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MOTALA

The Östergötland landscape around Lake Vättern is attractive. Linda and Frank Selto traveled from Boulder, Colorado in the USA, to pedal the 17 Swedish miles on the bicycle route around the lakes northern part. After a completed vacation they are ready to tell their American friends to follow in their tracks.

Americans on two wheels along Lake Vättern

The first time in Sweden, they choose to vacation on two wheels. Linda and Frank Selto are seasoned bicyclists and searched the internet to find an adventurous alternative for a vacation. They found what they were looking for through Linda Long and Swedenadventures (Svea Adventures). She offered a bicycle package that sounded interesting: "Lake Vättern Self-Guided Bicycle Trip".

- It works well to book like that. We've done that in the past as well, says Frank Selto.
- The internet is fantastic adds Motala's Tourist Director Lotta Karlsson.

Linda and Frank Selto landed in Göteborg, stayed there a few days and then continued to Motala, which is the starting point for the Around Lake Vättern route. Here, the couple also picked up their yellow two-wheelers which were to take them 17 Swedish miles from Motala to Karlsborg.

The first stop was Heidenstam's Övralid.

- We had been warned about the hill. Frank Selto shakes his head, when he thinks of the nightmare hill up to the author's home.
- We are seasoned bicyclists, but this was a demanding route, maybe not for beginners. We have biked in Europe in the past, in Holland, but that's mostly flat.

After arriving at Övralid, the bicyclists enjoyed the fantastic view and were also inspired to read something by the Nobel price recipient.

- I'll see if I can find any of his books translated into English, says Frank Selto.

The next stop was Medevi. The calm and quietness of the old heath spa from the 18th century was much appreciated. And so was the water, which was tasted.

- But they didn't let us take a bath in the springs. Maybe we would have needed it in order to gain extra strength, says Linda Selto with a laugh.

In Askersund county, they stopped in at Bastedalens Mansion and in Olshammar.

- It was in Olshammar, that the author in Övralid grew up. He is really associated with this region, concludes Frank Selto and impresses his wife with his knowledge of the weird Swedish names.

Upon arrival in Karlsborg, they visited the enormous fortress before returning to Motala by car. Another alternative is to take the boat from Karlsborg to Motala.

The American guests had only nice things to say about the arrangement.

- The entire package was great, we stayed overnight at nice places, it was interesting, the roads were quiet, the route was well-marked and the food – it was fantastic, says a happy Frank Selto.
- I think that I have actually gained weight. I thought it would be the other way around, he laughs.
- Yes, we definitely took in more calories than we burned, agrees his wife.

They hadn't read up on the area before they landed in Sweden, but they also didn't think it was necessary.

- It's better to be surprised, says Linda Selto.

The Selto couple were the first to try the bicycle package, and for that they deserve a surprise says Motala Tourist Director Lotta Karlsson. The Göta Kanal Director Claes-Göran Österlund arrives to deliver the newly released book about Göta Kanal in English.

- This is me, he says, and points to a photo where he's dressed up like Baltzar Von Platen (the builder of

the canal).

- Are you the city mayor? asks Linda Selto surprised.
- No, no, I am Motala's founder.

Then they shared a few thoughts about other vacation destinations and other seasons – Colorado's fantastic ski resorts. Then the conversation ends with some ice-hockey talk.

- Peter Forsberg has to come back to us. We promise not to hurt him, says Frank Selto.

The couple ends their visit in Motala with a stroll along the lake they just pedaled around. The boat Kung Sverker lies in the harbor, ready to take off.

After a detour to Finland, the journey returns back to Boulder, USA. Then they'll gladly recommend a bicycle vacation in Sweden to their friends. But Frank adds a final word

- This tour is not for beginners, since the terrain is pretty uneven. We are seasoned bicyclists and we bike often. We may not be ready for Tour de France, but this race we managed fine.

Caption under image:

Welcome to Motala! The Göta Kanal Director Claes-Göran Österlund greets Linda and Frank Selto from Boulder, USA. They have just landed back in Motala after a 17-mile trip around Lake Vättern. As a small surprise they are handed a book about Göta Kanal. "Are you the city mayor?" asks Linda Selto when she sees the picture of Claes-Göran Österlund dressed up like Baltzar Von Platen. "No, no, I am Motala's founder..."