



# Scandinavians: In Search of the Soul of the North

*Robert Ferguson*

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**Scandinavians: In Search of the Soul of the North** Robert Ferguson

**A journey of discovery through two millennia of Scandinavia's history, culture and society, "told with deep knowledge and an intoxicating passion" (BBC).**

Scandinavia is the epitome of cool: we fill our homes with Nordic furniture; we envy their humane social welfare system and their healthy outdoor lifestyle; we glut ourselves on their crime fiction; even their strangely attractive melancholia seems to express a stoic, commonsensical acceptance of life's vicissitudes. But how valid is this outsider's view of Scandinavia, and how accurate our picture of life in Scandinavia today?

*Scandinavians* follows a chronological progression across the Northern centuries: the Vendel era of Swedish prehistory; the age of the Vikings; the Christian conversions of Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Iceland; the unified Scandinavian state of the late Middle Ages; the sea-change of the Reformation; the kingdom of Denmark-Norway; King Gustav Adolphus and the age of Sweden's greatness; the cultural golden age of Ibsen, Strindberg and Munch; the impact of the Second World War; Scandinavia's postwar social democratic nirvana; and the terror attacks of Anders Behring Breivik.

*Scandinavians* is also a personal investigation, with award-winning author Robert Ferguson as the ideal companion as he explores wide-ranging topics such as the power and mystique of Scandinavian women, from the Valkyries to the Vikings; from Nora and Hedda to Garbo and Bergman. This digressive technique is familiar from the writings of W. G. Sebald, and in Ferguson's hands it is deployed with particular felicity, accessibility, and deftness, richly illuminating our understanding of modern Scandinavia, its society, politics, culture, and temperament.

50 b&w images, 2 maps

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