Stockholm's timeless allure

IMAGINE A METROPOLIS WHERE ONE CAN IMMERSE ONESELF IN THE MOST PRISTINE NATURE, SHOP AT FLAGSHIP STORES OF THE COOLEST BRANDS, ENJOY FINE DINING IN MULTI-STARRED RESTAURANTS, AND ADMIRE OUTSTANDING CONTEMPORARY ART, ALL WITHIN A FEW KILOMETRES. STOCKHOLM, WHICH SEAMLESSLY BLENDS MODERN URBAN LIFESTYLE WITH GORGEOUS NATURAL BEAUTY, OFFERS ALL THIS AND MUCH MORE.

Built across 14 islands where Lake Malaren meets the Baltic Sea, the »Venice of the North« boasts leafy parks, Insta-perfect sea views, boat-dotted harbours, and the self-assured charm of people with nothing to prove. Explore it by foot, boat, bike, or the excellent public transportation system: our pick of what to see in this capital whose rhythms seem impervious to tourism; and where old style meets new creative moods in an easy, very Swedish way.

© Thomas Gallagher

The city stretches over 14 islands connected by 53 bridges.

The Royal Opera is located in the district of Östermalm.

SEE

Every district has its different vibe. Start in **Östermalm**, an opulent area where sleek boutiques mingle with institutions such as the historical **Grand Hôtel**, the **Royal Swedish Opera** and the just reopened **Nationalmuseum**. Hop across the bridge to **Gamla Stan**, the picturesque Old City, where the majestic **Royal Palace** filled with high-baroque staterooms awaits; continue to the island of **Södermalm**, the coolest part of town, where the area of **SoFo** (South of Folkungagatan), bursting with trendy cafes and stores, has become a hipsters' hangout. Conclude your tour on the island of **Djurgården**, the city's green lung, where the affluent have their mansions and everyone escapes for a gulp of fresh air.

© Erik Svensson

Fotografiska is a photography museum with exhibitions by artists such as Steve McCurry.

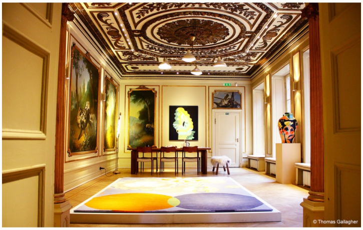
ART

A short walk from the city centre, the verdant island of **Skeppsholmen** hosts the **Modern Art Museum**: its impressive collection showcases works by household names such as Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, Francis Bacon and Jeff Koons. **ArkDes**, a world-class space dedicated to architecture and design, is located in the same building. Photography lovers will find their Mecca at **Fotografiska**, a seaside centre (in Södermalm) exhibiting works by artists like Annie Leibowitz, Steve McCurry and Robert Mapplethorpe (the restaurant has been voted »Best Museum Restaurant in the World«). A cluster of contemporary art galleries is ensconced in the **Gallery District**, a complex designed by Ragnar Östberg (the architect who also designed the City Hall);

© Thomas Gallagher

The ArkDes is a center for architecture and design.

check out **Nordenhake** – with spaces in Berlin and Mexico City –, specialised in minimalist and conceptual art. In a 17th century palace in Östermalm, **CFHILL Art Space** has introduced a new concept: it doesn't represent artists, but collaborates with a mix of Swedish and international names. **Andréhn-Schiptjenko Gallery**, one of the pioneers of the local art scene, is also worth a visit. It represents today's young Scandinavian talents such as Ynguild Saeter or Theresa Traore Dahlberg.



CFHILL Art Space is set in a 17th century castle.

© Thomas Gallagher

The Museum of Modern Art.

© Svenskt Tenn

The design shop Svensk Tenn is a temple of colorful furniture, textiles and ceramics.

© Brendan Austin

DESIGN

When it comes to interior design, **Svensk Tenn** is *the* store: a temple of colourful furniture, textiles, ceramics, mostly by legendary designer Josef Frank (there is also a charming old-style tea salon). Swedish furniture made with premium materials and craftsmanship is the forte of the adjoining **Malmstenboutiken**, where most of the pieces are by founder Carl Mamsten. Don't miss **Dusty Deco**, a creative hub where you can discover hand-picked European vintage furniture, works by up-and-coming Swedish artists and the store's own brand, such as Indian hand-made rugs. For selected pieces of Scandi design, such as lamps and chairs by Alvar Aalto, curated by the owner Andrew Duncanson, head to **Modernity**. **Brandstationen**, a colourful bazaar were the décor “knows no boundaries” displays a fascinating mix of vintage and contemporary furniture, prints, unique pieces and objects from around the globe.

At Malmstenboutiken the furniture is made by hand.

© Thomas Gallagher

Modernity stands for Scandic Design.

SHOP TILL YOU DROP

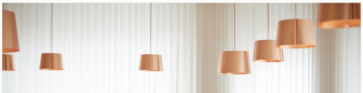
Prada, *Gucci* & Co.: the leading lights of fashion have their flagship stores on Birger Jarlsgatan, the golden avenue which has been known to overheat credit cards in record time. In the upmarket area of **Östermalm** you’ll find also the boutiques of the most sought-after Swedish brands. **Acne Studios** main store is set in the former bank where the heist that spurred the famous “Stockholm Syndrome” took place. Across the square, **Rodebjer** is known for garments where boho-chic meets Scandi-minimalism (the best-seller is the silk kaftan). Next door, **Hope** displays unisex functional garments with an emphasis on craftsmanship. A “European Luxury House”, **Byredo** creates sublime fragrances (try Bal D’Afrique) and chic “necessaires de voyage”. **Palmgrens**, the “Swedish *Hermès*”, is the main supplier of leather goods for the Royal Family (the rattan bag is a classic). For an alternative mood, hop over to **Södermalm** for addresses like **Herr Judit**, a treasure trove of curated vintage menswear; or **Nitty Gritty**, where cult items by brands such as *Comme des Garçons* hang side by side with pieces of street-style by Swedish designers (there is also a hair salon).

Palmgrens is the “Swedish *Hermès*”.

© Nitty Gritty

At Nitty Gritty there are cult objects of all kinds.

Exquisite Scandinavian cuisine is available at Specieret.



EAT & DRINK

New Nordic Cuisine, focused on ethics, health, quality and sustainability, has its epicentre in the capital and ambassadors such as top chef Mathias Dahlgren, the creator of **Matbaren** and its vegetarian twin **Rutabaga**, two airy bistros in the old-luxury world setting of the Grand Hôtel. Organic, seasonal and local ingredients are the foundation of the exquisite Modern Scandinavian cuisine of **Specieret and Gastrologik** by young chefs Jacob Holmstrom and Anton Bjuhr. The former is a small casual venue serving just one dish for lunch, the latter offers a culinary experience with a set menu. Locally sourced produce and Swedish recipes are on offer at the marine-themed **Oaxen Krog**, a superb fine dining venue on the waterfront of Djurgården island (it has a more casual annex, **Slip Bistro**). Booking is essential at **Woodstockholm** in Södermalm: the food is local and seasonal, the furniture designed in-house, and the menu themed (in November: “Food in the Movies”). The island is also home to **Teatern**, a complex within the Ringen shopping centre where famous chefs have small stalls: a chance to taste gourmet dishes at affordable prices. Stalls serving fresh Swedish specialties can also be found at **Östermalms Saluhall**, the food hall soon to reoccupy its magnificent original structure, which is currently under renovation. On weekends, join the locals at **Brasserie Riche's Lilla Baren**, a small bar always packed with beautiful people. Or bag a table at the hip rooftop bar **TAK**, for inventive cocktails, amazing city views and people-watching at its best.

© Gastrologik

Seasonal and regional organic ingredients form the basis of Gastrologik.

© Thomas Gallagher

Join the locals at Brasserie Riche's Lilla Baren.

BERNS
BERNS SALONGER
© Berns

The Berns is the VIP among the hotels.

STAY

From grande dames to millennial hangouts: Stockholm has them all, mirroring its multi-faceted personality. **Nobis** boasts the constant buzz that makes you feel part of the action even if you never set foot outside its doors (its **Gold Bar** is amongst the hottest in town) and impeccable Scandi décor by *Claesson Koivisto Rune*. At **Berns**, where Rihanna and Robbie Williams rest their heads and models reside during fashion week, the vibe is laid back rock-n-roll: on weekends people line-up to eat at its Asian restaurant and get into its bar and clubs hosting gigs by international bands. Detox, recharge and rejuvenate at **Yasuragi**, a Japanese-style hotel and spa, nestled in wild woods just 20 minutes by boat from the city centre. Rooms feature natural materials

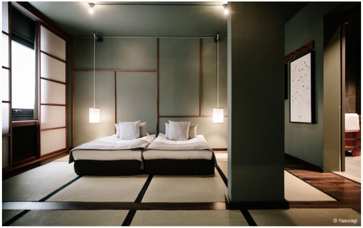
© Mathias Nordgren

The Berns Restaurant offers Asian food.

and spectacular views of the bay. Kimonos are the only attire you need during your stay. The impressive Japanese-style baths feature saunas, Turkish baths, outdoor and indoor plunge pools and rain curtains. The spa offers rejuvenating rituals using the pure Swedish products by *Hada*; the gourmet restaurants serve exquisite modern Japanese cuisine. Heavenly. To re-immerse yourself in the pulse of the city, choose **Hobo**, a millennials' favourite with a fun, playful vibe. The lobby/bar is bursting with creative types; the breakfast buffet, stocked with organic delicacies, is legendary; and the music spills into the revamped Brunkeberg Square. Welcome to Stockholm, a city with many souls.

© Peo Bengtsson

The Nobis Hotel has a typical Scandinavian interior design.



© Yasuragi

In Yasuragi you can relax extensively.

· ARTICLE BY Alessandra Signorelli

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