

# UPPSALA - ANCIENT VIKINGS AND MODERN SCHOLARS



Uppsala, an ancient town in Sweden, is home to 535-year old university. Founded in 1477 the university is considered one of the oldest in Europe hence it attracts tourists interested in the famous history of the town and its people.

Uppsala was originally a religious center that was of importance to the pagan Vikings and served as the location for their general assembly also referred to as the Thing. They had a temple in Uppsala that is believed to have had statues dedicated to Odin, Freyr and Thor, their pagan gods, as well as a golden chain that encircled it and hung from the gables.

**As much as the temple has disappeared some Viking remains still exist in the form of 3 earthen mounds as well as rune-stones.** According to legend, burrows of the three Norse gods were supposed to be located within the ancient temple's ruins. However from excavations conducted it has been proven that the burrows are actually for three Norse rulers.

Uppsala was later converted into a Christian center and became the center of the earliest archbishopric in the country as early as 1164. Medieval churches dating back to the 13th century are very few. However, there is a cathedral from the 15th century that is much more elegant located here. The interior of the early churches has the medieval feeling and touch.

**The cathedral is still in use to date.** The structure made with an exterior made out of bricks creates a homely feel. The interior on its side has the typical design that is expected of any cathedral in Europe. Kings Gustav Vasa of the famous ship Vasa and renowned scientist Carl Linnaeus as well as Emanuel Swedenborg, a mystic, are laid in their tombs within the cathedral.

The local university also has lots of attractions thanks to the fact that it is a center of learning that has been around for a long time. You may visit the Linnaean Gardens that were founded as early as 1655 and reorganized by Carl Linnaeus who introduced the taxonomic system that is still used today in categorization animals and plants. However, due to his categorization of human beings as primates, he was to get into deep trouble with the church. The garden is just close to the Uppsala Castle that is one of a kind as apart from the throne room you can also enjoy European art at its best.

When it comes to the university's art and archeological collections, these you can view at The Gustavianum which was formerly used as an operating theatre for medical students during the 17th century. Early equipment used by scientists is also on show at the museum. You may also choose to walk along the riverside and lounge with the students and catch some fresh air.

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