

Hike in Kolmården

Day 2, Around Stavsjö

Make your sandwiches at breakfast at Herrgårdsflygeln, pack your rucksack and put on your hiking boots, because today we're off into the real Kolmården forest. We'll hike just under 15 km and be out for about 3 hours.



Today you'll understand why the area of Kolmården is known as the black forest. 'Kol' means coal, which is black. The forest may not be black, but it's deep and majestic and, at the same time, very beautiful. There's a lot to remind you of John Bauer, even to this day. Maybe you'll even meet Tunstarr by one of the lakes.



Norrköping can be a dangerous place. In 1853, Hedvig, 51, was infected with cholera when she took the boat from Sandviken to the market in the city to sell the lingonberries she had picked to support her family. Two days later, Hedvig and her daughter died. The cholera cemetery, which became their final resting place, was prepared as early as 1834, during the early cholera epidemic. It is a peaceful and beautiful place in the middle of the forest.



We go under the E4, a noisy and rather boring transport route of a kilometre or so that we'd prefer to avoid, but the Swedish government wouldn't build the underpass that would have given us hikers a better nature experience. But hang in there!

When we finally leave the motorway behind, a couple of hours of impressive eye candy awaits. A beautifully managed forest, bogs, forest growing in the bogs, footbridges over bogs and expanses of moss-clad bare mountains with trails. We spot a brazen birch growing out of the rock face – now that's tempting fate.



We cross yet another expansive bog via two footbridges stacked on top of each other, one of which is so long that we may want to use the rail that has kindly been put there by Sörmlandsleden, which keeps these trails open.



During the hike, we can't help but think about what this beautiful forest and mountain landscape must have meant in the old days as a form of barrier

between Sörmland and Östergötland. No wonder you were encouraged to eat your fill before you left Vreta Gästgifveri to make your way down to Krokek where the next inn was waiting, a stone's throw from the now abandoned Krokek Church.



Today we carry a thermos with coffee and a couple of sandwiches. The mind boggles as we think two to three hundred years back in time, or during Queen Kristina's time, four hundred years ago, when Kristina ordered the new system of inns and that the paths be widened to take a horse and carriage.

Naturally we enjoy everything we see on our hike, which ends where it started – in Stavsjö. We come to the E4 and can see the restaurant up on the Stavsjö Klint.

We continue across the bridge, where the Swedish Transport Administration forgot about us hikers, and we're soon back in the community again.

There are hikers who've visited the Alps and Tyrol, but we stop up on the Klint for a glass of beer or wine. That's our so-called refuge. Welcome.

Ten minutes away, Stavsjö Herrgårdsflygel awaits with a shower followed by dinner at Stavsjö Krog & Kafé, run by the siblings Jonas and Catrin.

Text: Gunnar Casserstedt Photo: Thomas Rodestrand 26/01/2020