

## 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 Bar-B-Que 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 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 grounds in Europe.

### What to Expect

This tour offers a combination of easy terrain and moderate hills and is ideal for beginners and experienced cyclists. Our 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: Travel to Helsingör / Ferry to Sweden / VBT Bicycling Vacation begins / Warm-up ride / Welcome dinner

At 8:45 a.m., meet your VBT local guide in the lobby of The Square Hotel. Please remember NOT to pack your passport in your checked luggage and to bring the passport with you in your carry-on as you may need to present the passport to Swedish Immigration officials upon entering Sweden.

You travel with your local VBT guide to the city of Helsingör. This historic city overlooking Øre Sound, or Øresund to the locals, is called “Elsinore” in English and is known to Shakespeare readers as the site of Hamlet’s castle. Enjoy a guided tour of the Renaissance-style Elsinore castle, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

You will enjoy lunch on your own before boarding the ferry for the 20-minute crossing of the Öresund to the Swedish city of Helsingborg. During the ferry ride, you might snack on a local favorite, “two reds and a green”—a pair of sausages and a Tuborg beer. Upon arrival to Helsingborg, meet your trip leaders at the hotel for a bike-fitting and safety briefing. Afterwards check into your hotel, change to 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 are cycling along separates Sweden from Denmark and is one of the busiest waterways in the world, connecting the Baltic Sea to the North Sea and Atlantic Ocean. Later, settle into your hotel on Helsingborg’s waterfront, discovering this charming city with a bustling harbor and Hamlet’s castle in the distance across the Öresund.

This evening, get to know your fellow guests over a sumptuous welcome dinner with your leaders.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Warm-up — 14.5 km (9 miles)

What to Expect:

Cross the waterway on a ferry to Sweden between Helsingör, Denmark, and Helsingborg, Sweden. Cycle the flat bike path in Sweden along the Øre Sound.

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 cycling route along the sea. On the outskirts of town, pedal past a castle and forest, enjoying the coastal beauty along the Kattegat—the shallow sea between Denmark and Sweden. Your morning ride follows more of the scenic Kattegattleden bike path. Coast past quaint fishing villages with cozy thatch-roofed homes and boat-filled harbors. Admire stunning vistas of shoals and grassy bluffs overlooking the Kattegat. Soon, you turn inland near the town of Arild and pass dairy farms and small vineyards presided over by a windmill atop a gentle rise. Your refreshing morning spin has several lunch options along the way: perhaps a seaside restaurant or a lovely garden café.

After lunch, you may choose to shuttle or continue riding on the lovely coastal route back to your hotel in Helsingborg. Spend the remainder of the afternoon and evening exploring Helsingborg, the oldest town in Sweden. Always a strategic city for its location at the narrowest point on the Öresund, it changed hands from Danish to Swedish in 1658 after the Dano-Swedish War. During World War II, a sort of underground railroad here known secretly as the Elsinore Sewing Club helped Jews escape Nazi persecution. Today, Helsingborg is a picturesque seaside gem friendly to cyclists.

For dinner on your own this evening, you might venture out from your centrally located hotel to one of Helsingborg's numerous 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. Continue along the Kattegattleden bike path in the afternoon 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, you continue your cycling 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 leisure.

After lunch either shuttle or cycle to your next hotel. Your afternoon ride at times joins the ever-familiar Kattegattleden bike route. Named *Europe's Cycle Route of the Year 2018*, this scenic, 242-mile (390 km) bike path stretches from Gothenburg to Helsingborg. It was Sweden's first national bicycle route and is an inspiration to local and visiting cyclists. Traversing Sweden's southernmost county, Skåne County, reveals a varied landscape of forest and open shoreline meadows. Along the coast, you also spin through seaside communities such as the small village of 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 restaurant suggestions provided 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:

The morning route follows busier bike lanes in the city of Ängelholm before joining the popular Kattegattleden bike route and country roads.

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

Included Meals: Breakfast

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

After breakfast, you cycle through the manicured farmlands and small villages of the Bjäre Penninsula, taking in the sweeping distant views of the Kattegatt Sea. Civilization on the peninsula dates to the Bronze Age, and traces of the cultivated terraces of that time can still be found today. Picture-perfect Swedish panoramas of rolling farmland and neat red farmhouses mark your progress today toward Hovs Hallar—the steepest coastal region of the peninsula. Explore by foot the nature park with its 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 the vistas of the rugged shoreline and distant nature-reserve island of Hallands Väderö.

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

This evening, enjoy 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, and more paved bike paths of the Kattegattleden cycle route. There is a short quarter-mile (400-meter) stretch of gravel road to/from the Dagshög picnic site. The terrain is fairly 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 the nearby Norrviken Gardens, chosen 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 enjoy a savory lunch on your own in 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 shops and cafés at your leisure.

In the afternoon you will shuttle from the west coast of Sweden's scenic inland countryside to your lakefront historic countryside 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 a dedicated bike lane on 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 Bar-B-Que farewell dinner

After breakfast, you cycle from your inn on country roads into the surrounding countryside. Your flat, easy bicycle route takes you through forests and meadows to quaint villages and around numerous lakes. Stop in the morning at a typical countryside home for *fika*, the traditional Swedish coffee break, where welcoming Swedish hosts share with you some details about their daily life.

Cycle back to the hotel and enjoy lunch and the afternoon at your lakefront inn. Take advantage of

numerous activities that bring you close to this beautiful, scenic area such as hiking, rowing or paddling canoes on the lake, or simply relaxing in one of the unique eco-friendly saunas and hot tubs.

This evening enjoy a local folkloric group's performance and learn about their traditional costumes and a unique Swedish musical instrument, nyckelharpa, resembling a fiddle with keys attached to the neck to control the chords. Later savor a traditional Swedish Bar-B-Que farewell dinner in the hotel's 16th century historical Swedish 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: Stockholm

After breakfast, travel back to Stockholm, where your tour ends upon arrival at the Elite Hotel Stockholm Plaza. It is a short stroll from here to Stockholm's central train station and the Arlanda Airport Express train.

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 Hotel Stockholm Plaza (Day 7)**

Convenience and eco-friendliness are cornerstones of the 4-star Elite Hotel Stockholm Plaza. The city is right outside your door, from the green oasis of Humlegården Park and the busy Stureplan plaza to the Biblioteksgatan (Library Street) with its trendy shops and the Kungsträdgården, the oldest public park in Stockholm. What's more, the tram to Djurgården is only a few minutes' stroll away. The hotel has received Green Key certification, an environmental award for hotel and conference establishments. Enjoy the fitness center, sauna, and choice of restaurants at this air-conditioned property.