



# Åland Archipelago

## Includes →

Mariehamn .....	111
Jomala .....	116
Finström .....	116
Sund .....	117
Vårdö .....	119
Saltvik .....	119
Hammarland .....	121
Eckerö .....	122
Lemland .....	123
Lumparland .....	123

## Best Places to Eat

- Smakbyn (p118)
- Nautical (p114)
- Bodegan (p123)
- Café Kvarnen (p120)
- Bagarstugan (p114)

## Best Places to Stay

- Degersands Resort (p122)
- Kvarnbo Gästhem (p119)
- Hotell Arkipelag (p113)
- Sandösunds Camping (p119)
- Eckerö Hotell & Restaurang (p123)

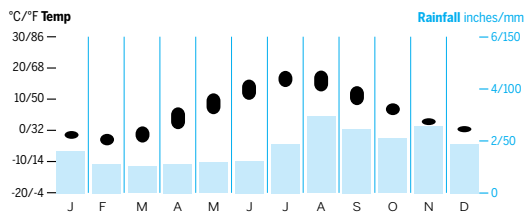
## Why Go?

The glorious Åland archipelago is a geopolitical anomaly: the islands belong to Finland, speak Swedish, but have their own parliament, fly their own blue-gold-and-red flag, issue their own stamps and have their own web suffix: 'dot ax'. Their 'special relationship' with the EU means they can sell duty free and make their own gambling laws.

Åland is the sunniest spot in northern Europe and its sweeping white-sand beaches and flat, scenic cycling routes attract crowds of holidaymakers during summer. Yet outside the lively capital, Mariehamn, a sleepy haze hangs over the islands' tiny villages and finding your own remote beach among the 6500 skerries and islets is surprisingly easy. A lattice of bridges and free cable ferries connect the central islands, while larger car ferries run to the archipelago's outer reaches.

## When to Go

### Åland Archipelago



**Feb & Mar** Skate the islands' frozen seas.

**Jun** See decorated poles being raised around the islands during Midsummer.

**Jul** Celebrate Åland's viking heritage at Saltvik's Viking Market.



## Åland Archipelago Highlights

- 1 Starting or ending in Eckerö, **cycle** the archipelago's fantastically flat, well-marked routes alongside green fields, red granite and sparkling seascapes (p116)
- 2 Running the ramparts of the cannonball-scarred ruins at **Bomarsund** (p117)
- 3 Climbing aboard the four-masted barque **Pommern** (p111) outside

Mariehamn's state-of-the-art maritime museum

- 4 Sipping blueberry beer on the terrace of Finstrom's **Stallhagen Brewery** (p117) after a behind-the-scenes tour
- 5 Touring Sund's 14th-century castle **Kastelholms Slott** (p117) on a picturesque inlet
- 6 Imagining the empire that constructed Storby's

majestically over-the-top post office **Post och Tullhuset** (p122) while browsing its artisan galleries and shops

- 7 **Kayaking** (p119) around Vårdö's islets of rustling silver birches and rippling bays
- 8 Cooking with local Åland produce at 'taste village' **Smakbyn** (p118) on a culinary course

## History

More than a hundred Bronze and Iron Age *forunminne* (burial sites) have been discovered across the Åland archipelago, attesting to over 6000 years of human habitation. Though all are clearly signposted, most are

in fairly nondescript fields. The discovery of fortress ruins confirm the archipelago was an important harbour and trading centre during the Viking era.

During the Great Northern War of 1700–21 (dubbed the 'Great Wrath'), most