



CUT-OUT-AND-GO GUIDE | SUMMERY STOCKHOLM

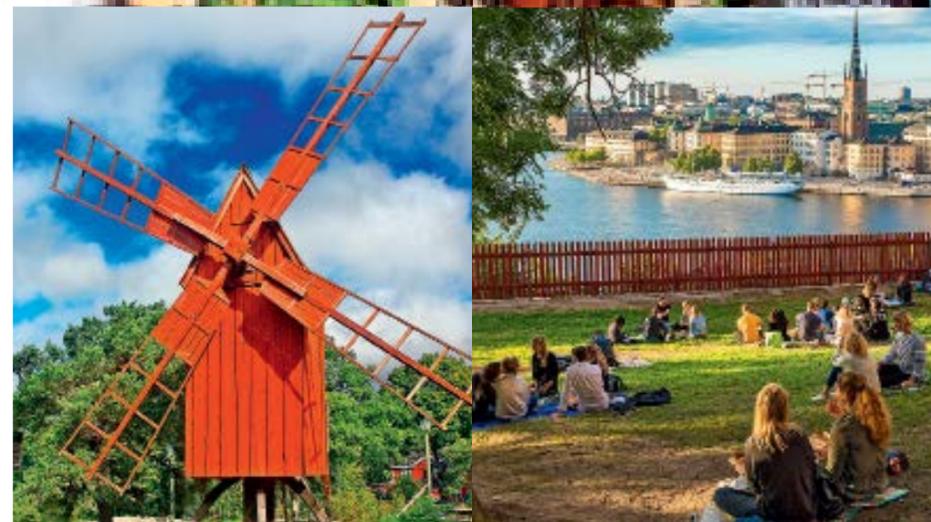


instant escapes

Summery Stockholm

When the mercury rises, Sweden's city of islands comes out to play

Forget cosy firesides, sleds and saunas. It's in summer — when the sun never sets, the crayfish are sweet, and light spills across the blues of the Baltic Sea — that Stockholm comes into its own. Pootle about in kayaks, swim in pristine waters, or raise a rooftop *snaps* with handsome new pals (who knock off work at 3pm to enjoy it all). *Skål!* **By Sally Howard**



SEE & DO

● Steal a march on the cruise-ship crowds by rising early to bask in the ethereal morning light. Stockholm By Horse (bokamera.se/stockholmbyhorse; from £59pp) has daybreak tours of the Old Town (Gamla Stan), with its medieval spires and Baroque Royal Palace (1 on map). Or **canter along the pine-scented riding trails of Djurgården** (2), a former royal hunting ground that's now a wooded island-park in the heart of the city.

● Say 'midsomer' and most Swedes reply 'picknick'! With its deli food halls and seaview parks, Stockholm was made for alfresco dining. Head for the counter at Fiskeläget (fiskelaget.com) in the central Hötorgshallen food hall (3) — locals plump for pickled herring, but try instead the delicious wild-salmon sarnies (£12). Then take the metro from Hötorget towards Södermalm island. **Roll out your blanket in hilltop Vita Bergen park** (4), and drink in the view across the archipelago.

● Stockholm's hotels vie to offer quirky activity-based rentals, from five-seater cargo bikes to bendy 'longboards' (sometimes free, often a £15-a-day hire). But go classic with a city pedal bike, hired for an afternoon from Strandvägen street, in the central Ostermalm district (rentabike.se; from £6; 5). **Breeze along the cycle path that snakes beside the water from bohemian Södermalm to Långholmen** island, where wooden houses are straight out of *Pippi Longstocking*.

RIDE THE WAVES

Want to spend more time exploring the archipelago? The Strömme ferry is a steal at £2.20 a ride (fjaderholmar.na.se; departs hourly from 11.30 to 21.30 from Nybroplan berth 13)

Eating out: alfresco cafe tables in old Gamla Stan; below, windmill at Skansen open-air museum; waterside picnics on Södermalm island

● You'll never know this city of 14 islands, locals will tell you, until you've seen it from the water. So join a group tour **kayaking beneath the bridges of Gamla Stan** in the company of peppy guide Sven (stockholmadventures.com; £40pp). Fancy something statelier? Dinner cruises come in at around £80pp on Strömme's antique steamers, including three courses with wine (stromma.se; 6).

● The Nytorget district, on Södermalm — SoFo to those in the know — is the heart of hipster Stockholm. Hop on the metro to Medborgarplatsen and take a morning stroll east along Kocksgatan and Asögatan streets — **a smorgasbord of vegan cafes, vintage stores, record shops — and beautiful Swedes**. Stop for a pick-me-up at retro confectionery shop Pärkans (parlanskonfektyr.se; 7).

● Part open-air architectural museum, part working farm, Skansen (skansen.se; from £16; 8), a 30-minute walk across pretty Djurgården bridge from central Ostermalm, is a favourite with families. Poke about its **peasant farmsteads and Nordic flower gardens** before picking up a fresh pastry from market garden-cum-cafe Rosendal's Garden, to gobble in the shade of fruit trees (rosendalstradgard.se; 9).

● Lidos are a no-brainer on a warm afternoon, or there's a wild swimming spot for everyone. Hornstulls Strand's sunnypiers, on the west of Södermalm, are packed with young Stockholmers quaffing ice-beaded beers (£3 from loopen.se; 10); while at Fredhäll (11), on Kungsholmen island, **bathers barbecue lunches on a rocky plateau before diving into the sea**. Or try the shaded coves to the north side of Sickla Lake (12) (via Sickla Udde tram), where tourists rarely venture and you'll glide past lily pads.

● Don't just retreat indoors at night — join locals making the most of the luminous skies by taking a blanket, plus a few beers from state booze chain Systembolaget (systembolaget.se), to one of the city's free outdoor gigs. Try Parkteatern's **theatre and music performances, or cinema screenings, often in English**, at Rålambhovsparken (13) (stockholm.tourist.blogspot.com has listings). >



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EAT

● Kid-friendly cafe

VETE-KATTEN (Mains about £10)
Because: This '20s-styled cafe in central Norrmalm looks genteel, but it's a top stop if you've kids in tow — staff are sanguine about the odd flying cinnamon bun. **Travel's tip:** At £7, the pie of the day is a steal. *Kungsgatan 55; 00 46 8 208405, vetekatten.se; ⑩*

● Hipster haunt

URBAN DELI TAKBAREN (Mains about £15)
Because: This tucked-away sculpture-gallery-cum-terrace restaurant in Norrmalm dishes up generous organic smorgasbords and Hernö gin cocktails to a friendly millennial crowd. **Travel's tip:** The terrace is easy to miss — nip to the deli downstairs and staff will show you the way, via back stairs. *Sveavägen 44; 00 46 8 4255 0020, urbandeli.org; ⑮*

● Rising star

OAXENSLIP (Mains about £16)
Because: Michelin-starred Oaxen is the one for new-Nordic nosh (don't miss the 'Angels' food' pud). The Djurgården setting's not scruffy, either: expect floor-to-ceiling windows and nods to the site's shipbuilding past. **Travel's tip:** Mains are gigantic, so share them. *Beckholmsvägen 26; 00 46 8 5515 3105, oaxen.com; ⑮*

● Swedish traditional

RICHE (Tasting menus from £18)
Because: This glass-fronted Ostermalm stalwart turns out classics for the likes of Stockholm's politicians. **Travel's tip:** Ignore the international dishes — you're here for local fare such as steaming meatballs with lingonberries. *Birger Jarlsgatan 4; 00 46 8 5450 3560, riche.se; ⑦*

● Killer crayfish

LISA ELMQVIST (Mains about £25)
Because: The Swedish tradition of devouring crayfish with *snaps* (shots), while sporting silly hats, takes an elegant turn here, in Ostermalm's 19th-century indoor market. **Travel's tip:** Ask for a fish lunch (such as cold poached salmon with dill mayonnaise and pickled cucumber) boxed up for a picnic in nearby Humlegården Park. *Östermalms Saluhall; 00 46 8 5534 0400, ostermalmshallen.se; ⑮*

PRE-BOOZE BITE

Prep for Barrio's Passionfruit Mojitos with dinner at nightlife institution Stora Grill (*stora.se*), where Turkish kebabs come with a Scandi twist

BUDGET TIP

The people-watching's great at Riche, but the drinks are pricey. Head to nearby Vigarda (*vigarda.se*) for an affordable nightcap

DRINK & SHOP

● Characterful tippie

BARRIO
Because: On the roof of southerly multi-venue Hornhuset, intimate Barrio majors in affordable fruit cocktails and upcycled communal tables. **Travel's tip:** The Neapolitan pizzas are a bit meh. Eat before you go. *Långholmsgatan 15B; hornhuset.se/barrio; ⑩*

● Scandi design chain

DESIGNTORGET
Because: It's Ikea's posher cousin, touting one-of-a-kind household and functional objects from indie Swedish designers. **Travel's tip:** Buying something bulky? No worries: they'll ship it home for you, for a snip. *Sergelgöngen 29; designorget.se; ⑫*

● Wild one

TRADGÅRDEN
Because: You can catch a live gig, play table tennis or pétanque, and have a night swim — this summer institution is more rolling festival than nightclub. **Travel's tip:** Entry queues are lengthy from July, so choose a live-performance night and prebook tickets at tickster.com. *Hammerby Slussväg 2; ⑫*

ASK THE LOCAL

Livia Podesta has lived in Stockholm for 13 years and works for the Swedish government

“On sunny days I cycle down to Bergsunds Strand ⑫ on Södermalm, where there's a weekend flea market and food trucks. I pick up some grilled paneer from Indian Street Food (*indianstreetfood.se*) and descend the wooden staircase next to the river. Visitors often focus on the Old Town, but Tantolunden Park ⑬, in Hornstull, is lovely for photos. It's dotted with small wooden houses that, in summer, compete to grow the most beautiful blooms. At Fjällgatan (Slüssen Station; ⑭), you have an amazing viewing spot across the city from a cliff, and there are two ice-cream places — my favourite is Finnsmanns Kalasglass (*kalasglass.se; ⑬*).



STAY

● Bargain B&B

STOCKHOLM CLASSIC HOTEL (Doubles from £59, B&B)
Because: If you're on a budget, but can't bear a hostel, try this cheap and chic option in Södermalm. There's an airport-shuttle pick-up point just a kilometre away, too. **Travel's tip:** Don't be tempted by the Small Double rooms: the eight quid saving is little comfort when you slam your shins into the TV cabinet at 3am. Upgrade. *Lundagatan 31; classicstockholm.com; ⑫*

● Quirky stay

MALARDROTTNINGEN YACHT HOTEL (Doubles from £80, B&B)
Because: Nautical atmosphere and a prime location (it's anchored at Riddarholmen, a trot from the Old Town) will sell you on the unusual cabin-style rooms in this converted '20s yacht. **Travel's tip:** Twins are roomier than the two-man bunks. Ask for a waterside twin with a porthole, at no extra cost. *Riddarholmskajen 111; malardrottningen.se; ⑫*

● Destination digs

DOWNTOWN CAMPER (Doubles from £128, B&B)
Because: It's hipster chic in the heart of Stockholm. Think loanable kayaks (from £4), an activity room with backgammon boards, and loft-style 'co-living' spaces. **Travel's tip:** Don't sleep past brekkie: there's everything from roasted artichoke hearts to oven-warmed tortilla. *Brunkebergstorg 9; scandichotels.com; ⑫*

● Period piece

BERNS HOTEL (Doubles from £139, B&B)
Because: Well located in Norrmalm, Berns has sleek, white-on-white Scandi-chic bedrooms — in contrast to its fin-de-siècle ballroom restaurant, where you get to breakfast à la carte beneath shimmery chandeliers. **Travel's tip:** The top floor shares a corridor with a hip, on-site nightclub, so avoid rooms on this level. On floor five you'll get the city views without the nocturnal sound effects. *Berzelii Park, Näckströmsgatan 8, berns.se; ⑫*

HIDDEN SPACES

The tucked-away public spaces are a bonus at Downtown Camper — but many guests miss them. The Game Room is great for kids (walk to the back of the ground floor, beyond reception) or escape to the Reading Loft (it's strung above the lounge room!)

Post modern: clockwise from top left, the Robert Berns Suite at Berns Hotel; diners on Oaxen Slip's terrace; Ett Hem's stylish lounge; designer homeware at Designorget; chef's finishing touch at Riche restaurant



● Lovers' nook

HOTEL RIVAL (Doubles from £258, B&B)
Because: A petite boutique stay in a quiet and well-connected strip of Södermalm, Hotel Rival is owned by Abba's Benny Andersson. Thank you for the music (and the quality buffet spread), Benny. **Travel's tip:** Higher-up rooms, complete with Juliet balconies, are worth the £100 extra outlay. Go park-facing for a view, or courtyard for quiet. *Mariatorget 3, rival.se; ⑫*

● Homely townhouse

ETT HEM (Doubles from £409, B&B)
Because: In residential Sibirien, luxury boutique hotel Ett Hem (meaning 'at home') lives up to its billing, from the tree-shaded courtyard garden to the library furnished with slouchy sofas, where you can pore over design tomes (with free afternoon tea). **Travel's tip:** Feeling peckish? No problem. Chef Michel is happy for you to raid the kitchen fridge for free drinks and snacks, any time of day or night. *Sköldungagatan 2; etthem.se; ⑫*

GET ME THERE

GO INDEPENDENT
BA flies from Heathrow to Stockholm Arlanda from £76 return. **Norwegian** has returns from Gatwick to Arlanda from £84 return. **SAS** flies to Arlanda from Heathrow from £100 return. **Ryanair** flies to Stockholm Skavsta (which is slightly further away) from Stansted, Gatwick, Liverpool and Edinburgh, from £45 return.

GOPACKAGED

Lastminute.com (lastminute.com) has three nights in four-star accommodation from £189pp, B&B, including return flights from Stansted. **Classic Collection Holidays** (classic-collection.co.uk) has three nights in a five-star hotel from £859pp, B&B, with private transfers and return flights from Gatwick. Or, for more options, try **EasyJet Holidays** (*easyjet.com/holidays*).

FURTHER INFORMATION

See the city's official tourism website: visitstockholm.com ■