

# The Naval Port of Karlskrona



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World Heritage site



In 1998 the naval town of Karlskrona was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. In an international context, the town is of major importance, representing as it does an unrivalled illustration of how a fortified naval town and base from the seventeenth and eighteenth was planned and established.

## Welcome to the world heritage site The Naval Port of Karlskrona

The key of Karlskrona's World Heritage status lies in the meticulous planning of its naval port and city. In the 17th century, Sweden enlisted the services of highly talented architects to realize King Karl XI's vision for the country's new naval base. Karlskrona was meticulously planned and

constructed from scratch on undeveloped islands, with the purpose of becoming a city that encompassed all the components necessary for an efficient navy. During the 18th century, Karlskrona experienced significant advancements in shipbuilding, architecture, town planning, military

*"Karlskrona is an exceptionally well preserved example of a European planned naval town, which incorporates elements derived from earlier establishments in other countries and which was in its turn to serve as the model for subsequent towns with similar functions.*

*Naval bases played an important role in the centuries during which naval power was a determining factor in European Realpolitik, and Karlskrona is the best preserved and most complete of those that survive."*

*World Heritage Committee, December 1998.*

construction, and engineering, which garnered recognition and admiration from across the continent. For over a century, the unique architecture and specialized facilities at the Navy yard positioned Karlskrona as a prominent centre of military technology and industry in the Baltic

region. Since their establishment, both the naval base and the dockyard have remained in continuous operation to this day. Over 340 years later, the city of Karlskrona continues to evolve, embodying a harmonious blend of old and new, tradition and innovation.

## A new naval base and city was born

By the late seventeenth century, Sweden was a major European power and had managed to acquire territory in parts of northern Germany and present-day Finland, Estonia and Latvia. In order to protect its extensive territories, Sweden recognized the necessity of establishing a new naval base. The eastern part of the Blekinge archipelago was chosen by King Karl XI as the location for a strategic naval base, as a part of a new town - Karlskrona.



*The painting, by Pehr Hillerström shows King Karl XI pointing out the place for Karlskrona. With him were his advisors Erik Dahlberg, Johan Gyllenstierna, Rutger von Ascheberg, Admiral Hans Wachtmeister, Admiral Erik Sjöblad and Axel Wachtmeister.*

In the late autumn of 1679, the King and his entourage arrived on Trossö. The only farmer living on the island was forced to leave his property. The Kingdom's greatest shipbuilders, architects, fortification engineers, and builders quickly began their work. Trösso, along with neighboring islands, provided an ideal location for a naval base with a narrow and deep

fairway easy to defend, and ample space to construct a protected dock. The base was planned as a unified entity, including fortifications, harbors, dockyards, and a civilian town. After nearly thirty years, much of the city was constructed. Karlskrona gained attention and became a model for other naval bases across Europe.

*Stortorget is located in the middle of the island of Trossö. The square is located on the island's highest point and is surrounded by Frederik Church, The Church of the Holy Trinity and the City Hall, all of which are part of the world heritage. In the middle of the square stands Karl XI, looking out over the square and the city.*

The planned city was intended to be a manifestation of Sweden's great ambitions and power. The various functions, such as civilian areas, dockyards, trade and industries, were gathered in a city plan designed with inspiration from the Roman Baroque period, with a monumental square and city blocks drawn in a square pattern with streets radiating outwards.

## The layout of the town and the civil city

The northern part of Trossö consisted of the civilian city while the southern part of the island was occupied by the naval dockyard and naval harbour. This division into a civilian and a military part of the city still exists today.

The civilian city was planned with various areas such as trade and housing that were required to support the naval base. Characteristic for Karlskrona were the very wide streets and the monumental square with its public buildings. In this classic grid plan the civilian part has its centre in the highest location, Stortorget, the square that is surrounded by buildings representing religion and the law.

The two churches by the square represent the two basic forms of the Renaissance, the round temple, and the basilica. Since church attendance was mandatory, the buildings had to be big enough to accommodate large congregations. For the King

Karl XI was religion important. It is said that he had once remarked "True fear of the Lord is one of the most noble, indispensable and beneficial things in Our Armed Forces."



*The Church of the Holy Trinity is a round church designed by Nicodemus Tessin the younger inspired by Italian architecture. The church has an impressive entrance with large columns and a beautifully patterned dome roof.*



Visit the Maritime Museum and step aboard a real submarine – HMS Neptune. Enjoy different exhibitions that tell you more about the history of the naval port of Karlskrona.

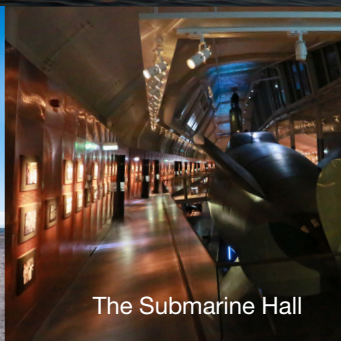


## Stumholmen

In 1993, after 300 years as a closed military area in the middle of Karlskrona, Stumholmen was transformed into a part of the civilian city. The pulse of history is heard clearly over the island, which once was a warehouse for the sailing fleet's food supply. Here you will find military buildings from the 18th century up until the 1950s. Most of the original buildings are still standing and are being used for various purposes, some more modern than others.



The Kungshall Storehouse



The Submarine Hall



The Sloop and Longboat Shed

Historic buildings are mixed with restaurants, private homes, tourist attractions and a university at the digital forefront – like a miniature version of Karlskrona where locals, tourists and students can meet and mix. The sloop and longboat shed in Karlskrona stands out as an extraordinary building,

showcasing the creativity and resourcefulness of the shipbuilders and designers at the dockyard. Particularly interesting is the roof construction and its rainwater drainage. The old hangars from the pioneering era of aviation and the Kungshall storehouse offer other captivating sights to explore.

Don't miss a visit to the Blekinge Museum, which is housed in the magnificent Grevagården. Step into the museum's World Heritage exhibition to learn more about the city's unique historical environments and why the city was designated a World Heritage Site in 1998.



Grevagården with The Baroque Garden

## Grevagården and Björkholmen

Count Hans Wachtmeister's private palace and a district for workers' housing has become two of the city's tourist destinations.

In the original plans, a commercial port was proposed in the northwest with warehouses on Björkholmen, designed as a Dutch trading town. However, the plans were abandoned, and the free plots that the crown provided on Björkholmen were mainly given to shipyard workers. As a result, the district early on acquired the social

character of a working-class district.

Grevagården is Count Hans Wachtmeister's private palace, which was completed in 1705. With the adjacent baroque garden, it is one of the few private residences that were spared during the great city fire in 1790. The building is largely preserved and today it houses the Blekinge museum.



The Björkholmen Cottages at Nordenskjöldsgatan.

# The Naval dockyard and harbour

Karlskrona is one of the few places in the world where there still exist buildings, environments, and workplaces created for the sailing warships of earlier times. The naval base is still active and is today one of Sweden's naval bases. The shipyard builds world-leading submarines and modern surface ships in composite.

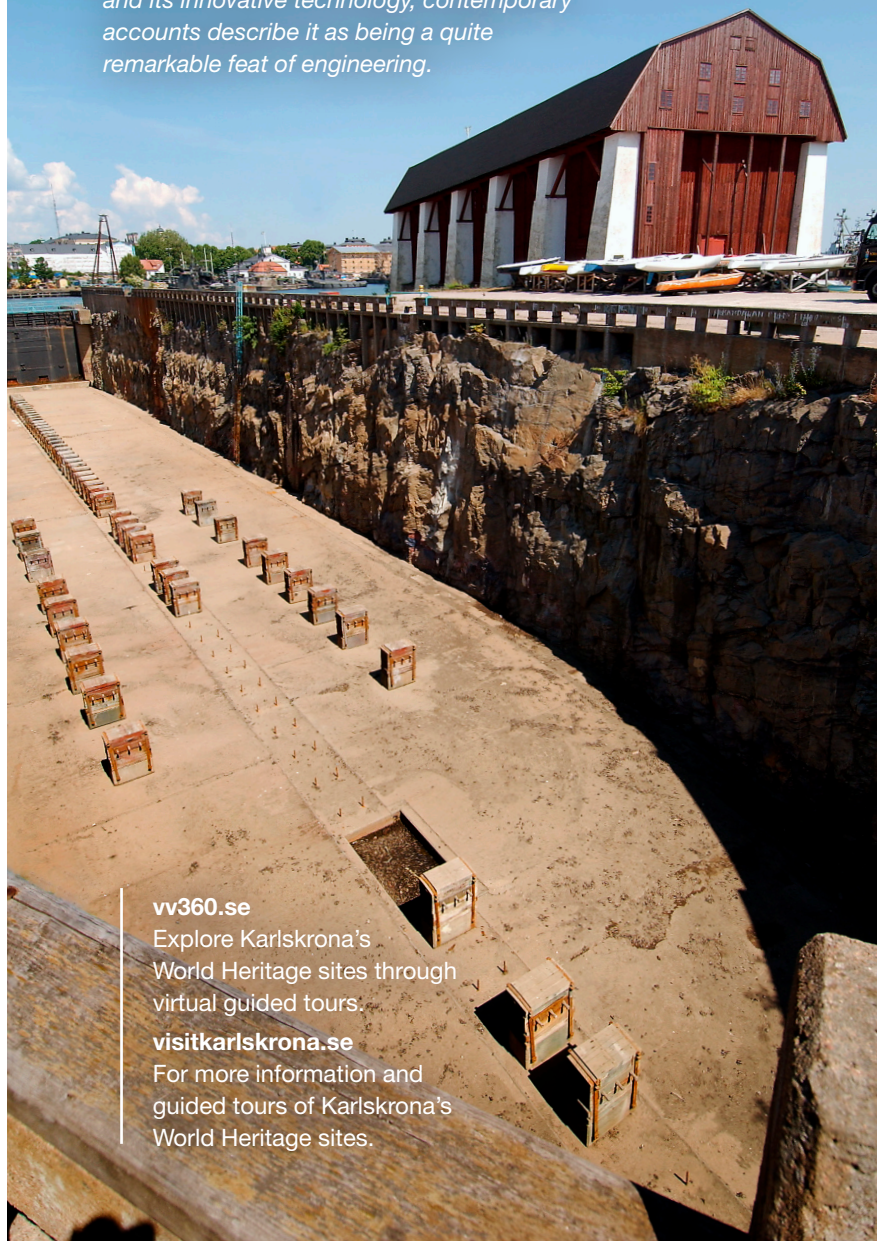


*The Rope-walk from the 1690's is one of the oldest preserved buildings in Karlskrona and one of the longest wooden buildings in Sweden. Its length, some 300 metres, was necessary for the effective manufacture of lengths of rope.*

The first dockyard was located on Vämö, closer to the mainland, where three ships were built. After a few years this was moved to the southern part of Trossö, in 1694. Fortifications and buildings were built there, with complementary facilities on Lindholmen, Söderstjärna and Stumholmen. Already in the early 18th century, Karlskrona became a centre for technological innovation, where the foremost example is The Polhem Dry Dock. In addition to the more eye-catching buildings, such as The Rope-Walk, The Wasa Shed and The Polhem Dry

Dock on Lindholmen as well as the Five Finger docks and Old Mast Crane in the western dockyard area, older details are preserved in the dockyard environment, such as quays, dolphin mooring structures and grinders. Currently, the dockyard remains in use, with ongoing shipbuilding activities taking place in the western dockyard area, while the Marine Base operates in the eastern area. Due to the global situation, there are restrictions in place for visiting certain areas. For information regarding guided tours, please contact the Karlskrona Tourist Center.

*The Wasa Shed was a one-of-its-kind in the world building when it was constructed, and a part of the streamlining of shipbuilding that took place during the 18th century. Here the workers worked along an assembly line, a technique that would become famous 100 years later through the ideas of Henry Ford. The Polhem dry dock was built between 1717-24. It created considerable interest from abroad owing not the least to its size and its innovative technology, contemporary accounts describe it as being a quite remarkable feat of engineering.*



[vv360.se](http://vv360.se)

Explore Karlskrona's World Heritage sites through virtual guided tours.

[visitkarlskrona.se](http://visitkarlskrona.se)

For more information and guided tours of Karlskrona's World Heritage sites.

# Fortifications

From the establishment of the naval base onwards, a series of fortifications were constructed. Some were situated on Trossö and the neighbouring islands, while others were built in the sea at the outer, western, and eastern anchorages.

In accordance with Erik Dahlbergh's intentions, in 1680 work began to fortify the entrance to Karlskrona through the construction of the Drottningsskär Citadel and the fortress of Kungsholm. The citadel was originally the main fortification, a role that Kungsholm then took over from the beginning of the 19th century. Further

in, towards the island of Trossö, are the fortification of Kurrholmen and Godnatt from the 19th century, and closer to the city, Koholmen, Mjölneholmen, and Ljungskär from the 18th century.

Bastions were built for the defense of the city itself, the dockyard and the port, although fewer than originally intended.

*Some of the best-preserved Swedish defense facilities can be found in Karlskrona. An example is Erik Dahlbergh's creation Drottningsskär Citadel, which is a fantastic destination.*

*Together with Drottningsskär Citadel on Aspö, Kungsholm fortress has guarded the entrance to Karlskrona for more than 300 years. Kungsholm fortress is still in use as part of the Swedish defence.*



*Godnatt is the last example of a core tower, a type of fortress that has existed in Sweden and Europe since the Middle Ages.*

**[visitkarlskrona.se](https://www.visitkarlskrona.se)**  
For more information and guided tours of Karlskrona's World Heritage sites.

# The environs of Karlskrona

The founding and construction of Karlskrona had a major impact on the surrounding areas of the city and resulted in the opening of a profitable market.

Large quantities of food, timber, tar, and iron were delivered both to the town and the Admiralty from the environs. Trade was particularly extensive during the construction of the naval base and during wartime, when the military presence

increased in the city. Around Karlskrona there is a number of smaller mansions that were constructed in pace with the city. These functioned both as agriculture farms that supplied the Navy and as summer residences.

*The newly built city lacked hydroelectric power, which instead could be found in Lyckeby. It was also from Lyckeby that fresh water, needed for the civilian city and the Navy, was brought. In 1721, Lyckeby Crown Mill was built with a better capacity than the two older mills that existed before.*



*Skärva manor was Fredric Henric af Chapman's summer residence. The building is one of the most singular architectural creations produced in Sweden during the eighteenth century. A combination of local Swedish building tradition and neo-classical architecture.*



A diver is seen underwater, exploring a shipwreck. The diver is wearing a full diving suit, including a mask, fins, and a tank. The water is dark and murky, with some light filtering through from above. The shipwreck is partially visible in the background, showing some structural elements and debris.

## World heritage below water

Within and in connection to the World Heritage Site of The Naval Port of Karlskrona, there are approximately sixty intentionally sunk wrecks. These wrecks are closely linked to the specific values that underlie the designation of the World Heritage Site.

Some of the ships were built in Karlskrona and have been part of the innovative shipbuilding development that is still ongoing today. When the ships were no longer profitable to repair, they were sunk in embankments and barrages. It contributed to the city's planning, development and defense.

Several wrecks outside the naval base can be dived on, for example wrecks that have been used to block off the entrances to Karlskrona. Between Ekenabben's pier and the island of Tjurkö, at a depth of 10-12 meters, there are the wrecks of six intentionally sunk ships from the 17th and 18th centuries.

## Facts about the shipwrecks in Djupasund

### Södermanland/Gripen

The ship of the line Södermanland were built at the Djurgården shipyard in Stockholm in 1749. Södermanland was more than 42 metres long, over eleven metres wide and had two gun decks with a total of 52 guns. Later, Södermanland was converted into a frigate and renamed Grip (later Gripen). The ship made several voyages to the Mediterranean area. During Gustav III's Russian War, the ship took part in many battles. In 1810, the ship was sunk in Djupasund.

### Enigheten

The ship of the line Enigheten was one of the largest ships in the Swedish navy when it was launched in Karlskrona in 1696. The ship was approximately 51 meters long and 12.5 meters wide and equipped with roughly 90 cannons. Enigheten was later renamed King Fredrik. In 1785, the ship was sunk in Djupasund.

### Wasa

Wasa was a ship of the line built in 1778 in the Wasa Shed in Karlskrona. Wasa was 48.4 meters long and 13.6 meters wide. Wasa participated in many naval battles during the war against Russia 1788–1790. In 1803 the ship was sold to the East India Company but was bought back in 1808 in connection with the outbreak of the Finnish War. Wasa was sunk in 1836 in Djupasund.

### Disa

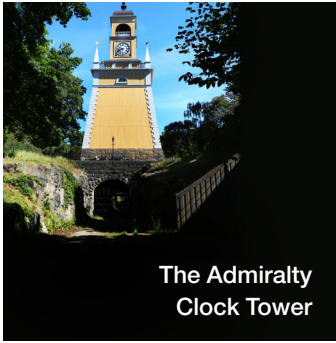
Disa was built in 1764 as a flat-bottomed archipelago frigate that could both sail and row on its reconnaissance missions in shallow waters, a so-called "Pojama". Disa was 23.75 meters long and 5.5 meters wide. Disa was sunk in 1810 in Djupasund.

### Simpan

Simpan is the smallest and most secretive of the wrecks. We know that the ship was sunk in 1810 and that contemporary documents refer to it as a Kronojakt, but we do not know when it was built or by whom. The wreckage shows that the ship was built according to the Nordic clinker boat technique which is a UNESCO intangible cultural heritage.

### Pollux

In 1741, the brigantine Pollux was launched in Karlskrona. The ship was 28.4 meters long and 7.1 meters wide. Pollux was armed with 18 light guns and was sunk in Djupasund in 1785.



The Admiralty  
Clock Tower



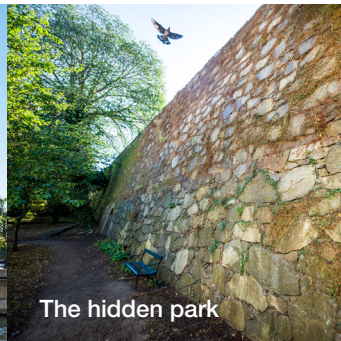
The Corps de garde

## Discover the world heritage site

Karlskrona is filled with exciting environments, buildings and details. Everywhere there are traces of the time when Karlskrona was Sweden's third largest city. Go on a city walk on your own or join one of the guided city tours.



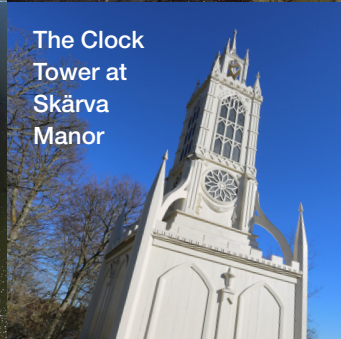
The Crown bakery



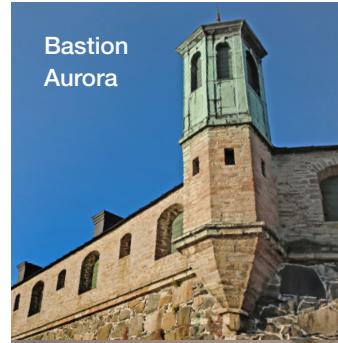
The hidden park



The Powder Magazine  
at Ljungskär



The Clock  
Tower at  
Skärva  
Manor



Bastion  
Aurora



Mjölnerholmen



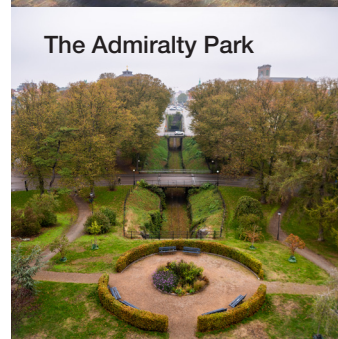
Stadshotellet



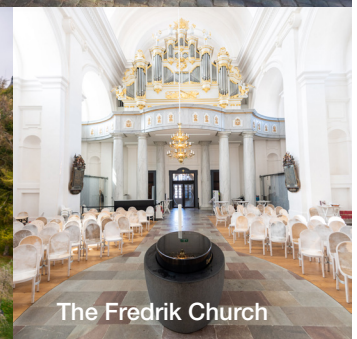
The Military  
Gaol



The Admiralty Church and the Old Man Rosenbom



The Admiralty Park



The Fredrik Church

## Find your way

It is not a specific building that makes Karlskrona a World Heritage Site, but rather the entirety of the naval city. The World Heritage Site of the Naval Port of Karlskrona encompasses the military and civilian city, naval shipyard and harbour, fortifications, as well as several surrounding facilities that have been significant for the naval base's supply. Adjacent to this text, you will find some of these listed and marked on the map for easy navigation.

### Trossö

1. The Fredrik Church
2. "The Water Castle"
3. The Church of the Holy Trinity
4. The Town Hall
5. Count Wachtmeister's Residence/Blekinge Museum
6. The Enclosing Wall
7. The Boy Seamen Barracks
8. The Admiralty Clock Tower
9. Bataljon af Trolle
10. The Admiralty Church
11. Bastion Aurora
12. Bataljon Sparre
13. The Main Guardhouse
14. The dockyard wall
15. Admiral Chapman's Residence

### Stumholmen

16. The Corps de garde
17. The Sloop and Longboat Shed
18. The Naval Museum

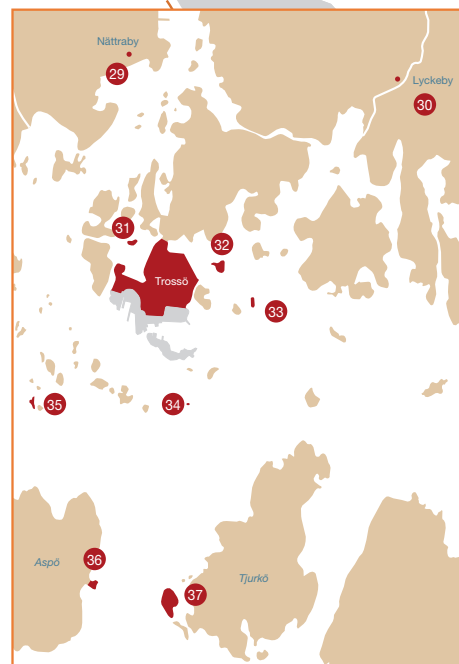
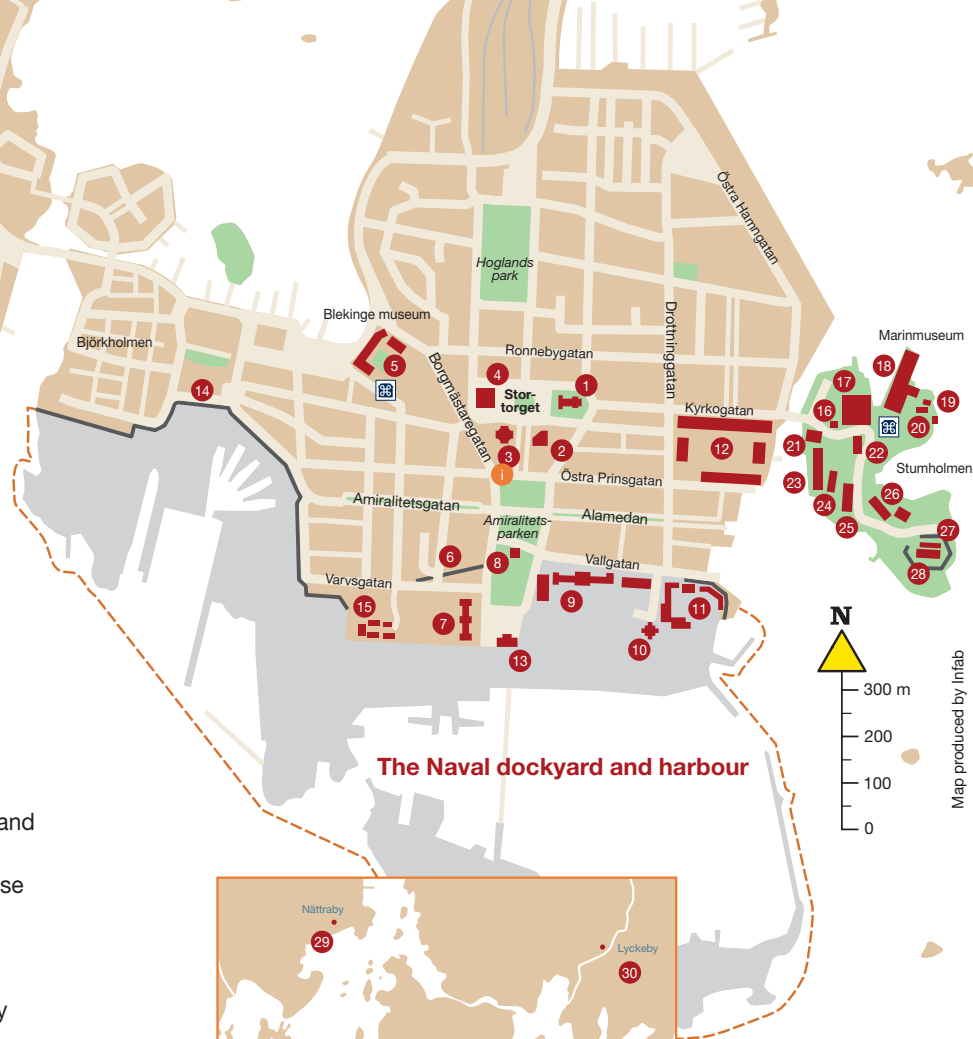
19. Quarantine Hospital and Fumigation Shed
20. The Disinfection House
21. The Crown bakery
22. The Military Gaol
23. The Navy's Main Clothing Manufactory
24. The Naval Barracks
25. The Cooper's Storehouse
26. The Hangars Nos. 3 and 4
27. Bastion Kungshall
28. The Kungshall Storehouse

### Omlandet

29. Admiral af Chapman's estate at Skärva
30. The Crown Mill in Lyckeby

### Befästningar

31. Ljungskär
32. Mjölneholmen
33. Koholmen
34. Godnatt
35. Kurrholmen
36. The Drottningkärr Citadel
37. The Kungsholmen Fortress



### Information

The Karlskrona Tourist Center is located in the city center, at the Nordenskjöldska House. You can also seek more information about the World Heritage site at the museums marked on the map.

Read more about the world heritage at [orlogsstadenkarlskrona.se](http://orlogsstadenkarlskrona.se).

Karlskrona offers incredible experiences in unique environments. Amidst the aroma of tar and the sound of waves, a wide range of fascinating guided tours awaits. Karlskrona's skilled world heritage guides will take you to exciting and one-of-a-kind places.

You can also digitally experience the World Heritage of The Naval Port of Karlskrona.

### **The World Heritage Karlskrona app**

The app is a digital gateway to the World Heritage Site Naval Port of Karlskrona. Through maps, stories, images and themed walks, you gain a deeper understanding of the site's significance. Explore both well-known and hidden environments at your own pace, on site or remotely.

### **Guided Tours**

Guided tours can be booked at the Karlskrona Tourist Center throughout the year.

Visit [visitkarlskrona.se](http://visitkarlskrona.se) for more information.

### **Glimpse of the World Heritage**

A series of short films that give you a glimpse of the World Heritage city and its secrets.

[karlskrona.se/glimtavvarldsarvet](http://karlskrona.se/glimtavvarldsarvet)

### **Experience the World Heritage in Virtual Reality**

Immerse yourself in virtual reality and explore the historic naval shipyard Lindholmen, Polhemsdockan, Wasaskjulet, or Repslagarbanan. Embark on guided tours in a breathtaking World Heritage environment.

Visit [vv360.se](http://vv360.se) for more information.

### **The World Heritage of The Naval Port of Karlskrona**

For more information about the World heritage of The Naval Port of Karlskrona, please visit [orlogsstadenkarlskrona.se](http://orlogsstadenkarlskrona.se).



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