

Southwest Sweden



The southwest is Sweden in a nutshell. For big-city living, gorgeous green Göteborg (or Gothenburg in English) offers all the restaurants, culture and theme-park screams you could need. Take advantage of the excellent summer pass and explore every facet of the city for next to nothing.

The rest of the Västergötland region contains a funny old mixture of surprising sights: don't miss Trollhättan, Sweden's film-production capital; Läckö Slott, fairytale castle supreme; and the quiet delights of the Göta Canal, which threads its way across the region.

Facing westwards onto the ocean, the beautiful Bohuslän coastline is a favourite Swedish holiday destination. With its myriad islands, tiny fishing villages and mysterious Bronze Age rock carvings, it manages to retain an enigmatic air in spite of all its adoring visitors.

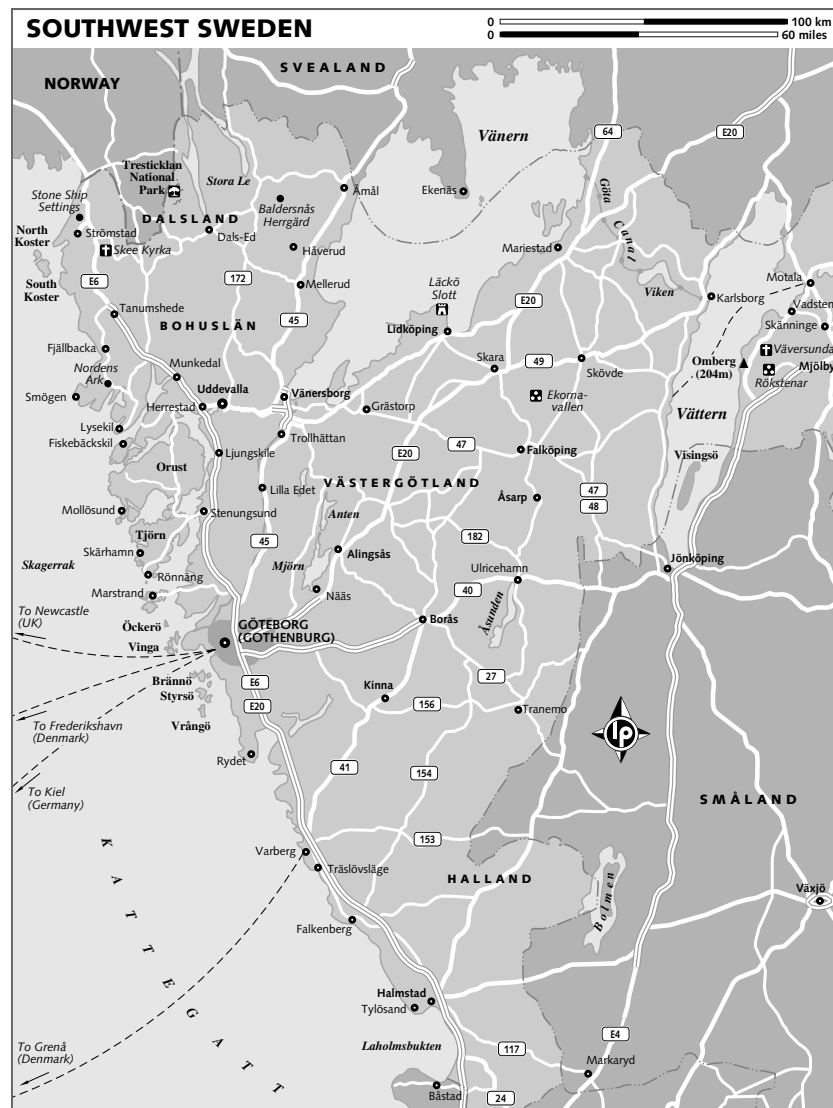
Europe's third-largest lake, Vänern, strokes the edges of watery, forested Dalsland, a canoeists' paradise and a county for really getting away from the tourist trail. For wilder waves and historical seaside towns, head for Halland. It has clean, sandy Blue Flag beaches and the best windsurfing in Sweden.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Ride till you puke at Sweden's number one attraction, **Liseberg fun park** (p204), in Göteborg
- Puzzle over the weird and wonderful **Bronze Age artwork** (p222) at the Unesco World Heritage site in Tanumshede, Bohuslän
- Enjoy the strange film-set industrial landscape of **Trollhättan** (p226)
- Cruise down the river to the **Nya Älvsborg Fästning** (Nya Älvsborg Fortress; p206) in Göteborg
- Stroll round the picturesque fishing villages of Bohuslän, particularly **Smögen** (p220), **Åstol** (p218) and **Fjällbacka** (p220)
- Catch the waves at **Apelviken** (p232), the country's premier windsurfing beach



■ AREA: 30,584 SQ KM ■ HIGHEST ELEVATION: GALTÅSEN (362M) ■ POPULATION: 1,805,683



Orientation & Information

Götaland is a large area of Sweden that consists of five different regions or *landskaps*: Bohuslän, Dalsland and Västergötland in the west, Halland in the south, and Östergötland in the east (covered in the Southeast Sweden chapter p142). These regions are grouped together into the three counties

or *läns* of Västra Götalands län (taking in Västergötland, Dalsland and Bohuslän), Hallands län and Östergötlands län. Götaland is also the region containing the two largest lakes in Sweden – Vänern and Vättern, which are connected by the Göta canal. The latter lake divides Götaland into two distinct parts.

REGIONAL TOURIST OFFICES

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

HallandsTurist (☎ 035-10 95 60; www.hallandsturist.se; Box 538, SE-30180 Halmstad)

Västsvenska Turistrådet (☎ 031-81 83 00; www.vastverige.com; Kungsporsavenyn 31-35, SE-41136 Göteborg)

Getting Around

The following companies provide regional transport links. If you are planning to spend some time in any of these counties, it's worth enquiring about discount cards, monthly passes or a *sommarkort*, offering cheap travel in the peak summer period (from midsummer to mid-August). Also check 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.

Hallandstrafiken (☎ 0346-486 00, 0771-33 10 30; www.hlt.se)

Västtrafik (☎ 0771-41 43 00; www.vasttrafik.se)

The main railway lines in the west connect Göteborg to Karlstad, Stockholm, Malmö and Oslo. In the east, the most important line runs from Stockholm via Norrköping and Linköping to Malmö. Express buses connect major towns on much the same routes.

One of the best ways of seeing the region is by taking the long and unforgettable journey along the Göta Canal (see p146) – from the rolling country of Östergötland, north of Linköping, into the great Lake Vättern, before continuing into the region of Västergötland on the other side and on to Göteborg. See p330.

GÖTEBORG

☎ 031 / pop 481,410

In expensive Sweden, Göteborg, with its cheap fares, cheap accommodation and fantastic attractions, is a top introduction to the country that shouldn't make your piggy bank turn up its trotters. Göteborg (pronounced something like 'yer-te-bor') is also known by its English name Gothenburg. It is Scandinavia's busiest port and has a continental outlook; its showpiece Kungsporsavenyn boulevard is often nicknamed the 'Champs Élysées', and the comparison is justified (in a low-key Nordic way). The cheerful, relaxed

atmosphere is enhanced by the city's large student population.

Scandinavia's largest amusement park, Liseberg, froths over with rollercoasters, ice creams and glittery lights, and the nearby Universeum is another wonder-world well worth exploring. Heritage sites and museums sprout from every street, from 17th-century fortresses to state-of-the-art 21st-century multimedia extravaganzas. A tremendous 10% of Göteborg is green space: take time out to stroll through its charming parks and gardens.

The Göta älv (Göta river) runs through the city: in sunny weather boat trips are a pure delight. You can easily escape westwards on the efficient tram system for a mellow island-hopping trip. Despite being a coastal city, the weather is good with high sunshine levels.

History

Gamla Älvsborg fortress, standing guard over the river 3km downstream of the centre, is Göteborg's oldest significant structure, with portions dating back to medieval times. It was a key strategic point in the 17th-century territorial wars, and was held by Denmark for seven years before being yielded to Sweden in 1619. Two years later, the Swedes founded Göteborg.

Dutch people played an important part in shaping the young city. Still fearful of Danish attack, the Swedes employed Dutch experts to construct a defensive canal system in the centre. The workers lived in what is now the revitalised Haga area: around a fifth of the original buildings are still standing. Most of Göteborg's oldest wooden buildings went up in smoke long ago – the city was devastated by no less than nine major fires between 1669 and 1804.

Once Sweden had annexed Skåne in 1658, Göteborg expanded as a trading centre. Boom-time came in the 18th century, when merchant companies like the Swedish East India Company made huge amounts of wealth. Look around and you'll notice the many grandiose buildings built using the profits of that period.

From the 19th century, shipbuilding was a major part of the city's economy, until the industry totally collapsed in the 1980s. Volvo's first car wheeled out of Göteborg in 1927. It's now one of Sweden's largest

companies (although it was taken over by Ford in 1999), and it's estimated that a quarter of the city relies on the company in some way. Today, Göteborg is Sweden's most important industrial and commercial city. Most of Sweden's oil is imported through the vast port.

Orientation

From the centre of the city, Kungsporsavenyn (known simply as 'Avenyn') crosses one of the city's original 17th-century canals (most have been filled in) and leads southeast up to Götaplatsen. The Avenyn is the heart of the city with boutiques, restaurants, galleries, theatres and street cafés. The huge Nordstan shopping centre lies just north of the canal system, opposite the central train station.

The former shipyards and much of the heavy industry (including Volvo) are on the northern island of Hisingen, formed by bifurcation of the Göta älv. Hisingen is reached by road via the monumental Älvsborgs bron (bridge), southwest of the city; by Götaälvsbron (north of Centralstationen); and by the E6 motorway tunnel, Tingstadstunneln, northeast of the city centre.

The main E6 motorway, just east of the city centre, runs north-south between Oslo and Malmö.

Information**BOOKSHOPS**

Akadembokhandeln Kungsgatan (☎ 15 02 84; Kungsgatan 61; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, noon-4pm Sun); Nordstan shopping complex (☎ 61 70 30; Nordstan shopping complex; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Fri,

10am-6pm Sat, 11am-5pm Sun); Vasagatan (☎ 60 96 80; Vasagatan 26-30; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Thu, 10am-4pm Fri, 10am-2pm Sat, closed Jul) The three central branches of Akadembokhandeln offer the best selection of English-language books in the city.

Pocketshop (☎ 10 49 40; Centralstationen; ☎ 6.15am-9pm Mon-Fri, 7am-8pm Sat, 8.30am-9pm Sun) English-language books.

Press Stop (☎ 15 84 45; Drottninggatan 58; ☎ 9.30am-6.30pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat, noon-3pm Sun) For English-language newspapers and magazines.

Pressbyrån (☎ 15 37 90; Centralstationen; ☎ 6am-10pm Mon-Fri, 8am-8pm Sat, 8am-10pm Sun) Similar to Press Stop. There is another outlet in Centralstationen open until midnight and a platform kiosk as well.

EMERGENCY

Dial ☎ 112 for fire, police or ambulance in emergency situations only.

Police station (☎ 739 20 00; Ernst Fontells Plats)

INTERNET ACCESS

GameNet (☎ 711 90 16; Viktoriagatan 22; per hr Skr30; ☎ 1-10pm)

IT Grottan (☎ 778 73 77; Chalmersgatan 27; per hr Skr43; ☎ 11am-11pm)

Palatset (☎ 13 24 80; Ekelundsgatan 9-11; per hr Skr25; ☎ until at least midnight) A large bar and billiards hall.

Sidewalk Express (www.sidewalkexpress.se; per hr Skr19) Sidewalk Express computers are found at Centralstationen & the 7-Eleven shop on Vasaplatsen. To log on, buy vouchers from the coin-operated machines and you'll be issued with a username and password.

LEFT LUGGAGE

Luggage **lockers** (small/medium/large Skr20/30/40 for up to 24hr) are available at Centralstationen and the long-distance bus terminal Nils Ericson Terminalen.

GÖTEBORG PASS

The excellent Göteborg Pass discount card is well worth getting, even if all you're going to do is park in Göteborg (which has the most expensive street parking in Sweden, and the most dedicated traffic wardens). You also get free or reduced admission to a bundle of attractions (including Liseberg and the museums), plus free city sightseeing tours, bicycle hire and travel by public transport within the region.

The card costs Skr210/150 per adult/child for 24 hours, Skr295/210 for 48 hours. It's available at tourist offices, hotels and Pressbyrån newsagencies.

Göteborgspaketet is an accommodation package offered at various hotels with prices starting at Skr475 per person per night. It includes the Göteborg Pass for the number of nights you stay. You can book the package in advance over the Internet or telephone the tourist office on ☎ 61 25 00. A variety of more expensive packages includes theatre or concert tickets, casino passes, spa visits etc.

LIBRARIES

Stadsbiblioteket (☎ 61 65 00; Götaplatsen; 🕒 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun) The city library has imported newspapers and magazines, books in English, a good café and a modern computer section (free Internet access for 15/30min without/with library card).

MEDICAL SERVICES

Medical information is available around the clock on ☎ 703 15 00.

Akuttandvården (☎ 80 78 00; Stampgatan 2) For emergency dental treatment.

Apotek Vasan (☎ 0771-45 04 50; Nordstan complex; 🕒 8am-10pm) Late-night pharmacy.

Östra Sjukhuset (☎ 343 40 00) Large hospital about 5km northeast of the centre, near the terminus at the end of tramline 1.

MONEY

Banks with ATMs can be found everywhere, including inside the Nordstan complex and along Kungsporsavenyn.

Forex (☎ 0200-22 22 20; www.forex.se) Centralstationen (🕒 7am-9pm Mon-Sat); Kungsporsavenyn 22 (🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat); Kungsporsplatsen (🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat); Landvetter airport (🕒 5.15am-9pm Mon-Fri, 5.15am-7pm Sat, 5.15am-10.30pm Sun); Norstan Complex (🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat) Foreign exchange office with branches all over the city.

POST

Postal services are now mainly provided by kiosks, newsagents, petrol stations and supermarkets – look for the blue-and-yellow postal symbol.

Post office (Nordstan complex; 🕒 9am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, noon-3pm Sun)

TOURIST OFFICES

Main tourist office (☎ 61 25 00; www.goteborg.com; Kungsporsplatsen 2; 🕒 9.30am-8pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri & 10am-2pm Sat Sep-Apr, 9.30am-6pm Mon-Fri & 10am-2pm Sat & Sun May–mid-Jun & end Aug) Central and very busy, with good free brochures and maps.

Branch tourist office (Nordstan complex; 🕒 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm Sat, noon-4pm Sun)

Dangers & Annoyances

Göteborg is a reasonably safe city by European standards, but travellers should be alert and take care in the Nordstan shopping complex late at night. It becomes a pretty unsavoury venue and is not a place that is likely to feel comfortable for solo women.

Sights**LISEBERG**

Sweden's most popular attraction is this **theme park** (☎ 40 01 00; www.liseberg.se; adult/under 7yr Skr60/free; 🕒 to 10pm or 11pm most days May-Aug, & during Christmas period), southeast of the city centre. Take tram 4 or 5, and enter from Örgrytevägen or Getebergsled. The park gets over three million visitors every year (and sometimes it feels as though they're all visiting at once!).

There are a few fairly big rides – for example, the 90kph wooden rollercoaster Balder, and 2005's new ride Kanonen, where you're blasted from 0 to 75kph in under two seconds. For views of the city without losing your lunch, the ride to the top of the Liseberg Tower, 83m above the ground, climaxes in a slow spinning dance with a breathtaking panorama. There are plenty of carousels and fairytale castles for smaller kids, and frequent summer shows and concerts.

Each ride costs between one and four coupons (Skr15 each) per go, but it probably makes sense to buy a pass (one/two days Skr265/335). Opening hours are complex – check the website.

MUSEUMS

After Liseberg museums are Göteborg's strongest attractions: admission to most is covered by the Göteborg Pass. All have good cafés attached, and several have specialist shops.

Stadsmuseum

The Åskekärr Ship, Sweden's only original Viking vessel, is on display at the **Stadsmuseum** (☎ 61 27 70; Östindiska huset, Norra Hamngatan 12; adult/under 20yr Skr40/free; 🕒 10am-5pm May-Aug, 10am-5pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Wed rest of yr), alongside silver treasure troves and weaponry from the same period. There are other good archaeological collections, lots of information on the city's history, and an impressive amount of East Indian porcelain (the museum is located in the huge 18th-century former HQ of the Swedish East India Company).

Universeum

The spectacular **Universeum** (☎ 335 64 50; www.universeum.se; Södra Vägen; low season individual/family Skr110/395, high season Skr135/495; 🕒 10am-7pm Jul & Aug, 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, to 8pm Wed, 11am-6pm Sat & Sun May & Jun, 11am-6pm Tue-Sun, to 8pm Wed Sep-Apr) is one for families and nature-lovers. A

funicular takes you to the top of an indoor mountain, from where you follow the course of a Scandinavian stream down through rivers and lakes to the sea – shark tunnel ahoy! Things take a tropical turn in the absorbing rainforest: birds and butterflies flutter, while more gruesome denizens dwell in Piranha River, Caiman Creek, Anaconda Swamp and Stingray Lagoon.

Röhsska Museet

A carnival of creativity awaits you at **Röhsska Museet** (☎ 61 38 50; www.designmuseum.se; Vasagatan 37; adult/under 20yr Skr40/free; 🕒 noon-8pm Tue, noon-5pm Wed-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun), Sweden's only art and design museum. Exquisite Chinese and Japanese sculptures and baroque furniture make up the older historical exhibitions. For a huge culture shock, descend to the ultramodern 20th- and 21st-century Scandinavian design section – furniture features strongly, but there's also some outrageous crockery.

Maritiman

Near the opera house north of the centre is the largest floating **ship museum** (☎ 10 59 50; Packhuskajen; adult/7-15yr Skr75/30; 🕒 10am-6pm May-Aug, 10am-4pm Mar, Apr, Sep & Oct, 10am-4pm Fri-Sun Nov) in the world! It's made up of 19 historical crafts, including fishing boats, a light vessel and a firefighter, linked by walkways. Shiny down into the 69m-long submarine *Nordkaparen*, a throat-tightening glimpse into underwater warfare. Another highlight is the museum's biggest craft, the labyrinthine 121m-long destroyer *Småland*, which saw service from 1952 to 1979. Inside, hunched figures listen to crackling radio messages, and the bunks look just-slept-in – you half expect to meet uniformed sailors in the dim, twisting passages...

There's a lot to see, so allow a couple of hours.

Konstmuseet

The main city art collection is at **Konstmuseet** (☎ 61 29 80; www.konstmuseum.goteborg.se; Götaplatsen; adult/under 20yr Skr40/free; 🕒 11am-6pm Tue & Thu, 11am-9pm Wed, 11am-5pm Fri-Sun). There are no table works by the French impressionists, Rubens, Van Gogh, Rembrandt, Picasso, and an impressive collection of Scandinavian masters (Bruno Liljefors, Edvard Munch, Anders Zorn, Carl Larsson). Room

22 is particularly distinctive, with its paintings of the uncanny Nordic twilight.

There's also an interesting sculpture hall, the **Hasselblad Center** (☎ 20 35 30) photographic collection, and temporary exhibitions covering the latest in Nordic art.

Outside, Götaplatsen is dominated by the bronze **Poseidon fountain**, which was unveiled to public outcry in 1931. This 7m-high colossus originally had colossal private parts, and the strait-laced citizens of Göteborg demanded some drastic reduction surgery.

Varldskulturmuseet

Opened in 2005, Göteborg's newest and most futuristic museum is **Varldskulturmuseet** (Museum of World Culture; ☎ 63 27 30; www.varldskulturmuseet.se; Södra Vägen 54; admission free; 🕒 noon-5pm Tue, Sat & Sun, noon-9pm Wed-Fri), where ethnography, art and global politics collide in immersive multimedia exhibitions. At the time of writing, themes included: 'Sister of Dreams', on the myths of the Orinoco people; 'No Name Fever', on AIDS; and 'Horizons', stories about Africa. The latter two will run into 2006, to be joined by an exhibition on trafficking.

Sjöfartsmuseet

The main museum of maritime history is **Sjöfartsmuseet** (☎ 61 29 00; www.sjofartsmuseum.goteborg.se; Karl Johansgatan 1; adult/under 20yr Skr40/free; 🕒 10am-5pm May-Aug, 9am-4pm Tue-Fri, to 8pm Wed, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Sep-Apr), by Stigbergstorget about 2km west of the city centre. Tram 3, 9 or 11 will get you there. It includes model ships, cannons, a ship's medical room and a large collection of figureheads, such as the vicious-looking *Vinthunden* from the frigate with the same name. The attached **aquarium** (included in the entry fee) has a good selection of Nordic marine life. Outside, the **Sjömanstornet** (Mariner's Tower), topped by a statue of a grieving woman, commemorates the Swedish sailors killed in WWI.

Naturhistoriska Museet

The **Natural History Museum** (☎ 775 24 00; www.gnm.se; Slottsskogen Park; adult/under 20yr Skr60/free; 🕒 11am-5pm May-Aug, 9am-4pm Tue-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat & Sun Sep-Apr) contains the world's only stuffed blue whale. You could once walk inside its mouth, until an amorous couple were discovered inside and the jaws were firmly shut. As natural history museums go, this

is a large and impressive one, with some 10 million specimens of wildlife from around the world. To get there, take tram 1 or 6.

Nya Älvsborgs Fästning

At the mouth of the Göta älv, squat red **Elfsborgs Fortress** has had an interesting history. It was built in the 17th century to defend the young city from Danish attack, and saw action again in the early 18th century during the Great Nordic War. Visitors can see the church built for Karl XII's troops, and the dungeons for when they stepped out-of-line.

The fortress is about 8km downstream from Göteborg. Boat trips and **guided tours** (adult/6-12yr/family Skr110/60/280) are run six times a day from May to August by Börjessons (see opposite). Tours depart from Lilla Bommen harbour, north of the train station. Most are free for holders of the Göteborg Pass.

Volvo Museum

Just celebrating its 10th birthday, the **Volvo Museum** (☎ 66 48 14; Hisingen; adult/child Skr30/10; ☞ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Jun-Aug; noon-5pm Tue-Fri, 11am-4pm Sat Sep-May) contains everything from the company's very first car to the most cutting-edge experimental designs – including the first jet engine used by the Swedish Air Force.

The museum is about 8km west of the city centre at Arendal. Fittingly, it's tricky to get to without a car. Take tram 2, 4 or 5 to Eketrågatan, then bus 27.

PARKS

Laid out in 1842, the lovely **Trädgårdsföreningen** (City Park; ☎ 365 58 58; Nya Allén; adult/under 17yr Skr15/free; ☞ 7am-9pm May-Aug, 7am-6pm or 7.30pm Sep-Apr) is a large protected area off Nya Allén, full of flowers and tiny cafés and popular for lunchtime escapes. It contains Europe's largest **rosarium**, with around 2500 varieties, and the 19th-century **Palmhuset** (☎ 41 57 73; adult/under 20yr Skr20/free; ☞ 10am-5pm May-Aug, 10am-4pm Sep-Apr). This graceful building is a miniature version of Crystal Palace in London, with five differently heated halls: plant highlights include the camellia collection and the 2m-wide tropical lily pads.

Sweden's largest botanical garden is the **Botaniska Trädgården** (Carl Skottsbergsgatan 22a; admission free; ☞ 9am-sunset, greenhouses 10am-5pm), with around 12,000 plant species.

Just across Dag Hammarskjöldsleden, **Slottskogsparken** (admission free; ☞ 24hr) is great for a stroll. The Naturhistoriska Museet is perched on a hill in the park. There's also **Barnens Zoo** (Children's Zoo; ☞ May-early Sep) and **Djurgårdarna**, an animal park with farm animals, elk, deer and other Swedish animals and birds. Feeding time at the seal pond is 2pm daily.

The rocky heights of Ramberget (87m) in **Keillers Park** (Hisingen) give the best view of the city. You can get there on the city bus tour (see opposite), or take a tram to Ramsbergsvallen and walk up.

CHURCHES

Göteborg's churches aren't very old but they're a better reflection of Swedish architecture than Stockholm's Italian imitations.

The classical **Domkyrkan** (Gustavi Cathedral; Västra Hamngatan; ☞ 8am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-4pm Sat, 10am-3pm Sun) was consecrated in 1815 – two previous cathedrals were destroyed by town fires. Many of the cathedral's contents are modern, but there's an 18th-century clock and reredos. Two other remarkable 19th-century churches are **Hagakyrkan** (☎ 731 61 60; Haga Kyrkoplan; ☞ 11am-3pm Mon-Thu & Sat) and the neo-Gothic **Oscar Fredriks kyrka** (☎ 731 92 50; Oscar Fredriks Kyrkogatan; ☞ 8am-4pm Mon-Fri).

One of the most distinctive buildings in Göteborg is **Masthuggskyrkan** (Storebackegatan; ☞ 9am-6pm summer, 11am-4pm rest of yr), a welcome landmark for sailors and a smashing viewpoint over the western half of the city. Completed in 1914, its interior is like an upturned boat.

OTHER SIGHTS

The **Haga district** is Göteborg's oldest suburb and dates back to 1648. In the 1980s and '90s, the area was thoroughly renovated and it's now a pleasing mixture of old and new buildings, independent knick-knack shops and cool cafés.

The red-and-white 'skyscraper' **Göteborgs-Utkiken** (☎ 15 61 47; Lilla Bommen 1 adult/child Skr20/10; ☞ 11am-5pm May-Aug, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Sep-Apr), nicknamed 'The Lipstick' by city-dwellers for obvious reasons, has superior views of the harbour from the top.

The **Klippan precinct** was once a bustle of industry – glassworks, foundries, breweries and salting houses – which has been turned into a picturesque heritage centre. It includes

18th-century sailor's cottages, the remains of Gamla Älvsborgs fort (ransomed from the Danes in 1619), a brewery opened by the Scot David Carnegie (now a hotel), and St Birgittas kapell. Klippan is just off Oscarsleden, about 400m east of Älvsborgsbron – take tram 3 or 9 to Vagnhallen Majorna.

Kronhuset, lying between Postgatan and Kronhusgatan, is the city's oldest secular building, a former arsenal built in Dutch style between 1642 and 1654. It was here that Karl X held the disastrous **riksdag** (parliament) in 1660 – he died while it was in session. **Kronhusbodarna**, just across the courtyard from Kronhuset, consists of several workshops making and selling pottery, silverware, glass and textiles.

The curious **Feskekörka** (☎ 711 35 09; Rosenlundsgatan; ☞ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat Jun-Aug, closed Mon rest of yr), or 'Fish Church', has nothing remotely to do with ecclesiastical matters – it's a seafood market.

Activities

Cyclists should ask the tourist office for the map *Cykel Karta Göteborg*, which shows the best routes in and around the city. It's divided into three parts (Skr20 each, or Skr50 for all three). See p215 for bike hire.

The best indoor pool is the magnificent and exclusive **Hagabadet** (☎ 60 06 00; Södra Allégatan 3; ☞ 6.30am-9.30pm Mon-Thu, 6.30am-8.30pm Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 10am-6pm Sun). For Skr360 you can swim all day and use the attached sauna, gym and aerobics facilities; between 6.30am and 9am, you can swim for Skr100. There's a Roman bath and all manner of health and beauty treatments if you're feeling travel-weary.

Contained within the vast Valhalla gym/swim/bowling complex is the indoor pool **Valhallabadet** (☎ 61 19 56; Valhallagatan 3; ☞ 7am-7pm Mon-Fri, 7am-3pm Sat, 11am-3pm Sun). A swim and sauna costs Skr40, and there's also a relaxing Roman bath here (Skr110).

Outdoor swimming is best in **Delsjön lake**, 6km east of the centre (take tram 5 to Töpelsgatan). You can also hire **canoes** (☎ 40 34 88) and **fish** for pike or perch here: ask the tourist office for tackle shop details, as you'll need a permit.

Bohusleden is an easy walking trail that runs for 360km through Bohuslän, from Lindome (south of Göteborg) to Strömstad, passing just east of the city. You can buy a guide to the route from the tourist offices (Skr45).

For serious **island hopping**, take tram 11 southwest to Saltholmen and you'll have at least 15 different islands to explore – see p215.

There's some good **rock climbing** around Göteborg. Tram 6, 7 and 11 go to Kviberg, close to some of the best climbing, at Utby. Contact **Göteborgs Klätterklubb** (☎ 43 13 86; www.gbkk.nu in Swedish) for more information.

Tours

Börjessons (☎ 60 96 70; www.borjessons.com) run 50-minute city bus and boat tours (some under the name 'Paddan Sightseeing'). They're a great way to get your bearings and are free with the Göteborg Pass; as are tours to Nya Älvsborgs Fästning. There may be restrictions on times you can go, so check first.

Tour	Frequency	Departs from	Ticket (adult/6-12 yrs)
City Bus Tour	five daily May-Aug	Stora Teatern	Skr120/60
City Boat Tour	from 10am May-Sep	Kungssportsbron	Skr95/60
Nya Älvsborgs Fästning	five to 11am May-Aug	Lilla Bommen	Skr110/60

Börjessons runs tours from Lilla Bommen to **Vinga** (see p216) and around the island of **Hisingen** (adult/6-12yr Skr130/65; ☞ 6pm or 7pm Tue-Sun Jul-mid-Aug), amongst others.

Sleeping

Göteborg has several high-quality hostels near the city centre. Most hotels offer exceptional discounts at weekends and in summer.

PRIVATE ROOMS

The tourist office can arrange private rooms from Skr175/225 for a single/double, plus a Skr60 booking fee.

HOSTELS

Most hostels are clustered in the central southwest area, in apartment buildings that sometimes inspire little confidence from the outside, but inside offer accommodation of a very high standard. All are open year-round.

STF Vandrarhem Slotsskogen (☎ 42 65 20; www.sov.nu; Vegagatan 21; dm Skr120-140, s/d Skr260/330; ☞)

Unlike many Swedish hostels, big, friendly Slottsskogen is a cracking place for meeting other travellers. For a small extra payment there's access to a laundry, sauna and sun bed. You can also hire bikes (per day/two days Skr90/160), and the hostel's buffet breakfast (Skr55) is acquiring legendary status. If you're really penny-pinching, you may get an even cheaper bed in one of the inner windowless rooms. Parking spaces can be booked for a fee. Tram 1 or 2 to Olive-dalsgatan will get you there.

STF Vandrarhem Stigbergsliden (☎ 24 16 20; vandrarhem.stigbergsliden@telia.com; Stigbergsliden 10; dm Skr120, s/d Skr250/300) In a renovated 19th-century seaman's institute (tram 3, 9 or 11 to Stigbergstorget), this is a hostel with history. Staff are greatly helpful, and besides the usual stuff (big kitchen, laundry, TV room), there's a sheltered yard/garden plus bikes for rent (Skr50 per day).

Masthuggsterrassens Vandrarhem (☎ 42 48 20; www.mastenvandrarhem.com; Masthuggsterrassen 10H; dm/d Skr160/400) If you're looking for a good night's sleep, try this clean, quiet, well-run place. It has good facilities – three lounges, three kitchens and a little library (mostly Swedish books) – and is handy if you're catching an early ferry to Denmark. Take tram 3, 9 or 11 to Masthuggstorget and follow the signs.

Göteborgs Vandrarhem (☎ 40 10 50; www.goteborgsvandrarhem.se; Mölndalsvägen 23; dm Skr150-160, s/d Skr350/370) Nifty for those desperate to get to Liseberg as early as possible! Little extras include a sauna and big sunny terrace. Take tram 4 to Gettebergssång.

Kvibergs Vandrarhem & Stugby (☎ 43 50 55; www.vandrarhem.com; Kvibergsvägen 5; low season 1-/2-/3-/4-bed r Skr250/360/450/580, high season 3-/4-bed r Skr480/600) This recommended SVIF hostel, a few kilometres northeast of the city centre (tram 6, 7 or 11), has super amenities, including sauna, sun beds, laundry, table tennis, two kitchens and two lounges. There are no dorms – instead you rent out the entire room. There are also hotel-style rooms and cabins in the green grounds.

Also recommended:

Göteborgs Mini-Hotel (☎ 24 10 23; www.minihotel.se; Tredje Långgatan 31; dm Skr130-160, d Skr360) Clean and inviting, with renovated rooms and an all-day reception. Breakfast is available June to August.

Linné Vandrarhem (☎ 12 10 60; www.vandrarhemmet-linne.com; Vegagatan 22; dm Skr180, d Skr380) Down the

road from Slottsskogen, this SVIF hostel is another good central-ish option.

CAMPING

Lisebergs Camping & Stugbyar Kärralund (☎ 84 02 00; karralund@liseberg.se; Olbergsgatan 1; low/high season sites with car Skr135/240, cabins & chalets from Skr495/1395) The fun park owns and operates a range of accommodation around Göteborg. This camp site is the closest one to town (tram 5 to Welandergatan); as you'd expect, it's fully geared for families. There are 35 tent sites – unreservable, so turn up early.

Lilleby Havsbad Camping (☎ 56 50 66; Lillebyvägen; low/high season sites t Skr160/190; ☎ May-Aug) Also part of the Liseberg 'empire', this place is by the seaside, 20km west of the city centre in Torslanda. To get there take bus 25 from near Centralstationen to Lillebyvägen, then change to bus 23.

HOTELS

Midrange

Vanilj Hotell, Kafé & Bar (☎ 711 62 20; www.vaniljhotel.entersol.se; Kyrkogatan 38; s/d from Skr895/1095, discounted to Skr595/895; ☎) This is an excellent choice. The owners have made a big effort to make their little hotel, located on a quiet central street, cosy and homelike. Individually decorated rooms (renovated in 2004) range from country checks to Scandinavian cool, and breakfast is served in the lovely café downstairs. Get there early for one of the five parking spaces.

Hotell Barken Viking (☎ 63 58 00; barken.viking@liseberg.se; Gullbergskajen; crew quarters s/d Skr600/850, officer's cabin s/d Skr1195/1495, discounted to Skr895/1095) The *Barken Viking* is a beautiful four-masted sailing ship, converted into a hotel and restaurant and moored near Lilla Bommen harbour. Crew quarters have shared bathrooms and bunks. If you pay extra, you can leave the salty sea dogs behind and promote yourself to an officer's cabin, with proper beds, extra luxuries and private facilities.

Hotel Eggers (☎ 80 60 70; www.hotelegggers.se; Drottningtorget; s/d from Skr1425/1780, discounted to Skr730/1060; ☎) Elegant Eggers was founded as a railway hotel in 1859. Its pleasant rooms are individually decorated, with nods to their Regency-era setting; a good few have private balconies overlooking the bustle of the square. There's also a handy valet parking service (Skr210).

Hotel Vasa (☎ 17 36 30; www.hotelvasa.se; Viktoria-gatan 6; s/d from Skr845/995, discounted to Skr625/825; ☎) Hotel Vasa is an attractive, family-run place convenient for the cafés of Vasagatan. There's a courtyard garden, two of the doubles have Jacuzzis, and a nice touch is that each room has a book about Göteborg to leaf through.

Hotel Royal (☎ 700 11 70; www.hotelroyal.nu; Drottninggatan 67; s/d from Skr1045/1295, discounted to Skr790/990; ☎) Göteborg's oldest hotel (1852) has aged very well. The grand entrance has been retained, complete with painted glass ceiling and sweeping staircase, and the agreeable rooms make the necessary 21st-century concessions. It's also blessed with very helpful staff.

City Hotel (☎ 708 40 00; www.cityhotelgbg.se; Lorensbergsgatan 6; s/d without bathroom from Skr495/595, discounted to Skr445/545) The City represents excellent value for such a central hotel (within yards of Sweden's 'Champs Elysées'), and all rooms have recently been renovated. For about Skr300 extra you can have a private bathroom. There's no dining room, so breakfast is brought to your door.

Hotel Opera (☎ 80 50 80; www.hotelopera.se; Norra Hamngatan 38; budget s/d Skr750/895, discounted to Skr495/795, standard s/d Skr1095/1295, discounted to Skr695/895) Conveniently located by the train station and bus terminal. Budget rooms are in an older part of the hotel and are small but adequate, while standard rooms are larger, better decorated, and have extras like desks; all rooms have private bathrooms. Sauna and Jacuzzi are available to all.

Hotel Flora (☎ 13 86 16; www.hotelflora.se; Grönsaktorget 2; s/d Skr475/620, with bathroom Skr990/1195, discounted to Skr650/850) Handily central, not far from the tourist office. It's an old building, slightly battered but comfortable, with a 24-hour reception. Four of the rooms have pleasing river views.

Top-End

Hotel Odin Residence (☎ 745 22 00; www.hotelodin.se; Odinsgatan 6; apt s/d from Skr1495/1895; ☎) Our top pick for space and comfort. This new hotel has fabulous apartments filled with the kind of décor and gadgets you'd kill for at home, and all come equipped with everything you need for a long, happy stay (including a full kitchen, and lounge with TV and stereo). There are cheaper rates for stays of longer than a week.

Hotel Gothia Towers (☎ 750 88 00; info@gothia-towers.com; Mässans Gata 24; s/d from Skr1690/2090, discounted to Skr940/1040; ☎) Scandinavia's largest hotel is the whopping 23-storey Gothia Towers (take tram 5). Its 704 rooms are stylish and modern, particularly the new 'Design' options: all sharp, clean lines and bathroom windows so you can admire the view from the bath! The sky bar and restaurant Heaven 23, with superb panoramas over the city, are popular with nonguests too.

Radisson SAS Scandinavia Hotel (☎ 758 50 00; Södra Hamngatan 59-65; s/d from Skr1870/1970, discounted to Skr1290/1290; ☎) This is one of the most luxurious hotels in Göteborg. Rooms run around a vast atrium (containing shops, bar and restaurant): there's something of a spaceship feel to those looking inwards. Snazzy rooms have beds with light-up Perspex headboards! There's also a health club to help you relax. Breakfast isn't included in the price.

The Scandic chain has several hotels in Göteborg, including:

Scandic Hotel Europa (☎ 751 65 00; europa@scandic-hotels.com; Köpmansgatan 38; s/d Skr1500/1700, discounted to Skr940/990; ☎) With 6th-floor pool and sauna area.

Scandic Hotel Rubinen (☎ 751 54 00; rubinen@scandic-hotels.com; Kungsporsavenyn 24; s/d Skr1795/2295, discounted to Skr950/1250; ☎) In the heart of the Avenyn action, with on-site restaurants and cocktail bar.

Eating

Göteborg is awash with sleek and fashionable restaurants. Kungsporsavenyn is lined with restaurant/bars and alfresco eating is the thing when the sun comes out: however, you pay for the privilege of dining on the Avenyn. Vasagatan and Linnégatan have a good choice of restaurants too, but with less big-city pizzazz and often lower prices. Many dining places close on Sundays.

RESTAURANTS

Budget

Andrum (☎ 13 85 04; Östra Hamngatan 19; large/small/mini plate Skr65/50/35; ☎) 11am-10pm Mon-Fri, noon-8pm Sat & Sun) One for the veggies. Andrum does an all-day lunch buffet which is excellent value for money. Choose your plate size, then select from a spread of salads, hot mains and homemade breads. It's simple, tasty, wholesome stuff, and cheerfully recommended.

Bombay (☎ 12 00 39; www.restaurangbombay.com; Andra Långgatan 8; lunch Skr55, mains from Skr70) Bombay is quite a busy lunchtime spot. It does good-value Indian dishes to eat in or take away, with decent tandoori and vegetarian selections.

Solrosen (Kaponjargatan 4; dinner mains from Skr65; ☎ 11.30am-1am Mon-Fri, 2pm-1am Sat) 'Cheap' seems to equate with 'vegetarian' in Göteborg. Another purse-easy choice is 'The Sunflower', a slightly grungy studenty veggie place with great buffets and an all-day special.

Midrange

Trädgårn (☎ 10 20 90; bokningen@tradgarn.se; Nya Allén; lunch from Skr95, dinner mains Skr145-285; ☎ closed Sun) This cool and spacious restaurant, bar and nightclub (until 5am Friday and Saturday) has a summer terrace backing onto the lovely Trädgårdsföreningen park. Lunch here is a treat, with salads, hotplate dishes and four-course meal deals, depending on how hungry you are. In the evening, the restaurant's award-winning chefs rustle up excellent fish and seafood buffets.

Brasserie Lipp (☎ 10 58 30; info@brasseriellipp.com; Kungssportsavenyn 8; mains Skr120-240; ☎ until at least 1am, closed Sun Oct-Mar) Classic and classy, this French-inspired bar-restaurant has good light meals on its menu, including Caesar salads and club sandwiches, plus more substantial Mediterranean and Asian evening mains. It's also a popular bar, with live DJs on Friday and Saturday nights in summer.

Bliss (☎ 13 85 55; Magasinsgatan 3; lunch Skr74, dinner mains around Skr210; ☎ 11.30am-2.30pm Mon-Fri, 6pm-1am or 2am Tue-Sat) Bliss has one of the hippest interiors in Göteborg, with low designer seats, multicoloured fairy lights, and superb food. It's a real night-time joint: if you're not up to a big meal, you can share tapas-style bar snacks and dance to live DJs until late.

Cyrano (☎ 14 30 10; Prinsgatan 7; mains around Skr190; ☎ 5-11pm Mon-Fri, 2-11pm Sat, 2-9pm Sun) Squint and you could almost be in Provence. This inviting little French bistro has a warm dark-wood interior and a few outdoor seats. There's an à la carte menu of fish, duck and lamb mains (or frogs' legs in Pernod!), and a larger pizza menu.

Smaka (☎ 13 22 47; info@smaka.se; Vasaplatsen 3; mains Skr120-200; ☎ 5pm to 1am or 2am) Smaka serves up wonderful, traditional Swedish *husmanskost* (home cooking) like elk burgers, gravadlax and its speciality, meatballs

with mashed potato and lingonberries. Finish off your meal with a cloudberry soufflé, then retire to the lively bar.

Joe Farelli's (☎ 10 58 26; www.joefarelli.com; Kungssportsavenyn 12; pizzas 120-200, mains Skr150-260; ☎ noon-1am, to 3am Fri & Sat) A casual Italian-American restaurant-bar, where you can slap ketchup on your US burgers 'n' steaks, or get misty-eyed about the old country with Sicilian-style bruschetta, pizza and pasta. Its Sunday brunch is perfect for soaking up Saturday night's beer.

A Hereford Beefstouw (☎ 775 04 41; www.hereford-beef.com; Linnégatan 5; lunch Skr85, steaks Skr130-350; ☎ closed lunch, Sun & Mon in summer) If you're feeling anaemic, this upmarket steakhouse is the answer, offering all manner of meat, including T-bone steaks, veal sirloin and rack of lamb. Solid meals are served on solid African oak tables, and you get a good view of busy Linnégatan as you eat.

Sjöbaren (☎ 711 97 80; Haga Nygata 25; mains Skr100-160; ☎ 11am-11pm Mon-Thu, 11am-midnight Fri, noon-midnight Sat, 1-10pm Sun) This cosy place, in the Haga district, serves well-prepared Swedish seafood in a nautical setting (inside) or pleasant courtyard garden. Go for classic dishes like gravadlax, fish soup or seafood pasta.

Den Lilla Tavernan (☎ 12 88 05; Olivedalsgatan 17; mezes Skr30-70, mains around Skr100; ☎ from 4pm Mon-Fri, from 1pm Sat & Sun) The Little Tavern is a charming and authentic spot with reasonably priced Greek favourites and a great array of mezes perfect for sharing. There's also musical entertainment of a bazouki nature.

Magnus & Magnus (☎ 13 30 00; magnus@magnusmagnus.com; Magasinsgatan 8; mains Skr155-255; ☎ from 6pm Mon-Sat) This modern restaurant draws fashionable crowds with its relaxed atmosphere. Low chairs and handsome tables make it feel more like someone's (swanky) home than a business, and there's a summer courtyard for alfresco dining. Meals are mainly meat and fish, with a tasty range of starters.

Top End

28+ (☎ 20 21 61; Götabergsgatan 28; mains Skr295-365; ☎ 6-11pm Mon-Sat) This award-winning gourmet restaurant is a special-occasion place. Thoughtful and intriguing dishes are predominantly fishy, and include smoked mussels with pickled cucumber and baked anglerfish with cherry tomatoes and risotto. For a really exceptional blow-out, go for

the seven-course *degustation* fish menu (Skr795). Awkwardly, the restaurant closes from mid-June to late August.

Fiskekrogen (☎ 10 10 05; www.fiskekrogen.com; Lilla Torget 1; mains Skr255-375; ☎ lunch & dinner Mon-Sat) This is a magnificent fish and seafood restaurant in former East India Company buildings. It has an impressive circular dining room called Blåskajsa, and an equally impressive cellar of over 400 wines.

Linnéa (☎ 16 11 83; info@restauranglinnea.com; Södra Vägen 32; lunch Skr95, mains Skr220-300; ☎ noon-2pm Mon-Fri, from 5.30pm Mon-Sat) Modern Swedish cuisine is served up at exclusive, intimate Linnéa. Fancy ingredients and some surprisingly homely ones (gooseberries, nettles and lentils) are spun into subtle and succulent meals, beautifully presented on glass plates.

CAFÉS

All of Göteborg's museums have excellent cafés.

Brogyllens Konditori (☎ 13 87 13; Västra Hamngatan 2; snacks Skr25-50; ☎ closed Sun) Splendid breads, pastries, coffee and cakes are served at this traditional *konditori*. It's swimming in elegance, with grand chandeliers overhead and graceful sculptures scattered around.

Eva's Paley (☎ 16 30 70; Kungssportsavenyn 39; dishes Skr40-60; ☎ until at least 11pm Mon-Sat) Something of a Göteborg institution, this huge café opens until late every evening and has plenty of outdoor seating in summer. It serves baked potatoes, wraps, meat and veggie pasta, salads and a rainbow of fresh muffins (buy them to take home from the bakery next door).

Café Kosmos (☎ 13 14 00; Västra Hamngatan 20; ☎ 10am-10pm Mon-Sat, 11am-10pm Sat, noon-10pm Sun) One giant mass of tables (don't expect any privacy), this slick place attracts 20-something crowds. All the usual coffee 'n' café snacks are served up, although one feels the social scene is more important.

Along the leafy Vasagatan boulevard, near the university, there are quite a few cafés. **Java Kaffebär** (Vasagatan 32) is a true student haunt, thick with dreadlocks, dyed hair and nipple rings. It offers cheap bagels and sandwiches to its customers. **Café Garbo** (☎ 774 19 25; Vasagatan 40) and the very trendy **Espresso House** (☎ 397 50; Vasagatan 22) are two coffee houses in the same area, both with large windows and prime people-watching opportunities, plus fashionable café food (Skr30 to Skr60).

QUICK EATS

If you need something quick, the Nordstan shopping complex has loads of fast-food outlets.

Aldardo (☎ 13 23 00; Kungstorget 12; pizza slice from Skr25, pasta from Skr40; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-2pm Sat, closed mid-Jul-Aug) Right by the tourist office, this busy deli is a recommended spot to pick up authentic Italian fast food – home-made pizza *al taglio* (by the slice) and pasta dishes to go.

Crepes Van (crêpes from Skr20; ☎ 4-9pm Mon-Thu, 4pm-3am Fri & Sat) Those with a sweet tooth should head to this takeaway van near the McDonald's branch on Linnégatan, also a favourite of 'flushed and clumsy' patrons late on Friday and Saturday.

Sushi & Soda (Pringsgatan 4; ☎ until 9pm) A sushi takeaway with several branches in the city. This outlet is closest to several of the hostels and serves excellent Japanese lunch deals, including miso soup and 11 pieces of sushi, for around Skr70.

Kalaya (☎ 12 39 98; Olivedalsgatan 13; dishes from Skr60; ☎ 11am-10pm) Also near the hostel area, Kalaya has authentic Thai noodle and curry dishes.

Alexandras (Kungstorget; ☎ 711 78 78) Located in the central Saluhallen, this place is renowned for its excellent hearty soups and stews (around Skr40), particularly welcoming on a cold day.

SELF-CATERING

Saluhallen (Kungstorget; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm Sat) This classic old central market hall is the perfect place to put together your picnic pack, with munchables from around the world. It is also full of excellent budget eateries and food stalls.

Saluhall Briggen (Nordhemsgatan 28; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 9am-2pm Sat) Not as big or as busy as the central Saluhallen, this covered market nevertheless has an array of lunch stalls handy for the hostel district.

Feskekörka (☎ 711 35 09; Rosenlundsgatan; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 8am-1pm Sat Jun-Aug, closed Mon rest of yr) A market devoted to fresh fish and squamous things, the 'Fish Church' will delight seafood fans.

Hemköp supermarket (Nordstan complex; ☎ 8am-10pm) Big supermarket in the thick of things.

Systembolaget Kungssportsavenyn (☎ 18 65 24; Kungssportsavenyn 18); Kungsgatan (☎ 711 86 16; Kungsgatan 6) There are various Systembolagets dotted

about the place, selling beer, wine and spirits. These are the two most conveniently located in Göteborg.

Drinking

Swedish licensing laws mean that bars must have a restaurant section, although in most cases, it's vice versa – stroll down Kungsporsavenyn and see what takes your fancy. There are also several bars on Järntorget that are currently 'in' drinking spots.

Ölhallen 7:an (☎ 13 60 79; Kungstorget 7) One place that you should check out is this little gem, a well-worn Swedish beerhall that hasn't changed in about 100 years. There's no food, wine or pretension, just beer, and plenty of choices.

Dubliner (☎ 13 90 20; www.dubliner.se; Östra Hamngatan 50B) As authentic an Irish pub as you'll ever find on the continent, the Dubliner has pints of Guinness, bar meals like beef-and-Guinness pie, and live Celtic music every night in summer.

O'Leary's (☎ 711 55 19; Östra Hamngatan 36) Almost opposite is this American-style sports bar with sporting memorabilia plastering the walls, 30 TV screens and bar snacks of the chicken-wing-and-burger variety.

Rose & Crown (☎ 10 58 27; Kungsporsavenyn 6) This is an 'English-style' pub popular with tourists and locals. There's more of a concentration on the restaurant and less on in-your-face drinking than at some other bars.

Dancin' Dingo (☎ 81 18 12; www.dancindingo.se; Kristinelundsgatan 16; ☎ until 2am or 3am) Just in case any nationalities are feeling left out, here's an entertaining Australian pub not far off Kungsporsavenyn, with a great if raucous atmosphere.

Entertainment

CLUBS

Most clubs have an age limit of 25 or 27, and there may be an admission charge depending on the night.

Nivå (☎ 701 80 90; Kungsporsavenyn 9; admission free-Skr100; ☎ until 3am Wed & Thu, until 4am Fri & Sat) This bar/restaurant metamorphoses into a crowd-pleasing (and crowded) club as the week draws on, with several floors of action. Wednesday night is soul night; other nights are a mix of dancey music, with mellower tunes in the Skybaren.

Valand (☎ 18 30 93; natklub@valand.nu; ☎ until 3am Wed, until 5am Thu-Sat) Vintage Valand, on

the corner of Vasagatan and Kungsporsavenyn, draws a mixed, party-hard crowd. There are various nights – student, R&B, soul, mainstream dance – so check what's on first.

Trädgårn (☎ 10 20 90; Nya Allén; admission Skr100; ☎ until 5am Fri & Sat) With its crazy lasers, huge dance floor and outdoor terrace, this is one of the biggest clubs.

MataHari (☎ 13 69 49; www.gretas.nu; Drottninggatan 35; ☎ until 4am Fri & Sat) The nearest thing in Göteborg to a gay club, but welcoming to all, MataHari (part of Gretas Bar & Kök) gets kitschy on Friday and Saturday nights. The minimum age is 20 years.

Nefertiti (☎ 711 15 33; Hvitfeldtsplatsen 6) Super-cool Nefertiti near the Fish Church, is a large and well-established venue for live jazz, blues and ethnic music; it also has a nightclub, restaurant and café.

Jazzhuset (☎ 13 35 44; info@jazzhuset.se; Erik Dahlbergsgatan 3) An old jazz club drawing a more mature crowd to its live music sessions, usually Fridays and Saturdays until 3am. In an attempt to snare a younger audience, it also hosts rock and pop bands on Thursdays.

CINEMA, CONCERTS & THEATRE

Check the local events listings for movies and shows or with the tourist office for current schedules and prices.

Göteborgs Stadsteatern (City Theatre; ☎ 61 50 50; www.stadsteatern.goteborg.se; Götaplatsen; tickets from Skr210; ☎ closed summer) Stages theatre productions in Swedish.

Göteborgs Konserthus (Concert Hall; ☎ 726 53 00; www.gso.se; Götaplatsen; ☎ closed summer) Home to the local symphony orchestra, with some interesting performances.

GöteborgsOperan (☎ 13 13 00; www.opera.se in Swedish; Christina Nilssons gata; tickets Skr100-500) At Lilla Bommen harbour, stages classical and modern ballet and opera and assorted musical performances.

Nya Ullevi (☎ 81 10 20; www.ullevi.se; Skånegatan) An outdoor stadium where huge pop and rock concerts are held.

Scandinaviu (☎ 81 10 20; www.scandinaviu.se; Valhallagatan 1) An indoor concert venue near Nya Ullevi and run by the same company.

The two biggest cinemas in the centre are the 10-screen **Biopalatset** (☎ 17 45 00; Kungstorget) and **Filmstaden** (☎ 0856-26 00 00; Kungsgatan 35), showing blockbuster movies.

SPORT

Göteborgers are avid sports fans. The city's two biggest stadiums are the outdoor Nya Ullevi (see opposite) for **football** matches, and the indoor Scandinaviu (see opposite) where the crowds go wild for **ice hockey**. In August 2006 the European Athletics Championships will be held at the Ullevi stadium.

Shopping

DesignTorget (☎ 774 00 17; Vallgatan 14) A great store showcasing the works (usually quite affordable) of established as well as up-and-coming designers.

Naturkompaniet (☎ 13 51 60; Stora Nygatan 33; ☎ Mon-Sat) Sells a wide range of camping and outdoor equipment.

Nordstan shopping complex (☎ 62 39 76) is Sweden's largest mall, with around 150 shops. These include the upmarket department store **NK** (☎ 710 10 00; Östra Hamngatan 42) and cheaper **Åhléns** (☎ 333 4000; Östra Hamngatan 18), both stocking a good range of quality souvenirs.

Göteborg has over 30 art galleries, all with art for sale and free admission. Ask the tourist office for the handy leaflet *Konst i Göteborg*, which has a map showing the city's galleries and design studios.

Getting There & Away

AIR

Twenty-five kilometres east of the city, **Landvetter airport** (☎ 94 10 00; www.landvetter.lfv.se) has up to 30 direct daily flights to/from Stockholm Arlanda and Stockholm Bromma airports (with SAS and Malmö Aviation), as well as a daily service to Umeå and several services per week to Borlänge, Luleå and Sundsvall. See p323 for contact details.

There are also direct flights to European cities including Amsterdam (KLM), Brussels (SN Brussels), Copenhagen (SAS), Frankfurt (Lufthansa and SAS), Helsinki (Finnair, Blue1 and City Airline), London (SAS), Manchester (City Airline), Munich (Lufthansa), Oslo (Wideroe) and Paris (Air France).

Göteborg City Airport (☎ 92 60 60; www.goteborgairport.se), some 15km north of the city at Säve, is used by Ryanair for budget flights to London Stansted, Glasgow and Frankfurt.

BOAT

Göteborg is Scandinavia's largest port and a major entry point for ferries. There are sev-

eral car/passenger terminals, with ferries to Denmark, Germany, Norway and the UK: for more details see p328.

Nearest to the city centre, the **Stena Line** (☎ 704 00 00; www.stenaline.se) Denmark terminal near Masthuggstorget (tram 3, 9 or 11) has at least seven daily departures for Frederikshavn, with a 50% discount for railpass holders.

Faster and more expensive **SeaCat** (☎ 720 08 00) catamarans to Frederikshavn depart up to three times a day in summer from near Sjöfartsmuseet. Take tram 3 or 9 to Stigbergs-torget.

Further west is the Stena Line terminal for the daily car ferry to Kiel (Germany). Take tram 3 or 9 to Chapmans Torg.

DFDS Seaways (☎ 65 06 80; www.dfdsseaways.se) sails twice weekly to Kristiansand (Norway) and Newcastle (UK) from Skandiahamnen on Hisingen (take tram 6 to Frihamnen).

BUS

The bus station, Nils Ericson Terminalen, is next to the train station. There's a **Tidpunkt** (☎ 0771-41 43 00; ☎ 7am-10pm Mon-Fri, 9am-10pm Sat, 9am-7pm Sun) office here, giving information and selling tickets for all city and regional public transport within the Göteborg, Bohuslän and Västergötland area.

Eurolines (☎ 10 02 40; www.eurolines.com; Nils Ericsonplatsen) has its main Swedish office at the bus station in central Göteborg. See p326 for details on international bus services offered by the company.

Swebus Express (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) has an office at the bus terminal and operates frequent buses to most major towns. Services to Stockholm (Skr400, seven hours) run seven to 10 times daily. Other direct destinations include Copenhagen (Skr319, four hours), Halmstad (Skr120, 1½ hours), Helsingborg (Skr233, three hours), Jönköping (Skr120, two hours), Oslo (Skr250, 3¼ hours), Malmö (Skr281, three hours), and Örebro (Skr281, four hours).

Säfflebusen (☎ 0771-15 15 15; www.safflebusen.se) runs services to Copenhagen (Skr280, 4½ hours, seven daily), Oslo (Skr220, 3¼ hours, seven daily) and Stockholm (Skr320, seven hours, up to four times daily).

Less frequent (usually one to three on Friday and/or Sunday), **Svenska Buss** (☎ 0771-67 67 67; www.svenskabuss.se) runs buses to major towns such as Helsingborg (Skr200, 2½

hours), Malmö (Skr250, four hours) and Oskarshamn (Skr300, 4¾ hours); departures for Stockholm (Skr360, 7¾ hours) via Jönköping (Skr210, 2¼ hours) are daily.

Prices can be considerably lower than those quoted here for advanced bookings or for travel from Monday to Thursday (especially for Swebus Express and Säftebussen).

CAR & MOTORCYCLE

The E6 motorway runs north–south from Oslo to Malmö just east of the city centre and there's also a complex junction where the E20 motorway diverges east for Stockholm.

International car-hire companies Avis, Europcar and Hertz have desks at Landvetter and Göteborg City airports. For car hire in

town, contact one of the petrol stations, for example **Statoil** (☎ 85 97 80; Andra Långgatan 46), in the southwestern part of town.

TRAIN

Centralstationen is the oldest railway station in Sweden and is now a listed building. It serves SJ and regional trains, with direct trains to Copenhagen (Skr540, four hours), Malmö (Skr480, 3¼ hours) and Oslo (Skr390, four hours), as well as numerous other destinations in the southern half of Sweden.

Direct Intercity trains to Stockholm depart approximately every two hours (Skr490, five hours), with quicker but more expensive X2000 trains (Skr1110, three hours) also every two hours. Booking your ticket at least a week in advance will bring decent reductions to the prices quoted here.

Overnight trains to the far north of Sweden (via Stockholm) are operated by Tågkompaniet.

Getting Around

TO/FROM THE AIRPORT

Landvetter airport, 25km east of the city, has a frequent Flygbuss service to/from Nils Ericson Terminalen (one-way Skr70, 30 minutes). A taxi from the city centre to the airport will cost around Skr370.

Buses from Göteborg City Airport to Nils Ericson Terminalen leave 50 minutes after flight arrivals. For the return journey, they leave the bus terminal around 2½ hours before flight departures (one-way Skr50, 30 minutes). A taxi should cost around Skr250.

BICYCLE

With the Göteborg Pass, you're entitled to borrow a bike for free from **Cykelverkstan** (☎ 711 97 70; Parkgatan 29); bring some ID. Otherwise try **Cykelkungen** (☎ 18 43 00; Chalmersgatan 19; per day/wk Skr120/500).

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Buses, trams and ferries run by **Västtrafik** (☎ 0771-41 43 00) make up the city's public transport system; there are Tidpunkten information booths selling tickets and giving out timetables inside **Nils Ericson Terminalen** (🕒 7am–10pm Mon–Fri, 9am–10pm Sat, 9am–7pm Sun), in front of the train station on **Drottningtorget** (🕒 6am–8pm Mon–Fri, 8am–8pm Sat & Sun), and at **Brunnsparken** (🕒 7am–7pm Mon–Fri, 9am–6pm Sat).

Holders of the Göteborg Pass travel free, including on late-night transport. Otherwise a city transport ticket costs adult/child Skr20/10 (Skr40 on late-night transport). Easy-to-use Maxirabatt 100 'value cards' cost Skr100 (from Tidpunkten or Pressbyråns newsagencies) and work out much cheaper than buying tickets each time you travel. A 24-hour Dagkort (day pass) for the whole city area costs Skr50.

The easiest way to cover lengthy distances in Göteborg is by tram. Lines, numbered 1 to 14, converge near Brunnsparken (a block from the train station).

Västtrafik has regional passes for 24 hours/30 days (Skr225/1400) that give unlimited travel on all *länstrafik* buses, trains and boats within Göteborg, Bohuslän and the Västergötland area.

TAXI

One of the larger companies is **Taxi Göteborg** (☎ 65 00 00). Taxis can be picked up outside Centralstationen, at Kungssportsplatsen, and on Kungssportsavenyn. Women travelling alone at night can expect a fare discount.

AROUND GÖTEBORG Southern Archipelago

☎ 031 / pop 4300

A car-free paradise, the southern archipelago is just a short hop from the busy city. It can get busy in summer, particularly the beaches, but wriggle around and you'll always find a quiet stretch of sand or serene green corner.

There are nine major islands and numerous smaller ones. The largest island is Styrö, but even that's less than 3km long. Due to previous military restrictions, most of the area was closed to foreigners until 1997; it's now a favourite residential area for wealthy commuters.

Take tram 11 from Göteborg city centre to Saltholmen, from where an excellent 16-destination passenger-only ferry network runs round the islands. The Göteborg Pass is valid, or you can buy a ticket (one-way Skr20) that takes you all the way from central Göteborg to Vrångö; bikes (if there's space available) cost an extra Skr10.

Boats run frequently to Asperö (nine minutes), Brännö (20 minutes) and Styrö (30 minutes) from around 5.30am to 1am

THIS MAP
NOT AVAILABLE
IN PICK & MIX

(less frequently at weekends); services to the other islands are more limited.

The best information about the islands is the English-language booklet *Touring the Archipelago*, published by Västtrafik and available from the tourist offices or Tidpunkten booths (see p215).

BRÄNNÖ

pop 790

Car-free Brännö's beaches and outdoor dance floor are its biggest attractions, although it's hard to take your eyes off the local *lastmoped*, bizarre-looking motorised bikes with large trays attached.

The busiest ferry terminal is Rödsten, in the northeast, but ferries also call at Husvik in the southwest. The island's website (www.branno.nu) is in Swedish only.

From the church in the centre of the island, follow the cycle track through the woods towards the west coast. A 15-minute walk from the end of the track leads to a stone causeway and the island **Galterö** – a strange treeless landscape of rock slabs, ponds, deserted sandy beaches and haunting bird calls. You can watch ships of all sizes and colours sail into or out of Göteborg harbour.

On Thursdays from mid-June to mid-August, **Börjessons** (☎ 60 96 70; www.borjessons.com) runs evening cruises from Lilla Bommen harbour to Husvik's **pier dance floor**, where passengers can boogie for a couple of hours before returning to the city. The tour costs Skr130/65 per adult/child; dinner is available on board at an additional cost.

Pensionat Bagge (☎ 97 38 80; www.baggebranno.se; s/d low season Skr330/500, high season Skr390/660) Get away from it all at this simple, friendly place about a kilometre south of the ferry quay; it also offers bike hire.

Brännö Vårdshus (☎ 97 04 78; info@brannovards.hus.se; Husviksvägen; mains Skr100-210; ☎ 11am-11pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 11am-9pm Tue–Sun May, 11am-7pm Thu–Sun rest of yr) With the same owners, the Vårdshus has a restaurant, café and bakery and serves excellent meals, including the local speciality *rödspätta* (plaice). There's a grocery shop near the church.

OTHER ISLANDS

Just southeast of Brännö, **Köpstadsö** is a small island with a quaint village of white-painted houses and narrow streets. Transport on the island is even more basic than on Brännö:

locals use individually named wheelbarrows, which you'll see neatly parked by the quay!

In the central part of the archipelago, **Styrsö** has two village centres (Bratten and Tängen, both with ferry terminals), a mixture of old and modern houses, and a colourful history of smuggling. There's a café and pizzeria at Tängen, and a supermarket. A bridge crosses from Styrsö to neighbouring densely populated **Donsö**, with a functioning fishing harbour.

The southern island of **Vrängö** has a good beach for swimming on the west coast, about 10 minutes' walk from the ferry. The northern and southern ends of the island are part of an extensive nature reserve.

Tiny **Vinga**, 8km west of Galterö, has impressive rock slabs and good swimming, and it has been home to a lighthouse since the 17th century. The writer, composer and painter, Evert Taube, was born on the island in 1890 – his father was the lighthouse-keeper. **Börjessons** (☎ 60 96 70; www.borjessons.com) runs full-day tours (adult/6-12 years Skr130/70) from Lilla Bommen (Göteborg) to Vinga via Nya Älvsborg Fästning, daily from mid-July to mid-August.

Marstrand

☎ 0303 / pop 1300

Once a spa town and favourite of the Swedish royal family, Marstrand, with its wooden houses and picturesque island setting, still attracts affluent visitors. It contains Sweden's most popular *gästhamn* (guest harbour), and is *the* weekend destination for boatie types. The village fairly hums with people in summer, but if you don't mind sharing it...well, it's worth sharing.

After disembarking, turn left for the **tourist office** (☎ 600 87; www.marstrand.se; Hamngatan 33; ☎ 9am-6pm Mon-Fri, 11am-5pm Sat, noon-4pm Sun mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 8am-noon Mon-Fri rest of yr). There's no ATM or Systembolaget, so bring wealth and wine with you.

Looming over the village is doughty **Carlstens Fästning** (☎ 602 65; www.carlsten.se; adult/7-15yr Skr60/20; ☎ 11am-6pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun rest of yr), a fortress constructed in the 1660s after the Swedish takeover of Bohuslän; later building work was done by convicts sentenced to hard labour. Its impressive round tower reaches 96m above sea level, and there are smashing archipelago views

from the top. Admission includes a guided tour (phone ahead for English-language times), although you can explore by yourself with an audio guide.

Pick up the English-language *Discover Marstrand* brochure (Skr10) from the tourist office and set off for an hour's walk round the island. Buildings of interest include the **town hall**, which is the oldest stone building in the county, and **Maria Kyrka**, dating from the 13th century.

Most of the accommodation options on the island are upmarket.

Marstrands Varmbadhus Bätället (☎ 600 10; marstrandsvarmbadhus@telia.com; Kungspan; d/tr/q Skr675/885/1180; ☎) Marstrand's most reasonably priced accommodation is this private hostel, continuing the town's spa tradition with its associated pool and sauna. Turn right after disembarking from the ferry and follow the waterfront for 400m.

Hotell Nautic (☎ 610 30; www.hotellnautic.com; Långgatan 6; B&B s/d Skr850/1100) Located at the northern end of the harbour, the Nautic has bright and simple rooms decked out in blues and creams. A couple have balconies with great sea views.

There are numerous eating options in Marstrand, including cheap fast-food stalls along the harbour.

Marstrands Vårdshus (☎ 603 69; Hamngatan 23; ☎ noon-1am Easter-Sep) For fresh seafood in the open air, head for this crustacean restaurant by the harbour. There's a big sunny terrace where you can sit with a G&T and watch the boats sail by.

Bergs Konditori (☎ 600 96; Hamngatan 9; snacks Skr30-60; ☎ May-Aug) Follow your nose to this dockside *konditori*, selling fresh bread, cakes, quiches and sandwiches.

From Göteborg you can take bus 312 to Arvidsvik (on Koön) then cross to Marstrand by frequent passenger-only ferry. The complete journey should take about an hour and cost Skr50.

Bohus Fästning

☎ 0303

Survivor of no fewer than 14 sieges, the hulking ruins of **Bohus Fästning** (☎ 992 00; adult/6-16yr Skr30/15; ☎ 10am-7pm May-Aug, 11am-5pm Sep, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun Apr) stand on an island in the Nordre älv, near Kungälv. Construction of the fortress was ordered in 1308 by the Norwegian king, to protect Norway's southern

border. The building was enlarged over the centuries, becoming one of Sweden's toys at the Peace of Roskilde in 1658. Nowadays, its substantial remains include a remarkable **round tower**. Tourist information for the area is available at the fortress.

STF Vandrarhem & Camping Kungälv (☎ 189 00; info@kungalvsvandrarhem.se; Färvägen 2, Kungälv; sites Skr130, dm Skr150, 4-bed cabins Skr495; camp site ☎ May-mid-Sep) This hostel is in a pleasant riverside setting directly across the road from the fortress. There's also a café here, and you can rent small boats.

The Grön Express bus runs at least every 30 minutes from Göteborg to Kungälv; get off at the Eriksdal stop (Skr40, 25 minutes) and walk the remaining 500m.

BOHUSLÄN

Bohuslän Coast

Some of the finest scenery in Sweden is found along the beautiful Bohuslän Coast. Craggy islands, picturesque fishing villages and the soft western light all create a dreamy magic. It does get very busy in summer with boat- and land-bound tourists, but you'll always find a quiet corner somewhere.

If you're heading north from Göteborg, stop at the **tourist office** (☎ 0303-833 27; www.bastkusten.se; Kulturhuset Fregattan; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-3pm Sun mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) in Stenungsund to pick up brochures and especially maps of the surrounding area.

Transport connections are good: the E6 motorway runs north from Göteborg to Oslo via the larger towns of Stenungsund, Ljungskile, Herrestad, Munkedal, Tanumshede and passing close to Strömstad before crossing the Norwegian border. There's a local train service that runs frequently from Göteborg to Strömstad, via much the same towns as the E6 route. Bus connections from these towns to the outlying islands exist, although some aren't terribly frequent. It's an area suited for independent exploration – consider hiring a car or bike in Göteborg so you can enjoy things at your own pace.

TJÖRN & AROUND

☎ 0304 / pop 15,019

A large bridge swoops from Stenungsund (on the Swedish mainland) to the island of **Tjörn** (www.tjorn.se). It's a magnet for artists, thanks to its general prettiness and spangling

new watercolour museum; and a fave for sailors, with one of Sweden's biggest sailing competitions, the Tjörn Runt, taking place here in mid/late August.

Skärhamn and Rönnäng, in the southwest, are the main settlements on the island and have a few facilities, including a small **tourist office** (☎ 67 10 40; skarhamn@bastkusten.se; Södra Hamnen; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 11am-3pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, noon-5pm Mon-Fri, 11am-3pm Sat rest of yr) at Skärhamn.

Skärhamn also contains the impressive **Nordiska Akvarellmuseet** (Nordic Watercolour Museum; ☎ 60 00 80; www.akvarellmuseet.org; Södra Hamnen 6; adult/7-20yr Skr70/10; ☎ 11am-6pm Jun-Sep, noon-5pm Tue, Wed & Fri-Sun, noon-8pm Thu Oct-May), a sleek and stylish waterside building housing changing exhibits. There's an award-winning gourmet café and restaurant **Vatten** (☎ 67 00 87) attached; its fish dishes are particularly recommended.

Up the hill is a working smithy, **Smedja Volund** (☎ 67 17 55; info.volund@swipnet.se; Gråskärsvägen 9; ☎ 11am-8pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, noon-5pm Tue-Sun rest of yr), with a café and a studio displaying Bert the blacksmith's unique ironwork; the man himself is often hard at work in the forge.

The Tjörnexpressen bus runs up to eight times weekdays (twice Saturday and Sunday) from Göteborg's bus terminal to Tjörn, calling at Skärhamn, Klädesholmen and Rönnäng. Bus 350 from Stenungsund crosses the island to Rönnäng.

Klädesholmen

The 'herring island' of Klädesholmen, to the far south of Tjörn, is one of the most flawless places on the west coast, although activity is fairly subdued due to the departure of the herring (there were once 30 processing factories here, today reduced to a handful). Find out more at the tiny **herring museum** (☎ 67 33 08; kladesholmens-museum@swipnet.se; Sillgränd 8; adult/child Skr10/5; ☎ 3-7pm Jul-mid-Aug), which tells the story of the industry.

Neighbouring **Salt & Sill** (☎ 67 34 80; info@saltsill.com; mains Skr130-300; ☎ summer, Wed-Sun rest of yr) has a good choice of main courses, and naturally herring features heavily on the menu.

Åstol

Nearby **Åstol** looks like something from a bizarre dream – this tiny, barren chunk of rock is dotted with rows of white houses that

seem to perch on top of each other from the sea. There's not much to do, but for some reason it's utterly loveable. Amble round the car-free streets, admire the views of the other islands, and try the fish at **Åstols Rökeri** (☎ 67 72 60; ☎ 11am-midnight mid-Jun-mid-Aug), a fish smokery with summer restaurant attached.

You can reach Åstol by ferry from Rönnäng (Skr30, roughly hourly between 6am and 11.30pm).

Rönnängs Vandrarhem (☎ 67 71 98; Nyponvägen 5, Rönnäng; dm Skr200; ☎) This SVIF hostel (in Rönnäng, about 1km from the ferry) is good and spacious, with one sizeable kitchen and dorms where you don't have to fight for bag room. The plant-filled terrace is popular for evening meals.

ORUST

☎ 0304 / pop 15,160

Sweden's third-biggest island, **Orust** (www.orust.se) has some breathtakingly pretty fishing villages. It has a thriving boat-building industry, with over half of Sweden's sailing craft made here. A bridge connects Orust to Tjörn, its southern neighbour.

Orust's **tourist office** (☎ 311 40; henen@bastkust-en.se; Norra Strandvägen 3; ☎ 9.30am-6pm Mon-Sat, 10am-2pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-2pm Tue-Sat rest of yr) is in the town of Henån.

There's an outstanding STF hostel, **Tofta gård** (☎ 503 80; www.toftagard.se; low/high season dm Skr170/235, s Skr270/335, d Skr340/470) near Stocken in the island's west, about 5km from the larger village of Ellös. It's located in an old farmhouse and outbuildings in a delightful setting, with good walking, swimming and canoeing nearby. There's also a café and restaurant here in peak season. Reservations are necessary between October and May.

Möllösund

Super-cute **Möllösund**, in the island's southwest, is the oldest fishing village on the Bohuslän coast and is a great place on a sunny day. Artsy-craftsy shops surround a picture-perfect harbour, and there are several gently scenic walking paths.

Möllösunds Hembygdsmuseum (☎ 214 69; admission free; ☎ 11am-1pm & 5.30pm-7.30pm late-Jun-early Aug) is in an old fisher-folks house near the water and has exhibits about local life.

Prästgårdens Pension (☎ 210 58; www.pragtgardens.se; Kyrkvägen; d from Skr700; ☎) Slightly inland from the harbour, this is the most

delightful little spot. Every room is different: they're high-ceilinged and immaculate, yet retain a homely feel.

Vandrarhem, Café & Restaurant Emma (☎ 211 75; www.cafeemma.com; dm Skr220; restaurant ☎ 11am-midnight mid-Jun-mid-Aug) All things to all people, excellent Emma's is slap on the harbour. The hostel is small and welcoming, and you can rent bikes. The café/restaurant is making a name for itself by serving hearty dishes made from locally sourced and organic ingredients. Specialities are fish soup and exceptional ice cream. Out of season, book for the hostel and phone to check restaurant hours.

Möllösunds Wårdshus (☎ 211 08; Kyrkvägen 9; lunch Skr80, mains from Skr150; low/high season d from Skr850/950) This upmarket 19th-century inn is the place to come for drinks and light lunches in the flowery garden (the restaurant closes for dinner over the summer). There are eight well-turned-out rooms, tastefully decorated with touches of flowers or nautical themes.

There's an ICA supermarket near the harbour.

Bus 375 runs the Uddevalla-Henån-Ellös route around nine times a day Monday to Friday, continuing to Möllösund on six of these journeys (three buses Saturday and Sunday). The Orustexpressen bus runs several times on weekdays direct from Göteborg to Henån; otherwise change in Stenungsund or Lysekil.

LYSEKIL & AROUND

☎ 0523 / pop 14,767

With its air of faded grandeur, the former spa resort of Lysekil feels oddly like an English seaside town. It's low-key, and pampers its summer visitors less than other Bohuslän towns, but there's something pleasing about this more realistic attitude.

The **tourist office** (☎ 130 50; info@lysekilsturist.se; Södra Hamngatan 6; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 11am-3pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, phone for times rest of yr) is helpful, and there are good amenities for travellers around town, including banks, supermarkets and **Bogart Video** (☎ 147 13; Rosvikstorg 4; per 30min Skr20; ☎ 11am-10pm, to midnight summer), a video-rental shop with Internet access.

Sights & Activities

Havets Hus (House of the Sea; ☎ 196 71; www.havets-hus.se; Strandvägen 9; adult/5-14yr Skr75/40; ☎ 10am-4pm mid-Feb-Oct, to 6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) is a busy

aquarium with sea life from Sweden's only true fjord, which cuts past Lysekil. Wolf-fish, lumpsuckers, anglerfish...all the cold-water beauties are here.

Lysekil has some interesting architecture dating back to its 19th-century spa days: old bathing huts and **Curmans villor**, the wooden seafront houses built in romantic 'Old Norse' style. Carl Curman was the resort's famous physician, who persuaded visitors that Lysekil's sea bathing was a complete cure-all.

Perched on a hill, the neo-Gothic pink-granite **church** (☎ 11am-7pm) has some superb paintings and stained glass panes showing local working life.

Out at the tip of the Stängenäs peninsula, the **Stängehuvud Nature Reserve**, with lots of coastal rock slab, has quiet bathing spots and a wooden lookout tower.

Seal safaris (☎ 306 64 02; adult/under 14yr Skr140/70; ☎ noon, 2pm & 4pm Sun-Thu, noon & 2pm Fri Jul-mid-Aug) lasting 1½ hours leave from near Havets Hus: buy tickets on board. Recommended 4½-hour **boat trips** (adult/child Skr150/75; ☎ mid-Jun-mid-Aug) to the island of **Käringön** depart once a week in summer.

Passenger-only ferries cross the Gullmarn fjord roughly hourly to **Fiskebäckskil**, where there are cobbled streets, wood-clad houses, a harbour full of boats and a few good restaurants. The interior of the **church** is like an upturned boat, with votive ships and fine ceiling and wall paintings.

Sleeping & Eating

The tourist office can sort out **private rooms** (s/d from Skr285/450) for a booking fee of Skr75.

Strand Vandrarhem & Hotell (☎ 797 51; strand@strandflickorna.se; Strandvägen 1; dm Skr200, hostel s/d Skr250/500, hotel s/d Skr645/790; ☎) The friendly 'beach girls' run a choice of accommodation not far from Havets Hus. The hostel is a typically good SVIF choice, with hotel-style rooms on offer too; some have sea views.

Havshotell (☎ 797 50; Turistatan 13; s/d Skr895/1395, discounted to Skr795/1195; ☎) Run by the same folk, this is a more upmarket option than the hostel. It's based in a sensitively renovated turn-of-the-20th-century house, and has characterful rooms all with a seafaring/historical theme.

Siviks Camping (☎ 61 15 28; fax 127 27; sites low/high season Skr140/220; ☎ mid-May-mid-Sep) Built on large pink-granite slabs by a sandy beach

2km north of town, Siviks is the best camp site in the area, with ample swimming opportunities. Facilities include shop, restaurant, minigolf, dance floor and laundry.

Prämen (☎ 143 52; Södra Hamnen; lunch Skr95, mains Skr150-250; ☎ noon-late) You can't miss Prämen, an atmospheric floating restaurant and bar specialising, understandably, in fish and seafood with the odd meaty main. Crabs, mussels, prawns, halibut, salmon: if it swims, scuttles or sticks to rocks in the sea, it's on the menu.

Café Kungsgatan (☎ 160 01; Kungsgatan 2; lunch Skr70; ☎ closed Sun) Set back from the sea-front, this pleasant café serves homemade lunches: pasta, quiche, salads, hot and cold sandwiches, washed down with all kinds of teas and coffees.

There are a few fast-food places on and around Rosvikstorg and eateries all along the main street.

Getting There & Away

Express bus 840 and 841 run every couple of hours from Göteborg to Lysekil via Uddevalla.

SMÖGEN

☎ 0523

With its waterside boardwalk, rickety fishermen's houses, and steep twisting streets, Smögen is a village out of time – and place. Weirdly, sections of it feel almost south-east Asian – you half expect Jackie Chan to come toppling from one of the almost-stilted houses.

There's a **tourist office** in summer only (☎ 375 44; info@sostenasturism.se; Torget; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Fri, 11am-7pm Sat & Sun mid-Jun–mid-Aug).

The classic wooden boardwalk **Smögen-bryggan** around the harbour is usually packed with visitors – to get peace and quiet, go first thing in the morning or out of season. Fishing boats unload their catches of prawns, lobsters and fish at the harbour, when there's a lively **fish auction** (www.smogens-fiskauktion.com; Fiskhall; ☎ 8am Mon-Fri, plus 5pm Thu).

Boats (☎ 312 67; Skr50 return) leave for the nature reserve on the nearby island of **Hällö** up to 15 times daily in summer from Smögen harbour.

The **Kon-Tiki Dykcenter** (☎ 374 74; smogen.fkp@kon-tiki.se; Madenvägen 3) does boat dives, PADI courses and hires out kayaks (per three hours/one day Skr150/250).

Makrillvikens Vandrarhem (☎ 315 65; makrillvik.en@telia.com; Makrillgatan; dm Skr200-250; ☎) In the former spa bathing house, this is an excellent budget choice – 500m from the boardwalk crowds, and with an old waterside sauna for guest use. There's a small playground, and canoes for hire.

Bryggens Gästhem (☎ 703 91; Madenvägen 2; per person Skr300) Another of Smögen's cheaper options is this 'guesthouse' near the harbour, which has two- to six-bed hostel-style accommodation scattered over three different buildings. A few rooms have balconies with sea views.

Hotel Smögens Havsbad (☎ 668 450; www.smogens.havsbad.se; Hotellgatan 26; low-season Skr1045/1310, high-season s/d Skr1220/1550; ☎) This hotel had radical surgery just after its 100th birthday: its hideous prosthetic extension is (thankfully for guests) beautiful on the inside, with light Scandinavian-style rooms, many with sea views.

There are plenty of appetising cafés, grill-bars and fish restaurants along Smögen-bryggan.

Skårets Krog & Konditori (☎ 323 17; skaret@swip.net.se; Hamnen 1; mains Skr200-285; ☎ weekends from Easter, daily mid-Jun–mid-Aug) Near the Fiskhall, Skårets has a ground-floor *konditori* serving light meals and yummy cakes. For a quality seafood dinner in classy but cosy surrounds, head upstairs to the restaurant. The fish casserole, flavoured with saffron, is delicious – and there's a fine view of the harbour.

Coffee Room (☎ 308 28; Sillgatan 10; breakfast from Skr39, mains Skr45-80; ☎ 8am-at least 10pm summer, shorter hr winter) Anyone pining for an English breakfast will sing hallelujahs here over the egg, sausage, bacon, tomato and baked beans. There are also quick and simple lunchtime snacks (*panini*, pasta salads, stir-fries), and evening tapas or barbecues in the airy garden.

Bus 860 and 861 (SmögenExpressen) run regularly from Göteborg to Smögen (around three hours), via Uddevalla, Munkedal, Hunnebostrand and Kungshamn. A couple of the services are direct, otherwise change in one of the towns en route.

FJÄLLBACKA

☎ 0525

Film star Ingrid Bergman spent her summer holidays at Fjällbacka (the main square is named after her). And if it's good enough

NORDENS ARK

Snow leopards, wolves and lynx prowl **Nordens Ark** (☎ 0523-795 90; www.nordens.ark.se; Åby Säteri; adult/13-17yr/5-12yr/family Skr120/70/55/330; ☎ 10am-7pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug, 10am-4pm or 5pm rest of yr) a safari park 12km northeast of Smögen and one of the area's big family attractions. It shows off animals and plants from countries with a similar climate to Sweden's, and has breeding programmes for endangered species. Guided tours of the park are available daily in peak season and on weekends the rest of the year (included in entry price). Last admission is two hours before closing.

for Ingrid, it's good enough for us (and half of Sweden). Despite the crowds, Fjällbacka is utterly charming, with its brightly coloured houses squashed between steep cliffs and the rolling sea.

A very helpful **tourist office** (☎ 321 20; Ingrid Bergmanstorg; ☎ 9.30am-7.30pm mid-Jun–mid-Aug) opens in the summer.

The main attraction is just pottering about, eating ice cream, browsing the trinket shops, or wandering up the cliff or along the Kungsklyftan path. From July to mid-August, there are ½-hour **island boat trips** (☎ 321 25; info@halsaniffjallbacka.se; adult/child Skr100/50; ☎ noon & 3pm) and two-hour **seal safaris** (adult/child Skr150/75; ☎ 7pm Thu) departing from the harbour.

Stora Hotellet (☎ 310 03; www.storahotellet-fjallbacka.se; Galärbäcken; Jun-Aug s/d/ste from Skr1225/1550/2150, rest of yr Skr1125/1450/1990) One of the most individualistic hotels ever, the incredible Stora Hotellet offers a trip 'around the world in 23 rooms'. It was originally owned by a ship's captain who decorated it with exotic souvenirs. He named each room after his favourite ports and explorers (and girls!), and each tells its own story. The question is, how do you choose which room to book? There's also a restaurant for fine dining.

Oscars II (☎ 322 10; info@fjallbacka.net; Ingrid Bergmanstorg 2; low/high season d Skr850/995, ste Skr1495/1950; restaurant ☎ until midnight) Another excellent place, Oscars II is a cosy café, bar and brasserie. It has pretty double rooms for rent upstairs, and a suite with its own sunny terrace, lounges and super harbour views.

Badholmens Vandrarhem (☎ 321 50, 0703-28 79 55; per person Skr200) On a teeny little island just off the harbour is this simple hostel, reached by a causeway. Four plain bunk-bedded huts look out to sea, and there's a café, laundry and free sauna for guests nearby.

Bus 875 runs between Göteborg and Strömstad via Hamburgsund and Fjällbacka.

Uddevalla

☎ 0522 / pop 50,068

You may find yourself in Uddevalla, Bohuslän's capital, while waiting for transport connections. It's worth popping into the museum, and the old spa area at Gustafsberg is nice for a swim, but Uddevalla is fairly modern and industrial and there's little reason to linger long. The **tourist office** (☎ 997 20; www.uddevallaforum.se; Kungstorget 4; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon, 10am-4pm Tue-Fri) can help with information.

Bohusläns Museum (☎ 65 65 00; www.bohusmus.se; Museigatan 1; admission free; ☎ 10am-8pm Mon-Thu, 10am-4pm Fri-Sun May-Aug, closed Mon Sep-Apr), near the bus station, tells the history of the area from the Stone Age onwards, and has displays on traditional stone, boat-building and fish-preserving industries. There's also an art gallery and restaurant.

STF Vandrarhem Gustafsberg/Uddevalla (☎ 152 00; jan.gustafsberg@telia.com; dm Skr165; ☎ mid-Jun–mid-Aug) This hostel, based in an old bathing house, is in a wonderful waterside location at the old spa of Gustafsberg, 4km from the centre. There are recreation areas and a café down this way too. The area can best be reached by boat (Skr20) six times daily from the jetty across the river from the museum, or by local bus.

Regional buses and trains run daily to Strömstad (Skr120, 1¼ hours) and Göteborg (Skr110, one hour). **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) runs to Oslo (Skr308, six hours) up to six times daily. Buses drop off and pick up from the bus station on the E6 motorway, rather than in the town centre.

Strömstad

☎ 0526 / pop 11,373

Strömstad is a sparky seaside resort, fishing harbour and spa town, close to the Norwegian border and the old and brand-new Svinesund Bridges. In summer Norwegian tourists pile across to take advantage of

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO ROCK CARVINGS

Bohuslän's Bronze Age rock carvings (*hällristningar*) are everywhere, a phenomenal 3000-year-old artistic record of religious beliefs, rites and everyday living. All the carvings are in the open and free to view. An excellent book, *The Rock Carving Tour* (Skr50, from tourist offices/museums in the region), contains thoughtful interpretations and detailed maps showing you how to find the best Bohuslän sites.

The **Tanum plain** is particularly rich in carvings, and the entire 45-sq-km area has been placed on the Unesco World Heritage List. Start your rocky odyssey at **Vitlycke**, within the Tanum area, where you'll find ships, animals, humans and tiny footsteps scattered through the woods. The splendid 22m **Vitlycke Rock** forms a huge canvas for 500 carvings of 'love, power and magic'. These range from simple cup marks to some of Sweden's most famous rock-art images, including the *Lovers*, showing a sacred marriage.

If you're bewildered by the long-armed men, blue whales, sexual imagery and goat-drawn chariots, cross the road to **Vitlycke Museum** (☎ 0525-209 50; www.vitlyckemuseum.se; adult/under 20yr Skr50/free; ☎ 10am-6pm Apr-Sep), which has a determined go at explaining them. There are handheld computer guides for hire at extortionate prices, but it's much better to catch the **English tour** (included in museum admission; ☎ 3pm), when a knowledgeable human being explains the carvings.

You'll need your own transport to get to Vitlycke. By public transport, the nearest you can get is to Tanumshede, 2.5km north: regional buses on the Göteborg–Uddevalla–Strömstad route stop here. Tanumshede train station is further away still.

Sweden's cheaper prices, lending a particularly lively air to the town's bars.

There are several fantastic Iron Age remains in the area, including one of Sweden's largest ship settings, and some fine **sandy beaches** at Capri and Seläter. Boat trips run to the Koster islands, the most westerly in Sweden and popular for cycling.

The busy **tourist office** (☎ 623 30; www.stromstad.tourist.se; Torget; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Sat, 10am-7pm Sun Jun-Aug, shorter hr Sep-May) is between the two harbours on the main square. Check your email at the **public library** (☎ 193 16; Karlsgatan 17).

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

In town, **Strömstads Museum** (☎ 102 75; stromstads.museum@telia.com; Södra Hamngatan 26; adult/child Skr20/free; ☎ 11am-4pm Mon-Fri, 11am-2pm Sat) has displays on local themes. One of Sweden's largest and most magnificent **stone ship settings** (admission free; ☎ 24hr) lies 6km northeast of Strömstad. It rests in a field full of wildflowers, generally free from other visitors, which makes it a much more personal experience than Ales Stenar (see p180). There are 49 stones in total, with the stem and stern stones reaching over 3m in height; the site has been dated to around AD 400 to 600. Across the road is a huge site containing approximately 40 **Iron Age graves**. Ask at the tourist office or bus station for informa-

tion on buses, or hire a bicycle (see opposite). Alternatively, there's a lovely walking path from the north of town.

The Romanesque stone **Skee Kyrka** (☎ 8am-3pm Mon-Fri Jun-Aug) is about 6km east of Strömstad and has a 10th-century nave. There's also a painted wooden ceiling and an unusual 17th-century reredos with 24 sculptured figures. Nearby, there are **Iron Age graves**, a weird **bell tower** and a mid-Neolithic **passage tomb** (c 3000 BC).

Boat trips (adult/child Skr110/60 return) run from Strömstad's north harbour to the Koster islands (www.kosteroarna.com) roughly every two hours in summer. **North Koster** is hilly and has good beaches. **South Koster** is flatter and better for cycling.

In summer there are also **seal safaris**; ask at the tourist office for times and prices.

SLEEPING & EATING

Crusellska Hemmet (☎ 101 93; Norra Kyrkogatan 12; dm/s/d Skr180/320/400; ☎ Mar-Nov; P) Crusellska may sound like a Disney villain, but it's actually an exceptional STF hostel. It feels like a boutique hotel thanks to its drifting white curtains and pale décor, the landing has a comfy seating area with wicker chairs and lounges, the kitchen is big enough for all guests and then some, and there's a peaceful garden out the back. It fills up early, so book ahead.

Hotell Krabban (☎ 142 00; www.hotellkrabban.se; Bergsgatan 15; s/d Skr790/990) 'The Crab' is a small and personal place in the centre of town. Rooms, based in an old wooden building, have a vaguely nautical theme. There are cheaper alternatives (around Skr100 less) if you're happy to share a corridor bathroom.

Strömstad Camping (☎ 611 21; info@stromstad.camping.se; Uddevallavägen; low/high season sites Skr130/160, 2-bed cabins from Skr300/450; ☎ May-Sep) In a large, pleasant park at the southern edge of town, the camp site also has 36 shady cabins for rent.

Restaurang Trädgården (☎ 127 24; www.tradgard.net; Östra Klevgatan 4; lunch Skr119, mains Skr190-260; ☎ lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Wed-Sat) Chinking glasses and happy laughter lure you into this busy, bright restaurant. It has a limited but immaculate à la carte menu, where fresh meat and seafood are turned into culinary marvels. There's also a lighter menu of salads, burgers and baked potatoes.

Restaurang Bryggan (☎ 600 65; Ångbåtskajen 6; lunch Skr72, mains Skr115-200; ☎ 11am-10pm, shorter hr in winter) Situated in a wonderful place for ocean-gazing, this cosy restaurant is tucked along the little harbour lane behind the tourist office. Dishes are fish- and meat-based, with one veggie option, and you can eat outside in the summer.

Just off the main square, **Laholmens Fisk** (☎ 102 40; Torget) sells seafood baguettes (from Skr40), along with fish fresh off the boats. The **ICA supermarktet** (Södra Hamngatan 8) is central, and **Systembolaget** (Oslovägen 7) is a couple of minutes' walk away.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Buses and trains both use the train station near the southern harbour. The **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) service from Göteborg to Oslo calls here up to six times daily and Strömstadsexpressen runs to Göteborg (Skr200) up to five times daily. Strömstad is the northern terminus of the Bohuståg train system, with around seven trains daily to/from Göteborg (Skr140).

Ferries run from Strömstad to Sandefjord in Norway (see p329).

For a taxi, call **Strömstads Taxi** (☎ 122 00). Car hire is available from **Statoil** (☎ 121 92; Oslovägen 42), bicycles from **Cykelhandlarn** (☎ 607 70; Oslovägen 53; per 1/5 days Skr100/350; ☎ May-Aug, closed Sun rest of yr)

DALSLAND

Northern Dalsland is a landscape of long, long lakes, forests and silent towns, and is the place to go if you want to get well away from the tourist trail. You can actually paddle through the wilderness all the way to Norway from sleepy **Dals-Ed** (also known as Ed): contact **Canodal** (☎ 618 03; www.canodal.com; Gamla Edsvägen 4; 2-person canoes Skr180/900 per day/week) for details. The company can supply equipment needed for wilderness camping.

The eastern half of Dalsland is also watery and peaceful, but with more things to see. The scenic **Dalsland Canal** crosses the region, and gets especially interesting (we promise) at Häverud. The canal itself is only 10km long, but it links a series of narrow lakes between Vänern and Stora Le, providing a route 250km long. Not everyone wants to relax on these waterways: a new endurance race, the **Dalsland Kanot Maraton** (www.kanotmaraton.se), sees competitors racing their canoes over a gruelling 55km course here in mid-August.

Häverud

☎ 0530

An intriguing triple transport pile-up occurs at tiny Häverud, where a 32m **aqueduct** carries the Dalsland Canal over the river, and a road bridge crosses above them both.

There's a helpful **tourist office** (☎ 305 80; info@dalslandcenter.com; Dalslands Center) to assist with any enquiries.

The area around the aqueduct is a smashing spot, filled with ambling visitors and the crashing noise of water. Pleasures are simple: visit the Tardis-like **Kanalmuséet** (☎ 306 24; adult/under 15yr Skr30/free; ☎ 10am-6pm Jul & Aug, 11am-4pm Jun & Sep) where the history of the canal is told through imaginative displays; sit with a beer and watch boats negotiating the **lock**; or hop on a vessel yourself for various **boat tours** along the canal. These mainly run from July to mid-August, and can be booked at the tourist office; a trip to Uppered costs adult/under 12 years Skr30/20.

STF hostel (☎ 302 75; Museivägen 3; dm Skr150; P) This dinky 1st-floor hostel overlooks the canal. Its attic-like rooms are pleasant but can nevertheless get warm in summer. Outside May to August, bookings are necessary.

Häveruds Rökeri (☎ 351 31; Dalslands Center; mains Skr150-200; ☎ daily summer, weekends rest of yr)

This is a good fish and seafood restaurant, based in an old paper mill with the chains still hanging from the ceiling, which also has chilled-out lockside tables. Sandwiches are served during the day, and there's a delicatessen for self-caterers.

For transport details, see below.

Around Häverud

About 3km south of the aqueduct is **Uppered**, where you'll find the **Dalslands Museum & Konsthall** (☎ 0530-300 98; www.dalslandsmuseum.se; adult/under 12yr Skr40/free; ☎ 11am-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-4pm Wed-Sun mid-Aug-Dec & mid-Mar-mid-Jun). There's a compact permanent display of local art, furniture, ceramics, ironware and Åmål silverware as well as temporary exhibitions. The small sculpture park in the grounds is worth visiting for its eerie installations, hidden amongst the shrubs and trees. Its **Café Bonaparte** (so-called because Napoleon's niece Christine once lived there) is a good place for coffee and snacks.

Another few kilometres south at **Skällered** is a beautiful 17th-century wooden church (☎ 0530-300 14; ☎ 8am-6pm Mon-Sat, 9am-6pm Sun May-Sep), with well-preserved paintings and biblical sculptures.

Atmospheric **Högsbyn Nature Reserve**, about 8km north of Häverud near Tisselskog, has woodland walks and a shallow bathing place. Best of all are its impressive Bronze Age **rock carvings (hällristningar)**: 50 overgrown slabs feature animals, boats, labyrinths, sun signs, and hand and foot marks. There's a small **museum** (admission by donation; ☎ Jun-Aug), and a haunted **café**. You can get here from Häverud on a **boat trip** (☎ 0530-310 97, 0530-304 00; adult/7-14yr Skr140/60; ☎ 1pm Jul-mid-Aug) that gives you 45 minutes at the carvings.

Baldersnäs Herrgård (☎ 0531-412 13; admission free; s/d Skr895/1295), 10km further north past the village of Dals Långed, is a lovely manor house and grounds, complete with English garden, swimming spots, restaurant and café, handicraft stalls and a small Naturum. Quality accommodation is offered here too.

Mellerud is on the main Göteborg to Karlstad train line, and Swebus Express buses between Göteborg and Karlstad stop here three times daily in either direction. Local bus 720 runs a circular route to/from Mellerud via Upperud, Häverud and Skällered.

Åmål

☎ 0532 / pop 12,823

Åmål, the main town in Dalsland, is situated on Lake Vänern. It became infamous after the 1999 release of the Swedish-language film *Fucking Åmål*, which was actually filmed in Trollhättan and was given the very boring title *Show Me Love* for its release to the English-speaking world. The town's biggest event is **Åmåls Bluesfest**, held over the second weekend in July, when Swedish and international artists play and the town drowns in visitors.

The **tourist office** (☎ 170 98; www.amal.se; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm Sat, 11am-6pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, phone for hr rest of yr) is near the guest harbour, and the main street Kungsgatan has all services.

There are a few diversions in the town, but there's no reason for an extended stay – the real attractions are out in the surrounding waterways and forests. The Old Town, around the church **Gamla Kyrkan** (completed in 1669), is a stately collection of 18th-century buildings and worth a quick look.

Åmåls Hembygdsmuseet (☎ 158 20; Hamngatan 7; adult/child Skr20/free; ☎ 1-6pm mid-Jun-Aug, 1-6pm Sat & Sun mid-May-mid-Jun), near the tourist office, is a particularly interesting local museum with three floors of stuff ranging from toys to funeral confectionery.

STF Vandrarhem Åmål (☎ 102 05; lokrantz@home.se; Gerdinsgatan 7; dm Skr140; ☎ Apr-Nov) This well-equipped hostel just north of the town centre has nice views over the lake and bikes for hire.

Stadshotellet (☎ 616 10; info@amalsstadshotell.se; Kungsgatan 9; s/d Skr845/1190, discounted to Skr845/890) Central and elegant, the Stadshotell has high-ceilinged, comfortable rooms and helpful staff, plus one of the best restaurants in town, serving mainly Swedish specialities.

Örnäs Camping (☎ 170 97; ornascamping@amal.se; sites from Skr145, cabins from Skr345) This is a large ground on the shore of Lake Vänern, south of the centre. There's a small sandy beach, and bikes and boats are available for rental.

Hamncompagniet (☎ 100 10; Hamngatan 3; lunch Skr70, mains Skr90-170) This flash complex, not far from the tourist office, is a boaties favourite thanks to its proximity to the marina. There's a restaurant, bar and disco, plus lots of outdoor seating by the lake.

SJ trains to Göteborg (Skr156, 1½ hours) or Karlstad (Skr70, one hour) stop in Åmål

up to six times daily. Swebus Express buses follow the same route and call three times a day. The train and bus stations are about a kilometre southwest of the town centre.

VÄSTERGÖTLAND

Vänernsberg

☎ 0521 / pop 37,105

Vänernsberg, at the southern outlet of Lake Vänern, was once known as 'Little Paris', but it's hard to see why today. The scenic nature reserve/royal hunting grounds outside town are its main attractions, although families may enjoy Skräcklen park, with playgrounds, waffles and some very popular bathing spots.

The **tourist office** (☎ 27 14 00; www.vanersborg.se; ☎ 8am-7pm Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm Sat & Sun Jul & Aug, 8am-5pm Mon-Fri Sep-Jun) is at the train station, and banks and other facilities are mostly along Edsgatan.

Vänernsbergs Museum (☎ 600 62; Östra Plantaget; adult/under 17yr Skr20/free; ☎ noon-4pm Tue, Thu, Sat & Sun yr-round, plus noon-4pm Wed-Jun-Aug) is the country's oldest provincial museum and has a remarkable southwest African bird collection along with local exhibits.

Described by Linnaeus as an 'earthly paradise', the **Hunneberg & Hanneberg Nature Reserve** covers two dramatic, craggy plateaus 8km east of town. There are 50km of **walking trails** here that are certainly worth exploring. The deep ravines and primeval forest also make great hiding places for wild elk, and this area has been a favourite royal hunting ground for over 100 years. Three-hour **elk-spotting safaris** (adult/5-16yr Skr240/175; 6.30pm Mon & Thu Jul & Aug) leave from the train station: book tickets at the tourist office.

Kungajaktmuseet Älgens Berg (☎ 27 79 91; www.algensberg.com; adult/child Skr60/30; ☎ 10am-6pm Fri-Mon, 10am-8pm Tue-Thu Jul & Aug, 10am-6pm May-Jun, 11am-4pm Tue-Sun Sep-Apr), the royal hunting museum, is at Hunneberg and tells you everything you could ever wish to know about the elk. In summer bus 665 heads out here.

SLEEPING & EATING

Hotell 46:an (☎ /fax 71 15 61; Kyrkogatan 46; s/d Skr595/750, discounted to Skr550/650) This small, family-run place, on a quiet residential street near Skräcklen park, offers six bright and homey rooms. Reception service is limited, so phone before turning up.

Hunnebergs Vandrarhem & Kursgård (☎ 2203 40; Bergagårdsvägen 9B, Vargön; sites Skr70, dm Skr180; ☎) In a big old manor house near the cliffs of Hunneberg (7km east of the centre), this is a large, well-equipped SVIF hostel. Camping is permitted in the grounds, and there are bikes for rent. Take the frequent bus 62 from the town square to Vägporten, then walk 500m.

Ronnums Herrgård (☎ 26 00 00; www.ronnums-herrgard.parkinn.se; Vargön; s/d/ste Skr1170/1170/1650; ☎ ☎) Nicole Kidman was a guest at this luxurious mansion, out towards Hunneberg. It's set in gorgeous grounds, the rooms are hugely elegant, and the newly renovated oak-floored suites are particularly special. The hotel frequently has special rates and packages: contact them for details. If you feel like a gastronomic treat, the restaurant is one of the best in the region.

Ristorante Italia (☎ 612 20; Edsgatan 7; lunch Skr65, mains from Skr70; ☎ 11.30am-10pm Mon-Thu, 11.30am-11pm Fri, noon-11pm Sat, noon-9pm Sun) Back in town, this is one of a number of busy eateries on the main street. It serves a mixture of Italian and Swedish food, including reasonably priced pizza and pasta, and has outdoor seats in summer.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

Trollhättan-Vänernsbergs airport (☎ 825 00; info@fyrstadsflyget.se) lies midway between the two towns. There are around seven direct flights Monday to Friday (one Sunday) to/from Stockholm. Taxis are the only way to access the airport: **Taxi Vänernsberg** (☎ 666 00) charge around Skr300 for the trip from Vänernsberg. With **Taxi Trollhättan** (☎ 820 00) from Trollhättan, it costs about Skr130.

Local buses run from Torget and long-distance services stop at the train station. Local bus 61, 62 and 65 run roughly half-hourly between Vänernsberg and Trollhättan. Express bus 600 runs a couple of times to Trollhättan, continuing to Göteborg.

Säfflebusen (☎ 0771-15 15 15; www.safflebusen.se) has a Göteborg-Trollhättan-Vänernsberg-Lidköping-Stockholm service that stops three times daily in Vänernsberg. **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) runs three times daily to Göteborg (Skr95, 1½ hours) via Trollhättan, and also north to Karlstad (Skr190, 2½ hours).

SJ trains to Uddevalla (Skr39, 20 minutes) run every one/two hours. Trains to Trollhättan (Skr39, 15 minutes) and Göteborg

HOORAY FOR TROLLYWOOD

In recent years Trollhättan has become home to the Swedish film industry and has earned itself the inevitable nickname 'Trolleywood'. A number of Swedish and Scandinavian films have been filmed in and around the town, including Danish producer Lars von Trier's award-winning *Dancer in the Dark* (1999), and *Dogville* (2002), starring Nicole Kidman and Swedish actor Stellan Skarsgård.

Film i Väst (www.filmivast.se) is Trollhättan's large film production company. Check its website for more information, and also ask at the tourist office if you want to know what film sets (and stars) you might stumble across in town.

(Skr119, 1¼ hours) run about every hour (some require a change at Oxnered).

Trollhättan

☎ 0520 / pop 53,154

Trollhättan itself has the air of a surreal filmset: looming warehouses, foggy canals, crashing waterfalls, and a futuristic cable car all give it a bizarre and thrilling edge. The town has really made the most of its industrial heritage, and has plenty of unusual attractions. As well as a three-day **film festival** in mid-August, the town celebrates **Waterfall Days** (www.fallensdagar.se) in mid-July with live bands, fireworks and water-related happenings.

INFORMATION

The excellent **tourist office** (☎ 48 84 72; www.visittrollhattan.se; Åkerssjövägen 10; ☎ 10am-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri mid-Aug-mid-Jun) is about 1.5km south of the town centre, near the Innovatum. If you want to visit all the attractions, ask for the two-day **Innovatum-kortet** (1/2 people Skr130/200, under 16y free on adult ticket; available early Jun-mid-Aug), which includes cable-car trips and museum admissions. It also sells a handy *Guidebook to Trollhättan's Falls & Locks*, which details walking routes in the maze-like industrial areas.

For Internet access, visit the **library** (☎ 49 76 50; Kungsgatan 25; ☎ 10am-7pm Mon-Thu, 10am-6pm Fri, 10am-3pm Sat late Aug-mid-Jun, 11am-6pm Mon-Fri mid-Jun-late Aug) or **@Tonis Café** (☎ 141 60; Kungsgatan 19; per 30/60min Skr15/25; ☎ noon-9pm).

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

Saab Bilmuseum (☎ 843 44; www.saab.com; Åkerssjövägen 10; adult/7-17yr Skr60/30; ☎ 10am-2pm & 5-7pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, phone for winter hr) is a must for car fanatics and fans of Swedish design. The shining white museum contains Saab car models from the first (a sensational 1947 prototype) to the futuristic (experimental designs running on biofuel that know if you're drunk!). There are also videos showing safety tests involving crash-test-dummy elks. You're guided through the museum by electronic handsets (40-minutes' playing time), which contain interesting information in between the irritating Saab advertisements.

Innovatum Kunskapens Hus (☎ 48 84 80; www.innovatum.se; adult/7-19yr/family Skr60/40/130; ☎ 10am-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-4pm Tue-Sun rest of yr), next door to the Saab Bilmuseum, is a fantastic science centre with interactive experiments aimed mainly at children. But don't let that put you off: push the little blighters out of the way and revel in the gyroscopes and whirlpool machines. Why wasn't physics fun like this when we were kids?

In four minutes, the **Innovatum Linbana** (cable car; ☎ 48 84 80; adult/1-19yr Skr40/20; ☎ 10am-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 11am-4pm Sat & Sun mid-Apr-mid-Jun & mid-Aug-Sep) will sweep you over the canal to the hydroelectricity area. Once you're on the far side of the canal, follow the stairs down to the river, where you'll find one of Sweden's most unusual industrial buildings, the potent-looking **Olidan power station**, which supplied much of the country's electricity in the early 20th century. There are three 30-minute tours daily in summer (ask the tourist office for details).

Take a wander southwest to **Slussområde**, a pleasant waterside area of parkland and ancient lock systems. Here you'll find cafés and the **Kanalmuseet** (☎ 47 22 51; Åkersberg; adult/child Skr10/free; ☎ 11am-7pm Jun-Aug; noon-5pm Sat & Sun Apr, May & Sep), which describes the history of the canal and contains over 50 model ships.

Northeast near the Hojum power station, witness spectacular cascades when the **waterfall** (☎ 3pm Sat & Sun May-Aug, plus 3pm Wed Jul & Aug) is unleashed. Normally the water is diverted through the power stations, but at set times the sluice gates are opened and 300,000L per second thunders through. For an even more remarkable sight, wait for the night-time **illuminated waterfall** (☎ 11pm Fri Jul & Aug).

There are also two- to three-hour **canal tours** (per person from Skr180) in summer; enquire at the tourist office for times.

If you can stay awake until it gets dark enough, there's an **open-air cinema** (☎ 11pm Thu Jul-mid-Aug) in summer at the Innovatum; most films shown are home-grown Swedish, but it's worth checking the programme for English-language movies.

SLEEPING & EATING

Gula Villan (☎ 129 60; trollhattansvandrarmem@telia.com; Tingvallavägen 12; dm Skr135; ☎) The cheery STF hostel, in a pretty old yellow villa, is about 200m from the train station. You can rent bikes here, and breakfast is available.

Hotell Bele (☎ 125 30; www.hotellbele.se; Kungsgatan 37; s/d Skr795/895, discounted to Skr590/690; ☎) Bele is a central, no-frills option on a pedestrianised street in the heart of town. Accommodation is basic but comfortable, and there's a sauna and solarium for guest use.

Scandic Hotel Swania (☎ 890 00; swania@scandic-hotels.com; Storgatan 47; s/d from Skr1430/1630, discounted to Skr890/890; ☎) For more luxury, head to the upmarket Swania, situated in the old town hall by the canal. Its quality facilities include a restaurant and nightclub.

Grand Café (☎ 890 09; light meals Skr80-120, dinner mains Skr170-200) Part of the Swania, this café has a good menu offering light meals (stirfries, salads and mushrooms on toast) to hearty steaks, and prices are more reasonable than the swish décor might have you expect. The bar here is a bustling after-work spot, and the outdoor area is popular in good weather.

Strandgatan (☎ 837 17; Strandgatan; mains Skr55-100) One of the best – and busiest – places in town is this trendy bistro serving bagels, quiche, salads and baked potatoes. It's in a fantastic location, with a large canal-side seating area in summer.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

See p225 for transport details. To reach the attractions in Trollhättan from the train station or the Drottningtorget bus station, walk south along Drottninggatan, then turn right into Åkerssjövägen, or take town bus 11 – it runs most of the way.

You can rent bikes from **Innovatum Kunskapens Hus** (adult/child/tandem per 3hr Skr40/20/80, per day Skr75/40/140).

Lidköping

☎ 0510 / pop 37,241

Lidköping, on Lake Vänern, is bright and cheery. However, many of its finest attractions (like the enchanting castle, Läckö Slott) lie some distance out of town.

The main square, Nya Stadens Torg, is dominated by the **old courthouse** and its tower (actually a replica – the original burnt down in 1960). A previous fire in 1849 destroyed most of the town, but the 17th-century houses around **Limtorget** still stand.

The **tourist office** (☎ 200 20; www.lackokinne.kulle.se; Bangatan 3; ☎ 9am-8pm Mon-Fri, 10am-8pm Sat, noon-6pm Sun mid-Jun-mid-Aug, noon-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is at the train station, and the **public library** (☎ 77 00 15; Nya Stadens Torg 5) has free Internet access.

SIGHTS IN TOWN

Rörstrand Fabriksbod (☎ 823 46; Fiskaregatan 4; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-3pm Sat, noon-4pm Sun) is the second-oldest porcelain factory (still in operation) in Europe. There's a vast shop selling seconds and end-of-lines, so you may snap up some bargains; you can even buy copies of the porcelain used at the Nobel banquets in Stockholm! There's also a small **museum** (Skr20) containing everything from 18th-century faïence to modern creations.

Vänernuseet (☎ 77 00 65; Framnäsavägen 2; adult/7-18yr Skr40/20; ☎ 10am-5pm Tue-Fri, noon-5pm Sat & Sun) has geological exhibits, including an ancient meteorite and displays about Vänern (the third-largest lake in Europe at 5650 sq km). The most curious item is a 3m-long glass boat.

LÄCKÖ SLOTT

For a fairytale castle fix, get yourself to **Läckö Slott** (☎ 103 20; www.lackoslott.se; ☎ May-Sep), 23km north of Lidköping near Vänern. It's an extraordinary example of 17th-century Swedish baroque architecture, with cupolas, towers, paintings and ornate plasterwork. The first castle on the site was constructed in 1298, but it was improved enormously by Count Magnus Gabriel de la Gardie after he acquired it in 1615.

The castle now has 240 rooms, with the most impressive being the **King's Hall**, with 13 angels hanging from the ceiling and nine huge paintings depicting the Thirty Years War.

Guided tours (adult/7-15yr/family Skr70/20/160; ☎ on the hr 11am-5pm May-Aug, 11am-2pm Sep) lasting 45 minutes give you access to the most interesting rooms; there's an English tour at 3.30pm daily. Otherwise you're free to bumble about in the courtyards and lower floors, which contain a few shops and the castle restaurant, **Fataburen** (lunch Skr110; ☎ noon-3pm & 6-9pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug).

In the castle grounds, there's a **café** (lunch Skr80; ☎ 11am-6.30pm May-Aug) serving cheaper snacks and a **rental kiosk** (☎ 24 98 13; bengtsson@kajakfritid.se; ☎ noon-5.30pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) where you can hire swan-shaped boats (per hour 180) or canoes (per half day from Skr130) for exploring the lake.

Classical music and opera events are held in the courtyard several times a week in July (tickets around Skr320); enquire at Lidköping tourist office.

From mid-June to mid-August, bus 132 runs four to seven times a day from Lidköping to the castle. Car parking costs Skr30.

HUSABY KYRKA & ST SIGFRID'S WELL

Husaby (around 15km east of Lidköping) is inextricably linked to Sweden's history. King Olof Skötkonung, the country's first Christian king, was converted and baptised here by the English missionary Sigfrid in 1008. Olof's royal dunking took place at **St Sigfrid's Well**, near **Husaby Kyrka** (☎ 8am-4pm Apr, 8am-8pm May-Sep). A succession of Swedish kings have carved their names into the rocks here.

The church actually dates from the 12th century, but the base of the unusual three-steeped tower may well be that of an earlier wooden structure. An English-language audio guide is available.

There's a small, seasonal **tourist office** (☎ 34 32 60; Pilgrimsgården; ☎ noon-6pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) near the church. Bus 106 runs to Husaby, but very infrequently.

KINNEKULLE

The 'flowering mountain' **Kinneulle** (306m), 18km northeast of Lidköping, is unusually diverse in its geology and plant life. There are numerous short nature trails, or you could explore it on the 45km-long **Kinneulle vandringsled** (walking trail), which runs past remainders of the old limestone workings. Ask at the tourist office for a map (Skr20). Local trains run to Källby, Råbäck and Hällekis, with access to the trail.

SLEEPING & EATING

STF Vandrarhem Lidköping (☎ 66430; info@lidkopingsvandrarhem.com; Gamla Stadens Torg 4; dm/d Skr140/280) Just a couple of minutes' walk from the train station, this hostel is in a pretty spot in the old town. Standards are high, and the staff are very helpful.

Hotel Läckö (☎ 230 00; Gamla Stadens Torg 5; s/d Skr690/890, discounted to Skr590/790) The smiley reception people at this family-run hotel also make you feel very welcome. Comfortable rooms have good high ceilings, and there's the odd quirky touch like the artsy foyer hatstand.

Hotel Stadt (☎ 220 85; hotel@stadtlidkopings.se; Gamla Stadens Torg 1; s/d Skr995/1290, discounted to Skr590/790; P) Stadt is the best hotel in town with amenities including restaurant, nightclub and sauna/spa. Rooms are parquet-floored with pristine modern décor and big TVs. At the time of writing, all of the 3rd-floor bedrooms had been newly renovated.

Krono Camping (☎ 268 04; www.kronocamping.com; Läckögatan; sites Skr155-200, 2-person cabins Skr395-465; ♻) This is a huge, family-oriented lakeside camping ground, 1.5km northwest of town beside the road to Läckö, where kids can run wild. There's everything you could possibly need: shop, restaurant, laundry, minigolf, boules, sauna, playground, and boat hire.

Café O Bar (☎ 270 27; Nya Stadens Torg 4; lunch Skr69, mains Skr150-200) This sleek place, on the main square, is a fashionable restaurant-bar with a good selection of interesting meals, including mushroom risotto or lamb racks with couscous.

Café Limtorget (☎ 251 45; Mjölningården, Limtorget 1; ☎ closed Sun) With its rose-filled garden, this is a cute old place well worth seeking out. It serves sandwiches and ciabatta for around Skr40, plus pastries, waffles and other temptations.

There are several other options around Gamla Stadens Torg and the surrounding streets – Källaregatan is fertile ground for cheap pizzerias and grill bars, while Grevgatan has some inviting old cafés.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Town and regional buses stop on Nya Stadens Torg. Bus 5 runs roughly hourly on weekdays (four Saturday and Sunday) between Trollhättan, Lidköping and Skara.

Säfflebusen (☎ 0771-15 15 15; www.safflebusen.se) runs three times daily to Stockholm (via

Örebro; Skr300, 4½ hours) and Göteborg (via Vänersborg and Trollhättan; Skr170, 2½ hours). Länståg trains from Lidköping to Hallsberg or Herrljunga connect with Stockholm and Göteborg services respectively.

Karlsborg

☎ 0505 / pop 6905

Karlsborg is a quiet little town s-t-r-e-e-e-t-c-h-e-d alongside Lake Vättern some 80km east of Lidköping. Amazingly, this peaceful backwater was once intended to be Sweden's capital in times of war, thanks to its beast of a bastion, Karlsborgs Fästning.

The **tourist office** (☎ 173 50; info@karlsborgsturism.se; Ankarvägen 2; ☎ 9am-6pm Jul-mid-Aug, 10am-4pm Mon-Fri mid-Aug-Jun) is in an octagonal wooden house between the fort's main entrance and the lake.

Karlsborgs Fästning was one of Europe's largest construction projects. This enormous fortress has a circumference of around 5km, and is so huge that it took from 1820 to 1909 to complete; it was out of date even before it was finished, and was mothballed immediately! Most of the 30-odd buildings inside are original: there's a **military museum** (☎ 854 70; adult/child Skr40/10; ☎ 10am-4pm or 6pm mid-May-Aug, 10am-3pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) and a **church**, which has an extraordinary candelabra made from 276 bayonets.

The fortress area is always open. If you want gun smoke, cannon roar and scuttling rats, though, you'll have to book a special-effect **guided tour** (adult/7-12yr Skr80/40; ☎ 1pm Jun-Aug) at the tourist office; from midsummer to August, there are up to 12 tours every day. The **Lilla Blå tourist train** (adult/under 12yr Skr80/40; ☎ 2pm mid-Jun-mid-Aug) also zips round the centre of the fortress.

Karlsborg is the start/end of the western section of the **Göta Canal** (see boxed text, p146, and p330 for further details).

STF Vandrarhem Karlsborg (☎ 446 00; Ankarvägen 2; dm/d Skr135/300; ☎ Jun-Aug; P) Right on the fortress's doorstep, this is used as military accommodation for most of the year. If you can overlook the slightly brusque reception, a good option is to stay here and self-cater (there are supermarkets in the nearby town centre), although there are more sleeping and eating options in town, especially beside the Göta Canal about 2km northwest of the fortress (follow the main road).

A bus runs every hour or two to Skövde, connecting with SJ trains to Göteborg or Stockholm.

HALLAND Halmstad

☎ 035 / pop 87,929

After roasting themselves on the 6km-long Blue-Flag **beach** at Tylösand (8km east of town), many holidaymakers return to Halmstad's lively bars and clubs at night.

Halmstad was actually Danish until 1645, and served as an important fortified border town. Its street plan was laid out by the Danish King Christian IV after a huge fire wiped out most of the buildings in 1619. He also awarded Halmstad its coat of arms: you'll see the three crowns and three hearts motif dotted all over the place.

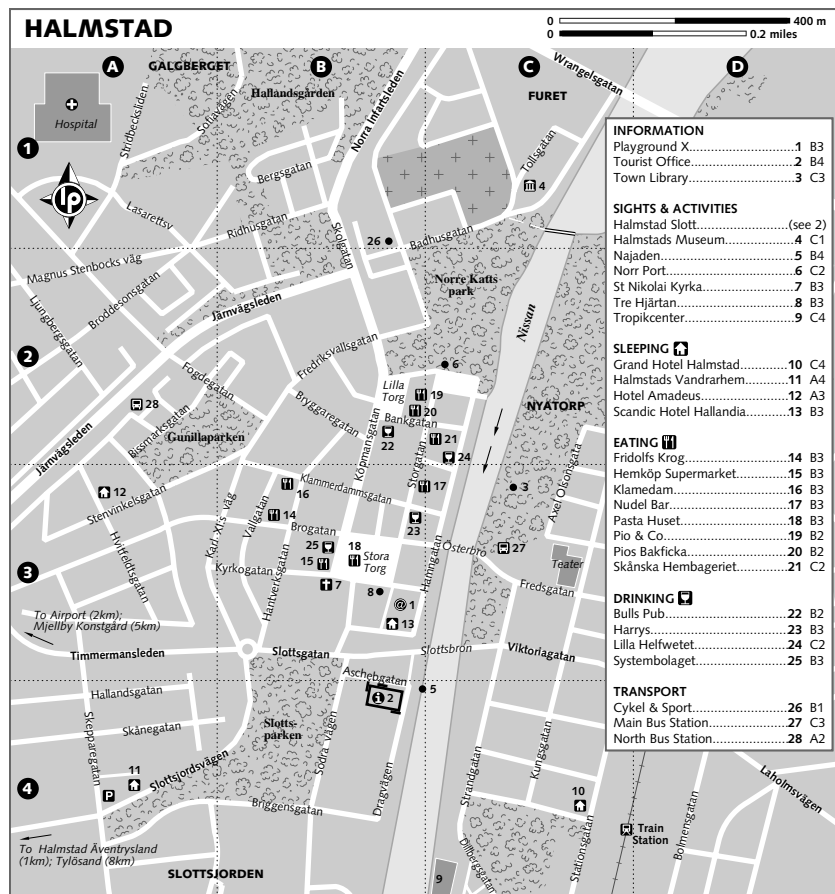
The **tourist office** (☎ 13 23 20; www.halmstad.se; ☎ 9am-7pm Mon-Sat, 11am-6pm Sun late Jun-mid-Aug, 9am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is inside Halmstads Slott (castle). Stora Torg and Storgatan have most of the facilities travellers will require, including banks and supermarkets. At the time of writing, a futuristic new **library** (www.huvudbiblioteket.se; Axel Olssongata 1) was being built by the river: once it opens in 2006, there should be plenty of free Internet access. Otherwise try **PlaygroundX** (☎ 12 10 90; Storgatan 6; per hr Skr25; ☎ 10am-midnight).

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

For a small county institution, **Halmstads Museum** (☎ 16 23 00; Tollsgatan; adult/7-15yr Skr40/20; ☎ noon-4pm Tue & Thu-Sun, to 8pm Wed) manages to host some good art/design exhibitions. Its modest array of local treasures are displayed with ingenuity: for example, silver hoards and Viking swords are set in cases in the floor, as though just discovered on an archaeological dig.

Halmstad Äventyrslund (☎ 10 84 60; Gamla Tylösandsvägen 1; admission Skr150; ☎ 10am-8pm Jul & Aug, shorter hr May, Jun & Sep), lying just out of town, is a theme park for little-ish kids featuring pirates, fairytale characters, dinosaurs, a miniature village, rides and waterslides. A free road train leaves Halmstad roughly every hour from near the corner of Stora Torget and Brogatan; a board tells you the exact departure times.

Another one for families, across the river and downstream from the tourist office, **Tropikcenter** (☎ 12 33 33; Strandgatan; adult/child



Skr70/40; ☎ 10am–6pm Jul, 10am–4pm Aug–Jun) is in the old customs house and shows off tropical birds, fish and reptiles. At both places, kids under 1m tall get in for free.

The museum ship **Najaden** (admission free; ☎ 5–7pm Tue & Thu, 11am–3pm Sat Jul & Aug), berthed just outside the castle and built in 1897, was a training ship for the Swedish Royal Navy.

Christian IV built **Halmstad Slott** (open irregularly to guided tours in summer: ask the tourist office for details) and the town walls. The latter were demolished in the 18th century, although fragments like the north gate **Norre Port** remain. Other medieval attractions include the lovely 14th-century church **St Nikolai Kyrka** (☎ 8.30am–6pm Jun–Aug, 8.30am–3pm Sep–May), and the half-timbered **Tre Hjärtan**

(Three Hearts) building on Stora Torg. In the main square is Carl Milles' sculptural fountain *Europa and the Bull*, and Picasso's (*Woman's Head*) is down by the river.

Mjellby Konstgård (☎ 316 19; adult/under 20yr Skr50/free; ☎ 1–5pm Tue–Sun mid–Mar–Oct) is 5km from town but worth a trip if you're into modern art – the museum here includes the permanent Halmstad Group exhibition of surrealist and cubist art (labelled in Swedish). Take the irregular bus 330 from the North Bus Station.

Sleeping IN TOWN

The tourist office can arrange private rooms in town from Skr150 per person (plus book-

ing fee). It's a popular town, and many of the large hotel chains have branches here.

Halmstads Vandrarhem (☎ 12 05 00; halmstad@hallonsten.se; Skepparegatan 23; 2-/4-/5-/6-bed r Skr450/600/725/850; ☎ mid–Jun–mid–Aug) This SVIF hostel becomes student digs outside summer. Rooms are slightly battered, with that drawing-pins-in-the-wall look that comes with college accommodation, but they're decent enough and have sofas and desks. There's a spacious garden for evening lounging.

Hotel Amadeus (☎ 16 60 00; www.amadeus.nu; Hvitfeldtsgratan 20; s/d Skr850/1050, discounted to Skr640/840; (P) (Q)) At 65 rooms this isn't a tiny hotel, yet it manages to retain a very personal and welcoming air. Rooms are comfortably mid-market – not old-fashioned but not state-of-the-art, either – and there are budget alternatives (around Skr200 less) if you're counting the pennies.

There's little difference in price or standards at the following two upmarket places, both with sauna, solarium, bar, restaurant and so on:

Grand Hotel Halmstad (☎ 280 81 00; www.grandhotel.nu; Stationsgatan 44; s/d Skr1200/1550, discounted to Skr790/990; (P) (Q)) Handy for the train station, with rooms decorated in a more traditional vein.

Scandic Hotel Hallandia (☎ 295 86 00; hallandia@scandic-hotels.com; Rådhusgatan 4; rm/ste Skr1320/1800, discounted to Skr1090/1320) On the main square with more modern Scandinavian-style accommodation; some rooms have balconies overlooking the river.

IN TYLÖSAND

Hotel Tylösand (☎ 305 00; info@tylosand.se; Tylöhusvägen; d Skr2345, discounted to s/d Skr1295/1395) This is the place to try if you're into the beach, nightclubbing and/or Roxette (it's part-owned by Per Gessle, one half of the Swedish pop duo). It's a large, upmarket complex on the beach, with lots of eating options and summer entertainment happenings; check out the glamorous foyer full of art, and Leifs Lounge nightclub. This is one of the few Swedish hotels where prices go up at weekends, although packages are available.

Krono Camping (☎ 305 10; www.kronocamping.se; Kungsvägen 3; sites Skr130–240, cabins from Skr525) A huge and bustling camping ground near the beach, with loads of family-friendly facilities. Avoid holidays such as midsummer, when prices go stratospheric: a whopping Skr840 for three days!

Tyleback (☎ 19 18 00; info@tyleback.com; Kungsvägen 1; sites Skr220, 1-/2-/3-/4-bed rm Skr260/390/585/780, hotel s/d Skr795/995) Accommodation to suit all pockets – camping, hostel, hotel – is offered at Tyleback, in a pleasantly rustic location.

EATING & DRINKING

Halmstad is jam-packed with dining spots, pubs and bars, mostly around pedestrianised Storgatan. Alternatively, on summer nights head to the after-beach parties at Tylösand.

Klamedam (☎ 12 40 50; Klamedammstratan 21; mains Skr235–265; ☎ 6–11pm Mon–Sat) Slide onto suede seats at this exclusive restaurant and prepare for a treat. Dishes are immaculately presented, with mains of mostly fish and meat, and the atmosphere is cultivated and quite romantic.

Pio & Co (☎ 21 06 69; Storgatan 37; mains Skr160–230; ☎ from 6pm) Pio's is an award-winning up-market brasserie. Its extensive menu of quality dishes contains Swedish favourites with a world-flavour twist, such as salmon with sugar-roasted summer veg on couscous.

Pios Bakficka (Lilla Torg; meals under Skr100) Behind Pio & Co is this place, which literally means 'Pio's Backpocket'. It's a more casual spot with outdoor seating and a good bar menu.

Fridolfs Krog (☎ 21 16 66; Brogatan 26; meals Skr75–220; ☎ from 6pm) Less exclusive and with a wide menu, this is another pleasant place for a fine dinner. There are low-priced pasta options, or more expensive, well-prepared meat and fish meals including bouillabaisse.

Skånska Hembageriet (☎ 21 24 07; Storgatan 40; ☎ closed Sun) This is a good old-fashioned bakery with café attached. Sandwiches cost from Skr29, and of course there are lots of freshly baked buns to choose from.

Lilla Helfwetet (☎ 21 04 20; Hamngatan 37; ☎ closed Sun) With its funky dancing devil symbol, you can half guess what awaits you in this great converted warehouse near the river. This super-cool restaurant, bar and cocktail lounge transforms into a nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights, when there's partying until 3am.

For something quick, visit hole-in-the-wall **Nudel Bar** (Storgatan; meals incl drink Skr60) or the **Pasta Huset** (pasta Skr29) van on Stora Torg. There's a Hemköp supermarket and a Systembolaget just off Stora Torg.

On the northern part of Storgatan and nearby Lilla Torg are some popular drinking

places, including pub-style **Harrys** (☎ 10 55 95; Storgatan 22), with a large outdoor terrace curling round the corner, and the **Bulls Pub** (☎ 14 09 21; Lilla Torg), in a former fire station.

GETTING THERE & AWAY

The **airport** (☎ 12 80 70) is only 2km west of the town centre. Skyways has regular connections to Stockholm's Arlanda airport.

The train station is in the southeastern corner of the town centre, and the bus station is a few blocks away at Österbro. **Swebus Express** (☎ 0200-21 82 18; www.swebusexpress.se) runs buses at least five to seven times daily to Malmö (Skr178, 2¼ hours), Helsingborg (Skr90, one hour), Göteborg (Skr120, 1¾ hours) and Lund. **Svenska Buss** (☎ 0771-67 67 67; www.svenskabuss.se) runs the same routes, at a cheaper price but less frequently. Swebus Express also has a direct twice-weekly service to Jönköping (Skr178, 2¾ hours).

The regular trains between Göteborg (Skr170, 1¼ hours) and Malmö (Skr160, two hours) stop in Halmstad, calling in at Helsingborg (Skr110, one hour) and Varberg (Skr81, 45 minutes).

GETTING AROUND

Local bus 10 runs at least half-hourly to the clubs and beaches at Tylösand (adult/child Skr20/10).

Try **Taxi Halmstad** (☎ 21 80 00) for assistance getting around. You can hire a bike from **Cykel & Sport** (☎ 21 22 51; Norra vägen 11; ☎ 10am-6pm Mon-Fri, 10am-1pm Sat) for Skr70/100 per half/full day.

Varberg

☎ 0340 / pop 54,338

This attractive town lies by the side of a 60km stretch of beautiful white-sand beaches: its population consequently triples in the summer months. Varberg's darker side includes its fortress, once used as a prison and now home to an excellently preserved bog body.

The **tourist office** (☎ 887 70; www.turist.varberg.se; Brunnsparken; ☎ 9.30am-7pm Mon-Sat, 3-6pm Sun late Jun-early Aug, 9.30am-5pm Mon-Fri rest of yr) is located in the centre of town, and most facilities are nearby.

SIGHTS & ACTIVITIES

The **medieval fortress** (☎ 828 30; adult/6-17yr Skr50/10; ☎ 10am-5pm mid-Jun- mid-Aug, 10am-4pm

Mon-Fri, noon-4pm Sat & Sun rest of yr), with its superb museum, is the main attraction in Varberg. Unusual exhibits include the poor old Bocksten Man, dug out of a peat bog at Åkulle in 1936. His 14th-century costume is the most perfectly preserved medieval clothing in Europe.

Brave the brisk Nordic weather and swim in the striking **Kallbadhuset** (☎ 173 96; adult/under 15yr Skr45/25; ☎ mid-Jun-mid-Aug, 1-8pm Wed & 9am-5pm Sat & Sun winter), a bizarre Moorish-style outdoor bathhouse built on stilts above the sea just north of the fort.

Getterön Nature Reserve is just 2km north of the town and has excellent bird life (mostly waders and geese). The reserve has a **Naturum** (visitors centre; ☎ 875 10; Lassavägen 1; ☎ 10am-4pm May-Aug; Fri, Sat & Sun Sep-Apr) with good exhibitions.

In 2004, the **Varberg Radio Station** (☎ 67 41 90; Grimeton), about 10km east of Varberg, was added to the Unesco World Heritage List. It was part of the interwar transatlantic communication network: today it's the only such long-wave radio station left in the world. Admission is by guided tour (on the hour from 11am to 5pm Tuesday to Sunday, July to mid-August): phone ahead to let them know if you'd like an English tour.

Apelviken, just 2km south of Varberg, is Sweden's best place for **windsurfing** and **kitesurfing**. Bring your own kit or rent from **Surfer's Paradise** (☎ 67 70 55; info@surfersparadise.nu; per hr/day Skr80/300; ☎ Jun-Aug), which also offers courses: contact them for details.

SLEEPING & EATING

Fästningens Vandrarhem (☎ 887 88; vandrarhem@turist.varberg.se; dm/s/d Skr210/280/470) Within the fortress, this SVIF hostel is one of the finest hostels in Sweden. It offers singles in old prison cells or larger rooms in other buildings.

Hotell Gästis (☎ 180 50; gastis@hotellgastis.nu; Borgmästaregatan 1; s/d from Skr945/1295, discounted to Skr725/1025) This friendly place is highly recommended and probably offers the best value in town in summer. Although it doesn't look like much from the outside, inside it's bright, clean, stylish and colourful, with lots of extras like a library and outdoor terraces, plus guests can rent bikes. All prices include breakfast and a dinner buffet.

Getteröns Camping (☎ 168 85; www.getteronscamping.se; low/high season sites from Skr160/220, cabins & chalets from Skr410/675; ☎ May-mid-Sep) This well-equipped place is right on a sandy beach on the Getterön peninsula. There are plenty of tent spaces, but it does get busy in high season.

Lundquistska Huset (☎ 143 90; Brunnsparken; mains Skr120-180) When it comes to dining, this upmarket spot near the tourist office offers excellent cuisine, including vegetarian options.

Most cheap restaurants are along the pedestrianised Kungsgatan. **Café Fästnings**

Terrassen (☎ 105 81) at the fortress offers the best sea views in town.

GETTING THERE & AROUND

Buses depart from outside the train station; local buses run to Falkenberg, but regular trains are your best bet for places like Halmstad, Göteborg and Malmö.

Stena Line ferries operate between Varberg and the Danish town of Grenå (see p328); the ferry dock is next to the town centre.

Bike hire from **Erlan Cykel** (☎ 144 55; Västra Vallgatan 41) costs from Skr80/350 per day/week. For a taxi try **Varbergs Taxi** (☎ 165 00).

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