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Viking wellbeing: The new wave of ancient wisdom

Sweden is leading a major travel trend for 2026: Viking Wellbeing. Reimagining ancestral traditions such as wood-fired baths and forest immersions, these contemporary experiences focus on the essentials of nature and the luxury of time.



Photo: Emma Ivarsson (Download)

While history often paints a different picture, the Vikings actually prioritised hygiene and physical care. Regular bathing, grooming rituals, and the practice of alternating between heat and cold were social and functional habits that formed the basis of their daily lives.

This ancestral wisdom resonates deeply with today's travellers, who are increasingly looking to slow down and swap digital noise for simple, sensory experiences. Across Sweden's forests and lakes—the very landscapes the Vikings once called home—these ancient traditions have been reimagined for the modern age, offering a direct link to a lifestyle that is both regenerative and timeless.

Mastering the heat and cold

- **Silva Spa at Trakt Forest Hotel (Småland):** Tucked away in the forest, this intimate spa offers wood-fired baths and lakeside saunas for a sensory experience between warmth and fresh water.
- **Uppvallens Fäbod (Härjedalen):** Set at a glamping site deep in the woods, this stream-side sauna provides a striking setting for the heat-and-cold ritual in both summer and winter.
- **The Creek Cabin at Hyssna Forest Resort (West Sweden):** Located in a moss-covered valley, this cabin encourages guests to alternate between hot baths and the cold, living water of a nearby stream.

The rhythm of the fire

- **Åre Nature Studio (Jämtland):** Every meal begins around an outdoor fire. Chef Fredrik Karlsson builds menus on foraged, hunted, and fished ingredients, creating a direct connection to the seasons.
- **Asa Herrgård (Småland):** As part of the 'Edible Country' initiative, guests forage for seasonal ingredients and share a meal at a long wooden table in the heart of the forest.
- **Knystaforsen (Halland):** This Michelin-starred restaurant, located in a former sawmill, places the campfire at the very heart of its intimate dining experience.

Total Viking immersions

- **Forest Camp by Elles Utemat (Dalarna):** A gentle, year-round retreat offering wood-fired cooking and forest spas to help guests disconnect in harmony with nature.
- **Wild Sweden Forest Retreat (Västmanland):** A raw six-day adventure for those seeking nature at its most rugged, including bushcraft, forest yoga, and camping by a lake in wolf territory.
- **Sibbjäns Farm Retreat (Gotland):** A refined take on Viking wellbeing on the island of Gotland, featuring natural pools and a regenerative 'farm-to-plate' philosophy.

Viking Wellbeing in the capital

Stockholm, built across 14 islands, provides immediate access to this lifestyle through several new openings:

- **Acqua di Foresta, Villa Foresta (Lidingö):** A 900-square-metre sea-view oasis with indoor and outdoor pools and multiple saunas. Opening Spring 2026.
- **Hagastrand Hotel & Spa:** Located in Haga Park, this Wingårdhs-designed hotel features a snow room and an 18-metre pool with underwater music. Opened October 2025.
- **Emberlin by Frantzén:** A contemporary wood-fired dining concept from three-Michelin-starred chef Björn Frantzén. Opening Summer 2026.

Find out more:

- Viking Wellbeing in Sweden
- Viking Wellbeing press imagery

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