



# surindsvall

**Every place name  
hides a story.  
This is an account  
of what happened.  
Read and learn.  
And come and visit!**

**From exciting history to living heritage.**





**'Stone-town Sundsvall' has become a household expression. After the great fire of 1888 the town was born again with lavishly decorated stone houses. Ostentation and affluence was symbolized in the Knaust Hotel, which still offers beds for the night.**

2000 years ago the silent forest enclosed the area that is now Sundsvall. There were no roads and very few people. The river valleys and coast housed the first settlers who lived by fishing and hunting. After a few centuries they learned how to till the land and small farms emerged. At the same time contact with the outside world led to the development of trade.

During the Middle Ages and into the 18th century the population steadily grew and small villages emerged. Sundsvall was a very small community at that time but an important centre for service and trade.

During the 19th century the town expanded very swiftly. The forest which had previously provided timber for houses, firewood and tools now provided a much sought-after raw material. Sawmill after sawmill was set up along the coast. Workers came from all over the land and by the end of the century Sundsvall had become the centre of the Swedish sawmill industry.

The sawmills reached their peak in the 1890s. By the turn of the century the woodpulp industry had taken over. Today Sundsvall is still dominated by timber working, but new businesses and activities and people also arrived during the 20th century.

**1. The Stone Town.**

STENSTADEN.  
www.sundsvall.se

**2. Gran House.**

GRANSKA HUSET.  
ADDRESS Storgatan 26.

**3. Town Hall.**

STADSHUSET.  
OPEN during events.  
ADDRESS Stora torget.  
www.stadshusetsundsvall.se

**4. Knaust Hotel.**

HOTELL KNAUST.  
OPEN all year.  
ADDRESS Storgatan 13.  
TELEPHONE 060-608 00 00.  
www.elite.se/hotell/  
/sundsvall/knaust/

**5. St Olof, Nacksta.**

NACKSTA S:T OLOF.  
OPEN during services.  
ADDRESS Midälrvägen 2.  
TELEPHONE 060-61 71 10.  
www.katolskakyrkan.se

**6. Högom.**

HÖGOM.  
ADDRESS Västra vägen.

**7. Kulturmagasinet Arts Centre.**

KULTURMAGASINET.  
OPEN Mon-Thurs 10-19,  
Fri 10-18, Sat-Sun 11-16.  
ADDRESS Packhusgatan 4.  
TELEPHONE 060-19 18 00  
www.sundsvall.se/  
kulturmagasinet

**8. Sundsvall Library (7).**

SUNDSVALLS BIBLIOTEK.  
OPEN Mon-Thurs 10-19,  
Fri 10-18, Sat 11-16.  
ADDRESS Packhusgatan 4.  
TELEPHONE 060-19 18 26  
www.sundsvall.se/  
kulturmagasinet

**9. Sundsvall Museum (7).**

SUNDSVALLS MUSEUM.  
OPEN Mon-Thurs 10-19,  
Fri 10-18, Sat 11-16.  
ADDRESS Packhusgatan 4.  
TELEPHONE 060-19 21 26  
www.sundsvall.se/  
kulturmagasinet

**10. Sundsvall Photographic Museum (7).**

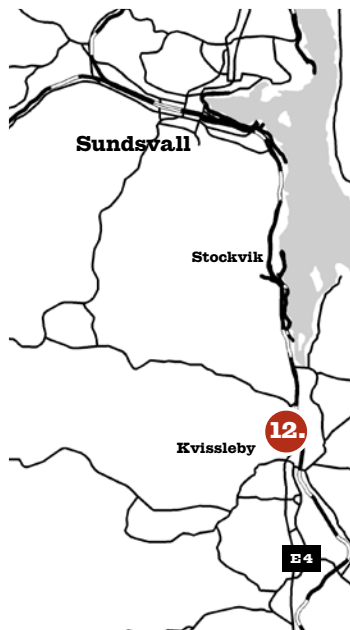
FOTOMUSEET SUNDSVALL.  
OPEN Tues-Fri 12-17, Sat 12-15.  
ADDRESS Magasinsgatan 12.  
TELEPHONE 060-19 25 34

**11. Medelpad Archives (7).**

MEDELPADSARKIV.  
OPEN Mon-Fri 10-16.  
ADDRESS Packhusgatan 4.  
TELEPHONE 060-19 18 75  
www.sundsvall.se/  
kulturmagasinet

**12. Kvissle Nolby.**

KVISSLE NOLBY.







## 1. The Stone Town.

STENSTADEN. An event that had a permanent effect on Sundsvall was the great fire that devastated large parts of the town on a day in June in 1888. Almost nothing could be saved among the isolated wall-posts that remained standing in the ashes of what had once been a lively little wooden town in southern Norrland. When it came to rebuilding the town, new fires were to be avoided at all cost. Sundsvall at this time was a flourishing centre. The sawmill industry was at its peak and it was possible now to build in stone.

The wealthy sawmill owners, so-called timber squires, invited some of Sweden's best architects and builders and began rebuilding Sundsvall immediately.

The town that emerged with richly decorated four-storied houses in stone with towers, turrets, and bay windows, is unparalleled in this part of Sweden. There are elaborate facades, apartments and stairwells, and the whole stone town is a monument to the importance to the nation of the region's export industry. 📍

## 2. Gran House.

GRANSKA HUSET. Before the great fire of 1888, a two-storied wooden house stood here. It was totally destroyed in the flames. The building was how-ever insured and the owner, the apothecary Peter Gran thus received a large sum of money. He used this to build an elaborate house which still stands today. Then, over 100 years ago, Gran set up one of Sweden's most elegant pharmacies along with an apartment dwelling of 11 rooms for himself. The walls and ceilings were decorated by specialist painters summoned from Stockholm. The stairwell was equipped with beautiful murals, special light fittings and an ornamental ceiling. Today the famous pharmacy is gone. The building now houses a shopping gallery, offices and apartments. But the stairwell is preserved as a reminder of the revolutionary times of its origin. Gran House represents the upheavals in 19th century society, and is a listed building. 📍



## 3. Town Hall.

STADSHUSET. The fire of 1888 also engulfed Sundsvall's town hall. Even though only the outer walls remained standing in the cooling ashes, it was decided to rebuild it. The new town hall supported many different functions in the 1890s, including a session hall for the town administrators to debate in, and a court house for trying criminals. But there was also a grandiose festive suite and, on the floor below, the police station for making arrests and dealing with stolen property.

Today the former town hall has become a listed building and the large festive rooms with their elaborate interiors are used for various events, and at these times are open to the public. 📍





which is the Mirror Room today.

The hotel has been rebuilt many times and has served as a food hall and office space before becoming a hotel once more. Since 1979 the façade, stairs and dining room have been protected by the hotel's status as a listed building. One can still see reminiscences behind the door of the pomp and wealth that characterized Sundsvall after the fire of 1888. 🔴 🔵

## 4. Knaust Hotel.

HOTELL KNAUST. the property owners whose houses burnt down in the town fire had all received large amounts in compensation from the insurance companies, and there was therefore much money going around. On the 9th of October 1891 the first-class Knaust hotel was opened. This was yet another extravagant building with a façade filled with decorative ornamentation. The new-rich sawmill owners came here to mingle with the wholesalers, and feast on food and drink in the so-called Swiss Room

## 5. St Olof, Nacksta.

NACKSTA S:T OLOF. Christianity has been practiced in Sweden since approximately 1000 AD. Since then thousands of churches have been built throughout the land, in both towns and countryside, each period with its own style of architecture. Nacksta Church was built in 1963-69 and is thus a rather new edifice. From a national perspective it is considered to be extremely unique, as it is a complete contrast to all previous traditions of church building in Sweden. The shape of the building is the most striking. It has





a black façade and looks more like a boat than a church. According to the architect Peter Celsing the church needed to have a spectacular design to hold its own in its magnificent surroundings.

The church belongs to Sundsvall's Catholic parish and is open for visits during services. Since Sweden practices religious freedom and everyone is welcome, regardless of faith or philosophy of life. ➤

## 6. Högom.

HÖGOM. Högom, beside the granlo housing complex, is one of the largest burial mounds in Norrland and the most famous of its ancient monuments.

The site is a 1,500-year old cemetery with a dozen burial mounds. In the mid-20th century some were excavated and numerous exotic and exciting finds were made.

Archaeologists believe that rich and powerful chieftains were buried here. The place was clearly important for the people of its time. In one of the graves the remains of a man were found – the so-called Högom man – buried in



his last repose with his sword, lance, spear and fighting arrows.

The grave also contained horse-fittings, a saddle, and a harness and bridle which led archaeologists to believe he was an equestrian warrior. Textile remains from his outfit and a decorated belt were also found, which indicated how he was clothed. The red tinge in the cloth indicates that it came from Italy.

The Högom man was clearly a rich person with a high rank. Perhaps the chieftain of all of mid-Norrland? The cemetery is well worth a visit. The finds from the graves are exhibited in Sundsvall Museum. ➤



## 7. Kulturmagasinet Arts Centre.

KULTURMAGASINET. After the great fire in Sundsvall, four large warehouses were built for storing foodstuffs down at the harbour. During the 1980s these were renovated and all transformed into a beautiful arts centre. Kulturmagasinet is now one of Sundsvall's central meeting places with a café, library, archive, consumers advice bureau, energy and climate advice centre, learning centre, and open pre-school playgroup. Enjoy concerts, lectures, theatre; meet an author or watch a film. For the children there are storytimes, musical games and much more. ➡

## 8. Sundsvalls Library.

SUNDSVALLS BIBLIOTEK. The library is a place where you can read newspapers and magazines, and borrow books and music. The main library which lies in Kulturmagasinet, has books, daily newspapers, and magazines in Swedish and 15 other languages. Over 20 computers offer access to the Internet and various games for children. It is also possible to rent a word-processor, send faxes, and copy documents. The main library also provides consumer information and energy and climate advice. The municipality also has 11 local libraries and a mobile library which visits those areas without one. Several of the local libraries have regular programmes of events for both children and adults. ➡



## 9. Sundsvall Museum.

**SUNDSVALLS MUSEUM.** Sundsvall museum shows exhibitions on current topics as well as Sundsvall's history. It contains a large collection of Swedish 20th century art, and work by many artists including the sculptor Carl Frisendahl, who was born in Näsäker but lived most of his life in Paris. The exhibition 'The town that transformed itself' the growth of the stone town after the great fire of 1888, is displayed. The exhibition 'The chieftain in Högom' follows the work of excavating the chieftain's grave and the personal items found in the grave, such as gold finger rings, a washing basin, textiles and a comb of bronze, as well as several everyday objects from elsewhere on the site. ↻ ▶



## 11. Medelpad Archives.

MEDELPADSARKIV. The Medelpad archives contain facts and information about local history and genealogical research all under one roof. The archives and collections contain documents and photographs from various municipal activities, such as poor relief, schools and health care. There are also records from active associations and societies and intriguing personal histories.

The Medelpad Archives also contain a number of databases intended for genealogical and local history research. 📍



## 10. Sundsvall Photographic Museum.

FOTOMUSEET SUNDSVALL. The goal of the museum is to illustrate documentary and communicative photography, in cooperation with the region's training programme in illustrative journalism. The European

photographic tradition is the starting point. There is also an extensive collection of old cameras. Many of the museum's exhibitions have been on tour in Europe's major cities. 📍



## 12. Kvissle Nolby.

**KVISSLE NOLBY.** The beautiful natural scenery of Kvissle/Nolby in Njurunda, south of Sundsvall, contains several large burial mounds some of which are more than 2,000 years old and one is the largest in Norrland. Sundsvall's earliest history is in evidence here. Archaeologists and historians consider that the area was lived in since the birth of Christ. Bronze objects which were made in the Roman provinces in southern Europe have been found in some of the graves. One of these is a bronze cauldron. Glass vessels and Roman coins are further evidence that the people who lived here traded over long distances with Europe. Travel was made by boat in those days. This was long before roads were built, and the sea was best for long journeys. ➡ ▶





**Here in the exposed north lay the town of Sundsvall, snuggled into a beautiful bay and looking new, joyful and gleaming. 'What a rich and powerful town', said the boy.**

**From Nils Holgersson's Wonderful Journey  
by Selma Lagerlöf.**









Mid University, Campus Sundsvall.

## Why is history important?

How long have people lived in Västernorrland? What did they live on? What sort of existence did they have? What important events affected the inhabitants? Just how old are the buildings and cultural environments that surround us? What can they tell us?

Many questions can be answered by studying remains from the past which can help us understand how people adapted to the varying conditions of life at different times and why society looks the way it does today. This is why it is important to take care of our cultural heritage. It is a vital source of knowledge about the past.

## Why this brochure?

This brochure has been produced by the County Administrative Board in Västernorrland. County administrative boards are government authorities that exist in every county and work with issues that extend across the whole of society. An important area of concern is the protection of valuable buildings, churches and ancient remains, ensuring that significant aspects of society's history are preserved and made accessible to the public.

There are several other bodies in Sweden that work with history and the cultural heritage. These include museums, archives and libraries. Through exhibitions, archival records and books they reveal the past, the ancient landscape and how people lived.

The aim of this brochure is to inform you about some of the places under the protection of the County Administrative Board. We have also chosen to include other places that are well worth a visit such as museums, libraries and archives.

## Protection according to the Heritage Act.

**Listed buildings** are those that are protected by law. They must be preserved with care and cannot be altered or demolished.

There are approximately 70 such buildings in Västernorrland. They have been chosen because they are excellent examples of historic architecture or were important to the history of society.

**Churches** are also protected by the Heritage Act which means that they must be preserved with care and cannot be altered or demolished without permission from the county administrative boards. No church built before 1940 may be changed or demolished, but even churches which were built after that may be protected. As Christianity was Sweden's major religion for more than a thousand years, the Church has had a great influence on society. Church buildings are thus an important part of our cultural heritage.

**Ancient remains** are the traces of past human activity from all periods. These can include thousand-year old graves in the shape of stone cairns or large grass-covered earthen mounds, settlement sites, trapping pits for wild animals, paintings on rock faces, old mills, and much more.

There are no books from prehistoric times to relate how people lived in those ancient days. Therefore it is the ground under our feet which holds an archive full of information on past life. Ancient remains can provide much information which is hard to find otherwise. They too are protected from alteration or destruction by the Heritage Act.



## Some terms.

Since this brochure is aimed at everyone regardless of background, here is a brief explanation of some of the terms used:

**Culture** includes not only music, theatre and literature, but also the way people live and organise their existence and their society.

**History** is the study of human activity in previous times.

**Cultural heritage** refers to the traces left behind by previous generations, such as buildings, houses, objects and customs.

**Cultural environment** is a very broad term and refers to environments influenced by man, such as towns and agricultural landscapes. It is often used in a narrower sense to refer to a limited environment such as a manorial estate.

**Norrland** is the northernmost region of Sweden and includes Västernorrland. The southern region is called Götaland and the central region Svealand.

**A county (län)** is a geographical area delimited for public administration, for example,

Västernorrland. Sweden is divided into 21 counties.

**A municipality (kommun)** is a smaller geographical area with responsibility for a large portion of our social services such as schools, child care, geriatric care, planning of roads and waterways, and integration. Sweden is divided into 290 municipalities.

**Translation** is important since there are many people in our province who speak languages other than Swedish. In order to reach out to as many as possible with information about our history and cultural heritage we provide this brochure in Arabic, Persian, Swedish and Somali. Brochures in the same series about other municipalities in the province are also available in French, Russian, Spanish and Amharic.

## **Welcome to Sundsvall.**

There is a history behind everything you see around you. All buildings, roads, fields and forest groves have something to relate. Every period had its events which affect our present surroundings.

Increased knowledge about our history leads to an increased understanding of the daily environment we live in with its mixture of old and new which makes our society exciting and interesting.

We present some places here that can help to explain the origin and growth of Sundsvall; places which are well worth visiting today.



**LÄNSSTYRELSEN**  
VÄSTERNORRLAND

Länsstyrelsen i Västernorrland (Västernorrland County Administrative Board)  
871 86 Härnösand. Phone 0611-34 90 00. [www.lansstyrelsen.se/vasternorrland](http://www.lansstyrelsen.se/vasternorrland)

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