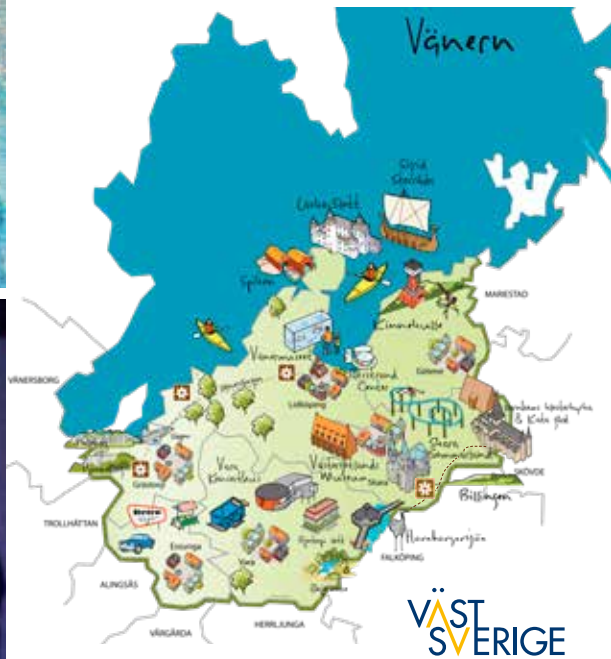


Experience more...



-in our corner of...

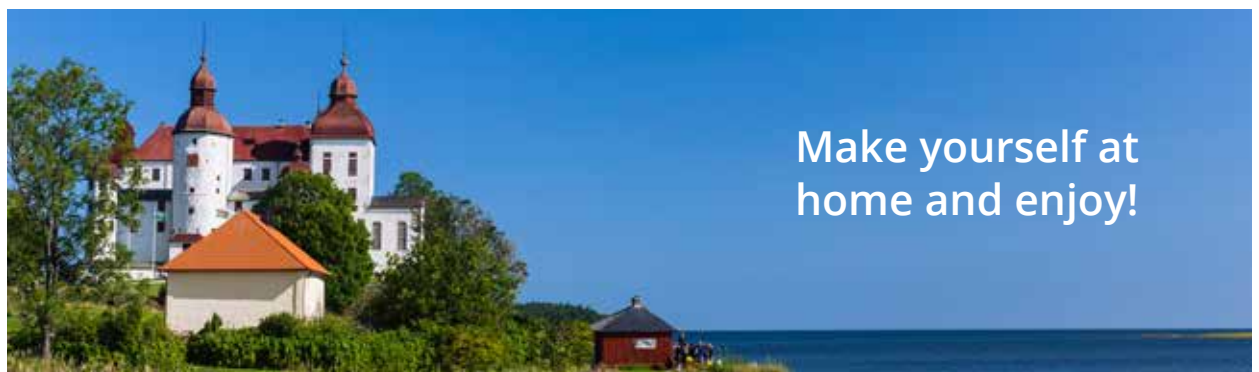


Essunga • Grästorp • Götene • Lidköping • Skara • Vara

WELCOME TO OUR CORNER OF WESTERN SWEDEN

Essunga, Grästorp, Götene,
Lidköping, Skara and Vara

Here in our corner of western Sweden we are proud of our unique natural and cultural heritage. You can view traces from pre-Christian Sweden and from further back in time when the ice age created our plateau mountains. Explore our cultural heritage on foot along a variety of hiking trails that run through broad-leaved woodland, archipelago environments and along farm tracks.



Make yourself at
home and enjoy!



LOCAL PRODUCE

The Västgötaslätten is made up of lush plains and nutrient-rich soil. You will find many local food producers and farm shops here offering the very best in the way of food. From field to fork is a short step.



FARMERS' MARKETS & LOCAL PRODUCE

Grästorps offers small-scale locally produced goods available for sale on the last Sunday of every month throughout the summer, for example, at its farmers' market (Bonnemarknad). Another popular visitor attraction is local ice-cream makers Mäjens Glass & Maräng and neighbouring Mossängen farm shop.



THE WHITE GUIDE

Here in our corner of western Sweden you will find numerous coffee shops and restaurants offering tempting delicacies. Several of them feature in the White Guide. Just a few years ago Conditori Nordpolen was named Sweden's best patisserie. Find out why!

Lidköping boasts plenty of White Guide cafés, and if you want to enjoy a unique gastronomic experience – head for the Hvita Hjorten at Läckö.

GASTRONOMICAL FOOD EXPERIENCES

Bjertorp Slott	Kvänum
Feeling Restaurant & Wine bar	Lidköping
Restaurang Hvita Hjorten	Lidköping
Mellbygatans ost & delikatesser	Lidköping
Restaurang Sjöboden	Kållandsö
Forshems Gästgivaregård	Forshem

'FIKA' WITH A SPECIAL TOUCH

Café Bella Mi	Lidköping
Café på Klostret	Blomberg
Café Stallet	Kållandsö
Conditori Nordpolen	Vara
Esti	Vara
Henrys Bageri	Lidköping
Rådhuskonditoriet	Lidköping
Sivans Café och butik i Baljered	St Levene



Visiting the North Pole (Nordpolen) can be much easier than you think. All you actually need to do is come to Vara and look for a sign showing a polar bear. Welcome to Conditori Nordpolen – you won't be disappointed.



ESTI

Pitchforks and spades adorn the yellow-striped walls sandwiched between quotes such as “Bättre fika åt folket” (Better coffee and cakes for everyone) and Med kärlek till och från slättan” (With love to and from the plains). Serving up local ingredients and focusing on enjoyable taste sensations in a cup.



BJERTORP SLOTT IN KVÄNUM

Guests come to Bjertorp Slott to enjoy a taste of the good life. Our catering team use the best ingredients the region has to offer, and the castle itself is the best-preserved art nouveau setting in Sweden, with individually furnished hotel rooms that are all unique.



ABBEY CAFÉ WITH A LONG HISTORY

Varnhem has been serving coffee to visitors for hundreds of years. The café has been the natural meeting place in historical Varnhem. It has now expanded its offering with barbecue evenings and Afternoon Tea at certain times.



DINING AND 'FIKA' IN FAIRYTALE SETTINGS

The Kinnekulle district also offers gastronomic experiences. For example, you can visit Forshems Gästgivaregård, which is Sweden's oldest inn, with a history dating back to the 13th century. You will also find Hellekis Trädgårdscafé & Kök at Hellekis Manor – one of many castles and manor houses on Kinnekulle.



THE FISHING VILLAGE OF SPIKEN

A few kilometres from Läckö Castle you will find the fishing village of Spiken. In summer the harbour is filled with boating visitors and other tourists enjoying locally produced delicacies. Lake Vänern's red gold – vendace roe – is harvested and processed in Spiken during the darkest months of winter.



CULTURE – WHERE IT BEGINS

There's huge variety to be found in our corner of western Sweden: runestones and Christian Vikings, art, music, architecture and design. Experience baroque style at Läckö Castle or follow one of our brown & white culture trails. And if you fancy a trip back in time, try out our Retro Route (Retrovägen). For something truly modern instead, we have a VERY blue building in Vara

SWEDEN'S BLUEST STATION BUILDING

The Blue Orange is one of Sweden's biggest works of art and was created by German artist Katharina Grosse, whose particular interest is colours and their interaction with one another and the observer. Five boulders in all colours of the rainbow have landed on the old station building, which is vivid blue from roof ridge right down to the ground, and a sixth on the other side of the tracks.



SWEDEN'S BIGGEST LITTLE CONCERT HALL

Vara is home to one of Sweden's biggest concert halls. Perhaps not in terms of the exterior, but definitely in terms of ambition and repertoire. Every spring and autumn Vara Concert Hall presents a seasonal programme featuring everything from Family Saturdays, classical music, dance and jazz to theatre, stand-up and musicals.



THE RETRO ROUTE AND NOSSEBRO

Route 190, also known as the Retro Route, winds its way from northern Gothenburg up to Skaraborg. At the heart of this picturesque route you will find retro stronghold Nossebro in Essunga municipality, where you can view three decades of well-preserved cultural heritage – both interiors and exteriors from the 1950s, 60s and 70s. In addition to an authentic old electrical shop from 1969, you can visit a unique three-room apartment (“Andra Våningen”) and an old fire tower, a station house, a cinema, cafés and eateries with an appealing retro style.



LIDKÖPING – THE CITY OF PORCELAIN

The old porcelain factory houses the Rörstrand Museum, telling the story of one of Europe’s oldest porcelain factories and the crown jewel of Swedish porcelain: Rörstrand. The collections span almost three centuries and feature everything from chamber pots to well-loved tableware. Today the Rörstrand district is once again a centre for ceramic production and various ceramic embellishments can be found throughout the town.

Don’t miss the old town, dating back to the Middle Ages, with picturesque Limtorget, the oldest part of Lidköping. The artisans who were always to be found here have now been joined by artists and a range of cafés. Take a stroll around and enjoy the charming atmosphere. Take a historical tour through the app Läckö Kinnekulle.



NEW AND OLD TOWN IN LIDKÖPING

Lidköping is a small-town idyll with an inspiring sense of life and drive. In the square stands the characteristic Old Town Hall (Gamla Rådhuset), which is also the symbol of the town. It once belonged to Swedish statesman Magnus Gabriel De la Gardie.

SKARA CATHEDRAL AND THE MOST BEAUTIFUL CITY IN SKARABORG

It's not for nothing that Skara has been named the most beautiful city in Skaraborg. From far outside the city you can see the two spires that are the symbol of Skara. The first known cathedral on this site was consecrated around 1150, but new finds indicate that there was already a church here in the 11th century. Bo Beskow's 43 stained glass windows alone make Skara worth a visit. However, you will find much more that is also beautiful about the city, including the architecture in the city centre.



CURIOUS ABOUT RUNES?

The Sparlösa Runestone is one of Sweden's most noteworthy runestones. The stone probably originates from the 9th century and is unique in its image depiction. Sweden's tallest runestone can also be found very nearby. You will find it at Levene Church.



VARNHEM ABBEY AND KATA GÅRD – DISCOVER TRACES OF CHRISTIAN VIKINGS

The magical and atmospheric setting around the abbey church and ruins provides some fantastic history to uncover. Behind the abbey ruins archaeologists have unearthed some sensational finds that provide information about the site from the time before the monks came here in the 12th century.

At Kata Gård modern architecture meets 1000-year-old walls. Here you will find the ruins of one of Sweden's oldest churches, a private farm church from the Viking era. The church crypt is presumed to be one of Sweden's oldest preserved rooms. The building is named after the woman who was in charge of the large farmstead here during the latter part of the Viking era.



NATURE EXPERIENCES

Between Lake Vänern and Lake Vättern you will find many different types of landscape. Geology and the ice age have shaped a varied habitat for humans, plants and animals in this unique plateau mountain region. Limestone clefts with orchids, areas of plain, thousands of flowering cherry trees, bogs, kame topography, boulder ridges, peninsulas and fantastic lakes of all sizes.



THE VALLE REGION

Between Skara and Billingen the inland ice has left behind a gentle, rolling landscape dotted with lakes. The area boasts numerous nature reserves with a wealth of unique flora and fauna. If you want to go hiking, there are 60 km of marked trails to explore. The section from Timmersdala to Varnhem is known as Vallevägen and is a picturesque route to ramble along, especially in May when the cherry trees are laden with blossom in shades of white and pink. Download the app Kulturväg Skaraborg for more tips.

OUT AND ABOUT

Our Out And About guide features a collection of thirty fascinating and picturesque locations you can visit in the Skara district. It is available from Skara Tourist Office and can also be downloaded from skara.se.





Unique plateau mountains



KINNEKULLE – THE FLOWERING MOUNTAIN

Once you have visited Kinnekulle, you will want to return. For this is not only one of Sweden's most picturesque spots, it is also a region filled with culture and vibrant history.

Kinnekulle with its volcano-like profile and abundance of natural attractions is an almost magical experience, especially when the wild garlic bursts forth in May, transforming the broad-leaved woodland into a sea of white flowers. The unique flora and fauna is due to Kinnekulle's geological structure with calcareous bedrock. Large areas of the mountain are designated as nature reserves, such as Österplana hed with its unusual alvar landscape and Munkängarna with its magical and beautiful broad-leaved woodland. Kinnekulle was originally an island in the sea, and the mountain was shaped by its waves. Evidence of this can be seen in the many clefts that turn into magnificent waterfalls in spring, such as Martorpsfallet and Bratteforsfallet.

BILLINGEN

North and South Billingen offer a variety of experiences. Explore the mountain by hiking trails or bike. Or why not come in winter for a little cross-country skiing at Blängsmossen? Nature is open all year round!



HALLEBERG, HUNNEBERG AND KUNGAJAKTSMUSEET

The plateau mountains of Hunneberg and Halleberg rise like islands from the fertile plains, and the views are magnificent. Hunneberg is an ecopark with numerous wild animals in a large area of forest. You will find beautiful scenery and many excellent hiking trails, along with lakes in unique and biologically valuable forest settings – several of them are nature reserves.

The former farm of Bergagården is now home to both a restaurant and the Royal Hunt Museum - Elk Hill (Kungajaktmuseet Älgens Berg). Join a guided tour, go canoeing, fishing or mountain-biking. Another exciting place to visit is Dättern – a shallow, nutrient-rich freshwater bay that is one of the most valuable breeding sites in the county and the Lake Vänern region for several bird species.

POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATIONS

For those who appreciate expansive views, a visit to Kinnekulle's observation tower is a must. And why not visit Kinnekulle's grand quarry too, where you can view 40 metres of the immense limestone layers that make up the mountain? At the foot of Kinnekulle is Hällekis, a small industrial community with its own handicraft village that attracts countless visitors every summer.



CYCLING AND HIKING

For those seeking a challenge, there are six mountain-bike trails on Kinnekulle offering varying ascents, distances and levels of difficulty to choose from, starting and ending at Kinnekullegården. Another way to experience Kinnekulle is hiking along one of the wonderful hiking trails running through this magnificent landscape.



PICTURESQUE HORNBOGASJÖN

Hornborgasjön (Lake Hornborga) is a nature reserve covering just over 4,000 hectares and comprising lake and lakeside meadows as well as part of the old agricultural landscape east of the lake. The arrival of the cranes at Hornborgasjön is a sure sign of spring, but the lake is home to abundant and unique bird life all year round.

At Naturum Hornborgasjön visitor centre you can learn more about wetlands and about the animals, plants, geology and cultural history of the area. Café Doppingen at Naturum Hornborgasjön serves a tempting selection of locally produced delights.





water

KÅLLANDSÖ – THE PEARL OF LAKE VÄNERN

Kållandsö is Lake Vänern's second largest island and a popular year-round destination with its rich outdoor life and picturesque cultural landscape. It is home to Läckö Castle – a baroque castle with a 700-year history, well-preserved interiors and inspiring castle gardens. In summer both exhibitions and concerts are held here, such as Läckö Sommaropera and Läckö Visfestival. Naturum Visitor Centre Vänerskärgården – Victoriahuset houses the Hvita Hjorten restaurant. Enjoy fantastic dishes prepared using ingredients obtained from the castle garden and local growers.



KAYAKING AND HIKING

The Kållandsö archipelago offers calm paddling conditions. If you don't have your own kayak, they are available to hire beside Läckö Castle and at several other locations. If you would rather experience nature on foot, Kållandsö has some excellent hiking trails through beautiful and varied scenery.

COOL AQUATIC ADVENTURES

Skara Sommarland is Scandinavia's biggest water park, with fun aquatic activities for the whole family. For little ones, there's the fun pools (Sagopoolerna) and the lagoon (Kottelagunen). Attractions for older and more adventurous visitors include the Snake Pit, Cobra and Big Drop, with a 21-metre free fall. The wave pool (Vågpoolen) is the biggest in the Nordic region, with a delightful long beach.

STEAMBOAT S/S NOSSAN

A trip aboard the S/S Nossan is a real journey back in time: the smell from the wood-fired steam engine, the gentle pace and the beautiful, untouched surroundings of the river Nossan. You will have a skipper and guide on board to provide commentary on what you are seeing and historical anecdotes about the district and the boat.





EVENTS TO SUIT ALL TASTES

Markets, dancing cranes, Santas and opera. And much more!



LIGHT FESTIVAL, HAUNTED HOUSE & ESCAPE ROOM

At the turn of September/October Nossan light festival takes place. An almost magical experience, with spectacular illuminations along a two-kilometre stretch of the river Nossan. The festival also features restaurant tents and stages with musical entertainment every evening. One popular element of the festival is the ghost walk organised by Spökhuset Grästorp. For those who can't get enough of scary experiences, Spökhuset Grästorp is an attraction that is open all year round. Excitement and suspense can also be found at Grästorp's Escape Rooms – Hidden Logic.

SAVE THE DATE – EXPERIENCE GRÄSTORP

Swedish National Day celebrations	6 June
Sing-along evenings, Thursdays	18 & 25 July, 1 & 8 August
Grästorp festival	9-10 August
Vänerveckan	24 August-1 Sept.
Nossan light festival	5-12 October

CRANE FESTIVAL AT HORNBOGASJÖN

For one week in spring the Trandansen information centre and the area around Lake Hornborga becomes a real hive of activity, with a variety of themed activities for young and old alike. Food tents offering local delicacies combine with bird-watching sessions, field days for schoolchildren and interesting talks.

VALLEHELGEN

In May every year, artists and craftspeople open up their homes and studios to visitors in the heart of the beautiful Valle region. Cafés, restaurants and local clubs and societies also welcome visitors, offering nourishment for body and soul. Come along and enjoy a packed weekend of colourful experiences.

POPULAR MARKETS

Nossebro prides itself on hosting Sweden's oldest and largest monthly market, "Nossebro marknad", with 543 stalls and 100,000 visitors per year. Stallholders have been coming here on the last Wednesday of every month since 1903. One new feature is a variety of theme markets in an event tent from March to November. On the day before the market in June and August you can join in with sing-along evenings along the banks of the river Nossan, and there is a campsite alongside if you want to stay overnight. Another type of market is Veteranmarknaden, which is organised on the last Saturday of April and August. You can find everything from car parts to retro gadgets.

FOOD MARKET IN HÖTORGET IN SKARA

Six times a year Hötorget is filled with locally produced delicacies, restaurant tents run by Skara restaurateurs, entertainment and a genial atmosphere for young and old.

THE RAMSON DAY ON KINNEKULLE WITH SWEDISH CHAMPIONSHIPS IN OUTDOOR COOKING

Savour the aroma of the garlic and see the expanse of the ramson's white blooms as we celebrate Kinnekulle's very own herb on 1 June. There will be music, markets, Swedish regional championship in outdoor cooking, all based at Hellekis Manor.

MOTORLÖRDAG

Nossebro Motorlördag is held in central Nossebro on the first Saturday in June. A day for all retro and motoring enthusiasts. The event welcomes vintage cars, vintage tractors, "A-traktors", motorcycles and mopeds. There is a wide range of traders selling retro or motoring-related items, such as car parts, retro clothing and much more. You can also vote for your favourite vehicle, get a retro hairdo and watch a variety of displays.

STRAWBERRY EXTRAVAGANZA

The strawberry has its very own day of celebration in Vara, a festival for all ages held on the Friday/Saturday after midsummer ever since 1985. On 28-29 June the square in Vara will be filled with well-known Swedish artists, entertainment, dancing, a funfair, market stalls, masses of activities and a festival atmosphere – all with free entry.

LÄCKÖ KAYAK EVENT

Kayakers from across the country will be meeting at Läckö Castle on 28-30 June to enjoy the fantastic scenery of the archipelago around Källandsö island. Three days of talks and courses for both beginners and experienced kayakers.

LIVE MUSIC IN LIDKÖPING

Throughout the summer from June to August entertainment is on offer on Lidköping's various music stages, everything from pop and rock to classical and opera. On Tuesdays in July the sun jetties by the river Lidån will play host to local artists, on Wednesdays the venue will be Hantverksgården in Limtorget, and on Thursdays well-known artists will perform in Stadsträdgården (city park).

In addition to this, concerts are arranged at Rörstrand, Visfestival and Opera at Läckö Castle, Måndax & Tisdax at Stadshotellet, and much more.

POWER BIG MEET, MOTORTORSDAGAR AND HJULAFTON IN LIDKÖPING

A summer of motoring events in Lidköping gets under way on 4-6 July with Power Big Meet as car enthusiasts from around the world gather to share their interest. There will be markets, cruising, classic car competitions and a wonderful atmosphere throughout the town. Motortorsdagar (Motoring Thursdays) will continue throughout the summer (13/6-1/8), concluding with the traditional Hjulafteon on 8 August, when the whole of Lidköping is filled with racing cars, displays, motorcycle cortèges and much more.

TROTTLING WEEK WITH STOCHAMPIONATET

During week 29 every year Skara and Axevalla are transformed into a dynamic festival venue when Stochampionatet takes place. In addition to the trotting races, which attract tens of thousands of visitors from near and far, the town takes on a real party atmosphere with performances by well-known artists and competitions.

SOMMARKVÄLLAR I SKARA

The "Summer Evenings" event on the Djäkne stage in central Skara offers well-known artists, children's entertainment, bouncy castles, obstacle courses, open-air cafés and ice creams for all children. Free entry every evening!

OPERA & VISFESTIVAL AT LÄCKÖ CASTLE

Every year summer opera performances take place in Läckö Castle Courtyard. This year's production will be "The Marriage of Figaro", from 14 July to 3 August. The acoustics, the atmosphere and the historic setting guarantee a memorable experience. Läckö Visfestival (song festival) takes place on 9-10 August.

MUD-SPLASHED ENTERTAINMENT

Imagine getting to experience a real tractor race in the countryside! At Södra Lundby rural community centre just outside Vara it's full speed ahead both in and around the competition arena on Friday 26 July. Tractors skid, mud sprays and the audience can experience tractor racing, after-race drinks and much more.

LIDKÖPING PORCELAIN FESTIVAL

On 16-17 August it will once again be time for the Porcelain Festival in Lidköping. Porcelain and craftsmanship take centre stage over the two days, with talks, workshops, exhibitions, tours and much more.

JOIN US FOR AN ARTISAN FOOD SAFARI

On the first weekend in May and September (7-8 September) VästgötaLandet's local artisan food producers invite visitors to enjoy a Mathantverkssafari (Artisan food safari). Enjoy good food, top-quality products and encounters with dedicated and skilled artisan producers in an idyllic rural environment!

KULTURNATTEN/KULTURVECKAN (CULTURE NIGHT/CULTURE WEEK)

Culture Night is the start of a packed week of culture in Skara and the surrounding area. A varied mix of art forms, theatre and experience tours with music in various forms and different kinds of experiences, often with a common theme.

VENDACE ROE DAY AT SPIKEN FISHING VILLAGE

Come along and celebrate vendace roe day on 10-11 November on Källandsö island. Watch the processing of the roe, purchase delicacies and enjoy vendace-roe-inspired dishes in the fishing village of Spiken.

SKARA FILMFESTIVAL

For film-lovers, autumn is anything but gloomy in Skara. A whole idyllic week filled with films, several showings a day. The programme includes films for children, adults and young people, more recent releases mixed with

older classics that are perhaps difficult to find anywhere else.

CHRISTMAS FAIR AT HELLEKIS MANOR

The last weekend in October every year sees the traditional Christmas fair in the grounds of Hellekis Manor. You will find most things you would expect from a Christmas market, everything from edible delights to handicrafts.

AUTUMN MARKET IN VARA SMÅSTAD

The Harvest Market (Skördemarknaden) on 28 September will focus on locally produced food and is an event that highlights many of the excellent food producers on the Varaslätten plain and surrounding area. The Harvest Market is a day for young and old alike, with a variety of children's activities.

CHRISTMAS IN VARA SMÅSTAD

Christmas festivities in Vara Småstad begin on 1 December, and the Christmas window displays are usually something extra special to see. Treats are served at our cafés and restaurants during the day, and as darkness falls a wonderful festive atmosphere spreads throughout the town. Charming music and dancing around the Christmas tree are all part of the tradition, as are mulled wine (glögg) and pepparkakor biscuits.

LONGEST SANTA PARADE

On the first Sunday in December Skara is filled with Santas of all shapes and sizes for a fun and festive occasion. You can experience one of Europe's longest Santa parades, with Santas and elves delighting everyone as they walk, ride or cycle through the city with great merriment and spectacle.



GOLF AT EKARNAS

Grästorp offers golf in attractive surroundings at a number of different courses, including a driving range, chipping and putting green. Ekarnas Golfmotell and restaurant is directly adjacent to the course and everyone is welcome, whether they play golf or not.

In our corner of western Sweden you can play golf on a variety of courses. To find out more, visit golfaiskaraborg.se.

ART NOUVEAU CASTLE AND GOLF - A UNIQUE COMBINATION

Anyone who enjoys golf should be sure to play a round at Vara-Bjertorp golf club. It's a well-tended 18-hole course with several ponds in a picturesque setting and has been named the best course in western Sweden several times. You can stay and dine in luxury in a unique castle environment at Sweden's youngest art nouveau castle - Bjertorp Slott - which is directly adjacent to the course.



