

The Port of Stockholm, Sweden: A Disney Cruise Line Port Review

by Cheryl Pendry, PassPorter Featured Columnist

Next summer, the Disney Magic heads back to Europe, but with a wider variety of ports of call than ever before, adding in the stunning Norwegian fjords into its itinerary.

Along with that, a number of the old favourites return to the Disney itinerary line-up, including Baltic routes. That's on my bucket list to do one day, although ironically we've already visited a number of the destinations that the Disney Magic will take in. One of those ports is Stockholm, the beautiful capital of Sweden, which we were fortunate enough to spend a couple of days in, as part of a trip to Scandinavia.

The first thing you immediately notice about Stockholm, appropriately enough for a cruise port of call, is that it's very much a city on the water. In fact, it's been built on a series of islands, so the chances are you'll find yourself taking to a boat to get around to see the major sights.

□ The main attraction for many visitors to Stockholm, and I count myself in that, is the Gamla Stan or old town. It's packed with vibrantly coloured buildings, many dating back to the 18th century, and it's a real pleasure to just wander around this part of the city. At the heart of it is the Royal Palace, which is well worth seeing. As you'd expect from any palace, it's an impressive building, and we spent a very happy morning exploring it. This is a huge visitor draw, and just like any major Disney attraction, we were there at opening, as we visited in the height of the summer, exactly the time the Magic will be visiting Stockholm. We found this approach worked well, and crowds were low, although were certainly building by the time we left.

□ Other buildings in the Gamla Stan well worth seeing include the Storkyrkan or cathedral, the Stortorget, the square at the heart of the old town, and the Parliament building, which is made up of older and newer buildings in a fascinating mixture of architecture.

The main museums are outside of the charming Gamla Stan, and if you want to visit them, that's where you'll likely need to take a boat trip out to the island of Djurgarden, which was once a Royal hunting ground. The chances are most people will probably take a Disney shore excursion, as I have no doubt they'll be offering options that include visits here, and as you will need to negotiate boat rides, that's what I'd pick as well, as you don't want to get stuck getting back to the Magic.

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□So what's out at Djurgarden that's worth visiting? For me, the top attraction is the Vasa Museum, which is home to the Royal warship the Vasa. It dates from the 17th century, and is really something to see, as it's been beautifully conserved, and of course being Royal, is covered in beautiful decorations, giving you a good idea of how much work went into creating it. Sadly, the Vasa has what can only be described as a chequered history. It capsized in Stockholm harbour in 1628 with the loss of around 50 people. As it was supposed to be the pride of the country's navy, it didn't look good, and that's probably why it was left lying on the bottom of the harbour until it was discovered in 1956. It took many years before it could go on display to the public though, with the museum only opening in 1990.

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□Disney may add in some excursions that include Skansen, which was the world's first open air museum when it opened in 1891, as it's a huge draw for families. It shows how people once lived in Sweden, with homes, farms and even animals. A firm favourite for many visitors are the bears and I have to say we spent some serious time admiring these beautiful animals.

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□Since our visit to Djurgarden, a new attraction has opened its doors, and it's one I'd certainly love to see one day. It's ABBA The Museum, celebrating the lives and music of the famous foursome, and is just a 10 minute walk from the Vasa Museum.

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□One thing that Disney are likely to offer are trips out on the water, as that is a beautiful way to see Stockholm. A boat trip may just be a way of getting in between the various different attractions, but there are also sightseeing options, and they're well worth taking too, unless you really want to get your feet on dry land for a while that is!

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□Another way to get a wonderful view of Stockholm that will be a lot more energetic and will require more planning is to visit the tower of Stockholm City Hall. It's 106 metres high, and it is quite the hike to get up it, but the view when you get there is worth it. If this is something that interests you, you're best off heading there as early as you can, as only limited numbers of people are allowed up it from opening time at 9:15am each morning, and tickets can only be bought on the day. The city hall itself is also well worth seeing, although the only way to get inside is by taking a guided tour. It's home to some amazing rooms, and every year plays host to the annual Nobel Prize festivities in December.

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□There are so many choices for what will be a busy day in Stockholm. We spent a couple of nights in the city on our visit, and there are still things we didn't get round to visiting, like the royal palace of

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Drottningholm, located six miles west of Stockholm, and the national museum. I think a return trip, perhaps on a future Disney Magic visit, is in order for us to take in some of those sights!

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□The Disney Magic stops at Stockholm four times in summer 2015. The first two are during the seven-night Northern European itineraries from Copenhagen, Denmark, departing on May, 30 and June, 13. It also features on the 12-night Northern European cruises from Dover, England, which head out on July, 10 and 22.

About The Author: Cheryl and husband Mark live in England and love to travel, particularly to America. They are in the process of visiting every Disney theme park around the world, having already been to Disneyland Resort Paris, Hong Kong Disneyland and both American Disney resorts. They are now planning for their trip to Japan in the spring to visit the Tokyo Disney Resort. [Click here to view more of Cheryl's articles!](#)

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