



## Country Walkers

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## Sweden & Finland: Stockholm to Helsinki - Flight + Tour Combo

### Travel Style - Guided Walking Tour

This small-group Guided Walking Adventure offers an authentic travel experience, one that takes you away from the crowds and deep into the fabric of local life. On it, you'll enjoy 24/7 expert guides, premium accommodations, delicious meals, effortless transportation, and local wine or beer with dinner. Rest assured that every trip detail has been anticipated so you're free to enjoy an adventure that exceeds your expectations.



Summer is the perfect time to visit Sweden and Finland. During the period of “white nights,” when the sun barely dips below the horizon, the great capital cities of Stockholm and Helsinki blossom, flaunting their exceptional natural settings astride the Baltic’s islands and inlets. Based at luxurious, centrally located hotels, discover the best of Nordic history, culture, and nature as you stroll through the vibrant streets and urban parkland of these two sophisticated cities. On day trips into the surrounding countryside, follow in the footsteps of ancient Swedes among Sigtuna’s colorful timber houses, walk through the forested expanses of Nuuksio National Park, and explore the UNESCO World Heritage sites of Drottningholm and Suomenlinna. You’ll sense the intimate connection to nature that is so central to Swedish and Finnish culture, as you walk beautifully maintained waterside paths and dine on wild-caught and foraged foods from the Nordic land and sea. Complementing your daily walking excursions are ferry trips among leafy green islands, and an unforgettable overnight cruise across the Baltic Sea.

## Flight + Tour Combo Itinerary - 2019

### Flight

#### Fly from USA to Stockholm, Sweden

Begin your adventure by departing from a convenient gateway city in the United States or Canada. Spend the first night aloft.

### Arrival

#### Arrive in Stockholm, Sweden

Upon your arrival at Stockholm’s Arlanda Airport, a representative holding a Country Walkers sign meets you as you exit the baggage-claim area. Please note that there may be up to a 45-minute wait if



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there are other guests arriving within the same time frame. A complimentary small group transfer is provided to your hotel in the heart of Stockholm. The remainder of the day is at your leisure (no meals included). A visit to the Vasa Museum (Stockholm's most popular museum and home to the world's only preserved 17th-century ship), as well as City Hall (where the great Nobel banquet is held annually) are highly recommended during your pre-tour time in this stunning capital.

### **Accommodation: Hotel Skeppsholmen, Stockholm**

Located on an island in the heart of Stockholm's urban archipelago, the Hotel Skeppsholmen occupies a beautifully renovated 17th century building. Its peaceful yet central location is within walking distance of all of central Stockholm. The hotel seamlessly combines contemporary Swedish design within a historic context and offers upscale locally sourced cuisine in its restaurant and terrace dining areas.

### **Day 1**

#### **Join your Country Walkers *Sweden & Finland: Stockholm to Helsinki* tour**

Breakfast is included at your hotel.

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 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.

Another short ferry ride across the harbor brings you to Gamla Stan, Stockholm's captivating, pedestrian-friendly old city. 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, culminating with a light lunch in this historic setting. Afterwards, return with your guide along the waterfront to your hotel on its leafy inner island, spend an hour or two exploring Gamla Stan's nooks and crannies on your own, popping into the 13th century cathedral, the Nobel Museum, or the Kungliga Slottet, Stockholm's opulent baroque Royal Palace.

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. Gaze out



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over the city's spires and rooftops from your harborside perch as you savor inspired seasonal offerings like lobster soup with citrus-marinated scallops, roast venison with fennel sausage and wild mushrooms, or gooseberry sorbet with vanilla-cardamom cream.

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## 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 Wenngarn 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!

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### 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 fourteen 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 the aromatic cardamom-laced cinnamon buns known as Kanelbullar.

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.

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### Day 4

#### Boat ride to Drottningholm Palace, walk of grounds and optional visits of buildings. Transfer to ferry terminal for overnight ferry to Helsinki.

*6 miles, easy*



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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

The Tallink-Silja Line ferry boats plying the Baltic Sea between Stockholm and Helsinki are large passenger and vehicle ferries able to transport approximately 2,800 passengers and 395 cars. This overnight journey departs Stockholm at around 4:45 pm and arrives in Helsinki at 10:00 am. The two ferries were both built in the early 1990s and are over 600 feet long with 13 decks. On-board amenities include a range of restaurants, cafés, and bars, a Tax Free Superstore, and evening entertainment and casino. Your Commodore seaview cabins have a television, complimentary refreshments, and private bath. These cabins also have a separate Commodore Lounge with bar, sauna, and complimentary afternoon coffee and tea.

## Day 5

### Helsinki Green Walk

*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 through the market square in front of the Presidential Palace, where you'll hop on public transportation and head for the eastern side of Helsinki's port for



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an urban “green walk.” Your route offers an engaging overview of Helsinki’s urban and natural ecosystems as you weave through public parks, garden allotments, and nature preserves, with views across the water to the port, small islands, and passing ships.

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**

This grand historic hotel in the center of Helsinki is within easy walking distance of the city’s port area, museums, and design center. Plush, spacious rooms are done up in classic décor. The restaurant and elegant old-world lobby bar are longstanding local favorites.

## 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 the Market Square this afternoon and catch 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, 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.

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### Day 7

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

After breakfast, bid farewell to your group as your Country Walkers *Sweden & Finland: Stockholm to Helsinki* tour concludes. Explore Helsinki on your own or prepare for onward travels.

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### Departure

**Näkemiin!** This morning after breakfast, a small-group complimentary transfer is provided to Helsinki-Vantaa Airport based on your departure time. Your guides will confirm the transfer time while on tour.