nykvarn we have a half-hour train journey back to Stockholm where we return to our first night's hotel and our farewell dinner.

**Day 8: Departure day.**

After breakfast we there is a 2-hour Stockholm cruise on the canals and waterways threading between the islands of the city. Our cruise ends around noon and you are free for your onward travel arrangements.

**Outdoor Travel** offers cycling holiday in several areas of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, Holland, Ireland, England and Scotland, Romania, Austria, Poland, Hungary, in the Czech Republic or India, Vietnam, New Zealand and Australia. Other group guided Bike & Boat 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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