

FIELDS OF GOLD
Sörmland is as
pretty as a picture



Swede dreams



in the wind, but our effort was rewarded when, with a huge splash, a fish eagle crashed into the lake in front of us, rising again with a fish clutched in its talons. An amazing sight!

After lunch at our B&B we walked to Viking King Rönne's grave, referred to as the "big barrow". From the top of this giant mound we took in the spectacular views of Lake

Runnviken, then met carpenter Åsa, who took us foraging.

Walking across her wheat fields in the blazing sunshine, we gathered pine branches and nettles to take to her farm, a traditional dwelling of red painted wooden houses.

We sat in her sunny garden and drank pine tea and ate delicious homemade sweet nettle cakes. Åsa makes bespoke furniture and sells crafts from other female artisans.

Clara, Åsa and Nadine are just some of local women artisans and producers who created the "sunflower route" on route 223 - look for

sunflower signs indicating where to stop. vag223galleria.se

At dusk we drove around harvested wheat fields in search of moose - and soon we saw two babies slowly followed by their mother, rummaging through the corn. And on the drive back we were mesmerised by a male moose's huge antlers when he stopped to stare at us before lumbering into the sunset.

At Öster Malma Castle and Wildlife Park you can see not only moose but also red deer, fallow deer, roe deer, wild boar and mouflon. Borrow binoculars and follow the game trail.

And the excellent Café Jägarboden serves up venison hot dogs as well as gifts in the farm shop.

Another highlight was a visit to the coastal town of Mariefred, on the shore of Lake Mälaren, filled with chic boutiques, cafés and the must-see Royal Gripsholms Castle. The Swedish National Portrait Gallery here houses over 4,000 portraits.

By the end of our break we had totally fallen for Sörmland - its unspoiled landscape, clean air and sparkling waters had us truly smitten!

TRAVEL FILE

TOP TIP Alcohol is available only from state-controlled shops called "systembolaget" which can be tricky to find. Ask locals where to go and check closing times. Buy spirits from duty free on your way.

GOOD TO KNOW There are frequent trains from Stockholm to Sörmland. The ticket machines all take credit cards and are easy to navigate. swedavia.com

RETAIL THERAPY Shoppers can head to Vingåkers Factory Outlet for bargain designer clothing from

the likes of Tiger of Sweden, Helly Hansen and J Lindenberg. vfo.se

GETTING THERE BA, SAS and Norwegian all fly from London to Stockholm Arlanda. SAS also operates flights from Manchester, Bristol, Birmingham and Edinburgh to Arlanda. Ryanair flies from Stansted to Stockholm Skavsta in the heart of Sörmland.

WHERE TO STAY B&B doubles at Trosa Stadshotell from £150 per night trosastadshotell.se
B&B doubles at Runnviken from £136 per night runnviken.se

MORE INFO visitsormland.com