

NEWS AND IDEAS FOR STORIES FROM

# WEST SWEDEN

2025

**To international media and tour operators:**

Natural, progressive, and a bit different – we are West Sweden. Our newsletter has news, story ideas, and products for 2025. The companies and destinations highlighted in this newsletter all work together towards Stepping up Sustainability.

Welcome to West Sweden 2025!

[westsweden.com](http://westsweden.com)



**INCLUDED IN THIS NEWSLETTER:**

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WEST  
SWEDEN



**West Sweden** consists of Bohuslän, Dalsland, and Västergötland, each with its own distinct character. **Gothenburg** is the capital city for Västra Götaland, Sweden's second-largest city, and is the natural gateway to the wider region. West Sweden's landscape is one of forests, lakes, plateau mountains, history and agriculture, it also includes shorelines along Sweden's two largest lakes, Vänern and Vattern and a glittering marine coastline.



The west coast archipelago stretches along the **Bohuslän** coast and is made up of thousands of islands and skerries, granite cliffs, and sheltered waters. Many of the inhabited islands are car-free, and you'll find charming fishing villages, boat-life, and cuisine that majors in fresh seafood, including the ingredient of the moment – seaweed!



**Dalsland** has been called Sweden's lake district. It is a little more remote, less densely populated and nudges up against Norway. The landscape is mostly dense forest scattered with crystal clear lakes and shared with all the Swedish wildlife you might expect, including moose and beaver. The scenic Dalsland Canal connects many of the lakes and is a sign of Dalsland's rich industrial heritage.



**Västergötland** is dominated by the UNESCO-listed plateau mountains, Lake Vänern and its freshwater archipelago, the historic Göta Canal, and fairytale Läckö Castle. 12th century Varnhem Abbey and Viking era Kata Gård are emblematic of this historically important area known as Sweden's Cradle.

# STEPPING UP SUSTAINABILITY

**West Sweden is currently taking big steps towards becoming a more sustainable destination.**

**Stepping up Sustainability** is a joint initiative for sustainable tourism in West Sweden. It's a framework for public and private operators to bring about a shift to a more sustainable society. Right now, over 700 businesses are affiliated to Stepping up Sustainability, and almost all of West Sweden's 49 municipalities.

We look at sustainability relating to four principles:



1 There should be as little unnecessary environmental impact as possible when travelling to and in West Sweden.



2 Tourism should be good for both residents and visitors.



3 We market and drive visits to areas in West Sweden when and where they are not full.



4 We aim to have robust businesses in the hospitality industry in West Sweden that are able to offer more full-time jobs.

## The winners of Stepping up Sustainability for 2024

Every year, Stepping up Sustainability winners are chosen in two categories: Municipal Initiative and Tourism Business.

This year, the winner for **Municipal Initiative is Gothenburg's 400th Anniversary**, organized by Gothenburg City and Göteborg & Co for its holistic approach to sustainability, accessibility and inclusion. The festivities took place over several months and culminated in a festival that attracted over 350,000 visitors who celebrated the city's history and future.

In the category for hospitality businesses, the award goes to the association Lysekils Vänner (Lysekil Friends) for the collaboration that resulted in **Västerhavspromenaden** – a 1,100-metre long boardwalk along the granite cliffs at the city's edge. By generating an enormous local commitment the promenade along the North Sea coast is a unique bridge between people and place and a delight to everyone in the area.

[steppingupsustainability.se](https://steppingupsustainability.se)



## CLIMATE SMART HOLIDAYS

To show that people can travel climate-smart without compromising on comfort, five tourism businesses, in collaboration with West Sweden Tourist Board, have developed package trips with the lowest possible carbon dioxide emissions. Accommodation is in unique buildings such as glass cabins and off-grid tiny houses, visitors are encouraged to travel by train and can be picked up at the station in electric vehicles for the last stretch. Meals are from high quality, locally produced ingredients and the CO2 emissions for the whole trip can be calculated, so guests can be fully informed about the low climate impact of their trip.

[vastsverige.com/en/climate-smart-holidays](https://vastsverige.com/en/climate-smart-holidays)



# NEWS FROM GOTHENBURG

## EXO, THE HIGHEST RESTAURANT IN THE NORDIC REGION, OPENS 2025

At 246 meters, recently completed Karlatornet is the tallest building in the Nordic countries. The building is mixed use and includes private apartments and the 300 room Clarion Hotel Karlatornet, which occupies an adjoining building with suites on the upper floors of the main tower.

On the 69th floor a spectacular observation deck and EXO, an ambitious new restaurant 220 meters above sea level, will open to pre-booked groups in the spring and to the general public at the end of 2025. The name EXO is inspired by the exosphere, the outermost layer of our atmosphere.

[goteborg.com/en/places/karlatornet-opening-2025](https://goteborg.com/en/places/karlatornet-opening-2025)

## WANG & SÖDERSTRÖM AT THE RÖHSSKA MUSEUM OF DESIGN AND CRAFT

For the first time, the Swedish artist and design duo Anny Wang and Tim Söderström will hold a solo exhibition in Sweden at the Röhsska Museum of Design and Craft, 29 March – 28 September 2025. Through their playful collaboration, they explore themes of nature, the body, and technology. Their latest exhibition in Copenhagen was praised as one of the best of 2024 by the Danish Arts Foundation.

[rohsska.se/en/wang-soderstrom](https://rohsska.se/en/wang-soderstrom)



# HOTEL NEWS FROM WEST SWEDEN

## HOTEL STRANA LAUNCHES NEW OCEAN SPA

Boutique hotel **Strana**, located in Hälleviksstrand on the island of Orust, has opened its new Strana Ocean SPA at the turn of the year. This 300-square-metre facility will have foot baths, a dry sauna, indoor and outdoor hot tubs, a seaside sauna, and signature relaxation rituals. Strana's accommodation includes seaside cabins, hotel rooms, and raft-glamping. The scenic Kuststigen hiking trail passes nearby.

For more information, visit [hotelstrana.com](https://hotelstrana.com)





## NEW TINY HOUSES AT HÄLLESDALENS GÅRD OPENING SPRING 2025

Nestled by the sea in a secluded bay, **Hällesdalens Gård** (one hour north of Gothenburg) will open two new tiny houses in spring 2025, each designed for two guests with a bedroom, loft, bathroom, small kitchen, and EV charging. These additions bring the total to six cozy self-catering houses, with breakfast, seafood, cheese, and charcuterie available for delivery. Guests can join yoga classes or book a private yoga session before enjoying a wood-fired hot tub, floating sauna, and BBQ area. The location offers easy access to kayaking, paddleboarding, and hiking on the Kuststigen trail. Owners Annika and Jonas manage all aspects of the property, from building to sustainable practices, using local and second-hand materials.

More at: [hallesdalen.com](https://hallesdalen.com)

## OPENING LATE SUMMER 2025: KUSTHOTELLET STYRSÖ

**Kusthotellet Styrso** is set to open in late summer 2025, featuring 40 rooms and 10 suites, restaurant, wellness area, and outdoor gym. Easily accessible by ferry from central Gothenburg, Styrso is a car-free island offering walking trails, panoramic views of the archipelago, cycling, and swimming. A bridge connects Styrso with the island of Donsö. Visitors can eat at the hotel or at restaurant Popsicle on Donsö, both restaurants focus on locally sourced ingredients and sustainable seafood. Experience a seaweed walk and culinary adventure with Karolina from Algblommen, a seaweed diver and sustainability advocate committed to promoting the future of sustainable marine industries.

More information, visit [kusthotelletstyrso.se](https://kusthotelletstyrso.se)



## HÄLLSNÄS HOTELL EXPANDS: NEW ROOMS, SPA, AND MICHELIN-STARRED RESTAURANT

Just 15 km east of Gothenburg on Lake Långan, **Hällsnäs Hotel & Restaurant** is adding 32 new rooms and four luxury suites scheduled for completion in fall 2025. Initial renovations to existing rooms and the main building will be complete by March 2025. A new spa features a floating wood-fired sauna, an infrared sauna, and outdoor hot tubs available year-round, along with lake swimming for the adventurous. Hällsnäs is also home to Signum, the Michelin-starred restaurant with a commitment to sustainability, led by award-winning chef Thomas Sjögren. Hällsnäs Hotel holds a strong position as a premier, eco-conscious getaway close to Gothenburg.

[hallsnas.se/en](https://hallsnas.se/en)



## OPENING 20 JANUARY 2025: HJORTVIKEN COUNTRY CLUB

In a picturesque lakeside setting just 25 minutes from Gothenburg, Hindås used to be a popular destination for summer and winter activities. Reviving that tradition the new **Hjortviken Country Club** will offer 150 rooms, two restaurants, and six bars. The lake is just a stone's throw away and activities include swimming, hiking, kayaking and stand-up paddleboarding. The Sjuhäradsleden, a 140-km hiking trail, begins in Hindås with a beautiful 13-km stretch into the forest and in the winter, you will find cross-country ski trails that start 300 metres from the hotel. The two restaurants, BayBay and The Club Room, will serve food inspired by Swedish and Spanish tradition. The hotel is part of ESS Group, which operates several renowned destinations, including Ystad Saltsjöbad and Hotel Bellora in Gothenburg.

More information: [hjortviken.se](https://hjortviken.se)

# WEST SWEDEN IS SWEDEN'S LARGEST CAMPING REGION

West Sweden is the country's largest camping region, with about 50 SCR\*-affiliated campsites attracting visitors in spring, summer, and autumn, and even a handful that are open through the winter. They are a popular choice for visitors who want to get close to nature and engage in outdoor activities. Most sites have cabins, motorhome pitches, glamping tents and easy access to hiking, cycling, kayaking, and fishing whether they are by the sea, in a forest or beside a lake. **Daftö Resort** in Strömstad was recently named one of Europe's top-rated campsites for 2024 by Germany's ADAC, Europe's largest automobile association. This recognition secures Daftö's status as a "Superplatz" for 2025.

[vastsverige.com/en/stay/camping](https://vastsverige.com/en/stay/camping)

\*SCR stands for Svensk Camping, the trade organization for Sweden's camping and cabin businesses, [camping.se/en](https://camping.se/en)



## CAMPSITES OFFER GREAT OPPORTUNITIES FOR FISHING ENTHUSIASTS

Campsites in West Sweden provide ideal bases for anglers, since they are often close to the sea, lakes or rivers. The eagerly awaited **sea trout fishing season opens on April 1, 2025**, giving enthusiasts access to the fishing along the Bohuslän coast. **Hafsten Resort and Camping** offers an excellent base and offers fishing packages. Campsites like **First Camp Hökensås – Tidaholm**, located inland about 130 km northeast of Gothenburg, work closely with **Hökensås Sport Fishing** to offer access to fishing including popular freshwater species such as rainbow trout, known for their strength and vibrant colours; char, thriving in the cool, clear waters; brown trout, a favourite with fly fishers; and perch, prized by spin fishers.

[hokensas.se/info/information-in-english](https://hokensas.se/info/information-in-english)

[vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/fishing](https://vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/fishing)



## IN TUNE WITH NATURE

95 percent of Sweden is uninhabited, and the average Swede lives no more than two kilometres from a nature reserve. So it's little wonder that people in Sweden have a strong connection to nature and are happy to be outdoors all year round. This means that people in Sweden have very balanced lifestyles with all the social, physical and mental benefits that come from that – and they are happy to share.

Väderöarna, "The Weather Islands," are Sweden's westernmost islands, and being on a tiny island surrounded by the sea you will experience the weather like nowhere else. Be it rain, wind, or blazing sunshine, it is an immersive experience. **Väderöarnas Vårdshus** offers accommodation in historic pilot cottages and serves a fortifying menu based on the local seafood.

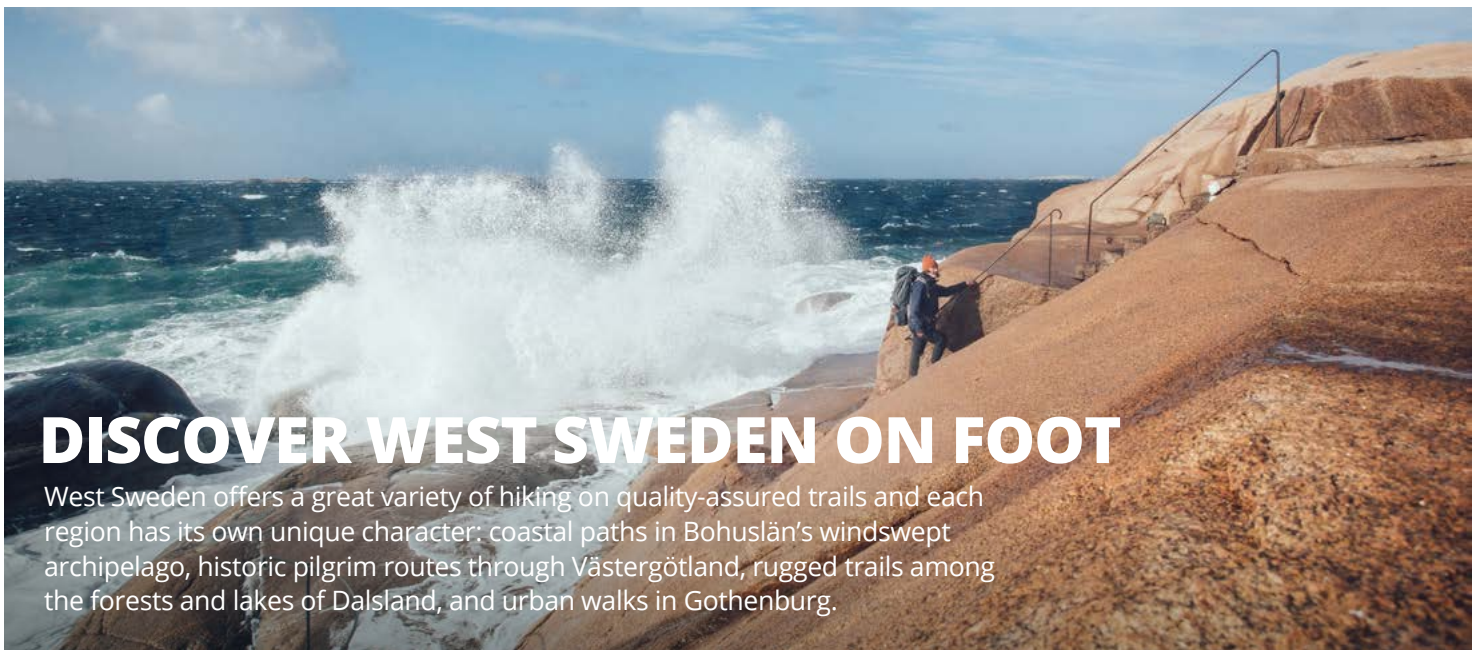
Further inland in Dalsland, **Swedish Country Living** offers accommodation in eco-friendly cabins, surrounded by grazing sheep and nestled among century-old oaks beside a tranquil lake. Guests are invited to cook outdoors and unwind, immersed in the serene landscape.

Near Hjo, **Inforest** has a collection of secluded, off-grid tiny houses. These modern cabins offer a moment for slowing down, reflection, and embracing a simpler way of life.



## SILENT TRAVEL: COLD WATER SWIMMING AND KAYOGA RETREATS IN WEST SWEDEN

Silent travel is a growing wellness trend that encourages a deeper connection with oneself. Autumn, winter and spring in West Sweden is the perfect destination for mindful nature experiences. **Skärgårdsidyllen** near Grebbestad offers "Kayoga", a combination of kayaking and yoga. Guided tours lead visitors by sea kayak to a tranquil island in the Koster Marine National Park, for a gentle yoga session by the sea. **Tofta Retreat** in Tofta Nature Reserve hosts a Silent Retreat, with a full day of silence, yoga, meditation, and relaxation exercises. Other calming experiences include **Kajkanten Vrångö**, in the Gothenburg Archipelago, with floating sauna, hot tub, and ocean bathing, or drift away across Lake Vänern on a raft equipped with wood-fired sauna, hot tub, and BBQ hut, courtesy of **Naven Outdoor Experience**.



# DISCOVER WEST SWEDEN ON FOOT

West Sweden offers a great variety of hiking on quality-assured trails and each region has its own unique character: coastal paths in Bohuslän's windswept archipelago, historic pilgrim routes through Västergötland, rugged trails among the forests and lakes of Dalsland, and urban walks in Gothenburg.



## RAIL & HIKE – SCENIC HIKING TRAILS REACHED BY TRAIN

Taking the train to start a day's hiking is increasingly popular in West Sweden, with two particularly popular routes easily reached by rail: **The Gotaleden Trail** is a 99-kilometre route from Gothenburg to Vårgårda via Alingsås, the "Capital of Fika". Easy access to train stations along the route make it easy to reach each of the stages.

**The Biosphere Trail** is 140-kilometres from Mariestad to Läckö Castle via Kinnekulle. The route explores UNESCO biosphere reserve, Platåbergens Geopark, and in Lidköping there is the iconic Rörstrand Museum and world-class art at Lidköpings Konsthall.

[vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/walking/hiking-trails/gotaleden](https://vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/walking/hiking-trails/gotaleden)

[vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/walking/hiking-trails/the-biosphere-trail](https://vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/walking/hiking-trails/the-biosphere-trail)

## ISLAND HIKING

**The Kuststigen Coastal Path** stretches from Gothenburg to Oslo, through rocky landscapes and higgledy piggledy fishing villages of traditional wooden houses. Many of the islands are car-free, and highlights include Dyrön, with wild mouflon sheep; Ramsvik, known for its unique granite formations; Bohus Malmön, with historic granite quarries and beautiful beaches; and Skaftö, home to the enchanting villages of Grundsund and Fiskebäckskil. It's easy to combine hiking with fishing trips, seal safaris, accommodation, and excellent dining.

The 27 km **Gothenburg Archipelago Trail** leads you over the islands of Hönö, Fotö, Öckerö, Hälsö, with new stages coming to the islands of Källö-Knippla, and Hyppeln. Easily accessible by bus from Gothenburg city centre. During the summer you can also take a ferry to Hönö from Gothenburg city centre. Both trails offer a scenic and convenient escape to car-free island life just a short hop from the city.

[vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/walking/hiking-trails/kuststigen](https://vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/walking/hiking-trails/kuststigen)



## HIKING ON PILGRIM PATHS

Take your pick of West Sweden's historic Pilgrim Paths. **The Pilgrim Path Göta Älv** begins in central Gothenburg, covering 143 km in 10 stages. Starting with the city's historic sites, the path then leads into the Lärjeån Valley and the Vättlefjäll Nature Reserve. The trail is easily accessible by public transport and pairs well with an overnight stay in Gothenburg.

**The Pilgrim Path Dalsland** winds through one of West Sweden's more remote regions. 100 km long, this trail holds centuries of history, tracing the journey of countless pilgrims toward Nidaros, now Trondheim, in Norway.

Opening on 31 May 2025 **The Pilgrim Path Hjo and Kungslena** stretches for 55 km through the region's historic countryside. It's also accessible by public transport, making it an inviting option for a weekend pilgrimage.

From summer 2025, the 44 km **Falköping-Varnhem trail** will be extended by a new 14 km section to Skara, connecting to the existing 26 km **Skara-Husaby trail**, bringing the collected stages to about 84 km in total.

[vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/walking/hiking-trails/walk-along-the-pilgrim-paths-of-west-sweden](https://vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/walking/hiking-trails/walk-along-the-pilgrim-paths-of-west-sweden)



Photo: Per Pixel Petersson

## WEST SWEDEN FOR FOODIES – DISCOVER LOCAL FLAVORS

West Sweden is abundant with local ingredients. The seas off Bohuslän are a world-class larder of fresh seafood, at its best in spring or autumn. Dalsland's forests are rich with mushrooms, berries, and wild game, while Västergötland is home to Vänern's prized vendace roe (Vänerlöjrom) and, thanks to the region's many dairy farms, some of Sweden's finest cheeses. Taste of West Sweden promotes the region's best food experiences, highlighting restaurants, farm shops, and producers focused on local specialties and authentic flavours.

Read more: [vastsverige.com/en/eat-and-drink](https://vastsverige.com/en/eat-and-drink)



### NEW RESTAURANTS IN GOTHENBURG

Gothenburg's vibrant dining scene enjoys a constant flow of new restaurants adding to the city's culinary landscape. Here are some of the latest openings from autumn 2024: **INTE** is a neighbourhood bistro focusing on modern European cuisine. It's a joint project by the experienced owners behind Restaurant Tizne and Koizen. **Collage** is a new addition from Götaplatsgruppen and Park Lane, housed in the Kochska building in the vibrant Makaregatorna area. **Collage** is a French-inspired brasserie where Montmartre meets New York's Meatpacking District. Studion is Collage's "little sister" around the corner, offering cocktails and French dishes. **Nomi** is in an extension of the historic Merkurhuset and is home to two dining experiences: **Aji**, serving Japanese-Peruvian Nikkei cuisine, and **Révolte**, a pop-up featuring a new guest chef every month. The venue also includes a bar with music events and an art gallery.

[goteborg.com/en/guides/new-restaurants-in-gothenburg](https://goteborg.com/en/guides/new-restaurants-in-gothenburg)

### FIKA – SWEDEN'S BELOVED COFFEE BREAK

In Sweden, fika is more than just a coffee break, it's a cherished ritual of slowing down and connecting over coffee and something sweet. **Alingsås, the "Capital of Fika"**, is a charming town with cozy cafés and historic wooden houses, located only 40 minutes by train from Gothenburg and close to the Gotaleden hiking trail. There are about twenty cafés, three of which are ranked in Sweden's White Guide, and Alingsås offers guided fika tours exploring its unique café culture and Swedish fika traditions.

[vastsverige.com/en/eat-and-drink/swedish-fika/alingsas-the-capital-of-fika](https://vastsverige.com/en/eat-and-drink/swedish-fika/alingsas-the-capital-of-fika)



### BLUE FOOD FROM THE SEA

Blue food refers to ingredients from seas and lakes and there's an increasing interest particularly in blue food from the sea. Mussels, oysters, sea squirts, and seaweed are delicious and climate conscious foods, found in restaurants around West Sweden.

[vastsverige.com/en/eat-and-drink/blue-food-from-the-sea](https://vastsverige.com/en/eat-and-drink/blue-food-from-the-sea)

### MUSSELS: NUTRITIOUS AND ECO-FRIENDLY

Mussels are a sustainable superfood, rich in protein and essential vitamins, and can be farmed with little or no impact on marine environments. Janne Bark, known as "Mussel-Janne," has restaurants in Ljungskile and Smögen and the mussel beds are so close to the restaurant in Ljungskile that guests can join an expedition on his boat, M/S Märta, to fetch their own dinner, fresh from the sea.

[musselbaren.se/english](https://musselbaren.se/english)





# OUTDOOR COOKING IN WEST SWEDEN: A CULINARY JOURNEY

Outdoor cooking is a growing trend with a long tradition in West Sweden.



At **Dalslands Aktiviteter** in Dals Långed (1.5 hours from Gothenburg), join a guided tour to learn about local plants, wildlife, and fire-making, ending with a meal of local vegetables, berries, game, or fish. The centre also offers hiking, beaver safaris, paddling, an elk park, gravel cycling routes, and more.

Read more: [dalslandsaktiviteter.se/en](https://dalslandsaktiviteter.se/en)



**Vristulven Adventure Center**, about 20 km south of Mariestad, provides an all-inclusive glamping experience, with ingredients for a two-course meal cooked over an open fire. Combine with hiking through Vristulven Nature Reserve and along the Biosfärsleden trail.

Read more: [vristulvens-aeventyrscenter.se](https://vristulvens-aeventyrscenter.se)



**Outdoor Support**, located near Årås Säteri about 25 km northeast of Ulricehamn and 120 km from Gothenburg, offers a culinary experience where nature becomes the kitchen. Participants prepare a three-course meal outdoors, featuring elk, deer, or wild boar, along with seasonal, local ingredients. The scenic cooking site by a lake along the Wilderness Trail offers an unforgettable outdoor dining experience.

Read more: [outdoorsupport.se/en/outdoor-cooking-a-three-course-dinner](https://outdoorsupport.se/en/outdoor-cooking-a-three-course-dinner)



**Ragnerud Hiking Destination** at Kroppefjäll launches "FOOD in the WILD," an exciting outdoor culinary experience for food lovers and nature enthusiasts. Enjoy an exclusive tasting menu in a picturesque setting this autumn, or cook your own meal over an open fire with a unique lunch package – complete with a sandwich iron. One weekend will also see an opportunity to learn outdoor cooking from Swedish influencer Hanna of "Portionen under tian." This is a chance to indulge in exquisite dining amidst the untamed beauty of the great outdoors.

Read more: [ragnerud.com/eng/hiking/food-in-the-wild-eng](https://ragnerud.com/eng/hiking/food-in-the-wild-eng)

More on culinary experiences: [vastsverige.com/en/eat-and-drink/](https://vastsverige.com/en/eat-and-drink/)



**DALSLAND**  
Sweden's gravel cycling destination

## DALSLAND – SWEDEN'S GRAVEL DESTINATION

Dalsland has over 500 km of gravel roads which make ideal gravel cycling for hours without meeting any cars. The roads cut through forests, farmland and villages. Our new website: Dalsland – Sweden's gravel cycling destination, is available in 7 languages and contains all the information you need to plan your route, including 11 route suggestions complete with GPX files and tips on what not to miss. There's lots of cycle friendly accommodation in the area, and plenty of cafes and restaurants. The site also lists bicycle hire providers and service stations in strategic locations as well as information on how to get to Dalsland by train from Gothenburg.

New route suggestions in 2025 will extend across more of Dalsland.

[vastsverige.com/en/dalsland/cycling/gravel-cycling](https://vastsverige.com/en/dalsland/cycling/gravel-cycling)



### NEW MTB ARENA IN HÖGALIDEN OUTSIDE HJO

180 km east of Gothenburg a new MTB arena has opened in the Högaliden Activity Area just outside Hjo. The arena offers MTB trails suitable for all ages and skill levels including flow trail, jump trail, skills trail, and a skills zone featuring elevation changes, jumps, and areas to practice technique and balance. Nearby, Inforest offers eco-friendly, off-grid tiny houses nestled in the forest. Hjo, on Lake Vättern, is famous for its well-preserved wooden buildings dating back to the 1700s and 1800s.

## LATEST NEWS ON MOUNTAIN BIKE DESTINATIONS

Photo: Visit Hjo – Rebecca Martyn

### BIKING DESTINATION BILLINGEN AND HOTEL BILLINGEHUS

Billigen, the plateau mountain rising above Skövde, has become a top biking destination and now boasts an MTB arena inaugurated in 2024. There are short trails in green, blue, and red, with pump tracks, skills trails, jump trails, and drop zones. Beyond the arena are more trails for XC, Trail, and Enduro, along with well-marked gravel routes. A new activity provider, Behind Bars, leads guided MTB tours on Billigen, and perched on the edge of the plateau, the stylish Hotel Billingeus offers a spa, rooftop infinity pool and bar, and restaurant with magnificent views. Skövde has excellent rail links to Gothenburg and Stockholm.

### SKI BIKE HIKE IN ULRICEHAMN

Ski Bike Hike in Ulricehamn, 100 km east of Gothenburg, is a family-friendly, multisport facility. They offer 12 new, high quality, downhill trails suitable for both beginners and professionals. A new skills area has also been introduced, featuring jumps, wooden curves, and a gravel pump track, perfect for children who want to try biking. In winter, the resort offers alpine skiing with seven lifts and eight slopes. Nearby Lassalyckan Outdoor Area has a modern hotel, with cross-country ski trails starting right on the doorstep.

[vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/cycling/mountain-biking/](https://vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/cycling/mountain-biking/)



# NATIONAL CYCLE ROUTES IN WEST SWEDEN

West Sweden has more than half of Sweden's national cycle routes, including The Göta Canal Trail, named Europe's Best Cycling Route of 2025 at the Fiets en Wandelbeurs in Utrecht, Netherlands.



## THE VÄNERLEDEN

**640 km around Lake Vänern**

Sweden's longest trail, looping around Lake Vänern, with varied terrain which is hilly in Dalsland. Nominated as Cycling Route of the Year in the Netherlands. Combines nature and culture: Porcelain town Lidköping, Läckö Castle, Kinnekulle table mountain and the Platåbergens Geopark.



## GÖTA CANAL TRAIL

**200 km, Sjötorp – Mem**

Flat and family friendly. Can be combined with boat and other experiences along the canal. Crosses the Vänerleden at Sjötorp. The Göta canal trail, is named 'Europe's best cycling route of the Year' 2025.



## THE ÄTRADAL TRAIL

**200 km Falköping – Falkenberg**

Flat, with 50% of the trail on railway embankments. Family friendly. Combines culture, food and history in landscapes dotted with idyllic small towns. Crosses the Kattegatt Trail (Kattegattsleden) in Falkenberg.



## THE UNIONSLEDEN

**350 km Moss – Karlstad**

Cycle between two countries. This scenic, undulating route is along mostly gravelled roads. Crosses the Vänerleden at Bengtsfors and Fengersfors.

Find out more here:

[vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/cycling/cycle-paths/national-cycle-routes](https://vastsverige.com/en/nature-experiences/cycling/cycle-paths/national-cycle-routes)



## CULTURAL NEWS

### LÄCKÖ CASTLE CELEBRATES SWEDISH PORCELAIN ICON STIG LINDBERG

The **Naturum Vänerskärgården – Victoriahuset** visitor centre, complete with a hotel and restaurant **Hvita Hjorten**, stands on the shores of Lake Vänern just 300 metres from the delightful, **Läckö Castle**. This summer, from June 7th until September 14th, Läckö Castle presents a full season of art, design, and music. The highlight of the summer will be a showcase of **Stig Lindberg's** timeless designs, celebrating his influence on Swedish art and the 200-year legacy of Gustavsberg, the renowned Swedish ceramics centre. An exhibition of work from sculptor and painter **Cecilia Jansson** will bring a contemporary edge to the castle's historic ambiance.

Just 25 km from Läckö Castle lies the porcelain town of Lidköping and **Rörstrand Museum**, with a special exhibition "A Collector's Tale," featuring porcelain from **Ulf Sandberg's** generous donation of porcelain from the Lidköping porcelain factory, ALP. This collection offers a glimpse into the artistry and history of porcelain through the eyes of a dedicated collector. The opening will be held on January 25th.

Read more: [vastsverige.com/en/lacko-kinnekulle](https://vastsverige.com/en/lacko-kinnekulle)



Go your own road/Erik Johansson

### NEW ART CENTRE FEATURING ERIK JOHANSSON'S PHOTOGRAPHY OPENS IN MAY 2025

This spring, located between scenic Lake Vänern and the Kinnekulle plateau, a new permanent art centre featuring the surreal photography of **Erik Johansson** will open at **Svenstorps Gård**, outside Götene. Johansson is a Swedish surrealist photographer celebrated for his imaginative, reality-defying photo manipulations. He has exhibited at Fotografiska in Stockholm and is an ambassador for Hasselblad. The gallery will have an on-site café, and the grand opening coincides with the Vårundan, an annual Spring Art Tour around Kinnekulle, on May 3-4, 2025.

Erik Johansson's official website: [erikjo.com](https://erikjo.com)



### CELEBRATE 150 YEARS OF SKARA STADSHOTELL WITH LARS LERIN'S ART

Skara Stadshotell celebrates its 150th anniversary with the recent acquisition of 31 watercolours by **Lars Lerin**, which will be added to the permanent collection on display throughout the public areas. That means there are a remarkable 70 works that can be enjoyed by all guests at the hotel. Skara is one of Sweden's oldest towns, home to Skara Cathedral with its magnificent twin steeples, close to historical Varnhem and Lake Hornborga, famous for its diverse birdlife, especially the spring migration of cranes. A new Pilgrim's Way from Falköping to Husaby will pass through the town, opening autumn 2025 and making Skara a key stop for pilgrims.

[skarastadshotell.se/en](https://skarastadshotell.se/en)



### BORÅS – ART IN FOCUS

Borås is world leading in design innovation and street art. The town itself is an art gallery, with 120 works by internationally renowned sculptors and street artists, and 3 new permanent sculptures added to Annelund park in 2024. Plan your visit on the West Sweden Street Art Trail website, an initiative led by urban art organisation Artscape, created to catalogue all the street art in West Sweden and Gothenburg. Borås has three major art museums: **The Textile Museum of Sweden** showcases the town's textile heritage and contemporary innovation, **Borås Konstmuseum** presents thought provoking contemporary art, and **Abecita Popkonst & Foto**, work by leading international photographers and graphic artists.

The exhibition "**The dress makes the man**" at the Textile Museum runs from 12 October 2024 to 24 August 2025, with a glimpse into a new era of haute couture, and **Fredrik Robertsson** as one of the few male clients. Another exciting exhibition, running from 4 October 2025 to 5 April 2026, celebrates **Sven Fristedt**, one of our most prolific textile designers, known for creating patterns for companies like Borås Wäfveri AB and IKEA. [boras.com/en](https://boras.com/en)



## TJÖRN – ISLAND OF ART

Located about 70 km north of Gothenburg, Tjörn is a vibrant cultural hub. It features the internationally renowned **Nordic Watercolour Museum** and **Pilane Sculpture Park**, which presents sculptures along an outdoor trail with views of the archipelago. On the horizon, the tiny island of Hamneskär is home to the iconic **Pater Noster lighthouse** and the beautifully restored lighthouse keeper's house, now an award-winning hotel. This summer, all three venues will host exceptional art exhibitions.

[vastsverige.com/en/tjorn/things-to-do/tjorn-island-of-art](https://vastsverige.com/en/tjorn/things-to-do/tjorn-island-of-art)

### Sculptures at Pilane opens for the season on May 17th 2025

Pilane is excited to announce a major exhibition featuring world-renowned sculptor **Ugo Rondinone**. The show will include five gigantic stone figures from his series "Human Nature," previously displayed at Rockefeller Center in New York and Place Vendôme in Paris. Additionally, some of Rondinone's shimmering celestial bodies, the Moon and the Sun, will rise above the Bohuslän archipelago. Pilane and Tjörn will also get their own "airport", featuring a landing strip, control tower, and a hangar for 3 planes. Designed as a large model by artist **Göran Hägg**. Sculpture in Pilane will be open from 17 May to 28 September 2025.

Read more: [pilane.org/en/index.php](https://pilane.org/en/index.php)

### Nordic Watercolour Museum celebrates 25 years

In 2025 the Nordic Watercolour Museum will have its 25th anniversary! Since its inception, the museum has become a highly respected hub for watercolour art. As part of the anniversary celebrations there will be a series of special exhibitions throughout the year. Stay tuned for more details.

[akvarellmuseet.org/en](https://akvarellmuseet.org/en)



## VINTAGE & SECOND-HAND TREASURES

West Sweden has a history of high-quality craftsmanship. Home to Sweden's first linen mill **Ekelunds Linneväveri**, the oldest active glassworks **Limmareds Glasbruk**, and **Rörstrand**, Europe's second-oldest porcelain brand. With this rich heritage, flea markets and second-hand shops are a treasure trove. Limmared, 100 km east of Gothenburg, is a haven for retro lovers and home to 12 second-hand shops filled with exciting finds, open every Tuesday and Saturday.

Gothenburg has everything from upscale antique shops to vintage boutiques. **Forum Göteborg**, the only permanent department store for curated vintage, antiques, and design in Scandinavia, hosts over 30 exhibitors in historic Gamlestadens Fabriker, 5 minutes from the city centre.

[forum-goteborg.se](https://forum-goteborg.se)

## SWEDISH AUTHORS BRING NORDIC NOIR TO LIFE

Nordic noir captivates audiences worldwide with its dark, psychological tales set in stark Nordic landscapes. Leading Swedish authors shape this genre through evocative, atmospheric settings across Sweden. **Camilla Läckberg** brings mystery to Fjällbacka's scenic coast, while **Ann Rosman's** novels unfold on the historic island of Marstrand. **Ake Edwardsson** explores Gothenburg's gritty urbanity, and **Maj Sjöwall's** classic Martin Beck series ventures along the Göta Canal. **Helene Tursten** weaves suspense from Dalsland's wilderness to Gothenburg's cityscape, and **Emelie Flygare Carlén**, a pioneer of Swedish crime fiction, set her stories in Bohuslän's coastal towns like Strömstad. Sweden's literary tradition continues to inspire the unique, haunting style of Nordic noir.

**Andersweg Reisen** is a German tour operator that offers a literature-themed trip to Sweden. This eight-day journey visits literary sites along the west coast, such as Fjällbacka and Marstrand, and includes activities such as Fika tours and guided readings. Read more: [andersweg.reisen/reise/mit-der-buchhandlung-lesekatze-nach-schweden](https://andersweg.reisen/reise/mit-der-buchhandlung-lesekatze-nach-schweden)

French tour operator **Nord Espaces** is offering travel packages to Bohuslän, inviting travellers to explore the atmospheric region featured in Camilla Läckberg's crime novels. [nord-espaces.com/destination/suede/sur-les-traces-de-camilla-lackberg](https://nord-espaces.com/destination/suede/sur-les-traces-de-camilla-lackberg)





Photo: Liseberg AB/Stefan Karlberg

## FAMILY ADVENTURES

In West Sweden, the great outdoors is an exciting playground where families can bike, hike, paddle, fish, tackle adventure courses, and cook together. Alongside these experiences close to nature, Gothenburg offers attractions like **Liseberg amusement park**, **Universeum science centre**, and a variety of family-friendly hotels and restaurants, making West Sweden an ideal destination for spring, summer, and autumn breaks.

For more information: [vastsverige.com/en/west-sweden-for-families](https://vastsverige.com/en/west-sweden-for-families)

### TJÖRNBRO ARENA AND LILLA BRATTÖN ISLAND – FOR THE ACTIVE FAMILY

**Tjörnbrö Arena**, about 50 km north of Gothenburg, is Bohuslän's ideal family basecamp. They have Sweden's largest outdoor trampoline park, an outdoor pool, kayaking, SUP, yoga, hiking, biking trails, and year-round events like Ninja School and concerts. Accommodation is in apartments and there is a restaurant on-site. A couple of hundred metres away, the island of **Lilla Brattön** can be reached by ferry from June to August, and offers a car-free break to swim, unwind, and enjoy nature. New cabins will be available on the island from early 2025. A perfect base for all of West Sweden, notable nearby attractions include the **Nordic Watercolour Museum**, **Pilane Sculpture Park**, and **Nordens Ark** wildlife sanctuary.

For more information: [tjornbroarena.se/english](https://tjornbroarena.se/english)



### DALSLAND FOR FAMILIES – NATURE AS THE ULTIMATE PLAYGROUND

Dalsland offers families a chance to immerse themselves in nature with unforgettable outdoor experiences tailored to all ages. The season stretches from spring break in May through the summer and into autumn. **Kroppefjäll B&B**, in Dals Rostock, provides a nature-first experience with a self-guided quiz trail right outside the door and cook-it-yourself meal packages to cook over an open fire. Also in the Kroppefjäll Wilderness Area near Högsäter, **Ragnerud** offers family-friendly experiences in a beautiful lakeside setting. Family activities include an adventure trail for children, a playground, and paddle tours on the lake. **Dalslands Activities**, in Dals Långed, stands out with a choice of over 50 activities for thrill-seekers or visitors seeking peaceful nature experiences, including: high ropes courses, ziplines, horse riding, bushcraft, and a moose park.

[dalsland.com](https://dalsland.com)



Photo: Mikael Svensson

### FAMILY ADVENTURE: SHIPWRECK TOURS ON LAKE VÄNERN AND CYCLING ALONG THE GÖTA CANAL

**Naven Outdoor Experience**, operating on Lake Vänern, offers a unique kayaking adventure where you can explore shipwrecks from the water's surface using a water telescope. Guided tours dive into myths and local history, bringing to life a time when mermaids and magic were part of everyday life on Lake Vänern. [naven.se/en](https://naven.se/en)

This adventure pairs perfectly with cycling along the Göta Canal, where families can ride on the tow path, once used by oxen to tow the canal boats. A gentle adventure with great views, flurries of activity at the boat locks, cozy canal-side cafés, and plenty of options for accommodation and bike rentals along the route. [en.upplevelsepaket.se/resa/cykelsemester-langs-gota-kanal-tur-retur-start-toreboda](https://en.upplevelsepaket.se/resa/cykelsemester-langs-gota-kanal-tur-retur-start-toreboda)



# TOUR OPERATORS TO WEST SWEDEN

There are many tour operators offering package tours to West Sweden, who cover many of the ideas in this newsletter. Below is some of the news for 2025.

For a full list: [westsweden.com/touroperators](https://westsweden.com/touroperators)

## New cycle-paddle-hike tour around Lake Vänern and Göta Canal

A new "Cycle-Paddle-Hike" tour around Lake Vänern and the Göta Canal will be introduced by German tour operator **Wikingen Reisen** in 2025. Participants will hike on the Biosphere Trail, cycle along the Göta Canal, and kayak near Läckö Castle. The tour is mostly by public transport, including train travel along the scenic Kinnekullebanan railway. Accommodation is provided at Hotel Edward in Lidköping, a charming town on the southern shore of Lake Vänern.

For more details: [wikingen-reisen.de/wanderreisen/schweden/suedschweden/5222.php](https://wikingen-reisen.de/wanderreisen/schweden/suedschweden/5222.php)

## New 7-night Swedish West Coast experience

**Zonista/Andersweg Reisen** has launched a new program for individual travellers, featuring a seven-night stay at Gullmarsstrand, located on Sweden's beautiful west coast in Fiskebäckskil. The program includes local excursions, such as seafood safaris, seal watching, cycling, and hiking tours. Andersweg Reisen has also introduced a version of the tour that combines a stay in Fiskebäckskil with a few nights in Gothenburg.

For more details: [andersweg.reisen/reise/urlaub-mit-komfort-an-der-schwedischen-westkueste](https://andersweg.reisen/reise/urlaub-mit-komfort-an-der-schwedischen-westkueste)

The program including Gothenburg: [andersweg.reisen/reise/goeteborg-und-der-zauber-von-gullmarsstrand](https://andersweg.reisen/reise/goeteborg-und-der-zauber-von-gullmarsstrand)

## New cycling tour on the Ätradalen trail

**BBI Travel in the Netherlands** has launched a new cycling tour on the Ätradalsleden, in collaboration with the local Destination Management Company - Outdoor Support. This tour features a scenic route between Falköping and Falkenberg partly along disused railway embankments with daily distances between 36 and 48 km. The 7-day itinerary includes a night in Gothenburg and accommodations in hotels and B&Bs along the route with breakfast, dinner, and luggage transport provided

For more details: [bbi-travel.nl/zweden/actief/fietsreizen/fietsarrangement-door-west-zweden-langs-de-atradalsleden/SEHOFI01](https://bbi-travel.nl/zweden/actief/fietsreizen/fietsarrangement-door-west-zweden-langs-de-atradalsleden/SEHOFI01)

## New explore West Sweden tour

**Zonista**, a destination management company (DMC), collaborates with tour operators in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland to offer curated journeys across Scandinavia. In 2025, Zonista presents the week-long "Explore West Sweden" tour, featuring stays at the historic Lundsbrunn Resort. Groups of 25 will enjoy daily excursions to key sights, including the Gothenburg Archipelago, Kinnekulle Table Mountain, Läckö Castle, Lake Vänern, the Göta Canal, along with local food and cultural experiences.

For more details: [zonista.de/?142933\\_paradiesisches-westschweden](https://zonista.de/?142933_paradiesisches-westschweden)

## New roadtrip glamping and May school holiday

**Buro Scanbrit** in the Netherlands offers many trips to West Sweden, including special May school holiday packages for families. New for 2025 will be the roundtrip glamping experience, featuring stays at Lagunen Glamping near Strömstad in Bohuslän and Kroppefjäll near Dals-Rostock in Dalssland. This unique itinerary is designed to provide travellers with comfort and a chance to immerse themselves in Sweden's nature.

For more details: [buroscanbrit.nl/vakantie/zweden/rondreis/op-avontuur-in-zweden-in-de-meivakantie](https://buroscanbrit.nl/vakantie/zweden/rondreis/op-avontuur-in-zweden-in-de-meivakantie)

[buroscanbrit.nl/vakantie/zweden/rondreis/svea](https://buroscanbrit.nl/vakantie/zweden/rondreis/svea)

## New family-friendly adventure: Gothenburg & Lake Vänern

In early 2025, **Regent Holidays** will introduce a new product for families which combines a couple of nights in Gothenburg with a few nights at Natorum Victorialhuset, located on the shores of Lake Vänern right beside the fairytale Läckö Castle. The area is part of the Plateau Mountain Landscape and Sweden's first UNESCO Global Geopark. Families can enjoy cycling, hiking, and kayaking in the scenic landscapes surrounding Källandsö.

More details about this family trip by train and public transportation will be available soon. Meantime, for more details on Swedish Rail & Trail Getaways: [regent-holidays.co.uk/tour/swedish-rails-trails-getaway](https://regent-holidays.co.uk/tour/swedish-rails-trails-getaway)

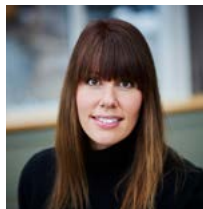
## Sometimes the accommodation is the experience. Extraordinary places to stay in West Sweden.

West Sweden is lucky to have a lot of small, independent tourism businesses that are founded on principles of sustainability. Very often these are the most unique and unusual places to stay as well, with a closeness to the sky, the forest, seas, lakes and wildlife. Perfect for refreshing all the senses and reminding us what a truly beautiful planet we share.

[vastsverige.com/en/stay/quirky-stays-in-west-sweden](https://vastsverige.com/en/stay/quirky-stays-in-west-sweden)



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