

# *Hjo*

Water, wooden houses and lush greenery – an unbeatable combination, which gives Hjo its distinct character. The fresh water provides nourishment for mind and body and the summer breezes waft off Lake Vättern across the town as the harbour glistens in the sun.



The steamboat Trafik, more than 100 years old, ploughs smoothly through the waves and small fishing boats set off early in the morning to catch whitefish and char. Across the lake is the gentle silhouette of the Omberg mountain and in the evenings you can see the lights of Östergötland. It's a peaceful scene, which has changed little since Hjo's early days as a spa resort.

Hjo is a compact town where visitors can explore the narrow cobblestoned streets in a setting with unbroken traditions dating back to the 15th century. People have lived and worked here for more than 600 years. The houses in Hjo are often decorated in various oil colours with elegant windows, shaped mouldings and beautiful verandas. The outhouses are painted in the warm and typical colour of Sweden; "Falu Red".

The lush woodlands, hedges and shrubs are a delight to the eye and provide fragrant scents for passers-by. In this greenery that character of the town pleasure. Lilacs, mock and elder are just some you'll discover.



fact it is provides the mellow and makes a stroll such a orange, roses, cherry trees of the blooms and scents

The magical woodland shore through the town have time to explore the valley, you could find purple loosestrife, valerian, giant balsam, stream veronica and other exotic plants with poetic sounding names.

winds its way from the lake and along the river. If you

## *Hjo as a spa resort*

The development of Hjo as a spa resort started way back in 1876. People started to come here for a cure to improve their physical health. People also came for their social well-being and to meet like-minded individuals. Many marriageable young people may have met their lifetime partner here while their parents discussed their offspring's eligibility.

## *The Park*

The layout of the spa has changed over the years, but the site and its buildings are still well preserved. The associated park was designed by the German landscape architect J J Sterneman. Most European trees species were planted and tennis courts and a croquet lawn were installed. Beautiful walkingpaths encircled the whole park.



The present-day park still has many of the original trees, however, new planting has been undertaken to preserve its character. The southern part of the park has delightful flower beds, while the northern part is a carefully preserved natural habitat. You can still enjoy the bridges and small areas with tables and benches on the shores of Lake Vättern.

### *The park villas*

The early 20<sup>th</sup> century villas in the Town Park, which were once used as medical clinics and

accommodation for the spa guests, are today used as hotel accommodation, kindergarten, a museum, exhibition rooms, artist studios as well as a youth hostel and a restaurant.

Once a bathing area and a lounge for the upper class, the “Society’s building” nowadays hosts the Butterfly Museum and the Vättern Aquarium.

The current site of Hotel Bellevue was previously a railway hotel. The large terrace between the hotel and the baths was used, then as now, for performances. On the terrace there is a statue of King Erik of Pomerania, the founder of “Grön-köping”. Grönköping is a fictitious town, which reflects the Swedish society in a satirical way. Articles are published in Grönköping’s Veckoblad (Greenboro Weekly). The statue was sculpted by the Swedish artist Calle Örnemark for the Grönköping Hjournalists’ association and for the local municipality.

### *Bathing huts*

Between the terrace and Lake Vättern is a swimming area called Guldkroksbadet. Here you can find bathing huts. They ones belonged to the spa resort where men and women, strictly segregated, went for swims in the cold waters of Lake Vättern due to its strengthening effect. Today’s swimmers can enjoy a heated pool just as strengthening.



## *Three wooden towns*

### *Three Wooden Towns*

Hjo, Eksjö and Nora have all three received the “Europe Nostra” award rewarding preservation of old cities. All three cities have formed a network to develop small towns as attractions for visitors interested in Swedish history and building heritage. For further information, please see the web page [www.tretrastader.se](http://www.tretrastader.se). Here you have the chance to participate in a virtual town walk.

### *Europe Nostra*

Hjo has been awarded the Europe Nostra Medal of Honour for the “noteworthy preservation of the wooden town which has conserved and maintained its distinctive character and charm”



# *Activities, sights & events*

## *Accommodation*

Hjo's only hotel, Hotel Bellevue, is located in the park, phone: +46-(0)503-120 00. In the same area you also find Hjo's Youth Hostel Villa Eira, +46-(0)503-100 85. Private accommodation such as cottages and rooms, in and around Hjo, are available via the Tourist Information Office.

## *Annual art exhibition*

During the Whitsun weekend, Hjo holds a yearly art exhibition called "Konstrundan". It has around fifty participants from in and around Hjo. All participants have marked their studio or gallery with a green flag with a blue K on it. Furthermore, each artist exhibit one piece of art at Villa Svea as a guide to the visitor. Further information about the artists and a map of locations can be obtained from the Tourist Information Office in Hjo.

## *Art galleries*

Two galleries can be found in the centre of the town: Huset på Gården and Galleri Grappa. There are also galleries available slightly outside Hjo such as Galleri Karlsten between Hjo and Tibro. Besides these galleries you can visit several artists in their homes where they hold their studios open to the public. To facilitate for tourists to do such there is a map available at the Tourist Information Office. Grönköpingssalen, Villa Svea and Hjo Art School are other places where exhibitions run regularly throughout the year.

## *Boules, minigolf & tennis*

Boules, mini golf and tennis are available in the park during the summer. The mini golf is open daily between 11 Am until 21 PM, with exception for heavily rainy days. Tennis tickets can be purchased at Hjo's Tourist Information Office, 75 SvKr for an hour.

## *Bicycle trails*

Why not get on the bike and take a shorter tour of about 10-20 km around the Hjo district. Longer tours are available around Lake Vättern or on the Västgöta and Sweden trail. Maps and cycling packages are obtainable at Hjo's Tourist Information Office.

## *Bicycle hire*

Bicycles are available for hire at Sunes Cykel and Sport, located to the industrial area in Hjo. It costs from 100 kr for one day to 70 kr per day for more than 7 days. Phone: +46-(0)503-139 36, address: Silogatan 5.

## *Christmas*

Our annual Christmas Market always takes place the first of Advent (normally first weekend in December). It gets under way at the square and continues indoors at Kihlbergsgården. All the Swedish Christmas characters are there. You can experience a typical Lucia procession and a glass or two of Swedish mulled wine ("glögg"). There are also quiz games, a ginger bread exhibition and distribution of gifts.

## *Chocolate*



In Hjo's own Chocolatier you can buy, try or eat as much chocolate as you like. It is situated in Hamnbacken, close to the square. It is open daily.

## Ceramics

Röda Boden is a ceramic factory outlet in central Hjo. They are open daily . There are also many ceramics who open their studios during the summer months. Gunilla Sander is one of them, situated in the park.

## Fishing



If you are interested in fishing on Lake Vättern you can rent rowing boats from Hjo Sik, situated in the harbour. Phone +46-(0)503-310 32. Alternatively you can participate in a trolling charter. For information and booking, please contact Richard Lindberg, phone: +46-(0)503-143 44 or Osprey Fishing, Fredrik Thorén phone: +46-(0)73-80 22 058. Please also see the information board at the harbour.

## Golf

You can play golf at Hökensås Golf Club, 7 km south of Hjo. The golf course has 27 holes plus practice facilities as well as a restaurant. The course is considered to be the best layout in the region. Golf packages including accommodation and greenfees can be purchased at Hotel Bellevue. Contact Hjo Tourist Information Office for further information.

## Handicraft

The second weekend in July Hjo holds the yearly Handicraft Trade Fair. Approximately 500 exhibitors sell everything from textile, ceramics to woodcarvings, jewellery and clothes. The trade fair attracts around 50 000 visitors every year.

## Hjo harbour

A harbour right in the town centre, a "Blue Flag" marina with excellent harbour services, awaits the visitor who arrives by boat. The harbour was built in 1855. Since the Middle Ages Hjo has provided the shortest boat journey across the lake. Monks from the monastery in Östergötland would make use of this on their pilgrimages to Varnhem, Skara, and Nidaros in Norway.



## the Hjo stream

The river has played an important role for the town of Hjo and its development. In fact, the river may have been the reason why the town is located where it is. Waterfalls and rapids in the river have been used to drive mills and other machinery ever since the Middle Ages. It was along the river that the area's first factories were established.

The riverside of the Hjo Stream is nowadays a nature reserve, which is the home of flora and fauna of national importance. The slopes and plateaus often consist of overgrown meadows. There are also some large oak trees, which are classed as "giants" (with a diameter of more than 1 metre). Many birds breed in the valley, including the listed lesser-spotted woodpecker and protected birds such as the tawny owl and the long-tailed tit. During the winter, dippers are found along the river. The river is a breeding ground for both trout and grayling.

## *Ice cream*

At the Österhagen Ice Cream store you can try ice cream made the old way, with real cream and real flavours. No artificial flavouring is used. During the summer they are open daily, at the small yellow pavilion in Hamnbacken.

## *the Loc-Hjo-Motive*

Take a guided tour through Hjo on our Loc-Hjo-Motive. Tours run from June through August, Tuesday to Sunday, starting at 11 AM from the harbour. For further information, please see timetable on the information board in the harbour.

## *Music*

Music is a major part of Hjo's cultural life. The Culture School of Hjo and Hjo Kyrkas Ungdomskör (Hjo Church Youth Choir) holds several music concerts during the year. The choir has won the Choir Olympics held in Linz, Austria and has a broad repertoire of musical concerts. This includes the Easter concert with known solos such as Requiem.

Hjo's Folkhögskola has both music and cantor summer courses with a broad range of music available.

## *Museums*

The Vättern Aquarium and the Butterfly Museum situated in the park are open daily during the summer months (May through August) from 10 Am to 6 PM. There is also a Town Museum situated in the park. It is open daily until the 7<sup>th</sup> of August. Please contact the Tourist Information Office for details on entrance fees.

## *Painting courses*

If you want to learn how to paint there are summer courses available held by artist Ingrid Melin-Bjureus or Hjo Art School. Hjo Art School provides 1-3 year courses held by professional artists. Contact Hjo Tourist Information Office for more information.

## *Restaurants*

There are several restaurants to choose from in Hjo. A few are situated close to the square, some next to the harbour and others in the park. There are also café's and a chocolatiers.

## *Smoked fish*

Freshly smoked whitefish is available at the fish shop "Hjo Sik". Several commercial fishermen deliver their catches daily all year



around for smoking or for immediate sale. Hjo Sik also sells lunch boxes of smoked fish and potato salad, which you can enjoy while savouring the fresh air of the lake.

## *Swimming*

You can swim in a heated pool at Guldskroksbadet in the centre of Hjo or take a dip in Lake Vättern. Why not start the day with our popular Morning Swim between 7 - 7.30 AM. The pool is open daily during the summer: 10 AM - 6 PM.

## *S/S Trafik*

The steam boat S/S Trafik, built in 1892, is now operated by a voluntary association and runs tours during the summer to Visingsö and other destinations around Lake Vättern.

Jazz cruises with the Hjo-Orleans musicians are a summer highlight in Hjo. Tickets can be booked at Hjo's Tourist Information Office.



## *Trout safari*

During October through November "trout safari" is organised along the river to see the fish spawning. These guided tours take place in the evening and you are advised to bring a pocket torch and to wear rubber boots and sturdy clothing. After the walk, participants are invited to coffee in Grebbans Mill. The trout safaris must be booked in advance at the Tourist Information Office.

## *Town walks*

If you want to know more about the area, Hjo Tourist Information Office have maps of suggestions for a town walk available. Price: 10 Sv Kr. The Tourist Information Office also supplies backpacks for children to be used as part of a game identifying various town landmarks. When completed, the child will receive a complementary gift.

## *The Västra Vätterleden trail*

These long-distance walking trails runs for about 150 km in eight stages and passes through the Hjo district. Maps are available at Hjo tourist information office.

## *Walking & running tracks*

Högaliden, 5 km south of Hjo, provides excellent walking , running and mountainbike tracks. This outdoor-activity-area also has winter tracks for skiing. A service building is available for visitors.

## **YEARLY EVENTS**

3<sup>rd</sup> weekend of June

Tour Vättern, Bicycle tour passes Hjo

1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of July

Harbour Day

Located to the harbour with steamboat jazz and much more.

2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of July

Handicraft Trade Fair

The largest Handicraft Trade Fair in Scandinavia with appr. 500 exhibitors.

1<sup>st</sup> weekend of August

Antique and Collectables Trade Fair

At Park

2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of August

Food and Wine Trade Fair

You can purchase locally and regionally produced food, wine, chocolate and cheese tasting, seminars and much more.

2<sup>nd</sup> weekend of August

Accordion Festival

One of Sweden's largest accordion festivals.

1<sup>st</sup> weekend of September

Autumn Market

