

Central Sweden



Like a tastefully arranged towel in a sauna, Svealand drapes itself right across the middle of the country, from the northeastern shore to the western mountains. It's an area strongly associated with Sweden's heritage – it even gave the country its name (Svea Rike, or Sverige). Vikings set out on expeditions from Lake Mälaren, and built their most sacred temple at Gamla Uppsala; rune stones, burial mounds and forts still lie scattered over Uppland.

In the northwest, Dalarna (Dalecarlia) is rich in folk culture and is the home of Sweden's most famous symbol, the brightly coloured wooden *Dalahäst* (Dala horse). On Midsummer's Day, happy hordes of people flock to the country's biggest celebrations, in the town of Leksand.

Svealand is littered with old industrial villages, with perfectly intact 16th- and 17th-century furnaces and forges; they're surprisingly picturesque places, and two of them are unique enough to appear on Unesco's World Heritage List. If you're more of a romantic, head for the region's gorgeous castles: Örbyhus Slott is a particularly fine baroque example.

Svealand's diversity – huge forests, balmy lakes, green meadows and high border mountains – is great news for outdoor types. Try your hand at rafting, canoeing, dogsledging, hiking, canyoning or rock-climbing. Sweden's biggest and best ski resort, at Sälen, explodes with rosy-cheeked skiers once the snows begin to fall.

HIGHLIGHTS

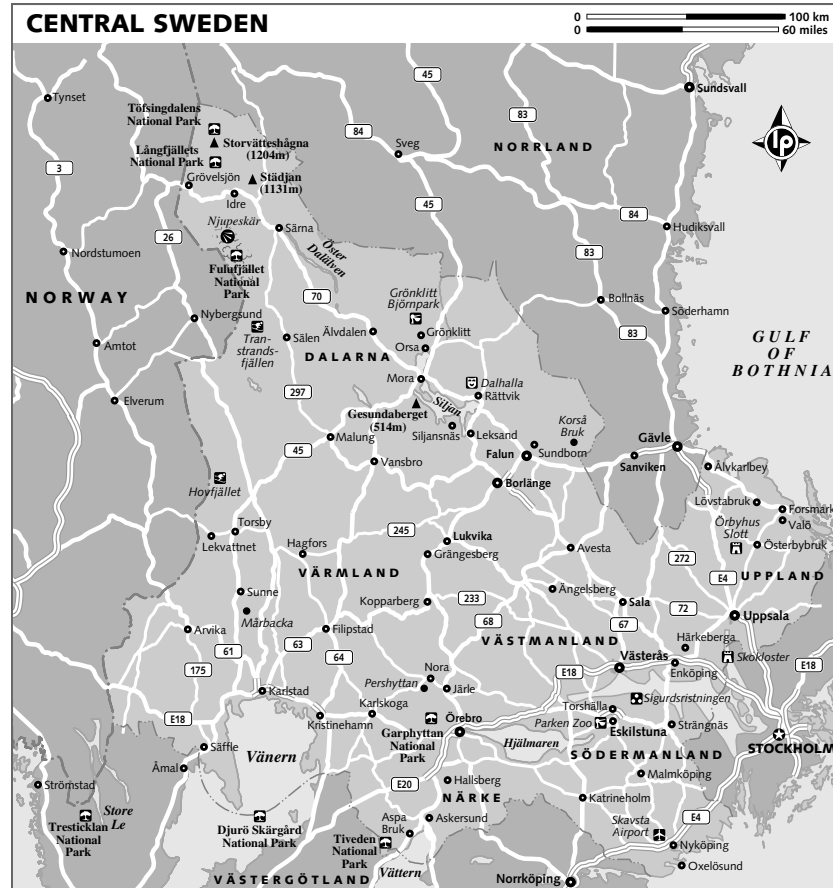
- Watch roly-poly bear cubs wrestle at **Grönklitt Björnpark** (p268)
- Join the country's biggest midsummer celebrations at **Leksand** (p262)
- Explore Sweden's industrial heritage down the silver and copper mines at **Sala** (p249) and **Falun** (p260)
- Sample Scandinavia's finest ice cream in the attractive wooden town of **Nora** (p251)
- Steal some great decorating ideas and revel in the humour and artistry on show at **Carl Larsson's house** (p262)
- Hike or ski in the rugged mountains along the Norwegian border near **Sälen** (p268)
- Build your own raft and sail it down the peaceful **Klarälven** (p259)



■ AREA: 80,843 SQ KM

■ HIGHEST ELEVATION:
STORVÄTTEHÅGNA (1204M)

■ POPULATION: 1,648,148



Orientation

Svealand consists of six regions (*landskaps*) and seven counties (*län*). In the east, there's the regions of Uppland and Södermanland (a.k.a Sörmland), in the middle of the country there's Västmanland and Närke, while the west has Värmland and Dalarna. This book has dealt with the county of Stockholms län in a separate chapter.

Information

REGIONAL TOURIST OFFICES

Visitors can contact the following regional tourist offices for more detailed information on the area.

Sörmlands Turism (☎ 0155-24 59 00; www.sormland.se/turism; Box 58, SE-61122 Nyköping)

Turistinformation Dalarna (☎ 023-640 04; www.dalarna.se; Trotzgatan 10-12, SE-79183 Falun)

Turistrådet Örebro Län (☎ 019-602 70 00; www.orebrolan.se/turism; Eklundavägen 9-15, Box 1613, SE-70116 Örebro)

Uppsala Tourism (☎ 018-727 48 00; www.uppland.nu; Fyrstorg 8, SE-75310 Uppsala)

Värmlands Turistråd (☎ 054-14 80 41; www.varmland.org; Drottninggatan 45, SE-65225 Karlstad)

Westmannaturism (☎ 021-10 38 00; www.vastmanland.se in Swedish; Stora Gatan 40, SE-72187 Västerås)

Getting Around

Express buses connect major towns in southern areas. For the west and north of the region, you'll need to use *länstrafiken* (regional network) services.

The following companies provide regional transport links. If you're planning to spend some time in any of these counties, it's worth inquiring about discount cards, monthly passes or a *sommarkort*, offering cheaper travel in the peak summer period (mid-summer to mid-August). Check also the respective websites for routes, schedules, fares and passes; these websites don't always have information in English, but if you call the telephone numbers listed you'll usually reach someone who can help you in English.

Dalatrafik (☎ 0771-95 95 95; www.dalatrafik.se in Swedish)

Länstrafiken Örebro (☎ 0771-22 40 00; www.lanstrafiken.se in Swedish)

Länstrafiken Sörmland (☎ 0771-22 40 00; www.lanstrafiken.se in Swedish)

Upplands Lokaltrafik (☎ 0771-14 14 14; www.upplandslokaltrafik.se in Swedish)

Västmanlands Lokaltrafik (☎ 0774-41 04 10; www.vl.se)

Värmlandstrafik (☎ 0563-532 34; www.kollplatsen.com in Swedish)

SJ (☎ 0771-75 75 75; www.sj.se) trains run along both sides of Mälaren lake. Hallsberg is a major junction and trains continue west to Karlstad and Oslo. There are good services from Stockholm to Uppsala and Mora, and many other destinations.

UPPLAND

UPPSALA

☎ 018 / pop 182,076

There's something of a small, green Amsterdam feel about Uppsala, Sweden's fourth-largest city and one of the oldest – perhaps it's the tranquil waterways, streams of bicycles and young studenty population. Don't miss the spectacular cathedral, dating back to the 15th century, and the Renaissance castle with its impressive history. On the edge of the city, Gamla (Old) Uppsala was once a flourishing 6th-century religious centre where humans were sacrificed to the Norse gods.

Information BOOKSHOPS

Akademibokhandeln Lundequistska (☎ 13 98 30; Forumgallerian, Dragarbrunnsgatan 43-45; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, noon-4pm Sun) The best

English-language book selection in Uppsala, upstairs in the shopping centre.

Pressbyrån (Sankt Persgatan 10) Sells foreign newspapers and magazines. Another branch inside the train station.

EMERGENCY

Ambulance (☎ 112)

Police (☎ 16 85 00; Salagatan 18)

University Hospital Emergency Unit (Akademiska Sjukhusets Akutmottagning; ☎ 611 00 00; Sjukhusvägen)

INTERNET ACCESS

Port 22 (Sankt Olofsgatan 32; per hr Skr19; ☎ 11am-8pm Mon-Fri, 11am-6pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun)

Sidewalk Express (per hr Skr19) Found inside Saffet's, Stora Torget, and at the train station. To log on, buy vouchers from the coin-operated machines.

UNT City Internet Café (cnr Fyrstorg & Drottninggatan; per 15mins Skr10; ☎ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10.30am-2.30pm Sat) Inside the *Uppsala Nya Tidning* newspaper office.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Train station (small/medium/large lockers per 24hr Skr15/20/25)

LIBRARIES

Library (☎ 727 17 00; Svartbäcksgatan 17; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon & Wed-Fri, 10am-8pm Tue, 11am-3pm Sat year-round, also 1-4pm Sun Sep-Apr) Offers free Internet access, but bring ID and expect longish waits.

MEDICAL SERVICES

There's an after-hours pharmacy at the hospital (see Emergency section).

Apoteket Kronan (Svartbäcksgatan 8; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Sat)

MONEY

Head to Stora Torget for banks and ATMs.
Forex (☎ 10 30 00; Fyrstorg 8; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat)

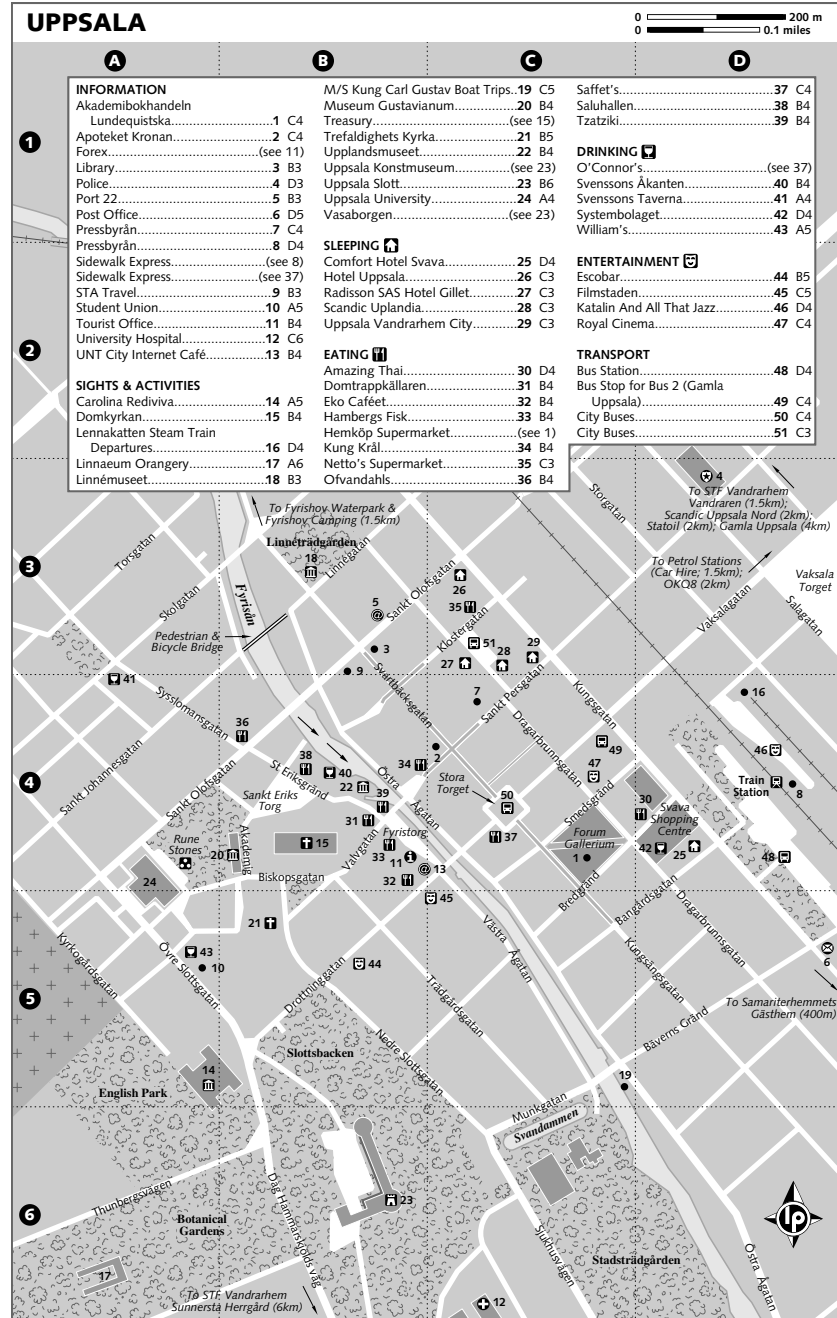
POST

A number of central newsagencies also provide postal services.

Post office (Bäverns Gränd 19; 8am-6pm Mon-Fri) Right next to the bus station.

TOURIST INFORMATION

Tourist office (☎ 727 48 00; www.uppsalaturism.se; Fyrstorg 8; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, also noon-4pm Sun mid-Jun–mid-Aug) Pick up the good *Walking Tour of Uppsala* leaflet, and the listings guide *What's On Uppsala* for the latest entertainment and events.



UPPSALA KORTET

This handy little three-day discount card (Skr125) gives free or discounted admission to many of the town's attractions, plus free local bus travel and parking. There are also discounts at participating hotels, restaurants and shops. The card is valid from June to August, and can be bought from the tourist office.

TRAVEL AGENCIES

STA Travel (☎ 020-61 10 10; Sankt Olofsgatan 11)

UNIVERSITIES

Student union (☎ 480 31 00; www.uppsalastudentkar.nu; Övre Slottsgatan 7)

Sights

GAMLA UPPSALA

If you enjoy fresh green countryside butted thick with pagan history, don't miss Gamla Uppsala, 4km north of the modern city. It's one of Sweden's largest and most important burial sites, containing around 300 mounds from the 6th to the 12th centuries. The earliest and most impressive are the three great **grave mounds** (admission free; ☎ 24hr), said to contain the legendary pre-Viking kings Aun, Egils and Adils...although that's unlikely, considering the body from the Östhögen (East Mound) is a woman.

According to breathless reports from the medieval chronicler, Adam of Bremen, a vast golden temple graced Gamla Uppsala in the 10th century. Outside, dog, horse and human sacrifices were strung up in a sacred grove. Thor, Odin and the other Viking gods were displaced when Christianity arrived in 1090, and from 1164, the archbishop of Uppsala had his seat in a cathedral on the site of the present **church** (☎ 0708-56 33 22; ☎ 9am-6pm Apr-Sep; 9am-4pm Oct-Mar).

Gamla Uppsala Museum (☎ 23 93 00; www.raa.se/old uppsala; adult/7-18yr Skr50/30; ☎ 11am-5pm May-Aug, noon-3pm Wed, Sat & Sun Sep-mid-Dec & Jan-Apr) contains finds from the cremation mounds, a poignant mix of charred and melted beads, bones and buckles. More intact pieces come from various **boat graves** in and around the site.

Nearby is **Friluftsmuseet Disagården** (☎ 16 91 80; admission free, guided tours Skr30; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-May-Aug), a 19th-century farming village con-

sisting of 26 timber buildings. Disagården is the focal point for Uppsala's midsummer celebrations.

Just next to the unexcavated flat-topped mound, **Tingshögen** (Court Mound), is **Od-insborg** (☎ 32 35 25; buffet Skr150; ☎ 11am-6pm), a restaurant known for its horns of mead and Viking feasts (although daintier refreshments are offered at the downstairs summer café).

If you feel like a peaceful walk, **Erikleden** is a 6km 'pilgrims' path' between the cathedral in Uppsala and the church in Gamla Uppsala. Buses 2 and 110 run daily and are very frequent (between them there's one every 10 minutes Monday to Friday, every 40 minutes at weekends).

UPPSALA SLOTT

Pink and ponderous, **Uppsala Slott** (☎ 727 24 85; admission by guided tour only, adult/6-18yr Skr60/15; ☎ in English at 1pm & 3pm Jun-Aug) was built by Gustav Vasa in the 1550s. It contains the state hall where kings were enthroned, and where Queen Kristina abdicated (see boxed text, p31). It was also the scene of a brutal murder in 1567, when crazy King Erik XIV and his guards killed Nils Sture and his two sons, Erik and Svante, after accusing them of high treason. The castle burnt down in 1702, but was rebuilt and took on its present form in 1757.

In the ruins of the death-stained dungeons is a waxworks museum, **Vasaborgen** (☎ 50 77 72; www.vasaborgen.se in Swedish; adult/7-15yr Skr40/20; ☎ 10am-4pm May-Aug), where Renaissance scenes and intrigues are brought to life.

The southern wing of the castle houses the **Uppsala Konstmuseum** (☎ 727 24 82; adult/under 19s Skr30/free; ☎ noon-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun), with five centuries worth of permanent artworks and some interesting temporary exhibitions.

DOMKYRKAN

The Gothic **Domkyrkan** (cathedral; ☎ 18 72 01; www.uppsaladomkyrka.se; admission free; ☎ 8am-6pm) dominates the city, just as some of those buried here – including St Erik, Gustav Vasa and the scientist Carl von Linné (see boxed text, p240) – dominated their country.

Gustav's funerary sword, silver crown and shiny golden buttons have been moved to the **treasury** (☎ 18 72 01; adult/child Skr30/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Sat & 12.30-5pm Sun May-Sep, limited hr Oct-Apr) in the cathedral's north tower,

where there's also a great display of medieval textiles. Particularly fine are the clothes worn by the three noblemen who were murdered in the castle (see above): they're the only example of 16th-century Swedish high fashion still in existence.

BOTANICAL GARDENS

The excellent **Botanical Gardens** (☎ 471 28 38; www.botan.uu.se; Villavägen 6-8; admission free; ☎ 7am-8.30pm May-Aug, 7am-7pm Sep-Apr), below the castle hill, show off over 10,000 different species, and are well worth a wander. Attractions include the 200-year-old **Linnaeum Orangery** (☎ 9am-3.30pm Mon-Thu, 9am-2.30pm Fri year-round) and a tropical **greenhouse**, currently undergoing restoration (due to reopen in 2007).

MUSEUMS

With its wonderfully eclectic halls, the **Museum Gustavianum** (☎ 471 75 71; www.gustavianum.uu.se; Akademigatan 3; adult/under 12yr Skr40/free; ☎ 11am-4pm Tue-Sun) is the most intriguing of Uppsala's museums. It contains a reconstructed Viking ship burial, Egyptian mummies and Carl von Linné's notebooks, but the most wowing exhibit is the 17th-century **Augsburg Art Cabinet**, containing over a thousand ingenious trinkets, and the vertiginous **anatomical theatre** where executed criminals were dissected.

In the display hall of **Carolina Rediviva** (☎ 471 39 00; Dag Hammarskjölds väg 1; adult/under 12yr Skr20/

free; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & 11am-4pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-8pm Mon-Fri & 10am-5pm Sat mid-Aug-mid-Jun), the old university library, is the surviving half of the *Codex Argenteus* (AD 520), written in silver ink on purple vellum in Gothic.

Upplandsmuseet (☎ 16 91 00; www.upplandsmuseet.se in Swedish; Sankt Eriks Torg 10; free admission; ☎ noon-5pm Tue-Sun), in an 18th-century watermill, houses county collections on folk art, music, and the history of Uppsala from the Middle Ages onwards.

Botanists will enjoy **Linnémuseet** (☎ 13 65 40; www.linnaeus.uu.se; Svartbäcksgatan 27; adult/under 16yr Skr25/free; ☎ noon-4pm Tue-Sun Jun-mid-Sep), which displays memorabilia linked to Linné's work in Uppsala; and the attached 18th-century **Linnéträdgården** (☎ 471 25 76; adult/under 15yr Skr30/free; ☎ 9am-9pm May-Aug, 9am-7pm Sep), Sweden's oldest botanical garden, with more than 1300 species arranged according to Linné's 'sexual system' of classification.

There are also several special-interest museums (on medical history, psychiatry, evolution etc), attached to university departments, with complex opening hours; enquire at the tourist office for details.

OTHER SIGHTS

Trefaldighets Kyrka (☎ 9am-5pm) isn't as outwardly impressive as the nearby Domkyrkan, but it has interesting brick vaulting and some 15th-century painted ceilings.

EVERYDAY GODS

Some of the greatest gods of the Nordic world – Tyr, Odin, Thor and Frigg – live on in the English language as the days of the week: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, respectively.

Tyr was the god of justice, a deity who lost his hand to a giant wolf. The gods tried to trick the wolf, Fenrir, into captivity by challenging him to break an indestructible chain. The wolf was suspicious, but accepted the challenge on condition that one of the gods place a hand in his mouth. Tyr agreed, the gods succeeded in fettering Fenrir, but the furious wolf retaliated by biting off Tyr's right hand.

The most eminent of the Nordic gods was one-eyed Odin, whose eight-legged flying horse, Sleipnir, had runes etched on its teeth. Odin gave up his eye in exchange for wisdom; he also gleaned information from his two ravens Hugin and Munin, who flew daily across the worlds in search of knowledge. As the god of war, Odin sent his 12 Valkyries (battle maidens) to select heroes killed in battle to join him at the palace of Valhalla. He was also the god of poets, a magician and master of runes.

Frigg was Odin's wife, and she's also known as a fertility goddess and the goddess of marriage.

The thunder god, Thor, protected humankind from the malevolent ice giants with his magic hammer, Mjølfnir (Thor's-hammer talismans are frequently found in Viking graves). Immensely strong, he would hurl Mjølfnir into the clouds to create vast thunderstorms before the hammer came boomeranging back again.

On the lawn by the main **Uppsala University** building (imposing enough to demand a glance inside) are nine typical Uppland rune stones.

On 30 April, students dressed in white gather to celebrate the **Walpurgis Festival**. Traditionally, this includes a student boat race on the river at 10am and a run down Carolinabacken at 3pm, as well as various processions and much singing.

Activities

You can ride the narrow-gauge steam train **Lennakatten** (☎ 13 05 00; www.lennakatten.se in Swedish; unlimited day-travel ticket adult/6-15yr/family Skr150/75/300) 33km into the Uppland countryside. Train trips take place up to seven times on Sunday from June to August, and there are also tours on Thursday, Friday and Saturday in July. The trains depart from the Uppsala Östra museum station, behind the main station.

Slow the pace with a boat cruise to the baroque castle of Skokloster. **M/S Kung Carl Gustaf** (☎ 14 48 00; www.kungcarlgustaf.se; return ticket adult/child Skr200/100), a 19th-century ex-steamship, sails Tuesday to Sunday from mid-May to mid-August. Tours leave Islandsbron at 10.30am and return at 4.30pm, allowing 2½ hours at Skokloster. There are also evening river cruises at 7pm Tuesday to Saturday from May to August; the cruise plus buffet and entertainment costs Skr350 per person.

Families with water-loving children should head for **Fyrishov** (☎ 727 49 50; www.fyrishov.se in Swedish; Idrottsgatan 2; adult/3-15yr Skr75/60; ☎ 9am-9pm), one of Sweden's largest waterparks with

the full complement of slides, Jacuzzis, waterfalls and wave machines.

Sleeping

Uppsala Vandrarhem City (☎ 10 00 08; www.uppsala.vandrarhem.se; Sankt Persgatan 16; dm/s/d Skr200/350/480; ☎ year-round; ☎) The Vandrarhem City is recommended for its sheer convenience – you really can't stay anywhere more central for these prices. Rooms, all named after famous Uppsala landmarks, are small but decent (although dorms suffer from traffic and level-crossing noise), and there are plenty of toilets and showers to go round.

STF Vandrarhem Sunnersta Herrgård (☎ 32 42 20; info@sunnerstaherrgard.se; Sunnerstavägen 24; dm Skr190, s/d from Skr340/380; ☎ Jan–mid-Dec; bus 18 or 20) A pleasant, well-equipped hostel located in a manor house some 6km south of the city centre. It's possible to rent bikes (per day/week Skr50/200), and there's a boat that you can use for free.

STF Vandrarhem Vandraren (☎ 10 43 00; info@vandraren.com; Vattholmavägen 16C; dm Skr210-250, s/d from Skr250/440; ☎ mid-Jun–mid-Aug; bus 2, 20, 24 or 54) A student residence for most of the year, this summer hostel 2km north of the city has excellent amenities, including a private bathroom for each room. You can also rent bikes.

Samariterhemets Gästhem (☎ 10 34 00, fax 10 83 75; Samaritergränd 2; s with/without bathroom Skr570/490 d with/without bathroom Skr840/740, prices discounted by around Skr80) Run by a Christian community, this is a clean, central and inviting guest-house. Old-style rooms are simply decorated in cool creams, with antique furniture dotted here and there.

Hotel Uppsala (☎ 480 50 00; hoteluupsala@profil.hoteles.se; Kungsgatan 27; s/d from Skr1110/1335, both discounted to Skr700; ☎) Newly refurbished in crisp calming birch wood, Hotel Uppsala is great for people who enjoy their snacks: 40 of the rooms have microwaves and fridges.

Scandic Uplandia (☎ 495 26 00; uplandia@scandic-hotels.com; Dragarbrunnsgatan 32; s/d from Skr1325/1640, discounted to Skr915; ☎) Scandic Uplandia is centrally located and recently refurbished, with smart modern rooms.

Scandic Uppsala Nord (☎ 495 23 00; uppsala@scandic-hotels.com; Gamla Uppsalagatan 50; rm from Skr990; ☎) Similar in style but with more in the way of gyms, saunas and solariums, Scandic's other hotel is 2.5km from the city centre on the road to Gamla Uppsala. For guests with a conscience, there are a few 'environmental rooms' where 97% of the contents can be recycled once they're past their best.

Comfort Hotel Svava (☎ 13 00 30; info.co.svava@choicehotels.se; Bangårdsgatan 24; s/d Skr1325/1625, discounted to Skr1125/1380; ☎) Named after one of Odin's Valkyrie maidens, Hotel Svava, right opposite the train station, is a very comfortable top-end business-style hotel.

Radisson SAS Hotel Gillet (☎ 68 18 00; sales.uppsala@radissonsas.com; Dragarbrunnsgatan 23; s/d/st Skr1340/1740/1990, discounted to Skr700/990/1250; ☎) The bathrooms in this smart hotel have just been revamped, and some of the rooms have views of the cathedral (though singles are on the small side). Facilities include a bar, sauna, gym, pool, solarium and ice machines.

Fyrishov Camping (☎ 727 49 60; stugby@fyrishov.se; Idrottsgatan 2; sites Skr130, 4-bed cabins from Skr450; ☎ year-round; bus 1, 4 or 33 from Dragarbrunnsgatan) This campsite, 2km north of the city, is great for families with waterbabies: it's attached to one of Sweden's largest waterparks.

Eating

RESTAURANTS & CAFÉS

Domtrappkällaren (☎ 13 09 55; info@domtrappkallaren.se; Sankt Eriksgränd 15; lunch from Skr80, dinner mains Skr200-290; ☎ closed Sun) Previously a prison, this is now a top-notch restaurant set in an atmospheric cellar (lunch is served upstairs). It specialises in gamey dishes and Swedish cooking, such as venison, reindeer and cloudberry soufflé.

Tzatziki (☎ 15 03 33; Fyristorg 4; mezedes Skr49, mains Skr100-140) Tzatziki will supply all your *moussaka* and *souvlaki* needs. There's cosy seating in the 16th-century interior, and in

summer the outside tables by the riverside thrum with diners. Service is fast, the food tasty, and there are several veggie options.

Kung Krål (☎ 12 50 90; www.kungkral.se in Swedish; Sankt Persgatan 4; lunch Skr80, mains Skr90-180) In the heart of town, this is perfect for summer lunchtimes, when the umbrella'd seating on Gamla Torget fills with hungry punters. The extensive menu includes burgers, pasta, reindeer, salads and seafood dishes.

Hambergs Fisk (☎ 71 00 50; Fyristorg 8; lunch from Skr80, à la carte mains Skr150-240; ☎ Tue-Sat) Next to the tourist office is this excellent seafood restaurant, which is especially popular for lunch. Self-caterers may be interested in the attached fresh fish shop.

Amazing Thai (☎ 15 30 10; Bredgränd 14; lunch buffet from Skr60, à la carte dishes Skr90-130) A popular lunch spot thanks to its great-value buffet. The evening menu features a good selection of fragrant stir-fries, noodle dishes and curries.

Ovandahls (☎ 13 42 04; Syslomansgatan 3-5; cakes & snacks around Skr40) Something of an Uppsala institution, this classy *konditori* dates back to the 19th century and is a cut above your average coffee-and-bun shop. It's endorsed by no less a personage than the king, and radiates old-world charm.

Eko Cafét (☎ 12 18 45; Drottninggatan 5; snacks Skr50-70) This funky little place with retro and mismatched furniture serves some of the best coffee in town. It does Italian-style whole-food, turns into a tapas bar on Wednesday to Saturday evenings, and frequently hosts live jazz/folk. Things quieten down somewhat in the summer, when it just opens for lunch Monday to Friday.

QUICK EATS & SELF-CATERING

Saffet's (☎ 12 41 25; Stora Torget 1; meals from Skr59) Cheap eats pour from the friers at this central fast-food outlet, serving Tex-Mex, burgers, spuds, kebabs and fish and chips.

Saluhallen (☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Recently rebuilt after a devastating fire, this must now be one of the world's shiniest indoor markets. Stock up on meat, fresh fish, cheeses and fancy chocolates.

There's a central **Hemköp supermarket** (Stora Torget; ☎ until 10pm) and a branch of the cheaper chain **Netto's** (Klostergatan; ☎ until 8pm Mon-Fri, 6pm Sat & Sun). For alcohol, **Systembolaget** (Dragarbrunnsgatan 50) is inside the Svava shopping centre.

CARL VON LINNÉ

He may sound like a complete eccentric – a syphilis doctor who kept monkeys in his back garden – but Carl von Linné (1707–78), or Linnaeus, was a scientific genius. Known as the 'Father of Taxonomy', Linné invented a precise method for ranking minerals, plants and animals. Described in his work *Systema Naturae* the basis of his system is still used today.

Linnaeus believed that by studying the natural world, man could fathom out God's plans. His minute observations led him to devise a classification system of plants (based on their sexual organs) – where one Latin name indicates the genus, and one the species. Some contemporary scientists were appalled at the system's sexual explicitness, but Linnaeus obviously had a sense of humour about it: he named a small and insignificant weed after one of his most vocal critics!

As an inspirational professor at Uppsala university, he packed his pupils off around the globe to bring back samples; two of them even joined Captain Cook's expedition to Australia. Among his other achievements, Linné took Celsius' temperature scale and turned it upside down, giving us 0°C for freezing point and 100°C for boiling point, rather than the other way around.

Drinking & Entertainment

In the evenings, local students converge on the university bars on Sankt Olofsgatan (difficult to get into if you're not an Uppsala student, but worth a go). Or try the bar-restaurants in town.

Svenssons Taverna (☎ 10 09 08; Sysslomansgatan 14) This cool *taverna* has a winning combination of rustic interior and shady outdoor seating area.

Svenssons Åkanten (☎ 15 01 50; Sankt Erikstorg; ☞ May-Sep) The Tavernas sister venue is equally popular for summer evening drinks, with a great riverside location near the indoor market.

O'Connor's (☎ 14 40 10; Stora Torget 1) Upstairs from Saffet's is this friendly Irish pub and restaurant (with good pub meals from Skr50). It has live music at least six nights of the week, and a selection of over 70 beers from around the world.

William's (☎ 14 09 20; Övre Slottsgatan 7) In the university quarter, William's is a cosy 'English' pub.

Katalin And All That Jazz (☎ 14 06 80; Godsmagasinet, Östra Station) The excellent Katalin is in a former warehouse behind the train station. It hosts regular live jazz and blues, with occasional rock and pop bands. There's a good restaurant here too.

Escobar (☎ 14 00 40) A popular bar and nightclub which has recently been revamped. At the time of writing, its grand reopening was being eagerly awaited.

Big Hollywood films are screened regularly at the **Royal Cinema** (☎ 13 50 07; Dragarbrunnsgatan 44) and **Filmstaden** (☎ 08 56 26 00 00; www.sf.se in Swedish; Drottninggatan 3).

Getting There & Away

The **Flygbuss** (Bus 801) departs at least twice an hour between 3.15am and midnight for nearby Arlanda airport (Skr80); it leaves from outside Scandic Hotel Uplandia.

Swebus Express (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) runs regular direct services to Stockholm (Skr65, one hour, at least hourly), Gävle (Skr120, one hour 40mins, two daily), Västerås (Skr90, 1½ hours, eight Monday to Friday, three Saturday and Sunday), Örebro (Skr200, three hours, two to four buses daily) and Falun (Skr190, 3½ hours, two Monday to Saturday, one Sunday). **Svenska Buss** (☎ 0771-67 67 67; www.svenskabuss.se in Swedish) also operates two services on Fridays

and Sundays that call at Västerås (Skr60, 1¼ hours), Örebro (Skr120, 2½ hours) and Karlstad (Skr180, 4¼ hours).

There are frequent SJ trains to/from Stockholm (Skr49, 40 minutes). All SJ services to/from Gävle (Skr129, 50 minutes, at least seven daily), Östersund (Skr480, six hours, at least two daily) and Mora (Skr272, 3¼ hours, two daily) also stop in Uppsala.

For car hire, contact **Statoil** (☎ 20 91 00; Gamla Uppsalagatan 48), next to the Scandic Uppsala Nord. There are also three petrol stations with car hire, 1.5km along Vaksalagatan: **OKQ8** (☎ 29 04 96; Årstagatan 5-7) often has good deals.

Getting Around

Upplands Lokaltrafik (☎ 0771-14 14 14; www.ul.se in Swedish) runs traffic within the city and county. **City buses** leave from Stora Torget and the surrounding streets. Tickets cost from Skr20 and give unlimited travel for two hours.

NORTHERN UPPLAND

Centuries-old ironworks and mines dot the green landscape of Northern Uppland. From vast gorges ripped into the ground to spic-and-span forge workers' cottages, the industrial heritage in this area makes for some unique trips. Ask any tourist office for the free booklet *Vallonbruk in Uppland*, or check out www.vallonbruken.nu.

You'll notice the word 'bruk' in many local placenames. A *bruk* is an industrial village that processed raw materials, such as iron ore. Most appeared in the 17th century, and were owned, run and staffed by Dutch and Walloon (Belgian) immigrants. The profits were used to build fine mansions, surrounded by humble workers' homes.

To reach Löfstabruk or Forsmark, take bus 811 from Uppsala to Östhammar (Skr80, 1¼ hours, every 30 minutes Monday to Friday, hourly at weekends), then change to bus 832 (four to eight daily). Bus 823 runs hourly from Uppsala to Österbybruk (Skr60, one hour, at least 10 daily).

Österbybruk

☎ 0295

You'd never guess from its placid air, but Österbybruk and its ironworks were established solely to make munitions for Gustav Vasa's interminable wars. Today the village is a sleepy place, which nevertheless contains most basic facilities (bank, bakery,

supermarket, pizzerias etc), and a summer **tourist office** (☎ 214 92; ☞ 11am-5pm Jun-Aug).

The pleasant area around the tourist office includes the mansion **Österbybruk Herrgård** (which has summer art exhibitions), **workers' homes** and the world's best-preserved 17th-century **Walloon forge**. Two types of tours are offered: one takes in the grounds of ironworks, the other takes you into the forge and explains its original workings. Both tours are given daily in summer (mid-June to mid-August) and cost Skr40 per adult (free for children).

About 2.5km west, there's the old 100m-deep **Dannemora Gruvor**, once a mine and now a lake. Tours of the mine buildings run at noon and 2pm daily in July, and at weekends in June and August (adult/child Skr50/free). Daredevils can experience the **Gruväventyr** (☎ 207 00; www.gruvaeventyr.se in Swedish; Stormningsvägen 7; admission Skr390; ☞ 11am, 1pm, 3pm, 5pm & 7pm Wed-Sun Jul-mid-Aug), an unusual climbing/abseiling/rope-bridge course around the old mine. It's unsuitable for anyone shorter than 1.6m.

The impressive 15th-century castle **Örbyhus Slott** (☎ 214 06; www.orbyhus-slott.com; admission by tour only, adult/12-16yr Skr50/15; ☞ 1pm Sat & Sun mid-May-mid-Sep, plus 1pm & 3pm Jul), 10km further west, is where mad King Erik XIV was imprisoned by his brother Johann. Erik was then murdered with a bowl of pea soup laced with arsenic.

Wårdshuset Gammel Tammen (☎ 212 00; info@gammeltammen.se; s/d Skr895/1150, discounted to Skr595/850) This lovely old inn is in one wing of Österbybruk Herrgård, by the ironworks estate. Rooms are cosy and peaceful – some have views over the duck pond – and there's a good restaurant (snacks Skr70, mains Skr150).

Dannemora Vandrarhem (☎ 215 70; Stormningsvägen 4; beds Skr175; ☞ May-Oct) This wee hostel, with 20 beds, is near the Dannemora mine and is based in old mineworkers' houses.

Karins Stallcafé (☎ 401 48; ☞ 11am-5pm May-Jul, 11am-4pm Aug) Near the Gammel Tammen, in a former stable, this summer café serves lunches and snacks, set off by chunks of warm homemade bread.

Löfstabruk

☎ 0294

Tiny Löfstabruk (Leufsta Bruk), 24km due north of Österbybruk, is a great example of a mansion with associated factories. In

1627 the Dutchman Louis de Geer came to Löfstabruk, and the mansion was built for his grandson, Charles de Geer, around 1700. The house and its factories were destroyed by a Russian attack in 1719, but everything was rebuilt and iron production continued until 1926.

There is a small **tourist office** (☎ 310 70; ☞ 11am-5pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-2pm Sat & Sun rest of the yr) next to the church, where you can buy tickets for various one-hour guided tours, including to the mansion (1.30pm); the village and park (noon); and a themed tour, the subject of which changes every year (3.30pm). They all cost Skr50 and run daily from mid-June to mid-August.

Leufstabrucks Wårdshus (☎ 311 22; vardshus.lovestabruk@telia.com; budget s/d Skr200/300, historic s/d Skr300/400, with breakfast s/d Skr500/600) This classy inn has options for both lean and bulging wallets. Cheaper hostel-style rooms are in a modern annexe, and the posher accommodation is inside the beautiful 16th-century house. There's also a fine restaurant (mains Skr165 to Skr185), serving everything from coffee and cakes to a full à la carte menu.

Forsmark

☎ 0173

The beautiful surroundings of the **Forsmarksbruk** ironworks are ideal for photographers; it may be an old industrial estate, but its church, manor house, workshops and English gardens, all set around a central pond, are just staggeringly pretty. The **statue** of Neptune in the middle of the pond dates from 1792. There's a seasonal **tourist office** (☎ 500 15; ☞ 9am-4pm Jul-mid-Aug) which is staffed until 4pm, but open until 9pm for brochures. These days the main employer in the area is the nearby nuclear power station. An exhibition room adjoining Forsmark tourist office extols the virtues of the plant...with no mention of, for example, the radioactive waste it leaked into the Baltic Sea in June 2005.

The **bruksmuseum** (adult/child Skr20/free; ☞ noon-4pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug), with old carriages, sleeping quarters and a factory office, is definitely worth a look, although its opening times can be erratic. **Eldorado** (free; ☞ 9am-4pm Mon-Fri, 11.30am Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug), a tiny experiment station for kids, has a fantastic rolling-ball machine guaranteed to hypnotise.

Forsmark Wårdshus (☎ 501 00; forsmark.vardshus@telia.com; lunch Skr70, s/d Skr550/750) Friendly staff

cope admirably with the hungry coach parties at this lovely old inn. As well as devouring lunch, you can stay in one of the charming rooms (prices include breakfast overlooking the English park, and rent bicycles (per day Skr100).

SÖDERMANLAND

NYKÖPING

☎ 0155 / pop 49,575

You can easily spend a relaxing summer day or two in Nyköping, checking out its low-key attractions. There's a **tourist office** (☎ 2482 00; turism@nykoping.se; Stadshuset, Stora Torget; ☹ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-1pm Sat mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) inside the rather ugly town hall on the main square. Banks, supermarkets and other services can be found on Västra Storgatan, running west from Stora Torget.

Sights & Activities

The scenic ruined castle **Nyköpingshus** (admission free; ☹ 24hr) was the setting for some violent sibling rivalry. In 1317 the king's son, Birger, invited his two brothers, Erik and Valdemar, to a banquet there. When they arrived, he hurled them into the dungeon and threw away the key; they both eventually starved to death. Try to keep your mind free of such gruesome behaviour as you stroll by the tranquil riverside grounds.

You can also visit **Sörmlands Museum** (☎ 24 70 02; adult/under 20yr Skr20/free; ☹ 10am-5pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-5pm Tue-Sun mid-Aug-mid-Jun) inside the castle. It's made up of the **Kungstornet** (King's Tower), the whitewashed four-storey castle tower; **Gamla Residenset**, the wonderfully recreated old governor's residence; and the neighbouring **Konsthallen**, with interesting art exhibitions and a collection of 19th-century boathouses.

By Stora Torget, there's the old **rådhus**, and **St Nicolai Kyrka**, with a rather splendid pulpit amongst the usual ecclesiastical furnishings. Also of interest are two **runestones** and the 700 Bronze Age **rock carvings** in Släbroparken, about 2.5km northwest of town.

Take a walk along the river – 'Sweden's longest museum', so the publicity goes. If you fancy a longer hike, the 1000km-long **Sörmlandsleden** (☎ 355 64; www.sormlandsleden.se) passes through town on its meander round the entire county. You can also explore the

nearby **archipelago**; inquire at the tourist office.

Sleeping & Eating

Nyköpings Vandrarhem (☎ 21 18 10; Brunngatan 2; dm Skr160) This is an 18th-century wooden SVIF hostel, located just outside the castle grounds. It's small and friendly with good facilities.

Comfort Hotel Kompaniet (☎ 28 80 20; Folkungavägen 1; s/d Skr1380/1595, discounted to Skr795/975) Just south of the centre, near the harbour, this has stylishly decorated rooms in a riverside building that was once home to a furniture factory. All prices include a dinner buffet, making the discounted rates particularly good value.

Strandstuviken Camping (☎ 978 10; strandstuviken@hotmail.com; sites Skr140, cabins from Skr375; ☹ May-Sep) The nearest camping ground is this family beachside place, with sauna, mini-golf, and canoe and bicycle hire. It's a good 8km southeast of town, though, with no public transport.

Café Hellmans (☎ 21 05 25; Västra Trädgårdsgatan 24; breakfast buffet Skr55, lunch buffet Skr65) This charming place is the nicest spot in town for lunch. As well as good-value buffets, there are bagels and subs from Skr30, plus good coffee and excellent cakes to enjoy in the summer courtyard.

Lotsen (☎ 21 21 03; Skeppsbron; meals Skr80-160; ☹ until 2am Wed, Fri & Sat) Summer-opening Lotsen is a casual bar-restaurant down by the harbour. It has good simple meals like pizza, meatballs and burgers, or more upmarket mains like salmon and beef fillet, and there's often live music.

Getting There & Around

Nyköping's **Skavsta airport** (☎ 28 04 00; www.skavsta-air.se), 8km northwest of town, has flights to/from the UK with Ryanair (see p323). Airport buses meet most flights and run to/from Stockholm (Skr130, 80 minutes). Local buses run every 10 minutes from Nyköping to Skavsta (Skr15, 20 minutes); alternatively, a **taxi** (☎ 21 75 00) costs about Skr140.

The bus and train stations are 800m apart on the western side of the central grid. Nyköping is on the regular **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) routes: Stockholm-Norrköping-Jönköping-Göteborg/Malmö, and Stockholm-Norrköping-Kalmar. To

get to Eskilstuna, take local bus 701 or 801. SJ trains run every hour or two to Norrköping (Skr75, 40 minutes), Linköping (Skr145, 1¼ hours) and Stockholm (Skr120, one hour). Most X2000 services don't stop in Nyköping.

The tourist office has bikes for rent (per day/week Skr40/200).

ESKILSTUNA

☎ 016 / pop 91,168

Once the murder capital of Sweden, Eskilstuna is now most famous for its zoo, which has had great success in breeding endangered white tigers. There are a number of other things to see, mostly linked to the town's old industries. Twelve kilometres northeast of Eskilstuna is one of the most extraordinary rock carvings in Sweden (see boxed text 'Sigurdsristningen', below).

The **tourist office** (☎ 10 70 00; www.eskilstuna.se in Swedish; Nygatan 15; ☹ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & 11am-3pm Sun Jun-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-May) dispenses helpful information. You'll find most services around Fristadstorget and the pedestrianised part of Kungsgatan. The central **public library** (☎ 10 13 51; Kriessensgatan 4; ☹ 9am-8pm Mon-Thu, 9am-6pm Fri & 10am-3pm Sat) has free Internet access.

Parken Zoo

One of central Sweden's most popular family attractions is the zoo and amusement park **Parken Zoo** (☎ 10 01 01; www.parkenzoo.se; adult/4-14yr Skr140/100; ☹ 10am-6pm Jul-mid-Aug, 10am-4pm mid-Apr-Jun & mid-Aug-early Sep). Animals in the zoo include monkeys, komodo dragons, and some beautiful white tigers who were successfully bred here. It's not a cheap day out though; additional charges are made

for: parking (per day Skr40); the **amusement park** (day ticket Skr135; ☹ noon-6pm Jul-mid-Aug, noon-4pm mid-May-Jun), which has kiddies' rides and some larger whizzy things; the **reptile house** (adult/child Skr20/10); and the **swimming pool** (adult/7-14yr Skr30/20; ☹ 10am-6.30pm late May-mid-Aug).

Parken Zoo is located 1.5km west of the town centre. Bus 1 (Skr19, five minutes) leaves frequently from the train station.

Other Sightings

The **Rademachersmedjorna** (Rademacher Forges; ☎ 10 13 71; Rademachergatan; admission free; ☹ 11am-4pm Tue-Sun) contain the carefully-conserved 17th-century remnants of Eskilstuna's ironworking past. And the tradition continues: iron-, silver- and goldsmiths all have workshops here.

Faktoriet (☎ 10 23 75; faktoriet@eskilstuna.se; admission free; ☹ 11am-4pm Tue-Sun), on the island Strömsholmen, tells the story of Eskilstuna's industrial and cultural heritage. Its mighty steam engines spring into life on the first Sunday of the month (February to November).

At the time of writing, **Konstmuseet's** (☎ 10 13 69) extensive art collection was being re-located to the Munktell area; phone for further details.

In **Torshälla**, 6km north of the town centre, **Brandt Contemporary Glass** (☎ 35 52 30; brandtglass@telia.com; Klockberget; admission Skr30; ☹ 11am-4pm Fri & Sat), just behind the church, is a contemporary glass workshop and gallery exhibiting vases and sculptures. The **Ebeling-muséet** (☎ 10 73 05; Eskilstunavägen 5; admission free; ☹ noon-4pm Wed-Sun) has bizarre steel sculptures by Allan and Marianne Ebling, and changing temporary exhibitions. The old wooden houses and pretty riverside areas

SIGURDSRISTNINGEN

This exceptionally vivid 3m-long **Viking Age rock carving** (admission free; ☹ 24hr; bus 225) tells the story of Sigurd, the greatest hero in Germanic legend. It was the source for Wagner's Ring Cycle, and *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* also borrow freely from it.

Carved into the bedrock around AD 1000, the carving shows Sigurd killing the snakelike dragon Fafnir (who guards a cursed golden ring). After tasting the dragon's blood, Sigurd is able to understand the language of the birds. They warn of a murderous plot against him, so Sigurd attacks first, chopping off his enemy's head. Also on the stone is Sigurd's horse Grani, a gift from Odin.

The runes in the dragon's body are unrelated to the legend – they explain that a nearby bridge (the abutments can still be seen) was raised by Sigrid in memory of her husband Holmger.

The carving is one of Sweden's finest and worth a detour. It's situated near Sundbyholms Slott and Mälaren lake, 12km northeast of Eskilstuna.

in Torshälla are also worth a look. Take bus 2 or 15 from Eskilstuna to Torshälla (Skr19, 40 minutes).

Sleeping & Eating

STF Hostel Eskilstuna (☎ 51 30 80; vilsta.sporthotell@swipnet.se; dm Skr150, s/d from Skr250/300; ♿ year-round; bus 12 from Fristadstorget) Lying in the Vilsta nature reserve 2km south of town, this hostel is well provided for – all rooms have en suite and TV. It's part of the Vilsta sport complex, so there are gym, Jacuzzi and sports facilities conveniently to hand.

City Hotell (☎ 10 88 50; www.cityhotell.se; Drottning-gatan 15; s/d from Skr899/1155, discounted to Skr575/750) Among the better priced hotels in town is this one, right opposite the train station. Rooms are comfortable, and a few are adorned with wonderful Swedish stoves, giving them a hint of the 19th century.

Sundbyholms Slott (☎ 016-42 84 00; www.sundbyholms-slott.se; s/d from Skr990/1390, ste Skr3250; ♿) Near Sigurdsristningen, 12km northeast of Eskilstuna. Luxury suites, perfect for a romantic weekend, are available in the tasteful mansion here. If your budget doesn't stretch that far, more prosaic rooms are available in the attached hotel. The castle, by Mälaren lake, not far from the Sigurd carvings, also houses a top-quality restaurant.

Restaurang Tingsgården (☎ 51 66 20; Rådhus-torget 2; mains Skr150-220; ♿ closed Sun) This intimate dining option, inside a wonderful wooden 18th-century house, is a true treat. There's an extensive menu of Swedish favourites, from mussel soup to wild strawberries, and some pleasing nods to international cuisine. In summer, you can sit out on a large deck overlooking the twinkling river.

Café Kaka (☎ 13 10 94; Kyrkogatan 6; meals Skr40-70) Kaka is a funky, upbeat café and meeting place, serving up sandwiches, pasta, salads and the occasional live DJ.

Getting There & Away

The bus station is located 500m east of the train station, beside the river. Local bus 701 goes roughly hourly to Malmköping (Skr43, 45 minutes) and Nyköping (Skr86, two hours). **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) operates up to six buses daily on its Stockholm–Eskilstuna–Örebro route, but trains are best for destinations such as Örebro (Skr102, one hour, every two hours), Västerås (Skr65, 30 minutes,

hourly) and Stockholm (Skr118, one hour, hourly).

VÄSTMANLAND

VÄSTERÅS

☎ 021 / pop 131,014

With its cobble streets, higgledy-piggledy houses and flourishing flower gardens, Västerås' old town is an utter delight. Sweden's sixth-largest city is a place of two halves: head southeast and you'll find modern shopping centres, large industries and sprawling suburbs that bear no resemblance to the teeny lanes and crafty shops you've left behind.

Västerås makes for a pleasant day trip, and is a handy base for exploring Lake Mälaren and important pagan sites nearby.

Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 39 01 00; http://turism.vastmanland.se; Kopparbergsvägen 8; ♿ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 10am-2pm Sun mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 9.30am-6pm weekdays, 10am-3pm Sat rest of yr) can help with visitor inquiries for the town and region.

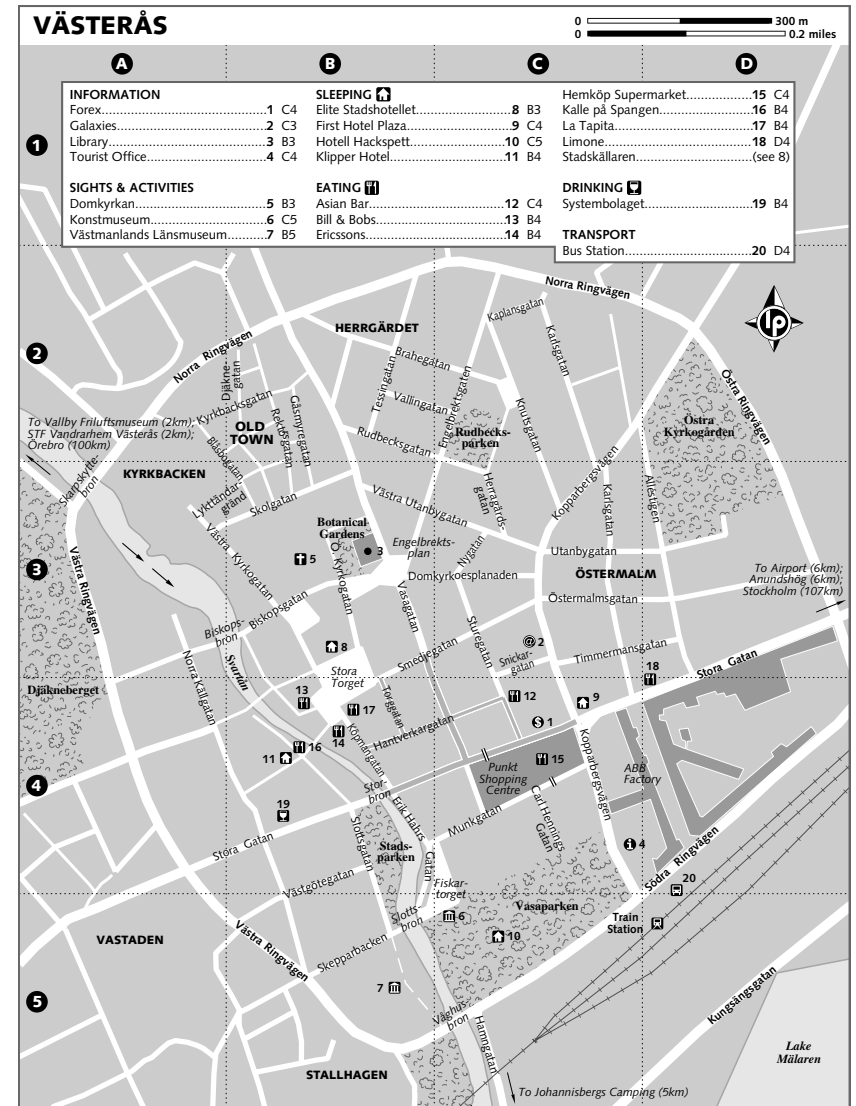
There's a **Forex** (☎ 180080; Stora Gatan 18; ♿ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) exchange office, banks, ATMs, and most other services visitors will require, along Stora Gatan. The **library** (☎ 39 46 00; Biskopsgatan 2; ♿ 10am-7pm Mon-Thu, 10am-6pm Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) is opposite domkyrkan (the cathedral) and offers free Internet access. There's also an Internet café, **Galaxies** (☎ 12 54 40; Kopparbergsvägen 27B; per hr Skr45; ♿ noon-9pm Sun-Thu, noon-10pm Fri & Sat).

Sights

MUSEUMS

The **Konstmuseum** (☎ 16 13 00; Fiskartorget 2; admission free; ♿ 11am-4pm Tue-Fri & noon-4pm Sat mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & noon-4pm Sun rest of yr), based in the stately old town hall, devotes its energies to exhibiting contemporary Swedish painters. The permanent collections, with works by artists such as Ivan Aguéli and Bror Hjorth, also get an occasional airing. In the cellar vaults is a decent café, which serves up homemade pies, soups and cakes, and migrates outdoors in summer.

Vallby Friluftsmuseum (☎ 39 80 70; www.vallbyfriluftsmuseum.se; admission free; ♿ 10am-5pm year-round; bus 10 or 12), off Vallbyleden near the E18 inter-



change, 2km northwest of the city, is home to an extensive open-air collection. Among the 40-odd buildings, there's an interesting farmyard and craft workshops.

Västmanlands Länsmuseum (☎ 15 61 00; Slotts-gatan), inside Västerås Slottet (manor house), was closed at the time of writing; contact the tourist office for more information.

OTHER SIGHTS

The fine brick-built **Domkyrkan** (Cathedral; Biskopsgatan; ♿ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm Sat & Sun) was begun in the 12th century, although most of what you see today is late-14th-century work. It contains carved floor slabs, six altar pieces and the marble sarcophagus of crazy King Erik XIV.

ARTY ALTERNATIVE LODGINGS

In addition to Västerås' normal, run-of-the-mill hotels, there are two unique accommodation possibilities in and around town. Both created by local artist Mikael Genberg, they are well worth investigating if you like your lodgings with a twist.

The **Hotell Hackspett**, or Woodpecker Hotel, is a fabulous tree house in the middle of Vasaparken, behind the Konstmuseum. The cabin sleeps only one person and is 13m above the ground in an old oak tree; guests (and breakfast) are hoisted up in a basket! The second of Genberg's fascinating creations is the **Utter Inn**, a small, red, floating cabin in the middle of Mälaren lake, only accessible by boat. The bedroom is downstairs – 3m below the surface – and is complete with glass viewing panels to watch the marine life outside. There's room for two people, and a canoe is provided.

Accommodation in the tree house or lake cabin costs Skr700 per person per night if you bring your own food and bed linen, or the 'deluxe package' (when linen is supplied and you will be delivered food in the evening and breakfast in the morning) is Skr1000 per person. For bookings, contact Mikael Genberg directly (☎ 83 00 23, info@mikaelgenberg.com) or call the Västerås tourist office. Genberg also has a website (www.mikaelgenberg.com); it's in Swedish only, but the pictures will give you an idea of his creations.

Behind the cathedral is the quaint old-town area **Kyrkbacken**, once the student district it is now a wonderfully preserved portion of pre-18th-century Västerås, studied with artisans' workshops.

The city is surrounded by ancient pre-Christian sites. The most interesting and extensive is **Anundshög** (admission free; ☞ 24hr), the biggest tumulus in Sweden, 6km northeast of the city. It has a full complement of prehistoric curiosities, such as mounds, stone ship settings and a large 11th-century rune stone. The two main stone ship settings date from around the 1st century. The area is part of the Badelunda Ridge, which includes the 13th-century **Badelunda Church** (1km north) and the 16m-wide **Tibble Labyrinth** (1km south). Ask the tourist office for the handy map *Badelunda Fortids Bygd*. Take bus 12 to the Bjurhovda terminus, then walk 2km east.

Sleeping

Budget travellers will struggle in the centre of Västerås, but there's plenty of choice for middle-of-the-range and top-end spenders.

STF Vandrarhem Västerås (☎ 30 38 00; info.vasteras@quality.choicehotels.se; Svalgängen 1, Vallby; dm/s/d Skr205/390/520; ☞ year-round; ♿) A couple of kilometres out of town is this recommended (brand-new) hostel, with budget and hotel accommodation. Staff are great, and you can use the sauna and pool for free.

Elite Stadshotellet (☎ 10 28 00; info@vasteras.elite.se; Stora Torget; s/d from Skr1120/1320, discounted to Skr595/795; ♿) Many of the rooms at the Elite, in a lovely Art Nouveau building, have

prime views over the main square – request one if you like people-watching. The décor is tasteful (pale walls, leafy bedspreads and mahogany-style wood), the staff are obliging, and there's a highly regarded restaurant and English-style pub attached.

Klipper Hotel (☎ 41 00 00; niklas@klipperhotel.se; Kungsgatan 4; s/d from Skr595/1190, discounted to Skr595/695; ♿) The attractive, family-run Klipper has one of the best locations in the city, near the river in the old town. Prices are reasonable, and the comfortable (if smallish) rooms are simple and fresh. Parking costs an extra Skr50 per day.

First Hotel Plaza (☎ 10 10 10; reservations.plaza@firsthotels.se; Karlsgatan 9A; s/d from Skr1269/1469, discounted to Skr588/788; ♿) Bang in the centre of the modern city, this 25-storey skyscraper was built for gravity-defying lounge lizards; it boasts the highest cocktail bar in Sweden! Some rooms have views over Lake Mälaren, and all expected mod cons are here, including a spa with masseurs, sauna, gym and Mediterranean-inspired restaurant.

Johannisbergs Camping (☎ 14 02 79; sites/cabins from Skr80/400; bus 25) The closest campsite is this place, 5km southwest of the city near Lake Mälaren. Facilities include a small swimming area and canoe hire.

Eating & Drinking

La Tapita (☎ 12 10 44; Stora Torget 3; tapas Skr25-65, mains Skr100-185; ☞ closed Sun) This Spanish-themed tapas bar and restaurant has a mellow atmosphere, enhanced by Latin music and piles of southern Mediterranean grub.

Nibble an array of tapas, tuck into pasta, fish and meat mains, or share a *paella Valenciana* (Skr166 per person) with a friend.

Stadskällaren (☎ 10 28 00; Stora Torget; mains Skr185-280) In the atmospheric cellar of the Stadshotellet, this restaurant is a great place to treat yourself. Its small but perfectly formed menu is fish- and meat-based, with dishes cooked to perfection in Swedish style.

Limone (☎ 41 75 60; Stora Gatan 4; dishes Skr120-200; ☞ closed lunch Jul & Sun year-round) Limone is an elegant, upmarket Italian restaurant, with stylish décor and impressive menu items like *linguini* with crayfish, or grilled veal wrapped in Parma ham.

Bill & Bobs (☎ 41 99 21; Stora Torget 5; meals Skr80-200) A diverse crowd settles down at this casual spot to drink and chatter at the outdoor tables on the main square. Thai chicken and hamburger with bacon bits are a couple of Bill & Bobs' popular 'classic' dishes.

Asian Bar (☎ 18 60 68; Sturegatan 10; lunch Skr60-100; ☞ closed Sun) If your saliva starts streaming at words like *teriyaki*, *ichiban* and *yakitori*, head down to this simple central sushi bar.

Kalle på Spangen (☎ 12 91 29; Kungsgatan 2; meals Skr40-65) This is without doubt the best café in Västerås. It's right by the river in the old part of town, and has several cosy, creaky-floored rooms filled with mismatched furniture and gilt-edged grandfather clocks. Friendly staff serve up a wide selection of coffees, sandwiches, salads, baked potatoes and cakes.

There's a **Hemköp supermarket** (Punkt shopping centre, Stora Gatan) and **Ericssons** (☎ 13 55 12; Stora Torget 3) is an excellent delicatessen for stocking up on picnic supplies. For alcohol, visit **Systembolaget** (Stora Gatan 48).

Getting There & Around

The **airport** (☎ 80 56 00; www.vasterasflygplats.se) is 6km east of the city centre, and is connected by bus L941. Budget carrier **Ryanair** flies here from the UK (see p323 for more details), and SAS flies regularly to Copenhagen (mainly on weekdays).

The bus and train stations are adjacent, on the southern edge of Västerås. Regional buses 65 and 69 run to Sala (one hour, up to eight weekdays, two Saturday and Sunday) as do trains (Skr39, 25 minutes, every two hours). **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200 21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) runs to Uppsala (Skr90, 1½ hours, up to six daily), Stockholm (Skr90, one hour 40 minutes, up to nine daily) and Örebro

(Skr95, 1½ hours, up to eight daily). **Svenska Buss** (☎ 0771-67 67 67; www.svenskabuss.se in Swedish) also runs routes to Stockholm (Skr70, 1½ hours, one Friday) and Uppsala (Skr70, 1½ hours, two Friday and Sunday).

Västerås is accessible by hourly trains from Stockholm (Skr91, one hour). Trains to Örebro (Skr102, one hour), Uppsala (Skr100, 1½ hours) and Eskilstuna (Skr65, 30 minutes) are also frequent.

Call **Taxi Västerås** (☎ 18 50 00) to help you get around.

SALA

☎ 0224 / pop 21,554

Sala's silver mine was the source of Sweden's wealth in the 16th and 17th centuries, and a descent into its dank tunnels is a true high (or should that be low?) point of anyone's holiday. The mine quite literally changed the face of the neat town centre; channels and ponds, the source of power for the mines, now weave through and around it, giving a pleasantly watery feel.

The **tourist office** (☎ 552 02; www.sala.se/turism; Stora Torget; ☞ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri year-round, plus 10am-2pm Sat May-Sep) is inside the town hall. The free town map is useful if you want to use the walking paths.

Sights & Activities

Sala Silvergruva (☎ 195 41; www.sala.se/salasilvergruva; ☞ 11am-5pm May-Aug, noon-4pm Sat & Sun Sep-Apr), about 2km south of the town centre, is the old silver mine area. Above ground, there's a whole weird landscape to explore, made up of chimneys, holes, explosives stores, spoil heaps and engine houses. The listed buildings in the **museum village** contain artists' workshops, a café, a **mine museum** (under construction at the time of writing) and a small Swedish-only **police museum** (adult/child Skr20/10; ☞ noon-4pm Jun-Aug), full of rusty knuckledusters.

Under the surface are 20km of galleries, caverns and shafts, into which you can descend on one of several different **mine tours**. The most frequent of these is the informative one-hour **60 Metersturen** (adult/child Skr100/50). There are no set times for English tours – to be certain of catching one, book ahead.

Both village and mine are off the Västerås road. It's a pretty walk along the **Gröna Gängen** (Green Walk), which takes you southwest via the parks and the **Mellandammen** pond at Sofielund. Public transport connections

aren't good; take the Silverlinjen bus from the train station to Styrars, then walk the remaining 500m.

In the main park in town is **Väsby Kungsgård** (☎ 106 37; vasbykungsgard@glocalnet.net; adult/child Skr20/free; ☞ 1-4pm Mon-Fri year-round), a 16th-century royal farm where Gustav II Adolf (possibly) met his mistress. Excitement for the traveller is confined to the beautifully preserved interiors and 17th-century weapons collection.

Aguéliumuseet (☎ 138 20; agueli@sala.se; Norra Esplanaden 7; adult/under 18yr Skr40/free; ☞ 11am-4pm Wed-Sun) exhibits Sweden's largest display of oils and watercolours by local artist Ivan Aguéli (1869–1917). Entry is via the town library.

The houses and courtyard called **Norrmanska Gården** (Norrbygatan) were built in 1736; the area is now home to shops and a café.

Sleeping & Eating

STF Vandrarhem & Camping Sala (☎ 127 30; sites from Skr50, dm Skr125; ☞ mid-May–Sep, by arrangement outside these months) This haven of tranquillity is in the woods near the Mellandammen pond, 1.5km southwest of the centre. It's a sweet complex with lovely staff and a homely café (☞ June to August) serving all-day light meals. Walk along Gröna Gången from the bus station, or take the Silverlinjen bus to the water tower and walk the rest of the way.

Hotell Svea (☎ 105 10; Vasbygatan 19; s/d Skr595/695, discounted to Skr495/595) Making a change from huge impersonal chains, friendly 10-roomed Svea puts the emphasis on its personal service. Rooms are old-fashioned but clean and comfortable, and it's exceptionally handy for the train and bus station.

Norrmanska Kök & Bar (☎ 174 73; Brunngatan 26; lunch Skr55, dinner Skr80-150; ☞ 11am-2pm Mon & Tue, 11am-10pm Wed & Thu, 11am-1am Fri & Sat) This restaurant, in a rustic 18th-century courtyard, is easily the best place in town for a bite. There's a great array of lunch meals, including pasta, *panini*, baked potatoes and salads. It's a popular evening spot too, with a decent dinner menu.

Vårdshuset Gruvcaféet (☎ 195 45; mains Skr79-150; ☞ 11am-5pm May-Aug) If you're out sight-seeing at the mine, this charming café, in a wooden building (dating from 1810), does good cakes, sandwiches and hot dishes (pasta, Thai chicken, baked spuds).

Getting There & Around

For transport to and from Västerås, see p249. Going to or from Uppsala, take regional bus 848 (1¼ hours, hourly Monday to Friday, nine buses Saturday and Sunday). Sala is on the main Stockholm to Mora rail line (via Uppsala), with daily trains roughly every two hours (Skr86, 40 minutes).

Ask about bike hire at the tourist office.

ÄNGELSBERG

☎ 0223

Ängelsberg Bruk, a Unesco World Heritage site in the tiny village of Ängelsberg, was once one of the most important early-industrial ironworks in Europe. During the 17th and 18th centuries, its rare timber-clad **blast furnace** and **forge** (still in working order) were state-of-the-art technology, and a whole town sprang up around them. Today you can wander round the perfectly preserved estate, made up of a mansion and park, workers' homes and industrial buildings. Guided tours (Skr50) run daily from mid-June to mid-August, and less frequently from May to mid-June and mid-August to mid-September; contact ☎ 131 00 for details.

Ängelsberg is around 60km northwest of Västerås, from where regional trains run every hour or two (Skr98, 45 minutes); from Ängelsberg train station it's a 1.5km walk north to the site.

Nya Servering (☎ 300 18) is not far from Ängelsberg train station and serves food from 11am to 8pm daily. There's a good view from here across to the island Barön on Åmänningen lake, where the world's oldest-surviving **oil refinery** is located – it was opened in 1875 and closed in 1902.

NORA

☎ 0587 / pop 10,523

One of Sweden's most seductive old wooden towns, Nora sits snugly on the shores of a little lake, clearly confident in its ability to enchant the pants off anyone. Slow your pace and succumb to its cobbled streets and steam trains, mellow boat rides and perfect ice cream.

The helpful **tourist office** (☎ 811 20; nora.turistbyra@nora.se; Stationshuset; ☞ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat & 10am-5pm Sun Jul, 10am-6pm Mon-Sat & 10am-5pm Sun Jun & Aug, 9am-noon & 1-3pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is at the train station, by the lake. It takes bookings for 11 guided tours (June to August), which

either have different themes or take place at a particular attraction. The guided **town walk** (adult/7-14yr Skr60/30) is available in English. Alternatively, buy a brochure (Skr10) for self-guided walks.

Sights & Activities

Trips on the **museum railway** (adult/child return Skr70/35) take you 10km southeast to Järle, or 2.5km west to the excellent old mining village at **Pershyttan**, where there's a guided tour daily at 3pm. The train operates to a complex timetable that includes regular weekend trips from midsummer to mid-August.

The manor house, **Göthlinska Gården**, just off the main square, was built in 1739 and is now a museum featuring furniture, décor and accoutrements from the 17th century onwards; join a summer-only **guided tour** (adult/7-14yr Skr50/25; ☞ 1pm Jul-Aug).

Boat trips (☎ 070-21665 24; adult/child return Skr15/5; ☞ 10am-6pm Jul & Aug, 10am-6pm weekends mid-May–Jun & early Sep) to the family-friendly island Alnortors ö depart roughly every half hour from the little jetty near the STF hostel. A walk around the island takes about an hour, and there are swimming spots and a café.

Sleeping & Eating

STF Nora Tågghem (☎ 146 76; info@noratagghem.se; dm Skr120; ☞ May–mid-Sep) For novelty value, you can't beat this cheery hostel where bunkbeds are crammed into converted 1930s' railway carriages. All compartments have great views over the lake, and there's a café here which does breakfast, and sandwiches and snacks throughout the day.

Lilla Hotellet (☎ 154 00; www.lillahotelletnora.com in Swedish; Rådstugugatan 14; s/d Skr495/760) The charming 'Little Hotel' has a warm and homely feel, with large rooms (some with shared facilities) decorated in 1940s' style. There's a good level of service, and ohh, it's so nice to stay somewhere with a heart and soul.

Nora Stadshotell (☎ 31 14 35; norastadshotell@home.se; Rådstugugatan 21; s/d Skr795/850, discounted to Skr595/850) You can't miss this elegant building, planted smack on the main square, although the white-furnished rooms don't quite live up to the exterior's promise. There are good-value lunch deals (Skr85) at the restaurant, which can be eaten on the

airy summer terrace, and à la carte evening mains from Skr150.

Trångbo Camping (☎ 123 61; trangbocamping@yahoo.se; sites Skr115; ☞ May-Sep) This small campsite is by the lakeside 1.5km north of Nora (there's a lakeshore path for walkers). Amenities are fairly basic, but there's a swimming place and the beach volleyball is popular.

Strandstugan (☎ 137 22; Storgatan 1; snacks Skr40-50; ☞ summer only) Down by the lake is this delightful red wooden house, set in a flower-filled garden, where you can get coffee, sandwiches, cakes and other home-baked goodies.

Nora Glass (☎ 123 32; Storgatan 11; ☞ May-Aug) Nora is renowned for its incredible ice cream, made here for over 80 years. You never know what flavours will be available, as three or four different ones are churned out fresh each day, but you DO know that they're worth queuing for.

Self-caterers will find a supermarket on Prästgatan.

Getting There & Around

Länstrafiken Örebro buses run every hour or two to Örebro (Skr47, 40 minutes) and other regional destinations.

Ask the tourist office about bike rental.

NÄRKE

ÖREBRO

☎ 019 / pop 126,982

Attractive Örebro has a particularly romantic-looking castle, which is surrounded by a dazzling moat filled with waterlilies (as all such buildings should be). It's certainly a great city to amble round, especially when the weather's fine.

Örebro was built on a prosperous textile industry, and it became a university city in 1998. Most of the city was rebuilt after a devastating fire in 1854.

Information

The busy **tourist office** (☎ 21 21 21; www.orebro.se/turism; ☞ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Jun-Aug) is inside the castle.

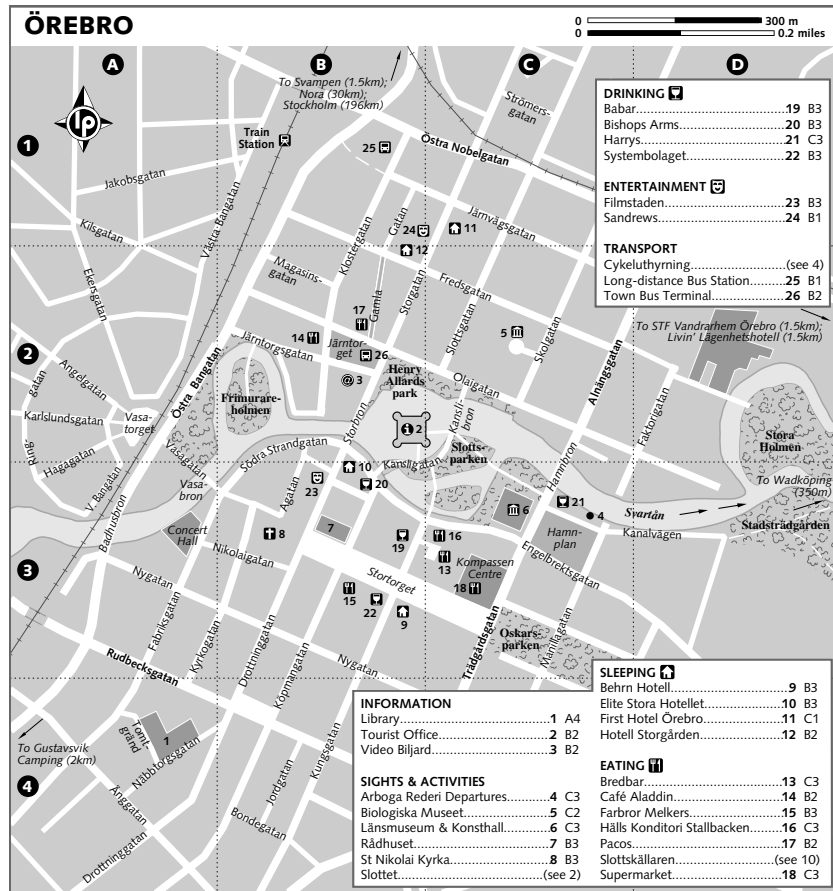
Banks can be found along Drottninggatan, south of the castle. The **library** (☎ 21 10 00; Näbbtorosgatan) has Internet access, as does **Video Biljard** (☎ 611 66 30; Järntorget 6; per 30/60 min Skr20/35; ☞ 11am-midnight).

Sights & Activities

The once-powerful **Slottet** (☎ 21 21 21; admission via tours, adult/6-15yr Skr60/20; 🕒 late Jun–mid-Aug) is a magnificent edifice, now used as the county governor's headquarters. Although originally constructed in the late 13th century, most of what you see today is from 300 years later. The outside is far more dramatic than the interior (where the castle's conference business is sadly all too evident). To poke about inside, you'll need to take a tour – there's a historical one at 4.30pm (in Swedish or English, depending on numbers), or a 'Secrets of the Vasa Fortress' option at 2.30pm (in English), which is a slightly toe-curling piece of costumed clowning around. You are allowed unaccompanied into the northwest tower,

where there's a small **history exhibition** (admission free; 🕒 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun).

East of the castle, Örebro is blessed with the **Stadsträdgården**, voted Sweden's most beautiful park and great for kids. It stretches alongside the Svartån (the Black River) and merges into the excellent **Wadköping** museum village. The village contains craft workshops, a bakery and period buildings – including Kungsstugan (the King's Lodgings, a medieval house with 16th-century ceiling paintings) and Cajsa Warg's house (home of an 18th-century celebrity chef). You can wander round the village at any time, but the shops, café, exhibitions and museums are open roughly 11am to 4pm (sometimes 5pm) Tuesday to Sunday year-round.



The **Länsmuseum & Konsthall** (☎ 6028700; info@orebro.lanmuseum.se; Engelbrektsgratan 3; admission free; 🕒 11am–5pm Thu–Tue, 11am–9pm Wed) has permanent artwork grouped into themed rooms, and historical displays about the region (mostly in Swedish).

Many Swedish schools once had private natural history collections, but most were binned in the 1960s. Örebro's **Biologiska Museet** (☎ 21 65 04; adult/under 16yr Skr25/10; 🕒 11am–2pm Mon–Fri mid-Jun–mid-Aug), in Karolinska Skolan off Fredsgatan, is a survivor, and is worth a glance for its tier upon tier of stuffed birds.

The 13th-century church **St Nikolai Kyrka** (🕒 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, 11am–3pm Sat) has some historical interest: it's where Jean Baptiste Bernadotte (Napoleon's marshal) was chosen to take the Swedish throne. Just opposite, on grand Storgatan, is **Rådhuset** (the city hall); if you're around at the right time, stop to hear the **chimes** (🕒 12.05pm & 6.05pm year-round, plus 9pm Jun–Sep), when sculptures representing the city's past, present and future come wheeling out of a high arched window.

The first of Sweden's modern 'mushroom' water towers, **Svampen** (☎ 611 37 35; info@svampen.nu; Dalbygatan 4; admission free; 🕒 10am–6pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 11am–4pm Sat & Sun rest of yr; bus 11) was built in 1958 and now functions as a lookout tower. There are good views of Lake Hjälmarén and a café at the top.

Arboga Rederi (☎ 10 71 91; info@lagerbjelke.com) offers a number of cruises. Their evening trips on Lake Hjälmarén (Skr240; 7pm) Wednesday to Friday mid-May to September, plus Saturday in July) are popular, and include an onboard shrimp supper.

Sleeping

STF Vandrarhem Örebro (☎ 31 02 40; hepa@hepa.se; Kaptensgratan 1; dm from Skr130; bus 16 or 31; 🕒) This good, but quite well hidden, place lies 1.6km northeast of the train station.

Livin' Lägenhetshotellet (bokning@livin.nu; per night Skr500) The STF hostel also owns this apartment complex next door. Each well-designed flatlet fits up to four people and has a fully equipped kitchen, bathroom and living area. The hostel rents bikes and inline skates.

Hotell Storgården (☎ 120200; www.hotellstorgarden.se; Fredsgatan 11; s/d from Skr680/780, discounted to Skr500/550) It could do with a lick of paint, but this 1st-floor budget hotel is handily central. Rooms, with shuttered windows, are large, airy and have private facilities; the

effort stretches to yellowing pads of paper in the desk drawers!

First Hotel Örebro (☎ 611 73 00; www.firsthotels.se; Storgatan 24; s/d Skr1095/1495, discounted to Skr595/795; 🕒) Most of the spacious rooms at this more conventional establishment overlook a quiet, sunny terrace; those on the higher floors have small balconies. Bathrooms have all recently been refurbished and there's a bar selling booze and light meals.

Behrn Hotell (☎ 12 00 95; www.behrnhotell.se; Stortorget 12; s/d Skr995/1295, discounted to Skr645/845; 🕒) Excellently situated on the main square, you get the feeling that the Behrn Hotell goes that extra mile. Rooms are individually decorated and range from medieval-like fittings to clean-cut modern Scandinavian. If you're splashing out, go for a luscious suite, with old wooden beams, chandeliers and Jacuzzi. There's also a spa, and a restaurant which does dinner Tuesday to Friday.

Elite Stora Hotellet (☎ 15 69 00; info.orebro@elite.se; Drottninggatan 1; s/d from Skr1195/1665, discounted to Skr650/795; 🕒) This is the pick of the town's hotels. Many of the sumptuous, newly spruced-up rooms have stunning views of the castle, and offer all the mod cons you'd expect from this upmarket chain.

Gustavsvik Camping (☎ 19 69 50; www.gustavsvik.se; Sommarrovägen; sites Skr130–295, cabins from Skr770; 🕒 mid-Apr–early Nov; bus 11; 🕒) This camping facility is 2km south of the city centre. It's huge and family-oriented, with pools, mini-golf, a café, and bike rental (Skr60 per day).

Eating

Slottskällaren (☎ 15 69 60; Drottninggatan 1; mains Skr190–220; 🕒 from 5pm Tue–Sat year-round, plus lunch Mon–Fri Sep–Jun) This upmarket eatery, at the Elite Stora Hotellet, offers fine dining and a good wine cellar. You can nibble beautifully presented meat, fish and veggie dishes in the atmospheric 14th-century vaults, or sit out on the terrace and drink in the glorious castle views.

Bredbar (☎ 31 50 20; Kungsgatan 1; dishes from Skr60) In summer, Bredbar is an ultrapopular place for lunch, thanks to its outdoor seats in a courtyard suntrap. A constant dance of customers swirls in and out for ciabattas, huge bowls of salad and pasta, or hotplate dishes (mostly pasta-based).

Pacos (☎ 10 10 46; Olaigatan 13A; lunch from Skr55, dinner mains Skr100–150; 🕒 closed Sun) Bright colours, chirpy music and an assortment of

well-priced lunchtime specials bring in the diners. Dishes are mainly Tex-Mex food, but pizza and pasta are served, too.

Hälls Konditori Stallbacken (☎ 611 07 66; Engelbrektsgratan 12; meals Skr60) Backing onto the same appealing cobbled courtyard as Bredbar, is this classic old-style café. Sensible light meals (salads, quiche, sandwiches) are on offer, plus there's teetering piles of lurid-coloured creamy cakes and patisseries.

Farbror Melkers (☎ 611 81 99; Stortorget 6; meals around Skr50) If you're more of a modern sort, head instead for this stylish alternative, with good coffee, light meals (sandwiches, baked potatoes), and a large picture window so you can stare out onto the square.

For cheap eats head to **Café Aladdin** (☎ 18 35 30; Klostergratan 11), on slightly grungy Järntorget, which offers pizza, pasta and baked spuds for under Skr40. There's a supermarket in the Kompassen centre on Stortorget.

Drinking & Entertainment

Babar (☎ 10 19 00; Kungsgatan 4; mains Skr130-170) Trendy Babar is a restaurant and bar, fashionable with young, hip student types. It delivers international cuisine, moody lighting and dancey tunes to its customers, and stays open until 2am Wednesday to Saturday for drinking and boogieing (Saturday is over 23s only).

Bishops Arms (☎ 15 69 20; ☎ until at least midnight) Whether or not you're convinced by the 'authentic English pub' schtick, the bar's outdoor drinking area, with super castle views, is a swinging spot on a summer evening. There are also pub meals here for under Skr100.

Harrys (☎ 10 89 89; Hamnplan; mains Skr80-180; ☎ from 5pm) Another popular nightspot, Harrys is in a good location down by the river. There's a comprehensive menu of pub meals, live music on a Thursday, and a nightclub on Friday and Saturday.

For take away alcohol head to **Systembolaget** (Stortorget 10).

Örebro's cinemas, both showing mainstream films, are **Filmstaden** (☎ 611 84 00; www.sf.se; Drottninggratan 6) and **Sandrews** (☎ 10 44 24; sandrewmetronome.se; Storgatan 19).

Getting There & Away

Long-distance buses, which leave from opposite the train station, run almost everywhere in southern Sweden. From here, **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se)

has connections to Norrköping, Karlstad and Oslo, Mariestad and Göteborg, Västerås and Uppsala, and Eskilstuna and Stockholm.

Train connections are also good. Direct SJ trains run to/from Stockholm (Skr220, two hours) every hour, some via Västerås (Skr102, one hour); and Göteborg (Skr270, three hours). Other trains run daily to Gävle (Skr242, four hours) and Borlänge (Skr156, 2¼ hours), where you can change for Falun and Mora.

Getting Around

Town buses leave from Järntorget and cost Skr15. **Cykeluthyrning** (☎ 21 19 09), at the Hamnplan boat terminal, rents bikes from May to September from Skr90 per day. For a cab, call **Taxi Kurir** (☎ 12 30 30).

ASKERSUND & AROUND

☎ 0583 / pop 11,477

Askersund, with its quaint little harbour, crooked wooden houses and cobbled square, is often overlooked by travellers, but it's a good place to relax.

The **tourist office** (☎ 810 88; turistbyran@askersund.se; Lilla Bergsgatan 12A; ☎ 10am-7pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-12.30pm & 1-4pm Mon-Fri rest of yr), on the main square, has free Internet access (30-minute slots). Ask for information on walking and cycling routes around the lake, and guided tours. Askersund has banks and most other tourist facilities.

Sights

TIVEDEN NATIONAL PARK

Carved by glaciers, this trolls' home and former highwaymen's haunt (about 33km south of Askersund) makes for wonderful wild walking. The park is noted for its ancient virgin forests, which are very rare in southern Sweden, and has lots of dramatic bare bedrock, extensive boulderfields and a scattering of lakes. There's an information centre in the southeastern part of the park (2km from the entrance). The entrance is 5km off the main road (the turn-off is at Bocksjö, on road No 49). There's no public transport to the park.

OTHER SIGHTS

Cool, classical and refined, lakeside **Stjernsund Manor** (☎ 100 04; entry by tour, adult/under 12yr Skr50/free; ☎ 11am, noon, 2pm, 3pm & 4pm mid-May-Aug) contains one of the best-preserved

19th-century interiors in Sweden, with elegant furniture and gilt, glass and velvet fixtures and fittings. There's also an appealing café in the nearby estate manager's old house. The manor is 5km south of town; see the information on *M/S Wettervik*, below, for how to get there.

Hembygdsgård (Hagavägen; admission free; exhibitions ☎ noon-3pm Mon-Fri mid-Jun-mid-Aug) has a collection of old wooden farm buildings, and a children's zoo with rabbits, sheep and ducks.

'Boat Harry' runs the small **boat museum** (Hamngatan; adult/child Skr10/free; ☎ 1-6pm Mon-Fri, noon-4pm Sat & Sun Jul-mid-Aug) at the harbour, with old sailing vessels, motors and model ships.

In July and early August, the *M/S Wettervik* (www.wettervik.se) makes various trips from the harbour, including an excursion to Stjernsund Manor (adult/12-15yr Skr80/40) at 1.30pm and 3pm. To fit in a tour of the house, take the first boat and return on the second (which departs Stjernsund at 3.15pm). Book tours at the tourist office.

Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office can arrange private rooms in the area.

Café Garvaregården (☎ 104 45; info@cafegarvaregarden.com; Sundsgatan; rm Skr700) This desperately lovely B&B in the centre of town is a real find. It offers simple but charming accommodation in an 18th-century house, wrapped around a flower-filled courtyard. There's also an inviting café downstairs.

Aspa Herrgård (☎ 502 10; aspa@edbergs.com; rm from Skr2580, discounted to Skr1495; ☎ ☎) For a true treat, try this luxurious boutique hotel, based in a 17th-century manor house in a comely country setting (17km south of town on road No 49). With its draped beds, flowery cushions and graceful Greek statues, it's the perfect place for a romantic weekend. There's also an exclusive restaurant (non-guests should reserve).

Hotel Ramada Norra Vättern (☎ 120 10; info.norra.vattem@ramadasweden.se; Klockarbacken; s/d Skr965/1165, discounted to Skr840/840; ☎) In an unattractive, modern building near the bridge, rooms (off extremely long corridors!) are nevertheless pleasant and well-equipped with minibars, cable TV etc. Staff are friendly, and there's a restaurant here, too.

Wårdshuset Sundsgården (☎ 100 88; Sundsbrogatan 1; lunch Skr65, meals Skr60-180) For dining, the

pick of the pile is this fetching old inn. It has a riverside deck so you can sit in the sun and watch the boats sail by, and a selection of good-value light meals (baked potatoes, pasta, salads) for under Skr100.

Husabergsudde Camping (☎ 71 14 35; camping@husabergsudde.se; low/high season sites Skr130/145, cabins from Skr300/330; ☎ May-Aug) This is a large, lakeside camping ground with top amenities, 1.5km south of town. You can rent canoes and rowing boats (per hour/day Skr30/160) and bikes (per hour/day Skr15/65). There's no public transport to the site.

Café Tutingen (☎ 141 39; Storgatan) This charming café, with its low ceilings, warped old floorboards and mismatched but shapely seating, should be your first choice for coffee and cakes. It does good sandwiches and excellent patisseries, baked on the premises. Best of all is the garden, filled with roses and daisies, and containing the perfect balance of sun and shade.

Getting There & Around

Länstrafiken buses 708 and 841 each run four times on weekdays to Örebro (841 doesn't run in July). Bus 704 runs frequently to the mainline train station at Hallsberg.

Husabergsudde Camping does bike and boat hire.

VÄRMLAND

KARLSTAD

☎ 054 / pop 81,768

Karlstad is the gateway to outdoor activities in Värmland. There are several sights worth seeing in town, and a large student population means that it has a decent restaurant and bar scene.

Sharing the same building as the library, the **tourist office** (☎ 29 84 00; www.karlstad.se; Bibliotekshuset, Västra Torggatan 26; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-6pm Sat, 11am-4pm Sun mid-Jun-late Aug; 9am-6pm Mon-Thu, 9am-5pm Fri, 11am-4pm Sat late Aug-mid-Jun) has lots of info on both town and county, including fresh-air escapes in the region's forests, and on its rivers and lakes.

Banks and ATMs are along Storgatan. The **library** (☎ 14 85 95; Västra Torggatan 26) has Internet access, as does the **Bogart Nöjesbutik** (☎ 21 21 33; Östra Torggatan 6; per hr Skr35; ☎ until at least 11pm) video store.

Sights & Activities

Voted Museum of the Year in 2005, the imaginative **Värmlands Museum** (☎ 14 31 00; www.varmlandsmuseum.se; adult/under 20yr Skr40/free; ☹ 10am-5pm end Jun-end Aug, 10am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 10am-9pm Wed rest of yr) is out on point Sandgrundsudden. Its sensory displays cover local history and culture from the Stone Age to current times, including music, the river, forests and textiles.

For green space and picnics, seek out **Mariebergsskogen** (☎ 29 69 90; mariebergsskogen@karlstad.se; admission free; ☹ 7am-10pm year-round; bus 1 or 31), a leisure park/open-air museum/animal park in the southwestern part of town (about 1km from the centre).

It's worth popping your head round the door of the 18th-century **cathedral** (☹ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm rest of yr), a soothing space with sparkling chandeliers and votive ships. You can visit the small and creepy **old town prison** (Karlbergsgatan 3; admission free; ☹ 10am-5pm) in the basement of Comfort Hotel Bilan, with original cells, prisoners' letters and a hacksaw found in the post (honest). On the eastern river branch, find **Gamla Stenbron**, Sweden's longest stone bridge at 168m.

From Tuesday to Saturday late June to mid-August, there are regular two-hour **boat cruises** (☎ 21 99 43; adult/child Skr80/50) on Lake Vänern, departing from the harbour behind the train station.

Sleeping

STF Vandrarhem Karlstad (☎ 56 68 40; karlstad.vandrarhem@swipnet.se; dm Skr135, s/d from Skr260/325; ☹ May-mid-Dec; bus 11 or 32) The hostel is off the E18 motorway at Ulleberg, 3km southwest of Karlstad's centre, and it has good facilities.

Hotell Freden (☎ 21 65 82; www.fredenhotel.com; Fredsgatan 1; s/d Skr480/580, discounted to Skr380/480) One of a number of central hotels opposite the train station, Freden is a simple budget hotel with comfortable rooms and shared bathrooms. Breakfast is not included.

Comfort Hotel Bilan (☎ 10 03 00; bilan@comfort.choicehotels.se; Karlbergsgatan 3; s/d from Skr1250/1550, discounted to Skr790/940; ☐) The town's old jail cells have been converted into large, bright and cleverly decorated rooms – if it weren't for the display in the basement, you'd never guess the building's history. The added bonus here is that prices include an evening

buffet, making discounted rates a particularly good deal.

Elite Stadshotellet (☎ 29 30 00; info.karlstad@elite.se; Kungsgatan 22; s/d from Skr1290/1590, discounted to Skr645/795; ☐ ☑ ☒) The elegant Elite is another good upmarket choice, with a lovely riverside location. High-ceilinged rooms give a sense of space and calm, and there are excellent amenities, including a sauna, summer restaurant and English-style pub.

Skutbergets Camping (☎ 53 51 20; www.camping.se/s10; low/high season sites Skr150/205, cabins from Skr375/575; bus 18) This big friendly lakeside ground, 7km west of town, is part of a large sports recreation area, with beach volleyball, a driving range, mini-golf, exercise tracks and a mountain-bike course. There are also sandy and rocky beaches nearby.

Eating & Drinking

Head to the main square, Stora Torget, and its surrounds for good eating and drinking options, most with outdoor summer seating.

Källaren Munken (☎ 18 51 50; restaurang@munken.nu; Västra Torggatan 17; lunch Skr65, mains Skr195-255; ☹ closed Sun & mid-Jun-mid-Aug) Inspired gourmet meals, like pistachio-baked lamb with artichoke butter, are served up in this elegant but cosy 17th-century vaulted cellar.

Valfrids Krog (☎ 18 30 40; Östra Torggatan; snacks Skr45, mains Skr150-220) This is a relaxed spot for a drink or meal, with light, tapas-style snacks (such as minichorizo, chicken drumsticks and asparagus), and good Swedish and international mains catering to most tastes.

Kebab House (☎ 15 08 15; Västra Torggatan 9; meals from Skr50) Don't be fooled by the name – the Kebab House is a cut above regular fast-food places and serves good-value pizza, kebabs, pasta and salads. In summer, battle your way to one of the popular outdoor tables, in the middle of the busy pedestrianised street.

Rådhuscaféet (☎ 15 29 29; Tingvallagatan 8; meals around Skr50) This café, in one corner of the town hall, is great for watching the world pass by. It serves good coffee, sandwiches and baked potatoes in stately old surroundings.

The **Hemköp supermarket** (☎ 15 22 00; Fredsgatan 4) is inside Åhléns, and **Systembolaget** (☎ 15 56 00; Drottninggatan 26) is close by.

The huge **Ankdammen** (☎ 18 11 10; Magasin 1, Inre Hamn), on a floating jetty at the harbour, is Sweden's largest open-air café and a very popular summer drinking (and eating)

spot. Also good for drinks is the **Bishops Arms** (☎ 29 30 20; Kungsgatan 22), with outdoor seating and river views in summer.

Getting There & Around

Karlstad is the major transport hub for western central Sweden. The long-distance bus terminal is at Drottninggatan 43, 600m west of the train station.

Swebus Express (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) has daily services on a number of routes, including Karlstad-Falun-Gävle, Karlstad-Göteborg, Stockholm-Örebro-Karlstad-Oslo, and Karlstad-Mariestad-Jönköping. **Svenska Buss** (☎ 0771-67 67 67; www.svenskabuss.se in Swedish) runs twice daily on Tuesday and Thursday between Karlstad and Uppsala (Skr190, 4¼ hours), via Örebro and Västerås.

Intercity trains to Stockholm (Skr425, 3¼ hours) run frequently. There are also several daily services to Göteborg (Skr226, three hours) and express services to Oslo (Skr370, three hours).

Värmlandstrafik (☎ 020-225580) runs regional buses. Bus 302 travels to Sunne (Skr68, 1¼ hours, one to five daily) and Torsby (Skr85, two hours, one to three daily). Local trains also operate on this route – prices are the same as for buses.

Free bikes are available from the city's two **Solacykeln booths** Stora Torget (☎ 29 50 29; ☹ 7.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3.30pm Sat May-Sep); Outer harbour (☹ 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3.30pm Sat Jun-Aug).

SUNNE

☎ 0565 / pop 13,604

Sunne is the largest ski resort in southern Sweden. In summer, it's a quiet spot with several cultural attractions in the vicinity.

The **tourist office** (☎ 164 00; www.sunne.info; ☹ 9am-9.30pm mid-Jun-mid-August, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is at the campsite reception building (see right). The town has banks, supermarkets and most other tourist facilities, mainly on Storgatan.

Sights & Activities

The most interesting place in the area is the house at **Märbacka** (☎ 310 27; www.marbacka.se; adult/child Skr60/30; ☹ 11am-3pm mid-May-mid-Jun, 10am-4pm mid-Jun-early Jul & Aug, 10am-5pm Jul, 11am-2pm Sat & Sun Sep), where Swedish novelist Selma Lagerlöf (1858-1940) was born. She was the first woman to receive the Nobel Prize for

Literature, and many of her tales are based in the local area. The large kitchen and library where she wrote her books are particularly lovely. Admission is by guided tours only (45 minutes), which leave on the hour – a tour in English is given daily in July at 2pm. Märbacka is 9km southeast of Sunne; enquire at the tourist office about buses.

Sundsbergs Gärd (☎ 103 63; adult/child Skr40/free; ☹ noon-4pm Tue-Thu & Sat & Sun late Jun-mid-Aug), opposite the tourist office, featured in Lagerlöf's *Gösta Berling's Saga* and now contains a forestry museum, art exhibition, café and manor house with beautiful furnishings.

Flower gardens, a tropical greenhouse and an arboretum will appeal to sedate adults at **Rottneros Park** (☎ 602 95; info@rottnerospark.se; adult/4-15yr Skr120/45; ☹ mid-May-mid-Sep; bus 302), some 6km south of Sunne. There's also plenty for hyperactive kids – lots of play areas and the tree-top, rope-swinging delights of Sweden's largest climbing forest. Rottneros has its own train station.

The steamship **Freya of Fryken** (☎ 41590; freja@angbatfreja.nu) sank in 1896, but it was raised and lovingly restored in 1994. Now you can sail along the lakes north and south of Sunne; departures are several times weekly from late June to mid-August, and short trips cost from Skr100 per adult and Skr50 for those between 8 and 15 years. Lunch and dinner cruises are also on the programme.

Ski Sunne (☎ 602 80; www.skisunne.se in Swedish), the town's ski resort, has 10 different descents, a snowboarding area and a cross-country skiing stadium. Or, rattle down the slopes in a wire-caged car in summer, on a **hillrolling** (four descents Skr275; ☹ 11am-4pm Tue-Sat Jul) descent.

Sleeping & Eating

STF Vandrarhem Sunne (☎ 107 88; sunne.vandrarhem@telia.com; Hembygdsvägen 7; dm Skr150) Part of a little homestead museum just north of town, this well-equipped hostel has beds in sunny wooden cabins. There's a futuristic kitchen, airy dining room and outside tables and chairs for alfresco meals. Breakfast is available (Skr50), and bikes can be rented (per day Skr50).

Sunne SweCamp Kolsnäs (☎ 164 00; kolsnas@sunne.se; low/high-season sites Skr130/180, 2-bed cabins Skr290/345, 4-bed cabins Skr395/465; ☑) This is a large, family-oriented camping ground at the southern edge of town, with mini-golf,

a restaurant, beach and assorted summer activities, plus bikes, boats and canoes for rent.

Länsmansgården (☎ 140 10; info@lansman.com; s/d from Skr645/820; lunch Skr95, à la carte mains Skr135-240) This historic 'sheriff's house' also features in Lagerlöf's *Gösta Berling's Saga*. It's a picturesque place for a fine lunch or a restful evening in one of the romantic bedrooms, named after the books' characters. The excellent restaurant specialises in very Swedish cuisine, made using fresh local ingredients; dishes include pike pâté, salmon, beef, reindeer and lamb dishes. The mansion is 4km north of Sunne centre, by road No 45 (towards Torsby).

Saffran & Vitlök (☎ 120 09; Storgatan 27; lunch around Skr50; ☎ 11am-6pm) This charming café in a cheery blue building serves up baked potatoes, big bowls of salad, two hot lunch options (one meat and one veg), tasty deli items and excellent ice cream.

Köpmangården (☎ 132 50; Ekebyvägen; ☎ from noon Tue-Sun) Once a grocer's shop, this is now the town's most popular restaurant and drinking spot. The interior is rather elegant, and there's a large decking area for fine weather.

Strandcaféet (☎ 104 88; Strandpromenaden; mains Skr80-130; ☎ summer) In the park is this appealing beach café, with outdoor seating over the water and live music on some summer evenings.

Getting There & Away

Bus 302 runs to Torsby (Skr47, 45 minutes, one to three daily) and Karlstad (Skr68, 1½ hours, one to five daily). Regional trains to Torsby and Karlstad (one to three daily) are faster than the bus, but cost the same.

TORSBY & AROUND

☎ 0560 / pop 13,086

Sleepy Torsby, deep in the forests of Värmland, is only 38km from Norway. It's the home town of Sven-Göran Eriksson, coach of England's national football team. The area's history and sights are linked to emigrants from Finland, who settled in western parts of Sweden in the mid 16th century. Spurning Swedish towns, they made for the forests where they built their own distinctive farms and villages.

The **tourist office** (☎ 105 50; www.torsby.se; Gräsmarksvägen 12; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat &

Sun mid-Jun-Aug, 9am-4pm Mon-Fri Sep-mid-Jun) is a couple of kilometres west of town, on road No 45.

Sights

Torsby Finnkulturcentrum (☎ 162 93; www.finnkultturcentrum.com; Gräsmarksvägen 8; admission Skr20; ☎ 11am-4pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug; noon-4pm Tue-Fri rest of yr) has displays describing the 17th-century Finnish settlement of the area, covering smoke-houses, hunting, music and witchcraft. The best bit is the terrace café, with seats overlooking a lulling lake.

The excellent neighbouring **Fordonsmuseum** (☎ 712 10; Gräsmarksvägen 8; adult/under 15yr Skr40/free; ☎ 10am-5.30pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) will appeal to motorheads, with its collection of vintage cars, motorcycles and fire engines.

Hembygdsgården Kollsberg (☎ 718 61; Levgrönsvägen 36; adult/child Skr20/free; ☎ noon-5pm Jun & Aug, noon-6pm Jul), down beside Lake Fryken, is a dinky homestead museum with a number of old houses, including a Finnish cabin.

One of the best preserved 'Finnish homesteads' in the area is **Ritamäki Finngård** (☎ 502 25; ☎ 11am-6pm Jun-Aug), 25km west of Torsby and 5km from Lekvattnet. It was probably built in the late 17th century and was uninhabited until 1964, making it the last permanently inhabited Finnish homestead in Sweden. It's surrounded by a nature reserve. Bus 310 goes to Lekvattnet but there is no public transport to Ritamäki.

Activities

There are a number of summer activities and tours in the area, including fishing, canoeing, white-water rafting, rock-climbing, mountain biking, and beaver and elk safaris. Contact the tourist office for information.

Finnskogleden is an easy and well-marked, long-distance path that roughly follows the Norwegian border for 240km – from near Charlottenburg to Søre Osen (in Norway); it passes the old Finnish homestead Ritamäki Finngård. There's a guide book (available from tourist offices, Skr125) that has text in Swedish only, but all the topographical maps you'll need. The best section, Øyer-moen to Röjden (or vice versa), requires one or two overnight stops. Bus 311 runs from Torsby to near the border at Röjdäfors (twice daily on weekdays), and bus 310 runs to Vittjärn (twice daily on weekdays), 6km from the border on road No 239.

EXPLORING THE WILDERNESS

Vildmark i Värmland (☎ 140 40; www.vildmark.se) organises outdoor activities in the pristine wilderness of Värmland in summer, including canoe trips (one to six days), beaver-spotting safaris, rock-climbing and rafting.

For a real get-away-from-it-all, back-to-nature experience, try one of their raft trips on the Klarälven. With help, you actually make your own six-person craft from cut logs and lengths of rope. Prices start at Skr500 for a day trip, Skr1840 for five days (four nights) or Skr2190 for eight days (seven nights). If you choose a longer option, you can sleep on board the moored raft, or climb ashore and camp for the night (equipment can be hired at additional cost). You can while away your days fishing, swimming, wildlife spotting and enjoying the serenity. Check out the website for more information.

You can catch boat trips on the **Freya af Fryken** from Torsby (see p257).

Looking like something you might use to smash atoms, the world's longest ski tunnel (1.3km) is due to open here in spring 2006. The **Torsby Ski Tunnel** (Valberget; ☎ May-Dec) arena will also contain the world's only **indoor biathlon shooting range**. Details had not been finalised at the time of writing; contact the tourist office for further information.

Skiing outdoors is possible from December to Easter, 20km north of Torsby at **Hovfjället** (☎ 313 00; www.hovfjallet.se). There are several ski lifts (up to 542m above sea level) and a variety of runs. Day passes start at Skr215 for adults and Skr180 for 8-15-year-olds. Alpine **ski hire** (☎ 312 55) costs Skr205 per day.

Sleeping & Eating

Hotell Örnen (☎ 146 64; hotell-ornen@telia.com; Östmarksvägen 4; s/d Skr740/890, 1-/2-/3-/4-bed apt Skr890/1100/1310/1520) Cosy Örnen is a pretty lemon-coloured place set behind a white picket fence in the town centre. Newly refurbished Swedish-style rooms are sweet, with flowing curtains, crisp white furniture and folk-art decoration. There are also similar flatlets, with private kitchens.

Torsby Camping (☎ 710 95; info@torsbycamping.se; Bredvikens; sites Skr120, cabins from Skr350; ☎ May-mid-Sep) With its child-friendly beach, playgrounds and mini-golf, this large, well-equipped lakeside ground (4km south of town) is a popular family spot.

There's no shortage of fast-food outlets and pizzerias in the centre. Finer options lie out of town.

Vägsjöfors Herrgård (☎ 313 30; info@vagsjofors herrgard.com; B&B from Skr310 per person, dm Skr180) Twenty kilometres north of Torsby, by a stunning lake, is this large manor house.

B&B rooms are individually decorated so it's a little hard to say what you'll get, but the décor is genteel, and there are hostel beds too. They also serve food, though lunch only (Skr70, noon to 3pm).

Faktoriet (☎ 149 80; Båthamnen; meals around Skr80; ☎ from noon) By far the most appealing eatery in Torsby is down at the harbour (at the far end of Sjögatan). The view of the harbour is not at all attractive, but this is a cool restaurant with light meals (pasta, baked potatoes, *fajitas*) and a popular bar.

Heidruns Bok- & Bildcafé (☎ 421 26; www.heidruns.se; ☎ 11am-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) In summer there's live music, poetry and other entertainment at this charming café, run by local poet Bengt Berg. You can feast on books and artwork, or on excellent home-baked cakes! Heidruns is 10km north of Torsby, at Fensbol on road No 45.

Getting There & Away

See opposite for travel information. There are a few buses that run north of Torsby, but generally on weekdays only.

DALARNA

FALUN

☎ 023 / pop 54,994

Falun, which is traditionally the main centre of Dalarna, is synonymous with mining, but don't think grisly thoughts of dark pits and industrial grime – Falu Kopparbergsgruva (Copper Mountain mine) is unique enough to appear on Unesco's World Heritage List and is a fascinating experience. An even more popular attraction is the home of painter Carl Larsson, a work of art in itself and absolutely unmissable.

The **Falun Folkmusik Festival** (www.falufolk.com), with international and regional performers, is held over four days in mid-July; contact the tourist office for tickets.

Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 830 50; www.visitfalun.se; Trotzgatan 10-12; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 10am-5pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat rest of yr) can help with visitor information.

Most services (banks, supermarkets etc) are on or just off Stora Torget. There's Internet access at the **public library** (☎ 833 35; Kristinegatan 15), or at **Falu Biljard Centre** (☎ 282 75; Falugatan 4; per hr Skr30; ☎ 1-10pm Mon-Fri, noon-6pm Sat & Sun).

Sights

FALU KOPPARBERGSGRUVA

Falun's copper mine was the world's most important by the 17th century and drove many of Sweden's international aspirations during that period. Today it's on Unesco's World Heritage List and makes for a fascinating day out.

Tradition says that a goat called Kåre first drew attention to the copper reserves, when he rolled in the earth and pranced back to the village with red horns. The first historical mention is in a document from 1288, when the Bishop of Västerås bought shares in the company. As a by-product, the mine produced the red paint that became a characteristic of Swedish houses and Falu Red is still well-used today. The mine finally closed in 1992.

The **mining complex** (☎ 78 20 30; www.kopparberget.com; ☎ 10am-5pm May-Aug, noon-4pm Sep, noon-4pm Sat & Sun Oct-Apr; bus 709), to the west of town at the top end of Gruvgatan, contains various sights. Most dramatic is the **Stora Stöten** (Great Pit), a vast hole caused by a major mine collapse in the 17th century. By a miracle, the miners were on holiday that day and no-one was harmed. There are lookouts around the crater edge, and numerous **mine buildings** including a 15m waterwheel and shaft-head machinery.

The **mine museum** (adult/7-18yr Skr40/20) contains everything you could possibly want to know about the history, administration, engineering, geology and copper production of the mine, as well as the sad story of Fat Mats the miner.

You can go on a one-hour tour of the **disused mine** (adult/7-18yr Skr90/45) – bring warm clothing. Prices include museum entry and in high season you shouldn't have to wait more than an hour for an English tour. Between October and April, tours must be booked in advance.

If you get peckish, the pretty café **Gjuthuset** (☎ 132 12), serving coffee, sandwiches and cake, teeters on the edge of the Great Pit. Opposite the main reception is **Geschwornergården Vårdshus** (☎ 78 26 16; lunch Skr70), a more stately affair which does excellent hot lunch specials.

OTHER SIGHTS

The World Heritage listing actually encompasses a much larger area than just the Kopparbergsgruva. You can pick up a free brochure, *Discover the Falun World Heritage Site*, which pinpoints all the smelteries, slag heaps and mine estates within a 10km radius of Falun.

Dalarnas Museum (☎ 76 55 00; www.dalarnasmuseum.se; Stigaregatan 2-4; adult/child Skr40/20; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, noon-5pm Sat & Sun) is a super introduction to Swedish folk art, music and costumes. Selma Lagerlöf's study is preserved here, and there are ever-changing art and craft exhibitions.

A sea of baroque blue-and-gold hits you at **Kristine Kyrka** (☎ 545 70; Stora Torget; ☎ 10am-6pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Sep-May), which shows off the riches brought to town by the 17th-century copper trade. Also worth a gander is Falun's oldest building, the late-14th-century **Stora Kopparbergs Kyrka** (☎ 546 00; Kyrkbacksvägen 8; ☎ 10am-6pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Sep-May), with brick vaulting and folk-art flowers running round the walls.

If you're feeling energetic, walk up to **Hoppstörnen** (☎ 835 61; ☎ 10am-6pm Sun-Thu, 10am-11pm Fri & Sat mid-May-mid-Aug), the tower and ski jump in the hills behind the town. You can take a lift to the top (Skr20) for a great view.

The Lugnet area in Falun, and the Bjursås area to the northwest, are both winter-sports centres with ski runs, nordic courses and toboggan runs. Also in Lugnet is the **Idrottsmuseum** (☎ 138 24; admission Skr20; ☎ 10am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat; bus 705 or 713), showcasing local sports.

There are several beautiful old buildings scattered some distance from Falun; if you have time and transport, ask the tourist

office for information on Korså Bruk (an excellently preserved former industrial settlement), Svärdsjö Gammalgård (an 18th-century homestead with lots of summer entertainment), Stadisstugan (a house decorated with folk-art Biblical scenes), and Vika Kyrka (with magnificent 16th-century wall paintings and medieval sculptures).

Sleeping

Falu Fångelse Vandrarhem (☎ 79 55 75; info@falufangelse.se; Villavägen 17; dm Skr200) The friendly SVIF hostel is the most central budget option. Accommodation is in the converted cells of an old prison, used for its original purposes up until the mid-1990s.

Hotel Falun (☎ 291 80; Trotzgatan 16; s/d Skr540/740, discounted to Skr490/590; P) There are some good hotel choices right by the tourist office, including this place which has comfortable modern rooms with private toilet and shared shower (or you can pay extra for rooms with full private bathroom).

Park Inn (☎ 70 17 00; www.falun.parkinn.se; Bergskolegränd 7; s/d from Skr1120/1390, discounted to Skr670/790; P) Also located near the tourist office, the Park Inn offers congenial rooms decorated in creams and pale greens. Beds are brand new, and all the bathrooms are due to be renovated in 2005/06. There's a large sunny dining room, plus a bar, sauna and exercise room.

Scandic Hotel Lugnet Falun (☎ 669 22 00; falun@scandic-hotels.com; Svärdsjögränd 51; s/d Skr1295/1595, discounted to Skr840/840; P) This large, modern building stands out a mile with its ski-jump design. It has heaps of facilities, including a restaurant, bar and even a bowling hall in the basement! The hotel is just east of the centre on road No 80, close to Lugnet.

Lugnets Camping (☎ 835 63; lugnet-anl@falun.se; sites Skr135, simple 2-bed huts from Skr200, cabins Skr600; bus 705 or 713; ☎) This long, thin campsite is 2km northeast of town, in the ski and sports area. Amenities are good: crazy golf, boules and a nearby open-air swimming pool will keep kids amused.

Eating & Drinking

Banken Bar & Brasserie (☎ 71 19 11; Åsgatan 41; basic mains Skr110-145, à la carte mains Skr130-200; ☎ closed Sun) Based in a former bank, classy Banken has a splendid interior and matching service. The menu includes a *gott & enkelt* (good and simple) category – featuring

the likes of burgers and pasta – plus more upmarket 'world cuisine' options.

Två Rum & Kök (☎ 260 25; Stadshusgränd 2; mains Skr190-250; ☎ Tue-Sat) This restaurant shares the same kitchen as Banken, but it's more exclusive. It's won awards for its gourmet food (dinner only), served in an Art Nouveau interior.

Rådhus Källaren (☎ 254 00; Stora Torget; mains Skr255-275; ☎ closed Sun) The town hall's atmospheric 17th-century cellars are another good spot for fine (if somewhat overpriced) dining. Dishes are a Swedish-world fusion, focusing on meaty-steaky mains. The bar next door is the place to be seen, and stays open until 2am on Friday and Saturday.

Kopparhatten Café & Restaurang (☎ 191 69; Stigaregatan 2-4; lunch buffet Skr80, eve mains Skr100-150) An excellent choice is this funky, arty café-restaurant, attached to Dalarnas Museum. Choose from upmarket sandwiches (seed bread, brie, roast peppers), soup or a good vegetarian buffet for lunch, and light veggie, fish and meat evening mains. There's an outside terrace overlooking the river, and live music on Friday nights in summer.

Bryggcaféet (☎ 233 30; Fisktorget) Another fab café, Bryggcaféet is a dinky little building which was once the fire station. It serves good coffee and cakes, and has a large decking area by the river.

Lilla Pizzerian (☎ 288 34; Slaggatan 10) For cheap eats, this pizzeria does takeaway and eat-in pizzas and kebabs, with nothing on the menu over Skr55.

Harrys (☎ 79 48 87; Trotzgatan 9-11; ☎ closed Sun) This pub is entered off Åsgatan, and has everything – pub, restaurant, outdoor area and disco.

For self-caterers, there's a centrally located **ICA supermarket** (Falugatan 1) as well as a **Systembolaget** (Åsgatan 19).

Getting There & Around

Falun isn't on the main train lines – change at Borlänge when coming from Stockholm or Mora – but there are direct trains to and from Gävle (Skr121, 1¼ hours, roughly every two hours).

Swebus Express (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) has buses on the Göteborg-Karlstad-Falun-Gävle route, and connections to buses on the Stockholm-Borlänge-Mora route.

Regional transport is run by **Dalatrafik** (☎ 0771-95 95 95; www.dalatrafik.se in Swedish), which

'LOVE EACH OTHER, CHILDREN, FOR LOVE IS ALL'

Whatever you do, don't miss the ravishing **Carl Larsson-gården** (☎ 600 53; www.carllarsson.se; Sundborn; Admission by guided tour only, adult/7-17yr Skr90/40; 🕒 10am-5pm May-Sep, 1pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr), home of artist Carl Larsson and his wife Karin, in the picturesque village of Sundborn. After the couple's deaths, their early-20th-century home was preserved in its entirety by their children, but it's no gloomy memorial. Lilla Hyttnäs is a work of art, full of brightness, humour and love.

Superb colour schemes, decorations and furniture fill the house: Carl painted portraits of his wife and children everywhere, and Karin's tapestries and embroidery reveal she was as skilled an artist as her husband. Even today, the modern styles in most of the house (especially the dining room) will inspire interior decorators. The **mine master's room** has a beautiful painted ceiling (from 1742) and there's a display of Larsson's collection of **Sami handicraft** in the long passage.

Tours (45 minutes) run almost continuously, but call in advance for times of English tours (alternatively, follow a Swedish tour with an English handbook costing Skr20).

If you like Larsson's work, you can see more at the **Carl Larssons Porträttsamling** (☎ 600 53; Kyrkvägen 18, Sundborn; adult/under 12yr Skr25/free; 🕒 11am-5pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug), where there are 12 portraits of local worthies.

Bus 64 (Skr34) runs from Falun to Sundborn village (13km).

covers all corners of the county of Dalarna. Tickets cost Skr17 for trips within a zone, and Skr17 extra for each new zone. A 31-day *länskort* costs Skr900 and allows you to travel throughout the county. Regional bus 70 goes approximately hourly to Rättvik (Skr51, one hour) and Mora (Skr85, 1½ hours).

You can hire bicycles from **Cykel & Fjäll** (☎ 638 62; info@cykelfjall.se; Stora Torget; per day/week Skr90/250; 🕒 closed Sun).

LAKE SILJAN REGION

KABOOOM!! Not a word that would instantly spring to mind as you rest your eyes on the soft forest-and-lake scenery here. But, 360 million years ago, Lake Siljan was the site of Europe's largest meteoric impact. Crashing through the Earth's atmosphere, the giant lump of rock hit Siljan with the force of 500 million atomic bombs, obliterating all life and creating a 75km ring-shaped crater...where you can now paddle canoes in the utmost peace and tranquillity. It's a funny old world.

The area is a very popular summer destination, with numerous outdoor festivals and attractions. Maps of **Siljansleden**, an excellent network of walking and cycling paths extending for more than 300km around Lake Siljan, are available from tourist offices. Another way to enjoy the lake is by boat: in summer, **M/S Gustaf Wasa** (☎ 070-542 10 25; www.wasnet.nu) runs a complex range of lunch, dinner and sightseeing cruises from the main towns of Mora, Rättvik and

Leksand. Enquire at any of the area's tourist offices for a schedule.

The big midsummer festival **Musik vid Siljan** (www.musikvidsiljan.se) takes place in venues around the lakeside towns in early July.

Check out the Siljan area website (www.siljan.se) for lots of good information. All the tourist offices in the area have brochures and maps for visitors, and all can help organise accommodation in the region.

Leksand

☎ 0247 / pop 15,504

Leksand's Midsummer Festival is the most popular in Sweden and up to 20,000 spectators watch the maypole being set up on the first Friday evening after 21 June.

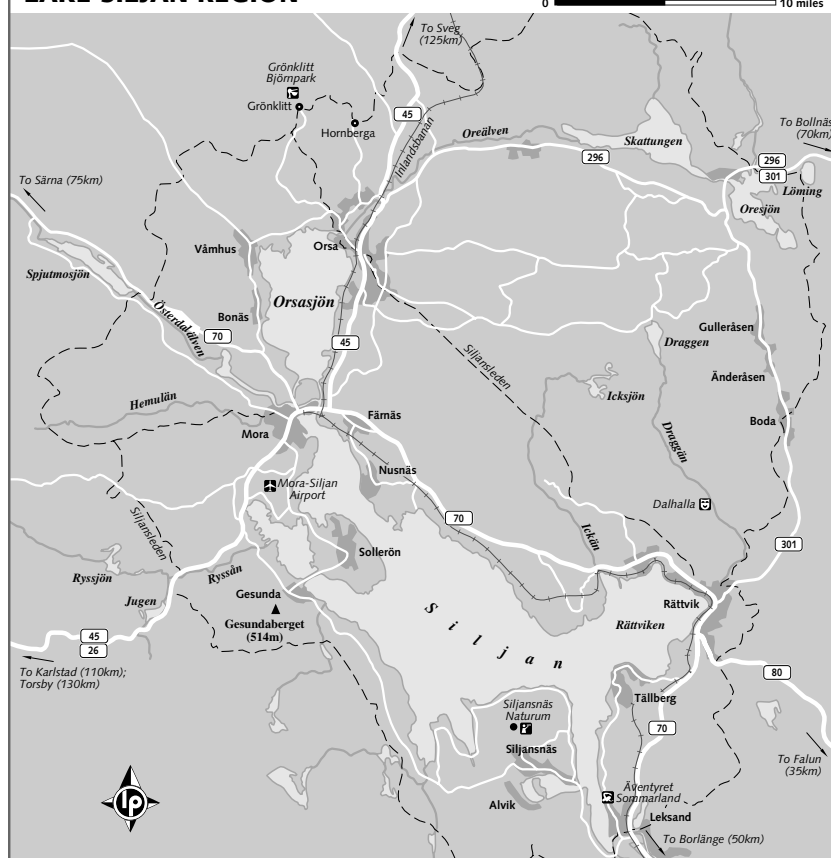
The town has a **tourist office** (☎ 79 61 30; leksand@siljan.se; Norsgatan 40; 🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr), and banks and supermarkets, primarily on Sparbankgatan. The **library** (☎ 802 45; Kulturhuset, Kyrkallén) has Internet access.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Built by a doctor for his young English wife, **Munthe's Hildasholm** (☎ 100 62; www.hildasholm.org; Klockaregatan 5; entry by guided tour, adult/12-16yr Skr70/30, hourly 11am-5pm Mon-Sat 1-5pm Sun Jun-mid-Sep) is a sumptuously decorated early-20th-century mansion, set in beautiful gardens by the lake. **Phone ahead** for guided tours in English.

Leksands Kyrka (☎ 807 00; 🕒 9.30am-8pm Jun-mid-Aug, 9.30am-3.30pm rest of yr), with its distinctive onion dome, dates from the early 13th

LAKE SILJAN REGION



century, but has been extensively renovated and enlarged. The church contains extravagant baroque furnishings.

Families should pick a sunny day and head for **Äventyret Sommarland** (☎ 139 39; admission Skr195, family ticket Skr735; 🕒 10am-5pm Jun & Aug, 10am-6pm Jul; bus 58), a huge waterpark with pools, slides, rides and other amusements, 2km north of Leksand.

Siljansnäs Naturum (☎ 233 00; Siljansnäs; admission free; 🕒 11am-4pm mid-May-Jun, 11am-8pm Jul, 11am-6pm Aug), 14km northwest of Leksand, has information about the meteor and local flora and fauna, with a slightly moth-eaten collection of 50 stuffed animals. The highlight is the 22m-high **viewing tower**, from where you get stunning 360° views around the lake. Bus

84 runs from Leksand to Siljansnäs, from where it's a 300m walk to the Naturum.

SLEEPING & EATING

STF Vandrarnhem Leksand (☎ 152 50; info@vandrarhem.leksand.se; Parkgården, Källberet; dm Skr130; 📍) It's a little out of the way (2km south of town), but this is a lovely wee hostel, and Dalarna's oldest, with ultracut wooden huts built around a flowery courtyard. Bikes are available for rent (per day Skr70).

Hotell Leksand (☎ 145 70; info@hotellleksand.com; Leksandsvägen 7; s/d Skr740/940; 📍) This is a small, modern and very conveniently situated hotel in the heart of town. Rooms are fairly nondescript, but the folk are friendly and it's not a bad place to lay your head.

Phone first, as the reception doesn't open all day.

Leksands Camping & Stugby (☎ 803 13; leksands.camping.stugby@leksand.se; car & tent low/high season Skr100/115, cabins & chalets from Skr340; bus 58; 📍) This big lakeside campsite has all the facilities you could require – including a restaurant, small beach and neighbouring waterpark – and lies 2km north of town. In high season it's less crowded than the camping grounds at either Mora or Rättvik.

Bygatan 16 (☎ 155 05; Bygatan 16; meals Skr90-190; 📍 closed Sun) Bygatan is a smart establishment with a menu of light and main meals, including creative pasta, beef and fish dishes. The restaurant is closely linked to the local hockey team, and has a special 'hockey menu' during the playing season.

Siljans Konditori (☎ 150 70; Sparbanksgatan 5; sandwiches Skr20-45, buffet Skr60-80; 📍 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat, 11am-2pm Sun) This large and inviting bakery-café sits on the corner of Stora Torget. It has sunny outdoor tables, and serves good sandwiches as well as carnivorous and herbivorous lunch buffets.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

There are a couple of direct intercity trains every day running from Stockholm to Leksand (Skr270, 3¼ hours). Bus 58 regularly connects Leksand with Tällberg (Skr34, 20 minutes) and Rättvik (Skr51, 40 minutes).

The **STF hostel** (☎ 152 50) rents bikes. For a cab, call **Taxi Leksand** (☎ 147 00).

Tällberg

☎ 0247

Tiny Tällberg has a mere 200 residents, yet its eight upmarket hotels and several chic boutiques hint that it's a tourist hotspot. It's certainly an appealing place for lunch and a walk, but unless you're after a romantic countryside escape, it's perhaps better to stay in Rättvik or Leksand and visit for the afternoon. The town's website (www.infotallberg.nu) is in Swedish, but has links to all the hotels.

Klockargården (☎ 502 60; www.klockargarden.com; Siljansvägen 6; s/d/ste from Skr595/990/1590; 📍) Charm personified. Klockargården is a collection of old timber buildings set around a grassy green courtyard, plus one new wing built in 2004. Each unique room is decorated in a tasteful country style, all the suites have Jacuzzis, and several have trim

wooden balconies too. Staff are very helpful, and there are frequent summer craft fairs and folk concerts in the grounds. The restaurant has a daily lunch buffet for Skr95 and à la carte meals are around Skr200. Good-value packages are available.

Åkerblads (☎ 508 00; info@akerblads-tallberg.se; Sjögattu 2; s/d Skr695/1290, lunch Skr125, eve mains Skr195-345; 📍) Tällberg's oldest hotel is this elegant affair, arranged inside a beautiful collection of buildings dating from the 15th century onwards. There's a relaxation suite, garden tennis and ping-pong for entertainment, and the restaurant is considered one of the region's finest, with a lunch buffet and à la carte main courses nightly. Weekend and half-board packages are available.

Bus 58 between Rättvik and Leksand stops in the village regularly (two to six times daily). Tällberg is also on the train line that travels around Lake Siljan; the train station is about 2km from the village proper.

Rättvik

☎ 0248 / pop 10,864

Stretched along the shores of Lake Siljan, Rättvik is a popular year-round town, combining summery sandy beaches and winter ski slopes. It has a couple of low-key but unusual things to see and do, including a summer bobsleigh run.

There's a full programme of special events in summer, including a **folklore festival** (www.folklore.se) in late July, and a **Classic Car Week** (www.classicarweek.com in Swedish) in late July and/or early August.

The **tourist office** (☎ 79 72 10; rattvik@siljan.se; Riksvägen 40; 📍 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is at the train station. Rättvik's facilities include banks and supermarkets on Storgatan, and a **library** (☎ 701 95; Storgatan 2) with Internet access.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

The 725m-long **SommarRodel** (☎ 513 00; info@rattviksbacken.nu; one/three rides Skr45/120; 📍 11am-6pm or 7pm Jun-Aug, closed when raining), a sort of bobsled chute, is lots of fun. You get to hurtle downhill at 35mph, which feels fairly fast so close to the ground.

An enterprising 17-year-old built **Vidablick Utsiktstorn** (adult/5-12yr Skr20/5; 📍 10am-7pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug), a viewing tower about 5km southeast of town, from where there are great panoramas of the lake, a good café

and a youth hostel (but unfortunately no public transport).

Scandinavia's longest wooden pier, the impressive 628m **Långbryggan**, runs out into the lake. Other interesting buildings include the 13th-century church and its 87 well-preserved **church stables**, the oldest dating from 1470. The pseudo-rune **memorial** beside the church commemorates the 1520s rising of Gustav Vasa's band against the Danes – the rebellion that created modern Sweden.

The Swedes are mad for them! Get your open-air-museum fix at **Gammelgården** (☎ 514 45; admission free; 📍 11am-5pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug), 500m north of the church, which has a good collection of furniture painted in the local style.

Central **Kulturhuset** (☎ 701 95; Storgatan 2; admission free; 📍 11am-7pm Mon-Thu, 11am-3pm Fri, 11am-2pm Sat, 1-5pm Sun) houses the library, art exhibitions, and a display describing the Siljan meteor impact 360 million years ago.

The easy **ski slopes** are excellent; there are four lifts and a day pass is Skr200.

Dalhalla (☎ 79 79 50; www.dalhalla.se), an old limestone quarry 7km north of Rättvik, is used as an open-air theatre and concert venue in summer; the acoustics are incredible and the setting is stunning. Tickets usually start at around Skr165 and it's well worth going to see a performance; ask the tourist office for a programme.

SLEEPING

Summer accommodation in Rättvik disappears fast, so it's worth booking ahead – even for campsites. Central places to stay are few and far between.

STF Vandrarhem (☎ 105 66; rattviksparken@rattviksparken.fhs.se; Centralgatan; dm Skr150) The well-appointed hostel buildings are clustered round a courtyard in the same park as the campsite here. The large road to one side might bother light sleepers.

Jöns-Andersgården (☎ 130 15; www.jons-andersgarden.se; Bygatan 4; s/d Skr475/600, d with bathroom Skr800; 📍 mid-Apr–mid-Oct; bus 74; 📍) Way up on the hill with superb views, beds here are in traditional wooden huts dating from the 15th century. Rooms have all recently been renovated, and there's one great double room that has its own sauna (Skr1100 per night). If you've no transport, the kindly owners will pick you up from the train station by arrangement, and breakfast is included in

the price. There's also a very nice Italian café-restaurant on the premises.

Hotell Vidablick (☎ 302 50; vidablick@hantverksbyn.se; Faluvägen; s/d Skr650/1050, discounted to Skr600/850) Vidablick is an excellent choice, with rustic hotel accommodation in grass-roofed huts, some with lake views. The hotel is behind the OKQ8 petrol station on the road to Leksand, about 3km south of town.

Stiftsgården (☎ 510 20; www.stiftsgarden.org; Kyrkvägen 2; s with/without bathroom Skr520/410 d with/without bathroom Skr790/570) This picturesque, church-run place is by the lake, away from the hustle and bustle of town but within walking distance. Rooms are simple but pleasant enough, and breakfast is available for Skr50.

Siljansbadet Camping (☎ 516 91; www.siljansbadet.com; sites low/high season Skr105/185, 4-bed cabins from Skr330/440; 📍 May-Oct) Near the train station, this campsite is on the lake shore and boasts its own Blue-Flag beach.

Rättviksparken (☎ 561 10; rattviksparken@rattviksparken.fhs.se; Furudalsvägen 1; sites low/high season Skr110/150, d Skr325, cabins from Skr425) Another large, bustling campsite, this is by the river off Centralgatan (1km from the train station).

EATING & DRINKING

You might want to head to Tällberg or Mora for a wider choice of restaurants.

Jöns-Andersgården (☎ 130 15; www.jons-andersgarden.se; Bygatan 4; mains Skr135-190; 📍 Thu-Sun May-Sep; bus 74) If you can stir your stumps and make it up the hill, you'll find this rather sweet restaurant tucked at the top. Dishes such as lemony chicken with *gremolata* potatoes, and *tagliatelle* with truffle oil, bring a taste of Italy to this very Swedish establishment.

Restaurang Anna (☎ 126 81; Vasagatan 3; dishes Skr100-190; 📍 Tue-Sun) Behind the town hall, this is your best central option for 'finer dining'. It's a good midrange choice, serving Swedish and international dishes, including fish, lamb, pork and reindeer.

Strandrestaurangen (☎ 134 00; 📍 Jun-Aug) For something a bit different, you could try this beach restaurant. It's really more of a drinking spot though, with live music on Tuesday nights and 'after-beach' parties at the weekend.

The cheapest eateries, like old-style **Fricks Konditori** (☎ 133 36; Stora Torget; sandwiches from Skr35), serving sandwiches, quiche, cakes and coffee, are opposite the train station.

There's a **Systembolaget** (Storgatan), and three supermarkets on the same street.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Buses depart from outside the train station. Dalatrafik's bus 70 runs regularly between Falun, Rättvik and Mora. A couple of direct intercity trains per day from Stockholm (Skr290, 3½ hours) stop at Rättvik (otherwise you have to change at Borlänge). There are local trains every couple of hours between Rättvik and Mora (Skr65, 25 minutes).

You can hire a bike from **Team Sportia** (☎ 103 33; Storgatan 14, per day/week from Skr100/500). A **taxi** (☎ 510 00) is also an option.

Mora

☎ 0250 / pop 20,083

Mora is spliced with Sweden's historic soul. Legend has it that in 1520 Gustav Vasa arrived here, in a last-ditch attempt to start a rebellion against the Danish regime. The people of Mora weren't interested, and Gustav was forced to put on his skis and flee for the border. After he left, the town reconsidered and two yeomen, Engelbrekt and Lars, volunteered to follow Gustav's tracks, finally overtaking him in Sälen and thereby changing Swedish history.

Today the world's biggest cross-country ski race **Vasaloppet**, which ends in Mora, commemorates this epic chase, and involves 90km of gruelling Nordic skiing. Around 15,000 people take part on the first Sunday in March. In summer, you can walk the route on the 90km **Vasaloppsleden**.

The **tourist office** (☎ 59 20 20; mora@siljan.se; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is at the train station. There are banks, supermarkets and other facilities in town, primarily on Kyrkogatan. The **library** (☎ 267 79; Köpmangatan) has Internet access.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Even if you have no interest in skiing, you may be pleasantly surprised by the excellent **Vasaloppsmuseet** (☎ 392 25; www.vasaloppet.se; Vasagatan; adult/child Skr30/20; 10am-5pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri mid-Sep-mid-Jun), which really manages to communicate the passion behind the world's largest cross-country skiing event. There's some fantastic crackly black-and-white film of the first race, a display about nine-times winner and

hardy old boy Nils 'Mora-Nisse' Karlsson, and an exhibit of prizes. Outside the museum is the race **finish line**, a favourite place for holiday snaps.

Zornmuseet (☎ 59 23 10; www.zorn.se; Vasagatan 36; adult/7-15yr Skr40/2; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Sat, 11am-5pm Sun mid-May-mid-Sep, noon-5pm Mon-Sat, 1-5pm Sun rest of yr) celebrates the works and private collections of the Mora painter Anders Zorn (1860-1920), one of Sweden's most famous artists. Many of Zorn's best-known portraits and characteristic nudes are on display here; perhaps most interesting for the foreign visitor are his naturalistic depictions of Swedish life and the countryside.

Next door, the Zorn family house **Zorngården** (☎ 59 23 10; Vasagatan 36; entry & tour adult/7-15yr Skr50/15; ☎ 10am-4pm Mon-Sat, 11am-4pm Sun mid-May-mid-Sep, noon-3pm Mon-Sat, 1-4pm Sun rest of yr) is an excellent example of a wealthy artist's house and reflects Zorn's National Romantic aspirations (check out the Viking-influenced hall). Access to the house is by guided tour (every 15 minutes in summer; phone ahead for English tours).

Tomteland (☎ 287 70; www.tomteland.se; Gesundaberget; individual/family Skr145/525 Jul & Aug, cheaper rest of yr; ☎ 10am-5pm Jul & Aug, shorter hr rest of yr) is where the Swedish Father Christmas lives, so it's naturally popular with Swedish children. Much of the entertainment revolves around children's theatre and storytelling, but there are activities that non-Swedish speakers might enjoy - scary trolls, face-painting, pedal boats, and the chance to see where Santa makes all the toys... It's open year-round, but live events stop out of season, and prices and opening periods shrink; phone first to see what's going on

SLEEPING

STF Vandrarhem Mora (☎ 381 96; info@maalkullann.se; Fredsgatan 6; dm Skr185; ☎) On a quiet backstreet close to the Vasaloppet finish line, this is a small and pleasant youth hostel. Beds are snapped up fast, so book ahead.

Målkull Ann's (☎ 381 90; Vasagatan 19; s/d from Skr550/600; ☎) Hostel proprietor, Ann, also owns this lovely B&B, with cheerful countrified rooms, a sauna and bikes for hire (per day Skr70). Rooms with private bathrooms are a few hundred krona extra.

Hotell Kung Gösta (☎ 150 70; trehotell@telia.com; Kristinebergsgatan 1; dm from Skr130; hotel s/d Skr940/1140, discounted to Skr645/795; ☎) ☎

THE DALA HORSE

What do Bill Clinton, Elvis Presley and Bob Hope have in common? Answer: they were all given the gift of a Swedish *Dalahäst*. These carved wooden horses are painted in bright colours, and decorated with folk-art flowers. To many people they represent the genuine Sweden, and are a far more powerful symbol than the Swedish flag.

The exact origin of these cheerful ornaments is uncertain. The first written reference comes from the 17th century, when the bishop of Västerås denounced such horrors as 'decks of cards, dice, flutes, dolls, wooden horses, lovers' ballads, impudent paintings', but it's quite likely that they were being carved much earlier. Sitting by the fireside and whittling wood was a common pastime, and the horse was a natural subject - a workmate, friend, and symbol of strength. The painted form that is so common today appeared at the World Exhibition in New York in 1939, and has been a favourite souvenir for travellers to Sweden ever since.

The best known Dala horses come from Nusnäs, 10km southeast of Mora. The two biggest workshops are **Nils Olsson Hemslöjd** (☎ 372 00; www.nohemslöjd.se; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, shorter hr & closed Sun rest of yr) and **Grannas A Olsson Hemslöjd** (☎ 372 50; www.grannas.com; ☎ 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, shorter hr & closed Sun rest of yr), where you can watch the carving and painting, then buy up big at the massive souvenir outlets. Wooden horse sizes stretch from 3cm-high (Skr60) to 50cm-high (Skr2500).

Public transport to Nusnäs isn't great: there are three buses from Mora Monday to Friday only.

Opposite the main train station and handy for travellers, Kung Gösta has standard hotel rooms, recently refurbished, and an indoor swimming pool, sauna and solarium. For budget-minded guests, there's also a hostel annexe, **Kristineberg**, with 10-bed dorms, a self-catering kitchen and separate sauna.

First Hotel Mora (☎ 59 26 50; mora@firsthotels.se; Strandgatan 12; s/d from Skr1145/1345, discounted to Skr748/948; ☎) ☎) The classiest hotel in Mora is this central and upmarket choice. Rooms are very effective, most combining clean lines, wooden floors and earthy tones with bright folk-art accents. For relaxation, head to the Emma Spa where there are steam rooms and Jacuzzis, plus massage and body treatments.

Moraparken (☎ 276 00; moraparken@mora.se; tent & car Skr140, 2-/4-bed cabins Skr320/455, s/d Skr775/1150, discounted to Skr575/750; ☎) ☎) This place wants for nothing; the campsite and hotel are combined in a great waterside spot, 400m northwest of the church, and both have solid facilities. The purpose-built hotel rooms (all ground floor) are newly renovated, with wooden floors and a sleek modern look. The Vasaloppet track passes through the grounds, and you can hire canoes to splash about on the pond.

EATING

All the hotels mentioned under Sleeping have decent restaurants.

Målkull Ann's (☎ 381 90; Vasagatan; mains Skr145-185) This is a cosy restaurant and café in a smart wooden 19th-century building opposite Vasaloppsmuseet. In summer, light lunches and heartier selections are served on the large balcony, overlooking the lake.

Claras Restaurang (☎ 158 98; Vasagatan 38; lunch Skr75, mains Skr110-190) In the picturesque old town you'll find convivial Claras, with excellent service and a menu of filling staples. Try the wonderful dessert of deep-fried camembert with warm cloudberry.

Mora Kaffeestuga (☎ 100 82; morakaffeestuga@telia.com; Kyrkogatan 8; meals Skr35-50) For a quick lunch, this spot has a restful grassy garden out the back. On offer are the standard salads, quiches, baguettes etc.

Helmers Konditori (☎ 100 11; Kyrkogatan 10) Next door is another good café-bakery, with homemade bread, sandwiches and cakes.

There are fast-food joints and supermarkets on Kyrkogatan.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

The Mora-Siljan airport is 6km southwest of town on the Malung road. **Skyways** (☎ 0771-95 95 00; www.skyways.se) has three flights to Stockholm Arlanda on weekdays and one on Sunday.

All Dalatrafik buses use the bus station at Moragatan 23. Bus 70 runs to Rättvik and Falun, and buses 103, 104, 105 and 245 run to Orsa. Once or twice daily, bus 170 goes to

Älvdalen, Särna, Idre and Grövelsjön, near the Norwegian border.

Mora is an **SJ** (☎ 0771-75 75 75; www.sj.se) train terminus and the southern terminus of Inlandsbanan (Inland Railway), which runs north to Gällivare (mid-June to mid-August). The main train station is about 1km east of town. The more central Mora Strand is a platform station in town, but not all trains stop there, so check the timetable. When travelling to Östersund, you can choose between Inlandsbanan (Skr347, 6¼ hours, one daily) or bus 245 (Skr255, 5¼ hours, twice daily). For more information on the Inlandsbanan, see p273.

Hire a car in Mora to see the best of the region, especially northwest Dalarna; for smaller budget models try **OKQ8** (☎ 139 58; Vasagatan 1). You can rent a bike at **Intersport** (☎ 59 39 39; Kyrkogatan 7; per day/week Skr100/500).

Orsa & Grönklitt

☎ 0250 / pop 7031

Orsa, 16km north of Mora, puts extra zzzs into the phrase 'sleepy village'. However, it's the place with the most tourist facilities before you get to the area's biggest attraction further north in Grönklitt: the fur, teeth and claws at the wonderful bear park.

The **tourist office** (☎ 55 25 50; orsa@siljan.se; Dalgatan 1; ☹ mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 10am–5pm Mon–Fri rest of yr) is in Orsa, with banks nearby. Buses 103 and 104 run regularly between Mora and Orsa.

Fat-bottomed roly-poly bear cubs are the star attraction at **Grönklitt Björnpark** (☎ 462 00; www.orsagronklitt.se; adult/6–15yr Skr90/50; ☹ 10am–3pm mid-May–mid-Sep, until 6pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug), 16km from Orsa, an excellent reserve where you can also see lynx, wolves and Wolverines. The animals have a lot of space and fairly natural surroundings. The bears are usually fed between 11am and 1pm, when you'll get a great view of them. Summer activities such as fishing, canoeing and elk or beaver safaris can be booked at the park. Bus 118 runs from Mora to Grönklitt, via Orsa (twice daily weekdays, once on Sunday).

In winter, there's a **ski area** (ski passes per day Skr215; ☹ Dec–Mar) at Grönklitt.

Björnången Hostel (☎ 462 00; Grönklitt; 2–4-bed rm Skr325/425; (P)) Run by the same people, this private hostel in a low, modern building is up at the bear park. There's no 10-to-a-cubby-hole here: rooms are for two or four people. There's also a sauna for guests.

Orsa Camping (☎ 462 00; www.orsagronklitt.se; Orsa; low/high season sites Skr105/170, cabins per week from Skr2475/4575; ☹) This is a big campsite, beautifully situated on the shores of the lake in Orsa. It's particularly suitable for families, with several playgrounds, a waterslide, canoe hire, crazy golf and a beach to keep the kids happy.

Wårdshuset (☎ 462 31; Grönklitt; lunch Skr95, dinner mains Skr90–150) And yet another piece of the Bear Empire... Also near the park, this inn specialises in pizza, pasta and Swedish buffets (with salmon, prawns, potatoes and all the pickled herring you can stand). In winter, it's the place for après-ski drinks.

SÄLEN & AROUND

☎ 0280 / pop 400

Sälen is a tiny spot, way up in the wilds of Dalarna. In summer, the ghost-village offers chilled-out beaver safaris, canoe trips, fishing and horse riding (inquire at the tourist office). As soon as the first snowflakes flutter, though, an amazing transformation occurs: the whole area turns into Sweden's largest and swishest ski resort.

Head first to the Centrumhuset complex, where you'll find a bank, doctor, pharmacy, Systembolaget and most other facilities, including the **tourist office** (☎ 187 00; info@salen.se; ☹ 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 9am–3pm Sat & Sun Jun–Aug & Dec–Apr, 9am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat rest of yr). Opposite the complex are supermarkets and stores where you can rent ski gear in winter, and inline skates, boats and canoes in summer.

Activities

The **ski areas**, with chalets, pubs and night-clubs, are strung out for 20km along the road running through the steep-flanked mountains west of Sälen. There are over 100 lifts, pistes of all degrees, and guaranteed snow from 15 November to April. **Gustav Backen** at Lindvallen is the busiest ski run in Europe; for skiing information visit www.skistar.com. North of Sälen, cheaper and quieter skiing is available at **Näsfjället**.

There's some good **hiking** in the area in summer, mainly north of the road.

Sleeping & Eating

Winter visitors should contact their travel agent or the tourist office for accommodation, or get in contact with **SkiStar** (☎ 0771-84 00 00; www.skistar.com) for packages.

STF Vandrarhem Sälen (☎ 820 40; info@salensvandrarhem.se; dm Skr160) The name's misleading – it's 27km north of Sälen – but if you have your own transport and want to get away from it all, this is the hostel. It's based in a peaceful nature reserve at Gräsheden (near Näsfjället), with some great walks nearby and Kungsleden (see p49) passing 1.5km from the hostel.

Sälen Gästgiveri (☎ 201 85; info@gastis.com; s with/without bathroom Skr550/450 d with/without bathroom Skr650/550; mains Skr110–180) In the village, this place has fairly basic accommodation (you get the idea that the restaurant is more important than the lodgings). Prices given here are for the summer season, winter prices are higher by Skr50 to Skr200 per room. The restaurant is a popular summer choice with a wooden terrace, a well-stocked bar, and a menu ranging from bar snacks and pizzas to substantial steak, pasta and salmon mains.

Inside the Centrumhuset complex there's a delicatessen selling fresh local produce, and an excellent bakery.

Getting There & Around

Bus 95 runs from the ski area to Mora via Sälen, once daily in the ski season (otherwise you have to change buses at Lima). A ski bus tours around the ski area in winter.

IDRE & GRÖVELSJÖN

☎ 0253

The small town of Idre lies close to some beautiful upland wilderness, and there's very good skiing here. The friendly **tourist office** (☎ 200 00; info@idreturism.se; Framgårdsvägen 1; ☹ 10am–7pm Mon–Fri, noon–6pm Sat & Sun Jun–Aug, 8am–5pm Mon–Fri Sep–May) has lots of brochures and hiking advice, plus free Internet access. Staff can arrange a variety of activities, including dogsledding, skiing, hiking, canyoning, rock-climbing, boat trips, elk and beaver safaris, horse riding, rafting and

canoeing. They can also book accommodation in the area.

Idre Fjäll ski centre (☎ 410 00; www.idrefjall.se; ☹ Nov–Apr), 9km east, has three chairlifts, 28 ski-tows and 42 downhill runs – including 11 black runs. Day lift passes are Skr285. There are also 60km of prepared cross-country tracks.

Grövelsjön, 38km northwest of Idre and close to the Norwegian border, lies on the edge of the wild 690 sq km **Långfjällets Nature Reserve**, which is noted for its lichen-covered heaths, moraine heaps and ancient forests. Reindeer from Sweden's southernmost Sami community near Idre wander throughout the area.

Sleeping & Eating

Skiers should contact their travel agent or the tourist office for accommodation packages.

STF Fjällstation Grövelsjön (☎ 59 68 80; grovelsjon@stfturist.se; dm/s/d from Skr240/360/500; ☹ Feb–Apr & mid-Jun–Sep) This excellent mountain lodge in Grövelsjön has a wide array of facilities, including a kitchen, spa, shop and outdoor gear hire. The rather good restaurant serves breakfast, lunch and dinner; enquire for half-board and full-board arrangements. This is a big and busy place, with a huge range of tours and activities available.

Sörälvens Fiske Camping (☎ 201 17; www.soralven-camping.com; sites Skr125, cabins Skr480) Sörälven offers rather shadeless camping areas but good cabins, and is popular with the fishing crowd. The campsite is just out of Idre, 2.5km towards Grövelsjön.

There's a supermarket in Idre, and several grills and pizzerias.

Getting There & Away

Dalatrafik bus 170 travels on a route between Mora, Idre and Grövelsjön (2¼ hours from Mora to Idre, 3¼ hours to Grövelsjön). There are three services to Grövelsjön on weekdays, and one or two on weekends.

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