

## Scandinavia: Denmark & Sweden

### Bike Vacation Only

If you're not familiar with the Swedish Riviera, it's a thing. The sandy beaches of Torekov and Båstad have long been the summer haven of Sweden's social elite—and the shoreline drips with opulence and distinctive Swedish charm. Starting in Denmark, your local leaders will introduce you to the region's heritage in regal settings—including a visit to Helsingør, the castle said to be the setting of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Cycle easy paths through the pristine forests of Småland, returning to an ancient manor house that's been a frequent retreat of Swedish royalty for centuries. Your leaders will be delighted to introduce you to traditional Swedish folklore during a festive evening of song and dance—and of course a boisterous, and delicious, Swedish barbecue that's nothing like anything you could ever experience back home.

### Cultural Highlights

- Discover the bike-friendly culture of two of Scandinavia's most fascinating countries: Denmark and Sweden.
- Cycle past magnificent sea views on easy coastal routes, including the Kattegattleden bike path—Europe's Cycle Route of the Year in 2018.
- Explore Hamlet's moody castle of Elsinore on a guided tour, then ferry across the narrow Öresund Strait to Sweden.
- Tour Norrviken Gardens, widely regarded as Sweden's most beautiful garden and consistently ranked among the most captivating in Europe.
- Savor the flavors of Scandinavia—from farm-fresh lunches and traditional Swedish *fika* to a scenic picnic at the Viking burial grounds of Dagshög, capped by a festive farewell barbecue with folkloric music.

### What to Expect

This tour features a combination of easy terrain and moderate hills, making it ideal for both beginners and experienced cyclists. The VBT support vehicle is always available for those who would like assistance with the hills.

**Tour Duration:** 7 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 9-40 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 1-6 hours

**Group size:** 14-20 max

## Climate Information

### Average High/Low Temperature (°F)

May 61°/46°, June 66°/52°, July 70°/55°, August 70°/54°, September 63°/50°

### Average Rainfall (in.)

May 1.6, June 2.4, July 2.4, August 2.4, September 2.4

## DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins / Travel to Helsingør / Ferry to Sweden / Warm-Up Ride / Welcome Dinner

Meet your VBT local guide at 8:45 a.m. in the lobby of our Pre-Tour hotel, The Square Hotel, in Copenhagen, Denmark.

You'll travel with your guide to the city of Helsingør. This historic town overlooking Øresund (or Øre Sound to locals) is known in English as "Elsinore," made famous by Shakespeare as the setting of *Hamlet*. Enjoy a guided tour of the Renaissance-style Elsinore Castle, now a UNESCO World Heritage site.

Lunch is on your own before you board the ferry for a 20-minute crossing of the Øresund to the Swedish city of Helsingborg. During the ferry ride, you might sample a local favorite: "two reds and a green"—a pair of sausages and a Tuborg beer. Upon arrival in Helsingborg, meet your VBT trip leaders at the hotel for a bike-fitting and safety briefing. Afterwards, check into your room, change into your cycling gear, and begin your warm-up ride along the scenic southern coast of Sweden to the picturesque fishing village of Råå. The 2.5-mile-wide strait you're cycling beside separates Sweden from Denmark and is one of the busiest waterways in the world, linking the Baltic Sea with the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean.

Later, settle into your hotel on Helsingborg's waterfront and enjoy the charm of this coastal city, with its bustling harbor and views of Hamlet's castle across the water. This evening, get to know your fellow travelers over a sumptuous welcome dinner with your trip leaders.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-Up Ride — 14.5 km (9 miles)

### What to Expect:

Cycle along a flat bike path in Sweden beside the Øresund.

Cumulative Distance Range: 14.5 km (9 miles)

Included Meals: Dinner

## DAY 2: Cycle from Helsingborg to Skäret

Set off from Helsingborg by bike, following a scenic route along the sea. On the outskirts of town, pedal past a castle and through coastal forests, enjoying the beauty of the Kattegat—the shallow sea between Denmark and Sweden. Your morning ride continues along the scenic Kattegattleden bike path, coasting past quaint fishing villages with cozy thatch-roofed homes and boat-filled harbors. Admire stunning vistas of shoals and grassy bluffs overlooking the Kattegat. Turning inland near the town of Arild, cycle past dairy farms and small vineyards, with a picturesque windmill presiding over the gentle hills. Along the way, there are several options for lunch, perhaps at a seaside restaurant or a charming garden café.

After lunch, you may choose to shuttle or continue cycling along the lovely coastal route back to your hotel in Helsingborg. Spend the remainder of the afternoon and evening exploring Sweden's oldest town. Always a strategic city due to its location at the narrowest point of the Öresund, Helsingborg shifted from Danish to Swedish control in 1658 after the Dano-Swedish War. During World War II, an underground network known as the Elsinore Sewing Club secretly helped Jews escape Nazi persecution. Today, Helsingborg is a picturesque seaside gem known for its vibrant atmosphere and cyclist-friendly streets.

For dinner on your own this evening, you might venture out from your centrally located hotel to one of Helsingborg's many restaurants.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Helsingborg to Skäret — 37 km (23 miles)

Afternoon: Skäret to Helsingborg — 32 km (20 miles)

### What to Expect:

Depart from your hotel in Helsingborg and ride to the rural town of Skäret along the Kattegattleden, a dedicated bike lane and path. In the afternoon, continue along the Kattegattleden back to your hotel in Helsingborg.

Cumulative Distance Range: 37 – 69 km (23 – 43 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

## DAY 3: Cycle to Torekov

This morning, continue your cycling journey to Ängelholm. Originally settled in 1516, this pretty town is renowned as one of the only remaining producers of clay cuckoos, a unique style of handmade wind instrument with finger holes. Enjoy time exploring Ängelholm and having lunch at your leisure.

After lunch, either shuttle or cycle to your next hotel. Your afternoon ride at times rejoins the familiar Kattegattleden bike route. Named Europe's Cycle Route of the Year in 2018, this scenic 242-mile (390 km) path stretches from Gothenburg to Helsingborg. It was Sweden's first national bicycle route and remains an inspiration to local and visiting cyclists. Traversing Sweden's southernmost region, Skåne County, the route reveals a varied landscape of forest and open shoreline meadows. Along the coast, you'll also spin through seaside communities such as Skepparkrogen and Torekov, where you will enjoy the next two nights at your charming spa hotel.

Tonight, shuttle to the seaside town of Båstad to dine at one of the recommended restaurants suggested by your trip leaders.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Helsingborg to Ängelholm – 33 km (20 miles)

Afternoon: Ängelholm to Torekov – 32 km (20 miles)

### What to Expect:

This morning's route follows busier bike lanes through the city of Ängelholm before joining the popular Kattegattleden bike route and quieter country roads.

Cumulative Distance Range: 33 – 65 km (20 – 40 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast

## DAY 4: Cycle the Bjäre Peninsula / Hovs Hallar / Dagshög

After breakfast, cycle through the manicured farmlands and small villages of the Bjäre Peninsula, taking in sweeping views of the distant Kattegat Sea. Civilization on the peninsula dates back to the Bronze Age, and traces of ancient cultivated terraces can still be found today. Picture-perfect Swedish panoramas of rolling farmland and neat red farmhouses mark your progress toward Hovs Hallar—the steepest coastal region of the peninsula. Explore this scenic nature park on foot, wandering among steep red cliffs and pebbled beaches.

Afterward, as you ride back toward your hotel, pause to savor a lovely picnic lunch at the old quarry and Viking burial grounds of Dagshög. Enjoy your sumptuous picnic while feasting your eyes on vistas of the rugged shoreline and the distant nature-reserve island of Hallands Väderö.

It's a short ride from here back to your hotel, where you may spend the afternoon relaxing by the pool or enjoying one of the spa's treatments. (The spa is popular with locals, so we recommend booking in advance with your trip leaders when you meet them on the first day of the bike tour.)

This evening, gather for an included group dinner in the hotel's lovely restaurant.

### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Torekov Hotell to Hovs Hallar Loop — 33 km (20 miles)

### What to Expect:

Ride well-paved, narrow country lanes with little traffic, as well as additional paved sections of the Kattegattleden cycle route. There is a short quarter-mile (400-meter) stretch of gravel road to and from the Dagshög picnic site. The terrain is generally flat with occasional rolling hills.

Cumulative Distance Range: 33 km (20 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## DAY 5: Cycle to Norrviken Gardens / Båstad / Toftaholm

After breakfast, cycle to nearby Norrviken Gardens, honored as Sweden's most beautiful garden and Europe's second-most beautiful garden in 2006. Enjoy a tour of one of the year's specially themed gardens. After the tour, savor a savory lunch on your own at the estate's villa or cycle into the charming resort town of Båstad, home to Sweden's Tennis Open, held each summer since 1948. Explore the town's shops and cafés at your leisure.

In the afternoon, shuttle from Sweden's scenic west coast into the picturesque inland countryside to your lakefront historic inn.

Tonight, enjoy a dinner prepared by your inn's talented chef.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Torekov to Norrviken Gardens — 30 km (19 miles)

#### What to Expect:

Cycle to the seaside resort town of Båstad and the Norrviken Gardens. The route alternates between a cycle path and dedicated bike lanes along country roads and village streets. Traffic in Båstad can increase during the summer months, especially in July during the weeks of Sweden's Tennis Open tournament.

Cumulative Distance Range: 30 km (19 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 6: Cycle the Swedish Countryside / Swedish Fika / Folkloric Musical Performance / Swedish Barbecue Farewell Dinner**

After breakfast, cycle from your inn along country roads into the surrounding countryside. Your flat, easy route winds through forests and meadows, passing quaint villages and numerous lakes. This morning, stop at a typical countryside home for *fika*, the traditional Swedish coffee break, where welcoming hosts share insights into their daily life.

Return to the hotel by bike and enjoy lunch and a relaxing afternoon at your lakefront inn. Take advantage of the many activities that immerse you in this scenic setting—go hiking, row or paddle a canoe on the

lake, or unwind in one of the unique eco-friendly saunas or hot tubs.

This evening, enjoy a performance by a local folkloric group and learn about their traditional costumes and the *nyckelharpa*—a distinctive Swedish instrument resembling a keyed fiddle. Later, savor a traditional Swedish barbecue farewell dinner in the hotel's 16th-century historic house.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Toftaholm Hergard loop ride to Swedish Fika — 61 km (38 miles)

#### What to Expect:

Depart from your hotel and ride along two-lane scenic country roads. After the Swedish *Fika*, ride back to the hotel.

Cumulative Distance Range: 61 km (38 miles)

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 7: Travel to Gothenburg / Gothenburg Guided Walking Tour / Your VBT Vacation Ends**

After breakfast, travel to Gothenburg. The journey takes approximately three hours.

Upon arrival in Gothenburg, all guests will enjoy an included walking tour of the city, ending at the iconic Feskekörka ("Fish Church"), where you'll have lunch at your leisure at one of the many local restaurants. After lunch, continue your walk to our Post-Tour hotel. The tour officially concludes at approximately 3:30 p.m. upon arrival at the Elite Plaza Hotel Gothenburg.

From the hotel, it's a short walk to Gothenburg Central Station, where trains and airport buses depart regularly for Göteborg Landvetter Airport.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## Accommodations

May vary depending on departure date.

### Elite Hotel Marina Plaza Helsingborg (Days 1-2)

Elite Hotel Marina Plaza location by the seaside and next door to the ferry / train station makes the hotel an ideal choice for leisure travelers as it is perfect walking distance to entertainment, landmarks and shops. The rooms are modern and stylish with complimentary wifi for all hotel guests. Twin bedded rooms offer a view overlooking the hotel's atrium whereas double rooms with one queen bed offer a water view. Note, there are no twin bedded rooms with water views. The hotel's gastropub -The Bishops Arms, offers a pub menu and an impressive range of beer and whiskey. The restaurant Marina Bar & Bistro serves the hotels delicious breakfast buffet and also offers lunch and dinner. Dine and watch the sun go down from one of the outdoor terraces.

### Torekov Hotell (Days 3-4)

The Torekov Hotell is a short walking distance from the beautiful village of Torekov at the far end of the Bjäre Peninsula. The hotel boasts one of the peninsula's coziest gourmet restaurants, the Bistro, serving locally cultivated and organic food. A feeling of tranquility pervades everywhere here. Each air-conditioned room boasts its own terrace while tennis courts and an open-air gym help you get in a workout if you wish. The hotel also offers a small, personal spa area, which is popular with the local villagers.

### Toftaholm Herrgård (Days 5-6)

With a register of owners dating from the 14th century, the Toftaholm Herrgård offers you a pleasant stay. Become part of manor-house life at the time when Count and Constable of the Realm Gustav Olsson-Stenbock owned Toftaholm. He later became King Gustav Vasa's brother-in-law – and later his father-in-law – when the King married the Count's daughter! Enjoy the hotel's setting on the shores of Lake Vidöstern, as well as its long tradition of hospitality. Amenities include a spa and restaurant serving international and classic Swedish cuisine. The hotel is not air conditioned but does offer WiFi throughout.

### Elite Eden Park Hotel (Day 7)

Exclusive Elite Eden Park Hotel is located in the heart of Stockholm, overlooking the tranquil Humlegården park and vibrant Stureplan. The guests' rooms are designed with timeless elegance, ultimate comfort with air conditioning and are the perfect accommodations for rest and relaxation after an exhilarating day touring Sweden's capital city. The hotel is home to two of the most popular dining venues in Stockholm – Miss Voon restaurant and the Asian gastropub GOMA. At Miss Voon, flavors from



all the Asian cuisines are combined with a Scandinavian base. At GOMA, the drinks are the focus along with Asian gastropub food. Behind the gastronomic experience is the well-known Scandinavian restaurateur, Jonas Svensson.