



## Hiking in the Footsteps of Medieval Pilgrims

Through rolling landscapes steeped in natural and cultural history, we set out on a 13 kilometre guided hike along parts of the Pilgrimsleden trail, between Varnhem and Falköping, approx 1,5 hours northeast of Gothenburg. Here, in the historical heartland of modern Sweden, we will pass by the ruins of one of Sweden's oldest churches as well as one of Europe's most important lakes for breeding and migratory birds.

We will begin our hike in historic Varnhem, where the Catholic Order of Cistercians arrived as early as 1150 and established a monastery. On the hill behind the ruins of the monastery and the monastery church we will also find the ruins of one of Sweden's oldest churches; a private church built on a Viking era farmed estate during the 10th century. This site is known as Kata Gård and is named after the woman who managed the large estate towards the end of the Viking Age. The excavation of Kata Gård has led to a revised understanding of Sweden's history, since it shows that Varnhem and Västergötland Province converted to Christianity a century earlier than the rest of Sweden.

By lunchtime we will have reached the Billingen plateau, where the bedrock is more than 1.7 billion years old. Here we'll be able to enjoy the fantastic views and the lunch we have brought with us made from locally sourced ingredients.

After lunch, the tour will transition to a stretch of less demanding hiking up on the plateau, after which we will follow trails that lead down the mountain and onwards along the main road. Once here, we will be able to enjoy a wonderful view of Lake Hornborga, located approximately 15 kilometres southeast of Skara. The lake is considered to have one of the richest bird populations of any Swedish lake and is especially well known for its "dancing" cranes in the spring and autumn. We will finish our day with a guided tour of the Naturum Hornborgasjön visitors' centre and refreshments at Café Doppingen.

Approx. 13 km hiking

### Highlights of the day:

- Learn the history of the Viking age farmed estate, Kata Gård
- Breathtaking views from the Billingen plateau
- Experience Lake Hornborga – one of Europe's most important lakes for migratory and breeding birds

**Level of difficulty:** 3

**Special clothing/equipment requirements:** Guests joining the hike will need to bring good walking boots, a backpack, your own water bottle and clothing appropriate for the weather.

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**Departure time from Hotel Post:** approx. time 7.00 am.

**Arrival time at Hotel Post:** approx. time 5.30 pm.

**Sustainable action:**

Local produce and organic food. Nicklas Fällström, Falbygdsresor, will bring some extra samples in addition to the packed lunch. It will include both cheese and charcuterie from Falbygden and Nicklas will talk about local ingredients and the importance of cheese for the area. He will also talk about “allemansrätten” (freedom to roam).

**Min/Max group size:** 10/25

**Tour provider:** [Falbygdsresor](#)

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