



Museums **PASSPORT**

A day at the museum

IKEA Museum, Älmhult, Sweden

THE IKEA MUSEUM IS THREE MUSEUMS IN ONE: AN ARCHIVE OF 20TH-CENTURY DESIGN, A HISTORY OF POLITICS AND LIFE IN RURAL SWEDEN, AND A BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK AT THE ICONIC BRAND.

WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Located in what was once the world's first IKEA store, the IKEA Museum offers a unique perspective into Swedish design, history and culture. The museum (flat) packs a punch with 3500 square metres of exhibition space where you'll find a treasure trove of retro products and fascinating displays that trace the story of the furniture giant, situating it in its social and political context. The IKEA Museum physically, historically and intellectually covers a lot of ground, making for a hands-on museum excursion that is shockingly educational and seriously fun. ikeamuseum.com

EXIT THROUGH THE GIFT SHOP

ONE COULD CONSIDER THEIR LOCAL IKEA A GIFT SHOP IN AND OF ITSELF. BUT HERE, YOU'LL FIND PLENTY OF TCHOTCHKES ALONGSIDE A ROBUST SELECTION OF DESIGN BOOKS AND ART PRINTS.

Around Älmhult

Älmhult is surrounded by rolling hills, picturesque farms and some very photogenic livestock in the stunning landscape of rural Sweden. Keep your eyes peeled for quaint and quintessentially Swedish mid-century modern homes as you enter and exit the town, which is accessible by train and bus. For the ultimate IKEA experience, visitors can stay in the world's only IKEA hotel, located across from the museum.



TOP FOUR...

EIGHTY YEARS OF DESIGN

Of course, the focus of the IKEA Museum is the furniture. The museum's top floor provides a decade-by-decade guide to the history of IKEA and furniture design, examining material culture at a mass-market level. Displays of vintage IKEA products serve as time capsules of interiors from bygone eras. Here, you'll also learn about the influence political movements, technology and sustainability have had on the way that IKEA furniture is designed and produced.

EXPLORING SMÅLAND

Our Roots is an exhibition that forms a large part of the museum, and is dedicated to the history and people of Älmhult and Småland, IKEA founder Ingvar Kamprad's rural childhood province. This section includes exhibitions of folk art and handicrafts, lauding the resourcefulness of people living among limited means and a harsh environment. Visitors can even take part in a hands-on butter-churning simulation.

SOCIAL HISTORY

IKEA's dominance didn't just come from the quality of its furniture, but from a rising middle-class market that was the by-product of an emerging welfare state. Also part of *Our Roots*, this section provides a fascinating look into the political and pedagogical history of Sweden, examining the role that sociology and psychology played in product development.

AN ELEVATED IKEA CAFE

Fika is a Swedish term for a coffee and cake break, but it's also a life philosophy of slowing down and enjoying the little things. Included in your museum ticket is a free cup of coffee, tea or lingonberry juice – perfect for a post-peruse fika.



INTERNATIONALTRAVELLER.COM **159**