

# Walking trail - TENGÖLEDEN, 6.5 km



This 6.5 km long walking trail winds its way through Öland's historic, cultural landscape. It will take you to extremely species-rich forests and the unique Great Alvar - in short during this hike you will experience the best of Öland's nature and hidden history! The approx. 6.5 km long, moderately difficult hike begins and ends at Station Linné (1). The first 3.2 km of the trail is clearly marked but on the Great Alvar there are very few paths, despite this the last half of the hike through the flat and open landscape should not pose any problems. The Öland cows grazing on the Great Alvar can sometimes come across as very curious, but if you ignore them they will ignore you too. Good footwear is recommended, wear wellies if it has recently rained. This walk will take 3-4 hours to complete as there is much to look at. Don't forget to bring something to drink with you. A perfect place to enjoy a picnic on a sunny day, but please do not forget to take your rubbish home with you.

- (1) Follow the gravel road north of Station Linné for about 400 m in an easterly direction. Continue 50 m past the big pear tree on the right hand side, then turn left through the opening in the stone wall. Follow the path across to the next field. Pass through the next stone wall and enter the "diversitetsängen", the Diversity Meadow (2).
- (2) The "Diversity Meadow" is an extremely species rich meadow, and it also contains house foundations from the Iron Age. The trail continues towards the meadow's north-easterly corner, where you will pass through another stone wall. Follow the winding path for approx. 200 m until you reach the next point of interest; Old Skogsby (3), an Iron Age village from 1500 years ago.
- (3) Old Skogsby. Here you will find traces of at least ten Iron Age foundations. It is believed that among these remains is one of northern Europe's largest chieftain halls. What seems to be the remains of a cattle street is in fact the sides of this 47 m long hall. Can you see it? 200 m ahead after you have climbed over the stile you will find a sign about this unique relict (only in Swedish).
- (4) Meadow with pollarded trees. The meadows and trees are managed by a local, non-profit organisation who keep these old traditions alive and help support the biodiversity in a major way! A perfect place to enjoy a picnic on a sunny day, but please do not forget to take your rubbish with you once you leave.
- (5) Follow the path to the next meadow. Turn left and walk across the meadow. Continue 20 m into the old forest before you turn to the right and up onto the bank 20 m further down the path. Follow the edge to the next meadow (approx. 200 m). Walk along the edge of the meadow and take the exit on the left through the stone wall and enter the deciduous forest. Along this section of the path you will find a lot of Roman snails (*Helix pomatia*), so please walk carefully.
- (6) You are now back in the Midland forest (Mittlandsskogen), one of the most species-rich environments in Sweden. Walk along the ditch which was dug by hand during the period between the 1st and 2nd world war. The ditch starts at the edge of the Great Alvar and flows into the Baltic Sea north of Gårdby and is over 15 km long. The water from this canal adds yet more diversity to an already species rich area. Follow the path until the forest opens up and enter the next meadow (approx. 300 m).
- (7) If you wish to stop the walk now and return to Station Linné you can do so by taking this shortcut: Walk around the mound of stones and follow the path back to Station Linné.  
Otherwise continue the walk by following the edge of the field.
- (8) Cultivated Field - stone wall - ditch - roadside ; four nouns that may not sound particularly exciting to a nature lover. As a matter of fact these man-made areas have contributed to this area's uniqueness, and have given us huge numbers of different species.

Some years lucerne or clover is also grown here and the plants when in bloom attract huge amounts of insects. Along the stone wall you will hear a great buzzing noise on sunny days. Follow the edge of the field for about 250 m, until you reach a small stream (with water depending on the season). Cross over the log bridge and keep to the left. Follow the small tractor road all the way to the T-junction (approx. 500 m). Along the roadside there are exciting insects and lovely plants, so keep a lookout!

(9)

Turn right (westerly direction) into the Kalkstad nature reserve. At the T-junction you will find a sign about nature reserve.

**From the County Council's website:** "The reserve is part of the southernmost offshoot of Öland's 'Mittlandsskog', Midland forest. The environment is the richest of all forest habitats, with a large number of rare animals, plants and fungi. Many of the special phenomena which distinguish a deciduous forest are displayed here in Kalkstad, for example different tree species of various ages and sizes, dead and dying trees, old trees, large trees and hollow trees. Here you will also find wetlands and drier meadows as well as the deciduous forest. The fields in Kalkstad contain a lot of different species. In spring you will find some rare species in bloom, *Lathyrus niger*, Lungwort and *Stellaria holostea*. All indicate the high, natural values of the forest and are known as indicator species. Kalkstad is a paradise if you are interested in fungi with several threatened species growing here. These fungi have been given names such as Hare's ear (*Otidea onotica*) and Beautiful bonnet (*Mycena renatii*).

Among the tree species, most of which are oak, ash, lime and maple, hides a real rarity; European White-elm (*Ulmus laevis*). The extensive shallow root system ultimately forms distinctive high buttresses around the base of the trunk. In Sweden this tree is only found growing wild here on Öland."

**End of quote** Follow the road until you reach the wetland in Kalkstad reserve's most southern edge and the Great Alvar's northern edge.

(10) At the edge of the forest there is a so-called "vät", ie a wetland that some summers dry out completely. During summers when the wetland has not yet dried out, you can find the now extremely rare horseshoe shrimp (*Triops cancriformis*); a species which in Sweden is only found in a handful of places on Öland. *T. cancriformis* is considered the oldest, living, species in the world – a 220-million-year-old fossil has been found which appears to be identical to the still-living *T. cancriformis*. Large specimens up to ten centimetres have been reported, but usually they are only half that size.

(11) Use the stile 100 m from the forest edge to take you over the stone wall / barbed wire.

(12) You are now on the Great Alvar which consists mainly of moorland with the bedrock (consisting of nearly half a billion year old Ordovician limestone) often exposed or covered by only a thin layer of soil. This area has a very special flora and fauna with a variety of unique species not found anywhere else in Sweden. Grazing is necessary to prevent it being overgrown; over thousands of years large areas have been shaped by grazing. This is a unique landscape and Alvar of this size cannot be found anywhere else in the world. The total amount of Alvar in the world is approx. 995 square kilometres and approx. 665 square kilometres are found in Sweden. The Great Alvar on Öland, is the world's largest still grazed pasture of any Alvar, it is 260 square kilometres and covers most of southern Öland. The efforts to protect the Great Alvar have further intensified since 2000, when the whole southern Öland - not only Alvar – was placed on UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites and this was justified by: "*The landscape of Southern Öland is characterized by its long cultural history and the geological and topographical conditions. Southern Öland is an outstanding example of how man uses the island's diverse landscape in the best possible way.*"

The pastures (Alvar and coastlands), including villages and their fields, together form the World Heritage Site "Southern Öland".

Continue diagonally down southeast, follow the edge of the treeline, cross a few low stone walls where appropriate and try to find the alvar-road (about 600 m from the stile; see map) that leads to the west.

- (13) The Alvar-road runs straight through a nature reserve of high natural and cultural value: the Karlevi southern conservation area. This area has great ecological, historical and geological value, and was established in 1992 in order to preserve the habitats of animal and plant species that are special to the Alvar, as well as the wetland and maintain this open landscape. The general public can visit the area as long as they don't cause any disturbance to the fauna, flora or the farming. The area is also included in the Natura 2000 (EU's Habitats and Birds Directives).
- (14) Turn right and continue north along Route 136, near the village of Eriksöre. Road 136 is considered by experts to be one of Northern Europe's oldest roads - estimated at about 6600 years old! Several burial sites and other cultural relics along its entire length testify to the road's historical significance. Moreover, Öland roadsides with their extremely rich blooms are almost as well-known a feature of the Öland landscape as windmills. Watch and enjoy - especially during the summer months - urban environments don't get more beautiful than this!
- (15) You are now on the Great Alvar's most northerly edge: another area which houses a very special flora and fauna with a variety of species unique to Sweden. The orchid blooms in the month of May are world famous! Continue walking parallel to Route 136 until you are level with the stile at Eriksöre junction: you now join our trail "Gröna slingan" which takes you north, back toward Station Linné (green arrows).
- (16) Turn left immediately after the stile and follow the path back to Station Linné. The approx. 100 m long stretch from the stile and Alvar edge to the station plot is bordered by a sloe berry shrubbery, lots of herbs and other shrubs and east of the trail, closest to the station, there is even a wetland. So even though this is only a 100 m long stretch of a very human influenced nature, it is nonetheless very species rich!
- (1) Back at Station Linné - hope you had a nice time and welcome back!

