

To a Swedish Forest Cabin from a River Cottage: Culinary Tours with Chef Jacob Whitson in Värmland

Sweden's rich culinary heritage is deeply connected to its landscapes, from its vast forests to its pristine waters. Now, British-born chef Jacob Whitson, formerly of renowned River Cottage, is inviting travellers to experience this firsthand with a series of exclusive culinary tours in Värmland. Inviting travellers to experience the Original Sweden and its luxurious roots, these tours offer an authentic taste of Sweden's natural abundance—where foraging, fishing, and time-honoured traditions shape an unforgettable gastronomic journey.

How to Know You Are in the Original Sweden

Sweden is unlike anywhere else. It is a country of unique natural abundance, where the land itself provides a wealth of luxurious ingredients for those who know where to look. The Original Sweden initiative invites travellers to explore the country's authentic culinary heritage, and one of its most exciting new experiences comes from British-born chef Jacob Whitson, who is launching exclusive culinary tours in Värmland.

Our Luxurious Roots

When we talk about Sweden's luxurious roots, we don't mean royalty—we mean the deep-rooted food culture that thrives in its forests, fields, and waters. Wild mushrooms, berries, fruits, and vegetables grow in abundance, shaping a cuisine that is both seasonal and deeply connected to the land. From fine dining to foraging, Sweden offers visitors the chance to indulge in some of the world's finest ingredients, often found just a short walk from the doorstep.

A Taste of History with Jacob Whitson

Jacob Whitson, a chef from Somerset with experience at River Cottage HQ, has spent the last decade in Sweden immersing himself in the country's food culture. Now, he is introducing a series of intimate culinary tours in Värmland, giving visitors the chance to experience the true bounty of Sweden. Working with a network of hunters, fishermen, and growers—some with experience at the renowned Fäviken restaurant—Whitson's tours will run between July and October when the landscape is at its most generous.

Whitson is passionate about food history and the ways in which Swedish and British culinary traditions intertwine. He points to dishes like "kalvdans" (calf-dance), made from a cow's first rich milk, as an example of how culinary heritage connects different cultures—mirroring the now-forgotten English dish "bee-stings." Similarly, the small, fragrant fish called smelts, once a staple in the UK but now rare, continue to be enjoyed in Sweden.

The Ultimate Luxury: Abundance and Access

For Whitson, Sweden's greatest luxury lies in the free and equal access to nature's resources. [Allemansrätten](#), the country's right to public access means that foraging for berries and mushrooms is not just allowed but encouraged, while local fishing permits open up pristine lakes and rivers teeming with trout, salmon, and whitefish. The experience of collecting ingredients directly from the landscape and preparing them in traditional ways creates a deep, personal connection to the land—one that Whitson is passionate about and eager to share.

Värmland – A Lake-Rich Haven of Natural Beauty

[Värmland](#) is a natural wonderland stretching across central-west Sweden, spanning rolling hills and deep forests, and boasting some 10,000 lakes. You'll also find Sweden's longest river, the [Klarälven](#), snaking through this idyllic province before it flows into one of Europe's biggest lakes, [Vänern](#). The varied landscape and abundance of water make it ideal for outdoor activities, including kayaking, swimming, fishing, cycling, hiking, and skiing. It's easy to see why Värmland is nicknamed "the lake district" – the region is studded with no fewer than 10,000 lakes.

World-famous author and Värmland resident Selma Lagerlöf was the first woman to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1909. The Swedish part of the Klarälven, which also flows through Norway, is one of Sweden's longest rivers, measuring a total of approximately 460 kilometers.

Jacob Whitson on Sweden's Culinary Riches:

"I first came to Sweden in 2009 and was immediately captivated by its forests, lakes, wildlife, and incredible produce. Since moving here in 2015, I've spent years exploring its food traditions and meeting the hunters, fishermen, and farmers who keep these traditions alive. Many of the ingredients we cook with daily in Sweden would be considered rare delicacies in the UK or

simply unavailable. Sweden has so much to offer, but its best-kept secrets lie just beneath the surface. My greatest joy is revealing this 'Secret Sweden' to others."

Top Things to Do While Visiting Värmland

- If you choose just one activity, make it [timber rafting](#) along the Klarälven River. Follow in the wake of Värmland's historic log drivers by building your own raft with eco-tourism company [Vildmark i Värmland](#) before setting off down the river.
- [Naturbyn](#) is a unique place to stay hidden treasure among the spruce and pine alongside a quiet bay in Lake Eldan in the forest of Värmland. Stay in hand-built log cabins and cottages, treehouses or a floating wooden houseboat. With no electricity, relax and enjoy the beauty that nature has to offer. From cooking on an open fire and enjoying the silence of nature to jumping into the lake after your sauna.
- [Mårbacka](#), the former home of author Selma Lagerlöf, is one of Värmland's top cultural attractions. Nestled in idyllic Sunne, the house and its garden remain largely as the writer left them, offering a glimpse into her life and work. Another notable heritage estate is [Alsters Herrgård](#), just outside Karlstad, the birthplace of much-loved Swedish poet Gustaf Fröding. His 18th-century manor house, perched idyllically by Lake Vänern, is also open to the public.

For more information on Jacob Whitson's upcoming culinary tours and the Original Swedish region of Värmland, please visit:

<https://www.secret-sweden.com/>

<https://visitvarmland.com/en/>

<https://visitsweden.com/visit-the-original-sweden/>

Press images from Jacob are available on request. Inspirational press images from Värmland: <https://imagebank.sweden.se/index.php/my-selections/9d598y6el>

About Jacob Whitson

Jacob Whitson is a chef from Somerset, England, with a background in some of the UK's most respected restaurants and cookery schools, including River Cottage HQ and Babington House. Since moving to Sweden in 2015, he has developed expertise in foraging, traditional cooking methods, and Swedish food history. His passion lies in connecting people with the land through immersive culinary experiences.

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Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(1\)](#)

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