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Se hur  
mycket våra  
värmepumpar  
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KLICKA HÄR



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## Sublime Sweden is full of surprises

Posted on: 22 October 2014 by [Diane Priestley](#)

Diane Priestley is dazzled by Swedish culture and history and the captivating charm of Sormland.



**Tracing the steps of the notorious 100-year-old man who climbed out the window and disappeared, discovering sublime Swedish cuisine (the best kept culinary secret in the world), soaking up idyllic countryside in Sormland, jumping aboard a boat and zooming across the tranquil Baltic Sea to hike in a lush island forest, staying the night in an historic castle, visiting grand palaces, viewing the world's largest collection of sparkling vintage cars and antique juke boxes, delving into the intriguing history of the Swedish monarchy (Britain is not the only country with a colourful royal lineage!) and to cap it off visiting the famous Cake Castle (yes we died and ascended to heaven!) added up to a magical mystery tour, a feast for the senses, I will be raving about for years to anyone who'll listen!**

To let you into a little secret, I didn't know much about Sweden before this illuminating foray into the Northern European paradise, but now I'm hopelessly hooked and yearning for more!

What made this four-day sojourn so extraordinary? We were a group of seven wide-eyed gals on a press trip writing for various publications and privileged to have an eloquent and knowledgeable tour guide, Elisabeth Daude, who brought to life Swedish culture and history with captivating charm!

So you want to know more, right? Of course you do. So here goes...

I am still awe-struck by the fact I can happily sit and read on a plane and in just two hours I am transported to another country! This is not the Magic Faraway Tree fantasies of my childhood but the reality of our 21<sup>st</sup> century lifestyle. So with childlike wonder, courtesy of the sleek Arlander Express, we find ourselves wandering the cobblestone streets of bustling Stockholm, set right on the glistening harbour. Right away I learn that Sweden is an archipelago of thousands of islands on the Baltic Sea (Who knew?)

The Old Town is peacefully free of traffic so tourists and locals can stroll through charming laneways lined with colourful shops bursting with traditional crafts and aromatic bakeries. The famous Nobel Museum is a Stockholm favourite and we view the city palace of King Gustaf and Queen Silvia. Like our British royal family, the Swedish Royals have several magnificent palaces throughout the country, many open to the public.



As we scurry across the bridge to the elegant [Hotel Reisen](#), swarms of tall, slim, good-looking Swedes on bicycles cheerfully glide past on their evening commute. We discover many hundreds more locals, towering blue-eyed blondes with perfect posture, enjoying a late summer Thursday night out in the lively, immensely popular [Taverna Brillo](#) restaurant where we are delighted to find ourselves that evening dining on the tasty creations of award-winning chef, Magnus Nilsson.

From this gourmet initiation, the irresistible Swedish desserts become my downfall, as I plummet spectacularly off my Diet perch into the hedonistic pleasure of rich chocolate mousse with homemade salted caramel ice cream! Bliss!



On Friday morning, after a Scandinavian breakfast banquet, we gather in the lobby to meet Elisabeth, our guide with Sormland Tourism, and our kindly driver Sven-Gunnar who loads our luggage into the neat little 22-seater bus for the drive to the impressive [Sparreholms Castle](#) on beautiful Lake Baven.

Another form of bliss, as we cruise through the genteel countryside, a pastel patchwork of meadows, forest and lakes dotted with cheerful yellow timber cottages and rust coloured farm houses, I am absorbed in the amusing adventures of Allan Karlsson, the mild-mannered centenarian who escaped out the window of the Old People's home in Malmkoping, wearing his pee-soaked slippers. It turns out that Allan throughout his long life of accidental travel around the globe managed to change the course of history!

What double pleasure to be reading this quirky novel in the very same region where the decrepit hero and his gang of cohorts drove their yellow get-away bus crammed with Sonya, the circus elephant!

At Sparreholms Slott we are warmly welcomed by the manager and shown around the opulent castle brimming with exquisite furnishings and unique pretty hand-painted ceramic stoves. The massive dining room, superb conference room and beautiful guest rooms treat visitors from all over the world to an experience of pure luxury with the added bonus of some surprising museums.



We stroll through the oak groves on the tranquil lake to a huge showroom that houses a rare collection of vintage and classic cars and carriages lovingly collected by proud owner, Helge Karinen over four decades. The gleaming vehicles, in impeccable condition, are a sheer delight. Car enthusiasts would be in Seventh Heaven spending hours purring over these beauties!

And there's more! We explore the fascinating juke box collection, which takes us on a journey through the musical eras of the Antique Age, Silver Age and Golden Age through the development of music boxes, phonographs and gramophones to the jukeboxes of the 50s. These polished machines are, like the cars, in immaculate condition and working order and a treat for any music lover.

And for horsey people this grand estate even offers a celebrated equestrian centre with world-class training and competitions.

Over a tasty lunch our group enthuses about how this unique attraction would appeal to British tourists of all ages and special interest clubs; car enthusiasts, music lovers and horse riders would have the time of their lives!

The lovely Asa Malmqvist from Swedish Tourism has joined our group. It is Asa who designed our tour and full marks for the fascinating variety and interesting attractions she has managed to draw together.

Well-sated we pile in the mini-bus and head for Malmköping, a close knit community of 1700 residents put on the map by author Jonas Jonasson who chose this quaint little village for the setting of his wildly popular novel, **The Hundred-Year-Old Man Who Climbed Out Of The Window and Disappeared**. The captivating book has sold eight million copies in 45 languages and been made into a \$50 million movie!

We meet dedicated local, An-Louise Olsson who works as a volunteer showing visitors around her beloved village. She leads us to the Old People's Home where the rebellious birthday boy stepped feebly out the window and shuffled his way to the Bus Stop where the misadventure began!



We travel to the Byringe train station in the forest, today the home of a delightful couple who cheerfully pose for snaps. There's something about this endearing novel that brings a smile to your face! You just can't help but get caught up in Allan's escapades!

On the way to our next destination we make a lakeside stop-off for 'fika', the Swedish tradition of afternoon coffee or tea and delicious cake!

What comes next is so unexpected! We are staying overnight at a castle no less! The [Hedenlunda Slott](#) in Flen is a magnificent stately mansion offering luxurious accommodation just a stone's throw from what has to be the finest restaurant I've ever experienced!

## **Sörmland factbox**

### **Getting there**

British Airways, SAS and Norwegian all operate flights from London to Stockholm Arlanda. SAS also operates flights from Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol and Edinburgh to Arlanda.

In addition, Ryanair flies from London Stansted to Stockholm Skavsta in the heart of Sörmland.

## **Hotels**

### **Hotel Reisen**

A double room with breakfast costs from SEK 1,276 per night

[www.firsthotels.com/Our-hotels/Hotels-in-Sweden/Stockholm/First-Hotel-Reisen/](http://www.firsthotels.com/Our-hotels/Hotels-in-Sweden/Stockholm/First-Hotel-Reisen/) / +46 8 22 32 60

### **Hedenlunda Slott**

A double room with breakfast costs from SEK 1,990 per night

[www.hedenlundaslott.se](http://www.hedenlundaslott.se) / +46 157 754 00 .

## **Meals**

## **Taverna Brillo**

Mains start from SEK 175

<http://tavernabrillo.se/en/> / +46 8 51977800

## **Attractions**

### **Sparreholms Slott**

The museums cost SEK 80 per person for a guided tour of one museum, SEK 150 per person for two museums and SEK 230 per person for three museums.

Double room with breakfast starts from SEK 1,745 per night.

### **100 Year Old Man tour in Malmköping**

Tours cost from SEK 200 per person and are offered as required by the tourist office in Malmköping. To book a tour, call + 46 157 43 09 96 or visit [www.flen.se](http://www.flen.se) for more information.

[www.flen.se/Global/upload/Om%20Flens%20kommun/Dokument/hundraaringen\\_110707\\_hi.pdf](http://www.flen.se/Global/upload/Om%20Flens%20kommun/Dokument/hundraaringen_110707_hi.pdf)



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Visit [www.visitsormland.com](http://www.visitsormland.com), [www.visitsweden.com](http://www.visitsweden.com) or [www.visitstockholm.com](http://www.visitstockholm.com) (*Visit Sörmland website is currently only in Swedish but the UK version is launching in November*)

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