



# Österlenleden

THE COMPLETE GUIDE



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# Overview

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## Österlenleden: Skåneleden SL4 on the Baltic Coast

Österlenleden is Skåneleden SL4, a waymarked trail through Österlen in south-east Skåne, Sweden. The canonical route is a 188 km loop from Ystad, though many hikers walk the roughly 103 km coastal line from Ystad to Brösarp/Alunbruket in about 6–8 days. It is a moderate walk: mostly easy coastal, farmland and woodland paths, with some uneven beach, cliff and hilly sections. See more routes in [Sweden](#).

### Route Overview

The full Österlenleden starts and ends in Ystad, a rail-connected medieval town on the south coast. From there it can be followed as a circular Skåneleden SL4 loop, but the common trip is point-to-point along the Baltic coast via Nybrostrand, Kåseberga, Löderup, Borrby, Skillinge, Simrishamn, Kivik, Stenshuvud National Park, Haväng and Ravlunda before finishing around Brösarp or Andrarum/Alunbruket. Inland sections add beech woodland, open farmland, Brösarps Backar, Hallamölla and the Linderödsåsen high ground. For other Swedish long-distance routes, compare [Blekingeleden](#), [Hallandsleden](#) and [Bohusleden](#).

### History on the Österlenleden

Österlenleden crosses one of Skåne's richest historic landscapes. The coast includes Ales Stenar, an Iron Age stone ship above the Baltic, and Bronze Age remains near Kivik. Inland, the route reaches Andrarum/Alunbruket, the ruins of a major 17th–19th-century alum works that became a large industrial settlement. The modern trail is part of Skåneleden, the regional walking network developed from the 1970s onwards.

### Notable highlights

- **Ales Stenar, Kåseberga:** A 59-boulder megalithic stone ship, about 67 m long, set on a grassy clifftop above the Baltic. It is one of the route's clearest links to Iron Age Österlen.
- **Stenshuvud National Park:** Sweden's southernmost national park, with beech forest, heath, rare flora and a coastal hill rising to a 97 m sea lookout.
- **Kivik:** A coastal village known for apple orchards and cider, with the Bronze Age King's Grave burial cairn nearby.
- **Brösarps Backar:** Rolling, juniper-clad hills that are especially notable for spring wildflowers and open Österlen views.
- **Hallamölla waterfall:** Skåne's highest waterfall, where the Verkaån river drops in steps through a wooded ravine near Brösarp.
- **Andrarum alum works, Alunbruket:** Ruins of an alum works founded in 1637; in the 18th century it was the largest industrial settlement in the Nordic region.

### Challenges to expect

This is low-level walking, not mountain terrain, but do not treat it as a pavement stroll. Expect sand, narrow coastal paths, gravel tracks, forest roads and quiet lanes, with exposed Baltic sections and some

uneven, hilly ground around Brösarp and Andrarum. Waymarking is generally reliable, but a map or GPS is useful on inland woodland sections.

# Key Data

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|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Country               | Sweden   |
| Distance              | 188 km   |
| Duration              | 6-8 days   |
| Difficulty            | Moderate   |
| Trail type            | Loop   |
| Elevation gain/loss   | 2080 m   |
| Highest point         | 195 m  |
| Terrain & landscape   | Coastal, Farmland, Meadows, Forest, Hilly                                  |
| Trail surface         | Sand, Gravel, Dirt, Paved  |
| Accommodation         | Wind Shelters, Campsites, Wild Camping Spots, Guesthouses, Hostels, Hotels |
| Average daytime temp. | 20°C   |
| Chance of rainfall    | Medium   |
| Estimated cost        | \$\$   |
| Optimal season        | Spring, Summer, Autumn   |
| Accessibility         | Family Friendly, Pet Friendly  |
| Facilities            | Restrooms, Water Sources, Campsites, Shelters, Picnic Areas                |
| Permits & fees        | No permits or fees   |

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# Introduction

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Österlenleden is the orange-marked Skåneleden SL4 through south-east Skåne: officially a 188 km loop from Ystad, but most walkers take the ~103 km coastal line to Brösarp or Andrarum–Alunbruket over six days. It links Baltic beaches and dunes at Sandhammaren, fishing villages such as Skillinge and Brantevik, the clifftop stone ship of Ales Stenar, apple country around Kivik, the beech woods and 97 m summit of Stenshuvud, then the rolling Brösarps Backar, Hallamölla waterfall and the alum works ruins at Andrarum — moderate, varied walking suited to fit beginners as well as more experienced hikers.

The route asks for regular full-day distances, comfort on sand, gravel tracks, field paths, forest roads and hilly inland ground, and enough planning to match accommodation or camping options to the stages. This guide covers the six-day coastal itinerary, overnight stops, guesthouses and vindskydd, food and resupply, transport to Ystad and back from Brösarp or Andrarum, seasonal terrain, navigation and the common planning mistakes to avoid.

## Stage-by-Stage Guide

The stage notes below follow the common six-day coastal point-to-point version of Österlenleden, from Ystad to Brösarp and Andrarum/Alunbruket. The official Skåneleden SL4 is a longer 188 km loop back to Ystad, so check that maps, GPX files and accommodation bookings match the route variant being walked.

### Stage 1: Ystad to Kåseberga — approx. 21 km

This is a varied opening day: easy coastal walking out of Ystad, flat sandy forest paths through Sandskogen, then a more exposed and rolling finish over Hammars Backar before dropping into Kåseberga. It is a moderate day rather than a hard one, but the distance, wind and final climbs make it more substantial than the gentle start suggests.

From Ystad, the route leaves the rail-connected town via the harbour and seafront, then follows the south coast eastwards. The walking through Sandskogen is flat and sandy, using forest paths through a pine plantation established to stabilise the shifting sand. The northern part of Sandskogen is a nature reserve, and the path crosses the Nybroån before reaching Nybrostrand.

Nybrostrand is the main practical stop of the day, with a café and shops, plus a water tap at the campsite toilet block. After Nybrostrand, the character changes as the trail rises towards Hammars Backar. This ridge section is the hardest part of the stage: expect steeper ascents, open exposure to coastal wind and less shelter. In spring, the slopes are known for wildflowers, but in poor weather this is where the day can feel slowest.

The approach to Kåseberga includes stone and sandy beach walking beside the sea. The major landmark is Ales Stenar above the village: Sweden's largest megalithic stone ship, set on the clifftop with broad Baltic views. It is worth allowing time here rather than arriving too late in the day.

**Food and water:** Ystad has full services before departure. Nybrostrand is the useful mid-stage resupply point. Kåseberga has harbour food options, including Kåseberga Fiskrökeri, cafés and limited village services. Carry enough water from Ystad or Nybrostrand for the exposed second half.

**Accommodation:** Kåseberga has small-scale accommodation including Kåseberga Gårdshotell & Spa, Ales BnB and guesthouses. Some accommodation is around 1.6 km from the village centre, and not every place has an in-house restaurant, so evening meals should be checked when booking.

**Transport and access:** Ystad is the easiest start point, with rail connections from Malmö and Copenhagen via the Öresund link. Nybrostrand and Kåseberga have road access, and Skånetrafiken buses can be useful if shortening the day, but current timetables should be checked before travelling.

**Navigation and warnings:** Waymarking is generally straightforward: orange Skåneleden markers through town and inland sections, with the coast as a clear reference on open stretches. Kabusa Gunnery Range can be closed for military exercises; when this happens, the inland alternative is signposted. Do not ignore closure signs.

## Stage 2: Kåseberga to Skillinge — approx. 22 km

This is the big sand-and-dune stage, with long open beach walking and more tiring underfoot conditions than the modest elevation gain implies. It is one of the most atmospheric sections of Österlenleden, but it can be draining in heat or headwind.

From Kåseberga, the trail heads east past Löderups Strandbad and into the Hagestad Nature Reserve area. Expect sandy paths, oak woodland, heath and dune-edge walking. Some parts are shaded and pleasant, but the surface remains soft in places and progress can be slower than on firm tracks.

The main feature is Sandhammaren, with its long white sandy beach and lighthouse area. The stretch from Spraggehusen towards Sandhammaren involves around 9 km of open sand. In calm weather it is a superb coastal walk; in summer heat or strong wind it becomes physically demanding, especially if wind-blown sand is coming off the beach. There are swimming opportunities along this coast, including around Mälarhusen, Sandby, Borrby and Kyhls Strandbad, but do not plan the stage around services at every beach.

After Sandhammaren, the route continues through dune, heath and coastal terrain towards Skillinge, a fishing village with cafés, a grocery shop and accommodation.

**Food and water:** Carry lunch and plenty of water from Kåseberga. There is a seasonal kiosk around the Sandhammaren lighthouse area, but it should not be treated as a guaranteed resupply. Skillinge has cafés and a grocery shop, though the shop is not open on Sundays. Skillinge Hamnkrog is a summer-only option, and Karnelund Krog is another dining option in the area.

**Accommodation:** Skillinge has B&B-style accommodation such as Lunkaberg B&B and Hoby Gård. Forest camping is also available near Skillinge for walkers using camping options.

**Transport and access:** The coast road and nearby villages give possible exit points, and Skånetrafiken buses may help split or shorten the day. Timetables and stop locations should be checked before relying on them, especially outside summer.

**Navigation and warnings:** Orange markers guide the route through Hagestad Nature Reserve; on open coastal sections the line broadly follows the shore. The warning for this stage is not technical difficulty but fatigue: soft sand, glare, heat and wind can make the 22 km feel longer. Take more water than seems necessary on warm days and protect against sun exposure.

## Stage 3: Skillinge to Simrishamn — approx. 13 km

This is the shortest stage of the six-day itinerary and works well as a half-day walk, a recovery day or a chance to spend more time in Simrishamn. The terrain remains coastal but changes noticeably from the sandy landscapes around Sandhammaren to rockier shore, open meadows and fishing hamlets.

North of Skillinge, the path uses beach meadows, grass heaths and boulder-strewn coastal ground. The walking is generally easy to moderate, though the rougher shoreline surfaces need more attention than a promenade path. The geological feel of the coast changes towards slate and rock formations as Simrishamn approaches.

The stage passes Gislövshammar, known for historic millstone quarries, and Brantevik, one of the classic Österlen fishing villages, with a harbour and half-timbered houses. Örnahusen is a worthwhile pause for birdwatching, especially during migration periods. A longer optional detour can be made inland to

Glimmingehus Castle, one of Scandinavia's best-preserved medieval tower houses, around 4–5 km off-route.

Simrishamn is the largest town on this coastal walk and the most convenient overnight stop for services, dining and onward transport.

**Food and water:** There may be seasonal café or kiosk options at Gislövshammar harbour and Brantevik, but they should not replace carrying basic supplies. Simrishamn has full services, including restaurants, supermarkets and a pharmacy.

**Accommodation:** Simrishamn has the broadest choice of accommodation on the route, including hotels such as Kockska Gården and other town options. It is a sensible place to build in a more comfortable night or rest period.

**Transport and access:** Simrishamn is rail-connected and is one of the best points for joining, leaving or shortening the walk. Skånetrafiken services also make this stage practical for section walkers.

**Navigation and warnings:** The coastal path is well marked and mostly easy to follow. The main planning issue is timing: because the stage is short, walkers who arrive early may want to book accommodation that allows luggage drop-off or plan time in Simrishamn rather than rushing the day.

#### **Stage 4: Simrishamn to Kivik — approx. 22 km**

This is usually the most demanding stage of the coastal itinerary. It combines distance, the biggest sustained climbing of the route, rocky and rooty ground in Stenshuvud National Park, and one of the longest gaps between reliable food and water. Elevation figures vary by itinerary, but expect a notably ascent-heavy day, roughly in the range of +250 m to +450 m.

From Simrishamn, the route heads north along the coast through traditional fishing villages including Baskemölla and Vik. The terrain is mixed: sandy beaches, boulder-strewn meadows, wooded slopes, cultivated fields and short inland diversions. Tjörnedalagården is one of the botanical highlights, with herb-rich deciduous woodland, grazed meadows and spring flowers such as orchids, pasqueflowers and cowslips. North of Tjörnedala, the sandstone formation known as the Priest's Bathtub is a distinctive coastal landmark.

Do not rely on walking the beach below Vik. The safe way is to follow the marked inland route past hills and cultivated land rather than trying to force a coastal line that may not be passable.

The defining section is Stenshuvud National Park. The route climbs through beech and hornbeam forest towards the 97 m summit, with steeper, rockier and more uneven ground near the top. Some sections may require hand support, especially in wet conditions. The reward is the coastal panorama over Hanöbukten from the summit. After the summit, the route passes near Naturum Stenshuvud visitor centre before descending towards Kivik. Near Kivik, Kungagraven, the Bronze Age King's Grave burial cairn, is a worthwhile detour if time and opening arrangements suit.

**Food and water:** Start with adequate supplies from Simrishamn. Baskemölla and Vik have limited services, and the Stenshuvud section should be treated as having no reliable food stop. Naturum Stenshuvud has basic facilities and visitor information, but not a full resupply. Kivik has a supermarket, cafés, restaurants and Kiviks Musteri, known for apple juice and cider products. Carry at least 1.5 litres of water on this stage in warm weather.

**Accommodation:** Kivik has hotels, guesthouses and seaside accommodation, including options such as Agda Lund and STF Kivikstrand Seaside Hotel. Book ahead in summer and during popular autumn apple-season periods.

**Transport and access:** Simrishamn is the rail-connected start of the day. Kivik has road and bus access, but current Skånetrafiken connections should be checked before planning a late arrival or onward transfer.

**Navigation and warnings:** Follow the orange SL4 markers, especially through Stenshuvud National Park and around Vik. The national park paths are signed, but the ascent is rocky and rooty; slow down in rain or leaf fall. This is the stage where underestimating food, water and time most often causes problems.

## Stage 5: Kivik to Brösarp — approx. 12 km

Although shorter than the previous day, this is not just an easy transfer stage. The route leaves the immediate coast, crosses heath and former military land, then climbs into the Brösarps Backar hills on soft, uneven ground. Expect around +290 m / -260 m of ascent and descent, with the effort concentrated in the second half.

From Kivik marketplace, the route heads north past Vitemölla, a fishing village beside rare sand steppe habitat, sandy beach and dunes. The area includes Lindgrens länga outdoor museum and nearby historic landscape features around Örakeren. Services in Vitemölla are very limited, so it is better treated as a scenic pause rather than a resupply point.

The route then crosses Ravlunda Heath, a former military shooting range now managed as nature reserve heathland. It is open and exposed, with heather, wind and broad skies. After crossing road 19, the path rises into Brösarps Backar, one of the classic inland landscapes of Österlen: rolling glacial hills, juniper scrub, heath and wide views. On clear days, views can reach towards Hanö island to the north and Bornholm to the south-east. Spring, especially April and May, is a particularly strong season here for cowslips, pasqueflowers and heathland flowers.

The final approach follows the Verkeån valley into Brösarp, a small village with limited but useful services.

**Food and water:** Stock up in Kivik before leaving. Vitemölla and Ravlunda have very limited or no reliable walker services. Brösarp has a small supermarket and Brösarps Gästgifveri & Spa, with a restaurant that should be booked ahead in peak season. Carry food and water for the full stage.

**Accommodation:** Brösarp's main overnight option is Brösarps Gästgifveri & Spa, with a few B&Bs in the area. Availability is limited compared with Simrishamn or Kivik, so this is an important booking to secure early.

**Transport and access:** Kivik and Brösarp are accessible by road and regional bus, making this stage practical to shorten or use as a section walk. Check Skånetrafiken timetables before depending on a bus at the end of the day.

**Navigation and warnings:** Orange markers lead across heath and into the hills, but take care at junctions in Brösarps Backar where multiple paths cross the open slopes. Livestock may be present in pastures on this inland part of the walk; keep gates closed and give animals space. Dogs are not recommended on these stages.

## Stage 6: Brösarp to Andrarum / Alunbruket — approx. 14 km

The final stage is the strongest change in landscape: from the open hills around Brösarp into the wooded Verkeån river valley and the historic alum works at Andrarum/Alunbruket. It is also the hilliest inland day, with repeated undulations through valley terrain; allow 4–5 hours rather than treating it as a short walk.

From Brösarp, the trail follows the Verkeån through a deep, wooded ravine. The forest character is unusually lush for Skåne, with oak, beech, elm, ash and lime creating a dense deciduous canopy in spring and summer. Paths include forest tracks, stream-side sections and undulating valley walking. The difficulty is moderate rather than technical, with no hand-support scrambling, but the ground can be muddy and slower after rain.

Hallamölla is the key natural landmark: Skåne's highest waterfall, dropping 23 m beside a preserved mill that operated for nearly 500 years until 1949. Beyond Hallamölla, the route continues through Verkeån Nature Reserve, one of southern Sweden's largest nature reserves, with marked trails and good signage. The route also passes near the edge of Christinehof ecopark before reaching Andrarum and Alunbruket.

Alunbruket is the cultural end point of this six-day version: the ruins of the alum works founded in 1637, once the largest industrial settlement in the Nordic region. Kaffestugan Alunbruket offers café and simple accommodation in season, normally March to October; this should be checked before booking outside the main walking period.

**Food and water:** Brösarp is the last reliable food stop, so leave with all food needed for the day. There are no reliable services through the Verkeån valley. Water from the Verkeån should be treated or filtered if used. Kaffestugan Alunbruket is a useful finish option when open.

**Accommodation:** At the finish, Alunbruket has simple accommodation associated with Kaffestugan Alunbruket when open. Brösarp may be a more reliable overnight base if walking the stage as an out-and-back or if onward transport is awkward.

**Transport and access:** There is no train station at Andrarum/Alunbruket. Departure is by Skånetrafiken regional bus, commonly via Brösarp and then onwards towards Tomelilla, Simrishamn, Ystad, Malmö or beyond. Some self-guided trips include a transfer to Brösarp bus stop. Allow around 1–2 hours for public transport back towards Ystad or Malmö, depending on connections, and check the Skånetrafiken journey planner before the final day. Copenhagen Kastrup airport is around two hours' total travel from Brösarp, depending on connections.

**Navigation and warnings:** Follow the orange Skåneleden markers through the valley; yellow Backaleden markers also appear in this area. Keep right at the main reserve trail junction. Mud, wet leaves and stream-side paths can slow progress in autumn and winter. As on Stage 5, expect livestock and pasture gates in places: close gates carefully and avoid disturbing animals.

## Recommended Itinerary

This itinerary follows the common coastal point-to-point Österlenleden walk from Ystad to Brösarp and Andrarum / Alunbruket. The full Skåneleden SL4 Österlen is a longer 188 km loop back to Ystad; the schedule below is the practical 6-stage version most hikers book.

### Standard 6-stage itinerary

| Day     | From      | To         | Approx. distance | Why this stage makes sense   | Services/accommodation notes  |
|---------|-----------|------------|------------------|--|---|
| Arrival | —         | Ystad      | —                | Ystad is the easiest place to start: rail-connected, with direct access from Malmö and Copenhagen via Malmö. Arriving the day before avoids starting a 21 km first stage after travel.                         | Stay in Ystad. It has the best start-point services, restaurants and shops before the smaller coastal villages.   |
| 1       | Ystad     | Kåseberga  | 21 km            | A logical first coastal stage: harbour promenade, Sandskogen sand forest, the Nybroån outlet and open hills around Hammars Backar before reaching Ales Stenar above Kåseberga.                                 | Kåseberga is small. Harbour restaurants are useful, but accommodation is limited and often set back from the harbour. Dinner may need arranging with the accommodation. Book early.   |
| 2       | Kåseberga | Skillinge  | 22 km            | One of the longest coastal days, but it keeps the itinerary neat by reaching the next proper village. The route passes Löderups Strandbad, Hagestad Nature Reserve and the sand and dunes around Sandhammaren. | Skillinge has limited but adequate services, including harbour restaurants and a grocery store. Accommodation in and around Skillinge is tight, so this is one of the key nights to secure early.                                   |
| 3       | Skillinge | Simrishamn | 13 km            | A deliberately shorter day after two longer stages. It follows coastal meadows and small fishing settlements including Gislövshammar and Brantevik, with plenty of time to reach Simrishamn unhurried.         | Simrishamn has the best services on the route: supermarkets, restaurants, hotels and a railway station with onward links to Ystad, Malmö and Copenhagen. It is the best place for a rest day, resupply or joining/leaving the walk. |

| Day | From       | To                    | Approx. distance | Why this stage makes sense   | Services/accommodation notes   |
|-----|------------|-----------------------|------------------|--|--|
| 4   | Simrishamn | Kivik                 | 22 km            | The longest and most demanding coastal stage. It links Baskemölla and Vik with Stenshuvud National Park, where the route climbs through forest and heath to the 97 m coastal summit before descending towards Kivik. | Carry food and water, as services are limited through the Stenshuvud section. Kivik has good end-of-day services, harbour restaurants and accommodation, but summer rooms should still be booked ahead.  |
| 5   | Kivik      | Brösarp               | 12 km            | A short stage, but not a throwaway day. The route leaves the coast via Vitemölla, turns inland through heath, valley and undulating ground, and gives a gentler approach to Brösarp before the hillier final stage.  | Brösarp is small but practical, with a shop and established accommodation. Brösarps Gästgifveri & Spa is the main overnight option, so availability can control the whole itinerary.   |
| 6   | Brösarp    | Andrarum / Alunbruket | 14 km            | The most hilly finish, crossing Brösarps Backar and wooded ground around the Verkaån, with Hallamölla waterfall and the historic alum works at Alunbruket as the natural endpoint.                                   | Andrarum / Alunbruket has very limited services and no rail station. Many booked trips include a transfer back to Brösarp bus station for onward Skånetrafiken buses. Independent walkers should check current bus times before committing to finish-day travel. |

## Slower variants

Choose a slower schedule if walking with children, carrying camping gear, travelling in summer with time for swimming, or wanting longer stops at Sandhammaren, Simrishamn and Stenshuvud National Park.

| Variant  | How to adapt the itinerary  | Who it suits   | Planning notes  |
|--|---|--|---|
| 7 walking days by splitting Kåseberga to Skillinge | Break the 22 km Kåseberga-Skillinge stage around Löderup, Sandhammaren or the Borrbystrand area.        | First-time long-distance hikers, families, and anyone who prefers avoiding back-to-back 20 km-plus days early in the trip. | Accommodation and camping options must be checked before booking, as this stretch has long beach and nature-reserve sections rather than large settlements. |
| 7 walking days by splitting Simrishamn to Kivik    | Stop around Baskemölla, then continue separately through Vik, Stenshuvud National Park and on to Kivik. | Walkers who want unhurried time in Stenshuvud rather than treating it as part of a long 22 km day.                         | STF Baskemölla Hostel is a practical mid-stage option. Availability should be checked early in peak season.   |

| Variant                      | How to adapt the itinerary  | Who it suits  | Planning notes   |
|------------------------------|---|---|--|
| Add a rest day in Simrishamn | Keep the standard walking stages but spend two nights in Simrishamn.        | Anyone wanting a lower-risk itinerary, a resupply pause, or a weather buffer before the Stenshuvud stage. | Simrishamn is the easiest rest-day town because it has the strongest services and rail access.           |
| Add time around Brösarp      | Spend an extra night in Brösarp before continuing to Andrarum / Alunbruket. | Walkers interested in Brösarps Backar, Hallamölla and the Verkaån valley, especially in spring.           | Accommodation in Brösarp is limited; book this night before building the rest of the schedule around it. |

## Faster variants

A faster itinerary is possible, but it changes the character of the walk. The standard schedule already includes two 22 km days and a hilly final stage, so cutting time usually means either one very long day or using public transport to skip a shorter section.

| Variant                           | Example schedule  | Who it suits   | Trade-offs   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|
| 5 walking days, all on foot       | Day 1 Ystad–Kåseberga; Day 2 Kåseberga–Simrishamn; Day 3 Simrishamn–Kivik; Day 4 Kivik–Brösarp; Day 5 Brösarp–Andrarum / Alunbruket.    | Fit, experienced walkers who are comfortable with a roughly 35 km day.   | Kåseberga–Simrishamn is a hard combined stage and not recommended for most hikers. It also leaves less time for Sandhammaren, Skillinge, Brantevik and Simrishamn. |
| 5-day trip using public transport | Walk the main highlight stages, but use a Skånetrafiken bus to avoid walking the short Skillinge–Simrishamn section.                    | Time-limited hikers who prefer preserving the major coastal and inland highlights rather than forcing a 35 km walking day. | Bus times and ticketing should be checked in the Skånetrafiken app before travelling.  |
| Section-hike approach             | Use Ystad and Simrishamn railway stations as access points, then continue north towards Kivik, Brösarp and Andrarum on a separate trip. | Walkers combining Österlenleden with other travel in Skåne or those without a full week available.                         | Works best if accommodation at the smaller endpoints is booked first, then transport is fitted around it.  |

## Booking priorities for this itinerary

- Secure Kåseberga, Skillinge, Brösarp and Alunbruket first; these are the tightest overnight stops.
- Simrishamn and Kivik have a better choice of places to stay, but summer and holiday periods still need early booking.
- If using baggage transfer, check that each accommodation can receive luggage and that any off-route transfers are included.
- If camping, use official Skåneleden information for current vindskydd locations and facilities, and apply allemansrätten responsibly. Do not assume every stage end has a staffed campsite or shop.
- All transport and accommodation prices are in SEK. Sweden is not in the eurozone.

# Planning the Route

## Choose the route version first

The first planning decision is whether to walk the full Skåneleden SL4 Österlen loop or the more common coastal point-to-point route.

| Route choice                         | Practical meaning  | Typical time  |
|--------------------------------------|--|---|
| Coastal Ystad-Brösarp/Andrarum route | The usual long-distance walking itinerary, following the coast and then turning inland towards Brösarp and Alunbruket    | 6 walking days, with 7 walking days if adding a slower pace or rest day |
| Full SL4 Österlen loop               | The official 188 km Skåneleden loop from Ystad back to Ystad, waymarked with orange markers and divided into 14 sections | About 12-14 walking days  |

Most visiting hikers plan the coastal line rather than the complete loop. The six-stage itinerary is also the one that fits the natural chain of towns and villages with accommodation. The full loop is better treated as a longer Skåneleden project, or as a set of individual sections, unless there is enough time for nearly two weeks on trail.

## How many days to allow

For the coastal route, six walking days is the standard pace. It gives several moderate-length days, one short day into Simrishamn, and enough time for the hilly inland finish without forcing late arrivals at small villages.

| Day | Stage                            | Approx. distance | Planning note  |
|-----|----------------------------------|------------------|--|
| 1   | Ystad to Kåseberga               | 21 km            | A full first day; book Kåseberga accommodation early and check its exact location relative to the village.     |
| 2   | Kåseberga to Skillinge           | 22 km            | Carry lunch; accommodation at Skillinge is the main bottleneck on the route.                                   |
| 3   | Skillinge to Simrishamn          | 13 km            | Shorter day, useful for an afternoon in Simrishamn or for managing transfers if staying there two nights.      |
| 4   | Simrishamn to Kivik              | 22 km            | The longest and most demanding coastal stage, including Stenshuvud National Park; carry food and enough water. |
| 5   | Kivik to Brösarp                 | 12 km            | Shorter day as the route turns inland towards the Brösarp hills.   |
| 6   | Brösarp to Andrarum / Alunbruket | 14 km            | Rural finish; plan onward bus connections before setting off.  |

With arrival and departure logistics included, many walkers need around eight nights: one night in Ystad before starting, six walking nights, and either a final night near Brösarp/Andrarum or an early onward journey. A rest day in Simrishamn or Kivik makes the trip more relaxed and is sensible for walkers who

want time for food stops, harbours and Stenshuvud rather than treating the route as a point-to-point march.

The route can be walked briskly, but it is not especially well suited to improvising very long or very short days. Overnight stops are dictated by the coastal villages, and there are stretches where there is little practical accommodation between stage ends.

## Book accommodation before transport

Accommodation is the main constraint on Österlenleden. The walking is not technically difficult, but the chain of small villages means beds can decide the itinerary more than legs do.

The key pressure points are:

- **Skillinge:** very limited accommodation. It is common for walkers to stay in Simrishamn for two nights and use a transfer or taxi back to/from Skillinge. Independent walkers should check Skillinge first, then build the rest of the itinerary around whatever is available.
- **Kåseberga:** accommodation may be outside the village centre, so check the exact location and whether an evening meal or transfer is needed.
- **Brösarp:** a small village with limited beds, especially in mid-summer.
- **Andrarum / Alunbruket:** very small; shared bathrooms and limited services are possible, and onward transport needs planning.

For late June to mid-August, book well in advance; 3–6 months ahead is a sensible target for a complete inn-to-inn itinerary. Outside peak summer, the issue changes from availability to opening dates: small cafés, farm shops, hostels and B&Bs may operate seasonally. April and late October are possible for well-organised walkers, but every overnight stop should be arranged before travelling.

Simrishamn has the strongest accommodation choice on the route and is the easiest place to use as a two-night base if Skillinge is full or if a rest day is wanted.

## Food, water and daily supplies

Do not assume every fishing village has open shops, especially outside summer. The important planning days are:

- **Day 2, Kåseberga to Skillinge:** carry a packed lunch and enough water; the Sandhammaren and south-east coast section has limited resupply.
- **Day 4, Simrishamn to Kivik:** carry food before leaving Simrishamn, particularly for the Stenshuvud National Park section.
- **Haväng, Ravlunda and the inland stages:** services are more scattered, so check opening times and do not rely on a café being open.

Even when villages are close together on the map, seasonal opening hours can make a big difference. Breakfasts, packed lunches and evening meals are worth confirming when booking accommodation.

## Transport planning

Ystad is the simplest start point, with a railway station and direct trains from Malmö, plus connections from Copenhagen via the Öresund link. Simrishamn is also rail-connected and is the most useful mid-route access point.

The finish is more awkward. Brösarp and Andrarum/Alunbruket are rural, and onward travel normally depends on Skånetrafiken buses, often via Tomelilla, with onward connections towards Ystad, Simrishamn, Kristianstad or Malmö. Current timetables should be checked before travelling, and walkers finishing at Alunbruket should not assume a convenient late-afternoon bus if arriving after 16:00. If the final stage ends late, staying one more night in the Brösarp area can be easier than forcing an evening transfer.

Taxis can be useful for accommodation gaps, especially around Skillinge, but longer rural transfers are expensive and should be arranged in advance.

## Shortening or extending the walk

The easiest way to shorten the standard coastal itinerary is to finish at **Brösarp** and skip the final **Brösarp to Andrarum/Alunbruket** stage, saving about 14 km and simplifying the onward bus journey.

Other practical adjustments include:

- staying two nights in **Simrishamn** and arranging a transfer around the Skillinge accommodation bottleneck;
- using public transport to shorten individual days where connections work, especially around **Simrishamn** and **Kivik**;
- adding a rest day in **Simrishamn** or **Kivik**;
- adding extra time around **Brösarps Backar** if travelling in the spring wildflower season;
- continuing beyond Andrarum on the inland SL4 sections to complete the full 188 km loop back to Ystad, adding roughly 85 km and another 5–6 walking days.

The route should not be shortened by simply expecting to find accommodation halfway through a stage. In several places, the sensible overnight stops are the stage-end villages and towns.

## Section hiking

Österlenleden works well as a section hike because the coastal settlements have enough public-transport access for joining and leaving the trail. The most useful access points are:

| Access point | Why it works  |
|--------------|---|
| Ystad        | Rail access from Malmö and Copenhagen; natural start for the coastal route.                 |
| Simrishamn   | Strongest mid-route base, with rail and bus connections.                                    |
| Kivik        | Useful for the Stenshuvud and Brösarp sections; buses connect towards Simrishamn and Ystad. |
| Brösarp      | Practical inland finish, with bus links via Tomelilla.                                      |

Good shorter trips include **Simrishamn to Brösarp** over about three days, taking in Stenshuvud, Kivik and the Brösarp hills, or **Ystad to Skillinge/Simrishamn** over two to three days for Ales Stenar, Sandhammaren and the south-east coast. The best standalone long day is **Simrishamn to Kivik via Stenshuvud**, but it needs transport planned at both ends.

Skånetrafiken timetables and fares change, so check the current journey planner before fixing a section-hike schedule.

## Navigation and trail information

The route is waymarked as Skåneleden SL4 with orange markers, and navigation is generally straightforward. A phone map or GPS track is still recommended for beach sections, forest paths and places where the trail crosses quiet lanes or farmland. Download the GPX or offline map before leaving Ystad, as relying on a mobile signal alone is poor practice on any long-distance walk.

The official Skåneleden route information is the best place to check current diversions, fire restrictions and shelter information before departure.

## Camping, shelters and permits

No permit is needed to walk Österlenleden, and there is no trail fee. Stenshuvud National Park is freely accessible, though walkers should follow park rules and stay on appropriate paths where required.

Camping is possible under Sweden's **Allemansrätten** — the right of public access — but it is not a licence to camp anywhere. For individual walkers, one or two nights in the same place is customary. Do not camp near dwellings, on agricultural land, or in grazing pastures, and respect boundaries on private land.

The Skåneleden network also has simple **vindskydd** wind-shelter sites with basic facilities along parts of the trail network. Locations and availability should be checked before travelling, especially if planning a low-cost camping itinerary rather than booking B&Bs and inns.

Open fires are only acceptable where permitted and safe; fire bans are common in dry summers. Dogs must be kept on a lead from 1 March to 20 August to protect wildlife during the nesting season.

## Best planning order

For this route, the practical order is:

1. **Fix the route version** — coastal point-to-point or full SL4 loop.
2. **Secure accommodation**, starting with Skillinge, Kåseberga and Brösarp.
3. **Check transport**, especially the Brösarp/Andrarum finish and any Skillinge transfer.
4. **Plan food and water carries** for the longer and less serviced stages.
5. **Download maps and GPX** and check current Skåneleden notices.
6. **Choose the season**: late May to June for wildflowers and lighter crowds, July for peak summer services and crowds, or late August to September for cooler walking and Kivik apple country.

## Towns, Villages and Overnight Stops

Accommodation planning on Österlenleden depends on whether you are walking the full Skåneleden SL4 loop or the more common coastal point-to-point route. The overnight pattern below follows the usual six-day coastal itinerary from Ystad to Brösarp and Andrarum/Alunbruket; the full 188 km loop adds further inland sections and requires separate planning against the current Skåneleden stage information.

| Usual walking day | Common overnight stop | Practical note                                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|--|
| Before day 1      | Ystad                 | Best pre-walk base, rail-connected, full services    |
| Day 1             | Kåseberga             | Tiny village; book well ahead                        |
| Day 2             | Skillinge             | B&Bs and self-catering; food opening can be seasonal |
| Day 3             | Simrishamn            | Best mid-route trail town and resupply point         |
| Day 4             | Kivik                 | Good village stop, but busy in summer                |
| Day 5             | Brösarp               | Key bus exit point; limited accommodation            |
| Day 6             | Andrarum / Alunbruket | Atmospheric finish, but onward transport is limited  |

Smaller coastal settlements are useful for breaks, cafés or emergency shelter from weather, but should not be assumed to have reliable year-round food or beds. Summer is the easiest season for services, but also the busiest; spring and autumn are quieter but more variable. Winter walkers should expect many coastal cafés and restaurants to be closed. Sweden uses the Swedish krona, SEK/kr, not the euro.

### Ystad

Ystad is the most practical place to start the walk, even though many coastal itineraries begin the first walking stage from Nybrostrand, about 8 km east of town. The official SL4 loop begins and ends in Ystad, while most point-to-point walkers use Ystad for a pre-walk night, food shopping and transport connections.

This is one of the strongest service points on the whole route. There are supermarkets, cafés, restaurants, pharmacies and a broad range of accommodation. Options include central hotels such as Anno 1793 Sekelgården, Prins Carl and Fritiden Hotell & Kongress, higher-end stays such as Continental du Sud, and hostel-style accommodation including Beach House Ystad and Trollskogens Vandrarhem. Prices and seasonal availability should be checked before booking.

Ystad has the best transport access at the southern end of the trail. Pågatåget trains run to and from Malmö in around 45 minutes, with onward connections to Copenhagen via Malmö. Some Copenhagen–Ystad services run direct, but most journeys involve changing at Malmö. Ystad is also the natural place to return to from Brösarp by regional bus at the end of the common coastal walk. Use Skånetrafiken for current timetables.

Parking is available in town, including car parks near the station, but long-stay conditions should be checked before leaving a vehicle for several days.

## Nybrostrand

Nybrostrand is a small coastal village east of Ystad and is often treated as the practical start of the coastal walking line. It is useful if you want to shorten the first day or skip the urban exit from Ystad.

Services are limited, so it is not usually planned as an overnight stop. Most walkers pass through or start here after taking a Skånetrafiken bus from Ystad. Carry food and water from Ystad rather than relying on Nybrostrand.

## Kåseberga

Kåseberga is the usual first overnight stop on the six-day coastal itinerary, after the stage from Ystad. It is a tiny Baltic fishing village with limited capacity, so this is one of the places where early booking matters most, especially from late spring through summer.

The main accommodation noted for hikers is Kåseberga Gårdshotell & Spa, a boutique hotel in a renovated Scanian barn close to Ales Stenar, with food options and spa facilities. There are also holiday rentals and Airbnb-style stays in and around the village, but supply is small.

Food is better than the size of the village might suggest in season. Kåseberga Fisk AB at the harbour is a well-known smokehouse for fresh and smoked seafood, and there are harbour cafés, restaurants and an ice-cream kiosk. Out of season, do not rely on every venue being open.

There is no railway station. Public transport is limited compared with Ystad and Simrishamn, so Kåseberga works best as a booked overnight stop rather than a flexible transport exit. The practical reason to stay here is its position directly below Ales Stenar, the 59-boulder stone ship on the coastal ridge above the village.

## Löderup / Löderups Strandbad

Löderup and Löderups Strandbad sit around the first and second stage transition area on the coast east of Kåseberga. This is not a major trail town, but there is some holiday accommodation in the wider area.

For most long-distance walkers it is a pass-through or contingency area rather than a planned overnight. Services are limited and can be seasonal. If using accommodation here to split the Kåseberga–Skillinge section, check exact location carefully against the trail, as a bed inland or along the coast may add extra walking.

## Sandhammaren

Sandhammaren is a major landscape highlight rather than a village stop. Expect long sandy beach, dunes and planted sand forest, but not reliable settlement services.

It is a poor place to depend on for food, shopping or accommodation unless a specific nearby booking has been made. Carry what is needed for the stage and treat Sandhammaren as exposed coastal walking, where wind, soft sand and weather can make progress slower than the map distance suggests.

## Skillinge

Skillinge is the normal second overnight stop after Kåseberga. It is a larger fishing village than Kåseberga and has more of a year-round community, but it is still a small place with limited accommodation

compared with Ystad or Simrishamn.

Accommodation is mainly B&Bs, apartments, holiday cottages and self-catering. Östangård Bed & Breakfast offers apartments with kitchens and has an on-site restaurant with limited opening days. There is not a large hotel market, so book early if walking in summer or on weekends.

Food options include harbour restaurants, a harbour pub, bakeries, a ship's store and a supermarket. Opening hours are important: Sunday trading and restaurant service should not be assumed. If arriving late, or walking in spring or autumn, carry a back-up meal from Kåseberga, Ystad or Simrishamn.

Public transport is more limited than in the rail-served towns. Skånetrafiken regional buses serve the area, but timetables should be checked before building an itinerary around them.

## **Gislövshammar**

Gislövshammar is a small coastal hamlet between Skillinge and Simrishamn. It is best treated as a scenic walk-through point rather than a reliable service stop.

There may be local or seasonal accommodation in the wider area, but it is not a standard overnight base for the six-day route. Do not plan on shops or regular food service here.

## **Brantevik**

Brantevik is another small coastal settlement between Skillinge and Simrishamn, with a harbour setting and a seasonal harbour café. It can make a pleasant break on the shorter Skillinge–Simrishamn stage.

For overnight planning, Brantevik is secondary to Simrishamn. Services are limited and seasonal, so carry food if walking outside the main visitor season. Simrishamn is close enough on the usual itinerary that most walkers continue there for accommodation, transport and resupply.

## **Simrishamn**

Simrishamn is the best mid-route town on the coastal walk and the most useful place for resupply after Ystad. It sits at the end of the usual third day from Skillinge, which is a shorter stage, giving time for laundry, shopping, gear checks or a late lunch arrival.

Accommodation choice is much stronger here than in the fishing villages. Options include central hotels such as Hotel Kockska Gården, harbour-area hotels, family-run hotels near the station, B&Bs on and around Storgatan, the STF hostel on Christer Barnekowsgatan and Tobisvik campsite by the beach. Budget B&B-style stays can start from around 1,050 kr per night, with mid-range hotels higher; current prices should be confirmed before booking.

Simrishamn has multiple restaurants, cafés and supermarkets, and is the most reliable year-round food stop on the route after Ystad. It is the best place to stock up before the longer stage to Kivik and the smaller-service section beyond.

Transport is excellent by trail standards. Pågatåget trains run on the Österlenbanan to Ystad in around 39 minutes, with onward travel towards Malmö. Trains are broadly hourly. There are also express bus links towards Kristianstad and Lund. For section-hikers, Simrishamn is the easiest place to join or leave the route mid-walk.

## **Baskemölla**

Baskemölla is a tiny coastal hamlet north of Simrishamn, with a fishing harbour and very limited services. It is a walk-through place on the Simrishamn–Kivik stage rather than a dependable overnight stop.

A seasonal café may be available, but opening should not be relied on. Leave Simrishamn with enough food and water for the day.

## **Vik**

Vik is another small coastal hamlet on the way from Simrishamn to Kivik. It is useful as a landmark and possible rest point, but not a major resupply or accommodation centre.

If planning to stay in or near Vik, book a specific place in advance and check how far it lies from the marked route. Otherwise, continue to Kivik for more predictable beds and food.

## **Kivik**

Kivik is the usual fourth overnight stop and one of the most attractive practical bases on the route. It is known for apple orchards and cider country, and sits just south of the Stenshuvud and Haväng section, so it is well placed before the national park and the inland turn towards Brösarp.

Accommodation includes STF Kivikstrand Badhotell in the centre close to the beach, plus B&Bs and holiday rentals. STF Vandrarhem Skepparpsgården Haväng is north of Kivik at Haväng and can also be used to adjust the stage, though it lies beyond the village. Farmors Lycka Gårdshotell, near Ravlunda and above Kivik, is another rural option but may add logistics depending on the exact walking line.

Food is generally good in season. Kiviks Musteri has a shop, café and restaurant/bistro, and Kivik also has harbour cafés and summer restaurants. Kiviks Musteri is open daily 10:00–17:00, but individual restaurant and café hours elsewhere vary by season.

Kivik has no railway station. Skånetrafiken buses connect the area with Simrishamn and towards Ystad, but timetables should be checked before relying on them. The village is busy in high summer and during major local events, so accommodation should be secured well ahead.

## **Vitemölla**

Vitemölla is a small coastal hamlet north of Kivik, close to the approach to Stenshuvud National Park. It has summer cottages and limited seasonal services.

It is not a strong resupply point. There may be seasonal accommodation or a simple café or kiosk in summer, but walkers should not depend on it outside the main visitor period.

## **Stenshuvud National Park**

Stenshuvud National Park is a route highlight rather than an overnight stop. The trail passes through Sweden's southernmost national park, with beech forest, heath, dunes and the 97 m Stenshuvud coastal summit above Hanöbukten.

There is no accommodation inside the park. A visitor centre and toilets are available seasonally, but food and lodging need to be planned in Kivik, Haväng or beyond. Keep to marked paths where required, and

allow time for slower walking if detouring to viewpoints or the summit.

## Haväng

Haväng sits north of Stenshuvud and is one of the most useful non-village overnight options on this part of the route. It works well for walkers who want to break up the Kivik–Brösarp section or spend more time around the national park and coast.

STF Vandrarhem Skepparpsgården Haväng is located on the trail in a nature reserve. It is a half-timbered farmhouse hostel with 2–6 bed rooms, shared kitchen, WiFi and some dog-friendly rooms. Booking is essential in season.

The key practical detail is check-in: standard check-in is 17:00–19:00. If arrival may be late, contact the hostel in advance. Food options are more limited than in Kivik or Simrishamn, so check what is available and carry supplies if self-catering.

## Ravlunda

Ravlunda is a small inland village between the Kivik/Haväng area and Brösarp. It is not a major trail town, but it matters because some rural accommodation sits nearby.

Farmors Lycka Gårdshotell is in this wider area, above Kivik and near Ravlunda, with eight rooms in a red-brick farm, a restaurant, farm shop and hiking packages. The nearest bus stop is around Ravlunda Kyrka, about 2.5 km away. Exact access from the trail should be checked when booking, especially if arriving on foot after a long day.

Apart from booked accommodation, services in Ravlunda are limited.

## Brösarp

Brösarp is the usual fifth overnight stop and the most important transport hub at the northern end of the coastal point-to-point itinerary. It sits inland by Brösarps Backar, with the route moving away from the coast into hillier ground.

Accommodation is more limited than in the main coastal towns. Some walkers stay in Brösarp itself or use rural accommodation in the surrounding area, including options such as Farmors Lycka Gårdshotell depending on the itinerary. Holiday rentals may be available, but supply is not large; book ahead rather than assuming a same-day bed.

Food services are also limited compared with Simrishamn or Ystad. Café Smulan has daytime opening hours, and Farmors Lycka has café and restaurant provision on selected days, but current opening should be checked. Carry food if arriving late or walking outside summer.

Brösarp Bussterminal is the key exit point. Skånetrafiken bus SKX 4 links Brösarp with Ystad in about 44 minutes, running roughly hourly during the day, with services approximately between 07:30 and 20:30. Timetables change, so check Skånetrafiken before travelling.

Many walkers finish here rather than continue to Andrarum/Alunbruket, because onward transport from Alunbruket is much less convenient. Continuing is worthwhile for the Verkeån valley, Hallamölla waterfall area and the alum works, but it requires firmer end-of-walk logistics.

## **Andrarum / Alunbruket**

Andrarum and Alunbruket form the usual end point for walkers who continue beyond Brösarp. This is a small settlement in a wooded ravine landscape by the Verkeån, known for the ruins of the Andrarum alum works founded in 1637.

STF Alunbruket Bed and Breakfast is the key accommodation here. It is affiliated with Kaffestugan Alunbruket, Skåne's oldest coffee house, and the Skåneleden passes directly by the property. Facilities include rooms with breakfast, a shared self-catering kitchen, WiFi, bike storage and a garden with barbecue. It is seasonal, normally March–October, so opening must be confirmed before booking, especially for late-season walkers.

Food is centred on Kaffestugan Alunbruket, which serves coffee, homemade pastries and light meals seasonally. Do not rely on evening food unless it has been arranged or confirmed.

Transport is the main drawback. There is no rail station, and onward public transport is limited. The nearest bus stop is at Eljaröd, about 5 km away, or walkers can hike or take a taxi back towards Brösarp, about 10 km by trail, for bus SKX 4 to Ystad. The cleanest strategy is often to stay overnight at Alunbruket, then arrange a transfer or return to Brösarp the next morning.

## **Camping, wind-shelters and unbooked nights**

The wider Skåneleden network includes simple wind-shelter campsites, or vindskydd, with toilets along the trail system. They are useful for campers and for walkers who prefer not to book every night, but they are basic and not always positioned conveniently for the village-to-village coastal itinerary.

Water availability varies, so check the current Skåneleden map before relying on a shelter site. Under allemansrätten, the Swedish right of public access, wild camping is permitted subject to standard responsibilities: camp discreetly, leave no trace, respect homes and cultivated land, and follow fire restrictions. This makes a lightweight camping itinerary possible, but food resupply still needs planning around Ystad, Simrishamn, Kivik and Brösarp.

## Getting to the Start

Ystad is the practical arrival point for Österlenleden. It is the start and finish town for the full Skåneleden SL4 Österlen loop, and it is also where most walkers base themselves before starting the shorter coastal walk towards Brösarp or Andrarum/Alunbruket.

One important detail: some itineraries treat Ystad town as the trailhead, while the STF signature version starts at Nybrostrand, about 8 km east of Ystad, where the coastal walking begins in earnest. Before booking accommodation, baggage transfer or a first walking day, decide whether the first stage starts from Ystad itself or from Nybrostrand.

### By train

Ystad station is the main public-transport gateway for the route. It is served by Pågatågen, Skånetrafiken's regional train network, and is the simplest way to reach the start without a car.

| Route                                   | Typical journey                               | Notes  |
|---|---|--|
| Malmö Centralstation to Ystad           | About 50 minutes                              | Direct Pågatågen trains, usually around every 30 minutes during the day. Typical one-way fare is about 80–120 SEK. |
| Copenhagen Central / Nørreport to Ystad | About 1 hour 30 minutes                       | Change at Malmö Hyllie after crossing the Öresund link into Sweden. Services are generally frequent.               |
| Copenhagen Airport to Ystad             | About 1 hour 15 minutes–<br>1 hour 30 minutes | Take the train towards Malmö, change at Malmö Hyllie for Ystad. Typical one-way fare is about 200–250 SEK.         |
| Simrishamn to Ystad                     | About 39 minutes                              | Direct Pågatågen service, useful for section hikers and for returning to a vehicle left in Ystad.                  |

Skånetrafiken is the regional transport authority for trains and buses in Skåne. Its journey planner and app cover the relevant train and bus legs for this walk, including Copenhagen Airport connections once travelling into Sweden. Current timetables and fares should be checked before travelling.

### By bus

Regional Skånetrafiken buses serve Ystad and the surrounding Österlen villages, but the train is usually the more convenient arrival option for Ystad itself.

The bus becomes more useful for two specific hiking logistics:

- **Starting at Nybrostrand:** if following an itinerary that begins at Nybrostrand rather than Ystad town, take a Skånetrafiken bus from Ystad towards Simrishamn, or use a taxi. The correct stop and line should be checked before travelling.
- **Returning from Brösarp:** walkers finishing the point-to-point coastal route around Brösarp can use Skånetrafiken Line 4 / SKX 4 back to Ystad. The journey is about 46 minutes and usually runs hourly, making it practical to leave a car in Ystad and return by bus at the end.

There is also a bus link between Tomelilla and Ystad, with a journey time of about 23 minutes, but services are less frequent. This should be checked before travelling.

## By car

Ystad is straightforward to reach by road from western Skåne. It is about 60 km south-east of Malmö via the E65 / Route 13.

For walkers doing the linear Ystad–Brösarp/Andrarum version, the usual car strategy is:

1. Drive to Ystad.
2. Leave the car in a long-stay car park in town or near the harbour.
3. Walk the route north-east along the coast and inland.
4. Return from Brösarp to Ystad by Skånetrafiken bus.

Ystad has multi-storey car parks and long-stay parking options, including facilities around the harbour and the Centralstation area. Aimo Park and APCOA operate parking in Ystad, with online booking available for some sites. Long-stay rules, prices and maximum stay periods should be checked before travelling, especially in summer.

If returning by taxi from the Brösarp area to Ystad, the drive is about 35 minutes. Local operators such as Taxi Österlen and Olles Taxi AB serve the area; typical fares may be around 500–600 SEK, but current rates should be checked before booking.

## From the nearest airport

**Copenhagen Airport (CPH / Kastrup)** is the best airport for most international walkers. It has far more route options than Malmö Airport and has a simple rail connection into Skåne.

From Copenhagen Airport, take a train towards Malmö and change at Malmö Hyllie for the Pågatågen service to Ystad. The total journey is usually about 1 hour 15 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes, with trains at least twice per hour. Skånetrafiken tickets can be bought online or from the red Skånetrafiken machines at the airport.

**Malmö Airport / Sturup (MMX)** is closer by road but less convenient by public transport. It is about 38.5 km from Ystad. By public transport, take the airport bus to Malmö Centralstation, then the Pågatågen train to Ystad; the full journey is usually about 1 hour 45 minutes to 2 hours. A taxi from Malmö Airport to Ystad takes about 30 minutes and may cost around 350–450 SEK. Current taxi rates should be checked before travelling.

## Where to stay before starting

Ystad is the logical place to stay the night before beginning the walk. It has the station, harbour, shops, restaurants and enough accommodation to make an early start straightforward.

Well-placed options include:

| Accommodation            | Practical notes   |
|--------------------------|---|
| Hotel Continental du Sud | Central and close to the station; a historic hotel dating from 1829.                      |
| Anno 1793 Sekelgården    | Town-centre location in a 17th-century building, convenient for the harbour and old town. |

| Accommodation                  | Practical notes   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Fritiden Hotell & Kongress     | Larger 4-star option with full facilities.                                |
| B&B Stationen                  | Near Stortorget and the ferry terminal; a practical budget-friendly base. |
| Guesthouses and Airbnb options | Available around the old town and useful if hotels are full.              |

Booking ahead is sensible in June–August, when Ystad is busy with summer visitors as well as ferry traffic to Bornholm and Poland. If using a baggage-transfer package, check whether the operator expects the walk to start at Ystad or Nybrostrand, as this affects the first morning's transport.

## Getting Home from the Finish

For the full 188 km Skåneleden SL4 loop, the finish is back in Ystad, so onward travel is straightforward by rail. The logistics below mainly apply to the common point-to-point Österlenleden walk ending at Brösarp or Andrarum/Alunbruket. Brösarp is the practical transport hub; Andrarum and the alum works have far fewer services, so most walkers should plan to reach Brösarp before travelling on.

### By train

There is no railway station at Brösarp or Andrarum. The nearest practical rail connections are reached by bus, usually via Ystad or Tomelilla.

| Route  | Typical journey                            | Notes   |
|--|--|---|
| Brösarp → Ystad by bus, then Ystad → Malmö by train                  | Around 50 min bus + around 45–50 min train | Good default route for Malmö, Copenhagen and onward Swedish rail connections. |
| Brösarp → Tomelilla by bus, then Tomelilla → Ystad or Malmö by train | Around 28 min bus; train onward            | Useful if the Tomelilla connection times work better.                         |
| Tomelilla → Simrishamn by train                                      | Timetable-dependent                        | Useful for returning to the east-coast trail corridor.                        |

Ystad has frequent Pågatågen regional trains to Malmö Centralstation, typically about every 30 minutes during the day, with a journey time of roughly 44–51 minutes. From Malmö Centralstation there are regular onward trains across the Öresund link to Copenhagen.

Tomelilla is also on the Österlen Line between Ystad and Simrishamn. Trains from Tomelilla run to Ystad, Malmö and Simrishamn, so the Brösarp–Tomelilla bus can be a sensible alternative to going first to Ystad. The Brösarp–Malmö journey via Tomelilla is around two hours in total when connections line up.

All train and bus times are timetable-dependent and should be checked in the Skånetrafiken journey planner or app before travelling, especially on Sundays and public holidays.

### By bus

The main bus stop for leaving the trail is **Brösarp Bussterminal**. Skånetrafiken line **SKX 4 / line 4** links Brösarp with Ystad Station and Tomelilla Station.

- **Brösarp → Ystad Station:** around 44–51 minutes, with roughly hourly daily service.
- **Brösarp → Tomelilla Station:** around 28 minutes, with frequency varying by time of day.
- Typical regional fares for these journeys are around **30–50 SEK**, but Skånetrafiken zone pricing applies, so confirm the current fare before travelling.

First buses from Brösarp are generally around the early morning, and the last useful departures are usually around 20:00–21:00. Exact times vary by day and season. If finishing late at Alunbruket or Brösarp, do not assume there will be an onward bus without checking the same day.

From **Andrarum/Alunbruket**, the simplest plan is usually to walk the final 4–5 km to Brösarp or arrange a taxi. Andrarum has access to the bus network, but the closer stops are less convenient and services are more limited than from Brösarp Bussterminal.

## By car/taxi

If a car has been left in Ystad at the start, the easiest public-transport return is the Brösarp–Ystad bus, taking about 50 minutes. This makes Ystad a practical base for walkers who prefer to park at the start and return there after the point-to-point route.

Parking in Brösarp is generally straightforward. At Andrarum/Alunbruket, parking is more limited around the alum works visitor area.

Taxis are useful for late finishes, bad weather, heavy packs or if staying at accommodation away from the bus route. Local operators include:

- **Taxi Österlen:** +46 414 177 77
- **Kiviks Taxi:** +46 414 70098 / [info@kivikstaxi.se](mailto:info@kivikstaxi.se)

A taxi from Brösarp to Ystad takes roughly 35 minutes and is expensive, typically around **3,200–3,900 SEK**. It may be reasonable for a group sharing the fare, but solo walkers should treat it as a backup rather than the default. Confirm availability and the current price before booking.

Driving from Brösarp to Malmö is about 83 km and takes roughly 1 hour 10 minutes in normal conditions.

## From the nearest airport

For most international walkers, **Copenhagen Airport (CPH / Kastrup)** is the most useful airport. From the finish, the usual public-transport chain is:

1. Brösarp → Ystad by Skånetrafiken bus, about 50 minutes.
2. Ystad → Malmö Centralstation by Pågatågen train, about 50 minutes.
3. Malmö Centralstation → Copenhagen Airport by Öresundståg, about 23 minutes.

Allow around **2 hours from Brösarp to Copenhagen Airport** when connections are smooth, and build in extra time for bus connections and airport check-in. From Malmö Centralstation, Öresundståg services to Copenhagen are frequent, typically around every 20 minutes.

**Malmö Airport (MMX / Malmö Sturup)** is closer to Malmö than Copenhagen Airport but is less central to the rail network. Travel from Brösarp normally still involves reaching Malmö, then using Flygbussarna or a taxi to the airport. This should be checked before travelling, especially for early flights.

## Where to stay at the finish

Staying in Brösarp is often the simplest option if finishing late, walking the extra section to Andrarum/Alunbruket, or catching an early onward bus. Brösarp has more services than Andrarum, including an ICA supermarket near the church.

Accommodation options in and around Brösarp include:

- **Brösarps Gästgifveri & SPA**, a historic inn on Albovägen.
- **Talldungen Gårdshotell** on Bengtemöllevägen.
- **Källagårdens B&B**.
- **Rubensholm B&B**, between Brösarp and Skåne Tranås on road 19.
- Cottages and private rentals in the Brösarp area.

Andrarum/Alunbruket is atmospheric as a trail finish but less convenient for transport and evening services. If accommodation is not already arranged there, Brösarp is the better overnight target.

## Which Direction Should You Walk?

For the usual six-day coastal Österlenleden, the best direction is **Ystad to Brösarp or Andrarum/Alunbruket**. This is the de facto standard line used by self-guided walking operators and it also matches the way the official SL4 Österlen route is commonly introduced from Ystad, with the first section heading east towards Nybrostrand.

The reverse direction is perfectly walkable, and it has one clear benefit: finishing in Ystad gives an easy rail exit, more places to eat and a more conventional end-of-walk feel. However, for most independent hikers, the standard south-to-north direction is simpler to plan and gives a better progression through the landscape.

### Standard direction: Ystad to Brösarp / Andrarum

This direction works especially well for hikers arriving from outside Skåne. **Ystad is the natural gateway**, with a railway station and regular trains from Malmö; Malmö also gives onward connections via the Öresund link towards Copenhagen. Starting here avoids the need to begin the trip with a bus transfer into the inland end of the trail.

At the far end, **Brösarp has no railway station**, but it does have regional bus connections. SkåneExpressen 4 links Brösarp with Ystad station in roughly 46 minutes, with services running regularly through the day. Current timetables should be checked before travelling, especially if finishing late in the day or on a public holiday. If finishing at **Andrarum / Alunbruket**, allow for the onward link to Brösarp; organised trips often include a transfer from Alunbruket to Brösarp bus terminal.

Scenically, Ystad to Brösarp also has the stronger build-up. The walk leaves a rail-connected coastal town and quickly reaches major early highlights: **Kåseberga and Ales Stenar**, then the long sandy coast around **Sandhammaren**. The middle days move through fishing villages such as **Skillinge, Brantevik, Baskemölla and Vik**, with **Simrishamn** as the main mid-route town. The final part then becomes hillier and more varied, with **Kivik, Stenshuvud National Park, Haväng, Brösarps Backar, Hallamölla** and the wooded industrial remains at **Andrarum / Alunbruket**.

That gives the route a satisfying shape: coast first, then the more rugged inland hills and heritage finish. Alunbruket is a quiet, unusual endpoint rather than a busy town, so it feels more like reaching the end of a journey than simply arriving at another transport hub.

### Reverse direction: Brösarp / Andrarum to Ystad

Walking north-to-south is a valid choice, particularly if the priority is to **finish in Ystad**. Ending in a rail-connected town with restaurants, cafés and onward trains can be convenient, and some hikers will prefer the certainty of finishing at the strongest transport point.

The trade-off is at the start. Reaching Brösarp or Andrarum normally means taking a train or bus to a regional connection point and then using local bus services or a transfer. This is not difficult, but it is less straightforward than stepping off the train in Ystad and walking from there.

The scenery also changes character. In reverse, the route begins with the inland hills, **Hallamölla, Brösarps Backar** and **Stenshuvud** relatively early, then gradually becomes a more settled coastal walk

towards Simrishamn, Sandhammaren, Kåseberga and Ystad. That is still an excellent journey, but it front-loads some of the most dramatic terrain rather than letting it build towards the end.

## Climbs, wind and accommodation

There is no major ascent advantage in either direction. Österlenleden is low-level overall, but the hillier walking around **Stenshuvud, Brösarp and Andrarum** has more undulation than the easier coastal and village stages. Walking from Ystad saves that hillier ground for the final part of the trip; walking in reverse tackles it early.

Wind is a small but real consideration on this coast. The Baltic shore around Österlen can be exposed, especially around **Kåseberga, Löderup and Sandhammaren**. Prevailing winds in Skåne are broadly westerly to south-westerly, so walking Ystad to Brösarp often puts the wind more behind or side-on during much of the coastal section. This is only a marginal advantage: exposed beaches can be windy in any direction.

Accommodation flow also favours the standard direction. From Ystad northwards, the first half of the walk passes through or near several established coastal villages and towns, including **Kåseberga, Skillinge and Simrishamn**. Choices become thinner inland around Brösarp and Andrarum, so those final nights should be booked with care. In reverse, the more limited inland accommodation comes immediately at the start, which can make the first stages less forgiving if arrival times or bookings are tight.

## What about the full SL4 loop?

For the full **188 km SL4 Österlen loop**, Ystad is still the logical start and finish. The usual pattern is to leave Ystad on the coastal leg first, then continue round the inland return sections over the quieter ridge country of **Linderödsåsen**. The loop can be walked either way, but starting with the coastal arc from Ystad is the more natural and commonly used direction.

## Recommendation

Walk **Ystad to Brösarp / Andrarum** unless there is a specific reason to finish in Ystad. It gives the simplest start, a clear transport plan at the end, the best scenic progression, a small wind advantage on the exposed coastal stages and a more memorable finish among the hills and wooded ruins of Alunbruket. The reverse is entirely feasible, but it is less convenient for most walkers and works best for those who specifically want Ystad as their final overnight stop or onward rail connection.

## Accommodation Along the Route

Accommodation is a strength of the Österlenleden coastal itinerary, but it is uneven. Ystad, Simrishamn and Brösarp are the easiest overnight stops to book, while Kåseberga and Skillinge need the most care. The route works well as an inn-to-inn walk if accommodation is booked ahead, and it is especially straightforward when using a self-guided package with luggage transfer.

### Accommodation at a glance

| Place                 | Accommodation level               | Best for  | Notes  |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Ystad                 | Good                              | All walkers   | Best-supplied start town, with hotels, B&Bs, apartments and rail access. Summer weekends should still be booked ahead.           |
| Kåseberga             | Limited                           | B&B hikers, couples, walkers wanting to stay near Ales Stenar | Small fishing village rather than a town. There are real options, but demand is high and rooms go quickly in summer.             |
| Skillinge             | Very limited                      | Walkers who secure a room early                               | Thin supply of guesthouses, cottages and self-catering. Many itineraries use Simrishamn instead.                                 |
| Simrishamn            | Good                              | All walkers, section hikers, fallback for Skillinge           | Reliable mid-route hub with hotels, B&Bs and a train station. Less pressured than Kåseberga, but still book summer nights ahead. |
| Kivik                 | Moderate                          | Coastal-stage finishers, walkers wanting a village stay       | Good choice for its size, including B&Bs and hotels. Popular in summer and during apple-country season.                          |
| Brösarp               | Good, but centred on one main inn | All walkers, spa-seekers, those continuing inland             | Brösarps Gästgifveri & SPA dominates the village accommodation market. Book well ahead for Friday and Saturday nights.           |
| Hallamölla Gård       | Limited / special                 | Farm-stay walkers, Hallamölla waterfall detours               | Small on-trail farm stay in Verkeån Nature Reserve, with 8 rooms and 17 beds. Dinner and packed lunches can be arranged.         |
| Andrarum / Alunbruket | Limited                           | Final-night finishers   | STF Alunbruket Bed and Breakfast is the key option, in half-timbered buildings by the trail and Kaffestugan Alunbruket.          |

### Booking strategy

For the standard Ystad to Brösarp/Andrarum coastal walk, accommodation should be treated as part of the route planning rather than something to improvise on arrival. This is especially true from June to August, on weekends throughout the walking season, and in the smaller villages.

The main pressure points are:

- **Kåseberga** — a very small village with strong visitor demand because of Ales Stenar. Book this night early.
- **Skillinge** — the weakest overnight stop on the six-day coastal itinerary. If no room is available, plan to stay in Simrishamn and use a bus or pre-arranged transfer. Timetables and transfer options should be checked before travelling.
- **Brösarp** — manageable if booked early, but Brösarps Gästgifveri & SPA is popular at weekends.
- **Kivik** — a better choice than its size suggests, but still a summer tourist village where advance booking matters.

May, June, September and early October are generally easier than July and August, but many properties are small, privately run places with only a handful of rooms. Even outside peak summer, booking the full itinerary in advance is the safest approach.

## Best overnight bases by stage

### Ystad

Ystad is the easiest place on the route to arrange accommodation. It has a genuine hotel and B&B range, plus apartments and private rentals. It is also rail-connected, so it works well for a pre-walk night or for anyone section-hiking the first part of the route.

Typical choices include central hotels such as **Hotel Sekelgården** and **Hotel Prins Carl**, alongside smaller B&B and apartment options. There is usually more flexibility here than in the villages, but summer weekends still need early booking.

### Kåseberga

Kåseberga is one of the most atmospheric overnight stops, but also one of the most constrained. It is a small fishing hamlet close to Ales Stenar, not a service town, and accommodation is spread between village B&Bs, farm stays and small aparthotel-style options nearby.

Useful names to look for include **Ales B&B**, **Kåseberga Gårdshotell & Spa**, **Kåseberga Hideout**, **Vinkille B&B**, **Wingårdhs B&B Österlen** and **Peppinge B&B**. Some options sit slightly outside the village, so check the exact location against the day's walking route before booking.

This is a place to book early, particularly for July, August and weekends.

### Skillinge and the Simrishamn fallback

Skillinge has the thinnest accommodation supply on the coastal itinerary. There are some guesthouses, holiday cottages, self-catering apartments and private rentals, but it cannot be relied on as a guaranteed overnight stop.

If Skillinge accommodation is available, it gives a good fishing-village overnight and avoids transfer logistics. If it is not, **Simrishamn** is the practical fallback. Simrishamn is around 9 km south of Skillinge by road, has a train station, and has a far more reliable choice of hotels and B&Bs. Many self-guided itineraries handle this by booking extra nights in Simrishamn and transferring walkers as needed.

Independent walkers should check bus times or arrange a transfer before committing to a Simrishamn-based solution.

## Simrishamn

Simrishamn is the best mid-route accommodation hub. It has a solid range of town hotels and B&Bs, plus rail access, making it useful for section hikers or anyone needing to shorten, split or rework the route.

Common options include **Apotekarns B&B**, **Hotell Kockska Gården** and **Hotel Svea / Sure Hotel Collection by Best Western**. Compared with Kåseberga and Skillinge, Simrishamn is much easier to plan around, though advance booking remains sensible in summer.

## Kivik

Kivik has a good accommodation spread for a village of its size. It is a popular coastal and apple-country stop, so it is not a place to leave until the last minute in peak season.

Useful options include **Agda Lund B&B**, **Hotell Hanöbris** and **Kiviks Hotell**. Expect a mix of B&Bs, small hotels and more polished village accommodation rather than large chain hotels. Check whether evening meals are available on site or nearby when booking, especially outside high summer.

## Brösarp

Brösarp is the key inland base for the final part of the common point-to-point route and for walkers continuing towards Andrarum and Alunbruket. The main accommodation is **Brösarps Gästgifveri & SPA**, a historic inn with 32 rooms, restaurant, breakfast, WiFi and parking. Rates are advertised from around **SEK 1,090 per night**, but current prices should be checked before booking.

This is a practical and comfortable stop, but it is also popular. Friday and Saturday nights in the main season should be booked well ahead.

## Hallamölla Gård

Hallamölla Gård is a useful special-case option between Brösarp and Andrarum, particularly for walkers interested in the Verkeån Nature Reserve and Hallamölla waterfall. It is small, with **8 rooms and 17 beds**, shared toilets and showers, and a terrace by the river.

Dinner is normally arranged on site, with set meals served in the evening. Published package prices include Friday dinner at **SEK 1,550 per person** and Saturday dinner at **SEK 1,750 per person**; confirm current prices and availability before booking. Packed lunches can also be arranged.

Because capacity is very limited, this is not a fallback to rely on at short notice.

## Andrarum / Alunbruket

For walkers finishing at Andrarum or Alunbruket, the key accommodation is **STF Alunbruket Bed and Breakfast**. It offers rooms in half-timbered houses, breakfast, and direct access to the trail area. **Kaffestugan Alunbruket**, Skåne's oldest coffee house, is connected with the site.

This makes sense as a final-night stop if the onward bus connection is awkward, or if the route is being walked at a slower pace. Availability should be checked early because the accommodation choice at the finish is limited.

## Camping, shelters and budget options

The Skåneleden network includes simple wind-shelter campsites, known as **vindskydd**, along the route. These are basic: typically a three-sided wooden shelter and a simple toilet, with no showers and no proper cooking facilities. They are useful for low-cost walkers carrying camping kit, but they should not be treated as equivalent to a campsite with services.

Sweden's **Allemansrätten** allows responsible wild camping on unfenced land for one or two nights. On Österlenleden this needs particular care near farms, villages, private gardens, beaches with heavy visitor use and nature-sensitive areas. Camp discreetly, arrive late, leave early, and do not light fires unless it is clearly permitted and safe.

## Luggage transfer and awkward gaps

The coastal Österlenleden is well suited to inn-to-inn walking with luggage transfer. Self-guided operators arrange accommodation, daily bag movement and route materials, which removes most of the difficulty around limited village supply and the Skillinge accommodation gap.

For independent walkers, luggage transfer may still be possible through local services or individual accommodation arrangements, but this should be checked before travelling. If carrying everything, pack with the assumption that some nights may involve B&Bs or hotels, while budget walkers should plan shelter and campsite nights carefully rather than expecting full services at every stage.

# Camping and Wild Camping

Österlenleden is a good route for camping, especially on the coastal Ystad–Brösarp/Alunbruket line. The terrain is mostly low-level, resupply towns are frequent, and the wider Skåneleden network has free wind-shelter campsites. The main planning cautions are seasonality, protected-area rules, water reliability and summer fire bans.

## Main camping options

| Route section                                  | Practical camping options   | Planning notes   |
|--|---|--|
| Ystad / start                                  | <b>Ystad Camping</b> at Sandskogen, east of Ystad, directly on the Baltic coast   | Large formal campsite with beach access and services. Sandskogen is a nature reserve, so camp only at the formal site unless local rules clearly allow otherwise.              |
| Löderup / Sandhammaren area                    | Small family-run campsites exist around Löderup and the Sandhammaren dune area  | Facilities and opening periods vary. Sandhammaren is a sensitive dune and coastal environment; avoid pitching on dunes or fragile vegetation.                                  |
| Simrishamn / Tobisvik                          | <b>Tobisviks Camping</b> between Baskemölla and Simrishamn; <b>Simrishamns Camping</b> within walking distance of Simrishamn centre | One of the strongest areas for formal camping on the route, with town services nearby. Tobisvik has tent pitches and beach access; check current opening dates before booking. |
| Kivik  | <b>Kiviks Camping / Kiviks Familjecamping</b> , adjacent to Skåneleden in Kivik village   | Useful at the end of the Simrishamn–Kivik stage. The campsite lists a 2026 season of 28 March–11 October; future seasons should be checked before travelling.                  |
| Vitemölla / Haväng / between Kivik and Brösarp | <b>Ängdala Camping</b> , between Kivik and Brösarp near Vitemölla, close to Haväng and Vitemölla nature reserve                     | Well placed for walkers heading towards Stenshuvud and Brösarp. Has pitches with and without electricity, plus cabins/hostel rooms and service buildings.                      |
| Brösarp hills / Andrarum                       | Fewer formal campsites; wild camping and Skåneleden shelters become more relevant   | Good practical wild-camping country where land is suitable, but avoid private residences, cultivated land, grazing areas and protected zones.                                  |

Most formal campsites in Österlen are seasonal, commonly operating from spring into September or October. Outside the main season, expect far fewer options and check opening dates directly with each site before building an itinerary around them.

## Skåneleden wind shelters

The official Skåneleden SL4 information states that simple campsites with wind shelter and toilet are available along the trail. These **vindskydd** are a major advantage for campers: they are free to use and commonly provide a basic shelter, picnic bench, firepit, firewood and space nearby for a tent, although facilities vary by site.

Do not assume every shelter has drinking water, a toilet or usable firewood. Before departure, check the exact shelter locations and facilities on the official Skåneleden interactive map or on Vindskyddskartan. Shelter status can change because of maintenance, local restrictions or fire risk.

## Wild camping under allemansrätten

Sweden's **allemansrätten** gives walkers a broad right to camp, but it is not a right to camp anywhere without judgement. On Österlenleden, the practical rule is simple: a small tent for one night is generally acceptable on suitable uncultivated land, well away from houses and without damaging the ground.

Follow these rules carefully:

- Camp for **one night** before moving on.
- Pitch well away from private homes, gardens, farm buildings and holiday cottages.
- Do not camp on cultivated land, crops, grazing land or sensitive vegetation.
- Avoid dunes, fragile coastal habitats and nature-reserve areas unless camping is clearly permitted.
- Groups with several tents may need landowner permission.
- Pack out all rubbish, including food waste and toilet paper.
- Do not cut or break living trees, branches or bark for firewood or shelter.

Wild camping is most realistic away from the built-up coastal villages and on the inland sections around the Brösarp hills and towards Andrarum, where there is more open ground and woodland. On the coastal stages, private property, farmland, dunes and nature reserves make careful site choice more important.

## Stenshuvud National Park: strict camping rules

Stenshuvud National Park is the most important camping restriction on the route. Allemansrätten is limited inside the park, and wild camping is not permitted wherever you choose.

Inside Stenshuvud National Park:

- Tent camping is permitted **only** at the designated campsite near the **north entrance at Hällevik**.
- Camping is allowed there only between **16:00 and 10:00** the following morning.
- Fires are allowed only at designated BBQ areas at the main entrance and at the north-entrance campsite.
- Fires are prohibited everywhere else in the park.
- During a fire ban, no fires are allowed.

Plan the Kivik–Stenshuvud–Haväng–Brösarp section so that any overnight stop complies with the park rules. Do not assume that a secluded woodland spot inside the park is legal.

## Fire rules and summer bans

Open fires are allowed in Sweden unless a fire ban is in force, but the responsibility sits with the person lighting the fire. In dry Skåne summers, especially from June to August, fire bans are common.

For Österlenleden, the safest approach is:

- Check current fire-ban status before lighting any fire, using Krisinformation.se or Skåneleden trail notices.
- Use purpose-built grills or firepits where available.
- Never light a fire on rock, peat, roots, dry grass or fragile ground.
- Fully extinguish with water before leaving.
- Do not use living wood; bring fuel or use supplied firewood where available.
- If there is any doubt, use a stove instead of an open fire.

A firepit at a wind shelter does not automatically mean fires are permitted during a ban. Check the local rule at the time.

## **Water for campers**

Formal campsites provide drinking water, and the main coastal towns and villages — including Ystad, Skillinge, Simrishamn and Kivik — are useful places to refill. Some Skåneleden shelter sites also have water, but this must be checked on the shelter listing before relying on it.

Wild campers should carry enough water for the evening, morning and the next walking stretch. Natural water on the route should not be treated as automatically safe, particularly in lowland farmland areas where agricultural runoff can affect streams and ditches. Filter or treat natural water if used.

## **Best strategy for a camping itinerary**

A practical camping plan is to combine formal campsites in the coastal towns with selected Skåneleden shelters or careful wild-camping spots inland. The coastal stages from Ystad to Simrishamn have the best formal campsite coverage; Kivik and the Vitemölla/Haväng area give useful options before the more restricted Stenshuvud and Brösarp sections.

For a lightweight but low-risk plan, book or check formal campsites for Ystad, Simrishamn and Kivik, then use the official Skåneleden map to identify shelters or legal camping possibilities for the Brösarp and Andrarum end of the walk.

## Food, Water and Resupply

Österlenleden is relatively straightforward for resupply by long-distance walking standards, but it is not a route where every village has a shop. The reliable supermarkets are in **Ystad**, **Simrishamn** and **Kivik**, with smaller provisions in places such as **Skillinge** and **Brösarp**. Between them, many food options are seasonal cafés, kiosks, fish counters, farm shops and harbour restaurants.

The notes below apply to the commonly walked **Ystad-Brösarp/Andrarum coastal itinerary**. The full 188 km SL4 loop has additional inland sections, so food and water stops beyond this coastal line should be checked separately before travelling.

### How much food to carry

Carry a packed lunch on most stages unless there is a specific meal stop that is open and fits the day's timing. The most important food gaps are:

- **Simrishamn to Kivik** — the longest coastal stage, with no dependable shop between the two towns.
- **Kivik to Brösarp** — after leaving Kivik, food and water are limited; Stenshuvud's visitor facilities are seasonal and should not be treated as a guaranteed lunch stop.
- **Brösarp to Andrarum / Alunbruket** — there are no reliable services between Brösarp and Alunbruket, so carry everything you need for the final stage from Brösarp.

In summer, kiosks and cafés make the route feel well supplied. In spring and autumn, many coastal and visitor-centre businesses reduce hours or close, so supermarkets become much more important. Winter walking is poor for resupply because of widespread seasonal closures.

### Water on the route

Tap water in Sweden is safe to drink. Use taps at accommodation, public toilets, campsites, Skåneleden wind-shelter facilities where available, cafés and supermarkets. Carry **at least 1.5–2 litres** between known refill points, and more in hot weather or if camping.

Do not plan the walk around natural water. This is a coastal and agricultural lowland route rather than a mountain walk with dependable upland streams. Streams, ditches and small watercourses near farmland should be filtered or purified, and agricultural drainage ditches are best avoided entirely.

The key water warning is the **Kivik-Stenshuvud-Haväng-Brösarp** section: fill up fully in **Kivik** before setting out. The Naturum Stenshuvud visitor centre can provide toilets and, in season, café/kiosk facilities, but opening is seasonal and not guaranteed throughout the year.

## Stage-by-stage food and water notes

| Section                       | Food availability  | Water availability  | Notes  |
|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Ystad → Kåseberga</b>      | <b>Ystad</b> is a full resupply point with ICA, Coop, bakeries, cafés and restaurants. <b>Nybrostrand</b> has limited services. <b>Kåseberga</b> has seasonal eating around the harbour and Ales Stenar area, including Kåseberga Café & Bistro, Kåseberga Harbour Kiosk and Kåseberga Fisk.   | Fill in Ystad before leaving. Water is available in Kåseberga.  | Kåseberga's café and kiosk hours are strongest in high season; check current opening times if relying on dinner or breakfast there.  |
| <b>Kåseberga → Skillinge</b>  | <b>Löderup / Löderups Strandbad</b> should not be relied on for resupply. <b>Sandhammaren</b> has a seasonal kiosk near the lighthouse, with fish and chips, herring burgers, pastries and snacks when open. <b>Skillinge</b> has a local grocery shop on Strandgatan 36, plus café/harbour food options; Coop is also present.                            | Carry enough from Kåseberga or Skillinge accommodation. Refill where cafés, shops or accommodation allow.   | The Sandhammaren kiosk is a summer stop, typically late June to mid-August with shorter shoulder-season opening. Outside that window, carry food. The Skillinge grocery shop does not reliably open on Sundays, so plan ahead.             |
| <b>Skillinge → Simrishamn</b> | <b>Gislövshammar</b> is very small with no reliable shop. <b>Brantevik</b> has seasonal fish and harbour food options, including Branteviks Fisk; restaurants and cafés may not suit a walker's lunchtime schedule. <b>Simrishamn</b> is a major resupply point with an ICA Supermarket and many cafés, bakeries and restaurants.                          | Fill in Skillinge before leaving. Simrishamn has straightforward water access through accommodation, cafés and town facilities.                                     | This is a shorter stage, so one packed lunch or a flexible Brantevik stop is usually enough. Stock up well in Simrishamn for the longer stage to Kivik.  |
| <b>Simrishamn → Kivik</b>     | Limited dependable food between the towns. <b>Baskemölla</b> , <b>Vik</b> and the approach via <b>Tjörnedala</b> should not be treated as resupply points. <b>Kivik</b> has ICA Supermarket Kivik on Killebacken 6, Kiviks Musteri with bistro/farm shop, and seafood options such as Buhres.  | Fill fully in Simrishamn. Next dependable refill is Kivik.  | This is the most important packed-lunch stage. Carry food, snacks and enough water from Simrishamn. Farm shops and roadside produce stalls may appear in season, especially around apple harvest, but they are a bonus rather than a plan. |
| <b>Kivik → Brösarp</b>        | <b>Kivik</b> is the last dependable food point before the hills; use ICA and local cafés/shops before leaving. <b>Stenshuvud National Park</b> has seasonal visitor facilities at Naturum, with café/kiosk service in summer. <b>Haväng</b> has no food. <b>Brösarp</b> has some village services, including restaurants in season and a small local shop. | Fill fully in Kivik. Naturum Stenshuvud may have toilets and tap access in the frost-free season, but do not rely on it outside opening periods. Refill in Brösarp. | Treat this as a food-and-water gap after Kivik. Stenshuvud is useful when open, but it is not a guaranteed resupply point in spring, autumn or winter.   |

| Section                                | Food availability   | Water availability   | Notes   |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Brösarp → Andrarum / Alunbruket</b> | <b>Brösarp</b> has the last village services before the final stage. There are no reliable services between Brösarp and the finish, so carry everything from Brösarp. <b>Andrarum / Alunbruket</b> is very small with limited services. | Fill in Brösarp. Do not expect refill facilities between Brösarp and Alunbruket. | Plan the end of the walk before setting out. Many hikers continue by bus or taxi to a larger place for food and accommodation, so carry enough to finish comfortably. |

## Reliable resupply points

The best places to buy proper walking food rather than just café meals are:

- **Ystad** — best start-point shop, with ICA, Coop, bakeries and cafés.
- **Skillinge** — useful smaller resupply, but Sunday opening is not reliable.
- **Simrishamn** — the key mid-route supermarket town; restock here before the long Simrishamn–Kivik stage.
- **Kivik** — essential resupply before Stenshuvud, Haväng and Brösarp.
- **Brösarp** — limited but useful village services before the final inland stage.

Opening hours in rural Sweden can be shorter than expected, particularly outside June–August and around public holidays such as Midsummer. Supermarkets in Simrishamn and Kivik are the most dependable options on the coastal itinerary, but current hours should still be checked before travelling.

## Seasonal cafés, kiosks and farm shops

Österlen's summer food scene is one of the pleasures of the route, but it can be misleading for off-season planning. Kiosks at places such as **Kåseberga**, **Sandhammaren** and **Stenshuvud** are most useful in the main summer season. In spring and autumn, they may run reduced hours or be closed.

Farm shops and roadside stalls are common across Österlen, especially around apple, strawberry, asparagus and herb-growing areas. Many are seasonal, and some operate on an honesty-box basis. They are excellent for snacks and local produce, but should not replace supermarket planning on the longer stages.

# Navigation and Waymarking

Österlenleden is an official Skåneleden route and uses the Skåneleden orange waymarking system. For most of the coastal walk from Ystad towards Brösarp and Andrarum, navigation is straightforward: the Baltic is an obvious handrail, villages come at regular intervals, and the walking is generally on beaches, tracks, field paths, quiet lanes and woodland paths rather than across remote mountain terrain.

That said, this is not a route to walk with no map at all. Waymarking is not equally strong everywhere, the route has a loop and point-to-point distinction, and Stenshuvud National Park is a known navigation gap because the Skåneleden orange markers do not run through the park itself.

## Waymarking system

Skåneleden routes are marked in orange. On Österlenleden you may see:

- square orange boards or plates fixed to trees and posts
- painted orange squares
- orange bands around tree trunks, particularly in protected nature areas
- orange arrows at junctions
- an orange marker with a cross, which means the wrong path — turn back and re-find the correct orange markers

Large Skåneleden information boards are placed at important access points such as stations, car parks and trail campsites. These boards are useful for checking your current position, the next milestone, GPS coordinates and emergency information. Photographing the board before setting off is a sensible habit, especially if using a phone as the main navigation tool.

## The main navigation issue: loop versus coastal route

The official SL4 Österlen is a 188 km loop beginning and ending in Ystad. Many walkers, however, follow the shorter coastal point-to-point line from Ystad to Brösarp or Andrarum / Alunbruket. This matters on the ground because orange waymarks can relate to the wider SL4 loop, local route variants or connecting paths, not necessarily the six-day coastal itinerary most hikers have in mind.

Before leaving each morning, check the day's intended finish and the correct branch of the route. This is particularly important around Brösarp and on the inland sections, where route choices and diverging paths are more common than on the open coast.

## Sections that need extra attention

| Area   | What to watch for   | Practical advice  |
|--|---|---|
| Coastal stages from Ystad towards Simrishamn and Kivik | Orange markers can be sparse, old or faded in places, but the coastline makes the general line obvious. | Keep the sea on the correct side and use a GPX or map to confirm where the route leaves beaches for lanes, villages or headlands. |

| Area  | What to watch for  | Practical advice   |
|---|--|--|
| Kåseberga area                                  | After Kåseberga, one marked option can drop towards sand walking on the beach.   | Check the route carefully before committing to a descent; the hilltop line is often the easier walking line where available.   |
| Brantevik-Skillinge                             | The official orange-marked route can use asphalt close to a busy road for part of this stretch.  | Some walkers choose a more coastal alternative, but this is not the waymarked official line. If taking an alternative, navigate deliberately and rejoin the route later. |
| Stenshuvud National Park                        | There are no orange Skåneleden markers through the national park itself; the park has its own trail system.  | Carry a GPX track or study the route through the park before entering. Do not rely on orange markers here.   |
| Stenshuvud to Brösarp and Andrarum / Alunbruket | More complex woodland, field paths and hilly inland ground replace the simple coastal handrail. Orange markers return outside the national park, but junctions need more care. | Keep checking the route at path junctions, especially near Brösarp where options diverge.  |

## Maps and GPX

A GPX track is strongly recommended for this walk, even though the coastal sections are generally easy to follow. It is most useful where markers are faded, where the path leaves the shore, and through Stenshuvud National Park.

Useful navigation options include:

- the official Skåneleden interactive map planning tool on the Skåneleden website
- the official Skåneleden GPX, available from skaneleden.se, covering the Skåneleden routes and showing trail infrastructure such as wind-shelters
- the dedicated printed map **Wanderkarte SL4: Skåneleden Österleden**, at 1:50,000 scale, covering the full SL4 route, stages, shelters and route markings
- Outdooractive, Komoot, AllTrails and HiiKER, which include Skåneleden / SL4 route mapping and can be used with downloaded offline maps
- **Vandra i Skåne**, a Swedish-language hiking app for Skåne

For most independent hikers, the best setup is a phone with offline maps and the correct GPX loaded, backed up by a power bank. A paper map is sensible for the full SL4 loop, for anyone camping and using wind-shelters, or for walkers who prefer not to depend entirely on a phone.

## Mobile signal and offline use

This is lowland, populated southern Sweden rather than a remote wilderness route. Signal is generally good around towns and villages such as Ystad, Simrishamn, Kivik and Brösarp. However, data connection can be weaker in forested or rural sections, particularly around Stenshuvud, the Brösarp hills and the Verkeån valley towards Andrarum.

Download offline maps and the day's GPX track before leaving accommodation each morning. Do not assume that a live data connection will be available at every woodland junction.

## How difficult is the navigation?

Navigation difficulty is moderate overall. The coastal stages are suitable for hikers with limited navigation experience, provided they can follow a map or GPX and pay attention when the route leaves the shoreline. The inland walking towards Brösarp and Andrarum requires more concentration, but not advanced compass work in normal conditions.

The key rule is simple: follow orange markers where they exist, know in advance which version of the route you are walking, and do not enter Stenshuvud National Park expecting Skåneleden orange waymarks to guide you through.

## Terrain, Conditions and Difficulty in Practice

Österlenleden is a low-level walk, but the footing changes often enough that it should not be treated as a simple promenade. Most of the common Ystad–Brösarp/Andrarum walk is on good paths, sandy tracks, forest roads, field edges and quiet lanes. The harder work comes from sand, short rocky coastal sections, muddy woodland, livestock pastures and the steeper hills around Stenshuvud, Brösarp and Andrarum.

The canonical SL4 loop has a high point of about 195 m on the inland ridges near Brösarp and Andrarum. On the coastal point-to-point route, Stenshuvud is the standout coastal climb at 97 m, while the final inland stage towards Alunbruket is the most physically demanding day.

### Underfoot: what the path is actually like

| Terrain type                      | Where it matters most   | Practical effect   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|
| Sandy forest paths and dunes      | Ystad Sandskogen, Löderup, Sandhammaren, Vitemölla Strandbackar | Easy in cool conditions, more tiring when dry, loose or hot. Sandhammaren is the main place where beach walking can slow the pace. |
| Gravel tracks and forest roads    | Frequent throughout the route                                   | Generally fast, straightforward walking; good for covering distance.   |
| Field paths, meadows and pastures | South-coast farmland, Brantevik–Simrishamn, Brösarp area        | Can be soft, rutted or wet after rain. Expect gates, stiles and livestock.   |
| Rocky or stony coastal path       | Around Gislövshammar and some shore sections                    | Short, uneven sections where footwear and careful foot placement matter.   |
| Woodland dirt paths               | Stenshuvud, Brösarp hills, Verkaån valley                       | Roots, mud and slippery leaves can make easy gradients feel slower.  |
| Boardwalks                        | Wet ground in Stenshuvud National Park                          | Helpful in wet areas, but still take care when boards are damp.  |
| Quiet lanes and tarmac            | Near villages and road crossings                                | Not dominant, but unavoidable in places. Stay alert where the route uses or crosses minor roads.                                   |

Beach walking is not a defining feature of the whole trail. Sandhammaren is the main prolonged sandy section, and the sand is often firm enough to walk efficiently. In places, parallel sandy forest paths can be used instead of the open beach. Elsewhere, beach or shore walking is usually short and broken up by meadows, tracks, lanes and village paths.

## Difficulty by stage on the common coastal route

| Stage                            | Typical difficulty in practice | What makes it easier or harder  |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Ystad to Kåseberga               | Easy to moderate               | Sandy forest paths through Ystad Sandskogen, then firmer coastal ridge walking towards Kåseberga and Hammars Backar. The distance is more significant than the terrain. |
| Kåseberga to Skillinge           | Easy, but long                 | Mostly straightforward walking through coastal reserves, pine forest and the Sandhammaren area. Sand and the 22 km length are the main reasons it can feel tiring.      |
| Skillinge to Simrishamn          | Easiest stage                  | Shorter distance, beach meadows and coastal paths. The stony slate and limestone-like ground near Gislövshammar is the main uneven section.                             |
| Simrishamn to Kivik              | Moderate                       | Varied coast, meadows, forest and orchards, with the steep, rocky Stenshuvud climb as the key challenge.  |
| Kivik to Brösarp                 | Moderate                       | Sandy slopes, Ravlunda heath, the Verkeån valley and Brösarps Backar make this more undulating than the earlier coast. Around 290 m of ascent.                          |
| Brösarp to Andrarum / Alunbruket | Moderate-hard for this route   | The toughest day overall, with about 640 m of ascent through beech forest, ravine terrain, stream-side paths and the Verkeån valley near Hallamölla.                    |

### Stenshuvud: the main technical-feeling section

Stenshuvud National Park is the most demanding short section on the coastal route. The climb is not high by mountain standards, but it is steep, rocky and bumpy in places, with the path crossing boulders and rough ground near the upper slopes. The descent on the far side is also steep and rocky enough to slow the pace.

Lower forest paths in the national park can be muddy and slippery after rain, although boardwalks help across the wettest ground. Sturdy walking shoes or boots are strongly recommended here, even if the earlier coastal stages have felt easy in lighter footwear. In summer, Stenshuvud is also one of the busiest parts of the route, so progress can be slower on narrow or rocky sections.

### Brösarps Backar, Verkeån and the inland finish

The character changes after Kivik. Vitemölla Strandbackar and Ravlunda heath bring sandy slopes, open heathland, scrub and juniper before the route reaches the Verkeån valley and the rolling hills of Brösarps Backar. These hills are not high, but they are more tiring than the coastal walking because the path repeatedly rises and falls across sandy pasture and heath.

Around Brösarps Backar, expect grazing cattle and horses, electric fences and stile-stairs. The hills are crossed by many cattle-made paths, so attention to the orange Skåneleden waymarks matters. Some sandy climbs and descents can be slippery when wet, and one short sandy rise and fall is a genuine effort compared with the easier coastal ground.

The Brösarp to Andrarum / Alunbruket stage is the hardest day on the common itinerary. It follows beech forest, the Verkeån river valley, rapids, ravine terrain and the Hallamölla waterfall area. The path

is still a walking route rather than a technical trail, but the repeated ascent and descent, stream-side footing and damp forest floor make it slower and more physical than the coast.

## **Mud, wet ground and slippery sections**

Österlenleden is not a boggy trail in the British upland sense, but wet conditions do affect several sections:

- lower woodland paths in Stenshuvud can become muddy and slippery;
- boardwalks in Stenshuvud can be slick when damp;
- creek-side and stream-side paths in the Brösarp hills and Verkaån valley can be slippery after rain;
- pasture paths may become soft, churned or rutted where livestock use the same ground;
- beech forest sections can be rooty and leaf-covered, especially in autumn.

Waterproof footwear is useful in spring and autumn, not because of deep bogs but because of wet grass, mud, damp woodland and slippery stream valleys.

## **Livestock, gates and fences**

Livestock fields are a normal part of the route, especially through farmland and around Brösarp. Expect cattle, sheep and horses in some pastures, plus conventional farm gates, stiles and electric fences with stile-stairs in the Brösarps Backar area.

Move calmly through livestock fields, keep to the waymarked line, close gates where required and give animals space. Dogs should be kept under close control, particularly in grazing areas and nature reserves. This should be checked before travelling if walking with a dog, as local restrictions can apply seasonally or in protected areas.

## **Road walking and villages**

Road walking is present but not dominant. The route uses or crosses quiet lanes near villages and through settled farmland, with more built-up walking around places such as Ystad, Simrishamn and the fishing villages. These sections are useful for services and accommodation, but they do break the natural-path rhythm. Visibility and care matter on minor roads, particularly where there is no dedicated footway.

## **Seasonal conditions**

Spring and autumn usually give the best walking conditions: cooler temperatures, fewer crowds and firmer surfaces. Spring is especially good on the Brösarp hills, while autumn can be damp under trees and along streams.

Summer brings long daylight and generally dry paths, but it can also make sandy sections hotter and softer. Stenshuvud and Sandhammaren are popular in summer, so allow extra time through busy areas. Carry enough water between villages in warm weather, particularly on the longer 21–22 km stages.

Winter conditions are not defined by altitude, but wet weather can make the steep paths at Stenshuvud, the sandy hills around Brösarp and the ravine paths near Verkaån significantly more slippery. No scrambling is required, but these sections deserve more care in rain, frost or leaf fall.

## Overall judgement

The route is moderate because of distance, changing surfaces and several hilly inland sections, not because of technical difficulty. There is no scrambling, no sustained exposure and no high mountain terrain. Fit beginners can manage the easier coastal stages with sensible footwear and daily distances under control, while the Stenshuvud climb and the Brösarp–Alunbruket stage provide the main tests for stronger walkers.

## Weather and Best Time to Walk

Österlenleden is most practical as a spring-to-autumn hike. The coast is low-level and rarely extreme, but it is exposed: wind, sudden showers, strong sun on open beaches and seasonal accommodation closures matter more than altitude. The inland hills around Brösarp, Andrarum and Linderödsåsen are only around 200 m, but they feel colder and wetter than the coastal villages in poor weather.

### Best months

| Period                   | Verdict for hikers   | Main planning points   |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--|
| Late May                 | Excellent            | Wildflowers on Brösarps Backar, apple blossom around Kivik, long bright days, peak sunshine around Ystad and fewer crowds than midsummer.                    |
| June                     | Excellent            | Warm, long daylight of around 17 hours in southern Skåne, generally the best balance of weather, services and manageable visitor numbers.                    |
| July–August              | Good but busy        | Warmest period, but accommodation pressure is highest and Ales Stenar, Stenshuvud and the fishing villages can be crowded. August is also the wettest month. |
| September to mid-October | Very good            | Quieter trails, mild temperatures and Kivik apple season, with shortening daylight and increasing rain into October.   |
| November–February        | Poor for a thru-hike | Short daylight, cold rain, possible inland snow or frost, muddy woodland paths and many seasonal guesthouses and cafés closed. Day walks are more realistic. |

For most walkers, the strongest choices are **late May, June and early September**. July and August can be excellent walking months if accommodation is booked well ahead and crowded coastal sites are accepted as part of the trip.

### Spring: March to May

Spring starts cold and can be blustery. March and April commonly sit around 5–12°C, with possible overnight frost, especially inland near Brösarp and Andrarum. The trail is largely accessible from March, but early spring suits walkers who are comfortable with wind, cold mornings and a higher chance of muddy ground on the inland sections.

Late April and May are much better for a full walk. Daytime temperatures rise towards 15–18°C, humidity is relatively low and May is the sunniest month around Ystad, averaging about 9.2 hours of sunshine per day. This is also the best period for the inland hills: cowslips, pasque flowers, thrift, almond flowers and wild thyme are associated with Brösarps Backar, while apple blossom appears around Kivik in May.

Accommodation and cafés begin to open more reliably from May, though smaller fishing-village services can still be seasonal. If planning a spring walk before May, every overnight stop and food plan should be checked before travelling.

## Summer: June to August

Summer is the easiest season for underfoot conditions, long days and reliable services. June is often the best summer month: daytime temperatures are usually around 18–21°C, nights around 12–14°C, and southern Skåne has roughly 17 hours of daylight. Early June also avoids some of the Swedish holiday pressure.

July is the warmest month, with average daytime highs around 20–21°C at Ystad and Simrishamn, and occasional hotter days of 25–28°C. The open coastal stages have limited shade, so sun protection matters. The beach and dune walking around Sandhammaren is particularly exposed, and heat reflected from pale sand can make this section feel harder than its height profile suggests.

August remains warm but is the wettest month, with average precipitation around 71 mm at Ystad and about 78 mm at Simrishamn. Rain often comes as showers or thunderstorms, and sudden squalls can come in off the Baltic. A lightweight waterproof should be carried even in high summer.

Summer is also the busiest accommodation period. Ystad and Simrishamn have more year-round capacity, but smaller places such as Skillinge, Brantevik, Baskemölla and Vik are much more dependent on seasonal guesthouses, B&Bs and cafés. Book early for July and August, especially if walking the common Ystad to Brösarp or Andrarum coastal itinerary with fixed overnight stops.

## Autumn: September to mid-October

September is one of the best months for Österlenleden. Temperatures are usually around 14–17°C, the coastal villages are quieter, and accommodation is generally easier to arrange than in midsummer. The beech and pine woodland around Stenshuvud and Brösarp becomes more attractive as autumn colour develops.

Late September and early October can also be a good time to pass through Kivik for apple season. Festival dates vary and should be checked before travelling if they are part of the plan.

By October, temperatures commonly drop to around 9–13°C and daylight becomes a more important constraint. By mid-October there are roughly 10 hours of usable daylight, which is still workable for the shorter 12–14 km inland stages but leaves less margin for delays, café stops or bad weather. Rain increases through October, and the sandier beach sections, woodland tracks and hillsides can become slower and messier.

Many walking operators and seasonal businesses focus on the period up to mid-October, with later autumn arrangements possible only by prior planning. From late October onwards, services become much less predictable outside Ystad and Simrishamn.

## Winter: November to February

Winter is not recommended as the main thru-hiking season for Österlenleden. The coastal path and Stenshuvud National Park remain accessible, and the low altitude means the route is not a mountain winter undertaking, but the practical drawbacks are significant.

Expect short daylight, cold wet weather and limited services. December has only around 7–8 hours of daylight and averages about 1.1 sunshine hours per day at Ystad. Typical daytime highs are around 3–

6°C, with overnight lows near -1 to -2°C. Snow is occasional rather than dependable, but the inland Brösarp hills can see snow, frost and icy patches.

The weakest winter sections are the exposed clifftops, the beach approaches where wind and sand drift can make progress tiring, and the inland woodland and ravine paths around Hallamölla and the Verkaån, which can be slippery after heavy rain or frost. Many guesthouses, B&Bs and seasonal cafés in the fishing villages close from November to Easter, so a winter end-to-end walk requires careful accommodation and resupply planning. Day walks from Ystad, Simrishamn, Kivik or Brösarp are much more realistic.

## Wind and exposure

Wind is one of the defining weather factors on this route. Skåne's open landscape and coast on several sides mean strong breezes are common, and the Österlen coast is exposed to Hanöbukten and Baltic weather. A sea breeze can be pleasant in summer but cold in spring and autumn.

The most exposed places include:

- the clifftops around Ales Stenar and Kåseberga;
- the beaches and dunes around Sandhammaren;
- open coastal paths between the fishing villages;
- the Stenshuvud summit area;
- any unsheltered farmland or ridge sections inland.

Prevailing winds in Skåne are generally from the south-west. Walkers heading north-east from Ystad towards Brösarp may therefore have a following wind on typical coastal days, but this should not be relied on. Pack a windproof layer even when the forecast looks dry.

## Rain, surface conditions and footing

Annual precipitation around Ystad is about 690 mm, distributed fairly evenly through the year. April is the driest month at around 38 mm; August is the wettest at around 71 mm. Rain is not usually a reason to avoid the route, but it changes the walking quality quickly.

Key surface issues by area:

- **Sandhammaren and the beach sections:** soft sand is tiring in any season. Winter storms and sand movement can make it rougher or less even.
- **Coastal clifftops:** generally straightforward, but exposed and potentially slippery in wet or icy conditions.
- **Stenshuvud National Park:** woodland and summit paths can be greasy after rain, especially where roots and rock are exposed.
- **Brösarp, Andrarum and Hallamölla:** beech forest, hillside tracks and the Verkaån ravine can be muddy from October to March and slippery after heavy rain.

Waterproof footwear is useful outside high summer. In June to August, many sections are firmer and drier, but the beach sand remains physically demanding.

## Ticks and insects

Ticks are a serious practical consideration on Österlenleden from April to October, with peak activity from May to September. Skåne is one of Sweden's higher-risk counties for Lyme disease and tick-borne encephalitis, and the route passes through exactly the kind of habitat where ticks thrive: tall grass, heathland, beech woodland, pine forest and meadow edges.

Practical precautions:

- wear long trousers, ideally tucked into socks in grassy or wooded sections;
- use a DEET or Picaridin-based repellent;
- check skin thoroughly every evening, especially the groin, armpits, hairline and behind the knees;
- remove ticks promptly with fine-tipped tweezers;
- seek medical advice if a spreading rash or flu-like symptoms develop after a bite.

A TBE vaccine is available in Sweden and is recommended for people spending significant time in tick-heavy areas. It requires multiple doses, so it must be arranged before travel. There is no vaccine for Lyme disease, but early treatment with antibiotics is effective.

Midges are much less of a problem on coastal Skåne than in northern Sweden, and the sea breeze often keeps insects down on exposed sections. Mosquitoes can still be irritating in July and August in sheltered woodland, wet dune areas around Sandhammaren and the Verkaån valley near Hallamölla. Insect repellent is worth carrying in high summer.

## Seasonal services and closures

Ystad and Simrishamn are the safest year-round bases. Smaller coastal villages and fishing settlements are much more seasonal, with many guesthouses, B&Bs and cafés operating mainly from May to September or October. This matters most on the standard six-day Ystad to Brösarp or Andrarum walk, where overnight options are spread between small places.

Stenshuvud National Park trails are open year-round, but visitor centre hours reduce outside the main season. Skåneleden wind-shelter campsites and simple camping under allemansrätten remain possible year-round, but winter camping requires proper cold-weather equipment and self-sufficiency.

For a first full walk, plan between **late May and early October**, with **June and early September** offering the best balance of weather, daylight, services and trail conditions.

## Safety Notes

Österlenleden is a low-level coastal and rural trail, not a remote mountain route, but it still needs proper day-to-day judgement. The main safety issues are livestock, exposed wind, loose sand, occasional road walking, ticks and the quieter inland stages around Brösarp and Andrarum.

### Emergency number and help

Sweden's emergency number is **112** for police, fire, ambulance and rescue services. Do not use 999. Mobile callers in Sweden can typically be located by the emergency service, but a clear description of the nearest village, trail section, road or landmark is still useful.

Ystad and Simrishamn have full medical facilities. Simrishamn also has a pharmacy and supermarkets, making it an important mid-route place to deal with minor injuries, replace supplies or reassess plans.

### Mobile signal and navigation

Mobile coverage is generally good in the villages and along much of the coast, with 4G/LTE normally available in settled areas. It can become patchier in dense woodland, including parts of Stenshuvud, and on the quieter inland ground near Brösarp and Andrarum. Do not rely on live mapping alone.

Before leaving each morning:

- download the day's map or GPX in advance;
- keep the Skåneleden SL4 route available offline;
- note the next village or exit point;
- carry enough battery for a full day, with a power bank on longer stages;
- keep the orange waymarks in sight, especially through woodland, pasture and near the Kåseberga-Kabusa military area.

### Livestock and dogs

Livestock is one of the most important practical hazards on this route. The trail passes through many grazed pastures, with cattle and horses sometimes close to, or directly on, the path. Particular care is needed around the Kåseberga-Kabusa area, north of Gislövshammar, south of Brantevik, south of Simrishamn and between Torparebron and Haväng.

In livestock fields:

- stay on the marked path and close gates behind you;
- give cattle and horses as much room as possible;
- do not run, shout or wave poles aggressively;
- avoid walking between cows and calves;
- if animals block the path, wait or make a calm, wide detour only where it is safe and permitted.

Dogs are a poor fit for several sections of Österlenleden. Cattle can react aggressively to dogs, and some pasture sections are not advisable with a dog. Anyone planning to walk with a dog should check the

current Skåneleden stage notes before committing to the route.

## Road walking and traffic

Most of the route is on paths, tracks, beaches and quiet lanes, but there are several road-adjacent sections. Stage 1 includes tarmac along **Östra Kustvägen** towards Hammar, and stages 3–5 use coastal roads and cycle paths in places. Between Skillinge and Brantevik, the waymarks bring walkers close to a trafficked road; some walkers prefer the sea-side alternative where conditions allow, but that still requires attention to footing and route-finding.

Use normal road-walking discipline: wear bright clothing, face oncoming traffic where there is no pavement, keep to the verge when possible and take extra care in poor light or rain.

## Weather, wind and exposure

The Baltic coast can be windy even on warm summer days. The most exposed places include the Kåseberga–Kabusa clifftops, Sandhammaren, and the open sections around Skillinge and Gislövshammar. The route is low-level and does not involve serious mountain exposure, but wind can slow progress, increase fatigue and make rest stops cold.

Carry a windproof layer even in July. In spring and autumn, add a warm layer and waterproof shell; forest and inland sections can feel noticeably cooler than the open coast.

In summer, the long beach, dune and farmland sections offer limited shade. Sun protection is important from June to August: use sunscreen, wear a hat and start early on hot days where possible. Summer temperatures in Skåne can be warm enough to make the 20 km-plus stages noticeably harder.

## Terrain-specific hazards

| Area                              | What to watch for  | Practical approach  |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| Kåseberga to Kabusa               | Steeper coastal ground, wind exposure, livestock and a nearby military area        | Allow more time than the distance suggests; follow waymarks and do not wander off-route |
| Sandhammaren                      | Deep, loose sand and dunes   | Expect slower walking and more ankle fatigue; trekking poles can help                   |
| Stenshuvud National Park          | Rocky and rooted paths, including the 97 m summit route and coastal woodland paths | Take care after rain; sturdy footwear is useful   |
| Brösarps Backar and Linderödsåsen | Hillier, uneven inland ground  | Treat this as more demanding than the easier coastal walking                            |
| Pasture sections                  | Fences, ladders and Swedish stile infrastructure                                   | Climb carefully, especially with a heavy pack or in wet weather                         |

Light trail shoes may be enough in dry summer conditions, but boots or supportive walking shoes are sensible in spring, autumn or after rain.

## Water safety at Sandhammaren

The walking route stays on the beach and dune edge, but Sandhammaren is also a tempting swimming spot. The beach lies near the south-eastern tip of Sweden, where Baltic currents meet, and the currents can be strong and changeable. Underwater sand reefs shift, and conditions can be hazardous even when the beach looks calm.

If swimming, do not swim alone, do not go far from shore and check for local warning flags or notices. The safest option on a walking day is often to treat Sandhammaren as a rest stop rather than a swim stop.

## Ticks

Ticks are common in Skåne, especially in coastal vegetation, woodland and long grass. They are active roughly from March to October, with a summer peak. Lyme borreliosis is the more common concern, and tick-borne encephalitis is also present in Skåne.

Reduce risk by wearing long trousers in woodland and tall grass, tucking trousers into socks where vegetation is high, and checking the whole body at the end of each day. Carry a proper tick remover and remove ticks promptly; do not use petroleum jelly or improvised methods. Anyone spending extended time in wooded Skåne may wish to discuss TBE vaccination with a GP before travelling.

## Solo hiking and quieter sections

Solo walking is common and generally safe on Österlenleden. The route regularly passes villages and is not wilderness, but the inland section from Kivik towards Brösarp and Andrarum is quieter, more rural and has fewer passing walkers than the coast.

A sensible solo routine is to send someone the day's start point, finish point and expected arrival time. This matters most on the Kivik–Brösarp–Andrarum stages, where help may be further away and the walking is hillier and more wooded.

There is no food or water available after leaving Kivik until Brösarp, so leave Kivik with enough for the full stage plus a reserve.

## Fire safety for campers

Campers using Skåneleden wind-shelters should only light fires where it is safe and permitted, using designated fire rings where provided. In dry summer periods, fire bans (**eldningsförbud**) are common enough to plan for. Check the current fire situation before lighting any stove or fire; this should be checked before travelling and again locally during the walk.

## Daily safety checklist

Before setting off each day, check:

- the weather forecast, especially wind and rain on coastal stages;
- the day's distance and likely walking time, allowing extra time for sand, hills and livestock;
- whether there are long gaps without shops, cafés or water;
- that offline maps and GPX files are available;

- that the phone is charged and 112 is saved or memorised;
- whether any fire ban applies if camping;
- the nearest realistic exit point by village, road or public transport.

## Gear Recommendations

Österlenleden is not a high mountain route, but it is hard on footwear and exposed kit. The main gear challenges are sand, wind, ticks, patchy shade, occasional muddy field paths, and the hillier ground around Stenshuvud, Brösarps Backar and Linderödsåsen.

### Footwear: prioritise sand control and all-day comfort

Lightweight hiking shoes or trail running shoes are adequate for most of the coastal route, provided they have good grip and are already well broken in. Heavy mountain boots are usually unnecessary, but some ankle support can be useful on the rockier and hillier sections around Stenshuvud and Brösarp.

The key issue is sand. The open beach section from Spraggehusen / Löderup towards Sandhammaren is long, exposed and tiring, and sand works into shoes quickly. For this route, pack:

- **Waterproof hiking shoes or boots** for wet spring/autumn conditions and muddy meadow paths.
- **Sand gaiters** or close-fitting low gaiters for the beach and dune sections around Löderups Strandbad and Sandhammaren.
- **Two-sock system** if prone to blisters: a thin liner sock under a thicker walking sock.
- **Spare dry socks** for sand, rain and sweaty summer days.
- **Blister plasters and foot tape** — especially important before the long sand stages.

### Waterproofs, windproofs and layers

The Baltic coast can be windy even in settled weather. Open stretches around Kåseberga, Kabusa, Sandhammaren and the beaches have little shelter, so a windproof outer layer matters as much as rain protection.

Pack as a minimum:

- **Waterproof and windproof jacket** in every season.
- **Waterproof trousers** in spring and autumn, and for anyone walking the full 188 km loop where inland tracks can be wet.
- **Moisture-wicking base layers** in wool or synthetic fabric; avoid cotton for walking days.
- **Fleece or light insulated mid-layer** for cool evenings, coastal wind and shaded woodland.
- **Warm hat or buff** for spring/autumn starts and breezy clifftops.

In summer, keep layers light and breathable, but do not leave the shell jacket behind. Even July and August evenings can feel cool near the coast.

### Sun, insects and tick protection

Several days have long exposed coastal sections with little shade, especially on the beaches and dunes. Carry:

- Sunscreen
- Sunglasses

- Sun hat or cap
- Lip balm with sun protection

Ticks are a real consideration in Skåne, particularly from roughly March to October. The route passes through woodland, long grass, meadows and forest edges, so tick prevention should be treated as standard kit rather than an afterthought.

Recommended tick precautions:

- Wear long trousers or use tick-resistant clothing in long grass and woodland.
- Tuck trousers into socks on overgrown sections.
- Walk in the middle of the path where possible.
- Carry a **tick remover** or fine tweezers.
- Do a full tick check after each walking day and shower soon after arrival.
- Consider medical advice on TBE vaccination before a trip involving extended time in Skåne woodland.

Mosquito repellent is also useful in summer, particularly near water and still, sheltered areas.

## Water and food carry

Do not rely on finding water at every beach, harbour or shelter. Food and water gaps can be significant between villages, and wells can dry out in hot summers. Taps and wells at wind-shelter sites may also be turned off in winter.

For most walkers, a **minimum 1.5–2 litre water capacity** is sensible for a full day, with more in hot weather or if walking the long beach sections slowly. Inn-to-inn hikers should still leave each morning with enough water for the whole stage.

Carry lunch and snacks before leaving the larger overnight stops such as Ystad, Simrishamn, Kivik or Brösarp. Smaller village cafés and shops can be seasonal, have limited opening hours, or may not suit early starts. This should be checked before travelling.

A small amount of **cash in Swedish krona (SEK / kr)** is worth carrying for minor purchases where card payment is not available.

## Navigation and electronics

Österlenleden is waymarked with the Skåneleden orange markers and is generally straightforward to follow, but do not depend only on paint marks. Forest tracks, beach exits, field edges, detours and the military training area near Nybrostrand make offline navigation useful.

Carry:

- Offline GPX route on a phone or GPS device.
- The relevant Skåneleden map as a paper backup.
- Power bank for multi-day use, especially if relying on phone navigation.
- Charging cable and plug adaptor suitable for Sweden.
- Headlamp in spring and autumn, and for anyone staying at vindskydd shelters.

Mobile signal is generally available on this coastal route, but it should not be treated as guaranteed in forests or rural inland sections.

## Trekking poles

Trekking poles are genuinely useful on this route rather than just optional ballast. They help with rhythm and balance on soft sand, reduce leg fatigue on long beach walking, and add stability on the hillier ground around Stenshuvud, Brösarps Backar and Linderödsåsen.

If flying to Malmö or Copenhagen before the walk, check current airline rules before packing poles in hand luggage.

## Gear by walking style

| Walking style                           | Pack and gear advice   |
|---|--|
| <b>Inn-to-inn with luggage transfer</b> | A <b>25–35 litre daypack</b> is normally enough for waterproofs, warm layer, lunch, water, first aid, sun protection and navigation. Many luggage-transfer trips use a <b>20 kg main-bag limit</b> ; confirm the current limit before booking. Still carry full day essentials, as transferred luggage will not be available during the stage. |
| <b>Self-supported camper</b>            | A pack around <b>50 litres</b> is appropriate if carrying tent, sleeping bag, mat, stove and food. Keep weight controlled: the sand sections are much harder with a heavy pack. Use a stable tent suited to wind; a dome tent can be easier where pegging is awkward on harder ground.   |
| <b>Vindskydd / shelter user</b>         | Skåneleden wind shelters are simple open shelters, not huts. Carry a sleeping mat, warm sleeping bag, stove, food, water capacity and headlamp. Shelters may have a compost toilet, fireplace, firewood and information board, but do not assume potable water is available.   |
| <b>Fast or section hiker</b>            | Trail running shoes or light hiking shoes are usually suitable. Keep pack weight low, but still carry waterproof shell, water, sun protection, tick remover, blister kit and offline navigation. Sand gaiters remain useful on the Sandhammaren beach section.   |

## Camping-specific kit

Camping is relevant on the wider Skåneleden network and for walkers using vindskydd sites or camping under allemansrätten, the Swedish right of public access. Keep the setup simple and self-contained.

Essential camping kit:

- Tent or shelter system suitable for coastal wind.
- Sleeping mat; vindskydd floors are hard and unheated.
- Sleeping bag matched to season: **around 10°C comfort for summer, around 0°C for spring/autumn, and around -10°C if attempting winter conditions.**
- Gas stove and cook set.
- Water containers with enough capacity for dry camps.
- Headlamp.
- Rubbish bags — pack out all waste.

Use fires only at designated fire places, such as those at official shelter sites, and respect fire restrictions in dry summer weather.

## Seasonal extras

| Season                                  | Add or emphasise  |
|---|---|
| <b>Spring</b>                           | Warm mid-layer for chilly evenings, waterproof footwear, full tick precautions, and extra care on muddy field and meadow paths.   |
| <b>Summer</b>                           | Sun hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, mosquito repellent, sand gaiters, higher water capacity and breathable layers. Heat and soft sand can make the beach stages feel harder than their distance suggests. |
| <b>Autumn</b>                           | Full waterproofs, warmer base layer, headlamp, gloves or buff, and a more conservative water/food plan as daylight and seasonal opening hours reduce.   |
| <b>Winter or out-of-season attempts</b> | Not the normal season for this route. Expect limited services, possible water shut-offs at shelters, short daylight and colder nights; check conditions before travelling.                            |

## Budget and Costs

All costs on Österlenleden should be planned in Swedish krona (SEK / kr). Sweden is not in the eurozone, although some self-guided operators price their walking holidays in EUR. Prices vary noticeably between shoulder season and the June–August peak, especially in the coastal villages, so check current prices before booking.

### Typical trip budgets

For the commonly walked coastal route from Ystad to Brösarp or Andrarum/Alunbruket, a six-night/seven-day budget is a realistic planning unit. The full 188 km SL4 loop will cost more simply because it takes longer.

| Style                      | Accommodation    | Food        | Likely daily cost | Six-night/seven-day trail cost* |
|----------------------------|------------------|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| Budget camping / vindskydd | 0–250 SEK        | 200–350 SEK | 250–700 SEK       | 1,500–4,200 SEK                 |
| Mid-range B&B / guesthouse | 600–1,000 SEK pp | 350–600 SEK | 950–1,600 SEK     | 5,700–9,600 SEK                 |
| Comfortable hotel / inn    | 900–1,500 SEK pp | 500–800 SEK | 1,400–2,300 SEK   | 8,400–13,800 SEK                |

\*Trail cost excludes long-distance travel to Sweden, but includes the sort of accommodation and food costs most hikers incur while on the route.

### Accommodation costs

Accommodation is the biggest variable. Independent walkers can keep costs low by using Skåneleden wind-shelters and campsites, while hikers staying indoors in Ystad, Kåseberga, Skillinge, Simrishamn, Kivik and Brösarp should expect coastal-season pricing.

| Accommodation type                       | Typical cost             | Notes   |
|--|--------------------------|---|
| Skåneleden wind-shelter / vindskydd      | Free                     | Basic trail shelters; facilities vary. Carry camping kit and do not rely on indoor comfort.                               |
| Wild camping under allemansrätten        | Free                     | Generally allows a one-night, low-impact camp where suitable. Avoid private gardens, cultivated land and sensitive areas. |
| Campsite tent pitch                      | 150–400 SEK              | Higher in June–August; shoulder-season pitches are often cheaper.   |
| Simple B&B / guesthouse                  | 600–900 SEK pp sharing   | Some very simple rooms may be cheaper, but availability is limited.   |
| Mid-range guesthouse, inn or small hotel | 700–1,100 SEK pp sharing | The most common indoor budget for a self-arranged trip.   |
| Comfortable hotel room                   | 900–1,500 SEK pp sharing | Peak summer rates around Kivik and the coast can sit at the upper end.  |

Simrishamn is usually the easiest mid-route place for a wider choice of accommodation and resupply. Kivik can be more expensive in high season, with some guesthouse rooms around 1,600–2,200 SEK per

room. Brösarp has fewer options, and Andrarum/Alunbruket is very limited, so the final night should be booked early or planned around transport.

## Food and drink

A low-cost hiker shopping in supermarkets and carrying lunches can manage on roughly 200–350 SEK per day. A more comfortable budget, with one café or restaurant meal most days, is closer to 300–500 SEK per day. Eating out for most meals is more likely to cost 500–800 SEK per day.

| Food approach                                     | Typical cost    | Practical notes  |
|---|-----------------|--|
| Mostly supermarket food                           | 200–350 SEK/day | Best stocked up in Ystad and Simrishamn.                 |
| Mixed self-catering plus one café/restaurant meal | 300–500 SEK/day | A sensible budget for most B&B-based walkers.            |
| Eating out regularly                              | 500–800 SEK/day | Lunch menus can be good value; dinners add up quickly.   |
| Mid-range dinner                                  | 200–350 SEK pp  | Common planning range for a restaurant meal.             |
| Set-menu / fine dining                            | 625–795 SEK pp  | Relevant around the more food-focused Österlen villages. |

Useful food-planning points:

- **Ystad** has the best start-of-walk choice for supermarkets, cafés and restaurants.
- **Kåseberga** has limited and often seasonal services.
- **Skillinge** has café and food options, but not on Sundays.
- **Simrishamn** is the best mid-route resupply stop.
- **Kivik** has harbour cafés and some shops; it is a sensible place to budget for a meal out.
- **Brösarp** is a small village with limited services.
- **Andrarum/Alunbruket** has very limited food options; finish with food carried or plan onward transport.

## Transport costs

Public transport keeps access costs relatively low. Ystad is rail-connected, Simrishamn is also on the rail network, and Brösarp/Andrarum is reached by regional buses.

| Journey                       | Typical cost | Notes   |
|-------------------------------|--------------|---|
| Malmö to Ystad by train       | 130–160 SEK  | Around 51 minutes.  |
| Copenhagen to Ystad via Malmö | 150–230 SEK  | Useful for international arrivals via the Öresund link.             |
| Simrishamn to Ystad by train  | 80–120 SEK   | Useful for section-hiking or returning from the mid-route railhead. |

| Journey                                   | Typical cost      | Notes   |
|---|-------------------|---|
| Brösarp to Copenhagen by public transport | 200–300 SEK       | Allow roughly 3 hours with connections.           |
| Travel to Ystad plus return from finish   | 330–530 SEK       | Typical self-arranged public-transport allowance. |
| Long-stay parking in Ystad                | About 45 SEK/week | Check current parking rules before leaving a car. |

From Brösarp, regional buses link towards Simrishamn, Kristianstad, Tomelilla, Ystad and Malmö depending on routing and day of week. Bus 574 links Brösarp and Simrishamn, and express services also operate from Brösarp. Timetables should be checked with Skånetrafiken before travelling, especially at weekends and outside summer.

Taxis are best treated as a contingency rather than a core part of the budget. They can be useful if accommodation sits off-route or if a stage needs shortening, but availability in small villages is limited and fares vary. This should be checked before travelling.

## Luggage transfer and self-guided packages

Österlenleden is a popular self-guided route, and baggage transfer is widely used by walkers staying in guesthouses and small hotels. Independent walkers can arrange the route much more cheaply, but packages remove much of the booking and transfer work.

| Option                         | Typical cost  | What it usually covers  |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| Standalone luggage transfer    | About 150–300 SEK per bag per transfer when available | Availability and pricing depend on operator and accommodation; check before booking.  |
| Eurohike self-guided package   | From about 11,400 SEK pp                              | Accommodation, breakfast, one dinner, luggage transfer, digital route documents and return transfer Alunbruket to Brösarp; priced in EUR. |
| Innwalking self-guided package | About 12,400–13,500 SEK pp                            | Accommodation, breakfast, door-to-door luggage transfer, maps/GPS and support; priced in EUR.   |
| Single supplement              | Often substantial                                     | Innwalking lists supplements of roughly €570–€640; check current prices before booking.   |

Package seasons typically run from May to mid-October, with April and late October sometimes possible on request. Minimum participant rules, tourist taxes, printed-material charges and what counts as an included meal vary by operator, so compare the inclusions rather than just the headline price.

## Fees, permits and maps

There is no trail permit or path fee for Skåneleden SL4, and Stenshuvud National Park is free to enter. The main unavoidable costs are accommodation, food and transport.

Digital mapping and GPX are available via the official Skåneleden route information, while printed map booklets may cost extra. A budget walker using free shelters, free access and supermarket food can

keep the route inexpensive; an inn-to-inn walker in peak summer should budget at Swedish coastal holiday prices.

# Luggage Transfer, Guided Tours and Support Services

## How luggage transfer works on the Österlenleden

The Österlenleden is unusually well supported for a Scandinavian long-distance trail. Most commercial services are built around the popular coastal point-to-point itinerary from Ystad to Brösarp or Andrarum/Alunbruket, rather than the full 188 km Skåneleden SL4 loop back to Ystad.

In practice, luggage transfer usually means:

- one standard bag per person moved by road between booked accommodations each walking day;
- a typical maximum of around 20 kg per person, though limits vary by operator;
- walking with only a daypack containing water, food, waterproofs, spare layers and essentials;
- route notes, digital maps or GPX files supplied as part of a self-guided package;
- an emergency or service phone number, but no guide walking with the group.

The final logistics around Andrarum/Alunbruket matter. Several packages include a transfer back to Brösarp at the end of the walk, because Andrarum/Alunbruket does not have a regular public-transport service. Independent hikers should plan this connection in advance rather than assuming an onward bus from the trail end.

## Self-guided walking-holiday companies

Most commercial packages combine accommodation, breakfast, baggage transfer and route materials. They suit walkers who want inn-to-inn logistics handled in advance, especially in peak summer when rooms in smaller villages can be limited.

| Operator           | Typical itinerary  | What is usually included  | Indicative cost and season   |
|--------------------|--|---|--|
| <b>Eurohike</b>    | 8 days / 7 nights, Ystad to Andrarum/Alunbruket                                    | Hotels, inns or B&Bs, breakfast, some dinners, luggage transfer, digital documents with GPS, service hotline, final transfer towards Brösarp    | From about €1,089 per person in a double room; premium "With Charm" version from about €1,689. Usually May–October, with some shoulder-season dates by request.        |
| <b>Inn Walking</b> | 8 days / 7 nights, with 5–7 day options; Ystad to Brösarp/Alunbruket, about 103 km | Privately owned guesthouses, hotels and B&Bs, breakfast, door-to-door luggage transfer, route pack, GPS tracks, 1:50,000 map, emergency hotline | About €1,180–€1,290 per person in a double room depending on season; supplements for single rooms and solo travellers. May to mid-October, with some dates by request. |

| Operator                       | Typical itinerary  | What is usually included  | Indicative cost and season  |
|--------------------------------|--|---|---|
| <b>Macs Adventure</b>          | 6 days / 5 nights, about 80 km on the coast  | B&Bs, guesthouses and small hotels, breakfast, baggage transfer up to 20 kg per person, app navigation, final transfer to the nearest rail connection, 24/7 support   | From about US\$1,140 per person. May–October.   |
| <b>The Natural Adventure</b>   | 8 days, 7 walking days, about 103 km   | 3-star hotels and guesthouses, breakfast, luggage transfer for one bag up to 20 kg, digital navigation app, final transfer from Alunbruket to Brösarp, 24/7 local phone assistance                              | From about £1,255 per person. March–November.   |
| <b>EverTrek</b>                | Swedish-language packages of 8 days / 7 nights, 6 days / 5 nights or 4 days / 3 nights                               | 2–4 star hotels, guesthouses and B&Bs with private bathrooms, breakfast, daily baggage transport, route information, mobile app, 24-hour emergency support, final Alunbruket–Brösarp transfer on the 8-day trip | From about 4,000 SEK per person in a double room in lower season, with higher summer pricing. Available year-round. |
| <b>Traventuria / TourRadar</b> | 8-day self-guided Ystad to Brösarp itinerary   | B&B accommodation, breakfast and route arrangements; check current inclusions carefully when booking  | Daily arrivals generally May to mid-October, with some shoulder-season dates by request.                            |
| <b>Vandra.se</b>               | Swedish-language section packages including Ystad to Alunbruket, Simrishamn to Alunbruket, and Simrishamn to Brösarp | Section-walking packages for hikers wanting a shorter supported trip  | Prices and current inclusions should be checked before booking.   |

Foreign operators may quote in EUR, USD or GBP, while Swedish operators normally price in SEK. Always check the current baggage allowance, what meals are included, and whether the final transfer from Andrarum/Alunbruket is part of the package.

## Guided tours

The Österlenleden is primarily sold as a **self-guided** walking holiday. The standard arrangement is that the operator books accommodation, transfers luggage and supplies navigation materials, while hikers walk independently each day.

There are no major operator-led group walking departures with a guide accompanying the group on the trail. Anyone wanting a fully guided format should ask local providers directly, but the normal supported option here is self-guided inn-to-inn walking rather than a led trek.

## Taxis and private transfers for independent hikers

Independent walkers can arrange ad hoc transfers, especially useful for the Andrarum/Alunbruket finish, luggage moves, missed buses, or shortening a stage in poor weather.

- **Kiviks Taxi** is based in Kivik and serves the Österlen region. It offers transport for 1–50 passengers and can handle train, restaurant, airport and group transfers. Phone: **0414-700 98**. Email: [info@kivikstaxi.se](mailto:info@kivikstaxi.se). Advance booking is recommended.
- **Taxi Österlen** is based in Simrishamn and covers the wider Österlen area, including Ystad, Simrishamn, Tomelilla, Kivik, Brösarp, Löderup, Borrby and nearby villages.
- **Skånetrafiken** is the regional public-transport authority for trains and buses in Skåne. It is useful for section hikers using Ystad, Simrishamn and Brösarp as access points. Use the Skånetrafiken app or journey planner for current train and bus times.

For the inland finish, plan on getting from Andrarum/Alunbruket back to Brösarp first, then continuing by bus towards Tomelilla, Simrishamn, Ystad or Malmö as required. This should be checked before travelling, especially at weekends and outside the main walking season.

## Who needs support, and who probably does not

A luggage-transfer package is worthwhile if:

- accommodation in Kåseberga, Skillinge, Baskemölla, Kivik or other smaller villages needs to be secured in advance;
- walking with more than a daypack would make the 12–22 km stages less enjoyable;
- the final Andrarum/Alunbruket logistics need to be handled cleanly;
- booking in Swedish, arranging rural transfers or managing seasonal availability feels inconvenient;
- travelling in June, July or August, when accommodation pressure is highest.

Support services are less necessary if:

- carrying camping kit and using Skåneleden wind-shelter sites or other camping options;
- booking guesthouses independently and travelling light;
- walking only the rail-connected or bus-accessible sections around Ystad, Simrishamn, Kivik and Brösarp;
- building a flexible section hike around Skånetrafiken rather than following a fixed inn-to-inn itinerary.

Self-sufficient backpackers can complete the route without any commercial support, provided they are comfortable carrying their own gear and planning food, water and overnight stops. Inn-to-inn walkers can also book direct, but the small-scale accommodation pattern along parts of the coast makes advance planning important.

## Booking ahead

For July and August, book accommodation or a package well ahead; 3–4 months in advance is sensible for peak summer, especially for Kåseberga, Skillinge, Baskemölla and Kivik. May is popular for Brösarps Backar wildflowers, while September and October often bring lower prices, fewer walkers and good walking temperatures.

Most self-guided operators run their main programmes from May to mid-October. Some offer April, late October or November dates by request, while EverTrek lists year-round availability and The Natural

Adventure has a longer March–November season. Current dates, prices and baggage rules should always be checked before booking.

## Shorter Hikes and Best Sections

You do not need to commit to the full 188 km SL4 loop to get the best of Österlenleden. The most useful shorter options are on the coastal Ystad–Brösarp/Andrarum line, where Ystad and Simrishamn have rail access and SkåneExpressen 3 links Simrishamn, Kivik, Brösarp, Tomelilla and Kristianstad. Always plan exact connections with Skånetrafiken before travelling, especially outside the main May–mid-October walking season.

### Best shorter options at a glance

| Best for                         | Section  | Distance / time                          | Why choose it   | Transport notes  |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Best day walk                    | Simrishamn → Kivik                                 | ~22 km / ~5.5 hrs                        | Coast, beech forest, Stenshuvud National Park, the 97 m summit viewpoint over Hanöbukten, and apple country approaching Kivik | Simrishamn is rail-connected from Ystad. Return from Kivik by SkåneExpressen 3.  |
| Short easy national park walk    | Stenshuvud National Park loops                     | ~4–8 km / under 2 hrs to just over 2 hrs | A compact way to see Stenshuvud's beach, forest and sea-view summit without a full stage                                      | Bus to Mellby skola on SkåneExpressen 3, then about 3 km on foot to the visitor centre; driving to the Naturum car park is simpler.  |
| Best weekend                     | Skillinge → Simrishamn → Kivik                     | ~35 km over 2 days                       | Fishing villages on day one; Stenshuvud and Kivik on day two  | Reach Skillinge by bus via Simrishamn or Ystad. Finish at Kivik for SkåneExpressen 3.  |
| Best 3-day section               | Simrishamn → Kivik → Brösarp → Andrarum/Alunbruket | ~47–51 km over 3 days                    | The strongest mix of coast, national park, heath, Brösarp hills, Hallamölla waterfall and Andrarum alum works                 | Start at rail-connected Simrishamn. Return from Brösarp/Andrarum using regional buses, typically via Tomelilla, Simrishamn or Ystad. |
| Best for beginners or families   | Kivik → Brösarp                                    | 11.2 km / ~3–3.5 hrs                     | Short full stage with varied but manageable ground: Vitemölla, Haväng, Ravlunda heath and the approach to Brösarp             | Kivik and Brösarp are both on SkåneExpressen 3. Walking it in either direction works.  |
| Best for villages and atmosphere | Skillinge → Simrishamn                             | ~13 km / ~3 hrs                          | Harbours, coastal meadows, Gislövshammar, Brantevik and an easy finish in a full-service town                                 | Both ends are bus-connected; Simrishamn also has rail services.  |

| Best for                      | Section               | Distance / time | Why choose it   | Transport notes   |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| Best iconic scenery           | Kåseberga → Skillinge | ~22 km          | Ales Stenar, Hagestad Nature Reserve, Sandhammaren dunes and long sandy beach walking | Bus access is available from Ystad to the Kåseberga area; return from Skillinge by SkåneExpressen 3. Check times carefully. |
| Best public-transport section | Simrishamn → Kivik    | ~22 km          | The strongest combination of scenery and simple logistics                             | Simrishamn has trains; both Simrishamn and Kivik are on SkåneExpressen 3.   |

## Best day walk: Simrishamn to Kivik

This is the most rewarding single day for walkers who want the character of Österlenleden without committing to a multi-day trip. The stage runs north from Simrishamn, passes through coastal villages and woodland, then reaches Stenshuvud National Park, where the 97 m summit gives one of the route's best views across Hanöbukten. The final approach to Kivik brings orchards and the option of visiting the Bronze Age Kungagraven burial cairn nearby.

At around 22 km, it is a proper full day rather than a casual stroll. Expect mixed surfaces and some height gain around Stenshuvud. Start early if relying on buses back from Kivik.

**Transport:** Simrishamn is on the Ystad–Simrishamn rail line. Kivik is served by SkåneExpressen 3, with onward travel towards Simrishamn, Brösarp, Tomelilla and Kristianstad. Current timetables and fares should be checked with Skånetrafiken.

## Shorter option: Stenshuvud National Park loops

For a half-day walk, use Stenshuvud National Park rather than trying to compress a full Österlenleden stage. Circular walks from the Naturum visitor centre are roughly 4–8 km. The shorter blue-marked route reaches the sea and returns in under two hours; a longer Stenshuvud Beach–South Summit circuit is around 8 km and takes a little over two hours.

This is the best choice for families, mixed-ability groups or anyone using Kivik as a base. It gives beach, forest and summit views without the transport complexity of a linear stage.

**Transport:** SkåneExpressen 3 stops at Mellby skola, from where it is about 3 km on foot to the park visitor centre. By car, use the Naturum car park; there is also access from the north entrance near Kivik Musteri. Naturum opening days vary by season and it is closed in winter, so this should be checked before travelling.

## Best weekend section: Skillinge to Kivik via Simrishamn

A strong two-day itinerary is:

| Day | Section                | Distance / time   | Character  |
|-----|------------------------|-------------------|--|
| 1   | Skillinge → Simrishamn | ~13 km / ~3 hrs   | Short, easy coastal walking through Gislövshammar, Brantevik and the fishing-village stretch |
| 2   | Simrishamn → Kivik     | ~22 km / ~5.5 hrs | Longer day with Stenshuvud National Park as the main feature                                 |

This works well because the first day is short enough for an arrival day, while the second day delivers one of the route's finest landscapes. Simrishamn is the logical overnight stop, with hotels, B&Bs, shops, restaurants and rail access. Kivik also has accommodation and services if extending the trip.

**Transport:** Reach Skillinge by bus via Simrishamn or Ystad. Finish at Kivik and use SkåneExpressen 3 back towards Simrishamn, Tomelilla or onward rail connections. The Kivik–Simrishamn bus journey is commonly around 30 minutes; fares change and should be checked before booking.

### Best 3-day section: Simrishamn to Andrarum/Alunbruket

For a compact version of the route with coast, hills and inland history, walk the northern half of the common coastal itinerary:

| Day | Section                       | Distance  | Main interest   |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----------|---|
| 1   | Simrishamn → Kivik            | ~22 km    | Stenshuvud National Park, sea views and orchards                  |
| 2   | Kivik → Brösarp               | 11.2 km   | Vitemölla, Haväng, Ravlunda heath and the Brösarp hills           |
| 3   | Brösarp → Andrarum/Alunbruket | ~14–18 km | Hallamölla waterfall, the Verkaån valley and the alum works ruins |

This is the best 3-day choice because each day feels different. The first is a classic coastal-and-forest day, the second is shorter but varied, and the third turns inland to the wooded ravine country around Hallamölla and Andrarum. The finish at Alunbruket adds a clear destination: the alum works founded in 1637, once a major Nordic industrial settlement.

**Transport:** Start at rail-connected Simrishamn. From the Brösarp/Andrarum area, use regional buses for connections towards Tomelilla, Simrishamn, Ystad or Malmö. Exact stops and times should be checked with Skånetrafiken.

### Best section for beginners: Kivik to Brösarp

The Kivik–Brösarp stage is the most practical first taste of Österlenleden. It is an official 11.2 km SL4 stage and is graded blue, meaning moderate walking with some uneven or soft ground and modest elevation changes. It is short enough for a relaxed day but still varied: Vitemölla beach and fishing village, sand steppe habitat, Havängsdösen, Ravlunda heath and the descent from the Brösarp hills.

It can be walked in either direction. Starting in Kivik gives a coastal opening and an inland finish; starting in Brösarp allows an easier return to Kivik for food and accommodation.

**Transport:** Kivik and Brösarp are both served by SkåneExpressen 3. Connections via Simrishamn, Tomelilla and Ystad make this one of the simplest stages to arrange without a car.

### **Best section for villages and accommodation: Skillinge to Simrishamn**

Choose Skillinge to Simrishamn for harbours, small settlements and an easy logistics day. At roughly 13 km, it is the shortest stage in the six-day coastal itinerary, passing Gislövshammar, Brantevik, Baskemölla and Vik before finishing in Simrishamn.

This section is useful for walkers who prefer shorter mileage, café stops and a town finish rather than remote terrain. Simrishamn has the widest service base on the eastern coast section, with supermarkets, restaurants, museums, a medieval church and a range of accommodation. Skillinge has a grocery shop and café, making it a practical start rather than just a trail point.

**Transport:** Both Skillinge and Simrishamn are bus-connected. Simrishamn is also on the rail line to Ystad, making this a good section for a single overnight or arrival-day walk.

### **Best section for scenery and iconic moments: Kåseberga to Skillinge**

The Kåseberga–Skillinge stage is the best choice for walkers who want the headline coastal scenery. It starts with Ales Stenar above the Baltic: Sweden's largest stone ship setting, made of 59 boulders and about 67 m long. The route then continues through Hagestad Nature Reserve and the Sandhammaren area, with dunes, planted sand forest and the longest sandy beach walking on the route.

At around 22 km, this is a substantial day. Sand and beach walking can feel slower than the distance suggests, especially with a loaded pack.

**Transport:** Use bus connections from Ystad to reach the Kåseberga area, then return from Skillinge by SkåneExpressen 3. This section is more timetable-sensitive than the Simrishamn–Kivik or Kivik–Brösarp options, so plan the start and finish before committing.

### **Best section for public transport: Simrishamn to Kivik**

Simrishamn to Kivik is the safest recommendation for hikers travelling entirely by public transport. Simrishamn has rail access from Ystad, and both Simrishamn and Kivik are served by SkåneExpressen 3. It also avoids the weaker logistics of some smaller coastal starts while still giving a full-quality walking day through Stenshuvud National Park.

For shorter walking, use Mellby skola as an access point for Stenshuvud National Park. The walk from the bus stop to the visitor centre is about 3 km, so include that in the day's distance.

### **Camping and low-cost shorter trips**

Österlenleden can be walked with camping, using campsites, the Skåneleden network's simple wind-shelter sites and Sweden's right of public access, allemansrätten. For a short camping trip, the best approach is to choose a section first, then check the official Skåneleden map for current vindskydd locations and facilities before setting out. Shelter locations, toilets and water availability should not be assumed.

The northern 3-day section from Simrishamn to Brösarp and Andrarum/Alunbruket is the most appealing camping-style short trip because it links Stenshuvud, Vitemölla, Ravlunda, Brösarps Backar

and the Verkaån valley. However, parts of the route pass through national park and nature-reserve land, where camping rules may be more restrictive than general allemansrätten. This should be checked before travelling.

### **Inland alternative: Österlencirkeln from Brösarp**

For walkers who want a short inland circuit rather than a linear coastal section, Österlencirkeln is a separate named loop of about 34 km from the Torparebron/Brösarp area. It follows the Verkaån river, passes Alunbruket and Hallamölla waterfall, and returns via Drakamöllan and Andrarum.

It works as a two-day weekend based around Brösarp, especially for those more interested in woodland, river valleys and the Brösarp hills than the Baltic coast. Brösarp has accommodation and bus access, but exact routing and transport should be checked before travelling.

## Highlights and Points of Interest

The coastal Österlenleden has a unusually strong run of stops for a six-day walk: prehistoric monuments, fishing harbours, dunes, orchards, national park woodland, glacial hills and industrial ruins. The highlights below are ordered roughly south to north along the common Ystad–Brösarp/Andrarum coastal itinerary, so they can be used when deciding where to linger or add an extra night.

### Ales Stenar, Kåseberga

Ales Stenar is the first major landmark after Ystad and one of the defining sights of the route. Set on a cliff-top above the Baltic at Kåseberga, it is Sweden's largest and best-preserved stone ship: 59 granite boulders arranged in a ship outline roughly 67–70 m long and 19 m wide.

The site dates from around AD 500–1000, in or just before the Viking Age. Its cliff-top position is as memorable as the archaeology, with open views over the Baltic and the surrounding coast. The alignment of the stone ship is associated with the summer solstice sunset and lunar standstill moonset directions, and some stones carry older Iron Age cup-marks, suggesting that material was gathered from earlier megalithic sites.

For walkers, this is a natural place to pause on the Ystad–Kåseberga stage. It is free to visit, exposed in poor weather, and particularly worthwhile in clear evening light if staying in or near Kåseberga.

### Dag Hammarskjöld's Backåkra

Between Kåseberga, Löderups Strandbad and Sandhammaren, Backåkra offers a quieter cultural stop. The four-winged 1840s farmstead was bought in 1957 by UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld as a future retreat, though he died on a UN mission in 1961 before living there.

Today it is a museum and conference centre, with displays including furniture from Hammarskjöld's New York apartment and artworks connected with his life. Its heathland setting between rolling ground and the Baltic makes it a reflective detour rather than a busy tourist stop. Opening times should be checked before travelling, especially outside the main season.

### Sandhammaren Nature Reserve

Sandhammaren is the route's classic beach-and-dune section. The nature reserve covers about 530 hectares at the south-eastern corner of Skåne, with wide white sand, shifting dunes and the planted sand forest east of Löderup. It is often singled out as one of Sweden's finest beaches, but for hikers the practical point is underfoot: soft sand can make progress slower and more tiring than the map distance suggests.

The reserve is also a strong wildlife and birdwatching area. A bird tower gives a useful stop for spring and autumn migration, when seabirds, thrushes, flycatchers and rarer species such as Tawny Pipit may be seen. Rabbits, squirrels, deer and elk are also recorded in the dune forest. Stay on proper trail lines around unstable dune areas.

## **Skillinge, Gislövshammar and Brantevik**

The coast between Skillinge and Simrishamn is one of the best stretches for walkers who enjoy small harbours and low-key coastal villages. Skillinge, Brantevik, Baskemölla and Vik each have their own character, with working harbours, traditional boathouses and seasonal seafood stops. Opening days for restaurants, smokeries and cafés vary, so do not rely on finding food without checking ahead.

Gislövshammar is the standout natural and geological stop on this part of the coast. The village sits on a stepped limestone headland where millstones were quarried from medieval times until the late 19th century. Circular extraction marks are still visible in the rock, and the layered limestone shelves at the shoreline give this small headland a very different feel from the sandy sections further south. The nearby sheltered cove known as Grandfather's Harbour is also a good place to watch seabirds and coastal activity.

## **Simrishamn**

Simrishamn is the main town of the coastal walk and the best place for an unhurried half-day off the trail. It is a medieval harbour town first documented in 1123 and was historically important to the Hanseatic herring trade. Until the 1980s it had Sweden's largest fishing fleet.

The old town has cobbled streets, pastel-coloured half-timbered houses, the 12th-century St. Nicolai Church, a local museum, independent shops and plenty of places to eat. It is also one of the most useful logistics points on the route, with rail access and local Skånetrafiken bus connections.

If adding extra time, Glimmingehus is a worthwhile excursion south-west of Simrishamn. This late-medieval fortified tower house, built around 1499, is one of northern Europe's best-preserved medieval castles. Transport and opening details should be checked before planning it into a walking day.

## **Kivik: apple country and the King's Grave**

Kivik is a compact harbour town with two very different reasons to slow down: Bronze Age archaeology and Österlen's apple-growing culture.

Kiviksgraven, also known as Kungagraven or the King's Grave, is one of Sweden's largest Bronze Age burial cairns. The mound is about 75 m in diameter and dates from around 1400 BC. Its burial chamber contains the only Bronze Age stone cist in Scandinavia decorated with rock carvings on its inner slabs, including figures of people, animals, ships, lurs and a chariot with four-spoked wheels.

Kiviks Musteri gives the modern local counterpart: apple orchards, juices, cider and visitor facilities connected with a family apple-growing business on the same site since 1888. Kärnhuset bistro and Äpplets Hus make it a practical food-and-interest stop when passing through Kivik. In September, Kiviks äpplefest, the Kivik Apple Market, draws large crowds; accommodation and transport should be planned earlier if walking then.

## **Stenshuvud National Park**

Stenshuvud National Park is the natural high point of the coastal route. The Österlenleden passes through or alongside the park on the Kivik-Brösarp stage, where beech forest, sandy heath, wet woodland, coastal meadows and the Baltic shore are packed into a short distance.

The northern peak reaches 97 m and gives a superb coastal viewpoint over Hanöbukten. On clear days, Bornholm can be visible on the horizon. The park is also exceptionally rich botanically, with around 600 species of vascular plants as well as many mosses, lichens and fungi. Cattle graze parts of the park from mid-May to mid-November to maintain the open flowering meadows, so give livestock space and keep gates as found.

Stenshuvud is worth extra time rather than treating it as simply another forest section. It is one of the best places on the route for short side loops, viewpoints and a slower picnic stop.

## **Haväng and Havängsdösen**

Near Haväng, the route passes another prehistoric site: Havängsdösen, a Neolithic passage tomb or stone chamber. It is a quieter and less imposing monument than Ales Stenar or Kiviksgraven, but it adds to the sense that this coast has been settled and marked for thousands of years.

Haväng also sits in the transition zone between the open coast, sandy ground and the inland approach towards Brösarp. It is a good place to notice how the walk begins to leave the pure Baltic shoreline and turn towards hills, pasture and river valleys.

## **Brösarps Backar**

Brösarps Backar, the hills around Brösarp, are one of Österlen's most distinctive landscapes. After the flatter beaches and harbours further south, the route enters rolling sand-and-gravel hills shaped by the retreating ice sheet at the end of the last Ice Age. The hills rise up to about 45 m and are part of Geopark Skåne.

Spring is the prime season here. In April and May the grazed slopes are known for cowslips, meadow saxifrage, wild thyme and the rare sand pink, while slender junipers give the hills their characteristic outline. Grazing maintains the open pasture character, so dogs and gates need careful handling.

Brösarp is also useful as a base if extra walking time is available. More than 100 km of marked trails fan out from the village, including the 6 km Brösarps Backar circular route.

## **Hallamölla waterfall and the Verkeån ravine**

Hallamölla is Skåne's highest waterfall, with the Verkeån dropping a combined 23 m through five cascades in a wooded ravine south-west of Brösarp. No individual fall is higher than about 2 m, so the appeal is not a single vertical drop but the sequence of water, rock, trees and old mill landscape.

The site has had a watermill since at least 1491, and the current timber-frame mill dates from the 1850s. The ravine woodland includes oak, beech, elm, ash and lime, and the stream banks can be good for common kingfisher, white-throated dipper and grey wagtail.

For route planning, this is more than a quick viewpoint: the Skåneleden SL4 Österlen follows the northern bank of the Verkeån through the ravine, while the separate Bäckaleden follows the southern bank. Together these trails make the Verkeån one of the best inland river sections connected with the Österlenleden.

## Andrarum and Alunbruket

The Andrarum alum works at Alunbruket provide an unusually strong finish to the point-to-point walk. Founded in 1637, the works produced alum from alum shale for tanning hides, dyeing textiles and use as a disinfectant. In the mid-18th century, under Countess Christina Piper, it became the largest industrial settlement in the Nordic region.

The works closed in 1912 after synthetic alternatives made production uneconomic. Today the area contains extensive ruins, ponds, channels, spoil heaps and interpretive trails within what is now the Christinehof ecopark. It is a fitting end to the inland section: less scenic in the beach-holiday sense than the coast, but much richer historically than a simple trailhead finish.

## Best places to spend extra time

| If you have extra time for... | Prioritise   | Why  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Prehistoric sites             | Ales Stenar, Kiviksgraven, Havängsdösen            | Three very different monuments spanning ship setting, Bronze Age cairn and Neolithic chamber tomb.           |
| Coastal scenery               | Sandhammaren, Gislövshammar, Stenshuvud            | The best mix of dunes, limestone shore, forested headland and Baltic viewpoints.                             |
| Town facilities and food      | Simrishamn, Kivik, the fishing villages            | Best combination of accommodation, cafés, restaurants, harbours and public transport.                        |
| Wildlife and plants           | Sandhammaren, Stenshuvud, Brösarps Backar, Verkeån | Bird migration, rich woodland and meadow flora, grazed hills and river-ravine habitats.                      |
| Inland character              | Brösarps Backar, Hallamölla, Andrarum/Alunbruket   | The strongest contrast to the coastal stages, with glacial hills, waterfall, ravine and industrial heritage. |

# Common Mistakes and Planning Tips

The Österlenleden is well waymarked and logistically manageable, but several issues regularly catch walkers out: the route has two common versions, accommodation is small-scale, services are seasonal, and the inland finish is not a railhead. Plan the walk around those realities rather than treating it like a continuous town-to-town hotel route.

## 1. Mixing up the 188 km loop and the 103 km coastal walk

**The mistake:** planning with the wrong map, GPX file or stage list. The official Skåneleden SL4 Österlen is a 188 km loop from Ystad over 14 sections. The trip most hikers actually book or walk is the shorter coastal point-to-point route from Ystad to Brösarp or Andrarum–Alunbruket, usually around 103 km over 6 walking days.

**The fix:** before booking accommodation or downloading navigation files, decide which version is being walked.

| If walking...          | Check that your plan says...   |
|------------------------|--|
| Full SL4 Österlen loop | 188 km, 14 sections, starts and ends in Ystad                            |
| Common coastal route   | Ystad to Brösarp / Andrarum–Alunbruket, about 103 km, typically 6 stages |

Do not assume that an “Österlenleden” GPX automatically matches the six-day coastal itinerary. Check the start, finish and overnight stops before relying on it.

## 2. Leaving accommodation too late

**The mistake:** assuming every overnight stop has plenty of rooms. The coastal route uses small fishing villages and rural settlements rather than large resort towns. Kåseberga, Skillinge, Kivik and Brösarp have limited accommodation, and peak summer demand across Österlen is high.

**The fix:** check availability before fixing the walking dates. For July and August, accommodation in the smaller stops is best booked 3–6 months ahead. Kåseberga has only a handful of rooms, Skillinge is particularly limited, and some self-guided operators avoid overnighiting there by using Simrishamn with taxi transfers instead. If one key stop is full, the whole stage plan may need adjusting.

## 3. Assuming Skillinge’s food options will be open

**The mistake:** arriving in Skillinge with no food because it is listed as one of the route’s main supply points. Skillinge is a useful stop, but the shop and café are closed on Sundays.

**The fix:** check the day of the week when planning the Kåseberga–Skillinge stage. If arriving on a Sunday, carry enough food from Kåseberga or earlier, and do not rely on buying lunch, dinner or breakfast supplies in Skillinge.

## 4. Underestimating food and water gaps on the early coastal stages

**The mistake:** treating the south coast as a continuous chain of villages with easy resupply. Stage 1 from Ystad to Kåseberga and Stage 2 from Kåseberga to Skillinge include long stretches of beach, dunes, farmland and quiet coast where services are sparse.

**The fix:** carry packed food and enough water before leaving the reliable service points. This is especially important around Sandhammaren, where walking through sand and dunes can take longer than expected and food or water should not be relied on outside the main summer season. Stage 2, at about 22 km, also needs a deliberate food and water carry. Between Kivik and Haväng on Stage 5, options are limited despite the shorter distance.

## 5. Planning by distance only, not terrain

**The mistake:** looking at the low elevations and short-looking stages and assuming the whole route walks quickly. The Österlenleden is not mountainous, but two sections are slower than their distance suggests.

**The fix:** allow extra time for:

- **Sandhammaren and the dune coast:** soft sand is tiring and can reduce pace sharply compared with gravel tracks or lanes.
- **Stenshuvud and the northern stages:** woodland, uneven ground and short climbs interrupt the rhythm of the coastal walking.
- **Brösarps Backar and the Linderödsåsen ridge:** Stage 5 from Kivik to Brösarp and Stage 6 from Brösarp to Andrarum / Alunbruket are only about 12 km and 14 km, but they include real ups and downs.

Do not use a flat 4 km/h planning pace across the whole walk. Shorter inland days can still feel substantial with a pack.

## 6. Forgetting that Brösarp and Andrarum are not railheads

**The mistake:** finishing the walk and expecting a simple train connection. Ystad and Simrishamn are rail-connected, but Brösarp and Andrarum / Alunbruket are rural finishes.

**The fix:** plan the exit transport before the final walking day. Brösarp has Skånetrafiken bus links, including SKX 4 towards Ystad, with a journey time of about 51 minutes, but services can be infrequent. Andrarum / Alunbruket is more rural again, so walkers finishing there need to reach Brösarp or another onward transport point.

Download the Skånetrafiken app before the trip and check the last useful departure. If the final stage ends late, consider staying in or near Brösarp rather than risking a missed bus. Current times should be checked before travelling.

## 7. Relying only on orange markers

**The mistake:** assuming the orange Skåneleden markers will appear constantly. The SL4 is waymarked, but along open coast markers may only appear where the route turns inland. In Stenshuvud National

Park, the route uses the park's own colour-coded circular trails rather than standard orange SL4 markers.

**The fix:** use the waymarks, but carry a second navigation method. A GPX file, the official Skåneleden map tools, Outdooractive or Komoot can all help prevent unnecessary backtracking. Download the Stenshuvud National Park trail map before entering the park, and expect the waymarking style to change there.

## 8. Not checking seasonal opening times

**The mistake:** planning meals from summer trip reports when walking in spring or autumn. Outside July and August, restaurants and cafés in smaller villages such as Kåseberga, Brantevik, Baskemölla, Vik and Vitemölla may be closed or operating limited hours. Even Brösarp can have fewer options outside peak season.

**The fix:** check opening days for each overnight stop and lunch stop shortly before walking. Carry more food than the map appears to require, particularly on stages where the next guaranteed shop is several hours away.

## 9. Building an itinerary from old accommodation lists

**The mistake:** relying on a blog post or old route description for guesthouses and luggage-transfer stops. Rural accommodation on Österlen changes, and small properties can open, close or reduce availability.

**The fix:** use current booking platforms, STF information and the Skåneleden interactive map when building the itinerary. Treat older trip reports as useful background, not as a live accommodation directory. This matters most in Kåseberga, Skillinge, Kivik and Brösarp, where one unavailable property can affect the whole schedule.

## 10. Misunderstanding allemansrätten and wind shelters

**The mistake:** assuming Sweden's right of public access removes the need to plan camping. Allemansrätten is useful, but it is not a blanket permission to camp anywhere, and the route passes farmland, coastal settlements and Stenshuvud National Park.

**The fix:** use the Skåneleden map to identify official wind shelters and simple campsites, but remember that vindskydd are first-come, first-served and may already be occupied in busy summer weeks. Always have a backup plan. On private land, camp discreetly, avoid crops and farm buildings, and follow the usual short-stay approach. In Stenshuvud National Park, camping rules are stricter; check the current rules with Naturum Stenshuvud before relying on a camp there.

## Final Advice

### Who Österlenleden suits best

Österlenleden is best for walkers who want variety, coastal character and manageable daily distances rather than a mountain challenge. The Ystad–Brösarp/Andrarum coastal route suits fit beginners, families used to full walking days, and moderately experienced hikers who enjoy beaches, fishing villages, beech forest, heathland and low hills.

It is less suitable for anyone expecting fully smooth paths throughout. Sandhammaren and other beach sections can be slow underfoot, and the ground becomes hillier and more uneven around Stenshuvud, Brösarp, Hallamölla and Andrarum. Very elderly walkers or anyone with limited mobility should treat the route with caution. Dog owners should also plan carefully: the trail passes livestock pastures, so dogs should be kept strictly on leads.

### The main thing to plan carefully

Accommodation is the key constraint. The coast has guesthouses, B&Bs, inns and small hotels in places such as Ystad, Kåseberga, Skillinge, Simrishamn, Kivik and Brösarp, but capacity is limited in the smaller villages. Skillinge can be particularly tight, and July–August dates on the whole Österlen coast can fill quickly. For peak season, book at least 2–3 months ahead where possible.

If beds are unavailable in a smaller overnight stop, Simrishamn is the most reliable fallback because it has stronger accommodation choice and a railway station. Walkers using luggage transfer should book the walking package early; companies such as Eurohike, Innwalking and The Natural Adventure offer self-guided trips with daily bag movement.

Timing matters too. Late April–May is excellent for spring flowers around Brösarps Backar, while September is usually quieter than high summer. Late autumn can still work, but accommodation and seasonal facilities become less dependable. This should be checked before travelling.

### The most rewarding sections

The route is strongest where the coast, culture and low hills meet in quick succession. Ales Stenar above Kåseberga gives the first major landmark, Sandhammaren adds the long white-sand coast, and the fishing-village chain through Skillinge, Brantevik, Baskemölla, Vik and Kivik gives the walk much of its character.

For many walkers, the finest stretch comes later: Stenshuvud National Park, Vitemölla and Haväng, then the move inland towards Brösarp, Hallamölla and Andrarum. This is where the route feels least like a simple coastal stroll, with beech forest, heath, the 97 m Stenshuvud summit, Brösarps Backar and the wooded ravine around Hallamölla waterfall.

### Thru-hike or section hike?

For most walkers, the best version is the 103 km coastal point-to-point route from Ystad to Brösarp or Andrarum/Alunbruket over 6–8 days. It has a clear start, a satisfying finish, good public transport access, and enough variety without forcing unnecessary extra distance.

The full Skåneleden SL4 Österlen is a 188 km loop back to Ystad. It is a valid choice for experienced walkers with more time, especially those who want quieter inland Skåne, but it is not necessary to get the best of the route. The inland return is better treated as an extension or a second trip rather than something to cram into a short holiday.

Section hiking is very practical. Ystad and Simrishamn are rail-connected, and Brösarp is served by regional buses with onward links via places such as Simrishamn, Tomelilla, Ystad and Malmö. Simrishamn makes the natural mid-route break for a two-part trip.

## **Final tips before setting off**

Do not follow the orange markers blindly where local conditions make a better coastal line obvious. Between Skillinge and Brantevik, some waymarked sections may lead briefly inland onto a busy road; experienced walkers often prefer the sea-side path where it is available and appropriate.

Download the current GPX from Skåneleden before leaving, even though the orange waymarking is generally good. Occasional gaps are possible, and a phone map removes uncertainty around beaches, woodland and village edges.

Pack for sand as well as tracks. Beach walking east of Löderup and around Sandhammaren can be tiring, especially in wind, so keep footwear comfortable and the pack weight sensible. Swimwear is worth carrying in warm weather for Sandhammaren, Vitemölla and Haväng.

Sweden uses the Swedish krona, not the euro. Cards are widely accepted in shops, cafés and hotels, but carrying a small amount of SEK cash is sensible for small rural stops, farm shops or simple camping facilities.

Budget walkers can make good use of allemansrätten and the Skåneleden vindskydd network, provided camping is done responsibly and local restrictions are respected. For everyone else, book beds early, carry a GPX backup, and give the final inland stages the same respect as the coast: Österlenleden is low-level, but it is still a real long-distance walk.