

Royal Palaces by Day, Archipelago Sunsets by Night

A 7-Day Sweden Itinerary

DURATION

7 Days

BEST TIME TO GO

May–September

long summer days (near-endless daylight in June) keep archipelago ferries, palace gardens and outdoor cafes running at full swing; May and September bring the same mild temperatures with thinner crowds and lower hotel rates than the July peak.

FROM

\$1,150 USD / person

for 2 people, incl. mid-range hotel, trains, ferries and sightseeing

Day 1

Arrival & Gamla Stan

Land at Stockholm Arlanda, ride the express train into the city, and spend the afternoon getting lost in the cobbled lanes of Gamla Stan before catching the Royal Palace's midday guard change.

Arlanda Express — Airport to Stockholm Central

~20 minutes · 340 SEK (about \$32 USD) per adult, one way

A dedicated high-speed rail line that covers the 25 miles between Stockholm Arlanda Airport and Stockholm Central Station in under 20 minutes, departing every 10–15 minutes — by far the fastest way into the city.

Arlanda Express · www.arlandaexpress.com

Gamla Stan Old Town Walk

~1.5 hours, self-guided · Free

Sweden's medieval old town on its own small island, all ochre and mustard facades, narrow lanes barely wide enough for two people, and the wide cobbled square at Stortorget where the old Stock Exchange building now houses the Nobel Prize Museum.

Changing of the Guard — Royal Palace

~40 minutes, self-guided · Free to watch

A military band and mounted guards process through Gamla Stan's lanes to the Royal Palace's outer courtyard, most days around 12:15pm (12:15 on weekdays, later on Sundays and holidays) — one of the few full-dress guard ceremonies left in Europe, and it costs nothing to watch from the courtyard.

Overnight — Lady Hamilton Hotel

From \$220–290 USD/night, for 2 people

A family-run, nautical-themed hotel tucked into a 15th-century building on a quiet Gamla Stan lane, with an antique-filled breakfast room, a small stone-walled pool built into the medieval foundations, and the shortest possible walk to the Royal Palace and Stortorget.

Lady Hamilton Hotel · lady-hamilton.thestockholmhotels.com

Day 2

Vasa Museum & Djurgården

A full day on the museum island of Djurgården: a warship that sank on its maiden voyage in 1628, an ABBA-themed sing-along, and a walk through three centuries of Swedish village life at Skansen.

Vasa Museum

~1.5 hours · 240 SEK (about \$23 USD) May–Sept, 195 SEK (about \$18 USD) Oct–Apr

A 17th-century royal warship that capsized and sank less than a mile into its maiden voyage in 1628, salvaged nearly intact from Stockholm harbor in 1961 and now the centerpiece of a purpose-built museum — 98% of the ship on display is original timber.

Vasa Museum · www.vasamuseet.se

ABBA The Museum

~2 hours · 249–329 SEK (about \$23–\$31 USD) per adult, by time slot

An interactive walk through ABBA's rise, from the group's actual stage costumes and gold records to a recreated version of the Polar Studio control room — the karaoke stage where visitors sing alongside holograms of the band is the reason people leave smiling.

ABBA The Museum · abbatheuseum.com

Skansen Open-Air Museum

~2.5 hours · 285 SEK (about \$27 USD) per adult, higher in peak summer

The world's oldest open-air museum, founded in 1891: more than 150 historic buildings moved here from across Sweden, a Nordic zoo with moose, lynx and brown bears, and costumed craftspeople demonstrating glassblowing and baking in a recreated 19th-century town square.

Skansen · www.skansen.se

Overnight — Lady Hamilton Hotel

From \$220–290 USD/night, for 2 people

A second night at the same Gamla Stan hotel.

Lady Hamilton Hotel · lady-hamilton.thestockholmhotels.com

Day 3

City Hall, Fotografiska & Södermalm

A guided climb through the building where the Nobel Banquet is held each December, an afternoon at a photography museum in a converted Art Deco customs house, and dinner in Södermalm's old working-class quarter.

Stockholm City Hall Guided Tour

~45 minutes · 150 SEK (about \$14 USD) per adult

A guided walk through the red-brick Stadshuset's Blue Hall, where the Nobel Banquet is held every December 10th, and the gold-mosaic Golden Hall lined with 18 million glass and gold tiles — entry is guided-tour only, in English and Swedish, on a fixed schedule.

Stockholm City Hall (Stadshuset) · stadshuset.stockholm

Fotografiska

~1.5 hours, self-guided · 225 SEK (about \$21 USD) per adult

A photography museum in a 1906 Art Nouveau customs house on the Södermalm waterfront, rotating through four major exhibitions a year — the top-floor café has one of the best harbor views in the city.

Fotografiska · www.fotografiska.com/sto

Dinner — Pelikan

~1.5 hours · \$30–\$45 USD per person

A cavernous 1904 beer hall in Södermalm, all dark wood and vaulted ceilings, serving husmanskost (Swedish home cooking) — the classic order is meatballs with lingonberry and mashed potato, or the pork knuckle for two.

Pelikan · pelikan.se

Overnight — Lady Hamilton Hotel

From \$220–290 USD/night, for 2 people

A third night at the same Gamla Stan hotel.

Lady Hamilton Hotel · lady-hamilton.thestockholmhotels.com

Day 4

Stockholm Archipelago — Vaxholm

A full day out on the water to Vaxholm, the small fortress town that guards the entrance to the archipelago and doubles as most Stockholmers' idea of a perfect day trip.

Waxholmsbolaget Ferry to Vaxholm

~55–65 minutes each way · covered by an SL travel card (24-hour card from about 165 SEK / \$16 USD)

The public archipelago ferry line departs from Strömkajen, just below the Royal Palace, threading between summer-house islands on its way out to Vaxholm — slower and cheaper than a private sightseeing cruise, and exactly how locals make the trip.

Waxholmsbolaget · waxholmsbolaget.se

Vaxholm Fortress & Old Town

~2 hours, self-guided · Fortress museum from 100 SEK (about \$9 USD)

A 16th-century fortress guarding the main shipping channel into Stockholm, reachable by a short passenger ferry from the harbor, paired with a walk through Vaxholm's wooden 19th-century villas and the small-town main street.

Lunch — Waxholms Hotell

~1 hour · \$25–\$40 USD per person

A yellow wooden hotel on the harbor since 1902, its dining room and waterside terrace serving classic archipelago seafood — the shrimp sandwich (räksmörgås) piled absurdly high is the thing to order.

Waxholms Hotell · www.waxholmshotell.se

Overnight — Lady Hamilton Hotel

From \$220–290 USD/night, for 2 people

A fourth night back at the Gamla Stan hotel after the ferry ride in.

Lady Hamilton Hotel · lady-hamilton.thestockholmhotels.com

Day 5

Uppsala Day Trip

A short train ride to Sweden's oldest university town, for Scandinavia's tallest cathedral and the Iron Age burial mounds that make Uppsala one of the country's most important Viking-era sites.

Train — Stockholm to Uppsala

~18–40 minutes depending on service · from about \$8–\$15 USD one way

SJ high-speed and regional Upptåget trains run several times an hour from Stockholm Central to Uppsala, making it one of the easiest day trips from the capital.

SJ · www.sj.se/en

Uppsala Cathedral

~1 hour, self-guided · Free entry

Scandinavia's tallest cathedral, its twin spires rising 387 feet over the old town since the 13th century, holding the tomb of King Gustav Vasa and a small museum of royal treasures and vestments in its north tower.

Gamla Uppsala Mounds & Museum

~2 hours · Mounds free; museum from about 100 SEK (\$9 USD)

Three enormous royal burial mounds from the 6th century, a short bus ride from central Uppsala, where Sweden's earliest kings are traditionally said to be buried — the adjoining museum covers the pre-Christian ceremonial site and its Viking-age gold finds.

Overnight — Lady Hamilton Hotel

From \$220–290 USD/night, for 2 people

A fifth night back in Stockholm after the day trip.

Lady Hamilton Hotel · lady-hamilton.thestockholmhotels.com

Day 6

Drottningholm Palace by Boat

A slow boat out to the working royal residence on Lake Mälaren, then a farewell dinner at the oldest restaurant in Sweden still serving food today.

Boat to Drottningholm Palace — Strömma

~1 hour each way · round trip from 245 SEK (about \$23 USD) per adult

A scenic hour-long cruise across Lake Mälaren from central Stockholm's Klara Mälarstrand dock, passing summer villas and small islands on the way to Sweden's own Versailles.

Strömma · www.stromma.com

Drottningholm Palace & Gardens

~2.5 hours, self-guided · Palace from about 160 SEK (\$15 USD) per adult

The Swedish royal family's actual private residence and a UNESCO World Heritage Site, its formal Baroque and English-style gardens open to wander for free, plus the 18th-century Court Theatre, one of the only theatres in the world still using its original stage machinery.

Farewell Dinner — Den Gyldene Freden

~2 hours · \$50–\$75 USD per person

Europe's oldest restaurant still in continuous operation, serving Gamla Stan's cellar dining rooms since 1722 — the Swedish Academy has held its weekly lunch here for decades, and the menu leans into classic game and seafood.

Den Gyldene Freden · +4684249760 · gyldenefreden.se

Overnight — Lady Hamilton Hotel

From \$220–290 USD/night, for 2 people

A sixth and final night at the Gamla Stan hotel.

Lady Hamilton Hotel · lady-hamilton.thestockholmhotels.com

Day 7

Stortorget & Departure

A last unhurried coffee in the square where Stockholm's medieval Stock Exchange still stands, before the express train back out to the airport.

Final Morning — Stortorget

~1 hour, self-guided · Free

Gamla Stan's oldest square, ringed by steep-gabled merchant houses in mustard, rust and cream, with the old Stock Exchange building (now the Nobel Prize Museum) on one side — an easy, low-key finish before checkout.

Departure — Arlanda Express to Stockholm Arlanda Airport

~20 minutes · 340 SEK (about \$32 USD) per adult

Closes out seven days that ran from a floodlit changing of the guard to a 1722 dinner table — allow the standard two-to-three-hour buffer before an international departure.