

# A weekend in... Stockholm

With summer on its way, what better time to explore the Swedish capital's fascinating islands, asks **Laura Holt**

## Why go now?

Brighter days have returned to the Swedish capital after the long, dark winter. Now's the perfect time to experience the best of the city's green spaces, including at the Skansen Museum; the world's largest outdoor exhibition is at Djurgårdsslätten 49-51 (0046 8 442 6000; skansen.se; admission SEK120/£9.50), set amid the leafy parkland of Djurgården – one of 14 islands over which Stockholm spreads itself. Close by, another of Stockholm's top sights – the Vasa Museum – marks 25 years of housing the salvaged Vasa warship, which set sail in 1628 from Stockholm harbour, only to sink – rather embarrassingly – 30 minutes later.

## Getting there?

Stockholm's main airport, Arlanda, is served by British Airways (0844 493 0787; ba.com), SAS (0871 226 7760; flysas.com) and Norwegian (0330 828 0854; norwegian.com). Travelling into the city takes 20 minutes on the Arlanda Express (0046 771 720 200; arlandaexpress.com; returns SEK490/£40). Flygbussarna (0046 771 515 252; flygbussarna.se) and Swebus (0046 771 218 218; swebus.se) also run coach services (returns SEK198/£16).

Ryanair (0871 246 0000; ryanair.com) flies from Stansted to Skavsta airport from £19.99 one way. A 90-minute bus ride to the city using Flygbussarna costs SEK278/£22 return.

## Where to stay

### Special treat

Swiss entrepreneur Heinrich Robert Berns opened **Berns Hotel** (1) at Berzelii Park (0046 8 566 322 00; berns.se) as a pastry parlour 150 years ago. He then introduced alcohol and can-can girls, giving the venue a rather insubstantial reputation. Today, the building contains a clutch of stylish, boutique rooms instead. Doubles from SEK2,400 (£193).

### Mid-range

When **Story Hotel** (2) at Riddargatan 6 (0046 8 854 5039; storyhotels.com) opened in 2009, it turned a new page on Stockholm's hotel scene. Located in the upmarket Ostermalm neighbourhood, it features luxurious, industrial-style rooms. Doubles from SEK2,190 (£176).

### Budget

Minimalist design permeates the



interiors of **City Backpackers** (3) at Upplandsgatan 2 (0046 8 206 920; citybackpackers.org), a chic hostel in the commercial centre of Norrmalm. Perks include free Wi-Fi, use of the inhouse sauna and bicycle hire. Dorms from SEK190 (£15) per person.

## On arrival

**7pm**  
Head to the Old Town island of Gamla Stan for a drink. On Malartorget, you'll find **The Flying Elk** (4), a stylish gastro pub that

was opened two years ago by Michelin-starred chef Bjorn Frantzen (0046 8 208 583; theflyingelk.se). Try the Corner Club for cocktails (cornerclub.se); Gaston for wine (gastonvin.se); Alg Hjartat for unusual beer; and the Elk for up-tempo atmosphere and nightly DJs.

## 9pm

Continue the party at **Asiatiska**, the dazzling Asian-fusion restaurant at **Berns Hotel** (1). Housed in the chandeliered



Södermalm district

## Stockholm checklist

**1** The main Stockholm tourist board is located at Sergels Torg 3 (0046 8 508 28 508), though the website has creative cues on how to plan a great trip (visitstockholm.com).

**2** Many shops close surprisingly early at weekends – smaller independents put up shutters at 2pm, and don't open on Sundays.

**3** For access to public transport and dozens of attractions, invest in a Stockholm Card (SEK765/£60 for 48 hours).



Skansen Museum

former concert hall, eating here feels like a real event. Sushi from SEK140 (£11). Alternatively, aim for **Kott & Fiskbaren** (5) at Gamla Brogatan 40 (0046 8 505 244 45; kottfiskbaren.se) in Norrmalm, which blends a meat bar, fish counter and deli with stylish interiors. Try the Swedish meatballs (SEK175/£14).

## Day one

**10am**  
Start the day on Gamla Stan (the Old Town), where you'll find the

Royal Palace (6), official residence of the Swedish sovereign. The Treasury is one of the most engaging parts, home to the crown jewels (0046 8 402 61 30; kungahuset.se; SEK150/£12).

## 11am

Stroll along cobbled Osterlånggatan, lined with shops and cafés. Favourite among them is homewares boutique **Hilda Hilda** (7) at number 21 (0046 8 641 3680; hildahilda.se) and clothing outlet **Ester's Showroom** (0046 8 203 638; esterinflow.se) at number 24. For quirky design gifts, pop into **Kalika** (0046 8 205 219; kalika.se) at number 18.

## 1pm

Time for lunch at **Jerntorgiths** (8), a cosy café that serves sandwiches from SEK59 (£4.50) and salads from SEK100 (£8) overlooking **Jarntorget**, a picturesque square (0046 8 218 320; jerntorg.se).

## 3pm

Cross the water into Södermalm. Ten years ago, this island south of the Old Town was known as a no-go area after dark. However, it's recently reinvented itself with vintage furniture boutiques, hipster cafés and bustling bars – especially around **SoFo**, the area south of **Folkungagatan** street. A highlight at the north end is the **Fotografiska** photography museum (9) at **Stadsgårdshamnen** 22 (0046 8 509 005 00; fotografiska.eu; SEK120/£9.50), encased within a former customs house. As well as hosting four exhibitions a year, it also has a noteworthy restaurant on the top floor, where huge wraparound windows afford panoramic views of the harbour.

## 5pm

Enjoy a drink at **Harvest Home** (10) at **Bondegatan** 50 (0046 8 643 1616; harvesthome.se), a candle-lit pub in the heart of SoFo. Wine from SEK63 (£5).

## 8pm

Time for a meal you won't forget. Head to **The Grand Hotel** (11) at **Sodra Blasieholmshamnen** 8 (0046 8 679 3500; grandhotel.se), home to two restaurants by Swedish chef **Mathias Dahlgren**. With two Michelin stars, **Matsalen** is the more formal, but **Matbaren** – still with one star – excels for its relaxed atmosphere.

Options range from king crab (SEK275/£22) to wild duck (SEK265/£21).

## Day two

**10am**  
Get the day underway at the **Vasa Museum** (12) at **Galarvarvsvägen** 14 (0046 8 519 548 00; vasamuseet.se; SEK130/£10.50). Created 25 years ago to house the infamous Vasa warship, which sank in 1628, the museum puts on an engaging display, with the salvaged vessel at its heart.

**\*EXPERT TIP\***  
Head to the red-brick **Saluhall building** in Ostermalm to sample the Swedish tradition of **fika** (coffee and cake) as you watch the lively indoor market doing its trade (ostermalmshallen.se; closed Sunday).

## 11am

Take a leisurely walk along the north end of **Djurgården Island**. Hug the towpath, taking in the view of Stockholm harbour to your left and a panorama of ever-changing arboreal scenery on your right. You'll pass dog-walkers, rollerbladers and runners before the water narrows to meet a bridge. Cross it to reach your stop for lunch.

## Noon

With its riverside location, **Djurgårdsbrunn** (13) at **Djurgårdsbrunnsvägen** 68 (0046 8 624 2200; djurgardsbrunn.com) feels a world away from the Swedish capital, though it's actually only a short walk into town. On weekends, local families gather here for brunch, served in two sittings from noon-2pm and 2-4pm (SEK285/£23).

## 3pm

Spend the afternoon on **Skeppsholmen Island**, home to the excellent **Moderna Museet** (14). It features art from the 20th and 21st centuries, including pieces by **Edvard Munch**, **Francis Bacon**, **Jackson Pollock** and **Andy Warhol** (0046 8 5202 3500; moderna.museet.se; SEK120/£9.50).

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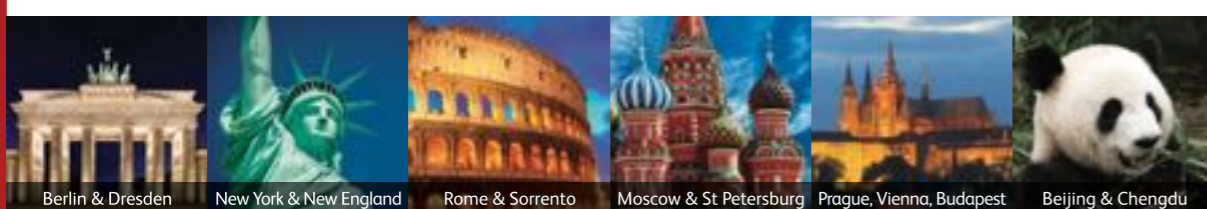
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