

PRESS INFORMATION Gotland Tourist Association

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PRESS INFORMATION FROM GOTLAND 2007

For more information, visit the Tourist information centre on the Internet: www.gotland.info

Welcome to Gotland!

Content:

- Everybody wants to fly to Gotland
- Historical activities on Gotland
- New meetings arena in the world heritage town
- Spring is in the air – visit the islands surrounding Gotland
- Party summer on Gotland
- Summer theatre on Gotland
- Tasteful Gotland
- Linneaus year on Gotland
- MTB-adventure

Gotland
GOTLANDS TURISTFÖRENING

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Everybody wants to fly to Gotland

Gotland has a host of summer flights. Wherever you are in the Nordic area in the summer, a flight to Gotland is close at hand. Three of the Nordic capitals, Oslo, Helsinki and Copenhagen, and even Hamburg, have summer flights to Visby.

There are also quite a few domestic flights. As well as all-year-round from Stockholm and Linköping, there are direct summer flights to Visby from Gothenburg, Sundsvall, Ronneby, Ängelholm and Norrköping.

“This is a very positive development. It means that we can make Gotland more accessible for a lot more visitors and attract new visitors to the island,” says Anders Murat, MD of the Gotland Tourist Association.

The following airlines with operate flights to Visby Airport throughout 2007:

Widerö:

Oslo – Visby June 16 – August 18.

Cimber Air:

Copenhagen – Norrköping – Visby June 25 – August 18.

City Airline:

Helsinki – Visby June 30 – August 18.

Gothenburg – Visby June 2 – August 18.

Gotlandsflyg subsidiaries:

Hamburg – Visby

Sundsvall – Visby June 30 – August 11.

Ronneby – Visby June 29 – August 13.

Ängelholm – Visby June 26 – August 12.

Direct flights:

Linköping – Visby. All-year-round, with the exception of a short summer break.

Skyways and Gotlandsflyg: Stockholm – Visby. All-year-round.

Would you rather not fly? No problem, the journey only takes three hours on **Destination Gotland's ferries**.

For further details please contact:

Gunilla Dufour, Airport Manager, LFV Visby Airport, +46 498 26 31 11

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Historical activities on Gotland

The world's largest silver treasure

Spillingskatten, the world's largest Viking silver treasure, is one treasure that has not disappeared. When the Historical Museum opens its doors again after extensive renovation, the majestic Spillingskatten will have a treasure chamber all of its own. It could need it too because when it was discovered in 1999 it weighed in at 67 kilos! When the rebuilding work is completed, the County Museum will have a new shop, a café and an entrance suitable for disabled people. The new museum opens in mid June.

The return of the medieval period

Week 32 is Medieval Week. World Heritage town Visby and other parts of the island will be swarming with people dressed in medieval attire: knights, jesters, burghers and peasants.

Medieval Week on Gotland is an absolute must for those with an interest in history.

Get a taste of what is to come when the knights clash several times in July at tournaments with the following scenario:

The year is 1288 and civil war has just ended. King Magnus has imposed a penalty on Visby's burghers for building a ring wall without his permission. King Magnus holds a jousting tournament to unite the two sides of the conflict, the townsfolk and the country folk.

Jousting tournaments include riding man against man in full armour and battle lance, archery competitions and battles to the death between heavily armoured knights on foot. The Royal jesters provide the entertainment, the market the fare and beverage.

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New meetings arena in the World Heritage town

One of Europe's most modern congress halls is opening in April – Wisby Strand Congress & Event. The demand for meetings in Visby has been enormous and, even before the meetings arena has opened, planning stretches to 2011. The first guests include Carola, who will be performing at the opening ceremony, and the Swedish astronaut Christer Fuglesang, who will be lecturing at the European Space Agency's international symposium in June.

With the sea on the doorstep to the west and medieval Visby to the east, this is probably Sweden's most beautiful meetings venue. There are 600 hotels rooms within walking distance, and more are planned for the next few years. Close proximity is a crucial aspect for most guests; on Gotland everything is close.

Wisby Strand Congress & Event will have the capacity for 1,000 people and provide a variety of solutions to meet specific customer requirements. The top floor restaurant boasts magnificent sea views and is open to the public.

The meetings arena will put new demands on Gotland as an all-year-round destination and will also provide new opportunities. A large section of the industry, from shopping and restaurants to large transport companies, see the business opportunities in a growing meetings industry. Hotel rooms are being built, simpler luggage handling routines are being developed and skills enhancement is underway to meet the new demands.

Opening day is scheduled for mid April when Carola and Idol 2006 colleagues Markus and Erik take the stage at Wisby Strand Congress & Event. The new meetings arena will claim a natural place in Gotland's near thousand-year tradition of large meetings in the middle of the sea. It is not by chance that so many still look to Gotland for successful meetings.

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About Gotland Convention Bureau:

Gotland Convention Bureau pursues the positive development of Gotland as a meetings venue. The Bureau comes under the wing of the Gotland Tourist Association and is financed by Gotland municipality and local companies and organisations. For further details please visit www.gotlandconvention.se

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Spring is in the air; time to visit the islands surrounding Gotland

See the peregrine falcon flying free. Creep right up to a rare orchid. Listen to the sound of silence and meet the arrival of spring on the islands surrounding Gotland.

Thoughts wander to Scotland's greyish green moors and precipitous cliffs. There are flowers here that do not grow anywhere else. The bird sanctuaries on the two islands of Stora Karlsö and Lilla Karlsö on Gotland's west side are a popular destination for nature lovers.

The islands are home to thousands of guillemots and razorbills. Other birds include eiders, scoters, herring gulls, lesser black-backed gulls and, since a few years back, even cormorants. The wheatear and rock pipit like it here. The peregrine falcon nests on Lilla Karlsö and rarities such as the red-backed shrike and gannet have been observed on Stora Karlsö in recent years.

Stora Karlsö was inhabited as far back as 9,000 years ago. Many remains have been discovered in the Stora Förvar cave, which is believed to have been inhabited for a total of 10,000 years.

Gotska Sandön National Park, 38 kilometres north of Fårö, is sometimes called the most solitary place in the Baltic Sea. Peace and tranquillity rules here along with total respect for the natural environment. There are plenty of traces from the intensive human activities throughout the ages.

On the islands surrounding Gotland you are as far from stress, cars and everyday life as you can possibly get. Traffic to Gotska Sandön begins on May 17. To Stora Karlsö: May 1. To Lilla Karlsö: May 10.

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Party summer on Gotland

Free in the summer? Visit Gotland!

The holiday season is getting closer and it is high time to being planning. Those looking for midsummer love should plan in this year's singles festival. Stay a few more days to the tones of one of the summer's singer-songwriter festivals on stage, street and square. A few new restaurants have seen the light of day, others have reappeared in new guises but many old favourites still lead the line.

Imagine, three whole days of midsummer celebrations full of singles! Gutnic games in the open have been planned, the picnic baskets are brimming with fare and the dance pavilions are decorated in birch leaves. Love you will have to arrange yourself.

The singles festival takes place between June 21 and 24. The package includes trip, food and accommodation.

The last weekend in June sees music lovers from everywhere at the Sweden Singer Songwriter Festival in Visby. The festival is open to all music lovers who like to meet others through music. Musicians also meet on Gotland on May 13-20 at the Listening Room International Songwriters Retreat in Holmhällar, southern Gotland.

Many are artists who normally set their course for Gotland, and not only in the summer. On April 14, Carola is performing at the opening ceremony of the new meetings arena Wisby Strand Congress & Event. The day after, Idol 2006 colleagues Markus and Erik take over.

One artist who is definitely raring to go is Per Gessle, who is back on tour again after two free summers. On July 24, Per Gessle is performing at Östergravar in Visby, near the ring wall.

Restaurant life bubbles in Visby during the summer. Shower the Baltic water out of your hair, pull on your sandals again and stroll out into the Visby summer night where the happy go lucky. Stress and angry queues are far away.

Among the extensive offering is Wallers Restaurant, now under new management. The new owners promise two cocktail bars and serving in the dining room, garden and at events. Gutekällaren is entering its tenth summer under current management and will be celebrating in time-honoured tradition. The programme is not ready yet but when Gutekällaren promises "The best of Swedish artists and events" so be it!

Hamnplan 5 now has an even larger discotheque, glazed-in with state-of-the-art sound and lighting.

The old open-air swimming bath "Kallis" has been demolished but the good news is that a new will be ready for midsummer, neighbours with the new Wisby Strand Congress & Event. Reckon with Sweden's most vibrant beach club!

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Summer theatre on Gotland

The 2007 Gotland summer theatre season promises to be something extra special. Lars Norén makes his debut as a Shakespearean director with Hamlet at the Roma Theatre; Linnaeus is lovingly portrayed at the stunning open-air theatre in Närsakar; a new exciting Bergman week awaits in the last week of June and, as always, beautiful music is on the menu at the Gotland Chamber Music Festival.

Every summer thousands of visitors enjoy the Roma Theatre's dramas in the 12th century abbey ruins. This year Lars Norén is directing Shakespeare's Hamlet: "An incredible play that will be read anew. I want to scrape out the skeleton," says Norén.

The outcome is on show at the Roma Theatre in Roma Kungsgård, June 27 to August 18.

Linnaeus my Love is a freshly penned performance at Närsakar open-air theatre in Närsån with its beautiful sea views. Who was the man behind all the flowers? Charismatic, spiritual, easy to fall in love with...

Bergman Week is a six-day celebration of Ingmar Bergman's artistry and includes films, guests, seminars and tours to film locations on Fårö. Last year's guests included Academy Award-winning director Ang Lee. The Bergman Week and Bergman himself played a lively part in last year's debates. This year's programme will be published in May and the Bergman Week takes place on Fårö on June 26 to July 1.

The participant list to this year's *Gotland Chamber Music Festival* is not quite complete. Staffan Scheja is there of course, along with Roland Pöntinen and Real Group. Many more will be added to the festival, which is taking place in the 800-year-old St Nicolai Ruins on July 29 to August 3.

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Tasteful Gotland

Asparagus festival on Ascension Day

Gotland celebrates the primeur of all primeurs with an asparagus festival. Several of the island's restaurants serve asparagus menus during the spring season. On Saturday May 19, the three largest asparagus farms will be holding open house.

The day will offer the chance to taste Gotlandic asparagus specialities and other delicacies like Gute sheep cheese and truffle. Three farms: Smedberg's farm in Ekeby, Sundgren's in Hellvi and Stenhuse farm in Sanda are open to visitors on May 19.

Gotland is the largest asparagus region in the country, more than half of the Swedish crop comes from the island. The growers aim to harvest the year's first crop as early as April.

The year's largest art tour

Begin the summer with an art tour of Gotland. During Whitsun, May 25-27, Gotland's craftspeople, artists and designers are opening their studios to visitors. This year's 98 participants include both nationally and internationally renowned names, but also some surprises. Open Studios has become a very popular event among Gotlanders and visitors alike.

Those without the opportunity to visit artists in their studios will be able to see all 98 participants at the Gotland Museum of Art exhibition between May 16 and June 6.

www.formguide.net has an excellent guide to the broad Gotlandic offering of art, crafts and design.

The autumn's black gold

When the bathing season is over and the autumn dusk descends it is time to harvest the much coveted and rare delicacy truffle, which is now being grown on Gotland. A truffle safari takes participants on a truffle dog hunt. See the expensive mushroom being harvested at close quarters and then enjoy a six or seven-course meal with truffle in all the dishes.

The truffle safari is partly arranged by Smakrike Restaurant in Ljugarn. www.smakrike.se

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