



Stuttford Van Lines Country Guide for

Sweden



Country Guides: Courtesy of Overseas Moving Network International (OMNI)

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1 CONTACT ADDRESSES

Location: Northeast Europe, Scandinavia.

Time: GMT + 1 (GMT + 2 from last Sunday in March to last Sunday in October).

VisitSweden in the UK

Sweden House, 5 Upper Montagu Street, London W1H 2AG, UK Tel: (020) 7108 6168.
Website: www.visitsweden.com

Embassy of Sweden in the UK

11 Montagu Place, London W1H 2AL, UK Tel: (020) 7917 6400. Website: www.swedenabroad.com/london Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1200 and 1400-1500 (general enquiries); Mon-Fri 0900-1200 (visa applications).

Embassy of Sweden in the USA

1501 M Street, Suite 900, NW, Washington, DC 20005-1702, USA Tel: (202) 467 2600.
Website: www.swedenabroad.com/washington

VisitSweden in the USA

Council PO Box 4649, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-4649, USA Tel: (212) 885 9700. Website: www.visitsweden.com

2 OVERVIEW

'Cultural contrast on the Baltic shores'

Sweden is a land of cultural contrast, from the Danish influence of the southwest to the nomadic Laplanders in the wild Arctic north. And while urban Sweden is stylish, modern and sophisticated, the countryside offers many simpler pleasures for those in search of tranquillity. Sweden's scenery has a gentler charm than that of neighbouring Norway's rugged coast. Much of Sweden is swathed in forest, and there are thousands of lakes, notably large stretches of water between Gothenburg and the capital, Stockholm. The lakeside resort of Östersund, in the centre of Sweden, is popular with Scandinavians, but most visitors opt first for **the cities and the Baltic islands:** the largest island, Gotland, with its array of ruined medieval churches, is a particular highlight. Another major attraction is the so-called 'Kingdom of Crystal', a forested area between Malmö and Stockholm boasting many fine glassworks. The land, as well as its people, has an air of reserved calm, and while best known for its automotive and musical exports Volvo and Abba are pretty much household names a strong historical undertone bubbles close beneath the surface. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Stockholm, where dozens of museums deal with all imaginable aspects of the past, and medieval and Baroque edifices housing boutiques and cafes overlook the attractive harbour.

Stuart Bowden



3 GENERAL INFORMATION

Area: 449,964 sq km (173,732 sq miles).

Population: 8.9 million (UN, 2005).

Population Density: 19.7 per sq km.

Capital: Stockholm. Population: 765,044 (2005).

GEOGRAPHY: Sweden is bordered by Norway to the west and Finland to the northeast, with a long Baltic coast to the east and south. Approximately half the country is forested and most of the many thousands of lakes are situated in the southern central area. The largest lake is Vänern, with an area of 5540 sq km (2140 sq miles). Swedish Lapland to the north is mountainous and extends into the Arctic Circle.

Government: Constitutional monarchy. Gained independence from Denmark in 1523. Head of State: King Carl XVI Gustaf since 1973. Head of Government: Prime Minister Göran Persson since 1996. Recent history: Two tragic events overshadow Sweden's recent past the assassination of Prime Minister Olaf Palme (known on the world stage as a leading exponent of Scandinavian neutrality) in 1986, and the murder of Foreign Minister Anna Lindh in 2003, days before a national referendum rejected membership of the common European currency system. From the end of the Second World War, the nation has enjoyed increasing prosperity, and has developed an extremely supportive welfare state, funded by relatively high taxation. However, by the beginning of the 1990s, the economy was no longer performing as well as it had done and the centre-right coalition government of Carl Bildt, which took office in 1991, instituted an austerity programme. This was designed to reduce inflation, cut the budget deficit by reducing public expenditure and de-regulate and privatise much of Sweden's extensive public sector. Relations with the (then) European Community had become the major issue in Swedish politics, although with all the major political parties favouring membership, the issue was less than contentious. Negotiations for full membership began in 1993. These were completed by the September 1994 election, which was won by the SAP; Sweden joined the EU at the beginning of 1995. Sweden chose not to join the European single currency at its inception in 1999; public support was lacking and the government felt that economic conditions were not right. By 2003, the Government was prepared to sign on, but a referendum that September rejected the Euro. Another general election will take place during 2006.

Language: Swedish. Lapp is spoken by the Sámi population in the north; there are also Finnish-speaking minorities. English is taught as the first foreign language from the age of nine.

Religion: Around 86 per cent of the population belong to the Church of Sweden (Evangelical Lutheran), separated from the state in January 2000; other Protestant minorities constitute the majority of the remainder.

Electricity: 220 volts, three-phase AC, 50Hz. Two-pin continental plugs are used.

Social Conventions: Normal courtesies should be observed. It is customary for the guest to refrain from drinking until the host makes a toast. The guest should also thank the host for the meal with Tack för maten. Casual dress is acceptable for everyday occasions; smarter wear for social occasions, exclusive restaurants and clubs. Evening wear (black tie) will usually be specified when required. Smoking is prohibited on public transport and in most public buildings.



Passport/Visa

	<i>Passport Required?</i>	<i>Visa Required?</i>	<i>Return Ticket Required?</i>
British	1	No	No
Australian	Yes	No	No
Canadian	Yes	No	No
USA	Yes	No	No
OtherEU	1/2	No	No
Japanese	Yes	No	No

Note: (a) Sweden is a signatory to the 1995 Schengen Agreement. For further details about passport/visa regulations within the Schengen area, see the introductory section How to Use this Guide. (b) Sweden does not recognise some Somali passports issued after 31st January 1991; check with Consulate or Consular section at Embassy for further details.

PASSPORTS: Passport valid for at least three months beyond length of stay required by all except:(a) 1. EU/EEA nationals (EU + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway) and Swiss nationals holding a valid national ID card. Note: EU and EEA nationals are only required to produce evidence of their EU/EEA nationality and identity in order to be admitted to any EU/EEA Member State. This evidence can take the form of a valid national passport or national identity card. Either is acceptable. Possession of a return ticket, any length of validity on their document, sufficient funds for the length of their proposed visit should not be imposed. (b) 2. nationals of Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, holding travel documents issued for travel between these countries.

VISAS: Required by all except the following: (a) nationals of the countries referred to in the chart and listed under passport exemptions above for stays of up to three months (based on individual circumstances); (b) nationals of Andorra, Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Brunei, Bulgaria, Chile, Costa Rica, Croatia, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Hong Kong (SAR), Israel, Korea (Rep), Liechtenstein, Macau (SAR), Malaysia, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Romania, San Marino, Singapore, Switzerland, Uruguay and Venezuela for stays of up to three months; (c) those continuing their journey, holding tickets with confirmed reservations and required travel documents, arriving and departing from/to a Schengen country and not leaving the transit area.

Note: A transit visa is required by nationals of the following countries (if holding a visa valid for less than three months): Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Congo (Dem Rep), Eritrea, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Iran, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia and Sri Lanka.

Validity: One to 90 days.

Types of visa and cost: £25 (price is subject to change depending on the exchange rate). A uniform type of visa, the Schengen visa, is issued for tourist, business and private visits. Visa fees are non-refundable and payable on submission of the visa application.

Application to: Consulate (or Consular section at Embassy); see Passport/Visa Information. Travellers visiting just one Schengen country should apply to the Consulate of that country;



travellers visiting more than one Schengen country should apply to the Consulate of the country chosen as the main destination or the country they will enter first (if they have no main destination).

Application requirements: (a) Valid passport with at least one blank page. (b) Two recent passport-size photos. (c) Fee, payable in cash or postal order (only if sent by post). (d) Completed, signed application form. (e) Proof of occupation/student status. (f) Proof of purpose of visit (invitation letter from Swedish company/friend for business visas/private-visit visas, or evidence of pre-booked hotel accommodation. (g) Stamped, registered, self-addressed envelope for return of passport. (h) Health insurance covering €30,000, emergency treatment by a doctor, urgent ambulance transportation and transportation back to applicant's home. (i) Written consent from parents for minors. (j) Proof of means of support during stay may be required by some nationals. Transit: (a), (d) and (k) Copy of airline tickets.

Working days required: Seven to 60. However, applicants are advised to apply at least 30 days before the date of their intended departure.

Temporary residence: Enquire at Embassy.

Passport/Visa Information: Embassy of Sweden in the UK11 Montagu Place, London W1H 2AN, UK Tel: (020) 7917 6400. Website: www.swedishabroad.com/london Opening hours: Mon-Fri 0900-1200 and 1400-1500 (general enquiries); Mon-Fri 0900-1200 (visa applications). Embassy of Sweden in the USA1501 M Street, Suite 900, NW, Washington, DC 20005, USA Tel: (202) 467 2600. Website: www.swedenabroad.com/washington

4 MONEY

Currency: Swedish Krona (SEK) = 100 öre. Notes are in denominations of SEK1000, 500, 100, 50 and 20. Coins are in denominations of SEK10, 5, 2 and 1, and 50 öre.

Currency exchange: Currency can be converted at FOREX foreign exchange agencies; these are found in major cities, airports and ferry terminals etc. ATMs are widely available.

Credit & debit cards: American Express, Diners Club, MasterCard and Visa are all widely accepted, as well as Eurocheque cards. Most shops and restaurants require ID when paying with a credit card. Check with your credit or debit card company for details of merchant acceptability and other facilities which may be available.

Traveller's cheques: Widely accepted. A nominal fee is charged when paying with traveller's cheques. To avoid additional exchange rate charges, travellers are advised to take traveller's cheques in Euros, Pounds Sterling or US Dollars.

Currency restrictions: There are no restrictions on the import or export of local or foreign currency.

Exchange rate indicators

DateAt time of publishing£1.00=SEK13.63\$1.00=SEK7.73

Banking hours: Mon-Wed and Fri 1000-1500, Thurs 1000-1600/1730. Some banks in larger cities have longer opening hours and are open at weekends.



5 DUTY FREE

The following items may be imported into Sweden without incurring customs duty: 200 cigarettes or 100 cigarillos or 50 cigars or 250g of tobacco*; 1l spirits over 22 per cent or 2l fortified or sparkling wine, 2l wine and 32l beer*; a reasonable quantity of perfume; gifts up to a value of SKr1700.

Note: *Travellers must be over 18 years of age to import any cigarettes or tobacco products; and over 20 years of age to import any alcoholic beverages. These regulations are strictly enforced.

Prohibited items: Narcotics, firearms, ammunition, weapons, most meat and dairy products, eggs, plants, potatoes from outside the EU, endangered species, fireworks and alcoholic beverages of over 60 per cent alcohol (120° proof).

Abolition of duty free goods within the EU: On 30 June 1999, the sale of duty-free alcohol and tobacco at airports and at sea was abolished in all of the original 15 EU member states. Of the 10 new member states that joined the EU on May 1st 2004, these rules already apply to Cyprus and Malta. There are transitional rules in place for visitors returning to one of the original 15 EU countries from one of the other new EU countries. But for the original 15, plus Cyprus and Malta, there are now no limits imposed on importing tobacco and alcohol products from one EU country to another (with the exceptions of Denmark, Finland and Sweden, where limits are imposed). Travellers should note that they may be required to prove at customs that the goods purchased are for personal use only.

6 PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

Below are listed Public Holidays for the January 2006-June 2007 period. Jan 1 2006 New Year's Day. Jan 5 Eve of Epiphany.* Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 13 Maundy Thursday. Apr 14 Good Friday. Apr 17 Easter Monday. Apr 30 Valborg's Eve.* May 1 Labour Day. May 25 Ascension. Jun 5 Whit Monday. Jun 23 Midsummer's Eve.* Jun 24 Midsummer Holiday. Nov 3 All Saint's Eve.* Nov 4 All Saints' Day. Dec 24 Christmas Eve.* Dec 25 Christmas Day. Dec 26 Boxing Day. Jan 1 2007 New Year's Day. Jan 5 Eve of Epiphany.* Jan 6 Epiphany. Apr 5 Maundy Thursday. Apr 6 Good Friday. Apr 9 Easter Monday. Apr 30 Valborg's Eve.* May 1 Labour Day. May 17 Ascension. May 28 Whit Monday.

Note: *Shops and offices will often close half a day early on the day before an official holiday.

7 HEALTH

	Special Precautions	Certificate Required
Yellow Fever	No	No
Cholera	No	No
Typhoid and Polio	No	N/A



Malaria

No

N/A

Other risks: Lyme disease is relatively common in the south of the country, especially during the summer months. Tickbourne encephalitis, a viral infection, is present. Diphyllbothriasis occurs rarely along the Baltic coast.

Health care: European Economic Area (EEA) and Switzerland: If you or any of your dependants are suddenly taken ill or have an accident during a visit to an EEA country or Switzerland, free or reduced-cost necessary treatment is available in most cases on production of a valid European Health Insurance Card (EHIC). Each country has different rules about state medical provision. In some, treatment is free. In many countries you will have to pay part or all of the cost, and then claim a full or partial refund. The EHIC gives access to state-provided medical treatment only and the scheme gives no entitlement to medical repatriation costs, nor does it cover ongoing illnesses of a non-urgent nature, so comprehensive travel insurance is advised. Note that the EHIC replaces the Form E111, which will no longer be valid after 31 December 2005. Some restrictions apply, depending on your nationality. Health care standards in Sweden are good. Hospital services are provided at county and regional levels; the latter have a greater range of specialist fields. Make sure the doctor you see is affiliated to the public insurance scheme. You must show your European Health Insurance Card (EHIC), or you will be charged the full cost of the treatment. With an EHIC, you will still have to pay part of the cost, which is not refundable. You will also have to pay the full cost of dental treatment up to a fixed limit, and most of the cost above this limit. Any reductions will be made before you get your bill. Dental surgeries or clinics are indicated by Tandläkare or Folktandvården signs and emergency service is available in major cities out of hours. You will have to pay the full cost of any prescription drugs up to a limit, and part of any costs above this limit. If you are taking prescribed medicines, make sure you have an adequate supply before leaving for Sweden. You can go to any public hospital. In-patient care is free, but you will have to pay part of the cost of any outpatient care. There is a fixed, non-refundable daily charge. Health insurance is recommended to cover emergency evacuation. More information can be obtained in Sweden from the Lokala Försäkringskassan (local Social Insurance Office).

Travel - International

AIR: The national airline is SAS Scandinavian Airlines System (SK) (website: www.sas.se).

Approximate flight times: From Stockholm to London is approximately two hours 30 minutes. From Gothenburg to London is two hours. From Stockholm to Los Angeles is 14 hours 10 minutes; to New York is 10 hours 10 minutes.

Main airports: Stockholm (STO) (Arlanda) (website: www.arlanda.lfv.se) is 42km (26 miles) north of the city. To/from the airport: There are frequent bus services operating between the airport and the city from 0625-2305 (travel time 40 minutes). Arlanda Express trains leave for the city every 15 minutes between 0600-2359 (travel time 20 minutes). Trains travel to a range of destinations, including Sundsvall, Falun, Mora and Uppsala from the airport. Taxi services are also available. Facilities: Duty free shop, car hire, banks/bureaux de change, cash dispenser, restaurant/bar, coffee shop and tourist information. There is a good selection of hotels within 10km of the airport. Gothenburg (GOT) (Landvetter) (website: www.landvetter.lfv.se) is 24km (15 miles) east of the city (travel time 25 minutes). To/from the airport: Coach services are frequent between the airport and the Central Station (every 15 minutes). Buses and taxis are available into Gothenburg, as well as to and from Copenhagen (travel time - 50 minutes). Car



rental is also available. Facilities: Duty free shop, car hire, bank/bureau de change, restaurant/bar and coffee shop. Malmö Sturup (MMX) (website: www.sturup.com) is 31km (20 miles) east of the city (travel time 35 minutes). To/from the airport: Bus and taxi services go to the city. Facilities: Bureau de change and a duty-free shop. Malmö City Hovercraft (HMA), 200m (650ft) from the Central Station, is now the city's main terminal for international air passengers using the hovercraft service operated by SAS which connects with flights at Copenhagen Airport. The terminal has its own duty free facilities. Taxi services are available. For more information on airports, contact LFV (website: www.lfv.se).

SEA: Main ports: Gothenburg (website: www.portgot.se), Sundsvalls Hamn (website: www.sundsvallshamn.se), Hargs Hamn (website: www.hargshamn.se) and Trelleborg (website: www.tralleborgshamn.se). DFDS Seaways ferries sail all year round from Newcastle to Gothenburg (travel time 24 hours). There are also ferry connections from Swedish ports to other destinations including Copenhagen, Gdansk, Helsingør, Kiel, Klaipeda, Oslo, Riga, St Petersburg and Tallinn.

RAIL: One UKSweden route is from London (Victoria and Liverpool Street) to Hook of Holland or Ostend, and onwards via Copenhagen (travel time 22-25 hours). There are connections by ferry from Denmark and through rail routes from Norway (Oslo, Narvik and Trondheim). However, the quickest route is to take the Eurostar train to Brussels, and then to catch a connection to Hamburg and on to Stockholm. The Swedish high-speed train x2000 travels from Oslo to Stockholm/Gothenburg. Inlandsbanan (inland railway) is a 1300km route from Kristinehamn (Mid-Sweden) to Gällivare (North). It is a privately owned company offering tours during the summer months. Bicycles can be taken on the trains. Connex AB operates trains from Stockholm to Gothenburg. Other destinations on the route include Kiruna, Luleå, Umeå and Sundsvall. The Inter-Rail pass offers unlimited second-class train travel in up to 29 European countries (includes Morocco and Turkey) split into eight zones (A-H). Three different tickets are available: a ticket covering one zone (two to six countries, 16 days validity), a ticket covering two zones (six to 10 countries, 22 days' validity) and an All Zone Pass (29 countries, one month's validity). Ferry services between Italy and Greece are included. Passengers must be resident in Europe for at least six months before the pass is used. Travel is not allowed in the passenger's country of residence. Travellers under 26 years receive a reduction of about 30 per cent. Children's tickets are reduced by about 50 per cent. Supplements are required for some high-speed services, seat reservations and couchettes. Discounts are offered on Eurostar and some ferry routes. Available from Inter Rail (website: www.interrailnet.com). The Eurailpass offers unlimited first-class train travel in 17 European countries. Tickets are valid for 15 days, 21 days, one month, two months or three months. The Eurailpass Saver ticket offers discounts for two or more people travelling together. The Eurailpass Youth ticket is available to those under 26 and offers unlimited second-class train travel. The Eurailpass Flexi allows either 10 or 15 travel days within a two-month period. The Eurail Selectpass is valid in three, four or five bordering countries and allows five, six, eight or 10 travel days (or 15 for five countries) in a two-month period. The Eurail Regional Pass allows four to 10 travel days in a two-month period in one of nine regions (usually two or more countries). Children receive a 50 per cent reduction. The passes cannot be sold to residents of Europe, Turkey, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia or the Russian Federation. Available from The Eurail Group (website: www.eurail.com). The Euro Domino pass enables holders anything from three to eight days' extensive travel within a one-month period on the entire rail network of their chosen country. It is valid in 28 European countries and North Africa, including the ferry service from Brindisi (Italy) to Igoumenitsa (Greece). The purchase a EuroDomino pass you must have been a resident in Europe for at least six months and a passport number is required at time of booking. It is not permitted to purchase a pass for travel within your own country of residence. To qualify for the youth rates, you must be under 26 years on the first date of validity of the pass. Children aged four-11 years inclusive pay half the adult fares rounded up to the nearest pound. Children



under four years travel for free. Seat reservations, couchette and sleeper charges are not included in the cost of the pass and are payable at the normal rate. Passholder fares are payable on some services. Reservation/Supplement charges are payable on all trains within Spain. Available from Rail Europe (website: www.raileurope.co.uk/railpasses/eurodomino.htm). The ScanRail pass can be used for extensive travel of five or 10 days in two months or 21 consecutive days across Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Payment of supplement if required on some trains. Seat reservation, couchette, sleeper or cabin charges are not included in the cost of the pass and are payable at the normal rate. The ScanRail pass also entitles holders to free travel on some ferry and buss routes as well as up to 50 per cent discount on ferries, buses and private railway throughout Scandinavia, free or discounted admission (up to 50 per cent off) to railway museums in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden and reduced room rates at 160 hotels throughout Scandinavia. Available from Rail Europe (website: www.raileurope.co.uk/railpasses/scanrail.htm).

ROAD: From the UK visitors can either drive to Sweden through Europe via Denmark or Germany, or catch a car ferry from Harwich (all year) to Gothenburg on the southwest coast (sailing time 24 hours). The Øresund Fixed Link, spanning 16km (10 miles) of waterway, joins the cities of Malmö (Sweden) and Copenhagen (Denmark). The link comprises a suspension bridge and an underwater tunnel, joined in the middle by an artificial island. It was designed to provide better connections between the Scandinavian peninsula and the European continent. Coach: There are services from London (Victoria), Dover and Folkstone to a number of Swedish cities throughout the year, taking approximately 30 hours (restricted service in winter). There are numerous and excellent road links with all neighbouring countries. Eurolines (52 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0AU, UK; tel: (08705) 143 219; website: www.eurolines.com) and National Express (ensign Court, 4 Vicarage Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3ES; tel: (08705) 808 080; website: www.nationalexpress.com) run regular coach services from the UK to Sweden. Travellers can either choose Mini-Pass breaks or book a 15-, 30- or 60-day pass. The six Mini-Passes give travellers the freedom to visit three cities, with prices starting at £55. Travellers can stay as long as they like in each city.

Öresundrunt Card: This pass enables visitors to travel on both sides of the Öresund River (Sweden and Denmark) on boats or trains. The ticket can be bought from the Malmo Tourism Office at Central Station.

Travel - Internal

AIR: SAS serves over 30 local airports. Travel by air is relatively cheap and efficient and there are a number of reduced fares offered by SAS; contact the airline for further details.

SEA/LAKE: Unlike Norway and Finland, there are few domestic ferry services in Sweden. The various archipelagos on the southeast coast are served by small ferries, the most comprehensive network being within the Stockholm archipelago, for which you can buy an island-hopping boat pass. The other major link is between the Baltic island of Gotland and the mainland at Nynäshamn and Oskarshamn, which are very popular routes in summer; booking ahead is strongly recommended. There are frequent coastal sailings to all ports and on the hundreds of lakes throughout the country, especially in the north. For details contact local authorities. Canal: The Gotä canal (served by vintage steamer; website: www.gotakanal.se) connects Gothenburg and Stockholm.

RAIL: The excellent and extensive rail system is run by Swedish State Railways (SJ), SE-105 50 Stockholm (tel: (468) 762 20000; website: www.sj.se). The network is more concentrated in the populated south where hourly services run between the main cities, but routes extend to the



forested and sparsely populated lake area of the north, which is a scenic and popular holiday destination. Restaurant cars and sleepers are provided on many trains. Reservations are essential for most express services. x2000 high-speed trains travel from Stockholm to Gothenburg; other destinations on the route include Jönköping, Sundvall, Gävle, Malmö and Härnösand. Motorail car-sleeper services are operated during the summer on the long-distance routes from Malmö, Gothenburg and Västerås to Kiruna and Luleå.

Sweden Rail Pass: The pass offers unlimited travel for three to eight days in one month. Supplements for seat, sleepers, etc are not included in the pass. Up to two children under 16 can travel free with one adult and reduced fares are available for others.

ROAD: Traffic drives on the right. Sweden's roads are well-maintained and relatively uncrowded, but watch out for animals crossing the road in remote areas. Credit and debit cards are becoming more acceptable as a means of payment at petrol stations. Most petrol stations have 24-hour automatic petrol pumps; they accept SKr100 and 20 notes. Bus: Express coach services and local buses are run by Connex (website: www.connex.com) and Swebus (website: www.swebus.se). Cheap and efficient links are available to all towns. Many coach operators do special offers on tickets on weekends (Friday to Sunday). Information is available in Sweden from local tourist offices. The Gothenburg, Malmö and Stockholm Passes (one-, two- or three-day) offer free public transport in those areas as well as free admission to selected museums and tourist attractions. Cards can be purchased from tourist information centres, train stations, camping sites or youth hostels. Taxi: Available in all towns and at airports. Intercity taxis are also available. Car hire: Available in most towns and cities. All international agencies are represented. Regulations: Speed limits outside built-up areas are 110, 90 or 70kph (68, 56 or 43mph) depending on road width and traffic density. In built-up areas the limit is 50kph (31mph) or 30kph (19mph) in school areas. Severe fines and sometimes prison sentences are imposed on drivers over the alcohol limit (0.02 per cent). There are on-the-spot fines for traffic offences. The use of dipped headlights is compulsory in the daytime for cars and motorcycles. Crash helmets are compulsory for motorcyclists. Seatbelts must be worn at all times. Children under seven may not travel in a car if it is not equipped with a special child restraint or a normal seat belt adapted for the child's use. Emergency warning triangles are obligatory. Studded tyres are only permitted from 1 November to the first Monday after the Easter holiday. Documentation: National driving licence is sufficient, but it must include a photo or it will not be recognised. The minimum age for car drivers is 18; for motorcyclists it is 17. The car's log book and written permission must be carried if driving someone else's car. A Green Card is not required by Swedish authorities, but it tops up the cover provided by a domestic policy. It is advisable to check the validity of insurance policies prior to departure.

URBAN: Public transport is efficient, comprehensive and well-integrated. Stockholm has bus, trams, metro (T-banan) and local rail services. Pre-purchase multi-tickets and passes are sold, though single tickets can also be obtained on the bus. There are trams in Gothenburg and Norrköping. Taxis are widely available; large taxi companies are cheaper than independents. Several of the main cities, particularly Stockholm, have boat excursions and services.

TRAVEL TIMES: The following chart gives approximate travel times (in hours and minutes) from Stockholm to other major cities/towns in Sweden.

	Air	Road	Rail	Gothenburg	0.506	004.30	Malmö	1.058	006.45	Luleå	1.152	0015.00	Mora	1.006	004.30
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8 ACCOMMODATION

HOTELS AND MOTELS: Hotels are usually of a high standard. Most have a restaurant and/or cafe and a TV lounge, and many include a buffet breakfast in the price. Good first- and medium-class hotels are found in every Swedish town. They are mostly private but are, in many cases, operated by hotel groups and offer special reduced rates for the summer and weekends. Special packages are available throughout the year in Gothenburg, Malmö and Stockholm. Scattered all over Sweden are country hotels, characterised by good food and attractive settings. Some are renovated and modernised manor houses or centuries-old farmhouses which have frequently been in the same family for generations. They are mostly independently owned and are often located in picturesque surroundings. Others are traditional old inns. During the summer many hotels offer facilities for swimming, fishing, boating, golf and flower-spotting or bird-watching excursions. There are also a number of mountain hotels which are ideal for those who want a peaceful holiday. They provide a good base for expeditions in the mountains and guided walks are often arranged, as well as other activities such as keep-fit classes, fishing and canoeing. Many are also popular skiing hotels in the winter. A comprehensive list of hotels can be found online (website: www.hotelsinsweden.net). The one- to five-star grading system was introduced in 2003. An SHR sign indicates that they belong to the Swedish Hotel & Restaurant Association (SHR), Sveriges Hotell & Restaurang Företagare, PO Box 1158, Kammarkargatan 39, 111 81 Stockholm (tel: (8) 762 7400; website: www.shr.se). Many Swedish hotels offer discounted rates throughout the summer and at weekends during the winter and some of the leading chains have special deals which can be booked in advance, including the SARA Hotels Scandinavian Bonus Pass, the Scandic Hotel Cheque Scheme and the Sweden Hotel Pass. Details of these offers and other (including family) discount schemes are contained in the annual guide *Hotels in Sweden*, obtainable from VisitSweden (see Top Things To Do). Sweden also has a large number of motels, most of which are new, usually situated on the outskirts of towns or in the countryside. Parking is free. They may have swimming pools, a gymnasium and saunas, restaurants and self-service cafes.

FARMHOUSE ACCOMMODATION: Working farms throughout Sweden offer accommodation, either in the main farmhouse or in an adjoining cottage. Accommodation is normally on a bed & breakfast basis, with self-catering facilities. Some farms offer full board. Accommodation can be booked through local tourist offices. For more information and bookings, see online (website: www.bopalandgard.org).

SELF-CATERING: Forest cabins and chalets are available throughout the country, generally set in beautiful surroundings, near lakes, in quiet forest glades or on an island in some remote archipelago. Purpose-built chalets generally consist of a living room, two or three bedrooms, a well-equipped kitchen and a toilet. They can generally accommodate up to six people, and cooking utensils, cutlery, blankets and pillows are provided. Visitors only need to supply sheets and towels. Log cabins offer a slightly simpler type of accommodation. Renovated cottages and farm buildings are also available, usually in remote spots.

CHALET VILLAGES: Sweden's many chalet villages offer the advantage of amenities such as a grocery, general shops, leisure facilities, restaurants, swimming pools, saunas, launderette, playgrounds, mini-golf, tennis, badminton or volleyball. Some have programmes of special activities such as music, dancing, barbecues, riding, fishing and walking trails. It is often possible to rent boats or bicycles. Information on rental of holiday cottages or flats can be obtained from specialist agencies, local tourist offices in Sweden or VisitSweden.



CAMPING/CARAVANNING: Family camping holidays are extremely popular in Sweden and there is a tremendous variety of attractive sites. Most are located in picturesque surroundings, often on a lakeside or by the sea with free bathing facilities close at hand. There are over 600 campsites, all officially approved and classified by VisitSweden. Many offer facilities such as boat or bicycle rental, mini-golf, tennis, riding or saunas. Many campsites have facilities for the disabled. Most authorised sites are open with full service 1 Jun-15 Aug. Many sites are also open in April or May but the full range of ancillary facilities, such as the post office, may not be open. About 200 sites remain open in the winter, particularly in the winter sports areas in central and northern Sweden. All sites open during the winter have electric sockets for caravans. The price for one night for the whole family plus tent or caravan and use of services is one of the lowest rates in Europe, although at some sites there are small charges for the use of services like showers or launderette. A Camping Card Scandinavia is recommended. It can be bought beforehand and works as a credit card for site fees, allows a quicker check-in time, discounted petrol and provides accident insurance whilst on site. Contact Camping in Sweden for more details (website: www.camping.se). Camping Cheques, valid at more than 350 sites, can be purchased before the holiday but only as part of a package including a return car-ferry journey. Each cheque is valid for one night's fees for a family with car plus tent or caravan, but does not include additional services. Detailed information about camping in Sweden is contained in a pamphlet which is available free of charge from VisitSweden; an abbreviated list of campsites is also available. Motor homes and caravans can be rented. Camping Gaz is not normally available in Sweden and visitors are recommended to take their own supplies. Only propane gas (eg Primus) is obtainable. This is widely available at more than 2000 Primus dealers along with the necessary equipment at reasonable prices. It is important to ensure that equipment designed to burn butane is not refilled with propane; this is both illegal and highly dangerous. It is possible to camp rough in areas away from other dwellings. A useful alternative to tent or caravan camping is to rent one of 4400 camping cabins which are available at 350 sites. These contain bunk beds and kitchen equipment but not sheets.

YOUTH HOSTELS: There are more than 300 hostels that range from mansions to a renovated sailing ship, the Af Chapman, in the centre of Stockholm, as well as many purpose-built hostels. There are no restrictions on who may use Sweden's hostels. Hostels have two to four beds per room, or family rooms, plus self-catering facilities. The hostels are run by the Swedish Tourist Federation (STF) but members of the UK Youth Hostels Federation for a cheaper rate, on production of a membership card. All youth hostels are open during the summer and some for the whole year. They are closed during the day but are open to check in new guests 0800-0930 and 1700-2200. During the summer it is advisable to book in advance. A list of Swedish youth hostels can be ordered from STF (see Top Things To Do). The hostels are also listed in the International Youth Hostel Handbook, available through the YHA in the UK; see also online (website: www.svenskatouristforeningen.se).

Swedish Tourist Federation: STF runs Sweden's youth hostels and several mountain stations in the north of the country and looks after the many mountain huts along the long-distance hiking trails. STF also publishes a list of guest harbours and issues guidance to hikers and canoeing enthusiasts. Membership is not required to stay at one of the hostels.

CASTLES AND MANORS: Many old buildings in Sweden are now being run as hotels. They provide a unique accommodation experience and are often situated on lakes or rivers with parklands and golf courses. Take advantage of the low weekend or summer prices. Package deals are also available.



Accommodation Information: Swedish Hotel & Restaurant Association (SHR) Sveriges Hotell & Restaurang Företagare, PO Box 1158, Kammarkargatan 39, 111 81 Stockholm, Sweden Tel: (8) 762 7400. Website: www.shr.se

Stockholm

Built on a string of islands, Stockholm was founded 700 years ago by King Birger Jarl at the strategic point where the fresh water of Lake Mälaren meets the salt water of the Baltic. A good starting point for an exploration of the city is the 'Old Town' (Gamla Stan), a cluster of old buildings and narrow cobbled streets which formed the original Stockholm. The old buildings are beautifully preserved and the main streets, Österlånggatan and Västerlånggatan, are pedestrian precincts with a host of boutiques, handicrafts and antique shops. The Old Town has three churches of historic interest, Storkyrkan and Riddarholm Church, both dating from the 13th century and the German Church with its magnificent Baroque interior. Overlooking the harbour is the Royal Palace, which contains the State Apartments, the Crown Jewels, the Hall of State and Chapel Royal, Royal Armoury and Palace Museum. Within easy reach of the Old Town, in a magnificent setting on the edge of Lake Mälaren, is Stockholm's elegant City Hall (Stadshuset), inaugurated about 60 years ago. There is a spectacular view of the capital from the top of the 100m (350ft) tower. Another spot for a magnificent view is the observation platform on the Kaknä's communications tower which, at 155m (508ft), is the highest building in Scandinavia. The island of Djurgården, can be reached either by bus from the city centre or by ferry across the busy harbour. The best-known attraction here is the purpose-built Vasa Museum housing the restored 360-year-old wooden warship which was recovered from the depths of Stockholm's harbour in 1961. Also in Djurgården is Skansen, an open-air folk museum which celebrated its centenary in 1991. It has about 150 traditional buildings from different regions of Sweden, as well as an open-air zoo and an aquarium. Across the road is Gröna Lund, a lively amusement park. The city boasts over 50 museums. No fewer than eight can be visited in the Djurgården area, including the Nordic Museum (Nordiska Museet), Waldemarsudde House, which was the home of the artist Prince Eugen until 1947, and Liljevalchs Konsthall. The Historical Museum (Historiska Museet) has some priceless treasures and implements from prehistoric Sweden, as well as examples of medieval art. The National Museum is Sweden's central museum for the national collections of painting, sculpture, applied arts, printing and drawings. Every visitor to Stockholm should invest in a special discount card, the 'Stockholm Card' (Stockholmskortet) which cuts sightseeing and entertainment costs. Cards of longer validity are available at an extra charge, in Stockholm from the Stockholm **Visitor's Board** (tel: (8) 508 28500; website: www.stockholmtown.com).

EXCURSIONS: There is a whole armada of boat excursions on offer. 'Under the Bridges of Stockholm' takes a circular tour through part of the harbour as well as Lake Mälaren. A longer trip can be taken out into the archipelago to resorts like Saltsjöbaden, Sandhamn or Vaxholm. Visitors can also take a boat from the City Hall to Drottningholm Palace. The Royal Theatre has been preserved in its original 18th-century form and plays are still performed there in period costume. There is also a museum depicting the development of the theatre since the Renaissance period.

Gothenburg

The history of Sweden's second city Gothenburg (Göteborg) is closely tied to the sea. The basic pattern of the city owes much to the Dutch architects who designed it; the spacious streets are laid out at right angles and there is a network of canals. The Nordstaden Kronhuset area houses the oldest building of the city, built in 1643 and now the City Museum. Nearby is Kronhusbodarna, an arts and craft workshop centre dating from the 18th century. The Botanical



Gardens (Botaniska Trädgården) contain a rock garden regarded as one of the most impressive in the world, with about 3000 species of Alpine plants. In the city centre is the beautiful Garden of Trädgårdsföreningen with its Palm House, built in the style of London's destroyed Crystal Palace. The Liseberg Amusement Park is an ideal spot for children. There are also many museums, such as the Maritime Museum (Sjöfartsmuseet) which illustrates Sweden's maritime history and the development of its shipbuilding industry. The Gothenburg Discount Card offering free admission to many tourist attractions can be purchased from the Gothenburg tourist **office** (tel: (31) 612 500; website: www.goteborg.com/en).

Excursions: One of the best ways of sightseeing in Gothenburg is on one of the famous Paddan boats (30 April-25 September). Departure is from the terminal at Kungssportsplatsen for an hour-long tour under 20 bridges and out into the busy harbour. Another popular boat trip is to the 17th-century Nya Elfsborg Fortress built on an island at the harbour mouth. There are also sightseeing tours of varying duration by bus with an English-speaking guide. A cheap way of travelling around the city is to buy a 24-hour ticket on the tram network. Gothenburg and Stockholm are both starting points for the classic four-day trip through Sweden's great lakes and the historic Göta Canal.

The Golden Coast

This area is situated in the southwest of Sweden and has vast stretches of beaches, warm sea and holiday resorts reaching for 400km (250 miles) from Laholm in the south to Strömstad in the north. Here there are flat, sandy beaches, bare rocks and fjord-like inlets with meadows stretching down to the seashore and tiny fishing villages.

HALLAND: This is a long, narrow province strung out along the picturesque west coast. Unlike its northern neighbour, Bohuslän (see below), its landscape is gentle, with mile after mile of long sandy beaches, often fringed with pinewoods. Inland, the scenery changes as it meets the tableland of Småland and the landscape is characterised by a series of ridges and valleys. There are also vast forests and heather-covered moors. Areas of note are Kungsbacka, a northern market town and the nearby Onsala peninsula, ideal for bathing, sailing and fishing, and Fjärås Bräcka, an unusual gravel ridge formed during the Ice Age. Further south is Varberg, one of Halland's main coastal resorts, dominated by the 13th-century Varberg Fortress. Other resorts are the port of Falkenberg and Tylösand, with its long sandy beach sheltered by dunes and pine trees. Halland's capital is the important seaport and industrial town of Halmstad. Warmed by the waters of the Gulf Stream, the west coast is a natural choice for seaside holidays.

BOHUSLÄN: The long narrow province of Bohuslän has countless spots where visitors can enjoy an idyllic holiday in the sun. The coastline is deeply indented and there are hundreds of rocky islands. All along the coast are picturesque villages with their typical red-painted huts where the nets are hung out to dry. The province is also one of the most important centres of ancient Swedish civilisation and there are many archaeological relics dating back to the Bronze Age and Viking times.

Excursions: Other towns worth visiting include Bovallstrand, Hunnebostrand, Kungshamn, Lysekil, Smögen and the islands of Orust and Tjörn.

Skåne

At the southernmost tip of Sweden is the province of Skåne, an area of fertile fields and meadows which was ruled by the Danes until 1658. To this day the Skånians have maintained their own distinctive dialect. As a reminder of the days of Danish rule there are more than 200



castles and manors scattered over the province, often forming part of a farm. This region is famous for its food (in particular the smörgåsbord), and the landscape is characterised by rolling fields and pastures and forests but only a few lakes. The best spots for swimming and fishing are along the east, south and west coasts. Inland there are countless small lanes ideal for cycling tours. For golfers, Skåne has some of the finest and most beautifully located courses in Sweden. Other main regional attractions include the medieval town of Lund which has a 12th-century cathedral and 14th-century astronomical clock, Båstad, Falsterbo, Helsingborg, Mölle and Ystad. There is also the Oresund bridge, the world's longest single bridge carrying both road and railway traffic, which links Denmark and Sweden.

MALMÖ: Founded in the 13th century, Malmö is Sweden's third largest city and offers a wealth of parks, gardens, restaurants and a beautiful beach. City sights include the main town squares, Mamöhus Castle and St Petri Church. Konsthallen and Rooseum museums are famous for their art collections. Especially recommended is the 'Malmö Card' which can be purchased at the Malmö Tourist Board (tel: (40) 341 200; website: www.malmo.se) and entitles visitors to free travel on local buses, free admission to museums and discounts on a wide variety of purchases.

Småland & Blekinge

In the middle of the 18th century, German immigrants established the province of Småland, north of Skåne, as the home of the Swedish glass-making industry. The 'kingdom of crystal' forms only a small part of Småland, a very large province that is also a good holiday country with vast forests, pleasant lakes and winding lanes along which red cottages are dotted. In the province of Blekinge there are large oak forests and softer landscapes. This region has many coastal towns that stretch along the Baltic. The Mörrumsån River is noted for salmon and sea trout and Lake Vättern for char fishing. Boat trips are available to the island of Visingsö on Lake Vättern. High Chaparral is a reconstructed wild west town. Three-quarters of the Swedish glassworks are found in the counties of Kalmar and Kronoberg. They are located off the beaten track surrounded by vast tracts of forest and attract many visitors each year. Each of the 16 glassworks are open to visitors Mon-Fri 0800-1500, where the craftspeople can be observed and top-quality products can be purchased. Visitors may also be invited to a hyttssill a traditional evening of entertainment including food of fried herrings, sausages and potatoes baked around the glass furnace, served with beer and schnapps. Most of the works have their own shops.

Gotland and Öland

These are Sweden's largest islands, situated off the southeast coast in the Baltic Sea. There is more sunshine here than elsewhere, making it a favourite summer holiday spot with the Swedes and, as a result, the beaches are rather crowded. The islands are of particular interest to ornithologists and botanists and there is a wealth of historic sites there are Stone, Bronze and Iron Age sites on both islands. Several ferries serve both islands and daily coach trips are available to Öland over one of Europe's longest bridges, starting just outside Kalmar on the mainland. Cycles can be hired on the islands.

Gotland: On Gotland are the Lummelunda Caves with their spectacular stalactites and stalagmites and a preserved medieval town at Kattlundsgrård. Visby is the main town.

Öland: On Öland are the royal summer residence at Solliden; Borgholm Castle; a restored medieval church at Gärdslösa; a recently excavated fortified village at Eketorp; and many Viking stones and local windmills. Borgholm is the main town.

Swedish Lakeland



This region comprises the nine provinces of Dalsland, Värmland and Västergötland in the west, Dalarna, Närke and Västmanland in the north, and Östergötland, Södermanland and Uppland to the east. These form a large part of Sweden with a mixture of open water, vast lakes, plains and meadows and large areas of wild natural scenery. The provinces in the west are dominated by Vänern, Sweden's largest lake, while in the north and east are the lakes of Vättern, Mälaren, Hjälmaren and Siljan as well as the Baltic Sea. The whole region is considered the cradle of Swedish culture, and it is here that the majority of Swedes live. For visitors there is a wide variety of hotels, campsites and country inns.

Excursions: Västergötland has the castle of Läckö, the Trollhättan hydro-electric waterfalls, canoe trips and fishing. Närke contains the Stjerhov Manor, and a 17th-century inn can be visited at Grythyttan in Västmanland. In Dalarna, visitors can meet Father Christmas at the Santaworld theme park. On the island of Sollerön there are Viking graves and in Kolmården there is a zoo and safari park. Gripsholm Castle is in Södermanland. The university city of Uppsala boasts Scandinavia's largest Cathedral and the Baroque Castle of Skokloster, with a vintage car museum.

The Midnight Sun Coast

The Midnight Sun Coast is a 1500km (900 mile) stretch of Baltic coastline which runs all the way to the Finnish border. In the south are the spruce forests of the province of Gästrikland; immediately to the north of this region is Hälsingland with its spectacular views, extensive lakes and typical wood-built mansions. Forestry has traditionally been the dominant industry of Medelpad, today one of Sweden's most industrialised areas, although there are plenty of opportunities for visitors who want to fish in unspoilt outback country or rent a cottage in the middle of a countryside rich in prehistoric monuments and relics of ancient cultures. In the province of Ångermanland is some of Sweden's most breathtaking scenery, consisting of forests, lakes, islands, fjords and mountains plunging dramatically to the sea. This magnificent district is called the High Coast. Västerbotten offers unspoilt wilderness and the Norrland Riviera coastline is ideal for a relaxed holiday. There are also countless clear lakes and rivers teeming with fish, and excellent roads lead inland to the southern part of Lapland. Further north along the coast at Lövånger there are hundreds of renovated timber cottages which are rented out to holidaymakers. Nearer the Arctic Circle the air and water temperatures in the summer are much the same as in the Mediterranean and this area has an excellent sunshine record. Norrbotten is a fisherman's paradise with plenty of mountain streams and sea fishing.

Lapland

The enormous expanse of Lapland, one of Europe's last wildernesses, covers a quarter of **the area of Sweden but has only 5 per cent of the population. It is both inviting and inhospitable:** fell-walkers who leave the marked routes do so at their own risk. The best-known route is Kungsleden, which also gives experienced mountaineers the chance to climb Sweden's highest peak, Kebnekaise. Other favourite areas for walking are the national parks of Sarek and Padjelanta. In the west the mountains soar up towards the Norwegian border and the region experiences rapid changes in the weather. Jämtland, bordering southern Lapland, has plenty of good hiking and fast-flowing rivers for fishermen. It is known for its skiing. Wildlife is abundant in Härjedalen, with reindeer, buzzard, beaver, lynx and Sweden's only herd of musk ox.

Excursions: The small northern village of Jukkasjärvi has received international reknown for its sculpted Ice Hotel, constructed from tonnes of snow and ice from the Torne River. It is rebuilt every winter after the summer thaw but attracts a number of tourists eager to experience the 'ice



beds' and drinks from the Absolut Icebar. For further information, check online (website: www.icehotel.com). Lapps celebrate their annual church festivals in Gällivare. In Jokkmokk there are collections of Lapp art and culture, and a Lapp Staden, an old village of 70 cone-shaped Lapp huts. Arjeplog has an interesting Lapp museum. Iron Age burial grounds and a medieval church are on the island of Frösö. The cable-car trip from Åre leads up to the summit of Åreskutan. Ski resorts include Åre and Sälen.

9 SPORT & ACTIVITIES

Watersports: Sweden has hundreds of miles of beaches, particularly on the west coast, and 96,000 lakes. There are numerous water-skiing and windsurfing centres on the coast and more accessible lakes. Skindiving is mostly confined to the rocky coasts and islets on the west coast both north and south of Gothenburg. Courses are held from June to August. The great number and variety of rapids makes white-water rafting a popular sport.

Sailing: There are about 50 centres where canoes are for hire; many campsites also offer a hire service. Sailing boats and motor-cruisers can be hired in more than 25 places in Sweden or visitors can bring their own. Many of Sweden's canals run through beautiful countryside and are well maintained to provide an ideal boating holiday. Short sightseeing trips are available on several canals but the classic journey is by steamer along the Göta Canal. All meals and accommodation are included in the price. Many cruises, some in vintage steamers, are operated from Stockholm out into the archipelago with its 30,000 islands.

Fishing: Sweden has more than 96,000 lakes and visitors can enjoy fishing in most of them. There are also thousands of miles of rivers, streams and brooks and a coastline of 6760km (4200 miles). The salmon season at Mörrum near Karlshamn opens at the beginning of spring. Sea-trout can be caught throughout the year, except in high summer, which is the best time for char and grayling (typical fish from the northern part of the country). Fishing is generally free all along the coastline and in the larger lakes, including Mälaren, Vänern and Vättern, but a special permit is required to fish in other lakes and rivers. Information is available from local tourist offices. Ice-fishing is an exciting alternative to try. Sea-fishing tours of varying lengths are arranged on the west coast and in the south. Guest harbours are available all round the coast and on lakes Mälaren, Vänern and Vättern.

Golf: There are excellent golf courses and facilities provided for members and visitors. Sweden has over 400 courses. One situated north of the Arctic Circle enjoys 24-hour daylight during the summer months and many midsummer championships take place at midnight. Clubs and golf carts can usually be rented. For more information, contact the Swedish Golf Federation (website: www.sgf.golf.se).

Wintersports: There are excellent facilities for skating, tobogganing, snow-mobiling, ice-climbing and dog-sledging. Most skiing takes place in the north, particularly in Dalarna, Härjedalen and Jämtland.

Other: Routes for hiking are on over 400 well laid-out paths in almost every part of the country. Cycling is a popular holiday recreation, particularly in the south. The Swedish Cycling Promotion Institute, in cooperation with regional tourist offices, has scheduled cycling tours in almost every region.

Entertainment



Food & Drink: Swedes like straightforward meals, simply prepared from the freshest ingredients. As a seafaring country with many freshwater lakes, fish dishes are prominent on hotel or restaurant menus. Things to know: Once on the open road the traveller is well catered for with picnic sites on the way, often with wooden tables and seats. Top-class restaurants in Sweden are usually fairly expensive, but even the smallest towns have reasonably priced self-service restaurants and grill bars. Many restaurants all over Sweden offer a special dish of the day at a reduced price which includes main course, salad, soft drink and coffee. Waiter service is common although there are many self-service snack bars. Wine, spirits and beer are sold through the state-owned monopoly, Systembolaget, open during normal shopping hours. Before 1300 on Sundays alcohol cannot be bought in bars, cafes or restaurants. After midnight alcohol can only be bought in nightclubs that stay open until between 0200-0500. National specialities: Smörgåsbord (Scandinavian cold table. First pickled herring with boiled potatoes then perhaps a couple more fish courses, smoked salmon or anchovies followed by cold meat, pâté, sliced beef, stuffed veal or smoked reindeer). Köttbullar (small meatballs). Smoked reindeer from Lapland. Gravlax (salmon that has been specially prepared and marinated). Wild strawberries and cloudberries. National drinks: Snapps (a Swedish liqueur which is traditionally drunk chilled with smörgåsbord, flavours vary from practically tasteless to sweetly spiced). Minimum drinking age: 20 years, although alcohol can be consumed in bars from restaurants from 18 onwards. In a restaurant or a nightclub, the minimum age for buying alcoholic beverages is 18. Stiff penalties are enforced for drinking and driving. Tipping: Hotel prices include a service charge. Service in restaurants is not usually included in the bill; around 10 per cent should be added. Late at night the service charge is higher. Taxi drivers should be tipped around 10 per cent.

Nightlife: Stockholm has pubs, cafes, discos, restaurants, cinemas and theatres. In the more rural areas evenings tend to be tranquil. From August to June the Royal Ballet performs in Stockholm. Music and theatre productions take place in many cities during the summer at open air venues. Outside Stockholm in the 18th-century Court Theatre of the Palace of Drottningholm there are performances of 18th-century opera.

Shopping: VAT (Moms) is refundable to visitors who are resident in non-EU countries on goods bought at shops participating in the Tax-Free Shopping scheme. The refund is payable to the customer when departing from Sweden at either airports or customs offices at ports. There are many traditional markets and country fairs throughout Sweden. Special purchases include glassware and crystal, ceramics, stainless steel and silver, hemslöjd (cottage industry artefacts) and woodcarvings. Women's and children's clothes are good buys, especially handknitted Nordic sweaters. Shopping hours: Mon-Fri 0930-1800, Sat 0930-1400/1600. Some department stores stay open until 1900 or longer. In larger towns, some shops have longer opening hours and are also open Sundays 1200-1600. In rural areas, shops and petrol stations close by 1700/1800.

Business

Statistics: GDP: US\$255.4 billion. Main imports: Machinery, motor vehicles, paper products, pulp and wood, iron and steel products and chemicals. Main exports: Machinery, petroleum and petroleum products, chemicals, motor vehicles, iron and steel, foodstuffs and clothing. Main trade partners: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, the UK and the USA.

Economy: Sweden boasts one of Europe's most advanced industrial economies and one of the highest standards of social welfare in the world. It also boasts a relatively large number of world-class multinational companies (Ericsson, Volvo). A prolonged period of peace, which included a policy of neutrality during both World Wars, has contributed much to its economic development.



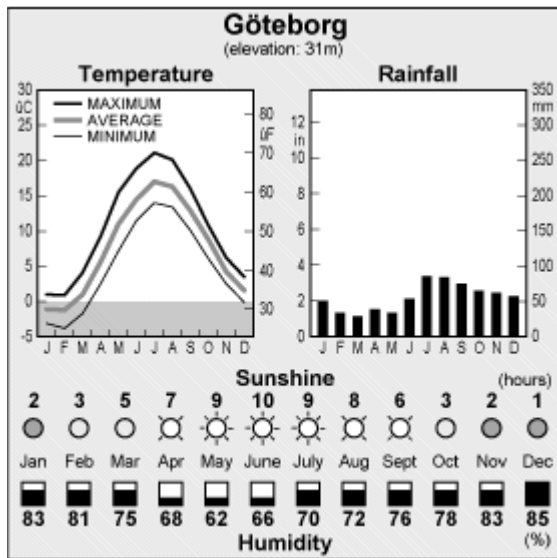
Over half of the country is covered by forest, supplying raw material for the wood-based industries paper, wood pulp and finished products such as furniture which account for 20 per cent of Swedish material exports. Most of the country's agriculture is concentrated in the south and central regions and produces dairy products, meat, cereals and vegetables. The agricultural and fisheries sector is, however, fairly insignificant today, accounting for just 2 per cent of GDP. Sweden has a strong industrial sector which produces a number of major exports including vehicles, office and telecommunications equipment, iron and steel, wood products and chemicals. The country is rich in mineral resources, which include 15 per cent of the world's known uranium deposits and large deposits of iron ore, copper, lead and zinc. Lacking fossil fuel deposits, Sweden has large nuclear power and hydroelectric programmes, which meet over 80 per cent of its energy needs. Sweden was a long-standing member of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), which linked most Western European economies outside the European Union, before it finally joined the EU in 1995. But there is a strong Euro-sceptic current: so far the Swedes have refused to join the Euro-zone, most recently at a national referendum in September 2003 (despite the endorsement of the national government). Domestic economic policy has been mainly concerned with making the labour market more flexible and with addressing Sweden's large government debt. The economy was in recession between 1999 and 2002, but is now slowly recovering. Current annual GDP growth was 3.6 in 2004 and dropped to 2.1 in 2005. Both inflation and unemployment (0.6 and 5 per cent, respectively) are close to the EU average.

Business Etiquette: Businesspeople are expected to dress smartly. English is widely spoken in business circles. Punctuality is important for business and social occasions. Business cards are commonly used. Office hours: Flexible working hours are a widespread practice, with lunch between 1200-1300.

Commercial Information: Stockholm Chamber of Commerce Box 16050, 10321 Stockholm Tel: (8) 5551 0076. Website: www.chamber.se There are also chambers of commerce for other major towns and regions in Sweden. Stockholm Visitors Board (Information on Conferences/Conventions) PO Box 16282, SE-103 25 Stockholm Tel: (8) 508 28500. Website: www.stockholmtown.com Gothenburg Convention Centre (Information on Conferences/Conventions) Mässans Gata 8, SE-412 51 Gothenburg Tel: (31) 708 8390. Website: www.gcc.se Malmö Tourist Convention Bureau (Information on Conferences/Conventions) Lugnagatan 84, SE-21159 Malmö Tel: (40) 342 204. Website: www.malmo.se/conference For a hotel and conference Guide.



10 CLIMATE



In spite of its northern position, Sweden has a relatively mild climate which varies greatly, owing to its length. The summers can be very hot but get shorter further north. The midnight sun can be seen between mid-May and mid-June above the Arctic Circle. Winters can be bitterly cold, especially in the north.

Required clothing: Light- to mediumweights for summer, heavyweights for winter and rainwear all year.

11 HISTORY AND GOVERNMENT

History: Sweden's contact with the rest of Europe is first recorded in the Viking period, when the country traded furs and arms with Russia, along the eastern passage. During the 13th century, a form of feudalism was introduced, a hereditary nobility was established and a thriving middle class of burghers emerged in the towns. Political history in this period is complex but some sense of order, however transitory, was engendered by the accession of Margaret then Regent of Denmark and ruler of Norway to the throne in 1387. She made an attempt to establish a united Scandinavia (the Union of Kalmar) but this did not last long after her death and, during the 15th century, the nobility were able to do much as they pleased at the expense of royal authority. The most significant event of this period was the Massacre of Stockholm in 1520, occasioned by Christian of Denmark's ill-judged attempt to reassert his authority in Sweden; this led to a national revolt, headed by Gustav Ericksson Vasa. The Danes were defeated and Gustav was crowned Gustav I in 1523, establishing the House of Vasa and heralding the beginning of Sweden's ascendancy in Europe. Protestantism became firmly established by the Convention of Uppsala in 1593. In 1611, Gustav II Adolf (better known as Gustavus Adolphus), one of the most famous names in Swedish history, became king. Much of the foreign policy of the 17th century was dominated by the desire to transform the Baltic into a Swedish lake this was the main motivation behind Gustav II's entry into the Thirty Years' War in 1629. Despite his perceived role as a champion of Protestantism, Gustav II soon came to an



alliance with Catholic France, in order to oppose their common enemy, the Emperor Ferdinand II. Sweden won the last remaining Baltic territories not under their control Prussia and Pomerania but Gustav was killed at the battle of Lützen in 1632. Although the Peace of Westphalia (1648) confirmed Sweden as a major power, this dominance proved to be short lived. Gustav was succeeded by his infant daughter, Christina. She abdicated in 1654 and the reigns of her three successors (1654-1718) were dominated by military campaigns, characterised by a slow retreat (in the face of Russia and Austria) and punctuated by spectacular but indecisive victories, such as Narva (1701). An alliance against the growth of Swedish power eventually defeated Karl (in the Great Northern War) and by the mid-18th century, Sweden had lost most of its possessions outside Scandinavia. Another casualty of the defeat was absolutism, established by Karl XI but abolished on the accession of his sister, Eleanora. Factions at court involved the country in further European conflicts, including another war with Russia; in 1772, Gustav III felt strong enough to re-impose absolutist rule. Despite an aggressive and successful foreign policy, his regime did not long survive his own assassination in 1792. After the Peace of Kiel in 1814, Sweden was confirmed in possession of Norway but was forced to cede several German regions to Denmark and Finland to Russia, marking the termination of Swedish interests on mainland Europe. Absolutism was not finally broken until the mid-19th century, as a result of Liberal opposition to Karl XV. The latter years of the century were dominated by economic expansion and the emergence of Norwegian nationalism, culminating in Norway's declaration of full independence in 1905. By this time, a parliamentary form of government had emerged in Sweden, with a strong Socialist opposition. The Socialdemokratiska Arbetarepartiet (SAP, Social Democrats) first gained power in the early-1920s and then, apart from a short break in 1936, held power continuously from 1932 until 1976. Since the end of World War II, in which Sweden remained neutral (as it had done in World War I), the country has enjoyed growing economic prosperity with continued investment in, and expansion of, the welfare state. Abroad, it has forged close links with other Scandinavian countries, which have developed an important role on the international stage as well-respected 'neutrals'. Nobody exemplified this more than Olaf Palme, prime minister and leader of the SAP from 1970 until his assassination in 1986. By the beginning of the 1990s, the economy was no longer performing as well as it had done and the centre-right coalition government of Carl Bildt, which took office in 1991, instituted an austerity programme. This was designed to reduce inflation, cut the budget deficit by reducing public expenditure and de-regulate and privatise much of Sweden's extensive public sector. Relations with the (then) European Community had become the major issue in Swedish politics, although with all the major political parties favouring membership, the issue was less than contentious. Negotiations for full membership began in 1993. These were completed by the September 1994 election, which was won by the SAP; Sweden joined the EU at the beginning of 1995. Sweden chose not to join the European single currency at its inception in 1999, public support was lacking and the government felt that economic conditions were not right. By 2003, the government was prepared to sign on, but a popular referendum that September rejected the Euro. The minority Social Democrat government that had taken office in September 1998, under premier Goran Persson, was partly hamstrung by the reservations of the ex-communist Left Party and the Greens, upon whose support the SAP relied to hold on to office. Despite the government's difficulties, opinion poll predictions and the general political shift to the right throughout Europe, the SAP held on to power at the most recent poll in September 2002. It still needs the support of the Greens and the Left Party.

Government: Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with legislative power vested in the single-chamber 349-member Riksdag (Parliament), which is directly elected for a three-year term. A prime minister and cabinet are drawn from the largest party or coalition of parties.

Travel Advice



Most visits to Sweden are trouble-free but you should be aware of the global risk of indiscriminate international terrorist attacks, which could be against civilian targets, including places frequented by foreigners. This advice is based on information provided by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in the UK. It is correct at time of publishing. As the situation can change rapidly, visitors are advised to contact the following organisations for the latest travel advice.

Latest travel advice contacts: British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Tel: (0845) 850 2829. Website: www.fco.gov.uk US Department of State Website: <http://travel.state.gov/travel>

Top Things To See

Stockholm is built on a number of islands. A highlight is the Old Town, a collection of well-preserved historic buildings lining cobbled streets. Its main streets, Österlånggatan and Västerlånggatan, are pedestrian precincts with a host of boutiques, handicrafts and antique shops. The Old Town has three churches of historic interest, Storkyrkan and Riddarholm Church, both dating from the 13th century and the German Church with its magnificent Baroque interior. **Overlooking the harbour is the Royal Palace (website: www.royalcourt.se)**, which contains the State Apartments, the Crown Jewels, the Hall of State and Chapel Royal, Royal Armoury and Palace Museum. Close to the Old Town is the elegant City Hall (Stadshuset). Cross by ferry to the Djurgården Island area, to see the Nordic Museum (Nordiska Museet) (website: www.nordiskamuseet.se), Waldemarsudde House (website: www.waldemarsudde.se), which was the home of the artist Prince Eugen until 1947, and Liljevalchs Konsthall (website: www.liljevalchs.com). The Historical Museum (Historiska Museet) (website: www.historiska.se) has prehistoric collections and medieval art. The National Museum houses the country's national fine arts collection. Vasa Museum (website: www.vasamuseet.se) contains a restored 360-year-old wooden warship, which was recovered from the harbour in 1961, while nearby is the Skansen open-air folk museum (website: www.skansen.se). Sweden's second city, Gothenburg (Göteborg), is the 'home' of Volvo cars. Historically, though it has strong seafaring traditions. Visit the Maritime Museum (Sjöfartsmuseet) (website: www.sjofartsmuseum.goteborg.se) and the Nordstaden Kronhuset area, which houses the oldest building of the city, built in 1643 and now the City Museum (website: www.stadsmuseum.goteborg.se). Gothenburg was planned by the Dutch, and features a network of canals criss-crossing the city. Founded in the 13th century, Malmö (website: www.malmo.se) is Sweden's third largest city and offers a wealth of parks, gardens, restaurants and a beautiful beach. City sights include the main town squares, Malmöhus Castle and St Petri Church. The Konsthallen and Rooseum museums house art collections. Gotland and Öland are Sweden's biggest offshore islands, in the southeast of the country. On Gotland are the Lummelunda Caves (website: www.lummelundagrottan.se) with spectacular stalactites and stalagmites and a preserved medieval town at Kattlundsgård. Öland features the royal summer residence at Solliden; Borgholm Castle (website: www.borgholmsslott.se); a restored medieval church at Gärdslösa; a recently excavated fortified village at Eketorp; and many Viking stones and local windmills. German immigrants founded Sweden's crystal and glass-making industry in the southern province of Småland, and a total of 16 glassworks in the area are open to visitors. Head south to Skåne, which offers the medieval town of Lund with its 12th-century cathedral and 14th-century astronomical clock. There is also the spectacular Oresund bridge, the world's longest single bridge carrying both road and railway traffic between Denmark and Sweden. Sweden's Lakeland region comprises the nine provinces of Dalsland, Värmland and Västergötland in the west, Dalarna, Närke and Västmanland in the north, and Östergötland, Södermanland and Uppland to the east. These form a large part of Sweden with a mixture of open water, vast lakes, plains and meadows and large areas of wild natural scenery. Experience the 'ice beds' and enjoy a well-earned thirst quencher in the Absolut Icebar at the sculpted Ice Hotel (website: www.icehotel.com) in the small northern village of Jukkasjärvi, Lapland. Constructed from tonnes of snow and ice cut from the Torne River, it is rebuilt every winter after the summer thaw and attracts many tourists. In Jokkmokk, there are collections of Lapp art and



culture, and a Lapp Staden, an old village of 70 cone-shaped Lapp huts. Arjeplog has an interesting Lapp museum. Iron Age burial grounds and a medieval church are on the island of Frösö. The cable-car trip from Åre leads up to the summit of Åreskutan.

Tourist Information: VisitSweden in the UK Sweden House, 5 Upper Montagu Street, London W1H 2AG, UK Tel: (020) 7108 6168. Website: www.visitsweden.com VisitSweden in the USA Council PO Box 4649, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163-4649, USA Tel: (212) 885 9700. Website: www.visitsweden.com

Top Things To Do

Take a boat trip from the city centre through Stockholm's many islands to **Drottningholm Palace** (website: www.royalcourt.se), where the Royal Theatre has been preserved in its original 18th-century form and plays are still performed there in period costume. There is also a museum depicting the development of the theatre since the Renaissance period. If there are four days available to spare, take the classic boat journey through Sweden's Great Lakes and the historic Göta Canal. The tours start at both Stockholm and Gothenburg (website: www.gotakanal.se). Sweden has hundreds of miles of beaches, particularly on the west coast, and 96,000 lakes. There are numerous water-skiing and windsurfing centres on the coast and more accessible lakes. There are excellent facilities nationwide for skating, tobogganing, snow-mobiling, ice-climbing and dog-sledging. There are excellent golf courses and facilities provided for members and visitors. Sweden has over 400 courses. One situated north of the Arctic Circle enjoys 24-hour daylight during the summer months and many midsummer championships take place at midnight. Try to spot Sweden's only herd of musk ox in the Härjedalen valley, southern Lapland, which also has abundant reindeer, buzzard, beaver and lynx. In winter, this region is also known for its skiing. Take to two wheels cycling is a popular holiday recreation, particularly in the south. The Swedish Cycling Promotion Institute, in cooperation with regional tourist offices, offers scheduled cycling tours in almost every region. Norrbotten is a fisherman's paradise with plenty of mountain streams and excellent sea fishing. It is situated on the so-called Midnight Sun Coast, which is a 1500km (900 mile) stretch of Baltic coastline that runs all the way to the Finnish border. Take the kids to Mora, in the heart of the Swedish Lakeland region, where they can meet Father Christmas at the Santaworld theme park (website: www.santaworld.se). For those keen on the past, southwestern Bohuslän province is also one of the most important centres of ancient Swedish civilisation and there are many archaeological relics dating back to the Bronze Age and Viking times.

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OverviewII

Sweden is a land of cultural contrast, from the Danish influence of the southwest to the nomadic Laplanders in the wild Arctic north. And while urban Sweden is stylish, modern and sophisticated, the countryside offers many simpler pleasures for those in search of tranquillity. Sweden's scenery has a gentler charm than that of neighbouring Norway's rugged coast. Much of Sweden is swathed in forest, and there are thousands of lakes, notably large stretches of water between Gothenburg and the capital, Stockholm. The lakeside resort of Östersund, in the centre of Sweden, is popular with Scandinavians, but most visitors opt first for **the cities and the Baltic islands**: the largest island, Gotland, with its array of ruined medieval churches, is a particular highlight. Another major attraction is the so-called 'Kingdom of Crystal', a forested area between



Malmö and Stockholm boasting many fine glassworks. Historically, Sweden has an interesting story. Its contacts with the outside world began in earnest during Viking times, when in addition to the well-documented raiding, there was extensive trading around the Baltic, primarily dealing in furs and weaponry. Swedish connections with the other Scandinavian countries, Norway and Denmark, have been strong since late medieval times. The monarchies of all three are closely linked, and at various times, one king or queen has ruled over more than one of the countries. Many significant battles have been fought over control of the three dominions. Indeed, Norway only fully shed Swedish control for the last time in the early years of the 20th Century. Although it did not gain a Parliament until the 19th Century, modern Sweden is known worldwide as a model of social democracy and tolerance. But there is a strong streak of independence, too; in common with the United Kingdom and Denmark, it has so far opted out of the common European Union currency system. The land and its people have an air of reserved calm, and while best known for its automotive and musical exports Volvo and Abba are pretty much household names a strong historical undertone bubbles close beneath the surface. Nowhere is this more apparent than in Stockholm, where dozens of museums deal with all imaginable aspects of the past, and medieval and Baroque edifices housing boutiques and cafes overlook the attractive harbour.

Communications

Telephone: Full IDD is available. Country code: 46. Coin-operated pay phones no longer exist and they are all now card-operated. Cards are readily available from kiosks and newsagents and instructions in English are displayed in most booths. Credit card phones (indicated by a 'CCC' sign) are widely available.

Mobile telephone: Coverage is available across most of the country.

Internet: Internet cafes exist in all main urban areas but are scarcer outside of these areas.

Post: Post office hours: Usually open during normal shopping hours (Mon-Fri 0800-2200, Sat 0900-1500). Some branches may be closed Saturday during July. Post boxes are yellow. Stamps and aerograms are on sale at post offices and also at most bookstalls and stationers. Airmail within Europe takes three to four days.

MEDIA: The Swedish public enjoys a wide variety of public and commercial broadcast services, though until relatively recently public TV and radio had a near-monopoly of the airwaves. Around 66 per cent of households have cable or satellite TV. Digital terrestrial broadcasting was launched by SVT in 1999. Swedes are among the top consumers of newspapers in the world. Press: The provinces have their own newspapers which are widely read in their respective regions; the major dailies are confined largely to the capital and include such titles as Aftonbladet (website: www.aftonbladet.se), Dagens Nyheter (website: www.dn.se), Expressen (website: www.expressen.se) and Svenska Dagbladet (website: www.svd.se). Many papers are financed by political parties but independence and freedom of the press is firmly maintained. All papers are in Swedish. The Local (website: www.thelocal.se) provides English-language online news. TV: Sveriges Television (SVT) operates SVT1, SVT 2, SVT24 (news channel) and SVT Europa. TV4, TV3, Kana; 5 and ZTV are other commercial channels available through satellite and/or cable. Radio: Sveriges Radio operates P1, P2, P3 and P4. Radio Sweden International broadcasts in a number of languages, including English. Rix FM, NRJ, Mix Megapol and Radio Match are commercial networks.