

A Week in Tarnaby, Sweden

The pace of life over the last week has been something our family rarely experiences. No specific time to wake up or go to bed. Day light from 8 to 3:30, but cold enough that we are only spending a few hours outside. Little open in Tarnaby, besides a wonderful bakery that is a pilgrimage worth making!

Our house is super comfortable. From the living room and kitchen there are windows north and south that remind us of how much snow surrounds us. The sun rises and set over the frozen lake, so far south in the sky it feels like it never leaves the horizon. We have seen clouds, snow, wind, sun and one night of stars. No Northern Lights, although we have been on the lookout.

The fireplace, with its heat driven fan, and the crazy, soothing pellet boiler, along with heated floors and a small, very hot sauna, keep us incredibly comfortable. The big couch, which Max has taken over, and a TV with an interesting LED light set up behind, have allowed for evening Great Courses and movies. We have listened to Gun, Germs and Steel, are holding a family book club reading about Vikings, and in other ways have pursued Max's (and our) education. All at a pace that has been very relaxing. I have read more books this week than I normally do in a month. I've had time to clean up the work I left undone, catch up on emails and now feel like I have a clean slate. What a feeling!

Thanks to Steve we have been eating well, and very healthy! Local salmon is my favorite. Also lots of wonderful cheeses and local breads. The heartier the better; although Max is favoring the cheese bread. Thanks to Max we have had no shortage of pastries and chocolate.

Our snow activities have been magical. There is so much snow here! Our family spends most winters looking for good snow and celebrating whatever we find. Here, it is all around. And it the light, fluffy powder of my childhood in Colorado. We are cross country skiing and snowshoeing, exploring trails made by snow mobiles (some with lights!) and those we create on our own. And trying to keep frost bite at bay and our fingers and toes warm. On one snowshoe adventure we crossed paths with a group of reindeer.

Forests here are very different. Many more deciduous trees than we are used to. Up high, they are very small and scraggly. Lakes (frozen now) surround us, with the only moving water being the rivers. It's fun to think of what it is like here in the summer. For now, we are glad that it is blanketed with snow.

The people we have met are very friendly. Most speak good English, so we are able to communicate! We are here for a very slow season - lovely for us. It's not clear when it gets busy, but mid-February seems to be one such time. Maybe also a few months in the summer. There appear to be many summer houses. We are a long way from anywhere, so it is not clear how that works. We are actually very close to Norway. And if this area is full of lakes, it is more so over the border – lakes and fjords. Rough and beautiful country.

I am feeling incredibly thankful to have this opportunity. To see new places, experience true winter and mostly to have unscheduled, uninterrupted time with Steve and Max.

