

Stockholm in One Day

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What do you do when you find yourself in one of the most beautiful capitals in Europe and only 24 hours to spare? You take in as much as possible, starting with the [Stockholm in One Day Tour](#).

Stockholm represents the best of land and sea – a vibrant city surrounded by an idyllic Baltic archipelago and a large lake, rich culture and history, juxtaposed against an urban area of sleek

design and trendy fashion.

I chose the Stockholm in One Day tour because it offered an insight into both of Stockholm's landscapes – a comfortable coach tour around the city followed by a cruise of the picturesque canal and islands. The tour takes a total of 2.5 hours, and both parts of the tour were accompanied by a very detailed audio narration.

The first view on the bus portion was a glimpse at the towering statue of Gustavus Adolphus the Great, himself a larger-than-life character in Swedish history. Dubbed “the Lion of the North” he is regarded as one of the greatest military commanders of all time. The beloved expansionist king ruled Sweden from 1611 to 1632 and is credited with making Sweden one of Europe's strongest powers. He also established Stockholm as the capital.



One of the highlights of Stockholm is undoubtedly the original section or Old Town, called Gamla Stan. Some of the buildings date back as early as the 1300's tilting towards each other on each side



of the narrow, cobblestone alleys. We drove past examples of iconic medieval architecture, the Stockholm Cathedral, and the Royal Palace, all the while I was furiously snapping photos, taking notes, and making plans to return to explore this vibrant area on foot.

Our tour took us to Karlaplan, a circular park in the Östermalm section. This popular plaza with its center fountain was created during the 1980's in the image of Place de l'Étoile in Paris. Karlaplan was so-named to honor the many Swedish kings named Karl, e.g. Karl X Gustav, Karl XI and Karl XII. The park spilled over into an area of exclusive, high-end homes.

Water rippling, sun beaming through the puffy white-and-gray clouds hanging in the electric blue sky, the excitement was palpable as we departed the ferry docks on our canal boat headed for Djurgården, one of Stockholm's most popular recreational islands. It's easy to understand why the island is a favorite with both locals and tourists – the island hosts the Skansen open air museum, the Abba the Museum, the Vasa Museum and other museums and monuments along with historical buildings and the amusement park Gröna Lund.

The pier disappeared into the crisp air on the horizon as we drifted past Östermalm – where we'd been earlier – for a very different and dramatic water view of the region and its attractive ochre-colored buildings.

The boat ducked under Stockholm's many bridges, creating the perfect backdrop as testified by the endless shutter clicks.

The cruise ended back at the ferry docks in a pedestrian-friendly part of the city, inviting the departing tourists to continue exploring the waterfront. I walked along the long, breezy harbor path, sharing the promenade with joggers, toddlers in strollers, and businesspersons speaking into cell phones. I gazed across the water at the buildings which seemed to hover on the water, creating a surreal vibe that I couldn't help but breathe in and hold onto. Sweden, particularly Stockholm, is so much more than meatballs and build-it-yourself furniture! My first introduction to Stockholm on the "nutshell" tour left a favorable impression and a strong desire to return for more.