

EUROPE · ISLANDS · CITY BREAKS · HIKING · WINTER SPORTS · HISTORY

 Sweden

Stockholm spreads across 14 islands linked by bridges and ferries, with an archipelago of tens of thousands more on its doorstep. Further north, the Icehotel in Jukkasjärvi rebuilds its winter rooms from river ice every year, and Abisko is one of Europe's surest bets for the northern lights. Trains make car-free travel easy.

 Before you go, read the UK government's travel advice for Sweden and entry requirements (visas, passport validity). Last updated by FCDO 11 August 2026.

 CAPITAL Stockholm	 CURRENCY Swedish krona (SEK) £1 ≈ SEK 13.25	 LANGUAGE Swedish, English Finnish, Sami	 BEST TIME Jun–Aug
 DAILY BUDGET £60–£280 £££ Expensive	 PLUGS Type C, F 230V · adapter needed	 FLIGHT FROM LONDON 2h 20m direct ~£70–£250 return	 TIME ZONE UTC+1 standard time

Sweden is long and thinly populated, and most first trips focus on the south, where Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö lie within a few hours of each other by fast train. Stockholm deserves three or four days for its old town, museums and an archipelago boat trip, while Gothenburg is a relaxed harbour city with granite west-coast islands on its doorstep. Medieval Visby, on Gotland, is a ferry ride from Nynäshamn, south of Stockholm. Lapland, more than 1,000km north, is a separate trip: in winter for the Icehotel, dog-sledding and the aurora, in summer for the midnight sun and the Kungsleden trail.

Sweden is expensive, though usually less so than Norway, and costs are easier to manage than its reputation suggests: weekday lunch deals (dagens lunch), hostels run by the Swedish Tourist Association and the right of public access (allmansrätten), which allows camping and foraging on most land, all help. The country is almost cashless, design-conscious and efficient. Summer is short but light-filled, with long evenings and a mass exodus to lakeside cottages in July, when some city restaurants close. Winters in the south are dark and grey, so cold-weather trips are better aimed at snowy Lapland.

Top 5 highlights

 HISTORY

Gamla stan

Stockholm's medieval old town is a maze of ochre and russet merchants' houses around Stortorget square, with the Royal Palace, the Nobel Prize Museum and Storkyrkan cathedral. Visit early or late to avoid cruise crowds.

 NATURE

Stockholm archipelago

Around 30,000 islands, islets and skerries stretch some 80km out into the Baltic. Hop on the Waxholmsbolaget ferries to Vaxholm's fortress, swim off the rocks at Grinda or stay at a wooden inn on Sandhamn.

3

HISTORY

Visby

Gotland's main town is one of northern Europe's best-preserved medieval walled towns, with 3.4km of walls and the ruins of a dozen churches. Ferries from Nynäshamn take about three hours; August's Medieval Week brings jousting and markets.

4

ARCHITECTURE

Icehotel, Jukkasjärvi

Each winter artists carve new rooms and an ice bar from blocks of Torne River ice. Sleep at below -5°C in a thermal sleeping bag, or visit the year-round Icehotel 365, which keeps art suites frozen through summer.

5

NATURE

Abisko National Park

A rain shadow keeps skies unusually clear here, making Abisko one of the best places in Europe to see the aurora; ride the chairlift to the Aurora Sky Station. In summer the Kungsleden trail starts here, under the midnight sun.

Biggest cities

LARGEST CITY

Stockholm

≈ 2.4 million people

The capital's must-sees are the Vasa Museum's salvaged 17th-century warship, the open-air Skansen museum and Södermalm's cafés, plus ferries that double as sightseeing boats.

2ND LARGEST CITY

Gothenburg

≈ 1.1 million people

Sweden's laid-back second city has canals, the Haga district's wooden houses and giant cinnamon buns, the Liseberg amusement park, and tram-and-ferry access to the car-free southern archipelago.

3RD LARGEST CITY

Malmö

≈ 750,000 people

Linked to Copenhagen by the Øresund Bridge, Malmö is a young, multicultural city of parks, falafel stalls and the twisting Turning Torso, with sea-bathing at Ribersborg's cold-bath house.

Ranked by urban-area population where available. Figures are rounded estimates, and sources define city limits differently, so rankings of similar-sized cities can vary.

When to go to Sweden

Best time: **Jun–Aug.**

Jan

Feb

Mar

Apr

May

Jun

Jul

Aug

Sep

Oct

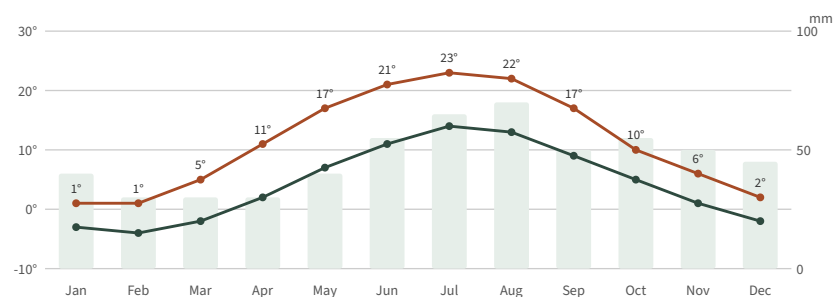
Nov

Dec

■ Best ■ Good ■ Mixed ■ Poor

Average climate in Stockholm

— High $^{\circ}\text{C}$ — Low $^{\circ}\text{C}$ ■ Rain (mm)



Festivals & events

Feb	Jokkmokk Winter Market Held in the first week of February since 1605, this Sami market just north of the Arctic Circle brings reindeer races, handicrafts, food and music to Lapland.
Jun	Midsommar On the Friday between 19 and 25 June, Swedes dance round a flower-decked maypole, wear flower crowns and feast on herring, new potatoes and strawberries; Dalarna celebrates most traditionally.
Dec	Lucia On 13 December, candlelit processions led by Lucia, wearing a crown of candles, sing in churches, schools and offices, with saffron buns and gingerbread.

How much does Sweden cost?

SHOESTRING £60 per person / day ≈ SEK 795 hostels, street food, buses	MID-RANGE £140 per person / day ≈ SEK 1,854 3-star hotels, restaurants, some taxis	COMFORTABLE £280 per person / day ≈ SEK 3,709 4-star+, guided trips, private transfers
--	---	---

Estimates per person per day, excluding flights. Prices vary by season and city.

Food to try

Köttbullar Small pork-and-beef meatballs in cream gravy, served with mashed or boiled potatoes, lingonberry jam and quick-pickled cucumber — home cooking at its most Swedish.	Kanelbulle The cardamom-scented cinnamon bun at the heart of fika, Sweden's daily coffee-and-cake ritual; 4 October is Cinnamon Bun Day.	Gravlax Salmon cured with salt, sugar and dill, sliced thin and served with hovmästarsås, a sweet mustard-dill sauce, on rye bread or with potatoes.
--	--	--

Getting around

SJ's fast trains link Stockholm with Gothenburg in about three hours and Malmö in four and a half, and night trains run north to Kiruna, Abisko and Narvik. Book early for cheaper fares. Ferries serve Gotland and the archipelagos, and domestic flights save time to Lapland. Cities have excellent public transport with app-based tickets, and Uber and Bolt operate in the larger cities.

Practical information

PLUGS & VOLTAGE   C F 230V — bring a UK-to-C/F adapter	EMERGENCY NUMBERS Telephone: 112 (ambulance, fire, police) Source: FCDO “Getting help”
DIALLING CODE +46	TIME ZONE UTC+1 (standard time)

TAP WATER

Generally safe to drink

DRIVING

On the right

TIPPING

Service is included in prices; rounding up or leaving 5–10% for good restaurant service is common but never obligatory, even when card machines prompt for it.

ETIQUETTE

Swedes queue carefully — take a numbered ticket (kölapp) in pharmacies and shops — and value punctuality and modesty. Remove shoes indoors, keep voices down on trains, and respect the right-of-access code.

MAIN AIRPORTS

Stockholm Arlanda Airport (ARN), Stockholm; Göteborg Landvetter Airport (GOT), Gothenburg

Visas & entry for Sweden

Shown for a British passport.

No visa needed

You can travel without a visa to the Schengen area, which includes Sweden, for up to 90 days in any 180-day period. This applies if you travel: as a tourist; to visit family or friends; to attend business meetings, cultural or sports events; for short-term studies or training.

The requirements for working in Sweden are different.

From the UK government's FCDO entry requirements for British passport holders — read the full page for passport validity, permits and exceptions.

Health & vaccinations



See a travel health nurse, GP or travel clinic **6–8 weeks before you go**. Make sure routine UK vaccinations (such as MMR and diphtheria-tetanus-polio) are up to date.

RECOMMENDED FOR MOST TRAVELLERS

Tetanus

SOMETIMES ADVISED — DEPENDS ON YOUR TRIP, ACTIVITIES AND HEALTH

Bat Lyssavirus

Tick-borne encephalitis

YELLOW FEVER CERTIFICATE

No yellow fever certificate is required to enter.

MALARIA

No malaria risk

Source: TravelHealthPro (National Travel Health Network and Centre), checked 21 October 2026. This is a summary, not medical advice.

Public holidays in Sweden

The next 12 months. Banks, offices and some sights may close, and transport and hotels get busy around these dates.

Sat 31 Oct 2026

All Saints' Day

Fri 25 Dec 2026	Christmas Day
Sat 26 Dec 2026	Second Day of Christmas
Fri 1 Jan 2027	New Year's Day
Wed 6 Jan 2027	Epiphany
Fri 26 Mar 2027	Good Friday
Sun 28 Mar 2027	Easter Sunday
Mon 29 Mar 2027	Easter Monday
Sat 1 May 2027	May Day
Thu 6 May 2027	Ascension Day
Sun 16 May 2027	Pentecost
Sun 6 Jun 2027	National Day
Sat 26 Jun 2027	Midsummer Day

National holidays only. Dates based on lunar calendars can move by a day or two depending on official announcements.

Useful phrases in Swedish

ENGLISH	SWEDISH	SAY IT
Hello	Hej	<i>hey</i>
Thank you	Tack	<i>tahk</i>
Please	Snälla	<i>SNEL-lah</i>
Excuse me	Ursäkta	<i>oor-SHEK-tah</i>
How much is this?	Hur mycket kostar det?	<i>hoor MICK-eh KOSS-tar deh?</i>

Know before you go

Sweden is close to cashless: many cafés, museums and buses refuse cash, so a contactless card or phone wallet is all you need.

Takeaway drinks stronger than 3.5% are sold almost only at state-run Systembolaget shops, which close early on Saturdays and all day Sunday; bars and restaurants serve normally.

Trains make car-free travel easy: book SJ tickets as soon as they open for the best fares, and reserve Lapland night-train sleepers well ahead in winter.

Visa, health and safety rules change. Before you book or travel, check the FCDO travel advice (gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) and TravelHealthPro (travelhealthpro.org.uk). Costs are estimates. © 2026 Pick My Trip.