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ROSEY ROSÉS

By Karen Bradbury

There are many reasons I love February. The days are growing longer and milder, making it a great time for all my favorite wintertime activities, skiing and skating first and foremost. And knowing winter will be over soon gives me added impetus to get out and enjoy the remainder of the season.

It's also the month of love, and Valentine's Day has always had a special place in my heart. Even over the many years I've found myself without a special someone, I've found it a day worth celebrating. In the absence of someone to wine and dine me, it's meant to get together with best friends, cook a fancy meal and maybe, grow sentimental over a bottle or two of wine.

This year being no exception, I'll cook up something yummy and serve it alongside the bounty of the grape. In keeping with the day, I will coordinate my chosen beverage with the color of the predominant Valentine's Day motif, the heart. (Technically speaking, hearts may be red, but in my book, they're pink.)

Which means the wine I go for must be a rosé. My fondness for rosés goes back to my college days, when a bottle of pink Zinfandel was as luxurious as things got. Many people consider rosé a neither-here-nor-there

choice, but I like it. It's spicy and uncomplicated, and meant to be enjoyed as is. You don't need to reach for big words to describe its bouquet and nuances.

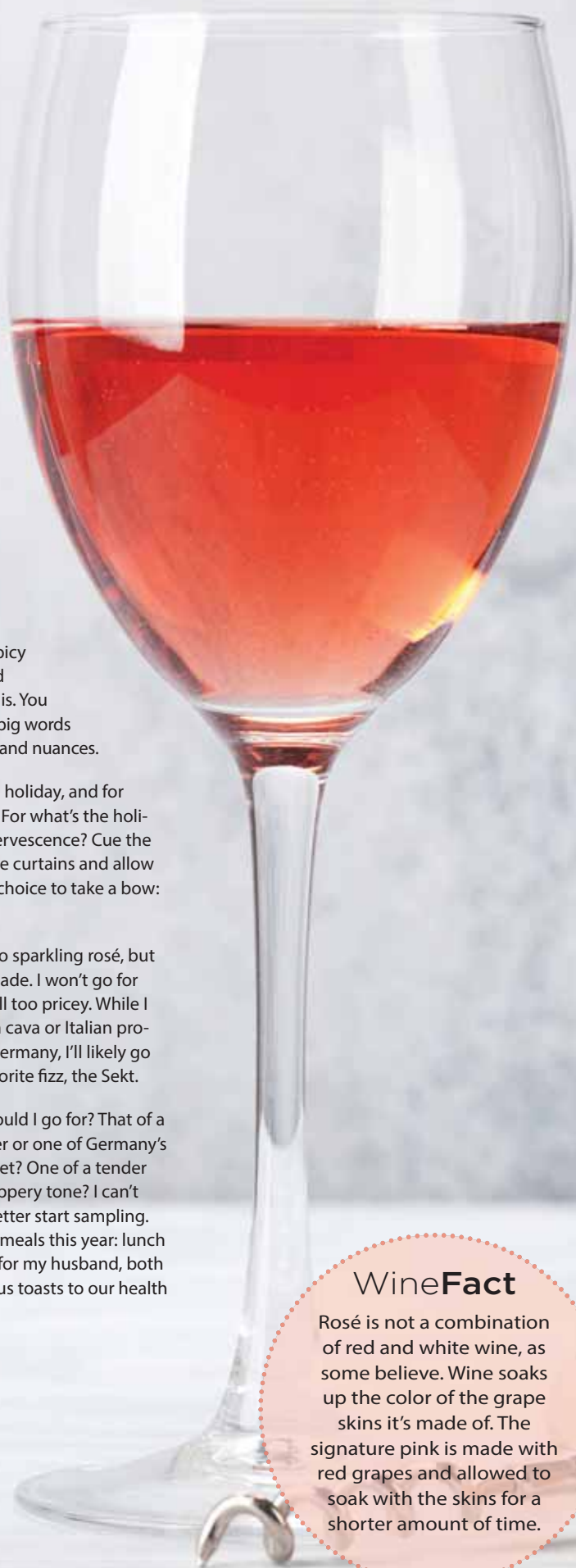
But let's not forget it's a holiday, and for that we need: bubbles! For what's the holiday of love without effervescence? Cue the classical music, draw the curtains and allow this year's beverage of choice to take a bow: sparkling rosé wine.

I've narrowed it down to sparkling rosé, but choices remain to be made. I won't go for Champagne, which is all too pricey. While I could choose a Spanish cava or Italian prosecco, as I'm based in Germany, I'll likely go for the homegrown favorite fizz, the Sekt.

But which rosé Sekt should I go for? That of a small-scale, local vintner or one of Germany's best sellers? Dry or sweet? One of a tender blush pink or a bold coppery tone? I can't get this wrong, so I'd better start sampling. Better yet, I'll cook two meals this year: lunch for a friend and dinner for my husband, both accompanied by copious toasts to our health and well-being.

WineFact

Rosé is not a combination of red and white wine, as some believe. Wine soaks up the color of the grape skins it's made of. The signature pink is made with red grapes and allowed to soak with the skins for a shorter amount of time.



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GERMANY'S HIGHLIGHT

Taunus Mountains

By Anna Bagiackas

Sometimes you want to plan a weeklong vacation, spending hours doing research and making travel arrangements. Other times you want to simply escape the routine of everyday, get some fresh air and feel refreshed and energized. Less than an hour's drive from central Frankfurt, the lesser-known Taunus mountain range offers a romantic getaway filled with beautiful nature spots, historical remains and wellness locales to help you and your loved ones relax.

NATURPARK

Surrounded by the Rhine, Main and Lahn river valleys, Taunus is a low mountain range covered in forest. With 1,200 kilometers of trails for hiking and cycling in Naturpark Taunus, the area is perfect for couples or families looking for some outdoor activities. Passing through the park is the Limes Hiking Trail (Limeswanderweg), a long-distance trail that was also an ancient border for the Roman Empire. Along this ancient trail you will see Roman watchtowers, forts and Celtic remains. You could also hike to the second-highest peak, Kleine Feldberg (the little Feldberg), where you will find a meteorological and geophysical observatory built in 1913. As you explore the Limes Hiking Trail you will have the chance to learn more about its history as there is information and stations posted along the route. If winter sports are more what you're looking for, downhill skiing, sledding and tobogganing can be found at Großer Feldberg mountain, the highest peak in this mountain range.

ROMAN HISTORY

If hikes interspersed with history are more up your alley, you can find a number of Roman and Celtic destinations within the Taunus region. A visit to the Saalburg fort will give you a real Roman experience, where you can imagine what this Roman border would have felt like centuries ago. The ancient

fort is home to a museum and cafe that is a replica of a Roman tavern, and they even bake bread in the ancient oven periodically. At Burg Königstein you will find the largest castle ruins in the area, and Berg Kronberg is worth a visit to catch a glimpse of the Frankfurt countryside and skyline.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

In addition to the presence of the Roman Empire, this area has long drawn Europe's most prestigious visitors such as Kaiser Wilhelm II because of its geothermal springs and mineral waters, making spas and wellness resorts popular attractions in this area. You can visit Germany's largest climatic health resort, Heilklima-Park Hochtaunus, or check out the historical spa Kur-Royal in Bad Homburg. Continuing your wellness and relaxation activities, you can find options for a romantic dinner at one of the many nearby Rhine wineries and restaurants.

You can choose from a couple of different towns to call your home for the weekend. One option is the larger town of Oberursel, closest to the Naturpark, with a charming old town and a number of restaurant options. Bad Homburg, just east of the Naturpark and Oberursel, is one of the wealthiest towns and home to much of the spa culture in the area. Another option is to stay in Kronberg, where you could splurge for a romantic stay at the 19th-century royal castle turned hotel, Schlosshotel Kronberg. ■



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Please note: These events are all subject to change during the ongoing COVID-19 response. Please call the facility in advance to ensure the event is indeed happening as scheduled.

Fishing Course

Learn what you need to know to purchase your German Fishing License and successfully fish while in Germany during Outdoor Recreation's U.S. Forces German Fishing Course Feb. 3, 5, 6 and 7, 2021. Course subjects include Fishing Law, Hydrology, Equipment, Ichthyology, Diseases and more. Cost is \$75 for adults ages 16 and up or \$25 for ages 10-15 (minimum age is 10). Register at the Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation Center on Clay North or call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.

Boot Camp

Come join the Fitness Center professionals for a six-week Boot Camp that will take you from ground zero to hero in a matter of weeks. This comprehensive Boot Camp will target your whole body, increase your cardiovascular endurance, provide strength conditioning, enhance your overall health and push you to your limits. Expect to work indoors and outdoors, get dirty and work hard. Sessions will be held Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6-7:15 p.m. Feb. 2 to March 11, 2021. Cost is \$159 per person. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9830 to sign up.

Biggest Loser

The Biggest Loser is back — bigger and better than ever. This is an eight-week program starting Feb. 8, 2021, and running through March 31, 2021. Classes meet on Mondays and Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30



Participants celebrate their successful completion during a previous Biggest Loser session.

p.m. Change your life in the course of eight weeks and begin to form healthier habits to last a lifetime. An overall winner will be chosen at the end of the program — winning a one-day MWR Outdoor Recreation trip for two. Cost is \$189 per person. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9830 to register.

Foreign Born Spouse Meeting

Get together with fellow foreign-born spouses during Treffpunkt meetings that are held every second Wednesday of the month from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Army Community Service. Call ACS at civ (0611) 143-548-9201 to register.

Recreational Shooting

Hone your marksmanship during a day on the range with Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation on Feb. 27, 2021. Shooting takes place at the JMTC Wackernheim Range from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$8 per person for Hunting, Fishing and Sports Shooting members; \$12 per person for non-members. A Family Rate is also available. Register at Outdoor Recreation or call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.

Car Classes

The Wiesbaden Automotive Skills Center hosts a Brake Service Class on Feb. 7 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Cost is \$25 per person. A Basic Car Class will be held on Feb. 24 from 5:30-7 p.m. Cost is \$20 per person. Call civ (0611) 143-548-9817 to register.

Sports Shooting Course

Wiesbaden Outdoor Recreation holds a U.S. Forces Sports Shooting Knowledge Course Feb. 25-27, 2021. Cost is \$90 per person. Classes will be held from 6-10 p.m. on Thursday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. Register at Outdoor Recreation or call civ (0611) 143-548-9801.

Mommy and Daddy 101

Pick up the tools to become an outstanding parent during Mommy and Daddy 101 classes, courtesy of Army Community Service's New Parent Support Program, on Feb. 2 from 9 a.m. to noon or Feb. 16 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Call ACS at civ (0611) 143-548-9201 for class log-in details.

Virtual Spouse Orientation

Connect with representatives from around the garrison to learn about education, health, employment, financial management and more — and get your questions answered — during the Virtual Spouse Orientation on Feb. 17 from 9-11:30 a.m. Call ACS at civ (0611) 143-548-9201 to register.

Ask the Relocation Team

Get your questions answered virtually during the weekly "Ask the ACS Relocation Readiness Team" sessions. The MS Teams sessions are held online every Tuesday at 10:30 a.m. Send an email to usarmy.wiesbaden.imcom-europe.mbx.mwr-acs@mail.mil to request an invitation to join a session.

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**HISTORY
ABOUNDS IN** *la Cité de*
CARCASSONNE

By Jessica Zen



History buffs will love visiting la Cité de Carcassonne, France. This medieval citadel has over 2,500 years of history and is surrounded by a double enclosure that stretches for 1.9 miles. It is the largest citadel with walls still completely intact. The imposing walls combined with 52 towers and four entrances make for quite the spectacle! Since 1997, this area has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is certainly worth a stop.



TRAVEL INSPIRATION

LEFT:
Fortified
walls of the
Carcassonne
castle

RIGHT:
Basilica
of Saints
Nazarius
and Celsus



© DARIJA MAKSIMOVA / 123RF.COM



▲ La Cite, Carcassonne,
France View of towers
and walls

When you look out over the fortification, you can almost see the knights fighting for their lady loves while a dragon breathes fire from a tower!

While you're there letting your imagination run wild, check out the following attractions:

Bust of Lady Carcas

Legend tells of a princess whose husband was lost during a battle against Charlemagne. The brave princess then fooled the conquering forces and saved her citadel. The brave leader bluffed about the circumstances of the citadel under siege and threw the last pig from the highest tower, indicating that the siege was failing because the princess was wasting livestock. Little did Charlemagne and his men know, that this was their last pig. The men retreated and left the city in peace.



© ANIBAL TREJO / 123RF.COM

Castle of the Counts

Though this castle has been renovated and rebuilt time and time again, it remains the most popular attraction within the walls. The ground floor now holds a museum with exhibits of stone crosses, statues and other items from the city. Visit the courtyard and get a good look at the various architectural styles. Fun fact: excavations still take place at the castle. What will they dig up next?

Théâtre Jean Deschamps

This open-air theater is home to the annual performing arts festival. Each year the stages come alive with music, dancing and dramas. Both national and international performers can be found on the stage and over 250,000 visitors attend this cultural event. The next festival will take place in July of 2021.

Basilica of Saints Nazarius and Celsus

Designed with Gothic-Romanesque architecture, this stunning minor basilica is Roman Catholic and a national monument. Original construction is thought to have been in the 6th century by Visigoths, though the centuries have dramatically changed the appearance. Construction on this masterpiece was not complete until the first half of the 20th century.

Portes

There are four main entrances to la Cité de Carcassonne: Porte Narbonnaise, Saint-Nazaire, d'Aude and du Bourg. Each door was intentionally designed to serve a purpose, like allow access to the city of Narbonne or serve as a defensive system.

Wells

Of the 22 wells that once provided water to the citadel's inhabitants, the great well takes the cake. It is not only the biggest, but also the oldest, dating back to the 14th century. As with any medieval structure worth its salt, there is a legend that goes with the well, proclaiming that there is hidden treasure within from the Visigoths. Though no treasure has ever turned up, don't give up hope!

Old bridge

This 14th-century medieval bridge was the only way for pedestrians to get from Bastide Saint Louis to Carcassonne until the 19th century. Work on the bridge began in the early 1300s and took approximately five years to complete. There are 12 semicircles in the bridge, each with a different opening diameter, ranging from 33 to 46 feet. This is an indication that the work was done at different intervals, as supplies were available. Though the bridge has been repaired many times, in 1820 the appearance altered the most. The chapel of Notre-Dame de la Santé can be found at the entrance to the bridge and is the only vestige of the oldest hospital in the city. The building has also undergone many alterations, but is still a lovely example of 15th-century architecture.

Château de Villemagne

Wine is also a fascinating part of this area's history. Just outside of Carcassonne, about thirty minutes away, you'll find a 12th-century building known as the Château de Villemagne. This delightful piece of architecture was once the priory of the abbey of La-grasse, but is now the perfect place for a wine tasting. Your visit doesn't just include tasty wines. Here you'll learn about the history of the winery, see prehistoric objects and also Roman empire objects discovered in the vineyards. See paintings and sculptures by local artists and enjoy some regional products, like foie gras, olive oil and cassoulet.

From the fascinating architecture to the intriguing legends, la Cité de Carcassonne is a history lover's dream. Fall into a fantasy while you wander around within the walls and imagine what life was like when conquerors came calling! Rest assured that no sieges are likely to happen while you are in attendance. ■



▲ La Cite and Pont Vieux crossing the Aude river in Carcassonne



◀ TOP: Château de Villemagne is a family-run vineyard passed down by generations. Taste the best wines from Grenache, Syrah, Marsanne, Roussanne, and Chardonnay to name a few.

BOTTOM: Take a walk within the walls of Carcassonne and enjoy medieval architecture and cafe-lined, cobbled streets.



Up Close and Personal *with* Toulouse de Capitoile

by Carrie Farrell

When I travel, I typically have a massive itinerary. No matter how many items I check off of my list, there is always one area or sight that leaves a lasting impression—one I would experience again if I ever got the chance to revisit. In Toulouse, de Capitoile and the surrounding neighborhood is that place.

Bursting with life, de Capitoile square is everyone's starting point in Toulouse. Numerous cafes, restaurants, hotels, bars and outward streets surround this hot spot that the locals refer to as Old Town. If you're ready to soak up some French culture, it's worth a closer look.



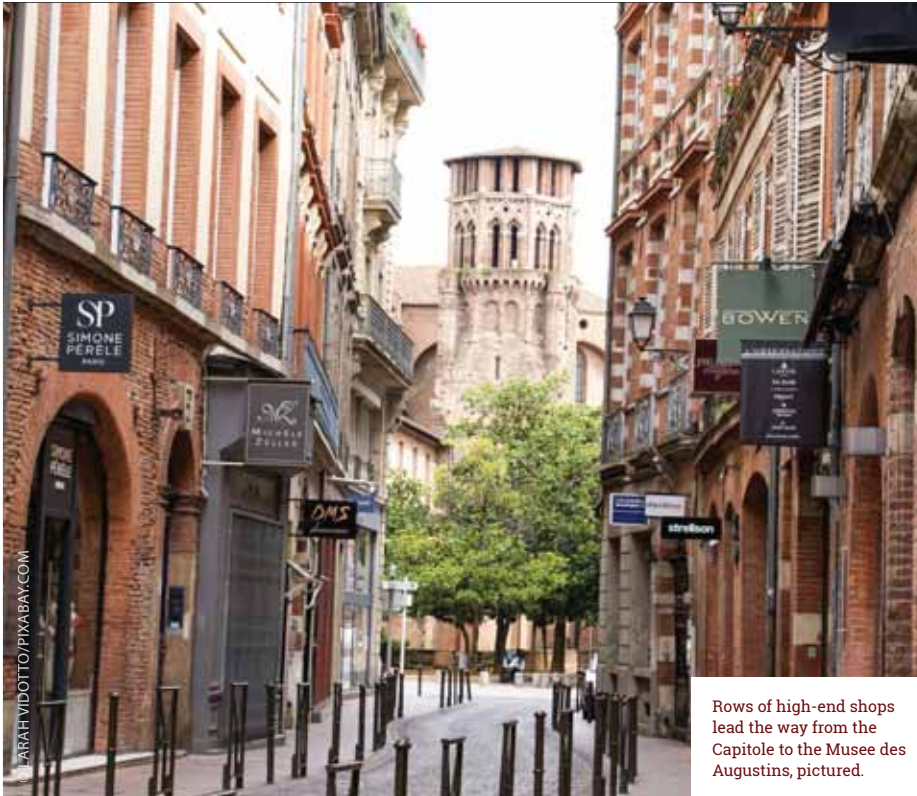
de Capitoile

Dating back to 1190, de Capitoile building houses the town hall, regional theatre, prestigious opera house and state rooms with magnificent paintings that trace Toulouse's history. The Capitoile square is a feel-good place where there is always something going on. Explore the arcade on the western side, with restaurants tucked under brick archways. On the ceiling of the arcade walk are unique illustrations depicting the city's history. Venture behind this emblematic building to the Donjon (Archive Tower), the oldest building in Toulouse.



TOP: A vintage postcard picturing the Capitoile de Toulouse.

LEFT: The Capitoile de Toulouse currently.



Rows of high-end shops lead the way from the Capitole to the Musee des Augustins, pictured.



Where to Shop

Branching out from the Capitole in every direction are narrow streets lined with traditional boutiques, internationally renowned shops and a handful of department stores. Some notable shopping streets are the Rue d'Alsace-Lorraine and Rue Saint-Rome—both are lined with popular and one-of-a-kind storefronts. Don't forget to weave in and out of the side streets between these two main shopping avenues. You can find some great souvenirs nearby. Don't miss Chocolaterie de Puyricard on Rue du Fourbastard and Petit Souk on Rue Baronié.



Where to Eat

There is every kind of food imaginable here. From street food to local bistros to restaurants, the options for filling your appetite are endless. Eat your way through the streets with fresh orange juice, waffles, crepes and more.

Within the Capitole arcades, dine in the city's oldest restaurant, Le Bibent, a luxurious French brasserie from 1882. While there, try the Toulouse sausage (flavored with garlic, wine and smoked bacon).

For something less touristy, check out Place Saint-Georges. Frequented by the locals, this square is surrounded by numerous cafes and restaurants. Start your day with breakfast à la Française at Café Au Jardin des Thés. Finish the evening at Restaurant Emile with cassoulet au confit de canard, a local dish not to be missed.



TOP: Toulouse sausage over beans.

BOTTOM: A restaurant-lined street.



Where to Chillout

Looking for a nice place to wind down? The Fat Cat is a hip little bar right off the Capitole square. They make a mean Manhattan! Around the corner, stop by the Jazz and Blues-worthy Satch Club on Rue Lafayette for the famous Cry Baby Collins (tanqueray, raspberry puree, lemon juice, dried candied ginger and soda water). Head toward the riverfront to Place Saint Pierre. There, check out two hot spots that are popular with local students—Le Saint des Seins and La Couleur de la Culotte (the color of the underwear).

No matter what you do

If you like the idea of Paris, but perhaps in a smaller package, Toulouse can hold its head up high in the ranks of breathtaking and vibrant cities to visit. It's so easy to lose track of time enjoying the relaxed vibe and quintessentially French aesthetic found in this city center. ■

TRAVEL INSPIRATION

How to Spend 48 HOURS in Stockholm

By Stacy Roman

You've arrived in the spectacular Scandinavian city of Stockholm. You only have 48 hours to absorb as much of the Swedish capital as you can. The clock is ticking and it's time to hit the ground running. Grab your phone, put on your comfy shoes and let's go!

What to See

Get the lay of the land and jump on a hop on-hop off boat tour and sail your way around the city, stopping at different points of interest. Or head to the top of Kaknastornet (TV Tower) for breathtaking panoramic aerial views of the skyline. From there, hit up one (or many) of Stockholm's fantastic museums. The Vasa Museum houses the well-preserved remains of a sunken Swedish royal flagship from 1628. Art lovers will want to check out Fotografiska, a stunning collection of modern photography. Music fans won't want to miss the Abba Museum which is dedicated to the '70s Swedish pop quartet.

If you prefer staying outdoors, which in the winter months can be challenging but no less scenic, wander through the cobblestone streets of Gamla Stan. The old town of Stockholm dates back to the 13th century and provides a pop of colorful architecture and history. For a little more adrenaline, Gröna Lund provides thrills and plenty of adventure. With more than 30 rides, it's a great spot to let the little ones burn off energy.

What to Eat

Thanks in part to IKEA, Swedish meatballs served with potatoes, doused in rich gravy and a side of lingonberries are known around the world and they're definitely worth trying in Sweden. Because of its proximity to water, seafood is engrained in Stockholm's cuisine. Try toast Skagen, which is similar to a creamy shellfish salad atop toasted bread. Or sample the savory deliciousness of Janssons temptation, a potato gratin mixture with breadcrumbs, onion and sprats.

A culinary tradition not to be missed is "fika." Similar to "kaffee und kuchen" in Germany, "fika" is a well-deserved afternoon coffee break. Cups of steaming hot coffee are served with a sweet pastry such as "kanabulle" (cinnamon bun) or princess cake—a sponge cake with cream and draped in bright green or pink marzipan.

While Stockholm is definitely worth spending more than a few days in, you can definitely get a great taste of this magical city in 48 hours. ■



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