

# AROUND MEDIEVAL CHURCHES

## ON GOTLANDSLEDEN



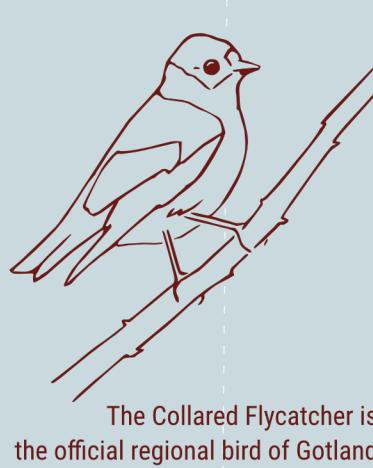
Ivy is the official regional plant of Gotland

### Gotlandsleden

500 km long,  
mostly asphalted bike trail  
biking at a speed of 20 km/h gets  
you around the island in 25 hours  
at 50 km per day, circumnavigation  
of Gotland takes 10 days

km

0 5 10

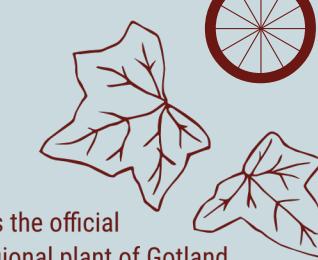


The Collared Flycatcher is the official regional bird of Gotland



The Turbot is the official regional fish of Gotland

60 m  
40 m  
20 m  
0 m  
height above sea level  
GOTLANDSLEDEN



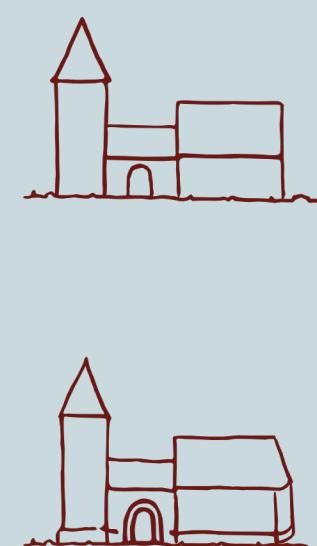
Ivy is the official regional plant of Gotland

106  
92 medieval churches  
of these are still in use today

### Church Timeline

from Anders Andrén: Det Medeltida Gotland

The first stone churches on Gotland were built at the beginning of the 12th century. They were simple Romanesque buildings with a simple nave, choir and apse, sometimes with a steeple. On the inside, some of them were decorated with Russian-Byzantine paintings which point to intense contacts with the eastern world that were prominent before the island became part of the diocese of Linköping in Sweden.



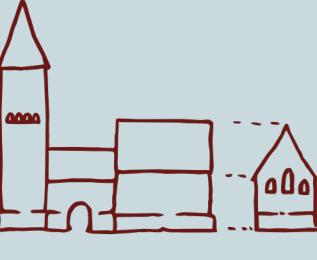
Included in this early group of stone churches are Garda, Källunge, parts of Havdhem and the vanished churches in Atlingbo, Barlingbo, Dalhem and Stenkyrka.

During the second half of the 12th century, many new Romanesque stone churches were built, with simple naves, narrower choirs, often semicircular apses and sometimes steeples. Now, they had a base, sometimes decorated portals and window alcoves, as well as arch friezes and ashlar with figurines. The paintings on the inside and the stone sculptures on the outside confirm contacts with Östergötland and what was back then Denmark, including the site at Lund Cathedral, showing that Gotland had become part of the diocese of Linköping.

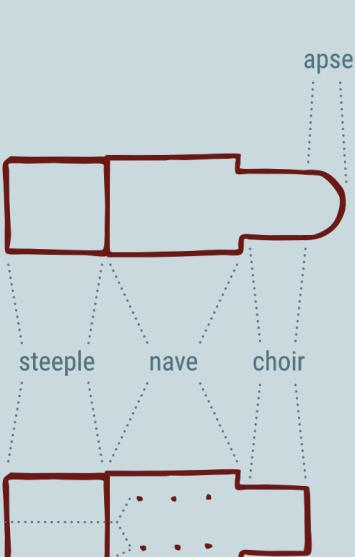


Examples from this period are found in Fardhem, Follingbo, Mästerby, Vall and the vanished churches in Bro, Endre, Grötlingbo, Hablingbo, Vänge, and Väte.

Around 1225, the construction style changed radically. The last stave churches were replaced by new stone churches with vaults, resting on one or two columns in the middle of the church. Older churches were supplemented with large steeples, sometimes with external galleries. Several of the older stone churches were demolished and replaced by much larger, vaulted churches with nave and aisles. The apse as a distinguished marker of the eastern side of the building disappeared and instead the choir ended with a straight gable, usually with three windows. Many of the new churches lacked windows and sometimes even doors on the northern side. Both round Romanesque and pointed Gothic arches were included. The buildings now resembled those in north-western Germany, reflecting the new trading networks that were built up during that time.



Examples can be found in Dalhem, Gothem, Lau, Levide, Roma, Stenkyrka, Tingstäde, Vamlingbo, and Öja.



From the end of the 13th century to the middle of the 14th century, the final major alterations of the churches were carried out, now in a purely Gothic arched style. New choirs, entire churches and very tall steeples were erected, and many churches got new splendid portals with rich carved decorations. Churches dating back to this time can be found in Grötlingbo, Hablingbo, Hösne, Martebo and Väte.



But many of the big projects were never finished, instead construction ended abruptly. Such semi-finished churches can be found in Fröjel, Garda, Källunge, Lummelunda, Lye and Vallstena.

57° N

DEM and landuse data  
© European Union, Copernicus Land Monitoring Service 2019  
European Environment Agency (EEA)

Road data and location of churches  
© OpenStreetMap contributors

Information about churches from  
Anders Andrén: Det medeltida Gotland: En arkeologisk guidebok  
Svenska Historiska Media Förlag AB, 2015, ISBN: 978-91-87031-31-1