



Gothenburg



Welcome to Sweden's congenial second city – just perfect for a laid-back weekend break

Why on earth would you choose to visit a provincial northern city like Gothenburg? Because in a low-key, unassuming way, it's delightful.

Okay, so it's not the sort of city that's going to blow you away with

spectacular art and architecture like Rome, or dazzle you with its urban whirl like New York. But it's not trying to. It sort of lies back and gently charms you, the sort of town the word 'livable' might have been coined for. Gothenburgers know it, and are congenitally cheery, making a nonsense of the Swedish reputation for reserve.

As you board the bus back to the airport at the end of your trip, you might find yourself strangely sad to be leaving so soon – good reason to start making plans to return.



GETTING THERE

Ryanair (www.ryanair.com) flies from London Stansted and Glasgow Prestwick to Gothenburg City.

City Airlines (www.cityairline.com) flies from Manchester and Birmingham to Gothenburg Landvetter.

BMI British Midland (www.flybmi.com) flies from London to Gothenburg Landvetter.

GETTING AROUND

The centre is small enough to explore on foot. But trams zip all around town, and are just 20kr including transfers. You can even transfer onto a boat to the islands of the archipelago. Take the 11 tram to Salthomen (half an hour through unexciting suburbs) for the ferry harbour.

Gothenburg is a great city to cycle round, with plenty of leafy cycle lanes. There's a bike shop on Kristinelgata, but we found it shut at weekends. Ask if your hotel has any bikes.

GOOD PLACES TO EAT AND DRINK

1

Hemma Hos

Haga Nygata 12
Tel 031 13 40 90

On a cobbled Haga corner, Hemma Hos serves up modern takes on Swedish favourites like sole, potatoes and lentils (200kr) in smart but relaxed surrounds.

2

Smaka

Vasaplatsen 3
Tel 031 13 22 47

Bustling bar/restaurant serving up pub grub Swedish style, with traditional meatballs with lingonberries (98kr) vying for attention on the menu alongside elk burger.

3

7:an

Kungstorget 7

Not just an old beer hall, but a licenced historic monument, unusually allowed to serve alcohol without hot food available. Serves only beer. And they really do mean only beer.

4

Vanilj

Kyrkogatan 38

Sweet little place to stop for a refuel while shopping in the old town, serving hot snacks like nachos and chilli, as well as the obligatory piles of sticky cakes. There's a hotel too.

5

Kringlan

Haga Nygatan 13

Queues meant we ended up going elsewhere (Jacob's up the street at number 10) for our cake, but we reckon Kringlan was the cosiest of the abundant cosy Haga Nygatan cafes.

GOOD THINGS TO SEE AND DO

1 Hit the water

www.paddan.com
Yes, it's hopelessly touristy, but the Paddan boat tour is also a lot of fun. There are prime views of the handsome canalside buildings from Gothenburg's merchant heyday, and you'll get an understanding of the city's relationship with the all-important water.

2 Chill out in Haga

Nose around the boutiques and antique sellers of storybook Haga Nygata, the city's original suburb with its attractive wood and brick governor's houses. Try a spot of window shopping, then indulge your sweet tooth on cake at one of the snug cafés.



3 'Worship' at the Fish Church

www.fiskekyrkan.se
Tuck into a plate of cured herring or a warming fish pie while the fishmongers hawk the catch of the day around you at the unique neo-Gothic 'Fish Church' market. Closed Sun, Mon and Sat after 2pm.



4 Pick up a bit of local history

www.stadsmuseum.goteborg.se
Explore the history of Gothenburg at the City Museum, housed in the splendid former East India Company building. English labelling is sketchy in parts, but the early story of the city has a fair amount, and the Vikings exhibition is excellent.

5 Feast your eyes on design classics

www.designmuseum.se
Drool over Scandinavian classics at the Röhsska Museum of design, just off the shopping street known as 'Avenyn'. Not all interpretation is in English, but things are just as pretty without labels. Closed Mon, late opening Tue.

6 Shop for something to take home

The pedestrianised old town is nothing like as attractive as Haga, but if you're looking for something to take home, this is the place to head. It can seem like every other shop window showcases sleek homeware. Best of all is the venerable Josephssons.



7 Take a walk in the park

Gothenburg is a very green city. Right in the centre is the Trädgårdsföreningens Park, perfect for a canalside stroll. Fine buildings like the Ritz are reflected in the water, and there's a botanic garden with glass houses modelled on the Crystal Palace.

8 Enjoy all the fun of the fair

www.liseberg.com
It's only open summer and winter (when there's a Christmas market), so we weren't able to visit and can't give you our opinion, but Gothenburg has Scandinavia's biggest theme park just outside the centre.



GOOD PLACES TO STAY

1 Flora

Tel 031 13 86
www.hotelflora.se
There's nothing especially exciting to report about our room at Hotel Flora, but it was perfectly comfortable, and good value for the location (just on the edge of the old town). You couldn't ask for a warmer welcome, and the ground-floor cafe is chic but homely.
● Double room £65 weekends

2 Avalon

Tel 031 751 02 00
www.avalonhotel.se
Treat yourself to a stay at Gothenburg's new design hotel. There's not a hair out of place, starting in the lobby with its bright designer furniture, and mezzanine lounge where a long gas flame flickers in a wall recess. Our bath was too small, but otherwise the room was exemplary.
● Double room £85 April weekend

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

Time difference UK +1 hour
International dialling code +46
Exchange rate £1 = 13.1 Kronor
When to go Days are long in summer, perfect for outdoor drinking. Days are short in winter, but Christmas decorations and markets might compensate.
Tourist information Kungssportplatsen 2
Useful website www.goteborg.com