

Day 4 - Thursday



Today, the group had the opportunity to explore Stockholm on a guided city tour. Our first stop was the Town Square, a bustling public square in the heart of the city. We marveled at the architecture of the surrounding buildings, which ranged from historic to modern.

Next, we visited the Ostern Courtyard Palace, an impressive 18th-century residence in the Baroque style. The palace was built for the Royal Mistress, creating a grand yet intimate atmosphere, with impressive artwork and design on display throughout.

Afterwards, we set out to see two of the many waterways in Stockholm. The city consists of a total of

15 islands, and we visited a historic alley called Hell Street, where our guide informed us about the city's medieval trade and fortifications. We also learned about the construction of Stockholm's many bridges, which are essential for connecting the islands and maintaining the city's infrastructure.

One of the most fascinating stops on the tour was the Iron Boy figurine, which has become a celebrated local landmark. Our guide told us the story of the boy who was once rumored to have murdered his parents and then ran away, only to return years later and be discovered as a beggar. The statue was created in his honor and serves as a reminder of the city's complicated history.

Another highlight of the tour was the Priest Street, which was built on top of the old medieval wall that once surrounded the city. There, our guide pointed out the Rune Stone along the way, which was used as a form of written communication during the Viking Age, before the widespread use of the written alphabet. We learned that the street was once home to butchers and therefore nicknamed the "Hell Street", due to the smells and sounds associated with their work.

Our guide also mentioned Kristina Cyllenstierna, the widow of the King who did not allow the Danish King to be crowned until he granted amnesty for his previous actions. Her story, along with many others, gave us a deeper understanding of the city's rich and complex history.

After the guided tour, we continued our tour to Skansen, an open-air museum and zoo that showcases Sweden's cultural heritage. We were able to see traditional Swedish buildings, crafts, and daily life from the past. The zoo was also a great spot to observe and learn about the local wildlife.

In the afternoon, we headed to the Vasa Museum. The museum houses the beautifully restored warship Vasa, which sank on its maiden voyage in 1628 and was rediscovered in the 1960s. The Vasa is one of Sweden's most popular tourist attractions and a true marvel of engineering and preservation.

During our tour, we learned about the Vasa's history, as well as the techniques and technologies used to restore and conserve this unique piece of history.

