

WEEKEND AWAY GOTHENBURG, SWEDEN

HANNAH SUMMERS

HIP pavement-side cafés, cutting-edge art exhibitions and shops rammed with fairtrade gear and antiques... the appetite for “Scandi-cool” has sent trend-chasing travellers in their droves to Stockholm. But I’m talking about Gothenburg: Sweden’s second city, and – whisper it – its coolest.

Here you’ll find all that covetable Nordic design, modern art, craft beer and the requisite cutting-edge food scene but with far smaller crowds. And whether you’re tearing into doughy kanelbullar (cinnamon buns) or crawling in the city’s food trucks, you’re sure to be in the company of creative, dining-savvy Swedes.

Trams may rattle along the pretty cobbled streets but the city is compact enough to explore on foot. Wander through the leafy Kungsparken (King’s Park), the boutique-crammed lanes of Haga and along the narrow canals and you’ll have this chilled-out city sussed in no time.

Bed down: retro rooms

Located on Avenyn, one of Gothenburg’s more upscale, bar-lined streets, the relaxed, seven-floor **Bellora** (00 46 3176 734 00; hotelbellora.se) takes design inspiration from the Sixties. Thankfully that doesn’t mean brown swirly carpets but instead you’ll find fun, fresh interiors with bold, cobalt-blue floral wallpaper, brass wall lamps and trendy tiling. Breakfast is a feast, and a great way to experience a typical Scandi start of cheese, fish, yoghurt and home-made jam. Be sure to swing by its newly opened rooftop bar, which offers great city panoramas after a day of street-level strolling. Doubles from 1,464 krona (£135), including breakfast.

Fed & watered: smart-casual

Start the day – or sharpen up if you’re flagging by mid-afternoon – with a flat white at **da Matteo** (00 46 3113 0515; damatteo.se). Several locations are dotted around the city but the flagship urban-vibe café in Magasinsgatan’s main square is the buzziest. Don’t leave without trying a sugar-dusted cinnamon bun – they’re baked on site.

Gothenburg’s gastro scene can be cruel on the wallet but the food trucks in the same square serve up brilliant dishes, covering a vast range of cuisines, for a fraction of restaurant prices. Try **Jinx** (jinxfoodtruck.com) for crispy tofu and chilli sauce stuffed into light and fluffy bao, or **Strömmingsluckan** (00 46 7324 599 07) for traditional pan-fried herring and mashed potato topped with generous ladles of lingonberry sauce. Streetkåk is a handy app for narrowing down



PER PEXEL PETERSSON/IMAGEBANK.SWEDEN.SE/TINA STAFRENI/GÖTEBORG & CO



Look out: clockwise from main, the view over Gothenburg; a room at the Bellora hotel; one of the trams that criss-cross the city; a pop-up market at Röda Sten arts centre. Inset top, fresh seafood at Restaurang Gabriel



Gothenburg has simply got it

truck locations across the city (streetkak.se).

Seafood-lovers should make the pilgrimage to **Feskekorka**, or the “Fish Church” (00 46 3113 4681). The indoor market was built in 1874, inspired by Norwegian stave and Gothic stone structures. Nowadays the busy, canal-side hall is a great place to get your shellfish fix – stroll between the glass counters watching the crowds buy their evening’s fish supper, then grab a table on the mezzanine level and feast on oysters, fresh fish smörgåsbords and locally brewed Ocean beer at **Restaurang Gabriel** (00 46 3113 9051; restauranggabriel.com).

For an informal evening meal with the locals, check out the burgers at **The Barn** (00 46 3135 249 49; thebarn.se). The small menu calls on the area’s best produce – expect sublime cheeseburgers pimped with truffle mayonnaise and extra-crispy, hand-cut fries (the sweet potato versions are particularly great). The setting is equally laid-back, with bare-brick walls, weathered

wooden counters and dangly lights creating a cool yet calm hangout.

For a post-prandial sip, take your pick from the bars queued up along Tredje Langgatan – the regenerated area is spot-on for bar- and restaurant-hopping. Start with Swedish craft beer at **Brewers Beer** (00 46 3114 7788; brewersbeerbar.se), where the on-tap specials are changed more often than the owner’s underwear (their words not ours). If the eight per cent ABV pale ales and specialist stouts are getting to you, absorb some of the damage with their pizza, made from seven-year-old wheat sourdough.

Tacos and Tequila (00 46 3130 952 20; tacosandtequila.se) is another favourite of the arty crowd. Along with wine and beer, there’s a strong cocktail list – ideal with a side of ceviche.

In the bag: fine design

Make a beeline for the **Artilleriet Warehouse** (00 46 3171 176 21; artilleriet.se) on Magasinsgatan for lust-worthy interiors shopping. Inside, the

vast, softly lit space is crammed with Swedish designer rugs, lamps, glassware, throws, and is heaven for those keen on neutral hues and impeccable Scandinavian design.

Gothenburg’s residents pull off loose yet expertly cut clothes with aplomb – find your own version at **Grandpa** (00 46 3171 170 08; grandpa.se), home to independent designer labels and sustainable cosmetics. The city’s vintage clothes scene is also good, so have a rummage through the garish prints and denim at **Pop Boutique** (Magasinsgatan 22; 00 46 3115 1555). Or if you’re into antiques then duck into the small shops along Haga Nygatan and lose yourself in the satisfying search for one-off, stylish souvenirs.

Cultural agenda: mix it up

The city isn’t short on cool museums. Start at **Röda Sten** (00 46 3112 0816; rodasten.com); located right on the harbour, the spruced-up industrial building, which once operated as a boiler house, now features an ever-

changing programme of modern art installations. The guided tours are excellent, and the atmosphere in this shabby-chic space is a draw in itself. Keep it in mind for Friday and Saturday nights when the building hosts live bands and DJs.

The Museum of World Culture (00 46 1045 612 00; varldskulturmuseerna.se) is a must for yet more fascinating exhibitions – from Crossroads, a look at climate change, to Afghan Tales, a showcase of contemporary Afghan photography (running until January 8, 2017). For something totally different, try the centrally located **Liseberg** amusement park (00 46 3140 0100; liseberg.com), which has been pulling in the thrill-seeking, rollercoaster-loving crowds since the 1920s.

Details: Gothenburg

Norwegian (0330 828 0854; norwegian.com) offers 12 weekly flights to Gothenburg from Gatwick starting at £29.90 one-way. ■ goteborg.com

THE HOTEL Experience this

Marriott has opened a new outpost of its “experiential” Moxy brand in the German capital. Located in the cool district of Friedrichshain, Moxy Berlin comes with a games room and bar, as well as the Living Room – a communal work-play space that’s all sealed concrete floors and statement lighting. The 210 rooms are simple but stylish, with room-only rates starting at €72. moxyhotels.com



THE FLIGHT Big easier

British Airways takes off for New Orleans next spring, with what will be the UK’s only non-stop connection to The Big Easy. The new service connecting Heathrow to Louisiana’s largest city will operate four times a week, starting March 26. BA hasn’t flown to New Orleans since the Eighties, when it had a route from Gatwick. Economy fares start at £599 return. ba.com



THE LUGGAGE Full metal

Samsonite has launched its new collection of metallic-toned luggage. Among the new models are copper Cosmolite cases and limited edition Lite-Shock luggage in gold. Prices start at £279 for a carry-on-sized Cosmolite Copper Blush, which is lightweight and comes with multi-directional wheels as well as a combination lock. samsonite.co.uk