

# Mid Scandinavia Tours

## In the footsteps of Viking Olav, 10 days



Experience St Olavsleden: The northernmost pilgrim trail in the world and learn about the Viking Olav that later became Olav the Holy and also the King of Norway. The starting point of the pilgrimage is in Sundsvall, Sweden, the place where Olav began his walk to Trondheim, on the coast of Norway, in 1030.

This 580-kilometer log trail will take us by coach and by foot from the Baltic Sea in the east of Sweden, to the Atlantic Ocean in the west in Norway. While you're travelling through the historical landscape everything from accommodation to food and guided tours are arranged for you. We will visit all the highlights such as important churches, ancient stone carvings, rune-stones, spring-wells, outdoor museums and a moose rescue farm. We will sample Viking food, listen to local music and visit a monastery before we reach our final destination, the Nidaros Cathedral in Trondheim.

Our experience involves enjoying the most beautiful parts of the trail through meditating our way of putting one foot in front of the other. We will take time to reflect over life, let the time move a bit slower and hopefully also experience an inner journey.

After a our nice walk we will rest our legs and let the comfort of the coach take us to the next stretch. Average hiking distance will be 3 km (1,9 miles) and never longer than 7 km (4,3 miles). The hikes will be on well marked paths and never super steep. The longest ride with coach without a stop will be 1 hour.

Accommodation will be in carefully picked local hotels, guest houses and cosy cabins. You will also have the chance to try tenting if you want.

You will be traveling in a small group (10-15 people) together with a local guide.

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## 1. ARRIVAL DAY IN SUNDSVALL - Welcome to Sweden

Welcome to Sweden and Mid Scandinavia Tours! We will start our journey in Sundsvall, the city located close to the starting point of St Olavsleden. Access travel to Sundsvall is best reached from Stockholm by train (3,5 h) or flight to Sundsvall Timrå Airport (1 h). You will find more information under the headline "getting here". The walk from the train station to the hotel is about 15 minutes but we can also arrange a pre-booked taxi for you from the train station or the airport. If you arrive early to Sundsvall, we recommend spending some time at the rooftop SPA of the hotel. Bring a good book to the terrace and make yourself comfortable on a cosy sofa overlooking the sea and enjoying the same sea breeze as Viking Olav did when he sailed into the harbour in the year 1030.

At 6 pm we gather the group in the hotel lobby. We will enjoy a good dinner together, get to know each other and talk about the pilgrimage we have ahead of us.

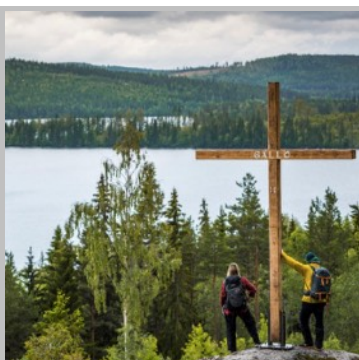
- **Included meals:** Dinner
- **Driving distance:** No driving today
- **Hiking distance:** None. Rest your legs and get ready for tomorrow
- **Accommodation:** Clarion Hotel Sundsvall, Sundsvall, Sweden
- **Optional activities:** The Spa at Clarion Hotel Sundsvall

## 2. SUNDSVALL TO REVSUND - We put on our hiking boots and start our pilgrimage

It's time to put on our hiking boots and start our pilgrimage. Our first stop for today is the olde church ruin in Selånger, west of Sundsvall. This was the first place Viking Olav arrived at after sailing from Russia on his quest to reclaim the throne of Norway. We will get our pilgrim passport here and collect our first stamp on our way to Nidaros in Norway.

The highlights of today will be walking in an old Swedish native forest, visit a rune-stone from the Viking age and visiting Selånger church. We will take the time to reflect over the start of this journey in front of the St Olav statue in the church. At noon we will stop for lunch at an old mansion. Our accommodation for today will be at the little farm that have been taking care of many pilgrims over the years.

- **Included meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- **Driving distance:** 2 hours
- **Hiking distance:** Approximately 7 km
- **Accommodation:** Bakgården, Revsund, Sweden



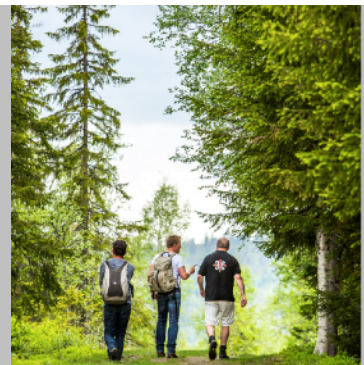
### 3. REVSUND TO ORRVIKEN - Time to enter an important island of the Vikings

Enjoy a calm morning walk along the Revsund lake. It's a perfect opportunity to relax and enjoy a walk in the silence, listening to the birds sing their morning song and just think of where you should put your feet on the forest path. We will visit a small cave with an interesting history and for the brave, it's a chance to crawl into the cave and ponder of the man who lived here for several years. After the first walk we will pick you up with the bus and after a short drive we are ready for our next walking section that will take us to a spring well. According to the legend the well is created by St Olav and we will be able to have a drink from the cold clear water.

In the afternoon it's time to dive into Viking history for real when we arrive to Frösön, where the Vikings once lived. It's named after the Viking God "Frö" and here we will visit the northern most located rune-stone in Sweden.

You will also get the chance to do some shopping in the town of Östersund. A map will guide you to all the unique local stores in the town. At the end of the day we will arrive at Moose Garden in Orrviken. The family who lives at the farm takes care of moose calves that have been affected from car accidents and have been nursing and feeding many of them with milk bottles from when they were babies. We will spend the night in comfortable cabins overlooking Swedens fifth biggest lake, Storsjön and the panoramic Oviken mountains.

- **Included meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- **Driving distance:** 1 hour
- **Hiking distance:** Approximately 7 km
- **Accommodation:** Moose Garden, Orrviken, Sweden



### 4. ORRVIKEN AND SURROUNDINGS - Meet a moose and explore the local museum

When you wake up this morning and look out the window the first thing you see might be a moose! The old ones are so tame that you can say hi and give them a kiss. We start the days adventures with a guided tour where we get to know some of the moose and the history of the farm.

At noon we will take the bus to the museum Jamtli, where the Jämtland region's cultural history comes to life. At the exhibition Vikings the ancient woven cloths "Överhogdalsbonaderna" can be



found. These fabrics have existed for more than 1000 years and depicts a world miles away from the one we live in today. Outdoor history is brought to life by actors and animals and we will get to know how people lived in the 18<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Jamtli is also home to a branch of the National Museum with unique collections of Nordic paintings, sculptures and other artwork dating from 1500-1900.

At dinnertime we will head back to the Moose Garden and cook a meal together. In the evening the sauna will be ready for those who want to experience the traditional Scandinavian tradition. After a sauna, we can take a moment to sit outside and enjoy listening to legends of the great lake monster while we watching the sun set over the mountains.

- **Included meals:** Breakfast and dinner
- **Driving distance:** 1 hour
- **Hiking distance:** No hiking today, just short walks
- **Accommodation:** Moose Garden, Orrviken, Sweden
- **Included entrances:** Moose Garden and Jamtli museum



## 5. ORRVIKEN TO ÅRE - We try Swedish fika and cook dinner over an open fire

Today we kiss the moose farewell and walk the St Olav trail along the lakefront of Storsjön. In the horizon the mountains reflect in the lake just as they did when St Olav embarked on his journey almost 1000 years ago.

After our morning hike we will be treated with traditional Swedish Fika (cookies and coffee) before we head into the woods. Our second stretch will take us to Glösa where we will learn about the first people who came to this area after the last ice age. The waters edge reveals 5000-year-old stone carvings. Just as people have done since the ice age, we will prepare our dinner over an open fire close to a beautiful waterfall.

In the evening we will arrive at the famous mountain village Åre that has been a popular tourist destination for more than 100 years. It all started with wealthy guests who came to the small farm village to breathe the healthy mountain air. The first tourist hotel opened 1895 by the lady Kristina Hansdotter. The cosy hotel is still around and like 100 years ago, still welcomes its guests and is where we are going to spend the night. Today the small village Åre has become the biggest tourist destination in northern Sweden. Get ready to pick your favourite activities for tomorrow!

- **Included meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- **Driving distance:** 1,5 hours
- **Hiking distance:** Approximately 7 km
- **Accommodation:** Hotell Åregården, Åre, Sweden



## 6. ÅRE - Full day in Åre, pick your favorite activities in the mountain village

After spending a few days together as a group we split up for some free time doing as you wish. Sleep in or walk up the mountain and enjoy the view. Shop at all the small shops of Åre filled with traditional handcraft from the area and high-quality outdoor brands that have their roots here. Åre also offers a lot of optional activities such as downhill mountain biking, kayaking, fishing and yoga just to mention some of them. If you want to do a mountain hike Totthummeln is a recommended trail that offers a beautiful view over the valley.

In the evening we gather as a group again for a short walk to the Åre church dated all the way back to the medieval age. It is the only mountain church in Scandinavia built of stone. The church has been visited by thousands of pilgrims during the years and the wooden statue of St Olav from the 12<sup>th</sup> century has an exciting history. Expect an evening filled with music that is a big part of the local culture.

- **Included meals:** Breakfast
- **Driving distance:** Transport to the activities can be arranged if needed
- **Hiking distance:** Optional hikes are offered
- **Accommodation:** Hotel Åregården, Åre, Sweden





## 7. ÅRE TO STIKLESTAD - We cross the border to Norway and end up in an old Viking village

Hopefully your legs are feeling ready for our next part of St. Olavsleden. It will take us to Sweden's largest waterfall, Tännforsen.

A few kilometres from the Norwegian border we will stop and enjoy the barren landscape without trees that is the home of the reindeers. Moss and lichen form the base of their diet and if we are lucky we will even see some reindeers.

When we have crossed the Norwegian border we will witness the open and beautiful landscape change into farming land. We will arrive in Stiklestad in afternoon, where King Olav met his destiny. In the evening we will gather around a long Viking table and feast on Viking food. It will be an evening filled with Viking tales and perhaps even tales from our own journey over the border to Norway!

- **Included meals:** Breakfast, lunch, dinner
- **Driving distance:** 2 hours
- **Hiking distance:** Approximately 2 km
- **Accommodation:** Scandic Stiklestad, Stiklestad, Norway



## 8. STIKLESTAD TO TAUTRA - Enjoy the view of the coastline and visit a monastery

After Stiklestad the path will split in two and we will drive along the coastal road and let the time move a bit slower. We will take in the landscape from the bus window and will be given time to reflect over the days we have been traveling along St Olavsleden.

Tautra, an island where people have been living borttagen text since the bronze age, is our destination for today. The monastery on the island was built in the middle-ages and is dedicated to Virgin Mary. The nuns welcome us and we will join their silent meditation in the afternoon.

- **Included meals:** Breakfast
- **Driving distance:** 1,5 hours
- **Hiking distance:** Optional hikes are available
- **Accommodation:** Klostergården Tautra, Tautra, Norway



## 9. TAUTRA TO TRONDHEIM - Visit the Nidaros Dome

We have now been following St. Olavsleden all the way from the Swedish Baltic Sea in the East to the Norwegian Atlantic Ocean in the west. In the morning we will take the boat from the island Tautra to the bustling coastal town Trondheim. It's the 4<sup>th</sup> largest town in Norway and was the capital of Norway until 1217. Our last pilgrim walk will take us to the Nidaros Dome where St Olav is buried according to the legend. Before we have dinner together, we will have some time to stroll the cosy streets of Trondheim.

- **Included meals:** Breakfast
- **Driving distance:** No driving today, we will take the boat from Tautra island to Trondheim
- **Hiking distance:** Approximately 3 km
- **Accommodation:** Pilegrimgsgården hotell og gjestegård, Trondheim, Norway



## 10. TRONDHEIM - Time to head home

After breakfast the guide will meet you in the reception and help you out with the transport to the train station in Trondheim or at Trondheim airport in Vaernes. The airport is easy to exes by the high speed train (40 minutes) and the train station is just a 15 minutes walk from our accommodation.

On this last day of the pilgrimage, take time to reflect and think of how we started as a group of strangers and now it ends with so many shared memories. We have made a journey not only in geographical distance but also an inner journey. Maybe you have come to realization in both discussions with your fellow travellers but also in the quiet walks with your own thoughts. As Phil

Cousineau so beautifully said *"Pilgrimage is a powerful metaphor for any journey with the purpose of finding something that matters deeply to the traveller"*.

- **Included meals:** Breakfast

Important information:

- Hotels and activities can be changed if needed but will always be changed to something equivalent.
- Optional activities are not included in the price.
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