



Nature Travels

outdoor experiences in Sweden



WESTERN SWEDEN CYCLE EXPLORER

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Western Sweden Cycle Explorer: 1 or more days

Experience Code: BLU5BS1

With a working farm as your base, take self-guided cycling excursions to discover an area rich in natural and cultural heritage.

This experience gives you chance to explore the surrounding countryside at your own pace. Bike through luxuriant meadows of summer flows and quiet forests exploring an area which is not only renowned for its scenic and archaeological interest but also ideal for discovering on two wheels.

The farm that will be your base camp for the duration of your stay is a unique working sheep farm and home to 80 of Sweden's 300 remaining black fine-woolled sheep. This rare breed is characterised by its exceptionally fine wool for weaving, and the surrounding meadows are kept open from the ever-encroaching forest by the action of their grazing. Located on a rise surrounded by ancient oaks, the farm itself is almost a self-contained village with its traditional red and white houses and outbuildings.

Each morning you pack your picnic basket, choose your route, saddle up and head out for the day into the quiet of the surrounding area – on your travels you may encounter some of the rich local wildlife, including a number of species of birds of prey and perhaps a majestic elk, the King of the Forest, blocking your path! Along the way, cool off with a dip in one of the many lakes, stop for a quiet picnic in some secluded spot, or scour the forests for mushrooms or berries...however you choose to pass the time, you can be assured of a relaxing and uplifting cycling experience in the heart of the Swedish countryside!

This experience is available for any duration, from one night to a more extended stay allowing you to really explore and get to know the scenery and history of this fascinating area. Best cycling conditions are generally from end of March to end of October, though accommodation at the farm may be booked year-round.

Dates for 2008 summer season:

Season: Best cycling conditions end March to end October, though this experience can be booked year-round. Dates by arrangement - please contact us for availability.

The price:

Full board:

Adult £76/night; Child under 12 years £65/night.

Half Board:

Adult £65/night; Child under 12 years £55/night.

What The Price Includes:

Accommodation

Accommodation is in two-person sleeping lofts on the farm. Accommodation is in the loft area of a 1½-level house. Provided you are less than 2m tall you will have no problems standing straight in the middle! Shared toilet and shower facilities.

Meals

Half board includes breakfast and dinner.

Full board includes breakfast, morning coffee, lunch, afternoon coffee and dinner.

Equipment

There are a number of bicycles available on the farm which you are welcome to borrow. You will also receive a route map/description.

Guides:

Guidance and tour descriptions from your host and hostess.

Transfer:

Transfer from Herrljunga or Lekåsa.

What The Price Does Not Include:

Cycle helmets; alcoholic drinks.

Optional extras:

Single supplement: £20/night.

Other activities available on the farm: cooking, try your hand at wool and leather-crafts.

Equipment/clothes needed:

NB: We advise you not to buy equipment or clothes for your trip or to incur other non-refundable expenses such as flights until you have received confirmation of your booking from us in writing.

Packing list (recommended):

You will need suitable clothes for the season in which you visit (please ask us if you would like advice).

Toiletries:

Soap, toothpaste, plasters, moisturiser, sun-cream, painkillers, blister tape.

Clothes:

Take clothes you are not afraid to damage. Pack rainwear (jacket and trousers), boots, shoes, a pair of warm socks, something to cover your head in case of heat or rain, a pair of gloves/mittens, a warm sweater, sweatshirt, T-shirt, shirt, trousers, a pair of shorts, beachwear, underwear, anorak (or similar) and something to sleep in.

Additional:

Sunglasses, camera, binoculars and a good book.

Health requirements/experience:

The biking terrain is generally easy. General good health and fitness.

Group size

Minimum: 1 person.

Maximum: The farm can accommodate groups of up to 14 people.

Groups

It is possible to book this experience as a group. Please contact us for a quotation.

Information about the area:

The area is rich in history, not only because of the "VästgötaLagen", (laws passed on by verbal tradition for centuries and first written down in 1280s), but also because of historic events and roads from Birger Jarl's time. The farm is situated near to the very first ancient road from Lödöse to Birka.

Herrljunga:

There is a great deal to discover in Herrljunga, the meeting point of the railway and the road in Västergötland. In the county of Herrljunga, distances are small. Outdoor activities such as bathing, windsurfing and hiking/cycling tours are available to all. For the nature lover, the area offers a diverse fauna and flora of meadow and forest species. It also has a rich historical past where traditional craftsmanship and culture live on.

Västergötland:

Västergötland is an area of stunning scenery and a prospering cultural life. Admire the castles, each with a history of its own. The picturesque towns, quite often with a stream running through them, offer a wide selection of local art and handicrafts. The warm and friendly atmosphere makes every visitor feel welcome. Perhaps you will also notice the subtle humour, characteristic of Västergötland.

Experience the tablelands with their unique flora and fauna where the cows graze in the pastures. The fertile plains of Västergötland favours the lush vegetation as well as the many farmers. Since ancient times the plains have been home to generations of Swedes, with the megaliths as monuments of the past. The historical sites are innumerable. This may be the reason that Västergötland is called "the cradle of Sweden". Västergötland offered a variety of places suitable for settlements. Situated between the two huge lakes of Vänern and Vättern, the early Swedish settlers had all the possibilities for successful fishing and transport along the waterways. Today the lakes play a significant role for recreation, as do the nature reserves and national parks such as Kinnekulle and Tiveden.

Common Sense and the Right of Public Access

Do not disturb, do not destroy – that is the basic principle of Sweden's right of public access. It is not an unrestricted right. Here, you can read about the rules that apply.

The Swedish right of public access is not a law, nor is it an absolute right. It may rather be regarded as an opportunity, one that makes it possible for everyone to enjoy the countryside. But it is an opportunity that requires responsibility, consideration and good judgement. Rules describing the kinds of consideration that must be shown are incorporated into Sweden's environmental law, and apply to everyone who exercises the right of public access.

Respect others' privacy

You may travel through the countryside on foot, bicycle, horse or skis, and temporarily remain in one place, as long as there is no risk that your presence or activities will damage crops, tree plantations or other sensitive areas. But you must respect the privacy of others, and you may not cross or intrude upon private property.

Camping

It is permitted to set up a tent for a day or so on ground that is not used for agriculture and is far from the nearest dwelling. The closer to a residence and the greater the risk of disturbing others, the more important it is to ask the landowner for permission.

Do not litter

All sorts of littering are forbidden in the countryside. A cigarette butt in a dry summer forest can destroy resources worth millions. Glass, tins and bottle caps harm both humans and wildlife, and plastic bags cause great suffering to animals that ingest them. For this reason, bags full of litter should never be left beside rubbish bin if it happens to be full.

Blossoms and berries

You may not take such items as twigs, branches or bark from living trees, including birches. Obviously, you may not take entire shrubs or trees, either. But you are allowed to pick wild berries, flowers and mushrooms, as well twigs and branches that have fallen to the ground. Certain flower species are so rare that they risk becoming endangered. These species are protected and may not be picked. Information about them is available from county administrative boards. Orchids are protected throughout Sweden.

Protected natural areas

Protected natural areas, including nature reserves and national parks, usually have special rules that restrict the right of public access.

More information on the right of public access can be found on our website under About Sweden or at www.allemansratten.se

Getting there:

NB: We advise you not to buy equipment or clothes for your trip or to incur other non-refundable expenses such as flights until you have received confirmation of your booking from us in writing.

By Air:

You can choose to fly to:

- Copenhagen
- Gothenburg Landvetter
- Gothenburg City

For details of flight connections see our Travel Add-ons page at <http://www.naturetravels.co.uk/category-add-ons.htm>

Many airlines offer discounts on rental cars in connection with their flights.

Without flying

- **London-Herrljunga by train via Cologne.** Lunchtime Eurostar to Brussels, train to Cologne, overnight sleeper to Copenhagen and onward train to Herrljunga.
- **London-Herrljunga by ferry to Denmark then train.** Ferry from Harwich to Denmark, train to Copenhagen and onward train to Herrljunga.

Travel within Sweden:

From Copenhagen Kastrup airport: Train to Herrljunga. Travel time 4.5-5 hours with one or more changes.

From Gothenburg Landvetter or Gothenburg City airports: Flight bus to Gothenburg Central (can be booked directly through us – please see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm - travel time 20 mins). Train to Herrljunga (travel time 1 hour or less direct).

From Gothenburg Central you can also travel by local bus 801 to Lekåsa.

Transfer to/from the farm is included from either Herrljunga or Lekåsa.

To see train connections and book tickets, go to www.sj.se or call +46 771 75 75 75. Click "In English" in the top right corner. The most affordable ticket type is "Just nu 2 klass". Please note that prices are only displayed and tickets released for booking 90 days before travel.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us and we will be happy to advise.

What to do next:

If you are interested in this experience, please make sure that you understand exactly what the experience entails and are confident that you will be able to take part fully in all activities included in the trip. If you have any doubts or questions, please discuss the matter with us and we will be happy to advise. Similarly, if you have any particular health or dietary requirements that we need to be aware of, please mention these at the time of booking.

If you feel confident that you will be able to take part, then download and read our TERMS AND CONDITIONS. Then, please contact us to make sure that your chosen dates are available, and feel free to ask us anything else you like: we are keen to ensure that your trip is an enjoyable and memorable experience for you – we love Sweden and we want you to too!

For more information on how to book this trip please see www.naturetravels.co.uk/booking.htm or call us on 01929 463774.

Additional Notes

This provider has received a prestigious Swedish Ecotourism award for its commitment to high standards to cultural and environmental sensitivity.