

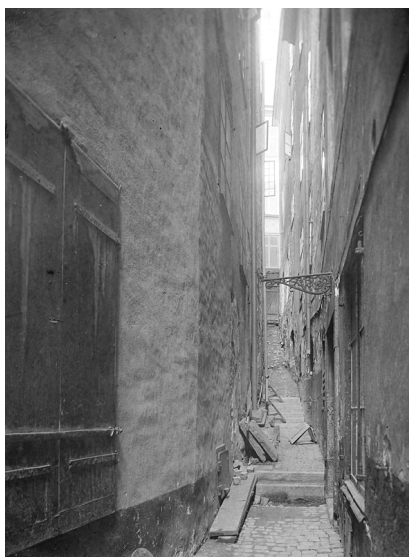
A Stockholm Walkabout Tour in the Old Town to explore the most narrow street in Stockholm.

Mårten Trotzig Gränd or “Alley of Mårten Trotzig “ is an alley in the Old Town of Stockholm that got its name in 1949. The alley is only 90 cm wide (just under 3 ft) and 29 meters long (just under 27 yards) with 36 steps to the top, making it the most narrow alley in Stockholm.

The alley is named after the German merchant and burgher Mårten Trotzig (1559-1617), who, born in Wittenberg, immigrated to Stockholm in 1581, and bought properties in the alley area during the period 1597 to 1599, where he also opened a shop. According to sources from the late 16th century, he dealt in iron and copper, and by 1595 had sworn his burgher oath. He later became one of the richest merchants in Stockholm. He was beaten to death during a business trip to Kopparberg in the Bergslagen area in 1617.

During the middle ages, during the Antiquity and the Renaissance, this small alley was probably called “*Trångsund*”, or narrow strait, and 1544 it was called ‘*den tronge trappegrenden*’, or the narrow stair alley, and in 1608 it was called “*Trappegrenden*” or stair alley. If walls could talk we would also know it was called “*Trånga Trappgränden*”, or narrow stair alley. It is uncertain when the name Mårten Trotzig was connected with the alley, but it should be around 1733, when it appeared on maps as “*Trots gränd*”

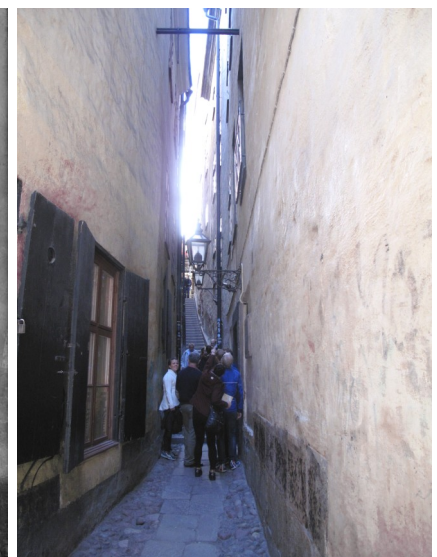
In the middle of 1800s the alley was enclosed by barriers in both ends, but was reopened in 1945 and is the walkway entry between Prästgatan 1 and Västerlånggatan 81 at Järntorget, or Iron Square.



Mårten Trotzig gränd, 1954
Stockholmskällan



Mårten Trotzig gränd, 1960s
Stockholmskällan



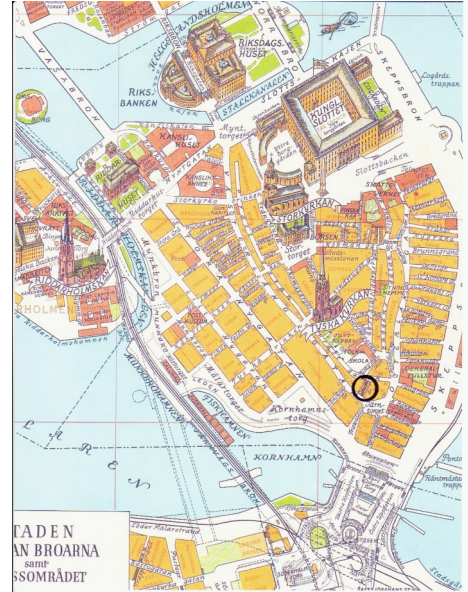
Mårten Trotzig gränd, 2014

The best known other narrow street is Rue du Chat-qui-Pêche, considered the narrowest street in Paris. It is only 1.80m (just under 5 feet, 11 inches) wide and has a length of 29m (just about 27 yards). It is located in the 5th arrondissement, on the Rive Gauche of the Seine, and runs from Quai Saint-Michel to Rue de la Huchette.



Rue du Chat-qui-Pêche

Now, when we have developed some background knowledge about some famous narrow streets, we need to start our walkabout to the “Alley of Mårten Trotzig”. A very good and convenient starting point is at the Locks (Slussen) to which there are several connections to underground or busses. Here we have a wonderful view of both Lake Mälaren as well as the Baltic Ocean. Inhale the sea air and understand that this is a view that very few cities in the world could offer a tourist's imagination. We also have a very good view of the skyline of the South Hills and the Old Town. We pass by the "Grain Harbour Square” (Kornhamnstorg) a public square in the Old town also known in the passed as *Kornhaffin* (1427), *Jernboen* (1586), *Åkaretorget* (1644) and *Kornhamns torget* (1651). We continue walking through Triewaldsgränd to the Iron Square (Järntorget) from which we have just a short walk to the “Alley of Mårten Trotzig” via Västerlånggatan to number 81, and we are finally there.



Map to Alley of Mårten Trotzig

We are entering the alley from the south proceeding towards the north end of the alley. We take some time to study the beautiful architecture of the buildings from the 1500s, to obtain a better understanding for the living conditions for people in the past living so close to each other without modern amenities like, electricity, running water, sanitation etc....



Alley of Morten Trotzig, north

In front of us we see a couple of young boys entertaining us by playing Gene Kelly or Fred Astaire dancing along the street and trying to use the walls as part of their dancing floor.

When reaching the north end of the Alley we have to chose to either going left along Prästgatan, the most beautiful street in Old town, or going right towards the German church with its impressive architecture.





Prästgatan, west



Alley of Mårten Trotzig,
North end



German church, east

Going either way we will gain some very pleasant views of the pressures of Old Town. This is the end of the walkabout and I'm going back to my mothers apartment to have dinner after a very entertaining walk and many new memories.

Written by Leif Rosqvist, editor of New Sweden Cultural Heritage Society and SRIO newsletters in Portland, Oregon.

More information for the interested:

Wikipedia: Type in the "Alley of Mårten Trotzig"
Internet/Google: Type in Stockholmskällan and search for the "Alley of Mårten Trotzig"