



GQ DOES...

STOCKHOLM

THERE'S A LOT MORE TO THE SWEDISH CAPITAL THAN PIPED ABBA AND FLAT-PACKED FURNITURE.



First, let's tackle the stereotypes. Yes, Stockholm can be eye-wateringly expensive and yes, its inhabitants are possibly the planet's most attractive race. Which at least means when you're being relieved of \$10 for a beer, it will be by a long-legged, flaxen-haired beauty with piercing blue eyes and a poetry-inspiring smile.

Look beyond that, though, and you'll find a city that blends historical grandeur with cutting-edge design. Stockholm is scattered

across 14 islands and sits at the edge of an archipelago of 30,000 more; an aquatic summer playground plied by a flotilla of ferries, sail boats and cruise ships. Each of the city's five main districts has its own personality, from the medieval, cobble-stoned lanes of Gamla Stan to the edgy, bohemian vibe of Södermalm. Throw in some world-class places to eat, dozens of sexy bars and a cosy cafe on every corner and you won't want to come home. ■

EAT

Restaurant AG

(Kronobergsgatan 37, 112 33) is a temple to all things meaty, including dry-aged cuts hanging in a huge glass refrigerator. Versailles-style boudoir **Grill** (Drottninggatan 89, 113 60) has nine themed areas in which to enjoy its delicately seasoned meats and seafood. "Fika" (to have coffee and cake) is a Swedish institution and you'll find a tempting array of pastries at **Sturekatten** (Riddargatan 4, 114 35) in a quirky, character-filled townhouse. restaurangag.se; grill.se; sturekatten.se

DRINK

The high cost of alcohol means most Swedes have a few glasses at home before hitting the bars around 11pm. **Riche** (Birger Jarlsgatan 4, 114 34) is a perennial favourite with two interconnected areas and two different crowds — **Lilla Baren** attracts the frisky tots whereas **Stora Baren** is affectionately known as 'divorcee ditch'. Both the **Lydmar** (Södra Blasieholmshamnen 2, 103 24) and **Nobis** (Norrormstorg 2-4, 111 86) hotels have great in-house bars, but on a balmy night, you'll want to go to **F12 Terrassen** (Fredsgatan 12, 111 52),

a summer-only terrace club that spills onto a sweeping stone staircase. riche.se; lydmar.com; nobishotel.se; terrassen.f12.se

SLEEP

On the waterfront opposite the Royal Palace, the 46-room **Lydmar Hotel** is like the home of the Swedish banking magnate you wish you knew. Beautifully decorated with a mix of antiques and contemporary local designs, it's a haven of impeccable service and Scandinavian Zen. Even more intimate is **Ett Hem** (Sköldungagatan 2, 114 27), a new luxury guesthouse with bespoke furnishings in its 12 bedrooms, many featuring fireplaces and marble bathrooms. ettthemstockholm.se

SEE

On paper, **Vasa** (Galärvarvsvägen 14) sounds yawn-inducing. But it's a jaw-dropping presentation of a 69m, 384-year-old wooden warship salvaged in 1961. On the same island of Djurgården is the bizarre but intriguing **Spirit Museum** (Djurgårdsvägen 38), which examines the Swedes' love of the hard stuff through art, video and interactive exhibits. www.vasamuseet.se; spritmuseum.se

DO

While there are many archipelago boat tours, none is as fun as the 1.5-hour high-speed hoon in a military-grade rigid inflatable boat (**RIB**). Stieg Larsson fans should check out the Dragon Tattoo exhibition at the **Stockholm City Museum** (Ryssgården) where you can pick up a Millennium Map for a self-guided tour. ribsightseeing.se; stadsmuseum.stockholm.se

SHOP

Stroll down **Biblioteksgatan** for high-end Swedish fashion outlets such as **WHY RED**, **ACNE** and **V Ave Shoe Repair**. For an insight into Swedish design, visit **Svenskt Tenn** (Strandvägen 5, 114 51), a two-storey homage to revered furniture and fabric designer Josef Frank. svenskttenn.se

PLAN

Unless you're a fan of sub-zero temperatures and six hours of sunlight, don't visit in January. From May to September the city spills outside for long summer nights and balmy mid-20s temps. Pick up a Stockholm Card (from \$66 a day) for free entry to 80 museums and free public transport. visitstockholm.com



THE BREAKDOWN

LONG-LEGGED LOVELIES

MEN WITH BEARDS

BLAZERS AND T-SHIRTS

MID-WEEK SHENANIGANS

BUYING A ROUND

PHOTOGRAPHY ROB MCFARLAND.