

18th-Century Sweden: The Golden Age of Gustavian Style May 1-10, 2025

Arranged by Classical Excursions



Gunnebo Manor House

In 1771, the future Gustav III returned to his native Sweden from the French court at Versailles to ascend the throne as king after his father's sudden death. The young monarch had been profoundly inspired by French Neoclassical architecture and decorative arts. Later trips to France and Italy gave further impetus to Gustav's passion for the classical. During his reign (1772-1792), Sweden rose to a level of architectural and cultural sophistication never known before. The king transformed this once removed European country into the "Paris of the North," setting a standard of style for most levels of Swedish society that continued well into the 19th century.

Join us on this excursion as you discover the truly beautiful and singularly charming Gustavian style of architecture and decoration, which has attained great popularity in America. The tour is led by Lani Summerville of Classical Excursions and Dr. Johan Cederlund, who collaborated on the book entitled *Classical Swedish Architecture & Interiors: 1650-1840*.

Swedish curators and historians will give us exclusive tours and will introduce us to the classical works of such important Swedish architects and designers of the period as Hårleman, Rehn, Adelcrantz, the Masreliez brothers, Sergel and many others. Many of the manor houses and palaces on the tour are featured in the book, *Neoclassicism in the North: Swedish Furniture and Interiors, 1770-1850* by Håkan Groth, as well as *Classical Swedish Architecture & Interiors: 1650-1840*, and many are open exclusively for our group.

SLOTT in Swedish means castle, small palace, or very large manor house.

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DETAILED ITINERARY



May 1 to May 10, 2025

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Breakfast, lunch and dinner included each day, unless otherwise noted.

May 1 - Stockholm

Independent arrivals today. Check in at five-star **Grand Hotel, Stockholm**

Depart hotel lobby at 5pm a walking tour of Old Town led by tour director Lani Summerville followed by a welcome dinner at a restaurant in Old Town. Lecture at the hotel by Dr. Johan Cederlund.

May 2 - Stockholm

Breakfast at the hotel. Depart the hotel lobby on foot.

We begin with a private before hours tour of the **Royal Palace** designed in 1690 by Nicodemus Tessin the Younger and carried out by Carl Hårleman well into the mid-18th century. This palace is the largest royal residence in Europe with 618 rooms decorated in Baroque, Rococo and Gustavian styles.

Our next stop is a tour of **Gustav III's Museum of Antiquities**. Gustav III was a great collector of antiquities. The museum houses his personal collection of Italian sculpture that he brought back from his *Grand Tour* in 1783-84. Gustav was inspired by pope's museum at the Vatican after having a guided tour by the pope himself. He thereafter enlisted the help of Francesco Piranesi (son of Giovanni Batista Piranesi) along with Giovanni Volpato to expand upon his collection of sculpture, vases, prints and engravings.



Following lunch, we proceed to **Drottningholm Palace**, designed in the 17th century by Nicodemus Tessin the Elder and completed by his son Nicodemus Tessin the Younger. Carl Hårleman and Jean Eric Rehn added Rococo and Gustavian touches to the interiors in the 18th century. We next visit the exquisite **Court Theatre**, c.1766 by architect Carl Fredrik Adelcrantz, who had only modest financial resources for this structure. The classical pilasters, for instance are composed of gypsum and the supports of papier-mâché. Still operating today is the wooden hand-driven stage machinery. The simple wooden building has a plaster façade designed in classical symmetry. We also tour the palace's 17th century **Baroque embroidery garden**, the **Rococo garden** and the **water parterre**. We end our day with a visit to the **Chinese Pavilion** built in 1263 with an exterior of polished tiles. We'll also pass by the **Guards Pavilion**, designed to look like a campaign tent.

Evening at leisure, dinner on your own tonight. Overnight at the Grand Hotel, Stockholm.

May 3 - Stockholm

Breakfast at the hotel. Followed by a departure from the hotel by foot. Our first stop is an exclusive visit to the **Tessin Palace** (image right), which is the official residence of the City Governor of Stockholm and not open to the public (image below). It was designed in 1692-97 by and for Nicodemus Tessin the Younger as his private residence. One will see the best-preserved French Baroque interiors in the world today. The rear courtyard is a very elaborate façade featuring the three Greek orders and culminating with a Corinthian gallery creating an illusionary false perspective and framing the French broderie parterre garden. **This is subject to last minute approval from the Governor.*



We then visit **Svindersvik** (image left). The manor house was prominently placed overlooking the Saltsjön Sea east of Stockholm. The manor house was planned by court architect Carl Hårleman and built in the 1740s for the owner of the East India Company Carl Grill. Forty years later Svindersvik was redecorated, and an entertainment pavilion was added in the Neo-classical style. At a distance the house looks impressive with a two-story pedimented center entrance. However, the remaining structure is a modest single story. The decorated interiors are considered some of the best-preserved examples of the Gustavian style.

We will have lunch in **Sturehof** manor house, followed by a tour of this home of Baron Johan Liljencrantz, Minister of Finance under Gustav III. The Baron, a man of humble background, was one of the largest landowners in the area and was part-owner of the famous Marieberg porcelain tiled- stove factory. The factory was the largest and most prominent producer of decorative tiled stoves in all of Sweden. Of the 30 surviving Marieberg tiled stoves, 17 are at Sturehof. The yellow anteroom, originally the baron's bedroom, has the finest stove at Sturehof, as well as Sweden. The walls of painted panels by Lars Bolander echo the design of the stove. This elegant house was designed by Carl Fredrik Adelcrantz, was completed in 1781. The rooms are still well preserved with superb carvings by Jean-Baptiste Masreliez.



We continue to **Haga Park** for a tour of **Gustav III's Royal Pavilion**. The pavilion was designed by architect Olof Templeton and was completed in 1790. Gustav's inspiration for the pavilion was Le Petit Trianon at Versailles. Haga was a nearby country retreat used by the king to escape the ceremonial life in Stockholm. Not even Gustav's family was allowed to visit Haga without a personal invitation. Haga boasts true Neoclassical interiors including a mirrored gallery reminiscent of Versailles, as well as one of the finest Pompeian rooms in Europe. The

picturesque park also contains such follies as the Chinese Pavilion, built when chinoiserie decoration was all the rage; the Turkish Kiosk, and three corps-de-garde buildings, wooden structures covered in painted copper

sheeting and shaped like the tents of a military encampment. At Haga you will experience Gustav's most private world.

Group dinner this evening. Overnight at the Grand Hotel, Stockholm



May 4 - Stockholm

Breakfast at the hotel.

We start the day at **Rosersberg Palace** (image above), which is considered to be one of Sweden's best-preserved examples of Neo-classical design. Remodeled by Nicodemus Tessin the younger in the 1680s in the latest French style, the palace became the Crown Prince's property in 1757 and was later redecorated with new interiors by Jean Eric Rehn in the 1770s. Almost no alterations have been made to these late 18th century interiors.

Brunch at Hammarby, followed by a tour of botanist Carl Linne's summer house **Hammarby** (image right).

We end the day with a private tour of **Rosendal** (below), which was purchased by Prince Karl Johan a year prior to ascending the throne. The main building was destroyed by fire allowing the king an opportunity to create something after his own tastes. In 1823 work



began on the new building. Rosendal became for Karl Johan what Malmaison was for Napoleon. The architect, Fredrick Blom was responsible for a new invention, a type of "prefabricated" wooden structure, which was implemented in its largest scale in Rosendal. It is said that Blom was greatly inspired by the large villas built on the outside of Paris during the 1800s and were illustrated by J.C Krafft

and N. Rasonette. Rosendal is one of the finest examples of Swedish Empire style and is the best-preserved house from the period.

Evening at leisure, dinner on your own tonight. Overnight at the Grand Hotel, Stockholm.

May 5 - Stockholm

Breakfast at the hotel. Depart hotel by bus for a day long excursion.

We depart today on a day-long excursion to **Leufsta bruk** (image below), an ironworks village to the north with renowned preservationist Lars Sjöberg as our guide. Mr. Sjöberg will give us a tour the interiors of the main mansion designed by Jean Eric Rehn during the height of the Gustavian era, followed by a visit to his own restoration project “**Brukskontoret**”, which is filled with a fine collection of Gustavian antiques.

Lunch is at **Leufsta Vardshus**.



The final visit of the day is to the privately owned manor house **Stora Wasby** (image right), attributed to court architect Jean Eric-Rehn or Carl Harleman, ca.1750. Known for its fine Rococo design and classical elements, it features a low saddle back roof and richly articulated façade. The interiors are definitely Rehn's work and the wife's antechamber is considered to be Sweden's finest Rococo interior. The owner, Carl De Geer will host our visit to his family home, which is not open to the public.

Evening at leisure, dinner on your own tonight. Overnight at the Grand Hotel.



May 6 -
Stockholm to Mariefred

Breakfast at the hotel. Check out and depart hotel.

We drive to the west for a morning tour of **Gripsholm Castle** (image left), Gustav III's residence during the fall and winter months. Here the royal court gathered in a fashion similar to his French counterparts at the royal chateau at Fontainebleau. Gripsholm is a fortress-like structure, which the king transformed into a Gustavian showplace. The charm and grace of the rooms are distinctly

Swedish. The walls and furniture of a princess's bedroom are upholstered in exquisite Chinese floral silk, while the floors are scrubbed pine. Queen Sophia Magdalena's bedroom is painted, gilded and paneled in crimson damask, while the windows are dressed in red and white checked silk.

Two unique aspects of Gripsholm we discover are 28 sets of rooms for the courtiers decorated in simple Swedish style and the **Court Theatre**, built within one of the castle's massive round towers. Due to limited space, the architect Eric Palmstedt, ingeniously attached half columns to the curved back wall of the auditorium and inserted mirrors between them, which aided in creating the illusion of fully rounded columns and a larger space. The theatre is considered one of the finest Neo-classical interiors in Sweden that has survived intact.

Lunch at **Sodertuna Slott**

Our next stop will be **Thureholm Castle** (image right), privately owned by Eva and Christer Bonde. Joining us for this exclusive tour is Dr. Johan Cederlund, who has written several publications on Thureholm. Dr. Cederlund will guide us through this magnificent building designed by renowned architect Carl Hårleman in 1730. Thureholm was Hårleman's first commission upon returning from his studies in France. The exterior is typical of the Swedish Baroque style, however, the interior floor plan models the French interior floor plans of the period. This is thought to be the first "modern French" floor plan to be introduced in Sweden. It eventually became the standard in later Swedish architecture. At Thureholm we witness the typical Hårleman variation of the French mansard roof, beautifully painted wall coverings and the original 18th century "porcelain kitchen," which is the only existing one in Sweden.



Check in to our hotel **GripsholmsVardshus** (Inn), a member of Historic Hotels of Sweden. Group dinner.

May 7 - Mariefred

Breakfast at the hotel.

Our first stop is **Tullgarn Palace**, which was purchased in 1772 by Gustav III's younger brother Prince Fredrick Adolf. The prince was a talented artist and honorary member of the Swedish Academy of Arts. His travels in Rome, Herculaneum and Pompeii can be seen as a great inspiration in the interiors at Tullgarn, which we will visit. Here you will witness some of Jean-Baptist and Louis Masreliez's finest interior work.





Lunch and a private tour of **Elghammar**, designed by Giacomo Quarenghi in St. Petersburg for Curt Von Stedingk, Sweden's ambassador to Catherine the Great's court. It is considered to be one of Sweden's finest Palladian houses. The house is still occupied by descendants of the original builders and contains all of the original Russian and Swedish 18th century furnishings and interiors. The owner Duke Charles-Louis d' Otrante will host our exclusive visit to this privately owned home which is not open to the public.

Return to the hotel for free time and a group dinner. Overnight at the Gripsholms Vardshus.

May 8 – Mariefred to Gothenburg

Breakfast at the hotel. Check out and depart hotel.

We travel across the country with a stop at **Olivehult** for a visit and brunch with the owner. It originally consisted of a 17th century one story Baroque house. In the Gustavian era a second story was added. This amazing property, which is still in private hands and not open to the public, boasts original 17th century wall coverings and textiles along with a fine collection of Baroque and Gustavian period furniture.



Late afternoon arrival in **Gothenburg** and check in to the **Elite Plaza Hotel**. Group dinner.

May 9 - Gothenburg to Lund

Check out and depart the hotel at 9:00 am. We visit to **Gunnebo Manor House**. This modest-sized wooden framed building was designed by Carl Wilhelm Carlsberg in 1784-86 for a wealthy merchant by the name of John Hall. Gunnebo is one of the finest examples of a Neo-Classical country residence and the exquisite style available to an 18th century landowner. The house is perfectly positioned on the property and takes on the look of a Palladian villa in the Italian countryside. From the front the house resembles a Greek temple with the portico with coupled ionic columns and on the garden façade it has a central bay under a pediment featuring a frieze inspired by antiquity along with a monumental double staircase leading into the gardens. Gunnebo retains many of the he exquisite original furnishings that reflect the cool and harmonious austerity of the late Gustavian period.



Late afternoon arrival and check in **Grand Hotel Lund**.



Tonight we have a private tour, followed by our **Farewell Dinner at Ovedskloster**. This is one of the greatest privately owned manor houses from the Gustavian era. It was designed by the royal court architect Carl Harleman and built in 1769. When the original owner Hans Ramel died in 1799, he stipulated in his will that the house and specifically the piano nobile should remain intact and untouched. Still owned and occupied by the Ramel family the house retains all the original furnishings and interiors designed by Jean Eric Rehn, one of the finest interior designers of the period. The interiors and the furniture are of the same if not better quality than that found in the Royal Palace itself. It is said

that Gustav III himself expressed contempt over the interiors rivaling his own in Stockholm.

Overnight at the Grand Hotel Lund.

May 10 – Day for departures

Independent departures from Copenhagen International Airport, Denmark. There is a direct train nearby the hotel going to the departures terminal at Copenhagen International Airport – it takes just 35 minutes (airport code: CPH), or a train back to Stockholm.

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Updated as of July 15, 2024 | Itinerary subject to change without notice.