

DESTINATION ♦ STOCKHOLM



CITY LIGHTS

The Swedish capital glitters at night, with its vibrant restaurant scene and entertainment precinct.

PICTURE: ISTOCK

DINE LIKE A NOBEL WINNER

Warm to the city where art and sustainability's on the table for everyone

CELESTE MITCHELL

A BBA's Bjorn Ulvaeus may have said, "Wild horses couldn't drag me away from a summer on the Stockholm archipelago" but with the changing of the seasons, a different side of the Swedish capital emerges. A winter sojourn means languid "fika" breaks, losing yourself in myriad world-class museums and guilt-free shopping – for you're not wasting any precious sunlight hours in pursuit of style. Here's how to heat up a short winter break in Stockholm.

DAY 1 WANDER GAMLA STAN
With the city spread across 14 islands, the best way to get your bearings – and keep warm – is in the centre on the cobblestone streets of Gamla Stan. It's where Stockholm was founded in 1252 and is equal parts grand palaces and kitsch souvenir stores.

'RECYCLED GARMENT' WAS SWEDISH RETAIL INSTITUTE'S 2018 CHRISTMAS PRESENT OF THE YEAR

Scandi-cousin Copenhagen might have the Little Mermaid but here in Stockholm's medieval Old Town, see if you can spot Järnpojke or "little boy who looks at the moon", tucked away behind the Finnish Church. At only 15cm high, this 1950s sculpture is the smallest monument in Stockholm.

VISIT CITY HALL
There's a little dinner party that

happens at Stockholm City Hall each year you may have heard about. Since 1930, the Nobel banquet has been hosted inside the Blue Hall, where 1300 people are seated for dinner before dancing the night away in the gilt Golden Hall; its walls emblazoned with 18 million gold mosaic tiles. It's not quite rubbing shoulders with laureates on the night but you can take a guided tour and even dine on a Nobel menu from a specific year, served on the same china, in the on-site restaurant.

DINNER AT URBAN DELI
Prefer something more casual? This chain of produce-proud, minimal-waste deli/restaurants was born 10 years ago with menus built around leftovers. Urban Deli (urbandeli.org) also doesn't sell any vegetables transported by air and has swapped plastic bags for fabric and paper. Share meat and seafood platters

and wash it down with Swedish wine to a '90s soundtrack that will make you want to dance. At the Sveavägen outpost, tables are used as a co-working space in between meal times while you'll also find a hotel in the basement and a rooftop bar open in the summer months.

DAY 2 FERRY TO VAXHOLM
The city heart may straddle 14 islands but Stockholm archipelago is made up of about 30,000 and you can take a ferry to most. For a day trip high on winter charm, head to the traditional fishing village of Vaxholm to meet Linda Wahlström, owner of Vaxholm B&B (vaxholmsbedandbreakfast.se). Whether you're overnighting or not, book ahead for a cinnamon bun-baking workshop or wrap yourself in a blanket by the fire in the cosy greenhouse and a traditional "fika" (social coffee break) spread of

soup, home-baked bread, coffee, cinnamon buns and cakes.

SUSTAINABLE SHOPPING
Swedes expect sustainability in business as much as they expect their train will arrive on time. It's why the "recycled garment" was the Swedish Retail Institute's choice for Christmas Present of the Year for 2018. Do your bit by buying ethical and eco fashion from local labels Filippa K, which also has a branded second-hand store in Stockholm (filippa-k.com); Mini Rodini, an organic, gender-neutral kids' wear outfit that has turned fishing nets into swimwear and PET bottles into jackets (minirodini.com); and Residus, which sources surplus factory fabrics for its collections (residusofficial.com).

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DINNER AT PELIKAN

If your only acquaintance with Swedish cuisine happened in an Ikea cafeteria, Pelikan (pelikan.se) is the place to try traditional "toast skagen", roasted reindeer and meatballs as big as golf balls served with lingonberries and potato puree. Operating as a restaurant since 1733, this rustic beer hall is one of the best places to warm up on a chilly winter evening.

DAY 3 UNDERGROUND ART TOUR

The powers that be in Stockholm believe art is for everyone which is why a journey on the metro is like travelling through the world's longest art gallery. Of 100 stations, 94 are emblazoned with sculptures, mosaics, paintings and reliefs by more than 150 artists, some dating back to the 1950s. Free art tours are on offer to help you decipher the meaning (in English only during summer) or you can simply buy a ticket and self-guide your way through some of the highlights.

Must sees include T-Centralen, where blue, calming murals match the impeccably preserved blue train carriages – in service since the '70s – and Kungsträdgården, a living, breathing "archaeological dig". Unsurprisingly, the subway is a hot spot for Instagrammers.

SLSE

LUNCH AT NATIONALMUSEUM

Re-opened in 2018 after a five-year closure for extensive refurbishment, Stockholm's Nationalmuseum (nationalmuseum.se) is a design lover's motherland.

Previously white walls have been cloaked in jewel tones to make the collections pop, marble columns unearthed from beneath plaster and arched windows uncovered to allow natural light in.

A visit here wouldn't be complete without lunch in the dining hall, overseen by chef Fredrik Eriksson, who has cooked Nobel dinners at City Hall and for HRH Prince Carl Philip and HRH Princess Sofia's wedding in 2015. Everything – the glass you're sipping from to the chair you're sitting in – is bespoke.

VINTAGE SHOPPING IN SOFO

Vogue called it the "Williamsburg of Stockholm" and the blocks south of Folkungagatan – aka "SOFO" – are where you'll find flagship hipster boutiques and great vintage shopping. Start your browsing at Grandpa (grandpastore.com) where



T-CENTRALEN



NOBEL PRIZE BANQUET



GAMLA STAN

Metro 'galleries' include T-Centralen; Gamla Stan is where Stockholm was founded in 1252; the Nobel banquet at Stockholm City Hall.

PICTURES: ISTOCK, PASCAL LE SEGRETAIR/GETTY IMAGES

Scandi homewares sit alongside indie clothing labels, then drop by L: A Bruket (labruket.se) for cult organic skincare, candles and body wash.

Hit a sweet note at Pärkans (parlanskonfektyr.se) where 1930s jazz and unspeakably good caramels coexist. Sample some of the experimental seasonal flavours, as

well as the best-selling vanilla and sea salt, and try to leave with just one box.

Indulge your inner magpie at the Beyond Retro (beyondretro.com) flagship store where a cavernous basement, once used by hardworking fishmongers, is packed to the rafters with one-off sixties dresses through to acid-wash denim and logo tees. On

the same street, Judits Second Hand (judits.se) and Herr Judit (herrjudit.se) offer a tight curation of vintage wear for women and men for those who prefer to shun new mass-produced threads.

THE WRITER TRAVELLED AS A GUEST OF SINGAPORE AIRLINES AND VISIT STOCKHOLM

ESCAPE ROUTE

STOCKHOLM

GETTING THERE
Singapore Airlines flies to Stockholm via Singapore and Moscow five times a week on-board the new-gen Airbus A350-900. singaporeair.com

STAYING THERE
Downtown Camper hotel is a destination unto itself with its heated rooftop pool and sauna, sprawling breakfast buffet and Australian "lifestyle concierge" Kristian Hell, who can hook you up with a bike or skateboard for exploring or help you book free yoga and meditation classes and movie nights on-site. scandichotels.com/downtowncamper

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