

STOCKHOLM: SEVEN REASONS TO STAY

Despite being dubbed the world's smallest big city, **Stockholm** is Sweden's economic powerhouse, and a global hub for technology innovation. Yet it's also steeped in Nordic culture and filled with thriving, pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods, says local expert Annika Hipple, which are all excellent reasons to stay on after business is done



Island hopping

Built on 14 islands where the Baltic Sea meets Lake Malaren, Stockholm is shaped by water. Hop on a sightseeing boat plying the city's waterways, or take a day excursion into the archipelago with **Stromma** or **Waxholmsbolaget**. Feeling active? **Stockholm Adventures** offers kayaking tours in the city and outer archipelago.



Local bites

Stockholm's vibrant culinary scene focuses on fresh local ingredients and innovative spins on Swedish cuisine – try **Fem Sma Hus** ('five small houses') in Gamla Stan, where dishes include veal and reindeer fillets, seared char fish and vanilla ice cream with cloudberry. If you're visiting around Christmas, don't miss the *julbord* buffets of meatballs, gravlax and herring at either **Wardshuset Ulla Winbladh** or **Operakällaren**.



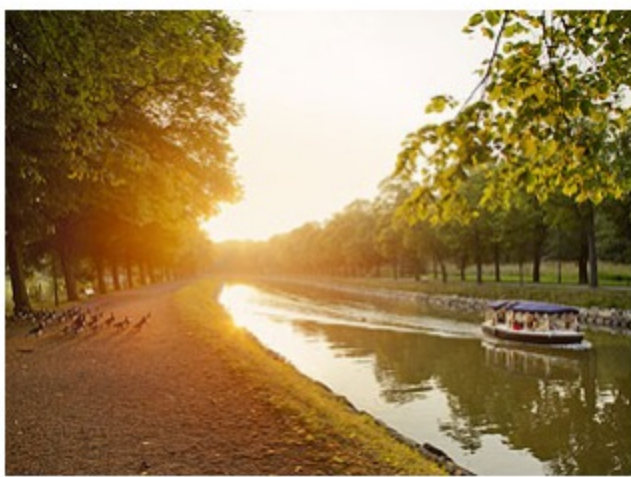
Time travel

Trace Sweden's often turbulent history at the small but well-presented **Museum of Medieval Stockholm**, tucked away under a bridge by the Royal Palace, or the **Swedish History Museum** on Ostermalm, where highlights include the Viking exhibit and glittering Gold Room.



Kaffe break

The concept of *fika* – a social coffee break – is a cornerstone of Swedish culture, and in Stockholm you're unlikely to be far from a cafe where you can enjoy a *kaffe* with a *kanelbulle* (cinnamon bun). Grab a table overlooking Stortorget or Jarntorget squares in Gamla Stan for prime people-watching or join the locals at a sidewalk cafe on hip Sodermalm.



Green at heart

Eco-conscious Stockholm boasts the world's first urban national park, the Royal National City Park, which includes the leafy Djurgarden Island. Explore on foot or rent a bike, kayak or canoe by the **Djurgarden Bridge**. Stop for lunch or *fika* at organic bakery and cafe **Rosendals Tradgard** where the menu changes daily depending on what's fresh in their garden.



Views to thrill

There's nothing like seeing Stockholm from above to get a feel for its network of islands and waterways. Ascend the **City Hall Tower** for a superb panorama of central Stockholm, or head to Fjallgatan or Skinnarviksparken for free views from the heights of Sodermalm.



Cultural icons

One of Sweden's most successful exports, ABBA, recently got **their own museum** on Djurgarden. For those whose tastes are more dragon tattoos than dancing queens, Stockholm City Museum's **Millennium walking tour** on Sodermalm traces the footsteps of author Stieg Larsson and his memorable characters.