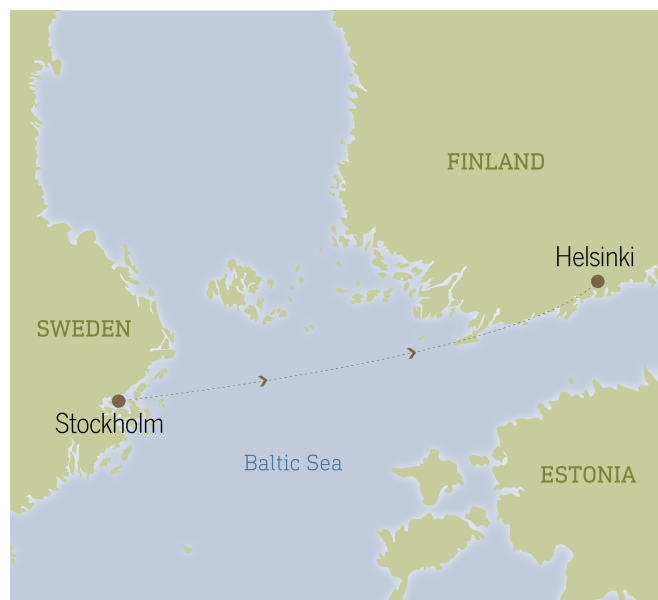


## Sweden & Finland: Stockholm to Helsinki

### Tour-Only Itinerary

Discover two Nordic capitals, which share the same “white nights” – a time when the sun barely dips below the horizon. In Stockholm, you’ll find a sophisticated city built around urban islands, where daily life unfolds amid modern architecture and bustling public spaces. During your walking tour of Stockholm, you’ll explore the island oases of Djurgården and Långholmen, and soak up Swedish history as you wander the city’s medieval lanes. Across the Baltic Sea is Helsinki – Finland’s famed capital city – where you’ll trek protected wilderness, dine at the UNESCO sea fortress of Suomenlinna, and wander the elegant grounds of Drottningholm Palace. With stays in luxury hotels and meals of flavorful Nordic foods, you’ll experience unforgettable Nordic culture on this Stockholm to Helsinki walking tour.



### Highlights

Explore the multi-island, 18th-century sea fortress of Suomenlinna and the exquisite Swedish royal gardens of Drottningholm, both UNESCO World Heritage sites

Ferry across the picturesque channels of Stockholm to the urban islands of Djurgården and Långholmen, and wander the medieval lanes of Sigtuna and Gamla Stan

Trek the Finnish wilds of Nuksio National Park, following trails through hushed fir forests, past craggy outcrops and scenic lakes

Dine in style at elegant restaurants, sampling the native flavors of the far north, such as lingonberries, herring, and reindeer

## On all Guided Adventures you can count on ...



Expert local guides to introduce you to the best of your destination.



Gracious accommodations that are a clean, comfortable home away from home.



Off-the-beaten-path places you'd never find on your own.



Experts to handle all the details.



A maximum of 18 fun-loving fellow travelers to share the journey.



Flight + Tour Combos include plane tickets, airport car service, and pre- and post-tour accommodations.



Delicious, authentic multi-course meals—virtually all are included.

## Activity Level

This tour is one of our Guided-Full Walking Adventures, rated easy. Walks average 3-6 miles per day, with shorter and longer options on some days. Walks are on a variety of terrain including city streets, gravel paths and country roads, and one forested trail with limited rocks and exposed roots. This tour includes small public ferry rides in Stockholm and Helsinki and a 16-hour overnight on a large passenger ferry to cross the Baltic Sea. If you are prone to motion sickness, please bring any treatment or medication that you are accustomed to using.

## DAY 1

### Join your *Sweden & Finland: Stockholm to Helsinki* tour. **Djurgården and Gamla Stan**

3-4 miles, easy and 1-2 miles, easy

Your Country Walkers representative meets you at the Hotel Skeppsholmen at 9:00 a.m. in the lobby. After a brief introduction to the group, your adventure begins.

Kick off your day with a short ferry ride from your hotel on Skeppsholmen Island to the adjacent green oasis of Djurgården. This peaceful island in the middle of Stockholm has long been a favorite of the city's residents. From the 16th to the 18th centuries it served as a royal game reserve, before assuming its current status as an urban getaway for cultural entertainment and outdoor recreation. Here you'll find a wide variety of museums and other venues – the Vasa maritime museum, the Skansen zoo, the Cirkus performance space, ABBA The Museum, and the Gröna Lund amusement park – all immersed in an exuberant natural setting.

This morning's easygoing walking excursion across the island gives you a close-up look at Djurgården's appealing mix of natural and man-made features. You'll follow a combination of walking paths and sidewalks through mature parkland with views of the bustling archipelago and its surrounding waters, passing yacht clubs, beautifully tended gardens, and families enjoying a day out in nature. On the furthest end of Djurgården, enjoy an al fresco lunch at a harborside café, taking in the view of the Fjäderholmarna, or 'feather islands' in the distance.

Afterwards, continue walking with your guide along the south shore of the island or return directly to your hotel on its leafy inner island. You may also wish to linger longer stay and spend an hour or two exploring Djurgården's museums, galleries, and other attractions on your own.

Celebrate the start of your tour in grand style at this evening's welcome dinner, feasting on panoramic city views and sumptuous Swedish fare at one of Stockholm's most elegant restaurants. Another short ferry ride across the harbor brings you to Gamla Stan, Stockholm's captivating, pedestrian-friendly Old Town. Here, on the first settled island in the archipelago, history becomes tangible as you wander through narrow medieval streets and admire the charming ensemble of saffron-, ginger-, and cinnamon-colored facades framing Stortorget, the city's oldest square. Your guide will accompany you on a short guided walk, point

out Stockholm's 13th century cathedral, the Nobel Museum, or the Kungliga Slottet, an opulent baroque Royal Palace. Enjoy dinner in this historic setting, savoring inspired seasonal offerings like artichoke soup with onion cream,, roast venison with fennel sausage and wild mushrooms, or gooseberry sorbet with vanilla-cardamom cream.

Accommodation: Hotel Skeppsholmen, Stockholm

## DAY 2

### Transfer to Sigtuna. Walk from Sigtuna to Viby to Venngarn Castle

4-7 miles, easy

This morning you'll transfer about one hour north of Stockholm to the historic town of Sigtuna, located on the shores of sprawling Lake Mälaren. Founded in 980, Sigtuna is considered to be Sweden's oldest town, immortalized in the ancient Norse sagas and recognized as the site where Sweden's first coins were minted in 995. To this day, the surrounding countryside is dotted with 11th-century runes, while the town center contains the ruins of the 13th-century Dominican monastery where we begin our walk.

After a leisurely stroll past the colorful wooden buildings along Storagatan, Sigtuna's medieval-sized narrow main street, continue along the lakeshore on a mixed-use paved pathway and onto a country road leading to the beautifully preserved 19th-century farming village of Viby. With its flowery pastures dotted with red clapboard houses, it's no wonder that Viby is a popular location for Swedish films!

Your walk continues along an unpaved rural road through fields to Venngarn Castle. Crowning a 1,000-year-old site framed by concentric stone walls, this stunning mustard-yellow mansion with its baroque chapel is amazingly well preserved, accessible, and at the center of a vibrant small community. Enjoy lunch overlooking the period 17th-century park before walking or shuttling back to Sigtuna.

In the late afternoon, return to Stockholm and prepare for another sumptuous dinner at your hotel's superb restaurant. The flavors of Sweden's forests and Baltic Sea waters burst forth in creations such as herb-grilled fillet of Nordic char or spicy fried venison with game gravy. Afterwards, settle in for a quintessentially Swedish dessert—tart, juicy, reddish-golden cloudberry served with almond cake, crème anglaise, chocolate, and meringue!

Accommodation: Hotel Skeppsholmen, Stockholm

## DAY 3

### Walk on Långholmen Island. Boat ride to Vaxholm Island, short walk.

3-5 miles, easy

Transfer via public ferry this morning and continue on foot to Långholmen, another of the 14 urban islands on which Stockholm is built. Surrounded on all sides by Lake Mälaren, Långholmen served as a “prison island” for two centuries before it was reclaimed as public parkland in 1974. These days the old prison has been converted into a hostel and museum, while the island’s green spaces have become a popular recreation destination. Your route this morning follows walking paths along Långholmen’s waterfront, passing historic prison buildings, the slips of the local boating club, and garden allotments where Stockholmers lovingly tend their vegetables and flowers. Along the way, you may break your journey to partake in one of Sweden’s tastiest traditions: the late morning “fika,” a time-honored ritual in which friends gather for coffee, conversation, and a sweet treat of cardamom-laced cinnamon buns or Swedish cookies.

After free time for lunch and relaxation, hop aboard a scheduled ferry boat this afternoon and head for the island town of Vaxholm, east of Stockholm in the archipelago that leads out to the Baltic Sea. Enjoy a short walk past the sailboats bobbing in the harbor and through the traditional village of wooden clapboard homes, anchored by its distinctive onion-domed town hall.

Tonight you’ll enjoy a privileged vantage point overlooking the water and Vaxholm’s historic stone fortress, as you dine at one of the island’s favorite seafood eateries, perhaps sampling a modern twist on the Swedish smörgåsbord. Transfer by minibus back to your hotel after dinner.

Accommodation: Hotel Skeppsholmen, Stockholm

## DAY 4

### Boat ride to Drottningholm Palace, walk of grounds and optional visits

## of buildings. Transfer to ferry terminal for overnight ferry to Helsinki

3 miles, easy

This morning, board a public boat from central Stockholm's quayside through Lake Mälaren to the royal Drottningholm Palace, a superb representation of 18th-century European architecture, now enshrined in its entirety as a UNESCO World Heritage site. Modeled after France's Versailles Palace and still home to the Swedish royal family, the main building is a riot of chandeliers and gold and white décor. Delight in strolling broad paths lined with greenery as you explore the beautifully landscaped Palace Park grounds, replete with fountains, canals, artfully trimmed hedges, marble statues, chestnut-lined avenues, and Swedish native trees. Here you may also have time to visit the magnificent Slottsteater (Palace Theater), built in 1766 and still hosting live opera performances each summer. The theater retains a host of vintage details, including original 18th-century stage sets and hand-operated wind, thunder, and cloud machines. A walk across the grounds brings you to the candy-pink Chinese Pavilion, whimsically decorated in fashionable 18th-century chinoiserie.

Mid-afternoon, transfer to Stockholm's ferry terminal to board the overnight ferry to Helsinki, a scenic voyage that takes you through the picturesque archipelago in the sun's waning light before crossing into the Baltic around midnight.

After settling into your seaview cabin, enjoy dinner on the water in the ship's fine-dining restaurant. Afterwards, choose from numerous on-board activities, including shows, gambling, and duty-free shopping, or head for the open deck, where you can share drinks and conversation while contemplating views of islands and channels illuminated by the late evening sun.

Accommodation: Tallink-Silja Ferry

## DAY 5

### Helsinki City Walk and Suomenlinna

3-4 miles, easy

Your overnight ferry docks before 11:00 a.m. in Helsinki's historic port. Here you'll get your first glimpses of Finland's sophisticated capital, with its grand, powder-blue city hall backed by the imposing, domed,

white Lutheran Cathedral and the striking, red-brick Russian Orthodox church, topped by green and gold onion domes.

A short stroll from the ferry terminal leads you toward the Kauppatori area of Helsinki's city center. Your local guide points out some of the city's famous sites, including Esplanade Park, the Parliament House, and Finlandia Hall. Once at Kauppatori harbor, you board a public ferry to the UNESCO World Heritage site of Suomenlinna. A 15-minute jaunt through the island-dotted seascape of Helsinki's harbor brings you to this 18th-century sea fortress, inspired by French military architect Vauban and built over six fortified islands interconnected by bridges. Designed by the Kingdom of Sweden to protect against Russian expansion, it eventually fell into Russian hands for over a century before passing to the new nation of Finland in 1918. It now offers a fascinating glimpse into the region's history and is a beautiful spot, enjoyed by locals and visitors alike for strolling, picnicking, dining, and relaxing.

Upon arrival, enjoy a 3-course lunch at the island's brewery. Afterwards, your guide provides an overview of the island's most famous sights, including the characteristic pink barracks built during the Russian period, the 19th-century Russian church (whose steeple doubles as a lighthouse), the naval dockyard (the world's largest at the time of its construction in the 1760s), and the King's Gate entryway, Suomenlinna's enduring symbol, constructed in 1753-54 and rebuilt after heavy damage suffered in the Crimean War.

After ferrying back to the mainland, you may wish to join your local guide on a walk to some of Helsinki's other main sites including the Oodi Library and Senate Square. Or you may wish to walk directly to your hotel to relax and refresh. Dinner is on your own tonight. Your guides help you in choosing among Helsinki's many fine-dining restaurants within easy walking distance of your hotel. There's also time to enjoy the hotel's spa facilities!

Accommodation: Hotel Kamp, Helsinki

## DAY 6

### Nuuksio National Park

3-5 miles, easy

This morning you transfer about an hour northwest of Helsinki for a walk in the vast expanses of Nuuksio

National Park. Small lakes, craggy outcroppings, and hushed fir forest make up the park's upland geography, offering a sense of Finland's wild places surprisingly close to the nation's capital. These woodlands are home to elk, lynx, and the park's diminutive mascot, the Siberian flying squirrel. Your walking trail winds through this serene landscape and ends at a forest hut, where we'll gather by the fire for a traditional Finnish lunch that may include wild game, mushrooms, and berries hunted and foraged from the nearby forest.

For tonight's farewell dinner, you walk to a local Michelin-starred restaurant that focuses on seasonal and locally grown Scandinavian produce. Here, perhaps over a meal of grilled langoustine topped with basil pesto and wild herbs, you toast with your fellow walkers, reminiscing over your adventures in Stockholm and Helsinki.

Upon arrival, your guides will provide a brief overview of the island's most famous sights, including the characteristic pink barracks built during the Russian period, the 19th-century Russian church (whose steeple doubles as a lighthouse), the naval dockyard (the world's largest at the time of its construction in the 1760s), and the King's Gate entryway, Suomenlinna's enduring symbol, constructed in 1753-54 and rebuilt after heavy damage suffered in the Crimean War.

Accommodation: Hotel Kamp, Helsinki

## **DAY 7**

### ***Your Sweden & Finland: Stockholm to Helsinki tour concludes***

Näkemiin! After breakfast, your Stockholm to Helsinki walking tour concludes as you bid farewell to your group. It's time to explore Helsinki on your own or prepare for your onward travels. Country Walkers provides you with City Information that includes recommendations on what to see and do in Helsinki during your stay.



## What's Included

### Tour Only

Exceptional boutique accommodations	✓
All on-tour meals except 1 lunch and 1 dinner	✓
Local guides with you throughout tour	✓
Local wine and/or beer with dinner	✓
Entrance fees and special events as noted in the itinerary	✓
Emergency travel assistance hotline available 24/7	✓