



Nature Travels

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SEA KAYAKING IN THE STOCKHOLM ARCHIPELAGO - 3 DAYS

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Sea Kayaking in the Stockholm Archipelago – 3 days

Experience Code: STA3KS1

The Stockholm Archipelago is a network of over 24,000 islands, rocks and skerries, many of which are completely uninhabited, extending 60km to the east of the capital Stockholm, "Venice of the North". The archipelago is easily accessible from Stockholm, which is itself built on some of the larger islands near to the mainland, yet is one of Sweden's most stunning natural areas, home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna including majestic aerial predators such as the White-tailed Sea Eagle and Osprey.

The calm, sheltered waters, whispering pine trees, smooth rocky islands and colourful orchid meadows make the Stockholm Archipelago ideal for sea kayaking and wild camping – and with thousands of islands to choose from, finding your own private island is rarely a problem!

Over three days you will discover some of the very best of what the Stockholm Archipelago has to offer. Your start point is the island of Runmarö, one of the top paddling areas in the archipelago offering excellent access to the wilder scenery of the outer archipelago.

Sea kayaking is an ideal way to experience the rich natural heritage of the archipelago, allowing you to travel through shallow, narrow passages between the islands where oystercatchers and seagulls can reach the bottom but larger boats cannot pass. Kayaking is a tranquil, low-impact form of transport allowing you to enjoy the scenery and wildlife of the area without disturbance.

Led by an experienced local guide with intimate knowledge of the natural and cultural heritage of the region, Sea Kayaking in the Stockholm Archipelago is suitable for both novices and more experienced paddlers alike. Distance covered and the pace of the tour can be flexible depending on weather conditions and the needs and wishes of the participants – but wherever your paddle takes you, the most important thing is to relax and enjoy the unique beauty of the archipelago landscape, all the more precious and remarkable for being so easily accessible from one of Europe's loveliest cities.

Scheduled tours run from afternoon on Friday to afternoon on Sunday, making Sea Kayaking in the Stockholm Archipelago the perfect option for a long weekend active break for individuals, couples, families with older children or small groups of friends. For larger groups and corporate clients, private tours are possible on custom dates by arrangement.

If time is limited or you would like to discover the pleasure of sea kayaking in the archipelago without the commitment of a longer tour, one-day tours are also available.

Friday / Day 1:

You assemble by the coast in Stavsånäs, less than one hour by local bus from the centre of Stockholm, in the afternoon around 13.00 (details of local travel arrangements will be provided after booking). Your experience begins with a transfer by taxi boat using a family-run firm to the island of Runmarö, where your kayak guide will be waiting to welcome you. You will then have a short instruction meeting where you are taken through how to use your equipment and important safety procedures before taking to the water to begin your exploration of some of the Stockholm Archipelago's 24,000 islands, rocks and skerries.

The distance covered on this first day is quite short to allow you to settle into your technique and relax into the surroundings. When you come to your first island camping spot for the night, you will pitch camp before preparing dinner together in the twilight.

Saturday / Day 2:

A quick dip in the refreshing archipelago waters is the perfect start to the day. After breakfast you will once more take to the water for a day of leisurely paddling. If weather conditions are suitable, you will head out towards the island of Bullerö out towards the open sea. Bullerö is well-known in Sweden as the inspiration for Swedish artist Bruno Liljefors, who used the landscapes of Bullerö as the basis for his nature paintings. There is a small museum and picturesque village on the island, and you take a break here for a short visit before paddling on to your next wild camping spot for the night.

If you have some remaining energy after your day on the water, an evening stroll along the rocks to enjoy the sunset and tranquility before dinner is an ideal way to round off your second day in the archipelago.

Sunday / Day 3:

If the early sunrise of a Swedish summer wakes you early, you can take to the water for a morning swim or dawn paddle. After a hearty breakfast, you will load up the kayaks to spend the morning exploring new inlets, islets and skerries. Your guide is knowledgeable in the rich natural heritage of the area and you have an opportunity to learn about the unique flora and fauna of the Stockholm Archipelago. Notable bird species in the archipelago include the White-tailed Sea Eagle and Osprey, and with luck you may catch sight of these majestic predators in the wide skies above.

As always, weather and wind conditions will dictate the best route to follow, but the day is planned with paddling stretches of reasonable distance and a stop for lunch, with the level of challenge adapted to suit the needs and wishes of the group. Eventually it will be time to head home towards Runmarö. Here you will unpack the kayaks and see to the equipment before catching the taxi boat back to Stavnäs with final views of the archipelago landscape behind and the beginnings of Stockholm, "Venice of the North" to the east.

You will be back in Stockholm around 19.00.

Dates for 2010 season:

3-day tour:

- 02.07-04.07.10
- 23.07-25.07.10
- 30.07-01.08.10 (special tour for participants aged 55+)
- 06.08-08.08.10
- 13.08-15.08.10
- 20.08-22.08.10
- 03.09-05.09.10

Groups of minimum 4 persons can also book private tours on dates by arrangement between June and September (April to November for groups with previous kayaking experience).

1-day variation:

A 1-day variation on the standard tour is also available on the following dates:

- Every Saturday and Sunday 05.06-12.09.10, also every Thursday and Friday 01.07-27.08.10.

Price:

3-day tour:

£334/person

1-day variation:

£92/person (Thursdays and Fridays), £112/person (Saturdays and Sundays). For 1-day tours, you will travel from central Stockholm by local bus in the morning then to the kayak centre by taxi boat to begin your tour. You will spend the day kayaking in the archipelago and be back in Stockholm in the evening around 18.00-19.00. Price includes taxi-boat transfer to/from the kayak centre, kayak equipment, outdoor lunch and services of local guide.

What The Price Includes:

Equipment:

- Sea kayak and all necessary equipment including paddles, life vest and splash skirt. Stable single kayaks are used as standard. If you would prefer a K2 (double) kayak, please let us know in advance. One K2 is always taken on each tour for safety reasons, as a backup for participants who may be tired, as a more stable option and for easier storage of certain items for the tour.
- Cooking equipment.
- Safety equipment.

Accommodation:

- Tented accommodation in spacious 2-person tents (single occupancy also possible – please see Optional Extras).
- Inflatable mattress.
- Accommodation is wild camping and there are no “proper” toilet facilities during the tour. Your guide will carry trowel and toilet paper as part of standard equipment and will instruct you in how to deal with your toilet waste, etc.

Food:

- All meals from dinner on Day 1 to lunch on Day 3. Please let us know in advance if you have any particular dietary requirements.
- Everyone assists with preparation of food and other tasks around the camp.

Guide:

Services of experienced and knowledgeable guide during the tour.

Transfer:

Return taxi boat transfer between Stavnäs and Runmarö.

What The Price Does Not Include:

Alcoholic beverages.

Optional extras:

- Sleeping bag hire: £19/person.
- If you require single occupancy in tents, this can be arranged for an additional £38/person.

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):

Even if you are travelling in summer, ensure that you take suitable clothes for cold evenings. You should have good rainwear and sleeping bag with comfort temperature of +5 degrees C or lower (especially for tours in May and June).

You should be careful not to overpack – space is limited and you may be surprised how little gear is really necessary. Bear in mind that rucksacks, etc, cannot be taken in the kayaks. Volume is a more important consideration than weight when planning your packing.

Your belongings should be stored in soft bags (preferably waterproof). Your personal rucksack or other luggage will be stored at the kayak base during your tour.

You should bring the following equipment:

- Sleeping bag (if not hired as optional extra), stored loose in large plastic bag in the kayak
- Rain and windproof jacket and trousers
- Sports sandals (with velcro straps) or other footwear suitable for water
- Trainers (water-durable)
- T-shirt and long-sleeved shirt
- Warm sweater/fleece
- Long-johns, especially if you feel the cold
- Bathing suit/shorts (wear these during paddling)
- Cap
- Gloves for chilly evenings
- Towel
- Personal water-bottle
- Flashlight or headtorch
- Suncream (factor 15-25)
- Camera
- Sunglasses
- Personal toiletries including toilet paper, plasters, moisturiser, painkillers and mosquito repellent (see the "About Sweden" page on our website for further information about mosquitoes).

Other useful items include:

- Water-durable cycling gloves for paddling, if you have them
- Extra plastic bags
- Compass, if you have one
- Binoculars
- Field-guide book (e.g. for birds or flowers if you have a particular interest)
- A bottle of wine (if you wish!)

You should pack your equipment in smaller (ordinary) plastic bags to make things easier to find and store. Depending on the kayak type, you will be issued with waterproof sea-bags or your kayak may have waterproof compartments. However, there is always a small risk that gear will get wet. It is a good idea to pack your camera/mobile phone in a small waterproof plastic box or case.

Health requirements/experience:

Swimming ability required. You should be in good health, have a normal level of fitness and enjoy the outdoors.

Minimum age 16 years for scheduled tours. Younger participants are welcome on private tours. Recommended minimum age to paddle own kayak 12-13 years.

The tour is suitable for both novice and more experienced paddlers. No previous kayaking experience is required.

Weather conditions can of course vary, but strong winds are rare. There are generally hardly any waves as you are paddling in the protected waters between the islands of the archipelago. There are no currents/tides in the archipelago.

Ticks and TBE:

Note: Ticks occur in grassy areas, whereas during your kayak tour you will be mostly on rocky ground.

As in the UK, there are ticks in the forests in Sweden which can carry diseases such as Borrelia. You should check for ticks at the end of a day in the outdoors. If you find a tick, remove it as soon as possible by pulling the tick out straight, carefully and slowly, with the tweezers as close to the skin as possible. Ensure that you do not leave any of the insect's mouth parts attached to your skin. Wash the bite area with soap and water. In the unlikely event that you feel unwell or notice anything unusual around the area of the bite in the coming days/couple of weeks, consult your doctor.

In some small localised areas of Sweden (mostly in the Stockholm archipelago), the ticks are known to carry a disease called TBE, or Tick-borne encephalitis, and locals spending extended periods in affected areas do vaccinate themselves. For a map of TBE distribution in Europe and latest updates, please see: <http://www.tickalert.org/tbe-countries.html>

For current advice on TBE and inoculations, please consult your doctor or see NaTHNaC at http://www.nathnac.org/ds/c_pages/country_page_se.htm

Group size:

Minimum total 2 participants required for tour to be confirmed to run.
Maximum group size 9 persons.

Groups:

This experience can also be booked by private or corporate groups of minimum 4 persons on custom dates by arrangement between June and September (April to November for groups with previous kayaking experience).

Information about the area:

The Stockholm Archipelago is Sweden's largest archipelago and one of the largest in the Baltic Sea.

The archipelago contains between 24,000 and 30,000 islands, rocks and skerries and extends 60km east of the capital Stockholm, which is itself built on some of the larger islands near to the mainland. Despite its accessibility from the city, the archipelago retains its wild character and many of the islands are still completely uninhabited.

The landscape varies from densely-forested islands to bare rocks and cliffs. The islands also vary considerably in size – some take many hours to cross on foot while it is possible to swim around others in just a couple of minutes.

In general the Stockholm Archipelago has a sunnier, drier climate than the mainland and the archipelago is one of Sweden's sunniest areas. Depending on weather conditions and the time of your tour, typical summer temperatures are 20-25 degrees C during the day with water temperature 15-20 degrees C, ideal for a refreshing dip!

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 on 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:

- Stockholm Arlanda (ARN)
- Stockholm Skavsta (NYO)
- Stockholm Västerås (VST)

For details of flight connections see www.naturetravels.co.uk/holidays-in-sweden.htm. Click on the airport icons to see connections to/from each airport.

Flight buses from Swedish airports into the city can be booked online through us – see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-flygbussarna.htm

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

Without flying

London-Stockholm by train: Lunchtime Eurostar to Brussels, train to Cologne, overnight sleeper to Copenhagen and connecting trains to Stockholm.

Harwich-Stockholm by ferry and train: DFDS ferry Harwich to Esbjerg (Denmark), then onward train to Stockholm via Copenhagen. DFDS ferries can be booked online through us – see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-dfds-seaways-ferries.htm.

Travel within Sweden:

From Stockholm Arlanda (ARN): Flight bus (travel time approx. 40 mins) or Arlanda Express train (travel time approx. 20 mins - see www.arlandaexpress.com) to Stockholm Central. Underground train (T-bana) to Slussen for local bus to Stavsånäs (travel time from Slussen approx. 50 minutes).

From Stockholm Skavsta (NYO) or Stockholm Västerås (VST) airports: Flight bus to Stockholm Central (travel time approx. 80 mins). Underground train (T-bana) to Slussen for local bus to Stavsånäs (travel time from Slussen approx. 50 minutes).

If you would like to drive, full driving instructions can be provided after booking.

If you require accommodation in the Stockholm area, we offer affordable accommodation in a quiet yet central part of the city – please see www.naturetravels.co.uk/add-ons-stay-on-the-way.htm.

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 visit our website www.naturetravels.co.uk/booking.htm or call us on 01929 463774.

Additional Notes

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