

ESCAPE



The Scandinavian TRIFECTA

*Embark upon the ultimate Nordic adventure through
NORWAY, SWEDEN, and DENMARK'S capital cities*

By Mary Murray

OSLO

As Europe's northernmost country, Norway's identity is tied to the ocean and a thirst for exploration. This land of Vikings attracts visitors with its fascinating geography characterized by fjords nestled between cliffs and jagged coastline. In Oslo, the region's natural and historical heritage commingles with cultural pursuits and amenities distinct to our modern age.

Cutting a curvaceous silhouette against the Oslo Fjord, The Thief

(*thethief.com*) is a contemporary hotel that steals its name from its location's storied past. During the eighteenth century, Tjuvholmen, or Thief Islet, was a haven for robbers and other miscreants. Today, it's regarded as Oslo's entertainment and arts center, and The Thief embraces this reputation in its design and operating philosophy.

With an exterior marked by the interplay of shadows, glass, wood, and snapshots of life inside, The Thief complements its compelling structure with artworks strewn across shared spaces and private quarters. All

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COURTESY OF THE THIEF/MATTIAS HAMBEN, JASON STRONG



COURTESY OF THE THIEF/STUDIO DREYER HENSLEY



COURTESY OF BANK HOTEL/JOHAN NILSON



COURTESY OF BANK HOTEL/JOHAN NILSON

LEFT: BANK HOTEL PROVIDES EASY ACCESS TO SITES LIKE GAMLA STAN AND ALSO INCLUDES A FINE-DINING RESTAURANT, BONNIE'S. BELOW: ROOMS AT HOTEL D'ANGLETERRE OFFER VIEWS OF COPENHAGEN'S KONGENS NYTORV.



COURTESY OF THE THIEF/STUDIO DREYER HENSLEY



THE THIEF COMBINES NORDIC HIGH DESIGN AND AN ARTISTIC SENSIBILITY IN ITS EXTERIOR, ROOMS, AND ON-SITE RESTAURANT, FOODBAR. OSLO ATTRACTIONS INCLUDE THE OSLO OPERA HOUSE (ABOVE) AS WELL AS THE VIKING SHIP MUSEUM, THE NORWEGIAN MUSEUM OF CULTURAL HISTORY, AND VIGELAND PARK, THE WORLD'S LARGEST SCULPTURE PARK.



accommodations come with a balcony perfect for curling up with a blanket, sipping the verbena tea left at turn-down service, and savoring glorious Oslo vistas.

Thief Foodbar specializes in updated Norwegian cuisine as seen in dishes like halibut paired with leeks, lardons, potatoes, and kale, or a mushroom barley risotto accented by raw and pickled chanterelles. The hotel's bar boasts equally intriguing libations

and specialty cocktails inspired by works at the adjacent Astrup Fearnley Museum of Modern Art (*afmuseet.no*), which showcases pieces by the likes of Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst. The best part? Guests at The Thief get in for free.

STOCKHOLM

For even more immediate access to all the city has to offer, secure an Oslo Pass (*visitoslo.com*). In addition to complimentary entry to dozens of museums and attractions, it also allows holders to hop on and off public transportation and ferry services to Bygdøy peninsula, home to such sites as the Norwegian Museum of Cultural History and the Viking Ship Museum. Back on the mainland, sample

Oslo's cultural scene at the Munch Museum (*munchmuseet.no*), with a collection dedicated to Norwegian artist Edvard Munch; the Oslo Opera House (*operaen.no*), an iceberg-like structure that makes for a great architectural tour; and Vigeland Park (*vigelandmuseum.no*), where more than 200 of Gustav Vigeland's sculptures depict the circle of life.

Roaming the cobblestone streets of Stockholm, one cannot help but become enthralled with its beautiful mélange of water, vegetation, and colorful buildings. Its Old Town, or Gamla Stan, is known as the city between the bridges and provides a glimpse into the Sweden of yesteryear. But while Stockholm supplies many access points to its august history, it also balances this reverence with a thirst for cosmopolitan delights.

Bank Hotel (*bankhotel.se*) exemplifies this mindset. A study in eclectic hospitality, Bank Hotel opened in August 2018 in a retrofitted, circa-1910 bank envisioned as an Art Deco interpretation of a Renaissance palace. The bank's original bronze doors give way to a treasure trove of divine decor and references

to the property's monetary ties. At Bonnie's restaurant, for example, polished green marble and velvet emerald chairs instantly recall cash. On the menu, diners will find a "Smash the Piggy Bank" dessert that you have to break open with a hammer before enjoying.

Beyond Bonnie's, Bank Hotel abounds in communal areas that appeal both to guests and locals. Two bars—Sophie's and Papillon—deliver distinct drinking environs while exuding the same international design sensibility prevalent in the 115 rooms and suites. In lieu of stereotypical Scandinavian sparseness, Bank Hotel chose fabrics and furniture that invite rest. Comfy sofas in bright hues of green and red pop against neutral linens and natural materials like wood and stone.

Bank Hotel may hook you with its looks, but it reels you in with its location. Many of Stockholm's top activities are within walking distance, including Gamla Stan, the Royal Palace, and the island of Djurgården. Here, fans of Swedish pop act ABBA can check out their namesake museum (*abbathemuseum.com*) and nautical enthusiasts can head to the Vasa Museum (*vasamuseet.se*), which contains a well-preserved ship that capsized off the shores of Stockholm in 1628.

The *Vasa* is a point of national pride, but there's perhaps nothing more instantly associated with Swedish culture than the meatball. For a millennial twist on this pint-sized delicacy, eat at Meatballs for the People (*meatball.se*). Craving something more sophisticated? Then opt for Lilla Ego (*lillaego.com*), a small neighborhood restaurant run by award-



winning chefs who had tired of the grind of Michelin-starred kitchens.

Of course, no dining experience captures the essence of Sweden quite like *fika*. This midday coffee break is a way of life for Swedes, who view it as an opportunity to slow down and unwind. Our absolute favorite baked good to devour during *fika*? Unquestionably Swedish cardamom buns. Similar to a cinnamon roll in theory, these heavenly pastries are sweet yet spicy, floral yet peppery. You'll surely crave one each day you're in Stockholm and for weeks after you depart.

COPENHAGEN

In recent years, foodies have flocked to this Danish city to dine at Noma (*noma.dk*), lauded as the best restaurant in the world. But Copenhagen is more than just one impossible-to-book eatery. Between its charming canals, singular monuments, and welcoming personality, this idyllic destination has long appealed to aesthetes, thrill seekers, and bon vivants alike.

The latter group will feel most at home at Hotel D'Angleterre (*dangleterre.com*), a palatial property situated on Copenhagen's Kongens Nytorv, or King's New Square, near the oh-so-Instagrammable Nyhavn district and the shopping street of Strøget. Established in



COURTESY OF HOTEL D'ANGLETERRE

1755, Hotel D'Angleterre underwent a massive renovation at the beginning of this decade, resulting in a grand fusion of ultra-posh surroundings and accommodations fit for royalty. Guests can expect traditional interiors bathed in rich shades of purple and gold, as well as superb concierge service that anticipates all needs. The rooms and suites feature fabrics so sumptuous and carpeting so plush, you'll find it next to impossible to extricate yourself from this lap of luxury.

The hotel's commitment to everything luxe extends to its Balthazar Champagne bar and the Michelin-starred restaurant Marchal. Indebted to D'Angleterre's fine-dining legacy, Marchal is a journey for the senses. Meals begin with delectable small bites like gougères with truffle cream and comté cheese, and end with mouth-

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COURTESY OF TIVOLI GARDENS



COURTESY OF HOTEL D'ANGLETERRE

RIDE THE DEMON AT TIVOLI GARDENS AND SAVOR LICORICE ICE CREAM WITH FROZEN HERBS, CRISPY MERINGUES, AND LEMON AT MARCHAL AT HOTEL D'ANGLETERRE.

watering masterpieces like rhubarb with pistachio ice cream, rose meringue, and cardamom cream. Marchal also prioritizes showmanship, and no dish personifies that like the *Canard à la Presse*. It's not an order for the culinarily meek—but brave gourmands will adore it.

For all of Copenhagen's high-end dining, the city is equally renowned for its street food

and craft beer. Hot dog aficionados will appreciate the plentiful variations on *pølse*, with the most famous being a frankfurter stuffed inside a hollow baguette. Wash it down with a brew from Mikkeller (*mikkeller.dk*), a Copenhagen institution with a handful of locations around town, including a few blocks from the world-famous Tivoli Gardens (*tivoli.dk*).

Founded in 1843, Tivoli is one of the oldest amusement parks on the planet. You could easily spend days strolling through its menagerie of pavilions, theaters, rides, and games, all the while contemplating the visitors who came before you—among them Walt Disney, who culled inspiration for his own Disneyland, and Danish writer Hans Christian Andersen, who penned *The Nightingale* following a trip to the park. Many of Andersen's fairy tales are illustrated in The Flying Trunk ride, but you'll have to venture outside Tivoli to see *The Little Mermaid*, a sculpture that has become a symbol of the city. Perched on a rock off Langelinie, the forever-young sea creature stares longingly at the shore, captivating onlookers with her lovesick pose and the promise of happily ever after. ◀◀

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