

Overview of Sweden

Crisp and clean, the tranquil Scandinavian country of Sweden offers a variety of experiences within its elegant and sophisticated cities, its picturesque medieval villages, coastal island archipelagos, peaceful lakes, and forests and the icy tundra of northern Lapland.

The capital city, Stockholm, encompasses 14 islands on the shores of the Baltic Sea. It is a high-tech city with a small-town feel, filled with top class restaurants, pulsating nightclubs, cosy pubs, and a full array of performing arts venues.

Best of all, nearly everyone you meet is fluent in English. Few visitors to Stockholm can resist an excursion to discover the offshore islands: the Stockholm archipelago offers some of the most beautiful coastal scenery in Europe, and can be enjoyed from the city on a day cruise.

With its delightful fishing villages, the west coast of Sweden is popular with gourmets and seafood lovers. Those digging for history will be fascinated with Uppsala, the ancient Viking city where the newest buildings date from the 18th century.

A really novel excursion is a visit up north to the Ice Hotel, sculpted from ice every winter in Lapland where the Sami people enjoy showing visitors their way of life, centred on their reindeer herds. Meanwhile, way down south, Smaland (small lands), has been christened the 'Crystal Kingdom' in honour of the famous glassworks that exist there in places like Orrefors and Kosta.

Sweden is an enchanting country, not as cold as one might imagine despite its situation in the high latitudes, and is well worth exploring, whether along the meticulously maintained roads or on the extensive high-speed train system.

Key Facts

Language:

Swedish is the main language, and the Sami population in the north speaks Lapp. Most Swedes speak and understand English; many are proficient in other European languages such as German, French, and Spanish.

Passport/Visa:

All visitors are required to have visible means of support as well as tickets and documentation for return or onward travel. The borderless region known as the Schengen area includes the following countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden. All of these countries issue a standard Schengen visa that has a multiple entry option that allows the holder to travel freely within the borders of all. It is highly recommended that travellers' passports have at least six months' validity remaining after the intended date of departure from their travel destination.

Immigration officials often apply different rules to those stated by travel agents and official sources.

Currency:

The Swedish monetary unit is the krona or crown (SEK), which is divided into 100 ore. Banks exchange money during business hours from Monday to Friday; visitors can also change money at airports, ferry terminals, post offices, and Forex exchange offices, which are open daily. There are numerous ATMs throughout the country, most of which accept MasterCard and Visa. Most major credit cards are accepted throughout Sweden, and mobile payment apps are very popular.

Electricity:

Electric current is 230 volts, 50Hz. Standard European two-pin plugs are used.

Travel to Sweden

Overview

Dotted with picturesque medieval villages, tranquil lakes, lush forests, coastal island archipelagos, and cosmopolitan cities, sightseeing in Sweden is anything but dull. For a break from historical and cultural attractions, visitors can hop on board a ferry or enjoy a picnic in one of Sweden's countless parks.

They can also head north to explore the icy tundra and UNESCO World Heritage Site of the Laponian area in Lappland, sample some reindeer steaks, marvel at the Northern Lights (Aurora Borealis), and explore the Ice Hotel, which is sculpted each year by the Sami people in the winter months.

A trip to the capital, Stockholm, in the south is worthwhile too, as it boasts more than a dozen islands to explore via day cruises, a wonderful arts and nightlife scene, and ocean fishing from the heart of the city. Travellers should visit the quaint Gamla Stan (Old Town), a maze of narrow cobble-stoned streets shaded by historic houses circling the Royal Castle where Swedish royalty has resided since the 13th century, or explore the canals of Gothenburg.

The west coast fishing villages are the place to be for seafood lovers, while those who are more into culture will be smitten with Uppsala, the ancient Viking city where the last building was constructed in the 18th century and more than 150 museums can be investigated.

The summer months are the most popular time to visit Sweden, but the country truly is a year-round destination, even though the winter months are short on sunlight. With a wealth of attractions and historical sites, visitors will need a few weeks, if not months, to fully enjoy the magic and charm of Sweden.

Climate in Sweden

The climate in Sweden varies from north to south. Despite its northerly placement, the country is generally temperate due to the warm offshore Gulf Stream currents. There are three different climatic zones in Sweden: the south has an oceanic climate, the centre has a humid continental climate, and the north has a subarctic climate.

Summers in the south and centre of Sweden are warm and pleasant, with average high temperatures ranging between 68F and 77F (20C and 25C). In the winter, temperatures in these regions average between 25F and 36F (-4C and 2C).

In the north it is substantially colder, with short, cool summers and long, snowy winters, while temperatures frequently drop below freezing between September and May. Rain is possible in Sweden at any time of year, but is most common in late summer. The southwest of the country receives the most rain.

The best time to visit Sweden is in the summer months from June to August, when the days are long and warm and the open-air museums and restaurants are open. As summer is the most busy and expensive time to visit Sweden, some travellers prefer to go in the spring or autumn, which are both very pleasant seasons and are far less crowded.

Health Notes when travelling to Sweden

No health risks are associated with travel to Sweden and medical care in the country is excellent. Reciprocal health agreements exist with other European Union countries, though the Global Health Insurance Card (GHIC) replaced the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) for UK citizens after Brexit. The GHIC allows UK citizens access to state healthcare during visits to the EU. The GHIC is not valid in Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein or Switzerland, nor is it an alternative to travel insurance. All non-EU travellers should ensure they have comprehensive travel insurance. Everyone 16 years of age and older should get fully vaccinated for COVID-19 before travel.

Safety Notes when travelling to Sweden

Sweden is an extremely safe country to visit. There is some petty crime in the cities where tourists congregate, but crime is generally at much lower levels than elsewhere in Europe. Most visits to Sweden are trouble free.

Customs in Sweden

Sweden is very liberal and secular, and equality is an important part of the culture. Boastfulness and open conflict are usually avoided, as is discussing work as an entry into a conversation.

Chivalry is often considered an outdated concept in Sweden, which is one of the most gender equal countries in the world. Gestures such as opening doors for women are not considered necessary.

Smoking is not allowed in indoor establishments such as restaurants and bars; swedes have a reputation for being meticulously tidy, so it is polite to remove shoes when entering a Swedish home.

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Duty Free in Sweden

Travellers to Sweden over 18 years from non-EU countries and residents who arrive on a commercial flight, from a trip exceeding 20 hours do not have to pay duty on the following items: 200 cigarettes, or 100 cheroots, or 50 cigars, or 250g tobacco, or a proportional mix of these. One litre of spirits with alcohol content higher than 22 percent, or two litres of fortified or sparkling wine, and two litres of non-sparkling wine and beer are allowed duty free; other goods to the value of SEK 1,700 are also allowed. Prohibited items include drugs, other than those for medical or scientific purposes; and potatoes that are grown outside the EU.

Doing Business in Sweden

Sweden is no stranger to corporate culture and is home to many global companies such as Skype and Spotify, not to mention popular automotive company, Volvo. Scandinavians, and Swedes in particular, value the inherent equality and dignity of all people; this is reflected in business, where consensus and compromise is valued in the decision-making process.

Decisions often take a long time to be made, as all opinions are considered. It best to avoid overt displays of wealth or status; business practice and personal conduct should always be rational, calm, and disciplined. Swedes often come across as overly reserved, but business meetings are efficient.

The business world in Sweden draws a strict line between work and social gatherings, so foreigners shouldn't expect many post-work social events or dinner invitations. The best way to circumvent the reserved nature of most Swedes in the business environment is at the twice-daily fika, or coffee break, when the general rules regarding business behaviour are relaxed a little.

Punctuality is vital and it is a point of pride for many Scandinavians, illustrating mutual respect. It is important to schedule an appointment in advance and have it confirmed shortly before any engagement. Handshakes for men and women are common after introduction and first names are often used instead of surnames.

Dress codes are conservative and smart, but suits are not always necessary. Business people in Sweden should endeavour to show honesty, transparency, professionalism, and mutual respect in all business dealings. Sweden is one of the least corrupt countries in the world, making it a pleasure to do business here.

Business hours run from 8am to 5pm from Monday to Friday. The language of business is Swedish, but English is generally spoken throughout the country and many multinationals will use it as the language of business when necessary.

Communication in Sweden

The country code for Sweden is +46. Travellers can purchase local prepaid SIM cards for unlocked phones; public WiFi is widespread.

Tipping in Sweden

A service charge is included in restaurant bills and waitrons may see a tip as demeaning. It's best to check how a tip will be received before leaving one. Passengers generally round up the fare when using a taxi. Tips are welcome for exceptionally good service in hotels, but are not expected.

Passport/Visa Note

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Entry Requirements

Entry requirements for Americans:

To enter Sweden, US citizens require a passport valid for three months beyond intended stay. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days within a 180 day period.

Entry requirements for Canadians:

Canadians require a passport valid for the period of three months beyond the intended stay to enter Sweden. No visa is required for a maximum stay of up to 90 days within a 180 day period.

Entry requirements for UK nationals:

United Kingdom citizens require a passport valid for at least three months beyond period of intended stay, with the

exception of passports marked 'British Citizen', 'British Subject' (containing a Certificate of Entitlement to the Right of Abode issued by the United Kingdom), and 'British Overseas Territories Citizen' issued by Gibraltar, which will be accepted if valid on arrival.

No visa is required for passports endorsed 'British Citizen', 'British Overseas Territories Citizen' issued by Gibraltar, Identity Cards issued by Gibraltar, and 'British Subject' (containing a Certificate of Entitlement to the Right of Abode issued by the United Kingdom). All other British nationals are entitled to a maximum stay of 90 days without a visa, within a 180 day period.

Entry requirements for Australians:

For entry to Sweden, Australian citizens require a passport valid for three months beyond period of intended stay. No visa is required for stays of up to 90 days within a 180 day period.

Entry requirements for Irish nationals:

Irish nationals require a valid passport, but no visa is necessary.

Entry requirements for New Zealanders:

New Zealand nationals require a passport valid for three months beyond period of intended stay. No visa is necessary for stays of up to 90 days within a 180 day period.

Entry requirements for South Africans:

South Africans require a passport valid for three months beyond period of intended stay as well as a visa for entry to Sweden.

Tourist Offices

Swedish Tourist Office: <http://www.visitsweden.com>

Sweden Embassies

In the United States:

Swedish Embassy, Washington DC, United States: +1 202 467 2600.

In Canada:

Swedish Embassy, Ottawa, Canada: +1 613 244 8200.

In the United Kingdom:

Swedish Embassy, London, United Kingdom: +44 20 7917 6400.

In Australia:

Swedish Embassy, Canberra, Australia: +61 2 6270 2700.

In Ireland:

Swedish Consulate General, Dublin, Ireland: +353 1 265 0888.

In New Zealand:

Consulate-General of Sweden, Wellington, New Zealand: +64 4 499 9895.

In South Africa:

Swedish Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa: +27 12 426 6400.

Foreign Embassies in Sweden

American Embassy

United States Embassy, Stockholm: +46 8 783 5300.

Canadian Embassy

Canadian Embassy, Stockholm: +46 8 453 3000.

British Embassy

British Embassy, Stockholm: +46 8 671 3000.

Australian Embassy

Australian Embassy, Stockholm: +46 8 613 2900.

Irish Embassy

Irish Embassy, Stockholm: +46 8 5450 4040.

New Zealand Embassy

New Zealand Embassy, Brussels (also responsible for Sweden): +32 2 512 1040.

South African Embassy

South African Embassy, Stockholm: +46 8 824 3950.

Currency

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Exchange rate for 1 SEK - Swedish Krona

0.00 BMD Bermudan Dollar	0.09 EUR Euro	0.09 USD U.S. Dollar	0.07 GBP U.K. Pound Sterling	14.14 JPY Japanese Yen	0.13 CAD Canadian Dollar
0.08 CHF Swiss Franc	0.14 AUD Australian Dollar	3.64 UAH Ukrainian Hryvnia	41.02 KZT Kazakhstani Tenge	8,599.98 LBP Lebanese Pound	0.45 LYD Libyan Dinar
0.63 BOB Bolivian Boliviano	0.00 NPR Nepalese Rupee	0.00 OMR Omani Rial	0.00 QAR Qatari Rial	0.12 SGD Singapore Dollar	0.00 TTD Trinidad Tobago Dollar
0.00 VEF Venezuelan Bolivar	5.37 DOP Dominican Peso	0.00 HRK Croatian Kuna	1.57 MXN Mexican Peso	56.41 XOF West African CFA Franc	0.00 PGK Papua New Guinean kina
0.00 BSD Bahamian Dollar	0.00 FJD Fiji Dollar	0.00 HNL Honduran Lempira	12.37 DZD Algerian Dinar	0.00 MMK Myanma Kyat	0.00 BWP Botswana Pula
0.34 PEN Peruvian Nuevo Sol	86.71 CLP Chilean Peso	35.74 AMD Armenia Dram	2.15 CZK Czech Koruna	1.63 MDL Moldova Lei	12.93 ISK Icelandic Krona
1,162.59 UZS Uzbekistan Sum	0.34 ILS Israeli New Sheqel	0.07 JOD Jordanian Dinar	0.00 KWD Kuwaiti Dinar	3.53 UYU Uruguayan Peso	0.00 MUR Mauritian Rupee
0.00 NIO Nicaraguan Córdoba	1.01 NOK Norwegian Krone	0.37 PLN Polish Zloty	0.35 SAR Saudi Riyal	0.00 LKR Sri Lanka Rupee	3.40 THB Thai Baht
0.34 AED U.A.E Dirham	0.47 BRL Brazilian Real	0.43 RON Romanian New Leu	0.72 HKD Hong Kong Dollar	56.41 XAF Central African CFA Franc	2,347.45 VND Vietnamese Dong
81.16 ARS Argentine Peso	0.00 XCD East Caribbean Dollar	0.00 GTQ Guatemalan Quetzal	0.93 MAD Moroccan Dirham	0.00 BHD Bahrain Dinar	0.09 PAB Panamanian Balboa
0.16 AZN Azerbaijan Manat	362.20 COP Colombian Peso	8.17 KGS Kyrgyzstan Som	33.45 HUF Hungarian Forint	1.01 TJS Tajikistan Ruble	1,485.18 IDR Indonesian Rupiah
4.43 EGP Egyptian Pound	125.55 KRW South Korean Won	688.97 PYG Paraguayan Guaraní	0.44 MYR Malaysian Ringgit	46.97 CRC Costa Rican Colón	0.15 NZD New Zealand Dollar
25.67 PKR Pakistani Rupee	8.44 RUB Russian Rouble	1.71 ZAR South African Rand	0.29 TND Tunisian Dinar	0.00 BBD Barbadian Dollar	0.17 BGN Bulgarian Lev
2.99 TRY Turkish Lira	5.29 PHP Philippine Peso	2.99 TWD New Taiwan Dollar	107.63 NGN Nigerian Naira	0.00 XPF CFP Franc	0.00 GHS Ghanaian Cedi
0.00 JMD Jamaican Dollar	0.00 ANG Neth. Antillean Guilder	0.00 BND Brunei Dollar	10.06 RSD Serbian Dinar	0.67 CNY Chinese Yuan	0.64 DKK Danish Krone
0.32 TMT New Turkmenistan Manat	7.71 INR Indian Rupee				

Overview of the Attractions in Sweden

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Public Holidays in Sweden

	2023	2024
New Year's Day	Mon. January 1	Mon. January 1
Good Friday	Sun. April 7	Fri. March 29
Easter Monday	Wed. April 10	Mon. April 1
Labour Day	Wed. May 1	Wed. May 1
Swedish National Day	Thu. June 6	Thu. June 6
Midsummer Day	Mon. June 24	Sat. June 22
All Saints' Day	Mon. November 4	Sat. November 2
Christmas Day	Wed. December 25	Wed. December 25
Boxing Day	Thu. December 26	Thu. December 26
Ascension Day	Sat. May 18	Thu. May 9
Whit Sunday	Tue. May 28	Sun. May 19
Epiphany	Sat. January 6	Sat. January 6