

Copenhagen, Denmark

Copenhagen, largest city and capital of Denmark, is home and final resting place of author Hans Christian Andersen, and, in fact, the fairy tale feel of the city is everywhere, from the coppery green towers alongside gingerbread houses to the cobblestone streets lined with bikes and warm people.

Tivoli Gardens: Perhaps the best known of all Copenhagen's attractions, Tivoli Gardens is the world-renowned amusement park located in the very heart of the city. Visitors are dazzled by the park's fairyland lights, beautiful flowers, gift shops, rides, restaurants and strolling musicians.

Rosenborg Castle: This was the royal residence until the 19th century, and is one of the city's most popular museums, where you'll see the Royal Crown Jewels, costumes, and other royal memorabilia.

Strøget: Copenhagen's popular shopping district is made up of five streets reserved for pedestrian traffic only, and it features fine eateries, elegant stores and trendy boutiques filled with everything from luxury items to souvenirs.

Stockholm (Nynäshamn), Sweden

Nynäshamn, your gateway port to Stockholm, affords a commanding view of the capital of Sweden. Stockholm is a city of 14 islands linked by boats and graceful bridges. Its history stretches seven centuries, and it is Sweden's center of art and culture. It is also famous for being the home of the Nobel Prize.

Gamla Stan: Stockholm's historic old town is a warren of narrow cobbled streets and buildings dating from the 15th to the 19th centuries.

Royal Palace: Gracing the waterfront, this former royal residence displays its exquisite collections of tapestries, porcelain, and Baroque and Rococo furnishings.

Vasa Museum: This museum's centerpiece is the 17th-century warship Vasa, the oldest fully preserved ship in the world.

Helsinki, Finland

Helsinki is the center of Finnish commerce and culture, as well as the nation's capital. The skyline features a dramatic blend of classical architecture and clean modernism, with Russian and Swedish influences throughout. Much more than, simply, the nation where saunas originated, Finland -- Helsinki in particular -- delight visitors with a vital sense of heritage as well as enthusiasm.

Senate Square: Dating from the early 19th century, this square is the focus of the city and boasts fine neoclassical buildings, St. Nicholas Cathedral, and the University of Helsinki.

Tempeliaukio Church: Blasted and carved from solid granite and topped with a huge copper dome, this church is one of the most unique structures in the world.

Market Square: The colorful and lively Kauppatori or Market Square is where everyone comes to buy the freshest fish, fruits, vegetables and flowers, and where you'll find every conceivable local handicraft and souvenir for sale.

St. Petersburg, Russia

Situated at the confluence of the Gulf of Finland and the mighty Neva River, this former imperial capital fascinates visitors with its strong European influences, grand residences, world-renown museums and extraordinary monuments to a glittering past gone by. With its elegant palace-lined waterways, gilded and domed skyline, and grand boulevards where Czars once traveled in golden carriages, the majestic city of St. Petersburg well-deserves its nickname as the "Empress of the Baltic."

Hermitage Museum: The former Winter Palace and four adjacent buildings house one of the finest collections of art in the world.

Catherine Palace: The ornate Baroque palace sports an ornate blue and white façade crowned with golden onion domes.

Smolny Cathedral: Five cupolas rise above the ornate blue-and-white Baroque façade of this cathedral designed for Peter The Great's daughter.

Tallinn, Estonia

The beautiful capital city of Tallinn is one of the Baltic's great surprises, a fairyland jewel of medieval architecture perched dramatically above the sea. In 1991, Estonia won its independence from the Soviet Union without bloodshed, and since then, Tallinn has succeeded in restoring its beauty and charm. A member of the famed Hanseatic League that dominated trade in the Baltic during the Middle Ages, Tallinn has preserved its medieval Old City with its high church spires and red-tiled roofs.

Toompea Hill: The heart of old Tallinn's "Upper Town" is Palace Square, home to Toompea Castle, the seat of the Estonian Parliament.

St. Mary's Cathedral: The Gothic cathedral is one of the city's major architectural landmarks and the oldest church in Tallinn.

Russalka Monument: This monument commemorates the Russian sailors lost on the Russian battleship Russalka, which sank in the Gulf of Finland in 1893.

Berlin (Warnemünde), Germany

Once considered just a quaint fishing village at the mouth of the Warnow River, Warnemünde emerged in the 20th century as Germany's fifth largest maritime center for all of Germany's shipping, shipbuilding and fishing industries. This port city is also the gateway to the great city of Berlin and its history, culture and attractions.

Brandenburg Gate: This gate was the central crossing point between east and west when the Berlin Wall divided the city into two. Its elegant columns, classical friezes and historic statuary, once pitted by war and neglect, have all been restored.

The Reichstag: Berlin's place in world history can be seen in the city's many fine museums, especially at the Reichstag, once set afire by the Nazis to facilitate their seizure of power, this national landmark was fully restored and is now the seat of the unified German parliament.

Unter den Linden Strasse: The sweeping, tree-lined Unter den Linden Strasse, with its luxury hotels and chic cafes, is one of Berlin's finest shopping venues, full of boutiques, galleries and a wide variety of gift shops.

Aarhus, Denmark

Århus is a city of growth. With a population of more than 300,000, Århus is Denmark's second largest city. It is at heart, however, also Denmark's youngest city when you consider the average age of its inhabitants which is far lower than anywhere else in the country. At the University of Aarhus alone there are nearly 35,000 students, and there is a total of 25 educational and research institutions in the city. But Århus is also a city with clearly visible roots, founded, as it was, by the Vikings in the 8th century.

1250 years of city history At the same time Århus is a city which is also very conscious about its roots. Århus could well be Denmark's oldest city; evidence has been found which shows that there was a Viking settlement here as early as the 8th century. The Vikings settled by the mouth of the river – at the very spot where the Cathedral today rises into the sky with its tower soaring to more than 90 metres in height. The 'Bispetorv' square was also the centre of the town 1250 years ago, and in The Viking Museum in the basement of the Nordea Bank you are standing right next to the rampart which the Vikings built around Århus in the 10th century.

Oslo, Norway

Oslo is the oldest and least populous capital in Scandinavia. The city offers excellent theater, great cafés and quality shopping, as well as a rich history, with some of the most fabled maritime legends in the world as homeland to the seafaring Vikings.

Vigeland Sculpture Park: This park features over 650 statues by sculptor Gustav Vigeland. Works of all sizes in granite, bronze and wrought iron depict the many stages and episodes of human life.

Viking Ship Museum: This fascinating museum features three remarkably preserved oaken longships from the 9th century.

Folk Museum: Set in a beautiful wooded area of Bygdoy Peninsula, this open-air museum features a superb group of old buildings, gathered from all over Norway, that represent the history and culture of the country.