

Southeast Sweden



This superb region has something for everyone: tiny islands, fairytale castles, an epic canal, wonderful medieval towns and a party-hard beach life.

Småland's most famous feature is Glasriket, the 'Kingdom of Crystal', where beautiful glass artworks are produced. Don't miss a mesmerising visit to one of the 'hot shops', where globules of molten glass are twisted and tweaked into wondrous shapes.

Blekinge was the seat of Sweden's 17th-century sea power and the incredible naval city of Karlskrona, now a Unesco World Heritage site, is a singular mixture of brutal fortresses and grandiloquent design.

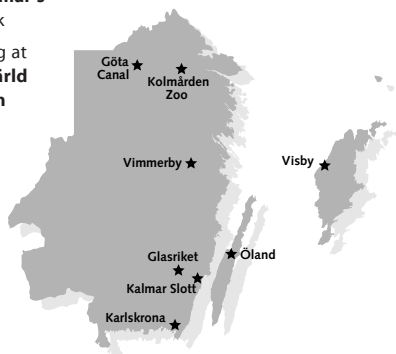
Most of the superb island of Öland has also made the Unesco list, due to its unique geology, ring forts and Iron Age burial sites. It's also one of Sweden's favourite vacation spots, even the king and queen kick off the cares of state here on their summer holidays.

Östergötland, laced through by the Göta Canal, is home to the small but perky industrial cities of Norrköping and Linköping as well as the lakeside town of Vadstena, one of Sweden's jewels.

Gotland is one of Sweden's richest historical regions with untold numbers of prehistoric sites, Viking rune stones galore, medieval churches and the Unesco-listed walled town of Visby. Throw in endless sandy beaches and you've got yourself a perfect holiday destination.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Admire the military might of **Karlskrona** (p133), a superb naval fortress town
- Check out the Renaissance perfection of **Kalmar's Slott** (p125), a castle right out of a storybook
- Let the kids run wild with Pippi Longstocking at Vimmerby's theme park, **Astrid Lingren's Värld** (p132) or spend a day at the vast **Kolmården zoo** (p143)
- Blow your own glass vase, or buy one made by a master in **Glasriket** (p127)
- Wonder at the windmills, bask on a beach, or get medieval at Eketorp fortress on long, thin **Öland** (p137)
- Climb the hilly streets and prowl the walls of 13th-century **Visby** (p152)
- Take a lazy trip on the **Göta Canal** (p146)



POPULATION: 1,404,652 AREA: 49,748 SQ KM HIGHEST POINT: STENABOHÖJDEN (327M)

Orientation

Southeast Sweden stretches south along the coast from Stockholm to Skåne and inland as far as Lake Vättern. It incorporates the following *landskap* areas: Småland (including Jönköpings län, Kronobergs län and Kalmar län); the island Öland, off the east coast; Blekinge in the south; Östergötland, the eastern part of Götland, which is split off from the western half by the massive Lake Vättern; and the island of Gotland.

Information

REGIONAL TOURIST OFFICES

Visitors can contact the following for more detailed information on the area:

Blekinge Turism (☎ 0455-30 50 20; www.blekingeturism.com; Ronnebygatan 2, SE-37132 Karlskrona)

Gotlands Turistföreningen (☎ 0498-20 17 00; www.gotland.com; Box 1403, Hamngatan 4, SE-62125, Visby)

Smålands Turism (☎ 036-35 12 70; www.visit-smaland.com; Västra Storgatan 18A, Box 1027, SE-55111 Jönköping)

Turism i Kalmar Län (☎ 0480-44 83 30; www.kalmar.regionforbund.se/turism; Nygatan 34, Box 762, SE-39127 Kalmar)

Turism i Kronoberg (☎ 0470-74 25 70; turism.kronoberg@kommun.vaxjo.se; Stationen, Norra Järnvägsgatan, SE-35230 Växjö)

Ölands Turist (☎ 0485-56 06 00; www.olandsturist.se; Turistvägen, Box 74, SE-38621 Färjestaden)

Östsvenska Turistrådet (☎ 011-19 44 73; www.ostgotaporten.com; SE-60181 Norrköping)

Getting Around

There are various small airports scattered through the region, usually with daily direct flights to/from Copenhagen and Stockholm; see individual sections for details.

Year-round ferry services go between Visby on Gotland and both Oskarshamn and Nynäshamn.

Express buses mainly travel along the coast (to Västervik, Oskarshamn, Kalmar and Karlskrona), follow the E4 via Jönköping, or cruise along highway No 33 from Jönköping to Västervik (via Eksjö and Vimmerby). A few express services go through the region's interior; these are operated by **Svenska Buss** (☎ 0771-67 67 67; www.svenskabuss.se) and **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se).

The main Malmö to Stockholm railway runs through the region, but you'll have to change to local trains to reach most places of interest. SJ trains run west from Karlskrona

to Kristianstad or north from Karlskrona to Kalmar. There are also SJ services from Kalmar to Linköping, and inland routes from Oskarshamn to Nässjö and Kalmar to Göteborg. The Nässjö to Jönköping and Falköping trains are run by **Vätertåg** (☎ 0380-55 44 02).

The following companies provide regional transport links. If you're planning to spend some time here, it's worth enquiring about monthly passes or a *sommarkort*, offering discount travel from midsummer to mid-August. Check also the respective websites for routes, schedules, fares and passes; these sites 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.

BlekingeTrafiken (☎ 0455-56980; www.blekingetrafiken.se)

Jönköpings Länstrafik (☎ 0771-444333; www.jlt.se)

Kalmar Läns Trafik (☎ 0491-761200; www.klt.se)

Kollektiv Trafiken (☎ 21 41 12)

Länstrafiken Kronoberg (☎ 0771-767076; www.lanstrafikenkron.se)

ÖstgötaTrafiken (☎ 0771-211010; www.ostgota

trafiken.se)

SMÅLAND

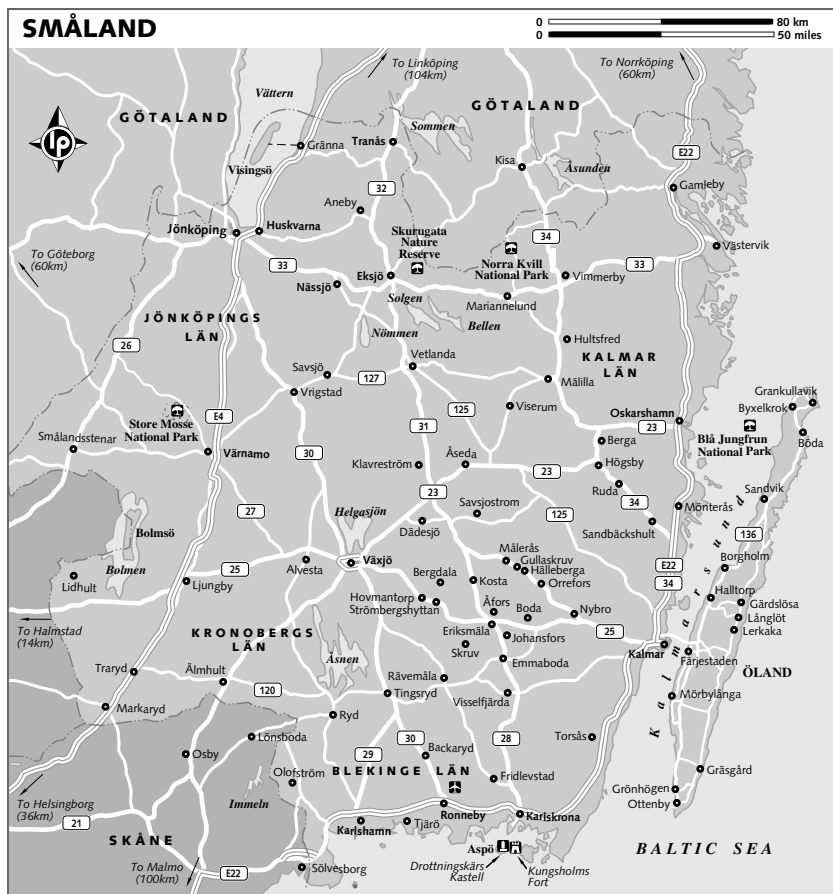
The region of Småland is one of dense forests, glistening lakes and bare marshlands. Historically it served as buffer zone between the Swedes and Danes; the eastern and southern coasts in particular saw territorial tussles. Today it's better known for the Glasriket (Kingdom of Glass), a sparsely populated area in the central southeast, which is dotted with crystal workshops. Småland is broken up into smaller counties (*läns*): Jönköpings in the northwest, Kronobergs in the southwest, and Kalmar in the east.

JÖNKÖPING & HUSKVARNA

☎ 036 / pop 119,927

Whenever you hear the scratching of matches on sandpaper, spare a thought for Jönköping – birthplace of the safety match. You can visit the restored production area here to learn more about this vital, but little considered, necessity.

Fairytale illustrator John Bauer was inspired by the forests around Jönköping, and the town museum shows off his superb otherworldly drawings of trolls, knights and



princesses. Other famous sons and daughters include ABBA's Agnetha Fältskog, and indie band The Cardigans.

From Jönköping, at Vättern's southern end, an urban strip stretches 7km eastwards, sucking in Huskvarna, famous for its sewing machines, chainsaws and motorcycles.

Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 10 50 50; www.jonkoping.se; ☎ 9.30am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-3pm Sat yr-round & 11am-4.30pm Sun Jun-Aug) is in the Juneporten complex at the train station.

Banks can be found along Östra Storgatan. The large **library** (Dag Hammarskjölds plats), with Internet access and café, is adjacent to the Länsmuseum.

Sights & Activities

JÖNKÖPING

Apparently 'the only match museum in the world', **Tändsticksmuseet** (☎ 10 55 43; Tändsticksgården 27; adult/under 19yr Skr40/free; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat & Sun Jun-Aug, 11am-3pm Tue-Sat Sep-May), in an old match factory, deals with this practical Swedish invention. It's quite an eye-opener: the industry was initially based on cheap child labour, workers frequently suffered from repulsive 'phossy jaw', and it was common knowledge that phosphorus matches were good for 'speeding up inheritance and inducing abortions'.

Near the Tändsticksmuseet is the **Radio Museum** (☎ 71 39 59; Tändsticksgården 16; admission Skr20; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat, 11am-3pm

Sun Jun-mid-Aug; closed Sun & Mon mid-Aug-May) with a collection of over 1000 radio sets and related memorabilia.

Jönköpings Länsmuseum (☎ 30 18 00; Dag Hammarskjölds Plats; adult/under 18yr Skr40/free; ☎ 11am-5pm Tue & Thu-Sun, 11am-8pm Wed) has collections covering local history and contemporary culture, but the real reason for coming here is to see the haunting fantasy works of artist John Bauer (1882-1918), inspired by Jönköping's countryside.

West of town is the expanse of **Stadsparken**. Its curiosities include the 1458 mounted ornithological taxidermic masterpieces of **Fågelmuseet** (☎ 12 99 83; admission free; ☎ 11am-5pm May-Aug), and the **Friluftsmuseet** (☎ 30 18 00; admission free; ☎ 11am-5pm Jun-Aug) with a charming collection of old buildings.

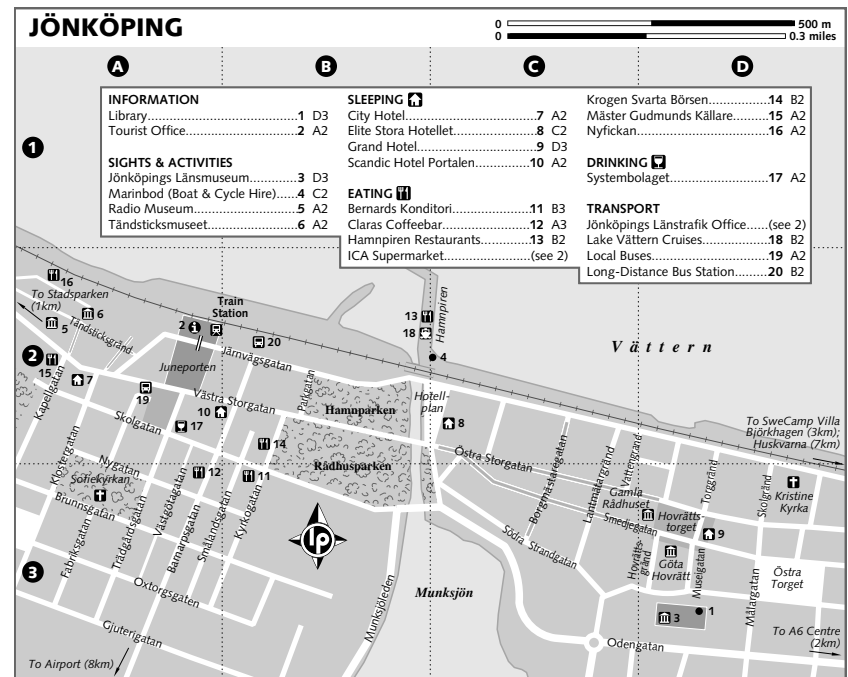
Snakes, crocodiles, primates and tropical birds fill **Tropikhuset** (☎ 16 89 75; Kompanigatan 8; adult/3-14yr Skr50/30; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, 10am-4pm Sep-May), 2km east of town in the A6 Centre. Also here, military history fans will appreciate the **Försvarshistoriska Museum** (☎ 19 04 12; adult/child Skr30/15; ☎ 10am-5pm), which examines 18th- and 19th-century soldiers' lives.

From April to September, visitors can enjoy different **cruises** (☎ 070 637 1700) on Lake Vättern, aboard the MS *Nya Skärgården*. Evening trips include a buffet dinner and cost around Skr420. The boat departs from Hammpiren; book at the tourist office.

For waterskiing or boat hire, contact **Marinbod** (☎ 12 04 87; Hammpiren; ☎ Jun-early Sep). Waterskiing, wakeboarding and kneeboarding all cost Skr200 per 15 minutes; small motor boats cost Skr250 per three hours or Skr495 for one day.

HUSKVARNA

Square-jawed men going hunting while their wives snuggle up to their sewing machines: the **Husqvarna fabriksmuseum** (☎ 14 61 62; www.husqvarna-museum.nu; Hakarpsvägen 1; adult/12-18yr Skr40/20; ☎ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, noon-4pm Sat & Sun May-Sep, 10am-3pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) conjures up a vivid technical-colour 1950s world. The factory began as an arms manufacturer, but diverted into motorbikes, chainsaws, cooking ranges and microwave ovens over the years, and this interesting museum charts the company's rise.



For powerful drama, catch Huskvarna's **Fallens Dag** (Waterfall Day), at the end of August. When darkness falls the floodgates open and a torrential illuminated waterfall is released; contact the tourist office for details.

From Jönköping, take bus 1 to Huskvarna (Skr20), 7km away.

Sleeping

JÖNKÖPING

Grand Hotel (☎ 71 96 00; info@grandhotel-jonkoping.se; Hovrättstorget; s/d from Skr770/930, discounted to Skr490/590) In a stately 17th-century building, this central choice is probably the cheapest in town. Budget, standard and superior rooms are available.

City Hotel (☎ 71 92 80; hotel@cityhotel.nu; Västra Storgatan 25; s/d from Skr895/995, discounted to Skr545/645) Another midrange accommodation option, the friendly family-run City is a step up in quality from the Grand. Rooms are dated but comfortable – those on the top floor have balconies with lake views – and there's a sauna.

Scandic Hotel Portalen (☎ 585 42 00; portalen@scandic-hotels.com; Barnarpsgratan 6; s/d from Skr1290/1490, discounted to Skr790/790; ☎) One of Scandic's two Jönköping hotels, the stylish Portalen is the place to unwind. All rooms are decorated with Scandinavian coolness, and superiors have private fridges and coffee makers. The hotel also has a large spa with beauty treatments.

Elite Stora Hotellet (☎ 10 00 00; info@jonkoping.elite.se; Hotellplan; s/d from Skr1295/1495, discounted to Skr675/775; ☎) The Elite is the town's most majestic hotel, with a good location opposite the harbour. Rooms have folksy accents, yet are very classy. There's a sauna, pool table, restaurant and pub; if you get a chance, sneak a peek at the grandiose banquet hall.

SweCamp Villa Björkhagen (☎ 12 28 63; Friggagatan 31; villabjorkhagen@swipnet.se; sites Skr170-220, cabins & rooms from Skr575) This big site is on the lakeshore, approximately 3km east of town. There are various accommodation options, plus playgrounds, pedal cars and minigolf for children.

HUSKVARNA

STF Vandrarhem Huskvarna (☎ 14 88 70; www.huskvarnavandrarhem.se; Odengatan 10, Huskvarna; 1-/2-/3-bed rm Skr260/340/450) Standards are high at this sizeable year-round hostel. Clean and twin-kling rooms have TV and private toilets

(except room 37, which is correspondingly cheaper), and breakfast is available (Skr45).

Eating & Drinking

For a seaside vibe and loads of choice head straight for Hampiren (the harbour pier), where you'll find a blur of restaurants with good lunch specials (around Skr70) and merry crowds gathered for evening meals. For cheaper alternatives, try inside the Juneporten transport/shopping complex.

Krogen Svarta Börsen (☎ 71 22 22; Kyrkogatan 4; mains Skr270-335) Fresh, seasonal ingredients grace the plates at the best dining establishment in town. A great atmosphere, superb food and superb service justify the high prices.

Mäster Gudmunds Källare (☎ 10 06 40; Kapellgatan 2; lunch Skr65, dinner mains Skr150-195; ☎) closed Sun summer) This appealing place is in a 17th-century cellar, with beautiful vaulted ceilings, and has good-value lunches (although not in summer). Evening mains are mainly meaty and fishy local Swedish dishes, such as grilled char from Vättern lake, with a few nods to French cuisine.

Nyfickan (☎ 19 06 86; lunch Skr50) In an unusual brick building that once belonged to the match-making empire, the excellent Nyfickan is part of the town's cultural centre. It's an arty affair with good coffee, cakes, tacos, falafel and sandwiches. There's a decent veggie selection, and options for people on gluten- and sugar-free diets.

Other good cafés include **Claras Coffeabar** (☎ 30 01 15; Barnarpsgratan 18), serving gourmet *panini* in stylish surrounds; and **Bernards Konditori** (☎ 71 11 21; Kyrkogatan 12), with commendable coffee and a glassed-in terrace for people-watching.

There's an **ICA supermarket** (Juneporten complex), and **Systembolaget** (nr Skolgatan & Trädgårdsgatan) nearby.

Getting There & Around

Jönköping airport (☎ 31 11 00) is located about 8km southwest of the town centre. **Skyways** (☎ 0771-95 95 00) has daily flights to/from Stockholm Arlanda, and **SAS** (☎ 0770-72 77 27) operates daily flights to/from Copenhagen. Bus 18 serves the airport, or else a taxi costs around Skr180.

Most local buses leave from opposite Juneporten on Västra Storgatan. Local transport is run by **Jönköpings Länstrafik** (☎ 0771-44

43 33; www.jlt.se in Swedish; Juneporten; ☎ 7.30am-6pm Mon-Fri); there's an office with information, tickets and passes in Juneporten.

The **long-distance bus station** is next to the train station. There are at least eight daily **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) services to Göteborg (Skr120, two hours) and Stockholm (Skr320, 4½ hours); five to Helsingborg (Skr245, three hours) and Malmö (Skr293, 4½ hours); two to Karlstad (Skr265, four hours); and two to Västervik (Skr211, three hours). Svenska Buss runs to Eksjö, Göteborg, Kalmar, Oskarshamn and Stockholm.

Jönköping is on a regional train line; you'll need to change trains in either Nässjö or Falköping to get to or from larger towns.

Taxi Jönköping (☎ 34 00 00) is the local taxi company. You can hire bicycles from **Marinbod** (☎ 12 04 87; Hampiren; per day Skr150; ☎) Jun-early Sep).

GRÄNNA & VISINGSÖ

☎ 0390

All that's missing from Gränna are Oompa-Loompas. The sweet smell of sugar hangs over the village, and the shops overflow with the village's trademark red-and-white peppermint rock (*polkagris*). It's a touristy spot with touches of tackiness, but the steep

streets, lakeside location and excellent polar exhibition give it a good dose of character.

Across the water and 6km west is the peaceful island of Visingsö. Connected by frequent ferries it's a great place for cycling.

Information

There's a **tourist office** (☎ 410 10; www.grm.se; Grenna Kulturgård, Brahegatan 38; ☎) 10am-7pm mid-May-Aug, 10am-4pm Sep-mid-May) in central Gränna, and another **tourist office** (☎ 401 93; www.visingso.net; ☎) 10am-5pm May-Aug, to 7pm late-Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-6pm Mon, 8am-2pm Tue-Fri Sep-Apr) at the harbour in Visingsö.

With ID, you can use the Internet at Gränna **library** (☎ 410 15; ☎) 10am-7pm Mon-Thu, 10am-1pm Fri), upstairs from the tourist office.

Brahegatan, the main street of Gränna, has a bank and ATM.

Sights

In the same building as the tourist office, **Andréxpedition Polarcenter** (adult/child Skr50/20; ☎) 10am-7pm mid-May-Aug, 10am-4pm Sep-mid-May) describes the disastrous attempt of Salomon August Andrée to reach the North Pole by balloon in 1897 (see below). It's riveting stuff, particularly the poignant remnants of the expedition: cracked leather boots, monogrammed handkerchiefs, lucky

BIG TROUBLE IN A SMALL BALLOON

One of Sweden's most famous explorers was Salomon August Andrée, born in Gränna in 1854. He became interested in hot-air ballooning after a visit to America, and eventually bought his own balloon to use for scientific surveys.

In 1895, Andrée announced to the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences that he intended to fly a 4000km journey over the North Pole, and needed Skr130,000 for the project. Initial scepticism was quashed by the support of explorer Baron Adolf Erik Nordenskiöld (the discoverer of the Northeast Passage), Alfred Nobel and King Oskar.

After one failed attempt, *The Eagle*, with Andrée and two companions aboard, took off on 11 July 1897 from Danskøya, a bleak offshore island near the northwest tip of Svalbard. There was sporadic contact during the first few days – then nothing. The balloon disappeared and its fate wasn't known until 33 years later.

In 1930, the crew of a Norwegian ship discovered the explorers' bodies on Kvitøya, more than 300km east of Danskøya. They were shipped back to Stockholm, with their remaining equipment and rolls of intact camera film. Andrée's diary was also found, documenting their fateful journey.

Three days into its flight, after problems with steering and height control, the balloon had crunched down onto the frozen Arctic Ocean. The explorers salvaged what they could and headed south towards Kvitøya, but lost most of their supplies when an ice floe they were camping on broke up. After three months of living on raw bear meat, seagulls and seals' blood, they reached Kvitøya, where they perished one by one over the next few days; the exact causes of their deaths remain unknown.

amulets, and mustard paper to ward off those polar winds.

But don't be put off by Andrée's ballooning tragedy; for Skr1695 per person you can take a one-hour scenic **hot-air balloon trip** (☎ 305 25; bengt@flyg-ballong.nu) over the area.

Several sweet-makers have kitchens where you can see traditional red-and-white candy being made. One is **Grænna Polkagriskokeri** (☎ 100 39; Brahegatan 39), directly opposite the tourist office, which uses an authentic 19th-century recipe. You can watch porridge-looking crispbread being produced at **Grænna Knäcke** (☎ 100 57; Brahegatan 43).

Visingsö has a 17th-century **church**, **castle** and **aromatic herb garden**. An extensive network of footpaths and bicycle trails lead through oak woods and at the harbour you can hire bikes (per three hours/one day Skr40/75).

The beautiful lakes of Bunn and Ören, and their dark forests, inspired local artist John Bauer to paint his trolls, princesses and magical pools (see p117). From June to mid-August, you can take a **boat tour** (☎ 510 50; adult/child Skr150/80; ☎ 12.30pm Sat & Sun Jun, 12.30pm Jul–mid-Aug) to the lakes, departing from Bunnströms badplats, 2.5km from Grænna.

Sleeping & Eating GRÄNNA

The tourist office arranges **private rooms** from Skr140 to Skr250 per person per night (plus Skr100 booking fee).

Grænna Turistbyrås Vandrarhem (☎ 410 10; Bergsgatan 70; dm Skr140; ☎ mid-Jun–early Aug; 📍) The tourist office administers this SVIF hostel, perched on a hill overlooking town. It's basic, but central and cheap, plus there's a pleasant garden and a few parking spaces up for grabs.

Gyllene Uttern (☎ 108 00; info@gylleneuttern.se; s/d from Skr1150/1395, discounted to Skr750/995; 📍) South of town is imposing Gyllene Uttern, an elegant hotel off the E4. Rooms are simple but masterful, and there are good-value packages including a 'Romantic' weekend option.

Hotell Västanå Slott (☎ 107 00; info@vastanaslott.se; d from Skr1290; ☎ May–Sep; 📍) This super-stately manor house, about 6km south of town, is a pad for regal relaxation. Per Brahe owned it in the 17th century, although today it's decorated according to its 18th-century past, with chandeliers, dark oil paintings and suits of armour. There are super views over the lake.

Grænnastrandens Camping (☎ 107 06; info@granna.camping.se; Hamnen; tent sites/dm Skr160/140, 4-bed cabins from Skr500; ☎ Jun–Sep) This busy family campsite down by the harbour has a café, shop, minigolf and boat hire.

For a choice of food in a great waterside setting, head down to the harbour (1.5km) where there are restaurants selling Greek, French and Swedish grub (most are open summer only).

Amalias Krog (☎ 100 17; Brahegatan; lunch Skr89, mains Skr100–200) This central joint is a decent eating option, serving no-nonsense food like steaks, salmon and lemon sole in a cool, tiled dining room.

Fiket (☎ 100 57; Brahegatan 57) The pick of Grænna's eateries is this charming bakery-café, selling sandwiches, quiches, salads and *knäckebröd* (crispbread). There's an old jukebox, rock 'n' roll records pepper the walls in kitsch 1950s' style, and there's a breezy balcony at the back.

There are fast-food outlets and a super-market on Brahegatan.

VISINGSÖ

STF Vandrarhem Visingsö & Pensionat (☎ /fax 401 91; info@visingsovandrarhem.se; dm from Skr150, pensionat s/d Skr700/1110; ☎ Vandrarhem May–Aug) This combined hostel/B&B lies in an oak wood around 3km from the ferry pier. The *vandrarhem* is scattered across three buildings, with a separate kitchen/shower block. The *pensionat* has four cosy rooms with private facilities.

Visingsö Vårdshus (☎ 404 96; mains Skr90–130; ☎ May–Aug) Simple meals, such as grilled chicken, salads, burgers and baked potatoes, are served at this rustic place in the woods. Their speciality is fish from Vättern lake.

Restaurant Solbacken (☎ 400 29; lunch Skr65, mains Skr90–150; ☎ May–Aug) Local fish also find themselves on the menu at this lively restaurant, pub and pizzeria at Visingsö harbour. There are great views over Vättern from the veranda.

Getting There & Around

Local bus 121 runs hourly from Jönköping to Grænna (Skr55, one hour). Bus 120 runs several times Monday to Friday from Grænna to the mainline train station in Tranås (Skr55, one hour). Daily Swebus Express destinations include Göteborg, Jönköping, Linköping, Norrköping and Stockholm.

The Grænna–Visingsö **ferry** (☎ 410 25) runs every 15 minutes in summer, less frequently the rest of the year. Return tickets for foot passengers are Skr50 per adult, and Skr25 for those between six and 15 years of age; a bicycle is Skr30 and a car with up to five people is Skr230.

EKSJÖ

☎ 0381 / pop 16,571

Eksjö is one of the most exquisitely preserved wooden towns in Sweden, with buildings in the old town dating back to the 17th century. It's a joy to wander round its lopsided, flower-filled courtyards, and the local museum is a credit to the place.

The **tourist office** (☎ 361 70; www.eksjo.se; Norra Storgatan 29; ☎ 8am–8pm Jul–mid-Aug, 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat rest of yr) can occasionally arrange English-language guided town **tours** (Skr30), and it also has bicycles for hire (per day/week Skr60/225).

Sights

Stroll through the delightful streets and yards of Eksjö, especially those north of Stora Torget. You'll see excellent old buildings at **Fornminnesgårdens Museum** (☎ 148 39; Arendt Byggmästares gatan; admission Skr10; ☎ 11am–3pm Mon–Sat mid-Jun–mid-Aug) – some built in the 1620s. Exhibits chart the history of the area from the Stone Age to modern times.

Award-winning **Eksjö Museum** (☎ 361 70; Österlånggatan 31; adult/7–17yr Skr40/20; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, noon–4pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug, 1–5pm Tue–Thu, noon–4pm Sat & Sun Sep–Jun) tells the town's story from the 15th century onwards. The top floor is devoted to local Albert Engström (1869–1940), renowned for his satirical cartoons: there's an English translation of the captions. Eksjö was once known as the 'Hussar Town', and the region's long-standing military connections are explored in a fascinating new wing of the museum.

Aschanska gården (☎ 361 70; Norra Storgatan 18) is an interesting 1890s-style house with guided tours at 1pm and 3pm daily July and August (Skr50).

The **Skurugata Nature Reserve**, 13km north-east of Eksjö, is based around a weird 800m-long fissure in the rocks. Its sides tower to 56m, yet in places the fissure is only 7m wide. From the top of the nearby hill, **Skuruhatt** (337m), there are great views of the forests. You'll need your own transport to get here.

The **Höglandsleden** passes through the reserve; ask the tourist office for details of this walking trail and of the **Höglandstrampen cycle route** (booklets in English Skr40).

Sleeping

STF Vandrarhem Eksjö (☎ 361 70; vandrarhem@eksjo.se; Österlånggatan 31; dm/s/d from Skr130/170/330) In the heart of the old town, this *vandrarhem* is based in a supremely quaint wooden building, with a gallery running round the upper floor. Reception is at the tourist office.

Stadshotell (☎ 130 20; info@eksjostadshotell.se; Stora Torget; s/d Skr845/1090, discounted to Skr595/790; 📍) The impressive Stadshotell dominates one edge of the huge 19th-century main square. It has the flashiest accommodation in town, with comfortable long-windowed rooms and an elegant restaurant-bar.

Eksjö Camping (☎ 395 00; info@eksjocamping.nu; sites Skr100, 2–4-bed cabins from Skr200/340) This is a friendly nook by picturesque Husnäs lake, about a kilometre east of town. There's a restaurant and café, plus minigolf and good swimming. There's also a **hostel** (dm Skr150).

Eating & Drinking

Lennarts Konditori (☎ 61 13 90; Stora Torget) With an outdoor terrace and views of dramatic Stora Torget, this traditional *konditori* is the place to go for cakes, crêpes and quiche.

Restaurang Balkan (☎ 100 20; Norra Storgatan 23; lunch from Skr65, pizzas Skr60, à la carte dishes Skr90–150) The Balkan has a surprising menu of Chinese, Swedish and pizza dishes.

There's a central **Hemköp supermarket** (Österlånggatan) and a **Systembolaget** (Södra Storgatan 4).

Getting There & Around

The bus and train stations are in the southern part of town. The tiny *länståg* (regional train) runs up to seven times daily to/from Jönköping. Local buses run to Nässjö (Skr42, hourly Monday to Friday, six at weekends). Swebus Express runs two buses on the Göteborg–Jönköping–Eksjö–Vimmerby–Västervik route on Fridays and Sundays.

VÄXJÖ

☎ 0470 / pop 76,755

A venerable old market town, Växjö (pronounced *vak-choo*, with the 'ch' sound as in the Scottish 'loch' – ask a local to demonstrate!), in Kronobergs län, is a very important stop for Americans seeking their

Swedish roots. In mid-August, **Karl Oscar Days** commemorates the mass 19th-century emigration from the area, and the Swedish-American of the year is chosen. There's also a fantastic glass collection in town, plus a little something to stop the kids getting bored...

Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 414 10; www.turism.vaxjo.se; Västra Esplanaden 7; ☎ 9.30am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun–Aug, 9.30am–4.30pm Mon–Fri rest of yr) shares a building with the **library**, and allows 30 minutes of free Internet access per day. Storgatan is the main pedestrian mall, where you'll find banks and other services.

Sights

Utvandrarnas Hus (Emigrant House; ☎ 201 20; www.swemi.se; Vilhelm Mobergs gata 4; adult/7–16yr Skr40/5; ☎ 9am–5pm Mon–Fri, 11am–4pm Sat & Sun May–Aug, 9am–4pm Tue–Fri, 11am–4pm Sat Sep–Apr) has scores of intelligent displays on the emigration of over one million Swedes to America (1850–1930). It also includes a replica of Vilhelm Moberg's office and original manuscripts

of his famous emigration novels. It's all fascinating stuff, and the centre also has an excellent research facility (open weekdays only, reservations advised) for those tracing their Swedish ancestors.

Next door is **Smålands Museum** (☎ 70 42 00; www.smalandsmuseum.se; Södra Järnvägsgatan 2; adult/under 19yr Skr40/free; ☎ 10am–5pm Mon–Fri, 11am–5pm Sat & Sun Jun–Aug, closed Mon Sep–May), with a superb exhibition about Sweden's 500-year-old glass industry. Four of the rooms are filled with work from medieval goblets to the most contemporary sculptures, and there's also a great café.

Kids can jump on a spaceship to the Milky Way or create the world's biggest soap bubble at **Xperiment Huset** (☎ 101 25; www.xperiment.se; Lokstallarna; adult/7–16yr Skr75/60; ☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, 11am–4pm Sat & Sun Jun–Aug, 10am–4pm Tue–Fri, 11am–4pm Sat & Sun Sep–May), a hands-on science and illusion centre.

The impressive twin-spired **Domkyrkan** (Cathedral; ☎ 9am–5pm) has been struck by lightning and repeatedly ravaged by fire – the latest renovation was in 1995. Inside, there's a fine 15th-century altar and displays of

local artwork (in glass, wood and iron). You'll also find a Viking rune stone in the eastern wall.

In 1542, the Småland rebel Nils Dacke spent Christmas in **Kronobergs Slott**, now a ruin. The 14th-century castle is on a small island (reached by footbridge) in photogenic Helgasjön lake, about 8km north of the town. **Boat trips** (☎ 70 42 00; adult/5–12yr Skr125/50; ☎ weekends mid-Jun–mid-Aug) on Sweden's oldest steamship, *Thor*, leave from just below the ruins. Take bus 1B from town.

Enquire at the tourist office about guided summer **walking tours** (☎ 5.30pm Mon) of town, and also about two-hour summer **sightseeing tours** (☎ 816 84; adult/child Skr55/30) in a red double-decker London bus.

Sleeping

Most of the big chain hotels have a hotel in Växjö.

Växjö Vandrarhem (☎ 630 70; www.vaxjovandrarhem.nu; dm from Skr155; ☎) Also at Evedal, this former spa hotel dates from the late 18th century. All rooms have washbasins, there's a big kitchen, laundry, and a wonderful lounge in the attic. It's deservedly well loved, so book early. Take bus 1C from town.

Hotell Esplanad (☎ 225 80; Norra Esplanaden 21A; s/d Skr700/800, discounted to Skr470/570; ☎) The cheapest central accommodation is at the Esplanad, with unfussy, adequate rooms. The lowest-priced have corridor bathrooms.

First Hotel Cardinal (☎ 72 28 00; cardinalhotel@jesab.se; Bäckgatan 10; standard s/d Skr1094/1484, discounted to Skr648/848; ☎) A jump up in quality, the central Cardinal has 'budget-style' (in a second building round the corner) and more luxurious rooms. There's a sauna, bar and brand-new restaurant.

Elite Stadshotellet (☎ 134 00; info@vaxjo.elite.se; Kungsgatan 6; s/d from Skr1195/1395, discounted to Skr650/775; ☎) This grand-looking 19th-century building offers a distinctly swish experience. Rooms are large and confident-looking, and there's a popular restaurant and English-style Bishop's Arms pub, serving a good range of food and international beers.

Evedals Camping (☎ 630 34; evedals.camping@telia.com; Evedalsvägen; sites Skr175–215, 4-/6-bed cabins Skr600/700) Evedal is a huge lakeside recreation area, 6km north of the centre, where this campsite is based. You can enjoy the beaches, swimming, canoeing and boating (per hour/day Skr80/200) on Helga lake. There are two

restaurants nearby – Restaurang Brunnen, and the more upmarket Evedals Vårdshus.

Eating & Drinking

Wibrovski (☎ 74 04 10; Sandgårdsgatan 19; mains Skr145–195; ☎ from 6pm Mon–Sat) You can watch fish, lamb and chicken mains being prepared in the open kitchen at this classy restaurant in Växjö's oldest timber house. Retire to the outdoor terrace in fine weather.

PM & Väner (☎ 70 04 44; Storgatan 24; bar meals Skr65–150, mains Skr190–330; ☎ closed Sun) This stylish place is a favourite spot for fashionable locals; the décor is all brushed steel and leather benches, and there are occasional DJs. Dishes steal from all over the world, with Caribbean, Indian, Mexican and African ingredients all popping up.

Café Momento (☎ 391 29; meals around Skr70) Smålands Museum contains this fantastic café. Service is attentive, and there's always an excellent selection of hot and cold gourmet sandwiches, pies, salads, soup, spuds and cakes. In summer, there are tables in the pretty courtyard.

Askelyckan (☎ 123 11; Storgatan 25; ☎ closed Sun) Another top lunch spot is this bakery-café, with sandwiches, baguettes, great pastries and a large shady courtyard.

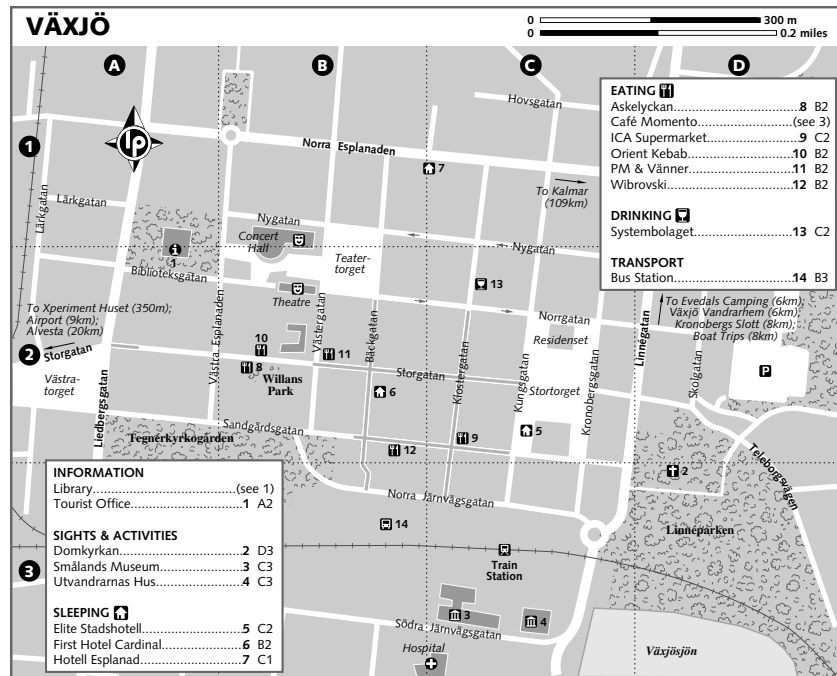
Orient Kebab (☎ 120 32; Storgatan 28; meals around Skr40–60; ☎ until 10pm) Don't let the lurid plastic Arabian Nights exterior put you off, inside are decent kebabs, falafel, burgers and pizzas to take away.

There's an **ICA supermarket** (nr Klostergatan & Sandgårdsgatan; ☎ until 8pm Mon–Fri, until 5pm Sat & Sun) and **Systembolaget** (Klostergatan 14).

Getting There & Away

Småland airport (☎ 75 85 00; www.vxo-airport.se) is 9km northwest of Växjö. **SAS** (☎ 0770-72 77 27; www.scandinavian.net) has direct flights to Stockholm Arlanda, **Stockholmsplanet** (☎ 0771-71 72 00; www.stockholmsplanet.com) to Stockholm Bromma, and **European Executive Express** (☎ 0859-36 31 31; www.european.se) flies daily to Copenhagen. Airport bus 50 connects with flights (Skr59), otherwise take a **taxi** (☎ 13500).

Länstrafiken Kronoberg (☎ 0771-76 70 76; www.lanstrafikenkronoberg.se in Swedish) runs the regional bus network, with daily buses to Halmstad, Jönköping and Kosta. Long-distance buses depart from the **station**, next to the train station. Svenska Buss runs one or two services daily to Eksjö (Skr180, 1½ hours), Linköping



(Skr240, 3¼ hours) and Stockholm (Skr340, 6½ hours).

Växjö is served by SJ trains that run roughly hourly between Alvesta (on the main north-south line; Skr39, 15 minutes) and Kalmar (Skr143, 1¼ hours). A few trains run daily directly to Karlskrona (Skr143, 1½ hours), Malmö (Skr240, two hours) and Göteborg (Skr285, three hours).

KALMAR

☎ 0480 / pop 60,649

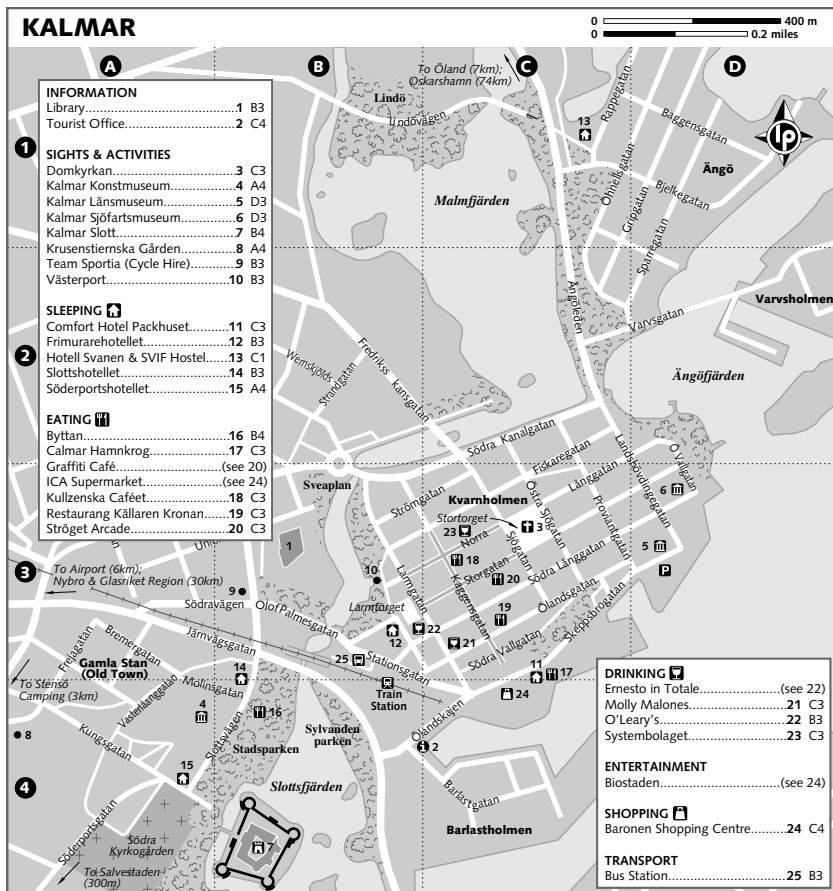
Kalmar has one of the most spectacular castles in Sweden, with an interior even more perfect than its turreted outside – miss it at your cost. Other excitements in town include Sweden's largest gold hoard, from

the 17th-century ship *Kronan*, and picturesque buildings and cobbled streets in the Kvarnholmen area. If you've anything to celebrate, Kalmar's a good place to do it in, with romantic hotels and lively bars.

The short-lived Kalmar Union of 1397, when the crowns of Sweden, Denmark and Norway became one, was agreed to at the castle.

Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 41 77 00; www.kalmar.se/turism; Ölandskajen 9; ☎ 9am-9pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun late Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat May & Sep, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri Oct-Apr) sells a good English-language town walking guide, *Wander Round Kalmar by Yourself* (Skr30).



To get free Internet access join the **library** (☎ 45 06 30; Tullslätten 4; ☎ closed Sun May-Aug) as a temporary member.

You'll find banks and other services on Storgatan.

Sights

KALMAR SLOTT

Fairytales turrets, moat, drawbridge, foul dungeon and secret passages...yes, **Kalmar Slott** (☎ 45 14 90; adult/7-16yr Skr75/20; ☎ 10am-6pm Jul, 10am-5pm Jun & Aug, 10am-4pm Apr, May & Sep, 11am-3:30pm 2nd weekend of month Oct-Mar) has absolutely everything that a proper castle should. This powerful Renaissance building was once the most important in Sweden, and it's fortified accordingly. It has one of the best-preserved interiors from the period.

King Erik's chamber is a real highlight. Erik's rivalry with his brother Johan caused him to install a secret passage in the loof. There's also a superb suspended ceiling in the **Golden Hall**; eye-boggling wall-to-wall and floor-to-ceiling marquetry in the **Chequered Hall**; an elaborate **bed**, stolen as war booty then carefully vandalised so that no Danish ghosts could haunt it; and a delightful **chapel**, one of Sweden's Most Wanted for weddings.

To find out more, join one of the fascinating **guided tours** (in English at 11.30am & 2.30pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, plus 3.30pm Jul), included in the admission price. There are also children's activities here in summer; contact the castle for details.

KALMAR LÄNSMUSEUM

The highlight of this **museum** (☎ 45 13 00; www.kalmarlansmuseum.se; Skeppsbrogatan; adult/under 18yr Skr50/free; ☎ 10am-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun mid-Aug-mid-Jun), in an old steam mill by the harbour, are finds from the 17th-century flagship *Kronan*. The ship exploded and sank just before a battle in 1676, with the loss of almost 800 men. It was rediscovered in 1980, and over 22,000 wonderfully preserved items have been excavated so far, including a spectacular gold hoard, clothing, musical instruments and cannon.

OTHER SIGHTS

Aft and slightly to port of the county museum, **Kalmar Sjöfartsmuseum** (☎ 158 75; Södra Långgatan 81; adult/7-12yr Skr30/10; ☎ 11am-4pm mid-Jun-mid-Sep, noon-4pm Sun mid-Sep-mid-Jun) contains a delightfully eccentric maritime collection,

with nautical instruments, bottled ships, fog-horns, and things made out of knots and armadillos.

The landmark baroque **Domkyrkan** (Cathedral; Stortorget) was designed by Tessin, King Karl X Gustav's favourite architect. Its sage-green interior is very restful, and there's a spectacular pulpit. To find out more, plug into one of the audiophones by the main door.

Krusenstienska Gården (☎ 41 15 52; Stora Dammgatan 11; adult/child Skr25/7; ☎ 1-5pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug) is a fully furnished, 19th-century middle-class home, 500m from the castle entrance. Tours of the house are on the hour, but entry to the pretty gardens and café is free.

Kalmar Konstmuseum (☎ 42 62 82; Slottsvägen 1D; adult/under 18yr Skr40/free; ☎ 11am-5pm, to 8pm Thu), near the castle, displays works by well-known Swedish artists like Carl Larsson and Anders Zorn, and houses temporary modern exhibitions.

Västerport was the original point of entry into the city. Nowadays you can watch glass-blowing and pottery-making at the studios here, and buy the results.

Festivals & Events

Historical Kalmar has lots of summery events. One of the biggest is the **Medeltidsfestival & Marknad** (☎ 45 13 74), a medieval festival and market with jousting, music, handicrafts, food and drink. It's held in Salvastaden – a reconstructed medieval village about 500m south of the castle in Kalmarsundsparken – on a weekend in late July. Entry costs Skr80 (family ticket Skr290) per day.

Sleeping

Hotell Svanen (☎ 255 60; www.hotellsvanen.se; Rapppegatan 1; dm Skr205, s/d from Skr520/625; ☎) This 'low-price hotel' is an excellent choice. Its simple rooms are newly restored, with cable TV and private toilets. The **SVIF hostel** is part of the hotel: both share the reception (open all day), kitchen, drinks machines, sauna, foyer, Internet service etc. Svanen is on the island of Ängö, about 1km north of town; walk, or take bus 402.

Slottshotellet (☎ 882 60; www.slottshotellet.se; Slottsvägen 7; s/d from Skr1350/1690, discounted to Skr890/1390; ☎) The top pick in town is this wonderfully romantic hotel, based in four buildings in a gorgeous green setting near the castle. Most rooms have antique furnishings and are cosy as anything, and some

have lovely old Swedish tile stoves. Staff are immensely helpful, and there's also a summer restaurant.

Frimurarehotellet (☎ 15230; www.frimurarehotellet.com; Larmtorget 2; s/d Skr990/1210, discounted to Skr720/895; ☑) In the heart of the action, this 19th-century building contains spacious rooms full of character with polished wooden floors. The plant-filled lounge is a nice touch, with free tea, coffee and biscuits. There are also cheaper rooms (about Skr200 less) that have showers in the hallway.

Comfort Hotel Pakhuset (☎ 570 00; www.hotelpakhuset.se; Skeppsbrogatan 26; s/d Skr1345/1545, discounted to Skr875/1145; P ☑) This chain hotel is based in a converted 18th-century waterfront warehouse that retains its beamed ceilings but is modern in every other way.

Söderportshotellet (☎ 125 01, Slottsvägen 1; s/d Skr495/695; ☎ mid-Jun–mid-Aug) Söderportshotellet is right outside the castle and offers summertime accommodation in student digs. Rooms are modest yellow-washed affairs; some on the upper floor have castle views. There's a super café-restaurant downstairs that often hosts live jazz and blues.

Stensö Camping (☎ 888 03; www.stensocamping.se; Stensövägen; sites/cabins Skr150/450; ☎ Apr–Sep) There are family-friendly facilities galore at this campsite, 3km southwest of town, including swimming, boat, canoe and bicycle rental, a restaurant and minigolf. However there's no public transport to the door, buses 401 and 411 stop around 600m away.

Eating

A good area for upmarket dining is the harbour; the view of huge timber yards and cranes is somewhat industrial, but you don't want pretty sailing boats *all* the time...

Calmar Hamnkrog (☎ 41 10 20; Skeppsbrogatan 30; mains Skr130–245) The stylish Hamnkrog serves the best food in town, a combination of Swedish favourites and continental innovations (like grilled swordfish with seafood paella and *gremolata*).

Byttan (☎ 163 60; Stadsparken; lunch Skr70, dinner mains Skr155–195; ☎ summer) This classy glass-and-steel restaurant is in the park by the castle. It serves classic Swedish dishes, for example herring platters (Skr120), helped down by wonderful views of Kalmar's major attraction.

Restaurang Källaren Kronan (☎ 41 14 00; Ölands-gatan 7; mains Skr100–200; ☎ closed Mon) Six cellars

have been transformed into this high-calibre experience, where a small but select evening menu is served under a snug vaulted ceiling. Mains are mostly meat and fish, but an effort is made for veggies too.

Kullzenska Kaféet (☎ 288 82; 1st fl, Kaggsgatan 26; snacks from Skr30) The pick of the town's cafés is this gorgeous maze of genteel 19th-century rooms, with original tiled stoves and furniture. There's a range of sandwiches and cakes (try the great fruit crumbles).

Graffiti Kafé, (☎ 256 30; Storgatan 24; meals around Skr50; ☎ closed Sun) Part of the small food hall inside the Ströget arcade, this fast-food café offers salads, baguettes and tasty baked potatoes with a multitude of fillings.

There's also an **ICA supermarket** in the Baronen shopping centre.

Drinking

The following places are popular for food, and also turn into lively drinking spots later in the evening.

Molly Malones (☎ 41 13 44; Lärmgatan 6; meals Skr45–120; ☎ closed Sun & Mon) This cosy Irish pub serves bar snacks as well as 'authentic' Irish meals (such as steak-and-Guinness pie, and fish and chips).

O'Leary's (☎ 44 09 70; Larmtorget 4; mains Skr140–200) Nearby, this Boston-style sports bar has outdoor seating on the square, and is a crowd-pleaser on summer evenings. Food is of the type that goes well with beer: fajitas, ribs, chicken wings and burgers.

Ernesto in Totale (☎ 200 50; Larmtorget 4; mains Skr90–170; ☎ until 2am Wed, Fri & Sat) This Italian café, restaurant, bar and nightclub also attracts scores of people, with its *barristas*, extensive menu, after-work promotions, long cocktail list and weekend dancing.

For alcohol, visit **Systembolaget** (Norra Lång-gatan 23).

Entertainment

The **Biostaden** (☎ 122 44; Skr85) cinema is in the Baronen shopping centre on Skeppsbrogatan.

Getting There & Around

The **airport** (☎ 587 00) is 6km west of town. **SAS** (☎ 0770-72 77 27) flies several times daily to Stockholm and **European Executive Express** (☎ 0859-36 31 31; www.european.se) flies weekdays to Copenhagen. Town bus 20 runs to and from the airport (Skr30).

HERRING À LA GLASSWORKS

In days gone by, glassworks were more than just a workplace – they acted as a focal point for the community, an after-hours gathering spot for workers, hunters and vagrants. They were the place to go to keep warm on long winter evenings, tell stories, make music and enjoy the company of others. Naturally, good food and drink were a vital part of these gatherings – strong *aquavit* (a potent, vodka-like spirit) was shared and food was cooked using the furnaces and cooling ovens. Today visitors to Glasriket can partake in *hyttsill* parties, socialising at long tables and eating food prepared using these traditional methods.

The menu includes salted herring, smoked sausage, bacon and baked potatoes, as well as the regional speciality *ostkaka* (cheesecake). The cost to join a *hyttsill* party is Skr325 (under 10s are free), and the price includes beer, soft drinks and coffee, (*aquavit* costs extra!). Parties are held almost daily from June to August at the larger glassworks of Kosta, Målerås and Orrefors. Contact the regional tourist offices or the glassworks themselves to make a reservation.

All regional and long-distance buses depart from the train station; local town buses have their own station on Östra Sjögatan. Regional buses are run by **Kalmar Länstrafik** (☎ 0491-76 12 00; www.klt.se in Swedish), including buses to Öland.

Four **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) services daily run north to Västervik (Skr130, two hours), Norrköping (Skr220, four hours) and Stockholm (Skr316, 6½ hours); and two services daily run south to Karlskrona (Skr80, 1¼ hours), Karlshamn (Skr110, two hours), Kristianstad (Skr170, three hours), Lund (Skr230, four hours) and Malmö (Skr230, 4½ hours). **Svenska Buss** (☎ 0771-67 67 67; www.svenskabuss.se in Swedish) has four services per week on the same route; journey times and prices are similar. **Silverlinjen** (☎ 0485 261 11; www.silverlinjen.se in Swedish) runs three daily direct buses from Öland to Stockholm (Skr270), calling at Kalmar; reservations are essential.

SJ trains run every hour or two between Kalmar and Alvesta (Skr181, 1¼ hours), where you can connect with the main Stockholm–Malmö line and with trains to Göteborg. There are direct trains running to Linköping up to five times daily (Skr268, three hours), also with connections to Stockholm.

For bicycle hire, contact **Team Sportia** (☎ 212 44; Södravägen 2; per day/week Skr100/400; ☎ Mon–Sat). **Taxi Kalmar** (☎ 44 44 44) can help you get around town.

GLASRIKET

The '**Kingdom of Crystal**' (www.glasriket.se), with its hypnotic glassblowing workshops hidden in among dense forests, is the most visited area in Sweden outside Stockholm

and Göteborg. There are at least 11 glass factories (look for *glasbruk* signs), most with long histories: Kosta, for example, was founded in 1742. The immense popularity of this region is not only with northern Europeans – lots of Americans tour the country tracing their ancestors, many of whom emigrated from this area at the end of the 19th century.

The glassworks have similar opening hours, usually 10am to 6pm Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm Saturday and noon to 4pm Sunday. Expert glass designers produce some extraordinary avant-garde pieces, often with a good dollop of Swedish humour involved. Factory outlets have substantial discounts on seconds (around 30% to 40% off), and larger places can arrange shipping to your home country.

There's a **Glasriket Pass** (Skr95), which allows free admission into 'hot shops' and museums, and discounts on purchases and *hyttsill* parties; but unless you're intending to go completely glass crazy, it doesn't really add up.

Most of Glasriket is in Kalmar län, with some in Kronobergs län; all parts are covered in this section.

Getting There & Around

Apart from the main routes, bus services around the area are pretty much nonexistent. The easiest way to explore is with your own transport (beware of elk). Bicycle tours on the unsurfaced country roads are excellent; there are plenty of hostels, and you can camp almost anywhere except near the military area on the Kosta–Orrefors road.

Kalmar Länstrafik's bus 139 runs from mid-June to mid-August only and calls at a few of the glass factories. The service operates four times per day on weekdays, once on Saturday, and runs from Nybro to Orrefors and Målerås. Year-round bus services connect Nybro and Orrefors (one weekdays), and Kosta is served by regular bus 218 from Växjö (two or three daily).

Buses and trains run from Emmaboda to Nybro and Kalmar (roughly hourly); trains also run to Karlskrona, Växjö and Alvesta, from where there are direct services to Göteborg and Stockholm.

Nybro

☎ 0481 / pop 19,882

The biggest town in Glasriket, Nybro makes a good base for exploration. It was once an important centre for hand-blown light bulbs(!), and still has two glassworks on its doorstep. Nybro's **tourist office** (☎ 450 85; www.nybro.se; Stadshusplan; ☹ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri mid-Aug-mid-Jun) is inside the town hall.

Of the two glassworks, 130-year-old **Pukeberg** (☎ 800 29; www.pukeberg.se; Pukebergarnas väg), just southeast of the centre, is perhaps more interesting for its quaint setting. **Nybro** (☎ 428 81; Herkulesgatan; www.nybro-glasbruk.se) is smaller but also has unusual items, like the range of Beatles glassware.

There's a superior homestead museum **Madesjö Hembygdsgård** (☎ 179 35; adult/child Skr25/5; ☹ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun late Jun-Aug), about 2.5km west of town. It's housed inside the 200m-long *kyrkstallarna* (former church stables), and contains an admirable collection, which includes cannonballs, clothing, coffins, carpenters' tools, chainsaws, a classroom, a country shop and a fantastic (ice-) cycle – and they're just the things beginning with 'C'.

Nybro Lägrishotell & Vandrhem (☎ 109 32; Vasagatan 22; dm Skr150-225, s/d Skr490/740; ☎) The local STF hostel, near Pukeberg, is clean and comfortable and has a kitchen on each floor as well as a sauna. More expensive 'hotel' rooms have cable TV, nonbunk beds and private showers and toilets. You can rent bicycles.

Stora Hotellet (☎ 519 35; rumsbokning@telia.com; Mellangatan 11; s/d Skr925/1195, discounted to Skr650/850) The town's other option is this dated but reasonable central hotel, by the tourist

office. It contains Scandinavia's largest work of art, an impressive 70 sq metre fresco of Nybro's industrial history. The restaurant offers the best choice in town for a meal (pizzas around Skr85).

Joelskogens Camping (☎ 450 86; www.joelskogenscamping.com; Grönvägen 51; site Skr120; ☹ May-mid-Sep) Campers should head for this little lakeside ground just out of the centre, with basic facilities (kitchen, laundry, shop) and a small beach area.

SJ trains between Alvesta and Kalmar stop here every hour or two. Regional bus 131 runs to/from Kalmar.

Orrefors

☎ 0481

Founded in 1898, **Orrefors** (☎ 341 95; www.orrefors.se; ☹ year-round) is perhaps the most famous of Sweden's glassworks. The huge site holds a factory with glass-blowing demonstrations, museum, impressive gallery and large shop with a shipping service. Orrefors is its glassworks and there's little else to the village.

STF Vandrhem Orrefors (☎ 300 20, 0708 26 78 78; orreforsvandrhem@tele2.se; Silversparregatan 14; dm/s/d from Skr120/235/320; ☹ May-Aug) If you need a lie-down after all the glass-buying, this excellent hostel is located conveniently near the factory. Quaint red houses surround a grassy garden, and the peaceful rooms have proper beds. Breakfast is available on request.

Vårdshuset Orren (☎ 300 59; meals around Skr100; ☹ 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-2pm Mon-Fri mid-Aug-mid-Jun) In the factory grounds, this inn offers good lunches. There's also a kiosk in the glassworks area selling hot dogs and ice cream.

Gullaskröv & Målerås

☎ 0481

Don't miss the glassworks at Gullaskröv, about 6km northwest of Orrefors. Here, Uruguayan-born artist **Carlos R Pebaqué** (☎ 321 17; www.carlosartglass.com) makes utterly extraordinary vases in his one glass oven.

Completely different in scale and style is the large and popular **Mats Jonasson factory** (☎ 314 00; www.matsjonasson.com), 8km further northwest in Målerås, which sells engraved glass animal designs from around Skr200. There's a restaurant serving lunches.

Hallegårdens Vandrhem (☎ 320 21; Hallegården; per person from Skr175; ☎) A kilometre or so southeast of Gullaskröv, this super youth

hostel is in a tranquil rustic setting. Rooms all have washbasins, and there's a sunny café selling baked potatoes, salads and cakes.

Målerås Vandrhem (☎ 311 75; frank.fender@telia.com; Lindvägen 5, Målerås; per person Skr150; ☎) Very handy for the Mats Jonasson glassworks, this SVIF hostel is another good place to stay.

For coffee and buns, try the tiny **Café Konditori** (☎ 310 44; Lindvägen 1, Målerås; ☹ closed Sun) attached to Målerås's bakery.

Kosta

☎ 0478

Kosta is where Glasriket started in 1742. Today the **Kosta Boda** (☎ 503 00; www.kostaboda.se) complex draws in coach loads of visitors, who are all elbows and claws in the vast discount shop. But don't be put off – Sweden even manages to make its tourist traps pleasant places. The two museums contain some amazing creations, there are plenty of glass-blowing demos in the old factory quarters, and there's a good café too.

To see beautiful bandy-legged elk at close quarters, head for **Grönåsens Algpark** (☎/fax 507 70; www.mooserpark.net; ☹ 10am-8pm Apr-Nov), Sweden's biggest elk park, located 3km west of town towards Orrefors. You can admire these gentle creatures on a 1.3km walk in the forested enclosure (Skr35). Then, if you wish, you can practise blasting 2D elk shapes made of metal in the shooting range, buy elk sausages to roast on the barbecue outside or purchase an elk-skin baseball cap. And, talking of horror, don't miss the display in the building behind the shop: it's guaranteed that you'll drive 50% slower after you've seen the crumpled metal, glassy eyes and lolling tongue...

Kosta Bad & Camping (☎ 505 17; info@glasriket.kosta.se; sites Skr150, cabin from Skr425; ☹ Apr-Oct; ☎) There are great facilities at this campsite on the edge of Kosta village, including a pool, sauna, shop and boules.

Kosta Vårdshus (☎ 500 06; lunch Skr75, s/d Skr420/690) Across the road from the Kosta Boda factory, this hotel/restaurant currently has 10 simple, old fashioned rooms, but big plans are afoot: a new wing with 20 modern rooms is to be built in 2007. The *vårdshus* also attracts crowds for its cheap lunches.

For other eating options, try cheerful **Café Kosta** (☎ 502 60) inside the factory's outlet store, with tasty quiches and baked potatoes for around Skr55.

GLASS-BLOWING FUN!

If you feel inspired by Glasriket's top designers, why not have a go at **glass-blowing** (Skr150; ☹ most days mid-Jun-mid-Aug) yourself? Several hotshots – Orrefors, Kosta, Pukeberg and Johansfors – risk litigation by allowing you to blow, shape and 'open out' the treacley molten glass. It's the greatest fun, and the endearingly misshapen result will be a source of pride for years to come. Your masterpiece has to cool for two hours before you can take it away.

OSKARSHAMN

☎ 0491 / pop 26,300

Quiet Oskarshamn is useful for its regular boat connections with Gotland, and there are several sights to see while waiting for transport.

The **tourist office** (☎ 881 88; www.oskarshamn.se; Hantverksgatan 18; ☹ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, 11am-4pm Sun Jun-mid-Aug, 9-11.30am & 12.30-4.30pm Mon-Fri mid-Aug-May) is in Kulturhuset, along with the **library**, which has free Internet access.

Sights

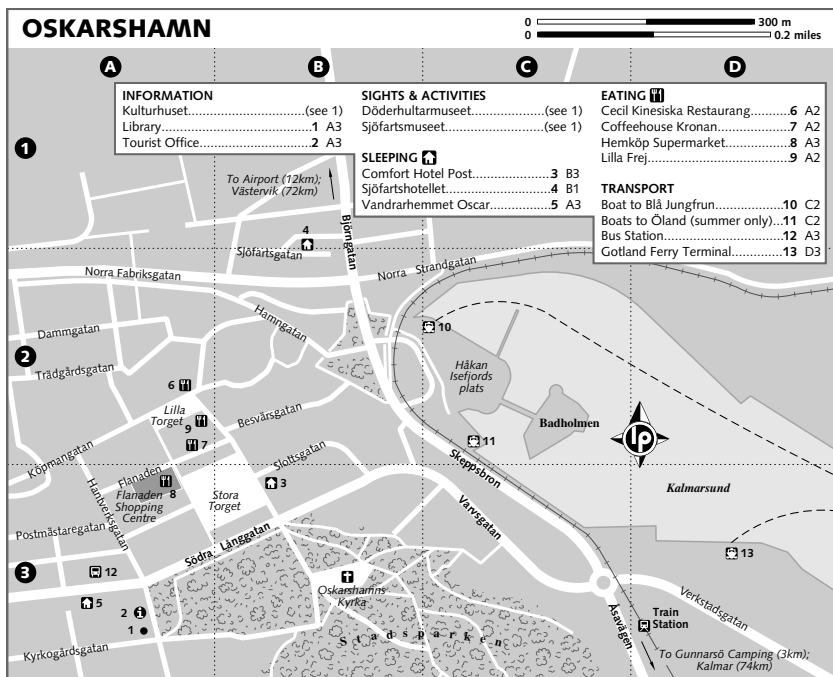
Upstairs in Kulturhuset, **Döderhultarmuséet** (☎ 880 40; ☹ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri & 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Jun-mid-Aug, noon-4pm Tue-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat mid-Aug-May) is well worth a visit. It features the work of local artist, Axel Petersson 'Döderhultarn' (1868-1925), who captured local characters and occasions – weddings, funerals country dances etc – in vigorous and funny wood carvings; around 200 of which are on display. Next door, with the same opening hours, **Sjöfartsmuséet** (☎ 880 45) contains local maritime exhibits.

One admission price (adult/12-20 years Skr35/15) covers entry to both museums.

Blå Jungfrun National Park

Blå Jungfrun (the Blue Maiden), a 1km-long granite island, is known as the 'Witches' Mountain' because, according to tradition, this is where they gather every Easter to meet the devil. The island is a nature reserve loved for its fantastic scenery, gnarled trees, blue hares and bird life, and the curious stone maze, **Trojeborg**.

Between mid-June and August a local **launch** (per adult/7-15yr Skr180/90) departs up to six



times weekly (usually *not* Mondays) from Brådholskajen, the quay at the head of the harbour in Oskarshamn, allowing passengers 3½ hours to explore the island. Contact the tourist office for information and bookings.

Sleeping & Eating

Vandrarhuset Oscar (☎ 158 00; forum@oskarshamn.se; Södra Långgatan 15-17; hostel dm/s/d Skr205/305/410, hotel s/d Skr610/810, discounted to Skr510/675; 📍) This shiny place, half hotel half hostel, is a brilliant budget option. Rooms have TV, fans and private bathrooms – only the kitchen for self-caterers gives it away as a hostel. It's conveniently placed for travellers, just opposite the bus station.

Sjöfartshotellet (☎ 76 83 00; sjofartshotel@telia.com; Sjöfartsgatan 13; s/d Skr945/1045, discounted to Skr595/695; 📍) The hotel was created as a sailors' foundation, hence the harbour setting and nautical décor. Its function is still the same today, and sailors have priority, with remaining rooms let to nonnautical guests. Rooms are comfortable, if on the small side, and there's a sauna.

Comfort Hotel Post (☎ 160 60; Stora Torget; s/d Skr1325/1525, discounted to Skr790/990; 📍) A step up in both price and location is offered at this upmarket hotel on the main square, which also has an interesting history – the hotel was once the grand old post house. The agreeable and ample-sized rooms reflect this past. All prices include an evening buffet, making the discounted prices particularly good value. The hotel's facilities include a sauna, Jacuzzi, restaurant, bar and a cosy lounge.

Gunnarsö Camping (☎ 132 98; Östersjövägen; sites low/high season Skr105/125; ☽ May–mid-Sep; 📍) Located 3km southeast of town, this has seaside sites, a heated pool, restaurant, minigolf and other family campsite necessities. However, it is difficult to get to without a car as public transport connections are very poor.

There are no outstanding restaurants, but there are a couple of pleasant ones. **Lilla Frej** (☎ 843 00; Lilla Torget; lunch Skr70, meals Skr80-160) has modern décor and a varied menu of pizza, pasta, salads, and fish and steak dishes. Just across the square, **Cecil Kinesiska Restaurang** (☎ 187 50; Lilla Torget; dishes Skr89-170)

has Chinese cuisine as well as Swedish and even French dishes.

Coffeehouse Kronan (☎ 143 80; Flanaden 6; snacks from Skr45) This is a great lunch spot, with filled baguettes and *panini*, plus tasty cakes and good coffee. In summer there's seating on the bustling pedestrian street outside.

There's a **Hemköp supermarket** nearby in the Flanaden shopping centre.

Getting There & Away

Oskarshamn airport (☎ 332 00) is 12km north of town and **Swedline Express** (☎ 0495-2490 65) flies twice on weekdays to Stockholm Arlanda.

The bus station is very central, while the train station is on the other side of town, close to the ferry terminal. Long-distance bus services stop at the bus station, but some also stop at the train station (local buses run frequently between the two).

Regional bus services run up to six times daily from Oskarshamn to Kalmar (Skr72, 1½ hours) and Västervik (Skr64, one hour).

Swebus Express has three daily buses between Stockholm and Kalmar that call in at Oskarshamn. Svenska Buss operates four services weekly from Stockholm to Malmö via Oskarshamn, Kalmar and Karlskrona. Regional trains run from Linköping and Nässjö.

Boats to Visby depart from the ferry terminal near the train station, daily in winter and twice daily in summer. There are also boats to Öland leaving from the ferry terminal off Skeppsbron; see p126 for more information.

VÄSTERVIK

☎ 0490 / pop 36,566

Västervik is a popular summer resort on the Baltic Sea, with camera-friendly cobbled streets, buzzing nightlife, sandy beaches just east of town, and 5000 islands on the doorstep. Harried by the Danes in its early years, Västervik grew to become a major shipbuilding centre between the 17th and 19th centuries. Famous sons include former tennis player Stefan Edberg, and Björn Ulvåsen from Abba. Björn often returns in mid-July for **VisFestivalen**, Västervik's 40-year-old folk-song festival.

In a striking old Art Nouveau bathhouse, the **tourist office** (☎ 889 00; www.vastervik.se/turist; Strömsholmen; ☽ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun Jul–mid-Aug, 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat

May, Jun & late Aug, 10am-6pm Mon-Fri Sep-Apr) is located on an islet linked by road to the town centre. There's a **library** (☎ 887 77; Spötorget; ☽ Mon-Fri summer, plus Sat winter) with free Internet access.

Sights & Activities

Västervik is stuffed with beautiful old buildings; ask the tourist office for its first-class town-walk brochure, which leads you round the best. **St Petri Kyrka** is a dramatic mass of spires and buttresses, while the older, calmer **St Gertruds Kyrkan** (Västra Kyrkogatan) dates from 1433 and has taken lightning strikes and riots in its stride. Nearby, **Aspagården** (Västra Kyrkogatan 9), dating from the 17th century, is the oldest wooden house in town. Other old houses from the 1740s can be seen at picture-perfect **Båtmansstugorna** (Båtmansgatan) – former ferrymen's cottages.

Displays at **Kulbackens Museum** (☎ 211 77; adult/under 18yr Skr30/free; ☽ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri, 1-4pm Sat & Sun May-Aug, 11am-4pm Tue-Fri Sep-Apr), just north of the tourist office, cover the history of the town. Also here is **Unos Torn**, an 18m-high lookout tower with fine archipelago views.

Two-hour **archipelago tours** (adult/child Skr130/70) on *MS Freden* depart from Skeppsbron daily from midsummer to the end of August. Make reservations at the tourist office.

Sleeping

The town bursts at the seams in summer, so book accommodation ahead.

Båtmansstugor (☎ 317 67, 194 03; Strömsholmen 42; cottages per person Skr200) This is a collection of delightful 18th-century fishermen's cottages for rent in an atmospheric old part of town. Most cottages sleep four and have their own kitchen, but bathrooms are shared.

Västerviks Stadshotell (☎ 820 00; info@stads-hotellet.nu; Storgatan 3; s/d Skr1250/1700, discounted to Skr875/1200; 📍) Belonging to the Best Western chain, the central Stadshotell has modern, comfortable rooms, sauna and gym, private parking (Skr90 per day), and a restaurant and a popular nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights.

Lysingsbadets (☎ 889 20; lysingsbadet@vastervik.se; low/high season sites Skr120/215, beds Skr140/160, d Skr500/550, cabins from Skr215/365; 📍) This huge, five-star 'holiday village' by the sea (2.5km southeast of town) is a world of its own. Restaurant, golf, a swimming pool, beaches, and boat, bicycle and kayak hire are all available,

ASTRID & PIPPI

If you're a fan of the red-headed, pigtailed strongest girl in the world, you'll already know and revere the name of author Astrid Lindgren (1907–2002). Astrid, a farmer's daughter, was herself an unconventional tomboy, causing scandals in her home town of Vimmerby first by cutting off all her hair as the jazz age dawned, and then by becoming a single mother.

In 1941, Astrid's daughter Karin was stuck in bed with pneumonia, and asked her mother for a story about 'Pippi Longstocking'. The weird name inspired Astrid to invent a stream of stories about that original wild child, an immediate hit with Karin and her friends.

In 1944, Lindgren sprained her ankle and passed the time by writing down the Pippi stories. They were refused for publication, but another book of hers won second prize in a girls' story competition. The next year Lindgren entered a revised Pippi manuscript into another competition, where it won first prize.

This was just the beginning of a prolific career. Lindgren's impressive output included picture books, plays and songs, and her books have been translated into more than 60 languages. She worked in radio, TV and films, was head of the Children's Book Department at her publishers for four years and received numerous honours and awards from around the world.

plus there are extra activities like circus-skill workshops, pony trekking and karaoke evenings. The hostel opens June to August, but cabins and hotel rooms are available year-round. Take local bus 5 (Skr13).

Eating & Drinking

Restaurang Smugglaren (☎ 213 22; Smugglaregränd 1; mains Skr180-230; ☞ from 6pm summer, shorter hr winter) Tucked down an alley off Strandvägen is the charming Smugglaren, which offers quality food in a cosy wooden building, complete with model ships and paraffin lamps. There's also an outdoor courtyard for summer.

Waterside Fiskaretorget is a hive of activity; there are a number of restaurant-bars located here, and all have outdoor terraces that are especially sought-after on long summer evenings. **Harry's** (☎ 173 00) and the **Brig** (☎ 342 00) are on the square; both open noon to late daily (until 3am Friday and Saturday) in summer, shorter hours during winter. They offer simple bar food, plus an à la carte menu for finer dining, and are great spots to relax over a drink.

Västervik's fast-food speciality is French fries, mashed potato and shrimp salad (Skr20); look out for it at stands along the waterside. **Systembolaget** is on Kvarngatan.

Getting There & Away

Long-distance buses stop outside the train station, at the eastern edge of the town centre. Trains run between Västervik and Linköping up to five times daily (Skr113, 1¼

hours). Daily bus services run every couple of hours to Vimmerby (Skr56, 1¼ hours), Oskarshamn (Skr64, one hour) and Kalmar (Skr112, three hours).

Svenska Buss runs to Stockholm, Kalmar, Karlskrona and Malmö four times per week. On Fridays and Sundays, Swebe Express runs two buses on the Västervik–Vimmerby–Eksjö–Jönköping route.

VIMMERBY

☎ 0492 / pop 15,596

Vimmerby is the birthplace of Astrid Lindgren, and home to one of Sweden's top visitor attractions, a theme park based on the Pippi Longstocking books. Absolutely everything in town revolves around the strongest girl in the world. Even the pretty cobbled town square, Stora Torget, is filled with Pippi entertainments during the summer – there's no escape!

Vimmerby has a busy, helpful **tourist office** (☎ 310 10; www.turism.vimmerby.se; Västra Tullportsgatan 3; ☞ 9am–8pm late Jun–early Aug, 9am–5pm Mon–Fri rest of year). If you don't know whether Mr Nilsson is a horse or a monkey, **Bokhandeln** (☎ 123 10; Stora Torget 8) sells Pippi books in various languages, including English.

Sights & Activities

Young children and Pippi Longstocking fans should head for **Astrid Lindgrens Värld** (☎ 798 00; www.alv.se; adult/4-15yr/family Skr210/145/640 mid-Jun–mid-Aug; ☞ 10am–6pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 10am–5pm mid-May–mid-Jun & late Aug), on the northern edge of town. Actresses dressed as Pippi

(complete with gravity-defying pigtails) sing and dance their way around the 100 buildings and settings from the books – the Swedish kids love it! Prices drop outside peak season, as there are fewer activities and theatre performances. Cars are charged a cheeky Skr20. There's a local bus (Skr18), or it's a 10-minute walk from the centre.

There's a reasonably priced restaurant, a fast-food joint and coffee shops in the park. If you're a dedicated fan, you can stay at the on-site **camping ground** (sites low/high season Skr135/195, 4-bed cabins from Skr495/695; ☞ mid-May–mid-Aug).

Older visitors can learn about Lindgren's antiwar and pro-animal-rights stance at **Astrid Lindgrens Gården** (☎ 798 00; adult/child Skr65/35 or free with admission to theme park; closed Mon & Tue Sep–May), an excellent museum of her life and work. The house is adjacent to the theme park.

If you can't bear to look at those ginger plaits any more, wander down Storgatan where you'll find many of Vimmerby's quaint 18th- and 19th-century wooden houses. There's also **Museet Näktergalen** (☎ 76 94 59; Sevedegatan 43; adult/child Skr20/10; ☞ noon–5pm Mon–Fri, 10am–2pm Sat mid-Jun–mid-Aug), a small 18th-century house with traditional painted walls and ceilings.

Sleeping & Eating

There's a camping ground at the theme park (see above). There's lots of accommodation in town, much of it offering theme-park packages; ask the tourist office for details.

Vimmerby Vandrarhem (☎ 100 20; info@vimmerbyvandrarhem.nu; Järnvägsallén 2; 4-bed rm from Skr500; ☎) This cheerful newish hostel, based in a fine wooden building, is right near the train station. There are more expensive doubles available, with proper (nonbunk) beds, plus a garden with barbecue.

Ramada Vimmerby Stadshotell (☎ 121 00; info@vimstätt.ramadasweden.se; Stora Torget 9; s/d Skr1170/1350, discounted to Skr960/1180; ☎ ☞) You can't miss this dashing pink building on the town square. Rooms aren't anywhere near as grand as the exterior implies, but they're comfortable if small, with cable TV, minibars and the rest. Staff are very friendly, and can make you a picnic hamper (Skr200) for your visit to Astrid Lindgrens Värld. There's a good restaurant.

Konditori Brödstugan (☎ 104 21; Storgatan 42; meals around Skr50) One very busy lunch spot is this

bakery-café, with a wide choice of quiches, salads, baked potatoes and hot dishes. You may have to lurk for a table.

Getting There & Away

Buses and trains depart from the Resecentrum, downhill past the church from Stora Torget. Swebe Express runs twice on Fridays and Sundays to Eksjö and Jönköping, and in the other direction to Västervik (Skr56, 1¼ hours). Svenska Buss operates daily between Stockholm, Linköping and Vimmerby. After Vimmerby, services continue to either Oskarshamn, Åseda, or Kalmar and Nybro.

Kustpilen trains run several times daily south to Kalmar, or north to Linköping.

BLEKINGE

With its long coastline and safe harbours, Blekinge's past and present are faithfully fastened to the sea. Sweden and Denmark once squabbled over the area, a trump card in power games over the Baltic. Today it's still an important naval zone and parts of the wonderful Unesco site Karlskrona are still under military control. The region's second largest town is Karlshamn, where in the 19th century emigrants boarded ships bound for America. There's watery enjoyment in the fish-filled rivers and lakes, and a stunning southern archipelago to explore at leisure.

KARLSKRONA

☎ 0455 / pop 61,137

As you approach Karlskrona, an optical illusion makes it appear to be floating on water – which in a sense, it does; the town has always been a hugely important naval base, dependent on the sea for its survival. In 1998 the entire town was added to the Unesco World Heritage List due to its well-preserved 17th- and 18th-century naval architecture.

After the failed Danish invasion of Skåne in 1679, King Karl XI decided that a southern naval base was needed for better control over the Baltic Sea, and so Karlskrona was created – almost immediately becoming Sweden's third-biggest city. Much of the town is still a military base, so to see certain sights you'll need to book a tour at the tourist office and have ID at the ready.

Information

You'll find ATMs and the post office in the Wachtmeister shopping centre on Borgmästaregatan.

Library (☎ 30 34 65; Stortorget 15-17; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon, Wed & Thu, noon-7pm Tue, 10am-5pm Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) Free Internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 30 34 90; www.karlskrona.se /tourism; Stortorget 2; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat & Sun Jun-Aug, 10am-5pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat Sep-May)

Video shop (Admiraltetsgatan 4; per hr Skr29) Internet access.

Sights & Activities

FORTIFICATIONS

The finest attraction is the extraordinary offshore **Kungsholms Fort**, with its curious circular harbour, established in 1680 to defend the town. Four-hour **boat tours** (adult/12-18yr Skr140/70; ☎ 10am & 2.15pm mid-Jun-Aug, plus 3pm & 6.30pm Tue, Thu & Sat Jul) to the fort, including a guided tour of Kungsholm, depart from Fisktorget; book at the tourist office. Another option is the boat operated by **Skärgårdstrafiken** (☎ 783 30), which runs from Fisktorget and circles the fort five times daily from mid-June to mid-August (adult/child Skr80/35); you must inform the tourist office of your visit in advance if you take this second option.

Bristling with cannons, the tower **Drottningkärs kastell** on the island of Aspö was described by Admiral Nelson of the British Royal Navy as 'impregnable' – and it looks it. You can visit it on a **Skärgårdstrafiken boat** (adult/child return Skr80/35; ☎ Jun-Aug), departing from the end of Östra Köpmansgatan.

MUSEUMS

The striking **Marinmuseum** (☎ 359 30 02; Stumholmen; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm Jun-Aug, 11am-5pm Tue-Sun Sep-May) is the national naval museum. Inside are reconstructions of a battle deck in wartime, a hall full of fantastic figureheads, piles of model boats, and even some the real thing – such as a minesweeper, a sailing ship and a submarine.

Nearby, the **Konstmuseet** (☎ 30 34 22; Bastionsgatan 8; admission free; ☎ noon-5pm Tue-Fri, to 7pm Wed, noon-5pm Sat & Sun), once a seamen's barracks, is now a modern art gallery.

The extensive **Blekinge Museum** (☎ 30 49 60; Fisktorget 2; admission free; ☎ 10am-6pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 11am-5pm Tue-Sun mid-Aug–mid-Jun) explains the local fishing, boat-building and quar-

rying trades. The most captivating part is Grevagården, an 18th-century house where each room is filled with thousands of contemporary objects, from thimbles to coffins. There's also a small baroque garden and a pleasant café.

The surprising **Museum Leonardo da Vinci Ideale** (☎ 255 73; Drottninggatan 28) exhibits a private collection of original art, but was closed at the time of writing; phone for information.

OTHER SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Stortorget is the town's monumental square, deliberately created to rival the best in Europe. It's dominated by symbols of law and religion: the courthouse; the baroque church **Fredrikskyrkan** (☎ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat); and **Trefaldighetskyrkan** (Trinity Church; ☎ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat), inspired by Rome's Pantheon.

Sweden's oldest wooden church is **Amiralitetskyrkan** (☎ 103 56; Vallgatan); outside is the wooden statue **Old Rosenbom**, who raises his hat to charitable visitors.

There's a small **Blue-Flag beach** on Stumholmen. Pick a sunny summer afternoon for a tour around Karlskrona's **archipelago**, made up of an astounding 1650 islands. A three-hour tour costs Skr125/60 per adult/child; contact the Skärgårdstrafiken office at Fisktorget for timetables and information. Enquire at the tourist office about two-hour **guided walks** of the city (adult/12-18yr Skr60/30), held on Saturdays from May to mid-September.

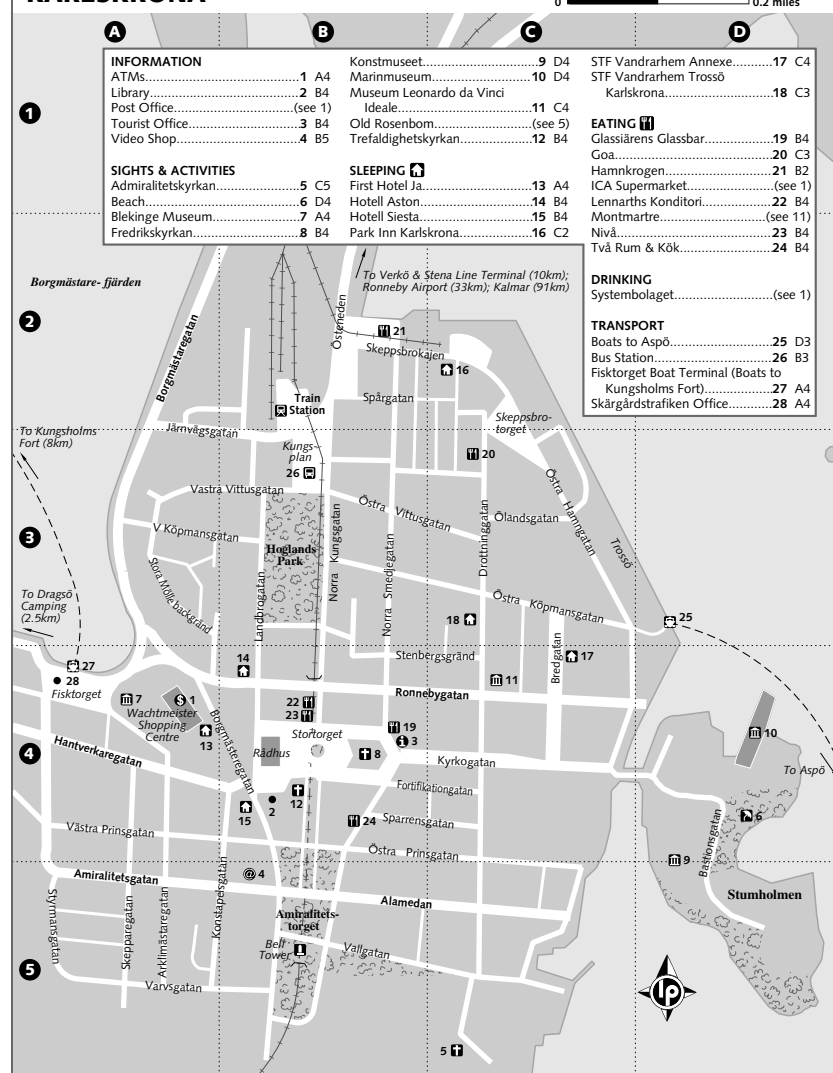
Sleeping

STF Vandrarhem Trossö Karlskrona (☎ 100 20; www.karlskronavandrarhem.se; Drottninggatan 39; dm/s/d Skr125/230/280) Wonderfully friendly, this modern, clean hostel has a laundry, TV room and backyard for kids to play in; parking on the opposite side of the street is free.

STF Vandrarhem Annexe (Bredgatan 16; dm/s/d Skr155/310/375; ☎ mid-Jun–mid-Aug) There's also this summer-only annexe around the corner; reception is at the main building.

Hotell Siesta (☎ 801 80; info@hotellsiesta.se; Borgmästaregatan 5; budget s/d from Skr615/750, discounted to Skr490/590; ☎) This decent midrange option is right behind Stortorget. Recently renovated standard rooms are bright and attractive, with green-and-yellow décor. Budget rooms are smaller and older, although they're about to be spruced up.

KARLSKRONA



Hotell Aston (☎ 194 70; www.trossohotel.se; Landbrogatan 1; s/d Skr995/1095, discounted to Skr545/645; ☎) This is another smart 3rd-floor place, located centrally. There's a sauna and, if you're lucky, you'll get waffles for breakfast.

First Hotel Ja (☎ 555 60; karlskrona.ja@firsthotels.se; Borgmästaregatan 13; s/d Skr1100/1290, discounted to Skr645/795; ☎) One for shopaholics, this

hotel is located inside the Wachtmeister shopping centre. It offers fairly luxurious rooms, which are comfortable and tastefully decorated, plus there's also a sauna, bar and restaurant.

Park Inn Karlskrona (☎ 36 15 00; www.karlskrona.parkinn.se; Skeppsbrokajen; s/d Skr1245/1245, discounted to Skr745/895; ☎) The Karlskrona is a business

AUTHOR'S CHOICE

STF Turiststation Tjärö (☎ 600 63; tjaro@stfturist.se; beds Skr280, camp sites per person Skr75; ☞ early May–early Sep) This place lies on an idyllic island nature reserve, off the coast of Blekinge between Karlshamn and Karlskrona, with walking trails and peaceful beaches. The hostel is highly recommended; breakfast is available and there's a café and fully licensed restaurant, plus boat and canoe hire. Boats run from Järnavik at least six times daily in summer (return Skr80) – it's a good idea to call the hostel to confirm sailing times.

hotel, conveniently close to the train station. Rooms are dark blue, smart and shipshape, with nautical touches. Staff are very helpful, and there's an Internet connection in the foyer.

Dragsö Camping (☎ 153 54; info@dragsocamping.nu; Dragsövägen; sites Skr160, 2-bed cabins from Skr300, hostel d Skr300; ☞ late Apr–mid-Oct) This large campsite, 2.5km northwest of the town centre, is situated on a scenic bay. There are lots of good facilities, including boat and bicycle hire. Bus 7 stops about a kilometre short of the camping ground.

Eating & Drinking

Nivå (☎ 103 71; Norra Kungsgatan 3; light meals Skr50–120, grill Skr120–225; ☞ closed Sun) Just off Stortorget, this steakhouse has an excellent menu of light, well-priced dishes (nachos, burgers, baguettes, salads, baked potatoes), plus heartier meals from the grill. It's also a very cool bar that gets lively later, until at least 1am.

Två Rum & Kök (☎ 104 22; Södra Smedjegatan 3; fondue Skr100–200; ☞ closed Sun) Another good choice for an evening is this classy place, which is known for its magnificent fondue (minimum two persons); go for savoury meat, fish or vegetable, or pig out on scrumptious chocolate.

Hamnkrogen (☎ 803 36; Skeppsbrokajen 18; lunch Skr70, mains Skr79–175) Hamnkrogen is right by the guest harbour, and has outdoor summer seating; it's favoured by people who've just got off the bobbing boats. It offers pizzas, steaks and grills, but if you fancy something spicier, great tandoori dishes, baltis and biryanis are cooked by the restaurant's Indian chef.

Montmartre (☎ 31 18 33; Ronnebygatan 18; pizza Skr65–80, mains Skr80–160) Taking its cue from the Museum Leonardo da Vinci next door, this upmarket pizza restaurant sells Florentine-influenced food and comes complete with its own art gallery.

Goa (☎ 133 70; Drottninggatan 61; lunch Skr75; ☞ 9.30am–3.30pm Mon–Fri) Veggies and diners with a conscience will love this small, welcoming café, decorated with bright Mexican colours and cacti. It serves tasty lunches of lasagne, soup, salads, quiches and so on, that you can wash down with a healthy smoothie or Fair Trade tea.

Lennarths Konditori (☎ 31 03 32; Norra Kungsgatan 3; ☞ closed Sun) This is an old-fashioned bakery-café, good for coffee and snacks. In summer you can sit by the splashing fountain, or on the secluded terrace upstairs.

Glassiärens Glassbar (☎ 170 05; Stortorget 4; ☞ May–Sep) The huge queues tell you that something special is going on here, and true enough, Glassiären sells some of the best ice cream in the northern hemisphere! You can watch waffle cones being made as you wait.

The **ICA supermarket** and **Systembolaget** are inside the Wachtmeister shopping centre.

Getting There & Around

Ronneby airport (☎ 0457-255 90) is 33km west of Karlskrona; the Flygbuss leaves from Stortorget (Skr75). SAS flies to Stockholm Arlanda, and Stockholmsplanet flies to Stockholm Bromma daily.

The bus and train stations are just north of the town centre. Regional buses are operated by **BlekingeTrafiken** (☎ 0455-569 80; www.blekingetrafiken.se). Regular *Kustbussen* (coast buses) operate between Kalmar, Karlskrona, Karlshamn and Kristianstad.

Svenska Buss runs four times a week from Malmö to Stockholm, calling at Kristianstad, Karlshamn and Karlskrona on the way. Swebus Express service 834 runs twice daily from Malmö to Kalmar, calling at Kristianstad, Karlshamn and Karlskrona.

Direct trains run at least 16 times daily to Karlshamn (Skr59, one hour) and Kristianstad (Skr113, two hours), at least six times daily to Emmaboda (Skr69, 40 minutes), and at least a couple of times to Göteborg (Skr388, five hours). Change at Kristianstad or Emmaboda for Malmö and Lund; at Emmaboda for Kalmar.

Stena Line ferries to Gdynia (Poland) depart from Verkö, 10km east of Karlskrona (take bus 6); see p328 for details.

For a taxi, call **Taxi Karlskrona** (☎ 191 00).

KARLSHAMN

☎ 0454 / pop 30,847

With its quaint cobbled streets and old wooden houses, you'd never guess that this quiet town was once so devilish. Alcoholic drinks, tobacco, snuff and playing cards were produced in great quantities here, and it was a major 19th-century smugglers' den! Karlshamn was also the port from where many Swedes left for America. One of Sweden's biggest free festivals, the **Baltic Festival** (Östersjöfestivalen; ☎ 811 16; balticfestival@karlshamn.se) in late July, sees a quarter of a million people roll in for bands, boat races and a carnival parade.

The **tourist office** (☎ 812 13; www.karlshamn.se; Ronnebygatan 1; ☞ 9am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–6pm Sat, noon–6pm Sun mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 9am–5pm Mon–Fri mid-Aug–mid-Jun) can help with information and bookings. Drottninggatan is where you'll find most services.

Sights

The **utvandrarmonumentet** stands in a park by the harbour, commemorating all the America-bound emigrants. The figures on the monument are characters from Vilhelm Moberg's classic work *The Emigrants* – Karl Oscar, looking forward to the new country, and Kristina, looking back towards her beloved Duvemåla. Nearby, you'll find a 300-year-old **fishing cottage** – open summer only.

The 'culture quarter' **Karlshamns Kulturvarter** (☎ 148 68; Vinkelgatan 8; ☞ noon–5pm Mon–Fri Jun–Aug, 1–4pm Mon–Fri Sep–May) has interesting information about Karlshamn's tobacco and *punsch*-producing history, and some 18th-century merchants' houses.

Sleeping & Eating

STF Vandrarhem Karlshamn (☎ 140 40; stfturistkhamn@hotmail.com; Surbrunnsvägen 1C; beds Skr165) This hostel is on the eastern side of the town grid, near the train station, and offers good rooms, all with private bathrooms. Kids will love the nearby playground, created by children.

First Hotel Carlshamn (☎ 890 00; carlshamn@firsthotels.se; Varvgatan 1; s/d Skr1129/1329, discounted to Skr668/868; P) For high-quality accom-

modation, walk out of the tourist office and across the road into this upmarket hotel. Cushy rooms are clean-lined and modern, and some have harbour views. There's a sauna, 24-hour bar and a top-quality restaurant too.

Gourmet Grön (☎ 164 40; Östra Piren, Biblioteksgatan 6; tapas/buffet Skr70–150; ☞ closed Sun) This award-winning waterside restaurant has wonderful lunch-time and evening buffets, with an emphasis on vegetarian food. Nibble on a ciabatta, tapas-style goodies, or inventive spreads with Tunisian, French, Greek and Italian influences.

Köpmannagården (☎ 317 87; Drottninggatan 88; pizzas around Skr70) For cheaper eats, try this pleasant restaurant and pizzeria with its lovely summer courtyard.

Getting There & Away

The bus and train stations are in the north-eastern part of town. For travel information, see the previous section on Karlskrona.

Lisco Line sails daily between Karlshamn and Klaipėda in Lithuania; see p328 for details.

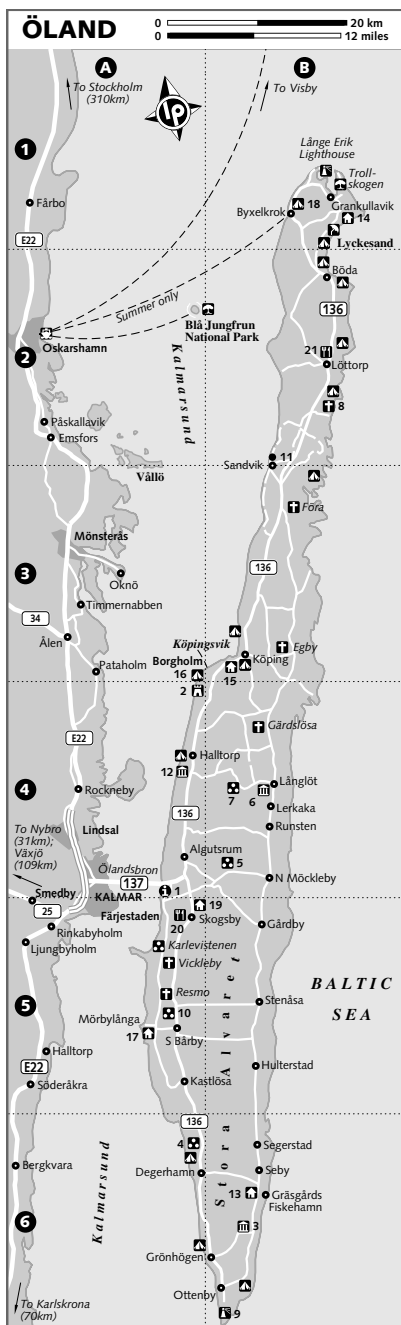
ÖLAND

☎ 0485 / pop 25,000

Like a deranged vision of Don Quixote's, Öland is *covered* in old wooden windmills. Some are spruce, repaired and cherished, others stand forlorn, sails broken and dangling like dead daddy-long-legs. All in all, it's a surreal scene.

At 137km long and 16km wide, Öland is Sweden's smallest province. It's also a hugely popular summer destination for Swedes – even the king and queen have a summer house here. The island gets around two million visitors annually, mostly in July. Around 90% of them flock to the golden shores in the northern half of the island to bask and bathe. If you're looking for more than a beach holiday, it's the south that holds the most surprises. All of Öland, from Färjestaden southwards is a Unesco World Heritage site, designated for its unique agricultural landscape which has been in continuous use from the Stone Age to today.

There are surprisingly few hotels, but you can stay in innumerable private rooms (booked through the tourist offices), at 27



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campsites and at least a dozen hostels (book ahead). Camping between midsummer and mid-August can cost up to Skr250 per site. The island has developed a reputation as a foodie's delight, and there are lots of excellent restaurants.

Information

The bridge from Kalmar lands you on the island just north of Färjestaden, where there is a large and well-stocked **tourist office** (☎ 56 06 00; www.olandstourist.com; ☎ 8.30am-8.30pm Mon-Sat, 9.30am-7pm Sun Jul, 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun May, Jun & early Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr; closed late-Dec-early Jan) at the Träffpunkt Öland centre. Staff can book accommodation throughout the island (including cottages and cabins for a Skr75 fee). Model monks and ring forts illustrate the island's history in the **Historium** inside the tourist office, and there's a **Naturum** (Swedish only) for wildlife spotters.

There's also a smaller tourist office in Borgholm (see opposite).

Getting There & Around

BICYCLE

There are no bicycle lanes on the bridge between Öland and Kalmar, so cyclists take their lives into their own hands! Cyclists aren't allowed on the bridge in summer – instead there's a free *Cykelbuss* service to get you across (roughly hourly; enquire at the tourist office in Kalmar).

The following shops hire out bicycles in summer for around Skr100 per day, or about Skr400 a week:

Byxelkroks Cykeluthyrning (☎ 070-579 61 00;

Hammkontoret; Byxelkrok)

ERSA-Cykeluthyrning (☎ 0708-17 75 50; Ekvägen 1; Färjestaden)

Hallbergs Hojjar (☎ 109 40; Köpmangatan; Borgholm)

BOAT

From mid-June to mid-August, MS *Solsund* (☎ 070-621 42 60) sails daily from Byxelkrok (northwest Öland) and Oskarshamn (on the mainland 60km north of Kalmar). One-way tickets cost Skr150/100 per adult/seven-16 years; a car and up to five people costs Skr550, and a bicycle Skr50.

BUS

Silverlinjen (☎ 0485-261 11; www.silverlinjen.se in Swedish) runs three daily direct buses from Öland to Stockholm (Skr270, 6½ hours), calling at Kalmar – reservations are essential.

Buses connect all the main towns on the island from Kalmar, and run every hour or two to Borgholm (Skr48, 50 minutes) and Mörbylånga (Skr32, one hour). A few buses per day run to Byxelkrok and Grankullavik (both Skr88, around 2¼ hours), in the far north of the island. Services to the south are poor, with some improvement from May to August.

BORGHOLM & AROUND

The most happening town on Öland is Borgholm, the 'capital' of the island (it's a small island!). It's a real family place, with every other shop selling flip-flops, plastic octopuses and ice cream. The most dramatic sight is the enormous ruined castle on its outskirts.

The **tourist office** (☎ 890 00; Sandgatan 25; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Sat Jul, 9am-5.30pm, 10am-3pm Sat Jun & early Aug, 9am-12.15pm & 1-5.30pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is at the bus station. Banks and other services are in Storgatan.

Sights

Northern Europe's largest ruined castle, **Borgholms Slott** (☎ 123 33; www.borgholmslott.se; adult/12-17yr/Skr50/20; ☎ 10am-6pm May-Aug, 10am-4pm Apr & Sep), looms just south of town. This epic limestone structure was finally burnt and abandoned early in the 18th century, after being used as a dye works. There's a very good museum inside and a nature reserve nearby. The ruins are a frequent summer concert venue, and there are children's activities between late June and mid-August.

Sweden's most famous 'summer house', **Solliden Palace** (☎ 153 55; adult/7-17yr/Skr60/30; ☎ 11am-6pm May-mid-Sep), 2.5km south of the town centre, is used by the royal family. Its exceptional gardens are open to the public and are well worth a wander.

VIDA Museum & Konsthall (☎ 774 40; www.vida.museum.com; adult/under 15yr/Skr40/free; ☎ 10am-7pm Jul, 10am-5pm May, Jun, Aug & Sep, 10am-5pm Sat & Sun only Apr & Oct-Dec) is a strikingly modern museum and art gallery in Halltorp, about 9km south of Borgholm. Its best halls are devoted to two of Sweden's top glass designers.

On the east coast, about 13km southeast of Borgholm, is **Gårdslösa kyrka** (☎ 11am-5pm mid-May-mid-Sep), the best-preserved medieval church (1138) on Öland, with reasonably intact wall and ceiling paintings.

Sleeping

The tourist office can help you find rooms round town.

Ebbas Vandrarhem & Trädgårdscafé (☎ 103 73; rum@ebbas.se; Storgatan 12; lunch Skr75, 2-/4-bed rm Skr530/880; ☎ May-Sep) Right in the thick of things, Ebbas friendly café has a small STF hostel above it. Five of the agreeable lemon-yellow rooms overlook a big garden, and four the bustling pedestrianised main street. There's a kitchen for self-caterers...or just pop downstairs for a decent choice of hot and cold grub, served until 9pm.

Villa Sol (☎ 56 25 52; www.villasol.nu; Slottsgatan 30; low season s/d from Skr330/500, high season s/d from Skr500/650) Villa Sol has a super garden and small but thoughtfully decorated rooms. Each has a different colour scheme – we like the Yellow Room best, for its sunny feel and private balcony. Prices exclude breakfast, but there is a guest kitchen. Rooms with private bathrooms cost around Skr200 extra.

Guntorps Herrgård (☎ 130 00; www.guntorpsherrgard.se; Guntorpsgatan; s/d from Skr895/1095) This is a

delightful old farmhouse east of town. The accommodation is excellent, with either pale romantic rooms, or brash modern black-white-and-red colour schemes. There's the added drawcard of a huge smörgåsbord (Skr175 per person; ☺ from 6pm daily) offering superb samples of local dishes.

Hotell Borgholm (☎ 770 60; www.hotellborgholm.se; Trädgårdsgatan 15; d Skr990-1595; ♿ ♿) After a terrible fire in 2004, the Borgholm closed for complete refurbishment. At the time of writing, it had just reopened, shinier and more stylish than ever. Boutique rooms are done out in super-cool Swedish style, all spotlights, sharp lines and serene hues. The owner is Karin Fransson, one of Sweden's best chefs – so, as you can imagine, the restaurant here is first class.

Kapelludden Camping & Stugor (☎ 56 07 70; Sandgatan 27; info@kapelludden.se; sites low/high season Skr170/275; 6-bed cabins Skr1220, high season weekly rental only; ♿ ♿) This beachside campsite is the handiest, just near the tourist office. It's a huge place (some 450 sites) and has five-star, family-oriented facilities, but it can get rowdy in summer.

Eating & Drinking

Nya Konditoriet (☎ 100 11; Storgatan 28) This busy old-fashioned bakery-café serves good sandwiches and pastries.

Pubben (☎ 124 15; Storgatan 18) There are snacks and light meals here, but mainly people come to this English-style pub for the beer. With genial service and a summery terrace, it's the most heaving bar in town.

There are supermarkets on Storgatan, and a central **Systembolaget** (Östra Kyrkogatan 19).

NORTHERN ÖLAND

At Sandvik on the west coast, about 30km north of Borgholm, **Sandviksvarn** (☎ 261 72; www.sandviksvarn.com; pizzas from Skr65; ☺ noon-8pm May-Sep, to 10pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) is a Dutch-style windmill and one of the largest in the world. In summer, you can climb its seven storeys for good views across to the mainland. There's a restaurant with old barrels for seats where you can try the local speciality, *lufsa* (baked pork and potato, Skr65); and an adjacent pizzeria.

Källa kyrka, at a little harbour about 36km northeast of Borgholm, off road 136, is a fine example of Öland's medieval fortified churches. The broken **rune stone** inside shows

WINDMILL MANIA

Once, the little island of Öland had more windmills than Holland! During the 1750s, the wooden mills suddenly became symbols of wealth and power, and every aspiring man-about-town had to have one. Öland's oak forests vanished under the mill-building craze, and soon around 2000 sets of sails were spinning across the island.

By the 1950s, the mills had become obsolete and most fell into disrepair. Nowadays, the 400 or so remaining windmills are recognised as unique historical monuments, and are lovingly restored and tended by local windmill associations.

You'll see two basic types of windmill on Öland: an early style known as 'German' or 'post', where the whole mill was turned into the wind; and later versions known as 'Dutch' or 'tower' windmills, where just the cap revolved.

the Christian Cross growing from the pagan tree of life.

Grankullavik, in the far north, has sandy beaches and dense summer crowds; **Lyckesand** is one of the island's best beaches and the strangely twisted trees and ancient barrows at the nearby **Trollskogen** nature reserve are well worth a visit.

Grankullaviks Vandrarhem (☎ 240 40, fax 24010; dm from Skr150; ☺ May-Sep), a SVIF hostel, is superbly situated on the beachfront and has a kitchen, restaurant and bakery.

Neptuni Camping (☎ 284 95; www.neptunicamp.se; Småskogsvägen; sites Skr150, cabins from Skr400) This wild and grassy place is handy for people jumping off the ferry in Byxelkrok, and also has good amenities.

Lammet & Grisen (☎ 203 50; Lötörp; ☺ from 5pm), 10km south of Böda, is popular for its all-you-can-eat evenings (Skr245), with whole spit-roasted lamb and pork on the menu and live entertainment. The restaurant has recently been renovated, and it's very family-friendly.

Bus 106 runs a route to the north from Borgholm.

CENTRAL ÖLAND

Fortresses, a zoo and an excellent farm village are central Öland's biggest sights. The largest settlement is Färjestaden (Ferry

Town), where you can find banks and services; the town rather lost its purpose in life after the bridge was built, although an effort has been made to rejuvenate the old jetty.

Ölands Djurpark (☎ 392 22; admission Skr220; ☺ 10am-6pm May-Aug, to 8pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-4pm Sep) is a zoo, amusement park and water park favoured by families, just north of the bridge near the tourist office. Kids under 1m tall get in for free.

The largest Iron Age ring fort in Sweden, **Gråborg**, was built as the Roman Empire was crumbling. Its monumental walls measure 640m around and are seriously impressive, even though much of the stonework was plundered for later housing. After falling into disuse, the fort sprang back to life around 1200, when the adjacent **St Knut's chapel** (now a ruin) was also built. The Gråborg complex is about 8km east of Färjestaden, just off the Norra Möckleby road; you really need your own transport to get there.

The vast **Ismantorp fortress**, with the remains of 88 houses and nine mysterious gates, is deep in the woods, 5km west of the Himmelsberga museum. It's an undisturbed fortress ruin, clearly showing how the village's tiny huts were encircled by the outer wall (Eketorp, see right, is an imaginative reconstruction of similar remains). The area, just south of the Ekerum-Långlöt road, can be freely visited at any time.

A 17km **hiking trail** leads from Gråborg to Ismantorp fortress.

The best open-air museum on Öland is **Himmelsberga** (☎ 56 10 22; adult/under 15yr Skr55/free; ☺ 10am-5.30pm mid-May-mid-Aug), a farm village on the east coast at Långlöt. Its quaint cottages are fully furnished. There's hay in the mangers and slippers by the door; it's all so well done you feel as though the inhabitants have just popped out for a minute. There's also a dinky café and a modern art gallery.

STF Vandrarhem Ölands Skogsby (☎ 383 95; info@vandrarhemsby.se; dm/s/dSkr140/200/280; ☺ mid-Apr-Sep; ♿), a charming STF hostel, claims to be Sweden's oldest (it dates from 1934). It's based in a flowery old wooden house, 3km southeast of Färjestaden. The Färjestaden-Mörbylånga bus 103 (Skr18) runs past at least five times daily.

There are a few good eateries at the old jetty in Färjestaden, including **Café Restaurang Bojen** (☎ 310 37; mains Skr90-140; ☺ from 11.30am Jun-Aug, shorter hr rest of yr), where you can sam-

ple fresh fish dishes or try Öland's speciality, *kroppkakor* (potato dumplings stuffed with pork), served with lingonberry jam and cream. There's a large sunny terrace with wonderful views over Kalmarsund.

SOUTHERN ÖLAND

The southern half of the island has made it onto Unesco's World Heritage List. Its treeless, limestone landscape is littered with the relics of human settlement and conflict. Besides linear villages, Iron Age fortresses and tombs, this area is also a natural haven for plants and wildlife.

Birds, insects and flowers populate the unusual limestone plain of **Stora Alvaret**. Bird-spotting is best in May and June, which is also when the Alvar's rock roses and rare orchids burst into bloom. The plain occupies most of the inland area of southern Öland, and can be crossed by road from Mörbylånga or Degerhamn.

The ancient grave fields of **Mysinge** and **Gettlinge**, stretching for kilometres on the ridge alongside the main Mörbylånga-Degerhamn road, include burial sites and standing stones from the Stone Age to the late Iron Age. The biggest single monument is the Bronze Age tomb **Mysinge hög**, 4km east of Mörbylånga, from where there are views of almost the whole World Heritage site.

If you can't picture how the ring forts looked in their prime, take a trip to **Eketorp** (☎ 66 20 00; www.eketorp.se; adult/7-14yr Skr70/30; ☺ 10am-5pm May-Aug, to 6pm Jul-mid-Aug). The site has been partly reconstructed to show what the fortified villages, which went in and out of use over the centuries, were like in medieval times. Children will like the scamping pigs, and the fort is particularly fun when there are re-enactment days – phone for details. Excavations at the site have revealed over 26,000 artefacts, including three tonnes of human bones, some of the finds are on display at the little **museum** inside. There are free **tours** in English at 1pm daily from midsummer to the end of August. The fort is 6km northeast of Grönhögen; there are several buses (summer only) from Mörbylånga.

On the east coast, about 5km north of Eketorp, **Gräsgårds Fiskehamn** is a delightful little fishing harbour. A little further north, there's an 11th-century **rune stone** at Seby, and in Segerstad there are **standing stones**, **stone circles** and over 200 graves.

Öland's southernmost point is a curious place. A **nature reserve** (☞ 10am-8pm mid-Jun-early Aug, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Easter-mid-Jun & late Aug-Sep), almost surrounded by sea, it's popular with families and bird-spotters. Pay Skr50 to park, then you're free to wander round the **Naturum**, snack in the café-restaurant, or climb Scandinavia's tallest lighthouse, **Långe Jan** (42m).

SLEEPING & EATING

MörbyVandrarhem & Lågrishotell (☎ 49393; morby@hotelskansan.com; Bruksgatan; hostel 1-2/-4/-8-bed rm Skr300/400/600/800, hotel s/d from Skr400/600; ☞ May-Aug; P) In the small village of Mörbylånge, this has a mixture of hostel- and hotel-style accommodation. It's great for families, with a nearby park and beaches, and bikes for hire. There's also a restaurant on site.

Kajutan Hotell & Vandrarhem (☎ 408 10; kajutan@hotelskansan.com; lunch Skr69, mains Skr100-180, 1-2/-4/-6-bed room Skr300/400/600/800, hotel s/d Skr690/890) Kajutan is down by Mörbylånge harbour. The new management were revamping the rooms for the 2006 season – although when they'll find time out from the busy bar-restaurant is anyone's guess! Summer lunches, served in a sunny courtyard, are particularly popular.

Gammalsbygårdens Gästgiveri (☎ 66 30 51; info@gammalsbygarden.se; s/d Skr600/800; ☞ closed Mon & Jan-Feb; P) A graceful country farmhouse on the east coast, 5km north of Eketorp. Rooms (all doubles except one) are individually decorated, with neat whitewashed walls, a couple have private balconies. The food (mains around Skr160), mostly fish and venison, is also very good – reservations are a must.

Restaurang Fågel Blå (☎ 66 12 01; mains Skr90-130; ☞ 11am-5pm Jun-Aug, to 10pm Wed & Fri Jul) This super café-restaurant is by the lighthouse in the far south. The sharply designed building offers unparalleled sea views. Scoff à la carte local favourites like venison, herring and *kroppkakor*, or roll up for the twice-weekly evening buffet in July.

There are supermarkets in Mörbylånge, and a Systembolaget.

ÖSTERGÖTLAND

The Göta Canal threads diagonally across Östergötland, with the region's main towns beaded along its banks. These are generally old 19th-century industrial heartlands, full of fascinating architecture, their buildings

given new leases of life as heritage centres, restaurants and concert halls. The west of the region, bordered by the mighty Lake Vättern, fits a different pattern. Its flat green countryside is steeped in ancient history, and includes both Sweden's most impressive rune stone and the unmissable medieval town of Vadstena.

NORRKÖPING

☎ 011 / pop 124,410

With typical Swedish cleverness and cunning design, Norrköping's closed-down mills and disused canals have been superbly regenerated – like Manchester in England... only beautiful! It's well worth stopping to gaze at the waterfalls, locks and stunning buildings, which now house museums, cafés and a concert hall. Another key attraction is the animal park at Kolmården, some 30km to the northeast.

The industrial development of Norrköping began in the 17th century, but really took off in the late 19th century when textile mills and factories sprang up alongside the swift-flowing Motala ström. Seventy percent of Sweden's textiles were once made in Norrköping, but the last mill closed in the 1970s.

Information

Banks and ATMs can be found along Drottninggatan.

Forex (☎ 0200-22 22 20; www.forex.se; Drottninggatan 46; ☞ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat) Money exchange.

Library (Stadsbiblioteket; Södra Promenaden 105; ☞ 8am-8pm Mon-Thu, 8am-6pm Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, noon-4pm Sun) With free Internet access.

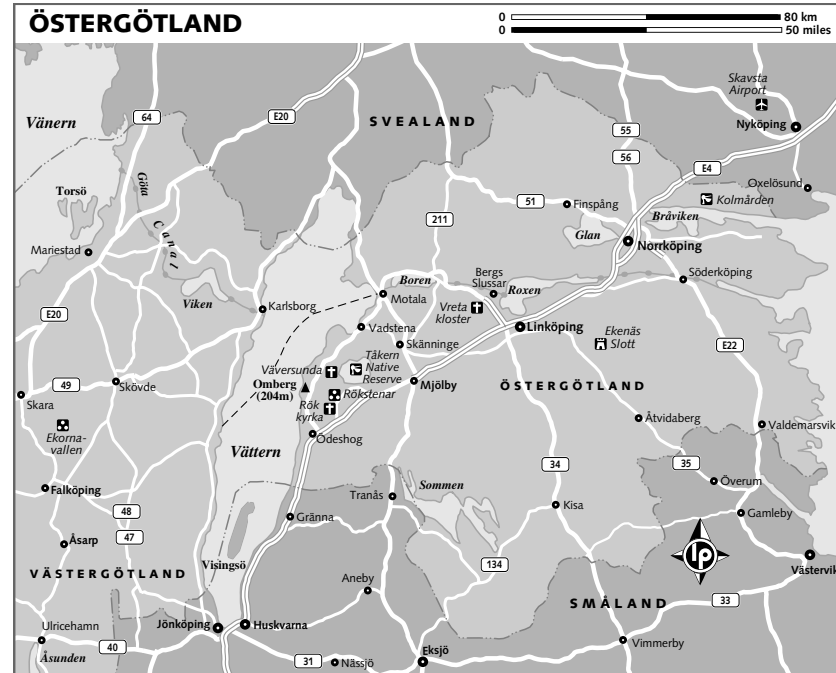
Norrköpings Biljard och IT Café (☎ 16 34 00; Prästgatan 48; per 25 mins Skr25) Internet access.

Tourist office (☎ 15 50 00; www.destination.norrkoping.se; Dalsgatan 16; ☞ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat & Sun Jul-mid-Aug, shorter hr rest of the yr)

Sights & Activities

Industrilandskapet is the well-preserved industrial area near the river. Pedestrian walkways and bridges lead past magnificent former factory buildings and around the ingenious system of locks and canals. The most thunderous waterfall is **Kungsfallet**, near the islet Laxholmen.

Within the area are several interesting museums, all with free admission. The excellent and unique **Arbetets Museum** (☎ 18 98 00;



Laxholmen; ☞ 11am-5pm) documents working life. There's one permanent display about Alva Carlsson, a typical worker in the former cotton mill, and numerous inventive temporary exhibitions. The seven-sided building, designed in the 1920s, is a work of art in itself – go and see!

Over the bridge, **Stadsmuseum** (☎ 15 26 20; Holmbrögränd; ☞ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun) delves into the town's industrial past. Some of the machinery is still operational and there's a great café here.

Holmens Museum (☎ 12 89 92; ☞ 9am-12.30pm Tue & Thu) describes the history of Louis de Geer's paper factory, which was founded in the early 17th century.

A modern addition to the riverside scenery is the extraordinary 1300-seat **Louis de Geer Konserthus** (☎ 15 50 30; www.louisdegeer.com; Dalsgatan 15), in a former paper mill. Still containing the original balconies, it's a superb venue which is used for orchestral, jazz and pop concerts.

Other Sights & Activities

Konstmuseum (☎ 15 26 00; Kristinaplatsen; adult/under 18yr Skr40/free; ☞ noon-4pm Tue & Thu-Sun, noon-8pm Wed

mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-5pm Wed & Fri-Sun, 11am-8pm Tue & Thu Sep-May), the large art museum south of the centre, has important early-20th-century works, including examples of modernism and cubism.

For great city views, climb the 68m-high **Rådhusornet** (Town Hall Tower; Drottninggatan; Skr30; ☞ 3pm Mon-Fri Jul).

Two kilometres west of the city centre, near the river, are good examples of **Bronze Age rock carvings**, with an adjacent museum, **Hällristningsmuseet** (☎ 16 55 45; www.brin.se; Himmelstalund; admission free, guided tours adult/under 18yr Skr30/free; ☞ 11am-6pm mid-Jun-Jul, 10am-4.30pm May-mid-Jun & Aug). Guided tours of the rock carvings take place at 2pm in July. Take bus 115 to Riksvägen, then walk the last 500m.

In July, the tiny **vintage tram** No 1 runs a short guided tour through the town centre. It leaves from outside the train station at 5pm and 5.30pm Monday, Wednesday and Friday (Skr40).

Kolmården

Kolmården **zoo** (☎ 24 90 00; www.kolmarden.com; ☞ 10am-6pm Jul, 10am-5pm May, Jun & Aug, Sat & Sun

Sep) is billed as the largest in Europe and has about 1000 animals from all continents and climates of the world. The complex is divided into two areas: the main **Djurparken** (zoo; adult/4-15yr Skr200/115) with a dolphin show, and **Safariparken** (adult/4-15yr Skr110/80) – if you don't have your own car, there's a safari park **bus tour** (adult/4-15yr Skr30/15). A combined ticket for the zoo and safari park costs Skr260/155. The cable car (Skr80/40) around the park gives a better view of the forest than of the animals.

A separate **Tropicarium** (☎ 39 52 50; adult/4-15yr Skr70/45; ☎ 9am-7pm Jul, 10am-6pm Aug, 10am-4pm or 5pm Sep-Jun) opposite the entrance has spiders, sharks, alligators and snakes and completes the attraction.

You'll need all day to take the zoo in fully. Kolmården is 35km north of Norrköping, on the north shore of Bråviken (regular bus 432 or 433 from Norrköping; Skr60, 40 minutes).

Sleeping CAMPING & HOSTELS

Hörnans Hotell & Vandrarhem (☎ 16 58 90; cnr Hörngatan & Sankt Persgatan; dm Skr200, s/d Skr385/700) This is the only budget option right in the heart of town. Rooms are above a busy pub-restaurant, so after a night out you haven't far to go. Most were renovated in 2005, and all come with cable TV.

STF Vandrarhem Abborreberg (☎ 31 93 44; abborreberg@telia.com; dm Skr175; ☎ Apr-mid-Oct; P)

Sweet-toothed hostellers will appreciate this place, with its associated ice-cream parlour. It's beautifully situated in a coastal pine wood 6km east of town, with accommodation in huts scattered through the surrounding park, and is definitely worth the trek. Take bus 111 to Lindö.

Himmelstalunds Camping (☎ 17 11 90; info@norrko-pingscamping.com; Campingvägen; sites per night & per person Skr40, cabins from Skr500) This little campsite is on the south bank of Motala ström, approximately 2.5km from the city. It's short on whistles and bells, but there's a small café on site. Public transport is nonexistent.

Also recommended is **STF Vandrarhem Turistgården** (☎ 10 11 60; info@turistgarden.se; Ingelstogatan 31; dm/s/d Skr155/240/340; P), a pleasing little hostel about 800m north of the train station.

HOTELS

Hotell Drott (☎ 18 00 60; www.hotelldrott.com; Tunbindaregatan 19; s/d Skr695/860, discounted to Skr450/630; P) Staff are very friendly at Hotell Drott. Breakfast includes meatballs(!), light evening meals are an option, and there's also a kitchen for self-caterers. Rooms are old-fashioned but comfy.

Hotell Centric (☎ 12 90 30; info@centrichotel.se; s/d Skr695/825, discounted to Skr450/640; Gamla Rådstugugatan 18; P) There are pleasant large rooms in Norrköping's oldest hotel.

Hotell Isabell (☎ 16 90 82; Vattengränd 7; s/d Skr480/580, discounted to Skr380/480) This is another cheapish hotel, but reception hours are limited, so phone ahead.

Scandic Hotel Norrköping City (☎ 495 52 00; norrko-pingcity@scandic-hotels.com; Slottsgatan 99; s/d from Skr890/990, discounted to Skr495/950; P) Near the train station, the Scandic City offers up-market lodgings, although rooms are more chintzy than usual for this chain. There's a sauna and Jacuzzi, plus a great sun terrace with views over the river.

Elite Grand Hotel (☎ 36 41 00; info.grandhotel@elite.se; Tyska Torget 2; s/d from Skr820/1540, discounted to Skr620/975; P) The top choice in town is this classy hotel, where the stylish foyer area hints at the quality to be found in the hotel's rooms. There's a spa in the cellar, plus a restaurant and a Bishop's Arms pub attached.

Eating & Drinking

Källaren Bacchus (☎ 10 07 40; Gamla Torget 4; lunch Skr63, mains Skr120-220) This popular restaurant and pub has a great garden courtyard in sum-

mer. In winter, repair to the vaulted cellar for some snug dining. Steak is a speciality, and there are tasty fish dishes.

Pappa Grappa Bar & Trattorian (☎ 18 00 14; Gamla Rådstugugatan 26; mains Skr120-230; 6pm-1am Mon-Sat) This is an authentic Italian restaurant with an intimate air. There's a full range of antipasto, bruschetta, and meat and fish mains, from vegetarian *tortellini verdi* to rich lobster lasagne. Choose between 120 sorts of grappa while bopping to live weekend DJs.

Guskelov (☎ 13 44 00; Dalsgatan 13; lunch Skr69, mains Skr100-190; ☎ Tue-Sat from 6pm, plus lunch Mon-Fri winter) With its fancy Art Nouveau front, this is an elegant-looking choice that won't completely break the bank. It's cosy, with a menu of mainly meaty mains, such as burgers, steaks and grills. It turns into a nightclub on Friday and Saturday, with live DJs from all over Sweden.

Restaurang Sing Thai (☎ 18 61 88; Trädgårdsgatan 15; meals Skr95-180; ☎ noon-10pm) Sing Thai serves a range of quite pricey Thai meals, including curries, satays, seafood and noodle dishes, although the lunch deal is good value at Skr65.

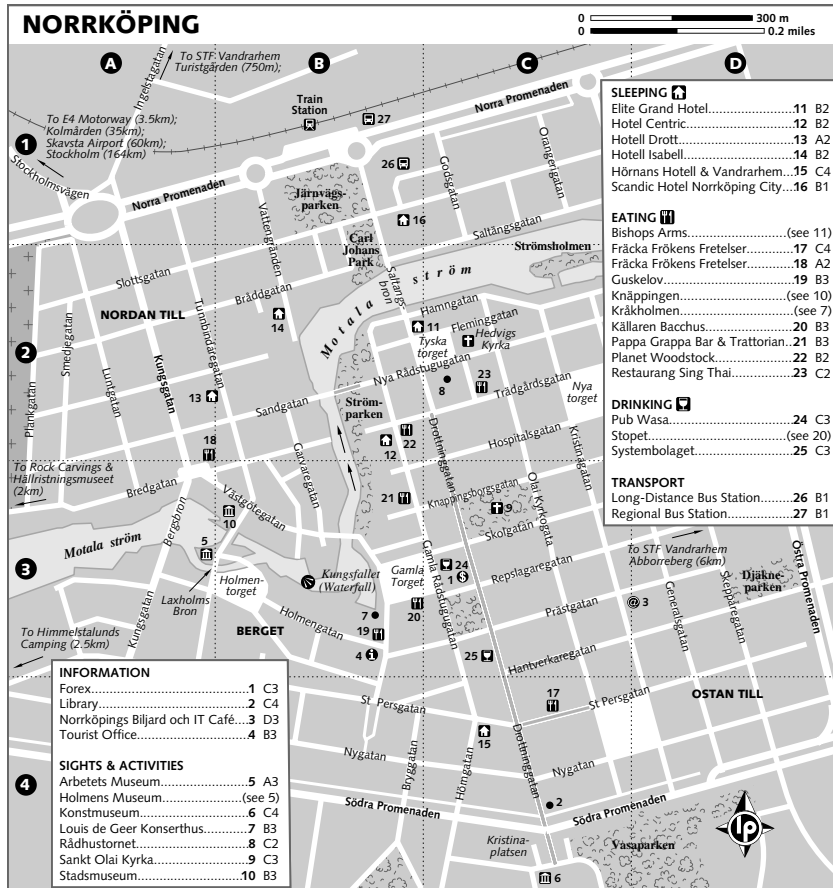
Kräkholmen (☎ 15 50 60; Dalsgatan 15; lunch Skr65; ☎ 11am-3pm Mon-Fri) In summer, Kräkholmen (part of the Louis de Geer Concert Hall) is a fantastic lunch option. You get to sit at a terrace in the industrial area and consume light meals and ice-creams to the sound of the crashing waterfall.

Knäppingen (☎ 10 74 45; www.knaepingen.se; Västgötegatan 21; lunch from Skr75; ☎ closed Mon) The café in the Stadsmuseum makes a refreshing change, offering focaccia, taco, crêpes and better veggie options than boring pasta. In summer, you can sit in a sunny courtyard tucked between several stately old mills.

Fräcka Frökens Frestelser Kungsgatan (☎ 23 88 23, Kungsgatan 43); Sankt Persgatan (☎ 23 96 67; Sankt Persgatan 101) There are two branches of this cool café, offering good coffee, fancy teas (a cup of strawberry-and-cream, anyone?), sandwiches, salads and cakes. Both have outdoor seating areas.

For cheap meals late at night, there's always **Planet Woodstock** (☎ 18 81 11; Gamla Rådstugugatan 11; meals around Skr60; ☎ until at least 11pm) a slightly grungy place with an extensive menu of bagels, baked potatoes and hot dishes like moussaka and lasagne.

A favourite drinking spot is **Stopet** (☎ 10 07 40; Gamla Torget), an atmospheric cellar pub that



fills up after the locals have finished work. Another spot that gets busy after office hours is nearby **Pub Wasa** (☎ 18 26 05; Gamla Rådstugugatan). The **Bishop's Arms** (☎ 36 41 20; Tyska Torget 2), at the Grand Hotel, is a good English-style pub where you can while away an hour or two, sitting outside with a beer and a great view of the river.

The blocks between Drottninggatan and Olai Kyrkogata contain big shopping centres full of chain stores and supermarkets. For alcohol, go to **Systembolaget** (Drottninggatan 50B).

Getting There & Away

Sweden's third-largest airport (Nyköping Skavsta) is 60km away – see p323 for details. To get there take the train to Nyköping, then catch a local bus.

The regional bus station is next to the train station, and long-distance buses leave from

a terminal across the road. **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) has very frequent services to Stockholm (Skr110, 2¼ hours) and Jönköping (Skr140, 2½ hours), and several services daily to Göteborg (Skr216, five hours) and Kalmar (Skr170, four hours). **Svenska Buss** (☎ 0771-67 67 67; www.svenskabuss.se in Swedish) runs similar, though less frequent, routes.

Norrköping is on the main north–south railway line, and SJ trains depart every two hours for Stockholm (Skr193, 1½ hours) and Malmö (Skr519, four hours). Kustpilen SJ trains run roughly every two hours, north to Nyköping (Skr75, 40 minutes) and south to Linköping (Skr43, 25 minutes).

Getting Around

Minimum fare on Norrköping's urban transport is Skr20. Trams cover the city and

are the quickest option for short hops, especially along Drottninggatan from the train station.

For a taxi, ring **Taxi Norrköping** (☎ 10 10 00).

SÖDERKÖPING

☎ 0121 / pop 14,095

Söderköping, 17km southeast of Norrköping, is a delightful town in which to spend a few hours. Admire its quaint churches and tiny wooden houses, meander the quayside, or use it as the starting place for a trip along the Göta Canal.

Sights & Activities

Staff at the **tourist office** (☎ 181 60; www.soderkoeping.se; Margaretagatan 19; ☎ 10am–7pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat & Sun Jul, 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, 10am–4pm Sat Jun & Aug, 10am–4pm Mon–Fri Sep–May) can help you plan an exploration of the Göta Canal, including cycling or walking along part of it, or cruising some or all of its length.

The quaintest area is **Drothems kvarteren**, where there are two medieval churches. **St Laurentii Kyrkan** is the most impressive, with its ridiculously pointy Gothic spires, wooden-shingled bell tower and 11th-century rune stone. The 14th-century **Drothems Kyrka** is a more homely affair.

If you want to know more about the town's history, visit the little **Stadsmuseum** (☎ 214 84; Gamla Skolgatan 6; admission free; ☎ 10am–4pm Jun–Aug, 10am–4pm Mon–Fri Sep–May). Cross the canal from Slussgränd and climb the steps to the top of 78m-high **Ramundberget** for a great view. The town boasts the world's oldest existing **dry dock**, by the canal.

Sleeping & Eating

STF Vandrarhem Mangelgården (☎ 102 13; Skönbergagatan 48; dm Skr160; ☎ May–Aug; P) Next door to the camping ground is this STF hostel, in a lovely 18th-century wooden building.

Söderköpings Brunn (☎ 109 00; info@soderkopingsbrunn.se; Skönbergagatan 35; s/d from Skr1375/1800, discounted to Skr1145/1600; P) Söderköping enjoyed a brief spell as a health resort, and you can continue the tradition at this large, luxurious spa, dating from the 1770s and full of old-world class. It offers quality accommodation, pretty grounds and a top-notch restaurant; the company also run Göta Canal boat trips in July.

Korskullens Camping (☎ 216 21; korskullenscamp@hotmail.com; sites Skr140, cabins & chalets from Skr350;

☎ mid-May–mid-Sep) This campsite has a pretty set-up just off the E22 motorway southeast of the centre, with green areas, a windmill and a café. Bike hire is also available (per day Skr100).

La Uva (☎ 103 38; Rådhusorget; lunch Skr69, tapas Skr35–80) By the dinky town hall, La Uva is a great Spanish restaurant with around 30 scrumptious snackettes on its tapas menu. There's live jazz and blues music outdoors in summer.

Cafés and restaurants line the canalside. Try **Bondens** (☎ 105 42; Kanalhamnen; meals Skr80–120), a super little creperie with a pleasant woody interior and outdoor seating right by the water.

Getting There & Around

The bus stop is near the tourist office, on the E22. Local buses run once or twice per hour to Norrköping (Skr40, 30 minutes), and Swebus Express runs nine times daily to Jönköping and in the other direction to Stockholm, and three times daily south along the coast to Västervik, Oskarshamn and Kalmar.

Hire bikes at the **B&B Slussen** (☎ 155 46; Slussgränd 10; per day/week Skr100/500), by the canal.

LINKÖPING

☎ 013 / pop 136,912

Linköping is best known for its splendid medieval cathedral, which is definitely worth stopping to admire. It's also infamous for an unhappy historical event, the 'bloodbath of Linköping'. Following the Battle of Stångebro (1598), many of King Sigismund's defeated Catholic army were executed in the town, leaving Duke Karl and his Protestant forces in full control of Sweden.

Linköping is now quite a modern, industrial city (manufacturer Saab is the major employer), but pockets of its past survive in churches, castle, museums and the streets around Hunnebergsgatan and Storgatan.

Information

There are banks and other services around Stora Torget.

Gamer Palace (Drottninggatan 36; per hr Skr19;

☎ until at least 8pm) Internet access.

Library (Stadsbiblioteket; ☎ 20 66 03; Östgöttagatan 5;

☎ 10am–6pm Mon–Fri, 11am–3pm Sat, plus 11am–3pm Sun Sep–Apr) A striking new library, with free Internet access (bring ID) and an excellent café.

THE GÖTA CANAL

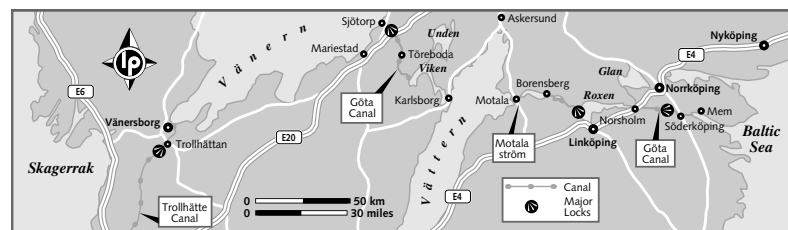
The Göta Canal is one of the country's biggest attractions as well as its greatest civil engineering feat. Idling along in a boat or cycling the towpaths is a wonderful way to see Götland's countryside.

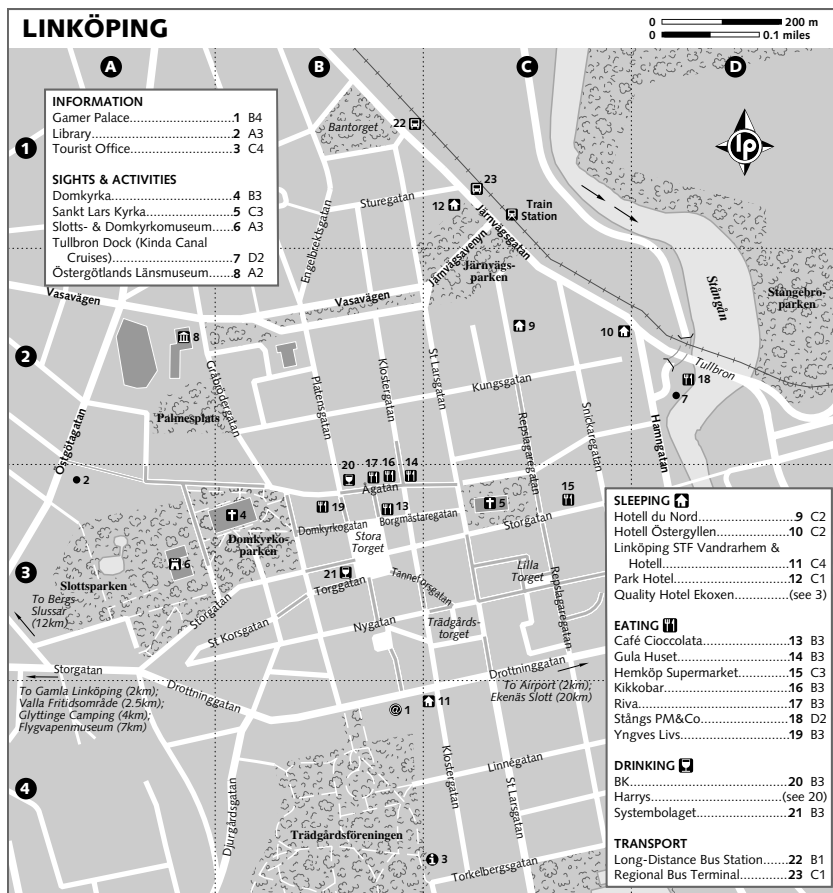
The canal joins the North Sea with the Baltic Sea, and links the great lakes Vättern and Vänern. Its total length is 190km, although only around 87km is human-made – the rest is rivers and lakes. It was built between 1802 and 1832 by a team of some 60,000 soldiers, and provided a hugely valuable transport and trade link between Sweden's east and west coasts.

There are two sections to the canal: the eastern section from Mem (southeast of Norrköping) to Motala, (north of Vadstena on Vättern); and the western section from Karlsborg (on Vättern) to Sjötorp (on the shores of Vänern). The Göta Canal system is then linked to the sea by the Trollhätte Canal, in Västergötland. Along these stretches of the canal are towpaths, used in earlier times by horses and oxen pulling barges. Nowadays these paths are used by walkers and cyclists, with the occasional canalside youth hostel breaking the journey.

Boat trips are obviously a favourite way to experience the canal. You can go on a four- or six-day cruise of its entire length, travelling from Stockholm to Göteborg (or vice versa) and stopping to enjoy the wayside attractions; see p330 for more information. Alternatively, there are a number of shorter, cheaper boat trips along sections of the canal – any tourist office in the area should be able to advise you. Staff can also tell you about canoeing, cycling or even horse-riding along certain parts.

A good website for information about possible activities and packages on the Göta canal is www.gotakanal.se.





Tourist office (☎ 20 68 35; www.linkoping.se; Klostergatan 68) Inside Quality Hotel Ekoxen. Open 24hr, but staffed only during office hours.

Sights

GAMLA LINKÖPING & VALLA FRITIDSOMRÅDE

The town's best attractions are just outside the centre. Half a million people flock to **Gamla Linköping** (☎ 12 11 10; admission free; bus 202 or 214, Skr20), 2km west of the city. One of the biggest living-museum villages in Sweden, it consists of six streets and around 90 quaint 19th-century houses. These contain about a dozen theme museums (all free, with various opening times), crafty shops and even a small chocolate factory. You can

wander among the 19th-century buildings at will.

Just 300m through the forest is **Valla Fritidsområde**, a recreation area with domestic animals, a children's playground, minigolf, a few small museums and many old houses.

KINDA CANAL

Most visitors to Sweden know about the engineering marvel of the Göta Canal, but Linköping boasts its own canal system, the 90km **Kinda Canal**, which opened in 1871. It has 15 locks, including the deepest one in Sweden. Possible cruises include evening sailings, musical outings and wine tasting trips. For a simple day excursion, from late June to early August the **M/S Kind** (☎ 0141-23

33 70) leaves Tullbron dock at 10am on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday, and travels to Rimforsa (adult/6-15yr Skr345/110, return by bus or train included).

OTHER SIGHTS

Made from blocks of hand carved limestone, the enormous **Domkyrka** (☎ 9am-6pm) was the country's largest and most expensive church in the Middle Ages. Its foundations were laid around 1250, with its 107m spire and vast interior, it's still astonishing visitors today. Inside, green men stud the ceiling, and there are numerous medieval treasures dating back to the 14th century.

The struggle between church and state is explored in the nearby castle's **Slotts & Domkyrkomuseum** (☎ 12 23 80; adult/under 7yr Skr40/free; ☎ noon-4pm Tue-Sun Apr-Sep), where the bolshy, larger-than-life King Gustav Vasa and the last Catholic bishop, Hans Brask, made friends, ate, drank and fell out again. Archaeological finds include two mummified black rats from the bishop's privy!

Just north of the cathedral, **Östergötlands Länsmuseum** (☎ 23 03 00; Vasavägen; adult/child Skr20/10; ☎ 11am-8pm Tue, 11am-4pm Wed, Sat & Sun) has a decent European art collection (Cranach's painting of Eden, *Original Sin*, is wonderful, with a smiling Eve twiddling her toes), and Swedish art dating to the Middle Ages.

The concrete floor of **Sankt Lars Kyrka** (Storgatan; ☎ 11am-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-1pm Sat) was built in 1802 above the previous medieval church crypt. Downstairs, you can see 11th-century gravestones and skeletons.

Approximately 7km west of the centre is **Flygvapenmuseum** (☎ 28 35 67; Carl Cederströms gatan; admission free; ☎ 10am-5pm Jun-Aug, noon-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-May; bus 213), with exhibits on air-force history and 60 aircraft.

Ekenäs Slott (☎ 771 46; tours Skr80; guided tours on the hr 1-3pm Tue-Sun Jul, Sat & Sun May-Jun & Aug), built between 1630 and 1644, is one of the best-preserved Renaissance castles in Sweden. It has three spectacular towers, a moat, and furniture and fittings from the 17th to 19th centuries. The castle is 20km east of Linköping; you'll need your own transport to get there.

Sleeping

Linköping STF Vandrarhem & Hotell (☎ 35 90 00; www.lvh.se; Klostergatan 52A; dm from Skr190, s/d hotel rooms Skr650/760, discounted weekends to Skr490/590; ☎)

A well-swish central hostel with hotel-style accommodation too, mostly with kitchenettes. All rooms have private bathrooms and TVs. It fills up fast, so book ahead.

Hotell Östergyllen (☎ 10 20 75; Hamngatan 2B; s/d from Skr395/550) There's a slight air of peeling paint at this budget hotel not far from the train station, but rooms are comfortable enough. You can pay up to Skr200 extra for a private bathroom.

Hotell du Nord (☎ 12 98 95; www.hotellundord.se; Repslagargatan 5; s/d from Skr680/880, discounted to Skr470/620; ☎) This fuchsia-pink 19th-century building sits in parkland. Rooms are pleasant and light, and you can eat breakfast on the patio in summer.

Park Hotel (☎ 12 90 05; www.fawlytowers.se; Järnvägsgatan 6; s/d Skr890/1090, discounted to Skr590/790; ☎) Disturbingly billed as Sweden's 'Fawly Towers', this hotel resembles that madhouse in appearance only. It's actually a smart family-run establishment with clean parquet-floored rooms, on a green piece of land near the train station.

Quality Hotel Ekoxen (☎ 25 26 00; www.ekoxen.se; Klostergatan 68; s/d from Skr1395/1695, discounted to Skr795/995; ☎) The large Ekoxen has stylish, modern newly renovated rooms. There's a spa and massage centre (including flotation tanks!), and an acclaimed restaurant.

Glyttinge Camping (☎ 17 49 28; glyttinge@swipnet.se; Berggårdsvägen; sites Skr150; ☎ May-Sep) This huge campsite, with minigolf and cycle hire, is 4km west of the city centre.

Eating & Drinking

Most places to eat (and drink) are found around the main square or nearby streets, especially along buzzing Ågatan.

Stångs PM&Co (☎ 31 20 00; Södra Stånggatan 1; lunch Skr80, mains Skr215-250; ☎ lunch Tue-Fri, from 6pm Tue-Sat, closed lunch Jul) In a 200-year-old warehouse down near the Kinda Canal docks, this is a splendid restaurant with a location to match. The dinner menu is impressive, with old Swedish favourites given snappy new interpretations, and there are frequent evening barbecues in summer.

Riva (☎ 12 95 15; Ågatan 43; mains Skr160-250; ☎ from 5pm Mon-Sat) Gourmet pizzas (with toppings such as honey and goat's cheese, or marinated scampi) are baked in big wood-fired ovens at this trendy Italian restaurant.

Kikkobar (☎ 13 13 10; Klostergatan 26; mains Skr130-180) Kikkobar is a cool corner house with

an international menu where 'East meets West' – meaning Western mains like steak and salmon, and plenty of sushi and stir-fry dishes too.

Gula Huset (☎ 13 88 38; Ågatan; lunch Skr69, dinner mains Skr100-200) The courtyard tables are much sought after in summer at the traditional 'Yellow House'. It offers a good-value lunch, plus a long menu featuring pasta, Swedish specialities, and seafood, meat and vegetarian dishes.

BK (☎ 10 01 11; Ågatan 47; tapas around Skr30, mains Skr120-200) It positively heaves on Friday nights. Dabble at the extensive tapas menu, or go for burgers enlivened with mango salsa as the crowds get increasingly raucous.

Harrys (☎ 13 33 90; Ågatan 43) Another lively pub-restaurant with beer-drinking food like spareribs, burgers and burritos.

Café Cioccolata (☎ 13 18 80; Hantverkaregatan 1) A genuine Italian-run café, stylish Cioccolata has a wide range of coffees and filled *paini* or *ciabatta* (around Skr40).

Yngves Livs (☎ 31 88 88; Ågatan 38) A godsend for vegans or anyone with milk allergies, this may be the only café in Sweden to serve vegan lattés! There are crêpes, sandwiches and buses to nibble on too.

The **Hemköp supermarket** on Storgatan has the longest opening hours – until 10pm daily. The Filbytergallerian shopping centre contains a small **Systembolaget** (☎ 27 09 48; Stora Torget).

Getting There & Away

The **airport** (☎ 18 10 30) is only 2km east of town. **Skyways** (☎ 020-95 95 00; www.skyways.se) fly daily direct to Stockholm Arlanda and Copenhagen. There's no airport bus, but **Taxi Linköping** (☎ 14 60 00) charges around Skr130 for the ride.

Regional and local buses, run by **ÖstgötaTrafiken** (☎ 0771-21 10 10; www.ostgotatrafiken.se), leave from the terminal next to the train station; route maps and timetables are available at the information office. Journeys cost from Skr20; the 24-hour *dygnskort* (Skr110) is valid on all buses and local trains within the region. Up to four express buses per day go to Vadstena, otherwise change at Motala.

Long-distance buses depart from a terminal 500m northwest of the train station. Swebus Express runs seven or eight times daily to Jönköping (Skr157, 1½ hours) and Göteborg (Skr271, four hours), and north to

Norrköping (Skr65, 40 minutes) and Stockholm (Skr190, three hours).

Linköping is on the main north-south railway line. Regional and express trains run to Stockholm roughly every two hours; express trains go to Malmö. Frequent regional trains run north to Norrköping (Skr43, 25 minutes). Kustpilen SJ trains run every few hours to Norrköping, Nyköping and Kalmar.

Getting Around

Most city buses (Skr20 minimum fare) depart from Centralstationen. For a taxi, ring **Taxi Linköping** (☎ 14 60 00). Bicycle hire is available at **Bertil Anderssons Cykel & Motor** (☎ 31 46 46; Plantensgatan 27).

BERGS SLUSSAR

☎ 013

Bergs Slussar, 12km northwest of Linköping, is one of the most scenic sections of the Göta Canal – there are seven locks with a height gain of 19m – very impressive in canal terms! The nearby ruin **Vreta kloster**, Sweden's oldest monastery, was founded by Benedictine monks in 1120. It's worth a look, but the adjacent 13th-century **abbey church** is more interesting.

There's a beautifully located **STF Vandrarhem** (☎ 603 30; bergsslussar@sverige.nu; dm Skr185; ☎ May-Aug) near the locks, with a café, minigolf and bikes for rent. You'll find a couple of cafés and restaurants out this way, including **Kanalkrogen** (☎ 600 76; meals Skr150-200), with a great range of meals.

Buses 521 and 522 run regularly from Linköping.

VADSTENA

☎ 0143 / pop 7562

Beautiful Vadstena on Vättern lake is a legacy of both church and state power, and today St Birgitta's abbey and Gustav Vasa's castle compete for the visitor's interest. The atmosphere in the old town (between Storgatan and the abbey), with its wonderful cobbled lanes, evocative street names and wooden buildings, makes Vadstena one of the most pleasing places in Sweden.

Information

The **tourist office** (☎ 315 70; www.vadstena.com; ☎ 10am-7pm Jul, 10am-6pm Jun & early Aug, 10am-2pm or 3pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is inside the castle. Ask for details about town walks and local boat

tours. You'll find banks and other services east of the castle, on Storgatan and around Stora Torget.

Sights

Located near the lake, the mighty Renaissance castle **Vadstena Slott** (☎ 315 70; Slottsvägen; adult/7-15yr Skr50/10; ☎ 10am-7pm Jul, 10am-6pm Jun & early Aug, 10am-2pm or 3pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) was the family project of the early Vasa kings. The lower floors contain a small historical display. The furnished upper floors are more interesting, but are only open during guided tours (in English at 2pm mid-May-mid-Sep); it's worth going on one if only to visit the chapel, which has an incredible 17-second echo!

The **Sancta Birgitta Klostermuseet** (☎ 100 31; Lasarettsgatan; adult/8-18yr Skr50/20; ☎ 11am-6pm Jul, 11am-4pm Jun & Aug) is in Bjälboättens Palats (a royal residence that became a convent in 1384), and tells the story of St Birgitta's rollercoaster life and those of all her saint-and-sinner children. It contains the coffin that she was brought back from Rome in, and there are realistic waxworks in the old nuns' cells.

'Of plain construction, humble and strong', **Klosterkyrkan** (abbey church; admission free; ☎ 9am-8pm Jul, 9am-7pm Jun & Aug, 9am-5pm May & Sep) was built in response to one of St Birgitta's visions. After the church's consecration in 1430, Vadstena became the top pilgrimage site in Sweden – a trend which is being revived today. Inside are medieval sculptures and some interesting carved floor slabs.

The old courthouse **rådhus**, on the town square, and **Rödortnet** (Sånggatan) both date from late medieval times.

Sleeping

Chain hotels don't get a look-in here; pretty and personal is the rule. Book accommodation well in advance.

STF Vandrarhem Vadstena (☎ 103 02; www.va-bostaelle.se/vandrarhem; Skänningegatan 20; dm Skr170; ☎) This is a lovely big central hostel, with kindly staff, sunny dorms and a large underground kitchen decorated with cheerful red Dala horses. From late August to early June it's essential to book in advance.

27:ans Natlogi (☎ 765 64; 27ans@va-bostaelle.se; Storgatan 27; s/d from Skr500/650; ☎) Cool white paint and wooden floors give a calming feel to the six rooms (some with views of Klosterkyrkan). More expensive rooms have private bathrooms. All include breakfast.

Pensionat Solgården (☎ 143 50; Strågatan 3; s/d from Skr540/690; ☎ mid-May-Aug) There's a range of uniquely decorated rooms (some with private bathrooms) at this family-run hotel, all with an art/artist connection. They're all very different – see the photos at www.pensionat-solgarden.se (Swedish only) to see what takes your fancy.

Vadstena Klosterhotel (☎ 315 30; hotell@klosterhotel.se; s/d from Skr1150/1450; ☎) History and luxury do a little dance together at this fine hotel in St Birgitta's old convent. The bathrooms are a wee bit dated, but the medieval-style rooms are great, with chandeliers, high wooden beds, indispensable coffee-makers. Most also have stunning lake views.

Vätterviksbadet (☎ 127 30; sites Skr165, simple rooms & cabins from Skr350; ☎ May-mid-Sep; ☎) This quality campsite is near the lake, 2km north of the town. Its family-friendly amenities include a beach with shallow waters, minigolf, boules, a kiosk and a café.

Eating & Drinking

Restaurant Munkklostret (☎ 130 00; lunch Skr85, mains Skr230-250; ☎ from noon in summer, shorter hr winter) The Klosterhotel's excellent restaurant is the best place to eat in town. Seasonal, succulent steak, lamb, game and fish dishes are flavoured with herbs from the monastery garden, and served in the monks' old dormitories. Try a cleansing green-apple sorbet to finish your meal.

Rådhuskällaren (☎ 121 70; Rådhusorget; mains Skr90 to Skr180) This pleasant 15th-century cellar restaurant, under the old courthouse, has simple but filling burger, pasta and fish meals. Its outdoor section is a favourite afternoon drinking spot in summer.

For sandwiches and light meals, visit the open-air café **Hampaviljongen** (☎ 310 95) in the park in front of the castle.

The town has a central supermarket, **Coop-Konsum** (Rådhusorget; ☎ until 11pm) and **Systembolaget** (☎ 100 36; Hovsgatan 4).

Getting There & Around

See Linköping for regional transport information. Only buses run to Vadstena – take bus 610 to Motala (for trains to Örebro), or bus 661 to Mjölby (for trains to Linköping and Stockholm). **Swebus Express** runs on Fridays and Sundays to/from Stockholm (Skr233, four hours). **Blåklints Buss** (☎ 0142-121 50; www.blaklintsbuss.se in Swedish) runs one service daily

from the Viking Line Terminal in Stockholm to Vadstena (Skr160).

Sport Hörnan (☎ 103 62; Storgatan 8; 🕒 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 9.30am-2pm Sat) has bikes for rent (per day/week Skr100/300).

AROUND VADSTENA

Rökstenen

Sweden's most famous rune stone, the 9th-century **Rökstenen**, is near the church at Rök (just off the E4 on the road to Heda and Alvastra). It's a monumental memorial stone raised to a dead son. On it is carved the longest runic inscription in the world, an ancient, intricate verse so cryptic that scholars constantly scrap over its interpretation.

There's a small, seasonal **tourist office** (☎ 0142-712 84; 🕒 10am-4pm Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-3pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun May & late Aug) on site. The outdoor exhibition and the stone are open at all times.

Buses are virtually nonexistent, but cycling is a good option, as the scenic flatlands around Vättern lend themselves to the pedal.

Väversunda

The Romanesque 12th-century limestone **Väversunda kyrka**, situated 15km southwest of Vadstena, is a bizarre-looking church, which contains restored 13th-century wall paintings. The adjacent **Tåkern Nature Reserve** attracts lots of different bird species and there's a bird-watcher's tower near the church.

Again, buses are hopeless; a bicycle is by far the best way to explore.

GOTLAND: THE ISLAND OF CHURCHES

Nowhere else in northern Europe are there so many medieval churches in such a small area. There are 92 of them in villages outside Visby; more than 70 still have medieval frescos, and a few also contain very rare medieval stained glass. Visby alone has a dozen church ruins and a magnificent cathedral.

A church was built in most villages during prosperous times from the early 12th century to mid-14th century. After 1350, the money ran out (mainly due to war), and the tradition ended. A lack of funds helped to keep the island in an ecclesiastical time-warp; the old churches weren't demolished, and new ones were never built (until 1960). Each church is still in use, and all those medieval villages still exist as entities.

Most churches are open 9am to 6pm daily from mid-May to late August. Some churches have the old key in the door even before 15 May, or sometimes the key is hidden above the door.

The *Key to the Churches in the Diocese of Visby* is a very useful English-language brochure, which is available free from tourist offices.

GOTLAND

Gotland is one of the richest historical regions in Sweden, with around 100 medieval churches and an untold number of prehistoric sites, including stone ship settings, burial mounds and the remains of hilltop fortresses. Keep your eyes open for the information boards indicating sites along roadsides.

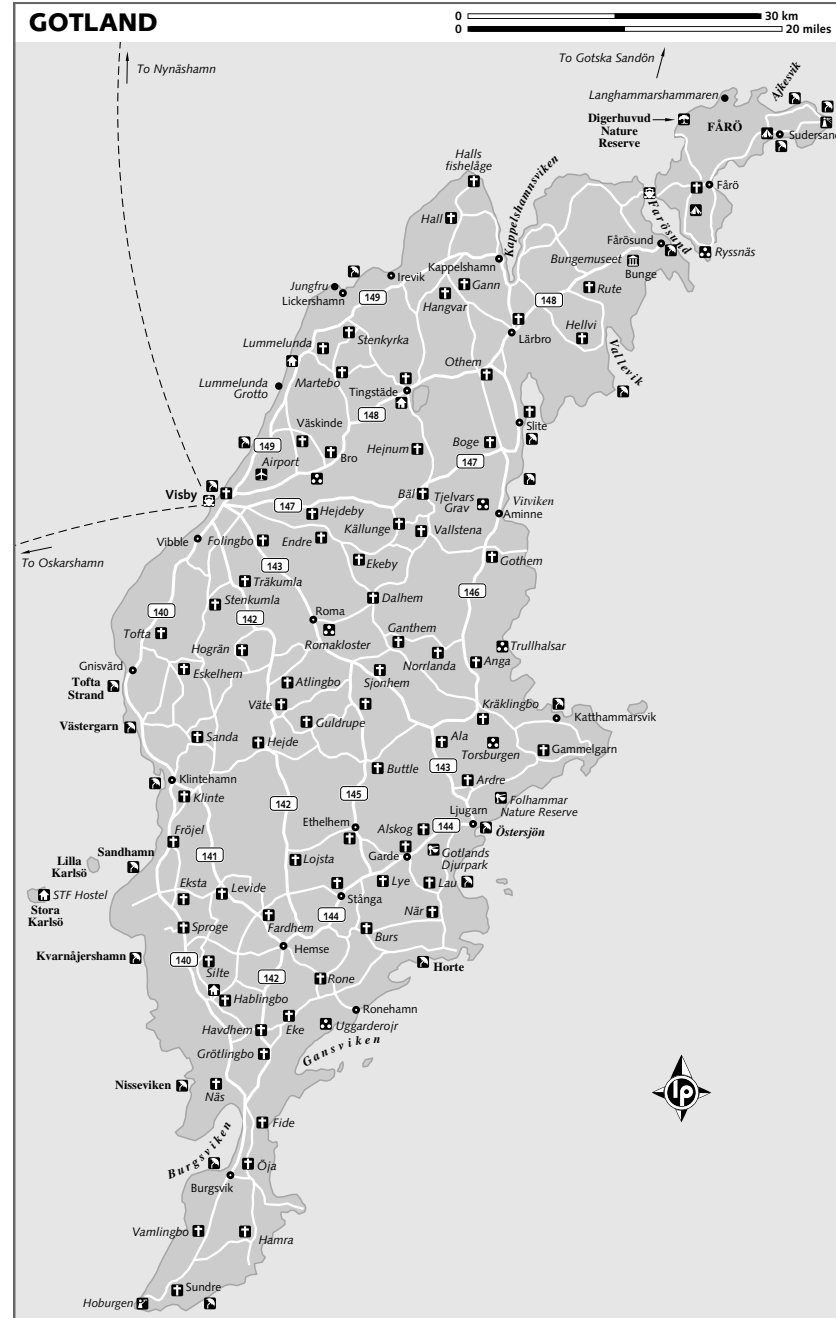
The island lies nearly halfway between Sweden and Latvia, in the middle of the Baltic Sea, roughly equidistant from the mainland ports of Nynäshamn and Oskarshamn. Gotland is both a region (*landskap*) and a county (*län*). Visby is the only town, but there are several large, and many small villages. The large island, Fårö, lies off Gotland's northeastern tip and the island national park of Gotska Sandön lies 38km further north. Stora Karlsö and Lilla Karlsö are two small islets just off the western coast.

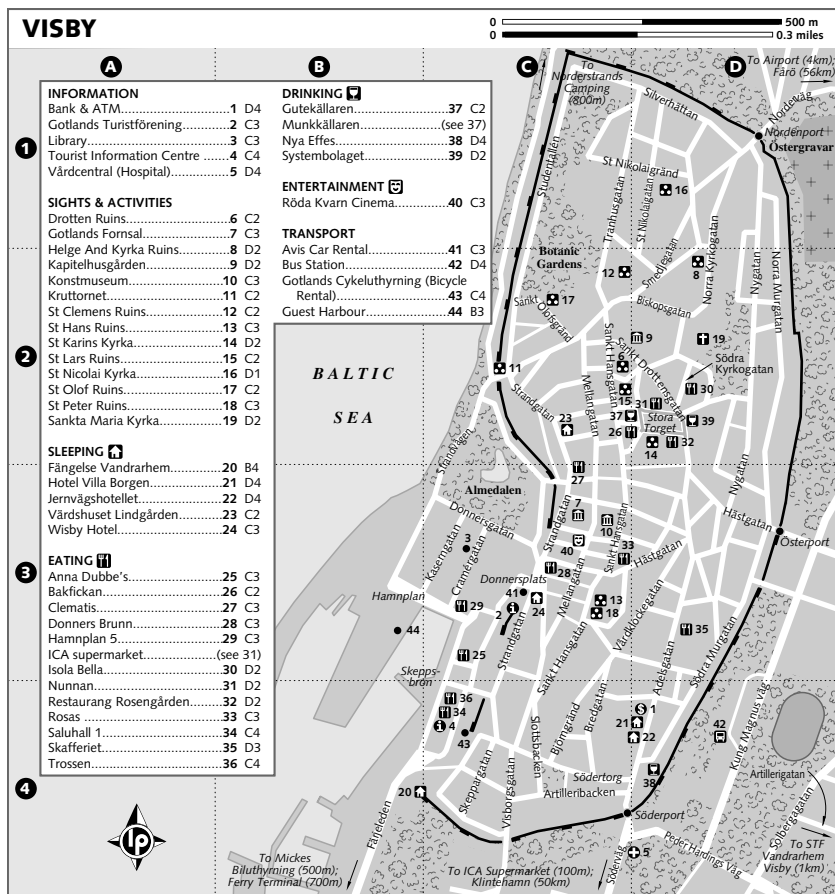
More good information about Gotland is available on the Internet at www.gotland.net and www.guteinfo.com (in Swedish).

VISBY

☎ 0498 / pop 21,400

The medieval port town of Visby is enough to warrant a trip to Gotland all by itself. A walled city, full of ruined churches and well-preserved buildings both public and residential, the city is a wonder to look at and a delight to get lost in. Its cobbled streets are full of twists and turns and steep hills, with another gorgeous view around





every single corner. The city wall, with its 40-plus towers and the spectacular church ruins within, attest to the town's former Hanseatic glories. Today it's a Unesco World Heritage site that leaves few visitors disappointed.

The place swarms with holidaymakers in the summer, and from mid-May to mid-August cars are banned in the old town. For many, the highlight of the season is the costumes, performances, crafts, markets and re-enactments of **Medeltidsveckan** (Medieval Week; www.medeltidsveckan.com), held during the first or second week of August. Finding any sort of accommodation during this time is almost impossible unless you have booked ahead.

Information

Bank (Adelsgatan) With ATM.

Gotland City (☎ 08-406 15 00; info@gotlandcity.se, www.gotlandcity.se; Kungsgatan 57) A central travel agency in Stockholm, useful if you're planning your trip from the capital.

Gotlands Turistföreningen (☎ 20 17 00; www.gotland.com in Swedish; Box 1403, Hamngatan 4, SE-62125, Visby)

ICA supermarket (Stora Torget) Sells stamps, as does the tourist office.

Library (Cramergatan, ☎ 29 90 00; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 12-4pm Sat & Sun) Free Internet access.

Tourist Information Centre (☎ 20 17 00; www.gotland.info; Skeppsbron 4-6; ☎ 8am-7pm in summer, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri & 10am-2pm Sat & Sun rest of yr) The tourist office has moved to a new office at the harbour.

Sights & Activities

The town is a noble sight, with its 13th-century wall of 40 towers – be sure to take a few hours and walk around the perimeter (3.5km). Also set aside time to stroll around the Botanic Gardens and the narrow roads and pretty lanes just south of the gardens. Pick up a copy of the booklet *Visby on Your Own* (Skr35, available at the tourist office), which will guide you around the town and give you good snippets of local history. In summer the tourist office also organises two-hour guided walking tours of the town (Skr80), with English-language walks up to four times a week.

The ruins of 10 medieval churches, all located within the town walls, include **St Nicolai Kyrka**, built in 1230 by Dominican monks. The monastery was burned down when Lübeckers attacked Visby in 1525. The **Helge And Kyrka** ruin is the only stone-built octagonal church in Sweden, and it was built in 1200, possibly by the Bishop of Riga; the roof collapsed after a fire in 1611. On Stora Torget, **St Karins Kyrka** has a beautiful Gothic interior and was founded by Franciscans in 1233. The church was extended in the early 14th century, but the monastery was closed by the Reformation and the church fell into disrepair.

The ruins contrast with the old but sound **Sankta Maria kyrka** (Cathedral of St Maria; ☎ 8am-5pm Mon-Fri, 8am-6.30pm Sat, 9am-5pm & 6-8pm Sun summer, shorter hr rest of yr). This is an impressive building, with stained-glass windows, carved floor slabs, an ornate carved rearedos and wall plaques.

Gotlands Fornsal (☎ 29 27 00; Strandgatan 14; adult/child Skr50/free; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-May–mid-Sep, noon-4pm Tue-Sun mid-Sep–mid-Apr) is one of the largest and best regional museums in Sweden – allow a few hours if you want to appreciate it. Amazing 8th-century, pre-Viking picture stones, human skeletons from chambered tombs, silver treasures and medieval wooden sculptures are among the highlights. **Konstmuseum** (☎ 29 27 75; Sankt Hansgatan 21; adult/child Skr30/10; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-May–mid-Sep, noon-4pm Tue-Sun mid-Sep–mid-May), nearby, is an art museum featuring exhibitions by local, national and international artists.

A number of other interesting ruins are scattered throughout the city centre, each with a brief history on a signboard nearby

Sleeping

Fängelse Vandrarhem (☎ 20 60 50; Skeppsbron 1; dm from Skr150) As hard to get into as it once must have been to get out of, this hostel offers beds year-round in the small converted cells of an old prison. It's in a good location, between the ferry dock and the harbour restaurants, and there's a cute terrace bar in summer. You'll need to reserve well in advance.

Jernvägshotellet (☎ 27 17 07; staff@visbyjernvags.hotell.com; Adelsgatan 9; 2-/4-bed rooms from Skr440/800; ☎ yr-round) You will have to call ahead to book at this place, a small, comfortable and very central hostel with spotless modern facilities.

STF Vandrarhem Visby (☎ 26 98 42; carl.tholin@tjelvar.org; dm from Skr120; ☎ mid-Jun–mid-Aug) This hostel is southeast of the town centre off Lännavägen, in a school residence, and therefore only opens in peak season.

Visby Hotel (☎ 20 40 00; info@visbyhotell.se; Strandgatan 6; s/d low season from Skr865/1240, s/d high season Skr1535/1870) Top of the heap in Visby is the luxurious, landmark Visby, with pillars and vaulted ceilings creating a lovely medieval atmosphere.

Vårdshuset Lindgården (☎ 21 87 00; lindgarden.vardshuset@telia.com; Strandgatan 26; s/d low season Skr595/745, s/d high season Skr750/945) This is a good, central option, with rooms set facing a pretty garden beside a popular restaurant. Dine outdoors and listen to music in the courtyard in summer.

Hotel Villa Borgen (☎ 27 99 00; hotell.villaborgen@telia.com; Adelsgatan 11; s/d low season Skr860/970, s/d high season Skr910/1070) This place has pleasant rooms set around a pretty, quiet courtyard, and an intimate breakfast room with French doors and stained glass, that's also a prime spot for people-watching.

Gotlands Resor (☎ 20 12 60; info@gotlandresor.se; Färjeleden 3) This is a travel agency in Hamnhotellet that books private rooms in Visby – singles/doubles cost around Skr285/425 inside the town walls, or Skr240/380 outside. This agency can also organise cabin rental, provide bike hire and rent camping equipment.

Hamnhotellet (☎ 20 12 50; Färjeleden 3; s/d low season Skr560/600, s/d high season Skr640/760) Hamnhotellet is not far from the ferry terminal and offers uninspiring but cheap (for Visby) hotel rooms.

Norderstrands Camping (☎ 21 21 57; sites low/high season Skr85/145, cabins low/high season from Skr350/550;

☞ late-Apr–mid-Sep) The closest camping ground is this place by the sea, 800m north of Visby's ring wall (well connected by a walking and cycling path).

Eating & Drinking

There are more restaurants per capita in Visby than in any other Swedish city. Most are clustered around the Old Town squares, on Adelsgatan or at the harbour. Wherever you choose, do not pass up a chance to try the island's speciality – a saffron pancake (*saffranspankaka*) with berries and cream. You'll find it at most coffee shops in Visby and around the island, usually for around Skr45 with coffee.

Donners Brunn (☎ 27 10 90; Donners plats; mains Skr95-235) This is among the finest restaurants in town – *brunn* means 'well' and you'll see it just inside the door. The Swedish and international menu is adventurous and tempting, and there are also cheaper vegetarian and *husmanskost* (home-style fare) options. This restaurant is deservedly popular, so it's wise to book ahead.

Clematis (☎ 21 02 88; Strandgatan 20; ☞ mid-summer–mid-Aug) In summer, visit Clematis, which looks as much like a museum as a restaurant; the medieval atmosphere backs up a menu of food cooked according to medieval recipes. There's also period music and entertainers, including the occasional fire-eater.

Nunnan (☎ 21 28 94; meals Skr80 to Skr180; ☞ lunch & dinner until 1am) With a menu featuring Greek dishes, Nunnan is an appealing option right on the main square.

Bakfickan (☎ 27 18 07; mains Skr118-218; ☞ lunch & dinner) The menu at the highly rated Bakfickan features well-prepared fish and seafood – good luck trying to walk past it if you're hungry.

Isola Bella (☎ 21 87 87; Södra Kyrkogatan 20; mains Skr75-185) Between Stora Torget and the cathedral is this narrow place, serving authentic Italian cuisine. There's a thin slice of garden out the back where meals are served in summer.

Nya Effes (☎ 21 06 22; snacks & meals Skr70-145) Be sure to also check out this place, just off Adelsgatan. Full of character, it's a pub-bar built into the town wall, and is a good place for a meal or a drink. There's a simple bar menu, an outdoor courtyard, pool tables and regular live music here in summer.

Rosas (☎ 21 35 14; St Hansgatan 22) This pretty, half-timbered house with a sunny courtyard is an excellent lunch spot, serving baguettes, filled crêpes, baked potatoes and saffron pancakes (all around Skr30 to Skr50).

Skafferiet (☎ 21 45 97; Adelsgatan 38; sandwiches from Skr35) This casual lunch spot has a tempting array of open-faced sandwiches displayed on its counters.

Restaurang Rosengården (☎ 21 81 90) In the shadow of the ruins and facing Stora Torget, this garden restaurant offers weekday lunches of unambitious but filling fare, such as salads and quiches for Skr62, plus evening à la carte dishes from around Skr105.

Hamnplan 5 (☎ 21 07 10; Hamnplan 5) Formerly called Skeppet, this place down by the water is an upmarket restaurant by day and a nightclub by night.

Other hang-outs around the harbour are popular on warm summer days and evenings, including the restaurants **Anna Dubbe's** (pastas from Skr69) and **Trossen** (lunch & dinner from Skr95) and the cheap stalls selling ice cream, sandwiches and pizza inside **Saluhall 1**.

A pair of neighbouring restaurant-bars with seemingly infinite levels of seating, from cellars to balconies, **Gutekällaren** (☎ 21 00 43) and **Munkkällaren** (☎ 22 14 00) are both home to nightclubs popular with the summer crowd.

There is a tiny **ICA supermarket** (Stora Torget) for self-caterers, next-door to Nunnan, or a much larger one on Söderväg, which is south of Söderport. **Systembolaget** (Stora Torget) is central.

Entertainment

For rainy days, there's the **Röda Kvarn cinema** (☎ 21 01 81; Mellangatan 17; tickets Skr80; ☞ from 5pm).

Getting There & Away

AIR

There are regular **Skyways** (☎ 020-95 95 00; www.skyways.se) flights between Visby and three mainland airports: Stockholm Arlanda, Stockholm Bromma (up to 10 times a day for each airport) and Norrköping (three flights daily on weekdays). Flights between Stockholm and Visby generally cost Skr650 and up, but if your dates are flexible you can get deals from Skr295.

The cheaper local airline is **Gotlands Flyg** (☎ 22 22 22; www.gotlandsflyg.se), with regular flights between Visby and Stockholm Bro-

mma (one to six times daily). Prices start at Skr500 one way; book early for discounts, and inquire after stand-by fares (from Skr350).

The island's **airport** (☎ 26 31 00) is 4km northeast of Visby and is served by buses.

BOAT

Year-round car ferries between Visby and both Nynäshamn and Oskarshamn are operated by **Destination Gotland** (☎ 20 10 20; www.destinationgotland.se). There are departures from Nynäshamn one to five times daily (about five hours, or three by high-speed catamaran). From Oskarshamn, there are one or two daily departures (except Saturday from early November until mid-March) in either direction (four to five hours).

Regular one-way adult tickets for the ferry/catamaran cost Skr228/291, but from mid-June to mid-August there is a far more complicated fare system; some overnight, evening and early-morning sailings in the middle of the week have cheaper fares.

If you want to transport a bicycle it will cost Skr41; a car usually costs Skr317/415, although again in the peak summer season a tiered price system operates. If you hope to take a car on the ferry or catamaran between mid-June and mid-August, it's essential to reserve a place well in advance, as spots fill up quickly with Swedes going on holiday.

Getting Around

There are over 1200km of roads in Gotland, typically running from village to village through the pretty landscape. Cycling on the quiet roads is highly recommended, and bikes can be hired from a number of places in Visby. The forested belt south and east of Visby is useful if you bring a tent and want to take advantage of the liberal camping laws.

Many travel agents and bike-rental places on the island also rent out camping equipment. In Visby, you can hire bikes at about Skr65/325 per day/week from behind Saluhall (on the harbour) or at Österport (down by the outside of the wall). **Gotlands Cykeluthyrning** (☎ 21 41 33), behind Saluhall, also rents tents (Skr75/250 per day/week), or for Skr250 per day (Skr1250 per week) you can hire the 'camping package' – two bikes (or one tandem bike), a tent, a camping stove and two sleeping mats. **Gotlands Resor** (☎ 20

12 60; info@gotlandresor.se; Färjeleden 3) offers similar packages.

A few companies and service stations offer car hire. A central office in Visby is **AVIS** (☎ 21 98 10; godman@gotlandica.se; Donners plats 2), where you can rent a small car from Skr550/3000 per day/week. At the **guest harbour** (☎ 21 51 90) you can also rent cars, motorbikes and mopeds.

Kollektiv Trafiken (☎ 21 41 12) runs buses via most villages to all corners of the island. The most useful routes, that have connections up to seven times daily, operate between Visby and Burgsvik in the far south, Visby and Färösund in the north (also with bus connections on Färö), and Visby and Klintehamn. A one-way ticket will not cost you more than Skr59 (although if you take a bike on board it will cost an additional Skr40), but enthusiasts will find a monthly ticket good value at Skr590.

AROUND VISBY

There's not much but forest and farmland until you're at least 10km from Visby. If you're heading northeast, visit the remarkable Bro church, which has several 5th-century picture stones in the south wall of the oratory, excellent sculptures and interior lime paintings.

Heading southeast on road No 143, on your way to Ljugarn, check out the 12th-century Cistercian monastery ruin **Romakloster** (☎ 501 23; adult/child Skr20/free; ☞ 10am-6pm Jun-Aug, & weekends May & Sep), a kilometre from the main road. Summer theatre performances here cost around Skr250 (tickets from Visby tourist office). The 18th-century manor house is also impressive.

Dalhem, 6km northeast of the Cistercian monastery, has a large church with 14th-century stained glass (the oldest in Gotland) and magnificent (albeit restored) walls and ceiling paintings; take note of the scales of good and evil. There's also a historic **steam railway** (☎ 380 43; adult/child Skr40/25; ☞ 11.15am-3.30pm Wed-Thu, Sat & Sun Jun-Aug) and museum in Dalhem.

There's a good range of services in the reasonable-sized town of Klintehamn. From here, you can catch a passenger-only boat to the island nature reserve **Stora Karlsö** (www.storakarlsö.com) one to three times daily from May to early September (adult/child return Skr225/110, 30 minutes). You can visit the

island as a day trip (with five or six hours ashore), or stay overnight at the hostel (see below). This fairly remote island is home to extensive birdlife including thousands of guillemots and razorbills, there are also impressive cliffs by the lighthouse.

Sleeping & Eating

Pensionat Warfsholm (☎ 24 00 10; warfsholm@telia.com; sites Skr85, dm from Skr150, rooms per person with/without bath from Skr440/250) In Klintehamn, this is a hotel, hostel and campground in a pretty waterside spot with a restaurant attached.

STF hostel (☎ 24 05 00; boka@storakarlso.com; dm Skr150) If you want to get away from it all, you can stay on Stora Karlsö at the simple STF hostel. There's a nature exhibit, restaurant and café on the island. Booking ahead is required.

EASTERN GOTLAND

Ancient monuments include the Bronze Age ship setting, Tjelvars grav, 1.5km west of road No 146 (level with Visby), and its surrounding landscape of standing stones, almost all linked with the Gutasaga legends. Gothem church is one of the most impressive in Gotland; the nave is decorated with friezes dating from 1300. Torsburgen, 9km north of Ljugarn, is a partly walled hill fort (the largest in Scandinavia) measuring 5km around its irregular perimeter.

Ljugarn is a small seaside resort, and there are impressive *raukar* formations at Folhammar Nature Reserve, 2km north. Southwest of Ljugarn in the village of Alskog, **Gotlands Djurpark** (☎ 49 35 00; adult/child Skr85/50; ☎ 10am-4pm mid-May-Aug, closed Midsummer Eve) is a small zoo, home to around 40 types of animals, including kangaroos, ostriches and zebras. Southwest of here, the impressive Garde church has four extraordinary medieval lych gates and an upside-down medieval key in the door; the original 12th-century roof can also still be seen.

Sleeping & Eating

STF hostel Ljugarn (☎ 49 31 84; dm from Skr130; ☎ mid-May-Aug) This place has a fine spot at the eastern end of the Ljugarn village (down by the water).

STF hostel Garda (☎ 49 13 91; gardavh@sverige.nu; dm Skr125; ☎ Feb-Dec) The hostel in Garde is a

series of cabins with three golf courses in the immediate vicinity.

Frejs Magasin (☎ 49 30 11; info@ljugarn.com; s/d Skr450/650, with private facilities Skr700/800) This is a large, central, wooden-built pension, surrounded by green countryside in Ljugarn. It also offers three- and four-bed rooms, and has apartments and cabins available by the week, if you're travelling in a group.

There's a Konsum supermarket in Ljugarn, and some good dining options in summer. **Restaurang Kråkan** (☎ 49 33 71; mains Skr150-200), just off the main road through town, is an up-market place, and nearby **Bruna Dörren** (☎ 49 32 89; Strandvägen 5; meals from Skr60) is a more casual restaurant and pizzeria with a large outdoor courtyard.

NORTHERN GOTLAND & FÄRÖ

It's hard to imagine a better way to see the area than by cycling up to Färö and following the bike trails around the little island. There's a **visitors centre** (0498-22 40 22; ☎ 10am-6pm in summer, Sat & Sun rest of yr) with Internet access in Färö town.

On your way, stop at the **Bungemuseet** (☎ 22 10 18; adult/child Skr70/free; ☎ 10am-4pm mid-May-Aug, 10am-6pm Jul-mid-Aug), an open-air museum with 17th-century houses and picture stones dating from 800. It's near the north-eastern tip, about 1km south of where the ferry connects to Färö. Across the road is a charming café with some of the best saffron pancakes on the island.

The **grotto** (☎ 27 30 50; adult/child Skr70/50; ☎ May-mid-Sep) south of Lummelunda is the largest in Gotland. The temperature in the grotto is a cool 8°C, so bring warm clothing. The impressive *raukar* formations at nearby **Lickershamn** are up to 12m high; look out for **Jungfru** (signposted), with its haunting legend. Near the Jungfru trail-head at Lickershamn there's a campground and friendly café serving authentic Thai food (from Skr75) and a hut where you can buy smoked fish (both ☎ 10am-6pm in summer).

The frequent ferry to **Färö** is free for cars, passengers and cyclists. This island, home to Ingmar Bergman, has magnificent *raukar* formations; watch the sunset at Langhammarshammaren if you can. There are lots of fossils in the rocks by Färö lighthouse, at the eastern tip of the island. British troops who fought in the Crimean war

are buried at **Ryssnäs**, in the extreme south; obey signs posted along roads here, as this area is still used for military training and testing.

Sleeping & Eating

There is a good **STF hostel in Lärbro** (☎ 22 50 33; dm Skr150; reception ☎ 8-11am & 5-10pm), on road No 148 between Visby and Färösund, open from mid-May to the end of August. It has a gym open to hostel guests for Skr65. There is a beachside **SVIF hostel** (☎ 27 30 43; dm from Skr175) in Lummelunda, signposted from the main road; call ahead if you'll be arriving after 5pm.

There's an ICA supermarket (with an ATM) on the main street near the ferry terminal in Färösund, and another on Färö near the tourist office.

GOTSKA SANDÖN NATIONAL PARK

Isolated, triangular-shaped **Gotska Sandön** (www.gotskasandon.com in Swedish), with an area of 37 sq km, is an unusual island, with lighthouses at its three corners, 30km of beaches, sand dunes, pine forest and a church. There is a really good network of trails right around the island.

Camping (sites per person Skr50, beds in basic huts Skr110, cabins from Skr450) near the northern tip is possible; there are basic facilities but you must bring all supplies with you.

Boats (☎ 24 04 50; ☎ early May-early Sep) run from Färösund and Nynäshamn three to four times weekly when operating (Skr695/885

return from Färösund/Nynäshamn, Skr100 for bikes).

SOUTHERN GOTLAND

Hemse is a commercial centre, with good services (such as supermarkets, banks and a bakery), and the smaller village of Burgsvik, further south, is similar.

Öja church dates from 1232 and has Gotland's highest church tower (67m). It has a magnificent cross, and the wall and ceiling paintings are very detailed. Look for the inscribed stone slabs under the covered shelter just outside the churchyard. **Hablingbo church** has three lavishly carved doorways, a votive ship, carved floor slabs and rune stones.

Lojsta has the deepest lakes in Gotland, remains of an early medieval fortress and a fine church. On the eastern coast near Ronehamn, **Uggarderojr** is a huge, late-Bronze Age cairn with nearby traces of settlement. The cairn, probably a navigation marker, is now a long way inland due to post-glacial uplift.

Sleeping & Eating

The Hablingbo **STF hostel** (☎ 48 70 70; vandrar hem@gutevin.se; beds Skr150; ☎ May-Sep) is next to Gute Vin, a good restaurant and commercial vineyard.

In Björklunda, 2km north of Burgsvik, friendly **Vårdshuset Björklunda** (☎ 49 71 90; dm from Skr165, s/d from Skr590/790) is a delightful place reminiscent of a Greek villa, with pretty whitewashed buildings. Meals at the restaurant here are good and reasonably priced.

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